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ATARE plans fund for promoting research

MSD uplifts total medical drugs needs provision to reach 81 pc

By Carlos Banda

THE Medical Stores Department (MSD) said yesterday that the country's medicine stock had reached 81 percent of requirements as of June 2023 compared to 57 percent attained in the corresponding period last year.

Mavere Tukai, the CEO made this affirmation at a media briefing journalists on the department's performance during the past two years, linking the increase with higher output in the country's pharmaceuticals sector.

Availability of medical products had increased from 51 percent last year to 64 percent in June 2023, with the department's total expenditure rising to 190.3bn/- during fiscal 2022/2023 from 134bn/- previously.

The department had an increase in sales revenue by 373.4bn/-, up by 52bn/- or 16 percent growth for fiscal 2022/2023 compared to 320bn/- collected during fiscal 2021/2022, he said.

He similarly noted that the joint procurement system with member states of the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) couldn't work owing to lack of cooperation plus gaps in interstate financial and regulatory requirements.

Poor harmonisation of regulatory regimes and financial system requirements impeded efforts to take up initiatives by SADC members to implement the plan, he stated.

"We practiced the SADC joint procurement in the first three years and we were able to attain 6.8bn/- sales revenue," he said, pointing out that the European Union (EU) helped in initiatives to advance the pharmaceutical sector.

This constituted the formation of a project, 'Support towards Industrialisation and the Productive Sectors (SIPS)' for the purpose, involving improvements in its MSD operations.

It also includes improvement in efficiency and digitalization of the procurement value chain, financial capabilities, institutional structure and discharge of functions, he said.

Administrative improvement and uplifting risk management systems like the office of strategic management are also envisaged, he added.

'With 400-megawatt shortfall, power cuts will last till March'

By Henry Mwangonde

TANZANIA is facing a 400-megawatt shortfall arising from ongoing repairs of plants and increased energy demand, making it necessary to have power cuts until March next year.

Gissima Nyamo-Hanga, the newly installed Tanzania Electric Supply Co. (Tanesco) managing director, told journalists in Dar es Salaam yesterday that the firm was working on strategies to minimise the shedding.

"We expect to reduce the 400MW shortage to an average of 100 MW a month by fast tracking current repair efforts" with a view to return to the normal schedule by March next year, he said.

Decreased water levels in hydropower plants arising from climate change was another major cause of the power supply shortage, he stated, noting that the company was working with stakeholders like the Tanzania Petroleum Development Corporation (TPDC) to fast-track repairs at its gas plants.

He appealed for calm during the transition period as the corporation works to put into place lasting solutions to the problem, expressing the conviction that by March next year, the repair of plants will have been completed and operations of the Julius Nyerere Hydropower Project (JNHPP) moving into gear.

He similarly underlined the need for the participation of various stakeholders in stepping up climate change mitigation efforts to reduce its effects on sensitive sectors such as energy.

At the swearing in ceremony earlier in the week, President Samia Suluhu Hassan tasked the new Tanesco CEO to end power woes within six months, after being appointed to replace Maharage Chande.

Tanzania produces about 1,900 MW through hydropower, natural gas, solar and heavy furnace oil, with various units and individuals using diesel generators or biomass to privately generate own power.

Natural gas and hydropower are the major sources accounting for 64.04 percent and 3.69-percent respectively.

Government efforts are being directed at renewable energy to reduce dependency on hydropower as it is less reliable due to climate change.

Prime Minister Kassim Majaliwa said during the 5th Tanzania Energy Congress held recently that the government intends to diversify energy sources by venturing into solar and wind energy generation using available natural resources.

He referred to seven power generation projects in difficulties, several being hydro. This was a result of climate change effects, he added.



Muslim faithful stage a procession in Dar es Salaam yesterday in celebrating the birth anniversary of Prophet Muhammad. Photo: Correspondent Jumanne Juma

Minister hails 60 years of China-Tanzania ties

Every year the relationship is getting stronger, especially in trade and investment

By Carlos Banda

COOPERATION between Tanzania and China during the past 60 years has seen many successes especially in trade and investment, the government has stated.

January Makamba, the Foreign Affairs and East Africa

Cooperation minister made this late on Tuesday at a city function to mark the 74th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China.

The event was attended by a number of cabinet ministers, the Information, Communications and Information Technology minister Nape Nnauye, Internal Affairs

minister Hamad Yussuf Masauni, retired premier Mizengo Pinda and a number of foreign envoys.

He said that Tanzania was proud of the cooperation as it has pushed economic growth, investment and expanded the tourism sector, elaborating that this relationship had seen many years of success in the international arena.

"Every year the relationship is getting stronger, especially in trade and investment," the minister underlined.

He said China is leading in bringing capital to Tanzania and in the size of commercial investments and

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China's Ambassador to Tanzania, Chen Mingjian, makes remarks at an event held in Dar es Salaam on Tuesday to mark the 74th anniversary of the founding of People's Republic of China. Photo: Correspondent Miraji Msala

USAID ends \$25m 5-yr nutrition project

By Guardian Reporter, Doda

This has helped to increase access to nutritious food, he said, expressing gratitude to USAID for ...

United States diplomats and senior state officials yesterday marked the completion of the 'Sustainable Nutrition' project, described as a hallmark in the journey towards better nutrition across the country.

Mohamed Mchengerwa, the Regional Administration and Local Governments state minister in the President's Office, unveiled a publication at the closure event profiling experiences of the beneficiaries of the project in its lifetime.

He said that the 'Sustainable Nutrition' story book reflects the five-year journey

in four regions, where the project was used to champion sustainable practices like agroforestry and livestock rearing.

This has helped to increase access to nutritious food, he said, expressing gratitude to USAID for "bolstering Tanzania's nutrition

realm."

Colin Dreizin, economic growth office director for the United States International Development (USAID) country office said that during implementation, USAID worked closely with ministry of Health, Regional Administration and Local Governments, as well as distinguished partners like Deloitte (an audit firm), Africa Academy for Public Health (AAPH), the Tanzania Marketers Group (TMG) which helps USAID in evaluation of local projects, and the Partnership for Nutrition in Tanzania (PANITA).

The event honoured efforts of civil society organisations engaged with the nutrition project across five

years, an initiative of the U.S government conducted in Doda, Iringa, Morogoro and Rukwa regions.

The key objective was to reinforce local nutritional efforts through collaboration with local governments and partnerships with over 300 private entities. It involved diverse and nutritious food types becoming more accessible, leading to noticeable health improvements in those regions, he said.

Since its inception in 2018, upwards of \$25m was channeled into the project, ensuring that over 1.6m women and 1.2m children in the four regions have access to vital nutritional services, the minister had indicated.



Girl of 15 years killed on way to school in south London stabbing

LONDON

A 15-year-old girl has been killed on her way to school after being stabbed in Croydon, south London.

Police cars and ambulances surrounded a red double-decker bus in Wellesley Road, near the Whitgift Centre, following the attack at 08:30 BST.

A boy aged 17, believed to be known to the victim, was arrested shortly after the girl died at 09:21 BST.

A statement from Old Palace of John Whitgift School said it was "deeply shocked".

The private girls' school in Croydon said the victim was a "much-loved and valued friend and pupil".

"It will take some time for the Old Palace community to come to terms with this terrible news, and we will offer support to our pupils as we try to do so.

"Above all, we send our love and deepest sympathies to the girl's family at this unimaginably distressing time."

Speaking to reporters on Wednesday afternoon the Met Police's Ch Supt Andy Brittain said this was "every parent's worst nightmare".

"I know the officers who responded this morning, along with our emergency

service colleagues, are devastated at the victim's death."

He said officers were on the scene within two minutes of the call being received and provided emergency first aid.

"Within 75 minutes a 17-year-old boy was arrested in New Addington, and remains in custody", he added.

The force confirmed it was not looking for anyone else in connection to the offence.

A white forensic tent has since been erected within a police cordon outside the Whitgift Centre and a bunch of flowers can be seen by the tent.

The cordon also surrounds a red double-decker number 60 bus, and about a dozen police officers and several emergency vehicles remain in the area.

One eyewitness described seeing a bus driver and a woman trying to resuscitate the girl on the pavement.

The woman who only wanted to be known as Bridget, said: "I was on the bus before and came off and walked back down, I saw them resuscitating her.

"The driver was holding her and a lady. The emergency services were already here when I walked back."



Msonge Organic Group member Asha Abdalla Juma (L) briefs Zanzibar President Dr Hussein Ali Mwinyi and First Lady Mariam Mwinyi (2nd-R), yesterday on vegetables and fruits produced by her group (L) with support from Moswery Agribusiness Solution Ltd. It was at the group's pavilion at the Organic Agriculture Exhibition in progress at Kizimkazi in Zanzibar's

Minister hails 60 years of China-Tanzania ties

FROM PAGE 1

gradually as well, in tourism.

China is a nation that came from poverty early in the past century to attain top global ranking in terms of technology and economy, he said, pointing out this example is a source of motivation and confidence for development

planners in the country.

China was pursuing a major investment programme worldwide in the past 10 years which has been of great benefit to Tanzania and the world at large, he declared.

Chen Mingjian, the Chinese ambassador, said that in its 74 years since the 1949 revolution, China has made great strides in

economic development, while at present China's national income grew at 5.5 percent annually in the first half of 2023, estimated at \$8.24 trillion.

Imports and exports have increased to reach \$2.8trn, with the sale of cars in the past seven months reaching \$2.5m worth, making China the global leader in that area.

She said the International Monetary Fund (IMF) has predicted that China will contribute 34.9 percent to global rise in incomes, with China's investments in Tanzania hitting \$1.8bn.

This trend took off earnestly after President Xi Jinping's visit to Tanzania ten years ago, with China's direct investment in

Tanzania being 2.5 times that of 2012.

Gilead Teri, the Tanzania Investment Center (TIC) executive director said at the event that in the 10 years following President Xi's visit, Chinese investments in projects has reached \$1.8bn, with an extensive impact on the nation in trade, investments and job creation.



Constitutional and Legal Affairs minister Dr Pindi Chana (2nd-R) cuts the ribbon in Dar es Salaam yesterday to launch guidelines on witness protection, management of criminal assets chiefly meant to assist investigators, detectives and prosecutors in handling requests they send and receive from abroad as part of international cooperation. She is with Director of Public Prosecutions Sylvester Mwakitalu (2nd-L), Prevention and Combating of Corruption Bureau director general Salum Rashid Hamduni (L) and Zanzibar's Director of Public Prosecutions, Mgeni Jiliani Jecha. Photo: Correspondent Jumanne Juma

S.Africa to clear Covid lockdown criminal records

Johannesburg

South Africa's parliament has passed a bill which would expunge criminal records for those convicted of breaching Covid-19 lockdown laws.

South Africa had some of the world's toughest restrictions, which saw more than 340,000 convicted for not wearing masks, consuming alcohol and breaking curfew, among other violations.

Those who admitted guilt and paid fines will now have their records cleared.

South Africans have broadly welcomed this bill.

There had been numerous complaints about people missing out on employment opportunities because of their criminal records.

It has to be approved by the National Council of

Provinces, and then signed into law by President Cyril Ramaphosa but there is little doubt it will become law.

The Judicial Matters Amendment Bill gained broad political support when it was debated in parliament.

However, the left-wing Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) welcomed part of the bill but said it couldn't support it as a whole.

"The prosecutions and persecutions that came about as a result of the regulations flowing from the Disaster Management Act during the pandemic demonstrated the depth into which our judiciary system could be used to severely limit the rights of individuals," said EFF MP Veronica Mente.

It has to be approved by the National Council of

In Uganda, scramble for land intensifies in fields near Kampala

KAMPALA

On the edge of Kampala, the hard lines of the city start to blur, smudging into soft hills where the breeze rustles through banana leaves.

This is the district of Wakiso, which surrounds the Ugandan capital like a cradling hand. It is an in-between place, where village becomes city, and the thud of the hoe gives way to the roar of mechanical graders.

Everybody here wants land. Brokers thumb through dog-eared title deeds. Surveyors prowl with their theodolites, measuring precise angles on rolling

fields.

And last December, in Namayumba sub-county, a posse of heavysset men made camp in a grove of trees, signalling the start of a tussle that would leave 1,000 people in fear for their homes.

There was nothing unusual about this dispute. Land conflict has become commonplace in Wakiso, a district of more than three million people. And it is a recurring theme in many African countries as cities seep into their hinterlands, washing away established boundaries and old patterns of living.

In Ghana, vigilantes known as "land

guards" violently enforce rival claims for land around Accra. In Ethiopia, the expansion of Addis Ababa has unearthed fraught questions of ethnicity and nationhood. In Zambia and Tanzania, survey data shows the growth of commercial farms owned by rich city-dwellers, especially in areas close to towns.

Florence Nakakande climbs the slope above her garden plot in Namayumba as raindrops glisten on the leaves. For most of her 62 years, she has dug and weeded and planted, coaxing beans and cassava from the earth, and laughter still comes lightly

to her lips.

But she knew trouble was coming when she first saw kanyamas, the bouncers. They would jog through the village at sunset, their biceps rippling through their T-shirts, or patrol the road with sticks.

She had never known a problem like this, ever since she moved here as a newlywed. Back then, her husband had bought a kibanja, an interest on a small parcel of land, and they became tenants of a local family who owned more than 400 hectares (about 1,000 acres) in the area.

On paper, the law gives strong

protection to kibanja-holders, who cannot be evicted as long as they pay a nominal rent, fixed by law at a few dollars a year. In practice, problems often arise when the landowner dies and his estate is sold or passed on.

That is exactly what happened in Namayumba. The landowner's descendants split into two camps, each claiming rightful ownership. One branch of the family was now working with a surveyor to measure and subdivide the land, offering to help tenants get formal title deeds if they relinquished a portion of their plots.

Nakakande rejected the deal. She

knew how easy it was to print fake documents at Nasser Road, a street in Kampala which is a hub of forgery. And anyway, her plot was a little larger than a football field.

"I'm a farmer," she says. "If they cut my land, I will not have anywhere to dig."

The kanyamas accompanied the surveyors as they measured out the fields, geometry and muscles working in unison. Whenever they walked past Nakakande's house, they would gesture at her to leave.

Agencies

Municipality to team up with UK institutions to address climate change effects

By Guardian Reporter

TEMEKE Municipal Council in Dar es Salaam has met and held discussions with experts from 'Tomorrow's Cities' institution from the UK with the aim to have in place strategies on how to fight the effects of climate change.

Speaking in Dar es Salaam on Tuesday during the meeting, Temeke Municipal Mayor, Abdallah Mtinika said the Council continues to take precautions against the effects of climate change including floods caused by El Nino expected to begin shortly. He also said that they expect to convene a meeting today and that other representatives from other countries will also participate.

"The main aim of the meeting is to conduct research that will help Temeke Municipal residents face the effects of climate change, floods in particular and urban planning,"

said Mayor Mtinika.

He explained that 'Tomorrow's Cities' will conduct research in the period of six months in collaboration with the Dar es Salaam Ardhi Institute and which will help to identify all challenges that cause floods in some areas.

Prof Wilbard Kombe, an Ardhi Institute expert said the importance of the research is that it will help to identify the gravity of disasters and how to address them.

For his part, Tomorrow's Cities' representative, Mark Pelling thanked Mayor Mtinika for inviting them to do research in the Temeke municipality, saying that it will bring positive results and enable in addressing disasters that can occur owing to the effects of climate change.

The meeting also brought together land and urban planning officials from the Municipality as well as other experts from the land sector.



Deputy Prime Minister Dr Doto Biteko (C), who doubles as Energy minister, switches on the lights at a house at Nyantakara in Biharamulo District yesterday shortly after the electrification of the village. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

Tanzania lauds Sweden for assistance towards SGR project

By Guardian Correspondent,

Stockholm

FINANCE minister Dr Mwigulu Nchemba has thanked Sweden through its various institutions, including Export Credit Agency (EKN) for its robust cooperation in contributing to Tanzania's development, including the construction of the Standard Gauge Railway

(SGR) from Dar es Salaam to Makutupora.

Dr Nchemba made the remarks in Stockholm on Tuesday when he met and held discussions with EKN Managing Director, Anna-Karin Jatko, which has provided guarantees to various banks that provide loans towards the construction of the SGR.

In the project, Sweden through its various firms has participated in import-

ing into Tanzania construction raw materials, working equipment, electrical and communication systems as well as the issue of environmental preservation.

He said that the projects which Sweden has assisted Tanzania since the beginning of the two countries' relations in both social and economic fields include those in health, water, energy, exclusive financial economy and

transportation.

Sweden also provided guarantee for access to funds for the construction of the First and Second stretches of the SGR (Dar to Morogoro and Morogoro to Makutupora) whose construction has reached 98 per cent and 95 per cent respectively and that trial runs for the First stretch will begin in December this year.

"The 2,102 km railway is

essential for the economic development of the country and is a regional strategic project and the country's priority at the moment," he said.

"For her part, EKN Managing Director, Anna-Karin Jatko commended Tanzania's great development strides, economically and socially saying it is a good supervisor of its economy as well the improvements made to the its

investment and business environment, and added that Sweden supports all these efforts and ready to assist Tanzania realise its goals in bringing development to its people.

Dr Nchemba and his delegation are in a working visit to Scandinavian countries, the visit that aims to boost economic and social ties between Tanzania and Sweden.



Members of education, health and agriculture boards from various regions sit in groups in Dar es Salaam on Monday when discussing ways to classify the workplace challenges they commonly face. This was at a three-day workshop organised by the Tanzania Gender Networking Programme (TGNP). Photo: Correspondent Sabato Kasika

'Number of new projects registered up by 26 pct from July 2022 to June 2023'

By Polycarp Machira, Dodoma

THE Tanzania Investment Centre (TIC) has recorded an increase of 26.1 per cent of new registered projects between July 2022 and June 2023 compared to the projects registered in the previous period between July 2021 and June 2022.

A total of 234 projects were registered in the 2020/2021 financial year while 273 investment projects were registered in 2021/2022 fiscal year, which was an increase of 39 projects, equivalent to 14.3 per cent. In 2022/2023 financial year, a total of 369 projects were registered, recording an increase of 96 projects which is equivalent to 26.1 per cent.

Speaking with The Guardian in Dodoma, TIC Regional Investment Acting Manager, Juma Nzima said the increase in number of registered projects was due to various factors including reduction in registration fees for local investment projects

from 100,000 US dollars to 50,000 US dollars.

"In the past, the investment projects that were owned by locals were registered with a fee of 100,000 US dollars but now half of that fee has been reduced, and now Tanzanians are paying only 50,000 US dollars," he said.

He said that the TIC's good performance was also due to the use of the electronic system (Tanzania Electronic Investment Single Window System-TeSWS), an arrangement that has made it easier for the Centre to deliver services, including simplifying access to TIC services by their clients.

"Through TeSWS, our clients and stakeholders can access all the information needed at the same time and anywhere. When customers log in into our system they can access information of all our co-working institutions such as BRELA, TRA, NEMC, OSHA, TBS, TMDA, NIDA

and all other key institutions dealing with the investment issues, hence making it easier for them to complete their activities quickly and efficiently," he said.

Nzima noted that improvements made on the laws governing investment matters in the country have further created conducive and enabling investment environment.

According to the TIC official, following the improvements on the laws, the expansion and rehabilitation projects are now being given an opportunity to benefit from tax incentives.

"Before the improvements on law governing investment matters, all the rehabilitation and expansion investment projects were not given tax incentives on the basis that they had already benefited from the incentives at the time of registration, but now all projects are getting these incentives," he said.

He said that the use of Investment

One Stop centres was also another reason behind the increase in registered projects, explaining that the benefits that investors and TIC get from the use of TeSWS is similar to benefits that all One Stop Investment centres bring.

"If you go to all our facilities (Centres) you will receive the services from all the stakeholders involved in investment matters, meaning that you will meet BRELA, TRA, RITA and NEMC officials etc in our offices physically," he said.

He noted that since the establishments of TIC in 2017 Dodoma and Singida regions have registered a total of 213 projects, with 165 projects registered in Dodoma Region and 48 projects in Singida Region.

Low power tariffs, political stability, strategic geographical location, availability of skilled manpower and improvement of transport infrastructure also make Tanzania an attractive investment destination.

Tanzania milk production stands at 3.6 billion litres, far below demand

By Guardian Correspondent,

Mwanza

ABOUT 3.6 billion litres of milk is produced in the country each year which is below demand of milk which is 12 billion litres, the situation necessitates imports of 8.4 billion litres.

This was revealed by the Tanzania dairies Board (TDB) Registrar, Dr George Msalya at the event to mark Schools Milk Drinking Week held at national level in Mwanza Region yesterday.

Dr Msalya said in addition to Tanzania being home to 36.6 million cattle, milk production is still low and called on the government to increase efforts in mobilis-

ing milk production in order to cope with milk processors demand for the important raw material.

He said that the country has 152 dairy plants with 252 collecting centres and called on livestock keepers to opt for commercial livestock keeping and sell the milk to the processing plants.

TDB Chairman, Prof. Zakaria Masanyiwa said the milk drinking by Tanzanians is low, one person drinks 62 litres of milk per year on average.

"According to research by the UN, a person is required to drink 200 litres of milk per year compared to Tanzanians drinking 62 litres per year," said Prof Masanyiwa.

For her part, Nyamagana District Commissioner Amina Makilagi, representing Mwanza Regional Commissioner said that through the plan to provide schools with milk, they will increase funds to schools to make sure that every meal provided to school is accompa-

nied by a glass of milk for students' health.

Closing the event, Deputy Livestock and Fisheries Minister, Alexander Ulega called on TDB to find friendly ways to lower the price of milk from 1,888/- per half litre to assist students to have easy access to the milk.

He said the government has provided subsidies in the livestock keeping sector and is looking at how to get low cost packaging, instead of costly ones that rise milk prices.



REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL: No. RFP/2023/SUP/020
FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A CONTRACT FOR THE PROVISION OF THE DESIGN, SUPPLY, INSTALLATION AND OPERATION & MAINTENANCE OF AN OFF-GRID SOLAR PHOTOVOLTAIC POWER PROJECT AT NYARUGUSU AND NDUTA CAMP AND THE HOSTING COMMUNITIES OF KASULU AND KIBONDO

1. Background:

The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Representation Office in Dar es Salaam invites reputable and qualified service providers to submit firm offers for the establishment of a Contract for the Provision of the Design, Supply, Installation and Operation & Maintenance of an Off-Grid Solar Photovoltaic Power Project at Nyarugusu and Nduta Camp and the hosting communities of Kasulu and Kibondo

2. Eligibility:

Suppliers duly registered with relevant government authorities, with sound financial basis, relevant experience, reputed clientele, and with knowledge of how to meet UNHCR's requirements are invited to participate in the bidding process.

Kindly download the tender documents in the below link:

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1dYMygeE8-eePwv87qmb7FYoYSHru-oM?usp=sharing>

If you fail to access the link, please write to ndassa@unhcr.org and copy ishobeza@unhcr.org

CRUCIAL DATES FOR THIS INVITATION TO BID

Deadline for receiving requests for clarification	16 th October 2023 at 2359 hours EAT
Deadline for submission of offers	23 rd October 2023 at 1600 hours EAT

UNHCR tenders are free of charge, no fees are charged to collect the tenders.

DC graces celebrations of week for the hearing impaired, roots for their rights

By Correspondent James Kan doya

THE government is working closely with stakeholders to ensure more people understand sign language, a move which is expected to ensure those with deafness and hearing loss access their rights including health care.

District Commissioner made the statement yesterday in Mbeya Region at the opening of celebrations to mark the International Week of the Deaf People.

Haniu said this year's theme—'A society which deaf people can everywhere sign' is aimed to raise awareness of the various forms

and causes of hearing loss as well as deaf culture.

He said Tanzania is now working to ensure sign language is recognized and used in all community places. He said limited understanding of the languages hinders provision of services to the deaf.

"The government is work-

ing to ensure the language spreads across the country; this will enhance inclusiveness at community level. Limited understanding of the language is one of the obstacles hindering effective communication," said the Rungwe DC.

"Our role is to ensure sign language is well known to

build a society in which deaf people can sign everywhere," he added.

A representative from the World Health Organisation (WHO), Mary Kessy, said it is the right time to ensure the rights of people with disabilities including deaf people.

"It is time to ensure deaf people sign everywhere

when looking for social services or interacting with others," he said.

Tanzania Association of Deaf (CHAVITA) Regional Secretary, Queen Majembe, said the week is celebrated to remind the government to recognize the rights of people with deafness and hearing loss.

The World Federation of Deaf (WFD) shares a vision of a world where people everywhere can sign anywhere. A world where deaf people are seen as part of the natural range of human diversity and sign language is celebrated and used everywhere as part of national societies.

WFD calls on governments to take measures to ensure at least 50 percent of their children and youths know their national sign languages, as a step towards building a society in which deaf people can sign anywhere.

Senyamule calls upon students to lay stress on tree planting culture

By Guardian Correspondent, Do doma

DODOMA region commissioner Rosemary Senyamule has challenged residents to cultivate tree planting culture as part of efforts to enhance environmental conservation.

Senyamule made the remarks when closing a two-day seminar for prospective retirees of the Public Service Social Security Fund (PSSSF) was held in the city from September 25th to 26th, 2023.

She also tasked students in the region to emulate the tree planting spirit from PSSSF employees to boost vegetation cover and get rid of climate change in their localities.

RC Senyamule commended PSSSF for supporting the government's endeavours in dealing with the adverse effects of climate change whereas until now the fund has distributed 739,000 tree seedlings to retirees.

"I am happy that you are involving both employees and retirees in the tree planting exercise. By December this year, you would have planted nearly 7 million

trees; this is a good move towards curbing the effects of climate change," said the RC noting each of the retirees will plant ten trees and take care of them.

She called upon Dodoma residents to also support the government's efforts that are geared to make the city green through various environmental campaigns including tree planting.

Beatrice Musa Lupi, PSSSF Acting Director General said the fund will continue to support government efforts in dealing with climate change, adding each of the prospective retirees have been provided with tree seedlings.

"The fund's management in collaboration with employees will run a campaign to ensure that each employee plants and takes care of ten tree seedlings at their respective areas. This campaign will continue until December 2023," she said.

Eng Salum Omary, a member of the fund who expects to retire in coming months, said they have all agreed to support the government efforts in environment conservation; promising that retirees will plant and take care of the trees accordingly.



Saudi Arabia's Ambassador to Tanzania, Yahya Ahmed AkishYahya (C); Tanzania's Foreign Affairs and East African Cooperation deputy minister Mbaruk Nassor Mbaruk (3rd-L); and the Dean of the Diplomatic Corps in Tanzania, Dr Ahmad El Baaoui Mohamed (2nd-L), who is the Comoros' Ambassador to Tanzania, pictured in Dar es Salaam on Tuesday cutting a cake at an event to mark the 93rd anniversary of Saudi Arabia's National Day. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

Agency inspects weighing scales in Geita Region to ensure fair business

By Guardian Correspondent, Geita

THE Weight and Measurement Agency (WMA) has conducted an impromptu inspection of weighing scales used for various types of minerals to ensure fair trade.

WMA Acting Manager in Geita Region, Eva Ikula said yesterday that the inspections will be sustainable. She was speaking at the on-going 6th international mining

exhibition at the EPZA Bombabili Mwatulole grounds in Geita Region.

She said WMA participated at the exhibition for purposes of providing education to stakeholders in the mining sector. She said the agency educated people on the importance of using correct measurements as well as its responsibilities.

"There are 10 mineral's markets in Geita Region; we inspect the weigh-scales to ensure accuracy in the minerals' business. Weigh machines used by traders must be verified by the agency," said Ikula, noting it is the agency's responsibility to ensure that all the weigh-scales used in measuring gems and minerals are verified and works correctly.

The manager said that verified weigh-scales are marked to indicate that they have been checked and can be used. She said the verified weighing machine has a sticker, a seal that has the national emblem and dates showing when they were inspected.

Verification of the weighing machines will enable the government to collect appropriate revenues

from mineral sellers.

One of the gold traders at the Geita market, Patrick Charles, said WMA has been assessing the scales regularly, the thing that increases efficiency.

He called upon fellow traders to make sure their scales are checked and verified in order to comply with the laws.



National Assembly Speaker Dr Tulia Ackson (R), current chairperson of the African Geopolitical Group of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, presents a souvenir to Beatriz Argimón, Uruguay's National Assembly Speaker doubling as Vice President, in Montevideo yesterday. Photo courtesy of Tanzania's National Assembly

Mpango to officiate this year's annual NGO Forum next week

By Getrude Mbago

VICE President Dr Philip Mpango is expected to officiate at this year's Annual NGO's Forum set to take place from October 3 to 5 in Dodoma city bringing together over 5000 participants from various organizations.

Themed: Our NGOs, Our Values, Our Nation, the three-day event is conducted under preparation and coordination of the National Council of NGOs (NaCoNGO).

Addressing reporters in Dar es Salaam on Tuesday, NaCONGO chief executive officer, Rachel Chagonja said apart from members of the council, the forum will also attract partners and stakeholders.

She said the forum's major objective is to raise discussions on various opportunities as well as chart how to address challenges that continue to befall the NGOs sector in the country.

"This conference which

is conducted annually will be preceded by forums at regional level where members engage in deep discussions and come up with burning issues that are later brought in the national conference for wider discussion and decisions, the issues include policies, ethics and funds," she said.

She said that the event will also remind members on several key areas including the responsibility of non-governmental organizations to the community which will also go along with a blood donation exercise, tree planting as well visit Miyuni Orphanage Centre in the Region.

The CEO said that blood donation was important and urged Tanzanians to create a culture of donating so as to support those in hospitals' beds fighting for life.

"We believe that the blood which will be donated will go to support mother and child health, during the forum also legal services will be provided, so any Tanza-

nian who needs the support is welcomed at the Forum's grounds to meet our paralegals and other experts," she explained.

Participants will also get time to discuss on how they can work in synergy to mobilize resources which include utilising local resources to finance various development endeavours of the organisations and communities in Tanzania.

"The Forum will also discuss policy and legal systems for the coordination of NGOs looking at the opportunities and challenges of laws and policies that have been obstacles in the coordination and performance of the organizations, and we will look deeply on the NGOs Act," she added.

According to Rachel, non governmental organizations must play their role of contributing to the country's development through proper utilisation of funds and application of innovation and technology to address challenges facing the society.

CRB called on to make sure bigger numbers of indigenous contractors land strategic projects

By Guardian Reporter, Dodoma

WORKS minister Innocent Bashungwa has instructed the Contractors Registration Board (CRB) to make sure it comes up with strategies to enable indigenous contractors to participate in the implementation of projects in the construction sector for them and the nation to benefit.

The Minister gave the instructions here on Tuesday when met with and received implementation reports from the Engineers Registration Board (ERB), Architects and Quantity Surveyors Registration Board (AQRB), Contractors Registration Board (CRB) and the National Construction Council (NCC).

He instructed the Ministry to sit down and listed to the challenges they face and find solutions thereon as well as prepare strategies that will help the indigenous contractors implement many projects, strategic projects in particular that can enhance their working capital.

"When it comes to the issue of 'local content', President Samia Suluhu Hassan would like to see increased participation of indigenous contractors in the construction sector," said Bashungwa.

He explained that current statistics show that the number of contractors registered by CRB is 14,550 out of who 550 are foreign and 14,000 local, but in regard to the implementation of strategic projects, local contractors receive 46 per cent of the projects and 54 per cent go to foreigners.

Bashungwa also commended the government's directive in the Public Procurement Act for projects costing from 10bn/- to 50bn/- by being

according priority to local contractors.

In regard to contractors' debts, Bashungwa said that through the Ministry of Finance, the government has put in place procedures of paying the debts and that every month from August this year 70bn/- is allocated whereas 50bn/- for payment local contractors debts and 20bn/- to those of foreign contractors.

Bashungwa also directed institutions under his ministry to make sure they invent strategies in announcing to the public achievements of their performance for the benefit of the institutions and the nation in general.

He also instructed them to supervise their experts in order to make sure they provide the right services to the public and in time, and take steps against those violating their work ethics.

Submitting his report, CRB Registrar, Eng. Rhoben Nkori said in FY 2022/23, the Board registered a total of 4,374 projects valued at 9,274trn/- of which projects valued at 4,998trn/- or 53.9 per cent were implemented by indigenous contractors and while projects worth 4,275trn/- or 41.1 per cent were implemented by foreign contractors.

For his part, ERB Registrar, Eng Bernard Kavishe said that the Board in coordinating short term practical training courses to graduate engineers aimed at empowering them get adequate skills in the performance of their profession.

AQRB Registrar, Arch. Edwin Nnunduma explained that his Board registered a total of 1,514 experts out of who 1,481 are indigenous and 33 foreign.



Said Mussa (gesturing) of Kigunga village in Kilindi District airs his grievances in style at a parents' meeting held at Kigunga Primary School yesterday. It was called to discuss various issues, including problems with students' meals at school and class attendance. Photo: Correspondent Dege Masoli

Opening of Tanganyika District seed farm expected to benefit Katavi Region farmers

By Guardian Correspondent, Tanganyika

TANGANYIKA district commissioner in Katavi Region, Onesmo Buswelu, has said the launch of the district's Luhafwe Seed Farm will benefit farmers in the region to a great extent.

Buswelu made the remarks during the visit of Agricultural Seed Agency (ASA) officials who visited the farm recently for its launch to enable it begin operation.

He said seed production at the farm

under ASA management will to a great extent help in the availability of quality crop seeds in the country.

"A thank ASA for inaugurating the farm, we in the district will provide cooperation as normal in order to make sure ASA's goals in seeds production are attained," DC Buswelu.

He added that ASA is an important institution in the farming sector whereby residents of Katavi Region and the entire western zone will greatly benefit from

the farm.

He also appealed to ASA to immediately open the farm and start quality seeds production.

He further said the seed farm will also increase economic opportunities and employment to the people of Luhafwe and Tanganyika District in general, especially to the youth, women and elders in the farming sector.

For his part, ASA Chief Executive Officer, Dr Sophia Kashenge commended

DC Buswelu for his cooperation in making sure the seeds agency is given the land area for seeds production.

She said ASA will start opening up 200 hectares of land to enable it produce quality seeds for the coming farming season for distribution to farmers.

She also assured residents of the district for cooperation in regard to opportunities to be obtained from the seed farm just as it is the case for its seed farms in other areas.



Medical Stores Department director general Mavere Tukai pictured in Dar es Salaam yesterday addressing senior media practitioners at a meeting organised by the Treasury Registrar's Office. The focus was on the government agency's performance, including achievements, challenges and projections. Photo: Correspondent Jumanne Juma

Develop regular health screening habits to avoid NCDs, experts urge Tanzanians

By Correspondent Christina Mwakangale

TANZANIANS have been asked to develop regular health screening habits to avoid heart-related complications and other non-communicable diseases (NCDs).

Dr Robert Mvungi, president of the Tanzania Cardiac Society (TCS) said this yesterday speaking to journalists in Dar es Salaam, ahead of tomorrow's World Heart Day, that has been organized by the Jakaya Kikwete Cardiac Institute (JKCI) and TCS.

Dr Mvungi said that at this year's celebration with theme: 'Use Your Heart to Protect Your Heart', will go along with free heart disease screening be held from September 29 and 30, this year at the Dar

Group-JKCI hospital.

"Our country has made great strides in fighting and treating heart diseases, that's why the has considered it a blessing to raise the status of JKCI due to repentance, preventing heart diseases in the country, the party is organizing this celebration in collaboration with them.

"There will be an examination camp, to determine the symptoms of heart diseases," he said, welcoming Dar es Salaam residents to visit the free screening camp.

He said that the celebrations started since 2000 with the aim of sensitizing the public about heart diseases, which are caused by the effects of uncontrolled blood function such as blockage of the heart arteries which, if affected, can

cause diabetes.

"The research we have so far is that a person with diabetes is five times more likely to get heart disease than another person. Heart disease is a cycle of all the things that surround the heart," he said.

He added that in the world 20 million people die due to heart problems, which 80 percent of these diseases could be prevented, if professional advice was followed.

Dr Peter Kisenge, JKCI managing director said that the government is focused on strengthening the health sector, especially heart treatment and there are specialist heart doctors.

According to him, these heart diseases contribute to many deaths in the world saying early screening helps to take

control of the complications.

"We aim to sensitize the community on the importance of protecting heart health and it is very important to exercise, because it helps to prevent these diseases. We will provide education on how to focus on nutrition and we are expecting an official guest on the day of the anniversary to be the Dar es Salaam Regional Commissioner," he said.

Dr. Tulizo Shemu, acting director of JKCI Dar Group said that the celebration aims to bring awareness to the community to reduce the number of those who suffer while saying that heart disease is expensive so to prevent it, it is better for citizens to do an early examination.

Horn of Africa nations for action on climate change, global system overhauling

UNITED NATIONS

DURING the 78th session of the UN General Assembly's general debate, nations from the Horn of Africa passionately called for action to combat the imminent climate threat and to overhaul the currently outdated and unjust global financial framework.

Leaders from Somalia, Ethiopia, Djibouti and Eritrea depicted a bleak scenario of a world severely affected by climate change. Their message was unequivocal: This pressing crisis requires a swift and united effort.

Hamza Abdi Barre, prime minister of Somalia, highlighted the "power of solidarity and cooperation" in an interconnected world and urged leaders to accelerate action to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

For his part, Ethiopian Deputy Prime Minister Demeke Mekonnen Hassen asked world leaders: "Do we have the necessary political will to choose global partnership over geopolitical competition (and) are we prepared to work together towards a promising age of shared prosperity?"

Hassen pointed out the unsettling reality that current policy decisions are heightening tensions, with poverty and hunger rising and the SDGs being undermined.

He showcased Ethiopia's efforts for sustainable development and climate action, noting that its 10-year development plan aligned with the SDGs and the national Green Legacy Initiative to ensure development through rural and urban green programs.

Regarding global security, the leader from Ethiopia underscored the importance of a system that honors the sovereignty of UN member states and prevents conflicts.

"Reforming the Security Council is not a choice but an absolute necessity," he stressed, calling for permanent seats for Africa.

Mahamoud Ali Youssouf, Djibouti's foreign affairs minister, highlighted the importance of bolstering multilateralism and global collaboration.

There is a tendency to "group together into clubs," Youssouf said, adding that this "minilateralism" results in resistance to change in international institutions, thus worsening inequality and compounding geopolitical competition.

Although this trend isn't irreversible, he noted that it demands significant investment to establish a system that reflects present geopolitical dynamics and strengthens close collaboration.

Foreign Minister Youssouf also mentioned that Djibouti has achieved significant strides in diminishing malnutrition, managing the pandemic and synchronizing national strategies with the SDGs despite an uncertain global economic environment.

The government also emphasized reducing poverty, fostering sustainable economic development, ensuring access to clean water and sanitation, and investing in renewable energy and climate adaptation measures.

Youssouf underscored the recent launch of Djibouti's inaugural 'wind park,' set to produce 60 megawatts of renewable energy.

Osman Saleh Mohammed, Eritrea's Foreign Affairs Minister, emphasized that the United Nations needs to upgrade its structure and mandate to effectively fulfill its historic purpose.

He emphasized that reforming the Security Council should not be limited to expanding membership.

ATARE plans fund for promotion of research

By Guardian Reporter

THE Association of Tanzanian Researchers (ATARE) said it plans to create a fund that will promote research and take care of interests of researchers alongside establishing a database of all researchers found and the kind of researches they make in Tanzania.

Prof Joseph Ndunguru, ATARE President told reporters that the association is progressing well in identifying and grouping researchers and researches so far made. It now



Doing things that are devoid of scientific knowledge and using poor quality tools, half of the Irish potatoes remain under the earth and rot

wants to see research being made on many aspects of life. It also wants to create a fund that will promote research efforts and take care of the interests of researchers. The association also wants to see research that will promote economic development and make the lives of the people better.

"This association brings together Tanzanian researchers of different categories. We are interested in promoting scientific and technological

research. We want an association that is very close to researchers and that helps a member to continue with his or her research," he said.

With those kinds of plans, he explained, it is imperative and pertinent that a fund is created to promote the envisioned research and uphold interests of researchers.

ATARE Chairman, Geoffrey Kirenga said it is critical to have researchers that aim to liberate villagers by making them engage in efficient farming. Kirenga is also the CEO of the Southern Agricultural Corridor of Tanzania (Sagcot).

He said the agriculture sector needs all types of sciences—from science of creatures, engineering science, social science to environmental science. All these and other areas are begging for research, he said. "Doing things that are devoid of scientific knowledge and using poor quality tools, half of the Irish potatoes remain under the earth and rot," he quipped, explaining that a farmer spends a fortune cultivating a crop but gets a poor harvest in return.

Sagcot's experience shows before applying scientific knowledge a farmer was harvesting seven tones of potatoes in a hectare. Now a farmer in Njombe harvests 50 (200 bags) of Irish potatoes. This, he said, simply means that if a Tanzanian smallholder will be empowered with modern technology, he will compete with any other Irish potato grower in the world and Tanzania will be on the world map of that crop.

CSOs gather in Dodoma to discuss ways for Tanzania to meet SADC Vision 2050

By Correspondent Valentine Oforo,

Dodoma

CIVIL Society Organisations (CSOs) have been convened in Dodoma to deliberate on the country's ways to meet the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Economic Vision 2050.

The SADC vision requires all Member States to be peaceful, inclusive, competitive, middle- to high-income industrialised regions, whereby all citizens enjoy sustainable economic well-being, justice, and freedom by 2050.

Bavon Christopher, ActionAid Tanzania Country Director said this yesterday when speaking on the sideline of the three-day forum.

Christopher said they have decided to convene so as to have ample time to discuss, evaluate and share key inputs on how the country is doing.

He stated that the forum was also to provide a useful podium to allow the participants to evaluate how the government was managing to adopt and use the SADC's Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP) 2020-2030.

"The plan, (RISDP 2020-2030) majors on various key issues such as the need to improve industrial growth, agriculture, infrastructure, human rights, as well as efforts to combat effects of climate change," he expressed.

He expressed that realisation of SADC 2050 vision was to a greater extent banking on the actions and measures to be taken by the governments, private sector and the civil society, and

individuals through short- and medium-term strategic plans.

"That's why we as SCOs, have decided to meet as part of fulfilling our major obligation to assure Tanzania (the government) is setting and implementing friendly measures to help transform all key economic facets thus, enabling the country to sail through the needed economic status by 2050," he observed.

The meeting attracted representatives from different civil society organisations across the country, representatives from the ministry foreign affairs and east African cooperation, and the lawmakers from SADC.

SADC Member States include Angola, Botswana, the Union of Comoros, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Eswatini, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.



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held yesterday at the District Hospital grounds in Kilindoni.

The items handed over by Baragomwa included 200 bedsheets, 11 bed screens, six examination beds for patients, and 20 bedside lockers for storing medicines, all intended for the District Hospital.

Other supplies included 66 bedsheets, 60 mattresses, 13 bed screens, 13 examination beds for patients, and 16 small bedside lockers for the five clinics in Kiegeani, Michueni, Kilindoni, Gonge, and Kifinge.

Baragomwa mentioned that the secondary school benefiting

from the donation of 100 desks was Kilimahewa Secondary School.

"This donation, worth 40m/-, is part of our continued support through the Corporate Social Investment program to the Mafia District Government. On May 11 of this year, we provided 100 chairs and 100 desks to Ndongoni and Jibondo Secondary Schools, respectively, with a total value of 15m/-," said Baragomwa.

"Health and education are priority sectors for NMB, as they are the foundations for the development of any nation. We recognize President Samia

Suluhu Hassan's efforts in providing quality education, and as leading stakeholders, we are committed to supporting the resolution of existing challenges."

DC Sumaye commended NMB for its significant support in providing medical and educational supplies, which will strengthen the fight against the three enemies of the nation mentioned by Mwalimu Julius Nyerere: ignorance, poverty, and diseases.

"NMB is doing great work in combating the enemies of ignorance, diseases, and poverty,

as identified by the Father of the Nation during his leadership. Your support will help address the 46 per cent shortage of supplies in Dispensaries, health centers, and hospitals," said Sumaye.

"We appreciate President Samia for her dedication to health and education. Due to the increasing number of facilities and schools, the demand for supplies has also grown, and NMB's role in this is commendable. The Mafia District Government is proud of your presence."

"In the pastoral communities

where I come from, even if someone owns 200 cows, the absence of one bull is easily noticed by the others. This analogy holds true for NMB. If they stop supporting the government in resolving such challenges, you recognize the impact," added DC Sumaye.

He acknowledged that the government recognizes and appreciates NMB's contribution, sending his regards to the CEO, Ruth Zaipuna, for caring about and valuing the people of Mafia.

Dr Omary Mvulana, the Acting District Medical Officer of Mafia District, conveyed his gratitude

on behalf of the Education and Health Departments of the Council. He praised NMB for its quick response whenever they seek assistance in addressing their challenges.

"Our council has several primary schools, clinics, and health centers, many of which face various difficulties. Today, NMB has reduced the shortage of medical and Education supplies from 60% to 57%, but we still have a shortage of desks, and we call upon more partners to come forward and support us," said Dr Mvulana.



Same district commissioner Kasilda Mgeni (front) leads defence and security committee members on Tuesday when following up reports about illegal gold mining in Kisiwani and Msindo wards. Photo: Correspondent Asharack Miraji

TeIW online business registration to benefit investors

By Correspondent Joseph Mwendapole

THE Tanzania Electronic Investment Window (TeIW) is set to benefit investors in various ways including online registration of business without necessarily meeting the respective service providers in person, the Prime Minister Kassim Majaliwa has said.

Kassim Majaliwa said this yesterday in Dar es Salaam when launching TeIW, a system that integrates operations of all institutions involved in facilitating investments.

He also launched a guideline for registering advisory service providers for investors and an investment awareness campaign.

The premier said that the system makes investors to get service quickly from respective service providers and obtain investment permits within three days.

Majaliwa said the government will continue to create a good environment to attract local and foreign investors, adding that the issue of strengthening

the investment environment is a permanent agenda.

"I believe this platform will facilitate the acquisition of permits in institutions smoothly and on time thus enabling investors to achieve their goals of registering projects at TIC," he said.

He said TIC had a challenge in providing services in absence of modern and technological systems as well as other challenges such as bureaucracy and fraud has made investors to incur losses with many investors with many also failing to complete their registration of projects.

"After the government recognised the challenge, it focused on strengthening the performance of TIC through the use of technology. The goal is to increase efficiency, reduce bureaucracy, reduce unnecessary spending and increase the Center's income," he said.

He said the government has been instructing its institutions on the importance of using technology to improve services and increase

efficiency, especially in providing electronic services, which will eliminate many problems faced by investors.

Minister of State in the President's Office, Planning and Investment, Professor Kitila Mkumbo, said TeIW is going to improve the provision of services to both local and foreign investors who have decided to invest in the country by totally removing bureaucracy and delays in serving investors.

He said it will help investors achieve their goals in the registration of their projects and the acquisition of various permits and licenses from the institutions.

Mkumbo said the system goes hand-in-hand with various ongoing changes to improve the business and investment environment as well as improvements in laws, policies and operational systems in investment promotion.

TIC Board Chairman, Dr Binilith Mahenge thanked the e-Government Authority (e-GA) for the job well done

in constructing the system with close professional advice and support from the centre.

He said that through the new system TIC expects it will greatly help improve performance and thus increase efficiency and productivity in the provision of services to investors.

The first phase of the construction of the TeIW system involved seven ministries and institutions which are the National Identification Authority (NIDA), Tanzania Revenue Authority (TRA), Business Registration and Licensing Agency (BRELA), Tanzania Investment Centre (TIC), Office of the Prime Minister (Department of Labor), Department of Immigration and Ministry of Lands, Housing and Human Settlements Development.

The second phase will involve Tanzania Bureau of Standards (TBS), Medicines and Medical Devices Authority (TMDA), Environmental Management Council (NEMC), Tanzania Electric Supply Company (TANESCO) and the Occupational Safety and Health Authority (OSHA).



NMB Bank's chief internal auditor, Benedicto Baragomwa (4th-R), pictured in Mafia yesterday presenting to Mafia district commissioner Zephaniah Sumaye a 40m/- consignment of medical equipment and supplies for use by Mafia District Hospital and five clinics. The support also included 100 desks for Kilimahewa Secondary School. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

Relief as bank donates medical supplies to Mafia District hospital, school, dispensaries

By Guardian Correspondent, Mafia

IN complimenting the government's efforts to boost healthcare services, NMB Bank has handed over various donations worth 40m/- to the District Hospital, five dispensaries, and one secondary school in the Mafia district, as part of its Corporate Social Investment (CSI) programme.

Benedicto Baragomwa, Bank's chief internal auditor presented the donations to the Mafia District Commissioner, Zephaniah Sumaye, at an event

held yesterday at the District Hospital grounds in Kilindoni.

The items handed over by Baragomwa included 200 bedsheets, 11 bed screens, six examination beds for patients, and 20 bedside lockers for storing medicines, all intended for the District Hospital.

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Government instructs 357 residents to move out of Mindu Dam environs

By Guardian Correspondent, Morogoro

PRESIDENT Samia Suluhu Hassan has instructed for the removal of 357 people from five areas of Mindu Ward in Morogoro Municipality who had been assessed in order to pave way for the Mindu dam projects as recommended by the panel of eight ministers from sectorial committee and endorsed by the Cabinet and in return they should receive token payment and provided with plots at CCT area, Mkundi Ward in the Municipality.

The decision from President Samia was spelled out by the Minister for Lands, Housing and Human Settlements Development, Jerry Silaa as he addressed Mindu residents as part of his visit regarding the implementation of the recommendation of the panel of eight ministers.

The residents required to move are those from Mindu, Mikoroshini, Mkoya, Mkwajuni and Kasanga areas in order to protect the dam for the benefit of Morogoro municipality residents and that there will not be any compensation, except the provision of new land plots.

Silaa added that President Samia has adhered to wisdom and leniency as different to what had been decided earlier requiring all those who invaded reserve areas to move out at once.

"But President Samia has directed me to make sure Mindu residents are given a token payment and new land plots.

He also called on the residents not to move from the area and proceed up the mountains as they will be met by other laws, hence they should respect the government's decision.

He added that the earlier decision on 975 villages countrywide with land conflicts regarding people invading reserve areas was that all of them should be removed without any compensation or given land plots.

Earlier, Mindu Ward Councillor, Zuberi Mkalaboko said the people had no problem at all to move out but they complain of the process not being inclusive, little compensation to be given and the 500 metre distance they should observe away from the dam as the measurement has exceeded the distance mentioned.

"It is merely for the dam's safety, why have Mwanza residents built very close to the lake and there are no adverse effects?" he queried.

In addition, Mindu dam is not a water source, it is just a reservoir," said the Councillor amid cheers from the people who presented him with cash as he continued to speak for them.

For her part, Morogoro District Commissioner, Rebecca Nsemwa appealed to Minister Silaa to issue a decision that will abide by the importance of the dam that is depended by the residents of Morogoro Municipality by 80 per cent.



Temeke mayor Abdallah Mtinika (L) briefs journalists in Dar es Salaam yesterday on progress in the implementation of the municipality's development projects in financial year 2022/2023. With him is acting communication officer Francisca Mselemo. Photo: Correspondent Imani Nathaniel

Calls grow for research funding to address health challenges in EAC

By Alice Kagina, Kigali

HEALTH experts have pointed out the need to invest in research work, as part of the resources needed to find solutions to persistent health challenges in East African countries.

The call was announced on Tuesday, ahead of the 9th East African Health and Scientific Conference (EAHSC) bringing together researchers to present and discuss their work, as well as exchange information between health practitioners, slated from September 27 to 29 at Kigali Convention Centre.

Held under the theme "Challenges and Strategies to preparedness and Response to Communicable and Non-Communicable Diseases: Lessons learnt from the COVID-19 pan-

dem", the summit seeks to discuss innovative approaches and interventions to strengthen health systems, leadership and governance for management of communicable and non-communicable diseases.

It also includes the success, opportunities, and challenges in the management of Covid-19 and Ebola, addressing social, economic, and political impacts caused by Covid-19 pandemic, and harnessing digital technologies for preparedness and response to communicable and non-communicable diseases.

It will also discuss the manufacturing and regulation of medicines, vaccines, diagnostics, and other health technologies in the context of epidemics and pandemics, as well as traditional and herbal medicines

use, and practices and beliefs during Covid-19 pandemic.

When it comes to research capacity in the region, Dr Novat Twungubumwe, Executive Secretary, East African Health Research Commission (EAHRC), said an assessment carried out in EAC countries revealed that 94 per cent of funding for research work is from external entities.

"We have to find innovative ways to increase our income and fund our own research, it is an important issue of resources," he noted.

Besides that, Twungubumwe pointed out that the region faces gaps in research capacity including infrastructure and human resources. For instance, he mentioned that there are still few research institutions in

partner states and at different levels of capacity.

However, he said there is a will to improve human resource capacity whereby the inter-university council for East Africa provides scholarship programmes so as to improve the quality of researchers in the region.

Through EAHRC, Zachee Iyakaremye, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Health, said that currently, there is an initiative among partner states to buy the needed medicines through a common channel to address the cost and logistic issue that comes with making such orders as a single country.

He mentioned that EAC states also partner to support information and good practice exchange, as well as the testing of

some medicines.

Health experts emphasise that research development is crucial to building a robust healthcare ecosystem, especially with the gap in Africa as unveiled by the pandemic.

It is crucial for investment in this domain at a time when Africa is fighting global inequalities when it comes to pharmaceuticals and having a voice in global healthcare decision-making, as well as responding to emergencies.

Rwanda is championing this initiative with partnership to build a BioNTech vaccine manufacturing plant, hosting the African Medicine Agency, and African Pharmaceutical Foundation, to build a whole healthcare ecosystem on the continent.



Muheza Health College laboratory assistant Rukia Ahmed (in light-blue headcloth) addresses residents of the town yesterday on recently introduced technology of eradicating mosquitoes. Photo: Correspondent Steven William

Libya: foundations of UNESCO-listed site of Cyrene inundated after deadly floods

TRIPOLI

FLOODS that killed thousands in Libya's east also inundated parts of the region's sole UNESCO-listed site threatening the monuments with collapse, a recent visitor and a leading archaeologist said.

The immediate damage to the monuments of Cyrene, which include the second century AD Temple of Zeus, bigger than the Parthenon in Athens, is relatively minor but the water circulating around their foundations threatens future collapses, the head of the French archaeological mission in Libya, Vincent Michel said.

The ancient Greco-Roman city of Cyrene (Shahhat) is located about 60 km (37 miles)

west of flood-hit Derna.

Settled from the Greek island of Santorini around 600 BC, Cyrene was one of the leading centres of the Classical world for nearly a millennium before being largely abandoned following a major earthquake in 365 AD.

Its name lives on in Cyrenaica, the historical name for eastern Libya.

UNESCO declared its surviving monuments a World Heritage Site in 1982. When the overthrow of longtime dictator Moamer Kadhafi in a NATO-backed uprising ushered in years of conflict and neglect, UNESCO added the site to its World Heritage in Danger list in 2016.

According to Claudia Gazzini, Libya spe-

cialist at the International Crisis Group think tank, who recently visited the site, much of it remains waterlogged days after the torrential rains triggered by Storm Daniel on September 10 to 11.

In places, ancient walls have collapsed, blocking the water courses that would normally drain the sprawling site, which also boasts a necropolis outside its walls as large as the city itself.

"There's a street lined by ancient walls that connects the upper and lower levels down which rainwater would normally escape but large boulders have fallen in, blocking the flow," Gazzini told AFP by telephone from Libya's main eastern city of Benghazi.

"On the lower level, there's also dirty water continuously bubbling out of the ground in the middle of the ruins," she said, adding that neither residents of the adjacent village of Shahat nor an official from local antiquities division that she met there, could tell her where it was coming from.

"If water continues to flow in and remains trapped in the site, the retaining wall could collapse, taking with it a large chunk of the ruins," she said.

French archaeologist Michel, who knows the site well having worked 10 years in another part of the area, said he had been able to analyse pictures of the monuments taken after the floods.

Monitor public officials prior to appointments to tame embezzlers'

By Guardian Reporter, Dodoma

FORMER Controller and Auditor General (CAG) Ludovick Utuh has cited several issues to adhere to in taming the embezzlement of public funds including in-depth investigation appointed officials to determine their truthfulness before taking up posts that involves overseeing of huge sums of public funds.

Other measures include implementing CAG's recommendations, ensuring strong internal audits and resilient supervision from accounting officers in overseeing officials under their charge.

Regarding the issue on the control of funds embezzlement, the retired CAG said:

"Who are these people appointed to take these positions, they should be people who have been investigated first and seen to be fit for the posts, this criterion is very important."

"Perhaps public service regulations very much protect those employed thereby making them become arrogant," he added.

He also called on laws on public employment and regulations thereof be reviewed, else the situation will become serious.

For his part, Hamad

Rashid Mohamed, veteran politician said:

"As you pay an inspection visit in offices you find unresolved issues still remain outstanding in the presence of the Regional or District Commissioner, accountability is zero and this is our main problem regarding the implementation of issues we decide.

He said citizens should be educated regarding their rights in order to enhance accountability.

"Without doing that, people will be in the dark in regard to government spending, for example a district council receives funds from the central government, they do not know how the money is allocated to various social services sectors," he added.

He gave an example of Zambia where the project's supervisor is announced for members of the public to know.

The veteran politician urged for concerted efforts on the war against corruption in order to install discipline in the public service.

This comes in the wake of Prime Minister Majaliwa visits in Kigoma and Kagera regions where he found serious issues regarding embezzlement of public funds.

BoT's double assurance procedure encouraging

THERE have been expressions of good feelings all over the place, with local miners applauding the new initiative by the Bank of Tanzania (BoT) to purchase domestic gold.

The miners are now assured of gold prices at world market levels, in effect meaning that the government is making an 'autocritique' to the effect that shortchanging local miners in a systematic way, not just on negotiable margins, is counterproductive.

The trend has usually given neighbouring countries the luxury of believing that they are major gold and even tanzanite producers. When the new move takes root, the fad will dry up.

And that is just the main part of the story but not the whole thing, as there are scores of valuable stones mined in a totally unregulated manner as they don't have 'strategic minerals' status.

Going by the common ways of top-level executives, there will be few moves in that direction as foreign exchange stability is closely identified with gold.

As happened, even tanzanite was scarcely being mentioned in relation to the move to purchase, process and export gold to UK under an export licence. There may be need for debate on the BoT attitude towards precious stones, too.

Small miners reached for interviews at the ongoing Geita Mining & Technology Exhibition were delighted with market proximity at equally appreciable prices.

The BoT general manager has asserted that the central bank has already purchased 418 kilogrammes of gold from local miners, which suggests that the market is now working. A sound market rewards producers with the best prices in town; all else is skipped.

Some officials have been suggesting that it was the first time since

Independence that gold is being collected as part the country's reserves.

It is possible that it will be the first time for the move to take hold, for reasons that the international economic climate has changed, and the government is now expected to fulfil its routine budgetary rules.

There are still spheres of global concern like HIV & AIDS and malaria, tied up with tuberculosis alongside mother and child care to stem deaths traditionally far too high to leave anyone with conscience at ease.

The fact that BoT had refined the product and exported it to the UK for proper registration in international markets through the Export Credit Guarantee Scheme, probably absorbing its insurance costs in the event of an accident, shows that the bureaucratic mindset is at the starting point of 'time travel'.

They will be moving from 'permanent sovereignty' over the gold being exported to a more realistic view of depending on external institutions to provide guarantees. It helps to stymie unending debates and legislative blockages.

What is evident is that the bureaucracy is learning some lessons in globalisation in that no legislation can keep a country's markets closed.

Having repressive methods reign over market incentives risks seeing small-scale trafficking graduate into well-organised cartels.

Depending on the rewards and format of regulatory procedure, the fellow holding the last signature would soon realise how much it is worth - that is, when buyers take up local gold and seek the relevant stamps.

In that case, those in the Tanzania Mining Commission, the Tanzania Revenue Authority or elsewhere should not start dampening the small miners' newly registered enthusiasm, as that wouldn't do much good.

We hope new envoys have reaped enough fruits from induction 'tour'

THERE was time when English Language teaching relied especially heavily on an auxiliary textbook entitled 'Common Mistakes in English'.

Among other things, the book ran a list of a wide array of errors likely to be found in any cohesive discipline. It was, understandably, a must-read - and for very valid reasons.

Several Tanzanians recently appointed ambassadors and high commissioners have just been on a ten-day learning tour that saw them visit institutions facilitating the organisation of foreign trade.

That essentially meant touring product outlets on the one hand and investment sources on the other. Just which aspect is more important definitely depends on who answers.

The difficult part is that such 'diplomatic coursework' is not a familiar feature of 'orientation'.

Top officials of the Tanzania Investment Centre (TIC) said the training was organised on instructions from none other than President Samia Suluhu Hassan.

It was argued that, before the new envoys take up their new postings, they needed to familiarise themselves thoroughly with opportunities and procedures investors have to follow.

When it comes to the key issue that was being taken up, two sorts of mental attitudes could be figured out on the particular part of the envoys.

There are those likely to see the training on an overly positive note, ready to use those methods introduced or emphasized as to how to elicit investor interest in this or that sector.

It is even possible attention was paid to inviting investors for specific

projects and the terms being laid out, distinct from asking the investors to choose among say 19 potential investment areas.

Had the various teams at the Treasury, Planning and Investment as well as TIC itself and the revenue authorities sat longer and more earnestly on the matter and decided what is needed most, (not just agriculture, livestock and fishing value addition), their demands on the envoys being posted on various diplomatic stations would evidently be eased.

They would even know more clearly what sort of firms, organisations or agencies they most likely should contact, inclusive of their negotiating margins.

Investment authorities need to pay much attention to what investors often demand, and not play dice with reforms.

Typically, the Treasury or the various regulatory authorities make changes to investment law or guidelines.

Bureaucrats boasting long experience can often move to use agents to take their criticism to courts or tribunals if they fail to get their way.

They would then lie in wait, if you will, to see just how far these changes eat into their privileges, knowing that many changes will remain mild, or words of mouth.

This way envoys fail to list assurances: they are just grilled on 'procedures' and could admittedly show some fatigue.

But that is more speculative or hypothetical than we believe obtained in the course of the induction the newly appointed envoys have undergone. We wish them the very best in their new positions.

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Focus on humans, not robots: Some tips on how to cover AI

By Special Correspondent

2023 has been the breakout year for generative AI, with many industries, including journalism, studying the implications this new technology may have on their own fields.

Last month (August) the Associated Press updated its AP Stylebook to include a chapter on journalistic coverage of artificial intelligence. It includes suggested reporting approaches, common pitfalls, and general guidelines.

Garance Burke is a global investigative journalist with The Associated Press and the person who led the development of the AI chapter in the latest edition of the AP Stylebook.

I spoke with Garance about how journalists can improve their coverage of these new technologies based on these guidelines. Excerpts from our interview:

Q. What factors did you take into account when writing the Artificial Intelligence chapter on the latest edition of the AP Stylebook?

A. I'm based in San Francisco, where AI is having a moment. So it's very clear to me that there's a real need to bring more journalistic rigour to our coverage of these technologies.

I was really fortunate to have a fellowship at Stanford University back in 2020, and had the time and space to take more programming classes and think about how these models are built and how to best understand their impacts in the world.

I'm an investigative reporter. So when writing this guidance, I thought a lot about how to translate these complicated statistical concepts into terms that reporters can understand - so that we can do deep and accurate work when chronicling these systems, both their promise and their perils.

How should journalists approach their coverage of AI?

I think we're in a bit of a hype cycle, or what some might call a doom cycle. But rather than just staying in that esoteric debate about whether AI models are good or bad, coverage of AI tools should really get back to journalistic basics - and this includes thinking about: how do these systems actually work? Where are they deployed? How well do they perform? Are they regulated? Who's making money as a result? And who's benefiting? And also, very importantly, which communities may be negatively

impacted by these tools?

As journalism about AI becomes a staple of reporting across beats and platforms, it's really important to just think about these basic journalistic questions rather than feeling as if the very concepts behind these models are too difficult for an average journalist to parse.

You mentioned the term 'hype cycle'. How can journalists deem what is worth covering and what is not when it comes to AI?

We did include some do's and don'ts in this Stylebook chapter about AI and one particular thing to keep in mind is to just really beware of developers who describe their tools as breakthrough or revolutionary technologies, because few of these systems really are. A lot of that tends to be thinly disguised marketing ploys.

In this particular situation, consulting with experts and thinking about ways to build sources with people who audit these systems, academics who've done studies of the data, technologists who may have worked at these companies or currently do, regulators who understand these tools from a different perspective will help reporters come to deeper and more accurate ways of writing about these tools rather than sticking to the sort of breathless, first-in-class, best-in-class kind of 'hypey' coverage.

I have also seen a lot of coverage that verges towards a more alarmist or 'doom and gloom' tone. How can journalists balance their concerns for these tools while not veering towards hyperbole?

We're very conscious that we're putting forward this new AI chapter of the AP Stylebook during this big wave of disruption. AI technologies are increasingly starting to impact journalism itself and the beats that we cover in the real world.

Bringing a basic journalistic lens will help us provide coverage that helps our audiences understand the ways in which these technologies may alter our daily lives.

One thing to keep in mind is that we have a big responsibility as journalists because in many countries these tools are not particularly well-regulated. This is all happening in real time and so we have a real responsibility to explain and visualise these technologies accurately and with nuance, as our coverage in turn ends up having lasting impacts on law, public policy, and beyond.

Just taking a step back and thinking about how to bring more critical lenses to these tools is really important right now.

What is the most common pitfall you see in current AI coverage?

One thing that has been pretty evident in recent coverage is just humans' fascination with robots. There's a lot of coverage out there that ascribes human emotions or capabilities to AI models or implies that they have thoughts, feelings, or exert human-like agency in the world. That doesn't really further the public's understanding of what these technologies can do.

Journalists will produce much better journalism by focusing on the humans who develop and supervise these systems and by trying to go beyond the tool itself to look at the human data which were captured to train these models and the humans who made very specific choices in how these models are optimising or predicting.

Can you point to one story or one angle that you think has gotten lost in current AI coverage?

You don't need to be an engineer and to be able to get access to the entire code base to really interrogate these systems. One element that often gets lost is that, as journalists, we can be like water. When we don't find answers through the front door, we can seep underneath. We can talk to the people who, off the record, have misgivings about the tool they deployed. Or we can find the paperwork that shows the government contract that proves that a surveillance technology or a predictive tool is being deployed in our communities.

We can do our own AI experiments testing these models if we get access to APIs. We can also use these technologies in our reporting if we get, say, a huge cache of documents by letting the AI do the cumbersome work that humans are otherwise tasked with, like going through thousands and thousands of PDFs.

It's important to keep in mind that we have a lot of resources that we can employ as journalists to explain these technologies if we come at it from the perspective of finding the humans who are building these systems and, very importantly, the people who are most impacted by them.

These systems can often carry human biases in the training data used to build them. So it's important to think about the methodological choices that were made.

If you have a child welfare algorithm that runs on data that might over-represent families of colour, what kinds of choices does that lead the model to make going forward? Or if you have a large language model that's trained on a vast array of text from the internet that includes conspiracy theories, what does that mean that the model knows as its basis for language?

Just keeping in mind how human biases can influence the ways in which these tools work is important, in addition to knowing that you have the agency yourself to deploy AI tools and experimenting in testing the systems that you're reporting on. Doing new digitally savvy open source work in your newsroom is also a good place to keep pushing.

As AI tools continue to optimise and develop, what will you keep your eyes on for updating?

This process, as with most at the AP Stylebook, involved consulting some of our internal experts at the AP, consulting with external experts, and sending around the guidance for comment. We're very open to hearing from other people as to what they think about this first new AI chapter. We're very conscious that the Stylebook is read by people all over the world, inside and outside of journalism, and so we're going to be updating it as AI evolves.

Being based in San Francisco and seeing the degree to which large language models are morphing and expanding every day, it's going to be really important to think about generative AI in particular and how these models are adopted in multiple spheres of life that we cover as journalists, so that we can stay on top of the ways in which generative AI is changing.

How would you like people to use these guidelines?

My hope is that this guide helps more people write about these technologies accurately and in depth. All of us need to really be thinking about how AI models are influencing our world and what that means, not just the people who are creating the tools or those who have deep computational backgrounds. So my hope is that this gives journalists around the world - from many different backgrounds - the feeling that they too can do it.

*reutersinstitute

By Special Correspondent

THIS is a conversation with Dr John M. Ulimwengu, a senior research fellow at the International Food Policy Research Institute's (IFPRI) Development Strategies and Governance Unit.

His research interests include poverty dynamics, agricultural productivity, and rural development. Since 2007, John has been involved in strategic research on the transformation of food systems in Africa under the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Program (CAADP) agenda and has served as the Africa-wide coordinator of the Regional Strategic Analysis and Knowledge Support System (ReSAKSS). He holds a Ph.D. in Agricultural Economics from Ohio State University (USA).

Q: Tell us about the Africa Agricultural Status Report (AASR) and what we should expect from this year's report.

A: AASR is an annual publication that provides a comprehensive analysis of the agricultural sector in Africa, including data, trends, challenges, and opportunities. It aims to inform policymakers, researchers, development organizations, and other stakeholders about the current state of agriculture in Africa and offers insights into ways to promote sustainable agricultural development on the continent. This year's report was launched at the Africa Food Systems Forum 2023 in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania on 5 September 2023. The 2023 AASR sheds light on drivers of food system transformation that play a critical role in the effectiveness and sustainability of African food systems. The objectives of this year's report include:

First, to assess the current state of affairs: Provide a comprehensive overview of Africa's current food systems, including the status of food systems transformation efforts in selected African countries, showing where the gaps are and highlighting areas that require further action.

Second, to identify challenges and opportunities: Identify the key challenges facing African food systems, including climate change and other shocks and stressors. The report also highlights the potential of digital technology innovative financing and the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) to significantly transform food systems in Africa.

Third, to evaluate existing policies and initiatives: The report proposes specific strategies for empowering African food systems. These strategies will be evidence-based and tailored to the unique challenges and opportunities of different subregions and countries in Africa.

Fourth, Africa's demographic dividend: How can the process of food systems transformation involve more youth and women?

Fifth, knowledge and innovation: The report makes recommendations for the development of future knowledge and innovation.

Sixth, environment-nutrition trade-offs: The report demonstrates the current environmental-nutrition trade-offs of regionalized African food supplies and consumption and examines the variation in food supply, consumption, and compliance with food-based dietary guidelines in Africa, as well as the environmental impact variation associated with food supply in Africa.

Q: Projections by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) indicate that Africa's annual food imports will increase significantly from USD 15 billion in 2018 to USD 110 billion by 2025. What are the factors contributing to the perceived failure or underperformance of Africa's agricultural sector that leads to a dismal food and nutrition security outlook?

A: In Africa, the use of outdated farming practices and the low adoption rate of improved agricultural technologies have contributed to low productivity. Issues such as monocultures, lack of crop rotation, and poor soil management are still prevalent across the continent. Poor infrastructure in terms of roads, storage, and processing facilities limits access to markets and increases post-harvest losses.

Moreover, many African farmers and other food systems-related businesses lack access to finance and credit facilities that would enable them to invest in improved agricultural technologies and inputs. However, it is important to note that the situation varies widely across countries and regions. Numerous challenges and external impacts, including extreme weather events and climate

The state and future of Africa's food systems



Dr John M. Ulimwengu

change, recurrent outbreaks of pests and diseases, limited availability and low adoption of yield-increasing technologies have put African food systems in a critical situation.

Q: The COVID-19 pandemic was one of the greatest public health threats of our time. How did this affect food security in Africa?

A: Food availability is a critical component of food security, and its disruption can contribute significantly to the failure of food systems. The COVID-19 pandemic-induced recession has greatly impacted people's ability to afford food, particularly in low-income communities. In 2021, the negative effects of the COVID-19 pandemic pushed an estimated 30 million people into extreme poverty.

This means that Africa will fail to attain SDG 1 on ending extreme poverty by 2030, which will exacerbate the hunger challenge. The United Nations (2022) Africa Sustainable Development Report notes that poverty rates remain high in Africa, that at least 492 million people will be left in extreme poverty by 2030, and at least 350 million people by 2050 under prevailing trends. These high-level statistics and trends are alarming.

They not only evoke a sense of urgency for Africa to transform its food systems but, more so, point to a need for a deeper understanding of the status quo. As the continent looks towards the implementation of transformative interventions, the fundamental question is where countries stand in relation to the drivers of food system transformation. It is in this spirit that the UN hosted the 2023 UN Food Systems Stocktaking Moment in July 2023 to review commitments to action made at the 2021 Food Systems Summit.

The rebuilding of economies after the COVID-19 pandemic and conflicts offers a unique opportunity to transform African food systems and make them resilient to future shocks, while ensuring environmental sustainability and healthy nutrition for all. To make this happen, major shifts are required at various scales, including changes in policies, practices, institutions, structures, innovations, and processes to build much-needed resilience to current and future shocks.

Q: How has the Russia-Ukraine crisis disrupted food markets in Africa?

A: The Russia-Ukraine war has disrupted global energy and food markets, resulting in a surge in prices of agricultural inputs, energy, and food. Russia and Belarus export approximately 20 percent of the world's nitrogen fertilizers and 40 percent of the world's exported potassium, respectively. Russia and Belarus produce more than a third of global potash. The heavy sanctions imposed on both countries have reduced the accessibility of potash in the world market.

The impact of these disruptions in the global supply chain of agricultural inputs (i.e., fertilizer) has been greatly felt by sub-Saharan African countries that source some of their fertilizer supplies from Russia, Belarus, and Ukraine. Furthermore, this impact is exacerbated by multiple climate shocks and the lethargic macroeconomic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. Africa must seek opportunities in the current crises to reduce its dependence on food imports by enhancing the resilience of its food systems.

Q: Regarding women and youth, what is their contribution to food security systems in Africa?

A: Women are key to agricultural transformation, but various obstacles and economic constraints limit their contributions to their households and communities. They face several



challenges that undermine their engagement in food security systems, particularly when it comes to entrepreneurship and agribusiness. There is a need to improve small-scale women farmers' access to productive inputs such as fertilizers. Doing so can boost local agricultural production and promote resilience to food price spikes and other economic shocks.

In many African nations, women and youth play vital, yet often overlooked, roles in ensuring food security. Their contribution spans across the entire agricultural value chain, from planting to post-harvest management, marketing, and consumption. Women are typically the primary caregivers in families and, in many African cultures, are predominantly responsible for growing food for household consumption.

Women make up a significant percentage of the agricultural labor force in many African countries. They are involved in activities like planting, weeding, and harvesting. They play a crucial role in post-harvest processes such as drying, threshing, and storage, ensuring that the produce remains in good condition, thereby reducing waste and sustaining food availability.

As the older generation ages, many young people either take up farming or engage in agro-based entrepreneurial activities, innovating in sectors like crop production, poultry, and fisheries. With growing exposure to technology and education, youth are bringing innovation to post-harvest management, introducing mechanized tools, and using ICT for better storage solutions. A cross the continent, there's a surge in youth-led startups and businesses focused on adding value to traditional food items, enhancing their shelf life, and increasing their market appeal.

It's important to recognize and bolster the roles of women and youth, as they are pivotal in ensuring food security in Africa. Given the right resources, training, and access to technology, they have the potential to significantly elevate Africa's agricultural and food security outlook.

Q: How can African countries fund the agricultural sector in order to transform their food systems?

A: Many African countries lack the necessary funding to transform their food systems. Innovative financing mechanisms such as impact investing or blended finance can mobilize private capital to fill this gap. For example, the African Development Bank's (AfDB) "Feed Africa" strategy aims to attract USD 1 billion in investment to modernize Africa's agriculture sector. Innovative financing can incentivize sustainable farming practices that contribute to environmental preservation and climate change mitigation. For instance, green bonds and climate-smart loans can fund projects that reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions or help farmers adapt to climate change. The Tropical Landscapes Finance

Facility, for example, issues green bonds to finance sustainable agriculture and renewable energy projects in developing countries. Innovative financing can also help manage the risks associated with agricultural activities. For instance, weather-index insurance products can protect smallholder farmers against climate-related risks.

The African Risk Capacity, a specialized agency of the African Union (AU), provides weather insurance for member states helping them manage climate risks and protect food-insecure populations. In some cases, innovative financing may be a source of seed capital for agrifood start-ups fostering innovation and entrepreneurship.

Q: Innovation and knowledge play crucial roles in transforming food systems. How is investing in innovations key to transforming African food systems?

A: Innovation can take many forms in food systems, be they technological, social, institutional, or policy-related. Technological innovations are often the most visible, with new technologies such as precision agriculture, vertical farming, and alternative proteins offering potential solutions to enhance productivity, improve sustainability, and reduce environmental impacts. Policy innovations such as effective climate policies or investment in public goods such as agricultural research can foster an enabling environment for sustainable food system transformation.

Knowledge, particularly in the form of research and education, underpins many of the aforementioned innovations. Research helps generate the evidence needed to drive technological, social, and policy innovation, while education equips farmers and other food system actors with the skills to implement these innovations. Evidence generated through research is critical for driving the adoption of sustainable farming practices.

Q: How can trade, particularly features of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) play a significant role in empowering African farmers to develop sustainable food systems?

A: Trade can stimulate the production of a more diverse range of crops, which can lead to improved nutrition and food security. Diversifying food production can reduce dependence on a single crop and make food systems more resilient to shocks such as drought or disease. Trade can stimulate economic growth by enabling farmers to sell their products in wider markets, both within and beyond national borders.

This can lead to increased income for farmers, which can be reinvested in farming practices to increase productivity. Trade can also improve food security by allowing countries to import food when local supplies are insufficient or too expensive. In this way,

trade can help to stabilize food prices and ensure that people have access to the food they need. The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) is one of the largest free trade areas in the world, with several participating countries, and has the potential to significantly transform food systems in Africa in various ways, because it creates a single continental market for goods and services with free movement of persons and investments.

Q: Africa is expected to experience a significant demographic dividend, as the continent has the youngest population globally. How can this demographic dividend contribute to food system transformation in the continent?

A: The increased youth population can be involved in various stages of food value chains, including production, processing, distribution, and marketing. This can increase food availability, access, and affordability. Harnessing this demographic dividend can lead to increased productivity in agriculture and the transformation of food systems.

The younger population tends to be more adaptive and innovative. This demographic can utilize, adapt, and innovate agricultural technology that improves farming practices, reduces post-harvest losses, and enhances market access. A younger population can also influence policies related to food systems through advocacy and leadership. They can push for policies that ensure food security and promote climate smart agriculture and sustainable practices.

Finally, investment in education for the young population can result in an improved understanding of sustainable farming practices, nutrition, and food systems, leading to the long-term transformation of the way food is produced, processed, and consumed.

Q: How can digital technology be used to transform African food systems and improve food security across the continent?

A: Digital technologies can contribute to the development of precision agriculture, which involves using data and technology to manage agricultural inputs such as water and fertilizer more efficiently. For instance, satellite imagery and remote sensing technologies can help farmers monitor crop health, predict yields, and optimize irrigation. Mobile technologies can provide farmers with access to real-time market information such as prices, demand, and supply trends. This can help farmers make informed decisions about what to plant and when to sell, potentially increasing their incomes.

Digital technologies can improve the traceability and efficiency of food supply chains. For instance, blockchain technology can provide a secure and transparent record of transactions, thus helping to prevent fraud and im-

prove the quality and safety of food. Digital technologies can support climate smart agriculture by providing farmers with information about weather patterns and climate risks. This can help farmers adapt their practices to changing climatic conditions.

Q: How is the climate smart agriculture approach transforming agricultural systems to support food security under the new realities of climate change?

A: Climate smart agriculture (CSA) practices are designed to enhance resilience, increase productivity, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Implementing CSA in Africa is crucial due to the continent's vulnerability to climate change and its dependence on agriculture. Several countries have initiated CSA programs such as conservation agriculture, agroforestry, weather-based insurance schemes, improved water management, and irrigation. This multi-faceted approach offers farmers the opportunity to achieve food security and ensures that they are more prepared to handle the current and future effects of climate change.

CSA practices such as crop rotation, intercropping, and agroforestry can help in achieving higher yields, improving soil fertility, and reducing the reliance on chemical inputs. They promote the use of drought-resistant, early-maturing, and disease-resistant crop varieties, ensuring better yields even under unfavorable climatic conditions. Adopting Climate-Smart Agriculture practices in Africa can ensure food security through ecological balance, and economic growth, aligning perfectly with the broader food system transformation goals. Proper investment, policy support, and community engagement are crucial to harness the full potential of CSA in Africa.

Q: In conclusion, what does the future hold for African food systems?

A: Africa has the potential to not only ensure food security for its people, but also play a crucial role in the global food system. However, the continent is still grappling with myriad challenges from climate change and infrastructural gaps to inadequate policies, which require proactive and innovative solutions.

The transformation of African food systems is not only a matter of urgency, but also an incredible opportunity to uplift millions from poverty, improve nutrition, and drive inclusive and sustainable economic growth. The journey ahead will require collective effort, innovative thinking, and sustained commitment. The rewards - a prosperous, food-secure, and sustainable Africa - are well worth the endeavor.

After Nagorno-Karabakh, is Armenia next?

By Karlos Zurutuza

ON September 19, the sound of bombs reminded the world of a long-forgotten conflict. In the Caucasus, the Azerbaijan's army was launching a massive attack against a small enclave, Nagorno-Karabakh.

Also called Artsakh by its Armenian population, Nagorno-Karabakh is a self-proclaimed republic within Azerbaijan which had sought international recognition and independence since the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991.

But that's unlikely ever to happen. Aware of the enemy's military superiority, and exhausted by a ten-month blockade by the Azeri army that has left its residents without even the most basic supplies, the Armenians of the enclave capitulated in less than 24 hours.

These fast-moving events, however, are just the latest chapter in a violent, painful saga dating all the way back to the end of the Cold War.

During the Soviet collapse, conflict between Armenians and Azeris led to a chain of forced expulsions and violence escalated sharply in Nagorno-Karabakh.

Thirty years ago, the First Nagorno-Karabakh War (1988-1994) ended with an Armenian victory this time, leading to the exodus of more than half a million Azerbaijanis back to Azerbaijan.

For the next 25 years, Armenians in the enclave enjoyed their own de facto republic, which they resumed calling by its old name: Artsakh.

However, the international community did not recognize Artsakh. Meanwhile, Azerbaijan spent those decades investing new profits from gas and oil to strengthen its army, investing heavily in new, high-tech military technology.

Azerbaijan would unleash its new force in 2020, during the Second Nagorno-Karabakh War. After 44 days of horror, Baku would retake many of the areas lost years before.

Armenians fled, some even digging up their dead from cemeteries and driving away with their ancestors in the trunk of their cars for reburial elsewhere, so certain they would never return to that land again.

For Azerbaijan, however, it was an incomplete victory. The Armenians had lost two-thirds of the territory under their control in the second war. But the areas Armenian troops had held on included key regions such as the capital and its surrounding districts.

Carnegie Europe's Thomas de Waal, author of *Black Garden: Armenia and Azerbaijan Through Peace and War*, describes the conflict between Armenians and Azeris as "ethnic cleansing by each side in turn, rather than diplomacy."

That the Azeris had squandered their turn three years ago became clear on September 19. The job had to be finished.

Now what? Local sources point to hundreds of dead and thousands of displaced, although it is still too early to know the real figures. What can be confirmed is the mass exodus of thousands of Karabakhis to Armenia.

In addition to the disarmament and dismantling of the Armenian adminis-



Civilians are being evacuated in Stepanakert, the capital of Nagorno-Karabakh, after the Azeri attack on September 19. Local administration data estimates the population of Karabakh at 120,000. Credit: Siranush Sargsyan/IPS.

tration of the enclave, Baku has called for its "full integration into Azerbaijani society."

Could the enclave become an autonomous region within Azerbaijan? It's unlikely.

If nearly a million members of the Talish people - a Persian-speaking minority, many of whom people also live in neighbouring Iran - do not enjoy any rights as a minority in Azerbaijan, what could the 120,000 Armenians from Karabakh possibly expect?

The only thing standing between them and the Azeris were the Russian peacekeepers deployed after the 2020 peace agreement launched by Moscow.

But it didn't quite work. During the three years since the second war, armed incidents were common along an uneasy contact line between the two sides. Russian peacekeepers were hesitant to get between the two longstanding enemies, with Russian forces limiting themselves to

observing and taking cover during frequent flareups.

Armenia's Prime Minister, Nikol Pashinyan, had frequently accused the international community of looking the other way. Calls for Russia to be more assertive in its peacekeeping mission on the border received a cold shoulder from the Kremlin.

In early September, Armenia and the United States conducted joint military manoeuvres, widely interpreted as a signal that Armenia had run out

of patience with Moscow.

Five Russian soldiers are reported dead in the current Azeri attack. But even that appears to have drawn little response from Moscow.

Complicating the situation further, the European Union maintains gas supply agreements with Azerbaijan, which have become key to making up Russian supplies disrupted by the war in Ukraine.

A complicit silence from the EU on the invasion has allowed Baku and

Moscow to close ranks against the West. Only Turkey - a close ally of Azerbaijan - is likely to find an open line to Baku and Moscow now, and may play a crucial role as a third voice.

Amid the high-wire diplomacy, regular Karabakhis have been abandoned to their fate, and for most fleeing to Armenia is the only option. Images from the brutal 2020 second war, of Azeri soldiers cutting off the noses and ears of civilians and vandalizing monasteries, remain fresh in local memory.

Just a slice of land The new conflict has also shed light on a longstanding strategic objective of Baku: to join the region to Turkey and the Mediterranean. Azerbaijan has been deploying troops in Armenia's recognized territory since 2020, in a southern region called Syunik.

The strategic strip of land is the only thing standing in the way of connecting the Caspian region to commercial and military access to the open sea. Importantly, it's a long-standing goal Baku shares with a key regional power, Turkey.

Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev clings to point 9 of the peace agreement that ended the 2020 war.

Where it says: "Ensure the free movement of people, vehicles and goods," Aliyev believes he reads something about a certain "corridor" that, of course, he would control but that could isolate Armenia from its Persian neighbour.

Its consequences for Armenia would be disastrous: Iran is the only country with which Armenia maintains a fluid commercial link given that its borders with Azerbaijan and Turkey have been closed since the 90s.

On the other hand, relations with Georgia tend to be problematic due to ties of this with Ankara.

On Monday 25, while Karabakhis were fleeing in their dozens of thousands, Turkish President, Recep Tayyip Erdogan visited the Azerbaijani enclave of Nakhchivan for the first time.

Bordering Turkey, Nakhichevan would be a strategic part of the controversial corridor.

The fate of Nagorno-Karabakh will surely ripple through the region and beyond. "If Artsakh falls, Armenia will also fall," Davit Baboyan, former Foreign minister of the enclave, told IPS several months ago.

Baboyan calls the current situation the "worst moment in Armenian history since the genocide." More than one and a half million Armenians were exterminated in the Armenian genocide, the notorious Anatolian purges that occurred in the first decades of the 20th century.

On August 9, a former prosecutor of the International Criminal Court, Luis Moreno Ocampo, warned of "the threat of a new genocide against the Armenian people."

As the world watches the exodus of the Karabkhis from the land they have inhabited for thousands of years, the images may be repeated in Armenia in the short term.



Russian peacekeepers in front of the Dadivank monastery, in Nagorno Karabakh. The failure to fulfil its commitment to protecting the population after the 2020 war has been key to the Azerbaijani victory. Credit: Karlos Zurutuza/IPS

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
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Tembelea mitandao ya kijamii ya Radio One



Radio One

Company provides education to secondary school students at 6th international mining exhibition

By Guardian Correspondent, Geita

OVER 50 students from Nyankumbu Girls' Secondary School have been given an invaluable insight into mining from the perspective of the main sponsor of the 6th Geita Mining & Technology Exhibition held at the Investment Zone (EPZA) in Geita Region.

The education was meant to give them an opportunity to consider a career in the mining industry.

The students were welcomed yesterday by a team of enthusiastic Geita Gold Mining Limited (GGML) staff at the company's pavilion at the expo.

The students, some of whom study science, had the opportunity to interact with GGML staff and learn about the various aspects of mining operations including exploration, extraction, processing and environmental management, community development and safety practices.

They were also given information about career opportunities and scholarships available to young women wishing to enter the mining industry.

The visit was part of GGML's on-going efforts to promote education and career development among young people in the Geita Region, particularly girls.

Gilbert Mworio, GGML's Senior Manager for Sustainability said the visit was a valuable experience for both the students and the company.

He said GGML was a key partner in the establishment and support of Nyankumbu Girls Secondary School, the largest second-

ary school for girls in Geita, which was officially opened in 2014.

"This was the result of a public-private partnership in which GGML provided the funding, Geita town council provided the land, and the government took responsibility for the day-to-day management to create a safe environment for young girls to gain the knowledge and skills they need to work," he said.

"The company also sponsors the exhibition, which showcases the latest innovations and best practices in the mining sector," he said, adding the firm was delighted to host the bright and talented students at its pavilion and shared with them the mine's vision of responsible mining.

He said they value their partnership with Nyankumbu girls secondary school and look forward to continuing to support their educational programmes. We believe that investing in education is investing in the future of our community and our country.

Regina Mabula, GGML's social economic development officer said: "We hope that this visit will inspire them to pursue their academic goals and consider a career in mining."

She thanked the teachers and staff of Nyankumbu Girls Secondary School for their cooperation and commitment, noting: "GGML is proud to support the education and empowerment of young women in Geita and beyond, as they are the future leaders and innovators of our society."

"We hope that this visit will inspire them to pursue their dreams and reach their full potential," said Mabula.



Israel Ryoba (L), an occupational hygienist from GGML's Health, Safety, Environment and Training Department gives an overview of occupational health policies at the mining firm to students of Nyankumbu Girls Secondary School



KINSHASA

KOLWEZI town in the Democratic Republic of Congo was nicknamed the cobalt capital of the world for having plenty of the mineral.

The town in Lualaba Province in the south of the country is one of the reasons the DRC has nearly half the world's cobalt reserves and accounts for 70 percent of global production.

There are other things that tick. The DRC also holds the 7th largest copper reserves in the world. And according to the IEA, copper is the mineral most widely used in "clean energy" technologies, while cobalt is an essential mineral in most lithium-ion batteries, an important element in the energy transitions the world is moving towards.

Yet, this town's blessings are also its curses. Its mined areas are turning inhabitants into sacrificial lambs of displacement as mining operations by multinational companies in Kolwezi push communities out of their homes.

In its report entitled: 'Fueling change or the status quo? rights watchdog Amnesty International studied the activities of four mining investment projects in Kolwezi.

Together with the NGO Initiative for Good Governance and Human Rights (IBGDH), based in Kolwezi, Amnesty International came to one: behind the prosperous face of a flourishing mining industry in Kolwezi, communities are dying in silence, victims of brutal expropriation that began 11 years ago.

Kolwezi reflects the world's latest quest for clean energy to accelerate the establishment of a low-carbon economy by reducing reliance on fossil fuels. And the DRC is attracting investment in the mining sector, targeting all minerals that can help the world achieve those goals. Since 2002, with the publication of the Mining Code (which was revised in 2018), the DRC relaunched the mining sector by attracting foreign companies.

Kinshasa granted advantages to mining investments in order to boost a sector that had fallen into ruin following the general downturn in the economy.

This led to massive investment in Kolwezi. Mining majors, in search of minerals for the energy transition, are landing in Kolwezi, a town of around

Forced evictions from DR Congo's mineral-rich villages blight outlook

215 km² with an estimated population of between 500,000 and one million.

Subsequently, companies discovered that deposits rich in cobalt and copper were hidden beneath the soil of inhabited areas. The deposits were even discovered on land where farmers had their fields. This led to the forced eviction of farmers and landowners.

Ilunga Kadjele Elysée, brought to Kinshasa by Amnesty International to testify on the occasion of the publication of its report, explained on how she and 143 other farmers were evicted from their land (in Tshamudenda village, on the outskirts of Kolwezi) and fields in 2017 by the Republican Guard, a presidential unit, in return for small sums of money.

"We had gone to our fields but were chased away by the soldiers. Some women were raped during these brutal evictions. We have nowhere to go and grow food to survive. We have been resettled on other land, but the fields are a long way away. My age no longer allows me to travel long distances. We are asking the government to help us."

The woman, in her sixties, is demanding fair compensation from Metalkol RTR, which, in response to strong pressure from the community of Tshamudenda, wrote that it "has no command or control over the deployment of the FARDC (Congolese army)."

Amnesty International and the Initiative for Good Governance and Human Rights spoke in 2022 with more than 130 people who had been affected by four similar mining projects in and around the town of Kolwezi.

Former residents' village in Mukumbi and whose homes said that they were torched in November 2016, by soldiers (from the Republican Guard) torched to force the villagers to leave, in preparation for a mining operation.

The village has become a concession where the Chemaf Company extracts 20,000 tonnes of copper and 16,000 tonnes of cobalt every year.

Other testimonies were given by residents of the Gécamines neighbourhood in Kolwezi. In this residential area, gigantic mining sites stand next to houses. Several homeowners were relocated so that Compagnie Commus could begin mining. Since 2012, this company, 28 percent owned by the DRC and 72 percent by China, has been producing 128,000 tonnes of copper and 2,506 tonnes of cobalt every year.

"In 2020, Commus informed a second group of more than 200 families that they would be evicted," reads the report. One of those relocated, Edmond Musans, who came to Kinshasa with Amnesty International, still complains about the "modest sum" he received in compensation.

"I had no say in how much I received. I had a big house. But now I'm unable to rebuild the same house. I used to live in the city. We were relocated 20 kilometres from this area, in poor conditions", Edmond Musans said.

Amnesty International states: "the evictions carried out by Commus between 2016 and 2021 did not comply with the procedural criteria".

"We know that there are economic interests involved, but the important thing is to remember that the DRC has also ratified international treaties that oblige it to respect human rights in all areas.

"The important thing is to respect not only international law, but also the Congolese mining code. We hold the Congolese government accountable to a standard that it has set itself," Candy Ofime, a lawyer and member of Amnesty International's climate team.

"I think it's important for the Congolese government not to talk out of both sides of its mouth, because the DRC has positioned itself as a country that is a solution to the climate crisis because of its peat bogs, minerals and tropical forest", added Candy Ofime, before concluding: "I don't even think that the Congolese authorities are completely reluctant".

East African countries working to integrate tourism destinations

By Special Correspondent, Addis Ababa

EAST African countries are integrating their tourism destinations to offer better experiences to tourists visiting attractions along the East African corridor, some officials from the East African countries have said.

The remark came during the Oromia Tourism Week 2023 that began Sunday in Addis Ababa, the Ethiopian capital, with various activities, including panel discussions, exhibitions, and beauty contests.

Speaking about the significance of establishing a regional tourism platform, Sarah Kirenga, a representative of the Rwandan Chamber of Tourism, said the integration would help offer a variety of destinations to tourists visiting the corridor.

"It is very important for us in the tourism sector to be able to sell a product that connects with each other. We would be able to sell our tourists a destination that is giving variety," Kirenga said.

She said the Oromia Tourism Week serves as a platform to create a network in the tourism ecosystem, pro-

mote a variety of tourism products, and boost regional tourism.

"With the integration, it will be easy to sell a tourism package that is complete and very attractive," said Kirenga, noting that a tourist who happens to visit Rwanda may at least experience gorilla trekking.

Emphasizing the need to focus on regional tourism rather than individual destinations along the East African bloc, Anthony Ochieng, market development representative of the Ugandan Tourism Board, said the countries along the East African region are teaming up to boost intratravel and implement the East African tourism marketing plan.

"Under the East African tourism marketing plan, we are able to market East Africa as a region, not focusing on individual destinations but the East African (destinations)," Ochieng told Xinhua.

East Africa is well known for its natural and cultural tourist attraction sites, many of which are inscribed on the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) World Heritage List in

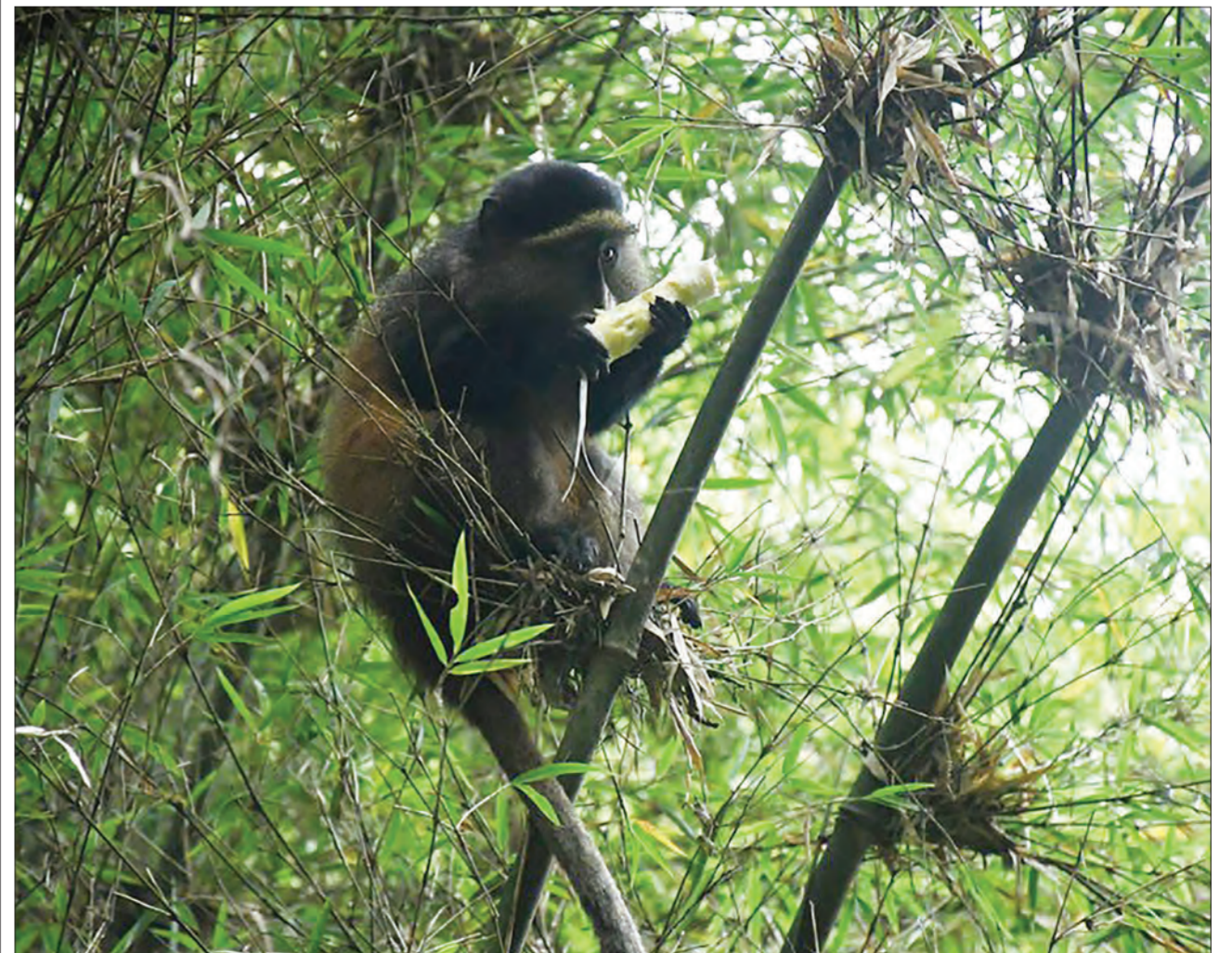
recognition of their unique natural qualities.

The region is also home to popular safari destinations with a wealth of fascinating historical and archaeological sites that have been accorded global prominence.

Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, South Sudan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo have already started to sell their tourist destinations as a region, said Ochieng, adding that tourists would experience a variety of attractions in Uganda, including "the Big Five," namely lion, leopard, Cape buffalo, rhinoceros, and African elephant.

The Oromia Tourism Week is an annual event that aims to highlight the unique tourism offerings and experiences available in the Oromia region of Ethiopia.

This year's event, which began Sunday and runs until Tuesday, brings together tourism stakeholders, government representatives, industry professionals, and visitors from around the world to explore and appreciate the region's vast potential as a top tourism destination.



A golden monkey eats bamboo shoots in Mgahinga Gorilla National Park in southwestern Uganda

Zimbabwe's food security ambitions in El Niño's crosshairs

By Ignatius Banda

ZIMBABWE is riding a wave of food security assurances after what officials said was last year's bumper grain harvest, but recent El Niño forecasts could test the country's agriculture production ambitions.

The devastating phenomenon could further bring the spotlight on Zimbabwe's disaster preparedness as the country has, over the years, received early warnings of impending climate-induced humanitarian crises but found wanting.

While the landlocked southern African country has invested heavily in farm mechanisation and irrigation, there are concerns that the looming El Niño could test if these interventions will help sustain food production at a time when aid agencies say more people will require assistance into the coming year.

During the 2022/23 season, Zimbabwe recorded its highest grain harvest in years, with the agriculture ministry declaring that the country will not be importing any food in the short term.

However, fresh climate uncertainty concerns have brought back worries about the country's ability to feed itself, where thousands of smallholder farmers - the primary growers of the staple maize - rely on rain for their agriculture activities.

According to the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), up to 70 percent of Zimbabwe's population subsists on rainfed agriculture, effectively exposing the vulnerability of food security as El Niño looms.

In a July update, FAO's Global Information and Early Warning Systems listed Zimbabwe as one of the southern African countries where the UN agency had prepared what it called "anticipatory protocols for drought" ahead of El Niño.

"El Niño is likely to result in a mixed start to the 2023/24 rainy season in Zimbabwe. Precipitation from December to March, during the height of the rainy season, is likely to be below average, negatively impacting the 2023/24 agricultural season," the Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS-NET) said in a June update.

Climate ministry officials say El Niño has previously affected agricultural production, noting that more remains to be done to counter its devastating effects.

"The combination of drought and water scarcity results in decreased agricultural pro-



Wildfires under dry conditions have been cited as contributing to the El Niño phenomenon. Credit: Ignatius Banda/IPS

ductivity, leading to reduced food production, and this subsequently impacts food security and increases food prices," said Washington Zhakata, a director of the Environment Ministry's Climate Change Management Department.

He noted that the country could still have more to worry about in the aftermath of El Niño.

"El Niño conditions create conducive conditions for the outbreak of crop diseases and pests. When the crops are weakened, they become more susceptible to infestations and diseases, further affecting agricultural yields," Zhakata told IPS.

While Zimbabwe has committed to building a multi-billion-dollar agriculture

sector, climate uncertainty could derail those plans as the country has been slow in setting up infrastructure such as irrigation and new dams.

According to Zhakata, countermeasures such as escalated investment in the sector could cushion the country against future climate shocks.

"Investment in irrigation infrastructure, such as dams, weirs, boreholes and water conveyancing systems to where the water will be required, to provide alternative water sources during drought periods, enhance farmers' access to irrigation systems, and promote efficient water management practices," Zhakata said.

This comes as the World Food Pro-

gramme (WFP) says more people will require food assistance during the traditional lean season early next year, already worsened by El Niño.

"Nutritional vulnerability is highest at the peak of the lean season (January - March) when food stocks from the previous growing season run low and prices in the market increase," said Mary Gallar, WFP-Zimbabwe spokesperson.

"Recognising the challenges experienced by communities in some poor performing areas, it is expected that a large number of people will rely on food assistance at the beginning of next year," Gallar said.

According to FAO, El Niño last hit Zim-

babwe in 2016 and left 40 million people in southern Africa needing food assistance.

It is yet to be seen what preparations the country's grain reserves will be enough in the event of another El Niño-induced drought.

According to agencies, the 2016 El Niño "severely reduced seasonal rains and higher-than-normal temperatures linked to El Niño caused an anticipated 12 percent drop in aggregate cereal production."

Amid such anticipated reduced food production, Zimbabwe's 2023 bumper grain harvest will provide a litmus test of the country's grain statistics, which some analysts have questioned.

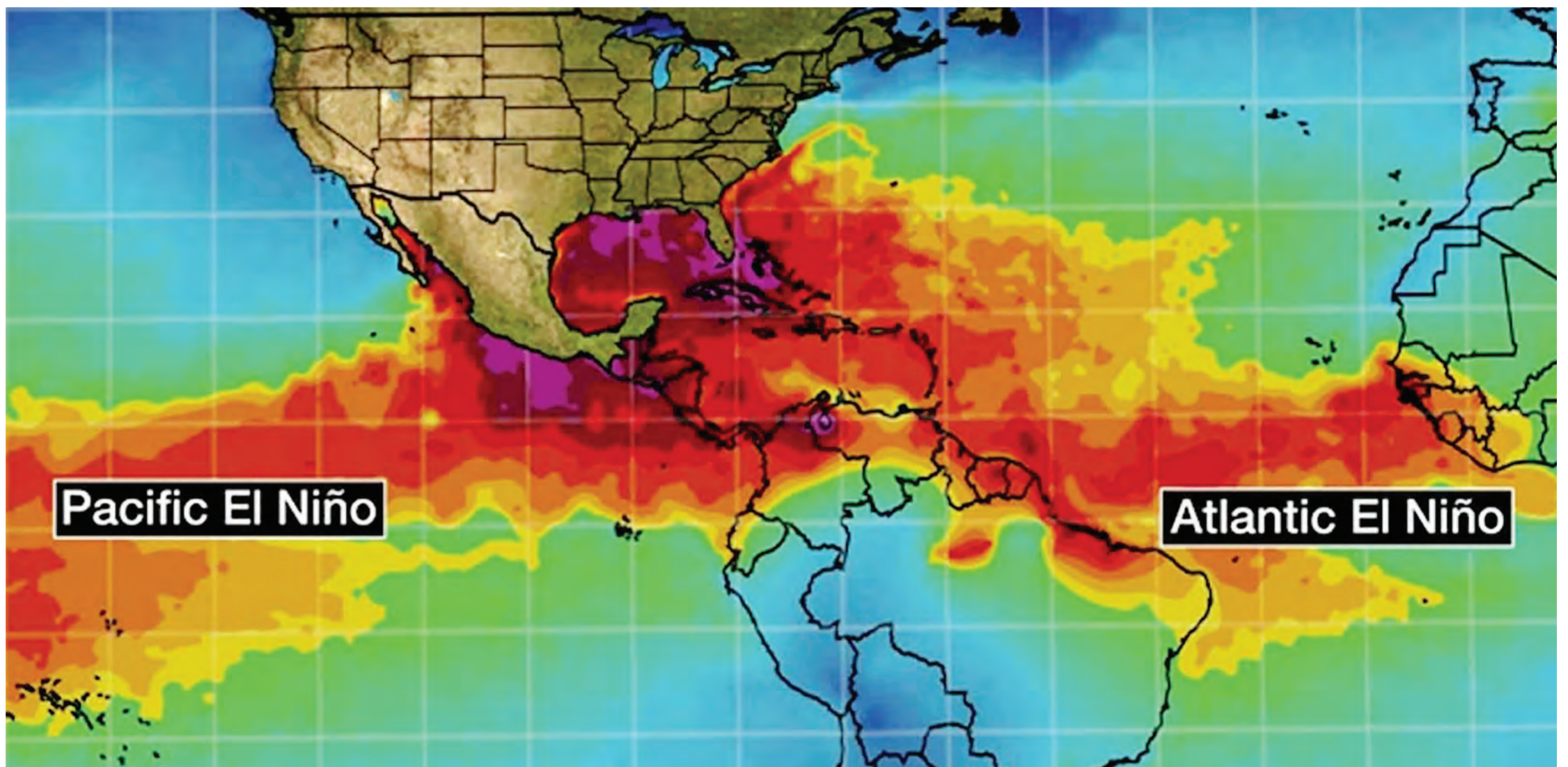
According to climate ministry officials, Zimbabwe is one of many countries bearing the brunt of climate uncertainty yet to benefit from loss and damage pledges by rich nations, further compounding efforts to address climate-related emergencies adequately.

"The 27th Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP27) acknowledged that existing funding arrangements fall short of responding to current and future impacts of climate change and are not sufficient to addressing loss and damage associated with the adverse impacts of climate change," Zhakata said.

"So far, no Parties have benefitted from this facility; it is a prerequisite to have clearly defined operational modalities and initial resources being deposited into the fund before it can be accessed. It is expected that the modalities will be agreed in December to pave the way for the operationalisation of the Fund," he added.

For now, as potentially devastating El Niño drought approaches, smallholders could find themselves none the wiser as they count their losses in the absence of measures to mitigate the impact of climate change.

IPS UN Bureau Report



RADIO One

RATIBA YA VIPINDI JUMATATU - JUMAPILI

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
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Thursday 28 September 2023

Homegrown African banks push for growth

NAIROBI

FOR many years, Societe Generale (SocGen) was the most unwavering of European banks in its commitment to African markets. While its peers were rattled by a tough environment and repeatedly opted to exit or downscale, the French giant remained resolute.

Yet in June, SocGen announced it will exit four African markets: Congo Brazzaville, Equatorial Guinea, Mauritania, and Chad. The bank also intends to undertake a strategic review of its Tunisian operation. Going forward, it said it will focus resources only on markets where it can position itself among the leading banks.

Following in the footsteps of other multinationals either exiting or downscaling operations in Africa, Pan-African lender Vista Group is acquiring the Congo and Equatorial Guinea operations, while Coris Group is buying the Mauritania and Chad businesses.

That the ground caved in for SocGen only means that the longtime contrarian finally joined the trend. Exits and downscaling have become familiar among multinational banks in Africa. Since 2017, six have walked away from the continent or clipped operations significantly.

SocGen completes a cycle of transformation for the African banking industry. The era of European dominance of the sector appears to be over. Today, it is firmly in the hands of Pan-African banks, regional and semiregional lenders, and niche country-focused banks. "The survival of multinationals in Africa has largely become untenable," says Ndubuisi Ekeke, chairman of Tekedia Capital, a US-based venture capital firm.

Factors including weak and volatile currencies, unfavorable cost models, regulatory complications, competition from homegrown African banks, emergence of a vibrant fintech ecosystem, and economies in a constant state of crisis have made their survival on the continent increasingly difficult.

Weak currencies have made nonsensical African subsidiaries' asset valua-



tions and profits. When converted to pounds and dollars, the impact is substantial erosion. Case in point is the UK financial conglomerate Atlas Mara. When it exited in 2021, it cited currency volatility and a drying up of liquidity for ravaging its books. Currency depreciation, in particular, caused a \$145 million decline in the dollar value of its assets.

Operating costs are another land mine. For multinationals, failure to evolve and craft strategies to cut down on noninterest expenses denied them economies of scale. Shunning the retail mass market and opting to concentrate on corporate, treasury, merchant, and investment banking and high-end clientele exacerbated a model with built-in high operating costs.

These realities, coupled with bleak growth prospects and the introduction of the more stringent Basel III regulatory framework, including higher capital adequacy ratio requirements, strong anti-money laundering regulations, and know-your customer policies, have made it increasingly difficult to hang on in

Africa.

"Most multinationals realized that as long as they remain in Africa, the task of complying with international banking obligations will be tough," says Mohamed Hashish, managing partner at Soliman, Hashish & Partners, an Egyptian-based international corporate law firm.

A new order emerges

No factor has been more lethal, however, than homegrown African banks' determination to wrestle control of the sector.

Looking forward, the battle for dominance will likely not involve multinationals. African banks will push for growth either organically or through mergers and acquisitions, technology and innovations, customer-centric service delivery and cost management.

The emergence of formidable Pan-African banks like Standard Bank, Absa Bank, Ecobank, Attijariwafa Bank, Bank of Africa, Access Bank, and UBA Bank has systematically dismantled the multinationals' dominance when it comes to offering high-end products and services like

private banking, treasury, corporate, deal-making, payments and wealth management. Moreover, Pan-African banks have amassed strong capital bases that give them the muscle to finance big infrastructure projects and even take the frontline in arranging dollar-dominated syndicated loans.

"There is no service you cannot find in the indigenous banks," says Ekeke. The locals can provide elite services cost-effectively owing to their diversified operations and geographical reach.

While Pan-African banks provide scale, footprint and coverage, regional and semiregional lenders have dismantled the status quo in key regions. In West Africa, banks like GT Bank, Zenith Bank, Vista Bank and Coris Bank have become major players. In East Africa, aggressive expansion has helped KCB Bank and Equity Bank edge out competition, while Nedbank and FNB Bank have built strong bases in southern Africa.

For banks that have opted to concentrate on their home markets, cultivating a winning formula such as serving niche markets in retail, small

and midsize enterprises and budding corporates, and deploying strategies to drive financial inclusion, have also emerged as channels to success.

"It is evident that banks are deploying local knowledge to shield off competition," says Hashish. North Africa banks especially have succeeded with this approach. Apart from South Africa-based Standard Bank, few sub-Saharan lenders have ventured successfully into the region.

Further consolidation looms

While many African banks have found a formula for survival, others that have clung to their traditional *modus operandi* have struggled. A majority of banks at the bottom of the pyramid are considered candidates for acquisition, while others risk collapse.

The consensus, including from regulators, is that further consolidation is coming, and may be beneficial if the creation of formidable financial institutions is seen as critical to anchoring the continent's growth, including the success of the African Continental Free Trade Area.

That said, expansion via both M&A and organic growth comes with risks for African banks. The continent remains a highly fragmented market. Besides divergent regulations, political and socioeconomic disparities are rife. In some countries, worsening economic crises, political instability and security risks, ballooning public debt, runaway inflation, depreciating currencies, and rising interest rates are applying pressure to banks, resulting in rising provisions for bad loans and slowing profitability.

Case in point is KCB Bank. The lender was forced to more than double its loan loss provisions to \$70.5 million from \$29.8 million for the 2023 half-year period, leading to a 20% decline in net profit to \$107 million, from \$134.7 million in the preceding similar period.

The continent's patchwork of economic conditions mean that banks pursuing expansion can return impressive profits in some markets

while struggling elsewhere. Some, like Ecobank, have managed to find a balance. With operations in 33 countries, Ecobank posted \$1 billion in net revenue in the first half of this year. During that first period, the Central, Eastern, and Southern Africa region contributed 32% of the group's revenue, Francophone West Africa 28%, Anglophone West Africa 23%, and Nigeria 13%, while its international subsidiaries contributed 3%.

"Our results demonstrate the benefits of our diversified business model, resilient balance sheet and our commitment to serving our customers," Ecobank Group CEO Jeremy Awori said in late July.

Massive investments in technology, digitalization—including internet and mobile banking—and other innovations are meanwhile enabling African banks to overcome cross-border challenges.

Unfortunately, bankers complain that a complicated maze of regulations is stifling deeper innovation, exposing traditional full-service banks to new threats from fintechs and telcos. In Nigeria and many other African nations, rigid controls and checks mean that traditional banks cannot run fintech units unless they create a holding company that guarantees customer deposits are not used to run the unit.

Considering that the DNA and the future direction of banking will be built on technology, this stance denies African banks huge opportunities Ekeke warns. "The best banks in the future could be technology companies that offer banking services, and not banks that use technology," he says.

For homegrown African banks, being alert is paramount if they want to build on the positive results that many of them are starting to enjoy. Failure to evolve, be alert, transfuse, and change their operational models to remain competitive could allow fintechs to apply the same deadly dose to them that they appear to have dispensed to the multinationals.

Nigeria's new central bank governor now tasked with reviving confidence

LAGOS

When Olayemi Cardoso (pictured) takes full control of Nigeria's central bank this week, his biggest challenges will be to restore its credibility after eight years of mismanagement, boost confidence in Africa's worst-performing currency and slow an inflation rate that's among the highest on the continent.

Since taking office in May, President Bola Tinubu has instituted a raft of new policies – scrapping a \$10 billion annual fuel subsidy and liberalizing the foreign-exchange market. The reforms were much-needed, but crippled an economy long on its knees. The naira is in free-fall – hitting unprecedented lows – and gasoline prices have more than tripled, pushing the inflation rate to a more than 18-year high.

Through it all, the central bank has been leaderless – its last governor has been imprisoned since June, charged with fraud, which he denies.

"The economy is a few meters from going bust," said Mosope Arubayi, an economist at IC Group in Lagos. The country risks defaulting on its debts, like its West African neighbor Ghana, if action isn't taken soon, she said.

The nomination of Cardoso, former chairman of Citigroup Inc. in Nigeria, has offered a glimmer of hope to weary investors. A longtime adviser to Tinubu, Cardoso is widely expected to abandon the unorthodox policies

of his predecessor, Godwin Emefiele, under whose nine-year tenure the central bank maintained multiple exchange rates and rationed dollars, repelling investment.

At his confirmation hearing on Tuesday, Cardoso, 66, ensured investors that the central bank would not be "hijacked by anybody," and that a culture of compliance would be ingrained and its credibility restored.

"It's a crusade," said Cardoso, who served as the president's economic commissioner during his 1999-2007 governorship of Lagos state. "And we will be successful since the future of Nigeria rests on it."

Bank in Turmoil

Cardoso takes over a central bank in turmoil – even its four deputy governors have been hauled in for questioning and forced to resign.

For eight years, Emefiele pursued a wildly unorthodox policy, marching in lockstep with then-President Muhammadu Buhari's statist approach. He intervened in nearly every facet of the economy – banning imports of dozens of items including wheelbarrows and toothpicks, and doling out loans to everyone from rice farmers to Nollywood film producers and petty traders.

Cardoso will refocus the "CBN to its core mandate," he said on Tuesday. "There is a need to pull the CBN back from direct development finance interventions into more limited advisory

roles that support economic growth."

Early on, Cardoso will need to focus on stabilizing the naira. There's a \$12 billion queue at the central bank for investors to repatriate profits, dividends and trade obligations as well as suppressed dollar demand, according to estimates by Goldman Sachs Group Inc.

"The immediate priority will be to be able to verify the authenticity and the extent of what is owed," Cardoso said. "And then, of course, once we do that, we need to promptly find a way to take care of that."

Wale Edun, Nigeria's finance minister, said last week that \$6.8 billion of overdue forward contracts owed by the central bank to domestic lenders is what is fueling volatility in the naira.

Dwindling reserves

Cardoso will need to shore up the bank's \$33.3 billion of foreign-exchange reserves, about 90 percent of which have been used as collateral for dollar loans from foreign and domestic banks. He'll also need to quickly raise rates, which will pit him against his old friend Tinubu, who called for lower borrowing costs in his inaugural speech.

The central bank will need to raise rates significantly and at the same time drain the market of naira liquidity, said Charlie Robertson, head of strategy at FIM Partners.

"Do both of those and show you are serious about stabilizing the cur-



rency," Robertson said, adding "one-year yield of around 20 percent could make naira more interesting to hold."

Higher rates would also add pressure to the government's borrowing costs and worsen its fiscal position with debt service payments already consuming nearly all of its income. A rate hike would also hurt local businesses, put further pressure on inflation and send meager economic growth of 2.5% in the second quarter even lower.

"We will be going to evidence-based monetary policies," Cardoso said. "We shall not the making decisions based on a whim."

Tinubu has little room for fiscal maneuvering – debt service consumed 96 percent of revenue in 2022. Access to international debt markets is also limited, with the country's credit rating six notches into junk territory and yields at double digits even after rallying on Tinubu's initial reforms.

Strikes & protests

The impact of Emefiele's wayward central bank policy can be felt across Africa's most-populous country.

The nation's biggest labor unions have called for an indefinite strike from Oct. 3 over the sharp rise in the cost of living and are demanding a wage award to cushion the impact on workers. At least two Nigerian states have had to cut the number of working days to four from five to reduce the amount workers spend on transport.

Businesses have been hit by rising costs caused by the naira's 40% devaluation in the wake of the currency reform. That's pushed up interest expenses for those with dollar loans.

Faced with a backlash, Tinubu suspended further increases in gasoline prices. The central bank also reintroduced some of the controls around foreign exchange to stop the naira weakening further on the official market. That's led to the reemergence of a nearly 30% gap between the official rate and the widely used unauthorized market rate.

Unlike Emefiele, a flamboyant character who held combative press conferences and tried to run for president while serving as governor, Cardoso is widely seen as a reserved institutionalist.

Nigerian tycoon Tony Elumelu said he was confident that the new central bank team is "very capable" and will be able to bring confidence and trust back into the economy. "We have confidence in the new central bank governor based on his credentials and his team and we believe that they will correct things," he said in an interview with Bloomberg TV.

All investors want, he added, is an economy "where they can invest freely, as well as move their monies out, when it comes to remittance and repatriation of a dividend."

WORLD BANK CHIEF VOWS TO TACKLE 'DYSFUNCTIONALITY'

New York

WORLD Bank President Ajay Banga said Tuesday that he is working to reform "dysfunctionality" among the leadership of the development lender, and pledged to refocus its mission to better address the challenges posed by climate change.

The former Mastercard chief executive told the Council on Foreign Relations in New York that the bank should alter its current twin mandate of poverty alleviation and boosting shared prosperity to include climate change.

"I think the twin goals have to change to being elimination of poverty, but on a livable planet, because of the intertwined nature of our crises," he said.

He added that he was working to redefine the World Bank's business around what he called five key knowledge "verticals": people, prosperity, planet, infrastructure and digital.

Banga's comments in New York come

shortly before global leaders are due to gather for the World Bank and International Monetary Fund's (IMF) annual meetings, which will take place this year in the Moroccan city of Marrakesh.

- Fixing the plumbing -

Banga, an Indian-born naturalized US citizen, was nominated to lead the World Bank earlier this year by President Joe Biden, and began his new role in June.

The bank has historically been led by an American, while the IMF has been managed by a European -- a controversial arrangement that has existed since the two institutions were founded in the aftermath of the second World War.

Banga has already made a number of changes to the bank's management since taking over, setting up a new 15-person private sector advisory board, and pledging deeper cooperation with regional development banks to tackle shared challenges.

On Tuesday, Banga vowed to "fix the plumbing" at the bank, which he said suffered from "dysfunctionality" in the

boardroom.

The World Bank's board is made up of 25 executive directors appointed by its 189 member countries, who must balance the interests of the development lender with those of the states they represent.

"I want people to say when I'm gone that I left the bank working much better than when I got it, because then my successor will not have to deal with what I'm dealing with," he said.

- Climate change -

Proposals to reform the World Bank's balance sheet from countries including the US and Saudi Arabia could add as much as \$125 billion in extra lending capacity if they come to pass, Banga told the audience in New York.

This would be a significant increase for the development lender, which mobilized just over \$100 billion in financing last year.

Banga has previously called on the World Bank to collaborate more closely with the private sector to meet the enormous costs associated with climate change mitigation and adaptation.

On Tuesday, Banga said the bank should carefully target where it wants to encourage private investment to help cap carbon emissions in order to have the biggest impact.

"We need to focus on 10 countries where the growth of emissions will be so high if we don't change to renewables that all the work we do in the developed world to reduce the use of emission-heavy energy will be lost," he said, without naming them.

These middle-income countries are states "where there is some hope for the private sector, both in terms of scalable models and the like, that renewable energy could make money," he added.

In order to invite the private sector to participate, the World Bank should offer to manage some of the political risks associated with climate-related investments in these countries, along with the risk of currency fluctuations, Banga said. The World Bank group already has a political risk agency, but the foreign exchange risk is an issue that still needs to be resolved, he told the audience in New York.



Ajay Banga

China's central bank to use 'precise, forceful' policy to bolster recovery

BEIJING

China's central bank said on Wednesday it would step up policy adjustments and implement monetary policy in a "precise and forceful" manner to support an economy whose recovery was improving with "increasing momentum".

The People's Bank of China (PBOC) will keep liquidity reasonably ample and maintain stable credit expansion, the bank said in a statement after a quarterly meeting of its monetary policy committee.

"The current external environment is becoming more complex and severe, international economic trade and investment are slowing down, inflation is still high, and interest rates in developed countries remain high," the central bank said.

"The domestic economy continues to recover and improve, with increasing momentum, but it still faces challenges such as insufficient demand."



"We need to continue to work hard and take advantage of the improving momentum, step up macro policy adjustments, implement the prudent monetary policy in a precise and forceful manner," the PBOC said.

The wording in the latest comments was consistent with the line taken earlier by the central bank, though the remarks on the economy appeared slightly more positive as the PBOC had said in its April

statement that the recovery lacked solid foundations.

The world's second-largest economy is showing some signs of stabilising after a flurry of modest policy measures, but the outlook is clouded by a property downturn, aging demographics, high debt and geopolitical tensions.

The central bank will guide banks to lower borrowing costs for companies and households and support banks to replenish capital, it said.

China will step up government investment and policy incentives to spur private investment and promote a recovery in prices from a low level, the central bank said.

The PBOC reaffirmed its stance of keeping the yuan stable and preventing the risk of currency overshooting.

The central bank also pledged to promote the healthy and stable development of the property market, implementing policies to lower down payment ratios and mortgages rates for some home buyers.

The central bank will step up its support for the building of public infrastructure for both normal and emergency use in megacities, the transformation of "urban villages", or underdeveloped areas, and affordable housing, it said.

The cabinet has announced guidelines to boost investment in such areas as part of efforts to support the economy.

Dubai repays \$5.5bn of crisis-era loans to reduce debt load

DUBAI

Dubai said it began repaying a \$20 billion bailout loan from Abu Dhabi and the country's central bank, as part of an effort to reduce its debt burden almost 15 years after the sheikhdom teetered on the brink of default.

Taking advantage of an economic recovery, the emirate lowered its total debt to 25 percent of gross domestic product with payments that include 20 billion dirhams (\$5.5 billion) to Abu Dhabi and the central bank. Dubai shelled out a combined 28.5 billion dirhams within a year and a half, its media office said Tuesday on social media site X, citing its debt management office.

It didn't give details as to what liabilities were still included in its calculations, and the media office wasn't able to comment when approached separately by Bloomberg. Dubai isn't rated by any of the three major credit assessors.

S&P Global Ratings earlier estimated Dubai's direct government debt at 244 billion dirhams, equivalent to around half the emirate's economic output. Its broader debt climbs to 100% of GDP when including money owed by state-related entities, according to S&P.

Dubai's economy is thriving,



fueled by an influx of newcomers -- from crypto millionaires and bankers relocating from Asia to wealthy Russians seeking to shield assets. Sectors from hospitality to retail are enjoying a remarkable comeback, while new arrivals have pushed property prices to record levels.

Resurgent demand for homes, hotels and office space has helped the emirate generate more fees for goods and services, as well as receipts from taxes for property transactions, value added taxes and housing fees. Although Dubai scrapped

a 30 percent tax on alcohol sales and made liquor licenses free since the start of 2023, that will likely be offset by a 9 percent federal corporate levy imposed from June.

Though the full picture isn't yet clear, evidence suggests a new focus in Dubai on reducing a debt load that S&P said had reached a "cyclical high" of 78 percent of GDP in 2020. The burden has gone into decline with the creation of a debt management office last year, as the economy booms after emerging from the global pandemic as an investment safe haven

and a magnet for tourists and the wealthy.

In 2009, Dubai just skirted a default and had to turn to oil-rich Abu Dhabi, the biggest of the seven sheikhdoms in the United Arab Emirates, to support state-controlled companies through the global credit crisis. The amount has been rolled over twice since then.

S&P estimated last May that the \$20 billion in loans from Abu Dhabi and the central bank made up 30 percent of Dubai's gross general government debt and said it expected them to be rolled over again.

Old Mutual due to launch new bank in South Africa

JOHANNESBURG

and in-budget, it said.

as customers seek to fund their liquidity requirements," it said

Old Mutual says it is on track to launch a new bank in South Africa in 2024, with the plan to soft-launch for "friends and family" before taking the almost R2 billion build live with the wider public.

In March, the group said it planned to launch the new bank in the second half of 2024.

"Our bank build in South Africa is a core component of our integrated financial services ecosystem. A transactional banking capability enhances our ability to have regular interactions with our customers and partner with them earlier on in their life journeys," it said.

"The bank platform build is progressing at a pleasing pace. To date, we have spent R1.2 billion of the R1.75 billion expenditure approved for the build. We recently submitted our Section 16 application to the Prudential Authority and are now awaiting feedback."

"The next steps following the granting of section 17 by the regulator are to connect to the payments system and to conduct integration testing followed by a 'friends and family' launch of the bank."

The progress being made on the bank comes despite the group operating in a very challenging environment. The build is on track

Performance

In its interim results for the six months ended 30 June 2023, the group said it performed well across most of its key performance indicators, with sales growing by 14% following improved productivity levels.

The improved results come amid a rebound in the South African economy in the first half of the year after a decline in Q4 2022.

"Despite the dual impact of electricity shortages and a confidence crisis, more efficient production processes combined with significant private sector energy generation supported economic activity," the group said.

"Strong growth in private sector investment in energy generation projects and on-going rebuilding of inventories also added to growth."

However, the rand did reach a record low against the dollar following tensions between South Africa and the USA over the Lady R fiasco.

Inflation also averaged 7 percent in Q1 2023 due to high food prices, while elevated unemployment continued impacting real income growth.

"Our customers' disposable income remains under pressure, which led to increased disinvestments on savings and investments

Financials

During the period under review, the group's basic earnings per share dropped by 9 percent from 106.8 cents in H1 2022 to 96.7 cents in H1 2023.

Headline earnings per share were also down 8 percent from 104.9 cents in H1 2022 to 96.9 cents in H1 2023 in South Africa.

Despite this, the group upped its interim dividend per share by 28 percent from 25 cents in H1 2022 to 32 cents in H1 2023.

The group said that economic growth in South Africa is still very weak but has proven resilient. Inflation is returning to the South African Reserve Bank's midpoint, with the central bank then keeping rates unchanged in its July and September meetings.

However, load shedding will continue to impact the economic outlook, which could dampen the economic outlook.

Growth is thus expected to drop from 1.9 percent in 2022 to 1 percent in 2023.

"According to the Energy Council of South Africa, load shedding may cease by the end of 2024, but this will require a collaborative effort by both Eskom and the private sector," the group said



Banking must find balance with AI in financial markets

By Edoardo Reviglio

THE surge in artificial intelligence research within the financial technology sector has been remarkable. Banks are strategically cultivating ecosystems through partnerships with universities and international collaborations. Prominent players such as Capital One, JPMorgan Chase, BBVA and ING are embracing open-source collaboration to drive intellectual property development.

European banks are also making significant strides in AI research, with Intesa Sanpaolo taking the lead. Research papers authored by professionals within the banking industry span a wide spectrum, encompassing both theoretical and applied AI research. Applied research in 2022 encompassed areas ranging from quantum machine learning applications to innovative chatbot design and recommendation systems. Intriguingly, there is a noticeable absence of macroeconomics in these research programmes conducted by banks.

The competitive nature of AI research could lead to more secretive approaches, impacting the landscape of public AI research. Tech giants like Google, Meta, Mozilla and Hugging Face have traditionally championed open-source research, but this move towards secrecy is becoming a trend in AI research.

This raises a question of public interest: why should private institutions exclusively profit from public investment in university-driven open-source innovation? Shouldn't they instead spearhead an unprecedented partnership between banks, universities and public institutions, aimed at jointly investigating the significance of AI in macroeconomic forecasting, addressing both theoretical and practical dimensions?

AI in macro forecasting

Central banks rely on a combination of microfounded econometric models and other tools for macroeconomic forecasts. However, the failure in recent years to predict inflation trends has led to calls for greater co-operation between fiscal and monetary policy and a re-evaluation of forecasting models.

Prominent figures like Janet Yellen,



US Treasury secretary, and Mark Carney, former Bank of England governor, have acknowledged shortcomings in understanding inflation dynamics. Claudio Borio, chief economist of the Bank for International Settlements, has questioned the understanding of the inflation process and its root causes.

An International Monetary Fund paper, 'How Well Do Economists Forecast Recessions?', reveals the failure of economists to predict 148 of the past 150 recessions. It underscores the complexity of economic prediction, given idiosyncratic human behaviour, technological advancements and geopolitical factors.

Is the issue rooted in data and computational capacity, or is it more about theoretical limitations? The latter hypothesis suggests that AI can enhance macroeconomics but only to a certain extent. Accurate predictions require solid theoretical foundations, and the field is grappling with these challenges.

Policy-makers and major

international institutions formulate forecasts by amalgamating inputs from diverse models, economic theories and pragmatic viewpoints. The resulting consensus informs policy decisions. This is where AI can play a greater role. By processing vast datasets, detecting patterns and incorporating multiple variables, AI can refine economic and monetary predictions. Central banks and governments stand to benefit from more accurate forecasts of indicators such as inflation, gross domestic product growth and unemployment rates. These enhanced models can inform policy choices, improving decisions on interest rates, liquidity management and macroprudential measures.

But what about macro theory? Shouldn't private and public institutions invest more in co-operative research on AI to ensure a harmonious integration of macro and micro finance? If we do not attain improved outcomes at this crucial level, AI algorithms and intelligent systems may excel at predicting

immediate and short-term transactions but could prove inadequate in managing medium- to long-term banking and financial risks. This situation is a cause for concern, not only within the banking industry but also for the wider economy, bearing substantial implications.

Revolutionising financial transactions

Without improved macroeconomic forecasts, the potential of AI to manage financial transactions using algorithms and intelligent systems would diminish its medium- and long-term value. In the short term, however, its applications are impressive. AI-driven trading systems have revolutionised trading activities by offering unprecedented speed, accuracy and innovation. These systems analyse vast datasets, identify hidden correlations and execute high-frequency trades.

Machine learning, particularly deep learning, underpins AI-powered trading, unearthing intricate market patterns and making rapid trading

decisions. AI solutions excel in handling complexities in financial markets, combining data from technical and fundamental analysis with real-time sentiments from social media. The adaptability and sophistication of AI, seen through methodologies like artificial neural networks and sentiment analysis, enrich trading strategies.

The fusion of AI with quantum computing and emotional data from human-machine interfaces could be transformative. Nonetheless, finding the right equilibrium between AI capabilities and human insights remains essential when navigating the intricacies of financial markets, just as achieving a more refined balance between macroeconomic and financial forecasts is of utmost importance.

The Bank of England's appointment of Ben Bernanke for an assessment of the models and data supporting its forecasts presents a compelling call to action. This moment provides an opportunity to drive both public and private institutions towards much more ambitious research initiatives in the realm of AI and macroeconomic forecasts.

Edoardo Reviglio is Visiting Senior Research Scholar at Yale Law School and a member of the OMFIF Advisory Board.

Banks 'compete hard for home loan customers'

WELLINGTON

KPMG has released its latest analysis of the country's financial institutions, which shows the banking sector's profit increased 12.7 percent after tax between March and June - rising from \$1.54b in the March quarter to \$1.74b in June.

Interest income was flat, up only 1.4 percent to \$3.63b. Non-interest income was up 30.4 percent on the previous quarter.

Brad Olsen, chief executive at Infometrics, said it indicated that as their funding costs increased, that was fully being passed to customers. "It does raise the question of how hard they are competing, particularly with lower house sale numbers."

Banks' net interest margin - that's the difference between what they have to pay for funds and what they charge borrowers - ranged from 2 percent at TSB through to 4 percent at Heartland Bank.

ASB, Heartland and TSB recorded 10 basis point drops in their margins in the quarter while Westpac was up 10 basis points.

John Kensington, KPMG partner, said banks were still competing hard for high-quality loan business.

He said they would probably fight for someone with a strong income and good equity wanting a loan to buy a property.

But with other loans they were being more cautious and making some borrowers who were more marginal work harder, he said.

Mortgage broker Glen McLeod said it seemed banks were sometimes hanging back. "We're about to go into the spring sale season but I'm not seeing any big spring campaigns happening."

He said there was a lot of uncertainty in the market and banks would sometimes switch on and off their appetite for deals. He said it was the "weirdest" market environment he had ever operated in.

The report noted that although the official cash rate had been on hold at 5.5 percent, mortgage rates had continued to climb as their access to wholesale funding became more expensive.

"We are seeing that this has not deterred borrowers as new lending for residential mortgages continued to increase."

Compared to March, there was a 26 percent increase in new mortgages in June, to \$15.9b.

Banks' impaired asset expense dropped, boosting profit. But provisions for bad debt are climbing, which Kensington said reflected the rising cost of living.

"The June 2023 quarter is the second consecutive quarter in which each of the five major banks have reported an increase in the percentage of loans which are past due, indicating more customers are struggling to meet their repayments. With inflation and interest rates high, if we see this trend continue through the second half of the year, it is likely that we could see further increases in provisions."

Kensington said banks had been somewhat shielded from the wider economic downturn so far because a number of their customers had not yet moved on to a new mortgage rate and many were ahead on their payments.

"They're not feeling the full impact at the moment, or yet. But obviously if inflation stays high, interest rates stay high for a period of time it will start to impact them more going forward."



Dollar scales to 10-month top as rate jitters persist

SINGAPORE

The dollar rose to a 10-month high against its major peers on Wednesday, toppling the euro and sterling to 6-month lows and pushing the yen deeper into intervention territory, as the prospect of higher-for-longer US rates gripped markets.

US Treasuries stabilised after a heavy selloff in recent days, though yields remained elevated and kept the greenback solidly bid. [US/]

The euro was last 0.14 percent lower at \$1.05575, after slumping to a six-month low of \$1.05555 earlier in the session. The single currency was on track to lose more than 3 percent for the quarter, its worst quarterly performance in a year.

Sterling was similarly down 0.09 percent at \$1.2146 after hitting a six-month trough of \$1.2141 earlier on Wednesday, and was headed for a quarterly loss of more than 4 percent.

The US dollar index meanwhile peaked at a 10-month high of 106.30. "The US dollar is stickier to the upside than the downside," said Tina Teng, market analyst at CMC Markets.

"It's (been) a shock for markets since last week because the Federal Reserve's rhetoric was more hawkish than expected... I think it's more likely they would hike rates for one more time."

UK to delay implementing global banking reforms

LONDON

The Bank of England will delay implementing the latest package of global post-crisis banking reforms for another six months, aligning its approach with the US as officials wade through an avalanche of industry feedback.

The new rules, part of the broader Basel III reforms, are global policymakers' final effort to insulate the banking industry against the excessive risk-taking that culminated in the financial crisis of 2007-08.

The package includes limiting banks' ability to decide how much capital they need to back certain loans and trades - measures that generally increase banks' costs, though the BoE has said that is not the objective.

The BoE is preparing to unveil a July 2025 implementation deadline in the coming weeks, in line with the July 2025 date announced by the US over the summer, several people briefed on the plans told the FT.

The rules were to set to come into force in January 2025, after years of delays from the initial target of January 2021.

The BoE declined to comment.

UK-based banks have pushed back against some of the BoE's proposals that they say will put them at a disadvantage against the



EU's banks. EU policymakers have taken such an industry-friendly position that the ECB has warned their approach could give the damaging impression European banks were subject to lax regulation.

The UK's Treasury, and some banks, had been told about the BoE's plans, the people said. They added the

BoE intended to shorten the five-year phase-in period by six months and to delay finalising certain rules.

While banks had pressed for the delay to avoid the logistical conundrum of staggered implementation across two major jurisdictions, the BoE believes the delay is independently justified

because the UK's original timelines had become very challenging.

The BoE had promised to produce "near-final" rules on its entire Basel package by the end of the year so that banks would have 12 months to prepare. Officials have privately told banks that the volume of consultation responses the BoE received

made the target difficult to achieve.

The BoE now hopes to publish "near-final" rules on only the most complex markets and trading areas in December, with rules on everything else coming next May, people familiar with the matter said.

"Alignment with the US is helpful, but we think it's possible the US will delay by a further six months - it's an easy giveaway to say 'we're listening' when there's so much argument about the content," said a senior policy executive at one of the UK's biggest banks.

"The UK and EU should keep the flexibility to match to a further delay by the US," they said, adding banks were "sad to see the phase-in drop by half a year or maybe - we always want longer to adjust".

The new timeline puts the UK out of sync with the EU, which still has a January 2025 deadline. A senior EU regulator said the EU could still theoretically extend its implementation, but since the EU already had a longer phase-in period for the rules, it's "not such a big deal".

WORLD

COP28 is a great opportunity to address pressing environmental issues - Haifa Abu-Ghazaleh

CAIRO

AMBASSADOR Haifa Abu Ghazaleh, Assistant Secretary-General and Head of the Social Sector at the League of Arab States expressed hope that the upcoming 28th Conference of the Parties (COP28) to be hosted by the UAE this year will build on the outcomes of COP27 to contribute to addressing pressing environmental issues.

In her statement to the Emirates News Agency (WAM), Abu Ghazaleh (pictured) said that the Arab region's participation in the ongoing talks on how to cope with crises result-

ing from climate change - through Egypt's hosting of COP27 in Sharm el-Sheikh last year and the UAE's hosting of COP28 this year - underscores the significant role played by Arab countries in the field of climate action and the world's interest in the proposals and initiatives presented by Arab countries to combat the negative impacts of climate change.



She warned of the serious impacts of this issue on citizens of the Arab region and other countries of the world, which calls for the world's nations to join forces to find solutions.

The Assistant Secretary-General commended the comprehensive development renaissance the UAE is witnessing in all fields, especially in the field of environment and renewable energy.

She pointed out that the League of Arab States will participate in events to be held on the sidelines of COP28 in cooperation with the General Women's Union of the UAE. **ANI**

Putin informs Iranian counterpart about Russian peacekeepers' activity in Karabakh

MOSCOW

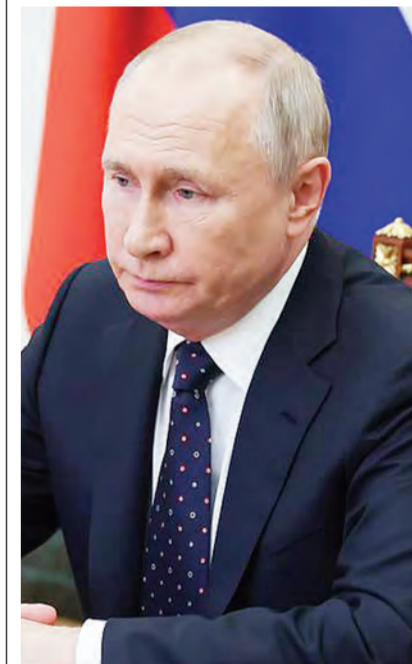
RUSSIAN President Vladimir Putin informed his Iranian counterpart, Ebrahim Raisi, about the activities of the Russian peacekeeping contingent in Nagorno-Karabakh, the Kremlin press service said on Tuesday after their telephone call.

"The presidents exchanged views on the situation around Nagorno-Karabakh and issues of normalizing relations between Azerbaijan and Armenia. Vladimir Putin informed [the Iranian president] about the activities of the Russian peacekeeping contingent, including in what concerns delivering humanitarian assistance to civilians and defending the rights and security of Nagorno-Karabakh's Armenian population," it said.

The presidents "stressed the importance of resolving all problems only by peaceful, political and diplomatic means," it added.

On September 19, tensions flared up again in Nagorno-Karabakh. Baku announced it was launching what it described as "local anti-terrorist measures" and demanded the withdrawal of Armenian troops from the region. Yerevan, in turn, said there were no Armenian forces in Karabakh, calling what was happening "an act of large-scale aggression."

Russia called on the conflicting sides to prevent civilian casualties and return to a diplomatic solution. On September 20, the Azerbaijani Defense Ministry announced that an agreement had been reached in coordination with the Russian peacekeeping contingent to suspend the anti-terrorist operation in Nagorno-Karabakh.



Türkiye 'to back Sweden's NATO bid if US fulfills promise'

ANKARA

TURKISH parliament will ratify Sweden's NATO membership if the United States permits the sale of its F-16 fighter jets to Türkiye, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said on Tuesday.

"If they fulfill their promise, our parliament will also fulfill its, and take its steps accordingly," Erdogan was quoted by semi-official Anadolu Agency as saying.

Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan has recently held meetings with his US counterpart Antony Blinken regarding the issue, Erdogan told journalists on his flight back from Azerbaijan to Türkiye.

After being kicked out of the F-35 stealth fighter jet program by Washington for purchasing Russia's S-400 air defense systems, Ankara has sought to buy more F-16 jets, but its request has been pending for months with the Biden administration and US Congress.

The Turkish government agreed to advance Sweden's accession to NATO in July, but the decision needs the approval of its parliament which will end recess in October.

The Turkish parliament ratified



Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, meets with Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis (not in photograph) on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly in New York, Sept 20, 2023. AP

Finland's NATO bid in March, but is still reluctant about a similar bid from Sweden because of its alleged support for the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK).

Finland and Sweden applied to join NATO in May 2022 in the wake of the Russia-Ukraine conflict. Their acces-

sion to NATO needs the approval of all member states of the military alliance. Türkiye, a NATO member, held back its approval and accused the two Nordic countries of supporting anti-Turkish Kurdish organizations and political dissidents.

Xinhua

114 killed, more than 200 wounded in wedding fire in northern Iraq

BAGHDAD

UP to 114 people were killed and more than 200 injured in a huge wedding hall fire in the town of al-Hamdaniya in Iraq's northern province of Nineveh, Governor of Nineveh Najm al-Jubouri told reporters yesterday.

The fire broke out on Tuesday night in the al-Haytham Wedding Hall in the town of al-Hamdaniya, 35 km southeast of the provincial capital Mosul, the official Iraqi News Agency (INA) quoted the Iraqi Civil Defense as saying earlier.

It said that initial reports indicated that fireworks were used during the celebration, which may have caused the fire. The building was covered with highly flammable materials, which accelerated the fire that led

to the collapse of part of the building, the INA said, adding that an investigation was launched into the incident.

The Health Ministry spokesman Sayf al-Badr said that the situation is under control and that the health ministry is following the incident closely. The INA reported that the health minister issued instructions to the health departments in the

neighboring provinces of Kirkuk and Salahudin to send ambulances to help evacuate the victims.

A statement by his media office said that Prime Minister Mohammed Shia' al-Sudani made a phone call to the Nineveh governor to learn about the situation and ordered the interior and health ministers to support the affected people.

Xinhua

Partnership between Barrick, Mali build gold mining sector

BAMAKO

THE 26-year-long partnership between Barrick (previously Randgold) and the state of Mali has built the country's gold mining industry into a world leader and positioned it strongly for further growth.

The Loulo-Gounkoto complex is one of the world's top 10 gold producers and the biggest business in terms of enterprise value in the whole of West Africa.

Together with the Morila mine, the complex has

contributed \$9.3 billion to the Malian economy and accounted for between 5% and 10% of the country's GDP over the past 10 years.

Loulo-Gounkoto is one of Mali's largest taxpayers and employers, with a workforce of some 7,000, 97% of whom are Malian nationals.

Over the life of the complex the state has received more than 70% of the economic benefits it created.

"We are continuing to invest in the future of Loulo-Gounkoto. Successful exploration is more than

replacing the ounces we mine as well as identifying new growth opportunities with the potential to deliver the next generation of major discoveries in the Loulo region.

The new underground mine at Gounkoto - the complex's third - has developed its first production stopes and the Yalea South cutback is ahead of plan," said Barrick President and CEO Mark Bristow.

"We foresee that the complex will be a major contributor to the Malian economy for years to come.

The achievement of that vision will require the continued commitment to the mutually rewarding partnership which has brought us this far and deliv-

ered sustainable benefits to all stakeholders, including the country's citizens."

In line with Barrick's global policy of local procurement, Malian suppliers accounted for 74% of the complex's purchases, amounting to \$298 million, during the first half of this year.

Turning to Loulo-Gounkoto's operations, Bristow said the complex was continuing to perform strongly and was on track to achieve its production guidance for this year. It remains tightly

focused on the safety of its workers and there were no lost-time injuries again during the past quarter.

As part of Barrick's transition to renewable energy, the complex is extending its solar power installation by 48MW and battery storage system by 38MVA. The project is already feeding 10MW into the mines micro-grid and it is expected that its second phase will be commissioned well ahead of the current end-2024 completion date.

Agencies

Russia urges UN to react to Ukraine's numerous human rights abuses

GENEVA

THE Russian delegation participating in the 54th session of the UN Human Rights Council called upon relevant bodies of the United Nations to react to the Kiev government's numerous abuses of human rights and freedoms.

"We call upon the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, his office and relevant special procedures of the UN Human Rights Council to respond to lawlessness and abuse on the part of the Kiev authorities," a member of the Russian delegation, Ilya Barmin, said.

He drew attention to Ukraine's "laws on total Ukrainization, which affected education, science, culture, mass media, radio and television."

"Persecution of all forms of dissent is becoming more and more severe. Neo-Nazi groups operate freely all over the country. Radicals are dealing with the undesirables openly and with impu-

city," he said, mentioning the Kiev government's persecution of the canonical Ukrainian Orthodox Church, its clerics and parishioners.

The practice of forced disappearances and arbitrary arrest is widespread in the country, Barmin continued. The use of torture and violence against detainees by the country's law-enforcement and security officers is "systemic."

"It is absolutely unacceptable that, against this backdrop, the Baltic countries and the collective West in general are encouraging the neo-Nazism in Ukraine, while Waffen-SS veterans, war criminals and collaborators are greeted by national parliaments," the member of the Russian delegation said.

The 54th session of the Human Rights Council is taking place in Geneva between September 11 and October 13. Although Russia is not a member of the council, it actively participates in its sessions. **Agencies**

Arab media and film sector leaders discuss the future of content and entertainment in a digital world

ABU DHABI

Amazon that have transformed the production landscape. Jaber noted that platforms like Shahid and Netflix have made substantial investments to boost their competitive advantage and expand their subscriber base, with production costs for a single episode seeing an exponential rise to USD 500,000.

Founder and Chairman of Al Sayegh Media Group, Abdullatif Al Sayegh shared his experiences on seeing through a transition from government media to the private sector when he established a successful firm amid the global financial crisis in 2010.

He credited his success to a competent team and clear strategising, emphasising that the team is always key to the success of leadership.

Another session addressed the synergy between social media and traditional media platforms for promoting business ideas. Mohammad Al Sahlawi, Co-founder of Flat 12; Khalifa Al Muhairi, Entrepreneur; Hessa Aljessmi, Co-founder of DubaiFoodBabes; and Deenah Al Hashemi, Founder & CEO of Sxill Lab, engaged in discussions moderated by Shaima Al Suwaidi, Director of Brand Dubai.

They noted that the quality of content used to convey messages to the target audience is key to promoting their businesses and sharing their success stories. **ANI**

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Hangzhou Asian Games highlights power of intelligent technology

ON the evening of Sept. 23, the opening ceremony of the 19th Asian Games kicked off at the Hangzhou Olympic Sports Center Stadium. Combining the beauty of nature, culture, sports, and technology, it touched millions of viewers.

What excited the audiences both inside the stadium and in front of TV sets the most was the moment when Olympic champion swimmer Wang Shun and a digital torchbearer jointly lit the Asian Games cauldron.

As six human torchbearers passed on the torch in the stadium, also known as "the Big Lotus," the digital torchbearer made up of over 100 million virtual sparks, each representing a participant of the online torch relay - took giant strides toward the cauldron. After the digital figure and Wang jointly lit the cauldron, the Asian Games flame gushed out from the fire pit inspired by the tidal bore of the Qiantang River.

It was the first digital ignition

ceremony in the Asian Games' history, and also the first one participated by over 100 million people. It highlighted the results of three years of efforts made by the technological team, who conducted over 100,000 tests and wrote more than 200,000 lines of codes. The team integrated its independently developed Web3D interactive engine Galacean, AI figures, cloud services and block chain technology to build a digital platform able to accom-

modate more than 100 million users, perfectly fusing the virtual and real worlds.

It was also the first time that the concept of "intelligent Asian Games" was proposed in the history of the Games. Numerous technological achievements and cutting-edge technologies have been widely applied throughout the entire process of the Asian Games.

From the deployment of the three core systems of the Hangzhou Asian Games, namely

Results Distribution System, Games Management System, and Games Support System, to all event data and supporting data processed on the "cloud," and to shuttle services by autonomous driving buses, and the use of digital twin technology to ensure venue operations, the "intelligent Asian Games" has truly lived up to its name.

The Hangzhou Asian Games has opened a window to observe China's technological innovation, mirroring a bright

future where digital technology will drive the development in multiple sectors.

People's Daily



It highlighted the results of three years of efforts made by the technological team, who conducted over 100,000 tests and wrote more than 200,000 lines of codes. The team integrated its independently developed Web3D interactive engine Galacean

Zimbabwean farmers brace for drought as new agricultural season beckons

HARARE

ZIMBABWEAN farmers are bracing for declining precipitation in the forthcoming agricultural season, with some opting to plant early and others to skip maize and go for other drought-resistant and early-maturing crops.

In an interview on Tuesday, President of the Zimbabwe Farmers Union Abdul Nyathi told Xinhua that farmers should acknowledge the impact of the El Nino factor, which is bound to cause poor rains or even drought, in southern Africa in the 2023-24 season.

The phenomenon, which is not new to Zimbabwe and the region, usually causes delayed and erratic rains, thus adversely affecting crops and livestock.

Most farmers do not have irrigation facilities and depend on rain for their crops and livestock. Nyathi therefore urged farmers to consider options available in the coming season to optimize yields. "We want all farmers to know about El Nino and understand its impact," Nyathi said.

"For this season, farmers should determine the size of hectareage they want to plant early." He also urged farmers to consider planting crops that are drought-tolerant to minimize losses.

"You may also want to ... increase

the amount of drought-resistant crops, and if you're going for maize, go for the short-term, early-maturing varieties," he said.

In Mashonaland East Province, village head Robson Zindonda said farmers in his area had been advised to go for the government-sponsored climate-proof agricultural practices such as digging holes, applying compost and manure, and covering the fields with mulch to retain moisture.

"We were also advised by the local agricultural extension officer to plant early because of the anticipated erratic rains, so some people will soon start digging the holes," he said. Some other farmers are considering dry planting whereby they cast the seeds and then wait for rain to fall.

"You don't want to miss the opportunity to utilize the early rains, so it is better to be ready before the rains come," said Zindonda's nephew Simon.

The Zimbabwean government is also acting. "In light of the predicted normal to below-normal rainfall, the government has adopted a plan of action dubbed AMA - Adaptation, Mitigation, Action," reported the official newspaper Sunday Mail, citing government official John Basera.

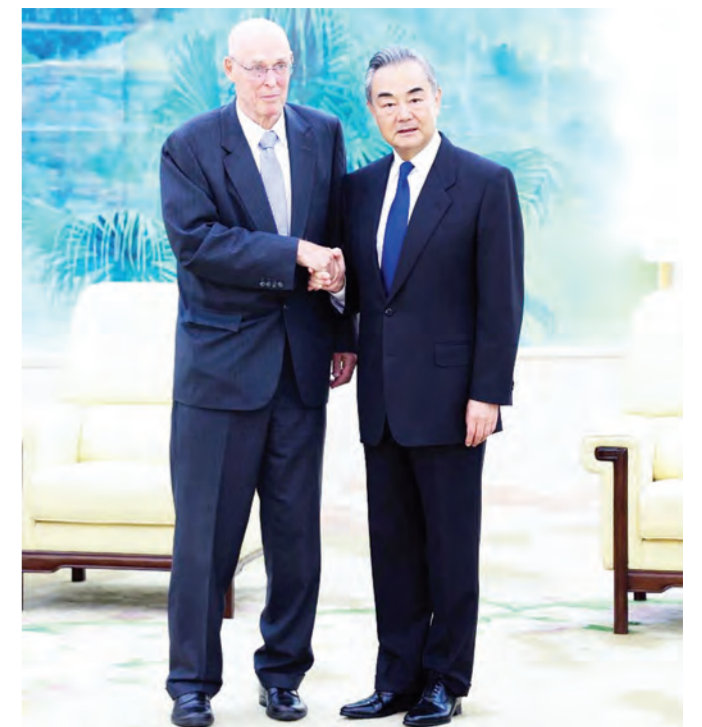
He said the measures include accelerated rehabilitation of infrastructure, a countrywide adoption of climate-



Workers harvest tobacco leaves at a farm in Goromonzi, Mashonaland East Province, Zimbabwe, March 9, 2022. File photo

proof agricultural practices, and promotion of on-farm feed formulations. In addition, the government allows private companies to

import maize without paying duty, as part of measures to ensure adequate grain supply in the country. Xinhua



Wang Yi, a member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and director of the Office of the Central Commission for Foreign Affairs, meets with a delegation led by former U.S. Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson in Beijing on Tuesday. Xinhua

China welcomes more US companies to invest in China

BEIJING

CHINESE Vice President Han Zheng on Tuesday met with former U.S. Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson in Beijing, saying China welcomes more U.S. companies to invest and do business in China to share development opportunities.

Noting China-U.S. relations are the most important bilateral relations in the world today, Han said the two countries, one being the biggest developing country and the other the biggest developed country, should enhance mutually beneficial cooperation in all areas, push forward the world's economic recovery together, and address global challenges.

Han said China always follows the guiding principles of mutual respect, peaceful coexistence, and win-win cooperation in dealing with relations with the United States. It is hoped that the U.S. side could work with China to bring the bilateral ties back to the track of sound and steady growth.

Since the beginning of this year, China's economy has kept on a general rebound track. The Chinese side will continue to optimize economic structures, deepen reform and opening up, and achieve high-quality development, said Han.

"We welcome more U.S. companies to invest and do business in China to share development opportunities together," Han added.

For his part, Paulson said he has confidence in the prospects of China's economic

development. The U.S.-China relations have an important impact on the world.

The two countries should maintain communication and dialogue, strengthen people-to-people exchanges and economic and trade cooperation, and jointly cope with global challenges such as climate change.

Paulson also expressed willingness to continue playing a positive role in promoting the steady development of U.S.-China relations.

Wang Yi, a member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and director of the Office of the Central Commission for Foreign Affairs, met with a delegation led by Paulson on the same day.

Wang said the nosedive of China-U.S. relations does not meet the interests of the two peoples, the expectations of the international community, and the trend of the times.

It is hoped that the United States will return to the rational and pragmatic track in its China policy, take concrete actions to lengthen the positive list and shorten the negative list, and work with China to explore ways of peaceful coexistence as two major countries.

Paulson welcomed the recent resumption and maintenance of dialogue between the United States and China, adding the two sides should indeed find the right way to get along with each other, build mutual trust, and push for the steady improvement of U.S.-China relations.

Xinhua

India will continue to raise its voice in support of Afghan people - Kamboj

NEW YORK CITY

INDIA'S permanent representative to the United Nations, Ruchira Kamboj has reiterated the country's steadfast dedication to peace, stability and humanitarian support for Afghanistan.

In a UN Security Council briefing on Afghanistan yesterday, Kamboj highlighted three key observations regarding the situation in Afghanistan while drawing upon India's historical and civilisational ties with the Afghan people.

"At #UNSC Briefing on Afghanistan, Amb @ruchirakamboj, our Permanent Representative, reaffirmed India's steadfast dedication to peace, stability & humanitarian support for our Afghan friends. India's commitment shines through educational scholarships & collaborations with UN agencies," posted Permanent Mission of India to the UN on X.

"As Afghanistan's contiguous neighbour and a friend to its people, India has direct stakes in ensuring the return of peace and stability to the country," said Kamboj at the outset of her address.

She also said that India's collective approach to Afghanistan has been articulated in Security Council Resolution 2593, which was adopted on August 30, 2021, following the fall of Kabul and the subsequent Taliban takeover.

"In this regard, our common and immediate priorities include providing humanitarian assistance for the Afghan people, the formation of an inclusive and representative government structure, combating terrorism and drug trafficking, and



Permanent Representative of India to the United Nations Ruchira Kamboj

preserving the rights of women, children and minorities," Kamboj added.

India's permanent representative to the UN also underscored India's commitment to helping Afghan people through educational scholarships and collaborations with UN agencies.

"Given the distressing humanitarian situation in the country, we need to prioritize humanitarian assistance to the people. India has delivered assistance to Afghanistan in the form of food grains, medicines, vaccines, disaster relief aid, winter clothing and materials for education," she said.

She said that India has continued scholarships to Afghan students. It has also partnered with the UN Office of Drugs and Crime in its humanitarian efforts, and our assistance will continue for the benefit of the people of Afghanistan," Kamboj said.

"We have collaborated with several UN agencies on the ground and will continue to do so for the welfare of the people of the country," she said. She reaffirmed India's unwavering commitment to "keeping Afghans close to our hearts".

"Going forward, India will continue to raise its voice in support of the Afghan people. We believe that the pursuit of peace and stability in Afghanistan is an urgent and shared imperative that demands our collective dedication," said Kamboj.

Already grappling with poverty, Afghanistan found itself sinking further into destitution due to international isolation and the economic turmoil triggered by the Taliban's takeover in 2021.

The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs reported a staggering increase in poverty, with 97 per cent

of Afghans living below the poverty line, a stark rise from 47 per cent in 2020, according to Amnesty International, an international non-governmental organisation focused on human rights, with its headquarters in the United Kingdom

The absence of social safety nets forced desperate families into distressing measures such as child marriages and organ trafficking. Despite dire circumstances, the humanitarian aid provided fell far short of meeting the basic needs of the population.

The Afghan economy continued to suffer from the freezing of foreign reserves and the reduction of development assistance, punitive actions taken by the international community in response to the Taliban's ascent.

In 2022, most of the aid flowing into Afghanistan was humanitarian in nature, primarily aimed at averting starvation, with minimal support for other critical social services such as healthcare, employment, and education.

The mass exodus of skilled professionals - doctors, engineers, lawyers, teachers, and government officials - left these sectors severely under-resourced, exacerbating the country's woes.

The Taliban regime imposed increasingly draconian restrictions on women's rights, stifled media freedom, and curtailed freedom of expression. Institutions dedicated to safeguarding human rights were either severely restricted or completely shuttered. Peaceful protesters found themselves at the mercy of arbitrary arrests, torture, and enforced disappearances. ANI

Biden, Trump woo union voters by visiting striking auto workers

CHICAGO

Negotiations between the United Auto Workers (UAW) and Big Three U.S. automakers continued on Tuesday, as U.S. President Joe Biden visited a picket line outside a General Motors parts distribution center in the U.S. state of Michigan and Republican Donald Trump announced a visit to the state Wednesday to show his support to autoworkers.

Each 2024 presidential candidate, tied in the polls over a year out from the election, is seeking to win over blue-collar voters and their dueling trips have ensured that the strike will now become a political battleground, reports said.

"You made a lot of sacrifice. You gave up a lot when the companies were in trouble. Now, they're doing incredibly well... You should be doing incredibly well, too," Biden said on the 12th day of the union's strike, amid the applause from the striking workers.

"You deserve a significant raise you need and other benefits... It's time for them to step up for us." "Wall Street didn't build the country," Biden said.

The middle class built the country, and unions built the middle class. That's a fact. Let's keep it going." This is the first time in at least a century for a sitting president to visit a labor union's picket line, at the invitation of UAW President Shawn Fain,

The Detroit News quoted the White House as saying on Tuesday. "The White House has been toeing a careful line during the strike, voicing support for the workers and a pay increase but declining to specifically endorse the union demands," CNN reported on Tuesday.

Fain joined Biden at the picket line. He thanked Biden for coming, saying the president "will do right by the working class." Former U.S. President Donald Trump is set to make an address Wednesday at an auto supplier in Macomb County, Michigan, to show his support to the autoworkers.

Trump's support among union members has increased as Biden's has fallen in recent months, according to Michigan polling company EPIC-MRA. Trump led Biden 46 percent to 43 percent among union members in an August survey, after Biden led Trump 51 percent to 42 percent in June, according to Bernie Porn, president of EPIC-MRA.

In response to the UAW strike, Ford in a statement conveyed a commitment to reaching an agreement with the union. "Ford and the UAW are going to be the ones to solve this by finding creative solutions to tough issues together at the bargaining table," the statement said.

"We have a shared interest in the long-term viability of the domestic auto industry, the industrial Midwest



Striking UAW workers picket outside a Stellantis facility in Center Line, Michigan, on September 22, 2023. Reuters

and good-paying manufacturing jobs in the U.S. That's what's at stake, so we are going to stay focused on reaching a deal that is fair to our employees and enables us to invest and grow."

GM said in a statement that its "focus is not on politics but continues to be on bargaining in good faith with the UAW leadership to reach an agree-

ment as quickly as possible that rewards our workforce and allows GM to succeed and thrive into the future." GM has presented five "historic" offers covering wages and job security.

"We value our workforce, and understand the impact a strike has on our employees, communities and the economy -- nobody wins," the state-

ment said. Stellantis in a statement said the company "presented a record offer" with a 21.4-percent compounded wage increase, 1 billion dollars in retirement benefits and inflation protection and job security measures.

"Unlike the non-unionized transplants and EV startups who com-

prise the majority of the U.S. market, Stellantis relies on the collaboration between management and labor to ensure that our company remains competitive, and therefore sustainable," the statement said.

"It requires a balanced agreement that fairly rewards our workforce for their contribution to our success, without significantly disadvantaging Stellantis against our non-union competitors." "We stand ready to sign a record contract that positions our company to continue providing good jobs here at home and be the winner as the U.S. transitions to an electrified future," the statement said.

The UAW went on strike on Sept. 15 at three select facilities of Ford, GM and Stellantis, and expanded the strike to 38 GM and Stellantis facilities on Sept. 22.

Nationwide, 18,300 UAW autoworkers at 41 Ford Motor Co, GM and Stellantis NV facilities in 20 states are on strike, asking for higher wages, pensions for all workers and the elimination of the tiered wage systems. Michigan consulting firm Anderson Economic Group LLC estimates that in the first week prior to the expansion, the strike caused an economic loss of more than 1.6 billion dollars from lost wages, production and other impacts from the walkouts and layoffs at suppliers and feeder plants. Xinhua

SPORT



Alaf Aces' cricketer, Ankit Baghel (L), receives the Player of the Match prize from a cricket official upon the conclusion of the 2023 Dar es Salaam Cricket (DC) GP Gymkhana Shield showdown's tie pitting Alaf Aces against Shree Kutchi Leva Patel Sports Center (SKLPSC) recently. PHOTO: COURTESY OF DAR ES SALAAM CRICKET

Alaf Aces' cricketers thrash SKLPSC in 2023 GP Gymkhana Shield opener

By Guardian Reporter

ALAF Aces cricketers have got off to an impressive start in this season's Dar es Salaam Cricket (DC) Gymkhana Shield after posting a 59-run drubbing of Shree Kutchi Leva Patel Sports Centre (SKLPSC) recently.

The clash that took place at Dar es Salaam Gymkhana Club (DGC) witnessed Alaf Aces amassing 177/6 in the scheduled 20 overs after they had gone in to bat first.

Alaf Aces' captain, Asif Butt, won the toss and elected to bat, and the opening batting pair made up of him and Ejaz Aziz started with the opening stand of 64 runs in 7.2 overs before the former - a veteran player - was run out, he was nevertheless watchfully scoring 28 runs.

He was then followed by Aziz, who was also in blistering form having scored 38 runs off 27 balls, to the pavilion.

All-rounder Salum Jembe came in at number three and scored 22 runs off 19 but the player, who made SKLPSC pay for their mistakes, was Ankit Singh Baghel.

The no-nonsense cricketer scored 48 runs off 25 balls, whilst nailing four humungous sixes and a boundary, in what turned out to be the best batting figures when Alaf Aces took the crease.

There were a couple of cameos, one of which was showcased by Tanmay Das - the debutant - and the other by the club's founder, Azim Thakur, also a veteran cricketer.

Das ended two runs short of a two-digit figure, whilst clearing the boundary once, in his short spell at the crease.

Thakur was later replaced by youthful Hamza Ally, scoring 12 runs off eight balls. The total score for Alaf Aces was 177 runs.

The SKLPSC bowlers Mohammed Rizwan, Vikeshkumar P Kerai, Naran Vekariya, and Vipul Pindoria had a difficult time keeping Alaf Aces' batting unit in check, given they ended with a wicket each for their club.

Securing 178 runs from 20 overs to come out with the win happened to be a tall order for SKLPSC cricketers given they, in response,

ended with 118/8.

Alaf Aces' cricketers did have a bit of a scare during their turn with the ball - with the way the first three overs went - after conceding 30 runs in three overs.

Once SKLPSC's opener Rizwan got out though - having been caught by Alaf Aces' Kibwana Salum off Mohamed Ali's delivery - things gradually fell into place.

Rizwan made his way back with 20 runs, whilst blasting four fours, pushing his club's score to 33 runs after 4.2 overs once he left the crease.

Vikeshkumar P Kerai, deployed as one of the top-order cricketers, ended as the batsman with the most runs in the fruitless chase after posting 38 runs.

Kerai blasted four fours and a six in the innings that were so far worth writing home about, leaving the crease once he was caught by Alaf Aces' wicketkeeper Jaffary Kanyita from Das's bowling.

Alishahab Fazleali Bukhari, slotted in at number three, was the other SKLPSC cricketer with two digits as the performer ended with 21 runs which consisted of two fours. He offered the much-needed boost given he took the crease whilst his outfit was two wickets and he pushed the score to 62 runs after 9.2 overs by the time he returned to the pavilion.

Much as Vipul Pindoria made his way back with the bat in hand, whilst notching three runs, his efforts could not prevent SKLPSC from suffering defeat.

The SKLPSC cricketers were ultimately bowled out for 118 runs and Ankit Singh Baghel was adjudged Player of the Match.

Pacer Ally Mpeka had successfully led Alaf Aces' bowling onslaught given the cricketer ended with three wickets, giving away 26 runs in four overs.

Efforts by SKLPSC to get down to a successful chase were, as well, dealt a blow by Alaf Aces' Ankit Singh Baghel who registered two wickets, conceding 25 runs.

Alaf Aces' Jembe, Das, and Ali ended with one wicket each to dash SKLPSC's hopes away.

President Samia pledges more prize to Twiga Stars

By Correspondent Nassir Nchimbi

PRESIDENT Samia Suluhu Hassan has pledged to award Tanzania's senior national women's soccer squad, Twiga Stars, more cash should they overcome Togo in the second round of the Women's Africa Cup of Nations (WAFCON) Qualifiers.

The Tanzania team is set to take on Togo in the first leg of the second, and last, round of 2024 WAFCON Qualifiers slated to take place at Azam Complex Stadium in Dar es Salaam on November 27 before playing the reverse fixture on December 5.

President Samia also awarded Twiga Stars 10m/- following their victory over Ivory Coast in the qualifying pathway's first round.

Twiga Stars on Tuesday defeated Ivory Coast 2-0 in the rematch at Azam Complex Stadium to see the two locked to a 2-2 aggregate scoreline and the former, in the end, emerged victorious via penalties.

The newly-appointed Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Arts, Culture, and Sports Gerson Msigwa conveyed the Head of State's message to Twiga Stars' players and staff shortly after the rematch was completed.

The official disclosed: "The Head of State conveys her heartfelt congratulations following winning today's match. She has awarded you 10m/- and has pledged to award more prize money as we proceed into the next round, prizes will be announced soon."

Msigwa noted: "For now, let's focus on qualification for 2024 WAFCON, as we aim higher in 2027 AFCON because we will certainly achieve a lot together in that period, I would also like to congratulate the technical bench, Tanzania Football Federation, and former Minister and Permanent Secretary of Arts, Culture and Sports for the hard work."

Twiga Stars' head coach Bakari Shime hailed his players for winning the Tuesday match, insisting his second-half game plan worked effectively.

The tactician revealed: "Our team has shown maturity. It is the first time we have played against Ivory Coast. We have learned a lot from our mistakes and hope not to repeat them against our next opponent, Togo."

Twiga Stars forward Opa Clement asserted they will work hard to ensure they advance to next year's WAFCON finals, given she believes it is possible.

Opa pointed out: "I am happy to have taken part in today's win. During the break, the coach told us to remain calm. We did what he said, and we have won."

The 2024 WAFCON showdown will comprise 12 teams that will qualify for the Group Stage, one of which is automatically qualified hosts, Morocco.

The teams were seeded according to the FIFA Women's World Ranking released in June 2023 and their performance in the previous edition that took place in Morocco in 2022.

SPORTS

Karia working to bring back Kagame Cup tourney, Union League by other methods

By Correspondent John Kimbute

TANZANIA Football Federation (TFF) president Wallace Karia, whose tenure in office seems to be crowned with success already, has a few things up his sleeve that could significantly animate the sporting calendar if it all goes as planned.

He is working to restore two competitions, one which was snuffed out by a congested club calendar, and another which lost meaning as Zanzibar went up in African soccer.

Its membership in the continental soccer body took the wind out of its need for proving something locally and regionally, aside from hosting the Mapinduzi Cup.

In an extensive interview with hosts of a radio talk show in Dar es Salaam at the weekend, the TFF president, who doubles as president of the Confederation of East and Central African Football Associations (CECAFA), covered several contested issues, including the joint bid to host the Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON) finals in 2027, where the picture he drew up was that the continental confederation was positive about the idea.

The big issue is whether the three members of the 'AFCON Pamoja Bid' will have lined up the requisite number of approved stadiums by the time approval is made, or within range of starting the finals. A few are handy, already.

What might be a bit exciting is whether the annual club championship show that used to be known as the Kagame Cup can be restarted and that is a bit doubtful, first in its previous structure as involving champion clubs in the region.

What the TFF leader explained in that direction was that pre-season requirements had finally made it impossible to inch into the tournament, to fit in with the premier league schedule, national team schedules, and finally, a usable pre-season calendar.

The sub-regional confederation had given up on the issue and is now trying to bring back the tourney in a different format, involving youth teams, U-17, etc.

Even less urgent for a breadth of opinion is what is usually known as a Union League or a sort of super-cup if not a super league.

If it is taken up as a super cup involving the top winners of the premier leagues, it would be easier to arrange, in like manner as the Community Shield, but if



Tanzania Football Federation (TFF) president, Wallace Karia.

one starts to think of a proper league, it will be different.

One may end up with second-string sides battling for the trophy, for precisely the same reasons that the current Mapinduzi Cup format is adequate for the purpose, as a Union top club earns no international accolades.

Zanzibar has admittedly failed in its bid for FIFA membership. The reasons are mixed, not least being the fact that the capacity of Zanzibar teams to fulfil CAF international obligations has for a whole appeared to be weak.

If they fail again, for instance, failing to travel to South Africa for a return match just to comply with the calendar, they will be axed. It will take a while till admission is again considered.

In that sense, what is needed at present is stability, where Zanzibar proves its CAF membership status both by regular appearance in scheduled contests especially in away matches, and hopefully emerges as a real competitor, not a perennial also-rans.

When this status is achieved it can think of being considered for membership in the global fraternity, but that has other things to be taken note of, that it does not touch off similar demands from less autonomous regions.

That may preclude any attempt to imitate Britain where its four parts all play in FIFA tourneys.

Restoring the Kagame Cup as a youth tournament is similarly disputable as a realistic use of the brand, as it is an Eastern Africa Club Championship.

It can efficiently be arranged for teams dropping out of the continental tourneys, to maintain international

fixtures of a different sort, for instance, Azam FC would this year be our representative at the tourney, and a method would be found to pick either a second or even third competitor.

The issue is that the tourney be organized as a third tier of international fixtures the way Yanga dropped to the second tier last season.

Trying to find time out of the usual international fixtures clashes with the calendar as the tourney used to be held at the annual interval, which as the TFF president explained, is now filled by professional preparations often involving setting up camp outside the country.

It means the Kagame Cup tournament can no longer be organized on that basis and needs to take the image of the Carabao Cup, as the equivalent of the FA Cup already exists, namely the Azam Sports Federation Cup.

The rest would be an effort to see if the Rwandan leader has an interest in the brand being attached to something that lacks that original standing - though it can also be altered to the original format within international league schedules, as an additional tourney.

That way the real champs or the runners-up would be in a position to target more than one international silverware, not what dropping into the CAF Confederation Cup has been eliminated.

Using the dropping method in a revived Kagame Cup tournament risks losing its taste, just like picking third winners similarly does not maintain the taste. Instead, it is useful commercially to have real champions battle for another title.

By Correspondent Nassir Nchimbi & Agencies

KENYA'S professional boxing sensation, Rayton 'Boom Boom' Okwiri, is confident of defeating Tanzanian ringmaster Hassan 'Tornado' Mwakinyo when they take on each other in the International Boxing Association (IBA) Super Middleweight title bout in Dar es Salaam on Friday.

Okwiri, aged 37, recently lifted the World Alliance Boxing Association (WABA) Africa Middleweight title with a win over Malawi's Chikodi Makawa on a unanimous points decision at the Nyayo Stadium, Indoor Arena in Nairobi.

The former Africa Boxing Union (ABU) champion said his emphatic win against Makawa demonstrates the massive potential he has as he seeks to scale new heights.

All three judges scored 100-90 in his favour, sending the arena into a celebration frenzy. The victory brought his impressive track record to nine wins, a loss, and a draw (9-1-1).

Okwiri said the victory set his season in

Okwiri confident of beating Mwakinyo in IBA Super Middleweight title fight

motion and laid the perfect foundation for a vicious fight against Mwakinyo.

"He has avoided me for a long time now but I won't allow him to get away this time around. Our meeting is long overdue and I believe I will triumph," Okwiri said.

The Kenyan pugilist said he has been yearning for a match-up with the highly rated and technically gifted boxer because they have a lot in common with Mwakinyo. "He is an orthodox boxer just like me whom I can easily beat if I prepare well enough," Okwiri disclosed.

He said he would not waste time fighting inexperienced pugilists anymore but would go straight for the scalps of either title contenders or pugilists with titles.

The Kenyan boxer said: "I chose him because a champion like me shouldn't be wasting time - fighting nondescript

boxers - who have nothing to offer in the game." "It's time to separate boys from men. You can only be the best if you fight the best," he added.

Mwakinyo, whose real name is Halfan Hythani Hamza, has won 20 fights out of the 23 bouts he has fought since making his debut in 2020 against compatriot, Alibaba Tarimo, on November 29, 2015.

He rose to the global limelight after clinching the World Boxing Federation (WBF) Intercontinental Light Middleweight title twice in 2020.

Mwakinyo boasts a decorated trophy cabinet that includes the Universal Boxing Organization (UBO) International Super Welterweight title won in 2018.

The boxer has, moreover, lifted the WBF Intercontinental Super Welterweight title in 2020, and the African Boxing Union (ABU) Super Welterweight title in 2021.



Tanzanian senior tennis player, Omari Abdallah, executes a backhand shot when he took part in a training at Dar es Salaam Gymkhana Club (DGC) recently. PHOTO: CORRESPONDENT JUMANNE JUMA

Ballesteros again is a big inspiration for Europe in the Ryder Cup. Lowry already is in tears

GUIDONIA MONTECELIO, Italy

EUROPEAN captain Luke Donald has made sure his Ryder Cup team does not lack for inspiration. It even reduced Shane Lowry to tears.

Team Europe posted a video of Donald giving a tour of the team room at Marco Simone, decked out in blue and gold with images of the late Seve Ballesteros practically everywhere.

There is a wall with the names of all 168 players who ever competed for Great Britain & Ireland and Europe (starting in 1979). The locker room has lockers for every player and caddie because as Donald says, "We're all in this together."

His favorite room is what Donald calls the dressing room to get ready for the matches, with words in each stall – "This is your time" – written in their native language.

There are 13 such lockers – 12 players and one for Ballesteros.

"Seve is our ultimate symbol of what makes a European player great," Donald said. "His spirit and his enthusiasm and his soul will be with us all the way."

All the way out the door, for sure. The room has a painting of Ballesteros on the wall as they head out to the course.

"What the Ryder Cup meant to him, they'll feel that as they go out," Donald said.

As for Lowry? The Irishman who once said he didn't cry when he won the British Open or when his daughter was born confessed to tears upon the arrival at Marco Simone.

That stemmed from some motivational videos Donald had for his team when they arrived. Details are not forthcoming, at least not yet. "That's kind of personal for us," Jon Rahm. "We have some individual videos and some collective videos. There's very few players not shedding a few tears yesterday afternoon, I can say that."

Lowry owned up to being one of them.

"Look, it's an emotional week, and even some of the stuff that's happened already this week would get you quite emotional," said Lowry, who made his Ryder Cup debut in 2021 at Whistling Straits, a 19-9 loss to the Americans.

"I think being a part of something that is bigger than you or anything else is pretty cool, and I think Whistling Straits was hard to take," Lowry said. "But it was quite motivating for me coming away from that, and it's quite motivating for me this week."

All that Rahm shared about the video was that it was family-related, a reason all the players made it to the Ryder Cup.

"If you guys were to watch it, it would make you feel a lot of the same emotions we felt," the Spaniard said.

CANTLAY AND SCHAUFFELE
Patrick Cantlay and Xander Schauffele have formed a strong partnership, which started with a card game on the long flight to Australia in 2019 and has produced a 7-3 record in team matches at the Ryder Cup and Presidents Cup.

Except for being Californians, they would appear to have little in common. Cantlay was the first to be asked Tuesday a difference in their personalities that he admires.

"He's very positive," Cantlay said with a smile.

It got even better when a British writer drew the obvious connection and wondered if that meant Cantlay was more on the grumpy side.

"Did you just get that notion right now?" Cantlay replied, a rare show of self-deprecation. "Most people would be grumpy around Xander. He is like Tony Robbins out there. He is impressively positive. I think the nice way to say it is I'm a realist."

As for Schauffele, he also mentioned his "positivity," though

that's built largely around his golf.

"He's an easy guy to lean on because he's so good at golf," Schauffele said. "We just have a really good time, and when we get things going, it sort of feels like we kind of kick into cruise control. ... He's an easy person to lean on to stay positive."

"His ability to focus is what I think is probably his strongest attribute, besides all the incredible golf and everything he's good at."

That partnership at the Presidents Cup, a debut for both of them, carried off the course. They now take vacations together. Schauffele's wife and Cantlay's fiancée are close, and Schauffele recently moved from Las Vegas to South Florida near where Cantlay lives.

SWEDISH STAR

Ludvig Aberg has become a star attraction for the European team, mainly the fact that he was chosen for the Ryder Cup four months after the 23-year-old Swede finished playing at Texas Tech.

It went to a new level Tuesday. He was mentioned alongside the likes of former British Open champion Henrik Stenson, tennis great Björn Borg, retired soccer star Zlatan Ibrahimovic and ABBA, perhaps eclipsing them in fame one day.

"I would not put myself in the same sentence as ABBA," Aberg said. "All I try to do is play golf and I try to hit as few shots as I can every tournament I play in."

He does that well enough that European captain Luke Donald took a chance on him.

THE CROWD

Tommy Fleetwood has contended on some of the biggest stages in golf, such as playing in the final group at the British Open and contending on the weekend this year at Royal Liverpool near where he grew up.

But the Ryder Cup is different, especially a home crowd.

"I think the crowds are there to lift you at all times, and I think when it's going well, you absolutely ride the wave of a home crowd and the momentum that they are creating," Fleetwood said. "The cheers, the sound, the noise, that's amazing, and you know that they are there to lift you up if it's not going so well."

"You look at Ryder Cup moments – putts holed or shots hit – the crowd is part of that. The reaction you get, the roars that you get, they play a huge part in your memory."

Last time was different, of course. It was in Wisconsin, and there were practically no European fans at Whistling Straits because of travel restrictions still in place from COVID-19.

"I hit some great shots at Whistling Straits," Fleetwood said. "Just nobody really cheered them."

STRICKER'S WIFE

Steve Stricker's wife, Nicki, was never big on the pomp and galas at the Ryder Cup. When the matches were in Scotland in 2014 and Stricker was a vice captain, he was asked if his wife would be going with him.

"She didn't always like going when I was playing, so I doubt she'll want to go with me as a vice captain," Stricker said with a laugh.

The Ryder Cup in Rome held such appeal that Nicki had plans to go. Those plans were interrupted by good golf – not his, hers.

Nicki Stricker qualified for the U.S. Senior Women's Amateur. The 36-hole qualifying for match play starts on Friday in Scottsdale, Arizona.

Yes, golf runs in the family. Stricker already has set the season earnings record on the PGA Tour Champions, his wife is in a USGA championship, oldest daughter Bobbi had Epsom Tour status this year and their youngest, Izzi, is a Wisconsin state high school champion.

AP

Sofyan Amrabat impresses in confidence-boosting Man Utd win over Palace

By Mike McGrath

ERIK Ten Hag's finest hour at Manchester United has been the EFL Cup and the competition served to ease the pressure off the Dutchman here. Storm Agnes is heading to the UK this week but the clouds gathering above Old Trafford recently have partially cleared after two wins in four days.

These are small steps towards recovery for United, who looked so unconvincing in the first month of the campaign. This is what they have been craving: a straightforward win. Alejandro Garnacho and Casemiro scored goals to settle any nerves following this testing period, and Anthony Martial added another.

United are not out of the woods yet but this victory will help. Sofyan Amrabat made a full debut as an inverted full-back, Mason Mount returned from injury and there was the sight of Harry Maguire back in a red shirt looking commanding in the United backline. United are never far from a storm but it has been a positive few days after defeating Burnley.

Ten Hag spoke of players needing to embrace the pressure of playing for United and they are still a bad defeat away from crisis, with Crystal Palace back here at the weekend. Yet some of the positives United can find include hungry wingers such as Garnacho looking to break into the team regularly.

Raphael Varane back from injury adds solidity, while Amrabat looks comfortable in his new surroundings. They have winnable games on the horizon and the chance to climb up the Premier League table after such an indifferent start to the season.

United are still a soap opera off the pitch, with no takeover close to completion and two of their most expensive players banished from the first-team squad, yet the players at his disposal at least look determined to get the club back on track.

Martial can look sulky when matches are not going his way but he even came close to cracking a smile when he thudded in the third goal. Another



Amrabat receives tactical instruction from manager Erik ten Hag. Agencies

player with something to prove after being questioned.

"Pressure is just part of life at Manchester United, for every single person involved with the club," wrote Ten Hag in his matchday programme notes, acknowledging the scrutiny he has been under for the last month. "The demands here are never easy because expectations are so high and everyone is always watching, but you do not wear this crest to have an easy life."

For Amrabat, the deadline signing, his start at United has been far from straightforward. After Sergio Reguilón became the latest injury casualty, the Morocco midfielder was deployed as a makeshift left-back, albeit one Ten Hag had used in that position while at Utrecht more than six years ago.

"He is a midfielder but previously he played as a full back a while ago. At the World Cup, he was one of the best holding midfielders but he is a player who will play where the manager needs him to play. He's a warrior. He'll fight for the badge, I'm sure," said Ten Hag.

Ten Hag rotated his squad, giving

Maguire a first start of the season. Since his error in Seville when United had crashed out of the Europa League, Maguire had only started one match and a rare start in the EFL Cup spoke to where the £85million signing stands in Ten Hag's pecking order.

While Maguire stayed at United despite a lack of guaranteed football, Dean Henderson had secured a move away from Old Trafford and his Palace debut came against his old employers. His time at United was not without controversy, criticising his treatment when he was not made No1, but his immediate chance to prove his former club wrong was over quickly.

He had surgery on a thigh problem last season, ruling him out for four months, and his bad luck with injuries continued as he felt a muscle strain as he kicked.

After getting replaced by Sam Johnstone, United were ahead two minutes later with the substitute goalkeeper not yet touching the ball.

United cut through the Palace defence after Diogo Dalot's underlap was spotted by Facundo Pellistri. As Palace defenders rushed backwards,

Dalot evaded them with a pull-back and Garnacho finished confidently. Fans had called his name at the weekend when he was an unused sub and this was the reason why.

The lead was doubled with a goal set up by another returning United player. Mount, coming back from a hamstring problem, fizzed over a corner that picked out the mismatch of Jeff Schlupp marking Casemiro. The Brazilian attacked the set-piece and angled a header into the far post.

Martial scored his first goal of the season 10 minutes into the second half to make certain of the win. Casemiro picked out the French forward with a cross to the far post, which he met first time with a half-volley that crashed into the side-netting.

Andre Onana has been error prone at the start of his United career but pulled off confidence-boosting saves to deny Jean-Philippe Mateta twice. Donny van de Beek also came on for his first appearance in nine months, with the United fans giving him a warm reception.

THE TELEGRAPH

Chelsea owners 'welcome' in dressing room, says under-fire Pochettino

LONDON

UNDER-FIRE Chelsea boss Mauricio Pochettino says the club's owners are welcome to visit the dressing room – as long as they leave the talking to him.

Chelsea co-owner Behdad Eghbali went into the Stamford Bridge dressing room on Sunday after a 1-0 defeat against Aston Villa extended their woeful start to the Premier League season.

Eghbali is not the only member of Chelsea's hierarchy to have entered the team's inner sanctum – co-owner Todd Boehly and co-sporting directors Paul Winstanley and Laurence Stewart have also paid visits.

With Pochettino under scrutiny following Chelsea's run of one win from their first six league games, Eghbali's appearance in the dressing room was interpreted as a sign the pressure is mounting on the Blues manager just weeks into his reign.

But the Argentine boss said he was happy to see Chelsea's powerbrokers sharing in the team's "suffering". "I like when the owners come – in all my career as a coach, at Espanyol then Southampton, Tottenham and Paris Saint-Germain also, before and after," Pochettino told reporters on Tuesday.

"It's good that the owners came to the dressing room. It's in the way that they approach the players that is the most important. If they are in a good way, I think they're very welcome."

Last season, Boehly reportedly told Chelsea's players their season was "embarrassing" during his dressing room speech after a home defeat against Brighton towards the end of a miserable campaign.

AFP

Aston Villa players complain sweaty Castore shirts are affecting performances

By Matt Law

ASTON Villa players have told club chiefs they are unhappy with this season's wet-look shirts, which they claim are weighing them down.

Head coach Unai Emery is thought to be aware of the issue, with Villa now working with sports manufacturer Castore to try to find a solution as quickly as possible.

Villa launched new home, away and third kits this season, but supporters have noticed the shirts quickly become wet through and cling to players during games due to perspiration.

Telegraph Sport understands that has prompted complaints from players, who believe it to be a performance issue and have told members of the Villa hierarchy that the shirts become uncomfortable and heavy.

The problem has been particularly obvious on the claret home shirts, which quickly turn much darker during games, but players have claimed the white away kit is just as bad.

Villa are two years into what was described as a multi-year deal with British sportswear manufacturer Castore and it remains to be seen whether or not the issue could affect that deal.

Newcastle United triggered an exit

clause to free themselves of a contract with Castore that had been due to run to 2027 so they can switch to Adidas at the end of this season.

One source close to a Villa player told Telegraph Sport: "The players are having to play in soaking wet t-shirts and it is a problem that needs to be solved. It cannot go on all season. The players look like they've jumped in a swimming pool after about 10 minutes."

Villa have started the season encouragingly, winning four of their opening six Premier League games, but Emery will be keen for the complaints of his players to be swiftly dealt with.

The issue will not impact replica shirts bought by fans, with Villa not facing the possibility of having to recall kits or issue replacements to the public.

Any solution would likely require Castore to produce a new run of shirts for the players that do a much better job of absorbing sweat and remaining lightweight.

Announcing what was described as a 'landmark' partnership with Castore in May 2022, Villa released a club statement that said: "Castore and Aston Villa are both aligned in terms of their

future goals which include; striving for excellence, having a clear strategic direction and adopting a challenger mentality - making the new partnership a perfect synergy."

Other than Villa and Newcastle, Castore have this season produced kits for Wolverhampton Wanderers, Rangers, Sevilla and Bayer Leverkusen among others.

Villa have announced the club will launch a new crest for a second successive campaign after concluding the round badge that features on this season's shirts 'has not had the impact which had been hoped'.

In an announcement on the club's website, Villa has revealed they will canvas the opinion of supporters ahead of selecting a permanent new-look crest ahead of the club's 150th anniversary next year.

Villa entertain Everton in the Carabao Cup on Wednesday night in front of what could be their lowest Villa Park crowd since their return to the Premier League.

The Midlands club have faced criticism from supporters for taking their first Carabao Cup game off season tickets and charging a minimum of £30 for an adult ticket.

THE TELEGRAPH

Gwiji by David Chikoko



'Fans can do what they want' says Pochettino after Chelsea jeers

LONDON

MAURICIO Pochettino insisted he would not condemn the Chelsea fans who booed his team after Sunday's drab 0-0 draw against lowly Bournemouth.

The Blues have made their second worst ever start to a Premier League campaign following a lacklustre performance at the Vitality Stadium.

With just one win from five league games, Chelsea are closer to the relegation zone than the top four.

It has been a wretched start to Pochettino's reign after his close-season appointment and for the second successive game his team were booed off by angry supporters.

Chelsea defender Ben Chilwell appeared to endure extra abuse when he went towards the Blues fans in one corner of the stadium at the final whistle.

Despite a spending spree of over £1 billion since Todd Boehly's consortium purchased Chelsea from Roman Abramovich in 2022, the west London club are in a bigger mess than ever.

Despite an injury crisis that forced Pochettino to name three outfield players aged 19 or under

on the bench as well as two goalkeepers, the Argentine said he couldn't complain about the fans' jeers.

"What can we do? For me, I have nothing to say. The fans can do whatever they want," he said.

"We know what we need to do, we are strong in our belief. We have 12 injured and today we had three or four young guys and two keepers on the bench.

"I'm going to cry? I'm going to complain? To who? I need to accept this, the challenge and keep being positive."

Asked whether he was sympathetic to the reaction of the supporters, Pochettino added: "What I can tell the fans is there are circumstances that we cannot change.

"We have too many players injured. We're a team that would be strong if we are together. Manchester City, Arsenal, when they have all the squad fit, they can compete for everything.

"Why is it different for us? It's because of what? We don't have all the squad available from the beginning of the season.

"These are the circumstances we need to accept and be positive, patient."

AFP

Madrid comeback to stay perfect, Ramos enjoys Sevilla return

MADRID

REAL Madrid came from behind to beat Real Sociedad 2-1 and climb back to the top of La Liga on Sunday, maintaining their perfect start to the season.

Earlier Sergio Ramos made his second Sevilla debut in a narrow win over Las Palmas, while Mason Greenwood played his first match for Getafe, on loan from Manchester United.

After Barcelona put five past Real Betis in a flashy display on Saturday the onus was on Carlo Ancelotti's Madrid side to maintain their 100 percent record and they did, against the tricky Basque visitors.

Propelled by the electric Takefusa Kubo, Real Sociedad took an early lead through Ander Barrenetxea, but Madrid hit back with goals from Fede Valverde and Joselu to earn their fifth win from five games.

England international Jude Bellingham was unable to continue his excellent goalscoring form, after netting five goals in his first four Madrid matches, but remains the division's top goalscorer.

Madrid start their Champions League campaign on Wednesday at home against Union Berlin, and despite losing Ballon d'Or winner Karim Benzema in the summer and star player Vinicius Junior to injury, remain a force to be reckoned with.

"We started by letting in a goal and the good thing is that we were capable of turning it around - the bad thing is that we have to avoid that," said Ancelotti.

"We did it thanks to the commitment, energy and will of the team, we have an intensity that opponents find hard to cope with for 90 minutes."

The Basque visitors went ahead at the new-look Santiago Bernabeu after only five minutes, when Kubo stroked a fine pass into Barrenetxea's path.

Kepa Arrizabalaga kept out his first effort with a fine save but could not claw out the second.

Kubo then beat the goalkeeper with a brilliant strike but it was disallowed for offside.

Joselu hit the crossbar with the goal gaping and Alex Remiro denied Dani Carvajal as Madrid found their footing.

Valverde slammed Real Madrid level less than a minute into the second half, lashing Fran Garcia's cut-back in off the post from outside the area.

The left-back created the second goal too, crossing for target man Joselu to nod the hosts ahead at the back post.

Spain international Joselu was immediately taken off for Eduardo

Camavinga, as Ancelotti sought more control of the game.

The Italian got it too, with the visitors effectively shut down, no longer finding spaces between Madrid lines.

"This is the Bernabeu and with our fans we turned it around," said Joselu. "We're doing a bit of everything, we're confident in ourselves, there's a lot of quality in the squad and we came from behind again."

Madrid lead Barcelona by two points, with both of Spain's giants unbeaten, although the Catalans drew their opening game against Getafe.

- 'Die happy' -

Sergio Ramos played for Sevilla for the first time since he left the club in 2005 as they earned their first win of the season over Las Palmas.

The 37-year-old centre-back started in the 1-0 victory at the Ramon Sanchez-Pizjuan, following his arrival from Paris Saint-Germain this summer.

Ramos, who left Sevilla for Real Madrid 18 years ago to the ire of many supporters in Andalusia, was cheered on his return.

Belgian winger Dodi Lukebakio sent Sevilla ahead after 71 minutes and with Ramos patrolling, they kept their first clean sheet of the campaign.

"I felt a lot of emotion... it was amazing to find my people again, my home, my fans, it's unique," Ramos told Movistar.

The defender admitted some nerves about how fans would treat him after playing at a rival club for so long.

"I had a few doubts at first but the reception I had on my arrival, I will take to the grave... now I can die happy," he added.

Elsewhere Pacheta got off to a winning start as Villarreal's new coach thanks to Alexander Sorloth's 94th minute winner against Almeria in a 2-1 victory.

Getafe edged Osasuna 3-2, with Greenwood making his debut, and his first appearance since January 2022.

The English striker, on loan at Getafe from Manchester United, was charged with attempted rape and assault in October 2022 but the charges were later dropped.

Getafe coach Jose Bordalas sent Greenwood on in the 77th minute to applause from home fans at the club's Coliseum Alfonso Perez stadium.

A group of Osasuna supporters greeted the 21-year-old's arrival to Spanish football with chants of "Greenwood, die".

"I didn't hear them so I have nothing to say," said Bordalas. "I am very happy with the kid's debut."

AFP

Ten Hag hails Man Utd character after 'horror' start against Forest

LONDON

MANCHESTER United boss Erik ten Hag labelled his side's concession of two goals inside four minutes to Nottingham Forest "crazy", but hailed his players for fighting back to win 3-2 on Saturday.

United's unimpressive start to the season looked set to continue when Taiwo Awoniyi broke clear from the home side's corner to open the scoring after 90 seconds.

Less than two minutes later it was 2-0 as Willy Boly was left unmarked from Morgan Gibbs-White's free-kick to head in.

"With all respect to Forest, we can't allow them (the goals)," said Ten Hag. "They were easy giveaways. It's crazy, but sometimes games go like this."

United lost 2-0 to Tottenham last weekend after being dominated by Wolves on home soil, despite escaping with a 1-0 win on the opening weekend of the campaign.

They steadied the ship with a second win in three games.

Cristian Eriksen started the fightback by turning home Marcus Rashford's cross.

Casemiro then levelled from Bruno Fernandes' headed knockdown.

Forest were reduced to 10 men when Joe Worrall saw red for denying Fernandes a clear goalscoring opportunity.

United made the man advantage count as Fernandes slotted home a penalty 14 minutes from time after Rashford was brought down in the area.

"Horror start, but the character of the team was brilliant," added Ten Hag. "We stayed so calm and so composed. We stuck to our belief, stuck to our plan, played some good football and scored three good goals. It was a great comeback.

"It's a marker, absolutely. We've seen this team can bounce back. If you have such a start, you need to get over it. It's not easy, but compliments to the team.

"We have the personality. In certain moments we can definitely improve, but in general this team has



Bruno Fernandes completed Man Utd's comeback from 2-0 down to beat Nottingham Forest 3-2. Agencies

the character to bounce back all the time."

Fernandes has been criticised in his early weeks as club captain for negative body language towards his teammates. But the Portuguese led the fightback and said United need to iron out their flaws with more consistent displays.

"We know what it means to be a Manchester United player. We know this shirt demands a lot and we are ready for that," said Fernandes.

"The team showed great spirit, passion and desire. We just need to be aware that we can't concede so early. It wasn't the perfect start for us but we kept control, kept the ball and started doing the right things."

Meanwhile, Arsenal manager Mikel Arteta criticised his side for not killing off 10-man Fulham as the visitors scored early and late to snatch a 2-2 draw at the Emirates on Saturday. Andreas Pereira struck in the first minute as he pounced on a sloppy pass from Bukayo Saka to put Fulham in front. Arteta's substitutions appeared to have turned the game as Fabio Vieira won a

penalty, converted by Saka, to level before teeing up Eddie Nketiah to put Arsenal 2-1 up.

Fulham then lost Calvin Bassey to a second booking, but still hit back when Joao Palhinha took advantage of more poor defending to sweep home a corner in the 87th minute.

"We have to show another level of commitment and desire. With 10 men, you cannot concede a goal," said an irritable Arteta. "Right from the beginning, we gave an incredible goal away. You make life really difficult for yourself, but the team reacted really well.

"We dominated the game and created countless chances and should have scored five, six, seven goals easily. And, when you have done the most difficult thing which is to get back ahead against a team that is well organised, you have to defend your box from one corner.

"It is the only chance they have and you get punished."

Arsenal are aiming to win the Premier League for the first time in 20 years after narrowly missing

out to treble winners Manchester City last season.

The Gunners appear to have greater strength in depth this season after the signings of Declan Rice and Kai Havertz.

It showed as Vieira and Nketiah made telling contributions off the bench, while Oleksandr Zinchenko also impressed on his return from injury as a substitute.

"All three substitutes changed the game. Fabio was involved in everything we created and I am really happy with that," added Arteta. "The same with Eddie. It is my fault that Fabio has not played more and today he gave me reasons to play him more."

Arsenal's first dropped points of the season saw them miss out on top spot in the Premier League to north London rivals Tottenham on goal difference.

Both sides have seven points from their opening three games, but could be usurped by City, who are in action at Sheffield United on Sunday.

AFP

FIFA suspend Rubiales as Spain women's coach Vilda joins criticism over kiss

MADRID

FIFA suspended Luis Rubiales as president of Spain's football federation on Saturday for kissing Women's World Cup player Jenni Hermoso on the lips, while even his close friend Jorge Vilda joined the tidal wave of criticism.

The move by world football's governing body was the latest development in a deepening row pitting Rubiales and the federation (RFEF) against Hermoso and her Spain teammates, which the players say has tarnished the glory of winning the World Cup in Australia last Sunday.

"(We) decided today to provisionally suspend Mr. Luis Rubiales from all football-related activities at national and international level," FIFA said, banning him and the RFEF from contacting Hermoso or those close to her.

The suspension of Rubiales will last 90 days while FIFA undertake disciplinary proceedings against the 46-year-old.

Later Saturday the majority of the women's team's coaching staff offered their resignations over Rubiales' conduct, although controversial coach Vilda was not among them.

Meanwhile 81 players including Hermoso are on strike from the national team.

"I deeply regret that Spanish women's football's triumph has been harmed by the improper behaviour of our leader Luis Rubiales, which he himself has acknowledged," said controversial coach Vilda in a statement to domestic EFE news agency.

Vilda, who was seen applauding Rubiales' speech on Friday in which he refused to resign despite unprecedented criticism, was told in it by the president he would be offered a new deal with a huge pay hike.

Six of Vilda's first-team staff and



Luis Rubiales

five others working in women's football in the RFEF offered to step down because of the "unacceptable attitudes and statements" from Rubiales.

They added that they supported Hermoso's version of events.

Hermoso and 80 other Spain players, including the entire World Cup squad, said they will not play for the national team until the "leadership" changes.

The RFEF responded to FIFA's suspension, saying Rubiales has "full confidence in the FIFA bodies" and will defend himself "so the truth prevails and his complete innocence is

proven".

The federation also said Pedro Rocha would take over as interim president during Rubiales' suspension.

- Defiant -

Rubiales had been under intense pressure to quit but at an emergency RFEF meeting on Friday he was defiant, saying he refused to resign and claiming he was the target of a "social assassination".

On Saturday, the federation upped the ante by threatening legal action over Hermoso's "lies" about the kiss.

Hermoso said "at no time" did she

consent to the kiss following the 1-0 win in the final against England in Sydney, which Rubiales described as "mutual, euphoric and consensual".

The RFEF responded, saying it would take "as many legal actions as necessary to defend the honour of the President of the RFEF."

Later Saturday the federation published another statement attacking Hermoso.

"Hermoso lies in all the statements she makes against the president, as we will have the opportunity to prove in due course," it read.

The RFEF said Hermoso had described the kiss as "a mere anecdote without significance" in statements to a FIFA welfare officer soon after it happened. Later they deleted the statement.

- 'Victim of assault' -

Hermoso hit back strongly against Rubiales' claims the kiss was consensual, saying she felt "vulnerable and the victim of an assault".

"I want to clarify that at no time did I consent to the kiss that he gave me and in no case did I seek to lift up the president," she said in the statement on Friday released through the women players' Futpro union.

The Spanish government had con-

Gwiji by David Chikoko



Ballesteros again is a big inspiration for Europe in the Ryder Cup. Lowry already is in tears

GUIDONIA MONTECELIO, Italy

EUROPEAN captain Luke Donald has made sure his Ryder Cup team does not lack for inspiration. It even reduced Shane Lowry to tears.

Team Europe posted a video of Donald giving a tour of the team room at Marco Simone, decked out in blue and gold with images of the late Seve Ballesteros practically everywhere.

There is a wall with the names of all 168 players who ever competed for Great Britain & Ireland and Europe (starting in 1979). The locker room has lockers for every player and caddie because as Donald says, "We're all in this together."

His favorite room is what Donald calls the dressing room to get ready for the matches, with words in each stall – "This is your time" – written in their native language.

There are 13 such lockers – 12 players and one for Ballesteros.

"Seve is our ultimate symbol of what makes a European player great," Donald said. "His spirit and his enthusiasm and his soul will be with us all the way."

All the way out the door, for sure. The room has a painting of Ballesteros on the wall as they head out to the course.

"What the Ryder Cup meant to him, they'll feel that as they go out," Donald said.

As for Lowry? The Irishman who once said he didn't cry when he won the British Open or when his daughter was born confessed to tears upon the arrival at Marco Simone.

That stemmed from some motivational videos Donald had for his team when they arrived. Details are not forthcoming, at least not yet. "That's kind of personal for us," Jon Rahm. "We have some individual videos and some collective videos. There's very few players not shedding a few tears yesterday afternoon, I can say that."

Lowry owned up to being one of them.

"Look, it's an emotional week, and even some of the stuff that's happened already this week would get you quite emotional," said Lowry, who made his Ryder Cup debut in 2021 at Whistling Straits, a 19-9 loss to the Americans.

"I think being a part of something that is bigger than you or anything else is pretty cool, and I think Whistling Straits was hard to take," Lowry said. "But it was quite motivating for me coming away from that, and it's quite motivating for me this week."

All that Rahm shared about the video was that it was family-related, a reason all the players made it to the Ryder Cup.

"If you guys were to watch it, it would make you feel a lot of the same emotions we felt," the Spaniard said.

CANTLAY AND SCHAUFFELE
Patrick Cantlay and Xander Schauffele have formed a strong partnership, which started with a card game on the long flight to Australia in 2019 and has produced a 7-3 record in team matches at the Ryder Cup and Presidents Cup.

Except for being Californians, they would appear to have little in common. Cantlay was the first to be asked Tuesday a difference in their personalities that he admires.

"He's very positive," Cantlay said with a smile.

It got even better when a British writer drew the obvious connection and wondered if that meant Cantlay was more on the grumpy side.

"Did you just get that notion right now?" Cantlay replied, a rare show of self-deprecation. "Most people would be grumpy around Xander. He is like Tony Robbins out there. He is impressively positive. I think the nice way to say it is I'm a realist."

As for Schauffele, he also mentioned his "positivity," though

that's built largely around his golf.

"He's an easy guy to lean on because he's so good at golf," Schauffele said. "We just have a really good time, and when we get things going, it sort of feels like we kind of kick into cruise control. ... He's an easy person to lean on to stay positive."

"His ability to focus is what I think is probably his strongest attribute, besides all the incredible golf and everything he's good at."

That partnership at the Presidents Cup, a debut for both of them, carried off the course. They now take vacations together. Schauffele's wife and Cantlay's fiancée are close, and Schauffele recently moved from Las Vegas to South Florida near where Cantlay lives.

SWEDISH STAR

Ludvig Aberg has become a star attraction for the European team, mainly the fact that he was chosen for the Ryder Cup four months after the 23-year-old Swede finished playing at Texas Tech.

It went to a new level Tuesday. He was mentioned alongside the likes of former British Open champion Henrik Stenson, tennis great Björn Borg, retired soccer star Zlatan Ibrahimovic and ABBA, perhaps eclipsing them in fame one day.

"I would not put myself in the same sentence as ABBA," Aberg said. "All I try to do is play golf and I try to hit as few shots as I can every tournament I play in."

He does that well enough that European captain Luke Donald took a chance on him.

THE CROWD

Tommy Fleetwood has contended on some of the biggest stages in golf, such as playing in the final group at the British Open and contending on the weekend this year at Royal Liverpool near where he grew up.

But the Ryder Cup is different, especially a home crowd.

"I think the crowds are there to lift you at all times, and I think when it's going well, you absolutely ride the wave of a home crowd and the momentum that they are creating," Fleetwood said. "The cheers, the sound, the noise, that's amazing, and you know that they are there to lift you up if it's not going so well."

"You look at Ryder Cup moments – putts holed or shots hit – the crowd is part of that. The reaction you get, the roars that you get, they play a huge part in your memory."

Last time was different, of course. It was in Wisconsin, and there were practically no European fans at Whistling Straits because of travel restrictions still in place from COVID-19.

"I hit some great shots at Whistling Straits," Fleetwood said. "Just nobody really cheered them."

STRICKER'S WIFE

Steve Stricker's wife, Nicki, was never big on the pomp and galas at the Ryder Cup. When the matches were in Scotland in 2014 and Stricker was a vice captain, he was asked if his wife would be going with him.

"She didn't always like going when I was playing, so I doubt she'll want to go with me as a vice captain," Stricker said with a laugh.

The Ryder Cup in Rome held such appeal that Nicki had plans to go. Those plans were interrupted by good golf – not his, hers.

Nicki Stricker qualified for the U.S. Senior Women's Amateur. The 36-hole qualifying for match play starts on Friday in Scottsdale, Arizona.

Yes, golf runs in the family. Stricker already has set the season earnings record on the PGA Tour Champions, his wife is in a USGA championship, oldest daughter Bobbi had Epsom Tour status this year and their youngest, Izzi, is a Wisconsin state high school champion.

AP

Sofyan Amrabat impresses in confidence-boosting Man Utd win over Palace

By Mike McGrath

ERIK Ten Hag's finest hour at Manchester United has been the EFL Cup and the competition served to ease the pressure off the Dutchman here. Storm Agnes is heading to the UK this week but the clouds gathering above Old Trafford recently have partially cleared after two wins in four days.

These are small steps towards recovery for United, who looked so unconvincing in the first month of the campaign. This is what they have been craving: a straightforward win. Alejandro Garnacho and Casemiro scored goals to settle any nerves following this testing period, and Anthony Martial added another.

United are not out of the woods yet but this victory will help. Sofyan Amrabat made a full debut as an inverted full-back, Mason Mount returned from injury and there was the sight of Harry Maguire back in a red shirt looking commanding in the United backline. United are never far from a storm but it has been a positive few days after defeating Burnley.

Ten Hag spoke of players needing to embrace the pressure of playing for United and they are still a bad defeat away from crisis, with Crystal Palace back here at the weekend. Yet some of the positives United can find include hungry wingers such as Garnacho looking to break into the team regularly.

Raphael Varane back from injury adds solidity, while Amrabat looks comfortable in his new surroundings. They have winnable games on the horizon and the chance to climb up the Premier League table after such an indifferent start to the season.

United are still a soap opera off the pitch, with no takeover close to completion and two of their most expensive players banished from the first-team squad, yet the players at his disposal at least look determined to get the club back on track.

Martial can look sulky when matches are not going his way but he even came close to cracking a smile when he thudded in the third goal. Another



Amrabat receives tactical instruction from manager Erik ten Hag. Agencies

player with something to prove after being questioned.

"Pressure is just part of life at Manchester United, for every single person involved with the club," wrote Ten Hag in his matchday programme notes, acknowledging the scrutiny he has been under for the last month. "The demands here are never easy because expectations are so high and everyone is always watching, but you do not wear this crest to have an easy life."

For Amrabat, the deadline signing, his start at United has been far from straightforward. After Sergio Reguilón became the latest injury casualty, the Morocco midfielder was deployed as a makeshift left-back, albeit one Ten Hag had used in that position while at Utrecht more than six years ago.

"He is a midfielder but previously he played as a full back a while ago. At the World Cup, he was one of the best holding midfielders but he is a player who will play where the manager needs him to play. He's a warrior. He'll fight for the badge, I'm sure," said Ten Hag.

Ten Hag rotated his squad, giving

Maguire a first start of the season. Since his error in Seville when United had crashed out of the Europa League, Maguire had only started one match and a rare start in the EFL Cup spoke to where the £85million signing stands in Ten Hag's pecking order.

While Maguire stayed at United despite a lack of guaranteed football, Dean Henderson had secured a move away from Old Trafford and his Palace debut came against his old employers. His time at United was not without controversy, criticising his treatment when he was not made No1, but his immediate chance to prove his former club wrong was over quickly.

He had surgery on a thigh problem last season, ruling him out for four months, and his bad luck with injuries continued as he felt a muscle strain as he kicked.

After getting replaced by Sam Johnstone, United were ahead two minutes later with the substitute goalkeeper not yet touching the ball.

United cut through the Palace defence after Diogo Dalot's underlap was spotted by Facundo Pellistri. As Palace defenders rushed backwards,

Dalot evaded them with a pull-back and Garnacho finished confidently. Fans had called his name at the weekend when he was an unused sub and this was the reason why.

The lead was doubled with a goal set up by another returning United player. Mount, coming back from a hamstring problem, fizzed over a corner that picked out the mismatch of Jeff Schlupp marking Casemiro. The Brazilian attacked the set-piece and angled a header into the far post.

Martial scored his first goal of the season 10 minutes into the second half to make certain of the win. Casemiro picked out the French forward with a cross to the far post, which he met first time with a half-volley that crashed into the side-netting.

Andre Onana has been error prone at the start of his United career but pulled off confidence-boosting saves to deny Jean-Philippe Mateta twice. Donny van de Beek also came on for his first appearance in nine months, with the United fans giving him a warm reception.

THE TELEGRAPH

Chelsea owners 'welcome' in dressing room, says under-fire Pochettino

LONDON

UNDER-FIRE Chelsea boss Mauricio Pochettino says the club's owners are welcome to visit the dressing room – as long as they leave the talking to him.

Chelsea co-owner Behdad Eghbali went into the Stamford Bridge dressing room on Sunday after a 1-0 defeat against Aston Villa extended their woeful start to the Premier League season.

Eghbali is not the only member of Chelsea's hierarchy to have entered the team's inner sanctum – co-owner Todd Boehly and co-sporting directors Paul Winstanley and Laurence Stewart have also paid visits.

With Pochettino under scrutiny following Chelsea's run of one win from their first six league games, Eghbali's appearance in the dressing room was interpreted as a sign the pressure is mounting on the Blues manager just weeks into his reign.

But the Argentine boss said he was happy to see Chelsea's powerbrokers sharing in the team's "suffering". "I like when the owners come – in all my career as a coach, at Espanyol then Southampton, Tottenham and Paris Saint-Germain also, before and after," Pochettino told reporters on Tuesday.

"It's good that the owners came to the dressing room. It's in the way that they approach the players that is the most important. If they are in a good way, I think they're very welcome."

Last season, Boehly reportedly told Chelsea's players their season was "embarrassing" during his dressing room speech after a home defeat against Brighton towards the end of a miserable campaign.

AFP

Aston Villa players complain sweaty Castore shirts are affecting performances

By Matt Law

ASTON Villa players have told club chiefs they are unhappy with this season's wet-look shirts, which they claim are weighing them down.

Head coach Unai Emery is thought to be aware of the issue, with Villa now working with sports manufacturer Castore to try to find a solution as quickly as possible.

Villa launched new home, away and third kits this season, but supporters have noticed the shirts quickly become wet through and cling to players during games due to perspiration.

Telegraph Sport understands that has prompted complaints from players, who believe it to be a performance issue and have told members of the Villa hierarchy that the shirts become uncomfortable and heavy.

The problem has been particularly obvious on the claret home shirts, which quickly turn much darker during games, but players have claimed the white away kit is just as bad.

Villa are two years into what was described as a multi-year deal with British sportswear manufacturer Castore and it remains to be seen whether or not the issue could affect that deal.

Newcastle United triggered an exit

clause to free themselves of a contract with Castore that had been due to run to 2027 so they can switch to Adidas at the end of this season.

One source close to a Villa player told Telegraph Sport: "The players are having to play in soaking wet t-shirts and it is a problem that needs to be solved. It cannot go on all season. The players look like they've jumped in a swimming pool after about 10 minutes."

Villa have started the season encouragingly, winning four of their opening six Premier League games, but Emery will be keen for the complaints of his players to be swiftly dealt with.

The issue will not impact replica shirts bought by fans, with Villa not facing the possibility of having to recall kits or issue replacements to the public.

Any solution would likely require Castore to produce a new run of shirts for the players that do a much better job of absorbing sweat and remaining lightweight.

Announcing what was described as a 'landmark' partnership with Castore in May 2022, Villa released a club statement that said: "Castore and Aston Villa are both aligned in terms of their

future goals which include; striving for excellence, having a clear strategic direction and adopting a challenger mentality - making the new partnership a perfect synergy."

Other than Villa and Newcastle, Castore have this season produced kits for Wolverhampton Wanderers, Rangers, Sevilla and Bayer Leverkusen among others.

Villa have announced the club will launch a new crest for a second successive campaign after concluding the round badge that features on this season's shirts 'has not had the impact which had been hoped'.

In an announcement on the club's website, Villa has revealed they will canvas the opinion of supporters ahead of selecting a permanent new-look crest ahead of the club's 150th anniversary next year.

Villa entertain Everton in the Carabao Cup on Wednesday night in front of what could be their lowest Villa Park crowd since their return to the Premier League.

The Midlands club have faced criticism from supporters for taking their first Carabao Cup game off season tickets and charging a minimum of £30 for an adult ticket.

THE TELEGRAPH

Gwiji by David Chikoko



SPORT

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Shime credits Twiga Stars players for hard-fought victory

By Guardian Correspondent

TANZANIA'S senior national women's football side 'Twiga Stars' head coach, Bakari Shime, credited his players with the way his side battled to come out winners against their Ivorian counterparts on Tuesday.

Twiga Stars progressed to the second round of the 2024 Women Africa Cup of Nations (WAFCON) Qualifiers after edging out Ivory Coast 4-2 on post-match penalties following a 2-2 aggregate score over two legs.

Two quick goals netted by midfielder Donisia Minja and striker Opah Clement put Tanzania 2-0 up against Ivory Coast immediately after the break in the rematch that took place in Dar es Salaam.

The two goals leveled the fixture aggregate after Ivory Coast's 2-0 first leg 2-0 thanks to Frédérique Akebie Abroguoa and Ines Ida Guehai's strikes at Stade Yamoussoukro last Friday.

The clash then went straight to the penalty shootouts to decide the aggregate winner and Twiga Stars stood tall to emerge the winners and proceed to the final round of qualification where they will meet Togo on November 27 and December 5 this year.

Togo had thumped Djibouti 7-0 away last Friday to put one foot in the second round ahead of the return leg and booked a place in the WAFCON with a 3-0 home win on Tuesday.

Twiga Stars goalkeeper Najjath Abbas was the heroine of the day. The JKT Queens shot-stopper saved two penalties to lead Tanzania to a 4-2 shootout victory. She guessed right to save penalties taken by Zote Kpaho and Bernadette Kakouan.

Esther Mabanza, Anastazia Katunzi, Donisia, and Opa were all clinical for Twiga Stars from the spot.

Eneka Kasonga was the only Twiga Stars player who faltered. Mariam Diakite and Ida Guehai Rebecca scored for Ivory Coast.

Speaking after the game, an elated Shime congratulated his players for sticking to instruction in a difficult game against a determined and talented Ivorian side featuring many Europe-based players.

The coach stated: "We had difficulty in the dressing room to bring the players back to the game and to believe that we still had a chance to do well. We were able to manage the game well and got two quick goals that surprised our opponents.

Shime disclosed: "However, after the two goals they regrouped and were more energized. They put us under pressure."

"We found ourselves in a difficult time to prevent them from scoring a goal and forcing the game into penalty shootouts," he pointed out.

He noted: "At the end of the day, we managed to score goals. I said yesterday that we can score against them and fail to qualify.

Tanzania's senior national women's football team 'Twiga Stars' players jubilate after garnering qualification for the 2024 Women's Africa Cup of Nations (WAFCON) with victory over Ivory Coast in the qualifiers rematch that took place at Azam Complex Stadium in Dar es Salaam on Tuesday. PHOTO: COURTESY OF TANZANIA FOOTBALL FEDERATION



Tanzania Football Federation (TFF) president, Wallace Karia.

Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda win bid to host 2027 AFCON finals

By Correspondent Michael Mwebi

THE 2027 African Cup of Nations (AFCON) tournament will be held in Tanzania, Kenya, and Uganda, with a united bid from East Africa winning the right to host the continent's biggest football event.

The Confederation of African Football, CAF Executive Committee decided on Wednesday.

Patrice Motsepe, CAF president, announced the bid, dubbed 'East Africa Pamoja Bid', as the winner of the rights to host the premier African football bonanza after the CAF Executive Committee's meeting in Cairo, Egypt.

Motsepe said: "The future of African football has never been brighter... shortly, an African nation will win the World Cup. The 2027 edition is going to be beautiful."

"The commitment and drive made by the three presidents of the countries shows how

eager the region is to host this event," the CAF president disclosed.

The East African bid was selected over competing bids from Botswana and Senegal in a vote among some 22 CAF Executive Committee members.

It will be the first time three countries have joined to host the AFCON finals – previously, Gabon and Equatorial Guinea, Nigeria and Ghana had jointly hosted the tournament.

This means that Tanzania, Kenya, and Uganda have automatically qualified for the AFCON 2027 finals as the hosts.

The last time the African Cup of Nations finals were staged in East African regions was 53 years ago when Sudan hosted the tournament.

In 1996, Kenya lost a golden opportunity to welcome home the *creme de la creme* of African football due to an inability to fulfill requirements set forth by the continental football governing body, forcing the tournament to be

moved to South Africa.

Hosting the expanded 24-team tournament requires at least six stadiums and six training pitches.

Depending on the hosting agreement and game allocation, the three countries will each need at least two standard stadiums and two training pitches.

Currently, only Tanzania's Benjamin Mkapa Stadium is approved to host CAF elite tournament games though it was also recently found to be subpar for the inaugural African Football League. One more stadium will have to be upgraded to approved standards.

Kenya is currently renovating its main stadium, Kasarani. Uganda is also doing the same to Nambule Stadium and was forced to host its national team's 2024 AFCON Qualifiers' duels in Egypt and Cameroon as a result.

The tally was 134 votes for the united bid and 65 votes for Morocco.

Power Dynamos duo set to miss CAF Champions League clash

By Correspondent Michael Mwebi

ZAMBIA'S Power Dynamos goalkeeper Lawrence Mulenga will miss Sunday's CAF Champions League Second Preliminary Round's second-leg encounter against Tanzania's Simba SC.

Mulenga was stretched out of Power Dynamos' 2-2 draw at home to Zesco United in a Zambian Super League game played on Sunday.

He suffered a concussion after colliding with an opponent and was rushed to hospital for treatment.

The Zambian international is out of hospital and recovering steadily but will only return to training next week thus ruled out of the crucial clash

against Simba SC which will take place in Dar es Salaam.

The CAF Champions League's Zambia representatives will also be missing the services of another key player in central defender, Dominic Chanda, who was sent off in the first leg that ended in a 2-2 stalemate in Ndola.

Even without the duo's services, the Zambian Super League champions can still bank on Andy Boyeli's scoring prowess, which saw him net 18 league goals last season, and former Orlando Pirates striker Austin Muwovo.

Simba SC will host Power Dynamos at Azam Complex Stadium as they bid to make it to the CAF Champions League Group Stage for the fourth time in the

last five years.

Roberto Oliveira 'Robertinho', Simba SC head coach and his men need just a scoreless draw to qualify for the lucrative Group Stage of the premier continental showpiece.

Like his opposite charge, Robertinho will also miss the service of an important player- central defender Henock Inonga.

The highly rated Congolese international picked up an injury in Simba SC's 3-0 victory over Coastal Union in a 2023/24 NBC Premier League tie that took place last week.

Simba SC's team doctor Edwin Kagabo confirmed Inonga is ruled out for at least one more week as the center-back

continues with his recovery.

"As it is, indications are that his healing will be quick. We are giving him proper dressings and other treatment including antibiotics and painkillers. Perhaps, God willing, within a week and a half we can see him return to our training ground," Kagabo said.

In a related development concerning the decider, Simba SC Media and Communication Manager, Ahmed Ally, confirmed Power Dynamos are expected to arrive in Tanzania this afternoon.

Ally stated: "Power Dynamos are expected to arrive in the country on Thursday around noon by ATCL airline. The referees are expected to arrive in Tanzania on September 30."

Flexibles by David Chikoko

