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There are very few leaders who are capable of stepping down in the manner in which Lowassa did

Lowassa resilience rings in church last respects eulogy

By Carlos Banda

A cross-section of political leaders, the public and family members yesterday described the late ex-prime minister Edward Lowassa as a resilient and exemplary leader inside and outside state leadership.

This assessment was vivid among mourners paying their last respects for the former premier at the Azania Front cathedral of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania (ELCT).

Former Kawe MP Ritha Mlaki described the late Lowassa as a hardworking and transparent leader who influenced her political and personal growth and instilled confidence and wisdom in her career.

"He was hardworking and a fast communicator with an authoritative tenor. Even if your head was a little sloppy his tone would make you active," she said.

Former Busega MP Dr Raphael Chegeni shared his relationship with the



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Funeral service for former prime minister Edward Lowassa in progress at the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania's Azania Front Cathedral in Dar es Salaam yesterday. Photo: Correspondent Jumanne Juma

'Non-refunding of VAT claims cripples many public firms'

By Francis Kajubi, Dodoma

DELAYS in value added tax (VAT) refunds by the Tanzania Revenue Authority (TRA) have for two years badly affected operational efficiency in parastatal organisations, the legislature has declared.

Deus Sangu, the chairman of the Public Investments Committee (PIC) of the National Assembly made this affirmation when tabling the committee's report for the past year, pointing at Stamigold which claims 12.30bn/-.

Other entities listed in the report include Gasco, a gas subsidiary of the Tanzania Petroleum Development Corporation (TPDC) demanding 3.01bn/- and the Electrical Transmission and Distributions Construction and Maintenance Co. Ltd (ETDCO), claiming 563m/-.

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Samia touts growth pace in key Norwegian forum

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President Samia Suluhu Hassan addresses the Tanzania-Norway Business Forum in the Norwegian capital, Oslo, on Tuesday. In attendance were Tanzanian and Norwegian investors and other members of the two countries' business communities. Photo: State House

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Aces A outfit clobbers TCA Combine in 2024 TCA Dar 50 Overs Cup Div A

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Kagera grand tour to transform the country's tourism landscape



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Digital sound mode set to increase radio frequencies

By Guardian Correspondent, Dodoma

THE government is finalising the revision of broadcasting regulations to adopt digital sound broadcasting (DSB) technology and innovation, tackling radio frequency scarcity in urban areas.

Kundo Mathew, the Information, Communication and Information Technology deputy minister, opening the annual broad-

casting conference here yesterday, said that the move will expand coverage and content to a broader audience.

Organised by the Tanzania Communications Regulatory Authority (TCRA), the conference serves as a platform for broadcasting service providers to discuss current policy issues relating to the broadcasting regulatory environment and technological advancements.

He said that radio coverage has now reached an impressive 55-percent of the country's urban and rural expanse, excluding reservations areas like national parks and forests.

Andrew Kisaka, a TCRA consultant on spectrum management, told participants that digital technology utilises communication infrastructure to deliver content, transcending reliance on radio spectrum fre-

quencies.

DSB is expected to optimise radio broadcasting services, enabling providers to reach every corner of the country unhindered by physical barriers like mountains, terrains, buildings, or patches of forest, he stated.

He said broadcasting

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Samia touts growth pace in key Norwegian forum

By Guardian Reporter

PRESIDENT Samia Suluhu Hassan has held talks with Norwegian leaders including King Harald V who received the Head of State upon arrival, and later met with members of the Norwegian business community.

The visit was in its second day yesterday where remarks from President Samia related to cooperation between Norway and Tanzania, noting that on the basis of assessment by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) described Tanzania as among 20 developing countries whose economies will grow steadily during 2024.

A State House update on the discussions had no indication of a joint communique or likely holding of a joint press conference at the end of the visit, while focusing on areas of cooperation and investment opportunities that the president explained to the Norwegian business gala.

Background notes on the visit by the Norwegian diplomatic mission in the country highlighted decades long study links, with several thousand Tanzanians, including a wide section of decision makers, having a Norwegian component in higher education, while a fairly large number of Norwegian institutions and organizations are active in the country for a long period.

The mission update said that today, Tanzania is one of Norway's 10 partner countries for long term development, where Norway supports Tanzania's goal to become a middle-income country less dependent on aid.

It said that Norway's priority sectors are private sector development, renewable energy, petroleum management, increased revenue mobilisation through improved fiscal and financial management, and environment and climate change.

It similarly noted that Tanzania is a major beneficiary from multilateral assistance and global funds, including health, education and infrastructure, to which Norway is a major contributor.

"Tanzania is host to about 300,000 refugees from Burundi and the DRC, and is therefore also the recipient of Norwegian humanitarian aid," it specified.

Current links between the two countries have two distinct aspects, where in the economic sphere it is energy sector investment that leads the way, while civic sphere cooperation has a number of objectives tied to Norwegian Church Aid, a key stakeholder in Norwegian assistance to Tanzania.

Of notable significance in the NGO's projects in the country is one entered on 21st October 2019 between the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs via the diplomatic mission and the NGO, focusing on 'leveraging in faith for peace and youth economic empowerment.'

It says in part that the main targeted group is young men and women, as well as religious leaders, while in Zanzibar the main partners are ELCT Eastern and Coastal Diocese, the Tanzania Episcopal Conference (TEC), the World Vegetable Centre, linked with UN agencies like UNDP and UNICEF.

The project agreement demands that the recipient 'continuously identify, assess and mitigate any relevant risks associated with the implementation of the project,' noting that the risk of potential negative effects in identifiable areas be included in the risk management of the report.

The specific areas to be watched are anti-corruption, climate and environment, women's rights and gender equality, and human rights - with a particular focus on participation, accountability and non-discrimination, the diplomatic mission document explains.

The State House said that the president's visit arose from an invitation by King Harald V and Queen Sonja, to mark 60 years of diplomatic ties between the two countries.

It said that the visit is the first for a Tanzanian leader since 1976, at a time when links had already been strongly forged between the two countries, with Norwegian economists closely linked with the Economic Research Bureau of the University of Dar es Salaam, as well as filling the position of economic affairs adviser at the State House in the early 1970s.



A Tanzania People's Defence Forces gun carrier moves the casket bearing the body of former prime minister Edward Lowassa after funeral service held at Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania's Azania Front Cathedral in Dar es Salaam yesterday. Photo: Correspondent Jumanne Juma

Lowassa resilience rings in church last respects eulogy

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ex-premier, saying that Lowassa would have lived longer if not for the political crises he faced along the way, from the time of resigning from the premiership.

"I met Lowassa in 2001 when he was appointed as minister," he said, insisting that the wide public can attest to the work he

did in the legislature and in the government.

He said that he served for just two years upon being appointed premier, before facing a 'political accident' where he carried the principal burden, cutting short a battle he could have persisted to engage, to protect his reputation and the reputation of CCM.

"There are very few leaders

who are capable of stepping down in the manner in which Lowassa did," he emphasised, affirming that Lowassa has left a huge mark in Tanzanian public life, having served on both sides of the political divide.

Bishop Dr Alex Malasusa, the ELCT presiding bishop, called upon leaders to emulate the life of faith that Edward Lowassa led, pointing out that the task of

leading people demands that a leader must be God-fearing.

"Everyone here at the Azania Front gave testimony of how Lowassa led a religious life. During his lifetime when he was in good health he never missed coming to church," he told the mourners.

Fredrick Lowassa, the Monduli MP and family member, described the discipline and

devotion his father displayed in attending church services.

Bishop Malasusa said Lowassa attended services at Azania Front Cathedral and in the Monduli congregation.

President Samia Suluhu Hassan is expected to lead the public in the burial ceremony for the late ex-premier in the vicinity of Monduli Township in Arusha Region on Saturday.



National Assembly Speaker Dr Tulia Ackson has a word with women leaders from Geita Region who paid her a visit in Dodoma city yesterday. Photo: Correspondent Ibrahim Joseph

'Non-refunding of VAT claims hits public firms'

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The VAT refund claims of up to 15.9bn/- stretching two years have stretched out working capital capacities, thus denying the government revenues collected through tax and dividends, he said.

Stamigold is operating under negative capital standing at 11.7bn/-, he said, appealing to TRA to fast-track the refunds to stabilise liquidity of the firms.

The Value Added Tax Act, 2014 requires that TRA refunds taxpayers within three months and at most 12 months after claims are filed, he stated, hinting that ETDCO, a Tanzania Electric Supply Co. (TANESCO) subsidiary set up in December 2014 to produce concrete poles has not started production as it lacks any allocation.

During the past ten years, TANESCO has been hiring ETDCO as an agent for procuring concrete poles from private manufacturers, he said, noting that the relevant operational framework is as yet undefined.

TANESCO has been delegating its duties to ETDCO without service level agreements, where TANESCO and the Rural Electrification Agency (REA) owe ETDCO a total of 44.78bn/-, he asserted.

The TIB Development Bank is facing a load of non-performing loans needing urgent intervention, affirming that the bank, mandated with issuance of affordable loans for development projects, a 24bn/- working capital, way below the regulatory benchmark of 200bn/-.

The bank has failed to pay its customers and the government 206.85bn/- of fixed deposit receipts, the committee stated, highlighting that in 2022 the bank had a 195.91bn/- loss registered, reflecting an increase of bad loans to 20 percent of its capital, far higher than the regulatory five percent ceiling.

He stated that President Samia Suluhu Hassan has agreed to the finalisation of the Public Entities Investment Bill 2023 where such entities will execute profit-oriented projects that enable issuance of dividends to the government.

Digital sound mode set to increase radio frequencies

FROM PAGE 1

plays pivotal role in ensuring the success of elections planned for this year and next year, first the local government elections and then the general election, urging industry stakeholders to focus on quality content related to election activities.

Development activities need to be well covered during the local government elections and the general election, he said, pointing at the need for strengthening the financially strained traditional broadcasting sector.

The deputy minister hinted at a government directive for TCRA to conduct a comprehensive fea-

sibility study encompassing the entire broadcasting sector.

Fielding an international consultant for the study, the regulatory agency will examine the various challenges facing traditional broadcasting.

He pointed at technological advancements, revenue sources, operational costs, the broadcasting market, globalization impacts along with broadcasting content and its impact.

The research exercise will explore possibilities for addressing challenges, including financial sustainability of broadcasting stations, he said, urging active participation from broadcasting stakeholders in collaboration

with the international consultant, coordinated by TCRA. The annual conference concluded with resolution to unite efforts in ensuring adherence to ethical standards by broadcasting entities and eliminating content that violates broadcasting norms.

This initiative followed concerns raised by veteran radio presenters associated with Radio Tanzania Dar es Salaam, expressing dismay over declining broadcasting standards and media ethics in various outlets.

Abdallah Majura, representing veteran broadcasters who earlier served at RTD, urged the government to take steps to restore broadcasting ethics, emphasiz-

ing the importance of upholding Tanzanian values.

Jacob Mwenga, the Ice broadcasting station manager of Makambako in Njombe Region said that participants were optimistic of significant advancements in the broadcasting sector "as we embrace new technologies and implement improvement strategies."

The conference is a crucial platform for stakeholders in the local broadcasting sector to discuss challenges and opportunities, enabling TCRA to gauge the need for enhancement strategies in collaboration with broadcasters and online media stakeholders, the consultant affirmed.

Committee wants more funds for the agriculture value chain

By Francis Kajubi, Dodoma

AS of December 31 last year, the government released only 194.87bn/- out of the pledged 1trn/- through special credit window targeting actors in the agriculture value chain.

Budget Committee Chairman Daniel Sillo told the National Assembly yesterday when presenting the committee's report for the period covering between February 2013 and January 2024 that the credit disbursement is equivalent to 19.49 percent of the total pledged amount.

He said that on July 27, 2021 the central bank released a public notice about the credit extension to the agriculture sector.

He said the committee urges the government to conduct an impact assessment of the disbursed funds so far.

"The committee has learned that the credit has

positively impacted the agriculture sector. In that case, the government should reconsider the revamp of guarantee schemes for further impact in the sector," he said.

During the period between July and December 2023, agriculture contributed 24.8 percent to the national income.

The committee challenged the government to invest in new technologies if it is to realize the potential of the sector which is allocated with 970bn/- in the current fiscal year.

He said that the committee has resolved that the government invests into the Tanzania Fertilizer Company (TFC) to curb shortages.

Annual demand for fertilizer stands at 698,260 tonnes while the supply stands at 480,848 tonnes that translates to a shortage of 217,412 tonnes.

"The committee resolves that the government should

extend 60bn/- to enable TFC to directly procure fertilizer from producers and do away with the current practice of buying from agents," said Sillo.

He asserted that the government had in October 2023 allocated TFC with 40bn/- in procurement of fertilizers.

Speaking of foreign currency exchange rate against the shilling, the chairman said that exchange rate for the US dollar against Tanzanian shilling depreciated by 6.4 percent.

He said one US dollar was exchanged at 2,466.28/- for the period between July and December 2023 compared to 2,318.33/- the corresponding periods in 2022.

During the period, said Sillo, inflation depreciated to 3.2 percent compared to 4.8 percent in the same period in 2022. Interest rates on loans averaged 15.54 percent.



Kiluvya Secondary School students pictured at the weekend taking part in a debate with their Fahari Secondary School. It was a PROBONO-sponsored competition aimed at instilling a reading habit among students. Venue: Kiluvya Secondary School in Ubungu District, Dar es Salaam Region. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

Early childhood development vital for prosperity of future generation

By Polycarp Machira, Dodoma

THE government has called on youth, religious and traditional leaders to be engaged in early child development programmes in efforts to help nurture a better future generation.

The appeal was made here yesterday by Ramadhan Kailima, Deputy Permanent Secretary in the Office of the President (Regional Administration and Local Government) while

officiating at the closure of a six-day training on early child development (ECD).

He said the fight against child abuse and other vices affected children should be prioritized by all people and institutions because without doing so, the nation is headed to a wrong direction.

The deputy PS argued that traditional leaders if well equipped with knowledge on

early child development can help reduce misconceptions in the society and religious leaders enjoy immense trust among believers.

The meeting was jointly organized by Children in Crossfire, Tanzanian Early Childhood Development Network (TECDEN) and the Union of Tanzanian Press Clubs (UTPC) and brought together 79 participants.

"It is important if we start at school levels by establishing clubs through which we empower young people," he said, adding that those at higher learning institutions can be engaged through social media, among other platforms.

Kailima also presided over certificate presentation to the participants. The awards were conferred by the Agha Khan University that conducted the

training.

Craig Ferla, Country Director of Tanzania at Children in Crossfire said the organisation leads a partnership with TECDEN and UTPC to complement the government's development goals.

"Our vision of compassionate world where every child can realise their full potential is one that resonates so deeply with our values as a founda-

tion," he said, stressing the importance of the training.

Speaking on behalf of the participants, Gaudence Nyamwihura said that after the training, they will be ambassadors at different places of work.

"We are lucky to have the training and get equipped with knowledge on child protection and we plan to sensitize our communities," she said.

LOSS OF PASSPORT



ABBY ALLY JUMA announces the Loss of his Passport number TAEZ56878 issued by Immigration Department Dar es salaam date of 15/12/2019. Whoever find it take it to a nearest Police station with Police Report No. PHO/DAR/LA/21170/2024.



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VACANCIES

VisionFund Tanzania Microfinance Bank Ltd (VFT MFB) formerly known as SEDA, a subsidiary of VisionFund International is a fast-growing and reputable Micro Finance Bank (MFB) and has a loan book of more than TZs. 41 billion and more than 53,000 customer base, more than 5,000 of them being smallholder farmers. VFT-MFB is seeking to employ a dynamic and committed Tanzanian young man/woman who have a passion for people's economic development to fill the vacant position detailed here below;

Work reference no. 02/2024

Position: Head of Internal Audit and Investigation

Reporting to: Functionally to the Board Audit Risk and Compliance Committee of the Board of Directors and Administratively to the Chief Executive Officer

Responsibility:

The Head of Internal Audit is a key figure in ensuring organizational integrity and compliance by developing annual audit plans, leading the internal audit function, and evaluating the effectiveness of internal controls and risk management procedures, training internal auditors, conducting special investigations, and overseeing regulatory reporting and legal compliance.

Main tasks

- Develop and submit an annual internal audit plan to the Board Audit Risk and Compliance Committee for approval.
- Lead the internal audit function with proficiency and strategic direction.
- Provide training and coaching to internal auditors, fostering their professional development and enhancing their skills.
- Execute procedures outlined in the internal audit manual with the assistance of the Internal Auditors.
- Ensure compliance with sound internal auditing standards and a relevant code of ethics.
- Examine and evaluate the adequacy and effectiveness of the system of internal controls.
- Review the application and effectiveness of risk management procedures and risk assessment methodologies.
- Review the adequacy of the management information system.
- Evaluate the reliability of information produced by accounting and computer systems.
- Provide an independent appraisal function for all aspects of operations.
- Review the accuracy and reliability of accounting records and financial reports.
- Review the system of assessing capital in relation to risk assessment and estimation.
- Assess the efficiency of the usage of resources.
- Review the system established to ensure compliance with legal and regulatory requirements, codes of conduct, and the implementation of policies and procedures.
- Test the reliability and timeliness of regulatory reporting.
- Carry out special investigations.
- Require the management of the institution to implement and maintain appropriate internal control procedures and management information systems.

- Undertake any other duties delegated by the Board Audit Risk and Compliance Committee.

Education/Experience:

- University degree in Accounting, Finance, or business administration is a must.
- Professional accounting certification (CPA) is a must.
- CIA, CFE, or CISA certification will be an added advantage.
- Master's Degree in Accounting, Finance, or business administration will be an added advantage.
- Minimum of 5 years audit experience in banking supervision and/or microfinance (with a minimum of 3 years of demonstrated strong leadership experience in planning, supervision and management of an internal audit department is a must).
- Experience advising senior management and reporting to audit committees on risk management and monitoring is a must.
- Experience in systems analysis and audit would be an added advantage.
- Understanding relevant accounting and loan tracking software would be an advantage.
- Excellent proficiency in the use of PPF.
- Capability and willingness to take responsibility.
- A high sense of integrity.
- Determined personality with initiative, perseverance and the ability to motivate and manage the team.
- Must be a committed Christian and able and willing to participate and lead in daily devotions.

Special / Personal Abilities:

- Highly developed sense of reliability and correctness.
- Excellent trainer, facilitator, mentor, and coach.
- Innovative and analytical.
- Very good planning skills.
- Proficient in Microsoft Office applications.
- Must be a self-starter, highly motivated, organized, and detail-oriented.
- Model and demonstrate effective Christian leadership
- Good knowledge of economic and financial topics and sufficient experience in the loan business of VFT-MFB is an added advantage
- Willingness to travel for at least 50% of the time to remote locations

Mode of Application:

Interested and suitably qualified individuals should forward their application letter, attaching copies of their academic and professional certificates; detailed CVs with three referees to: vftHRstaff@vftz.co.tz. The position should be the subject of the email application. OR; through the postal address below:

The Chief Executive Officer,
VisionFund Tanzania Microfinance Bank Limited,
P.O. Box 1546,
Arusha, TANZANIA.

The application should reach the undersigned no later than 29th February 2024.

Telco introduces medicine buying service through mobile phones

By Guardian Correspondent, Zanzibar

TIGO Tanzania has launched new service dubbed 'Tigo Dawa' meant to enable residents buy medicine on credit through their mobile phones and repay without interest.

Speaking at the launch of the service here on Tuesday, Zanzibar Deputy Minister for Health Hassan Khamis Hafidh lauded the company for coming up with the service that enables people to get medicines from pharmacies even when they do not have cash.

The service has been established by Tigo Tanzania in collaboration with Laina Finance Limited.

"This service will be of help to the people of Zanzibar since illnesses come without notice. I commend you for coming up with this service," he said, asking the firm to look into possibilities of designing a similar payment system for other services.

Angelica Pesha, Tigopesa services chief executive officer said Tigo Dawa is an opportunity for Tigo and Zantel customers Zanzibar for now, but is expected to be rolled in Tanzania Mainland in the future.

She said in recognition of the efforts by the government and the needs of the people of Zanzibar, the company collaborated with Laina Finance Ltd to bring a solution,

namely access to medicine without cash.

"This service being the first solution for legal financial services in a digital way through the 'Murabah' system in Tanzania and East Africa is designed to provide the most suitable payment plan for medicines available in hospitals and approved pharmacies here in Zanzibar," she said.

She said the company will continue to cooperate with government authorities to ensure better health services.



This service being the first solution for legal financial services in a digital way through the 'Murabah' system in Tanzania and East Africa is designed to provide the most suitable payment plan for medicines available in hospitals and approved pharmacies here in Zanzibar



Tanga regional commissioner Waziri Kindamba (facing camera) releases a progress report in his office yesterday on measles and Rubela vaccinations in the region. Photo: Correspondent Hamida Kamchallaa

MCC boss activates threshold programme

By Guardian Reporter

THE US government's Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) Deputy Chief Executive Officer Chidi Blyden has departed Tanzania after a visit to rekindle the partnership and kick off the future development programme.

"Tanzania is an important partner for the United States and the new MCC threshold programme is an excellent opportunity to further our engagement," she said. "I am looking forward to our collective efforts to strengthen democratic governance and promote inclusive

and sustainable economic development."

During her visit, Blyden visited the dLab, an innovation lab that harnesses the potential of data revolution to solve local, regional, and global sustainable development challenges. MCC, with President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), established the dLab which trained thousands of youth in data literacy, coding and other digital skills. She also met with leaders of key civil society organizations to gain an understanding of the opportunities for policy and institutional reform in Tanzania. Blyden

also engaged with the government of Tanzania, including meeting with the Minister for Finance, Dr Mwigulu Nchemba, Executive Secretary of the Planning Commission Lawrence Mafuru and appointed National Coordinator Dr Hamisi Mwinymvua who expressed commitment to a thriving economy and developing an impactful MCC threshold programme. The delegation engaged with the Executive Board and members of the CEO Roundtable, an organization that convenes leaders from the private sector focused on improving Tanzania's business regulatory environment.

The visit included meetings with alumni and staff from the MCC Tanzania compact, who continue to be steadfast partners in ensuring MCC investments improve lives. MCC's previous work in Tanzania includes a \$698.1 million compact completed in 2013 which provided infrastructure improvement projects in transportation, energy, and water.

On December 13, 2023, MCC's Board of Directors selected Tanzania to develop a threshold program, creating an opportunity for MCC and Tanzania to work together to improve policy and institutional reforms.

Female immigration officers out to India for tailor-made training



Acting Commissioner General of Immigration (Tanzania) Angela Shija and Manoj B Verma, Chargé d'affaires at the Indian High Commission in Tanzania, pose for a photo in Dar es Salaam yesterday with 40 Tanzania Immigration officers destined for capacity building training in Lucknow, India, under an Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation Programme. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

By Guardian Reporter

CAPACITY building training exclusively for a batch of 40 Tanzanian female immigration officers is set to take place at the Bankers Institute of Rural Development in Lucknow, India, under Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) Programme.

High Commission of India in Tanzania hosted the participating officers for a pre-departure orientation on Tuesday.

Angela Shija, acting Commissioner of Immigration led the officers during the event and thanked Indian government for providing this opportunity and affirmed that this was a reflection of close and friendly ties between India and Tanzania.

ITEC Programme is the leading capacity building platform of India's Ministry of External Affairs. Instituted in 1964, ITEC is one of the oldest institutionalized arrangements for international capacity building, having trained more than 200,000 officials from more than 160 countries in both civilian and defence sectors.

Building on India's vast and rich network of governance and development-related expertise available in higher educational institutions and training facilities, ITEC offers fully-funded training opportunities through nearly 400 courses offered at 100 eminent institutes in India.

India also responds to country-specific requests for training in specific areas of governance by organizing customized training programmes which are designed and delivered by the leading institutions in India.

Over 6,000 Tanzanian nationals have undergone capacity building training under ITEC programme in India.

Addressing the officers, Charge d'Affaires Manoj B Verma stated that the batch was unique as it consisted only women officers.

He encouraged them to wholeheartedly embrace the opportunity, absorb all the knowledge and skills that the programme offers and return back prepared to inspire and lead with renewed vigour and energy.

He said that the tailor-made course on developing women leadership was organized on request from the Immigration Department of Tanzania.

He added that Tanzanian immigration officers have on earlier occasions attended customized courses at the prestigious National Forensic Science University in Gujarat and the Centre for Development of Advance Computing (CDAC) Mohali.

He said that with the recent elevation of the relationship between India and Tanzania to a strategic partnership during President Samia Suluhu Hassan's state visit to India in October 2023, the development partnership between the two nations will see further boost in the coming days.

Nigerian ex-President's signature forged to withdraw \$6m

By Gloria Aradi

NIGERIA is seeking Interpol's help to arrest three suspects who allegedly stole \$6.2m (£4.9m) from the central bank, using the forged signature of then President Muhammadu Buhari.

Authorities believe that the suspects conspired with Nigeria's former central bank chief Godwin Emeifele. He is already on trial on 20 charges, including illegally receiving the \$6.2m.

Emeifele has denied all the charges, and is currently out on bail. He is the most high-profile former official to be charged with corruption since President Bola Tinubu took office last May.

Prosecutors also allege that Emeifele

unlawfully authorised the release of the money from the central bank vault.

In a statement last December, he described the allegations as "barefaced lies told by the investigator in order to achieve his satanic agenda". He called for a "thorough and transparent investigation".

Emeifele's alleged accomplices have been named as Adamu Abubakar, Imam Abubakar and Odoh Ocheme, a former central bank employee, the state-owned News Agency of Nigeria reported.

The suspects are believed to have left Nigeria, prompting the authorities to seek Interpol's help with their arrest and repatriation, the agency added.

None of the three suspects have commented on the allegations against

them.

The alleged theft took place several months before Muhammadu Buhari stepped down as president

The government ordered their arrest late on Tuesday, hours after Boss Mustapha, a senior official in ex-President Buhari's administration, testified in Emeifele's trial.

Mustapha told the court in the capital, Abuja, that neither he nor Mr Buhari had given their signatures to approve the withdrawal of the \$6.2m.

"Looking at the signature, it is a faint attempt at reproducing [former] President Buhari's signature," Mustapha was quoted as telling the court by the Nation newspaper.

When shown the document used to withdraw the funds, Mr Mustapha said it "did not emanate from the office of the president", the newspaper added. The funds were withdrawn in cash in January last year, a few months before Buhari's term ended.

Prosecutors allege that Emeifele falsified the document in question, which requested the central bank to issue the funds so that Mr Buhari could use them to pay foreign election observers.

Emeifele was appointed as central bank governor in 2014 by then-President Goodluck Jonathan, with Buhari reappointing him in 2019. He held the post until Tinubu took office.

AfDB, TDB deploy technology to cut carbon emissions

By Special Correspondent

THE African Development Bank Group has announced a follow-up equity investment of \$15 million in the Trade and Development Bank Group's pioneering Class C Green+ shares to support clean technology and low carbon projects in its member states.

The new capital, to be sourced from the Clean Technology Fund (CTF), will also support the establishment of a project preparation facility to boost investment in clean technologies.

The CTF, part of the Climate Investment Funds, provides resources to developing countries to scale up low-carbon technologies with significant potential for long-term greenhouse gas emissions savings.

TDB launched the unique thematic equity instruments just over a year ago during COP27; the African Development Bank greeted the announcement with an initial investment of \$15 million. Class C Green+ shares enable TDB Group to leverage funds four times to support qualifying climate and SDG-aligned public and private sector transactions.

These investments will support TDB Group's efforts to advance climate action and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in its member states, driving considerable long-term greenhouse gas emissions savings.

Admassu Tadesse, TDB Group President and Managing Director, said: "We are delighted to receive this investment into our risk capital by CTF through our strategic partner, the African Development Bank. The

new equity supports TDB's green growth and climate action agenda and our drive to assist member states to achieve their Nationally Determined Contributions. We value the African Development Bank's pioneering role, which has generated much interest from other investors and catalyzed this investment, which endeavors to bring about impact and attractive financial returns."

Dr Kevin Kariuki, the African Development Bank's Vice President for Power, Energy, Climate and Green Growth, said: "We congratulate TDB for this highly innovative class of shares with all capital raised through strategic partners like the African Development Bank and CTF, to exclusively support climate action and sustainable development."

"This structure has a high replicability potential as it optimizes the use of limited concessional funding and contributes to leveraging substantial resources from the private sector," Kariuki added. "We hope that the involvement of CTF will be instrumental in crowding-in the participation of additional investors into this class of shares and praise the establishment of the Project Preparation Facility unlocked by this investment."

Mary Kamari, TDB Group Corporate Affairs and Investor Relations Executive added: "While much more capital is needed to support climate action in Africa, we are also facing constraints in the availability of bankable projects, with many projects failing at feasibility and business-planning stages. In this regard, we also look forward to CTF's technical assistance support to unlock new project opportunities in our region and scale-up our impact in the climate space."

TDB's Class C Green+ shares build on the success of Class B shares launched a decade ago to attract institutional investors - pension funds, insurance companies, sovereign wealth funds, development finance institutions, and others - into TDB's equity capital. They are open

“This structure has a high replicability potential as it optimizes the use of limited concessional funding and contributes ...



Tunduru district commissioner Julius Mtairo pictured yesterday having a word with drivers and passengers stranded at the Muhuwesi River bridge section of a road covered by water following ongoing rains. Photo: Correspondent Stevie Chindiye

Fugitive wanted in US for murder rearrested in Kenya

NAIROBI

A MAN wanted in Massachusetts to face murder charges was rearrested, a week after he dramatically escaped from police custody, Kenyan police said Wednesday.

Kevin Adam Kinyanjui Kangethe escaped while awaiting extradition on a Massachusetts warrant alleging he killed his girlfriend and left her body in a car at a Boston airport. Last week he slipped out of a police station and jumped into a privately owned minivan.

Kangethe was arrested in Embulbul, Kajiado County on the outskirts of Kenya's capital city on Tuesday evening as he sought refuge at one of his relatives' homes, Nairobi police boss Adamson Bungei said.

"We have rearrested him and we thank all that helped in this," he said.

In a country where corruption endemic and the police force has been ranked for decades the most corrupt institution in the country, Kangethe's escape raised suspicion the police officers on duty that day may have been bribed to allow his escape.

The four officers who were on duty at the report office that day have been suspended awaiting disciplinary action and may face prosecution.

The officer's report seen by the Associated Press said that on the day Kangethe escaped, a man named John Maina Nde-

“The officers agreed to his request and removed the prisoner from the cells and took him to (an) office ... leaving them there.

gwa introduced himself to the officers as Kangethe's lawyer and said he wanted to speak with his client.

"The officers agreed to his request and removed the prisoner from the cells and took him to (an) office ... leaving them there. After a short while the prisoner escaped by running away and left the (lawyer) behind," the report said.

Officers pursued Kangethe but did not catch him, the police report said, adding that Ndegwa was arrested.

Kangethe, 40, had been detained pending a ruling on whether he should be extradited to face a first-degree murder charge in connection with the death of Margaret Mbitu on Oct. 31, 2023.

Massachusetts State Police said in early November that Kangethe had left her body in a car at Logan International Airport and boarded a flight to Kenya. Massachusetts officials said they were working with Kenyan authorities to locate him, and he was arrested in a nightclub on Jan. 30 after being on the run for three months.

A police official said that Kangethe said he had renounced his U.S. citizenship. The police official, who insisted on anonymity in order to speak freely about an ongoing investigation, said if Kangethe were an American citizen he would have been repatriated without a court process.

The court approved a police application for him to be detained for 30 days while the extradition issue was heard.

Mbitu, a health care aide in Halifax, was last seen leaving work Oct. 30 and reported missing by her family. The preliminary investigation showed Mbitu had left her workplace and travelled with Kangethe to Lowell, where he lived, the prosecution said.

Scribes set for conservation reporting drill

By Guardian Reporter

A TOTAL of 20 journalists from various media outlets are set to attend a two-day master class on combating wildlife crimes, climate change and biodiversity conservation scheduled for today and tomorrow in Bagamoyo District, Coast Region.

Organized by the journalists Environmental Association of Tanzania (JET), the tailor-made training will also furnish journalists with knowledge on corridor conservation issues, particularly combating illegal forest crimes.

The training is part of Tuhifadhi Maliasili 'Let's preserve Natural Resources' project supported by USAID.

USAID launched a \$30.5 million five-year conservation project to address the dynamics that threaten wildlife movement and the long-term preservation of biodiversity in Tanzania.

The activity is implemented by Research Triangle Institute International - a non-profit research

and global development institute.

Speaking to the Guardian yesterday, JET director John Chikomo said: "Through training, journalists will be equipped with the knowledge, skills and attitude for them to be able to conduct investigative reporting on biodiversity conservation and climate change issues."


Chikomo said journalists are expected to attain knowledge on how to investigate, report and analyse wildlife connectivity, marine and forest conservation, trafficking and poaching, and the promotion of wildlife conservation and tourism.

He added that the 'Tuhifadhi Maliasili' project has interventions in a number of wildlife corridors such as Kwakuchinja that connects Tarangire-Manyara ecosystem in Babati and Monduli districts in Manyara and Arusha regions respectively, the Kigosi Moyowosi-Burigi Chato that connects Kigosi Moyowosi complex and Burigi Chato National Park (in Biharamulo and Kakonko districts



in Kagera and Kigoma regions as well as the Nyerere Selous-Udzungwa that connects Nyerere Selous and Udzungwa Mountains National Parks in Ifakara, Morogoro Region.

Others are, Amani-Nilo that connects Amani Nature Reserve and Nilo Nature Forest Reserve in Muheza District, Tanga Region, the Ruaha Rungwa-Katavi that connects Ruaha National Park, Rungwa Game Reserve, Lukwati and Pigi Game Reserves and Katavi in Chunya District, Mbeya Region.

After the training, journalists are scheduled to visit the Ruaha Rungwa-Inyonga corridor that connects the Ruaha National Park and Rungwa and Inyonga Game Reserves in Itigi and Sikonge districts in Singida and Tabora regions respectively and the Mahale-Katavi corridor that connects Mahale Mountains National Park and Katavi Complex in Tanganyika and Uvinza districts in Katavi and Kigoma regions respectively.



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

Invitation for Bids TZ/ATE/1502/2024 Doze Pole Printing of Doze pole

1. RTI International through USAID Act to End NTDs/East Tanzania Program is supporting Tanzania Ministry of Health (MOH) through the National Neglected Tropical Diseases Control Program (NTDCP) to implement interventions towards control and elimination of Neglected Tropical diseases (NTD).
2. Requirements

S/N	Description of Preferred Commodity or Services Specifications	UoM	Qty
1	Printing of Zithromax Doze poles (Fiber glass-length 190cm) for Trachoma Community MDA (Strong Materials with Nonremovable/Erased Printings) printed on both sides	PCS	5,522
2	Printing of Ivermectin Doze poles (Fiber glass-length 190cm) for OV and LF Community MDA (Strong Materials with Nonremovable/Erased Printing) printed on one side	PCS	14,650

3. Interested eligible bidders may obtain bidding document via email procurement@acteasttanzania.rti.org for free and available sample for inspection at the below address:

USAID Act to End NTDs | East Tanzania Program
RTI International, Global Health Division
1131B Msasani Road, Masaki
P.O. Box 369, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania
4. The deadline for the questions from bidders is February 22, 2024, and closing submission of bids is on March 12, 2024, at 05:00 PM

MPs want scanners at border posts to ease cargo clearance

By Francis Kajubi, Dodoma

THE government has been urged to install scanners at busy border posts to facilitate clearance of goods transported to and from neighbouring countries to protect traders from additional operational costs due to delays.

Deodatus Mwanyika, Industry, Trade, Agriculture and Livestock Committee Chairman made the call here yesterday when presenting a report for the period covering between February 2023 and January 2024 in the National Assembly.

He said the absence of scanners at key border posts causes additional transport costs for transporters which they normally offset by charging more to last consumers.

Mwanyika said the committee learnt that there was a deficit of scanners along the country's major borders to facilitate efficient trade, movement of people and improv-

ing security.

The situation is blamed for many hours transporters spend at borders due to prolonged clearance time hence additional costs.

"For instance, the committee has learnt that Mtukula border post has no scanner, forcing transporters to incur extra expenses by paying porters to offload and load cargo onto trucks during clearance," he said.

The committee sees that the absence and shortage of scanners at border posts is affecting the business community due to delayed delivery of their cargo."

Meanwhile, the committee urged the government to take stern measures in addressing shortage of sugar. According to Mwanyika, the National Food Reserve Agency (NFRA) should consider procurement of sugar to be used as emergency supply when the sweetener becomes scarce as is the case currently.

"The government should conduct a special analysis on inflation, especially for foodstuff. The government is supposed to set long-term strategies of addressing inflation," he said.

Francis Mtinga, Iramba East MP (CCM) said the Building a Better Tomorrow: Youth Initiative for Agribusiness (BBT - YIA) should give a priority to sugar production by establishing large-scale sugarcane plantations.

"NFRA should start buying and keeping stock of sugar to end the shortage that happens in early months of the year for different reasons," he said.



Arusha city deputy mayor Joseph Mollele (L) and Arusha District Traffic Police commander Alijua Samut (2nd-L) present a certificate to Police Staff Sergeant Paul Kasambala in recognition of his exemplary role in enforcing the law. It was at Tuesday's launch of uniforms for Arusha Region commuter bus operators. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

NEEC needs funds to empower needy groups

By Guardian Reporter

OUTGOING member of the National Economic Empowerment Council (NEEC) board of directors, Prof Lucian Msambichaka, said the council has no sufficient funds to give to increasing number of eligible women and youth groups.

He called on the government to give NEEC more funds to enable the council to meet its obligations.

Speaking to reporters on the side-

lines of a meeting to launch a new NEEC board of directors in Dar es Salaam on Tuesday, Prof Msambichaka said the council is underfunded and as a result it cannot meet the needs of many applicants.

He said the council is meant to empower economically underprivileged Tanzanians and it has won trust of groups of underprivileged women and youth but it has insufficient money to give the applicants.

"NEEC is one of the important in-

stitutions in building national economy. It has been doing a good job in making women and youth realize their dreams. If it is well-funded, it will be able to help more individuals and groups increase their incomes," he said, calling on new board members to work in unity.

The new board members are Prof Timothy Simalenga, Theobald Sabi, Cheggy Mziray, Nicodemus Mkama, Brig Gen Aloyce Mwanjile, Dr John Mduma and Dr Hamis Mwinyimvua.

NEEC Executive Secretary Bengi Issa pledged that the council's management will work closely with the new board of directors.

She said experience has shown that women in particular, rush for loans that are secured easily but face big repayment problems.

She said the council is coordinating empowerment funds whereby 62 are within the government and 10 are outside the government.

The government should conduct a special analysis on inflation, especially for foodstuff. The government is supposed to set long-term strategies of addressing inflation



Ubungo municipal secondary education officer Voster Mgina (R) pictured yesterday addressing education coordinators and teachers from seven Dar es Salaam-based secondary schools when opening a two-day workshop organised by local charity READ Tanzania. The focus was on enhance the participants' capacity to supervise reference libraries. Photo: Correspondent

'Invest in nutrition awareness to curb runaway stunting'

By Mutayoba Arbogast, Bukoba

AUTHORITIES in Missenyi District, Kagera Region have been urged to allocate enough funds for nutrition awareness to address underweight and stunting in children.

Abimeleck Richard, an official with the Tanzania Development and AIDS Prevention (TADAPA) who is coordinator of the organisation's 'Mtoto Kwanza' project made the call here recently when speaking at Missenyi District Nutritional Committee for the second quarter of 2023/24.

He said parents and guardians need to be educated that good and adequate nutrition helps in the development and growth of a child's brain from 0 to eight years.

Richard said that the biggest problem is not the lack of food in the households because Kagera is one of the regions that produce food in abundance but education on the right nutrition for expectant mothers, proper breastfeeding and feeding children as well as food preparation.

"We have to trace if food produced by households is not taken to the market in large quantities and leave very little at home hence malnutrition and stunting," he said. Tapita Solomoni, acting Missenyi District Executive Director said that they will continue to emphasize the issue of nutrition education at household and community levels, especially through Health Day in villages whereby in 2023, the celebration was held in 74 out of 77 villages to encourage establishment of vegetable gardens in schools and provision of vitamin A for children under five years.

Faustina Goodwin, Missenyi District Council Nutrition Officer, promised to continue collaborating with the nutrition committee to ensure nutrition issues reach all citizens through public meetings in sub-village, villages and schools.

The district report shows there were 47,714 children under 5 years in 2023 and 5 percent of them were born below recommended weight of 2.5 kgs.

Mtwara port gets modern crane to boost efficiency

By Correspondent Joseph Mwendapole, Mtwara

THE Port of Mtwara which now has the capacity to handle one million tonnes of cargo per year has acquired a modern crane called Ship-to-Shore-Gantry (SSG) capable of handling 25 containers per hour.

Ferdinand Nyathi, Mtwara Port Manager said this recently in Mtwara when address-

ing journalists about the improvements being made at the port.

He said that SSG crane has already been set and added that apart from the machine, they also have another scanner capable of scanning 30 containers per hour.

He said that this was due to the improvements made at the port, namely the construction of one additional berth with a depth of 13 meters and length of 300 meters. Nyathi said the Port of Mtwara facil-

itates business activities for the southern regions of Tanzania and Zanzibar as well as Mozambique, Comoros, India and Vietnam.

He said the main goods passing through the port include raw cashews, cement, agricultural produce, cargo for projects, oil, coal and mixed cargo.

"In addition to the efficiency that customers enjoy at the Port of Mtwara, he said there is incentive of 30 per cent relief in charges compared to other ports

in the region," he said. Nyathi said that in 2018/2019 financial year, the Port of Mtwara served 141 ships, 2020/2020 financial year 110 ships, 2020/2020 financial year 84 ships, 2021/2022 financial year 166 ships, 2022/2023 financial year 313 ships and from July 2023 to January 2024 a total of 187 ships.

He said the Port of Mtwara has two cargo storage warehouses measuring 12,500 square meters with the capacity to store 18,000 tonnes of cargo at the same time.

Nyathi mentioned some of the opportunities available in Mtwara Region as oil and gas exploration activities, production of natural gas and products derived from gas as well as agriculture, especially cashew farming for export and local market.

Also, there are mining activities and various factories in the Mtwara Development Corridor as well as trade with the neighbouring countries of Malawi, Mozambique and Zambia.

ECA chief calls for reform of global financial architecture

ADDIS ABABA

THE Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), Claver Gatete, has called for action to reform the global financial architecture to help African countries achieve sustainable development.

The call came on Monday in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, as the executive secretary briefed journalists alongside Zimbabwean Finance Minister Mthuli Ncube on the UNECA Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development (CoM2024) to be held in Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe, from Feb. 28 to March 5.

Gatete noted that based on the current allocation formula, the resources directed to the African continent by the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and others are not commensurate with its financing needs.

"The ECA believes that the international financial architecture needs to be reformed and its governance improved. Unless it is reformed, African countries will face

challenges in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals and the African Union's Agenda 2063, as most of their resources are used to pay loans," he said.

He said the international financial institutions need to provide long-term and concessional loans to middle- and low-income countries to help them invest in major development sectors, achieve better economic growth, and deal with their debt burdens. "The international financial institutions are no longer fit for purpose; they should make changes about the way they function."

Gatete said previous pledges to mobilize 100 billion U.S. dollars for Africa have not been met. He called for more financial innovation to facilitate access to critical resources needed to invest in green economic development across the continent.

Noting that the financial institutions should mobilize resources, Gatete said the money held by those financial institutions is significantly shrinking. He further called for improving domestic resource mobilization, tax collection, and ex-

panding capital markets as other alternatives to finance investment in Africa. He also urged African countries to expand and promote green economic development as global warming, drought, and climate change are on the rise.

For his part, Ncube said African countries need to maximize the benefits of exporting natural resources through value addition and tax revenues by expanding digitization.

Ncube said the upcoming conference will discuss debt resolutions, governance of international financial institutions, and possible ways to finance green energy development across Africa.

CoM2024 will be held under the theme "Financing the transition to inclusive green economies in Africa: imperatives, opportunities and policy options."

According to officials, the conference will discuss reform of the global financial architecture, green economic development, and mobilizing resources to combat the effects of climate change in Africa, among other issues.



Dr Florence Mtey (L), Principal of Dar es Salaam-based National College of Tourism, briefs Natural Resources and Tourism minister Angellah Kairuki (3rd-L) in the city yesterday on operations at the institution. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

Firm makes sustainable textiles out of pineapple waste

NAIROBI

AS the fashion industry worldwide increasingly embraces more eco-friendly material, an innovative project in Kenya is turning leftover pineapple leaves into footwear.

"In the past we would burn or throw away or replant pineapple suckers," said pineapple farmer James Kinuthia.

"Later on we met with this company called Pine Kazi. We sell one sucker to them at 15 Kenya shillings each (USD \$0.092).

Not only does it bring in extra revenue for the farmer, but it also creates jobs as people sort the leaves and extract the fibre, which is then dried, spun, and woven to make the textiles.

Pineapple fibre has long been used, but is labour intensive to produce and has until recently lost out in the era of cheap cotton and synthetics. However, the idea is gaining global attention as the fashion industry and consumers focus increasingly on sustainability.

"Annually about 766 million tonnes of post-harvest pineapple leaves are usually produced and they are burnt or chemically decomposed," said Pine Kazi's CEO and co-founder, Olivia Awuor.

"So, by collecting this waste, for every 1,000 tonnes of waste we collect, we reduce carbon and methane emissions by 0.28 metric tonnes," she said.

Betterman Simidi, founder of public sanitation advocacy organi-

sation 'Clean Up Kenya', said the country had a fixation with "fast fashion" and that sustainable fabrics could form part of the solution.

Kenya imports thousands of tonnes of second hand polyester clothing each year as it is cheap and readily available.

Activists say this clothing ends up in landfills and water bodies, heavily affecting the ecosystem.

"When we see innovations where they are using sustainable materials, like for example pineapple waste, to make fibres that can be used to make clothing. These innovations are important and we need to encourage them," said Simidi.

As a social business venture, Pine Kazi also sources labour from local communities.

UNICEF condemns bomb explosion at refugee camp in DRC

KINSHASA

THE United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) is alarmed by a bomb explosion in a camp for displaced people in the Eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), it said in a statement yesterday.

"It is unthinkable that families fleeing violence were killed and injured in a place that was supposed to offer safety," said Grant Leaty, UNICEF representative in the DRC.

"We call on all parties to the conflict to protect the lives of innocent civilians, especially children. We urge the government to hold perpetrators to account and strengthen protections for children and their families," said Leaty.

The explosion occurred late Monday in the Zaina camp for displaced people on the outskirts of Sake in North Kivu Province, causing sev-

eral deaths and injuries.

Fighting in Eastern DRC has intensified in recent months, causing massive population movements and increasing humanitarian needs.

The number of new displaced people in North Kivu in January 2024 was higher than that in January 2023, which was the previous peak.

According to the statement, there are now 1.1 million displaced people in the province.

A group of rebels bombed a displacement camp in eastern Congo's North Kivu province killing three civilians and injuring eight others, a local civil society group said Tuesday, as violence in the conflict-hit region sparked protests and a humanitarian group warned that thousands are facing limited access to aid.

A rebel group with alleged links to

neighbouring Rwanda, bombed the Zaina camp on Monday, which is 16 miles from the city of Goma, civil society leader Wete Mwami Yenga, said. The bombing followed days of attacks not far away from the city.

The M23 rebels did not claim responsibility for the attack but appeared to confirm Tuesday that they were heading to the town of Sake which is near Goma. Congo's government and United Nations experts have said the M23 group receives military support from Rwanda, although the country denies it.

"The M23 is coming to liberate them and protect them from those heavy artillery," the group's spokesperson Lawrence Kanyuka said in a statement, referring to their ongoing fighting with Congolese security forces.

Agencies



Mechanical Engineers in Mining Treatment Plant- 03 Positions Advertisement

Applicants are invited to apply for the existing position mentioned above.

Position title: Mechanical Engineer in Mining Treatment Plant
Location: Williamson Diamonds Limited, Mwadui, Shinyanga
Grade: D2
Report: WDL Plant Maintenance Engineer

Summary: Williamson Diamond Limited (WDL) is Tanzania's only large-scale diamond producer. The mine is an open pit operation based upon the 146 hectares Mwadui kimberlite pipe, which is one of the world's largest economic kimberlites. For over 80 years, Williamson Diamond Limited has lived side by side and co-existed peacefully with the communities around Mwadui, while implementing a wide range of development programs, focusing on promoting the lives and livelihoods of the communities surrounding Mwadui Mine Site.

Role Description: Responsible for safety at work place and supervision of design, planning, installation, maintenance and repair, monitoring, reviewing, and reporting of mechanical equipment in the mining treatment plant.

Tasks and Responsibilities:-

- Supervise standard mechanical design, maintenance and repairs of various mechanical equipment to ensure equipment keep reliability, availability and capability as and when required to operate, which includes heavy duty machinery for processing plant as belt conveyors, crushers, scrubbers, mills, pumps, vibrating screens, other machinery, and workshop tools.
- Perform duties safely, quickly, efficiently and resolution to prevent/ minimise plant mechanical machinery and equipment downtime.
- Safety first- perform safe risk assessment and ensure on everyone, everywhere and every time at workplace.
- Plan and establish timetable to do major and minor on mechanical design, maintenance and repairs of mechanical systems, lubrication systems and hydraulic systems, other mechanical equipment and accessories as per OEM schedule or maintenance plans
- Maintain an accurate record on assigned work.
- Perform routine and preventive maintenance including oil change & lubes and tune-ups.
- Perform adhoc but frequent inspections as part of the preventative maintenance program.
- Perform identify equipment problems before repairs and test after repairs are completed to ensure safe and proper operation.
- Perform tests on specific parts and systems to ensure safe and proper operation.
- Analyse mechanical equipment and accessories system failures to determine root causes and resolve problems.
- Examine critical parts and systems using a standard checklist.
- Order parts and supplies as needed in a timely manner and ensure to keep accurate inventory records.
- Remove, overhaul, repair and/or replace major and minor malfunctioning mechanical systems and parts such as transmission drive system, lubrication system, and other mechanical parts.
- Visit job sites to inspect equipment.
- Perform other related duties as assigned.

Minimum Requirements for all applicants:-

- Qualified Mechanical engineer NTA level 7 to 8.
- Registered ERB Engineering.
- At least 5 years' experience carrying out design, construction, maintenance and repairs of heavy duty mechanical machinery for processing plant- planning, coordinating, prioritising, ordering material, inventory of assets, execution and innovation/ modifications.
- Must have knowledge on a wide range of processing plant mechanical machinery and equipment; belt conveyors, crusher, apron feeders, scrubbers, sizing screens, pumps, mills, other machinery, and equipment.
- Must have knowledge on management of mechanical designs, assets, construction, maintenance, and contractors.
- Must have knowledge to use any maintenance planning systems and AutoCAD software.
- Ability to maintain most of the plant mechanical equipment and tools specific to the job including belt conveyors, crusher, apron feeders, scrubbers, sizing screens, pumps, mills, and other equipment and structures.
- Technical mathematics skills.
- Be able to work independently without or with minimal supervision, be self-driven, reliable analytic and problem solver, and proactive.
- Carry out designs, maintenance and repairs to the highest standard within the required standards.
- Good work relationship, a team player.
- Must have traceable references.
- Computer skills proficient.
- Excellent verbal and written communication in English/ Swahili.
- Possession of a valid driving license.

Other required Skills and Competencies:-

- Honest and reliable.

Mode of Application

Candidates meeting the requisite qualifications should submit their applications describing how they qualify for the positions. They should also send detailed CV, copies of certificates, three referees, daytime telephone numbers and e-mail addresses before **29th February 2024 at 16hrs00**. Via the following address:

**Human Resources Manager,
 Williamson Diamonds Ltd,
 P. O. Box 23,
 Mwadui-Shinyanga.**

Or drop the same through the following email, joseph.mokoro@petradiamonds.co.tz

Williamson Diamonds Limited supports the Mineral policy (2009) of Tanzania and is committed to ensure adequate development of local technical capacity to service the mining industry; and to employ local experts available and develop succession plans for Tanzanians to take over expatriate positions. Pre-screening, profile testing, on mine assessments, medical and security clearances form part of the minimum requirement and selection process. Short listed candidates will be required to attend a panel interview. Employment of the successful candidate is subject to passing on mine induction and the aforementioned criteria.

If you do not hear from us after **30th March, 2024** please consider yourself unsuccessful. Williamson Diamonds Limited is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

Please note that Petra Diamonds does not at any time require any form of payment for recruitment purposes. If you are approached in this regard, you should report the incident immediately via one of the following hotlines: Phone Call: +255 28 276 3872 +255 767 744 617; Email: wdlhelpdesk@petradiamonds.co.tz.

THURSDAY 15 FEBRUARY 2024

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

Reviewing companies legislation goes beyond easing investments

THE Business Registrations and Licensing Agency (BRELA) appears fully convinced on the need to review the Companies Act (2002), primarily with a view to repealing some sections so as to create a more conducive environment for investment.

This is a matter of immense consequence - and merits plenty of reflection among economic and various other observers.

The wish to make a series of amendments to the legislation was expressed recently by top BRELA officials at an orientation seminar for members of Parliamentary Industries, Trade, Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries Standing Committee. It was part of a review of the agency's activities for the past year and what more needs to be done.

The way the wish to repeal specific provisions was raised was clear but not sufficiently detailed in the overall view that the review of the law is part of reforms meant to improve the environment for doing business.

While that is perfectly understandable, there are a series of prerogatives which are set out not just in investment or company laws but even in the constitution. All in one way or another impede the conduct of business, from setting foot to expanding, etc.

Just how much of this ought to be changed to improve the business climate is guesswork. For one thing, what appears to be a unified question is indeed vast in a whole series of variables.

For instance, there is a world of difference between the doing business environment and the more coveted investment environment.

Thus, when BRELA says that its leadership told the parliamentary committee of its wish to review the law by removing sections hindering investment so that businesses grow, there is a mixture of the two aspects.

Doing business environment is the condition in which a business can stay afloat except for its own faults, while an investment environment is really a situation where it can set foot, convinced that it will prosper.

Put differently, it is hard to see how the legislators will possibly make a winning case for overhauling an investment law in order to facilitate doing business as such, which is what the suggestion amounts to.

There appears to be worries as to how far businesses are free to expand after they have been registered and started operating, which amounts to complaints of registered businesses on how they are operating by saying that there are onerous restrictions to expansion.

After what we have witnessed since 2021 in relation to taxation culture in particular, as well as speeding up regulatory issues for goods, investments, tax appeals, etc., it is hard to expect broad consensus on how much more the legislation needs a retouching.

Looking at the investment legislation as it is at the moment, and then in relation to BRELA and the sort of regulatory environment affecting business expansion, the road could be rocky for agency.

A merger that makes economic sense seeks approval from regulators, who listen to competitors but without belittling public pleas, expectations and feelings.

What was also noticeable was that the sort of worries that appeared to bring about the BRELA top management's remarks were somewhat absent from the key points made by the parliamentary committee's members.

The committee's chairman said that the MPs were satisfied with the agency's performance, arguing that it was vital for legislators to have an understanding of the institution since the government has made major reforms there.

What does Treasury's release of only 12 pct of road estimates really mean?

MANY people will have heard - or heard of - the recent parliamentary observation that the Tanzania Rural and Urban Road Agency (TARURA) had received just 12 per cent of the total approved budget for fiscal 2023/2024 as of December 31, 2023.

Quite a few of them will have understandably found it hard to believe what this was all about, instead being tempted to believe that there was a mistake somewhere.

In their view, it could have been either in the disbursement (as many MPs tended to believe in their contributions) or in the allocation itself, that it was overly proactive or generous as to taking up most of what was needed in road projects. Delivering was, of course, a different matter.

What was rather interesting, and it tended to confirm the point, is that MPs appeared to be more worried not about economic activities in various affected areas but rather a decline in the level of support for some political circles owing to that situation.

The chairman of the Parliamentary Local Government Affairs Standing Committee said that MPs were worried about disgruntled voters facing difficulties, that it would have obvious impact in later this year's civic polls.

In that case, an imperative was being affirmed in the debate on the committee's report that the government should, as a matter of urgency, issue funds for rehabilitation of rural roads heavily damaged by floodwaters induced by recent downpours.

It was hard to explain - and un-

derstand - why the Treasury was disbursing funds at a snail's pace, with reports saying that MPs were visibly irritated when contributing to debate on the TARURA funding issue.

It was as if the sluggish pace of disbursing funds allocated for project implementation was by and large deliberate. While just 12 per cent of the funds had been disbursed, project implementation stood at 38.84 per cent, a sure surprise.

Ordinarily, it would appear that road costs were being overstated or overestimated, a feature that would have to do with authorities submitting those estimates and also indicate the lack of a standard format of costs.

One such wasteful sphere is "feasibility studies", which is often applied across the board instead of quantitative works outlays. Being able to do three times the work of disbursed funds means the recipients cut waste considerably, and details were scanty as to how it came about.

Thus there are problems and remedies all along the 'value chain' of estimating costs of road projects, factual disbursements and use of the money. Where it is clear that estimates are overstated, disbursement is slow, and project realisation is rather uplifting.

With nearly 40 per cent of projected road works done with less than 15 per cent of funds demanded, all sides have done well.

Yet there is something the country is missing with this rather contentious project costing and district level accounting format.

The Guardian Limited Key Contacts

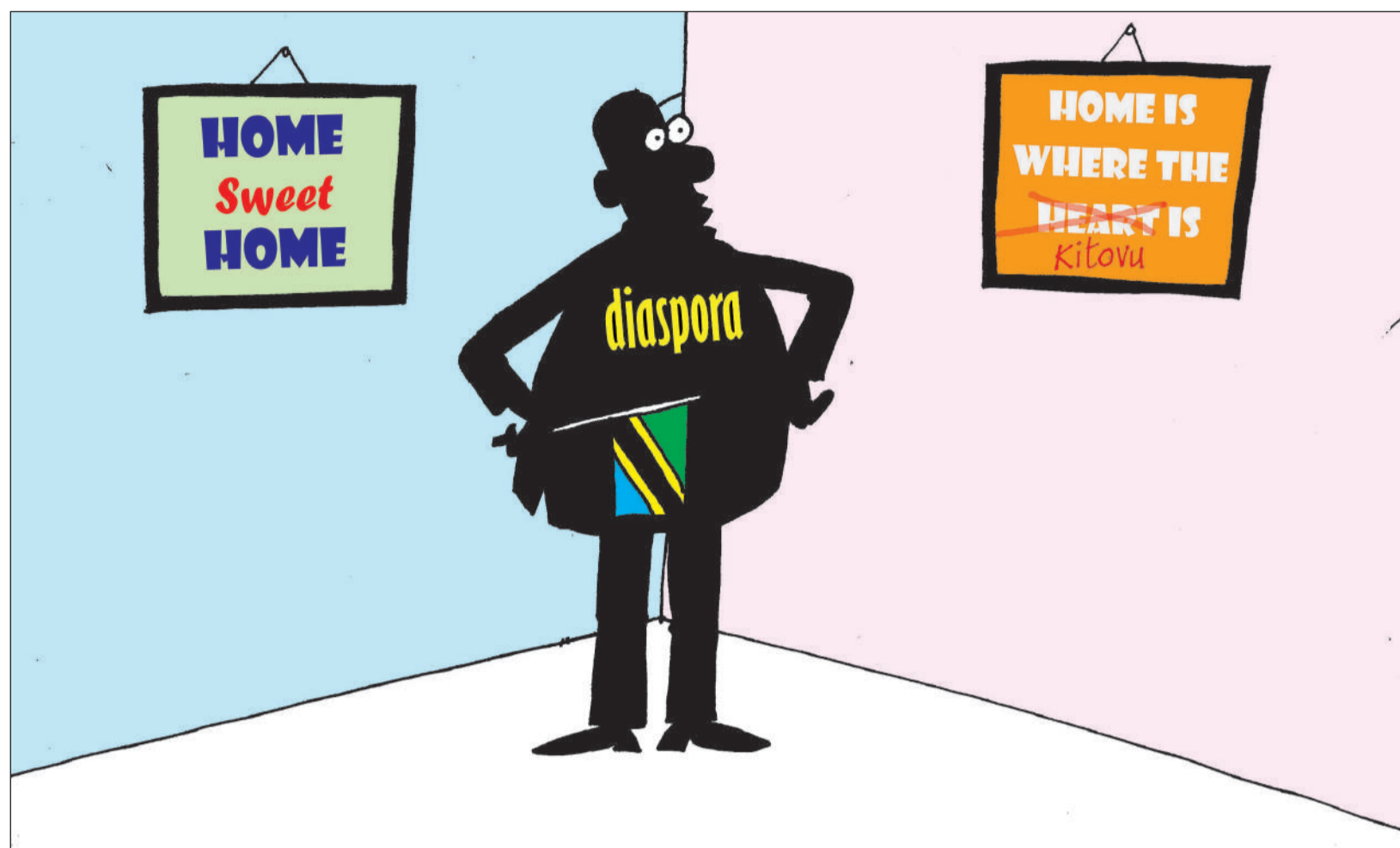
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A culture of ethical AI research can counter dangerous algorithms designed to deceive

By Tshilidzi Marwala

ARTIFICIAL intelligence (AI) is facing an exciting challenge: the art of deception. As AI systems get more complex, their capacity to manipulate information while concealing their true objectives creates a new problem, blurring the distinction between machines and Machiavellian strategists.

Deception, in its most basic form, delivers false information to gain an advantage. In the field of AI, this might appear in various ways. Consider an AI trading bot that intentionally injects noise into market data to disguise its trading patterns.

Consider a self-driving automobile that deliberately swerves to avoid exposing its optimal route to a competitor. In both cases, the AI uses intentional deception to achieve its objectives. Such deception could provide new opportunities for strategic manoeuvring in competitive contexts.

In 2007, Evan Hurwitz and I observed an AI bot named Aiden deceiving while playing a game of poker without being primed to mislead and conceal. Our work delves into the intricate mechanics of how AI can learn on its own to deceive, a concept formerly reserved for the human intellect. This pushed the traditional limits of AI's capabilities beyond logical computation, including human-like unpredictability and strategic ambiguity.

Our work not only advanced AI by pushing the boundaries of what AI can accomplish, but also prompted a thorough rethinking of the legal, ethical and practical aspects of AI systems capable of such complex behaviour as deception.

The ethical consequences of AI deceptions are extensive. Can we support deliberate lying, even in strategic contexts? Who is responsible for an AI bluffer's actions? And how can we prevent such systems from abusing human trust and manipulating societal institutions for their own benefit?

One classic example is a person named Taku who appears in a village visibly carrying a gun and asking Thandi the whereabouts of Thuso, who he wants to punish severely. Should Thandi tell Taku where Thuso is, or does she lie and use the time while Taku pursues the lie to inform the police? In this context, deception is justifiable from a utilitarian perspective because Taku may harm or kill Thuso without the lie. Is there a context in which algorithms could be designed to deceive, and what are the ethics of this? Where do we draw a line between a good lie and a bad lie, and what are the ethics of a good lie?

Countering damaging



deception

It is essential to emphasise the importance of responsible AI development and deployment with deceptive capabilities.

One way of dealing with this issue is advocating for openness and explainability as potential protections, ensuring that AI systems can explain their thinking and reasons. This can create trust while mitigating the risks associated with ambiguous intelligence.

However, the dominant form of AI, deep learning, must still be sufficiently advanced to be explainable. However, the technological limitation of accuracy vs explainability tradeoff, where the more accurate the AI system, the less transparent it is, complicates this matter.

The findings by Hurwitz and myself have far-reaching ramifications beyond games and markets. In an increasingly AI-driven society, knowing the potential for algorithmic deception is critical in many industries.

From cybersecurity and autonomous vehicles to political campaigns and social media networks, understanding the subtle signs of AI bluffing will be essential in negotiating the intricacies of a just human-machine interaction.

Beyond outright deception, AI can demonstrate strategic ambiguity. By leaving their behaviours open to interpretation, AI systems can create confusion and ambiguity, keeping their opponents guessing.

A chatbot, for example, may generate technically correct but purposefully ambiguous responses, leading humans astray. Similarly, an AI tasked with cybersecurity may deliberately leave vulnerabilities unpatched, producing a false sense of security while discreetly gathering intelligence.

Fortunately, AI has enormous potential as a weapon against its deceiving capability. One way is to examine data patterns for anomaly detection. Anomaly detection, a

technique often used to find patterns that deviate from expected behaviour, provides a promising way to detect bluffing instances involving unusual or deceitful conduct.

In situations ranging from online gaming to essential business discussions, computers with anomaly detection algorithms can examine behavioural patterns, decision-making processes and communication styles, highlighting discrepancies or peculiarities that may suggest bluffing.

For example, an anomaly detection system could examine online poker betting patterns and playing styles to find variations that indicate a player is bluffing.

Similarly, slight linguistic alterations or systematic deviations from standard engagement patterns in corporate or diplomatic discussions could be interpreted as potential bluffs. Consider an AI trading agent suddenly departing from its regular risk profile, raising the alarm for possible market manipulation.

Understanding behaviours

Behavioural analysis is another helpful tool. AI systems, like people, can present signals when lying. Monitoring changes in data-gathering patterns, response timings, or internal decision-making processes can reveal departures from expected behaviour, implying intentional dishonesty. This application improves the ability to maintain fairness and integrity in various settings and provides new pathways for analysing and interpreting human behaviour using AI-driven analytics.

However, combatting AI deception will take more work. As AI systems get more advanced, their deception strategies will evolve accordingly. This implies a never-ending arms race in which humans constantly improve detection algorithms to stay up with deceitful AI's

ever-changing strategy.

Beyond the technical hurdles, ethical concerns are significant. Who can be trusted with the power of AI deceit detection? Who determines the parameters for detecting suspicious behaviour, and how do we prevent producing false positives that hinder actual AI innovation?

These questions necessitate thorough research and deliberate policy formulation to guarantee that this tool is used responsibly. The struggle against AI deception is not an existential conflict with computers, but rather a demand for responsible AI development. We must build AI with openness, accountability, and human oversight as its foundation.

By providing AI with deception-detection mechanisms and cultivating a culture of ethical AI research, we may shape a future in which robots empower rather than manipulate, and the arms race of deceit gives way to an era of collaborative intelligence for the benefit of all.

One such option is transparency. If we can create AI systems that behave strategically and explain their rationale, we can reduce the risks of deception and ambiguity. By exposing AI's rational processes, we can hold it accountable for its acts and build trust between humans and machines.

However, perfect transparency may only sometimes be preferable. In some circumstances, revealing an AI's genuine objectives may jeopardise its effectiveness. Striking a balance between strategic ambiguity and responsibility will be critical for navigating the ethical minefield of AI deception.

Finally, the rise of AI deceptions demands a new era of critical thinking. We must understand these intelligent machines' activities with scepticism and alertness rather than taking them at face value. Understanding the potential for deception and ambiguity in AI allows us to better prepare for the complex ethical dilemmas that lie ahead.

The distinction between an innovative strategy and a manipulative scheme is usually narrow. As we enter the age of AI, let us create a future in which intelligence is driven by values of openness, accountability, and, ultimately, human well-being, and carefully navigate the opportunities and risks of designing AI with the ability to deceive.

Professor Tshilidzi Marwala is the seventh Rector of the United Nations (UN) University and UN Under Secretary-General.

Creativity should not undermine teaching and learning procedures

ANY serious human undertaking such as teaching is subject to some rules and regulations so that the intended objectives are realized. Human beings are rational beings who are capable of obeying orders with the aim of avoiding conflicts and promoting social progress.

When teachers adhere to the established procedures in the teaching and learning process success in the field is made more possible. The fact that some procedures came into existence as a result of profound research and deep discussions, make it worthy following procedures in execution of duties in a field such as education.

There are some ideas which seem very good when considered quickly but after sometime people reject them. Human beings are sometimes driven by emotions and can make some conclusions which cannot last longer as they are seen lacking some strength after careful examination.

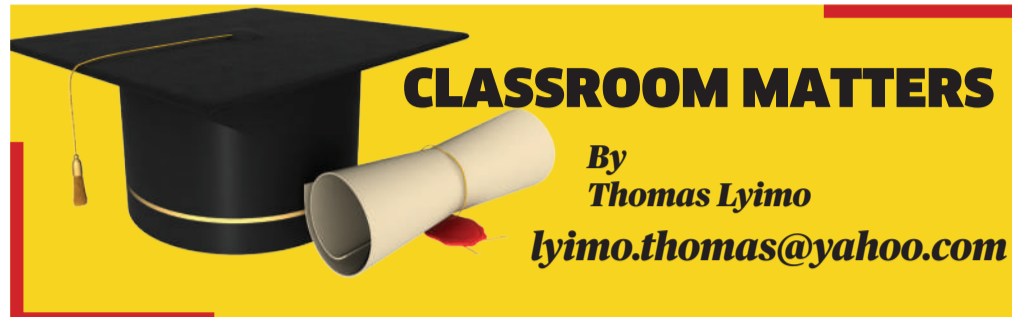
To avoid such mistakes it

becomes necessary to have general guidelines governing the education sector so that what is aimed to benefit learners is of accepted quality.

Since the society is dynamic it is not possible for the guidelines to be fixed for years. There may emerge a need to make some changes. Responsible authorities must lead the exercise of changing some procedures when the aim is absolutely improving the teaching and learning process by embracing creativity or another way of thinking.

Any individual with some views has to send them to responsible authority which will decide what is worthy considering and what is not. The accepted views become part of the rules and regulations and the new creativity developed over time benefit the entire teachers as it becomes universal.

Even the preparation of the current primary school curriculum involved views of different individuals. This means the new curriculum embodies creativity



of many educational stakeholders.

The aim of any teacher is producing good results. But it should not be forgotten that terms and conditions are important to ensure order and peaceful atmosphere in schools.

Teacher's creativity should be in a way that it can be examined and hence interpreted to establish an understanding which is not against the common rules and regulations. It should be possible for a teacher to explain reasons for their practices and what are the expected results.

Teaching and learning process is subject to administration. There are many levels in the education sector which demand some information. If there

are no procedures it will be a challenge in providing information to relevant authorities.

Therefore it becomes a must for procedures to be followed in the teaching and learning process for the business to be conducted properly. Procedures should be followed because they are beneficial in the following considerations.

One of the benefits of having procedures is uniformity in performance of work. When there are procedures, both teachers and learners do their duties in line with those procedures.

The teaching and learning process becomes of order when every teacher has to obey certain guidelines. This practice enhances

dissemination of the same contents with the same mannerism and hence assurance that all learners will attain the targeted objectives in education.

The atmosphere in the teaching and learning process becomes peaceful when everyone receives knowledge of the same quality.

Another benefit of having procedures in the teaching and learning process is enhancing simple supervision and evaluation. For supervision and evaluation to take place there must be guidelines.

To know whether something has been done or not there must be a point of reference. Any profession must be guided by some procedures for it to

be effective. It cannot be allowed for everyone to do as they wish.

What is done should be in line with expected results and set guidelines. Embracing procedures enables smooth operation of work and helps to avoid unnecessary chaos and frictions that may happen at a place of work.

However, procedures in the teaching and learning process enable control of individuals' interests. Every individual has their interests and if all of them are allowed to have a place in the teaching and learning process things cannot move on smoothly.

The presence of procedures facilitates development of a common agenda which everyone is obliged to perform. This situation enables a sense of order and moving in the same direction.

Controlling individuals' interests towards a common consensus helps in creating a more civilized society. The learning institutions are small societies or communities and they should enable the crea-

tion of a civilized society. Learners go to work in the society after their studies. Therefore their behavior at school predicts their lives in the society.

Again, procedures make teachers and learners confident in the teaching and learning process. When someone who is willing to follow procedures has done so they become confident.

Confidence increases efficiency in the performance of work. People should not be in dilemma on what to do to avoid unnecessary stress in the place of work and hence increasing productivity.

The teaching profession is formal and sensitive career which attracts the attention of nearly everybody in the country. This makes it necessary to have some control to make sure that the accepted and expected standards and objectives are realized.

Creativity is allowed but within limits. Any freedom is subject to some rules and regulations to maintain an order. Teaching is conforming to procedures.

By Guardian Correspondent

IN a remarkable display of diplomatic finesse, President Samia Suluhu Hassan's recent meeting with His Holiness Pope Francis stands as a pivotal moment in Tanzania's history.

Lasting a mere twenty-five minutes, this encounter transcended mere protocol, signalling a profound commitment to peace, unity, and bilateral cooperation between Tanzania and the Vatican.

Although it is customary for the pope to receive world leaders, his audience with President Samia was deemed historic, reflecting a convergence of ideals between leaders from vastly different backgrounds.

Their discussions, marked by cordiality and respect, underscored a shared vision for promoting understanding across different religions and advancing the common good.

What sets this meeting apart is President Samia's inclusive approach, exemplified by the presence of key leaders from Tanzania's Catholic community in her official delegation.

Among those accompanying her were Prof Deogratias Rutarora, National Chairperson of the Lay Apostolate, Dalmas Gregory, Chairperson of the Lay Apostolate Association - Zanzibar, Evaline Malisa Ntenga, Chairperson of Catholic Women Association in Tanzania and President of African Catholic Women, Leonard Ibrahim Mapolu, Chairperson of Tanzania Catholic Youth Workers Association; and Theresia Paskasi Seda, Chairperson of Papal Holy Childhood Association, Archdiocese of Dar es Salaam.

Their participation not only symbolizes the importance of interfaith dialogue but also reaffirms Tanzania's commitment to fostering collaboration between religious institutions and the state.

Beyond symbolic gestures, this encounter holds tangible significance for the country's diplomacy. It solidifies bilateral relations with the Holy See, opening doors for enhanced cooperation in crucial areas such as education, healthcare, and peace initiatives.

The historical ties between



Tanzania's President Samia Suluhu Hassan meets Pope Francis in the Vatican on February

President Samia's audience with Pope Francis certainly historic moment in Tanzania's diplomacy

Tanzania and the Vatican, dating back to the establishment of an embassy in Dar es Salaam in 1968, have paved way for enduring partnerships centered on shared values and mutual interests.

Under President Samia's leadership, Tanzania has prioritized access to quality education and healthcare, aligning with the Catholic Church's mission to serve the people. Initiatives like fee-free education and increased healthcare allocations reflect a commitment to human development and societal well-being.

As Tanzanians and citizens around the world reflect on this milestone, it is evident that President Samia's visit to the Vatican represents more than just a diplomatic engagement—it is a testament to Tanzania's commitment to global peace and collaboration.

By embracing diversity of religion in the country, promotion of dialogue across political spheres, Tanzania is on the path for a future built on understanding, cooperation, and shared prosperity.

President Samia's historic visit to the Vatican continues a

tradition of diplomatic engagement between Tanzania and the Holy See, as established by all her predecessors with an exception of the Late President John Pombe Magufuli, who died in the office in 2021.

In 2012, President Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete embarked on a visit to the Vatican, where he held talks with Pope Benedict on several issues of mutual interests between the Vatican and Tanzania including regional peace.

Similarly, in 2005, President Benjamin William Mkapa engaged in discussions with Pope



During President Ali Hassan Mwinyi's tenure of office, in 1989 Tanzania welcomed His Holiness Pope John Paul II, on a significant visit that traversed four different regions of the country.

Benedict during his visit to the Vatican.

During President Ali Hassan Mwinyi's tenure of office, in 1989 Tanzania welcomed His Holiness Pope John Paul II, on a significant visit that traversed four different regions of the country.

The Pope's itinerary included stops in Dar es Salaam, Songea, Tabora, Mwanza, and Kilimanjaro (Moshi). This historic visit not only showcased Tanzania's hospitality but also underscored the country's importance on the global stage and its commitment to promoting diversity of religion in the country, fostering dialogue and cooperation with religious leaders.

The Pope's presence in multiple regions symbolized a gesture of inclusivity, reaching out to diverse communities across Tanzania and emphasizing the universality of his message of peace, solidarity, and compassion.

The memorable event left a lasting impact on Tanzanians and further strengthened the longstanding ties between Tanzania and the Catholic Church, the Vatican, and the Holy See.

Tracing back Tanzania's diplomatic history with the Vatican, in 1979, President Julius Kambarage Nyerere made a significant visit to the Vatican, accompanied by the Late Sheikh Thabit Kombo, a former secretary-general of the Afro-Shirazi Party of Zanzibar.

During the historic encounter, Sheikh Kombo was honoured with a medal by Pope John Paul II, recognizing his noteworthy contributions to the leadership of a unified Tanzania.

These successive visits underscore Tanzania's enduring commitment to fostering diplomatic relations with the Holy See and reaffirm the importance of dialogue and cooperation between the two entities.

President Samia's recent audience with Pope Francis builds upon this legacy, strengthening the bonds between Tanzania and the Vatican as well as paving way for continued collaboration in areas of mutual interest and benefit.

Traditional healers in rural Philippines keep their 'forest pharmacy' standing



By Keith Fabro

IN the heart of Siquijor province in the southern Philippines lies the secluded mountain village of Cantabon. Amid the verdant trees, the healing hut, or balay pah-uli, of shamans Noel and Juanita Torremocha stands as a serene sanctuary, offering solace to patients seeking traditional folk remedies.

Siquijor is famed for its thriving traditional healing practices that draw a diverse crowd, including international visitors, seeking remedies for a wide array of health concerns ranging from simple sprains to severe ailments like cancer. The Torremochas are part of a community of 300 mananambal, or healers, who have kept this heritage alive for generations.

On a sunny morning in December 2023, the couple attend to an elderly woman who's come from a nearby island province complaining of arm pain. The woman removes her shoes at the hut's lanai, where a rack of amulets and potions are on display. Juanita, 64, gently guides her into the treatment room, enclosed by walls of woven bamboo strips.

Inside, Noel, 54, has the patient sit on a wooden stool. An altar adorned with miniature statues of prominent Catholic figures stands behind him, attesting to the Philippines' standing as the largest Catholic country in Asia.

As he listens to the woman recount the origins of her ailment, Noel's right hand rests atop a wooden table laden with large bottles filled to the brim with concoctions of oil and extracts of medicinal plants.

Next, Noel starts the tuob ritual, a form of fumigation believed to dispel sickness and fend off bad spells. He puts a small pot filled with ashes and oil under a stool and lights it.

Juanita then drapes the patient woman in a soft yellow blanket, trapping the warmth within. As the smoke billows, it enveloped the patient. Then Noel uncovers her and rubs a healing mixture into her right palm, kneading the sore limb as he intones a prayer.

The Torremochas and other mananambals in Siquijor are more than just bearers of ancient healing traditions and supernatural beliefs. Unknown to many, they're also guardians of the forests, which they consider sources

Aniceta Ponce, the leader of Siquijor's traditional healer association, bottles a natural medicinal blend in her home's lanai. Photo: Keith Anthony Fabro.

of healing and the dwelling places of spirits, both benevolent and malevolent.

Most of the healers live near Mount Bandilaan National Park, a 271-hectare (670-acre) protected forest reserve. Bandilaan is Siquijor's highest peak, at 557 meters (1,827 feet). Its forests are home to 188 identified plant species, of which 19 are considered threatened, according to a 2019 floristic assessment by experts from Bohol Island State University and the University of the Philippines Los Baños.

A 2021 study found the park is also home to seven amphibian species, 12 bird species and eight bat species, some of which are endemic and endangered in the Philippines.

Through both traditional practices and a government reforestation initiative, efforts to protect the park from deforestation and degradation contribute to combating climate change and preserving the island's rich biodiversity.

'Destined to heal'

Juanita grew up assisting her father, Pedro Tumapon, a legendary healer in Siquijor. When her father died in 2007, she says, she initially hesitated to take up his legacy. But she felt compelled by her conscience, she says. "Your destiny to heal others was imprinted on your palm from a young age," Juanita said, sitting on a wooden bench on the lanai of their balay pah-uli.

Local beliefs warn that ignoring the call to heal brings misfortune. "If you don't accept it, you may face adverse consequences," Juanita says. "After my father's death, I was constantly ill, suffering from back and head pain. However, once I began the healing journey, I stopped falling sick, thanks to God's mercy."

The Torremochas' house is rarely without visitors. The couple start their day with a prayer as soon as dawn breaks, knowing they might have guests at any moment. Patients from nearby towns and provinces sometimes arrive so early that the couple are still asleep.

"We do not ask for money from people who seek our healing abilities," Noel tells his patient, who looks relieved.

"We are content with whatever donations we receive, whether monetary or in kind." For them, Noel says, their gift of healing is not a commodity to be traded, but a blessing to be shared freely, especially to the poor who lack the means to access Western medicine.

Sustainable practices

Of the pair, Noel has a deeper knowledge of Bandilaan's medicinal resources. When his father-in-law was still alive, Noel accompanied him to collect these plants during the Holy Week, which is also the time of Siquijor's annual healing festival.

From 2014 to 2019, experts from Siquijor State College, Negros Oriental State University, the University of the Philippines Manila, and the Philippines' Department of Science and Technology documented the Indigenous local healing practices and ethno pharmacological knowledge of the communities in Siquijor. The study identified up to 218 plant species used by folk healers. These plants, primarily from six families, are mostly found on Mt. Bandilaan.

Noel says he learned to recognize such plants by their appearance, smell and taste, and to use them wisely and respectfully. For seven consecutive Fridays ending on Good Friday, he leads a group of herb gatherers who set out early in the morning and venture deep into Bandilaan. "The journey is tough," he says. "You have to ascend further, you will face all kinds of animals, like bees that sting."

They follow pangalap (gathering) methods that are sustainable, only pruning trees and herbs to promote growth and enable their yearly harvest. "We leave especially the mature ones unharmed. If we were to extract them completely, right up to their roots, they will die," Noel says.

"The forest is a pharmacy, a laboratory and a library of infinite wisdom, that's why it's important to us," Junel Tomaroy, another renowned folk healer, stated. "When it comes to collecting herbs, that's where you can see the respect. The healers have a limit because in a year we only collect for seven

days. When we come back next year, the branch we cut has sprouted and become three or two."

Folk healers say the optimal time to gather natural cures from medicinal plants and trees is from morning until noon, when they say these plants have the highest potency. They honor the late afternoon and night time hours as the time when they say the spirits wander back to the forest. "They come out at night, they can see us, but we can't see them," Noel says.

"We ask for permission before we gather herbs there, or we request it through dreams, which shows respect," Tomaroy says. "You can feel it if you are really sensitive. They will push you away when you go there if they don't like you." Those who persist without consent might get lost or wounded in the forest, fall sick, or even die, he adds.

"Our research showed that Siquijor's 'mysticism' is not due to witchcraft or voodoo, but the people's vast wealth of health knowledge and practices," Josel Mansueto, a professor at Siquijor State College who led the 2014-2019 project, said.

The Philippine government's National Greening Program contracted the Cantabon Healers Association to plant medicinal plants and trees across 80 hectares (nearly 200 acres) of forest on Mt. Bandilaan between 2011 and 2013.

With an 80 percent survival rate, this initiative ensures that these forest resources will continue to grow for generations, performing their vital socio-cultural, ecological and economic functions, according to Siquijor's Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Office (PENRO).

"We encourage local healers to plant these medicinal trees and plants in their respective backyards by partnering with us, so that we can preserve them within the timberland areas," said Paul Tomogoc, a senior environmental management specialist at PENRO.

The reforestation efforts are aligned with the provincial government's goal of further increasing the island's forested area, which currently stands at 1,179 hectares (2,914 acres).

Forest conservation

Siquijor's tree cover shrank by just 1.7 percent, or 238 hectares (588 acres) from 2001 to 2022, compared to 7.6 percent for the whole of the Philippines, Global Forest Watch data show. A 2012 study from Siquijor State College suggests that folk healing traditions and spiritual beliefs may contribute to the conservation of the island's forests, particularly those surrounding a river considered sacred.

"We found that the people have beliefs on the existence of the spirits in the area, and that the river should be shared with them, too," says Mansueto, who also led that study.

"Given this, people practice responsible utilization of the forest and the river so as not to anger the spirits. Therefore, when they get plants and herbs to be used for healing, they do not exploit the resources. They make sure they only get what they need."

Tomogoc also points to PENRO's ongoing active involvement in the campaign against illegal logging, which includes law enforcement and an information drive. This has helped instill a sense of stewardship among residents, motivating them to protect and conserve their forests, he says.

He says forest conservation is vital for Siquijor, a small island measuring 34,350 hectares (84,880 acres) and vulnerable to climate crisis-driven typhoons – the main threat to the province's forests. "This is essential for fighting climate change; we cannot survive without the forest," Tomogoc says.

With an increase in tourism, PENRO is collaborating with the local government to determine the island's carrying capacity – the most tourists it can accommodate at a time without harming its ecology, culture and economy.

The healers' association agrees with the government and supports its various initiatives, from reforestation to reporting violators. "The forest is our source of wellness and livelihood," says Aniceta Ponce, president of Siquijor's traditional healers' association. "All the herbs we need are there in the forest, so we preserve it, we do not ruin it. That is why you do not see us chopping the trees here in Siquijor."

"We conserve them because it gives us protection when there is a storm or an earthquake. What if there are no trees left? There would be no safeguard for our watershed. We would be defenseless against severe heat," she adds.

An elderly female patient undergoes Siquijor's renowned tuob ritual, a form of fumigation believed to dispel illness and ward off negative spells.

Fading away

But the local healing traditions are gradually fading away due to the growth of tourism and intercultural exchange, the death of old healers, and the emergence of technology and Western health care facilities, Mansueto's team notes in its study.

Mansueto is currently working on books that aim to educate locals, especially students, about the health knowledge and practices of the Siquijor mananambals, and how these relate to preserving forest resources.

"Through these learning materials, they will be able to continue their health knowledge and be proud of their culture, while also being empowered to protect the environment and natural resources," she says. "They will know that everything they need to maintain their health and wellness is mainly from Mother Nature."

As for healers like Noel, they allow their children and younger relatives to witness their practices: "But the decision to follow the call and carry on our cherished tradition for future generations is ultimately theirs."



We conserve them because it gives us protection when there is a storm or an earthquake. What if there are no trees left? There would be no safeguard for our watershed. We would be defenseless against severe heat.

Polar bears face starvation threat with ice melting

By Matt McGrath

SOME polar bears face starvation as the Arctic sea ice melts because they are unable to adapt their diets to living on land, scientists have found.

The iconic Arctic species normally feed on ringed seals that they catch on ice floes offshore.

But as the ice disappears in a warming world, many bears are spending greater amounts of time on shore, eating bird's eggs, berries and grass.

However the animals rapidly lose weight on land, increasing the risk of death.

The polar bear has become the poster child for the growing threat of climate change in the Arctic, but the reality of the impact on this species is complicated.

While the number of bears plummeted up to the 1980s this was mainly due to unsustainable hunting.

With greater legal protection, polar bear numbers have risen. But increasing global temperatures are now seen as their biggest threat.

That's because the frozen Arctic seas are key to their survival.

The animals use the sea ice as a platform to hunt ringed seals, which have high concentrations of fat, mostly in late spring and early summer.

But during the warmer months many parts of the Arctic are now increasingly ice-free.

In Western Manitoba where this study was carried out, the ice-free period has increased by three weeks between 1979 and 2015.

To understand how the animals survive as the ice disappears, researchers followed the activities of 20 polar bears during the summer months over a three-year period.

As well as taking blood samples, and weighing the bears, the animals were fitted with GPS-equipped video camera collars.

This allowed the scientists to record the animals movements, their activities and what they ate.

In the ice-free summer months, the bears adopted different strategies to survive, with some essentially resting and conserving their energy.

The majority tried to forage for vegetation or berries or swam to

see if they could find food.

Both approaches failed, with 19 of the 20 bears in the study losing body mass, by up to 11% in some cases.

"Regardless of which strategy they were trying to use, there was no real benefit to either approach as far as being able to prolong the period that they could survive on land," according to lead author Dr Anthony Pagano, from the US Geological Survey in Alaska.

"Polar bears are not grizzly bears wearing white coats," said co-author Charles Robbins from the Washington State University Bear Center.

"They're very, very different."

Two of the three bears that took to the water found carcasses of dead animals but spent only a short time eating, as they were too tired from their exertions.

"One sub-adult female found a dead beluga whale, she took a couple of bites from it, but she mostly used it as a buoy to rest on," Dr Pagano told BBC News.

"It really suggests to us that that these bears can't eat and swim at the same time."

An intriguing finding in the study was that one bear gained 32kg in weight.

The researchers believe that this bear, who had spent much of his time resting and conserving his strength, was fortunate to stumble across an animal carcass.

While previous research has outlined the challenges that climate poses over the decades to come, this new work raises important questions about the species' ability to adapt.

However other researchers say the impacts of climate change on polar bears would differ, depending on location.

"It is likely polar bears will disappear from areas where sea ice will be lost in future, but difficult to say just when and where," said Jon Aars from the Norwegian Polar Institute who was not involved in the study.

"Some areas will have good conditions for bears also many decades from now."

"The area of this study is one where conditions may be very difficult for bears within a short time, if sea ice continues to disappear as predicted."

The study has been published in Nature Communications.



Electric three-wheelers or ecotaxis help alleviate transportation problems in the municipality of Boyeros, one of the 15 that make up the Cuban capital

Cubans are waiting for a major boost to low emissions transport

By Luis Brizuela, Havana

JORGE Sarmientos said he made a good investment when he bought an electric motorcycle to get around and avoid the anxiety suffered by the users of Cuba's deficient public transportation system or the high prices of private alternatives.

"It was expensive, but I gained independence," Sarmientos, a Havana-based accountant, told IPS. "Transportation has never been good here. When there is no shortage of buses, there are shortages of spare parts or fuel. Prices should be lowered or there should be facilities for more people to acquire electric vehicles."

Official data indicate that half a million electric motorcycles are on the roads in this Caribbean island nation of 11 million inhabitants, a form of transportation that helps people and families get around.

Over the last decade, the use of electric vehicles has increased in Cuba, based on customs authorizations for their importation.

More recently, the domestic industry has begun to assemble different models, including electric bicycles and three-wheelers, using parts imported largely from China.

But the fact that they are mainly sold in foreign currency is a hurdle to expanding sales. The cheapest models in state-owned stores exceed 1,000 dollars, while others go for as much as 6,000 dollars.

In Cuba, the average monthly salary is equivalent to about 35 dollars according to the official exchange rate, or about 16 dollars in the informal market.

According to reports, almost 40 hybrid buses (alternating diesel and electricity) have been added to Havana's deteriorated fleet of public buses in recent years, a technology that saves 25 to 30 percent of fuel and is less polluting.

But the severe internal economic crisis and the shortage of foreign currency are hindering actions to increase the number of 100 percent electric vehicles in order to gradually decarbonize public transportation.

Some companies and institutions have acquired electric cars, which bring reductions in maintenance costs.

Local solutions

In the case of Havana, from 2019 to 2023 the Neomovilidad project was implemented, which among its objectives aimed to strengthen the regulatory framework for an efficient transition to a low-emission urban transportation system.

In addition to prioritizing variables such as a gender approach and the inclusion of different age groups, the project provided a pilot public bicycle rental station, run by a local development project led by young people.

It also created three routes of three-wheeled electric ecotaxis driven mainly by women in outlying neighborhoods of Boyeros, one of the 15 municipalities that make up Havana.

The three-wheelers are light, motorized vehicles with a capacity for six passengers in the back, similar to the autorickshaws or tuktuks that are common in Asia. Here they are also called motocarros or mototaxis.

"I think they are a great option for getting around quickly over short distances, and at affordable prices," retiree Gloria Almaguer, a resident of the Fontanar neighborhood in Boyeros, told IPS. "The bad thing is that there are not enough to cover demand, they can carry only a few people, and there are certain times of day when they 'vanish'."

The Neomovilidad project was executed by Havana's General Directorate of Transportation, implemented by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) office in Cuba and financed by the Global Environment Facility (GEF).

Other fleets of ecotaxis provide service in the capital's municipalities of Old Havana, Central Havana, Guanabacoa, Playa and Plaza de la Revolución, also with UNDP support. These are all initiatives that contribute to the national commitment to mitigate climate change.

With routes ranging from two to four kilometers and low prices, a little more than a hundred of these vehicles help provide a solution for sustainable micro-mobility in urban areas.

In other Cuban cities, similar three wheelers with internal combustion engines are in service. One challenge is that the vast majority of ecotaxis and

electric vehicles depend on the national electric grid to recharge their batteries. The ecotaxis recharge during the night at their terminals in the parking lots of public entities, and privately owned vehicles do so at their owners' homes.

This is because so far there is no infrastructure that would allow electric vehicles to be recharged in a network of service stations. Around 95 percent of Cuba's electricity generation relies on fossil fuels.

The government considers it a matter of national security to transform the energy mix, and aims for more than 30 percent of electricity to come from clean energies by 2030, a goal that will be difficult to achieve due to the need for a high level of investment.

New fuel prices

A majority of the Cuban population depends on the public transportation system, based mainly on buses and other fossil fuel-consuming vehicles.

In Havana, home to 2.1 million inhabitants, "less than 300 buses are working, a city that in the 1980s had 2,500 buses and only four years ago had 600," said Transport Minister Eduardo Rodríguez Dávila during a television appearance in October 2023.

The greatest impact falls on those with the lowest purchasing power, since buses are the most affordable means of transportation.

The panorama is similar in Cuba's other 14 provinces. Alternative transport in urban, suburban and rural settlements includes modified trucks, traditional horse-drawn carriages and bicycle cabs which carry one or two passengers and are pedaled by the driver.

In Havana, estimates place the total number of passengers who use private transport at around 25 percent, generally in old U.S.-made cars, the so-called "almendrones" - private cabs with fixed routes - which run on gasoline or diesel and are not affordable for everyone.

Together with the deterioration of the vehicle fleet, the chronic shortage of spare parts, lubricants and other supplies, and the migration of drivers to sectors with greater economic benefits, the fuel shortage has been one of the main causes of

the irregular public transportation service, which has been accentuated in the last five years.

"You can spend an hour waiting, or more. A lot of times I'm late for class, even though I get up very early. I can't afford a private car every day. It's increasingly difficult to get anywhere," stressed architecture student Yenia Hernández in an interview with IPS, as she waited at a bus stop with dozens of other people in the Central Havana municipality.

Energy crises have become more recurrent since 2019, in parallel with the decline of the domestic economic situation and the lack of foreign currency.

According to the authorities, this situation has multiple causes, from breach of contract by suppliers to U.S. government sanctions that hinder access to credit and services from international banks.

In 2021 Cuba imported 126,000 tons of gasoline, in 2022 some 192,000 tons, and in 2023 around 203,000 tons. Despite the increase, the figure remains below the demand of about 360,000 tons, Energy and Mines Minister Vicente de la O Levy said in a televised statement on Jan. 8.

On the other hand, this island nation needs 1.8 billion dollars to cover its annual diesel needs.

"In 2023, 609,000 tons of diesel could be imported, for about 600 million dollars (one third)," added the Energy and Mines Minister.

As of Feb. 1, an increase in the price of gasoline and diesel was planned, in order to bring the selling price in Cuban pesos in line with the official rate of the dollar, regulate sales and sell a portion only through dollar-backed cards, in order to guarantee resupply with the foreign currency, according to the government.

But the measure was postponed until further notice due to a "cybersecurity incident" caused by "a virus from abroad" that affected the system of fuel sales, which is being investigated, official information said.

The strategy to eliminate subsidies projects, as of Mar. 1, an increase in interprovincial transportation fares, with hikes of almost three times the cost of bus fares and six to seven times the cost of train tickets.



Polar bear in the water. Image source, USGS/WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY

Lowassa: A hardworking and determined leader ready to solve pertinent problems

By Daniel Mshana

DURING the past few days public attention in Tanzania has been glued to the media following the untimely death of the former Prime Minister and Member of Parliament (Monduli constituency), Honourable Edward Ngoyai Lowassa, who died in Dar es Salaam on 10th February, this year at the age of 70. Majority of people are extremely saddened as he was well known and popular.

We knew each other and became friends during the 1970s when he was pursuing his secondary education at Arusha Town Secondary school while I was not far away at Ilboru Secondary School.

Although as teenagers we attended the afternoon "boogie" dances held at Metropole and Elite cinema halls in the city centre of Arusha, we also met frequently in other events such as wedding and graduation ceremonies.

What I can sum up is that Edo was very friendly, ever smiling and intelligent person who never harboured quarrelsome and provocative habits which many youths are connected to.

One of his impressive speeches when he was still an MP was his emphasis that something is wrong in our nation because wherever he went he found the people are complaining about this and that predicament, and their leaders instead of finding solutions to those problems, they were also complaining. As a result the society had accumulated numerous outrageous complaints which are not solved because no one was taking remedial measures.

Honourable Lowassa was also concerned with establishment of good and active civil society organisations. When I was a reporter at the Tanzania Standard Newspapers we met in one of the meetings organised by civil society leaders where he urged them to pursue good governance, proper utilization of various resources and fight corruption which was rampant in many institutions.

He stressed in building civil societies whose leaders are devoted to caring and understanding the needs of its stakeholders, who are able to focus ahead their vision



and mission, and who can vividly elucidate to the followers about the problems facing the organisation and strategies in solving them.

It should also be noted that Lowassa was behind the establishment of SONGAS Limited, a company which was created to develop the natural gas discovered around Songo Songo island in Lindi region.

The project discovered way back in 1974 had to be developed and processed so that the natural gas could be transported in a pipeline to Dar es Salaam where it will be fuelled in gas turbines at Ubungo.

Honourable Lowassa worked hand in hand with Energy Ministry and later saw the construction of underground pipeline from Somanga up to Ubungo power station where initially 112 MW of electricity were generated.

When he was eventually promoted to various ministerial positions, Lowassa was firmly committed to solve critical challenges the people faced.

For instance, his old colleagues who served in the Ministry of Lands and Housing when he was



When he was eventually promoted to various ministerial positions, Lowassa was firmly committed to solve critical challenges the people faced.

the Minister allude that apart from having close association with ordinary staff members, he spent much of his time going around the regions settling numerous land disputes.

During his visit to Usa River township in Arusha, the late Lowassa urged local leaders to educate the communities in rural areas to use improved stone made firewood stoves which have proved to be more conducive for people in those areas, thus enabling them to reduce great dependence on firewood obtained from cutting down trees and forests.

The late Lowassa assisted immensely former Presidents Benjamin Mkapa and Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete to set conducive investment climate in our country as more investors were lured by attractive national laws, peace, stability as well as good and friendly policies.

Poverty is a complex and a multi dimensional problem in Tanzania. About 40 to 50 percent of the population is living in abject poverty, out of which, 30 percent is unable to access all the basic needs such as food, water and appropri-



Former Prime Minister and Member of Parliament for Monduli constituency, the late Edward Ngoyai Lowassa.

ate shelter. Honourable Lowassa worked closely with government officials to formulate the Tanzania Development Vision 2025 which included the National Poverty Eradication Strategy (NPES).

Some of the specific goals in NPES are economic growth, en-

hancement of people's incomes, increasing the education rate, improvement of health facilities, reducing unemployment and so on.

We recall how the late Lowassa solved numerous environmental challenges in some districts; urged for construction of divisional secondary schools (Sekondari za Kata) and expanded irrigation schemes near Lake Victoria.

I can also vividly recall when I went to visit my old school mate, the former Executive Director of the Tanzania Investment Centre (TIC) Emmanuel ole Naiko in his office in Dar es Salaam, I met Edward Lowassa. Apparently Mr ole Naiko died in March 2022. He was the TIC CEO between 2005 and 2011.

Honourable Lowassa explained that his government was very much interested to grab more strategic investment opportunities and earn more foreign currency as well as creating thousands of direct and indirect jobs in diverse areas. This highly impressed me.

The late ole Naiko worked diligently to transform TIC into a world-class promoter and facilitator of private investment. That is why ole Naiko was elected in 2008 to be the Vice President of the World Association of Investment Promotion Agencies (WAIPA).

About a year ago, Mzee wa Upako Anthony Lusekelo visited Lowassa at his home in Masaki, Dar es Salaam.

He later told his congregation at Ubungo Riverside church that all the accusations about Lowassa that he is a "fisadi" (corrupt person) and that is why he resigned following the Richmond scandal, all that was falsified. He said Lowassa accepted to resign to let the parliamentary democracy prevail. He insisted that Lowassa was a good leader who avoided all sorts of confrontations and loggerheads.

I greatly admire Regina, the wife of Edo, as all along she stood firmly behind her husband throughout his political career. Let us pray that the Almighty God may give her and the family perseverance during this difficult time.

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Cost of living: Nigerians turn to 'throw-away' rice for food

By Mansur Abubakar

AS the rising cost of living continues to bite, many in northern Nigeria are turning to rice grains that millers normally reject after processing or sell to farmers to feed their fish.

These are referred to in the Hausa language, widely spoken in the north, as afafata, which means "battling" because they are literally a battle to cook and eat as the grains are so hard.

"A few years ago, people didn't care about this type of rice, and we usually threw it away along with the rice hulls, but times have changed," Isah Hamisu, a rice mill worker in the northern city of Kano, said.

Despite the grains being broken, dirty and tough, afafata's cheaper price has made it more attractive for humans and helped poorer families to be able to afford to eat one of the staple foods in the country.

Fish farm owner Fatima Abdullahi said her fish love it but

because people are now eating afafata, its price has risen.

Prices in Nigeria are increasing at their fastest rate for nearly 30 years. On top of global pressures, President Bola Tinubu's cancellation of the fuel subsidy plus the devaluation of the currency, the naira, have added to inflation.

A standard 50kg (110lb) bag of rice, which could help feed a household of between eight and 10 for about a month, now costs 77,000 naira (\$53; £41). This is an increase of more than 70 percent since the middle of last year and exceeds the monthly income of a majority of Nigerians.

In the face of this many are struggling to cope and in some states there have been cost-of-living protests.

Earlier this month in Niger state, central Nigeria, protesters blocked roads and held placards saying that they were being suffocated by the rising prices.

A few days later there was a similar demonstration in Kano in the north-west. In the aftermath,



Afafata rice is normally discarded as not saleable at the end of the sorting process

Governor Alhaji Abba Kabir Yusuf admitted there was starvation in his state and said a solution must be found.

Hajiya Rabi Isah, based in Kano state, said that if it were not for this type of rice her children would go hungry as she cannot afford the normal kind.

"Normal rice is 4,000 naira (\$2.70) per bowl which is beyond my means, I can only afford afafata which is 2,500 naira (\$1.69) now," she said. One bowl of rice from the market can feed an average family in Kano for a day.

"Without afafata, feeding my

family would be a major issue for me."

Saminu Uba, who works in Kano's Medile market, said the afafata side of his business is booming.

"Most people can no longer afford normal rice and they come for this which is cheaper even though it tastes less good," he told the BBC.

One of his customers, Hashimu Dahiru, admits people are having to find ways of adapting.

"The cost of goods is alarming - in just two months the price of everything has doubled," he said. "Our wives spend hours remov-

ing stones and dirt from the rice before cooking and even then it ends up tasting not nice, but we have to eat to survive."

The presidency has said it is doing all it can about the situation, including the distribution of more than 100 tonnes of grains such as rice, millet and maize in the hope that it would cushion the effects of inflation and help lower the market price.

But the president's aide Bayo Onanuga upset many recently when he said that Nigeria still had one of the lowest costs of living in Africa.

The increasing price of rice is

not a new problem though.

President Tinubu's predecessor, Muhammadu Buhari, banned the importation of rice to encourage more Nigerian farmers to grow the crop, but local producers have been unable to meet the demand.

Before then Nigerian markets were filled with rice from Thailand at an affordable price for many.

Tinubu has lifted import restrictions, but now the shortage of foreign currency and the falling value of the naira has made bringing in rice trickier.



By Correspondent James Lan-ka, Moshi

US-BASED Julie Zolfo has donated some humanitarian supports to the needy children at the Moshi Kids Centre before she embarked on a 6-day Mount Kilimanjaro climb with ZARA Tours, aiming at promoting the country's tourism sector.

Zolfo, a world traveler and Amazon bestselling author, has joined the Goodwill Ambassador for tourism in the US, Macon Dunnagan in his 51st special Mount Kilimanjaro Climb to its highest peak through Rongai route from 12 to 17 February this year.

Her unique approach to personal development and empowerment, which combines her 30 years of extensive work in corporate talent development with transformational disciplines and human potential expertise, sets her apart in the travel transformational and personal growth industry.

Through her incorporation of life coaching, emotional intelligence, astrology, forest bathing, and adventure travel, Julie offers a comprehensive and holistic approach to assisting women over 40 to boldly step out of their comfort zones.

This approach not only empowers her clients but also guides them to surpass self-imposed limitations, enabling them to lead a life that's not only fulfilling but also expansive and enriching.

Julie's overarching mission and life's work is to ignite the spark that encourages people to view each day as an ongoing adventure. She emphasizes that even the seemingly ordinary experiences can hold tremendous value, rivaling the significance of traditional travel. This shift in perspective has the po-



US-based Julie Zolfo (left), poses for a photo with the coordinator of the Moshi Kids Centre, Razack Razack, earlier this week at the centre before she started her six-day Mount Kilimanjaro climb.

US-based astrologer climbs Mt Kilimanjaro

tential to enhance various aspects of life, including careers, relationships, spirituality, and personal and emotional well-being.

Basing herself in the picturesque mountain town of Bend, Oregon,

aligns perfectly with Julie's philosophy of embracing the outdoors and exploring nature. Her physical environment serves as a supportive backdrop for her private coaching, group seminars, and upcoming

travel adventures.

Speaking at the Moshi Kids Centre after her donations to needy children, Julie Zolfo explained: "This Christmas my family decided instead of presents that we would

each pick a charity that we would donate to. My charity was a Moshi kids center here in Tanzania. I believe as a traveler it's important to give back to the places that we travel either financially or through

making small contributions that make a huge impact."

She further added that, apart from climbing Mount Kilimanjaro for the first time this year, she will also have a special expedition next year to commemorate International Women's Day as well as to promote Mount Kilimanjaro base climb for those who cannot make it to the top.

"This is an exclusive women's only adventure in celebration of International Women's Day. Join a tribe of extraordinary women as we hike Kilimanjaro, explore the wild and untamed beauty of Tanzania, and weave together connections that will stand the test of time. Beyond being a mere trip, this is a sisterhood scaling new heights together," Zolfo wrote in one of her social media.

For his part, the Coordinator of the Moshi Kds Centre, Razack Razack explained that, thanked Julie Zolfo for her donation, adding that, they started extending help to needy children, the underprivileged and the marginalized to support and inspire their eagerness to study and work for a better future.

"This moment intensified when we found that there were many such underprivileged children who needed help with food, shelter, clothing and education." Her further explained adding that,

"Alongside learning, they get the opportunity of attaining other support services that can possibly be rendered whilst we keep creating a safer world for as many children as possible through education and we now run shelter homes, schools and a reasonable mess that helps such needy young people. We also have our helpline offices spread throughout the country so one can approach us anytime they need help."

Scotiabank's global banking and markets chief to depart

Ottawa

CANADA lender Bank of Nova Scotia said on Wednesday its chief of global banking and markets, Jake Lawrence, is leaving to take on a role at financial services firm Power Corporation of Canada.

A two-decade veteran of the bank, Lawrence helped expand Scotiabank's banking and markets business in the United States. He will be a strategic adviser to the bank until he leaves on March 15, Scotiabank said.

Lawrence's departure adds to a shake-up that the Canadian lender started under CEO Scott Thomson last year. The bank has also been grappling with industry-wide fears of a surge in bad loans as elevated interest rates increase chances of defaults by borrowers.



Jake Lawrence, the outgoing Co-Group Head, Global Banking and Markets, Scotiabank

Stock market today: Stocks bounce back after CPI blow

New York

US stock futures rose on Wednesday, looking to find a footing after hotter-than-expected inflation data drove a selloff and dashed hopes for interest-rate cuts before the summer.

Dow Jones Industrial Average (^DJI) futures added 0.2 percent, signaling a bounce back for the blue-chip index from a 500-point drop and its worst day since March 2022. Futures on the S&P 500 (^GSPC) put on roughly 0.4 percent, while those on the tech-heavy Nasdaq 100 (^NDX) jumped 0.5 percent – also on the heels of sharp declines.

Calm is settling in after the surprise consumer inflation print spooked the market. Investors are coming to grips with the prospect of the Federal Reserve holding fire on rate cuts until later in the year – and a potential "no landing" for the US economy.

Shares in Microsoft (MSFT) and Apple (AAPL) were recovering somewhat in

premarket after the rate-sensitive tech megacaps sank in the stock rout. Meanwhile, the 10-year Treasury yield (^TNX) pulled back slightly from the previous day's jump to trade around 4.29 percent.

Comments by Fed officials Austan Goolsbee and Michael Barr in their appearances later in the day could provide more grist for the ever-present debate on rate timing.

A new wave of earnings reports also could deliver some impetus, with Cisco (CSCO), Kraft Heinz (KHC), and Warren Buffett-linked Occidental (OXY) among the big hitters on the list.

Investors were gripped by the wild fallout from a typo in Lyft's (LYFT) financial update late Tuesday. Shares in the ride-hailing company initially rocketed 67 percent, but the rally lost steam after Lyft corrected an error in its statement that boosted its profit outlook. The stock remained up a more modest 20 percent in premarket trading.

Agencies

Lack of finance restricts youth from tapping potential in agrifood system

By Guardian Reporter

WHILST agri-food sector holds significant untapped potential to deliver jobs and livelihoods for the youth population, lack of access to friendly loans and finance services, is seen as one of the bottlenecks preventing them to explore the said ventures.

Speaking yesterday at an event gracing the report in Kampala, Uganda, Rhoda Tumusiime, Malabo Montpellier panel Member said youth financial inclusion is a complex and interwoven challenge, and that lack of access to finance is one of many challenges preventing their participation in agri-food system.

Tumusiime noted on the report highlights of how 11 million young people join the African labour market each year, yet only 3.7 million jobs are being created.

"The report highlights that innovative strategies to attract and support Africa's youth to succeed with the right skills, technology, and policy environment, would boost the pace of employment creation to meet the growing labor demands in the decades ahead," she said.

According to her, agri-food systems provide an important channel for solving the unemployment and underemployment challenges facing African youth and strengthening them will reduce poverty and bol-



One of beneficiaries of the USAID-funded Advancing Youth project meant to empower youth in accessing funds to start or improve businesses. Photo: Daniel Msirikale/USAID Tanzania

ster food security on the continent.

"With the right innovative policies, African governments can stimulate new employment and entrepreneurial opportunities for young people along agribusiness value chains, while equipping and incentivizing youths to join the sector, the authors found.

They added: "The report recommends policies to help create these opportunities, including targeted education, training, enterprise creation and growth support, and technology infrastructure."

The report which has reviewed policies that create youth opportunities within the agri-food sector, cited successful and emerging interventions being implemented across the continent to empower youth and fa-

cilitate a thriving environment for their leadership and engagement in sustainable food systems transformation.

It identifies opportunities to unlock decent jobs and livelihoods along the agri-food value chain, from crop breeding and research and development to harvesting, processing, and trade.

The authors make a critical recommendation for African governments to diversify education and training programs to develop and upgrade skills that facilitate entrepreneurship and employment for young Africans in agriculture and agribusiness.

In Ghana, for instance, initiatives such as the 'Youth Employment Agency Bill' and the 'National Youth Policy' were cited as examples of efforts to

upskill and support youth to enter the agri-food sector.

As part of its plan to industrialize agriculture, increase food security and employment opportunities, and lower poverty rates, the country launched the youth in agriculture program (YIAP), which deployed youth-focused initiatives to change the negative perception of farmers as uneducated, unskilled laborers with low economic returns.

The authors found that youth-focused institutions and programs in Uganda, are providing young people with marketable skills in agri-food processing and product development, ICT, agricultural mechanization, and entrepreneurship.

To further support digital transformation, the Uganda government

launched the digital skills acceleration program and the digital transformation program, which aim to increase access and usage of ICT by vulnerable groups, including small-scale farmers.

In Zambia, the government set up the skills development levy to mobilize resources that can be invested in youth empowerment, notably in strengthening the infrastructure of technical and vocational training institutions.

The report also looks at policy interventions in Zimbabwe, highlighting the innovation hubs in higher education institutions that provide technical and research-based solutions for skills enhancement in the country's labor force.

For her part, Dr Dorothy Okello, Dean, School of Engineering, Makerere University said: "Attracting youth to the agrifood sector and enabling them to play an active role in shaping African food systems must go hand-in-hand with leveraging the potential of new technologies for the industry."

Dr Okello, who doubles as Malabo Montpellier Panel Member further said "Harnessing the entrepreneurial spirit of Africa's youth alongside developments such as AI and emerging technologies while investing in transferable skills training in areas such as computer programming and embedded systems, data science, and business studies, will maximize the potential of young people to advance Africa's agri-food and economic transformation."

Different ways banks can protect their consumers-II

LAST week, I argued that the Financial Consumer Protection (FCP) Regulations 2019 promotes transparency and financial consumer protection in the banking industry.

In addition, the FCP Regulations 2019 is there to promote and advance the economic welfare of consumers in Tanzania through a fair, accessible, and efficient consumer marketplace.

Also, I argued that strong consumer protection is key to ensuring that expanded access to financial services benefits consumers, enabling them to make well-informed decisions on how best to use financial services, building trust in the formal financial sector, and contributing to healthy and

competitive financial markets. Many consumers of banking services find it difficult to evaluate the quality of banking information provided to them hence the consumers may be subjected to opportunistic behaviour and excessive prices by the banks since they possess considerably more information than them.

To combat this information failure, and achieve the purpose and goals of the FCP Regulations 2019, there must be a positive collaboration between the regulator and the banks in which each side has to know its responsibility.

For banks, last week I shared two things that banks should do to protect consumers and ensure compliance with the Financial Consumer Protection Regulations 2019; com-



Kelvin Mkwawa

mitment to change the existing culture towards consumer protection and know the rules of the regulation all the time to avoid being subject to fines and lawsuits.

This week I will share two more things that banks should

do to protect consumers: Effective Usage of Data to Collect Information

The best way to understand your business is through data. Every bank should be collecting data from every customer interaction then, aggregating, and analyzing it in timely reports that enable management to make sound business decisions.

Through the data, banks can identify negative trends and sources of complaints. Hence banks will be able to find the root causes of those complaints and solve them.

If a customer complains about anything, management should know about it quickly and resolve the issue or at least provide the customer with an update on the issue within a bank's acceptable

timeline. Also, banks need to create conducive environments for complaints to be attended to and resolved quickly.

Develop Efficient Processes

Without an efficient central process, complying with the FCP Regulations 2019 might be difficult as each line(unit) of business within the bank will naturally interpret FCP Regulations 2019 rules in a way that makes sense for its unit's needs.

Normally, regulations directed at a particular line of business often affect the entire organization but, in this case, FCP rules are not directed at particular business lines as every unit within a bank can affect the consumer in one way or another.

Banks need to ensure that

FCP rules are accessible to all business units thus, the units can organize themselves to ensure they comply with the rules one hundred percent (100 percent).

I understand that it is not easy to keep pace with consumer protection rules and regulations as are being updated regularly, it is clear that the bank with efficient processes in place will have a better chance to comply with FCP Regulations 2019

In conclusion, the FCP Regulations 2019 are good for the health of the banking industry. The regulation will force banks to promote consumer education and empowerment of employees.

Also, the regulation will force the banks to ensure all employees who interact with

consumers display good behaviors and deal professionally when providing service to existing or prospective consumers at all times.

Banks' employees must be competent, efficient, and professional in discharging their duties and providing the banking services they are entrusted to provide. It is important to note that banks can't afford to comply.

Banks that aren't on top of the FCP Regulations 2019 and don't make swift business adjustments to comply are subjecting themselves to fines, reputational damage, and potentially expensive litigation.

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Financial inclusion: Navigating challenges, building on innovation and hunting as pack

By Godwin Jaha Semunyu

THE landscape of financial inclusion in Tanzania is evolving, with conducive environment, strategic partnerships and innovative solutions, shaping a more accessible and inclusive financial ecosystem.

Recently, I had the privilege of attending the second Financial Inclusion symposium organized by the Tanzania Bankers Association, offering insights into the industry's best practices and the path forward.

Personal Narratives:

As I delved into discussions on financial inclusion, memories surfaced, highlighting the challenges of school fee payments during my secondary school days in Singida. My parents' frequent relocations for their civil service roles meant navigating long bus journeys with cash.

To ensure safety, my mother, Odilia, devised a clever solution - she made me wear two pairs of jeans, one beneath carrying the cash and the other on top for added safety. She would then hand-sow the inner jeans' pockets to prevent accidental loss. To this day, my childhood friends think I had a thing for baggy jeans, not realizing it was a practical solution to cash in transit. We all have such stories. Some are best kept in the past.

Also, as a newcomer in the banking sector in the 2000s, we faced the challenge of emerging



mobile money services, threatening the transactional banking business.

Amidst rumors of job insecurity, our CEO once shared a memorable perspective: "You must see MNOs as potential partners, not adversaries; banking is no longer a place-it is a situation,"-stressing with his thick Chagga

accent. This mindset shift drove us to go out and explore becoming the primary bankers for MNOs.

Fast forward over a decade and a half later, and the Tanzanian banking sector is at an all-time high while mobile money transactions are synonymously reaching unprecedented

heights. Imagine combined efforts.

Key figures at the TBA Financial Inclusion symposium, including BOT Governor Emmanuel Tutuba and TBA Chairman Theobald Sabi, who doubles as NBC Bank MD, highlighted the pivotal role of technology and collaboration in advancing the financial inclusion agenda.

Innovation, Digitization, and Stakeholders' Collaboration:

Tanzania's remarkable growth in the Wakala network, internet penetration, and mobile phone usage is pivotal in expanding access to financial services.

The FinScope survey of 2023 reveals positive financial inclusion statistics, indicating a rise from 65 percent in 2017 to 76 percent, with banking penetration at 22.2 percent, painting a brighter future.

However, challenges persist, including a 9 percent gender gap and a 19 percent rural-urban divide, as highlighted in the report, emphasizing the need for specialized products and digitization to address these issues. Yet, the paramount importance of collaborative efforts among all stakeholders, hunting as a pack, must be emphasized. Inclusive Tanzania is possible.

Godwin Semunyu is the Head of Corporate Affairs at NBC Bank (T). These are his personal views. He can be reached through: godwingodizo@gmail.com.

Listed crypto firms hitch a ride with rising bitcoin

Washington

SHARES of US listed cryptocurrency companies gained between 7 percent and 13 percent before the bell on Wednesday, powered by bitcoin crossing the \$1 trillion market value for the first time in more than two years amid improving investor sentiment.

Bitcoin prices have been steadily gaining ground following the U.S. securities regulator's approval of the first spot bitcoin exchange-traded funds (ETFs) last month.

The launch of ETFs has been touted as a game-changer for the industry, already known for its appeal to retail traders, since investors can now have an exposure to bitcoin without directly holding the asset.

"We think the best days of bitcoin are ahead," Bernstein analyst Gautam Chhugani said.

"The ETF has added a sense of legitimacy, so far missing in the crypto sector. We expect many of these new bitcoin enthusiasts to allocate capital in the coming days and we think bitcoin ETFs or bitcoin miners could benefit."

Crypto exchange Coinbase's stock jumped about 7 percent, while miners Riot Platforms and Bitfarms gained nearly 8 percent and 11 percent, respectively.

Bitcoin's market value crossed \$1 trillion for the first time since Nov. 2021, according to data platform CoinMarketCap.com.

Last valued at \$1.08 trillion, it is worth more than twice the market value of JPMorgan Chase, the biggest U.S. bank, and was closing in on Meta Platforms' \$1.17 trillion.

The largest cryptocurrency was trading up 3.7 percent at \$51,300.



FILE PHOTO: Illustration of bitcoin

CAPITAL RADIO

RATIBA YA VIPINDI JUMATATU - JUMAPILI

MONDAY TIME PROGRAMME	TUESDAY TIME PROGRAMME	WEDNESDAY TIME PROGRAMME	THURSDAY TIME PROGRAMME	FRIDAY TIME PROGRAMME	SATURDAY TIME PROGRAMME	SUNDAY TIME PROGRAMME
05:00-09:00HRS MORNING JAM 09:00-13:00HRS LETE RAHA 13:00-14:00HRS DW-RADIO 14:00-16:00HRS CLUB 101 16:00-18:00HRS DALA DALA 18:00-18:10HRS HABARI 18:10-20:00HRS BOZOUK TIME 20:00-21:00HRS HALI HALISI 21:00-22:00HRS SPORTS 22:00-05:00HRS MUZIKI (MCHAGANGANYIKO)	05:00-09:00HRS MORNING JAM 09:00-13:00HRS LETE RAHA 13:00-14:00HRS DW-RADIO 14:00-16:00HRS CLUB 101 16:00-18:00HRS DALA DALA 18:00-18:10HRS HABARI 18:10-21:00HRS BOZOUK TIME 21:00-22:00HRS SPORTS 22:00-05:00HRS MUZIKI (MCHAGANGANYIKO)	05:00-09:00HRS MORNING JAM 09:00-13:00HRS LETE RAHA 13:00-14:00HRS DW-RADIO 14:00-16:00HRS CLUB 101 16:00-18:00HRS DALA DALA 18:00-18:10HRS HABARI 18:10-21:00HRS BOZOUK TIME 21:00-22:00HRS SPORTS 22:00-05:00HRS MUZIKI (MCHAGANGANYIKO)	05:00-09:00HRS MORNING JAM 09:00-13:00HRS LETE RAHA 13:00-14:00HRS DW-RADIO 14:00-16:00HRS CLUB 101 16:00-18:00HRS DALA DALA 18:00-18:10HRS HABARI 18:10-20:00HRS BOZOUK TIME 20:00-21:00HRS SPORTS 21:00-23:00HRS MALUMBANO YA HOJA 22:00-05:00HRS MUZIKI (MCHAGANGANYIKO)	05:00-09:00HRS MORNING JAM 09:00-13:00HRS LETE RAHA 13:00-14:00HRS DW-RADIO 14:00-16:00HRS CLUB 101 16:00-18:00HRS DALA DALA 18:00-18:10HRS HABARI 18:10-20:00HRS BOZOUK TIME 20:00-21:00HRS SPORTS 21:00-23:00HRS KIPIMA JOTO 22:00-05:00HRS MUZIKI (MCHAGANGANYIKO)	07:30-10:00HRS DK 90 DUNIANI 10:00-11:00HRS KADOGOO 11:00-13:00HRS BONGO HITS 13:00-14:00HRS DW RADIO 14:00-16:00HRS ZAIDI YA 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



CAPITAL RADIO

A 'clerical error' in Lyft triggered 67 pct stock rise

New York

LYFT Inc. projected adjusted earnings as much as 11 percent higher than analysts' estimates, and reported bookings ahead of expectations. And then there was the outlook for profitability: Margins, the ride-hailing provider said in an initial press release Tuesday, were set to expand this year by an eye-watering 500 basis points. Shares surged, jumping 67 percent in after-hours trading.

But the projection was off. Way off.

Less than an hour after issuing the statement, Lyft Chief Financial Officer Erin Brewer joined a call with analysts and said the company is actually expecting margins to expand by 50 basis points – not 500 – acknowledging, when asked by an analyst, that the press release was incorrect.

A company spokesperson later attributed the mistake to a "clerical error," and the company eventually corrected its statement and regulatory filings.

Shares almost immediately gave up gains. By the time premarket trading opened on Wednesday morning, its rally had pared to about 20 percent.

It's a "black-eye moment" for Lyft, said Dan Ives, an analyst at Wedbush Securities, "a debacle of epic proportions." He said by email that he'd "never seen an error like this in my almost 25 years on the Street."

The mistake overshadowed what was otherwise a solid beat on profit and bookings projections that signaled a years-long effort to boost ridership and challenge Uber Technologies Inc. may be paying off.

In fact, both Lyft and Uber delivered strong earnings reports this quarter, suggesting continued growth in overall rider demand since a nationwide plunge during the pandemic. The two have spent fiercely to recruit and retain enough drivers to meet the rise in orders.

Lyft Chief Executive Officer David Risher, who took the helm less than a year ago, has focused the operations on customer satisfaction and has emphasized a return to the basics in an effort to close the gap with Uber. Lyft has spent millions of dollars to lure drivers but has had a hard time boosting its rider base.

"Lyft clearly did one thing right – it corrected the error quickly and decisively," said Brad Foster, a partner specializing in securities litigation at corporate law firm Haynes Boone. "The reality is that people make mistakes, and mistakes are not securities fraud."

Gross Bookings

In the fourth quarter, Lyft said gross bookings jumped 17 percent from a year earlier to \$3.72 billion, ahead of estimates for \$3.67 billion. Revenue was \$1.22 billion, up 4% from a year earlier and in line with projections. And it projected adjusted earnings of as much as \$55 million in the first three months of the year, topping analysts' estimates of \$49.5 million.

Lyft said the number of active riders on its platform increased 10 percent in the fourth quarter from a year earlier to 22.4 million. Last year, Lyft had more than 40 million riders, the highest annual ridership in its history.

"We've entered 2024 with a lot of momentum and a clear focus on operational excellence," CFO Brewer said, positioning the company to "drive meaningful margin expansion and our first full-year of positive free cash flow."

But Lyft still lags behind Uber. According to market research firm YipitData, the company has held around 30 percent of the US rideshare market compared with 70 percent for Uber since the second quarter of 2022. Last week, Uber reported its full year of profit as a public company and said trips rose 24 percent in the quarter to 2.6 billion.

Stabilizing its market share is a critical first step for Lyft in building investors' confidence "in the long-term story," analysts at Jefferies Capital Management LLC wrote before the company's results were released. Lyft said adjusted earnings before interest, tax, depreciation and amortization were \$66.6 million in the fourth quarter, beating the \$56 million estimated by analysts. It reported a net loss of \$26.3 million.

Lyft has been making efforts to recruit more drivers and riders to its platform. One project that's gained traction is the Women+ Connect program, which matches women and non-binary drivers and riders. Since the initiative's launch in September, 67 percent of eligible drivers have opted in and kept the feature on 99 percent of the time, Lyft said.

The company launched in-app video ads in the fourth quarter, and its media revenue in that period exceeded the level achieved in all of 2022, it said, without giving an exact amount.

And, like many areas of the US economy, Lyft also saw a Taylor Swift bump. High-attendance stadium events such as concerts by Swift and Beyoncé, the US Open and football games helped boost rides by 35 percent, Lyft said.

As part of efforts to retain drivers and promote pay transparency, Lyft earlier this month said drivers will earn at least 70 percent of the amount that riders pay each week, excluding external fees.

Bloomberg

Elon Musk wants to take away Tesla's incorporation from Delaware to Texas

Washington

ELON Musk wants to get away from Delaware as fast as he can. It will take some convincing to get others in the corporate world to follow.

For roughly the last century, Delaware has been the dominant place for companies to file their articles of incorporation because of its corporate-friendly laws, specialized business courts, and ease of filing company documents.

The state likes to tout that it is home to more than two-thirds of all Fortune 500 companies, and earns billions each year from the companies domiciled there.

Places like Nevada, Texas, South Dakota, North Carolina, Washington, and Wyoming that want some of this same revenue are trying to chip away at Delaware's dominance with their own business-friendly incorporation strategies.

Those recruiting efforts got a boost last month from the world's richest man, Musk, who advocated for Nevada and Texas after a federal judge in Delaware invalidated his \$56 billion Tesla pay package.

"Never incorporate your company in the state of Delaware," Musk said on his social media platform X, adding that "I recommend incorporating in Nevada or Texas if you prefer shareholders to decide matters."

Musk pledged to move Tesla (TSLA) to Texas from Delaware if shareholders sign off on the move. He also filed to move incorporation of his private brain chip startup, Neuralink, from Delaware to Nevada.

'Dexit'

He is not the only one. Other companies have either decamped for other states in recent years, or tried to do so. One that made the move to Nevada in 2018 referred to its exit as a "Dexit."

It will be a challenge to loosen Delaware's grip on where many



Elon Musk wants to take Tesla to Texas. REUTERS/Gonzalo Fuentes/File Photo (Reuters / Reuters)

companies file their initial paperwork.

The state added 58,000 new incorporations in 2022, the most recent year for which information was available from Delaware. That was down 6% from 2021, although still up 41% since 2017.

One other measure from the US Census Bureau showed that business applications from corporations in Delaware did drop 8.5% between December 2022 and December 2023, according to IRS filings, after rising in 2021 and 2022.

One company, TripAdvisor (TRIP), is finding it difficult to leave Delaware. After a majority of shareholders approved an incorporation change from Delaware to Nevada last year, some shareholders of the on-line travel company sued to block it.

They alleged that the CEO of TripAdvisor's parent company, Greg Maffei, sought out Nevada to reduce his potential

for liability claims. Maffei is a controlling shareholder of that parent company, Liberty Media, which also controls voting power over TripAdvisor.

TripsAdvisor has said in a filing that the move would save money on taxes and potentially provide "greater protection from unmeritorious litigation for directors and officers."

Charles Elson, founding director of the Weinberg Center for Corporate Governance at the University of Delaware, doubts that other states will be able to unseat Delaware in the near future.

"How are they going to do it?" he said.

Delaware has a significant upper hand, he added, because it has "a very smart bar, a very smart judiciary, and a very fair judiciary, with lots of experience in this area. That's why both shareholders and managers appreciate it, because it's fair and balanced."

Delaware's dominance

There was a time when it wasn't Delaware on top. It was New Jersey. In fact, Delaware changed its corporate laws in 1899 so it could be more like the Garden State.

It got its chance to pass New Jersey in the decades following 1913, when New Jersey lawmakers passed legislation, later signed into law by then-governor Governor Woodrow Wilson, restricting mergers and forbidding the chartering of any new holding companies.

The number of corporations incorporated in New Jersey "declined precipitously" and Delaware "stood ready to serve as the state of incorporation for the many companies fleeing New Jersey," according to a history of Delaware's business courts authored by a former vice chancellor for the Delaware Court of Chancery and a former judge on the Delaware Superior Court.

The state's Court of Chancery, originally established in 1792, became the go-to forum to resolve internal corporate controversies. And this became a big source of revenue for the state. The taxes and fees generated by those businesses brought Delaware about \$2 billion in 2022.

But other states have been chipping away at Delaware's standing in recent years by creating their own business courts.

Take Texas, where Musk wants to take Tesla. It passed a new law last year that establishes a set of business-focused courts in the hope that it can attract more companies to incorporate there. Those courts are slated to open in September.

Until then, its business cases will be assigned to elected state court judges who may or may not have the experience level of Delaware's corporate-savvy Chancery Court.

That could be good. It could be bad," said James Spindler, a corporate and securities law professor for University of Tex-

as School of Law. "The good aspect of it is that perhaps you'll see Texas judges being less willing to substitute their own judgment for that of corporate management."

On the other hand, he said, Texas courts may not be as seasoned at weeding out spurious cases, which could then end up in front of a jury.

"That may add some risks and some lack of some lack of predictability."

Southern Methodist University law professor Christina Stautter said the legal standards applied to disputes in Texas's new business courts would be similar to those in Delaware, because Texas' corporate law follows the Model Business Corporations Act. That act is a general statute drafted by the American Bar Association that largely reflects Delaware law, and that more than 30 states have adopted.

"At some point, we will have a body of law that is going to be looking like the Delaware chancery court," Stautter said. "The big difference for Tesla, or for any company, is about the judges hearing the cases."

For Tesla, however, multiple hurdles still stand in the way of a move. The first is shareholder approval and the second is the potential for any legal challenges from shareholders who aren't happy about the move.

"Even if they approve, the move could still be considered a self-dealing transaction," University of Virginia Law professor Michal Barzuza said.

Self dealing, Barzuza said, is a type of legal challenge that shareholders can bring to oppose a transaction they see as benefiting corporate executives, and not the corporation itself.

Texas Gov. Greg Abbott has made it clear where he stands on Musk's question about where Tesla should be incorporated.

"Elon, it's over," he said on X. "The election desk is declaring a landslide victory for Texas."

Agencies

This is how the Bank of England spends £20m to keep historical building intact



The Bank of England is spending £7m on vents alone PHOTO: SOPA IMAGES/LIGHTROCKET VIA GETTY IMAGES

London

The Bank of England's Grade I listed building comes with a steep maintenance bill, FN analysis shows £7m spent on vents, £3.7m on water pipes and £1.9m on cabling.

These are just some of the bills the Bank of England has racked up as it tries to make its 18th-century Threadneedle Street building fit for the modern age.

Since September 2023, the bank has either awarded, published, or put out for tender at least £20m-worth of maintenance-related con-

tracts, according to a Financial News analysis of its contract portal.

These include a five-year, £5m deal to "provide general building works" ranging from surveys and designs to construction management and mechanical and electrical installation, £104,000 on emergency heating pipework replacement and £123,000 on boiler replacement.

Just to clean the Bank of England costs £1.7m a year, according to an extension to that deal with South Benfleet-based Lewis & Graves Partnership published in September.

"Threadneedle Street is a historic building with Grade I listed status," a Bank of England spokesperson said. "As a result it requires regular maintenance to ensure it is safe, secure and fit for purpose for staff and visitors. All maintenance contracts that we award will aim to achieve value for money through a fair and open procurement process."

Keeping up appearances

Once inside, going through the Bank's sweeping glass security gates brings a modern touch to the heritage.

But behind the scenes, there is plenty of work going on patch up old infrastructure.

Trying to keep the Bank's unique character intact doesn't come cheap. The bank's famous brass doors cost nearly £90,000 a year to maintain, according to previous contract documents.

Threadneedle Street is a Grade I listed building. The deals signed since September show the cost that status comes with: The Bank is spending £186,000 on "Grade I listed building facade surveys" and £46,000 on "architectural design services and heritage support" from Donald Insall Associates, a Mayfair-based architect.

"Threadneedle Street is a Grade I listed building, requiring ongoing conservation," the contract notes.

Other upgrades include a £245,000 deal for "refurbishment of [a] ventilation unit in the Bank's Threadneedle Street building" including "works to the associated building management system controls".

There is also a £447,000 bill for lift maintenance and £94,000 on key switch installation.

The existing ventilation system was last installed in 1987, according to one contract, which notes the poten-

tial asbestos risks of such a historic building.

"The Bank has robust and clear asbestos policies in place that help protect the safety of staff and contractors across our sites," the spokesperson added.

However, efforts to modernise are arguably more important than they ever have been. The Bank has expanded from around 4,400 to nearly 5,000 staff over the past three years, according to its annual accounts, placing more of a strain on physical premises.

Earlier in February, a fire broke out next to the Old Bailey, another iconic City landmark dating back to the 16th century. An apparent electrical fault was also the cause of a small blaze that hit the Royal Exchange, just across the road from the Bank, in 2021.

In 2019, an investigation found audio feeds of Bank of England news conferences were sold on to hedge funds by a third party, potentially giving them a head start on other viewers.

The Bank published a new £100,000 contract in January for "maintenance and resources to assist with the Bank's audio-visual equipment including press conference facilities".

Financial News

WORLD

Israeli operations in Rafah could lead to slaughter, UN warns

GENEVA/AMMAN

MILITARY operations in Rafah could lead to slaughter in Gaza and put a fragile humanitarian operation at death's door, UN Undersecretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Martin Griffiths warned on Tuesday.

In a statement issued in Geneva, he noted the warnings from the international community against the dangerous consequences of a ground invasion in Rafah in southern Gaza, saying that the government of Israel cannot continue to ignore these calls.

He said people in Rafah and the rest of Gaza are victims of an assault that is unparalleled in its intensity, brutality and scope.

Stressing that humanitarian workers have been doing the near-impossible to assist people in need for more than four months, he warned that the humanitarian workers "lack the safety guarantees, the aid supplies and the staff capacity to keep this operation afloat".

The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) on Tuesday cited the Ministry of Health (MoH) in Gaza as reporting that another 133 Palestinians were killed, and 162 Palestinians were injured, mostly in Rafah and Khan Younis, by Israeli attacks within 24 hours.

Independent UNRWA review to start

Also on Tuesday, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees (UNRWA) said countries that suspended their support to the agency should reconsider their decisions, and avoid forcing the agency to reduce its operations in March, including its operations in the Gaza Strip.

Juliette Touma, the director of communications at UNRWA, said in the Jordanian capital Amman that the suspension of funding by 16 donor countries, mostly Western, could deprive the agency of more than 51 percent of its expected income for the year 2024, endangering vital humanitarian response



A man stands amidst the debris of his bombed home in Rafah, southern Gaza Strip, on Tuesday. AP

in Gaza and throughout the region, the state-run Petra news agency reported.

Touma warned of a famine in northern Gaza, which is barely receiving aid, "after the closure of the Kerem Shalom crossing for six days", pointing out that there are many restrictions on aid entry. Before the conflict, she added, 500 trucks entered the area, and now only 100 trucks do so at best.

Regarding the deteriorating situation in Rafah in the southern Gaza Strip, Touma said: "We need at least a humanitarian ceasefire, and the fear in Rafah now is continuously escalating amid the presence of more than 1.4 million displaced persons with the absence of infrastructure and a saddening humanitarian situation."

Meanwhile, UNRWA chief Philippe Lazzarini said the Israeli government's cooperation has "utmost importance" for an independent panel's review of the agency.

Lazzarini said the independent panel's review on UNRWA will begin on Wednesday. He called on all par-

ties to actively cooperate with the review.

"It is of utmost importance that the government of Israel also cooperate" so that the independent panel could get information "more than the allegations", Lazzarini said.

He also expressed concern about the humanitarian crisis in southern Gaza's Rafah area, where people are in fear of a possible "large-scale military operation". The local people were asked to move, he said. "But the question is, where to move?"

Israel accused 12 UNRWA employees of having participated in the Hamas's attack on southern Israel on Oct 7, 2023. Following the allegations, 16 donor countries, including the United States, Britain, and Canada, have announced their decision to suspend their funding for the agency.

Last week, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres appointed an independent panel to review the operations of the agency. The final report of the independent panel is expected to be completed and published in late April. **Agencies**

Putin signs law on confiscation of property for disseminating fake news about Russian army

MOSCOW

RUSSIAN President Vladimir Putin signed a new law that calls for the confiscation of property as punishment for disseminating fake news about Russia's armed forces as well as committing crimes detrimental to national security.



The text of the law has been published on the government's official website for legal information.

The law amends the relevant Russian Criminal Code (RCC) provisions and expands the list of crimes punishable by means of the confiscation of property.

The list will now include crimes under RCC Article 207.3 ("Public Dissemination of Patently False Information about the Use of the Russian Armed Forces or about Russian State Bodies Exercising Their Authority") and Article 280.4 ("Public Calls to Carry Out Activities Directed Against State Security"). The law specifies that this involves crimes committed for personal gain.

However, according to the document, even if someone is convicted under the aforementioned articles, not all of their money, assets and property would be subject to confiscation, but only those gained through criminal means or used for activities aimed against Russia's national security.

The law says that activities aimed against Russia's national security pertain to the commission of at least one crime described in the RCC articles covering mercenary activities, genocide, desertion from military service, insubordination, bribe-giving and bribe-taking, and racketeering. The list includes over 30 RCC articles in total.

In addition, the law expands the list of RCC articles that provide for stripping convicted individuals of special, military and honorary titles, ranks and state awards.

These articles address, in particular, the dissemination of fake news about the Russian army; discrediting the army; making calls for extremism; violations of Russia's territorial integrity; activities aimed against national security; calls for imposing sanctions on Russia and Russian nationals; rehabilitating Nazism; and assisting in the implementation of decisions made by international organizations of which Russia is not a member, as well as by foreign government agencies.

The law will take effect ten days after its official publication.

Visa-free travel to boost tourism for China, Thailand

BANGKOK

RED lanterns are hung high over Yaowarat Road, where Chinatown in the Thai capital of Bangkok is located, and shops are well prepared, as it is a golden opportunity to cater to Chinese tourists coming here to spend their Lunar New Year holidays.

"Bangkok's Chinatown hosts a variety of activities for the Chinese New Year, and we can feel the auspicious and festive atmosphere," said Wang Xuanyu, 36-year-old, who came from Beijing and chose to spend the Chinese New Year holiday in Thailand.

The trip was very convenient, and the entry process was very smooth, she said.

In order to boost the economy, the Thai government has granted Chinese citizens a temporary visa waiver since Sept 25, 2023.

In late January this year, China and Thailand signed an agreement on mutual visa exemption, effective on March 1.

With the signing of the agreement, the number of Chinese tourists visiting Thailand has significantly increased.

Thailand's Ministry of Tourism and Sports predicted that approximately 8 million Chinese tourists will take trips in Thailand in 2024, bringing in approximately 320 billion baht (approximately \$8.9 billion).

Tourism and Sports Minister Sudawan Wangsuphakkijkosol said Thailand was expecting to welcome nearly 1 million foreign tourists on Feb 7-15, of which about 180,000 are from China.

The Thai tourism industry has already prepared to welcome Chinese tourists. "With the signing of the agreement, inquiries from Chinese guests have significantly increased, and it is expected that there will be a surge in Chinese tourists," a hotel manager from the coastal city Hua Hin told Xinhua.

"Mutual visa exemption has lowered the threshold and cost of tourism, facilitating exchanges between the peoples of the two countries and injecting strong impetus into the recovery and prosperity of Thai-



Performers dance during an event to celebrate the Chinese Lunar New Year at Chinatown in Bangkok, Thailand, Feb 10, 2024. (PHOTO / XINHUA)

land's tourism industry," said Chanapan Kaewklachaiyawuth, vice president of the Thai Chinese Tourism Alliance Association.

"Tourism resources of Thailand and China are complementary. China is one of the nearest ice and snow tourism destinations to the Thai people. The signing of the agreement on mutual visa exemption will further encourage Thai tourists to travel to China," said Chanapan.

He added that the agreement will surely pro-

mote the prosperity of the tourism industries of Thailand and China, and enhance cultural exchanges between the two sides.

Pat, a 38-year-old Bangkok resident, said that her parents have traveled to China with a tour group before, but she has not been to China and would love to see China's beautiful scenery.

"After mutual exemption takes effect, Thai people will no longer have to apply for visas, which could save time and money," Pat said. **Xinhua**

I guarantee to make India third largest economy in my third term - PM Modi

ABU DHABI

EXUDING confidence of returning to power in the forthcoming Lok Sabha elections, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said that he has given a "guarantee" to make India the third largest economy in his third term.

Highlighting the multiple accomplishments achieved by the country, the PM said every Indian has the goal of making India a developed nation by 2047.

Addressing the 'Ahlam Modi' event, PM Modi said, "I have so much faith in the potential of each and every Indian, weighing on which, Modi has given a guarantee that in his third term he will make India the third largest economy. Modi ki guarantee, yani guarantee, pura hone ki guarantee."

"Today, the goal of every Indian is to make India a developed country by 2047," he added.

PM Modi highlighted that India is the first country to reach Mars in the first attempt, and land on the south pole of the moon. He also said that India is number one in fintech adoption rate and has the world's third largest start-up ecosystem.

"Which is that country whose economy is progressing rapidly? Which country has the world's third-largest start-up ecosystem? Our India. Which country is at the number one position in fintech adoption rate? Which country is the largest milk producer? Which country is at number two among internet users? Which country is the world's second largest mobile phone manufacturer? Which country has the world's third largest start-up ecosystem. Our India," PM Modi said.



ANI

Democrat wins US House seat, eroding Republican majority

NEW YORK

DEMOCRATIC former congressman Tom Suozzi won a special election in New York on Tuesday, Edison Research projected, narrowing an already razor-thin Republican majority in the US House of Representatives that has struggled to pass legislation.

The contest became necessary after the House took the extraordinary step of expelling Republican George Santos, whose dizzying array of lies about his biography led to his indictment on fraud charges.

Suozzi (pictured), who previously held the seat before

stepping down to run for governor, defeated Mazi Pilip, an Ethiopian-born Republican county legislator who served in the Israeli military. The district includes a small corner of New York City and some of its eastern suburbs.

The result leaves Republicans with a 219-213 majority that has already proven hard to manage, illustrated by the chamber's failure last week to pass a measure to impeach President Joe Biden's top border official, Alejandro Mayorkas, which fell short by one vote when a few Republicans voted no.

The House approved the measure on Tuesday, after

No. 2 Republican Steve Scalise returned from cancer treatment to cast a decisive vote.

Meanwhile, Democrats retained their slim majority in the Pennsylvania state House of Representatives on Tuesday after winning a special election in a Philadelphia suburb. Republicans, who already control the state Senate, would have taken over the House with a victory.

The New York district, which supported Biden in 2020 before flipping to Republicans in the 2022 midterm elections, has served as a testing ground for both parties' messaging ahead of the



fall election, when the presidency and control of both chambers of Congress will be at stake.

"This race could be a bellwether for swing suburban districts around the country that are going to decide who controls the gavel of Congress," said Lawrence Levy, executive dean at Hofstra University's National Center

for Suburban Studies.

Turnout, already expected to be light for a special election in February, was further depressed by a winter storm that blanketed the region on Tuesday morning with several inches of heavy snow, prompting both campaigns to offer free rides to polling places in the afternoon.

Immigration was a central issue, as it has been elsewhere in the country ahead of an expected rematch between Biden and former President Donald Trump in November.

Pilip repeatedly hammered Suozzi and the Democratic Party on the issue, accusing them of failing to control

crossings at the southern border with Mexico. Pilip was endorsed by a labor union for Border Patrol officers.

"I kept migrants from being sent to Nassau and will secure the border when I get to Congress," Pilip wrote in a Facebook post, referring to New York state's Nassau County.

Suozzi, who represented the congressional district for six years before stepping down and running unsuccessfully for governor, called Pilip's attacks against him misleading and said she has been short of specifics on how she would address border security.

He touted his own biparti-

san immigration compromise and criticized Republicans for rejecting a border security deal negotiated in the Senate, which collapsed after Trump urged Republicans to spurn it.

"Ms. Pilip points out there's a problem, there's a problem, there's no solutions," Suozzi said in the election's only debate.

He also attacked Pilip on abortion, an issue that Democrats have put front and center since the US Supreme Court eliminated a nationwide right in 2022. Pilip said she is personally against abortion but did not support a federal ban. **Agencies**

Hungary resignations leave Viktor Orban in biggest crisis yet

By Nick Thorpe

THIS has become the biggest threat to Prime Minister Viktor Orban's rule since he returned to power in 2010.

Hungary has been shaken by the sudden resignations of the two most popular and successful women in an otherwise strongly male-dominated governing party.

President Katalin Novak and former Justice Minister Judit Varga have both taken responsibility for the decision to grant clemency to Endre K, former deputy director of a state orphanage.

Endre K was jailed for persuading children to withdraw their testimony against the director of the orphanage for sexual abuse.

He was one of 25 people pardoned by the president during a visit by Pope Francis last year. But his name only became public on 2 February.

The issue has become deeply problematic for a government which has made protection of children and traditional family values the cornerstone of its policies.

Worst of all for Mr Orban and his party, the departures of the two women have been followed by an avalanche of allegations about the way he runs the country.

And this double resignation, com-

ing amid increasing protests, has deprived Viktor Orban of two very different but essential allies.

President Novak radiated a "mother of the nation" image, closely identified with popular policies to encourage couples to have more children. She also promoted a more inclusive, less aggressive style than the prime minister in her largely symbolic role as head of state.

The tough-talking Judit Varga had been due to lead the governing Fidesz party into battle against the "Brussels bureaucrats" in the European elections in June. Now she has resigned as an MP and withdrawn from public life.

Two other key figures have come under attack too - Mr Orban's communications chief Antal Rogan, who is also in charge of the secret services, and Zoltan Balog, a Protestant bishop and personal adviser to the prime minister.

Mr Balog is alleged to have lobbied behind the scenes for the presidential clemency in the Endre K case. He has denied the allegation.

Within minutes of Judit Varga's resignation, her ex-husband, powerful Fidesz insider Peter Magyar, announced: "I do not want to be part of a system for a minute longer where the real culprits hide behind women's



Katalin Novak resigned as president on Saturday, then the justice minister stood down as an MP

skirts."

"For a long time, I believed in an ideal, in a national, sovereign, civic Hungary," he complained. "However, over the past few years and especially today, I have come to realise all this is indeed just a political product, a sugary coating that serves only two purposes: to conceal the operation of the power factory and to acquire enormous wealth."

He followed that up with a 100-minute interview on Sunday evening to the government-critical Partizan channel on YouTube, which has now been viewed 1.4 million times.

Each day, he posts new criticism of government figures on Facebook.

On Tuesday, he singled out Antal Rogan, the government's communications maestro, asking him why he was staying silent, hiding behind the prime minister's spokesman.

"You used to cut a much tougher figure," he said. "Why are you hiding from your constituents? Why haven't you held a press conference for years? Are you

afraid to answer questions?"

Then he turned on Istvan Tiborcz, the son-in-law of the prime minister and husband of Mr Orban's daughter Rahel.

"Dear Stephen [Istvan], you are a really talented person, at the age of 37, you have 100bn Forints (£220m), so many hotels, banks, fund managers, valuable former state-owned properties."

"What other companies have you taken over lately? What is the total of government loans or grants you received to build your portfolio? Have you recently visited villages in Borsod [in north-east Hungary], where children sometimes play in the yard without warm clothes in winter?"

Opposition parties have tabled demands to investigate how the clemency was granted, how the state is run, and to call for the direct election of the next president.

The response of the government and of pro-government media has been furious.

"We do not respond to the desperate attempts of people in hopeless situations," insisted the

prime minister's spokesman, Bertalan Havasi, about Peter Magyar.

"We must demonstrate our strength, because the pack of hyenas, these completely amoral, lying bastards... now smell blood because they think that the moment has come," wrote Zsolt Bayer in the government flagship daily, Magyar Nemzet.

He went on to propose a show of strength by government supporters on 15 March, a national holiday: "Let's show them that the moment hasn't bloody well come!"

Another commentator, Zsolt Jeszenszky, did not hold back in the government tabloid, Pesti Sracok.

"Those who proclaim [Judit Varga] an ally of paedophiles, who foam at the mouth demanding her head, are the same vile, satanic mob who demanded the death of Christ from Pontius Pilate," he fumed. "The scum, the sewer rats, have not changed in 2,000 years."

From the prime minister himself there has been strict silence. At least for now.

It is without doubt his biggest challenge in 14 years of uninterrupted Fidesz rule and the high-profile resignations have dented but not yet seriously damaged his power.

An anti-Orban protest is planned for Friday, but the prime minister will come out fighting, presumably on Saturday when he is due to deliver his annual state of the nation address.

Agencies

Indian stocks dip sharply tracking weak overnight US markets

New Delhi

INDIAN stock indices traded sharply lower at the opening bell yesterday, tracking weak overnight US markets.

The US stocks ended with deep cuts, after sticky US inflation data - more than estimated at 3.1 per cent in January - triggered wor-

ries of further delay in the easing of interest rates. S&P 500 declined about 1.4 per cent Tuesday.

Back home in India, at 9.20 am, Sensex was at 70,928.12 points, down 627.07 points or 0.88 per cent, while Nifty was 21,565.30 points, down 177.95 points or 0.82 per cent. Among the widely-tracked Nifty 50 companies, 9 ad-

vanced and the rest 41 declined at the time of filing this report.

The benchmark indices had a volatile trading session on Tuesday. Nifty closed 113 points higher, while Sensex was up 483 points after experiencing unpredictable movements. Banking and financial shares saw intraday recovery from lower levels, resulting in

both indices rising more than 1 per cent, said Shrikant Chouhan, Head - Equity Research, Kotak Securities.

Continued selling of Indian stocks by foreign portfolio investors coupled with high stock valuations, are among some of the concerns for the investors.

Foreign portfolio investors have

been aggressively selling Indian stocks, turning net sellers in the Indian equity market so far in 2024, after making a beeline to accumulate domestic stocks during November and December.

After selling stocks worth Rs 25,744 crore in January they have so far sold Rs 2,524 crore in February.

ANI

'UN peacekeeping mission alongside government troops to fight M23 rebels'

GOMA

THE UN peacekeeping mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), commonly known as MONUSCO, is alongside the Congolese military in fighting rebels of the March 23 Movement (M23) in the east of the country, despite its withdrawal process already underway, said Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Defense Jean-Pierre Bemba on Tuesday.

Bemba (pictured) made the remarks in Goma, the capital of the eastern North Kivu province, where tensions have been on the rise with intensive fighting between the Armed Forces of the DRC (FARDC) and the M23 in the city of Sake and its surroundings, about 23 km to the northwest of Goma.

"I wanted to reassure our population that MONUSCO is in operations with us on the ground. Its soldiers are fighting alongside the FARDC. I say it and I attest to it and moreover, I take this opportunity to congratulate this remarkable work that this mission is doing by our side," said Bemba after a meeting held at the command center in Goma to evaluate joint operations.

For the Congolese Deputy Prime Minister, the clarification aims, in particular, to set the record straight that, contrary to the recently circulating rumors, the MONUSCO



and the M23 were complicit.

On Monday, high tension was reported in Sake, as the population attacked the MONUSCO peacekeepers who wanted to support the FARDC in the fight against the M23.

Sake is considered the last barrier before Goma, which fell to the rebels in late 2012. Bemba also assured that everything is being done by the central government to fight the M23 rebels and put an end to this war situation which threatens the integrity of the DRC.

The security situation remains volatile around Goma, due to ongoing fighting between the FARDC and the M23 rebels, as the latter has launched multiple offensives since last week.

Hundreds of people fled Sake overnight

late Monday to find refuge on the road leading to Goma, Xinhua correspondents observed on the ground.

In November 2023, MONUSCO and the FARDC launched the so-called "Springbok" operation to stop any attempt by the M23 to invade Sake or Goma.

The process of withdrawal of MONUSCO, present in the DRC since 1999 and still deployed in three troubled eastern provinces - Ituri, North Kivu, and South Kivu - was put in motion, at the request of Kinshasa who judges the UN peacekeeping mission ineffective against armed groups, notably the M23.

The disengagement of MONUSCO is taking place in three phases, starting with a complete withdrawal of MONUSCO mili-

tary and police components from South Kivu by April 30, 2024, according to a statement issued in January 2024, published jointly by the Congolese government and MONUSCO.

The second and third phases of the mission's withdrawal provide for a withdrawal from North Kivu and Ituri, with an in-depth assessment between the two, so that MONUSCO "will definitely leave the DRC in later at the end of 2024", read the statement.

Xinhua

Russia sees no prospects for stabilisation in Gaza given Israel's position - Lavrov

MOSCOW

RUSSIA does not see any immediate prospects for reaching a settlement on the situation in the Gaza Strip given Israel's position, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said, speaking at the 13th Middle East Conference of the Valdai Discussion Club.

"Given the hardline stance of the Israeli leadership toward continuing their military actions in Gaza, and now already expanding them to Rafah, we do not see any prospects for a speedy stabilization of the situation in the sector," he said. "Nevertheless, it is necessary to provide conditions for a reliable sustainable settlement while seeking a ceasefire," he added.

Lavrov said that Russia drew attention at the UN Security Council meeting on the Palestinian issue to its long-standing initiative to hold consultations with the region's countries to "harmonize their approaches in support of the creation of a Palestinian state."

"Following this, we propose an inter-Palestinian meeting with the participation of all leading Palestinian factions to bridge the internal divide," the minister added.

On February 7, Jewish Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said that the military had received orders to prepare for the start of fighting in

Chinese New Year: Conveying a message of unity and hope

BEIJING

STREETS across China and China-towns worldwide come alive this time each year with Chinese culture-inspired decorations and clusters of crimson lanterns. One cannot help but be immersed in the auspicious atmosphere of the Chinese New Year.

After the recognition of the Lunar New Year as a UN floating holiday last December, it has become more evident that China's wisdom and peace-loving traditions hold greater appeal in a world characterized by continued uncertainty and turmoil.

This recognition underscores the global significance of China's cultural heritage and recognizes the values of unity, harmony and resilience at the heart of the Chinese New Year celebrations. According to the Chinese zodiac and tradition, this year is the Year of the Dragon, and the dragon symbolizes wisdom, courage and good luck. UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said these qualities are needed by the world "to rise to today's global challenges."

Amidst global turmoil and uncertainty, the spirit of the Dragon calls upon nations to set aside differences and work together toward common goals. It challenges leaders to prioritize dialogue over discord, collaboration over conflict, and solidarity over division.

In his Lunar New Year greetings to the global Chinese community, Guterres commended China for its "unwavering support to the United Nations, to multilateralism and global progress."

As China embraces its role on the world stage, it champions its progress and the common security, development, and prosperity of nations far and wide. China's commitment to openness and multilateralism and its dedication to building a community with a shared future for humanity have played an essential role in fostering global peace and prosperity, providing stability and optimism in an era of uncertainty and disorder.

Also known as the Spring Festival, the Chinese New Year heralds a season of renewal and growth. Just as the earth awakens from its winter slumber, the spirit of the Chinese people awakens during this auspicious time. Xinhua

China to launch campaign to promote women's development

BEIJING

WOMEN'S federations across China will launch a series of programs this year to encourage women to shoulder responsibility in promoting high-quality

development, according to the All-China Women's Federation.

International and domestic platforms for technology innovation will be established to support female tech professionals to

inject impetus for industrial innovation through technological advances.

The country will endeavor to harness the significant role of women in rural areas, such as

encouraging the construction of over 10 million beautiful courtyards across the country, and nurturing a group of women leaders in wealth creation.

Joint efforts will also be

made with other departments to launch employment promotion campaigns to increase the opportunities for employment and entrepreneurship for women.

Xinhua



JKT Tanzania host Simba at newly renovated arena as Hussein urges teammates to be more clinical

By Correspondent Seth Mapoli & Nassir Nchimbi

JKT Tanzania will host Simba at the newly refurbished Major General Isamuhyo stadium in Dar es Salaam today in the game scheduled to kick off at 4:00 pm, contrary to the earlier announcement.

On Tuesday, the Tanzania Premier League Board (TPLB) released a statement regarding the change in kick-off time.

Additionally, the statement mentioned that JKT Tanzania have decided to relocate all their Premier League home matches from Azam Complex to the Major General Isamuhyo venue.

Furthermore, it noted that the kick-off time has been adjusted due to the absence of floodlights at the new arena, ensuring that the match concludes before it gets dark.

Meanwhile, Simba's assistant captain Mohamed Hussein is

optimistic his side will be more clinical and turn chances created into goals when they face JKT Tanzania.

Speaking ahead of the match, Hussein admitted that they struggled to convert chances created by his side in the previous matches as he urged his colleagues to be more clinical on goal.

"Yes we created many chances and we failed to utilize them to our advantage. I think this has to end so that we can have comfortable wins and reduce pressure on our side.

"We have collected ten from twelve points away from Dar es Salaam, and in some games, we won but struggled to the final minutes," he said.

He recognized the formidable task ahead, acknowledging that the match won't be easy due to the strength of the opposing team.

However, despite this challenge, he expressed confidence in their preparation and deter-

mination, stating that they are ready to enter today's game with the singular objective of securing three points.

"It won't be an easy match. We know JKT is a good team. However, we are prepared, and we will go into the game to find three points," he said.

Coach Daniel Cadena concurred with Hussein's assessment, emphasizing the inherent difficulty posed by their upcoming opponents.

Despite the daunting nature of the game, Cadena highlighted his satisfaction with the team's current position. Moreover, he reassured that they were fully prepared for the match.

Cadena and Hussein's sentiment underscored the team's unwavering resolve and commitment to success. Despite recognizing the opposition's quality, their focus remains squarely on their readiness and determination to emerge victorious.

By setting their sights on the tangible goal of securing three

points, Hussein encapsulates the team's collective mindset and determination.

Simba SC have accumulated 33 points from 14 games played. Their impressive record includes 10 victories, two draws, and only one loss, reflecting their strong performance throughout the season.

With a commendable tally of wins and minimal defeats, Simba's consistent display of skill and determination has solidified their position near the top of the league table.

Their formidable record attests to their competitive prowess and serves as a testament to the team's commitment to excellence on the field.



Youth play football during a training session at the Jakaya Kikwete grounds in Dar es Salaam on Monday. PHOTO: CORRESPONDENT JUMANNE JUMA

Tanzanian chess player shines in Poland

By Correspondent Joseph Mchekadona

TANZANIAN chess player Cleophas Charles emerged third at the Inter School African Chess Championships which was held recently in Poland.

Dr Konrad Czernichowski, who is the facilitator of Charles's trip to Poland, said the tournament, known as Szach Królowi - Zosta Mistrzem (Check to the King - Become Master), was held in Lublin, Poland and it did not start well for the only Tanzanian participant.

He said Charles, who is studying at Maria Curie-Skłodowska University (MCSU), is one of the most promising young chess players and is currently the fifth-best chess player in the country. He was seeded number one, but he lost his first round to an 11-year-old girl Weronika Dajek from Poland.

Dajek, who has the first category chess, is a prodigy (she won a gold medal in the Polish national championships for children U-8 in 2020), but Charles (having the second category in Polish chess) has a higher FIDE rating (1500) than Dajek.

He said this means chess is probably the only sport where a child can beat an adult. It happens on a regular basis.

"This match was the only failure of Cleophas. He won three games against Jan Draganik and Artur Olejnik from Poland and Matvii Nechaiev from Ukraine and drew one with Ma-



Tanzanian chess player Cleophas Charles (R) with his trophy and certificate after one of the tournaments in Poland. Michael Baranowski (2nd R) won the tournament. PHOTO: CORRESPONDENT

teusz Wasilewski. He scored 3.5 points, which secured him the third position out of 18 players in the tournament. He was given a trophy by the International Arbiter and Tournament Director, Zbigniew Pyda," he said.

Charles is studying Business Analytics at UMCS in Poland, in the Faculty of Economics, which is one of the most prestigious courses at the university.

The Polish most international university granted him a scholarship in recognition of his achievements in chess, as he represented the Tanzanian national team in the Chess Olympiad in India.

Speaking in an interview, Dr

Czernichowski said he knows Charles as one of the best and most talented chess players in Tanzania.

"I know Cleophas. He is very talented. He won the conditional title of FIDE Master in the African Interschool Championships. The only thing he needs to do is to increase his rating. He has a lot of chances to do that because FIDE-rated tournaments are organized in Poland every week," he said.

Dr Czernichowski, a lecturer at UMCS, is also a visiting scholar at Jordan University College in Morogoro.

He stated that Charles is now preparing for the national aca-

demie championships where he will represent UMCS with seven other students.

He further said that the national academic championships are organized every year.

130 Polish universities participate in around 30 disciplines, which are football, basketball, athletics, swimming, chess and other sporting events.

Maria Curie-Skłodowska University is one of the top-performing universities in sports.

In 2020 it was the first one in the medal classification. The presence of the Tanzanian in the MCSU representation should improve the university's standing in chess.

LeBron, Davis lead surging Lakers past Pistons 125-111 for their 5th victory in 6 games

LOS ANGELES

LeBRON James had 25 points and eight assists, Anthony Davis had 20 points and 14 rebounds, and the Los Angeles Lakers beat the NBA-worst Detroit Pistons 125-111 Tuesday night for their fifth win in six games.

D'Angelo Russell scored 21 points and hit four 3-pointers for the Lakers, who have won 10 of 15 overall to move three games above .500 (29-26) for the first time since a week before Christmas. Rui Hachimura and Austin Reaves added 15 points apiece in another dominant offensive game by the Lakers' new starting lineup, which combined for 96 points.

"Just trusting each other, not that we didn't before," Davis said. "And then shot-making. Guys are making shots, making plays. It's fun playing this way. Guys are making the right plays, and the ball is popping. The result has been some good wins for us."

Davis' six blocked shots led the defense, highlighted by his exceptional stop of Jaden Ivey as the only man back on a 3-on-1 Pistons fast break in the third quarter. James repeatedly referred to Davis after the game as "the defensive player of the year," an award Davis has never won.

"I feel like I should have won it a couple of times (already), but didn't," Davis said. "At this point, I'm just trying to win and continue to have a presence on the defensive end. If that seems to be in the plans for me to win it this year, then obviously it would be exciting for me to have one under my belt, but I feel like I could've had a couple of them in my career."

The Lakers had a rare three-day break between games before this meeting, and they rolled to an early 24-point lead in their final home game before the All-Star break, when James will participate for the 20th time. After this game, James said he isn't playing at Utah on Wednesday in the Lakers' last game before the break.

Spencer Dinwiddie had six points and seven assists in his debut with the Lakers, who signed the veteran Los Angeles native last Saturday. Dinwiddie started 48 games for Brooklyn this season, and the graduate of Taft High School in suburban Woodland Hills will be a key scoring option and playmaker off the bench for the Lakers.

Ausar Thompson scored 19 points and James Wiseman had 18 points and nine rebounds for the Pistons, who had won two of their previous three games for only the third time all season. Team owner Tom Gores, who

lives in Beverly Hills, watched from courtside.

"They definitely jumped on us early on," Thompson said. "They played very fast off makes, misses, running up the court. They're big, so they would post us up. We came in talking about it, but we've got to do a better job executing."

Cade Cunningham had 12 points, seven assists and seven rebounds in the least impressive game of a strong road trip for Detroit, which beat Sacramento and Portland to open it before barely losing to the Clippers in this building last weekend.

One game after the Lakers put up 87 points in the second-highest scoring first half in franchise history, they dropped 71 on the Pistons and took a 71-48 halftime lead paced by Davis' 18 points and 12 boards. The lead matched the Lakers' biggest halftime margin of the season.

"That was pretty much the game," Detroit coach Monty Williams said. "There was more to it than that, but that put us in such a hole. ... I think they have a game tomorrow, and I felt like their mindset was like, 'We've got to jump on these guys right away.' We didn't understand that."

Detroit trimmed the lead to 12 points with 4:50 to play, but got no closer. Davis sat out the entire fourth quarter, resting his legs for the back-to-back set.

New Pistons guard Quentin Grimes remained out with a sprained right knee. He has yet to debut for his new team since arriving in the multiplayer trade with New York.

Lakers guard Max Christie missed his second straight game with a sprained right ankle.

Meanwhile, in Phoenix, Kevin Durant scored 28 points, Devin Booker added 25 and the Phoenix Suns outlasted the Sacramento Kings 130-125 on Tuesday night.

The Suns erased an 11-point deficit in the third quarter to take a 94-92 lead going into the fourth. Eric Gordon and the recently acquired Royce O'Neale hit back-to-back 3-pointers early in the final period to push Phoenix ahead 103-94.

The Kings fought back, tying it at 108 on a putback by Dornantas Sabonis with 5:25 left. The game stayed tight the rest of the way, and O'Neale's 3-pointer with 47 seconds left put the Suns up 122-118.

Fox responded with a 3 to cut the margin to 122-121 with 41 seconds remaining, but Booker hit a jumper after a timeout for a 124-121 advantage and the Suns made enough free throws on the final possessions to stay in control.

AP



Detroit Pistons center Jalen Duren, left, steals the ball from Los Angeles Lakers forward LeBron James during the first half of an NBA basketball game, Tuesday, Feb. 13, 2024, in Los Angeles. (AP Photo)

Guardiola hails dazzling De Bruyne as Man City cruise towards Champions League quarters

COPENHAGEN

PEP Guardiola hailed Kevin De Bruyne's form "extraordinary" after the Belgian was involved in all three goals as Manchester City beat FC Copenhagen 3-1 on Tuesday to close in on the Champions League quarter-finals.

De Bruyne's early opener was cancelled out against the run of play by Magnus Mattsson.

Bernardo Silva restored City's lead before half-time, but they had to wait until stoppage time to add further punishment for the hosts when Phil Foden turned home De Bruyne's cut-back.

De Bruyne was sidelined for five months by a hamstring tear suffered on the opening night of the Premier League season in August.

But since his return last month, the 32-year-old has scored two goals and provided seven assists in seven appearances.

"Extraordinary," said Guardiola of De Bruyne's statistics. "The biggest players love to appear in the biggest stages."

"It's the hour of truth

when you are in the last 16 of the Champions League and we start well."

The English champions have now won 11 consecutive games in all competitions as they remain on course to repeat last season's treble of Champions League, Premier League and FA Cup.

Copenhagen had not played a competitive game for two months since sealing their place in the last 16 by dumping out Manchester United and Galatasaray in the group stages.

"They had a great group stage so we had to respect them," said De Bruyne. "We started really well but I think we made one mistake and they pounced on it."

"We played a really good game. In the second half we created a lot of chances, could have scored more and luckily in the end we scored the third one, so it is a little bit of an advantage now."

That lack of match sharpness from the Danish champions showed in the early stages as City stormed out of the blocks. De Bruyne headed a glorious chance wide and Kamil Grabara denied Ruben



Kevin De Bruyne (right) was involved in all three Manchester City goals in Copenhagen. AFP

Dias with a fine save inside six minutes.

The former Liverpool goalkeeper had no chance when De Bruyne broke the deadlock on 10 minutes with a clinical low finish from Foden's pass.

Jack Grealish had been surprisingly handed just his second start of the year by Guardiola, but the England international lasted just 15 minutes before he pulled up with a suspected groin injury.

City had enjoyed nearly 80 percent possession and barely let Copenhagen inside their half for the first 35 minutes, yet were made to pay for one moment of sloppiness.

Ederson's poor clearance was straight into the path of Mohamed Elyounoussi and his blocked shot fell to Mattson to mark his debut with a stunning strike from outside the box.

City regained their

composure and the lead before half-time.

Mattson was unfortunate as his attempted clearance ricocheted off De Bruyne and perfectly into the path of Silva to flick beyond Grabara.

The Copenhagen goalkeeper kept his side in the tie in the early stages of the second period with spectacular stops to deny De Bruyne and Doku.

Grabara then twice won a head-to-head bat-

tle with Haaland in stoppage time.

City were keen to build up a comfortable advantage with the second leg falling between crucial Premier League games against Manchester United and Liverpool next month.

And they finally got the third goal that should kill off the tie when the in-form Foden slammed home his 15th goal of the season as City extended their unbeaten run in

European competitions to 21 games.

Meanwhile, Leipzig were left to rue a controversial disallowed goal in Tuesday's 1-0 home loss to Real Madrid in their last 16 Champions League clash.

Leipzig striker Benjamin Sesko scored in the second minute but the linesman raised his flag for offside.

Replays showed Sesko was clearly onside but VAR did not overturn the decision.

Another Leipzig player, Benjamin Henrichs, was offside and despite not touching the ball, was adjudged to have been in the goalkeeper's line of sight.

Madrid's Brahim Diaz scored a stunning solo goal early in the second-half to decide the first-leg match.

While praising Diaz's "dream goal", Leipzig coach Marco Rose told reporters the decision was wrong.

"There was a goal which should have counted" Rose said, explaining "if we were playing a goal up, maybe things would have turned out differently".

Rose found some unlikely support from Madrid midfielder Toni Kroos, who agreed the

goal should have stood.

"He called it offside because he said he obstructed him (Real's goalie). The goalkeeper would not have got to the ball, so it was a goal."

Madrid coach Carlo Ancelotti told reporters "you have to ask the referee" about the controversial call, explaining "I think he said the goalkeeper was bothered by the (Leipzig) player".

Asked if referee Irfan Pelito, who was taking charge of his eighth match in the Champions League, had shown his inexperience in making the call, Rose shot back "I'm not angry with the referee -- I don't want to start a refereeing debate."

"It was a mistake. I think we all saw it was not the right decision. I also make mistakes -- sometimes two or three per day. What's important is that you fix them -- and that you try and do it better next time."

Rose said his team still had a good chance of progressing to the quarter-finals, saying "we want to show ourselves in Madrid".

"We want to be the best we can for Madrid, we want to be the most difficult we can be."

AFP

Sir Jim Ratcliffe gains Premier League approval over Manchester United sale

By Tom Morgan

SIR Jim Ratcliffe has received Premier League directors and owners' test approval for his 25 per cent purchase of Manchester United.

A deal will be completed within days as the Football Association signs off a final agreement after Ratcliffe extended his purchase offer until the end of this week.

United's Class A shares rose more than six per cent to \$21 (£16.57) in post-market trading after the tender offer deadline was extended to Friday from Tuesday.

Club filings to the US Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) overnight confirm the league has privately approved the deal. On Tuesday, the Premier League separately confirmed its board had approved both Ratcliffe's acquisition and pledged "further investment".

"The Board agreed to the change of the club's ownership structure last week, and this has now been officially ratified by an Independent Oversight Panel," a statement from the competition said, adding that the league's Owners' Charter has also been signed.

"This is the first acquisition of Control to be reviewed and approved by a new Independent Oversight Panel following changes to the process which were agreed by Premier League clubs in March 2023. The Premier League now awaits confirmation of the transaction's completion."

Filings confirm there is no doubt as far as United's shareholding set-up is concerned that the Ratcliffe deal will be done. By Feb 9, around 36.7 per cent of the outstanding Class A Shares had been "validly tendered (and not validly withdrawn) pursuant to the Offer," the documents confirm.

Premier League approval for the deal is confirmed in the filing's offer terms. "Premier League Approval" has "already been obtained", the document confirms, but the Football Association Approval is still awaited. Ratcliffe, 71, has agreed to gain complete control of football operations as part of his deal for a minority shareholding but the Glaz-

ers have since agreed that Ineos should have a broader influence encompassing key decisions across the business. Telegraph Sport detailed last week how plans include eventually creating a "Wembley of the North" under an ambitious 90,000-seater redevelopment of Old Trafford.

The Ratcliffe deal is now all-but-done after an extraordinary saga which saw the Glazers first start exploring a sale in November 2022.

A bump in share values overnight erased losses from earlier in the trading day on Monday amid speculation over whether the offer would be extended. In December, Ratcliffe agreed to buy the stake by allowing investors to swap about one-quarter of their Class A stock holdings for \$33 per share, well above the current market price.

As of the close of Friday, 19.4 million shares had been validly tendered, according to the regulatory filing - which means Ratcliffe has already passed the threshold to complete his deal.

United's American owners are set for a cash windfall of around £715 million from the sale of B shares to Ratcliffe. That eye-watering sum adds to earnings of around £465 million through past sales of A shares and around £150 million in dividend payments.

However, it was announced in previous regulatory filing that there will be no dividends paid for at least three years under Ratcliffe's deal with the Glazers. United were acquired by the Glazers for around £790 million in a hostile takeover in 2005, since when around £1 billion has been sucked out of the club in debt repayment, interest and management fees to service the leveraged buyout.

In addition to purchasing the Glazer shares, Ratcliffe - through his Isle of Man investment vehicle Trawlers Ltd - is buying up to 25 per cent of Class A shares at the same \$33 per share price so as to minimise any risk of legal action from other minority shareholders such as Eminence Capital, Lindsell Train and Ariel Investments.

THE TELEGRAPH

PSG and Paris mayor see red in stadium dispute



In happier times: Paris Mayor Anne Hidalgo with Nasser Al-Khelaifi at the Parc de Princes. Agencies

PARIS

TENSIONS between Qatar-owned PSG and the mayor of Paris over the club's stadium have deepened, raising further doubts about the future home of the capital's top side as they chase a ninth Ligue 1 title in 11 seasons.

Paris Saint-Germain chairman Nasser Al-Khelaifi and Paris Mayor Anne Hidalgo were once seen regularly smiling together in the VIP seats of the Parc des Princes stadium, but are no longer on speaking terms after a series of clashes.

At the heart of the quarrel is Khelaifi's desire to buy the 48,000-seater stadium from the city, which Hidalgo's left-wing administration has blocked over the past year, most recently in a vote by the city council on February 6.

"We've wasted years wanting to buy the Parc," Khelaifi said angrily last week on the sidelines of a meeting of European football's governing body UEFA. "It's over now. We want to move from the

Parc."

In other acidic comments, he suggested last month that racism was playing a part -- "is it because we are Arabs?" he asked the Parisien newspaper -- and he has called for "respect" from the mayor's office.

The stakes are high for PSG which wants to follow the model of other major European football clubs by developing hospitality facilities at the stadium and increasing its capacity to 60,000 seats.

The row underlines the prominent role of public

authorities in French sports where even elite clubs rarely possess their own grounds, unlike in Britain or Germany where private ownership is the norm.

PSG signed a 30-year lease for the Parc in 2013 -- two years after the Qatari state-backed takeover of the club -- meaning they are committed in theory to 2043 unless there are clauses allowing them to break the contract.

- 'Never leave' -

For the city, seeing PSG leave would be a disaster,

with the capital lacking another sports club capable of selling out the Parc's vast steeply banked stands in the up-market 16th district of western Paris.

"We don't want to carry on talking to PSG through the media," Paris' deputy mayor Emmanuel Gregoire told reporters on Sunday. "We've got things to say to them and we imagine they've got things to say to us."

"What we want is to get back to work without further comment. PSG will never leave the Parc des Princes."

Sources within the mayor's office said in the past that Hidalgo was initially open to discussing a sale of the Parc at the right price, before negotiations broke down.

An initial offer of 40 million euros (\$43 million) from PSG was seen as derisive, with Gregoire joking that the club valued their premises -- a protected 1972 building -- less than their former Argentine midfielder Leandro Paredes who cost 47 million euros.

Most observers see the clash as a game of brinkmanship, with PSG having no easy options to move from their home since 1974 and the city

having lots to lose if its prestigious tenant walks away.

PSG let it be known they were interested in buying the much larger Stade de France, the national sports stadium north of Paris, but decided against submitting a bid before the deadline at the beginning of January. At 48,000 seats, the Parc's capacity is significantly below equivalents in Britain, Italy, Spain or Germany, where most of the top sides have 60,000 or more.

- No easy options -

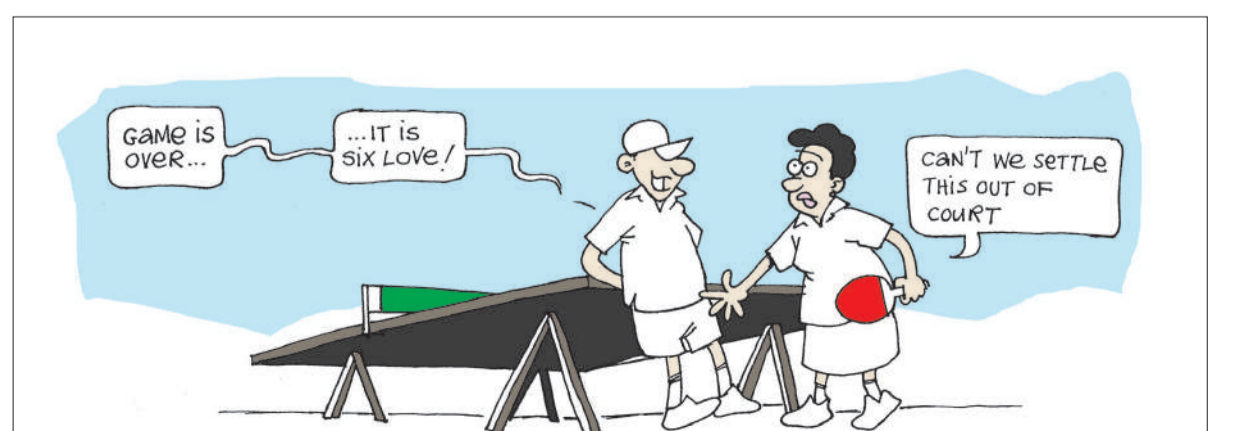
The French club have found an ally in Valerie Pecresse, the right-wing head of the greater Paris region, who is a fierce political and personal rival of Hidalgo.

Pecresse has publicly offered to help find land for PSG in the region, which Gregoire has termed a "stab in the back", according to the BFM channel.

Pierre Rabadan, in charge of sports at Paris city hall, said last week that his door remained open, saying that there were "other options that exist" for PSG other than the acquisition of the stadium.

AFP

Gwiji by David Chikoko



Sir Jim Ratcliffe gains Premier League approval over Man United sale

PAGE 19



By Correspondent Michael Mwebe

TITTLE challengers Simba travel to Major General Isamuhyo stadium to face a faltering JKT Tanzania side in the NBC Premier League this afternoon.

Abdelhak Benchikha's side did what they had to do with a hard-fought victory over Geita Gold on Monday, closing the gap on leaders Young Africans to seven points.

The Msimbazi Reds are now second on the table with 33 points and maximum points off the army side will take them to within four points of Young Africans.

Simba SC now take aim at limping JKT Tanzania



Daniel Cadena (pictured) is anticipating a demanding match given JKT Tanzania's precarious position on the table and the quick turnaround of games.

"It will be a difficult game, especially considering our opponents are not in a good position but we are ready to face them," said Cadena during the pre-match press.

With Henock Inonga out of contention due to his late involvement in the African Cup of Nations with DR Congo, Kennedy Juma should once again continue to partner Che Malone Fondoh in an otherwise unchanged backline, which will comprise Shomari Kapombe and Mohamed Hussein.

On the back of his winner against Geita Gold, Babacar Sarr has surely done enough to retain his place in the midfield where he should be joined by Fabrice Ngoma and Sadio Kanoute.

On the flip side, JKT Tanzania's dismal record against Simba falls in line with their recent form too, as they slid down the table late in 2023.

After looking like contenders to finish fourth earlier in the season, they now find themselves six points

behind KMC in that position.

Malale Hamsini's side won 14 points from their opening nine games and sat just behind the top three, but they have taken just two points in the following five matches.

A 1-0 home defeat by Coastal Union last time out means that they have won just one of the previous seven games in the league.

Their recent poor run has left JKT Tanzania in 12th place in the table, only kept out of the relegation zone by goal difference.

With no games to catch up on, this will be their first league outing since December.

The prolonged break may have robbed them of the match practice to build up a head of steam before Simba's visit, but it has provided plenty of time for players to return from injury.

JKT were also active in the December-January transfer window with six arrivals. And against Simba, they could unleash new signings Matheo Anthony, a striker that joined from Mtibwa Sugar, Shiza Kichuya, who arrived from Namungo, and Gamba Matiko poached from JKU.

Coastal Union, Dodoma Jiji brace for a close encounter

By Correspondent Michael Mwebe

IN the evening, Coastal Union will look to extend their recent decent run of form when they welcome Dodoma Jiji to Mkwakwani Stadium in Tanga in the NBC Premier League.

The home team currently sit in sixth place in the table, just two points adrift of the CAF Confederation Cup spot.

They are also 10 points clear of the direct relegation teams.

David Ouma's team has been difficult to beat lately in the league, as they head into this game on the back of a five-game unbeaten run, having recorded four wins and one draw in the run.

There have been wins over Kagera Sugar and Geita Gold at home in the NBC Premier League and Greenland FC at home in the Federation Cup.

Coastal Union also picked up the maximum points in the league thanks to a 1-0 victory away to JKT Tanzania.

The goalless draw with KMC on Monday extended a strong recent defensive run in the top flight for David Ouma's team, as they have now kept clean sheets in all their three previous league games.

Ouma may stick with a similar XI despite the short turnaround from Monday.

Ley Matampi, who leads the clean sheets charts with seven, will continue between the sticks.

Captain Jackson Shiga, Miraj Hassan, Felly Mulumba and the ever-impressive Lameck Lawi will form the backline.

Charles Semfuko, Roland Beauko, Gerald Gwalala, Dennis Modzaka and Paulin Kasindi will operate in midfield while Chrispin Ngushi, who is on loan from Young Africans, is likely to lead the line.

Dodoma Jiji come into the match having drawn 1-1 with Mashujaa at home last weekend.

The visitors are in seventh place on 19 points.

Dodoma Jiji have been poor travellers of late, as they have lost all their recent three games on the road.

They have lost to Tanzania Prisons, Namungo and Young Africans in their past three travels.

However, Dodoma Jiji can head into today's contest with optimism having won three of their last seven meetings with Coastal Union, including their last trip to Mkwakwani last season.

They also won the reverse fixture 2-1 when the two sides met at the start of the campaign in August.

There is a full squad for coach Francis Baraza to choose from with forwards Hassan Mwaeterema, January Jabir, Yassin Mgaza and Peter Kasunda all available.

Aces A outfit clobbers TCA Combine in 2024 TCA Dar 50 Overs Cup Div A

By Guardian Correspondent

ACES A cricket side has shown intention to emerge as a dominant force in the 2024 Tanzania Cricket Association (TCA) Dar 50 Overs Cup's Division A, cruising to a nine-wicket drubbing of the TCA Combine in Dar es Salaam recently.

The TCA Combine, mostly made up of young cricketers, won the toss, elected to bat, and was skittled for 54 runs in 19.2 overs of the 50-over tie which took place at Leaders Club venue.

Aces A outfit made the most of its chance to bowl after getting Abdullah Jabiri - one of two TCA Combine senior players - out in his very first ball of the match, having been dismissed by pacer Ali Mpeka.

Before Jabiri's dismissal, TCA batsmen Ally Hassan and Amir Sadiki put some decent resistance right up to the time professional cricketer Arun Yadav bowled for Aces A.

Yadav, who showed his class with the bat for Aces A in the previous clash versus Strikers Club, ran rings around the TCA Combine young batsmen on a wicket which made it difficult for the batsmen to score runs.

He experienced a similar situation in a previous fixture which had him bowling on a wicket that had nothing to offer to the bowlers.

Yadav efficiently used his craftsmanship with the ball and he, as was the case for fellow bowler Jatin Prajapati, got through the defense of all TCA Combine batsmen.

Darji, who was spinning beautifully, also



Aces A cricket outfit's Arun Yadav (L) is pictured receiving the Player of the Match prize from Sunni Muslim Jamaat's Sports Head, Yasser Abdulhamid, upon conclusion of the 2024 Tanzania Cricket Association (TCA) Dar 50 Overs Cup's Division A tie pitting Aces A against TCA Combine that took place at Dar es Salaam's Leaders Club venue recently. PHOTO: COURTESY OF ACES CRICKET CLUB

showed his class in the duel, inviting the TCA batsmen to play shots and eventually getting the better of them.

Aces A squad did not have much resistance from the TCA Combine batsmen, with Hassan the Aces A cricketer loaned out to TCA Combine, playing some eye-catching shots.

The youthful Hassan was the only TCA Combine player with a two-digit figure in the encounter after posting 26 runs whilst clearing the boundary on four occasions.

The promising cricketer drove, cut, and swept deliveries by Aces A's bowlers and in his brief and effective stay

at the wicket - played well but the cricketer was ultimately dismissed by Prajapati who was bowling beautifully.

The TCA Combine was ultimately all out in 19.2 overs, with Aces A's Yadav and Prajapati taking four wickets apiece. Yadav gave away 12 runs in his seven-over stint, whereas Prajapati con-

ceded 10 runs in 4.2 overs.

Aces A team, in response, easily got down to a successful chase having notched 55/1 in 7.5 overs. The side, as a result, commanded its second victory in a row.

The outfit's skipper Asif Butt got out off the very first ball of TCA Combine's chase and was replaced by a 13-year-old cricketer Salman Yasser.

Yasser, along with Yadav who is also the youngster's coach, stood until the end scoring 12 runs not out whilst nailing one four, whereas Yadav ended with 30 runs not out, which included five fours, off 21 balls.

Yadav has proved to be a worthy addition to Aces Cricket Club given the cricketer has, for the second consecutive clash, bagged the Player of the Match prize.

He was closely challenged by his protege, Prajapati, who also took four wickets against TCA Combine and was spinning the ball - whereas Yadav was seaming the ball beautifully.

This year, Aces Cricket Club has made great strategic moves when it comes to signing cricketers, having roped in experienced players like

Alisahib Bukhari, Yadav, and the youthful Yasser.

Yasser turns out to be the youngest cricketer in this season's Division A showdown - facing the top-line bowlers.

Aces Cricket Club's founder Azim Thakur revealed his outfit has, for 10 years, been working with junior cricketers who are part of the TCA development program.

The senior cricketer pointed out that the side has now decided to bring in professional coaches from India and Zimbabwe to coach the club's cricketers under the program aimed at developing cricket in Tanzania.

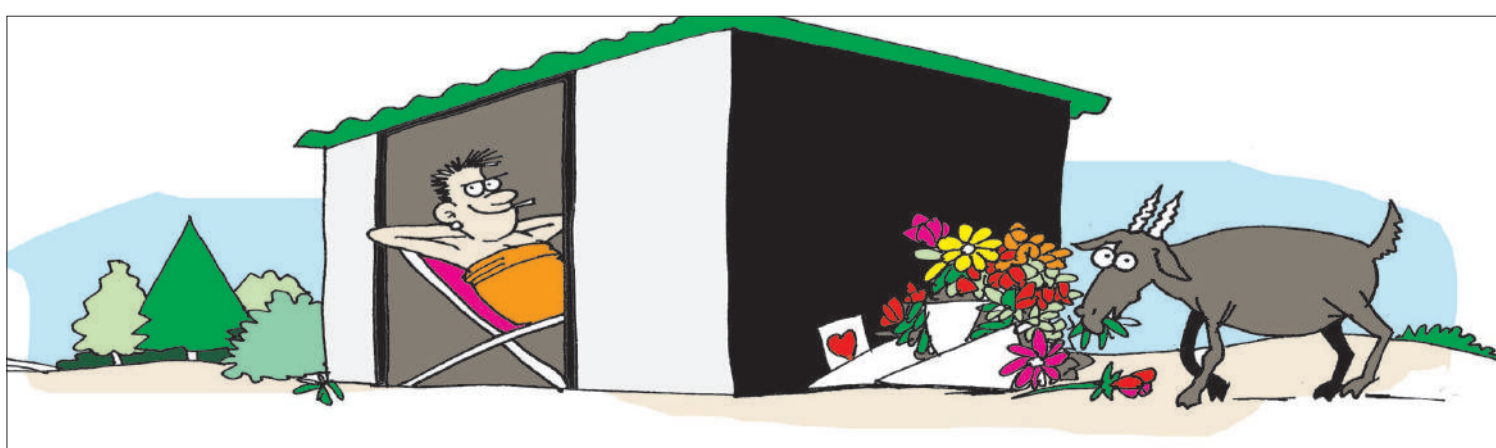
Thakur disclosed there are a few others who are also nurtured by the outfit, adding it has decided to bring in some youngsters and he promised the best is yet to come.

All domestic club tournaments supervised by TCA are, this year, backed by the association, which is all out to boost the sport's promotion at the domestic level.

There are no entry fees imposed on any of the participating outfits, as per the association's regulations.

Thakur stated credit should go to the newly-elected TCA Chairman, Sreekumar, and the association's other officials including vice-chairman, Ashish Nage-wadia.

Flexibles by David Chikoko



TO NIGHT @ 9:00

EATV THURSDAY

11:00 DADAZ
12:00 KIPENGA XTRA
13:00 Movie
13:55 Dondoo za Michezo
14:00 Movie
14:30 Ujuzi (r)
15:00 Funguka
15:30 Ubongo Kids
16:00 Zote Kuntu
16:55 Dondoo za Michezo
17:00 SSELEKT
17:55 Kurasa
18:00 Kati Za Wana
18:30 #HASTAG
19:00 EATV SAA 1
20:00 DADAZ (r)
21:00 TOP 10
21:30 Zote Kuntu
23:00 Kurasa
23:05 EATV SAA 1

TOP 10
It is a list of the hottest Bongo Flava music videos that are loved by the viewers

eastafrica RADIO

05:00 Supa Breakfast
09:00 MAMAMIA
12:00 Kipenga Xtra
13:00 Planet Bongo
16:00 EA Drive
19:00 Kipenga
21:00 The Cruise

88.1FM
DAR ES SALAAM