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PM: DCs must administer TB drugs cash

By Henry Mwangonde

DISTRICT commissioners will now have to administer the funds meant for procurement of drugs for tuberculosis, as an average 17bn/- is spent every month for the purpose, adding up to 462bn/- spent yearly.

Prime Minister Kassim Majaliwa issued this directive yesterday while officiating at the World TB Day event held at national level in Simiyu Region. He said that if everyone is accountable, the TB transmission chain will be cut as the disease can be treated.

He underscored the need for collective efforts among stakeholders in the fight against TB by controlling new infections and deaths, when launching the national multisectoral accountability framework for TB (MAF-TB).

The framework is a global initiative tied with strategies of the World Health Organisation (WHO) to overcome the disease by 2030, to which was pegged the premier's appeal to ministries cited in the strategy work to ensure all groups which are at risk are protected.

He specifically pointed at those working in the mining sector, as one crucial vector for TB is the lack of fresh air, both in mines and in regular workplaces, apart from homesteads. District authorities have to provide public places meant for rest and a change of air, he stated.

He said Tanzania has registered achievements in the fight against TB as WHO figures for 2022 indicate that deaths



Mariam Chamkwata (L), one of the members of staff of the Morogoro-based Sokoine University of Agriculture (SUA) who are experts in the training of the African giant pouched rats used in detecting TB by sniffing sputum samples, briefs Prime Minister Kassim Majaliwa yesterday on what that is all about. The PM was visiting the university's pavilion at an exhibition forming part of World Tuberculosis Day (March 24) celebrations held at national level in Bariadi, Simiyu Region. To his right is Health minister Umyy Mwalimu. Photo: PMO

“With this year's theme 'Yes, we can end TB

from TB decreased from 55,000 to 25,800 at the base year, a 55 percent decline.

New infections dropped from 306 among 100,000 people to 208 during the period, a 32 percent decrease, he stated.

Health minister Umyy Mwalimu had earlier affirmed that data shows 71 people die every day from the disease, urging the public to make a point of going for check-ups.

In a statement, the WHO country office said this year's event highlights the need to ensure equitable access to prevention and care, in line with drives towards universal health coverage and the sustainable development goals.

Dr Matshidiso Moeti, the regional director for Africa, said in 2011, with a clear roadmap, the regional directorate showed that it is possible to reach - and even surpass - the first milestone of the 'End TB Strategy.'

This was pegged at 20 percent reduction by 2020, with a decline rate of 22-percent in new infections from 2015.

Through WHO technical support, leading advocacy and effective partnerships, enormous progress has been made over the past decade, she said, noting that high-burden countries

China hails close ties 10 years after Xi visit

By Correspondent James Kandoya

DIPLOMATIC and trade relations between China and Tanzania have attained a new peak from the time Chinese President Xi Jinping visited the country ten years ago.

Ambassador Chen Mingjian made this affirmation in Dar es Salaam yesterday at a symposium for the 10th anniversary of the state visit by President Xi, noting that pragmatic bilateral cooperation has gathered momentum over the past decade.

The symposium brought together diplomats, top executives of Chinese companies operating in the country, scholars, senior health practitioners and government officials, along with other interested parties.

China has remained Tanzania's largest trading partner and largest source of foreign investment for many years, the envoy affirmed, elaborating that last year the trade

“China remains committed to enhancing solidarity and cooperation with African countries, moving forward together on the path of equality, mutual learning and win-win cooperation

volume increased by 23.7 percent year-on-year, reaching \$83.1bn or 35 times the trade volume back in 2012.

China's direct investment stock in Tanzania was 2.5 times that of 2012, she observed, explaining that after taking office, President Xi Jinping rapidly mapped out how to carry

out China-Africa friendship to a higher level.

The intention is to promote the development of trade ties and advance China-Africa cooperation in a changing international environment, she said.

In the past 10 years, these objectives have been enriched with elevated ties being sharply demonstrated, she said, pointing out that commemorating that event stems from the fact that it was a milestone in China-Africa relations, apart from bilateral ties.

“China remains committed to enhancing solidarity and cooperation with African countries, moving forward together on the path of equality, mutual learning and win-win cooperation,” she emphasised.

There is a thrust towards common development to build a China-Africa community

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Marburg virus controls: Lake Zone watches 193 people for contact risks

By Guardian Correspondents

AUTHORITIES in Lake Zone regions are pushing up controls to curb the spread of the new Marburg disease, with Kagera Region monitoring 193, including hospital staff who came into contact with the



Reports from Mwanza said the regional authorities are monitoring travellers from Kagera Region along with fishermen in islands for risks of infection

patients in the early stages of the outbreak.

Prof Tumajini Nagu, the chief medical officer, made this observation in Bukoba yesterday, saying that 86 of those being monitored are hospital staff.

The situation hadn't changed over the past few days, with the same eight reported patients, five having died and three still undergoing treatment. The patients are getting better every day, the top medic affirmed.

Reports from Mwanza said the regional authorities are monitoring travellers from Kagera Region along with

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US, Tanzania exploring tourism sector openings

By Guardian Correspondent, Dodoma

TANZANIA and the United States have agreed to sign a number of investment agreements in the tourism sector pending review of some contested provisions.

Mohamed Mchengera, the Natural Resources and Tourism minister, made this affirmation here yesterday shortly after holding talks with US ambassador Michael Battle, a meeting also attended by

“US firms will go through and decide on preferred areas of investment and once the government sorts out issues in the contractual format, the deal will be sealed

permanent secretary Dr Hassan Abbasi. The two sides agreed to make a quick review on some areas for the projected agreements slated for signed in due course, he said, noting that a basic framework accord has been struck.

Issues related to major investments have been agreed but a few things need to be reviewed, with the two parties asked to recheck particular

matters properly “so that we can complete the signing exercise on time,” he said.

Investors from the United States are interested in the country's protected areas, where the government has released a list of conservation and wildlife priorities.

US firms will go through and decide

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US, Tanzania exploring tourism sector openings

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on preferred areas of investment and once the government sorts out issues in the contractual format, the deal will be sealed, he said.

He said that at present upwards of \$1.5bn is earned from the tourism industry with the projected contracts seeing the government getting up to \$11bn total earnings annually.

In the wake of the 'Royal Tour' documentary, the number of local and foreign visitors has been rising, with year ending February 2023 recording 1.8m tourists from abroad, a new milestone, he state.

He said Tanzania has a long-term relationship with the United States in areas like combating poaching in protected areas, drugs and human trafficking, praising ongoing improvement of the tourism infrastructure plus building world class hotels.

In his remarks, Ambassador Battle said Presi-

dent Samia's role in the famed documentary has brought a lot of benefits to the country, propelling a sharp rise in the flow of tourists.

He said that his country will continue to cooperate with Tanzania in preserving resources and investing in the tourism sector.

He took note of the government's objective of increasing the number of tourists to five million, making a \$6bn contribution to national income in the near future, as the sector contributes up to 17 percent of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), with upwards of 1.5m jobs.



... with the two parties asked to recheck particular matters properly "so that we can complete the signing exercise on time



Zanzibar President Dr Hussein Ali Mwinyi cuts the ribbon yesterday to open Noor Mosque at Haji Tumbo in Unguja's Urban District, West Urban Region. The one-storey building has just undergone reconstruction with funding from Sheikh Ali Salim Ali (L) and the Minister of State in the Zanzibar President's Office (Constitutional and Legal Affairs, Public Service and Good Governance), Harouni Ali Suleiman (2nd-R). Photo: Zanzibar State House.

China hails close relations 10 years after visit by Xi

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with a shared future, the envoy remarked, underlining that strengthening solidarity and cooperation with African countries has always been a key preoccupation for Chinese diplomacy.

Vita Kawawa, the Foreign Affairs, Defense and Security standing committee chairman in the legislature, said that Tanzania has been benefiting from bilateral ties with China in multiple ways. China is currently the largest source of foreign direct investment into the country, he stated.

Tanzania Investment Centre (TIC) data shows that 1,098 Chinese investment projects billed to take up \$9.65bn were registered by end of last year

In Zanzibar a total of 15 projects with aggregate value of \$202.2m had been registered by the same period, he said, with all these projects creating upwards of 30,000 job openings, he elaborated.

Tanzania expects to work with China to strengthen cooperation in various spheres, take the relationship to a new height and turn it into an exemplary case of Africa-China relations in the global context, he added.

Marburg virus controls: Lake Zone watches 193 people

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fishermen in islands for risks of infection.

Fishermen have been urged to take precautions on suspected cases and avoid contact, with regional public health education coordinator Renard Mlyakado insisting that people should avoid shaking hands and keep the

environment clean.

Authorities were engaging religious leaders and community groups to help convey the message on precautions against Marburg disease, while Tanzania Fishers Union (TAFU) spokesman Sijaona Karoli said that fishermen lack health facilities in the islands.

Emergency treatment centers are needed to deal with the new scare, he said. Thomas Rutachunzimbwa, the regional medical officer, said the region is providing education to the public on how the disease is spread, its symptoms and effective protection. Residents said precautions

on the new disease were similar to what they were told during the COVID-19 scare. "We are trying to abide by experts' guidelines to make sure we are not affected." Isesanda Kaniki, the Kagera regional medical officer, said a team has been formed to raise awareness in the

community and follow-up on treatment of infected patients. The deployed team has skills to recognize symptoms of the Marburg disease, which takes several days to incubate before showing symptoms like fever, vomiting, bleeding from various body openings and kidney failure.

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like Ethiopia, Kenya, Lesotho, Namibia, South Africa, Tanzania and Zambia have surpassed or reached the 20 percent target of reducing new TB cases.

With this year's theme "Yes, we can end TB," the regional directorate is now on the threshold of reaching a 35-percent TB death reduction, citing challenges like the link between TB and HIV.

Approximately 20-percent of people newly diagnosed with TB are also living with HIV infection, she said, noting also the multi-drug resistant TB strain, where 26 percent of people living with the strain in Africa are receiving appropriate treatment.

The use of rapid diagnostic testing has increased from 34 percent in 2020 to 43 percent in 2021, improving the ability of the various countries to detect and diagnose new cases of the disease, she said. In a quick rejoinder, the Alliance for Change and Transparency (ACT-Wazalendo) called for improved healthcare for TB patients by establishing diagnosis centers in lower-level health centers.

The party called for the establishment of an outlying approach to identify people with TB signs and symptoms so that they get quick treatment.



Help comes the way of a motorcyclist who fell into a ditch yesterday as he attempted to ride across a flooded bridge at Mkuyuni in Nyamagana District, Mwanza city, shortly after a downpour. Photo: Correspondent Vitus Audax

Africa is world's future for touring - US VP Harris

By Special Correspondent

US Vice President Kamala Harris is expected embark on a tour of three African countries namely, Ghana, Tanzania and Zambia, this weekend.

During the visit, she will promote the White House's positive view of Africa as the "future of the world."

The tour is a part of the Biden administration's efforts to increase US engagement with Africa, which was

largely ignored during the presidency of Republican Donald Trump.

Historically, Africa has been viewed in Washington as a problematic region rather than an area of opportunity.

A senior US official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, stated that the aim of the tour is to challenge and update out-dated notions about living, working, and investing in Africa.

Harris "believes African innova-

tion and ideas will shape the future of the world," said the official.

The tour is also part of Washington's pushback against growing Chinese and Russian involvement in the resource-rich continent, with US officials touting what they say is the more positive US message.

"It's no secret that we are engaged in competition with China very clearly, to compete (with) China in the long term," a senior US official said. Citing "real concerns" about

China's use of loans to gain control over weak economies in Africa, the official insisted the United States is not trying to copy Beijing's methods.

"Our relationship with Africa cannot and should not be defined by competition with China," he said, proclaiming an "affirmative agenda in Africa" that leans on public-private partnerships and transparency.

Preceding Harris, who lands Sunday in Ghana for the first stop, have

been trips to Africa by five of President Joe Biden's cabinet secretaries and First Lady Jill Biden.

The vice president's journey, which will take her to Tanzania on Wednesday, then Zambia on Friday, has a special poignancy. She is the first Black person and woman ever in the White House number two job and she visited Zambia as a young girl, when her maternal grandfather, who was from India, worked there. The trip will also help her burnish

her foreign policy credentials ahead of what is expected to be Biden's bid for a second term in office, with her again at his side.

Harris is due to meet with President Nana Akufo-Addo of Ghana, President Samia Suluhu Hassan of Tanzania and President Hakainde Hichilema of Zambia.

Topics will include debt relief, democracy, economic growth, food security, and impacts of Russia's war in Ukraine.



Constitutional and Legal Affairs minister Dr Damas Ndumbaro (3rd-R) in a show of solidarity with members of the ministry's staff at their workers' council meeting held in Dodoma city yesterday. Others at the high table are the ministry's Permanent Secretary and workers' council chairperson, Mary Makondo (L), Deputy Permanent Secretary Dr Khatibu Kazungu (2nd-R) and the council's assistant secretary, Nassoro Msigwa. Photo: Correspondent Ibrahim Joseph

Japan supports WFP to provide support for refugees in Tanzania

By Guardian Reporter

THE United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) yesterday welcomed a new contribution of \$ 900,000 from the government of Japan to support 200,000 refugees with life-saving food assistance in Tanzania.

The contribution comes at a critical time when WFP is faced with significant funding gaps and will enable WFP to provide food assistance to refugees in Nyarugusu and Nduta camps in Kigoma region.

In order to mitigate the burden of Tanzania as a host country, the government of Japan has been supporting WFP in their activities in the refugee camps.

"I am pleased to host such a ceremony that highlights Japan's \$ 900,000 contribution to WFP to meet the food and nutrition needs of refugees in Tanzania" said Yasushi Misawa, Ambassador of Japan to Tanzania.

Tanzania is home to more than 200,000 refugees from Burundi and Congo, who rely on WFP's assistance to meet their basic food needs.

The Japanese funding will be used to purchase various food commodities including cereals, pulses, vegetable oil, and salt - all distributed as part of WFP's food basket.

"We are extremely grateful to the government of Japan for their generous and continued support, which will make a difference in the lives of refugees in Tanzania, said Sarah Gordon-Gibson, WFP's Country Director in Tanzania. She added: "This contribution will help us provide much-needed food assistance to vulnerable refugees, most of whom are children and women."

The government of Japan is a long-standing partner of WFP in Tanzania. The latest contribution brings Japan's total contributions to Tanzania to \$ 4.7 million since 2016.

Tanzania introduces special wagons for fresh fruits and vegetable kiosks

By Correspondent Marc Nkwame,

Arusha

TANZANIA launches special wagons for fresh fruits and vegetable kiosks.

The initiative, a brainchild of the Tanzania horticulture association, aims at promoting nutrition, hygiene, youth employment as well as tourism in major cities, starting with Arusha, the country's gateway to northern zone attractions.

"We also intend to use the mobile kiosks to add value to horticultural produce, especially

fruits and vegetables," explains the TAHA executive officer, Dr Jackline Mkindi.

So far there are five prototype fresh fruits and vegetable wagons, three in Arusha, One in Mbeya and another in Dodoma.

The Mobile Kiosks come equipped with solar panels, clean water system, shelves that permit air circulation, ample room to provide shelter against weather elements and wheels that enable the wagons to be moved from one location to another.

These carts also feature waste disposal bins, colourful external

panels and bright interior settings.

The Arusha regional commissioner, John Mongella who officially launched the project, lauded the move and pointed out that the kiosks will not provide reliable mobile eateries but they also help to keep the city clean and beautify its streets and landscapes.

"It will also be more useful if each of the mobile kiosks get serial digits identifying the operator and their places of service, so that in future such numbers will be the basis for securing loans from local financial institutions,"

stated Mongella.

As far as the Regional Commissioner is concerned, the new mobile kiosks idea is yet another boost to the country's agricultural development.

The Arusha City Mayor, Maximilian Inrange rolled out a special offer of 20 such wagons to twenty young people who now stand to get interest free loans from his officer to procure the kiosks from TAHA for their fruits, Vegetables and fresh food business.

"I also wish that the kiosks will also be used as exemplary outlets for healthy eating by stocking organically grown food, especially

fruits and vegetables which is currently the global trend," said Mayor Inrange.

Executed through TAHA and TRIAS in conjunction with City Councils, the Tanzania mobile fresh fruits and vegetable kiosks are still in the pilot phase at the moment with more roll outs expected in near future.

"This is part of the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact, which Arusha signed in 2017 in becoming one of the more than 100 cities signatories in the world," explains Dr Mkindi the TAHA Executive.

The Milan Urban Food Policy Pact is an international agree-

ment between cities around the globe, aiming at developing sustainable food systems that are inclusive, resilient, safe and diverse.

The Milan agreement intends to provide healthy and affordable food to all people in a human rights-based framework that minimizes waste and conserves biodiversity while adapting to and mitigating impacts of climate change.

Through the pact, urban centres wishing to develop more sustainable urban food systems will be supported through fostering city to city cooperation and best practices exchange.



Emmanuel Ndejemi, Tanzania Medicines and Medical Devices Authority (TMDA) Central Zonal enforcement officer, looks on as medicinal drugs seized for having expired or being unregistered are burnt in an incinerator at Benjamin Mkapa Hospital in Dodoma city earlier this week. Photo: Correspondent Peter Mkwavila

Mwinyi eyes more investments in various sectors of archipelago

By Guardian Reporter, Zanzibar

ZANZIBAR President Dr Hussein Mwinyi has said his government is committed to welcome investments in various sectors in the Isles including the blue economy.

Dr Mwinyi (pictured) made the commitment at the State House in Zanzibar when he held talks with investors from the United Kingdom led by Agnes Gitau of the Eastern Africa Association.

The president told the delegation that Zanzibar has focused on developing the blue economy where there are various opportunities for investors including fisheries and seaweed farming.

"Fishermen are doing a great job but are facing challenges of lack of modern fishing techniques as well as packaging know how for export," Dr Mwinyi said.

He advised the potential investors to look at the sector so that most fishermen have the capacity to practice modern fishing which is profitable.

Explaining on investment, Dr Mwinyi said apart from being blessed with beaches that attract tourist, the Isles have a completion on investment especially in fishing and tourism.

"Our doors are open for investment, we promise to work with you and facilitate investment on any area which you may see suitable for investment," he said.

He asked the potential investors to approach the Zanzibar Investment Promotion Agency (ZIPA) which is responsible for



investment issues.

"At ZIPA you will find all institutions which are responsible for investment because they are operating under one umbrella to fast-track operations.

The Managing Director for Eastern Afrika Association, Agnes Gitau said the coming of the investors was to explore investment opportunities and to meet the private sector to see how they do their operations.

"When we met Tanzania's High Commissioner in UK, Rose Migiro insisted that we visit Zanzibar in our tour to Tanzania so that we see for ourselves how blessed the Isles are," she said.

She said what the delegation witnessed in the Isles was demonstrating what Dr Migiro told them while in the UK about Zanzibar and its beauty.

ATE urges employers to stimulate women's participation in leadership, decision-making

By Guardian Reporter

THE Association of Tanzania Employers (ATE) has urged employers and their companies to invest in initiatives and a safe structural and institutional environment that will stimulate women's participation in leadership and decision-making.

ATE's chief executive officer Suzanne Ndomba-Doran made the call in Dar es Salaam on Thursday during the launch of the 9th cohort of the "Female Future Programme" which is aimed to get more women into management positions, decision-making processes and on corporate boards.

The programme which will take some weeks in class and nine months of practi-

cal assignments will see 73 women from 22 public and private organizations being equipped with essential leadership skills to enable them deliver well in their organisations.

She noted that reports show that although women representation in various sectors was increasing, the pace is still very slow, something which needs more efforts to support their participation.

"Women representation in various sectors is still low, we need more joint efforts to address the gap. Tanzania still needs more women in top leadership positions for the country to make progress in its various development initiatives, companies need to put systems in place that will enable more

women to take top positions," she said.

She noted that various studies have proved that having more women in top leadership positions speeds up the pace of development, so investing in them should be reemphasized.

She said women can do wonders if they are trusted in executive and top positions and people should ignore perceptions that women can't handle complicated executive positions like men.

Suzanne said that the training programme will be provided in partnership with the Eastern and Southern Africa Management Institute (ESAMI) with support from the Confederation of Norwegian Enterprises (NHO).

"This programme is going to be beneficial and will connect the ladies strategically to improve their performance, personal and organizational success and we believe this will enhance productivity at workplaces and an organization will feel the importance of grooming talents they wish to motivate," she said.

Suzanne who was one of the first beneficiaries of the first Cohort some years back, said the programme has a number of advantages to women including increasing hard work spirit and how to overcome various leadership challenges.

Human Resources Director at CRDB Bank, Godfrey Rutagwa said they have supported a total of 16 women staff to join

the training because they have recognised its importance.

He said the bank recognises the power of women that's why it is investing in equipping them with skills that in turn bring positive impacts in the bank's development and their lives.

He encouraged other companies to set aside resources to improve the skills of their workers for efficient outcomes.

Simon Shayo, Vice President of Geita Gold Mining Limited (GGML) said the company has been bringing women to attend the training since the programme commenced with an aim to strengthen women capabilities to lead various positions in the mining sector.



Profil Masawe, CCM Parents' Wing chairman for Kinondoni District, addresses the wing's members in Dar es Salaam's Wazo suburb earlier this week. Photo: John Badi

Contractors' association TUCASA is inaugurated

By correspondent Mary Kadoke

THE Tanzania United Contractors and Allied Services Association (TUCASA) was officially launched in Dar es Salaam yesterday with the intention of becoming the voice that will present their concerns in an organised manner.

The inauguration ceremony was attended by contractors and several other stakeholders.

Speaking during the launch, Chairperson of the association's Interim Committee, Samuel Marwa said the motive behind creation of TUCASA is to have one voice.

"It has now come to the point where we decided to have our own association. In many scenarios we have seen the government addressing small traders association, public transport association; this has pushed us to officially launch our association," he said.

Marwa said the inauguration went hand in hand with having a common agreement over the constitution which includes review of the current document by members.

"We will appoint TUCASA leaders so that their names are registered to the Registration, Insolvency and Trusteeship Agency (RITA)," added Marwa, noting that one of the association's goals is to cross borders and find a way

to engage other partners.

Treasurer, Tanzania Women Contractors Association, Vivian Ibrahim said that having TUCASA will not wipe away the 30 percent engagement of women on projects as they will still ensure that women engagement is considered at all cost. "We will not have a chapter in TUCASA but we do believe that with it our concerns will be presented effectively," said Ibrahim.

Thobias Kiando from the Association of Citizen Contractors Tanzania (ACCT) said as contractors they have gone through a lot as per their profession especially during the outbreak of COVID-19 as well as the war between Ukraine and Russia.

According to him, one of the challenges has been less priority from the government especially when they are supposed to pay compensations.

Kiando said it's time the government adopts how the Ugandan government works closely with stakeholders in the construction industry. He said the Ugandan government has been organising round table discussion with contractors, the thing that facilitates implementation of their activities.

"The field is complicated and tough; but we have perfectly started and we are definitely going to reach our desired goals," he added.

Health ministry, RCs in border regions tasked to control cholera

By Correspondent Valentine Oforo,

Dodoma

THE Ministry of Health has been directed to work with regional commissioners to control outbreak of cholera in regions bordering countries that are currently battling the disease.

Minister of State in the Prime Minister's Office (Policy, Parliamentary and Coordination) George Simbachawene gave the directives here yesterday during the launch of National Multi Sectoral Programme (2023-2027) against outbreak of cholera in the country which is to be implemented in collaboration with local and international stakeholders including Save the Children, World Health Organisation (WHO) and United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

Simbachawene said that neighbouring Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Malawi and Zambia are currently grappling with seri-

ous cases of cholera outbreak.

He said the grim situation should be used by Tanzania to attain preparedness and plug all loopholes for the cross border of the disease in the country.

"The ministry of health must cooperate with the regional commissioner, district commissioner and other local government officers in the regions bordering DRC, Malawi and Zambia to ensure the disease is not spreading to our side," he ordered.

He added that report by the World Health Organisation (WHO) depict that by March 8th this year, Malawi experienced at least 52,167 cases of cholera, claiming the life of a total of 1,620 people, insisted that Tanzania must stand vigilant and prepare to limit possibility of any spread into the country.

The minister noted that a total of 72 cases of cholera was reported in Tanzania in a period from January to March this year, in which 13 cases were from Ruvuma, 7 in

Kigoma, 34 in Katavi and 18 in Rukwa region, claiming the life of three people.

Giving further directives to help curtailing the outbreak of the disease across the country, Simbachawene directed all water authorities across the country to cure water before distributing it to the public.

"Cholera is a shameful disease which is rooted from poor hygiene and poverty and thus, all sectors must work together in cooperation with the stakeholders from the private side as well as the international development partners to limit its outbreak in the country," he insisted.

Dwelling on the launched programme, minister Simbachawene said the programme will serve as a pivotal podium to help improve coordination of effective interventions against the disease. "The prime focus is to assure we stand on a professional side to limit the outbreak of the disease rather than

cure the patients," he expressed.

He cited lack of safe and clean water, consumption of poor-hygienic foods and unhealthier latrines as the chief drivers of the disease, and called for joint efforts from different ministries and sectors in the implementation of the vital programme.

The robust health initiative, designed for implementation from 2023 to 2027 focuses on key health sectors to help curbing, fighting and rooting out causes as well as outbreak and negative impacts of the silent killer disease within the country by 2030.

Angela Kauleni, Country Director for Save the Children, said poor hygiene, including unreliable accessibility to clean and safe water, and poor hand washing culture was standing among key drivers in most of the disease prone areas.

"From January to March this year we conducted several helpful interventions in some regions and districts, including Katavi, Man-

yara, Kigoma, Uvinza, Tanganyika and Babati, where we offer trainings, awareness campaigns, together with rolled out diverse humanitarian support to the victims from our own financial source," she added.

Expressing relevant experience, she said in some areas, especially in the pastoralists communities, the people fostering negative traditions that fuel the outbreak of cholera. "For instance, in such areas we visited the majority rejected the use of the aqua tablets," she observed.

Shalini Bahuguna, UNICEF Country Representative said launching of the strategy was part to foster implementation of human rights in Tanzania, and observed that it will further assist the country to attain the UN set Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Apart from hailing the government to draft and launch the programme, she underscored the need for effective and timely

execution of the interventions included in the programme.

She said cholera was seriously troubling several counties across the continent, including Zambia, Malawi and Mozambique, saying despite so far making an impressive stride to control the disease, Tanzania must continue to set several and realistic strategies to fight the pandemic.

"Tanzania must work to enhance budget allocation and training towards the community health workers in the country because they are the ones who stand at foreline during the outbreak of the disease, but also they're the key figures in addressing the disease from the grassroots," she urged.

Dr ZaboloniYoti, the World Health Organisation (WHO) Representative said cholera was among the preventable diseases, and added that among others, the programme must work to stamp out all drivers of the disease within local communities.

Woman conquers Mount 'Kili' while raising money for research on cancer

By Special Correspondent

NOT many people can say they climbed to the summit of Mount Kilimanjaro - and likely even fewer can say they did so while raising more than \$50,000 for cancer research.

Wendy Nelson, can say she did both.

Nelson, who is currently the head of corporate development for Danforth Advisors and is the president and founder of Boston Biotech Forum, personally raised just over \$51,000 while her group of 20 biotech executives raised a cumulative \$1.16 million to benefit the Fred Hutch Cancer Center while participating in the Mount Kilimanjaro Climb for Cancer.

The funds Nelson raised will go to a pair of researchers at the cancer center whose work is directed towards the type of cancer Nelson's daughter Lindsey battled.

The team started up the mountain early on Feb. 12 and reached the summit five days later. "The experience was absolutely amazing, truly a transformational experience, a trip of a lifetime. I loved and embraced every minute of it. It was amazing. Truly amazing," Nelson said.

Unfortunately, the top of the mountain was soaked in with heavy fog, thick clouds, and whipping snow and ice, so Nelson had no view at all from the summit of Kilimanjaro, but she said the views all the days heading up were incredible as she hiked through five distinct climate zones.

"Once we got down below 18,000 feet again on our way down from the summit, the skies opened up to a brilliant blue sky so the incredible views returned," she said.

Nelson said the toughest part was summit

day.

"It was a very long day. We got up at 11:00 p.m. to eat breakfast, packed our backpacks, and left high camp (which was at 15,800 feet of elevation) at midnight, climbing steadily to the light of our headlamps. The wind was blowing at 40 mph and the temperature was frigid - our Nalgene water bottles froze on the way up," she said.

Nelson said it took almost seven hours to climb from 15,800 to the summit at 19,341 feet of elevation, where they took a few quick photos in the blizzard conditions.

The team then had to hike three hours back down on loose scree to high camp at 15,800 feet, have lunch and pack up before continuing another two to three more hours down to 12,100 feet, where they spent that final night.

"That was a long day," Nelson said.

The summit of Kilimanjaro is at 19,341 feet of elevation where there is less than half the oxygen found at sea level. This extremely high altitude makes most people feel nauseous to some extent which adds to the difficulty of summit day, and some folks even suffer from a bit of delirium.

Unfortunately, they passed a small group on their way up where one member of the party had collapsed.

"His heart had stopped. His guide was furiously administering oxygen and chest compressions, but we later learned that the man, unfortunately, perished on the mountain that morning and it was a somber reminder that we were up where our bodies were not acclimated to living," she said.

One member of Nelson's team of 20 was struggling too much to even attempt the summit push, but thankfully the other 19 members



Don Bosco Tech Africa director Fr George Tharaniyil (2nd-L) presents a copy of a job service quality manual to Don Bosco Madagascar provincial superior Fr Innocent Bizimana at the agency's annual stakeholders' assembly held in Dar es Salaam yesterday. They are with Steffen Mohlendick (L), project manager and partner from Don Bosco Mondo in Germany (L), and Fr Jose Lorberth from Don Bosco headquarters in Rome. The thrust of the meeting was on transforming technical and vocational education and training for successful employment and improvement of quality of life for Africa's youth. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

of her team made it safely to the 'roof of Africa' and back down again.

She said the Tanzanian crew that took care of them was "absolutely incredible" and the Tanzanian crew of porters took excellent care of them. She said you are not allowed to climb Kilimanjaro without a proper guide and crew.

"They greeted us in camp each afternoon with festive song and dance, pulling us all in to join the celebration. That was by far the most fun and joyous part of each day."

But, of course, the happiest moment was when their 19-person team stood at the summit together.

"It was almost surreal - such an incredibly emotional and overpowering

feeling. To know that together we raised \$1.16 million for cancer research, we all work in the biotech industry to help bring new medicines to patients, we were all climbing in memory of or in honour of loved ones who had battled cancer, and we had made it through blizzard conditions to stand on the Roof of Africa together, brought many of us to tears," she said.

She said their guides drilled into their brains the whole way up that they would have to go "pole, pole," which means "slowly, slowly," in Swahili, and is the best way for your body to manage with the low oxygen.

"It was pitch black and freezing cold. You can only see the boots of the hiker in

front of you. I was up front behind the lead guide, so I focused on his boots and got into a rhythm with my breathing - breathing in on one step and out with the next step. It really helped and my heart rate stayed low and I felt fantastic the whole way up."

Nelson said she had a minor headache and queasy stomach the entire time she was above 16,000 feet, but it was quite manageable. Members of the team took Diamox for the whole climb, which helps combat altitude sickness.

When asked if Nelson would do the same challenges she said she always likes to go to new places and experience new things, but she is definitely not done with the mountains.

About 68pc of CEOs in Tanzania optimistic on economic growth in the next 12 months - PwC

By Guardian Correspondent

CHIEF Executive Officers (CEOs) in Tanzania are optimistic of the future, foreseeing good economic growth, but do recognise that there are threats to the region's economic growth, with inflation and macroeconomic volatility ranking higher in the short term according to the latest report released by the PwC.

Dubbed "Winning today's race while running tomorrow's" the PwC's 26th Annual Global CEO Survey, polled 4,410 CEOs in 105 countries and territories in October and November 2022 ("Global CEOs"), including 71 respondents from Tanzania (CEOs).

According to the survey findings, sixty-eight of CEOs in Tanzania share the pessimism of Global CEOs (73 percent) that the global economy will decline over the next 12 months.

However, the same percentage of Tanzania CEOs (68 percent) are optimistic about the prospects of domestic economic growth expecting Tanzania's economy--GDP to grow in the next 12 months; albeit not as op-

timistic as in the prior year survey (78 percent).

Tanzania CEOs are very confident of their respective company's prospects for revenue growth both in the next 12 months (54 percent) and the next three years (63 percent).

"This optimism is mirrored in a recent IMF press release which states that "the economy is benefitting from improvements in the business environment, but also expected to continue facing spill over of the war in Ukraine in the near term", and that "economic growth is projected at 5.2 percent in 2023" according to the latest PwC report.

The report also states that, "contingent on the implementation of the authorities' structural reform agenda, including the business environment and governance, real GDP growth is projected to rebound to about 7 percent over the medium term, inflation is expected to return to the BoT's target, and the current account deficit to moderate over the medium term as the global shocks subside and the authorities' reforms start to pay off.



Matina Nkurlu (R), Meridianbet Tanzania's head of marketing and communications, pictured in Dar es Salaam earlier this week presenting reflector jackets to Officer Commanding Kawe Police Zone, Deus Shata, in commemorating Road Safety Week. Second left is Kawe Traffic Police In-charge Rose Maira. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

Global partners commit to improve maternal, newborn and child health

By Guardian Reporter and Agencies

TEN Ministries of Health with country, regional and global partners have resolved to strengthen collaboration towards improving maternal, newborn and child health through sustained quality of care at all levels of the health system.

This commitment was made at the global meeting of the Network for Improving Quality of Care for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health (MNCH) held in Ghana.

The meeting was co-organised by the Ministry of Health, Ghana, the World Health Organisation

(WHO) and UNICEF under the theme 'Sustaining and scaling up quality of care for MNCH'.

It brought together Ministries of Health from 11 countries - Tanzania, Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, India, Malawi, Nigeria, Sierra Leone and Uganda.

Ghana Minister for Health, Kwaku Agyeman-Manu underscored the role of primary health care systems in ensuring the availability of quality services for mothers, newborns and children.

He called for stronger collaboration among the Network countries and partners to accelerate the attainment of Universal Health Cov-

erage (UHC).

"Our ambition for Universal Coverage will only be an illusion if we are not conscious of the quality of care," added Hon Kwaku Agyeman-Manu.

This meeting was aimed at engaging with the champions from government, implementing partners and other stakeholders to reflect on five years of efforts to integrate quality of care in health systems and maternal, newborn and child health interventions.

The WHO Acting Assistant Director-General for UHC, Dr Anshu Banerjee highlighted the importance of quality of care in the

prevention of maternal mortality and called on countries to integrate quality of care into health systems.

"We must include quality of care in national strategic plans and ensure that it is effectively implemented at all levels of care," Dr Anshu Banerjee stated.

WHO Representative to Ghana, Dr Francis Kasolo, noted the progress Network countries, including Ghana have made in strengthening the health system to provide quality care and called for continuous knowledge sharing to consolidate the gains.

"Leveraging our collective ex-

perience of care and engagement of the community in this regard provides a good pathway to scale up across Network countries," Dr Kasolo said.

Stakeholders at the meeting committed to ensuring the rights and equity in quality of care for the most vulnerable women, newborns and children whilst also recognizing the need to learn from and share emerging innovations to improve quality of care.

They also reaffirmed their commitment to improving people-centred care, including women's newborns', children's and families' experience of care and con-

tinue to develop national learning systems that facilitate documentation and knowledge exchange in support of scaling up of high-quality maternal, newborn and child health services.

"These commitments reflect our collective determination as countries and partners to deepen our ongoing joint efforts towards improving the health and well-being of mothers, newborns and children through the quality of care initiative," noted Dr Roseline Doe, the Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn, Child and Adolescent Health (RMNCAH) Officer at WHO Ghana.



Small traders pictured yesterday having clearly 'invaded' pedestrian paths along Msimbazi Road deep in the heart of Dar es Salaam's sprawling Kariakoo market zone. Photo: Correspondent Jumanne Juma

Government workers get 100 percent pay rise in Zimbabwe

HARARE

THE Zimbabwean government has given massive salary increases to its employees over the last few weeks, but workers say it is still not enough to meet their needs in the wake of hyperinflation.

The government granted a 100 percent salary raise to its employees.

Earlier this month, the government awarded a 400 percent pay raise to police and soldiers.

A soldier previously earned 170,000 Zimbabwean dollars, an equivalent of \$184 at the official exchange rate.

Before the raise, police officers earned 133,000 Zimbabwean dollars, an equivalent of \$144 at the official exchange rate.

Teachers who used to earn about 39,000 Zimbabwean dollars (\$84) would now earn double that amount.

The reviewed salaries will however be paid in local currency.

In a letter addressed to the southern African country's Public Service Commission, the Finance Ministry's Permanent Secretary George Gumatanga said COVID-19 allowances have

been reviewed upwards from \$200 to \$250 for all government workers.

"The approved framework for remuneration reviews takes into account the requirement to continuously enhance the general welfare of public employees while attempting to stay within the budget and respecting the general rule of maintaining wage bills at sustainable levels so as not to compete with other expenditures," said Gumatanga. But trade union organizations such as the Amalgamated Rural Teachers Union of Zimbabwe (ARTUZ) denounced the pay raise as ridiculous.

"A big lesson to all our colleagues in labour is that our employer has no respect for the workers' side. Teachers remain incapacitated," said Obert Masaraure, president of the ARTUZ.

In a tweet, ARTUZ said: "The calculation is that the total of the new salary is less than 400 USD which is below the standard cost of living and the basic needs all together. So, it is nothing. The favourable amount for the teachers is \$1,260."

Zimbabwe's consumer price inflation eased to 92.3 percent year-on-year in February 2023, according to official figures.

Implementation of Dar water projects reaches 90 per cent, raising hopes of availability

By Correspondent Joseph Mwendapole

THE implementation of water projects in the city by the Dar es Salaam Water and Sanitation Authority (DAWASA) has reached 90-percent as hopes rise that scarcity of the precious liquid facing the commercial capital will come to an end.

The implementation of the projects is expected to serve 150,388 residents of Up-

endo, Tungi, Magogoni, (Kigamboni Municipality), Mwanamtoti, Butiama, Mianzini, Dovy, Mwembemama, Kisewe, Magengeni (Temeke Municipality) and Mgeule, Mgeule Juu (Ilala).

Speaking about the implementation of the project, project manager Engineer Stephen Urio, said the implementation involves nine projects that will serve the residents of 13 streets in Kigamboni, Ilala and

Temeke municipalities.

He said that the project involves the laying of a 14-inch pipe to 2.5 countries for a distance of 138.45 kilometers and connecting more than 2,000 domestic customers.

"The project is implemented by the contractor of M/S Ceytun - Kasco Joint Venture with a value of 10.8bn/-," said Engineer Urio. And the chairman of Upendo Street, Zacharia Mkundi, hailed the sixth phase for

the implementation of the project that has passed in his street.

He said for a long time they have been using unsafe and expensive water from private individuals, so he is happy that the residents are going to get clean and safe water from DAWASA.

"I thank government of the sixth phase, for what is happening in my street because now the time has come for the residents to

go and enjoy the clean and safe water service because for them it was a long-term puzzle," he said

And Rukia Shaban thanked DAWASA for hearing their cry and bringing a project that will give them relief in life.

"If this project is completed, it will have helped us a lot because of the reduction in water costs, but also the certainty of getting clean and safe water," Rukia said.

Africa CDC chief calls for boost in health security to cope with disease threats

ADDIS ABABA

AFRICA'S health security needs to be strengthened so as to cope with recurrent healthcare threats, Acting Director of the Africa Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC) Ahmed Ogwel Ouma has said.

"Emerging and re-emerging infectious diseases are a sign that the health security of the continent needs to be strengthened to cope with the disease threats," an Africa CDC statement quoted Ouma as saying on Wednesday.

The Africa CDC chief made the call in line with the Africa CDC's pledge to support Tanzania and its neighbouring countries to control the ongoing Marburg virus disease outbreak in the country. He also urged members of the public to continue sharing information in a timely manner with the authorities to enable a most effective re-

sponse.

As part of its efforts to strengthen the health security of Africa, the Africa CDC, the African Union (AU)'s specialized healthcare agency, last week launched its second five-year strategic plan spanning from 2022 to 2026.

According to the plan, the Africa CDC will provide strategic direction and support to AU member countries during the period through six pillars, including surveillance and disease intelligence, information systems, laboratory systems and networks, emergency preparedness and response, national public health institutes and research, as well as disease control and prevention.

The ultimate purpose of the plan, which was developed in line with the AU's 50-year continental development Agenda 2063, is to ensure a safer, healthier, coordinated, and prosperous Africa, said the statement.



AMREF Country Director Dr Florence Temu (R) briefs Prime Minister Kassim Majaliwa yesterday on progress in the implementation of the agency's tuberculosis project in Tanzania. It was during the commemoration of World Tuberculosis Day, which was held at national level in Simiyu Region. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

To break the glass ceiling, women must be resilient and hardworking

By Guardian Correspondent

RECENTLY Tanzanian women joined others across the world to celebrate the International Women's Day which is marked on March 8, every year.

The event went along with a number of events from different groups and companies to honour the contribution of women all over the world.

The Dar es Salaam-based advisory and consulting firm Accelerate Business Group also organised a special women executive breakfast that brought together over 300 women executives, entrepreneurs and thought leaders dedicated to improving the status of women in the

society.

Themed: 'Breaking Glass Ceilings' the meeting aimed at exploring the challenges that women face in their professional and personal lives together with discussing strategies to overcome them.

The women had a golden opportunity of listening to several successful women from various businesses and companies while also having an opportunity to network with other women from various backgrounds and occupations since the event brought together executives, business owners and leaders who are committed to enhancing the status of women in our societies.

Speaking with this paper soon

after the event, Managing Director and founder of Accelerate Business Group, Bernice Fernandes clarified that the event enabled women to network, express their opinions about women's challenges, and gain knowledge from the experience of other executive women in leadership and in business.

"There are a lot of things that were discussed with the intention of empowering women to prosper in everything they do in their daily life, urging them to not look on their previous challenges, meaning their past experience should not ruin their future but should be a means of pushing them towards success and financial freedom," she said.

She said that it was a successful event because the more than 300 women who turned up for the event explored different challenges they encountered in their professional and personal lives and they were in turn equipped with skills of how to overcome them in future.

Bernice urged women to work together as a means of breaking down barriers and supporting one another in confronting difficulties, because if a woman succeeds it means the success will have a significant effect not only on their own lives but for the rest of the community.

Among influential women who turned up for the event was the minister for Culture, Arts and Sports,

Pindi Chana, who in her speech encouraged women to go for what they strive for by citing the example of Tanzania's first female President, Samia Suluhu Hassan.

"My fellow women, you should understand that once you put your mind to anything, it is possible to achieve it and you must believe in what you are capable of and keep on until it is done," she added.

The event was also graced by the United States (US) Ambassador to Tanzania, Michael Battle, who said: "Being a part of this prestigious event is an honour, being in the same room full of women who are role models for women's empowerment is a wonderful honour, let me urge you

to move forward and focus on what you want to do and move forward." As the African Proverb states: "When you educate a woman, you educate an entire nation".

UN Women Country Representative, Hodan Addou explained how women can overcome barriers to success and how women can work collectively, while Georgia Mutahgaywa, the Country Liaison Manager at Barrick Gold Corporation asked women not to conform to popular negative beliefs about women.

"Tell yourself to push and break that glass ceiling, of course, women are known for womanly roles, but today we need to show that we can do other things and we are able," she



Project Massawe (L), Mwanga Hakika Bank's Head of Corporate Banking, briefs a visitor at the bank's pavilion during an exhibition held in Dar es Salaam yesterday on the sidelines of a Tanzania Union of Construction and Associated Services meeting. Photo: Correspondent Imani Nathaniel

NGO embarks on campaign to help fight stigma against children with brain disorders

By Correspondent James Lanka, Moshi

A Non-Governmental Organisation—Gabriella Children Rehabilitation Centre (GCRC) has launched a campaign that aims at addressing stigma against children with brain disorders namely Autism, hyperactive brain and Down syndrome.

The event includes special awareness through special events in primary schools where the organisation hosts poetry, music and bonanza to create awareness.

In the first place the organization hosted events at Mwereni inclusive primary school after marching from Moshi to the post office and then back to the school.

Speaking during the exercises Executive Director for GCRC, Brenda Shuma explained that such activities are a part of activities to mark World Down Syndrome Day 2023 (WSD 2023) observed on March 21, every year.

"This year's WSD with the theme: 'With Us Not For Us', GCRC is promoting the rights of the people with disabilities by saying, People with disabilities have the right to be treated fairly and have the same opportunities as everyone else," she explained.

Shuma further explained that Down syndrome, one of the human body disabilities worldwide, is not recognised by many people particularly in Tanzania and in Africa in general.

"In every cell in the human body there is a nucleus, where genetic material is stored in genes. Genes carry the codes responsible for all of our inherited traits and are grouped along rod-like structures called chromosomes," she explained.

According to her, Down syndrome occurs when an individual has a full or partial extra copy of chromosome 21.

A few of the common physical traits of Down syndrome are low muscle tone, small stature, an upward slant to the eyes, and a single deep crease across the center of the palm - although each person with Down syndrome is a unique individual and may possess these characteristics to different degrees, or not at all.

Tanzanians urged to deviate from harmful use of alcohol

By Correspondent Theresia Victor

TANZANIANS have been urged to deviate from the harmful use of alcohol that can cause a high burden of disease and significant social and economic consequences.

The call was made on Thursday by Tanzania Breweries Limited (TBL) Director for greater Africa Corporate Affairs policy and sustainability, Mesiya Mwangoka when speaking at the launch of a campaign dubbed 'MdogoMdogo'.

She said the brewer company is committed to promoting smart drinking and influ-

encing social norms and individual behaviour to reduce harmful use of alcohol.

Mwangoka noted that too much alcohol consumption can cause diseases, injuries and other health conditions that may disrupt their health which directly hinders them from achieving their financial goals.

"Our smart drinking global target aims to reduce the harmful use of alcohol by 10 percent by 2025 in line with World Health Organisation (WHO) and United Nations sustainable development goals. We have launched this campaign in line with their global smart drinking goal which include

programmes and initiatives focused on shifting social norms, consumers' behaviour and their own social practices," noted Mwangoka.

The harmful use of alcohol can also result in harm to other people, such as family members, friends, co-workers and strangers while deviating them from reaching their economic goal and so should take it easy when drinking, she said.

"As part of our smart drinking goals one key initiative the business focused on was introducing voluntarily incorporated consumer guidance labels across all its portfo-

lio of product and other promotional items as the label will provide advice against drinking while underage, pregnant or driving," she added.

She said TBL takes pride in producing and marketing their beer with quality and care because the company believes that it's essential to help consumers understand how and why alcohol should be consumed within limits and that is the reason it ensures their marketing does not target underage consumers and reflects good taste and decency.

Andrew Whiting, TBL Subsidiary ABIn-

Bev Vice President Legal and Corporate Affairs Africa said as the world leading brewer they want every experience with beer to be positive by helping consumers to make smart choices while enjoying the company's products.

"We are leading the way using the core strengths of our business and investing behind evidence-based initiatives to promote smart drinking where we cultivate a new era of cultured consumers who have mastered the art of drinking", he said.

Alcohol literacy is a critical component of TBL's global sustainability goal and the

AU appeals for nearly \$90m for its peacekeeping mission in Somalia

NAIROBI

The African Union (AU) has appealed for nearly \$90 million in funding for its peacekeeping mission in Somalia.

In a statement, Bankole Adeoye, the AU Commissioner for Political Affairs and Peace who made the funding request, said the African Union Mission to Somalia (AMISOM) is providing crucial support to the Somali military as they battle against the al-Shabaab terrorist group.

"I highlighted the many gains by AMISOM and stressed the compelling need for predictable, adequate, flexible and sustainable funding for ATMIS towards its transition of security responsibilities to SSF (The Somalia Stability Fund) by December 31st 2024," Adeoye said after attending a joint AU-UN event on the AU Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS) mid this week.

Without the funding, he said, the 19,600-strong AU force would be unable to function effectively and fulfill its mandate to reduce the threat posed by terrorists and support peace and reconciliation efforts toward a secure and stable Somalia.

Adeoye's sentiments were echoed by UN Under-Secretary-General Rosemary DiCarlo who said that despite initial generous donor support, contributions have "significantly declined," leaving the mission in a "dire financial situation."

"Our proposition is straightforward: It is urgent to ensure predictable, sustainable and multi-year funding for ATMIS and adequate resourcing for the Somali security transition," DiCarlo said.

"Our common objective - the full handover of security responsibilities to Somali security forces and institutions by the end of 2024 - depends on it," she added.



Cyprian Luhemeja (2nd-R), until recently Dar es Salaam Water and Sanitation Authority (Dawasa) CEO and now Deputy Permanent Secretary in the Water ministry, receives documents from Dawasa lawyer Florence Yamat in Dar es Salaam on Wednesday after the signing of a waste water processing contract with Dubai's Metito (Overseas) Limited. Right is acting Dawasa CEO Kiula Kingu. Photo: Correspondent Joseph Mwendapole

Gender equality a fundamental human right and critical driver of economic growth

By Correspondent Daniel Semberya

YOUNG journalists who are still in college and those who are about to complete their journalism course have been urged to write more stories on gender balanced matters.

Gender equality is not only a fundamental human right but also a critical driver of economic growth and sustainable development. Promoting women's economic empowerment can lead to economic productivity, innovation and competitiveness in Tanzania's economy.

Speaking this week in Dar es Salaam during a half day seminar to some journalism students from Tumaini University, Dar es Salaam College (TUDARCO), Tanzania Gender Network (TGNP) Training and Capacity Building Coordinator, Anna Sangai urged the prospec-

ive journalists to have a gender eye when writing their news, either they are in newsrooms or outside newsrooms. The seminar was organised by TGNP in collaboration with Internews through their newly introduced Boresha Habari Project. The aim is to make young journalists understand the basics of gender balanced stories and their importance in the development of the society.

Sangai said that by writing such articles they will be in a position of being able to cling to any managerial position and posts available in the society they are living in.

She said that the Tanzanian 2025 Development Vision states clearly the removal of racial discrimination and gender participation in the different economic, social, political and cultural issues.

According to Sangai Tanzania has entered and signed different national, regional and international protocols in an endeavour to attain gender equality in Tanzanian society. "Your stories should change the society's negative mindset on gender so as to increase developments to all groups of people in society."

She noted that all groups will have equal participation in development issues, and to get knowledge and education, which means the nation's developments will grow quickly because many people are participating and no one will be left behind.

Coordinator of the Boresha Habari Project, Mariam Oushoudada said the training which is being supported by Internews, is meant to help student journalists who are still in colleges to ensure they pri-

oritise gender reporting.

She said "That gender correlation to students needs to start while they are still in college until when they finish their studies."

Oushoudada said the training will be sustainable, urging the trainees to balance the stories and coverage without hurting another sex.

"This training has come after realising many leaders are negatively reported in news coverage, so grooming journalists from colleges with gender knowledge will in one way or another bring equity and equality and thus eventually spur the nation's economic growth and development." Maria Raimonds, a third-year student in Mass Communications at Tumaini University, commended TGNP and Internews for the training; saying it has really equipped her with the knowledge on sex and

gender roles, culturally, socially and politically, of which she did not know before. She said that gender oppression is a two-way traffic that needs more and joint efforts to address it.

"Society needs to change its mindset without favouring one sex, but it needs to treat both sexes equally. And also, it should not suppress people in the vulnerable groups." Another third-year student in Mass Communications at Tumaini University, Beatrice Bandawe has urged the society to address the gender-based violence that is alarming in society.

"The training has been an eye opener, and it will help us balance our stories by ensuring our stories do not hurt or tarnish the image of another person."

Isyaka Nyamihasi, a second-year student in Mass communications at

the same University, has said that the training has helped him to understand more on gender matters.

He has suggested that this kind of education needs to be taught to people in rural settings so that they also understand the value and importance of a woman.

"A woman has the ability to perform what a man can do. Let's give her an opportunity to practice what she knows. Adding

Sabina Ntobi a second-year student at TUDARCO apart from commending the good efforts done by TGNP and Internews, she urged the government and other key stakeholders in this sector to borrow a leaf from them and support activities and interventions that are meant to equip journalists with the knowledge and skills, which at the end will benefit the entire society.

Major reforms in ICT systems to enhance tax collections - minister

By Guardian Reporter

MINISTER for Lands, Housing and Human Settlement Development, Angeline Mabula said yesterday that her ministry is making major reforms in its Information and Communication Technology (ICT) systems to enhance tax collections thus boost government coffers.

She was briefing members of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Lands, Natural Resources and Tourism in Dodoma. Mabula presented a report on implementation of the ministry's budget for the 2022/2023 financial year as well as budget estimates for the coming financial year.

"We are going to make major reforms in our ICT systems to enable Tanzanians to get messages through their mobile phones. We want to use friendly ways in tax collection," said Mabula.

She said that the new system will be in use before the coming budget parliamentary meetings, whereas some people will start receiving text messages via mobile phones on estimated land and property tax.

Minister added that the exercise is about to be completed as a team of IT experts is working tirelessly to ensure it starts working soon.

She said the government is determined to strengthen the security of properties by ensuring every piece of land in the country is identified, surveyed and owned legally to control land disputes.

Mabula added that the move will facilitate economic growth as well as individual's income. She said the ministry will continue to work on recommendations and advice given by the committee to ensure the government achieves its targeted goals.



We are going to make major reforms in our ICT systems to enable Tanzanians to get messages through their mobile phones. We want to use friendly ways in tax collection



Construction of Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) transport infrastructure well under way in Dar es Salaam's Vingunguti suburb earlier this week. Photo: Correspondent Jumanne

WHO: Number of global cholera cases continues to grow

By Guardian Reporter and Agencies

THE world's cholera situation is deteriorating, the World Health Organisation (WHO) confirmed in an update, with two dozen countries now reporting cases, including Yemen.

The 24 separate countries are reporting some level of cholera cases as of Monday, the WHO said in a statement.

A majority of cases are in southeast Af-

rica, with extended outbreaks continuing to plague Malawi and Mozambique.

Since January, new outbreaks were reported in Tanzania, South Africa, Zimbabwe and Zambia, according to the WHO.

Tropical Cyclone Freddy, which pummeled parts of East Africa in February only exacerbated the situation.

The storm approached levels equivalent to a Category 4 hurricane, and the heavy rain, flooding and damage to wa-

ter and sewer systems is helping to fuel further cholera outbreaks.

Overall, more than 36,000 people have been infected and 1,700 killed since 'unprecedented rise in cholera cases worldwide' last year, according to the WHO.

Many of the countries reporting outbreaks are also seeing a higher mortality rate among those that contract the acute diarrheal illness, caused by infection of the intestine with *Vibrio cholerae* bacte-

ria. About 1 in 10 people with cholera will experience severe symptoms, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Though the infection can sometimes be severe or life-threatening, it is more often mild or entirely without symptoms.

"The overall capacity to respond to the multiple and simultaneous out-

breaks continues to be strained due to the global lack of resources, including shortages of the oral cholera vaccine, as well as overstretched public health and medical personnel, who are dealing with multiple disease outbreaks and other health emergencies at the same time," WHO said.

Based on the current situation, WHO assesses the risk at the global level as very high.

The Guardian

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SATURDAY 25 MARCH 2023

Taking A New Look
At The News
ESTABLISHED IN 1995

The world must unite in handling plastics better

PUBLIC awareness campaigns against the use of unauthorised plastic bags or their bad handling or against deliberate or negligent littering of the environment have been going on in the country. Through these campaigns Tanzanians have been sensitised and reminded time and again to use only environmentally friendly plastic bags to minimise health and environmental risks.

Yet, not much has been achieved in this regard as bad handling of unauthorised plastic bags or containers is still used or they are still seen scattered in many regions of the country.

Reducing plastic use seems like one of the easiest environmental actions people can take. We re-use bags, put take-out coffee in our own mugs or recycle our plastic bottles, and feel good about ourselves. But it is not so simple. Plastic pollution is still causing immense harm to our planet.

There is no corner of the Earth, from mountaintop to sea trench, left unsullied by plastic. We see it everywhere.

Chemicals in plastics can radically change the normal functioning of our hormones. Microplastics are posing threats to coastal communities where marine species are the main food.

We need a system change that addresses the full life cycle of plastics, from the extraction of raw materials to alternatives to improved waste management. We need to be innovative and eliminate products that are unnecessary, avoidable or problematic.

Design products for reuse and recycling and ensure this happens. Remove hazardous additives.

By doing this we could reduce the volume of plastics entering our oceans by over 80 per cent by 2040 and reduce virgin plastic production by 55 per cent. We could reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 25 per cent and create 700,000 additional jobs.

Nations have a chance to make this new economy a reality if they agree to start negotiations on a strong and comprehensive global agreement to tackle plastic pollution'

Despite the success in the control of importation and use of plastic bags, disposable water bottles still litter the Tanzania.

Many people still throw away used plastics on the streets and thus hampering government's ban on use of plastic bags.

Plastic recycling is very important and must be taken seriously. Plastics make up a huge amount of solid waste and take centuries to break down in landfill or the ocean. Therefore, all recyclable plastics should be recycled to reduce landfill, conserve energy and conserve the environment.

Since the majority of plastic is non-biodegradable, recycling is a part of global efforts to reduce plastic in the waste stream, especially the approximately 8 million metric tonnes of waste plastic that enters the Earth's ocean every year.

Compared with lucrative recycling of metal, and similar to the low value of glass recycling, plastic polymers recycling is often more challenging because of low density and low value.

There are also numerous technical hurdles to overcome when recycling plastic. Materials recovery facilities are responsible for sorting and processing plastics, but have struggled to do so economically as of 2019.

A group of international consumer goods companies operating across Africa launched the 'African Plastics Recycling Alliance' at the seventh edition of the Africa CEO Forum. The Alliance aimed to transform plastics recycling infrastructure across sub-Saharan Africa.

The Alliance will promote innovation and collaborate on technical solutions and local pilot initiatives to improve plastics collection and recycling, which in turn is expected to create jobs and commercial activity.

Vicious turns of weather show the need for micro-insurance outreach

REPORTS from Mara Region say that Musoma Rural MP Prof Sospeter Muhongo has launched a fundraising campaign to assist fishermen and women in his constituency whose boats were vastly damaged by a hurricane at the start of the week. Starting a campaign of that sort is nothing short of abnormal, but it is laudable on the part of the legislator, and one hopes that certain budgetary funds could be made available for instance to repair the boats, or intensely subsidized grain as many of them rely on daily catches and sales to buy food. It is a grim moment.

The MP talked of surviving while waiting for repairs on their vessels, not whether each of them has the cash to make repairs, or there are other arrangements to get each of the boats repaired, etc. Ordinarily such mishaps don't form part of the business of governing but with climate change attitudes need to be altered, so that attending to those whom calamity has befallen when the weather goes berserk becomes a routine commitment. It re-

quires an alteration to budgeting so that the government can accommodate more disaster relief instead of waiting for 'truly shocking' incidents.

The situation was indeed tough for Musoma Rural lakeside villagers, with heavy rains and strong winds destroying over 200 boats and 62 nets. It appears that the scale of destruction along the lakeshore was far more significant than any other damage at the residential level, as the legislator did not dwell on that of community needs but as relates to damaged fishing vessels and accompanying gear. The broader part of the fishermen and women harvest sardines near the lakeshore.

The government might not take much notice as some individuals have boats to repair the way car owners repair their vehicles every passing day. Nor is there a rescue situation where landslides have occurred etc, and thus it is pretty well a manageable issue, not a state emergency. Perhaps a bank may issue a collective bank loan for repairing boats, with the boats as collateral, etc.

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The highs and lows of Nigeria's 2023 presidential election

By Special Correspondent

WHILE some logistics challenges, malpractices and violence in some locations undermined the election, we believe it is excessive and inaccurate to describe the exercise as totally flawed.

Reactions from across the world have followed the 25 February presidential election, which produced old guard politician, Bola Tinubu, as Nigeria's next leader. Mr Tinubu was the candidate of the All Progressives Congress (APC), the platform on which outgoing President Muhammadu Buhari has governed Nigeria since 29 May, 2015.

While a number of world leaders have congratulated the president-elect, some Western media have echoed the views of the Nigerian opposition and a section of the local media, which have been very critical of the election.

Mr Tinubu was announced winner of the hard-fought contest with 8,794,736 of the over 24 million votes cast in the election. His tally represents only 37 per cent of the votes, the lowest by a winner since 1979. Yet, it is 8 per cent higher than that of his closest rival, Atiku Abubakar of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP). Peter Obi of the Labour Party (LP) was further behind with a 25 per cent share of the ballots.

Not unusual in Nigerian elections, the opposition has refused to concede defeat, and the two closest contestants have launched a formal challenge of the results in court. They are alleging electoral fraud. In addition, they are lamenting the failure of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) to upload screenshots of polling station results to a web portal, IReV, created for the purpose. Even at that, though quite ironic, some of the election results at the national legislative levels favourable to these parties have been endorsed and celebrated.

PREMIUM TIMES believes that INEC's failure to upload the results, as promised, is a major flaw that has cast doubt on the credibility of the election. The electoral commission's explanation for the failure, offered two days after the election, was that technical glitches hindered it from uploading the results to the INEC Result Viewing Portal (IReV). The agency has since uploaded and published over 90 per cent of the results.

Some opposition politicians have also questioned INEC's interpretation of the law on the national spread of winning results. The Constitution requires the winner of the presidential election to secure at least a quarter of the votes in each of two-thirds of the states of the federation and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT). Mr Tinubu crossed that threshold in

29 of the nation's 36 states, but his challengers are saying he also needed to have done so specifically in the FCT, where he didn't. INEC believes that is a wrong interpretation of the law.

Some media organisations, as well as a number of local and international observers, have corroborated the opposition's claims of lapses in the conduct of the election. In its interim report, the Nigerian Bar Association (NBA), which deployed 1,000 members from its 128 branches to monitor the poll across the country, identified some of the challenges it observed. These include "late arrival of INEC officials and ballot materials at the polling stations, malfunctioning of the biometric voter accreditation system (BVAS) machines, limited or non-transmission of results from polling units to the INEC Result Viewing (iReV) portal, insecurity at some polling units, including violent attacks on voters and officials, voters' intimidation, snatching and destruction of voting materials."

Despite these observations, the NBA said about 92 per cent of the voters its Election Working Group interviewed said they were either "somewhat satisfied" or "excellently satisfied" with the conduct of the polls. What the report suggests is that respondents do not consider the observed lapses significant enough to damage the integrity of the election.

It is noteworthy that since INEC began uploading the results to the IReV portal, a number of voters have alleged discrepancies between what they witnessed as votes that were collated at polling units on Election Day and what was published on the result portal by INEC. But such observations are not widespread.

YIAGA AFRICA, a non-governmental organisation which did a parallel tabulation of the results from many states, reported variations between its results and those of INEC in Rivers and Imo, two states also flagged by the media and some of the opposition parties for significant levels of electoral irregularities.

While some logistics challenges, malpractices and violence in some locations undermined the election, PREMIUM TIMES believes it is excessive and inaccurate to describe the exercise as totally flawed or as the worst in Nigeria's history, as some want the world to believe. If anything, the election demonstrated appreciable progress in the nation's electoral process, in comparison to past ones.

An analysis of media reports on Election Day indicates a reduction in reported cases of ballot box snatching and vote buying, compared to previous elections. It is unclear to what extent the scarcity of cash, due

to the implementation of the naira redesign policy of the Central Bank of Nigeria, contributed to this.

The results of the poll, more than anything else, also support our own assessment of the election. Although the ruling APC runs the federal government and 21 of 36 states, Mr Tinubu won in only 12 states. He lost in some of the party's historical strongholds, some with large voting populations. These include his home state, Lagos, Kano, Katsina, Kaduna, Kebbi, Yobe and Gombe, all of which have APC governors. Aside from the President-elect who lost his home state, the National Chairman of the party, Abdullahi Adamu, and the Director-General of Mr Tinubu's campaign organisation, Governor Simon Lalong, were also trounced in their Nasarawa and Plateau States, respectively, by the Labour Party. President Buhari's home state, Katsina, as well as Kaduna, Kano and Kebbi, which have governors fiercely loyal to Mr Tinubu, all fell to the opposition.

The Labour Party, which had no elected official in its ranks and had been derided by opponents throughout the campaign for lacking political structures across the country, recorded a stunning victory in Lagos, polled nearly 90 per cent of the votes in Mr Obi's home South-East zone and disrupted long-established voting patterns in the South-South states of Cross River, Delta, Edo and Rivers. It is difficult to explain how a completely rigged process would deliver such outcomes. At no other election in Nigeria's history has so many shocking upsets been recorded, including the loss of seven sitting governors seeking election to the Nigerian Senate.

The governors who lost Senate bids include Darius Ishaku of Taraba (PDP), Simon Lalong of Plateau (APC), Samuel Ortom of Benue (PDP) and Atiku Bagudu of Kebbi (APC). The others are Ben Ayade of Cross River (APC), Okezie Ikpeazu of Abia (PDP) and Ifeanyi Ugwuanyi of Enugu (PDP). They were all defeated by lesser known politicians in their states.

The National Assembly elections, which were held at the same time as the presidential poll, have delivered perhaps the most diverse parliament in Nigeria's political history. This can be seen from the tabular summary below, presented by INEC before issuing out certificates of return to 98 senators-elect and 325 representatives-elect.

We believe two main factors account for this new and refreshing electoral picture. The first is the deployment of technological solutions, such as the bimodal voter accreditation system (BVAS), which has firmly ousted the use of crude force in rigging elections. Now it is impossible

to stuff ballot boxes or manufacture voting figures, as the number of accredited voters must match the number of ballot papers cast. The BVAS, which also instantaneously transmits accreditation data directly to INEC's central server, has been a game changer in this respect.

The snapping and sharing of declared results by voters from the polling units by phone have also strengthened transparency and substantially contained the collation of fictitious figures. Even the results belatedly uploaded to the IReV platform by INEC is now being used by citizens to vet the results declared by the electoral body.

The other critical factor appears to be the insistence of President Muhammadu Buhari that the elections must be free, fair and credible. This is despite his faux pas of violating the Electoral Act on Election Day when he openly displayed his ballot paper for the world to see who he voted for in what was supposed to be a secret ballot. Former President Olusegun Obasanjo is the only other elected Nigerian president to have conducted a presidential election for his own exit. In 2007, he declared the election a do-or-die battle for himself and his party, determined the party's choice of candidates, and is alleged to have blatantly manipulated the poll to ensure a favourable outcome.

In contrast, sixteen years later, President Buhari not only rejected any role suggested to him in the nomination of the APC standard bearer, but some of his decisions and policies were also celebrated by the opposition under the assumption that they were targeted at stopping Mr Tinubu. A few days before the election, the governors of Kaduna and Kano states had publicly accused the president of deliberately sabotaging the electoral prospects of his own party.

PREMIUM TIMES believes that while the observed lapses certainly affected many aspects of the poll and must be comprehensively addressed, the 25 February presidential election does not qualify as a sham and is definitely not one of the worst in Nigeria's history. The election rather points towards the direction of a fairly free, fair and credible one.

It is important to assert this, remembering that the military cited failed elections as impetus for the coup d'états of 1966 and 1983 that ended Nigeria's earlier experiments with democratic civil rule. This election, on the contrary, should be taken as another step forward in Nigeria's democratic journey. Any dispute arising from it must therefore be effectively addressed through the established judicial process.

Tanzania improves in 2023 global economic freedom index

By Telesphor Magobe

LAST week, we briefly looked at proper child upbringing as opposed to 'repeated child beating' wrongly regarded as an effective way of correcting a child. We then concluded, as the Law of the Child Act (R.E. 2019) provides, that we should always care for the physical and mental well-being of a child.

Section 13(2) of the Law of the Child Act cautions us: "No correction of a child is justifiable which is unreasonable in kind or in degree according to the age, physical and mental condition of the child and no correction is

justifiable if the child is by reason of tender age or otherwise incapable of understanding the purpose of the correction."

Today, I invite you to briefly look at the 2023 Index of Economic Freedom (IEF) released recently. It surveyed 184 sovereign countries from July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022 and measures the countries in 12 aspects of economic freedom which are grouped into four broad categories, namely (1) rule of law (property rights, judicial effectiveness and government integrity), (2) government size (tax burden, government spending and fiscal health), (3) regulatory efficiency (business freedom, labour free-

dom and monetary freedom) and (4) market openness (trade freedom, investment freedom and financial freedom).

This year, Tanzania ranks 83rd in global ranking out of 184 surveyed sovereign countries and 6th in sub-Saharan Africa out of 47 surveyed countries. This year's overall score of 60.0, which is 0.5 point higher than last year's overall score, is slightly higher than the world average.

This places Tanzania in the category of countries which are "moderately free" in IEF. Economic freedom scores are categorised as follows in terms of score points: (1) 80-100: free, (2) 70-79.9: mostly free, (3) 60-69.0: moderately free, (4) 50-59.9: mostly unfree and (5) 0-49.9 repressed.

However, last year, Tanzania ranked 93rd in global ranking out of 177 surveyed sovereign countries with an overall score of 59.5 and 10th in sub-Saharan Africa out of 47 surveyed countries. Although its overall score was above the regional average, it was below the world average. Its economic freedom status was thus categorised as "mostly unfree" for having scored between 50 and 59.9 points.

While we may frown on last year's ranking, this year's ranking makes us smile, thanks to ongoing government reforms in various sectors of the economy. What we should do is to keep it up.

According to Anthony Kim, who is research fellow in economic freedom and editor of the IEF, economic freedom is about much more than a business environment in which entrepreneurship and prosperity can flourish. He says with its far-reaching impacts on various aspects of human development, economic freedom empowers people, unleashes powerful forces of choice and opportunity, nourishes other liberties, and improves the overall quality of life.

He suggests that economic freedom is about individual autonomy, concerned chiefly with the freedom of choice that individuals enjoy in acquiring and using economic goods and resources. He argues that rising deficits and mounting public debt in many countries have undermined and will likely further undercut their overall productivity growth and ultimately slow economic vitality.

"Despite the notable downturn in global economic freedom, there continues a clear relationship between improving economic freedom and achieving higher economic dynamism as well as greater overall well-being. No matter what their existing level of development may be, countries can measurably boost their economic growth by implementing steps to increase economic freedom through policies that reduce taxes, rationalise the regulatory environment, open the economy to greater competition, and fight corruption."

Kim links economic freedom to openness to entrepreneurial activity that allows individuals to innovate, respond to new opportunities in the marketplace, and enjoy success based on their own efforts. He also links greater economic freedom to effective and democratic governance. "Admittedly, the achievement of political freedom through a well-functioning democratic system is a messy and often excruciating process, but the positive relationship between economic freedom and democratic governance is undeniable."

Kevin Roberts, President of The Heritage Foundation suggests that "The Heritage Foundation's IEF has served as an essential policy guide that analyses and highlights the state of economic freedom in countries around the globe. Over time, the IEF has recorded profound advances as the cause of freedom has swept the globe, empower-

ing everyday families and workers to thrive and hold their political authorities accountable. However, economic freedom is not a gift. It must be re-earned every generation. This is the challenge we now face."

We may conclude with what Kim says. He suggests that greater economic freedom, as one of the most effective means by which to eliminate poverty, has a major positive impact on levels of poverty as well. He argues that the 2023 IEF reveals a world economy that, taken as a whole, is "mostly unfree" for the global average economic freedom score has fallen from the previous year's 60.0 to 59.3—the lowest it has been over the past two decades.

He says poverty intensity as measured by the United Nations Development Programme's Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI), which assesses the nature and intensity of deprivation at the individual level in education, health outcomes, and standard of living, is also much lower on average in countries with higher levels of economic freedom.

Besides this year's good performance in economic freedom, the 2023 IEF report picks holes in Tanzania's commitment to further institutional reforms needed for long-term economic development, management of public finance and a legal framework in relation to regulatory efficiency.

Thus, the 2023 IEF can inform us about the areas we have performed well and those we can still improve to make our country sustain socioeconomic and political vibrancy.

Today's proverb: "Zeal without knowledge is a runaway horse."

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The Law and You

Tailored protection of lakes and rivers must benefit communities



By Ademola Ajagbe

WATER underpins all life forms, and the water situation in Africa is diverse. Within a country or region, the situation can shift from water scarcity to abundance. This necessitates tailored measures to protect sources of water from—water catchments, lakes, rivers, streams, or wetlands—without disrupting the natural systems and livelihoods that depend on it.

Across the continent, there is an urgent need to conserve freshwater ecosystems to safeguard the important services that they play in supporting communities as a source of water for domestic use and agriculture, as well as supporting livelihoods through fishing and the use of water for energy production, whether hydropower or cooling. This is in addition to being home to 12 percent of the Earth's known species, including mammals, birds, fish, insects, and plants—a richer diversity of life forms per unit area, compared to land and oceans.

However, these healthy freshwater ecosystems and their sources are dwindling, as water flows and levels are receding. The continent, and indeed the whole world, is staring at a crisis that is both about water scarcity and loss of biodiversity. This is due to multiple threats facing freshwater ecosystems, including

climate change; invasive species, such as water hyacinth; and overdependence, as well as direct degradation, from farming, industry, and pollution.

These risks need to be addressed to maintain water's many benefits to African people and the planet. It is just as urgent to conserve its rich biodiversity with the continent's population projected to double by 2050, exerting more pressure on natural resources.

Unfortunately, when it comes to protection, freshwater systems have historically not received as much attention as land and oceans, a trend that is starting to be reversed. Leading with science, The Nature Conservancy (TNC) is bringing together governments, communities, NGOs, and private sector, to help protect and restore these sources of life that

we depend on.

Solutions to protect these water sources must be long-lasting and tailored to an area's unique features. For instance, different approaches would be needed for the wet Congo Basin covering nine countries, and the expansive Okavango, the world largest inland freshwater delta, whose terminal basin never reaches the sea and almost all its water is from Angola. Besides, because it is expensive to move water from one place to another, it calls for locally applied solutions that also consider the prevailing circumstances and do not disrupt economic activity.

Development and the environment can co-exist, with neither suffering at the expense of the other. TNC has been at the forefront in championing replicable, nature-based, public-

private approaches across the continent with a track record of success. This is transforming Gabon into a model for smart development, applying conservation science in freshwater and hydropower planning to support its green ambition; and using a web-based freshwater conservation blueprint tool to evaluate development scenarios for ones that benefit people and nature the most while minimizing harm.

In the Lake Tanganyika basin that covers Tanzania, Zambia, Burundi, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, it is about rapidly scaling fisheries co-management best practices, combining ground-breaking science, local knowledge, and proven methods.

In the Okavango Basin, this has taken a multi-pronged approach that proactively bun-

dles conservation efforts with smart development and sustainable financing to maximise positive economic, social, and environmental benefits, while forestalling risks and mitigating unavoidable impacts. And in Kenya, the Upper Tana-Nairobi Water Fund has inspired cities across the continent to set up programs that work with communities to protect watersheds for the benefit of upstream and downstream users. Africa needs more initiatives like these.

To accelerate the pace and scale of conserving freshwater ecosystems, significantly more investment is needed. Different actors, from government and development finance institutions to non-profits and communities, also need to work together to arrive at low cost, high impact and replicable

solutions. Local communities must be an integral part of such efforts, as stewards and holders of knowledge and rights, leaning on their traditional approaches while protecting their social, cultural, and economic interests.

To sustain our rivers and lakes for the incalculable benefits to people and planet, we must all coordinate and collaborate our conservation actions, including those for cross-border rivers and lakes. It is time for the world to work together in implementing the goals for protecting and restoring freshwater sources, while avoiding risks, for the benefit of generations to come.

Ademola Ajagbe is the Regional Managing Director, Africa at The Nature Conservancy.

Iraq in 2023: Challenges, prospects for peace and human security

By Shivan Fazil and Alaa Tartir

OVER the past two decades Iraq has been affected by several waves of intense conflict and violence. The 2003 invasion of Iraq by a multinational coalition led by the United States and United Kingdom toppled the Ba'athist regime of Saddam Hussein.

It also ushered in years of chaos and civil war, as a variety of armed groups vied for power and territory and targeted coalition forces and the fledgling post-Ba'athist Iraqi Army.

A period of relative calm in the early 2010s was broken by the rise of the extremist Islamic State group, which occupied large parts of the country from 2014 until it was largely defeated by Iraqi forces with the support of a US-led international coalition in 2017.

Today Iraq is enjoying its most stable period since 2003. Armed violence persists in different forms, but it is sporadic, fragmented and localized. However, the country remains fragile and divided, and its people face an array of deepening challenges that the state is struggling to address. This Topical Background aims to provide a snapshot of the situation in Iraq 20 years since the invasion.

A fragile, oil-dependent economy

Crude oil exports accounted for an estimated 95 per cent of federal revenues in 2020. Successive governments have done little to wean Iraq off this heavy dependency on oil rents and diversify the economy. This has led to a bloated public sector characterized by patronage and to a shortage of jobs for new graduates—especially those without the necessary connections and networks.

The dependency on oil rents also exposes the Iraqi economy to fluctuations in global oil prices. Not only does this make long-term development planning difficult, but in 2020, when global oil prices plunged, the government was left unable to fund basic services or even pay public-sector salaries and pensions.

Public debt reached 84 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP), and GDP itself fell 16 per cent, inflaming anger at the government. Although oil prices quickly recovered, two years of government paralysis and political turmoil have made it difficult for Iraq to take advantage and invest the increased revenues.

Despite having large natural gas reserves, Iraq currently relies on gas imports from Iran. The US and Iraq's European partners are keen to end this dependency and to help Iraq become energy-independent.

However, the political and economic turmoil of the past few years in Iraq have stalled

investment in capacity to separate and process gas from Iraqi oil fields, and instead vast quantities of gas associated with oil extraction are flared off.

This leaves Iraq still dependent on Iranian gas and electricity imports, greatly increases its climate footprint and creates acute air pollution in parts of the country. The situation is a prime illustration of the complexity of Iraq's security challenges and governance failures, which interact in complex ways with its oil-dependent economy, tumultuous regional dynamics and environmental issues.

The changing face of armed violence

Today, Islamic State is thought to be unable to recruit more members in Iraq and only an estimated 500 fighters are still active in the country. Major military operations against Islamic State have thus ended.

In 2020, the US began reducing its military footprint in Iraq—which had risen sharply in response to the rise of Islamic State—and only around 2500 US military personnel remain in the country, at Iraq's invitation, in an advisory role.

A key task as the threat from Islamic State dissipates is to deal with the Popular Mobilization Forces (an Iraqi state-sponsored umbrella organization comprising a number of predominantly Shia militias, some supported by Iran) as well as smaller militia groups linked to ethno-religious minorities in the country's north that were formed in the name of community self-defence.

One of the goals of successive Iraqi governments has been integrating these forces into the Iraqi security forces, but progress has been slow. Most of the militias are nominally under the Ministry of Defence.

However, many seem to act independently of government and outside institutional jurisdiction. Some have been accused of human rights violations and abuses against civilians, particularly during the mass anti-government protests in 2019.

Another task, being urged by the US and the anti-Islamic State coalition, is to improve how the Peshmerga—the armed forces of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI)—and the Iraqi Armed Forces interact.

A lack of coordination and intelligence-sharing has undermined the efficiency of security operations, particularly in the disputed territories of Iraq. Prior to the emergence of Islamic State in 2014, the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) and the federal government in Baghdad were jointly administering security in these territories.

Iraq has also suffered from the spillover of civil conflicts and counterinsurgency in neighbouring countries, especially in some



Iraqi university students protesting against the government, 2020. Credit: Mohsin/Shutterstock

of its more remote regions. Iran and Türkiye have both launched missile strikes or armed incursions against opposition forces on Iraqi territory in recent years.

Identity politics and worsening state-society relations

The United States and other members of the coalition that invaded Iraq in 2003 and supported its transition to post-Ba'athist democracy lacked a long-term vision. They often failed to anticipate the consequences of major decisions, such as the disbanding of the Iraqi Army in 2003 or several initiatives put forward by the transitional authorities.

One of the most consequential of these initiatives was the establishment of Muhasasa Ta'ifia, a form of consociational elite bargain that was adopted after 2005. Under Muhasasa Ta'ifia, government posts, sinecures and departments are shared out among the Kurdish, Shia and Sunni political elites after an election—often after a lot of fraught inter-factional horse-trading.

Voters are offered a choice of parties within a given ethno-sectarian bloc, but no choice of policy platforms. There is no parliamentary opposition to hold the government accountable.

Muhasasa Ta'ifia was conceived as a way to stop Iraq fracturing and divisions along the major ethno-sectarian faultlines, to encourage the groups to collaborate and to avoid one group becoming too dominant. While it has arguably succeeded to an extent in those aims, it has also given rise to ineffective governments, lack of accountability, and a public sector rife with corruption and patronage.

As a result, a major new faultline has emerged, with ordinary citizens united across ethno-sectarian lines by grievances against the governing class. Along with corruption, citizens complain of economic mismanagement, unemployment, crumbling infrastructure, weak public services and more. Largely youth-led anti-government protests in 2019 expressed their feelings of aliena-

tion from the political elite with the slogan 'We want a homeland'.

Mass protest has been growing since 2015. The October Protest or Tishreen Movement that began in 2019 was large enough to topple the government of Prime Minister Adil Abdul-Mahdi in early 2020 and was violently suppressed by state forces and militias.

Muhasasa Ta'ifia caused another political crisis in 2021-22 when elites were unable to agree on a new government for over a year after a general election in October 2021. Voter turnout in that election fell to a record low of 44 per cent, illustrating the growing popular disillusionment and frustration with the political system.

Muhasasa Ta'ifia seems unlikely to change in the near term, but there are some signs that it is slowly breaking down, and perhaps even starting to make way for a more issue-based politics. For example, political factions have recently been forming alliances beyond their ethno-sectarian blocs.

Following the 2021 election, Muqtada al-Sadr, the leader of the Shia Sadrist movement, proposed forming a majority government with a sizeable parliamentary opposition—although this was rejected by other factions.

More positively, the Tishreen Movement spawned its own political candidates, some of whom won seats. Their potential to influence federal politics is negligible, but they may be able to push forward change in subnational politics.

The Kurdistan region in federal Iraq

The Kurdistan Regional Government has a peaceful, if occasionally fraught, relationship with the federal government in Baghdad. The KRG enjoys a high level of autonomy, which includes maintaining its own military forces, the Peshmerga.

Early on in the transition process after 2003, Kurdistan was recognized as Iraq's most stable region, and its leaders as having valuable experience of govern-

ment that the other transitional authorities lacked. This was also partly due to the no-fly zone and other measures to protect the Iraqi Kurds from Iraqi government attacks implemented by the United States and European partners after the first Gulf War in 1991.

The Kurds in Iraq have largely distanced themselves from the Kurdish independence movements in neighbouring Iran, Syria and Turkey, to the extent that Peshmerga forces have even clashed with Turkey's Kurdish Workers' Party (PKK) forces operating on Iraqi soil.

Relations between the KRG and the federal government are complicated by long-standing disagreements over oil revenue sharing and control of the disputed territories, which include the oil-rich city of Kirkuk. The KRG brought these territories under its control after Iraqi security forces withdrew in the face of Islamic State advances in 2014. Resolving the status of the disputed territories should have taken place a decade earlier, according to the 2005 constitution.

When the major military operations to defeat Islamic State came to an end in 2017, tensions between the federal government and the KRG were intensified by the KRG's push for greater autonomy. The KRG organized a referendum for independence that also included the disputed territories that were then under its control (including Kirkuk).

The federal government rejected the referendum and retook the disputed territories with military force, supported by the Popular Mobilization Forces, and implemented other punitive measures against the KRG.

The KRG and state-society relations in the KRI have similar problems to those found at the federal level. The KRG budget relies heavily on independent oil exports and on budget transfers from Baghdad, removing the incentive to diversify the economy. And the two main Kurdish factions, the Kurdistan Democratic Party and

the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, have been in a power-sharing agreement since the unification of two Iraqi Kurdish enclaves in 2006. This agreement sees government and administrative posts shared between the two parties—an arrangement not dissimilar to Iraq's Muhasasa Ta'ifia. As in the rest of Iraq, residents of the KRI complain of corruption, patronage and mismanagement by the Kurdish authorities. Many have left Iraq to seek asylum in Europe and elsewhere.

Relations with Iran and the US

In the field of diplomacy, Iraq's strongest relationships and ties are with Iran and the US. Nevertheless, Iraq has sought to diversify its diplomatic and economic relations in recent years, including with Arab Gulf states as well as Egypt and Jordan.

Iran is Iraq's largest trading partner, although Iraq imports from Iran—worth around \$9 billion in 2018—vastly outweigh trade in the other direction. Iraq and Iran have also cooperated extensively in the fight against Islamic State.

Iran's influence in Iraq, much of it exercised through Shia political factions, has been a source of anger among protesters, especially as Iranian-backed militia groups have been involved in violence against anti-government protests.

In addition to having guided the post-invasion political transition, the USA remains Iraq's main source of security support and of military and development aid. The USA has recently increased pressure on Iraq for tighter control of dollar sales in order to stamp out potential money laundering that benefits Iran and Syria.

Steps taken to do this contributed to a significant drop in the dollar value of the Iraqi dinar, leading to soaring inflation in early 2023 and the replacement of the central bank governor.

Iraq has been caught in the middle of regional tensions, particularly due to its diplomatic

and geographic closeness to Iran. In recent years Iraq has tried to take an active role in resolving these tensions. For example, with French support Iraq has organized two regional summits—one in Baghdad the other in Amman, Jordan—aimed at de-escalating regional tensions. In 2021 Iraq hosted talks between Iran and Saudi Arabia, a prelude to the China-brokered détente announced in March 2023.

The situation for Iraq's minorities

State failure to protect Iraq's many ethno-religious minorities is a long-standing problem. Since 2003, many minorities have been displaced due to insecurity, often migrating to the KRI—which was seen as calmer, safer and more tolerant—and in many cases out of Iraq altogether.

The Islamic State group targeted minorities, particularly those of non-Abrahamic faiths. The worst of this was in Nineveh Province, known for its mosaic of ethnic and religious diversity. The Islamic State attacks on the Yazidi group in Sinjar district were so devastating that they have been recognized as a genocide.

Many of the minorities who were displaced during the Islamic State occupation have not returned—partly down to the presence of the many militias still active in their areas of origin and a general sense of insecurity, but also because they feel they can make a better life in their new homes. A UN-brokered agreement between the KRG and the federal government in 2021 that was aimed at normalizing the security situation in Sinjar has had little effect on the ground that would encourage the internally displaced Yazidis to return.

Although minority citizens in Iraq are experiencing lower levels of armed violence based on their identity, discrimination against them seems to have worsened in the wake of the Islamic State occupation. SIPRI has been working in the Nineveh Plains region on ways to improve intercommunal relations and help minorities to re-establish their cultural practices and social relations.

Multiple civil society and grassroots groups are pushing for a reimagining of Iraq, where ethnicity and sect play a much smaller role. However, Iraq's powerful political blocs are keen to maintain the current power-sharing arrangement, even though it does not seem likely to bring prosperity or lasting peace.

The legacy of the invasion still runs through many of the challenges that Iraq faces, but no longer defines them. Gradually, Iraq is shaping its own destiny—hopefully to the benefit of all its citizens.

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CAPITAL RADIO

RATIBA YA VIPINDI JUMATATU - JUMAPILI

MONDAY TIME PROGRAMME	TUESDAY TIME PROGRAMME	WEDNESDAY TIME PROGRAMME	THURSDAY TIME PROGRAMME	FRIDAY TIME PROGRAMME	SATURDAY TIME PROGRAMME	SUNDAY TIME PROGRAMME
05:00-09:00HRS MORNING JAM 09:00-13:00HRS LETE RAHA 13:00-14:00HRS DW-RADIO 14:00-16:00HRS CLUB 101 16:00-18:00HRS DALA DALA 18:00-18:10HRS HABARI 18:10-20:00HRS BOZOUK TIME 20:00-21:00HRS HALI HALISI 21:00-22:00HRS SPORTS 22:00-05:00HRS MUZIKI MCHAGANGANYIKO)	05:00-09:00HRS MORNING JAM 09:00-13:00HRS LETE RAHA 13:00-14:00HRS DW-RADIO 14:00-16:00HRS CLUB 101 16:00-18:00HRS DALA DALA 18:00-18:10HRS HABARI 18:10-21:00HRS BOZOUK TIME 21:00-22:00HRS SPORTS 22:00-05:00HRS MUZIKI MCHAGANGANYIKO)	05:00-09:00HRS MORNING JAM 09:00-13:00HRS LETE RAHA 13:00-14:00HRS DW-RADIO 14:00-16:00HRS CLUB 101 16:00-18:00HRS DALA DALA 18:00-18:10HRS HABARI 18:10-21:00HRS BOZOUK TIME 21:00-22:00HRS SPORTS 22:00-05:00HRS MUZIKI MCHAGANGANYIKO)	05:00-09:00HRS MORNING JAM 09:00-13:00HRS LETE RAHA 13:00-14:00HRS DW-RADIO 14:00-16:00HRS CLUB 101 16:00-18:00HRS DALA DALA 18:00-18:10HRS HABARI 18:10-20:00HRS BOZOUK TIME 20:00-21:00HRS SPORTS 21:00-23:00HRS MALUMBANO YA HOJA 22:00-05:00HRS MUZIKI MCHAGANGANYIKO)	05:00-09:00HRS MORNING JAM 09:00-13:00HRS LETE RAHA 13:00-14:00HRS DW-RADIO 14:00-16:00HRS CLUB 101 16:00-18:00HRS DALA DALA 18:00-18:10HRS HABARI 18:10-20:00HRS BOZOUK TIME 20:00-21:00HRS SPORTS 21:00-23:00HRS KIPIMA JOTO 22:00-05:00HRS MUZIKI MCHAGANGANYIKO)	07:30-10:00HRS DK 90 DUNIANI 10:00-11:00HRS KADOGOO 11:00-13:00HRS BONGO HITS 13:00-14:00HRS DW RADIO 14:00-16:00HRS ZAIDI YA UMJUAYYO 16:00-18:00HRS ALIYEVUMA 18:00-21:00HRS BUZUKI TIME 21:00-22:00HRS SPOTI 22:00-05:00HRS MUZIKI MCHAGANGANYIKO)	07:00-09:00HRS HABARI NA MATUKIO YA WIKI 09:00-11:00HRS THE SUNDAY 11:00-13:00HRS TOP 20 13:00-14:00HRS DW RADIO 14:00-16:00HRS CAPITAL MICHEZONI 16:00-18:00HRS UKURASA WA MBELE 18:00-21:00HRS JIACHIE 21:00-22:00HRS SPOTI 22:00-01:00HRS LADHA LAINI 01:00-05:00HRS MUZIKI MCHAGANGANYIKO)

Tembelea mitandao ya kijamii ya CAPITAL RADIO



CAPITAL RADIO

Plea for tax waivers on clean cooking energy appliances

By Guardian Reporter

CLEAN cooking energy stakeholders have called on the government to waive taxes on environmentally friendly cooking energy appliances to make the same affordable to the majority of Tanzanians.

The call comes at a time when a limited enabling environment such as inadequate supportive policies that favors incentives for electrical cooking appliances is a challenge that hinders affordability and market growth of alternative cooking appliances.

"Most of these appliances are imported and lack of incentives in taxes and other legal requirements that could promote and facilitate increased supply and demand has instead led to high costs of the appliances in the market, making it difficult for end users to afford," said Estomih Sawe, a Dar es Salaam-based sustainable energy stakeholder.

In an exclusive interview in Dar es Salaam yesterday, Sawe who is also the SESCOM Electric Pressure Cooker's chief executive officer (CEO), said that the challenge has been limiting efforts to make Tanzanians enjoy clean cooking energy in the country.

According to him, one such initiative is the SESCOM Electric Pressure Cooker (EPC) which is designed to use a very small amount of electricity that is friendly compared to using charcoal and firewood. He said the EPC has been designed to both suit rural and urban areas because it uses little electricity.

"According to research conducted on the pressure cooker, it has been established that it can use less than 200/- for cooking half kg of beans, whereas a charcoal stove would use the same amount of beans at a cost of more than 1,500/-." This appliance is imported and we are working on developing the market network and exploring opportunities for first assembling and later manufacture in the country," Sawe said.

He added that agents have been directed to sell the pressure cookers at affordable prices as a way to promote them.

"The EU/UNCDF project regions of Dar es Salaam, Morogoro, Dodoma, Mwanza and Coast will be selling at a reduced price due to the project subsidy, we are grateful for the timely support. This will go a long way to enable more households to afford clean cooking appliances. If the government will waive the taxes, this will further help more people to afford clean cooking," said Sawe.

"We continue to engage Tanzania Electric Supply Company (TANESCO), so that their customers could use the pressure cooker at a cheaper price," this will



SESCOM's executive director Estomih Sawe (R) introduces standard stoves that use low-power technology to cook different types of food in Dar es Salaam recently. Others are the firm's sales manager Katarina Aloyce (C), followed by the business coordinator Albina Minja and manager Shukuru Meena.

help TANESCO to stimulate Demand and increase their revenue, especially considering that they will have huge electricity surplus soon after completion of Julius Nyerere Hydro Power Plant, he added.

Another SESCOM official, Albina Minja said that the pressure cooker has modern features and cooks by using heat and pressure and after the required amount has been attained, it cuts off the electricity, and it is also very safe to use it.

Shukuru Meena, the SESCOM Manager, said that the company uses electricity that is clean and commended the government for ensuring that most Tanzanians get access to electricity. Since more than 40% Tanzanians have access to electricity, we could help them to transition to cooking with electricity and help the government move closer to achieving its target of 75% Tanzanians having access to clean cooking by 2030. At the moment less than 10% of Tanzanians

have access to clean cooking.

"The pressure cooker could be used in schools where there are many people. All Tanzanians can do away with using charcoal and firewood if assisted to use solar electricity for cooking. We hereby advocate the use of this reliable clean energy which is also sustainable and with low costs. The use of this energy will improve health and the environment," he said.

He said the pressure cookers will be introduced in schools saying that the aim is to ensure that they reach all the public places as a way of conserving the environment and facilitating affordable and environmentally friendly energy.

The current unsustainable production and use of biomass fuels contribute to the degradation of the environment and health hazards to the livelihood of people, and according to World Health Organization (WHO) report titled Indoor Air Pollution, more than 27,500 people die annually in Tanzania due to

the inefficient use of solid biomass energy for cooking.

Most of the biomass fuels are being burned in inefficient three-stone fireplaces in rural areas and in metal charcoal stoves in urban areas, which in turn affects the health and well-being of the population through indoor air pollution.

Despite the recognized benefits of modern energy cooking services for health, the local environment, and climate change, large-scale adoption and sustained use of clean cooking solutions such as the use of electricity and biogas for cooking have proven wanting.

This is due to a variety of context-specific barriers both on the demand and supply sides. While financing, lack of appropriate business and delivery models, and poor enabling environment appear to be major constraints for manufacturers and suppliers of efficient cooking appliances, lack of supportive policies, information, awareness, and cultural

barriers dominate demand.

The government needs to put in more efforts for clean cooking solutions for the initiatives to succeed by committing strong leadership through effective strategies and progressive policies, investment and multi-sector partnerships.

Electrification and clean cooking are currently seen as two separate domains. The efficient electric cooking (e-cook) study partners consisting of TaTEDO-SESO, Loughborough University, University of Surrey, Gamos Ltd, Innovative UK, and the MECS programme confirmed that there is potential to unite the two.

EPCs present a transformative opportunity to leverage this encouraging progress to drive forward the goal of ensuring universal access to clean cooking by 2030, in line with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Clean cooking energy stakeholders are also calling for various initiatives to be put in place including pro-

moting highly efficient electric pressure cookers in areas with access to reliable electricity.

Begin by encouraging suppliers to import quality efficient electrical cooking appliances. Reduce the import tariff and value-added taxes as applied to LPG and solar PV products.

Reach poorer households and create repayment plans aligned with how people currently pay for charcoal, firewood, and kerosene.

Widen access to consumers in weak-grid and off-grid regions by supporting the import of lithium-ion batteries and piloting battery-supported electric cooking systems.

Reports indicate that modern cooking energy services are crucial to human well-being and to Tanzania's economic development. Cooking remains a central part of the energy transition and core to the achievement of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 7 and the Paris Agreement.

However, despite Tanzania's various initiatives to ensure access to clean cooking energy, the services for all remains a challenge, the majority of its people still use charcoal and firewood.

Data shows that in Tanzania over 85 percent of the population are without clean cooking services, still depend on solid biomass fuels for cooking with 63.5 percent of households using firewood, followed by charcoal users 26.2 percent, only 5.1 percent using LPG and 3-percent uses electricity. The government could take advantage of the existing electricity infrastructure and ongoing electrification efforts to quickly scale up clean cooking access in the country, by promoting the use of electricity of which more than 40% of the population already have in their houses, they should only be helped to acquire efficient electric cooking appliances. Waiving of taxes on the electric cooking appliances will be one of the most important measure.

Just a viewpoint on the two hectares of restored mangrove forest in Kigamboni

By Getrude Mbagu

STUDIES have confirmed that although mangroves make up not more than one percent of all tropical forests around the world, they have a critical role in mitigating climate change and many other advantages to human beings and species.

Despite their small area coverage, mangrove forests provide a wide range of ecosystem services, including coastal protection, breeding sites for various kinds of fishes, bio filtration of pollutants, provision of habitat for birdlife and wildlife, high potential of carbon sequestration hence contribution to amelioration of climate change, and provision of opportunities for beekeeping and ecotourism ventures for direct benefits.

Any source of mangrove degradation or decline has subsequent major implications for both marine resources and livelihood of adjacent mangrove dependent communities. This justifies for purposeful joint efforts of management of the ecosystems using various approaches towards the protection and restorations.

Tanzania's total forest vegetation cover is 48.1 million hectares while the mangrove forest ecosystem in Tanzania covers an area of 158,000 ha, accounting to 0.32 percent of the total forest cover.

Four out of the five districts in Dar-es-Salaam Region have mangrove forest reserves which are Kinondoni, Ilala, Temeke and Kigamboni districts.

Kigamboni Districts harbours the largest coverage of mangrove forest reserves in an area of 1,638 ha at Mji-Mwema, (80 hectares), Ras Bamba and Ras Dege, (245 ha), Yaleyale Puna (476 ha) Mbezi estuary (567 ha) and Shungu Bweni estuary (270 ha).

The Kigamboni district forest office identified 12 hectares of degraded mangrove forests due to illegal cutting of mangrove trees for charcoal production, but the situation had not been resolved sustainably due to limited funding for restoration.

To reverse the trend and ensure people continue to benefit from mangrove conservation rather than their degradation, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) with funding from the European Union (EU) has supported restoration of two hectares of mangrove forest close to Tundwi Songani village in Kigamboni.

Through the implementation of a five-year project titled 'Multilateral Environmental Agreements in Africa, Caribbean and Pacific Countries - Phase III (ACP MEAs 3)' FAO aims to promote environmental

sustainability by strengthening good governance and operationalization of MEAs through the development and implementation of integrated approaches to address national biodiversity-related priorities and commitments in agriculture, as well as the restoration of degraded ecosystems.

The project is implemented in six districts, of Kigamboni in Dar es Salaam Region; Kilosa in Morogoro, Kilolo in Iringa, Mbarali in Mbeya; Karatu in Manyara and Same in Kilimanjaro region.

Speaking recently when members of the Project Technical Team visited the mangrove forest and the established mangrove nurseries in Kigamboni District, Diomedes Kalisa, FAO Officer and ACP MEAs 3 Project Coordinator said a total of 20,000 mangrove seedlings were planted in mangrove forest reserve degraded area close to Tundwi Songani village at Pemba Mnazi ward.

There are 36,000 mangrove seedlings being raised in a nursery and are expected to be planted between April and May 2023 to cover other 3 hectares of degraded mangrove areas in that district, he said.

"We are pleased that two hectares of degraded mangrove ecosystem along the Indian Ocean in Kigamboni district have been restored



FAO's, EU-funded project restores Kigamboni mangrove forest ecosystem, improving natural vegetation

within these few years of the project," Kalisa added.

He said the restoration has been made possible following commitments by district authority and community members who have played and continue to play critical roles in collecting and planting mangrove seedlings despite challenging conditions that exist in the mangrove forest.

"Mangrove forest degradation, due to illegal cutting of mangrove tree species for charcoal making as well as fuel wood, was previously rampant due to limited funding resources for both protection

and restoration. Community-based mangrove restoration, facilitated by FAO, has raised awareness among members of neighbouring communities about the importance of protecting and restoring mangrove forests for enhanced sustainable provision of ecosystem services in the long run," he said.

Kigamboni District Executive Director, Erasto Kivale thanked FAO and EU for bringing the project, which has not only restored degraded land, but also instilled skills that will help staff and citizens prioritize environmental conservation on a daily basis.

"We appreciate this project a lot because now our mangrove forest, which was badly destroyed due to various human activities, has been restored and the coastline is regaining its beauty and looks so attractive," said Sikujua Mwapinga, District Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation Officer.

Mangrove forest restoration requires technical and financial support to ensure that interventions are scaled up to other locations that have not yet been addressed, as well as community commitment to ensure that whatever has been planted is protected."

Dead sharks on Cape shore grab attention of marine biologists

By Julia Evans

LAST month, 20 sevengill shark carcasses washed up on Pearly Beach, catching the attention of the public.

The sharks were likely killed by Cape's iconic orca or killer whale pair, Port and Starboard, in a predation event.

Ralph Watson, a marine biologist at the Marine Dynamics Conservation Trust, part of the team that picked up the first batch of sevengill carcasses at Pearly Beach after receiving reports from the community on 21 February, said, "this situation grabs people's attention because all of a sudden 20 sharks wash up, most of them mangled".

"This grabs our attention because we see it. But there are literally fisheries out there that catch hundreds, if not thousands of sharks a day. And if we don't see that, it doesn't grab our attention, and we don't really care, which is problematic."

Scientists started noticing these two orcas preying on sevengill and white sharks around 2015 in the Cape, and they have contributed to the short-term abandonment of these species from their typical aggregation sites around False Bay and Gansbaai and in the decline of the white shark population. But marine biologists say this isn't the threat we should be concerned about.

Watson said we don't know the population size of sevengill sharks in this area, so we don't know the impact this predation event has had, but even so, the number is a drop in the ocean to what fisheries catch out at sea.

"Then you've got to question, how impactful is this in comparison to what we don't see?"

Is this an unprecedented event?

The marine biologists explained that it's not necessarily unusual for a predation event like this to occur.

"There have been reports from around the world of killer whales hunting sharks," explained Watson, saying in South America 17 sevengill sharks were found after a predation event by killer whales, but the weather circumstances in Pearly Beach that week were just right for the majority of the carcasses to wash up.

Dr Enrico Gennari, a marine ecologist and one of SA's leading shark scientists, emphasised that while this is a record event of carcasses on the beach after an orca predation event, sharks don't float,

"so it is likely that this event has not been the biggest of its magnitude, but the fact they all reached the beach for us to see, that is unusual."

Dr Simon Elwen, a marine biologist with Sea Search whose research specialises in whales and dolphins, told Daily Maverick, "I think the only reason they were on the beach is because of the weather conditions - there were big swells and onshore wind."

"Like every time they go hunting, they probably kill that many every day."

"It's almost like the orcas won the jackpot by finding all these animals close to each other," said Gennari. "However, that doesn't mean it is a rare event. [It's just] we don't see it."

"We don't know if they [orcas] eat 15 sharks around South Africa a day," said Watson, "it was just an opportune moment for us to actually see the effect."

Elwen explained that what is unusual about this event is that killer whales are pretty rare around South Africa, and that the vast majority around SA eat mammals, particularly dolphins - and they tend to do it away from shore.

Elwen emphasised that this is not a shift in killer whale diet in South Africa, but that this pair likely grew up on that diet, and by arriving brought a new hunting strategy to our ecosystem.

"But because those individuals are eight tonnes each - they can do a lot of damage," said Elwen, explaining that one adult killer whale needs the equivalent of one white shark liver a day for its dietary needs.

"But you know, 20 sharks killed, even white sharks, is not a massive number if you put it into perspective," said Gennari, who is with the Oceans Research Institute in Mossel Bay.

"When you look at coastal fisheries, those sharks are killed in those numbers within 10 minutes by a longliner," said Gennari, "it is not a really massive worry compared to what happens because of us humans."

White sharks, as well as Sevengill sharks, are classified as Vulnerable by the IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature) and Gennari estimates that white sharks in SA have slowly declined over the past 20 years, and have declined even more after orcas started killing white sharks in Gansbaai in 2017.

So conserving this species should be a concern, but which threats are most important to focus on?



A sevengill shark carcass that washed up on the shore of Pearly Beach after an orca predation event. (Photo: Marine Dynamics Conservation Trust)

The knock-on effect on ecosystems of orcas taking out sharks

In May 2022 a hobbyist drone pilot recorded the first direct evidence of orcas killing white sharks in South Africa, at Hartenbos Beach and river mouth in Mossel Bay.

Marine biologists have been tracking these two specific killer whales - called Port and Starboard - for years, but his was the first footage of a predation event like this.

Elwen said this video was a real "smoking gun, providing insight into social dynamics. And we got some insight into the techniques of how they're [orcas] hunting animals," he said.

"We first observed the flight responses of sevengills and white sharks to the presence of killer whales Port and Starboard in False Bay in 2015 and 2017," said marine biologist and South African National Parks' shark expert Dr Alison Kock, when the study about the drone footage came out last year.

"The sharks ultimately abandoned former key habitats, which has had significant knock-on effects for both the ecosystem and shark-related tourism."

The 2019 study, *Running scared*: when predators become prey, showcases how once those two orcas turned up in False Bay (the largest known aggregation site for this species globally) and began preying on sevengill sharks, it led to the prolonged absence of sevengill sharks from False Bay.

And the 2022 study, *Fear at the top*: killer whale predation drives white shark absence at South Africa's largest aggregation site, illustrates how white sharks have emigrated from their aggregation site in Gansbaai after the orca predation events. And the loss of an apex predator - like white sharks - is known to have profound impacts on ecosystems and trigger trophic cascades (when the disappearance of a species often results in a complete rearrangement of the food web).

"However, that doesn't explain why the sharks do not come back - like in any other parts of the world," emphasised Gennari. "Or that the decline of white sharks in Gansbaai started before those orcas were spotted killing white sharks."

"It is a compound effect - shark nets killing sharks (which started more than 60 years ago) started the decline, compounded by the removal of the prey from badly managed fisheries. Together with the orcas, it is the nail in the coffin," said Gennari.

"We should focus on where we have the power; removing nets and drumlines and better managing the coastal fisheries."

Impact of coastal fisheries

Forestry, Fisheries and Environment Minister Barbara Creecy revealed in a written reply to parliamentary questions in July 2019 that on average every year just two or three demersal shark longline boats catch 20,000 smoothhound sharks (which are an endangered species), 6,000 soupfin

sharks (critically endangered - similar to a Black Rhino), 2,000 bronze whalers and 2,000 skates.

"If we average two operating vessels fishing every single day of a year (which we know is not possible), a single boat would catch in a day at least over 30 sharks, which is double the number killed (for the first time we know of) by orcas," said Gennari in regard to these figures.

"So how is the Minister allowing a critically endangered and endangered species to be targeted?"

While Gennari agreed that most soupfin sharks are caught as bycatch by trawlers and not demersal shark longliners, setting a maximum quota for bycatch - as many countries in the world do - could be an option. For smoothhound sharks, which are targeted by demersal shark longliners and line fishing boats, yearly target quota would be an important proactive step to conserve South Africa's natural heritage.

Watson agreed, saying that while bycatch of sharks has decreased in the last few years, "there's still bycatch of sharks that likely outnumber what these killer whales did in this situation by a huge factor."

Gennari said improving the fisheries doesn't mean stopping fishing, "it just means that all the fisheries in South Africa are sustainable" - and at the moment, that is not the case.

A recent study that came out in the East coast of the US, showed that sharks and rays - a third of which face extinction - can rebound, their decline can be reversed with improved fisheries management through government enforcing science-based fishing limitations.

"They saw that as soon as fishery approached change, and they started to look at sustainability, that numbers bounced back," said Gennari regarding the study. "Even though South Africa was the first country that protected the white shark, it might be the first country that is going to lose the white shark, many lesser known shark and ray species."

Gennari emphasised that he is not against fisheries, but in favour of sustainable fishing practices, which are beneficial for the longevity of the fishing industry itself. **DM**

By Fawzia Moodley

Artisanal miners face onerous obstacles to become legal

GREED, poverty, irresponsible legal mining giants which exploited and then abandoned South Africa's mines, together with the government's failure to enforce regulations on the mining giants to rehabilitate mines before closing them, have created fertile ground for a thriving illegal artisanal mining sector called Zama Zama, many of them run by criminal syndicates.

South Africa's economy has largely been mining based, and under apartheid, white-owned mining companies exploiting lucrative gold, diamond, coal, and chrome grew rich, using cheap local and migrant labour from neighbouring countries.

Post-apartheid, the ANC government has tried to bring black ownership and small-scale miners into the mining sector and, more recently, attempted to decriminalise artisanal miners who use rudimentary tools and are largely involved in surface mining.

According to submissions made by the Legal Resources Centre (LRC), the Benchmarks Foundation, and the International Labour Research and Information Group (ILRIG), policy weaknesses, lack of enforcement, bureaucratic bungling, and red tape have ensured that the status quo from apartheid remains largely intact.

The LRC contends that retrenchments due to mechanisation or closure of unprofitable mines have increased illegal mining. The lack of enforcement of laws relating to the rehabilitation of closed mines has created space for criminal Zama Zama and artisanal miners who are perforce illegal to operate in disused or abandoned mines.

With the publishing of the Policy on Artisanal and Small-Scale Mining in March 2022, artisanal miners all over the country are forming cooperatives in a bid to be legalised. But it is an uphill battle to get permits.

The LRC also warns of further conflict and xenophobia because the law precludes foreign Zama Zama from getting permits. However, Minister of Mineral Resources and Energy Gwede Mantashe says: "It must be clear that once an individual illegally enters our country and engages in illegal economic activity, such an individual cannot be sanitised through being issued with a small-scale mining license."

Robert Krause, an environmental researcher, says that the roots of the problem lie in "the mining houses shirking their environmental rehabilitation responsibilities as well as failure to invest in a post-mining economy for workers and the surrounding community."

There are nearly 6000 ownerless and derelict mines, many of them "abandoned by mining capital before the present regulatory dispensation under the National Environmental Management Act and the Financial Provisioning regulations."

Krause says there is "a persisting pattern of large mining houses selling off their mines towards closure to companies they know full well will not be in a position to carry out their rehabilitation duties."

Legal loopholes and lax regulation by the regulator enable this.

"The companies that end up with liabilities frequently go insolvent, and the financial provision for closure is often treated



It's a struggle for artisanal miners working in South Africa to be legalised due to onerous requirements. Credit: NAAM

as just another claim."

He says, "Mine abandonment fuels illegal or artisanal operations, as low-grade ore is left behind, convenient entrances remain open, and people in need of work are thrown out of the economy."

When the profitable reserves are depleted, there's an employment crisis. Then, the op-

tion for survival, mainly where closure is not done properly, is to become a Zama Zama.

Krause says the artisanal miners need material support and capacitation from mining companies and the state, "instead they are still often treated like criminals while violent criminal syndicates flourish."

According to an Oxpeckers

environment journalist probe a few years ago, "a fortune has been set aside for mine rehabilitation in South Africa. But large mines are not being properly closed, and the money cannot be touched."

Oxpeckers say that although the money cannot be used for rehabilitation while a mine is still operational, the DMRE can

use it if it is abandoned.

"The department is yet to provide an instance in which this money has been used, however. Instead, most mines are not deemed legally closed, and the money cannot be touched."

But Mantashe says: "It is estimated that it would cost over R49 billion to rehabilitate these mines. The Department of

Mineral Resources and Energy (DMRE) receives R140 million per annum for the rehabilitation of mines. With this allocation, we can only rehabilitate at least three mines and seal off 40 shafts per year."

The minister revealed in September 2022 that 135 shafts in the Eastern, Central, and Western Basins in Gauteng (province) were sealed over three years. The DMRE intended to seal off another 20 in the current financial year, prioritising the Krugersdorp area where Zama Zama gang raped a film crew in July last year.

Mantashe says that the rehabilitation of mines is a long terms project: "We must appreciate that it would take a long time to completely rehabilitate all these mines at this rate due to budget constraints and security threats to officials executing this programme."

Advocates for the legalisation of artisanal miners say the government needs to provide resources to fund environmental assessments and facilitate a local buyers' market via a national buying entity to sell their mined products.

"People in South Africa need to finally see the benefits of the mineral resources of South Africa, as in the past colonial and Apartheid practices coupled with large-scale mining have deprived the majority of this benefit," the LRC group says.

Clearly, this is a pipe dream, as the struggle by artisanal miners to get permits to become legal has underlined.

The irony is that their legalisation will not only allow them to earn a living but also pay taxes and end their constant harassment by criminal elements and the police alike.

Japan helps WFP provide vital support to refugees in Kigoma

CIC writes off Sh900mn uncollectible premiums

NAIROBI

CIC Insurance Group has written off Sh900 million uncollectible premiums as it sought to clean from its books debts that had accumulated over the years, and with remote chances of being recovered.

The underwriter says about Sh650 million relates to unremitted insurance premiums of Sh10,000 and below, mainly in the hands of direct customers and agents.

CIC Group chief financial officer Philip Kimani said the write-offs were the reason behind the income tax expense paid in the financial year that ended December 2022 tripling to Sh936 million from Sh291 million the year before. "These debts relate to insurance premiums that go back many years, some more than 10 years. They had been provided for over the years and so we had to do a full assessment of how collectable they are. So it was part of this clean-up exercise that the write-off happened," said Mr Kimani.

"A lot of it was very small debt. Of the Sh900m, Sh650m were debts less than Sh10,000 from our direct customers and agents."

CIC's pre-tax profit had more than doubled from Sh959.7 million to Sh2.03 billion but the income tax expense tripled from Sh291 million to Sh936 million, leaving it with a net profit of Sh1.09 billion.

Mr Kimani explained that CIC had previously provisioned for the bad debt, leading to the creation of a deferred tax asset.

Writing off the debt that had been provisioned meant reversing the deferred tax asset into the current tax expense, leading to the jump in the taxes to an equivalent of 46 percent of the gross earnings from 30.3 percent in 2021.

"When you provision for debt, it creates deferred tax assets. When you write it off, you reverse the deferred tax asset to your current tax. There was no cash flow impact but an accounting reversal of what had been provided," said Mr Kimani.

CIC had in 2020 made a Sh1.28 billion provision for impairments and carried the same figure into 2022. At the end of 2021, CIC disclosures showed Sh1.55 billion of the money was over four months old.

The underwriter has resumed dividend payout for the first time in four years as the net profit for the financial year ended December 2022 grew by 63 percent to Sh1.09 billion.

The growth in net earnings from Sh668.4 million returned CIC to the Sh1 billion and above net profit club for the first time in seven years.

The improved performance has seen the CIC board propose a payment of Sh0.13 per share dividend to shareholders, in a payout that will amount to Sh340 million.

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CIC had in 2015 returned a net profit of Sh1.14 billion from Sh1.08 billion it had posted in 2014, a performance that was attributed to business realignment in general business, group life business and investment portfolio.

"The strong performance was driven by continued execution of our transformational initiatives focusing on customer experience, performance management, operational efficiency, digital transformation, research and innovation, cost competitiveness and debt management, among others," said Patrick Nyaga, CEO at CIC Group.

The improved performance has seen the CIC board propose a payment of Sh0.13 per share dividend to shareholders, in a payout that will amount to Sh340 million.

The dividend will be paid on or about May 26, 2023 to the shareholders on the register at the close of business on May 8.

Top shareholder, Co-operative Insurance Society Limited, will receive Sh252.6 million as dividends for its 74.3 percent stake, while Co-operative Bank of Kenya chief executive Gideon Muriuki will get Sh18 million for his 5.3 percent stake.

CIC's pre-tax profit had more than doubled from Sh959.7 million to Sh2.03 billion, but the income tax expense tripled from Sh291 million to Sh936 million.



Sarah Gordon-Gibson, WFP country director and repress (left) with Yasushi Misawa, Japan ambassador to Tanzania displays symbolic signed maize flour bags to indicate the essence of food security to vulnerable communities at an event held yesterday in Dar es Salaam. Photo: Francis Kajubi.

By Francis Kajubi

THE United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) yesterday welcomed a new contribution worth 2.1bn/- (\$900,000) from the Japanese government to support 200,000 refugees with life-saving food assistance hosted in Nyarugusu and Nduta refugee camps in Kigoma region.

Addressing the press in Dar es Salaam yesterday, ambassador of Japan to Tanzania Yasushi Misawa said the donation is being reimbursed at a critical time when WFP is faced with signifi-

cant funding gaps.

"I'm very pleased to present WFP with this donation to meet the food and nutrition needs of refugees in the Kigoma region. Tanzania is home to more than 200,000 refugees from Burundi and the Democratic Republic of Congo," said Misawa.

According to him, Japan has supported Tanzania in the agricultural sector since the 1980s, with a particular emphasis on rice planting.

"Tanzania is now a rice exporting country that plays an important role in food security in the East African region," he said.

He asserted that while the Ukraine-Russia crisis greatly affected the supply chain in the world and the cost of food prices, Japan promised in the TICAD8 held in Tunisia in August 2022, to provide \$300 million all over Africa including Tanzania to bolster food production through co-financing with African Development Bank (AfDB) and assist with capacity building for farmers.

He said that Japan has been also strengthening its partnership with WFP, recognizing it as an international organization playing a central role in responding to the needs of vulner-

able populations.

"Japan has funded the UNICEF project in 2021 to improve health services in the refugee camps and the host communities through the provision of medical equipment and supplies;

The same year, Japan supported UNHCR to strengthen preventive and community-based health care services necessary to protect refugees against the health impact of the COVID-19," said Misawa.

Accepting the donation, Sarah Gordon-Gibson, WFP country director and representative said the UN Agency has been in Tanzania since 1963 delivering humanitarian and development programmes.

She said WFP through its flagship strategic plan 2022/27 supports the economic, social, and environmental issues of food and nutrition security for the people it targets.

The plan targets at sustaining inclusive economic growth through market-based interventions, strengthening human capital and increased affordability of healthy diets, and promoting climate change adaptation and environmental restoration.

"We are extremely grateful to the government of Japan for the generous and continued support which comes at a crucial time, as WFP faces a significant funding gap to continue providing food assistance to refugees," said Gibson.

She further underlined that the donation will make a significant difference in the lives of over 200,000 refugees who solely rely on WFP assistance to meet their basic food needs.

"The government of Japan is a long-standing partner of WFP in Tanzania. The latest contribution brings Japan's total contributions to Tanzania to \$4.7 billion since 2016," she asserted.

Jokate warns Korogwe food suppliers on hiked prices

By Correspondent Cheji Bakari, Korogwe

KOROGWE district commissioner Jokate Mwegelo yesterday cautioned the business people in the district not to use Ramadan holy month to hike prices of foodstuffs.

DC Mwegelo issued such caution when she held talks with Tanzania Chamber of Commerce, Industries and Agriculture (TCCIA) Korogwe district leaders on various matters related to agro products and the agribusiness in the district.

She said there is a tendency for business people during the holy month of Ramadan to hide away food stuffs into their wholesale or retail stores aimed to deceive their customers as there is shortage but purposely targeting at increasing prices of the products.

"Fasting into the holy month of Ramadan is the path for a believer to be closely related with the Almighty God, don't use the opportunity of food stuff's high demand to hiking prices," cautioned Mwegelo.



Jokate Mwegelo.

She further assured Korogwe's residents that food security is reliable to meet their dietary needs so there is no need to doubt and wished all the best Muslims whose fasting in the district.

Despite Muslims are fasting during the daylight, the positive side of Ramadan is still demand for food stuff is high because people tend to consume more and even purchase more than

they actually need henceforth business persons utilize the opportunity to increase prices.

That often means higher prices, which translates into higher profit margins for merchants, retail stores, restaurants and cafes - especially those which arrange amusement programmes for after iftar.



CIC Group chief executive officer Patrick Nyaga (right) with chief financial officer Philip Kimani during the release of the insurer's 2022 financial results on Wednesday.

Huawei unveils non-stop banking initiative to spur more innovation

CAPE TOWN

HUAWEI has launched its Non-Stop Banking initiative and is calling for increased co-operation between the technology and banking industries to facilitate innovation in financial services across Africa.

The initiative was unveiled this week, at the Huawei Intelligent Finance Summit for Africa 2023, in Cape Town, with the company saying it plans to facilitate 'a digital future of non-stop services, non-stop development, and non-stop innovation'.

Huawei noted the banking sector is evolving, embracing digitalisation and

the global tech firm anticipates exponential growth in spending on technology coming from the banking sector.

The company forecast that artificial intelligence, big data and analytics, and cloud will see the largest investment as banks automate, digitalise, and become more data-driven and intelligent.

To this end, Jason Cao, CEO of Huawei Global Digital Finance, said: "The financial industry should pay acute attention to users and their demands, embracing changes

"Huawei is dedicated to helping its African financial customers address challenges and accelerate changes across six fields: shifting from transaction to

digital engagement; cloud-native and agile businesses; data democratisation; secure and reliable infrastructure; hybrid multi-cloud and Lego-style modular services, and automated and predictable operation.

"In this way, Huawei will facilitate financial digitalisation and innovatively improve productivity in Africa. Revolving around stability, agility, and intelligence."

Over 200 delegates are taking part at the Huawei Intelligent Finance Summit for Africa 2023, including key industry opinion leaders, as well as executives from major banks across Africa.

Leo Chen, president of Huawei Sub-

Saharan Africa region, gave the keynote speech at the summit bringing to light details of the company's Non-Stop Banking initiative.

Chen emphasised the importance to the banking sector of deepening digital investments. He said also such investments will reduce operational costs, allow the institutions to develop new products, and enhance relationships with customers, resulting in increased revenues for banks.

In Africa, he added, there's an even greater imperative for banks to embrace digitalisation, as it allows for greater financial inclusion.

In his speech, Chen spoke highly of

the innovative work already undertaken by many African banks in embracing digitalisation, but recommended the industry needs to go further and embrace the 'non-stop' approach that will characterise the future of banking.

Over the years, Chen said, Huawei has provided the foundation and backbone for the digitalisation of the banking industry in Africa by supporting the construction of the continent's ICT infrastructure and digital connectivity in rural areas.

Going forward, Chen said Huawei's extensive focus on research and development is well-poised to help the industry shape its future too.

Women seen championing nutrition through agribusiness

KIGALI

ADELINE Umukunzi stands in a field in Musanze District picking nutritious mushrooms from inside a small covered structure. The structure provides an environment with moisture, low light, and humidity, which enables these umbrella-shaped fungi to thrive.

Umukunzi, who is now 28-years-old started growing mushrooms in 2018 after completing secondary school, with just 10 mushroom spawns, locally known as "imigina," which she bought at Rwf5,000 and grew in a basin filled with soil.

Mushroom spawns can be likened to seeds for crops, and Umukunzi said one can produce some 400 grams in a three-month life span. "I used to sell the mushrooms to neighbors and increased investment as they expressed appreciation for them," she said.

Umukunzi's mushroom farming began in 2019 and requires a small space, giving yield in a short period of only seven days after planting.

Now, Umukunzi uses 7,800 mushroom spawns valued at Rwf3.9 million every season (three months), which she grows inside 26 small wooden housing structures, with one having 300 mushroom spawns.

Between 100 and 120 kilos of mushrooms can be produced from one housing structure, which implies between a total of 2,600 and 3,120 kilos in the 26 of them in three months. As she sells a kilo of mushroom at Rwf2,000, the overall three-month sales are estimated at Rwf5.2 million - Rwf6.2 million.

Umukunzi gets at least between Rwf200,000 and Rwf250,000 profit from mushroom sales per month, after deducting all expenses such as investments and paying employees. "I was able to complete university education and support my family as a result of income from mushroom farming," she said, adding that she has nine permanent employees who take care of her farm and also supplies mushrooms to some hotels and restaurants in Musanze District.

Umukunzi observes that "mushrooms have a great contribution to nutrition because they contain nutrients that a mother needs from pregnancy," indicating that the crop is rich in iron like that found in iron



Adeline Umukunzi said mushroom is a crop that requires a small area but starts giving yield after a short period of planting.

supplement drugs that pregnant mothers get from health facilities to prevent anemia. For vegetarians, they make mushroom samosa upon request.

In Nyagatare district, Natural Fruit Drier Company Ltd, Managing

Director, Mercianne Uwamwezi said that her firm began with focusing on farm production, growing fruits on three hectares, and producing about three tonnes per month.

Now, it is focusing on buying produce from farmers and processing

it, and only growing fruits on half a hectare. It processes different fruits, including mangoes, passion fruits, pineapple, as well as vegetables.

"Through processing, we mix all those fruits and package them into one bottle, such that a consumer can get all their nutrients at once," she said, adding that transforming fresh fruits into powder helps to keep it safe for long and tackle post-harvest losses in the process. The firm has a machine that dries 1.2 tonnes of fruit per day, and another that can extract juice from 1.2 tonnes per day, and a machine that can grind 500 kilos per day. The firm is going to work with over 50 cooperatives counting over 600 members, from which it will be buying fruits and vegetables to meet its demand.

In Rubavu District, Charlotte Uwimana is an Irish potato farmer but also grows other crops such as beans, maize, vegetables, and fruits. She started growing potatoes on one and a half hectares but her farming business gradually grew to about five hectares and a half today.

Also, she said, production went up from 13 tonnes per hectare a sea-

son in 2013 to 21 tonnes per hectare a season currently, explaining that the development was based on factors such as increased farming skills for this crop, and proper use of both manure and chemical fertilisers, as well as quality seeds, among others.

"With the availability of enough potatoes, vegetables, and fruits, among others, we are able to contribute to addressing malnutrition," she said.

According to the Rwanda Comprehensive Food Security and Vulnerability Analysis (CFSVA) 2021, 20.6 per cent of the population in Rwanda was food insecure, while about 32.4 per cent of under-five-year children were stunted (chronically malnourished).

The fifth Rwanda Population and Housing Census report conducted in 2022, revealed that 67.8 per cent of Rwandans had occupations in agriculture in 2022.

It showed that the percentage of agricultural occupations was higher among females than males, as there were 77 per cent of females engaged in agricultural activities compared to 58 per cent of males as of August 2022.



Women self-employed through smart food card programme in Cape Town.

Smart food cart programme is launched in South African

CAPE TOWN

TECH non-profit organisation Empire Partner Foundation (EPF) has partnered with the Chemical Industries Education & Training Authority (CHIETA) to launch a smart food programme to stir-up entrepreneurship in South African townships.

With this initiative, the two organisations say, they seek to empower township-based small and medium enterprises and increase the number of South African entrepreneurs in townships.

Beneficiaries of the programme are provided with 7-inch tablets, allocated a food cart that is fitted with a location-tracking and reporting device, and an e-commerce app. The app includes three integrated platforms (consumer ordering app, merchant app and drivers' app) to support township last-mile delivery.

The food cart is equipped with digital payment devices to accept card payments and sell value-added services.

This, at the adoption of a wide range of digital payment methods is accelerating in South Africa, according to Mastercard's Payment Index 2022.

In addition, initial stock and working capital will be provided to the beneficiaries under the programme.

CHIETA, which is mandated to facilitate skills development, says it is no longer in the business of skills development and training only.

"We are now in the business of sustainable livelihoods. One of our goals is to support 2 000 small businesses and 200 new startups by 2025. This is aligned to the Skills Development Act of 1997, which mandates SETAs to improve the quality of life and contribute to entrepreneurial skills development in SA. As a SETA, we are a facilitator and enabler of talent development in SA," Yershen Pillay, CHIETA CEO, tells ITWeb Africa.

Commenting on the EPF and

CHIETA collaboration, he says: "Partnerships are essential for closing the skills gap. Collaboration is the engine of innovation and a strategic pillar for CHIETA.

"The benefits of collaboration include cost reduction, resource optimisation and impact maximisation. Since adopting our new strategy, based on digital innovations and collaboration, we have created new value in the form of collaborative partnerships increasing from only 19 in 2021 to 82 in 2022.

"These include new partnerships with the Youth Employment Service on youth development and the China Europe International Business School on SMME development."

To enable growth of small business and entrepreneurship, Pillay is calling for urgent interventions to bridge the digital divide in South Africa.

He says CHIETA is at the forefront of addressing this problem as it views technology as a key cata-

lyst for development.

"The tech landscape in SA is in transition. We are making steady progress in the growth of tech startups. New technologies such as virtual reality and augmented reality are continuously being adopted across different industries.

"On the other hand, digital inequality is rising with SA having significantly fewer secure internet servers as compared to countries of the global North, and internet penetration among schools being low at only 20%. We need to bridge the digital divide in SA."

For EPF, the CHIETA partnership aligns with its 'purpose of empowering youth to build South Africa and Africa through technology by solving key socio-economic challenges affecting the public'.

Last year, the EPF launched multimillion-rand Empire Partner Foundation Tech Fund 2, which identifies and rewards young, high-potential, innovative entrepreneurs to spur economic development in the country using technology.

Mikhail Mariemuthu, EPF senior manager, says: "We responded to a request by CHIETA to produce a tech-driven entrepreneur support programme. We believe that by aligning with the mandate and strategy of CHIETA we will be able to support and add tech-driven innovation and sustainable social impact to their programmes.

"From the start of the EPF journey we have focused on three key areas: youth, technology and entrepreneurship. Given the high levels of unemployment among the youth and lack of current and future job opportunities, we have developed a highly focused delivery and enablement platform and built a smart ecosystem to unlock the potential for our youth.

Stanbic reports rising demand for office space outside Kampala city

KAMPALA

AN increase in cost and heightened competition for office space within Kampala has seen "the emergence of a nascent office market in Wakiso and Mukono districts, a real estate market report by Stanbic Properties indicates.

The report, which covers the period between June and December 2022, notes that over-saturation of Kampala's office space has spurred an office market in the two districts, with clients establishing offices, particularly on the upper floors of mixed-use buildings along major routes.

However, the report notes that the bulk of office supply in the two districts have been taken up by small and medium enterprises, start-ups and single-person occupiers, leaving large companies to compete for the available space.

The report, which presents movements and trends in the real estate property market in the Kampala Metropolitan Area, also noted that demand for office space in Kampala increased by 4 percent, signaling a recovery in the second half of 2022 compared to the same period last year.

The demand was mostly registered among grade A and B properties, which represent high quality buildings and higher income tenants.

Mr Spencer Sabiti, the Stanbic Properties chief executive officer, said the increase was due to a combination of expansionary or consolidation-led and pent-up demand as tenants sought to realign their business strategies after a lengthy hiatus post-Covid-19.

He also noted that rent for grade A offices is expected to increase due to rising demand resulting from a boom in oil activities.

"Going forward, we anticipate office rent particularly for grade A to remain

on an upward trajectory in the next 12 months on the back of tight vacancy, robust demand and limited new supply," he said.

However, the report notes that rent for grade C buildings is expected to stagnate or continue to decline due to a shift as tenant seek to get office spaces outside Kampala.

During the period, the report noted, rent for grade C offices declined by 12.5 percent from \$8 per square metre per month while that of Grade A and B remained stable at \$15 and \$11 per square metre per month, respectively.

Rent for office spaces in Wakiso and Mukono, the report indicates, averaged at Shs25,000 per square metre with Mukono Municipality, registering a 12.5 percent annual increase, up from Shs20,000 per square metre per month.

In the retail rental market, the report noted, cost of living remained a key challenge in the second half of 2022 but there was a sense of a return to normalcy with prime locations on the ground and first floors continuing to be keenly sought after.

Impact of shift to online

The shift to online channels due to Covid-19 related spillover effects, the report noted, has come at the expense of physical retail with landlords and retailers in prime malls seeking to find ways through which they can lure consumers back to brick-and-mortar retail stores.

The report also noted that rent in Kampala Residential Market for stand-alone houses in Kololo, Naguru, Nakasero and Bugolobi reduced for both two and three-bedroom apartments due to a demand and supply disequilibrium, which saw supply outstrip demand.



Health workers at a health facility in Kampala

ILO: 44pc of essential Uganda's workers underpaid

KAMPALA

AT least 44 percent of Uganda's essential workers are underpaid, the 2023 International Labour Organisation World Employment and Social Outlook, has indicated.

The 44 percent is way higher than the global average of 29 percent but relatively lower than East Africa's biggest economy - Kenya - which has 50 percent of its key workers underpaid.

The report, which sheds light on critical sectors of different global economies, including

Uganda, notes that whereas sectors such as health and security are critical, especially during emergency episodes such as Covid-19, workers in such sectors continue to earn the lowest wages, despite working for long hours.

ILO also indicates that some of the workers under the above sectors are subjected to indecent conditions, characterised by long hours of deployment and delayed wages and salaries.

The report also highlights employees in the above sectors as

some of those that may have had the most significant role during Covid-19.

Therefore, ILO noted, wages and working conditions of such workers need to be improved to drive efficiency and labour satisfaction.

The UN agency indicates that a little more than 52 percent of the world's workforce is made up of key workers in health, food production and delivery systems, retail, security, technical and clerical, cleaning and sanitation, transport, and manual sectors.

The report also notes that Kenya, at 50 percent, has the highest percentage of underpaid key workers among the 90 sampled countries while Portugal, at 5 percent, has the lowest.

Uganda is ranked at fourth, with 44 percent of its key workers receiving inadequate pay.

The report also reveals that majority of people who died from Covid-19 were important workers who contracted the disease while performing their duties, which highlights a lack of workplace safety in global workplaces.

Shilling depreciates further as new forex code takes effect

NAIROBI

THE Kenyan shilling depreciated further on the day the banking sector regulator effected a new foreign exchange code that promises stringent penalties against those caught manipulating the forex market.

Bank executives said in confidence that while they had been expecting a new code to be issued in due course—and had even been participating in its preparation through working groups—the move by the Central Bank of Kenya (CBK) to issue and enforce it came before they had finalised their submissions on the same.

The surprise issuing of the code, they said, had dampened the supply of dollars in the interbank market that had aided the recovery of the shilling from Monday.

Rates quoted for dollar buyers in banking halls on Thursday ranged from Sh136 to Sh143, and between Sh127 and Sh128.60 for those offloading the greenback to banks.

On Wednesday, banks were selling dollars at between Sh136 and Sh142, down from a range of Sh140.55 and Sh144.50 a week earlier.

The CBK's official rate on



Central Bank of Kenya (CBK) Governor Patrick Njoroge.

Thursday stood at an average of Sh130.99 per dollar, having depreciated from Sh130.61 on Wednesday.

"There were some flows on Thursday, but generally lower than those we saw on Wednesday. We saw some caution after the regulator stamped its authority,"

a trader told the Business Daily.

The CBK has kept a keen eye on the forex market following concerns some players had in the past sought to manipulate the market for selfish gains.

But this has in turn been cited as one of the reasons for the reluctance of banks to trade dollars

with each other, out of fear of falling foul of the regulator if prices exceeded the expected range.

The CBK said in a statement on Wednesday that its code is modelled on the FX Global Code that currently has 51 signatories, including three African countries—South Africa, Mauritius and Angola—but added that it has been customised as appropriate to the Kenyan context.

The banking regulator said the code will ensure the integrity and effective functioning of the forex market in Kenya.

It prohibits banks from engaging in trading practices, quoting prices or making transactions with the intention of manipulating price movements or disrupting the functioning of the market.

The code also requires banks to immediately conduct a self-assessment and submit to the CBK a report on their level of compliance with the new code by April 30, 2023, and thereafter submit a detailed compliance implementation plan approved by their boards by June 30, 2023.

Failure to comply with the code will see banks face 'administrative action including monetary penalties as provided for under the Banking Act'.

The code was issued in a pe-

riod of heightened attention on the local forex market after the shilling hits new lows of 145 units to the greenback in the retail market and crossed the 130 mark on the official printed rate amid dollar supply constraints that have threatened imports of key economic inputs.

The mounting economic threat posed by the forex question prompted the government to negotiate a deal with Saudi Arabia and UAE to allow imports of fuel on credit, which is expected to ease the monthly demand of about \$500 million from the market by oil marketers.

The widening divergence between the market and official rates has also raised fears over the emergence of a black market for dollars.

Meanwhile, President William Ruto said on Wednesday that the government had held conversations through the CBK with players in the sector to reinstate the interbank exchange market, a key cog in the even supply of dollars in the economy.

The President said that he expects the market conditions to improve in the next two weeks, and put on notice those hoarding dollars that they would be looking at losses imminently, signal-

ling that the government expects the exchange rate to come down with the improved supply of hard currency.

Depositors held Sh921 billion worth of dollars in their accounts by the end of December.

Early this month the shilling on Wednesday hit an all-time low against the dollar, setting up the country for more expensive imports, electricity and debt servicing distress.

Central Bank of Kenya (CBK) data shows the shilling exchanged at an average of 127.08 on Wednesday evening against the dollar compared to Sh123.42 at the start of the year.

The depreciation is linked to the aggressive rise of US interest rates to tame inflation, which led to a resurgence of the dollar and the sustained shortage in the local market since last year.

The local currency has been on the back foot since mid-2021 when it stood at Sh106.54 on the combination of weak inflows and strong dollar demand.

The shilling lost 9.0 percent in 12 months to December 2022, pushing living costs up and hurting households already subjected to high fuel and food prices.

Cash crunch: Banks, businesses lament scarcity of currency notes

LAGOS

THE expected improvement in supply of cash to the banks is yet to materialise as PoS agents and other business owners lament the crushing impact of the ongoing cash crunch on patronage.

Vanguard investigation showed that two weeks after the Central Bank of Nigeria, CBN, directed banks to comply with the Supreme Court that extended use of the old naira notes till December 31st this year, most Nigerians find it difficult to access cash from the banks.

Bankers who spoke to Vanguard yesterday said supply of cash has not improved.

According to a banker who spoke on condition of anonymity, "The cash supplied to our branch is between N500,000 and N1 million per day. This is a branch that used to get about N70 million per day before the cash crunch."

Vanguard visits to banks around Igando and Ikotun in Lagos yesterday show that some banks didn't pay customers due to non-availability of cash while some rationed the available cash.

Also the banks were besieged by a crowd of customers who stood under the scorching sun hoping to get cash.

Morenike Oladimeji, a PoS agent at Ikotun market said she visited Sterling Bank around 7 a.m and was given number 93.

"After so many hours of waiting, the Chief Security Officer addressed us saying that the bank wanted to pay N10,000 old notes today but because of the crowd it has been reduced to N2,000 per customer. I just left the place because that will not sustain my business."

On his part, Ahmed Oladipupo a PoS agent at Ikorodu said he

couldn't get any cash from his bank.

"I couldn't get any cash from my bank today. Since the beginning of this week they have been claiming that there is no cash. My business has suffered a lot. Our charges have not reduced because the scarcity of cash is still there."

"We still source cash from other means despite the reversal of the old notes to legal tender."

A bank customer, Osamudiamé Mary, said she paid N1,500 to withdraw N5,000 in Ikorodu this week.

"It is very devastating and bad that I will pay 40 percent as charges out of 100 percent of the money I want to withdraw."

"It is very painful. Where is the money? The economy is bad coupled with this naira situation. As a matter of fact I withdrew N5,000 with N1,500 from a PoS agent in Ikorodu. They too don't have access to cash."

Gladys Eboleme, a garri seller at Ikotun market said her business has been struggling despite the release of the old notes.

"I don't have PoS terminal for transfers. Sometimes when people transfer to my account I don't receive an alert and my account is not credited."

"I have made losses since this naira issue started."

"So I decided to collect only cash and this has resulted in poor sales. But I still collect transfers from only those customers I know very well."

Yemisi Tovide, a tomato seller at Ikotun market said: "You can see my tomatoes are getting soft. I bought two baskets of tomatoes since Monday and this is the last set. Before, within a week I sold more than 10 baskets."

"The naira scarcity has reduced customer patronage because I don't accept transfers nor

SATURDAY 18 March		SUNDAY 19 March		MONDAY 20 March	
5:30	Uwanja wa Mazoezi	5:30	Uwanja wa Mazoezi	5:00	Soap rpt: Uzalo
6:00	HABARI	6:00	HABARI	5:30	Uwanja wa Mazoezi
6:40	Kumekucha	6:40	Kumekucha	6:00	HABARI
7:00	Habari	7:00	Habari	6:40	Kumekucha
8:00	Al Jazeera	8:00	Al Jazeera	7:30	HABARI
9:00	Watoto wetu	9:00	Watoto Wetu	8:00	Kumekucha Michezo
10:00	Kipindi maalum: FAO	10:00	Igizo: Mizengwe	8:55	Habari za saa
10:05	Shika Bamba 5	10:05	Igizo: Rebeca	9:00	Kumekucha Kishindo
10:35	Mjue Zaidi rpt	10:35	Art and Lifestyle	9:30	Soap: In Love with Ramon
11:15	Chetu ni chetu rpt	11:15	ITV Top 10	10:00	Watoto wetu
12:00	Hawavumi lakini wamo	11:30	Jungu Kuu	10:25	Jagina rpt
13:00	Usafiri wako	11:45	Shika Bamba	10:55	Habari za saa
13:30	Jagina	12:00	Habari	11:00	Kipindi maalum rpt: Maa-dhimisho wiki usalama
14:00	Soap: In Love with Ramon rpt	12:15	Kipindi Maalum: Tatu Mzuka	11:55	Habari za saa
16:15	Igizo: Mizengwe	12:15	Igizo: Rebeca	12:00	Kipindi maalum rpt: Reflexology
16:30	Igizo: Rebeca	12:40	Art and Lifestyle	21:15	Kipindi maalum: Mchezo Supa Jackpot
17:00	Shamsham za Pwani	22:10	ITV Top 10	21:30	Igizo: Mizengwe
18:00	Jiji Letu	22:50	Hawavumi lakini wamo	21:45	Mjue Zaidi
18:15	ITV Top 10 rpt	23:40	Soap: Uzalo rpt	22:20	Bongo movie:
19:00	Jungu Kuu	01:15	DWTV	23:30	Soap: Uzalo rpt
19:30	Shika Bamba			02:05	Al Jazeera
20:00	Habari				
21:05	Kipindi Maalum: Tatu Mzuka				
21:15	Igizo: Rebeca				
21:40	Art and Lifestyle				
22:10	ITV Top 10				
22:50	Hawavumi lakini wamo				
23:40	Soap: Uzalo rpt				
01:15	DWTV				

WORLD

Have Europe nations violated human rights through climate inaction?

GENEVA/BRUSSELS

CITIZENS affected by climate change are suing the governments of more than 30 European countries in three separate cases before the European Court of Human Rights, alleging that state inaction has violated their human rights.

They are the first such cases to be heard before the Court in Strasbourg, France, and could result in orders for the governments involved to cut carbon dioxide emissions much faster than currently planned.

Here's what you need to know.

What are the three cases?

The first case being heard next Wednesday focuses on the health impact of climate change-induced heatwaves, in a case brought by thousands of elderly Swiss women against the Swiss government as part of a six-year legal battle.

Also on Wednesday, the court will hear a case brought by Damien Carême, a member of the European Parliament for the French Green party, who is challenging France's refusal to take more ambitious climate measures.

The third case, due to be heard after the summer concerns six Portuguese youths, who are taking on 33 countries - including all 27 European Union member states, Britain, Norway, Russia, Switzerland, Turkey and Ukraine.

They, too, argue those countries have violated their rights and should be or-

dered to take more ambitious action to address climate change. Six other climate cases are pending.

What rights may have been violated?

The cases will be the first time the Court considers on whether climate change policies, if they are too weak, can infringe people's human rights enshrined in the European Convention.

The Swiss women argue that by failing to cut emissions in line with a pathway that limits global warming to 1.5C, Bern violated, among others, their right to life.

The case cites the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change - which found with very high confidence that women and older adults are among those at highest risk of temperature-related mortality during heatwaves - and uses the applicants' medical records to show their vulnerability.

Carême's application, made in 2019 when he was mayor of the municipality of Grande-Synthe in northern France, will assess whether insufficient government action can amount to a violation of the right to life, by exposing people's homes to climate risk.

In his case, the French Council of State already ordered Paris to take additional measures to cut emissions by 40 percent from 1990 levels by 2030.

Carême will now ask the Strasbourg court to assess whether the government's failure to do more to address cli-



This file aerial picture taken on Sept 13, 2022 at Glacier 3000 resort above Les Diablerets in the canton of Vaud, Switzerland shows the Tsanfleuron pass free of the ice that covered it for at least 2,000 years next to blankets covering snow from the last winter season to prevent it from melting. (PHOTO / AFP)

mate change violated his right to private and family life.

The Portuguese youths - whose ages range from pre-teens to early 20s - also argue that the 33 countries have failed to agree to curb emissions fast enough to limit global warming to 1.5C. They argue that their right to life is being threatened by climate change-fuelled impacts like wildfires, and that failure to tackle climate change discriminates against young people who will be hit hardest.

One of the youths was prevented from attending school for days because of the amount of smoke in the air from wildfires, while another of the group's garden was covered in ash.

What's at stake for governments?

The outcome of the cases at the European Court of Human Rights could have wider ripple effects, by either supporting or undermining the prospects of similar cases being won in future - both in national courts, or at the Strasbourg court.

A win could also embolden more activists and citizens to bring similar cases against governments - or, equally, a loss for the claimants could have a chilling effect on potential similar claims.

Some eight countries have piled into the Swiss proceedings as third parties in a move which shows how important the cases are for them.

The 33 governments in the Portuguese case

also tried, unsuccessfully, to stop the court fast-tracking their case.

Some of the countries involved argue that the cases are inadmissible, saying it is not Strasbourg's job to be "supreme court" on environmental matters or enforce climate treaties, in Switzerland's words.

What could the court decide?

The fact that the three cases are all being referred directly to the court's top bench - the 'Grand Chamber' - is seen as significant since only cases that raise serious questions about the Convention's interpretation are sent there.

There have already been some cases where national courts have upheld citizens' rights in relation to climate change, most notably the 2019 'Urgenda' case in the Netherlands. In that case the Dutch High Court ordered the government to speed up plans to cut greenhouse gas emissions, saying it hadn't done enough to protect its citizens from the dangerous effects of climate change.

The European Court of Human Rights typically deals with cases within three years although it could be faster since at least the Swiss case has priority status.

The Swiss case asks for the court to prescribe deep emissions cuts within three years that would ensure the levels are "net negative" versus 1990 levels by 2030.

A panel of 17 judges will decide on the cases and the outcomes cannot be appealed.

Agencies

India's opp leader Rahul Gandhi disqualified from parliament

NEW DELHI



INDIA'S parliament yesterday disqualified the leader of the main opposition Congress party, Rahul Gandhi, a day after a court jailed him for two years in a defamation case loosely linked to the prime minister, parliament said in a statement.

Gandhi (pictured) "stands disqualified from the membership of Lok Sabha", parliament said, referring to the lower house of parliament.

Congress members held protests in some parts of the country on Friday against Gandhi's conviction and two-year-old jail sentence.

Congress party officials have described the judgment as politically motivated and blamed the government of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

Agencies

There could be no winner in war between Russia, US - Medvedev

MOSCOW



RUSSIAN Security Council Deputy Chairman Dmitry Medvedev warned of the disastrous consequences of a potential confrontation between the armies of Russia and the United States.

In an interview with Russian media outlets and users of leading Russian social media network VKontakte, Medvedev said, "The first thing is, only a real conflict can decide which army is first, second or 21st."

Secondly, it would be wrong to say that the US army is No. 1, while ours is No.2 for one simple reason. If these armies start a war, how could we say who the winner is? Obviously, there will be no winner."

A potential confrontation "would cause disastrous consequences," the politician warned. "And it would be impossible to say whose army is superior," he added.

According to Medvedev, the US army could have been considered the best "at least during that period when it was active on the ground - as usual, not on its own soil, at that," referring to the US occupation of Vietnam. He said he was shocked to learn that 3 million Vietnamese people had been killed in that conflict.

"Therefore, I would not speculate on whether one army is stronger than the other. A fighting army is a strong army," Medvedev concluded.

Agencies

UN report: World off-track to meet sustainable water goal

UNITED NATIONS

TWO-THIRDS of the world's population will continue to live in water insecurity well beyond 2030 if radical measures are not taken, UN water experts warned in a report published on Thursday.

"Unless radical action is taken, this assessment indicates that two-thirds of the world's population will continue to live water-insecure well beyond 2030," says The Global Water Security 2023 Assessment, led by experts at the United Nations University Institute of Water, Environment and Health (UNU-INWEH).

Also known as the UN Think Tank on Water and established in 1996, the UNU-INWEH is a member of the UNU family of organizations.

The report, released on the second day of the UN 2023 Water Conference, "provides a multi-dimensional comparison of the state of water security affecting 7.8 billion people across 186 countries midway into the Water Action Decade (2018-2028) and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development".

A press release accompanying

the launch of the report states that the world is far from achieving Sustainable Development Goal 6 that aims to ensure all people have access to clean water and sanitation.

"Without water security, countries are simply incapable of supporting freshwater ecosystems, livelihoods and human well-being," said Charlotte MacAlister, the report's lead author and senior water security researcher at UNU-INWEH.

"This global assessment highlights significant development challenges that policy discussions should center on in the seven years left to fulfill SDG 6."

Based on the assessment published by the UNU-INWEH, policymakers are mainly focused on water scarcity mitigation around the globe. The authors argue that this reductionist interpretation of water security "has put the world off-track to meeting SDG 6 by 2030."

To provide a more realistic understanding of the water security status around the world, this UN report evaluated water security on 10 components or dimensions including drinking water, sanitation, good health and water qual-



A woman fills up water containers at a tap in a camp for internally displaced people in Baidoa, Somalia, on Nov 9. AFP

ity, among others.

The results are worrying: 78 percent of the global population, or about 6.1 billion people, presently live in water-insecure countries.

The global assessment's key findings show that 23 countries - 16 Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and seven Small Island Developing States (SIDS) - are critically water-insecure; and more than 70 percent (close to 5.5 billion) do not have safe wa-

ter access, with Africa having the lowest levels of access, at only 15 percent of the region's population.

In total, only 33 countries from three geographic regions are water secure, according to the report.

Almost 31 percent (over 411 million) of people in the 54 African countries, including 33 LDCs and six SIDS, do not have access to a basic drinking water service. Only 201 million people (15 per-

cent) have access to safely managed drinking water, the findings show.

Countries at risk of floods and droughts have compounded challenges that threaten their economic safety, the report said, adding that by region, Africa has the highest number of countries at high risk of floods and droughts, while also experiencing accelerated population growth, urbanization and industrialization.

Agencies

IMF: Lebanon in 'dangerous situation' with reforms stalled

BEIRUT

THE International Monetary Fund warned on Thursday that Lebanon was in a very dangerous situation a year after it committed to reforms it has failed to implement and said the government must stop borrowing from the central bank.

IMF mission chief Ernesto Rigo told a news conference in Beirut that the authorities should accelerate the implementation of conditions set for a \$3 billion bailout.

"One would have expected more in terms of implementation and approval of legislation" related to reforms,

he said, noting "very slow" progress. "Lebanon is in a very dangerous situation," he added, in unusually frank remarks.

Lebanon signed a staff-level agreement with the IMF nearly one year ago but has not met the conditions to secure a full program, which is seen as crucial for its recovery from one of the world's worst financial crises.

Without implementing rapid reforms, Lebanon "will be mired in a never-ending crisis," the IMF warned in a written statement after Rigo's remarks.

The economy has been crippled by the collapse of the Lebanese cur-

rency, which has lost some 98 percent of its value against the US dollar since 2019, triggering triple-digit inflation, spreading poverty and a wave of emigration.

The crisis erupted after decades of profligate spending and corruption among the ruling elites, some of whom led banks that lent heavily to the state.

The government estimates losses in the financial system total more than \$70 billion, the majority of which were accrued at the central bank.

"No more borrowing from the central bank," Rigo said.

"Over the years, the government

has been borrowing from the central bank. Not just in the past (but also) the last few months, which is something we have recommended should stop."

The IMF has called for financial sector losses to be distributed in a way that preserves the rights of small depositors and limits recourse to state assets, though powerful politicians and banks have pushed back, delaying the recovery.

"Suffice it to say that the loss is so large that there will unfortunately have to be a distribution between the government, the banks and depositors," Rigo added.

Still, he said that the IMF would

"never walk away" from helping a member country and there was no deadline for Lebanon to implement the reforms.

Slow reforms

Some observers say that an IMF deal now appears further away than ever before.

"To anyone observing Lebanon over the last four years, the likelihood of an IMF program being implemented appears slim to none," Mike Azar, a financial consultant and expert on the Lebanese financial crisis, told Reuters.

"There is no urgency, no incentive and no pressure on decision-makers

to implement any of the basic reforms," he said, adding that Lebanon was instead headed for disorderly dollarization, collapsing public services and the wiping out of remaining deposits.

Authorities have passed some reform measures, such as a 2022 budget, an audit of the central bank's foreign asset position and a revised banking secrecy law.

But the IMF's statement on Thursday said the revised banking secrecy law should be amended again "to address outstanding critical weaknesses".

Agencies

Don't mess with them: diplomat warns against harassing Russian journalists in Germany

MOSCOW

MOSCOW will take retaliatory measures in case Russian media outlets and journalists face pressure in Germany, Russian Foreign Ministry Spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said at a briefing on Thursday.

"The German media have published information on the matter, which was provided by the German authorities and makes it clear that despite official statements, particularly from [German Foreign Minister Annalena] Baerbock - and she said in Moscow that they don't interfere in the situation - that they not only interfere but they also pay for and moderate content; they did this in the past and they are doing it now," Zakharova noted, when asked if German media outlets working in Russia would face any consequences following the German government's statements about journalists' ties to intelligence agencies.

"If Russian journalists in Germany are harassed, there will be retaliatory measures against German journalists," Zakharova said.

According to her, Moscow will retaliate if Russian media outlets come under literal and figurative attack in the countries where governments fail to take action to protect journalists or even participate in campaigns targeting Russian reporters and media outlets.

"We have heard lies, and we have heard lies from Ms Baerbock in Moscow, who said that they had no ties to independent media but now it turns out that they even pay them," the Russian diplomat stressed.



Why aren't China, Russia Cold War-style allies?

BEIJING

THERE are those in the West inclined to frame the relationship between Beijing and Moscow by using the traditional geopolitical term of "allies." Their assessment is wrong.

Bilateral relations between China and Russia differ from the kind of military-political alliance seen during the Cold War. Instead, the two countries transcend such a model of state-to-state relations, adopting an approach of no-alliance, no-confrontation and not targeting any third party, according to a joint statement signed and released by Chinese President Xi Jinping and his Russian counterpart, Vladimir Putin, in Moscow on Tuesday.

With the steady development of bilateral ties in recent years, the two countries have set a fine example for developing a new model of major-country relations featuring mutual respect, peaceful coexistence and win-win cooperation.

But why do Beijing and Moscow, comprehensive strategic partners of coordination for a new era, choose not to become allies?

A core principle in a new era

Non-alignment is one of the core principles of Chinese diplomacy and a valuable experience from history.

During the Cold War, the world was divided by two ideologically-driven camps vying for global supremacy. Several countries had no choice but to be forced to pick sides.

With the end of the Cold War, most countries prioritize making friends and boosting development in a peaceful environment. China is no different.

China's diplomacy follows a path of non-alignment, non-confrontation and non-targeting of any third party.

Non-alignment is both the core and a key premise, demonstrating China's independence in making policies and refusing to attach to or submit itself to others. China does not ally itself with any country, including Russia.

The principle of non-alignment, non-confrontation and non-targeting of any third party is enshrined in the Treaty of Good-Neighborliness and Friendly Cooperation Between China and Russia signed in 2001.

The legally-binding pact, which serves as a fundamental guideline for the China-Russia relationship, has determined



This undated file photo shows the national flags of China and Russia on Red Square, Moscow. Bilateral relations between China and Russia differ from the kind of military-political alliance seen during the Cold War. (PHOTO / XINHUA)

the nature of bilateral ties. The treaty also makes it legally impossible for the two countries to form an alliance.

In various official joint statements made by the two sides over the years, China and Russia have repeatedly stated that their relationship is not a kind of alliance and will not target any third country.

Say no to bloc confrontation

The nature of the Cold-War era alliance means that those who choose to ally with each other need to shoulder some obligations for one another.

Alliance members could temporarily feel secure under an "umbrella." Still, they are very likely to face more adversaries as outsider countries could establish their own alliances or take drastic measures in

response.

Yet when one country is being threatened or facing aggression, its allies must come to its aid. Such a relationship binds countries together, making your enemies mine and my adversaries yours.

Alliances pose the risk of bloc confrontation and even a hot war, plunging the world into chaos. China and Russia clearly understand the potential danger.

While meeting the press with Putin after their talks on Tuesday, Xi stressed that under the new historical circumstances, the two sides will view and handle China-Russia relations with a broad vision and a long-term perspective, in a bid to make greater contribution to human progress.

In the joint statement on deepening the comprehensive strategic partnership of co-

ordination between China and Russia, the two sides reaffirmed their opposition to all forms of hegemonism, unilateralism, power politics, the Cold War mentality and bloc confrontation.

And in the face of profound changes rarely seen in a century, China has always been an active champion of the building of a new type of international relations based on mutual respect, fairness, justice and win-win cooperation, and of a community with a shared future for mankind.

Being allied could also undermine national credibility, making flexibility in international affairs difficult. If China were a Russian ally, China couldn't remain neutral on the Ukraine issue, let alone promote peace talks.

To some extent, US attempts to maintain its hegemony and contain the development of other countries have driven China and Russia closer.

China and Russia are dedicated to upholding their original aspirations of being good neighbors, good friends and good partners to bring mutual benefits to their people through win-win cooperation.

Xinhua

US carries out air strikes in Syria after American contractor killed

WASHINGTON

THE US military carried out multiple air strikes in Syria on Thursday night against groups who it blamed for a deadly drone attack that killed an American contractor, injured another and wounded five US troops earlier in the day, the Pentagon said.

Both the attack on US personnel and the retaliation were disclosed by the Pentagon at the same time late on Thursday.

The attack against US personnel took place at a coalition base near Hasakah in northeast Syria at approximately 1:38 pm (1038 GMT) on Thursday, it said.

Although US forces stationed in Syria have been targeted by drones before, fatalities are extremely rare.

US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin said the retaliatory strikes were carried out at the direction of President Joe Biden.

"No group will strike our troops with impunity," Austin said in a statement.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, a group that monitors the war in Syria, said the US strikes had left eight people dead in Syria.

Reuters was unable to independently confirm the toll.

Repeated attacks

The drone attack on US personnel caused wounds that, for three services members and a contractor, required medical evacuation to Iraq, where the US-led coalition battling the remnants of Islamic State has medical facilities, the Pentagon said.

The other two wounded American troops were treated at the base in northeast Syria, it said.

US troops have come under attack about 78 times since the beginning of 2021, according to Army General Erik Kurilla, who oversees US troops in the Middle East as the head of Central Command.

Deployments in Iraq have also come under drone and rocket attacks in recent years.

The attack came just weeks after the top US general, Mark Milley, visited northeast Syria to assess the mission against Islamic State and the risk to US personnel

Cyclone Freddy deepens cholera risks in worst-hit countries - WHO

BRAZZAVILLE

THE devastation by Tropical Cyclone Freddy is exposing major health risks in the hardest-hit southern African countries, amid the ongoing and exacerbated cholera outbreaks across the continent, warned the World Health Organization (WHO) on Thursday.

Since the cyclone made landfall in Madagascar, Mozambique and Malawi, the devastation has raised public health risks, as the cyclone tore through amid cholera outbreaks in Malawi and Mozambique, said the WHO Regional Office for Africa, based in Brazzaville, capital of the Republic of the Congo.

According to the WHO Regional Office, cholera cases had more than doubled in Mozambique over the past week from 1,023 to 2,374 as of March 20.

Though Malawi, which is battling its worst-ever cholera outbreak on record, continued to record a decline, with cases falling to 1,424 as of March 20 compared with 1,956 the previous week, the widespread flooding might still reverse the recent progress made against the disease.

In February, the WHO Regional Office for Africa warned that if the current fast-rising trend of cholera continues, this year's infections could surpass the number of cases recorded in 2021, the worst year for cholera in Africa in nearly a decade.

In 2021, 141,467 cases of cholera and 4,094 deaths were registered. Cholera is an acute, extremely virulent infection that can spread rapidly and dehydration results in high morbidity and mortality. The disease, however, is easily treatable.

Xinhua

China, Russia continue expanding cooperation in green development



A freight train carrying China-manufactured new energy vehicles departs from Guangzhou for Moscow, Jan. 12, 2023. (Photo courtesy of the State-owned Assets Supervision and Administration Commission of Guangdong Province)

CHINA and Russia are each other's largest neighbors and major emerging markets, and the cooperation between the two countries boasts strong resilience, ample potential and wide space.

Over the recent years, the two countries have constantly expanded their cooperation in green development, which not only benefits the two peoples, but also injects positive energy into regional and global development.

Russia's first electric vehicle plant, with a designed annual production capacity of 100,000 units, was put into operation in September 2022. Its spare parts are supplied by Chinese manufacturers.

At the end of 2022, the once-renowned carmaker Moskvich restarted production. Its major products are electric and hybrid vehicles. China is a main provider of new energy technologies for the Russian brand.

In recent years, Chinese auto manufacturing sector, new energy vehicle (NEV) technologies and carmakers have gained an increasingly high reputation in Russia. The automobile industry has gradually become a new highlight of China-Russia cooperation.

According to a sales manager surnamed Anashkin of a car dealer under a Chinese automaker in Moscow, the Chinese automaker's latest models were hitting the Chinese and Russian markets simultaneously, the cars' appearance and performance are both

competitive.

"Many models have been sold out. We only accept preorders now and are replenishing our inventory," he said.

The NEV sector, in which China enjoys technological advantages, will be one of the important fields of cooperation between China and Russia in the future.

Russian news agency Sputnik said in a report that China is promoting green development and the harmonious coexistence between human and nature, improving environmental protection through reducing pollution and implementing measures to protect and restore environment.

Citing Sergey Sanakoev, deputy chairman of the Russian-Chinese Friendship Society, the report noted that China has been pursuing ecological progress in an increasingly active manner over the recent years, adding that the country takes concrete actions to improve the environment and is witnessing a significant rise in the production and supply of electric vehicles.

China's exports of vehicles and auto parts to Russia saw a big rise and the sales of Chinese vehicles in Russia kept expanding. There were 1,041 car dealers selling Chinese vehicles in Russia as the end of 2022.

Apart from expanding cooperation in the NEV sector, China and Russia are also taking joint efforts to promote green economy, pollution treatment and biodiversity conservation.

On Dec. 1, 2022, the committee for cross-border water quality inspection and coordination between China and Russia kicked off its 18th meeting. Both the Chinese and Russian side vowed to make concerted efforts in joint actions of cross-border water quality inspection in 2023. The water quality along the border of the two countries has remained stable over the recent years, and the ecology environment in border areas has been gradually improved.

China and Russia will keep deepening cooperation on the protection of rare and endangered wildlife and migratory birds, enhance cooperation between nature reserves from the two sides, jointly build ecological corridors and carry out joint studies on giant panda protection and breeding.

Over the recent years, China and Russia have reaped fruitful results in regional ecological cooperation under multilateral frameworks, laying a solid foundation for maintaining regional ecological balance and sustainable development.

Kranina, a senior researcher with China Economic and Social Research Center, the Institute of the Far East of the Russian Academy of Sciences, told People's Daily that China has adopted a series of practical measures to develop green infrastructure, energy, transport and finance. "China's experience in sustainable development is worth learning from," she said.

People's Daily

Ethiopia calls US accusations of war crimes 'inflammatory'

JERUSALEM

ISRAELI Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu violated the law by saying he would get personally involved in a judicial overhaul plan, the attorney-general said yesterday.

In the face of intensifying protests against the proposed changes, Netanyahu said on Thursday he was putting aside all other considerations and would do "anything it takes" to reach a solution.

Netanyahu, who is on trial on corruption charges which he denies, said his hands had been tied but a law amended on Thursday to limit the circumstances in which a prime minister can be removed gave him more space for maneuver.

However, Attorney-General Gali Baharav-Miara, in a letter addressed to Netanyahu, disagreed.

"The legal situation is clear: you must refrain from any involvement in initiatives to change the judiciary, including the makeup of the committee for the appointment of judges, as such activity is a conflict of interest."

"Your statement last night and any action you take in violation of this matter is illegal and tainted by a conflict of interest," Baharav-Miara said.

The letter followed Baharav-Mi-

ara's earlier warnings that Netanyahu must stay out of his coalition's push for a judicial overhaul because of what she deemed a conflict of interest arising from his trials.

In a message distributed by the ruling Likud party, an unnamed source close to Netanyahu denied the prime minister violated any laws or conflict of interest agreements in his statement and said it had no repercussions on his personal affairs.

The source said it was incumbent on the premier to try and reach a wide consensus during a time of national crisis that carried implications on the country both domestically and abroad.

Netanyahu's religious-nationalist coalition has been pursuing changes to the judiciary that would give the government sway in choosing judges and limit the Supreme Court's power to strike down laws.

Proponents say the plan would rein in Supreme Court overreach and restore balance between the branches of government. Critics say it would weaken the courts, endanger civil liberties and harm the economy.

The proposed plan has sparked weeks of nationwide protests and drew concern among the country's Western allies.

Agencies





Tanzania's pool player, Abdallah Hussein, is pictured in China recently, as the performer is representing Tanzania in this season's Heyball Masters held in Hebei. PHOTO: CORRESPONDENT

Tanzania's pool player eyes top honour in World Heyball Masters

By Correspondent Joseph Mchekadona

TANZANIA'S pool player, Abdallah Hussein, has opened his pursuit of a successful spell in the ongoing World Heyball Masters taking place in Qinhuangdo, Hebei in China on a good note.

The player, on Wednesday evening, beat Bolorkhuu Erdene of Mongolia 13-2 to reach the showdown's Round of 64.

The preliminary championships started last Tuesday will come to an end tomorrow, while the main event, played in a knockout format, will get underway the following day and climax on April 5.

Tanzania Pool Association (TAPA)'s official, Michael Machella, expressed his happiness, saying that is good news.

He said the association has never doubted Hussein's competence in pool table sport.

"He has started well and we are happy with his performance, the Heyball Championships are one of the toughest events as they attract the cream of pool players," Machella revealed.

"Securing victory in the first game is a sign that he is destined for a good

run," he said.

Hussein was invited to the championships after putting stellar performance in the continental championships that took place in Zambia early this year.

Chinese pool association has catered for the player's travel costs and other logistics.

Heyball which was formerly known as the Chinese 8, is regarded as the most lucrative billiards sport in the world.

All players who will qualify for the top 20 will enter the grand finals and be assured of a cash prize amounting to 3000 US dollars.

The championships' winner will take home 730,000 US dollars, runners-up rake in 220,000 US dollars, the third-placed contender gets \$ 88,000 while the fourth-placed performer will take home \$ 44,000.

The fifth-placed winner will walk away with \$30,000, \$23,000 awaits the sixth-placed winner, the seventh-placed winner gets \$20,00 and the eighth-placed winner will pocket 15,000 US dollars.

Pool players placed ninth to 12th will each pocket \$14,000 and contenders taking 13th to 16th positions will each get 11,000 US dollars.

Dar club now holds sway in 2023 Isamilo Swimming Championships

By Guardian Correspondent

DAR ES SALAAM'S Bluefins Swim Club swimmers have collected 38 medals in the just-ended Isamilo Swimming Championships held at the Isamilo International School pool in Mwanza.

In the two-day event that also involved other five clubs, Bluefins' young swimmers won eight gold medals, 16 silver medals, and 14 bronze medals.

The Dar es Salaam side's swimmers also scooped individual overall awards in various age categories and recorded new Personal Best Times (PBs).

Bluefins' eight-year-old Camilla Kyenekiki and Taher Zavery were outstanding, as the former won three gold medals and two silver medals in the girls' category.

Zavery scooped one gold medal and five silver medals in the boys' category in the same age group.

Camilla also managed to break the record in the 25m Freestyle event, held since 2014, after completing her event in 17:19 seconds and creating a new record.

The youngster further won the overall trophy for the second runner-up position in her age category.

Kabeer Lakhani ended as the winner of the overall second runner-up trophy in the boys' age group of 11-12 years after winning two gold medals and one bronze medal.

Imaan Kimario was presented with the overall trophy as the first runner-up in the girls' 9-10 years age category after winning one gold medal, two silver medals, and two bronze medals.

Other Bluefins swimmers, who won medals in the showdown, are Abbas Abdulali who won one gold medal, two silver medals, and one bronze medal, and Kaysan Kachra (one silver medal and two bronze medals).

Sakina Abdulali (one silver medal and one bronze medal), Saalih Mbonde (one silver medal and one bronze medal), and Adnan Hassanali (one silver medal) also did well.

Zahra Alibhai (one silver medal), Fatema Manji, Huzeifa Hassanali, and Idris Zavery



Dar es Salaam's Bluefins Swim Club's Imaan Kimario in action at the Isamilo Gala, which took place in Mwanza last weekend. Kimario was one of the leading swimmers in her age category of 9-10 in the showdown. PHOTO: CORRESPONDENT

that garnered one bronze medal each as well emerged as winners.

In the masters' category, Bluefins swimmers, Rehana Noorani (one silver medal), and Zeinab Jivajee (three bronze medals) got the better of other outfits' contenders.

Zeinab was also the overall winner of the second runner-up award in the ladies' masters category.

Bluefins swimmers who created new PBs include six-year-old Gulamabbas Dewji, Burhanuddin Hatim, Qais Kanji, Rayyan Kassam, Ayreen Lakhani, Burhanuddin Huzeifa,

Mohamed Manji, Burhanuddin Jafferjee, Amatullah Mustansir, and Sakina Manji.

Burhanuddin Jivajee, Rania Noorani, Adam Patwa, Burhanuddin Mustansir, Zaem Somji, Alefiya Patwa, Maahira Noorani, Burhanuddin Taibali, and Huda Tamim are the other swimmers with new PBs.

Rahim Alidina, Bluefins' founder and head coach, said: "We are extremely happy and satisfied with the performance of our swimmers especially the younger ones, many of whom were experiencing a swim meet of this caliber for the first time." The official revealed: "They

however managed to hold their nerve against some experienced swimmers, performed well, and beat their times."

"This was the goal that we had set for the younger swimmers and they surpassed our expectations," Alidina noted.

The official noted: "We can confidently say that these swimmers have a good future in swimming if they decide to take up the sport seriously."

He added: "We will continue to nurture and train young swimmers to develop them into competitive swimmers as has been the trend at Bluefins down the years."



Yanga Pricens' footballers and their coaches jubilate when Nigerian attacker, Chioma Wogu, scored an equalizer for the club as it took on Simba Queens in this season's Serengeti Lite Women's Premier League (SWPL) match at Uhuru Stadium in Dar es Salaam on Wednesday. The tie ended in a 1-1 draw. PHOTO: CORRESPONDENT JUMANNE JUMA

SBL sponsors empowerment seminar for Dar female artists

The Guardian Correspondent

SERENGETI Breweries Limited (SBL) has, in collaboration with Mdundo, a music service provider, conducted an empowerment seminar for female artists in Tanzania.

The training aims to equip the performers with skills that will enable them to address the challenges they face in the male-dominated music industry in Tanzania.

The empowerment seminar comes after Mdundo conducted a survey in November and December last year and established that female artists in the Tanzanian music industry face dire challenges including sexual harassment as well as limited access to funds and resources.

Speaking of the partnership, SBL Communications and Sustainability Manager, Rispa Hatibu, said: "This is an opportunity for us to support progressive voices and champion inclusiveness and diversity which is one of our key pillars as per our 'Soci-

ety 2030: Spirit of Progress' goals."

The official noted: "We extend our support to Tanzanian female artists to further cement our stance on championing gender diversity."

She added: "We are aware that being a woman in any male-dominated industry such as music and entertainment comes with challenges."

Rispa disclosed: "We, therefore, have set out to first understand the challenges that women in music face in Tanzania by engaging with Mdundo to conduct the survey whereby a questionnaire was sent out to all artists on Mdundo's platform and a total of 106 respondents submitted responses."

Mdundo Licensing and Partnership Manager, Prisca Nicholas, said: "After identifying the challenges, the next step was to create a platform where women in music in Tanzania can meet, network, and learn from fellow artists and key industry stakeholders with enough experience

and authority to speak on these challenges."

The official revealed: "Such stakeholders will offer relevant advice, tools, and tactics that the musicians can use to address the issues at hand and ensure that they progress beyond just earning royalties from platforms like Mdundo."

A total of 10 panelists including representatives from the Copyright Society of Tanzania (COSOTA), media houses, music distribution and licensing companies, as well as SBL, facilitated the seminar.

The panel session also included a question and answer opportunity, in which the female artists who attended sought further advice on pressing issues affecting them in the music industry.

The progressive marketing initiative will go beyond the Mdundo partnership as SBL will, from March 25, get its sponsorship for Clouds Media Group's 'Malkia Wa Nguvu 2023' platform underway.

Messi goal tops off Argentina's homecoming celebration

BUENOS AIRES

LIONEL Messi capped a night of unbridled joy with the 800th goal of his career as world champions Argentina celebrated their homecoming with a 2-0 friendly victory over stubborn Panama in Buenos Aires on Thursday.

The 35-year-old seven-time Ballon d'Or winner's stunning free-kick in the dying minutes came after 21-year-old MLS sensation Thiago Almada gave a glimpse of what the future holds with his first goal for the national team in only his third appearance.

It was an emotional night as fireworks crackled overhead before kick-off at the impressive Monumental stadium where the 83,000 lucky fans that managed to get tickets among the more than 1.5 million people who tried, created an electric atmosphere.

Messi, coach Lionel Scaloni and numerous players came onto the pitch with their children and several seemed on the brink of tears as fans in unison sang "Muchachos", the anthem of Argentina's victorious World Cup campaign in Qatar.

After the match the party continued, with every member of the World Cup winning squad given a replica trophy to lift, surrounded by their families.

"I always dreamt of this moment, being able to celebrate with you (the fans), being able to come to my country to lift a Copa America, a World Cup. It's the best thing there is," said Messi, who was presented with several awards after the game.

"I am eternally grateful to this group of players. Football is theirs, it belongs to all those that wear this jersey," said Scaloni, who finally cracked and let the tears flow.

"They leave every last drop of sweat and sometimes the result doesn't follow. This time it did and it's amazing."

- Persistence pays for Messi -

It was clear that this was more a celebration than a football match but Panama clearly had not read the script.

Despite fielding a weakened side, they were organized and disciplined and managed to frustrate the new world champions for 78 minutes before their defenses were finally breached.

Argentina, who started the game playing champagne football, created relatively little given their 73 percent possession in the first period.

Messi struck the woodwork with a freekick while Enzo Fernandez brought a diving one-handed save out of goalkeeper Jose Carlos Guerra with a shot from distance.

Scaloni had picked the same starting XI that faced France in the World Cup final in December -- when Argentina triumphed 4-2 on penalties after a sensational 3-3 draw -- but after a goalless first half he made three changes.

In the second period, Argentina knuckled down to trying to win a football match but Guerra was twice equal to Messi free-kicks and also saved a low curling effort from veteran Angel Di Maria.

As the minutes ticked by, the tension rose with Argentina acutely aware that their party risked falling flat if they did not win.

But, eventually their main man came to the fore and ensured Panama would not be party poopers.

Messi had a hand in the opening goal, crashing another free-kick off the woodwork, with Almada, a second half substitute, following up to slot home.

The stadium erupted and the tension drained from Argentina's players, by now mostly substitutes.

With a minute to go, Messi was given yet another free-kick within shooting range -- his fifth of the match -- and this time he curled it into the top corner to seal the dream scenario for his delirious fans.

Then the party continued with singing and dancing and a video recap of Argentina's glorious run to their third world title on the stadium's giant screens.

No one left as the players, accompanied by partners and children, embarked on a lap of honor, each clutching their own replica trophy.

AFP

Southgate hails Kane's 'strength' after breaking England goal record

GARETH Southgate praised Harry Kane's mental strength after he broke England's all-time goal record with the crucial strike in Thursday's 2-1 Euro 2024 qualifier win over Italy.

Captain Kane stroked home his 54th international goal from the penalty spot to move ahead of Wayne Rooney and help England to a Group C win in Naples over the European champions.

The 29-year-old had been level with Rooney after missing a penalty in England's quarter-final defeat by France at the World Cup in December.

"To break the record in the manner he did given the recent history was an indication of his strength of character. I couldn't be happier for him," Southgate told reporters.

"To do it as quick as he has as well, he still has a lot of his career to go, is an incredible achievement. The players gave him a brilliant reception afterwards and I think that was a response to the record and what he's had to recover from."

Kane's goal came towards the end of an impressive first-half performance which would have put the game to bed had Jack Grealish not missed a glaring chance from close range when set up by the Tottenham striker.

AFP

Why Folarin Balogun, a coveted dual-national striker, has USMNT fans in a tizzy

BY HENRY BUSHNELL

Folarin Balogun is one of the brightest young strikers in England's vast player pool, and so, naturally, he was supposed to be in Leicester and London this week playing soccer. He was named to the England Under-21 roster for a pair of friendlies. Shortly after scoring his 17th goal of a breakout season on Sunday, he was expected to join up with the squad.

But Balogun, the New York-born son of Nigerian parents, has not been in England.

He's been in Florida, where the U.S. men's national team was training this week, on something of a recruiting visit.

His stateside presence does not mean that he is committing to play for the USMNT. He will not appear in two CONCACAF Nations League games this week and next. To do so, he'd need to apply to FIFA for a one-time switch of association from England to the U.S. A FIFA spokesman confirmed to Yahoo Sports on Thursday that Balogun has not done that.

"My international future is not decided yet, in terms of who I'll play for," Balogun told Sky Sports in a recent interview.

But he has heard the American recruiting pitch. He has spoken with some U.S. players. He's had "some discussions" with USMNT staff, interim coach Anthony Hudson confirmed Thursday night. Hudson later added: "It's been an opportunity for us just to share about our program, and who we are, and what we do."

Meanwhile, across the pond, England U21 coach Lee Carsley said Thursday that he'd spoken to "Flo," as Balogun is nicknamed, this week, and "he didn't give me any inkling that there



Folarin Balogun, on loan from Arsenal to Reims, has had a breakout season in France's Ligue 1. (Agencies)

was an issue or that he was thinking of doing anything in the future. He said he is looking forward to the summer," when the England U21s will contend for their European championship.

"But," Carsley admitted in a separate interview -- when asked about Balogun's eligibility to represent the U.S. and Nigeria, and his international future being up in the air -- "it's something that we're aware of and we need to keep an eye on."

Fans, meanwhile, have been keeping both eyes glued to the situation, sleuthing for clues about Balogun's whereabouts. The realization that Balogun, in a Wednesday Instagram post, appeared to be in Orlando sent American soccer Twitter into a tizzy. The following day, as the USMNT departed Florida for Grenada (they'll return Saturday ahead of a Monday game in Orlando), Balogun posted a photo of himself in sweaty athletic gear, with a towel around his neck, and the caption: "This heat!"

Which, of course, led fans to their weather apps. It was 53 degrees and raining in London. It was 58 and damp in Reims, France, Balogun's temporary club home. It was 83 degrees and sun-

ny in Orlando.

On Thursday evening, with the USMNT down in the Caribbean, Balogun attended an Orlando Magic game. The NBA team even made him a custom jersey. Each progressive update fueled an online frenzy and fanatical excitement -- because a commitment from the 21-year-old forward would instantaneously better the USMNT.

***Who is Folarin Balogun?**

Balogun was born in Brooklyn -- he has said that his parents were visiting family in New York at the time -- but spent the vast majority of his childhood in London, which is where he learned the game that he grew to love.

He started at a local club, Aldersbrook, and played informally with friends. Then an Arsenal scout saw him at an all-day tournament and approached his father. Thus began a weeks-long trial, during which Tottenham called his father and also offered a trial. And so, for a short but crazy period, young Folarin would train with Arsenal's academy on Mondays, Thursdays and Fridays, and with Tottenham's the rest of the week.

He eventually chose

Arsenal, and rose through a fiercely competitive academy, first as a winger and then as a goal-scoring center forward. The move to striker unleashed him. A prolific season earned him his first youth national team call-ups -- with England's U17s -- and placed him on American radars.

U.S. fans and coaches have tracked him ever since, and increasingly this season, his first with regular playing time at a first-division club. After spending the latter half of last season on loan at Middlesbrough in England's second-tier Championship, and with the Arsenal first team proving difficult to crack, the Gunners sent him on loan to Reims in France.

He started with a bang in Ligue 1 and never really slowed down. He's scored 17 goals in 27 appearances, just two fewer than league-leading Kylian Mbappé, and underlying numbers suggest Balogun's fiery form is no fluke. He leads all Ligue 1 players in non-penalty Expected Goals, a combined measure of shot quantity and quality. He is excelling at a firmly mid-table club, meaning his success is not a product of brilliance all around him. He is clever, quick and clinical with both feet.

So, if he were to commit to the USMNT, he would likely become the top striker in the player pool, regardless of age, and a favorite to start at the 2026 World Cup.

***Could Folarin Balogun commit to USMNT soon?**

Balogun has said that he will make a decision on his international future soon, but has not explicitly hinted at what that decision might be. Implicitly, though?

On the day of England's latest senior roster release, after being omitted from Gareth Southgate's squad for Euro 2024 qualifiers, Balogun posted a cryptic message on Instagram: "In life, go where you're appreciated."

His social media posts this week, coupled with England's announcement that he'd withdrawn from the U21 squad and would "miss the forthcoming matches after reporting an injury" -- after playing 90 minutes for Reims on Sunday -- only deepened external intrigue.

Hudson, speaking Thursday night, did not mention any injury. He said Balogun was "out here havin' a bit of a break, and some training, and some discussions. Now it's about him enjoying the rest of his trip."

Carsley, the England U21 coach, said Thursday that Balogun "felt his right hamstring" on Sunday, and that doctors had confirmed the minor injury. "So you can only take what they're saying to be accurate."

Balogun spent his youth career with England. He played once for the U.S. U18s, at a tournament in the Czech Republic, but because it was not an official competition, it required no official switch of allegiance. He has continued to represent England in official competitions

and friendlies. Carsley said Thursday that Balogun is "connected to what we're doing" and "a big player for us."

So, as of now, he is an England international. In interviews, he has referred to London as "my city." And "if people ask me where I'm from," he said in November, "I say I'm English."

But he also noted that he's a "mixture" of cultures. He has family in Nigeria. He also has extended family in New York and Atlanta. He has visited New York, and reconnected with his birthplace, and called it "a special feeling."

And "of course," he told Sky recently, "I want to play international football at the highest level, in the World Cup, and I want to compete at the highest level. I want to put myself in positions where I'm performing in front of millions of people." That will surely play into his decision. He has also said he will consult his family.

He could also be wooed by the USMNT's organic recruiting machine: a diverse, vibrant generation of players similar in age who helped the U.S. land commitments from other dual-nationals, including Yunus Musah and Sergio Dest. Musah is now part of the machine, and has a prior relationship with Balogun dating back to their days in the Arsenal academy.

Christian Pulisic, the deputy USMNT captain, said Thursday that he has not spoken with Balogun. "But I know some of the guys that know him from previous teams have reached out to him and spoken to him," Pulisic said. "Obviously, from our side, we'd love to have him."

Hudson kept his comments relatively brief, and concluded with: "I hope we get the chance to speak to him again. It's been good to meet him."

(Agencies)

Kane leads England to win in Italy, Ronaldo sets new caps record as Portugal cruise

LONDON

HARRY Kane became England's all-time leading goalscorer as the Three Lions enjoyed a perfect start to Euro 2024 qualifying by winning 2-1 away to Italy on Thursday, as Cristiano Ronaldo scored twice on his record 197th cap in Portugal's 4-0 win over Liechtenstein.

Kane netted his 54th goal for England in his 81st international appearance from the penalty spot in Naples after Declan Rice had fired the visitors into an early lead.

The England captain moves clear of the record mark he had shared with Wayne Rooney.

"Thanks to everyone who's helped me get to this stage. It's a great night. We haven't won in Italy for so long so to score, and win this game, is just special," said Kane.

Gareth Southgate's men gained some measure of revenge for their defeat by the Azzurri in the Euro 2020 final.

In their first match since bowing out in agonising fashion to France in the World Cup quarter-finals, England were dominant in the first 45 minutes.

Rice rifled home his third international goal on 13 minutes after Italy failed to clear a corner.

Another set-piece led to Kane's record-breaking moment as Giovanni Di Lorenzo handled inside the area.

The Tottenham striker banished the memories of his missed penalty late on against France in Doha by sending Gianluigi Donnarumma the wrong way.

But Italy rallied after the break when Argentine-born striker Mateo Retegui fired home on his international debut.

England were forced to see out the final 10 minutes a man down after two quickfire yellow cards for Luke Shaw, but they held out for their first win away to Italy since 1961.

"We feel like we are one of the best teams in Europe," added Kane.

"Coming here and putting in a performance like that today shows we are ready for the next challenge."

In the other game in Group C, North Macedonia beat Malta 2-1.

Ronaldo marks historic night -

Ronaldo marked Roberto Martinez's bow as Portugal boss with another historic night in Lisbon.

The 38-year-old, who was dropped from the Portuguese starting XI during the World Cup,

set a new record for men's international appearances by passing the previous mark of 196 caps held by Kuwait's Bader Al-Mutawa.

Joao Cancelo fired home the opening goal after just eight minutes but it was not until Bernardo Silva doubled Portugal's lead early in the second half that the floodgates opened.

Ronaldo made it 3-0 from the penalty spot before blasting home a free-kick from the edge of the area for his 120th

international goal.

"It's a new cycle. It is very important that a player shows commitment and that he can use his experience," said Martinez. "Cristiano has that: a lot of experience and a lot of commitment to the national team."

In the same group, Rade Krunic scored twice as Bosnia and Herzegovina swept aside Iceland 3-0.

But Slovakia, who have qualified for the last two Euros, were held 0-0 at home by Luxembourg.

Euro 2020 semi-finalists Denmark bounced back from their disappointing early exit at the World Cup to beat Finland 3-1 in Copenhagen.

Atalanta forward Rasmus Hojlund scored a hat-trick for the Danes on his first start for his country.

Elsewhere in Group H, Dion Charles scored twice as Northern Ireland won 2-0 in San Marino, while Slovenia came from behind to win 2-1 away to Kazakhstan. AFP

Gwiji by David Chikoko



SPORT

Why Folarin Balogun, a coveted dual-national striker, has USMNT fans in a tizzy

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By Correspondent Nassir

Nchimbi

TANZANIA'S Simba SC head coach, Roberto Oliveira, is out to revamp his squad to ensure it excels in various competitions for many years.

Simba SC will have to improve its squad after falling flat last season, losing all domestic competitions' titles to age-old rivals Yanga.

With hopes to lift this season's NBC Premier League top honour again fading away, Oliveira has decided to aim at improving the squad for the next season.

Oliveira, alias 'Robertinho', admitted to having started a special task of monitoring some of the players, whose

Oliveira all out to help Simba SC regain lost glory



Simba SC head coach Roberto Oliveira. PHOTO: COURTESY OF SIMBASC

teams play against Simba SC in the domestic and international showdowns, to find those who will suit his system and possibly join the squad at the end of this season.

The Brazilian tactician said the move aims at having a list of players with the criteria he wants before meeting Simba SC leadership which will be responsible for

implementing his needs. "In every game, my job is to not only make sure we win but also look for the best players we see and, after that, I follow them later to know if either their best levels have continued or they only played well when we met them," the coach noted.

Robertinho pointed out: "We are monitoring all domestic and foreign players to see the positions we want to add players to based on the quality we see in the players we have now and, later, I will sit with the leaders to make decisions."

The gaffer moreover added he wants the Msimbazi Street outfit to have a good balance for each position next season. According to the coach, each position ought to have two players with high quality to create good competition.

"If you look at each position now, there are more than two players, I think the best way is to have a good balance of the squad," the gaffer pointed out.

"We can have a squad of players in which there are two people in each position but the important thing here is that their quality should be great and later

we let them compete for their place," the coach said.

The Brazilian noted: "I will make sure that we have a very good team because the competitions we participate in and the quality of the opposing teams force us to have that quality."

"Here however we have to agree that Simba SC has a big name and the player we will have must have the status of the club, I think this is big," the tactician revealed.

This season, Simba SC has booked a place in the quarterfinals of the CAF Champions League after posting unassailable nine points.

The Msimbazi Street club's closest challengers in the premier continental tournament's Group C, Guinea's Horoya Athletic Club and Vipers SC of Uganda, can hardly attain such points even if they win their last matches.

Simba SC will, at the end of this month, travel to Morocco to lock horns with group leader, Raja Club Athletic, in their last fixture.

In the NBC Premier League, Simba SC has notched 57 points from 24 matches to sit second on the log.

Kidao: TFF cannot interfere with Taifa Stars' coach's decision

By Correspondent Nassir Nchimbi

TANZANIA Football Federation (TFF) has said that it is not responsible for selecting players for the senior national team, Taifa Stars, after some experienced players were left out of the squad now facing the 2023 Africa Cup of Nations Qualifiers' double-header against Uganda's Cranes.

Taifa Stars confronted Uganda in a Group F duel at Suez Canal Stadium in Ismailia, Egypt yesterday before the teams take on each other in the next fixture at Benjamin Mkapa Stadium in Dar es Salaam on March 28.

Taifa Stars and Uganda locked horns in Ismailia following the decision reached by the game's host, Uganda, to choose the venue after lacking a stadium that meets the criteria set by CAF.

Some Tanzanian football fans have expressed their displeasure over the selection of the Taifa Stars squad, especially after Simba SC full-backs, Mohamed Hussein and Shomari Kapombe, failed to get the national team call-up.

Wilfred Kidao, TFF Secretary-General, pointed out that the federation does not have the authority to reverse the decisions reached by Taifa Stars' technical bench, so the selection conducted by head coach Adel Amrouche must be respected.

The TFF leader revealed: "The coach is the one with the authority to select the Taifa Stars squad. This is his role and duty, I saw people complain and question his selection on the internet."

"The head coach was only doing his work among many selections, every player has an equal chance to make it to the national team, this is a team for everyone," the TFF official added.

"The gaffer cannot leave players directly, TFF helps the coach in administrative matters, it cannot interfere with the coach in player selection."

"Everyone is doing their daily duties. I'm a coach too, I can't accept interference in my duties, so I can't see a teacher" Kidao disclosed.

However, as it stands in Group F, Algeria tops the pile with six points after winning the opening two ties, followed by second-placed Niger with two points in the bag generated after stamping two draws.

Taifa Stars is positioned third with one point, as is the case with fourth-placed Uganda, making the double-header bringing the two sides together very difficult and decisive.

Yesterday's clash became the first assignment for the recently appointed Taifa Stars' head coach Amrouche who is eager to guide the country's flag-bearers to the 2023 AFCON finals, scheduled for January-February next year.

Geita Gold FC pursues 2023/24 CAF inter-club tourneys

By Correspondent Nassir Nchimbi

GEITA Gold FC has set up clinical strategies to ensure that the outfit returns to the CAF inter-club tournaments next season and becomes the best in and outside the stadium.

The Geita-based outfit, for the first time, participated in the CAF Confederation Cup this season and was eliminated in the First Preliminary Round by South Sudan side, Hilal Al Sahil, on aggregate.

An away goal posted by Hilal Al Sahil in the second leg, which ended with Geita Gold FC cruising to a 2-1 victory, had the Tanzanian club crashing out of the tournament.

In the first leg involving the two outfits, Hilal Al Sahil notched a 1-0 win over Geita Gold FC.

Geita Gold FC's Secretary-General, Simon Shija, disclosed that they are determined to make their way back to the continental tournaments after learning a lot from Simba SC and Yanga, which have made it to this season's Africa inter-club tournaments' quarterfinals.

He revealed that they believe the good performance shown by Simba SC and Yanga in this season's continental showdowns has come about due to vast experience and large investments placed in the clubs.

The official noted: "We have planned to make sure we finish in the top four so that we can be part of the teams that will represent the country internationally next season, if we achieve this, it will be our second time in a row."



Geita Gold FC's Secretary-General, Simon Shija.

"There are many things we have learned and realized where we went wrong at the beginning of this season when we participated in the

CAF Confederation Cup, we believe if we come back we will be stronger," the official pointed out.

"Clubs like Simba SC

and Yanga have financial muscles, pay good salaries and bonuses on time, and camp anywhere, so it brings motivation to the players to

do well, this gives us great motivation," he revealed.

The official disclosed: "Geita Gold FC understands to attract sponsors, it needs to perform well and finish in a better position in the league standings."

Shija noted: "And we wish to get such sponsorship so that we can serve our players well and get there. Geita Gold FC has serious strategies to ensure that it returns to the international stage next season by finishing in the top four positions."

"We are interested in having our sponsors ready and various negotiations are on-going."

"We will fight for the top four positions with all our strength, even though those who are above us have more points than us," Shija noted.

With six games remaining in this season's top flight, Geita Gold FC is currently aiming to make the top four of the Premier League, having collected 34 points.

The side is lately sitting fifth on the log, trailing fourth-placed Azam FC which has amassed 56 points, third-placed Singida Big Stars which has recorded 57 points, Simba SC sitting second, and top-placed Yanga.

Flexibles by David Chikoko

EVERY TIME YOU SMILE I FEEL LIKE TAKING YOU TO MY PLACE

ARE YOU SINGLE?

NO A DENTIST

