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Public figures, citizens mourn Lowassa

Another former prime minister Joseph Warioba, said he knew Lowassa as a strong leader who didn't give up

By Guardian Reporter

TOP public figures, politicians, clerics and ordinary people yesterday expressed grief and respect for the memory of former Prime Minister and veteran Monduli MP, Edward Lowassa, who died on Saturday at the Jakaya Kikwete Cardiac Institute (JKCI) in Dar es Salaam.

Another former prime minister Joseph Warioba, said he knew Lowassa as a strong leader, who didn't give up, a person who believed in education and employment for the youth.

He said in an interview that when he was premier he spearheaded the building of secondary schools in every ward to enable universal improvement in access to education.

He especially recalled that as prime minister the late Lowassa was a good monitor of the implementation of what was decided by the government. To this observation, some observers recall that after he left the post, the mobilisation slogan of the first years of the fourth phase was sidelined.

Former Zanzibar president, Amani Abeid Karume said the nation has lost a great man who made major decisions and followed them up to make they are implemented.



Former Prime Minister Joseph Warioba signs condolence book at the Dar es Salaam residence of late former Prime Minister Edward Ngoyai Lowassa yesterday. Related photos on Page 4. Photo: Correspondent Jumanne Juma

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Dabo: We can emulate Simba and Yanga only by winning titles

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Kapombe asks Simba fans for their support against Geita

Vatican awaits Samia in new phase of church-Africa links

By Guardian Reporter and Agencies

POPE Francis (pictured) is expected to hold talks with President Samia Suluhu Hassan as the Tanzanian leader starts a two-day visit to the tiny church state within the Italian capital of Rome.

The president will be on a working visit to the Vatican where she will exchange views with the leader of the world Catholic Church on a number of issues, before proceeding with a two-day visit to Norway on Tuesday and Wednesday.

Reports say that in the tour, President Samia is accompanied by leaders of five Catholic Church associations, where the talks will be held at two stages.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and East African Cooperation said in a statement yesterday that President Samia will meet Pope Francis in a private audience, and then the pontiff will hold a wider audience with the entire delegation accompanying the president.

Across the two days stay at the Vatican, the president will have a conversation with Cardinal Pietro Parolin, the Secretary of State, and Archbishop Paul Gallagher, the secretary for relations with states.

Leaders of church associations accompanying the president are drawn from associations and missions, of the local church, including nationwide youth, men, and women wings, the statement indicated.

Tanzania like other African countries has noticeable ties with the Vatican since inde-



pendence, with one papal visit in 1990, and recently Tanzania had its third cardinal consecrated, after more than a decade at a key missionary office at the Vatican.

The ministry said that the Catholic Church is estimated to have 240 kindergarten schools, 147 primary schools, 245 secondary schools, 110 vocational training colleges and five universities. The church similarly runs 473 health institutions caring for all sections of the public, it stated.

Observers looking at the visit believe it will not relate to current disputes within the church which have also been the subject of extensive commentary and at some points, legal initiatives in African countries, while the Vatican late last year issued a broad-based appeal not to discriminate people linked in same sex relations.

Yet with the Pope's approval, African Catholic bishops will not carry out the extra-liturgical blessings proposed for same sex-couples, a *modus vivendi* meant to skirt sharp disputes on loyalty to the Vatican.

The reigning pontiff despite being in ill health intermittently, early last year visited the Democratic Republic of the Congo and South Sudan to push for peace, in strongly worded pleading that caught the hearts of many African followers and observers.

Chroniclers said it was his fifth trip to Africa since being elected head of the Catholic Church in 2013.

The 86-year-old had to postpone the trip earlier scheduled for mid-2022 after suffering knee problems. But he was determined to undertake the visit, which brought to 10 the number of African countries he has visited.

Observers say that during the 1960s, popes didn't travel much outside Vatican City, before Pope Paul VI bucked the trend and became the first reigning pope to visit Africa.

The pope had considerable proximity with founder president Mwalimu Nyerere, where the Second Vatican Council, a planetary episcopal consultation during 1964 and 1965, elevated to Catholic doctrine many of what Mwalimu believed were ethical and socialist principles.

It was also at the time that Tanzania had its first cardinal, Archbishop Laurean Rugambwa, before Pope John-Paul II gave Tanzania its second cardinal, Archbishop Polycarp Pengo.

Right to worship assured, says VP

By Guardian Reporter

THE government will ensure that it protects the right to worship for all citizens without discrimination, Vice President Dr. Philip Mpango has declared.

Gracing the consecration ceremony for the Rt. Rev. Dr. Abel Mollé as bishop of the North-Central Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania (ELCT) he said that the country's leadership will ensure that people live in peace and get better social services.

Bishop Dr. Abel Mollé was consecrated and then he in turn ordained the Rev. Laurent Lukumay as assistant to the bishop, this being a constitutional position at ELCT, with the august ceremony being held at the Kimandolu Parish.

The VP said the government is focused on investing in large strategic projects in all sectors, which if completed will significantly uplift the country's economy, appealing to the ELCT and other denominations to work with the government in serving the people.

He devoted his remarks to community preparations for the civic polls late this year, underlining that the polls are important to place in office devoted leaders at the grassroots level where many people live, boosting development efforts.

Religious leaders need to encourage people to actively take part in the vital polls exercise, he urged, affirming that the government intends to ensure that there is a fair and enabling environment for all those taking part.

The vast majority of the people must be able to participate in electing the leaders they want, he emphasised, pointing at the cooperation between the government and religious institutions.

Noting that this link has been shown for a long time in various fields, the VP acknowledged the great contribution of the church in the provision of community services, chiefly in education and health.

The government shall work on resolving challenges facing ELCT-run hospitals, which the diocese leadership had raised, referring to Orkesumet and Selian hospitals.

The VP put a world that authorities in the Health ministry and Regional Administration and Local Governments in the President's Office (PO-RALG) to convene with a view to addressing challenges the hospitals face.

Appealing to church followers and the public to maintain the peace, unity and harmony, he urged religious leaders to persist in encouraging efforts at environmental preservation.

In his remarks, the new bishop reaffirmed church commitment to working with the government in providing social services, expressing satisfaction with the Arusha regional authorities in cooperating with the church.

This has made it possible to achieve success in various activities including planting more than 300,000 trees in the region, the prelate indicated.



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Public figures, citizens mourn Lowassa

FROM PAGE 1

Vice President Dr Philip Mpango paid homage to the late ex-premier at an episcopal consecration ceremony in Arusha, saying he was flying back to Dar es Salaam to join the family of the late Lowassa.

The VP announced the death of the former premier during his working tour of the region, where the scheduled consecration, the region was beset with the huge change in the public mood, including in the Lutheran Church to which he belonged, where the consecration was already scheduled.

A former minister, Dr Harrison Mwakyembe news of Lowassa's death will touch many people, noting that the late Lowassa had proved to be someone loaded with great experience in government operations.

"There is no doubt that Lowassa was a great treasure of ideas and positive advice in the construction of our nation. I would like to use this opportunity to wish the family of the deceased and all Tanzanians, led by the President Samia, patience at this difficult time," he said.

The VP relayed messages of condolence to the family, the region and the public as a whole from President Samia Suluhu Hassan as he made the public announcement on state television on Saturday afternoon.

ELCT Archbishop Alex Malasusa presented his condolences to the VP as well as other religious leaders in Arusha region to take to the late Lowassa's family.

"I have received your messages of condolence and promise to deliver them to the late Edward Lowassa's family in Dar es Salaam as soon as I leave Arusha," the VP affirmed.

Juma Duni Haji, the ACT Wazalendo national chairman, said that Lowassa was a leader who served the country with a cheerful heart in various positions he held.

"The nation will remember him for his contribution to the development of our country. On behalf of the party, I offer my condolences to his widow Regina Lowassa and the entire family, we are with them in this difficult period," the opposition leader said, who was once the late Lowassa's running mate as Chadema president-



Former Zanzibar president Amani Abeid Karume

tial candidate in the 2015 general election.

ACT Wazalendo will fly party flags at half-mast for the five days of mourning directed by President Samia Suluhu Hassan, he said, while Chadema national chairperson Freeman Mbowe expressed great sorrow at this event.

He described him as a courageous leader, a brilliant politician, a strong activist who was on the forefront fighting for political and economic change in Tanzania.

"He was a friend of mine and our ally in the journey for true democracy in Tanzania. He was full of wisdom, bravery, empathy, patriotism, love and forgiveness. He was visionary, he had plans and an effective implementer of various development projects for the welfare of the public," the opposition leader said in a statement.

Veteran academic and former international civil servant, Prof Anna Tibaijuka, praised Lowassa in placing the interests of the country first, and his staunch opposition to political harassment.

Ex-Muheza MP and veteran top police officer Adadi Rajabu said Lowassa loved people's devel-



Freeman Mbowe

opment and did not like to see the people living in poverty.

Goodluck ole Madeye, a former deputy minister, said Lowassa loved all the people and found it troubling that someone else was routinely hungry. He was a humble leader and did not like repressive actions, he said.

"He was creative and broad-minded, even one day you can't find him debating someone, he wanted you to go to him with ideas or suggestions for development," he said.

CCM chairman in Kagera Region and former minister Nazir Karamagi said that Lowassa was opposed to political enmity and when he shifted to the opposition in 2015 he helped the opposition to obtain many seats in the National Assembly.

Karamagi also said that Lowassa changed the concept of 'Kilimo Kwanza' into education first, believing that without education there is no progress in agriculture, a situation that contributed to having educated farmers.

He talked of Lowassa as having persuaded him to enter politics in 2003, and was of constant assistance, helping those with govern-



Prof Anna Tibaijuka

ment responsibility to perform better.

Former CCM regional chairman in Shinyanga, Khamisi Mgeja, described Lowassa as a leader who was assertive in practice.

"Lowassa had great practical ability and he was also assertive in defending the people as well as the nation as a whole," Mgeja said, honouring the fallen leader he once followed him into opposition after nomination shenanigans in the ruling party.

"When Lowassa was minister for Water he pushed for Tanzania to use water from Lake Victoria for irrigation despite intense criticisms," he recalled.

Former CCM regional chairman in Singida, Mgana Msindai, who had also shifted with Lowassa into opposition, said that the nation has lost a smart leader who never feared anything when it comes to deciding something for the country's development.

He said Lowassa will be remembered for many things, which he did during his period in leadership, but the biggest was to establish ward secondary schools across Tanzania, which are currently in good position and achieving good



Dr Harrison Mwakyembe

results.

Singida regional commissioner Peter Serukamba, a close associate of the former premier in his campaigns, said he has received with sadness the death of Lowassa and that the nation has lost one of its more eminent patriots.

A resident of Arusha, Jacob Timothy who used to be classmates with Lowassa at Monduli Primary School in the mid-60s, recalled that the former premier was very good in poetry, singing and conducting the local pupils' brass band.

Retired civil servant Joseph Panga says during his rather short tenure as Prime Minister, Lowassa managed to visit a good number of remote villages, indicating that he was 'a man of the people.'

Kalist Mollele, a resident of Longido, recalled the year 2006 when the district suffered acute food shortages due to famine and Lowassa sent Mizengo Pinda who was then in charge of Regional Administration and Local Governments to the area, instructing him to solve the problem immediately.



Prime Minister Kassim Majaliwa (C) pictured in Dar es Salaam yesterday presenting a trophy to David Shilatu, company secretary of Moshi-based TPC Ltd, in appreciation of the firm's timely payment of statutory contributions to water authorities. This was at a stakeholders' meeting whose thrust was on the need to ensure the safety and development of water projects. Left is Water Minister Jumaa Aweso. Photo: Correspondent Imani Nathaniel

Hungary president resigns over child sexual abuse pardon

BUDAPEST

THE president of Hungary has resigned live on television over a decision to pardon a man convicted of covering up a child sexual abuse case.

It was revealed last week President Katalin Novak had given clemency to a man jailed for forcing children to retract sexual abuse claims against a director of a state-run children's home.

Protests calling for her to step down had been growing in Hungary. Novak apologised and said she made "a mistake" in granting the pardon.

Judit Varga, the former minister of justice who approved the pardon, has also resigned from her new role of leading the European elections campaign for Prime Minister Viktor

Orban's ruling Fidesz party.

The controversy which led to the resignations came after the names of 25 people pardoned by Novak in April last year, as part of a visit to Hungary by Pope Francis, were made public by Hungarian media last week.

On the list of convicts was the deputy director of a children's home near Budapest, who had been jailed for three years after forcing children to retract claims of abuse against the director of the home.

The director had himself been jailed for eight years over abusing children at the government-run facility.

Hungarian opposition parties and protesters had been demanding her resignation, but Novak's decision to do so was as sudden as it was

unexpected.

Novak is a popular figure in Fidesz and a rare female politician in a male-dominated country. She is a key ally of Hungarian Orban and previously worked as his family minister.

In 2022, she became the first woman to hold the largely ceremonial role of Hungarian president.

The case has unleashed an unprecedented political scandal for Hungary's long-serving nationalist government.

In particular, it caused deep embarrassment for Fidesz, which has made traditional family values the cornerstone of its social policy.

Speaking in an address live on television, Novak said she granted the pardon in the belief the convicted man "did not exploit the vulner-

ability of the children under his oversight".

She apologised to victims who "might have felt that I did not stand up for them".

"I made a mistake, as the pardon and the lack of reasoning were conducive to triggering doubts about the zero tolerance that applies to paedophilia," Novak added.

In addition to the resignation of Novak, another leading female politician from Fidesz has also resigned over the same case.

Judit Varga, who was minister of justice at the time of the pardon, countersigned the clemency decision.

The double resignation of its two most prominent female politicians is a serious setback for Orban and his party, with Varga due to head the Fidesz list in the European elections in June.

Vatican awaits Samia in new phase of church-Africa links

FROM PAGE 1

In papal visits to Africa the earlier period was consecrated to elevation in world eyes of cardinal events in the history of the church in Africa, where Pope Paul VI visited Uganda in 1969.

He made a pilgrimage to the Uganda Martyrs Shrine, Namugongo, canonising 22 Catholic martyrs on the spot, a great moment for the church in Africa up to now.

During his reign, Pope John-Paul II travelled widely throughout Africa in his 26-year pontificate, from 1980 to his demise in 2013, where he often defended the church against revolutionary ideologies.

In a memorable visit to Ouagadougou, the capital of Upper Volta (late named Burkina Faso), he made an appeal for international assistance for the country as it suffered a devastating drought. The donations received set in place the foundations for the establishment of the John Paul II Foundation for the Sahel in 1984.

During his trip, he criticised Marxism as an ideology and welcomed the religious enthusiasm he encountered.

He said "there is a great temptation to demolish instead of building, to procure weapons at a great price for populations that need bread, to want to seize power - sometimes confronting one ethnic group with another ... while the poor sigh for peace, they succumb to the desire for profit benefitting a privileged class."

Novak is a popular figure in Fidesz and a rare female politician in a male-dominated country. She is a key ally of Hungarian Orban and previously worked as his family minister



Prof Joyce Ndalichako (C), Minister of State in the Prime Minister's Office (Labour, Youth, Employment and People with Disabilities), closes an educational training session for Judges of the southern regions Labour Division High Court of Tanzania held in Songea municipality at the weekend. She is flanked by Workers Compensation Fund director general Dr John Mduma (L) and Joseph Karayemaha, Presiding Judge of the Songea Zone of the High Court. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

Govt set to change workers compensation law

By Guardian Correspondent, Songea

THE government is expected to table the Workers Compensation Act amendment bill by incorporating views collected from judges of the High Court of Tanzania-Labour Division and other stakeholders.

Prof Joyce Ndalichako, Minister of State in the Prime Minister's Office (Labour, Youth, Employment and Persons with Disability) made the statement here at the weekend while closing a working session for High Court judges-Labour Division, executives of the High Court and Commission for Mediation and Arbitration (CMA) held in Songea town, Ruvuma Region.

She assured the judges that the government takes their views and suggestions very seriously as they are important towards improving workers' rights on compensation.

Prof Ndalichako said that the government is already working

on some of the proposals meant to plug on loopholes in the law as proposed by judges at a similar session held in Bagamoyo in July, 2023.

"We held a similar session in Bagamoyo District, Coast Region and you (judges) gave some recommendation; let me assure you that we have commenced work on the views. There are suggestions to improve section 39 (2) of the Workers' Compensation Act (Chapter 263) which sets a time limit for submitting claims without giving scope to receive such claims if there are fundamental reasons for delay. We have worked on them and we expect complete the amendment bill to be tabled in the National Assembly soon," she said.

The minister further said her office through the Workers Compensation Fund (WCF), expects to receive more recommendations from more judges with the aim of increasing the effectiveness of the implementation of the law.

Ndalichako noted that the government recognizes and appreciates the contribution of workers in all sectors and that's why it has continued to implement and improve compensation amount for workers in both the private and public sectors.

She said, in the short period of the sixth phase government leadership, various changes have been witnessed in the social security sector, including reducing the contribution rate for private sector employers from 1 percent of the employee's salary every month to 0.5 percent.

Earlier when opening the training, Principal Judge of the High Court of Tanzania, Mustapher Mohammed Siyani encouraged employers in the country to register with WCF and provide employment information of their employees in order to protect the rights of the employees when they get injured at workplace.

"Apart from having the law that

punishes employers who fail to register with WCF, there are still some employers who do not provide their employees information and thus hinder the fund to pay compensation," he said.

Judge Siyani issued an example of case of a man who was working at a construction company in Lindi Region who was injured while at work and led to the loss of his limbs and caused him permanent disability of more than 75 percent but he did not have the opportunity to get compensation because his employer had not registered and submitted contributions to WCF in accordance with the law.

"Despite the young man working for more than two years, but his information was not in the WCF database and he did not have the right to get any compensation," he said, adding: "If there were information, he would definitely get more compensation than the one that came from reconciliation between the victim

and employer."

WCF director general Dr John Mduma said that the High Court of Tanzania is an important stakeholder of the fund in the implementation of its responsibilities.

Dr Mduma said that the training is part of the implementation of the government's directive that requires cooperation with stakeholders for the purpose of talking about productivity and better services for the people.

"It is our expectation that this training will bring benefits to both parties by increasing relations with the aim of providing better services to the people by helping those who get accident at work," he said.

The training brought together participants from Ruvuma, Mtwara, Iringa, Mbeya, Songwe and Rukwa regions and amongst the topics covered were procedures for presenting and handling compensation claims through negotiations.

Nearly 10,000 children get malaria vaccine after rollout

BRAZZAVILLE

NEARLY 10,000 children in Burkina Faso and Cameroon have received the RTS,S malaria vaccine since being introduced this year.

A wider malaria vaccine rollout is underway this year in several African countries, with Cameroon being the first outside the malaria vaccine pilot programme to do so.

Cameroon launched the vaccine on 22 January 2024. It is being integrated into its national routine immunization programme in more than 500 public and private health facilities across 42 health districts in the country's 10 regions.

Burkina Faso introduced the vaccine on 5 February, becoming the latest country in the region to kick off the immunization. The game-changing vaccine complements the existing range of malaria control measures to prevent the disease and lower its burden. "Malaria is one of the major health challenges our region faces. The wider rollout of the malaria vaccine marks a significant milestone in advancing the fight against this deadly disease," said Dr Matshidiso Moeti, World Health Organization (WHO) Regional Director for Africa.

"We're committed to supporting countries to ensure that all eligible children are protected from the devastating impacts of this preventable illness."

The vaccine rollout in the two countries, mark the start of a major initiative by the WHO Regional Office for Africa's Accelerated Malaria Vaccines Introduction and Rollout in Africa (AMVIRA). AMVIRA was developed as a response to the planned introduction of the two malaria vaccines (RTS,S and R21) into the routine immunization schedules of 19 countries in the Africa region in 2024.

Through AMVIRA, WHO in Africa will strengthen the provision of state-of-the-art support to countries in their efforts to effectively and efficiently introduce and rollout malaria vaccines. The initiative also enhances coordination with partners, UNICEF, GAVI, the Vaccine Alliance, and other partners.

In support of countries to ensure smooth introduction, community understanding and acceptance, and strengthened logistics, WHO has deployed 69 experts in immunization, data science and communication, across all 10 regions in Cameroon, as well as in Burkina Faso.

WHO works with countries to set up comprehensive preparations such as national vaccination policy and guidelines, integrating the new vaccine into the delivery schedule of other vaccines and health interventions, developing an operational roll out plan, training of healthcare workers, investing in infrastructure, technical capacity, vaccine storage, community engagement and demand generation, and ensuring formative supervision, monitoring and evaluation of the process to ensure quality vaccine delivery.

As the malaria vaccine rollout extends to all eligible countries, WHO will continue to ensure that experts are deployed where needed, implement robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to track progress, identify challenges and facilitate timely interventions where required.



UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA
MINISTRY OF ENERGY
ENERGY AND WATER UTILITIES
REGULATORY AUTHORITY
(EWURA)



PUBLIC NOTICE

(Issued under section 19 of the EWURA Act, Cap. 414 and Rule 20(4) of the Petroleum (Wholesale, Storage, Retail and Consumer Installation Operations) Rules, GN No. 150 of 2022)

NOTICE is hereby given to the public that, **EWURA** has received an application seeking approval on the transfer of a licence of a petroleum retail outlet with the particulars set out hereinafter below:

The current name of the Station:	Poly Petroleum Limited
Licence Number:	PRL-2019-053
Physical Location:	Plot No. 107, Block "A", Msongola Area, Ilala Municipality in Dar es Salaam Region
Proposed change of name:	Suad Noorhussein Mohamed T/A Poly Petro Fuel
Transferor:	Poly Petroleum Limited
Transferee:	Suad Noorhussein Mohamed T/A Poly Petro Fuel

Any person who wishes to make any representations or objections with respect to the application should do so in writing and submit it to **EWURA** within fourteen (14) days from the date of publication of this notice. All representations or objections should be addressed to the address below.

Issued by
Director General
The Energy and Water Utilities Regulatory Authority (EWURA)



Tanzania Red Cross Society, Mwai Kibaki Road, Plot no. 53 Block C, Mikocheni B, P.O. Box 1133, Dar es Salaam Tanzania. Phone +255 22 2780948, 0800 750 150/51
Email: info@trcs.or.tz, Website: www.trcs.or.tz

Invitation to tender: Date: 12th/02/2024

The Tanzania Red Cross Society (TRCS), invites interested and eligible bidders to submit their best bids/proposals for Cash Distribution Services in any part of the Country as shall be determined by need and issuance of Local Purchase Orders.

Interested and eligible firms can obtain a complete set/detailed RFQ documents from Tanzania Red Cross Society (TRCS) office during office working hours from Monday 12th February 2024 - Monday 26th February 2024 between 10:00am - 03:00pm local time except during lunch hour.

Bidding is open to ONLY qualified and legally registered Service Providers by Tanzania Government to operate in the country.

Submission of the bids:

The bids are to be submitted in a hard copy in sealed envelopes marked Tender for Cash & Voucher Assistance Distribution Service Provision & to be dropped in the tender box provided at Tanzania Red Cross Society (TRCS) reception not later than Monday 26th February 2024 at 02:00 pm local time addressed to the **Secretary General, Attn: Procurement and Logistics department, Tanzania Red Cross Society, Mwai Kibaki Road, Mikocheni P. O. Box 1133 Dar es Salaam. Tanzania**

All submitted bids must be registered at the reception prior to dropping into the tender box, failure to register your bid shall be disqualified.

Note: Successful bidder and unsuccessful bidders shall be notified.

For any information regarding bid submissions, clarification or quality specifications, send your query to saum.mpongole@trcs.or.tz or you can call 0719722990.

Fee per tender is Tanzania Shillings One Hundred Thousand Only (TZS. 100,000) and it is non-refundable.

Mode of Payment

- Pay by using Bank Account number 011103002443, Name of Account: TANZANIA RED CROSS SOCIETY.
- Visit any of National Bank of Commerce (NBC) Bank to pay.
- You will be required to present the deposit slip to Tanzania Red Cross Society in order to get receipt

which will enable to buy tender document at Procurement and Logistics Unit.
The late payment slip shall not be accepted

Edward Lowassa: Down memory lane



Following his early February 2008 resignation as Prime Minister, Lowassa (L) shares a light moment with his successor, Mizengo Pinda, shortly after the latter's swearing-in at Chamwino State House in Dodoma Region.



In the wake of his having rejoined CCM, he is welcomed to State House in Dar es Salaam in early 2019 by the ruling CCM's winner of the 2020 Presidential Election, Dr John Pombe Joseph Magufuli.



After having surprisingly crossed over from the ruling CCM, former Prime Minister Edward Lowassa receives Chadema membership card from the opposition party's national Chairman, Freeman Mbowe (L), in Dar es Salaam in 2015. This was widely seen as part of the countdown to late that year's General Election, with Lowassa as the Chadema flag bearer in the race for the Tanzanian presidency.



Lowassa addresses a 2015 General Election campaign rally as a Chadema candidate for the Tanzanian presidency.



Lowassa (L) and former president Jakaya Kikwete show Union presidential race nomination forms both had collected from the CCM headquarters in Dodoma city. This was shortly after they jetted back into Dar es Salaam's Julius Nyerere International Airport in 1995.



Lowassa (R) and his Vietnamese counterpart and host, Nguyen Tan Dung, review an honour guard during a September 5, 2006 welcoming ceremony for Lowassa in Hanoi. Lowassa was on a five-day official visit to Vietnam focused mainly on bilateral economic and trade cooperation between Tanzania and Vietnam.



After resigning as prime minister in early February 2008, Lowassa has a word with former President Jakaya Kikwete at Chamwino State House in Dodoma. It was on the occasion of Mizengo Pinda's swearing-in as Lowassa's successor.



Crowds of presumed CCM supporters welcome Lowassa (C) to Tabora Region when he was looking for the party's endorsement in the 2015 Union presidential race.



Umy Nderiananga (2nd-R), Deputy Minister of State in the Prime Minister's Office (Policy, Parliament and Coordination), presents working documents to one of the new National Economic Empowerment Council board members in Dar es Salaam on Saturday. Looking on are NEEC executive secretary Beng'i Issa (R) and administrative and human resources officer in the Prime Minister's Office, Stella Mwaiswaga. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

Election protests see two dead in Senegal

DAKAR

At least two people were confirmed dead after protests were held across Senegal on Friday.

Demonstrators were not allowed to gather, and groups were dispersed by security forces.

The victims confirmed as of yesterday, two men in their twenties, were killed in Saint-Louis and in Dakar according to local media reports.

The victim in Saint-Louis was a student. He was killed on a school campus following demonstrations in the northern city, according to a statement from the public prosecutor.

Anger has mounted since President Sall last week postponed presidential elections scheduled this month. The delay came hours before official campaigning was due to begin.

Parliament backed a delay until December and voted to keep Sall in power until his successor takes office, which is unlikely to be before early 2025.

Sall's second term was due to end on April 2nd. The president said he postponed the vote because of a dispute between parliament and the Constitutional Council over aspiring candidates who were not allowed to stand. In an interview last Friday, he said he wants to rapidly organize a national dialogue that will pave the way for a peaceful electoral process.

Opposition lawmakers have filed an appeal at the Constitutional court while presidential candidates appealed to the Supreme Court.

Senegalese in the diaspora have also taken to the streets. In France where a large community of Senegalese lives, crowds gathered on Saturday in major cities including Paris, Bordeaux (South west) and Nice (south).

'Let's focus on early detection, prevention of epilepsy'

By Correspondent Christina Mwakangale

THE Tanzania Epilepsy Association (TEA) has underscored the need to increase efforts and focus on training primary and community health workers in order to facilitate early detection and prevention of epilepsy.

Dr Patience Njenje, neurologist at the PCMC Clinic made the remarks in Dar es Salaam at the weekend when speaking to journalists about the International Epilepsy Day, which is marked today.

"For instance, SOLIDARMED (2019-2021) programme that worked

with Ulanga District on maternal health resulted in increased antenatal care of up to 96 percent and safe deliveries at health facilities by 94 percent from 60 percent home deliveries before the programme started," he said.

He said this programme resulted in reduction of intrapartum cause of epilepsy which has reduced the incidence of epilepsy in Ulanga District, Morogoro Region.

"Despite decades of health education, causes of epilepsy are still wrongly attributed to supernatural causes including witchcraft, body invasion by evil spirits and family

curse," said Dr Njenje, who spoke on behalf of TEA.

Dr Njenje said globally, epilepsy is a common, chronic brain disease affecting about 60 million people worldwide with between 34 and 76 new case per 100,000 live births being added annually with average point prevalence of 0.5-19 percent.

"In Tanzania, cumulative lifetime incidence is 2 percent. Africa has one of the highest prevalence, varying from 20 to 58 per 1000 population. Research in Tanzania has found that there are about one million people living with epilepsy in the country," he said.

Tanzania is one of the countries with some villages having the highest prevalence of up to 37.5/1000 population with 73-111 per 100,000 new cases being added annually."

According to Dr Njenje, current research findings show a decrease of prevalence from the above 70 to 20 to 15 per 1000 populations and incidence from the above 73 to about 50 per 100,000 people per year in some areas in the country.

"Over 60 percent of deaths are due to epilepsy-related complications, directly or indirectly," he said.

He said that modest reductions are due to concerted efforts by the Min-

istry of Health, through Public health programmes and professional NGOs like TEA; nonprofessional NGOs, Parents of Children with Epilepsy Tanzania (POCET) and other Tanzania epilepsy organizations in raising awareness.

In Tanzania, 45 percent of children of school age with epilepsy are not sent to school mostly due to stigma and discrimination.

"Of those who attend school, 68 percent attend regularly and only 37 percent complete primary education. Over 75 percent of patients with epilepsy in Tanzania consult traditional healers.

Dr Njenje said up to 60 percent of people with epilepsy reach a modern health facility on average of one year from the first seizure and only about 10 percent get regular and appropriate medication.

"Therefore, the diagnostic and treatment gap has remained high with a decreasing trend in some areas from 100 percent 60 years ago, to 95 percent 30 years ago and currently about 50 percent."

He said about 24 percent of people living with epilepsy have physical disability due to underlying causes of epilepsy including contractures due to burns, scars and head injuries.

Adopt e-procurement system, councils told

By Guardian Correspondent, Dodoma

Minister of State in the President's Office (Regional Administration and Local Government) Mohamed Mchengera has urged all councils in the country to promote effective use of the National e-Procurement System of Tanzania (NeST).

NeST is an electronic system designed to facilitate various aspects of procurement, including e-registration, e-tendering, e-contract management, e-catalogue and e-auction within the government.

Speaking in Dodoma at the weekend during awards ceremony organized by the Public Procurement Regulatory Authority (PPRA), Mchengera wanted the councils to learn from Kwimba District Council in Mwanza Region which emerged the best in the usage of the new system.

He acknowledged the significance of NeST system as a tool to enhance transparency, accountability and value for money which responds to the directives of President Samia Suluhu Hassan who wanted institutions to increase efficiency by investing in electronic systems.

"It is important now for all other councils to take this system very seriously as it has proved how good it is not only in addressing loopholes in public procurement but also saving time and money for customers," he said.

PPRA director general Eliakim Maswi commended Kwimba District leadership for the job well done in adopting and making effective

use of the system to bring changes in the procurement processes.

Maswi said that the use of NeST enhances bidder participation and transparency in public procurement, enabling the government to secure goods and services at market prices.

Additionally, the system registers and approves bidders based on location-specific criteria to ensure quality service delivery.

Happiness Msanga, Kwimba District Executive Director unveiled the secret behind their success in the system as investing in providing education to civil servants, which involved training the district commissioner, safety and security committee members, leaders in health centres, villages and wards as well as heads of primary and secondary schools.

"We also provided our time to educate bidders with low knowledge on the system; they were trained by our procurement officers and information technology experts," she said.

She said the system has greatly helped them a lot in many aspects of procurement, including the reduction of costs in products and reducing disputes and complaints on tenders.

"There are no more complaints on the availability of tenders as this system guarantees transparency of every process," she said.

Kwimba has emerged the best in the usage of NeST system as it announced 150 tenders and was awarded 10m/- cash prize, followed by Mbarali District which announced 141 tenders.



Bishop-Elect Dr Abel Godson Mollel is ordained and commissioned during a service held in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania's Diocese of North Central Congregation of Kimandolu in Arusha Region yesterday. Photo: VPO

PM demands speed in water harvesting infrastructure works

By Guardian Reporter

PRIME Minister Kassim Majaliwa has directed the Ministry of Water to increase pace in the construction of rainwater harvesting infrastructure to reduce shortage of the precious liquid in the country.

The infrastructure, according to Majaliwa, will greatly help improve water access during the dry season.

He also directed water basins boards in the country to increase efforts in the protection of water sources, including putting restrictions in accessing sources and declaring them as protected areas.

He made the directives in Dar es Salaam yesterday when opening the sixth meeting of the National Multi-Sector Forum on Water Resources which aims to explore strategies for

strengthening collaboration among stakeholders in Tanzania's water sector.

"Water basins boards should implement the directives issued by the Vice President on November 16, 2023 when launching a national tree planting campaign that are friendly to water sources. He directed the boards to ensure that they facilitate planting of friendly trees of at least 2.5 million per

year," he said.

The Premier also wanted the Ministry of Minerals to control mining activities in water sources and also supervise miners to protect the environment.

"The Tanzania Forest Services needs to control massive commercial tree farming in water sources and instead encourage planting of natural or fruit trees in order to protect

the environment," he said.

Earlier, Minister for Water Jumaa Awso thanked the government for releasing funds to facilitate construction of various water projects whereby protection of water resources is also given high priority.

Anthony Mavunde, Minister for Minerals who spoke on behalf of the sectoral ministers said that they will continue to work together to ensure that

the country's water resources are protected for current and future generations.

Reports show that Tanzania is endowed with relatively abundant freshwater resources but these are unevenly distributed and increasingly at risk.

Water demand in the key economic sectors of agriculture, energy and manufacturing is rising sharply alongside rising demand for domestic

consumption and for the environment.

The forum brought together senior government and business leaders, research institutions and civil society organisations and was meant to strengthen inter-sectoral collaboration, inform decision making at the national and basin levels and help shape an improved institutional framework for decision making.



Members of Fund to Care for the Sea (MKUBA) in Pangani District, Tanga region, display a dummy cheque for 10.5/- extended at the weekend by the European Union and Mwambao Coastal Community Network in Tanzania for use in empowering the group economically. Photo: Correspondent Boniface Gideon

VP wants speed in construction of girls' school in Longido

By Guardian Reporter, Longido

VICE President Dr Phillip Mpango has tasked leaders in Longido District, Arusha Region, to ensure that construction of Samia Suluhu Girls' Secondary School is completed within the agreed time.

The VP gave the directive recently during the laying of the foundation stone for the school located in Longido District.

Dr Mpango also wanted the President's Office (Regional Administration and Local Government) to collaborate with regional stakeholders to conduct estimations on the cost of building a perimeter wall for the school and teachers' houses.

He said that the absence of houses for teachers and a fence risks safety of the pupils because the school is surrounded by thick bushes with wild animals.

Dr Mpango also asked regional leadership, the public and stakeholders to ensure that more secondary schools are built in the district in the next financial year so that all registered pupils continue with their sec-

ondary education.

Mpango said that the number of children enrolled in schools in Longido District is unsatisfactory, noting that in 2014 for instance, only 49.2 percent of 2,147 children selected to join secondary education reported.

He called on parents, government officials and the general public to cooperate in fighting the challenges that impede the government's efforts to improve education sector, including ending child pregnancies.

The VP also directed the Ministry of Water to ensure that water originating from a well at Sinya Ward reaches Namanga Township as early as possible to address the supply problem facing its residents.

Dr Mpango also addressed residents of Oldonyohasi Village during his visit in Arusha Region where he condemned the acts of some guards with National Service Corporation Sole (SUMA JKT) who took the law into their hands by punishing people they caught conducting human activities in a forest reserve locate in the village.

Tarime villages plan projects as miner avails 9bn/- in CSR

By Guardian Correspondent, Tarime

ABOUT 90 villages in Tarime District, Mara Region, are set to benefit from 9bn/- provided by Barrick Gold Corporation through its North Mara Mine for implementation of various development projects.

The funds, which are part of the company's Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), will provide relief to various challenges facing the villages as approved by

ward councillors during a meeting held here at the weekend.

Simion Kiles, Tarime District Council Chairman said that 60 percent of the funds will be directed to 77 villages and 40 percent will go to 11 villages surrounding the mine.

The meeting was also attended by Tarime Rural MP Mwita Waitara and other council leaders.

"Out of the 60 percent which is directed to the 77 villages, 30 percent of will

go to council's strategic projects and the remaining 30 percent will go directly to the villages' projects," he said.

Kiles who also doubles as Nyakonga Ward Councillor urged his fellow councillors to tell the people about the projects that are implemented under CSR in their areas for them to know and thus strengthen their protection.

"Make sure that you conduct public rallies in your wards and tell citizens about these projects, it is very important

for our people to know how stakeholders such as Barrick Gold are important," he said.

Tarime District Commissioner Solomon Shati said that effectiveness of CSR projects was high and it increases from time to time where most parts are based on social initiatives which are the priorities of the citizens.

"We implement an inclusive plan; we don't engage in projects without getting views from the public and councillors.

The major focus is to ensure that all projects address people's challenges," he said.

He said that the council in collaboration with the mine has continued to improve the implementation of CSR projects.

"If you take projects implemented in 2019/2020 when CSR started and compare with the current ones, there is a big improvement as collaborations have increased and people get required service

as per set goals under CSR," he said.

Francis Uhadi, Barrick Gold North Mara public relations manager, urged the councillors to continue being good ambassadors of the projects implemented under CSR for the public to know them well.

"Currently, there are various projects worth 7.3bn/- which are being implemented in various villages in the district and we will continue to avail more funds to support development," he said.

TPA, stakeholders drafting customer charter

By Correspondent Peter Nyanje

THE Tanzania Ports Authority (TPA) is working with its stakeholders in cargo handling and transportation to prepare a customer charter which will outline responsibilities of each stakeholder.

This was said by Dr George Fasha, TPA director of marketing, when briefing journalists who visited the Port of Mtwara late last week.

"We (TPA) have organized a meeting which will bring together all stakeholders to discuss and ultimately agree on standards which we should apply when handling cargo which is transported through our ports," he said.

Dr Fasha said that the charter will describe and outline responsibilities of each stakeholder, saying this is meant to strengthen cooperation amongst and between stakeholders in doing their work.

"In addition to expedite cargo handling, this move will also end apportioning of blames when things go wrong. There are more than 30 stakeholders who work with TPA in cargo handling and transportation chain but frequently when problems occur, it is TPA which is blamed," he said adding.

"We are doing this in order to ensure that each stakeholder is abreast of what they are supposed to do and every customer will be in a better position to know who to hold accountable in case of any problem."

In another development, heavy investment at the Port of Mtwara have started to pay off following the improvement of the facility with customers from neighbouring Mozambique now using the port.

Mtwara Port Manager Ferdinand Nyathi said this during the tour, adding that the facility had just received a cargo of pipes intended for a gas transportation project in Mozambique.

"The customer decided to use our port due to deteriorating security situation in Mozambique. But that is not the only factor because the decision has also been influenced by efficiency of our facility after heavy investment which has improved operations. There are other ports which they could use as alternative but they chose Mtwara after being satisfied with its efficiency," he said.

According to Nyathi, improvement of the port has enabled it to increase amount of cargo it handles over the years.

"For instance, after construction of a new berth with the length of 300 metres and depth of 13 meters, the Port of Mtwara is now capable of handling one million tonnes of cargo annually," he said. Usually, the Port of Mtwara facilitates transportation of cargo between southern regions and other parts of the country like Dar es Salaam, Tanga and Zanzibar as well as between Tanzania and Mozambique, Comoros, India and Vietnam, to name but a few.

"And efficiency has been increasing alongside investment as data indicates. For instance in the whole of 2018/19 financial year, we handled only 106,170 tonnes of cargo but between July 2023 and January this year, we have already handled 1,016,296 tonnes of cargo. This is tremendous improvement," he said.

Main commodities transported through the port are raw cashew, cement, food items, project cargo, fuel, coal and mixed cargo. He said the new berth, which has been constructed at the cost of 158.7bn/- has also been fitted with a ship-to-shore gantry crane which is capable of loading and unloading up to 30 containers in an hour.

"We have also received a modern mobile scanner which can



Kelvin Joseph (2 nd-R) of Dar es Salaam's Science Centre explains to Education, Science and Technology minister Prof Adolf Mkenda (L) how some of fruit can serve as good conductors of electricity. It was during International Women and Girls in Science anniversary celebrations held in Arusha city yesterday. Photo: Correspondent Getryde Mpezya

OUT empowers academic staff on materials preparation

By Correspondent Mary Kadoke

THE Open University of Tanzania (OUT) has trained its academic staff on how to write teaching and learning materials as part of its strategy to improve quality of education it provides.

Prof Deus Ngaruko, OUT Deputy Vice Chancellor for academics, research and professional services spoke of the new development while closing a four-day workshop that took place in Dodoma last week.

He said that the university has

made significant progress, including developing the capacity to produce its own teaching materials.

"Since its establishment in 1992, our university has been growing steadily from increasing the number of courses to preparing its own teaching and learning materials to help improve education sector in the country," he said.

He explained that when the university started, it relied on borrowing study materials from neighboring countries such as Kenya and Nigeria.

"When we started offering training in 1994 after being registered in 1992, we initially started using materials from the University of Nairobi, Open University of Nigeria, and South Africa. Starting to prepare our own materials using our own local trainers is a significant step," he added.

He said that in the early 2000s, OUT lecturers collaborated with lecturers from the University of Dar es Salaam to prepare their own materials that still exist and have been greatly assisting students in their self-studies.

Dr Proches Ngatuni, senior lecturer at OUT, said that provided lecture on teaching materials was essential and would help them produce high quality teaching and learning materials.

Prof Raphael Gwahula, coordinator of publications in the directorate of publications, research and innovation called on OUT lecturers to adhere to a 'very good policy' present at the university to achieve the university's goal of enhancing quality education.

"Although writing and teaching learning materials is the lecturer's

responsibility, the university will provide incentives to lecturers who are more diligent in preparing such study materials," he said.

The workshop was attended by 27 academic staff from various OUT academic departments.

The Open University of Tanzania is a distance learning public university in Tanzania and the largest by the number of students. It was established by an Act of Parliament No. 17 of 1992. It is a single mode institution offering certificate, diploma and degree courses through distance learning.



Tanga Regional CCM chairman Rajabu Abdallah (L) welcomes former opposition Civic United Front Special Seats legislator Sonia Jumaa Magogo shortly after she declared that she was defecting to the ruling CCM. It was at a meeting held at Chanika in Handeni District yesterday. Right is Handeni Urban constituency MP Reuben Kwagitwa. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

Small-scale miners ought to adhere to workplace safety rules

By Correspondent Wilhelm Mulinda, Mwanza

SMALL-SCALE gold miners have been urged to strictly follow principles and procedures governing safety at workplace.

The call was made by general secretary of Tanzania Youth in Mining Ashraph Omary when speaking to journalists in Mwanza recently.

Omary said that safety of miners and their properties are worth more than gold, therefore, it is important to strictly adhere to principles and procedures of safety throughout when at work.

Also, he noted that the government should set aside mining areas for youth as they are the engine of the nation in production and building the economy.

Citing an example, he said that many youth graduate from universities with degrees in geology but stay idle in the streets instead of working in mines where their expertise are needed to push forward the economy of the nation.

Omary said that Occupational Safety and Health Authority (OSHA) as well as National Environment Management Council (NEMC) should be at the forefront to ensure that safety procedures at workplace are observed and mining activities are environmentally friendly all the time.

He noted that in most cases, officers from NEMC make interventions when environmental harm occurs while little is done to ensure safety of artisanal miners which is equally important.

Giving an example, he said that open defecation is rampant in small-scale mining areas, a practice that is contrary health guidelines and to environmental conservation.



The call was made by general secretary of Tanzania Youth in Mining Ashraph Omary when speaking to journalists in Mwanza recently

Experts to discuss role of technology in development

By Guardian Reporter

STAKEHOLDERS from the public and private institutions dealing with technology will convene this week to discuss its contribution to addressing various challenges facing Tanzanians.

The gathering dubbed 'Future Ready Summit' is scheduled to take place at the Julius Nyerere International Convention Centre in Dar es Salaam on Thursday and Friday.

Participants will discuss diverse issues affecting the country's technology, including effective policies and the future of digital innovation in businesses, services, and products to foster social and economic development.

Minister for Information, Communications and Information Technology Nape Nnauye is scheduled grace its launch.

Key topics for discussion during the conference include deliberate efforts to formulate effective and modern policies that stimulate innovation in the country. This is crucial for the overall future growth of technology and creation of a conducive creative environment for businesses and startups in the country.

The conference will also explore the impacts of using imported technological products and services, including social media platforms such as Facebook and TikTok.

The discussion will explore the opportunities available in the country for domestic and foreign investors, focusing on factors that led many to prefer

foreign products and services compared to local innovations.

Global technological advancements have revolutionized social and economic operations. As a nation, continued efforts are needed to support various organizations and sectors investing in existing and emerging technologies to efficiently and conveniently serve the population.

Joseph Manirakiza, UNDP's Funguo Tanzania project manager said: "We're participating in this meeting to further our efforts in supporting young people's innovative ventures so that they can scale up and create employment for others."

We'll have start-ups exhibiting at the pavilions and we will also participate in policy discussions on how we can have better policies to stimulate home-grown innovations."

Russel Zhao, account director at Huawei Tanzania: "We've decided to participate in this meeting because it aligns with our vision of connecting everyone with digital services from home, work and different institutions."

The conference targets innovators and young entrepreneurs seeking platforms to showcase their innovations and engage with potential investors. It also serves as a platform for major players in technology seeking innovations and eager to connect with their peers.

Additionally, it is an ideal occasion for businesses and various stakeholders interested in investing, utilizing technology in their operations, and contributing to the progress of other initiatives.

Dams in conservancies to minimise human-wildlife conflicts

By Guardian Reporter, Moshi

THE World Wildlife Fund (WWF) has facilitated construction of charco dams in conservancies to address human-wildlife conflicts around protected areas in Kilimanjaro Region.

WWF's Wildlife species expert, Prof Noah Sitati made the remarks at the weekend when speaking here during Spatial Monitoring and Reporting Tool (SMART) training for collection of natural resources data in conservation areas and communities. The training involved wildlife conservation stakeholders, including game officers.

SMART is a combination of software, training materials and patrolling standards that helps conservation managers monitor animals, identify threats such as poaching, diseases as well as making patrols more effective.

He said for the wildlife to thrive, water is very important, hence, the idea of WWF embarking on the project of constructing big charco dams so as

to provide water sources to animals in their natural habits to reduce the risk of wildlife entering human settlements and destroy water infrastructure.

"These charco dams have been constructed in areas which have a history of scarce rainfall and droughts, features which severely impact wildlife populations," he said, adding that the areas are situated in Same, Mwanza and Rombo districts.

Commenting on SMART training, Prof Sitati said it aimed at providing education to wildlife managers on how to collect data using modern technology so that they can obtain accurate data to enable relevant authorities to deal with challenges related to wildlife.

Kolady Kayanda, elephant and rhino expert in Same District said that the training will enable wildlife managers to obtain and store natural resources information securely.

"In the past, they used tools such as notebooks which sometimes led

to the loss of important information related to natural resources," he said.

This training will empower participants who are wildlife management experts in villages and wards to use modern technology to collect information and submit them to the relevant authorities in time; this will give light to the relevant authorities to deal with those challenges quickly".

Same District Wildlife Officer Thomas Katunzi thanked WWF for facilitating the training as well as other activities which are related to conservation of wildlife and other natural resources.



These charco dams have been constructed in areas which have a history of scarce rainfall and droughts, features which severely impact wildlife populations

ASPIRES Tanzania

Agricultural Sector Policy and Institutional Reforms Strengthening

SERA BORA, meaning Better Policies in Swahili, is a 5-year United States Agency for International Development (USAID) funded project awarded to Michigan State University (MSU) and implemented under the auspices of the Agricultural Sector Policy and Institutional Reforms Strengthening (ASPIRES) NGO in Tanzania, that seeks to accelerate the adoption of effective policies and programs that would promote broad-based economic growth, improve food security and nutrition and contribute to poverty reduction in Tanzania.

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ASP/PG/003/24	Office furniture, fittings, equipment, and occupational safety equipment
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ASP/PG/005/24	Newspapers and Magazines, electronic billboards
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ASP/PS/006/24	Printing services and bulk printing of various items
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CATEGORY C	
Consultancy Services	
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ASP/PS/002/24	Legal and human resource management services
ASP/PS/003/24	Media communication services and ICT-based solutions
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Email address for submission of proposals/quotes	info@aspires.or.tz
Solicitation Issue Date	
Deadline for submission of proposals	March 31st, 2024
Submissions after this date will not be considered	

Submission

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1.	Company Profile, including relevant certification
2.	At least 3 of the applicant's most recent services/work, value, and duration of contracts entered with clients (must be listed)
3.	Provide at least 3 different references from different clients (preferably most recent work)
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Submit pre-qualification documents to info@aspires.or.tz before March 31st, 2024.

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MONDAY 12 FEBRUARY 2024

**Taking A New Look
At The News
ESTABLISHED IN 1995**

We should not avoid PPP option in preference for big fire budgets

A SENSE of alarm similar to the ringing tone of a fire tender was noticeable in the National Assembly in Dodoma city towards the end of the week when a parliamentary committee said that 120 districts do not have fire and rescue centres.

That implies over 80 per cent of the country's districts going without basic infrastructure for any rescue effort in case of a fire outbreak.

The committee said in a yearly overview that 80 fire and rescue centres were found in 64 districts, which impedes the public agency from conducting its work to satisfaction.

The number and variety of gaps in equipment and personnel narrated in the committee report were such that any keen observers would wonder if whatever solutions may have been given were apt.

The principal focus of the report, or at least in relation to this aspect in the report, was the state of fire readiness countrywide.

It was reported that the Fire and Rescue Force has a shortage of 3,000 officers. It needs at least 237 fire tenders, 28 turntable ladders and 28 Hazmat vehicles special for fighting fires. It lacks 168 rescue tenders and has a shortage of 38 cranes and 38 fire rescue boats for use in lakes or at sea.

This multi-faceted discrepancy between statutory needs and what is physically available shows structural drawbacks, not budgetary lapses.

For instance, it was said that during the current financial year the force was allocated 9.93bn/- for development purposes but, with four months remaining, no such funds had been disbursed by the Treasury.

Legislators did not appear to see anything of a policy or normative issue - for instance, the relationship between infrastructure provision and efficiency - even in the absence of data in that direction.

There are many issues of operational efficiency or reliability and one needs to learn from the Controller and Auditor General to make an intelligent assessment and on the

basis of experience, Treasury places a premium on past efficiency in budgetary expenditure.

In that sense, it is tempting to concur with MPs convinced that the disbursement of development funds from the Treasury to the Home Affairs ministry and its institutions is not satisfactory.

In addition, finding the right response after observing those budgetary schedules as approved by the legislature is legally valid and incontestable.

The government hasn't said anything to the contrary, so it looks like an administrative oversight on the part of the Treasury.

Yet it is clear that the government is under pressure as to what it should urgently do and what can wait and, sadly, it doesn't always collect sufficient revenues.

The fire tenders item is non-loanable from multilateral financial agencies, as the government mostly pursues for a considerable portion of development expenditure, as it is recurrent, much like police gear.

What needs to be worked upon is whether there is a workable formula for ensuring that enough fire and rescue services are available all over the country on a sustainable basis.

The solution is plainly not a massive increase in budgets if Treasury can't meet current estimates, in which case there is need for 'Plan B'. That is surely what public-private partnership is about.

That was the spirit in which a Special Seats MP implored the government to ensure that fire and rescue centres are put up in all districts and provided with the required facilities.

There is no discernible way in which that can be done within a reasonable timeframe, but to MPs it is a no-go area, hence the common practice of sticking to government expenditure for any outlays.

It looks anathema to speak of falling back on the private sector by designing usable contractual arrangements, but it really should not be so.

Seeing PCCB suspect corruption in projects truly emits inspiring signals

WHAT would otherwise appear to be routine information about the work of the Prevention and Combating of Corruption Bureau (PCCB) whether in Dodoma Region or elsewhere is in a sense something of an important point of departure.

It is sea change from a situation where the bureau notices nasty things and re-lays them to the relevant authorities for appropriate further action, but without such action forthcoming.

The explanation would likely be that corruption is, at least in law, supposed to be an individual act while misappropriation of funds is often collective.

PCCB is reported to have spotted irregularities and 'signs' of corruption in 15 development projects valued at 4.34bn/-, nearly half of 35 development projects taking up 21.16bn/- being monitored by the bureau.

Report talk of an acting regional PCCB commander having listed the projects targeted by queries as three in the health sector, 24 in the education sector, four in the construction sector and as many in the water sector.

Chances are that those running the projects will be surprised that 'business as usual', which by some accounts has been gathering pace since the Samia leadership set in, might not quite tolerate some of emerging initiatives.

The commander explained that, as part of the oversight effort as related to school re-entry, the bureau was monitoring projects in the education sector as a key area of focus on since the region was expecting a lot of Form One pupils to be enrolled as compared to Standard One.

She said PCCB has set targets aimed at inhibiting incidents of corruption, and was thus making a keen follow-up on the construction work so that pupils are enrolled - and start classes - as expected.

Surely, those implementing the respect-

ive projects knew that the government was keen about classroom construction, but may not have reckoned with closing loopholes of embezzlement.

Those find embezzlement 'normal' are not likely to figure out that there might be a sense of urgency about classrooms, water, etc., but it will be at their own peril.

As the commander put it, there was something ad hoc about this monitoring operation, that it was linked to an apparent emergency, and noticeably it is easier to talk of education, admissions urgency, rather than health centres or for that matter water outlays in the region.

The question is whether this ability to actually 'smell' corruption and intervene as appropriate marks a new ethos in the way the bureau works or it will wither as rapidly as it came up when things normalises and pupils are enrolled again.

An idealistic approach would be to suggest that we have now arrived, but someone aptly warned in African literature in the 1970s with respect to the prevalence of corruption in Africa, saying despairingly that the vice was still rampant and it was not yet time to party.

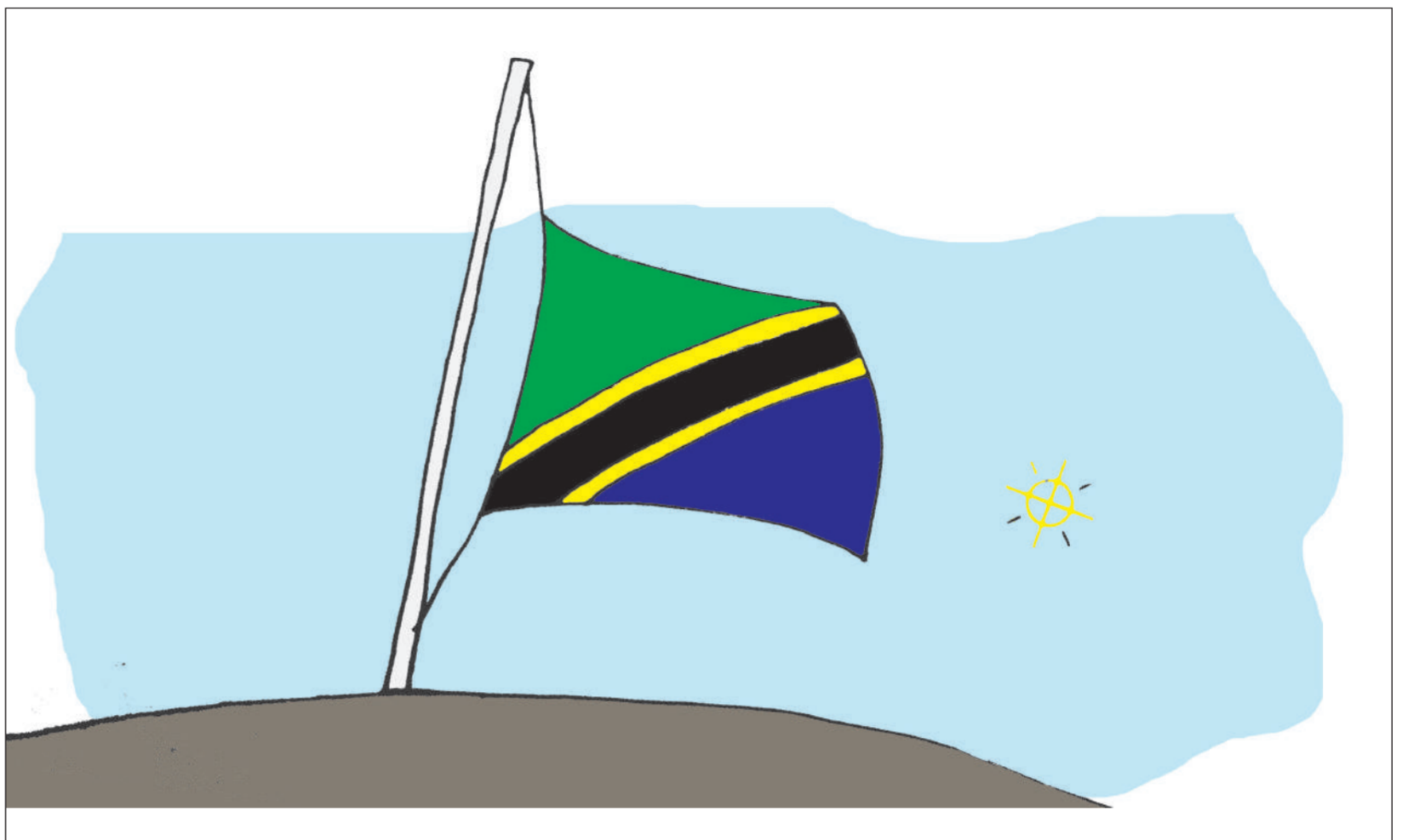


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Civil society gives Ramaphosa Sona resounding thumbs-down

By Takudzwa Pongweni

USING the story of Tintswalo, a child born at the dawn of democracy, President Cyril Ramaphosa's State of the Nation Address (Sona) touched on 30 years of democracy and the progress made by the ANC.

These are the views of a broad range of civil society organisations and experts on what his address means for different sectors including social grants, health, and youth unemployment.

Missed opportunity and vague plans for SRD grant

Ramaphosa (pictured) said the benefits of the Social Relief of Distress (SRD) grant were evident, and the grant will be extended and improved as the next step towards income support for the unemployed.

Ramaphosa also said that social assistance has been shown to increase school enrolment and attendance, lower drop-out rates, and improve the pass rate.

Isobel Frye, executive director of the Social Policy Initiative (SPI), said the words of Ramaphosa were "underwhelming at best".

"In the run-up to the 2024 Sona, many people viewed it as an opportunity for the government to end the sixth administration on a high note with the introduction of the universal basic income, which would be building on the R350 grant that was introduced in 2020 and has been renewed each year," said Frye.

"The 2024 national elections also opened the possibility that the ruling party would use Sona to provide an election promise to the majority of people whose lives seem to be in a repeat cycle of poverty and unemployment".

Frye said this came as a shock as there had been increasing suggestions from the government, particularly the Department of Social Development that universal basic income is on the table - with the Minister of Social Development commissioning studies around basic income support which recommend the roll-out of basic income towards universal income support.

"At the same time, we know that South Africa has the highest unemployment in the world and none of the employment creation programs come anywhere close to addressing the 11.7 million backlog of jobs or 800,000 jobs that are needed each year to absorb new labour market entrants," she said.

Frye said the Sona was 'very disappointing'.

"The opportunity to actually say to the nation that the government has got a plan to absorb people who have been marginalised by the economy was just completely overlooked and it seems



quite unfathomable that there was nothing more concrete than the very vague plan to extend and improve the SRD grant," she said.

Alfred Moyo from #PayTheGrants said it was a disappointing and repetitive Sona.

"There was nothing tangible that came out, especially for us as #PayTheGrants, the poor, and marginalised communities. There is nothing we can celebrate from the Sona," he said.

"They don't talk about the value of the grants, R350 nowadays has no value and the people who are being declined from accessing the grant are much higher than the ones receiving the money".

Moyo also said he was expecting to hear Ramaphosa say that the SRD grant would be phasing into the universal basic income grant.

The Institute for Economic Justice (IEJ) said it was 'disappointed and underwhelmed' by the President's Sona.

"Many of the supposedly innovative proposals announced by the President are simply a rehash of tried and failed approaches to bring about development and were lacking in detail," said the IEJ.

While the extension of social assistance to some unemployed adults through the SRD grant, and the introduction of public employment programmes have been positive in recent years, Ramaphosa sidestepped the National Treasury's continued undermining of both interventions through repeated underfunding of grants and employment and job creation initiatives.

"While the SRD grant should be received by at least 16 million people, deliberate barriers to access brought in to stay within a lower budget allocation have made it so that only around 8.5 million people receive it," said the IEJ.

Ramaphosa also did not indicate plans for the Presidential

Employment Stimulus and provided no timelines for the commitment to use the SRD as a stepping stone for a Basic Income Grant.

"Overall, Tintswalo's story, although shared by many, does not fully align with the reality of millions of young people in South Africa facing poverty, a lack of opportunity, and worsening access to essential services in the face of budget cuts, who are losing hope in the promise of 1994," said the IEJ

Nothing new for basic education sector

Equal Education's head of research, Elizabeth Biney said it was a regurgitation of previous Sona's, and while Ramaphosa spoke about pressing issues for society broadly, there was nothing new he said for the basic education sector.

"It's the same thing, nothing new, substantial, or concrete. We have heard these comments before about expanding access to Early Childhood Development [ECD] and trying to improve learning outcomes, but we don't actually know what that means or how it's going to look like because it never happens or we are still struggling to get there," she said.

Ramaphosa said moving ECD to the Department of Basic Education was one of the most important decisions, as more resources could be devoted to early childhood development.

Biney said this was not fully fledged out yet.

"On paper, they've done the transition and they have moved the responsibility across, but we are still seeing a lot of ECD centres that are 'informal' so they haven't been formalised properly and they cannot be regulated in the way that is required to ensure consistency and quality across the board," she said.

When it comes to basic education, there is a fixation on matric results and these are often used as the litmus test for the health of the sector, but Biney says this is insufficient.

"When it comes to policy priorities, they tend to be very vague or broad. They say we are going to improve educational outcomes or learning outcomes but how? We increasingly see instances where kids cannot read for meaning by the time they turn 10 so how are we improving these outcomes? The matric results alone cannot be the measure of improvement of learning

outcomes in the sector," she said.

"We need more substantive, clear policies priorities are opposed to those vague ones".

Disconnect between Ramaphosa address and realities of youth

Kristal Duncan-Williams, project lead at Youth Capital said the narrative of Tintswalo 'felt like a slap in the face'.

Ramaphosa spoke of Tintswalo, a child born at the dawn of democracy, contrasting her life with that of her parents.

"The President is disconnected from the realities of young people. We had many young people asking who is this Tintswalo because she is not us. It just felt so disconnected from the realities that young people are facing. The fact that this person [Tintswalo] studied at a TVET and just walked straight into a job is unheard of," she said.

While Ramaphosa spoke about all of the achievements of the last 30 years, he failed to address the shortcomings, glossing over the role the ANC has played in some of the challenges facing the country, said Duncan-Williams.

"He went on about the success of the Presidential Employment Stimulus and yet we haven't had the Presidential Employment Stimulus roll out this year as it should have because the Minister of Finance has not come up with a detailed budget for financing it, so it really seems like the President sings from one sheet while the Treasury sings from another," she said.

Duncan-Williams said Youth Capital would wait to see the outcome of the National Budget Speech, which will be delivered on 21 February 2024.

"The president has many promises to us before and they haven't materialised so we will be waiting with bated breath to see if the budget backs up some of the promises the president has once again made," she said.

State of the healthcare system barely addressed

Anele Yawa, general secretary of the Treatment Action Campaign said that Ramaphosa said nothing about the quality of healthcare services, instead painting a beautiful picture that many could not relate to based on their lived experiences.

"We are really disappointed in the President especially around his two paragraphs on health, because we feel that he should have said a lot about health in South Africa," he said.

Yawa said that according to the World Health Organization Global Report, in South Africa, about 280,000 people are diagnosed with tuberculosis with 54,000 people dying of tuberculosis.

The passing of a Tanzanian political titan: Lowassa's legacy and the complexities of political allegiances

By Adonis Byemelwa

IN a televised address on behalf of President Samia Suluhu Hassan, Vice President Dr Philip Mpango announced the passing of former Tanzanian Prime Minister, Edward Lowassa, at the Jakaya Kikwete Cardiac Institute (JKCI) in Dar es Salaam on February 10th, 2024, at noon.

In a striking coincidence, all five candidates who contested the 2015 and 2020 Presidential elections, including John Magufuli (CCM), Anna Mghwira (ACT-Wazalendo), Seif Sharif Hamad (CUF) and now Edward Lowassa (CHADEMA), have passed away within almost four years.

The nation is now mourning the loss of these influential political figures, leaving behind a void in the country's political landscape. Lowassa succumbed to complications related to intestinal twisting, lung issues, and high blood pressure after a prolonged illness.

Having battled health challenges since January 14, 2022, Lowassa received medical care at Jakaya Kikwete Cardiac Institute (JKCI) before seeking further treatment in South Africa, ultimately returning to JKCI. President Samia Suluhu Hassan expressed condolences to the family, relatives, and friends, declaring a five-day mourning period with flags flying at half-mast from February 10, 2024.

Edward Lowassa, born on August 26, 1953, in Ngarash Village, Monduli District, was the eldest son of Mzee Ngoyai Lowassa. His educational journey included primary school in Monduli, secondary education in Arusha, and higher studies at the University of Dar es Salaam and the University of Bath, UK.

A prominent figure in the ruling party—CCM, Lowassa served in various capacities, including as the Chief Executive Officer of the Arusha International Conference Centre (AICC). He entered politics, becoming the Member of Parliament for Monduli in 1990 and later holding ministerial positions.

Notably, Lowassa served as the Prime Minister of Tanzania from 2005 until his resignation in February 2008 amidst the Richmond scandal. Despite the controversy, he continued to be a significant political figure, winning the Monduli parliamentary seat in 2010 with a resounding 90.93 percent of the votes.

In his final days, Lowassa, once in the political limelight, maintained a subdued presence, sparking occasional speculation about his health. His legacy, shaped by contributions to Tanzanian politics, leaves an indelible mark, symbolizing the end of an era.

Lowassa, survived by his wife Regina and five children, leaves behind a legacy shaped by his contributions to Tanzanian politics. His passing marks the end of an era in Tanzanian political history.

He began his career as Prime Minister under President Kikwete from 2005 to 2008. However, numerous scandals forced him to step down and tender his resignation.

Following his resignation, President Kikwete was forced to dissolve his cabinet, as required by the constitution, and



Chadema and was nominated as the flagbearer for the Coalition of People's Constitution (Umoja wa Katiba ya Wananchi - Ukawa). Despite his efforts, he was defeated by the late Dr John Magufuli.

During his campaign, Lowassa did not hide his sentiments. He expressed disappointment on the podium, stating that he had expected President Kikwete to support him within the party in 2015, but Kikwete had turned against him. The rift between them ultimately paved the way for Dr. Magufuli to become the President.

Lowassa was quoted saying that he had anticipated Kikwete's support based on their agreement in 2005, where Kikwete supported him, and that's why he did not oppose Kikwete in 2010, believing that Kikwete would reciprocate in 2015.

After being defeated by Dr. Magufuli, amid Ukawa's rejection of the election results and calls for massive nationwide protests, Lowassa played a calming role. He stated that taking to the streets would lead to shedding innocent Tanzanian blood, and he discouraged any violence.

Responding to those who wanted him, Chadema, and Ukawa to protest, Lowassa remarked that doing so would result in spilling the blood of innocent Tanzanians. He emphasized the need to reach the State House without causing harm to the people, trusting that God would help them.

He was quoted saying, "We will reach the State House without shedding anyone's blood at any time, and God will help us. I tell all those who are dissatisfied, you know the power of the people, but do not use it to harm others."

Lowassa's political journey marked by his shift from the opposition to the ruling party and vice versa, reflects the complexities and consequences of political turncoats. His return to CCM in 2019 underscores the fluid nature of political allegiances, with individuals adapting to the changing landscape. However, this maneuvering can have lasting implications on one's credibility and public trust.

The oscillation between political affiliations raises questions about consistency, ideological commitment, and the potential impact on governance. While politicians may argue that such moves are strategic, critics often perceive them as opportunistic, eroding public confidence and contributing to the cynicism surrounding political figures.

Lowassa's story serves as a reminder of the challenges posed by frequent party switches, highlighting the need for a principled and transparent political culture.

The broader effects of political turncoats extend beyond the individual, influencing public perception, trust in political institutions, and the overall health of a democratic society. In the end, the legacy of political turncoats leaves an indelible mark on the political landscape, shaping the narratives surrounding individuals and their contributions to the public sphere.



The two political heavyweights, who had been allies in 1995 and 2005, were now in direct competition, with tensions escalating. In the end, Lowassa lost the internal party battle.

quickly formed a new one under Mizengo Pinda as the new Prime Minister.

Lowassa's final days were marked by a noticeable absence from the spotlight, with speculation about his ill health from time to time.

Edward Ngoyai Lowassa was born on August 26th, 1953, in Monduli, Arusha, Tanzania. He belongs to the Baby Boomers generation, born during a period of post-war population growth. His father served as the supervisor of the livestock slaughterhouse in Monduli and also worked as a colonial government caterer in the Arusha district.

Edward, the fourth child in the family, showed early signs of artistic talent during his primary school days at Monduli School (now Moringe School), named after former Prime Minister Edward Moringe Sokoine. Sokoine, a prominent figure in Tanzanian politics, tragically died in a car accident in 1984.

Edward excelled in his primary education and attended Arusha Secondary School, graduating in 1971. He continued his education at Milambo High School in Tabora from 1972 to 1973, achieving excellent results in his O-level exams. Subsequently, he pursued a bachelor's degree in Drama at the University of Dar es Salaam, graduating in 1977.

Continuing his academic journey, Lowassa earned a postgraduate de-

gree in Development Studies from the University of Bath in the UK in 1984. His academic achievements laid the foundation for a successful political career.

Edward Lowassa's political journey began in the 1970s when he joined the Tanganyika African National Union (TANU) youth wing. With the formation of the Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM) in 1977, he transitioned to the new political landscape. Lowassa's involvement in both politics and the military marked his early years in public service.

In 1989, President Ali Hassan Mwinyi appointed Lowassa as the Chief Executive Officer of the Arusha International Conference Centre (AICC), a position he held until 1990. His leadership skills were further recognized when he was appointed as a Member of Parliament and later served as the Minister of State in the Office of the Prime Minister and the First Vice President.

Lowassa's notable achievements include his role in the Tanzanian military during the conflict with Idd Amin's Uganda in 1978 and his instrumental contributions to major projects such as the water supply project from Lake Victoria to Shinyanga, Simiyu, and Tabora.

In 1995, Lowassa made a bid for the CCM presidential candidacy but faced challenges during the party's selection process. Subsequently, he

won the parliamentary seat for Monduli and later served as the Minister of Water and Livestock Development in President Benjamin Mkapa's administration.

Lowassa's political prominence reached new heights during the 2005 General Election when he played a key role in Jakaya Kikwete's presidential campaign. After the election, Kikwete appointed Lowassa as the Prime Minister, a position he held for two years and two months before resigning amid allegations related to a controversial energy contract with Richmond Development Company.

Despite the resignation, Lowassa remained active in Tanzanian politics. Heading into the 2015 general elections, it is said that within CCM, President Kikwete had aligned himself with the then Minister of Foreign Affairs, Bernard Membe, while Lowassa garnered support from various networks, including Friends of Lowassa.

The two political heavyweights, who had been allies in 1995 and 2005, were now in direct competition, with tensions escalating. In the end, Lowassa lost the internal party battle.

Lowassa's name was dropped early in the candidate selection process, and he did not make it to the top five contenders. However, determined to pursue the presidency, he switched allegiance to the opposition party

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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 UMJUAVYO 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



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The Israel-Gaza war: Death and Israel's search for 'total victory'

By Jeremy Bowen

I would rather be writing this story in the Gaza Strip, not Jerusalem. After many years of covering wars, since El Salvador in 1989, I'm convinced that nothing beats first-hand reporting.

Unfortunately, in this terrible war, international journalists can't do that. Israel and Egypt, the two countries that control Gaza's borders, do not want us in there, reporting freely. Israel allows some closely supervised visits with its army. I have been on only one, back in November.

Since we cannot get in, we rely on Palestinian journalists who can't get out. I have huge admiration for their courage and dedication to truthful reporting.

Fortunately, in the modern world it is impossible to seal a war off. That is because ordinary people can film with a phone - and with a few clicks, post their pictures online. We can talk to them too, if communications haven't been cut. Israel and Hamas upload their own videos. Everything must be verified and checked, especially now that artificial intelligence is much easier to use.

With all those constraints in mind, this is how the war looks on a February day from Jerusalem.

The humanitarian crisis
Just after Hamas attacked Israel on 7 October, Yoav Gallant, Israel's defence minister, announced: "We are putting a complete siege on Gaza... No electricity, no food, no water, no gas - it's all closed."

"We are fighting human animals," he added, "and we are acting accordingly."

Under pressure from US President Joe Biden, Israel now allows limited supplies of food, water and medicine into Gaza. But it continues to restrict the entry of relief supplies into Gaza and the movement of relief convoys inside the Strip.

Israel claims what goes in is adequate. International aid groups say on top of the fact that innocent civilians in Gaza are being killed and wounded, they are also being starved and deprived of medical treatment. The Geneva Convention says that punishing civilians for crimes they did not commit amounts to collective

punishment, which is a war crime.

The Americans have since 7 October urged Israel to respect the laws of war in Gaza, specifically to stop killing so many Palestinian civilians. The fact that American officials, from President Biden downwards, keep repeating and strengthening their criticisms shows they believe Israel has ignored them.

On his visit here this week, the US Secretary of State Antony Blinken issued his most stinging public criticism yet of Israel's conduct of the war. The brutality of Hamas attacks on Israel, he said, cannot be used to justify brutalising Palestinians.

"Israelis were dehumanized in the most horrific way on October 7," he told a news conference in Tel Aviv. "The hostages have been dehumanised every day since. But that cannot be a license to dehumanise others."

"The overwhelming majority of people in Gaza had nothing to do with the attacks of October 7," Blinken went on. "The families in Gaza whose survival depends on deliveries of aid from Israel are just like our families. They're mothers and fathers, sons and daughters, who want to earn a decent living, send their kids to school, have a normal life. That's what they are. That's what they want."

Even so, the US has chosen not to attach conditions to its huge military and diplomatic support for Israel. It continues to supply Israel with weapons, even though it does not approve of the way that they are being used.

Philippe Lazzarini, the commissioner general of UNRWA, the UN agency that is leading the humanitarian operation in Gaza, issued his own warning about the long-term consequences of the war for young people in Gaza when I spoke to him this week.

"I'm extremely worried," he said. "They're all deeply traumatised by this unprecedented war. They're living in absolutely miserable conditions. Now, if the war ends tomorrow, our first priority should be to find ways to bring these children back into an education system...or we will just be sowing the seed of

more resentment and hate in the future."

Israel will not be impressed by Lazzarini's comments. It has made serious allegations against UNRWA, accusing it of aiding and abetting Hamas. Lazzarini has been fighting to save the agency since Israel presented a dossier to the Americans saying about a dozen UNRWA staff took part in the 7 October attacks.

UNRWA sacked the accused men and is trying to reassure the 16 major donor countries who have suspended its funding. Lazzarini says he takes the allegations very seriously, is determined to root out any Hamas sympathisers, but Israel still has not given him the dossier it sent to the US. Israel believes UNRWA is rotten to the core. The crisis surrounding the agency is without a doubt another impediment to the aid operation.

Northern Gaza is virtually inaccessible for the UN and other aid organisations. Information has trickled out, with local people living in the ruins reporting general starvation and widespread malnutrition among children that is likely to have life-long health consequences for those who survive.

We get more information from southern Gaza, where getting on for two million people are trying to stay alive. Some 1.4 million are in Rafah, hard up against the Egyptian border wire. Most people live in tents made of plastic sheeting, next to pools of sewage.

Unlike journalists, aid workers from the organisations involved in the relief effort can go in and out of Gaza. I've spoken to a range of UN officials with decades of experience in war zones. All have said it is the worst they have ever seen. One told me: "I've never seen anything of this size and scale and depth."

Another said Gaza was the most dangerous and difficult place he had ever been, not just because of Israeli bombing, but because law and order had broken down. He said: "There are many guns in Gaza, but as well as that, there are lots of big angry men with clubs." The UN was moving aid convoys in the small hours of the morning to

stop them being robbed.

The war in Gaza

Palestinians in Rafah are approaching panic about a ground assault into the town by Israeli troops. A colleague from BBC Arabic spoke to Jabr al-Burdini, a middle-aged man in Rafah who had just been digging dead children out of the ruins of a neighbour's house.

"If there were Israeli operations here, thousands of people would be killed. The kids are terrified and so are the adults. Look at the children. They can't sleep."

Lazzarini told me that a major Israeli assault on Rafah would "add an additional apocalyptic layer in the Gaza Strip".

He said that some 5 percent of the population - about 100,000 people - had in the last four months either been killed, wounded or had disappeared, most likely dead under the rubble.

"And then you have the rest of the population now being concentrated almost in the open air in Rafah. And then you conduct a military operation in this place, you can only add an additional disastrous layer of tragedy. And this needs absolutely to be avoided."

Air strikes already kill many people in Rafah, but despite American calls for restraint, Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu says he has ordered the army to attack the town once it has a plan to move Palestinian civilians out of Rafah. Since nowhere in Gaza is safe, residents do not find that reassuring. Perhaps Mr Netanyahu is trying to mollify Biden.

Another potential audience might be the International Court of Justice in The Hague, which has ruled that Israel faces "plausible" allegations that it is committing the crime of genocide against Palestinians in Gaza.

Israel has set a high bar for victory that might be unattainable, even over many months. It wants to wipe out Hamas, restore Israel's security and free the hostages Hamas took on 7 October.

Many of the families of Israelis held in Gaza and their supporters

Attack: Palestinians survey the rubble after Israeli attacks in Deir al Balah

do not buy the prime minister's argument that only force will free the hostages. The want a ceasefire deal, as they fear that the longer the war continues, the less likely that they will ever see them again.

Israel has inflicted considerable damage on Hamas, but it has not broken its capacity to fight. A senior Western intelligence official told me that Israel had killed about one-third of Hamas forces and destroyed about one-third of the tunnel network that makes Hamas such an obdurate enemy.

Netanyahu has also said Israel would like to kill Hamas leaders, starting with Yahya Sinwar, the man who it is believed instigated and directed the 7 October attacks. So far, Sinwar and his closest lieutenants are believed to be alive, perhaps living in the tunnel network shielded by Israeli hostages.

The war in the wider Middle East

In four months, the shockwaves of the war in Gaza have spread out across the Middle East. Iran's network of allies, which it calls the axis of resistance, is engaged in the wider war.

After three US soldiers were killed in Jordan by a militia trained and funded by Iran, the US started a rolling programme of air strikes in Syria and Iraq. With the UK, it has also bombed the Houthis in Yemen who are attacking shipping in the Red Sea. Hawks in the US and Israel want the American military to bomb Iran.

The Houthis and Iran's other allies and proxies say they are acting in solidarity with the Palestinians in Gaza. The most powerful ally of Iran is Hezbollah in Lebanon. Its border war with Israel is getting more serious and more intense by the day. Pressure is growing inside Israel to send troops into southern Lebanon.

The Americans are trying to construct a path to a peaceful future in the Middle East. Secretary of State Blinken has laid out a vision of Saudi Arabia normalising relations with Israel, if the Israelis allow the Palestinians to have an independent state of their own. Prime Minister Netanyahu says Palestinian independence will not happen. He insists Israel will press on until it achieves "total victory".

This war goes on and there is no immediate prospect of a ceasefire. The longer it continues, the harder it will be to control the consequences of what is happening in Gaza.

Africa's absence as permanent member of UNSC 'flagrant injustice' - Guterres

By Thalif Deen

AS the UN continues its never-ending saga on the reform of the Security Council (UNSC), one of the political anomalies that keeps cropping up is the absence of Africa, among the five permanent members (P5)—a privilege bestowed only on the US, UK, France, China and the Russian Federation.

The African continent, which has been shut out, consists of 55 states with a total population of over 1.4 billion people. Providing a list of his "priorities for 2024", Secretary-General Antonio Guterres singled out the reform of the Security Council—a lingering issue in an institution which is nearly 79 years old—when he told delegates on February 7, "it is totally unacceptable that the African continent is still waiting for a permanent seat".

Guterres said: "And indeed our world badly needs: Reform of the Security Council; Reform of the international financial system; the meaningful engagement of youth in decision-making; a Global Digital Compact to maximize the benefits of new technologies and minimize the risks and an emergency platform to improve the international response to complex global shocks."

Responding to a question at a press conference during the South Summit in Uganda last month, Guterres was critical of what he called "a clear injustice, a flagrant injustice, that there is not one single African permanent member of the Security Council". And, he said, one of the reasons was that most of the countries of Africa were not independent when the UN institutions were created.

"But in recent public declarations, I've seen the permanent members being favourable to at least one African permanent member. United States said so, the Russian Federation said so, China has been positive in this regard, UK and France too".

"So, for the first time, I'm hopeful that at least a partial reform of the UN Security Council could be possible for this flagrant injustice to be corrected, and for Africa to have at least one permanent member in the Security Council".

But it is not guaranteed, he cautioned, because nothing depends on the Secretary-General. "It depends exclusively on Member States, on the General Assembly, but for the first time I think there are reasons to be hopeful."

Meanwhile, the Latin America and Caribbean (LAC) region, which has over 670 million people, with 12 Latin American countries and 21 self-governing territories, mostly in the Caribbean, is also missing from permanent membership in the UNSC.

Martin S. Edwards, Associate Dean for Academic and Student Affairs, School of Diplomacy and International Relations, at Seton Hall University in New Jersey, told IPS: "I think that we should be talking seriously about issues of representation in the Security Council, but the challenge is how to move from rhetoric to a serious proposal".

There are different ways to frame this, he pointed out. "The G20 added the African Union (AU) as a member, and of course, we could also think about regional seats along the lines of the Human Rights Council. But this having been said, the key issue is what is the ask."

The US position has been to increase regional representation without a veto. "I realize that this might not go as far as advocates would want, but since there is already a significant movement underway to delegitimize the veto, insisting on the veto would put those efforts at cross purposes."

But the bigger and unaddressed challenge for all proposals for reform is that they do not respect the realities of US domestic politics.

The US Senate would have to approve any proposed change to the charter, and the window for any proposed reform is now largely shut because of the realities of the US electoral calendar, declared Edwards.

Nursing institute ushers in hope for vulnerable rural girls in Bangladesh



Two sisters, Sweety Akter (L) and Shikha Akter (R), are enrolled in Moimuna Nursing Institute. Sweety has already completed a nursing diploma with financial support from the institute, and Shikha is now a second-year student

THAKURGAON, Bangladesh

AFTER passing her secondary school certificate (SCC) in 2019, Sweety Akter went door-to-door to collect money to enroll in a college, but she wasn't successful.

Born to an extremely poor family in Fultala village under Baliadangi upazila in Thakurgaon district, Akter saw her dream of studying fading as she was unable to enroll in a college because of a lack of funding, despite her good results at school.

"I went to many places but did not get the opportunity for admission. I did not have the financial support to study at a private college or an educational institute."

Then Sweety's fortune changed.

"I luckily got a chance to study for a nursing diploma free of charge at Moimuna Nursing Institute (MNI)," she told IPS.

Two sisters, Sweety Akter (left) and Shikha Akter (right) enrolled in Moimuna Nursing Institute, Sweety has already completed a nursing diploma with financial support from the institute and Shikha is now a second-year student. Credit: Rafiqul Islam/IPS

Two sisters, Sweety Akter (left) and Shikha Akter (right),

are enrolled in Moimuna Nursing Institute. Sweety has already completed a nursing diploma with financial support from the institute, and Shikha is now a second-year student. Credit: Rafiqul Islam/IPS

Explaining her financial hardships, the 22-year-old Akter said her father is a gambler who had sold all the family's assets to gamble, and he had even sold their lone home-stand, where they are currently living.

"My father does not give me and my younger sister any money for education. My mother works as domestic help at the houses of people and is bearing the costs for our four-member family," she said.

Sweety said that if she had not had the opportunity to enroll at MNI, it would have been impossible for her to pursue tertiary education, and she would have been forced to marry.

Overcoming all the odds and passing the nursing diploma, she is now pursuing an internship at Rangpur Medical College and Hospital (RMCH) with financial support from the institute, which paves the way for former students to get jobs at hospitals.

Shikha Akter (19) enrolled in Moimuna Nursing Institute in Thakurgaon, northwest Bangladesh, to pursue a diploma in nursing science and

midwifery with the encouragement of her sister, Sweety.

Shikha said she enrolled in the institute at a minimum fee, and now she is enjoying more facilities than other students as her elder sister also studied there.

"I am studying the nursing diploma and staying at the MNI's hostel, which makes my life easy. I want to be a good nurse and serve people," she added.

Joya Rani, a 20-year-old girl from poverty-stricken Kaliganj village under Deviganj upazila, also studied the nursing diploma with financial support from the institute.

"My father is physically challenged, so he cannot work. My mother is the only breadwinner for our family, and she supports the family by rearing cattle. That's why she cannot give me any money (for study)," she told IPS.

Joya, who is currently doing an internship at RMCH, said she received a stipend of Taka 2,000 (USD 19) from the institute over the past two years, and if she had not received the stipend, it would not have been possible for her to continue studying.

Moimuna Nursing Institute, located 460 kilometers away from the capital Dhaka, is a non-profit approved by the Bangladesh Council of Nursing and Midwifery and offers a

three-year diploma in nursing for about USD 1,500, which includes tuition fees, accommodation, uniforms, and books.

Thakurgaon is a poor district in Bangladesh, with a poverty rate of 36.7 percent against 18.7 percent at the national level. Of them, about 19.7 percent of people in the district live in extreme poverty, which prevents many from continuing their education, particularly the girls.

Since the start of its journey in 2019-20, the MNI has been providing financial support, including stipends and need-based scholarships, for students coming from underprivileged families.

MNI's managing director, Dr. MA Sayed, said the institute authorities are providing a handful of scholarships, with three poor students receiving stipends in each batch so that they can continue their nursing education.

In distributing scholarships and stipends, a committee of the institute inspects the houses of their students. If the committee finds evidence of acute financial hardship, the MNI provides support.

Even after completing the nursing diploma, the institute's support continues, and it facilitates sending the former students to public hospitals to do internships.

"During their internship, we

are providing financial support for some selected poor students so that they can accomplish their goals," Sayed said.

He said the MNI provides a residential facility for its students to ensure a smooth environment for education, resulting in a 100 percent pass rate, which makes it the first in Thakurgaon district.

"We also carry out career counseling for students to encourage them to consider a higher education in nursing," he added.

Teachers, students and staff of Moimuna Nursing Institute pose for a photo in front of its main building on the campus. Credit: Rafiqul Islam/IPS

Teachers, students, and staff of Moimuna Nursing Institute pose for a photo in front of its main building on the campus. Credit: Rafiqul Islam/IPS

Nirmola Toppa, mother of Nila Kispotta, who recently completed a nursing diploma from the MNI, said after her daughter passed the SSC examination, she tried to marry her off because she could not afford to pay for her daughter's educational expenses.

But a scholarship meant Nila could complete her diploma, and she is now getting a stipend of Taka 2,000 (USD 19) per month from MNI to complete her six-month internship at RMCH.

Nirmala said Nila received Taka 6,000 (USD 57) to enroll in the internship too.

Founder of Moimuna Nursing Institute, Dr. Saifullah Syed, said in Thakurgaon, many rural underprivileged girls and those coming from minority and ethnic communities pass the entrance exam (SSC) to enroll in nursing institutes but do not enroll due to financial constraints.

Also, there are many who could qualify but do not take the entrance exam, thinking that they may not be able to afford the educational expenses to become nurses and midwives," Syed told IPS.

"That's why I founded Moimuna Nursing Institute to ensure that qualified poor rural girls, particularly those coming from minority and ethnic communities, get the opportunity to become nurses and midwives," Syed told IPS.

He asserted that his institute has established an endowment fund under the control of a Board of Trustees, provides need-based scholarships, and arranges sponsors.

Zambian artist inspires younger women to overcome stereotypes

KAPIRI MPOSHI

ELIZABETH Banda, 53, from Kapiri Mposhi, central Zambia, is making waves because of her artworks.

Banda's artist journey began during her elementary school years over three decades ago. She vividly recalls the first time she laid her hands on clay, shaping it into various objects under the guidance of her teacher.

"I enjoyed making things from clay. As a young teenager, I spent a lot of time perfecting my skills and looked forward to producing great pieces of art," she said.

However, life's responsibilities took precedence, forcing her to set aside her artistic pursuits to prioritize being a homemaker. Banda married young and

went on to have eight children, seven of whom have since died.

Nonetheless, fate had a different plan in store for her. An encounter with women involved in making clay pots and simple ornaments about a decade ago rekindled her passion.

Armed with her innate talent, Banda began her artistic talent anew. She turned part of her home into a makeshift art studio, where she spends much of her time making intricate objects from clay or cement mixed with sand.

"I realized that if I could create something out of earth, I could bring joy into people's lives and support my family at the same time," Banda said while working on a figure depicting a learner reading a book. The piece was commissioned by a school

in the town of Kapiri Mposhi.

Her artworks, which cost 100-1,000 Zambian kwacha (about 3.7-37 U.S. dollars) apiece, range from figurines to intricate vessels, she said.

Banda's craftsmanship has caught the attention of many in Kapiri Mposhi, and her fame as a talented artist is inspiring young women and girls to consider venturing into the traditionally male-dominated art scene, including sculpting.

"Until now, I had never come across a woman who makes sculptures," said 16-year-old Cecilia Mwewa. "This has encouraged me to occupy spaces dominated by men."

Mary Mayondi, 17, lauded Banda for making a mark as the only female artist in Kapiri Mposhi in-

volved in making life-size objects.

"Because of her, I am currently undertaking online lessons in art and sculpture-making. I intend to use the skills to earn a living," Mayondi said.

Kapiri Mposhi Royal Academy, one of the schools that have since engaged Banda to put up a life-size figure to add beauty to the surroundings, said the school administration has been inspired by Banda to introduce art as a subject.

"The idea is to equip learners with practical skills to enable them to be creative and possibly use art to earn a living, just as is the case with Banda," School director Martin Simusamba said. "Girls will be particularly encouraged to take up art to exploit their potential."



Artist Elizabeth Banda works on a life-size figure in Kapiri Mposhi, central Zambia

Drug addiction: NGO embarking on harm reduction initiatives, stamping out stigma

By Correspondent Sabato Kasika

DRUG Addiction amongst youth has been a major challenge especially in urban areas such as Dar es Salaam, Arusha, Mwanza, Tanga, Pwani, Morogoro, Dodoma, and Mbeya.

Official statistics from the Drug Control and Enforcement Authority (DCEA) released in June 2022, showed an increased number of drug users whereas nearly 905,902 individuals sought treatment at Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) clinics in 2021.

The clinics support treatment against substance disorders such as heroin addiction and other comorbidities that People who use drugs (PWUDs) suffer.

The alarming statistics highlights the pervasive nature of the problem, calling for immediate actions by both the government and stakeholders to enhance provision of harm reduction services, counselling, substance abuse recovery programs and economic empowerment to recovering addicts.

Beyond the immediate challenge of substance abuse (including marijuana, khats, heroin, cocaine and alcohol) there is another problem—societal stigma. However, most of the addicts remain unaware of their rights in such circumstances, compounding the issue.

In Bagamoyo District, Coastal Region, the Life and Hope Rehabilitation Organization (LHRO), a registered Non-Government Organization with headquarters Mwanamala, Kinondoni District, Dar es Salaam Region has come up with a program to reduce harm reduction among drug addicts as well as minimizing societal stigma.

In Bagamoyo, the project will be implemented in five wards—Dunda, Magomeni, Nianjema, Kisutu, and Kiromo. It also runs a 'Rehab Centre' at Makarani Street in Dunda ward. Established in 2003, the NGO has offices in Mbeya and Mwanza regions.

To execute the project, 'Strengthening the capacity of People who use drugs (PWUDs) in fighting stigma and discrimination, LHRO engages diverse groups of educators, including doctors, social welfare officers, legal experts, law enforcers, local government leaders, clerics, healthcare providers, police and peer educators who were drug addicts.

LHRO Executive Director, Al-Karim Bhanji said the one year initiative is funded by the Ambassador's Fund for



The pervasive societal stigma faced by addicts, is sometimes self-imposed, he said, noting that in such an environment, addicts needs psychology services.

HIV/AIDS Relief (AFHR) supported by the US President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR).

"By strengthening access to justice and critical social services to drug addicts as well as legal aid provisions and stakeholders' engagement, we are able to address the multifaceted needs of our community," explained Bhanji.

He said the number of wards selected for the project is limited depending on allocated budget of 50m/-. To start with, he said they will conduct public meetings at each of the villages whereas people will be imparted with enough knowledge on the impacts of using drugs, a move expected to raise awareness among addicts, families, and communities.

"The engagement of social welfare officers is meant to ensure drug addicts are provided with psychology services while doctors will emphasize

the importance for them to enrol at MAT clinics. Legal professionals including court officials and police officers will provide insights into relevant laws," elaborated Bhanji.

The pervasive societal stigma faced by addicts, is sometimes self-imposed, he said, noting that in such an environment, addicts needs psychology services.

"We expect doctors to educate drug addicts on the importance of enrolling for methadone treatment at MAT clinics as well as ensuring consistent treatment," he added, noting that legal aid service providers will be available to assist addicts who sometimes commit offences and are imprisoned or taken to custody.

He stressed that legal service providers also entitled to ensure that those remanded or jailed have access to methadone medication at hospitals.

He said there has been complaints that some jailed addicts are denied chances to go for methadone medication.

According to Bhanji, the educative programs will bring together all the stakeholders including police officers and law enforcement agencies to ensure they understand the importance of methadone treatment to addicts, thus allow them to attend clinics.

"We have a number of former drug addicts who are now working as peer educators. They help us in educating addicts by sharing their stories and how they managed to overcome addiction," he added.

A Psychologist, Delvina Maleko who is also the Bagamoyo District Social Welfare Officer, emphasized the need for families and the society to stop stigma against addicts.

Maleko noted that there are many

individuals who consider drug addicts as worthless members of society or family units. The misconception which is dangerous and result in individuals taking desperate actions, including suicide, as they grapple with feelings of disapproval and lack of acceptance.

She underscored the need to educate families on the detrimental effects of drug abuse, enabling them to exercise vigilance and nurturing future leaders who are either recovering from addiction or have abstained from drugs.

"We commend efforts by stakeholders including LHRO. It is important for us to continue educating the public on the negative impacts of using drugs. Failure to educate people, we will be building a nation where young individuals can hardly contribute to the country and their personal development," she explained.

"Addicts must receive education encompassing safe methadone usage, awareness of their legal rights and understanding the consequences of drug abuse. It is crucial that families and society engages actively in the educational process," Maleko said.

Dr Kandi Lussingu, the Bagamoyo District Medical Officer commended efforts to offer education to addicts, saying the move will save a number of young individuals from engaging in substance abuse.

"These young people are the future of our nation; they deserve support and guidance from their families and communities. Stigmatization and isolation would further contribute into them taking actions that are dangerous to their lives. They only need to be educated to refrain from using drugs," said Dr Lussingu.

The UNODC, 2016 indicates that over 28 million people in Africa are using illegal drugs, this is due to easy availability of the illegal drugs and drug trafficking activities. Common illegal drugs used in Africa include; khat, heroin, cocaine and cannabis. Youth have been identified as the most vulnerable group and highly affected.

Drug abuse results in economic, social and health effects including; mental retardation, lung diseases, heart diseases and Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV), disorders in adolescence, young adults and the general public. Several awareness and initiatives programs were done by the government and private sectors.

Zimbabwe nurses seek better conditions abroad but fearing for patients at home

By Clemence Manyukwe

IN December 2021, Setfree Mafukidze, his wife and four children moved to Somerset in the United Kingdom, joining a long list of health workers who have fled Zimbabwe to escape economic and political turmoil.

For four years, he had worked as the head nurse at the only clinic in Chivu, a town about 140km (90 miles) south of Harare.

By his estimate, he cared for more than 10,000 people there. Despite earning only about \$150 a month, he would often dip into his own pockets to pay his patients' bills.

Once, a patient with meningitis needed \$200 to buy lifesaving medication, a huge sum in a country where a third of the population live on no more than \$1 a day. Neither the patient nor his mother had the funds, so Mafukidze appealed to well-to-do Zimbabweans in the diaspora to help. After they did, he drove back and forth to the capital, Harare - a 12-hour journey in all - to get the drugs.

For Zimbabweans who saw people like Mafukidze as heroes, their departures are seen as a great loss.

"He would attend to people at any given time during emergencies and could make follow-ups at our homes," said Tawanda Mabuwa, a Chivu resident. "When my sister who was his patient died after he departed for the UK, he sent his wife with clothes for Christmas for the two orphans my sister left. He



Nurses protest against poor pay and working conditions at a government hospital in Harare, Zimbabwe Photo: AP

was just good, and we keep on losing our best."

Fleeing Zimbabwe

After Brexit in 2016 and COVID-19 four years later led to a shortage of skilled professionals in the UK, the country eased entry rules, leading to an increase in work visas issued to foreign health and social care workers.

From September 2022 to Sep-

tember 2023, 21,130 Zimbabweans were given visas to work in the UK, according to Home Office data. It was a 169 percent increase from the same period the year before, putting Zimbabwe among three countries - alongside Nigeria and India - with the largest number of citizens heading to the UK on this visa.

In November, the World Health Organization said the number of

public sector health workers in Zimbabwe had been reduced by at least 4,600 since 2019 despite increased recruitment.

Five health workers said they would jump at an opportunity to work abroad. Dozens of WhatsApp groups have been created with those who have left offering tips to members who are looking to leave or are in the process of doing so.

"Nurses in Zimbabwe are not paid well enough to stick around when an opportunity to leave arises. It's all about remuneration. It's all about conditions of service," said Mafukidze, who decided to leave to give his children better opportunities and advance himself academically.

A healthcare worker who spoke on the condition of anonymity to Al Jazeera said he used to earn the equivalent of \$150 per month but now gets 3,000 pounds (\$3,782) per month after taxes.

Beyond pay, many healthcare workers in the African nation said they opted to migrate because of the general state of the healthcare sector. Health training schools are ill-equipped and have too few tutors. Hospitals lack functioning equipment and have inadequate drug supplies and poor working conditions.

The situation has been worsened by a deepening economic crisis that President Emmerson Mnangagwa has been unable to halt since toppling Robert Mugabe in November 2017 in a military coup.

"At the moment, there are shortages of staff, leading to burnout to those who are there. ... The buildings are dilapidated. People need competitive salaries, and the issue of the economy must be addressed," said Enock Dongo, president of the Zimbabwe Nurses Association.

Zimbabweans living in border towns are increasingly crossing to neighbouring South Africa and Zambia for healthcare. In 2022, an official in South Africa's Limpopo province was caught on camera saying the country's healthcare system was being overwhelmed by an influx of Zimbabwean patients.

Donald Mujiri, spokesperson for Zimbabwe's Ministry of Health, did

not respond to Al Jazeera's questions about the continuing migration or the state of healthcare in Zimbabwe.

A continuing dilemma Despite being separated by oceans, many health workers abroad still keep in touch with their former patients and become sad whenever they get news of a death.

"I'm emotionally attached because I know that when someone has to reach a person who is more than 10,000 miles (16,000km) away from them for that kind of assistance, it means there is a gap. There is definitely a gap," said Mafukidze, who is in his 40s.

That continuing bond has now led to a personal dilemma for dozens of these emigrants watching helplessly as Zimbabwe's healthcare system and economy continue to deteriorate: to remain in their new homes where their time and talents are better rewarded or return home to help the patients they left behind.

"I have had a long list of patients, people who believed in my services, who constantly reach out to me, ... and I have constantly helped them over the phone, but I have always felt I was better off on the ground," Mafukidze said. "Unfortunately along the way, some have been lost, and it gives me some sadness to say maybe if I was there, things could have been different. ... That feeling grips me [like] I neglected people back home."

He delivers consultations virtually by WhatsApp or calls, focusing on diabetes care after having lost his mother to the ailment when he was only 12 years old.

Another nurse who left for Somerset in 2019, Tapiwa Mujuru said he was attached to teenagers who were born HIV-positive while working at a Harare facility.

BUSINESS

Bankers urged to embrace digital financial inclusion

Kenya Airways adds direct Somalia, UAE cargo flights

NAIROBI

KENYA Airways (KQ) has started ferrying cargo directly between Sharjah in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Somalia's capital Mogadishu, as it seeks to expand its cargo business.

The airline has launched a weekly flight effective Friday, February 9, with plans to increase to twice a week in April.

The national carrier has partnered with Dubai-based sales agent Global GSA Cargo LLC as its logistics partner to service the route.

"We are delighted to expand our world-class logistics service to underserved markets with a solid product, and we believe in having a direct service complemented by Dubai's trader, transit, humanitarian, and project-driven traffic," KQ cargo director Dick Muriangi said.

"The direct route between UAE and Somalia offers huge demand for air freight transportation, particularly high-tech consumer goods, automotive parts, project cargo, and clothing, which are the most frequently flown goods on the route," he added.

Kenya Airways expanded its cargo freight fleet with a B737-800F plane last November, with plans to lease a second similar aircraft. The planes

Dar lifts KQ ban after Kenya okays cargo flights have a higher cargo capacity and operate long-range

flights compared to KQ's two B737-300F, which it has been using.

The 737-800F plane carries up to 23 tonnes of revenue payload, according to the manufacturer Boeing.

In 2020, KQ converted two of its B787 into cargo airlines following high demand for freight services amid a sharp decline in passenger services at the height of the coronavirus pandemic.

In addition to Sharjah, the third-most populous city after Dubai and Abu Dhabi, the airline plans to deploy its cargo planes on destinations such as Dubai, Jeddah, Riyadh, Dakar, Lagos, N'Djamena, Mumbai, Freetown, and Monrovia.

Kannan Nachiappan, chief executive officer of Global GSA Cargo, said the direct UAE-Somalia flights would cut transit time and reduce costs.

"UAE, being a multimodal logistics hub, acts as a primary gateway to Africa, and having a dedicated KQ Cargo freighter to offer this service helps cut transit times and offer scheduled main deck capacity into several remote destinations across the region. This service would cover a market characterised by narrow body belly-only options, lengthy transit times, and expensive rates," he said.

Kenya Airways said it would also be resuming direct passenger flights between Nairobi and Mogadishu starting February 15, 2024.



Tanzania Bankers Association (TBA) chairman Theobald Sabi (C) shares views with two of the association's members shortly before the opening of TBA's financial inclusion conference held in Dar es Salaam last Friday. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

By Guardian Reporter

THE central bank has encouraged the Tanzania Bankers Association (TBA) members to come up with more new digitalized financial inclusion services especially those focusing on providing customer-centric products and services.

Bank of Tanzania's (BoT) governor Emmanuel Tutuba made the call when he graced TBA's second

conference on financial inclusion held in Dar es Salaam last Friday.

Tutuba said that financial inclusion is key in sustainable growth with existing customers while striving to reach underserved and unreached groups by formal digitalized financial inclusion services.

"As alluded in the National Financial Inclusion Framework 2023/28, groups which are underserved and are considered as priority segments are women; youth; Micro, Small and Medium En-

terprises (MSMEs); persons with disability; and smallholder farmers and fishers. I believe if these groups are well included in the financial system by addressing the barriers to access and usage, we will experience higher economic growth," said Tutuba.

He asserted that the cost of financial services, be it bank charges, transaction costs or lending rates are acting as barriers to financial inclusion as well as a burden and even a cause of poverty to people.

"I urge all of us to consider this matter in our discussions and propose appropriate measures to curb it;

On the side of the government, we now have in place the Tanzania Instant Payments System (TIPS), whose aim is to enable interoperability and lower transaction costs," he said.

TBA's chairman Theobald Sabi said commercial banks have always been on the front line supporting the government's strategies by serving different groups of the community alongside their solid commitment to enhancing financial inclusion.

"TBA understands that collaboration is key, and we are actively engaging with Mobile Network Operators (MNOs) and other stakeholders to foster partnerships that can broaden the reach of financial services," said Sabi.

By his account, embracing Fintech Startups is another avenue commercial banks are exploring to realize the true achievement of financial inclusion.

Recognizing the dynamism and innovation brought by these startups, TBA aims to integrate their solutions into the banking ecosystem to create a more inclusive and tech-savvy financial sector.

TBA has held its second conference on financial inclusion which brought together stakeholders from the financial sector, private sector, governments, development partners, and academia.

Theme 'Sustaining Economic Development through Financial Inclusion' the conference discussed opportunities, challenges and how to integrate more Tanzanians into formal banking space especially those from rural areas.



Access Bank's co-founder killed in helicopter crash

LAGOS

He joined the Nigerian Stock Exchange in 2011 and served in various capacities, including vice-president, according to his LinkedIn biography.

A helicopter carrying six people, including the co-founder of Nigeria's biggest bank by assets, crashed in a Southern California desert near the Mojave National Preserve, authorities have said.

Herbert Wigwe, 57, co-founder of Access Bank, was among the victims, family members from his home village of Isiokpo said.

Abimbola Ogunbanjo, 61, who was president of the National Council of the Nigeria Stock Exchange from 2017 to 2021, and served as the group chairman of the Nigerian Exchange Group Plc from 2021 to 2022, was confirmed dead by a family member in Lagos.

The Federal Aviation Administration said a Eurocopter EC helicopter crashed at about 10 p.m. on Friday with six people on board.

The crash site was near the border with Nevada. The

craft was headed to Boulder City, Nevada, south of Las Vegas, local ABC affiliate KABC reported without saying where it got the information.

"The scene of the crash was determined to be east of the 15-Freeway, near Haloran Springs Road," the San Bernardino County Sheriff-Coroner Department said in an emailed statement on Saturday. "No survivors have been located."

Wigwe started his professional career with Coopers & Lybrand Associates, an international firm of chartered accountants, before spending a decade at Guaranty Trust Bank. In 2004 he co-engineered the acquisition of local lender Access Bank where he assumed the post of deputy managing director and eventually became chief executive officer in January 2014.

He was building a new \$500 million university outside the southern city of Port Harcourt to help students hone skills needed for the finance and technology industries in Africa's most-populous nation, he told Bloomberg in an interview in November.

Wigwe planned to teach and mentor students and also engage some of the country's biggest entrepreneurs including billionaire Aliko Dangote, Africa's richest man, to teach at the university.

"To get the next set of leaders in banking, you need to create the right education for them," Wigwe told Bloomberg from his office in the 14-story Access Bank headquarters overlooking a part of the Lagos lagoon. Ogun-

banjo started his professional career as a banker with Chase Manhattan Bank Nigeria in 1985 before he re-qualified as a legal practitioner and joined the law firm of Chris Ogunbanjo & Co in 1990, where he held the position of managing partner until his death, according to a biography from his firm.

He joined the Nigerian Stock Exchange in 2011 and served in various capacities, including vice-president, according to his LinkedIn biography.

Ogunbanjo was the former vice chairman of the Commercial Law and Taxation Committee of the Lagos Chamber of Commerce and acted as special Nigerian counsel to the London and Paris clubs in connection with the refinancing and re-scheduling agreements made between the Federal Republic of Nigeria and International Creditors Banks.



Govt to expand meat, live animals exports to Iran

By Enock Charles

In strengthening the commercial cooperation between Tanzania and Iran, the government is determined to increase the trade volume through the sales of meat and live animals to Iran due to availability of market.

Speaking on the 45th anniversary of the Islamic Revolution of Iran, Minister of Trade and Industrial Development from Zanzibar Revolutionary Government, Omar Shaaban said that currently the trade volume between Tanzania and Iran is US\$60 million.

"Last year the trade volume between Tanzania and Iran was US\$60 million. Iran exported US\$40 million and imported goods valued US\$20

million from Tanzania," said Shaaban.

"We have been doing business with Iran, even some products like cement have been coming from there, but recently they have shown interest in buying meat and animal products, because there is a big market for the commodities".

"Tanzania has a huge number of quality livestock that comprises 25.8 million cattle, 16.7 million goats and 8.7 million sheep; let me assure you Ambassador these huge numbers of animals is an expression of readiness of Tanzanian to feed the growing demand of quality meat and live animal in Iranian market," he said.

Minister Shaaban said that Tanzania can supply meat to Iran and that it is an opportu-

nity for breeders in Tanzania to take advantage of that opportunity.

However, he also invited Iranian businessmen to bring products to the country such as clothes, where it has been said that the Iran has made progress in the production of textiles.

"In the investment aspect, according to Tanzania Investment Centre (TIC) records, there are 15 Iranian investment companies registered in Tanzania worth US\$333.23 million. Consequently, our government is humbly appealing for a concerted effort to enhance trade, investment and tourism for the mutual benefit" said Minister Shaaban.

Iranian Ambassador to Tanzania Hossein Alvandi Behineh

said that the Islamic Republic of Iran is ready to enhance the bilateral relations in agriculture, mining, fisheries, livestock and scientific and knowledge base area as well as facilitate travelling of citizens of both countries to each other.

"The honourable leaders of the two countries agreed on accelerating the holding of joint commission meeting and facilitation of citizens travels to both countries. In this regard, Tanzania citizens in the next few days can visit Iran without requirement of visa application"

Ambassador Behineh said that there is considerable capacity to develop Iran and Tanzania relations in political, economic, trade, scientific and cultural areas.



Decrease in inflation set to fuel Fed rate-cut optimism

New York

THE pulse of US inflation likely continued to slow at the start of the year, helping to feed expectations that the Federal Reserve will find interest-rate cuts more palatable in the coming months.

The core consumer price index, a measure that excludes food and fuel for a better picture of underlying inflation, is seen increasing 3.7 percent in January from a year earlier.

That would mark the smallest year-over-year advance since April 2021, and underscore the inroads Fed Chair Jerome Powell and his colleagues have made in beating back inflation. The overall CPI probably rose less than 3 percent for the first time in nearly two years, economists forecast Tuesday's report to show.

While acknowledging that progress, policymakers have been

cool to the idea that rates may be reduced as soon as next month.

Their patience has roots in an economy that's flashing green lights, the biggest of which is the labor market. Durable employment growth has kept consumers spending. A separate report on Thursday is projected to reveal another increase in retail sales, excluding motor vehicles and gasoline.

The cooling of inflation, along with expectations that borrowing costs will head lower this year, explains the recent improvement in consumer confidence. A University of Michigan survey scheduled for release on Friday is forecast to show an index of sentiment holding near the highest level since July 2021.

Investors will also monitor Fed officials speaking in the days following the CPI data, to gauge the timing of any future rate cut. Among those on the schedule are

regional bank presidents Raphael Bostic of Atlanta and Mary Daly of San Francisco, who both vote on policy this year.

"In deciding when to start cutting rates, the Fed will have to reconcile the data they have in hand - which show inflation on a fast track to the 2 percent target - with risks that inflation could flare up again or the labor market could weaken more sharply. Data in the coming week will factor into that decision - but won't provide a definitive answer," said Anna Wong, Stuart Paul, Eliza Winger and Estelle Ou, economists, Bloomberg Economics.

Turning north, Canadian home sales will reveal whether the market continues to heat up ahead of expected mid-year rate cuts. Housing starts and manufacturing data will also be released.

Among global highlights this week, Japanese gross domestic product, UK inflation and wages,

and testimony by the euro-zone central bank chief will feature.

Meanwhile, Japan's economy is expected to rebound from its dismal performance over the summer, providing another signal for the Bank of Japan as it prepares to end its negative rate policy.

Figures out Thursday are also set to confirm that Japan has slipped to the fourth-largest economy in the world, behind the US, China and Germany.

China's markets will be closed for Lunar New Year celebrations, and no major releases are scheduled.

Reserve Bank of India Governor Shaktikanta Das, who kept a hawkish stance at Thursday's rate meeting, may see some progress in his inflation fight at the start of the week with consumer prices expected to have grown at a slower pace in January. That probably won't be slow enough to prompt talk of a pivot, however.



By Correspondent Mary Kadoke

DIAMOND Trust Bank (DTB) has urged girls and women scientists to remain committed in their studies and career because they guarantee lifetime achievements.

Jesca Tugara, DTB deputy head of communication and marketing department gave the remarks in Dar es Salaam over the weekend, when the bank's Information Technology (IT) team visited Alpha secondary school students in Kunduchi, to celebrate the International Day of Women and Girls in Science.

She said the motive behind the visit was to recognise their participation in science and give a word of courage to keep them moving without fear.

"As we celebrate the International Day of Women and Girls in Science, we need you to live into our testimonies and have the courage to become dedicated in your studies," said Tugara.

Solana Mpepo, the member of the bank's IT team highlighted skills, competence and consistency as key aspects to winning in the field.

"The International Day of Women and Girls in Science celebrations gives us courage as practitioners in the science field and most especially girls to tell you that nothing is impossible and with skills, competence and consistency they can achieve their goals," said Mpepo.

She added: "The field is neither that tough nor complicated.

DTB officer urges women, girls in science to remain committed



Diamond Trust Bank Information Technology representatives pictured together with A-Level students from Alpha Secondary School located in Kunduchi. Seated right is Jesca Tugara, the bank's deputy head of communication and marketing department. Photo: Correspondent Mary Kadoke.

Therefore, Science needs women and women need science."

Jenny Nsemo, Alpha Girls Physics, Chemistry and Mathematics (PCM) student said science is difficult in theory but simple in practical sense.

"People perceive Science as the hardest thing to deal with, but it is the simplest field if you work hard on it. Its essence cuts across

so many sectors globally," said Nsemo.

The International Day of Women and Girls in Science, celebrated on 11 February, is implemented by United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and UN-Women in collaboration with institutions and civil society partners that aim to promote women and girls

in science.

The day gives an opportunity to promote full and equal access to and participation in science for women and girls.

Gender equality is a global priority for UNESCO, and the support of young girls, their education and their full ability to make their ideas heard are levers for development and peace.

Rwanda inflation rate declines to 5pc in January

KIGALI

CONSUMER prices on Rwandan market only increased by 5 percent year-on-year in January 2024, a deceleration when compared to 20.7 percent recorded in January 2023.

This is according to the National Institute of Statistics Rwanda (NISR). In December 2023, consumer prices had eased to 6.4 percent.

Inflation is the pace at which prices of consumables increase on the market year on year and on a monthly basis, and it is calculated based on approximately 1,622 products in 12 urban centres of Rwanda.

Prices of foodstuffs and non-alcoholic beverages increased by 7.4 per cent, bread and cereal prices declined by 0.7 per cent, meat prices by 14.7 per cent, milk, cheese, and eggs by 17.7 per cent, and vegetables saw no change in prices.

The cost of housing, water, electricity, gas, and other fuels increased by 2.1 per cent, transportation rose by 6.4 per cent, while prices in restaurants and hotels increased by 4.7 per cent.

Consumer prices started to fall back within the National Bank of



Rwanda Central Bank governor John Rwangombwa

Rwanda (NBR) target range between 2 percent and 8 percent in December 2023 and has now averaged to desired percentage of 5 percent.

However, in mid-January, Central bank Governor John Rwangombwa noted that Red Sea-related disruption to global trade is seen as an inflationary risk and might result in a rise in transport costs for imported goods if the situation is not contained within the shortest time possible.

"So, it is seen as a risk now, expecting that it will be overcome in

the shortest time possible. But if it persists, then it might affect especially the transport cost. How much that will impact the goods that are being imported we are yet to see," he said.

Other developments on the Rwandan market include the slight reduction in fuel prices whereby effective February 12, a litre of petrol will cost Rwf1,637, and a litre of diesel Rwf1,632, according to a communicate from the Rwanda Utilities Regulatory Authority (RURA) on Saturday.

Fuel prices factor in inflation in

a sense that their increase means an increase in logistic cost which consequently impacts commodity prices on the market.

Inflation reached its highest peak at 21.7 percent in November 2022 before starting a decelerating trend since the beginning of 2023, following different government measures put in place to tame it, despite the poor agriculture performance that persisted across seasons over two consecutive years.

Owing to the recent agriculture season that relatively performed better compared to previous ones, consumers started seeing a drop in food products on the market towards the end of 2023.

Overall, the decline is also attributed to the monetary policy tightening measures taken throughout 2023, government-incentivized measures, and falling prices of major international commodities.

With the National Bank of Rwanda (NBR) maintaining the key repo rate at 7.5 percent in November 2023 to tame inflation and observation from global economic trends, economists expect inflation to further ease in 2024, subject to agricultural performance and geopolitical climate.

NMB Bank launches savings culture drive

By Guardian Reporter

NMB Bank has added a new dimension to the NMB Pesa Account opening drive by introducing a 150m/- three-month reward campaign to enhance the inclusive finance initiative.

The savings promotion was launched last Saturday at a special bash to showcase the lender's recently debuted cheapest and simplest way to open a new bank account in the market

The NMB Pesa Day for promoting the savings account and enlightening the public on benefits of being an NMB Pesa Account holder was held in the Dar es Salaam suburb of Mbagala at the Zakhem grounds.

Whereas CEO Ruth Zaipuna emphasized that the novel account opening service and the reward campaign will boost financial inclusion, Temeke District Commissioner Sixtus Mapunda who graced the event said the two are also initiatives for empowering people economically.

"Our 2024 goals include continuing to simplify access to banking services in the country and thus increase the inclusion of more people into the formal financial sector. It is for that reason we have come up with the NMB Pesa Account and the campaign," Zaipuna explained.

She said strategies to deliver on that and create a more accessible banking experience particularly for the NMB Pesa Account holders include increasing the number of agents from 28,000 to over 50,000 in two years.

Apart from luring new customers and adding impetus to the NMB Pesa Account opening campaign, Zaipuna said the promotional drive equally seeks to foster a savings culture.

The competition will comprise weekly draws in which 10 winners will pocket 500,000/- each, monthly raffles whose prizes will be a million shillings for each of the five winners and a fabulous grand finale.

"In the final draw, there will be various prizes such as 10m/- for one winner whereas another eight will scoop 3m/- each. To be won here too will be a washing machine, a smart TV, a two-doored fridge, a gas cooker, five motorbikes and eight three-wheelers," she stated.

Eligibility for the competition requires only depositing 50,000/- in the NMB Pesa Account, whose debut has debunked the long-held misconception that opening a bank account is a costly and complex process reserved for the well-off only.

DC Mapunda said NMB's creativity and investment to make account opening hassle-free augurs well with the government's financial inclusion aspiration to drastically increase the current low number of people with bank accounts in the country.

Noting that the increment will be good economically, he added that NMB Pesa Account whose opening only costs 1,000/- with no monthly charges has many impactful benefits such as access to the unsecured digital loans.



NMB Bank CEO Ruth Zaipuna (L) presents a motorcycle to Agnesi Maujundu (C) for winning the bank's campaign prize in an event held in Dar es Salaam at the weekend. Right is the bank's chief of retail banking Filbert Mponzi. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

ECB needs to start cutting interest rates, council says



FRANKFURT

THE European Central Bank will soon need to start cutting interest rates, according to Governing Council member Fabio Panetta.

"Macroeconomic conditions suggest that disinflation is at an advanced stage, and progress toward the 2 percent target continues to be rapid," he said on Saturday at the annual Assiom Forex event in Genoa. "The time for reversal of the monetary policy stance is fast approaching."

ECB officials are preparing to loosen policy this year – probably from April or June – with investors leaning toward the earlier of the two. The outcome will hinge on inflation, which has plunged over recent months but isn't expected to meet the 2 percent target again until next year.

"There has been no upward de-anchoring of inflation expectations – if anything downside risks are emerging," Panetta said. "Concerns about the hypothesis of persistently high core inflation have also proven groundless."

Several policymakers have suggested that wage increases could feed through to consumer-price growth and the ECB needs to wait for those data. The Italian central bank chief, known for his dovish stance, said such a threat is exaggerated.

"The risk remains that still strong nominal wage growth could reignite inflation," Panetta

said. "This possibility should not be underestimated, but a closer look at the data allays these concerns."

He also warned against delaying a move too much.

"If monetary policy were to take too long to accompany the ongoing disinflation, downside risks to inflation could emerge that would conflict with the symmetrical nature of the objective set by the ECB's Governing Council," he said.

Some officials have started thinking about how to pace easing once it starts. Panetta joined colleagues pushing for a step-by-step approach.

"We need to consider the pros and cons of cutting interest rates quickly and gradually, as opposed to later and more aggressively, which could increase volatility in financial markets and economic activity," he said.

Speaking about Italy's economic outlook, Panetta pointed out that the deficit will decrease but debt is unlikely to shrink.

"The information available for 2023 suggest that the fiscal deficit and public debt as a percentage of GDP have fallen," he said. "Over the next few years, despite the expected decline in the deficit, debt should remain broadly stable."

He painted a rosier picture of Italian banks' situation saying balance sheet indicators are positive with liquidity ratios well above regulatory requirements and improved profitability.

Panetta however warned that such favorable conditions for

banks are not likely to last and lenders must prepare for the future by maintaining balanced maturity structure of assets and

liabilities, good management of non-performing loans, and safeguarding the soundness of their capital base.

South Africa's EFF wants reforms in central bank

JOHANNESBURG

THE Economic Freedom Fighters, South Africa's third-largest political party, called for an overhaul of central bank policy and higher corporate taxes in a campaign manifesto released in anticipation of this year's national elections.

Most opinion polls predict the party will garner less than a fifth of the vote, making it unlikely the EFF will form the next government. That didn't stop party leader Julius Malema from unveiling an ambitious plan to more than 50,000 people at the Moses Mabhida stadium in the eastern city of Durban on Saturday.

He committed to ending the nation's long-running electricity crisis within six months by reactivating all of South Africa's coal-fired power plants and developing nuclear energy, and promised the creation of 9 million new jobs, including through the formation of a state-owned security company.

"We are going to take the land and we are not going to pay a cent," Malema said, reiterating the party's long-standing position. The party plans to resubmit a proposal to amend the constitution to allow for land to be expropriated without compensation, he said.

The latest polls indicate that the ruling African National Congress is likely to lose its majority, and that the EFF's

share of the vote is poised to increase from the 10.8 percent it won in 2019. Some surveys suggest that Malema's party even stands an outside chance of displacing the Democratic Alliance as the biggest opposition party.

President Cyril Ramaphosa has yet to declare a date for the election, which must be held by mid-August.

Should the ANC fall just shy of half the vote in the election, it will probably form a governing coalition with one or more minor parties. If it garners about 45 percent or less, it would have to enlist the support of one of its main competitors and that would place the EFF into contention as a partner, since the DA and IO other parties have entered into an alliance and pledged not to work with the ANC.

Investors and business leaders are concerned about the prospect of the EFF being part of the government, given its populist policy proposals, which include increasing the role of the state in the economy, raising additional public debt, and increasing taxes.

The EFF's populist rhetoric and confrontational style – its lawmakers have disrupted proceedings in parliament and brawled with security officers – have found resonance among many poor, Black township residents, whose living standards remain dismal 30 years after the end of apartheid.



MONDAY - WEDNESDAY FROM 10:30 PM



ITV		9:30		13:00		19:30		6:00	
MONDAY 12 Feb		Soap: Laws of love	Dakika 45 rpt	Soap: Laws of love	HABARI	HABARI	HABARI	HABARI	HABARI
5:00 Soap rpt: Uzalo	5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi	Habari za saa	Habari za saa	Habari	6:00 Kumekucha	6:00 Kumekucha	6:00 Kumekucha	6:00 Kumekucha	6:00 Kumekucha
6:00 HABARI	6:40 Kumekucha	Watoto wetu	Chetu ni chetu rpt	21:05 Malumbano ya hoja	6:40 Kumekucha	6:40 Kumekucha	6:40 Kumekucha	6:40 Kumekucha	6:40 Kumekucha
7:30 HABARI	7:30 HABARI	10:25 Jagina	Mapishi rpt	23:00 Jiji letu	7:30 HABARI	7:30 HABARI	7:30 HABARI	7:30 HABARI	7:30 HABARI
8:00 Kumekucha Michezo	8:00 Kumekucha Michezo	10:55 Habari za saa	Habari za saa	23:30 Music: The Base	8:00 Kumekucha Michezo	8:00 Kumekucha Michezo	8:00 Kumekucha Michezo	8:00 Kumekucha Michezo	8:00 Kumekucha Michezo
8:55 Habari za saa	8:55 Habari za saa	11:00 Chetu ni Chetu rpt	Habari za saa	00:30 Al Jazeera	8:55 Habari za saa	8:55 Habari za saa	8:55 Habari za saa	8:55 Habari za saa	8:55 Habari za saa
9:00 Kumekucha kishindo	9:00 Kumekucha kishindo	11:40 Igizo: Mizengwe	Habari za saa	FRIDAY 16 Feb	8:55 Habari za saa	8:55 Habari za saa	8:55 Habari za saa	8:55 Habari za saa	8:55 Habari za saa
9:30 Soap: Laws of love rpt	9:30 Soap: Laws of love rpt	11:55 Habari za saa	Habari za saa	5:00 Soap rpt: Uzalo	9:00 Kumekucha kishindo	9:00 Kumekucha kishindo	9:00 Kumekucha kishindo	9:00 Kumekucha kishindo	9:00 Kumekucha kishindo
9:55 Habari za saa	9:55 Habari za saa	12:00 Al Jazeera	Habari za saa	5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi	9:30 Soap rpt: Laws of love	9:30 Soap rpt: Laws of love	9:30 Soap rpt: Laws of love	9:30 Soap rpt: Laws of love	9:30 Soap rpt: Laws of love
10:00 Watoto wetu	10:00 Watoto wetu	12:30 Afya ya jamii	Habari za saa	6:00 HABARI	9:55 Habari za saa	9:55 Habari za saa	9:55 Habari za saa	9:55 Habari za saa	9:55 Habari za saa
11:00 Kipindi maalum: AFCON 2023	11:00 Kipindi maalum: AFCON 2023	12:55 Habari za saa	Habari za saa	6:40 Kumekucha	10:00 Watoto wetu	10:00 Watoto wetu	10:00 Watoto wetu	10:00 Watoto wetu	10:00 Watoto wetu
11:55 Habari za saa	11:55 Habari za saa	13:00 ITV Top ten	Habari za saa	7:30 HABARI	10:30 Usafiri wako	10:30 Usafiri wako	10:30 Usafiri wako	10:30 Usafiri wako	10:30 Usafiri wako
12:00 Al Jazeera	12:00 Al Jazeera	13:50 Shikabamba	Habari za saa	8:00 Kumekucha Michezo	10:55 Habari za saa	10:55 Habari za saa	10:55 Habari za saa	10:55 Habari za saa	10:55 Habari za saa
12:30 Meza Huru	12:30 Meza Huru	13:55 Habari za saa	Habari za saa	8:55 Habari za saa	11:00 Kipindi maalum: Watumi-shi housing	11:00 Kipindi maalum: Watumi-shi housing	11:00 Kipindi maalum: Watumi-shi housing	11:00 Kipindi maalum: Watumi-shi housing	11:00 Kipindi maalum: Watumi-shi housing
16:30 Watoto Wetu	16:30 Watoto Wetu	14:00 Shikabamba	Habari za saa	9:00 Kumekucha kishindo	11:20 Jagina rpt	11:20 Jagina rpt	11:20 Jagina rpt	11:20 Jagina rpt	11:20 Jagina rpt
17:00 Music: The Base	17:00 Music: The Base	14:25 Igizo rpt: Slay Queen	Habari za saa	9:55 Habari za saa	11:55 Habari za saa	11:55 Habari za saa	11:55 Habari za saa	11:55 Habari za saa	11:55 Habari za saa
18:00 Hapa na Pale	18:00 Hapa na Pale	14:55 Habari za saa	Habari za saa	10:00 Watoto wetu	12:00 Al Jazeera	12:00 Al Jazeera	12:00 Al Jazeera	12:00 Al Jazeera	12:00 Al Jazeera
18:15 Mapishi	18:15 Mapishi	15:00 Meza Huru	Habari za saa	10:30 Soap rpt: Uzalo	12:30 Kipindi maalum rpt: Tanesco	12:30 Kipindi maalum rpt: Tanesco	12:30 Kipindi maalum rpt: Tanesco	12:30 Kipindi maalum rpt: Tanesco	12:30 Kipindi maalum rpt: Tanesco
18:30 Kipindi Maalum: Sema na Mahakama	18:30 Kipindi Maalum: Sema na Mahakama	16:30 Watoto wetu	Habari za saa	10:55 Habari za saa	12:55 Habari za saa	12:55 Habari za saa	12:55 Habari za saa	12:55 Habari za saa	12:55 Habari za saa
19:30 Soap: Laws of love	19:30 Soap: Laws of love	17:00 Music: The Base	Habari za saa	11:00 Kipindi Maalum: Maisha ni Nyumba	13:00 Kipindi Maalum: Maisha ni Nyumba rpt	13:00 Kipindi Maalum: Maisha ni Nyumba rpt	13:00 Kipindi Maalum: Maisha ni Nyumba rpt	13:00 Kipindi Maalum: Maisha ni Nyumba rpt	13:00 Kipindi Maalum: Maisha ni Nyumba rpt
20:00 Habari	20:00 Habari	18:00 Hapa na Pale	Habari za saa	21:30 Kipindi Maalum:	13:30 Kipindi Maalum rpt: Maisha ni Nyumba rpt	13:30 Kipindi Maalum rpt: Maisha ni Nyumba rpt	13:30 Kipindi Maalum rpt: Maisha ni Nyumba rpt	13:30 Kipindi Maalum rpt: Maisha ni Nyumba rpt	13:30 Kipindi Maalum rpt: Maisha ni Nyumba rpt
21:05 Kipindi Maalum: AFCON 2023	21:05 Kipindi Maalum: AFCON 2023	18:15 Mapishi	Habari za saa	21:45 Chetu ni chetu	13:55 Habari za saa	13:55 Habari za saa	13:55 Habari za saa	13:55 Habari za saa	13:55 Habari za saa
21:30 Kipindi Maalum: Maisha ni Nyumba	21:30 Kipindi Maalum: Maisha ni Nyumba	18:30 Kipindi Maalum: Sema na Mahakama	Habari za saa	22:30 Soap: Uzalo	14:00 Kipindi Maalum rpt: Tanesco	14:00 Kipindi Maalum rpt: Tanesco	14:00 Kipindi Maalum rpt: Tanesco	14:00 Kipindi Maalum rpt: Tanesco	14:00 Kipindi Maalum rpt: Tanesco
21:45 Chetu ni chetu	21:45 Chetu ni chetu	19:30 Soap: Laws of love	Habari za saa	22:30 Soap: Uzalo	14:30 DW: Afrimaxx rpt	14:30 DW: Afrimaxx rpt	14:30 DW: Afrimaxx rpt	14:30 DW: Afrimaxx rpt	14:30 DW: Afrimaxx rpt
22:30 Soap: Uzalo	22:30 Soap: Uzalo	20:00 Habari	Habari za saa	23:00 Jiji letu	14:55 Habari za saa	14:55 Habari za saa	14:55 Habari za saa	14:55 Habari za saa	14:55 Habari za saa
23:00 Jiji letu	23:00 Jiji letu	21:05 Kipindi Maalum: Maisha ni Nyumba	Habari za saa	23:30 Music: The Base	15:00 Meza huru:	15:00 Meza huru:	15:00 Meza huru:	15:00 Meza huru:	15:00 Meza huru:
00:30 Al Jazeera	00:30 Al Jazeera	21:30 Kipindi Maalum:	Habari za saa	00:30 Al Jazeera	16:30 Watoto Wetu	16:30 Watoto Wetu	16:30 Watoto Wetu	16:30 Watoto Wetu	16:30 Watoto Wetu
02:00 DWTV	02:00 DWTV	21:45 Chetu ni chetu	Habari za saa	WEDNESDAY 14 Feb	17:00 Music: The Base	17:00 Music: The Base	17:00 Music: The Base	17:00 Music: The Base	17:00 Music: The Base
TUESDAY 13 Feb	TUESDAY 13 Feb	22:30 Soap: Uzalo	Habari za saa	5:00 Soap rpt: Uzalo	18:00 Hapa na Pale	18:00 Hapa na Pale	18:00 Hapa na Pale	18:00 Hapa na Pale	18:00 Hapa na Pale
5:00 Soap rpt: Uzalo	5:00 Soap rpt: Uzalo	23:00 Jiji letu	Habari za saa	5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi	18:15 Mapishi	18:15 Mapishi	18:15 Mapishi	18:15 Mapishi	18:15 Mapishi
5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi	5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi	00:30 Al Jazeera	Habari za saa	6:00 HABARI	18:30 Jagina	18:30 Jagina	18:30 Jagina	18:30 Jagina	18:30 Jagina
6:00 HABARI	6:00 HABARI	WEDNESDAY 14 Feb	Habari za saa	6:40 Kumekucha	19:00 Usafiri wako	19:00 Usafiri wako	19:00 Usafiri wako	19:00 Usafiri wako	19:00 Usafiri wako
6:40 Kumekucha	6:40 Kumekucha	5:00 Soap rpt: Uzalo	Habari za saa	7:30 HABARI					
7:30 HABARI	7:30 HABARI	5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi	Habari za saa	8:00 Kumekucha Michezo					
8:00 Kumekucha Michezo	8:00 Kumekucha Michezo	6:00 HABARI	Habari za saa	8:55 Habari za saa					
8:55 Habari za saa	8:55 Habari za saa	6:40 Kumekucha	Habari za saa	9:00 Kumekucha Kishindo					
9:00 Kumekucha kishindo	9:00 Kumekucha kishindo	7:30 HABARI	Habari za saa	9:30 Soap: Laws of love					
9:30 Soap: Laws of love rpt	9:30 Soap: Laws of love rpt	8:00 Kumekucha Michezo	Habari za saa	9:55 Habari za saa					
9:55 Habari za saa	9:55 Habari za saa	8:55 Habari za saa	Habari za saa	10:00 Watoto wetu					
10:00 Watoto wetu	10:00 Watoto wetu	9:00 Kumekucha Kishindo	Habari za saa	10:30 Shamba lulu					
11:00 Kipindi maalum: AFCON 2023	11:00 Kipindi maalum: AFCON 2023	9:30 Soap: Laws of love	Habari za saa	10:55 Habari za saa					
11:55 Habari za saa	11:55 Habari za saa	10:00 Habari	Habari za saa	11:00 Ripoti maalum					
12:00 Al Jazeera	12:00 Al Jazeera	20:00 Habari	Habari za saa	11:55 Habari za saa					
12:30 Meza Huru	12:30 Meza Huru	21:05 Kipindi Maalum: Maisha ni Nyumba	Habari za saa	12:00 Al Jazeera					
16:30 Watoto Wetu	16:30 Watoto Wetu	21:30 Kipindi Maalum:	Habari za saa	12:30 Jarida la wanawake rpt					
17:00 Music: The Base	17:00 Music: The Base	21:45 Chetu ni chetu	Habari za saa	12:55 Habari za saa					
18:00 Hapa na Pale	18:00 Hapa na Pale	22:30 Soap: Uzalo	Habari za saa	13:00 Kipindi maalum rpt: BOT					
18:15 Igizo: Mizengwe	18:15 Igizo: Mizengwe	23:00 Jiji letu	Habari za saa	13:30 Art and Lifestyle					
18:30 DW: Afrimaxx	18:30 DW: Afrimaxx	23:30 Music: The Base	Habari za saa	13:55 Habari za saa					
19:00 Afya ya Jamii	19:00 Afya ya Jamii	00:30 Al Jazeera	Habari za saa	14:00 Hapa na Pale					
19:30 Soap: Laws of love	19:30 Soap: Laws of love	WEDNESDAY 14 Feb	Habari za saa	14:15 Top ten					
20:00 Habari	20:00 Habari	5:00 Soap rpt: Uzalo	Habari za saa	14:30 Shamba lulu					
21:05 Dakika 45	21:05 Dakika 45	5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi	Habari za saa	10:55 Habari za saa					
22:00 Bundesliga na DW	22:00 Bundesliga na DW	6:00 HABARI	Habari za saa	11:00 Ripoti maalum					
22:15 Mapishi	22:15 Mapishi	6:40 Kumekucha	Habari za saa	11:55 Habari za saa					
22:30 Soap: Uzalo	22:30 Soap: Uzalo	7:30 HABARI	Habari za saa	12:00 Al Jazeera					
23:00 Jiji letu	23:00 Jiji letu	8:00 Kumekucha Michezo	Habari za saa	12:30 Jarida la wanawake rpt					
23:30 Music: The Base	23:30 Music: The Base	8:55 Habari za saa	Habari za saa	12:55 Habari za saa					
00:30 Al Jazeera	00:30 Al Jazeera	9:00 Kumekucha Kishindo	Habari za saa	13:00 Kipindi maalum rpt: BOT					
02:00 DWTV	02:00 DWTV	9:30 Soap: Laws of love	Habari za saa	13:30 Art and Lifestyle					
TUESDAY 13 Feb	TUESDAY 13 Feb	10:00 Watoto wetu	Habari za saa	13:55 Habari za saa					
5:00 Soap rpt: Uzalo	5:00 Soap rpt: Uzalo	10:30 Igizo: Filimbi rpt	Habari za saa	14:00 Hapa na Pale					
5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi	5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi	10:55 Habari za saa	Habari za saa	14:15 Top ten					
6:00 HABARI	6:00 HABARI	11:00 Hawavumi lakini wamo	Habari za saa	14:30 Shamba lulu					
6:40 Kumekucha	6:40 Kumekucha	11:55 Habari za saa	Habari za saa	14:55 Habari za saa					
7:30 HABARI	7:30 HABARI	12:00 Al Jazeera	Habari za saa	15:00 Meza huru:					
8:00 Kumekucha Michezo	8:00 Kumekucha Michezo	12:30 Bundesliga na DW rpt	Habari za saa	16:30 Watoto Wetu					
8:55 Habari za saa	8:55 Habari za saa	12:55 Habari za saa	Habari za saa	17:00 The Base (DJ Show)					
9:00 Kumekucha kishindo	9:00 Kumekucha kishindo		Habari za saa	17:30 Kiislam					
			Habari za saa	18:00 Hapa na Pale					
			Habari za saa	18:15 Top ten					
			Habari za saa	19:00 Shamba lulu					
			Habari za saa	19:30 Soap: Laws of love					
			Habari za saa	20:00 Habari					
			Habari za saa	21:05 Kipima Joto					
			Habari za saa	23:00 Jiji letu					
			Habari za saa	23:30 The Base					
			Habari za saa	00:30 Al Jazeera					
			Habari za saa	SATURDAY 17 Feb					
			Habari za saa	5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi					

Bezos sells \$2bn of Amazon stock

NEW YORK

WORLD

Somalia's parliament okays country's EAC membership

MOGADISHU

SOMALIA'S parliament on Saturday approved the Treaty of Accession to the East African Community, completing the country's eighth membership in the regional bloc.

The Second Deputy Speaker of the House of the People of the Federal Parliament of Somalia, Abdullahi Omar Abshir, said 148 out of 150 lawmakers voted in favor of the treaty for Somalia to join the bloc, while one rejected it and another abstained during the vote

in the parliament.

The Somali Minister of Information, Culture and Tourism, Daud Aweis Jama, said the parliament's ratification of this treaty signals the completion of Somalia's membership process, beating the six-month deadline set for Somalia to deposit its instruments of ratification with the EAC secretariat.

"This is a significant step forward in Somalia's integration with the regional bloc, showcasing its commitment to the House of People of the Federal Parliament has approved the country's



Somali army soldiers walk next to the Somali parliament in Mogadishu in this May 24, 2014 photo. (PHOTO / AFP)

admission to the EAC bloc, with 148 MPs (members of parliament) voting in favor on Saturday," he said in a statement issued in Mogadishu, the Somali capital.

Somalia was admitted as the eighth member of the EAC in November 2023, joining Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan, Tanzania, the Democratic Republic of the Con-

go, and Uganda.

Experts have said the entry of Somalia will massively boost the EAC's geographical reach, its efforts to improve its multilateral and fiscal standing, and the exploitation of Somalia's blue economy resources, such as fish, which will boost the regional economy.

Xinhua

King Charles gives thanks for support after cancer diagnosis

LONDON

BRITAIN'S King Charles on Saturday expressed gratitude to well-wishers following his cancer diagnosis, his first public comment since Buckingham Palace announced he would postpone some engagements to undergo treatment.

"I would like to express my most heartfelt thanks for the many messages of support and good wishes I have received in recent days," Charles said in a statement.

The palace announced on Monday that Charles, 75, had been diagnosed with a form of cancer,

less than 18 months into his reign.

"As all those who have been affected by cancer will know, such kind thoughts are the greatest comfort and encouragement," Charles said.

The king said it was heartening to hear how his diagnosis had helped to shine a light on the organizations that support cancer patients in Britain and elsewhere.

News of his cancer came after Charles spent three nights in hospital last month where he underwent a corrective procedure for a benign enlarged prostate.

Buckingham Palace has not given any details of his condition other than to say it was not pros-



King Charles leaves Clarence House by car in London, Feb 6, 2024. Buckingham Palace announced Monday evening that the king has begun outpatient treatment for an undisclosed form of cancer. (PHOTO / AP)

tate cancer but said the king was remaining "wholly positive" and looking forward to returning to public duty as soon as possible.

Charles' wife, Queen Camilla, said on Thursday that Charles was doing "extremely well".

With the king undergoing treatment and Prince William's wife Kate recovering from abdominal surgery, the onus is on the remaining royals - especially William and Camilla - to provide the public face of the monarchy.

Agencies

Gaza: At least 25 killed in Israeli bombing on Rafah city

GAZA/BAGHDAD/AMMAN/BEIRUT

AT least 25 Palestinians were killed in an Israeli bombing of a house in the southern Gaza Strip city of Rafah yesterday, according to the official Palestinian news agency WAFA.

Many displaced people were living in the house at the time of the bombing, and dozens of others were injured, said the report.

"Israeli bombings have escalated in recent hours in Rafah, paving the way for a military operation in the city," Mayor of Rafah Ahmed Al-Sufi said on Saturday.

He called on the international community to take action to prevent Israel from carrying out a military offensive in the city, which is currently inhabited by more than 1.4 million Palestinians, stressing that any military action would lead to a "massacre" and a bloodbath.

Al-Sufi added that "the situation in Rafah is currently tragic, especially since the aid that enters through the Rafah crossing is only sufficient for 10 percent of the city's population. If this continues, we will be on the verge of a famine."

The Hamas-run government media office also warned of a "global catastrophe" if Israel carries out a military operation in Rafah.

"We hold the US administration, the international community, and Israel fully responsible, if the Israeli army attacked the city," the office said in a press statement, calling on the UN Security Council to convene immediately and adopt a resolution that would oblige Israel to stop.

The number of displaced people fleeing to Rafah increased significantly after the Israeli army launched one of its largest and most violent attacks a few weeks ago on the southern city of Khan Younis, adjacent to Rafah.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Friday instructed the army to prepare plans for a ground op-



Palestinians search for survivors after an Israeli airstrike on a residential building in Rafah, Gaza Strip, on Saturday. AP

eration in Rafah, the southernmost Gaza city to which over half of the 2.3 million Gaza residents fled during the conflict.

Since the start of the Israel-Hamas conflict in Gaza on Oct 7 last year, about half of the residents there have fled to Rafah, adjacent to Egypt, in search of safety.

The number of displaced residents has grown after the Israeli army launched one of its largest attacks on Khan Younis, adjacent to Rafah, weeks ago.

The border city, which receives food and medicine aid from foreign countries and UN agencies through the Rafah crossing, is crowded with tents on empty agricultural lands, in schools and along roadsides.

Iraq seeks global intervention

Urging the international community to thwart the Israeli plan to launch a military operation in Rafah, the Iraqi Foreign Ministry said on Saturday such an operation would lead to "a new humanitarian catastrophe and massacre" in Rafah.

The ministry also reiterated the need to stop military operations against the Palestinians and to provide humanitarian aid to them.

Jordan cautions of danger

On Saturday, Jordan's Foreign Ministry warned of the danger of military operations by the Israeli army in Rafah.

Sufian Qudah, the ministry's spokesperson, reiterated the kingdom's rejection of the displacement of Palestinians within or outside their land, and stressed the necessity of ending the war and reaching an immediate ceasefire to ensure the protection of civilians, their return to their homes, and the delivery of aid to all parts of the territory.

Qudah also called on the international community to fulfill its responsibilities and take immediate and effective action to prevent Israel from escalating its attacks, which have caused an unprecedented humanitarian catastrophe in the enclave.

Israeli airstrike kills 2 in Lebanon

Two people were killed and three others injured on Saturday as a result of an Israeli airstrike in Jadra, a Lebanese town about 65 kilometers away from the country's border with Israel, Lebanese security sources said.

Registration of Russian presidential candidates over, there will be four of them

MOSCOW



THE Central Election Commission (CEC) of the Russian Federation has completed its registration of candidates for the upcoming presidential election, eventually clearing four people for the upcoming presidential race.

For the first time since 2008, there will only be four options in the ballot - Leonid Slutsky of the Liberal Democratic Party of Russia (LDPR), Vladislav Davankov of New People, Nikolay Kharitonov of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation (KPRF) and incumbent Russian President Vladimir Putin, who is running for a fifth term as an independent.

The nomination period for party candidates was between December 8 and January 1, while for self-designated candidates it ended on December 27. On December 28, Russian Central Election Commission Chair Ella Pamfilova said a total of 33 people, including nine contenders from parties and 24 independent contenders, planned to run for Russian presidency next year. Only 15 of them eventually submitted the documents required to be registered as candidates.

When the deadline for filing documents expired on January 1, only 11 candidates remained in the race: three self-nominated candidates - the incumbent, President Vladimir Putin, bloggers Rada Russkikh and Anatoly Batazhev, and eight candidates from political parties - Leonid Slutsky (LDPR), Nikolai Kharitonov (KPRF), Vladislav Davankov (New People), Sergey Baburin (Russian People's Union), Andrey Bogdanov (Russian Party of Freedom and Justice), Boris Nadezhdin (Civic Initiative), Sergey Malinkovich (Communists of Russia), and Irina Sviridova (Democratic Party of Russia).

Slutsky and Davankov became the first registered candidates on January 9. Kharitonov joined them on January 9. All of them are members of parties represented in the Russian parliament's lower chamber - CPRF, LDPR, and New People - and therefore did not have to collect signatures.

Other candidates began submitting collected signatures and registration documents after January 22, with the deadline being January 31. By that time, self-nominated candidates were expected to present 300,000 signatures in their support, while nominees from out of parliament parties - 100,000 signatures.

Putin, whose campaign activists gathered over 3.5 million signatures in support, received the candidate status on January 29. His campaign team handed 315,000 signatures over to the Central Election Commission on January 22. Out of the 60,000 signatures selected for a check, only 0.15% were deemed invalid.

Before the January 31 deadline expired, three candidates - Baburin, Sviridova and Bogdanov - withdrew from the race.

On February 8, the CEC declined to register presidential hopeful Sergey Malinkovich of the Communists of Russia party and Boris Nadezhdin of the Civic Initiative party, citing a high percentage of invalid signatures submitted in their support. The percentage was above the permissible 5% (4.9% for Malinkovich and 15.2% for Nadezhdin). After being denied a spot on the ballot, Nadezhdin announced his intention to appeal this decision to Russia's Supreme Court.

Additionally, self-nominated bloggers Rada Russkikh and Anatoly Batazhev were denied the right to run because they failed to collect the required number of signatures and lacked certain documents.

About the candidates

Davankov, 39, became the first presidential candidate from the New People party. He has been its member since 2020 and currently holds the position of State Duma (lower parliament chamber) deputy speaker and first deputy chairman of the New Party faction. He participated in the 2023 election for the mayor of Moscow and finished fourth, gathering 5.34% of the vote.

Putin, 71, is the incumbent president of Russia. It will be his fifth presidential election, following the polls in 2000, 2004, 2012 and 2018. He showed his best result in 2018, receiving 76.69% of the vote.

Slutsky, 56, has led the LDPR party since May 2022. He is the chairman of the State Duma's international affairs committee and became the third presidential candidate in his party's history. Earlier, the party nominated its founder Vladimir Zhirinovskiy (in 1991, 1996, 2000, 2008, 2012 and 2018) and Oleg Malyshev (2004).

Kharitonov, 75, has been a member of all eight convocations of the Russian State Duma. It will be his second presidential election. 20 years ago, he came second in the presidential race, securing 13.69% of the vote. Earlier, CPRF designated as presidential candidate its leader Genady Zyuganov (1996, 2000, 2008 and 2012) and Pavel Grudinin (2018).

Agencies

STOCKHOLM

Sweden closes Nord Stream gas pipeline investigation amid political complications

THE Swedish Prosecution Authority announced on Wednesday the closure of its investigation into the Nord Stream gas pipeline explosions, citing a lack of jurisdiction in the case.

As the 16-month-long investigation concludes, the authorities, who identified the incident as a "gross sabotage" possibly involving "a state actor," have failed to pinpoint any culprits.

Analysts believe Sweden's ultimate decision to transfer and relinquish the "hot potato" to Germany is driven by intricate and delicate political considerations.

"The investigation into gross sabotage against Nord Stream 1 and 2 gas pipelines is closed, as Swedish jurisdiction does

not apply," stated the Swedish Public Prosecution Authority. Prosecutor Mats Ljungqvist, remaining tight-lipped due to secrecy, refrained from providing further details or commenting on any suspected individuals involved.

The primary purpose of the investigation was to uncover whether Swedish territory and citizens were involved in the act, thereby risking damaging Swedish interests or security, said the authority.

But the investigation showed "nothing has emerged to indicate that Sweden or Swedish citizens were involved in the attack which took place in international waters," it added.

Calling the investigation

"systematic and thorough," Ljungqvist said the authority had analyzed many ship movements, conducted an extensive crime scene investigation and held several interviews.

He added that Sweden has provided potential evidence to the ongoing German investigation, aligning with the concurrent Danish inquiry into the matter.

On Wednesday, Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov stated that Russia has consistently sought updates on the investigation's progress but has been denied access to the information. He added, "We will monitor subsequent investigative actions and make decisions accordingly."

The Nord Stream pipelines, which transported natural gas from Russia to European markets via Germany, were severely damaged in September 2022 after blasts in the Baltic Sea. Denmark, Sweden and Germany launched investigations following the explosion, which resulted in four leaks. Russia's participation in the investigations was denied.

In March last year, the Swedish prosecutor labeled the gas pipeline explosions as "gross sabotage" with a potential state actor involvement. Despite unverified reports implicating the United States, Ukraine and Russia, no suspects have been publicly identified.

All parties have denied in-

volvement 16 months after the incident. Washington and some of its allies have long criticized the pipelines, warning they posed a risk to Europe's energy security due to dependence on Russian gas.

The credibility and logic of a 5,000-word investigative report titled "How America Took Out The Nord Stream Pipeline" by Pulitzer Prize winner Seymour Hersh in February last year stand out among various revelations.

Hersh revealed that the sabotage of the pipelines was a secret operation ordered by the White House, implemented by the CIA and assisted by the Norwegian Navy.

But the White House and the

Norwegian foreign ministry both denied involvement. The Washington Post reported in April last year that Western officials would rather not know who bombed the Nord Stream pipelines, fearing it might implicate their own allies. The investigation is "a hot potato" for Sweden, security reporter John Grunlund said in an analysis on Swedish Television on Tuesday, commenting on the expected results.

"Every decision by the authorities risks having consequences for the security policy. By all accounts, the choice ultimately fell on the easiest path -- to let Germany finish the job," he said.

Grunlund said the arrangement is convenient for Sweden as "all other solutions would

have led the Swedish authorities down a path where they had to single out a possible perpetrator or state." Sources with insight into the matter said both the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Justice have been consulted due to the issue's sensitivity as it involves security policy and foreign powers.

"If the Swedish Prosecution Authority and the Security Service had opted for a more offensive solution, for example, singling out a country, the government and the authorities would have been faced with difficult follow-up questions about, for example, why they don't go all the way and take measures against the state responsible," he analyzed.

Xinhua

Welcoming the Year of the Dragon or the Loong? Insights from the Chinese perspective

BEIJING

AS communities worldwide, both within and outside China, partake in diverse festivities to welcome the Year of the Dragon, the mythical creature has become the subject of debate. Some call it a dragon, while others prefer the term "loong," underscoring a discussion about the most accurate translation of this symbol of traditional Chinese culture.

CONTRASTING PERSPECTIVES

Do dragon and loong convey the same meaning, or do they represent different creatures with distinct connotations? "Clearly, there's a difference," said Luca Nurmio, a scholar at the University of Luxembourg. "Western dragon is usually like a big magical monster."

In Western culture, shaped by Greek mythology, the dragon is frequently portrayed as the guardian of treasure, embodying a symbol of greed and destruction. "In the West, our dragons are almost all negative and very bad, fierce beasts that have to be killed," said Frances Wood, a well-known British sinologist.

Notably, medieval European manuscripts depict the iconic image of "Saint George slaying the dragon." Furthermore, within the Christian Bible's Book of Revelation, there is the representation of the Great Red Dragon, symbolizing Satan and the impending end times.

These diverse cultural narratives contribute to the multifaceted symbolism of dragons in the Western imagination, where they often embody themes of conflict, temptation and apocalyptic forewarnings.

"The one word dragon does encompass two very different ideas," explained Wood, adding, "In China, the dragon is very positive, it's an animal that helps humanity and that is noble."

In Chinese culture, the dragon, or Chinese loong, is considered an aus-

picious symbol, with emperors often referring to themselves as the "true dragon sons of heaven."

"The Chinese dragon is more like a friendly (one)," remarked Luca. In the Chinese language, more than 100 idioms incorporate the word "dragon," predominantly conveying positive connotations such as excellence, power, prestige, royalty and good luck.

Given the Chinese penchant for illustrating daily nuances through idiomatic expressions, the term "dragon" remains a pervasive and integral element in their everyday conversations. When people express admiration for a son-in-law, they often refer to him as "a swift son-in-law who rides the dragon," subtly suggesting his abilities, power and prestige.

During weddings, couples are often blessed with wishes for a harmonious and prosperous life, symbolized by the dragon and phoenix, with the groom referred to as the dragon and the bride as the phoenix.

The dragon is revered as a symbol of strength and authority, while the phoenix embodies wisdom, beauty and auspiciousness. It is a prevalent aspiration among Chinese parents to hope for their children to "become a dragon," signifying the pursuit of greatness or success.

This cultural inclination underscores the profound significance and positive attributes associated with the dragon within the Chinese collective consciousness.

Outside China, in the Japanese language, which shares a cultural affinity with China, the Western dragon and Chinese loong are different characters and separate entities, with Chinese loong often used in people's names and Western dragon seen in the term for dinosaurs, which tends to merge with the Western concept of a dragon.

LOST IN TRANSLATION

Given the profound differences in meaning between dragon and Chinese loong, why has the loong been trans-



Artists perform dragon dance to celebrate the upcoming Chinese Lunar New Year, or Spring Festival, in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, Feb. 9, 2024. (Photo by Phearnu/Xinhua)

lated into English as dragon?

Dragons appeared in the 13th-century book *The Travels of Marco Polo*, which described decorations at the royal court. Polo might have believed that the Chinese architectural depiction of dragons bore certain resemblances to the Western concept of dragons.

In the early 19th century, British missionary Robert Morrison compiled the first Chinese-English, English-Chinese dictionary in history, in which he translated the Chinese loong as dragon.

"The impact of this dictionary was profound, leading to the widespread adoption of the term dragon in the West," remarked Peng Ping, professor and vice dean of the School of English and International Studies at Beijing Foreign Studies University.

Language significantly influences human minds, and as a result, Westerners perceive it intriguing that the Chinese associate themselves with the concept of dragons. In their culture, dragons are symbols of malevolence, contributing to a cultural distortion and misinterpretation," she explained.

As China becomes more integrated into the global community, the growing popularity of Chinese culture offers the world a genuine glimpse into the rich symbolism and significance of the Chinese dragon or loong. Xinhua correspondents conducting interviews worldwide observe a growing interest among Westerners in exploring Chinese traditional culture.

"If I think of my life, when I was young, nobody knew about Chinese New Year or anything like that. But now it's spread into Trafalgar Square," said Wood, who recalled that the Lunar New Year vibe has grown strong in the last couple of decades.

The global influence of Chinese culture is expanding, sparking curiosity and appreciation for the iconic dragon's symbolism and rich heritage.

"I think many people only learn about the traditions when they have more contact with it, like the Dragon Boat Festival. And I was at the Dragon Boat Festival. So I know that Chinese traditions also reference the dragon and its cultural association with water," said Luca.

TIME FOR A CHANGE?

With the world becoming more familiar with the Chinese zodiac sign, has the time come to translate the Chinese dragon to loong?

"While we see positive changes, indicating that Chinese culture is spreading more widely in the West, I feel (the term dragon) may still fall short in capturing the true essence of the Chinese dragon's image, as its core term remains dragon after all," said Peng, suggesting using loong instead.

"Maybe we can call it Chinese dragon and name this year as The Year of the Chinese Dragon," said Wood. "I think it would be good to call it loong. Western dragons don't really reflect the Chinese culture in this way," commented Luca.

In some parts of the world, the term loong has already been adopted. As the Chinese Lunar New Year approaches, Fiji issued Year of Dragon stamps to celebrate the Chinese New Year.

"Bula! (meaning hello in Fiji) It is a pleasure that I take this opportunity to wish you all the compliments of the season for the year of the Loong," Fijian President Williams Katonivere extended New Year greetings to China through a Xinhua video. The issue of translation may seem trivial.

What matters more is conveying the true essence of the zodiac dragon. The Chinese people place great importance on welcoming people globally to immerse themselves in the Year of the Dragon's celebratory spirit and share in the Spring Festival's joy, warmth and splendor. Happy Chinese New Year. May you live loong and prosper!

Xinhua

Chinese provincial-level regions report remarkable economic performance in 2023

RECENTLY, 31 provinces, municipalities and autonomous regions in China successively released their economic performance for 2023 and announced their economic development targets for the coming year.

Guangdong became the first province to surpass 13 trillion yuan (\$1.83 trillion) in GDP, while Jiangsu maintained its position as the top recipient of actual utilization of foreign investment. Besides, two new cities have joined the "trillion-yuan-GDP club." These highlights serve as a vivid testament to the upward trend and positive development of the Chinese economy.

All 31 provinces, municipalities and autonomous regions saw their GDP grow in the past year. Xizang autonomous region and Hainan province led the country with GDP growth rates of 9.5 percent and 9.2 percent respectively, followed by Inner Mongolia autonomous region with a growth rate of 7.3 percent.

In addition, Ningxia Hui autonomous region, Gansu province, Jilin province, Chongqing municipality, Shandong province, Sichuan province, Zhejiang province reported GDP growth rates above 6 percent. The majority of Chinese provincial-level regions have experienced GDP growth rates ranging from 4 percent to 6 percent.

Guangdong province's GDP has surpassed 13 trillion yuan for the first time, with year-on-year growth of 4.8 percent. Its economic output has remained the highest in the country for 35 consecutive years.

The government work report of Guangdong province highlighted the vitality and resilience of the private



A drone takes off from Dahejia township, Jishishan county, northwest China's Gansu province for emergency mapping of earthquake-stricken areas, Dec. 21, 2023. (Photo by Ding Kai/People's Daily Online)

economy. In the past year, the number of operating entities in the province has exceeded 18 million, including over 10 million individual businesses. The number of enterprises has surpassed 7.8 million, accounting for 1/7 of the national total.

Jiangsu province reported GDP of over 12 trillion yuan, ranking second nationwide. Shandong province, ranking third, crossed the 9-trillion-yuan mark for the first time. Zhejiang province ranked fourth with GDP of over 8 trillion yuan, the first time for it to achieve so.

Apart from the increasing quantity, the GDP statistics also mirrored high-quality development. Shandong province has been consecutively selected as the province with the best business environment in the country.

It is home to 15 national-level characteristic industry clusters for small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), as well as 299 "little giant firms" - specialized and sophisticated SMEs that produce novel and unique products. The total number of technology SMEs in the province has exceeded 45,000.

Beijing's per capita GDP, labor productivity, and energy and water consumption per unit of GDP maintained the best level among provincial-level regions in the country. Shanghai reached a record-breaking scale of actual utilization of foreign investment, reaching \$24 billion. Its total trading volume in the financial market increased by 15 percent, main-

ing its attraction to global investors.

It is reported that there are currently 26 cities in China that have achieved a GDP of over 1 trillion yuan, also known as the "trillion-yuan club." Among them, Jiangsu province has the highest number of cities in this club, including Suzhou, Nanjing, Wuxi, Nantong, and Changzhou. Guangdong province has four cities in the club, namely Shenzhen, Guangzhou, Foshan, and Dongguan. Additionally, Qingdao, Jinan, and Yantai in Shandong province, Hangzhou and Ningbo in Zhejiang province, as well as Fuzhou and Quanzhou in Fujian province, are also part of this group.

In 2024, various local governments in China have set their goals for the new year in their work reports. Xizang and Hainan, which saw the fastest GDP growth in 2023, have set their growth targets for this year at around 8 percent, the highest among all provincial-level regions. Most other provinces have set their GDP growth targets for 2024 at around 5 percent, which is roughly in line with the national GDP growth rate in 2023.

It is worth noting that the term "new productive forces" appeared for the first time in the work reports of several provincial-level regions. Sichuan province, for example, will focus on the layout and vigorous development of the artificial intelligence industry in order to promote new productive forces. Anhui province has proposed supporting the growth and expansion of the automo-

bile industry and building world-class enterprises with Anhui characteristics.

Shanghai has listed 34 livelihood projects for 2024, including the addition of 4,000 beds for elderly care, 30 community canteens for the elderly, and the renovation of 3,000 beds for cognitive impairment care. Additionally, there will be an increase of 3,000 seats in public kindergartens and 7,000 seats of community childcare places. A total of 70,000 units of affordable rental housing and over 10,000 units of affordable housing will be constructed, along with the installation of 3,000 elevators in existing multi-story residential buildings.

Childcare, elderly care, and housing were buzzwords in Shanghai's annual targets for the new year.

Ningbo, as a major city in foreign trade and manufacturing, will continue to leverage its advantages in 2024. The city vowed to achieve a growth rate in the value added of strategic emerging industries two percentage points higher than that of the industries above designated size. Additionally, it aims to establish over 30 provincial-level or higher demonstration projects in areas such as intelligent manufacturing and industrial internet. Furthermore, Ningbo plans to regularize the business of international navigation vessel bonded liquefied natural gas refueling.

In addition, boosting domestic demand and promoting consumption are also key tasks highlighted in the government work reports of multiple regions.

People's Daily

Barrick grows its reserve base for third successive year

TORONTO

BARRICK Gold Corporation has reported growth in attributable proven and probable gold mineral reserves by five-million ounces before 2023 depletion, while also striving to maintain the quality of the mineral reserve base.

As such, the company's attributable proven and probable mineral reserves now stand at 77-million ounces at 1.65 g/t, compared with 76-million ounces at 1.67 g/t in 2022.

Led by the Africa & Middle East region, Barrick has delivered a third consecutive year of organic gold reserve growth over and above annual depletion. This unremitting focus on asset quality has successfully delivered replacement of over 140% of the company's gold reserve depletion since end of year 2019, adding almost 29 million ounces of attributable proven and probable reserves or 44 million ounces of proven and probable reserves on a 100% basis (excluding acquisitions and divestments).

Barrick says successful drilling programmes at Lumwana, in Zambia, have driven the growth of proven and probable copper reserves by 330 000 t of copper in 2023, allowing the company to replace 124% of yearly global copper depletion at a consistent quality, effectively maintaining attributable proven and probable copper mineral reserves of 5.6-million tonnes at 0.39% in 2023.

Attributable measured and indicated gold resources for last year currently stand at 180-million ounces at 16 g/t, with a further 39-million ounces at 0.8 g/t of inferred resources. Attributable measured and indicated copper resources for 2023 stand at 21-million tonnes of copper at 0.39%, with a further 7.1-million tonnes of copper at 0.4% of inferred resources.

The company's mineral resources are reported inclusive of reserves and are based on a gold price of \$1 700/oz and an updated copper price of \$4/lb for last year.

Barrick president and CEO Mark Bristow says the company's strategy of investing in organic growth through exploration and mineral resource management has created real value through discovery and development, rather than relying on increases in commodity prices to provide value to high-premium mergers and acquisitions.

"For our industry to help build a better world, we have to invest in our own future by creating value through exploration, leveraging our capital infrastructure base by

Russia to respond harshly to attempts to strip it of reserve ownership - Foreign Ministry

MOSCOW



RUSSIA will provide a harsh response to all attempts to strip it of ownership over its sovereign reserves, Russian Foreign Ministry Spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said over the potential use of Russia's frozen assets by the West.

"We will provide a harsh response to any unfriendly actions, connected to attempts to strip Russia of ownership over its sovereign reserves in one way or another. Our response measures, aimed at protection of our legitimate rights and interests, will be justified both from legal and moral standpoints," the diplomat said in a commentary, published on the Russian Foreign Ministry website.

According to Zakharova, if Russian reserves indeed get used as a security, any people and funds that decide to buy such obligations, will become the first candidates to be subjected to Russia's countermeasures, including financial and proprietary ones.

"The Russian government currently reviews a wide array of options on how to exert legal and economic effect on those who expect to profit from stealing our assets," she underscored.

Meanwhile, the diplomat noted that "for the first time in a while, Western official started admitting, even if not publicly, the danger of arbitrary manipulations with someone else's property."

"Amid the problems in the economy, largely caused by their own mistakes and miscalculations, as well as the mirror effect of the anti-Russian sanctions, Europe has finally considered the consequences of such expropriations for their own investment climate and business reputation," the spokeswoman noted.

She pointed out that Moscow sees any attempt to seize Russian assets as primitive theft.

"Of course, we understand that the West won't stop and will keep looking for new pretexts to create an impression of legitimacy of seizure of our assets. We view any attempts to seize funds owned by Russia as primitive theft and the expropriators' desire to fill their own pockets," she underscored. **Agencies**

Agencies

Simba Cement proudly marks 21 years of Kilimanjaro Marathon sponsorship

By Guardian Correspondent

WHEN you mention one of the longest sponsorships of the Kilimanjaro Premium Lager International Marathon, you cannot miss to name Simba Cement which is proudly marking 21 years with the prestigious event that is being held for the 22nd time this year.

What started like a mere fun run with less than 500 runners, is today one of the biggest athletics events in the world attracting over 12,000 runners and a multiple number of spectators on the 21 and 42 kms routes from Moshi town as well as from more than 56 countries worldwide.

Simba Cement is among the sponsors who have made it happen all through as the Marathon continues to grow year after year as hundreds of participants and spectators gather in Moshi every last Sunday of February or first Sunday of March to mark what has now become a calendar event to many.

Asked about the secret behind the consistency, the Simba Cement Marketing and Communication Manager, Mtanga Noor, says: "This is because we believe in the STRENGTH of our brand, we believe in the organizers of the event, we believe in sports and having fun, we believe in Kili Marathon as a package; from our team which consists of the runners, volunteers, to our customers who participate in Kilimanjaro International Marathon, the service providers to the event; all these, with their unified efforts, make Kili Marathon a success and this year is marking 22 years."

She says through the Kilimanjaro Marathon, Simba Cement has been able to reach out to its stakeholders in a joyous mood.

"The stakeholders I am talking about are our customers, suppliers, shareholders as well as all others who like to have fun and keep themselves physically fit,"



Simba Cement participants during a previous edition of the Kilimanjaro Premium Lager International Marathon. FILE PHOTO

she adds.

To Simba Cement, she says it is all about teamwork during the Marathon as running together with their customers and prospective ones defines teamwork - serving water to the runners, employees and management is teamwork.

"To Simba Cement, the Kili Marathon strengthens our teamwork in a fun and cheerful mood," she said

She says the whole team heading to Moshi for the Marathon will comprise more than 50 people, including runners and volunteers, adding that for employees, especially runners, they support them with the running gear, transport to and from Moshi, as well as meals and accommodation while in Moshi and this too goes to the volunteers. One of the aspects of the marathon that most sponsors look forward to in the Marathon is the corporate challenge where

they battle it out and the organisers later announce the winners after getting the average of their finishing times in the 42km and 21km races.

"This year our corporate challenge consists of five (5) employees who are training every day. Some of these are new to the race and others have been there," she said, adding that their team has a total number of 25 runners.

"I congratulate all other sponsors led by Kilimanjaro Premium Lager (main sponsor) and Tigo -21km Half Marathon, Gee Soseji - 5 km Fun Run for your enormous contribution. I cannot also forget the water table sponsors Kilimanjaro Water, TotalEnergies, CRDB Bank and TPC Sugar. Official partners - Garda World, CMC Automobiles and Sal Salinero Hotel and suppliers - Kibo Palace Hotel and Keys Hotel, she says adding that it would not have

been easy for the organisers without committed sponsors.

To their customers and participants of the Marathon, she says they should trust the STRENGTH WITHIN every bag of Simba Cement, and every construction which is using Simba Cement, from their product flagship, which is Simba Imara, the all-purpose cement, Simba Bora for high raise and long lasting construction, and Simba Barabara for roads stabilization.

"We promise our customers the availability of Simba Cement with high and consistent quality," she says.

This year's event will be held at the Moshi Cooperatives University on Sunday, February 25 from 6.30 am. The Kilimanjaro Premium Lager International Marathon is organised by the Kilimanjaro Marathon Company Limited and locally coordinated by Executive Solutions Limited.



Youth fight for the ball during a training session at the Jakaya Kikwete grounds recently. PHOTO: JUMANNE JUMA

AT reveals team for world cross-country championships

By Correspondent Marc Nkwame, Arusha

A TOTAL of 12 athletes have been selected to form the national cross-country team which will represent Tanzania in the 2024 World Athletics Cross-Country Championships.

This year's World Athletics Cross Country Championships are taking place in the Serbian capital of Belgrade on March 30.

The Tanzanian national team runners to represent the country include six male, five female and one Under-20 candidate and were named in Arusha during the national cross-country championships. The national cross-

country competition was held at Ilboru Secondary School's sports grounds.

According to the Acting Secretary General of Athletics Tanzania (AT), Jackson Ndaweka, the selected athletes will soon be entered into preparatory camps alongside those training for the Commonwealth Games.

"Some of the chosen representatives were also part of the national team for the forthcoming All African Games and the two events are only one week apart," said the Athletics Tanzania official.

The All African Games events take place from March 8 to 23, in Ghana while the world cross-country championships start on

March 30, 2024 in Serbia.

Speaking here, the secretary of the Arusha Athletics Association, Rogath Steven, said he was happy that all runners from the region have made it into the national team.

"Arusha has also been chosen to play the host because the preparatory camps for the national team are going to be based in the region," added Steven.

According to the official, last year Tanzania performed well in world athletics championships and that is why the country's participatory quota was increased to 12 participants from the only four that represented the country last year.

Originally, the world cross-country event was due to take place in Croatia, but the World Athletics Council realized that preparations at Medulin and Pula in Croatia to host the event on February 10 had not been advanced sufficiently, therefore shifted the stage to Serbia.

Juliana Mwamsuva, who coordinates the Tanzania Youth Athletics Championships (TAYAC), said she was impressed by the national cross-country event which was well organized and featured extremely capable sportsmen and women.

"Arusha also suits its current position as the basic venue for national athletics events," she added.

Kapombe asks Simba fans for their support against Geita Gold

By Correspondent Seth Mapoli

AFTER failing to meet the expectations of their fans in the previous game against Azam FC at CCM Kirumba Stadium in Mwanza, Simba SC defender Shomari Kapombe has urged their disappointed supporters to come together and support the team in today's match against Geita Gold FC.

Kapombe promised that the players have learned from their mistakes and are determined to fight for victory to bring happiness to the fans.

Simba narrowly avoided dropping three points in their last match against Azam on Friday, with Clatous Chama saving the day with a last-minute equalizing goal.

Despite Azam taking an early lead in the 14th minute by a goal registered by Prince Dube, the match ended in a 1-1 draw. This result allowed Yanga to maintain their lead at the top of the league standings.

Simba will face Geita Gold at CCM Kirumba in Mwanza today in their fourth game away from Dar es Salaam following matches against Mashujaa, Tabora United, and Azam.

Despite their previous dominating victory against Geita Gold with a 5-0 scoreline, Simba enter the game with a determination to secure another win, considering it one of the crucial matches of the season.

Reflecting on the draw against Azam, Kapombe emphasized the team's disappointment at not securing all three points but expressed gratitude for earning one point.

"We express gratitude to God for the safe conclusion of the game. We got one point that fell short of our expectations, as we had aimed for three, but we are thankful to God for that singular point.

"The game proved challenging, particularly due to conceding an early goal, necessitating significant effort to restore balance. Nonetheless, we remained steadfast in following the guidance of our coaches," said Kapombe.

He also acknowledged the difficulty of the match, particularly conceding an early goal, which required significant effort to equalize. Kapombe credited the team's resilience and unity for salvaging a point from the game.

Looking ahead, Kapombe stated that the team is focused on the next game and is determined to secure all three points. He thanked the supporters in Mwanza for their unwavering support and called on them to continue backing the team in their quest for victory in the upcoming matches.

"We extend our gratitude to the people of Mwanza for their support during our previous game at CCM Kirumba Stadium. I also implore them to continue supporting us and to bolster the team with their encouragement as we strive for victory in Monday's match against Geita Gold FC," he added.

Kapombe reiterated the team's commitment to bouncing back from setbacks and urged the fans to remain steadfast in their support. He emphasized the importance of unity and determination in achieving success in the Tanzania Premier League.



Winner of 'Twende AFCON' praises Betway for opportunities

By Guardian Correspondent

A RESIDENT of Dodoma, Prisca Sospeter, has gone to Ivory Coast for the Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON) as one of the winners of the second phase of the 'Twende AFCON' Promotion run by Betway Tanzania.

The promotion, which was launched in November last year, among other things, was aimed at providing opportunities to Tanzanians, especially users of the Betway betting network, to support the Tanzania national team (Taifa Stars) which was also participating in the competition.

Talking about the opportunity, Prisca said that it has been a great pleasure for her to witness the championship of great value in Africa, believing that it will help her to increase her understanding of African football and the competition that exists between countries while allowing her to meet different people.

"I thank God for getting this opportunity. For me, it is the first time to travel to the Ivory Coast, and it allowed me to see this big championship live," said

Prisca, while thanking Betway Tanzania for bringing the promotion that gave her the opportunity.

On his part, the Ambassador of Betway Tanzania, Salama Jabir, said that the promotion, which lasted for one month from November 16 to December 16, was aimed at giving Tanzanians the opportunity to go to the Ivory Coast to witness the championship and also to support Taifa Stars.

"We know our team was in Ivory Coast to participate in the AFCON, so our promotion went with a strategy to empower Tanzanians to go and give it strength, but unfortunately our fighters were eliminated in the group stage. We believe that in the future it will do better because even this year it has shown great strength," said Salama.

The African Cup of Nations (AFCON) 2023, which ended yesterday, began in the country on January 13. It included teams from 24 countries, including Tanzania, which this year has participated for the third time since it qualified for the first time in 1980.

The team also qualified in 2019 and this year.

Erik ten Hag fears £85m black hole at Man Utd with no Champions League

By Ian Whittell

ERIK ten Hag admits that the potential £85 million hole left by Manchester United's failure to qualify for the Champions League will impact summer team-building.

The Premier League's refreshed emphasis on its profit and sustainability regulations has already been felt across the game.

And Ten Hag has admitted the new version of FFP rules have already prevented him from signing a desperately needed striker in the January transfer window.

Now, with hopes of a top-four finish receding and even a place in the Europa League or Europa Conference League far from guaranteed, Ten Hag knows United's European destination next season will impact his spending power.

"It's very important to play Champions League, that is clear, we don't have to discuss this," said the United manager.

"What exactly is the impact, that is what in this moment I don't know.

"You have more financial power when you achieve the Champions League and that is our target, absolutely."

Unlikely as it may have seemed a few weeks ago, before a run that has brought 10 points out of the past 15 available in the league, Champions League football next season is not completely out of the question.

Victory at Aston Villa on Sunday afternoon would lift United to within five points of Unai Emery's side, with 14 games remaining. But it remains a tall order, with Spurs standing between the two clubs at present.

Instead, United are more likely to qualify for the lesser of the two European competitions, and take the financial "hit" that goes with it.

English teams made an average of £85 million from participation in the Champions League last season, compared with £24.7 million in the Europa League and £18 million in the Conference League.

But the Champions League's complicated payment structures offers clubs multiple revenue streams, with prize money, appearance money and television money all feeding into the overall pot.

Estimates put the sum made by neighbours City for winning the Champions League last season at around £108 million - an indication of the riches United will be missing out on if they end this season out of the competition for the third time in eight years.

The potential lack of firepower at ten Hag's disposal this summer would place added emphasis on his group of young players whose development has been one of the bright points of a so-far disappointing campaign.

Midfielder Kobbie Mainoo, 18, has played at a level way beyond his years in recent weeks and is expected to start alongside Casemiro at Villa Park, with Ten Hag praising the Brazilian veteran for the influence he has had on the teenager.

"He gives you calmness and composure on the ball, he gives you options, he sees the critical pass, so he is always a step ahead of his opponent to break lines," said Ten Hag.

"So he is a very important player for our game and we're happy he's back.

"And Kobbie Mainoo, he can learn a lot from it and that togetherness, absolutely there is that bond [between them].

"Kobbie is very coachable, Casemiro has so much experience and Kobbie will learn a lot from him and that can accelerate his development. When they play together I think they can take benefit from each other.

"Casemiro takes that responsibility, he takes it to him, he is talking to him, I see it in the dressing room, I see it on the pitch in games, I see it in training.

"Of course he looking at his own game but he's trying to help and support Kobbie."

THE TELEGRAPH



South Africa beat DR Congo in shootout to finish third at AFCON



South Africa defender Khuliso Mudau (L) fights for the ball with DR Congo midfielder Aaron Tshibola. Agencies

ABIDJAN

CAPTAIN and goalkeeper Ronwen Williams was the hero again as South Africa beat the Democratic Republic of Congo 6-5 on penalties in the Africa Cup of Na-

tions third place play-off on Saturday.

After a 0-0 draw following 90 minutes in Abidjan, Williams saved spot kicks from Chancel Mbemba and Meschack Elia to give Bafana Bafana the bronze medal in the Ivory Coast.

Before Elia had his kick saved, Siyanda Xulu converted to give South Africa what proved the decisive lead in the shootout.

Williams saved four shootout kicks last weekend to help South Africa get past Cape Verde after

a goalless quarter-final.

DR Congo will regret many missed chances during regular time in a lively match while South Africa maintained a perfect record in third place play-offs having beaten Tunisia on penalties

24 years ago.

South Africa made three changes to the team beaten in a penalty shootout by Nigeria after an incident-packed semi-final three days ago.

Nkosinathi Sibisi, Thapelo Morena and Mhali Mayambela came in for suspended Grant Kekana and injured duo Mthobi Mvala and Percy Tau.

DR Congo retained only two of the side that lost to hosts Ivory Coast in the other semi-final -- captain and centre-back Mbemba and midfielder Samuel Moutoussamy.

But eight of the nine who were dropped sat on the bench, leaving French coach Sebastien Desabre with multiple options should he wish to make changes.

- Threatening -

Although the Congolese had less of the ball in the opening half at Stade Felix Houphouet-Boigny in the Ivorian economic capital, they were the more threatening team in the attacking third.

Physically imposing Silas Mvumpa came close to breaking the deadlock after just eight minutes, but as he tried to round Williams in the area, the goalkeeper snatched the ball.

Simon Banza worked his way into a danger-

ous position close to the South African goal midway through the half, only to deliver a weak shot that posed no danger.

Despite some neat build-up play, it took South Africa 43 minutes to get a shot on target, and the effort from Mayambela went straight to goalkeeper Dimitry Bertaud.

As the match reached the mid point of the second half, Congo continued to look the side more likely to break the deadlock.

When Williams fumbled the ball and lost possession, the ball went across the goalmouth and Silas fired wide when he should at least have hit the target.

So should Mbemba, who had ventured forward for a free-kick, but he blazed over when the ball fell invitingly into his path close to goal. Substitute Fiston Mayeye also wasted a chance.

A captivating tournament was to conclude later yesterday in another Abidjan stadium with the Ivory Coast facing Nigeria in the final with a seven million dollar prize on the line.

The countries met at the group stage last month in the same venue and the Super Eagles won 1-0 thanks to a William Troost-Ekong penalty.

AFP

Liverpool leapfrog Manchester City to reclaim Premier League top spot

LONDON

LIVERPOOL returned to the Premier League summit with a hard-fought 3-1 win against relegation-threatened Burnley on Saturday after champions Manchester City briefly replaced them at the top.

The Anfield side are hunting a record-equalling 20th English top-flight title in Jurgen Klopp's final season in charge but once again have relentless City snapping at their heels.

Liverpool were not at their fluent best against Vincent Kompany's men but did enough to get over the line on what Klopp called a "super difficult" day.

City, who had earlier beaten Everton 2-0, are two points behind Liverpool with a game in hand as they chase an unprecedented fourth consecutive English top-flight title.

The Reds were gifted the lead when Burnley goalkeeper James Trafford failed to claim the ball from a Trent Alexander-Arnold corner and Diogo Jota headed home his ninth Premier League goal of the season.

But they were pegged back just before half-time when Dara O'Shea powered a bullet header past Liverpool goalkeeper Caoimhin Kelleher, replacing Alisson Becker, who was missing with an illness.

Liverpool, playing in front of a record league crowd at Anfield of nearly 60,000 after a ground expansion, were a different proposition after the

break and got their reward when Luis Diaz headed them back in front in the 52nd minute.

The visitors had several inviting chances to equalise before Darwin Nunez's header from Harvey Elliott's cross secured the vital win.

"It's not only the three points," Klopp told the BBC. "You cannot have momentum guaranteed all the time.

"Nine days ago we played incredible against Chelsea then we lost to Arsenal. It's always a different challenge. If it's not clicking straight away, fight through it.

"It was really tough today but the boys fought through and got three points."

- Haaland double -

Earlier, Erling Haaland scored his first goals since November as Manchester City topped the table for the first time since November.

Pep Guardiola's team laboured to break down the stubborn visitors at a nervous Etihad Stadium but Haaland struck twice late in the second half.

They are his first goals since returning from an absence of nearly two months due to a foot injury.

Guardiola's men have won their past 10 games in all competitions but the Spaniard might be a little concerned with the way they laboured against struggling Everton, who remain in the relegation zone.



Darwin Nunez made the points safe for Liverpool with a glancing header - PA

"In the first half our body language was not good," said the City boss. "You cannot play good football if you are not positive. You do your best when you are positive. When you start to complain and are sad it does not work.

"We talked at half time and I told them, 'what do you expect, to come here and win 5-0? Come on. Life is tough and football is tough'."

Brennan Johnson struck a dramatic winner in the sixth minute of stoppage time to fire Tottenham

back into the top four with a dramatic 2-1 win against Brighton.

The teams looked set to share the spoils after Pape Sarr cancelled out Pascal Gross's early penalty in the 61st minute.

But South Korean star Son Heung-min, back from Asian Cup duty, teed up fellow substitute Johnson in the dying seconds to earn a vital victory.

"It's fair to say that we are still a work in progress but we had a world-class player in Son, who makes the most difficult ball look

simple to set up Brennan," said Spurs boss Ange Postecoglou.

"Going into the game we looked at the squad and knew we had the ability to change it up. It's fair to say that helped us."

Newcastle beat Nottingham Forest 3-2 in the evening kick-off.

Brazil midfielder Bruno Guimaraes scored twice for Eddie Howe's team, who climb to seventh in the table, but Forest have now taken just one point from their past four matches.

Bottom side Sheffield United beat Luton 3-1 and Rodrigo Muniz scored twice as Fulham beat Bournemouth by the same scoreline.

Brentford saw off Wolves 2-0 courtesy of Christian Norgaard's first-half header and a fine team goal late in the game finished off by Ivan Toney.

Third-placed Arsenal travel to West Ham on Sunday while high-flying Aston Villa host Manchester United.

AFP

Gwiji by David Chikoko



SPORT

Erik ten Hag fears £85m black hole at Man Utd with no Champions League

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By Correspondent Michael Mwebe

AFTER failing to collect maximum points in their last game against Azam on Friday, Simba have no room for error when they take on hosts Geita Gold at CCM Kirumba in Mwanza this afternoon.

At the moment, they are staring at a potential 10 points gap with leaders Young Africans who were scheduled to play Tanzania Prisons later yesterday.

Simba, driven by the sting of dropping two points against Azam, now seek redemption.

A defeat in this upcoming duel could potentially derail their title aspirations, leaving Abdelhak Benchikha's men with a proverbial mountain to climb.

Simba's historical edge is evident, with three wins in their last four encounters with Geita Gold.

Though history plays little part, Simba will also be boosted by their away records having won all their four away games so far.

In a team news update, Aishi Manula is expected to replace Ayub Lakhred between the sticks, while Hussein Kazi is also believed to have a chance of returning to the starting XI despite a below-par performance that saw him substituted against Azam.

Simba will also again be without the services of

Disappointed Simba now seek for response against Geita Gold



Simba SC midfielder Fabrice Ngoma (2nd R) battles for the ball with Azam FC midfielder Yahya Zayd during their NBC Premier League match at Kirumba Stadium in Mwanza on Friday. PHOTO: COURTESY OF SIMBA SC

Henock Inonga and Willy Onana while Fabrice Ngoma is expected to continue in central midfield, with Clatous Chama operating further forward.

Goalkeeping coach Daniel Cadena spoke about the tight fixtures nightmare though he was quick to point out they have enough quality to deal with it and get the required results.

"There is no time for recovery or training, but we are ready to work hard for victory. All the players are ready, we do not have any injuries.

"Every match is important and we face the pressure to win in each of our games. We respect our opponents but we have very good players and they can control the pressure. As for now we are

not thinking about anything but focusing on the coming game," he said.

Geita Gold are only out of the relegation zone by two points, and things could turn around very quickly with games coming thick and fast.

Tabora United, Ifeju and Kagera Sugar could force the miners out of safe positions with triumphs in their later yesterday and today affairs.

Assistant coach Lucas Mlingwa spoke on the prospect of facing Simba and insisted they are going for an all-out approach to win.

"We respect Simba as an elite side. We respect their experience in the league, but we have prepared the team technically and psychologically. We have accorded them respect but we want maximum points," he said.

Zanzibar eyes hosting 2024 CECAFA Senior Challenge Cup after five-year hiatus

By Correspondent Seth Mapoli & Agencies

THE Zanzibar Football Federation (ZFF) has thrown its hat into the ring, vying to host the prestigious CECAFA Senior Challenge Cup in July 2024.

This move highlights the growing ambition of Zanzibar's football scene and underscores the tournament's enduring significance in the East and Central African region.

The Council of East and Central Africa Football Associations (CECAFA) opened the bidding process for member associations that will be in a position to host any tournament in the zone this year.

Yussuf Mossi, the CECAFA Competitions Director, said the bidding process opened on February 1 and will close on February 16.

He said the Competitions Committee chaired by Isayas Jira, also the president of the Ethiopia Football Federation (EFF), sat in Nairobi, Kenya few days ago and drew the calendar of the competitions for 2024.

CECAFA is the oldest sub-regional football organization in Africa, formed in 1973. Its flagship tournament, the Senior Challenge Cup, boasts a rich history dating back to 1926 when it was known as the Gossage Cup.

The inaugural match saw Kenya edge out Uganda 2-1, setting the stage for decades of fierce competition and camaraderie.

The Cup typically features national teams from CECAFA's member countries, including Tanzania, Uganda, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Djibouti, Burundi, Somalia, Rwanda, Sudan, and Kenya.

The last edition, held in December 2019, saw Uganda triumph over Eritrea in the final.

Interestingly, 2024 marks the first time the tournament will be contested by U-23 teams instead of senior squads.

Zanzibar's interest in hosting stems from more than just national pride. The island, with its growing tourism industry and passionate football fanbase, sees the tournament as a chance to showcase its infrastructure, talent, and commitment to the sport.

Hosting the Cup would undoubtedly boost Zanzibar's profile on the regional and international stage, attracting significant tourist dollars and investment.

However, ZFF isn't the only contender. The CECAFA General Meeting will decide the host nation from all applications received by February 16, 2024.

This open bidding process reflects CECAFA's desire to spread the benefits of hosting major tournaments across its member countries and foster regional development.

ZFF has taken action in response to CECAFA's announcement regarding the opportunity to bid for the hosting rights of five tournaments scheduled for 2024.

These include qualifiers for the AFCON U-17 and U-20 Championships, the CAF Women's Champions League Zonal qualifiers, the Africa Schools Football Championships Zonal qualifiers, and the CECAFA U-20 Girls Championship.

This ambitious bid demonstrates ZFF's comprehensive strategy to position Zanzibar as a hub for football development across various age groups and genders.

Whether Zanzibar's bid for the Senior Challenge Cup and other tournaments succeeds remains to be seen. However, their proactive approach and commitment to football development are already commendable.

Regardless of the outcome, the 2024 CECAFA tournaments promise to be exciting events, fostering regional unity and providing a platform for young talent to shine.



Azam FC coach Youssouph Dabo. (Agencies)

We can only emulate Simba and Yanga by winning titles - Dabo

By Correspondent Nassir Nchimbi

AZAM FC gaffer Youssouph Dabo has said that he and his charges can't fight with the history of Simba and Young Africans in the Tanzania football scene as he asked his players to build their present by clinching the NBC Premier League title this season.

The Senegalese has acknowledged that Simba and Young Africans are clubs with rich history and fascinating fan bases and the only way for his side to emulate the two local giants is through results and winning titles.

Dabo, who is recognized through his tactical discipline within Azam FC style of play and the aggressiveness of his players,

eyes to transform the ice-cream makers into a title-winning team.

"I know Tanzanians don't rate us like Simba and Young Africans to that level of respect and the only way to take it is through picking points and staying on top of the table. We can only earn recognition and respect by winning titles.

"I told my players that we should treat every game like a final and at the end of the day we can achieve what we want to achieve in this league," he said.

Dabo was speaking on his previous game against Simba at CCM Kirumba on Friday where they lost control of the game into the last ten minutes and ended in a 1-1 draw.

"We lost control of the game

in the very last minutes of the game while we had everything in our hands. We squandered goal-scoring opportunities, especially in the first half where we could have scored at least three goals.

"We studied Simba through video footage and realized that they are a good attacking team but not good at tracking back. In quick transitions, they become easy to go through and leave scoring chances," he added.

The match was crucial for both teams as they pushed for the NBC Premier League top spots behind Young Africans, who won the league in two consecutive seasons.

As it stands, Azam have 32 points from 14 games while Simba have 30 points from 13 matches.

Flexibles by David Chikoko



CECAFA President Wallece Karia. (Agencies)

