

National Pg 3
TCRA verifies 90pct of SIM cards



National Pg 4
Rungwe embarks on vanilla farming



National Pg 6
RC wants timely fertiliser distribution



Page 13

Breath of fresh air



By Getrude Mbago

PRESIDENT Samia Suluhu Hassan has lifted restrictions on political activities, while cautioning political parties to adhere to the law and observe Tanzanian customs and traditions.

In a widely broadcast speech at a Dar es Salaam State House meeting with leaders of political parties yesterday, the president acknowledged that holding public meetings is a constitutional right for registered political parties.

Political parties can now hold public rallies anywhere, in line with the law as conducting political rallies is a vital democratic right, she explained how the government agreed to lift the ban that has lasted for upwards of seven years.

Seemingly picking her words with care, she formally lifted the ban on the conduct of public meetings but reiterated specific regulations that the parties must observe in using that right.

Public rallies should not be misused to foment chaos, she said, emphasizing that the principal outlook of the sixth phase government had not changed, that it is focused on reconciliation, resilience, reform and rebuilding.

The president teased parties that when they raise challenges and the government rectifies the problems, CCM will have an advantage, get votes and remain in office.

She similarly addressed other demands especially in relation to the law on political parties as well as various provisions of the constitution, while not naming the National Electoral Commission directly but touching on constitutional reforms.

She said some people wish to refer to the issue as a constitution making process, stressing the view that it is a constitutional reform process, rejecting

TURN TO PAGE 2

Stakeholders praise Samia's bold initiative

By Guardian Reporter

POLITICAL stakeholders and religious leaders have hailed President Samia Suluhu Hassan's decision to lift the ban on public meetings as well as pursuing the constitutional review process.

They expressed appreciation after the Head of State announced the shift at a meeting with leaders of political parties yesterday at the State House in Dar es Salaam.

Chadema national chairman Freeman Mbowe said the change was positive and the party would convene an internal consultative meeting to map the path ahead.

He was relieved that oppression experienced by political parties in previous years had been rolled back, the constitutional right restored, expressing hopes that "in the new constitution a lot will also change."

He said that a number of laws during the fifth phase were passed without engaging key stakeholders, citing the Statistics Act of 2019 plus amendments to the Elections Act of 1985, the Political Parties Act of 1992 and legislation

TURN TO PAGE 2



The president poses for a group photo with the leaders moments after yesterday's meeting. Photo: State House

Land conflicts: Cabinet axes vast game reserves

By Correspondent James Kandoya

THE government has agreed to reallocate close to 1.5m acres of public land into village lands to end years of conflict between settling farmers and reservation authorities.

Dr Angelina Mabula, the Lands, Housing and Human Settlements Development minister, told reporters in Dar

es Salaam yesterday that the land changing its official use include protected government land and ranches.

Recommendations adopted by the cabinet committee on land conflicts and accepted by the government include nullifying 12 game reserved areas with 707,962 acres and seven reservations with 46,715 acres.

The cabinet committee has directed the respective regional

authorities to supervise the reconversion of the identified areas, so that the exercise is complete by the end of March, she stated.

The ministry had collected 90.9bn/-, which is roughly 75 per cent of the first half year target for fiscal 2022/2023 from land rent defaulters who paid rent before end of November last year, she said.

A total of 2,819 defaulters had benefitted from interest exemption of 6.9bn/- by the end of November, with the government noticing an increase of house owners paying up land rent without being pursued, with 22.6bn/- collected during the past month.

Local government authorities need to effectively

TURN TO PAGE 2





Inginga Regional Police Commander Allan Bukumbi makes a recent briefing on what he referred to as failure by some motorists assigned to transport 'in-transit' (IT) vehicles to observe road traffic regulations, behaviour now commonly blamed for a spate of 'avoidable' crashes. Photo: Correspondent Friday Simbaya

Kenyans can now visit SA without visas for 3 months

JOHANNESBURG

KENYANS can now live in and enjoy South Africa without a visa for three months a year at most, thanks to a new law that came into effect on 1 January.

This was revealed in a statement by the High Commissioner of the Republic of Kenya to the Republic of SA, Kingdom of Lesotho and Kingdom of eSwatini, Catherine Muigai Mwangi.

She said the move was a "concrete demonstration of the deep bonds of friendships and a commitment to nurturing closer ties."

Kenya and South Africa have found themselves linked when it comes to regional and international matters.

The cessation of hostilities in Ethiopia's Tigray civil war brought together envoys from South Africa and Kenya, supported by former South African deputy president Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka and Kenya's former president, Uhuru Kenyatta.

Talks were held in Pretoria in November and a continuation took place in Nairobi, Kenya in December.

South Africa is the biggest economy in southern Africa and Kenya is the biggest in the East African Community (EAC).

However, trade between the two nations isn't big. South Africa exports vehicles, fruit, food and beverages and imports include coffee, tea, edible

fats and oils, cut flowers and chemical products.

Talks for the visa-free movement occurred last year and in November 2022, the agreement was reached.

Mwangi said: "The conclusion of the longstanding negotiations on the visa exemption further reflects conscious efforts and political will by the leaders of our two countries to eliminate any barriers to building greater business, cultural and communal relations."

In the past, Kenyan nationals were exempted from paying visa fees if their stay in South Africa was less than 30 days.

If they intended to stay longer, visa fees of R 661 were required.

The visa-free movement dovetails

with the African Union (AU) 2018 policy of "free movement of person's protocol."

The initial announcement of the visa-free movement was made in Nairobi on 9 November last year when SA President Cyril Ramaphosa made his first state visit to the EAC country at the invitation of the President William Ruto.

Coincidentally, it was a year after then-outgoing president Kenyatta's visit to South Africa.

South Africa and Kenya have agreements in the field of correctional services, meaning they can exchange jailed persons, cooperation in housing and resettlement, multi-media and many other fields.

Breath of fresh air

FROM PAGE 1

out of hand that the Warioba Draft is still the starting point for the new process.

The president emphasized that there are international conventions that guided the work of writing a draft constitution in 2014, but the world situation had changed and the country needs to decide what it needs and what it doesn't need in such conventions.

She similarly asserted that the committee to be tasked with advising on areas that need to be changed in the constitution will be broad-based, not entirely anchored among political parties.

It will include representatives of political parties, academicians, civil society organisations, Tanzanians living outside the country, along with defence and security organs, among others.

While putting aside the Warioba Draft as the point of departure, she did not privilege the 2014 Proposed Constitution, saying the issue was to find what the country needs at the moment.

She expressed satisfaction with the task force which collected views from different sources and interest groups on how democracy can be restored, and the reforms needed to

strengthen democracy.

President Samia praised political parties for exercising patience, supporting the maintenance of peace and harmony despite not having the freedom to conduct public meetings, urging the parties to conduct politics positively, not seeking to disrupt the peace, and development efforts.

In his remarks, Vice President Dr Phillip Mpango said that the meeting is a gift for political parties for the New Year, hailing the president "for taking forward the vision of the late President Julius Nyerere."

Prime Minister Kassim Majaliwa praised efforts by President Samia in bringing the parties together for the meeting, pleased with how leaders of various political parties have responded to this effort.

They are now taking up various issues that affect the country, including climate change and protecting the environment as key aspects of their political agenda, he said.

Judge Francis Mutungi, the registrar of political parties, said that challenges the parties experienced during the past years will be resolved, vowing to work closely with political parties to discuss and reach agreements on such issues.

Land conflicts: Cabinet axes vast game reserves

FROM PAGE 1

supervise detailed land use plans in villages via village land committees to control construction activity that ignores certified plans, she said.

Complaints were being received from people as to violations of land use and poor supervision in urban and rural areas," she said.

Similarly, the government had received reports on 129 out of 184 district councils, on the construction of filling gas stations

in view of the 2018 regulations. Measures will be taken where the rules have been contravened, she said.

Street naming and addressing was going apace with 1,961 streets formalised and 1,436 streets not yet formalized, she said.

The government has similarly set out 2.3m plots where surveying 1.1m plots has been completed, with the certificates of right of occupancy prepared and issued to the people, the minister added.

Stakeholders commend Samia's bold initiative

FROM PAGE 1

on civil society organisations, among others.

ACT-Wazalendo leader Zitto Kabwe commended President Samia for lifting the ban on political rallies, noting that this has been the cry for a long time.

The move will strengthen democracy in the country as it is a constitutional right, he stated, with Prof Ibrahim Lipumba, the Civic United Front (CUF) chairman echoing his remarks.

He said that political parties are not supposed to beg for security agencies that they hold public meetings but to inform them.

CHAUMMA chairman Hashim Rungwe said the decision was joyful to political parties and the public generally.

Fr. Dr Charles Kitima, the Tanzania Episcopal Conference (TEC) secretary general, said President Samia's announcement on political rallies as well as on the constitution should be commended by everyone.

It has responded to a stakeholders cry for a long time, he said, asserting that "this has been our prayer and cry as religious leaders. We have fought for this right for many years," he stated.

The stakeholders started calling for the government to allow political rallies since the fifth phase government but nothing was done, "so you can see how the parties have suffered for more than five years. It is their democratic right, but they were denied," he emphasised.

This shows how President Samia is engaging with political parties, so the country's democratic space is expanding, she stated.

Fr. Dr Kitima said the decision is a big credit to President Samia locally and in the international community as she has improved

the image of the country. Religious leaders will continue supporting the government in various development initiatives, he stated.

He recalled how for a long time starting about 25 years ago with the multi-party system, political parties were used to conducting politics freely and competitively.

"But in the past five years, the situation deteriorated, as democracy was ruined and some political parties were completely curbed," he stated.

The cleric and academic urged political parties to ensure that they exercise their right by engaging in peaceful politics as per the country's laws.

On the contested new constitution, Fr. Dr. Kitima appealed for political will to promote the rule of law and ensure that the new constitution is made and followed.

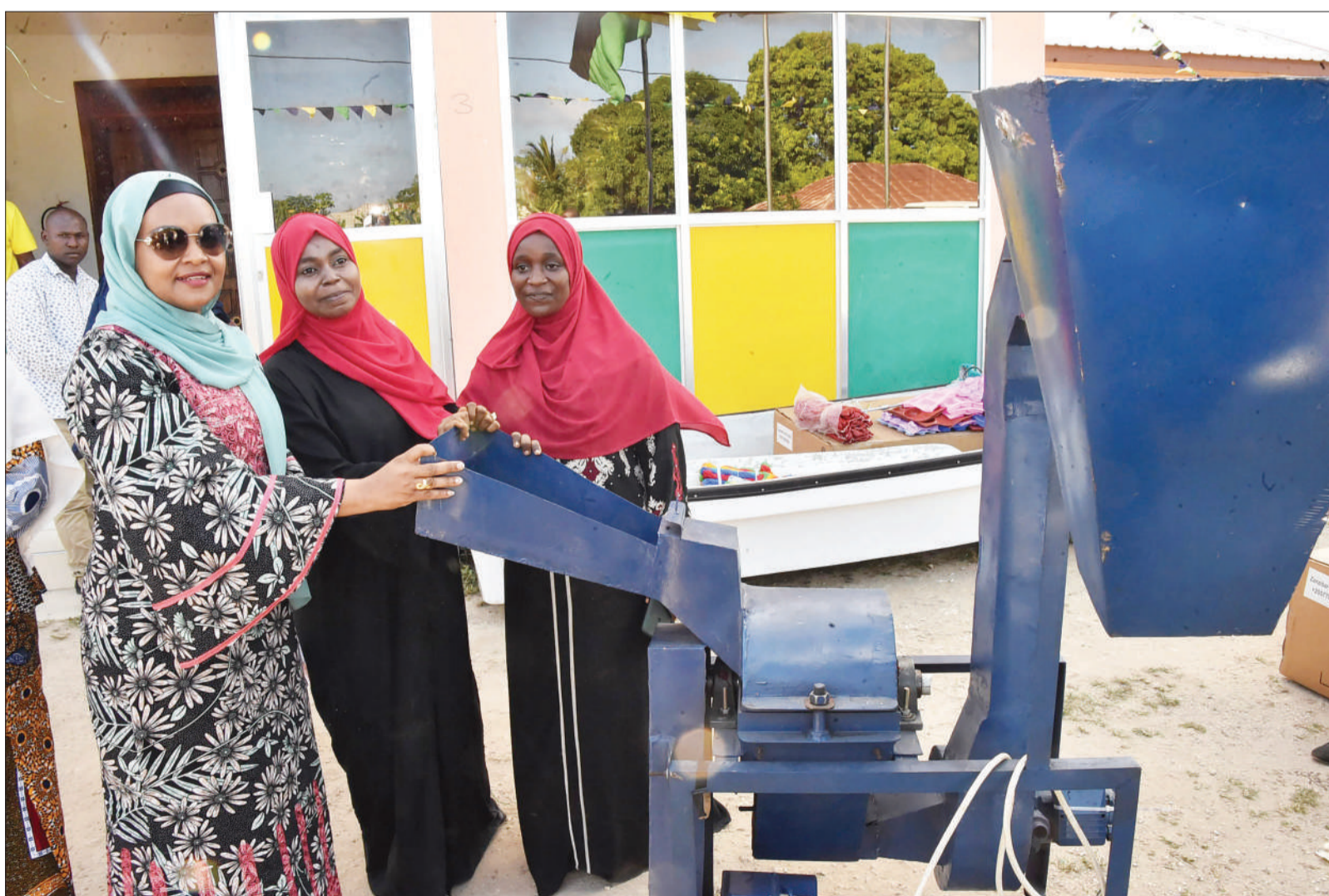
Bishop Anthony Mlyashimba of the Baptist Church in Dodoma hailed the new direction on political activities shown by President Samia.

"We cannot construct a beautiful and attractive house on a weak foundation," he said, expressing gratitude that "the president has shown readiness to commence the constitution making process."

He, however expressed fear on the envisaged process, noting that forming a committee to start collecting views afresh will incur avoidable expenses.

The government should commence the constitution making process by taking the Judge Warioba Draft "which contain important issues," he added.

"But in the past five years, the situation deteriorated, as democracy was ruined and some political parties were completely curbed"



Zanzibar First Lady Mariam Mwinyi (L), who is Zanzibar Maisha Bora Foundation chairperson, presents a seaweed grinding machine to Tumaini Micheweni group secretary Mtumwa Adalla Hamadi. This was during yesterday's distribution of various equipment and inputs to seaweed farming groups in Micheweni District, North Pemba Region, as part of the run-up to the climax of the 59th anniversary of the January 12 Zanzibar Revolution. Photo: Zanzibar State House

Ghana and Morocco to begin Covid checks for China arrivals

LAGOS

GHANA and Morocco have become the first African countries to impose travel restrictions on passengers from China over concerns about coronavirus.

From Tuesday, Morocco has banned travellers from China regardless of their nationality until further notice.

The foreign ministry says the move is aimed at preventing a spike in infections in the country.

Ghana's restrictions will take effect on Friday.

The moves come after China abruptly dropped its Covid-19 controls in December last year.

Other countries outside Africa have also imposed restrictions.

For example, passengers arriving

in England from China now have to provide a negative Covid test before they board a flight. The US is testing people on arrival.

Countries that plan to test travellers say the policy will help spot worrying new variants early and prevent an influx of cases.

Ghana says passengers from China will be tested at the airport for free and must also present a

negative test result 48 hours before arrival.

International health experts have argued that the lifting of restrictions in China has led to Covid-19 spreading much faster.

But Beijing's foreign ministry has said coronavirus rules should only be introduced on a "scientific" basis and accused Western countries and media of "hyping up" the situation.



Workers of Zanzibar-based Bluebay Beach Resort and Sultan Sands Hotel pictured at the weekend following proceedings at a staff prize-giving ceremony addressed by their director, Andrew Smith. Photo: Correspondent Martin Kabemba

'Selection for boarding schools was merit-based no more space'

By Guardian Reporter

THE government has defended its placement of just 4,000 pupils to boarding secondary school out of over 1 million who passed primary school examinations, saying there is no more space.

Dr Charles Msonde, deputy Permanent Secretary in the President's Office (Regional Administration and Local Governments) said this in Dar es Salaam yesterday, noting that there are 4,307 public secondary schools in the country whereby 4,269 are day schools and 38 boarding schools.

"The boarding schools have capacity to accommodate only 4,224 students, so it is hard to put all the students in the boarding schools while their capacities are low," he said.

He explained that there was no other way than selecting those who have performed well in the primary school leaving examination despite desires of the majority to join the schools.

"Those who performed well by getting grade A were 50,475, so it was still difficult for us to get the 4,269 students from this big number," he explained.

He further said: "We have three groups of boarding which include those that accommodate students with high performance, technical school and the third group is the one consisting of normal boarding schools."

Dr Msonde said that in the 2022 Primary School Leaving Examinations, seven schools got high performance with 932 students who got placement in boarding schools.

He also said that a total of 1,323 students were selected to join technical secondary school, 1,816 students placed to normal boarding schools and 153 selected to join boarding schools owned by regional governments.

He also said that a total of 1,069,717

pupils were to join day schools by considering proximity of schools and student's residences.

Last week the government banned transfers to boarding schools for students who are unsatisfied with their Form one placement in day schools saying that the selections considered rules and set criteria.

Permanent Secretary, President's Office (Regional Administration and Local Governments), Prof Riziki Shemdoe during the working session with regional education officers in Dodoma to evaluate performance in managing education for the year 2022.

According to him, since Minister Angellah Kairuki announced the selection results of form one students in public schools, the office has been receiving requests from parents wanting their children to be transferred to boarding schools due to various reasons but the available boarding school cannot accommodate all students.

He wanted parents to accept this and start preparing their children to report to the schools which they have been allocated.



We have three groups of boarding which include those that accommodate students with high performance, technical school and the third group is the one consisting of normal boarding schools

90 pct of registered SIM cards verified, says TCRA

By Guardian Reporter

THERE has been a positive response from the recent appeal by the Tanzania Communications Regulatory Authority (TCRA) on mobile phone services subscribers to verify the status of the registration of their SIM cards; the Authority reported yesterday.

TCRA has reiterated the call on non-compliant subscribers to verify their SIM card registration by the end of January this year. Unverified SIM cards will be blocked after 31 January 2023.

TCRA Director General, Dr Jabiri

Bakari announced the verification early last month, explaining that it was designed to protect innocent consumers against online crimes such as fraudulent activities and theft.

Verification would succeed if all subscribers voluntarily and fully complied, he added, emphasising that verification would make mobile communications safer for all.

Reporting on the verification, TCRA's Manager for Telecom and Internet Management, Eng. Sadath Kalolo said 60,076,000 active SIM cards have been verified, with only 2,061,000 or 4.3 per cent remaining.

The ongoing verification is carried out jointly with mobile network operators. Penalties for non-registration of SIM cards are stated in the Electronic and Postal Communications (SIM card registration) Regulations.

Subscribers can verify the status of the registration of their SIM cards and be updated on those registered against their national identification numbers by pressing *106# on their mobile phones. SIM cards are registered by matching subscribers' fingerprints with those in the National Identification Authority (NIDA) database.

Pressing *106# on a subscriber's mobile phone activates a menu in which number 3 enables one to verify the SIM cards registered against their national identification numbers issued by NIDA. Subscribers who discover any anomalies in their registration are urged to take up matters with the respective mobile service provider.

TCRA has identified several reasons for non-compliance with SIM card registration procedures, including criminal intentions.

In early November 2022 TCRA blacklisted and deactivated 52,087 international mobile equipment identities (IMEIs), including those involved in theft and fraudulent activities through mobile phone networks. An IMEI is a unique code used to identify an individual mobile telephone in Global Systems for Mobile (GSM) communication networks.

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Kikondo village accepted as part of Mbeya region

By Guardian Correspondent, Mbeya

KIKONDO villagers in Mbeya urban district have started realizing growth of their personal incomes due to increased production of various food and cash crops.

The good news comes after the conflict between Mbeya district officials and the villagers of not being recognized as either Mbeya region or Njombe region residents had come to an end.

The villagers had also been through a boundary dispute between them and the Kitulo National Park for years as they were required to leave the place and pave way for conservation activities.

The villagers were also required to vacate the place since they were blamed by government authorities for settling near the source of two rivers which float into Ruaha and Lufilyo Rivers.

Recently, Mbeya regional commissioner Juma Homera and the Njombe regional commissioner Anthony Mtaka held a public meeting with the villagers and agreed that they continue to live in the area on the condition of not damaging the environment.

However, the two commissioners agreed that the villagers should be recognized as residents of Mbeya region, something they had needed for a long time.

Speaking with The Guardian, some of the villagers said that after the conflict ended, they are now living in peace and are continuing with their production activities.

One of the villagers, John Mpole said that they previously believed that officials from the National Parks Authority (TANAPA) were the ones who wanted them evicted and thus hate them.

He said that now after the officers defended them and remained in the village, they live well with them and cooperate in various social issues.

He said that they have now begun to improve economically by increasing the production of various crops that they were previously afraid to produce in large quantities for fear of being evicted by the government.

"Our economy here depends a lot on potato farming. We used to grow a small amount because we were

afraid to spend a lot of money and then be evicted and leave it here. Right now, as you can see, all the fields have been cultivated," said Mpole.

Stella Seme said they have agreed to ensure that they protect the existing water sources in their area so that they can help them and the people of other areas where the water flows to.

She said that at the moment they have set special signs that show the boundaries of the areas that should be cultivated and those that are not suitable for protecting the water sources and forests that exist in the vicinity of their areas.

The chief Kitulo National Park Conservator Theodora Batiho said the relationship between the conservators and the residents of the village has improved recently after talking to them through traditional elders. He said that in previous years they were enemies with TANAPA officials. They were afraid to even go through the village but now they are cooperating in various social activities.



Our economy here depends a lot on potato farming. We used to grow a small amount because we were afraid to spend a lot of money and then be evicted and leave it here. Right now, as you can see, all the fields have been cultivated

Burkina Faso officials say 28 people found shot dead

OUAGADOUGOU

TWENTY-eight bodies have been found in northwest Burkina Faso over the weekend, the government said, noting an investigation was under way as speculation grows over who may be responsible.

"The government was informed of an incident at Nouna ... during the night of December 30-31," a government statement said late on Monday. It added that an investigation had been begun into the matter.

The Collective against Impunity and Stigmatisation of Communities (CISC) organisation denounced the violence as "reprisals targeting civilians" by armed civilians claiming to be members of an auxiliary force who "freely engage in organised looting and targeted abuses of [the] civilian population".

Attacks targeting security forces and civilians have increased in recent months, especially in northern and eastern regions bordering Mali and Niger, which are battling armed groups.

Despite large gold deposits, Burkina Faso - which has 21 million inhabitants - is one of the poorest countries in the world.

Since 2015, the West African country has become the epicentre of a violent rebellion that has spread from neighbouring Mali over the past decade. Thousands have been

killed across the Sahel region with nearly two million people being displaced and forced to live in makeshift camps.

The government's inability to stem the attacks led to two coups this year with each military leader promising to make security a priority.

However, swaths of its territory are being cut off by armed groups in repeated attacks. The east and Sahel regions have been some of the hardest hit parts of the country, with towns besieged by rebels who prevent civilians from moving freely.



The government's inability to stem the attacks led to two coups this year with each military leader promising to make security a priority



Magu district commissioner Salum Kali (2nd-R) pictured in Mwanza city at the weekend presenting a prize TV set to Mwadawa Ibrahim Mohamed of Chato District for emerging one of the winners of a Vodacom Tanzania Plc campaign raffle. With them are Vodacom's marketing and business strategy manager, Venance Chapaulinge (L), and Lake Victoria zone senior sales manager Ahmed Akbarali. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

Rungwe residents embark on the farming of vanilla

By Guardian Correspondent, Rungwe

RESIDENTS of Rungwe in Mbeya Region are embarking on vanilla farming after being equipped with modern methods of producing the crop and receiving quality seeds from experts.

The farmers have been empowered more after being assured of reliable markets by a local company known as Ney headquartered in Kilimanjaro region.

Earlier, the farmers said they

never knew about the crop and where to get quality seeds to start practicing farming the crop.

One of the farmers Mboka Mwakatumbula a resident of Kyimo said they were sensitized by the company which purchases the crop and were also given the know how to grow the crop for their benefits.

He said it is now two years since they started producing the crop saying those who responded earlier to the call have started benefiting while others are

expected to start harvesting later this year.

"This is an easy crop to produce especially here in Mbeya. We plant with Bananas because this crop needs shade but the main task is weeding," he said.

An expert in the crop in Rungwe Juma Mzava said the crop grows well in any area with a temperature less than 25 to 35 degrees and an average longitude of 100 1300 meters above sea level.

He said the crop also grows better in an area which receives 2,500 to

5,000 litres of water rains which Rungwe qualifies as it has all the qualities.

He named some of the areas in Rungwe district that are suitable for the crop's production as wards of Kyimo, Ikuti, Bagamoyo, Kinyala, Iponjola, Nkunga, Malindo, Suma, Masoko, Kisondele, Msasani, Makandana and Lufingo.

He said some of the areas in the district qualify for the crop's production but have not been sensitized enough to start farming.



Ruvuma regional commissioner Col Laban Thomas plants a tree at a point along Mbugusi river bank within the Lugumbilo reserve in Mbingamhalule ward, Songea District, where a total of 2,000 natural tree seedlings have been planted. Photo: Correspondent Gideon Mwakanosya

Car bomb hits convoy in Nigeria's southeast, 4 killed

ABUJA

FOUR security officials were killed in a car bomb targeting a former government official in southeast Nigeria, authorities said Tuesday.

Three police officers and a paramilitary official were killed in the attack in Imo State on a convoy carrying the former governor Ikedi Ohakim, Police Commissioner

Mohammed Barde said.

"The man (Ohakim) was ambushed and he was able to manoeuvre and escape," said Barde. The four security personnel were killed in a different car, he said.

The attack was an unfortunate setback to government efforts to restore peace in some of Nigeria's conflict-ridden southeastern states, said Barde.

Southeast Nigeria has experienced a rise in violent attacks in recent years, often blamed on separatists trying to break away from the West African nation to form an independent country.

The separatists who identify themselves as the Indigenous People of Biafra have become more violent amid calls for a referendum. Their attacks often target prominent

people and security forces in the southeast, say conflict experts.

A manhunt to arrest the assailants has begun said authorities.

The attack has raised fears among local residents who are concerned that security will be threatened in the area during the country's presidential elections in February.

The violence comes months after an ambush on a lawmaker in the southeastern Anambra State which killed four police officers in September. After that incident last year, Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari said he is "deeply concerned" about the troubled region.



Dr Angelina Mabula (R), the Lands, Housing and Human Settlements Development minister, updates journalists in Dar es Salaam yesterday on developments relating to the ministry and its various wings. Photo: Correspondent Munir Shemweta

Africa's official Covid vaccination rates about to go up - Africa CDC

By Annalisa Merelli

AS of the end of 2022, about a quarter of the population of African countries had been fully vaccinated against Covid-19, according to the latest figures shared by Africa CDC.

The coverage varies drastically depending on the country. In Liberia, for instance, nearly 80% of the population is fully vaccinated, while only 34% in neighboring Sierra Leone. Congo, Sudan, Senegal, and Madagascar all have vaccination rates below 10%.

These numbers are about to change—and not because of an increase in vaccinations. Africa CDC acting director Ahmed Ogwel Ouma announced in a video briefing on Dec. 22 that it will modify the way it reports vaccination rates. Rather than reporting coverage of the overall population, it will only report vaccinations of eligible population aged 12 or more.

Due of delays in international vaccine deliveries, Africa lags behind the rest of the world in Covid vaccination rates, and is the

only continent where less than 50% of the population is fully vaccinated. Currently, just more than 800 million doses of vaccines have been administered in Africa, or 80% of the total received. About a third of the vaccinations have been made with Johnson & Johnson's vaccine, followed by Pfizer (22%), AstraZeneca (17%), China's Sinopharm (15%) and Sinovac (7%).

In most countries, the focus of vaccination campaigns has been on older and vulnerable populations, and typically children and adolescents aren't yet eligible for the vaccine.

Africa CDC is changing the way it reports vaccination rates to focus only on the population it considers eligible, or people aged 12 or above. About 40% of the African population is below 15, so the change in denominator will lead to a large jump in the coverage figures. When Africa CDC makes the change, the percent of the eligible population currently vaccinated will jump from 26% to 42%.

Nyala Ilembo residents to have clean, safe water thanks to completion of the Shizuvi water project

By Guardian Correspondent, Mbeya

RESIDENTS of Nyala Ilembo village in Mbeya district council will now access clean and safe water after lacking the precious liquid since independence following completion of Shizuvi water project by the Rural Water and Sanitation Agency (RUWASA).

The project is being implemented at a cost of 482 through the emergency financial assistance under the Rapid Credit Facility and Rapid Financing Instrument to support the authorities' efforts in responding to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The project is expected to serve more than 2000 people with the contractor for the project Felix Msangi saying the project is part of the six projects being implemented by RUWASA in Mbeya region.

He said among the projects include building a 90,000 litres water tank, laying down pipes which are 16.5 long and building 16 water centres.

He said the Nyala Ilembo project will end water woes in the region and ensure that people will participate fully in development activities.

The administrative officer for Ruwasa in Mbeya Emile Mpsi called upon the people in the area to ensure they protect water sources to ensure they are useful.

She said the government has spent a lot in construction of the project saying what is remaining of it is to ensure the infrastructure is protected so that it helps in national development.

"This project is very important because it will allow development activities to continue as usual because much of the time will be spent on economic activities," she said.

Village chairman Joshua Mwandete said before the construction of the project most people travelled 40 to 60 minutes in search of water.

He said after the completion of the project, the woes have come to an end because currently they will use the availability of the waters to develop the area.

One of the residents in the area John Mwainga said despite the completion of the project there are some villages which still face water challenges.

This project is very important because it will allow development activities to continue as usual because much of the time will be spent on economic activities

KCB BANK

Tariff Guide

SERVICE	TZS	USD/EURO	KES	GBP
STATEMENTS				
Monthly Statement	free	free	free	free
Duplicated Statements per page (excluding community account)	1500 per page	1.30pp	78pp	0.70pp
Interim Statement per page (excluding community account)	1500 per page	1.30pp	78pp	0.70pp
ATM VISA DEBIT CARD				
ATM Card Issuance (for the first time)	free	free	n/a	n/a
ATM withdrawal from KCB ATMs (per transaction)	800	equivalent	equivalent	equivalent
ATM withdrawal from Non-KCB ATMs (Tanzania)	2500	1.3	n/a	n/a
ATM withdrawal from Non-KCB ATMs (International)	6500 per each 400,000 limit	3.3	equivalent	equivalent
ATM mini statements	550	equivalent	equivalent	equivalent
Daily Limit	1000000	equivalent	50000	equivalent
Minimum withdrawals	5000	equivalent	n/a	n/a
ATM Card Replacement (lost/destroyed cards)	15000	13	n/a	n/a
Blocking/unblocking ATM cards	free	free	free	free
Card Renewal	15000	13	n/a	n/a
STANDING ORDER				
within KCB	2500	equivalent	equivalent	equivalent
Outward to other banks	5000	3	n/a	n/a
Setup/Amend Standing Order	6500	7	500	4
Unpaid Standing Order (penalty)	10000	10	500	10
CHEQUES				
Unpaid Cheque (insufficient funds) - Outward	15000	13	n/a	n/a
Unpaid Cheque (insufficient) - Inward	65000	52	n/a	n/a
Unpaid Cheques - technical	15000	15	n/a	n/a
USD unpaid cheque	52	52	n/a	n/a
Counter Leaves	13000	equivalent	equivalent	equivalent
Bankers Cheque	26000	26	n/a	n/a
Stop payment-per set up	25000	25	1300	13
New cheque book retail	600 per leaf	equivalent	equivalent	equivalent
TT's INTERNATIONAL				
Outward	50USD(TZS equivalent)	50USD(Euro equivalent)	equivalent	equivalent
Inward TT (excluding community accounts)	13USD (TZS equivalent)	13USD(Euro equivalent)	equivalent	equivalent
Recall of funds/Cancellation of TT	10USD (TZS equivalent)	10USD(Euro equivalent)	equivalent	equivalent
Amendment of TT (Customer induced)	10USD (TZS equivalent)	10USD(Euro equivalent)	equivalent	equivalent
TRANSFERS LOCAL				
KCB to KCB	1500	equivalent	equivalent	equivalent
EFT (KCB Tanzania to any local bank)	3500	3	n/a	n/a
TISS/local TT (excluding community account)	10000	13	n/a	n/a
East African Payments (EAPS)	10000	n/a	870	n/a
MINIMUM A/C OPENING BALANCE				
Current Account-Company (SME&CORPORATE)	100000	100	5000	13
Current/Personal	50000	100	5000	65
Mapato Account	10000	10	500	10
KCB Junior Account	10000	10	500	10
KCB Student Account	10000	10	500	10
KCB Simba Savers	50000	50	n/a	n/a
A/C CLOSURE				
Closing account	35000 before 6months, free after 6 months	39	2200	26
OTHER SERVICES				
Search of old documents	15000	13	900	10.5
Forex Cash Deposits (smaller denominations below US \$ 50)	n/a	8% for denominations that are less than USD 50	n/a	8% for denominations that are less than USD 50
Dormant Account Activation	free	free	free	free
ACCOUNT MAINTENANCE FEES				
Counter Withdrawals (excluding: Simba,Cub & Community accounts)	<10million 1500 >10million 0.1% max 20000	0.50%	0.50%	0.50%
Ledger Fees - Current Accounts (excluding community and salary)	personal current account 10,000, business 20,000, corporate account 30,000	personal current 10USD/Business 16USD/Corporate 20USD	700	personal current 10GBP/Business 16GBP/Corporate 20GBP
Ledger Fees - Savings Accounts (excluding Simba, Cub, salary & Student Accounts)	1200	7	176	7
THIRD PARTY ENCASHMENT				
withdrawal fee to be paid by the beneficiary	6500	13	450	7
SALARY PROCESSING				
Salary processing	2600	equivalent	130	equivalent
CERTIFICATE OF BALANCE				
Balance of Account (Flat fee per certificate)	39000	equivalent	equivalent	equivalent
Auditors Confirmation (flat per certificate)	30000	equivalent	equivalent	equivalent
Reference Letters	30000	equivalent	equivalent	equivalent

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Signed 04.01.2023
Signed 04.01.2023

Please note: All taxes included

*Base Lending Rate 19% for TZS and 9% for USD
*All rates are subject to negotiation based on the product

Morogoro leaders condemn large number of cattle in water sources

By Guardian Correspondent, Morogoro

AUTHORITIES in Morogoro District expressed concern over the presence of large numbers of livestock that ravage water sources.

They also lodged an appeal to President Samia Suluhu Hassan to work on the allegation that there are five cabinet ministers who own large number of cattle that are behind destroying water sources that support the regions of Dar es Salaam, Morogoro and Pwani.

The ruling CCM's district chairman Gerold Mlenge said this yesterday when speaking at the official launch of water project in Lundi ward and village.

The party district leader said the district does not have grazing area, but there are many ranchers who disturb farmers while destroying water sources

Mlenge said the presence of a large number of livestock has proven to damage water sources in Morogoro district and lead to conflicts between farmers, breeders and the land in general, which can be resolved if followed up.

Mlenge asked Water Minister Jumaa Aweso to take the names of those ministers from the Morogoro District Commissioner's office and submit to the relevant authorities for action.

Morogoro South MP, Innocent Kalogeres said that the state in water projects for the financial year 2022/23 has received more than 1.7bn/- in various areas while fearing the contractor M/S Crossworld Logistic Co. Ltd to complete the water project on time.

The MP tasked the contractor to complete the project as early as possible so that the people can get water and fulfill the government's dreams of bringing water closer to people.

Water Minister Jumaa Aweso said that the challenge of water, especially the deterioration of its sources, has been appearing from time to time, similar to the issue of livestock, where he promised to submit their complaint of the five ministers who own livestock in the district as it is to the president without fail.

"I have been given a special request by the leaders here, regarding the livestock challenge, I acknowledge receiving it and I will deliver it as you wanted, I am also a victim, one of the biggest challenges is the destruction of water sources," said minister Aweso.

RUWASA district's manager, Eng Grace Lyimo, said that the project

costs 492.8m/- which if completed will fulfill the government's goal of providing quality water services to more than 4,000 people in Ng'ongola and Lundi villages in the district.

He said that the project has been implemented since January 17, 2022 and was expected to be completed on July 16, 2022, where the time has been extended and required to be completed on February 7, 2023 due to various challenges.

He said the water source of the project is a deep well with the capacity to produce 264,000 liters per day and the water demand in the two villages is 230,200 liters per day.

Lyimo explained that the main works planned in the project are the construction of a 150,000 liter tank, the construction of two houses for pumping stations, the Tanesco electricity connection, excavation work, pipe laying and reaching a length of 19 kilometers, the purchase of line pipes mains and water supply pipes, building 17 rural water collection stations and rehabilitating six water stations.

He mentioned other works as the repair of two water tanks and the construction of the water community office and the purchase of two motorcycles for the management and operation of the project when it is completed.

He said that in general, the implementation of work in the project is 69 percent complete and an amount of 212.5m/- has already been paid to the contractor.

One of the beneficiaries of the project in Lundi ward Rehema Hembela said he is grateful to President Samia for bringing them clean and safe water, something she described as a very big relief.



I have been given a special request by the leaders here, regarding the livestock challenge, I acknowledge receiving it and I will deliver it as you wanted, I am also a victim, one of the biggest challenges is the destruction of water sources

'Evacuate water catchment areas, stop human activities'

By Guardian Correspondent, Manyoni

MANYONI district commissioner Rahabu Mwangi has ordered people who are engaged in human activities and livestock keeping near water sources to immediately vacate the areas.

He issued the order yesterday when opening a general meeting by water stakeholders in Manyoni district.

Mwangi said the rural water and sanitation authority-RUWASA is working hard to ensure that people in rural areas have access to water, but the problem is that some people are damaging water sources by cultivating near water sources and tending livestock.

"I ask the environmentalists to provide information when you see people destroying water sources so that appropriate measures can be taken against the perpetrators," he said.

She congratulated RUWASA for continuing to ensure that water service reaches the people in all villages and all areas within the district.

Manyoni acting district executive director Fadhili Chimsala said people must be sensitized on protection of water sources.

Prevention and Combating of Corruption Bureau Senior Officer in Manyoni district Wilson Ntiro, said his office will continue to monitor

implementation of water projects to ensure that they are completed on time and with relevancy in value of money.

He said damaging water infrastructure is an offense and it is considered as economic sabotage, therefore leaders should tell the people to take care of the water sources so that they last longer.

Ntiro said water preservation unions should ensure that people or institutions that sell water have special permits of doing so because the Water Act 2009 states that no one is allowed to sell water unless they have a special permit.

Those who sell water in rural areas without a special permit are doing so illegally.

RUWASA Head of the operation and maintenance division Engineer Madhu Shija emphasized on planting trees around water sources so that they remain safe and provide water at all times.

"RUWASA would like to get information about each water source, how many trees have been planted, and make sure all water preservation unions submit monthly reports," he said.

Head of community based water society (CBWSO), Binto Manyama said; from March 16 to 22 water preservation unions should have classified the recommendations of activities that will be held during each water week commemorations.



Meat dealers attend to their customers just outside an abattoir at Uyole in Mbeya District yesterday. Photo: Correspondent Nebart Msokwa

Authorities in Mbeya Region chart ways to ensure timely distribution of fertiliser

By Guardian Correspondent, Mbeya

AUTHORITIES in Mbeya region have strategized to ensure subsidized fertiliser which has just arrived in the region is circulated and distributed to farmers for timely application during the ongoing farming season.

Mbeya Regional Commissioner Juma Homera revealed this when he witnessed the disembarking of subsidized fertiliser which has been produced by a local industry located in Dodoma.

The RC directed the company which has been contracted to distribute the fertiliser across the region, Ben Agro Star, to ensure the fertiliser reaches all the district councils equally in the region to evade conflicts.

He said the region is in need of 11,000 tonnes of fertiliser to meet its demand hence calling upon the company to increase the pace of distributing and transporting the input from Dodoma.

"There is a huge task ahead of you, so please work hard to ensure

that people who are intended to get fertiliser do so timely," he said.

He directed the company and other distributors to ensure the fertiliser is distributed and sold at the same price as indicated by the government and those who will go against it will be punished by the law.

He called upon district commissioners to follow up on fertiliser availability in shops which are registered as well as ensure if it is sold at the recommended price.

The managing director of Ben

Agro Star Dr Izrael Mwampondele said the first batch of the fertiliser which arrived in the region was just the beginning as were others on the way from Dodoma.

He said Mbeya being one of the main producers of the food crops, there is need for the input to arrive timely so that farmers can start applying to facilitate bumper harvest. He assured the RC that the company will distribute the input in the region with dedication while taking note of the indicative prices by the government.



Samli Mniuka (L), a small trader based along Dar es Salaam's Congo Street, pictured yesterday assisting a presumed pupil in trying on shoes in preparation for the nationwide opening of schools for calendar year 2023. Photo: Correspondent Imani Nathaniel

'100 most reputable Africans' in 2023 announced

By Special Correspondent

REPUTATION Poll International, a leading global reputation firm, has released the 2023 list of the 100 most reputable Africans. The list features individuals from diverse sectors including governance, human rights, education, entertainment, and business.

The selection criteria are integrity, impact and visibility.

Kenya's Amina Chawahir Mohamed, South Africa's Bonang Mohale, Chancellor at the University of the Free State and Professor at Johannesburg Business School; and

Cameroon's Njoya Tiku, Manager of the UNDP Regional Office in West and Central are some of the prominent personalities featured on the list.

Governance and Policy: The President of Kenya, His Excellency William K. Ruto, the President of Malawi, His Excellency Lazarus Chakwera and Senator Chantal Moussokoura Fanny of Ivory Coast, amongst others.

Business: Egypt's Naguib Onsi Sawiris, Chairman of Weather Investment company, Ghana's Sir Samuel Esson Jonah, Chancellor of the University of Cape Coast,

and Executive Chairman of Jonah Capital in South Africa and Nigeria's Dr. Dauda Lawal, Executive Vice Chairman and CEO of Credent Capital and Advisory Ltd. Human Rights Advocacy: Martha K. Koome, Chief Justice of Kenya, and Nigeria's Aisha Yesufu are featured.

Leadership: Ethiopia's President, Sahle Work-Zedde, Nigeria's Dr. Paul Enenche MD, and Ghana's Afua Kyei (the Chief Financial Officer at Bank of England, where she leads the Finance Directorate) are featured and Bolaji Akinremi (Amb.) || Director of Economy Trade & Investment, Ministry of Foreign

Affairs.

In addition to the individuals recognised on Reputation Poll International's "100 Most Reputable Africans" list for their various achievements, there are also those who are celebrated for their contributions to social impact and social entrepreneurship, helping to transform businesses in Africa and positively impacting lives without causing controversy.

The 100 Most Reputable Africans list is aimed at recognising and celebrating the achievements of individuals making a positive impact in Africa and worldwide.



Nallusamy Rajendran Murali (2nd-R), Bagamoyo Sugar Limited's deputy general manager (Agriculture), briefs a delegation of Tanzania Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture (TCCIA) representatives last week on how the firm is managed. Others include TCCIA acting president Swallah Saidi Swallah (C) and board member Dr Kingu Mtemi (3rd-R). Photo: Guardian Correspondent

TCCIA happy with Bagamoyo Sugar Company performance

By Guardian Correspondent, Bagamoyo

THE Tanzania Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture (TCCIA) said here yesterday it is happy with positive investment made by the Bagamoyo Sugar Limited that has resulted in planting 2,000 hectares with sugar cane, creating 1000 jobs, and building infrastructure using internal resources.

Speaking at the end of the tour of the farms and firm's premises, the TCCIA Acting President, Swallah Saidi Swallah, said the chamber is happy with the performance of the company and its future plans, especially promotion of sugar out growers.

"We are happy with the performance of this company. We have witnessed positive and focused investment that promises our country good results in the sugar industry. To us (TCCIA) the existence of this company with positive investment plans is a big success in the agriculture, industry and commerce sectors," he told reporters. The factory is owned by the Bakhresa Group of Companies.

Swallah said the chamber wants to know exactly how Bagamoyo smallholders can grow sugar canes and become an important supplier of raw materials to the factory.

He said the chamber has adopted a tour strategy that entails visiting companies and discussing with

owners the basis of their successes, emerging challenges and problems and how to solve them. "We have started with industries. We want to know what is taking place there, identify areas of cooperation and kind of support the chamber can offer. We have started with industry," he said.

He praised the current government's investment policy, which he said is friendly to investors and has consequently attracted investors to Tanzania.

A member of the TCCIA Board of Directors, Dr Kingu Mtemi, who was part of the delegation, said the delegation was impressed by the plans and willingness of the company to support sugar out growers as an important supplier of

raw materials.

"There is a glaringly big demand for raw materials. As a chamber we would like to cooperate with this company to motivate sugar out growers and make them a reliable source of raw material for the factory," he said.

The Deputy General Manager (Agriculture), Nallusamy Rajendran Murali, told visitors that the company welcomes support from the TCCIA. He said the company has built internal farm roads, established irrigation infrastructure, bought requisite machinery and machines for loading and offloading canes using company resources. He said the company wants to use sugar out growers as key suppliers of raw materials.

Ruvuma starts tree planting project in protection of two sources of water

By Guardian Correspondent, Songea

RUVUMA regional commissioner Colonel Laban Thomas yesterday graced the event for planting 3,500 natural trees along river Luegu and river Mgugusi in the region as part of marking the tree planting week.

The tree planting took place at two water sources which flow into river Luegu in Namtumbo district and river Mgugusi in Lugumbilo village in Songea district.

At river Luegu a total of 1500 natural tree seedlings have been planted and at the source of river Mgugusi 2000 seedlings have been planted at that source.

The tree seedlings have been provided by the Tanzania Forestry Services Agency (TFS).

Namtumbo district commissioner Dr Julius Ningu said that the district is implementing the instructions to conserve water sources as given by President Dr Samia Suluhu Hassan.

He said the district will also plant trees in other rivers that feed into river Luegu.

Thomas said river Luegu contributes 19 percent of the water floating into the Julius Nyerere Hydropower Project set in Rufiji River

"This river contributes 19 percent of all the water that floats into the Julius Nyerere power project," he said.

He banned all human activities ongoing at the source of the river to make it sustainable.

He congratulated Ngwinde village residents for protecting the forest surrounding the water source.

He asked TFS to distribute more seedlings for free to the residents so that they can plant and preserve the environment.

While he was at Mgugusi River that feeds its water into river Ruvuma, he was annoyed by destruction of the Lugumbilo forest

reserve located at that water source where people have invaded it.

He instructed Songea district commissioner to ensure that all the people involved in the destruction of the source are arrested and prosecuted for destroying the environment.

He also ordered all those who cultivated maize fields at the source to be removed and the reserve to remain open.

He has ordered all the mountain reserves in the Ruvuma region that have been invaded by people to be evicted to protect the water sources for the benefit of the current and future generations.

Meanwhile, Ruvuma region CCM chairman Odo Mwisho condemned the destruction of the environment at the Mbingamhalule water source.

Ruvuma region's natural resources advisor Africanus Challe said during the tree planting week, the region is expected to plant 1,100,000 natural tree seedlings provided by TFS.



He has ordered all the mountain reserves in the Ruvuma region that have been invaded by people to be evicted to protect the water sources for the benefit of the current and future generations



Grass is transported in Dar es Salaam's Madala suburb yesterday for feeding livestock under the zero-grazing modality implemented in line with the city by-laws. Photo: Correspondent Miraji Msala

Senegalese journalist 'extremely strained' after hunger strike

DAKAR

A Senegalese journalist and prominent anti-government critic is "extremely strained" after a two-week hunger strike he launched in protest of his detention, his lawyer said on Monday.

Pape Ale Niang, head of the Dakar Matin online news site, was arrested on November 6 and charged with "divulging information likely to harm national defense."

Niang, widely followed in Senegal for his regular columns on current affairs, was released on December 14 but sent back to prison a week later. He has been on a hunger strike since his latest imprisonment on December 20.

"I pray that the irreparable does not happen," Me Moussa Sarr told journalists.

The journalist has been at Dakar's main hospital since December 24, with doctors concerned about his

condition for the past five days, according to a local press body.

The case against Niang arose after he wrote about rape charges faced by the country's main opposition leader, Ousmane Sonko.

He is accused of describing confidential messages about security arrangements for Sonko's interview with investigators, according to trade unions.

His detention sparked a wave of criticism from the press, civil

society groups and Senegal's opposition, many of whom called for his release.

Senegal has a strong reputation for openness and press freedom in troubled West Africa, but this status is in decline, according to Reporters Without Borders (RSF).

Its 2022 Press Freedom Index ranked Senegal 73rd out of 180 countries – a fall of 24 places compared with the 2021 assessment.

US drops Burkina Faso from Africa duty-free business programme

WASHINGTON DC

THE United States has dropped Burkina Faso from its trade preference programme citing deep concerns over "unconstitutional change" in government in the West African country, the US Trade Representative's (USTR) office has said.

Frustrations over the government's inability to curb activity by armed groups spurred two military coups in Burkina Faso in 2022. The previous and current military governments have made efforts to beef up security, but the attacks have continued.

The African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) provides sub-Saharan African nations with duty-free access to the US if they meet specific eligibility requirements, including making progress towards political pluralism.

The USTR's office said Burkina Faso had failed to meet the requirements of the AGOA statute and would be given "clear benchmarks" for a pathway towards reinstatement to the trade programme, adding that Washington would work with Ouagadougou.

On Monday, the Burkinabe Ministry of Foreign Affairs reacted to the decision by repeating a November statement saying the timetable for a return to democracy had not changed.

Burkina Faso had committed to returning to constitutional rule in 24 months in a July agreement with the West African regional bloc ECOWAS.

Burkina Faso, one of the world's poorest countries, has been in the

grip of a conflict in which armed groups linked to al-Qaeda and ISIL (ISIS) have killed thousands of civilians and created one of the continent's fastest-growing humanitarian crises.

Nearly two million people have been displaced who reside in makeshift camps, many run by the United Nations, that dot the arid countryside.

The violence, which has rumbled on for about seven years, has been focused in the north and east, crippling local economies, causing mass hunger, and restricting access to aid organisations.

Just before Christmas, Burkina Faso's military government asked a senior UN official to exit the country. The UN contested the decision saying "the doctrine of persona non grata does not apply to United Nations officials".



The African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) provides sub-Saharan African nations with duty-free access to the US if they meet specific eligibility requirements, including making progress towards political pluralism

CGTN clip will help Destination Tanzania

A NEW clip on Chinese Global Television Network (CGTN) which is available on DSTV next to a band of well-known global broadcasters like Cable News Network (CNN) and Al Jazeera, among others, is of interest to Tanzanian tourism stakeholders. It notably highlights a close up look at Mount Kilimanjaro, what the glaciers look at close range, even improving the image of the mountain that some of us thought we knew enough. We get images from photographs, not the climbers.

The close up photos are the sort of image one gets if he or she actually climbs the mountain, though chances are that the route taken would avoid the massive hanging ice blocks that photographic show closed upon. Without some expertise it isn't easy to say where the photographer stood to get those images, as they aren't routine at all, which means that most photographs of the top stretch of the mountain are taken from a safe distance from the most dangerous zones. It is possible one can approach the edges with massive ice blocks with a plane for a snapshot, or fitting auxiliary equipment on camera to close up or to enlarge, etc.

Whatever the case this was an excellent view of what a climber actually finds upon climbing, and informs keen climbers of the scale, enormity of the challenge, and even the sporting exertion they are likely to face in the area. Still the area is famous for the climbing, as it is partly arduous and partly manageable for those habitually in good health or athletic shape. Thus the nerve tingling images of ice cliffs and imagined climbing challenge aren't routine stuff for Kilimanjaro, but can come up.

Without a profiling of the clip

attached to its showing on CGTN, figuring out its provenance was kind of taxing, if it was made by local promoters for the TV item, or it came directly from the television network itself. The news item was both a CGTN item and a promotional package for Tanzania as it was about Air Tanzania starting a second regular destination weekly, underlining that China is emerging as a key market for Air Tanzania and for tourism as such. For some viewers the clip background music appeared to merge with the network mounting it, that it was faintly Chinese music, but an expert could say it was sort of blended that way, etc.

What though passed in mind was the impression that Destination Tanzania was now arriving where it has always stopped short of being noticed, namely on global television of renown. Not surprisingly this has come after 'Tanzania: The Royal Tour,' but the fact that this was in the first place a US documentary where President Samia Suluhu Hassan felt obliged to assist for higher national interest shows that the country's image was on the rise. The documentary took it a stage further and now offshoots of the ground breaking profiling are being conceived.

At the same time this scenic Kilimanjaro video clip is less of a promotional event than a salutary affirmation that links between Tanzania and China elicit a keen reaction at the top level in the Far East country. The honour extended to President Samia to be the first Head of State to visit China upon the conclusion of a destiny defining congress of the ruling Communist Party, followed by German Chancellor Olaf Scholz, is not lost to media executives in that country. The clip is one result.

World Braille Day communication is realisation of human rights for blind

BRILLE is a tactile writing system used by people who are visually impaired, including people who are blind, deaf blind or who have low vision. It can be read either on embossed paper or by using refreshable braille displays that connect to computers and smartphone devices. Braille can be written using a slate and stylus, a braille writer, an electronic braille note taker or with the use of a computer connected to a braille embosser.

Braille is named after its creator, Louis Braille, a Frenchman who lost his sight as a result of a childhood accident. In 1824, at the age of fifteen, he developed the braille code based on the French alphabet as an improvement on night writing. He published his system, which subsequently included musical notation, in 1829. The second revision, published in 1837, was the first binary form of writing developed in the modern era.

Braille characters are formed using a combination of six raised dots arranged in a 3 x 2 matrix, called the braille cell. The number and arrangement of these dots distinguishes one character from another. Since the various braille alphabets originated as transcription codes for printed writing, the mappings (sets of character designations) vary from language to language, and even within one; in English Braille there are 3 levels of braille: uncontracted braille - a letter-by-letter transcription used for basic literacy; contracted braille - an addition of abbreviations and contractions used as a space-saving mechanism; and grade 3 - various non-standardized personal stenography

that is less commonly used.

In addition to braille text (letters, punctuation, contractions), it is also possible to create embossed illustrations and graphs, with the lines either solid or made of series of dots, arrows, and bullets that are larger than braille dots. A full braille cell includes six raised dots arranged in two columns, each column having three dots. The dot positions are identified by numbers from one to six. There are 64 possible combinations, including no dots at all for a word space. Dot configurations can be used to represent a letter, digit, punctuation mark, or even a word.

Early braille education is crucial to literacy, education and employment among the blind. Despite the evolution of new technologies, including screen reader software that reads information aloud, braille provides blind people with access to spelling, punctuation and other aspects of written language less accessible through audio alone. While some have suggested that audio-based technologies will decrease the need for braille, technological advancements such as braille displays have continued to make braille more accessible and available. Braille users highlight that braille remains as essential as print is to the sighted.[4]

Visual impairment, also known as vision impairment, is a medical definition primarily measured based on an individual's better eye visual acuity; in the absence of treatment such as correctable eyewear, assistive devices, and medical treatment-visual impairment may cause the individual difficulties with normal daily tasks including reading and walking.

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'Ethiopia govt peacefully takes over Tigray'

By Ashenafi Endale

THE Tigray War was an armed conflict that lasted from 3 November 2020 to 3 November 2022. The war was primarily fought in the Tigray region of Ethiopia between the Ethiopian federal government and Eritrea on one side, and the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) on the other.

After years of increased tensions and hostilities between the TPLF and the governments of Ethiopia and Eritrea, fighting began when Tigrayan security forces attacked the Northern Command headquarters of the Ethiopian National Defense Force (ENDF), alongside a number of other bases in Tigray. The ENDF counter attacked from the south - while Eritrean Defence Forces (EDF) began launching attacks from the north - which Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed described as "law enforcement operations." Federal allied forces captured Mekelle, the capital of the Tigray Region, on 28 November, after which Abiy declared the operation "over." However, the Tigray government stated soon afterwards that it would continue fighting until the "invaders" were out, and on 28 June 2021, the Tigray Defense Forces (TDF) retook Mekelle; by July the same year, they had also advanced into the Amhara and Afar regions. [59] In early November 2021, the TDF, together with the Oromo Liberation Army (OLA), took control of several towns on the highway south from Tigray Region towards Addis Ababa, and the TPLF stated that it considered "marching on [the capital]." Together with seven smaller rebel groups, the TPLF and OLA declared a coalition aiming to "dismantle Abiy's government by force or by negotiations, and then form a transitional authority."

After a successful government counter-offensive in response, and then a series of negotiations with the TPLF, Ethiopia declared an indefinite humanitarian truce on 24 March 2022, in order to allow the delivery of humanitarian aid into Tigray. However, fighting dramatically re-escalated in late August 2022, after peace talks broke down. Rapid mobilization of troops soon followed, with Ethiopia, Eritrea and Tigray reportedly organising hundreds of thousands of troops against each other by October the same year. After a number of peace and mediation proposals in the intervening years, Ethiopia and the Tigrayan rebel forces agreed to a cessation of hostilities on 2 November, which went into effect

the day after; Eritrea was not a party to the agreement, however, and their status has remained unclear.

All sides, particularly the ENDF, EDF, and TDF, have committed war crimes during the conflict. Mass extrajudicial killings of civilians have taken place throughout, including in Axum, Bora, Chenna, Kobo, the Hitsats refugee camp, Humera, Mai Kadra, the Debre Abay monastery, and Zalambessa. An estimated 385,000-600,000 people have been killed, and war rape became a "daily" occurrence, with girls as young as 8 and women as old as 72 being raped, often in front of their families. A major humanitarian crisis has developed as a result of the war, with famine becoming widespread. It also inflicted immense economic damage on the region, with the cost of rebuilding alone estimated to be roughly \$20 billion.

Implementation of Pretoria agreement speeds up.

Ethiopia's federal government would retake command of the city of Mekelle, capital of the Tigray regional state, in the coming few days, exactly two years after the onset of war in November 2022. On December 29, 2022, federal police troops were stationed in Mekelle to safeguard federal facilities and ensure the smooth functioning of everyday activities.

The Pretoria and Nairobi peace treaties have allowed the Ethiopian National Defence Force (ENDF) to secure strategic areas in the region. The disarming of Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) fighters is also being monitored by the AU-led Monitoring, Verification, and Compliance Mission (MVCM) team.

In the presence of Olusegun Obasanjo, Uhuru Kenyatta, Workneh Gebeyehu (PhD), secretary general of IGAD, officials of the federal government, including Gedion Timotios (PhD), minister of Justice, and officials of the TPLF, the MVCM officially began its mission on last Thursday in Mekelle.

Antony Blinken, secretary of state of the United States, praised the launch of the AU-led disarmament team. "The signing and launch of the AU-MVCM in Mekelle is another important step towards securing lasting peace for the people of northern Ethiopia," he said in a statement issued on Thursday.

Ten military experts from different African countries, including South Sudan and Kenya, make up the MVCM team, which has already begun to observe the collection of heavy weaponry held by the TPLF at Agula, which is located close to Mekelle.

"We saw a lot of enthusiasm among the population," Steven Radina (Maj. Gen.), head of the MVCM, said. "I visited a mechanization garrison at Agula, where I saw an assortment of heavy weapons and the willingness to hand over and continue with the peace process."

Once the handover of the heavy weapons to the ENDF is completed, the process continues for the light weapons, culminating in the full implementation of the Disarmament, Demobilisation, and Reintegration (DDR) programme.

When the disarmament is fully implemented, Eritrean and Amhara forces are expected to withdraw from the Tigray region, according to officials at the federal government. Reports say that Eritrean troops have started to leave the region.

Regional elections will be conducted in Tigray after the region is fully stabilized. An interim government will be formed in Tigray, comprising the TPLF, the federal government, and opposition parties in Tigray, according to Redwan Hussein (Amb), security advisor to the Prime Minister. He stated this while briefing members of the opposition party at the African Leadership Excellence Academy on December 28, 2022.

The battalion of ENDF has already arrived in Mekelle to take over the weapons, Getachew Reda, TPLF spokesperson said while speaking during the launch ceremony of the MVCM.

On the other hand, the federal government is also fulfilling the TPLF's demands, including the resumption of basic services and humanitarian assistance provision.

The federal institutions in Tigray are quickly resuming operations after cabinets of the federal government, led by Tadesse Chafu, the house speaker, arrived in Mekelle for the first time in two years last Thursday.

Ethiopian Airlines began flights to Mekelle, with plans to resume Shire flights and triple Mekelle flights beginning Monday, January 1, 2023. Ethio telecom has also resumed its connection to Mekelle and 28 other towns in the region after repairing more than half of its 1,800 kilometers of fiber-optic cable in the conflict areas. Electricity, transportation, and banking services are also resuming, while banks are facing liquidity problems as fresh injections are required into their branches in Tigray.

By December 29, over 106,000 metric tons of humanitarian aid and 1,400 metric tons of medicine had been provided to Tigray since the peace agreement was signed on

November 2, 2022.

"We have walked the talk," Olusegun Obasanjo said during the MVCM launch in Mekelle on Thursday. After being assigned by the AU 17 months ago to find a way out of the deadly conflict between the federal government and TPLF, he traveled to Mekelle for the 10th time.

"The suspicion and the heated debate eventually led to the peace agreement. An agreement that will be implemented slowly. The trust building is really crucial," said Uhuru Kenyatta, who also hopes to see the celebration of the completion of the peace progress in Addis Ababa by the time the Ethiopian Christmas arrives, which will be on January 7, 2022.

However, officials from both the federal government and Tigray state say there is still a lot of work to be done to end the war.

Delisting the TPLF from the terrorist designation, political negotiations regarding the representation of Tigray in the federal government, ensuring transitional justice, solving the Wolkait issue, healing the social fabrics, and reconstructing the war-affected regions remain heavy on the federal government's shoulders.

On the other hand, the withdrawal of Eritrean and Amhara forces, the return of all IDPs to their homes, and the full supply of humanitarian aid and full resumption of services concern the TPLF officials.

"There are several parts of the agreement that are to be implemented. Parties might have concerns, be it about the pace of the implementation or others. Nevertheless, we are on a positive trajectory. The government has shown support for the full implementation, and too much blood has been shed and lost," Gedion said. He says that it is time for a rebuild. We must take lessons from the past two years. "There is much work ahead on DDR."

However, both parties agreed not to allow any mistrust to develop, as this would jeopardize the peace process's progress.

"No spoiler, from here or outside, should be allowed to stand in the way of that mission to rebuild our communities. We are prepared to ensure that any relapse into mutual distrust does not succeed," Getachew responded.

Kenyatta is looking forward to the meeting in Addis Ababa, "where Ethiopia will take full control over their affairs and ensure a peaceful and lasting resolution is found."

Of relatives who live in same cities but do meet only during yearend festivities

I WISH you and your family a happy and healthy New Year 2023. Festive seasons cannot increase or decrease the importance of our family, but family increases the importance of festivities undoubtedly.

Most of us wait for the whole year for our family to be reunited during Christmas and New Year holidays. People give a number of reasons, chief being the hectic city life where everybody is busy chasing money. But is it healthy for family bond and upbringing of future generations? My answer is no.

If you enjoyed this Christmas and the New Year with your family, then you should be grateful because that means the importance of the festive season doubled for you with your family.

Families are a source of unconditional love and resource for all of us to life's changes and challenges. Most people would also agree on the importance of family in creating healthy individuals and strong communities.

Parents are the first and most important teachers in every child's life. The importance of family starts at birth and stays constant throughout life. As children grow into their teens and early childhood, families can be a bedrock of support during times of change.

Families provide necessities such as food clothing and shelter for children in their household. But the importance of family doesn't end with physical needs; they should aim to support emotional needs as well. In truth, humans have multiple needs and a healthy family can support them well. In short, a strong family should be source for much more than basic items needed for life.

Children are not equipped to manage life on their own. Children need to feel safe and protected to engage in a healthy way with the world. When children feel protected, they can enjoy the magic and wonder of childhood.

So we do agree families provide protection for children. In today's hyper-connected world, it's easy to get over exposed to unhealthy ideas and images. However, only a close family with strong values can help young members avoid or resist negative influences. Without strong family values, young people can succumb to peer pressure and get addicted to



A family's influence on young children can last a lifetime in many ways. Healthy families are the building blocks of a healthy society and nation. Behind every successful person, there is a happy supportive family, be it immediate or distant.



Pressing Issues
With
Chaitra Chatterjee

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various forms of addictions.

When children are young family can provide advice but as they grow, parents can navigate complex webs of relationships. Parental guide can help young people to choose colleges, careers and even partners. However, in some cases too much support can be harmful as some children can be over dependent on parents.

As children grow, parents should support them in an indirect way. A family is one who demands less and gives more as possible. Family helps us to bring out our personality. Family is our canvas through which we paint

our world. Without family one's identity is incomplete. Joint family teaches us importance of unity in life.

Family teaches us about the customs, traditions and cultures of societies and nations. Family helps us to fight odd times and removes our loneliness. Without family, we won't be able to share our success or failure with anyone. A family gives us strength we need during our difficult times and enjoys the achievement or success with us.

Family maintains stability and peace in society. Due to huge change in lifestyle, some people are unable to balance their family

life and work but we should balance our work and family to live a healthy lifestyle.

A family's influence on young children can last a lifetime in many ways. Healthy families are the building blocks of a healthy society and nation. Behind every successful person, there is a happy supportive family, be it immediate or distant.

So, families are very important for everyone, not only for festive seasons, though family events, parties or vacations and strengthening relationships but also a vital part in our everyday life of struggle to provide physical, mental or economic support and inspiration.

Family is a blessing to us. Never lose the sight of importance of family even when life gets complicated and busy. And, don't wait for the next Christmas and New Year to meet family members, do it whenever you can. It is sad that some relatives, including those living in the same cities, see family members only during these yearend festivities.

"Everyone needs a house to live in but a supportive family is what builds a home," said American poet and author Anthony Liccione.

We can live longer and healthier by observing simple routines in our lives

By Pankras Luoga and Judith Costantine

SINCE 1990s there has been an increase of various diseases in the world. This has been the case in both developed and developing countries and Tanzania has not been spared.

Developing countries have recorded increase of communicable diseases as well as emergence of non-communicable diseases. Some of the common communicable diseases are cholera, dysentery, diarrhea, Tuberculosis, malaria HIV/Aids and many others without forgetting the recently emerged Covid-19.

At the same time, the world has witnessed increased trend of Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) including diabetes both type 1 and 2, heart diseases like hypertension, cancers and many other complications.

As it is in other developing countries, Tanzanians have witnessed the increase of the number of deaths caused by communicable as well as NCDs. For instance, after the public announcement of an outbreak of Covid-19 in December 2019 in China, and later in Tanzania in

March 2020, the disease caused more than 800 deaths in the country according to official statistics.

As the country was reeling from the devastating impact of Covid-related disruptions, in July 2022, there was emergence of leptospirosis or field fever in the southern areas of the country particularly Ruagwa District in Lindi Region.

What are their effects to society?

All these trends of diseases have been causing a lot of effects to the society particularly on the manpower of the nation. Example is the recorded trends of incidences of sudden deaths with unknown causes in the communities and sometimes diseases such as cancer are diagnosed but at late stage of development, leading to deaths that could be prevented.

In Tanzania and other countries, people have lost relatives and money spent on whatever was believed to cure Covid-19 before the development of vaccines and even thereafter since vaccine hesitancy was yet another global pandemic.



NCDs are the biggest enemy of developing economies like Tanzania in terms of financial cost of managing them as well as lives lost. This is so because experts now warn of alarming statistics when it comes to NCDs in young people who are supposed to propel the engine of the economy.

What should be done now?

It is true that most of the diseases are caused by our behaviours or lifestyles. For instance, not observing cleanness of our surroundings and food that we eat, not eating balanced diet, not exercising, taking too much

alcohol, not observing the socio ethics and engaging in unsafe sex kill many prematurely.

Hence, it is important that every person who wishes to live longer and healthier life to conduct a monitoring and evaluation of their life and make necessary changes. For, no one does this for another person. Even your doctor will only advise, period.

Some of the measures one can take regular check-up which helps diagnosis of diseases at early stage. It is important that one gets proper treatment before the disease develops into chronic stage and becomes difficult or impossible to

treat.

Also, it is advised that people follow advice given by health providers including avoiding or reducing foods that contain high amounts of sugar (glucose) and oil, especially with high content of cholesterol.

Many seem to fail when it comes to moderate drinking. In their New Year message, some Christian clerics raised alarm over binge drinking by teenagers. But as doctors all over the world say, you can adamantly drink excessively at your own peril.

Like drinking problem, body inactivity seems to be a problem

in Tanzania. We live in the era where many people do office work in air conditioned environments and people drive or commute to work. In other words, people don't sweat. It looks and sounds cool but deadly. For, such bodies are very attractive to NCDs.

And now comes eating. Healthy eating is another problem as people love it starchy, oily and sugary while the fact is too much of any of that is harmful. To be safe, practise eating food that increases immunity. Some people don't want to see, leave alone touch vegetables simple because they can afford meat. That's a problem.

In addition, observation of normal health practices such as washing hands before eating and after using the toilet, drinking clean and safe water, eating clean and safe food, taking time for resting and eating balanced diet can someone avoid a host of diseases.

What are the benefits of taking these measures?

If we embrace regular health check-ups, then the benefits will be at individual, societal and national level. For, diseases will be diagnosed at early stage and treated promptly before advancing. This saves not only lives but time and money. It can be done.

Pankras Luoga is Assistant Lecturer in Health Systems Management, Monitoring and Evaluation in Health at Muhimbili University of Health and Allied Sciences (MUHAS) and Judith Costantine is Assistant Lecturer in the School of Pharmacy Department of Medicinal Plants at MUHAS.

In proxy war with Russia, the US doles out 100 billion dollars in aid, arms to Ukraine



By Thalif Deen

A US Senator once described Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, perhaps facetiously, as “a Winston Churchill in a tee shirt”.

And last month, when he addressed the US Congress – with the presence of about 100 Senators and 435 Congressmen – he tried to re-live that moment.

While most of the Senators and Congressmen were in business suits for the formal occasion, Zelenskyy opted for green military fatigues and a matching sweatshirt.

And he was the second wartime head of government to address the US Congress, after British Prime Minister Winston Churchill’s 1941 address to Congress during World War II.

In his address December 21, the 44-year-old Zelenskyy appealed for increased economic aid, sophisticated weapons and security assistance.

According to a report in the New York Times last month, if Congress passes the budget bill (it did), the US aid to Ukraine

President Volodymyr Zelenskyy (on screen) of Ukraine, addresses the Security Council meeting on the situation in Ukraine. Credit: UN Photo/Loey Felipe

since the Russian invasion last February would amount to a hefty 100 billion dollars “allocated over four emergency spending packages.”

“We have artillery, yes thank you,” Zelenskyy told Senators and Congressmen. “We have it. But is it enough? Honestly, not really?”

Although the US has been sending a staggering array of weapons, including 1,400 Stinger missiles, GPS-guided joint Direct Attack Munition (JDAM) and the Patriot missile system, Ukraine has requested even more advanced weapons, including M1A2 Abrams battle tanks and F-16 fighter planes.

But the US is holding back both for security reasons.

According to the State Department, more than 40 US allies, have provided economic aid, political support or weapons to Ukraine in its hard-fought battle with Russia, one of the world’s major nuclear powers.

Norman Solomon, Executive Director of the Washington-based Institute for Public Accuracy (IPA) told IPS while the

Russian government is entirely responsible for its horrendous decisions to invade Ukraine and to persist with warfare there, the United States has refused to engage in actual diplomacy to avert the war or to seek a workable end to it.

The vast ongoing shipments of arms from the U.S. to Ukraine are of such a huge magnitude that they signify many billions of dollars in profits for U.S.-based weapons makers, he pointed out.

And those shipments of weapons represent eagerness in Washington to escalate the conflagration rather than seek ways to reduce and end it, said Solomon, author of “War Made Easy: How Presidents and Pundits Keep Spinning Us to Death”.

“The tremendous quantity of weaponry flowing from the USA to Ukraine can be understood as an extension of the U.S.-led NATO approach to Russia since the fall of the Soviet Union – encirclement and confrontation with Russia instead of trying to find genuine geopolitical solutions for Eu-

rope as a whole.”

The U.S. withdrawals from the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty in 2002 and from the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty in 2019, he argued, were reckless steps for conflict between the world’s two nuclear superpowers that could end in global annihilation.

Now, the United States is proceeding to maximize the profits of its military-industrial complex while boosting the likelihood that the war in Ukraine will keep getting worse. The vows of victory in Ukraine, he noted, are fervent expressions of madness in Washington and in Moscow.

“Rather than pursue avenues for diplomacy that could bring the terrible suffering in Ukraine to an end, the U.S. government policy is to further enrich U.S. military contractors and escalate even further a war that is already a catastrophic reality,” he declared.

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken told reporters last month the United States will continue to work closely with more than 40 allies and part-

ners in support of the people of Ukraine as they defend their freedom and independence with extraordinary courage and boundless determination.

“We will continue to support Ukraine for as long as it takes, so it can continue to defend itself and be in the strongest possible position at the negotiating table when the time comes,” he declared.

In a “Fact Sheet” released last July, the State Department provided a partial breakdown of US arms to Ukraine, which includes:

- Over 1,400 Stinger anti-aircraft systems; more than 6,500 Javelin anti-armor systems.
- Over 20,000 other anti-armor systems.
- Over 700 Switchblade Tactical Unmanned Aerial Systems.
- 126 155mm Howitzers and up to 411,000 155mm artillery rounds.
- 72,000 105mm artillery rounds.
- 126 Tactical Vehicles to tow 155mm Howitzers.
- 22 Tactical Vehicles to recover equipment.
- 16 High Mobility Artillery

Rocket Systems and ammunition.

Four Command Post vehicles.

-Two National Advanced Surface-to-Air Missile Systems (NASAMS).

-20 Mi-17 helicopters.

-Counter-battery systems.

-Hundreds of Armored High Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicles.

-200 M113 Armored Personnel Carriers.

-Over 10,000 grenade launchers and small arms.

-Over 59,000,000 rounds of small arms ammunition.

-75,000 sets of body armor and helmets.

-Approximately 700 Phoenix Ghost Tactical Unmanned Aerial Systems.

Laser-guided rocket systems – and more.

The United States also continues to work with its allies and partners to provide Ukraine with additional capabilities to defend itself.

According to the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), the Russian Federation’s military and paramilitary services are equipped mostly with domestically-produced weapons systems, although since 2010, Russia has imported limited amounts of military hardware from several countries, including Czechia, France, Israel, Italy, Turkey, and Ukraine.

The Russian defense industry is also capable of designing, developing, and producing a full range of advanced air, land, missile, and naval systems. As of 2021, Russia is the world’s second largest exporter of military hardware.

The Russian armed forces include approximately 850,000 total active-duty troops (300,000 Ground Troops; 40,000 Airborne Troops; 150,000 Navy; 160,000 Aerospace Forces; 70,000 Strategic Rocket Forces; approximately 20,000 special operations forces; approximately 100,000 other uniformed personnel (command and control, cyber, support, logistics, security, etc.); estimated 200-250,000 Federal National Guard Troops.

(IPS UN Bureau Report)

Money laundering and corruption risks in Latin America

By Lakshmi Kumar

OVER the last decades, the private investment fund sector has grown into a multi trillion-dollar industry. Private investment funds are vulnerable to money laundering because they contain a variety of structural risk factors that help camouflage illicit behavior.

A 2020 leaked bulletin from the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) found that criminals were using “private placement funds including investments offered by private equity firms and hedge funds, to circumvent the anti-money laundering (AML) programs of other financial institutions and launder money.”

The new Global Financial Integrity (GFI) report Private Investment Funds in Latin America: Money Laundering & Corruption Risks examines the money laundering risk factors associated with these private investment funds in Latin America.

It analyzes the ring of actors and facilitators involved, the methods of contact used by perpetrators and the channels utilized to move illicit money. The report provides a series of case studies and analyzes AML regulation of private investment funds in four countries; Brazil, Mexico, Chile and Argentina.

“Despite the scale of wealth under management, ‘family offices’ have little to no regulatory oversight in most parts of the world.”



Data collected by Transparency International looks at bribery, the diversion of public funds, officials using their office for private gain, conflicts of interest and legal protections for those denouncing corruption. Credit: UN News/Daniel Dickinson



The report provides a series of case studies and analyzes AML regulation of private investment funds in four countries; Brazil, Mexico, Chile and Argentina.

noted Tom Cardamone, President and CEO at GFI. “This is especially concerning given the close nexus between wealth and corruption in many parts of the world. The unregulated nature of these funds makes them a particularly useful vehicle to mask proceeds of corruption or money laundering.”

Additionally, Private Investment Funds in Latin America uses a series of case studies to highlight how money laundering,

corruption and organized crime risks exist in private investment funds in Latin America.

The risk factors include a customer base often composed of wealthy individuals, including politically-exposed persons; a close relationship between fund managers and their clients (i.e. investors); the use of shell companies and trusts to manage investments; outsourcing operations and risk management; weak transparency around source of

wealth and source of funds; and investment structures which may include multiple accounts in different jurisdictions, including secrecy and tax havens, with funds moving through a concentration account.

GFI in this report offers the following key recommendations:

- The Brazilian government, which has the largest assets under management in the region,

should be the first to adopt AML regulations that will address future risks when they arise. As well as regulators pay closer attention to family office architecture and undertake a risk assessment of the sector

- Latin American authorities should look to regulate intermediaries and enabler professions for AML/CFT due diligence as they are critical in allowing illicit money to move through the financial system within the region but also to be invested in private investment funds overseas.

- The United States, Switzerland, the Cayman Islands, Malta, and other countries within the EU should conduct a robust money laundering risk assessment of their private investment fund sectors.

- Latin American law enforcement authorities involved in corruption, drug trafficking, and organized crime investigations should be provided training on the complexities of private investment funds and the manner in which they can be used to hide illicit assets.

Global Financial Integrity is a Washington, D.C.-based think tank, producing high-caliber analyses of illicit financial flows, advising developing country governments on effective policy solutions and promoting pragmatic transparency measures in the financial system to promote global development and security.

(IPS UN Bureau)

'Let us fix where we went wrong on environmental conservation'

By Felician Kilahama

IN the previous article, I explained the reality the matter in the context that natural forests are not adequately managed. When the 'Forest Guards' were removed almost 40 years ago, the destruction of forests/woodlands started immediately.

The challenges emerged firstly, the capacity of the Forest Division to manage the forests declined. Secondly, equipment like vehicles and/or gadgets to survey and map forests could not meet the needs and thirdly, the budget provided was so little that it was difficult to attend natural forests throughout the country. Therefore, the ability and strength to manage and take care of forests became a big challenge. When the Tanzania Forest Serves Agency (TFS) was launched more than ten years ago; the expectation was budget will increase and forestry staff will have better opportunities to manage and protect natural forests from being damaged by human activities.

Thereafter, TFS's budget increased from 25bn/- to 55bn/-. Basically, the profession requires foresters to manage natural forests sustainably and concentrating on securing ecological services for the good of all. Perhaps there are those who may wonder what ecological services mean? In short, when you see such droughts and the water in the streams and rivers like Ruvu, Ruaha Mkuu dry up, is a situation that indicates ecological services that enable rainwater to be stored underneath the forests and finally enabling streams and rivers to possess water; is an indication that its main source: existence of sufficient and healthy vegetation cover have been largely destroyed. Furthermore, the forestry profession requires foresters to manage forests to sustain ecological services however; income should come from well-managed forest resources. Thus, foresters cannot justify destruction of forests in the context of revenue collection.

Expanding tree plantations are an important issue, collecting revenues from where it should be collected is also commendable. When the Forest Services Agency (even the name refers to services (ecological) started operating may be somewhere things went wrong. I agree with President Samia Suluhu Hassan that the great destruction of natural forests/woodlands is outcome of past mistakes including personal attitudes. Not denying the Agency to collect revenues, but the issue is where does the money come from?

Revenues should be the outcome of professionally well-managed and properly maintained forests. Again, professional advice is important hence decision and policy makers should, as much as possible, listen to professionals. For example, existence of district committees to allocate permits to those who request to harvest, is an outcome of politically inserted forestry procedure but unprofessional. Foresters and other actors should work diligently and manage the forests in-situ and not ex-situ. We must practice forestry procedures that ensure harvesters will not destroy the natural base for ecological services by cutting trees irresponsibly. In principle, any tree harvested should be in line with the forest management and harvesting plans. If no trees to harvest that's it; manage forests for ecological products including water supply, soil conservation, carbon sequestration and counting on oxygen supply again, without forgetting habitats to the biodiversity for tourism.

The Conservator for a particular forest such as the Mlele Hill Forest Reserve in the Katavi Region; he and his colleagues must be present where the forest is located in order to manage the same properly. Any interested tree-harvester, should go to the Conservator's Office and be served accordingly. The natural endowments—forests and water are vanishing at alarmingly high speed. On the other hand, the main goal of instituting TFS was/is to prevent natural forests from being destroyed due to lack of effective management practices. Pretty sure that the private sector can very-well do with the forest plantations without too much frustrations if the government puts enabling policies/legal instruments in place for vigorous participation while Government continuing with the supervision and regulatory roles including revenue collection.

With such personal viewpoint of seeing forest resources as main sources of money, the forests are at high risk and the situation is likely to get worse unless we immediately fix such erroneous perceptions. In the context that this dilemma persists for the next 20 or more years what will the environmental conditions dictate to us?

Dr Felician Kilahama, is the former Director of Forestry and Beekeeping



20m children at risk of disease, thirst, starvation in Horn of Africa - UNICEF

By Madhumita Paul

THE number of children suffering terrible drought conditions across Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia has more than doubled in five months, according to a UNICEF's report.

Approximately 20.2 million children were threatened with severe hunger, thirst and disease in December, compared to 10 million in July. This surge is due to climate change, conflict, global inflation and grain shortage.

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

In the Horn of Africa, nearly 70 per cent of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) region comprise arid and semi-arid lands prone to recurrent droughts. The east African region stretches from Eritrea in the north, through Ethiopia and Djibouti to the southern tips of Kenya and Somalia.

The region is experiencing its worst drought in more than 40 years. In the past 10 years, the Horn of Africa has endured three severe droughts (2010-2011, 2016-2017 and 2020-2021).

At least 36.1 million people in the region have now been affected by one of the most severe and longest droughts in recent history that are expected to continue well into 2023.

This includes 24.1 million people in Ethiopia, 7.8 million in Somalia and 4.35 million in Kenya. Many are at risk of starvation and millions face severe levels of hunger.

Lieke van de Wiel, UNICEF



It is estimated that approximately two million children in Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia require urgent treatment for severe acute malnutrition, the deadliest form of hunger.

deputy regional director for eastern and southern Africa, said: "While collective and accelerated efforts have mitigated some of the worst impacts of what had been feared, children in the Horn of Africa are still facing the most severe drought in more than two generations."

It is estimated that approximately two million children in Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia require urgent treatment for severe acute malnutrition, the deadliest form of hunger.

Approximately 2.7 million children are out of school due to drought and an additional four million are at risk of dropping out, according to UNICEF.

More than two million people are internally displaced due to drought. Water insecurity has increased by more than twice, with close to 24 million people facing terrible water shortages.

As families are driven to the edge of dealing with increasing stress,

children face several risks, including child labour, child marriage and female genital mutilation.

Gender-based violence, including sexual violence, exploitation and abuse, is also increasing due to widespread food insecurity and displacement.

"We urge the international community to commit to responding now for what might hit the Horn of Africa next year and in the years to come," van de Wiel appealed.

UNICEF's 2023 emergency appeal of \$759 million to support children and their families will require timely and flexible funding, especially surrounding education, water and sanitation and child protection – all of which were severely underfunded this year.

An additional \$690 million is required to support long-term investments for children and their families to recover and adapt to climate change.

S.African journalist (90) delivers news in the desert

CALVINIA, South Africa

ARMED with a flask of coffee, some boiled eggs and a towel to shield his bare legs from the scorching sun, 90-year-old Frans Hugo sets off every Thursday to deliver newspapers in the South African desert.

Week in, week out, the elderly editor has made the 1,200-kilometre (750-mile) round trip across the semi-arid Karoo region in the country's south. He has been doing it for some four decades.

Born Charl Francois Hugo in Cape Town in 1932 -- but known to everyone simply as Frans -- he is arguably the last bastion of a dying business.

Driving an orange Fiat Multipla stacked with copies of the eight-page weeklies and with an old portable radio to keep him company, Hugo brings news to towns and villages dotting this vast, parched back-country.

He leaves at 1:30 am from Calvinia, a small town of less than 3,000 souls about 500 kilometres north of Africa's southernmost tip, and comes back in the early evening.

"I am like a pompadonkie," he told AFP on a recent tour, using the local moniker for the nodding donkey pumps used to extract groundwater from boreholes.

"I keep doing this every Thursday without fail. I will probably stop when I am physically not capable of doing it anymore."

Hugo worked as a journalist in Cape Town and then in Namibia for almost 30 years before retiring to this remote region.

"I couldn't handle the pressure anymore, so I moved to the Karoo," he said. "Just as I was able to take a breath and relax, the man who owned the printers and the newspaper here in Calvinia came to ask me if I was interested in the business."

His daughter and her husband got involved but tired and quit after a few months. "I've been sitting with this thing ever since," he quipped.

Helped by his wife and three assistants,



The newspapers have survived the onslaught of the internet, although readership is down

he has kept alive some historic small-town titles at a time where many printed newspapers around the world are struggling to survive the digital age.

The Messenger, previously known as the Victoria West Messenger, was founded in 1875, while Die Noordwester and Die Oewernuus started printing in the 1900s.

All three are written in Afrikaans, a language descended from Dutch settlers and one of South Africa's 11 official tongues, but sometimes carry stories in English.

Hugo scoffs at people wanting "to read the news on their cellphones."

The rise of internet has hit

readership but is seemingly yet to reach his newsroom, which looks like a museum.

The office is adorned by an old Heidelberg printing press and paper cutting machines. Staff use computers and software from the early 90s. Still, Hugo's team prints about 1,300 copies a week, something he says shows an undying appetite for community news.

The papers sell for eight rand (about 50 US cents) and are dropped off at shops, convenience stores and the correspondents' homes.

The readers are mainly farmers,

living in a remote, semi-arid landscape.

Writing in Afrikaans, which actor Charlize Theron recently controversially said was still spoken only by "about 44 people", keeps the language alive and ties together small communities separated by hundreds of kilometres (miles) of desert, said Hugo.

As long as he's around and has the required strength, they will receive their paper every Thursday.

What will happen later does not concern him, he said.

"I don't have a clue what will happen... in five years or 10 years," he said. "I am not worried."

Another uphill year is brewing for South African Parliament that dropped the ball

By Marianne Merten

MEMBERS of Parliament must improve their performance after a year in which they dropped the legislative ball while politicians went toe to toe.

If mixed metaphors annoy, well, 2022 was just that kind of a year. And the trouble with 2023 will be that much attention, focus and effort will be away from the parliamentary benches as the 2024 electioneering campaigns are set to kick off across political circles.

The first signals of that could come as early as 9 February when the presidential State of the Nation Address opens South Africa's political calendar - for the second year from somewhere other than Parliament.

The fire-devastated National Assembly building and other sections remain unrepaired and crumbling since the 2 January 2022 blaze - and unloved if the weeds between the cobblestone and rubbish blown into ragged greenery is anything to go by.

Sometime early in 2023 repair work will go on tender after Finance Minister Enoch Godongwana was persuaded to loosen the purse strings for the roughly R2-billion it will cost. The DA is headed to court if Parliament doesn't secure alternative venues to resume proper physical meetings.

Covid-19 lockdown restrictions ended yonks ago. And yes, a dozen or so committee rooms are scattered in unaffected buildings on the precinct; traditionally, outside venues have also been hired.

Most recently, Parliament's spending watchdog, the Standing Committee on Public Accounts, has resumed fully physical sittings. The Section 194 inquiry into the removal from office of suspended Public Protector Busisiwe Mkhwebane has also sat in person, with online links provided.

That impeachment inquiry has delivered acerbic exchanges, gobsmacking whistle-blower testimony and tedious politicking. But it suspended itself before schedule because of witnesses' unavailability in a programme that has run well past its targeted September 2022 finalisation date. It will resume in early 2023, running down the clock on her non-renewable seven-year term that ends in October 2023.

The other impeachment inquiry - against President Cyril Ramaphosa over his Phala farm forex saga - did not move beyond possibility as ANC



Parliament in Cape Town burns on 3 January 2022. The damage has not been repaired, although money has been made available, and much of MPs' work continues to be done in virtual settings. (Photo: ER Lombard / Gallo Images)

MPs used their numbers to nix it. Five rebels, including Cooperative Governance Minister Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma, broke ranks publicly and several more, such as Tourism Minister Lindiwe Sisulu and ex-health minister Zweli Mkhize, were simply absent.

Their disciplinary fate for bucking the party line will lie with the ANC post-elective conference some time in 2023.

Though opposition parties sharply criticised the governing ANC for yet again putting party before state, that vote cleared one cloud over Ramaphosa with three days to go before the party's elective conference.

Set on resigning, he was persuaded otherwise by Cabinet ministers Gwede Mantashe, who is also ANC national chairperson, Mondli Gungubele, Godongwana, Pravin Gordan and Eastern Cape Premier Oscar Mabuyane, as well as some others.

Old-school ANC tactics of drawing into the laager and stalling paid off even in the ANC National Executive Committee (NEC) and ultimately meant the NEC told its employees to Parliament to vote against the Section

89 independent panel recommendation and make it go away.

It was that party marching order über alles approach that the Zondo Commission identified as a contributor to Parliament's lack of speedy and decisive action on the emergence of claims of State Capture and the twisting of public institutions such as Eskom and Transnet for the private benefit of a few, such as the Gupta brothers, their business associates and selected, politically connected members of South Africa's political elite.

"If it [Parliament] wants to be taken seriously by the executive and to be treated with respect, it must make it clear to the executive who calls the shots in Parliament," said the report's section on Parliament, recommending opposition MPs as committee chairpersons, a presidential oversight committee and more.

Now the entire six-volume report is before Parliament's rules committee, which must decide what to do. That has included issuing a report that opposition parties had to show gaps in how other parliamentary committees do oversight on matters falling under

the Presidency before establishing a separate one for the head of state.

But that's for 2023. Like the Electoral Amendment Bill for which the Constitutional Court had to give not one extension but two, until 31 January 2023.

This really wasn't in the interest of justice, according to the court the first time round when it found "more should have been done" by Parliament to ensure meeting the June 2022 deadline to amend the law so that independents could also contest in provincial and national elections.

"The minister did not, in fact, take all reasonable measures to give effect to the order. Parliament awaited the minister's introduction of the Bill," the court said in granting the first extension. "When it was so long delayed, Parliament should have taken steps to introduce a bill, without reliance on the minister. This it failed to do."

This electoral amendment law is steeped in politics. The pundits tout the possibility of the ANC's plummeting below 50% in the 2024 poll, but there is also a broad civil society push for greater accountability by introducing directly elected constituency MPs.

Well, the proposed answer of the National Council of Province (NCOP) to civil society's call for broader electoral reform - a panel to look into matters - had to go back to the National Assembly, which, unusually, decided that MPs needed to hold further public hearings. And that meant Parliament had run out of time. Again.

Although the NCOP acted on this electoral amendment legislation and all necessary Budget-related laws, the Expropriation Bill's passage stalled and must resume in this second House in 2023.

Not out of time was the national legislature on the two laws the government wanted passed by the end of 2022 to prevent greylisting by the global anti-money-laundering and anti-terrorism-financing body, the Financial Action Task Force (FATF).

It was a rush, and some MPs grumbled about the pressure ministers put them under after sitting on their draft laws for months and months.

Taking three and five months, respectively, the General Laws (Anti-Money Laundering and Combating of Terrorism Financing) Amendment Bill and the Protection of Constitutional Democracy against Terrorist and Related Activities Amendment Bill were done and dusted.

Though civil society intervention ensured a stop to the mandatory registration of non-governmental organisations to be more in line with the more nuanced, risk-based FATF recommendations, concerns remain, particularly about the anti-terror law. Fudgy remains government action on central issues the FATF had raised, including a lack of dedicated money-laundering prosecutions, the missing Hawks investigative and auditing specialists, and ameliorating South Africa's risk as a regional financial hub with major cross-border cash movements.

But Parliament has done its bit for the government's plan to stave off greylisting in early 2023. Ramaphosa must now sign the laws into effect by the government's self-set 31 December 2022 deadline.

Perhaps then it will be full force for Parliament to finish outstanding matters, from the Section 194 public protector impeachment inquiry to the Electoral Amendment Bill. But, crucially, also the qualitative changes, including the State Capture commission recommendations, to ratchet up meaningful oversight in pursuit of constitutional values of accountability, responsiveness and transparency. 2023 is loading. **DM**

Africa's maternal deaths call for urgent action to meet SDGoals

By Francis Kokutse

AS the effects of COVID-19 on Africa's health sector become clearer, it looks the continent will need to take urgent steps to overcome the disruptions suffered in the breakdown in antenatal and postnatal care for women and newborns and neonatal intensive care units. The pandemic brought some setbacks to the gains achieved in maternal mortality over the past decade.

Consequently, the continent needs to race against time to improve its health sector to meet the Sustainable Development Goals against the backdrop of a new report, the Atlas of Health Statistics 2022, which called for increased investment to avert the growing number in maternal mortality across the continent.

The report said that inadequate investment in health and funding for programmes were some of the major drawbacks to meeting the SDG in the sector.

"For example, a 2022 WHO survey of 47 African countries found that the region has a ratio of 1.55 health workers (physicians, nurses, and midwives) per 1000 people, below the WHO threshold density of 4.45 health workers per 1000 people needed to deliver essential health services and achieve universal health cov-

erage."

It noted that 65% of births in Africa are attended by skilled health personnel - the lowest globally and far off the 2030 target of 90%, adding that "skilled birth attendants are crucial for the well-being of women and newborns. Neonatal deaths account for half of all under-5 mortality. Accelerating the agenda to meet its reduction goal will be a major step toward reducing the under-5 mortality rate to fewer than 25 deaths per 1000 live births."

The Ghanaian authorities might have taken note of the trend last year and launched a national campaign to avert all preventable deaths related to pregnancy dubbed "Zero Tolerance for Maternal Deaths."

Director of the Ghana Health Service (GHS), Dr Patrick Aboagye, said the campaign was to remove all barriers and unfair treatments that increased the vulnerability of pregnant women and girls to maternal mortality and also push those with unintended pregnancies to indulge in unsafe abortions and other risky action.

Aboagye said the campaign was critical to accelerating the decline of maternal mortality from 308 out of every 1,000 live births to 70 by 2030, in line with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). "The slow decline in

maternal mortality in Ghana is of great concern to the Ministry of Health, the GHS, and its partners."

Reacting to the Atlas report, WHO Regional Director for Africa, said Dr Matshidiso Moeti, said: "This means that for many African women, childbirth remains a persistent risk and millions of children do not live long enough to celebrate their fifth birthday."

She asked governments to take note.

"It is crucial that governments make a radical course correction, surmount the challenges, and speed up the pace towards the health goals. These goals aren't mere milestones, but the very foundations of a healthier life and well-being for millions of people."

The report estimated that, in sub-Saharan Africa, 390 women will die in childbirth for every 100 000 live births by 2030. This is more than five times above the 2030 SDG target of fewer than 70 maternal deaths per 100 000 live births and much higher than the average of 13 deaths per 100 000 live births witnessed in Europe in 2017.

"It is more than double the global average of 21. To reach the SDG target, Africa will need an 86% reduction from 2017 rates, the last time data was reported, an unrealistic feat at the current rate of de-



Africa needs to urgently invest in health programmes to reduce maternal deaths, which is more than five times above the 2030 SDG target of fewer than 70 maternal deaths per 100 000 live births. Measures include ensuring women access to skilled birth attendants. Credit: Ernest Ankomah/IPS

cline," the report said.

The region's infant mortality rate is 72 per 1000 live births. At the current 3.1% annual rate of decline, there will be an expected 54 deaths per 1000 live births by 2030, far above the reduction target of fewer than 25 per 1000.

The report assessed nine targets related to the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) on health and found that at the current pace, increased investment is needed to accelerate progress on the targets. Among the most difficult to achieve will be reducing maternal mortality.

Physician and chief executive officer of Medway Health, Dr Omotuyi Mebawondu, has expressed concern that despite the world-

wide reduction in maternal mortality rate, sub-Saharan Africa still accounts for two third of an average of 800 daily deaths of women from pregnancy and its complications.

Mebawondu said one of the key interventions is to ensure that pregnant women have access to antenatal care principally to identify danger signals early and enjoy delivery with the assistance of skilled birth attendants.

Accordingly, he has suggested that another way of reducing maternal mortality is to look into the use of technology. "The challenge of human resources for health in sub-Saharan Africa imposes a great responsibility on policymakers to explore technology in delivering health interventions to hard-to-

reach populations.

Mebawondu said this must be preceded by adequate internet penetration and access, especially in rural areas, as such technology will help update and upgrade the health workers' skills and educate the women on the challenges of pregnancy.

"A database of all pregnant women in poor rural localities must be collated and followed up through such technology. In addition, technology can be used to enhance emergency response to common causes of maternal deaths like bleeding, sepsis, and eclampsia. It can also be used to deliver most needed family planning services," he said.

(IPS UN Bureau Report)

BUSINESS

African aquaculture leaders join forces to build feed mill

By Special Correspondent

MAXIM Agri Holding, Victory Farms and Gatsby Africa have announced plans to break ground on the SamakGro aquafeed mill.

According to a news release, the feed mill facility will be managed by Netherlands-based Maxim Agri and will produce high quality and affordable aquafeeds to meet the demand from East Africa's growing aquaculture industry. The company has extensive experience in emerging markets through its operations in Pakistan and Sri Lanka, with its Kenya operations launched in November 2017. Maxim Agri will focus on producing customised feed to help small land commercial farmers maximise their performance.

Obaidur Rehman, general manager of SamakGro Limited Kenya, said, "we are excited about the strategic advantages and opportunities for the aquaculture industry that this joint venture will create through localising feed production and making available a product of verifiable, consistent quality that aquaculture practitioners and entrepreneurs can rely on."

Construction of the SamakGro mill is ongoing in Naivasha, Kenya, with feed production expected to begin in 2023. The news release projects that multiple jobs will be created and that livelihoods will be positively affected when the mill comes online.

In addition to being geared for

aquaculture nutrition and feed production, the mill plans to invest in local ingredient trials and development, testing for the right mix of nutritional elements from Kenya-produced ingredients. The project also hopes to keep sustainability at its core by relying on sustainable sources of energy. SamakGro's main facility will operate on a mix of solar and geothermal power.

We are excited about the strategic advantages and opportunities for the aquaculture industry that this joint venture will create.

OBAID UR REHMAN, GENERAL MANAGER OF SAMAKGRO LIMITED KENYA

Caesar Asiyo, Victory Farms chief development officer, is confident that once it is operating at full capacity, the SamakGro feed mill will play an instrumental role in alleviating the perennial shortage of affordable quality aqua feeds in the country and become a major contributor to level the field for the growth of a robust and competitive aquaculture industry.

The joint venture will contribute directly to the Manufacturing pillar of President Uhuru Kenyatta's Big Four Agenda and will play a critical role in economic development through creation of employment opportunities. Once operational, the mill will provide foundational support for food and nutritional security through its direct linkage to the aquaculture industry.



Building the mill will reduce reliance on imported feeds

SMEs are Saudi Arabia's driving force for its economic growth

By Nirmal Narayanan, Riyadh

SMALL and medium-sized enterprises are a force to reckon with in Saudi Arabia as the Kingdom, in line with the goals outlined in Vision 2030, continues to diversify its economy which has been dependent on oil for several decades.

Even when COVID-19 disrupted global economies, SMEs in Saudi Arabia remained steadfast in their growth under the visionary leadership of King Salman and Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman.

In 2022, when the world started rebounding from the fallout of the pandemic, the support offered by the government to SMEs in Saudi Arabia was instrumental in helping them get back on their feet.

With new regulations, reforms and financial support aimed to create an accommodative environment, the government is transforming the SME sector into an engine for economic growth in the Kingdom.

Saudi Arabia's Small and Medium Enterprises General Authority, also known as Monsha'at, is fueling the growth of the SME sector in the Kingdom.

The state-run authority offers entrepreneurial platforms such as business incubators, business accelerators, and co-working spaces for SMEs to evolve and thrive in the market. The authority also facilitates government-fee refund, direct and

indirect lending programs for SMEs and fast-growing unicorns.

Through these initiatives, Monsha'at aims to successfully achieve the targets outlined in Vision 2030 which include lowering the unemployment rate from 11.6 percent to 7 percent, increasing women's participation in the workforce from 22 percent to 30 percent, and expanding SME contribution to 35 percent of gross domestic product by the end of this decade.

The growth of SMEs in 2022 was monumental, as the number of registered SMEs in Saudi Arabia hit 892,063 at the end of June, registering a 25.6 percent increase from the fourth quarter of 2021.

In its report titled SME Monitor, Monsha'at said that Riyadh and Makkah were the most attractive regions for startups, accounting for 35.4 percent and 21 percent of the Kingdom's SMEs respectively in the first half of 2022.

The report also revealed that Saudi Arabia has successfully narrowed the gender gap in the Kingdom, as 45 percent of SMEs are now headed by women.

According to the report, regulatory reforms over the first half of 2022 have played a crucial role in increasing the number of female entrepreneurs in the country, with most of them leading firms in the food, wholesale and retail, health and professional sectors and supporting service industries.



According to the market report, the value of combined bonds and equities markets in Tanzania as of Monday this week was nearly 32trn/-, with government bonds worth 16.9trn/ and equity market 15.6trn/-.

Analysts expect strong capital markets in 2023

By Mnaku Mbani

CAPITAL analysts say they expect the Tanzania's capital market to remain strong during this year, despite of the global economic challenges projected by the international financial institution.

Speaking on the outlook of the market for this year, capital markets analyst Ramadhani Kangwadi despite of the global economic concerns projected by International Monetary Fund (IMF) recently, Tanzania capital market will remain strong in 2023.

"We expect our capital markets to perform better this year, as we witnessed during last year, despite of the global economic destructions," he said yesterday.

He said the regulatory reform including the newly adopted foreign exchange regulations are expected to stimulate the market further, especially in attracting foreign investors.

"The foreign exchange regulations are expected to operate smoothly this year, which will trigger the participation of foreign investors on our capital markets," he said.

Kangwadi said the economic diplomacy implemented by the government has also created favourable investment climate,

which will therefore boost further growth of the Tanzanian market, especially the capital markets this year and looking forward.

He also said introduction of different capital markets products including bonds, which all were oversubscribed during last year, are also showing clear indications of strong market performance in future.

"Good performances of last year's bonds market paint a good picture for the future of our capital markets," he said.

Imani Muhingo, head of research and financial analytics at Alpha Capital said they expect the increase of turnover and increase in share prices in 2023, due to good performances of listed companies, mainly banking sector.

But, he expects reduced foreign investor participation on capital markets, particularly the DSE, due to projected global economic recession by mid this year.

"Following the recent projections by International Monetary Fund (IMF) which may lead into a recession by mid this year, some foreign investors are expected to move their funds in smaller markets to large market such as US for investing in fixed incomes," he said.

However, Muhingo noted that despite of projected global

economic challenges, the local economy is expected to remain strong, as oil prices are continuing to remain stable.

Muhingo believes that an ongoing improvement of financial literacy among Tanzanians will absorb the gaps of foreign investors exit in equities market.

"There has been an increasing participation of local investors in equities and bonds markets, including pension funds and retail investors, which are expected to absorb the gap of foreigners exit," he said in an interview with The Guardian yesterday.

Muhingo also says he expects an improved both primary and secondary activities on bonds markets.

According to the market report, the value of combined bonds and equities markets in Tanzania as of Monday this week was nearly 32trn/- of which government bonds are valued 16.9trn/ and equity market is valued 15.6trn/-.

Meanwhile, the Dar es Salaam Stock Exchange (DSE) share indices closed positive during the opening of the year following the appreciation of NMB Bank Plc share price, amid decrease of CRDB Bank Plc share price.

The market report shows Tanzania Share Index (TSI) closed 0.31 points up to 3,889.12 points on Monday this week from 3,888.81 points recorded during

the closing day of last year.

According to the report, DSE All Shares Index closed 0.10 points up to 1,882.09 points on Monday this week from 1,881.99 points recorded on Friday last year.

The increase of share indices was due to increase of NMB Bank Plc share price by 2.65 percent to 3,100 on this year opening from 3,020 recorded during the closing trading session of last year, pushing its market capitalization to 1,550bn/- from 1,510bn/- respectively.

According to the report, a total turnover of 1.4bn/- was recorded during the year opening through the transaction of 3.52 million shares traded in 144 deals.

Top mover during the day was CRDB Bank Plc which transacted 3.4 million shares valued 1.329bn/- transacted in 125 deals at a price ranging between 380/- and 400/- per share.

However, CRDB share price closed 3.80 percent down to 380/- on Monday this week from 395/- recorded on Friday last week, decreasing its market capitalization to 992.5bn/- from 1,037bn/- respectively.

Second top mover was NMB Bank Plc which transacted 25,765 shares valued 79.875mn/- transacted in three deals at a price ranging between 3,100/- and 3,140/- per share.

KCB finally buys DR Congo bank

By Special Correspondent

KCB Group Plc has announced the acquisition of Trust Merchant Bank SA (TMB) after receiving all the regulatory approvals.

The group now owns an 85 per cent stake in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) based lender. KCB Group obtained the regulatory green light in Kenya, the Democratic Republic of Congo and COMESA Competition Commission.

In a statement, KCB Group CEO Paul Russo said the transaction will positively contribute towards KCB's increased scale of operations by establishing its presence in new markets and providing income diversification from a geographical perspective.

Further, the transac-



tion will enable KCB to accelerate its market presence in the DRC in the near term by leveraging on TMB's 18-year operational history, vast branch network, valuable local customer re-

lationships and deep knowledge of local business dynamics.

In addition to the core banking business of TMB, the existence of an insurance subsidiary Afrissur SA will provide

an opportunity for KCB to diversify its offerings in DRC's insurance sector. This transaction will provide KCB a strategic foundation to capitalize on cross-border trade from the Indian to the

Atlantic Ocean.

Through KCB's expertise and experience, the statement noted, this presents a good opportunity for KCB to provide to the existing customers of TMB and new customers to be acquired as a result of the transaction, enhanced banking products that is expected to grow and embed KCB's brand in the DRC market and beyond.

"We have found a partner with a proven and trusted history of serving and supporting customers, businesses, and communities. Combining our common legacies and our complementary footprints will strengthen our ability to serve our communities and regional customers and provide solutions that make a difference in people's lives," said Russo.

Increasing population, demand for food in Africa need urgent attention - experts

By Tony Malesi

CLIMATE change is the most high-lighted megatrend affecting the food systems of Africa. Environmental, demographic, economic and social factors like population growth and increasing food demand, however, also play a significant role in impacting the transformation of the systems, according to food security analysts and experts.

In its annual report on the state of agriculture and food security across the continent, 2022 Africa Agriculture Status Report, Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA) highlighted six megatrends and areas of priority for action. AGRA is funded by Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and the Rockefeller Foundation and is headquartered in Nairobi, Kenya.

The food systems of the continent are in a precarious state of recovery and transformation following a relatively long period of disarray and disruption, the analysis found.

This disruption, the report showed, is a result of the devastating effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, emerging pests and diseases, extreme weather events, food price inflation and the war in Ukraine.

African governments and development partners should anticipate and proactively respond to six major environmental, demographic, economic and social megatrends, the report said.

Africa continues to experience high rates of population growth. The continent's rural population is projected to rise by an average of 53 per cent, which implies continued growth in demand for agricultural land and general land

degradation.

"Moreover, a growing class of middle- and high-income urban-based Africans with an interest in commercialised farming has further intensified the demand for agricultural land. These forces have combined to create conditions of land scarcity," read the report.

Africa's urban populations are rising rapidly – even faster than rural areas. The report warned that "the combination of high population growth and rising incomes is creating explosive growth in food demand".

The report urged governments to build capacity to expand the range of crops and animal products they produce to include high-value fruits and vegetables, among others.

Economic development, especially increasing wages and incomes, will create challenges and opportunities for the continent's food systems.

Africa's growing middle class will lead to a rapid shift in the labour force from farming to non-farm jobs, which may encourage the move to labour-saving farm technologies and practices, according to experts at AGRA.

The experts said rising wages might also trigger diet changes, leading to increased demand for meat, fish, processed foods, cooking oil and foods prepared away from home.

The report acknowledges that climate change is the single most systemic global environmental problem that affects all regions and socioeconomic divides. Africa will continue experiencing a heightened frequency and intensity of extreme rainfall events, including droughts, heavy rains and floods, said the analysis.

"Such events com-

bined with chronically low public expenditure on agricultural research, development and extension will slow the pace of farm technical innovation and agricultural productivity growth on the continent," it said.

The high incidence of acute food insecurity and malnutrition in numerous African countries starkly exposes the fragility of regional food systems.

The increased frequency and severity of weather extremes, ongoing impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, increasing conflict and insecurity and rising global food prices have not improved things.

While the rate of technical innovation across the agri-food value chain is lower in Africa compared to global trends, the continent is experiencing leapfrogging in digital agriculture.

"In most African countries, the rapid adoption of mobile phones and internet connectivity have accelerated the deployment of agricultural services for farmers and other value chain actors. This has resulted in enhanced access to information, knowledge, financial services, markets and farm tools," noted the report.

Governments must go beyond the AGRA report, according to Okwako Mpalale, an expert and researcher at Kenya Agricultural Research Institute (KARI).

Mpalale urged African governments and development partners to be deliberate in boosting food security, including implementing effective policies and fully funding agriculture.

"The biggest area of concern remains climate change. Authorities must realise that rain-fed agriculture is no longer tenable and embrace and prioritise irrigation, especially among small-holder farmers," said



Policymakers must develop more resilient and sustainable food systems, including efficient production and diversity of inputs adapted to the evolution of local agroclimatic conditions, say experts.

Mpalale.

Sustainable food systems need to be set up and small-holder farmers need to be empowered to increase productivity and use innovative technology.

"By embracing research and technology and increasing funding to such subsectors, we will have an easy time producing more food with reduced costs, especially if governments enlist the services of agricultural extension officers to work hand in hand with farmers," said Mpalale.

More experts added their voices to the AGRA report,

with agriculture and food security consultant Joseph Beyo expressing worry about the continent's spiralling population.

"As soon as 2030, Africa will experience a population explosion and a lack of food will compound the crisis. This might result in malnutrition and other deadly ailments. We don't want to get there," warned Beyo.

The population burst would have far-reaching implications, including environmental degradation, especially after converting forests and grasslands into farmlands, Beyo said in a

phone interview. The consultant is also a farmer in Western Kenya.

"Governments must move with speed and put in place policies and mega plans to triple their agricultural productivity to feed the ever-growing population to avoid a situation of over-dependence on imports," said Beyo.

Policies are necessary because unplanned agrarian expansion into human settlements and wildlife spaces will result in habitat loss and other far-reaching consequences on the environment and ecosystems, he said.

"Boosting food insecurity

Shunned by youth, Morocco cosmetic oil craft faces uncertain future

ESSAOUIRA, Morocco

MOROCCO'S argan oil is highly prized by the cosmetics industry, yet it is now mostly produced by elderly workers, raising questions about how long the artisanal practice can continue.

A dozen women, sitting on the floor of a workshop inland from Essaouira, a port town on Morocco's Atlantic coast, work to deftly shell argan nuts, crush them and extract the oil.

It is a time-honored and labor-intensive craft, but one increasingly shunned by young people in the North African kingdom.

The women, mostly aged over 60, manually pulp the small yellow fruits at Cooperative Marjana, while others use hammers to crush the robust shells and remove the nuts.

Women squeeze oil out of a paste made from crushed Argan nuts, near Morocco's western Atlantic coastal city of Essaouira, on October 15, 2022. (AFP) The fruits are then sorted, roasted, ground and pressed for their oil, which is used in cooking but has also long been famed for its moisturising and anti-aging properties for skin and hair.

"It's difficult work and it requires experience and, most of all, patience," said Samira Chari, who at 42 is Marjana's youngest artisanal worker.

Cooperative founder Amel El Hantatti says the job's physical nature is one reason "young people aren't taking up this craft anymore," despite a lack of local employment.

The area's otherwise arid landscape is home to vast argan orchards. Tourists stopping to see the production process and buy argan products are warmly welcomed by Marjana's all-female staff.

Argan is so important to the region between the towns of Essaouira and Agadir that in 1998 UNESCO declared a biosphere reserve in the area and later added the tree's cultivation to its Intangible Cultural Heritage list. Argan oil is the main source of revenue in this part of southern Morocco, where few other crops survive the low rainfall and searing summer heat.

It is also widely used in Moroccan cuisine and has been certified with an Appellation of Origin since 2010.

Hantatti founded the cooperative in 2005 and says it now employs 80 women, some working in production and others in sales.

But today, she says, "I really fear that the artisanal production of argan oil might disappear."

The cooperative's younger workers prefer to work in the gift shop, selling argan soap, shampoo and moisturiser. One of them, Assia Chaker, 25, said: "I tried to work a few days with the craftswomen but I couldn't carry on, it's a hard process and really tiring."

"I like having contact with people and practicing other languages with tourists who come into the shop every day, instead of spending the whole day crushing and pulping argan nuts."

"Anyway, one day the job will be done by machines," she added.

But Hantatti said the process is hard to mechanize, insisting that "oil extracted by machines will never have the same flavour as what the women produce."

"It contains all the positive vibes of these artisans, their laughter, the stories they share as they're working. There's a spiritual quality that makes it special and unique."

The cooperative produces up to 1,000 liters (about 265 gallons) of oil a year and works with four companies bringing groups of visitors as they pass through the popular coastal region.

Safaricom reduces M-Pesa paybill charges by nearly half

NAIROBI

SAFARICOM customers paying between Sh100 (\$0.81) and Sh500 (\$4.05) in paybill charges will now be charged Sh4 (\$0.032), down from Sh23 (\$0.19) in new tariffs applicable from Sunday, the company has announced.

Transactions below Sh100 have been zero-rated, the company said.

These are part of new charges for money transactions between customers and businesses, amid increased demand for mobile payment services.

Payments between Sh500 and Sh1,000 (\$8.10) will cost Sh9 (\$0.073), down from Sh23 while those between Sh50,000 (\$405) and Sh150,000 (\$1,215) will cost Sh105 (\$0.85), down from Sh210 (\$1.70).

Meanwhile, businesses sending money to customers will be charged Sh5 (\$0.041) for payments between Sh100 and Sh1,500



Safaricom has announced new charges for money transactions between customers and businesses, amid increased demand for mobile payment services.

(\$12.16), compared to the current Sh15.27 (\$0.12) while payments between Sh20,000 (\$162.07) and Sh150,000 will now cost Sh12, down from Sh22.4.

"In the new changes, business to M-Pesa charges have been reduced by an average of 41 per cent while M-Pesa Paybill charges have been reduced by an average 47 per cent. The paybill tariffs is also applicable to customers sending money to bank,"

the company said.

The reduction of paybill charges comes at a time many businesses have switched to using the platform after ditching the Lipa Na M-Pesa Buy-Goods payment option that eats into their incomes. Safaricom has also announced new charges for transactions between bank accounts and M-Pesa where bank to M-Pesa transaction charges have been reduced by an

average of 61 percent and M-Pesa to bank charges have been reduced by an average of 47 percent.

This is after the Central Bank of Kenya (CBK) two weeks ago announced the reintroduction of charges for transactions between mobile money wallets and bank accounts after negotiation with lenders and mobile money payment firms.

The CBK waived the charges in March 2020

as part of measures that were put in place by the government to facilitate the use of mobile money to prevent the spread of Covid-19.

Boost lenders earnings

The reinstatement of the charges will boost the earnings of lenders who record income from transactions as part of their non-funded income, and mobile network operators who derive

significant sums of their income from mobile money transactions.

"The reduced M-Pesa to bank tariff will also apply to all M-Pesa paybill payments that customers use for utilities such as electricity, hospital bills, schools, government payments etc. to ensure affordability," said Safaricom in an earlier statement last week.

The CBK said the number of Kenyans actively using mobile money increased by over 6.2 million during the waiver period, while the monthly volume and value of person-to-person transactions increased from 162 million transactions worth Sh234 billion (\$1.9 billion) to 440 million transactions worth Sh399 billion (\$3.2 billion).

Further, the monthly volume and value of transactions between payment service providers (PSPs) and banks increased from 18 million transactions worth about Sh157 billion (\$1.3 billion) to over 113 million transactions worth Sh800 billion (\$6.5 billion).

US sanctions deprive Iranians of breathing fresh air under severe pollution - experts

TEHRAN,

WITH the arrival of the cold season, the air pollution in Iran's capital Tehran has reached an alarming level and is hazardous for the health of local residents.

Domestic and foreign experts pointed out that under the years-long U.S. sanctions, the forced use of old vehicles, which should have been scrapped long ago, is the cause of the terrible air quality in Tehran.

STATE OF EMERGENCY

Over the past weeks, Tehran's local authorities decided to shut down school and university classes for some days and switched to online learning.

Abd Maleki, deputy director of Civil Affairs Coordination of Tehran Governorate, announced on Monday the continuation of remote working of sensitive groups of employees, including pregnant women, employees aging above 50, and those who have heart, lung, respiratory and rheumatic diseases as well as ones with diabetes, high blood pressure and cancer problems, according to official IRNA news agency.

Maleki said that based on the approvals of the air pollution emergency working group, universities and all educational levels of Tehran will continue online learning for two more days until Wednesday, while sports activities in open spaces are also canceled.

The even-and-odd plans for motorists are implemented as traffic rationing measures under which private vehicles with registration numbers ending with an odd digit



An Iranian woman walks past the former U.S. Embassy in Tehran, which bears a mural depicting the Statue of Liberty with a dead face. With just days to go until the U.S. plans to snap more sanctions back into place, questions linger about what the move spells for the world.

will be allowed on the streets on odd dates and those with an even digit on even dates.

Besides, a daily permit license to enter the restricted traffic zones in Tehran will not be issued by Tehran Municipality until Wednesday, Maleki said, urging the citizens to refrain from unnecessary activities outdoors.

RESULT OF SANCTIONS

Abbas Shahsavandi, the head of the air health and climate change department of Iran's Health Ministry, pointed out that the traffic of old cars and diesel motorcycles is the main reason behind Tehran's air pollution. There are many clunker vehicles and diesel motorcycles in Tehran,

which must be removed from the consumption cycle, Shahsavandi was quoted as saying by Tehran Times.

Also, Abdollah Motevalli, deputy director of Iran's Standards and Quality Inspection Company, said that some 83 percent of air pollution in Tehran and 70 percent in other Iranian big cities are caused by vehicles, according to the report.

On Dec. 20, 2022, a group of UN human rights experts announced that "it is no surprise that Tehran is one of the world's most polluted cities.

U.S. sanctions force people to prolong the use of older vehicles that burn fuel less efficiently, while making it impossible for Iran to obtain equipment and technology to reduce vehicle

emissions."

The sanctions also prevent Iranian scientists from engaging in joint environmental research projects abroad, and prevent Iranians from accessing online databases and courses about environmental issues and sustainability, they pointed out.

NEW SOLUTIONS

On Monday, Mojtaba Shafiee, managing director of the Transport and Traffic Organization of Tehran Municipality, stressed that new ideas are needed to tackle the traffic and air pollution in Tehran. Elaborating on the effect of the even-and-odd plan from the door of the homes on reducing air pollution, he noted that if the plan is implemented correctly, it will be effective in reducing air pollution.

He also announced the holding of the 19th International Conference on Transportation and Traffic Engineering in Tehran in March, with its focus on public and smart transportation among other topics.

Regarding the development of cycling routes in the capital, he stated that the use of shared bicycles is one of the main models of traffic management around the world that should be considered in Tehran.

In the meantime, Motevalli said that all motor vehicles used by government, public and non-government sectors are required to obtain a technical examination certificate, which can be highly effective in reducing air pollution, optimizing fuel consumption and car safety, and consequently the health of citizens.



In Dec. 20, 2022, a group of UN human rights experts announced that "it is no surprise that Tehran is one of the world's most polluted

Russia's Federation Council prepares draft paper on gas alternatives for regional supplies

MOSCOW

A DRAFT law on the use of alternative kinds of gas in addition to natural gas for more efficient gas supplies to regions was prepared by Andrey Kutevov, head of the committee of the Federation Council [upper house of the Russian parliament - TASS].

A copy of the document sent to the government for the receipt of the opinion was seen by TASS.

"The draft was developed for purposes of implementing the list of assignments of Russian President Vladimir Putin on development of alternative eco-friendly energy resources, an action plan [roadmap] of implementing a socially focused and cost efficient system of gas infrastructure development and gas supplies to Russian regions, and further for the expansion of the domestic gas market and guaranteed supplies of liquefied petroleum gas, liquefied natural gas and compressed natural gas to the domestic market to meet utility needs of the population," the explanatory note to the document reads.

Current legislation regulates the procedure of supply and use "of exclusively natural gas" for purposes of gas supplies to households and industrial plants.

At the same time, the procedure of using alternative kinds of gas for gas supplies purposes is not determined legislatively, the lawmaker said. **Agencies**

Israeli far-right minister visits contested Jerusalem holy site

JERUSALEM

ISRAEL'S far-right national security minister Itamar Ben-Gvir briefly visited the compound that houses the Al-Aqsa mosque in Jerusalem yesterday, a move condemned by Palestinians as provocative and despite warnings it could lead to violence.

"The Temple Mount is open to all," Ben-Gvir said on Twitter, using the Jewish name for the site. An accompanying photograph showed him strolling at the periphery of the compound, surrounded by a clutch of bodyguards and flanked by a fellow Orthodox Jew.

An Israeli official said the quarter-hour visit took place in accordance with a so-called status quo arrangement, dating back decades, that allows non-Muslims to visit on condition they do not pray. It passed without incident, the official said.

The rise of Ben-Gvir, (pictured) leader of the Jewish Power party, to join a religious-nationalist coalition under re-elected Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has deepened Palestinians' anger over the long frustrations of their goal of statehood.

In fresh violence in nearby Bethlehem, in the occupied West Bank, Israeli troops shot dead a Palestinian teenager during a clash, medical officials and witnesses said. There was no immediate comment from the army.

The Palestinian foreign ministry said it "strongly condemns the



storming of Al-Aqsa mosque by the extremist minister Ben-Gvir and views it as unprecedented provocation and a dangerous escalation of the conflict."

A spokesman for Hamas, a Palestinian Islamist group that rejects coexistence with Israel, said Al-Aqsa "will remain Palestinian, Arab and Islamic ... and no fascist can change this fact".

Jordan's foreign ministry said it condemned in "severest" terms the visit by Ben-Gvir to Al-Aqsa and his move of "violating its sanctity".

There was no indication that Ben-Gvir approached the mosque, however. Once an advocate of ending the ban on Jewish prayer at the compound, he has, since taking office, spoken in a more non-committal way about a need to enforce "non-discrimination" there.

"If Hamas thinks that it can deter me with threats, it should understand that times have changed," Ben-Gvir said on Twitter.

"There is a government in Jerusalem!"

On Monday, a Jewish Power lawmaker, Abmog Cohen, told Israel's Kan radio that the party's "aspiration is - yes, God willing, for all religions to be able to pray on the Temple Mount".

But Netanyahu, now in his sixth term as premier, has pledged to preserve the "status quo" around holy sites.

The Al-Aqsa compound, known to Muslims as the Noble Sanctuary, is Islam's third-holiest site. It is also Judaism's most sacred site, a vestige of two ancient temples of the faith.

Located in East Jerusalem, which Israel captured along with the West Bank and Gaza Strip in a 1967 war, the compound further serves as a focus of Palestinian hopes of founding a state in those territories.

Israel deems all of Jerusalem its indivisible capital - a status not recognized internationally.

Agencies

Taliban seeks economic self-sufficiency, foreign funds for Afghanistan

KABUL

THE Taliban administration will encourage self-sufficiency and wants international trade and investment, the acting commerce minister said, as Afghanistan faces isolation and suspension of some humanitarian operations over restrictions on women.

"We will start a national self-sufficiency program, we will encourage all government administrations to use domestic products, we will also try to encourage people through mosques to support our domestic products" Haji Nooruddin Azizi told Reuters. "We will support any item which can help us for self-sufficiency."

Another part of their strategy was to boost trade and foreign investment, he said.

"Those who were importing items to Afghanistan from abroad, they are asking us to provide opportunities for investing in Afghanistan and they want to invest here instead of importing from abroad," he said.

He said that countries including Iran and Russia were interested in trade and investment.

Already facing a lack of formal recognition and sanctions hampering the country's banking sector, investors are faced with growing security concerns after attacks on foreign targets in Kabul, claimed by the Islamic State.

Azizi said authorities were working to

ensure security, laying out a plan to develop industry by creating special economic zones on land previously used for US military bases. He said his ministry was presenting the plan to the administration's cabinet and economic commission.

He added that foreign investors were showing interest in Afghanistan's mining sector, which has been valued at more than \$1 trillion. He said that an iron mine in western Herat and a lead mine in central Ghor province had seen 40 companies take part in an auction and that the results would be announced soon.

He said that a major contract signed with Russia in September for the supply of gas, oil and wheat would see the delivery of the items to Afghanistan in coming days.

The Taliban-led administration is facing increased isolation over policies in recent days restricting women from access to public life, including attending university.

An order barring female NGO workers has thrown the humanitarian sector, which is providing urgent aid to millions of people, into disarray, with some organizations suspending operations in the middle of the harsh winter.

Azizi did not comment on the new restrictions but said his ministry had allocated 5 acres of land for a permanent exhibition center and hub for women-led businesses.

"We always support women investors," he said.

China's ecosystems restoration project contributes to world ecological progress

CHINA'S Shan-Shui initiative, which translates to "mountains and rivers," was recently recognized as one of the ten World Restoration Flagships at the 15th Conference of Parties (COP15) to the UN Convention on Biological Diversity meeting held in Montreal, Canada.

The initiative combines dozens of large-scale projects nationwide to restore ecosystems, including mountains, rivers, forests, farmlands, lakes, grasslands and deserts.

The UN Environment Programme (UNEP) said the Shan-Shui initiative sees all ecosystems as a part of a community of all life on Earth, and has restored millions of hectares of land through relentless efforts.

The Shan-Shui initiative is a signature project explaining how China practices the vision that "Mountains, rivers, forests, farmlands, lakes, and grasslands are a life community."

Since 2016, the country has implemented

44 projects under the initiative at critical ecological spots in the Three Eco-zones and Four Shelterbelts - the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau Eco-zone, the Yellow River Eco-zone, the Yangtze River Eco-zone, the Northeast Shelterbelt, the North Shelterbelt, the South Shelterbelt, and the Coastal Shelterbelt.

The Shan-Shui initiative aims to launch integrated protection and systematic governance of all ecological elements in different regions, and strives for holistic and comprehensive ecological benefits.

In 2020, multiple government departments jointly issued a guideline that regulates the im-

plementation of Shan-Shui projects according to five principles, such as "prioritizing ecological conservation and pursuing green development," and "integrating natural restoration as the main and artificial restoration as a supplement."

Multiple regions in China are at the forefront of implementing the Shan-Shui initiative. They have opted for technical models according to local conditions including ecological degradation, damage and resilience of ecosystems, creating valuable experiences for the construction of a beautiful China.

Hefei, east China's Anhui province has launched a six-phase

ecological protection and restoration project for Chaohu Lake, during which 10 wetlands have been built around the lake.

Central China's Hubei province implemented a restoration project that well coordinates the treatment of various ecosystems to build an ecological shelterbelt in the Three Gorges region, exploring a "Hubei model" that addresses comprehensive and whole-process ecological issues.

Gansu province in northwest China launched an integrated restoration project for the mountains, rivers, forests, farmlands, lakes, grasslands and deserts on the upper reach of the Yellow River in Gannan Tibetan auto-

nous prefecture. It also built several major pilot national parks to build an ecological barrier in the upper reach of the Yellow River.

The Shan-Shui initiative has created huge benefits. For instance, the Three Gorges section of the Yangtze River in Hubei province, which was once surrounded by chemical engineering enterprises, is now seeing the return of Yangtze finless porpoises.

In addition, the mainstream of the Yellow River in Gannan Tibetan autonomous prefecture recharges 58.7 percent of the runoff in the source region of the Yellow River. Hefei has been credited by the Ramsar Conven-

tion as an international wetland city.

So far, China has completed ecological protection and restoration of more than 3.5 million hectares. It plans to restore ten million hectares of vital ecosystems by 2030. The country has achieved a series of innovation outcomes in organization models, implementation methods and technical standards. The World Restoration Flagships were selected under the banner of the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, a global movement coordinated by the UNEP and the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).

The ten flagships proved this time aim to restore more than 68 million hectares and create nearly 15 million jobs. They will be eligible for UN funding and technical support.

Reflections on 2022



Young Africans Sports Club players and officials pose with the 2021/22 Premier League silverware shortly after facing Mbeya City in the top-flight match that took place in Mbeya on June 25, 2022. (Photo: Courtesy of Yanga)

By Correspondent Lloyd Elipokea

THE New Year has just started and I'm certain that loads of my compatriots are hoping that this year turns out to be a veritable annus mirabilis for Tanzania in the perennially action-packed realm of sports.

Indeed, the outset of any year is traditionally the most opportune time to reflect on the momentous happenings in various fields of human endeavor such as politics and sports among others.

Since this humble space on The Guardian's back pages is primarily devoted to sports, I would now like to cast my mind back and reflect on the sporting developments that marked last year.

Here on the home front, 2022 began with Yanga trying their damndest to wrest the NBC Premier League title from Simba SC's firm grasp.

It should be noted that in the spell leading up to the 2021-22 season, Simba had been fantas-

tically crowned NBC Premier League champions for four seasons on the trot.

So, as last season kicked off, Yanga's legions of fans must have been hoping that their beloved club would end their miserable trophy drought in the league campaign that had just kicked off.

And, in truly exhilarating fashion, Yanga fans would have a lot of reasons to celebrate as the Jangwani Street club would make a clean sweep of all football competitions on the mainland which are the Community Shield, the Azam Sports Federation Cup and of course the earnestly coveted NBC Premier League.

The million dollar question though is, can Yanga replicate their laudable exploits this season?

Although the jury is still out on that query, it is a cast-iron guarantee that it will be unbelievably exciting to see how the race for this season's league title pans out.

Moving on, a colossal sporting

event that involved Tanzania last year was of course the Birmingham Commonwealth Games.

In marked contrast to the past, we actually prepared thoroughly and meticulously for the Commonwealth Games and this diligent preparation would tellingly make all the difference.

Indeed, our contingent to the Birmingham Games would return home with a creditable haul of three medals, which is extremely admirable, especially when one considers that the last time we actually claimed a medal at the Commonwealth Games was in 2006.

With our overall display in Birmingham being so encouraging, our three medal-winning athletes were rightfully feted as heroes.

These heroic athletes who put an extra spring in our step are the marathoner Alphonse Simbu who bagged a silver medal and the boxers Yusuf Changalawe as well as Kassim Mbundwike who each secured a bronze medal.

From one praiseworthy sporting development, let us now ze-

ro-in on another noteworthy feat which was achieved by the Serengeti Girls at the FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup last year.

Indeed, you couldn't have guessed that the Serengeti Girls were making their maiden appearance at the competition as our female starlets impressively played out of their skins to progress to the quarterfinals of the elite championship.

Sadly though, the Serengeti Girls' fairy-tale run in the FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup would be cruelly cut short by Colombia in the quarterfinals who hammered our starlets 3-0.

Nevertheless, despite the setback, our Serengeti Girls had still enormously succeeded in making their mark on the FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup.

Here's hoping then that all Tanzanian sports athletes can emulate the exceptional displays of the Serengeti Girls in this, the New Year.

Analysis: The Suns are on the brink, and not in a good way

By TIM REYNOLDS

ONLY 18 months ago, the Phoenix Suns were on the brink. They held a 2-0 lead over the Milwaukee Bucks in the NBA Finals. They were two wins away from the parade. Chris Paul was finally going to get his ring. Suns in Four was not just a stadium chant, but a very real possibility. They're on the brink again now.

A very different brink.

A team that lost 18 games in the entirety of the 2021-22 regular season lost its 18th game of this regular season – with 44 games left to play – on Monday, a 102-83 embarrassment at Madison Square Garden to New York, and the score makes it seem closer than it really was. It was really over with 4:30 left in the first half, the Knicks then holding a 52-20 lead.

Phoenix managed its fewest points since November 2018, a span of 372 games, including playoffs. The bigger issue was the lack of ... well, whatever has set the Suns apart over the last two-plus years.

"It's a mindboggling thing," Suns coach Monty Williams said. "It's happened too many times to this team."

Over the last four weeks, the Suns are 4-11; only Charlotte, at 3-12 in that span, has been worse. In fairness, Phoenix is missing Devin Booker, who was playing at an All-NBA level and



Phoenix Suns guard Chris Paul (3) prepares to dribble downcourt as New York Knicks guard Miles McBride defends during the first half of an NBA basketball game, Monday, Jan. 2, 2023, in New York. (AP Photo)

is likely going to be sidelined a few more weeks with a left groin strain. But it wasn't exactly going perfectly when Booker was healthy, either.

Some things have gone as expected, or better than expected, in the NBA so far this season. League-leading Boston hasn't missed a beat because of Ime Udoka's suspension

and Joe Mazzulla taking over as interim coach. New Orleans and Memphis had high hopes after the way they finished last season; right now, they're both among the best in the Western Conference. Brooklyn, when there's no drama, has been as good as anyone in the NBA. Milwaukee, the team that beat the Suns in those 2021 NBA

Finals, looks poised for a deep postseason run.

And then there's the surprises of the not-good variety. Phoenix is 20-18 with three games left until the season's midpoint. The Suns are in play-in tournament range and headed in the wrong direction. There's still time, sure, but efforts like Monday don't give much reason for hope.

Championship windows usually don't close in an instant. It happened that way in Chicago in 1998 when Michael Jordan and Phil Jackson left the Bulls and the franchise started over after six titles in eight years. It could be argued it happened that way when LeBron James left Cleveland in 2010, Miami in 2014 and Cleveland again in 2018. What's more typical, though, is a team tends to age out, fall apart, see the locker room bonds start to fade, or some combination thereof.

It might be all the above in Phoenix's case. There's an ownership change happening because of Robert Sarver's boorish behavior; Mat Ishbia could be in place within the next few weeks. Allegations of the franchise having a less-than-professional workplace environment for some have been detailed thoroughly by ESPN in recent months. But the dysfunction hadn't seemed to affect the locker room, until this year.

AP

The Guardian

SPORT

Benedict aide's tell-all book will expose 'dark maneuvers'

VATICAN CITY

POPE Emeritus Benedict XVI's long-time personal secretary has written a tell-all book that his publisher on Monday promised would tell the truth about the "blatant calumnies," "dark maneuvers," mysteries and scandals that sullied the reputation of a pontiff best known for his historic resignation.

Archbishop Georg Gaenswein's "Nothing but the Truth: My Life Beside Pope Benedict XVI" is being published this month by the Piemme imprint of Italian publishing giant Mondadori, according to a press release.

Benedict died Saturday at age 95 and his body was put on display Monday in St. Peter's Basilica ahead of a Thursday funeral to be celebrated by his successor, Pope Francis.

Gaenswein, a 66-year-old German priest, stood by Benedict's side for nearly three decades, first as an official working for then-Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger in the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, then starting in 2003 as Ratzinger's personal secretary.

Gaenswein followed his boss to the Apostolic Palace as secretary when Ratzinger was elected pope in 2005. And in one of the most memorable images of Benedict's final day as pope Feb. 28, 2013, Gaenswein wept as he accompanied Benedict through the frescoed halls of the Vatican, saying goodbye.

He remained Benedict's gatekeeper, confidant and protector during a decade-long retirement, while also serving until recently as the prefect of Francis' papal household. It was Gaenswein who performed the anointing of the sick last Wednesday, when Benedict's health deteriorated, and it was he who called Francis on Saturday to tell him that Benedict had died.

According to Piemme, Gaenswein's book contains "a personal testimony about the greatness of a mild man, a fine scholar, a cardinal and a pope who made the history of our time." But it said the book also contained a first-hand account that would correct some "misunderstood" aspects of the pontificate as well as the machinations of the Vatican.

"Today, after the death of the pope emeritus, the time has come for the current prefect of the papal household to tell his own truth about the blatant calumnies and dark maneuvers that

have tried in vain to cast shadows on the German pontiff's magisterium and actions," the press release said.

Gaenswein's account would "finally make known the true face of one of the greatest protagonists of recent decades, too often unjustly denigrated by critics as 'Panzerkardinal' or 'God's Rottweiler,'" it said, referring to some common media nicknames for the German known for his conservative, doctrinaire bent.

Specifically, the publisher said Gaenswein would address the "Vatileaks" scandal, in which Benedict's own butler leaked his personal correspondence to a journalist, as well as clergy sex abuse scandals and one of the enduring mysteries of the Vatican, the 1983 disappearance of the 15-year-old daughter of a Vatican employee, Emanuela Orlandi.

The book appears to be just part of what is shaping up as a postmortem media blitz by Gaenswein, including the release Monday of excerpts of a lengthy interview he granted Italian state RAI television last month that is to be broadcast Thursday after the funeral.

According to the excerpts published by La Repubblica newspaper, Gaenswein recounted how he tried to dissuade Benedict from resigning after the then-pope told him in late September 2012 that he had made up his mind. That was six months after Benedict took a nighttime fall during a visit to Mexico and determined he no longer could handle the rigors of the job.

"He told me: 'You can imagine I have thought long and hard about this, I've reflected, I've prayed, I've struggled. And now I'm communicating to you that a decision has been taken, it's not up for discussion,'" Gaenswein recalled Benedict saying.

Gaenswein also referred to the struggles, scandals and problems Benedict faced during his eight-year pontificate, recalling he had asked for prayers at the start to protect him from the "wolves" who were out to get him. Gaenswein cited in particular the "Vatileaks" betrayal, which resulted in the butler being convicted by the Vatican tribunal, only to be pardoned by the pope two months before his resignation.

"Anyone who thinks there can be a calm papacy has got the wrong profession," he said.

AP



In this image released on Monday, Jan. 2, 2023, by the Vatican Media news service, Bishop George Gaenswein, center, and close entourage pray in front of the body of late Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI lying out in state in the chapel of the monastery 'Mater Ecclesiae' where he mostly lived after retiring on Feb. 28, 2013. Pope Benedict, the German theologian who will be remembered as the first pope in 600 years to resign, has died, the Vatican announced Saturday, Dec. 31, 2022. He was 95. (Vatican Media via AP)

Sloppy Liverpool tumble again in loss at Brentford



Brentford players celebrate at the end of the English Premier League soccer match between Brentford and Liverpool at the Gtech Community Stadium in London, Monday, Jan. 2, 2023. (AP Photo/Ian Walton/Ian Walton / Associated Press)

LONDON

LIVERPOOL lost more ground in the race for a top-four English Premier League finish when it lost to Brentford 3-1 on Monday.

Sloppy defending cost Liverpool twice in the first half, prompting angry boss Jurgen Klopp to substitute key defender Virgil van Dijk at half-time.

Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain pulled one back but Bryan Mbeumo killed off Liverpool as Brentford beat the visitors for the first time since 1938 in all competitions.

Brentford rose from 10th to seventh in the standings. It was two points behind Liverpool.

Ibrahima Konate's own goal gave the Bees the lead and Yoane Wissa's header just before half-time put them in control.

Wissa, the replacement for Ivan Toney, the Bees' 13-goal top scorer, had two goals ruled out for offside before he scored in a breakneck first half.

Liverpool's Darwin Nunez added to his growing catalogue of wasted opportunities in front of goal. He was slipped in behind by Mohamed Salah and took the ball around Bees goalkeeper David Raya and rolled it towards goal, only for Ben Mee to arrive in the nick of time to slide in and block.

At the other end, Wissa sent Mbeumo clean through on goal but the latter's shot was well saved by Alisson. However, from the corner, Brentford took the lead when the ball ricocheted off the knee of France World Cup finalist Konate and squirmed past Alisson.

Mbeumo's corners continued to cause the visitors problems and Wissa put two of them into the net only for both goals to be chalked off.

However, the winger made it third time lucky four minutes before half-time when he buried a superb header from Mathias Jensen's cross. Alisson got a hand to the ball and scooped it out but referee Stuart Attwell's watch buzzed to confirm Wissa finally had his goal.

Klopp had seen enough of the shambles at the back and replaced Van Dijk with Joel Matip as one of three half-time changes.

The luckless Nunez managed to find the net shortly after the restart after breaking through one on one with Raya, only for VAR to pull him up for offside.

Moments later, Liverpool made one count, Oxlade-Chamberlain glancing in a header from Trent Alexander-Arnold's tempting cross.

They pressed for an equalizer but Raya did well to keep out a Fabinho shot and Konate headed wide.

Brentford ended their hopes six minutes from time after Mbeumo brushed off a feeble challenge by Konate and tucked away the third.

AP

Santos now gives stirring farewell to 'eternal' Pele

By Oliver Brown

UNDER a broiling Brazilian sun, Pele's embalmed body was positioned centrally, and with the utmost grace, on the Santos pitch where his legend was born. He lay in an open casket filled with white petals, a blue shirt buttoned up to his collar beneath a gauzy veil. One mourner felt moved enough to bend down to kiss his forehead. His widow Marisa carefully placed a few rosary beads upon his hands. Moments later, his entire family, led by his son Edinho, formed a final guard of honour around the titan they had lost, their hands linked in prayer.

These were ethereal images, and yet complex in their symbolism. In life, Pele had wanted to be seen as somehow imperishable. Even in old age, he would tell his friends that he did not have a single grey hair. It was for this reason that he detested wakes. "The only wake I'm going to is my own, because I can't get out of it," he once muttered to his personal advisor, Pepito Fornos. It is customary at any funeral to say how much the deceased would have loved it. But so seduced was Pele by the aura of invincibility, you could not help but question how fitting it was for his mortal flesh to be on public display.

He could be consoled that his body of work, defined by that triptych of World Cup glory, was matched by a send-off apt in its grandeur. In the end, the bereaved flocked here not out of prurience, but out of a resolve to commune with Pele, football's great purveyor of joy, one final time. Antonio da Paz, 67, was among the first in the queue, arriving draped in the Brazilian flag and wearing a crown fashioned out of golden foil. "I've been a fan since the 1960s," he said. "There is so much nostalgia now he has gone."

At dawn on New Year's Day, he had taken his



The son of Brazilian football legend Pele, Edinho (3-L), prays with people during Pele's wake at the Urbano Caldeira stadium in Santos, Sao Paulo, Brazil on January 2, 2023. - Brazilians bid a final farewell this week to football giant Pele, starting Monday with a 24-hour public wake at the stadium of his long-time team - AFP

place outside Santos' Vila Belmiro home, anxious to find comfort in collective grief. On the surface, it might seem a stretch to compare the scene to the stoic waiting to watch the Queen lying in state at Westminster Hall last September. But the two spectacles were uncannily similar, with thousands of Brazilians lining up to offer a last salute to the player they had known simply as "the King". Even the Santos fan club still captures Pele's regal aspect. "Socio Rei," it is called.

In the mazy backstreets that encircle the ground, the mood was a curious blend of sorrow of exuberance. Yes, there was the confronting element of coming face-to-face with a dead body, albeit one in serene repose. But there was also the soothing sense of sharing Pele memories en masse. For that reason his public came dressed not in doleful black or even in muted shades, but in Brazil shirts of vibrant canary yellow, their children perched on their shoulders to glimpse the idol they had, until now, known only by repute.

For those who did study him at his pomp,

this final "adeus" was too significant to miss. Pedro Subler, a 71-year-old radiology technician, had driven 550 miles, bringing a pair of binoculars to ensure he could view the body. "You can't say that Pele wasn't the best," he said. "In football he is everything and will continue to be so. I only saw him in person once at this stadium. But I've been a Santos supporter since the 1958 World Cup and I follow the World Cup because of him."

"Eternal" was the word most commonly printed on the replica shirts that hung outside. Inside Vila Belmiro, the cosy 16,000-seat arena, nestled in the heart of this rumbustious coastal city, Santos had hardly stunted on the tributes either. "The only player who stopped a war," one banner declared, a reference to the occasion in 1967 when, on tour with his boyhood club, Pele persuaded warring factions in Nigeria to stage a 48-hour ceasefire for his visit.

The adoration, in the wake of Pele's death from cancer at the age of 82, was palpable. For almost a week Santos has been in official mourn-

ing, conjuring ever more elaborate gestures to commemorate this aching loss. A drone display above the beach picked out the letters of his name in the night sky. In a house in the suburbs, a No 10 shirt with no club insignia filled the front window, a plain but striking act of reverence. For the pathos of Pele's passing is detected not just among Santos' black-and-white-clad ultras, but throughout Brazilian society.

Take street vendor Elton Calisto, who had festooned the walls with 500 "Pele Eterno" jerseys, but who was not even a Santos fan. "I follow Palmeiras," he said. "But I'm a football lover, and Pele was the greatest of all."

These sentiments had been self-evident from the second the funeral cortege began its stately procession here, with fireworks erupting from the bridges overhead as it passed. Alongside Ze Roberto, the former Brazil midfielder, Edinho carried his father's coffin towards the centre circle. There, he saw the giant floral wreath that had already been sent by Neymar, a striker who has equalled Pele's

total of 77 international goals but who has always seemed burdened by the inheritance of those three World Cup triumphs.

To Pele's immediate family, such expressions of solidarity brought peace on the most emotionally fraught of days. Gabriel, his grandson, had looked overwhelmed at his turn beside the casket. It was, after all, only the second time he had seen him in his life. "I told him the things that were in my heart," he reflected. "I told him how much I admired him."

During his declining late years, Pele had grown increasingly invisible to most in Brazil. Only Marise and his daughter Kelly understood the full gravity of his health struggles, to which he finally succumbed last week due to multiple organ failure. This was a chance to recreate the most powerful of bonds between a player and his disciples. In the background, an old song of his, "Eu sou Pele" ("I am Pele") played on a loop over the Santos loudspeakers. Out in the middle, families embraced each other, still marching one by one to

bid him goodbye in the merciless midday heat.

"It is a very sad moment, but we are now seeing the real meaning of this legendary player to our country," said Gilmar Mendes, a Brazilian Supreme Court justice. "My office has shirts signed by Pele, DVDs, even a picture of him as a goalkeeper."

As the 24-hour wake wound to its close, there was one more journey still for Pele to undertake, a procession through the streets of Santos, watched by Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, Brazil's newly-inaugurated president. It would make a poignant stop at the house of his 100-year-old mother, Celeste. And from there he would be buried, privately, at the Memorial Necropole Ecumenica, a vertical cemetery with space for 14,000 bodies. It might look an impersonal final resting place, but those closest to him should not worry. As Santos' stirring day of celebration proved, Pele left an indelible personal mark the world over. Most people here, while shattered that he died, were just grateful that he lived.

(Agencies)

Ronaldo's Al Nassr move underlines Portugal star's decline

RIYADH

UNWANTED by Europe's elite clubs, Cristiano Ronaldo's steep decline has been laid bare by a move to Saudi Arabian side Al Nassr that signals the end of his reign as one of football's most feared strikers.

Ronaldo will be officially unveiled by Al Nassr on Tuesday after agreeing a contract that runs until 2025 and is reportedly worth more than 200 million euros.

But the riches and fanfare that await the 37-year-old in Saudi Arabia are at odds with his reduced status as a fallen star trading on past heroics. For Ronaldo to be forced to play out what will surely be the final chapter of

his glittering career in the football backwater of Saudi Arabia is a damning indictment of his lacklustre form over the last 18 months.

Ronaldo, a five-time Ballon d'Or winner, heads to the Gulf after a painful year that saw him relegated to the Portugal bench and cut adrift by Manchester United.

His second spell with United imploded in November with his departure by mutual consent, shortly after he criticised boss Erik ten Hag and the club's hierarchy in an explosive television interview.

As his relationship with United soured, Ronaldo was linked to a string of Champions League contenders including Chelsea, Bayern Munich and Napoli. A return to his first club Sporting Lisbon

was also rumoured, while there was talk of a move to the MLS to join Inter Miami, part-owned by former United team mate David Beckham.

But none of those deals came to fruition and when United decided his diminishing contribution, coupled with his public

displays of dissent, made him a pricey luxury they no longer needed, it was instructive to note the absence of a rush to sign the ageing icon.

Coming at the same time as his acrimonious United exit, Ronaldo's failed quest to finally win the World Cup underlined

his descent to the ranks of football's mere mortals.

- Tears in Qatar -

In a move that would have been unthinkable just a few years ago, Ronaldo was left out of the starting line-up for Portugal's last 16 thrashing of Switzerland.

And when Portugal suffered a shock 1-0 defeat against Morocco in the quarter-finals, Ronaldo started on the bench, made little impact after his eventual introduction and was last seen trudging down the tunnel in tears after the final whistle.

AFP



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PAGE 19

Thompson's season - best 54 leads Warriors past Hawks in 20T

SAN FRANCISCO

KEVON Looney rushed his first try, not realizing he had a little time. Then he tipped in the game-winner as the final buzzer of the second overtime sounded. He got swarmed in celebration.

The durable big man who played every game last season and all of them so far in this one delivered a career-high 21 rebounds with two in the final 2 seconds. Klay Thompson scored a season-best 54 points, and the Golden State Warriors held off the Atlanta Hawks 143-141 on Monday night.

Looney laughed when asked if he had ever scored the game-winning basket – “not a walkoff game-winner.”

“I rushed the first one I didn't think I had that much time, but I saw I had more time so I took my time on the second one and I was able to make it,” Looney said.

Trae Young tied the score on a floating layup with 8.2 seconds remaining before the Warriors' final chance. Young made four crucial free throws late in the first OT and finished with 30 points and 14 assists.

Looney also had 14 points and five assists. Draymond Green made his only 3-point attempt of the game with 43.8 seconds left in the last OT and finished with 13 rebounds and 11 assists.

Thompson shot 21 for 39 and his 10 3-pointers matched a season high – and his 54 were six off his career-best scoring outing of 60 accomplished in three quarters on Dec. 5, 2016.

Simba appoint former Vipers boss Robertinho as coach



Roberto Oliveira Gonçalves do Carmo, alias Robertinho, after being introduced as Simba Sports Club head coach in Dar es Salaam yesterday. (Agencies)

By Correspondent Michael Mwebe

SIMBA's lengthy coaching hunt has concluded with the appointment of Roberto Oliveira Gonçalves do Carmo, alias Robertinho, as their new head coach, the NBC Premier League club announced yesterday.

The well-travelled Brazilian tactician started his coaching career at Grössembacher, Rio Branco, Brasil de Pelotas, São Bento, Fluminense, Clube de Regatas Brasil, Centro Sportivo Alagoano, America, and Rio Branco (all in Brazil).

He also has had coaching spells at Al-Shamal (Qatar), Kazma (Kuwait) and Legião (Brazil).

His African coaching career has seen him through Grombalia Sports (Tunisia), Stade Tunisien (Tunisia), Hammam-Sousse (Tunisia), Stade Gabèsien (Tunisia), Atlético Sport Aviação (Angola), Rayon Sports (Rwanda), Gor Mahia (Kenya) and finally Vipers of Uganda.

His playing career witnessed him play at Brazilian giants Fluminense, Flamengo, Palmeiras, Internacional, Sport, Atlético Mineiro and Grössembacher.

He also played at the Portuguese club Nacional be-

tween 1989 and 1993.

On Thursday last week, Uganda Premier League defending champions Vipers confirmed that Robertinho had left his role, ending his over-a-year stay at Kitende. The Brazilian departed 14 months into his three-year contract, having been appointed in August 2021.

At Vipers, he had a hugely successful spell where he guided the club to the 2021/22 Uganda Premier League title and the 2020/21 Uganda Cup.

He also led the Vipers to the 2022/23 CAF Champions League group stages

for the first time in the club's history.

At Simba, he has replaced caretaker coach Juma Mgunda, who was put in charge of the team following Zoran Maki's exit in September last year. Mgunda will remain as one of the assistant coaches with Selemani Matola.

Simba, second in the league standings with 44 points from 19 games, are chasing leaders and defending champions Young Africans.

Robertinho's first league fixture will be a home game against Mbeya City on January 17 at the Ben-

jamin Mkapa National Stadium.

However, Robertinho's immediate task would be to defend the Mapinduzi Cup title in the ongoing tournament in Zanzibar.

The 56-year-old is expected to watch their next Mapinduzi Cup match against KVZ tomorrow from the stands and take charge of first-team training on January 14.

Caretaker boss Mgunda received public backing from fans and board members to oversee first-team matters through to the end of the season but, with CAF Champions League Group

Stage coming next month, efforts to sign a more experienced head coach were revived.

The appointment of Robertinho is in line with the club's belief that they need a reputable coach to steer them through the forthcoming CAF Champions League where they are pitted alongside Vipers (Uganda), Raja Casablanca (Morocco) and Horoya (Guinea).

As far as media reports are concerned, Robertinho may be reunited with his former striker Caesar Manzoki, who is a long-time Simba target.

Upanga SC plots Annadil Burhani downfall in 2022 Gymkhana Shield tournament

By Guardian Correspondent

AFTER a month-long break, the 2022 Cello|Ruby's Magic Gymkhana Shield cricket showdown is back in action with Annadil Burhani Club set to take on Upanga SC in one of the clashes slated for this weekend.

A total of six crunch games have been lined up for the weekend with all duels taking place at Dar es Salaam Gymkhana Club venue.

Annadil Burhani Club sitting fifth in Group B will take on second-placed Upanga SC in the weekend's opening game that is set to be played on Sunday.

Upanga SC led by Kishen Kamanja will, on the one hand, be out to overcome Annadil Burhani Club so the former can put pressure on Group B leader, Aruti Aces Club.

With Upanga SC boasting a 1.5250 net run rate after commanding victory in two clashes the side has taken part in, beating Annadil Burhani Club will see the former stay within reach of progression to the knockout stage.

Annadil Burhani Club will, on the other hand, be banking on experi-

enced cricketers including skipper Mustafa Lukmanji, Abbas Adamji, Adnan Zariwala, and Firoz Hatim Dahodwala to spring a surprise on Upanga SC.

Defeating Upanga SC is a must for Annadil Burhani Club if the latter wishes to make its presence felt in the showdown.

Annadil Burhani Club that has posted one victory and defeat in three duels has notched two points to stay above bottom-placed Dar Cricket Club (DCC).

Pak Stars, now placed third in Group A, will confront second-placed Shree Kutchi Leva Patel Sports Center (SKLPSC) that has been in fine form in this tournament, in the weekend's other tie.

Pak Stars that has several reliable cricketers that include Ivan Ismail is set to come out with all guns blazing seeking to tame SKLPSC.

The youthful Ismail, who had a tremendous stint with Tanzania's national team in 2022 ICC Men's T20 World Cup Sub Regional Africa Qualifier Group B held in Rwanda, will be looking to unleash his confident form to see Pak Stars take home a win.

The SKLPSC, having notched a 1.7976 net run rate from victory in three ties and defeat in one, is barely expected to play second fiddle in the encounter.

In-form SKLPSC cricketers including captain Naran Vekariya, Athuman Siwa, Anil Pindoriya, Khalil Rehemtulla, and Hassan Rahim have a daunting task of keeping Pak Stars' performers at bay so their side can prolong its impressive run.

The third and last game on Sunday will be a Group A duel pitting tournament hosts,

Gymkhana Cricket Club, against GP outfit, with the former looking for their second win to stay in the hunt for semi-final spot.

Fourth-placed Gymkhana Cricket Club that has a -1.3054 net run rate following victory in one clash and loss in one needs victory to scale up the group's standing.

The showdown's washed-out game between Aga Khan SC and Upanga SC will be replayed on January 12 at 8am, according to information released by the organizing committee.

Both teams are look-

ing to cement their options with key wins.

Another tie will pit Pak Stars against Union SC which has had a difficult tournament thus far.

The day's last game will witness tournament favourites Aruti Aces Club confronting DCC.

A win for Aruti Aces Club would confirm the club as the Group B leader and see the squad progress to the semi-finals.

The 2022 Cello|Ruby's Magic Gymkhana Shield showdown, proudly sponsored by Cello, Ruby's Magic, General



Upanga SC cricketers pose for a photo during 2022 Cello|Ruby's Magic Gymkhana Shield tournament tie against Lions Cricket Club which took place in Dar es Salaam last year. Photo: Correspondent

Petroleum, ETG Group, ness, and Pepsi, is ground of Dar es Salaam Gem Point, Planet Fit- played at the historic Gymkhana Club.

Flexibles by David Chikoko

Year 2023 is UNLIKE 2022



WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?