



RC lauds bank for bolstering digital payments Page 3

MP forms committee to fight GBV Page 4

Be patriotic, Dr Chana tells civil servants Page 6

Page 13

DCEA uncovers 3,182 kilogram of heroin, holds five

By Henry Mwangonde

TWO persons of Asian origin and five others have been arrested in connection to the seizure of 3,182 kilogrammes of heroin and methamphetamine in a special operation conducted in Dar es Salaam and Iringa regions for most of December.

Aretas James Lyimo, the commissioner general for the Drug Control and Enforcement Authority (DCEA) said at a press conference yesterday that the operation was conducted from December 5 and 23 in the two regions.

The seized drugs involve 2,180.29 kilogrammes of methamphetamine and 1001.7 kilogrammes of heroin, uncovered in Kigamboni, Ubungu and Kinondoni districts in Dar es Salaam and Iringa urban area.

"The seizure involves a huge consignment of drugs which has never been recorded in Tanzania's history in the fight against drugs," he said, asserting that those arrested belong to big networks of drug barons wanted by local and international law enforcement agencies.

The seized drugs were wrapped in packs of products like coffee and tea, a commonly used method to avoid detection, he said, explaining that while heroin which is manufactured from opium poppy mainly in Asia and America, methamphetamine is a new drug, "a very addictive stimulant same as cocaine." Methamphetamine is an artificial stimulant that is highly addictive and can be injected, smoked, snorted or ingested orally, he said, describing the drug as entailing serious health effects to the user.

It leaves a lasting effect on the brain leading to loss of memory, while affecting the central nervous system, he said, affirming that if the drugs seized entered the market, upwards of 76m people in the country and in neighbouring states would have been affected.

The seizure has spared harmful effects to a section of manpower in the region that could have been affected by the drugs, he stated, urging the general public to enhance collaboration with the agency whenever they see signs of trafficking. They need to provide information about

TURN TO PAGE 2



Zanzibar First Vice President Othman Masoud Othman (R) draws the curtain to launch the Masingini water project at Urban West A in Unguja as part of activities to mark 60 years of the Zanzibar Revolution, yesterday. Photo: FVPO

NHIF calls roundtable with private hospitals

By Correspondent Joseph Mwendapole

PRIVATE hospital operators will hold a meeting with the National Health Insurance Fund (NHIF) that will also involve top executives of national and regional referral hospitals, private and religious healthcare institutions, to discuss the new payment rates taking effect at the start of the New Year.

Dr Christopher Lazeck, the NHIF Kinondoni regional manager, yesterday dispatched a letter to the Association of Private Hospital Owners (APHFTA), saying that the meeting will be held tomorrow at the PSSS commercial complex in Kinondoni suburb of Dar es Salaam. Members of the association have recently alerted NHIF that they will not be able to serve NHIF members on the basis of stipulated payments, which they affirmed represent a 25per cent drop in valuation and 36percent drop for various services.

They said they were not involved in preparing the new consultation and treatment pricing schedules, with NHIF saying earlier this month that it had standardised payments.

It had increased amounts the government-run insurer pays for some services and drugs while lowering quotations for others, it said, asserting that the rates were adjusted to reflect the prevailing situation.

While NHIF officials say that various health stakeholders were involved in the review but APHFTA declared early this week that NHIF pronounced the new rates without its formal involvement.

Many private hospitals would be risking closing down due to huge losses if they

TURN TO PAGE 2

Zanzibar recorded 57,296 tourist arrivals, November

By Guardian Correspondent, Zanzibar

THE number of tourists visiting Zanzibar in November rose by 4.2 percent to 57,296 compared to 54,961 arrivals in the Isles a month earlier.

Bakari Khamis Kondo, an official from the Chief Government Statistician for Zanzibar, told journalists yesterday that the main source of the visitors were from Europe,

standing at 42,488 tourists or 74.2 percent of the total.

"We also received a good number of visitors from African countries, accounting for 11.6 percent of the total," he said, noting that 5,353 visitors (9.3percent) were from the United States.

Five European countries had big numbers of tourists, namely Italy (6,590), Poland (6,148), France (5,226), Germany (4,765) and

Britain (3,990), where 86.2 percent of the visitors entered Zanzibar by flight and 13.8 percent by ship at the Malindi port, Unguja.

Upwards of 83.1 percent of the visitors used international airlines and 3.1 percent took local airlines, with 2.7 percent of arrivals using foreign shipping lines and 11 percent boarded locally operated ships.

Among the visitors, 30,411 were men and

TURN TO PAGE 2



Elias Masumbuko (C), mayor of Shinyanga municipality, leads residents to clean the environment and plant trees at the Kidalu water source yesterday. Photo: Correspondent Marco Maduhu

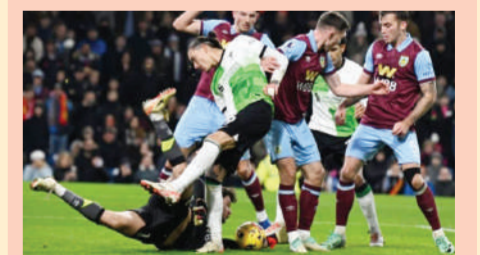
SPORTS

Page 20



Taifa Stars set for 2023 AFCON warm-up with Egypt

Page 19



Liverpool go top as Nunez strikes, Hojlund caps Man United fightback

Page 18



Azam FC eyes dominance in 2023/24 NBC Premier League



Zanzibar recorded 57,296 tourist arrivals, November

FROM PAGE 1

26,885 women, while tourists aged 65 years and above accounted for 9.5 percent of arrivals. Those aged 15 years or less were equivalent to 4 percent while 86 percent were aged 15 to 64 years, he said. Up to 95 percent of them visited the Isles for vacation, he elaborated.

Those who came to Zanzibar for learning purposes or visiting their relatives mostly stayed for a week (74.5 percent), and 25.4 percent of them stayed

for over 10 days, he said.

Visitors to the Indian Ocean archipelago in the past five years stood at 538,264 in 2019, 260,644 in 2020, 394,185 in 2021, 548,503 in 2022 and 568,312 this year.

Moto Ng'wingande, a Bank of Tanzania (BoT) economist in Zanzibar, linked the increased number of visitors with economic growth, affirming that tourism sector improvement is beneficial to Isles residents.

DCEA uncovers 3,182 kg of heroin, holds five

FROM PAGE 1

the business in drugs, as seizures are only possible with public involvement, he pursued, issuing a stern warning to those involved in trafficking, that the law enforcers are committed to ensure that Tanzania is free of drugs.

When conducting various operations, back in June DCEA reported seizing 200.5 kilogrammes of heroin and varied intoxicating drugs in a wave of

inspections from March to June, arresting 109 suspects, including three foreigners.

Other drugs seized then include 978 bags of marijuana, methamphetamine (531.5grams) heroin (3,878 pellets) and cocaine (138 pellets).

DCEA also managed to destroy 1,093 acres of marijuana plants, in an operation conducted in association with the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB), he added.

Tanga to host tangerines, spices summit in March

By Guardian Correspondent, Tanga

TANGA Region is set to host a summit about tangerines and spices to discuss issues in agriculture, markets and proper methods for crop marketing.

Speaking to journalists yesterday, Executive Director of Muheza District, Jumaa Mhina said the summit will take place in March 2024 where participants will deliberate on agriculture issues and crops markets including best practices for the benefit of farmers in Muheza District.

Mhina called upon farmers and stakeholders to attend the summit in big numbers as the meeting will render an opportunity for them to brand and thereafter obtain potential markets for their crops in and outside the country.

Mhina added that the visit by the Minister of Agriculture, Hussein Bashe has brought forth major achievements to the district's agricultural sector.

"We are thankful for the minister's visit which has exhibited support to sisal, oranges and spices with the district being an example in the imposition of hardship allowance for agricultural officers in wards and villages including motorcycle fuel," he said.

The DC also extended his appreciation to President Samia Suluhu Hassan for progressive disbursement of development funds for Muheza District.

Mohammed Mfaki, Muheza District Administrative Secretary, said President Samia has been in the forefront to inject funds in the district to support development in education, agriculture, health, water, electricity and road infrastructures.

CCM secretary in Muheza District, Simon Leng'ese and the chairman of Muheza District Council, Erasto Mhina highlighted in separate occasions that the major strides made are in accordance with the ruling party's election manifesto.

Newly discovered toad species lives on African volcano, study

By Special Correspondent, Nairobi

SCIENTISTS have identified a new genus and species of true toad from a single specimen found in the high forests of Mount Kenya, an extinct volcano in Kenya and the second-highest peak in Africa, after Kilimanjaro.

Contrary to the prevailing belief that most of Kenya's amphibian species originated after volcanic activity subsided millions of years ago, the new species – named the Kenyan volcano toad (*Kenyaphrynoides vulcani*) – may date back as far as 20 million years, making it significantly older than the volcanic formation of Mount Kenya itself.

"Many of Kenya's mountains are volcanic or geologically comparatively new, so to find an ancient lineage that has persisted for millions of years is mind-blowing," said Dr. Simon Loader, principal curator of vertebrates at the Natural History Museum, London. "It's a real conundrum to figure out how it got here."

"While we're not certain, it seems like it might once have had a wider distribution and as the climate changed over the past 10's of millions of years, it tracked the tropical forest as it moved, with the toad's final destination being the top of Mount Kenya."

The discovery of the Kenyan volcano toad challenges the notion of the Kenyan Interval, a term used to describe the stark contrast in amphibian diversity between Kenya and its neighbouring countries.

While Ethiopia and Tanzania have long been biodiversity hotspots for amphibians, Kenya's geological history, and the frequency of tectonic activity, has made it a challenging place for these creatures to thrive.

The unique characteristics of *Kenyaphrynoides vulcani* suggest that the

Kenyan Interval may not be as straightforward as previously believed.

When the toad was first discovered in a pitfall on Mount Kenya back in 2015, it already appeared to be very different from the species that are normally found in the region.

"We were really surprised to see this animal – it didn't look like anything we had seen before but resembled something we knew from Tanzania called *Churamiti maridadi*, a forest tree toad from the rainforests of the Ukaguru mountains," said Dr. Patrick Malonza and Dr. Victor Wasonga, curators at the National Museums of Kenya.

Kenyaphrynoides vulcani's distinct features include a smaller size, a more frog-like body, and distinctive green and brown markings.

Its genetic and morphological differences from other known toad species have led to its recognition at the genus level. Clues from its physical characteristics, such as enlarged fingertips suggest it may be a climber.

Its thumbs also have sharp points known as nuptial spines which are found in many male frogs and toads, as they help the male grab onto a female and stimulate them into breeding.

"These forest toads found in mountains in East Africa are unusual and don't look like a typical toad," said Dr. Hendrik Müller, a researcher at the Martin-Luther-University Halle-Wittenberg.

"More interestingly, several are known have an unusual breeding strategy called ovo-vivipary." "In ovo-viviparity the eggs hatch inside the female. This means that the young emerge from the mother as small toads, rather than as tadpoles."

The discovery is reported in a paper in the *Zoological Journal of the Linnean Society*.



Muheza District residents in Tanga Region look at the caterpillar stuck in the mud to remove dirt in Amtico River at the Kwamtiga on Monday. Photo: Correspondent Steven William

Minister calls upon Tanzanians to ensure proper land use planning

By Guardian Correspondent, Katavi

DEPUTY Minister for Lands, Housing and Human Settlements Development Geophrey Pinda has called upon Tanzanians to ensure proper land use planning for the benefits of coming generation.

Pinda was concerned that since the country's population keeps increasing, it is only through land use planning that the coming generation would benefit with the available land resources.

Speaking at his home at Kibaoni in Mpimbwe District, Katavi Region on Tuesday, he said as the government

prepares the country's Development Vision 2050, Tanzanians must prepare land use plans because populations increase and land resources become scarcer. "We must have plans for the coming 25 years on how we are going to use the limited land resources. It is even better to have land use plans for 50 years to come," said Pinda.

He added: "Those owning land should share it with their relatives; we must love each other and share whatever we have including land because it is a rarer resource."

Pinda who is the Member of Parliament for Kavuu Constituency said a

number of successes have been recorded compared to previous years.

He linked the recorded development strides with the good leadership of President Samia Suluhu Hassan who has been allocating funds for implementation of various projects including those which are not in the ruling party's election manifesto including construction of dispensaries, schools and road infrastructures.

Mpimbwe District Executive Director, Shamimu Mwariko called upon the residents to collaborate with their leaders especially those making bold strategic decisions. She said by doing

so the district will record successes like other districts in the region.

"If we are really determined to bring about development in our district we must work and collaborate with our leaders and support their plans," she said.

Meanwhile, Former Prime Minister, Mizengo Pinda urged Kavuu MP to be closer to the people and share with them the various development plans.

"You should respect all the people and involve them in development plans. It is important to have a good relationship with people you represent," said the former Premier.



A cross-section of Kavuu constituency residents in Mpimbwe council enjoy Christmas party fun organised by their legislator who is also Lands, Housing and Human Settlements Development Deputy minister Geophrey Pinda held at his residence Kibaoni in Katavi Region on Tuesday. Photo: Correspondent Munir Shemweta

NHIF calls roundtable with private hospitals

FROM PAGE 1

treat insured patients on the rates billed to take effect January 1, it said, suggesting that a payments increase across the board would have compensated hospitals for payment delays, inflation and the recent drop in the value of the shilling.

NHIF says that the packages indicate services, drug prices and fees covered by the fund, claiming that they were

reviewed this year "to take into consideration changes that have taken place since 2016 when the last review was conducted."

It insists that the review was inclusive and involved key stakeholders, including APHFTA, to which the private health facilities' body signalled its inability to attend NHIF members were the new rates to take effect as planned.

NHIF says that the payments review

began in 2020 and involved various religious organisations, the Medical Association of Tanzania (MAT), public hospitals and physicians in charge of district hospitals as well as APHFTA, which the association forcefully denies.

All the same NHIF says that consultations were still being pursued, "to make sure that all stakeholders understand the review," while APHFTA says

that much of the review involved price slashing, with costs of 78 percent of medicines and services being cut by an average of 36 percent.

NHIF had similarly asked private hospital operators to install an online system and use it to submit payment claims to NHIF to enable their being settled within 14 days, "but the situation had not changed despite the platform being up and running."

Call to recognise eye health as vital part of healthcare and development

By Polycarp Machira, Dodoma

THE country Director for Sightsaver, Godwin Kabalika has stated that eye health should be equally available to everyone, no one should be disadvantaged because of where they live, their gender, health, or background.

He argues that currently it is inaccessible for some sectors of society and even a luxury for those in urban areas.

Speaking during an interview with this paper, the director noted, "This needs to change. When we tackle these issues, children can learn and adults can earn. Eye health equals a ripple effect on the lives of individuals, families, and communities, helping nations to thrive and reducing poverty and inequality."

He cited a new Lancet Global Health report that has found preventable and sight loss will cost the global economy \$411 billion in the year 2020 due to lost employment. This figure far outweighs the estimated cost gap of addressing the unmet need of vision impairment estimated at about \$25 billion.

The director also acknowledged the fact that governments are working towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), a set of United Nations (UN) goals which aim to reduce global poverty and inequality and protect the planet.

They include a target to achieve universal health coverage (UHC), ensuring everyone has access to health services. In 2021, global leaders also unanimously adopted the UN 'Vision for Everyone' resolution, which explicitly links eye health to all the SDGs.

To achieve the goals and resolution, inclusive eye health is essential. Unless it is recognised as a vital part of healthcare and development, efforts to achieve the SDGs and UHC will fail.

Indeed, the World Health Organization reported in September that "the world is off track to make significant progress towards universal health coverage" and that improvements to health services coverage have stagnated.

The impact of inclusive eye health can be seen through stories such as Amina Yusuph from Kilosa Morogoro, who had bilateral cataract for two years, she was operated under the Sightsavers and regional partnership eye care outreach program, now she

can see well.

Amina shared her experience of having blurred site for two years as dependence, she added that, a person loose freedom and privacy, everything you needs support from other person, therefore, eye services should be available for everyone in need said Amina.

Sightsavers, Ministry of Health and other eye health partners are also marking World Sight Day by creating awareness to the people to love their eyes.

He continued, "We are already working with the government and other partners to improve eye health services and we commend their efforts. But more needs to be done to ensure eye health is represented in health planning, resourcing, and funding. Including people with disabilities, women, and other marginalised groups, community outreach, and a geographically spread workforce, will help reduce disparity of access."

Sightsavers recently conducted project introduction of its Inclusive Eye Health project (Macho Yangu) in Dodoma and the representative from Dodoma Regional Referral Hospital mentioned that currently in Tanzania there are only at least 84 Ophthalmologists out of the needed 271, Assistant Medical Officer in Ophthalmologist (AMOOs) are at least 86 out of the needed 564.



This needs to change. When we tackle these issues, children can learn and adults can earn. Eye health equals a ripple effect on the lives of individuals, families, and communities, helping nations to thrive and reducing poverty and inequality

Dr Malusa to be crowned as ELCT leader next month

By Guardian Reporter, Moshi

THE re-elected Head of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania (ELCT) Bishop Dr Alex Malusa is set to officially be crowned leader of the church for the next four years on January, 21 next year.

He will assume the role and be responsible for overseeing implementation of the resolutions from the 21st ELCT meeting which agreed to initiate a process to have one constitution for the church.

The whole process has been given a timeframe of one year to be completed, with the service to crown bishop Malusa expected to be held at Azania front of the Eastern and Coast Diocese in Dar es Salaam.

Head of the ELCT Dr Frederick Shoo announced the intent to hand over the helm of the church leadership yesterday in Moshi, Kilimanjaro region when speaking to the diaspora 444 who reside outside the five Provinces of northern Diocese of northern Tanzania.

"The constitutional issue is a big issue; therefore, I call upon all ELCT members to pray for this issue," he said.

Speaking on his tenure as a leader, Dr Shoo said it was a huge responsibility but through God's guidance he managed to lead the church.

Malusa, who is also the Bishop of the Eastern and Coastal Diocese, was

elected at conference which went up to midnight by the members of the ELCT which started on August 20 to 25 this year at Tumaini Makumira University located in Usa River, Arusha region, after a fierce competition that gave him victory in the third round.

Bishop Malusa, is returning to the position he served from 2007 to 2015, when he finished his term, and handed over to Bishop Dr Shoo.

In the election announced by the Chairman of the election, Bishop Amon Mwenda, Dr Malusa, was resoundingly elected with 167 votes, equivalent to 69.3 percent

His opponent, Bishop Dr Abednego Keshomshahara of North West Diocese (Kagera), got 73 votes, equivalent to 30.3 percent

The meeting of the KKKT was preceded by the celebration and the 60th anniversary of the creation of the KKKT.

The new head of the ELCT, is faced with the difficult task of addressing the challenges the church is facing.

The new constitution that is currently being drafted gives him the power to manage all 27 Dioceses, to unite the church from all Dioceses, each of which has its own constitution and have one constitution.

Among other things, he has to find a way to end the differences of opinions among the bishops of the church but also ensuring that the assets of the church belong to one church.



Kiteto District Commissioner in Manyara Region Remidius Mwema (3rd L) receives office documents from his predecessor Mbaraka Batenga who is now Chunya DC in Mbeya Region at Kibaya on Tuesday. Photo: Correspondent Gift Thadey

By Beatrice Philemon

A GRASSROOTS women-led Organisation—Sauti ya Wanawake Ukerewe (SAWAU) is implementing the 'Haki Mazingira' project aiming to educate women and girls on how to cope with climate change effects.

Sophia Donald, the organisation's executive director said yesterday that the project is being implemented in three wards in Ukerewe Island—Bwiro, Bwisya and Murutunguru.

The project aimed at helping women and girls understand what are the causes of climate change will include training them on environment conservation.

They will be educated on the negative impacts of cutting down trees for charcoal and firewood as

Ukerewe based organisation trains over 2000 women, girls on climate resilient

well as avoiding conducting activities such as agriculture near water sources.

She said the organisation has been able to provide training to 250 women and girls in the three wards with financial support from Women Fund Tanzania Trust (WFTT). She said the target is to reach 2000 women and girls.

"WFTT provided us with 20m/- for implementation of the project of which we will execute from July 2023 to August 2024," she said, adding that under the project, women and girls are also planting trees in different

areas within the island.

Donald said the organisation will conduct advocacy programmes to officials at the district council to enable them to formulate new friendly laws that will protect women and girls from being mostly affected by climate change.

She lauded WFTT and other women's rights stakeholders for supporting the organization to participate at the 15th gender festival exhibition that took place at Tanzania Gender Networking Programme (TGNP) in November this year.

"During the event I got an

opportunity to participate in different workshops, share experiences with other participants and learnt so much about climate and how it is impacting the lives of women and girls.

She said the gender festival was an opportunity for her to join hands with gender activists and deliberate on collective actions that would result in formulation of new policies and legal frameworks.

"I am going to share the acquired knowledge with fellow women and also use the gained skills to improve the various programmes at our organization," she added.



Tanzania Traffic Police Commander Ramadhan Ng'anzi provides safety driving education at Nangurukuru in Lindi Region on Tuesday. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

Ilemela MP forms committee to fight against GBV

By Correspondent Sabato Kasika

ILEMELA MP, Dr Angelina Mabula has formed a committee to fight against gender-based violence (GBV) within the ruling CCM women wing (UWT).

The MP also promised to work with various stakeholders in the war including Mwanza-based NGO—SMAUJATA.

Dr Mabula unveiled this recently in Mwanza when speaking during special UWT meeting where she expressed that GBV acts were within the party's

wing.

"It is important to fight these acts are within our union as well, so I have created a committee against sexual violence and we will cooperate with other stakeholders like SMAUJATA," said Dr Mabula.

The secretary of SMAUJATA in the lake zone, Hashim Ramadhan, asked the members of the union to be at the forefront in the protection of children.

Ramadhan said, SMAUJATA has been providing education on the effects of GBV to various groups including

politicians, in various areas of the lake region.

"And we promise to cooperate with the MP for his decision to create a committee against sexual violence within this union, as our work will be similar," said Ramadhan.

In addition, he said, the action taken by the Member of Parliament to create committees within the UWT, aims to support the efforts of President Samia Suluhu Hassan to fight such actions.

"Our President, along with Minister Dr. Dorothy Gwajima and the Chairman

of SMAUJATA, Sospeter Bulugu, the founder of this Campaign, are leaders who give us the strength to sacrifice for our community," he said.

"My call is that, let's continue to unite by exposing all those who commit violent acts and use their money to silence the victims and cause them not to cooperate," he said.

He said, the war is difficult, because some of the evildoers are people with great financial power, and that the heroes of the campaign will continue to fight them.

'Improved sexual, reproductive health services prevent youth from being infected with HIV'

By Guardian Reporter

THE 2020 United Nations has estimated that 42 per cent of the global population are people aged below 25 years while 18 per cent are adolescents aged 10-19 years.

Africa is home to 88 per cent of the global population of adolescents whereas 18 per cent of the 88 per cent of world population of adolescents are in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA).

In Tanzania, adolescents aged between 10 and 19 years account for 23 per cent of the population. Adolescents and Young People (AYP) constitute a demographic segment that has unique needs and challenges.

They are a sexually active group beginning their debut earlier. This makes them vulnerable to sexual and reproductive health (SRH) problems such as teenage pregnancy, unsafe abortion, sexually transmitted infections (STI) and Human Immune Deficiency (HIV).

Available evidence shows that 80 per cent of the new HIV infections in Eastern and Southern Africa occur among adolescent girls aged 10-19 years. In Tanzania, 5 per cent of the people aged 15 years or older are estimated to be HIV positive.

To improve AYP's sexual and reproductive health, the Children's Dignity Forum (CDF) is implementing a four-year project in partnership with a Network of Young People Living with HIV/Aids (NYP+).

The 'You(th) Care Project' is implemented in Kenya, Tanzania and Zambia and funded by the Aidsfonds and the Netherlands.

You(th) Care project aims to enable AYP, especially girls and other vulnerable adolescents, to advocate for and practice self-care for their SRHR needs and access to digital self-care services and commodities.

Self-care is defined as the ability of individuals, families and communities to actively promote their own health, prevent diseases, maintain health and cope with illness and disability.

The project intends to enable duty bearers and decision-makers to improve resources and implement laws and policies that respect, promote, and realise adolescents' SRHR and HIV self-care needs.

It also seeks to enable adolescents, specifically girls and those who are vulnerable to have increased access to quality SRH community and public services, including access to self-care services and commodities.

For improved access and uptake of sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) and self-care services, CDF is strengthening leadership and advocacy skills of AYP and improving their SRHR and HIV knowledge through (digital) social behaviour change communication (SBCC).

CDF also influences duty bearers through online and offline campaigns and community dialogue as well as engage key decision makers to improve policies and guidelines that affect adolescents' SRHR.

The capacity of public and community health service providers is also strengthened to enable them to increase AYP uptake of SRHR and self-care services. CDF promotes intergenerational dialogue among AYP to promote self-care and youth friendly services.

Evidence from two years of implementation of the project confirms that improving access of AYP to SRHR, including self-testing and self-care services has a great potential to improve their health.

Prior to implementation of the You(th) Care project, the majority of AYP in Tarime District lacked knowledge about SRHR, HIV and self-care services.

Their lack of knowledge translated into high rates of child marriages, teenage pregnancies, unsafe abortions and STIs and HIV infections. During its two years implementations, the project has increased AYP access and uptake of SRHR and Self-care services.

Statistics from Tarime District shows that new HIV infections have dropped from 51 in 2021 to 32 in 2023 while cases of STIs have declined from 400 in 2021 to 190 in 2023 and teenage pregnancy dropped from 33 in 2021 to 27 cases in 2023.

Statistics also show that there has been an increase in the uptake of self-care services among AYP from 210 in 2021 to 524 AYP in 2023.

The number of AYP using family planning has also risen from 38 percent in 2021 to 43 percent in 2023. Likewise, the number of male adolescents using modern circumcision methods has also increased from 1180 in 2021 to 2796 in 2023.

Gender based violence has also declined from 1668 cases in 2021 to 1070 cases in 2023. The changes highlighted above are a result of AYP increased knowledge of SRHR and self-care services.

The increase in AYP knowledge is attributed to the education provided by public and community health service providers and peer educators. Increased knowledge has resulted in correct use of condoms among AYP and increased uptake of self-care services.

Evidence from two years of implementations of the You(th) Care project has confirmed that improved access to SRHR and self-care services reduces the burden on the public health system.

AYP in the project sites can maintain their own health, prevent diseases and cope with illness without necessarily visiting the health care facility.

However, AYP access and uptake of SRHR and self-care services depends on the existence of facilitating factors. Experience from the You(th) Care project shows that availability of supportive policy and laws as well as adolescents' friendly environment at health care facilities are key facilitators of AYP's access and use of SRHR services.

Other factors include confidentiality among health service providers and availability of SRHR and self-care services and commodities such as self-testing HIV and self-care kits within the environment that does not require AYP to travel long distances.

It has also been revealed that a number of factors that prevent adolescents from accessing and using SRHR and self-care services include lack of policies and laws that promote access to SRHR services by AYP.

Included here the laws that deny adolescents below 18 years of age the right to test for HIV and those which permit adolescents girls to enter into marriage at 14 or 15 years of age were also found to affect AYP access to SRHR and Self-care services.

Other factors are the lack of a youth friendly environment in clinical settings and the lack of confidentiality in the context of health facilities available.

Long distance to the health facilities was also found to prevent AYP from accessing SRHR and HIV services at the health care facilities.

It is apparent that improving AYP's access to SRHR, HIV and Self-care services is the cost effective means for achieving UHC.

To improve AYP's access to SRHR and self-care services, there should be a review of policies and laws that impede adolescents' access to SRHR and HIV services.

The Law of Marriage Act 1971, should be amended so that girls are not legally allowed to enter into marriage at 14 or 15 years. The Statutory Age of Consent of independently consenting to HIV/Aids testing and counselling should also be reviewed to ensure adolescents are legally allowed to test for HIV/Aids.

Because adolescent become sexually active and start to engage in sexual activity early, the Education and Training Policy and the Education Sector Development Plan (ESDP) should also be reviewed to make SRH education a compulsory subject taught in school and assessed like other subjects.

A specific budget targeting AYP's SRHR services should be allocated to ensure health care facilities have adequate SRHR, HIV and self-care service and commodities.

Health care facilities should establish a youth friendly environment where AYP can confidently go for SRHR, HIV and self-care services.



It is apparent that improving AYP's access to SRHR, HIV and Self-care services is the cost effective means for achieving UHC



Silver Crescent workers based in Turkey who sponsored 300 Muheza District residents for eye treatment, five water wells and distributing food supply buy fruits at one of the kiosks on Tuesday. Photo: Correspondent Steven William

Chana tasks civil servants to be patriotic, abide by laws governing public service

By Guardian Reporter, Arusha

THE Registration, Insolvency and Trusteeship Agency (RITA) employees have been tasked to work diligently while prioritising patriotism, abide by the laws and public service regulations.

Minister for Constitutional and Legal Affairs, Ambassador Pindi Chana made the call over the weekend when speaking in Arusha at the 29th session of the RITA staff council meeting.

Dr Chana said the government continues with improvements in the systems and institutional structures to strengthen the provision of quality services to the citizens.

"As a government, our goal is to

strengthen the system and structures of various public institutions in order to improve and increase efficiency in the provision of services to the public."

The minister pointed out that the services provided by RITA are very important to people, so the agency is looking for reasons to continue to strengthen and develop ways and strategies to reach more citizens.

Frank Kanyusi, RITA Chief Executive Officer (CEO) who is also the agency staff council chairman said that the agency continues to improve the interests and rights of employees as well as to create a better and enabling environment for the provision of services.

"I would like to assure you that your interests and work environment will be considered and improved, the important thing from you is to increase your work effort and refrain from acts of corruption and misconduct so that together we stand on the basis of justice and responsibility," Kanyusi said.

Hery Mkunda, secretary general of the Tanzania Union of Government and Health Employees (TUGHE), who is also the Secretary General of Trade Union Congress of Tanzania (TUCTA) said the sixth-phase government led by President Samia Suluhu Hassan continued to follow through on its promise to improve the interests and

environment of public servants.

"TUGHE and TUCTA are the link between the government and the workers, so we will continue to discuss together and give advice and recommendations with the aim of improving and increasing the conditions and ability to carry out the duties of every public servant," he said.

Adam Mkolabigawa, RITA branch chairman lauded the government for fulfilling the promise to improve the interests of the workers in parallel with promoting them in various ranks, stressing: "We'll ensure that they work with dignity and patriotism to fulfil the government's ambition to improve the lives of Tanzanians."



Minister for Constitutional and Legal Affairs, Ambassador Pindi Chana speaks at the 29th session of the RITA staff council meeting in Arusha over the weekend. Others are RITA chief executive Officer (CEO) Frank Kanyusi (R) and Hery Mkunda, secretary general of the Tanzania Union of Government and Health Employees (TUGHE) and TUCTA. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

Amidst a horrendous 2023, civil society is fighting back society

Farhana Haque Rahman
TORONTO, Canada

The year 2023 has brought so much tragedy, with incomprehensible loss of lives, whether from wars or devastating 'natural' disasters, while our planet has seen yet more records broken as our climate catastrophe worsens.

And so as the clock ticks towards the (mostly western) New Year, readers are traditionally subjected by media outlets like ours to the 'year-end' - usually a roundup of main events over the previous 12 months, one horror often overshadowed by the next.

So forgive us if for 2023 IPS takes a somewhat different approach, highlighting how humanity can do better, and how the big depressing picture should not obscure the myriad small but positive steps being taken out there.

COP28, the global climate conference held this month in Dubai, could neatly fit the 'big depressing' category. Hosted by a petrostate with nearly 100,000 people registered to attend, many of them lobbyists for fossil fuels and other polluters, it would be natural to address its outcomes with scepticism.

However, while Yamide Dagnet, Director for Climate Justice at the Open Society Foundations, described COP28 as "imperfect", she said it also marked "an important and unprecedented step forward in our 'course correction' for a just transition towards resili-



Farhana Haque Rahman

ent and greener economies."

UN climate chief Simon Stiell acknowledged shortcomings in the compromise resolutions on fossil fuels and the level of funding for the Loss and Damages Fund. But the outcome, he said, was also the "beginning of the end" for the fossil fuel era.

Imperfect as it was and still based on old structures, COP28 hinted at the possible: a planetary approach to governance where common interests spanning climate, biodiversity and the whole health of Earth outweigh and supersede the current dominant global system of rule by nation states.

As we have tragically witnessed in 2023, the existing system - as vividly reflected in the repetitive stalemate among the five veto-

bearing members of the UN Security Council - is failing to find resolution to the major conflicts of this year, Russia-Ukraine and Israel-Gaza. Not to mention older and half-forgotten conflicts in places like Myanmar (18.6 million people in need of humanitarian aid) and in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (seven million displaced).

The unrestrained destruction of Gaza and the disproportionate killings of over 17,000, (now the death toll is "at least 20,000 people" according to Palestinian officials) mostly civilians - in retaliation for 1,200 killings by Hamas and 120 hostages in captivity - have left the Palestinians in a state of deep isolation and weighed down by a feeling of being deserted by the world at large.

The United Nations and the international community have remained helpless - with UN resolutions having no impact - while American pleas for restrained aerial bombings continue to be ignored by the Israelis in an act of defiance, wrote IPS senior journalist Thalf Deen.

The hegemony of the nation-state system is surely not going to disappear soon but - without wanting to sound too idealistic - its foundations are being chipped away by civil society where interdependence prevails over the divide and rule of the existing order. And so for a few examples encountered in our reporting:

CIVICUS Lens, standing for social justice and rooted in the global south, offers analysis of major events from a civil society perspective, such as its report on the security crisis gripping Haiti casting doubt over the viability of an international plan to dispatch a Kenya-led police contingent.

Education Cannot Wait, a global fund for education in emergencies and protracted crises, lobbied at COP28 for a \$150 million appeal to support school-aged children facing climate shocks, such as the devastating drought in Somalia and Ethiopia, and floods in Pakistan where many of the 26,000 schools hit in 2022 remain closed.

Leprosy, an ancient but curable disease, had been pegged back in terms of new case numbers but the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 made it harder for patients to get treatment and for new cases to be reported. Groups such as the Sasakawa Health Foundation are redoubling efforts to promote early detection and treatment.

With 80 percent of the world's poorest living closer to the epicenters of climate-induced disasters, civil society is hammering at the doors of global institutions to address the challenges of adaptation and mitigation.

Lobbying on the sidelines of COP28 in Dubai was activist Joshua Amponsem, co-director of the Youth Climate Justice Fund who questioned why weather-resilient housing was not yet a reality in Mozambique's coastal regions despite the increasing ferocity of tropical cyclones.

"My key message is really simple. The clock is ticking for food security in Africa," Dr Simeon Ehui told IPS as the newly appointed Director General of the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture which works with partners across sub-Saharan Africa to tackle hunger, poverty and natural resource degradation.

Dr Alvaro Lario, President of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), which has received record-breaking pledges in support of its largest ever replenishment, warns that under current trends 575 million people will still be living in extreme poverty in 2030.

"Hunger remains a political issue, mostly caused by poverty, inequality, conflict, corruption and overall lack of access to food and resources. In a world of plenty, which produces enough food to feed everyone, how can there be hundreds of millions going hungry?" he asked.

Empowering communities in a bid to protect and rejuvenate the ecosystems of Pacific communities is the aim of the Unlocking Blue Pacific Prosperity conservation effort launched at COP28 by Palau's President Surangel Whipps who noted that the world was not on track to meet any of the 17 sustainable development goals or climate goals by 2030.

A scientist with a life-long career studying coral reefs, David Obura was appointed this year as the new chair of IPBES, the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES).

"We really have reached planetary limits and I think interest in oceans is rising because we have very dramatically reached the limits of land," says Dr Obura, "What the world needs to understand is how strongly nature and natural systems, even when highly altered such as agricultural systems, support people and economies very tangibly. It's the same with the ocean."

An ocean-first approach to the fight against climate change is also the pillar of a Dalhousie University research program, Transforming Climate Action, launched last May and funded by the Canadian government. Traditional knowledges of Indigenous People will be a focus.

As Max Roser, an economist making academic research accessible to all, reminds us: for more people to devote their energy to making progress tackling large global problems, we should ensure that more people know that it is possible.

Focusing on the efforts of civil society and projecting hope amidst all the heartbreak of 2023 might come across as futile and wasted, but in its coverage IPS will continue to highlight efforts and successes, big and small, that deserve to be celebrated.

Farhana Haque Rahman is the Executive Director of IPS Inter Press Service Noram and Senior Vice President of IPS; she served as the elected Director General of IPS from 2015 to 2019. A journalist and communications expert who lived and worked in Africa, Asia, Europe and North America, she is a former senior official of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization FAO and the International Fund for Agricultural Development IFAD.

IPS UN Bureau

Construction of new megaport in Peru ignores complaints from local residents

CHANCAY, Peru

"We have always lived a very quiet life here, but everything has changed since the construction of the multi-purpose port began a few years ago," said Miriam Arce, a neighborhood leader in this municipality 80 kilometers north of the Peruvian capital, where the new port is projected to become the epicenter of trade between China and South American countries.

Chancay is one of the 12 municipalities of the province of Huaral and has a population of about 63,000 inhabitants. It is known for its agricultural valleys, a sea providing an abundant catch for artisanal fishers and for fishmeal production, and attractive waves for surfers.

"This bay is ideal for getting away from the chaos of Lima. People came here because they found the calm and certainty of being in a safe place where everyone knows each other, without fear of being robbed while enjoying a beautiful beach and delicious seafood dishes," Arce, president of the Association in Defense of Housing and the Environment of the port of Chancay, told IPS.

Her great-grandmother came to Peru in the 1930s fleeing the civil war in Spain, and settled in this Pacific coastal town where her children have always been involved in fishing.

"My grandfather worked in the first fishmeal factory and in the boom of the 1960s the company built these houses as a camp facing the sea and my dad, who was a fisherman, bought the house later," she said.

Arce's memories are related to the dilemma posed by some people moving away and leaving behind the conflict generated by the construction of the Chancay Multipurpose Port Terminal that will cover a total of 992 hectares, built with an investment of 1.2 billion dollars in Chinese capital in the current first stage, to reach 3.6 billion by the time it is completed.

The investment is part of the Belt and Road Initiative launched globally by Beijing in 2013 as part of its global



View from the area of La Puntilla, in the bay of the Peruvian town of Chancay, of the beach eroded as a result of the construction of the breakwater that is part of the megaport built by a Chinese company, whose work is in its first phase. CREDIT: Mariela Jara / IPS

economic policy, which includes the development of road, port and connectivity infrastructure in different countries around the world, including South American nations.

China's largest shipping company, the state-owned Cosco Shipping, joined the project in 2019, when it acquired 60 percent of the shares. It changed the original design of the work started in 2016, to reconvert it into a multipurpose terminal, with four planned ports, and it took charge

of construction. The remaining 40 percent stayed in the hands of the initial designer, the private Peruvian mining company Volcan.

It is called a multipurpose port due to the different functions of its terminals, which are expected to handle one million containers per year of general, non-mineral bulk, liquid and rolling cargo, using infrastructure with three different components: port operations, access and logistics, and the vehicular tunnel, as explained by

the Chinese shipping company on the project's website.

The first stage, covering 141 hectares, will culminate with the construction of a port that will be inaugurated during the next Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) summit, which will be held for the third time in Peru in November 2024 and will be attended by Chinese President Xi Jinping.

According to the Peruvian government, the megaproject will position this Andean country as the leading Pa-

cific logistics center in Latin America, which will boost its economy and exports and increase trade opportunities as well as local employment.

Why uproot ourselves?

Arce is 54 years old and lives with her parents in the house where her grandparents, uncles, aunts and cousins lived. From the front of the house she can see the sea and their dock, while the back of the house is directly adjacent to the Cosco Shipping construction site, which has forced her to live permanently with dust, pollution and noise.

"This is not just a house, it is part of my family history. Why should I have to leave, uproot myself, if I was born here and I love this place. I was not a social activist, but defending the bay of Chancay has made me aware of the meaning of life and the interests at stake in our country, where it seems that money is worth more than people's rights," she said.

Her house is in the area of La Puntilla and together with her IPS toured the group of homes that line the boardwalk and lead to a hill from where you can see the breakwater, and the movement of machinery and workers.

What is most striking is the mutilation of one side of the Cascajo hill, on whose slopes are built the houses of La Puntilla, and which overlooks the port's operational area where the docks, jetties and areas for maritime entry, container storage and maintenance workshops will be built.

Arce pointed out how the beach has eroded in the area. She also showed the geotubes, three-meter diameter canvas sleeves filled with sand and water that the company has placed between the sea and the sand as a retaining wall to counteract erosion.

"The works have changed the marine currents, we no longer have waves and have lost not only the characteristic beauty of the bay that was a tourist attraction, but the environment and natural resources have been damaged," she complained.

In 2016, explosions began that created seismic waves that affected houses located as far as 50 kilometers from the project area. Protests led to the signing of agreements between affected residents who received payments of between 75 and 260 dollars for the inconvenience caused.

Catastrophic shortage of food in Gaza—starvation as a weapon of war

UNITED NATIONS

As the killings of civilians in Gaza rose to over 20,000, the besieged city—which has been virtually reduced to rubble by Israeli bombardments—is also being ravaged by hunger and starvation. In new estimates released on December 21, the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC), a global partnership that includes the World Health Organization (WHO), said Gaza is facing “catastrophic levels of food insecurity,” with the risk of famine “increasing each day.”

An unprecedented 93% of the population in Gaza is facing crisis levels of hunger, with insufficient food, and high levels of malnutrition.

At least 1 in 4 households are facing “catastrophic conditions”: experiencing an extreme lack of food and starvation and having resorted to selling off their possessions and other extreme measures to afford a simple meal. Starvation, destitution and death are evident.

The World Food Programme warns that these levels of acute food insecurity are unprecedented in recent history and that Gaza risks famine.

Shaza Moghraby, Spokesperson for the UN World Food Programme (WFP) said: “I have been exposed to many IPC reports on various countries throughout my time at WFP and I have never seen anything like this before. The levels of acute food insecurity are unprecedented in terms of seriousness, speed of deterioration and complexity.”

Gaza risks famine. The population falling into the “catastrophe” classification of food security in Gaza or IPC Level 5 is more than four times higher than the total number of people currently facing similar conditions worldwide (577,000 compared to 129,000 respectively).

“We need an immediate humanitarian ceasefire, the opening of all border crossings and the resumption of commercial cargo to provide relief, put an end to the suffering and avert the very serious threat of famine. We cannot wait for famine to be declared before we act,” she said.

On recent missions to north Gaza, WHO staff say that every single person they spoke to in Gaza is hungry. Wherever they went, including hospitals and emergency wards, people asked them for food.

“We move around Gaza delivering medical supplies and people rush to our trucks hoping it’s food,” they said, calling it “an indicator of the desperation.”

Meanwhile, in a new report released this week, Human Rights Watch (HRW) accused the Israeli government of using “starvation of civilians as a method of warfare in the occupied Gaza Strip, which is a war crime.”

“Israeli forces are deliberately blocking the delivery of water, food, and fuel, while willfully impeding humanitarian assistance, apparently razing agricultural areas, and depriving the civilian population of objects indispensable to their survival.”

Since Hamas-led fighters attacked Israel on October 7, 2023, high-ranking Israeli officials, including Defense Minister Yoav Gallant, National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir and Energy Minister Israel Kat have made public



Displaced families in a school in Gaza. 21 December 2023 Credit: WFP/Arete/Aboud al Sayd

statements expressing their aim to deprive civilians in Gaza of food, water and fuel – statements reflecting a policy being carried out by Israeli forces, HRW said.

Other Israeli officials have publicly stated that humanitarian aid to Gaza would be conditioned either on the release of hostages unlawfully held by Hamas or Hamas’ destruction.

“For over two months, Israel has been depriving Gaza’s population of food and water, a policy spurred on or

endorsed by high-ranking Israeli officials and reflecting an intent to starve civilians as a method of warfare,” said Omar Shakir, Israel and Palestine director at Human Rights Watch.

“World leaders should be speaking out against this abhorrent war crime, which has devastating effects on Gaza’s population.”

Human Rights Watch interviewed 11 displaced Palestinians in Gaza between November 24 and December 4. They described their profound hard-

ships in securing basic necessities. “We had no food, no electricity, no internet, nothing at all,” said one man who had left northern Gaza. “We don’t know how we survived.”

Abby Maxman, President and CEO of Oxfam America said the shocking figures describing the high levels of starvation in Gaza are a direct, damning, and predictable consequence of Israel’s policy choices – and President Biden’s unconditional support and diplomatic approach.

“Anyone paying attention cannot be surprised by these figures after more than two months of complete siege, denial of humanitarian aid, and destruction of residential neighborhoods, bakeries, mills, farms, and other infrastructure essential for food and water production,” she said.

“Israel has the right to defend its people from attacks, but it does not have the right to use starvation as a weapon of war to collectively punish an entire civilian population in reprisal. That is a war crime.”

“The US government has repeatedly given Israel diplomatic cover, but now must urgently change course and put politics aside to prioritize the lives of civilians,” said Maxman.

“As humanitarians, we know no amount of aid can meaningfully address this spiraling crisis without an end to the bombing and siege, but it is unconscionable to deny it to Palestinian families who are starving”.

She argued the Biden administration must use all of its influence to achieve an immediate ceasefire to stop the bloodshed, allow for the safe return of hostages to Israel, and allow aid and commercial goods in, “so we can save lives now.”

“The US cannot continue to stand by and allow Palestinians to be starved to death.”

According to WHO, Gaza is also experiencing soaring rates of infectious diseases. Over 100,000 cases of diarrhoea have been reported since mid-October. Half of these are among young children under the age of 5 years, case numbers that are 25 times what was reported before the conflict.

Over 150,000 cases of upper respiratory infection, and numerous cases of meningitis, skin rashes, scabies, lice and chickenpox have been reported. Hepatitis is also suspected as many people present with the tell-tale signs of jaundice.

“While a healthy body can more easily fight off these diseases, a wasted and weakened body will struggle. Hunger weakens the body’s defences and opens the door to disease,” WHO warned.

Meanwhile, HRW said international humanitarian law, or the laws of war, prohibits the starvation of civilians as a method of warfare. The Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC) provides that intentionally starving civilians by “depriving them of objects indispensable to their survival, including willfully impeding relief supplies” is a war crime.

Criminal intent does not require the attacker’s admission but can also be inferred from the totality of the circumstances of the military campaign.

In addition, Israel’s continuing blockade of Gaza, as well as its more than 16-year closure, amounts to collective punishment of the civilian population, a war crime. As the occupying power in Gaza under the Fourth Geneva Convention, Israel has the duty to ensure that the civilian population gets food and medical supplies.



A family cooks a meal in a temporary accommodation in the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital. Credit: WFP

IPS UN Bureau Report

CAPITAL RADIO

RATIBA YA VIPINDI JUMATATU - JUMAPILI

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

Tembelea mitandao ya kijamii ya CAPITAL RADIO



CAPITAL RADIO

Africa's rich biodiversity offers wealth of carbon offset projects for Gulf investors

By Special Correspondent

AFRICA is a prime target for new multimillion-dollar carbon offset projects as companies increasingly seek to blunt the effects of their carbon footprints.

In September, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) announced plans to shell out US\$450 million to secure carbon credits from various carbon offset initiatives on the continent.

Already, carbon offset firms are snapping up new deals. Eco Netix, a measurement, reporting and verification (MRV) firm, told bird story agency that together with sustainable investment company ASC Impact, the firm had inked a deal with Emirati investors for millions in carbon stocks for the UAE government, which needs to offset 136 million tonnes by 2030.

New markets in the Gulf offer a bridge between investors and African states aiming to monetise their natural resources sustainably.

According to Eco Netix founder, Jakob Zenz, the factors attracting investors to Africa's carbon credit market are its rich biodiversity and extensive arable land. These assets are ideal for carbon offset projects, such as reforestation, sustainable agriculture, and renewable energy initiatives.

"They have the largest carbon sinks in the world. The Congo Basin, for example. All of these rain forests, this is besides size, availability, young people, willingness to work, educated people," Zenz noted.

"So all of these factors can make a project very viable and in an age of digitisation, information is available throughout Africa. Everyone has a smartphone. So communication becomes easy. Mobile money makes it easy to transact throughout the continent."

In Tanzania, Eco Netix is working on a mangrove restoration project covering 32,000



hectares, with 6,000 to 8,000 hectares identified for restoration. The cost of restoring each hectare is approximately US\$3,000, leading to a total investment of US\$18 to US\$24 million for the project.

ASC has concessional over 300,000 hectares for reforesta-

tion and is targeting an investment of €400 million, focusing on climate change mitigation in vulnerable areas.

The coalition, operating under the aegis of Sustain Now, aims to market 60 million tons of carbon credits in the UAE by 2030, leveraging key government and

corporate relationships. Sustain now is also expanding its land holdings for mangrove and forest projects, targeting an additional 2 million hectares within a year, and is actively seeking funding from the Middle East for these projects.

ASC's Karl Kirchmayer said that

after a successful run in Congo Brazzaville, Ethiopia and Angola they are planning new projects in other African states.

"All these countries are fitting perfectly in our strategy, to invest in areas where we have the best growing conditions. We have very good soil and rainfall," he

said.

Mangroves, often referred to as 'super trees', are central to these initiatives. Offering both environmental and economic benefits, mangrove forests are ideal candidates for carbon offset projects.

"I call it the Rolls Royce of carbon credits. It's a plant that has an incredible biodiversity system around it and... it's storing, like really substantial amounts of carbon. It's very permanent because it grows for so long."

However, the success of carbon projects hinges not just on financial investment but also on the integration of technology for transparency and accuracy. Recently, investigative reports have found glaring gaps in audits of carbon credit schemes, leading to accusations of "greenwashing" by some of the world's most carbon-intensive companies.

In the past year, the carbon market faced significant scrutiny over concerns of over-crediting, stemming from the lack of a clear baseline on what constitutes a carbon credit.

Zenz emphasised the crucial role of technology in ensuring the integrity of carbon credit projects.

"What is important is moving from one-time audit to real-time monitoring," he asserted.

Eco Netix now deploys a range of digital tools, including proprietary satellite imagery and remote sensing, to monitor the progress and impact of their projects.

This approach addresses the critical challenge of verifying the actual carbon sequestration achieved.

"We want to bring the transparency back into the carbon credit market. And we do that by having everything, the whole project, digitally available," he explained.

This digital availability encompasses not just the tracking of the projects but also the quantification of the carbon captured, a key metric in determining the success and value of these initiatives.

Sisal farming is a profitable venture for farmers amidst climate change challenges

By Zablon Oyugi

SISAL, which is the most important of the group of hard leaf fibres, is cultivated mainly in Tanzania, Brazil, Kenya, Angola and Mozambique but its cultivation has reduced despite its potential to earn farmers tidy sum in the wake of the ravaging climate change menace world over.

In fact, according to 2018 research by Aaron Mwaniki for South Eastern Kenya University (SEKU) on Factors Affecting Sisal Cultivation and Adoption in Kiomo Division, Kitui County in Kenya, the global sisal cultivation has been declining and in Kenya, for instance, sisal production has been on a decline since 1960.

As a result, says the research, sisal plantations are being replaced by other crops, with the fibre industries turning to synthetic fibres which have been proven to be environmentally unfriendly. Moreover, the vast majority of lands in arid and semi-arid areas which are not fertile go to waste.

This happens at a time the latest figures by Agriculture and Food Authority (AFA) indicate that the sisal sub sector currently supports approximately 30,000 farmers yet it has a potential to support over 150,000 farmers.

Planted in 12ft by 3ft spacing, an acre can accommodate up to 1,210 plants with each plant producing 200-250 leaves per harvest and each leaf producing 1,000-1,200 fiber bundles.

Currently a bundle of 27 sisal leaves goes for between Ksh12 and Ksh15 depending on the variety and market demand meaning an acre which can produce over 11,200 bundles per harvest can earn a farmer over Ksh168,000.

Promoting sisal production

Nevertheless, the situation might soon change thanks to the surviving farmers who are beginning to take the venture seriously and the pro-



motion of sisal production by AFA.

This is evidenced by the authority's figures indicating that in 2017, sisal exports earned Kenya Ksh2 billion but jumped to Ksh3.72 billion in 2019.

Ezekiel Nzue is a sisal farmer from Machakos County and he also extracts the crop's fibre using a decorticator machine after training by AFA.

He says he started as a casual labourer in a sisal farm before learning about the authority's search for willing individuals to be trained.

"I first met AFA officials around 2015 at an agricultural show in Nakuru where I got recruited given some experience I had in operating decorticator machine," said Nzue adding that he would later be given the sisal fibre extractor machine to operate everywhere the authority had a field day training. Soon, the Machakos farmer

would buy his own machine in 2016 at Ksh125,000 to go on his own after gaining more experience in sisal farming, fibre extraction, and market linkages by AFA.

Today, Nzue is a happy farmer in his new-found venture where, using the mobile machine, he extracts up to 1000 kilos of sisal fibres a day of which some are from his farm while others he buys from other farmers.

"I no longer depend on casual labours anymore since this business can earn me enough for my family expenses including school fees which I could struggle with before," he said adding that he currently has 600 sisal plants of which 45 are mature and ready for harvesting.

Offering direct market to other farmers

Nzue who currently works with farmers from Machakos and Makueni counties buys about 30 leaves at Ksh10

from the growers, extracts the fibres and sells to some companies in Nairobi at between Ksh130-150 thus offering direct market to fellow farmers.

"I have also recruited five young men who helps with operating the machine, sun drying the fibres and loading them for market," he said.

He adds that the demand for the fibres is huge and he is looking for 100 more farmers with 2-3 acres from other regions such as Makueni to contract. "In a week, a serious farmer can earn up to Ksh21,000," he said.

Some of the challenges he now experience are high cost of fuel and few farmers who are interested in sisal farming.

"I use to buy a litre of diesel at Ksh100 or even less when I started in 2016 but now the cost has even doubled to Ksh200 eating into my income," said Nzue.

OCP Africa's multifaceted approach to sustainable agriculture in Africa

RABAT

AS Africa grapples with the daunting task of feeding its rapidly growing population despite boasting nearly 65% of the world's uncultivated arable land, OCP Africa is spearheading a comprehensive and innovative approach to agriculture.

With a commitment to transforming Africa into a global leader in sustainable farming, OCP Africa's integrated strategy encompasses agri-tech innovation, financial empowerment, cooperative partnerships, and grassroots initiatives.

In a blog post published on the World Economic Forum website on the sidelines of this year's Davos Forum in January 2023, OCP CEO Mostapha Terrab remarked that "Accelerating the agricultural revolution will require a substantial collective effort."

This commitment to a collective effort to harness Africa's potential was reflected in the actions taken by the Moroccan giant's African subsidiary.

At the Dakar2 Summit organized by the African Development Bank Group on food sovereignty in Africa last January, OCP Africa CEO Mohammed Anouar Jamali indicated that the phosphate giant will allocate four million tonnes of fertilizer, "adapted to African soil and crop, for the continent in 2023 to bring impact to 44 million farmers."

Writing in the World Economic Forum blog in Davos, Terrab noted that while "technology is global," "innovation is local." Soil characteristics and growing conditions vary considerably, not only on a global scale, but also within each continent, country and region.

With this in mind, in March, at the Fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries (LDC5) in Doha, OCP Africa signed a strategic alliance with Microsoft's Africa Transformation Office.

This collaboration aims to strengthen food security in Africa by developing OCP Africa's digital agriculture platform, which integrates cutting-edge technologies such as the cloud and the agricultural data platform.

It notably seeks to support smallholder farmers and other Agri-stakeholders across the continent by 2025.

"We are convinced that precision farming, driven by the adoption of advanced technologies in agriculture, will revolutionize food production and help end hunger and poverty in Africa," said Wael Elkabbany, Managing Director of Microsoft Africa Cluster at the signing of the alliance.

The digital revolution is poised to enhance

farmer productivity, streamline business management, and facilitate seamless communication with stakeholders. By ensuring better access to products and agricultural services, OCP Africa is at the forefront of transforming traditional farming methods.

In his World Economic Forum blog post, Mostapha Terrab emphasized the untapped potential of African farmers, asserting that they are as capable and eager as their global counterparts.

To unlock this potential, OCP Africa initiated a pivotal partnership with the International Finance Corporation in October last year.

This partnership aims to mobilize a substantial \$800 million in blended capital by 2030, providing African farmers with access to the right inputs, supply chains, financial tools, and innovations.

Collaborating with the Bank of Africa, OCP Africa is strategically designing projects to enhance access to fertilizers and other inputs for African farmers and agri-processors, with specific initiatives targeting cashew and rice value chains in various African nations.

In its 2022 report, OCP Africa underscored the need for an inclusive, partnership-based approach to overcome Africa's challenges. According to the report, "Africa's challenges are difficult to overcome without an inclusive, partnership-based approach."

Building on this commitment, OCP Africa solidified its dedication to cooperative partnerships in 2023. This commitment was on display in the signing in June of two memoranda of understanding with the Togolese government on the sidelines of the High-Level Round Table on Fertilizers and Soil Health.

These agreements aim to strengthen cooperation in the agricultural and mining sectors, with a focus on producing phosphate fertilizers and enhancing the competitiveness of agricultural value chains in Togo.

So far, 20 African countries have received OCP's assistance and support. Of these 20 countries, farmers in countries such as Ghana, Nigeria and Kenya have benefited from OCP Africa's AgriBooster programme. Other countries such as Mauritania, Rwanda, Ethiopia and Senegal have benefited from fertilizer donations.

The 2022 report said: "By facilitating access to adapted fertilizers, OCP Africa is fulfilling its key commitment to help feed the continent's population by improving the health of their soils and preserving their environment."

Regime change in Israel

NEW YORK

Benjamin Netanyahu must go. Under the guise of judicial reform, Netanyahu has undermined the rule of law and divided the country. He is toxic to Arab states, even those which have signed the Abraham Accords. Netanyahu has become an impediment to Israel's democratic development and regional relations.

Israel needs a new government committed to peace and a cabinet that champions reconciliation. Perpetual war plays into the hands of Hamas. It placates Jewish hardliners who oppose the national aspirations of Palestinians. War also serves Netanyahu by distracting voters and delaying accountability for his government's intelligence failures on October 7.

It took up to ten hours for the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) to react to Hamas' invasion. Known for its security and intelligence services, Israel was caught flat-footed. Panicked residents of kibbutzim covered in safe rooms, while 1,200 Israelis were killed, butchered in their homes and on the grounds of the Nova Music Festival. Hundreds were taken hostage by Hamas, gang-raped and turned into sexual slaves. One hundred and thirty remain in captivity.

It is impossible to reconcile Israel's objectives. Israel cannot eradicate Hamas and free



The Israeli Prime Minister at the UN General Assembly sessions, September 2023. Credit: United Nations

hostages captive in the subterranean world of Gaza's tunnel network. Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin just visited Jerusalem to discuss priorities

and scaling back Israel's offensive. In the fog of war, the IDF killed three Israeli hostages last week displaying a white flag and speaking in Hebrew.

Shooting people, even Hamas members who surrender, violates the laws of war and Israel's military code. Exhausted and trigger happy, the incident is under investigation. The Israeli army chief of staff and the intelligence chief issued apologies. Netanyahu prevaricated, delaying his meeting with hostage families.

The incident caused outrage across Israel, raising questions about Israel's conduct of the war. The Hamas Ministry of Health claims that 20,000 Palestinian civilians have died as a result of IDF activities. Hostage families are demanding an investigation. There is a growing clamor to bring the hostages home. Hostage families are also demanding a plan to end the war. They have generally been supportive of Netanyahu's response, but they are wavering. They believe that continued action in Gaza risks the lives of the remaining 130 hostages. The bungled operation has brought Israeli institutions - the IDF, Shin Bet and Mossad - into disrepute.

Even President Joe Biden, Israel's biggest backer, criticized the IDF for its "indiscriminate bombing." France, Germany and Britain are also fed up and

have demanded a "sustainable ceasefire." Netanyahu said there will be a time and place for an inquiry into the Hamas attack and Israel's response. He believes that the longer it takes for an inquiry, the more the passions of hostage families will be mollified.

Israel's slow grinding war with Hamas must stop. Israel was justified in launching a reprisal after October 7, especially as details of the brutality came to light. Two months later, the IDF seems to be flailing about. Israel has been characterized as the aggressor and has lost the moral high ground. For sure, Israel has every right to defend itself. But what started as calculated counterterrorism now seems more like rage and revenge.

Can Hamas even be defeated? Hamas is more than an organization. It is a movement. For every Hamas terrorist that Israel kills, more Palestinian militants are waiting in the wings.

It's time for a new approach. An interim government overseen by the Palestinian Authority should be established and make plans for an eventual Palestinian state living side-by-side

at peace with Israel.

Indiscriminate bombing is counterproductive. A more surgical approach would differentiate between Hamas and Gazans, addressing claims of collective punishment.

Internationally mediated talks would ensue when the hostages are freed. Palestinians need a national horizon to separate themselves from the clutches of Hamas.

Israeli elections would likely repudiate Netanyahu and lead to the creation of a peace cabinet, putting Israel back on track as a democracy that respects minority rights and values good neighborly relations.

It is unimaginable that Netanyahu can survive his putrid performance. Prosecutors are waiting to charge Netanyahu with corruption. Israelis can debate the details of government formation for months, but polling suggests that regime change is something that Israelis agree on now.

David Phillips is an Adjunct Professor at the Security Studies Program of Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service.

IPS UN Bureau

THE GUARDIAN CROSSWORDS AND WORD FIT - 48 -

By Felix Magzin: 0787 0097 94 // felixmagzi@gmail.com

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26				

ACROSS:
 1. Capital city of Syria
 8. extending upwards from or above
 9. accumulate overtime
 11. slowly seep out
 12. a large amount of something
 13. Kigali is her mother city

DOWN:
 1. used to enter in the house
 2. asserted
 3. Table in Kiswahili
 4. a sphere of activity
 5. karat
 6. Bite in Kiswahili
 7. word originated from Arabic word 'safara' - to travel
 10. rigidly enforced
 14. cause the liquid in a container to run out
 16. digits at the end of a human foot 18. rub out
 19. in addition
 20. Sister in Kiswahili
 23. an adult human male
 24. discovered recently

15. the expression of creative skills
 17. relating to arteries
 19. increase
 21. swamp grass
 22. Amen in Kiswahili
 25. Native of Sudan
 26. Replied

In this Puzzle you have no clues, only a list of words that all fit into the grid. The Guardian have given you a head start.

SHOW	ERECT	TAIFA
STD: SHIT	YORE: SAC	AVOIDED
ID: LEO: TE	AWOWED	DORADO
ADDA: ME	MAD: MAY	WEMA
IAMBVIC	MAT: DWAM	ADRIFT OF

Yesterday's solution

C	A	N	E	T	O	A	D	T	W	A	G	E	R	S
O	M	E	N	R	A	G	E	A	R	A	B	I	C	A
R	A	N	D	O	M	C	A	R	E	B	U	K	E	D
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R	S	A	D	A	T	O	L	I	N	I	A	B	A	
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B	R	A	V	E										
T	E	T	A	T	A									

RADIO One

RATIBA YA VIPINDI JUMATATU - JUMAPILI

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
TIME PROGRAMME	TIME PROGRAMME	TIME PROGRAMME	TIME PROGRAMME	TIME PROGRAMME	TIME PROGRAMME	TIME PROGRAMME
05:00 AM HALI YA HEWA / KUMEPAMBAZUKA I 06:00 AM AMKA NA BBC 06:30 AM NIPASHE 06:50 AM MATANGAZO 07:00 AM NEWS BULLETIN 07:10 AM MATANGAZO 07:15 AM TAARIFA ZA BARABARANI 07:25 AM UDONDOZI WA MAGAZETI 07:40 AM KUMEPAMBAZUKA II 08:00 AM HABARI NYEPESI 08:10 AM KUMEPAMBAZUKA III 09:00 AM HABARI ZA BIASHARA 09:20 AM BRAND TALK 10:00 AM NEWS BRIEF 10:03 AM DEATH ANNOUNCEMENTS 10:10 AM YALIVOMO YAMO 13:00 HRS NEWS BULLETIN 13:30 HRS DJ SHOW 16:00 HRS NEWS BRIEF 16:03 HRS DEATH ANNOUNCEMENTS 18:30 HRS DIRA YA DUNIA BBC 20:00 HRS NEWS BULLETIN 20:10 HRS RADIO ONE DOCTOR 21:00 HRS NEWS BRIEF 21:05 HRS DAKIKA 45 22:00 HRS NEWS BULLETIN (24 HRS) 22:15 HRS AFRO TIZI 23:00 HRS NEWS BRIEF 23:03 HRS AFRO TIZI 01:00-05:00 HRS MUZIKI (MCHANGANYIKO)	05:00 AM HALI YA HEWA / KUMEPAMBAZUKA I 06:00 AM AMKA NA BBC 06:30 AM NIPASHE 06:50 AM MATANGAZO 07:00 AM NEWS BULLETIN 07:10 AM MATANGAZO 07:15 AM TAARIFA ZA BARABARANI 07:25 AM UDONDOZI WA MAGAZETI 07:40 AM KUMEPAMBAZUKA II 08:00 AM HABARI NYEPESI 08:10 AM KUMEPAMBAZUKA III 09:00 AM HABARI ZA BIASHARA 09:20 AM BRAND TALK 09:30 AM KUMEPAMBAZUKA SHERIA 10:00 AM NEWS BRIEF 10:03 AM DEATH ANNOUNCEMENTS 10:10 AM YALIVOMO YAMO 13:00 HRS NEWS BULLETIN 13:30 HRS DJ SHOW 16:00 HRS NEWS BRIEF 16:03 HRS DEATH ANNOUNCEMENTS 18:30 HRS DIRA YA LEO 18:30 HRS DIRA YA DUNIA BBC 20:00 HRS NEWS BULLETIN 20:10 HRS MATANGAZO / MUZIKI 20:15 HRS SPOTI LEO 21:00 HRS NEWS BULLETIN 21:05 HRS CHAGUO LA DJ 22:00 HRS NEWS BULLETIN (24 HRS) 22:15 HRS AFRO TIZI 23:00 HRS NEWS BRIEF 23:03 HRS AFRO TIZI 01:00-05:00 HRS MUZIKI (MCHANGANYIKO)	05:00 AM HALI YA HEWA / KUMEPAMBAZUKA I 06:00 AM AMKA NA BBC 06:30 AM NIPASHE 06:50 AM MATANGAZO 07:00 AM NEWS BULLETIN 07:10 AM MATANGAZO 07:15 AM TAARIFA ZA BARABARANI 07:25 AM UDONDOZI WA MAGAZETI 07:40 AM KUMEPAMBAZUKA II 08:00 AM HABARI NYEPESI 08:10 AM KUMEPAMBAZUKA III 09:00 AM HABARI ZA BIASHARA 09:20 AM BRAND TALK 09:30 AM KUMEPAMBAZUKA MICHEZO 10:00 AM NEWS BRIEF 10:03 AM DEATH ANNOUNCEMENTS 10:10 AM YALIVOMO YAMO 13:00 HRS NEWS BULLETIN 13:30 HRS DJ SHOW 16:00 HRS NEWS BRIEF 16:03 HRS DEATH ANNOUNCEMENTS 18:30 HRS DIRA YA LEO 18:30 HRS DIRA YA DUNIA BBC 20:00 HRS NEWS BULLETIN 20:10 HRS MATANGAZO / MUZIKI 21:00 HRS NEWS BRIEF 21:05 HRS CHAGUO LA DJ 22:00 HRS NEWS BULLETIN (24 HRS) 22:15 HRS AFRO TIZI 23:00 HRS NEWS BRIEF 23:03 HRS AFRO TIZI 01:00-05:00 HRS MUZIKI (MCHANGANYIKO)	05:00 AM HALI YA HEWA / KUMEPAMBAZUKA I 06:00 AM AMKA NA BBC 06:30 AM NIPASHE 06:50 AM MATANGAZO 07:00 AM NEWS BULLETIN 07:10 AM MATANGAZO 07:15 AM TAARIFA ZA BARABARANI 07:25 AM UDONDOZI WA MAGAZETI 07:40 AM KUMEPAMBAZUKA II 08:00 AM HABARI NYEPESI 08:10 AM KUMEPAMBAZUKA III 09:00 AM HABARI ZA BIASHARA 09:20 AM BRAND TALK 09:30 AM KUMEPAMBAZUKA UKIMWI 10:00 AM NEWS BRIEF 10:03 AM DEATH ANNOUNCEMENTS 10:10 AM YALIVOMO YAMO 13:00 HRS NEWS BULLETIN 13:30 HRS DJ SHOW 16:00 HRS NEWS BRIEF 16:03 HRS DEATH ANNOUNCEMENTS 18:30 HRS DIRA YA DUNIA BBC 19:30 HRS SPOTI LEO 20:00 HRS NEWS BULLETIN 20:10 HRS MATANGAZO / MUZIKI 21:00 HRS NEWS BRIEF 21:05 HRS CHAGUO LA DJ 22:00 HRS NEWS BULLETIN (24 HRS) 22:15 HRS AFRO TIZI 23:00 HRS NEWS BRIEF 23:03 HRS AFRO TIZI 01:00-05:00 HRS MUZIKI (MCHANGANYIKO)	05:00 AM HALI YA HEWA / KUMEPAMBAZUKA I 06:00 AM AMKA NA BBC 06:30 AM NIPASHE 06:50 AM MATANGAZO 07:00 AM NEWS BULLETIN 07:10 AM MATANGAZO 07:15 AM TAARIFA ZA BARABARANI 07:25 AM UDONDOZI WA MAGAZETI 07:40 AM KUMEPAMBAZUKA II 08:00 AM HABARI NYEPESI 08:10 AM KUMEPAMBAZUKA III 09:00 AM HABARI ZA BIASHARA 09:20 AM BRAND TALK 09:30 AM KUMEPAMBAZUKA UKIMWI 10:00 AM NEWS BRIEF 10:03 AM DEATH ANNOUNCEMENTS 10:10 AM HIZI NAZO 13:00 HRS NEWS BULLETIN 13:10 HRS DEATH ANNOUNCEMENTS 13:30 HRS DJ SHOW 16:00 HRS NEWS BRIEF 16:03 HRS DEATH ANNOUNCEMENTS 18:30 HRS HOJA YA LEO 18:30 HRS DIRA YA DUNIA BBC 19:30 HRS SPOTI LEO 20:00 HRS NEWS BULLETIN 20:10 HRS MATANGAZO / MUZIKI 21:00 HRS NEWS BRIEF 21:05 HRS KIPIMA JOTO 23:00 HRS WEEKEND SHOW 01:00 - 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Tembelea mitandao ya kijamii ya Radio One

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Thursday 28 December 2023

NBC facilitates transaction services via POS machine Mt. Kilimanjaro summit

By Guardian Reporter, Moshi

NBC Bank employees and tourism stakeholders, accompanied by journalists in the Kilimanjaro region, have safely returned from their expedition to Mount Kilimanjaro. Their objective was to successfully deliver the bank's Point of Sale (POS) machine to the mountain's peak, effectively showcasing the machine's durability and efficacy.

Apart from providing NBC Bank services to visitors of the mountain, the expedition aimed to demonstrate the high quality and efficiency of the POS machine in any environment within the country, including challenging terrains.

The reception event for the employees who climbed the mountain on December 16, led by Dickson Busagaga, a media stakeholder in Kilimanjaro, took place at the Marangu gate over the weekend, led by the Chief Conservation Officer of Mount Kilimanjaro National Park (KINAPA), Gladys Ngu'umbi, alongside NBC's Director of Business Banking, Elvis Ndunguru, NBC Bank employees, some tourism stakeholders, and customers of the bank in Kilimanjaro region.

Ngu'umbi lauded the employees and stakeholders on the successful completion of the expedition. She also commended the bank for using the mountain as a platform to showcase the quality and effectiveness of the POS machine while



NBC Director of Business Banking, Elvis Ndunguru (5th L), along with the Chief Conservation Officer of Kilimanjaro National Park (KINAPA), Gladys Ngu'umbi (4th L), congratulating some of the employees of the bank and tourism stakeholders including journalists shortly after returning from a historic expedition to climb Mount Kilimanjaro with the aim of delivering the bank's Point of Sale (POS) machines to the summit of the mountain. Photo: Guardian Correspondent.

extending its services to the world-renowned attraction. She noted that this development significantly facilitates payments for a diverse range of visitors to the park.

"For us, as tourism stakeholders, the arrival of this service is a savior against the challenge of payment services that various stakeholders, especially tour guides, face. Some of them had to

low tourists outside the park just to collect their payments."

"Through this machine, now their payments can be made right there at the summit while celebrating their ac-

complishment," stated Ngu'umbi, a sentiment supported by Hillary Kombe and Godlisten Mkenyi, tour guides on the mountain.

Ndunguru expressed that the endeavor serves not only to showcase the features and promote the NBC POS machine, but also to support the government's initiatives in boosting domestic and international tourism by promoting the tallest mountain in Africa and the world as a whole.

"We not only celebrate our success, but also express our gratitude to God for keeping us safe and healthy throughout the journey to the summit of Mount Kilimanjaro, where the NBC POS machines not only reached the peak, but also conducted transactions," he stated.

"We are proud to be the pioneers of the first POS machine launch at the peak of Mount Kilimanjaro. Our POS machines have been able to transact at all stations, Mandara, Horombo, Kibo, Gilman's Point, Stella, and even Uhuru Peak. This assures our customers that our POS machines are sturdy, reliable, and functional at any time, in any environment, and in any weather conditions," stated Ndunguru.

He further emphasized: "The decision to deploy this device at the summit of Mount Kilimanjaro is

rooted in the alignment between the five fundamental qualities associated with the symbols and significance of the stations encountered during this mountain ascent. We firmly believe that each station resonates with the qualities embodied by our NBC POS machines, namely Convenience, Speed, Advanced Technology, Smartness, and Payment Freedom."

The efforts are part of the lender's new campaign, "Tabasamu Tukupe Mashavu", aimed at offering its customers opportunities to enjoy and celebrate with their loved ones, including relatives and friends, during the year-end holiday season through simplified transactions via NBC Bank.

Florence Ng'wavi, the NBC Meru Rd branch manager expressed that the accomplishments reflect the collective spirit of the bank's employees in upholding and defending the quality of services provided to their customers.

"Despite the challenges faced during this expedition, our journey was made easier by the affirmation of the important qualities of this machine at each station climbed. Our belief in its efficiency and quality guided us throughout, as we aimed to prove what we believe in," stated Florence.

Jubilee Insurance wins PMAYA 2023 for offering quality services

By Guardian Reporter

JUBILEE Life Insurance Company has once again won the Presidential Manufacturer of the Year Awards 2023 in that category on account of the quality of its services.

Jubilee Life Insurance Company announced that last week it succeeded to win the quality prize at the PMAYA 2023 as one among the best companies in the life insurance category, for serving its customers plus delivering services and products that aim at protecting the future of our clients and their loved ones.

The awards placed under the Confederation of Tanzania Industries (CTI) have been a catalyst for industries and various companies which have continue put great effort in delivering services under that umbrella.

For the year 2023 the guest of honour was the President Samia Suluhu Hassan, who was accompanied by various other leaders.

Jubilee Life Insurance Company award was received by the company's CEO Helena Mzena who has expressed her great happiness after receiving that award.

"To participate in these awards is very important as it provides an opportunity for us as service providers to build good relationships with our clients. But more importantly these awards continue being a catalyst for making us persist in doing better," Helena said.

Profound gratitude to our clients for continuing trusting us, and we continue promise to provide quality life insurance services in this country.

To participate in these awards is very important as it provides an opportunity for us as service providers to build good relationships with our ...



Tanga joins Morogoro region in strategy to cultivate cloves

By Guardian Reporter

AS battles to achieve its targeted per capita income of 3,000 US Dollars by 2025, farmers in Tanga and Morogoro Regions are being motivated to grow cloves to benefit from rarely fluctuating global prices of spices, raise their disposable income and the per capita GDP.

Already Tanzania attained and crossed the middle income status which starts at \$1,096.

The current government's ambition is to cross the 3,000 US dollars mark well before 2025 using the agro-industrial transformation approach and capitalising on growing horticultural crops, especially cloves, because the crops have stable external markets.

Cloves are traditionally grown in Zanzibar, but with The Southern Agricultural Growth Corridor of Tanzania (SAGCOT) intervention, cloves are now thriving in hilly districts of Morogoro Region and harvests have surpassed

those of Zanzibar.

In 2022 Morogoro Region produced some 2,000 tonnes of cloves while Zanzibar produce 4,000 tonnes, the Morogoro Regional Administrative Secretary, Dr Musa Ally confirmed here, as farmers in Mvomero District are being drawn into growing the crop to sharply increase their disposable income. But the situation has changed radically.

The national strategy is to draw more regions with requisite climate conditions and soils into growing cloves and Tanga farmers are now the focus.

Meetings of experts from public and private institutions known as "Promoters of Agriculture and Environment Protection Forums", championed by SAGCOT are being held and giving guidelines on how to motivate farmers to grow crops best suited in their areas and growing enough for exports.

SAGCOT Chief Executive Officer Geoffrey Kirenga told such forum in Dar es Salaam

yesterday that growing of spices locally is an important element in the nation's strategy to grow for exports, increase decent rural jobs and farmers' disposable incomes.

"Horticultural crops have a huge external market and prices are lucrative; these crops matter in this strategy. Cloves have a stable market and profitable prices for farmers. Farmers can sell at between 14,000/- and 18,000/- a kilogramme. These indicative prices show how farmers' disposable incomes can quickly rise if we shall give the crop requisite attention," he told the delegates.

He said Zanzibar is a world grower of cloves, with century-experience in the crop's trade and is conversant with big global markets. The strategy, he said, is to grow the crop on the mainland. "Our founder growers of cloves are Morogoro and now Tanga Regions. They have shown us that we are on the right path because the two regions are already harvesting more

tones cloves than Zanzibar," he told delegates.

Early this year, Morogoro Region and SAGCOT co-sponsored a study tour of 20 farmers to learn how to grow cloves in Zanzibar.

Cloves are grown in Morogoro Rural, Kilombero districts, Mlimba district council and now Mvomero District has been added onto the list. The District Commissioner Judith Nguli pledged that "farmers will be motivated to grow the crop to shed poverty. We shall spare no effort because this is an opportunity we cannot afford to lose," she pledged.

SAGCOT Morogoro Regional Manager John Banga said under the strategy, Morogoro Region has been designated at a region for growing cereals and horticultural crops, apart from traditional cash crops. "In the past two months we have distributed 150,000 clove seedlings. The good thing is that stakeholders are coming forward to make this a reality," he said.

Tanzania to partake in next year's global trade exhibitions in India

By Correspondent Valentine Oforo, Dodoma

TANZANIA will participate in next year's 10th edition of the Vibrant Gujarat Global Trade Show 2024, the international high-profile trade exhibitions scheduled for January 9th, 2024 in India.

The envisaged event which will go in sync with celebrations of 20 years of Vibrant Gujarat as the summit of success will be staged at Mahatma Mandir Convention and Exhibition Centre in Gandhinagar, Gujarat, India.

Vibrant Gujarat is a biennial investors' summit organised by the government of Gujarat in Gujarat, India aimed at bringing together business leaders, investors, corporations, thought leaders and policy makers from across the world to understand and explore business opportunities available in Gujarat.

In an interview with the Guardian, an officer at the Tanzania Investment Center (TIC) who preferred anonymity said more than 30 local investors have confirmed to participate in the coming exhibition in India.

"The event is expected to attract participants from over 20 countries to showcase their products pertaining to various key economic sectors, including industry, agro processing, health, ICT, industrial park, renewable energy, mining, honey, engineering, wood and trade in general," said the official.

The officer expressed the impressive development surfaces as a result of President Samia Suluhu Hassan visit to India in October, 2023, the visit which among others, focused on at-

tracting more Indian investors into the country.

"President Samia directed TIC, to translate into reality her top vision to heighten the influx of Indian investments into the country in 2024, with target to ensure that India stands amid the top countries with large investments in Tanzania, as the case of China, Singapore and Germany," the officer unveiled.

To strengthening the bilateral ties between the two countries, Tanzania has been given a special honour to be a co-partner in the envisaged trade show.

As per the exhibitions setups, there will be a groundbreaking road show and business forums to be held in three major cities, including Pune, Bangalore and Ahmedabad.

At the set exhibition's grounds, at the Mahatma Mandir Convention and Exhibition Centre in Gandhinagar, there will be special vast booths for the Tanzanian companies to exhibit their products at free bases.

Among others, the event will showcase the evolution of Gujarat from the inception in 2003 as an event to attract investments in the state to working towards a global leadership in 2024. At least two curtain raiser events are being planned at New Delhi and Mumbai.

Some of the countries expected to feature in the event include Japan, Finland, Morocco, Republic of Korea, Mozambique, Estonia, UAE, Australia, UK, Netherlands, Norway, Nepal, Thailand, Bangladesh, Germany, and Egypt.

Tech-driven transformation: Small African agribusinesses revolutionise operations

By Grace Ashiru

AGRICULTURAL startups can gain empowerment through the synergy of Agritech solutions and digital marketing. With rising literacy rates in rural areas and advancing infrastructure, young farmers and agri-processors collaborating with the International Trade Centre (ITC) are poised to seamlessly integrate innovative technological solutions into their ventures.

Under the Netherlands Trust Fund V (NTF V) program, ITC's Alliances for Action has forged a partnership with Bopinc, a firm dedicated to developing tech solutions for businesses. They aim to bridge the gap between small agribusinesses and the tech sector. Their collaborative efforts are concentrated on assisting small and medium-sized processors involved in cocoa production in Ghana, coffee cultivation in Ethiopia, and processing cashews and other crops in Senegal.

The overarching objective is to scale up these operations, fostering improved profitability, enhanced incomes, and creating more job opportunities by promoting the in-country processing of local crops.



The activities center around conducting market research, fostering product development, implementing sustainable processing and packaging methods, orchestrating market-

ing efforts, and establishing specific commercial connections. To adopt a comprehensive approach, technology tools and platforms are seamlessly integrated into the business's core op-

erations. Preparing small businesses for the upcoming EU Corporate Sustainable Due Diligence Directive (CS3D) involves enhancing data collection pre-

cision, increasing transparency, and refining traceability. Agritech pilots are currently in progress, leveraging a tested methodology and participatory approach. Bopinc, rooted in this methodology, evaluated the digital requirements of businesses in Ghana, Ethiopia, and Senegal. Their findings indicate businesses need to embrace digitalization, specifically through enterprise resource planning (ERP) systems. This adoption facilitates heightened transparency and traceability in operations, aligning with regulatory standards like the EU CS3D directive.

Senegal's Zena, a cashew nut processor, has embraced tailored tech solutions to enhance the competitiveness and market reach of their 'Made in Senegal' operations. These operations target local consumers who increasingly prefer homegrown products, a trend gaining momentum in Dakar.

In Ghana, the initiative involves partnering with the Fair Trade-certified Kuapa Kokoo Cooperative Cocoa Farmers and Marketing Union Limited (KKFU). This collaboration signals a new era of digitalization and technological advancements, holding promising prospects for KKFU's 100,000 cocoa farmers.

Meanwhile, an ongoing pilot project in Ethiopia is dedicated to implementing an automated system for tracking coffee production and boosting efficiency within the Bench Maji Coffee Farmers' Cooperative Union. This union comprises 21,000 farmer members and is poised to benefit from technological advancements.

In Ethiopia, a second pilot is underway, aligning the Oromia Coffee Farmers' Cooperative Union with tech firm AgUnity to craft co-op manager systems tailored for EU legislative compliance. The GPS locations of 3,000 farmers across four primary cooperatives have been logged, a pivotal measure to adhere to the EU's deforestation-free product regulations. Additionally, businesses will gain entry to a digital tools directory originating in Ethiopia, marking a pioneering effort by ITC with intentions to extend this model to other nations.

The pilots are designed for long-term sustainability, with co-funding from beneficiaries. They contribute to capacity building in business service organizations, facilitating the transfer of knowledge and tools at the national level to support the digital transformation of the agribusiness sector.

Investors bank on African timber for sustainable building boom

By Special Correspondent

A SURGE in construction activity in Africa is drawing a new breed of investors eyeing mass timber - and the carbon-trapping forests needed to support it - as a sustainable building alternative to traditional concrete and steel.

Wooden buildings like the engineered timber construction planned for the world's tallest wood building in Zanzibar may only be starting to appear in cities worldwide but that is not stopping investors from betting on wood becoming a key building block in African construction.

"About 200 years ago, everyone was building with timber, then it shifted to cement, steel, and stones. Now people are going back, especially with modern housing," explained Karl Kirchmayer, co-founder and managing partner at ASC Impact.

Although wood buildouts in major cities and towns are hardly in the main stream, the trajectory, based on recent commercial activity, leans towards a timber-centric future, according to ASC.

In October 2022 the Burj Zanzibar was unveiled on the East African archipelago as the world's tallest hybrid timber structure. Due for completion in 2026, it is located in Fumba Town, Zanzibar's pioneering eco-town developed by the German-led engineering firm CPS.

A growing interest in wood is fueled by its sustainability credentials and the increasing global emphasis on reducing the carbon intensity of the construction sector.

According to Energy Monitor, replacing energy-intensive building materials with timber



prevent more than 100 billion metric tons of carbon dioxide entering the atmosphere by the end of the century.

According to Kirchmayer, the popularity of hybrid housing units, where concrete is used only for the foundations and timber for the majority of the structure, is also set to gain in popularity due to faster construction times.

With vast lands conducive to tree growth, Kirchmayer and ASC Impact believe that Africa is ripe for reforestation initiatives that support mass timber production and other green projects.

"The best way to sequester carbon is by planting new forests, particularly across vast surfaces. Utilizing these trees for timber means the carbon is sequestered in the buildings, replacing steel and cement. This carbon remains bound as long as the structure stands," he said.

Substituting all the imports of sawn wood and construction wood is where they see the biggest benefit.

"So we want to produce the construction wood for the inland market. With new plantations and forests and sustainable forestry, you create not only the timber and

sustainable construction material but also a lot of sequestration, substituting steel and cement," he explained.

Already, ASC has concessioned over 300,000 hectares for reforestation and is targeting an investment of €400 million in the coming years.

To avoid pushback from governments apprehensive about allocating land solely for forestation, ASC Impact is integrating agriculture and carbon offset projects into their offerings.

"So we are planting for inland consumption... we are planting corn, soybeans, sunflowers, and various other crops," he said.

"Communities and governments are much more open to investments in agriculture than to only carbon sequestration or reforestation projects. So we have not only the agricultural revenue, but also the timber revenues after a very long period, and we are also selling carbon credits."

This model has resonated with investors.

Kirchmayer notes that one of the key challenges facing mass timber adoption in Africa is the existing regulatory framework, which often favours energy-inten-

sive construction methods.

However, progressive policy changes and increasing awareness of sustainable building practices are beginning to pave the way for greater acceptance of mass timber. Early adopters in countries like Kenya and South Africa are setting precedents, showcasing the feasibility and benefits of mass timber structures.

"I know this is a cultural thing and also a development thing in the way that people think that higher quality construction is with concrete and cement," he said.

ASC Impact, with a footprint in Congo Brazzaville, Ethiopia, and Angola, is not the only company trying to ensure that timber is seen as a building solution for the future, in Africa and elsewhere.

Last year, New Forests, a forestry company based in Australia, raised US\$200 million from three investors for its new fund that aims to support sustainable forestry in Africa.

The fund, named the African Forestry Impact Platform (AFIP), is the first fund dedicated to Africa by New Forests. The fund has a target of raising US\$500 million in the next two to three years.

Global lender supports EA indebted states with \$1.9 billion financing deals

By Special Correspondent

THE International Monetary Fund (IMF) board has approved the payment of \$620.65 million in budgetary support for Rwanda, Tanzania and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) as part of the \$1.92 billion financing commitments which the Washington-based institution agreed with six East African nations in the past six months.

The deals have come as a relief for the six countries - Somalia, Burundi and Kenya, which are saddled with debts, a situation made worse by falling revenue collections, declining forex reserves and depreciating currencies.

The IMF funding, which is pegged on the implementation of key socio-economic and governance reforms by the recipient countries, is aimed at helping them deal with the persistent budget deficits and shore up the flagging foreign exchange reserve positions. In the past two weeks, the fund's board approved the disbursement of \$150.5 million, \$268.05 million and \$202.1 million for Tanzania, Rwanda and the DRC respectively.

For Tanzania, the funding is part of the \$1.04 billion Extended Credit Facility (ECF) that was approved by the IMF board in July 2022. The approval of Dodoma's funding followed the completion of the programme's second review, bringing Tanzania's total access under the arrangement to \$455.3 million.

The IMF mooted the 40-month financing package to help bolster Tanzania's economic recovery, address the spillover effects from Russia's invasion of Ukraine, help preserve macroeconomic stability, and support structural reforms toward sustainable and inclusive growth, drawing on the government's priorities.

"Most end-June 2023 quantitative performance criteria and indicative targets were met," the IMF said in a statement on December 13.

"The authorities' structural reform agenda is progressing well, with all end-June 2023 structural benchmarks completed on time, reflecting their commitment to the reform agenda."

For Rwanda, the IMF Board, on December 14, approved a new 14-month credit facility arrangement worth \$268.05 million, out of which Kigali can access \$138.84 million immediately.

The agreement falls under the fund's stand-by credit facility (SCF) and resilience and sustainability facility (RSF).

The Board's decisions allowed for an immediate disbursement equivalent to \$49.49 million under the RSF, and \$89.35 million under the SCF.

The fund noted that Rwanda's economic growth remained robust, but macroeconomic imbalances have intensified, adding that policy space to advance developmental objectives has been constrained by diminished policy buffers and repeated droughts and the severe floods in May 2023.

On the same day (December 14), the IMF Board completed the fifth review under the ECF arrangement with the DRC, allowing for an immediate disbursement of \$202.1 million towards international reserves, to continue building buffers.

This came soon after IMF and the Somalia authorities reached an agreement on key economic and financial policy reforms which saw Mogadishu get a huge debt relief and an additional \$100 million financing under a three-year Extended Credit Facility (ECF) arrangement.

For Burundi, the IMF board on July 17, 2023 approved a 38-month arrangement under the ECF with access of SDR 200.2 million (or \$261.7 million).

In November, the IMF staff reached an agreement with Kenya, for an expanded \$938 million financing. The funding, which still requires IMF board approval in January, would result in the fund granting Kenya immediate access to around \$682 million.

Ethiopia becomes Africa's latest sovereign default

LONDON

ETHIOPIA became Africa's third default in as many years on Tuesday after it failed to make a \$33 million "coupon" payment on its only international government bond.

Africa's second most populous country announced earlier this month

that it intended to formally go into default, having been under severe financial strain in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic and a two-year civil war that ended in November 2022.

It had been supposed to make the payment on Dec. 11, but technically had up until Tuesday to provide the

money due to a 14-day 'grace period' clause written into the \$1 billion bond. XS1151974877=TE

According to two sources familiar with the situation, bondholders had not been paid the coupon as of the end of Friday Dec. 22, the last international banking working day before the grace period expires.

Ethiopian government officials did not respond to requests for comment on Friday or over the weekend, but the widely-expected default will see it join two other African nations, Zambia and Ghana, in a full-scale "Common Framework" restructuring.

The East African country first requested debt relief under the G20-

led initiative in early 2021.

Progress was initially delayed by the civil war but, with its foreign exchange reserves depleted and inflation soaring, Ethiopia's official sector government creditors, including China agreed to a debt service suspension deal in November.

On Dec. 8, the government said

parallel negotiations it had been having with pension funds and other private sector creditors that hold its bond had broken down.

Credit ratings agency S&P Global then downgraded the bond, to "Default" on Dec. 15 on the assumption that the coupon payment would not be made.

EU-China cooperation vital in face of global challenges, says economist

BRATISLAVA, Slovakia

EUROPE and China have common interests in several areas, such as climate, trade and technology, and the cooperation between the European Union (EU) and China is vital, a Slovakian economic expert told Xinhua in a recent interview.

Juraj Sipko, former head of the Institute of Economic Research at the Slovak Academy of Sciences, said the world is currently facing three systemic shocks: climate change, the after-effects of the coronavirus pandemic, and numerous conflicts. The combined results of these shocks have led to geoeconomic blocks and global fragmentation.

Noting that the world economy is currently plagued by "very low economic growth, very high interest rates, very high inflation, and very high public debt," the expert stressed that international cooperation is the only way to counter the global trend of fragmentation.

The EU and China can benefit from working together with and learning from each other, not only in the field of trade but also in all areas of life, Sipko said.

Once served as the director of international relations at the Slovak Ministry of Finance, and a negotiator with the EU and the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development, Sipko has frequently visited China to gain first-hand experience and a "real picture of the local economy based on data analysis."

With global fragmentation on the rise, "China's efforts of promoting co-



European Council President Charles Michel (C) prepares to talk with the media after the first day's meeting of European Union (EU) leaders in Brussels, Belgium

operation and building infrastructure abroad play a significant role in the global economy," he said.

In his view, China is one of the key players actively pursuing international cooperation with the others.

He said China is one of the few countries that is "self-reliant" and able to extend support to others thanks to

its substantial wealth fund and foreign exchange reserves.

With an average 30 percent share

of contribution to global GDP growth per year over the past decade, and a similar forecast for the future, China will be able to continue investing - mostly in low-income countries and developing countries - under its Belt and Road Initiative, he noted.

"Even international institutions encourage China to help finance the process of restructuring of public debt in these countries," Sipko said.

The former advisor to the governor of the Slovak National Bank mentioned examples like China's financial aid to the floods-hit Pakistan in 2022 and China's infrastructure-building activities not only in developing countries but also in Europe.

China has managed to significantly reduce poverty in the past decades which will "increase the purchasing power parity of its middle-income class," Sipko said.

China's domestic demand will be the main driving force as the country continually shifts its growth model from quantity to quality thanks to "robotization, automatization, digitalization and technology innovation improvements," he said, while recommending China increasing its productive investment to stay competitive as many of its products are highly demanded abroad.

Regarding the intensity of the devastation of global climate change to many countries and industries, which is digging deep into national budgets and threatening financial stability, Sipko underlined: "The only way is to cooperate."

"Now that the current civilization is facing many challenges, risks, and an existential threat, it's not time for a strategy of isolation, but for fruitful and mutual cooperation in favor of all people living on this lovely planet," Sipko concluded



The 'nuisance' breaking new ground for African women in the energy value chain

By Seth Onyango

AT 67, Faustina Boakye's youthful vigor belies her age, a detail she casually brushes off with a smile, accustomed as she is to such compliments. But beyond her age-defying appearance and sched-

ule, Boakye is clearly driven by a mission. In her case, that mission is to push for women's active participation in the African energy sector.

"It's crucial to involve women in energy, their potential remains largely untapped," Faustina stated emphatically.

Boakye, often labelled a 'nuisance' by her critics, embraces the title as a badge of honour, asserting her commitment to fighting for women's access to affordable energy, opportunities, and technologies along the energy value chain.

"I am a nuisance whenever I go, but

for a good course. I'll continue to make noise until the powers that be succumb to this issue of gender equality, involvement of women in the energy and climate sectors," she vowed, speaking at COP28, in Dubai.

Her advocacy is rooted in the con-

viction that women, traditionally seen only as caregivers and excluded from major decision-making roles in energy, have much more to offer. "They're not just caregivers. They're innovators, leaders, engineers," she said.

Faustina's journey into advocacy began with a stark realisation during her extensive career as a journalist that more needed to be done to cast the spotlight on women.

"Covering conflict zones like Darfur (Sudan), I saw the dire struggles of women. It was heart-breaking but eye-opening," she recalled.

These experiences laid the groundwork for her transition from journalism to activism, having also worked at World Vision. At one point, upon seeing women's involvement in the Arab Spring, she wanted to protest at the embassies of those nations in Accra, Ghana in solidarity with them.

At COP28's gender pavilion, she spoke passionately about the tangible changes she's witnessed through women-led initiatives in the energy sector.

"One of our entrepreneurs developed LPG stoves tailored for African pots, transforming cooking in local restaurants. Another is revolutionizing fuel with bamboo briquettes," she explained with pride.

But her efforts go beyond advocating for local entrepreneurship. At international forums, Faustina has become a vocal advocate for direct financial support to women in the energy sector. This is a hot issue at COP28, where an announcement of funding for a Loss and Damage Fund was made on the event's opening day.

"We need to channel climate finance directly to these women, not just through governments or large organizations," she argued.

Despite the challenges, including a failed bid for a parliamentary seat due to entrenched gender biases, Faustina remains undeterred.

"I'm not going to stop making noise until the issues of gender equality and involvement of women in the energy and climate sectors are adequately addressed," she declared.

Her message, she stated is clear: women must be given fair access to energy resources and decision-making processes, especially in climate change and energy transitions.

One focus of Boakye's advocacy is the funding of micro-enterprises through microloans and the training of female entrepreneurs. Her efforts have led to the creation of workshops and training programs that not only educate but also inspire women to pursue careers in energy.

Her approach to advocacy now includes leveraging her journalism background to highlight issues related to women and energy. She believes that by documenting stories of women affected by energy policies, or those making a difference in this field, she brings much-needed attention to the issues and to the women who are driving change.

WORLD

Israel expands offensive in Gaza, UN warns of deeper crisis

JERUSALEM

ISRAEL declared on Tuesday the expansion of its ground offensive in the central Gaza strip, as the United Nations warned that the escalation of attacks is exacerbating a "catastrophic" humanitarian crisis in the war-ravaged Palestinian enclave.

Israel previously urged the residents of Gaza to move from the northern region to the central and southern regions, which it claimed as "safe zones." However, the Israeli forces later expanded their strikes across the strip, including the central and southern parts.

In a statement, UN Human Rights Office's spokesperson Seif Magango reported that more than 50 strikes oc-

curred in central Gaza on Dec 24-25, targeting the refugee camps of Bureij, Nuseirat, and Maghazi, where two strikes hit seven residential buildings, killing at least 86 people.

"An unknown number of people are still believed to be trapped under the rubble," Magango said.

The escalated Israeli bombardment, said Magango, is "deepening an already catastrophic humanitarian situation," with all roads connecting the three camps destroyed, hindering the delivery of relief aid. Shelters and hospitals, operating at a minimal capacity, are grappling with critical overcrowding and limited resources.

Palestinian health authorities have reported that approximately 21,000 people, predominantly children,



Palestinians search the rubble of a building following Israeli bombardment in Rafah in the southern Gaza Strip on Tuesday. AFP

women, and the elderly, were killed during the 81-day conflict, with thousands more missing and presumed to be buried under the rubble. A majority of the 2.3 million population has been displaced, and the UN reports widespread hunger.

Meanwhile, an Israeli military spokesperson told reporters that the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) believes that "thousands" of Hamas militants are located in the refugee camps of central Gaza.

IDF Chief of the General Staff Herzi Halevi said in an address to soldiers that the attacks will now concentrate on central and southern Gaza.

According to Halevi, the military "is close to completing the dismantling of Hamas' battalions in the northern Gaza strip."

He said that the military killed "many" militants and Hamas commanders, some surrendered to the Israeli forces and "hundreds" were taken prisoner. However, "it cannot be said that we killed them all. It seems likely that we will still encounter fighters in this area." He acknowledged that the ongoing attack has exacted a "heavy and painful toll" on soldiers' lives, with official figures indicating that the number of Israeli troops killed has reached 161 since the beginning of Israel's ground invasion.

The Israeli objectives - eliminating Hamas and bringing back home about 129 hostages who are still held in Gaza - "are not sim-

ple to achieve," Halevi noted, saying that the fight would continue "for many more months."

Addressing the parliament Security and Foreign Affairs Committee, Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant also emphasized that Israel faces "a long fight."

He said that since Hamas launched its surprise attack on Oct 7, Israel has been "in a multi-front war. We are being attacked from seven different arenas: Gaza, Lebanon, Syria, Judea and Samaria (the West Bank), Iraq, Yemen, and Iran."

Israel has "retaliated in six of these arenas," Gallant said. "Anyone who acts against us is a potential target, there is no immunity."

Xinhua

Expecting strong Russian participation at Vibrant Gujarat: Jaishankar

MOSCOW

EXTERNAL Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Wednesday discussed international strategic situation, conflicts and tensions with Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov in Moscow, adding that India expects a strong Russian participation at the Vibrant Gujarat meeting in January.

Jaishankar, who is in Russia for a five-day visit met his Russian counterpart at the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs Reception House in Moscow.

EAM Jaishankar said, "Our relationship has been very strong, very steady. And I think we have lived up to a special and privileged strategic partnership. This year we have already met 6 times, and this is our 7th meet. Our Prime Minister and President Putin have also been in frequent contact. We expect a strong Russian participation at the Vibrant Gujarat meeting in January."

"Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov greets Foreign Minister of India @DrJaishankar at the Russian MFA Reception House in Moscow. The bilateral talks have



External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and Russian Deputy Prime Minister Denis Manturov visit the Russian Industry and Trade exhibition, in Moscow on Tuesday. ANI

commenced," the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russia wrote in a post on X (formerly Twitter).

"Today we will focus on our bilateral cooperation in different

spheres, adjusting it to changing circumstances and demands. We will discuss the international strategic situation, conflicts and tensions..." he said.

During the bilateral meeting, Jaishankar said that this is the seventh meeting between the two leaders this year.

"It is always good to be in Mos-

cow. I agree with you that our relationship has been very strong and Steady," Jaishankar said.

"I think we have lived up to the responsibilities of strong and strategic partnership," he added.

Earlier, the Russian Embassy in India had stated that during the meeting, the Ministers will focus on the current and future areas of bilateral cooperation as well as discussion of the schedule of upcoming contacts.

"Moscow and New Delhi are committed to multipolarity as an integral factor in ensuring the balance of the world order that has emerged over the recent decades. Russia supports countries of the Global South in upholding political and economic sovereignty amid the spread of neocolonial practices. The priority is to promote a positive agenda and build constructive interstate dialogue," the statement added.

Jaishankar arrived in Moscow on Sunday for a four-day visit to Russia from December 25-29. After he arrived in Moscow, Jaishankar said he looked forward to his engagements in Russia.

ANI

Egypt's Suez Canal economic zone attracts 1.85-bln-USD investments in 6 months

CAIRO

EGYPT'S General Authority of the Suez Canal Economic Zone (SCZE) said on Tuesday that it received investments worth 1.85 billion U.S. dollars in the past six months.

Waleid Gamal El-Dein, chairman of the SCZE General Authority, was quoted as saying in a statement issued by the Egyptian Cabinet that 89 investment projects have

received final and initial approval from the SCZE since July 1.

Among them, 47 projects received final approval with a total investment of 941 million dollars, while 42 projects received initial approval

with an estimated total investment of 908 million dollars, El-Dein said.

Nine Chinese projects were among those that received final approvals, he said, adding that the Chinese projects cover areas such

as carpet manufacturing, textile printing, manufacturing household appliances, establishing a private customs warehouse, ready-made clothing, and accessories.

Xinhua

PM Modi discusses strategic partnership, West Asia situation with Saudi Crown Prince

NEW DELHI

PRIME Minister Narendra Modi held a conversation with Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman and discussed the future of the strategic partnership between India and Saudi Arabia.

The two leaders also discussed the situation in West Asia amid the ongoing Israel-Hamas war. They expressed concerns regarding terrorism and the loss of civilian lives.

They further agreed to work together for peace, security and stability in the region.

"Held a good conversation with my Brother HRH Prince Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud on the future of Strategic Partnership between India and Saudi Arabia. We exchanged views on the West Asia situation and shared concerns regarding terrorism, violence and the loss of civilian lives. Agreed to work together for peace, security and stability in the region," PM Modi posted on X (formerly Twitter).

Earlier this year, Salman visited India for the G20 summit in New Delhi. During his visit, he also held bilateral talks with PM Modi and President Droupadi Murmu.

The two leaders also held the first leaders' meeting of the India-Saudi Arabia Strategic Partnership Council.

After the meeting, PM Modi said that the economic corridor between India, West Asia and Europe will provide economic growth and digital connectivity between these regions. He noted that the cooperation between India and Saudi Arabia in the economic sector is vital for the peace and stability of the entire region.

President Droupadi Murmu also hosted a banquet in honour of the Saudi Crown Prince and noted that the two nations shared cultural experiences, economic synergies and a common commitment towards a peaceful and sustainable world.

ANI

UN chief appoints Sigrid Kaag as senior humanitarian coordinator for Gaza

UNITED NATIONS

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres on Tuesday appointed Sigrid Kaag of the Netherlands as the senior humanitarian and reconstruction coordinator for Gaza.

Kaag (pictured) will facilitate, coordinate, monitor and verify aid consignments to the embattled enclave, in line with a recent UN Security Council resolution.

She will also establish a UN mechanism to accelerate humanitarian relief shipments through states that are not party to the conflict. Kaag is expected to take up the assignment in Jan. 8.

According to a press note issued by the UN chief's office, Kaag has a wealth of experience in political, humanitarian and development affairs, as well as in diplomacy.

Most recently, she served as the first deputy prime minister and first female finance minister in the Dutch Government since January 2022, and was minister for trade and development cooperation from October 2017 to May 2021, and minister for foreign affairs until that September.

Kaag has held a wide range of senior positions in the UN system, including serving as special coordinator for Lebanon from 2015 to 2017, and as the special coordinator of the Joint Mission of the Organization for Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and the UN Mission in Syria from 2013 to 2015.

On Friday, the UN Security Council adopted resolution 2070, which, among other points, demands immediate, safe and unhindered delivery of humanitarian assistance at scale directly to Palestinian civilians throughout the Gaza Strip.

The resolution requests the UN secretary-general to appoint a senior humanitarian and reconstruction coordinator and calls for the "expeditious" establishment of the UN mechanism to ramp up aid distribution.



Philippines actions in South China Sea extremely dangerous, ignoring China's goodwill, restraint

RECENTLY, the Philippines has repeatedly stirred up trouble in the South China Sea, continuously infringing on China's sovereignty, making provocative moves in the waters of Ren'ai Jiao in China's Nansha Qundao, and spreading disinformation to smear China.

As a country from outside the region, the United States not only encouraged and supported the Philippines' provocative moves, but also distorted facts and made irresponsible accusations against China, irresponsibly escalating tensions in the region.

The Philippines, bolstered by the support of extraterritorial forces, has brushed aside China's goodwill and restraint, and has repeatedly challenged China's principles and red line. This is extremely dangerous and poses a serious threat to regional peace, stability, prosperity and development.

China has indisputable sovereignty over Nansha Qundao, including Ren'ai Jiao, and their adjacent waters. This was established in the long course of history and is consistent with international law including the UN Charter.

The Philippines promised to tow away a warship illegally "grounded" at Ren'ai Jiao 24 years ago. But 24 years on, the warship is still there.

Over the course of this year, the Philippines has gone back on its words and kept sending government and military vessels into the waters of Ren'ai Jiao to supply construction materials for the large-scale repair and reinforcement of the "grounded" warship and permanently occupy Ren'ai Jiao.

These moves gravely violated China's sovereignty and went against international law and the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China

Sea.

It has been the Philippines who is breaching the common understandings with China and heightening tensions in the South China Sea. It is the Philippines who has attempted to change the current status of Ren'ai Jiao and make it a fait accompli, and it is the Philippines who has on every occasion courted external forces to put pressure on China. This is an undeniable fact that cannot be changed no matter how the Philippine side tries to manipulate it.

In response to the Philippines' provocations, the China Coast Guard (CCG) responded in accordance with laws to safeguard China's territorial sovereignty. The CCG's operations were reasonable, legitimate, and professional.

China firmly opposes the Philippines' attempt to occupy Ren'ai Jiao and has made clear its solemn position to the

Philippine side at various levels and through multiple channels, putting forward proposals for properly managing the situation.

It is against the principles of international law and legally untenable for the Philippines to cite the "award" of the South China Sea arbitration, which is illegal, null and void, to claim that Ren'ai Jiao falls within its exclusive economic zone and continental shelf and deny China's sovereignty over it.

China will continue to do what is necessary in accordance with domestic and international laws to resolutely respond to provocative moves that infringe on China's sovereignty and defend its territorial sovereignty and maritime rights and interests.

At the same time, China has been committed to enhancing communication with the Philippines with sincerity

and goodwill to properly handle the tension. China hopes that the Philippines will make the right choice, and seriously honor its commitment to properly handling disputes through dialogue and consultation.

The Philippines relies on the United States as an extraterritorial force to cause trouble and provocation in the South China Sea.

The United States has been inciting and supporting the Philippines' attempts to repair and reinforce its warship that was deliberately "grounded" on Ren'ai Jiao. The United States even sent over military aircraft and vessels to assist and support the Philippines, and repeatedly sought to threaten China by citing the United States-Philippines Mutual Defense Treaty.

Instead of honoring its commitment to not taking a position on the South

China Sea, the United States blatantly emboldened the Philippines' violation of China's sovereignty, confounding right with wrong and deflecting blame. It has been acting as a scaremonger on security issues that stokes confrontation and antagonism. This seriously violates the purposes and principles of the UN Charter and gravely jeopardizes regional peace and stability, which is extremely irresponsible and dangerous.

Rigoberto Tiglao, former spokesperson for former Philippine President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, said in a recent article that the irrationality of the Philippines is a testament to the power of U.S. propaganda. He noted that the United States demonizes China as a threat to countries in the region such as the Philippines, saying "It was so easy for the U.S. to brainwash us."

People's Daily

Russian diplomat says Zelensky's news conference exposed West's fatigue

MOSCOW

UKRAINIAN President Vladimir Zelensky's recent year-end news conference signaled that Kiev lacks confidence about its future and the West has grown tired of Ukraine's political setbacks, Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said.

"Everyone has seen the Kiev regime's lack of confidence about its own future amid growing Western fatigue with their failures," she said at a news conference. "The begging of their Ukrainian underlings is causing ever more irritation in Washington, London and Brussels."

"There is a growing reluctance among ordinary people in Western society to nurture the corrupt regime from their own pockets," the diplomat went on to say. "The sooner the collective West realizes that the settlement of the Ukrainian conflict, which it provoked, is possible only through achieving the goals of the special military operation, the sooner peace will come."



Japan lifts operational ban on world's biggest nuke plant

TOKYO

JAPAN'S nuclear power regulator yesterday lifted an operational ban imposed on Tokyo Electric Power's Kashiwazaki-Kariwa nuclear power plant two years ago, allowing it to work towards gaining local permission to restart.

TEPCO has been eager to bring the world's largest atomic power plant back online to slash operating costs, but a resumption still needs consent from the local governments of Niigata prefecture, Kashiwazaki city and Kariwa village, where it is located.

When that might happen is unknown.

With capacity of 8,212 megawatts (MW), the plant has been offline since 2012 after the Fukushima disaster a year earlier led to the shutdown of all nuclear power plants in Japan at the time.

In 2021, the Nuclear Regulation Authority (NRA) barred Tepeco from operating Kashiwazaki-Kariwa, its only operable atomic power station, due to safety breaches including the failure to protect nuclear materials and missteps that saw an unauthorised staff member accessing sensitive areas of the plant.

Citing improvements in the safety management system, the NRA on Wednesday lifted a corrective action order that had prevented Tepeco from

transporting new uranium fuel to the plant or loading fuel rods into its reactors - effectively blocking a resumption.

Following the decision, Tepeco said it would continue its efforts to regain the trust of the local community and society at large, while Japan's chief cabinet secretary said the government would do its part to aid the process.

"The government will seek the understanding and cooperation of Niigata prefecture and local communities, emphasising 'safety-first,'" Yoshimasa Hayashi, the government's top spokesman, said.

Resources-poor Japan is eager to bring more of its nuclear power plants online to reduce its reliance on imported fossil fuels such as liquefied natural gas (LNG).

The Institute of Energy Economics, Japan (IEEJ) forecast last week that Japan's LNG imports would decline to 58.5 million metric tons in the 2024/25 fiscal year from an estimated 64 million tons this year. The fall factors in the anticipated restarts of a few more nuclear reactors and an increase in renewable energy sources.

Shares in Tepeco had soared after the NRA indicated early this month that it would consider lifting the operational ban after conducting an on-site inspection and meeting with the company's president.

Agencies

Asia-Pacific seen to lead global recovery amid disruptions

BANGKOK

The year 2023 saw the Asia-Pacific region leading global recovery with strengthening multilateralism and strong momentum despite disruptive factors.

The Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) delivered increasingly prominent dividends and the high-quality Belt and Road cooperation has entered a new phase. As the second-largest economy in the world, China has played its part in its sound development and strong commitment to regional cooperation to usher the Asia-Pacific into another "golden 30 years."

Strong momentum for recovery

In the past three decades, development in Asia-Pacific has embarked on a fast track of growth, turning the region into a powerhouse for world economic growth, an anchor of stability for global development, and a pacesetter for international cooperation. Per capita income in Asia-Pacific has more than quadrupled, and 1 billion people have been lifted out of poverty. This is an important contribution to human progress and global sustainable development.

The trend continued in the past year as Asia-Pacific supported global recovery with its strong momentum. In its Regional Economic Outlook released in October, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) said the Asia-Pacific region remains a key driver of global growth in 2023, despite headwinds from changing global goods and service demand and tighter monetary policies. The region is expected to grow by 4.6 percent in 2023, up from 3.9 percent in 2022, the IMF said.

Openness, inclusiveness and common development were still the mainstream themes for Asia-Pacific in 2023.

The RCEP has been in effect for all its 15 members since June. The world's largest free trade pact will eliminate 90 percent of the tariffs on goods traded among its signatories, providing another boost for economic growth in Asia-Pacific by further liberalizing and facilitating trade and investment.

Meanwhile, negotiations for Version 3.0 of the Free Trade Area (FTA) between China and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) began at the beginning of the year and is expected to facilitate growth in ASEAN and regional economic integration.

One of the key indicators of the economic recovery in the Asia-Pacific region is the speedy resumption of people-to-people exchanges. Chinese local governments and businesses actively ventured abroad to attract investment and conduct business negotiations, while investors and companies in the region returned to China to seek opportunities.

The warm welcome received by Chinese tourists in countries like Thailand left a heartwarming snapshot for the year. The launch of the international passenger service of the China-Laos Railway has further driven economic and trade cooperation as well as cultural exchanges among countries within the region. The resumption of on-site exhibitions at the China International Import Expo and the return of overseas exhibitors at the China-ASEAN Expo have accelerated the regional economic recovery.

"Asia-Pacific is the most dynamic region in the global economy ... the region has carried over two-thirds of global growth this year. And this will continue," Thomas Helbling, deputy director of the IMF's Asia and Pacific Department, told Xinhua in an interview. "We expect China and the region to remain the most dynamic region, to contribute importantly to global growth."

Tensions running high as massive protest against election irregularities expected in DR Congo capital

KINSHASA

A week after the election day in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), massive protest is expected Wednesday in the Congolese capital of Kinshasa, with several presidential candidates denouncing the electoral process marred by episodes of irregularity.

Visible tensions have been running high since the beginning of the polling on Dec. 20. It was till the last presidential election in late 2018 that the DRC realized its "first peaceful transfer of power" since independence from Belgium, according to the United Nations.

MASSIVE PROTEST

Five presidential candidates announced on Dec. 23 to launch a massive protest in Kinshasa on Dec. 27 to denounce what they described as major irregularities in the electoral process. "We will plan a march for Dec. 27.

We will protest against the irregularities observed during the voting operations of Dec. 20," according to a statement of the five presidential candidates issued Saturday, including Martin Fayulu and Denis Mukwege, two main challengers in the race.

The demonstration would start from Triumphal Boulevard, where the parliament is located right next to the headquarters of the Independent National Electoral Commission (CENI), in downtown Kinshasa.

Acts of violence among the protesters remain prime concerns for residents of Kinshasa.



This photo taken on May 11, 2023, shows a view in Kinshasa, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). Xinhua

Irregularities were reported in the general elections held on Dec. 20, as voters in the DRC were scheduled to elect a new president, members of the National Assembly and Provincial Assemblies, as well as municipal councilors.

Polling was officially extended the following day as a large number of polling stations were not able to open due to the late arrival of voting materials and equipment. The extension was deemed against the electoral law and the Constitution by some presidential candidates.

The "irregularities sufficiently attest that on Dec. 20, 2023, it was a sham election, organized in violation of the fundamental right of the Congolese people," according to the statement.

On Monday, the Commission of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) called on stakeholders in

the electoral process to "show the greatest restraint in their actions," to "reject hate speech and division, as well as violence in all its forms and to make their demands and protests peaceful."

On Dec. 23, 13 embassies in Kinshasa released a joint statement calling for restraint. "We call on all stakeholders, in particular political actors, candidates and their supporters, to continue to exercise restraint, allow time for the process to continue and to assert their challenges peacefully, in accordance with the laws and the Constitution," read the statement.

CALLS FOR ANNULMENT

As the CENI, the electoral body, has started publishing partial results of the presidential race, Moïse Katumbi, one of the main opposition candidates in the

presidential race, has suggested that the elections should be "annulled" because of "massive fraud."

"Faced with this unacceptable situation, we call for the immediate annulment of these chaotic elections, marred by massive fraud," read a statement by Katumbi on Dec. 23, a major challenger to the incumbent President Félix Tshisekedi, who is seeking reelection.

Denis Kadima, the CENI president, confessed to the press that he was unable to clarify the exact number of polling stations in operation, due to complications on the ground.

"So, I am unable to give you these figures because there are machines, you saw, which were broken," said Kadima in an interview with local media published Tuesday.

About 75,000 polling stations were supposed to be open for voters, yet polling continued on Dec. 23 in some parts of the country, three days after the fixed date, according to local media.

According to partial results announced by CENI late Monday, Tshisekedi was leading the race with 78.8 percent of the vote counted, while Katumbi ranked in second place with 17.3 percent of the vote.

Given the results announced by CENI so far account for more than 3.2 million ballots out of around 44 million voters registered, it is too early to call the election results. Full provisional election results are expected by Dec. 31, as CENI will publish daily updates starting on Dec. 24.

Egyptian tour guide says BRI makes his life splendid

On the center of page 18 of the People's Daily newspaper issued on Dec. 25, 2023, there is a photo in which an Egyptian tour guide is passionately explaining something to Chinese tourists.

This tour guide is Abbas El-Said. It is the second time for him to be reported by People's Daily, and the first time came 11 years ago when a journalist from People's Daily, captured a moment of Abbas, who was 28 and served as an assistant to the director of the China Cultural Center in Cairo, telling stories about the 12 Chinese zodiac animals to local students at the Center. This photo appeared on page 19 of the June 8, 2012 edition of People's Daily.

"I always have the photo of this precious report in my phone, and I often show it to my friends, colleagues, family, and Chinese tourists. It is my great honor and pride that my photo appeared on People's Daily, China's largest newspaper!" Speaking of the 2012 interview by People's Daily, Abbas was still excited.

Though Abbas had no elders in his family well versed in Chinese culture, he still developed a keen interest in China from a young age - a children's book about the East sparked his longing for China.

After entering elementary school, his curiosity in and fascination with China further deepened as he learned the stories of the ancient Silk Road, the faraway and beautiful country of ancient China, and the wisdom-filled Confucius and Confucianism.

Later, Abbas was admitted to the Chinese language department of Ain Shams University. In order to excel in Chinese, he practiced thinking in Chinese, and his progress was indeed remarkable.

The Egyptian man said that he had three dreams of his life - learning Chinese, being a tour guide, and serving as an envoy of cultural exchange between Egypt and China. And he has always been progressing steadily on this path he has planned.

In 2006, Abbas completed his studies at the age of 22 and went on to further his education at Sinai College of Tourism. After graduating in 2009, he officially became a professional Chinese-language tour guide.

As a matter of fact, Abbas started receiving Chinese tourists as a sophomore. "By working as a tour guide, I was able to earn an income while practicing my Chinese. Most importantly, being a tour guide allowed me to make friends with more and more Chinese people," he noted.

It was also during this year that Abbas started attending various activities at the China Cultural Center in Cairo. "The China Cultural Center is like a window that opens up to Chinese culture, allowing a ray of sunshine to shine into my heart."

In 2010, Abbas became an assistant to the director of the China Cultural Center in Cairo and served for a period of three years.

"This job gave me the opportunity to share my love for Chinese culture with more people. Through organizing lectures, exhibitions, and events like the Chinese New Year temple fair, more and more Egyptians started to embrace Chinese culture and became fond of it. Being able to contribute to the bridge of friendship between Egypt and China made me feel incredibly happy," Abbas told People's Daily.

Recently, Abbas has been studying a Chinese word "lianjie" (), which means connectivity. "As ancient civilizations, Egypt and China had friendly exchanges over 2,000 years ago, which marked 'lianjie' in history. The China-proposed Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) is 'lian-



Abbas El-Said explains the 12 Chinese zodiac animals to local students at the China Cultural Center in Cairo, Egypt. This photo appeared on page 19 of the June 8, 2012 edition of People's Daily. (Photo: People's Daily)

jie" in contemporary times that revitalizes the ancient Silk Road," Abbas explained.

He said China actively cooperates with countries around the world for mutual benefit and win-win outcomes, and he believes that in today's turbulent international environment, people will better understand the value and significance of the BRI.

Currently, "lianjie" is more reflected in the synergy between the BRI and Egypt's Vision 2030.

"The BRI is helping me fulfill my dreams and also benefiting my country. China has helped us build the Central Business District in our new administrative capital, where the Iconic Tower is known as the 'tallest building in Africa,' which makes us very proud," Abbas noted.

He also took the 10th of Ramadan Light Rail Transit program as an example, saying the program, as the first electrified railway in Egypt, adopts Chinese technologies and equipment.

"Many Egyptians, including myself, are personally experiencing the tangible benefits and conveniences brought about by the BRI," he said.

Abbas said his life would not be the same if he had not studied Chinese or if the BRI had not come to Egypt.

"My life is splendid because of the BRI," Abbas noted.

Currently, Abbas is preparing to establish a company that promotes Chinese culture and fosters cultural and economic exchanges between China and Egypt.

"I am willing to do my part to strengthen the connection between Egypt and China, bring the two countries closer and build closer ties between the two peoples!"

As tourism exchanges between Egypt and China continue to flourish, Abbas has become increasingly busy. Since the beginning of this year, he has been receiving an average of two to three Chinese tour groups every

month, with each group staying in Egypt for a minimum of one week and a maximum of 20 days.

His busy schedule reflects the accelerated development of bilateral relations between China and Egypt, and highlights the successful implementation of the BRI in Egypt.

In today's Egypt, the pragmatic cooperation between China and Egypt has brought about plenty of employment opportunities, leading to a high demand for Chinese-speaking talents. Learning Chinese has become a popular trend there.

In September 2022, a pilot project for Chinese language education in Egyptian secondary schools was launched, marking the inclusion of Chinese language into Egypt's national education system.

The growing enthusiasm for the Chinese language and Chinese culture in Egypt demonstrates that the mutual understanding between China and Egypt is built on mutual learning between the two civilizations, and the strongest potential of China-Egypt cooperation lies in people-to-people bond.

People's Daily



In 2006, Abbas completed his studies at the age of 22 and went on to further his education at Sinai College of Tourism. After graduating in 2009, he officially became a professional Chinese-language tour guide

Azam FC eyes dominance in 2023/24 NBC Premier League

By Correspondent Seth Mapoli

THE current football season in Tanzania is witnessing a familiar force, Azam FC, surging ahead in the 2023/24 Mainland Tanzania NBC Premier League.

After playing 13 games, the outfit's record speaks volumes- 10 victories and just two defeats- placing it firmly at the top of the table.

Under the guidance of head coach Youssouph Dabo, Azam FC demonstrates a remarkable blend of consistency and unwavering fighting spirit.

Azam FC's campaign began with a flourish, claiming three convincing victories on the club's home turf.

The Chamazi-based outfit beat Tabora United (4-0), Tanzania Prisons (3-1), and Singida Fountain Gate FC (2-1), with all falling prey to the club's offensive prowess.

However, the first roadblock emerged in the form of Dodoma Jiji FC, which held Azam FC to a goalless draw at Jamhuri Stadium in Dodoma.

Undeterred, the Chamazi boys bounced back with a crucial 1-0 triumph over Coastal Union at Mkwakwani Stadium in Tanga.

Azam FC later on took on a rival in the title race and the league defending champion, Young Africans SC, popularly



Azam FC players are pictured congratulating each other when the squad grabbed a goal in a recent NBC Premier League duel that took place in Dar es Salaam.

known as Yanga, in the much-anticipated tie at Benjamin Mkapa Stadium in Dar es Salaam.

The nail-biting encounter eventually proved a heartbreaker for the Chamazi-based outfit, as it narrowly went down 3-2 to Yanga.

This first defeat was followed by another setback, a 3-1 home loss to

Namungo FC. Yet, this proved to be a turning point.

Azam FC embarked on a stunning six-game winning streak, showcasing the squad's dominance against a variety of opponents.

Ihefu SC, Mtibwa Sugar, Kinondoni Municipal Council FC, JKT Tanzania, and Kagera Sugar were all swept

aside, with score lines ranging from 3-0 to a resounding 5-0 against both Mtibwa Sugar and Kinondoni Municipal Council FC.

This current hot streak paints a promising picture for Azam FC as the outfit looks towards the remaining fixtures.

Each player at Azam FC understands the significance of collective effort, as reflected in the squad's head coach Dabo who believes in his team and players that can do wonders in the 2023/24 NBC Premier League encounter.

"This unwavering commitment to pushing forward and achieving positive results fuels the team's ambition," Dabo said.

Beyond tactical prowess and individual brilliance, it is the unwavering support of the Chamazi fans that serves as a constant source of strength for Azam FC.

Their passionate chants and unwavering belief resonate throughout the stands, propelling the team forward even in the face of adversity.

With the league campaign still in its infancy, Azam FC's impressive run has undeniably set the tone for the season.

Whether they can maintain this dominance and ultimately claim the coveted Premiership title remains to be seen.

However, one thing is certain the Chamazi Boys are a force to be reckoned with, and their unwavering determination promises to make the rest of the season a thrilling spectacle for Tanzanian football fans.



Simba SC Information and Communication Manager Ahmed Ally.

Simba SC aims to improve squad to qualify for 2025 FIFA Club WC

By Correspondent Nassir Nchimbi

SIMBA SC leadership has said it will improve the squad so it can stay within reach of a place in the 2025 FIFA Club World Cup slated to take place in the United States.

The inclusion of Simba SC in the 2025 FIFA Club World Cup shortlist has been warmly welcomed by the club, pushing it to make a squad revamp to match the competition slated to take place in two years' time.

The list released recently by FIFA has placed Simba SC in seventh place with 45 points and it is the only side from East and Central Africa to secure a place in the list.

However, from the CAF zone, Al Ahly (Egypt) and Wydad Casablanca (Morocco) have already qualified with one spot remaining as Africa will enter three envoys.

According to the available list, Al Ahly is at the top with 110 points, followed by Wydad Casablanca in the second spot- having recorded 102 points-, while Mamelodi Sundowns (South Africa) is sitting third after collecting 81 points.

Simba SC Information and Communications Manager Ahmed Ally said that the club's inclusion in the global showpiece's qualifiers is a great honour and the club should be proud.

He moreover said the club's leadership will build the team well in collaboration with the technical bench to make sure it amassed enough points to participate in the showdown.

"Our team's inclusion in the list is something to be proud of, we will make sure that we fight to build a strong team to continue doing well especially in international competitions so that we can be better and fly the country's flag well," he said.

Other teams present in the list of the top 12 teams in the CAF rankings are ES Tunis of Tunisia in fourth place with 75 points, CR Belouizdad of Algeria in fifth place with 59 points, Petro de Luanda of Angola in sixth place with 49 points.

Raja Casablanca of Morocco is positioned eighth with 45 points, Al Hilal of Sudan is sitting ninth with 33 points, and Horoya AC of Guinea is in 10th place with 29 points.

Also in the list is Kaizer Chiefs of South Africa which is sitting 11th with 28 points, as is the case with Egypt's Zamalek which is occupying the 12th place.

Simba SC having a chance, long-time rival Young Africans SC, alias Yanga, also stands a chance of qualifying for the FIFA Club World Cup if the outfit wins the 2023/24 CAF Champions League.

Azam FC takes on Mlandege in Mapinduzi Cup opener

By Correspondent Nassir Nchimbi

AZAM FC will play the opening match of the 2024 Mapinduzi Cup tournament against defending champion Mlandege FC at the Amaan Stadium in Zanzibar today.

The ice cream makers have arrived in Zanzibar with a squad of 18 senior team players and seven academy players who will have minutes in the tournament.

Azam FC will be without midfielder Feisal Salum in the opening match, as he was yesterday expected to be one of the footballers making Zanzibar squad 'Zanzibar Heroes' in a friendly clash with Mainland Tanzania's Kilimanjaro Stars.

Salum boasts a 12-goal involvement record so far this season for Azam FC.

Apart from playing against Mlandege FC in Group A fixture, Azam FC will come up against Zanzibar outfits Mlandege FC and Chipukizi FC, and Jamus FC from South Sudan for a spot in the knockout rounds.

Azam FC will not only use the showdown to get the season fully on board but also present itself with a chance to lift the much-needed silverware.

Youssouph Dabo, Azam FC head coach, will also want to taste his free-flow expression playing style against some of the regional heavyweights.

Speaking ahead of Azam FC open-

ing match, the outfit's information officer Hashim Ibwe said: "Dabo wants to keep the rhythm of the team flowing, there are 18 senior players and seven academy players- as opposed to three junior players that played in last year's tournament, this shows how the coach wants to keep his team spirit flowing."

Ibwe revealed: "Once we resume NBC Premier League duties, we will approach games at a very high intensity, we aim to win the tournament and add silverware to our cabinet. Zanzibar has good footballing talents- we thus expect a tough opposition."

"Every player realizes what we need, we will continue to fight to get positive results to achieve the goals that we have set for ourselves this 2023/24 season," he said.

He has said that the Tanzania Mainland Premier League has tough competition, but he is confident that the club's players will continue to do well to win their matches after the AFCON finals.

Azam FC tops the league with 31 points ahead of powerhouses Young Africans SC (30) and Simba SC (23), positioned second and third respectively, having played two and three games fewer.

Chamazi-based Azam FC has won the Mapinduzi Cup tournament five times, the most of any side.



Mzumbe University student Ayoub Mwenda (C) is presented with home appliances by Tigo Tanzania's Coast Zone Manager, Gwamaka Mwakilembe (R), after winning the telecom company's campaign, termed 'Magifti Dabo Dabo', held recently. The prize handover ceremony took place in Dar es Salaam recently. Standing (L) is the campaign's other winner, Selemani Omary. PHOTO: CORRESPONDENT

Simba SC and Yanga in pursuit of 100m/- award in 2024 Mapinduzi Cup

By Correspondent Seth Mapoli

THE 2024 Mapinduzi Cup's Organizing Committee has unveiled the prizes for this season's tournament winner, announcing that the champion will receive 100m/- while the runner-up will claim 70m/-.

Clubs from Mainland Tanzania including Simba SC and Yanga, some clubs from neighbouring East African countries, and the ones based in Zanzibar will battle it out in the showdown.

Organized by the Zanzibar government in collaboration with the Zanzibar Football Federation (ZFF), the Mapin-

duzi Cup- which takes place annually- commemorates Zanzibar's Revolution Day.

This season's tournament prize for the champion is twice the amount awarded last year, in which the champion was presented with 50m/-.

This increase is attributed to the championship's expanded scale in celebration of the 60th anniversary of the Zanzibar Revolution, as stated by Organizing Committee Chairman Mbarouk Othman.

Apart from the monetary rewards, the showdown's Organizing Committee will present other accolades

such as the Best Player and Best Goalkeeper in the tournament.

Noticeably, Kenya's Bandari FC and Uganda URA FC have opted out of the showdown due to uncontrollable challenges, and their spots have been filled by Zanzibar's JKU SC and Jamus FC from South Sudan.

This shift has resulted in adjustments to the tournament groups, with Group A now composed of Azam FC, Vital'O (Burundi), and Zanzibar's Chipukizi United and Mlandege FC.

Group B features Zanzibar outfit JKU SC, Simba SC from Mainland Tanzania, Rwanda

soccer big gun APR FC, and Singida Fountain Gate FC from Mainland Tanzania.

Group C includes South Sudan's Jamus FC, Mainland Tanzania's Yanga, and Zanzibar outfits KVZ and Jamhuri. Despite these changes, the tournament system will remain unchanged.

Nasra Juma Mohammed, the secretary of the Organizing Committee, highlighted the challenges faced in finding replacement teams, expressing relief in securing JKU SC and Jamus FC.

Tickets for the matches to be played at Amaan Stadium are available, ranging from the ones costing

3,000/- each to those costing 10,000/- each.

The 2024 Mapinduzi Cup tournament has been scheduled to kick off today, culminating at Amaan Stadium in the Isles on January 13.

Azam FC boasts a record five Mapinduzi Cup titles, followed by Simba SC with three titles.

Mtibwa Sugar and Young Africans SC have each lifted the trophy twice. Other teams, including Zanzibar's Jamhuri, KMKM SC, Zanzibar's Polisi, Mafunzo FC, Miembeni FC, and Malindi SC, have secured the title once.

Guardiola says rivals want Man City to fail 'more than ever'

LONDON

PEP Guardiola believes many people now want Manchester City to fail "more than ever" after the club won their fifth trophy of an outstanding year.

City were to return to English domestic action at Everton later yesterday after adding the Club World Cup with a 4-0 thrashing of Brazilian side Fluminense in Saudi Arabia to their trophy cabinet, having already lifted the Champions League, Premier League, FA Cup and European Super Cup in 2023.

No club in English football history has enjoyed such a successful year, although Guardiola win six trophies when in charge of Barcelona in 2009 when the Catalan side won La Liga, Copa del Rey, Spanish Super Cup, European Super Cup, Champions League and Club World Cup titles.

"It is a business, you get credit when you win," City manager Guardiola said ahead of his side's trip to Goodison Park. "You don't win you are nothing, zero, what you have done in the past."

The Spaniard added: "As much as you win, they want you to fail. More than ever. I felt that when we won the sextuple in Barcelona."

"It's normal. They don't want (us to win). In these 14-15 years what we have won, the titles, is unbelievable. "People say 'how good they play, how genius it is'. But they give credit just because we win. They don't have to look further than that."

City's victory over Fluminense gave the Manchester side their first Club World Cup and capped a productive five days in Saudi Arabia that manager Guardiola said had "created incredible team building and team spirit".

It was all in marked contrast to their recent Premier League form, with a run of just one win in six games leaving City fifth in the table, six points behind leaders Arsenal.

"In the moment you don't win you are going to get doubts, absolutely everything," said Guardiola. "But that is what is nice. That is OK. Doubt again, we'll see what happens."

"I said before when we played incredibly well against Crystal Palace, Liverpool and Tottenham and don't win."

"It's a real proof they don't care the way we play. We played the best levels quite similar to these (past) eight years and we don't win. It's a 'disaster and crisis'."

"Of course we have bad moments like Aston Villa, who were better. But what's the problem?"

"They can play better so we have to accept it and move forward. The reality is we are happy, but they are waiting for us around the corner (to fail)."

But Guardiola, who spent Christmas with his family in Barcelona, insisted his focus now was firmly on Everton.

AFP

Ratcliffe pleads for patience after agreeing Manchester Utd deal

LONDON

JIM Ratcliffe has directly contacted Manchester United fans to plead for patience after agreeing to take a stake in the struggling English football giants.

United announced on Christmas eve that British billionaire Ratcliffe had agreed a deal to buy a 25 per cent stake in the club for about \$1.3 billion, with Ratcliffe vowing to return the Premier League side to the "top of world football".

United also announced in a statement on Sunday that Ratcliffe's INEOS chemicals company would take control of football operations after years of under-achievement under the US-based Glazer family, the club's current owners, who retain majority control at Old Trafford.

INEOS director of sport Dave Brailsford, best known for his work in cycling, was in the crowd at Old Trafford on Tuesday as United came from 2-0 down to defeat high-flying Aston Villa as they moved up to sixth in the Premier League.

Ratcliffe, 71, has now written to several fans' groups, including the Manchester United Supporters' Trust, insisting INEOS "are in for the long-term" but stressing on-field success "will require time and patience", with fans also hoping he can redevelop a crumbling Old Trafford ground.

"I wanted to write to you at this time given the critical role of the fans to the future of Manchester United as we recognise our responsibility as custodians of the club on your behalf," Ratcliffe said Tuesday.

"I believe we can bring sporting success on the pitch to complement the undoubtedly commercial success that the club has enjoyed."

"It will require time and patience alongside rigour and the highest level of professional management."

"You are ambitious for Manchester United and so are we. There are no guarantees in sport, and change can inevitably take time but we are in it for the long term and together we want to help take Manchester United back to where the club belongs, at the very top of English, European and world football."

"I take that responsibility very seriously."

Ratcliffe added he would not be speaking about club matters until the deal had received regulatory approval.

AFP

Liverpool go top as Nunez strikes, Hojlund caps Man United fightback

LONDON

LIVERPOOL climbed to the top of the Premier League as Darwin Nunez ended his goal drought to inspire a 2-0 win against Burnley, while Rasmus Hojlund broke his own barren run to cap Manchester United's thrilling fightback to beat Aston Villa 3-2 on Tuesday.

Jürgen Klopp's Liverpool took an early lead through Nunez at Turf Moor and held on despite wasting a host of chances.

Nunez's eighth goal this season was his first for 12 games since he netted against Bournemouth in the League Cup on November 1.

Diogo Jota, back from a month's injury absence, wrapped up the victory late on to leave Liverpool two points above second placed Arsenal, who have a game in hand.

Arsenal can regain top spot with a victory at home to West Ham on Thursday.

After successive draws with Manchester United and Arsenal prior to Christmas, this was an essential victory for Liverpool's title ambitions.

On Liverpool being in pole position, Klopp said: "That's nice. It will probably change and that's no problem. It was not perfect but we are where we are."



Burnley's English goalkeeper #01 James Trafford makes a save at the feet of Liverpool's Uruguayan striker Darwin Nunez during the English Premier League football match between Burnley and Liverpool at Turf Moor in Burnley, north-west England on December 26, 2023. AFP

At Old Trafford, United were in danger of another damaging defeat when goals from John McGinn and Leander Dendoncker put Villa in control by half-time at Old Trafford.

Erik ten Hag's team were booed off at the interval but they staged a much-needed revival, sparked by Alejandro Garnacho scoring their first goal in seven hours and twenty minutes.

Garnacho struck again to equalise before Hojlund

finally scored his first Premier League goal, in his 15th appearance, with eight minutes left.

Hojlund's cathartic strike ended United's four-match winless run in all competitions and lifted them to sixth in the Premier League.

"At half-time I said to the team, 'keep believing'. The atmosphere changed a lot from the first half to the second. If we play our best we can beat anyone," Ten Hag said.

United's victory came in

front of INEOS director of sport Dave Brailsford, who was in the directors box in the first sign of British billionaire Jim Ratcliffe's involvement after buying a 25 per cent stake on Christmas Eve.

Two games without a win have dented Villa's unexpected title challenge. Unai Emery's men remain third, three points behind Liverpool after their first defeat in 11 matches in all competitions.

Chris Wood's hat-trick against his old club

Newcastle gave Nuno Espirito Santo his first victory as Nottingham Forest boss, a 3-1 success at St James' Park. Wood left Newcastle to join Forest in June, but had scored only four times for his new club.

Alexander Isak's first half penalty put Newcastle ahead before New Zealand striker Wood equalised late in the first half.

Wood struck twice more in the second half to hand former Tottenham manager Nuno his maiden victory with Forest in his second

game in charge after replacing the sacked Steve Cooper. It was Forest's first win in eight games and only their second success in their last 15 matches.

Luton boss Rob Edwards said South Yorkshire Police are investigating an alleged racist comment towards Carlton Morris in his side's 3-2 win at fellow strugglers Sheffield United.

Morris complained of a comment made from a United fan late in the second half, which left him "pretty angry", and the police have spoken to him.

"There was an alleged racist comment, the police are dealing with that, they have spoken to Carlton and got his take on it," Edwards said.

Fulham boss Marco Silva insisted his goalkeeper Bernd Leno "touched" but "didn't push" a ball boy during the Cottagers' 3-0 defeat at Bournemouth.

The second-half incident occurred when Leno went to collect the ball from the youngster's outstretched hand before using his own hand to make deliberate contact with the shoulder of the boy, who appeared to take a step back for balance.

"Have you seen him pushing? I didn't see this. Yes, he apologised. I spoke with Bernd about it," Silva said.

AFP

Ineos has final say on Erik ten Hag's future and January moves

By James Ducker

THE full details of Sir Jim Ratcliffe's deal with the Glazers were revealed on Tuesday night as it emerged Manchester United could not sack Erik ten Hag or make a significant signing without consulting Ineos while the agreement awaits approval.

Ratcliffe and his Ineos team face a four to six week wait for their £1.03 billion purchase of a 25 per cent stake in United to be ratified by the Premier League. But under the terms of the arrangement with the Glazers, who have agreed to hand over complete control of football operations to Ratcliffe, no decision could be taken on Ten Hag's future or the purchase or sale of a player without Ineos being consulted.

As part of the deal that will see the Glazers' shareholding reduce to 49 per cent and Ratcliffe take a 29 per cent stake, it emerged that:

- No dividends will be paid for at least three years with investment in the first team squad and Old Trafford prioritised
- The Glazers could force Ratcliffe to comply with a future outright sale after 18 months under a so-called "drag-along rights" clause
- Ratcliffe will have first refusal for a year should the Glazers opt to sell any more of their valuable B shares in the future

United's extraordinary fightback from two goals down to beat Aston Villa 3-2 at Old Trafford on Tuesday night provided a huge boost to their top-four hopes and eased



Anti-Glazer banners at Old Trafford on Tuesday night. Under the new deal, the Glazers will not be able to take out dividends for three years - REUTERS

some of the pressure on Ten Hag. Ratcliffe is not expected to make any snap decisions at United, even though Ineos are keen to appoint a new director of football, but Ten Hag's long-term future is under scrutiny after a torrid season to date.

Ten Hag is known to retain the support of the current hierarchy but any decision around the future of the manager, football director John Murtough or ins and outs in the January transfer window would first need running past Ineos. That would suggest, for example, that Ratcliffe would expect to be consulted on any potential departure of Jadon Sancho, who has been exiled since early September in the wake of a falling out with Ten Hag.

A 241-page filing to the US securities and exchange commission that was released within minutes of the Villa game finishing revealed that United could not "appoint, dismiss or accept the resignation of

any director of football or first team manager" or buy or sell players without discussion with Ratcliffe and his team.

Sir Dave Brailsford, the Ineos director of sport who will join the football club board at United provided the deal is approved, was in the directors' box at Old Trafford on Tuesday night. Ten Hag said he had yet to hold talks with Brailsford, who has been charged

with conducting a root and branch review of football operations, but welcomed the former British cycling chief's impending arrival. "He wants to work with us, I want to work with him," Ten Hag said.

More than £150 million has been paid out in dividends since the Glazers took ownership of United and news that there will be none paid for at least three years is likely

to be warmly welcomed by fans. The Glazers have instead agreed with Ratcliffe to prioritise the re-investment of such money into infrastructure and the team. Ratcliffe is providing an additional £237 million to invest in Old Trafford although it is understood to recognise that considerably more investment will be required in the future to finance redevelopment and expansion of the ground or an entirely new stadium.

Although Ratcliffe will have first refusal for a period of 12 months should the Glazers opt to sell more B shares - which have 10 times the voting rights of Class A shares - the Americans could compel the Ineos chairman to agree to an outright sell down the line. "Drag-along" rights included in the deal mean Ratcliffe would be obliged to sell his shares subject to him receiving a \$33 (£26) per share cash offer from the Glazers should they decide on a full sale 18 months from now.

A drag-along right is a provision or clause in an agreement that enables a

majority shareholder to force a minority shareholder to join in the sale of the company. The majority owner doing the "dragging" must give the minority shareholder the same price, terms, and conditions as any other seller.

The SEC filing said: "For so long as the Glazer Parties are the majority holder, following the date that is eighteen months after the closing date and in connection with any full sale ... the company board may require the Trawlers Party [Ratcliffe's investment vehicle] to sell all of their company ordinary shares and take such other actions as are reasonably necessary to effect the full sale."

The document also confirms, as reported by Telegraph Sport on Sunday, that Brailsford and Ineos Sport CEO Jean-Claude Blanc will join the football club board at United and John Reece, Ineos' chief financial officer, and Ineos Sport chairman Rob Nevin, will join United's plc board

THE TELEGRAPH

Gwiji by David Chikoko



SPORT

Liverpool go top as Nunez strikes, Hojlund caps Man United fightback

PAGE 19

Simba SC all out to excel in 2024 Mapinduzi Cup

By Correspondent Nassir Nchimbi

SIMBA SC head coach Abdelhak Benchikha is adamant he will use the Mapinduzi Cup and international break to work on strengthening tactical structure after posting a series of poor results this season.

The Msimbazi Street club, one of four Mainland Tanzania clubs battling it out in the Mapinduzi Cup, has been placed in Group B of the tournament slated to kick off in Zanzibar today.

It will come up against Rwanda's soccer big gun APR FC, Singida Fountain Gate FC (Mainland Tanzania), and Jamhuri SC (Zanzibar), while the showdown's final is expected to take place on January 13 at Amaan Stadium in the Isles.

Simba SC will play the first Mapinduzi Cup match on January 1- coming up against Jamhuri SC- followed by a tie against Singida Fountain Gate FC on January 3 and a final group match against APR FC on January 5.

Last season, Mlandege FC won the title by beating Singida Fountain Gate FC 2-1 in the final. This is the 18th season of the Mapinduzi Cup.

Azam FC is the team that won the most trophies in the showdown, winning it five times, followed by Simba SC which has triumphed four times.

Benchikha said that he will line up a strong squad ahead of the competition to compete for silverware as well as keep his players focused ahead of the CAF Champions League and NBC Premier League campaign.

"We are not only going to fight and win the silverware in this tournament but also use it to strengthen my team by continuing to reduce the mistakes that cost us in previous games," the gaffer noted.

He added: "We have transition problems, especially in defense, and it is something that has to be addressed before the second round (of the league)."

"I am going to use the players who have not been called to the national teams and those who have not had the chance to appear in several games of the Mainland Tanzania Premier League and the CAF Champions League," the gaffer pointed out.

"It is their time to show their quality while I also aim to opt out of making many changes," Benchikha disclosed.

The Algerian coach noted: "I understand mistakes are there in football but we can't keep letting this happen. We need to improve tactically and get good results for our fans."

Simba SC is occupying third place in this season's Premier League having collected 23 points, trailing league defending champion Yanga which has notched 27 points to stay second, and leader Azam FC which has posted 31 points.

It should be noted that the Mapinduzi Cup tournament that was formed in 1998 is used as part of the activities that commemorate Zanzibar's independence.

The Algerian gaffer pointed out his players have a lot to catch up on this season as he aims to retain the winning mentality within the squad as it enters the January transfer market.

“

We are not only going to fight and win the silverware in this tournament but also use it to strengthen my team by continuing to reduce the mistakes that cost us in previous games

Taifa Stars set for 2023 AFCON finals' warm-up vs Egypt



By Correspondent Michael Mwebe

THE Tanzania Football Federation (TFF) has finalized arrangements for an international friendly match between Taifa Stars and Egypt on January 7 as part of the former's preparations for the 2023 African Cup of Nations.

This friendly is scheduled to take place in Egypt where Taifa Stars will pitch camp before leaving for Ivory Coast where the 2023 African Cup of Nations will take place.

The two sides also met in a friendly in the build up to the 2019 African Cup of Nations.

Taifa Stars' training camp commenced in Dar es Salaam on Monday, where the initial phase of preparations involves a friendly with Zanzibar Heroes before the senior national team travels to Egypt this weekend.

Tanzania has been drawn in Group F which

will witness the squad playing against Morocco, DR Congo, and Zambia.

Morocco and Zambia are also part of Tanzania's qualifying group for the 2026 World Cup.

Taifa Stars will play their Group Stage matches in the town of San-Pédro, located 350km from Abidjan.

The Tanzania squad will play on the fifth day of the tournament, January 17, at 6:00 p.m. locking horns with World Cup semi-finalist Morocco, a side the former has faced in five previous encounters.

Three days later, Taifa

Stars will take on neighbours Zambia on January 21 before concluding their Group Stage campaign on 24 January against DR Congo.

Group winners, runners-up and the best four third-placed teams will advance to the round of 16.

Last week, the TFF submitted a preliminary 55-man squad to the Confederation of African Football (CAF), with the final 27-man roster set to be unveiled on January 3, exactly 10 days before the opening match.

The long list headlined by

Mbwana Samatta has several new names of players with Tanzanian roots playing in European leagues including Norwegian topflight leading goal scorer, Amahl Pellegrino, who turns out for FK Bodø/Glimt.

Others are Adam Nditi, Zion Nditi (Aldershot Town), Roberto Nditi (Forfar Athletic), Ayoub Bilal (FK Gorazde), Tarryn Allarakhia (Wealdstone), Miano Danilo, Twariq Ahmed (Telford United), Mark John (Kingstone), Mohammed Ali (Boreham Wood) and Adam

Kasa (IFK Haninge).

Tanzania qualified for the 34th edition of the African Cup of Nations by finishing second in Group F of the qualifiers with eight points behind Algeria which dropped just two points in six games.

Taifa Stars picked two victories, against Uganda (0-1) and Niger (1-0), drew two matches away from the team's base, ties against Niger (1-1) and Algeria (0-0).

There were also two home losses in fixtures against Algeria (0-2) and Uganda (0-1).

Benchikha eyes Simba SC's reinvention in 2024 Mapinduzi Cup



Simba SC's head coach, Algerian Abdelhak Benchikha. PHOTO: COURTESY OF SIMBASAC

By Correspondent Seth Mapoli

SIMBA SC's head coach, Abdelhak Benchikha, has issued a warning to the club's leadership, emphasizing the urgent need for a big change in the team's composition during the upcoming transfer window.

The Algerian coach issued the warning following the club's disappointing 2-2 draw with Kinondoni Municipal Council FC in a 2023/24 NBC Premier League tie that took place at Azam Complex Stadium in Dar es Salaam on December 23.

"We have a lot of work to do," Benchikha stated, recognizing the gap between Simba SC's current performance and the squad's title aspirations.

He identified areas requiring improvement, saying: "The team is playing well but there are things they are lacking, like finishing our chances. We have to fix that."

Benchikha plans to use the upcoming rest period and the

2024 Mapinduzi Cup to shape a strong team.

He highlighted the importance of careful recruitment during the transfer window, focusing on players with a hunger for success.

Simba SC's Information and Communications Manager, Ahmed Ally, echoed the coach's concerns.

"Our squad needs a big change," he declared and outlined a two-pronged approach.

"The first is to add quality players with passion and a thirst for success. The second is to improve the existing players' fighting spirit," he disclosed.

Ally acknowledged the team's recent struggles, stating: "We must admit that our squad needs this big change."

He identified the lack of finishing as a major hurdle, saying: "The main problem we see now is finishing our chances."

Both Benchikha and Ally emphasized the crucial two-month period leading up to the transfer window.

"We have two months to make these changes," Ally affirmed. He expressed urgency, stating: "This is the main thing that has to be fixed right now."

While a shake-up in the player roster is a priority, Benchikha stressed the importance of internal improvement.

He stated, "It's not just about bringing in new players, it's about making the existing ones better."

This commitment to holistic development suggests a focus on both talent acquisition and team cohesion.

Speculation regarding potential transfer targets has already begun to swirl, suggesting a search for players with diverse skill sets to address specific needs within the squad.

Simba SC's participation in the 2024 Mapinduzi Cup is viewed as an opportunity to test potential signings and refine team tactics under competitive pressure.

In Group B, Jamhuri SC (Zanzibar), the three-time Mapinduzi Cup champion Simba SC, last season's finalists Singida Fountain Gate FC from Mainland Tanzania, and APR SC from Rwanda are set to compete.

This tournament serves as a crucial testing ground before the league resumes, allowing head coach Benchikha to finalize his plans for the season ahead.

The 2-2 draw with Kinondoni Municipal Council FC served as a stark reminder of Simba SC's shortcomings.

While the performance offered glimpses of the team's potential, the missed opportunities exposed a lack of clinical finishing that needs immediate attention.

Simba SC's leadership faces a critical juncture. The upcoming transfer window and the subsequent matches present a golden opportunity to rectify weaknesses and rebuild a team worthy of its championship ambitions.

Benchikha and Ally have issued a clear call to action- it remains to be seen whether the club answers with decisive action.

One thing is certain, Simba SC's journey towards regaining its dominance hinges on the decisions made in the coming months.

Flexibles by David Chikoko

