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## 2024 investments hit \$7.7bn record

By Henry Mwangonde

INVESTMENT flows have improved from \$3.7bn in 2021 to \$7.7bn in the outgoing calendar year, the Tanzania Investment Centre (TIC) has declared. 2024, showing a substantial increase. Gilead Teri, the TIC executive director, said at a press conference over the weekend, that the centre registered 842 projects valued at \$7.7bn in the course of this year, achieving 88.2percent of its expectations to register up to 1,000 projects. He was optimistic about the future, pointing at positive trends during 2024 as ushering in a promising year ahead, since the 2024 investment figures represent the highest recorded since data on investment promotion started being collected in 1991.

The manufacturing sector led with 377 projects valued at \$3.1bn, followed by transportation with 138 projects priced at \$1.2bn, he said, elaborating that substantial flows were also notice for commercial buildings, with 91 projects worth \$706m.

Tourism had 76 projects valued at \$337m while agriculture put up 66 projects of \$599m total value, he said, noting that manufacturing sector projects show that there has been a significant increase in investment.

"This positive trend is a result of the

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# VP issues red alert on fraud next polls

By Correspondent Marc Nkwame, Arusha



Vice President Dr Philip Mpango addresses Prevention and Combating of Corruption Bureau annual meeting in Arusha city yesterday. Photo: VPO

PREPARATIONS for the general elections late next year risk being enmeshed in fraud, bribery and other instances of corruption, Vice President Dr. Philip Mpango cautioned yesterday.

Presiding at the opening session of an annual conference of senior officials of the Prevention and Combating of Corruption Bureau (PCCB), he said public procurement entities had been seen to be a hotspot for misuse of public funds.

Recent reports from the Public Procurement Regulatory Authority (PPRA) reviewing a total of 44 institutions indicate that graft plays a major role in tendering processes, he asserted.

"Out of 17 floated bids in public institutions, procurement procedures for purchases billed at 62.27bn/- bypassed tender specifications and issued to entities through predisposition, he said.

Other qualified bidders were either sidelined or purposely snubbed, he stated, elaborating that the PPRA report showed that public contracts valued at over 54bn/- were signed without endorsement of the Attorney General's office, showing explicit graft intentions.

The annual general meeting of PCCB heads of department runs under the

## Girls take 'lion's share' of space in boarding schools

Boys outnumber girls in vocational schools by far

By Guardian Correspondent

A TOTAL of 6,810 fresh secondary school students join national boarding schools early next year where 5,199 are girls, given special priority, and the remaining 1,611 are boys.

Mohamed Mchengerwa, the Regional Administration and Local Governments state minister in the President's Office (PO-RALG), made this affirmation at a press briefing in Dar es Salaam yesterday on secondary school sections on the basis of achievement in the primary school leaving examinations this year.

A total of 809 students were selected for boarding schools for high achievers, of which 329 are girls and 480 are boys, while for vocational schools 1,174 students were selected, with a sharp imbalance of 197 girls and 977 boys, the minister indicated.

A total of 974,332 candidates who completed primary education, with 525,225 girls and 449,107 boys, are set to join government secondary schools to start Form One early next year.

This includes 3,067 pupils with special needs of whom 1,402 are girls and 1,665 are boys, on the basis of remarks by Setting out the results and format of selection, he said

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## Avoid despair, Mbowe advises party members

By Correspondent Elizabeth Zaya

CHADEMA national chairman Freeman Mbowe has cautioned against despair or desperation as the party approaches its national leadership elections.

Launching the party's offices for Kinondoni District in Dar es Salaam yesterday, he said that party members need to remain hopeful and maintain a spirit of

courage and resilience.

In his eagerly awaited remarks, he emphasized that challenges facing the party should not be a source of discouragement for members as power struggles in any organisation or setting are a natural part of life.

Every institution must go through such difficulties, he said, underlining that political activities should not lead to despair.

"Let us not allow feelings of hopelessness to take over; instead, let us remain courageous and determined. If we allow despair to dominate, we begin to seek shortcuts and we should not be looking for shortcuts," he remarked.

He called on the party leaders and members to uphold discipline within the organization. "We must build a cohesive family,

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**The government has issued a go ahead for employing 1,190 new members of staff to reinforce the PCCB workforce**

theme of 'prevention of corruption is yours and my obligation,' while on a brighter side the bureau affirmed saving 172.3bn/- during calendar 2023.

It is money that could have been lost through embezzlement in public offices and institutions, the report noted, pointing at cases of corruption as also tied to bureaucracy, poor service provision, laziness and carefree attitudes among senior public officials.

The VP insisted listed spheres where fraud and bribery are prevalent, including the police, land offices, licensing and permit issuing offices, while raising a red alert on the general election process awaited next year.

Francis Chalamila, the PCCB director general, had earlier said that for years the bureau was being constrained, lacking facilities to reach out to remote areas.

He praised President Samia Suluhu Hassan for disbursing 30.9bn/- to the bureau to purchase 88 new vehicles, which will enable officials to visit all sorts of places to closely investigate infrastructural projects being undertaken in various districts and regions.

The government has issued a go ahead for employing 1,190 new members of staff to reinforce the PCCB workforce, he added.



Mohamed Mchengerwa, Minister of State in the President's Office (Regional Administration and Local Governments), briefs journalists in Dar es Salaam yesterday on progress in the selection of students to join Form One in 2025. He is with Permanent Secretary Adolf Nduguru (R) and Deputy Minister of State Zainab Katimba. Photo: Correspondent Imani Nathaniel



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## Girls take 'lion's share' of space in boarding schools

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that the selection for Form One enrollment had candidates who scored 121 to 300 overall marks in the primary school leaving examination were selected.

Prospective students are being directed to boarding schools for some and day schools for the majority, with the boarding schools being reserved for those scoring at highest levels, vocational schools and national boarding schools.

The latter comprise some of the best schools where those eligible are allocated on the basis of a national distribution criterion, where regional equity criteria are observed.

Pupils with high academic performance are assigned to schools based on each region's number of exam candidates, ensuring an equitable distribution of students across districts, he said.

He listed the best schools as including Msalato, Mzumbe, Kilakala, Ilboru, Tabora Girls and Tabora Boys, while vocational schools selection of students is also tied to regional distribution.

The more notable ones are Tangata Tech, Moshi Tech, Musoma Tech, Bwira Boys, Ifunda Tech, Iyunga Tech, Mtwara Tech, Mwadui Tech and Chato Tech, he stated.

The national distribution of students for boarding schools follows the same procedure, ensuring that each district receives its share based on the number of school leaving candidates, he said.

At the same time 965,539 students join day schools, where 519,500 are girls and 446,039 are boys, with the minister affirming that the government has made thorough preparations to ensure that all students who passed the 2024 leaving exam are enrolled in secondary school by early next month.

"As a result of these preparations, all 974,332 students will begin the first term of the 2025 academic year on January 13," he declared.

Parents and guardians need to ensure that their children are prepared early, to avoid delays in reporting to school. Additionally, local government authorities have to ensure that all necessary arrangements are completed on time to insert the new students, he added.

## 2024 investments hit \$7.7bn record

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proactive steps the government has taken," he said, underlining that investments this year are expected to create 248,078 direct jobs.

A total of 768 new investors were registered while the rest were expanding existing investments, he said, highlighting that of the registered projects, 290 are owned by Tanzanians who have capitalized on the improved investment environment.

A total of 140 investments are foreign investors' venture projects and 445 involve Tanzanian project movers as shareholders, he said, noting that this year has been a game-changer for the investment sector. The increase in the number of projects owned by Tanzanians is a clear indicator of progress, he said, recalling that back in July TIC reported registering 707 projects pegged at \$6.561bn for the 2023/24 financial year.

That was a notable increase compared to 369 projects valued at \$5.394bn during 2022/23, with up-

wards of 38.19percent of the registered projects were owned by Tanzanians. About 42.86 percent of the projects were registered by foreigners and 19.38percent joint ventures.

The projects are expected to create 226,585 jobs, a significant increase from 53,871 jobs projected to have been generated the previous year.

Once again, the manufacturing sector led with 313 projects worth \$2.462bn, followed by transportation with 128 projects valued at \$1.035bn, he added.



**The increase in the number of projects owned by Tanzanians is a clear indicator of progress**



Finance Minister Dr. Mwigulu Nchemba (in tie), currently on a working tour of Oman, has an audience in Muscat yesterday with Oman's Tax Authority Chairman Nasser Khamis Al-Jashmir (2nd-R) on ways to strengthen cooperation between Oman and Tanzania chiefly in taxation so as to facilitate business operations for the benefit of both countries. With them are Tanzania's Ambassador to Oman, Fatma Rajab (L) and the Director of Tax Policy and Planning at Oman's Tax Authority, Hamed Al-Hashmi. Photo: Special Correspondent

## Avoid despair, Mbowe advises party members

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and a family cannot be run if insults keep being heard," he said.

At the Kinondoni meeting, the party leader emphasised on party members to keep faith in the party and to focus on their shared goals, cautioning that there was a danger for party unity to break down.

"If we disagree on ideas, let us not view those who think differently as enemies," he said, vowing to keep building, strengthening, helping and guiding one another, "to ensure that the party emerges stronger tomorrow than it was yesterday."

Chadema has evolved over time

and members need to keep developing it while remaining united, he said, affirming that the party was once for just a few people, but it has become a national party.

Some of its followers are Chadema members and others are not, but they all see Chadema as the last hope for this nation, he said, projecting a situation where the party grow stronger and the other onlookers join it.

"Ultimately, we will form a powerful movement greater than anything imaginable and that is when our dream of leading this nation will begin to come true," he told the gathering.

Observers saw the remark as di-

rected at vice chairman (Mainland) Tundu Lissu, that his energetic and confrontational drive to seek power could rob the party of a chance to realise its dream of becoming powerful and capable of winning elections.

John Mnyika, the party's secretary general, used the function to announce the process and timetable for the party's top leadership elections and to various wings or councils.

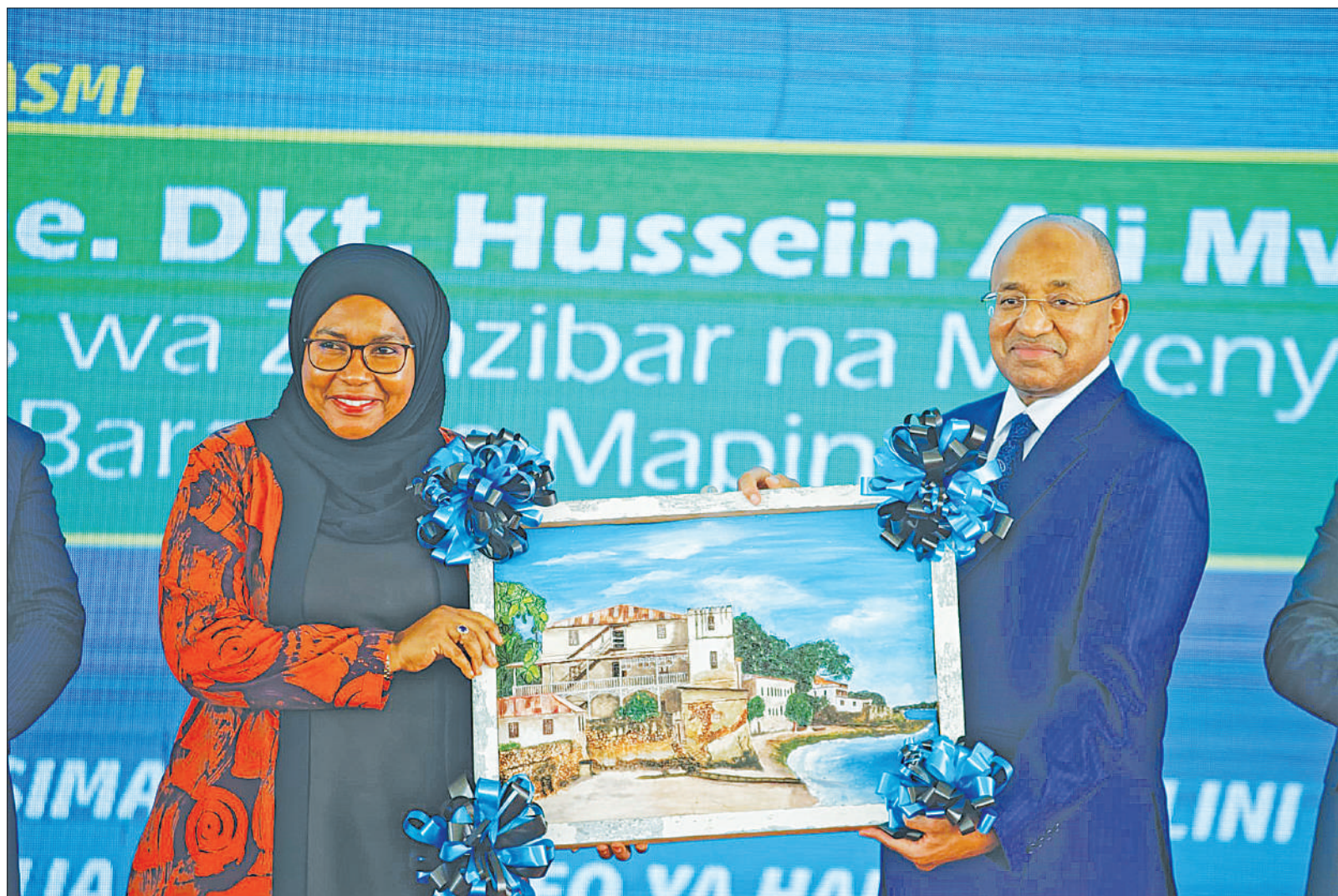
Prospective candidates can begin collecting and submitting nomination forms for various positions right up to January 5.

The key positions are national chairman, vice-chairman (Main-

land) and vice-chairman (Zanzibar), secretary-general and for the elders' council (Mainland). Others are deputy secretary general (Mainland), deputy secretary general (Zanzibar), and treasurer.

There are also five membership positions to the central committee (four from the Mainland and one from Zanzibar), as well as 20 members to the national congress (15 from the Mainland and five from Zanzibar).

He largely dismissed allegations made by the declared chairmanship contender on a decline in integrity within the party, demanding that the claims "be formally submitted to his office for investigation."



Zanzibar President Dr Hussein Ali Mwinyi presents a souvenir photo to Zanzibar Chief Secretary Zena Ahmed Said at a special anniversary event held at Zanzibar State House yesterday. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

By Guardian Correspondent, Njombe

AT least three people at Kiwe Village, Mawengi Ward in Ludewa District, Njombe Region have died after being struck by lightning.

Speaking to this paper yesterday Njombe Regional Police Commander Mahamoud Banga said that the incident occurred on December 15 at around 11 p.m.

He identified as Sixbeth Haule (58), Emilian Mlelwa (55) and Lufina Ngailo (52).

Commander Banga explained that at the time of the incident, there was a downpour. The vic-

## Three killed by lightning strike in Ludewa District

tims had taken shelter in Lufina's house. They were struck by lightning, and all three died instantly.

"The cause of the tragedy was heavy rain accompanied by lightning, which is ongoing in Ludewa District," said Commander Banga.

He issued a public safety warning, urging people to avoid areas prone to lightning, as it can result

in fatal accidents.

Commander Banga further emphasised the need for continued education on lightning encouraging the installation of lightning rods in homes.

"If a house is connected to electricity, it's essential to install sturdy lightning rods so that they can prevent damage when lightning

strikes. We will continue educating the public on taking precautions to minimize lightning-related risks," said Commander Banga.

He also advised farmers that, when they see signs of rain while in the fields, it is safer to leave and go home, particularly in mountainous areas where lightning strikes are more common.



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## Tanzania affirms commitment to generation equality platform

By Guardian Reporter, Zanzibar

CHAIRPERSON of the National Advisory Committee on the Generation Equality Forum (GEF) Angellah Kairuki has reaffirmed Tanzania's strong commitment to advancing gender equality, noting the country's significant role in the platform since its establishment in 2021.

She made these remarks in Zanzibar over the weekend during the launch of a training programme aimed at enhancing the capacity of private sector coordinators involved in the GEF.

Kairuki commended Tanzania's leadership in global gender equality initiatives, with President Samia Suluhu Hassan serving as the international leader of the platform and Zanzibar's President, Dr Hussein Ali Mwinyi, actively championing the 'He For She' initiative.

She also emphasized that Tanzania is at the forefront of economic rights and gender equality globally, noting that it is one of the few countries with both a national action plan and an advisory committee dedicated to gender equality.

"Most notably, the government has appointed local government authority officials as GEF coordinators across 31 regions and 184 district councils, both on the mainland and in Zanzibar," Kairuki said, underscoring Tanzania's extensive commitment to the platform's goals.

Kairuki further highlighted Zanzibar's unique position, stressing that despite its distinct economic and social context, the island presents an exceptional opportunity to integrate the priorities of the Gender Equality Platform with its local development agenda.

In her address at the training's opening session, the Minister for Community Development, Gender, Elderly, and Children, Riziki Pembe Juma, stressed that gender equality is critical for achieving inclusive and sustainable development across economic, social, cultural, and modern spheres.

She explained that the government recognizes the value of such training in driving significant change in gender

equality and empowering women, with the Gender Equality Platform standing out as a global initiative designed to fast-track investment and the implementation of gender equality measures.

"The Gender Equality Platform embodies international agreements that commit to gender equality in diverse sectors such as the economy, education, decent employment, leadership, budget management, science and technology, and social welfare," minister Pembe noted.

She added that the training would equip participants to foster accountability, professionalism, and transparency in managing national programmes aimed at achieving both national and international goals.

Minister Pembe acknowledged the successful implementation of the Gender Equality Generation programme but also pointed out the challenges that still need to be addressed for more effective execution in line with institutional action plans. She urged institutions to submit reports as required, ensuring the accuracy of data and providing a clear overview of the programme's implementation.

"It is important for all institutions to contribute to the success of the GEF programme," minister Pembe emphasized. "Gender equality is not the responsibility of the Ministry alone, but a collective effort across all sectors to ensure that we emerge as leaders in the Gender Equality Generation."

The Deputy Representative of UN Women Tanzania, Katherine Gifford, also spoke at the event, highlighting the pivotal role of these institutions in shaping policies and social norms that advance gender equality. She stressed the importance of preparing future leaders with the knowledge and skills necessary to drive gender equality forward.

"UN Women recognises the crucial role of institutions in addressing gender equality. We look forward to exchanging experiences and strengthening relationships between stakeholders in various sectors, including the private sector," Gifford said, emphasizing the need for collaboration in advancing the global gender equality agenda.

## Dr Mwinyi reaffirms commitment to tackling development challenges

By Guardian Reporter, Zanzibar

ZANZIBAR President Dr Hussein Ali Mwinyi has reaffirmed his government's determination to implement robust strategies to address the various challenges hindering the island's development, including corruption, misuse of public funds, negligence, and disregard for the law.

Speaking at a ceremony yesterday held at the State House to mark the second anniversary of the President's Office Monitoring and Government Performance Agency (ZPDB), Dr Mwinyi emphasised the government's commitment to improving public service delivery across key sectors. The event was attended by a range of senior officials and stakeholders.

Dr Mwinyi explained that the ZPDB was established with the primary goal of monitoring and overseeing government performance. The agency, he said, plays a crucial role in ensuring efficiency and effectiveness in sectors such as health, education, water, electricity, economic empowerment, culture, sports, and transportation.

He went on to clarify that the ZPDB is not unique to Zanzibar. Similar agencies exist in countries across Africa and beyond, including Tunisia, Kenya, Zambia, Rwanda, Malawi, Malaysia, and the UK's PDB, all of which aim to bolster government performance and help achieve national development objectives. "Institutional structures like the ZPDB are integral to good governance. They exist in many countries, helping governments improve service delivery and meet development goals," Dr Mwinyi stated.

The President also expressed confidence in the ZPDB's accomplishments over the past two years, praising the agency's staff for their professionalism, skills, and hard work under the leadership of its chief executive.

"I am pleased with the work that has been done so far, and I have full trust in the competence of the ZPDB's staff," Dr Mwinyi said, adding that the agency had successfully managed and prioritized sectors critical to the wel-

fare of Zanzibar's citizens, including education, infrastructure, empowerment, tourism, and roads.

"Timely access to services is essential for development and a key indicator of good governance," the President added. "We must continue to ensure that our citizens receive the quality services they deserve in all sectors."

He further called on all stakeholders - including government ministries, non-governmental organizations, and development partners - to cooperate in the implementation of the government's strategic projects. He emphasised the need for continued collaboration between ministries to achieve the country's development goals.

However, the President raised concerns that some government officials and employees have been obstructing the ZPDB's efforts. He stated that reports he had received indicated a lack of full cooperation, which is hampering the agency's ability to monitor projects effectively. "This behavior is unacceptable. There can be no place for such actions, and those responsible must face consequences, without favoritism," he said. "The success of this institution depends on the cooperation of everyone involved. All public servants have a duty to fulfill their responsibilities to ensure Zanzibar continues its progress in economic growth and social welfare," he added.

The Chief Executive Officer of ZPDB, Prof. Mohammed Hafidh Khalfan, also addressed the challenges faced by the agency. He noted that some leaders have been hindering the agency's work by withholding the necessary cooperation, resulting in delays in monitoring key projects.

"There are even instances where some leaders try to interfere with our operations. This is counterproductive," Prof. Khalfan said, adding that such attitudes prevent the agency from achieving its objectives.

He emphasized that ZPDB staff should not be seen as fault-finders, but as partners working to ensure the effective and transparent implementation of government projects.



Constitution and Legal Affairs minister Dr Damas Ndumbaro arrives at Magomeni in Kilosa District yesterday to launch the Mama Samia Legal Aid campaign in Morogoro Region yesterday. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

## Govt: Tanzania to increase average income by 2050

By Correspondent Maulid Mmbaga

MINISTER of State in the President's Office (Planning and Investment), Prof. Kitila Mkumbo, has revealed that by 2050, the country aims to increase the average income of every Tanzanian to five times from its current level, reaching \$4,700 (approximately 11m/-) per person, up from the current 2.8m/-.

Speaking at a meeting in Dar es Salaam with editors and media owners, which aimed to review the draft of the National Development Vision 2050, Prof. Kitila outlined the measure as one of the key targets for the country's long-term development agenda.

"The vision is to transform Tanzania into a middle- and upper-income nation by 2050, with a diversified, resilient, and inclusive economy," Prof. Kitila stated.

He explained that the goal is part of a broader strategy to create prosperity for all Tanzanians.

He emphasised that the vision

also seeks to eradicate poverty, particularly among vulnerable groups such as women, youth, and people with disabilities.

Additionally, the plan aims to strengthen regional economies and foster a high standard of living, inclusive governance, and human resource capacity across various sectors.

Prof. Kitila outlined others goals as part of the National Development Vision 2050, as eradicating poverty, especially for marginalised groups like women, youth, and people with disabilities, ensuring a high standard of living and prosperity for all Tanzanians, building human resource capacity across all sectors of the economy, establishing a transparent and accountable system of governance that guarantees lasting peace, security, and freedom, and creating resilience to climate change through sustainable management of natural resources.

"We aim to ensure that our development continues in a sustainable

and uninterrupted manner. The vision is rooted in the principles of national unity, justice, dignity, and democracy," Prof. Kitila added.

He stressed that the success of this vision depends on the collective responsibility of citizens, communities, and the nation to uphold democratic values, protect the constitution, and preserve the country's cultural and natural resources.

Prof. Kitila also emphasised that all feedback received from stakeholders, including the media, will be incorporated into the final version of the vision.

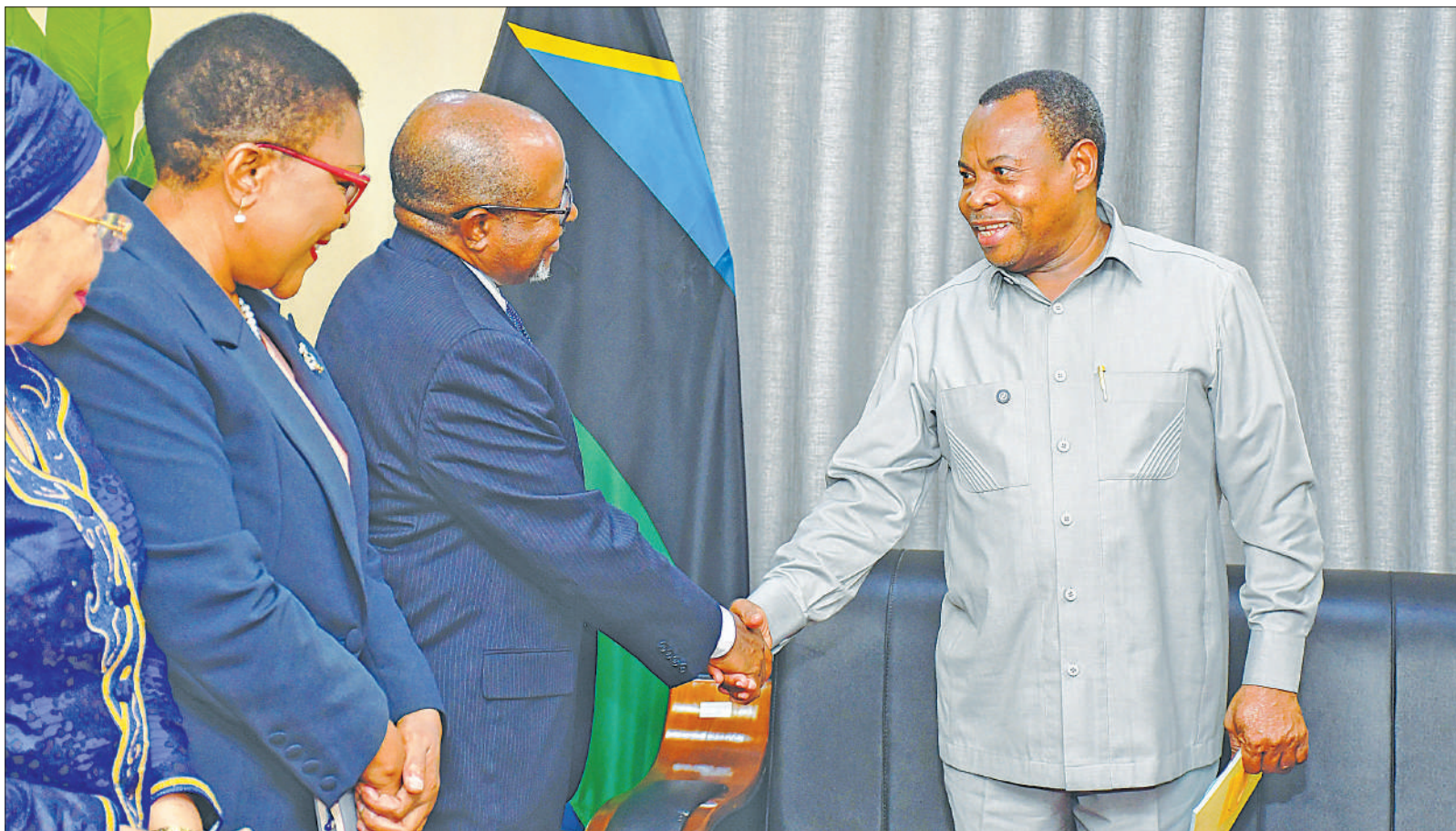
Deodatus Balile, Chairman of the Tanzania Editors Forum (TEF), highlighted the predictive nature of the vision but emphasized the importance of ensuring that national development goals are realistic and measurable, rather than hypothetical.

"We must ensure that these goals are not just aspirations, but have concrete, achievable targets," Balile said.

Neville Meena, a member of TEF, suggested that by 2050, any investor or businessman looking to operate in Tanzania should specify how their investments align with the national development vision. "We need to create a system where investments directly contribute to the goals outlined in the Vision 2050," Meena advised.

Peter Nyenje, another TEF member, emphasized the importance of legal protection for the vision, suggesting that the plan should be enshrined in law to ensure its implementation. "It's crucial that this vision is not subject to changes based on political cycles or leadership shifts," Nyenje said.

Manyerere Jackson, also a TEF member, underscored the need for a constitutional framework to support the vision. "Relying on the goodwill of the government leader will not be enough. We need a legal framework to ensure continuity and adherence to the national development goals," Jackson argued.



Zanzibar's First Vice President, Othman Masoud Othman (R), pictured in Zanzibar yesterday exchanging greetings with the Chairman of the President's Tax Reforms Commission, Ombeni Sefue. A delegation from the commission was on a continuing tour, seeking views on the taxation system in Tanzania and how to improve it. Photo: ZFWPO

## Rebranded Tashico plans operations to the Far East

By Correspondent Wilhelm Mulinda,

Mwanza

CHANGING Marine Services Co. Ltd (MSCL) to Tanzania Shipping Co. (TASHICO) was part of a broader transformation as the previous name did not accurately reflect the company's expanded maritime activities.

Eric Hamissi, the firm's managing director, said at a gathering of journalists and media stakeholders lately that rebranding of the company was meant to underline that shipping is its core business, "so it's important that our name mirrors what we do."

The name TASHICO not only reflects the company's core opera-

tions but also helps project an image of Tanzania when its vessels operate in various water bodies, he added.

The company is set to begin the construction of vessels in the upcoming financial year, aimed at expanding operations into deep-sea routes to the Far East.

The company is currently finalising a feasibility study to determine the appropriate vessel types and sizes, which will expand its operational reach and capacity.

Speaking recently, the director shared that the company's long-term goal is to become a major player in both lake and ocean-based maritime operations, significantly contributing to the nation's economy through increased divi-

dends.

Hamissi explained that the rebranding is just one element of a series of changes aimed at strengthening the company's presence in the maritime industry and contributing to national development.

In addition to the name change, TASHICO is modernising its operations through digital transformation. Key initiatives include the digitalisation of ticket issuance, revenue tracking, fuel consumption monitoring, and spare parts procurement.

Hamissi also outlined the company's ongoing infrastructure projects, including the construction of a new shipyard on Lake Tanganyika. The company is also working on two major cargo vessels: one

with a capacity of 3,500 tonnes for Lake Tanganyika, and another with a 3,000-tonne capacity for Lake Victoria. Additionally, TASHICO is nearing completion of the MV Mwanza, a passenger vessel with the capacity to carry 1,200 passengers and 400 tonnes of cargo.

The company is also in the process of rehabilitating seven vessels that currently serve Lake Victoria and Lake Tanganyika, aiming to improve the reliability of marine transport services on the important water bodies.

With these developments, TASHICO is positioning itself to become a key player in both regional and international maritime operations, contributing to Tanzania's broader economic growth.



## Project to train 5,400 farmers in Tabora, Singida and Mwanza

By Guardian Correspondent, Singida

THE Ministry of Agriculture, in collaboration with 'Trees For The Future', initiative has launched a new project aimed at strengthening the capacity of agricultural colleges to provide training that will directly benefit 5,400 farmers in the regions of Tabora, Singida and Mwanza.

The initiative, designed to enhance the livelihoods of local farmers, is set to begin in January 2025.

Fredrick Mngube, Director of Trees For The Future Tanzania, announced the details of the project during its official launch yesterday here.

He explained that the project will focus on improving agricultural practices through forest gardening techniques, and will be implemented in selected districts within the three regions.

"In Tabora, the project will be rolled out in Uyuui and Urambo districts; in Singida, it will be implemented in Ikungu and Singida districts; and in Mwanza, it will target Magu and Misungwi districts," Mngube said.

The project will begin with training experts from three agricultural colleges: Tumbi College in Tabora, Ukiruguru College in Mwanza, and Mbono College in Kigoma. These experts will undergo specialized training in forest gardening techniques, after which they will pass on their knowledge to extension officers. These officers will then train farmer leaders, forming groups of 30 farmers each. The project aims to work with five wards in each district, with the ultimate goal of reaching 900 farmers per district, totaling 5,400 farmers across the three regions.

Mngube further emphasized the project's long-term impact, stating, "The project will run for five years, and we are confident that through this training, farmers will be equipped with the skills needed to improve their agricultural practices, boost productivity, and adapt to the

challenges posed by climate change."

He also took the opportunity to thank President Dr. Samia Suluhu Hassan for her support in empowering extension officers with tools like motorcycles, which will aid them in reaching farmers in remote areas. "With these resources, extension officers will be better equipped to assist farmers in solving existing challenges and implementing new techniques," Mngube added.

Godfrey Edward, Assistant Director for Agricultural Training Services at the Ministry of Agriculture, highlighted the importance of the project in supporting the ministry's broader goals. "This initiative will play a key role in the implementation of various ministry plans, particularly the comprehensive plan to reform the agricultural sector," Edward said. He noted that the project aligns with the ministry's short-term agenda, which includes a 10-point plan aimed at increasing agricultural growth by 10% by 2030.

"For agricultural productivity to increase, farmers must adopt new techniques that are resilient to the impacts of climate change," Edward explained. "This project will not only equip farmers with practical knowledge but also contribute to the sustainability of the agricultural sector in the face of evolving environmental challenges."

Edward emphasized the importance of close monitoring to ensure the success of the project.

"The Ministry of Agriculture, in collaboration with Trees For The Future, is committed to achieving the objectives set out for this initiative, and we will work closely to ensure that the goals are met."

The five-year project is expected to have a significant impact on agricultural productivity in the three regions, helping farmers enhance their livelihoods, improve food security, and contribute to the overall economic development of Tanzania.



Members of the Akili Platform Tanzania staff picture late last week picking tree seedlings for planting at the Huruma Children's Centre of Vision Tanzania in Urambo District, Tabora Region, as a year-end goodwill gesture. Photo: Guardian Photographer

By Guardian Reporter

A legal challenge by Swiss-based Company M/S SICPA SA against the Public Procurement Appeals Authority (PPAA) of Tanzania has hit a significant hurdle.

The High Court in Dar es Salaam recently dismissed SICPA's application for judicial review, affirming the decision by PPAA to annul the fuel marking tender awarded to SICPA by the Tanzania Bureau of Standards (TBS).

In her ruling, Judge Elizabeth Mkwizu stated that the PPAA's decision was "lawful and rational" and based on sound legal grounds. SICPA's judicial review was dismissed with costs.

"The application is unmeritorious," Judge Mkwizu declared, adding that SICPA failed to meet the eligibility criteria in the tender process, notably by not disclosing vital information, including a corruption-related conviction in Switzerland.

## Switzerland's SICPA SA faces setback in fuel tender dispute

SICPA had been fined CHF 81 million (over 216 billion Tanzanian shillings) for its employees' involvement in corrupt practices with foreign public officials between 2008 and 2015. This penalty, confirmed by a Swiss court in April 2023, was central to the decision.

Judge Mkwizu emphasised that SICPA was required to disclose this penalty in its tender submission, as per the terms of the tender document, since it was issued within the disclosure period.

Additionally, SICPA had argued that the Public Procurement Appeals Authority (PPAA) acted "ultra vires" by allowing an appeal from the American company Authentix Inc, despite their complaint being filed late. However, the judge ruled that PPAA had acted within its man-

date and that the appeal was valid, in accordance with Rule 13(5) of the Public Procurement Appeal Rules of 2014.

The PPAA's ruling had earlier determined that TBS had made errors in evaluating the fuel marking tender, which included the supply of fuel marker plastic cylinders, metal jerricans, and other systems. The appeal specifically questioned SICPA's eligibility, given its failure to disclose the corruption penalty in the tender documents.

The PPAA also reviewed the penalty order issued against SICPA by the Swiss Attorney General, affirming that since SICPA did not dispute the penalty and failed to file an objection, the penalty was final and enforceable. Moreover, the Appeals Authority rejected SICPA's

claim that the penalty should not be disclosed as it concerned employees rather than the company itself. The Authority emphasized that the company was vicariously liable for its employees' actions.

The tender process, which involved three international companies—SICPA SA, Authentix Inc, and Global Fluids International (T) Limited—was initially launched by TBS on April 24, 2023. SICPA's bid was accepted despite the challenges raised by the other companies, but the PPAA ultimately ruled that the process had been flawed due to the company's non-disclosure of its legal issues.

With the ruling now in place, TBS is required to restart the tender process, ensuring compliance with the law and full transparency.

## TCRA awards laptops to maths challenge winners

By Guardian Reporter

THE Tanzania Communications Regulatory Authority (TCRA) has presented laptop prizes to five winners of the African Mathematics Competition held in August this year in South Africa, which brought together participants from more than 25 African countries.

The competition, organised by the Tanzania Mathematical Association under the chairmanship of Dr. Saidi Sima, saw Tanzania represented by university and secondary school students. A total of five participants represented the country, with four of them winning bronze medals by securing third place overall.

To facilitate Tanzania's participation in this competition, TCRA sponsored the delegation by providing travel tickets and creating various programs to encourage participation, especially among girls. Of the five medal winners, three were female, a significant motivation for promoting girls' interest in science subjects.

Recognising the importance of mathematics in national development, particularly in technology and the digital economy, TCRA decided to reward the winners with laptops to assist in their studies and inspire other students to participate in similar competitions and pursue Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) subjects, including Engineering and ICT.

While handing over the laptops to a representative of the winners, accompanied by the chairman of the Mathematical Association and lecturers from the University of Dar es Salaam, TCRA's Head of Communications and Public Relations, Rolf Kibaja, emphasized TCRA's contribution to the government's efforts under the Sixth Phase Administration to foster a digital economy by encouraging students to excel in science subjects.

"It's a pleasure for TCRA to see us achieving international success. This reflects everyone's involvement in the journey toward a digital

economy," he said.

Ambrose Rutashobya, the student representative who received the laptops on behalf of the winners, expressed gratitude to TCRA for facilitating their participation and providing the laptops, which he believes will further motivate their academic excellence.

"...On behalf of my colleagues, I would like to thank TCRA for these gifts and for recognising our efforts and the value of mathematics as a rewarding discipline," he said, also urging other Tanzanian students to work hard in all subjects, particularly mathematics.

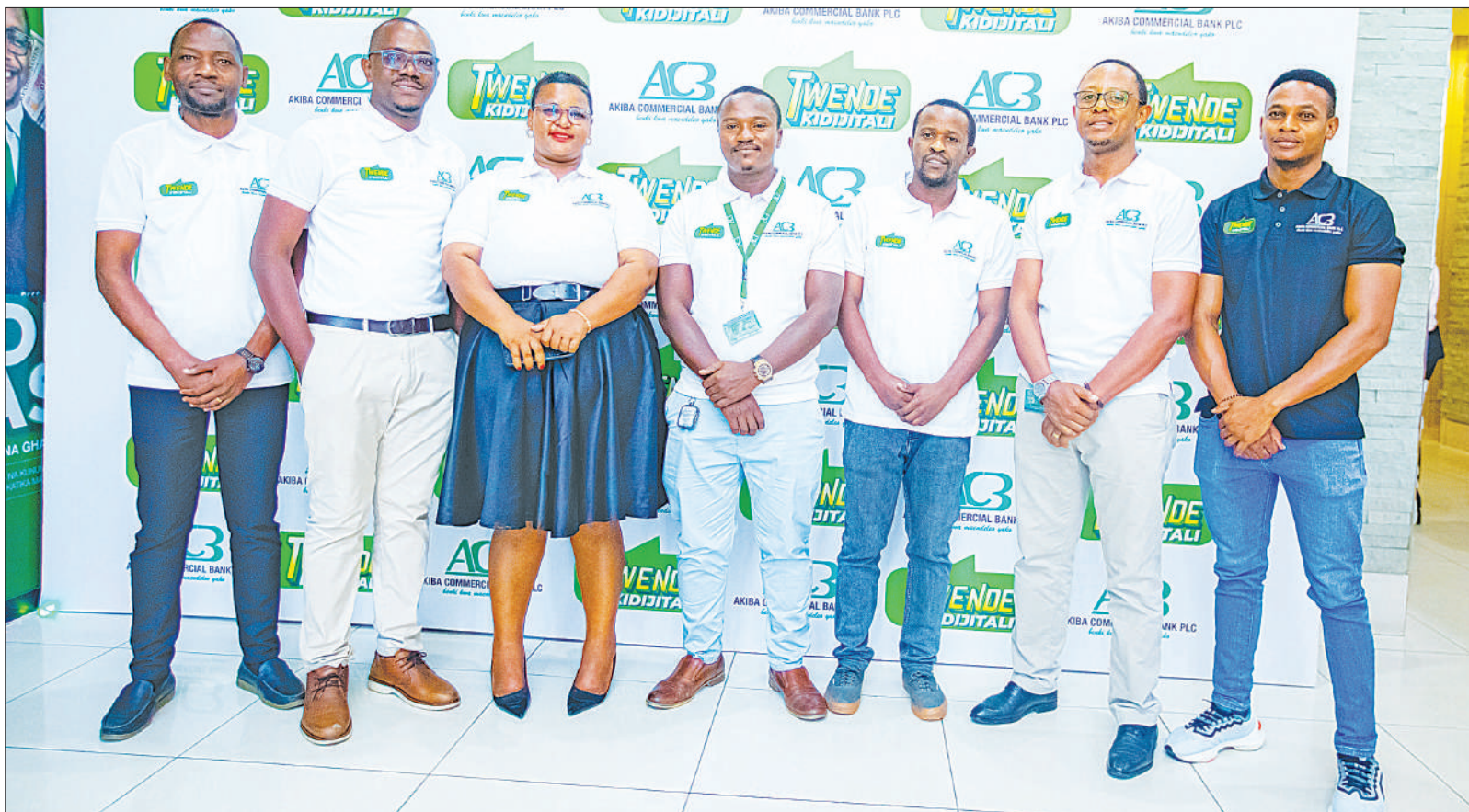
Dr. Saidi Sima, chairman of the Mathematical Association, also thanked TCRA for awarding the five laptops to the winners, emphasizing their significance in helping students with their studies and exploring innovations that can bring professional solutions.

"I would like to thank TCRA for this initiative, which values the contribution of mathematics and supports these students. I believe these laptops will assist them with various academic programs..."

Highlighting the success of girls in mathematics, Dr. Agneta Mandia, a Mathematics Lecturer at the University of Dar es Salaam, encouraged girls to embrace and excel in the subject. She applauded the three female participants who won medals among the four awarded to Tanzanian participants.

"I know that girls have the potential to excel in mathematics and science subjects, so I urge them not to fear but to believe in their ability to succeed," she said.

TCRA has been at the forefront of promoting education in Tanzania by establishing digital clubs that serve as a platform for students from primary schools to universities. These clubs aim to address challenges in mathematics and science performance by creating opportunities for participation, innovation, and collaborative learning, inspiring students to develop a passion for STEM subjects, including Mathematics, Science, Engineering, and ICT.



Members of the Akiba Commercial Bank Plc staff come together in Dar es Salaam recently in launching 'Twende Kidijitali', a digital transformation drive. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

By Special Correspondent

## Climate shocks, humanitarian crises and political divisions plague Central Africa

CENTRAL African nations are grappling with a complex web of crises that include climate shocks, humanitarian emergencies, and deep political divisions, according to a senior United Nations official.

Abdou Abarry, the UN Special Representative for Central Africa, addressed the Security Council over the weekend, calling for renewed global solidarity with countries in the region as they confront these challenges.

Abarry highlighted that extreme weather events and natural disasters have displaced over three million people across Central Africa this year, exacerbating already fragile socio-economic conditions. This trend underscores the urgent need for stronger climate action, as climate shocks continue to impact communities already struggling with poverty, conflict, and instability.

"The Congo Basin forest, the 'second green lung' of the planet, absorbs between 1 to 1.2 billion tons of carbon dioxide annually and plays a critical role in global climate regu-

lation," Abarry stated, emphasizing the region's strategic importance in the fight against climate change. Despite this, international climate financing remains insufficient, with less than 15% of commitments being met, leaving the region vulnerable to both environmental and humanitarian crises.

The humanitarian situation in the region has worsened due to mass displacements and emerging health threats. One notable challenge is the Mpox outbreak in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), which has strained local health systems already burdened by ongoing conflicts.

Abarry called on the international community to increase its efforts, warning that the current pace of assistance is falling far short of meeting the "staggering needs" in the region.

He also updated the Security Council on recent and upcoming elections in the region. In July,

Rwanda held its legislative elections, and several countries, including Burundi, Cameroon, Gabon, and the Central African Republic (CAR), are set to hold elections in 2025. Congo and São Tomé and Príncipe are also scheduled to vote in 2026.

Notably, countries like Chad, Cameroon, São Tomé and Príncipe, Gabon, and CAR have sought electoral assistance from the United Nations, reflecting the region's growing trust in the UN's support for democratic processes.

On the security front, Abarry stressed the ongoing threats posed by insurgent groups, particularly in the Lake Chad Basin, where Boko Haram affiliates continue to launch attacks. A recent joint UN mission called for strengthening the Multinational Joint Task Force, which plays a crucial role in countering these insurgencies and ensuring regional security.

He also praised efforts to resolve

regional disputes peacefully. For example, Gabon and Equatorial Guinea have referred their border dispute to the International Court of Justice (ICJ), and high-level dialogues are underway between Chad and CAR to address border security issues.

Looking toward 2025, Abarry outlined key priorities for the region, which include securing increased international funding for climate resilience, humanitarian aid, and peacebuilding initiatives. The UN's Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA) will continue to support these efforts, with a focus on strengthening regional stability and addressing pressing humanitarian challenges.

In February 2025, the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), in collaboration with UNOCA, will hold a summit to tackle the interconnected issues of climate change, humanitarian needs, and peace and security.





Prof Kitila Mkumbo (C), Minister of State in the President's Office (Planning and Investment), follows recommendations editors and other journalists made on the draft National Development Vision 2050 at a meeting held in Dar es Salaam yesterday for the purpose. Photo: Correspondent Joseph Mwendapole

## Police hold three over killing of CCM cadre

By Correspondent Francis Godwin

THREE people have been arrested by Police in Iringa Region on suspicion of the murder of Christina Kibiki, the former secretary of the ruling party CCM in Kilolo District.

Kibiki was killed at her home after being attacked by unknown assailants on the night of November 13, this year.

In a statement to the media yesterday, Iringa Regional Police Commander Allan Bukumbi confirmed that Police have continued their search, detaining several individuals for questioning before releasing them, while three suspects remain in custody.

RPC Bukumbi said that investigations are ongoing, and

there are additional individuals they expect to arrest for questioning. Once the investigation is complete, the suspects will be taken to court for further legal action.

Bukumbi also urged the public to continue cooperating with the Police by reporting criminals, as maintaining collaboration between Police and the public which is essential in reducing crime. He noted that citizens have been instrumental in exposing criminal activities.

Meanwhile, Iringa Police are searching for Police Officer F. 4987 Sergeant Rogas, stationed at the Ipogolo police station, and militia officer Thomas Mkembela, in connection with the murder of 23-year-old Nashon Kiyeyu, a

resident of Nyamhanga, Kitwiru Ward, Iringa Municipality.

Commander Bukumbi explained that the incident occurred on December 14, when Sergeant Rogas, in collaboration with militia officer Mkembela, arrested Nashon Kiyeyu on suspicion of phone theft and allegedly attacked him until he lost consciousness.

He added that Sergeant Rogas had received information from an anonymous source accusing Kiyeyu of stealing a phone, which led to his arrest by Rogas and Mkembela.

Allan Bukumbi stated that after the arrest, the suspect was reportedly beaten. When the officers noticed he had lost consciousness, they took him to a private hospital

before transferring him to Iringa Regional Referral Hospital, where it was pronounced dead.

Realising that the suspect had died from the beating, the officers fled the scene. The police in Iringa are continuing their intense search for the suspects and are disseminating information to other regions.

Bukumbi has urged anyone who sees Sergeant Rogas or militia officer Thomas Mkembela to report them so they can be apprehended and face legal action.

He stated that upon receiving the news, he went to the station but could not find his son or the officer who arrested him. After asking, it appeared no record had been made of his son's arrest.

## Z'bar pledges continued support for farmers' productivity enhancement

By Guardian Reporter, Zanzibar

ZANZIBAR'S Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation, Natural Resources and Livestock, through the Agricultural Research Institute (ZARI), has reaffirmed its commitment to working alongside development partners to support farmers in increasing crop production and improving their incomes.

Salum Faki Hamad, head of the Food Crop Research Division at ZARI, made the remarks over the weekend during a training session on fertiliser processing held in Kizimbani, Western 'A' District, Unguja.

The session focused on transforming the common raw material, Urea, into highly effective granules for farmers in the Unguja area.

Hamad explained that the primary goal of the training was to equip farmers with the knowledge and skills necessary to implement Urea Deep Placement (UDP) technology. This technology is designed to enhance food crop production and improve agricultural productivity across the region.

The training specifically addressed the process of converting basic Urea into high-efficiency UDP fertiliser granules.

"The key objective is to ensure that farmers acquire the knowledge to process Urea into UDP granules, which can increase fertiliser efficiency by over 30 percent," said Salum Faki Hamad.

He further explained that farmers who typically harvest 20 bags of crops using standard Urea could see an increase to 26 bags when using UDP fertiliser. Additionally, farmers could reduce their fertiliser costs by up to 50 percent. For a quarter-hectare farm, only 15 kilograms of UDP fertiliser is required, compared to the usual 25 kilograms of regular Urea.

Salum highlighted that research conducted in both Unguja and Pemba had shown positive

results for rice crops, and these findings are now being expanded to include maize. Early results indicate that UDP fertiliser is also proving effective in boosting maize production.

However, Salum acknowledged a significant challenge: the lack of sufficient resources to produce the fertiliser at scale, which has limited its widespread adoption among farmers.

He emphasized the importance of farmers embracing UDP fertiliser due to its economic and productivity benefits. Unlike regular Urea, which dissolves quickly, UDP fertiliser has a slower dissolution rate, ensuring that nutrients remain available to plants throughout their growth stages, particularly during the rainy season.

"In achieving this, I urge all farmers to continue collaborating closely with ZARI by bringing your fertiliser for processing into UDP granules, so you can fully reap the benefits of this technology," Salum encouraged the participants.

The farmers who attended the training praised ZARI's initiative and committed to working together in implementing the technology. They also promised to encourage other farmers to bring their fertiliser for processing into UDP to improve productivity on their farms.

The training was organized by ZARI in collaboration with the Tanzania Food Systems Resilience Programme (TFSRP), which is sponsored by the World Bank. Thirty farmers from various parts of Unguja, along with experts from ZARI, participated in the event.



**The key objective is to ensure that farmers acquire the knowledge to process Urea into UDP granules...**



Dr Regina Flongali, acting Medical Officer In Charge of Chamwino-based Uhuru Hospital, speaks at an orientation seminar for residents of the area held in Bugiri ward yesterday. Photo: Correspondent Peter Mkwavila

## UN says it requires \$1.42b to scale up humanitarian aid in Somalia next year

JOHANNESBURG

THE United Nations (UN) said it requires \$1.42 billion to increase humanitarian actions in Somalia, where 5.98 million people will need humanitarian assistance in 2025.

Launching its 2025 Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan (HNRP) for Somalia on Sunday, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) said 4.6 million people will be targeted for assistance focusing on lifesaving and life-sustaining assistance for people with the most severe needs.

OCHA said the plan envisioned scaled-up

development and climate financing to address the structural drivers of needs, build resilience, reduce the risk of future disasters and adapt to climate change.

Noting that drought and conflict could be among key risks in 2025, it added drier conditions will increase competition over resources, and heighten risks for disease outbreaks.

The UN agency also said conflict accounted for 53% of a total of 455,000 newly displaced people in the horn of Africa country, while climate shocks accounted for the vast majority of displacements in 2022 and 2023.

It said in 2024, the humanitarian situation

in Somalia saw slight improvements as compared to previous years, marked by a devastating drought in 2020-23 and severe flooding late last year.

KATIKA BARAZA LA ARDHI NA NYUMBA WILAYA YA KINONDONI MWANANYAMALA SHAURI LA MADAI NAMBARI 280 LA 2023 LAURENCE NOEL NKOMOLLA.....HUOMBAAJI/WAOMBAAJI DHIDI YA MOSES PETRO WAMBURA.....MDAIWA/WADAIWA

**WITO KUITWA SHAURINI**  
MOSES PETRO WAMBURA  
POPOTE ULUPO/MLIPO

LAURENCE N. NKOMOLLA Amefungua shauri mbele ya Baraza la Ardhi na Nyumba lililopo Kinondoni (Mwananyamala) Shauri husika limepatanwa kutajua kusikiliza tarehe 14/11/2024 saa 3:00 Asubuhi/Mchana mbele ya Mh. J.W. SILLAS hiyo unamuritha kuhudhuria mbele ya Baraza siku hiyo bila kukosa. Imetolewa na kutiwa Saini na Mhuri wa Baraza hili leo tarehe 21/11/2024.

ADVERTISEMENT IN THE GAZETTE OF SPECIAL RESOLUTION TO WIND UP BRITAU COMPANY LIMITED COMPANY NO. 159214524

IN THE MATTER OF THE COMPANIES ACT, NO. 12 OF 2002, AND IN THE MATTER OF BRITAU COMPANY LIMITED, IN VOLUNTARY LIQUIDATION, MEMBERS' WINDING UP

On the 29th day of November 2024, the Shareholders of BRITAU COMPANY LIMITED, at an Extraordinary General Meeting RESOLVED the following:-

- 1) That the Company be wound up voluntarily; and
- 2) That Mr. Ketanbahu Shah of Grant Thornton Advisory East Africa Limited is hereby appointed as the liquidator for the purpose of winding up the affairs and distributing assets of the Company.

We, the undersigned shareholders of the company, hereby certify the foregoing to be a true and bona fide resolution passed by the Company on the 29th day of November 2024.

CHAIRMAN  
Name: JONAS JACKSON LESAMILA  
Signature: [Signature]  
Date: 29/11/2024

SECRETARY  
Name: DAVID HOWARD GLASS  
Signature: [Signature]  
Date: 29/11/2024

THE UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA  
MINISTRY OF FINANCE

**INVITATION TO STAKEHOLDERS TO PARTICIPATE IN THE UPCOMING PROCEEDINGS OF THE TASK FORCE ON TAX REFORM IN PREPARATION FOR BUDGET 2025/26**

The proceedings of the Task Force on Tax Reform in preparation for Budget 2025/26 are scheduled to begin in February 2025. The working sessions of the Task Force will be preceded by the National Tax and Investment Conference, which is expected to take place in January 2025.

Every year, the Task Force provides a structured forum for discussion of various issues relating to tax policy and administration. Its deliberations have constituted a vital input to policy makers for a long period. It has helped to shape the country's tax regime and, through dialogue and analysis, facilitated an effective, transparent and efficient resolution of a number of issues.

The fiscal policy objectives for 2025/26 include improving business environment in order to attract investment, facilitating growth of small and medium business enterprises for sustainable economic growth; enhancing voluntary tax compliance; broadening the tax base; mainstreaming the use of ICT systems in tax administration; strengthening enforcement of tax laws; and streamlining levies and fees.

As part of these proceedings, the Task Force is inviting submission of proposals from interested parties including Government officials, private sector, civil society, religious organizations, academia, research institutions and other specialists in public finance. The submissions from interested parties should be in writing, stating clearly:

- i. Firm(s), organization(s) or association(s) being represented;
- ii. The proposed changes in tax or non-tax revenue, including analysis of the sectors, regions or taxpayers that would be affected;
- iii. The projected impact on the economy and Government revenues in the year of implementation and outer years;
- iv. The rationale and justification for the proposed revenue policy changes and, in particular, analysis of the means by which the proposal will help the Government to achieve its objectives; and
- v. Where a proposal entails reduction in Government revenues (even in the short term), there must be alternative proposal(s), setting out explicit and credible measures consistent with the overall thrust of the Government's fiscal policies, to offset the revenue loss arising from the proposal.

The Task Force is looking forward to having a productive engagement and exchange of ideas among stakeholders and the Government.

Submissions are accepted with effect from the date of this announcement until **31 March 2025** through the following portal: <https://maoni.mof.go.tz/>. **Submissions after the deadline will not be considered.**

The proposal(s) can also be submitted through the following address:  
**Secretariat Task Force on Tax Reform, Ministry of Finance, Policy Analysis Department, Treasury Square Building (2nd floor), 18 Jakaya Kikwete Road, P.O Box 2802, DODOMA.**  
OR  
E-Mail: [mathias.kadebe@hazina.go.tz](mailto:mathias.kadebe@hazina.go.tz) or [salha.mzee@hazina.go.tz](mailto:salha.mzee@hazina.go.tz)

For more details/clarifications please call: **0713 694 895** or **0652 442 944**  
Or visit our website: [www.mof.go.tz](http://www.mof.go.tz)

PERMANENT SECRETARY - MINISTRY OF FINANCE  
December, 2024



## Police unveil strategies to combat GBV in Tanzania

By Guardian Reporter

THE Tanzania Police Force, through its Gender Desk has outlined its strategies to accelerate the fight against gender-based violence (GBV) praising stakeholders who have been collaborating with them to ensure the complete eradication of these acts.

DCP Faidha Suleiman, coordinator of the Gender and Child Protection Desk, made the remarks in Dar es Salaam when speaking at the just concluded 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence (GBV).

He said that its significant progress was made with the help of partners, and many people were reached with messages through various means, including the media and the Khanga (a traditional cloth) designed by stakeholders with a message against such violence.

DCP Faitha stated that the Police Force has strengthened its efforts to eradicate gender-based violence, and so far, 420 desks and 75 buildings have been established across the country, with the goal of reaching citizens more closely.

She mentioned that during the 16 days of activism, in addition to engaging with the public in large gatherings, they were also able to reach 28 primary schools, 25 secondary schools, 8 mosques, and 43 churches in the Nyamongo District, Tarime, Mara Region. "Through collaboration with various partners, including those we worked with this year, we will continue the fight against gender-based violence and intensify efforts to eradicate it in the country," she added.

"In these 16 days, we also reached young motorcycle riders at 28 meeting points, 12 markets, and 5 savings groups, and we have made significant progress in raising awareness, especially among women, girls, and men, particularly in mining communities where GBV was previously very prevalent," she added.

She further noted that in the Nyamongo District, Tarime, Mara Region, they reached 48 out of 60 wards in the area, and a significant number of people benefited from education about the harms of gender-based violence during these 16 days.

On the issue of female genital mutilation (FGM) in the Kurya community in the Tarime and Nyamongo areas, she mentioned that there were many cases, but they had made significant progress

in changing the mindset of elders and women about these harmful traditional practices. "During these 16 days of activism, we were able to rescue several girls who were being prepared for FGM, following our efforts in Nyamongo, Tarime," said DCP Faidha.

"In Nyamongo, Tarime, we reached 9 out of 12 clans and provided education and information on gender-based violence for women, girls, and children," she added.

She explained that through the efforts of the Police Force, in collaboration with stakeholders like Barrick Gold, significant progress has been made in reducing gender-based violence in Mara Region. "According to recent statistics, Mara Region has a 28 percent rate of GBV, compared to 43 percent in Manyara and Arusha regions. Thanks to these efforts, these incidents are decreasing day by day," she said.

She further highlighted that in Nyamongo District, they reached 11 villages around the mine, engaging with the community and raising awareness about gender-based violence during the 16 days of activism.

"Indeed, the awareness is now very high, especially at the household level, and many Tanzanians, particularly in rural areas, are now speaking out about these issues and reporting them to the police so that legal action can be taken," DCP Suleiman added.

Additionally, she mentioned that the Police Force continues to run various programs to build the capacity of its officers on gender-based violence through training and how to deal with the issue with more professionalism.

She stated that the establishment of gender and child protection desks within the Police Force, the provision of training on combating gender-based violence for police officers, and the advocacy for child protection to be included in the Police Force curriculum are significant steps in the efforts to eradicate this problem.

Regarding Barrick's partnership with the police during the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence this year, Barrick's country relations manager, Georgia Mutagahywa, said that all the stakeholders involved are proud to collaborate with the government and the Police Force to reach a wide number of citizens. They have also taken the opportunity to educate many women, who are victims of gender-based violence, on the use of clean cooking energy.

## Workshops help Haitian women cope with trauma of ongoing gang violence

HAITI

IN recent days, a group of women took part in workshops in the Haitian capital, Port-au-Prince, to help them cope with the trauma of daily life.

The country is ravaged by ongoing gang violence which takes an emotional and psychological toll on families.

More than 700,000 people have been internally displaced in Haiti, over 100 thousand because of the surge in fighting over the past nine months.

Women and children have been particularly vulnerable to the gang violence that increased from early 2023.

This year, gangs took control of 85 per cent of the neighbourhoods in the capital.

In the workshops, women do several exercises using cognitive therapy and meditation to help with trauma and anxiety.

One of the exercises sees them tap their shoulders, arms, and head in unison as they listen to calming music.

The five-day workshops have been organised by UNESCO, in partnership with the Haitian Psychology Association and the Solidarity of Haitian Women Journalists.

UNESCO's head of office in Haiti, Eric Voli Bi, said at the opening that he hoped they would "provide the victims with the tools to rebuild their lives" and address their "invis-

ible wounds".

The United Nations says the expansion of criminal group activity in Haiti has contributed to a sharp rise in gender-based violence, including sexual violence, primarily targeting girls and women.

Psychologist Esther Josiane Mathelye pointed out that displacement has also been a significant factor of trauma.

"It is stressful for them to have to leave after 14 to 16 years in a neighbourhood where they had a life and a community," Mathelye says.

After losing her house during the 2010 earthquake, former radio broadcaster Yolande Day, moved three times until she found a home in Croix-de-Bouquet.

Earlier this year, it was taken over by gangs and where she still lives.

"Not to say that the gangs are my neighbours, but I meet them every day. I talk to them every day," says Day. She says the workshops have taught her to control her stress and how to laugh when it comes back.

"They helped us. We didn't know before these sessions that these exercises really help. The way I arrived, I'm not going back the same way," she says.

The initiative, funded by the Global Media Defence Fund and the US Department of State, also aims to assist female journalists in Haiti.

The effort is part of a UNESCO strategy to safeguard those who sustain culture and information in Haiti.



Iringa Regional Police Commander Allan Bukumbi briefs journalists in Iringa municipality yesterday on people suspected of being behind the November 13 killing of former Kilolo District CCM chairperson Christina Kibiki. Photo: Correspondent Francis Godwin

By Guardian Reporter and Agencies

## 80 Chinese language teachers attend training in Tanzania to enhance skills

A special workshop aimed at improving Chinese language teaching skills kicked off in Dar es Salaam over the weekend, bringing together around 80 Chinese language teachers from both Tanzania and China.

The two-day event gathered teachers from a wide range of institutions, including the Confucius Institute at the University of Dar es Salaam, the Confucius Institute at the University of Dodoma, the Confucius Classroom at the State University of Zanzibar, the Tanzania Institute of Education, the SAY Foundation in Zanzibar, as well as primary and secondary schools across the country.

Speaking during the workshop, Aldin Mutembei, the Tanzanian director of the Confucius Institute at the University of Dar es Salaam, expressed that the workshop provides a unique opportunity for educators to enhance both their professional knowledge and practical teaching skills.

"This workshop will help teachers

refine their techniques, integrate

new educational technologies, and adopt innovative methods that will better engage students and enrich their learning experiences," Mutembei said.

The increasing importance of teaching the Chinese language in Tanzania and across Africa was a central theme of the event.

Mutembei noted that as diplomatic, economic, and cultural ties between China and African nations deepen, learning Chinese has become an essential skill for Tanzanians to communicate and collaborate more effectively with Chinese counterparts.

"Understanding Chinese not only improves communication but also helps foster stronger people-to-people exchanges, which are vital for promoting mutual understanding and cooperation in various sectors such as trade, education, and technology," he

added.

The workshop is part of a broader effort to expand and improve the teaching of Chinese across Africa, where demand for the language is steadily increasing due to China's growing influence on the continent.

Participants at the workshop will engage in a series of interactive sessions, focusing on modern teaching strategies, language proficiency, and cultural exchange. The sessions will also highlight the use of multimedia and digital platforms to enhance language instruction.

Over the past decade, China has significantly increased its presence in Africa through initiatives such as the Belt and Road Initiative, which has bolstered trade and infrastructure development. As a result, Chinese language education has become a valuable skill for Africans seeking to tap into new opportunities in business,

diplomacy, and cultural exchange.

The Confucius Institutes and Classrooms across Tanzania play a vital role in promoting Chinese language and culture. They serve as hubs for educational collaboration between China and Tanzania, offering courses that cater to a wide range of students, from those in primary and secondary schools to university students and professionals.

The institutes are also instrumental in preparing Tanzanian students for careers that require Chinese language skills, particularly in industries such as international trade, tourism, and technology.

The workshop seen as a key step in strengthening the capacity of Tanzanian educators to meet the growing demand for Chinese language proficiency, ultimately contributing to the deepening of China-Tanzania relations.



Tanzania Red Cross Society secretary general Lucia Pande presents to journalists in Dar es Salaam yesterday the highlights of the organisation's progress report for the current calendar year. Photo: Correspondent Sabato Kasika

ASWAN

IN a significant step toward increasing renewable energy production, Egypt has unveiled the \$500 million Abydos 1 Solar Power Plant in Aswan, developed in partnership with Emirati firm Amea Power.

The solar plant, located in the Kom Omba desert, is set to play a crucial role in Egypt's push toward sustainable energy and its goal of reducing carbon emissions.

The plant, which was completed in just 18 months, has a generation capacity of 500 megawatts and covers an area of 10,000 square meters. It features cutting-edge infrastructure, including 64 conversion stations, 1,920 sub-transformers, and 1.2 million solar panels.

At the inauguration ceremony, Prime Minister Mostafa Madbouly

## Egypt unveils \$500 million solar power plant in Aswan to spur renewable energy

highlighted the importance of the Abydos 1 Solar Power Plant as a key part of Egypt's renewable energy strategy. He emphasized that the plant would help meet the country's growing energy demand, reduce reliance on fossil fuels, and contribute to Egypt's environmental goals by alleviating electricity shortages.

The facility's two main transformers, each weighing 255 tons and capable of supporting 300 megawatts, are some of the largest in the Middle East and Africa, according to Egypt Independent. The plant is expected to cut carbon dioxide emissions by 760,000 tons annually and power

approximately 256,000 homes.

Hussain AlNowais, Chairman of Amea Power, praised the project for its substantial reliance on local expertise, noting that 100 percent of the workers and 95% of the administrative staff were Egyptian. At its peak, the project employed 3,500 workers who collectively completed 4.9 million working hours.

The Abydos 1 Solar Power Plant is part of Amea Power's broader investment in Egypt's renewable energy sector, which also includes the \$2 billion Amunet Wind Farm and the upcoming Abydos 2 Solar Power Plant, set to have a capacity of 1,000

megawatts, along with a 600 megawatt-hour battery storage system.

As part of its national energy policy, Egypt aims to increase the share of renewable energy in its power mix from 11.5% in 2023 to 42 percent by 2030. Prime Minister Madbouly reiterated this ambitious target, stressing the government's commitment to advancing sustainable energy solutions.

The Abydos 1 Solar Power Plant marks a significant milestone in Egypt's transition to clean energy and sets the stage for further developments in the country's renewable energy landscape.



## Ecowas establishes exit timeline for coup-affected three nations

By Special Correspondent

THE Economic Community of West Africa States (ECOWAS) set an exit timeline for three nations affected by coups, following nearly a year of mediation efforts aimed at preventing a significant fracture within the bloc.

Omar Touray, the president of the ECOWAS Commission, announced that the transitional period will run from January 29, 2025, to July 29, 2025, while keeping the door open for the three countries during this time.

At the summit's opening, Touray expressed that the decision was "disheartening."

In January, Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger declared their intention to withdraw from ECOWAS, citing the bloc's sanctions and its failure to address their ongoing security challenges.

Membership in ECOWAS offers significant advantages, such as visa-free travel among member states, and it remains uncertain how this will be affected once the three nations exit the organization.

In a historic move for the nearly 50-year-old bloc, the military governments of Niger, Mali, and Burkina Faso have firmly rejected ECOWAS' attempts to persuade them to reconsider their departure, and they are exploring the possibility of issuing their own travel documents and forming a separate alliance.

The one-year notice period for their exit is expected to conclude as planned.

Touray praised the dedication of the bloc's envoys in their efforts to address the ongoing crisis. "These initiatives highlight your shared commitment to maintaining peace and unity in our region," he remarked.

Bola Tinubu, Nigeria's president and chairman of ECOWAS, emphasized that the global and regional challenges test their collaborative spirit.

"We must remain focused on our primary duty, which is to safeguard our citizens and foster an environment where they can thrive," he stated.

## UN inaugurates new bid to revive elections amid political turmoil

TRIPOLI

THE United Nations is initiating a new effort to revive Libya's long-delayed national elections, a move that comes after years of political deadlock and unresolved disputes.

The UN is convening a fresh round of consultations with Libyan experts, who will be tasked with resolving key issues in the country's electoral framework. This initiative aims to break the impasse that has hindered progress towards a unified, democratic government in the wake of years of conflict.

In a statement released on Sunday, the acting head of the UN mission in Libya (UNSMIL), Stephanie Koury, outlined the objectives of the new meeting. "The experts will work to develop options to overcome the contentious issues surrounding the electoral laws and to create a clear, actionable framework for governance," Koury said. "This committee will also focus on establishing milestones for a consensually agreed-upon government."

The international community has long been concerned about the lack of a functioning central government in Libya, with the country remaining divided between rival administrations. The planned national elections, originally scheduled for December 2021, were derailed due to disagreements over the eligibility of major candidates and the legitimacy of the electoral process. Since then, the UN-backed political process aimed at resolving the country's decade-long conflict has stagnated, and Libya has remained politically fragmented.

Tensions escalated in August 2024 when the Libyan parliament, based in the eastern city of Tobruk, voted to terminate the term of the Tripoli-based government of Prime Minister Abdul Hamid Dbeibeh, which had initially been tasked with overseeing the transition to elections. Dbeibeh, however, has rejected the move, continuing to assert his authority over the western region of the country. This division has left Libya effectively governed by two competing

One significant advantage of being part of ECOWAS is the ability to travel freely among member states, and it remains uncertain how this will be affected by the departure of three countries from the bloc.

When questioned about the potential consequences in July, the president of the ECOWAS commission noted, "Exiting an agreement... particularly one concerning free trade and the movement of people, carries the risk of losing those benefits."

On Saturday, the three nations issued a joint statement declaring that while their territories would continue to be accessible without visas for other West African citizens, they "reserve the right ... to deny entry to any ECOWAS national categorized as inadmissible immigrants."

Since its establishment in 1975, ECOWAS has been West Africa's leading political authority, and this division represents its most significant challenge to date, according to Babacar Ndiaye, a senior fellow at the Timbuktu Institute for Peace Studies in Senegal.

The likelihood of ECOWAS successfully reintegrating the three countries is low, primarily because the bloc seeks a swift return to democratic governance, which the military juntas have not pledged to uphold, explained Mucahid Durmaz, a senior analyst at global risk consultancy Verisk Maplecroft.

Allowing the juntas to maintain power "could lead to further regional fragmentation," while acknowledging them as legitimate authorities would signify "a serious deviation from ECOWAS's founding principles," Durmaz added.

He also pointed out that the regional bloc has not effectively managed the situation.

Durmaz remarked that the bloc's varied reactions to coups in the area suggest that its position is shaped more by the political aspirations of its member states rather than by its core mission of fostering democratic governance.

administrations—one in the east, and one in the west—both vying for control.

The UN's renewed push for elections is seen as a critical step toward ending the political fragmentation and establishing a unified government. A successful election would ideally lead to the formation of a single national government, consolidate military control, and unify state institutions, which have been fractured for years. It is also hoped that the elections will bring stability and pave the way for reconstruction, particularly in the oil-rich country that has been mired in violence and unrest since the 2011 NATO-backed overthrow of longtime leader Muammar Gaddafi.

In parallel to the political and electoral challenges, Libya continues to face severe humanitarian issues. The conflict, which has seen multiple factions and foreign actors intervene, has displaced hundreds of thousands of people. At the same time, the country's vital oil sector has suffered setbacks. Just last week, the National Oil Corporation declared a force majeure on some of its operations after the Zawiya Refinery in western Libya was damaged during clashes between rival groups.

The UN's new initiative is not only aimed at addressing the technical and legal challenges surrounding elections but also at promoting dialogue among Libyan stakeholders. The experts involved in the consultations are expected to propose a roadmap for a political transition that all parties can support, though doubts remain about whether key players in the conflict will be willing to compromise.

The international community, including the African Union and the European Union, has expressed strong support for the UN's efforts, but many remain wary about the prospects for success given the entrenched rivalries within Libya's political landscape.

As Libya's political future remains uncertain, the UN's renewed efforts to revive elections will be closely watched by both Libyan citizens and the international community. The outcome of these discussions could shape the country's trajectory for years to come.



Dodoma City social welfare officer Rachel Balisidya (2nd-R) pictured at Makulu in Dodoma Urban District at the weekend presenting exercise books to Liliyani Saidi (L), a Form III student at Sechelela Secondary School in Dodoma supported by Tanzania Shiriki Sustainable Care Centre Against Gender-Based Violence. It was at an event whose thrust was on raising public awareness against GBV. Photo: Correspondent Peter Mkwavila

## Mozambique braces for impact from Cyclone Chido's landfall

MAPUTO

CYCLONE Chido struck Mozambique on Sunday, unleashing powerful winds and raising alarms about potential devastation after traversing islands in the southeastern Indian Ocean.

Footage shared by the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) revealed boats wrecked along the shore and palm trees bending under the force of the winds.

Cabo Delgado province, which is home to approximately 2 million residents, has suffered significant damage, according to the agency.

Guy Taylor, the chief advocacy and communications officer for

UNICEF Mozambique, shared his observations from Pemba, the capital of Cabo Delgado Province in northern Mozambique.

This morning, Cyclone Chido made landfall as a powerful tropical cyclone, unleashing severe winds and heavy rainfall.

"UNICEF is concerned about the immediate impacts of this cyclone: the loss of life, the damage to schools, to people's homes, to health care facilities. We're also worried about the longer term impacts: children potentially being cut off from learning for weeks on end, people unable to get access to health care and the potential spread of waterborne diseases like cholera

and malaria," he said.

Taylor added in a video, that communities might find themselves isolated from schools and healthcare services for an extended period.

The storm has claimed at least 11 lives in the French territory of Mayotte, with the nearby islands of Comoros and Madagascar also feeling its impact.

The cyclone season in the southeastern Indian Ocean runs from December to March, and southern Africa has faced a series of intense storms in recent years.

Cyclone Idai in 2019 resulted in over 1,300 fatalities across Mozambique, Malawi, and Zimbabwe.

Last year, Cyclone Freddy caused

more than 1,000 deaths across multiple countries.

These cyclones pose threats of flooding and landslides, and the stagnant water left behind can lead to outbreaks of waterborne diseases like cholera, as well as dengue fever and malaria.

Research indicates that the severity of these cyclones is increasing due to climate change.

This situation forces impoverished nations in southern Africa, which contribute minimally to global warming, to confront significant humanitarian crises, highlighting their urgent need for assistance from wealthier countries to address the effects of climate change.



Sunflower farmers from Mahaya village in Itigi District, Singida Region, view the prototype of a Sunflower Rafiki planter developed by the Mwanza-based TARI-Ukiriiguru Centre in cooperation with Arusha-based CAMARTEC and meant to improve sunflower farming. Photo: Correspondent Valentine Oforo

## Africa CDC: Mpox cases in Africa surpass 65,000 mark

By Special Correspondent

THE number of Mpox cases reported so far this year in Africa has surpassed 65,000, as the death toll surged to over 1,200, according to the Africa Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC).

The African continent had reported 65,711 Mpox cases since the start of this year, of which 14,241 were confirmed, and over 1,237 deaths, accord-

ing to Africa CDC Director-General Jean Kaseya.

During last week alone, the continent reported 3,545 new cases, including 467 confirmed ones, and 37 new deaths, according to data from the African Union's specialised healthcare agency.

The Africa CDC said six African countries, namely Gabon, Guinea, South Africa, Morocco, Zambia, and Zimbabwe, have moved from active

transmission to a controlled stage. The African continent is "still losing people" due to the ongoing Mpox outbreak, which has so far affected 20 countries, Kaseya said, calling for concerted efforts against the outbreak.

In mid-August, the Africa CDC declared the ongoing Mpox outbreak in Africa a Public Health Emergency of Continental Security. Soon after, the World Health Organization also declared Mpox a public health emer-

gency of international concern, activating its highest level of global alert for Mpox for the second time in two years.

Mpox, known as monkeypox, was first detected in laboratory monkeys in 1958. It is a rare viral disease typically spread through body fluids, respiratory droplets, and other contaminated materials. The infection usually causes fever, rash, and swollen lymph nodes.



## BRT roads can be helpful not just for relevant buses

There is immense cause for the government to demand that the construction of the bus rapid transit (BRT) infrastructure in Dar es Salaam be hurried up.

Even with flyovers and widened roads, there is such an ever increasing intensity of traffic congestion that it is hard to say if the matter ought to end with just having rapid transit buses.

It would have been one thing were it with respect to trains for large passenger haulage, as buses surely cannot meet current demand.

One problem is the simple inability to use the public-private partnership at an earlier period, and even at present, as the BRT project was started in 2004 when the commercial capital's traffic environment was a lot less intense compared to the present.

By the time it was starting to work in early 2016, after plenty of haggling on fares, it had to be supplemented by flyovers for the traffic situation to ease up.

Now the government is pushing for rapid completion of BRT infrastructure even as it's practically no longer the proper solution right now.

Were it that BRT roads could be integrated into the traffic flow system it could make a difference in like manner as the traffic police have a way of creating free or empty roads for a state dignitary to use that space.

It would be a matter of holding back special buses at certain end points or terminals for a few minutes to ease congestion at some points, from a major congestion point to a dispersion point. With some design, it could work.

The reason for this kind of impression is that BRT roads are commonly relatively free or

empty, so to speak, with buses playing them occasionally.

That means BRT buses could also be put on a queue from time to time, decongesting major road axes. It would be such that when exit points of regular traffic eased from one major road to another have clogged up, the curtain falls for toad traffic and BRT buses then follow on both sides of the road or highway.

That would explain seeing or hearing the Works minister moving to instruct the permanent secretary to closely monitor what the contractors are doing, to ensure that the work is conducted day and night for timely completion of the project.

What the minister could also examine is how far this will help to alleviate traffic congestion in the city, as most of the vehicles on the road aren't buses in the first place but various other private vehicles.

When DART started its operations in early 2016, eliminating the city centre route to Ubungo and Kimara for shifting to DART buses, there was huge relief, though not as much now.

Still, that doesn't mean that the route can come back, as even the few flyovers in place no longer suffice. While BRT finds its operational feet as to the number of buses and who will collect fares or purchase buses, the roads can be put to more fruitful use with traffic police officers deciding what segment of vehicles should ply BRT roads and when.

For example, buses not stopping anywhere up to a major terminal could use a specified lane, being allowed on BRT roads while others have a "breather" and, within minutes - when they are already afar - DART buses resume business.

## Planting 2,000 trees around a school modifies its weather, not the climate

There is often considerable movement when a useful gesture as such the planting of hundreds of trees at one go, such as has recently been done at a primary school in Mwanza Region.

It is as if with each such gesture, we come nearer to solving a daunting climate change challenge, oblivious of its breadth and complexity.

In truth, the point of departure for climate change isn't just addressing local tree felling but carbon dioxide tonnage - with planting trees helping to absorb a portion of local emissions.

But it would be a different story were our view of issues etched a little higher to read that a company has been given a tender to spread seeds or dig holes to put in seeds and water them using to renew so many thousands of hectares of farmland in part as an effort to combat climate change.

Again we could think of coming together with other countries, especially if there is surplus energy whose use could be subsidised using global climate change funds to take up vast amounts of sea water.

The water could be desalinated and pumped into vast reservoirs generating tree cover around such structures and also used to activate more tree cover in large spaces across countries.

Such methods and their public-

private partnership framework are seldom raised in officialdom, with global platforms on the issue driven by carbon reduction and compensation agendas.

It is far easier for most countries to enhance their capacities for carbon dioxide absorption than it is possible for them to reduce emissions.

What is also obvious is that climate change is not combated merely by mobilising communities all over the country to plant and conserve trees.

Most of the time it will be the 'feel good' factor that we have to protect the environment and, when this mood is sufficiently widespread, we start believing that we are making encouraging headway. However, we finally discover that we are not quite there.

There will obviously justifiably be gestures of appreciation for the national forest agency to have distributed over 37,000 free tree seedlings in recent months and expect to do more of the same.

Something is undeniably better than nothing - and the budgeting for such goodwill gestures, if leveraged with bank loans on a major project, could make a vast difference.

It all means less funding for public agencies to put up such gestures and direct the cash to bank sector guarantee cover for large environment projects like vast tree planting and desalination.

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By Nikita Roy

**“THE future of news is moving beyond the written word. With AI at its core, it's conversational, spoken, interactive, responsive, and deeply personal - the very essence of meaningful human communication.”**

IN 2025, we won't just read the news - we'll talk to it, and it will talk back.

News will transform from something we passively consume to something we actively experience through voice-first AI that turns text into conversation and readers into participants.

I'm talking about unleashing the most powerful form of human communication - conversation - to revolutionise how we understand our world.

The future of news is moving beyond the written word. With AI at its core, it is conversational, spoken, interactive, responsive and deeply personal - the very essence of meaningful human communication.

Imagine sitting down with your morning coffee and saying: "Tell me what I need to know today." Your AI companion doesn't just read the headlines - it engages you in a personalised, conversational dialogue about the news that matters most to you.

It understands your context, interests, and knowledge gaps. It can challenge your assumptions, present diverse perspectives, and guide you through complex topics with the patience and adaptability of a personal journalist.

Curious about a complex geopolitical crisis? Don't just read about it - discuss it.

Want to unpack the implications of new economic policies, or explore stock market trends affecting your investments? Have a conversation about them.

Interested in local issues? Engage in a dialogue that connects global trends to your neighbourhood.

This isn't speculation - we're on the cusp of this future. At Newsroom Robots Labs, which I'm incubating at the Harvard Innovation Labs, our work focuses on demonstrating how newsrooms can incorporate conversational AI into their daily work, identifying practical use cases that enhance journalistic capabilities.

Meanwhile, our product labs are reimagining how audiences could interact with information in entirely new ways, building conversational experiences that transform passive readers into active participants.

The technological advancements of 2024 make this conversational future inevitable. Until recently, developers had to integrate multiple models to power speech-to-speech experiences, often

## Predictions for Journalism, 2025: AI turns news into a conversation

sacrificing emotion and emphasis with noticeable latency, disrupting the natural flow of conversations.

Now, with OpenAI's Realtime API, developers can create voice applications that capture the nuances of human conversation - all through a single API call. It even handles interruptions, as demonstrated by ChatGPT's Advanced Voice Mode.

Meanwhile, Meta's Spirit LM represents another leap forward: an open-source multimodal language model that seamlessly integrates text and speech, enabling more expressive and fluid interactions across formats.

Earlier this month, Eleven Labs introduced their own conversational AI platform. It's an all-in-one solution for creating customisable, interactive voice agents that manage turn-taking and interruptions with the fluidity of human conversation.

Even more transformative advancements are on the horizon. Nvidia's Blackwell architecture, introduced earlier this year, promises to revolutionise AI processing with a 2.5x performance boost over its predecessor. This next-generation GPU technology is set to power even more responsive and natural conversational AI applications.

We're already seeing audiences embrace this conversational approach. The popularity of Google's NotebookLM audio overviews feature demonstrates the growing demand for AI-powered podcast-style discussions.

Eleven Labs has now taken this further, integrating similar capabilities directly into their Eleven Reader mobile app, making conversational content creation accessible to anyone on the go.

It's plausible to predict the next evolution: These AI-powered discussions will move beyond one-way listening to real-time dialogue.

With that, users will be able to interrupt, ask questions and engage in genuine conversation with the information itself. This will transform passive content consumption into dynamic, interactive understanding.

The traditional model of journalism - write, publish, and hope readers understand - is fundamentally misaligned with how humans naturally process and engage with information.

It's even less aligned with how the younger generations consume content and the interactive, dynamic possibilities that AI enables for the future.

Think about the last time you

explained a complex topic to friends. Did you write them an essay? Of course not. You likely had a conversation - responding to their questions, adjusting to their level of understanding, and building meaning together through discussion.

This is how humans naturally learn and understand, yet we have confined ourselves to the straitjacket of one-way publishing simply because that's what technology previously allowed.

Now technology can finally match how humans naturally share information. It will transform how news fits into daily life for diverse audiences.

For busy professionals, it delivers focused, interactive briefings that fit between meetings. For younger audiences, it provides dynamic discussions that match their preference for conversational engagement.

For commuters, it offers rich audio experiences that turn traffic time into learning time. For students, it provides deeper context through adaptive, personalised insights that connect to their coursework.

At the same time, it will break barriers for those traditionally underserved. For someone with visual impairments, it transforms news into a rich audio discussion.

For a non-native speaker, it patiently explains unfamiliar terms. For someone overwhelmed by world events, it acts as a compassionate guide, helping them engage at their own pace.

This isn't just about convenience - it's about meeting people where they are and making quality journalism truly accessible to everyone.

This new technology presents both an opportunity and an imperative for news organisations to fundamentally reimagine their role.

It's no longer about adapting articles for voice interfaces. (That's like early web publishers asking how to make their printed pages look good on screens.) Instead, it's about designing systems that architect understanding through conversation.

In this new era, the organisations that will dominate journalism will be those bold enough to rethink their entire approach to news delivery around conversation. They will replace static articles with "story spheres": rich, multidimensional spaces of information that AI can navigate through dialogue.

A breaking news story might begin with current developments but can seamlessly branch into

historical context, expert analysis, or related global impacts based on the reader's questions and interests.

The organisations will pioneer "narrative AI" capable of weaving complex stories into personalised, interactive conversations. And they will redefine the role of journalists, transforming them from writers into conversation architects who structure information for dynamic, AI-driven discovery.

The entire concept of "publishing" will begin to evolve. Stories won't be finished when they are published; they will come alive through millions of unique conversations.

Breaking news will no longer be about being first to print - it'll be about facilitating the most meaningful, real-time dialogues as events unfold.

The printing press democratised access to information. The internet democratised the ability to publish. The AI revolution will democratise understanding itself through the most human interface of all: conversation.

The economic opportunities are staggering. Imagine monetising not pageviews or subscriptions but the depth and quality of AI-driven news conversations.

Imagine offering premium access to specialised AI analysts for niche topics, where audiences pay for deeper, more personalised insights.

Imagine news organisations transforming into centres of living knowledge, their AIs engaging millions in simultaneous, personalised dialogues - all while upholding rigorous editorial standards and fact-checking protocols.

The future of news isn't about reading words on screens. It's about engaging in conversations that transform information into understanding, facts into insights, and observers into participants. It's about making news as natural as conversation and as powerful as human curiosity.

For newsrooms, 2025 is the year to be bold. To stop thinking about how to adapt existing formats to new technologies and instead start reimagining news as an ongoing, dynamic dialogue with humanity.

To stop writing for readers and start designing for participants. To stop publishing articles and start architecting understanding.

The tools are here. The technology has arrived. This is our moment to revolutionise how we deliver news and how humanity understands its own story.

• A Nieman Lab dispatch. Nikita Roy is the founder of Newsroom Robots Labs.



By Telesphor Magobe

There is nothing distressful as not meeting one's basic needs such as food, shelter and clothing. We live in a world in which some people find themselves in a situation of uncertainty and unsure of their tomorrow.

These are the people we call 'poor' and some of them are 'extremely poor' and others the 'working poor'. The latter are people who are employed, but the salary they get does not afford them to live above \$2.15 per day. Those who belong to this category of people having a job, according to the International Labour Organisation (ILO), they do not have a guarantee of decent living conditions.

Think of those who have a monthly salary (if they are lucky because in some cases salaries could be delayed up to at least three months in some companies), but have a long list of dependants besides their immediate family members. So, poverty is contributed by many factors.

Multidimensional Poverty Index 2024 (MPI), which collected data from 112 countries, covering 1,359 subnational regions, suggests that 1.1 billion of 6.3 billion people live in acute multidimensional poverty, over half of them being children.

The report says over half of the 1.1 billion poor people are children aged below 18 years (584 million) and globally, 27.9 per cent of children live in poverty, compared to 13.5 per cent of adults. Furthermore, the report says 83.2 per cent of the world's 1.1 billion multidimensionally poor people live in sub-Saharan Africa (553 million people) and South Asia (402 million people).

The global MPI is a key international resource which evaluates acute multidimensional poverty in more than 100 developing countries. It was first launched in 2010 by the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI) at the University of Oxford and the Human Development Report Office of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

Some countries have as high as 78 per cent of extremely poor (Madagascar), as high as 56 per cent of moderately poor (Afghanistan) and others have fewer or no extremely or moderately poor people. According to ILOstat, Tanzania has 42 per cent of extremely poor, 30 per cent moderately poor and 28 per cent of

# Grappling with poverty amidst unfavourable living conditions



It measures extreme poverty using the international poverty line of \$2.15 per day. This means a person who earns less than \$2.15 per day is regarded as an extremely poor person. Starting this year, the WB says, it will start tracking poverty "at \$6.85 poverty line as part of its vision indicators to reflect evolving conditions."

This change takes into account the rapidly evolving world as it "has become richer and there has been substantial population growth, especially in lower-middle- and upper-middle-income countries. Low-income countries now constitute only 9 per cent of the world's population, compared to 58 per cent in 1990 when the World Bank started tracking extreme poverty."

The report says, lower-middle- and upper-middle-income countries now account for three-quarters of the world's population, compared to about one-quarter in 1990. Additionally, the report says the distribution of income around the world has evolved. "More than half of the global population lives on more than \$6.85 per day today, compared to less than one-third in 1990."

The report suggests that with growing income levels, the definition of basic needs expands beyond food, clothing, and shelter, and now also includes a healthy diet, good sanitation, internet connectivity, access to electricity, and education, among others. "The \$6.85 poverty line captures these patterns and helps present a more relevant picture of poverty in many countries."

Another poverty concept, the World Bank's societal poverty line, captures more systematically that the cost of meeting basic needs increases as an economy grows and allows for the poverty line to vary across countries over time."

It suffices to say that poverty can be eradicated through good management and utilisation of resources. This is possible where there is political will. As the old adage goes—'Where's the will, there's the way'.

not extremely or moderately poor.

Countries like Hong Kong, China, Republic of Korea, Qatar and United Arab Emirates have no extremely or moderately poor (by 100 per cent). That is, they have neither extremely poor nor moderately poor people. Others are Mauritius, Trinidad and Tobago, Thailand and Malaysia, according to this report. ILO evaluates extremely poor at less than \$2.15 a day, moderately poor at \$2.15 to less than \$3.65 a day, and not extremely or moderately poor at \$3.65 or above a day.

While ILO acknowledges that the world has made outstanding progress during the past two decades

in reducing working poverty, it points out that the improvements are noteworthy in all regions. According to ILO, progress has slowed down in recent years, which points to the need for renewed efforts to ensure all workers have decent living conditions.

Citing Sinha, Inchauste, and Narayan (2024), the World Bank (WB) in its Poverty, Prosperity, and Planet Report 2024 says: "Poverty reduction in sub-Saharan Africa has been slow, largely because of slow growth. But a lack of improvement in equality has also been a missed opportunity for poverty reduction in a region where many countries

have abnormally high levels of inequality."

However, the report says poverty rates are projected to continue declining only gradually until 2030. "Only 69 million people are projected to escape extreme poverty between 2024 and 2030. At this rate, 7.3 per cent of the global population will remain in extreme poverty in 2030, more than double the 3 per cent target."

It says by 2030 slightly less than 40 per cent of the global population (equal to more than 3 billion people) will live on less than \$6.85 per day—an 8-percentage-point decline in a decade—and less than 20

per cent will have less than \$3.65 per day.

"This means that poverty at the higher lines is projected to decline at rates similar to the ones achieved in the beginning of this century, while progress in reducing extreme poverty is slowing significantly. This projection reflects several factors, including differences in where the poor at the various lines live and the associated countries' projected growth rates over the next half-decade," the report says.

The WB defines a poor person as someone whose income or expenditure is below the minimum living standard that is socially acceptable.

## Promotion of peace and harmony across institutions, society

By Thomas Lyimo

The smooth functioning of any institution or society relies on creating an environment where individuals can interact freely, free from disputes and misunderstandings. Despite differences in perspectives and ideologies, deliberate efforts are necessary to ensure harmonious interactions. People need to trust one another to foster social and economic development.

Peace and harmony are essential for development. When individuals feel secure and trust each other's intentions, they are more likely to cooperate. This cooperation encourages sharing of ideas, teamwork, talent development and unity, all of which are critical for achieving common goals. Without peace fear and distrust hinder progress.

Promoting peace and harmony in society is essential for fostering a stable and prosperous living environment. A peaceful society ensures that people's fundamental rights, like freedom, safety, and dignity, are upheld. Peace

and harmony are the foundations for thriving communities, sustainable progress, and a better quality of life for all.

In a secure environment, businesses can flourish, investments are encouraged, and people can work without fear. Conflict and instability disrupt economies, hinder development and may lead to poverty.

Peaceful societies encourage cooperation, understanding and tolerance among different groups, thus fostering a sense of unity.

Traditional methods of child-rearing emphasized community involvement, which helped maintain social values and minimize conflicts. In contrast, modern parenting is often a private matter, sometimes leading to disputes among neighbors over children's behavior.

This shift highlights the erosion of shared values and the rise of conflicts over minor issues. However, today's society often lacks the patience to accept constructive criticism and advice is sometimes met with insults rather than coopera-

tion. This damages social bonds and hinders efforts to build a peaceful community.

Some believe that increased knowledge and resilience help maintain peace and harmony. Resilient individuals can handle minor conflicts before they escalate. Misunderstandings often arise from differences in perception.

Constructive criticism may be misinterpreted as an accusation, leading to embarrassment and conflict. Resilience helps individuals remain patient and maintain peace in these situations.

Effort is required to cultivate attributes that support peace and harmony. The Latin phrase *Sine labore nihil* (Nothing without work) underscores the need for diligence in promoting these values.

**Keeping sensitive information private**

Some information, if revealed, can harm social cohesion. Individuals who have reformed their behavior deserve to move forward without past mistakes being exposed.

Just as government de-



**Repeated mistakes indicate intentional wrongdoing, but first-time errors can be learning experiences. Facing challenges with determination fosters knowledge, which supports peaceful relationships.**

isions are confidential, institutions and societies should protect sensitive information to prevent misunderstandings and conflicts. Disclosing unnecessary details can do more harm than good.

**Avoiding post-meeting discussions**

Resolutions made in meetings address challenges or misconduct. After a decision, someone may feel hurt by the outcome. Continuing to discuss the resolution outside the meeting can deepen this hurt and damage relationships.

Gossip fuels division rather than unity, making it essential to discourage such behavior.

**Maintaining a positive mindset**

A positive attitude as well as willingness to learn from mistakes is crucial for peace and harmony. Everyone makes mistakes, but viewing them as opportunities for growth helps resolve challenges effectively.

Repeated mistakes indicate intentional wrongdoing, but first-time errors can be learning experiences. Facing challenges

with determination fosters knowledge, which supports peaceful relationships.

To maintain peace, personal issues should not be made communal or institutional. People have different visions and satisfaction levels, and not every matter requires collective action. Following proper procedures and respecting leadership hierarchies helps address challenges without causing conflicts.

Peace and harmony are vital for socio-economic progress, but maintaining them requires commit-

ment and understanding. Individuals should consider the consequences of their actions and appreciate the value of peace. When everyone works to protect harmony, unity is strengthened—and unity is power.

Promoting peace and harmony demands resilience, discretion, positivity, and respect for proper processes. By embracing these values, individuals contribute to a cooperative and thriving society.

**The author is a teacher based in Moshi. He can be reached at lyimo.thomas@yahoo.com**





By Soutik Biswas

# A nation of 1.45 billion wants more children

Last year, India nudged past China to become the world's most populous country

WITH nearly 1.45 billion people now, you'd think the country would be quiet about having more children. But guess what? The chatter has suddenly picked up.

Leaders of two southern states - Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu - have recently advocated more children.

Andhra Pradesh is mulling providing incentives, citing low fertility rates and ageing population. The state also scrapped its "two-child policy" for local body elections, and reports say neighbouring Telangana may soon do the same. Next-door Tamil Nadu is also making similar, more exaggerated, noises.

India's fertility rate has fallen substantially - from 5.7 births per woman in 1950 to the current rate of two.

Fertility rates have fallen below the replacement level of two births per woman in 17 of the 29 states and territories. (A replacement level is one at which new births are sufficient to maintain a stable population.)

The five southern Indian states lead India's demographic transition, achieving replacement-level fertility well ahead of others. Kerala reached the milestone in 1988, Tamil Nadu in 1993, and the rest by the mid-2000s.

Today, the five southern states have total fertility rates below 1.6, with Karnataka at 1.6 and Tamil Nadu at 1.4. In other words, fertility rates in these states match or are less than many European

countries.

But these states fear that India's shifting demographics with varying population shares between states, will significantly impact electoral representation and state wise-allocation of parliamentary seats and federal revenues.

"They fear being penalised for their effective population control policies, despite being better economic performers and contributing significantly to federal revenues," Srinivas Goli, a professor of demography at the International Institute for Population Sciences, said.

Southern states are also grappling with another major concern as India prepares for its first delimitation of electoral seats in 2026 - the first since 1976.

This exercise will redraw electoral boundaries to reflect population shifts, likely reducing parliamentary seats for the economically prosperous southern states. As federal revenues are allocated based on state populations, many fear this could deepen their financial struggles and limit policy-making freedom.

Demographers KS James and Shubhra Kriti project that popu-

lous northern states like Uttar Pradesh and Bihar stand to gain more seats from delimitation, while southern states such as Tamil Nadu, Kerala, and Andhra Pradesh could face losses, further shifting political representation.

Many, including Prime Minister Narendra Modi, have hinted that changes to fiscal shares and parliamentary seat allocations will not be rushed through.

"As a demographer, I don't think states should be overly concerned about these issues. They can be resolved through constructive negotiations between federal and state governments," says Goli. "My concern lies elsewhere."

The key challenge, according to demographers, is India's rapid ageing driven by declining fertility rates. While countries like France and Sweden took 120 and 80 years respectively to double their ageing population from 7 percent to 14 percent, India is expected to reach this milestone in just 28 years, says Goli.

This accelerated ageing is tied to India's unique success in fertility decline. In most countries, improved living standards, educa-

tion, and urbanisation naturally lower fertility as child survival improves.

But in India, fertility rates fell rapidly despite modest socioeconomic progress, thanks to aggressive family welfare programmes that promoted small families through targets, incentives, and disincentives.

The unintended consequence? Take Andhra Pradesh, for instance. Its fertility rate is 1.5, on par with Sweden, but its per capita income is 28 times lower, says Goli. With mounting debt and limited resources, can states like these support higher pensions or social security for a rapidly aging population?

Consider this. More than 40 percent of elderly Indians (60+ years) belong to the poorest wealth quintile - the bottom 20 percent of a population in terms of wealth distribution, according to United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)'s latest India Ageing Report.

In other words, Goli says, "India is getting old before getting rich".

Fewer children also mean a rising old-age dependency ratio, leaving fewer caregivers for an expanding elderly demographic.

Demographers warn that India's healthcare, community centres and old-age homes are unprepared for this shift.

Urbanisation, migration, and changing labour markets are further eroding traditional family support - India's strong point - leaving more elderly people behind.

While migration from populous to less populous states can ease the working-age gap, it also sparks anti-migration anxieties. "Robust investments in prevention, palliative care, and social infrastructure are urgently needed to look after the ageing," says Goli.

As if the southern states' concerns weren't enough, earlier this month, the chief of the Hindu nationalist Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (National Volunteers' Organisation), the ideological backbone of Modi's BJP - urged couples to have at least three children to secure India's future. "According to population science, when growth falls below 2.1, a society perishes on its own. Nobody destroys it," Mohan Bhagwat reportedly said at a recent meeting.

While Bhagwat's concerns may

have some basis, they are not entirely accurate, say demographers. Tim Dyson, a demographer at the London School of Economics, told the BBC that after a decade or two, continuing "very low levels of fertility will lead to rapid population decline".

A fertility rate of 1.8 births per woman leads to a slow, manageable population decline. But a rate of 1.6 or lower could trigger "rapid, unmanageable population decline".

"Smaller numbers of people will enter the reproductive - and main working - ages, and this will be socially, politically and economically disastrous. This is a demographic process and it is extremely difficult to reverse," says Mr Dyson.

This is already happening in some countries.

In May, South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol declared the country's record-low birth rate a "national emergency" and announced plans for a dedicated government ministry. Greece's fertility rate has plummeted to 1.3, half of what it was in 1950, sparking warnings from Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis about an "existential" population threat.

But demographers say that urging people to have more children is futile. "Considering the societal shifts, including the significant reduction in gender disparities as women's lives have become increasingly similar to those of men, this trend is unlikely to reverse," says Mr Dyson.

For Indian states like Tamil Nadu and Kerala, grappling with a declining workforce, the key question is: who will step in to fill the gap? Developed countries, unable to reverse declining fertility, are focusing on healthy and active ageing - prolonging working life by five to seven years and enhancing productivity in older populations.

Demographers say India will need to extend retirement ages meaningfully, and policies must prioritise increasing healthy years through better health screenings, and stronger social security to ensure an active and productive older population - a potential "silver dividend".

India must also leverage its demographic dividend better - economic growth that occurs when a country has a large, working-age population. Mr Goli believes there's a window of opportunity until 2047 to boost the economy, create jobs for the working-age population, and allocate resources for the ageing. "We're only reaping 15-20% of the dividend - we can do much better," he says.

## New research: Exercise boosts memory for up to 24 hours after a workout

By Mikaela Bloomberg

WHAT'S good for your heart is good for your brain. Just as physical activity helps keep our bodies fit and strong as we age, it also helps maintain our cognitive function - and is even linked with lower dementia risk.

Yet beyond the longer term cognitive benefits of physical activity, exercise also seems to give a short-term boost to cognitive performance lasting from minutes to hours.

According to our latest study, this cognitive boost may last up to 24-hours after exercising. Because some cognitive abilities start to decline as we get older, even small boosts to cognitive function can help keep us active and independent for longer.

Studies conducted both in the lab and real-world settings have shown that people who are more physically active - whether that's in the form of structured workouts or they just do more activity in their day-to-day lives - perform better on cogni-

tive tests in the hours after exercising.

But one question researchers are still trying to answer is how long these cognitive benefits last - particularly in older adults, where maintaining cognitive function is very important. This is what our research aimed to do.

In our study of middle-aged and older adults, we found that people who did more moderate-to-vigorous physical activity (such as jogging or cycling) performed better on memory tests the following day. This suggests that the memory benefits of physical activity might last longer than the couple of hours found in previous, lab-based studies.

Our study involved 76 participants aged 50-83. Each participant wore a wrist-worn activity tracker for eight days and nights.

They were instructed to go about their daily lives as usual. From these activity trackers, we were able to see how much time participants spent being sedentary or physi-

cally active each day - and how intense this physical activity was.

Because physical activity also affects sleep quality - particularly the amount of time spent in the deepest and most restorative sleep phase, referred to as slow-wave sleep - we were also interested in exploring the role of sleep in cognitive performance.

We extracted sleep quality characteristics from the activity trackers - including total sleep duration and time spent in slow-wave sleep.

On each day the participants wore the activity trackers, they also took a set of cognitive tests. Some of these cognitive tests assessed episodic memory (being able to recollect previous experiences) and working memory (the ability to temporarily store information in the mind). The type of cognitive tests the participants were given alternated each day to reduce the chances of participants learning and remembering the answers.



Moderate-to-vigorous exercise (such as cycling) is linked with better memory performance the next day.

We wanted to be sure we had isolated the effect of physical activity and

sleep on next-day cognitive performance. So, we took into account a

number of demographic, socioeconomic and lifestyle characteristics that

could have distorted the results. Each day, we also accounted for a participant's previous cognitive score to be sure we were focusing on day-to-day improvements in cognitive performance.

### Memory boost

We found that the more time a participant spent doing moderate-to-vigorous physical activity, the better their episodic and working memory scores were the following day. Getting more sleep, particularly slow-wave sleep, was also associated with improvement in memory scores - independently of physical activity. But people who were more sedentary had worse working memory scores the following day.

While the improvement in memory performance was relatively modest, none of our participants had cognitive impairment or dementia. So they realistically did not have much room to improve on these tests to begin with.

But these results could serve as a jumping-off

point for future studies examining next-day cognitive performance in people with neurodegenerative diseases - such as dementia, where we might see larger improvements in test scores. These findings also need replicating in a larger study before we can be sure of them.

The short-term cognitive benefits of exercise are thought to occur because exercise stimulates blood flow and the release of specific brain chemicals that contribute to cognitive function. Generally, these neurochemical benefits are thought to last a couple hours following exercise.

However, other changes induced by exercise - including some implicated in memory function - might last for 24-48 hours following exercise. This might underlie the results we found in our study.

Our findings point to the importance of maintaining active lifestyles as we age - and supporting this active lifestyle with good sleep.



# Cyclone Chido devastates Mayotte while leaving widespread destruction and a rising death toll

MAMOUDZOU

**T**HE death toll in the French territory of Mayotte from Cyclone Chido is “several hundred” and may run into the thousands, the island’s top government official told a local broadcaster Sunday.

France rushed rescue teams and supplies to its largely poor overseas department in the Indian Ocean which has suffered widespread destruction.

“I think there are some several hundred dead, maybe we’ll get close to a thousand. Even thousands ... given the violence of this event, Mayotte Prefect François-Xavier Bieuvre told TV station Mayotte la lere.

He had previously said it was the worst cyclone to hit Mayotte in 90 years. Bieuvre said it was extremely difficult to get an exact number of deaths and injuries after Mayotte was pummeled by the intense tropical cyclone on Saturday, causing major damage to public infrastructure, including the airport, flattening neighbourhoods and knocking out electricity supplies.

The French Interior Ministry confirmed at least 11 deaths and more than 250 injuries earlier Sunday but said that was expected to increase substantially.

Mayotte in the southwestern Indian Ocean off the coast of Africa is France’s poorest island and the poorest territory in the European Union. It has a population of just over 300,000 spread over two main islands.

Bieuvre said the worst devastation had been seen in the slums of metal shacks and informal structures that mark much of Mayotte. Referring to the official death toll so far, he said this figure is not plausible when you see the images of the



slums.”  
“I think the human toll is much higher,” he added.

## Mayotte took the brunt of Chido

Chido blew through the southwestern Indian Ocean on Friday and Saturday, also affecting the nearby islands of Comoros and Madagascar. Mayotte was directly in the cyclone’s path, though, and took the brunt. Chido brought winds in excess of 220 kph (136 mph), according to the French weather service, making it a category 4 cyclone, the second strongest on the scale.

Later, Chido made landfall in Mozambique on the African mainland and there were fears for more than

2 million people in the country’s north who could be impacted, according to authorities there.

French President Emmanuel Macron said his “thoughts” were with the Mayotte people and Interior Minister Bruno Retailleau was due to travel to Mayotte on Monday. Retailleau had warned Saturday night after an emergency meeting in Paris that the death toll “will be high,” while new Prime Minister François Bayrou, who took office on Friday, said infrastructure had been severely damaged or destroyed across Mayotte.

Pope Francis offered prayers for the victims while on a visit Sunday to the French Mediterranean island of Corsica.

## France wants to open an air and sea bridge to Mayotte

Rescuers and firefighters were sent from France and the nearby French territory of Reunion and supplies were also rushed in on military aircraft and ships. Damage to the airport’s control tower meant only military aircraft were able to fly in.

Patrice Latron, the prefect of Reunion, said authorities aim to establish an air and sea bridge from Reunion to Mayotte. About 800 more rescuers were to be sent in the coming days and more than 80 tons of supplies had been flown in or were on their way by ship. Some of the priorities were restoring electricity and access to drinking water, Latron said.

The French Interior Ministry said 1,600 police and gendarmerie officers have been deployed to “help the population and prevent potential looting.”

In some parts of Mayotte, entire neighborhoods of metal shacks and huts were flattened, while residents reported trees had been uprooted, boats flipped or sunk and many areas were without power.

Chad Youyou, a resident in Hamjago in the north of the island, posted videos on Facebook showing the extensive damage in his village and across the surrounding fields and hills, where almost every tree had been levelled.

“Mayotte is destroyed ... we are destroyed,” he said.

## The cyclone slams into northern Mozambique

Chido continued its eastern trajectory and into northern Mozambique where it continued to cause serious damage, while farther inland landlocked Malawi and Zimbabwe warned they might have to evacuate people because of flooding.

In Mozambique, UNICEF said Cabo Delgado province, home to around 2 million people, was the first region to be hit and many homes, schools and health facilities have been partially or completely destroyed.

UNICEF Mozambique spokesman Guy Taylor said that communities faced the prospect of being cut off from schools and health facilities for weeks and Mozambique authorities warned there was a high danger of landslides.

December through to March is cyclone season in the southwestern Indian Ocean and southern Africa has been pummeled by a series of strong ones in recent years. Cyclone Idai in 2019 killed more than 1,300 people, mostly in Mozambique, Malawi and Zimbabwe. Cyclone Freddy left more than 1,000 dead across several countries in the Indian Ocean and southern Africa last year.

The cyclones bring the risk of flooding and landslides, but also stagnant pools of water may later spark deadly outbreaks of the waterborne disease cholera as well as dengue fever and malaria.

Studies say the cyclones are getting worse because of climate change. They can leave poor countries in Africa, which contribute a tiny amount to global warming, having to deal with large humanitarian crises, underlining their call for more help from rich nations to deal with the impact of climate change.

# In 2024, robots exhibited greater ingenuity, utility

By Special Correspondent

Robots are no longer science fiction, they are part of our every day. In 2024, developers have made them more ingenious than ever.

Brave Robotics’ humanoid ‘Firebarion’ has the air of a character from the Hollywood Transformers movies.

And in China, a humanoid robot has been made to look like Su Shi, one of the country’s greatest and most revered poets.

South Korean tech giant LG even developed an AI-powered robot that can make up an original story based on pictures the user draws on a tablet.

But robots have performed some more seri-

ous functions this year too.

A team of surgeons carried out pioneering robot-assisted surgery on a child for the first time in the UK.

Southampton Children’s Hospital in England is leading a UK trial of the use of an advanced pioneering robot-assisted device called the Versius Surgical Robotic System.

Seven year-old Reece had an accident at the park and was then diagnosed with having an obstruction which inhibited the flow of urine from his kidney.

Surgeons used a remote controlled robotic arm for a procedure known as laparoscopic pyeloplasty.

“On the outside instead of a straight handle you’ve got something that looks more like a joystick. So,

still fully surgeon controlled. Robotic assisted might sound like it’s automated in some way, but actually it’s still surgeon controlled,” said Ewan Brownlee, consultant paediatric urologist at University Hospital Southampton.

In Edinburgh, the National Robotarium trialed robots to help stroke recovery.

A brain computer interface (BCI) is attached to the patient’s head which detects brain activity.

The robot responds in real time, mimicking the action the person is trying to perform.

The hope is that it could provide a cheaper form of physiotherapy.

“What we’ve found is that once the patient real-



izes that they are in fact controlling the robot, it gives them a sense of control. But it also gives them

a sense that the robot is exercising along with them, as if you were exercising with a partner. You

see they start to move, you start to move in conjunction with them,” says Professor Lynne Baillie,

professor of computer science at Heriot-Watt University.

In a swanky Nairobi sub-

urb, a new dining experience pulled in the crowds.

Robots helped the staff serve customers at the Robot Cafe - the first of its kind in East Africa.

Three of the bots worked alongside human waiters.

The owners of the cafe said the tech was too expensive to replace people - the machines are to draw crowds rather than save on wages.

“We believe that customers deserve to have the technology that is also available in developed countries so that they also experience a few things that are not available in the country. So we incorporated the robots basically for entertainment because that is what our target customers want,” explained John Kariuki, manager at Robot Cafe.

The use of robotic waiters in restaurants is not new; they have been in use in China, Japan and the United States among others.

## 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 UMUJAVYO 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





The African baobab in Wasini Island, Kenya

By Patrick Maundu

BAOBAB trees grow in arid and semi-arid parts of Africa, and have deep cultural and ecological significance.

However, this growing demand has become a double-edged sword, raising concerns about the sustainability of these ancient trees.

Where are baobabs found?

The tree is native to at least 37 countries in Africa and two in the Arabian Peninsula.

Baobabs are unique trees. They are among the world's longest-living trees, with some being over 2,000 years old.

Unlike most trees, which are adorned with lush leaves, the baobab often stands bare for the greater part of the year.

The tree has a slow growth rate. It

Baobab is a super food with growing global demand

This incident highlighted the lack of appropriate policies and regulatory frameworks to protect these important trees from exploitation, and underscored the urgent need for specific policies on safeguarding the baobab.

starts to flower and produce fruits from about 20 years of age. In many cases, however, especially in arid regions, trees give their first fruit much later, with some known to start at 60 years.

What is the baobab's significance?

In African cultures, every part of the baobab is valuable.

The leaves are consumed as a nutritious vegetable. The fruit pulp, with its tangy taste, adds flavour to foods and beverages.

The seeds are a source of oil in the cosmetic industry. The inner bark is harvested for its fibre, which is woven into ropes and baskets.

Because of its value, the baobab has attracted folklore and myths. Many African communities consider the tree sacred, often associating it with spirits.

Ecologically, the baobab holds an important position in the landscape, supporting a wide range of wildlife, in-



The inside of the baobab fruit

cluding fungi, insects, birds, reptiles, bats and monkeys. Its large trunk serves as a water reservoir.

Additionally, the baobab acts as a carbon sink. This means it absorbs carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and packs it away, helping mitigate

climate change.

Why is global demand for baobabs spiking?

The baobab's reputation as a superfood is spreading. This has mainly been fuelled by the recognition of baobab pulp as a food ingredient by the European Union and the US Food and Drug Administration in 2008

and 2009, respectively. This opened the way for its use as an ingredient in drinks, foods, natural remedies and cosmetics.

Zimbabwe has become a trailblazer in this industry, aggressively targeting the lucrative European market.

Why is the tree under threat?

The baobab is under threat on several fronts. Its slow growth rate, huge size, long life and economic value expose the tree to many risks.

Climate change is already reshaping the ecosystems baobabs rely on. These ancient giants need a specific range of soil and air humidity.

Changing community belief systems and local values are having an effect, too. The baobab's sacred status is waning as modernity spreads.

The surge in commercial interest is a double-edged sword. The high demand for baobab pulp raises serious concerns about interference with natural regeneration, loss of genetic diversity and the health of baobab populations.

This commercial interest has brought a new threat: biopiracy. This was witnessed in Kenya in 2022 when entire baobab trees were controversially uprooted and exported to Georgia in eastern Europe.

This incident highlighted the lack of appropriate policies and regulatory frameworks to protect these important trees from exploitation, and underscored the urgent need for specific policies on safeguarding the baobab.

What should be done?

Safeguarding the baobab requires more than isolated efforts.

It demands a blend of cultural and community protection, and conservation and management actions at the community level. It also requires strategic policy and regulatory frameworks, and collaboration on the national and global stages.

These policies should also support livelihood programmes for communities by supporting value chains and providing market linkages for baobab products.

RADIO One RATIBA YA VIPINDI JUMATATU - JUMAPILI

Table with 7 columns: MONDAY, TUESDAY, WEDNESDAY, THURSDAY, FRIDAY, SATURDAY, SUNDAY. Each column lists a time programme with specific show names and times.

Tembelea mitandao ya kijamii ya Radio One



Radio One



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Legislators to probe alleged misuse of \$232 m World Bank programme  
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## Turning waste into wealth: How youth in Kisumu are leading a quiet revolution

**KISUMU**

Beneath the scorching sun and along the dusty, winding paths of Nyalenda, an informal settlement in Kisumu, life thrives in all its contradictions. Makeshift stalls dot the crowded markets, vibrant with the shouts of traders and the aroma of freshly cooked *rech* (fish). Yet, behind this bustling energy lies the weight of challenges—piles of uncollected waste, joblessness, high rate of crime and the looming threat of climate change.

In the midst of this chaos, hope takes root. At the heart of Nyalenda, a group of determined young minds is rewriting the narrative. The Kisumu Young Agripreneurs (KIYA), a Kisumu County-based Agricultural & Climate Champion Youth Group, is transforming organic waste into opportunity. With their hands in the soil and their eyes set on a sustainable future, they are turning challenges into stories of resilience and renewal.

What most see as discarded peels, rotting vegetables, and scraps destined for landfills, these young agripreneurs see as gold—a resource with the power to transform not just soil, but lives. By turning organic waste into valuable products, KIYA exemplifies the power of community-driven solutions to address climate change and youth unemployment (they are mostly in their early 20s). They are proving that even in a place defined by struggle, innovation and determination can bloom.

Their work couldn't come at a more critical time. In Kenya, a staggering 40% of food produced annually—about 10 million metric tonnes—never makes it to the plate. Instead, it rots in landfills, releasing methane, a greenhouse gas 25 times more potent than carbon dioxide. For residents of Nyalenda, this isn't just an environmental crisis—it's a daily reality. Overflowing landfills pose health risks, pollute the environment, and magnify the struggles of an already burdened community.

For KIYA's co-founder, Roy Odawa, this problem wasn't just statistical; it was personal. "The stench and the waste were a problem we lived with every day," he shared. "But we knew we could turn it into something better—something transformative." Today in Nyalenda, where their headquarters stand as a testament to this transformation. On a once-neglected plot, KIYA has created a hub of innovation. Lush vegetables, fishponds, and a well-organized compound—complete with modest offices—reflects their tireless efforts.

That "something better" became the foundation of KIYA's mission: compost and Black Soldier Fly (BSF) farming—two simple yet transformative solutions.

### From Waste to Wealth: KIYA's Innovations

KIYA began with a simple idea: to collect organic waste from Kisumu's bustling Kibuye Market and turn it into compost. Every week, the team gathers fruit and vegetable peelings and buries them under layers of soil and leaves. Over time, nature works its magic, transforming the waste into nutrient-rich compost that rejuvenates depleted soils.

But KIYA didn't stop there. They discovered the power of the Black Soldier Fly (BSF), an insect whose larvae are voracious eaters of organic waste. In their cleverly named "love cages," BSF mate and lay eggs, which are collected and nurtured until they hatch into larvae. These larvae devour waste, leaving behind frass—a fertilizer that's pure gold for farmers—and themselves become

a protein-rich feed for poultry, fish, and pigs.

"BSF farming is a game-changer," says Roy, with a smile that hints at the pride of someone who's seen an idea flourish. "It's not just waste management; it's creating a circular economy."

### Empowering Farmers, One Training at a Time

KIYA's work doesn't end in Nyalenda. They've become a beacon of hope for farmers across Kisumu County. Through hands-on training sessions, the group teaches local farmers how to replicate their composting and BSF farming techniques.

For these farmers, the benefits are twofold: they save money by reducing their reliance on expensive synthetic fertilizers and animal feeds, and they earn extra income by selling the organic compost and BSF products.

One farmer, Margaret, who joined a KIYA training session, shares how it transformed her small plot of land. "Before, I struggled with poor yields and high costs. Now, with compost and BSF feed, my chickens are healthier, and my farm is thriving."

### Innovation at the Core

KIYA's ingenuity doesn't stop with waste transformation. They've introduced an evaporative charcoal cooler and an Aggregation Centre for African Leafy Vegetables (ALVs). The cooler keeps ALVs fresh for longer, reducing post-harvest losses, while the aggregation center ensures farmers can collectively package and market their produce, opening doors to better prices and broader markets.

### A Partnership for Change

Behind KIYA's success is a partnership with Germany's GIZ, which has been instrumental in supporting this youth-led initiative. Through GIZ's support, KIYA has not only refined its techniques but also gained access to the resources and networks needed to expand its impact.

Kenya's collaboration with Germany on climate and development issues finds real-world impact in initiatives like the Kisumu Young Agripreneurs (KIYA) project. The 2022 Climate and Development Partnership between the two nations prioritizes reducing carbon emissions, fostering climate-friendly growth, and adapting agriculture to climate change—goals KIYA brings to life through their innovative waste management and farming techniques.

Supported by Germany's GIZ, KIYA exemplifies how these partnerships translate into local action. By turning organic waste into compost and nutrient-rich Black Soldier Fly (BSF) products, they are not only reducing greenhouse gas emissions but also creating employment opportunities for youth. Projects like KIYA demonstrate the tangible benefits of the €1 billion investment in bilateral development programs, showcasing how global collaborations can empower communities and foster sustainable growth at the grassroots level.

### A Story of Youth, Resilience, and Opportunity

KIYA's story is one of determination and vision. In a region where youth unemployment looms large, this group has found a way to create jobs, protect the environment, and improve food security—all while inspiring their peers to see agriculture as an opportunity, not a last resort.

As the sun sets over Nyalenda, Roy and his team prepare for another day of collecting waste, nurturing larvae, and training farmers.

## 15 children from poor households in Kunduchi Ward emerge as best winners of DIY Toy competition



Dial Community of Tanzania, director Inwook Park (2nd L) displays a house made by children from poor households at the Dial Community of Tanzania area

By Beatrice Philemon

**F**IFTEEN children out of 200 from poor households in Kunduchi Ward, Kinondoni District have emerged the best winners of the DIY Toy Competition and walked away with various prizes from Voluntary Korean youth members dubbed: 'Team TOTO'

Dar es Salaam Based Company-Aron Group Tanzania Limited, Chief Executive Officer, Taegyun Kim said on Saturday that the contest was organised by his company in collaboration with the Voluntary Korean youth members dubbed: 'Team TOTO' and Dial Community of Tanzania.

The competition aimed to provide children with the opportunity to showcase their creativity by recycling thrown-away materials and turning them into toys.

It also sought to raise awareness about climate change and environmental issues, while involving other family members in the toy-making efforts.

"Through the DIY Toy Competition, children learn to see discarded materials not as waste but as opportunities. It empowers them to express their ideas and creativity, building both confidence and life skills.

Additionally, the event raises awareness in the community about the importance of environmental preservation and the potential of upcycling.

The children were able to make various types of toys, including a radio, using a hand-wash liquids soap gallon that actually makes sound, various types of houses, heavy duty trucks, flat bed trailer, refrigerated trucks, flight and other toys

Merciana Freddy, a Standard Four pupil at Mtakuja Primary School, emerged the first winner and received a school bag. Shaban Zubari was the third winner and took home a ball,



Taegyun Kim, chief executive director at the Dar es Salaam Based Company-Aron Group Tanzania Limited and Dial Community of Tanzania, director Inwook Park check toys made by children from poor households at Dial Community of Tanzania area

while Juma Hassan, the fourth winner, walked away with a spider toy. Miriam Mwebezi, the fifth winner, received kids' toy.

Wilfred Boniface, the sixth winner, received a racket and spider toy. Yokebedi Freddy, the eighth winner, took home a pencil, compass set, and jump rope. Joseph Charles, the ninth winner, won a ball and a certificate.

Peratia Freddy, the tenth winner, received a certificate. Hassan Hamis, the eleventh winner, and Dennis Antony also went away with certificates, along with three other winners.

The remaining participants received two kilograms of rice and other prizes.

Kim says, children from impoverished families in Tanzania often face significant challenges, including limited access to proper nutrition and education.

Children's creations are more than just toys—they are a reflection of innovative thinking.

"They show us that even discarded items can be transformed into something meaningful with the right touch of creativity," she says

The competition is not only about showcasing children's creations but also about demonstrating their ability to overcome limitations through their resourcefulness.

It also serves as a platform for raising awareness about environmental sustainability.

Additionally, one of the young participants shared their excitement, saying, "We don't have much, but I love making things. I can't wait to show my toy to my friends." This sense of pride and joy underscores the event's impact on fostering confidence and hope among children," Kim says

Additionally, through this event, they are connecting creativity and hope

The competition stands as a symbol of creativity thriving amidst hardship and the positive impact of small, sustainable changes. Tanzanian children remind us that even in the most challenging circumstances, imagination and innovation can flourish, transforming limitations into opportunities and inspiring us all to rethink what true creativity and value mean, Kim says

Wilfred Boniface, the sixth winner, expressed his thanks to Aron Group Tanzania Limited, Voluntary Korean youth members for organising the competition and allowing him to showcase his creativity.

"I am truly grateful for the recognition I have received for my work and called on the organizers and Dial Community of Tanzania to help him achieve his dream," he says.

During the event, he was able to create a radio with frequencies XCK, made from discarded materials.

For many, purchasing toys is an unattainable luxury. However, their creativity knows no bounds. Using discarded materials, these children craft their own toys, finding joy in the process of creation.

To celebrate and encourage their ingenuity, the DIY Toy Competition was introduced. This event goes beyond simple recycling—it embraces upcycling, where children transform waste materials into new, valuable items through their unique designs and ideas.

"Children in the competition used recyclable materials such as plastic bottles, old fabrics, and can lids to create their own toys.

From bottle cap cars and cloth dolls to small robots made of tree branches, the toys crafted by these children are not just play things—they are a testament to their imagination and boundless potential.

Daean Kim says, the chil-



# Kenya DP calls for collaboration between CoB, Cog to address delayed funds disbursement

NAIROBI

DEPUTY President Kithure Kindiki has urged the Controller of Budget (CoB) and the Council of Governors (CoG) to work together to resolve persistent delays in the disbursement and utilisation of county funds.

Speaking at the 25th Ordinary Session of the Intergovernmental Budget and Economic Council (IBEC) held at his official residence in Karen, Kindiki emphasised the need for accountability and efficiency in county resource management.

"We have had an issue of timely disbursement of county resources," Kindiki acknowledged. "I am informed by the CS for the National Treasury that progress has been made. I am told November is still outstanding, but next week, November will be sorted out so that we try to regularize the delays."

The Deputy President noted that delays in accessing development funds are exacerbated by accountability procedures involving the Controller of Budget, leading to further bottlenecks in service delivery.

He called for a balanced approach to ensure financial oversight does not hinder the functioning of devolved units.

"Counties and county governments cannot receive money and be unable to spend



Deputy President Kithure Kindiki

it. On the other hand, we must insist that accountability is for all of us," he stated. "We must bridge the gap between the viewpoints of the CoG and CoB to help both institutions deliver on their mandates."

Kindiki outlined the broader economic challenges that have strained both national and county-level finances, including high interest rates, inflation, and a weak shilling.

He credited the Kenya Kwanza administration for stabilizing the economy, noting significant

improvements over the past two years.

"Inflation has come down from a high of 9.7 per cent in 2022 to now 2.7 per cent, the lowest in 17 years," he said. "The exchange rate of the dollar has stabilized from highs of 165-168 to 127-129, and interest rates have dropped from over 15 per cent to 11.25 per cent, with indications of further decreases."

Kindiki reassured Kenyans that the worst of the macroeconomic turbulence was over, paving the way for enhanced

service delivery and economic growth.

He acknowledged the sacrifices made by county governments and households during the period of economic strain and committed to strengthening devolution.

Reflecting on the political instability that marked the past year, Kindiki pointed to the collapse of the Finance Act 2024 due to unrest, which resulted in fiscal shortfalls.

He commended the mediation efforts that resolved the

funding gaps, with county allocations adjusted to Sh387 billion to accommodate the revised revenue framework.

"The last one year had some political implications which affected our fiscal situation," he said. "Despite the challenges, I want to commend the spirit of understanding, collaboration, and consensus building displayed so far."

Kindiki emphasized the government's renewed focus on boosting household incomes, creating jobs, and ensuring in-

clusive economic growth.

He reiterated the administration's commitment to strengthening devolution and enhancing service delivery at the grassroots level.

"The pain has been significant, but I stand here today with good news that the worst is behind us," he said. "The future promises more comfort, and we remain committed to empowering citizens and ensuring prosperity for all."

The IBEC session brought together key stakeholders, including governors, the National Treasury, and other economic policymakers, to chart the way forward for sustainable resource allocation and improved service delivery across Kenya's counties.

Some of the notable leaders present include Cabinet Secretaries John Mbadi (National Treasury), Alice Wahome (Lands), Rebecca Miano (Tourism and Wildlife), Dorcas Oduor (Attorney General), Principal Secretaries Teresia Mbaika (Devolution), Sylvia Museiya (Wildlife), Paul Rono (Agriculture).

Others who attended the event are; Ahmed Abdullahi (Chairman, Council of Governors), Mutahi Kahiga (Vice Chairman, Council of Governors), Governors; Gideon Mung'aro (Kilifi), Issa Timamy (Lamu), Dhadho Godhana (Tana River) Nadhif Jama (Garissa), Mutula Kilonzo Jr (Makueni), Kawira Mwangaza (Meru), Abdi Ibrahim Guyo (Isiolo) and Wisley Rotich (Elgeyo Marakwet).



## Illicit vape market undermines global tobacco, harming reduction progress

LONDON

In 2024, the global novel nicotine product market is projected to reach \$65 billion with 120 million users worldwide. This growth, while substantial, is distributed unevenly across regions. Data from the ECigIntelligence Global Database, released in September 2024, reveals that vapes dominate the North American market. However, nicotine pouches are the fastest-growing product with an annual growth rate of 80 per cent. The vape market share in North America increased by 14 per cent, while heated tobacco products (HT) saw a 38 per cent growth rate.

In contrast, South America shows little to no activity in the novel nicotine market due to stringent regulations and widespread bans on tobacco and nicotine products. In Europe, the Middle East, Africa, and Asia Pacific (EMEA), there are a mix of vapes, heated tobacco, and nicotine pouches. Nicotine pouches lead in annual growth within the EMEA region at 50 per cent, followed by heated tobacco at 31 per cent and vapes at 15 per

cent.

Despite the significant growth in novel nicotine products in terms of market share and annual growth rate, illicit nicotine products, particularly vapes, pose a major obstacle to progress.

"The illicit market is huge in many countries, particularly in the vape sector. We're also seeing illicit activity in nicotine pouches and heated tobacco. Illicit trade is an existential problem for the vape industry," said Tim Phillips, Founder and Managing Director of ECigIntelligence, during the recently concluded 2024 E-Cigarette Summit in the United Kingdom.

Phillips noted that illicit vapes are creating widespread concern among consumers and parents, contributing to a perception of the industry being out of control.

"In the U.K., we see this all the time – many shops appear to be selling illicit products due to a lack of regulatory control," he said.

He further highlighted the difficulty in regulating the il-

licit vape market.

"We've attempted various methods to measure the size of the illicit vape market. Our findings show that, on average, 60 per cent of the vape market is illicit. This was determined by analysing the tax revenues collected from the vape market in Europe in 2022, which accounted for only 40 per cent of the expected amount," added Phillips.

The online marketplace has also emerged as a hotspot for illicit nicotine trade, primarily due to lax restrictions in some countries.

"In several European countries, bans on online sales are in place. However, in markets where online vape sales are permitted, consumers tend to purchase products directly from websites within their own countries. In countries with online sales bans, consumers often turn to websites based in countries without restrictions, thereby fueling the illicit market," he explained.

Tom Freeman, the Director of the Addiction and Mental Health Group Department of

Psychology at the University of Bath, said that vaping could help replace smoking but poor regulation has opened the floodgates to illicit vape products.

Phillips warned that failure to regulate the illicit vape market could lead to blanket bans on all vape products, including safer, legal options, thus undermining efforts to reduce the harm caused by smoking combustible tobacco products.

"To understand why the illicit vape market exists, we must recognise that vaping is still relatively new, and many regulatory authorities struggle to comprehend it fully. The sector is highly fragmented with thousands of rapidly evolving products making regulation and tracking difficult," Phillips said.

However, he noted that some progress is being made. Measures such as increased enforcement, taxation of illicit vapes to improve tracking, and retail licensing are already being implemented in the U.K. to monitor the market and its products.

## Kenya company shareholders okay sh3.25bn rights issue item

NAIROBI

Non-banking financial services firm Sanlam Kenya shareholders have approved a Sh3.25 billion rights issue.

The rights issue, aimed at recapitalising the company's balance sheet, will allow Sanlam Kenya to make an early repayment of a performing loan facility from Stanbic Bank Kenya PLC.

The move is expected to reduce long-term debt levels, cut interest costs, and bolster working capital.

Sanlam Kenya Chairman John Simba highlighted the strategic importance of the rights issue, stating, "The funds raised will enhance the Group's operational flexibility and provide the resources necessary to drive growth and profitability."

To facilitate the rights issue, shareholders approved an increase in the company's share capital from Sh2 billion to Sh3.72 billion, divided into 400 million ordinary shares with a nominal value of Sh5 each.

Additionally, the Board of Directors was authorised to allot and issue up to 1 billion ordinary shares under the program.

Sanlam Kenya Group CEO Nyamemba Tumbo emphasised that the rights issue would be fully underwritten by its parent company, Sanlam Allianz Africa Proprietary, ensuring the success of the capital-raising initiative.

"The early repayment of the Stanbic Bank facility will significantly reduce debt levels, saving on interest costs and improving the Group's financial position," said Tumbo.

He noted that the healthier balance sheet would enable the company to focus on pioneering inclusive financial confidence by investing in diversified non-banking financial services.

In recent years, Sanlam Kenya has undertaken several strategic initiatives, including debt restructuring, divestment from real estate, and streamlining operations.

These efforts have allowed the Group to concentrate on its core insurance business, positioning it for sustainable growth.

Eligible shareholders will be invited to participate in the rights issue once regulatory approvals are secured, with the issue price to be announced soon.

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# Red Sea tensions: Four scholars explain what's at stake for global trade, security

JOHANNESBURG

THE Red Sea region is a geopolitical hotspot. It holds strategic maritime importance as a global trade transit route and plays a crucial role in the broader region's security and economic stability.

Various actors are vying for influence in this important region. They include Turkey, the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, China, the US and Italy, which have set up military bases. Insecurity in the Red Sea region has a ripple effect on the cost of global trade. These military bases are intended to protect oil and merchant shipping.

With the interests at play here, the Red Sea basin has become an arena for complex global relations. This was especially evident following an early 2024 agreement between landlocked Ethiopia and the breakaway state of Somaliland to grant Addis Ababa access to the Red Sea. The agreement, which Somalia saw as an affront, has had huge implications that continue to play



out. It sparked agreements that led to new alliances - but also tested old ones.

As local and foreign interests collide, new dynamics are shaping the region's politics. The Conversation Africa has, over the years, worked with a range of academics to help readers understand the effects of these shifting alliances. Here are some of their in-

sights.

## Ethiopia-Somaliland agreement

On 1 January 2024, Ethiopian prime minister Abiy Ahmed and Somaliland president Muse Bihi Abdi announced a plan to give landlocked Ethiopia access to the Somaliland coastline for 50 years. In exchange, Ethiopia would

consider supporting Somaliland's quest for international recognition as a sovereign state. Somalia, which lays claim to Somaliland, declared the agreement an act of aggression. The deal - and the subsequent international opposition it drew - illustrate the complex web of alliances and rivalries shaping the region's politics, as Aleks

Ylönen explains.

## The Houthi threat

Early January also highlighted the global impact of insecurity in the Red Sea region. Houthi militia, who are Yemen-based rebels, became one of the Red Sea basin's most pressing security threats. The rebels claimed to be targeting Israeli-linked vessels

to protest against Israel's war against Hamas in Gaza. However, Saudi ships were the biggest casualty of their attacks. These attacks underscored the persistent insecurity in one of the world's most strategic waterways. Addressing this, security analyst Burak akir eker suggests, requires a coordinated international response.

## Turkey in Somali waters

In response to the Houthi threat and other security threats in the region, Turkey has deepened its involvement in Somalia. Ankara announced a new defence agreement with Mogadishu in February 2024. Under the terms of the deal, Turkey would provide military aid and training to help Somalia protect its waters from piracy and illegal fishing. But, as international relations professor Federico Donelli explains, the agreement is just part of Turkey's long-term strategic investment in the region. The maritime defence engagement supports Ankara's broader foreign policy strategy to gain

greater autonomy in global politics.

## Balancing act

Turkey's growing engagement in Somalia has strained its historical ties with Ethiopia. Ethiopia, already navigating the fallout from its agreement with Somaliland, views the maritime developments with Mogadishu as a potential threat. Ethiopia and Turkey have had cordial ties since the early 20th century and drew closer in recent years as both battled criticism from the west over domestic policies. History scholar Michael Bishku explains that Turkey's ties with Ethiopia are largely economic, while those with Somalia are sentimental. Navigating the different interests in the region calls for a delicate balancing act.

Such local and global power plays underscore the Red Sea's geopolitical importance, with economic and political interests fuelling cooperation and tension. Ultimately, the region's stability - or lack thereof - has far-reaching consequences for global trade, security and politics.

## Legislators ready to probe alleged misuse of \$232 m World Bank programme

ABUJA

The House of Representatives has resolved to investigate the alleged mismanagement and misapplication of \$232 million for Accelerating Nutrition Results in Nigeria (ANRiN) World Bank Programme.

The resolution of the House followed the adoption of a motion moved at the plenary on Thursday by Chike Okafor.

Moving the motion, the lawmaker said ANRiN is a World Bank-funded, performance-based project that uses loans to address nutritional challenges in Nigeria.

Okafor stressed that the program aimed at providing improved nutrition for vulnerable communities by increasing access to quality, cost-effective nutrition services for pregnant and lactating women, adolescent girls, and children under five years of age in Abia, Akwa Ibom, Gombe, Kaduna, Kano, Kogi, Kwara, Nasarawa, Niger, Oyo, and Plateau states.

He explained that ANRiN Program was entered into

by the federal government in 2018 to achieve a balance between the urgent need to protect Nigerian children from the devastating and life-long effects of malnutrition with the expectation of improved nutritional interventions and outcomes before December 2024.

Okafor said: "Concern that the programs so far have been alleged to be 'water, water everywhere but no water to drink,' a beautiful program for solving malnutrition challenges, but it has appeared to produce miraculous and obviously ineffective outcomes, taking cognizant of the reports and current indicators of Nigeria amidst such a huge and humongous loan from the World Bank."

He expressed worry that the recently released Nigeria Demographic Health Survey 2023/2024 indicated a worsening of nutrition specifics with indices showing an increase in under five stunting and malnutrition and the current realities raising questions about the \$232 million spent for nutritional interventions and Nigeria's poor

global ranking.

The lawmaker said an investigation would determine the extent of the alleged mismanagement of funds in the ANRiN Program, evaluate its impact, identify responsible parties, and propose accountability measures for future \$50 million interventions.

The House resolved: "Mandate the Committees on Nutrition and Food Security, Finance, Aids, Loan, and Debt Management to investigate the ANRiN World Bank loan to ensure that special programs of nutrition values are not abused or mismanaged;

"Also mandate the Committees on Nutrition and Food Security, Finance, Aids, Loan, and Debt Management to invite the Federal Ministry of Health, National Primary Health Care Development Agency, World Bank, the twelve beneficiary states and other relevant stakeholders involved to provide necessary documents and insights on the program for ease of investigation and report within four weeks for further legislative action."

## Youth in Kilwa District benefit from entrepreneurship project

By Beatrice Philemon

HEMED Mbelekajee, a board member of Kilwa Youth Development Initiatives' (KIYODI) from Kipindimbi village said recently during the launch of Kilwa Youth Development Initiatives' (KIYODI) three-year strategic plan.

The event was attended by KIYODI members, ActionAid Tanzania staff, and Kilwa Community Development Officers.

He urged KIYODI members and other youth from various wards in Kilwa District to take advantage of this opportunity to cultivate vegetables and fruits, including onions, bananas, and tomato, within their localities.

The project is expected to start in January 2025 in Kilwa District. Once it is ready, all the youth will be informed through the village government, the Kilwa Youth Development Initiatives' (KIYODI) platform and other youth reflection platforms. He urged the youth in all areas where they reside to take advantage of this opportunity because the KIYODI will assist them in finding markets for their produce.

"We want to see young people in the wards and villages engaging in agriculture so that they can become self-employed, increase their income, and have a better life," he says

The self-awareness education and entrepreneurship skills offered by Kilwa Youth Development Initiatives' (KIYODI) in Kilwa District Council, Lindi Region had also appointed the youth in different committees including planning, finance, social welfare and defence and security.

The youth also have established income-generating activities, which was not the case in the past. The event was attended by KIYODI members, ActionAid Tanzania staff, and Kilwa Community Development officers.

"The training has brought positive results, currently some youth have started Airtel Money businesses while others are growing vegetables and sell them within the villages and nearby villages to improve their economic status, be economically independent and support themselves and their families," said.

The youth have been selected as members of the village council. They have their own committees, manage their work effectively, and are actively involved in decision-making processes that focus on youth-related issues.

This has been made possible through KIYODI members, who have been visiting various villages to educate young people on self-awareness, helping them, understand who they are and what their responsibilities are.

"Under the programme, they taught them about joining youth groups and self-employment."

"Before this intervention, we received training from ActionAid-Kilwa, they taught us about self-awareness, how to utilise the opportunities available in our villages and organic farming," he explained.

Through the knowledge and skills gained from ActionAid Kilwa, they have been able to establish their own group known as Wapambaji Kilimo Hai, located in Kipindimbi village, Njinjo ward. Currently, the group has six members who are involved in vegetable and fruits farming.

He explained that in 2021/2022, they were able to cultivate Chinese, spinach, tomatoes, eggplant, earning a total of 480,000/-.

"This amount is very little because the situation was not good due to a lack of customers. There were too many vegetables on the farm, we had no market, and many of the vegetables wasted on farms due to the lack of customers," he says

Additionally, in 2023, they planted vegetables again, but all the vegetables were infected by pests.

"We used organic pesticides to kill the pests from destroying their crops, but they didn't help. Later, the agricultural officer advised us to use industrial pesticides, but those also didn't kill the pests. The pests continued to destroy the vegetables, and all the plants dried up, so we incurred a loss."

Additionally, after seeing that the pests were increasingly destroying the vegetables, the agricultural officer advised them to stop farming until the rains

start, then they can plant.

"We are grateful because, after the rains started, the pests have decreased. Starting from January next year, we will start planting watermelons. We have already set aside two acres of land for watermelon farming, we believe that through this crop, we will be able to earn cash," he says.

He expressed thanks to ActionAid Kilwa for training them on organic farming that in turn has helped them to engage in horticulture farming and later on create employment

They know on how to make traditional pesticides and fertilizers using indigenous species of plants to improve soil fertility and prevent pests that destroy crops.

The trainings have brought positive changes to them because they are now the ones training others in various villages, this was not the case before. Mbelekajee says

Currently, members are using traditional pesticides in their farming activities that are safe for environment and human health, we invite customers from all over the country who prefer to eat organic fruits and vegetables to visit in our village to buy vegetable and fruits from us," he says

Said Malenga, the secretary of KIYODI, expressed his gratitude to ActionAid Kilwa for supporting the organization in formulating its new strategic plan.

KIYODI currently has 200 members including 125 men and 75 women, and operates in 10 wards such as Kilwa Masoko, kilwa kivinje, Mandawa, Lihimalyao, Njinjo, Mitole, Miguruwe, Miteja, Namayuni and kipatimu. It has established 10 youth reflection groups with 221 members, engaging in entrepreneurship ventures like horticulture and motorcycle taxi businesses.

The strategic has been designed to empower youth economically, politically, and socially, promoting gender equality and inclusivity, ensure good governance and accountability, support agriculture, land, environment, and food security and foster institutional development and growth.

VIEW FROM THE TOP





## WORLD

## Open global trade is only way to feed the world, WTO chief says

By Bloomberg

GLOBAL poverty will increase if the world doesn't work to maintain a stable and open trading system, World Trade Organization Director General Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala said.

"We should keep our eyes on maintaining a stable, free, open and predictable trading system," Okonjo-Iweala said in an interview in Rome where she also met Pope Francis. "You cannot feed the world without trade, that is just a fact. One in four calories consumed in the world is traded."

The former Nigerian finance minister, who was recently reappointed to the post of global international commerce chief, is facing an uphill battle in championing free trade following the election of Donald Trump in the US.

"I know people are thinking about doom and gloom, that we're going to have trade wars and so on and so forth, but there are opportunities within the challenges facing

trade," said Okonjo-Iweala, who is the first woman to run the Geneva-based organization.

The WTO's mission of fostering lower trade barriers is at odds with Trump's threats of universal tariffs and his embrace of protectionism.

Okonjo Iweala, 70, recounted her youth during the Nigeria-Biafra war, saying her experience makes her aware of what's at stake when trying to help people escape poverty and conflict.

"I've lived through a war, from the time I was 12 to 15. My parents lost everything, we had nothing, I couldn't go to school during that time, we ran from place to place, and I know what it means to eat one meal a day, because that's what we did, sometimes we didn't even have one meal," she said. "That accumulated knowledge of what it means to actually work to lift people up, that's what my whole career has been about."

Okonjo-Iweala said the WTO needs to move ahead with reforms and push coun-



World Trade Organization Director-General Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala looks on during a press conference after she was reappointed for a second term, in Geneva, on Nov 29, 2024. AFP

tries to keep dialogue open.

"The way out is that we need to talk to each other," she said. "We need multilateralism, we need cooperation as no one country can solve global problems alone."

Among bright spots, Okonjo-Iweala mentioned the growth in services trade which she said is increasing at a rate of 8 percent-9 percent a year, and of green trade.

The future is in services and digitally delivered services trade which "is worth \$4.25 trillion now. The other one is green trade, that's another opportunity worth almost \$2 trillion now, and with prospects to grow," she said. "We have to give

hope whilst not running away from the fact that the present is challenging."

That compares to total global trade of about \$30.4 trillion, according to the latest WTO data.

She said she discussed some challenges with Pope Francis in Rome who was particularly concerned about the number of conflicts and uncertainty in the world. The head of the Roman-Catholic church has repeatedly spoken out against income inequality.

"He said children are searching for food in rubbish dumps and yet we are spending millions on arms," Okonjo-Iweala said.

## 25 years on, Macao prospers amid deeper integration into national development

MACAO

IN the Macao-Hengqin Youth Entrepreneurship Valley, a space where many young entrepreneurs from Macao chase their dreams, the aroma of coffee mingles with the smell of rain-kissed grass.

From Lei Zhen's office at Nanometals Technology, the view stretches from Hengqin's landmarks to Macao's glittering skyline. Lei founded Nanometals in Zhuhai, south China's Guangdong Province, in 2014, focusing on innovative applications of new materials, with nano silver wire as the core product.

Hengqin, located just across the river from Macao, is home to the Guangdong-Macao Greater Bay Area's manufacturing ecosystem, his company scaled up the production of flexible touch-screen materials – breaking foreign monopolies in this field.

Macao will soon mark the 25th anniversary of its return to the motherland. Since its return, the central government's strong support, coupled with active integration into the Chinese mainland, has transformed Macao into a modern, international metropolis, achieving remarkable progress in both economic development and people's livelihoods.

In tandem with this transformation, Macao has deepened its exchanges and cooperation with the mainland, becoming an integral part of China's broader development agenda and contributing to the cause of Chinese modernization.

Just over two months ago, the Macao Bridge, a new eight-lane bridge connecting the Macao Peninsula to Taipa, officially opened to traffic. This is the fourth cross-sea bridge to connect the two districts and it has greatly improved the flow of people and goods, enhancing the region's economic vitality.

Before its return to China, Macao's infrastructure was relatively underdeveloped. However, iconic city landmarks such as light rail systems and cross-sea bridges have since become symbols of its modernization. In 1999, Macao's GDP stood at MOP 51.9



People visit a flower show on Taipa Island in Macao, south China, Dec. 14, 2024. A flower show celebrating the 25th anniversary of Macao's return to the motherland kicked off here on Saturday and will run until Jan. 5, 2025. Xinhua

billion (about 6.23 billion U.S. dollars). By 2023, it had skyrocketed to nearly MOP 379.5 billion. Meanwhile, by the end of last year, the total savings of Macao residents had surpassed MOP 700 billion – an eightfold increase compared to 1999. Over the past 25 years, Macao has become one of Asia's wealthiest cities.

While its economy has grown steadily, Macao has also gradually diversified its industries, moving beyond its reliance on the casino sector. With the central government's support, Macao has embraced a more diversified, balanced and sustainable economic structure.

"During the past 25 years, Macao has made remarkable strides under the 'one country, two systems' framework," said Ho Iat Seng, chief executive of the Macao Special Administrative Region (SAR), noting that the proportion of key industries contributing to economic diversification has steadily increased – making the economy more resilient and diversified.

Notably, Macao's tourism sector has played a considerable role in its economic transformation. With its rich blend of Chinese and Western cultures, a diverse culinary scene, and unique architectural styles, tourism has become a vital part of Macao's economic diversification. The SAR government has been working to showcase Macao's

appeal, attracting tourists from around the world to experience the city's significant cultural heritage.

In 1999, Macao received only 7 million visitors. By Dec. 7, 2024, the annual visitor number had surged to 32.5 million. Macao is now one of the cities with the highest concentration of UNESCO World Heritage Sites globally and is working to establish itself as a world tourism and leisure center. According to a survey by China Tourism Academy, Macao was ranked as the most satisfactory outbound destination for mainland tourists in the first quarter of 2024.

The city has also witnessed a boom in its entertainment industry over the years, with many performance events being held including large-scale concerts.

"Whether in terms of cultural events or infrastructure, Macao is an ideal venue for shows," said Macao tenor Liu Naiqi. "Now, many mainland and overseas tourists come to Macao specifically to attend concerts."

In 2023, cultural and artistic events attracted nearly 20 million participants, with large-scale concerts drawing around 1 million attendees and generating approximately MOP 1.1 billion in box office sales. Non-gaming sectors now contribute to more than 60 percent of Macao's GDP, a steady increase from previous years.

"Macao's efforts to accelerate the diversification of its economy not only strengthen its economic power and competitiveness but also enable it to play a more significant role in supporting the national strategy and the country's high-level opening up to the outside world," said Ip Kuai Peng, vice rector of City University of Macao.

## Nigeria's proposed tax reforms promise incentives, raise concerns

ABUJA

AIMING to simplify and unify the country's tax system while promising significant incentives for businesses, especially small and medium enterprises (SMEs), the tax reforms recently proposed by the Nigerian government have continued to generate intense debate nationwide.

The proposed reforms, which include the Nigeria Tax Bill 2024, the Nigeria Tax Administration Bill, the Nigeria Revenue Service (Establishment) Bill and the Joint Revenue Board (Establishment) Bill, aim to overhaul the tax system of Africa's most populous country.

With differing views from various citizens, including government officials, experts and stakeholders, many believe that the proposed tax reforms will significantly reduce inefficiencies and boost government revenues. In contrast, others have raised concerns about "the potential negative impacts regarding the balance of fiscal federalism and the distribution of revenues from the value-added tax (VAT)," leading to fierce opposition, particularly from the 19 northern states.

"On this tax issue, there are a lot of misconceptions," said Babagana Zulum, governor of the northeastern state of Borno, while recently fielding questions from reporters in Abuja, the Nigerian capital. "We felt that the VAT provision in the tax law ... based on the calculations that we did, only Lagos and Rivers states (in the southern part of the country) will benefit from this scheme. We (the northerners) researched and concluded that we would lose."

Zulum, while calling for deeper consultations to understand the details of the tax regime before passing it into law, advised the federal government to pause and remove some of the clauses thought to be "inimical to the northern part of Nigeria."

In October, Nigerian President Bola Tinubu urged the bicameral legislature to pass the proposed reform bills. On Nov. 28, amid the fuss generated by the president's request, the tax bills passed a second reading in the Senate, the upper chamber of the legislature.

According to Emeka Obegolu, president of the Abuja Chamber of Commerce and Industry, these reforms represent "a significant step toward improving Nigeria's business environment."

Obegolu told Xinhua that provisions, such as the exemption of businesses with annual turnovers below 50 million nairas (about 32,290 U.S. dollars) from tax payments, would enable SMEs to reinvest their earnings into growth and job creation without the burden of high taxes.

He noted that the reforms propose overhauling more than 50 redundant taxes, a move expected to reduce operational costs for businesses and enhance their competitiveness.

"The proposed establishment of a single tax collection agency would further streamline processes, reduce compliance costs, and promote accountability," he said.

Noting the extent of the ongoing debate about the country's tax reforms, Dapo Abiodun, governor of the southwestern state of Ogun, suggested that the discontent over the reforms is largely due to misunderstandings and misinformation.

Looking forward to a "more equitable distribution of VAT revenue," which the proposed reforms aim to allow, Abiodun told the media in the state capital of Abeokuta that much of the VAT from industrial activities in Ogun has been accrued to Lagos, despite the bulk of production occurring in the state that he governs.

The governor said his expectation was high that under the new model, VAT distribution would be more reflective of where value is added, ensuring a fairer share for industrial states like Ogun.

Semiu Lawal, an entrepreneur, said that VAT generated from industrial states, for instance, should be redistributed based on where value is created, rather than where goods are sold.

This adjustment is expected to have a profound impact on states like Ogun, which host several major manufacturers, he told Xinhua, adding that the proposed changes to VAT distribution have sparked fierce resistance from governors of northern states because they believe the new derivation-based model could harm their regions' financial autonomy.

At a meeting in October, a forum of northern Nigerian governors rejected the model, fearing it would centralize tax authority and reduce their revenues. The National Economic Council, which statutorily comprises the country's vice president and all 36 state governors, acknowledged these concerns and called for wider consultation ahead of the legislative process for the bills.

With continued dialogue and negotiation, the hope is that the final tax system will foster greater economic growth and inclusivity for the entire country.

Agencies

## US, China should seize opportunities for dialogue, cooperation amid tensions, experts say

NEWYORK

IN interviews with Xinhua after Chinese President Xi Jinping sent a congratulatory letter to the 2024 gala dinner of the U.S.-China Business Council (USCBC), experts said the United States and China should seize opportunities to have dialogue and cooperation amid ongoing tensions.

In the congratulatory letter sent on Wednesday, Xi said China and the United States should choose dialogue over confrontation, and win-win cooperation over zero-sum games.

Noting that the China-U.S. relationship is one of the most important relationships in the world, Xi said it concerns not only the im-

mediate interests of the Chinese and American peoples, but also the future of and destiny of the entire humanity.

The success of one side should be an opportunity rather than a challenge for the other, and one's achievement should help rather than hinder the development of the other, he added.

Jeffrey Sachs, a renowned U.S. economist and professor at Columbia University, described Xi's remarks as "very wise" and hoped that Washington would heed them.

"President Xi's words are very wise, and I hope they are not in vain," said Sachs, criticizing the United States for adopting protectionist policies.

According to Sachs, the United

States has become protectionist for three reasons: First, it has worked politically to blame job loss in manufacturing in the U.S. Midwest on China. The U.S. Midwest states have been the "swing states" in presidential elections, so both parties have turned protectionist.

Second, the United States aims to use protectionism as an industrial policy to create U.S.-based industries that lag behind China's.

Third, the United States aims to use protectionism to hinder China's rise in a zero-sum strategy to bolster U.S. hegemony.

All three arguments for U.S. protectionism are "deeply misplaced," said Sachs.

"The United States has benefited

enormously from trade with China. To create an artificial tariff wall against trade with China will be a losing proposition," he said. "The main source of job decline is technology, not trade."

Putting tariffs on China will not create many if any U.S. jobs, and could well result in net job losses in the United States through a loss of competitiveness, said Sachs. The better way to help the lagging U.S. Midwest is through regional development policies in the United States and other social outlays, such as job retraining.

"The U.S. industrial policy for green and digital technologies should not aim against China. Indeed, Chinese companies can and should be part of successful U.S.-

based industries," he added.

"The U.S. idea of hindering China's economic rise is profoundly misguided and dangerous, introducing a mistaken zero-sum mentality into a positive-sum relationship," said Sachs.

Despite ongoing challenges, U.S.-China relations remain the most critical bilateral relationship in the world, said Mitchell Presnick, a visiting fellow of practice at the Fairbank Center for Chinese Studies at Harvard University and founder of Super 8 Hotels China. He emphasized that both nations recognize pragmatic reasons to keep avenues for cooperation open.

"We've seen President Xi make significant efforts over the past year to engage the American business

community," Presnick noted, citing key events such as the APEC Summit in San Francisco in November 2023 and the China Development Forum in Beijing in March 2024.

Beneath the rhetoric of conflict and competition, "both sides are searching for a way forward that better serves each country's interests," said Presnick.

"There are plenty of ways in which the United States and China could, if they choose to, improve their commercial relationship, and by so doing, improve U.S.-China relations," said Robert Kapp, former president of the USCBC.

Greg Cusack, a former Iowa state legislator, echoed the sentiments, calling for immediate steps to de-escalate tensions.

Xinhua



## India, Sri Lanka decide to conclude defence cooperation agreement soon, says PM Modi

NEW DELHI

PRIME Minister Narendra Modi has said that India and Sri Lanka has decided to soon conclude defence cooperation agreement. He said that both nations have decided to have cooperation on hydrography.

In his joint statement with Sri Lankan President Anura Kumara Dissanayake, PM Modi said that both nations believe that Colombo Security Conclave is an important platform for regional peace, security and development.

He said, "We completely agree that our security interests are interlinked. We have decided to conclude the defence cooperation agreement soon. Cooperation on hydrography has also been agreed upon. We believe that the Colombo Security Conclave is an important platform for regional peace, security and development. Under this, cooperation will be enhanced on topics like maritime security, counter-terrorism, cyber-security, fight against smuggling and organised crime, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief."

Highlighting people-to-people ties between India and Sri Lanka, PM Modi said, "The people-to-people relations between India and Sri Lanka are linked to our civilisations. When Pali language was given the status of "Classical Language" in India, it was celebrated in Sri Lanka too."

He welcomed Sri Lankan President to India and expressed happiness that he chose New Delhi for his first foreign visit after assuming office. PM Modi announced that the two nations have adopted a futuristic vision.

Welcoming Sri Lankan President to India, PM Modi said, "I welcome President Dissanayake to India. We are happy that you (Anura Kumara Dissanayake) chose India as his first foreign visit. This visit will bring a new speed and energy to the ties. For our partnership, we have adopted a futuristic vision."

Speaking about economic cooperation, he said, "In our economic cooperation, we have laid emphasis on investment-led growth and connectivity. We have decided that physical, digital and

energy connectivity will be important pillars of our partnership. Work will be done for establishing electricity grid connectivity and multi petroleum pipeline.

Pace will be given to Sampur Solar Power Plant. LNG will be supplied for Sri Lankan Power plants. To boost bilateral trade, both sides will try to conclude the Ekta soon."

PM Narendra Modi said that India has so far provided 5 billion dollars in line of credit and grant assistance to Sri Lanka and added that the cooperation has reached all 25 districts of Sri Lanka.

"India has so far provided 5 billion dollars in line of credit and grant assistance to Sri Lanka. We have cooperation in all 25 districts of Sri Lanka and the selection of our projects is always based on the development priorities of the partner countries. Taking our development cooperation forward, we have decided that grant assistance will be given for the rehabilitation of the signalling system of the Maho-Anuradhapura railway section and Kankesanthurai Port," he said.

Announcing monthly scholarship for 200 students in the universities of Jaffna and Eastern province from next year, PM Modi said, "Under education cooperation, from next year, monthly scholarships will be given to 200 students in the universities of Jaffna and Eastern Province. In the next 5 years, 1500 civil servants of Sri Lanka will be trained in India.

Along with housing, renewable energy and infrastructure, India will also cooperate for the development of agriculture, dairy and fisheries in Sri Lanka. India will also participate in the unique digital identity project in Sri Lanka."

The two leaders made the joint statement after holding talks in the Hyderabad House in Delhi. The two leaders warmly greeted each other and were engaged in talks as they proceeded to hold the meeting.

The Sri Lankan President is on a three-day state visit to India from December 15 to December 17. This is the first bilateral visit of Dissanayake to India after assuming office in September. **ANI**

## Beijing: Sino-US tech cooperation meets mutual interests

BEIJING

THE extension of the Agreement Between the United States and China on Cooperation in Science and Technology is in line with the interests of the people of both countries and meets the expectations of the international community, a Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson said yesterday.

China and the United States signed a protocol last Friday to extend the Agreement for an additional five years, effective from Aug 27, 2024, according to the Ministry of Science and Technology.

"The essence of China-US scientific and technological cooperation is mutual benefit and win-win," spokesperson Lin Jian said at the press conference in response to a relevant query.

The Agreement was one of the first intergovernmental agreements signed between the two countries after the establishment of diplomatic relations, providing strong support for scientific and technological exchanges and cooperation between China and the United States, Lin added.

He said this extension was an impor-

tant measure to implement the consensus reached by two heads of state, and it would not only promote scientific and technological progress and socio-economic development of both countries, but also help both sides address global challenges and improve the human well-being around the world.

"We hope that the US will work with China in the same direction, effectively implement the provisions of the agreement, and ensure that the results of China-US scientific and technological cooperation truly benefit both countries and the world," Lin said.



## Russian troops repel several Ukrainian counterattacks on Novy Komar in DPR

MELITOPOL

RUSSIAN troops repelled several attempts by the Ukrainian armed forces to counterattack in the village of Novy Komar north of Velyka Novosyolka in the People's Republic of Donetsk (DPR), Vladimir Rogov, Vladimir Rogov (pictured), chairman of the Russian Civic Chamber's commission on sovereignty, patriotic projects and veteran support, told TASS.

"In Novy Komar, half of the village is under the control of Russian troops. There were several attempts by the Ukrainian armed forces to counterattack from Novocheravatoye, all of them were repelled with significant losses for the enemy," he said.

Rogov noted that the situation on this section of the contact line had improved after Russian aviation destroyed the crossing over the Mokrye Yaly River, through which the Ukrainian armed forces were transporting reinforcements to storm Novy Komar.



## Peace talks over eastern DR Congo aborted

KINSHASA/LUANDA

A peace summit scheduled for Sunday to address conflicts in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) was called off at the last minute due to a tough negotiation standoff. Meanwhile, tensions have been on the rise on the ground with ongoing clashes between government military and rebels.

PEACE TALKS ABORTED

Angolan President Joao Lourenco was set to host DRC President Felix Tshisekedi and Rwandan President Paul Kagame, in a bid to ease tensions gripping the eastern DRC by securing an agreement supposed to be signed by the three heads of state.

The summit was planned as part of the "Luanda Process," a peace initiative launched in 2022 and endorsed by the African Union, to accelerate regional stabilization. Tshisekedi arrived in the Angolan capital of Luanda early Sunday for the summit and met with Lourenco and former Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta, broker of the "Nairobi Process," a parallel peace mechanism led by the East African Community (EAC).

However, Kagame did not board a flight to Luanda and walked away from the summit. "The agreement has been 99 percent negotiated," Angolan Foreign Minister Tete Antonio told the press after the tripartite summit was called off. "One of the parties requested the postponement of the summit until there is a common language," said Antonio.

NEGOTIATION STANDOFF

The peace agreement was aborted due to a tough negotiation standoff. According to Rwanda's Foreign Ministry, the ministerial meeting in Luanda on Saturday failed to reach a consensus between Rwanda and the DRC regarding a commitment to direct talks with the March 23 Movement (M23) rebel group.

"The DRC had accepted the principle of a dialogue with the M23, before surprising us with a refusal on the eve of the summit," said Rwandan Foreign Minister Olivier Nduhugirehe. The eastern DRC continues to face instability due to the M23 rebel group, which has been advancing and seizing large areas of territory. The DRC government accuses neighboring Rwanda of providing military support to the M23, an allegation Kigali denies.

While denying ties to the M23, Rwanda has accused the DRC military of collaborating with



File photo taken on July 25, 2024 shows soldiers seen in Cantine, a village in North Kivu Province, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). Xinhua

the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda, a Rwandan rebel group whose members are blamed for the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda.

"The ministers negotiated late into yesterday, but they could not reach an agreement on all points," said Antonio, adding that Sunday's summit "would therefore not have resulted in an agreement."

However, according to Kinshasa, the ministerial meeting on Saturday ended in a "deadlock" after Rwanda ambushed with a last-minute condition, which demanded that direct dialogue with the M23 precede the signing of any agreement.

"We are not going to talk directly with a terrorist group," DRC Foreign Minister Therese Kayikwamba Wagner told a press briefing late Sunday in Kinshasa. "If the M23 group wants to have any hope of being able to express its grievances and concerns, it will only be within the framework of the Nairobi Process."

TENSIONS RUNNING HIGH

Also on Sunday, the M23 rebels reportedly took control of the town of Matembe in the eastern North Kivu province, the epicenter of hostilities.

The locality is considered strategic for the DRC military to stop the advancement of the rebellion towards the northern part of North Kivu and potentially the neighboring Ituri

and Tshopo provinces. As part of the peace process, a ceasefire agreement took effect on Aug. 4.

However, clashes between the DRC military and the M23 have intensified since late October. The M23, which did not sign the ceasefire agreement, has expanded its territorial control. "The M23 ... has consolidated its civilian and military occupation in North Kivu. Today, it controls an area twice as large as in 2012," Bintou Keita, special representative of the UN Secretary-General in the DRC, told the UN Security Council meeting.

The M23 is a group of former rebels of the National Congress for the Defense of the People (CNDP) and got its name from the March 23, 2009 agreement signed between the CNDP and the DRC government. In November 2012, the M23 occupied Goma, the provincial capital of North Kivu, for 10 days.

After being defeated by the DRC army, the M23 signed a peace accord with the government in December 2013, in which it agreed to demobilize its fighters and transform itself into a political party.

M23 leaders, however, have since accused the government of failing to respect that agreement. M23 insurgency resurfaced in late 2021. According to the United Nations, nearly 6.4 million people have been displaced in the DRC due to armed conflicts and natural disasters.

## Syria's HTS leader meets UN envoy on national political transition

DAMASCUS

SYRIA'S Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) leader, Ahmad al-Shara, held a meeting with UN Special Envoy for Syria Geir Pedersen on Sunday in Damascus to discuss the political transition in the country, according to a statement released by local al-Watan Online news outlet.

Al-Shara, also known as Abu Mohammed al-Julani, said that UN Security Council Resolution 2254, adopted in 2015 concerning Syria's political transition, now requires an update to reflect the current realities in the country, urging a "fresh approach" that aligns with Syria's new leadership and evolving circumstances.

Al-Shara led a 12-day military operation that resulted in the downfall of former President Bashar al-Assad's government on Dec 8.

During the meeting, al-Shara underlined the importance of "swift and effective" cooperation to address Syrian citizens' needs, restore the country's territorial unity, and pave the way for reconstruction and economic development.

He also stressed the need for "careful, deliberate steps" in rehabilitating state institutions to ensure the forming of a "strong and efficient" governance system.

The HTS leader pledged to create a safe environment for the return of refugees, adding that the measures are being implemented with "great caution" and supervised by specialized teams so as to ensure optimal outcomes for the nation's future.

For his part, Pedersen said that the UN is closely monitoring the rapidly evolving situation in the country and is looking forward to the next steps toward a political transition following the ouster of Assad.

Speaking to reporters in Damascus earlier in the day, Pedersen emphasized the importance of Syrian state institutions fully resuming their functions under secure conditions.

"We are working with all segments of the Syrian people ... and we want to see no acts of revenge. Instead, we must ensure that institutions return to work, backed by the necessary security measures," he said.

Also on Sunday, Al-Shara unveiled plans for comprehensive economic and security reforms, including a proposed 400 percent salary increase for workers, the disarmament of all armed factions, and efforts to rebuild war-torn communities.

In a televised interview with state-run Syria TV on Sunday, al-Shara, also known as Abu Mohammed al-Julani, emphasized the new administration's aim to consolidate power under state control.

"All factions will be dissolved, and no arms will remain outside the authority of the state," said al-Shara.

He further disclosed that economic measures are being studied to address the country's prolonged hardships. "We are considering a plan to raise sala-

ries by 400 percent," he noted, although no specific timeline was provided.

Reconstruction and the resettlement of displaced citizens have also emerged as critical priorities. Al-Shara pledged to rebuild destroyed homes and ensure the return of refugees.

Meanwhile, Qatar announced on Sunday that it will resume operations at its embassy in Syria, effective Tuesday, with Khalifa Abdullah Al Mahmoud Al Sharif appointed as the charge d'affaires.

In a statement, Qatar's Ministry of Foreign Affairs noted that this move marks the restoration of diplomatic relations with Syria after a 13-year hiatus.

The ministry emphasized that the reopening of the embassy will enhance Qatar's ongoing humanitarian efforts, including its airlift of relief supplies to support the Syrian people during the transitional phase and address urgent humanitarian needs.

Qatar announced on Wednesday to reopen its embassy in Damascus, days after a militant

coalition led by Hayat Tahrir al-Sham ousted former President Bashar al-Assad last week.

Qatar closed its embassy in Damascus in 2011 following the outbreak of anti-government protests in Syria.



**Reconstruction and the resettlement of displaced citizens have also emerged as critical priorities. Al-Shara pledged to rebuild destroyed homes and ensure the return of refugees**



This handout photo provided by Syria's Interim Government shows UN Special Envoy Geir Pedersen meeting with Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) leader Abu Mohammed al-Julani, now using his real name Ahmed al-Shara in Damascus on Saturday. AFP



# Simba's rise and Yanga's challenge: Diverging paths in CAF competitions



Simba Sports Club winger Kibe Denis (not in picture) scores his side's second goal during their CAF Confederation Cup Group A match against CS Sfaxien at the Benjamin Mkapa Stadium on Sunday. Simba won 2-1. Photo: Courtesy of SSC

By Lloyd Ellipokea

IT is striking how local football's two behemoths Simba SC and Young Africans SC have experienced contrasting fortunes in continental football championships thus far this season.

Indeed, while Simba have registered two victories and only suffered one loss in the CAF Confederations Cup's group stage so far, Young Africans in stark contrast have painfully suffered two defeats and earned a measly point from their draw with Congolese titans TP Mazembe last Saturday in the CAF Champions League's group stage.

Simba's loads of supporters are most likely in high spirits at the moment after their beloved club claimed an uplifting

albeit slim 2-1 win against Tunisian side CS Sfaxien last Sunday at the magnificent Benjamin Mkapa Stadium.

Contrastingly, Young Africans' teeming supporters are likely feeling down presently following their storied club's huge struggles to secure their first triumph in the CAF Champions League's group stage, which has again proven to be beyond their reach.

Perhaps, the only consolation for Young Africans is that the club was able to snap its two-game losing streak in their fascinating 1-1 draw with TP Mazembe last Saturday in the crucial group stage clash of the CAF Champions League.

Therefore, as a result of their contrasting form in continental football's highly prized competitions, it is incumbent

upon Simba to avoid resting on their laurels in upcoming fixtures.

For Young Africans' part, it is vividly clear that the Jangwani Street-based football outfit swiftly needs to pull up its socks otherwise they could potentially miss out on partaking in the knockout round of the CAF Champions League.

Let us stick with the football theme and proudly revel in the fabulous feats of our national under-15 football team, who recently clinched the CAF CECAFA U-15 Schools Championship trophy following their commendable 2-0 triumph against Rwanda in the high stakes final late last week.

At this critical juncture, it should be remembered that the national U-20 football team secured their spot in next

year's AFCON U-20 finals earlier this year, which prompted widespread jubilation across our country.

In light of that, it is crystal clear to see that youth football in our country is in fine fettle.

In addition, it can justifiably be argued that there is great hope for the future because of the seemingly endless potential of our talented youngsters who are rapidly emerging as wizards of the 'people's game'.

Let us now continue our reflections on the concluding year in which European football stars of African descent wowed an admiring global audience with their magical football skills.

One such budding football great was the Spanish right winger Lamine Yamal, who is

incontestably a precociously gifted 17-year-old attacker.

Indeed, Yamal's mother hails from Equatorial Guinea while his father comes from Morocco.

At the prestigious European 2024 football Championship in Germany, Yamal's bag of tricks was on full display as he revealed the range of his unerring passes, his riveting dribbling skills and his penchant for unleashing powerful shots that were often right on the money.

Significantly, Spain ended up securing the coveted Euro 2024 trophy, thanks in no small part to the praiseworthy contributions from its gifted teenage sensation.

Thus, it is hoped that Yamal can continue to evolve fully into one of the most feared attackers in world football.

## Anthony Davis takes over as Lakers top Grizzlies

By Field Level Media

ANTHONY Davis shrugged off an injury scare to match season bests of 40 points and 16 rebounds as the Los Angeles Lakers defeated the visiting Memphis Grizzlies 116-110 on Sunday night.

Austin Reaves had 19 points and eight assists while LeBron James, back after missing two games due to a foot injury, chalked up 18 points, eight boards and eight assists for Los Angeles.

Jaren Jackson Jr. scored 25 points before fouling out for the Grizzlies, whose four-game winning streak came to an end. Ja Morant had 20 points, seven rebounds and six assists, offset by a 6-for-21 clip from the floor and seven turnovers.

Davis retreated to the locker room with 5:30 remaining in the third quarter after hurting his left shoulder in a collision with Memphis center Zach Edey during a rebounding contest.

However, Davis returned with 9:19 left in the fourth quarter and picked up right where he left off, scoring seven straight Lakers points soon after.

James got off to a fast start, dishing out two assists to Davis in the opening minute of the contest before following a thunderous slam with a chase-down rejection of Desmond Bane. He then scored on a tip-in to give Los Angeles a 9-2 edge.

Davis had 12 points and seven boards in the first quarter, which ended with the Lakers up 30-20. The Grizzlies went 5-for-20 from the field in what was their lowest-scoring first quarter of the season.

The Lakers' cushion grew to 44-29 thanks to a 10-0, second-quarter burst, which included a triple from Reaves.

Davis posted a double-double before the teams entered the break, racking up 22 points and 10 rebounds over the first 24 minutes of action to send Los Angeles into intermission up 64-46.

After seeing their deficit grow to 23, 81-58, with 6:22 to go in the third quarter, the Grizzlies took advantage of Davis' absence and closed the frame on a 19-5 run.

Morant used a reverse layup to get Memphis within seven at 105-98 with 5:24 left in the game, but the hosts found a way to hold on.

Meanwhile, Luka Dončić scored a game-high 45 points as part of a triple-double, Klay Thompson turned back the clock with seven 3-pointers and the Dallas Maver-

icks avenged an NBA Cup loss to the Golden State Warriors with a 143-133 victory on Sunday night in San Francisco.

Thompson finished with a season-best 29 points and Kyrie Irving tossed in 21 to complement eight assists for the Mavericks, who won for the eighth time in their past nine games.

Andrew Wiggins went for a team-high 29 points, Stephen Curry posted 26, Draymond Green added 21 and Jonathan Kuminga had 20 for the Warriors, who beat the Mavericks 120-117 on Nov. 12 but have won just five times in 14 games since.

The Warriors announced before the game that they had acquired Dennis Schroder from the Nets for DeAnthony Melton and Reece Beekman. The deal also included four second-round picks exchanging hands, with Brooklyn receiving three of them.

Dončić buried a 3-pointer almost two minutes into the game as the Mavericks, who trailed momentarily at 3-2, pulled away from Golden State and were never caught.

Dallas built a 13-point lead on the strength of a 46-point first quarter, only to see the Warriors counter with 41 points of their own in the second period to get within 81-74 at the break.

The Mavericks reached the century mark just under 4 1/2 minutes into the third quarter en route to their highest point total of the season. They'd reached 137 points twice previously in wins against the Portland Trail Blazers and the Washington Wizards.

The Warriors, who also got to 100 points in the third, came up short of their season high of 140.

Dončić posted his third triple-double of the season, also supplying 11 rebounds and 13 assists to go with three steals and two blocks. He went 6-for-11 on 3-pointers, while Thompson went 7-for-11 from deep. As a team, the Mavericks made 21 threes on 41 attempts.

Quentin Grimes added 14 points, P.J. Washington had 13 and Daniel Gafford collected 10 while also grabbing nine rebounds for Dallas, which shot 59.8 percent overall.

The Warriors lost despite outscoring the guests 81-63 from beyond the arc. Curry went 7-for-13 from deep and had a team-high 10 assists, while Wiggins and Green each went 5-for-9 on 3-point tries.

REUTERS



Los Angeles Lakers forward Anthony Davis (3) shoots the ball in the second half against the Memphis Grizzlies at Crypto.com Arena in Los Angeles, California, USA on Dec 15, 2024. Agencies.

BRISBANE

PACE spearhead Jasprit Bumrah has been India's one-man army in the ongoing test series against Australia and the 31-year-old said he has no problem shouldering the massive bowling workload.

Bumrah (pictured) is the leading wicket-taker in the five-test series with 18 dismissals from five innings despite little support from the other end.

In the ongoing third test in Brisbane, Bumrah claimed 6-76 even though Australia batters, particularly centurions Travis Head and Steve Smith, went after other bowlers and racked up 445 in their first innings.

The 31-year-old India vice captain dismissed five of Australia's top six batters but pace teammates Mohammed Siraj (2-97) and Akash Deep (1-95) were not that effective.

"We don't want to get into that mindset where we're pointing fingers at each other," a soft-spoken Bumrah said after India finished a rain-marred third day on a precarious 51-4.

"As a bowling unit, we are in transition. So it's my job to help others. I have played a little more

## India's one-man army Bumrah says fine with bowling workload



than them, so I am trying to help them."

Currently the world's top-ranked test bowler, Bumrah said it was his duty to mentor the likes of Akash Deep or seam-bowling all-rounder Nitish Kumar Reddy and lead them by example.

"We have 11 players and I don't look at it like I have to do extra (work),"

he said.

"A lot of new players have come into the side, so we have to be considerate and give them that cushion that will help them learn."

"We had a little more experience side when we came here last time but this is a journey that every team will go through."

"Nobody's born with all the experiences, nobody's born with all the skills. You keep learning and ... you get better."

Opener KL Rahul (33) and skipper Rohit Sharma, who is yet to open his account, will have to bat out of their skin to prevent Australia from going 2-1 up in the five-test series when play re-

sumes on Tuesday.

"The idea now is to bat as long as possible," Bumrah said of their plans. "We are hoping to build good partnerships tomorrow."

"Obviously (rain) disruptions hampered rhythm but you can't do anything about these things."

REUTERS



## Fonseca laments poor decision-making as Milan held by Genoa

MILAN

MILAN coach Paulo Fonseca criticised his side's poor decision-making with the final ball in their goalless home draw with Genoa in Serie A on Sunday, with the result spoiling the club's anniversary celebrations.

Former Milan strikers Marco van Basten and Filippo Inzaghi were involved as the club celebrated its 125th anniversary ahead of kickoff, but the goalscoring instincts of those two club greats were lacking as Milan failed to convert numerous chances against Genoa.

"I think we played a good game and created a lot," Fonseca told DAZN.

"The players wanted to win, but we just lacked the goal and also the quality in the last decision. The game was played with a good attitude, we recovered many high balls. We had 22 shots, we lacked the goal.

"We were aggressive without the ball, arriving many times close to Genoa's area. It's not a question of confidence, but of the quality of the last choice."

The Portuguese coach refused to pin the blame on his attackers.

"We have good strikers," Fonseca said.

"(Tammy) Abraham suffered a blow, he didn't come out to play the second half. Alvaro (Morata) hasn't trained all week."

Morata, who replaced Abraham at halftime, fired a good chance over in the 76th minute before hitting the bar three minutes later.

"Sometimes we talk about forwards, but our game has also lacked quality in crosses and shooting. I have total confidence in our forwards," Fonseca added.

Milan, who have won one of their last five league games, were booed by the fans as they left the pitch.

"It's normal for this to happen," Fonseca said.

"We wanted to win for our fans who are always with us. Today we can all recognise that the team gave everything: I'm dissatisfied with the result, the fans too and I understand them."

Milan next travel to Hellas Verona -- who are one point above the relegation zone -- on Friday before ending the year at home to struggling AS Roma on Dec. 29.

## Luis Enrique hails PSG performance after ending Lyon's unbeaten run

PARIS

PARIS St Germain manager Luis Enrique was full of praise for his side's control and quality during their win over Olympique Lyonnais on Sunday, which brought an end to the visitors' unbeaten streak and kept PSG clear at the top of Ligue 1.

PSG were largely in control and secured a 3-1 home victory after Goncalo Ramos sealed the win late on to end Lyon's nine-match unbeaten run.

PSG are top of the Ligue 1 table with 37 points, seven ahead of Olympique de Marseille in second.

Luis Enrique's side were the only team in the top eight that did not drop points this round and are still unbeaten in the league this season.

"Today, we played against an opponent full of confidence ... and I think we were at a very good level," Luis Enrique told reporters.

"At the end of the first half, conceding that goal may have cost us a bit, but when you're up against players of this calibre, it's important to make very few mistakes and on the whole, we're happy."

Desire Doue was heavily involved in the win, with the PSG striker earning a penalty and chipping in with an assist.

"I felt very good. Once again tonight I tried to listen to the coach's advice, to apply the tactics and also to help my teammates. Try to do my best to perform and to help the team," he said.

"It is also for the fans who encourage us all the time. They always push us, even in the most difficult moments we have had recently. We are coming back well and that is the most important thing."

REUTERS



# City's Guardiola shoulders the blame after shock collapse against United

MANCHESTER



MANCHESTER City boss Pep Guardiola pointed the finger squarely at himself after his team's calamitous run of results continued when their late collapse resulted in a 2-1 loss to Manchester United in the Premier League on Sunday.

City were ahead until the 88th minute when they conceded a penalty converted by Bruno Fernandes and were then hit with a sucker punch two minutes later when Amad Diallo scored.

"I don't have a defence. I'm the boss, I'm the manager and I'm not good enough," Guardiola (pictured) said. "I have to find a solution and I don't find a solution. It is as simple as that. I am not doing well, that is the truth."

City have one victory from their last 11 games in all competitions in what has turned into a full-fledged crisis for the champions and has everyone from players to pundits shocked.

"Today in the last minute we played like under-15s," said City midfielder Ruben Dias.

For

mer United defender Gary Neville said on Sky Sports: "This just does not happen to Manchester City, it does not happen to Pep Guardiola."

"These fans have not seen the like for many, many years. These players, serial winners and serial champions."

Guardiola, who recently signed a two-year extension with City, looked disconsolate when he walked into the tunnel after the final whistle, with the United fans gleefully singing: "He's getting sacked in the morning."

Guardiola had blamed the condensed fixture schedule for the number of injuries his side has suffered this season but he made no excuses in a long and heartfelt post-game press conference.

"(We were leading) 3-0 against Feyenoord at 75 minutes and we draw that (Champions League) game. Is that the schedule, the injuries? No. We have to win that game," the Catalan said.

"Today we have to win that game because apart from Bruno Fernandes (with a late chance that the United captain put wide) nothing happened. So, we give it away again."

"If always it's the same problem, it can be fixed. You say 'Ah, it's that player.' It can be fixed: he doesn't play. But it's not that."

City failed to register a shot on target in the second half, and their defeat marked the latest into a game that reigning champions have led in a Premier League contest and lost.

"I'm incredibly well paid to handle these situations, to handle the press conference, accept all the criticism, but I want to be honest, in one or two seasons, over a year, year and a half, we were able to lose

(only) eight games," Guardiola said.

"We were top of the league and the only unbeaten team in Europe and in one month and 10 days, we lost eight games. This is a big club and the club of course cannot accept it."

"I am sitting here in this press conference because of what I have done in the past; otherwise in big clubs they don't sustain a manager that way."

"I knew this would be a tough season but I didn't expect it would be as hard as it is right now. I want it, desperately. But eight (losses) out of 11? I'm here to try and will try again and again. That is the reality."

Meanwhile, a couple of hours before Manchester United's 2-1 comeback victory over rivals Manchester City, United manager Ruben Amorim was already making headlines for his bold decision to leave forwards Marcus Rashford and Alejandro Garnacho at home.

Amorim's men roared back in the dying minutes to beat City at the Etihad Stadium on Sunday thanks to goals from Bruno Fernandes and Amad Diallo, and the United boss said his decisions were all about holding his players to high standards.

"When people in the club are losing their jobs, we have to push our standards really high," Amorim said, in reference to former Sporting Director Dan Ashworth, who parted ways with the club a week earlier.

Omitting Rashford and Garnacho, Amorim said, however, was not a disciplinary move.

"Next week, next game, new life, they are fighting for their places but for me it's important, the performance in training, the performance in game, the way you dress, the way you

eat, the way you engage with teammates, the way you push your teammates, everything is important when we want to change a lot of things," the 39-year-old said.

"They have to fight for a place in the team and today the team proved we can leave anyone out of the squad and manage to win if you play together."

While United remained in 13th spot in the table, Amorim's second Premier League victory since he took command in mid-November -- against the reigning champions in the unfriendly confines of Etihad Stadium -- felt important.

"I think for the fans it has a deep meaning, especially in this context, this moment, but we have a difficult moment one week ago against Nottingham (3-2 defeat) in the storm," Amorim said. "Next week we will have three games, it will change the way we see the game. Today is a good day, let's enjoy it for 10 minutes."

United looked to be heading for what would have been three consecutive Premier League defeats for the first time since December 2015 before their late-game dramatics, sparked by Matheus Nunes's mistake in dragging down Diallo in the box.

Fernandes scored from the penalty spot in the 88th minute before Diallo found the back of the net from a tight angle less than two minutes later, sending the visiting fans into a frenzy.

Diallo's goal was just the seventh 90th-minute winner scored against the reigning Premier League champions, and 88 minutes was the latest into a game that a reigning champion has led in a Premier League match and lost.

REUTERS

## Barcelona now struggling with busy schedule - assistant coach

BARCELONA

AFTER a second consecutive league defeat at home, Barcelona's assistant manager Marcus Sorg attributed the team's struggles to a demanding schedule that has taken its toll on the players.

Barcelona have been struggling in LaLiga for over a month and a 1-0 home defeat to lowly Leganes on Sunday left them with one win in their last six league matches.

They remain top of the standings on 38 points, but level with Atletico Madrid - who they host on Saturday - and one point ahead Real Madrid in third, with both their title rivals having a game in hand. They are still top thanks to their brilliant start to the season, when they won 14 of their first 16 matches in all competitions. But while they have been excellent in the Champions League with five victories in six games, they have lost their way domestically.

"We have to learn from this experience because the schedule has been tough on the players. We have played a lot of very demanding games in a few days and the team is not used to this," Sorg told DAZN.

Sorg led the team from the sidelines on Sunday after coach Hansi Flick was handed a two-game suspension after being sent off in their 2-2 draw at Real Betis last week.

"It is very hard to understand this defeat. The first problem was the lack of concentration in the first five minutes of the game when we conceded that first goal," Sorg said.

"Still, we managed to create 20 scoring opportunities despite not playing a good game and we didn't score... It's difficult to win like that, when you miss so many chances."

"We are not happy with the current run in the league, but you have to accept things when you try to build a team. We are working hard. We're at the top and we might lose the lead, but we're still there."

Meanwhile, Atletico Madrid manager Diego Simeone quickly shut down any talk about his side challenging for the LaLiga title after they extended their winning streak with a 1-0 victory over visitors Getafe on Sunday.

Atletico have been in imperious form having won all their games since late October and secured their 11th consecutive victory across all competi-



Leganes' Marko Dmitrovic makes a save during their LaLiga match against FC Barcelona at Estadi Olimpic Lluis Companys, in Barcelona, Spain on December 15, 2024. REUTERS

tions to move level with Barcelona at the top of the standings.

Simeone, however, was not getting carried away and wants his players to temper any excitement and focus on their next game - away to Barcelona next Saturday.

"We have to take it one game at a time, there is no way to see our present without working and

trying to keep improving. We have to rest before facing Barcelona next," Simeone told a press conference on Sunday.

"I'm reiterative, I'm boring, I'm not going to change, until the last day it will be one game at a time. If we don't look at it that way, there will be no light."

Atletico and Barcelona have 38 points from 17

matches, a point ahead of Real Madrid in third.

Sunday's winning goal came after two substitutes combined as Nahuel Molina crossed for Alexander Sorloth to score and Simeone said he was glad to see players coming off the bench to make a positive impact.

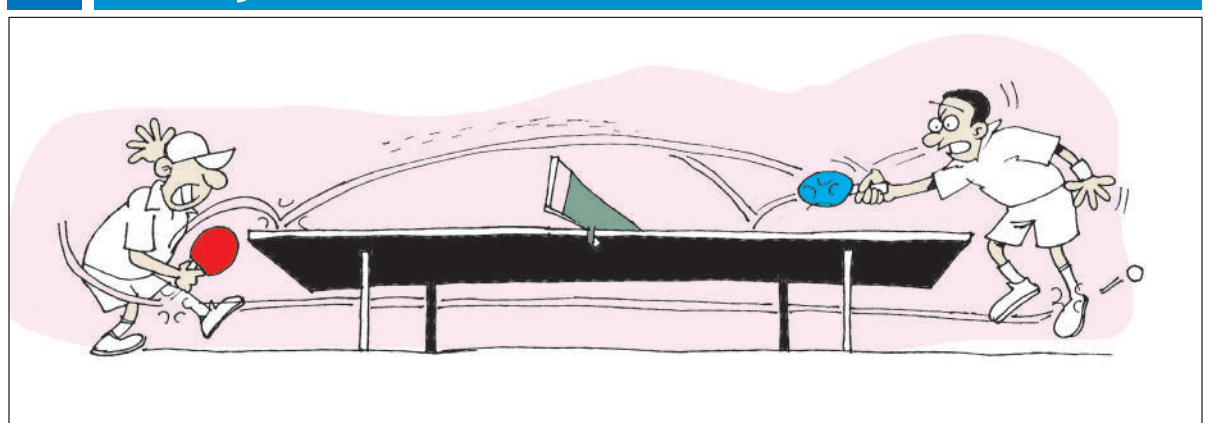
"I always tell them that I imagine the matches with different situations,

imagining what can happen and having answers. And we have answers, but it all depends on the commitment of the players," Simeone said.

"It's easy to say but it's very difficult how the players represent it when they go on the pitch, it makes me very happy to see the attitude I saw today."

REUTERS

## Gwiji by David Chikoko





# SPORT

City's Guardiola shoulders the blame after shock collapse against United

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## Taoussi rallies Azam to exploit Fountain Gate's defensive weaknesses

By Correspondent Nassir Nchimbi

AZAM FC head coach Rachid Taoussi is resolute in his mission to guide his team back to winning ways as they face Fountain Gate FC in a Premier League clash at the Azam Complex today.

Azam FC stumbled on Saturday, losing 2-1 to Tabora United at the Ali Hassan Mwinyi Stadium. The defeat ended their impressive eight-game winning streak, which included seven straight Premier League victories and a Federation Cup triumph.

It was Taoussi's second loss since taking charge, following their earlier 2-1 defeat to Simba SC.

Now sitting at the top of the league table with 30 points from 14 matches, Azam are looking to capitalize on Fountain Gate's recent struggles.

The visitors, despite being one of the league's most prolific attacking teams with 23 goals, have only managed one win in their last four outings.

However, Fountain Gate's defensive frailties remain a concern. They have conceded 23 goals this season - the second-highest in the league after bottom-placed KenGold FC.

Taoussi (pictured) acknowledged the offensive threat posed by Fountain Gate but emphasized the importance of exploiting their defensive weaknesses. He highlighted the need for discipline and adherence to Azam's game plan to secure a positive result.

"The league is highly competitive, and we are proud of our overall form. To maintain momentum, we must stay focused, especially against a team like Fountain Gate," Taoussi remarked.

"They have talented players and a skilled coach, which explains their attacking prowess. But we must take advantage of their defensive vulnerabilities."

Taoussi also detailed the preparations his team has undergone since their defeat in Tabora. "We've conducted numerous training sessions and a comprehensive review of our last match. We've identified areas requiring extra attention, which will be critical in today's game."

The coach further urged his players to remain focused, noting the heightened competition as league rivals Simba and Young Africans return to action. Azam have played three more matches than their closest challengers, with Simba SC sitting in second place on 28 points and Young Africans third with 27 points.

Azam's record under Taoussi has been impressive, with nine wins, three draws, and only two losses. The team has scored 20 goals while conceding just seven, a testament to their balanced approach.

Fountain Gate head coach Mohamed Muya, meanwhile, is aware of his team's defensive shortcomings. He has been working to address these issues and expressed hope that the upcoming transfer window will provide reinforcements.

"We're actively analyzing our defensive mistakes after every match and working closely with the current squad to improve. While mistakes persist, we are making progress," Muya said.

Despite acknowledging Azam's quality, particularly their talented international players, Muya remains optimistic.

"We respect Azam's strength but will not let it deter us. We've developed a strong game plan to contain them and aim for a positive result."



# Dauids hails Simba's fighting spirit after dramatic win over CS Sfaxien

marred by chaos after Simba's winning goal deep into stoppage time, with CS Sfaxien players, technical staff, and some fans reacting violently.

Addressing the incident, Dauids remarked: "I don't think CS Sfaxien fans and technical staff were justified in their actions. Their goalkeeper wasted time unnecessarily, and the referee simply compensated for that in added time. There was no need for them to react the way they did."

The victory moved Simba to six points after three matches, placing them firmly in contention for a spot in the knockout stages.

The Msimbazi Street-based side also extended their impressive home record in CAF competitions, having won 26 out of 36 matches at the Benjamin Mkapa Stadium since 2018.

The match began with an early set-back for Simba, as defender Fondoh Che Malone's mistake allowed CS Sfaxien striker Hazem Hassen to open the scoring just three minutes into the game.

However, Simba quickly responded through Kibu

Denis, who headed in a Charles Ahoua free kick in the seventh minute to restore parity.

Kibu's goal was his first since Simba's 3-1 win over Al Ahli Tripoli in September, a moment that reinvigorated the home team.

The equalizer energized the Simba faithful, who cheered the team on as they dominated possession for much of the first half, albeit without converting several clear chances.

Despite creating numerous opportunities, Simba's forwards, including Leonel Ateba, Steven Mukwala, and Jean Ahoua, struggled to find the net. Full-back Shomary Kapombe was a standout performer, delivering dangerous crosses that went begging.

With the game tied 1-1 and frustration mounting in the stands, Simba finally found their breakthrough deep into stoppage time.

Substitute Yusuf Kago's long cross found Kibu, who rose above the defenders to score his second goal of the night, sparking jubilant celebrations among the home fans.

However, the dramatic late winner triggered a chaotic reaction from CS Sfaxien. Players and officials from the Tunisian side confronted Malagasy referee Andofetra Aroniana, accusing him of bias.

The confrontation escalated, with members of Sfaxien's technical bench reportedly pushing the referee.

The violence spilled over into the stands as a small section of CS Sfaxien supporters clashed with Simba fans, leading to broken seats and other disruptions. Security personnel and stewards eventually intervened, restoring order after a tense few minutes.

Coach Dauids made crucial tactical changes during the game, including substituting Che Malone, who struggled defensively and made three costly errors.

Karaboue Chamou replaced Malone, providing much-needed composure at the back. In midfield, Dauids started Debora Mavambo, Awesu Awesu, Fabrice Ngoma, and Jean Ahoua.

Despite the victory, Simba missed several chances that could have sealed the game earlier. Dauids admitted that this remains an area to address in training.

"We will take a close look at the chances we missed and work on converting them. It's something we need to improve moving forward."

With six points from three matches, Simba SC remain in the hunt for qualification from Group A.

Later in the day, Bravos do Maquis of Angola secured a thrilling 3-2 victory over Algeria's CS Constantine in another Group A encounter.

The result adds excitement and complexity to the group standings, intensifying the competition as teams battle for a spot in the next stage of the CAF Confederation Cup.

Simba will now prepare for their remaining group games, including one more match at home and two away. The Reds' strong record at the Benjamin Mkapa Stadium continues to be a crucial advantage in their CAF campaigns.

Meanwhile, CS Sfaxien's loss marked their third consecutive defeat in the group stage, leaving them at the bottom of the table and on the verge of elimination.

Despite the violent scenes, Simba fans were ecstatic about the result and celebrated long after the final whistle. The late victory reaffirmed the team's fighting spirit, a quality that will be essential as they aim to progress further in the tournament.

Simba's resilience and tactical discipline under coach Dauids remain their greatest strengths, and the team will hope to build on this momentum in their quest for continental glory.

By Correspondent Seth Mapoli

SIMBA SC head coach Fadlu Dauids praised his players for their resilience after a hard-fought 2-1 victory against CS Sfaxien in a CAF Confederation Cup Group A clash at the Benjamin Mkapa Stadium.

"First of all, I would like to congratulate my players. I am proud of them because they did not tire or lose hope until the last minute. That is how a big team like Simba has to be," said Dauids (pictured) in his post-match interview.

He acknowledged the quality of their Tunisian opponents, particularly in the opening stages of the game.

"CS Sfaxien is a good side. They approached this game very well, especially in the first half, and gave us a hard time. Tactically, my players did well in attack, although we missed some chances. Each player gave 100% effort, and that was very positive."

The game on Sunday was



## Kenya and Tanzania share honours at 15th Chipkizi Cup

By Marc Nkwame, Arusha

KENYA and Tanzania showcased their soccer prowess in the 15th edition of the East African Youth Soccer Tournament, the Chipkizi Cup, with both countries claiming four trophies across various categories.

Kenya excelled primarily in the boys' categories, with the Lace-Up Academy triumphing in the Under-7 competition, Soccer Talents clinching the Under-15 title, Dream Soccer Academy securing the Under-11 trophy, and Soccer Africa taking the Under-9 crown.

Tanzania's victories spanned both boys' and girls' categories. The Future Stars Academy of Arusha secured the Under-11 girls' title, while the Fountain Gate Academy of Dodoma claimed the Under-20 girls' crown.

The boys' teams also shone, with Fountain Gate winning the Under-17 category and the Tanzanite Academy of Morogoro clinching the Under-20 title.

The Chipkizi Cup attracted a total of 330 teams from Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe, and Zanzibar.

Uganda's Kick It Soccer Academy emerged victorious in the Under-15 boys' category, while Zanzibar's Dulla Academy claimed the Under-13 title, building on their Under-11 victory in last year's tournament.

Organized by the Future Stars Sports Academy (FSA) of Arusha, the week-long tournament has become a

vital platform for identifying and nurturing young talent across Africa.

"The East African Youth Soccer Tournament celebrates talent and consistently delivers. The Chipkizi Cup has been instrumental in producing young stars who progress to bigger teams across Africa and beyond," said Alfred Itaelli, Director of Future Stars.

Zakayo Mjema (pictured), Chairperson of the Arusha Regional Football Association (ARFA), praised the tournament for fostering talent and enhancing Tanzania's reputation as a hub for young soccer players.

"These events have transformed Tanzania into a talent factory, nurturing fresh football prospects from across the East African region. Many of these players eventually earn opportunities to play overseas," Mjema noted during the finals ceremony.



A Don Bosco basketball player is captured mid-air executing a dunk against Millennium from Zanzibar during a youth tournament held recently at the Jakaya Kikwete Youth Park in Dar es Salaam. PHOTO: CORRESPONDENT JUMANNE JUMA

## Flexibles by David Chikoko

