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## Minister lists Samia Legal Aid assistance achievements

**By Polycarp Machira, Dodoma**

AT LEAST 775,115 people in 11 regions in the country have been reached by the presidential legal aid campaign, with 3163 cases solved by the start of this month.

Dr Damas Ndumbaro, the Constitutional and Legal Affairs minister, said at a press conference yesterday that the campaign team is preparing to launch activities in six regions, listed as Kigoma, Kilimanjaro, Geita, Katavi, Tabora, and Mtwara, starting Friday this week.

The campaign will be run for nine days in ten wards in every district, he said, noting that 13 more regions will be covered in two months, ensuring complete outreach across all regions in the Mainland and Zanzibar.

The campaign has reached at least 775,115 people in 11 regions, with 49 percent of beneficiaries being women and 51 percent men, he said, affirming that land conflicts topped the list of cases handled. Gender-based violence, marital con-

**“ This includes human rights, governance basics and other societal issues related to the justice system**

licts and inheritance disputes came next, he said, hinting that many inheritance conflicts stem from the absence of written wills, leading to disputes among family members over the property of the deceased.

The presidential legal aid campaign is a three-year initiative designed to provide legal aid to the public nationwide, equipping people with basic notions in those areas even if they are not facing any legal contentions, he said.

He added that educating the public on basic issues of human rights, the right to respect and dignity is a major focus, strengthening understanding of the law in particular for matters affecting women and children, he stated.

The conduct of the campaign is similarly focused on addressing traditions and customs that conflict with the country's laws, fostering societal understanding and respect for traditions in the context of the law, he specified.

Providing legal advice and support to victims' of sexual violence is another sphere of concern, as the legal aid initiative is meant to raise public awareness on legal rights and responsibilities.

This includes human rights, governance basics and other societal issues related to the justice system, he further

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# Observers optimistic as CCM picks Nchimbi running mate



World Health Organization (WHO) Director General Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus speaks at a press conference shortly after his discussions with President Dr Samia Suluhu Hassan (R) at Chamwino State House in Dodoma yesterday. Photo: State House

*Samia pleads with party leaders to reflect upon the need to adhere to ethical standards, as well as opposing injustice and oppression especially during elections*

**By Guardian Reporters**

POLITICAL excitement is in the air with the ruling party completing its key nominations for the general elections later this year.

The notable event was the premature taking up of the nomination agenda at an extraordinary party congress, which was convened to approve the nomination of the party vice chairman for the Mainland, to take the place of Abdulrahman Kinana who resigned from the post mid last year.

Political observers and the wider public were abuzz with informed and speculative expressions especially with the nomination of Ambassador Dr Emmanuel Nchimbi as running mate to incumbent President Samia Suluhu Hassan.

One reported analyst, Dr Albanie Marcossy, said that completing the nomination in a hurried manner "is an indication that the general election will not be easy."

Bishop Antony Mlyashimba of the central diocese of the Baptist Church in Tan-

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## VP: Report gender-based violence cases to the state

**By Guardian Correspondent, Arusha**

THE government has urged people all over the country to report incidents of gender-based violence (GBV) so that law enforcement agencies can take legal action against those responsible for such acts.

Vice President Dr Philip Mpango issued this appeal at the opening of the Tanzania Women Judges Association (TAWJA) commemorative meeting here at its 25th anniversary, being held from January 19th to 23rd.

Public institutions, private organizations and international agencies operating in the country need to join in the fight for gender equality and women's rights, he said.

Reporting such incidents would help combat the growing problem of gender-based violence, now an increasingly trou-

bling issue in society, he said, praising the association for its contributions to legal reforms.

These include the Prevention and Combating of Corruption Act (PCCA) of 2007 as it now includes provisions addressing sexual harassment to curb abuse of power, he said.

TAWJA has developed guidelines for judges and magistrates on handling gen-

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## 2024 high-speed internet connections rose by 35pc

**By Guardian Reporter**

HIGH speed internet is steadily gaining ground with connections increasing by 35 percent over the past 12 months, the regulatory agency says.

Dr Jabiri Bakari, the Tanzania Communications Regulatory Authority (TCRA) director general, says in the latest communications sector performance report released in Dar es Salaam yesterday, that 'fibre to the home' (FTTH) subscriptions rose from 61,645 in January to 83,201 in December 2024.

While the number of FTTH subscriptions is still relatively small, the growth rate surpasses the 33.63 percent increase in mobile broadband subscriptions, the report indicates.

Overall, internet subscriptions grew by 32.63 percent last year, rising from 36,211,559 in January to 48,028,227 in December, including SIM card-based and fixed-line connections.

The tally represents users who have accessed internet services in the last three months regardless of the technology used, he said, hinting that fibre optic cables which enable FTTH, offer faster speeds and are ideal for high-volume data consumption.

These needs include quicker downloads, video streaming and gaming, where on the basis of TCRA statistics, internet users on FTTH mode obtain or send data up to three times faster than mobile broadband users.

From September to December 2024,

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A traffic police officer inspects a lorry which overturned after losing control and collided with three vehicles and four tricycles along Wazo Road slope at Msikitini area in Dar es Salaam yesterday. Residents have expressed concern about the road being narrow while being used by large trucks transporting cement from the nearby factory. A number of people were injured in the accident. Photo: John Badi



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## VP: Report gender-based violence cases to the state

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der-based violence cases and has facilitated exchange of experience with judges globally to strengthen gender equality and human rights outreach education, he stated.

TAWJA is marking its Silver Jubilee under the theme "celebrating diversity and solidarity in gender equality," which the VP described as a fitting theme as it highlights the ongoing work of TAWJA in promoting gender equality and combating gender-based violence.

It fosters the recognition that gender differences should not serve as a basis for discrimination but rather compel solidarity and equality, he stated, stressing that justice and equality facilitate the building of a society that values the dignity of every individual, regardless of gender, race, income, education or origin.

He said that the government is committed to enhancing gender equality and empowering women, setting up a dedicated ministry for the purpose, tasked with Community Development, Gender, Elderly and Children, and responsible for overseeing gender equality initiatives.

"Under President Samia's leadership, the government has improved justice delivery, including ensuring gender equality at various levels of the judiciary and other sectors," he declared.

While progress has been made, there is still more work to be done in advancing gender equality, he stated, noting that women make up 33 percent of judges at the Court of Appeal and 38 percent at the High Court.

This gender presence is also evident in other positions, with women constituting 33 percent of court registrars, 48.7 percent of deputy registrars, 50 percent of resident magistrates, and 41 percent of primary court magistrates, elaborated.

These figures reflect sincere ef-

orts to achieve gender equality in the country's judiciary, he said, while Chief Justice Prof. Ibrahim Juma made similar remarks in relation to the Tanzania Judiciary Association (TJA).

In order to thrive there must be a sufficient number of female judges and magistrates, he said, pointing out that from 1921 to 1961, the judiciary did not provide employment opportunities for female judges or magistrates.

Considerable progress had been made by the Tanzanian government to increase the number of women in the judiciary, even as there is still a long way to go to achieve 50-50 gender balance, he stated.

Data from the Chief Registrar of the Judiciary as of January 15, 2025, shows annual employment trends from 2000 (when TAWJA was established) to December 2024, with the government having enabled the Judiciary Service Commission to employ a total of 1,441 magistrates, he said.

Over the past 25 years, the commission has employed 688 female magistrates, representing 48 percent of the total, where 753 male magistrates were employed.

The trend indicates that female magistrates are nearing a 50 percent balance or may surpass it, as seen in years where female magistrates outnumbered their male counterparts, he said.

In 2015 with 75 women the level was 65 percent as 40 magistrates were men, representing 35 percent of total; in 2018 with 72 women the figure represented 60 percent while 49 magistrates were men, about 40 percent of total.

In 2021 courts had 74 women magistrates, representing 54 percent plus 63 men magistrates at 46 percent. Last year 56 women magistrates were appointed, representing 50.45 percent of total, while 55 magistrates were men, stranding at 49.54 percent, he added.

## 2024 high-speed internet connections rose by 35pc

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FTTH broadband download and upload speeds stood at 31.8 and 40.9 megabytes per second (Mbps) respectively, compared to 10.8 and 13.2 Mbps for mobile broadband users, the report affirmed.

However, FTTH's main disadvantage is its relatively higher installation costs, which varies by location tied to availability of fibre optic cables.

Internet subscriptions also increased by 16 percent from September to December 2024, rising from 41,376,545 to 48,028,227 while average data usage per subscription increased slightly to 4.49 gigabytes

(GB) compared to 4.35 GB in September.

Despite this growth, local internet subscribers use 10.9 percent of available capacity for local and international outgoing and incoming traffic, where the capacity stands at 17,200 Gbps.

Just 1,868 Gbps was activated, implying current excess capacity or user poverty limitation for 15,332 Gbps available for activations.

There was slight growth in the number of registered domains with domestic names, from 31,584 in September to 32,267 in December 2024, an 11.24 percent increase from 29,006 in January, it added

## Minister lists Samia Legal Aid assistance achievements

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noted, citing inheritance and legacy management, land law and property rights as principal issues.

The campaign is an aspect of conflict resolution through alternative methods, while the public awareness campaign particularly targets local government officials, ward executives, village chairmen as well as members of district land councils, traditional elders and religious leaders.

The campaign is a constitutionally-backed legal initiative arising

from efforts by President Samia Suluhu Hassan to form a panel to rectify operations of the criminal justice system, as well as seeking to solve piled court cases related to land, inheritance and matrimonial issues.

Establishing a cadre of legal assistants has improved access to justice, a cadre initiated in 2017, with a total of 4,790 legal assistants trained so far. A total of 1,073 are registered and licensed in the Mainland while in Zanzibar has 370 trained legal assistants where 258 are registered and licensed, he added

## AU's intelligence services committee opens office in Libya - chief Al-Ayeb

TRIPOLI

THE Committee of Intelligence and Security Services (CISSA) of the African Union (AU) has announced the opening of its office in the Libyan capital Tripoli.

The opening ceremony at the weekend was attended by CISSA executive secretary Jackson Victor Hamata, and Libyan intelligence

Chief Hussein Al-Ayeb, as Libya assumed the presidency of CISSA for the year 2025.

"This inauguration of CISSA office in Libya enhances Libya's leadership in the field of intelligence work at the regional level," Al-Ayeb said, stressing the need to "intensify coordination between African intelligence agencies against terrorism, organised crime and other security issues."



Prime Minister Kassim Majaliwa speaks with members of the Presidential Tax Reforms Commission at his office in Dodoma yesterday. Second (R) is the Commission Chairman Ambassador Sefue. Photo: PMO

## Observers optimistic as CCM picks Nchimbi running mate

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zania said that the move by the CCM extraordinary congress was appropriate, on the basis of statutes of the party.

Knowing the names of candidates early will help the public know the candidates well in advance, reflecting upon them well ahead of the general election, he stated.

He even suggested the need to change the law so that the process of nomination starts early for all parties to introduce their contestants so that they are known to their constituents and voters.

He asserted that even at the CCM congress the matter of the nomination was vague in its rules, under-

lining that even former president Jakaya Kikwete, when asked for advice by the national chairperson on the matter, did not have a forthright answer.

Dr Cyril Komba, head of the Moshi College of Business Education, praised the running mate nomination, as the former ambassador and current party secretary general "has grown up in the party."

President Samia Suluhu Hassan, wrapping up the two-day congress, asked party leaders to reflect upon the need to adhere to ethical standards, as well as opposing injustice and oppression especially during elections.

She similarly cautioned against

misusing artificial intelligence during elections, while making efforts to inform citizens on how the government has implemented its 2020 manifesto, and promote unity.

She hailed the decision by Vice President Dr Philip Mpango to retire, expressing gratitude for his significant contributions to economic policy, as a distinguished economist.

"When the time comes for him to retire, we pray for his aspirations to be fulfilled. May he retire peacefully, with a long life, good health, and happiness. We sincerely thank him for his service to the nation," the president declared.

She also saluted former presidents Jakaya Kikwete, Amani Abeid

Karume and Dr Ali Mohamed Shein for their support during the extraordinary national conference.

She talked of their support as she was being overwhelmed by the proposal to endorse her and Dr Mwynyi as presidential candidates in the upcoming general election.

"When I called them aside, they were very helpful. I want to particularly thank Kikwete because this idea originated during his tenure as party chairman.

"He formed a council of former top leaders as party elders, which leaders consult when facing challenges. They are the encyclopaedia of this party, and you can't leave without a solution," she added.



Minister for Constitution and Legal Affairs Dr Damas Ndumbaro (L) briefs journalists in Dodoma yesterday about the Mama Samia Legal Aid Campaign, which has reached a total of 775,119 people across 11 regions. Photo: Correspondent Ibrahim Joseph

## Coalition roots for gender-sensitive budget to cushion premature babies

By Getrude Mbago

THE Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR) coalition has urged the government to allocate gender-sensitive budget for the health sector to ease the financial burden associated with the treatment and care of premature babies.

The appeal was made in Dar es Salaam at the weekend during a joint discussion on proposed Labour Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2024, which is expected to be presented to the Parliament soon.

Speaking at the event, Doris Mollé, director of Doris Mollé Foundation, and a member of the coalition's committee on advocacy, called for budget allocation at village and ward levels to ensure that health centres have the infrastructure and equipment necessary to care for premature babies at the local level.

"If our health centres and rural clinics are equipped with the necessary resources and equipment

to care for premature babies, it will significantly alleviate this issue. Women who give birth prematurely often travel long distances from the rural areas, spending considerable time seeking services at referral hospitals, which only increases the financial strain on communities," Mollé said.

She further highlighted that if the government allocates sufficient funds within the Ministry of Health's budget, particularly for the care of women giving birth to premature babies, and invests in the necessary equipment, it will reduce the burden on families and help mitigate the burden caused by high medical costs.

Mollé stressed the importance of ensuring that women have sufficient maternity leave when giving birth to premature babies.

She said that premature births should be an issue discussed openly by the society, with efforts to change negative attitudes.

Rose Marandu, Executive Direc-

tor of the Women's Fund Tanzania (WFTT), stressed the importance of allocating financial resources of government budgets at all levels.

She argued that such allocations would significantly reduce poverty, gender-based violence, and mistreatment of women who give birth prematurely.

"The SRHR coalition plays a critical role in educating the community, particularly men, who are key partners in reproductive health. Men must be fully engaged and understand their responsibilities so that when a woman gives birth to a premature baby, she does not face discrimination, mistreatment, or violence," Marandu said.

The SRHR coalition's proposal for the legal amendments includes a recommendation for Section 33 of the proposed law, which currently provides maternity leave for women who give birth prematurely, to be extended.

The coalition wants changes to maternity leave provisions, particu-

larly for mothers of premature babies, urging that the leave period be extended until the child reaches 40 weeks of age, instead of 36 weeks in the current draft.

Dr Dinna Mbaga, a member of the SRHR coalition's technical committee said extending the maternity leave will provide much-needed relief to mothers, enabling them to care for their premature infants during the critical early stages of development.

Saada Nassor, a mother of two premature children, shared the difficulties she encountered when she gave birth to a premature baby in 2017.

Reflecting on her journey, she praised the support she received from the Doris Mollé Foundation, which helped her navigate the challenges of caring for her newborn.

"The foundation's support was invaluable to me. It made a huge difference in my experience as a mother of a premature baby," she said.



Casket bearing the body of the late Ester Mahawe, former Mbozi District Commissioner, arrive for burial ceremony at Matevesi area in Arusha City yesterday. Photo: Correspondent Gift Thadey

# Over 6bn/- worth WMA building in Dodoma nears completion - PS

By Guardian Reporter

CONSTRUCTION of the Weights and Measures Agency (WMA) headquarters in Dodoma is progressing well, with authorities describing it as prudent use of Tanzanians' money.

Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Industry and Trade, Dr Hashil Abdallah, made the remarks yesterday after inspecting the progress of the building which has cost 6.2bn/- and is in final stages of completion. Dr Abdallah explained that the purpose of the building is to enhance service delivery in the trade sector, particularly for industrial products, emphasising that improving services in trade and industrial development involves creating conducive environment for workers and the delivery of the quality services.

"You are all witnesses; Tanzanians' funds are being used to complete this building so that we can provide better services to the business community and drive progress and efficiency in the industrial sector," he added.

Regarding the progress of the construction, Dr Abdallah confirmed that based on reports and his own observations, the contractor is on track to complete the project within the agreed timeframe, namely by February 10, this year.

Alban Kihulla, WMA Chief Executive Officer, expressed gratitude to the government for enabling the construction and noted that the project is at 95.2 percent.

He emphasised that the building's

completion will not only improve working conditions for WMA staff but also benefit the government as a whole.

Describing some of the benefits of the new building, the CEO explained that the modern laboratory within the facility will enable the storage of equipment known as secondary standards.

"I would like to remind you that the Weights and Measures Agency is responsible for storing equipment with secondary standards as this is where we are internationally compared. It also helps build investor confidence, knowing that the accuracy of measurements is monitored from the business level to the international level," he said.

Burhan Hamzam representative of the contractor Mohamed Builders and consultant from Mbeya University of Science and Technology (MUST), Rachel Lista, also confirmed that the building will be completed and handed over to WMA by February 10, 2025.

Construction of WMA headquarters, located at Medeli area, began on July 2, 2022, with an initial completion date of December 30, 2024. However, the contractor requested an additional 40 days due to minor challenges encountered.

To date, the contractor has received 5.8bn/- out of the 6.2bn/- allocated for the project.

*It also helps build investor confidence, knowing that the accuracy of measurements is monitored from the business level to the international level*

# TRA unveils new system linked to key institutions

By Guardian Reporter

THE Tanzania Revenue Authority (TRA) has launched a new system linked to key institutions to ease revenue collection.

During the launch in Dar es Salaam yesterday, TRA Commissioner General Juma Mwenda announced that the system, named Tanzania Customs Integrated System (TAN-CIS), is linked to 36 government institutions, including ports, airports and border customs stations.

Mwenda explained that the modern system, developed by a foreign company at the cost of nearly 100bn/-, will transform tax collections in the country.

He stated that with the new system, businesses will no longer need to visit TRA offices for tax payments or clarifications. Instead, they can complete all transactions from their offices, including paying import duties before goods arrive in the country.

"This system allows businesses to

import goods, know the exact customs duty costs, and pay before the goods reach the port, airports, or border customs stations. This will enhance efficiency and eliminate complaints from traders," he said.

He further emphasised that since all institutions involved in tax matters will use the system, commercial activities will speed up with no delays to import or distribute goods.

"By clearing goods more quickly at the ports, trade will grow rapidly and the country's revenue will in-

crease, benefiting the economy," he added.

Uledi Mussa, Chairman of board of directors of TRA, highlighted that the project's completion aligns with the government's directive to implement a system integrated across all government institutions.

"I am pleased that we have worked on the directive and now all institutions dealing with tax matters will use the TRA system, allowing citizens to spend less time on payments and tax services," he said.

# Samia, WHO head express readiness to fight Marburg, other health threats

By Correspondent Mary Kadoke

PRESIDENT Samia Suluhu Hassan has informed the World Health Organisation (WHO) of Tanzania's determination to confront global health challenges, including the ongoing threat of Marburg Virus Disease (MVD).

President Samia made the assurance in Dodoma yesterday, during a press briefing as she met WHO Director General Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus.

She emphasized that efforts are underway to ensure the nation's preparedness and response to emerging health risks, underscoring Tanzania's commitment to safeguarding public health both domestically and globally.

"We have resolved to reassure the general public in Tanzania and the international community as part of our collective determination to address the global challenges including the Marburg," she said.

Tanzania is safe and open for trade and other interactions, she added.

The Head of State further noted that the government appreciates the swift attention accorded by the WHO on the matter and assured everyone that the measures taken during the first outbreak in the year 2023, which included quick isolation, treatment of cases, contact tracing and community engagement proved highly effective.

Dr Tedros commended the president for the in-

vestments made in emergency preparedness in recent years.

He recognised Tanzania's successful launch of Universal Health and Preparedness Review (UHPR) which showcases the government readiness to health system resilience

"WHO is proud to have supported Tanzania's capacity for delivering health services, including training of health workers," he said.

He added: "I pledge WHO's continued support to bring the outbreak under control."

Health Ministry recently reassured the public and the international community, including the WHO, that it had intensified disease surveillance and would continue to provide timely updates.

Concerns about the virus were heightened following a WHO report last week which cited eight deaths linked to a suspected MVD outbreak in Kagera Region.


The report, intended for member states and International Health Regulations (IHR) authorities, aimed to raise awareness of the potential threat.

**TANZANIA MASIGIRA POWER LIMITED**  
(INCORPORATION NUMBER 107675)

IN THE MATTER OF THE COMPANIES ACT, CAP. 212 OF 2002  
AND  
IN THE MATTER OF VOLUNTARY WINDING UP (MEMBERS WINDING UP) OF  
TANZANIA MASIGIRA POWER LIMITED  
(THE COMPANY)

**NOTICE TO THE CREDITORS TO PROVE THEIR CLAIMS OR DEBTS**


NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN to the creditors of the above mentioned Company which is being wound up voluntarily that they are required to send names, addresses and the particulars of their claims or debts to the undersigned, the Liquidator of the said Company on the address shown below on or before the **21 February 2025** and if so required by notice in writing from the said Liquidator to personally come in and prove the said claims or debts at such time and place as shall be specified in such notice. Any creditor who fails to submit the particulars of the debts will be excluded from the benefits of any distribution made before such debts are proved, as the case may be, from objecting to such distribution.

  
.....  
**GEOFFREY DIMOSO**

Dated this 20<sup>th</sup> day of January 2025

For Tanzania Masigira Power Limited  
In Members Voluntary Winding Up  
The Address, Ground Floor,  
1 Bains Singh Avenue, Msasani Peninsula  
P O Box 79651  
Dar es Salaam,  
Tanzania

218333501



**AKIBA COMMERCIAL BANK PLC**  
*benki kwa maendeleo ya kitaifa*

## PUBLIC NOTICE

### Merging of Dar es Salaam Branches in Kariakoo and Ubungu

Akiba Commercial Bank Plc wishes to inform its customers and the public that the Bank will merge the following branches in Dar es Salaam effective from 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2025:


- Ilala and Aggrey branches with Kariakoo branch, located adjacent to China Plaza along Uhuru Street.
- Tandale branch with Ubungu branch, located at Ubungu Plaza along Morogoro Road.

This strategic move is part of our ongoing efforts to optimize our operations, enhance service efficiency and promote the use of digital banking services. As a result of this merger, customer accounts at Ilala and Aggrey branches will be migrated to Kariakoo branch while customer accounts at Tandale branch will be migrated to Ubungo branch.

The Bank would like to assure its customers and all stakeholders of a seamless transition without disruption to banking services or access to accounts and that dedicated support will be available throughout the exercise to assist you as needed. The Bank is encouraging customers to continue using our digital banking services including ACB Mobile, ACB Internet Banking, ACB VISA Cards and Akiba Wakala.

We sincerely thank you for your continued trust and loyalty. We remain committed to providing you with superior products and exceptional customer service to support your financial needs.

For more information, please visit our website at [www.acbbank.co.tz](http://www.acbbank.co.tz), our social media pages, or contact your Branch Manager, Relationship Officer, or our Call Center via the Toll-Free Number 0800 750 336.



**Dora Saria**  
**Head of Marketing and Communications**  
**Akiba Commercial Bank Plc**

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## CBT hires 500 extension officers to help boost cashew production

By Guardian Correspondent, Masasi

THE Cashewnut Board of Tanzania (CBT) has hired 500 agriculture extension officers to work with farmers by providing essential training on efficient and productive cashew farming techniques.

The initiative forms part of the government's strategy through Building a Better Tomorrow: Youth Initiative for Agribusiness (BBT-YIA) which aims to increase national cashewnuts production to 700,000 tonnes annually by 2025/2026.

Speaking here yesterday at the start of a five-day training session, Juma Yusuph, CBT Education Programme Manager explained that the young professionals with expertise in agriculture have been employed to offer direct support to farmers.

"The officers will be working within farming communities, particularly with cashew farmers, to provide guidance on how to cultivate the crop more efficiently, ensuring their produce is competitive in the global market," he said.

He added that the training was designed to equip the 500 officers with the necessary skills to assist farmers in improving both the quality and productivity of their cashew crops, ultimately contributing to the goal of increasing cashewnut production.

The extension officers, recruited have been deployed across five key cashew-producing regions: Mtwara, Lindi, Ruvuma, Coast and Tanga.

Yusuph noted that of the 500 agriculture officers, 400 hold diploma in agriculture while 100 possess

bachelor's degrees.

The officers have been assigned to various regions, with 245 posted in Mtwara, Lindi (152), Ruvuma (50), Coast (29 and Tanga (24).

A key responsibility for the officers will be to enhance access to agriculture extension services such as registering farmers to ensure they are recognised within a formal system.

Louteri Kanoni, Masasi District Commissioner, urged the officers to carry out their duties with integrity, adhering to the regulations and standards of public service.

He emphasised that the success of their work will be critical in achieving CBT's and the government's target in the subsector.



**The officers will be working within farming communities, particularly with cashew farmers, to provide guidance on how to cultivate the crop more efficiently, ensuring their produce is competitive in the global market**



Dar es Salaam Institute of Technology (DIT) Deputy Principal for Academics, Research and Consultancy, Prof. Ezekiel Amri (L), speaks during the opening of a five-day training session for the institute's instructors in Dar es Salaam yesterday. The training aims to enhance their teaching skills to align with technological advancements. Photo: Correspondent Miraji Msala

By Guardian Reporter, Zanzibar

## Zanzibar judiciary adopts ICT to ease access to info

THE High Court of Zanzibar has announced implementation of a major project aimed at improving judiciary's justice delivery, with all cases now expected to be accessed through Information and Communication Technology (ICT).

This was stated here yesterday by Chief Justice of Zanzibar, Khamis Ramadhan Shaaban, during the introduction of Zanzibar High Court improvement project for judges, magistrates and stakeholders in the criminal justice system.

Shaaban highlighted that the project aligns with the goals of the 2050 Development Vision in areas such as good governance, accountability and achieving global sustain-

able development goals for access to justice.

He emphasised that the judiciary is a crucial pillar of the global justice system. It is important to adapt to modern changes to meet citizens' needs and eliminate complaints.

Speaking at the event, High Court Judge Ibrahim Mzee noted that the project aims to bring about major reforms, including transitioning to a digital system for justice delivery using ICT.

He explained that all courts and personnel are moving away from paper-based systems and adopting ICT-driven reforms.

The new system is expected to significantly improve access to information, including case hearing statistics, and eliminate delays caused by bureaucratic red tape that often hampers justice.

During the ceremony, Chief Court Administrator, Professor Elisante Ole Gabriel, emphasised the need

for closer collaboration between essential state institutions, including the High Court Zanzibar and the High Court of Tanzania, to strengthen justice delivery for the people.

Several judges have supported the reforms to ensure timely and fair justice for those seeking legal redress.

"Reforms in the running of our courts are essential to ensure that citizens receive justice promptly," said Judge Aziza Suwedi.

## Conduct data-rich studies to guide key decisions, researchers advised

By Guardian Correspondent, Morogoro

RESEARCHERS have been urged to involve diverse groups in the early stages of their studies to gather data that assists the government in addressing societal challenges and planning development strategies from the family to the national level.

Dr Devotha Mosha, Director of the Institute for Continuing Education (ICE) at the Sokoine University of Agriculture (SUA), made the call at the weekend here during a workshop aimed at enhancing the skills of young researchers in data collection and analysis meant to produce high-quality research that benefits society, institutions and the nation as a whole.

Dr Mosha who also leads the Gender Affairs Unit within the Climate Adaptation and Resilience In Tropical dry lands (CLARITY) project, emphasised the importance of using participatory approaches that include all groups such as women, men, the elderly, youth, the rich, the poor and other segments of society to ensure that the information collected is representative of the entire society.

"As you know, without participatory methods, you cannot gather accurate and comprehensive information to provide useful recommendations for our institutions and the government. Therefore, I encourage researchers to take every opportunity to participate in trainings to learn and improve and understand participatory methods which greatly benefit the society," she said.

Egata Makanja from the National Development Corporation (NDC) praised CLARITY project for organising the workshop, which was extremely beneficial.

"At NDC, we run many development projects, and this training will help me conduct research to gather high-quality data that we can process and share for various applications," Makanja said.

Rehema Mollel, assistant trainer from the Department of Strategic Development and Training at SUA said: "I am truly grateful for this opportunity, as I have long wished to learn in such a setting. While we have had classroom lessons, they were not as extensive as what we have been taught here. I can clearly see that the lessons have greatly enhanced my knowledge for my work."

The two-day training, organised by the CLARITY project, brought together 70 participants, with over 100 others joining online.



**I am truly grateful for this opportunity, as I have long wished to learn in such a setting. While we have had classroom lessons, they were not as extensive as what we have been taught here. I can clearly see that the lessons have greatly enhanced my knowledge for my work**



Chief Sheikh and Mufti of Tanzania Abubakar Zuberi (C) inspects the construction of Muccadam Mosque at Chang'ombe area in Dodoma yesterday. Right is Dodoma Regional Sheikh, Mustapha Rajabu. Photo: Correspondent Peter Mkwavila

## Conservation managers urged to enforce laws to tackle overfishing

By Guardian Reporter, Zanzibar

MANAGERS of protected marine areas in Zanzibar have been urged to address emerging challenges in the ocean related to fishing laws and regulations to safeguard marine resources.

Dr. Said Than Rashid, Manager of Menai Bay Conservation Area,

made the call here yesterday at Maruhubi area on the outskirts of Zanzibar during theoretical and practical training on patrol operations and enforcement of fishing laws in the ocean.

Dr. Rashid emphasised that the training was crucial for marine managers due to the rise in illegal fishing in certain areas, which

hampers government efforts to protect marine resources.

He added that the training has significantly enhanced their capacity to work more effectively and acquire the necessary skills to fulfil their duties.

Noah Mpunga, Technical Advisor at Tanzania Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), said they have

introduced various community projects aimed at developing marine environment without affecting the local population.

He urged the trainees to collaborate with communities by applying marine conservation principles to address the challenges posed by climate change.

Participants commended the

training, saying the knowledge gained would help them tackle the challenges they face in managing marine resources.

Training experts Hyasint Donald Wariri and Haji Machano Ali from Fisheries Education and Training Agency (FETA) College in Mbegani, Bagamoyo, emphasised that for the national devel-

opment, effective managers must be in place to enforce marine fishing laws and protect the environment.

They encouraged the trainees to apply the skills and knowledge gained as Zanzibar's blue economy policy is vital for the development of both the communities and the nation.

## Contractors eye Moruwasa's 185bn/- modern water treatment plant project

By Correspondent Christina Haule, Morogoro

MOROGORO Urban Water and Sanitation Authority (MORUWASA) plans to build a modern water treatment plant capable of producing 54 million litres daily.

The 185bn/- project aims to address water woes in Morogoro Municipality.

Gidion Chahe, Project coordinator for clean water and sanitation at MORUWASA, announced this here yesterday during a visit by bidders competing for the tender who toured the areas designated for the project's construction.

The project is funded by the government with additional soft loan financing from the French Development Agency (AFD).

He stated that the bidders were expected to submit their tender documents by the beginning of March, marking a significant step towards signing of contract and commencement of construction of the new plant which is expected to solve water supply challenges in Morogoro Municipality.

Chahe explained that the inspection tour was meant to allow the bidders to familiarise themselves with the project's implementation areas and prepare their bids in accordance with the environmental conditions of the construction sites before the actual building of the new plant begins.

He noted that construction of the new water treatment plant is expected to begin in July this year at Mafiga area in Morogoro Municipality.

The new treatment plant will complement the existing facility built in 1985, which has a daily water production capacity of 27 million litres. With the growing population and commercial activities in the municipality, the demand for water has increased.

"The population growth, which is not proportional to the available water supply, has prompted the government to invest significant amount of money in building modern plant. In addition to the

existing plant's capacity, it will meet water demand in the municipality," he said.

Additionally, Chahe outlined other projects that will be developed alongside the new water treatment plant, with combined cost of 185bn/-. They include Mindu dam, expansion of clean water network and construction of water tanks in various locations.

Other projects include the expansion and renovation of wastewater treatment plants, extension of sewage network at Mafisa area and construction of a new office for MORUWASA at Msamvu area.

Earlier, during opening of the meeting with the bidders, MORUWASA Chief Executive Officer Tamim Katakweba said the construction work for the plant is expected to begin once all necessary procedures are completed.



**The population growth, which is not proportional to the available water supply, has prompted the government to invest significant amount of money in building modern plant. In addition to the existing plant's capacity, it will meet water demand in the municipality**

## Seven dead in encounter between soldiers, miners

ACCRA

AT LEAST seven people have been killed in a clash with soldiers on duty at a mine in the central Ashanti region, according to the army.

The Ghana Armed Forces said about 60 illegal miners, armed with among others things "pump action guns", had forced their way into the mine run by global giant AngloGold Ashanti and fired at the soldiers when they were intercepted.

This prompted the soldiers "to retaliate in self-defence", leading to the deaths and injuries, it said in a statement.

A representative of the miners denied that they had been armed.

Following news of the deaths, there were protests in Obuasi town where several buses were set on fire.

Angry residents poured onto the company's grounds following the killings, burning at least three vehicles and other equipment belonging to AngloGold Ashanti.

President John Mahama has ordered investigations into the matter, saying anyone found to have acted unlawfully will be brought to justice.

A statement from the presidency indicated that eight people had died.

The government asked AngloGold Ashanti to cover the medical expenses of the injured and the burial costs, while requiring security agencies to ensure peace in the area.

The company said the situation had since calmed down and it was working closely with the authorities.

It said its main concern was "the safety and health of our employees and those in our community" who were affected by the incident.

The local chairman of the Ghana National Association of Small Scale Miners, Kofi Adams, was quoted by

the Reuters news agency as saying that the violence was "unprecedented."

He said that nine people had died and 14 severely injured adding that it was "difficult to understand why it had happened."

In the past, he said, warning shots had been fired to ward off intruders. He also disputed the allegation by the military that the people had been armed.

The army said the "illegal miners were wielding locally manufactured rifles, pump action guns" and other weapons. It said it had a duty to defend itself, innocent civilians and property, including by using lethal force.

There have been tensions between AngloGold Ashanti and residents who accuse them of exploiting mineral resources without doing much to develop the area or create jobs.

Some local small-scale mining associations have been asking to be given some of the company's mining concessions.

The company insists it has been doing a lot for the local communities.

Yesterday, some schools built and managed by the company in the area announced a two-day shutdown following the disturbances.

There have been several conflicts between security officers and mining communities in the past, but the situation has been exacerbated by the country's current economic problems.

Ghana is going through its worst economic crisis in a generation with high public debt, high inflation and unemployment.

Amid the economic crisis, there has been a rise in small-scale mining, including unregulated sites that have been accused of having a devastating impact on the environment.



Musoma District Commissioner Juma Chikoka speaks to residents of Kigera Etuma Village before participating in digging of a foundation for the construction of Kigera Mwiyaale Secondary School at the weekend. Photo: Correspondent

## Parents, guardians urged to help instil moral values into children

By Guardian Reporter

PARENTS, guardians and all adult members of the society have been urged to help religious leaders in instilling moral values into children for the country's socioeconomic development.

Upendo Mwinchande, Executive Director of the Society Empowerment Organ (SEO) made the call during commemoration of World Religion Day in Dar es

Salaam at the weekend.

She emphasised that instilling moral values into children is essential for spiritual growth and ethical conduct.

"Regardless of religious beliefs, all religious institutions should promote compassion and empathy, which are key to societal well-being and harmony," Mwinchande said.

SEO invited religious leaders from Christian and Islam communities to highlight the significant roles

religious organisations play in shaping society, especially given increasing concerns over moral decay.

Mwinchande stressed that following religious teachings help children avoid harmful behaviours such as drug use, truancy and teenage pregnancy for girls.

Sheikh Abeid Hassan of Kimara Matangini Islamic Centre suggested that religious education should begin from primary

schools to foster positive societal transformation.

Pastor Walter Yobu underscored the vital role religious institutions play in addressing societal ills, expressing concern over the growing moral decadence.

World Religion Day, observed on the third Sunday of January each year, aims to promote understanding, peace and tolerance amongst different religions and cultures.



Singida Regional Administrative Secretary Dr Fatuma Mganga (R), inspects construction of a new secondary school at Kintandaa Village, Mtunduru Ward in Ikungi District at the weekend. The school will feature eight classrooms, two teachers' offices, administration block, laboratory, ICT room, water tank, incinerator, toilets stalls and furniture. Photo: Correspondent Thobias Mwanakatwe

By Guardian Reporter, Zanzibar

ZANZIBAR Health Services Fund (ZHSF) has launched a campaign to encourage registration of individuals working in the informal sector, aiming to ensure everyone benefits from health insurance services in the isles.

Yassir Juma, Director General of ZHSF unveiled this yesterday here during a meeting with various members of the public, including workers in the informal sector and businesspeople as part of the registration campaign.

He explained that the fund was established by Zanzibar government in 2023. The law requires all Zanzibaris to register in

## Insurer's campaign targets workers in informal sector

order to fully access health services.

To achieve the goal, the fund has embarked on a drive aimed at reaching all groups to ensure equitable access to health services throughout the isles.

"We have completed the registration process for government employees who are in the formal sector with success rate of 80 percent. Now we focus on the informal sector to meet the goal of universal health coverage," he said.

Juma Hamad, Director of Coordination at ZHSF, said that the registration process for government employees went on smoothly, with only a few remaining individuals whose information has not yet been entered into the official system.

He mentioned that government employees are required to contribute 3.5 percent of their salary, with the employer also contributing 3.5 percent, making a total contribution of 7 percent.

Evaluating the registration process for government employees, he noted that it has been successful, with human resources officers playing a key role in its success.

Additionally, he stated that all hospitals designated to provide health insurance services to government employees continue with the services, including those owned by the private sector as well as district hospitals in both Unguja and Pemba.

## DC wants seamless payment of taxes to spur development

By Guardian Reporter

ILALA District Commissioner, Edward Mpogolo, has said that the government is committed to creating a conducive environment for businesses to ensure they can pay their taxes seamlessly.

Mpogolo made the remarks in Dar es Salaam at the weekend during a sports bonanza organised by the Tanzania Revenue Authority (TRA) Kariakoo Tax Region, held at the Jakaya Kikwete grounds in Ilala Municipality.

"Congratulations to the business community for continuing to pay taxes. We will continue to support these efforts," he said. He pledged to work closely with the Dar es Salaam Regional Commissioner's office and TRA to promote tax compliance among businesses, ensuring the region remains a leader in tax

contributions.

Mpogolo highlighted that under President Samia Suluhu Hassan's leadership, Ilala District received 305bn/- for various development projects, including education, health and infrastructure.

"With the funds, we have built classrooms, paid for primary and secondary education, constructed health centres, and improved roads through Tanzania Rural and Urban Roads Agency (TARURA) funding, which used to be minimal but has now increased to 20bn/-. All of this is due to the significant increase in tax collections by TRA," Mpogolo said.

He also noted that by 2025, Dar es Salaam City Council expects to exceed its revenue target from 111bn/- to 120bn/-, thanks to strong collaboration across all government institutions.

## Chinese in Tanzania celebrate coming spring festival in style

By Guardian Reporter

MORE than 300 Chinese living in Tanzania gathered in Dar es Salaam at the weekend to celebrate the upcoming spring festival which marks the first day of the lunar calendar.

The celebration was guided by the Chinese Embassy in Tanzania and organised by overseas Chinese, with the audience enjoying a gala featuring traditional Chinese music, dance and other performances.

Chinese Ambassador to Tanzania Chen Mingjian said the spring festival is the social practice of the Chinese people to celebrate the traditional New Year, which has been included on the list of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation.

The spring festival falls on January 29 this year, marking the beginning of the Year of the

Snake. It is an important part of traditional Chinese culture, carrying the common expectations of mankind for reunion, happiness, satisfaction, and wellbeing, Chen said.

"We look forward to working with everyone in the New Year to make the China-Tanzania friendship tree more deeply rooted and fruitful," she said.

"Watching all these programmes, I can truly feel that the festive atmosphere is becoming more vivid and the spirit of the Spring Festival is all around," said Zhou Dao, a Chinese logistics expert working in Tanzania.

The early move into the spring festival mode was meant to greatly help promote excellent traditional culture, boost development of the holiday consumer market, and balance supply and demand, said Zhou Qingjie, a professor at China's Beijing Technology and Business University.

## Govt working to minimise dependent on expats - Jafo

By Correspondent Joseph Mwendapole

MINISTER for Industry and Trade, Dr Selemani Jafo, has said the government is making significant efforts to reduce the country's dependence on foreign experts.

Dr Jafo made the remarks in Dar es Salaam yesterday during his visit to the College of Business Education (CBE) where he inspected preparations for the college's 60th anniversary to be marked today at the Dar es Salaam main campus.

He encouraged students to pursue studies in metrology, highlighting the significant job opportunities in the field both within Tanzania and across East Africa.

The minister also inspected the ongoing construction of metrology complex at CBE, designed to accommodate over 4,000 students. Upon completion, the facility will feature laboratories, lecture halls, and metrology workshops.

Dr Jafo noted that the government has allocated 24bn/- for the construction of the metrology complex. The project aims to develop more local experts in various fields, reducing the country's dependence on foreign professionals.

"I urge Tanzanians to take advantage of this new facility and pursue studies in this field. We need more local experts; we cannot continue relying on outsiders. We must train our own," he stated.

During his visit, minister Jafo directed Chinese contractor, LI Jun Construction, to ensure that construction of the project is completed on time and meets the quality standards outlined in the contract.

The minister commended CBE's leadership for initiating the project, describing it as a significant step

towards creating a conducive learning environment for students specialising in metrology.

"I thank the site supervisors for the efforts. I see that the project is at 50 percent and progress is on track. However, the contractor must ensure quality is maintained and all equipment used be tested in our laboratories. The consultant engineer representing the government must also uphold quality standards," he added.

Dr Jafo emphasised the government's commitment to investing in educational infrastructure to ensure students receive quality education that meets the demands of the modern world of science and technology.

CBE Rector Prof. Edda Lwoga highlighted that the metrology complex will include lecture halls, workshops, and laboratories, accommodating more than 4,000 students.

"Metrology is the science of measurement and application, and there is a high demand for qualified professionals in this field. I encourage Tanzanians to explore this area of study," Prof. Lwoga said.

She added that the 24bn/- construction project began in May 2023, with the first phase expected to be completed by 2026. The second phase is scheduled to be completed in 2029.

Titus Kizito, representative of LI Jun Construction Company, confirmed that the project is progressing as planned. He assured the minister that the company would prioritise quality and ensure timely completion.

"We have taken the minister's instructions seriously and will ensure the construction meets the agreed-upon standards and is completed as scheduled," Kizito stated.



Inspector Francis Msuku, Acting Head of Community Policing in Simiyu Region, provides awareness on the citizens' fundamental rights to pupils of Biashara Secondary School at Gam-bosi in the region at the weekend. Left is Secretary General of Passengers' Rights Advocacy Organization (SHIKUHA), Hashim Omary. Photo: Correspondent

## Spend loan money on intended projects only, borrowers urged

By Guardian Correspondent, Njombe

NJOMBE District Commissioner Kissa Kasongwa has urged beneficiaries of the 10 percent loans issue by councils to use the money for the intended projects and ensure timely repayments.

Kasongwa made the appeal at the weekend while presenting 474.95m/- cheque to 81 groups comprising women, youth and people with disabilities in Makambako Town Council.

She cautioned that misuse of the funds would hinder repayments, ultimately preventing others from accessing future loans.

"Misusing them money will lead to repayment failures, denying others the opportunity to borrow," Kasongwa said.

Makambako Town Council Chairperson, Hanana Mfikwa, advised beneficiaries against spending the funds on celebrations, stressing that loans require proper management and hard work to generate profits and ensure timely repayment.

Vasco Mgunda, Secretary to Makambako MP, urged beneficiaries to avoid allowing the funds to create conflicts within their marriages.

Prosper Vedasto, a beneficiary, pledged to invest the funds in income-generating projects to facilitate timely repayment.

Of the total loan disbursed, 57 women's groups received 352.6m/-, 14 youth groups received 86.25m/-, and 10 groups of people with disabilities received 36.1m/-.

The 10 percent loans were first introduced in 1993 to empower marginalised groups, namely women and youth, who lacked collateral for financial institution loans. In 2018, an amendment to the Local Government Financial Act Cap 290 Sec. 37A made it mandatory for local government authorities (LGAs) to allocate 10 percent of their internal revenue as interest-free loans. The loans were designed to empower women, youth, and people with disabilities by enabling them to undertake income-generating activities to lift their households out of poverty.

The scheme operates as a revolving fund distributed according to the 4-4-2 principle: 40 percent for women, 40 percent for youth, and 20 percent for people with disabilities.

Of the total loan disbursed, 57 women's groups received 352.6m/-, 14 youth groups received 86.25m/-, and 10 groups of people with disabilities received 36.1m/.

## Factory workers' strike in Njombe enters day seven

By Guardian Correspondent, Njombe

WORKERS of DL Kibena Tea Company have entered seventh day of striking, refusing to report to work in protest over delayed salaries for four consecutive months.

Speaking to reporter outside Kibena Tea Factory at the weekend, workers voiced their grievances, highlighting that management

has not paid their salaries for four months, leaving them unable to cover basic living expenses.

One of the workers, Chesco Mligo, urged the government to intervene, saying that the unpaid wages have significantly impacted their ability to sustain their livelihoods.

"It is painful because since this investor arrived, all we are doing is raising our voices which go unheard

despite picking tea and contributing to the firm's business," Mligo said.

Another worker, Kalorina Komba, shared that the four-month salary arrears have forced families into financial hardships, struggling to meet even their most basic needs.

Elisha Mbembati, chairperson of the Tanzania Plantation and Agricultural Workers Union (TPAWU) at the Kibena tea branch,

disclosed that the employer recently paid one month's salary and urged the workers to return to work, promising to gradually clear the remaining arrears.

Kibena Tea Factory manager, Geradi Ngenzi, admitted outstanding salary arrears and pledged to continue payments as funds become available, starting with one month's salary.



A petty trader popular as machinga displays his merchandise along a pedestrian walkway at Mbezi Luis in Dar es Salaam yesterday, causing inconvenience to would-be users. Photo: Correspondent Sabato Kasika



Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Agency (RUWASA) Singida Regional Manager Lucas Said (R), provides a report on water access rights during Regional Consultative Committee (RCC) meeting at the weekend. Photo: Correspondent Thobias Mwanakatwe

## S. African police launch manhunt for fugitive deceitful mine leader

JOHANNESBURG

SOUTH African police have launched a manhunt for a Lesotho gang member believed to have controlled operations at an illegal gold mine where 78 bodies were recovered last week during a police siege, from which he escaped.

The alleged kingpin, known as "Tiger," surfaced from the mine in Stilfontein while it was under police surveillance and escaped from custody with the help of officials, a statement on Monday from the South African Police Service said.

"Extensive investigations and tracing operations are underway to find those officials who aided his escape between shaft II and the Stilfontein police holding cells," the statement said.

Police were widely condemned for the months-long operation in which they cut off food and water supplies to the miners in an attempt

to force them out of the mine to face arrest.

The stand-off culminated in a state-sponsored rescue operation last week in which 246 survivors were retrieved from the deep mine, many of whom were emaciated and weak from hunger.

But police claim the gang leaders were to blame for the deaths, citing reports from some miners who said there was food underground but the kingpins kept it for themselves.

Thousands of people are believed to be involved in illegal gold mining in abandoned industrial mines in South Africa in search of leftover gold. Some of the workers spend months at a time underground.

The lucrative industry is known to be run by Lesotho-based gangs, and police say some of the workers are illegal immigrants recruited from neighbouring countries without knowledge of what they have come to do.

## Zimbabwean acrobats embrace Chinese Spring Festival culture via lion dancing

HARARE

TICHAONA Zimuto, 34-year-old professional acrobat in Zimbabwe, has never thought that he would shoot to stardom among the Chinese community in a Chinese lion dance costume.

About a week ago, a group of young Zimbabwean performers called Blackstar Acrobatics, led by Zimuto, charmed an audience of Chinese expatriates in the southern African country and locals with a colourful and rhythmic performance of the lion dance during a Spring Festival celebration in the capital of Harare.

The audience, especially the Chinese, flocked to take photos with them on and off stage.

"Look! They are Zimbabwean lion dance performers, and they are bringing good luck to my stand," posted a Chinese restaurant owner who sold snacks during the celebration on WeChat, a popular Chinese social media platform.

Originating in ancient China, the Chinese lion dance combines dance, music, and martial arts. During the dance, the performers mimic a lion's movement in lion

costumes. This captivating art form is one of the most important traditions of the Chinese Spring Festival, which falls on Jan. 29 this year.

Zimuto and friends founded the team in 2018, and most of the teammates are now in their 20s. They knew little about the lion dance until late 2024, when a local friend recommended it.

"We used to see it in movies and short video clips online, so it has been a great experience doing this lion dance," said Bruce Gumbo, another performer.

The group of Zimbabwean youth set about practicing from scratch, following various video clips in an open space in western Harare's Dzivarasekwa suburb. With their advanced acrobatic skills, they quickly picked up the dance moves.

Even with limited rehearsal time, the team managed to put smiles on the faces of the audience with their electrifying performance at the Spring Festival event.

"Performing lion dance can be challenging, but it can also give you a sense of accomplishment," Zimuto said. "I like lion dance and want to learn more about it."

In Zimbabwe, lions are not only

a symbol of power and superiority, but also a popular ecotourism attraction in the country's numerous game parks. This makes the lion dance interesting for Zimbabwean audiences.

"When I was wearing the lion dance costume, I just felt excited. I just felt great, something special; I just felt like a lion, a real lion," Zimuto said. "I want to go to China to perform if there is an opportunity or a chance for us."

In December last year, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization inscribed "Spring Festival, social practices of the Chinese people in celebration of the traditional new year" on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

According to Zimuto and his team, participating in cultural events such as the Spring Festival satisfies his curiosity about Chinese culture, and engaging in cultural activities such as the lion dance is an effective way of bridging Chinese and Zimbabwean cultures through arts.

"From now on, you can either call us Blackstar Acrobatics or Lion Dance Troupe," Zimuto said.

## South African trade outlook shows gains - latest survey

JOHANNESBURG

SOUTH Africa's trade outlook shows signs of improvement despite ongoing challenges, with 65 percent of businesses optimistic about the next six months, according to the South African Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SACCI).

SACCI, the largest chamber of commerce in South Africa, released its December 2024 Trade Conditions Survey on Thursday, highlighting that the country's trade outlook is trending positively.

"Trade conditions slowed since August 2024 and deteriorated further, with only 35 percent of respondents reporting positive conditions in December. However,

the outlook for the next six months improved significantly, with 65 percent of respondents in December compared to 54 percent in October 2024," said SACCI CEO Alan Mukoki.

Mukoki explained that while some structural economic issues may be resolved, the current poor economic performance is limiting trade from reaching its full potential. However, 40 percent of respondents indicated that current conditions were better than those in December 2023.

"Sales expectations for the

next six months are high, with 72 percent of participants expecting better sales, up from 58 percent in October 2024," Mukoki added.

Despite challenging conditions, employment in the trade sector remained relatively stable, with 45 percent of respondents employing staff in November and 41 percent in December. Additionally, 57 percent of businesses plan to hire more staff in the next six months.

Mukoki also noted that SACCI expects the South African Reserve Bank to maintain its cautious stance on interest rate adjustments.



Muheza District Medical Officer Dr. Fani Mussa (C), speaks in the district during the launch of a six-day campaign to identify tuberculosis patients yesterday. The campaign began on January 17 and will run until January 24 at Ubwari Health Center. Others are Tuberculosis and HIV Coordinator Ester Minja (L) health official in the district Cecilia Muna (2nd L), and the Public Health Education Coordinator, Shabani Seif (R). Photo: Correspondent Steven William



### REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

**RFP Title:** Feasibility Assessment to Ascertain the Viability of Farmers Service Centers

**RFP Number:** 2025-TCP/01/01

**Date of Solicitation:** January 21, 2025

**Closing Date and Time:** February 3, 2025, 11:30 am (Arusha, Tanzania)

**Questions and Clarifications:** Due by January 29, 2025

#### Introduction to TAHA and Tuhifadhi Chakula Project

TAHA is an apex member based private sector organization that advocates for the growth and competitiveness of the horticulture industry in Tanzania. Since its inception in 2004, TAHA has been an effective voicing platform for producers, traders, exporters and processors of horticultural products mainly; flowers, fruits, vegetables, horticultural seeds, and spices. The Association safeguards the interests of industry stakeholders and ensures industry issues are well represented within national and international agendas. Visit us at <https://www.taha.or.tz/taha/about>

Feed the Future Tanzania (FtF) Tuhifadhi Chakula (Let's Save Food) is a five-years project funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and implemented by the Tanzania Horticulture Association (TAHA). The overarching objective of the Project is to reduce food loss and waste and resultant climate effects for improved food security and livelihoods.

The project has been co-created to improve food handling, storage, and value addition, facilitate market access, inform and promote policy and regulatory frameworks that reduce food loss and waste, and strengthen local organizations' capacity to lead in post-harvest management. Overall, the project will contribute to reducing post-harvest losses from 30-40% for horticulture to 15% and from 13% to 7% for cereals by the end of the project.

TAHA through FtF Tuhifadhi Chakula Project (TCP) has set aside a budget to solicit and engage eligible and qualified consultants to assess the viability of Farmers Service Centers (FSCs) to determine their potential to address farmers' needs effectively while ensuring operational, financial, social sustainability and enhancing proper food handling.

#### A. High Level Scope of Work

This consultancy will be guided by the scope of work below.

- Needs Assessment:** Identify and analyze the specific needs of farmers in the target region(s), including advisory services, and market linkages.
- Market Analysis:** Evaluate the demand for agricultural services among farmers and assess competition or gaps in existing service delivery.
- Location Suitability:** Assess potential sites for FSCs based on accessibility, proximity to farming communities, and logistical considerations.
- Service Portfolio:** Define the range of services to be offered, such as PHM input supply, training, credit, and market facilitation.
- Financial Viability:** Conduct cost-benefit analysis, revenue projection, and funding requirement assessment to ensure economic sustainability.
- Infrastructure and Resource Needs:** Identify the physical and technological infrastructure, equipment, and workforce required for FSC operations.
- Stakeholder Engagement:** Consult with farmers, cooperatives, government agencies, ministry of agriculture, Local government authorities and private sector partners to align goals and gather support.
- Policy and Regulatory Compliance:** Evaluate alignment with government policies, legal requirements, and potential incentives for agricultural service centers.
- Environmental and Social Impact:** Assess potential impacts on the environment and the community, ensuring adherence to sustainability standards.
- Risk Analysis:** Identify potential risks, including financial, operational, and climate-related, and propose mitigation strategies.
- Implementation Roadmap:** Develop an actionable plan outlining steps for pilot testing, scaling, and long-term operations.
- Data Collection and Analysis:** Collect data on raw materials, market requirements and trends, financial metrics, and operational factors.

#### B. Submission Instructions

Interested consultants or firms should download the terms of references through the link: <https://t.ly/J4YwC>

#### C. Clarification on the Advert

- All correspondence related to the RFP shall be made in English.
- Should there be any uncertainty, the Bidder shall seek clarification in writing through e-mail to: [procurement@taha.or.tz](mailto:procurement@taha.or.tz)
- Any clarification sought by the bidder in respect to the RFP shall be titled **CLARIFICATION - (Insert Consultancy Name)**.
- TAHA will only respond to requests for clarification received no later than **January 29, 2025**.
- Copies of TAHA's response will be forwarded to all registered participants (registration form on Appendix 1), including a description of the inquiry, but without identifying its source.

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## Pregnancy depression, and even after delivery, still vexing issues

REMARKS by a top flight psychotherapist with a consultant hospital in the city of Dar es Salaam on the dangers of depression during pregnancy, if left untreated, were a rude reminder on the psyche of many observers. It is the sort of thing that doesn't cross the mind until one meets a case of one or other mother in danger of being abandoned, or left in distress during a pregnancy or just after birth. A mother gets triplets - and the man leaves.

There was in the past month or two a different but related scenario, which could easily come back to pregnancy depression, where a mother died after having twins, the husband severed connection and a grandmother of the babies is left to look after them. There are other instances of depression, where for instance a young woman who lost her husband at the Kariakoo building collapse, was handed 50,000/- to go back to her parents, and has been living by her own relatives' assistance. Later, family members of the deceased husband came looking for the marital mattress as inheritance!

These illustrations are intended to backup what is an otherwise rather dry medical assessment of 'pregnancy depression and post-partum depression' as clinical conditions, which is true enough. Yet these situations are much more of vexing social circumstances than clinical situations per se, as it is not pregnancy which leads to depression but abandonment. When a woman is left alone to take care of a pregnancy, or an infant, and especially if she is still in late teens or early 20s, it can be devastating, unmanageable.

The consultant was making an effort to show the potentially severe

consequences for the mother and the unborn child, at a panel discussion on maternal mental health hosted by the Dodoma-based Mirembe Hospital, the leading national facility in mental health issues. There was reference to family history of mental health issues as genetic background to likelihood of developing such condition, though it appears that it is intimate difficulty and scale of disappointment which matter more. Genetics is in the capacity to take on suffering, the different points of mental breakdown or resilience.

Surprisingly, while plenty is being talked about in relation to gender-based violence, it is somewhat out of place to hear of denial of fatherhood or dereliction of childcare as part of the same. More is heard in relation even to gesture or touch, not to say stare, as big issues for which colloquia or conferences are devoted to examine, even set out penalties as in the 1998 Sex Offences Act that basically fell into disuse. The problem is that when a woman is being abandoned, another woman gains in attention, so there is no possible consensus on the issue; touching is a strictly individual matter.

While the medic was exploring implications of depression in the pre-delivery period and after it, that it can potentially lead to the infant having poor social connections and psychological development issues later in life, there is more than meets the eye. It is the slim chances of the woman or for that matter the just born infant, finding another life partner who can restore mental calm, eclipsing that depression. It can scarcely be resolved by intra-family norms; finding an anchor into self-reliance us a thorny issue to solve.

## Institutions seeking personal presence of president in their annual meets too often

A FEW observers may take note from time to time that an interest group or national organisation of sorts lets out news that President Samia Suluhu Hassan will be officiating at an annual meeting or general conference. When such a notice or information is issued with an actual date pinned on it that could be interpreted as a schedule, but when it is missing it implies that the organisation is satisfied an assurance has been given to that effect. At times events can be postponed for months as the State House is not able to schedule all such applications within a given timeframe, as the president has plenty of office work, routine meetings, upcountry tours or even travel.

Tied up with that often tiresome insistence that the president needs to come in person so that the lobby or interest group is honoured or treasured is now a habitual reference to top national leaders assigned to this or that function as simply representing the president. Yet it is common sense that any responsible official can represent the government, and ipso facto he or she is representing the country, and not quite simply the president. This sort of worry may appear but a quibble but is bigger than perhaps meets the eye.

It is all about accountability, tolerance and simplicity, that in a general meeting of any organisation with a national ambit, this time being the Association of Local Authorities of Tanzania (ALAT), if the president isn't there at the opening ceremony something is

amiss. It implies that if the message they have to provide isn't received by the president and in detail it means it hasn't been received yet. This is all a lack of tolerance for other ears, lack of faith that the message will be delivered, and lack of trust in institutions that issues are resolved in a procedural way, not just by appeal.

Remarks from the ALAT chairman in the briefing were equally interesting, underlining at the opening of an executive committee meeting that the annual meeting marks a key milestone for the association and its members. Before one can fathom what that specifically implies, another remark follows on the importance of unity within ALAT, stressing that no institution can succeed without a strong sense of cohesion. That provides an indication for scheduling for the president's appearance in person, as it requires that level of success to push ALAT demands that unity hinges.

What also this anchoring of unity in the high level presence implies is that the organisation expects, reasonably enough, that most of its demands will be met. This doesn't have to be shouted above the din to be grasped, as back in 2010 the trades union congress publicly asked then President Jakaya Kikwete to raise the minimum wage to 300,000/- so that they assure him of their votes in the polls. He declined the proposal and the reward, telling them that they can keep their votes, and definitely local authorities have plenty of things they wish are assured or glossed over, to offer votes!

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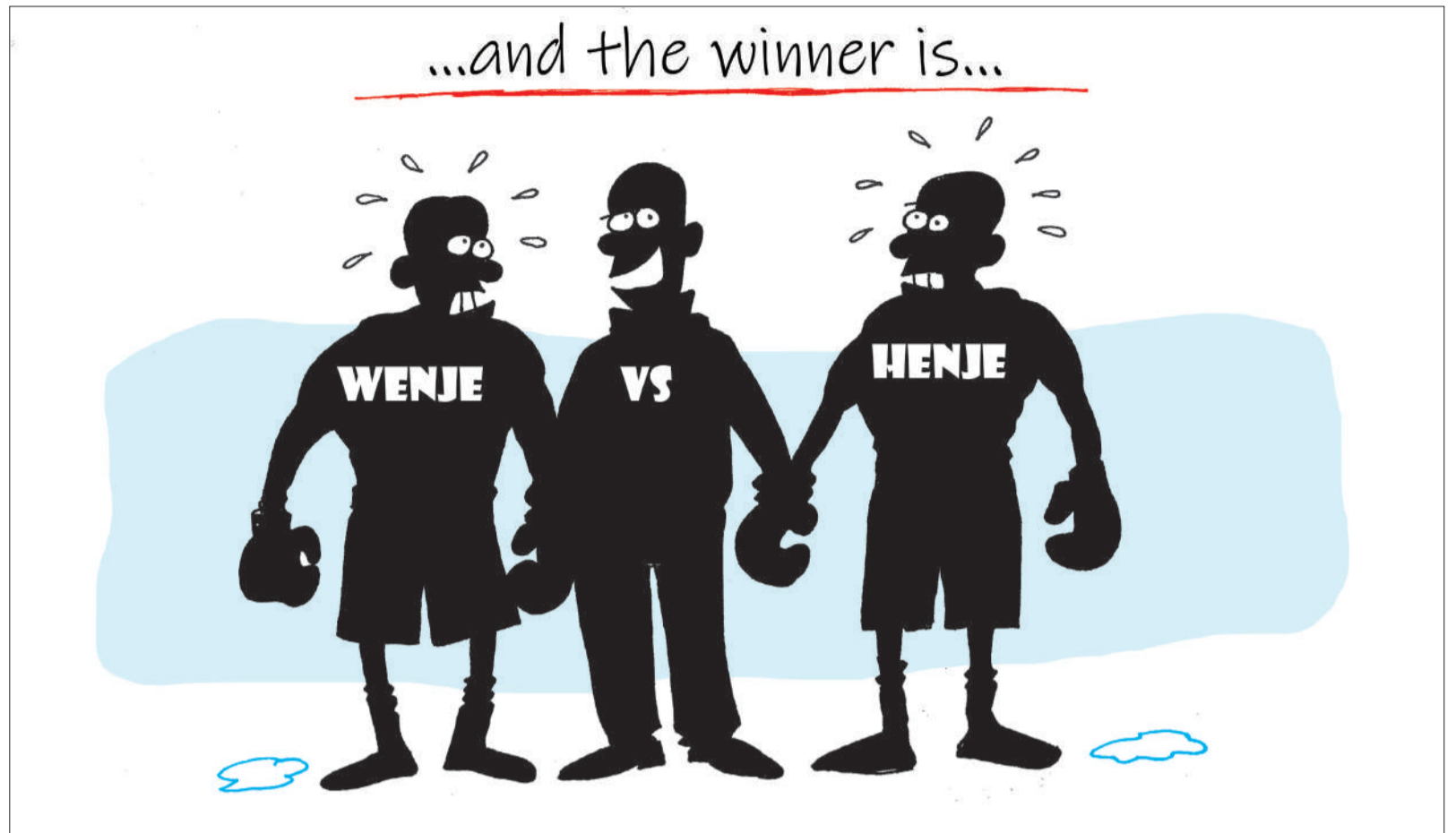
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## Still hopes for a future plastic treaty- but it won't be easy

By Simone Galimberti, Kathmandu

THE last few weeks of 2024 were a disappointment for those who strongly believed that planet Earth is in need of bold actions.

First, there were the frustration stemming from what could be defined at minimum as unconvincing outcomes of both COP 16 on Biodiversity and COP 29 on Climate.

Then all hope was resting on a successful conclusion of the 5th and final round of negotiations held in Busan to reduce plastic pollutions, at the Inter-governmental Negotiating Committee INC-5. (25 November -1 December 2024)

Instead also in this case, at the end, it was a letdown because no consensus had emerged on some of the key elements of the negotiations. Yet, flopping this more gloomy and dark view, I am learning that activists for a strong treaty are not giving up.

They are not ready to concede defeat and, rightly so. The fight must go on.

At least at Busan, the gap between the parties involved in the discussions came at the fore, providing clarity on their own desired outcomes, this time, each showing their cards, without hesitancy. On the one hand, a diverse coalition of more progressive nations.

Within it, both members of the Global South and a part of the Global North worked very hard to press for the best possible outcome, a treaty that would also include targets to reduce plastic production, especially the most nefarious type of it.

On the other hand, governments representing strong petro-chemical establishments had the overt mission to trample and block any attempts of reducing plastic production. Their mantras were conveniently focused on recycling and circularity as the best remedy to reduce plastic pollution.

To have a better assessment of INC-5, I approached the Plastic Pollution Coalition, a US civil society organization advocating an ambitious treaty. The group has also pressurized Washington to take a bolder stance in the fight against plastic pollution.

The resulting conversation with members of the Coalition, carried out via e-mails, was also an opportunity to identify the next goalposts for future negotiations and what scenarios might emerge in the months ahead.

They key messages are that, despite the final outcomes of the negotiations were not what many had hoped for, those, who want bold actions towards reducing plastic

pollution, should not despair.

First of all, my interest was on assessing the level of disillusionment among activists advocating for a strong and ambitious treaty.

"Plastic pollutes throughout its existence, and a strong globally binding treaty is critical for a healthy future for humanity. While we are disappointed with the outcome of INC-5—little to no progress on the treaty text—we remain hopeful and are very inspired by the growing collaboration and efforts of a majority of ambitious countries" said Dianna Cohen, Co-Founder and CEO of the Plastic Pollution Coalition.

The commitment from the members of the Coalition is not diminished but rather it is growing and with it also a sense of optimism.

"The fight is far from over. Talks will resume in 2025, and Plastic Pollution Coalition and allies continue to call on the US government to adopt a stronger position in the treaty negotiations" said Jen Fela, Vice President, Programs and Communications at the Plastic Pollution Coalition.

"The work won't be easy. While necessary to protect the planet and human health, there will likely be even less support for a strong and legally binding global treaty by the incoming US administration".

"The good news is that the talks in Busan demonstrated that more and more countries are willing to be bold and tell the world to get on board with what UN Environment Programme Executive Director Inger Andersen called a 'once-in-a-planet opportunity' for a treaty that will end the plastics age once and for all", Fela further stressed.

But what next? Balancing realism with ambition, what activists should aim in the next negotiations?

"We will keep pushing for a treaty that caps plastic production and prioritizes health, centers frontline and fence-line communities, acknowledges the rights of Indigenous Peoples and rights holders, restricts problematic plastic products and chemicals of concern, and supports non-toxic reuse systems", Cohen, the Co-Founder and CEO of the Coalition told me.

"We are proud to stand with our incredible community of allies and continue our work toward a more just, equitable, regenerative world free of plastic pollution and its toxic impacts".

Indeed, signs of hope are not misplaced".

"Despite Member States being unable to reach a deal at INC-5, there was promising ambition and growing collaboration among the majority of countries, and we're hopeful for the additional round of talks at INC-5.2 next year", she

further added.

"Ultimately, a delay is better than settling for a weak agreement that fails to meaningfully address the problem now, and the silver lining is that in the meantime, we can gain even more support for a strong treaty that cuts plastic pollution".

Moreover, it is important to remember that despite there was no agreement, a new consensus is emerging.

"Despite pressure from a handful of petrostates, the majority of countries are rallying together for a strong treaty, with more than 100 countries backing Panama's proposal to reduce plastic production, 95 supporting legally binding targets to regulate harmful chemicals, and over 120 nations calling for a treaty with robust implementation measures" reads a summary of INC-5 published by the Coalition.

A new coalition got cemented in Busan with countries like Panama and Rwanda working with European nations and others in the so called High Ambition Coalition to End Plastic Pollution.

I also wanted to better understand the key elements that can either make a future treaty at least acceptable for those advocating for plastic reductions and which are the "red lines" for them.

"Signs of a weak Plastics Treaty include voluntary measures to address plastic pollution, failure to commit to a significant global reduction in the total production of plastics, failing to identify and cease production of "chemicals of concern" known to harm frontline communities—a major environmental justice issue, a focus on recycling plastic as a solution, and omitting a full and strong range of actions that address plastic pollution throughout its endless toxic existence—from the extraction of its fossil fuel ingredients through plastic and plastic chemical production, shipping, use, and disposal" explained Erica Cirino, Communication Manager at the Coalition.

"The key is a mandated and significant reduction in plastic and plastic chemical production".

"Signs of a strong treaty include mandatory caps on plastic and plastic chemical production, identification and further regulation of especially hazardous chemicals of concern, and including a full and strong range of actions that work to end plastic pollution throughout its endless toxic existence, starting with the extraction of its fossil fuel ingredients through plastic and plastic chemical production, shipping, use, and disposal" she further said.

"A binding commitment that reduces especially "problematic"

plastic products and chemicals of concern would not be acceptable without a cap in overall production. All plastics pollute, and all plastic production must be reduced", Cirino further explained. The point raised by Cirino is one of the most contentious. "Those of special concern must especially be eliminated and regulated, but taking action to mitigate their harm should only be expedited—and not stand in place of mitigating harm of all plastics". Would it be still acceptable, in case there will be no breakthrough at all in the next round of negotiations, the most progressive nations, say the members of The High Ambition Coalition to End Plastic Pollution, would come up with their own, alternative binding agreement, even if not a fully-fledged global treaty as we are envisioning now?

Could this "extreme" and until now unimaginable 'last' option make sense even if plastic polluters would continue with their "business as usual approach"?

"It's certainly not an ideal solution, as plastic pollution is a global issue perpetuated by a global set of governments; investors; and industrial players, activities and infrastructure. That said, it potentially would be better than nothing if more progressive nations were to devise their own binding agreement, so long as it focused on curbing plastic pollution", Cirino shared.

"The main issue is, many of the biggest plastic producers in the world (namely, the US and China) are absent from the high-ambition talks for now. It's crucial that levels of plastic production drop globally. It would be all for naught if some countries reduce production, only for other nations to increase it".

Meanwhile having some countries going "solo" carries risks and these they are crystal clear.

Indeed, there are palpable concerns in places like Europe on this regard.

There, the plastic lobbying is worried that a decline of plastic production in Europe means that other nations like China are taking advantage by ramping up their production.

We are in a conundrum. At this moment, I can't imagine how the petro states will change their key negotiating positions. "If passed, hopefully an agreement among progressive nations would push other nations to also reduce their plastic production or, such an agreement may not help at all" concluded Cirino.

**Simone Galimberti writes about the SDGs, youth-centered policy-making and a stronger and better United Nations**



By Thomas Lyimo

# Cell phone firms leading banks in enabling financial investment for low-income earners

**A**DVANCES in global transport and communication have enhanced human interactions, creating a conducive environment for business. Globalization has further attracted multinational companies to invest in Tanzania, particularly in the finance and communication sectors, which are vital for societal development.

Consequently, significant investments have been directed towards these sectors, leading to the establishment of numerous multinational banks and cellular phone network companies in the country. These companies benefit Tanzanians by providing employment opportunities to citizens.

Today, both banks and cellular phone companies operate through agents, reducing the need for customers to visit physical branches for most services.

However, mobile phone companies have surpassed banks by offering not just communication services but also innovative financial solutions. Initially, these companies focused on money transfer services.

Over time, they have enabled locals to invest by purchasing shares in compliance with government regulations. Now, they lead the way in facilitating financial investment, particularly for low-income earners.

The decision by cellular phone network companies to empower small-scale income earners to invest their limited resources has broadened the benefits offered by these companies.

While employment opportunities are valuable, not all Tanzanians can benefit due to various factors. Direct employment in banks or cellular phone companies often requires academic qualifications that many lack.

Additionally, the available employment opportunities cannot accommodate the entire working population of 33 million Tanzanians. Therefore, helping individuals grow their limited financial resources is a crucial strategy to boost the country's economy.

Local and foreign companies earn respect when they significantly contribute to individuals' economic well-being as well as the nation. Economic investments are motivated by the win-win philosophy, emphasizing mutual benefit.

Hence, Tanzanians should recognize the financial opportunities created by these companies. Unlike traditional investment avenues like purchasing shares, the new model—where individuals can invest via cellular phones



and earn interest—presents a promising opportunity for many Tanzanians striving for financial success.

Government support for public sensitization campaigns could further encourage participation, aligning with national efforts to alleviate poverty.

When individuals consider investment, additional costs like registration or licensing often deter them. Cellular phone companies eliminate this barrier by enabling users already registered for communication services to access financial services seamlessly.

This dual registration simplifies the process and increases accessibility, making it easier to attract more participants.

Most Tanzanians have limited financial resources and are discouraged by the formalities of traditional banking services. Their primary concern is how to multiply their modest income with minimal bureaucratic hurdles. Extending financial services with direct, tangible

benefits—such as investing through cellular phone companies—offers several advantages:

**Encouraging savings:** Many individuals struggle to save money due to impulsive spending habits. Investing through cellular phone companies can help them achieve their financial goals by enabling disciplined savings, which are essential for raising capital and starting businesses.

**Earning interest:** For individuals who are unable to run or start a business, multiplying income can be challenging. Cellular phone companies provide a solution by offering interest-earning opportunities that are more accessible and affordable than traditional alternatives.

**Contributing to economic growth:** Investments through cellular phone companies contribute to the country's economic expansion by providing loans to businesses and supporting other economic

activities. This creates a cycle of growth that benefits both individuals and the nation.

Facilitating government financial planning: By formalizing financial transactions, cellular phone companies aid government planning. As registered financial service providers, they supply data on transaction volumes, helping the government estimate money circulation and stabilize the economy.

Proper economic planning is vital to avoid issues like inflation or deflation, ensuring a healthy financial system.

Cellular phone companies have bridged the gap for low-income earners, offering an accessible and straightforward investment platform. Their proximity to the population positions them as effective channels for government subsidies and financial assistance, further extending their impact.

The ease of financial investment has dismantled traditional barriers, presenting a unique opportunity for Tanzanians to build their financial base. With cellular phone network companies leading the charge, it's time to embrace these innovative solutions and invest for a brighter economic future.

*The author is a teacher based in Moshi. He can be reached at [lyimo.thomas@yahoo.com](mailto:lyimo.thomas@yahoo.com)*

# UNICEF: Tanzania makes notable progress in birth registration levels

By Telesphor Magobe

**I**N Tanzania, the Law of the Child Act (R.E. 2019) provides, among other things, for the child's right to name and nationality. Section 6(1) provides that: "A child shall have a right to a name, nationality and to know his [or her] biological parents and extended family." Besides this, subsection (3) establishes the responsibility of each parent or guardian to register the birth of his [or her child] to the Registrar-General.

At global level, Article 7(1) of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) states that "The child shall be registered immediately after birth and shall have the right from birth to a name, the right to acquire a nationality and as far as possible, the right to know and be cared for by his or her parents."

Sub-article (2) mandates States Parties to the Convention to ensure the implementation of these rights in accordance with their national laws and their obligations under relevant international instruments.

At regional level, Article 6(2) of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (1990) provides that "Every child shall be registered immediately after birth." Birth registration for all children appears also in the eight priority initiatives - 'An Africa Fit for Children' of Agenda 63: 'The Africa We Want'.

Therefore, birth registration is universally recognised as the child's right and each member country has to ensure a child is duly registered after birth. UNICEF has surveyed some world countries to determine their birth registration trends.

In its report titled "The Right Start in Life: Global levels and trends in birth registration 2024 update" it says in April 2023 the Human Rights Council adopted Resolution A/HRC/RES/52/25 stressing the importance of universal, accessible and non-discriminatory birth registration to prevent children from exclusion and protect them against statelessness.

"The resolution encourages legal and administrative reforms to remove barriers to registration and improve accessibility, including leveraging health and social protection systems to boost registration coverage," the report says. It adds that 53 million infants across the world lack a birth certificate.

This, the report notes, includes 37 million babies, who are unregistered and 16 million, whose births are reported as registered, but who lack proof in form of a birth certificate. This, according to the report, translates into about 3 in 10 infants worldwide have not been registered, and 4 in 10 infants do not possess a birth certificate. Moreover, it says more than 8 in 10 unregistered infants live in sub-Saharan Africa and Southern Asia.

UNICEF attributes low levels of birth registration in some parts of the world to lack of knowledge about the registration process, among other factors. It says in 51 countries with available data, the majority of mothers or caregivers (53 per cent) of unregistered children say they lack knowledge of how to register a child's birth.

"The other half (47 per cent) of mothers/caregivers are aware of the birth registration process, suggesting other barriers to registration."

UNICEF acknowledges that over the last 15 years, there has been a steady increase in birth registration levels glob-



ally. "However, progress has slowed over the last decade, and would need to be 5 times faster than it has been over the last decade for the world to achieve the sustainable development goal (SDG) target of universal birth registration by 2030." Target 16.9 states "By 2030, provide legal identity for all, including birth registration."

In sub-Saharan Africa, the report says the number of unregistered children could surpass 100 million after 2030 if prevalence levels remain as they are today. With sustained progress, the region could reduce the number of unregistered children in 2050 by nearly half. "Accelerated progress could mean 68 million fewer unregistered children than there are today."

According to UNICEF, three policy-driven, evidence-based strategies—interoperability, decentralisation and digitalisation—have advanced birth registration by embedding it within essential public services, making the birth registration process more accessible.

In sub-Saharan Africa, UNICEF surveyed Côte d'Ivoire, Sierra Leone, Rwanda, Tanzania, Burundi, Chad and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) - all of which have recorded progress

in their children's birth registration processes.

In Tanzania in particular, UNICEF says the government's Registration Insolvency Trusteeship Agency (RITA) made birth registration processes more accessible and affordable through a decentralised one-stop process.

"The Simplified Birth Registration System allows parents to register births, get their children immunised, and access nutrition services in a single visit to local health facilities and community ward executive offices."

It adds that the system operates in all 26 regions of Mainland Tanzania, and has increased registration points from 97 in 2013 to 11,376 in 2024. It also says that the simplified system has addressed logistical challenges. Thus, Tanzania is one of the countries, whose children's under 5 birth registration ranges from 61-76 per cent.

UNICEF in another report titled "State of the World's Children 2024" says in the 2050s the rate of survival for newborns - babies up to 28 days old - is projected to increase from 94 per cent of children born in the 2000s to 96 per cent in the 2050s across all three scenarios for the future (accelerated develop-

ment, business-as-usual and delayed development).

It also says the probability of a child's survival to age 5 is projected to increase from 98.5 per cent in the 2000s to 99.5 per cent in the 2050s "in the business-as-usual scenario."

"Ensuring child survival and development requires investment in prenatal care, health, nutrition, early childhood care and education. It means supporting families so [that] they can provide their children with the best start in life," the report says.

This means as children's survival rates increase, so does their birth registration. UNICEF stresses that birth registration is an essential prerequisite for legal identity and the fulfilment of children's rights for it entitles them to lifelong protection, which minimises the violations of their rights and their access to essential services are enabled.

By Blane Bachelor

# Overtourism was the buzzword of 2024. This summer looks to be just as crowded, chaotic

HIGHER visitor fees, bans on cruise ships, new hotel construction and vacation rentals. Widespread protests, including highly publicized incidents in Barcelona when residents sprayed tourists with water pistols.

Throughout 2024, various efforts by tourism authorities – and frustrated locals – to curb the sheer number of visitors in the world's most popular destinations continued to grab headlines. But as the demand for travel shows few signs of slowing, overtourism is poised to remain a critical challenge for visitors, residents and affected destinations, experts say.

"The whole industry needs to be a lot more proactive," Paula Vlamings, chief impact officer of global non-profit Tourism Cares, a pioneer in promoting sustainable tourism. "How do we conduct business? How do we market these destinations, and how do we serve the local communities that are being impacted? All that really needs a sustainable strategy going into the future, because more and more people are coming through the floodgates and forced into these destinations."

While some progress has been made – a growing desire among travellers to seek out lesser-known destinations, for example, and local governments recognizing the need for more robust planning – experts also warn there's a long way to go.

In other words: Don't expect crowds to disappear any time soon, especially in perennially popular European hubs like Paris, Barcelona and London – and especially during the summer high season.

"There are some positive things, perhaps, that have happened because of the crisis, if you want to call it that, last year," says Audrey Scott, of Uncornered Market, a Berlin-based sustainable tourism consulting firm that she co-founded with her husband in 2007. "But I still think 2025, just because of the sheer demand, is going to be a year where many of these popular places are still going to face some of the same challenges for tourism."

Plenty of regulations, still lots of tourists expected. Since the pandemic, travellers have been subjected to an ever-growing array of regulations, fees and other measures aimed at stemming the tourist tidal wave.

European cities including Venice and Amsterdam have introduced higher tourism taxes and banned cruise ships in their historic centers in recent years. Authorities of one overrun town in Japan, whose popularity has skyrocketed among tourists since it fully lifted its pandemic travel restrictions, erected a barrier in spring 2024 to prevent tourists from snapping selfies with Mount Fuji. Short-term rentals have come under fire, too, with tourism hotspots including New York and Barcelona implementing or announcing bans on Airbnb and other vacation rental platforms.

In summer 2024, tens of thousands of locals expressed their growing frustration in anti-tourism rallies and demonstrations across Europe, including Spain, the Netherlands and Greece. Critics contend that higher visitor numbers contribute to increased housing costs, community erosion and crowded public transportation, among other negative consequences.

Even so, the masses just keep coming. In 2024, Europe's tourism numbers reached new heights, with foreign arrivals surpassing 2019 figures, with a year-on-year increase of 12 percent since 2023. Portugal, which also has struggled with overtourism challenges, saw a 26 percent increase in arrivals in 2024 – and its popularity shows no signs of waning, as the country continues to rank high on lists of best countries to visit.

There's little reason to expect the tide to recede by summer 2025, which could shape up to be as chaotic and saturated as the 2024 season. In Spain, tourism was projected to grow by 5 percent in 2024 – that's more than double the rate for the overall economy – with more than 90 million visits expected from overseas tourists.

Meanwhile, milestone year-long events in Amsterdam and Rome – the 750th anniversary and the Catholic Jubilee celebration, respectively – will undoubtedly bring more visitors to these already crowded capitals (a projected 35 million in Rome alone).

Tourism experts also note that tackling overtourism challenges is a complex, long-term process. "This is something that has been developing for years, and you can't change the infrastructure in terms of more transportation, more water resources, more waste management, in the course of a year," Scott says.

From destination marketing to destination management

As tourism organizations struggle with the seemingly paradoxical dilemma of attracting visitors and their money – which underpins many economies – while figuring out how to manage the resulting crowds, many are overhauling their strategies.

Perhaps most notable is the shift from a destination marketing approach – in other words, bringing in more tourists – to one focusing on destination management that balances the needs of the destination and its residents while creating a positive visitor experience.

According to travel industry news site Skift, many destination leaders have changed their acronym from DMO to DMMO to reflect their emerging role as a "destination marketing and management organization."

Similarly, Barcelona – which, along with Amsterdam, Scott describes as a "poster child" for overtourism challenges – changed its tourism tagline in August 2024 from "Visit Barcelona" to "This is Barcelona."

"It's about asking, 'How can our destination support these visitors that are coming, make sure they have a great time, and also do so in a way that's not depleting our resources and it's actually benefiting the place, the local community, not only economically, but also in terms of supporting local culture?'" Scott explains. "And especially with the increased focus on sustainability, this management part is becoming more and more important."

Many destinations also aim to better educate and inspire tourists both before and during their stay in order to create a more positive experience for travelers and residents. Perhaps the most brash recent example: Amsterdam's so-called "stay away" online campaign, which it launched in spring 2023 and aimed directly at "wild,"



Portugal saw a 26% increase in visitors in 2024. The Baixa district of Lisbon is pictured.

hard-partying British males coming to the city in search of sex and drugs.

Copenhagen, meanwhile, opted for a more subtle approach with its CopenPay, a sustainability-inspired program offering tourists perks like discounted museum entry or a free coffee in exchange for taking the metro or traveling via bike.

Launched in the summer of 2024 as a pilot program, CopenPay will return in 2025, with many more businesses expressing interest in participating, according to the website.

Vlamings says this kind of cross-collaboration is a crucial component of effective, balanced strategies that benefit both tourists and destinations. She offers an analogy of a three-legged stool of "community, industry and government" – all of which "really have to start working more closely together, and they have. It's been a very fragmented industry up until now, and I don't think we have the luxury of doing that anymore."

Advance planning and forecasting also are paramount, Scott says. "We work with a lot of emerging destinations, and the question we always ask our clients is, how many tourists are enough? And on top of that, what can you do now in preparation for that increased number?"

Sharing the love

While overtourism undoubtedly means serious challenges for destinations grappling with it firsthand, it can present lucrative opportunities, too. Some lesser-visited cities and regions are increasingly positioning themselves as "destination dupes," a term popularized in 2023 by online booking giant Expedia that refers to alternate destinations easily accessible from popular hubs that offer their own distinct, authentic experience but with far fewer crowds. The concept grew into one of the most talked-about travel trends of 2024.

The Belgian city Antwerp, for example, has been gaining steam as a standalone destination for gastronomy, culture and fashion – with a fraction of the tourists in hotspots like Belgium's Bruges and the Netherlands' Amsterdam, which are both within about a 90-minute train ride.

In October, the city's leading five-star hotel, Botanic Sanctuary Antwerp, housed in a UNESCO-protected 17th-century monastery, welcomed guests for a longer stay than they originally planned – thanks to crowds in Amsterdam, Sven Klockaerts, the hotel's marketing and partnerships manager, said.

Feeling overwhelmed in the Dutch capital, the guests, a US fam-

ily with elementary school-aged children, stayed there only one night and opted to extend their time in Antwerp, changing their reservation at Botanic Sanctuary Antwerp to a full week and taking several day trips from the hotel, Klockaerts says. "They canceled their stay in Amsterdam and came earlier to us," he explains. "We [as a hotel] see it as a huge compliment, and it's also great for the city, that we become this little hidden gem for the US market."

Tourism organizations are looking to disperse travelers, too. Take, for example, Destination Canada's Tourism Corridor Strategy Program: Launched as a pilot in 2023 by the country's national tourism marketing organization, the initiative created "travel corridors" designed to promote areas and regions beyond well-known coastal provinces home to popular cities like Montreal, Québec and Vancouver. In 2024, four additional corridors were added for a total of seven.

Small signs of progress

Although overtourism will continue to present major challenges for the foreseeable future, tourism experts and insiders say they've noticed improvement on several fronts.

Local and regional governments, for one, are dedicating more resources to tackling the problems. Scott says her clients are increasingly seeking strategies that focus as much on residents' quality of life as bringing in tourists. As an example, she points to the mission statement that Uncornered Market helped develop for its client Destination Karakol, a town in eastern Kyrgyzstan: "to create a strong, vibrant tourism industry that makes Karakol a better place to live for local people."

Nearly a decade later, the mission statement is still in place, Scott says: "It's heartening that those values have continued to this day and are still guiding them."

Across the globe, Lake Tahoe, which has been swamped with visitors since the pandemic, is already seeing a positive impact from the comprehensive Lake Tahoe Destination Stewardship Plan that it announced in June 2023, Andy Chapman, president and CEO of Travel North Tahoe Nevada, told CNN Travel in an email.

The 143-page plan, which was signed by "an unprecedented consortium" of tourism, land management and non-profit organizations, has helped spark a collective movement to make Tahoe a more sustainable destination for tourists and residents alike, Chapman said. To combat traffic congestion on the area's two-lane roads, for example, solutions like vanpools and parking programs are "gaining traction," and Chapman also noted "a high demand

among property managers for newly developed behavior guidelines that help short-term renters understand what is required when they rent a home here."

Next up for tourism leaders: implementing and improving methodologies for gathering data to track progress. "Overall, there is a groundswell taking shape," Chapman said. "We see this and know that we are making progress. Now we need to find ways to actually measure it."

At the traveller level. While tourism organizations and local governments are essential in establishing balanced tourism models, experts remind travellers that they, too, play a pivotal role in minimizing the negative consequences of overtourism.

That's not to say they need to, for example, abandon a lifelong dream to see Rome's Colosseum in person. However, tourists who make even small tweaks to how, when and where they travel can still fulfil their wanderlust without compounding the challenges of overtourism.

Visiting in the off-season, for one, often means fewer crowds and lower costs. In industry lingo, this relates to seasonality – in other words, a destination's peak season, off-season and low season, the latter two of which many tourism organizations are nudging more travellers to consider.

"I do think that destinations have learned lessons from last year and are trying to proactively take measures to better disperse travellers, whether it's to less visited places, less visited neighbourhoods within a city, or incentivize them to go in the off-season," Scott says.

Wherever – and whenever – tourists decide to go, and however crowded (or not) the destination may be, Vlamings says "there are opportunities to shift" – whether that means staying at a family-owned bed and breakfast or choosing a small, locally led tour. To that end, Tourism Cares launched in 2023 its Meaningful Travel Map, which helps travelers discover locally led lodging, tours and services in dozens of destinations around the world, including Hawaii, Thailand and Scotland, all newer additions.

"It's not just taking people off the main path – it's also when you're on the main path, being conscious and intentional about where you spend your money and who you interact with," Vlamings explains.

Finally, one of Scott's favourite definitions of sustainable tourism – "tourism that makes the place better for local people to live," she explains – can also serve as a helpful tool throughout every part of your journey. She says, "Whether you're a travel company or destination or even a traveller when making decisions, ask yourself: How does this make things better for the local people who live here?"



People drink beer outside a bar-restaurant while an anti-tourism demonstration passes by in Barcelona in July 2024.

## Pemba's woman salt farmers forge livelihoods amid climate woes

By Special Correspondent, Pemba

Gruelling Craft

As the cool morning breeze sweeps across the Indian Ocean beach in Tanzania's Pemba archipelago, Salma Mahmoud Ali begins her day. With her brightly coloured Kikoi cinched tightly around her waist and a dark blue scarf framing her face, she walks barefoot toward her salt ponds. The humid air hangs, but Ali wades through ankle-deep water with courage.

Armed with a shovel, rake and pick, she methodically drags sparkling crystals under the rising sun. Each stroke pulls salt from the brine—a hard process born of necessity.

"It's a tough job," says Ali, a 31-year-old mother of three. "The heat is too much—no matter how much water you drink, the thirst won't go away. But it's how I feed my family and send my children to school."

For Ali and dozens of female artisanal salt farmers in Pemba, salt production is both their livelihood and their struggle. In this deeply patriarchal Muslim community, the gleaming piles of white salt represent survival—a craft demanding patience, precision and grit.

On Pemba Island, where farms yield 2,000 tons of salt annually, prosperity feels like a mirage. Experts believe output could triple with better tools, but resources remain scarce. Families and cooperatives divide the land, with an average of four owners per plot, leaving wealth unevenly distributed. Farm owners collect the bulk of the earnings, while the workers—who toil under the weight of every harvest—are left to scrape by, their paychecks barely carrying them through the season.

Most families rely on coarse, untreated salt, with only one in four affording iodized varieties. "It's our life," said Halima Hamoud Heri, a laborer, kneeling under the blazing sun. "Hard, but it keeps us going."

Salt farming has always tested endurance, but climate change conspires against the women who depend on it. Rising temperatures accelerate evaporation, often causing salt to crumble before it can be harvested. Unpredictable rainfall—once a seasonal certainty—now arrives without warning, flooding the ponds and washing away weeks of labor back into the sea.

"We used to know when the dry season would start and end," says Khadija Rashid, who has worked the ponds for 10 years. "Now the rain surprises us. Sometimes it's too hot, and the salt dries too fast. Other times, the rain ruins everything before we can collect it."

For families like Ali's, whose alternative livelihoods like fishing and farming have also been battered by erratic weather, salt production is a lifeline. It is work that demands accuracy and perseverance, and it leaves its mark on those who perform it. The sun cracks skin and the salt cuts into hands.

"By the time you carry the seawater, clear the mud, and harvest the salt, you're so tired you can barely stand," says Ali. "But you still have to do it again tomorrow."

### A Fragile Ecosystem

Standing at the edge of a salt farm in Pemba, Batuli Yahya, a field marine scientist from the Institute of Marine Sciences at the University of Dar es Salaam, gestured toward the silvery expanse.

"Salt production depends on delicate environmental conditions," she says. "But those conditions are changing faster than ever due to climate pressures."

The salt ponds, once reliable sources of livelihood for coastal communities, are increasingly at risk as rising sea levels, erratic rainfall, and intensifying heat disrupt their fragile balance.

"Sea level rise causes seawater



Salma Mahmoud Ali walks through her salt ponds.

to spill over into areas where salinity levels are meticulously controlled," Yahya explains. "It's a growing threat that turns productive farms into unusable pools."

The challenges don't end there. Rainfall patterns have become more unpredictable, she said, with sudden downpours diluting the brine or destroying salt pans altogether.

"Too much rain at the wrong time can ruin months of preparation," Yahya notes. "And when it's coupled with longer dry spells, it creates a cycle that's hard to manage."

### Higher temperatures are also exacerbating the situation.

"Evaporation is critical to the salt production process, but extreme heat pushes salinity levels beyond what the ecosystem can handle," Yahya says. "The microorganisms that play a key role in salt crystallization struggle to survive in such conditions."

For many coastal communities, the implications are severe. "This is not just an environmental issue," says Ali.

The challenges extend beyond weather. The reliance on manual labor to carry seawater to the ponds, clear mud, and harvest

salt leaves many women exhausted and prone to injuries. The physical toll is compounded by the economic pressure to produce enough salt to sustain their families.

### Finding Solutions

Amid challenges, Pemba's salt farmers find strength in unity. Through local women's associations, they adopt innovations to protect their work and improve production. One such breakthrough has been the introduction of solar drying covers—transparent sheets that shield ponds from sudden downpours while concentrating heat to speed up evaporation. "Before, if the rain came, we lost everything," says Heri, demonstrating how she spreads the covers over her pond. "Now, we can save our salt, even during the wet season."

The association also promotes knowledge-sharing among the women. Techniques to harden soil, efficiently distribute seawater, and package salt for market are taught collectively.

"Working alone, I would have given up," says Ali. "But together, we find solutions. If one of us learns something new, she teaches the rest of us."

### Empowerment Through Enterprise

The women's collective efforts improve livelihoods. Salt once sold in unmarked bags at local markets now reaches buyers in shops across Tanzania.

"I used to sell just enough to buy rice for the day," says Ali. "Now I sell in bulk, and I've now saved Tanzanian shillings 455,000 (USD 187)."

With the additional income, Ali has been able to feed her family and send children to school. "My daughter tells me she wants to be like me," she says. "But maybe with a little less sunburn."

The success has begun shifting perceptions in their community. Men who once dismissed salt farming as "boring work" now recognize its value, and some even assist with heavier tasks.

"We're not just salt farmers anymore," says Rashid. "We're businessmen."

### Hope Amid Challenges

Despite their progress, barriers remain. Access to financing is limited, and tools like solar covers and pumps are still too expensive for many women. Climate change continues to push them to innovate faster. "We need more support," says Ali. "Better tools, more training, and access to loans."

Still, the women soldier on. Ali drags the day's harvest into piles while pausing to wipe her brow.

"I hope the situation will improve and we will succeed even more," she says.

## Zoom Africa: Youth behind sustainable growth of world's 'youngest' continent

NAIROBI/BEIJING

On a sleek train between Nairobi and Mombasa, young stewards warmly welcome passengers. In the bustling Sino-Uganda Mbale Industrial Park, young workers proudly produce goods stamped with "Made in Africa". In Nigeria, young employees efficiently manage parcel deliveries at a booming e-commerce logistics hub.

Across the continent, young people are not just participants, they are catalysts accelerating Africa's transformation.

According to the African Union (AU) and the African Development Bank, Africa is home to the youngest population in the world, with over 400 million people aged 15 to 35 and its youth population is expected to surpass 830 million by 2050.

This demographic, fueled by the digital revolution and a shift toward green energy, is unlocking new opportunities on the continent.

By collaborating with global partners like China, African nations are tapping into this demographic dividend, empowering their youth to shape a brighter, more innovative future.

### Demographic asset

According to Statista, an international data and business intelligence platform, Africa's total population

exceeded 1.46 billion as of 2023 and is projected to reach about 2.5 billion by 2050.

In "AI and the Future of Work in Africa White Paper," Microsoft estimated that by the end of the 21st century, Africa will be home to almost half of the world's youth population, nearly twice the entire population of Europe.

The strong presence of young workers is invigorating traditional sectors such as agriculture, industry and services, while accelerating the development of emerging sectors like the digital economy, and renewable energy and artificial intelligence (AI). Furthermore, these young generations serve as a major consumption force, contributing to the growing attraction of the African market.

Youth are a crucial driving force for Africa's socio-economic development, said Liu Tiannan, associate professor at the French Department of Foreign Languages Faculty and director of African Studies Institute at the University of International Relations in China.

"The youth bulge in Africa could prove to be the regions' most valuable asset moving forward" as other regions of the world grapple with population aging and labor shortages, said the International Labour Organization in its report titled "Global Employment Trends for Youth 2024."



Machakos University students Peter kariuki(R) and Owen Alikula(L) demonstrate how to set up WiFi and bluetooth networks at the institution's Luban workshop in Machakos, Kenya, May 19, 2021. Xinhua

### Immersion in modern trends

At Yaxare, an herbal tea company based in the Gambian capital Banjul, 33-year-old founder Fatoumata Njie oversees the packaging of her products, which have gained popularity among local consumers largely due to the integration of digital technologies in her business management.

To enhance the quality and yield of local medi-

cal herbs, Njie developed a mobile application called "Happy Farm," helping farmers improve soil quality and boost harvests. Meanwhile, she regularly orders packaging and tea processing equipment from e-commerce platforms to deliver attractive, high-quality products to her customers.

Thanks to digital transformation, the daily lives of many young Africans like Njie are undergoing a significant shift. Across the

continent, e-commerce and digital finance are making impressive strides, while mobile payments are rapidly expanding. As communication infrastructure continues to improve, new job and entrepreneurial opportunities are increasing for Africa's youth.

Meanwhile, more young Africans are increasingly engaging in the energy transition, particularly amid the escalating threat of climate change. They are driving

innovation in energy technologies and supporting the electrification of rural areas, helping steer the continent toward a green economy.

Doreen Orishaba, managing director at BasiGo, a Kenyan company specializing in new-energy vehicles, has spent over a year promoting Chinese electric buses in Rwanda, where fuel imports are expensive and fuel consumption is high due to the mountainous roads. Her efforts have raised awareness among local bus operators about the environmental and economic benefits of these vehicles, prompting their order of more than a hundred electric buses.

"For every bus BasiGo puts on a Rwandan road, we are helping mitigate up to 30 tons of CO2 emissions," she said.

Unlocking youth potential Liu said that for Africa's youth potential to become a true demographic dividend, it is essential to improve the education system, enhance skill development, expand employment opportunities and promote entrepreneurship among young people.

Henok Amanuel Emiru, a 26-year-old Ethiopian student, never imagined he would win the highest distinction among African candidates at the Belt and Road International Skills Competition hosted in southwest China's Chongqing Municipality last June.

This success is the result of training at the Ethiopian

Luban Workshop, designated by the AU Headquarters as a high-quality skill-training center for the entire African continent. Through the shared expertise of his instructors, Emiru gained a mastery of techniques at the vocational training workshop.

The Luban Workshop is just a microcosm of Sino-African cooperation in youth education. Over the next three years, China will continue implementing Future of Africa, a project for China-Africa cooperation on vocational education, building schools of engineering technology with African countries, establishing or upgrading 10 Luban Workshops and 20 schools, and providing training opportunities with programs for youth development.

African countries are also making efforts to empower youth through tailored development programs, such as Morocco's government plan to invest 14 billion Moroccan dirhams (1.4 billion U.S. dollars) in youth employment, Senegal's National Youth Development Program 2025-2029, and Zambia's digital and green skills training projects until 2027.

"Together, we can build a continent where young people are at the forefront of innovation, governance and sustainable development," said Chido Mpemba, the AU youth envoy.

# New UN report: Africa's economy to improve in 2025 despite global stagnation, growing debt

By Special Correspondent

**A**FRICA is poised for modest economic growth in 2025, with recovery driven by major economies such as Nigeria, Egypt, and South Africa, according to the World Economic Situation and Prospects 2025 report released by the United Nations.

Despite these gains, the continent faces significant challenges, including high inflation, mounting debt, and climate-related vulnerabilities.

The global economy is expected to grow by just 2.8 percent in 2025, stagnation from the 2024 rate and notably below the pre-pandemic average of 3.2 per cent.

The report, produced by the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), stresses that "The world economy has remained resilient through 2024, avoiding a broad-based economic contraction despite years of multiple, mutually reinforcing shocks."

However, persistent structural issues such as weak investment and sluggish productivity continue to constrain global recovery.

In his foreword, the United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres points out that the world continues to face "challenges that slow the rate of economic progress and the pursuit of better lives for all."

## Africa's economic outlook

Africa's economic growth is forecast to improve from 3.4 per cent in 2024 to 3.7 per cent in 2025 and further to 4.0 per cent in 2026. This positive trajectory reflects recoveries in key economies and ongoing efforts toward regional integration under the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).

"Economic growth in Africa is projected to strengthen... driven by recovery in the region's largest economies," the report states.

East Africa continues to show robust growth, while other regions face distinct challenges.

Central Africa, for instance, is constrained by stagnating oil production and political instability, while high debt burdens and youth unemployment remain pressing concerns across the continent.

## Challenges

Inflation is a major obstacle for African economies, with several countries experiencing double-digit rates. The report notes, "Food inflation remains particularly persistent in developing economies, with about half of them experiencing rates above 5.0 per cent in 2024," a trend that exacerbates food insecurity in vulnerable populations.

Debt servicing is also a significant burden. The report reveals that in 2024, interest payments consumed an average of 27 per cent of govern-



A factory in Nigeria

ment revenues in Africa, up from 19 per cent in 2019. This limits fiscal space for essential investments in health, education, and infrastructure.

While Africa's growth outlook is positive, addressing structural challenges is critical for sustaining momentum.

The report highlights the importance of targeted investments, inclusive governance, and enhanced regional collaboration to achieve long-term development goals.

## Opportunities in critical minerals

Africa's abundant reserves of critical minerals, including cobalt and lithium, present opportunities for

economic growth.

The report underscores that "Countries with rich critical mineral reserves have immense potential to leverage these resources to stimulate economic growth and promote sustainable development."

However, challenges such as environmental degradation, governance issues, and unequal benefit distribution must be addressed to realize these opportunities fully.

The report emphasizes the need for sustainable practices, stating, "Robust tax systems can be put in place to capture public revenues. Countries can implement fiscal rules and establish stabilization funds to manage and save excess revenues from critical

minerals sectors during boom periods."

Li Junhua, the Under-Secretary-General DESA, maintains that "Critical minerals have immense potential to accelerate sustainable development, but only if managed responsibly."

Call for international cooperation

The WESP 2025 report calls for bold international cooperation to address Africa's development challenges. It urges reforms in the global financial architecture to provide greater support for developing countries.

Additionally, investments in renewable energy and sustainable infrastructure are highlighted as critical for fostering resilience and growth.

"The pursuit of net-zero emissions by 2050 will require the widespread deployment of clean energy technologies alongside universal energy access but will also entail economic, social, and environmental challenges," the report warns.

"Countries cannot ignore these perils. In our interconnected economy, shocks on one side of the world push up prices on the other. Every country is affected and must be part of the solution—building on progress made," warns Guterres, adding: "In 2025, countries must deliver on those promises, particularly at the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development."

Four individuals received prison sentences reflecting the gravity of their offenses.

However, gaps in responsiveness from service providers and authorities persist, undermining efforts to combat violence. In October 2022, a child rape case in Missenyi District faced inadequate follow-up, with an officer dismissively asking, "What interest do you have in that matter?—a stark reminder of the systemic issues needing urgent attention."

Encouragingly, stakeholder collaboration led to a breakthrough on March 15, 2023, when the Missenyi District Court sentenced a perpetrator to 30 years in prison.

This underscores the potential for justice when cases are properly reported and pursued but also highlights the need for systemic improvements in accountability and responsiveness.

To further promote child protection awareness, the National Multisectoral Early Childhood Development Programme (NM-ECDP) hosted a live radio program on Radio Shuz FM in Bukoba in June 2024. The program engaged the community, addressed child safety issues, and provided a platform for public feedback.

Dr Gwajima's appeal underscores the collective responsibility to protect vulnerable children and the power of communication in fostering a safer environment. Her message is a rallying cry for community involvement and proactive information sharing to safeguard the well-being of all children.

## Child protection: Public encouraged to report acts of violence by calling emergency services

By Correspondent Mutayoba Arbogast

**ONE** of the major reasons that contributes to continued acts of violence against children—particularly those of a young age, is lack of awareness among parents, guardians and communities about where to seek immediate help to report such incidents.

In August last year, the National Assembly endorsed the Child Protection Law Amendments of 2024 aiming to address gaps identified during the implementation of certain provisions, thus strengthen the protection and welfare of children.

The bill proposed revisions to three laws, the Cybercrimes Act (Chapter 443), the Law of the Child Act (Chapter 13), and the Legal Aid Act (Chapter 21).

Legislators commended the government for recognizing the importance of amending child protection laws to safeguard children from the evolving challenges of science, technology, and acts of violence and abuse.

Anastazi Kashemele (not her real name), a 70-year-old resident of a village in Missenyi District, Kagera Region, lives with her granddaughter—a Standard Four pupil orphaned by her parents' passing.

Kashemele once noticed something unusual about her granddaughter, observing her closely from head to toe. Concerned, she gently sits her down and asks why she has been walking with difficulty for some days.

At first, the child opted to remain silent but she suddenly started crying. Kashemele calms her down and encourages her to speak. Finally, the child revealed that one day, 'Mzee Makwito' (not his real name) pulled her into his room and did something bad to her.

Heartbroken, her grandmother realized that her neighbour is the perpetrator. She started seeking help from relatives, only to be advised against pursuing the matter, as it would consume time and money.

Kashemele's story highlights the barriers hindering effective reporting of child violence in many communities. Despite her concern, the lack of accessible information on reporting avenues fosters a culture of silence, allowing perpetrators to evade accountability.

Many parents, guardians, and community members remain unaware of their rights or the resources available to address violence. Educational initiatives



Dr Dorothy Gwajima, Minister for Social Development, Gender, Women and Special Groups

could inform families about proper reporting channels.

Additionally, fear of retaliation or social ostracization of ten deters individuals, especially in tight-knit communities where perpetrators may hold respected positions.

In December 2024, Dr Dorothy Gwajima, Minister for Social Development, Gender, Women, and Special Groups, emphasized the urgent need for community action against child violence.

The minister wrote on her X page (formerly Twitter), urging parents and guardians to avoid endangering children's safety by leaving them unsupervised or locked indoors while attending to other activities.

Dr Gwajima encouraged citizens to report any signs of violence or potential harm to children. She underscored the importance of early intervention to prevent further abuse and protect lives, promoting a free 24/7 confidential hotline (116) and the Ministry's contact numbers, including her direct line (+255 765 345 777).

She shared a case from Igunya, Tabora Region, where a concerned citizen reported a mother neglecting her six-year-old child due to alcohol addiction and marital strife.

The child, often locked indoors alone, faced significant safety risks. Thanks to timely intervention, authorities placed the child with a relative while providing psychological support to the mother.

Dr Gwajima praised the role of digital platforms in combating child abuse, expressing gratitude for citizens' proactive efforts. She reiterated her Ministry's commitment to leveraging networks for rapid information dissemination and intervention.

Kagera Region continues to grapple with challenges in protecting children and addressing violent crimes against them. Kagera Regional Police Commander Blasius Chantanda reported that 14 suspects faced penalties in 2024 for crimes against children and students, ranging from fines to imprisonment.

# RADIO One

## RATIBA YA VIPINDI

### JUMATATU - JUMAPILI

| MONDAY<br>TIME PROGRAMME   | TUESDAY<br>TIME PROGRAMME  | WEDNESDAY<br>TIME PROGRAMME  | THURSDAY<br>TIME PROGRAMME   | FRIDAY<br>TIME PROGRAMME   | SATURDAY<br>TIME PROGRAMME   | SUNDAY<br>TIME PROGRAMME   |
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**Tembelea mitandao ya kijamii ya Radio One**



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## IMF forecasts 3.3pc global economic growth in 2025/26

By Guardian Reporter

THE International Monetary Fund (IMF) is projecting the global economic growth at 3.3 percent in both 2025 and 2026, below the historical (2000-19) average of 3.7 percent and broadly unchanged from October.

In its world economic outlook published yesterday, the Bretton institute says among advanced economies, growth forecast revisions go in different directions.

In the United States, underlying demand remains robust, reflecting strong wealth effects, a less restrictive monetary policy stance, and supportive financial conditions.

Growth is projected to be at 2.7 percent in 2025, being 0.5 percentage points higher than the October forecast, in part reflecting carryover from 2024 as well as robust labor markets and accelerating investment, among other signs of strength.

Growth is expected to taper to potential in 2026.

In the euro area, growth is expected to pick up but at a more gradual pace than anticipated in October, with geopolitical tensions continuing to weigh on sentiment.

Weaker-than-expected momentum at the end of 2024, especially in manufacturing, and heightened political and policy uncertainty explain a downward revision of 0.2 percentage point to 1.0 percent in 2025.

In 2026, growth is set to rise to 1.4 percent, helped by stronger domestic demand, as financial conditions loosen, confidence improves, and uncertainty recedes somewhat.

Growth in sub-Saharan Africa is expected to pick up in 2025, while it is forecast to slow down in emerging and developing Europe.

In other advanced economies, two offsetting forces keep growth forecasts relatively stable.

On the one hand, recovering real incomes are expected to support the cyclical recovery in consumption.

On the other hand, trade headwinds—including the sharp uptick in trade policy uncertainty—are expected to keep investment subdued. In emerging market and developing economies, growth performance in 2025 and 2026 is expected to broadly match that in 2024.

With respect to the projection in October, growth in 2025 for China is marginally revised upward by 0.1 percentage point to 4.6 percent.

This revision reflects carryover from 2024 and the fiscal package announced in November largely offsetting the negative effect on investment from heightened trade policy uncertainty and property market drag.

In 2026, growth is projected mostly to remain stable at 4.5 percent, as the effects of trade policy uncertainty dissipate and the retirement age increase slows down the decline in the labor supply.

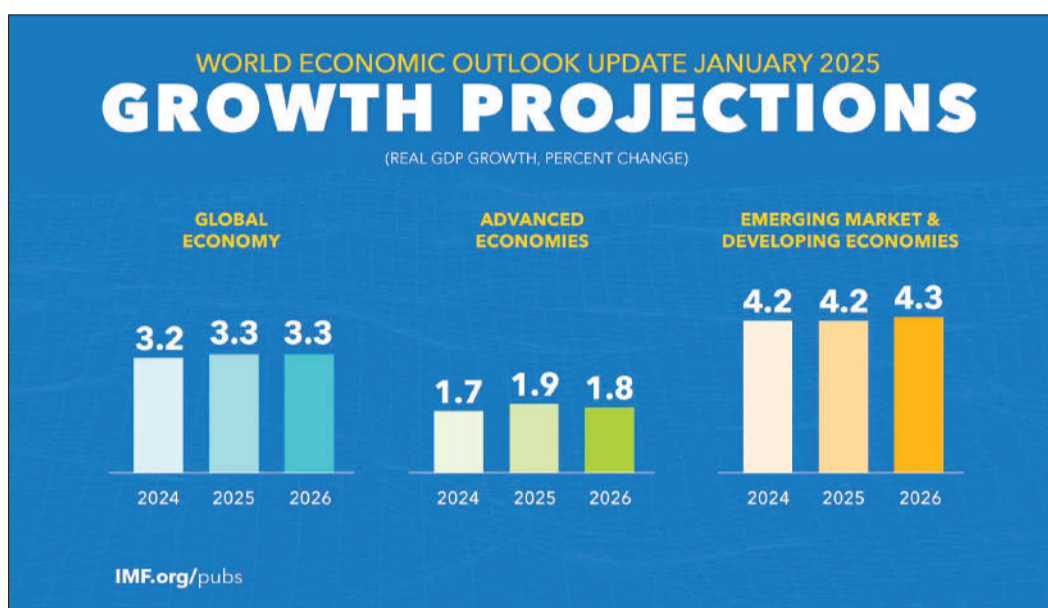
In India, growth is projected to be solid at 6.5 percent in 2025 and 2026, as projected in October and in line with potential.

In the Middle East and Central Asia, growth is projected to pick up, but less than expected in October. This mainly reflects a 1.3 percentage point downward revision to 2025 growth in Saudi Arabia, mostly driven by the extension of OPEC+ production cuts.

In Latin America and the Caribbean, overall growth is projected to accelerate slightly in 2025 to 2.5 percent, despite an expected slowdown in the largest economies of the region.

**Trade**  
World trade volume estimates are revised downward slightly for 2025 and 2026.

The revision owes to the sharp increase in



trade policy uncertainty, which is likely to hurt investment disproportionately among trade-intensive firms.

That said, in the baseline, the impact of heightened uncertainty is expected to be transitory.

Furthermore, the front-loading of some trade flows in view of elevated trade policy uncertainty, and in anticipation of tighter trade restrictions, provides some offset in the near term.

Progress on disinflation is expected to continue. Deviations from the October 2024 WEO forecasts are minimal. The gradual cooling of labor markets is expected to keep demand pressures at bay.

Combined with the expected decline in energy prices, headline inflation is projected to continue its descent toward central bank targets.

**Inflation**

The outlook says inflation is projected to be close to, but above, the 2 percent target in 2025 in the United States, whereas inflationary dynamics are expected to be more subdued in the euro area.

Low inflation is projected to persist in China. Consequently, the gap between anticipated policy rates in the United States and other countries becomes wider.

In the medium term, the balance of risks to the outlook is tilted to the downside, with global growth poised to be lower than its 2025-26 average and five-year-ahead forecasts at about 3 percent.

Near-term risks, in contrast, could reinforce divergences across countries: they are tilted to the upside in the United States, whereas downside risks prevail in most other economies amid elevated policy uncertainty and headwinds from ongoing adjustments (in particular, energy in Europe and real estate in China).

An intensification of protectionist policies, for instance, in the form of a new wave of tariffs, could exacerbate trade tensions, lower investment, reduce market efficiency, distort trade flows, and again disrupt supply chains.

Growth could suffer in both the near and medium term, but at varying degrees across economies.

Looser fiscal policy in the United States, driven by new expansionary measures such as tax cuts, could boost economic activity in the near term, with small positive spillovers onto global growth.

Yet in the longer run, this may require a larger fiscal policy adjustment that could become disruptive to

markets and the economy, by potentially weakening the role of US Treasuries as the global safe asset, among other things.

Furthermore, higher borrowing to fund looser fiscal policy could increase demand for capital globally, leading to an increase in interest rates and possibly depressing economic activity elsewhere.

Confidence and positive sentiment in the United States, partly driven by deregulation, could boost both the demand and the supply side of the economy.

While relaxation of unduly tight regulations and reduced red tape for businesses may spur near-term US growth through higher investment, dollar appreciation could fuel risks of capital outflows from emerging market and developing economies and drive risk premiums upward.

Moreover, an excessive rollback of regulations designed to put limits on risk-taking and debt accumulation may generate boom-bust dynamics for the United States in the longer term, with repercussions for the rest of the world.

Downside risks to macro-financial stability may be amplified if compounded by a weaker fiscal outlook or stalled progress on structural reforms.

Other supply-side shocks, such as labor force disruptions driven by reductions in migration flows to the United States, may permanently reduce potential output and raise inflation during the adjustment period.

A near-term boost for the US economy emanating from these factors would further underscore the divergent growth patterns across economies.

If the adverse effects of tariffs and reduction in the labor force dominate, global activity as well as activity in the United States might be affected negatively in the medium term.

## Farmers urged to secure their crops to overcome future uncertainties

By Guardian Correspondent

FARMERS across the country have been encouraged to take advantage of various insurance products that offer protection for both their crops and financial plans.

Nelson Bwihula, Chief Executive Officer of Newton Insurance, emphasized the significant advantages of agro-insurance, including financial protection, risk management, improved access to credit, business sustainability, and increased investment in agriculture.

Bwihula made the remarks in Dar es Salaam yesterday during an event to announce the company's rebranding from UAP Insurance to Newton Insurance. The new products have been designed to provide relief to farmers and protect them from the uncertainty of natural disasters that can devastate crop production.

"Farmers often face many uncertainties, particularly with natural disasters," said Bwihula. "At Newton Insurance, we have developed coverage to eliminate these uncertainties and ensure farmers are compensated in the event of a tragedy."

The insurance covers a range of risks,

including drought, hail, floods, frost, windstorms, pests and diseases.

Bwihula also assured farmers that claims would be processed promptly in line with regulations set by the Tanzania Insurance Regulatory Authority (TIRA).

He encouraged farmers to form groups to facilitate easier access to the coverage.

"It's more efficient to work with farmer unions rather than dealing with individuals. We encourage farmers to use their unions to access this essential cover, and our teams are ready to guide them," Bwihula said.

Frank Kajo, Bancassurance Manager, highlighted the company's ongoing commitment to expanding its services and raising awareness, particularly amidst the ongoing drought challenges affecting many farmers in the country.

"Farmers need to insure their crops to protect against losses in the event of a disaster," said Kajo. "We have a dedicated team of experts who will assess crop damage and ensure timely compensation."

In 2024 alone, Newton Insurance reached over 4,000 farmers with insurance services, with 1,200 farmers receiving compensation after disasters. The company continues to expand its outreach and focus on educating the public about the importance of timely insurance coverage.

Arthur Oginga, CEO of Old Mutual Group, further emphasized Newton Insurance's mission to bring affordable, high-quality insurance services to Tanzanians, particularly those in remote areas.

Oginga also expressed gratitude to the company's agents and customers for their continued support as Newton Insurance strives to reach even more communities in the coming years.



## Women ex-prisoners advised to diversify investments

By Correspondent Beatrice Philemon

WOMEN ex-prisoners including other people across the country have been advised to invest in various sectors to avoid having a single source of income.

Lucas Mwimo, Tanzania Prisoners Hope Foundation (TPHF)'s executive director said this recently when speaking to 29 women ex-prisoners attending a one-day training session aimed at forming a platform for women who have been released from Segerea and Ukonga prisons.

The event took place at the Nendiwe Feminist Wellness and Coaching Centre with funding from the Women Fund Tanzania Trust (WFTT).

"You can invest in short-term Treasury bills and long-term treasury bonds ranging from 5-25 years, that offer investors an interest of 15.95 percent," he says

Additionally, they can purchase shares in various companies currently listed on the Dar es Salaam Stock Exchange (DSE) through brokers to raise their capital.

They can also invest in the Unit Trust of Tanzania (UTT-liquidity) which offers returns ranging from 11-12 percent, and INUKA that was established two months ago and involves other East African countries.

He advised them to establish small financial institutions for lending (not those with high-interest rates, commonly referred to as 'Kausha Damu' to allow more people with access to loans services, boost their businesses and transform their livelihoods.

Other areas where women ex-prisoners including other people can invest in small and medium businesses include hardware stores, super markets, pharmacies, retail shops, building rental houses, hotels and buying and selling plots, depending on the research and expertise of the person involved in the business.

Additionally, they can also invest in Village Community Banks (VICOBAs) and Savings and Credit Co-operative Societies (SACCOs). If you have a profitable business, you can borrow to develop your business or project because their interest rates are very low. He also advised them to reject fear when they see that their economy or businesses are not performing well.

During the event, women ex-prisoners had the opportunity to learn various principles of micro-economics that will help them achieve a strong economy.

Currently, the economy of many people is poor due to a lack of sufficient knowledge about the micro-economic principles that could help them succeed in their daily activities.

Additionally, participants received training on financial and economic principles designed to help them succeed and thrive in both their businesses and personal lives.

"If you want to succeed in personal economy, you must follow these principles, change your perspective and your idea about the concept of success," he says

Mwimo says, your success or failure in life depends on the ideas and decisions you make every day, because everything begins with your ideas or thoughts.

He lauded WFTT for their financial support that helps women ex-prisoners receive training and establish a new platform dubbed: Tanzania Women ex-prisoners Platform. Its aim is to help them speak with one voice, advocating for their needs from the government, policymakers and the community

He also advises participants to have a clear vision of the life they want to live or achieve in the future and to work hard with quality and integrity.

Money and wealth are obtained by working and involving in legitimate economic activities, he says

"Do your job or business with quality, let's not do work just for the sake of doing it," he advises them

Additionally, the things that will help them obtain customers and approval are the quality of the products they produce.

"Also the quality of the work you do will help you get a promotion at work," he says.

Mwimo says, business is one of the key drivers that uplift our economy, especially when it is conducted according to business and economic principles.

He named some of the key principles for succeeding in business as: Before starting a business, conduct research to determine if the business will be profitable, ensure you have a stable market or permanent customers who will consistently purchase your products or services.

Mwimo advised participants to ensure their business is located in a convenient area. "For retail businesses, it's crucial to choose a location with high foot traffic," he stated.

Additionally, make business decisions based on the needs and preferences of your customers.

"If customers are asking for a product you don't have, make an effort to find it, and maintain financial discipline for the business or services you provide," he says

Factor that causes many people to fail in achieving their economic goals and life dreams is the mismanagement of money.

Mary Rusimbi, Co-Founder of the Women Fund Tanzania Trust (WFTT) encourages women ex-prisoners to collaborate with educational institutions and other networks that advocate for women's rights in the implementation of their activities.

# Embracing data privacy

ON April 2024 President Joe Biden of the United States signed an act which is now a law in the US, known as, "Protecting Americans from Foreign Adversary Controlled Applications Act."

I found this to be very interesting as it covers my previous topics on data privacy as a key agenda for businesses in 2025.

TikTok was founded by Zhang Yiming. He is also the founder of ByteDance, the parent company of TikTok. Zhang Yiming started ByteDance in 2012, and TikTok was officially launched in September 2016.

Zhang's vision was to use artificial intelligence (AI) to revolutionize how users engage with content, leading to the creation of TikTok. His innovative approach has made TikTok one of the most popular social media platforms globally.

Well, the act does not limit or disallow foreign ownership but focuses on "Adversaries" instead, as a move to control data privacy in America.

Data breaches have the potential to impact hundreds of millions or even billions of people simultaneously in today's data-driven world.

Attackers are taking advantage of the data dependencies of everyday life, which has led to an increase in data breaches as the amount of data moving has increased due to digital transformation.

Future attacks' potential size is up in the air, but as the list of the largest data breaches of the twenty-first century shows, they have already grown to enormous proportions.

According to CSO online that takes a look at some of the biggest data breaches. One, it was discovered in April 2019 that two Facebook app datasets had been made publicly available online.

Phone numbers, account names, and Facebook IDs were among the details pertaining to over 530 million Facebook users from approximately 106 countries.

But in April 2021, two years later, the

## DIGITAL MARKETING Alley Mmatya



data was made publicly available without charge in the black market.

Before that there was another data breach on Facebook, one year prior to the US elections in 2015 by Cambridge Analytica. A total of about 50 million Facebook profiles that were hacked.

Two, Sina Weibo is one of the biggest social media sites in China, with more than 600 million users.

The company revealed in March 2020 that 538 million Weibo users' personal information, including real names, site usernames, gender, location, and phone numbers, had been compromised by an attacker who had gained access to a portion of its database. The database was reportedly then sold on the dark web by the attacker. Three, in June 2021, 700 million users' personal information was exposed on a dark web forum from the professional networking giant LinkedIn, affecting over 90 percent of its user base.

After that, the hackers bragged that they were offering the entire 700 million customer database for sale.

LinkedIn maintained that the incident was a breach of its terms of service rather than a data breach and that no private or sensitive information was revealed.

To demonstrate the opposite, the hackers shared a sample of their scraped data, which included phone numbers, email addresses, genders, geolocation data, and other social media information.

Lastly, according to Cyber Daily Australia, On July 27, 2022, the social media giant, formerly known as Twitter, announced a significant hack in which information containing phone numbers

and email addresses from a variety of accounts, including those belonging to celebrities and ordinary people, was taken.

Utilizing Twitter's discoverability setting "Let others find you by phone number." Every account with a complete phone number for the entire French country code was impacted.

After speaking with several individuals impacted, Habitu8 founder Loder stated that he had verified that the data in the purported breach, was accurate.

Data breaches have indeed become a major concern in our digital age. These incidents highlight the importance of robust data protection measures and the need for continuous vigilance in the face of ever evolving cyber threats within businesses.

What you can also deduce is that attackers sell your information on the dark web/black market so that other organizations/people can use them to direct their marketing towards you, extract money from your accounts, expose your private life to the public etc.

One needs to be careful, aware and vigilant on what information you can put on your mobile devices, as well as with whom and the robust standards and practices on data privacy that you trust any institution with.

To be continued.

**Alley Mmatya (pictured) is Advertising, Marketing, Branding and Customer Experience Expert based in Dar es Salaam**

# Nigeria's \$20bn refinery disrupts European markets

By Alex Kimani

TWO months ago, Nigeria's beleaguered energy sector witnessed a very significant event: the Dangote Oil Refinery began producing gasoline and selling it domestically to Nigeria's state oil firm, Nigerian National Petroleum Company (NNPC), marking the first time in decades Africa's largest oil producer is refining its own crude.

The state-of-the-art \$20.5 billion refinery was launched in January 2024, but only began producing gasoline in September, expected to reach full operations in November.

The giant refinery has a capacity to process 650,000 barrels of crude per day, considerably bigger than any refinery in Europe and more than enough for Nigeria's needs.

To sweeten the deal further, the facility is buying crude and selling refined fuels in Nigeria in the local currency, saving the country's much-needed foreign

exchange, especially the US dollar.

But now Africa's largest refinery is beginning to disrupt Europe's Premium Motor Spirit (petrol) markets. According to OPEC, the Dangote refinery has cut down Nigeria's imports of petroleum products from Europe.

According to experts, the Dangote refinery might end the decades-long gasoline trade from Europe to Africa, valued at \$17 billion per year.

"The ongoing operational ramp-up efforts at Nigeria's new Dangote refinery and its gasoline (petrol) exports to the international market will likely weigh further on the European gasoline market," the report states.

"Continued gasoline production in Nigeria, a country that has relied heavily on imports to meet its domestic fuel needs in the past, will most likely continue to free up gasoline volumes in international markets which will call for new destinations and flow adjustments for the extra volumes going forward."

US Energy Information Administration (EIA) forecasts that Brent crude oil prices will average \$74 per barrel in 2025, an 8 percent decrease from 2024, and further decline to \$66 per barrel in 2026.

This anticipated decrease is attributed to global oil production growth outpacing demand. US crude oil production is expected to reach a record 13.55 million barrels per day in 2025.



# Know currencies that will benefit from dollar erosion

By Gary Smith



ACCORDING to some forecasts, the dollar will surrender 10 percent of its share of global foreign exchange reserves over the next 10 years. If that happens, 10 different currencies will benefit.

The latest Currency Composition of Official Foreign Exchange Reserve data from the International Monetary Fund show that the dollar's share of global foreign exchange reserves fell to 57.4 percent in Q3 2024 (Figure 1). This is the smallest share since 1994 and represents a decline of almost nine percentage points during the last decade.

The key driver of this move has been a reaction to the increased weaponisation of the dollar. This has always been an aspect of its 'exorbitant privilege' but has grown in importance since the 11 September 2001 terror attacks and reached a peak in 2022 after the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

Weaponisation will also be a factor behind the next 10 percent decline in the dollar share. The US is in the enviable position of being able to use financial assets to achieve foreign policy, or sometimes military objectives, without deploying soldiers. Hence, national security goals can be achieved relatively cheaply.

However, as early as 2017, then US Treasury Secretary Jack Lew acknowledged that the use of this weapon will push some players to avoid the dollar in the future, thereby reducing the extent of dollar dominance.

Academics have been successful in forecasting the gradual decline in dollar dominance since the year 2000 but have been hopeless at forecasting which currencies would benefit. Many have been in search of a single winner, when the reality has been that a wide array of currencies have benefitted. This pattern will continue.

The top 10 countdown

It is the small currencies that have taken up most of the slack in the last decade. Some of these, such as the Japanese yen, UK sterling, Australian dollar, Canadian dollar and Swiss franc, are named in the IMF COFER report. All five of them will grow as the US dollar's share declines.

The category that may continue to do best is described in the IMF data as 'other'. These are non-traditional currencies that are currently not specifically measured in the data.

A non-traditional currency that will grow is the South Korean won. South Korea is the 12th largest nation in the world in terms of gross domestic product. Geopolitically, it is an important cog in the US association of like-minded nations.

In May 2024 it was announced that South Korea was in talks to join the military security partnership between the US, UK and Australia known as AUKUS. Security agreements as well as trade flows (and the financial flows that mirror these) underpin the argument for the won.

A new name on the list for the next decade is the Indian rupee. India is the fifth biggest economy and most populous nation on earth. Size counts in this debate, as we saw a decade ago with the initial adoption and enthusiasm for China's renminbi.

India is 'non-aligned', and keen to have cordial relations with a wide list of nations. It is in an unusual position.

On one hand, it is part of the Quad security arrangement (with the US, Japan and Australia). On the other hand, India is a key member of the Brics group and since 2022 has had a close oil trading relationship with Russia. However, it also has land border tensions with fellow Brics member China.

Comparisons to the internationalisation of the renminbi are instructive. The Chinese currency began to be held as a reserve currency by central banks from 2010 onwards despite a lack of currency convertibility.

While not a substitute for deep, liquid and open capital markets, large foreign exchange reserves help to dampen currency volatility and enhance the argument for investing in the new currency.

Large foreign exchange reserves may provide comfort to global central banks who are looking to diversify their currency exposure into the rupee. This is a bold forecast - but a small slice of this story will benefit the rupee.

The euro and renminbi will also win, albeit modestly

At the turn of the century the newly launched euro was expected to go toe-to-toe with the dollar. However, the euro's weight in reserves today has barely changed since 1999.

The lack of capital market union and failure to develop a single issuer bond market to rival the depth and liquidity of the US Treasury market are two reasons.

Nevertheless, as the principal alternative to the dollar, the euro will take a small extra slice of the pie and remain in clear second place.

In 2016 the forecast winner was the Chinese renminbi. Following a promising start after the 2008 financial crisis and the decision by Beijing to promote the internationalisation of the currency, success has been modest.

This is despite the fast-tracked inclusion in 2016 into the IMF currency basket known as the special drawing rights.

The renminbi is currently home to around 2 percent of global foreign exchange reserves. The share has declined since the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

Eastern European central banks such as the Czech National Bank and the Central Bank of Lithuania have both liquidated their Chinese holdings. The latter explicitly cited Ukraine as a reason.

The renminbi story has also been hampered by capital market reforms that have fallen short of expectations, and most recently by Chinese bond yields that have fallen sharply. At current levels of yield new buyers of renminbi bonds might be discouraged.

However, geopolitical fracturing has two sides to it. For some nations China will be a friend rather than a foe, will command a larger share of the trade flows with these nations and the renminbi will have appeal for the managers of reserves.

Despite headwinds, the renminbi will gain a modest foreign exchange reserves share over the next decade.

Finally, the Singapore dollar already has a small slice of the foreign exchange reserves pie, and can grow modestly.

Large renminbi trade invoice flows through Singapore have led to rapid growth in the demand for Singapore dollar foreign exchange swaps. If continued, this will underpin the appetite for the Singapore dollar.

What chance of a new Brics currency backed by gold?

There has been speculation that a desire to avoid the dollar might encourage the launch of a gold-backed Brics currency, and that this might become a rival trade currency to the dollar and an eventual home for foreign exchange reserves.

This is unlikely. The Brics nations (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa and, since 2024, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, United Arab Emirates, Ethiopia, Iran and Indonesia) are a heterogeneous group, with differing objectives and - in the case of India and China - significant rivalries. This is not an obvious starting point for a shared currency project.

**Gary Smith (pictured) is Client Portfolio Manager at Columbia Threadneedle, an American asset management firm.**

# The importance of national cybersecurity public education

MORE than ever, our society is dependent on technology, and it greatly influences many facets of who we are. For social and economic obligations, the majority of modern people rely on the internet.

Since most of our activities involve moving information from one location to another, cyber security has become an essential part of our daily lives. Because of this, cyberattacks have become more attractive and potentially dangerous.

Compared to physical attacks, cyberattacks are more convenient, less dangerous, and less costly; nevertheless, they require just few expenses more than just a computer and the internet.

Currently, most people use ICT innovations such as internet to boost economic growth, service delivery flexibility, and efficiency. The highest level of security awareness is necessary while using ICT innovation; otherwise, people run the risk of losing their reputation, their clients' confidence, and their money.

To secure their system accounts, some people use passwords as a cyber security defense. Having passwords and usernames is insufficient to guarantee cyber security. As a result, the risk of cybersecurity is underestimated since a number of complex issues can result in threats and vulnerabilities that go beyond usernames and passwords.

One of the difficulties faced by internet users is realizing that they need to do certain actions but lack the knowledge and guidance to do so.

People must be educated on how to be more secure when using the internet. Resonant messages concerning firewalls, security software, passwords, updates and upgrades. Without knowing the extent of the risk, people cannot appreciate security.

Most people use technology to increase productivity and improve service quality. Cyber security recommended practices and concepts are unfamiliar to most citizens who use computers or mobile phones. For the sole purpose of preventing, identify-

By Ibrahim Sultan

Cyber Security Consultant.



ing, and responding to cyber threats, our people must stay up to date on the latest advancements in cyber security, especially to be able to prevent, identify, and respond to cyber threats.

Hackers may exploit innocent individuals and employ a range of sophisticated hacking techniques to make them victims if people are not well trained in cybersecurity. He may send a phishing email or a link to a malware-infected website, posing as Toyota and giving a free car, claiming to have won a lottery, or claiming to have received a green card. Users' devices are compromised if they click on the link or open the email attachment. A data breach will occur, putting users at risk for harm to their reputation, loss of customer trust, and financial and commercial damages.

In today's complicated threat landscape, hackers target individuals as points of entry into various systems using incredibly complex strategies. Approximately 90 percent of all cyber-attacks are the result of human error caused by ignorance of cybersecurity.

Giving individuals proper cyber security awareness training helps improve their knowledge of common cyberthreats, best practices for cybersecurity, and how to protect their digital assets.

What actions can the government take to increase its level of public cybersecurity awareness?

Despite the fact that cybersecurity is one of the most important issues that government are now dealing with through our National Cybersecurity Strategy, there is still a lack of public cybersecurity awareness and awareness in relation to the number of people who use the internet for various purposes today.

Fastly, there is no magic. Successful governments are those whose citizens have received cybersecurity awareness training on responsible use of ICT resources through a variety of methods, such as a national cybersecurity awareness cam-

paign. The goal of this program is to encourage safe online conduct and practices by bringing together government and ministry agencies that deal with cybersecurity and private enterprises to determine how best to work together to raise public awareness of cybersecurity.

Secondly, since the internet eliminates geographical barriers, the government must create an appropriate approach to reach to people in order to properly execute a public cybersecurity program. People need to learn how to use the internet more securely, including how to recognize and react to questionable conduct.

Finally, public cybersecurity awareness training and campaigns are the first steps in reducing your citizens' vulnerability and improving their comprehension of cyber security dangers. This process is ongoing. This training can improve the security of your people by assisting them in understanding common and modern cyberthreats. People should be aware of the repercussions of failing to take preventative measures against outside dangers.

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## Enhancement of ecological systems to sustaining Julius Nyerere Hydropower project, indispensable

By Dr Felician B. Kilahama

THE Hydropower-dam located at the Stigler's gorge, Rufiji River, is an investment that should have been realized between 1975 and 1985 during the phase one Government whose President was 'Hayati' Mwalimu Julius Nyerere. However, prospects for the project faded when Tanzania engaged in-war with Uganda 1978-1980. Indeed, plenty of resources (money/material-goods) were used hence submerged the nation into serious socio-economic consequences. In that context, the President, declared

state of 'emergency' and citizens requested to 'tighten-belts' when efforts to revamp perturbed national economic growth were underway. On-contrary, the situation become more deterrent to the extent that projects that required enormous-financial resources like Julius Nyerere Hydroelectricity Power Project (JNHPP) were put-on hold while waiting for national economic recovery.

Due to high-demand for cheaper electricity compared-to 'oil' generated electricity; the government constructed dams: 'Kidatu', Morogoro region and 'Mtera' along the border between Iringa

and Dodoma regions, banking-on 'Ruaha-Mkuu' river. Additionally, 'Nyumba ya Mungu' dam constructed in Kilimanjaro region; another-one at Hale, Tanga region to generate-electricity using Pangani River. Despite these efforts, still there were flaws regarding availability/stability, reliable electricity. "Hayawi hayawi huwa" is Kiswahili saying meaning 'it doesn't happen, yet happened'; indeed, JNHPP is real-testimony to this saying.

Congratulations to fifth-phase Government, by-then the sixth phase President was the Vice-President when JNHPP commenced. If it wasn't the

vigilant determinations and extraordinary decisions reached by the late John Magufuli to construct the Julius Nyerere dam, the project would have remained foretelling-story but construction of the dam, portrays landmark for sustainable electricity generation. If it wasn't that superb decision, I don't know what the current-state of electricity supply would be like! Furthermore, the fifth-phase government started other strategic-projects that sixth phase government working hard to complete/finishing but also factoring-in additional-projects. To-date, having comprehended achievements obtained within relatively short-period, majority are aware that through seriousness vis-à-vis well-determined developmental projects plus inherent discipline/good-morals the leaders in Africa, no doubts could perform wonderfully advancing her socio-economic achievements without relying too much on foreign aid/assistance.

The Julius Nyerere project shall provide more-than 2100 megawatts once completed and operational. Information from experts, through the media, show that JNHPP has reached the stage of enabling five (5) generators activated and producing 1,410 megawatts; equivalent to almost 70 percent of expected total megawatts. Also confirmed that the electricity transmission lines from the Rufiji-River to Chalinze are 99 percent complete. Equally, the cooling-station under construction in Chalinze is more than 97 percent complete indeed, these are great achievements.

These accomplishments plus other electricity projects: Rusumo (80 megawatts) and Kinyerezi-1 (185 megawatts); stimulated the government via the Rural Electricity Agency (REA), in 2024 reached more than 12,000 villages. Additionally, by end of 2024, more than 32,000 neighbourhoods provided with electricity out of 64,359 neighbourhoods. Existence of JNHPP is one issue and sustainable/reliable supply of electricity is another part. What's anticipated is making JNHPP electricity-supply remain reality for many years-ahead. The Rufiji-river is the confluence of the Ruaha-Mkuu, Kilombero and Kihansi rivers.

The main sources of water for Ruaha-Mkuu are various streams in Iringa and Mbeya and parts of Dodoma and Morogoro regions. Iringa region is also the source of the Ruaha-Mdogo river which, discharges its water into Ruaha-Mkuu while sources of water being Mufindi district including Sao-Hill, the largest forest-plantations in Tanzania. The Kilombero and Kihansi Rivers draw their waters mainly in Morogoro region.

In the 2000s, visited Kilombero District and on way to Ifakara (district headquarters) realized the road was part of the border between public land and Udzungwa National Park mountain covered with thick natural mountainous-forest. Having realized that became curious to know how many streams were running form the mountainous-forest area towards public-land? From start of national-park to its ending-point along the road counted 32 streams (including the one with 'Sanje-waterfall'). All streams had clean-water from well-conserved mountainous-forest. Generally, the streams entered areas with tremendous human-activities including sugarcane and rice farming plus other agricultural and livestock keeping activities. Through such extents the streams are subjected to siltation processes leading to unclean water.

Experiences show that the rivers from upcountry run through areas confronted by human-activities. For-instance, Ruaha-Mkuu river originates in mountainous including Mpanga-Kipengere ranges; flowing towards Mbarali district; while passing through famous-belt for rice farming drawing water from Ruaha-Mkuu. On-way towards the Ruaha National Park (RNP), the rivers passes through 'IHEFU' wetland area. This is critical ecological-site for the good of Ruaha-Mkuu river yet, faced with lots of challenges due to presence of many livestock obstructing ecological-systems including destruction of natural vegetation that vital maintaining optimal environmental conditions needed to enable Ruaha-Mkuu sustain water flow throughout the year. Human activities cause the water in Ruaha-Mkuu to decrease generating concerns not only for electricity production but also negatively-affecting existence/survival of wildlife within Ruaha National Park.

For determined supply electricity on sustainable basis using JNHPP-dam, strategies must be in place to ensure the dam flourishes for decades. The dam requires clean, sustainable flow of rain-water through Ruaha-Mkuu, Ruaha-Ndogo, Kihansi and Kilombero. Against this crucial requirement the following aspects are recommended/underscored:

Management/enforcement of Policies, Laws and Regulations such as the Environmental Act of 2004, Forestry and Bee resources management Laws plus relevant sectoral Laws/Regulations, to protect ecosystem-services of rivers is obligatory. Experiences show that relevant Legal Instruments including Guidelines do exist however, weaknesses are related to enforcement mechanisms. It is high time that enforcement of policies and legal instruments becomes mandatory requirement. Critical ecosystem services are connected to preservation of forests/woodlands including plants/herbs/grasses/leaves which indeed, filter rainwater before entering into streams/rivers. Thus, existence of natural vegetation along riverbanks critical in stopping soils/mud, sand and other debris from entering into rivers;

Human-activities (farming, livestock-grazing, settlements) all along the river; be strictly forbidden in order to safeguard ecosystem-service. Article 57(1) of the Environmental Management Act (2004) prohibits human activities which, by their nature, seriously endanger the 'life' of the 60-meter band reserved to ensure healthier environmental-conditions for the rivers. In that context, 60-meter-zone as specified in the Guidelines issued December, 2020 by the Office of the Vice-President, Environment, well conserved. Consequently, all-human related activities be rigorously prohibited to guarantee existence of ecosystem services in perpetuity through stopping 'mud/soil/sand and debris' carried by rain-water from reducing depth of dams;

The Office of the President, Regional Administration and Local Government (OR-TAMISEM) in collaboration with other public/private sectors/institutions make sure the Guidelines issued 2020 are enforced. This also entails participation of all parities including adjacent local communities firstly, by-understanding well the Guidelines and secondly, to-comply accordingly without waiting for mandatory prosecutions;

Organize and undertake publicity, sensitization, awareness-raising including environmental-education campaigns to all stakeholders' key to attainment of visualized goals related to ecological services along the rivers. Government alone cannot manage however, through collaborative public-private-partnerships (ppp) mechanisms; it is feasible. There're various environmental-inclined NGOs, again, several Media-Groups plus application of social-media-networks including desirable digital communication facilities together with other electronic means of transmitting relevant-messages; should be explored to reach many targeted groups/stakeholders at-once. High-political commitments are needed including availability of predictable/consistence financial and material inputs;

Finally, the overall benefits from sustainable conservation of riverbanks/water reservoirs would encompass, among others, firstly, clean-water supplying to clients in urban/rural areas by Urban/Rural Water Supply Authorities without incurring high-costs to purify-water before distribution to consumers. Secondly, the predicted-life period of the dams shall suffice for long periods hence enduring sustainable socio-economic pathways for Tanzania and rest of African countries as a whole. IT CAN BE DONE PLAY YOUR PART WELL.

**Dr Felician Kilahama (pictured) is the environmental expert based in Dar es Salaam. He previously served as the Director of Forestry & Beekeeping, Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism.**



VIEW FROM THE TOP

# TikTok resumes service in US hours after going dark

LOS ANGELES

TIKTOK resumed its service in the United States on Sunday, hours after it was suspended.

TikTok said it would work with US President-elect Donald Trump, who will assume the presidency on Monday, for a long-term solution that would keep TikTok in the United States.

The resume came just one day after US users were met with a message stating "A law banning TikTok has been enacted in the U.S. Unfortunately, that means you can't use TikTok for now."

The app also disappeared from Apple's App Store and Google Play app store on Saturday night.

TikTok, headquartered in Los Angeles, warned Friday that it would be forced to shut down its services for the 170 million users in the United States on Sunday unless US President Joe Biden provides a "definitive" assurance.

Earlier on Friday, the US Supreme Court upheld a law forcing TikTok's Chinese owner, ByteDance, to sell the app to an American company or face a nationwide ban starting on Sunday, just one day before Trump's inauguration.

The ban could have impacted US small businesses substantially. Accord-



A man carries a Free TikTok sign in front of the courthouse where the hush-money trial of Donald Trump was underway on April 15, 2024, in New York. (PHOTO / AP)

ing to TikTok, over 7 million US accounts used TikTok for business purposes as of November 2024.

The company also warned that US small businesses and content creators would lose 1.3 billion US dollars in revenue and earnings within the first month of shutdown, with nearly 2 million creators potentially losing 300 million US dollars in income.

In the aftermath of the shutdown, many TikTok users turned to other social media platforms to express their sadness, frustration, and anger toward the government.

Emily Senn, who had amassed 340,000 TikTok followers, shared a tearful farewell video discussing the platform's impact on her life and finances. "And to the US government, I'm never forgiving you for this," she said.

Another TikTok user, Alejandro Flores-Munoz, owns a catering business in Denver, Colorado. He told the Associated Press that TikTok helped him reach customers without spending money on marketing. "It's very disheartening,

specifically because I truly did rely on the app for my business and my growth," he said.

On Sunday, Trump announced on Truth Social that he will issue an executive order on Monday that will allow TikTok to continue operating, which, according to his interview with NBC on Saturday, will "most likely" be a 90-day reprieve from a potential ban.

"The order will also confirm that there will be no liability for any company that helped keep TikTok from going dark before my order," he continued.

The incoming president also said that he would like the United States to have a 50-percent ownership position in a joint venture.

"My initial thought is a joint venture between the current owners and/or new owners whereby the US gets a 50 percent ownership in a joint venture set up between the US and whichever purchase we so choose," Trump said.



## Trump promises harsh immigration crackdown on inauguration eve

WASHINGTON

DONALD Trump told thousands of roaring supporters he would impose severe limits on immigration on his first day in office, vowing to swiftly fulfill the central promise of his presidential campaign at a rally on Sunday inside a packed Washington arena a day before he returns to power.

"By the time the sun sets tomorrow, the invasion of our country will have come to a halt," he said to cheers at a "Make America Great Again Victory Rally" at the Capital One Arena.

Trump repeated his campaign pledge to launch the largest deportation effort in US history, which would remove millions of immigrants. An operation of that scale, however, would likely take years and be hugely costly.

The rally resembled the free-wheeling campaign speeches that have been a Trump staple since his first serious White House run in 2016, with the former and future president delivering a mix of boasts, false claims and sweeping promises to the delight of the crowd.

"This is the greatest political movement in American history, and 75 days ago, we achieved the most epic political victory our country has ever seen," he said. "Starting tomorrow, I will act with historic speed of strength and fix every single crisis facing our country."

The event marked his first major address in Washington since his speech on Jan 6, 2021, that preceded the storming of the US Capitol by an angry mob of his supporters. Trump has said he will pardon many of the more than 1,500 people convicted or charged in connection with the attack.

Trump's rally, along with his inaugural address on Monday, could preview the tone he plans to adopt during his second White House term. In recent weeks, Trump has bewitched foreign allies by musing aloud about taking over Greenland and the Panama Canal and turning Canada into a US state.

He vowed to repeal "every radical and foolish executive order of the Biden administration" within hours of assuming the presidency at noon ET (1700 GMT).

A source familiar with the planning said Trump will take more than 200 executive actions on Monday.

Border security will figure prominently in Trump's first executive orders, another source said, including classifying drug cartels as "foreign terrorist organizations", declaring an emergency at the US-Mexico border and moving toward reinstatement of the "Remain in Mexico" policy that forces non-Mexican asylum seekers to wait in Mexico for their US court dates.

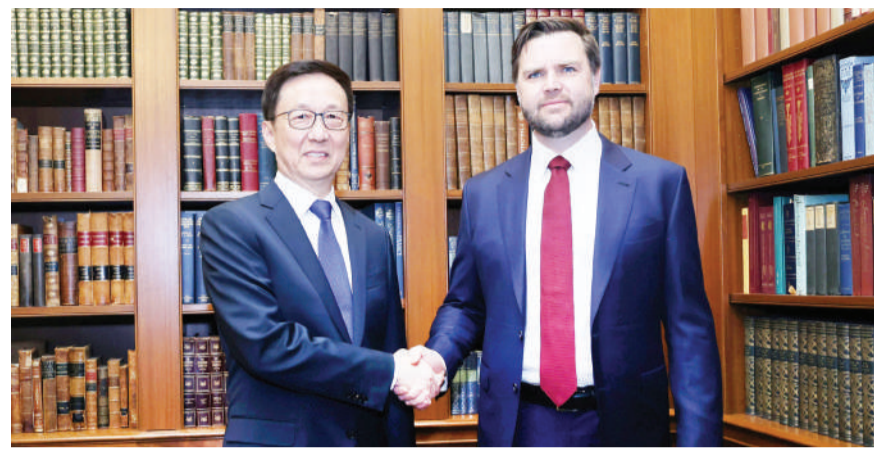
Trump's deportation plans have unsettled immigrants subject to removal, including some who immigrant advocates say are law-abiding, long-term residents with US-citizen spouses and children.

Trump said on January 10 that preparations for his potential meeting with Putin were underway as it was necessary to put an end to the Ukrainian conflict. According to Kremlin Spokesman Dmitry Peskov, Putin is ready to meet Trump without any preconditions.

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Parishioners swayed and an electric bass thumped during the service.

"Every time I spend time in a Black church," Biden said, "I think of one thing: the word 'hope.'" **Agencies**



Chinese Vice-President Han Zheng (L) shakes hands with US Vice-President-elect JD Vance, in Washington on Sunday. XINHUA

## Chinese VP says ready to work with US for steady growth of ties

WASHINGTON

CHINESE Vice-President Han Zheng said on Sunday that China is ready to work with the United States to adhere to the strategic guidance of the head-of-state diplomacy and follow through on the important consensus reached between Chinese President Xi Jinping and US President-elect Donald Trump, so as to push for the steady, healthy and sustainable development of bilateral ties.

Han made the remarks during a meeting with US Vice-President-elect JD Vance. Han is in Washington to attend the inauguration ceremony of Trump on Monday as Xi's special representative at the invitation of the US side.

During his meeting with Vance, Han first conveyed Xi's greetings to Trump and congratulated Vance on his election.

He noted that Xi recently had an important phone call with Trump, during which the two leaders have reached many important consensus on the development of China-US relations in the next stage.

Noting that China and the United States are both great countries, and that the Chinese and the Americans are both great people, Han said that the two sides are currently working hard to achieve their respective development goals and dreams.

As long as the two sides uphold the principles of mutual respect, peaceful co-existence and win-win cooperation, they will contribute to each other's progress, bring benefits to the two countries, and make important contributions to world peace and development, said Han.

Economic and trade relations are important issues of common concern to both sides, he noted.

Despite differences and frictions between China and the United States, they share huge common interests and space for cooperation, and the two sides can strengthen dialogue and consultation in this regard, Han added.

For his part, Vance asked Han to convey Trump's sincere greetings to Xi.

Vance said Trump had a phone call with Xi a few days ago, in which they had good communication on important issues regarding bilateral ties. Economic and trade relations, he stressed, are im-

portant to both the United States and China.

Noting that China is playing an increasingly important role in international affairs, Vance told Han that the United States is willing to develop an enduring and fruitful relationship with China, strengthen dialogue and cooperation with China on international and regional issues, and jointly promote world peace and stability.

The Chinese vice-president on Sunday also met with representatives of the US business community, including those from the US-China Business Council and the US Chamber of Commerce.

Han said it is hoped that US companies will continue to invest and take root in China, play an active role as a bridge, and make greater contributions to the steady, sound and sustainable development of China-US relations.

He said President Xi and President-elect Trump had an important phone call just recently, and they reached an important consensus on the development of China-US relations.

China and the United States share extensive common interests and vast space for cooperation, said Han, adding that a good start and stable development of China-US relations align with the common well-being of both peoples and meet the shared expectation of the international community.

As an enduring backbone supporting China-US relations, the US business community has been a participant, witness, contributor and beneficiary of China-US economic and trade cooperation as well as China's reform and opening-up, Han said.

China will unswervingly advance reform and opening-up, and continue to improve and optimize the business environment, he added.

Representatives of the US business community said that the recent phone conversation between President-elect Trump and President Xi sent a positive and encouraging message. As the world's two largest economies that are most dynamic and technologically advanced, the United States and China should engage in mutually beneficial cooperation and find a constructive and steady way to get along with each other. **Xinhua**

## Biden's administration has done tremendous disservice to Russian-US relations – Lavrov

MOSCOW

THE administration of US President Joe Biden has done a tremendous disservice to the Russian-US relations, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said in a commentary to VGTRK journalist Pavel Zarubin who posted it on his Telegram channel.

"The disservice is tremendous but the administration of [Donald] Trump seriously damaged as well, largely due to the fact in particular that [ex-president of US Barack] Obama left such legacy to Trump and his team.

And the sanctions imposed by Obama three weeks before Trump's inauguration were simply dishonorable, unethical, with our diplomats expelled, five diplomatic property units stolen.

Of course, they set our relations at a position of not the best start I would say. And now we see Biden's administration trying to do the same," Lavrov (pictured) said.

The minister also commented on Biden's statement who tried to compare himself with Russian President Vladimir Putin as he summed up his presidency, claiming that he was in the center of

Kiev, not Putin. "If a politician of such a scale as US President assesses his own term as a head of a powerful country on the basis of coup de theatre: 'Well, I was in Kiev, Putin wasn't there,' one can probably make a conclusion how serious his approach to fulfillment of his duties is," Lavrov said.

Agencies



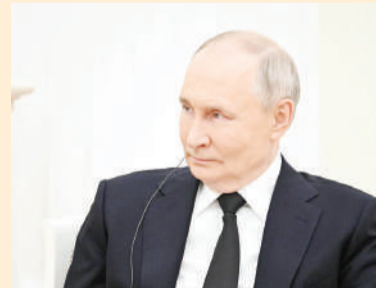
## Slovakia believes Putin, Trump to agree on Ukraine's military neutrality

MOSCOW

RUSSIAN President Vladimir Putin and US President-elect Donald Trump may reach an agreement on Ukraine's military neutrality, Vice Speaker of the Slovak Parliament Tibor Gaspar told TASS, adding that Slovakia would welcome

such a decision.

"Our prime minister [Robert Fico] has said confidently that we will not support Ukraine's NATO entry. We stand for decisions that imply guarantees both for Russia and the EU regarding security," he said. "That means that Slovakia will welcome agreements between



Trump and Putin, this probably being neutrality, Ukraine's military neutrality," the official added.

Trump himself admitted earlier that "the whole conflict in Ukraine was provoked, meaning Russia responded in such a way to certain provocative decisions by Ukrainian authorities," Gaspar noted.

Trump said on January 10 that preparations for his potential meeting with Putin were underway as it was necessary to put an end to the Ukrainian conflict. According to Kremlin Spokesman Dmitry Peskov, Putin is ready to meet Trump without any preconditions.

## Biden tries to lift Democrats' spirits on last full day in office

NORTH CHARLESTON, South Carolina

US President Joe Biden urged despondent fellow Democrats not to give up hope as he returned to the warm embrace of South Carolina's Black churchgoing community to mark the final full day of his presidency on Sunday.

Biden leaves office on Monday, ending a four-year term that leaves his Democratic Party in the political wilderness when he hands the of-

fice back to Republican rival Donald Trump, whom Democrats consider a threat to democracy.

At the Royal Missionary Baptist Church in North Charleston, Biden was remembered fondly by political allies and received a standing ovation from church attendees.

"We often reflect on resurrection and redemption, but remember, Jesus was buried on Friday, and he rose on Sunday," Biden told church-

goers from the pulpit. "We don't talk enough about Saturday, when his disciples felt all hope was lost."

His remarks came amid major developments in the waning hours of Biden's presidency, including a long-sought ceasefire and hostage deal in Gaza, an issue that has loomed over the last 15 months of Biden's presidency.

"I'm going to say to you, great friend, very little appreciation has been shown



recently, but faint not, history will be very kind to you," said Representative Jim Clyburn, who spoke before Biden, remembering sour early appraisals of Abraham Lincoln, Harry Truman and Lyndon

Johnson.

Biden alluded to bitter political disappointment following his withdrawal last summer from the race for a second term in office over concerns about his age and performance on the campaign trail but suggested he intended to stay in the public eye after his term ends.

"I'm in no ways tired," Biden said, echoing the words of a gospel standard to applause. "I'm not going anywhere."

South Carolina Democrats

rescued Biden's political career in February 2020, delivering him his first presidential primary win and momentum he would sustain through his victory over Trump later that year.

Biden credited Clyburn's late endorsement in that race with delivering voters in the state and said he could think of no better place to spend his final full day in office.

There, at the largely Black church, Biden marked the Martin Luther King Jr holiday

a day in advance, alongside his wife, Jill, and son, Hunter, and other family members and close aides.

He gave an offering before entering, according to the pastor, and later visited the International African American Museum in Charleston.

Parishioners swayed and an electric bass thumped during the service.

"Every time I spend time in a Black church," Biden said, "I think of one thing: the word 'hope.'" **Agencies**



# Day one of ceasefire: Hamas frees hostages, Israel releases prisoners

GAZA/CAIRO/JERUSALEM

HAMAS released three Israeli hostages and Israel released 90 Palestinian prisoners on Sunday, the first day of a ceasefire suspending a 15-month-old war that has devastated the Gaza Strip and inflamed the Middle East.

The truce allowed Palestinians to return to bombed-out neighborhoods to begin rebuilding their lives, while relief trucks delivered much-needed aid. Elsewhere in Gaza, crowds cheered Hamas fighters who emerged from hiding.

Fireworks were launched in celebration as buses carrying the Palestinian prisoners arrived in Ramallah on the West Bank, where thousands of people waited to welcome them. Those freed from Israeli prisons included 69 women and 21 teenage boys from the West Bank and Jerusalem, according to Hamas.

In Tel Aviv, hundreds of Israelis cheered and wept in a square outside the defense headquarters as a live broadcast from Gaza showed three female hostages getting into a Red Cross vehicle surrounded by Hamas fighters.

The Israeli military said Romi Gonen, Doron Steinbrecher and Emily Damari had been reunited with their mothers and released a video showing them in apparent good health. Damari, who lost two fingers when she was shot the day she was abducted, smiled and embraced her mother as she held up a bandaged hand.

"I would like you to tell them: Romi, Doron and Emily - an entire nation embraces you. Welcome home," Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu told a commander by phone.



A Red Cross convoy arrives to collect Israeli hostages released after a ceasefire agreement between Israel and Hamas took effect, in Gaza City on Sunday. AP

At Sheba Medical Center, the women were reunited with their families in long embraces that went from tears to laughter. A smiling Damari was draped in an Israeli flag. They were among more than 250 people abducted and 1,200 killed in a Hamas raid on Israel on Oct 7, 2023, Israel has said.

More than 47,000 Palestinians have since been killed in Israeli attacks, according to medical officials in Gaza. Nearly the entire 2.3 million population of Gaza is homeless. Around 400 Israeli soldiers have also died.

The truce calls for fighting to stop, aid to be sent in to Gaza and 33 of the nearly 100 remaining Israeli and foreign hostages to go free over the six-week first phase in return for nearly 2,000 Palestinian prisoners held in Israeli jails. Many of the hostages are believed to be dead.

In the north of the Gaza Strip, Palestinians picked their way through a devastated landscape of rubble and twisted metal that had been bombed into oblivion in the war's most intense fighting.

"I feel like at last I found some water to drink after being lost in the desert for 15 months," said Aya, who said she had been displaced from her Gaza City home for more than a year. The first phase of the truce took effect following a three-hour delay during which Israeli warplanes and artillery pounded the Gaza Strip.

That last-minute blitz killed 13 people, Palestinian health authorities said. Israel blamed Hamas for being late to deliver the names of hostages it would free, and said it had struck terrorists. Hamas said the holdup in providing the list was technical.

"Today the guns in Gaza have gone silent," US President Joe Biden said on his last full day in office, welcoming a truce that had eluded US diplomacy for more than a year. "We've reached this point today because of the pressure Israel built on Hamas, backed by the United States."

For Hamas, the truce provided an opportunity to emerge from the shadows after 15 months in hiding. Hamas policemen dressed

in blue police uniforms swiftly deployed in some areas, and armed fighters drove through the southern city of Khan Younis, where a crowd cheered. "Greetings to Al-Qassam Brigades," the group's armed wing.

"All the resistance factions are staying in spite of Netanyahu," one fighter told Reuters.

Trump aide: 'Hamas will never govern Gaza'

There is no detailed plan in place to govern Gaza after the war, much less rebuild it. Any return of Hamas will test the patience of Israel, which has said it will resume fighting unless the militant group is fully dismantled.

Hardline National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir quit the cabinet over the ceasefire, though his party said it would not try to bring down Netanyahu's government. The other most prominent hardliner, Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich, stayed in the government but said he would quit if the war ends without Hamas completely destroyed.

The truce took effect on the eve of Monday's inauguration of US President-elect Donald Trump. Trump's national security adviser-designate, Mike Waltz, said that if Hamas reneges on the agreement, the United States would support Israel "in doing what it has to do."

"Hamas will never govern Gaza. That is completely unacceptable," he said.

The streets in shattered Gaza City were already busy with groups of people waving the Palestinian flag and filming the scenes on their mobile phones. Several carts loaded with household possessions travelled down a thoroughfare scattered with rubble and debris.

Ahmed Abu Ayham, 40, of Gaza City said that while the ceasefire may have spared lives, the losses and destruction made it no time for celebration.

"We are in pain, deep pain and it is time to hug one another and cry," he said.

Agencies



## EAM Jaishankar meets Japan, Australia's Foreign Ministers, discusses bilateral ties

WASHINGTON

EXTERNAL Affairs Minister S Jaishankar yesterday met Japan's Foreign Minister Takeshi Iwaya in Washington DC.

Jaishankar said they discussed the progress in their bilateral cooperation and took stock of Quad's developments.

In a post on X, he said, "Good to meet with FM Takeshi Iwaya of Japan. Reviewed the progress in our bilateral cooperation. Also discussed developments pertaining to Quad."

Prior to that, Jaishankar also met Australian Minister for Foreign Affairs Penny Wong in Washington DC. He said he enjoyed their discussion on the state of the world.

"Delighted to meet FM Penny Wong, a Quad colleague, in Washington DC today. As always, enjoyed our discussion on the state of the world."

Jaishankar is representing the Indian government at the swearing-in ceremony of US President-elect Donald Trump as the 47th US President. He is set to attend the swearing-in ceremony at the invitation of the Trump-Vance Inaugural Committee, according to a Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) press release. During the visit, Jaishankar will also have meetings with representatives of the incoming administration, as well as some other dignitaries visiting the US on that occasion.

In a press release, MEA said, "On the invitation of the Trump-Vance Inaugural Committee, External Affairs Minister (EAM) Dr S Jaishankar will represent the Government of India at the Swearing-In Ceremony of President-Elect Donald J. Trump as the 47th President of the United States of America."

The ceremonial event is set to take place on Monday, approximately two weeks after Trump's electoral college win was certified by the US Congress. Earlier on January 17, he joined US Ambassador to India, Eric Garcetti for the opening of the US Consulate in Bangalore. Hailing the step as an important moment in the India-US ties, Jaishankar also announced that India will soon be opening its consulate in Los Angeles.

While addressing the gathering, Jaishankar highlighted several aspects of the India-US ties and said that the opening of the consulate was long due.

ANI

## Libyan parliament members discuss forming unified government

TRIPOLI

REPRESENTATIVES of Libya's eastern-based House of Representatives (parliament) on Sunday discussed forming a unified government in the country with the UN Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL).

In a meeting with Deputy Special Representative of UN Secretary-General for Political Affairs and Officer-in-Charge of UNSMIL Stephanie Koury, they "discussed the latest developments of Libya's political and economic situation and ways to

end the Libyan crisis by holding presidential and parliamentary elections and forming a unified government," the parliament said in a statement on its official website. The meeting also discussed the country's newly approved national reconciliation law, said the statement. In

December 2024, Speaker of the House of Representatives Aguilu Saleh announced that he and Koury had agreed on the need to unify the executive authority and form a unified government to "move forward towards holding presidential and parliamentary elections as soon as possi-

ble." Libya failed to hold general elections in December 2021 as previously scheduled, due to disagreements among the Libyan parties over election laws. Since the fall of the late leader Muammar Gaddafi's regime in 2011, Libya has been struggling with fragmentation.

SEOUL

SOUTH Korea's impeached President Yoon Suk-yeol refused yesterday to be questioned by investigators under a probe into whether he committed insurrection, as dozens of his supporters faced being charged over a violent rampage on a court building.

Authorities said security was being beefed up at the Seoul Detention Centre where Yoon is being held as a pre-trial inmate and at the Constitutional Court which is holding an impeachment trial to decide whether to permanently remove him from office.

Yoon became the first incumbent South Korean president to be arrested last week over his short-lived declaration of martial law on Dec 3.

On Sunday, he was formally processed for detention, including having his mugshot taken, after a court approved a warrant, citing concern the suspect could destroy evidence.

## S. Korea's Yoon shuns questioning as security tightened after court rampage

Following the midnight ruling, angry Yoon supporters stormed the Seoul Western District Court building early on Sunday destroying property and clashing with police who were at times overpowered by a mob wielding broken barricades to attack them.

Out of 90 people who were detained after the clashes, police plan to keep 66 in custody on charges of trespass, obstruction of official duty and assaulting police officers, Yonhap News Agency reported.

Other offenders were still being identified and police will also take legal action against them, acting Justice Minister Kim Seok-woo told a parliament judiciary committee.

Acting President Choi Sang-mok expressed deep regret over the "illegal violence" at the court building and also urged police to enforce the law strictly to prevent a repeat of



what happened on Sunday.

The unrest comes amid South Korea's worst political crisis in decades, which has rattled Asia's fourth-biggest economy.

South Korea's central bank on Monday

downgraded its economic growth projection for 2025 to between 1.6 percent and 1.7 percent, down from the 1.9 percent it forecast in November, citing political uncertainty.

Livestreamed intrusion

Hundreds of protesters, some blasting fire extinguishers at lines of police, broke through a cordon to enter the court building soon after the 3 am ruling on Sunday to approve the detention of Yoon.

Some of them were seen in video footage roaming halls where the offices of judges were located calling out the name of the judge who approved the warrant.

At least one judge's chamber was broken into by force, Chun Dae-yup, the head of the National Court Administration, said.

Several of those involved livestreamed the

intrusion on YouTube, with footage showing protesters trashing the court and chanting Yoon's name. Some streamers were caught by police during their broadcasts.

Yoon's refusal to appear for questioning on Monday at the Corruption Investigation Office for High-ranking Officials (CIO), which is leading the criminal probe, comes after he has repeatedly refused to cooperate with the investigation.

His lawyers have argued that his arrest on Wednesday and the warrant issued for his detention are illegal because they were backed by a court that is in the wrong jurisdiction and the CIO itself has no legal authority to conduct the probe.

Insurrection, the crime that Yoon may be charged with, is one of the few that a South Korean president does not have immunity from and is technically punishable by death. South Korea, however, has not executed anyone in nearly 30 years.

Agencies

THIS year marks the beginning of the implementation of the outcomes of the 2024 Beijing Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC). Recently, several African countries including Chad, Djibouti, Madagascar, and the Republic of the Congo signed economic and technical cooperation agreements with China.

The efficient and pragmatic cooperation between China and Africa in various fields has been further deepened, demonstrating the joint efforts of the two sides to move towards modernization together.

Under the guidance of President Xi Jinping, the FOCAC Beijing Summit was successfully held last year, after which bilateral relations between China and all African countries having diplomatic ties with China were elevated to the level of strategic relations and the overall characterization of China-Africa relations was elevated to an all-weather China-Africa community with a shared future for the new era.

Jointly advancing modernization that is just and equitable, open and win-win, that puts the people first and features di-

## China, Africa true friends on way to modernisation

versity and inclusiveness, and that is eco-friendly and underpinned by peace and security, China and Africa have strengthened strategic alignment in development and exchanged governance experiences. This has expanded shared values, paving the way for a broader horizon and injecting more momentum into the development of bilateral relations.

There is always vast space for African brothers in China's endeavor to expand high-standard opening up; and China will never be absent from Africa's pursuit of development and revitalization.

The ten partnership actions for modernization jointly promoted by China and Africa have set a roadmap for comprehensive deepening of cooperation. China is committed to providing Africa with a broader market, more practical technologies, and more stable investments for its modernization.

China has been granting zero-tariff treatment for all tariff product categories to all least developed countries that have diplomatic relations with



A Chinese rice expert instructs a local farmer in Sierra Leone to prevent and control plant diseases and insect pests. (Photo/Li Youliang)

China, which creates favorable conditions for high-quality African products to enter the Chinese market. China is also deepening vocational skills training and human resources cooperation with African countries to help the latter strengthen capacity building.

The cumulative installed capacity of photovoltaic power plants built by Chinese companies in collaboration with Africa has exceeded 15 GW, and the two sides will also construct an

"African Solar Belt", truly embarking on the path of green and low-carbon development.

President of the Republic of the Congo Denis Sassou Nguesso recently stated that Xi's proposal of the ten partnership actions for modernization at the FOCAC Beijing Summit covers all areas of China-Africa cooperation and addresses the challenges facing Africa, which is in line with Africa's needs.

On the journey to modernization, the FOCAC has played a

significant role in promoting Africa's development and improving the livelihoods of the people on the continent. Over the past 25 years since the establishment of the forum, China has helped Africa build 100,000 kilometers of roads, more than 10,000 kilometers of railways, nearly 1,000 bridges and nearly 100 ports. Over the past three years alone, over 1 million jobs have been created in Africa. The livelihood projects implemented in Africa, such as those related to

food security, water supply, and education, have benefited the people of many African countries.

Today, the forum has become a symbol of China-Africa solidarity and cooperation, a banner of South-South cooperation, and a model for guiding international cooperation with Africa. The importance China attaches to Africa has attracted increased attention and support from the international community, further promoting Africa's development.

In the face of profound changes unseen in a century, the world increasingly needs strengthened cooperation between China and Africa. The development of China and Africa represents the rise of the Global South, embodying the strengthening of just forces.

Under the guidance of Pan-Africanism, African countries have accelerated the integration process of seeking strength through unity and pursuing development and revitalization, playing an increasingly important role in international affairs and contributing transformative power to global governance.

China will always be the most trustworthy friend of its African brothers and sisters, the most reliable partner in their pursuit of development and revitalization, and the strongest supporter of Africa on the international stage.

The tradition of making Africa the first overseas destination for China's foreign minister each new year is a hallmark of Chinese diplomacy, which has been upheld consistently for 35 years. It is a testament to the enduring friendship between China and Africa, and China's consistent friendly cooperation with Africa.

Strengthening solidarity and cooperation between China and Africa, and jointly safeguarding the legitimate rights and interests of developing countries, aligns with historical justice and the trend of the times.

Regardless of the changing international situation, China and Africa will steadfastly advance cooperation to a higher level, deeper level, and broader scope, jointly promote modernization and build an all-weather China-Africa community with a shared future for the new era.

People's Daily

# SPORT

## KenGold make huge transfer spree to fight relegation

By Correspondent Michael Mwebi

KENGOLD, currently facing the threat of relegation from the Premier League, is hoping for a mid-season reset to avoid the nightmare of dropping to the Second Division.

After their promotion to the Premier League last season, the Mbeya-based side has struggled, sitting at the bottom of the table, 11 points adrift from safety.

In response to their precarious position, the club has embarked on an extensive overhaul of both their playing and technical units.

The dramatic changes have seen the release of several players, including Steven Mganga, Amir Njeru, James Msuva, Adam Uledi, Casto Posta, Paul Materazzi, Asanga Stalone, and Salum Iddrisa, among others.

This clearout is part of a strategic effort to bring in fresh faces with the hope of securing survival in the top-flight.

To bolster the squad, KenGold has brought in a number of experienced players. Former Young Africans and Simba attacking midfielder Bernard Morrison, who last played for AS Far Rabat in Morocco, and Obrey Chirwa, formerly of Kagera Sugar, are among the high-profile arrivals.

Additionally, the club has signed Zawadi Mauya, a former Kagera and Young Africans player.

Other notable signings include Emmanuel Asante from Namungo, Mubashid Seidu (Ghana), Kyala Lassa (Zambia), Elnest Kwofie (Ghana), and several others from both local and international backgrounds.

This includes players such as Kelvin Yondani, Mohamed Yusuph (Dodoma Jiji), Mathias Juviliani, and Thompson Unachi (Nigeria), all of whom are expected to strengthen the squad significantly.

They are also in the process of introducing a new head coach, Vladislav Heric, a Serbian national who previously led South African side Venda FC, as well as other clubs such as Chippa United, Cape Town and Free State Stars.

KenGold's bold move in the transfer market reflects their determination to avoid relegation and maintain their status in the top division of Tanzanian football.

Time will tell whether this gamble pays off, but with a strong influx of talent, they are aiming to turn their fortunes around.

## ITF name Sinner, Swiatek as world champions for 2024

MELBOURNE

THE International Tennis Federation (ITF) yesterday named Jannik Sinner and Iga Swiatek as its world champions of 2024 in recognition of their performances at the Grand Slams and other top events last season.

World number one Sinner, who has a potential ban of up to two years hanging over his head after failing two drugs test last year, won his first Grand Slam title at the Australian Open and followed that up with another at the U.S. Open.

He also lifted the ATP Finals title, finishing the season with a 73-6 win-loss record, and guided Italy to their second successive Davis Cup triumph in Malaga.

Sinner failed two drug tests in March but was cleared of wrongdoing year by a doping tribunal after it accepted his explanation that a banned substance had entered his system from his former physio through massages.

The World Anti-Doping Agency has appealed that decision and the 23-year-old faces a hearing at the Court of Arbitration for Sport in April.

Swiatek (pictured) edged out world number one Aryna Sabalenka to take the women's prize for the second time after the 23-year-old Pole won her fourth French Open title, four WTA 1000 trophies and also collected a bronze medal at the Paris Olympics.

However, she also fell foul of doping rules and served a one-month ban after a tribunal accepted that her failed test for trimetazidine had been the result of a contaminated batch of sleeping drug melatonin.

The ITF also named Marcelo Arevalo of El Salvador and Mate Pavic of Croatia, and the Italian pair of Sara Errani and Jasmine Paolini as doubles world champions.

The winners were chosen based on results from the season, with special emphasis on Grand Slam tournaments, the Davis Cup and Billie Jean King Cup, as well as the Olympic Games.

Meanwhile, Iga Swiatek felt satisfaction and hoped for closure after the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) said yesterday that it would not appeal her case at sport's highest court.

WADA's announcement came shortly after the five-times Grand Slam champion produced a ruthless display during her 6-0 6-1 win over German lucky loser Eva Lys to move into the Australian Open quarter-finals for the second time in her career.

"For sure I'm just satisfied that I can get closure and I can just move on and finish this whole process, because I just want to play tennis and focus on the tournament," Swiatek told reporters later. "Yeah, I'm just satisfied."

The world number two had tested positive for the banned hormone and metabolic



modulator trimetazidine in August and was provisionally banned the following month.

She then successfully appealed against her provisional ban and returned to action in October after the International Tennis Integrity Agency (ITIA) accepted the explanation her positive test was caused by contamination of her medication melatonin.

The Pole accepted a one-month ban, opens new tab that ended on Dec. 4 after accounting for time already served.

WADA said yesterday there would be no scientific grounds to challenge Swiatek's explanation at the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS).

"WADA has conducted a full review of the case file related to the ITIA decision, which it received on 29 November," WADA said in a statement.

"WADA's scientific experts have confirmed that the specific contaminated melatonin scenario, as presented by the athlete and accepted by the ITIA, is plausible and that there would be no scientific grounds to challenge it at CAS."

Swiatek said anyone who knew the details of her case would be understanding.

"The locker room has also been pretty nice," she added.

"The girls are understanding ... Now for sure, I just want to put this behind me, because I have already been on tour for quite a few weeks, and it's all been good.

"I don't expect any changes. I'm happy people understand."

However, men's world number one Jannik Sinner is still under the scanner after testing positive for the anabolic androgenic agent clostebol in March last year.

The Italian was also cleared of wrongdoing but WADA lodged an appeal to CAS, with a hearing starting on April 16.

Earlier yesterday, he shrugged off illness to battle past Holger Rune 6-3 3-6 6-3 6-2 and reach the quarter-finals of the Australian Open, where he is the defending champion.

REUTERS

SPORTS

## Gut-wrenching heartbreak for Yanga in CAF Champions League

By Lloyd Elipokea

DISTRESSINGLY for avid Young Africans aficionados, they are at times fraught campaign in Group A of the CAF Champions League's group stage has disappointingly ended with the Tanzanian powerhouses being mercilessly booted out of the immensely respected football competition.

Needing a victory against Algerian contenders MC Alger last Saturday at the state-of-the-art Benjamin Mkapa Stadium here in Dar es Salaam to make certain of a berth in the last eight, Young Africans agonizingly fell short of achieving their goal, and instead were forced to share the spoils in a goalless draw.

Sadly, that nil-nil stalemate meant that Young Africans finished Group A in third place, one point behind MC Alger, who ended the same group in second place with nine points.

Consequently, Group A leaders, the Sudanese titans Al Hilal, progressed to the CAF Champions League quarter-finals alongside Algerian side MC Alger, as only two clubs are allowed to advance to the knockout stage from each group in the perpetually drama-filled competition.

Understandably, literally all Young Africans supporters are gutted over their team's failure to meet their high expectations in the CAF Champions League this season.

That being said, it is crucial to note that the Jangwani Street-based football outfit were not disgraced and they can even justifiably hold their heads up high after being denied a quarterfinal spot by a minute one point.

While Young Africans were left to rue their upsetting fate, Simba on the other hand are on cloud nine following their sterling campaign in the group phase of



Young Africans Sports Club (Yanga) squad against MC Alger during their CAF Champions League Group A match at the Benjamin Mkapa Stadium last Saturday. Photo: Courtesy of YASCASSOCIATION

the CAF Confederations Cup.

Indeed, despite having already sealed their spot in the CAF Confederations Cup's knockout round prior to their last Group A face-off against the Algerian club CS Constantine at the renowned Benjamin Mkapa Stadium last Sunday, Simba admirably earned a convincing 2-nil triumph against their Algerian opponents.

By virtue of that impressive win, Simba outstandingly advanced to the quarter-finals in fine style as Group A's leaders.

Naturally, as Simba march on to the knockout round of this season's CAF Confederations Cup, all Tanzanians will be dearly hoping that the Tanzanian juggernauts can maintain their winning ways in the scintillating continental football competition.

Let us now focus our attention on international tennis where the

Australian Open is now in full swing in both the men's and women's categories.

Sadly, all African tennis devotees must be in low spirits at the moment following the unfortunate elimination of the female Tunisian star Ons Jabeur from the year's first grand slam in the third round lately.

For those still in the dark, the grand slams are the most treasured tennis tournaments in the world and they are four in number: the Australian Open, French Open, Wimbledon and the US Open.

Returning to Ons Jabeur's dismaying ouster from the Australian Open, the Tunisian will likely feel down in the dumps after finishing her 2024 season in August due to a persistent injury.

It is hoped then that Ons Jabeur will rapidly bounce back, which would indisputably gladden the hearts of all passionate African tennis fans.

## Australian broadcaster Tony Jones apologises to Djokovic, Serbian fans

MELBOURNE

AUSTRALIAN broadcaster Tony Jones has apologised to Novak Djokovic and fans of the Serbian for comments he made on TV on Friday night that the 10-times Australian Open champion considered "insulting and offensive".

Djokovic (pictured) declined to do the customary on-court interview after his fourth-round victory over Jiri Lehecka on Sunday pending a public apology from Jones and Australian broadcast rights holders Channel Nine.

Jones had mocked Djokovic and the Serbian fans who had gathered outside Channel Nine's broadcast booth at Melbourne Park on Friday, saying the 24-times Grand Slam champion was "over-rated" and a "has been".

In an interview on the channel on Monday, Jones said he thought the comments had been "banter" and he had immediately made a private apology to the "Djokovic camp" once he realised they had not been taken in humour. "I can stand by that apology to Novak," he said. "I should also say the disrespect was extended, in many ways, to the Serbian fans.

"We have built up a nice rapport with the Serbian fans ... and there was banter, and I thought what I was doing was an extension of that banter. Quite clearly that has not been interpreted that way.

"I feel as though I've let down the Serbian fans."

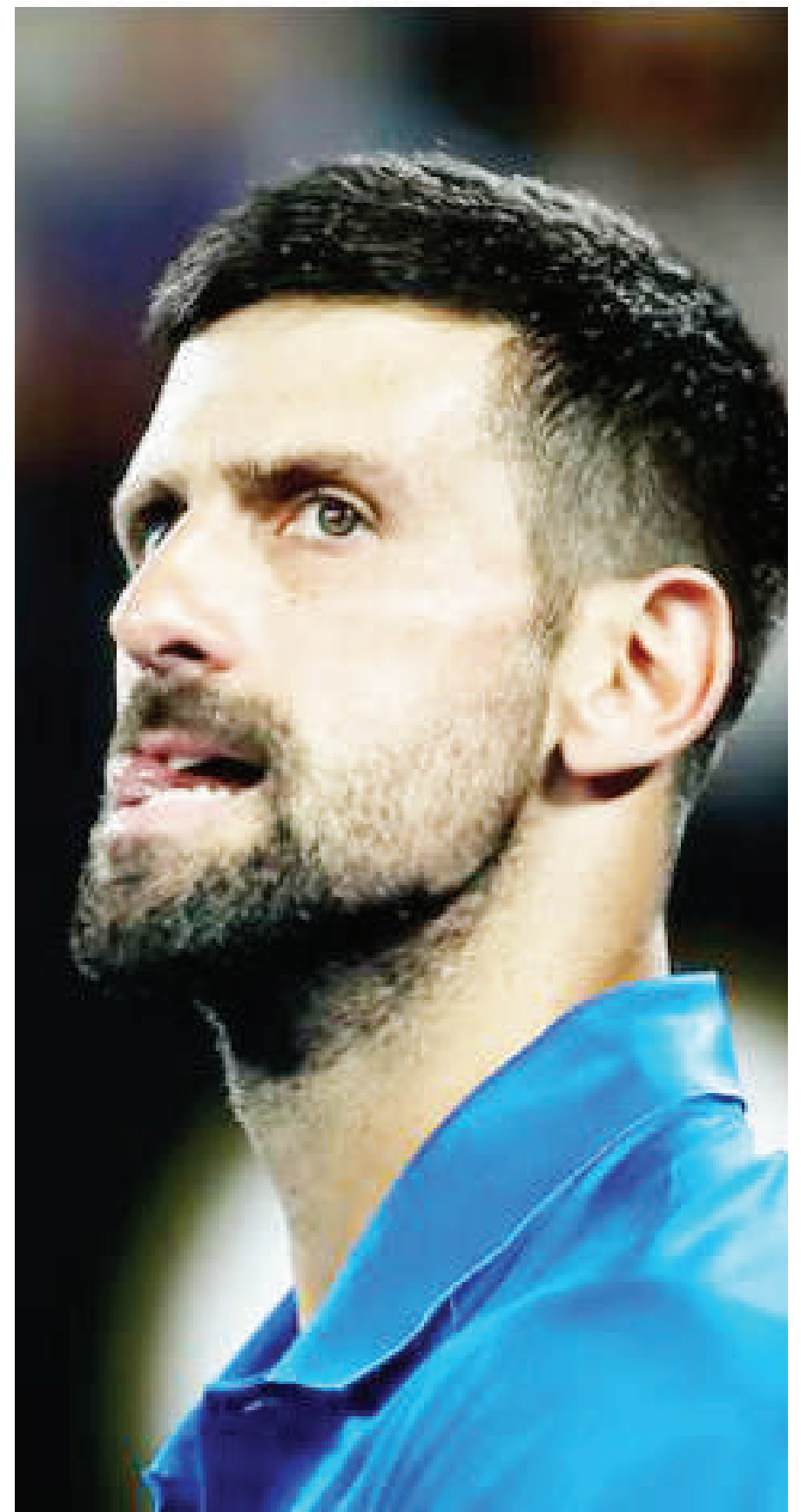
Jones said the one comment he particularly regretted was "kick him out", which he accepted could only be construed as a reference to Djokovic's deportation from Australia in a row over his COVID vaccination status in early 2022. "That has angered Novak which I completely understand now," Jones said.

"It has been an unfortunate situation, it has been one of personal angst for Novak, it's quite clearly personal angst for me as well."

Tennis Australia said Djokovic, who takes on world number three Carlos Alcaraz in the quarter-finals on Tuesday, wanted to move on from the issue.

"Novak acknowledges the apology has been given in public as requested, and is now moving on and focusing on his next match," it added in a statement.

REUTERS



## Ancelotti thrilled with Kylian Mbappe performance in thrashing of Las Palmas

By Fernando Kallas

REAL Madrid manager Carlo Ancelotti was delighted with Kylian Mbappe's performance as the Frenchman scored twice in a 4-1 win over visitors Las Palmas on Sunday that lifted the defending champions to the top of the LaLiga standings.

The Italian coach said that he was never in doubt that the 26-year-old forward was going to find his form despite a slow start in the Spanish capital after arriving from Paris St Germain, playing in a more centralised role up front.

"(Mbappe is) the best centre forward in the world, there should be no doubts as to whether he could play in that position," Ancelotti told a press conference on Sunday.

"He is a great striker who is very good playing in the centre, rather than on the wing, because that way he can make the most of his unique runs, with speed and technique."

Following a tough week in which they were booed by their home fans after a 5-2 loss to Barcelona in the Spanish Super Cup and an extra-time 5-2 win over Celta Vigo to advance to the Copa del Rey

quarter-finals, Real started the game against Las Palmas with a scare, conceding 25 seconds after kick-off.

However, guided by an inspired Mbappe, they managed to fight back and took advantage of Atletico Madrid's 1-0 loss at Leganes on Saturday to retake the lead in the league standings, encouraging Ancelotti ahead of the final stretch of the season.

"In times of difficulty, it is necessary to be self-critical and positive in order to move forward," Ancelotti said.

"There is criticism and criticism. The booing at the Santiago Bernabeu hurt, because the fans are not happy, but it motivates. It was an useful wake-up call for the team, who have put in a good performance."

"Football is like that, but I'm still a bit confused because I've heard that we play very bad football but here we are, LaLiga leaders."

Real are top on 46 points, two ahead of their local rivals in second, with third-placed Barcelona trailing by seven points after they were held to a 1-1 draw by Getafe.

REUTERS

## Postecoglou takes blame for latest Tottenham loss, but retains faith

LIVERPOOL, England

UNDER-PRESSURE manager Ange Postecoglou remained confident that he can turn around Tottenham Hotspur's season despite a demoralising 3-2 loss at struggling Everton on Sunday.

Postecoglou's injury-hit side crumbled in the first half at Goodison Park, conceding three goals, and a late rally failed to salvage what would have been a flattering point.

It was Tottenham's 12th defeat in the Premier League this season, only the sixth time Spurs have lost as many as 12 games from their first 22 matches and the first since 1997-98.

With Tottenham down in 15th place and closer to the relegation zone than the top half, Australian Postecoglou appears to be on increasingly thin ice with the club reportedly linked to several possible replacements.

He again lamented injuries after defeat at Everton, saying he only had 11 fit players to start the game after suffering another blow in the build-up with striker Dominic Solanke ruled out with an injury picked up in training.

Asked by Sky Sports whether his faith in his team was wavering, the 59-year-old said: "No it doesn't. If you look at the situation we're in, it will eventually dissipate. I certainly hope and believe it will."

"We'll give ourselves the opportunity to get consistency in performance and results. I certainly haven't lost belief or determination to turn it around and the players showed in the second half that they haven't either."

Tottenham have one only once in their last nine league games -- against bottom club Southampton -- and have lost seven in that period to slide down the table.

Speaking to reporters at Goodison Park, Postecoglou said he took responsibility for the latest defeat.

"It wasn't great the first half. I guess the majority of that is down to me. I changed the team and changed the structure," Postecoglou said. "We had a couple of setbacks in terms of player availability and we struggled to get control of the game and allowed Everton to capitalise on that. Obviously at halftime we had a mountain to climb. Fair play to the players, they kept going until the end."

Postecoglou, who is without a long list of injured first team players, said no new signings were imminent in the January transfer window and that his sole focus was on working with the players he has available to stop the rot.

"This is not about me, but what is about me right now is I have the responsibility of the group of players I do have, to try and get us through this," he said.

REUTERS

## Farris hails Inter's maturity in win over Empoli as title race heats up

MILAN

INTER Milan's assistant coach Massimiliano Farris praised his team's maturity in Sunday's 3-1 home victory over Empoli and said they were focusing on one match at a time.

With manager Simone Inzaghi serving a touchline ban for accumulating yellow cards, Farris led Inter to victory with goals from Lautaro Martinez, Denzel Dumfries and Marcus Thuram.

"The team had a very mature approach; it doesn't always mean coming out aggressively. We immediately found an Empoli side that focused on closing spaces at the back," he told reporters.

"Often, games are unlocked in the second half due to the work done in the first. And when Lautaro (Martinez) does what Lautaro does, there are no issues."

Farris added that they were not focusing on the table, with Inter three points behind Napoli at the Serie A summit but with a game in hand.

"We focus on the games to be played: before the match, we were six points behind, now it's three," he said. "Right now, we don't have time to look at the calendar, we only think about what needs to be done."

Goalscorer Martinez admitted that Napoli would be a tough challenge to overcome in the title race.

"It's going to be fascinating. We are three behind, we have a game in hand, but as always we need to focus on our own path, because Inter have to do better every single year," he told DAZN.

REUTERS

# Amorim labels his Man United team the worst in club's history

LONDON

MANCHESTER United manager Ruben Amorim labelled his side possibly the worst in the club's history after a 10th Premier League defeat of the season at home by Brighton & Hove Albion on Sunday.

United's 3-1 defeat leaves them in 13th place in the standings and on course for their lowest finish in the Premier League.

Brighton cruised to victory and United have now managed 11 points from a possible 33 since Amorim joined from Sporting in November. It is the first time since 1989-90 that they have lost 10 of their first 22 games of the league season.

"Imagine what this is (like) for a fan of Manchester United. Imagine what this is (like) for me," Amorim told Sky Sports. "We are getting a new coach that is losing more than the last coach (Erik ten Hag). I have full knowledge of that."

"(But) I am not going to change, no matter what. I know we can succeed, but we need to survive this moment. Because I'm not naive and I know that we need to survive now."

"We are being the worst team, maybe, in the history of Manchester United. I know that you want headlines, but I'm saying that because we have to acknowledge that and to change that. Here you go, your headlines."

The 20-times English champions are as close to the relegation zone as the top eight with 26 points from 22 games. Their worst finish in the Premier League era was last season when they ended in eighth.

Amorim suggested there will be more pain on the way for the team before the end of the season, as they prepare to host Rangers in the Europa League on Thursday before a trip to Fulham for their next Premier League fixture on Sunday.

"I'm not going to change how I see the game, I'm clear on that," he said. "The players are going to suffer, the fans are going to suffer, I'm sorry."

"I have one way of doing things but we need to survive this moment. It's very clear for everybody what we



Brighton & Hove Albion's Georginio Rutter scores their third goal against Manchester United during their Premier League match at Old Trafford, in Manchester, Britain on Sunday. Agencies

are going to do (tactically)."

United, who were last relegated from the top flight in 1974, have lost six of their opening 12 home league games, their worst record since 1893-94.

The one salvation for United fans might be that the last time they lost 10 of their first 22 games was under Alex Ferguson who went on to become the club's greatest manager with 13 Premier League titles.

Meanwhile, new Besiktas manager Ole Gunnar Solskjaer said Sunday he took the Turkish Super Lig club's job offer because it reminded him of his last managerial stint at Manchester United.

The 51-year-old Norwegian has agreed to a deal until the end of next season, with an option to extend for another year. It is his first managerial role since being sacked by United in 2021.

Solskjaer took over as Manchester United's caretaker manager in December 2018, with the team sixth in the standings, replacing Jose Mourinho (now Fenerbahce manager) for the remainder of the season.

The Norwegian earned a three-year deal after a run of 10 wins out of 13 league games. He guided United to third and second-place Premier League finishes and a Europa League final.

However, a poor run of form led to his departure in November 2021 with United in seventh place in the league standings. "I've been outside football for a little while, as a boss," Solskjaer told reporters.

"But I've been working in UEFA and I've been following football as well as this club... This project seems a little bit like Manchester United for me. We were sixth, then we become third and then second. And this is step by step."

"And of course we're here to win, so hopefully we can make it faster. But we have to be realistic. And yes, I had many offers, but as I said before, it had to be the right offer worth me moving away from my perfect life."

Besiktas, who have won the Turkish Super Lig title 16 times, are currently sixth in the standings. They have been without a permanent head coach since Giovanni van Bron-

ckhorst left in November.

"You need to feel that heartbeat racing again, because (you ask) 'do you have the energy?' and the project that the President and the board have been talking to me about it was the right thing I needed now," he added.

"I've been following United (since I left) and it's difficult when it goes down. You need to just turn the boat and hopefully we can turn the boat quickly here."

Solskjaer praised the club's young talent like Semih Kilicsoy (19-years-old) and Mustafa Hekimoglu (17). "A little bit unfair to compare with Erling Haaland," he added.

"Because Haaland is one of the best strikers in the world, but we will help them to become as good as they can get."

Solskjaer's side visit Mourinho's Fenerbahce in May in the Super Lig. Besiktas are 28th in the Europa League standings, a point off the play-off places, with two games left to play in the league phase.

REUTERS

## Man City are back, says Guardiola after Ipswich thrashing

IPSWICH, England

MANCHESTER City coach Pep Guardiola said his side were back to their old selves following a 6-0 demolition of Ipswich Town on Sunday that moved them into the Premier League top four.

City put their struggles over the last two months behind them as Phil Foden scored twice and set up another goal and Erling Haaland also got on the scoresheet in a much-needed win that moved them up to fourth on 38 points.

"We are really pleased, we are back to doing things that define this team for the last 10 years. Really pleased for the three points and to climb into qualification for the Champions League for next season," a beaming Guardiola told Sky Sports.

After some less-than-convincing efforts either side of Christmas, City finally found their groove against Ipswich, and the Spanish coach was impressed with how his side played.

"Much better, maybe not our best, but closer with the consistency we have in our game... everyone with the ball was clever, quicker, faster, everyone is related. You cannot be quick, wise and good if you are not connected defensively," Guardiola said.

For Ipswich, who remain in 18th place in the table on 16 points, the drubbing was a valuable footballing lesson.

"We didn't execute our gameplan how we wanted to. You can never write them off. It was always going to be tough, and we wanted to give a good account of ourselves - we probably didn't do that," defender Dara O'Shea said.

"We need to regroup, look back on our mistakes and go again. The main thing is to learn from it, and we cannot get too down on it. There is massive belief in this group and the club."

REUTERS



Manchester City's Phil Foden celebrates scoring their third goal against Ipswich Town during their Premier League match at Portman Road, in Ipswich, Britain on Sunday. REUTERS

Gwiji by David Chikoko



# SPORT

**Amorim labels his Man United team the worst in club's history**

COMPREHENSIVE REPORT, PAGE 19

## Coach Minziro: Solidarity key to Pamba Jiji's turnaround after mini transfer window

By Correspondent Nassir Nchimbi

DESPITE signing 11 players during the mini transfer window, including seven international stars, Pamba Jiji's head coach, Fred Felix 'Minziro,' remains cautious about the challenges ahead.

He emphasized that the team's success will depend on players understanding their responsibilities and fostering a spirit of solidarity.

During the transfer window, which closed on January 15, Pamba Jiji strengthened its squad by acquiring seven international players: strikers François Bakari, Mathew Tegis, Abdoulaye Camara, and Shassir Nahimana; goalkeeper Mohamed Camara; center-back Modou Camara; and winger Shariff Ibrahim.

The club also signed four local players: striker Habib Kyombo, attacking midfielders Deus Kaseke, Hamad Majimengi from Singida Black Stars, and Zabona Mayomba from Tanzania Prisons.

Pamba Jiji currently sit in 14th place in the league standings with 12 points after 16 matches, having won two, drawn six, and lost eight. They have scored just seven goals while conceding 16, highlighting their struggles in attack and defense.

The new signings, particularly in the attacking department, aim to address the team's finishing and chance-creation issues. However, Minziro (pictured) acknowledged the significant challenge of integrating the new players into the team in a short period.

Minziro is optimistic that the two-week break before the league resumes in February will provide enough time to prepare the squad for the challenges ahead.

"We will use these two weeks to ensure the players regain their form. I know we have new players in the squad, and it's not an easy task to integrate them in this short time, but we will fight," Minziro said.

He added: "Players need to understand their roles and responsibilities. I believe the new signings have been active in training with their previous clubs. The key now is to instruct them on our systems and get them ready to contribute."

Pamba Jiji face a daunting task in the second round of the season, with 14 matches to secure their place in the Premier League.

Minziro underlined the importance of collective effort, saying: "We have extra work to do. Both the coach and the players understand that we must ensure the team stays in the Premier League."

"With the players we've added and those already here, I am confident that with solidarity, we can turn things around," Minziro said.

With the CHAN tournament postponed until August, the Premier League will resume in February.

Pamba Jiji's next three fixtures include an away match against Dodoma Jiji, followed by home matches against Azam FC and Coastal Union.

## Ellie Mpanzu backed to come good in front of goal



By Correspondent Michael Mwebe

SIMBA head coach Fadlu Davids is optimistic that goals will eventually come for Ellie Mpanzu, despite the attacking midfielder's wastefulness in the 2-0 victory over CS Constantine last weekend.

While Mpanzu (pictured) missed three significant opportunities during the CAF Confederation Cup Group stage match at Benjamin Mkapa Stadium, his contributions were still pivotal to the team's success; he assisted Dennis Kibu's opening goal and played a crucial role in Leonel Ateba's second-half strike.

When asked about Mpanzu's struggles in front of goal, Davids highlighted the challenge of integrating new players into a cohesive attacking structure, where positional awareness and tactical flexibility are key.

"I'm very happy with Mpanzu. You know, it's difficult if you take a curriculum of six months and try to squeeze it all into a short space of time," he said.

Davids elaborated on the complexities of Mpanzu's role, stating: "Which position do I have to take? Do I have to be wide? Do I have to be inside? Do I have to make counter-movements?"

"I'm talking about the attacking structure, not even the defensive part. There's a lot of detail that goes into how we press, when we press, in which direction we press."

The coach expressed satisfaction with Mpanzu's adaptation to the team's system: "So I'm extremely happy how he's adapted, how he's come into the team. The goals will come."

"We can see the threat is there. Fantastic today for the first time maybe in the matches, making runs beyond the defence line."

Davids went on to emphasize Mpanzu's diverse skill set and is confident he is poised for a breakthrough in front of goal.

"He can receive it wide; he can receive it inside; he can go in one against one. And now finally we saw the runs in behind. The goals will come."

"He has so many attacking skills within his arsenal. So, it's just a matter of time. And when he does start scoring, I'm afraid he won't stop."

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*He has so many attacking skills within his arsenal. So, it's just a matter of time. And when he does start scoring, I'm afraid he won't stop*

## Davids praises Simba's maturity after victory over CS Constantine

By Correspondents Michael Mwebe & Seth Mapoli

SIMBA SC head coach Fadlu Davids commended his team's growing maturity following their decisive 2-0 win over CS Constantine, which secured their position as CAF Confederation Cup Group A winners.

Goals from Kibu Denis and Leonel Ateba maintained Simba's perfect home record in this season's tournament, propelling them into the knockout stages for the sixth time in seven years.

"First of all, I'd like to congratulate Constantine. We played them in the first match away in front of their home crowd. They are a good club with a well-structured team and strong coaching," Davids said.

He expressed pride in his squad's development: "I'm really happy with how my players have matured in this tournament. From the first match away to Al Ahli Tripoli to now, we've made significant strides as a group, both with and without the ball."

Davids highlighted his team's control throughout the game: "It was a very mature performance. We controlled all phases of the game - defensively when we didn't have the ball and offensively when we regained possession. The possession stats reflect our dominance when we had the ball."

"Well done to my players and the technical staff. They've done a fantastic job behind the scenes. From my coaches to the medical team, everyone played a part in this accomplished performance. I'm incredibly proud of my players today," he added.

Reflecting on the match, Davids said: "The first-half performance was fantastic. We executed our plan to push Constantine onto the back foot, play in their half, and create chances. Of course, there are always moments when you don't score."

"At halftime, we corrected a few key details. We started the second half with even greater intensity, pushing our center-backs higher and maintaining relentless pressure. Wave after wave, we kept them pinned despite not having our fans in the stadium."

Davids emphasized his satisfac-



Simba SC wingback Shomari Kapombe is fouled by a CS Constantine defender during their CAF Confederation Cup Group A clash at Benjamin Mkapa Stadium on Sunday. Simba emerged victorious with a 2-0 win. Photo courtesy of Simba SC.

tion with the team's display: "That's exactly how we want to play football - to dominate, to keep the opposition in their half, and prevent counter-attacks."

"With our fans behind us, I believe we would have been even more dominant. It could easily have been 5-6 goals. It was a complete performance, and I'm incredibly proud."

Meanwhile, CS Constantine head coach Kheireddine Madoui commended Simba for their performance, acknowledging the hosts' dominance in the second half.

"In the first half, we managed to contain them, but the second half belonged to Simba. After they scored the first goal, my players lost concentration, allowing them to score the second," Madoui said.

The Algerian tactician, who was once linked with a move to Young Africans,

added: "Simba deserved the victory today."

Simba SC and CS Constantine had already secured their spots in the CAF Confederation Cup quarterfinals before the match, making this encounter a battle for Group A supremacy.

Simba's victory confirmed their position as group leaders, while Constantine finished second.

The two sides now join other group winners and runners-up, including defending champions Zamalek (Egypt), RS Berkane (Morocco), Al Masry (Egypt), ASEC Mimosas (Ivory Coast) and USM Alger (Algeria), as well as Stellenbosch (South Africa).

With Simba topping Group A, the Tanzanian giants now turn their focus to the knockout stages, where they aim to build on their impressive form and pursue a deep run in the competition.

## Flexibles by David Chikoko



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