



Guardian BUSINESS Foreigners record nearly 7bn/- outflows at DSE in Q4, 2022

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Tourism stakeholders: The future is digital

By Guardian Reporter, Arusha



Prime Minister Kassim Majaliwa has an audience in Songea municipality yesterday with district officials from across Ruvuma Region yesterday. Photo: PMO

TOURISM sector stakeholders are emphasizing on the use of digital technology to further modernise tourism sector services, a stakeholders' gathering noted here at the weekend.

Dr Pindi Chana, the Natural Resources and Tourism minister, was among a range of speakers laying stress on the change. She observed that ICT has been transforming the tourism sector all over the world.

She said that on the demand side, it empowers visitors to identify, customise, and purchase tourism products and services while on the supply side, it is playing a critical role in the competitiveness of tourism organisations and destinations.

It is providing tools for developing, managing and distributing tourism product offerings globally, she said, underscoring government intention to ensure infrastructure improvements in that field.

Gathered stakeholders discussed various opportunities available in the sector and came up with proposals to enable the sector to grow faster and cement its place in contributing to national income as a whole

The minister said the tourism sector is performing better following various interventions by President Samia Suluhu Hassan, noticed in the surge of visitations during the

“We should help young people working in the sector by assisting them to pay for licences so that they conduct their activities legally. This will help them to generate capital; thus creating more jobs for other young people

past year.

The total number of tourists stood at 1.2m compared to 0.9m at the end of 2021, she said, attributing the rise in visitations to efforts by the government in promoting tourism attractions especially through “The Royal Tour” documentary.

She said the industry continues to improve, praising the Tanzania National Business Council (TNBC) for bringing together the stakeholders. Such meetings are important to explore challenges facing the industry to come up with suggestions to improve performance, she said.

TNBC executive secretary Dr Godwill Wanga said the meeting has come up with resolutions on ways to further increase the number

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NHC selling upfront most of its Kawe studio units

By Correspondent Valentine Oforo,

Dodoma

YOUTHFUL middle-class Tanzanians have been showing keen interest in taking up residential units being constructed by the National Housing Corporation (NHC) in Dar es Salaam, corporate officials have reported. Muungano Saguya, the NHC public affairs and information manager, said in an interview at the weekend that some buyers are paying upfront even before the specific housing units are completed.

NHC, a state-owned real estate developer, is building middle-class apartment blocks close to Tanganyika Packers grounds

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Mwinyi wants hospitals to allow private pharmacies

By Guardian Reporter, Zanzibar

MAJOR reforms being conducted in the Zanzibar health sector are meant to improve service provision and restore public trust in the government in relation to obtaining treatment in public hospitals.

Zanzibar President Dr Hussein Ali Mwinyi made this assertion when launching a new district hospital in Kitogani town as part of activities to mark the 59th anniversary of Zanzibar Revolution.

With the reforms, no one will miss essential services like prescription drugs, he said, directing the Health ministry to place private pharmacies in all public hospitals to strengthen services, enabling people to access drugs within hospital

premises. The ministry ought to properly budget and pay health staff on time to address complaints and improve delivery of services, he said, acknowledging that over the years a growing perception has spread that public health centres including hospitals have poor services.

They regularly face shortages of medicines thus compelling people to seek supplies in private facilities, he said, emphasizing that the newly launched Kitogani hospital will be an example of how other hospitals should function.

They need to have all the required tools and medicines plus motivated staff, he pointed out.

As the government cannot do everything, current policy insists on collaboration, he said, underlining that the public and

private sectors need to work together to improve services.

This applies not only in the health sector but also in other areas, attracting more people to invest in the health sector, he said.

In the Kitogani District Hospital the government has partnered with a private investor to enable the provision of the needed services, he said, appealing to hospital staff to conduct their duties in line with their professional oaths.

This will ensure that hospital care is more accessible, with friendly and quality services, he asserted.

Health minister Nassor Ahmed Mazrui said Paje town authorities need to build a bus stop and a resting area near the hospital, to ease transport for patients and those accompany-

TanRoads finishes 1.3trn/- sixth-phase road projects

By Guardian Reporter

A TOTAL of 14 road projects worth 1.3trn/- were completed from April 2021 to January 1, 2023, the Tanzania National Roads Agency (TanRoads) has declared.

Rogatus Mativila, the chief executive officer, said in a statement over the weekend, said the projects cover 883 kilometers of the road network. The projects have helped

improve transportation thus stimulating economic activities in various areas, he added, in a summary of implementation work during the sixth phase government. With the first budget of the sixth phase government, the plan was to construct a total of 12,216 kilometres highway network and 24,146 kilometres of regional roads where 11,513 kilometres were constructed at tarmac level. Noticeable projects include

the 63km Kidahwe-Kasulu road and the 50km Nyakanazi-Kibondo both in Kigoma Region, as well as the 66km Mbinga-Mbamba Bay road in Ruvuma Region. Others include the 53.9km Njombe-Moronga section road, the 53.3km Moronga-Makete section of both in Njombe Region. There is also the 50km Makutano- Natta section, a 49km Waso-Sale junction road, the 39.1km Kisusya-Ipinda-Matema road in Mbeya Region as

well as the 39km Chunya-Makongolosi road,” he elaborated. In Tabora region, TanRoads executed the first phase of the Usesula-Komanga road and Sikonge to Urambo, a length of 115.5km. In Katavi Region, there was a second portion of the Komanga to Kasinde road and also from Iyonga to Urambo Road with a total of 112.8km and third portion from Kasinde to Mpanda and Urwira, a total of 108km.

In Songwe Region, the 50km Mpemba-Isongole road and the 37km Mpanda-Kibo-Usimbili road were completed, he stated. Four major bridge projects executed were the one kilometre Tanzanite Bridge in Dar es Salaam and the 98metre Ruhuhu Bridge on the Kitati-Lituihi road in Ruvuma Region, he said. Construction of passenger

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TanRoads completes 1.3trn/- sixth phase road projects

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lounges at various bus stations was ongoing at a cost of 360bn/-, with a loan from the African Development Bank (AfDB), he said. A total of 62 roads projects were at procurement level, set to be constructed at tarmac level, where the government expects additional funds from the development partners, the CEO affirmed.

The agency has also commenced implementation of the engineering, procurement, construction and financing projects and shortlisted companies to implement the projects, with bids submitted towards the end of November 2022. The projects include the 205km Kibaha-Mlandizi-Morogoro road (expressway), the 512km Kidatu-Kilosa road passing through Ifakara, Lupiro, Malinyi and onward to Kilosa, and from Kidatu it proceeds to Lumecha in Ruvuma Region. Another is the 493km Arusha-Kibaya-Kongwa road, he said. Other envisaged roads include the 460km-Handeni to Singida road passing through Kiberashi, Kijingu, Njoro, Olboroti, Mrijo Chini, Dalai, Bicha, Chambolo and Kwa Mtoro before reaching Singida.

There is also the 218km Igawa-Songwe-Tunduma road, as well as the 175km Masasi-Nachingwea to Liwale road, he said. The AfDB funded projects include the 389km Karatu to Maswa road passing through Mbulu, Hydrom, Sibiti River, Lalago and then reaching Maswa, and the 81km Mafinga-Mtwango road. There are 43 road projects with a length of 2,021km currently in various stages of feasibility study whose construction is projected to cost 9.6bn/-, he said, noting that the agency was also implementing special projects like controlling overloading in roads and protecting road reserve areas. A total of 70 fixed weighbridges and 22 moving weighbridges are in place, which he listed as operating in Vigwaza, Mikese, while Dakawa, Njuki, Nala, Mpemba, Wenda and Kimokouwa have two moving weighbridges each. Their major role is to measure moving vehicles (weight in motion), he explained. The agency is also charged with conducting research on road construction tools, work undertaken by the Central Materials Laboratory and affiliated regional laboratories, he added.

Rwanda genocide convict leaves jail pending appeal

PARIS

A FRENCH-Rwandan man sentenced in Paris in 2021 for complicity in genocide, has been released from prison pending his appeal.

Claude Muhayimana was released from detention on 21 December and placed under judicial supervision pending his appeal.

The former driver, who has appealed his conviction, was referred to the investigative division of the Paris Court of Appeal, which ruled on 30 November that the extension of his pre-trial detention did not appear to be "essential either for the needs of the proceedings pending the hearing, or as a security measure".

He was released from detention on 21 December and placed under judicial supervision pending his appeal.

"I find this decision wise and particularly justified, since we have no idea when the appeal will be held," said his lawyer Philippe Meilhac, stressing that his client had "remained free during most of the investigation, without ever posing a problem."

The 61-year-old, who became a naturalised French citizen in 2010, is accused of having transported gendarmes and Interahamwe militiamen, the armed wing of the Hutu genocidal regime, to the sites of massacres of Tutsis between April and July 1994 in Kibuye and the surrounding hills, where tens of thousands of people were killed.

In December 2021, he was found guilty by a majority of votes of complicity in genocide and complicity in crimes against humanity in the hills of Karongi, Gitwa and Bissero over the period from 7 April to the end of June 1994, and of complicity in crimes against humanity in July in the hills of Bissero.



Engineer Ali Makame Ali (with microphone) briefs George Simbachawene (R), Minister of State in the Prime Minister's Office (Policy, Parliament and Coordination), in Zanzibar yesterday on the mother and child health centre the Tanzania Social Action Fund (Tasaf) has built Zanzibar as part of the countdown to the commemoration of the 59th anniversary of the January 12 Zanzibar Revolution anniversary. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

NHC sells upfront most of its Kawe studio units

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at Kawe on the northern outskirts of the commercial capital. The project is adjacent to a set of commercial high rise buildings within the same suburb that stalled during the fifth phase and is being redeveloped, accompanied by the Samia Housing Scheme (SHC). It entails a vision of 5,000 modern houses at a cost of 466bn/-.

Upwards of 560 housing units are planned for the initial phase, with 321 units already sold in anticipation of completion

of the units in the next few months.

It is an impressive purchasing trend of an average of 37 units per week since November 1 when NHC opened the window for upfront purchase of the upcoming units, he said, noting that this reaction pushed the corporation to add 60 houses to its initial first phase plan of 500 units. That was itself a rise from the projected 400 houses earlier, and so far, studio units (single bedroom units) are sold out, with two and three bedroom units still available for the

first phase units, he states. The housing units are being sold at discounted prices "set to expire on October 31st 2030," he stated.

In the wider construction plan, half of the housing units would be built in Dar es Salaam, 20 percent in the capital and the remainder in other regional centres, earlier reports had indicated. Completion of the project is expected to enhance corporate earnings and government revenue as various housing related taxes will be paid, along with the use of public

services and commercial facilities, all paying taxes and levies, he pointed out. UN Habitat, the housing and environment agency of the world body, indicates that by 2050, urban dwellers will be 70 percent of the population, then projected to have reached 135m, more than twice the 61.7m people in the August 2022 census. NHC is operating with a 20 year joint venture policy set out in 1993 with amendments in 1998, 2006, 2012 and a major overhaul last year, where it shifted from its own construction plans to open

a window for interested companies to seek joint ventures with NHC where the firms will extend their investment footholds in developing various plots. This will be conducted through joint venture arrangements intended to increase the number of low cost houses, he explained, noting that 66 real estate firms have expressed interest in the partnership. As various future projects will be undertaken this way, it is a good sign for the metamorphosis of the country's real estate sector, he added.



Former Zanzibar president Amani Abeid Karume (2nd-L) handing over a token of appreciation to Azania Bank Limited's director of treasury and markets, Gilbert Mwandimila (R), during the 9th Zanzibar Trade Fair in progress at Unguja's Maisara grounds. Left is Zanzibar's Trade and Industrial Development minister, Omar Said Shaaban, followed by permanent secretary Ali Juma Khamis. The bank is the event's main sponsor. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

Inflation persists in Congo despite measures

BRAZZAVILLE

THE rise in food prices in the Republic of Congo continues despite the measures taken by the government to combat the high cost of living.

In October 2022, Brazzaville exempted imported products from customs duties before publishing a decree in December of the same year to "freeze the prices of basic necessities". These measures were

welcomed by civil society, but the reality on the market is quite different. "When the agents from the trade department arrive, they give their prices. But when their backs are turned the prices change. Mustard that used to cost 750 CFA francs is now 1500 CFA francs," exclaims a trader passionately.

"The traders should do a follow-up. While we were still paying customs, a bag cost 9500 F

CFA, now that we have been exempted, it has risen to 14000 F CFA. The Congolese state is sovereign when it comes to setting prices, people have to carry them out," commented a housewife.

Food at a glance In its latest update on food inflation, the World Bank points out that more than 90% of countries experienced inflation above 5% in September, and that the

increase was much higher in food.

An increase of 18% for wheat between October 2021 and October 2022, 27% for maize and 10% for sunflower: prices that will remain high until the end of 2024, stresses the Washington-based institution, which is alarmed at the catastrophic situation of poor countries according to the french media Le Monde.

Africa's seventh larg-

est producer of black gold is unfortunately not spared. In Congo-Brazzaville, being able to make one or two meals a day of sakasaka or ébémbé ya Adoula broth has become a daily fight for most households.

Despite its agricultural potential, the country is largely dependent on imports, which cost nearly 700 billion CFA francs a year.

AGENCIES

Future is digital, say stakeholders in tourism sector

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of tourist arrivals, pointing at the use of digital technology to facilitate service delivery.

He urged service providers to make sure they own valid business licences for the government to recognize them, meanwhile as the council has created a one stop shop that simplifies payments.

It also has applications recognizing porters and those on temporary jobs, he stated. The Tanzania Association of Tour Operators (TATO) chairman, Wilbard Chambulo, meanwhile talked of the need to include young people trained in the sector or available for various tourism-related activities.

Observers noted that this was intended to discourage plans for more automated mountain viewing initiatives, as this would cut off hundreds of porters living on those services as well as the communities they are linked with.

"We should help young people working in the sector by assisting them to pay for licences so that they conduct their activities legally. This will help them to generate capital; thus creating more jobs for other young people," he suggested.

Monduli district commissioner Frank Mwaisumbe said the meeting was an opportunity for tourism stakeholders to meet and discuss challenges facing the sector.

It took over from the July 25th 2022 meeting also held here, he added.

Visually impaired teacher designs renewable energy Dar power plant

By Guardian Reporter

A RETIRED and visually impaired teacher George Rubagumya has designed a renewable energy power plant that upon completion will produce 42,000watts.

The plant, which has been christened 'Tanzanite Engine', will generate electricity that can serve between 10 to 25 houses with average home power usage.

Rubagumya, a resident of Tabata- Segerea in Dar es Salaam told this paper that he started working on the technology in 2018 for purposes of finding a permanent solution to power woes in the country.

He said the technology will help reduce the cost of building electricity infrastructures including poles.

According to him, the technology uses special pipes from a deep well dug near the plant whereas it pumps water upwards and returns it to the dam with great pressure.

He said the well has a capacity of 1,188 litres of water that can be used to generate electricity for more than a year.

He said construction of the plant started in July last year, citing financial constraints among reasons to delay completion of the remaining work. He said funds are required to purchase some of the construction materials.

Rubagumya said that he has spent 4.2m/-, saying he needs 10m/- to complete the construction of the plant.

He said the generated electricity can be used in offices, factories, hospitals and homes. He said there are advantages in using the technology because it guarantees electricity services throughout the year. He said one can also use the power to irrigate farms.

Other advantages include reduced costs because the technology doesn't require construction of infrastructures such as poles which are sold at higher prices.

He said the Small Industries Development Organisation (SIDO) and Energy Ministry are aware of his technological innovation which has not been completed over lack of funds. According to the retired teacher, the Tanzania Commission for Science and Technology (COSTECH) advised him to take the innovative plant to recognized institutions that are eligible for such funds.

Rubagumya asked stakeholders to support his endeavours towards completion of the power plant.



Singida regional commissioner Peter Serukamba waters a tree shortly after planting it during the recent launch of a tree planting initiative involving Ilongero and Mwankonko village water sources. Photo: Correspondent Thobias Mwanakatwe.

Students urged to execute conservation programmes to combat climate change

By Guardian Correspondent, Dodoma

STUDENTS from higher learning institutions have been urged to be in the forefront in implementing various conservation programs as part of efforts to combat climate change.

The call was made yesterday by the Director of the Environment Department in the Vice President's Office, Dr

Andrew Komba during an environment cleaning exercise at the Dodoma Regional Hospital that was organized by the Tanzania Higher Learning Institutions Students' Organisation (TAHLISO).

Dr Komba said the environmental cleaning exercise is part of implementation of the 2021 National Environmental Policy.

He commended students for organising

the event which compliments government efforts in environment conservation. He said that on January 10th this year, the government will engage in a major tree planting exercise in Dodoma city.

"The government decided to make Dodoma city an example in terms of the environment conservation, it is our responsibility to plant

enough trees and you have set an example by cleaning the hospital environs," he said.

The director added that it is the right time for college and university students to share such environmental conservation spirit with their younger siblings for the benefit of current and future generations.

Head of the Department of Health and Envi-

ronment at the Dodoma regional hospital, Paul Mageni said to support government efforts they have established a tree park within the hospital.

Mageni said the planted trees are not only for preserving the environment, but they also help people visiting the hospital for medical services to get fresh air and fruits.

TAHLISO leaders

expressed appreciation to the leadership of the Dodoma regional hospital for giving them an opportunity to clean the area.

They also congratulated students from various colleges who participated in the exercise which is one of the ways to support the government in ensuring a sustainable environment for the future of the nation.



EXCITING CAREER OPPORTUNITY

Air Tanzania Company Limited (ATCL) is expanding its network to meet the needs of its Business Strategy which focus on sustaining the recorded achievement and remain an airline of choice that meets and exceeds customer's expectation in line of its mission of provision of reliable, safe and high-quality services. Therefore, applications are invited from qualified Tanzanian to fill the positions mentioned below:

1. POSITION: AIRCRAFT TECHNICIAN II - STRUCTURES (5 POSTS)

1.1 MINIMUM ENTRY QUALIFICATION AND WORKING EXPERIENCE:

- Must be a holder of Diploma in Mechanical Engineering from recognized institutions.
- Certificates of Vocational Certificate Level III Fitter Mechanics majoring in automobile body repairs will be an added advantage.
- The candidate shall be required to attend a special course on aircraft structural repairs after being employed.

1.2 DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Carry out minor and major repair jobs under supervision.
- Work in workshops, hangar and line maintenance sections under supervision.
- Assist in removal and installation of aircraft components, repair, assembling and testing of aircraft systems.
- Perform any other duties as may be assigned by the supervisor.

2. POSITION: AIRCRAFT TECHNICIAN II - UPHOLSTERS (3 POSTS)

2.1 MINIMUM ENTRY QUALIFICATION AND WORK EXPERIENCE:

- Must be a holder of Diploma in Mechanical Engineering from recognized institutions.
- Vocational Certificate Level III Fitter Mechanics majoring in Upholstery manufacturing will be an added advantage.
- The candidate shall be required to attend a special course on sewing upholstery for aircraft cabins.

2.2 DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Sew upholstery (fabric and leather) onto new aircraft seat covers, carpets, car-tens, etc., according to manufacturer's specifications.
- Carry out upholstery repairs.
- Carry out removal and installation of aircraft seats, seat covers, carpets and other cabin upholstery.
- Perform any other duties as may be assigned by the supervisor.

3. TERMS AND CONDITIONS:

Five (5) years contract with attractive remuneration and fringe benefits as per ATCL Salary Structure and Incentive Scheme.

4. MODE OF APPLICATION FOR ALL APPLICANTS:

Interested applicants must submit a **duly signed letter** for consideration of the application attached with the following:

- A curriculum vitae (CV),
- Certified copies of all certificates (including secondary school, birth certificates), other relevant certificates, **Applicants who have studied outside Tanzania should have their certificates approved by relevant authorities Tanzania Commission for University (TCU) or National Examination Council-NECTA)**
- Two recent passport size photographs
- Name and address of at least two reputable referees;
- Applicants from Public Service should route their applications through their employers;
- Applicant's reliable contact address, email address and telephone number.

Note: Misrepresentation of qualifications or any other information on application shall warrant legal consequences

5. CLOSING DATES:

Applicants should consider the following closing dates for this post as follows:
Within 14 days from the first date of this announcement

Application letters should be directed to the following address: -

MANAGING DIRECTOR & CEO,
AIR TANZANIA COMPANY LIMITED,
P.O. Box 543,
DAR ES SALAAM.

Issued on: January 9, 2023



JOB OPPORTUNITIES

Air Tanzania Company Limited (ATCL) is expanding its network to meet the needs of its Business Strategy which focus on sustaining the recorded achievement and remain an airline of choice that meets and exceeds customer's expectation in line of its mission of provision of reliable, safe and high-quality services. Therefore, applications are invited from qualified Tanzanian to fill the positions mentioned below:

1. POSITION: PRINCIPAL PLANNING OFFICER II - (1 POST)

1.1. MINIMUM ENTRY QUALIFICATIONS AND WORKING EXPERIENCE:

- Must have a Master's Degree in one of the following fields: Planning, Project Planning, Statistics, Economics or equivalent qualifications from any recognized Institution
- Must have a Bachelor Degree in one of the following fields: Planning, Project Planning, Statistics, Economics or equivalent qualifications from any recognized Institution
- Must have at least ten (10) years of working experience in related field

1.2. DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- Analyze impact of economic growth in relation with Air Tanzania Company Limited (ATCL) business and operation and advice the Management accordingly;
- Coordinate research on areas which have impact in ATCL business;
- Perform cost benefit analysis to the entire ATCL operation and business;
- Continuously scan the internal and external key success factors and identify opportunities;
- Coordinate preparation of ATCL's business and operation strategies;
- Develop and coordinate implementation of aviation related investment and projects;
- Perform other duties assigned by the supervisor.
- Conducts Performance Review and Appraisal of subordinates and gives feedback respectively.
- Perform any other official duties as may be assigned by a supervisor.

2. POSITION: PLANNING OFFICER II - (1 POST)

2.1. MINIMUM ENTRY QUALIFICATIONS AND WORKING EXPERIENCE:

- Must have Bachelor Degree in one of the following fields: Planning, Project Planning, Statistics, Economics or equivalent qualifications from any recognized Institution

2.2. DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- Assist in the preparation of plans and budget;
- Gathering information and key in data for projects analysis;
- Solicit information for reports preparation;
- Support data collection for the research and survey;
- Collect and key in data for the business analysis;
- Solicit data for required by aviation regulatory bodies association like TCAA IATA, ICAO, AFRAA; and
- Perform any other duties assigned by the supervisor.
- Perform any other official duties as may be assigned by a supervisor.

3. TERMS AND CONDITIONS:

Five (5) years contract with attractive remuneration and fringe benefits as per ATCL Salary Structure and Incentive Scheme.

4. MODE OF APPLICATION FOR ALL APPLICANTS:

Interested applicants must submit a **duly signed letter** for consideration of the application attached with the following:

- A curriculum vitae (CV),
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- Two recent passport size photographs
- Name and address of at least two reputable referees;
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P.O. Box 543,
DAR ES SALAAM.

Issued on: January 9, 2023

Rwanda secures €37m to digitise public services for boosting the drone industry

By Alice Kagina

RWANDA has secured €37 million loan from the French Development Agency (AFD) to transform more public services digitally and develop the country's drone industry.

The related agreement is also complemented with a €1.2 million grant to mobilize French expertise in project implementation.

Providing quality services and customer care across public and private sectors has been of priority as outlined under the economic transformation pillar of the National Strategy for Transformation (NSTI), the medium term national strategy (2017 - 2024). But more needs to be done in terms of necessary infrastructure.

Besides improving public services that are still hampered by old local computer networks at central and local administration levels, the loan will also help the country to tap into the potential for using geospatial data - information recorded in conjunction with geographic indicators.

After signing the deal, Uzziel Ndagijimana, the Minister of Finance and Economic Planning, said: "It will help in unlocking drone private sector development and supporting policy design, monitoring, and evaluation across government. It will also support innovation and economic development based on geospatial and drone-generated databases."

Delegates visit a stand during a mini-exhibition where the first made in Rwanda drone was on display during the Africa Drone Forum held in Kigali in February 2020. The Minister indicated that the loan will be used to finance the construction of a Drone Operations Center of excellence, in Huye District. Sam Ngendahimana

Delegates visit a stand during a mini-exhibition where the first made in Rwanda drone was on display during the Africa Drone Forum held in Kigali in February 2020. The Minister indicated that the loan will be used to finance the construction of a Drone Operations Center of excellence, in Huye District. Sam Ngendahimana

The Minister indicated that the loan will be used to finance the construction of a Drone Operations Center of excellence, in Huye District. The latter will be a place to

test new-use cases for the industry as well as the operationalization of a geospatial hub (GeoHub), centralized geospatial data infrastructure and services.

The hub seeks to improve evidence-based development, planning, monitoring and evaluation of public policies of the country in various fields such as urban planning, response to natural disasters, health, and agriculture, among others.

A private company will manage the DOC while the Rwanda Space Agency will manage the GeoHub.

Arthur Germond, AFD's Director in Rwanda, said this was the agency's first financing to the digital sector of Rwanda.

"This project will help reduce the access gap between the capital and the rest of the country. It will also make the country more attractive and create economic opportunities in Huye District thanks to support for the drone industry," he noted.

Zipline's drone delivers blood in Rwanda. Rwanda secured €37 million loan from the French Development Agency to transform more public services digitally and develop the country's drone industry. Courtesy

Zipline's drone delivers blood in Rwanda. Rwanda secured €37 million loan from the French Development Agency to transform more public services digitally and develop the country's drone industry. Courtesy

In Rwanda, drones are being used to deliver blood supplies, support precision agriculture, inspect power lines, conduct aerial mapping of land, and most recently, in fighting mosquitoes.

The government also partnered with a US-based global drone firm, Auterion, to establish its hub in the country with the objective of collaborating in rolling out services in areas such as freight and postal cargo, health and humanitarian aid.

The first made in Rwanda drone on display during the Africa Drone Forum held in Kigali in February 2020. The drone was made by local drone solutions firm Charis UAS. Sam Ngendahimana

The first made in Rwanda drone on display during the Africa Drone Forum held in Kigali in February 2020. The drone was made by local drone solutions firm Charis UAS. Sam Ngendahimana



Information, Communications and Information and Technology deputy minister Kundo Mathew pictured at the weekend at Kungwi in Mafia District addressing a meeting during an inspection tour of communication projects. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

Dodoma RC urges good use of fertiliser

By Guardian Reporter, Dodoma

DODOMA Regional Commissioner, Rosemary Senyamule has appealed to residents to make good use of subsidy fertiliser provided by the government to cultivate more food crops.

She made the appeal when addressing farmers at Mlali Iyegu village in Mlali ward, Kongwa district during her visit aimed at emphasising to villagers to prioritise environmental protection, agriculture and education.

"90 percent of Kongwa residents are farmers and depend on agriculture. I urge them to practice modern agriculture by using fertilizers because the government has

reduced the cost burden by contributing 70 per cent of total costs," she said.

According to her the fertiliser have been professionally tested, noting once properly used, the region will have enough food and will not require any relief food from the government.

Senyamule visited a newly constructed secondary school at Ihanda Village, Mlali ward which is expected to start receiving students this January. The school will help students from Ihanda village who walk 12 kilometres every day.

Kongwa district commissioner, Remidius Mwema said they received funds for construction of 70 classrooms, adding, they are all

completed. The classrooms will accommodate 7,719 children who are expected to start Standard One in 2023.

Chairman of the Kongwa district council, White Zuberi said: "We have spent the funds to construct two schools to ensure all the pupils are accommodated."

On environment, Senyamule encouraged villagers to participate in a tree planting campaign that was launched on December 31st 2022. She said district officials should make sure trees are planted at their offices, primary and secondary schools.

She said each of the districts including Kongwa should plant 1,500,000 trees per year.

She also visited the new grain centre at Mtanana village which will work to develop expertise in prevention of aflatoxins in grain crops. The project under the Ministry of Agriculture has been established at a cost of 19bn/-.

"This facility is the largest in East and Central Africa; it will facilitate exportation of our crops internationally. It is encouraging to learn that the centre will also provide training to experts," she added.

Kongwa district executive director, Omary Nkullo, said that construction of the centre followed an incident that occurred in the past five years where people and animals died after eating foods which were poisoned by aflatoxins.



Uzungu legislator Prof Kitila Mkumbo has an audience with officials of Dar es Salaam's Mabibo mixed-goods market yesterday on the status of occupancy at the popular facility. Photo: Correspondent Miraji Msala

Govt offers 267bn/- for implementation of water projects in Morogoro Region

By Guardian Correspondent, Ulanga

MOROGORO regional commissioner, Fatma Mwasa has hailed President Samia Suluhu Hassan for approving a total of 267bn/- so as to facilitate implementation of water projects in various areas in the region.

RC Mwasa acknowledged that this is the first time in history the region has implemented more water projects, something which has greatly helped to address water shortage challenges in various parts.

Speaking yesterday here before the Minister for Water, Jumaa Aweso at a public rally in Kituti village in Ulanga District, the regional commissioner said majority of the residents have now been connected to water services due to efforts taken by the government.

She also commended Minister Aweso for his commitment in serving people travelling village to village to witness the situation of water and address challenges.

"Many water projects which have been implemented in the region have transformed the sector by increasing access to clean and safe water by residents, we thank the government for this," she said.

Mwasa said that the 267bn/- received, 187bn/- will be used for the improvement of Mindu dam and to expand a network of water so as to address water shortages in Morogoro urban which is the one facing a major challenge.

"The completion of the Mindu dam water project will greatly help address water challenges in Morogoro urban areas, this has affected people for 50 years,

but with the project, we are sure that no one will complain of the challenge again," she said.

She further said that 17bn/- has been directed to small water supply projects which are all going well and the implantation has reached 80 percent.

She said that on the implementation of water projects in rural areas, a total of 65bn/- has been issued including the 266m/- used for the Kituti village water project strengthening water supply in the village.

"President Samia doesn't speak a lot but she is doing a lot, we are the one experiencing this, villages have been connected to water and those that are, the government has approved funds to facilitate the projects," she added.

Minister Aweso urged

residents, water committees and water user associations to supervise the implementation of the projects as well as ensuring their protection so as to last long and benefit more people.

Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Agency (RUWASA) manager in Ulanga District, Eng David Kaijage said the water project in Kituti village has reached 92 percent and once completed, it will serve a total of 2,692 people who are currently relying from River water.

Kituti village chairman, Siliva Lyanhera commended President Samia for supporting them with the project, something which will bring huge relief to the residents who have been spending time searching for water in rivers and ponds.

Ensure Form One students report to secondary school, RC urges parents

By Guardian Correspondent,

Njombe

NJOMBE Regional Commissioner Antony Mtaka has said that 100 per cent of students who are expected to join Form One, this January should do so.

Speaking to a public rally in Njombe yesterday, RC Mtaka urged parents saying even those enrolled for start Standard One should also be in school today.

"All Form One students who have no uniform let's them go to school there should be no excuse on this matter. All students from poor families should report to school today. Free education involve all students irrespective of economic backgrounds,"

Mtaka stressed.

"Most of the professors we're seeing now come from the mud-walled, grass-thatched houses, so this should be a reason from those who haven't to stay at home," the RC noted.

Mtaka said: "We'll recognise those who do not have a uniform, councils and leaders and individual people, cannot fail to help students with no uniforms, and since I gave that idea, many people have volunteered to provide uniforms, including MPs."

He also tasked teachers to use Form One enrollment form as a yardstick to deter students to realize their education aspiration, urging parents to live the President Samia

Suluhu Hassan's dream of ensuring all children get to school. "President Samia build classrooms with desks, employs teachers and bringing in text books for students to pursue their dreams," the RC stressed.

One of Njombe residents, Eva Sanga, said they have received the governor's order in good faith and that they will ensure their children attend classes on January 9.

"The issue of building classrooms has helped us a lot, before the child started Form One we used to build classrooms with these donations but now President Samia's government has made it easier for us parents to fail now," Eva said.



All Set for JICA's New Malindi Fish Landing and Marketing Facilities Inauguration



60 MIAKA YA
USHIRIKIANO NA MAENDELEO
60 years cooperation & development

On 10th January 2023, official inauguration ceremony of the Project for Development of Malindi Fish Landing and Marketing Facilities in Zanzibar will take place. The ceremony will be officiated by H.E. Dr. Hussein Mwinyi President of Zanzibar and H.E. Yasushi Misawa, the Ambassador of Japan to Tanzania.

The project has been implemented by Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), responsible for Official Development Assistance (ODA) by the Government of Japan.

The Malindi landing site is not only the island's largest fishing port in the Zanzibar Archipelago but also the major distribution base for marine products headed for Zanzibar Municipality and beyond.

Before the construction of the facilities, the fishing wharf, seawall, nearby unloading and market facilities, and the general environment around the area have been damaged and collapsed which inhibited safe and efficient unloading of fish as well as fishing trip preparation work and have adversely affected the economy of Zanzibar, which, to a large extent, depends on fishery sector.

Therefore, in response to the request from the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania, the Government of Japan through JICA has decided to provide a Grant-Aid project, which improve landing site condition and establish new market facilities, with amount 1,353 million JPY (About TSH22.75 billion). The facilities contain the landing function (quay and seawall), wholesale (auction) and retailing function.

The Project was executed by the Japanese contractor RINKAI NISSAN CONSTRUCTION CO., LTD, and consultant Fisheries Engineering Co., Ltd with the Ministry of Blue Economy and Fisheries Zanzibar (MBEF).

In 60 years of cooperation since 1962, JICA has supported fishery sector since 1970s. Malindi Fish Landing and Marketing Facilities is the third fish market by JICA Grant-Aid, and the first JICA project for fishery sector in Zanzibar.

This flagship projects of Japan's cooperation to Tanzania shows the model of "high-quality infrastructure", that is a foundation of inclusive development for all people in Zanzibar.



New Malindi fish landing and marketing facilities. Clean and safety.

bar. Malindi Fish Landing Site and Marketing Facilities will now be more hygienic and safer for all fisheries' beneficiaries.

The market will provide a safe landing for nearly 400 fishing boats, sanitary, and efficient work environment for 6,500 users such as fishermen, porters, brokers, auctioneers, vendors, and thereby contributing to stable supply of fish with higher quality to the people of Zanzibar.

One of the stakeholders of this market, said that, he is foreseeing employment from the new facility. "The project is a savior for the people of Zanzibar as it give opportunity of self-employment and entrepreneurship" he noted.

The completed facilities are expected to accommodate more fishing vessels, create more jobs for people in the sector, and increase the earnings of stakeholders in the fisheries value-chains, thereby bringing out the potential of blue economy and boosting it. This project would meet all basic needs in the fishing activities in Zanzibar.



Grand floor of the facility. Auction will be held here.



1st floor of the facility.



Malindi fish landing site before JICA project. 95% of landing site users have got injured.

Govt commended for improving border trade

By Correspondent Crispin Gerald

THE government has been commended for making improvement in the border trade by removing all non-tariff barriers for 90 per cent in order to stimulate competition on international trade.

Evans Exaud, Liberty Sparks' founder and chief executive officer (CEO) made the call over the weekend when speaking during the online webinar.

He said that the move is therefore meant to create conducive environment to support Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) which helps to stimulate economic growth and independence development.

According to him, AfCFTA is the solution to many problems in Africa, including ending poverty, promoting education, stimulating competition, promoting local industries and increasing the production of services and goods in Africa.

It is also an instrument established by the Africa Union (AU) to remove cross-border trade barriers among people with similar needs in Africa.

Through AfCFTA, free movement of people and goods will be encouraged; Africa growth domestic products (GDP) will grow to USD 2.5 trillion and Africa will be the 8th fastest-growing economy in the world with market of 1.3 billion people.

He added that in order for the plan to succeed, there should be strong partnership between the government and public sectors to ensure that the implementation is well guaranteed and implemented.

AfCFTA are that SMEs which will be able to thrive as restriction are reduced. Local manufacturers will be able to access neighboring markets with a low tariff, and exports and imports between countries will be cheaper, allowing consumers to pay less while increasing production and doubling job opportunities.

"Intercontinental trade will reach 77 per cent currently 17, and make Africa economically Independent, Agriculture, food processing, textiles, paper, glass and other 100 African consumption products will generate more profit.

Exaud also list some hindrance factors

in the system which includes difficulties in obtaining VISA, expensive air tickets, poor technology and infrastructure, access to information, multiple clearance at the borders, corruption and violence against women traders.

He explained that Kenya and Ethiopia is not more than 69 million dollars because of restrictions, high taxes and cumbersome procedures on documentation at the border.

According to research associates at Liberty Sparks Michael Kyande the main objectives for AfCFTA is to facilitate the movement of goods and services so that people will not shift to other countries to pursue ease of border crossing and employment.

"Other factors will help to increase efficiency in the quantity and quality of products by knowing what the African markets want and how to deliver it if waiting time at borders is reduced," he said.

Kyande said that stakeholders should play their roles with determination to ensure that we reach Africa's market expectations.

"Ministries and policymakers should ensure that implementation and monitoring are stable," he said.

He detailed that, it takes 97 hours to process border crossings, while for the European Union (EU) it is 8 hours, procedural documentation for the EU it is 4.1 documents, the cost to export a container is more than USD 2,000 in the Africa Union, while in the EU it is USD 1,042, and the cost to import a container is more than USD 2,007 while in the EU it is about USD 1,079.

"The scarcity of local products in our supermarkets is due to these high costs of doing business, he added, our factories will increase efficiency in the quantity and quality of products by knowing what the African markets want and how to deliver it if the waiting time at borders is reduced," he added.

The main objective of AfCFTA is to facilitate this movement of goods and services so that people will not shift to other countries to pursue ease of border crossing and employment.



It is yet again pineapples in abundance in many parts of Tanzania, with retail prices ranging between 500/- and twice as much per piece - largely depending on size and quality. Correspondent Miraji Msala captured this scene at Dar es Salaam's Mabibo market yesterday.

Adhere to ethics, PM urges medical officers

By Guardian Reporter

PRIME Minister Kassim Majaliwa has directed district and regional medical officers across the country to abide by ethics among public servants and ensure that health services are provided at the required quality.

According to him, the government has been dishing out a lot of funds to improve the sector so as to ensure that Tanzanians are served with ethical servants and at needed quality.

The Prime Minister made the directives yesterday when speaking to public leaders in Ruvuma Region at a meeting held in Songea municipal conference hall.

He said the President Samia Suluhu Hassan has continued to ensure that enough funds are issued so as to facilitate implementation of various projects in the health including procurement of

medicines and medical tools and that professionals have to ensure that they fulfill their obligations as per ethical conduct.

"Regional leaders have a big role to ensure that services are provided well in our health centres and hospitals, the government has invested a lot to transform the sector and ensure that Tanzanians access friendly and quality services served by ethical servants," he said.

He wanted district commissioners to also supervise availability of medicines and medical tools from the Medical Stores Department (MSD) and Basket Fund as the Head of State was issuing enough funds for the procurement of the tools and medicines.

Meanwhile, the Prime Minister wanted district commissioners and district executive directors (DEDs) and education officers to supervise the implementation

of fee-free education by making sure that children attend school without being charged.

"Make sure you conduct regular visits to the schools, inspect registration forms to ensure that there is no area that forces parents to bring unnecessary contributions," he said.

Majaliwa also emphasized the need to supervise social welfare activities including income generating activities such as small scale traders.

"We need to supervise progress of economic activities in our communities, those that inject income to people, all these need close supervision by investigating challenges and finding solutions for them to grow both in urban and rural areas," he said.

He also wanted leaders to invest in addressing people's challenges as well as informing the public on what is conducted by

the government to promote development in their areas.

On collections, the Prime Minister called for a special identification of all revenue sources and what they are injecting in the councils so as to improve and close all gaps which are thwarting collections.

He also insisted that all funds collected from all sources should be sent to the central bank (BoT) before being approved for use.

Deputy Minister, President's Office (Regional Administration and Local Governments), Dr Festo Dugange said that President Samia has been bringing a lot of funds to facilitate implementation of projects meant to improve social welfare of citizens and that council leaders have role to supervise to ensure that the projects are executed and completed on time.



Tanzania Forest Services Agency commissioner general Prof Dos Santos Silayo pictured in Arusha city at the weekend addressing a meeting on challenges facing the forest sector in the country. Second right is Natural Resources and Tourism minister Dr Pindi Chana. Photo: Correspondent Asraji Mvungi

Cameroonian fishery products banned by EU Commission

YAOUNDE

THE European Commission has banned imports of seafood caught in Cameroon's waters, or caught by ships flagged there, and it labeled the central African country as "non-cooperating" in the fight against illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing.

The commission gave Cameroon a so-called "red card" and said EU member states would turn away seafood shipments from Cameroon even when it has catch certificates validated by the national authorities.

Cameroon is one of four non-EU countries that are currently on the commission's "red card" list, alongside St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Comoros and Cambodia. The country has in recent years emerged as one of several countries that offer "flags of convenience" where companies can -- for a fee -- register their ships in a nation that has no links to the vessel.

Last year, The Associated Press investigated 14 vessels registered in Cameroon that had been accused of illegal and unregulated fishing and found

that they were owned or managed by companies based in EU member states.

The European Commission said illegal, unregulated and unreported fishing is "one of the most serious threats to the sustainable exploitation of living aquatic resources."

"We have zero tolerance for IUU fishing and therefore the Commission has acted strongly today by giving Cameroon a red card," said the European Commissioner for Environment, Oceans and Fisheries, Virginijus Sinkevicius.

A spokesperson for Cameroon's Ministry of Livestock, Fisheries and Animal Industries could not be reached for comment Thursday.

Thursday's ban by the commission comes nearly two years after it urged Cameroonian authorities to step up its action against illegal fishing.

The Commission estimates as much as 26 tons of fish are caught illegally each year, comprising about 15 percent of the world's total catch. Illegal, unreported or unregulated fishing is worth between 10 billion and 20 billion euros each year.

Zanzibar's KMKM given land for constructing health centre

By Guardian Reporter, Zanzibar

ZANZIBAR'S Minister for Lands and Settlements Development, Rahma Kassim Ali has expressed gratitude to residents of Gando village in Pemba for providing land for the Isles's anti-smuggling force (KMKM) to construct a health centre.

The minister said this yesterday here when laying a foundation stone at construction of the site as part of the commemoration of the 59th anniversary of Zanzibar Revolution.

According to her, Gando residents have shown a patriotic heart for putting aside political ideologies and jointly deciding to set the plot for the force.

"You are truly revolutionists, what you have done is a remarkable thing and we thank you for this, we should always live by loving each other, promoting peace and unity regardless of our political ideologies differences," she said.

She further commended KMKM technicians and labourers for the good stage they have

reached in the construction of the health centre otherwise the government could have encountered high expenses to implement the project.

The minister however directed the head of KMKM Commodore Azana Hassan Msingiri to consider wages of the technicians and labourers who are working hard to complete the project.

"One completed, the health centre will bring relief to the force's families and citizens as it will be receiving quality health services as they are in

the KMKM hospital in Kibweni, Unguja," she added.

She emphasized on the importance of ensuring that the centre is equipped with quality human resources including doctors, nurses as well as equipment as per the Zanzibar's Ministry of health guideline.

Rahma further reminded authorities to think on providing quality mother and child services so as to enable residents of Gando to access the services rescuing them from traveling long distances to

seek for the same.

"I am sure that the patriotic heart which has been shown by the residents, translates that they love KMKM and that they are ready to continue supporting its operations by providing information on smuggling of various products such as cloves as well illegal fishing," she explained.

The Minister directed the permanent secretary of the Zanzibar's Land Commission to issue title deed of the plot after the force requested the minister to help them.

Tabora man charged with spreading false information on social media

By Correspondent Zuwena Shame

CHARLES Augustine, a resident of Karua in Tabora region was on Friday appeared before Kisutu Resident Magistrates Court facing eight charges including publishing false information through on-line social media.

The charges were read before Principal Resident Magistrate of the Kisutu Resident Magistrates Court, Mary Mrio.

Reading the charges, State Attorney Tumaini Maingu claimed that the accused published false information through YouTube in his account christened 'Mkombozi Media.'

It was alleged that among some of the false information he published included the one that was posted on December 10th last year with a heading—'Truth about those who murdered the late President John Magufuli. Makamba, Kinana, Kikwete should apologise to Tanzanians over their shoddy statements'.

State Attorney Maingu claimed that on November 9th 2022 the accused published false informa-

tion stating that President Samia Suluhu Hassan had appointed Paul Makonda to become Dar es Salaam Regional Commissioner.

It was alleged that the accused published the information well knowing that it was not true.

On the same date, the accused published false information that reads 'Bashiru has ashamed Kikwete, Makamba by mentioning President Samia and Nape as Magufuli murderers'.

On another count, it was alleged that between December 6th and 15th, 2022, Charles Augustine published information through his YouTube account without a valid license from the Tanzania Communication Regulatory Authority (TCRA).

The accused denied all the charges whereas the prosecution side claimed that the investigations have not been completed and advised the accused to remain remanded until January 19th this year.

The accused was released on bail after his two guarantors completed the bail procedure and signed cheques worth 5m/- each.



Minerals minister Dr Doto Biteko (3rd-L, foreground) is shown around a Rocktronic Ltd quarry at King'ori in Arumeru District, Arusha region, at the weekend. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

RAID accepts long-standing invitation to visit North Mara

By Guardian Reporter

NORTH Mara Gold Mine has confirmed that the UK-based organisation, Rights and Accountability in Development (RAID) has accepted the firm's long standing invitation to visit the mine during the week starting January 30th, 2023.

The intention of the site visit is to show RAID the numerous

initiatives North Mara has implemented to improve the lives and livelihoods of surrounding communities, gain contextual understanding of the operating environment at North Mara and meet with key stakeholders in the region.

North Mara and RAID will also discuss RAID's findings and methodology and pursue practical recommendations.

North Mara Gold Mine and other stakeholders look forward to hosting and engaging with the RAID team during the visit.

RAID exposes corporate wrongdoing, environmental harm and human rights abuses. We partner with those harmed to hold companies to account and pursue justice and remedy. Through rigorous investigation, advocacy and the law, we work

to strengthen regulation of business and bring justice for victims of corporate abuse.

As a UK-based NGO, RAID recognises that the doors to justice and remedy for the victims of corporate abuse are closed. This is especially true for communities in Africa where the power of global multinational companies and their impact on the environment is undeniable.

Based in the Global North, such multinational companies far too often infringe on the rights of local communities with little scrutiny or accountability. For those harmed, obtaining justice in local courts or in legal jurisdictions where the companies are based can seem like an impossible hurdle. It also seek to change that and provide an avenue for remedy.



With most schools countrywide reopening today for the new academic year, the number of sales points for school supplies has recently seen a steep rise. This is at Bombani bus stand in Muheza District, as found yesterday. Photo: Correspondent Steven William

Brazil rejoins community of Latin American, Caribbean states - Lula

SAO PAULO

BRAZIL has informed member countries of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) of its "full and immediate" reincorporation into the regional bloc.

The government of President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, who took office on Sunday, decided to rejoin

the pro-integration forum that his predecessor Jair Bolsonaro had abandoned.

"The extra-regional partners with whom CELAC maintains a regular dialogue, including the European Union, China, India, ASEAN and the African Union, were also informed about the country's return to the regional consultation mechanism," Brazil's Foreign Affairs Ministry said

in a statement on Thursday.

Brazil "actively participated in the creation of CELAC, by convening and hosting the first Summit of Latin American and Caribbean Countries in 2008 in Costa do Sauipe, in Bahia," the ministry said.

"Brazil's return to the community of Latin American countries is an essential step for the rebuilding of our diplomatic heritage and the full

reintegration of the country into the international community," added the foreign ministry.

Lula is set to participate in the 7th Summit of Heads of State and Government of CELAC to be held on Jan. 24 in Buenos Aires, following an invitation by Argentine President Alberto Fernandez, whose country currently holds the rotating presidency of the bloc.

YAMC empowers young women

By Ritah Mukasa

THE Young African Women Congress (YAWC) has empowered thousands of young women in Africa and the diaspora to be change agents in their communities.

YAWC is an annual residential Pan-African women's gathering that was birthed in 2016 and since then, it has been steadily progressing thanks to its different partners.

This year, the 2023 East African sub-regional session is going to be held in Kampala.

It is scheduled for April 2-5 at Makerere University under the theme: "Women's Empowerment for Sustainable Development; A Collective Responsibility".

Lindah Atim, the Uganda chapter president says, the session will feature prominent leaders from different career backgrounds across the world.

They will engage the participants in various sessions including keynotes, panel discussions, group brainstorming and parallel sessions.

Thereafter, the participants will enjoy an adventurous trip to tourist sites around the country. They will also enjoy a gala dinner and business exhibition among other extras.

Daniel Osei Tuffuor, the congress coordinator says, the sixth general continental convocation of the congress was held in October last year in Accra, Ghana.

Osei is also the Executive Director for the Excellent Leadership Group (ExLA Group) which is the holding organization for the YAWC Network.

Subsequently, the organizers

introduced and successfully hosted the maiden edition of the East Africa sub-regional session in Nairobi, Kenya in May 2022.

Atim says the sub-regional sessions intend to take empowerment to the doorstep of every African woman.

Meanwhile, participants at the forthcoming East African session will access the relevant empowerment tools they need to navigate life.

They will also analyze the sustainability of their impact on the development and progress of women.

Most importantly, the session will also mobilize and advocate for support for projects that focus on women's development.

In the same vein, the seventh annual continental convocation of the congress will also be held in Accra from September 3-7, 2023.

"YAWC invites all young women in Africa and the diaspora to attend this life-changing congress. The opportunities are countless," Atim calls out.

She adds, this platform promotes knowledge sharing and intellectual discourse. It also engenders a strong sense of belonging, which propels participants to become change-makers in their immediate environments with rippling effects on the continent.

Women's Empowerment for Sustainable Development

The Guardian

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MONDAY 9 JANUARY 2023

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

Internet, mobile phone frauds can be shifted to police notices

ANOTHER alert has been issued about potential frauds where the Bank of Tanzania (BoT) was pointing at an invitation being sent to possibly unguarded individuals to receive a sum of money, unexpectedly. A BoT statement cationed about an increasing trend of fraudulent notices where one receives information to the effect that a large payment has been made through the Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunications (SWIFT). It is something that can strike one's imagination as major banks around the world use it to settle major payments.

The BoT statement was rather elaborate on what such notification demands contain, for instance that a specified amount be made to the sending address for the withdrawal procedure to be completed. It specified that the receiver is notified through email or other means that the money has been sent to a bank account and the account holder is required to deposit a certain amount to access the wired amount. That obviously is the kernel of the fraud, but it does not belong to BoT as a regulatory agency since it isn't being done by an institution, just criminal groups.

Even if the senders of such e-mails were acknowledged organisations which are recognized in foreign countries, BoT would report the matter to the police if it is fraud, or direct corrective action at the local level if there are duly registered financial institutions involved, as BoT would then invoke explicit regulatory or legal provisions to pounce on such activities. Otherwise if a BoT staffer gets such messages, he or she would figure it as a crime worth investigating, by the police.

One psychological aspect m

financial crime that is under-explored in plenty of the commentary and apparently in this instance as well is that people fall victim to fraud because they are eager about fraud themselves. Most of us join what are known as Ponzi schemes not because we don't see the danger but because we allow ourselves to imagine that we shall be there first. When one is ready to see others lose money so long as he stuffs his pockets in so doing, he is justifiably defrauded of his money because he wanted ill-gotten gains. It is a rule of the game.

In other words the idea isn't just to alert society on a fraudulent scheme, attributing it to unknown operators who tell the targeted account holder that the money is for projects and private use. Issuing a blanket advice that such information is not true might not be as helpful, as those who craft it know how to play with the minds of those who receive the message, that it looks somewhat credible, even plausible. In that case it needs that the person isn't pursuing easy money to reject the info thus sent, and that is hard to guarantee, in this world of incessant betting, cash games.

The precaution that the public is advised to be vigilant with such dealings as most of the time they are aimed at deceiving the public was to be sure not a regulatory statement but a criminal investigation preliminary observation. When it comes from the police it has greater efficacy for responding to such emails and sending cash to an address could amount to money laundering or trafficking. At least the recipient of that email would be more worried if the note of caution comes from the police, as then it would be a warning not of loss but of complicity in a crime.

Timber taxes: Treasury could clarify on local governments' expectations

SOME tongue lashing has of late been heard as a cabinet minister made a trip to the southern highlands to put things right in relation to the timber trade, asking that

Scores of levies on the trade be scrapped. While reports on the timber trade situation were patchy to an extent, the minister made explicit references to additional sums like 100/- and 250/- per unit being put to the market, which was entirely in local taxation. Such levies lead to complaints from business people.

The minister on a tour of Njombe region thus asked regional administrations not just there but all over the country to properly apply legislation governing the timber trade. One missing was whether, as a central government levy, the three percent service charge is collected and used locally, or it is reclaimed by the Forest Service Agency, on behalf of the Treasury. If that is for instance the case, it is quite easy to see how local authorities by consensus see the need to impose own levies.

No explanations came from the Industry, Trade and Investment minister before the regional business council when a number of business people raised concerns over apparent failure to find solutions to arbitrary regulations and nuisance taxes. The formal position was that taxes are collected in accordance with the laws, and local authorities cannot change tax laws overnight. Any such amendments have to undergo thorough processes, and in relation to the timber trade, nothing of the sort existed definitely, so additional levies outside the legislation were

simply faulty.

If one takes the minister on an auxiliary step in the same direction, let it be asked if corporate social responsibility levies, which the government actively encourages on the part of local governments to slap on investors, are rightful or not. If they are rightful on foreign investors, surely local investors in the timber trade also need to make a contribution to local development or welfare needs outside recognizable central government taxation? We didn't hear responses from local authorities, and indeed there was no transcript of internal discussion, but it is largely predictable.

The minister's sharp reminder on pursuing a business and investment environment improvement policy to boost private sector performance isn't acutely dissonant with specified local impositions designed to be manageable. That is at least the view of local governments, and often the central government tells them to widen their sources of income and not just depend on central government subventions. So the borderline between local governments' own sources and nuisance taxes is thin.

There are all the same questionable initiatives for instance when the minister pointed a finger at officials for ignorance of policy measures, citing cases when a person from the Occupational Safety and Health Authority (OSHA) comes around and people do not know that numerous OSHA charges have been removed in recent taxation. There is evidently a clear situation where a specific occupational service levy is removed, then it is introduced as a local government revenue item.

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Africa must end scourge of cholera

By Special Correspondent

In its latest report, the Nigeria centre for disease control announced a total of 19,228 suspected cases of cholera, including 466 deaths in 2022.

Cholera is an infection of the small intestine by some strains of the bacterium. Symptoms may range from none, to mild, to severe. The classic symptom is large amounts of watery diarrhoea that lasts a few days. Vomiting and muscle cramps may also occur. Diarrhoea can be so severe that it leads within hours to severe dehydration and electrolyte imbalance. This may result in sunken eyes, cold skin, decreased skin elasticity, and wrinkling of the hands and feet. Dehydration can cause the skin to turn bluish.[8] Symptoms start two hours to five days after exposure.

Cholera is caused by a number of types of *Vibrio cholerae*, with some types producing more severe disease than others. It is spread mostly by unsafe water and unsafe food that has been contaminated with human feces containing the bacteria. Undercooked shellfish is a common source. Humans are the only known host for the bacteria. Risk factors for the disease include poor sanitation, not enough clean drinking water, and poverty. Cholera can be diagnosed by a stool test. A rapid dipstick test is available but is not as accurate.

Prevention methods against cholera include improved sanitation and access to clean water. Cholera vaccines that are given by mouth provide reasonable protection for about six months. The primary treatment for affected individuals is oral rehydration salts (ORS), the replacement of fluids and electrolytes by using slightly sweet and salty solutions. Rice-based solutions are preferred. Zinc supplementation is useful in children. In severe cases, intravenous fluids, such as Ringer's lactate, may be required, and antibiotics may be beneficial. Testing to see which antibiotic the cholera is susceptible to can help guide the choice.

Cholera continues to affect an estimated 3-5 million people worldwide and causes 28,800-130,000 deaths a year. The most recent of seven cholera pandemics and associated outbreaks, since the early 19th century, started about 1961. As of 2010, it is rare in high income countries. Children are mostly affected. Cholera occurs as both outbreaks and chronically

in certain areas. Areas with an ongoing risk of disease include Africa and Southeast Asia. The risk of death among those affected is usually less than 5 per cent, given improved treatment, but may be as high as 50 per cent without such access to treatment. Descriptions of cholera are found as early as the 5th century BC in Sanskrit.

Typical cholera diarrhea that looks like 'rice water'

The primary symptoms of cholera are profuse diarrhoea and vomiting of clear fluid. These symptoms usually start suddenly, half a day to five days after ingestion of the bacteria. The diarrhoea is frequently described as "rice water" in nature and may have a fishy odor. An untreated person with cholera may produce 10 to 20 litres (3 to 5 US gal) of diarrhoea a day.[17] Severe cholera, without treatment, kills about half of affected individuals. If the severe diarrhoea is not treated, it can result in life-threatening dehydration and electrolyte imbalance. Estimates of the ratio of asymptomatic to symptomatic infections have ranged from 3 to 100. Cholera has been nicknamed the 'blue death' because a person's skin

• t may have come into contact with the feces of other people with cholera (e.g., clothing, bedding, etc.) are essential. These should be sanitized by washing in hot water, using chlorine bleach if possible. Hands that touch cholera patients or their clothing, bedding, etc., should be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected with chlorinated water or other effective antimicrobial agents.

• Sewage and fecal sludge management: In cholera-affected areas, sewage and fecal sludge need to be treated and managed carefully in order to stop the spread of this disease via human excreta. Provision of sanitation and hygiene is an important preventative measure. Open defecation, release of untreated sewage, or dumping of fecal sludge from pit latrines or septic tanks into the environment need to be prevented.[46] In many cholera affected zones, there is a low degree of sewage treatment. Therefore, the implementation of dry toilets that do not contribute to water pollution, as they do not flush with water, may be an interesting alternative to flush toilets.

Water purification: All water used for drinking, washing, or cooking should be sterilized by either boiling, chlorination, ozone water treatment, ultraviolet light sterilization or antimicrobial filtration in any area where cholera may be pre-

sent. Chlorination and boiling are often the least expensive and most effective means of halting transmission. Cloth filters or sari filtration, though very basic, have significantly reduced the occurrence of cholera when used in poor villages in Bangladesh that rely on untreated surface water. Better antimicrobial filters, like those present in advanced individual water treatment hiking kits, are most effective. Public health education and adherence to appropriate sanitation practices are of primary importance to help prevent and control transmission of cholera and other diseases.

Handwashing with soap or ash after using a toilet and before handling food or eating is also recommended

In the considered opinion of this newspaper, this is an emergency that should be taken seriously by government at all levels.

Cholera is an acute diarrhoeal disease caused by vibrio cholerae bacteria. It is passed on from faeces through contaminated food, drinks, and unhygienic environment, and causes severe dehydration. The number of cholera cases tends to increase with the onset of the rainy season. The risk of death from cholera is higher when treatment is delayed.

Needless to say, the government must do everything possible to avoid a repeat of 2010 when Nigeria had its worst cholera outbreak in recent years, with nearly 40,000 cases and more than 1,500 deaths reported, according to a United Nations report. In 2014, Nigeria recorded 35,996 cases and in 2015, 2,108 cases were reported, with 97 deaths. Suffice it to say, cholera has become a recurring decimal in the country.

Regrettably, the Covid-19 pandemic has relegated most other diseases to the background.

Cholera is largely associated with rural communities and among poor people with poor nutrition, poor water quality, and poor sanitation, hence it has not gotten the desired attention from the government.

Experts have advised that washing hands frequently with soap under clean running water can prevent infectious diseases, including cholera. This is especially important after defecation and before handling food or eating.

Also, people should avoid open defecation and indiscriminate refuse dumping which contribute to the spread of cholera, as well as improved access to clean water, proper sanitation, and hygiene. This is a critical measure to prevent cholera cases and outbreaks.

Sadly, Nigeria is among the nations in the world with the highest number of people practising open defecation, estimated at over 46 million people. The practice brings with it significant health risks, linked to deaths from diarrhoea, cholera, and typhoid.

In 2016, Nigeria launched an action plan to end open defecation by 2025. The plan involves providing equitable access to water, sanitation, and hygiene services and strengthening tailored community approaches to total sanitation.

However, financial constraints have put the target in jeopardy. Nigeria needs an estimated N959 billion (\$2.7 billion) to end open defecation by 2025. Of that, the government is expected to provide around 25 per cent, or NGN234 billion -- because the country loses N455 billion annually to poor sanitation.

We also recall that based on World Bank estimates, Nigeria will be required to triple its budget or at least allocate 1.7 percent of the current Gross Domestic Product to water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH).

Therefore, we call on the federal and state governments to step up efforts to provide equitable access to water, sanitation, and hygiene services. The government should also ensure the sustainability of water services in rural communities.

Similarly, the government should revive the campaign to end open defecation in the country. Also, we call on the government to step up surveillance to detect and monitor the spread of the disease in the country.

It is essential to improve access to clean water and sanitation facilities. This can be achieved through investments in infrastructure, such as building wells and sewage treatment plants, as well as through public education campaigns that teach people about the importance of proper hygiene and hand washing.

In addition to improving access to clean water and sanitation, it is also important to strengthen the country's public health system. This means investing in trained medical professionals, as well as in the supplies and equipment needed to effectively diagnose and treat cholera.

The government must break the cycle as cholera keeps reoccurring every year. We also insist that hand-washing campaigns have to be reignited across the country. The way the government campaigned vigorously for the COVID-19 protocols should be extended to the hand-washing campaign across the country, especially in rural areas.

Finally, Nigeria must work with

New MIT internships to expand research opportunities in Africa

By Kristen Wilcox

WITH new support from the Office of the Associate Provost for International Activities, MIT International Science and Technology Initiatives (MISTI) and the MIT-Africa program are expanding internship opportunities for MIT students at universities and leading academic research centers in Africa. This past summer, MISTI supported 10 MIT student interns at African universities, significantly more than in any previous year.

"These internships are an opportunity to better merge the research ecosystem of MIT with academia-based research systems in Africa," says Evan Lieberman, the Total Professor of Political Science and Contemporary Africa and faculty director for MISTI.

For decades, MISTI has helped MIT students to learn and explore through international experiential learning opportunities and internships in industries like health care, education, agriculture, and energy. MISTI's MIT-Africa Seed Fund supports collaborative research between MIT faculty and Africa-based researchers, and the new student research internship opportunities are part of a broader vision for deeper engagement between MIT and research institutions across the

African continent.

While Africa is home to 12.5 percent of the world's population, it generates less than 1 percent of scientific research output in the form of academic journal publications, according to the African Academy of Sciences. Research internships are one way that MIT can build mutually beneficial partnerships across Africa's research ecosystem, to advance knowledge and spawn innovation in fields important to MIT and its African counterparts, including health care, biotechnology, urban planning, sustainable energy, and education.

Ari Jacobovits, managing director of MIT-Africa, notes that the new internships provide additional funding to the lab hosting the MIT intern, enabling them to hire a counterpart student research intern from the local university. This support can make the internships more financially feasible for host institutions and helps to grow the research pipeline.

With the support of MIT, State University of Zanzibar (SUZA) lecturers Raya Ahmada and Abubakar Bakar were able to hire local students to work alongside MIT graduate students Mel Isidor and Rajan Hoyle. Together the students collaborated over a summer on a mapping project designed to plan and protect Zanzibar's coastal economy.



"It's been really exciting to work with research peers in a setting where we can all learn alongside one another and develop this project together," says Hoyle.

Using low-cost drone technology, the students and their local counterparts worked to create detailed maps of Zanzibar to support community planning around resilience projects designed to combat coastal flooding and deforestation and

assess climate-related impacts to seaweed farming activities.

"I really appreciated learning about how engagement happens in this particular context and how community members understand local environmental challenges and conditions based on research and lived experience," says Isidor. "This is beneficial for us whether we're working in an international context or in the United States."

For biology major Shaida Nishat,

her internship at the University of Cape Town allowed her to work in a vital sphere of public health and provided her with the chance to work with a diverse, international team headed by Associate Professor Salome Maswine, head of the global surgery division and a widely-renowned expert in global surgery, a multidisciplinary field in the sphere of global health focused on improved and equitable surgical outcomes.

"It broadened my perspective as to how an effort like global surgery ties so many nations together through a common goal that would benefit them all," says Nishat, who plans to pursue a career in public health.

For computer science sophomore Antonio L. Ortiz Bigio, the MISTI research internship in Africa was an incomparable experience, culturally and professionally. Bigio interned at the Robotics Autonomous Intelligence and Learning Laboratory at the University of Witwatersrand in Johannesburg, led by Professor Benjamin Rosman, where he developed software to enable a robot to play chess. The experience has inspired Bigio to continue to pursue robotics and machine learning.

Participating faculty at the host institutions welcomed their MIT interns, and were impressed by their capabilities. Both Rosman and Maswine described their MIT interns as hard-working and valued team members, who had helped to advance their own work.

Building strong global partnerships, whether through faculty research, student internships, or other initiatives, takes time and cultivation, explains Jacobovits. Each successful collaboration helps to seed future exchanges and builds interest at MIT and peer institutions in creative partnerships. As MIT continues to deepen its connections to institutions and researchers across Africa, says Jacobovits, "students like Shaida, Rajan, Mel, and Antonio are really effective ambassadors in building those networks."

Opinion: Independent energy companies raring to go in Africa in 2023 with sustainable energy development

JOHANNESBURG

IN late 2019, Africa Oil Corp. President and CEO Keith Hill told Petroleum Economist that, given Africa's unproven oil and gas basins, the continent was probably "the greatest frontier," with outstanding opportunities for exploration, production, and development companies, including independents. Three years later, Hill remains bullish about Africa, and Canada-headquartered Africa Oil Corp. is driving oil and gas exploration here. The company is part of a growing trend we're seeing: independent oil and gas companies that recognize the tremendous promise of our underexplored continent and are finding ways to thrive here – and make a positive impact.

I'm extremely optimistic about independents like Africa Oil Corp and BW Energy, which are building on their successful track records in exploration and production, and Perenco, which is building Africa's natural gas industry.

I'm encouraged by the efforts of Trident Energy, which is finding ways to bolster production in mature fields, and by Eco Atlantic, which has been convincing investors not to turn their backs on our continent. Companies like these are exactly what Africa needs.

They're bringing private capital, experience, and know-how to the continent. They are accelerating resource monetization and maximization for the good of Africa. And, honestly, I can't wait to see what they do in 2023.

Putting natural gas to work for Africa

As David Christianson so eloquently put it in a recent blog for Trade Law Centre, a South Africa-based think tank, "Africa's gas future is floating offshore." Floating liquefied natural gas (FLNG) units are an ideal way to capitalize on Africa's abundant natural gas resources.

They can be deployed rapidly and more affordably than onshore LNG trains, creating a practical pathway to gas monetization. London-headquartered independent, Perenco, which has

operated in Cameroon for nearly 30 years, is capitalizing on these opportunities.

Not only did Perenco establish an FLNG plant in Cameroon, but it also made history there. The Hilli Episeyo FLNG, which began commercial operations in March 2018, is the world's second-ever FLNG plant to enter operation and the first in the world to operate from a converted LNG tanker.

The plant, moored off the coast of Kribi, is the property of Norwegian Golar. Not only does the project have global significance, but it also involves local entities. Perenco partnered with Cameroon's Société Nationale des Hydrocarbures (National Hydrocarbons Company) to launch the project.

The Hilli Episeyo is designed to produce 2.4 million metric tonnes per annum (2.65 million tons per year) of LNG and has 125,000 m³ of storage capacity. Natural gas for the plant is sourced from Perenco's Sanaga and Ebome gas fields.

What's more, Perenco is growing its upstream activity on the continent. Earlier this year, it signed a deal with oil and gas company New Age Ltd. to buy its stake and take over the operatorship of the Etinde gas field, which is in shallow water in the Rio del Rey Basin offshore Cameroon.

In July, Perenco acquired Anglo-Swiss multinational Glencore's entities in North Africa. The acquisition includes PetroChad Mangara, which operates the Mangara, Badila, and Krim oilfields in Chad's Doba Basin.

And in November, the company announced it had discovered oil in the Tchibeli North East pre-salt Vandji exploration prospect offshore Congo, describing it as a potential "play opener."

Each of these activities and successes represents a potential for greater energy security, economic growth, and based on Perenco's track record, more good jobs for Africans.

Perenco is a strong example of an independent company that has successfully developed strategies for Africa's unique challenges, needs, and opportunities. And it's not alone.

Breathing new life into maturing fields

Look at British independent Trident Energy, which is introducing a new era of operational efficiency and production improvements in Equatorial Guinea.

Trident's business strategy calls for acquiring mid-life-producing assets around the globe, particularly oil and gas fields lacking attention and investment, re-developing them, increasing production, and unlocking reserves. This approach is tremendously valuable in Africa, where we're seeing production declines in legacy assets throughout the continent.

In Equatorial Guinea, Trident is the operator of Block G, which includes the producing Ceiba and Okume Complex fields – made up of six oil fields in the Gulf of Guinea, in shallow and deep water in the Rio Muni basin – with a 40.375% working interest. The company also holds a 40% stake in Block S, W & EG-21.

In May of this year, the Ministry of Mines and Hydrocarbons of Equatorial Guinea and Trident's joint venture partners for Block G, Kosmos Energy, Panoro Energy, and GEPetrol, agreed to extend the Production Sharing Contract (PSC) for the block through 2040, giving Trident more time to unlock the block's full potential.

Trident has earned the respect of both the government and the companies it works with. Trident credits those strong working relationships with the company's commitment to be an active, visible member of the communities where it operates.

Foreign project leaders and their families relocate in-country, as the company fulfills its role as a major contributor to the local economy and community. Most importantly, building local capacity and improving local content has been a key strategy for the company's leadership.

Trident is also known for offering local residents high-quality jobs and respectful treatment, creating empowering skill development, healthcare, and education programs in host communities,

and implementing best practices to protect the environment.

Trident Energy's upgrades at Okume Field, which have been underway this year, call for converting 15 gas lift wells to electrical submersible pumps (ESPs), which are more affordable to operate and maintain.

To prepare for the conversion, the company has been working on a \$57 million upgrade at Okume's central processing facilities. Trident Energy's team in Equatorial Guinea has managed every aspect of the project including supply chain, logistics, and coordination.

Approximately 55% of the services were provided by local contractors. 32% of services were provided by regional contractors, and only 13% were provided by international contractors.

Projects that boost production in declining assets, like the Okume upgrades, are extremely important for both Equatorial Guinea and the continent at large. We hope more companies follow Trident's lead.

Setting the stage for success

The African Energy Chamber also has been impressed with Norwegian independent BW Energy, which has been very strategic in its approach to gas exploration and production in Namibia.

BW, which also has a strong presence in Gabon, targets proven offshore oil and gas reservoirs and minimizes risk with phased developments. By operating in sites with existing production facilities, the company reduces time to first oil and keeps cash flow in check, the company website explains.

In 2017, the company acquired a 56% stake in the Kudu gas field in the northern Orange sub-basin, approximately 130 km (80.78 m) off the southwest coast of Namibia. Several years later, BW increased its interest in the gas project to 95%.

The Kudu field is believed to hold at least 1.3 trillion ft³ of gas, but the site has remained undeveloped since Chevron/Texaco first discovered gas there in 1974. The field has had a long string of operators, but as Pan-African research agency,

Hawilti put it, factors ranging from the inability to agree on a gas price to delays in getting governmental support projects have kept the project in limbo.

The site's isolated location, and lack of infrastructure to transport gas, have not helped matters.

But, with BW in the driver's seat, I believe that chapter is now closed. As announced during African Energy Week in Cape Town, BW is pursuing a revised development plan for Kudu that includes using a repurposed semisubmersible drilling rig as a floating production unit (FPU), which will allow it to move gas onshore for domestic energy generation.

BW purchased the rig it needs for this effort earlier this year

BW's efforts could have far-reaching effects on day-to-day life in Namibia. Currently, the country relies on electricity imports to meet its domestic needs.

BW's work at Kudu will help provide the gas Namibia means to reliably deliver electricity to its people, drive industrial growth, create jobs, and position Namibia as a regional energy hub.

Overcoming hurdles, modeling determination

Another independent company modeling what can be achieved in Africa is Toronto-headquartered Eco Atlantic. It has been overcoming the challenges of raising capital in an era when companies are being pressured not to begin new oil and gas projects on our continent.

In April, Eco Atlantic raised approximately \$25.5 million to cover drilling expenses on the Gazania-1 well, on Block 2B offshore South Africa, although the company announced that its evaluation well did not show evidence of commercial hydrocarbons.

That's not stopping the company from moving forward in Africa. Along with its partners, Africa Energy Corp, Panoro 2B Limited (a subsidiary of Panoro Energy ASA), and Crown Energy AB, Eco Atlantic is planning additional exploration drilling, including a two-well campaign on Block 3B/4B offshore South Africa, set to begin

in 2023, and at least one well on the Orinduik Block offshore Guyana.

"While it is naturally disappointing not having made a commercial discovery, the Gazania-1 well was only the first of four wells we have planned for the next 18-24 months across our wider portfolio," Eco Atlantic co-founder and CEO Gil Holzman said.

Tenacity is a required trait for all companies in this industry. Eco Atlantic's ongoing commitment to exploring South Africa's offshore basins is commendable.

As recently as Dec. 19, the company announced its subsidiary, Azinam Limited, had acquired another 6.25% participating interest in Block 3B/4B offshore South Africa. Eco Atlantic also received regulatory approval for the acquisition.

Now Eco Atlantic will hold an increased participating interest of 26.25% in Block 3B/4B, with Africa Oil Corp., the block's operator, and Cape Town-based upstream company, Ricocure.

Big finds, big ambitions

As for Africa Oil Corp., one of its strengths is the respect it has earned in the sector and among government leaders. The company has been involved in such major finds as the 2022 Venus light oil discovery made with Total Energies offshore Namibia (through subsidiary Impact Oil & Gas Limited).

Since then, the company has kept its focus on continued exploration operations. It has producing and development assets in deep-water offshore Nigeria, development assets in Kenya, and a portfolio of exploration assets in Guyana, Kenya, Namibia, Nigeria, South Africa, and the Senegal Guinea Bissau Joint Development Zone (AGC).

The companies' successes in East Africa are particularly exciting. Exploration in Kenya within the last decade has opened two new basins that extend into southern Somalia. Keith recently told Energy, Oil & Gas magazine that the basins cover an area the size of the North Sea.

And in Puntland, the company is confident that it found an oilfield through drilling on the Shabeel well.

Zimbabwe and Zambia join hands to end sub-Saharan Africa's energy woes



It is expected to generate revenue of over US\$750 million annually, which will consequently enhance the economies of Zimbabwe and Zambia.

What is also noteworthy is that the project would be completed without any foreign aid.

Zimbabwe & Zambia's Self-reliance

While a consortium led by China's Power Construction Corporation and US firm General Electric won a bid to build the hydropower station in 2019, Zambia and Zimbabwe recently turned to the African Development Bank (AfDB) to help revamp plans for the joint development of the 2,400MW Batoka Hydropower Scheme.

Following the worldwide protectionism caused by the COVID-19 epidemic, Africa has begun to recognise the importance of self-sufficiency. Furthermore, the debt crisis that wreaked havoc on Africa in the past as a result of its over-reliance on predatory nations such as China and America has only helped to incentivize African countries to begin reducing their dependency on these nations.

Electricity helps individuals get out of poverty while also improving their health and standard of living. It is a multidimensional task to provide inexpensive power to the Sub-Saharan populace.

The region needs a large increase in renewable energy project investments. Sub-Saharan Africa has numerous power areas where participating countries trade electricity to improve overall system reliability.

However, trade remains restricted, in part, due to a lack of interconnectivity. Long-distance trade across electricity zones is especially challenging. As a result, the recent project between Zambia and Zimbabwe occupies a significant position and may provide the much-needed momentum that the region requires.

shops, private offices, and other auxiliary infrastructure.

The megaproject, which will employ over 4,000 people directly and 6,000 indirectly, is a showpiece project in the southern African region. Last month, President Mnangagwa met his Zambian counterpart Hakainde Hichilema and discussed steps that will be undertaken to kick start the project.

In 2018, Zimbabwe and Zambia agreed to build the hydroelectric scheme where the Zambezi River crosses their borders. The project is expected to provide about a third of the two nations' power needs.

ricans will still lack access to electricity in 2030. To achieve the target, Africa will have to expand the provision of electricity faster

Fortunately, many nations in the region comprehend this reality and have started to work towards solving the crisis, once and for all.

Batoka hydropower project

The proposed US\$4.5 billion Batoka Gorge Hydroelectric Power Station on the Zambezi River across the border between Zambia and Zimbabwe will alter Matabeleland North by constructing townships with utilities such as banks,

one-quarter.

Progress has been painfully slow. Since 2013 the number of Africans without electricity has fallen from 610m to 595m. Kenya, Rwanda and Ethiopia have performed particularly well. In 2013 roughly a quarter of Kenyans had access to electricity; today three-quarters do.

But development is still too slow, if the continent is to reach the UN's sustainable-development goal of access to "affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all" by 2030. On current plans, the IEA reckons, 530m Af-

secondary schools in sub-Saharan Africa do not have power; many clinics and hospitals in the region also lack access to reliable electricity.

Poverty is part of the problem. More than 40% of sub-Saharan Africans live on less than \$2 a day. The IEA report notes that paying for the electricity needed to power a few basic appliances would eat up a tenth of earnings for poorer households. Rural areas are hit particularly hard. Whereas nearly three-quarters of households in cities have access to electricity, in rural places the figure is closer to

By Bishnu Rathi

ELECTRICITY is the lifeblood of any economy. Gross Domestic Product per capita is generally three to five times greater in North Africa where less than 2% of the population is without reliable power. In sub-Saharan Africa, the problem is far more acute.

North Africa enjoys near-universal access to electricity, yet more than half of the sub-Saharan population—600m people—live in the dark. This can hinder the provision of basic services. Half of

Catholic priest's value addition project and fortunes for Sierra Leone farmers

FREETOWN, Sierra Leone

FR. Michael Baimba Conteh believes that the best way to make the message of the Gospel a reality among the people is by meeting their biggest need. And for the people served by the Catholic Diocese of Makeni in northern Sierra Leone, the biggest challenge is getting out of poverty.

Most households in the northern parts of Sierra Leone rely on subsistence farming, and ginger is the most cultivated crop among these deprived farmers who rely on brokers to sell their produce.

Fr. Conteh, a young Priest of the Diocese of Makeni, knows this challenge too well, having seen his parents struggle to make ends meet despite cultivating the valuable spice. He grew up in a rural community where he says 60 percent of farmers are cultivating ginger and cassava with no ready market.

A chunk of harvested ginger and cassava ends up rotting or is auctioned, leaving the farmers frustrated, he tells ACI Africa.

Fr. Conteh says that his desire as he grew up to become a Priest was to change the fortunes of poor farmers in northern Sierra Leone, by putting agribusiness at the core of his pastoral work.

After a journey of blood, sweat, and tears, Fr. Conteh has built GreenEnv Agribusiness, a mammoth state-of-the-art processing firm that is adding value



Fr. Michael Baimba Conteh, the founder of GreenEnv Agribusiness Company in Sierra Leone's Diocese of Makeni. Credit: Fr. Michael Baimba Conteh

to ginger that he buys in deals that farmers have found juicier.

The 33-year-old Priest has also planted an orchard on an 80-acre piece of land that has various kinds of fruit trees and a thriving bee-keeping venture. There is also growing animal husbandry that he recently started with 25 goats,

some sheep, and chicken. He plans to expand the orchard to a 200-acre farm in a bid to enlighten locals in northern Sierra Leone on the beauty of value addition and agribusiness.

"As a Diocesan Priest serving the people of God where I grew up, my roots challenge me to change

the situation of poor farmers. I am from the rural parts of Sierra Leone where we have lots of vulnerable, poverty-stricken women and youth who are struggling to make ends meet despite working very hard on their farms," Fr. Conteh says in the Thursday, January 5 interview with ACI Africa.

He adds, "Growing up in this poverty-stricken community, I saw the struggles that my parents went through in an attempt to meet our needs. Then as I journeyed to become a Priest, I realized that the best way to liberate them was through agriculture."

"I have realized that many

Priests are leveraging education to preach the good news. They are leveraging charity work to evangelize. I realized that the best way to evangelize my community and to make the Gospel a reality among the people is through agriculture, which the people are very passionate about. There was a need to start with something they are familiar with. That is ginger farming," he says.

Fr. Conteh notes that the Church in Africa can no longer rely entirely on donor funding, underscoring the need for Church leaders to be creative in sustaining their evangelization ministry.

"We are in the period of self-reliance and we are experiencing donor fatigue. Those who have been sending us funds are no longer doing so with consistency because they too are affected by the unpredictable economic patterns owing to things such as the COVID-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine," he says.

At GreenEnv Agribusiness, Fr. Conteh who is the CEO of the company aims to create an eco-friendly initiative that improves the ecosystem, one that creates decent jobs for rural women and youths, and one that creates food sustainability through an orchard-driven initiative.

The company has cultivated 80 acres of ginger and 45 acres of cassava and planted thousands of fruit trees including coconuts, avocado, pear, tamarind, orange, grapefruits, lime, cashew, mango, and bitter kola trees.

This way, Fr. Conteh's initiative is creating a viable green orchard environment that has also started to support beekeeping initiatives.

The initiative is also aimed at creating awareness of the need to protect the environment and stop rampant deforestation in northern Sierra Leone.

Zanzibar: A door into another world

By Lyse Comins

Waking up on the first glorious blue-sky day in balmy Zanzibar was like dying and rising in paradise.

A panoramic view of the warm Indian Ocean rushed into focus as we meandered out of the brand-new five-star Emerald Zanzibar Resort & Spa ensuite hotel rooms for the start of an idyllic week of adventure and relaxation.

Zanzibar, an archipelago off the coast of the Tanzanian mainland, is truly an African paradise, with miles of untouched beaches stretching as far as the eye can see, against a backdrop of the glistening emerald ocean.

Just a 3.5-hour charter flight from Johannesburg and an easy transfer from the new Abeid Amani Karume International Airport, previously known as Kisauni Airport and Zanzibar International, the new Italian-owned five-star deluxe all-inclusive resort opened in serene elegance with a white gala dinner on the beach in early December.

The 250-bed hotel overlooking the picturesque Muyuni Beach in Matemwe, a member of the Leading Hotels of the World, has been built in an ideal location, facing Mnemba Island and close to others where boats ferry tourists daily to snorkel and swim with dolphins in the translucent, warm waters. Zanzibar consists of many small islands and two large ones, Unguja (Zanzibar) where the capital, Zanzibar City in which the world heritage site Stone Town is located, and Pemba.

Our tour group had been invited to the official launch of the hotel by Africastay, which is based in South Africa, and runs a direct charter flight to Zanzibar from OR Tambo International Airport in Johannesburg several times a week.



Zanzibar: An archipelago ideal for tourists looking for more than Mauritius-lite.

We took a shuttle to explore Stone Town, famed for being the birthplace of rock band Queen's Freddy Mercury, and notorious for its historical buildings dating back to the 19th-century Arab-slave trade.

En route to Stone Town, the Dega Tours shuttle bus (which has top quality Wi-Fi, so you can send photos home) stopped for a tour of the government-owned Spice Garden that took us into the forest to explore the sights and aromas of the island's spice trade – cinnamon, cloves, lemongrass, black pepper and nutmeg. Here, our guide explained how nutmeg is used as an aphrodisiac by local people and the importance of cloves as one of the biggest generators of the island's export income from spices.

Zanzibar's earliest trades were slaves and spices, the latter still forming an important sub-sector of the country's

agricultural sector that comprises 27% of GDP and contributes to tourism through spice tours.

Bottles of sweet-smelling perfumes and an array of spices from the garden were traded at the end of the tour.

"Butterfly", a local celebrity in the Spice Garden, had earlier demonstrated his physical prowess as he scaled up the heights of a coconut tree, before guests were served sweet coconut water, "coca-cola" in a holed-out coconut with the most tender and juicy flesh several in our group said they had had ever tasted.

Next stop, Stone Town. And naturally we all wanted to head downtown to the former home of Freddy Mercury, to which our tour guide, Jay, nimbly navigated the narrow alleyways of the spotless old town.

Winding in the scorching heat, along litter-free streets, regularly interrupted

by the polite, albeit rushing-at-us "beep-beep" of passing motorcycles, more often than not with at least one pillion rider, one could not help reflecting on the history of this little island town. Motorcycles are the most common mode of private transport on the island, and a few tourists could also be seen catching a ride.

Stone Town's name originates from the 19th-century ornate stone houses Arab merchants built here with slaves when it served as a centre for the trade of some 600 000 slaves between 1830 and 1863, when the British and Omani sultans finally agreed to abolish slavery on the island.

Still standing in the town is the Old Slave Trade Market, now a tourist attraction, that none in our group were keen to explore, given the despicable thought of this inhumane aspect of world history.

Rather, we enjoyed exploring the town, its shops and the famous Zanzibar doors, which have been copied globally and provide every amateur photographer with a reason to snap like a pro.

Interestingly, a local told me the brass studs on the giant Zanzibar doors originated in India, where they were used as a defence against war elephants that would bash down doors in Punjabi tribal wars in that country. But the Arabs and traders of old, now long gone, have left behind only their rich architecture and Islamic heritage with mosques dotting the landscape.

Just one Catholic church can be found in the centre of town, outside which traders ply their wares – anything from sarongs and sandals to trinkets and tanzanite. But, be warned, here it is almost mandatory to haggle.

"Are you from Africa or America?" one hijab-clad young shop owner politely inquired as she placed the sarong I was buying on the counter.

"I am from South Africa," I declared cheerfully.

"Okay, because if you are from America there is one price, US dollars, but if you are from Africa, there is another price in shillings," she said.

I hastily pulled out 150 000 Tanzanian shillings to pay for the garment, which I later learned was still a relatively high price, but I still walked out a happy buyer.

It took the best part of the day, without stopping for lunch, to explore Stone Town and \$50 was sufficient spending money.

Weary, we headed back to our hotel, where we were welcomed once again with the warm hospitality and importantly, ice-cold sundowners, as we watched the sun slip away, and the night life of the hotel awakened.

A delectable dinner served in the Aqua restaurant followed by dancing in the rooftop bar preceded the close of another glorious day in this African paradise.

Comprehensive primary healthcare is crucial in early NCDs detection

By Correspondent James Kandoyo

APPROACH to improve quality of primary healthcare through enhanced capacity of detecting early non-communicable disease (NCDs) is very important to manage preventive, curative and rehabilitative services, experts have suggested.

Dr Maguha Stephano, Ocean Road Cancer Institute (ORCI) cancer screening and public advocacy manager said recently in an interview that NCD interventions through primary healthcare approach by strengthening early detection and timely treatment is very important. The expert said evidence shows that intervention approaches are excellent economic investments because, if provided early to patients, they can reduce the need for more expensive treatment.

According to her, it is now estimated that by spending \$ 14 dollars (30,000/-) in introducing human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine to a single girl, the government saves 5.5m/- that would be used to treat the same person (if not vaccinated) from cervical cancer.

"It is important to improve health care services offered in health centres to diagnose the diseases because they are - as close as feasible to people's everyday environment," she said, noting that primary health care ensures people must receive quality comprehensive care - ranging from promotion and prevention to treatment, rehabilitation and palliative care.

Once a health facility diagnoses a patient with a

disease, the management can give a referral to the right facility to solve the problem.

The manager insisted that capacity building for human resources in primary and health facilities development apart from doctors will enhance the capacity of nurses and other health staff to deliver good services.

According to her, most of the patients come to hospital at a late stage and therefore, end up in palliative care adding that they could get curative services if diagnosed early.

She explained that prevention will not only save lives, but also a huge boost for the economic development of the country countries.

"NCDs are lifelong disease therefore investing in prevention and diagnosis is the only solution to end the growing problem," she said, adding that many NCDs can be prevented by reducing common risk factors such as tobacco use, harmful alcohol use, physical inactivity and eating unhealthy diets.

She said the institute has extended its diagnosis services in zonal hospitals and up to regional hospitals to increase diagnosis.

Prof Francis Furia, a lecturer at Muhimbili University of Health and Allied Science (MUHAS) also said capacity building for health facilities to diagnose the NCDs at early stage is very important to reduce huge expenditure patients used to incur if diagnosed at late stage.

"While doing that, we have opted to improve primary health care training to the staff on NCD, to enable them to provide diagnose services," he said.

The true about the cost of NCDs in terms of lives and livelihoods lost is coupled with a staggering economic impact, both as a result of healthcare expenditure as well as the negative impact on human capital and productivity

For instance, the rapid rise in NCD is expected to impede poverty reduction initiatives in low-income countries including Tanzania because household expenditure on health care will increase.

According to him, the impact of the diseases ranged from individuals and national economies and significantly disrupted the existing health systems which overburdened other health problems including infectious disease.

Dr John Materu, medical officer in-charge at Kibosho council designated hospital, in Kilimanjaro region recommended to the government to improve health systems to have comprehensive based services at a lower level to detect the disease as one of the interventions.

"The government should systematically improve comprehensive based primary healthcare is crucial to reduce the number of referrals to major health facilities," he said.

If all diagnosis services are extended to all primary based health facilities in the country, more people will be diagnosed and therefore get treatment on time.

In addition, primary health care can act as a strategic entry point for multisectoral initiatives for addressing issues related to health.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) has reaffirmed its commitment



to collaborate with the Ministry of health in the fight against the diseases.

WHO country representative, Dr Zabron Yoti, said NCDs are severe and not reported as a result are underestimated, hence goes back under-resourced.

The experience has shown that most killers are sweet therefore informed decisions will help the community to make choices about what they should eat and drink.

"WHO's reaffirms the commitment to continue collaborating with the ministry of health's initiative of fighting against the NCD in the country," he said.

Dr Yoti said out of all NCDs diseases, cardiovascular was leading, adding that cancer accounted for 9.3 per cent while chronic respiratory diseases accounted for 1.9 per cent.

According to him, more investment in NCDs is needed to reduce the impact of the diseases such as community awareness campaigns so that they can make right

decisions. Tanzania has so far signed, agreed and is committed to adhering to internationally set targets such as sustainable development target number 3, 4 and the Global Action Plan to prevent and control of NCD, 2013-2030.

These are all geared towards reducing the rising burden of NCD through increasing financial investment, equitable resources allocations, development and enforcement of policies and guidelines that promote and advocate for measures to control for NCD risk factors and ensure equitable distribution and provisions of adequate care and treatment.

Valeria Millinga, the acting programme manager for NCDs Prevention and Control at the Ministry for Health said that Tanzania has made commendable progress in the fight against NCD including developing a National NCD control and prevention program, revising National NCD strategies and other related policies.

Also, remarkable

achievements have been attained in enhancing the allocation of resources to address stagnating NCD services.

"The target of the government is to see comprehensive healthcare delivered in health facilities including diagnosing, prevention and treatment of all diseases.

According to WHO, NCDs, including heart disease, stroke, cancer, diabetes and chronic lung disease, are collectively responsible for 74 per cent of all deaths worldwide.

More than three-quarters of all NCD deaths, and 86 per cent of the 17 million people who died prematurely, or before reaching 70 years of age, occur in low- and middle-income countries.

NCDs share four major risk factors: tobacco use, physical inactivity, the harmful use of alcohol and unhealthy diets.

The epidemic of NCDs poses devastating health consequences for individuals, families and communities, and threatens to overwhelm

health systems. The socioeconomic costs associated with NCDs make the prevention and control of these diseases a major development imperative for the 21st century.

NCDs drain the global economy, pose a powerful threat to human capital, and perpetuate poverty in households and communities.

The cost of NCDs in terms of lives and livelihoods lost is coupled with a staggering economic impact, both as a result of healthcare expenditure as well as the negative impact on human capital and productivity.

In total the five leading NCDs - cardiovascular diseases, chronic respiratory disease, cancer, diabetes and mental health conditions - have been estimated to cost US\$ 47 trillion between 2010-2030, an average of more than US\$ 2 trillion per year.

Three-quarters of these deaths, and 85 percent of NCD 'premature' deaths between the ages of 30 and 70, occur in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs).

Up to 80 percent of the diseases can be prevented or delayed into old age through actions that are affordable for every country.

A 2022 Lancet Health policy paper shows that all countries - including Lower Middle Income Countries (LMICs) - can achieve or nearly achieve the SDG target 3 and 4 by implementing a package of interventions that are aligned with the WHO Best Buys.

This would require, on average, an additional US\$18 billion annually over 2023-30. The investment could save 39 million lives and generate an average net economic benefit of \$2.7 trillion.... a 19:1 return on investment.

Climate change leaving African elephants desperate for water

By Rachael Gross

ELEPHANTS are not just important for their ecological, cultural and economic value. They are also a keystone species - that is, they help hold ecosystems together. This means their decline has far-reaching consequences.

Many African ecosystems pivot around the lives of elephants. Elephant feeding habits, such as pushing over trees and peeling off bark, can turn woody vegetation into grasslands. This makes room for smaller species to move in. Their digging for water in dry riverbeds creates water holes other animals can use. And as they migrate, elephants help spread seeds in their dung.

Under climate change, long, intense droughts across southern and eastern Africa are escalating. Some have lasted more than 20 years.

The conditions have left many elephants desperate for water. Research as far back as 2003 shows elephants in Zimbabwe were dying during drought. And in 2016, when a drying El Nino weather pattern hit southern Africa, there were reports of more elephant deaths, prompting a local conservation group to drill bore holes to provide relief.

Drought can also reduce the availability of food, causing elephants to starve. It can also mean young elephants die or don't develop properly, because their parched mothers produce less milk.



A unique physiology
So, why do elephants struggle in drought and heat?

When elephants experience high internal temperatures, it can disrupt the function of cells, tissues and organs such as the liver and cause them to become sick and die.

Humans and other animals also suffer heat stress. But elephants are particularly vulnerable because they can't sweat it off.

The graphic below shows how heat accumulates and dissipates in elephants. Heat accumulates through an elephants' natural metabolism and physical activity, as well as being absorbed from

the environment.

But it does not always effectively dissipate. Elephants' thick skin slows heat loss - and their lack of sweat glands exacerbates this.

What's more, elephants are the largest of all land mammals, weighing up to eight tonnes. They also have a large body volume - which generates heat - but a relatively small surface area (their skin) from which to lose this heat.

Water is essential for elephants to cope with heat. They swim and spray their skin with mud and water; the subsequent evaporation mimicks sweating

and cools them down.

And elephants cool themselves internally by drinking several hundred litres of water a day.

Let elephants roam free

Creating artificial water sources is a common management intervention when elephants need water. This includes the use of pipes, bores and pumps.

But this measure can be problematic. Sometimes, the water is sourced from supplies needed by local people. And large numbers of elephants congregating around water can permanently damage the local environment and reduce food

availability for other animals.

Historically, elephants migrated to water during drought. But the introduction of fenced areas in the landscape has disrupted this movement.

Fences were constructed to mark out colonial land ownership, separate people from large animals and deter poachers.

But as climate change worsens in Africa, elephants and other wildlife must be able to move freely between connected habitats.

Wildlife corridors may provide an answer. These are protected channels of vegetation that enable animals to move between

fragmented patches of habitat. Wildlife corridors work well for mega fauna in India and the United States and would likely increase mobility for much of Africa's wildlife.

Introducing more wildlife corridors, especially in southern and eastern Africa, would require removing fences. This change would have repercussions.

Nearby communities - which have not coexisted with elephants since colonisation - would have to adjust to the change. The removal of fences may also lead to an increase in poaching. And letting elephants roam the landscape may make them less accessible to tourists, which could reduce tourism revenue.

But communities have coexisted with elephants in the past. And community-based projects have been shown to reduce conflict between humans and wildlife. In some cases, they've also led to lower poaching rates and increased quality of life for communities.

Community management projects, such as in Northern Kgalagadi in Botswana, show how local expertise - drawn from millennia of experience and knowledge - can guide wildlife management. Research has shown successful outcomes - both socially and ecologically - in places where elephants share landscapes with people.

Protecting a keystone species

Ensuring African elephants survive drought will increasingly require new conservation strategies, including community-based management. Without this, already dwindling elephant populations will continue to decline.

This would be bad news for the health and stability of natural ecosystems in Africa - and a blow to Africa's people.



Regenerative agriculture shift paradigms for coffee cultivation in the Philippines

By Caleb Quinley

FOR Arnold Cagas Abear, coffee is life.

The 42-year-old Filipino farmer comes from generations of smallholders who have tended their fields through hard, manual labor. With his calloused hands, Abear has earned a living for his family over the years.

"In Filipino culture, family is everything," he says from his farm in Bukidnon, a province in northern Mindanao, Philippines. With three young sons and a daughter, his priority is to give them a good life. "This is why I do this."

Arnold Cagas Abear has de-

voted his life to farming. Living in Mindanao with his family, his coffee plantation has brought him not only economic growth, but also a new sense of meaning.

But tilling the land has never been easy. Before starting cultivating coffee, Abear struggled to support his family. Even after he turned to coffee farming, life remained a challenge. Many coffee farmers in the Philippines have inadequate knowledge and technology. Their production suffers from the deterioration of the environment, especially with the continuous depletion of soil nutrients after every harvest. They are hampered by high production costs, limited access to capital, and con-

straints on government support. Navigating the coffee landscape can be a daunting journey for Filipino farmers.

In 2010, Nestlé launched the Nescafé Plan program to help thousands of small-scale coffee farmers in addressing challenges concerning their yields, income, and quality of life. In 2018, Nestlé started collaborating with the German development organization Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), along with Philippine government agencies and other local groups, to implement Project Coffee+. This aims to educate farmers in regenerative agriculture and help expand their operations by teaching them how

to maintain their crops with new techniques. The project participants' average yields and incomes increased by some 64 percent and 45 percent respectively in 2021.

Image of regenerative agriculture methods

There are 4 main methods in regenerative agriculture: cover cropping, intercropping, composting, and agroforestry.

"Part of the plan is to teach our coffee farmers best agricultural farming practices," says Donnel Jun M. Tiedra, an agronomist and public affairs executive who is a driver of the project. "Regenerative agriculture is a system that aims to help farmers and nature

to flourish together."

Farmers are taught intercropping, a practice that helps improve soil biodiversity by growing vegetables alongside their coffee plants. They also learn agroforestry, the integration of trees with crops that helps protect the soil from erosion; cover cropping, a practice that makes use of ground-crawling crops which hold the topsoil together to help with soil nutrition; and composting.

After adopting these practices, Abear is finally finding success through coffee farming. But the crop has a long and complicated history.

Ruth P. Novales, the National Agriculture and Fisheries Council's coffee focal person, says that over the centuries, coffee has become deeply embedded in Philippine culture.

"For farmers, it's a source of hope, for consumers coffee is life," Novales says. "It's consumed all the time, from early morning to late at night. When people drink locally grown and manufactured coffee, they are directly helping a Filipino coffee farmer."

"For farmers, it's a source of hope, for consumers coffee is life," says Ruth Novales, a long-time expert and proponent of Filipino coffee. Over centuries, the plant has become a crucial part of Philippine culture.

Coffee farming didn't take off in the Philippines until the early 1800s. Within a few decades, Filipino coffee was considered a top competitor in the global market, alongside those from Africa and Brazil.

But in 1889, the Philippine industry declined after the appearance of coffee rust, a fungal disease that destroys the coffee plant. The infestation quickly spread across the country and impacted huge swathes of production areas.

Despite the trade coming close to implosion, it wasn't the end for Filipino coffee.

"In the Philippines, coffee is a heritage crop," Novales says. "It has come down through families for years and years, and it's still here."

Image of coffee beans being roasted

Coffee roasting is used to enhance the taste of coffee beans. Depending on the coffee type, the beans are heated to different temperatures for different lengths of time, creating a range of flavor palates, including chocolate or fruit.

PHOTOGRAPH BY KIM PATRICK AGUIRRE

The Philippines sits on the world's 'coffee belt,' an area where climate conditions are conducive to the growth and quality of the plant. Yet much of the new rise of Filipino coffee is a direct result of education between the public and farmers themselves. Tiedra says Nestlé will continue to work with the country's coffee farmers in building prosperous lives for themselves beyond subsistence levels, in the face of major hurdles.

Abear is getting older, and he worries about the future of his farm. It's a concern shared by the majority of the country's farmers who are aging. The reality is their children are often not interested in farming. According to data from the Philippine Journal of Science, natural coffee populations are also threatened by deforestation and land-use changes in the Philippines.

But the regenerative agriculture project is hoping to curb these concerns. As the country continues to ramp up its coffee industry, similar programs are playing a role in finding a new sustainable path. And the government, along with other local organizations, is working overtime to market agriculture to younger generations.

Ultimately, Filipino farmers are a resilient group. It will take much more to stop them from producing some of the world's best coffee. For Abear, coffee is not just a trendy drink or a cultural artifact - it's his family's future.

"We are expanding and building a training center to help other coffee lovers," he says. "We can now provide for our children's daily needs and send our children to school."

"In Filipino culture, family is everything," Arnold Cagas Abear says from his farm in Bukidnon, northern Mindanao, Philippines. "This is why I do this."

Bolt appreciates decision by LATRA on new tariff guides

By Guardian Reporter

Ride-hailing company Bolt has said it is appreciating the Land Transport Regulatory Authority (LATRA) for working tirelessly to addressing concerns raised by players in the industry.

This comes after LATRA issued a gazette notice number 7284, dated 30th December, 2022 on the new tariff guidelines for the ride-hailing industry.

Bolt Regional Manager, Eastern Africa, Kenneth Micah said in a statement issued yesterday that "we would like to appreciate LATRA and the relevant authorities that have worked tirelessly to ensure that the concerns raised by the industry stakeholders were addressed, to ensure a win-win situation for all stakeholders".

In light of LATRA's new regulations for the ride-hailing industry players, Bolt is going to make the necessary changes to its commission and passenger fare pricing structure as per the tariff guidelines in the coming days.

The statement said Bolt shall

continue to offer full scale operations in order to ensure that hundreds of thousands of users in Mainland Tanzania to continue accessing affordable, safe and convenient means of moving around the city.

"We are also committed to ensuring that the thousands of drivers driving on the Bolt platform in Tanzania will continue to access earning opportunities," the company said.

Bolt also said in a statement that is committed to further collaborate with LATRA and other relevant industry stakeholders, in order to ensure the growth of a free and favorable market for ride-hailing services in Tanzania.

LATRA and other key stakeholders in the industry have had a series of engagements, following the issuance of LATRA's Order No.01/2022, in March 2022 where LATRA sought to cap the commission at 15%.

Bolt therefore agreed to temporarily comply with the directive in order to demonstrate goodwill despite the negative impact the capping had on the business.

Analysts unveil factors to impact oil prices in 2023

SINGAPORE

At the beginning of 2023, several factors are at play in determining the short and medium-term trend in oil prices this year.

Supply and demand concerns, tightening monetary policy globally, expectations of a material slowdown in economic growth and possible recessions, and China's reopening with a Covid exit wave are all impacting crude oil prices.

During the first week of the year, oil prices tumbled by 9% in the first two trading days for the worst start to a year since 1991. The price of Brent Crude dipped to below year-ago levels for the first time in two years, possibly suggesting that "broader inflation has peaked and could fall rapidly in the coming months," Reuters columnist Jamie McGeever notes.

The annual change in the US benchmark, WTI Crude, has also turned negative several times over the past two months.

The base effects, that is, prices and the inflation rate compared to the same time last year, are falling and could signal deflation in energy commodities, which could intensify the drop in broader inflation to closer to the Fed's 2% target, according to McGeever.

Still, the Fed isn't abandoning its hawkish stance and determination to fight inflation which is "persistent" and at an "unacceptably high level," according to the minutes of the Federal Open Market Committee (FOMC) from the December meeting released this week.

"No participants anticipated that it would be appropriate to begin reducing the federal funds rate target in 2023. Participants generally observed that a restrictive policy stance would need to be maintained until the incoming data provided confidence that inflation was on a sustained downward path to 2 percent, which was likely to take some time," the Fed said.

"Participants concurred that the inflation data received for October and November showed welcome reductions in the monthly pace of price increases, but they stressed that it would take substantially more evidence of progress to be confident that inflation was on a sustained downward path," according to the FOMC minutes.

This week, Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis President James Bullard said that the prospects of a soft landing for the US economy have increased compared to the autumn of 2022, thanks to a strong and resilient labor market.

"The policy rate is not yet in a zone that may be considered sufficiently restrictive, but it is getting closer," Bullard said in a presentation on Thursday.

Nevertheless, concerns about a recession persist. The current weak oil demand in both the U.S. and China adds to the immediate-term bearish outlook on oil prices.

"Oil is trying to rally but demand concerns are keeping the gains small. The Saudis are slashing prices as the short-term crude demand outlook seems like it won't quite get a major boost from a robust China reopening," Ed Moya, Senior Market Analyst, The Americas, at OANDA, said on Thursday when oil prices inched higher after the massive selloff on Tuesday and Wednesday.

However, the weekly EIA report indicated that implied gasoline demand fell last week by the most since March 2020, and crude oil and distillate demand posted significant declines from a week ago, Moya noted.

ING strategists said on Thursday, "The oil market is looking better supplied in the near term and risks are likely skewed to the downside. However, our oil balance starts to show a tightening in the market from the second quarter through to the end of the year, which suggests that we should see stronger prices from 2Q23 onwards."

Foreigners record nearly 7bn/- outflows at DSE in Q4, 2022



Foreign investors last week sold shares worth 2.2bn/- or 85.73 percent of total selling value and bought shares worth 0.7bn/- FILE PHOTO

By Mnaku Mbani

Foreign investors recorded outflows amounting 6.8bn/- during the fourth quarter of last year, the highest and nearly half of net inflows recorded during the first three quarters of the year.

Dar es Salaam Stock Exchange (DSE) market reports show during the period, foreign investors sold shares valued 8bn/- or 56.51 percent of selling value, while they purchased shares valued 1.2bn/- or 6.56 percent of the value of buying activities.

During the fourth quarter of last year DSE recorded total turnover of 18.47bn, slight lower than 40.1bn/- recorded in the third quarter and higher than 17bn/- in fourth quarter of 2021.

Analyst says the market will experience foreign investor exit from the market, as many were targeting fixed incomes' investments in developed markets, including US where there has been interest rates hikes.

Imani Muhingo, head of research and financial analytics at Alpha Capital told The Guardian last week that foreign investors will be moving from small markets, such as Tanzania, due to projected economic recession my mid this year.

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

However, Muhingo believes that an ongoing improvement of financial literacy among Tanzanians has enabled smooth absorption of the gap caused by foreign investor exits.

He said local absorption capacity is currently high by both institutional and retail investors. The market report shows that during last week, foreign investors sold shares valued 2.2bn/- or 85.73 percent of total

selling value, and bought shares valued 0.7bn/- or 29.7 percent of total buying transactions.

According to the report, another outflows were recorded during the second quarter of last year where foreign investors sold shares valued 27.15bn/- or 67 percent of total selling value and they sold shares valued 25.02bn/- or 37.8 percent of total buying value.

But during the first and third quarter of last year, foreign investors recorded combined inflows of 12bn/-.

The report shows during the first quarter of last year foreign investors purchased shares valued 24.06bn/- against selling of 19.6bn/-, which translated into net inflows of 5bn/-.

In the third quarter of last year, reports shows foreign investors bought shares valued 15.5bn/- against selling of 8.6bn/-, which translated into net inflows of nearly 7bn/-.

Total market capitalization slightly improved to 15,684.55bn/- during the end of

fourth quarter of last year from 15,809.44bn/- recorded during the end of fourth quarter in 2021.

Domestic market capitalization closed last year at 10,341.22bn/- from 9,426.18bn/- recorded during the end of 2021.

All industrial indices closed the year up with Banking, Finance and Investment (BFI) jumping to 3,483.85 points at the end of last year from 2,393.12 points at the end of 2021.

However, DSE All Shares Index (DSEI) closed lower at 1,881.99 points on December 30, 2022 from 1,896.71 on December 31, 2021. Tanzania Shares Index (TSI) closed higher at 3,888.81 points on December 30 last year from 3,565.18 points recorded on December 31, 2021.

Brokers expect the equities market to stimulate in the current quarter, as many listed companies are expecting to announce their financial results for 2022, mainly commercial banks, which are top movers of the market.

Low production, exports growth push food prices up

By Guardian Reporter

Food prices are continuing to spiral in different part of the country, crowding consumer spending and create uncertain for poor families on what to have on table, in both urban and rural areas.

Data by the ministry of investment, industry and trade shows the wholesale prices of food commodities were higher in November last year, compared with November in 2021, with maize, the main staple, experiencing more than doubled price.

The survey in different markets shows the price of maize flour has hit 1,800/- per kilo from previously 1,000/- to 1,200/- while 20-kilogramme of raw maize has hit 22,000/- from 7,000/- respectively in rural areas.

The government, through National Food Reserve Agency (NFRA) is also currently distributing maize in different districts of Tanzania, to ease escalating prices, which are sold at 790/- per kilo, although consumers say is still high for rural populations with low incomes.

The ministry data further shows that the wholesale price of maize reached 108,090/- per 100 kilo in November last year, the highest in three years, from 49,683/- recorded in November 2021.

The price of rice has also experienced simi-



The wholesale price of maize reached 108,090/- per 100 kgs in November last year, the highest in three years. File Photo

lar trend as the report shows it reached 271,973/- per 100 kilo in November 2022, the historical highest, from 154,394/- recorded in November 2021.

According to the report, the price of beans increased to 279,561 per 100 kilo in November last year from 178,045 recorded in November 2021 while the price of sorghum jumped to 131,412/- from 105,371/- respectively.

The price of round potatoes increased to 89,266/- per 100 kilo

from 67,982/- respectively while the wholesale price of finger millet went up to 174,655/- in November last year from 163,777/- in 2021.

Bank of Tanzania (BoT) monthly economic review for December said food inflation (food and non-alcoholic beverages) continued to increase for sixth month in a row, reaching 9.5 percent in November 2022, up from 9.1 percent in the preceding month and 4.4 percent in the corresponding period a year before.

Much of the increase was observed in prices of soya, maize grains, sweet potatoes, round potatoes, rice and dried beans.

In general, BoT says, throughout 2021/22-crop season, prices of all major food crops increased, mainly owing to higher demand from neighbouring countries, as well as lower than projected food production in some areas of the country.

However, food supply situation remained satisfactory, with food stocks

held by the National Food Reserve Agency (NFRA) amounting to 147,401 tonnes at the end of November 2022, almost at the same levels reached over the past six months, according to BoT review.

The food stocks comprised of maize, paddy and sorghum.

During November 2022, NFRA purchased 458.4 tonnes of maize and 54 tonnes of sorghum, and sold 4,905.8 tonnes of maize to counsils, and grain traders and millers.

OPEC global demand forecast (mb/d)





Amanda Walter (Left standing) service customers at her ice cream business parlor at Masaki in Dar es Salaam Photo by Guardian Correspondent

How Amanda Walter transformed retrenchment into an opportunity

By Guardian Reporter

It is an open secret that retrenchment can happen to anyone and at any time, but what matters is how employees react to it.

There are those whose lives end up in a complete devastation after retrenchment and those who take up the pieces and soldier on.

For Amanda Walter, retrenchment gave her a new vigor to soldier on with her business idea, and she has effectively managed to turn the tables.

Being a learnt individual, Amanda was aware that she would not be employed forever.

That was precisely why she registered a women-owned food production company known as Farmer's Basket Ltd in the year 2018, when she was still an employee of a certain company.

Farmer's Basket Ltd deals with a variety of food items including and not limited to Ice Cream.

Actual ice cream production and trading by Farmer's Basket Ltd started in June 2022.

She got the idea to venture into the ice cream business in 2021 when she visited her sister for Christmas in Nigeria.

"While there, I saw how she made people happy with her ice creams. I then saw this as a great opportunity to do the same in Tanzania," narrates Amanda Walter.

She says being a firm believer in making people happy regardless of gender or age; she has effectively mastered what ice cream lovers have always known: a little bit of ice cream goes a long way in chasing the blues away.

"Having mastered the recipe little did I know that 2022 April, I would lose my job. I remember sitting at the boardroom table when I was told

that my position will no longer be valid in the business," she explains.

Like any other employee, Ms Amanda Walter says, the redundancy was the most heartbreaking news in her life at her age.

She pondered over her next destination and her life without an employed job.

But while she was busy thinking of what to do next, people surrounding her gave her the support she needed to realize her business dream.

"So funny enough, when I told all my close family and friends that I was no longer an employee, no one sulked. Instead, they were happy, saying that finally I would start living my dream. Each and every person in my life had a huge role to play to make my dream a reality," she narrates.

That was precisely how two months after the redundancy, Ms. Amanda Walter found herself doing her own business.

"Since then, I have been around big business entrepreneurs that have showed me the path, one in particular that showed me the light at the end of the tunnel," she explains.

Despite facing several challenges, including a lack of credit facilities to boost her capital, Ms. Amanda Walter has maintained the quality of her products to meet the needs of her clients.

"I can guarantee you that no one that has tasted our product has any bad/negative comment... As for the ice cream parlor, we do not compromise in quality," says Ms. Amanda Walter whose company's employees are women by 99 percent.

And having managed to effectively capture the ice cream market, Farmer's Basket Ltd is now contemplating to diversify into several other areas, including spice production and ice production among others.

"Our goal is to be the most

reliable Soft Serve Ice cream providers in Tanzania, Africa and the world. We are looking forward to expand across the globe. You never know with the support that we are getting from our lovely customers we might just be the next big Soft Serve Ice Cream Franchise in the world so help us God," says Ms. Amanda Walter.

She calls upon women who have been successful in their various careers to consider venturing into entrepreneurship before they retire.

"They must understand that there is life outside the employed official jobs and that a lot of people were making their living through such undertakings..." she says.

According to Ms. Amanda Walter, it is through self-employment that employed officials can live comfortably after retirement and that to operate such undertakings effectively, they must start the ventures being retiring.

Mercedes expects double-digit growth in Indian market

NEW DELHI

Mercedes Benz expects double-digit sales growth in India this year, despite concerns that a weaker rupee could increase car prices, the head of its local unit said in an interview.

The German luxury carmaker's sales in India rose 41% last year to 15,822 cars, its highest ever in the country, and it has an order backlog of around 6,000 vehicles, Santosh Iyer, managing director for Mercedes-Benz India, told Reuters.

One risk to the growth of India's luxury car market is a weakening Indian currency, which could force Mercedes to increase domestic prices as imported components get pricier, he said. The rupee fell 10% against the dollar in 2022, its steepest drop since 2013, making it the one of the worst performing Asian currencies.

"One of the biggest risks we see for us is the exchange rate. With the rupee weakening a bit more, that will lead us to more price increases. So that's some headwind we see when it comes to the growth potential," Iyer said.

"But we are starting the year with a very healthy order bank and that gives us the confidence of a double-digit growth even for 2023," said Iyer.

Mercedes plans to launch 10 new cars in India in 2023, most costing more than 10 million rupees (\$120,000), the top-end segment that grew 69% in 2022. The new launches will include gasoline cars, electric vehicles (EVs) and plug-in hybrids.

The company launched three EVs in India in 2022 including a locally assembled, electric model of its flagship S-Class sedan. EVs have seen strong demand, with Indian customers waiting four to six months after booking their cars. Iyer wants to reduce this to two to three months before launching more EVs.

India's EV market is gaining momentum - Renault is considering building a mass-market EV locally, Reuters reported on Friday, in a renewed push into a market where sales of such cars expected to grow quickly from a small base. Domestic carmaker Tata Motors and foreign players like Stellantis and Hyundai Motor have also lined up EV launches.

Mercedes has seen an easing of a global semiconductor shortage, but still faces some disruption due to a shortage of parts and delayed shipments caused mainly by geopolitical issues, energy crisis in Europe and pandemic-related lockdowns in different parts of the world, Iyer said.

He predicted it will take 12 to 18 months for the situation to normalise.



Mercedes-Benz cars parked at the company's assembly plant in Chakan, India FILE PHOTO

World Bank to warn of global recession risk in 2023 outlook



WASHINGTON

The World Bank is concerned that "further adverse shocks" could push the global economy into recession in 2023, with small states especially vulnerable.

The warning is contained in an abstract for the bi-annual "Global Economic Prospects" report due for release on

Tough year, tougher than the year we leave behind.

Tuesday and visible on the group's Open Knowledge Repository website.

Even without another crisis, global growth this year "is expected to decelerate sharply, reflecting synchronous policy tightening aimed at containing very high inflation, worsening financial conditions, and continued disruptions from Russia's invasion

of Ukraine," the World Bank said.

"Urgent global and national efforts" are needed to mitigate the risk of such a downturn as well as debt distress in emerging market and developing economies (EMDEs), where investment growth is expected to remain below the average of the past two decades, the Washington-based lender said.

"It is critical that EMDE policy makers ensure that any fiscal support is focused on vulnerable groups, that inflation expectations remain well anchored, and that financial systems continue to be resilient," it said.

Similar demands have been made by central bankers from around the world as they aggressively raise interest rates to ease price pressures while governments support businesses and households by containing energy costs.

International Monetary Fund Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva started 2023 with a warning that the world faces "a tough year, tougher than the year we leave behind." One-third of the global economy will be in recession because the US, the EU and China are all slowing down simultaneously, she told CBS's "Face the Nation" in an interview aired Jan. 1.

Taiwan exports fall for 4th month in December

TAIPEI

Taiwan's exports fell for a fourth straight month in December due to the worsening state of the global economy, as inflation and rising interest rates weighed on demand, and benefits from China's relaxation of its COVID controls had still to emerge.

Exports dropped 12.1% by value last month from a year earlier to \$35.75 billion, the lowest in 20 months, the Ministry of Finance said on Saturday.

That followed a 13.1% drop in November, and was slightly better than Reuters poll forecast for a 13.3% contraction.

For December, the ministry said global demand was slowing gradually, due to inflationary pressures and interest rate rises in major economies, as well

as disruptions to factory production in China amid a spike of COVID-19 cases after Beijing dismantled its zero-COVID regime.

The ministry saw Taiwan's exports continuing to decline in the first quarter as it expected the global economy to "slow significantly", with major uncertainties posed by both the war in Ukraine and the spread of COVID-19 in China.

"The positive demand driven by new technologies and rising silicon content in end products would not be able to offset these negative impacts," the ministry said in a statement.

Taiwan's total exports of electronics components in December fell 1.4% to \$16.04 billion, with semiconductor exports up 0.8% from a year earlier.

Firms such as TSMC, the world's largest contract chipmaker, are major suppliers to Apple Inc and other global tech giants, as well as providers of chips for auto companies and lower-end consumer goods.

At \$14.28 billion in December, Taiwan's exports to China, the island's largest trading partner, were down 16.4% from a year ago, after suffering a 20.9% drop in November.

Taiwan's finance ministry said risks ahead included uncertainty the U.S.-China tech war, adding that January exports could contract in a range of 20% to 24% from a year earlier.

The ministry's Tsai said fourth quarter exports -traditionally a busy season ahead of Christmas -dropped 8.6% year-on-year.

WORLD

Prince Harry set to deliver more broadsides at UK royals

LONDON

DAYS after Prince Harry's memoir accidentally went on sale early with new allegations of discord and conflict within the British royal family, a series of TV interviews with him will start airing on Sunday with the prospect of yet more damaging attacks on the monarchy.

Harry's book *Spare*, which went on sale in Spain on Thursday five days before its official release, chronicles not only hugely personal details, such as how he lost his virginity and took drugs, but also discloses more intimate private instances of family disharmony.

His elder brother, heir to the throne Prince William, knocked him over in a brawl, and both siblings begged their father King Charles not to marry his second wife, Camilla, now the Queen Consort, according to the book.

Commentators say it has plunged the monarchy into its biggest crisis since the days of the royal soap opera in the 1990s around the break-up of Charles' marriage to his late

first wife Princess Diana, William and Harry's mother.

All this comes just four months after Queen Elizabeth died and Charles acceded to the throne.

"So here's Charles trying to establish himself as the new king and now Harry's thrown this hand grenade and it's all coming kind of crashing around him," royal biographer Tina Brown said.

Since Harry and Meghan left royal duties and moved to California in 2020, they have railed at their treatment by the royals and the palace institution.

From their interview with Oprah Winfrey in 2021 to their six-part Netflix documentary series last month and now Harry's book, the couple's message has been the same: that the royals and their aides not only failed to protect them from a hostile and sometimes racist press, but actively leaked negative stories about them.

So far, there has been no comment from Buckingham Palace or anyone who speaks for the royal family, a stance that has been



In this March 09, 2020 photo, Britain's Prince Harry, Duke of Sussex (center) is introduced to performers as he leaves after attending the annual Commonwealth Service at Westminster Abbey in London. AFP

lauded by much of the British media as a dignified silence.

No point in 'staying silent'

On Sunday, Harry's public thoughts will keep coming, with three more TV interviews due to air. They had been timed for broadcast ahead of the official launch of Harry's book on Tuesday, and excerpts released ahead of time have shown Harry saying he wanted to give his side of the story.

"I don't know how staying silent is ever going to make things better," Harry says in his interview with Britain's ITV, which will be the first to be shown.

Polls suggest many Britons are becoming bored of the whole royal melodrama, and further revelations are unlikely to shake

their views, whether sympathy for Harry and Meghan, or for those they criticize. However Harry's book was No. 1 on Amazon UK's bestselling books list on Saturday, available for pre-order ahead of its release.

Royal commentator Emily Andrews said that given Britain's current cost of living crisis, there could be limited support for the complaints of a privileged prince residing in a mansion in California.

"They are polarizing, Harry and Megan, and I think that this new book by Harry probably won't change many people's opinions," Andrews told Reuters.

"I think this is overkill, it becomes saturation point and people think 'I don't want to hear anymore: shut up, go away'."

Putin in Christmas greetings notes church's role in supporting special operation fighters

MOSCOW

RUSSIAN President Vladimir Putin has extended Christmas greetings to Russians and Orthodox believers, noting the role of church organizations in supporting the participants of the special military operation.

"I'm extending my hearty Christmas greetings to you! This bright holiday that's loved by everyone inspires people for kind deeds and intentions, serves to establish in the society such enduring spiritual values and moral guidelines as mercy, compassion, goodness and justice," he said.

The president noted the constructive contribution that's made by the Russian Orthodox Church and other Orthodox denominations in Russia in the unity of the society, preservation of our historical memory, the rearing of the youth and the strengthening of the institution of the family.

"Church organizations pay priority attention to interethnic and inter-religious peace and accord in our country, take care of those who need help, support our fighters that participate in the special military operation. That large, multifaceted, truly self-sacrificing work is worthy of the sincerest respect," he said.

As he ended his greetings, Putin wished to Orthodox Christians and everybody who marks Christmas health, success and all the best.



Türkiye keen to push for Russia-Ukraine peace talks

ANKARA

TÜRKIYE has intensified its efforts to broker a permanent ceasefire and eventually a settlement between Russia and Ukraine, following successful grain and prisoner swap deals, but Ankara's balancing act has its limitations, experts said.

On Thursday, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan held phone conversations with his Russian and Ukrainian counterparts.

He told Volodymyr Zelensky that Ankara was ready to take on mediation and moderation duties to secure a "lasting peace between Russia and Ukraine," according to a readout from Erdogan's office.

The Turkish leader told Vladimir Putin that peace efforts in the ongoing conflict should be supported by a unilateral ceasefire and a "vision for a fair solution," the Turkish presidency said.

Soner Cagaptay, a political scientist at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, told Xinhua that Ankara hopes to mediate and host final peace talks after two rounds of preliminary discussions between Russia and Ukraine were held in Istanbul and the southern Turkish resort town of Antalya shortly after the conflict.

"Ankara is one of the few capitals that has maintained communication ties with Moscow and Kiev alike," Cagaptay said. Despite pressure from the United States and Europe, Türkiye has not joined Western sanctions on Russia, believing that talking with Moscow is better than isolating it.

But on the other side, Ankara has defended Kiev's territorial integrity and provided the latter with drones.

Selcuk Colakoglu, director of the Ankara-based Turkish Center for Asia-Pacific Studies, told Xinhua in a recent interview that Türkiye has adopted "a very delicate balancing policy" since the start of the Russia-Ukraine conflict.

Türkiye's leadership has been keen to capitalize on its previous diplomatic success with the grain deal concluded in June last year, which could work as the first step toward permanent peace.

However, both Cagaptay and Colakoglu emphasized that Ankara's mediator role in the ongoing conflict has limitations. "So far, Ankara's role in the Russia-Ukraine conflict is to eliminate certain problems, but reaching a final peace deal or solution is not that easy," Colakoglu said.

A source close to the Turkish government acknowledged the difficulty in persuading both sides to agree to begin discussing peace talks. "If they want to meet in Türkiye and discuss peace, we will certainly encourage it.

But we should be realistic about what can be attained by those talks," the source said on condition of anonymity. The source added that Türkiye wants to keep communication open to both Russia and Ukraine, and is urging Western allies to do the same.

Meanwhile, Ibrahim Kalin, Erdogan's chief adviser and spokesperson, who has been involved in meetings with both Russian and Ukrainian officials, warned that the conflict is likely to escalate in the coming months.

"More war means more destruction, and a deeper, longer crisis. This is not good for anyone," Kalin on Friday wrote on Twitter. "Türkiye will continue its efforts for negotiations, ceasefire, prisoner exchange, nuclear security, and grain export," he added.

Xinhua

Diplomats say China's COVID response policy revamp timely

BEIJING

FOREIGN diplomats from more than 130 countries in China attended a briefing on China's COVID response policy, saying that they believed China's optimization and adjustment of COVID response and entry-exit policies are timely and necessary and will provide an impetus for world economic recovery and growth.

The diplomats made the remarks on Friday at the briefing on China's COVID response policy for senior foreign diplomats in China, held by the International Department of the Communist Party of China Central Committee. They added they appreciated China's support and assistance to the international community in responding to the challenges posed by the epidemic.

China has recently taken the initiative to refine its COVID response measures. It adopted the 20 refined measures and 10 new measures and issued steps to treat COVID-19 as a Class-B instead of Class-A infectious disease. By shifting the response focus from stemming infection to preventing severe cases and caring for people's health, China aims to protect the lives and health of the people and reduce the impact of the epidemic on

economic and social development to the maximum.

El Salvadoran Ambassador to China Aldo Alvarez said the adjustment "comes right in time." According to the new circumstances of epidemic prevention, the new characteristics of the variants, and China's reality, Alvarez thought it was time for China to make the policy adjustment based on science.

"China has tried its best to protect people's lives and health in the past three years," Fredrick P. Malire, the counselor of Malawi's embassy in China, said. He added that China's COVID response policy adjustment would enhance the coordination and cooperation between China and other countries, thus providing impetus for the recovery of world economic growth.

Noting China is the second-largest economy in the world and an important trade partner to various countries, Malire said the policy adjustment means global trade will increase, which is no doubt "good news for many countries."

During the briefing, experts from China's National Health Commission, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, and the Beijing Hospital of Traditional Chinese Medicine introduced the scenarios



Nurses prepare medication at Shengjing Hospital of China Medical University's fever clinic in Shenyang, Liaoning province, on Dec 15, 2022. XINHUA

of epidemic prevention and control in China and interacted with the diplomats.

The diplomats listened carefully to the introduction, learned the details and logic behind the adjustment of China's COVID response policies, and appreciated China's achievements in fighting the epidemic and its outstanding contribution to the global fight.

While listening to the introductions, Luamanuvae Albert Mariner, Samoan Ambassador to China, took notes on China's experiences against the epidemic. "One of the key pieces of information I noted is China's ongoing efforts to share data with the WHO," Mariner said. He added that it was really encouraging that China uses Western medicine as well as its own traditional

medicine. China has also developed its own vaccines in response to the virus.

"COVID-19 is a global problem, and it requires a global solution. The only way to find this solution is through cooperation and dialogue," Mariner said. He said China sets a good example in this field.

"At the beginning of the epidemic, there was no other country willing to provide us vaccines because they said they needed to cover their own population. China was the first friend who helped us and the only one there for us from the very beginning. El Salvador really wants to thank China for that," Alvarez said, adding that he got vaccines made in China.

Hassane Rabehi, Algerian ambassador to China, said that many developing countries re-

ceived valuable support from China, including vaccines. That enabled their people to prepare for the epidemic. He thought of it as proof of China's work in supporting the international community in the fight against the epidemic, as well as the CPC's commitment to promoting the development of humanity's progress.

Rabehi mentioned, in particular, the important role of traditional Chinese medicine in epidemic prevention and control. Before coming to work in China, his wife helped promote TCM in Algeria.

"I can assure you that most of the Algerian people who experienced the TCM were very happy and very appreciative of that," said Rabehi.

The rest of the world can say whatever they want about China, but something they have to acknowledge is that China's policy has effectively protected the lives and health of its people, Alvarez said, adding that recent restrictions posed by some countries targeting only Chinese tourists seem not to be based on any technical or scientific support.

The adjustment of China's entry-exit policies is really welcomed by Samoa, Mariner said, and they are "looking forward to Chinese tourists to Samoa."

Xinhua

Venezuelan president appoints new FM, state oil company chief

CARACAS

VENEZUELAN President Nicolas Maduro on Friday appointed Yvan Gil as the new foreign affairs minister and Pedro Tellechea as the new president of state-owned oil compa-

ny Petroleos de Venezuela S.A. "It's a great responsibility. I'm sure he will perform with great professionalism," Maduro said of Gil on his Twitter account. The new foreign minister replaces Carlos Faria, whom Maduro thanked for "outstanding

work," adding that Carlos will be assigned new tasks soon. Gil previously headed the Agriculture and Land Ministry (2013-2014) and, since 2017, has served as deputy foreign minister for Europe. Tellechea, a mechanical engineer with a

specialty in public finance, was head of Petroquímica de Venezuela, the South American country's main state-owned petrochemical company, before being tapped to replace Asdrubal Chavez at Petroleos de Venezuela S.A.

Maduro also appointed Rear Admiral Anibal Coronado as the new head of government for the Francisco de Miranda Insular Territory, which comprises several islands in the Caribbean Sea.

Xinhua

China's catering industry in steady recovery thanks to optimisation of COVID-19 response

CHINA'S optimization of COVID-19 response measures is leading to a rebound in the catering industry.

Restaurants across the country have resumed dine-in services and are preparing for a peak period that may arrive with the upcoming Chinese New Year, which will fall on Jan. 22.

Sanlitun, a popular shopping area favored by young people in Beijing's Chaoyang district, is currently seeing a recovery in foot traffic, and that includes a restaurant of Haidilao, a leading hot pot restaurant chain in China, at Sanlitun SOHO, a shopping-residence-business complex.

"Today we will probably serve over 200 tables, and dozens of tables have already been

booked at noon. Reservations just get frequent as the Chinese New Year approaches, which will keep us busier," said Xu Bin, manager of the hot pot restaurant.

Over the past year, the restaurant's business performance went through ups and downs. Fortunately, it is getting better these days.

The restaurant resumed operation on Dec. 7 last year after a short suspension of dine-in services. Its business remained gloomy in the first few days, but has turned better since Dec. 16.

Xu told People's Daily that the number of diners at night recently was sometimes as many as that before the breakout of COVID-19, which boosted the turnover of the restaurant. "The foot traffic in other periods of time is

also recovering, and it would increase 30 percent on weekends," Xu said.

According to Chinese internet giant Meituan, the dining industry has recovered across the country to different extents since Dec. 8, 2022, and foot traffic has kept growing.

For instance, the number of online reservations for dine-in services received by restaurants in Guangzhou, south China's Guangdong province since December has more than doubled from that in the previous stage.

Urumqi, northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region, has seen a 413 percent weekly growth since Dec. 8 in the number of online reservations for dine-in services.

At noon on Dec. 18, 2022, couriers were seen entering and exiting a mini hot pot restaurant

in Chengdu, southwest China's Sichuan province. Jiang Sanchun, owner of the restaurant, said over 150 delivery orders had flooded in.

This restaurant, which covers only some 60 square meters, is located in an alley of Chengdu's Jinjiang district. Its dine-in and delivery services are both recovering thanks to the optimized COVID-19 response measures recently announced by China.

"We serve 80 to 100 tables of dine-in customers per day, and delivery orders are growing fast that we receive more than 300 of them on a daily basis," Jiang said.

Jiang estimated that the business would recover faster, saying his restaurant was fully prepared.

His restaurant sits near to a business dis-

trict, but its foot traffic was not stable in recent years. Therefore, the restaurant joined an online delivery platform to expand its service range and improve its digital operation. Now, over 60 percent of the restaurant's revenue comes from delivery service.

Many catering enterprises made innovations amid COVID-19, expanding their online sales channels and integrating online and offline services so as to recover their business.

"Through technological innovation and information sharing, delivery platforms are able to help catering enterprises enhance their capability in digitalization and improve their efficiency in digital operation," said an employee of Meituan.

People's Daily

McCarthy elected Republican US House speaker

WASHINGTON

REPUBLICAN Kevin McCarthy was elected speaker of the US House of Representatives early on Saturday, after making extensive concessions to a group of right-wing hardliners that raised questions about the party's ability to govern.

The 57-year-old Californian suffered one final humiliation when Representative Matt Gaetz withheld his vote on the 14th ballot as midnight approached, prompting a scuffle in which fellow Republican Mike Rogers had to be physically pulled away.

McCarthy's victory in the 15th ballot brought an end to the deepest congressional dysfunction in over 160 years. But it sharply illustrated the difficulties that he will face in leading a narrow and deeply polarized majority.

He won at last on a margin of 216-212. He was able to be elected with the votes of fewer than half the House members only because six in his own party withheld their votes - not backing McCarthy as leader, but also not voting for another contender.

As he took the gavel for the first time, McCarthy represented the end of President Joe Biden's Democrats' hold on both chambers of Congress.

"Our system is built on checks and balances. It's time for us to be a check and provide some balance to the president's policies," McCarthy said in his inaugural speech, which laid out a wide range of priorities from cutting spending to immigration, to fighting culture war battles.

McCarthy secured the gavel only after agreeing to a demand by hard-



Speaker of the House Kevin McCarthy bangs the Speaker's gavel for the first time after being elected the next Speaker of the US House of Representatives in a late night 15th round of voting on the fourth day of the 118th Congress at the US Capitol in Washington, US, on Saturday. REUTERS

liners that any lawmaker be able call for his removal at any time. That will sharply cut the power he will hold when trying to pass legislation on critical issues including funding the government, addressing the nation's looming debt ceiling and other crises that may arise.

Republicans' weaker-than-expected performance in November's midterm elections left them with a narrow 222-212 majority, which has given outsized power to the right-wing hardliners who have opposed McCarthy's leadership.

Those concessions, including sharp spending cuts and other curbs on McCarthy's leadership, could point to further turbulence in the months ahead, especially when Congress will need to sign off on a further increase of the United States' \$31.4 trillion borrowing authority.

Over the past decade, Republicans have repeatedly shut down much of the government and pushed the world's largest borrower to the brink of default in efforts to extract steep spending cuts, usually without success.

Several of the hardliners have questioned McCarthy's willingness to engage in such brinkmanship when negotiating with President Joe Biden, whose Democrats control the Senate. They have

raged in the past when Senate Republicans led by Mitch McConnell agreed to compromise deals.

The hardliners, also including Freedom Caucus Chairman Scott Perry and Chip Roy of Texas, said concessions they extracted from McCarthy will make it easier to pursue such tactics this year - or force another vote on McCarthy's leadership if he does not live up to their expectations.

"You have changes in how we're going to spend and allocate money that are going to be historic," said Representative Scott Perry, the chairman of the hard-right House Freedom Caucus.

"We don't want clean debt ceilings to just go through and just keep paying the bill without some counteracting effort to control spending when the Democrats control the White House and control the Senate."

One of those Democrats, Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, warned that the concessions McCarthy made to win the job may come back to haunt him.

"Kevin McCarthy's concessions to the extremists in his party make it far more likely that the MAGA Republican controlled House will cause a government shutdown or a default with devastat-

ing consequences to our country," Schumer said in a statement.

In a sharp contrast to this week's battles among House Republicans, Biden and McConnell appeared together in Kentucky on Wednesday to highlight investments in infrastructure.

McCarthy's belated victory came the day after the two-year anniversary of a Jan 6, 2021, attack on the US Capitol, when a violent mob stormed Congress in an attempt to overturn then-president Donald Trump's election loss.

This week's 14 failed votes marked the highest number of ballots for the speakership since 1859, in the turbulent years before the Civil war.

McCarthy's last bid for speaker, in 2015, crumbled in the face of right-wing opposition. The two previous Republican speakers, John Boehner and Paul Ryan, left the job after conflict with right-wing colleagues.

McCarthy now holds the authority to block Biden's legislative agenda, force votes for Republican priorities on the economy, energy and immigration and move forward with investigations of Biden, his administration and his family.

Concessions

But McCarthy has agreed to concessions that mean he will hold considerably less power than his predecessor, Democrat Nancy Pelosi. That will make it hard for him to agree to deals with Democrats in a divided Washington.

Allowing a single member to call for a vote to remove the speaker will give hardliners extraordinary leverage.

The agreement would cap spending for the next fiscal year at last year's levels - amounting to a significant cut when inflation and population growth are taken into account.

That could meet resistance from more centrist Republicans or those who have pushed for greater military funding, particularly as the United States is spending money to help Ukraine.

Foreign aid to Ukraine a money laundering scheme, head of Chechnya says

MOSCOW

THE Western aid to Ukraine is a working money laundering scheme, Head of Chechnya Ramzan Kadyrov said on his Telegram channel yesterday.

"I see that some are worried about the foreign aid to Ukraine. Do not worry! This is a working money laundering scheme. Western and Ukrainian officials will embezzle these funds, and no more than 15% of the entire aid will reach the trenches," he said.

Kadyrov (pictured) also noted that there is no need to worry about hostilities currently happening on Russian territory.

"These are our regions, which opted to join our state for the sake of protection of their people from Satanist actions of Ukrainian and NATO nationalists," he underscored.

On January 6, the US announced a new aid package to Ukraine worth over \$3 billion.

According to the White House, the aid will be provided directly from the Pentagon reserves, and will include Bradley armored vehicles, self-propelled howitzers, MRAP (Mine-Resistant Ambush-Protected) vehicles, air defense missiles and other weapons and ammunition.



Mideast tourism market gears up to welcome back Chinese tourists

TUNIS/CAIRO

CHINA'S move to downgrade the management of COVID-19 from Class A to Class B starting from Sunday has excited governmental officials and tourism industry players in the Middle East, who are gearing up to welcome back Chinese tourists absent for three years due to the pandemic.

LONG-AWAITED RETURN OF CHINESE TOURISTS

China has continuously optimized its COVID-19 responses, the latest of which will be lifting restrictions on citizens' outbound trips as of Sunday. The move is warmly welcomed by tourism practitioners in the Middle East. "We are so happy to hear the good news," Amir Ben Aribia, general manager of the Tunisian travel company Tunisia Blue Sky, told Xinhua. With Chinese tourists accounting for 90 percent of the company's business before the pandemic outbreak, Ben Aribia has been closely following the adjustment of China's COVID-related policies.

Karim Mohammed, a souvenir shop owner in the famous Khan El Khalili bazaar in Egypt's capital of Cairo, said that he expected Chinese tourists to return to Egypt soon. As the Belt and Road cooperation runs through the Middle East region where more countries offer visa-free or visa-on-arrival entry to Chinese citizens, the number of Chinese arrivals has surged in the pre-pandemic years. In 2016, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) started to grant visas to Chinese visitors upon

arrival. In 2017, over 764,000 Chinese tourists visited the UAE, representing a 41-percent increase year on year.

According to the 2020 report of Dubai Tourism, the easing of the UAE visa rules in 2016 led to the doubling of the number of Chinese visitors to the Gulf country in four years. When Saudi Arabia announced the issuance of tourist visas to visitors from 49 countries in 2019, China topped the number of tourist visas issued by the kingdom. Chinese tourists used to come in groups, which helped boost his business significantly, Mohammed said. Halis Aydogan, an official of the Turkish company Pasha Balloon Tours, told Xinhua that in Cappadocia, famous for its hot air balloon tours, Chinese tourists accounted for nearly half of some 600,000 balloon trip takers in 2019.

HUGE POTENTIAL FOR MIDDLE EAST

Despite the rapid growth, China remains a tourism market with huge potential for the Middle East. Experts believe the return of Chinese tourists would have a positive impact on a wide range of sectors in the region. "Not only does a hotel stay benefit the hospitality industry, but visitor spending in retail and leisure activities boosts demand for employment and stimulates the wider economy," Ross Curran, an assistant professor at Edinburgh Business School at Heriot-Watt University Dubai, told The National, an English daily newspaper with headquarters in Abu Dhabi. Meanwhile, the return of Chinese tourists would strengthen cultural exchanges between China and the Mideast countries in the long run.

Chinese tourists show more interest in the historical sites and natural landscapes, Ben Aribia said, adding that the Chinese travel style brings the industry a stable and handsome income. That is why Tunisia Blue Sky has focused on the Chinese market in recent years, he said. Abedulrazzak Abo Mohaisen, a Jordanian who owns a workshop selling his handcrafted traditional Arabic daggers near

the historical Roman Theater of Amman, said he expected a prosperous season brought by the return of Chinese visitors. "I believe that good numbers of Chinese tourists will revive tourism in Jordan. China is a major country with an ancient civilization, and cooperation with it in this sector will be very promising," he said.

Saudi Arabia's Tourism Minister Ahmed Al-Khateeb said that he hopes more Chinese tourists would visit and learn about Saudi heritage, culture, and people. "China is one of Saudi Arabia's main trade partners, and we have been enjoying Chinese culture and heritage for many years, especially the delicious food that can be found everywhere in Saudi Arabia. Now, we want the Chinese to come," the minister told Xinhua before the 116th World Tourism Organization Executive Council Meeting in Jeddah.

PREPARATIONS FOR NEW TOURIST WAVE

With restrictions on Chinese citizens' outbound trips lifted, a surge in numbers in 2023 is expected. Analysts noted that the travel industry needs to remain flexible to respond to changing conditions. International tourism arrivals, up 60 percent in 2022, will rise by a further 30 percent in 2023, with Chinese tourists acting as a great impetus to the growth, according to the London-based Economist. For now, hoteliers and travel agents in the Middle East are making preparations for a new wave of Chinese tourists.

"We sit and work with our friends ... to plan on receiving Chinese visitors and organizing new tours and destinations in the city," Serhan Kochan, a tour operator for the Ligarba Travel Agency in the largest Turkish city of Istanbul, told Xinhua. He said his teams are creating unique excursion tours to cover some newly restored or opened tourist destinations along the coast of the sea.

Xinhua

Benin holds parliamentary election set to test democracy

COTONOU

VOTERS in Benin went to the polls yesterday for a parliamentary election seen as a test of democracy as opposition parties are back on the ballot after boycotting or being excluded from the most recent presidential and legislative votes.

Benin's image as a bastion of democracy and stability in West Africa has been dented under President Patrice Talon, who went back on a pledge not to run for another term and oversaw an opposition crackdown since coming to power in 2016.

Seven parties are competing for 109 parliamentary seats in Sunday's vote, including the Democrates party linked to Talon's predecessor and rival Thomas Boni Yayi.

Boni Yayi's supporters led protests in 2019 after opposition parties were blocked from the legislative vote for failing to meet strict new election criteria.

"I will vote for this party (the Democrates) for the rebalance of power," said civil society activist Isidore Odountan, 31, in the largest city Cotonou.

Preliminary results, which are expected on Jan 11, may also be an indicator of the strength of the various political forces jostling to succeed Talon.

The next presidential election is due in 2026, when the next parliamentary vote will also be held.

Talon does not belong to any party but is supported by the two parties currently in power in parliament - the Bloc Republican and Union Progressiste le Renouveau.

There is no immediate sign the vote will see protests like in 2019 or those that broke out in 2021 against Talon's decision to seek re-election, said political analyst Expedit Ologou, head of Beninois thinktank Civic Academy for Africa's Future.

"The atmosphere seems calm, peaceful, friendly, fraternal in most areas of the country," he told Reuters.

Under Talon, the political protests have been met with deadly police violence, while politicized prosecutions and other legal tactics have been used to stifle the opposition, US democracy watchdog Freedom House said in its 2022 report.

Talon has denied targeting political opponents or violating human rights.

With more parties on the ballot, turnout should return to normal levels of around 60 percent after slumping to just 27 percent in 2019, Ologou said.

Regional security may be higher up voters' concerns in this election as Benin, alongside neighboring Togo and Ivory Coast, has seen increasing attacks from militants linked to al Qaeda and Islamic State as violence creeps south from the Sahel countries of Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger.

The insecurity and higher living costs linked to the special military operation in Ukraine pose a threat to Benin's recent economic gains, the International Monetary Fund warned last July.

Benin's agriculture-dependent economy has rebounded since the coronavirus pandemic, growing over 7 percent in 2021 and the first half of 2022.

But the country of 12 million remains one of the poorest in the world with a fifth of the population living on less than \$1.90 per day, according to the World Bank. **Agencies**



I will vote for this party (the Democrates) for the rebalance of power

Study: Flexible work arrangements beneficial to biz and workers

HONG KONG

FLEXIBLE working-time arrangements and reduced working hours like those adopted during the height of the COVID-19 crisis can benefit economies, businesses and workers, laying the ground for healthier work-life balance, according to a new study published by the International Labour Organization on Jan 6.

The report titled "Working Time and Work-Life Balance Around the World" - the first to put a spotlight on work-life balance - looked at two main aspects of working time: the working hours and work schedules or arrangements. It analyzed different working-time arrangements and their effects on work-life balance, including shift work, on-call work, compressed hours and hours-averaging schemes.

It found that the COVID-19 crisis measures yielded evidence that giving workers more

flexibility in how, where and when they work can be positive both for them and for their employers, in aspects such as improved productivity. Meanwhile, restricting flexibility can bring substantial costs, including increased staff turnover.

The report, however, cautioned that the benefits of some of these flexible arrangements, such as better family life, may be accompanied by costs including greater gender imbalances and increased health risks.

According to the study, a substantial portion of the global workforce is working either long or short hours when compared to a standard 8-hour day or 40-hour working week.

More than a third of all workers are regularly working more than 48 hours per week, while a fifth of the global workforce is working short or part-time hours of less than 35 per week. Informal economy workers are more likely to have long or short hours.

In its assessment of the evolution of the working hours during the pandemic, the ILO said working time is one of the key tools that can be used to counter the threats to society and the economy posed by any economic downturn.

Overall, the study said, it appears that the reduced hours of work during the pandemic - in particular the increase in the proportion of workers with short

hours of work - "had a positive effect on employment by helping to prevent job losses".

However, this phenomenon was concentrated in more developed countries. In the case of telework, it was concentrated in countries with relatively good IT infrastructures and large numbers of workers in teleworkable jobs.

The study said that without the use of working hours as an adaptation tool, the only options left in many cases would be either to "pay for pandemic countermeasures to protect the health of the population" in the form of lockdowns or restrictions of economic activity, fueling unemployment or economic inactivity

among the working population, or to forgo the pandemic countermeasures for these reasons and be forced to accept the risk to health of older population group.

"There is a substantial amount of evidence that work-life balance policies provide significant benefits to enterprises, supporting the argument that such policies are a 'win-win' for both employers and employees," the ILO report stated.

"The so-called 'Great Resignation' phenomenon has placed work-life balance at the forefront of social and labor market issues in the post-pandemic world," said Jon Messenger, the lead author of the report.

"This report shows that if we apply some of the lessons of the COVID-19 crisis and look very carefully at the way working hours are structured, as well as their overall length, we can create a win-win, improving both business performance and work-life balance."



here is a substantial amount of evidence that work-life balance policies provide significant benefits to enterprises, supporting the argument that such policies are a 'win-win' for both

Popular Bongo Flava musicians to release new albums in 2023

By Correspondent Ismail Tano

NEW albums are being announced and released constantly by various artists around the world. It is tough to stay on top of it all.

Here are some Extended Plays (EPs) and albums produced by prominent artists in Tanzania's new generation music, alias Bongo Flava, which have been set for release at some point this year.

Abdul Kiba

The signee of King's Music record label and brother of the country's famous new generation music artist, Ali Kiba, promised to release his long-awaited EP in December 2022 but decided to push it forward a few days before the release date.

Abdukiba said: "I'm sorry for the delay, it's my hope it will be released in early 2023."

The musician pointed out: "I planned to drop my EP in December 2022, but I was unable to do so due to family commitments and management plans."

Naseeb Abdul

Tanzania's most popular new genre musician was expected to release his album in 2022 but postponed the event to 2023.

The WCB group leader grabbed the attention of music fans due to his social media posts, pictures, and video clips showing the artist chatting with other popular musicians including Busta Rhymes, Wiz Khalifa, Wizkid, Alicia Keys, and Swizz Beatz.

Swizz Beatz is an American record producer who has been announced as an executive producer of Abdul's album.

Abdul, Afro-fusion singer-songwriter and executive producer is currently topping the charts with his hit single titled "Chitaki".

The singer dominated Tanzania's new genre music scene last year with his first-ever EP titled "First of All" (FOA).

Abdul noted: "The album will change Bongo Flava music... it will help our music industry make its mark in the global music industry."



Abdul Kiba

Bocco steps up pursuit of 2022/23 NBC Premier League top goal scorer's award



Simba SC forward John Bocco (2nd R) looks to beat Mbeya City FC keeper Harun Mandanda as they locked horns in the past NBC Premier League encounter that was played at Sokoine Stadium in Mbeya.

By Correspondent Ismail Tano

SIMBA SC's skipper, John Bocco, has proved he is still a clinical finisher, given the forward has lately been netting goals regularly for the outfit in the 2022/23 NBC Premier League.

Bocco that has scored nine goals is lately trailing two attackers, Yanga's Fiston Mayele, and fellow Simba SC forward Moses Phiri in the 2022/23 NBC Premier League golden boot race.

The towering goal-getter did not have a good start this season, with some fans, including those rooting for Simba, criticizing the player and advising him to opt for coaching, some of his teammates defended him.

Under coach Juma Mgunda, Bocco looked to have got hold of his goal-scoring form, as the attacker netted a hat-trick in his

club's 4-0 drubbing of Ruvo Shooting at Benjamin Mkapa Stadium in Dar es Salaam on November 19.

On October 2, 2022, Reliants Lusajo of Namungo FC had five goals, followed by Kinondoni Municipal Council FC attacker Matheo Anthony (four), Mayele (three), and Moses Phiri (three), and on October 5, Sixtus Sabilo of Mbeya City FC had two goals.

Mayele is one of two attackers with more goals than Bocco, as the Congolese goal-getter leads the rest of the pack in the race for the top goal-scorer prize with 14 goals.

Phiri, who has 10 goals, is now out of action given the Zambian striker was injured when Simba SC confronted Kagera Sugar in Bukoba on December 21.

Bocco has nine goals scored against Ruvo Shooting (hat-

trick), Polisi Tanzania, scoring one in his squad's 3-1 victory over the Kilimanjaro side.

The forward found the back of the net during Simba's clash against Geita Gold FC scoring one in a 5-0 victory, Bocco notched one as his team clobbered Kinondoni Municipal Council FC 3-1, and went on to notch a hat-trick in Simba's 7-1 victory over Prisons.

He has surpassed Sabilo, who currently has seven goals and two assists, Idris Mbombo of Azam FC has seven goals and two assists, Lusajo has six goals and three assists, and Anthony has four goals and five assists.

Bocco's ability to score more than one goal in one game puts pressure on the top two attackers in the race for the top goal scorer honour, whereas others have been scoring either one or two in one game.

Anthony is one of the attackers who heaped praise on Bocco's goal-scoring virtuosity.

The Kinondoni Municipal Council FC goal-getter who by then had four goals noted: "Bocco is a good striker who deserves respect, he has what it takes to score via solo effort, give him time and he will do well."

Prisons' skipper Benjamin Asukile also lauded Bocco, noting: "Bocco is the symbol of many young people who emulate him in valuing discipline."

The defender revealed: "I am always hurt when I see fans attack him, but the most important issue is his outfit's leaders are defending him."

Bocco is the most talented striker in Tanzania at the moment, having scored 150 goals since he started taking part in the Premier League in 2008.

TOC: Athletes ought to start hunting for qualification for 2024 Olympics

By Correspondent Ismail Tano

TANZANIA Olympic Committee (TOC) has urged the country's sportsmen and women to start seeking qualification for the 2024 Olympic Games scheduled to take place in Paris, France.

The committee has also insisted that there will be no universal places for Tanzania's sportsmen and women ahead of the multi-sport event slated for August 2 to August 11.

Filbert Bayi, TOC secretary-general, said there is still room for Tanzania's sportsmen and women to search for the qualifying marks, insisting that there will be no universal places.

According to Bayi, the 2024 Olympic Games organizers have already released a qualification period schedule and the qualifying marks required to be attained by sportsmen and women in various sports disciplines.

He said the marathon qualification window has been open since November last year and will expire on April 30 next year.

He noted that marathons have to record at least 2:11:30 for men and 2:29:30 for women.

According to Bayi, the qualification period for other sports disciplines runs from July 1 this year to June 30 next year.

The World Athletics Relays will be played in Nassau, Bahamas, the main Olympic qualifying event for the relays, in April/May 2024 (dates to be confirmed).

Bayi pointed out: "I call upon all sportsmen and women to at-



Tanzania Olympic Committee (TOC) secretary-general, Filbert Bayi.

tain qualification marks... there is no room for universalities that are normally for losers."

"We have done so for many years, and no medals were obtained by them," Bayi noted.

He said the TOC will include sportsmen and women who will attain the qualification marks set by the Olympic Games organizers.

"This means that we do not have barriers for any sportsmen and women to feature in an event despite TOC having a special training program that involves athletics, judo, and boxing," he said.

Bayi explained that judokas and amateur boxers have been given another chance to test their skills before being included in their special Olympic qual-

ification program.

Three runners, Ally Gulam, Benedicto Mathias, and Winfrida Makenji, have attained the standards set by the TOC and will soon undergo special training ahead of the Olympic Games qualification standards.

Gulam has qualified for the preliminary stage after recording 21.07 seconds and 10.40 seconds in the 200m and 100m races, while Benedicto recorded 21.74 seconds in the 200m race, and Makenji clocked 23.80 seconds and 11.80 seconds in 200m and 100m races.

According to Bayi, boxers and judokas who did well in special competitions will have to compete internationally, and those who will shine in high-profile tournaments will enter training

camp ahead of the 2024 Olympics.

"We will look at the proper procedure for those who did well nationally to prepare for international competitions, and those who will do well will directly join a special preparation camp," the TOC leader said.

Some boxers who won gold medals in national boxing competitions held recently are Yusuph Chagalawe (Light Heavyweight), Ibrahim Maulid (Lightweight), Joseph Philipo (Light Middleweight), and Rashid Mrema (Featherweight).

The training program also involves famous runners Alphonse Simbu, Failuna Abdi, and Gabriel Geay, as well as swimmer Hilal Hemed and judoka Andrew Thomas.

Bailly's flying tackle leaves French Cup rival in intensive care

PARIS

MARSEILLE defender Eric Bailly was sent-off after a horror flying tackle left a French Cup opponent in intensive care on Saturday.

Ivory Coast international Bailly, 28, who is on loan from Manchester United, was red-carded after just 15 minutes of the tie at fourth division amateur side Hyeres when his foot crunched into the chest of Almike Moussa N'Diaye.

The stricken Hyeres player was stretchered off before being taken to a local hospital from the modest 8,000-capacity Francis-Turcan stadium in Martigues in southern France.

Hyeres president Mourad Boudjellal, the colourful and controversial former owner of Toulon rugby club, told AFP that N'Diaye was then transported to another hospital in Marseille, 40km away.

"He was transferred to Hopital Nord in Marseille and they admitted him to intensive care, as a precaution," said Boudjellal.

"We pray that everything goes well for him. He's a great lad and one of our best players."

Earlier, coaching staff at Hyeres had been more reassuring.

"It's more fear than harm, nothing serious, maybe a concussion," assistant coach Zaki Noubir told Maritima radio. "Bailly came quickly into our dressing room to offer his shirt and above all to hear the latest news."

Despite playing most of the last-64 tie with 10 men, Marseille still had too much firepower and ran out 2-0 winners.

"On the red card, I didn't see what happened," said Marseille coach Igor Tudor.

"But the sending off changed everything and we had to push hard to win. It was a typically dangerous French Cup game. "We'll see later what the penalty will be for Bailly."

Alexis Sanchez opened the scoring with a 45th-minute 'panenka' penalty. Bamba Dieng added the second in the 71st minute.

Second division Rodez, from south-central France, pulled off a shock by defeating Monaco who are fifth in the top flight Ligue 1.

After the tie ended 2-2, Rodez came out on top in the penalty shoot-out 5-4 when goalkeeper Sebastien Cibois saved from Soungoutou Magassa. Ligue 1 Clermont were knocked out by sixth-division Olympique Strasbourg who claimed a shoot-out 4-3 after the tie ended 0-0.

Last year's runners-up Nice slumped to a 1-0 loss at third-tier Puy. Mohamed Ben Fredj scored the only goal after three minutes.

On Friday, Paris Saint-Germain rested their biggest stars but still won 3-1 at third-tier Chateauroux. With Lionel Messi, Kylian Mbappe and Neymar not even on the visiting bench, PSG took the lead after 13 minutes with a right-foot shot from Hugo Ekiti.

The home team hit back with a 37th minute goal by Natanael Ntola.

Carlos Soler put the visitors back in the lead in the 78th minute with another Spaniard, Juan Bernat, scoring the third goal in added time.

AFP

Wenger to help 'sleeping giant' India develop football talent

NEW DELHI

FORMER Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger will work with India to develop football talent as the sport's national federation attempts to overhaul its "identity and philosophy", the organisation revealed on Saturday.

India, once called a "sleeping giant" of football by former FIFA president Sepp Blatter, are 106th in world rankings and struggle to grab public attention in the cricket-obsessed country.

The All India Football Federation (AIFF) has struggled with governance issues and was temporarily suspended by football world governing body FIFA last year. Fresh elections followed in September and the AIFF is now eyeing big changes with the help of 73-year-old Frenchman Wenger.

"We will have a data driven scouting system in place for the national team," secretary general Shaji Prabhakaran told reporters on Saturday.

"We are going to work on this project with FIFA and Arsene Wenger is personally going to devote his time."

Wenger is currently working for FIFA as its head of global football development. AIFF president Kalyan Chaubey did not specify Wenger's exact role in the talent development programme but said the exercise would be key to making India a football powerhouse by 2047 -- the country's centenary of independence.

"We are not going to sell dreams," he said.

"We have to build the foundations of a strong structure and build our own identity and philosophy."

AFP

The gap between Messi and Ronaldo has never been clearer



Messi and Ronaldo are the two outstanding talents of their generation (Getty/Reuters)

By Miguel Delaney

BEFORE leaving Manchester United, Cristiano Ronaldo was so intent on staying at the top level that he had actually taken it upon himself to directly speak to figures he knew at elite clubs. Few were interested. There was no offer that would have been acceptable to the Portuguese. He still had strong ideas about his own worth.

Ronaldo's plan was clearly to go to the World Cup and remind everyone what that worth is, before watching the offers flood back.

Instead, reality intervened. That didn't just apply to a tournament that saw a limited Ronaldo unable to perform to anything like the same level and eventually left on the bench in ignominy. It also applied to a debate that has dominated football culture for the last 15 years.

Lionel Messi has done much more than win. He has shown there should never really have been a debate at all; that it was largely illusory, a product of social media and public relations.

This isn't to say the players didn't feel it, or that Ronaldo didn't push Messi on. It probably lifted both to greater heights. All of that was visible over the last decade.

It's just that Messi's World Cup victory also made visible the reality of the gap between these two stars.

Ronaldo is clearly better than most footballers to have ever played the game, something which made such a historic goalscorer. But Messi is perhaps the purest footballer to have ever played, which made him so much more than a goalscorer.

He is on that level above, where only Pele and Diego Maradona reside. That's where the debate really was.

This is what was so symbolic about this World Cup win, and the sense of completion. It was a great player fulfilling his career but also fulfilling all of his talent. Nothing was left out

there, in a manner that is rare in sport. Very few stories compare, with arguably only Pele's 1970 win and Muhammad Ali's 1974 reclaiming of the heavyweight title on a similar narrative and global scale.

Like those two, Messi displayed a similarly transcendent ability to adapt his innate talent, reshaping his own game and the game itself. His World Cup featured so many vintage moments that also gave him and the world something new in a sensational greater glory.

There was the scoring, since Messi ended with seven goals, the last of them a classic poacher's strike from a move he had started. There were the clutch moments, like that in the final, but also the impossibly accurate strike against Mexico that revived Argentina's entire campaign. One argument that has been put forward by a few people familiar with both stars is that, while Messi was always the better footballer, Ronaldo just had this superior will that ensured he didn't suffer defeats in the same way.

No more. The image of the ashen-faced Messi enduring another humiliation - another major trophy eluding him - is gone, except to serve as mere set-up for the finest of comebacks. Few have dominated and defined a World Cup like this, driving a relatively moderate team to the highest level. That is the greatest will, at the ultimate moment.

There were then the throwback Messi runs that themselves ran through this World Cup, especially that surge in the semi-final against Croatia.

Most tellingly, however, there was that divine pass for Nahuel Molina to score against Netherlands. It was not that Messi put it in the only place he could to conjure a goal out of nothing. It was that, in an instant and on the move, he had computed the optimum path to goal and followed in the most exquisitely economical manner.

This was precisely why there was really never been a debate at all, and

what has been made so apparent as both players come into the last half of their 30s.

Messi's greatness has always been about that talent, above all else. Ronaldo obviously has talent but the real difference has been how his physical prowess has maximised that. When you think of his great moments, they aren't usually about deftness or technique but power, agility and movement. Even his finishing, which became close to flawless, became as much about his timing.

Ever since Ronaldo's physical attributes started to fade, though, so has his effect. Messi, put bluntly, could still do so much more with a football. It is why it is easy to imagine spraying passes as his own movement wanes. He will still be able to control a football to a level superior to any other than maybe Maradona and Pele.

That was always evident, but this last period has made it an unavoidable truth. Messi has just enjoyed an achievement that is priceless. Ronaldo must try and portray a price as an achievement.

One response might be that Ronaldo is almost 38 and Messi 35, but it's the same if you take it back two and a half years.

In the autumn of 2020, the Portuguese had started a campaign that marked the end of Juventus' nine-year sequence of Serie A titles. The argument was already raging about how he provided goals but took away from the team's collective threat. There's now a different argument, that

Ronaldo's signing was one of the worst in modern football history given its negative effect on Juventus. The immense expense ensured the club couldn't reshape or restructure, anchoring them to a system built for him that weighed them down.

At the same age, Messi was ascending to the greatest glory.

It's not known if Ronaldo watched the World Cup final. It's still difficult not to think it influenced his decision to join Al-Nassr in some way. With no club of appropriate status offering an opportunity to restore his reputation and soothe his ego, he had to go for the next best thing you can gloat about. That's the biggest financial contract, as offered by Al-Nassr.

It still articulates one of many contrasts between these two, that have been conditioned by their abilities, personalities and choices.

Messi has just enjoyed an achievement that is priceless. Ronaldo must try and portray a price as an achievement.

"I had offers from Brazil, Portugal, America, Australia," he said. "But I gave my word to Al-Nassr."

They gave him a number.

Other arguments will be made about legacy, about spreading the game. "I gave my word to this club to develop not only football but other parts of this amazing country," Ronaldo went on. "I want to give a different vision of this club and country."

Far from enhancing

his legacy, though, it could damage it. Saudi Arabia already has a fervent football culture, after all. That could be seen at the World Cup. It's not like he's developing a new culture, nor is it like the wider game cares about its growth in any one country. There are questions over how much Ronaldo actually cares, too, given he only agreed to this deal at this late stage and at this kind of cost.

There is also the moral cost.

"Al-Nassr's signing of Cristiano Ronaldo fits into a wider pattern of sportswashing in Saudi Arabia," says Dana Ahmed, Amnesty International's Middle East Researcher. "It is highly likely that the Saudi authorities will promote Ronaldo's presence in the country as a means of distracting from the country's appalling human rights record."

It feels even likelier he will be used as an ambassador for the country's 2030 World Cup bid. He may even see Messi on television doing similar, given the Argentine's role with Saudi tourism.

An irony to this is that it still arguably isn't as bad as Messi's own use by Qatar, through Paris Saint-Germain. Whereas Ronaldo going to Saudi Arabia is a league attempting to superficially benefit from the afterglow of a faded star, projects like at the French club - or Newcastle United or Manchester City - are buying into the very fabric of the game. One is on the outside of the elite. One is at the very heart.

That is nevertheless where the two great rivals are now. Ronaldo is reduced to trying to find some meaning in a league far away from the top level, that brings more questions than attention. Few outside his online fanatics will seriously care about the goals.

Messi has just returned to a favourite for the Champions League, where he has been celebrated for finally winning the World Cup.

A last irony is that Ronaldo could still be at such a club. It just would have involved playing a more limited role on less money, albeit potentially still an influential one as a senior professional. There would have been serious merit in that. He could have done it for Manchester United.

It is as if he has been governed by a sense of denial about where he is at this point in his career, though.

It is as if a delusion has surrounded him. Questions have to be asked about some of the advice he has received.

There is similar with that bigger debate. Really, it is no shame that Ronaldo is on that second tier of greats, along with players like the Brazilian Ronaldo. It is part of what made him so good that he refused to accept that secondary status.

The flip side is that it has also led to this rather sad ending, as Messi enjoys this best possible climax.

As with Ronaldo's calls to clubs, there's little more worth saying.

(Agencies)

Gwiji by David Chikoko



SPORT

The gap between
**Messi and Ronaldo has
never been clearer**

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Feisal Salum unhappy with TFF Players Status Committee's decision

Speaking in an interview after the initial verdict, Majembe said: "We have been a little bit shocked with the verdict, that is to say that we are not happy with the decision."

The lawyer noted: "In fact, it is not something that we expected to come out like that, we are communicating with the player to see what we will do next."

He revealed: "This information has saddened us, and it has really upset us because we had looked thoroughly at our client's case, it was straightforward."

The lawyer pointed out: "It was a clear cut case and we did not expect things would be like this. The decisions arrived at the end have been completely completely against our expectations."

"We don't think that justice has been done, even though people say that justice exists in heaven, but if you look at the circumstances of the contract and football, justice was not done here. I think if there are other entities that may have different ideas, the answers cannot be the same," Majembe noted.

"I don't have explicit confirmation, but the feeling is that since we are not satisfied with this decision, we will go ahead to appeal against it, to seek justice for our side."

The lawyer said: "The CAS is the second step, TFF regulations show that we must request a review of this decision. So we haven't decided whether to ask for



Feisal Salum

a review or directly go to CAS."

"The verdict itself has been given as a summary, we have not got the reasons for the decisions so we are not in a position to decide whether the reasons for the

decisions will push us to go for a review or go directly to CAS," he revealed.

Majembe noted: "All these factors means we need to sit down to discuss as his lawyers his but also to discuss with the player himself

to see if the steps we recommend to take are something that he feels he needs to do because sustaining a case requires stamina. They are things that involve many people and are emotionally draining."



Abdulai Iddrisu

Azam FC completes signing of Ghanaian goalkeeper

By Correspondent Michael Mwebe

MAINLAND Tanzania's NBC Premier League side, Azam FC, has completed the signing of Ghanaian goalkeeper Abdulai Iddrisu from his home country's outfit Bechem United in a two-year deal.

Iddrisu was part of the Ghana national team made up of home-based players that was in Egypt preparing for the 2022 African Nations Championships which kick off this weekend.

However, the highly-rated goalkeeper cut short his stint with the Black Galaxies to travel to Tanzania to complete his move, ruling him out of the tournament.

The 25-year-old shot-stopper arrived in Dar es Salaam on Monday to complete all other formalities of his transfer from Bechem United. On Sunday afternoon Azam FC confirmed he has put pen to paper to sign a two-year contract.

Last season, Iddrisu had a good campaign with Bechem United, playing an important role as the club finished in third position during the 2021/22 Ghana Premier League.

The shot stopper allowed 18 goals in 31 matches on his way to winning Best Goalkeeper prize at the 2022 Ghana Football Awards gala.

He was also indispensable in Bechem United's run to the MTN FA Cup finals, keeping three clean sheets in eight games for the 2021/22 MTN FA Cup runners-up.

In the current campaign, he has played eight matches in the Ghanaian top flight and managed to keep three clean sheets and conceded 5 goals.

Iddrisu becomes the second Ghanaian goalkeeper to sign for Azam FC, following in the footsteps of Razack Abalora who spent three years at Chamazi-based side between 2016 and 2020.

His signing also means Azam FC has two foreign goalkeepers. Ali Ahamada who was signed at the start of this season has been the first choice but the Comoro international has faced constant criticism following a series of errors between the posts.

Azam FC still have academy products Wilbol Maseke and Zubeir Foba to call upon as third-choice and fourth choice back ups.

Ahmed Ali Suleiman, goalkeeper hailing from Zanzibar, who was supposed to offer competition to Ahmada was released last month.

By Correspondent Michael Mwebe

NDURUMA Majembe, the legal advisor who represented midfielder Feisal Salum Abdallah affectionately known as 'Fei Toto', at Tanzania Football Federation (TFF) Players Status Committee in the player's case against Young Africans SC, alias Yanga, says he and his client are not pleased with the outcome of the verdict.

Yanga filed a complaint before the Players Status Committee regarding Salum decision to unilaterally terminate his contract with the club.

Late last month, Salum wrote a termination letter to Yanga and paid 120m/- in order to walk out of his contract which is valid up to the end of 2023/24 season.

The Player status committee summoned both parties to appear before it on Friday morning last week.

A decision was reached after the committee heard both parties at the federation's headquarters in Karume in Dar es Salaam.

The Alex Mgongolwa-led Committee ruled in favour of Yanga stating the midfielder is still contracted with the club.



Abdulrazack Mohamed

Namungo FC follows in Ihefu SC's footsteps, releases seven

By Correspondent Michael Mwebe

NAMUNGO FC has followed in the footsteps of Ihefu SC as the former also announced mass departures at the club.

While Ihefu SC announced that five players would not be part of the club's squad going forward and released them, Namungo FC has offloaded seven players.

The club issued a statement which was shared on its social media account in which the outfit confirmed the players' departures and wished them good luck in their next clubs.

Nigerian forward Blessing Godwin and former Kinondoni Municipal Council FC defender Abdulrazack Mohamed have been let go as part of Namungo FC midseason clearance.

Godwin who joined the team at the start of this season struggled for game- albeit his exclusion sometimes owes to injury- played seven league games without finding the back of the

net.

Promising centre back Mohamed has found it tough to dislodge the pairing of Christopher Oruchum and Frank Magingi at the heart of Namungo FC defense.

He has been forced to contend for a place in the midfield which has restricted his appearance to just five games.

The Azam FC academy graduate joined Namungo FC mid-season from Kinondoni Municipal Council FC.

Mwisho Yangson, Idd Farjala, Salim Bwenzi, Omar Chareli are the other players shown the exit door. Their departure opens spaces for new players that have already been identified.

Right fullback Hassan Kibailo is already training with the team and is part of the squad in the on-going Mapinduzi Cup tournament in Zanzibar.

Namungo FC is also reported to be in negotiation to bring back the side's former striker Stephen

Sey.

The Ghanaian was the Lindi-based side's fans' favourite before he was sold to Egyptian side Eastern Company in 2021.

Former Azam FC and Yanga midfielder Frank Domayo has also been confirmed as a new addition to the squad.

Domayo was released by Azam FC at the end of last season having spent eight seasons with the Chamazi-based club since he joined from Yanga.

Benin international midfielder Patrice Coucou was the first signing for Namungo FC in the mid-season transfer.

He has hit the ground running with four consecutive appearances for Namungo FC so far.

In the league, Namungo FC is sitting fifth with 26 points, having played 19 games and are now 11 points behind fourth-placed Singida Big Stars, who are proving to be a force under coach Hans van der Pluijm in their top-flight debut season.

Flexibles by David Chikoko

