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# ZSTC needs database for clove farmers, says Samia

*The government will make greater efforts to look for export opportunities without affecting clove prices in international markets*

By Guardian Reporter

THE Zanzibar State Trading Corporation (ZSTC) needs to address challenges facing farmers, where it needs a database for farmers' records on cloves to cultivation to monitor the trends for sustainability.

President Samia Suluhu Hassan issued this instruction yesterday at a ceremony to open a ZSTC commercial complex costing 8.6bn/- at Chakechake municipality, Pemba Island, noting that the building will have a bank, thus helping farmers get their money on time, hassle free.

"The building is in Pemba as the island leads in the cultivation of cloves in Zanzibar and East Africa as a whole," she said, urging farmers to use modern methods in cultivating the crop, the number one export crop for Zanzibar.

Last year Zanzibar earned 118bn/- or up

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President Samia Suluhu Hassan assisted by Zanzibar Trade and Industrial Development minister Omar Said Shaaban in unveiling a plaque when launching the Zanzibar State Trading Corporation office in Chake Chake on Pemba Island yesterday. Photo: State House

# FAO, EU project seeks sharp cut in chemical fertiliser use

By Guardian Reporter, Moshi

FARMERS in six regions are being assisted to apply better farming methods enabling them to reduce extensive use of chemical fertiliser.

Diomedes Kalisa, an official of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) who coordinates the programme coun-

trywide, said here yesterday that the project intended to furnish detailed answers as to why so much biodiversity is being lost.

He made this observation on Monday at the start of a six-day training that involves 32 pesticide inspectors from border stops, stockists and other stakeholders where production or use of pesticides takes place.

Part of the research shows that biodiversity is lost through agriculture owing to the use of chemical fertiliser on which farmers have inadequate understanding, he said, underlining the importance of the multilateral environmental agreements for African, Caribbean and Pacific

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Barbaig tribal community leaders and East African Crude Oil Pipeline (EACOP) project officials sign documents yesterday on an agreement endorsing the diversion of a section of the pipeline, effectively making it unnecessary to relocate the grave of a traditional elder at Gorimba village in Hanang District. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

## Govt issues new foreign policy draft

*"We need to mobilise experts who will help us to clearly analyse the policy so that we come up with a sufficiently updated document"*

By Henry Mwangonde

THE government has published its new foreign policy draft, laying emphasis on economic diplomacy, climate change adaptation, marketing Kiswahili and participation of the Diaspora in development pursuits in a new policy format designed to respond to global changes.

January Makamba, the Foreign Affairs and East African Cooperation minister, said at a symposium to get stakeholder views on the policy draft that changes articulated in the draft are necessary to tap opportunities and address noticeable challenges in the international sphere.

"Tanzania just like other countries faces various opportunities and challenges in its international engagements, thus the policy changes will facilitate grabbing opportunities and addressing the challenges," he explained.

New issues in the draft policy include youth and gender problems along with the promotion of national values, aspects that are yet to be set out in working detail, he stated, affirming that the draft takes up obligations for Tanzania's peace and security engagements globally.

It emphasises on the need for resource mobilisation, promoting bilateral coopera-

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## 'Transit trade capacity needs six new berths'

By Correspondents Mary Kadoke and James Kandoya

LONG-TERM strategic plans to improve efficiency at major ports are being undertaken by the Tanzania Port Authority (TPA), including the construction of six new berths of 500 metres length at the Dar es Salaam and Bagamoyo ports.

Plasduce Mbossa, the TPA director general, made this affirmation at a press conference in Dar es Salaam yesterday, noting that the berths will be constructed on a public private partnership (PPP) basis.

The two ports belong to the central corridor that is currently under-served due to the limited number of berths along with dilapidated equipment, he said, elaborating that four berths will be constructed at Dar port and two at the

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## ZSTC needs database for clove farmers, says Samia

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wards of 65.9 percent) of its export earnings, she stated, noting similarly that the ZSTC building has all the necessary equipment for storage, sales of the crop.

Noting that Zanzibar cloves have a large market abroad, she praised ZSTC for various efforts aimed at empowering clove farmers, highlighting that in the 1960s, cloves production stood at 20,000 tonnes per year, but in recent years the yield declined to 8,000 tonnes, in 2020.

The price of cloves has meanwhile climbed from 14,000/- to 15,000/- per kilo, which is beneficial to farmers, she said, explaining that the government is making strategies to improve cost margins along the cloves value chain to enhance farmers' benefits.

The demand for cloves in the world is still high, thus it is relevant to seek investors to invest in the crop's value chain, she stated, while Omar Said Shaaban, the Trade and Industrial Development minister, expressed gratitude to President Samia for accepting to grace the building opening ceremony.

He said tests on the crop are now conducted using technology unlike in the past, while ZSTC was making even-

ry effort to ensure that it fights clove smuggling.

It has worked to raise the price of cloves for farmers each season, he said, acknowledging efforts by President Dr. Hussein Ali Mwinyi for efforts directed at improving the situation around the crop.

Soud Said Ali, the ZSTC managing director, said the project until its completion has cost 8.3bn/-, while President Samia in other remarks urged clove farmers in Zanzibar to stop smuggling the crop.

They should instead sell the produce to formal markets to enhance its value, she said, intimating that the government expects to woo investors into the cloves sub-sector to strengthen its value chain and uplifting the farmers.

Farmers need to produce the crop extensively to develop Zanzibar's economy as well as boosting the blue economy policy, she stated, noting that Zanzibar is the main producer of cloves, the gold of the proverbial Spice Islands. "We must be proud of it hence promote its production," the president declared.

The government will make greater efforts to look for export opportunities without affecting clove prices in international markets, she added.



Tanzania Ports Authority director general Plasduce Mbossa (L) updates journalists in Dar es Salaam yesterday on strategic plans meant to improve efficiency of service delivery at Tanzania's major port. Photo: Correspondent Mary Kadoke

## 'Transit trade capacity needs six new berths'

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Bagamoyo port.

Upon completion the berths will enable large ships to dock, such that by 2028, Bagamoyo port will be able to handle large ships carrying 25,000 containers. An online entry says that one of the largest ship classes in the world is the Malaccamax, which made its maiden voyage in 2016.

A Malaccamax-class ship is 1,200 feet long and can carry 20,000 containers, travelling only up to 25 miles per hour and has a cargo capacity of 2.1 million cubic feet, the entry explains.

"Construction of a new berth is estimated at \$100m to \$150m (260bn/- to 350bn/-)," he said, underlining that as such costs are far too high for the government, a PPP arrangement is preferable.

"Our port is strategically located to provide logistical nexus between Africa's massive population centres and other continents, Asia and even Europe," he said, pointing out that expansion of handling capacity is still far behind the growing demands for imports and exports.

To meet such demands private sector engagement is needed, as the port of Dar es Salaam needs massive invest-

ment including handling equipment to improve efficiency and reduce ship congestion.

The port is crucial as trade outlet for most neighbouring countries, reliant on exports of raw materials and imports of food, manufactured goods and fuel.

Other plans were the construction of a floating berth to handle tankers as well as developing the Export Processing Zones Authority (EPZA) land patch at Kurasini in Temeke municipality, aside from the Kwala dry port as Kibaha, Coast Region.

Despite some challenges the port served 976 ships from mid last year, surpassing the 792 ships handling target for July-December 2023, clearing 596,000 containers, far eclipsing the 430,000 target for the period, he said.

The major challenge is shortage of berths as the 12 berths available can serve 12 ships at a time, he said, noting that February is usually a high season with so much transit cargo, where the 'berth shortage' to accommodate all ships is keenly felt.

Available infrastructure like railways carry only three percent of the cargo handled at the port, while scanner breakage was another challenge, he added.

## Global economy set for weakest growth since pandemic, warns the World Bank

By Jonathan Josephs

THE global economy is set to grow at its slowest pace since the pandemic, the World Bank has warned.

It has forecast growth of just 2.4% in 2024 and stated higher interest rates were a major factor.

Global trade and investment would continue to be stifled by conflicts in Ukraine and the Middle East, it said.

Outside of the pandemic, growth of 2.4% would be the weakest since the 2009-09 financial crisis.

It said the resilience of the US economy meant last year's growth was likely to come at 2.6%.

Indermit Gill, chief economist, at the World Bank Group said: "Near-term growth will remain weak, leaving many developing countries - especially the poorest - stuck in a trap".

Problems he explained include "paralyzing levels of debt and tenuous access to food for nearly one out of every three people."

Global growth is at historically "mediocre" levels and growth in global trade remains sluggish, he added.

The twice yearly lookahead warned that fallout from the Israel Hamas conflict "has sharply heightened geopolitical risks". It said the disruption to key shipping routes caused by attacks on vessels in the Red Sea increased the likelihood of "inflationary bottlenecks".

Political concern about rising prices was voiced by US Secretary of State

Anthony Blinken on his ongoing tour to the region on Monday. He tweeted that the attacks "have disrupted or diverted nearly 20% of global shipping. This increases the cost and time of moving food, fuel, medicine, and humanitarian assistance."

It comes at a time when central banks around the world are beginning to feel that they are getting on top of the cost living crisis. Nearly two years of steady increases in the cost of borrowing have brought inflation closer of the 2% target in the US, UK and Eurozone and rates cuts are widely expected this year.

The higher cost of borrowing money is slowing the global economy, says the World Bank

However those higher interest rates in the world's biggest economies also make borrowing more expensive in poorer countries and the World Bank is particularly concerned about how affordable that is for the world's 75 poorest countries.

This is one way in which the report highlights that richer countries are recovering better from the pandemic than poorer nations.

"At the end of 2024 we project that all advanced economies will have a per capita income that is higher than what they had before COVID" said Gill.

However he added the average income of an individual in an emerging economy will be 75% of the pre-covid level, while it could be as low as 66% in the poorest countries.

## FAO, EU project seeks sharp cut in chemical fertiliser use

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countries (ACP MEAs) usually working with the European Union, a key export destination for African food crops.

The project implemented by the Tanzania Plant Health and Pesticides Authority (TPHPA) in partnership with the UN agency has assisted the farmers involved in the third phase of ACP MEAs to improve agricultural practices, as the project is aimed at enhancing sound biodiversity and agrochemical management.

It seeks to articulate these practices at field and policy levels in ACP countries, to promote agro ecological practices that enhance biodiversity resilience, he said, listing these practices

as including agroforestry, mixed crop-livestock systems and crop rotation.

These practices can help farmers to increase the levels of biodiversity in their fields, enhance natural control measures of pests and diseases and transition to more climate-resilient farming systems, he explained.

The project is implemented in Dar es Salaam Region in Kigamboni District, Morogoro (Kilosa District), Iringa (Kilolo District), Mbeya (Mbarali District), Arusha (Karatu) and Kilimanjaro (Same), he said, noting that the project started in 2019 and is billed to end later this year.

The project is funded by the EU and being implemented in the ACP zone as a whole, he said, elaborating that

activities undertaken include how to help farmers identify farming methods appropriate to their environments to facilitate soil fertilisation.

"Farmers have benefited from the training to reduce the heavy use of chemical fertiliser, in order to return the soil to its original state. They are also empowered on how to identify diseases in livestock as this also causes the loss of biodiversity in livestock areas," he explained.

Veterinary officers have been in the system to check these diseases and provide information to the relevant ministries, he specified, while Prof. Joseph Ndunguru, the TPHPA director general said that providing the training builds the capacity of techni-

cians to carry out pesticide inspection work.

The key objective is in using pesticides inspection an agro-sector official can contribute to the strategy of fostering the correct and safe use of pesticides to protect human health and the environment.

The big benefit that will come from the training is an increase in productivity in crops and improving produce markets by having quality crops easily sold abroad and bringing in foreign currency, the director noted.

"We are also going to reduce plant disturbances like crop pests and diseases as well as the presence of artificial nutrients in the market and with farmers," he added.



Mara regional commissioner Said Mtanda (gesturing) has a word on Monday with just-enrolled Form One students at Musoma municipality's Mwisenge Secondary School during a tour he made there. It was the day most primary and secondary school across Tanzania opened for the new academic year. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

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tion and regional integration in bodies like the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC), the East African Community (EAC) and unrestrained participation in the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), he said, highlighting also the need for the promotion of multilateral cooperation and elevating non-alignment.

He said the current foreign policy format was adopted 20 years ago and during that time the global environment has seen a number of changes

## Govt publishes new foreign policy draft

compelling a readjustment of the current strategy.

The policy seeks active international engagement, leveraged on the pursuit of economic objectives, preserving past gains and consolidating key principles of Tanzania's traditional foreign policy, he elaborated.

Prof Anna Tibaijuka, a former minister and veteran international civil servant, said that she was happy that Tan-

zania was still implementing the policy of non-alignment, affirming the need to properly put in place a mechanism for proper implementation of the new policy features.

"We need to mobilise experts who will help us to clearly analyse the policy so that we come up with a sufficiently updated document," she said, while the Civic United Front (CUF) chairman, Prof Ibrahim Lipumba recommended

having explicit guidelines at the level of economic policy to facilitate the new foreign policy outlook.

National values are of paramount importance to be included in the policy draft plus climate change adaptation, as Tanzania needs to be at the forefront in the war against climate change, he stated. The issue of Kiswahili should be explained further in the new policy, he added.





Jukwaa la Katiba Tanzania chairperson Dr Ananilea Nkya presents the forum's views on planned amendments to the country's electoral laws to the Parliamentary Administration, Constitution and Law Standing Committee in Dodoma city yesterday. Photo: Correspondent Ibrahim Joseph

## MPs' committee praises digital land management system drive

By Guardian Reporter, Arusha

THE Parliamentary Committee on Lands, Natural Resources and Tourism has hailed the Ministry of Lands, Housing and Human Settlements Development for installing digital land management system meant to eradicate bureaucracy and conflicts.

Dubbed Integrated Land Management System (ILMIS), the new system digitizes all land-related issues, including land administration, registration and surveying. It supports the process of transforming land records and maps into digital formats.

Speaking soon after the briefing on the project here yesterday, the committee chairman Timotheo Mzava commended the ministry for the good job which is poised to eradicate the gaps, improve efficiency in issuance of title deeds and certificates of occupancy while increasing government revenue.

"The committee is satisfied with this big step that the ministry has taken; Tanzanians will remember President Samia Suluhu Hassan for this project," he said.

Some of the committee members said that the system isn't only going to ease service provision but also enable the government collect required taxes while also responding

to various challenges facing Tanzanians.

Lucy Mayenga, a Special Seats MP said that the system will help address land conflicts facing people in various areas while preventing others from occurring.

Festo Sanga (Makete) said improving the system was a big step which should be commended as it is going to answer a number of challenges which Tanzanians are facing in the land sector.

He urged the ministry to ensure that its human resources are well prepared to use the system in order to bring the intended outcomes.

Emanuel Adamson (Tabora) also commended the government but queried how safe the system is as there are a number of digital systems but their full implementation remains a major challenge.

The ILMIS is expected to start operating in five regions of Arusha, Dodoma, Mwanza, Mbeya and Tanga and is expected to speed up access to land services online.

*"The committee is satisfied with this big step that the ministry has taken; Tanzanians will remember President Samia Suluhu Hassan for this project"*

## Mwinyi promises private sector bigger role in economic development

By Guardian Reporter, Zanzibar

ZANZIBAR President Dr Hussein Ali Mwinyi has said that his government will continue working closely with the private sector players to facilitate their participation in development projects.

According to him, the private sector plays a very big role and is contributing immensely in the implementation of development projects and building the economy.

Dr Mwinyi made the statement yesterday in Urban West Region, Zanzibar, during the launch of Fumba Port, which is part of the activities to celebrate the 60th anniversary of Zanzibar Revolution.

Citing an example of developed nations, Dr Mwinyi said that all of them have recorded the milestones of development by engaging the private sector in their development projects.

"The country's economy cannot rely solely on the public sector; it is crucial for the private sector to work together with the government to build the economy and bring development to the

people," he said.

He added that the private sector can collaborate with the government in implementing various development projects in many ways.

"Some projects can only be carried out by the private sector while others can be implemented through joint ventures with the government and the latter approach is used in countries around the world, including Zanzibar," he said.

He said that the government has continued to take measures to improve the transportation sector by constructing more ports such as the modern port of Mangapwani in Unguja and Shumba in Pemba.

He emphasised the significant contribution of the port to the national income and its role as an important economic gateway, saying that the government is also planning to construct modern ports for passengers to further improve transportation sector.

"The government must make deliberate efforts to establish strong strategies that ensure our ports make a sig-

nificant contribution to our economy and increase our national income," he said.

He further said that the government decided to collaborate with investors to provide services at Fumba Port due to the overwhelmed Malindi Port.

Malindi Port, which is over 35 years old and underwent major renovations in 1988, does not have sufficient capacity to provide efficient services due to the increasing population and economic activities in Zanzibar.

Dr Khalid Salum Mohamed, Zanzibar Minister for Works, Communications and Transport commended Dr Mwinyi for his determination in transforming the sector through improvement of ports and other infrastructure.

He added that the government is committed to strengthening the transportation sector by constructing ports in various parts of Zanzibar and improving passenger ports.

Talb Khamis, Fumba port captain, said the transport sector was an important area for the development of the blue economy in Zanzibar.

The Fumba Port project consists of two phases, with the first phase commencing in May 2023 after the signing of an agreement with the Zanzibar government through Zanzibar Ports Corporation (ZPC) whereby the first phase includes the construction of a ship ramp, container yard, cargo handling equipment, workers' office, and various systems for port operations and security.

"The main objective of the project is to reduce the transportation costs of goods to and from Zanzibar via Mombasa Port and ease container congestion at Malindi Port," he said.

By Correspondent Joseph Mwendapole

## 'Privately-owned industrial park in Kibaha all ready for business in Feb'

THE construction of KAMAKA Industrial Park which is expected to cost 3.5trn/- in Kibaha District, Coast Region, has reached 93 percent and is expected to be completed next month.

Dr Ashatu Kijaji, Minister for Industry and Trade, made the remarks yesterday when visited the industrial park to see the progress of its construction and the challenges that exist in order to work on them through sectorial ministers.

She commended local investor KAMAKA Co. Ltd for implementing such a big investment with the potential to help the nation to create new jobs and get foreign currency.

In addition, Dr Kijaji said that the construction of industrial parks and

factories help reduce the challenge of unemployment for youth in the country.

Regarding challenges, Dr Kijaji said there are some that have started to be worked on such as access road on which she promised to meet with Works Minister Innocent Bashungwa to see how to resolve it.

Abubakar Kunenge, Coast Regional Commissioner, said that the Makofia-Mlandizi-Mzenga-Vikumburu-Mloka road is important as it passes through an investment area with strategic projects.

Regarding water challenge, Kunenge said that he had already spoken with Water Minister Jumaa

Aweso who promised to come to the area to see the magnitude of the problem and take appropriate action.

Tumaini Kabengula, Finance and Marketing Officer at KAMAKA Co. Ltd said that when the industrial park is completed, it will provide 200,000 job opportunities including 30,000 direct ones.

"The project started in October 2021 for the first phase which consisted the construction of the main gate and fence, the police station, the administration building, the office and residence of emergency responders, the clinic, the 54 megawatt power station and the road system outside and inside," said Kabengula.



Jovin Njunwa, an assistant programme officer with an agency engaged in facilitating dialogue as relates to the need for HIV self-testing as well as female genital mutilation and sexual and reproductive health, conducts a youth sensitisation session in Tarime town late last week. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

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1.	JUDITH ALEXANDER KITALLY	Nyumba ya makazi yenye kwanja na. P11573 Reg. Plan na. DSM 0021736 eneo la Mbezi Luis Manispaa Ya Ubungu. Iliyosajiliwa kwa jina la JUDITH ALEXANDER KITALLY.	27.01.2024

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# Headline inflation for December had fallen to 3pc - NBS

By Polycarp Machira, Dodoma

THE annual headline inflation rate for the month of December, 2023 has decreased to 3.0 percent from 3.2 percent that was recorded in November, the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) reported yesterday.

The decrease explains that speed of price change for commodities for the year ended December 2023 decreased compared to the speed recorded for the November 2023.

NBS stated that the overall index went up from 110.01 recorded in December 2022 to 113.34 in December 2023.

Food and non-alcoholic beverages inflation rate for December 2023 also decreased to 2.3 percent from 3.7 percent that was recorded in November 2023.

On the other hand, annual inflation rate for all items without food and non-alcoholic beverages for December 2023 has increased to 3.3 percent from 3.0 percent that was recorded in November 2023.

"NCPI has shown a relatively stable price movement from December 2022 to December 2023, ranging between 110.01 and 113.34," reads the statement.

In addition, according to the NBS, annual headline inflation rates over the same period have shown a stable trend that ranges between 3.0 percent and 4.9 percent.

However, monthly consumer price index during the period under review has increased by 0.6 percent. The increase of the overall index is attributed to price increase for some food and non-food items.

Some food items that contributed to an increase of the index include: wheat flour by 1.7 percent, sorghum flour (6.7), beef (2.2), vegetables (1.7) cocoyam (3.5), green bananas (3.1) dried beans by (1.9), dried peas (1.7), dried cowpeas (1.5) and sugar (4.0).

The non-food items that contributed to the increase of the index includes garments for women by 1.0 percent, rentals paid by tenants (2.7) percent,

cooking gas (1.0), kerosene (3.0) firewood (4.1), bus fare (5.5) taxi fare (.9) and goods and services for personal care (1.5).

Annually, the average headline inflation has decreased to 3.8 percent in 2023 from an average of 4.3 percent recorded in 2022.

The results also show that annual average inflation rate for food and non-alcoholic beverages has decreased to 6.8 percent in 2023 from 7.3 percent recorded in 2022.

Furthermore, core inflation decreased to 2.3 percent in 2023 from 3.0 observed in 2022.

The decrease in the average annual headline inflation rate in 2023 is mainly contributed by the decrease of inflation rate for food and non-alcoholic beverages between 2022 and 2023.

In comparison with some East African countries, Uganda has recorded stagnant annual inflation rate at 2.6 percent while Kenya has recorded reduced rate at 6.6 percent in December, 2023, down from 6.8 percent recorded in November, 2023.



**Some food items that contributed to an increase of the index include: wheat flour by 1.7 percent, sorghum flour (6.7), beef (2.2), vegetables (1.7) cocoyam (3.5), green bananas (3.1) dried beans by (1.9), dried peas (1.7), dried cowpeas (1.5) and sugar (4.0)**

## Mwinyi defends demolition of old buildings in Zanzibar

By Guardian Reporter, Zanzibar

ZANZIBAR President Dr Hussein Ali Mwinyi has said his government will continue "improving" old buildings in the isles to make them more attractive and benefit future generations.

According to him, the government will not listen to some people who oppose the ongoing facelift of the city with argument that the buildings should remain intact with works limited to restoration but not demolition and new structures.

He made the remarks yesterday when opening Tumekuja Secondary School at Mwembeladu in Unguja which was constructed after the demolition of the old one.

"My government will not sit here witnessing old buildings rotting and falling down; we will ensure that we make the right decision for the benefit of the whole nation so that the coming generations also benefit," he said.

He said that before making the improvements as well as constructing modern schools, pupils were learning in classrooms which were in poor conditions, thus affecting their performance.

"I will continue supporting construction of new schools replacing the old ones because I am not ready to continue seeing our children learning in a poor environment while sitting down with no desks or strong buildings to cover them during rains," he said.

Dr Mwinyi said that prior to the construction of the new school, classes were congested with up to 200 pupils per classroom.

"In order to address the challenge of pupils going to school in shifts, we need to construct 5,000 classrooms; this is why we are striving to ensure that we improve and construct more schools to address the congestion," he said.

He commended teachers for working hard because for a long time they have been working in a poor environment with pupils in congested classrooms.

"This new school has the capacity of 1,755 pupils and it has been equipped with three modern laboratories and a library," he added.

Lela Muhamed Mussa, Minister for Education and Vocational Training, said construction of the school has cost 4.4bn/-.

She added that the ministry has started using the newly developed curricula in primary schools to stimulate provision of quality education and boost performance in national examinations.



**I will continue supporting construction of new schools replacing the old ones because I am not ready to continue seeing our children learning in a poor environment while sitting down with no desks or strong buildings to cover them during rains**



Heavy-duty trucks loaded with sugarcane lined up at Dar es Salaam's much-frequented mixed-goods market yesterday, waiting for wholesale customers mainly engaged in retail sugarcane juice processing. Photo: Correspondent Miraji Msala

## TANAPA upgrades road to ease shipment of crops

By Correspondent Marc Nkwame, Mugumu Ward.

THE road connecting three villages in Serengeti District, Mara Region is being upgraded to gravel level to speed up transportation in the precinct.

Stretching at nearly 13 kilometers long, the Park-Nyigoti to Nyichoka road which runs through Bokore all the way to Magata is among the development initiatives being implemented under the Serengeti Ecosystem Development and Conservation Project (SEDCP) by the Trustees of the Tanzania National Parks.

It connects the villages of Bokore, Nyichoka and Park Nyigoti in Mugumu

Ward. "During rainy seasons, the bridge linking the two sections of the road used to be frequently swept off by gushing storm water, sometimes costing lives of people and livestock," said Juma Wambura, Chairman of Bokore Village, adding that so far two people from the village have drowned to death at the channel.

A large box culvert was being installed at the dangerous crossing, to solve the problem once and for all while bulldozers and tractors continue to level and compact the gravel on the track which has also been widened a bit from its original width.

"The road is an important

infrastructure in that it is used to ferry farm harvests such as maize and millet from the fields to market outlets," said TANAPA conservation officer Robert Masobeji who is in charge of the community outreach department.

Measuring 12.92 kilometers, the road is being upgraded by the TANAPA through a local contractor, Tamau Company Limited, under the supervision of the Dar es Salaam-based CDM Smith SE.

It is done through the Rehabilitation of Rural Infrastructure in Serengeti District (SDC) Output 2, involving the Park Nyigoti -Nyichoka feeder road implemented through the SEDCP's 'Sustainable Conservation for

Development.'

The project is being financed by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) through the German Development Bank (KfW).

Other projects currently implemented under the Serengeti Ecosystem Development and Conservation Project in Mara Region includes the construction of teachers' quarters at Kazi and Kebosongo primary schools.

There are also construction of two classrooms at Kisangura Primary School as well as a modern dormitory for girls at Manchira Secondary School and a Dispensary at Bokore Village.



Residents of Shisyente village in Mbeya city's Masoko ward pictured late last week engaging self-help spirit in digging a trench pending the laying of a pipe for a water project being implemented by the Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Agency (Ruwasa). Photo: Correspondent Nebart Msokwa

## Eighteen diagnosed with cholera, five admitted

By Guardian Correspondent, Shinyanga

EIGHTEEN people have been diagnosed with cholera in Shinyanga Region with five still in hospital.

Speaking to journalists here yesterday, Shinyanga Regional Commissioner Christina Mndeme said that so far no death has been confirmed and that health experts were making close follow-up of the disease.

RC Mndeme said that last month, five people died after suffering from diarrhoea and vomiting at Kagongwa Ward in Kahama District and compelled the authorities to

form a team of experts to monitor the situation.

According to her, many patients who have been diagnosed with the disease have been treated and discharged, adding that only five patients are still in hospital.

"Out of the 18 patients, 15 are from Kahama District, two from Shinyanga municipality and one from Kishapu District. However, it hasn't been confirmed yet that the five people died of cholera," she said.

She called upon residents to continue taking precautions as the disease spreads quickly, stressing

the need for adhering to hygiene by avoiding using non-boiled water, eating fruits that haven't been washed, eating cold food and use of poor toilets.

The RC said the region was well prepared to fight the disease whereas three medical camps have been set up at the Ihapa Health Centre in Shinyanga Municipality, Kagongwa Health Centre in Kahama District and Kishapu Health Centre.

Musa Makungu, diseases monitoring and control coordinator in the region said they have embarked on educating the public in public areas such as markets and food vending places.

Late last year, cholera claimed four lives in Kagera Region

Kagera Regional Commissioner Fatma Mwasa said the first cases were reported on November 29 at Buchurago Village, Bugorora Ward in Missenyi District, adding that out of the four people who died, three belonged to one family.

Cholera is a deadly diarrhoeal disease that can kill within hours if left untreated. Results from water quality surveys show that the source for the disease is contaminated water, usually borne out of poor hygienic practices and lack of sanitation facilities.





Freshly harvested maize on sale at Dar es Salaam's Mawasiliano mixed-goods market yesterday. The seasonal practice is a common scene across the city and, indeed, in most other parts of Tanzania. Photo: Correspondent Miraji Msala

## Tanzania to host world artificial language conference

By Guardian Correspondent, Arusha

MORE than 2,000 participants from various parts of the world are set to convene at the 109th Universal Congress of Esperanto scheduled to take place from August 3 to 10 this year in Arusha city.

Costantine Mashauri, chairman of Esperanto speakers committee in Tanzania said that efforts by President Samia Suluhu Hassan to strengthen diplomacy as well as open the country have brought such an opportunity for Tanzania to host this international

congress.

He said that the meeting which is being held for the first time in Africa is bringing participants from 109 countries that speak the artificial language, allowing them to exchange their experiences, present their cultures, discover the host country and discover the host culture through music, dance, theatre and cinema.

In addition, he said that through the conference, the country of Tanzania, as the organizer, will have the opportunity to market the tourism attractions that are available.

"When you get more than 2,000 guests,

it is a big opportunity. So, we are happy and ready to utilize the conference to promote our country and what we have for the guests," he said.

However, he said so far 350 people have registered and 69 have confirmed their participation.

Ephraim Mafuru, the executive director of Arusha International Conference Centre (AICC) said that they are all relieved to meet the board team of the association of Esperanto language speakers who have come for the preparation of the meeting.

"In the past three days, 30 people came, including the Chairman of the

African Commission of the Association of Esperanto-speaking People in the World Patrick Manirakiza along with Jeremie Sabiyumva who is a board member, we welcomed them," he said.

He added that they are well prepared to host the meeting and the centre is already teaching nine young people to understand the language for them to serve the meeting fluently.

"It is one of our strategies to promote economic diplomacy through these international meetings; this is why stakeholders are well prepared," Mafuru said.

## South Korea bans dog meat trade

SEOUL

THE slaughter and sale of dogs for their meat is to become illegal in South Korea after MPs backed a new law.

The legislation, set to come into force by 2027, aims to end the centuries-old practice of humans eating dog meat.

Dog meat stew, called "boshintang", is considered a delicacy among some older South Koreans, but the meat has fallen out of favour with diners and is no longer popular with young people.

Under the new law the consumption of dog meat itself will not be illegal.

According to a Gallup poll last year, only 8% of people said they had tried dog meat in the past 12 months, down from 27% in 2015. Fewer than a fifth of those polled said they supported the consumption of the meat.

Lee Chae-yeon, a 22-year-old student, said the ban was necessary to promote animal rights. "More people have pets today," she told the BBC in Seoul. "Dogs are like family now and it's not nice to eat our family."

The new law focuses on the dog meat trade - those convicted of butchering dogs face up to three years in prison, while people found guilty of raising dogs for meat or selling dog meat could serve a maximum of two years.

Farmers and restaurant owners have three years to find alternative sources of employment and income before the legislation comes into force.

According to government statistics, South Korea had around 1,600 dog meat restaurants and 1,150 dog farms in 2023, all of which will now have to submit a plan to phase out their businesses to their local authorities.

The government has promised to fully support dog meat farmers, butchers and restaurant owners, whose businesses will be forced to close, though the details of what compensation will be offered have yet to be worked through.

Current President Yoon Suk Yeol and his wife own six dogs and have called for a ban on dog meat

On Tuesday lunchtime in Seoul, down an alleyway with several dog meat restaurants, a handful of older people were tucking into the stew and the generational divide was stark.

Kim Seon-ho, 86, was disappointed by the ban. "We've eaten this since the Middle Ages. Why stop us from eating our traditional food?" he said. "If you ban dog meat then you should ban beef."

Previous governments, dating back to the 1980s, have pledged to ban dog meat, but failed to make progress. Current President Yoon Suk Yeol and First Lady Kim Keon Hee are known animal lovers - they have six dogs, and Ms Kim has called for the practice of eating dogs to end.

Animal rights groups, which have long been pushing for the ban, praised the outcome of Tuesday's vote.

Jung Ah Chae, the executive director of the Humane Society in Korea, said she was surprised to see the ban in her lifetime. "While my heart breaks for all the millions of dogs for whom this change has come too late, I am overjoyed that South Korea can now close this miserable chapter in our history and embrace a dog friendly future," she said.

Dog meat farmer, Joo Yeong-bong, told the BBC the industry was in despair. "In 10 years, the industry would have disappeared. We're in our 60s and 70s and now we have no choice but to lose our livelihoods," he said, adding that this was "an infringement of people's freedom to eat what they like".

One dog meat restaurant owner in her 60s, Mrs Kim, told the BBC she was frustrated by the ban, and blamed it on the rise in the number of people in South Korea having pets.

## Climate change poses huge challenge to avian migration

BEIJING

AVIAN migration is a challenging journey that is subject to sudden storms, vast bodies of water and the risk of losing direction.

Climate change has made this situation worse, especially with record-low temperatures in northern China this winter.

In early November, a snowstorm struck more than 100 Oriental white storks in Changchun, the capital of Northeast China's Jilin province, during their southward migration. The birds are classified as first-level protected animals in China.

As the storm passed, most of the storks continued their journey, except for 11 birds who were too exhausted to fly on.

On Nov 16, staff members from the local forestry and grassland bureau transported these birds to the Qilihai wetland in Tianjin, where they joined others migrating to the area. The 11 storks are in good condition in their natural habitat, the bureau said.

Oriental white storks usually leave their breeding grounds in Northeast China for the warmer south in September or October, returning north in spring.

By Nov 24, about half the migratory birds in China had completed their journeys and reached coastal areas in eastern and southern parts of the country for the winter, the National Forestry and Grassland Administration said.

At that time, cranes and storks were experiencing a second migratory peak, the administration added.

The China Meteorological Administration said the increasing frequency of extreme weather events, rising sea levels, disappearing wetlands, and record temperatures are having adverse effects on avian migration.

Severe drought, wind and temperature drops, and wildfires that force birds to alter their routes are contributing to migratory difficulties.

Without the ability to replenish their energy and rest in areas along their route, birds may struggle to reach their habitats safely, the administration said.

In late summer 2020, wildfires and an early snowstorm are thought to have played a major role in causing a huge number of deaths among migratory birds throughout the west of the United States.

An essay published in the journal Geo-Health in 2021 said a laboratory report showed that the birds were severely emaciated.



George Simbachawene (R), Minister of State in the President's Office (Public Service Management and Good Governance), exchanges views with Watumishi Housing Investments staff when he toured the agency's headquarters in Dar es Salaam yesterday. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

## Tourism sector investors query Kenya's new rates

NAIROBI

KENYA faces a potential loss of business to other East African countries following the decision to increase entry fees to parks starting this year.

In the new charges, which took effect on January 1, Kenyans and other East African Community (EAC) adults will pay \$14 to visit urban parks such as Nairobi National Park during peak and low seasons. Children will pay \$3.40 as entry fees, up from \$1.4.

This is an increase from the \$2.80 fee that adults from the EAC were paying to enter the parks.

On the other hand, foreign adults

from the rest of Africa will pay \$20 while international tourists will be charged about \$100.

At different Premium Parks such as the Amboseli and Lake Nakuru National parks adult visitors will pay \$7 entry fee during the peak season and \$5.50 during low season.

The announcement of new park rates is being implemented less than a year after the Kenyan government introduced the statutory 14 percent value added tax and an extra two percent tourism levy to the Tourism Fund, which stakeholders claim has increased operating costs.

Tourism industry stakeholders have warned Kenya Wildlife Services (KWS),

the state corporation responsible for conserving and managing national and marine parks, that the move will discourage tourists from visiting the recreational areas.

Travellers Beach Hotel managing director Hillary Siele said the new rates will impact not only tour operators but also hoteliers.

"That was an idea implemented prematurely. There was a need for further public participation on the fees, considering this time when the economy is not doing well," said Siele.

Mohammed Hersi, a hotelier, said the new charges will discourage tourists from visiting national and marine parks and opt to other countries with similar packages.

"Why spend more in Kenya yet you can get similar services and animals in neighbouring countries?" he asked.

The charges are way above our competitors Tanzania, Rwanda, and South Africa. This will affect our numbers as tourists will opt for those countries since they offer the same packages at a cheaper price which will be a greatest stumbling block to tourism and economic growth," he said.

Now, Kenya becomes one of the most expensive safari destinations for foreigners, considering Ugandan parks charge between \$45 and \$60, while Tanzania charges \$80 for international tourists.



## WiLDAF roots for protection of women against violence in politics

By Guardian Correspondent, Dodoma

THE Women in Law and Development in Africa (WiLDAF) has called for improved legal system to protect women against all forms violence during elections and other political activities.

Anna Kulaya, WiLDAF national coordinator, made the call in Dodoma recently while submitting recommendations before Parliamentary Standing Committee on Governance, Constitution and Legal Affairs at a public hearing to collect views for the three proposed election-related bills.

Kulaya said that violence against women in politics and elections, especially sexual harassments, deters many women from contesting for political leadership positions.

She added that the ongoing reforms should take due regard of the situation and ensure that legal frameworks provide maximum protection of women for more inclusive democratic processes.

WiLDAF called for review of Section 6B of the Political Parties Affairs Bill to require political parties to set robust mechanisms through envisioned gender and social inclusion frameworks to address sexual harassment and other forms of violence against women in politics and elections.

Moreover, WiLDAF recommended Section 60 (1) of the Presidential, Parliamentary and Councillors Elections Bill to include gender based violence and discrimination as one of the reasons that can disqualify a candidate from contesting.

The organization also made a call for amendment of Section 37 of the same bill to include gender based violence and discrimination as one of the violations that can be used to contest a candidate nominated for a political office.

Another recommendation is for all of the bills to ensure that the definitions sections include meanings of terms and concepts such as sex, gender, gender-based violence in elections.

The call is part of the recommendations submitted by WiLDAF at the Parliament grounds in Dodoma during the public hearing to receive recommendations on the three electoral bills tabled by the government last year.

In 2023, the government tabled the three bills in the National Assembly in a bid to improve the electoral process in the country following a long outcry by democracy stakeholders.

The three bills that are currently in public hearing are the Presidential, Parliamentary and Councillors, National Electoral Commission as well as the Political Affairs.

Tanzania is scheduled to conduct its local government elections this year and General Election next year.

## Contractor sees infrastructure facelift in Z'bar

By Guardian Reporter, Zanzibar

CHINA Civil Engineering Construction Corporation (CCECC) has said that the ongoing road construction in Zanzibar, including fly overs, will stimulate economic growth and facelift the entire Stone Town tourist site and boost arrivals.

Zhang Junle, CCECC managing director made the remarks here yesterday when speaking to journalists on the construction project expected to cost 232bn/-.

He said construction of road from the main airport to Mnazi Mmoja Hospital with a length of 6.5 kilometres complete and the construction of elevated road is ongoing Mwanakwerekwe area and which is designed end traffic congestion.

On his company's experience, he said that it has the ability to build roads with high quality, adding that it has been implementing similar projects in various parts of East Africa.

He said the company successfully built the 1,860 kilometre Tanzania-Zambia Railway Authority (TAZARA) railway in the 1970s which still connects the two countries.

On the quality standards of the roads being built in Zanzibar, he said the project includes the road from Mkokotoni to Mtoni with a length of 52 kilometres which is funded by the African Development Bank (AfDB).

He said the Zanzibar government expects to build 277 kilometres of roads through the corporation and construction activities are ongoing in various parts of Zanzibar.

Zhang said that a total of 960 Tanzanians have benefited from the projects being implemented, including small companies skills transfer and subcontracts.

He commended the government of Zanzibar for the pending commemoration of 60 years of Zanzibar Revolution while strengthening international cooperation.

He stated that records show that Zanzibar and China have had a historical cooperation since the revolution in 1964 and there are many projects funded by China.

Xiong Yun Xu, CCECC project manager said the implementation of the road projects in Zanzibar was progressing well and the road from the airport to Mnazi Mmoja has already been launched by President of Zanzibar Dr Hussein Ali Mwinyi.



**...the company successfully built the 1,860 kilometre TAZARA railway in the 1970s which still connects the two countries**



Students of Zanzibar's Tumekuja Secondary School all ready for practicals in the school's science laboratory yesterday shortly after a tour by Zanzibar President Dr Hussein Ali Mwinyi. Photo: Zanzibar State House

## 'Butimba project ends water shortage in Mwanza'

By Guardian Correspondent, Mwanza

WATER Minister Jumaa Aweso has tasked Mwanza Urban Water Supply and Sanitation Authority (MWAUWASA) to immediately provide the service to residents on the waiting list after the completion of Butimba water project.

Aweso made the call on Monday when members of Parliamentary Budget Committee visited Butimba water project in

Mwanza city.

The minister said that completion of the project is good news for the people who were facing water shortage because the need was 172 million litres, but residents were getting only 90 million litres from the Capripoint project.

"It's time for MWAUWASA to supply clean and safe water without delay," he said.

He said that the ministry will continue to build strategic projects and solve water

problems in urban and rural areas, adding that currently, there is a project for 28 cities in areas facing water shortage.

Daniel Sillo, Budget Committee Chairman, said the committee ensures allocation of funds for various government projects, adding that they will not be an obstacle but ensure that they manage existing and new water projects in various parts of the country.

"A good job has been done; we are satisfied

with what is happening here in the Butimba project. This will meet the needs of the people of Mwanza. I commend President Samia Suluhu Hassan for her sincere commitment to helping women and girls get access to piped water," he said.

Selestine Mahubi said implementation of the Butimba water project was implemented in four phases: taking water from Lake Victoria to the treatment plant, from there to the tanks and thereafter to the users.



Shinyanga regional commissioner Christina Mndeme (R) updates journalists in Shinyanga municipality yesterday on the incidence of cholera in the region. Photo: Correspondent Marco Maduhu

## RC warns parents who hide children with disabilities

By Guardian Correspondent, Shinyanga

SHINYANGA Regional Commissioner Christina Mndeme has warned parents and guardians who hide children with disabilities to stop them from going to school.

According to her, it is unfair to hide children who have all the rights to attend school and realize their dreams.

She issued the warning yesterday while visiting some schools in the region to inspect enrolment progress in the 2024 academic year and said that the government will not

entertain people who abuse children by not allowing them to enjoy their rights.

She said parents and the society in general have a role to ensure that all children go to school regardless of their physical ability condition.

"We need to respect them because if they are well treated and given the right education, they can change their own situation for the better and even employ other able-bodied people," she said.

According to the RC, the government has made major improvements in schools, including infrastructure and teachers while

also enabling children to access education free which all children of school-going age should enjoy.

Mndeme said the government will continue making efforts to improve school infrastructure such as classrooms by equipping them with enough learning and teaching materials for provision of quality education.

"We have already constructed 603 new classrooms to ensure that pupils study in a comfortable environment; we call upon teachers to continue working hard to help our children get required skills for them to

reach their potential," she said.

Hassan Hemed, headteacher at Mwenye Primary School said that they have received 80 children for nursery out of the expected 156 and 217 for standard one out of the expected 230.

James Msimbe, Ngokolo Secondary School headmaster said that they have enrolled 79 form one pupils out of the expected 347 and that the registration is ongoing.

During the visit, the RC also distributed exercise books, pencils and pens to pupils in all schools that she visited.





Aziz Said Ali (L), Director of Tigo-Zantel's Zanzibar Region, has a word yesterday with seaweed dealer Jaha Haji Khamis at trade exhibition now in progress in Zanzibar with the firm as the main sponsor. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

## Kenya facing backlash over its new 'hectic' visa-free entry

NAIROBI

KENYA is facing a backlash over the visa-free entry policy introduced for all foreigners this month, with some terming it "hectic".

President William Ruto announced the policy last month to advocate for a visa-free travel within the African continent.

Kenyan authorities have since clarified that while the country grants visa-free entry, visitors need to apply for electronic travel authorisation (ETA) by submitting documentation and paying a \$30 (£23) processing fee.

The requirement also applies to countries whose citizens previously had unrestricted access to Kenya.

By Sunday, Kenya had received more than 9,000 visa applications through the digital platform, authorities said.

But some foreigners are now criticising the government, saying that the new policy has created confusion and made travel to Kenya tougher and costlier.

"Dear Africans, Kenya is not telling the world the truth when it says that it is now visa free, it is not! It has in fact made travelling there more difficult for Africans who didn't need a visa before," prominent Zimbabwean journalist Hopewell Chin'ono said on X.

"So until 24 hours ago, as a Malawian, I could just wake up, buy a ticket and fly to Kenya in the afternoon, visa free. Now Kenya has 'removed visa' for everyone visiting Kenya, but now everyone has to pay \$30 travel authorization fee 72 hours before travel. What? Hectic." Malawian entrepreneur Jones Ntaukira shared on X.

Some Kenyans have voiced fears that the tougher restrictions could trigger a boycott by some foreigners or that other countries could impose reciprocal restrictions.



**So until 24 hours ago, as a Malawian, I could just wake up, buy a ticket and fly to Kenya in the afternoon, visa free. Now Kenya has 'removed visa' for everyone visiting Kenya, but now everyone has to pay \$30 travel authorization fee 72 hours before travel. What? Hectic**

## Zimbabwe says all 15 trapped miners rescued

HARARE

ALL 15 miners trapped in a Zimbabwean gold mine for four days have been rescued. Mines Minister Soda Zhemu on Monday said the workers were healthy and conscious. Video footage posted on social media platform X, formerly known as Twitter, by Mangwana showed the workers, covered in mud, being greeted by a small

jubilant crowd at the mine site. The Redwing gold mine owned by Metallon Corporation caved in after the shaft collapsed on Thursday. Officials said an earth tremor might have caused the accident. Families of the trapped workers have been camping at the mine site in the mining village of Penhalogato - 270 km (167 miles) east of the capital Harare - waiting for the

rescue. The area is home to many undocumented workers who scrape a living amid economic hardship particularly since the mine was placed under corporate rescue in 2020. Mine accidents are not uncommon in Zimbabwe. At least nine people died in September after the collapse of Bay Horse Mine, a disused gold mine in Chegutu, about 110km (70 miles) west of Zimbabwe's capital,

Harare. Mining accidents in Zimbabwe - which sits on vast reserves of gold, platinum and diamonds - are not uncommon. Mining methods are often rudimentary and safety standards are largely disregarded. In 2019, dozens of miners drowned after heavy rain flooded the Silver Moon and Cricket mines near the town of Kadoma in the centre of the country.



Norland Industrial Group investor Pheno Kashimbiri, a dealer in nutritional supplements, addresses stakeholders in Dodoma city yesterday. Photo: Correspondent Peter Mkwavila

## Boeing risking global scrutiny following Alaska Airline incident

WASHINGTON DC

BOEING finds itself grappling with renewed safety concerns as federal authorities announce a temporary grounding of select Boeing 737 Max planes following a distressing incident involving an Alaska Airlines jetliner.

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has issued an emergency order mandating immediate inspections for some Max 9 planes, impacting a global fleet of approximately 171 aircraft.

This development compounds the challenges facing Boeing, given the history of two fatal crashes involving its Max line-up. In the most recent incident, an Alaska Airlines Boeing 737 Max 9 experienced a fuselage panel blowout shortly after takeoff, resulting in a swift loss of cabin pressure.

While remarkably no injuries were reported, the FAA's emergency order intensifies scrutiny on the safety of Boeing's best-selling plane, raising concerns within the aviation industry.

The repercussions of this safety directive are palpable for Alaska Airlines, which had to cancel 141 flights, amounting to 20% of its scheduled departures on Monday.

The airline foresees travel disruptions extending at least through mid-week. United, having grounded its 79 MAX 9s, faced the cancellation of 226 flights on Monday, constituting 8% of its scheduled departures.

Notably, out of the 171 planes affected by the FAA order, 144 are currently operating in the United States, as per data from aviation analytics firm Cirium.

International carriers, including Turkish Airlines, Panama's Copa Airlines, and Aeromexico, have also announced the grounding of affected jets in compliance with the safety directive.

This widespread response underscores the gravity of the situation, with airlines prioritizing passenger safety amid heightened scrutiny and ongoing investigations.

## Pan Africanists rally youth to secure Africa's future

ACCRA

RENNED pan-African advocates, Professor PLO Lumumba, Dr. Arikana Chihombori-Quao and Peter Obi, have united to encourage African youth to persevere in shaping the future of the continent.

Scheduled for January 7, the self-funded NGO event in Ghana faced an

unexpected cancellation. Speaking post-cancellation, Dr. Arikana expressed regret but emphasized their duty to make amends. "We acknowledge our let-down to the youth, but we recognize our duty to set things right. With the wisdom, energy, and intelligence of our youth, we believe in steering Africa towards a new path," expressed Dr. Arikana. The speakers, invited to deliver a message of hope and unity, highlighted the youth's

role in shaping Africa's future. Professor PLO Lumumba referenced Osageyefo Kwame Nkrumah's call for African unity in Accra 67 years ago, noting that the message of hope will persist despite the disruption.

Professor Lumumba anticipates similar events across Africa, emphasizing the continent's growing intimacy through initiatives like the African Continental Free Trade Area headquartered in Accra.

Nigerian politician Peter Obi blamed Africa's challenges on failed leadership, urging a change. Despite abundant resources, he emphasized the continent's high levels of poverty, signalling the need for transformative leadership. While 'The Convention 2024' faced an unexpected setback, the speakers remained resolute in their commitment to empowering African youth and fostering continental unity.



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## Blacklisting of some varsity degrees spells crisis for institutions in region

**A**UTHORITIES in Uganda have been making efforts to deny or qualify reports about Nigeria rejecting degrees earned from the East African country not in isolation but as part of the blacklisting of degrees from a series of countries, in West Africa and then in East Africa.

It is reported that Uganda's National Council for Higher Education is denying allegations to the effect that the country may face Nigeria's rejection of its degree certificates over authenticity concerns.

That may well be an evident understatement, as the range of concerns is wide and the steps are quite affirmative. Other reports said pointedly that last week saw Nigeria announce an expansion of its suspension of degrees accreditation, affecting Kenya and Uganda.

The decision followed an earlier move by Nigeria to suspend accreditation for degrees obtained from institutions in neighbouring Benin and Togo.

It suggests that there is a widespread problem, although thus far still unclear if it is just in foreign countries that misdemeanours may occur in obtaining degrees or whether Nigeria ought to have started with a number of its own universities.

Indeed, when instances of cheating or fake degrees occur, the issue isn't entire countries but that of specific applicants for accreditation, as it isn't possible that the other way can be true.

The Nigerian education minister is reported to have stated that the authorities there will not stop at just Benin and Togo but intend to extend the dragnet to the likes of Uganda and Kenya as well as Niger in the neighbourhood "where such institutions have been set up".

The scandal arose after an investigative reporter detailed how he had acquired a degree for a four-year programme from a Benin university in less than two months. A bombshell!

That doesn't necessarily suggest that this is the main route for obtaining degrees in that country or that Nigerian

students seeking foreign degrees just bribe some university officials and the degrees land in their hands.

Common sense has it that most universities teach and examine their students and that, for established universities, fake degrees are few and far between.

This would be because any clear case of such scam could shake an institution to its foundations, as is now the case.

In the circumstances, it is relevant to ask whether the problem is the universities at issue or degree-hungry Nigerian students with bundles of cash at the ready.

It is said that two wrongs do not make a right, so the fact that there are Nigerian students with bundles of cash going around enticing less endowed members of faculty staff or administrative officials is one thing while blacklisting countries for moves instigated largely by pecuniary pressure is another matter altogether.

Nigeria ought to thoroughly check each application for accreditation and recognition of a degree certificate, setting up periodic matriculation centres for applicants, etc.

This incident also illustrates how difficult it will be to set up workable regional institutions and, indeed, standards that ought to be followed in academic conduct or validation of quality of education. This matter was under heated debate at a regional conference held in Dar es Salaam a couple of months ago, and it is now clear that there is no regional standard that can be applied and checked from within.

Even with foreign institutions there are hanky-panky academic qualifications - for instance, having someone collecting detailed newspaper articles and presenting the same, complete with a hefty bundle of cash, for a masters' and even a doctoral degree citation.

With these days of ChatGPT, etc., academic and other rascals can do and obtain practically anything and everything they may be thirsting and hungering for.

## With rains and dislocations, Tanroads, Tarura in trouble

**R**EPAIRING key infrastructure damaged by rains repeatedly emerges as a problem.

However, but with reports coming in intermittent sequences, it's hard to say how widespread it will really be.

Within this situation, repairing a key bridge linking Songwe and Rukwa regions had to involve an abrupt visit by the Works deputy minister, who then directed the Tanzania National Roads Agency (Tanroads) to take up repair work in good time.

It wasn't clear when the bridge collapsed and how long it has taken without the roads agency moving in for its rehabilitation.

Having a bridge connecting two regions, if there are no auxiliary ways around it, ought to be taken as an emergency when it collapses.

That it had to be repaired did not need a visit by the deputy minister but communication with the relevant authorities in the respective regions.

Authorising or otherwise demanding that it be rebuilt was an urgency to be decided even on telephone, with standard format procurement orders then be put in place. But bureaucracy can prove quite costly and disruptive.

That Tanroads and the Tanzania Rural and Urban Roads Agency (Tarura) will likely be overwhelmed with work or appeals for attention during the heavy rains is one thing - and building an appropriate response mechanism very different.

In these days of artificial intelligence it is a matter of taking a photograph of the collapsed bridge, inserting it in a cost-format application, obtaining a usable building design complete with quotations, and proceeding to dispatch the 'package' to the relevant authorities.

Cross-checking would at most take a day if one indeed lives in the 21st century. Too bad, it would still appear

that only PPP would work in that context - including eliciting a bank loan response but only perhaps instant Treasury transfers as well.

A working PPP format would likely provide an opportunity for a loan to put the bridge back to work virtually overnight.

That would depend on whether it is a repair or a rebuilding format that is adopted. The presence of zonal exchanges permits trading of debt where a lending institution starts obtaining or figuring out the interest it starts to earn.

It would also mean having the builder finishes up the work quickly to boost investor confidence - for instance, in transit trade being disrupted.

Changing mentalities from waiting for major government disbursements for people to gain, in which case officials relish in emergencies as they push the government to disburse funds, are common in countries that build poverty, instead of transitioning from it.

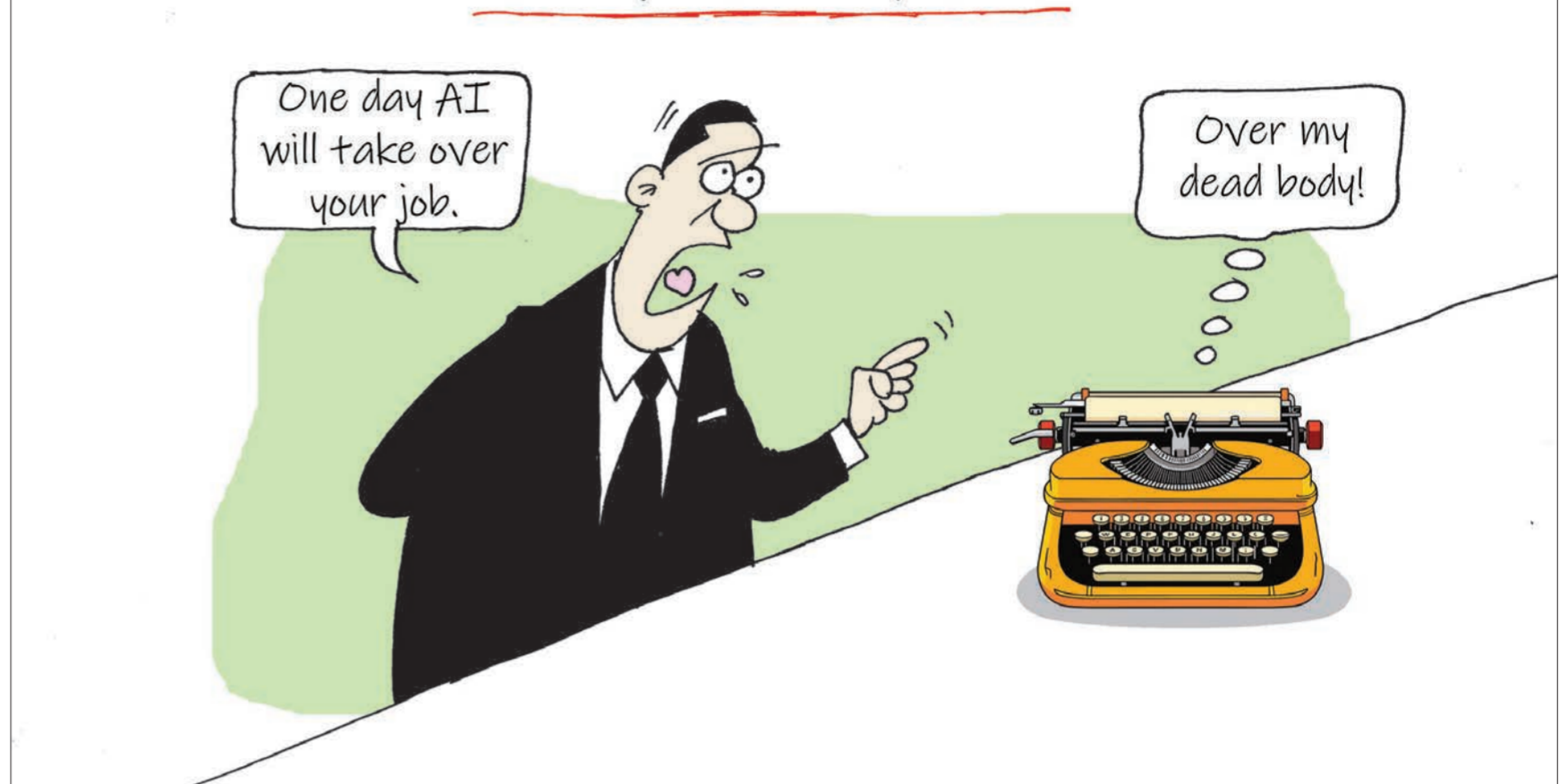
The key issue in that format is everything being run by public agencies and thus shutting out private sector contracting save by their being assigned by someone to whom the money is disbursed.

In a PPP format the company is picked, obtains clearance with an artificial intelligence repair format that is checked and approved, then seeks a loan the next day. No administrators will be there to arrange their cuts, etc. In a way, the difference between working on a rapidly yielding modality whose tools we already have, aplenty and sticking to tradition is a reflection of our values and attitudes.

We are not as yet keenly interested in building an efficient economy, only a public sector-dominated economy where bureaucratic privileges are optimised.

Hopefully, those concerned will see cause to move to do the needful without querying if higher authorities concur and the funds are disbursed.

Some years in the past...



By Brent R. Stockwell

**A** deadly contaminant stopped thousands of people's hearts, resulting in their deaths, but nobody knew why.

Then, in the 1950s, biochemist Fred Kummerow scraped open their arteries and found a lethal fat that had come from their food. As he learned, different fats in our diet are the determinants of health and disease, and control who lives and who doesn't.

"It's simple: if it jiggles, it's fat," Arnold Schwarzenegger once said. But how wrong he was! Yes, there are everyday fats like cooking oils, lard, and heavy cream. These are just the tip of the fat iceberg, as recent science has shown.

The heart attacks Kummerow studied were caused by a specific fat in processed foods, just one of many fatty molecules. Now, however, another deep and enduring mystery has scientists scratching their heads: Why does Nature use thousands of fat molecules when a small number should suffice?

A new generation of ultrasensitive chemistry technologies has indeed discovered thousands of rapidly shifting fat molecules in the human body that impact nearly all aspects of health.

Tracking changes in these fatty molecules predicts future onset of a wide variety of health complications, from heart, brain and liver ailments to infectious diseases, organ failure, and many cancers, and offers radically new treatment approaches using both diet and drugs.

The heart attack victims had clogged arteries, Fred Kummerow found after examining more than 20 people who died of heart attacks. Trans fats were the culprits, as he found vessels clogged with this fat, which is abundant in processed foods.

Having concluded that thousands of people die from trans fats each, he launched a campaign to ban these fats. This was finally implemented in 2018, a whole 70 years after his first observation.

Many fats hurt your health because they clog your arteries and damage your organs, such as your liver and brain.

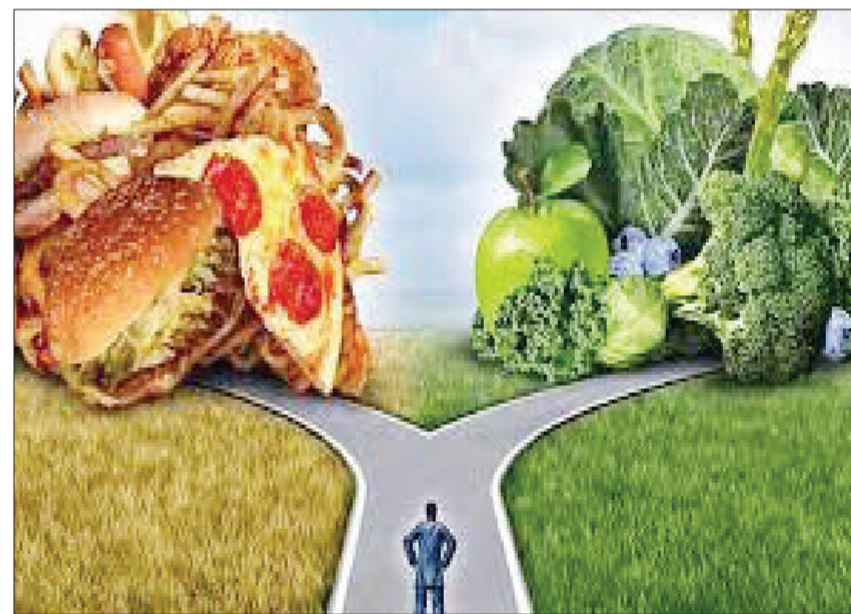
Trans fats cause deadly heart attacks by blocking blood flow to the heart; they are now illegal thanks to Kummerow's work.

Cholesterol, a fatty molecule, meanwhile increases heart attack risk, also by clogging arteries. The commonly used statin drugs work by reducing the substance in the body.

For their part, saturated fats cause liver damage, brain damage and heart attacks by clogging arteries and directly damaging these organs.

A recent study found that some fats with complex names reduced to acronyms, an example being DGLA, cause brain diseases by killing specific brain cells - such as those ones lost in

## Mysterious fats bolster disease more than we knew, new research reveals



Parkinson's Disease.

Deadly fats can be categorised based on their chemical structures and the damage they do. Trans fats, saturated fats, and DGLA have similar pencil-like, long and thin chemical structures, whereas cholesterol looks quite different, more like a series of keyrings strung together. But both kinds of fats are dangerous.

### The healthy fats

Healthy hearts and brains require fat molecules with beneficial effects, such as omega-3 fatty acids found in fish. These omega-3 fatty acids have the long pencil-like shape like some of the deadly fats, but with a few kinks, and help the brain and heart function well by dampening an overactive immune system.

Health and longevity are also associated with another fat present in olive oil, which is linked to long life and vitality. In the movie *Lorenzo's Oil*, a five-year-old boy develops a devastating brain disease due to deficiency in healthy fats essential for developing children.

Oily molecules such as cholesterol and trans fats are called lipids - derived from the Greek word lipos for fat or grease. Unlike most molecules, lipids avoid water and stick in the greasy membranes surrounding cells.

### Mapping the world of fatty lipids

DNA and genes are the subject of a vast number of studies. Lipids not so much. Nonetheless, researchers have detected a growing number of lipids in the decades since Kummerow made his discovery about trans fats.

Impressive advances in chemistry detectors have dramatically improved the ability to measure many different lipids in human cells and tissues. Indeed, a single human cell has thousands of distinct lipids, each with

the shoulder and is common in sports such as baseball. Being able to predict who is likely to suffer this injury could help prevent it, and might have kept the Yankees in contention.

### Mystery of lipid complexity, exploding cells

But why so many lipids? Different lipids may control how stretchy and durable cell membranes are. Some membranes are stiffer and others are soft and stretchy. These properties affect how cells interact with each other and how molecules within membranes behave.

Cells can even explode when their lipids react with oxygen. Some lipids, such as the ones that make membrane stretchy, are particularly prone to such reactions. Having too many of these lipids in a membrane can act as a fuse, potentially causing a cell explosion.

The huge untapped resource of lipid biology holds the key to predicting and treating a vast number of diseases. However, the true function of each of the thousands of lipids remains largely unknown, and will require years of study to determine.

Former President Bill Clinton twice had surgery to bypass arteries clogged with fat, after eating fatty fast foods most of life.

"I was lucky I didn't die of a heart attack," he told Dr Sanjay Gupta of CNN in 2004.

Clinton made a radical switch to a vegetarian diet, which is low in saturated fat and better for his heart. The best we know is that he has been healthy ever since. As he learned, the fats in our diet can indeed be the difference between life and death.

### Africa can benefit more

We are on the cusp of a revolution in lipidomic biology driven by this new technology, which continues to advance rapidly. Predicting how lipidomics technology will change healthcare and medicine over the next decade is difficult because the potential is so vast.

We are using this powerful new technology in my laboratory at Columbia University to understand which lipids control cell survival, and how we can create new diets and medicines to prevent disease.

After all, as computer scientist Alan Kay said, "The best way to predict the future is to invent it."

\* A medium.com dispatch. Brent R. Stockwell, PhD, is Chair and Professor of Biological Sciences at Columbia University in the New York and a prolific writer in Science, Creativity and Health.



# Benefits of early childhood education in laying foundation for a successful future

By Correspondent Grace Mwakalinga

IN 2015, Tanzania endorsed the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which were launched in New York from 25 - 27 September at the 'United Nations summit for the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda.

At the summit, former President Jakaya Kikwete, reiterated the country's commitment to the SDGs by joining the High Level Group to support its implementation.

Target Number 4 of the 17SDGs is on education; stating that by 2030, countries must ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education.

A study conducted by Cambridge University show that there is a significant difference between a child who has received early childhood education and one who has not. Research suggests that a child's cognitive abilities tend to be higher when they are in the classroom compared to those who are not.

Early childhood education provides a child with an opportunity to engage in activities that establish a solid foundation of knowledge, skills, and behaviours, thus enabling them to start primary school with strong basis.

In making sure that Tanzania achieves the SDG 4, Plan International has been working closely with the government through the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, Ministry of Community Development, Gender, Women, and Special Group and the Prime Minister's Office - Regional Administration and Local Government in implementing the LEARN Plus Project—a three-year initiative aimed to accelerate an affordable model to support pre-primary education and provide technical support needed to implement the model and use project research findings to advocate for the benefits of the



One of the newly constructed centres for provision of early childhood education in Chole ward, Kisarawe District.

model. The LEARN Plus Project launched in 2021 is designed to prepare children aged 5 to 6 for entry into Standard One. Research conducted in Kisarawe District, Coast Region in the same year by the University of Dar es Salaam (UDSM) and the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) targeting children aged between five and six years who had missed out on pre-primary education and were about to join Standard One, revealed a number of challenges that contribute to children's failure to get early childhood education. The research was conducted in 12 out of the 17 wards.

Some of the challenges include the long distance to and from school, unsafe environments due to presence of wild animals in their surroundings as well as traditional customs that have, for many years, deprived children of the opportunity to receive early education.

Kisarawe District started to im-

plement the LEARN Plus project in 2021 whereas a number of activities were carried out including community awareness campaigns on the importance of early childhood education, establishment of learning centres and classes, preparation of learning materials and training of teachers.

The Project Coordinator, Creptone Madunda said the project aims to support the government's efforts towards achieving goal 4.2 of the SDGs. He said project has developed and distributed a guide for school readiness program to prepare children who missed the opportunity for pre-primary education to join Standard One.

"To ensure successful implementation of the project, we trained 29 teachers who were selected from the community. They were equipped with teaching techniques and skills to enable them take care of the children," said Madunda.

Masha Mohamed Muhali is

one of the Community Teaching Assistant (CTA) who has been empowered to teach children at the Chole centre in the Kisarawe District, he commended Plan International for the efforts, saying his class has 20 children aged below five years, among them, 13 already know how to read and write.

"The other seven are children with disabilities; they have different complications that affect their learning process, but they are progressing well. With the knowledge we are imparting on them, they will be able to join Standard One next year," added Masha, noting that his is the only teacher at the centre.

He appealed to stakeholders to support the centre with teaching and learning materials such as story books, stationeries, exercise books as well as those for required for teaching people with disabilities.

Masha said there is a positive response from the community as more children are enrolled for

early childhood education at various centres. He said parents are aware of the importance of pre-primary education as prepares children by ensure they are competent in reading and writing.

"The centres can be easily accessible as they have been established near communities, children are no longer walking for longer distances to and from school," he said.

Saada Abdallah, from Chole ward said that at first most parents were not aware of the importance of pre-primary education. She said following village meetings and educational seminars conducted by the organization, almost all the parents are enrolling their children for early childhood education.

Esther Senkoro, is the Adult Education Officer in Kisarawe, who also doubles as the Coordinator of the Learn Plus Project in the District, said the project has been beneficial to the community as it helps to address learning challenges among children. She said

previously, most of the children were joining Standard One without adequate skills on the three Rs—reading, writing, and arithmetic.

She added construction of the Cholesamvula centre and Vibula primary school, are outcomes of the LEARN Plus project, adding the two have addressed the many challenges that both parents and children experienced.

"Under the project, we have successfully constructed the centres Vibula, Chole and Malangalanga primary schools. We have also constructed six toilets as well as Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) facilities at specific school," she added, noting the improvements have contributed in increased number of enrolled students from 320 to 533.

Additionally, we had a large number of children struggling with basic literacy skills, approximately 1850, but now the problem has been addressed in the project areas," said Esther

She added that the project aimed to reach 450 children, but due to a positive response from the community members, they exceeded the target. This has been praised by the government, and in supporting these efforts, they continue to build classroom infrastructure in areas of need to establish complete schools and initiate satellite schools.

Senior Education Officer from the Prime Minister's Office - Regional Administration and Local Government, Yusuph Singo asserted that the government was alarmed with the low enrolment rate of 45 percent in Kisarawe District; hence efforts to further invest in construction of schools and early childhood centres.

"We had to take measures to improve learning environment in Kisarawe since it was one of the Districts with a small number of children enrolled for pre-primary education," said the official, noting that efforts will also be directed to other areas with similar challenges.

## Holding of Togo's monkey turns the spotlight on illicit wildlife trafficking from the DR Congo

LUBUMBASHI

ON December 2, 2023, Togolese authorities intercepted 38 monkeys at the airport. They were being sent from Kinshasa, the capital of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), to Thailand and included at least two species classified as vulnerable by the IUCN.

Thirty of these animals had not been declared upon leaving the DRC.

On Dec. 7, Togo repatriated the severely distressed animals to Kinshasa, according to a press release from the IUCN, the Congolese wildlife authority, on Dec. 19. Fourteen of them died at the Kinshasa zoo before the remaining 24 were transferred to an animal sanctuary in the south-eastern city of Lubumbashi.

"The surviving animals were entrusted to us for rehabilitation so that they can one day return to the wild as we partner with the ICCN," said Franck Chantereau, president of the J.A.C.K. Primate Rehabilitation Centre in Lubumbashi. He said the high mortality rate was due to the poor conditions in which the traffickers transported the monkeys.

The seizure illustrates weaknesses in inspection at the DRC's borders. The live cargo departed from Kinshasa's N'djili Airport and was transiting through Togo to Thailand.

Among the animals intercepted were lesula (*Cercopithecus lomamiensis*), a species of guenon found only in the forests of the Lomami Basin which was not identified and formally described until 2012, and black crested mangabey (*Lophocebus aterrimus*). Both species have been classified as vulnerable by the IUCN.

Listed in CITES Appendix II, they can be exported from the DRC with a permit. However, Chantereau said that the traffickers did not possess the necessary permits to export them.

"When the animals arrived in Togo, the Togolese authorities and organizations fighting wildlife fraud realized that the animals in the crates did not match either the number or type of species authorized by CITES permits for export from the DRC. Therefore, they confiscated the animals."

The majority of the animals in the shipment – thirty of them – had not been declared in the official documentation. The



Two of the 14 monkeys that survived, a black mangabey (left) and a lesula, taken into care at the JACK primate rehabilitation center in Lubumbashi. Image courtesy JACK/EAGLE.

primary destinations for exports of monkeys from DRC include Thailand, Dubai and China, where wealthy people buy primates as pets, Chantereau said.

### Evolving cover for illegal trafficking

According to Adams Cassinga, a Congolese activist and national coordinator at the non-profit Conserve Congo, traffickers often use fraudulent documentation to smuggle protected species. Traffickers falsely describe the animals they're exporting as unprotected species on the documents

that are duly approved for transport by the authorized bodies. In this way, they can elude inspectors.

"It used to be great apes, gorillas and bonobos that were being sold. When the traffickers realized they had been found out, they started putting long-tailed macaques in the cages to distract from the big monkeys they were trafficking. This trick was also uncovered, and once again, they have changed their technique to falsifying the documents that are presented in inspections and clearance," said Cassinga.

The trafficker has not been publicly named, but Cassinga noted that he is well known to wildlife protection organizations and the authorities. However, Cassinga says, no official action has been taken against him: "The person was only questioned."

On Aug. 16, the U.S. Department of State banned three Congolese officials from the country for "significant corruption." The State Department accused them of trafficking chimpanzees, gorillas, okapi and other species. Another source, who asked to remain anon-



**How are they supposed to recognize species if they are police officers trained in protecting people and their property?**

ymous, believes that the fraudsters are aided by collusion within the conservation agency and CITES in the DRC.

The ICCN did not respond to requests for comment. Chantereau believes it is now important to strengthen surveillance measures, which involves increasing and training border inspectors and rangers. He noted, however, that the ICCN does not have enough rangers, and others are regularly killed in attempts to protect national parks.

"How are they supposed to recognize species if they are police officers trained in protecting people and their property?" he asked.







# Norway to approve deep-sea mining

By Esme Stallard

**N**ORWAY is likely to become the first country in the world to move forward with the controversial practice of commercial-scale deep-sea mining.

The plan, up before a parliamentary vote on Tuesday, will accelerate the hunt for precious metals which are in high demand for green technologies.

Environmental scientists have warned it could be devastating for marine life.

The vote concerns Norwegian waters, but agreement on mining in international waters could also be reached this year.

The vote is expected to pass without hindrance after it secured cross-party backing at the end of 2023.

The Norwegian government said it was being cautious and would only begin issuing licences once further environmental studies were carried out.

The deep sea hosts potato-sized rocks called nodules and crusts which contain minerals such as lithium, scandium and cobalt, critical for clean technologies, including in batteries.

Norway's proposal will open up 280,000 sq km (108,000 sq miles) of its national waters for companies to apply to mine these sources - an area bigger than the size of the UK.

Although these minerals are available on land, they are concentrated in a few countries, increasing the risk to supply. For example, the Democratic Republic of Congo, which holds some of the largest reserves of cobalt, faces conflict in parts of the country.

Walter Sognnes, co-founder of Norwegian mining company Loke Minerals, which plans to apply for a licence once the proposal is passed, recognised that more needs to be done to understand the deep ocean before mining begins.

He said: "We will have a relatively long period of exploration and mapping activity to close the knowledge gap on the environmental impact."

Martin Webeler, oceans campaigner and researcher at the Environmental Justice Foundation, said



**Environmentalists are concerned whale species like the humpback could be disturbed by deep-sea mining**

it would be "catastrophic" for the ocean habitat.

"The Norwegian government always highlighted that they want to implement the highest environmental standards," he said. "That is hypocritical whilst you are throwing away all the scientific advice."

He said that mining companies should focus on preventing environmental damage in current operations, rather than

opening up a whole new industry.

The proposal puts the country at odds with the EU and the UK, which have called for a temporary ban on the practice because of concerns about environmental damage.

Techniques to harvest the minerals from the sea floor could generate significant noise and light pollution, as well as damage to the habitat of organisms relying on the nod-

ules, according to the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).

In November, in an unusual move, 120 EU lawmakers wrote an open letter calling on the Norwegian parliament to reject the project because of "the risk of such activity to marine biodiversity and the acceleration of climate change". The letter also said the impact assessment conducted by Norway had too many knowledge gaps.

As well as external criticism, the Norwegian government has also faced pushback from its own experts. The Norway Institute of Marine Research (IMR) said that the government had made assumptions from a small area of research and applied it to the whole area planned for drilling. It estimates a further five to 10 years of research into impacts on species is needed.

The Norwegian government will not immediately allow

companies to start drilling. They will have to submit proposals, including environmental assessments, for a licence which will then be approved on a case-by-case basis by parliament.

Marianne Sivertsen Næss, chair of The Standing Committee on Energy and the Environment, which considered the original plan, told the BBC that the Norwegian government was taking a "precautionary approach to mineral activities".

She said: "We do not currently have the knowledge needed to extract minerals from the seabed in the manner required. The government's proposal to open an area for activity enables private players to explore and acquire knowledge and data from the areas in question. Opening up areas is not the same as approving extraction of seabed minerals."

Sognnes, of Loke Minerals, added that the government's plan would bring in much-needed investment from the private sector for research of deep marine environments.

"Develop[ing] knowledge on the deep ocean is very costly, you need to operate robots and these are very expensive and unfortunately the universities have limited access to these kind of tools," he said. He estimated that any actual extraction would not begin until the early 2030s.

Campaigners argue that more investment should go into recycling and reusing the existing minerals we have mined on land. The Environmental Justice Foundation estimates in a report that 16,000 tonnes of cobalt per year, about 10% of annual production, could be recovered through improved collection and recycling of mobile phones.

While Norway's proposal concerns its national waters, negotiations continue on whether licences could be issued for international seas.

The International Seabed Authority (ISA) - a UN-affiliated body - will meet this year to try to finalise rules, with a final vote expected in 2025. More than 30 countries are in favour of a ban, but countries such as China are keen to see the ISA press on.

## Labour all out to force ministers to run documents on Rwanda's policies

By Henry Zeffman

**LABOUR** will try to force the government to publish a string of documents relating to its Rwanda policy.

The party will table a vote on Tuesday demanding ministers disclose how much it would cost to send each asylum seeker to Rwanda.

The vote also demands ministers reveal cash given and set to be given to the East African country.

In addition, Labour wants to see the full memorandum of understanding ministers reached with Rwanda.

The scheme to send some asylum seekers to Rwanda was first announced by Boris Johnson in April 2022. The plan has been repeatedly delayed by legal challenges and no asylum seekers have been sent to Rwanda from the UK so far.

MPs will further consider the government's legislation which aims to revive the policy next week.

Sir Keir Starmer's party also want the government to publish papers revealed by the BBC which suggest Rishi Sunak had initially wanted to scale back the scheme when he was chancellor in 2022.

Those documents were prepared in No 10 when Boris Johnson was trying to persuade Mr Sunak to sign

off on the plan.

On Sunday Sunak denied ever doubting the policy would work, saying it was his job as chancellor to ask "tough questions" about the cost of every policy that crossed his desk. He said it was "wrong" to suggest that he did not "believe in the scheme".

Labour wants to force the vote on Tuesday afternoon as part of an opposition day, which allows the party to choose a subject for debate. The vote will take the form of a Humble Address - which technically means parliament is asking the King to compel the release of the documents, making the vote binding on the government.

The opposition are optimistic that some Conservative MPs will back the motion - although it would be extremely unusual for the government to suffer a large enough rebellion to lose the vote.

Tuesday's parliamentary gambit will force a Home Office minister to come to the Commons to justify the government's position on Rwanda before the next phase of parliamentary debates and votes on the Safety of Rwanda Bill, which would state that Rwanda should be considered a safe country under British law along with other provisions designed to put the policy on a stronger legal footing.



**Sunak is said to have been concerned about the cost of sending asylum seekers to Africa**

The bill is expected to return to the Commons this month, most likely next week, with several factions of the Conservative Party uneasy about the plans - some fearing they may go too far, others believing they do not go far enough.

Speaking at an event in Acrcrington on Monday, the prime minister said he would welcome "bright ideas" on how to improve the bill, but insisted "my entire party is supportive" of the legislation.

He said: "If people have bright ideas about how we can make this more effective whilst complying with our international obligations and retaining Rwanda's participation in the scheme... then of course, I'm open to having those discussions."

Yvette Cooper, the shadow home secretary, told the BBC: "It is totally unacceptable that the Conservatives have refused to come clean on the full costs of the failing Rwanda scheme."

"So far, costs are apparently

rising to £400m of taxpayers' money with more home secretaries than asylum seekers sent to Kigali.

"The Conservatives should stop dragging out this chaos and come clean about the real costs and problems."

A government source said: "We have already declared £240m that has been paid in our partnership agreement with the Rwandan government and one payment of £50m to come in April."

"After that the shadow home secretary's figures are her guesswork and for commercial sensitivity reasons we have not outlined any other potential payments that are all predicated on getting flights to Rwanda, which we are determined to do to stop the boats."

The source added: "Labour don't like our plans, but really don't have anything at all to offer that would realistically tackle this now-global challenge of illegal migration."



By A Special Correspondent

To meet their green agendas, the European Union, United States, and China are engaged in the modern-day equivalent of a gold rush.

This time, though, fortune seekers aren't panning for shiny nuggets in Canada, America, or Australia. Instead, all eyes are on the critical minerals of Africa – cobalt, graphite, lithium, and others – raw materials essential to the production of clean technology, including electric vehicles (EV).

To say that Africa is generously endowed in this regard seems almost like an understatement. Africa holds more than half of the world's reserves of cobalt, 46% of its manganese, and 21 percent of its graphite, all used in EV batteries, and about a quarter of its bauxite, which is required for solar photovoltaic technologies. Beyond reserves, mining and production are already in full swing in a number of countries.

Nearly 70 percent of all cobalt produced globally comes from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and that country is tied with Peru as number two behind Chile in the mining of copper, a key component in electric wiring.

Lithium, which has applications in everything from EV batteries to the lubricants that help wind turbines spin, is also being mined in the DRC, as well as in Zimbabwe and Namibia, while Ghana and Mali have lithium deposits that aren't being exploited yet. Namibia is also the world's second-largest producer of uranium, which is used in nuclear energy.

Given the urgency of the energy transition, it's no surprise that the market for critical minerals and rare earth elements (a group of 17 light and heavy metals and alloys integral to the performance and efficiency of motors and turbines; there are 100 rare earth element deposit sites in Africa) is strong and growing.

For example, the International Energy Agency (IEA) predicts that as the world moves away from fossil fuels manufacturers of clean energy technologies will require exponentially more critical minerals than they do today. Specifically, the IEA says that by 2040 demand for lithium will be more than 40 times what it is now; over the same period, the need for graphite and cobalt will be 20-25 times higher. As far as copper, the expected expansion of the electric grid over the next 17 years means demand will likely double.

In short, opportunity abounds for Africa, especially considering the shortage of critical minerals nearly everywhere else – if we can only harness it.

This is a particularly timely topic as the 2023 United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP28) wraps up and voices around the globe continue to weigh in on what Africa should do (or not do) with its oil and gas.

If we're going to be honest, we must admit that we don't always have the best track record when it comes to turning resource wealth into actual wealth for our people. But I believe we can break away from that pattern.

Out of our hands

For too long, for lack of will and do-



# Africa can benefit more from its critical minerals



**China Molybdenum Co. (CMOC), the world's largest cobalt producer, owns 80 percent of the mine, with Gecamines, DCR's state-owned mining firm, holding the remaining 20 percent stake.**

mestic policy, we've allowed our raw materials, including oil and natural gas, to be exported, meaning we've had no hand in the processes that happen next or the sale of finished goods

As a result, we've missed out on the job creation, industrialization, and economic diversification that downstream development represents, not to mention the money that comes with it: It's just an economic fact of life that processed materials command a premium price compared to raw materials.

Consider the DRC's massive cobalt and copper mine, Tenke Fungurume, which has been in production since 2009 and is projected to have 32 years' worth of reserves.

China Molybdenum Co. (CMOC), the world's largest cobalt producer, owns 80 percent of the mine, with Gecamines, DCR's state-owned mining firm, holding the remaining 20 percent stake.

As if controlling the mine's output – some 125,387 tonnes of copper and 10,465 tonnes of cobalt in the first half of 2022 alone – wasn't enough, CMOC also controls 72 percent of the refining capacity for the

mine's output. But CMOC doesn't refine those minerals in Africa; instead, they transport unprocessed minerals to ports in Durban, South Africa, and Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania, for overseas export.

That's a lot of potential revenue – a lot of potential, period – we've left behind our shores.

To take full advantage of the critical minerals beneath our feet, we must break free from our "mining-only" mindset. The value chain doesn't have to stop with extraction.

Yes, I understand the argument that minerals should be manufactured into products closer to where they will be used, and that Africa lacks, for example, both the manufacturing capacity to turn cobalt into EV batteries, and the market for EV cars. (Young African entrepreneurs have taken aim at this deficit, as you'll see in a moment.)

But with sufficient investment and collaboration, we can build capabilities and catalyze the market.

The good news is that we're seeing progress in that direction.

In April 2022, the DRC and Zambia signed a cooperation agreement to make EV batteries in Katanga prov-

ince, the mineral-rich region where Tenke Fungurume is located. That was followed in December by the U.S. entering into a trilateral memorandum of understanding (MOU) with those countries to develop a complete value chain around EV batteries, "from extraction to the assembly line. To move the deal along, earlier this year, the African Export-Import Bank (Afreximbank) and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) are helping the DRC and Zambia form special economic zones (SEZ) for the production of battery precursors, batteries, and EVs. According to the United Nations, "the Afreximbank and UNECA will play a central facilitating role, acting as the project's financial and technical partners respectively."

The two institutions will lead the establishment of an Operating Company (OpCo) in consortium with investors (both public and private) from DRC and Zambia, as well as international investors such as Afreximbank's impact fund subsidiary, the Fund for Export Development in Africa (FEDA)."

Both the DRC and Zambia, along with Mozambique, Namibia, and Tan-

zania, attended the recent Minerals Security Partnership (MSP) meeting to discuss how to improve mineral supply chains and ensure that countries can benefit economically from their critical mineral resources. The U.S., U.K., Australia, Canada, France, and Japan were among the MSP partners who participated in the event. The goals of the MSP are to attract public and private investment, increase transparency, and promote Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) standards in critical mineral supply chains.

In addition to Toyota setting up shop in Durban, South Africa, to assemble hybrid EVs from "semi-knocked down" imported vehicles and Uganda's Kira Motors converting internal combustion engine-powered buses into EVs, a small industry of EV motorcycle manufacturers has cropped up in Rwanda, Nigeria, Uganda, Kenya, and South Africa, potentially accelerating the growth of a much-needed domestic market and circumventing the need for the expensive, grid-scale charging infrastructure four-wheeled vehicles require. These companies are building EV motorcycles from the ground up and subbing EV motors for conventional ones in existing bikes.

As Dr. Marit Kitaw, interim director of the African Minerals Development Centre (AMDC), noted, this is evidence that "the continent's technical and manufacturing capabilities can be scaled up with supportive policies, skill-building programs, infrastructure development, and a favorable investment climate."

Speaking of the AMDC, the organisation, which the African Union established in 2013, has developed the African Green Minerals Strategy (AGMS) to help African nations make the most of their extractive resources, participate more fully – and do it sustainably. Dr. Kitaw, said the objectives of the AGMS are to accelerate local manufacturing of inputs for mining and processing strategic green minerals; build more processing facilities on the continent, which would enable African countries to capture a greater share of the value chain; and expand Africa's technical expertise and to increase resources for research, development, and innovation.

While agreements like those between DRC and Zambia are a start, our nations must collaborate more closely, especially when it comes to issues like establishing a common external tariff (CET). That would serve to avoid a patchwork approach to imports and make it easier for African countries to do business across borders.

Countries must avoid human rights violations that have plagued other extractive industries in Africa, ensuring workplaces are safe; indigenous people are not at risk; workers' living conditions meet universally accepted standards; the physical environment is protected; and children are not put to work when they should be in school.

As the world pivots to a low-carbon future, Africa has a chance to change where we sit on the critical minerals value chain and, in turn, to change our destiny. But there's tremendous work to do, and it has to be done right. With the right partners and support, within our continent and worldwide, it will be.

## CAPITAL RADIO

# RATIBA YA VIPINDI JUMATATU - JUMAPILI

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

Tembelea mitandao ya kijamii ya CAPITAL RADIO



CAPITAL RADIO



## Tanzania to become go-to market for all of Africa's electrical equipment supplies

By Guardian Correspondent

TANZANIA is venturing into the manufacture of electrical equipment aiming to become a key player in the industry, which is part of the government's strategy to diversify the East African country's economic portfolio.

During her recent visit to Multi Cable Limited (MCL), a Dar es Salaam-based factory, Industry and Trade Minister, Dr Ashatu Kijaji, sought to showcase the nation's progress in this sector and also emphasize the importance of local producers tapping into the vast potential of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).

"The quality of products made here, certified by Tanzania's Bureau of Standards (TBS), makes them competitive in the AfCFTA," she stated. But the country really aims high as it is looking to be the go-to-market for all of Africa's electrical equipment needs.

The initiation of the electrical equipment industry is not only intended to fulfill domestic needs but also conquer African and international markets.

The minister highlighted the MCL's impressive portfolio, which include transformers, meters, and cables, and noted the government's commitment to seeing to the growth of this promising sector, including by creating market access for local manufacturers.

Dr Kijaji also commended the company for supplying Tanzania Electric Supply Company (Tanesco) and Rural Electrification Agency (REA) with locally made electrical cables, signifying a leap towards self-sufficiency in this crucial sector.

"Our presence in regional markets like the EAC and Southern African Development Community (SADC) ensures ready buyers for our products," she pointed out.



**Dr Kijaji also commended the company for supplying Tanzania Electric Supply Company (Tanesco) and Rural Electrification Agency (REA) with locally made electrical cables, signifying a leap towards self-sufficiency in this crucial sector.**



## Nigeria minister shown the door over money in personal bank account



Humanitarian Affairs and Poverty Alleviation Minister Betta Edu

By Mansur Abubakar, Abuja

NIGERIA'S president has suspended a minister over the alleged diversion of more than 585 million naira (\$640,000; £500,000) of public money into a personal bank account.

Humanitarian Affairs and Poverty Alleviation Minister Betta Edu was suspended on Monday following public outrage over the scandal.

A statement from President Bola Tinubu's office said he had ordered an investigation into Dr Edu's ministry.

Dr Edu has denied any wrong-

doing.

Her office said she had approved the transfer into a personal account, which was not in her name, but said it was for the "implementation of grants to vulnerable groups".

Dr Edu, 37, is the youngest minister in President Tinubu's cabinet and is seen as a close

ally of the president.

The suspension of a minister is a rare occurrence in Nigeria - Dr Edu is the first to lose their job since President Tinubu took office in May last year.

His predecessor, Muhammadu Buhari, sacked only two ministers during his eight-year tenure.

Last week, local media reported on a leaked document that allegedly showed Dr Edu instructing a senior treasury official to transfer the money to the personal account of Bridget Oniyelu, the accountant for the government's Grants for Vulnerable Groups initiative.

Reports that Dr Edu had asked for the funds be moved to a personal account, rather than a government one, caused outrage. Tinubu called for an investigation into the transfer on Sunday.

He asked the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) for a "thorough investigation into all aspects of the financial transactions involving the Federal Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and Poverty Alleviation," said a statement released on Monday.

Tinubu asked Dr Edu to comply with the investigation. He also called for the reform of government institutions that run National Social Investments Programmes (NSIP) - initiatives like the Grant for Vulnerable Groups that aim to tackle poverty - stressing a need to "win back

## IMF approves disbursement of \$60.7 million to Mozambique

MAPUTO

THE executive board of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) has successfully concluded the third review of Mozambique's three-year loan programme.

This development enables an immediate disbursement of approximately \$60.7 million to Maputo, according to the IMF.

As of the latest announcement on Monday, the total disbursements under the \$456 million Extended Credit Facility program, sanctioned in 2022, now stand at around \$273 million.

The IMF affirmed in a statement that the program

has exhibited satisfactory performance, citing a notable decrease in inflationary pressures and a notable acceleration in economic recovery.

The overarching goal of the three-year arrangement is to provide vital support for Mozambique's economic recovery efforts. Simultaneously, it aims to implement policies that contribute to the reduction of public debt and address financing vulnerabilities.

The program also seeks to create opportunities for public investments in crucial areas such as human capital, climate adaptation, and infrastructure.



## Tanzania ranks second in tobacco production in Africa

By Guardian Reporter

TANZANIA has been mentioned as the second largest producer of Tobacco in Africa for the year 2022/2023.

Minister for Agriculture, Hussein Bashe made the statement yesterday on his X account (initially Twitter) adding that the country's production of the crop had increased from 50,000 tonnes to 122,858 tonnes in 2023/2024.

According to him, by December last year, the export value of tobacco was \$316 million towards the goal of reaching \$400 million.

Bashe noted that for the 2024/2025 season they are optimistic to reach 200,000 tonnes against the target of 300,000 by 2025/26.

According to the minister, Zimbabwe takes the lead by producing 296,000 tonnes, followed by Tanzania, Malawi (121,000 tonnes), Mozambique (65,800 tonnes), Zambia (44,000 tonnes) and Uganda (13,000

tonnes) in the list.

He applauded the farmers associations as well as Tobacco Companies in the country stating that for the first time more than 50 per cent of tobacco has been bought and sold abroad 100 per cent by local companies.

The minister said: "It was not an easy journey. I thank all the Tobacco Board workers, we dreamed, we did it, keep pushing."

In Tanzania tobacco is produced by large scale and small-holder farmers, the latter producing more than 50% of the crop. Prior to 1967, however, it was mainly produced on large estates owned by Europeans in Tabora and Iringa regions.

Tobacco was cultivated in more than 10 regions in Tanzania, one of the leading tobacco producers in the world. In the crop season 2017/2018, Mpanda region had 8,640 tobacco growers, followed by Tabora, with 7,901 farmers, and Katiwa, with 7,454.





# Zambian bank goes to Access Bank



By Ronald Adamolekun

ACCESS Bank Limited has completed the acquisition of African Banking Corporation Zambia Limited, trading as Atlas Mara Zambia. The bank's parent company, Access Holdings, made

this known on Monday, more than eight months after the deal was originally announced.

The lender consummated the transaction through its Zambian banking operation, making the new acquisition a wholly owned subsidiary of Access Bank Zambia.

Nigeria's biggest lender by

assets announced last April it received the final regulatory approval for the deal from the Central Bank of Zambia, giving it the latitude to expand its footprint in the southern African nation.

It had projected that the purchase would be concluded by last September, but that didn't happen.

A business combination of Access Bank Zambia and African Banking Corporation is to follow. In January 2021, the bank wrapped up its purchase of Cavmont Bank Limited of Zambia, later merging it with Access Bank Zambia.

The lender expects the merger to produce one of the top five banks in Zam-

bia, hoping to leverage Atlas Mara's big traction in the retail and public sectors to create a market leading universal banking platform in the country.

It has stated its ambition to transform its Zambian unit to rank among the three biggest banks by assets in that market come 2027.

"This marks a significant milestone for Access Bank as we work towards achieving our vision of being the World's Most Respected African Bank," Access Holdings CEO Herbert Wigwe said in a regulatory filing.

"We are poised for success by harmonising the robust brands, rich heritage, shared values, and best practices of both companies to create opportunities for all our stakeholders in Zambia and the SADC region," Wigwe added.

Last July, the financial services group bought the majority equity stake in Angola's Finibanco S.A and there are at least six other deals in the pipeline across different markets on the continent.

Its acquisition of Standard Chartered Bank's banking businesses in Angola, Cameroon, The Gambia, Sierra Leone and Tanzania, and of the majority stake in African Banking Corporation Tanzania Limited is already in the bag, having signed deals to complete the transactions.

Sarvesh Suri, IFC's Regional Industry Director for Infrastructure and Natural Resources in Africa.

"With approximately 600 million people across sub-Saharan Africa without access to electricity, the DRE market offers a viable solution to expanding access to electricity across the continent by offering affordable and climate friendly energy solutions."

In many countries across Africa, utilities are unable to provide consistently reliable or affordable electricity, resulting in power outages and a reliance on fossil fuel backup generators. This project will help displace these carbon-intensive power sources and improve access, affordability, and the quality of electricity supply, while also supporting the growth of the nascent DRE market.

IFC's investment in the Facility for Energy Inclusion fund is aligned with the World Bank Group's strategy to accelerate the pace of electrification in Africa to achieve universal access by 2030.

FEI was established in 2019 and is managed by Cygnum Capital Asset Management, an asset manager with an extensive track record of green investments in Africa. Earlier this year, IFC announced an investment in Cygnum Capital's AfricaGoGreen Fund to finance climate-friendly projects in Africa.

# IFC and FEI Fund team up to boost access to clean and more reliable energy in Africa



JOHANNESBURG

TO boost access to clean and reliable energy across Africa, IFC has signed a financing package for the Facility for Energy Inclusion (FEI), a pan-African fund that supports small-scale decentralized renewable energy (DRE) projects, bringing power to Africa's commercial and industrial sectors and supporting economic activity.

IFC's financing will help fund the addition of about 115 MW of generation capacity in about 15 African countries,

including the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ghana, and Kenya. FEI provides debt financing for small-scale renewable energy generation and storage projects to power commercial and industrial companies, telecom infrastructure as well as mini grids.

The \$80 million financing package comprises a loan of \$30 million from IFC; a loan of \$20 million mobilized from the Managed Co-Lending Portfolio Program (MCPP), which will enable longer-term financing that is not readily

available in the market; and up to \$30 million in blended finance.

The blended finance package includes \$15 million from the International Development Association's Private Sector Window Blended Finance Facility and \$15 million from the Finland - IFC Blended Finance for Climate Program.

"This is a major milestone for FEI which is now recognized by key market players as a lead lender in the DRE market in Africa with \$220 million commitments across

23 countries to date," said Orli Arav, Head of Debt Funds at Cygnum Capital Asset Management. "The partnership with IFC including a \$20 million tranche from institutional investors represents a vote of confidence to Cygnum Capital as a leading fund manager."

"Our partnership with FEI will help support the development of Africa's DRE market and attract local and international private investment, strengthening the sector's capacity to reach commercial viability and scale," said

# Kenya joins consortium to develop battery systems for renewable energy



Wind turbines at the Lake Turkana Wind Power project.

By John Mutua, Nairobi

KENYA is one of the nine African countries that will form a consortium to lead the world in developing battery storage solutions to tap more renewable energy.

The countries will help develop innovative battery storage under the Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS) Consortium as the world scales efforts to tap more of its vast wind and solar energy potential.

Kenya is home to the largest wind power firm in Africa, the 300-megawatt Lake Turkana Wind Pow-

er, and has also stepped up generation from solar sources, highlighting why it will play a leading role in the consortium.

Solar and wind energy sources are intermittent. Therefore, battery storage systems are critical in helping maximise the potential of renewable sources.

The World Bank, the African Development Bank (AfDB), the Asian Development Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank, the Agence Française de Développement, Africa50 and the Abu Dhabi-owned clean energy giant Masdar are funding the

consortium.

"Joining the BESS Consortium, commits members to participate in efforts to reach energy storage commitments of five gigawatts (GW) through the end of 2024," says AfDB of the deal signed last month.

"This will, in turn, provide a roadmap to ultimately achieving 400GW of renewable energy by 2030."

The need for enhanced battery storage solutions has been amplified over the years as countries shift more to clean energy. Quality battery storage provides a solution

to achieve flexibility, enhance grid reliability and power quality and scale up renewable energy, reducing the impact of adverse weather patterns.

The storage facilities will, for example, allow countries to maximise solar energy, even at night or wind power when the wind is not strong enough to turn the turbines and generate electricity, significantly reducing the chances of power outages linked to generation.

Besides the Lake Turkana wind farm, the State-owned KenGen is set to build a 200-megawatt wind plant.

# Mixed fortunes of gains and losses at stock exchange in Ghana across 2023

ACCRA

THE Ghana Stock Exchange market recorded a mixed performance in 2023, with composite index ending the year with a gain of 28.08 per cent, while the financial index ended the year with a year to date loss of 7.36 per cent.

The 28.08 gains made by the composite index represents a remarkable turn-around after making a loss of 12.38 per cent in 2022.

The Financial Stock Index, however extended its 2022 losses of 4.61% to 7.36% in 2023.

Volumes, value, and number of trades also saw a dip, compared to the figures recorded in 2022.

The cumulative volume traded amounted to 579,675,315, valued at GHS818.1 million, indicating a decline of 56.59 per cent and 50.11 per cent respectively, compared to the same period in 2022.

Despite a marginal 0.08 % decrease in the number of transactions, there was an increase in market capitalisation, rising by 14.55% from GHe64.5 billion at the end of December 2022 to GHe73.89 billion by the close of December 2023

The top gainers for the year were BOPP (187.58%), TOTAL (127.00%), UNIL (109.02%), GGBL (65.85%), and MTN (59.09%).

The Ghana Fixed Income Market (GFIM) on the other hand closed the year with a cumulative volume traded of 98.44 billion which is a 57.26% decrease from the 230.32 billion volume traded same period in 2022.

At the close of the year, the bond market recorded a cumulative volume traded of 98.44 billion, reflecting a decrease of 57.26% in comparison to the total volume traded of 230.32 billion observed in the preceding year.

Additionally, the total number of trades for the year declined by 24.36 per cent from 528,188 trades in 2022 to 399,522 trades in 2023. Long-term Government securities accounted for 32.47 per cent of market activity, while short-term government instruments constituted 58.64 per cent, with corporate trades comprising 8.89 per cent within the year under review.

GSE joined other Stock Exchanges around the world for the "Ring the Bell for Gender Equality" to mark International Women's Day. The day was marked with a panel discussion on the theme "DigitALL: Innovation and Technology for Gender Equality".

Bayport Savings and Loans Plc listed the first series and tranche of Notes issued under its newly established GHS500 million medium term notes and bond programme.

Constant Capital Limited was admitted as a Licensed Dealing Member of the Ghana Stock Exchange in May 2023.

In May 2023, the GSE and Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) organized a capacity-building training workshop for listed companies on the GSE ESG Disclosures Guidance Manual, ESG integration, and reporting using the GRI Sustainability Reporting Standards (GRI Standards).

The GSE collaborated with the African Securities Exchanges Association (ASEA) to organize a stakeholder engagement workshop to take Stock brokers, Fund Managers, Central Securities Depository, SEC, and other market players through the African Exchanges Linkage Project (AELP), which seeks to link all participating exchanges on a single platform for cross-border trading.

The GSE in collaboration with the Young Investor Network, Central Securities Depository, and other Partners launched the 'Youth Investment Education' campaign at the University of Ghana Business School. The programme impacted over 15,000 students across the country.



# Solar helps Dutch team complete African overland adventure in electric Skoda car

By Valerie Thompson

A DUTCH team intent on showing that "it is possible to implement sustainability in everybody's daily lives" travelled over 38,000 km by electric car from the north to the south of the African continent and back. They used solar panels they brought with them to make up for a spotty charging infrastructure.

Maarten van Pel and Renske Cox left the Netherlands in November 2022 to circumnavigate the African continent. They travelled 38,238 km. The journey took 14 months with 1225.5 hours of driving. "Of our total trip through Africa we used 43% solar," Renske Cox told pv magazine.

The Morocco to Cape Town leg of the trip used solar 54% of the time, sourced from their 60m<sup>2</sup> of solar panels with 10.8 kWh capacity. "The rest of the energy was charged with wall outlets, and sometimes custom made 3 phase setups," said Cox.



The 4x4electric team used solar panels they brought with them on the expedition.

The team took sixty 180 W solar panels made by Austrian module manufacturer DAS Energy on the road. Each weighs 3 kg/m<sup>2</sup> and measures 1/10 the thickness of conventional panels, according to Cox.

They traveled in a Skoda En-

yaq iv80 built in 2021 with a 77 kWh battery that is chargeable with either AC or DC power. Its default range is 537 km, but fully loaded for the expedition with

all-terrain tires, a tent, storage box and solar panels, the range was 400km, according to Cox.

It was not a luxurious trip. The two slept in a rooftop tent and

turned the expedition vehicle into a self-sufficient home for the duration. They had to curtail the last part of the journey as the North East was deemed too dangerous at the time. The car had to be shipped from Kenya to Greece to be able to complete the final leg.

Locating uninterrupted sunny ground for the panels at an angle with good irradiation was a challenge they met along the way. "When we started our expedition in Morocco in November, the optimal angle for our solar panels was roughly 60 degrees. This was really steep, so we had to be creative," according to the team's logbook. They found a clear space on a hill and used pegs from home to hold the panels in place. Related challenges they noted: shading caused by leaves, animals, and smoke.

The Enyaq was equipped with 460 W of custom vehicle-integrated PV (VIPV) panels based on I35 Maxeon-Sunpower back-contact

cells from Dutch specialist Mito Solar. They were installed on the hood, rooftop tent, and rooftop storage box to power the team's appliances, such as an induction cooking stove, fridge, lighting, and water pumps, as well as to charge electronics. "The panels of Mito Solar charged a separate 3 kWh battery in the car," said Cox.

A prototype of a custom-designed DC-DC converter was connected to the panels to charge the car battery on the road. It minimized the amount of equipment needed but it also decreased the energy losses due to switching to AC and back, according to Renske.

"Normally about 20% of the energy is lost due to switching from DC to AC and back. Other people interested in solar travel have expressed interest in the solution, as well as those who want to charge a car at their home without energy losses, so now we are working on a consumer version with Mito Solar," said Cox.

## Unpacking the agriculture market's 2023 performance, predicting 2024 for Africa

By Paul Makube, Johannesburg

AGRICULTURE had a wobbly start early in 2023 due to the combination of inclement weather that threatened the viability of crops and the persistent load shedding. Extreme temperatures with crops at their infancy threatened yield prospects which forced some farmers to replant or switch to alternative crops.

The intermittent electricity supply in the country that disrupted irrigation schedules exacerbated the situation as farmers could not irrigate crops at the right time during the day.

A significant portion of horticulture crops, mainly fruit and vegetables, are grown under irrigation that is mostly powered by electricity. Further, electricity is crucial post-harvesting of horticulture crops to maintain the cold chain and preserve quality of produce until it reaches the point of consumption.

In the case of field crops, crops affected included sugarcane, soybeans, and maize where irrigation accounts for 34%, 20%, and 15% of their total area planted. While almost half of wheat is produced under irrigation, the season had already ended for the winter crop early in the year.

Nonetheless, the weather did turnaround with good rains in a La Nina year ensuring sufficient crop recovery which delivered an excellent harvest at the end of the summer crop season.

The 2022/23 summer crop harvest was an impressive 20.74 million tonnes which is 6.8% higher year-on-year with maize accounting for 82% of the total production. Maize, a major staple for South Africa, saw harvest increasing by 6% year-on-year to 17.06 million tonnes of both the commercial and non-commercial crop.

Load shedding was a consistent negative for agriculture in terms of input costs in 2023. From primary production to agro processing, the unreliable electricity supply disrupted operations thus forcing producers to use alternative sources of energy mainly generators for power.

In addition to horticulture and field crops, red meat, poultry, dairy, piggeries, and wool all require electricity for processing and maintenance of cold chains. The use of generators raised their energy bill significantly as they had to run them for extend-

ed periods and diesel was also not cheap.

On the positive side, fertiliser prices reversed course in 2023 after a massive surge in 2022 due to global logistics challenges associated with the outbreak of the war in Ukraine.

Except for phosphate rock which increased by 29% year-on-year for the first nine months of 2023, the rest of the international fertilisers fell sharply with potassium chloride (KCL) posting the biggest decrease of 57% year-on-year, followed by urea, triple superphosphate (TSP), and di-ammonium phosphate (DAP) with declines of 50%, 33.6%, and 30.1% year-on-year, respectively (figures 1a and 1b). This means there was a reprieve for the summer crops farmers for the 2023/24 season in terms of fertiliser costs. Further, fuel costs particularly diesel started to decrease towards year end with a decrease in November followed by another cut of 65 cents/ litre for all grades of petrol and R2.35/l and R2.41/l decreases for the two grades of diesel (0.05% and 0.005% sulphur), respectively in December 2023.

On livestock feed, prices of major raw feed inputs declined considerably from the record highs of 2022 thus relieving pressure on producers. The abundance of maize, a major ingredient which accounts for over 70% of total livestock feed, helped maintain downward pressure on prices.

Maize prices declined on average by 11% and 7.5% year-on-year for the yellow and white varieties, respectively in 2023 and more pronounced in the second half of the year which coincided with the completion of the harvest (figure 2). Prices of major sources of plant proteins used in animal feed also declined with sunflower down by 12% year-on-year while soybeans eased by 0.5% year-on-year.

Just like the rest of the world, South Africa is not immune to challenges on the biosecurity front. The major animal and crop diseases and pests that have a huge impact on the country's trade are foot-and-mouth disease (FMD), Avian Influenza (AI), African Swine Fever (ASF), Citrus Black Spot (CBS), and False Codling Moth (FCM).

Livestock diseases such as FMD, AI, and ASF are reportable in terms of the World Organization for Animal Health (WOAH) and outbreaks are accompanied by import bans on animal products from affected countries.



**MONDAY - WEDNESDAY FROM 10:30 PM**



ITV	16:30	17:20	18:00	18:15	18:30	19:00	20:00	21:05	21:10	21:25	21:40	22:20	00:30
<b>WEDNESDAY 10 JAN</b>	5:00 Soap rpt: Uzalo	5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi	6:00 HABARI	6:40 Kumekucha	7:30 HABARI	8:00 Kumekucha Michezo	8:55 Habari za saa	9:00 Kumekucha Kishindo	9:30 Soap: In Love with Ramon	9:55 Habari za saa	10:00 Watoto wetu	10:30 Shamba lulu	10:55 Habari za saa
	11:00 Habari za saa	11:55 Habari za saa	12:00 Al Jazeera	12:30 Jarida la wanawake rpt	12:55 Habari za saa	13:00 Kipindi maalum rpt: BOT	13:30 Jungu kuu rpt	13:55 Habari za saa	14:00 Shamsham za pwani rpt	14:55 Habari za saa	15:00 Meza huru	16:30 Watoto wetu	17:00 The Base
	18:00 Jiji Letu	18:15 Mapishi	18:30 Jagina	19:00 Usafiri wako	19:30 Soap: In Love with Ramon	20:00 Habari	21:05 Malumbano ya hoja	23:00 Habari	23:30 Music: The Base	00:30 Al Jazeera	<b>FRIDAY 12 JAN</b>	5:00 Soap rpt: Uzalo	5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi
	6:00 HABARI	6:40 Kumekucha	7:30 HABARI	8:00 Kumekucha Michezo	8:55 Habari za saa	9:00 Kumekucha kishindo	9:30 Soap rpt: In Love with Ramon	9:55 Habari za saa	10:00 Watoto wetu	10:30 Usafiri wako	10:55 Habari za saa	11:00 Kipindi maalum rpt: Watumishi housing	11:20 Jagina
	11:55 Habari za saa	12:00 Al Jazeera	12:30 Bundlesliga na DW rpt	12:55 Habari za saa	13:00 Dakika 45 rpt	13:55 Habari za saa	14:00 Kipindi maalum: NSSF rpt	14:15 Chetu ni chetu rpt	14:55 Habari za saa	15:00 Meza huru	16:30 Watoto Wetu	17:00 Music: The Base	18:00 Jiji Letu
	18:15 Igizo: Mizengwe	18:30 Jarida la wanawake	19:00 Kipindi maalum: BOT	19:30 Soap: In Love with Ramon	20:00 Habari	21:05 Aibu Yako	21:10 Kipindi maalum: Tanesco	21:25 Kipindi maalum: Ripoti maalum:	22:00 Soap: Uzalo	23:00 Habari	23:30 Music: The Base	00:30 Al Jazeera	12:30 Kipindi maalum rpt: Tanesco
<b>THURSDAY 11 JAN</b>	5:00 Soap rpt: Uzalo	5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi	6:00 HABARI	6:40 Kumekucha	7:30 HABARI	8:00 Kumekucha Michezo	8:55 Habari za saa	9:00 Kumekucha Kishindo	9:30 Soap rpt: In Love with Ramon	9:55 Habari za saa	10:00 Watoto wetu	10:30 Usafiri wako	10:55 Habari za saa
	11:00 Kipindi maalum: Watumishi housing	11:20 Jagina	11:55 Habari za saa	12:00 Al Jazeera	12:30 Kipindi maalum rpt: Tanesco	12:55 Habari za saa	13:00 Kipindi Maalum: Maisha ni Nyumba rpt	13:30 Kipindi Maalum rpt: Sema na Mahakama	13:55 Habari za saa	14:00 Kipindi Maalum rpt: Sema na Mahakama	14:30 DW: Afrimaxx rpt	14:55 Habari za saa	15:00 Meza huru
	15:30 Mwangaza	16:30 Watoto Wetu	17:00 The Base (DJ Show)	17:30 Kiislam	18:00 Jiji Letu	18:15 Top ten	19:00 Shamba lulu	19:30 Soap: In Love with Ramon	20:00 Habari	21:05 Kipima Joto	23:00 Habari	23:30 The Base	00:30 Al Jazeera
	00:30 Al Jazeera	<b>SATURDAY 13 JAN</b>	5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi	6:00 HABARI	6:40 Kumekucha	7:00 Habari	8:00 Al Jazeera	9:00 Watoto wetu	10:05 Shika Bamba 5	10:35 Mjue Zaidi rpt	11:15 Chetu ni chetu rpt	11:50 Hawavumi lakini wamo	12:50 Art and lifestyle
	13:20 Shamba lulu	13:50 Soap: In Love with Ramon rpt	15:45 Igizo: Mizengwe	16:10 Igizo: Slay Queen	17:00 Shamsham za Pwani	18:00 Jiji Letu	18:15 ITV Top 10 rpt	19:00 Jungu kuu	19:30 Shika Bamba	20:00 Habari	21:05 Igizo: Slay Queen	21:40 Art and Lifestyle	22:10 ITV Top 10
	22:50 Hawavumi lakini wamo	23:40 Soap: Uzalo rpt	00:30 Al Jazeera	<b>SUNDAY 14 JAN</b>	5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi	6:00 HABARI	6:40 Kumekucha	7:00 Habari	8:00 Al Jazeera	09:00 Watoto Wetu	10:00 Soap: In Love with Ramon rpt	11:45 Hawavumi lakini wamo rpt:	12:45 Mjue zaidi
	13:30 Usafiri wako	14:00 Tamasha la Michezo	15:30 Mwangaza	16:30 Watoto Wetu	17:00 The Base	17:30 Kiislam	18:00 Jiji Letu	18:15 Top ten	19:00 Shamba lulu	19:30 Soap: In Love with Ramon	20:00 Habari	21:05 Kipima Joto	23:00 Habari
	00:30 Al Jazeera	<b>MONDAY 15 JAN</b>	5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi	6:00 HABARI	6:40 Kumekucha	7:30 HABARI	8:00 Kumekucha Michezo	8:55 Habari za saa	9:00 Kumekucha kishindo	9:30 Soap rpt: In Love with Ramon	9:55 Habari za saa	10:00 Watoto wetu	10:30 Usafiri wako
	10:55 Habari za saa	11:00 Kipindi maalum: Watumishi housing	11:20 Jagina	11:55 Habari za saa	12:00 Al Jazeera	12:30 Kipindi maalum rpt: Tanesco	12:55 Habari za saa	13:00 Kipindi Maalum: Maisha ni Nyumba rpt	13:30 Kipindi Maalum rpt: Sema na Mahakama	13:55 Habari za saa	14:00 Kipindi Maalum rpt: Sema na Mahakama	14:30 DW: Afrimaxx rpt	14:55 Habari za saa
	15:30 Mwangaza	16:30 Watoto Wetu	17:00 The Base (DJ Show)	17:30 Kiislam	18:00 Jiji Letu	18:15 Top ten	19:00 Shamba lulu	19:30 Soap: In Love with Ramon	20:00 Habari	21:05 Kipima Joto	23:00 Habari	23:30 The Base	00:30 Al Jazeera
	00:30 Al Jazeera	<b>TUESDAY 16 JAN</b>	5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi	6:00 HABARI	6:40 Kumekucha	7:30 HABARI	8:00 Kumekucha Michezo	8:55 Habari za saa	9:00 Kumekucha kishindo	9:30 Soap rpt: In Love with Ramon	9:55 Habari za saa	10:00 Watoto wetu	10:30 Usafiri wako
	10:55 Habari za saa	11:00 Kipindi maalum: Watumishi housing	11:20 Jagina	11:55 Habari za saa	12:00 Al Jazeera	12:30 Kipindi maalum rpt: Tanesco	12:55 Habari za saa	13:00 Kipindi Maalum: Maisha ni Nyumba rpt	13:30 Kipindi Maalum rpt: Sema na Mahakama	13:55 Habari za saa	14:00 Kipindi Maalum rpt: Sema na Mahakama	14:30 DW: Afrimaxx rpt	14:55 Habari za saa
	15:30 Mwangaza	16:30 Watoto Wetu	17:00 The Base	17:30 Kiislam	18:00 Jiji Letu	18:15 Top ten	19:00 Shamba lulu	19:30 Soap: In Love with Ramon	20:00 Habari	21:05 Kipima Joto	23:00 Habari	23:30 The Base	00:30 Al Jazeera
	00:30 Al Jazeera	<b>WEDNESDAY 17 JAN</b>	5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi	6:00 HABARI	6:40 Kumekucha	7:30 HABARI	8:00 Kumekucha Michezo	8:55 Habari za saa	9:00 Kumekucha kishindo	9:30 Soap rpt: In Love with Ramon	9:55 Habari za saa	10:00 Watoto wetu	10:30 Usafiri wako
	10:55 Habari za saa	11:00 Kipindi maalum: Watumishi housing	11:20 Jagina	11:55 Habari za saa	12:00 Al Jazeera	12:30 Kipindi maalum rpt: Tanesco	12:55 Habari za saa	13:00 Kipindi Maalum: Maisha ni Nyumba rpt	13:30 Kipindi Maalum rpt: Sema na Mahakama	13:55 Habari za saa	14:00 Kipindi Maalum rpt: Sema na Mahakama	14:30 DW: Afrimaxx rpt	14:55 Habari za saa
	15:30 Mwangaza	16:30 Watoto Wetu	17:00 The Base	17:30 Kiislam	18:00 Jiji Letu	18:15 Top ten	19:00 Shamba lulu	19:30 Soap: In Love with Ramon	20:00 Habari	21:05 Kipima Joto	23:00 Habari	23:30 The Base	00:30 Al Jazeera
	00:30 Al Jazeera	<b>THURSDAY 18 JAN</b>	5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi	6:00 HABARI	6:40 Kumekucha	7:30 HABARI	8:00 Kumekucha Michezo	8:55 Habari za saa	9:00 Kumekucha kishindo	9:30 Soap rpt: In Love with Ramon	9:55 Habari za saa	10:00 Watoto wetu	10:30 Usafiri wako
	10:55 Habari za saa	11:00 Kipindi maalum: Watumishi housing	11:20 Jagina	11:55 Habari za saa	12:00 Al Jazeera	12:30 Kipindi maalum rpt: Tanesco	12:55 Habari za saa	13:00 Kipindi Maalum: Maisha ni Nyumba rpt	13:30 Kipindi Maalum rpt: Sema na Mahakama	13:55 Habari za saa	14:00 Kipindi Maalum rpt: Sema na Mahakama	14:30 DW: Afrimaxx rpt	14:55 Habari za saa
	15:30 Mwangaza	16:30 Watoto Wetu	17:00 The Base	17:30 Kiislam	18:00 Jiji Letu	18:15 Top ten	19:00 Shamba lulu	19:30 Soap: In Love with Ramon	20:00 Habari	21:05 Kipima Joto	23:00 Habari	23:30 The Base	00:30 Al Jazeera
	00:30 Al Jazeera	<b>FRIDAY 19 JAN</b>	5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi	6:00 HABARI	6:40 Kumekucha	7:30 HABARI	8:00 Kumekucha Michezo	8:55 Habari za saa	9:00 Kumekucha kishindo	9:30 Soap rpt: In Love with Ramon	9:55 Habari za saa	10:00 Watoto wetu	10:30 Usafiri wako
	10:55 Habari za saa	11:00 Kipindi maalum: Watumishi housing	11:20 Jagina	11:55 Habari za saa	12:00 Al Jazeera	12:30 Kipindi maalum rpt: Tanesco	12:55 Habari za saa	13:00 Kipindi Maalum: Maisha ni Nyumba rpt	13:30 Kipindi Maalum rpt: Sema na Mahakama	13:55 Habari za saa	14:00 Kipindi Maalum rpt: Sema na Mahakama	14:30 DW: Afrimaxx rpt	14:55 Habari za saa
	15:30 Mwangaza	16:30 Watoto Wetu	17:00 The Base	17:30 Kiislam	18:00 Jiji Letu	18:15 Top ten	19:00 Shamba lulu	19:30 Soap: In Love with Ramon	20:00 Habari	21:05 Kipima Joto	23:00 Habari	23:30 The Base	00:30 Al Jazeera
	00:30 Al Jazeera	<b>SATURDAY 20 JAN</b>	5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi	6:00 HABARI	6:40 Kumekucha	7:30 HABARI	8:00 Kumekucha Michezo	8:55 Habari za saa	9:00 Kumekucha kishindo	9:30 Soap rpt: In Love with Ramon	9:55 Habari za saa	10:00 Watoto wetu	10:30 Usafiri wako
	10:55 Habari za saa	11:00 Kipindi maalum: Watumishi housing	11:20 Jagina	11:55 Habari za saa	12:00 Al Jazeera	12:30 Kipindi maalum rpt: Tanesco	12:55 Habari za saa	13:00 Kipindi Maalum: Maisha ni Nyumba rpt	13:30 Kipindi Maalum rpt: Sema na Mahakama	13:55 Habari za saa	14:00 Kipindi Maalum rpt: Sema na Mahakama	14:30 DW: Afrimaxx rpt	14:55 Habari za saa
	15:30 Mwangaza	16:30 Watoto Wetu	17:00 The Base	17:30 Kiislam	18:00 Jiji Letu	18:15 Top ten	19:00 Shamba lulu	19:30 Soap: In Love with Ramon	20:00 Habari	21:05 Kipima Joto	23:00 Habari	23:30 The Base	00:30 Al Jazeera
	00:30 Al Jazeera	<b>SUNDAY 21 JAN</b>	5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi	6:00 HABARI	6:40 Kumekucha	7:30 HABARI	8:00 Kumekucha Michezo	8:55 Habari za saa	9:00 Kumekucha kishindo	9:30 Soap rpt: In Love with Ramon	9:55 Habari za saa	10:00 Watoto wetu	10:30 Usafiri wako
	10:55 Habari za saa	11:00 Kipindi maalum: Watumishi housing	11:20 Jagina	11:55 Habari za saa	12:00 Al Jazeera	12:30 Kipindi maalum rpt: Tanesco	12:55 Habari za saa	13:00 Kipindi Maalum: Maisha ni Nyumba rpt	13:30 Kipindi Maalum rpt: Sema na Mahakama	13:55 Habari za saa	14:00 Kipindi Maalum rpt: Sema na Mahakama	14:30 DW: Afrimaxx rpt	14:55 Habari za saa
	15:30 Mwangaza	16:30 Watoto Wetu	17:00 The Base	17:30 Kiislam	18:00 Jiji Letu	18:15 Top ten	19:00 Shamba lulu	19:30 Soap: In Love with Ramon	20:00 Habari	21:05 Kipima Joto	23:00 Habari	23:30 The Base	00:30 Al Jazeera
	00:30 Al Jazeera	<b>MONDAY 22 JAN</b>	5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi	6:00 HABARI	6:40 Kumekucha	7:30 HABARI	8:00 Kumekucha Michezo	8:55 Habari za saa	9:00 Kumekucha kishindo	9:30 Soap rpt: In Love with Ramon	9:55 Habari za saa	10:00 Watoto wetu	10:30 Usafiri wako
	10:55 Habari za saa	11:00 Kipindi maalum: Watumishi housing	11:20 Jagina	11:55 Habari za saa	12:00 Al Jazeera	12:30 Kipindi maalum rpt: Tanesco	12:55 Habari za saa	13:00 Kipindi Maalum: Maisha ni Nyumba rpt	13:30 Kipindi Maalum rpt: Sema na Mahakama	13:55 Habari za saa	14:00 Kipindi Maalum rpt: Sema na Mahakama	14:30 DW: Afrimaxx rpt	14:55 Habari za saa
	15:30 Mwangaza	16:30 Watoto Wetu	17:00 The Base	17:30 Kiislam	18:00 Jiji Letu	18:15 Top ten	19:00 Shamba lulu	19:30 Soap: In Love with Ramon	20:00 Habari	21:05 Kipima Joto	23:00 Habari	23:30 The Base	00:30 Al Jazeera
	00:30 Al Jazeera	<b>TUESDAY 23 JAN</b>	5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi	6:00 HABARI	6:40 Kumekucha	7:30 HABARI	8:00 Kumekucha Michezo	8:55 Habari za saa	9:00 Kumekucha kishindo	9:30 Soap rpt: In Love with Ramon	9:55 Habari za saa	10:00 Watoto wetu	10:30 Usafiri wako
	10:55 Habari za saa	11:00 Kipindi maalum: Watumishi housing	11:20 Jagina	11:55 Habari za saa	12:00 Al Jazeera	12:30 Kipindi maalum rpt: Tanesco	12:55 Habari za saa	13:00 Kipindi Maalum: Maisha ni Nyumba rpt	13:30 Kipindi Maalum rpt: Sema na Mahakama	13:55 Habari za saa	14:00 Kipindi Maalum rpt: Sema na Mahakama	14:30 DW: Afrimaxx rpt	14:55 Habari za saa
	15:30 Mwangaza	16:30 Watoto Wetu	17:00 The Base	17:30 Kiislam	18:00 Jiji Letu	18:15 Top ten	19:00 Shamba lulu	19:30 Soap: In Love with Ramon	20:00 Habari	21:05 Kipima Joto	23:00 Habari	23:30 The Base	00:30 Al Jazeera
	00:30 Al Jazeera	<b>WEDNESDAY 24 JAN</b>	5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi	6:00 HABARI	6:40 Kumekucha	7:30 HABARI	8:00 Kumekucha Michezo	8:55 Habari za saa	9:00 Kumekucha kishindo	9:30 Soap rpt: In Love with Ramon	9:55 Habari za saa	10:00 Watoto wetu	10:30 Usafiri wako
	10:55 Habari za saa	11:00 Kipindi maalum: Watumishi housing	11										



## WORLD

## Oil tankers continue Red Sea movements despite Houthi attacks

HOUSTON

OIL and fuel tanker traffic in the Red Sea was stable in December, even though many container ships have rerouted due to attacks by Houthi militants, a Reuters analysis of vessel tracking data showed.

The attacks have driven up shipping costs sharply along with insurance premiums, but have had less impact than feared on oil flows, with shippers continuing to use the key East-West passage. The Houthis, who have said they are targeting Israel-bound vessels, have largely attacked non-petroleum goods shipments.

The added costs have not made a big difference to most shippers so far because the Red Sea remains much more affordable than sending cargo around Africa. But the situation bears watching with some oil companies like BP and Equinor diverting cargoes to the longer route. Also, increased shipping costs are likely to boost exports of US crude to some European buyers, experts said.

"We haven't really seen the interruption to tanker traffic that everyone was expecting," said Michelle Wiese Bockmann, a shipping analyst at Lloyd's List.

A daily average of 76 tankers carrying oil and fuel were in the south Red Sea and Gulf of Aden in December, the area close to Yemen that has seen attacks. That was only two fewer than November's average and just three below the average for the first 11 months of 2023, according to data from ship tracking

service MariTrace.

Rival tracking service Kpler tracked 236 ships on average daily across all of Red Sea and Gulf of Aden in December, slightly above the 230 daily average in November.

The additional cost of sailing around the Cape of Good Hope off Africa rather than via the Red Sea would make voyages to deliver oil less profitable, she said.

"So, you're going to try and go through", she said.

Since the beginning of December, chartering rates have roughly doubled according to data from ship analytics firm Marhelm. It cost as much as \$85,000 a day to ship oil on Suezmax tankers, which can carry as much as 1 million barrels. Aframax vessels, which can move 750,000 barrels, cost \$75,000 a day.

Tanker traffic in the south Red Sea region briefly dipped between Dec 18 and Dec 22 when the Houthi group intensified attacks on vessels, averaging 66 tankers, but movements resumed after, according to MariTrace.

Container ship traffic in the area has fallen more sharply, down 28 percent in December from November, with steep declines in the second half of the month as attacks mounted, according to MariTrace.

**'Still talking the risk'**

Several oil majors, refiners and trading houses have continued to use the Red Sea route, according to an analysis of LSEG data.

"Shippers and their customers really want to avoid a schedule disruption. So they are



A coastguard boat sails past a commercial container ship docked at the Houthi-held Red Sea port of Hodeidah, in Hodeidah, Yemen, Feb 25, 2023. REUTERS

still taking the risk," said Calvin Froedge, founder of Marhelm.

He noted that many oil tankers transiting the Red Sea were carrying Russian crude to India, which the Houthis have no interest in attacking.

The Chevron-chartered Delta Poseidon traversed the Suez Canal and Red Sea at the end of December en route to Singapore, according to LSEG's ship tracker. The Sanmar Sarod, chartered by Indian refiner Reliance, also crossed the Red Sea in late December to deliver gasoline components to the United States, data showed.

Chevron "will continue to actively assess the safety of routes in the Red Sea and throughout the Middle East and make decisions based on the latest developments," a spokesperson said.

**Reliance did not respond to a request for comment.**

Other tankers, chartered by trading house Gunvor's unit Clearlake, Indian refiner Bharat Petroleum and Saudi Arabia's Aramco Trading Company, have all navigated the route in recent weeks. The companies either declined to comment or did not reply to requests for comments.

Using the Red Sea can save 3,700 nautical miles off a trip from Singapore to Gibraltar.

**Shifting flows**

Some companies such as BP and Equinor have paused all transits through the

Red Sea and rerouted their vessels in the region.

Since the second half of December, at least 32 tankers have diverted or transited via the Cape of Good Hope, instead of using the Suez Canal, according to ship tracking service Vortexa.

The tankers that are diverting are mostly those chartered by companies who announced a pause on Red Sea movement, or those operated by US and Israel-linked entities, Vortexa added.

Fuel oil traders and bunkering sources in Asia said they were still monitoring Red Sea developments, though the East of Suez remains amply supplied for now so the current diversions are unlikely to boost prices.

East-to-west disruptions have mainly impacted European imports of diesel and jet fuel so far, Kpler data suggest. Meanwhile West to East diversions have impacted some European fuel oil and gasoline shipments to the Middle East, Asia-Pacific and East Africa, Kpler data shows.

Tensions there have also prompted more oil buyers to look to the US and likely played a role in the record 2.3 million barrels per day of crude exports to Europe in December, Matt Smith, an analyst at ship tracking firm Kpler said.

"Ongoing uncertainty in the Red Sea is likely spurring on some modicum of European buying (of US crude)," Smith said.

Agencies

## Russian forces improve tactical situation in Donetsk area – battlegroup spokesman

MOSCOW

RUSSIAN troops have improved their tactical position near Georgiyevka and Bogdanovka in the Donetsk area, Vadim Astafyev, spokesman for Russia's battlegroup South, told TASS.

"Units of the southern battlegroup, supported by air strikes and artillery fire, have improved the tactical situation in the areas of Georgiyevka and Bogdanovka.

They defeated the accumulations of manpower and equipment of the Ukrainian 24th, 28th, 42nd, 93rd mechanized, 92nd assault brigades, 112th territorial defense brigade near Toretsk, Andreyevka, Kleshcheyevka and Krasnoye," Astafyev said.

According to him, the enemy lost over 250 servicemen, as well as two tanks, three armored combat vehicles, two vehicles, and two 122 mm D-30 howitzers. "Air defense systems shot down four Ukrainian drones near the settlements of Pesky and Novomikhailovka in the Donetsk People's Republic," the spokesman added.

## Mozambique President Filipe Nyusi arrives in Ahmedabad to attend Vibrant Gujarat Summit

AHMEDABAD

MOZAMBIQUE President Filipe Nyusi arrived in Gujarat yesterday to attend the Vibrant Gujarat Summit. Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel received Nyusi at Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel International Airport in Ahmedabad.

In a post shared on X, Ministry of External Affairs official spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal stated, "A warm welcome to President Filipe Nyusi of Mozambique as he arrives in Ahmedabad for the 10th @VibrantGujarat Summit. CM @BhupendraPatel of Gujarat received President Nyusi at the airport."

Later in the day, Filipe Nyusi is scheduled to meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi at Mahatma Mandir in Gandhinagar, Gujarat.

PM Modi arrived in Ahmedabad on Monday for a two-day visit to inaugurate the 10th edition of Vibrant Gujarat Global Summit 2024 at Gujarat's Mahatma Mandir.

The theme of the summit, held from January 10 to 12, is 'Gateway to the Future' to celebrate "20 Years of Vibrant Gujarat as the Summit of Success". Several world leaders, including UAE President Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan and Timor Leste President Jose Ramos-Horta will attend the Vibrant Gujarat Summit.

Upon arrival in Gujarat, PM Modi in a post shared on X stated, "Landed in Ahmedabad a short while ago. Over the next two days, will be taking part in the Vibrant Gujarat Summit and related programmes. It is a matter of immense joy that various world leaders will be joining us during this summit. The coming of my brother, Mohamed Bin Zayed, is very special. I have a very close association with the Vibrant Gujarat Summit and I am glad to see how this platform has contributed to Gujarat's growth and created opportunities for several people."

The Vibrant Gujarat Global Summit was started in 2003 under the leadership of Modi when he was the state chief minister. The tenth edition of the Vibrant Gujarat Global Summit is being held from January 10-12 in Gandhinagar.

There are 34 partner countries and 16 partner organisations for this year's Summit. Further, the Ministry of Development of the North-Eastern Region will utilise the Vibrant Gujarat platform to showcase investment opportunities in the North-Eastern regions.

The Summit will host various events including seminars and conferences on globally relevant topics such as Industry 4.0, Technology and Innovation, Sustainable Manufacturing, Green Hydrogen, Electric Mobility and Renewable Energy and Transition towards Sustainability.

In the Vibrant Gujarat Global Trade Show, companies will display products made from world class state of the art technology. E-mobility, Start-ups, MSMEs, Blue Economy, Green Energy & Smart Infrastructure are some of the focus sectors of the Trade Show.

ANI



**The Vibrant Gujarat Global Summit was started in 2003 under the leadership of Modi when he was the state chief minister. The tenth edition of the Vibrant Gujarat Global Summit is being held from**

## UK Minister of State Lord Tariq has chosen excellent timing to visit India

NEW DELHI

BRITISH High Commissioner to India Alex Ellis has said UK Minister of State, Lord (Tariq) Ahmad has chosen excellent timing to visit Tamil Nadu and Gujarat, the states with the second and third largest economies in India.

"Welcome back to India @tariqahmadt - excellent timing to visit the states in India with the 2nd and 3rd largest economies, two centres of growth and UK-India cooperation," the British High Commissioner to India wrote on X on Monday.

British Minister of State, Lord (Tariq) Ahmad is on a three-day visit to India from Monday to launch two new UK-funded sustainability projects at the ongoing

Tamil Nadu Global Investors Meet (TNGIM).

Ahmad is also slated to visit Ahmedabad and attend Vibrant Gujarat, an innovation-focused summit, the British High Commissioner said in a statement.

Lord (Tariq) Ahmad is the British Minister of State for the Middle East, South Asia, UN and the Prime Minister's Special Representative on Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict.

While in Chennai, the minister will launch a heat mitigation project alongside Tamil Nadu's State Planning Commission. The project will provide recommendations to the government of Tamil Nadu to address extreme heat-related deaths and the loss of vital ecosystems, the British High Com-



mission statement said.

Also, with the Tamil Nadu Department of Environment and Climate Change, the minister will launch an Electronic and Battery Waste Management project, which will develop a plan to reduce battery waste, it said.

As Tamil Nadu and Gujarat are two of India's largest economies, the minister will use his trip to highlight the strong UK-India trade partnership and explore new opportuni-

ties to collaborate, including on clean energy growth, the statement added.

The British minister said, "Tamil Nadu and Gujarat are leading the way in the development of emerging technologies, and I am delighted to see first-hand British businesses pioneering innovation in the region.

"During my visit, I look forward to further promoting joint innovation projects alongside dynamic Indian businesses - from renewable manufacturing to financial services. These are made possible through the close trade partnership we have between our two countries," he said.

At the flagship investment summit TNGIM in Chennai, Lord Ahmad will deliver a keynote speech on the success of innovative UK-India projects in climate and energy, the state-

ment said.

He will continue to showcase the sustainable success of British businesses overseas at a great reception and will see first-hand how British businesses are supporting clean growth in India.

At the Biennial Investors' Summit in Vibrant Gujarat, the Minister will celebrate the close ties between the UK and India through business, culture, and the great links between our peoples.

While at Vibrant Gujarat, he will witness the signing of an MoU between the UK's Abertay University and India's Ecole Intuit Lab. The partnership agreement will see teaching, research and innovation expertise shared between the two organisations, the release said.

ANI

## European Council leader to step down, run EU race

LONDON

EUROPEAN Council President Charles Michel has announced his intention to run in European Union elections in June, prematurely ending his presidency, which was scheduled to continue until November, and plunging the bloc into significant uncertainty.

Michel said he wants to seek election as a

member of the European Parliament on behalf of his center-right Reformist Movement in the elections set for June 6 to 9.

"I think it is extremely important to be accountable," he told journalists as he announced his decision. He will need to step down as European Council president before he can take up his seat as an MEP on July 16.

Michel, formerly prime minister of Belgium, said

he will campaign to strengthen the EU's security and defense capabilities.

"If we want to be impactful in the long term, we need to develop this pillar," the Financial Times quoted him as saying. Michel's successor as president of the European Council will need to be agreed upon by the governments of the EU's 27 member nations.

If no consensus is reached before July 16, the role

will temporarily be filled by the country functioning as the bloc's presiding nation on a six-month rotation, which will be Hungary as of July 1.

The European Council president has a mediatory role and is responsible for organizing meetings of ministers and summits of national leaders on issues, including foreign affairs and finance. Agencies

XIAMEN, capital of southeast China's Fujian province, with its many "green accolades" such as the UN-Habitat Scroll of Honor Award, International Garden City, and national-level ecological city, is a garden city that is beautiful and ecologically friendly.

The city's Yundang Lake, with its picturesque scenery, is known as an eco-signature of Xiamen.

However, the mesmerizing scenic spot today used to be a "stinky lake" that locals never wanted to come near.

With a water area of 1.6 square kilometers, the Yundang Lake was once an inner-bay fishing port. In the 1970s, it became an inner lake due to the seaward embankment. The rapid development of factories around the lake resulted in a large amount of sewage discharged directly into the lake, causing severe pollution.

## Xiamen's Yundang Lake: A Chinese practice of man-nature harmony

"Back then, people passing by would run away quickly, covering their noses," said Chen Qingfu, a water quality administrator at the Yundang Lake conservation center.

At that time, the Xiamen Special Economic Zone was just established, and huge efforts were made to advance development, which led to a shortage of funds for environmental governance.

The pollution in Yundang Lake became a challenge for Xiamen - whether the city should sacrifice the ecological environment in exchange for economic growth and how it can strike a balance between development and environmental protection.

On March 30, 1988, Xi Jinping, who

then served as Member of the Standing Committee of the CPC Xiamen Municipal Committee and executive vice mayor of Xiamen, convened a special meeting on strengthening the comprehensive treatment of the Yundang Lake, creatively putting forward the request to carry out law-based governance of the lake, intercept and treat sewage, dredge the lake and build embankments, revitalize the water and beautify the environment.

This marked the beginning of a transformation of the Yundang Lake.

The lake was then comprehensively managed by law. About half a year later, the Xiamen Municipal People's Congress adopted a motion on accelerating the comprehensive treatment

of the Yundang Lake, which made clear the principles and direction of the governance.

Interception of sewage solved the problem of water quality from the source. Back then, there were 125 polluting enterprises by the lake. After a thorough investigation into them, many of these polluters were shut down, relocated or transformed as requested by the treatment plan.

In December 1991, just one week after the last batch of wastewater from an MSG plant was discharged to a pipe network, the water quality of Yundang Lake began improving.

However, it was difficult to further lift the water quality if the lake was not dredged over years of deposited

pollutants. Therefore, the government launched large-scale dredging operations, followed by the construction of embankments, as well as the building of a lake island. This not only improved water quality, but also significantly enhanced flood control capabilities.

Besides, innovative efforts were made to connect the lake and the sea utilizing the sea's natural tidal difference. Sluice gates were installed in the seawalls to let water in during high tide and release water during low tide.

At the same time, guide banks were built to circulate the water and effectively enhance the overall flood control and water exchange capacity of the lake area.

In order to restore the water ecology, since 1999, an initiative to restore the aquatic ecosystem has been underway along the shores of Yundang Lake through the experimental planting of mangroves. As the planting area gradually expanded, the marine ecosystem was revitalized, and water birds could once again be seen frolicking on branches.

The right approach produced immediate results.

After three years of intensive efforts, the first phase of the comprehensive treatment of Yundang Lake was completed, achieving the goal of basically removing the foul smell from the lake. Improved water quality brought back egrets, and Xiamen's nickname - Egret Island - finally matched reality.

People's Daily



## Egyptian, Palestinian leaders discuss Gaza conflict, Palestinian issue

CAIRO

EGYPTIAN President Abdel-Fattah al-Sisi and his Palestinian counterpart Mahmoud Abbas discussed on Monday the current situation in the Palestinian territories, mainly the ongoing conflict in the Gaza Strip.

During a meeting in the Egyptian capital Cairo, Abbas reviewed the latest developments of the Israeli military operations in the Gaza Strip and the "catastrophic human tragedy" in the seaside enclave, the Egyptian Presidency said in a statement.

In addition, Abbas talked about the Israeli escalation and violence in the West Bank, the statement added. For his part, Sisi underlined Egypt's intensified efforts and ongoing contacts with various parties to push for a ceasefire and the immediate entry of humanitarian aid in sufficient quantities into Gaza, to end the suffering of civilians in the coastal territory.

Meanwhile, the two leaders stressed the pivotal role of the Palestinian Authority and the necessity of taking all measures to support it in fulfilling its role. They also affirmed that the Palestinian issue requires the international community and active forces to assume the highest levels of historical, political and humanitarian responsibility, to work towards a just and comprehensive settlement, which includes the establishment and recognition of an independent Palestinian state along the 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

Sisi and Abbas considered that this is the primary guarantee for security and stability in the region, categorically rejecting any efforts or attempts aimed at liquidating the Palestinian cause or displacing Palestinians outside their lands.

Israel has been fighting with Hamas in the Gaza Strip since Oct. 7, 2023, after the Palestinian faction launched a surprise attack on southern Israel that killed about 1,200 people. The Israeli army has so far killed more than 23,000 Palestinians in its military operations in the enclave, the Gaza-based Health Ministry said Monday.

## 'India has been our 911 call'

MALE

FORMER Maldives Defence Minister Mariya Ahmed Didi on Monday said that derogatory comments against Prime Minister Narendra Modi demonstrate the "short-sightedness" of the Maldives government, adding that India has been a reliable ally, providing assistance in various sectors, including defense, and criticized any attempt to undermine the longstanding relationship.

She further expressed disappointment over disparaging remarks, highlighting India as the "911 call" for the Maldives, always coming to their rescue in times of need.

"It is the short-sightedness on the part of the present administration... We are a small country who are friends with all, but we cannot deny that we share borders with India. We share similar security concerns. India has always helped us. They have been helping us even in the defence sector with capacity building, providing us with equipment, and trying to make us more self-sufficient," Mariya Ahmed Didi said.

She said that Maldives and India are like-minded in their quest for democracy and respect for human rights. "It's a very short-sightedness on the part of the present government to really think that we can really try to not keep the age-old relationship that we have always had with India..." she said.

A massive row was triggered last week as Maldives deputy minister, along with other cabinet members and government officials, made disparaging and unsavoury references to PM Modi's Lakshadweep visit.

Meanwhile, the former Maldives Defence Minister said "... India has been our 911 call, whenever we need it, we give a call and you all come to our rescue. That kind of a friend. When you see such disparaging remarks about friends like this, it is sad for everyone concerned."

She underscored the importance of maintaining the age-old relationship with India and expressed concerns about the negative impact of such remarks on the friendship between the two nations.

Former Maldives Defence Minister said that considering our close friendship, neighboring status, and participation in the global community, it is essential to uphold our international commitments.

She noted the historical "India first" policy and hoped for its continuation, recognizing India as the nearest neighbor that has consistently provided sup-

port in times of need.

"I would think as close friends, as neighbours, as part of the global community, and we would keep our international commitments and Maldives government, would keep our traditional foreign policy of being friends with everyone. We've always had an India first policy, and I hope they continue it, that they recognize that you're the closest neighbour, that you will be the people who have always come and will come in the future also when the need arises and to have the sentiments of the Maldivian people because we have always gone to India for medical treatment as well," she added.

She urged acknowledgment of the sentiments of the Maldivian people, highlighting instances of seeking medical treatment in India and receiving COVID-19 vaccines under Indian aid.

"When we do not have the facility to attend to certain illnesses in Maldives. Even otherwise when we had the Covid, we got the vaccines also under Indian aid. We've had so much cooperation between the two countries. We have cooperated with each other from time immemorial, and it is not feasible for us to even think that we can replace our closest neighbour..." she said.

On January 2, PM Modi visited the Union Territory of Lakshadweep and shared several pictures, including an 'exhilarating experience' of him trying his hand at snorkelling.

In a series of posts on X, PM Modi shared pictures of the white beaches, the pristine blue skies and the ocean and tagged them with a message that read, "For those who wish to embrace the adventurer in them, Lakshadweep has to be on your list."

In a post that has now been deleted, the Maldivian Deputy Minister of Youth Empowerment, Shiuna, made a mocking and disrespectful reference to PM Modi.

The Maldivian government on Sunday distanced itself from Minister Mariyam Shiuna's derogatory remarks, saying her opinion does not reflect the government's views. The government added that 'appropriate action' will be taken against the minister, who is in the midst of a social media firestorm over her post.

The government added that it believes that the freedom of expression should be exercised in a "democratic and responsible manner, and in ways that do not spread hatred, negativity, and hinder close relationships between the Maldives and its international partners".

ANI

## Antony Blinken: On the US mission to stop Gaza igniting wider war

By Anthony Zurcher

OF all the priorities for US Secretary of State Antony Blinken on his fourth visit to the Middle East in three months, there is one message above all others that he wants to deliver.

His main mission on this trip is to ensure the Israel-Gaza war does not spread into a regional conflict.

As he flies between destinations in southwest Asia - a packed schedule that includes stops in Turkey, Jordan, Qatar, the UAE, Saudi Arabia and Israel - there is ample evidence, however, that the cauldron of tensions in the region is on the verge of boiling over.

Houthi rebels in Yemen have launched repeated missile and drone attacks on civilian shipping in the Red Sea, bringing traffic through that key international waterway to a near halt.

The US has warned that it will defend its interests. If the rebels persist, and the disruption to global commerce continues, an American military response may be inevitable - a development that would unsettle some key American Arab allies.

"We never see a military action as a resolution," said the Qatari prime minister in a joint press conference with Mr Blinken in Doha on Sunday. Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani said his biggest worry was that such action would "keep us in a loop that will never end and will create a real tension in the entire region".

On Saturday, Hezbollah forces in southern Lebanon fired a barrage of rocket attacks on northern Israel in reprisal for what appeared to be an Israeli-planned bomb attack that killed a key Hamas leader in



Antony Blinken meeting Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan of the UAE in Abu Dhabi on Monday

Beirut. Israel responded with air strikes targeting Hezbollah forces in Lebanon.

An escalation there, Mr Blinken said later that day, was a "real concern". He called on regional powers with influence over Hezbollah - in other words Iran and, to a lesser extent, Turkey - to use their influence to "try to keep things in check".

That may be difficult. As the Washington Post reported, American officials are concerned that Israel may be considering a more expansive offensive against Hezbollah.

"We prefer the path of an agreed-upon diplomatic settlement, but we are getting close to the point where the hourglass will turn over," Israeli Defence Minister Yoav Gallant said on Friday.

Meanwhile, US military installations have been hit by rocket and drone attacks from militants in Iraq and Syria, where more than 3,000 American soldiers are stationed. In late October, a drone breached US defences and struck a barracks but did not detonate, according to a Reuters report, narrowly avoiding what might have been significant American casualties.

The US has responded with military ac-

tion, including an air strike in Baghdad last week that killed Mushtaq Taleb al-Saidi, an Iran-backed militia leader.

Each of these episodes, taken individually, presents a threat to regional stability. When viewed as a whole, it suggests a Middle East teetering on the brink of wider war.

In Qatar on Sunday, Mr Blinken said the US has a plan to address the growing instability - and it hinges on winding down the Israeli military campaign in Gaza and working with Arab nations and the Israelis to establish a "durable" peace for the Palestinians.

"The United States has a vision for how to get there, a regional approach that delivers lasting security for Israel and a state for the Palestinian people," he said. "And my take-away from the discussions so far ... is that our partners are willing to have these difficult conversations and to make hard decisions."

Therein lies the rub. After meeting with Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman on Monday, Mr Blinken said he's seen a willingness to help stabilise and revitalise a post-war Gaza among all the leaders he's spoken with so far. But the US has to get Israel on board.

The timing of Mr Blinken's latest Middle East trip may give hints of the American strategy in this latest round of shuttle diplomacy. His early visits to Turkey and Arab nations before two days in Israel have allowed the secretary to take the temperature of regional players before sitting down with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and the Israeli War Cabinet.

Then the ball, as Americans like to say, is in the Israeli court.

"I'll have an opportunity to share with Israeli leaders everything I've heard thus far on this trip," he said on Monday. "I'm convinced that there is a future path that can actually bring lasting peace and security for Israel."

Behind all this is an American gamble - that resolving, or at least winding down, the Gaza War will cool tensions throughout the region. It is a bet that the various mini-crises - in the Red Sea, in Lebanon, and in Iraq and Syria - have not taken on a momentum of their own.

There is no peace in the region without a legitimate, peaceful solution to the Palestinian conflict, the Qatari prime minister said on Sunday. The question is, will there be peace with such a resolution?

During his November trip to the Middle East, Mr Blinken told reporters gathered on the tarmac in Ankara, Turkey, that countries across the region do not want war - and are working to prevent the conflict from spreading.

"Sometimes the absence of something bad happening may not be the most obvious evidence of progress, but it is," the US secretary said.

Since then, there has been ample evidence that while a wider war may not be wanted, the prospects for one has increased - despite the stated intentions and efforts of Mr Blinken and the Americans.

## China makes efforts to ensure power grid safety while protecting birds

By Ding Yiting, Yao Xueqing, You Yi

CHINA is one of the countries with the richest avian resources in the world and serves as a crucial pathway for the transboundary migration of migratory birds.

With the largest power system globally, China boasts a transmission network spanning over 2.26 million kilometers of 35 kilovolts and above. How can the country ensure a secure power supply while also providing a safe habitat for birds to inhabit and reproduce around transmission towers? People's Daily journalists had an interview to find the answer.

With swift acceleration and a sharp dive, a raptor seized its prey. After finishing the "meal," it hovered momentarily and landed on a transmission tower, which 110-kilovolt lines run through. At the top of the tower, there was an artificial nest woven from vines, serving as the "home" for this formidable bird.

It was in Zoige county, Aba Tibetan and Qiang autonomous prefecture, southwest China's Sichuan province. In this region, situated at an average altitude of around 3,500 meters, the staff of the Aba branch of State Grid Sichuan Electric Power Company have built a number of artificial nests for falcons, black kites, and other raptors.

"The Zoige wetland is abundant in water and grass, providing a habitat for over 200 species of birds. In the past, these birds used to build nests on transmission towers, using materials such as iron wire and cow hair. However, bird-related faults have become the third leading cause of line tripping, after lightning strikes and external damage," said Liu Yong, director of the digitalization department of the Aba branch of State Grid Sichuan Electric Power Company.

There aren't too many tall trees in the grassland, which makes transmission towers the preferred nesting sites for many bird species. In the past, local authorities attempted to deter birds from perching on the towers by installing repellent devices, but the effect was limited. Pondering over this issue, power workers came up with the idea that instead of trying to prevent birds, they should create artificial bird nests to guide the birds towards safer locations for nesting.

Last April, the Aba branch installed 32 artificial bird nests and 14 sets of high-definition video devices along a 110 kV transmission line. Additionally, partial insulation treatment was applied to the tower structure, in order to avoid large birds from coming into contact with exposed live wires while perching on the top of the towers.

"Our artificial bird nests are spacious and comfortable, and the locations of installation were carefully chosen. They are typically placed in non-electrified sections of the transmission towers, guiding birds to engage in safe activities within the designated areas, and ensuring the safety of both the birds and the power grid," Liu explained.



Staff members of the State Grid Corporation of China build an artificial bird nest in a safe area atop a power transmission tower. (Photo courtesy of the State Grid)

According to officials from State Grid Corporation of China, since 2016, the corporation has launched a public welfare project aiming to study the habits of rare raptors around the transmission lines in grassland areas on plateaus, develop artificial bird nests suitable for different regions, and label each nest with a unique "house number" for easy monitoring and management.

So far, the project has been extended to the grassland areas of six provincial-level regions, including Inner Mongolia autonomous region, Sichuan province, Xizang autonomous region, Gansu province, Qinghai province, and Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region.

Over 5,200 artificial bird nests have been installed, resulting in the successful hatching of nearly 4,000 chicks. This initiative has effectively protected the grassland ecology on Chinese plateaus.

Many transmission lines are situated in remote areas with limited accessibility, long distances and dispersed locations, thus it is necessary to enhance protection efficiency and accuracy. Jiangsu province has utilized technologies such as big data to develop nest site prediction models, which have proven to be highly effective.

The Tiaozini wetland in Yancheng, Jiangsu province serves as a crucial stopover point on the East Asian-Australasian flyway for migratory birds. From November to the next June each year, a large number of bird species, including the oriental white stork, a first-class nationally protected animal, choose to stay or winter in this area.

At the transmission operation and maintenance center of State Grid Yancheng Power Supply Company, a large screen displayed real-time footage from a transmission tower located over 90 kilometers away near the Tiaozini wetland. In the footage, a pair of oriental white storks with white feathers and fiery red legs

were busy constructing a new nest.

"This is a system that monitors biodiversity around the power grid. Whenever a nest is detected by the cameras, drones are automatically deployed to inspect and capture images. Once our employees confirm the presence of rare bird species like the oriental white stork, we immediately install protective equipment on-site. This not only enhances the effectiveness of protection but also reduces patrol costs," said Song Yanqiu, a staff member of the digital technology department of State Grid Yancheng Power Supply Company.

Song told People's Daily that with the monitoring system, the utilization rate of bird protection devices on the transmission lines has increased by approximately 20 percent. This system allows for observing and safeguarding the birds without causing disturbance or intervention.

In Anhui province, power grid workers have launched a biomimetic light emission project for birds, utilizing visual micro-cameras to identify birds and emit ecological light beams to guide their flight paths without causing harm.

In Shandong province, a new type of composite insulation bird guard has been developed, significantly reducing the rate of bird-related faults in power grids.

The continuous application of technological methods has yielded more effective results in the protection of power lines and birds.

Since 2021, State Grid Corporation of China has implemented the bird-protecting project at 23 sites across 18 provincial-level regions, including Tianjin, Jiangsu, Anhui, Jiangxi, and Shandong. This project aims to promote multi-party collaboration, technological innovation, and patrol and rescue efforts, resulting in the successful rescue of over 13,000 birds protected at various levels.

People's Daily



Maldives President Mohamed Muizzu and his wife Sajidha Mohamed being welcomed on his arrival at Xiamen, in Fujian on Monday. ANI



# TFF now addresses funding misinformation about Stars

By Correspondent Seth Mapoli

THE Tanzania Football Federation (TFF) has informed the public that the Confederation of African Football (CAF) has not provided any funds for the preparation of teams that will participate in the 2023 African Cup of Nations (AFCON) finals.

Ivory Coast will host the major continental showdown for national teams from January 13 to February 11 this year. The 2023 AFCON will bring together 24 teams, with Tanzania being among the participating countries.

Tanzania's senior national football team, Taifa Stars, is the only team from the CE-CAFA Zone that has qualified for the continental tournament.

Through a post on the federation's social media platforms, the national football governing body stated it is important to clarify that no financial support has been received from CAF for the teams gearing up for the 34th AFCON finals.



Tanzania Football Federation (TFF) president Wallace Karia.

TFF stated in the statement: "In light of this, we urge football stakeholders and Tanzanians in general to disregard any misinformation suggesting otherwise."

The CAF, according to

TFF, traditionally awards cash prizes to winners starting from the round of 16 up to the champion of the largest tournament in Africa.

"These funds play a crucial role in supporting the participating teams, and

it is essential to set the record straight regarding their availability," the federation pointed out.

In response to this situation, TFF and Taifa Stars' players have had a meeting to discuss and agree upon

the allocation of the prize money for each stage the team manages to reach during the 2023 AFCON.

This collaborative effort ensures transparency and a fair distribution of funds among the players and the federation.

"As preparations intensify for the upcoming finals, the TFF remains committed to providing accurate information and fostering unity within the Tanzanian football community," the federation disclosed.

"We appreciate the ongoing support and understanding from all stakeholders as we strive for success in the prestigious AFCON tournament," TFF insisted.

The Taifa Stars face a tough challenge in Group F of the 2023 AFCON, which includes Morocco, Zambia, and DR Congo.

Taifa Stars will open their campaign against Morocco on January 17, and later take on Zambia on January 21.

The Adel Amrouche-led Taifa Stars will come up against DR Congo in the last Group Stage match on January 24.

## Midfielder backs Simba to win 2024 Mapinduzi Cup

By Correspondent Nassir Nchimbi

SIMBA SC midfielder Fabrice Ngoma (pictured) has disclosed the club deserves to win the 2024 Mapinduzi Cup tournament based on hard work in training and the tournament.

The outfit, nicknamed 'Msimbazi Reds', cruised into the semi-finals of the competition following a 1-0 victory against Jamhuri SC in the quarterfinal at New Amaan Complex in Zanzibar.

The deep-lying playmaker, who in the past played for Morocco's Raja Casablanca, was voted Player of the Match for the second time in a row on Monday when Simba SC took on Jamhuri SC in the quarterfinal.

Ngoma was awarded 750,000/- as prize money for his excellent performance just four days after receiving

500,000/- as a Player of the Match award when he took part in his club's match against JKU SC in his outfit's second group stage clash.

The Congolese midfielder said due to his club's performance he feels the club needs to put more effort into the semi-final match against Singida Fountain Gate FC and later clinch the final spot and win the trophy.

The performer noted: "Simba SC has put in the hard work on training and as a result, it has been transformed into the pitch. We need to keep pushing and invest in ourselves in our semi-finals and reward ourselves with the trophy."

"We played extremely well during the tournament and every



player has stepped up," he stated.

"The new coach is determined to take us to further achievements and the rest of the work is on us to push for the trophy, the new players are settling well and we are happy that our squad is getting stronger and stronger every day," Ngoma revealed.

Ngoma, a contender for the 2024 Mapinduzi Cup Player of the Tournament accolade, only needs to guide Simba SC to the final and seal the award.

Singida Fountain Gate FC forward Elvis Rupia - who is set to face Ngoma and Simba SC in the semi-final today - is also a front-runner for the accolade

as he leads the tournament's goal-scoring charts with four goals.

Asked about the number of minutes (360 minutes) played by Ngoma in every Mapinduzi Cup for Simba SC without sitting out, assistant coach Suleiman Matola said the technical bench is aware of the workload put on Ngoma and is determined to reduce it to keep his fitness level high.

Simba SC debuted the squad's newly signed midfielder Babacar Sarr as he came in the second half to partner Ngoma on the double pivot role with fine displays from the Senegalese player giving Simba SC's fans a glimpse of hope ahead of other tournaments' fixtures.

The Mapinduzi Cup semi-final fixture will see four-time winners of the tournament, Simba SC, confront Singida Fountain Gate FC, a game scheduled to kick off at 8:15 pm.

## BFT selects pugilists for African Boxing Championships

By Guardian Correspondent

THE Boxing Federation of Tanzania (BFT) has revealed the names of 18 male boxers, 10 female boxers, and a technical committee consisting of nine people to form the national boxing team.

According to the BFT secretary-general Makore Mashaga, the team has already started out-of-the-camp training at Mgulani JKT in Dar es Salaam.

Mashaga also said the federation will host an international boxing championship at the end of this month.

It is set to serve as an opportunity for selecting pugilists who will represent Tanzania in the African Boxing Championships to be held in Ghana and qualifications for the Paris 2024 Olympics.

The 18 male boxers are Abdulrazaq Hamisi Salum- 48kg, Abdallah Mohamed Abdallah- 51kg, Aziz Waziri Chala- 54kg, Mwalami Salum Mohamed- 57kg, John Dominick Donard- 57kg, Hassani Hindu Mru- 60kg, Shaibu Jafari Baruti - 60kg, King Lucas Majobanga- 63.5kg, and Abdallah Mfaume Nchoka - 67kg.

Elias Damson - 67kg, Joseph Phillipo Kasi- 71kg, Alphonse Abel-

75kg, Ilankunda Daniel Nkundabanyanka - 75kg, Yusuph Changanalawe- 80kg, Mussa Wambura Malegesi- 86kg, Matonyinga Fidelis Kasala- 92kg, Mhina Moriss Richard - 92kg, and Alex Sita Mpini- 92kg are the remaining pugilists.

Female pugilists are Miriam Richard Maligisa- 48kg, Seraphina James Fussi- 48kg, Umukuruthum Athumani Mkumbi- 48kg, Zulfa Macho Rwenda- 52kg, Aisha Iddi Hamisi- 52kg.

Latifa Said Uloki- 48kg, Vumilia Twalibu Kalinga- 57kg, Leila Omary Yazidu- 60kg, Beatrice Ambos Nyambega - 60kg, and Grace Joseph Mwakamele- 66kg complete the boxers' list.

Technical committee members consist of Samuel Kapungu 'Batman' (head coach, IBA 1 Star), Rogate Damian Ulaya (coach, IBA 1Star), Mugeni Michael Changanalawe (coach, Diploma), Hassan Mzonge Mraba (coach, National Level), and Maneno Omary Msumimilwa (coach, National Level).

Maira Mussa Magolima (doctor), Makore Reuben Mashaga (Team Manager, IBA 1 STAR), Kassim Hussein Kassim (coach National Level), and Ruger Joseph Kahwa (team patron) are also on the technical committee members' list.



Magereza boxing squad's Issa Athuman (R) connects a left punch on JKT boxing team's Boniface Mlingwa when they took on each other in a 2020 National Open Boxing Club Championship bout that took place at the Tanganyika Packers ground in Dar es Salaam in August. Mlingwa won by points. PHOTO: CORRESPONDENT JUMANNE JUMA



Simba SC defensive midfielder Sadio Kanoute (2nd R) negotiates his way past Singida Fountain Gate FC defender Joash Onyango during the 2024 Mapinduzi Cup group stage match which took place in Zanzibar last week.

## Simba SC in pursuit of 2024 Mapinduzi Cup final spot

By Correspondent Nassir Nchimbi

SIMBA SC assistant coach Suleiman Matola has said the outfit expects a tough 2024 Mapinduzi Cup semi-final duel against Singida Fountain Gate FC at New Amaan Complex in Zanzibar today.

The two outfits will lock horns for the fourth time, with Simba SC having defeated Singida Fountain Gate in three meetings this season.

The two Mainland Tanzania's NBC Premier League outfits met in the Community Shield mini-tournament semi-finals in Tanga, which witnessed Simba SC coming out victorious.

In the other two encounters, they faced each other in this season's NBC Premier League and 2024 Mapinduzi Cup group

stage which was also won by Simba SC.

Matola has stated that they need to have many plans during the semi-final match against the Singida-based side to advance to the finals.

The gaffer noted: "The duel is going to be tough, I know Singida Fountain Gate FC is eager to get over the edge following losing three games to us this season including the previous one last week, we are ready and focused, and have accounts on ourselves and cruise to the finals."

"We rested a few players against Jamhuri SC including Sadio Kanoute bad he is back training with the squad, we don't have any injuries to our squad all remaining is the technical bench deciding which players to start to fight for the team," Matola pointed out.

Matola also highlighted that new club signing Lameck Chasambi will be on the bench for his new club ahead of the semi-final match.

"Chasambi had two training sessions for the club and he is fit to play for our side against Singida Fountain Gate FC, so far we are pleased with all new signings, they give us a variety of decisions to make," Matola revealed.

Singida Fountain Gate FC advanced to the semi-finals of the competition following a 2-1 comeback win against Azam FC in the last-eight stage to record qualification for the semi-final spot for the second time in the club's history.

Last season, Singida Fountain Gate FC took part in the Mapinduzi Cup final and lost to Zanzibar's Mlandege FC, this

season's showdown defending champion.

Singida Fountain Gate FC's assistant coach Nizar Khalfan said they are eager to end their winless run against Simba SC this season.

"Simba SC knows it's going to be a tough match, as we expect a tough match against Simba SC, we aim higher and that is to return to the final," the tactician said.

"We prepared strongly ahead of this encounter and we are comfortable and cautious ahead into this match," Khalfan noted.

Singida Fountain Gate FC will be hoping the outfit's front line consisting of Elvis Rupia and Habib Kyombo to be ruthless against Simba SC when the sides meet today at 8:15 pm in the Isles to seek progression to the final.



# Africa the next frontier for trophy hunter Salah

CAIRO

**S**ERIAL goal scorer Mohamed Salah has conquered the world, Europe and England with Liverpool. Now he dreams of leading Egypt to African glory.

He has come agonisingly close twice with his country, being part of the teams that lost the 2017 and 2022 Africa Cup of Nations finals to Cameroon and Senegal respectively.

In between reaching those title deciders, hosts Egypt suffered a humiliating last-16 loss to outsiders South Africa that left a 70,000 Cairo crowd speechless.

Egypt are among the favourites for the 2024 title in the Ivory Coast as they seek a record-extending eighth title in the premier African sporting event.

Drawn with Ghana, Cape Verde and Mozambique in Group B, it is widely expected that Egypt will finish first and qualify for the round of 16.

But captain Salah and his

Pharaohs teammates want more. Much more. They want to play in the February 11 final at the 60,000-seat Alassane Ouattara Stadium in Abidjan and win it.

"I want to win this competition," said the prolific scorer in Cairo as he showed off a new haircut following social media criticism of his scraggly locks.

"Having come so close twice, I would love to help Egypt win the final and lift the Cup of Nations trophy.

"I am so happy to play in this wonderful African football tournament and my teammates and I are desperate to succeed.

"It means a lot to play for the Egyptian national team. It is a great feeling to put on the red jersey, which has been worn by some many greats in the past.

**- 'Representing millions' -**  
"Every time I step on the pitch I am conscious of my role -- I am representing millions of Egyptians.

"We know the streets of

Cairo, Alexandria and other cities, towns and villages will be empty when we play in the Ivory Coast.

"People will either be at home or in cafes, cheering our every move, willing us to score and wishing us success."

Salah, who arrived at Liverpool in 2017 after spells with Al Mokawloon in his homeland, Basel, Chelsea, Fiorentina and Roma, is no stranger to success.

He helped Liverpool win the Club World Cup and UEFA Champions League in 2019 and the Premier League one year later.

In his last match for the Reds before flying to Egypt, the 31-year-old whose full name is Mohamed Salah Hamed Mahrous Ghaly netted twice in a 4-2 league win over Newcastle United.

Ghana boast the third most successful Cup of Nations record with four titles, behind Egypt (seven) and Cameroon (five), but it is 42 years since they last triumphed.

Otto Addo, who quit as Black

Stars coach after an early 2022 World Cup exit in Qatar, turned heads when he said the fixture against Egypt will be the easiest in the group for his country.

"Egypt are going to be overwhelming favourites to beat Ghana so all the pressure will be on them. The Black Stars will be motivated by the fact that no one gives them a chance.

"I believe it is easier to face Mohamed Salah and the other Egyptian stars than trying to break down the well-organised defences of Cape Verde and Mozambique."

Ghana are pinning their hopes of a good run on Mohammed Kudus, an attacking midfielder who has been outstanding for West Ham United this season.

They can also call on the long-serving Ayew brothers - attackers Andre and Jordan -- as they attempt to banish memories of a disastrous 2022 campaign that ended in first-round elimination.



Egypt captain Mohamed Salah (L) fights for the ball with Senegal forward Mame Thiam during the 2022 Africa Cup of Nations final in Yaounde. Agencies

AFP

## Farewell Franz Beckenbauer, the last of football's immortals

Miguel Delaney

FRANZ Beckenbauer really was one of those players who could talk with his feet, although there were some during his later life who felt his legacy would have been grander if he restricted himself to that.

No one was considering such controversies when the German great surged forward from defence in the manner that became his signature; there was only the purity of the play. One of his esteemed contemporaries, Gerd Muller, was meanwhile only considering what Beckenbauer wanted next. He would tell him with the type of pass played. If it was sharp, it meant Muller had to do something with it himself. If it was soft, it meant Beckenbauer wanted it back for the trademark one-two move that dictated and decided so many big matches.

It was the constant threat of this that settled one of the biggest ever West Germany-England matches, which was a rematch of the 1966 World Cup final that came four years later in the quarter-final. Beckenbauer's surges wreaked havoc and inspired a 3-2 comeback from 2-0 down. The Germans went on from there and won a historic semi-final against Italy, considered the greatest game ever played, to become one of the greatest ever international sides. Led by Beckenbauer, that West Germany were the first to hold the European Championship and World Cup at the same time, as they did across 1972 and 1974.

There was for a time a sense of frustration about that within England, since it had been Sir Alf Ramsey's surprising decision to take off Sir Bobby Charlton at 2-0 in 1970 that freed the space for Beckenbauer. The two were so often intertwined internationally, both because of their positions and their profiles in their teams.

It is almost sadly fitting that they have passed so close together, but it also reflects one of the more resonant meanings of Beckenbauer's death at 78. An era has really passed, too. Der Kaiser, as he became known for the regal elegance of his play, was considered one of football's "immortals". This was an elevated group of players who reached their prime during the classic television age between the 1950s and late 1980s, that marked the first true internationalisation of the game. It is little coincidence that to shine in this new era of technicolour was also to colour the game's formative collective consciousness. It wasn't just how they triumphed, but that they transformed and transcended the game.

Those that did it most, from the global perspective of an audience watching World Cups and European Cup finals, were probably Pele, Diego Maradona, Johan Cruyff, Alfredo Di Stefano, Ferenc Puskas, George Best and Beckenbauer.

Others of course have a claim to that, including Charlton.

The more profound reason for sadness here is that all of these are undisputed and, with Beckenbauer's passing, all are now gone. That is something that should be reflected on. That sadness is all the more acute because of the glory, and the happiness they created for their supporters.

Beckenbauer's very success even played into why both of his main teams, West Germany and Bayern Munich, became two of the most disliked but feared in the game. He often combined immense success with both.

Beckenbauer is one of a select group of players to have won both the European Cup and World Cup in the same year. That annus mirabilis of 1974 came right at the centre of West Germany's run of international glory and Bayern's historic run of three European Cups in a row. The latter is a feat that has still only been managed by four different club sides, and wasn't replicated for 42 years after Beckenbauer's team completed it in 1976. It remains a gold standard in club football.

Such feats didn't quite mean Beckenbauer was ever considered the equal of Pele or Maradona, but his on-pitch legacy is arguably deeper. At a time when "Total Football" was altering the parameters of how the game was played, and how it didn't need to be so fixed, the German was an immense influence on this. He was a notional defender who constantly went forward. This was almost never done, at least in such a high-profile way, and it transformed the very space of the pitch.

Beckenbauer gave the game the "libero", in its most widely understood sense. It freed him to win virtually every major trophy as a player. He remains the only defender to win the Ballon D'Or twice, if he can even be called a defender.

**And that was only one part of his career.**

He later became just the second of three football figures to win the World Cup as a player and a manager. There was another historical echo in how the first of those, Brazil's Mario Zagallo, died at the weekend. It is now only Didier Deschamps left.

As regards the discussion Beckenbauer leaves behind, it was always much more complicated than just celebrating his football greatness. There was plenty of controversy during his career, and biographer Uli Hesse described a "love-hate relationship" that Germany had with "its greatest ever footballer". Even as early as the 1970s, coverage of his shock move to the North American Soccer League brought accusations that he was simply running from many issues, including the tax authorities and a disintegrating marriage.

THE INDEPENDENT

## Osimhen dreams of AFCON title



Nigeria star Victor Osimhen (2L) in an aerial clash during a 2022 World Cup qualifier against Ghana in Abuja. Agencies

LAGOS

NEWLY crowned African Player of the Year Victor Osimhen is a star on a mission. He wants to transform the suffering of Nigerian supporters into joy with an Africa Cup of Nations title.

The Napoli forward topped the African poll last month to finish ahead of Egyptian Mohamed Salah and Moroccan Achraf Hakimi and become the first Nigerian winner since Nwankwo Kanu in 1999.

It was a reward for helping his club to a first Italian title in 33 years and also scoring consistently for the Super Eagles.

But amid the successes there was also sadness for the 24-year-old, who sold newspapers and bottles of water in the bustling streets of Lagos as a teenager to eke out a living.

The day that has haunted Osimhen for a long time was March 29, 2022, at the Moshood Abiola National Stadium in the Ni-

gerian capital, Abuja.

Earlier, Nigeria travelled to long-time regional rivals Ghana and drew 0-0 in the first of two matches to decide whether the Black Stars of Super Eagles would qualify for the 2022 World Cup.

As Nigerian supporters flocked to the national stadium expectations were high that the home team would use that advantage to good effect and secure a place at the finals in Qatar.

But those dreams were shattered as Ghana drew

1-1 to qualify on away goals and deprive Osimhen and his teammates of a place on the global stage.

"We could not have asked for more from our supporters in Abuja that night," recalled Osimhen to reporters before leaving Italy to join the Cup of Nations squad.

**- 'Let them down' -**

"They roared us on from the first whistle to the last. The noise they created was deafening, but we let them down and that hurt. Nigerians deserved bet-

ter."

Now Osimhen believes he has the perfect antidote to the lingering suffering of supporters -- Nigeria must win the biennial Cup of Nations a fourth time.

The Super Eagles triumphed at home in 1980, slamming three unanswered goals past Algeria, then edged Zambia 2-1 in Tunisia in 1994 and Burkina Faso 1-0 in Johannesburg in 2013.

Since overcoming the Burkinabe, Nigeria have been on a Cup of Nations

rollercoaster, failing to qualify in 2015 and 2017, finishing third in 2019 and making a last-16 departure two years ago.

Paired with Ivory Coast, Guinea-Bissau and Equatorial Guinea in the first round in Group A, Nigeria are expected to contest first place with the hosts.

Teams finishing first and second in each group are guaranteed knockout-stage places and the four best-ranked of the six third-placed sides also progress.

"We are capable of winning this tournament because the squad is packed with players who are performing exceptionally well for their European clubs," says Osimhen.

"All of us are desperate to make up for failing to reach the 2022 World Cup. The only way we can achieve that goal is by winning the Cup of Nations."

Ivory Coast, twice champions but flops when they previously hosted the tournament 40 years ago, have no shortage of stars and Algeria coach Djamel Belmadi says "they are the team to beat".

"We will enjoy the support of the entire Ivory Coast nation, which is an incredible asset to have," says Ivory Coast coach Jean-Louis Gasset.

Workmanlike Equatorial Guinea have reached the knockout stage in all three previous appearances while Guinea-Bissau, who won a 2024 qualifier in Nigeria, are seeking a first finals victory.

AFP

Gwiji by David Chikoko





## SPORT

Africa the next frontier for trophy hunter Salah

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## Yanga Princess looks to bounce back after loss

By Guardian Correspondent

YANGA Princess, with their backs against the wall after last week's stumble, are set to reignite their Mainland Tanzania Women's Premier League title aspirations as they visit Fountain Gate Princess.

The afternoon clash at Jamhuri Stadium is more than just a game, it is a chance for redemption.

Yanga Princess was beaten 3-1 by Simba Queens in last weekend's derby showdown at Azam Complex Stadium in Dar es Salaam.

Still reeling from the Derby loss, they now face another tough test in Fountain Gate Princess.

The derby defeat means Yanga Princess has won two and lost one of their opening Women's Premier League fixtures this season.

Yanga Princess' head coach Charles Haalubono has emphasized using the Fountain Gate Princess clash to pick themselves up.

He is eager to leave the disappointment of their last defeat in the rearview mirror.

Correcting some shortcomings noted against Simba Queens would be a top priority for coach Haalubono as he plots against Fountain Gate Princess.

The soft-spoken Zambian gaffer, who previously coached Zambia's Green Buffaloes Women's FC, admitted his team is still a work in progress.

Haalubono squad is grappling with offensive inconsistencies, and are unlikely to find this away fixture a walk in the park.

A more comfortable afternoon is desired, but the recent clashes with Fountain Gate Princess suggest a tight contest is on the cards.

Precious Christopher, Janet Moraa, and Airin Madalina will be tasked with sharing the goal-scoring burden while Anastasia Shau, Diana Antwi, Masika Mwakisua, and Noela Luhala will try to keep at bay Fountain Gate Princess forwards.

As for host Fountain Gate Princess, they come into this game on the back of a hard-fought 1-0 away victory over Alliance Girls last time out. The Dodoma-based side has won two opening games.

They finished third behind holders JKT Queens and Simba Queens and are targeting an improvement once again despite losing a number of their key players.

In head-to-head records, Fountain Gate Princess has won three of their four Women's Premier League games against Yanga Princess.

The 2023/24 Mainland Tanzania Women's Premier League campaign involves 10 teams from nine different regions.

It was preceded by a curtain-raiser tournament involving the top four teams from the previous campaign.



Yanga Princess' players are pictured celebrating a goal the outfit garnered in this season's Mainland Tanzania Women's Premier League clash against Amani Queens which took place in Dar es Salaam on December 27, 2023. Yanga Princess walloped Amani Queens 6-1. PHOTO: COURTESY OF YANGA PRINCESS

## Stars arrive at 2023 AFCON base in Ivory Coast



Tanzania's senior national football team players are pictured participating in drills in Egypt recently to shape up for the 2023 Africa Cup of Nations slated for January 13-February 11, 2024, in Ivory Coast. PHOTO: COURTESY OF TANZANIA FOOTBALL FEDERATION

By Correspondent Michael Mwebe

TANZANIA'S senior national soccer squad arrived in Ivory Coast on Monday afternoon to continue preparations for the CAF Africa Cup of Nations tournament after losing 2-0 to Egypt in a friendly game in Cairo on Sunday.

Adel Amrouche's 27-man squad left Cairo on Monday morning where they had set a one-week training camp.

They became the third side to arrive in the West African country to participate in the tournament when they touched down at Abidjan's Félix Houphouët-Boigny Airport for the continental showpiece event which begins on Saturday.

Amrouche and his team were received in Terminal 2 at midday with an impressive cultural ceremony arranged by the Local Organising Committee (LOC) of the CAF AFCON amid tight security.

Taifa Stars delegation then headed straight to the city of San Pedro where they will be based for their Group F matches against Morocco, Zambia, and DR Congo.

Taifa Stars will be making their third appearance at the

CAF Africa Cup of Nations and will launch their group stage campaign against Morocco on January 17 at the Laurent Pokou Stadium in San Pedro.

Three days later, they will take on neighbours Zambia on Sunday, January 21 before concluding their Group stage campaign on 24 January against DR Congo at Amadou Gon Coulibaly Stadium, Kourou.

Group winners, runners-up, and the best four third-

placed teams will advance to the round of 16.

Tanzania is looking to go at least one better than their performance at the 2019 AFCON in Egypt, where they lost all their three Group Stage games against Senegal, Algeria, and Kenya to finish bottom.

**Goalkeepers:** Kwesi Kawa (IFK Haninge/Sweden), Beno Kakolanya (Singida Fountain Gate FC), and Aishi Manula (Simba SC)

**Defenders:** Ibrahim Ha-

mad (Young Africans), Mohamed Hussein (Simba SC), Bakari Mwamnyeto (Young Africans), Dickson Job (Young Africans), Abdi Banda (Richards Bay/South Africa), Lusa-jo Mwaikenda (Azam FC), Miano Danilo (Villena CF/Netherlands), Haji Mnoga (Aldershot Town/England), Abdulmalik Zakaria (Namungo FC), and Novatus Miroshi (FC Shakhtar Donetsk/Ukraine)

**Forwards:** Kibu Dennis (Simba SC), Simon Msuva (Unattached), Mbwana Samatta (PAOK/Greece), Cyprian Kachwele (White Caps/USA), Kokola Charles M'mombwa (Macarthur FC/Australia).

## Simba SC, Singida Fountain Gate FC battle for Mapinduzi Cup tourney final

By Correspondent Michael Mwebe

SIMBA SC will battle with Singida Fountain Gate FC in the 2024 Mapinduzi Cup semi-final match in the evening.

The encounter, which has its kick-off slated for 8:15 pm, is set to take place at the New Amaan Complex in Zanzibar.

These clubs met in the Mapinduzi Cup group stage last week. Simba won the match 2-0. The Lions had the game wrapped up early in the second half thanks to goals from Willy Onana and Luis Miquisone.

It is going to be interesting to see how seriously each side will take the competition. Both coaches would love to lift the Mapinduzi Cup, but they also have bigger fish to fry.

The NBC Premier League and

Azam Sports Federation Cup remain the top priority for both clubs.

For Simba SC, the squad has a CAF Champions League Group stage campaign to contend with too. Given their priorities this season head coach Abdelhak Benchikha may not lose too much sleep if his team is knocked out.

However, with the 2023 AFCON break, the 2024 Mapinduzi Cup tournament is a good distraction for them, as they have the chance to assess fringe players and rebuild the confidence of some regular starters.

The absence of seven players on international duty is an opportunity for players like Luis Miquisone to secure a first-team spot in attack. They will need to take it.

Msimbazi Reds reached the



Simba SC's forward Moses Phiri (L) seeks to outfox Singida Fountain Gate FC's left-back, Yahya Mbegu, when the teams took on each other in a 2024 Mapinduzi Cup clash which took place in Zanzibar early this week. PHOTO: COURTESY OF SIMBA SC

semi-finals after edging out Jamhuri 1-0 on Monday. Jean Baleke's 45th-minute header from a great cross by Miquis-

one was enough to hand Simba SC victory over the resilient Zanzibar side.

Simba SC assistant coach

Selemani Matola anticipates a tough game following the two sides' recent clashes.

He also disclosed new signing midfielder Ladack Chasambi is available for selection having begun training with his teammates yesterday.

Malian midfielder Sadio Kanoute is also back in contention for a starting place after missing out on the last game due to a knock picked in the group stage game against KVZ FC last week.

For Singida Fountain it is an opportunity to create a memorable cup run that could redefine their season.

Thabo Senong's side will look to their pacy forwards Elvis Rupia, Habib Kyombo, Maruf Tchakei, Morice Chukwu, and Duke Abuya as they look to book their place in the final.

Singida Fountain Gate FC beat pre-tournament favourites Azam FC 2-1 in the quarterfinal on Monday, with both of their goals coming in the second half to produce an upset.

The winner will take on either Rwanda's APR FC or Mlange in the final scheduled for Friday.

A prize money of 100m/- is up for grabs alongside a trophy and medals for the 2024 Mapinduzi Cup winners.

## Flexibles by David Chikoko

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