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National Pg 3
ZRB to enhance revenue collections



National Pg 4
'Grab opportunities from tarmac road'



National Pg 6
PS pushes for more milk consumption



Newly appointed Law Reform Commission of Tanzania executive secretary Griffin Mwakapeje (L), Finance and Planning ministry permanent secretary Dr Natu El-Maamry Mwamba (C) and Bank of Tanzania governor Emmanuel Tutuba take the leadership ethics oath before President Samia Suluhu Hassan at Chamwino State House in Dodoma Region yesterday. Photo: State House

Treasury reveals in expectations with new BoT governor, PMG

By Guardian Reporter, Dodoma

SENIOR officials of the Finance and Planning ministry were yesterday in a pensive mood as to new directions in ministerial work following changes of guard in the Bank of Tanzania (BoT) and the ministry itself.

President Samia Suluhu Hassan yesterday swore in the new central bank governor as well as the permanent secretary, where experienced permanent secretary Emmanuel Tutuba takes over as BoT governor to replace Prof Florens Luoga - who has retired.

Dr Natu El-Maamry Mwamba comes in as Treasury permanent secretary, while Griffin Mwakapeje was sworn in as executive secretary of the Tanzania Law Review Commission.

The swearing-in ceremony was held at Dodoma's Chamwino State House.

Until the new appointment, Mwakapeje was legal services director in the Constitutional and Legal Affairs minister, while Dr Mwamba was a BoT deputy governor.

New paymaster general (PMG) Dr Mwamba

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'Idle plots sully urban landscapes, revenues'

By Guardian Reporter

UNDEVELOPED plots mar the urban landscape and diminish the scope of the government to earn revenue, the responsible minister has alerted.

Dr Angeline Mabula, the Lands, Housing and Human Settlements Development minister issued this directive yesterday in Dar es Salaam at a task force meeting working on the programme to formalise unplanned settlements.

She directed government agencies that plan, survey and formalise land occupancy ought to identify plots that have not been developed in urban areas to hand them over to other people who are ready to develop them.

Addressing officials of companies conducting surveys and processing land formalization procedures in Dar es Salaam zone, she said that after identifying those areas, the list of plots should be submitted to her office for preparing the required

permits for their seizure, she stated, similarly emphasizing that municipal authorities make sure urban development plans abide by major land use plans.

"If the plot was earmarked for constructing a ten storey building, then it should not be built to 20 storeys and if it was for a two storey building, only two storeys should be built," she stated.

Plans for grand urban development have already been issued, hence construction should abide by the plans, the minister underlined, to a gathering featuring top officials of the regional administration and city municipalities.

The formalisation of unplanned settlements is a legal requirement in the 1999 Land Act, Section 56-60 as well as the 2007 Urban Planning Act Section 23, she said.

The 1995 national land policy recognises unplanned settlements, with a proviso that they are re-planned for improvement through inclusive plans except those in hazardous

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School building, renovation to use 1.1trn/-this fiscal year

By Guardian Correspondent, Morogoro

A TOTAL of 1.1trn/- has been set aside for building and renovating primary schools to improve pre-primary and primary education, to be used during this financial year.

Angella Kairuki, the Regional Administration and Local Governments state minister at the President's Office, made this observation here yesterday at a working session to evaluate performance of initiatives to improve education delivery for 2022 and plans for this year.

Project implementation starts early



From January to June the government will issue 600m/- for construction of one secondary school in each council

next month with some schools being rebuilt, with intention to make noting that implementation of the programme will help make the country's primary schools safer, more inclusive and friendly.

There is also a component for enhancing teachers' capacities in delivering course content, she said, affirming that improving dilapidated facilities will make pupils feel more comfortable with the environment, easing concentration ability.

Reaffirming government concern with school conditions, she said some of them require major renovations, having been

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VP to lead tree planting drive in Revolution event

By Correspondent Valentine Oforo, Dodoma

VICE President Dr Philip Mpango is expected to lead tree planting exercise on Thursday along the Dodoma-Morogoro highway.

Dr Selemani Jafo, the Union and Environment state minister at VPO, made this observation here yesterday in a media briefing on environmental protection aspects in marking 59 years of the Zanzibar Revolution on Thursday, January 12.

Tree planting is one among official highlights in marking the Zanzibar

Revolution, he said, urging regional secretariats and local governments, plus environmental stakeholders across the country need to think of such initiatives.

They ought to supplement diverse initiatives by the government to find solutions for effects of climate change, the minister declared.

He praised Zanzibar President Dr Hussein Ali Mwinyi for having cancelled national events for this year's anniversary, directing that the funds meant for the event be used to speed up various development projects, citing education and health sectors in particular.

The environment portfolio takes inspiration from that move to prepare a schedule of events in the days leading to the commemoration, he said, noting that the Zanzibar and Union governments will this year mark the revolution by engaging in various activities including tree planting.

Regional and districts authorities need to use the current rains to plant trees to take care of the environment, offsetting the

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Fatuma Kiravu (L), a teacher at Mdote Primary School in Muheza District, pictured taking her Standard One pupils through their very first class yesterday - the day most schools countrywide reopened for the 2023 academic year. Photo: Correspondent Steven William



'Idle plots sully urban landscapes, revenues'

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areas, she further noted.

Dar es Salaam Region is an important zone in the ongoing land formalisation exercise, with 86 land surveying firms working on the matter in 272 allotted areas in five districts, as around a quarter of the total land formalisation exercise is conducted in Dar es Salaam region, she stated.

So far a total of 554,738 land plots are listed for formalisation, with survey work on 108, 193 plots already done, amounting to a fifth

School building, renovation to use 1.1trn/-this fiscal year

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built decades ago.

The government expects to spend 1.2trn/-to build 1,026 new secondary schools in 1,000 wards as well as 26 boarding schools, in the next five years, she said, citing the project as part of the secondary education quality improvement project (SEQUIP), working to improve the provision of secondary education.

In 2021 a total of 232 secondary schools were built in various wards with ten more girls boarding schools being built at present, she stated.

During fiscal 2022/2023 the government expects to construct 184 new secondary schools for wards lacking such facilities in each district or town council, along with five girls' boarding schools in five regions.

"From January to June the government will issue 600m/- for construction of one secondary school in each council," she said, noting that this will take into account the level of demand in targeted wards.

The minister appealed to regional authorities to increase the pace of registering nursery and primary school pupils to achieve intended

of the total, she affirmed.

Dr Allan Kijazi, the permanent secretary, said the task force meeting will submit recommendations on strategies prepared to solve challenges impeding the formalisation exercise in the commercial capital.

The task force work has taken up Dar es Salaam region first on account of its population and economic diversity, contributing 8.5 per cent of total GDP, while 23 per cent of all formalised land plots are located in Dar es Salaam, he added.

targets if possible by 100 percent.

"We need to ensure that all school aged children are identified and registered to commence schooling. No one should be left home as the government is facilitating free education," she emphasised.

Vicent Kayombo, head of the education management unit in the ministry, said the policy has increased the number of pupils in schools, at nursery and primary school level, now being felt among those seeking form one places.

Yet there are challenges as some pupils have been completing standard seven with clear deficiencies in reading, writing and arithmetic, he said, stressing the need for more focus and investment in literacy and numeracy.

Upwards of 20 percent of primary school leavers fail to continue with secondary education, which discourages government efforts, he said.

Regional Commissioner Fatma Mwasa said the region had until January 6 school return to attain its goals, registering 74,578 pupils to start nursery school and 37,342 enrolled for standard one. This is a 94.5 percent achievement, she added.

VP to lead tree planting drive in Revolution event

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negative effects of climate change, he said, noting that the ministry was arranging a tree planting exercise along the highway from Dodoma to Morogoro.

Along with the Environment

Minister Ndaki calls for stern measures on livestock killers

By Guardian Correspondent, Tarime

MINISTER for Livestock and Fisheries, Mashimba Ndaki has instructed authorities in Tarime District, Mara Region to take legal measures for wardens in Serengeti National Park who were allegedly killed four cows.

The livestock are claimed to have entered the park in Tarime District and the wardens shot them to death which is against prevention of cruelty to Animals Act.

He made the directives here during the weekend when he visited and conducted public rallies with residents of the wards bordering the park, where he received a number of complaints on unlawful acts which were being implemented by some wardens of the park.

Some of the villages include Nyanungu, Gibaso, Goronga, Kuibuse, Nyabirongo, and Karangatonga in the wars of Nyanungu, Gibaso, Kwihancha and Itiry. The minister was accompanied by the Tarime Rural legislator, Mwita Waitara and councilors of the wards.

Ndaki said that his ministry will not tolerate unlawful acts against animals conducted by some dishonest wardens in Serengeti National Park and recently alleged shooting a number of cows and killing others.

He said that if the residents have been violating the Park's rules, then there are legal processes that need to be followed to punish them instead of hurting animals. "It is

portfolio, other departments will be involved, with Dr Pindi Chana, the Natural Resources and Tourism minister, expected to participate in the exercise alongside the regional commissioner, Rosemary Senyamule, he added.

He called for fellow ministers including the one responsible for Natural Resources and Tourism as well as minister for Land, Housing and Settlement Development to sit together with experts from the ministry of livestock and discuss how to address the challenge facing residents living near the Serengeti National Park.

MP Waitara said majority of residents in the wards bordering the park are living a vulnerable life due to illegal operations conducted by officers of the park which include shooting their livestock as well as nationalizing many after seizing them.

He said that the residents have been also grappling to overcome wildlife attacks in their farms and settlements destroying crops and properties.

"Officers from the Land Unit came in the wards and villages and put boundary beacons so as to bar livestock from entering in the park, but residents have been experiencing torture from the park's wardens even if they are found grazing animals or conducting activities outside the set boundary," he explained.

He commended minister Ndaki for taking the measures and called for other ministries to act on the matter so as to rescue the situation.



National Assembly Speaker Dr Tulia Ackson (in glasses), who is also Mbeya Urban legislator, consoles Igawilo residents yesterday in the wake of massive destruction of property in the ward caused by floods. Photo: Correspondent Grace Mwakalinga

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has for years lectured at the University of Dar es Salaam and chaired the board of directors of the Kilimanjaro Airports Development Company (KADCO).

Dr Mwigulu Nchemba, the Finance and Planning minister, has assured the newly sworn-in PS/PMG that the ministry's staff were ready to offer all the support she would need to conduct her duties to satisfaction.

At a meeting held here to welcome the new PS after the State House ceremony, the minister said: "Let me assure you that this is an excellent team to work with. There

Treasury reveals in expectations with new BoT governor, PMG

are people who are experts in their areas of operations."

Dr Mwamba expressed gratitude for the show of support, pleading for high working standards to achieve the intended goals.

She made reference to the importance of changes in the technological environment, saying that Treasury officials have to be innovative, always seeking to equip themselves with new skills to

perform more efficiently.

"Equipping yourself with new skills doesn't necessarily mean that you should go for further studies, maybe Master's or PhD, but various applications or new available designs to improve your performance," she said.

Treasury deputy permanent secretaries Jenifa Omolo and Lawrence Mafuru meanwhile assured the new PS/PMG of

cooperation and the sharing of expertise.

Leonard Mkude and Athumani Mbutuka, accountant general and internal auditor general, respectively, lauded the new PS for her abilities and experience.

They expressed high expectations of her guidance in helping the ministry supervise policies implementation and project execution as expected.



Zanzibar President Dr Hussein Ali Mwinyi unveils plaque yesterday to launch Matumbaku and Miembeni sports grounds, built by the Zanzibar government with International Monetary Fund Covid-19 financial support. The event was part of the run-up to the climax of the 59th anniversary of the January 12 Zanzibar Revolution. Photo: State House

OSHA urges employers to ensure safe workplaces

By Guardian Correspondent, Arusha

THE Occupational Safety and Health Authority (OSHA) has urged employers to create better working environment to match with local and international standards and requirements.

OSHA's acting director of business services Netiwe Mhando made the call yesterday during a consultation meeting between the ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism and stakeholders.

She said OSHA was among the

institutions invited to attend the meeting to respond to issues raised by stakeholders on the implementation of the Occupational Health and Safety Act, 2003.

She said during the IIO labour conferences which was held in June last year in Geneva, Switzerland occupational safety was a key point of discussion.

He said the meeting also developed resolutions which are supposed to be implemented by International Labor Organisation

(ILO)'s member countries.

He said the organization is ready to address the challenges raised by stakeholders including lack of inspection dates which affects service delivery.

"In the next season, stakeholders in the tourism sector will be inspected at a time when there is a low season so that there are no challenges to service delivery," she said.

Acting OSHA director general, Dr Jerome Materu, said the agency is working on implementing

directives by the doing business blueprint which has also removed 11 levies which were seen as nuisance to business.

"After removing the levies we now visit stakeholders through various stakeholders so that we understand their challenges so that we can address them," he said.

Dr Materu said during a time when Tanzania has received a huge number of tourists through the Royal Tour, it is important to let stakeholders understand occupation safety issues.



Works and Transport minister Prof Makame Mbarawa (C) and Kigoma regional commissioner Thobias Andengeny (to his left) witness yesterday's signing of a contract for the construction of a lounge for passengers, roads and a control tower at Kigoma Airport. Photo: Correspondent Shukuru Senkoro

RC calls for improvement of revenue to facilitate implementation of projects

By Guardian Correspondent, Kibaha

COAST regional commissioner, Abubakar Kunenge has called for strengthened collection of revenues in the region to facilitate implementation of projects which have been stalled due to lack of funds.

Kunenge said despite the region leading in industries, its contribution to the Gross Domestic Product remains at 1-percent.

Speaking at a regional consultative meeting said this has resulted from the fact most investors pay their taxes and other levies to other regions.

He said to contain the challenge, there is need for investors not to pay taxes in regions which their offices are located but instead pay where their industries are located to ensure the Coast region also gains and contribute to national development.

He called for district councils to formulate other sources of revenue

and control loopholes for revenue losses to ensure the stalled projects are implemented.

Earlier when speaking during the meeting, the planning officer for the region Rukia Muwango said in the 2022/23 financial year, the region approved a 335.110bn/- budget in which 206bn/- was meant for expenditures and 80bn/- for implementing various development projects.

Out of the money, 48bn/- was from internal sources adding that the region's annual budget increased by 36bn/- which is equivalent to 12.14percent compared to 2021/22.

He said the increased was due to rise in salaries by 19.38percent and other expenditures by 21.82percent adding that internal revenues also increased by 23.33percent.

He added that the region was facing challenges of worn out transport materials such as vehicles and motorcycles which makes movement within the region a problem.

By Guardian Reporter, Zanzibar

ZANZIBAR Second Vice President Hemed Suleiman Abdulla has called on the Zanzibar Revenue Board (ZRB) to formulate robust electronic systems that will help to enhance revenue collection.

Hemed made the remarks here yesterday when opening a meeting that evaluated SRP performance for the period July-December last year.

He said the government needs revenue to run its development projects as well as for the Isles economic growth hence robust revenue collection system will help to raise revenue collection for the national interest.

He showered praise on ZRB for

Zanzibar 2nd VP calls on ZRB to enhance revenue collection

the achievements realised so far on revenue collection but stressed on more efforts and accountability to expand revenue collection base.

The VP said ZRB officials have the responsibility to oversee existing laws and procedures to attain their set targets.

He added that revenue collection needs high discipline by respecting government funds and called on the

officials to be faithful and patriotic to the nation.



...the government believes in low tax concept to taxpayers so that every trader and individual eligible to pay tax, fully does so

He also called on them to educate and supervise taxpayers to pay

taxes in accordance to the laws.

However, he added that the government believes in low tax concept to taxpayers so that every trader and individual eligible to pay tax, fully does so.

For his part, the Minister of state in the President's Office, Dr Sada Mkuya Salum said the achievements attained by the Board are a result of directives

from top government officials and pledged to continue enforcing the given directives to attain President Hussein Mwinyi's goals in building a new Zanzibar.

ZRB Commissioner Yusuf Juma Mwenda said the meeting aims to self-assess the Board's half year performance and plan for robust strategies to develop the Board's activities.



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CALL FOR APPLICATION FOR CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS TO SUPPORT IMPLEMENTATION OF MTOTO KWANZA PROJECT ACROSS 16 REGIONS OF TANZANIA MAINLAND

Tanzania Early Childhood Development Network (TECDEN) is a national umbrella network of Early Childhood Development (ECD) Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) working to promote Early Childhood Development in Tanzania by influencing change in policies, programs, and practices. Our work aims to impact children's holistic development, inspired by a vision of **a society where all children are developmentally on track to reach their full potential**. TECDEN has been in operation since 2000 and is a leading platform for ECD dialogue coordination among civil society, government, and other stakeholders, for more info see: <https://www.tecden.or.tz/>.

TECDEN in partnership with Children in Crossfire (CiC) secured funding from the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation to deliver a three years project from 2022 to 2024 to catalyse the implementation of the launched National Multisectoral ECD Programme (NM-ECDP) 2021/22-2025/26 across national and sub-national levels.

The Mtoto Kwanza Project is implemented in partnership between TECDEN, CiC, and the Union of Tanzania Press Clubs (UTPC) across all 26 regions in **two phases**. Currently, Mtoto Kwanza is moving into phase II with 16 regions these are **Singida, Shinyanga, Mwanza, Geita, Mara, Katavi, Simiyu, Kilimanjaro, Tanga, Pwani, Mtwara, Ruvuma, Njombe, Iringa, Kigoma, and Songwe**. **TECDEN is looking for one focal CSO from each mentioned region** above to support project implementation. Interested CSOs from these regions are invited to apply by downloading Call for **Application and Application Form** at: <https://www.tecden.or.tz/>.

Interested Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) should send a filled Application Form to TECDEN through: ecdnetwork@gmail.com indicating in the subject line: "**Name of the Region - Name of the CSO Application**". All application documents should be in a **single pdf format**.

Only those CSOs shortlisted will be contacted for the next step of the recruitment process

The closing time for receipts of applications is 23:00hrs on Sunday 22nd January 2023, local time in Tanzania

Court adjourns economic sabotage case in relation to illegal possession of ivory tusks worth over 4.6bn/-

By Guardian Correspondent Zuwena

Shame

THE Kisumu Resident Magistrate's Court yesterday adjourned the economic sabotage case involving nine suspects who were found in illegal possession of 660 pieces of ivory tusks worth over 4.6bn/-.

Senior Resident Magistrate, Rhoda Ngimilanga adjourned the case until January 30th, 2023 when it will come up for another mention.

The accused are Solomon Mtenya, Ally Sharif, Yohana Yongola, Victor Mawalla, Haruna Kassa, Abbas Hassan, Mussa Ligagabile, Khalifan Kahengele and Ismail Kassa.

State Attorney Tumaini Mafuru requested the court to adjourn the case claiming the state attorneys who are handling the case could not appear at the court because they have other assignments.

The accused are facing three charges of leading an organised crime, unlawful dealing in trophies and possession of government trophies contrary to the Wildlife Conservation Act and Organised

Crime Control Act.

It was alleged that on diverse dates between April 6th and June 23rd, 2022 within Dar es Salaam, the accused organised, managed, supervised and financed a criminal racket by buying, accepting, transporting and possessing government trophies (660 pieces of elephant tusks) valued \$2,105,181, (about 4.6bn/-) property of the government.



State Attorney Tumaini Mafuru requested the court to adjourn the case claiming the state attorneys who are handling the case could not appear at the court because they have other assignments

Take ownership of development projects, Z'bar 1st VP urges citizens

By Guardian Reporter, Zanzibar

ZANZIBAR First Vice President Othman Masoud Othman has urged leaders and citizens to put solid strategies to protect development projects which the government was putting great effort into implementing.

According to him, residents need to take ownership of the projects by taking good care of them so as to benefit them and future generations.

He made the call yesterday at an event to lay a foundation stone of a Water Tank in the Masinginbi area, West 'A' District in Unguja.

He said that the government has been investing heavily in implementing development projects so as to improve the welfare of citizens, something which needs to be supported by protecting them.

"For example this water project which we are laying a foundation stone to facilitate its implementation, is a continuation of the government's efforts to bring development to its people, the project will bring relief in the area and stimulate economic and social activities, so we should ensure that it is protected," he said.

The First Vice President acknowledged that there are some areas which are still grappling to access clean and safe water but the government is pioneering to address the challenge through implementation of various projects.

He said that once completed, the project will benefit residents in Masingini, Dole, Dimani, Kwarara Kidutani, Mkorogo, Mfenesini and Maungani shehias who have been facing water blues for years.

"We are very good in implementing a good number of development projects, but the challenge remains in maintaining them and ensuring that they are protected so as to last long and benefit more generations," he explained.

Othman further wanted the water department and responsible leaders to ensure that they set strong strategies and implement policies on proper use of water by barring massive and unnecessary usage of the precious liquid.

He said that the West part of Zanzibar is good by having enough water sources but massive deforestation was threatening the

sustainability of the sources.

"Residents have cleaned the forests and established settlements, something which has destroyed nature and biodiversity making the areas start facing impacts of climate change," he said.

Dr Salha Mohammed Kassim, Director General of the Zanzibar Water Authority (ZAWA) said the project is implemented through a loan by the India's Exim Bank and will be constructed collaboratively by three contractors.

She said the project will be implemented in three phases where a total of 64 water wells will be constructed thus improving water access to the villages.

The DG said a total of 2.5bn/- will be spent to compensate residents whose prosperities have been destroyed through the implementation of the project.

The director of the project from India's LST Company said the implementation of the project was progressing well calling on the government and responsible authorities to fast-track issuance of tools that are imported for the implementation of the project.



For example this water project which we are laying a foundation stone to facilitate its implementation, is a continuation of the government's efforts to bring development to its people, the project will bring relief in the area and stimulate economic and social activities, so we should ensure that it is protected



Khadija Hamisi of Suguti village in Musoma District dries sardines in a specially prepared area free from sand. Photo: Correspondent Sabato Kasika

Grab economic opportunities from tarmac road construction in Kigoma Region - call

By Guardian Reporter, Kigoma

WORKS and Transport minister Prof Makame Mbarawa has appealed to Kigoma Region residents to utilise opportunities in the infrastructures construction including tarmac roads by working hard for economic growth.

Prof Mbarawa said the construction of ships in Lake Tanganyika, the Standard Gauge Railway (SGR) and improvement to the Kigoma airport are

government's intentions to open the region to the world, "hence it would be better for the people to utilise these opportunities by working hard to attain development."

"Nearly 400km of tarmac roads are being built in the region and the aim of the government is to make sure transport services in all areas are improved to provide all opportunities in economic activities, including agriculture and trade," stressed Prof Mbarawa.

Witnessing the signing of the agreement for the construction of the 47.0km Kibondo-Mabamba road at tarmac level, he assured all residents who was touched by the project to be compensated according to the laws.

"We shall not undermine anyone, as compensation is a legal requirement, all those eligible will be paid accordingly," her added.

Meanwhile, TAROADS Chief Executive Officer, Eng Rogatus Mativila said the Kibondo-

Mabamba road will join Kigoma Region to Kagera, Geita and neighbouring Burundi through Gitega hence its completion will sour trade opportunities in the country's western zone.

He said the contractor is CHICO from China and construction work will take 24 months till completion and approximately 63.7bn/- will be spent.

Earlier, Kigoma Regional Commissioner Thobias Andengenyé thanked the government for the big investment in Kigoma Region and pledged to mobilise the people to take care of the infrastructure to last long.



Muheza Officer Commanding District Hadija Sokolo (R) pictured yesterday moments after planting a tree at Mang'anya Police Station in the district. Photo: Correspondent Steven William

Singida Region launches huge tree planting campaign

By Guardian Correspondent, Singida

SINGIDA Region has implemented the directive from President Samia Suluhu Hassan to protect the country's water sources by launching a huge tree planting campaign led by the Regional Commissioner, Peter Serukamba.

The campaign goes in tandem with the slogan 'every household should plant four trees on all sides of the building.'

Speaking at the launching event, at the weekend, Serukamba said the

aim is to make the region green and protecting the environment.

He added that the responsibility of this generation is to make sure it protects the coming generation by conserving the environment hence it is the responsibility of everyone to plant trees and take care of them.

He said the target of the region is to plant three million trees and that the campaign is sustainable and every district will do the same.

Meanwhile, Singida District Executive Director, Eliya Digha said

as council with 84 villages will make sure they are mobilised so that every person plants a tree from four tree onwards with the main aim to solve drought challenges facing the district.

Earlier, Singida Urban Water and sanitation Authority (SUWASA) Manager, Sebastian Warioba thanked President Samia for mobilising environmental conservation and for protecting water sources and called upon the residents to plant and protect trees. Danford Samson, an official from

Central Basin Water Board said they have participated in the launching of the campaign in order to make sure water sources are protected.

He said they will also visit every water source area to demarcate them and erecting sign boards to ward off invaders.

The campaign is part of the celebrations to mark 60 years since the Singida Region was established in 1962 and its apex will be held on October 15 this year under the slogan 'Singida is Ours, Work Should Go On.'



MV Kazi pontoon back in business yesterday across the Magogoni-Kigamboni creek in Dar es Salaam, after undergoing 4.4bn/- rehabilitation at the city's Songoro Marine Transport boatyard. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

MV Kazi resumes services after major refurbishment

By Guardian Reporter

THE MV Kazi ferry has officially resumed operations between Magogoni and Kigamboni following completion of major refurbishments costing over 4.4bn/-.

The ferry was removed from service to undergo scheduled refurbishments in June last year by Songoro Marine Transport at its Kigamboni boatyard in Dar es Salaam.

In the Five Year Development Plan for 2020-25, President Samia Suluhu Hassan gave various pledges to the people including improving the country's ferry services to alleviate ferry transport challenges in various areas.

The Works and Transport Ministry, through its agency -- Tanzania Electrical, Mechanical and Electronics Services Agency (TEMESA) has vowed to implement the pledges in making sure all ferries in the country are safe and reliable for services by refurbishing existing ferries and buying new ones.

When the country attained its Independence in 1961 there were no ferries that were mechanically run. A few of them were pulled by cables in some areas including the one at Utete on Rufiji River, Kigongoni (Ruvu River), Kisauke (Wami River), Kirumi (Kirumi River) and Ruhuhu (Ruhuhu River).

Since independence, the government has so far purchased nearly 29 ferries.

Out of the 29, six were sent to new areas that had no reliable ferry transport including Chato (MV Chato), Kome (MV Kome), Ukara (MV Nyerere), Kyanyabasa (M.V. Kyanyabasa), Kilambo and Msangamkuu.

The MV kazi ferry has been refurbished in accordance to approved international IMO standards by abiding to the Safety regulations governed by the Shipping Merchant Act manged

by Tanzania Shipping Agency Corporation (TASAC) that has made inspections and approved the ferry as being safe for carrying passengers, cargo including motor vehicles.

The completion of the MV Kazi refurbishment will improve transport services for both people and goods thereby improving the economic activities for Kigamboni residents.

In 2022/23 Financial Year, the Works and Transport ministry, through TEMESA is implementing various projects on ferries and infrastructures thereof.

The refurbishment on MV Kazi involved fitting of four new engines, and major repairs to its propulsion units, the ferry's gangways, replacing worn-out top roofs, replacing the water and fuel pipe systems, fitting modern navigating equipment including new life saving equipment according to international IMO standards.

MV Kazi has the capacity to carry 800 passengers and 22 vehicles, equivalent to 170 tonnes.



Out of the 29, six were sent to new areas that had no reliable ferry transport including Chato (MV Chato), Kome (MV Kome), Ukara (MV Nyerere), Kyanyabasa (M.V. Kyanyabasa), Kilambo and Msangamkuu

1, 442 teachers in Arusha given tablets in new drive to improve education in region

By Guardian Correspondent, Arumeru

ABOUT 1, 442 Secondary and Primary teachers within Arusha district council in Arumeru district have been given tablets in a special programme aimed at facilitating teaching and improving education in the region.

Speaking when he handed over the tablets, District Commissioner for Arumeru Richard Ruyango urged the teachers to use the digital

appliances carefully to achieve the intended goals including improving the teaching profession in the district. "The government has seen the importance of giving digital tools to teachers but they have a role to keep them safe for the purpose of the intended goals," he said.

The Chairman for Arusha Seleman Msumi said the tablets are supposed to be used as per directives as they are a public property and will be administered

by the Public Procurement laws.

He, however said the teachers will use the tablets to get teaching materials such as videos, audios, text books and other teaching related documents.

Head of Primary Education Salvatory Alute hailed the government for the move and vowed to ensure the protection of the digital tools so that they are used to improve education in the region.

"We believe that the use of technology will be the game changer in the teaching profession as it will allow the teacher to gain knowledge including evaluation, and new teaching methods which are in line with the changing world.

He commended President Samia Suluhu Hassan for seeing the importance of giving the digital tools to teachers saying this will facilitate teaching hence improve education in the region.

Deputy minister asks villagers to take care of telcom towers

By Guardian Reporter

KUNDO Mathew, Deputy Information and Information Technology minister has called on Mkula Ward residents in Katurukila Village in Kilombero District, Morogoro Region to take care of the communications infrastructures in their areas as these will assist in providing employment as well as contributing to the village government' revenues.

In addition, the government, though Universal Communications Service Access Fund (UCSAF) has been spending a lot of funds to construct the

infrastructures, adding that the cost for constructing a communication tower is close to 300m/- depending on the area.

The deputy minister made the remarks at the weekend as he was addressing Katurukila Village residents during his visit to inspect the availability of communications services in the area, adding that the government vows to construct telcom towers to solve the existing communications challenges.

"The towers will be constructed in your district hence make sure you guard them, guards should be drawn from villages and managed by village governments," said the

deputy minister.

Godfrey Kipandfa, Mkuya village resident from Ipangalala Ward said the telcom towers in their areas will not only will provide them with communications services, but will also enable the people earn money by selling their land plots for their construction.

Meanwhile, Frank Mbise, Ifakara Town resident said "the towers will help the people living near them get employment."

He thanked the government for the investment in their villages as they will start enjoying communications services for boosting their economic activities.



Dr Selemani Jafo (R) , Minister of State in the Vice President's Office (Union and Environment), pictured yesterday inspecting 12 classrooms built at Wete's Piki Secondary School on Pemba Island as part of the run-up to the climax of the 59th anniversary of the January 12 Zanzibar Revolution. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

TANZANIA LOCAL GOVERNMENT WORKERS UNION



Tender No. TALG/PROC/0034/2022

For

PRINTING AND DISTRIBUTION OF UMBRELLAS

Invitation for Tenders

Tanzania Local Government Workers Union (TALGWU) has set aside funds for the operation of the financial year 2023. It is intended that part of the proceeds of the fund will be used to cover eligible payment under the contract for the **PRINTING AND DISTRIBUTION OF UMBRELLAS**

1. TALGWU now invites sealed tenders from eligible Suppliers for

S/N	LOTNO.	Description	Unit	Quantity
01	01	PRINTING AND DISTRIBUTION OF UMBRELLAS	Pcs	90,000

2. Tendering will be conducted through the National Competitive Tendering procedures specified in the TALGWU Procurement Manual of 2018, and is open to all Tenderers.

3. Interested eligible Tenders may obtain further information from the office of the Tanzania Local Government Workers Union (TALGWU), Procurement Management Unit (PMU), P.O. Box 16097 Dar es salaam, located at Plot No 65 Block T' Chang'ombe Temeke Municipality opposite National Stadium Dar es salaam from 08:00am to 04:00 pm on Mondays to Fridays inclusive except on public holidays.

4. A complete set of Tendering Document(s) in the English Language and additional sets may be purchased by interested Tenderers on the submission of a written application to the address given under paragraph 4 above and upon payment of a non-refundable fee of Tzs 100,000/= by depositing at NMB Bank account number 20606600115 payable to KATIBU MKUU TALGWU.

5. All tenders must be accompanied by a Tender Security of 2% of the bid price.

6. All applications, one original plus TWO COPIES properly filled in, and enclosed in plain envelopes must be delivered to Tanzania Local Government Workers Union (TALGWU), Procurement Management Unit (PMU), P.O. Box 16097, Dar es Salaam, located at Plot No 65 Block T Chang'ombe Temeke Municipality opposite National Stadium Dar es salaam before or at 10:00am Tuesday on 7th February, 2023. Applications will be opened promptly thereafter in public and in the presence of Applicants' representatives who choose to attend in the opening ceremony.

7. Late Tenders, Portion of Tenders, Electronic Tenders, Tenders not received, Tenders not opened and not read out in public at the tender opening ceremony shall not be accepted for evaluation irrespective of the circumstances.

Rashid M. Mtima

GENERAL SECRETARY
TANZANIA LOCAL GOVERNMENT WORKERS UNION

Z'bar minister hopes processing plant will induce an increase in availability of honey

By Guardian Reporter, Zanzibar

ZANZIBAR Minister for Land and Housing Development Rahma Kassim Ali has said the presence of a honey processing plant will strengthen availability of the product and ensure a reliable market.

She was speaking at the launch of a honey processing factory in Kizimbani Unguja, Western District as part of celebrations to mark the 59th anniversary of the Zanzibar Revolution.

She said construction of the factory will help small entrepreneurs to increase income and employment for various groups including youth and women.

He said that construction of such factories is important for both Unguja and Pemba islands as the government is determined to enhance economic investments for improved welfare of the people.

"The factories will help to empower citizens, especially women as they will have a reliable market for their products," she said, calling upon the residents and leaders to ensure good use of the buildings so they last longer.

Earlier, Minister of State, President's Office, Labour, Economic Affairs, and Investment Mudrik Ramadhani Suraga asked entrepreneurs to produce the best honey to be able to penetrate international markets.

"If you produce good quality honey, you will be able to penetrate markets outside Tanzania. The government is determined to ensure

people get development through this sub-sector," said Suraga.

Permanent Secretary, President's Office, Works and Economic Empowerment, Maryam Abdalla Juma said construction of the 236m/- honey processing factory started March last year.

She informed that in an effort to empower people economically, a total of 753 entrepreneurs from Unguja and Pemba, including 280 men and 473 women were trained on beekeeping.

She said the entrepreneurs were also provided with modern beekeeping equipment worth 625m/-.

One of the entrepreneurs, Faraja Ali Hassan thanked the government for training them as well as construction of a plant which will add value to their products.



If you produce good quality honey, you will be able to penetrate markets outside Tanzania. The government is determined to ensure people get development through this sub-sector

PS urges Z'bar residents to increase milk consumption

By Guardian Reporter, Zanzibar

PERMANENT Secretary in the Ministry of Agriculture, Natural Resources, Livestock and Fisheries Shabani Seif Mwinyi has called upon Isle residents to increase their milk consumption to ensure a healthy nation.

Speaking at the launch of a food and grain storage warehouse in Kizimbani in the outskirts of Zanzibar town, Mwinyi said the amount of milk that Zanzibar residents drink per year is low compared to the World Health Organisation (WHO) recommended amount of 200litres per individual annually.

He asked citizens to eat a balanced diet and make sure they consume the amount of food at a level commended by health experts. He said their meals should be accompanied with milk.

"Eating too much food is dangerous to your health; you should also avoid eating below the recommended standards. Lack of food could ultimately lead to malnutrition and stunting problems," said the PS.

Commenting on the construction of the warehouse, he said the goal is to control pesticides for food safety and to ensure food security in the country.

He said the warehouse has been constructed through the Tanzania Initiative for Preventing Aflatoxin Contamination (TANIPAC) project at a cost of 630.5m/-. The project is implemented by the Ministry of Agriculture in Tanzania mainland in collaboration with the Zanzibar Ministry of Agriculture, Natural Resources, Livestock and Fisheries.

Meanwhile, Minister for Agriculture, Natural Resources, Livestock and Fisheries, Shamata Shaame Khamis asked the farmers to use the warehouse to store their crops saying the government decided to build the facility to ensure proper preservation of the grains.

The minister urged residents to stop constructing houses at agricultural fields for improved

agricultural activities.

Speaking after the inauguration of the warehouse, Mudrik Ramadan Soraga, Minister of State, President's Office, Labour, Economic Affairs, and Investment said food is one of the most important needs for human beings, prosperity and development of the country.

"There is no guarantee of food if the stored food is not safe," said the minister.

He said the government recognises the role and contribution of the tourism sector in the country's economy, hence the need to ensure availability of enough food for visitors coming to Zanzibar.

"Tourists should get safe food so that they remain healthy throughout their stay."

He said the Ministry of Agriculture, Natural Resources, Livestock and Fisheries through TANIPAC continues to provide education to all stakeholders, including farmers and traders on how to control aflatoxin contaminations.

The new grain warehouse with the capacity to store 1500 tonnes is part of efforts to strengthen the agricultural sector as well as the health of the people.



Eating too much food is dangerous to your health; you should also avoid eating below the recommended standards. Lack of food could ultimately lead to malnutrition and stunting problems



Information, Communications and Information Technology minister Nape Nnauye (2nd-L, foreground), cuts the ribbon to launch a Tigo tower in Kalambo District, Rukwa Region, built in part-implementation of a Universal Communications Service Access Fund project. Forty-six such towers have been installed in the country so far. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

By Guardian Reporter, Tarime

Barrick compensates villagers to allow mine expansion in Tarime

THE number of people who have been paid compensation for their property in the Komarera area in Tarime District, Mara region to allow the expansion of the North Mara Gold Mine activities, has increased from 4,836 to 4,881 people.

This came after the Arbitration Committee solicited citizens who initially did not agree to receive compensation compromised.

Up to now, the Barrick Gold Corporation, which operates the mine in partnership with the Government of Tanzania through the Twiga Minerals Corporation, has spent 21.594bn/- to pay the 4,881 people.

Tarime District Commissioner, Col Michael Mntenjele, who is the Chairman of the Arbitration Committee formed by the government, said at the end of the week that they continue to encourage the citizens who were paid compensation for their property to leave voluntarily, in

order to allow the Barrick North Mara Mine to expand its mining activities without delay.

"We urge those who have already been paid compensation to leave so that the mine can continue to clean up this area and finally be able to invest. Habitable houses will not be demolished. Demolition exercise will only cover vacated houses," said Col Mntenjele.

The DC has also used the opportunity to call upon the public to be careful with people who try to politicize the issue and distort the truth of what is happening in the Komarera area.

"There are politicians who bring politics into this - something that is not good because this is reality, a person is paid according to properties that existed before. Now if you continue to develop when the ban was already done, it is illegal. If

you start to mix politics issues and listen to politicians, you will waste your time instead of leaving and making development elsewhere so that the mine can continue to do its activities.

"We should also be aware that this North Mara has partnership with the government through Twiga Minerals Corporation, now continuing to stay in the Komarera area means that you are hindering the government and the investor from continuing to do his work," the DC emphasized.

According to the government valuer, Rashid Magetta, the 4,881 people are among the 5,162 people who are on the list to be compensated for their various properties found in the Komarera area.

Magetta said there are a few people who after being compensated for

their houses, were dishonest and rented them to others before the clean-up started in the area.

The Chairman of Ntarechagini Township in Komarera village, Marwa Mwita Omuko told journalists who visited the area that some residents of the township are among the people who were educated by the Arbitration Committee and agreed to go and collect compensation for their property.

"For example, my grandmother, after the committee elaborated to her what she deserves to be paid she agreed, but many have resisted taking the compensation claiming that their properties were undervalued," said Omuko.

Journalists have witnessed Barrick North Mara cleaning up exercise going on in areas where people have already vacated.



Brother Dennis Msechu pictured shortly after being ordained as a deacon at the Catholic Church's St Joseph's Cathedral in Zanzibar yesterday. Photo: Correspondent Martin Kabemba

Investigation into case facing former TPA boss, other staff incomplete, court hears

By Correspondent Zuwena Shame

INVESTIGATION into the economic sabotage case facing former Tanzania Ports Authority (TPA) Director Madeni Kapande and his fellows is not complete, the Kisumu Resident Magistrates Court heard yesterday.

Before Resident Magistrate, Ramadhani Rugemalila, State Attorney Nguka Faraji alleged that investigation is not complete and

therefore requested the court to adjourn the case until February 7th this year when it will come for another mention.

Other accused persons include the Director of Procurement Mashaka Kisanta, Human Resources Officer, Peter Gawile, Procurement Board Chairman Casmyli Lujegi and Acting Director, Information and Communication and Technology (ICT) department, Kilian Chale.

Kipande and his fellows are facing

the economic sabotage case with three counts including occasioning a loss worth \$1.8 million equivalent to 4.2bn/- to TPA.

It was alleged that between October 1st 2014 and October 1st 2020 in Dar es Salaam, the accused conspired and occasioned the loss to TPA.

Between January 1st and February 17th, 2015 while they were TPA staff, the suspects committed the offence by announcing a tender notice with

reference number AE/016/2014-15/CTB/G/39 for purposes of obtaining \$1,857,908.04.

Either, it was alleged that between October 2014 and October 2020 at the TPA premises and other areas within Dar es Salaam, the accused intentionally awarded a tender to Enterprises Planning Resources (ERP).

It was alleged that the accused announced the tender without permit from the TPA tender board and failed to follow the tender announcement procedures and made an advance payment of 40 percent without consent from the tender board, thus causing loss to TPA.

Farmers in Dodoma benefit from 5-year agroforestry project

By Correspondent Valentine Oforo,

Dodoma

THOUSANDS of farmers in Kondo and Chemba districts, Dodoma region have benefited from a five-year project on agroforestry and livelihood empowerment dubbed: 'Institutional capacity building project of eight core partners for appropriate service delivery (ICBP).

Abbaesiga Kamulali, Inades Formation Tanzania project coordinator said in an interview that the initiative has been implemented from 2018 to 2022 with the funding from Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) through Vi Agroforestry Tanzania.

He said the project focused to reach smallholder communities in said eight villages in Dodoma, as well as eight core partners serving over 20,664 members in three regions of Mara, Mwanza and Kagera.

Kamulali said ICBP is the robust program implemented under the Agroforestry Livelihood for Empowerment (ALIVE) among others, worked to contribute to the economic empowerment of smallholder families through sustainable market-oriented agriculture based on agroforestry.

According to him, the project which phased out late last year was aimed at increasing access and motivation of women and youth to participate in leadership and decision-making at farmer group level, especially in the two districts of Dodoma region.

"The other specific target of the initiative was also to heighten community engagement in natural resource management, sustainable agriculture and climate change adaptation and mitigation among the beneficiary farmers in Dodoma,"

he stated.

He further informed that throughout the project, a lot of initiatives were implemented concerning increasing capacities of communities to engage in diversified and profitable income-generating activities. The project is also geared towards benefiting boards of directors, executive committees or administrators, management teams and staff members at all levels (programme and administration) and indirectly the members of the main partners of Vi Agroforestry, who used to serve and reached out to approximate 20,644 of core partners in the three regions of the Lake Zone.

Inades Formation Tanzania also implemented a project on climate change resilient towards farmers in the two districts of Chemba and Kondo in Dodoma region.

Christened 'Climate Change Adaptation for Improved Livelihoods in Semi Arid' the helpful project under the financial shadow of Bread for the World worked to impart the farmers in the two districts with useful agroecological practices necessary for combating effects of climate change in their plantations.

Among others, the robust project which was executed in cooperation with the Agricultural Non State Actors Forum (ANSAF) had successfully managed to train the beneficiary farmers on proper land management, biological practices for the restoration of land fertility as well as soil moisture maintenance.

Apart from training the benefited farmers on how to restore soil fertility and moisture through agroecological methods, the initiative also capacitated the farmers to adopt improved drought tolerant seeds varieties as well as the Quality Declared Seeds (QDS).

3-dose malaria vaccine shows promise in Africa experiments

By Cara Murex

NEW research has confirmed that a three-dose malaria vaccine is both safe and effective in West African adults, including those previously exposed to malaria.

Researchers at the University of Maryland Center for Vaccine Development and Global Health (CVD) led work on the Plasmodium falciparum sporozoite (PfSPZ) vaccine.

The clinical trial, which included 80 participants, compared three doses of the PfSPZ vaccine against a placebo. Vaccine efficacy – a measure of how many vaccinated people got malaria – was 48% after six months and 46% at an 18-month follow-up.

"Our study shows that the vaccine can be given to malaria-experienced adults in a highly endemic area and still provide protection, which is difficult and complicated as these individuals already have significant immune responses to malaria parasites that must be overcome by a vaccine for it to be successful," said corresponding author Dr. Matthew Laurens, director of the International Clinical Trials Unit in the Malaria Research Group at CVD.

The PfSPZ vaccine is made by Maryland-based Sanaria Inc., using a live but weakened form of the malaria parasite Plasmodium falciparum sporozoite. In challenge studies where volunteers were intentionally exposed to the parasite, it provided 90% protection.

Malaria is a serious and sometimes fatal disease caused by a parasite that commonly infects a certain type of mosquito that feeds on humans. People who get malaria are typically very sick, with high fevers, shaking chills and flu-like illness, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

In African adults who previously had malaria, PfSPZ provided 52% efficacy – a measure of how well a vaccine prevents infection and protects against severe disease – against naturally transmitted

malaria infection. The protection lasted between eight and 14 months.

For the new study, researchers hoped to reduce injections from five shots to three, while also improving vaccine efficacy.

They assessed the vaccine in two parts: The first, which included 32 adults, was designed to determine the highest dose of vaccine that does not produce harmful side effects. In the randomized trial in 2017, 39 of 80 participants received the vaccine.

Participants were healthy men and non-pregnant women between 21 and 40 years of age.

"New strategies are needed to achieve the United Nations sustainable development goal of a 90% reduction in malaria incidence and [death rates] by 2030," said Dr. Mark Gladwin, dean of the University of Maryland School of Medicine. "Innovative vaccines that provide a higher level of protection against malaria are urgently needed to help to achieve this goal."

For decades, scientists have tried to develop an effective malaria vaccine but the shots have provided little protection in people who had previously been infected. The first vaccine against malaria (RTS,S/AS01) was approved by the World Health Organization (WHO) in October. It provides modest protection against the disease.

Malaria infected about 241 million people worldwide in 2020 and claimed 627,000 lives.

Researchers plan to conduct additional trials of the PfSPZ vaccine in other groups, including children, travelers, military personnel and pregnant women. Studies are ongoing, including a trial at University of Maryland that would administer the three vaccine doses in one month, a schedule suitable for travelers and the military. Results are expected this year.

The study was funded by the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases. Findings were recently published in Science Translational Medicine.



Residents of Songe in Kilindi District pictured yesterday fighting a fire that ended up razing a house in the village. Photo: Correspondent Dege Masoli

SA potato farmers ending year 'under immense pressure'

JOHANESBURG

SOUTH Africa's potato farmers are ending the year off under immense pressure. And although industry players are optimistic about the industry's future, it will be years before the industry recovers and farms return to previous levels

of profitability, as Duncan Masiwa reports for Food For Mzansi.

As it stands, potato farmers in the country are not turning in profits. This is mainly due to too many potatoes in the market, and the price farmers are getting for their potatoes is much less than what it should be.

"The pressure does not seem to have a possible break shortly," said Willie Jacobs, CEO of Potatoes South Africa. "The Russian-Ukrainian war still has a major impact on the availability of key inputs, and the current political turmoil acting in on the exchange rate, is not assisting things either."

In a previous article, Jaco Koekemoer, marketing manager for Potatoes SA, told Food For Mzansi that with farmers already under such severe pressure, these challenges were making matters worse for farmers. Things are likely to change when overproduction is no longer an issue.



Sospeter Lutonja (C), a Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Agency (Ruwasa) manager briefs Water minister Jumaa Aweso (R) as the latter made an inspection tour of water projects in Mvomero District, Morogoro Region, yesterday. Left is Mvomero legislator Jonas Van Zeeland. Photo: Correspondent Christina Hauke

New Chinese foreign minister heads to Africa for his first trip

BEIJING

CHINA'S new foreign minister Qin Gang is starting his term with a weeklong trip to five African countries, its foreign ministry announced.

Qin, who until recently was ambassador to the United States, will visit Ethiopia, Gabon, Angola, Benin and Egypt from January 9 to 16, spokesperson Wang Wenbin said at a daily media briefing on Monday.

In Egypt, Qin will also meet the secretary-general of the Arab League.

The new foreign minister is following in the footsteps of his predecessors, who have for more than 30 years started each year with a trip to Africa. "It shows that China attaches great importance to the traditional friendship with Africa and the development of China-Africa relations," Wang said.

Qin, 56, was appointed foreign minister on December 30. He succeeded Wang Yi, 69, who has replaced Yang Jiechi as the government's top foreign policy official.

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NHC real estate drive will nurture capital formation

EXPECTATIONS are high among a portion of city residents constituting a significant part of its more dynamic economic actors, namely young executives and their other middle class fellow enthusiasts. They are the most visible group as the National Housing Corporation (NHC) sells upfront most of its Kave studio units, remaining with scores of two and three bedroom units also being taken up but more slowly. This choice of units to buy also shows the cohort of population taking up the units, namely those who are unlikely to have children in school soon.

Having a residential premise is one among the most important 'to do' things once a person finds a family or a couple is constituted in a stable and forward looking manner. An NHC executive says that some buyers are paying upfront even before the specific housing units are completed, and one reason is that it is next to impossible to purchase any plots within the main city suburbs. Still, the young executives expect to wish to be within the city to ease access to office and bank.

When it comes to older executives and their age mates in trading or other sectors, chances are that they would not rush to pick up NHC units, as many are already thinking of retirement projects, a decade or so ahead of such a date. Most seek to buy plots not far from the city, finding ways to commute or even fill cars with petrol to go to work in a stable way, using earlier rent money for servicing own transportation. It isn't altogether easy but it gives them peace of mind, not renting.

Aside from proximity to the central business zones, as now they are sort of multiple depending on

what business spheres one is talking about, there are hidden advantages of the current effort.

The state-owned real estate developer is building hundreds of individual units as well as commercial high rise buildings within the same suburb. The latter project, clearly aimed at foreign investors and others coming in for long or short periods, irritated the fifth phase and it then stalled.

Now the centre of gravity has shifted to the Samia Housing Scheme (SHC) standing midway between the popular housing units of the 1960s and middle class units which essentially are stand alone. They offer an advantage of owning a plot along with a house, whereas an apartment bloc enables one to have a long term right of occupancy but can on no account own the land surrounding it. That is why apartment blocks target foreign residents, tend to be upscale in rentals, plus luxury.

A person purchasing an upmarket housing unit, whether it is stand alone or part of an apartment block, makes two investments in one. First there is an opportunity of a serene household rather than a congested environment in inner city rental space that is plentiful in the mostly unplanned areas, and then its ownership or right of occupancy can be offered in exchange for a bank loan. It is a succession of loans.

Banks know they would not stay with that portion of property for long before selling it if they need to. Same for small lenders like savings and cooperative associations or other credit firms, as someone else will pick occupancy at any cost. That propels greater credit in the city, and rapid expansion of the services sector.

Conservation must also be adapted to local conditions, involving the people

A PORTION of the conservation community and media are expressing loquacious enthusiasm on a wild dogs breeding project intended to repopulate a number of national parks with the fierce gang forming animals. Administrators at the Tanzania National Parks Authority (TANAPA) sentimentally tell the public that the animals are threatened with extinction, and profess that the answer is to breed them and return to the world. Why not ensure their availability in zoos around the country, or if there is an area where they don't cause conflicts with the population?

A number of conservators praise the species as cleaning up the bush, whereas the bush doesn't need to be cleaned as we all know that meat is not plastic, so animal carcasses blend with the environment. In any case there are other species that are dependable cleaners, not of carcasses firstly but of weak animals, especially the youngest herbivorous animals if they take their first steps in the scaring glare of encroaching, hungry predators.

Large and small predators first target weaker animals, but there are also those confident enough to roam alone in the bush. They meet the same fate on condition that they come across unmanageable opposition, like aged buffalo meeting a pride of lions, picking off usually isolated giraffes, or young elephants they can pull down in mud and compel the herd to abandon it.

In other words there is no case whatsoever of the need for wild dogs as part of wider conservation needs, as the real secret is that a whole range of professional conservationists admire the physical presence of wild dogs. That view isn't shared by the vast majority of people living

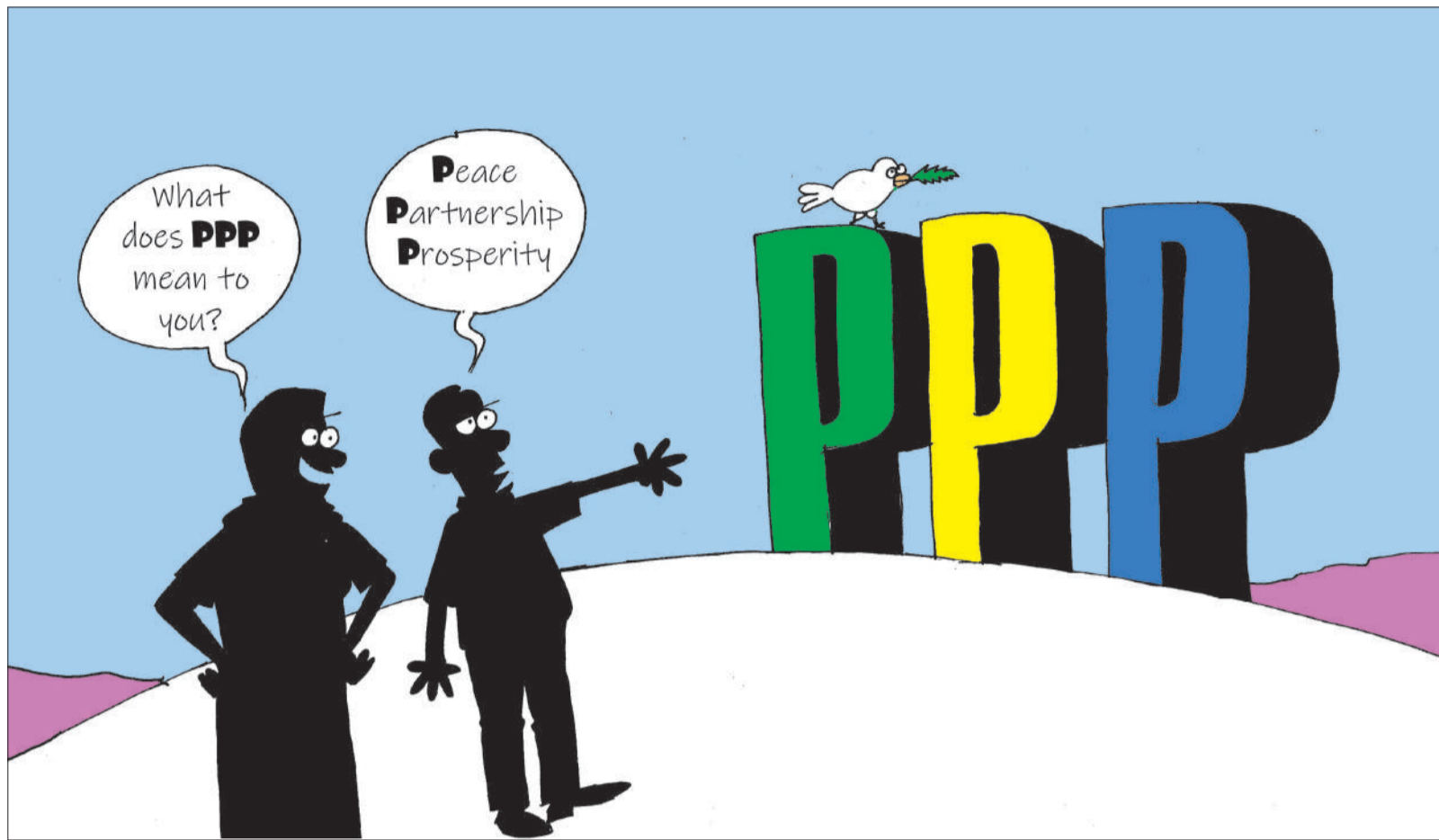
in the proximity of national parks and game reserves, as wild dogs disturb carefully nurtured balances of zones allocated for the grazing of cattle and human habitats. That means beasts in national parks ought to remain far from the scene as even omnivorous beasts like pig, buffalo or elephants are dangerous to villagers nearby. Wild dogs rudely disturb with relentless chases across an ecological zone; some experts say they can cover 75kms just in one day.

In that case wild dogs unlike lions don't observe any territory in how they hunt, so they aren't amenable to the carefully ranged expectations of the different parties in conservation. Park authorities need to give assurance that so long as the population is within its sphere of allocated areas, it will not be disturbed by wild animals, and usually or often that is the case.

Even if a carnivorous beast moves out of range it will be a single hyena or lion, but with wild dogs it is a pack of 10, 15 or more of them. Granted that they aren't as voracious as lions, still each can bite a different animal in a cowshed, or goats, and all hell is at loose, a village thrown into panic.

It hence evident that the breeding of wild dogs for continuous redistribution to national parks is an inward strategy of the park authorities backed up by payers of such projects among foreign conservation stakeholders like the vibrant Frankfurt Zoological Society.

It has often crossed swords with the government on balancing conservation and economic growth or development issues, and could influence the non-consultation of local people on this matter. TANAPA officials are just tasked with 'educating' them on the issue - or herders - but they will still poison the dogs.



By Ashenafi Endale

THE deployment of improvised explosive drones by extremist organisations is posing fresh concerns to the countries in the Horn of Africa. Somalia, Ethiopia, and Kenya face a growing threat, according to representatives of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD).

Al-Shabaab and other militant organisations are already working on the ability to equip common drones with explosives and dispatch them to attack specified locations. The modified drones then detonate on the target, based on an assessment by IGAD.

IGAD began training its member nations on how to stop the threat from emerging. The Organisation conducted trainings on the security risks posed by unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) (drones) and other cutting-edge technology for the first time in Bishoftu, Ethiopia, from December 5-10, 2022.

"There is an emerging threat from extremist and evidence proving that militant groups like Al-Shabaab is modifying normal drones into attack drones," Abebe Muluneh (Com.), director at IGAD security sector

By Lukman Shobowale

THERE is no doubt that these are truly challenging times. The slowdown in global economic activities, occasioned by both the impact of COVID-19 and the Russia-Ukraine crisis, have resulted in a cost of living crisis and a decline in the global volume of trade, leading to inflationary pressure at national, regional and global levels.

As one would imagine, Nigeria has not been insulated from the financial shock and rise in global inflation. In its latest report, the Nigeria Bureau of Statistics (NBS) put the nation's inflation at 21.47 per cent, in November 2022, the highest so far recorded in the nation's history. This has led to rise in food inflation and a corresponding decline in purchasing power of most Nigerians, leaving more people in severe poverty.

Similar to other monetary authorities in the world, the Central Bank of Nigeria has continued to tighten its monetary policy, as part of measures to address the growing inflation, notably through interest rate and other monetary policies to cushion the inflation.

The increase in lending rate has however made Nigeria one of the countries with the highest lending rate in Africa, although while some may argue that these are necessary interventions to mitigate inflation, such intervention have had severe impact on business and investment.

For example, following the Monetary Policy review in September 2022, the Central Bank of Nigeria

Explosive drones emerging threats for Ethiopia, Horn of Africa, says IGAD

programme (IGAD SSP) and IGAD head of mission to Ethiopia told journalist. "This mechanism was largely used by Al-Qaida and ISIS. They direct the drones equipped with explosive devices at their targets. So, we believe Al-Shabaab received such tactics, and IGAD has concluded that explosive drones are emerging threats in the Horn of Africa."

Over the past 10 years, the utilisation of UAVs has skyrocketed for a wide variety of purposes.

An IGAD statement issued after the trainings in Bishoftu noted that the recent commercial availability of a new generation of small UAVs has highlighted the growing threat posed by these devices in areas prone to terrorist attacks, unauthorized surveillance, and drug smuggling, among other forms of transnational organised crime (TOC).

The categories of UAV incursions were discussed in relation to the operators' sophistication and their intent to pose security hazards during the period of the sensitisation training.

"Their use has significantly

increased to include cartography and mapping, inspection of remote power lines and pipelines, delivery services, telecommunications relay, police surveillance, traffic monitoring, border patrol and reconnaissance, and emergency and disaster monitoring," Abebe said. "The population of drones is increasing, for purposes of video production and other purposes."

The commander referred to the most recent UN Security Council report on the transnational activities of Al-Shabaab, which revealed that the group deployed UAVs for attacks, intelligence gathering, and propaganda production.

The drones are also used by Al-Shabaab to document its own assaults.

In October 2022, the UN Security Council Counter-Terrorism Committee unanimously adopted the Delhi Declaration on Countering the Use of Emerging Technologies for Terrorist Purposes.

The declaration strongly condemns the continued flow of weapons, military equipment,

UAVs and their components, and improvised explosive device (IED) components to and between ISIL/Da'esh, Al Qaeda, their affiliates and associated individuals, groups, undertakings, and entities, and other terrorist groups and illegal armed groups and criminals, and encourages member states to prevent and disrupt procurement networks for such weapons, systems, and UAVs.

About 42 senior officials and experts from IGAD member states attended the IGAD training in Bishoftu, including senior border security officials, port (maritime and land border) authorities, aviation officers, intelligence officers, police, and representatives from defense and counterterrorism units.

Tigist Hamid, deputy director general for Ethiopia's Information Network Security Agency (INSA), was one of the officials. She says the aerospace team at INSA is working on the regulation of drones and averting such threats. IGAD's training at Bishoftu ended with a visit to the team's headquarters at INSA.

Real estate key to sustainable development

raised interest rate to 16.5 per cent. This made Nigeria the highest among other African countries, such as South Africa at 7 per cent, Kenya at 9.6 per cent, Morocco at 2 per cent, and Egypt at 13.75 per cent. These tightening measures have had a significant impact on business and investment.

Despite the economic uncertainties, the non-oil sector continues to show resilience, contributing to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and sustaining government revenue. In the last year, the agricultural sector contributed 25.9 per cent of GDP, manufacturing 20.56 per cent, while the real estate sector contributed 4.9 per cent to the GDP.

Also, there were significant contributions from the financial services, communications, entertainment and construction. The real estate sector has maintained a sustained rebound from the impact of the pandemic, maintaining a strong performance.

Already, experts have predicted that the Nigerian Real Estate sector would expand by 5.2 per cent in 2023, projecting a 6.5 per cent contribution to GDP. In a few years, the contribution of the sector is expected to rise to the levels of the United States and China, where the real estate sectors contribute 14 per cent and 13 per cent of GDP, respectively.

As the revenue from the oil sector continues to decline and we approach a gradual global shift from oil, Nigeria must begin to consider the real

estate sector, as a key contributor to the economy vis-a-vis its capacity to deliver sustained prosperity and the redistribution of wealth. Investment in real estate has the potential to hedge growing inflation; provide employment opportunities; break vicious cycle of poverty; bridge the housing deficit; redistribute wealth and enhance government revenue.

In terms of investment choices, real estate is also one of the most sustainable economic development drivers globally. Aside from its potential to hedge inflation, it is also insulated from price volatility. This can serve as a means to manage the impact of not just inflation but also currency depreciation. Similarly, as the country looks to reduce its poverty levels, real estate provides a sustainable approach to get people out of poverty and provide sustainable prosperity.

For example, the government can embark on mortgage reforms and special financing strategies to provide Nigerians with financing options at a single digit interest rate, to invest in real estate and home ownership. Moreover, such interventions are not new; an example is the Anchor Borrowers Programme, aimed at achieving rice sufficiency in the country.

In the long term, this policy can both create empowerment and help to bridge the housing gap, which currently stands at 28 million housing units. The real estate sector can serve as the key to address the growing

unemployment. More than a third of eligible workers in Nigeria are unemployed, according to the NBS. The unemployment figures as at Q4 2020, stand at 33.28 per cent.

The real estate sector typically involves several value chains that involve labour at every level. Increased activity in the real estate sector will significantly address the country's unemployment challenges and support wealth creation.

The real estate sector can also help to grow government revenue.

The government is currently faced with the trifecta of mounting debts, subsidy and low revenue. Nigeria's revenue to GDP currently stands at 8 per cent, below the African average of 18 per cent, shows that government revenue is one of the most inadequate globally. The real estate sector has great potential to sustain the development of national economy in the long term.

Significant investment and enabling business reforms in the sector can help the government to increase its revenue from the sector, through land-based taxes, improved tax revenue and widen the tax net. If properly harnessed, the Nigerian real estate sector can serve as the pathway to building a sustainable economic future.

Significant investment in the sector, in addition to enabling business environment reforms and financing support for Nigerians can accelerate the sector and its contribution to the growth of the national economy.

China helps Africa to ensure food sovereignty

By Bereket Sisay

CHINA has recently reached a tripartite agreement with Uganda and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations to deploy experts to the east African country to share their experiences with small-holder farmers about using better technologies to boost production levels.

The cooperation is under the framework of the FAO-China South-South Program, which is in its third phase in Uganda. The first and second phases had facilitated technology transfers and enabled upgrades to produce more crops, livestock, and fisheries.

China, as the first country to establish a South-South Cooperation (SSC) strategic alliance with the FAO in 2006, has developed the agricultural sector in many developing nations. China has also shared its knowledge, experiences and good practices among countries in the global south.

China has dispatched more than a thousand experts and technicians to countries in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, and the South Pacific. The support, especially in Africa, has created resilient agricultural development with a steady production cycle.

Africa, with the right policies in place and financial support, as well as financial and technical assistance from outside sources, is transitioning from subsistence farming to mass production. Nonetheless, droughts and floods caused by climate change have collided with a lack of appropriate



technological and expertise skills for the continent's total agricultural production.

In December, 2022, the FAO reported that the bulk of the 2022 cereal crop was harvested and aggregate regional output is forecast at 207.4 million tons, 3.4 million tons less than the previous five-year average, largely owing to adverse weather conditions.

Likewise, the drought in North Africa dragged down wheat production, while poor rains curtailed

yields in Southern Africa, although the sub regional output remained near average.

Multi-seasonal droughts in East Africa have also curbed production, and total cereal output is forecast to fall by nearly four percent compared to the average. In West Africa, the abundant rains have caused extensive flooding, while conflicts are disrupting agricultural activities in the Sahelian countries.

The sector requires a special

intervention to shift into positive trajectories while addressing its fundamental issues. Chinese assistance to African agricultural development can boost agricultural output as the sector depends on natural processes and is more exposed to natural hazards.

The hybrid rice that China introduced to Uganda yields about 10 tons per hectare compared to local varieties that yield only 3.5 and 2.5 tons per hectare.

A private farmer uses a small threshing machine to prepare a field for growing rice which will be sold to a Chinese company in Mozambique

This rice production trend should be introduced to many African countries, since the continent's rice consumption is projected to reach 34.9 million tons of milled rice by 2025. If the current trends continue, African rice production will meet only two-thirds of demand, requiring more than 12 million metric tons of rice to be imported each year at a cost of more than \$5 billion.

The same logic can apply to other food production activities on the continent. China should stretch its engagement in Africa's agricultural production systems. Africa should learn and grow alongside the rest of the global south, particularly China to help them to achieve the long-awaited goal of food sovereignty on the continent.

Africa can't afford to depend on food aid to feed its citizens and must secure food sustainability, thereby ending hunger and scarcity. Africa has huge potential for agricultural development, not only for becoming self-sufficient, as well as for emerging as a major cereal production continent for the outside world.

The continent has long lagged behind in addressing the root cause of insufficient food production. The 2022 Global Hunger Index indicates that overlapping crises have exposed the weakness of food systems and global progress against hunger has stagnated in recent years.

Accordingly, China wishes to promote the building of a community of shared future for humanity and to tackle Africa's fundamental challenges, particularly its agricultural problems, in order to help Africa realize its ambitious goal of food sovereignty.

Bereket Sisay is a commentator of international affairs, with a special focus

Is agriculture responding to youth aspirations, rights, interests?

By Ocheck Anthony

THERE is a growing acknowledgement that including youth in agriculture can have various advantages, including helping food security, animating development and business ventures, and keeping up with social legacy.

Notwithstanding the fact that it offers diverse opportunities for youth, it is yet to offer clear expressions about how the agriculture sector is answering youth aspirations, rights, and interests. In actuality, various locales and nations adopt various strategies and make varying levels of progress in the area.

So how can it be that agriculture, which employs around 65 percent of the Tanzanian populace, can't seem to speak to most of the youngsters?

Desperate neediness, high joblessness rates, restricted admittance to land, and restricted youth cooperation in dynamic cycles, from certain perspectives, compel a significant populace. We can likewise make reference to how the agriculture is regularly connected with hard physical work and low compensation.

Yet, uncoordinated policies and initiatives on youth land rights access remain a critical issue to resolve. If we go back to the 2016-2021 National Strategy for Youth Involvement in Agriculture, it required all local government authorities to set aside land for youth groups engaged in agriculture, while central government land policies and rules were rendered inert.

Sadly, customary norms and practices regard youth as a well-spring of free work by their families and elderly folks and are regularly prevented admittance to or procurement from getting land for wealth creation possibilities.

Another component restricting youth admittance to land is ageism, a sort of bias, very much like bigotry or sexism. Ageism against the youthful (otherwise called "adulthood") is both legitimate and normal, rather than segregation in view of race, orientation, religion, sexual direction, capacity, or mature (basically for more seasoned individuals).

Ageism has a daily impact on young people, sometimes publicly through legislative age limitations, but also silently through unfavorable attitudes, beliefs, biases, pre-conceptions, and stereotypes re-



garding youth. It deprives youth of any social, economic, or political authority, leaving them exposed to a variety of disasters.

All things considered, what is age? Should youth be characterized by their years or their personality? I am wagering on the last option.

Indeed, even in the 21st century, there is no consensus meaning of who a youth is. In Tanzania, for instance, it goes from 15 to 35. Wait a sec! Haven't you at any point met a 40-year-old with the brain of a little child? I will require this conversation to be postponed for later days.

Assuming we stop underscoring age to battle negative discernments that deter youth from preferring and prevailing in agriculture, we will unquestionably guarantee the area's prosperity.

In Tanzania, there are scandalous youth stories that they are defiant, idling in ghettos, and need more experiences, which are just a portion of the terrible stories that steamed and kill their aspirations and, in the process, deny them their rights.

Different privileges worth bringing up to help youth are the right to vote in our representative democracy, the right to privacy, the right to be free of physical punishment, the freedom to make decisions about their own lives, the right to

prove ourselves, and the right to be treated with the same respect as everyone else. These and other rights, however, are restricted to youth due to ageism.

In this way, where agriculture goes from here is not easy to refute. In any case, the fundamental part to consider is the manner by which agriculture and its worth chain should answer the freedoms of youngsters.

Furthermore, similarly as the ICT area is where youth go for fame, titles and gossip, agriculture should be that go-to field where youngsters can feel like their interests are being created, aspirations realized, and rights met.

With such a scenario, we can come to terms with the fact that there is still much work to be done to ensure that youth's rights, interests, and aspirations are established and developed in response to circumstances such as cultural differences, economic issues, social mobility, the rise of new media, celebrity life, gossip, and other societal contexts such as gender stereotypes and geography from the start of their childhood.

In Tanzania, youth aspirations are dynamic. They are significantly impacted by global trends like media, pictures, big names, famous people etc. Moreover, as a youngster, you most likely don't have the foggiest idea what you are great at;

you have such countless different potential capacities that it is challenging to conclude which course to take.

You are more impacted by patterns than your goals and interests: Assuming your companions appreciate football, almost certainly, you will fall into a similar classification, paying little mind to what you desire.

On the off chance that your family urges you to be a vocalist, regardless of whether it isn't something you appreciate, you will be impacted to do as such. You may be a superb essayist, yet you won't ever be able to find it since it's not the 'cool' thing to do.

Beside these contending impacts, you are encircled by individuals you see on television, radio, or web-based entertainment. They have all the earmarks of being cheerful, effective, and carrying on with a day to day existence they appreciate, so it is normal to need to imitate them. You admire these individuals as good examples, endeavoring to satisfy hopes that exist just in the media. What about 'agri-celebrities'?

The greatest desperation you have as a youngster is about what your future will resemble. It is about who you will be tomorrow – what kind of life, what sort of work, and what kind of vocation you will have. The solution to this

multitude of inquiries actually can't come remotely; it needs to come from the inside. The incongruity is that none of these dreams exist in agriculture.

With no fancy chain, flashy car, or celebrity life, agriculture is cornered by rural youth who lack access to quality education, facilities, IT infrastructure, marketing, and social contexts such as gender stereotypes and parenting at a young age. Lack of appeal is also often voiced by urban youth, who view agriculture as a 'filthy involvement' because of an absence of an "everyone's eyes-on-me" way of life. Thus, they consider agriculture to be an asset for poor people and a final area retreat.

And, of course, we can't ignore efforts to improve the livelihood of the communities in agriculture that have been undertaken by government and non-governmental stakeholders, such as the 'block farm scheme' inaugurated by the President Samia Suluhu Hassan.

With limited business skills, enterprise development, and technology, it is still difficult for youth to find decent jobs and employment opportunities within the agricultural value chain. Moreover, two development problems related to agriculture in Tanzania are poor agricultural performance and a reluctance to finance start-up agricultural value chain busi-

nesses.

Tanzania has good climate conditions that support agriculture and its value chain, and most of the people, particularly in the countryside, depend on agriculture as their main livelihood. Agriculture, on the other hand, is not modernized; it is rain-fed, which results in low productivity.

Furthermore, due to a lack of collateral and high risk, financial institutions rarely finance these start-up businesses in these circumstances. This has led to high youth unemployment, where most of the youth are job seekers, and most are competing for the limited job opportunities available in urban areas. These two issues relate to each other, as most regions are naturally endowed with agricultural advantages, but there is no clear integration of that resource into national development plans.

Smallholder farmers, including youth and those dealing with the agricultural value chain, face several difficulties pertaining to production, market access, storage, stockpiling, packaging, and branding their products. In most cases, produce does not meet market requirements in terms of volume and quality, leading to low prices and low investment returns.

Climate change is another interesting issue that affects agricultural practices, posing a challenge to farmers' prosperity. Climate change is increasing the trend of poor, erratic, and inadequate rainfall in most parts of the country, hence affecting agricultural practices. Besides, access to arable land for youth is an interesting issue since most of the youth rely on the inheritance of land from their parents. This has led to the limitation of youth ownership in agriculture.

By and large, issues denying youth admittance to agriculture genuinely compromise the eventual fate of food security, combating climate change, and sustainability in the area. In Africa today, 60 percent of the populace is younger than 25, and by 2030, youth will comprise 42 percent of world's youth.

Assuming that the circumstance persists, key endeavors to increase versatility in the area predominate, we might end up posing a similar question in the following ten years: "Is agriculture answering to youth goals, rights, and interests?"

Ocheck Anthony is the Bridge for Change executive director.



Slow adoption of electric vehicles despite 'green' dividends - study

By Special Correspondent

MANUFACTURERS of electric vehicles (EVs) are reporting slow sales despite such vehicles being touted as the best to decarbonize in the wake of environmental sustainability. A recent benchmark survey in the UK by RAC, a British automotive services company shows the number of drivers expecting to get an EV in the next five years dropped from 17 per cent in 2021 to 15 per cent last year.

However, just about 14 per cent of drivers in 2022 planned for their next car to be electric up from 10 per cent the previous year.

Nevertheless, that's not to say sales aren't increasing.

Around 4.3 million new battery-powered EVs (BEVs) and plug-in hybrid electric vehicles (PHEVs) were sold globally in the first half of 2022.

BEV sales grew by 75 per cent and PHEVs by 37 per cent and more growth was predicted for the rest of that year with sales

expected to rise by about 57 per cent to 10.6 million.

In Africa, EVs sales have remained the lowest worldwide since electric mobility is still in development. This is in spite of the continent's sales overall increase in recent years.

Data by Statista shows South Africa, which has the most advanced e-mobility market in Africa, counted about 1,000 EVs in 2022, out of a total fleet of 12 million automobiles.

In Kenya, the number of EVs was estimated at about 350, while

a total of some 2.2 million registered vehicles were likely in use in the country.

With policymakers in several global benchmark economies setting dates to phase out the sale of petrol and diesel cars, there are highlighted concerns that could slow down the e-mobility transition.

The European Union-wide ban on sales of these cars will come into force by 2035, while the UK has brought its own phase-out date forward to 2030 from 2035. China, the world's biggest car

market is aiming for 40 per cent of vehicles sold in the country to be electric by 2030.

Despite the developments, concerns that are likely to challenge whether the transition to EVs is happening fast enough and on a big enough scale are well evident;

High upfront costs of electric vehicles

While electric cars are often much cheaper to run as much as half the cost per mile than similar-sized petrol or diesel vehicles, they are also generally more ex-

pensive to buy, the report reads.

"The cost of charging an electric vehicle depends on where, when and how it's done. Costs increase significantly when drivers use public chargers. Rapid or ultra-rapid chargers can push per-mile costs close to or above the running costs for petrol or diesel cars," RAC says.

With the runaway inflation and increasing lending interest rates in many economies, the cost of buying an EV would automatically be pushed up and can also be a barrier.

A study by Nickel Institute notes that the cost of electric vehicles differs considerably from region to region, and each country has its own subsidies, taxes and incentives in place.

However, in all parts of the world, new EVs are currently more expensive than their petrol or diesel equivalents.

Limited access to charging infrastructure

The lack of adequate public charging infrastructures could also be a barrier to EV adoption globally, according to a recent study by a professional services company, Ernst & Young (EY).

From the benchmark survey by RAC, more than a third of the respondents cited insufficient access to city charging points as the main reason for not switching to an EV.

In Kenya as of March last year, there were about 29 public charging points with most of them still under the piloting phase.

As the roll-out further takes the course, the issue of access to the charging stations amid the uneven distribution would be a concern as it could also be a costly option.

Concerns about EV range

Worries about the distance an EV can travel on a single charge could also be another main barrier to electric vehicle adoption.

Around a third of drivers from around the world say they are concerned about driving long distances in electric-powered cars, according to the EY survey.

"Compared to the distance a vehicle with an internal combustion engine can travel on a full tank, EVs have some way to go to close the gap, although EV ranges are increasing," the report says.

Advances in battery technology have seen the average EV range more than double in the last decade, from 138km (86 miles) in 2011 to 349km in 2021.

This compares to 665km for an average fossil-fueled car.



HIV remains a leading killer in Africa despite medical breakthroughs

By Salim Abdool Karim

ABOUT 38 million people around the world are living with HIV. About 70% of them live in Africa. This shows that there is no solution to the AIDS pandemic without a solution in Africa. In 2021, there were 1.5 million new cases of HIV - just over 4,000 cases per day around the world. At the same time, close to 700,000 people died. The big challenge is to address the dual realities of people still dying from HIV in large numbers, and the large numbers of new infections. The upside is that there is a clear plan with clear goals on how to address this. In 2016, countries came together at the United Nations to agree on what the world's strategy should be. The goal is to end AIDS as a public health threat by 2030. We spoke with leading scientist Professor Salim Abdool Karim about how to close the gaps.

What are we getting wrong?

It's not like we're doing something wrong, but you can always do better than what we do now. Most new infections are coming from two different groups. The first is key populations. The largest number of new infections is occurring in men who have sex with men. Especially young men - often young black men. These infections occur largely in Eastern Europe and in Russia.



An HIV awareness ribbon

The second high priority is the large numbers of new infections in young women in Africa. If we don't address those two groups, we won't solve the problem. But to address those two groups is not easy. The challenges in much of Eastern Europe and Russia relate to their marginalisation and discrimination as much as they are about services for key populations.

In Africa, we have simply not been able to stem the number of new infections in young women to the extent we had

hoped. The problem is the way in which society has supported or entrenched age disparate sex, where teenage girls are having sex with men about eight to 10 years older than them.

And the means we have to slow the rate of new infections in young women is not well suited to the need. It's not feasible for a young woman who is not thinking about HIV and aware of her risk regularly to take a tablet every day or even to get an injection. So we have to develop new technologies.

We need a combination of new approaches in our society to reduce age disparate sex. And we need new technologies to protect young women. And thirdly, we need to get more young men and more men in their 20s and 30s into health services so that they test and they go on to treatment before they infect young girls.

How do we change this?

There are three things we have to think about.

The first is we must appreciate that each of us is mutually

interdependent: each person's risk affects the risk faced by others. Hence, we need solutions that involve everyone working towards a common purpose. We saw that very clearly in COVID-19. Omicron was first described in South Africa in November 2021 - within a week this variant was detected in 16 countries. Within two weeks omicron was in several countries on all continents. This shows that we are all interconnected and dependent on each other. We have a shared responsibility to deal with the problem.

We can't take the attitude that it's somebody else's problem. In many ways, in HIV, the response has taken our interdependence into consideration. For example, wealthy countries put resources into the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria for poor countries to benefit. It's a shared responsibility. The countries are not saying, "It's Africa's problem, we don't care." No, they're saying, "We understand that if we don't get HIV under control in Africa, it affects the whole world."

Second is that we have to mobilise the resources to at least get treatment up to the levels that we have set in our targets. That means we have to get 95% of people knowing their HIV status, 95% of people with HIV on treatment, and 95% of them virally suppressed. This is the global target for 2025. We need

to help each other to get to that target.

We're going to need to do better with prevention. That's the third point. Treatment is not going to be enough on its own to enable us to reach the 2030 target. We need to improve prevention. That means we're going to need to continue our efforts in circumcision and condom promotion, and to do better with pre-exposure prophylaxis.

What are the next steps?

We need to build on the momentum from the COVID-19 pandemic. The introduction of new technologies such as mRNA is a good example. This is technology we can tap to improve the research on vaccines against tuberculosis and malaria, particularly in HIV. We don't have a vaccine for HIV yet, but there are now new candidates being made with mRNA. At least we can do better with existing TB vaccines and existing malaria vaccines with a new platform such as using mRNA technology. It is also an important platform for HIV vaccines in the pipeline.

This article is part of a media partnership between The Conversation Africa and the 2022 Conference on Public Health in Africa.

Salim Abdool Karim, Director, Centre for the AIDS Program of Research in South Africa (CAPRISA)

Meet rising star taking the Sunshine Coast Biosphere to the world stage

EAST QUEENSLAND

ELLA Woodborne helped take the Sunshine Coast to UNESCO Biosphere status, and now she's about to represent our Biosphere globally as an inaugural member of a UNESCO think-tank informing international bodies, governments and the business world.

And she's just 19 years old. The Belli Park teenager and University of the Sunshine Coast Science/Arts student said she was "over the moon" to be selected for the UNESCO Our Humanature Pathways panel.

"I have the acceptance letter saved to my desktop, and every morning I go back and check it's still there," Ella said.

"I feel exceptionally honoured for both the potential of what the group can do, but also personally what I can learn from the members of this panel."

The UNESCO Our Humanature Pathways panel will conduct its first meeting in January to discuss humanity's role in establishing and maintaining a healthy relationship with nature.

Now living on her family's cattle farm in Belli Park, Ella hopes to bring the unique perspective and representation for both youth and agricultural communities living and



Ella Woodborne

working in a Biosphere. Sunshine Coast Council Mayor Mark Jamieson congratulated Ella on her latest achievement and said she would make a fitting representative for the newly designated Sunshine Coast

Biosphere. "Ella is a voice for our youth and proud advocate for positive change, both vital values as we come to understand what it means to live, learn, work and play sustainably as a Biosphere

community," Mayor Jamieson said. "Her input on this international stage will demonstrate to the world the strengths of our region as we work towards our goal of being Australia's most sustainable

region: healthy, smart and creative."

Ella counts chimpanzee expert Jane Goodall and Sir David Attenborough among her idols and said her passion for the environment began with her childhood spent in South Africa with her parents, who worked in conservation.

"I grew up in the bush, was always outside, and we had animals everywhere," she said.

"I always knew I wanted to work with the natural world."

When her family moved to the Sunshine Coast she founded the Grammar Green Team, a student-led environmental action group at Sunshine Coast Grammar, all while making an early start on her university degree.

At just 16 years of age, she joined the Sunshine Coast Biosphere Community Reference Group to represent the region's youth as the group launched its campaign to have the Sunshine Coast recognised as a UNESCO Biosphere.

In June 2022 the designation was officially declared, and Ella has remained on the transitional Sunshine Coast Biosphere Community Advisory Group (CAG) as it lays vital groundwork to ensure the region sustains its

Biosphere values and status for future generations.

Sunshine Coast Biosphere CAG chair Will Shrapnel said in the three years he'd worked with Ella she had been an enthusiastic and diligent environmental leader, and would be a wonderful ambassador for the region.

"Ella has been an amazing advocate who has always taken a hands-on approach to implementing and leading grassroots initiatives that make a real difference," Mr Shrapnel said.

"She was still in high school when we first started working together on the Biosphere nomination, and it has been amazing to witness Ella pursue her passion through university studies and now as a UNESCO panelist.

"Ella has certainly never been afraid to put forward her perspective and ideas through group discussions, speaking with confidence on behalf of current and future generations of Sunshine Coast people."

Ella is also a member of the Excellence Advisory Panel for the Sunshine Coast Ecological Park, a major Sunshine Coast Council green space project adjacent to Mary Cairncross Scenic Reserve.

Climate resilience: Kenyan farmers are adapting to extreme weather by growing indigenous crops

By Tony Malesi

UNITED Nations (UN) and World Bank reports indicate climate change has negatively affected global food systems, drastically reducing agricultural productivity. But rural communities in developing countries like Kenya seem to have found a solution: local and indigenous foods.

Rural communities and smallholder farmers in the east African country have resorted to indigenous foods to adapt and increase resilience against climate shocks. Hundreds of farming communities have reverted to indigenous leafy vegetables and tubers with the help of various rural outreach programmes.

Small-scale farmers, like Geoffrey Momanyi from Kenya's Kiambu County, had a great time farming indigenous foods. He plants and rotates various indigenous food crops on his one-and-a-half-acre farm, including cassava, maize and vegetables.

He had bountiful harvests in the last eight years, resulting from what he described as "simple and natural pollination by wind, birds and insects."

"All my harvests are always successful. This is because I use indigenous drought-resistant seeds, which guarantee me relatively good harvests, regardless of erratic rains," Momanyi said.

Momanyi propagates and stores seeds for the next planting season or seeks those he lacks from fellow subsistence farmers or local youth and women groups.

Mary Akelo, another small-scale farmer in Kenya's Kajjado County, said she prefers indigenous crops, especially vegetables, due to their growing demand.

"Most people prefer my leafy vegetables because of their higher nutritious value and medicinal properties. They are also easy to propagate," she said.

Hybrid seeds are expensive, yet you can only use them in one planting cycle. They also need heavy application of fertilisers and pesticides, which pollute the environment, she added.

Rural communities and small-scale farmers across Kenya have effectively built climate resilience and adaptive capacity. Most are holders of invaluable knowledge on indigenous food systems, passed from generation



Hundreds of farming communities have reverted to indigenous leafy vegetables and tubers with the help of various rural outreach programmes.



The Intergovernmental Committee for Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage has selected Kenya's success story of promoting traditional foods. The species will be listed in the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices.

to generation.

This information guides them to provide nutritious food, interdependently interact with the environment and preserve nature's rich biodiversity.

Various non-profits, such as Grow Bio-intensive Agriculture Center of Kenya (G-BIACK), assist smallholder farmers in selecting, storing and managing indigenous seeds.

Most are naturally adapted to specific locations because of various unique environmental factors. This helps to guard against total crop failure/loss.

G-BIACK coordinates with over 100 groups, representing over 20,000 indigenous smallholder farmers across Kenya, said Samuel Nderitu, director of the non-profit.

"We are a charity and train farmers to select indigenous seeds and establish community seed banks, through which they preserve special varieties," he said.

We aim at setting up 10 such banks yearly across the country, where over 2,000 endangered varieties will be preserved, he added.

Nderitu said he has indigenous seeds for almost every crop in his gene bank. He criticised the

commercialisation of mainstream food systems, saying it exposes the country in case of a pandemic or geopolitical crisis like Covid-19 and the war in Ukraine.

"I call upon fellow stakeholders in the indigenous seed market to protect the often ignored smallholder farmers and help them adapt to climate shocks and boost food security," he said.

Many other stakeholders – the National Museum of Kenya, Biodiversity and Biosafety Kenya, Inter-Sectoral Forum on Agroecology and Agro biodiversity and Seed Savers Network Kenya (SSN-K) – have embraced the idea and are helping small-scale farmers build capacity in this regard.

"Seeds are not only the basis of agriculture. They are carriers of plants' genetic makeup," said SSN-K in a statement

In Kenya, over 80 per cent of seeds that smallholder farmers use are indigenous. However, most of these subsistence farmers face challenges in accessing or multiplying these seeds, the statement added.

Small-scale farmers and researchers petitioned UNESCO to recognise and protect the endangered species in February 2022, following a sharp decline in

the country's food diversity.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) recognised Kenya's indigenous foods as a unique cultural heritage worth protecting.

"The Intergovernmental Committee for Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage has selected Kenya's success story of promoting traditional foods. The species will be listed in the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices," UNESCO said.

Some of the indigenous Kenyan vegetables that made it to the list of protected species include Manager (Amaranth), Osuga (black nightshade), Mrenda (jute plant), Kunde (cowpeas) and Terere/Muchicha (pigweed).

Some schools across Kenya, including Mundika High School, have now switched to consuming indigenous foods through an initiative by the United Nations Environment Programme and other partners.

The need to help small-scale farmers commercialise the production of indigenous foods and boost food security has gained the attention of the Kenyan government and necessary plans are in the works already.

A plan is in place to ramp up the

acreage under indigenous tubers and vegetables by producing affordable seeds for farmers through the country's lead research organisation, the Kenya Agricultural Research Institute (KARI).

"We plan to propagate more indigenous seeds and help farmers increase the intake of these special plants," said Lusike Wasilwa, an assistant director at KARI.

Sadly, exotic and commercial vegetables like cabbages and kales account for almost three-quarters of the total vegetables consumed in Kenya. We aim to reverse this trend, Wasilwa added.

Experts and officials are calling for more national and regional forums on the importance of indigenous foods, including festivals and symposiums.

They say this will equip small-scale farmers with knowledge on how to adapt to climate change and boost food security for sub-Saharan Africa's ever-expanding population.

"These crops will play a key role in boosting economies for most countries in sub-Saharan Africa and their Gross Domestic Product," said Frankline Mithika Linturi, Kenya's minister for agriculture.

Wave of drought-induced cholera in Kenya

NAIROBI

CLIMATE-linked health emergencies are on the rise across Africa and the deadly cholera outbreak in drought-hit Kenya is only the latest example.

Kenyan authorities and health experts have put citizens on high alert, citing the devastating effects of prolonged drought on major water towers and catchment areas.

They say this has resulted in acute water shortage and rationing, leading to poor sanitation and cholera outbreaks in major towns and counties like Nairobi, Kiambu, Machakos and Kajiado.

"Besides causing cholera, diminishing water resources due to severe drought in parts of the country are likely to lead to outbreak of other diseases associated with poor sanitation," warned Francis Kuria, head of public health at Kenya's ministry of health.

The Kenyan authorities have reported hundreds of confirmed cases, just as the World Health Organization (WHO) announced reduced vaccine doses across Africa by half due to an acute supply shortage earlier in December.

The acting director-general at the ministry of health, Dr Patrick Amoth, has expressed concern that the vagaries of climate change, especially the prolonged drought, may worsen the cholera outbreak in the country due to lack of access to safe water.

Dr Amoth advised: "Medics must watch out for cases of watery diarrhoea, strengthen their surveillance activities down to the village levels and strengthen the involvement of all laboratory personnel in disease surveillance for timely confirmation of potential cases of cholera."

The doctor and administrator warned that the bacteria responsible for cholera could also spread the disease when swallowed, such as when human waste gets into food or drinking water.

Doctors Without Borders, a French humanitarian medical non-profit, has also warned of possible cholera cases in Kenya's Dadaab refugee camp, home to more than 200,000 people who fled Somalia's drought and other humanitarian crises.

Cholera cases have also spiked across



In addition, such humanitarian crises lead to crowding and overstressing basic sanitary resources like potable water, he said.

the African continent, particularly in the flood-hit West African nations of Cameroon and Nigeria.

Climate-related health emergencies accounted for slightly over half of the public health cases in the continent in the last two decades, according to a new analysis by WHO.

Around 56 per cent of the recorded public health events in Africa between 2001 and 2021 were climate-related, the WHO analysis revealed.

In addition, a comparative analysis of the two decades (2001 to 2021) showed the continent witnessed an increase in climate-

related emergencies, with 25 per cent more cases recorded between 2011 and 2021 than in the previous decade.

Recurrent cholera epidemics in Kenya

Kenya has a history of annual cholera epidemics that intensify every five years, according to Dr Hassan Nyawanga. He, in a phone interview, said the diarrhoeal disease, which has so far claimed over a dozen lives, can lead to death within hours if not treated.

Dr Nyawanga noted: "Cholera is associated with poor access to clean, potable water, poor sanitation

and crowded living arrangements. These factors have negatively influenced the recurrent occurrence of the disease in the country.

He added that poor preparedness and lack of a proper and effective medical emergency response plan could have contributed to the dozen deaths following the outbreak.

"Needless to add, the high incidence rate is also a result of antibiotic resistance," the doctor said. "A recent study in Kenya revealed that the vibrio cholera bacteria have become resistant to some antibiotics often used to treat the

disease."

Besides promoting general health, the doctor said there is a need for a multi-sectoral approach to eradicate the disease. There are approximately four million cases of cholera and 143,000 deaths worldwide yearly due to cholera, according to WHO.

Among others, ensuring access to clean water for all would drastically reduce these numbers, the United Nations health agency said.

In Kenya, 37 per cent of the population still relies on unimproved water sources, such as wells and rivers, while 70 per cent use unhealthy sanitation solutions, according to WHO.

Experts believe there is an urgent need for mega investments in modern, advanced tools that accurately forecast early extreme weather events like floods and droughts.

The proliferation of deadly diseases like cholera is also a result of extreme weather events like floods and droughts, which lead to large-scale displacement of people, Dr Nyawanga said.

In addition, such humanitarian crises lead to crowding and overstressing basic sanitary resources like potable water, he said.

The world is moving towards widespread and severe cholera outbreaks due to droughts, floods and conflict that hamper access to water, according to WHO.

Unfortunately, this is happening amid an acute shortage of vaccines, even as ordinary families feel the financial heat of treating and managing cholera patients.

Reducing the impacts of prolonged drought, experts feel, is critical in alleviating vulnerabilities among poor populations before the hazard occurs.

Horn of Africa faces unprecedented humanitarian catastrophe after 5th failed rainy season

Inflation is rising in Kenya: Here's why, and how to fix it

Drought in the Horn of Africa: More than 18.5 million in Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia and Djibouti face humanitarian crisis

Autonomous Africa CDC a game-changer on disease outbreak response: experts

By Tony Malesi

PLANS are at an advanced stage to formally make the Africa Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) operations autonomous from the African Union Commission (AU).

The AU said the move is meant to make CDC more authoritative and eliminate unnecessary protocols and regulations that sometimes drag its operations.

Concerns have been raised with health experts and stakeholders, including ordinary Africans, complaining about the poor response to disease outbreaks and climate change-induced health emergencies.

"We have worked around the clock to make this a reality. We have set up new administrative and support systems, including human resource, procurement and finance that are independent of the African Union Commission," said Acting Director Ahmed Ogwel Ouma during a press briefing.

A few key steps are remaining for Africa CDC to fully operationalise the newfound freedom early this year, Ouma added.

African presidents amended Africa CDC's statute late last year, allowing the body to transition into an independent continental public health agency instead of a specialised institution largely weighed down by unnecessary bureaucracy under AU.

Stakeholders, including practitioners and experts in the health sector, have welcomed the move.

AU is "too busy and overburdened by other major operations like hunger response, peace and security initiatives to give healthcare maximum attention," said experts.

Also read: TB is once again the deadliest disease in Africa – what went wrong Africa CDC's operational autonomy is a major milestone for the continent and global health security. This, especially at a time diseases have increasingly become international security threats, Ouma said. He added that Africa now has direct control of its healthcare agenda.

Despite initial objections and a push to limit Africa CDC's powers, especially the mandate to declare and coordinate health emergencies, the World Health Organization (WHO) regional office for Africa has welcomed the move and ongoing final discussions.

Ordinarily, countries can make declarations regarding disease outbreaks within their borders, while WHO is mandated to declare international public health emergencies. There, however, has been a gap regarding who is supposed to declare continental emergencies.

While formulating Africa CDC's new mandate and revising its statute in a meeting in Zambia mid last year, the AU executive council granted the body the power to declare continental emergencies.

Africa CDC will now be in a position to assess disease outbreaks on the continent and declare it an emergency if it's beyond one country, said Ouma.

"We take this responsibility and authority with a lot of seriousness and sensitivity to avoid the continent lagging behind in terms of health crisis response," he added.

Also read: African health ministers adopt PEN-PLUS strategy against non-communicable diseases

Ouma said such declarations will now be made in collaboration with WHO and other stakeholders, with detailed information regarding the emergency directly shared with heads of state rather than through the AU as has been tradition.

Moses Masika, a global health and infectious disease specialist, welcomed the move while noting that Africa CDC cannot afford to completely delink itself from AU. Still, he said greater autonomy allows it to take action faster and more efficiently.

The move is a significant milestone in helping the continental body build capacity, which is critical in protecting lives in Africa, said the specialist, who is also a lecturer at the Faculty of Health Sciences at the University of Nairobi.

The main role of Africa CDC is to strengthen the continent's capacity for outbreak preparedness and response, Masika said.

"Autonomy will enable the body to put in place the structures and people required to execute their core mandate especially in disease prevention and surveillance, and coordinate any response across the continent," he added.

Making Africa CDC's operations



The COVID-19 pandemic across the continent exposed Africa's capacity challenge, which a well-funded autonomous Africa CDC will mitigate.

independent of AU is a step in the right direction, said the scholar, who also doubles up as a research scientist on emerging infections and antimicrobial resistance.

It gives the body autonomy to seek more funds from strategic and special interest partners and the ability to make decisions and take action promptly without the delays that would be occasioned by bureaucracy at the AU, he said.

Masika said

The enhanced capacity at Africa CDC will allow them to pursue and nurture relationships with national ministries of health, development and strategic partners like the WHO, Chinese CDC, the US CDC and the European CDC, among others. Such partnerships

will provide the networks and resources needed to operate effectively.

He added that the realisation of the newfound autonomy is long overdue, especially after recent epidemics and pandemics exposed the continent's weaknesses in responding to health emergencies and crises.

This is a great move, particularly after the suboptimal response to Ebola epidemic in West Africa in 2014-2016, said Masika.

"The COVID-19 pandemic across the continent exposed Africa's capacity challenge, which a well-funded autonomous Africa CDC will mitigate," added Masika.

He warned that despite the independence, Africa CDC still needs a close working relation-

ship with the AU to enable it to get political goodwill in various circumstances.

"Africa CDC will still need to rely on the might and networks of AU in, for instance, accessing special national data and information on various diseases from the 54 states across Africa because of the trust and confidence the continental body enjoys from member states," said Masika.

The mainstream view from stakeholders in the health fraternity is that autonomy will help Africa CDC strengthen the capacity and capability of the continent's public health institutions.

The move, some said, will bolster research and processing of new knowledge on how to prevent or manage diseases.



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Gold becomes the currency of global fear and distrust

By Jonathan Guthrie

Experts joke that some Russian-mined gold in British vaults “is so old it has double-headed Imperial eagles stamped on it”. Ownership shifted into non-Russian hands decades ago, they say. But investors are worried that Russian gold could be used for sanctions busting. The London Bullion Market Association is therefore registering it all.

The anxiety of investors is apt. Gold is the currency of fear and distrust. The financial systems of the democratic west and authoritarian east are pulling apart amid mutual recriminations. That extends the potential role of gold for national reserves and for transactions where no questions need be asked.

Investment fundamentalists dismiss the yellow metal as yieldless and useless. The market disagrees. Gold is trading at \$1,840, per troy ounce, close to record highs. The war in Ukraine has fostered heavy demand.

Just before Christmas, the World Gold Council, a UK-based industry body, estimated year-to-date cumulative purchasing in 2022 of 673 tons led by governments. That included 400 tons in the third quarter, a level described as “heroic” by Adrian Ash of BullionVault, a trading platform.

This contrasted with a figure of just 333 tons in the first nine months of 2022 reported by central banks to the IMF. Some of the discrepancy may be explained by differing sample groups and time periods. But it is hard to imagine that all of it is.

Moreover, in the 12 months to November, gold in British vaults – the biggest repository – fell by 500 tons, more than 5 per cent, according to LBMA data. At today’s price, those ingots were worth \$30bn.

The inevitable inference is that nations challenged by the so-called “tyranny of the dollar” are quietly buying gold to replace foreign currency in reserves or for other purposes. Russia springs to mind: most of its government institutions, banks and bigwigs are covered by sanctions. China is also subject to a growing raft of trade curbs amid tensions over Taiwan.

“Coals to Newcastle,” sceptics say. China and Russia have plenty of gold from their own mines. Moreover, gold is a pretty clunky substitute for dollars, as Barry Eichengreen, a Berkeley economics professor pointed out in a recent report. He noted: “Shipping \$1bn of gold would require six 20-foot trucks.”

Payment via Swift is certainly easier. But Russia has been largely excluded from an international banking system. China is keen to find alternatives, too.

Gold is routinely shunted round the world despite its weight. Whenever you fly from London to Zurich, the hold is likely to contain some gold ingots alongside your suitcase. One ounce of gold is fungible with another. There is a large retail market for the stuff via the jewellery trade. Prices are volatile, but less so than for cryptocurrencies.

Gold can also be traded more easily beyond US oversight than dollars. For unaligned states, dollar dealings too often touch New York’s markets. They are also likely to feature the multinational banks through which American regulators achieve extraterritorial reach.

Increasing gold reserves – without pushing the price up by admitting it – would be a pragmatic move for Russia and China. Using the commodity as a transactional currency would be a natural extension of the policy but would represent a shift from sanctions avoidance to sanctions busting.

That would be nothing new. A decade ago, Turkey allegedly paid billions in gold for natural gas from Iran, under heavy sanctions for its nuclear programme. Switzerland was the main source of bullion. Iran swapped some of it in the United Arab Emirates for foreign currency, according to a report from the Global Initiative against Transnational Organised Crime, a Geneva-based non-profit organisation.

In 2020, the Financial Action Task Force, a G7 body, found that UAE’s large, active market in physical gold still created substantial money laundering risks. The Gulf federation has promised to clean up its act. That is just as well. Dubai is becoming a home-from-home for Russians and their assets.

Sanctions enforcers should also take a close interest in the gold market in London. More than 9,000 tons of the metal, worth some \$544bn at current prices, sits in repositories within the M25, more than in Fort Knox. The city has a history of embroilment in money laundering. Investors should be wary of the gold stored in London’s secretive, subterranean vaults.

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A farmer visits her banana farm. Agriculture was one of the sector which contributed significantly to GDP growth during the third quarter of last year. File Photo

GDP grew by 5.2pct in Q3, 2022, shows NBS

By Guardian Reporter

The economy grew by 5.2 percent during the third quarter of last year, slightly lower than 5.5 percent recorded during similar quarter of 2021.

According to highlight of the third quarter of 2022 published by National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), economic activities that significantly contributed to the growth include transport and storage (14.2 percent); agriculture (12.4 percent); mining and quarrying (9.8 percent).

Others were construction (8.3 percent), financial and insurance service (8.3 percent); and manufacturing (7.9 percent). However, information and communication recorded the highest growth of 13.7 percent, followed by accommodation and food services (percent 13.2).

Other strong growth recorded by financial and insurance service (12.0 percent), mining and quarrying (9.8 percent); and electricity supply (9.7 percent). The value of Quarterly Gross Domestic Product (QGDP) in an absolute term at current prices increased to 42.9trn/- from 38.4trn/- in the similar quarter in 2021.

Further, the value of QGDP at 2015 constant prices also increased to 33.9trn/- in the third quarter 2022 from 32.2trn/- in the similar period in 2021.

Crops
Crop production grew at a slower rate of 2.7 in the third quarter 2022 compared to 6.8 percent in the corresponding quarter in 2021.

The slow in growth was due to unfavourable rainfall received in areas of the production during the period of July to September 2022.

Major crops that contributed to such increase include cassava which grew by 17.0 percent from 254 thousand tons in the third quarter 2021 to 297 thousand tons in the similar quarter in 2022.

Banana harvested increased by 8.5 percent from 135 thousand tons in the third quarter 2021 to 146 thousand tons in the third quarter 2022.

Sweet Potatoes increased by 4.6 percent from 108 thousand tons in 2021 to 113 thousand tons in the corresponding quarter in 2022.

Beans & Pulses increased by 1.3 percent from 81 thousand tons in 2021 to 82 thousand tons in the corresponding quarter in 2022.

Livestock

During the period of July to September 2022, livestock activities grew by 5.1 percent, up from 5.0 percent recorded in the corresponding period in 2021.

The demand for livestock-based products attributed to the growth in line with a significant increase in per capita income, urbanization, taste and preference as well as increased awareness on food nutrition.

Forestry and Logging

Forestry activity recorded a slower growth rate of 3.0 percent in the third quarter 2022 compared to 6.6 percent registered in the corresponding quarter in 2021.

The slower growth rate was due to a decrease in production of forestry products in line with the government intervention to ensure sustainable harvest of forest products.

Fishing

The activity recorded a growth rate of 0.9 percent in the third quarter 2022, up

from a negative growth of 2.2 percent recorded in the similar quarter in 2021.

The growth was attributed to an increase in fish catch during the period under review.

Mining and Quarrying

Mining and quarrying activity recorded a growth rate of 9.8 percent in third quarter 2022 compared to a growth rate of 13.1 percent recorded during the corresponding quarter in 2021.

The growth was mainly due to an increase in production of Gold, Diamond, Silver, Coal and Natural Gas.

During the period under review, gold production increased to 17,516 kg in the third quarter 2022 compared to 14,915 kg produced in third quarter 2021.

Diamond production increased to 74,462 carats in the third quarter 2022 from 19,418 carat in the corresponding quarter in 2021, coal increased to 774,398 tons in third quarter 2022 compared to 191,607 tons in the correspondence quarter 2021.

Manufacturing

According to NBS, manufacturing activity expanded to 4.5 percent in the third quarter 2022, up from 3.9 percent in the corresponding quarter in 2021.

The growth rate was attributed to a general increase in the production of industrial goods.

Electricity, Gas

The activity recorded a growth rate of 9.7 percent in the third quarter 2022 compared to 10.0 percent in the similar quarter in 2021.

During the period of July to September 2022, total electricity generated increased to

2,313 million kWh from 2,093 kWh million generated in the similar quarter in 2021

Water Supply and Sewerage

During the period under review, quantity of water produced increased to 97.3 million cubic meters from 97.5 million cubic meters recorded in the similar quarter in 2021.

The activity experienced a slight growth rate of 0.1 percent compared to 4.5 percent registered in the corresponding quarter in 2021.

Decrease in water supply from catchment areas caused a slow-down in growth.

Construction

NBS reports that construction activity recorded a slower growth rate at 2.7 percent in the third quarter 2022 compared to 5.8 percent in the corresponding quarter in 2021.

Transport and Storage

The activity recorded a growth rate of 9.4 in the third quarter 2022, up from a negative growth of 0.6 percent recorded in the corresponding quarter in 2021.

The growth was attributed to increased cargo tonnage and passenger transported by road transport services.

Accommodation and Food Services

Accommodation and food services recorded a growth rate of 13.2 percent in the third quarter 2022 compared to 14.3 percent recorded in the corresponding period in 2021.

The growth was attributed to an increase in number of tourist arrivals.

The number of tourist arrivals increased to 458,783 in the third quarter 2022 from 249,437 recorded in the simi-

lar quarter in 2021 equivalent to 83.9 percent increase.

Information and Communication

The activity recorded a growth rate of 13.7 percent in the third quarter 2022, up from 8.3 percent in the corresponding quarter in 2021.

An increase in airtime used by mobile phone customers and the expansion of broadcasting and internet services in the country.

Financial and Insurance Service

The overall financial and insurance activities increased by 12.0 percent in the third quarter 2022, up from 4.8 percent recorded in the similar quarter in 2021.

The growth rate of financial activities increased by 7.7 percent in the third quarter 2022 compared to 5.1 percent in the similar quarter in 2021.

The growth was attributed to an increase in level of deposit by 18.0 from 25.0trn/- in the third quarter 2021 to 29.5trn/- in similar period in 2022; an increase by 21.9 percent of the level of lending from 20.8trn/- in 2021 to 25.4trn/- in the similar period in 2022.

Increase in growth rate of insurance services by 5.0 percent in the third quarter in 2022 compared to 1.5 percent in the corresponding quarter in 2021.

Real Estate

The activity recorded growth rate of 4.4 percent in the third quarter 2022, compared to 4.6 percent recorded in the corresponding quarter in 2021.

The growth was attributed to increasing demand for accommodation especially in urban areas.





Crypto, blockchain desperately need winning moments in 2023

By Lewis McLellan

Reeling from high-profile failures in 2022, those seeking to promote blockchain as a major solution for financial industries need to demonstrate some success if they are to regain their momentum.

The crypto industry suffered some savage blows in 2022. A virulent combination of incompetence and malignity brought down first the Terra/Luna stablecoin ecosystem and then FTX, until recently the second largest cryptocurrency exchange in the world. The consequences for the cryptocurrency market cap have been devastating.

Optimists say that these events will serve to blow away the speculative froth, shake out the bad actors and let the rest of the industry get on with building some truly valuable applications for blockchain under the renewed scrutiny of regulators.

Perhaps they're right, but even those outside of the crypto speculation game that are seeking to make blockchain work for the finance world will have a great deal of work to do in 2023 to

overcome the fiascos that occurred towards the end of last year.

While the crypto collapse grabbed the headlines, Sompendu Mohanty, chief fintech officer at the Monetary Authority of Singapore, said that the Australian Securities Exchange's decision to abandon its blockchain securities exchange project after six years and A\$245m-A\$255m (\$164m-\$171m) invested would have a bigger impact on the adoption of blockchain.

Speaking at the OMFIF Asia Forum in December, Mohanty called the development 'a fiasco', saying ASX's blockchain project 'was supposed to be the leading light showing how distributed ledger technology can change everything and make the processes super efficient, and that collapsed.'

Shortly after the failure of ASX's blockchain replacement project, TradeLens, a blockchain-powered supply chain ecosystem, announced that it would also be discontinuing operations early in 2023. The project was a joint venture from AP Moller Maersk and IBM and its demise signals the end of one of the more promising avenues of enterprise blockchain de-

ployment.

These two events have seriously dented hopes that the promises made about blockchain's ability to revolutionise processes in financial markets will be realised. That, combined with the collapse of cryptocurrency value, has robbed the industry of much of what momentum was left after central banks around the world began to tighten monetary conditions and the tide of cheap credit began to ebb.

But, despite the loss of momentum, Mohanty is far from ready to throw in the towel on blockchain. He affirmed that Singapore remains invested in DLT as a technology that can add value by changing business processes.

That may take a more radical approach to governance. Mohanty suggested that some of the problems that emerged in 2022, particularly in the case of FTX, stem at least in part from an excessive centralisation of control. Mohanty pointed out that this was possible because of the creation of private, permissioned blockchains designed to fit in with existing players' preferences. He suggested returning to the original public blockchain model.

The cryptocurrency industry must also make changes. Speaking on the same panel, Rana Kortam, director of global public policy at Binance, said: 'It's on us at Binance and every player to hold ourselves to a higher standard. The companies that differentiate themselves will be those that adopt proper risk management measures.'

The panellists also agreed that DLT has a great deal to offer in terms of modernising cross-border payments. That could involve the use of effectively collateralised stablecoins, as suggested by Binance's Kortam, or deposit coins issued by banks as suggested by fellow panellist Naveen Mallela, managing director of JP Morgan's Onyx Coin Systems project.

Andrew McCormack, centre head for the Bank for International Settlements' Innovation Hub in Singapore, warned that, though blockchain-based solutions like these may seem attractive, the proliferation of these kinds of systems may well lead to fragmented liquidity unless there is an effective solution for interoperability.

Lewis McLellan is Editor of the Digital Monetary Institute, OMFIF.

Oil rises as Chinese border opening spurs fuel demand

SINGAPORE

Oil prices climbed on Monday as the borders reopened in China, the world's top crude importer, boosting the outlook for fuel demand growth and offsetting global recession concerns.

Brent crude futures rose 90 cents, or 1.2%, to \$79.47 a barrel at 0520 GMT, while U.S. West Texas Intermediate crude was up 90 cents, or 1.2%, at \$74.67.

Hopes for less-aggressive U.S. interest rate rises are buoying financial markets and depressing the dollar. A weaker greenback makes dollar-denominated commodities more affordable for investors holding other currencies.

Both Brent and WTI tumbled more than 8% last week, their biggest weekly declines at the start of a year since 2016.

"Crude oil prices recovered from the previous week's losses as the economic reopening in China and less aggressive monetary tightening prospects from the Federal Reserve set a positive tone for demand recovery," said Avtar Sandu, senior manager for commodities at Phillip Futures.

As part of a "new phase" in the fight against COVID-19, China opened its borders over the weekend for the first time in three years. Domestically, some 2 billion trips are expected during the Lunar New Year



Pumpjack is seen at the Sinopec-operated Shengli oil field in Dongying, Shandong File Photo

season, nearly double last year's movement and recovering to 70% of 2019 levels, Beijing says.

Over the last week, airlines have boosted their January international seat capacity to and from China by 9.5% as they ramp up flights after its border opening, according to aviation data provider Cirium.

Despite the gains in oil on Monday, concerns remain that the massive flow of Chinese travellers may cause another surge in COVID infections.

Those concerns are reflected in the market structure for the benchmark oil futures. Both front-month Brent and WTI contracts are in contango, when current prices are below prices for later-delivery contracts, which typically indicates bearish sentiment for the market.

"Market sentiment has remained negative as China's battle with COVID-19 worsens. Despite removing most virus-related restrictions, a surge in cases across the country could stifle econom-

ic activity," ANZ analysts said in a note.

Energy futures for crude oil, refined products and natural gas have plummeted in the New Year as traders have reconsidered near-term worries over cold weather and fears of supply shortages and dumped contracts.

Last week, U.S. energy firms cut the number of operating oil and natural gas rigs by seven, the biggest weekly decline since September 2021, energy services firm Baker Hughes Co said on Friday.

JSE now hits all-time high

JOHANNESBURG

The Johannesburg Stock Exchange hit an all-time high on Monday morning as South African technology and mining stocks gained on enthusiasm about China reopening its borders and hopes the U.S. Federal Reserve may slow the pace of interest rate hikes.

The all-share index rose as high as 78,450 points and at 8.55 GMT was trading at 78,342 points, about 2% higher than the previous close. The blue-chip index of top 40 companies also reached an all-time high, of 72,411 points.

Mining companies were among the big winners, with the mining index up 2.35% to 61,707 points, as the prices of basic materials rose on the hope that China's economy will rebound after COVID-19 policies dampened demand and a weaker dollar boosted gold prices.

"The market is expecting that US, UK and Europe will enter a mild recession and that will lead to a cut in interest rates in the second half," said Wayne McCurrie, a portfolio manager at First National Bank.

"Another factor that is helping the South African market is China just abandoning its zero COVID policy over the weekend and that impact is seen in the mining stock on the market, as well as Naspers."

Tech investor and market heavyweight Naspers Ltd, through its subsidiary Prosus, holds a 27% stake in Chinese tech and gaming giant Tencent and is its biggest investor. Naspers jumped 3.92%, while Prosus climbed 3.86%.

Improved risk sentiment also boosted the rand, which at 8.55 GMT traded at 17.00 against the dollar, 0.69% stronger than its previous close.

ETM Analytics attributed

the rand's recovery to last week's strong U.S. labour market data and more measured views of indications that the government may try to change the South African Reserve Bank's (SARB) mandate.

"Talk of changing the SARB's mandate is not necessarily something to fear," ETM said in a note.

Gwede Mantashe, chairman of the governing African National Congress (ANC), said on Friday that it wanted to expand the SARB's mandate to do more to support the economy, prompting the rand to fall during the session.

The central bank's focus, spelled out in the constitution, is "to protect the value of the currency in the interest of balanced and sustainable economic growth".

The government's benchmark 2030 bond was stronger in early deals, with the yield down 15 basis points to 9.85%.



Norway's oil profits soared to new heights during 2022

OSLO

Following several previous successful years, Norway once again saw record oil and gas profits in 2022, as well as progressing its renewable energy operations.

With energy prices soaring last year, in response to the Russian invasion of Ukraine and the subsequent scarcity of oil and gas in Europe, Norway recorded significant profits throughout the year.

The Nordic powerhouse quickly stepped in to provide gas to other European countries that were facing severe shortages, offering an alternative to Russia.

Thanks to its favorable position in the international energy market, Norway expects to continue achieving record earnings throughout 2023, as well as developing its green energy capacity to support the gradual transition away from fossil fuels to renewables.

In October, Norwegian oil and gas firm Equinor announced record third-quarter profits, achieving \$24.3 billion in the July-September period, and over \$9.77 billion in the same period of 2021. This was largely due to increased post-pandemic demand and higher gas prices, which almost tripled since the beginning of the Russia-Ukraine conflict. This figure was greater than its previous earnings prediction of \$23.5 billion.

Equinor's CEO, Anders Opedal, stated "The Russian

war in Ukraine has changed the energy markets, reduced energy availability and increased prices." He added, "High production combined with continued high price levels resulted in very strong financial results." Due to sanctions on Russian energy, Equinor became the main gas supplier to Europe in 2022, reducing Russian firm Gazprom's market share.

Despite strong profits, Equinor expected to achieve a 1 percent growth in production in 2022 compared to the previous year, lower than the planned 2 percent rise.

This was blamed primarily on delays on its Johan Sverdrup Phase 2 development, which was expected to commence operations in December instead of October. Equinor expects the new phase of Sverdrup to boost its crude output by 220,000 bpd.

And the Norwegian government believes the country's success to extend well into 2023, with anticipated earnings from oil and gas of \$131 billion for the year. This would set a new record, marking an 18 percent rise on 2022, and five times the earnings of 2021. It predicts an output average of 4.3 million bpd, over 4.1 million in 2022.

Although the Prime Minister, Jonas Gahr Støre, has rejected calls for a price cap on gas, Norway has introduced a windfall tax on its oil and gas companies. Støre believes that a price cap would not support

the boost in production required to meet Europe's high gas demand, as it continues to face shortages. However, taxes will be increased on Norwegian oil and gas by around \$195 million in 2023, as the government reverses an incentive package offered during the pandemic, reducing the tax deduction from 12.4 percent to 17.69 percent. The introduction of the windfall tax responds to pressure from left-wing parties to increase taxes on companies that are depleting Norway's natural resources, to tackle inflation.

While Norway's oil and gas industry continues to boost its fossil fuel production and see record profits, there are concerns about the ongoing reliance on energy sources with high greenhouse gas emissions. Since 2020, Norway has run almost entirely on renewables.

But it still operates large-scale, highly profitable oil and gas projects in response to the growing global demand for energy. For a country that strives to be a world leader in renewable energy and a forerunner in the transition to green, it still relies heavily on its oil and gas wealth.

Norway is the seventh wealthiest country by GDP per capita, and has seen its earnings soar over the last year thanks to oil and gas. This helps it pump funds into renewable energy capacity development, as well as supporting other countries in their development.

LONDON

Technology and business are inextricably linked. Entrepreneurs harness technological advances and, with skill and luck, turn them into profitable products.

Technology, in turn, changes how firms operate: electricity enabled the creation of larger, more efficient factories, since these no longer needed to depend on a central source of steam power; email has done away with most letters.

But new technologies also affect business in a subtler, more profound way. They alter not just how companies do things but also what they do—and, critically, what they don't do.

The history of capitalism is a story of such reorganisations. The Industrial Revolution put paid to the "putting-out system", in which companies obtained raw materials but outsourced manufacturing to self-employed craftsmen who converted these into finished products at home and were paid by output.

Instead, factories strengthened the tie between worker, now employed directly and paid by the hour, and workplace.

The telegraph, telephone and, in the 20th century, containerised shipping and better information technology (IT), have allowed multinational companies to subcontract ever more tasks to ever more places. China became the world's factory; India became its back office. Nearly three years after the pandemic began, it is clear that technology is once again profoundly redrawing the boundaries of the firm.

In the rich world, fast broadband internet and new communication platforms like Zoom or Microsoft Teams mean that a third of working days are now done remotely. Jobs are trickling out from corporate headquarters in metropolises to smaller cities and towns.

And the boundary between collaborating with a colleague, a freelance worker or another firm is blurring. Companies are drawing on common pools of resources, from cloud computing to human capital.

By one estimate, skilled freelance workers in America earned \$247bn in 2021, up from about \$135bn in 2018. The biggest firms in America and Europe are becoming more reliant on outsourcing white-collar work.

Exports of commercial services from six large emerging markets have grown by 16.5% a year since the pandemic began, up from 6.5% before it (see chart 1). On January 9th Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), an Indian IT-outsourcing giant, is expected to report another bump in profits.

A useful lens for understanding these changes was offered by Ronald Coase in his ground-breaking paper from 1937 entitled "The nature of the firm". Stay small and you forgo the efficiency afforded by scale. Grow too big and a business is too unwieldy to manage—think of Soviet-style command-and-control economies. Most commerce happens in between those extremes. But where on the continuum?

Coase, whose insights earned him a Nobel prize in economics, argued that firms' boundaries—in other words, what to do and what not to do yourself—are determined by how transaction and information costs differ within firms and between them.

Some things are done most efficiently in house. The market takes care of the rest.

For example, between the 1980s and the 2010s, globalisation and the IT boom boosted economies of scale and, as a result, encouraged market concentration. But the two factors also increased competitive pressures and reduced the cost of communication and collaboration between firms.

This caused companies to shrink their scopes. In research published last year Lorenz Ekerdt and Kai-Jie Wu of the University of Rochester found that the average number of sectors in which American manufacturers were active fell by half between 1977 and 2017.

By the 2000s many sprawling industrial conglomerates like Germany's Degussa, which had a hand in everything from metals to medicine, or British Aerospace, which was dabbling in automobiles, had unwound themselves and picked the knitting to stick to (chemicals and aircraft, respectively).

How technology is redrawing the boundaries of companies



As technology evolves, the contours of the firm will continue to be redrawn. The result is that companies have greater flexibility to seek out new workers for new tasks in new places.

Today Coasean forces are ushering in a new type of corporate organisation. It resembles a 21st-century putting-out system—not for artisan craftsmen but for the sort of white-collar professionals who epitomise modern Western economies.

Micha Kaufman, boss of Fiverr, an Israel-based marketplace which matches freelance workers with corporate clients around the world, observes that firms are getting better at measuring workers' performance based on their actual output rather than time spent producing it. This is true both of employees and subcontractors. The result is a reorganisation of businesses both internally and in relation to other companies in the economy.

Using data from America's Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, The Economist has examined jobs in three sectors particularly compatible with remote work: technology, finance and professional services. Our analysis finds that such jobs have become far more distributed across America since the pandemic. Big metropolitan areas have lost out to smaller cities and even the countryside.

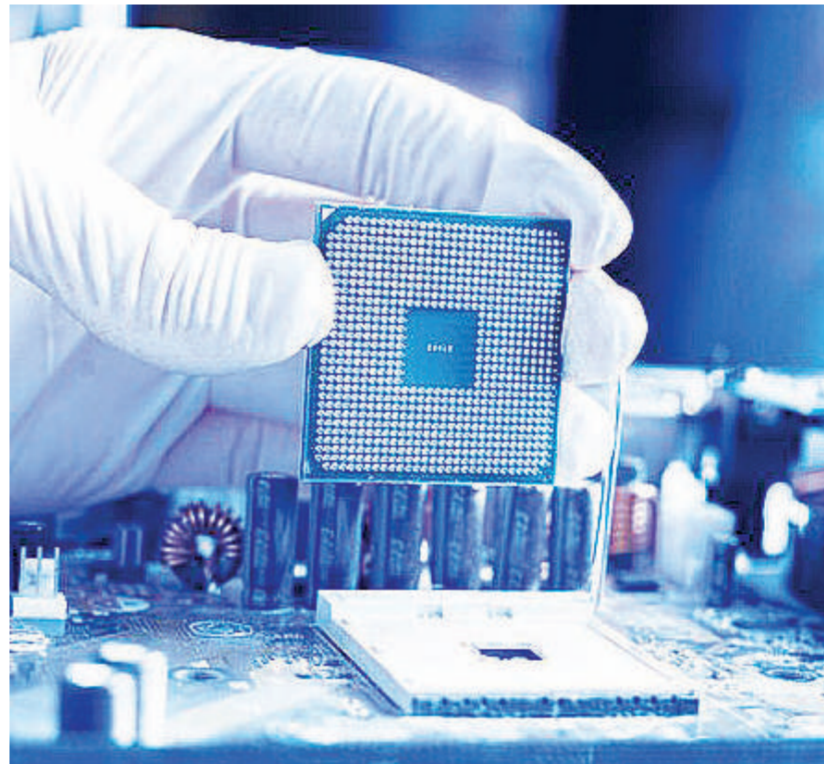
Since the fourth quarter of 2019, the number of jobs in the three sectors has grown by five percentage points more in rural areas than in San Francisco and New York.

Firms are also distributing work across more borders, often in new ways. Oswald Yeo, who runs Glints, a recruiting startup in Singapore, says that his firm hires employees in batches by country.

That helps the new recruits from Indonesia, say, form in-person connections with colleagues there, while expanding Glints's talent pool, Mr Yeo explains.

There is a premium for locations without a big time difference because, as a study last year from Harvard Business School found, cross-border teams collaborating on non-routine tasks often work into their leisure time in order to work synchronously with colleagues in different time zones. In Glints's case, that is places like Indonesia.

For American companies, it is increasingly Canada. Microsoft, which opened its first Canadian office in 1985, created a big new one in Toronto in 2022.



Google is tripling its Canadian workforce to 5,000. A study last year by CBRE, a property firm, of the 50 cities in America and Canada with the most tech workers found that four of the top ten were Canadian.

Together, the four added 180,000 tech jobs between 2016 and 2021, an increase of 39%. By comparison, the top four American cities gained just 86,000 jobs, or 8%, over the same period. Lower costs doubtless helped; the Canadian quartets were among the 16 cheapest cities among the 50, as measured by housing costs.

Barriers to immigration are another factor forcing firms to look abroad, says Prithwiraj Choudhury of Harvard Business School.

Mr Choudhury has documented a growing class of firms that help employers forge stable relationships with overseas employees without hiring them directly. One example is MobSquad, a firm that recruits skilled workers unable to obtain visas to America and employs them in Canada instead. Its American clients include Betterment, an investment firm, and Guardant Health, a biotechnology company.

MobSquad's recruits sit somewhere in between outsourced temps and full-time employees. This sort of arrangement points to the bigger

Coasean shift—to how firms demarcate which tasks they perform on their own account and which they subcontract.

A survey of nearly 500 American firms conducted by the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta in August 2022 found that 18% plan to use more independent contractors; only 2% said they would use fewer (see chart 3). On top of that, 13% want to rely more on leased workers, compared with 1% who want to reduce this reliance.

MBO Partners, a workforce-management firm, estimates that the number of American workers engaging in independent work for at least 15 hours a week increased from 15m in 2019 to 22m in 2022. Official figures from the Bureau of Labour Statistics are more conservative, but still show that nearly 1m more Americans are self-employed than at the start of 2020.

Pandemic-era job losses forcing people into less desirable work arrangements cannot be the whole story; a similar surge in self-employment did not occur after the global financial crisis of 2007-09.

The shift is once again enabled by technology, such as the proliferation of platforms for all manner of freelance work. Having grown slowly, from 9% of America's labour

force in 2000 to 11% in 2018, self-employment is becoming much more common.

Gig work is no longer the preserve of ride-hailing or food delivery. Whereas earlier freelance platforms, such as Taskrabbit, focused on routine tasks, emerging new ones increasingly recruit freelance workers for complicated work.

Upwork specialises in web development; Fiverr is known for media production. Amazon turned to Tongal, another freelancing platform, when it needed a team to rapidly produce social-media content for its Prime TV shows.

Besides making it easier for companies to rely on non-employees, technology is enabling new ways of collaboration between businesses. In 2020 Slack, the messaging platform of choice at many a firm, launched a feature that allows users to communicate directly with other companies as they can within their own organisations.

More than 70% of companies in the Fortune 100 list of America's biggest firms by revenue use the feature. The Atlanta Fed's survey found that 16% of responding firms were planning to increase domestic outsourcing and 12% envisioned more offshoring.

Already, combined revenues for six big IT-services firms with large operations in India—Cognizant, HCLT, Infosys, TCS, Tech Mahindra and Wipro—grew by 25% between the third quarter of 2019 and the same period last year (see chart 4).

Pinning down just how much firms depend on outsiders is tricky—companies do not advertise this sort of thing. To get an idea, Katie Moon and Gordon Phillips, two economists, look at a firm's external purchase commitments in the upcoming year as a share of its cost of sales.

As a snapshot of the economy, this measure of "outsourcing intensity", as Ms Moon and Mr Phillips call it, must be treated with caution; it does not capture all types of outsourcing and different firms account for external purchases in different ways. But it usefully illustrates changes over time.

The Economist has calculated the measure using data from financial reports for a sample of large listed firms from America and Europe (see chart 5). We find that companies are indeed growing more reliant on others.

Average outsourcing intensity across our sample has nearly doubled from 11% in 2005 to 22% in the most recent year of data (either 2021 or 2022).

This growth is especially pronounced among tech titans such as Apple and Microsoft; businesses that grew little over the analysed period, such as Unilever, a British consumer-goods giant, saw only small increases. This is consistent with research which finds that as firms grow ever larger and adopt more technologies, thus becoming more complex and unwieldy, they outsource more operations—precisely as Coase would have predicted.

As technology evolves, the contours of the firm will continue to be redrawn. The result is that companies have greater flexibility to seek out new workers for new tasks in new places.

Portugal has created a special visa for digital nomads, who will be able to work from the country for a year.

Argentina wants to introduce a preferential exchange rate for freelance workers selling their services abroad: the "tech dollar" would ensure that they will not be exposed to the rapidly devaluing peso.

For Western white-collar types, this stiffer competition for work may translate into compressed wages. According to a working paper published last year, by Alberto Cavallo of Harvard Business School and colleagues, wages differ less between countries for occupations that are more prone to outsourcing.

For the global economy, though, it means greater efficiency and, hopefully, faster growth and higher living standards. And for Coase, it means continued relevance.

WORLD

Six-year-old shoots teacher in Virginia

A 6-year-old boy shot his first-grade schoolteacher during an "altercation", police in Virginia say.

"This was not an accidental shooting," Police Chief Steve Drew said on Friday evening of the shooting that occurred about 2 pm that day. The child and the teacher had an altercation before a single shot from a handgun was fired at Richneck Elementary School in Newport News, a city of more than 180,000 people, about 110 kilometers southeast of Richmond. It did not appear that the boy and the teacher knew each other beyond the classroom environment.

The teacher, identified as Abigail Zwerner, 25, suffered "life-threatening injuries" from the shooting, Fox3 Now News quoted authorities as saying. She was in "stable condition and trending in a positive direction", USA Today quoted the Mayor of Newport News, Philip Jones, as saying on Saturday afternoon.

The boy was taken into police custody, Drew said. No students were injured. School

officials had quickly brought all students and teachers to the school's gymnasium and authorities had talked with lawyers about how to proceed.

Police have not said where the boy obtained the firearm or if any adults have been questioned about the shooting. A representative for the US Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives told ABC News that the agency is helping in the investigation by tracing the firearm recovered at the scene.

Virginia law does not allow 6-year-olds to be charged as adults, The Associated Press reported, nor can the boy be placed into the custody of the Department of Juvenile Justice if he is found guilty of any charges, the news agency said. However, a juvenile judge could place him under the control of the Department of Social Services.

USA Today quoted Andrew Block, a law professor at the University of Virginia and the former director of the Virginia Depart-



Students and police gather outside of Richneck Elementary School after a shooting, Jan 6, 2023 in Newport News, Virginia. (BILLY SCHUERMAN/THE VIRGINIAN-PILOT VIA AP)

ment of Juvenile Justice, as saying authorities may file a petition saying the boy needs services such as counseling. It is more likely authorities will focus on providing services to the boy in the interests of rehabilitation rather than punishment, he said. Sebastian Gonzalez-Hernandez told Fox3 his 6-year-old son was in the class when the shooting happened.

The teacher "screamed at her kids to run away" after being shot, Gonzalez-Hernandez said.

His son heard the gun go off and turned to see Zwerner collapse before he ran from the classroom, Gonzalez-Hernandez said.

The New York Times quoted Trannisha Brown, whose 11-year-old son, Carter Jackson, is a fifth-grader at Richneck, as saying that soon after the shooting she received a call from her son Carter. He took cover on the floor of his classroom with his friends after they heard gunfire.

"It shook me up hearing those kids crying and going frantic. All they knew was that there was a shooter in the school and they didn't know where the shooter was."

She stayed on the phone with her son, trying to comfort him. "You are going to be all right," she recalled telling him.

Moscow ends self-proclaimed cease-fire

MOSCOW

A self-declared cease-fire over Orthodox Christmas from the Kremlin ended on Sunday, with Russia vowing to push on with the special military operation in Ukraine until it reaches a victory.

President Vladimir Putin ordered a 36-hour cease-fire on Friday along the line of contact to observe Russia and Ukraine's Orthodox Christmas, which fell on Saturday.

Despite Russian troops' observance of the truce, Ukraine continued artillery shelling of populated areas and Russian positions, while Russian forces responded with fire, the Russian Defense Ministry said.

Most Ukrainian Orthodox Christians have traditionally celebrated Christmas on Saturday, as have Orthodox Christians in Russia. But this year the Orthodox Church of Ukraine, the country's largest, allowed also a Dec 25 celebration. Still, many observed the

holiday on Saturday, flocking to churches and cathedrals.

After the cease-fire ended, the Kremlin said Moscow will press ahead with the special military operation in Ukraine.

"The tasks set by the president (Putin) for the special military operation will still be fulfilled," Putin's first deputy chief of staff Sergey Kiriyenko was quoted by Russian state news agency TASS as saying. "And there definitely will be a victory."

There is no end in sight to the conflict, now in its 11th month, which has killed thousands, displaced millions and turned Ukrainian cities into rubble.

Ukrainian officials also reported blasts in regions that make up the broader Donbas region, the front line in the conflict where fighting has been raging for months.

Missile strikes

Pavlo Kyrylenko, governor of the Donetsk region, said



In this handout photo released by Russian Defense Ministry Press Service on Jan 7, 2023, Russian troops attend the Orthodox Christmas service at the Russian Armed Forces' main cathedral in the Patriot military park in Kubinka just outside Moscow, Russia, Jan 7, 2023. (AP)

there were nine missile strikes on the region overnight, including seven on the battered city of Kramatorsk.

Blasts were also heard in the city of Zaporizhzhia, a local official said, without giving any immediate report on damage or casualties.

Minutes after the start of the cease-fire on Friday, the White House announced \$3.75 bil-

lion in weapons and other aid for Ukraine and its European backers.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky praised the United States for including tank-killing armored vehicles in its latest package of military aid, saying they are "exactly what is needed" for Ukrainian troops locked in combat against Russian forces, even as

both sides celebrated Orthodox Christmas.

Ukrainian officials denounced the unilateral 36-hour cease-fire as a ploy and said it appeared to have been ignored by some of Moscow's forces. Ukrainian officials reported Russian shelling attacks in the Dnipropetrovsk and Zaporizhzhia regions on Saturday.

However, Russia's Defense Ministry insisted on Saturday that its forces along the 1,100-kilometer front line were observing the Kremlin-ordered truce, but returned fire when attacked.

The latest round of US military assistance was the biggest to date for Ukraine. For the first time, it included 50 Bradley armored vehicles and 500 anti-tank missiles they can fire. Germany also announced it would supply around 40 Marder armored personnel carriers and France promised wheeled AMX-10 RC tank destroyers.

South African President Ramaphosa vows to address energy challenges, fight against crime and corruption

JOHANNESBURG,

SOUTH African President Cyril Ramaphosa on Sunday pledged to address energy challenges and enhance efforts to fight against crime and corruption.

Ramaphosa, also president of the African National Congress (ANC), the country's ruling party, made the remarks in his address to mark the 111th anniversary of the ANC at Dr. Petrus Molemela Stadium in Mangaung, Free State Province. The National Executive Council, the ANC's highest governing body, has decided to

give top priority in 2023 to the energy crisis, ANC renewal initiatives, better service delivery, collaboration with social partners to boost job and investment creation, and the fight against crime and corruption, according to Ramaphosa.

The unstable electricity supply remains one of the biggest barriers to economic growth and disturbs the lives of all South Africans.

"The ANC calls for Eskom and the government to immediately focus on restoring additional units to operation as quickly as possible," he said.

Ramaphosa said the gov-



ernment should prioritize infrastructure investment over other expenditure items, alongside the structural reform of network industries, including electricity, telecom-

munications, water, rail, aviation and road infrastructure.

In order to address South Africa's persistently high unemployment rate, which is particularly acute among young people, grants

must be linked to opportunities for jobs, self-employment, training, and other types of economic development, he said. Ramaphosa pledged that the ANC will take action to strengthen law enforcement agencies and public participation in the urgent task of restoring peace and stability across the country.

"Additionally, immediate action must be made to restore the capabilities of law enforcement organizations and other criminal justice system institutions that have been compromised by state capture and corruption," he said.

Xinhua

Flexible work boosts productivity, ILO says

HONG KONG

FLEXIBLE work arrangements, including reduced work hours adopted during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, can benefit economies, businesses and workers and allow for a healthier work-life balance, according to an International Labour Organization study.

"Short-time work (or) work-sharing measures or other forms of job retention help to reduce the volume of work and to maintain employment on a larger scale," said the "Working Time and Work-Life Balance Around the World" report published on Friday.

The report found "powerful evidence" that providing workers with greater flexibility in deciding when, where and how they work resulted in positive business outcomes, including improved productivity. Restricting such flexibility resulted in "substantial costs, including increased turnover".

Pandemic impact

"This report shows that if we apply some of the lessons of the COVID-19 crisis and look very carefully at the way working hours are structured, as well as their overall length, we can create a win-win, improving both business performance and work-life balance," Jon Messenger, lead author of the report, said.

The study looked at two main aspects: working hours and work schedules or arrangements. It analyzed different work time arrangements and their effects on work-life balance, including shift work, on-call work, compressed hours and hours-averaging schemes.

During the pandemic, it said, work-sharing or short-time work policies and measures adopted by countries such as Germany were "found to have encouraged companies to respond to reduced demand for their products and services by reducing hours of work instead of cutting jobs".

Moreover, flexible working hours, such as those created using working-time accounts, enabled individuals, companies or industries to collectively cut work hours, while increasing work hours in new economic bottleneck areas such as healthcare or pharmaceutical industries.

Asia and the Pacific is the region with the highest proportion of workers who regularly work more than 48 hours a week, where nearly half of all workers, or 46.7 percent, work long hours.

The highest proportions of workers with such long work hours are in southern Asia at 57.1 percent. The region with the lowest proportion of workers with long work hours is Eastern Europe at 4.5 percent.

The report also cautioned that the benefits of some flexible arrangements, such as better family life, may be accompanied by costs, including greater gender imbalances and increased health risks.

The study also highlighted that working time is one of the key tools used to help counter threats posed by the pandemic to the economy.

Chinese New Year film festival kicks off in Malta

VALLETTA

THE fourth "Happy Chinese New Year" film festival kicked off on Saturday evening with the Chinese film "The Bravest" at Malta's National Center for Creativity in Valletta.

Maltese audiences will have the opportunity to watch four more Chinese films "The Climbers", "Looking Up", "The Wandering Earth" and "The Captain" during the film festival, which will last until Jan. 24.

Chinese film-making had become more and more sophisticated in recent years, and its topics and themes were becoming more diversified, Aida Daoud Bushra told Xinhua after watching the film, adding that she loved Chinese culture very much and hoped to see more Chinese films in the future.

Fiona Vella said she was delighted to watch the fine Chinese films on the occasion of the Chinese New Year. These films brought an interesting Chinese cultural experience to Maltese audiences, who would have the opportunity to enjoy the unique charm of Chinese culture and arts, she said.

This was the first time Kevin Debono and his wife saw a Chinese film and they were amazed by the charm of the film. They said they hoped to see more Chinese films in Valletta in the future.

"Happy Chinese New Year" film festival has become a vital brand event for Maltese people to experience Chinese culture, Yuan Yuan, director of the China Cultural Centre in Malta, told Xinhua, adding that she hoped more local people would further the development of Chinese culture and society through visual arts.

The Chinese Lunar New Year for 2023, or the Spring Festival, falls on Jan. 22.

China welcomes first arrivals following downgraded COVID management

THE first flights under China's new COVID-19 management for international travelers arrived at airports in south China's Guangdong province on Jan. 8, according to the national customs authority.

Over 380 passengers were aboard two flights, CZ312 from Toronto to Guangzhou and ZH9024 from Singapore to Shenzhen, on the day the country downgraded the management of COVID-19 to Class B and lifted certain restrictions on international passengers, a major shift of its epidemic response policies.

In a statement released by China's National Health Commission (NHC) in December 2022, inbound travelers and

goods would no longer be required to any quarantinable infectious disease control measures. Passengers simply need to take a nucleic acid test within 48 hours before departure, and they no longer need to request a health code from Chinese diplomatic and consular missions.

On the same day that the new management took place, Terminal 3-E of the Beijing Capital International Airport reopened for international arrivals. The airport's Terminal 2 international arrival services have also resumed. Operations in Terminal 3-D have been temporarily suspended, where all incoming travelers had to undergo a nucleic acid test and then be sent to quaran-

tine facilities since March 10, 2020.

It is reported that the airport would handle ten passenger flights in and out on Jan. 8. To prepare for the anticipated increase in travel, relevant authorities, airlines, and airports have been stepping up efforts.

Security force and targeted operational training have been enhanced in the airport to cope with the increased passenger traffic since that day, serving for smooth international exchanges and economic and social development.

In the Terminal 3-E border checkpoints, the layout and facilities have been upgraded with a fresh appearance. "To ensure a better clearance experience for passengers

after the resumption of flights, the Beijing frontier inspection authority has added 12 inspection channels and a waiting area at the border entry site," said Zhang Weitao with the authority.

According to Zhang, dedicated channels are set to make clearance simpler for special groups such as the elderly, young, disabled and pregnant women.

Following the new stage of China's COVID-19 control, the country is also resuming passenger entry and exit at sea and land ports, with domestic and international tourism expected to increase as the Spring Festival holiday approaches.

On the same day that the new management took place, Terminal 3-E of the Beijing Capital International Airport reopened for international arrivals. The airport's Terminal 2 international arrival services have also resumed



World leaders condemn supporters of Brazilian ex-president storming national seats of power

BRASILIA

AFTER supporters of former Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro stormed the presidential palace, the Congress and the Supreme Court here the capital city on Sunday, leaders of several countries and international organizations condemned their action and expressed support for Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva.

The attackers were protesting Bolsonaro's loss of power after being defeated by Lula da Silva in the presidential election in October. Lula da Silva, who was sworn in on Jan. 1, condemned the invasions, saying the attackers would be punished "with the full force of law."

More than 400 were arrested in connection with the attacks, Federal District Governor Ibaneis Rocha revealed Monday. "We continue working to identify all the others who participated in these terrorist acts this afternoon in the Federal District."

We continue to work to restore order," said Rocha on Twitter. Rodrigo Pacheco, president of the Federal Senate, also blasted the invasions, saying the protesters were "undemocratic" and must be punished "rigorously."

Bolsonaro, who was absent from the inauguration ceremony of Lula da Silva, voiced earlier on Twitter his support for peaceful demonstrations and rejected vandalism and invasion of public buildings.

Local media reported that Lula da Silva was not in the presidential palace at the time of the riot and security forces have now retaken control of the three buildings.

World leaders repudiated the



Protesters, supporters of Brazil's former president Jair Bolsonaro, storm the Planalto Palace in Brasilia, Brazil, Jan 8, 2023. (ERALDO PERES / AP)

protesters' acts and expressed their support for the incumbent Brazilian government.

While expressing his support for Lula da Silva, Colombian President Gustavo Petro called for an urgent meeting of the Organization of American States to "apply the democratic charter."

"An unconscionable attack on the three powers of the Brazilian state by Bolsonaroists. The Brazilian government has our full support in the face of this cowardly and vile attack on democracy," Chilean President Gabriel Boric said.

The Ecuadorian Foreign Ministry also issued a statement reiterating its "unrestricted support for democracy and the legitimately elected government."

Argentine Foreign Minister Santiago Cafiero wrote on Twitter that "we express our solidar-

ity with Lula da Silva and raise our voices in defense of Brazilian democracy."

Mexican Foreign Minister Marcelo Ebrard also expressed his country's "full support for the government of President Lula elected by popular will" and rejected "any attempt against democratic institutions."

OAS Secretary General Luis Almagro condemned the incursions, saying they are of a "fascist nature."

U.S. President Joe Biden has also condemned the "assault on democracy" in Brazil. "I condemn the assault on democracy and on the peaceful transfer of power in Brazil."

Brazil's democratic institutions have our full support and the will of the Brazilian people must not be undermined. I look forward to continuing to work with Lula," he said on Twitter

on Sunday. In Europe, EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Josep Borrell said in a statement that the EU condemns in the strongest terms the anti-democratic acts of violence that took place on Sunday in the heart of Brasilia's government quarter, and reiterates its full support for Lula.

French President Emmanuel Macron tweeted his support for Lula, saying: "The will of the Brazilian people and the democratic institutions must be respected!"

Portuguese President Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa condemned the acts of Bolsonaro's supporters and stressed Portugal's solidarity with Lula da Silva as a new "legitimately invested power" in Brazil after the 2022 election. Xinhua

Kiriyenko says Russia is sure to achieve goals of its military operation

MOSCOW

FIRST Deputy Head of the Russian Presidential Administration Sergey Kiriyenko has said that the goals of the special military operation that have been set by Russian President Vladimir Putin will certainly be achieved.

"The goals that have been set by the president with respect to the special military operation will be achieved no matter what. A victory is certain, as is a normal and decent life," he told reporters.

He also said Ukraine perpetrated provocations during the truce announced by Russia.

"They (Ukrainian provocations - TASS), have taken place, unfortunately. That's what I have seen in Donbass."

And the attempts to strike with drones during the night when a Christmas service was being held in Sevastopol, in the Kherson Region, and in the Zaporozhye Region.

It's the internal choice of every person. Unfortunately, many people that make decisions on the other side have nothing Christian and Orthodox left in their soles. Let God be the judge of them," Kiriyenko said.

Putin ordered on January 5 that a ceasefire be established along the combat engagement line in the area of the special military operation from 12:00 of January 6 through 24:00 of January 7. Russian Defense Minister Sergey Shoigu issued the relative directions. The Ukrainian government has reacted negatively to the idea of a ceasefire for Christmas. Agencies

Gunmen kidnap 32 people from southern Nigeria train station



Nigerian Railway Corporation personnel are seen on a platform as a train speeds by at the Idu Railway Station during the resumption of Abuja-Kaduna train railway operations in Abuja, Nigeria's capital on Dec 5, 2022. AFP

YENAGOA

GUNMEN armed with AK-47 rifles have abducted more than 30 people from a train station in Nigeria's southern Edo state, the governor's office said on Sunday.

The attack is the latest example of the growing insecurity that has spread to nearly every corner of Africa's most populous country, posing a challenge to the government in advance of a February presidential election.

Police said in a statement that armed herdsmen had attacked Tom Ikimi station at 4 pm (1500 GMT) as

passengers awaited a train to Warri, an oil hub in nearby Delta state. The station is some 111 km northeast of state capital Benin City and close to the border with Anambra state.

Some people at the station were shot in the attack, police said.

Edo state information commissioner Chris Osa Nehikhare said the kidnappers had taken 32 people, though one had already escaped.

"At the moment, security personnel made up of the military and the police as well as men of the vigilante network and hunters are intensifying search and rescue operations in a reasonable radius to rescue the kidnap victims," he said. "We are confident that the other victims will be rescued in the coming hours."

The Nigerian Railway Corporation had closed the station until further notice and the federal transportation ministry called the kidnappings "utterly barbaric".

The NRC last month reopened a rail service linking the capital Abuja with northern Kaduna state, months after gunmen blew up the tracks, kidnapped dozens of passengers and killed six people.

The last hostage taken in that March attack was not freed until October.

Insecurity is rampant across Nigeria, with Islamist insurgencies in the northeast, banditry in the northwest, separatists in the southeast and farmer-herdsmen clashes in the central states.

Higher interest rates alone may not cool down inflation - Israeli economists

JERUSALEM

SOME Israeli economists have noted that it remains questionable whether Israel's sharp increases in interest rates will be able to reduce inflation, saying the monetary policy may actually do more harm than good for the country.

After the Bank of Israel increased the rates seven times in a row, the base interest rate in the country has been lifted from 0.1 percent in April 2022 to 3.75 percent at present. The latest increase, according to central bank governor Amir Yaron, was undertaken to bring inflation back to the government's target range of 1 to 3 percent.

Israel's year-on-year inflation in November 2022 stood at 5.3 percent, the highest since 2008. However, Amir Elalouf, a lecturer and researcher in the department of management at Bar-Ilan University, doubts the efficacy of the rate hikes despite their benefits.

"The economic situation is relatively good, and inflation in Israel is relatively not high, when interest hikes have caused anxiety and depression among payers of mortgages and other loans," he explained.

High interest will favor big technology corporations with abundant cash, while young start-up businesses, which are crucial to the Israeli economy, still require financing and will now pay more money for it, Elalouf pointed out.

"The same goes for households. Those who have a lot of liquid cash will get more money from the new interest rates, while the middle class and the weaker ones who need money will now borrow more," he added.

"The move strengthens the strong and harms the weak," the Israeli researcher noted. Despite the high interest rate that has reduced the number of mortgages accepted in Israel, price decreases in shopping malls,

real estate offices, internet portals, and other sales locations in the country have yet to be witnessed, analysts said.

On the contrary, Israelis have experienced price rises across the board, including those for fuel, electricity, water, property taxes, and consumer items, while many households are dealing with higher mortgage payments, adding to the already strained spending power of ordinary families, they added.

Concerning the bank's upcoming interest decision, the Manufacturers Association of Israel cautioned that a further increase will harm the industrial sector and the Israeli economy as a whole.

Meanwhile, the Federation of Israeli Chambers of Commerce demanded the central bank formulate a broad plan to curb inflation together with the finance ministry instead of raising the interest rate once again.

However, Elalouf believes that the central bank would raise interest rates repeatedly until desired results are achieved, such as a decrease in home prices, saying it may be forced to turn to alternative strategies, such as thawing lands and easements for contractors, after unsuccessful interest hikes.



The same goes for households. Those who have a lot of liquid cash will get more money from the new interest rates, while the middle class and the weaker ones who need money will now borrow more

It's irresponsible for history to ignore China's contributions to COVID-19 fight

CHINA'S National Health Commission and National Bureau of Disease Control and Prevention recently held a virtual meeting themed around technical exchange for COVID-19 prevention and control with the World Health Organization (WHO).

The two sides communicated on the current state of the epidemic, medical treatment, acute care and continued vaccination. The two sides agreed to maintain technical exchanges to facilitate early end of the pandemic.

China has convened multiple meeting with the WHO on technical exchanges less than a month after it optimized its COVID-19 response measures, which mirrors the country's sense of responsibility in coping with global public health crisis.

China follows a science-based approach in preventing and controlling COVID-19 and has been constantly fine-tuning its response measures in light of the evolving situation.

Facing the wide spread of the original strain and the Delta variant, which had high virulence, China took strict measures and earned valuable opportunities for the international community to fight the disease. It has made important contributions to the global COVID-19 fight.

Given the significantly weakened pathogenicity and virulence of the Omicron variant, as well as China's expanded capacity in treatment, testing and vaccination, the country downgraded its management of COVID-19 from Class A to Class B.

This is expected to make COVID-19 response more scientific, targeted and effective, better ensure normal work and life

and meet people's demand for medical services, and reduce the impacts from the disease on economic and social development to the fullest extent.

It is generally believed by international personages that China's COVID-19 response is based on its understanding of the laws of how the virus evolves and spreads, and mirrors the country's commitment to seeking truths through scientific approaches.

China places people and their lives in the first place and works to ensure their safety and health to the fullest extent. It always upholds the vision of building a community of common health for mankind to contribute its

share to the global fight against COVID-19.

Since the onset of the virus, China has always followed the principle of openness and transparency, maintaining practical communication and cooperation with the WHO and other countries and regions.

In the early days of the pandemic, China raced against the time to identify the pathogen and shared the genome sequences of the virus, which helped other countries and regions to get prepared.

The country also regularly reported its COVID-19 situation to the WHO and relevant countries and regions in a timely and proactive manner.

According to incomplete statistics, China has conducted over 60 technical exchange activities with the WHO since it proposed and established a technical exchange mechanism with the UN health body in January, 2020.

In combating Covid-19, China has engaged in international cooperation and launched the largest global emergency humanitarian operation since the founding of the People's Republic of China, providing hundreds of billions of anti-pandemic items to 153 countries and 15 international organizations.

China was the first country to promise that it would make its COVID-19 vaccines a global public good, the first to support the waiver of COVID-19 vaccine pat-

ents, and the first to launch cooperation with other developing countries on vaccine production. It has provided more than 2.2 billion doses of COVID-19 vaccines to over 120 countries and international organizations.

Besides, the country has launched over 300 activities on technical exchange for COVID-19 prevention and control with 180 countries and regions, as well as over 10 international organizations, and sent 38 medical teams to 34 countries.

China has made important contributions to narrowing the global immunity gap and promoting global solidarity in fighting COVID-19, demonstrating its admirable sense of responsibility as a major country and winning wide applause from the international community.

People's Daily

Simba SC needs stability and calmness away from home, reveals Mgunda

By Correspondent Nassir Nchimbi

SIMBA SC has under new head coach Roberto Oliveira set up a seven-day camp in Dubai, United Arab Emirates to drill the squad ahead of the resumption of the 2022/23 NBC Premier League and 2022/23 CAF Champions League's group stage assignments.

The squad left for Dubai camp soon after crashing out of the group stage of this year's 2023 Mapinduzi Cup which is played in Zanzibar.

However, the club's officials claimed its participation in the showdown happened to be fruitful.

Simba SC will be the host in the NBC Premier League game against Mbeya City FC which will be played at the Benjamin Mkapa Stadium in Dar es Salaam on January 17, while having positives to take after exiting this year's Mapinduzi Cup.

Before leaving for UAE, Simba SC assistant coach Juma Mgunda said: "We are leaving to have calmness and stability under the new head coach."

The gaffer revealed: "We are going to prepare for the Premier League game and CAF Champions League to try something new while we are away from home to get new combinations and fitness of players."

"Regarding the preparations for our game with Mbeya City FC, I believe they are a good team... they have had good results lately, I hope we will assess them and prepare much on how they play when we

come back," Mgunda disclosed.

Simba SC has cherished its participation in this year's Mapinduzi Cup saying it was a worthy outing, an opportunity for the performers to get match fitness despite the early exit.

Simba SC beat KVZ 1-0 in the final group stage game at Amaan Stadium but failed to advance following a 1-0 loss to Mlandege in the group opener.

Mgunda had earlier made his assessment after the game against KVZ, noting even if they have exited the competition, the two games they have played have helped them make a good assessment of their squad in this mini-transfer window.

He said one of their targets was to assess every member of the squad giving ample playing time to players who hardly feature regularly in the NBC Premier League.

The gaffer said: "Our mission was accomplished though we had been knocked out. The technical bench wanted to use this tournament to make a thorough assessment of the squad by giving chances to players who don't feature regularly in both domestic and continental level matches."

"We have seen them, we have enough of what we wanted to see from them, and in this, we have succeeded," he said.

Concluding, he said they had to improve in their last game despite knowing they will never go through to the next stage.



Simba SC assistant coach, Juma Mgunda.

Mwanza's Pamba now seeks to reinforce squad

By Correspondent Cheji Bakari, Tanga

MWANZA's Pamba FC, which participates in this season's Championship League, has disclosed it is seeking reinforcement by landing five signings in a mini-registration period.

The outfit's information officer Moses William said the players needed by the outfit are two attacking midfielders, fullbacks, and two wingers.

He noted the recruitment follows head coach George Ssemogerere's recommendations. William further said the squad is in the final stages of parting ways with five players.

Pamba FC is expected to lock horns with Dodoma's Fountain Gate FC in the 15th-round match of the league scheduled to be played on January 14 this year.

According to Tanzania Football Federation (TFF), the one-month mini-registration period was opened on December 16 last year and will officially come to close on January 15 this year.

Pamba FC sits third in the ongoing league after posting 28 points, having featured in 14 games, posting a win in nine fixtures, a draw in one,

and a loss in four.

Dar es Salaam's JKT Tanzania is enjoying the driver's seat in the showdown with 34 points having taken part in 14 ties.

Meanwhile, Dodoma's Fountain Gate FC is closing in on roping in former Prisons' striker Mohamed Mkopi.

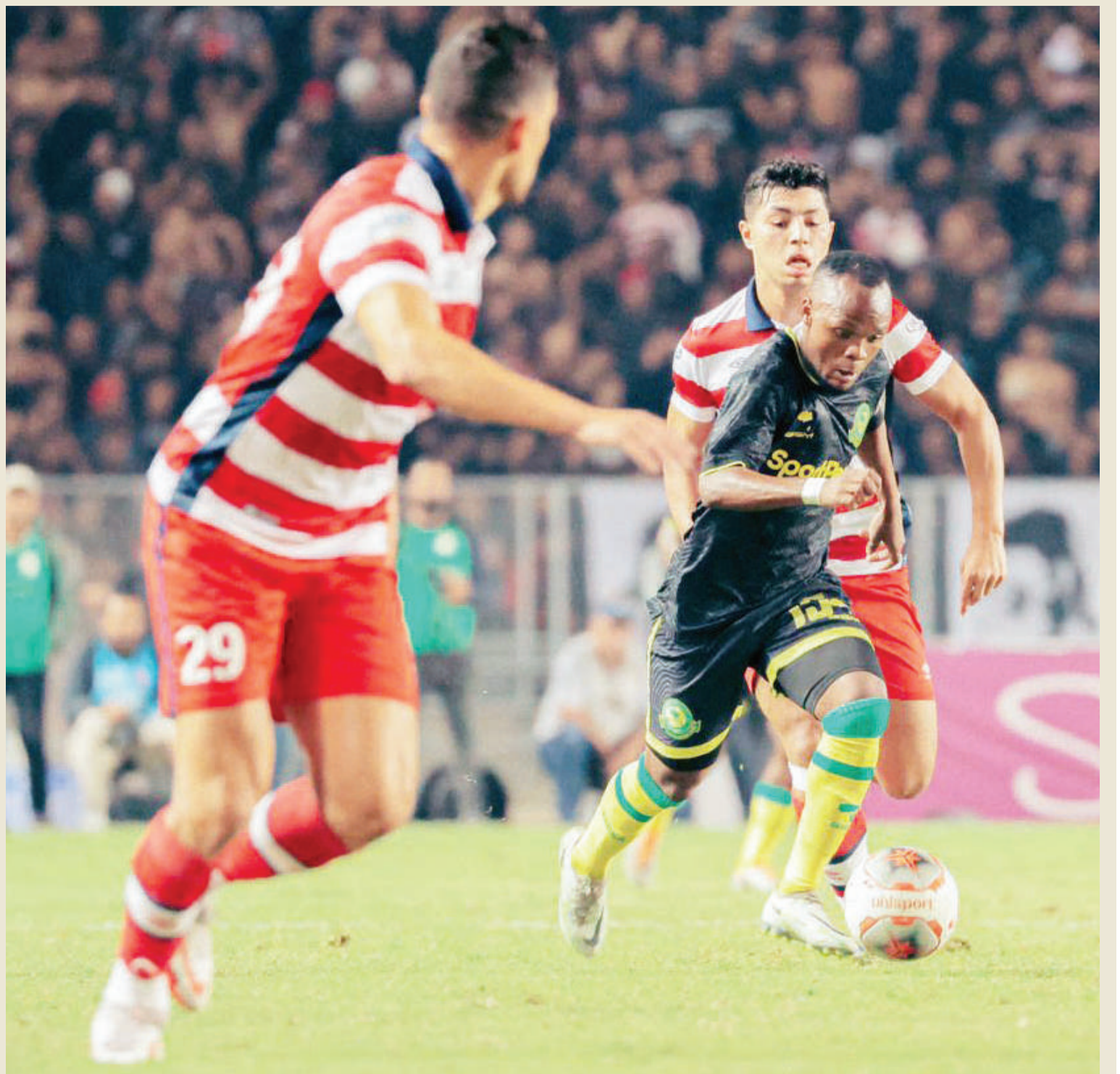
One reliable source disclosed to The Guardian Mkopi had last Thursday attended training at the club but the attacker's signing has not officially been confirmed.

"Fountain Gate FC succeeded to land his sign immediately after giving him a good offer with fringe benefits, he agreed and has already joined the squad," the source noted. Other players who have joined Fountain Gate FC during this mini-transfer window are Athuman Maulid and Ditram Nchimbi that has signed a six-month contract.

Before sealing a move to Fountain Gate FC, Maulid had played for Burundi's Kayanza United.

The footballer earlier entered an agreement to join Tanga's Coastal Union but the deal was dissolved mutually.

Fountain Gate FC is positioned sixth in the Championship League with 24 points from 13 fixtures.



Tanzania's Yanga right fullback, Kibwana Shomari (C), dribbles past Tunisia's Club Africain players during the 2022/23 CAF Confederation Cup Additional Second Preliminary Round's rematch that took place at the latter's backyard last year. Yanga won 1-0. PHOTO: COURTESY OF YANGA

A sporting wish list for 2023

By Correspondent Lloyd Elipokea

LAST week, Dear Reader, I presented my reflections on the year gone by in the perpetually active sporting domain.

However, since we are now on the cusp of a potentially exhilarating year in sports, it seems only fitting that I should focus on my hopes for Tanzania and Africa in the world of sports this year.

Let us set the ball rolling by mulling over domestic football as this year is unarguably set to be a monumental year for our two most storied clubs, Yanga and Simba SC.

Indeed, both mammoth clubs will be jockeying for top honors in continental football's most prestigious and esteemed championships, which are the CAF Confederation Cup and the CAF Champions League.

Yanga will represent the country in the daunting CAF Confederation Cup group stage while Simba SC will fly the flag high in the intensely competitive CAF Champions League.

Admittedly, qualifying for the quarterfinals from the group phase of both competitions will be an undeniably tall order for both local football colossuses.

However, one hopes that Yanga and Simba SC will be able to pick up vital clues about their respective failings from their participation in the concluding Mapinduzi Cup, and this ought to stand them in good stead.

From football, let us now zero in on the quadrennial Olympic Games, which are set to get underway next year in the globally renowned French capital, Paris.

Indeed, one hopes that we shall undertake thorough preparations for the Paris Games as this is the only fail-safe way of increasing our chances to cap-

ture medals.

Moving on, our preparation for the Olympics is a matter that dovetails nicely with the standard of coaching in this country as the latter has a massive impact on the former.

It should be noted here that some sports stakeholders called upon the authorities and would-be sponsors late last year to take measures that would help to improve the worrying standard of coaching on our shores.

This lackluster standard of coaching applies across the entire spectrum of sports on the home front and it has been a disturbing reality for many years now.

Hope springs eternal that rapid action will be taken by all concerned to significantly address this particular sporting malaise.

Let us now cast our gaze beyond local sports to the inter-

national sporting arena, which will be indisputably action-packed this year.

For example, the Women's Netball World Cup is set to take place this year in Cape Town, South Africa from July 28 to August 6.

Indeed, many ardent netball fans on the continent will be hoping that the continent's two finest netball-playing countries South Africa and Malawi will be able to produce the goods in truly splendid fashion.

Having said that though, to make headway in the competition, South Africa and Malawi will have to get the better of the sport's truly redoubtable triumvirate, which consists of New Zealand, Australia, and England.

Godspeed then to South Africa and Malawi as they head hopefully into the no-holds-barred intensely competitive arena of global women's netball.



Kinondoni Municipal Council Football Club.

KMC FC set to miss seven players in Mtibwa tie

By Correspondent Ismail Tano

DAR ES SALAAM's Kinondoni Municipal Council FC started training in the city on Monday to prepare for the 2022/23 NBC Premier League game against Mtibwa Sugar to be held in Morogoro on Friday.

Players making Kinondoni Municipal Council FC began moving to the side's camp on January 8 after the holiday break. Christina Mwagala, Kinondoni

Municipal Council FC information officer, noted apart from the players turning up since last weekend, the club's head coach Thierry Hitimana has also returned to the city from Rwanda.

The official pointed out Kinondoni Municipal Council FC misses seven players in its preparations for the game against Mtibwa Sugar.

According to Christina, Sadalah Lipangile, Ibrahim Ame, Matheo Anthony, Steve Nzinga-

masabo, and Ismail Gambo are not attending preparations because of family issues.

The official stated midfielder Emmanuel Mvuyekure and full-back Hance Masoud that were injured are getting treatment.

She disclosed: "We have started training today after a short break that we gave the players as Mapinduzi Cup takes place, we are facing a difficult game which is taking place away."

"We will have a difficult game

considering that we will go away again after losing in an encounter with Ihefu SC on January 3, but we are happy that our players are in good shape," the leader noted.

"They are training spiritedly, this projects a good image ahead of our game against Mtibwa Sugar."

Kinondoni Municipal Council FC is positioned ninth in the 2022/23 NBC Premier League with 22 points.

Like Cosmos signing Pele, says Ronaldo's new coach

RIYADH

CRISTIANO Ronaldo's new club coach Rudi Garcia on Sunday compared the Portuguese star's arrival at Al-Nassr in Saudi Arabia to Pele's signing with the New York Cosmos in 1975.

"It's a bit like Pele's arrival" in what was then the North American Soccer League, Garcia told AFP.

"Especially for the development of football, sport and culture in Saudi Arabia."

At 34, Pele came out of partial retirement to spark an explosion of interest in football in the United States. Ronaldo, at 37, is coming out of a bitter divorce with Manchester United.

"It's great. Great for us, for Al-Nassr. Great for Saudi Arabia," said Frenchman Garcia. "Cristiano Ronaldo is more than a player. He is one of the best players in the world."

Garcia was speaking on a visit the Riyadh bivouac of the Dakar Rally which is being held in Saudi Arabia and, like Ronaldo's high-priced signing, has drawn criticism that the country's leaders are "sportswashing", or trying to deflect attention from the kingdom's human rights record.

"For the development of Saudi Arabia and the Middle East, it is very, very important," said Garcia. "If today the Dakar is here, it brings home that in sports and cultural development a country can do a lot."

"It's amazing how much it's put a spotlight on our club. Now everyone knows where our club is around the world," said Garcia of Ronaldo's off-field impact, particularly on social media.

"We must have gone from 800,000 (followers) to 10 million in a few hours, a few days, because of Cristiano's arrival."

Ronaldo signed a contract until 2025 with the Saudi club in a deal worth a reported 200 million euros. Garcia said he was delighted with his new star.

"The greatest champions are the easiest to manage," he said. "He blended in with the squad. We saw him joking and laughing with pleasure with his new teammates. He was with us for the last game, even if he couldn't play. He was in the locker room, riding his bike."

AFP



Chelsea's head coach Graham Potter reacts during the English FA Cup soccer match between Manchester City and Chelsea at the Etihad Stadium in Manchester, England, Sunday, Jan. 8, 2023. (AP Photo)

Guardiola tells Chelsea to back under-fire Potter after FA Cup rout

LONDON

PEP Guardiola told Chelsea co-owner Todd Boehly to back under-fire boss Graham Potter after Manchester City thrashed the Blues 4-0 in the FA Cup third round on Sunday.

Potter's troubled side were beaten by City for the second time in four days as their hopes of winning a domestic cup this season came to a painful end.

Already knocked out of the League Cup by City in November and defeated 1-0 by the Premier League champions on Thursday, Chelsea's turbulent season was pushed deeper into crisis as Guardiola's men ran riot at the Etihad Stadium.

Riyad Mahrez started the demolition with a fine free-kick before Julian Alvarez's penalty and a Phil Foden strike made it 3-0 before half-time.

Mahrez's late spot-kick capped Chelsea's first FA Cup third round exit since 1998 after they had finished runners-up in the competition for the last three years.

With Chelsea languishing in 10th place in the Premier League -- 10 points adrift of the top four -- Potter is already beginning to feel the heat just

four months after replacing the sacked Thomas Tuchel.

The former Brighton manager will hardly have been comforted by the sound of Chelsea fans chanting Tuchel's name and sarcastically shouting "shoot" whenever they embarked on a rare attack during their latest abject defeat.

Chelsea have won only three of their last 12 games in all competitions, but Guardiola came to Potter's aid as he urged the Blues hierarchy to give him time to make his methods work.

"I would say to Todd Boehly, give him time. I know in big clubs, results are important but I'd say give him time," Guardiola said.

"What he's done at Brighton is outstanding, but we need time in the first season. I had (Lionel) Messi in Barcelona my first season so I didn't need two seasons because Messi was there."

- 'We are suffering' -

Chelsea did not muster a single shot in a first half even Potter described as "painful".

Potter could point to an injury crisis which kept nine players sidelined and led to teenager Bashir Humphreys making his senior debut in defence.

But the 47-year-old conceded performances must im-

prove quickly.

"The results in a small space of time are not positive. You can make excuses and look for reasons or say it isn't good enough. Both of those answers are correct," Potter said.

"We have to keep improving and stick together because clearly we are suffering as a football club and it's not nice at all. But that's where we are at the moment."

"We can't do anything apart from do our jobs better and work harder. You understand the supporters' frustration, we respect that. But our job is to do our job and keep working."

Insisting he still has the backing of his players, Potter added: "I think there is support in the dressing room."

"We are just going through a bad moment. We have to stick together and keep working."

Meanwhile, the Football Association will investigate alleged incidents of homophobic chanting by City fans.

"We strongly condemn the use of the term 'rent boy' and we are determined to drive it out of our game," an FA spokesperson said.

"We continue to work closely with the Crown Prosecution Service, as well as the UK Football Policing Unit, in relation to the use of this term."

AFP

Ronaldo the latest star to end career in soccer outpost

BY STEVE DOUGLAS

CRISTIANO Ronaldo is not the first soccer superstar to head off to one of the world's supposed minor leagues in the latter years of his career.

The temptation for one last huge payday, to be a trailblazer in a nation looking to boost its standing in the sport, or just to try something different often can be too big to resist. Not every player bows out right at the top like Zinedine Zidane -- even if the France great was sent off in the last game of his career, the World Cup final of 2006.

Others, like Pelé, Johan Cruyff, Zico, Xavi Hernandez, and now the 37-year-old Ronaldo at Saudi Arabian club Al Nassr, find themselves prolonging their careers at unlikely soccer outposts usually for vast amounts of money.

Here's a focus on a few of them, across five different countries:

PELE

It was a move that changed U.S. sports history. Pelé, the Brazil great and owner of an unprecedented three World Cup winners' medals, signed for the New York Cosmos in 1975 after being wooed by the team for four years.

Pelé's 2 1/2 seasons there -- he earned \$2.7 million, according to the Cosmos' then-general manager Clive Toye -- put U.S. soccer on a path to hosting the World Cup in 1994 and launching Major League Soccer two years later.

The Cosmos' average attendances nearly tripled in Pelé's first year and continued to grow. He scored 37 goals in 64 matches in the North American Soccer League and did all the PR work required in his mission to make soccer mainstream and underpin a surge in youth participation.

"We would not be where we are today," MLS Commissioner Don Garber said, "if it wasn't for Pelé deciding to come to the United States."

So many top players have since made their way to the U.S., typically to end their careers and for lifestyle reasons: Franz Beckenbauer, Johan Cruyff, George Best, David Beckham and Thierry Henry, to name just a few.

ZICO

Zico is almost as fondly remembered in Japan as he is in his native Brazil.

After two highly successful spells at Flamengo, either side of two years at Udinese in Italy, the playmaker quit his playing career, only to come out of retirement at the age of 38 to help usher Japanese soccer into professionalism.

He played for four seasons at Kashima Antlers from 1991-94, a period which took in the inauguration of the J-League in 1993. Zico remained in Japan until 2006, staying at Kashima as its technical director and then coach before becoming the national team's coach for the four-year cycle up to the 2006 World Cup.

He has since been elected into Japanese



FILE - Cristiano Ronaldo, warms up during his first training after the official unveiling as a new member of Al Nassr soccer club in in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, on Jan. 3, 2023. (AP Photo)

soccer's Hall of Fame and is known as the "God of Football" in Japan.

Along with England great Gary Lineker, who also played in Japan at the start of the league, Zico is regarded as a key figure in the development of Japanese soccer and its growth in popularity.

Dunga, Hristo Stoichkov and most recently Andres Iniesta, Spain's World Cup winner from 2010 who has played for Vissel Kobe since 2018, are other major names to have played in Japan.

XAVI HERNANDEZ

Xavi wasn't the first star player to land in Qatar's top league but he might have had the most prominence, given he arrived midway through 2015 -- at age 35 -- on the back of being the Barce-

lona captain who lifted the Champions League trophy weeks earlier.

The league had been running for more than 40 years by that point and, since the turn of the century, had enticed high-profile players such as Marcel Desailly, Pep Guardiola and Gabriel Batistuta in 2003 and 2004 and Raúl González in 2012.

Even Brazil great Romário came over to the tiny, oil-rich emirate to play, if only for three games in 2003 at a reported cost of \$1.5 million for Al-Sadd, Qatar's biggest club. That was before Qatar, in 2010, won the right to host the 2022 World Cup.

In that 12-year stretch, Xavi -- one of Spain's greatest players -- was the most famous soccer import, his stint in the

country lasting six years and following a plan that saw him take his coaching qualifications and be a World Cup ambassador.

ALESSANDRO DEL PIERO

Del Piero, the majestic Italy World Cup-winning forward, is comfortably the biggest name to have played in Australian soccer after his two years with Sydney FC (2012-14) on what was described by the club as the "largest professional sporting contract in Australian history" -- a reported \$2 million a season.

Del Piero scored 24 goals in 48 games but, as a rare superstar to play soccer in Australia, said his greatest satisfaction was aiding the growth of the game Down Under as TV viewership and Sydney's attendances swelled.

A record 35,000 spectators watched the 38-year-old Del Piero's debut, Sydney's membership grew beyond 10,000, and the club's chairman, Scott Barlow, said it lifted the "A-League onto the world stage."

No other player, past or present, in the A-League comes close to match-

ing Del Piero's gravitas -- former Liverpool and England striker Robbie Fowler had short stints at two Australian clubs before the Italian's arrival, and Dwight Yorke spent a season at Sydney before that -- so, in a sense, it has been a missed opportunity in a country where rugby league and cricket is king.

Australian soccer did get a timely uplift at the recent World Cup in Qatar when the national team reached the last 16.

DIDIER DROGBA

In 2012, Chinese clubs made a concerted push to attract top stars to its highest league -- the Chinese Super League -- after getting over the fallout of a corruption scandal that damaged its reputation.

Not enough, though, to dissuade Didier Drogba to sign for Shanghai Shenhua as perhaps the biggest draw of this first batch of leading players that also included Nicolas Anelka.

Drogba, then aged 34, was a huge deal at the time, not least because

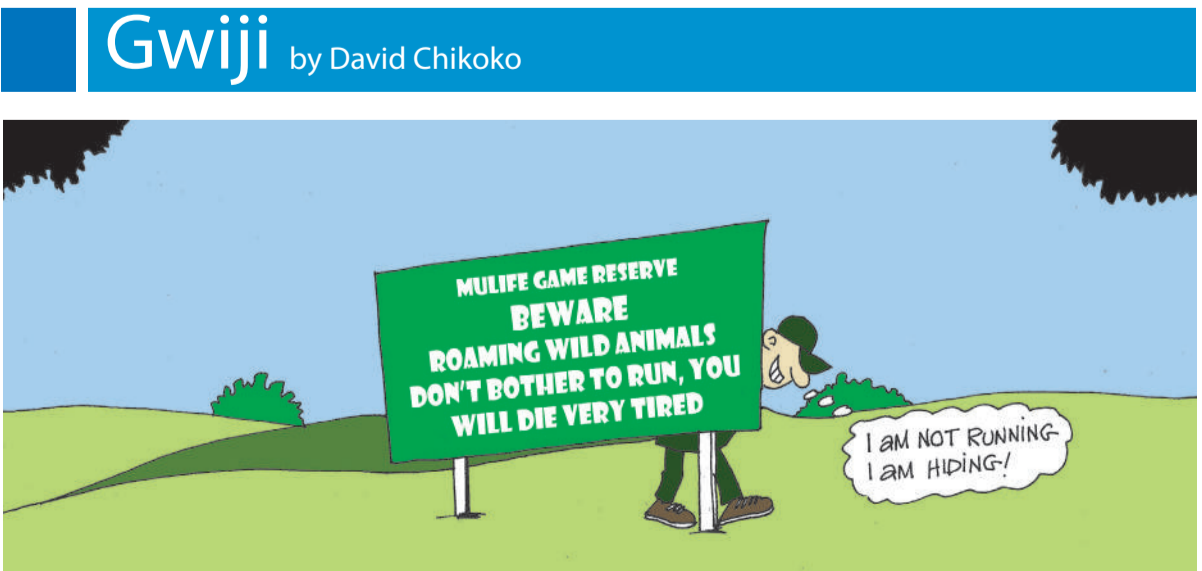
the Ivory Coast striker had just led Chelsea to its first Champions League title by scoring a late equalizer in regulation time and then the clinching penalty in the shootout of the 2012 final.

Drogba called it a "leap into the unknown," with Shenhua chairman Zhu Jun willing to pay Drogba a reported \$300,000 a week to help drag his team up the league and Chinese soccer officials hoping it would boost the country's hopes of becoming a major global player.

Drogba lasted six months before returning to Europe with Galatasaray in a messy split and China never has managed to compete with Europe as a go-to league.

However, Guangzhou Evergrande became the first Chinese team to win the Asian Champions League, in 2013 -- they won it again in 2015 -- and another wave of top players arrived in 2017, including Carlos Tevez, Alexandre Pato and Oscar.

AP



SPORT

Guardiola tells Chelsea to back under-fire Potter after FA Cup rout

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Francis Kazadi Kasengu. PHOTO: COURTESY OF SINGIDA BIG STARS FC

Singida Big Stars official debunks rumours on new signing

By Correspondent Nassir Nchimbi

SINGIDA Big Stars' leadership through the Chief Executive Officer Dismas Ten has quashed rumours that DR Congo striker Francis Kazadi is yet to sign for the club.

Ten was adamant Kazadi is their legal player, according to the contract signed earlier this year.

Kazadi has been signed by Singida Big Stars during the mini-registration window coming from Al Masry SC of Egypt, he did not have a chance to play regularly since he was signed in 2020.

Singida Big Stars' leadership has released information about the contract between the club and the 30-year-old attacker following rumors claiming that Kazadi has not yet signed a contract with the club, and is at the club on a trial basis.

Ten noted the information circulating about Kazadi's contract with their club is not true and what is on legal papers is that the attacker is their player.

The official pointed out: "Kazadi is our legal player and he has already signed a contract with our club, the information is incorrect because it is different from what is legally available."

"In normal circumstances, you cannot stop people from speaking and what they say comes in many situations, what I can assure you is that this is our legitimate player and when he is mentioned in a different statement from mine then, it is not correct."

"People should be aware that Singida Big Stars is an institution that does its work systematically, so in this issue of Kazadi's registration all protocols have been followed, so I want to make it clear that we work professionally and do not take chances on negative odds," Ten noted.

Rumors on Kazadi contract have been rife after the player scored four goals in the semi-final of this year's Mapinduzi Cup against Azam FC to book a spot in the final which will be played on January 13.

The attacker scored five goals in the showdown, his first goal was scored in the group stage game against Yanga which ended in a 1-1 draw and had Singida Big Stars making it to the semi-final in their maiden appearance in the competition.

Kally Ongala defends Azam FC goalkeeper after 2023 Mapinduzi Cup howlers



Singida Big Stars FC's midfielder, Said Ndemla (L), challenges his Azam FC counterpart Kenneth Muguna when the teams took on each other in this year's Mapinduzi Cup showdown's semi-final played in Zanzibar last weekend. PHOTO: COURTESY OF AZAM FC

By Correspondent Michael Mwebe

AZAM FC interim head coach Kalimangonga Ongala has jumped to the defense of the outfit's goalkeeper Zubeir Foba after his errors gifted Singida Big Stars goals in Sunday's Mapinduzi Cup semi-final, which ended in a 4-1 loss for Azam FC.

After an impressive start from Azam FC, they soon found themselves 1-0 down as Foba's attempt to dribble past Francis Kazadi was easily intercepted by the Congolese forward, who tapped home into an empty net to give Singida Big Stars the lead in the 27th minute.

The young goalkeeper who is the fourth choice at Azam FC had received a back pass from central defender Edward Manyama and had the option of making a simple pass to the unmarked Bruce Kangwa on the keeper's left side but opted for the risky decision of attempting to dribble past Kazadi who made him pay for the error by swiftly tapping the ball home.

Azam FC responded with an equalizer two minutes before the halftime break but once again was made to pay for a goalkeeping error by Foba who failed to handle a cross floated in by Ghanaian winger Nicholas Gyan that was knocked down to Kazadi who made no

mistake with yet another simple tap in.

Foba contributed his hat-trick of mistakes when he was caught out of position by Kazadi's clever chip that went over him and into the empty net to register Singida Big Stars' third goal of the night.

But that was not the end of his misery as he was beaten yet again by Kazadi to make it 4-1 and put the game out of

reach of Azam FC.

Speaking after Sunday night's game, Ongala was asked about Foba's mistakes and refused to lay the blame on the shot-stopper, insisting they failed as a group and mistakes are part of the game.

The tactician pointed out: "We didn't start well, we have to take criticism as the technical. For some reason, we were not into the game. We

conceded easily, we made it difficult for ourselves. We must learn from this."

The gaffer noted: "This is how football is, mistakes are normal in this game. We made mistakes and they capitalized, that's not normal."

"The difference was that we did not play our usual game, we failed to dominate, lacked concentration, intensity, and fighting spirit, and we failed as a whole. We can

not look at it from an individual basis."

Azam FC will now shift their attention back to the NBC Premier League where they are third in the standings, 10 points behind leaders Young Africans SC and four points behind second-placed Simba SC with 11 games to go. Their next league assignment is against Tanzania Prisons slated for Monday next week.

Hans Pluijm: Singida Big Stars forced Azam FC into committing mistakes

By Correspondent Michael Mwebe

SINGIDA Big Stars head coach Hans van der Pluijm has underlined his delight at how his side's high press forced Azam FC into key mistakes in the former's 2023 Mapinduzi Cup semi-final victory on Sunday night.

The newly promoted but ambitious Singida-based club thrashed Azam FC 4-1 to advance to the final of the 2023 Mapinduzi Cup tournament.

Singida Big Stars opened the scoring through a major howler by Azam FC's youthful goalkeeper, Zubeir Foba in the 27th minute who gifted striker Francis Kazadi.

Kazadi, the newly signed Congolese forward, went on to add three more goals to complete Azam FC's routing and confirm Singida Big Stars' final ticket at Amaan Stadium, Zanzibar.

Speaking to the press after the match, a delighted Pluijm was quick to explain how his team forced Azam FC into committing errors and mistakes.

Pluijm credited his side for their constant pressing that forced Azam FC into committing errors and mistakes in their half which his team capitalized on to punish them.

The tactician noted: "First of all I have to give credit to the boys, when you have players who want to



Singida Big Stars FC head coach, Hans Van Pluijm. PHOTO: COURTESY OF SINGIDA BIG STARS FC

and we have taken advantage of that. I think we now have a striker who takes the chances we get almost every week."

Pluijm added it makes little difference who they face in the final on Friday insisting finals are to be won not to be played and, having faced Yanga and Azam FC in the tournament, his players are well motivated to go all out for glory.

The gaffer revealed: "It does not make any difference who we meet in the final, when you play the final you want to win and you have to go out again."

Pluijm noted: "I think we have played against good teams, Azam FC is a good team but when we press

then you have that quality, players want to go deep, and once again congratulations to the team."

Singida Big Star will play the winners of Monday's semi-final between NBC Premier League side Namungo FC and Zanzibar's side Mlandege in the final to be played on Friday. There is no third-place match so Azam FC is done with the Mapinduzi Cup tournament.

The 2023 Mapinduzi Cup tournament featured 12 teams that were divided into four groups of three teams each.

Early tournament favorites defending champions Simba SC and Yanga failed to make it out of the group stages.

Flexibles by David Chikoko

