



'Wastewater flow into Lake Victoria risks its ecosystem'

By Guardian Reporter, Dodoma

THE National Assembly has expressed grave concern about the ongoing discharge of wastewater and industrial waste into Lake Victoria, citing its detrimental effects on the region's ecosystem.

Jackson Kiswaga (Kalenga), chairman of the Water and Environment standing committee of the National Assembly, warned that the pollution has led to a significant decline in fish stocks.

He also cited the spread of invasive species, the degradation of vital aquatic ecosystems and a worsening of water quality, when presenting the committee's annual report.

Despite ongoing efforts by the Vice President's Office the discharge of wastewater continues in several areas, notably in Milongo River, a major tributary of the lake, he stated.

Lake Victoria is under severe threat from unsustainable human activities including illegal fishing, wetland destruction, unregulated agriculture and non-sustainable mining practices, he explained.

Local authorities for areas in the vicinity of the lake need to implement prevailing waste management strategies in a strict manner and ensure full compliance with the Environmental Management Act, the report underlined.

VPO needs to take immediate action to guarantee sustainable wastewater management for Milongo River in Mwanza, he said, similarly citing environmental disasters in Hanang, Kibiti and Rufiji.

There is a need for legislation, regulations and guidelines to create a fund for environmental protection and climate change adaptation, the committee noted.

The fund would support the implementation of environmental management strategies, it said, also directing the government to fast-track the acquisition of large tracts of land, away from populated areas, for waste disposal in Dar es Salaam and surrounding regions.

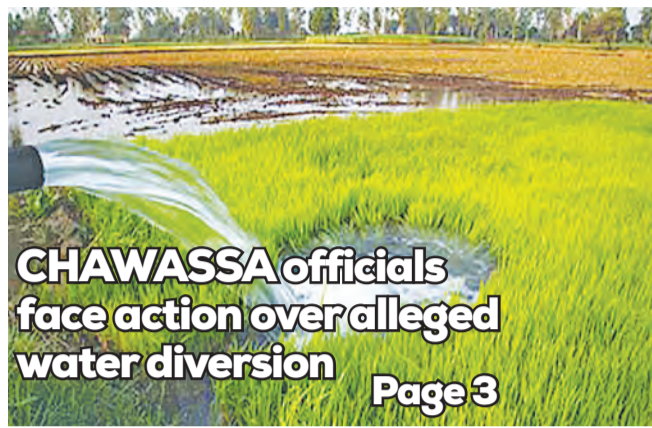
This exercise should be in accordance with urban planning regulations, he said, demanding that environmental protection and climate change adaptation is prioritised in the Vision 2050.

The Water ministry ought to fulfil its commitment to drill five boreholes in districts and constituencies across the country as part of government efforts to improve access to clean water for all.

Some of the boreholes being drilled have failed to yield water, despite significant investments he said, citing losses and undermining the national goal of improving access to clean water.

The report raised the need for the government to collaborate with research institutions, including universities and the Tanzania Petroleum Development Corporation

TURN TO Page 2



CHAWASSA officials face action over alleged water diversion Page 3



'Streamline compensation for human-wildlife conflict victims' Page 4



TFRA, NEMC address fertiliser manufacturers' challenges Page 5

World watching as SADC, EAC summit sits on DRC

STORY ON PAGE 2



Zanzibar President Dr Hussein Ali Mwinyi signs a condolence book at Shia Ismaili Jamaat Khana at Hurumzi in Unguja Urban District yesterday in mourning Tuesday's death in Portugal of Prince Karim Al-Husseini Aga Khan (88), popularly known as the Aga Khan IV, the 49th spiritual leader of world's Shia Ismaili community. Left is the Head of the Shia Ismaili Jamaat in Zanzibar, Altaf Jiwan. Photo: Zanzibar State House

DRC crisis: UN chief to attend AU meet in Addis

By Guardian Reporter and

Agencies

UNITED Nations secretary-general Antonio Guterres is expected to attend an African Union peace and security summit, where discussions will focus on restoring peace and stability in the Great Lakes region.

Addressing the media in Beirut yesterday ahead of crucial summits of the East African Community (EAC), and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) today, followed by convening the AU or-

gan on the matter, the UN chief called for immediate cessation of hostilities.

Having stressed that there is no military solution to the ongoing conflict, he is expected to call on African leaders to intensify efforts toward diplomacy and conflict resolution to prevent further loss of life and displacement.

The ongoing crisis has drawn widespread international concern, and the UN chief's call serves as a reminder of the persistent need for a unified and coordinated approach to address the root causes of the conflict.

This must be done to bring an end to the suffering of the people in the DRC, he emphasised, in a special appeal for peace in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

He warned of the worsening humanitarian crisis in Goma, where more than one thousands have been killed and hundreds of thousands displaced amid escalating violence.

Despite a unilateral ceasefire declaration by Rwanda-backed rebels, the Congolese government has dismissed it as "false communication," citing continued fighting in adjacent zones.

The UN chief executive strongly condemned widespread human rights violations, including sexual violence, forced recruitment of children, alongside deliberate attacks on humanitarian workers and their missions.

The situation in eastern DRC remains deeply precarious, with the violence, compounded by years of instability, threatening to undermine efforts towards peace and security in the region, he stated. There is urgent need for regional cooperation and diplomatic intervention to end the suffering of the Congolese people, he added.

SPORTS Page 20



Fadlu Davids defends Chasambi after costly mistake in 1-1 draw

Page 18



Yanga aim to maintain lead under new coach Miloud Hamdi



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Minister: Warehouse receipts format has clean bill of health

By Guardian Correspondent,

Dodoma

THE warehouse receipt system has played a pivotal role in enhancing the formalisation of agricultural trade across the country, the government has stated.

Dr Selemani Jafu, the Industry and Trade minister, made this assertion at a press conference here yesterday on the

successful conclusion of the agricultural trading season for 2024/25 and preparations for the upcoming 2025/26 season.

The system has enhanced price transparency, boosted price competition and provided farmers with secure markets for their produce, he stated, noting that in the outgoing season, 14 agricultural products were collected and sold through the system.

These include tea, beans, coffee, cocoa, cashew nuts, maize, rice, cassava, soybeans, sunflower and millet, where for the first time both production and collection saw a remarkable increase, he elaborated.

A total of 810,230,588 kilogrammes were collected, marking an over 80 percent rise compared to the 2023/24 season, with 451,192,592 kilogrammes

collected, he said.

This increase was not only evident in the volume of crops but also in the financial returns for farmers, he said, explaining that as a result of higher volumes and improved market prices, farmers received 2.9trn/-, more than double the 1.2trn/- earned in the previous season.

"The warehouse receipt system has proven highly beneficial to our farmers by ensur-

ing they receive fair prices for their produce in a timely manner, without the interference of unreliable middlemen. Moreover, this formalisation has bolstered the confidence of buyers from outside Tanzania," he emphasised.

The government works with various stakeholders to improve the system, he said, citing the key stakeholders as including the Warehouse Receipts Regulatory Board

(WRRB), the Tanzania Commodity Exchange (TMX), Regional Administration and Local Governments (PO-RALG), the private sector, financial institutions and the Tanzania Trade Authority (TTA).

"We have seen a significant increase in the volume of crops sold through this system, more registered warehouses and a greater number of farmers participating in selling their produce via official channels," he said.

"This is further proof that the warehouse receipt system remains a powerful tool to ensure farmers benefit appropriately from their efforts," he stressed, pointing out that local authorities involved in the system had also benefited from increased values.

"Tax revenue rose from 36bn/- in the 2023/24 season to 87bn/- in this now ending season," he added.

Why Trump now on warpath in Somalia

Washington, DC

Finding and fighting the militants who have become the beating heart of the Islamic State (IS) group in Africa can be tough work as they hide deep in the mountains of north-eastern Somalia.

But in typical Donald Trump style, after the new US president ordered an airstrike on the area last weekend, he posted on social media: "WE WILL FIND YOU, AND WE WILL KILL YOU!"

Trump said the hit, less than two weeks into his term, had targeted a senior IS attack planner and other militants in Somalia's semi-autonomous region of Puntland and had "destroyed the caves they live in, and killed many terrorists without, in any way, harming civilians".

He boasted that he had succeeded where former US President Joe Biden had failed.

"Biden and his cronies wouldn't act quickly enough to get the job done. I did!"

The fact that Somalia was the target of America's first major military operation under the new administration surprised many in the country who feared the US was planning to abandon them.

In his first term, Trump withdrew about 700 American troops, a decision reversed by his successor.

The \$600,000 (£492,000) a year deal the Somalia government recently signed with top Washington lobbying firm, the BGR Group, is an indication of how worried it is.

Under Biden, US troops in Somalia were carrying out

special operations, training an elite Somali force and conducting regular airstrikes.

A day before the airstrike, the Washington Post published an interview with Somali President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud in which he pleaded for the US "not to pull out the American advisers and consultants who are supporting the training of our special forces".

A post on X from his office after the strike also had a touch of desperation about it, acknowledging "the unwavering support of the United States in the fight against international terrorism" and welcoming "the continued commitment under the decisive leadership of President Donald Trump".

But airstrikes are different from troops on the ground and Trump did not stop aerial bombardments in his first term. In fact, he increased them to nearly 400.

"The strike does not mean that the US government is going to step up its military engagement in Somalia," says Matt Bryden, the strategic adviser of Nairobi-based Sahan Research.

"Several American officials expected to assume leadership positions on African affairs no longer perceive Somalia's federal government to be a credible partner and are deeply critical of the high levels of security assistance provided in recent years to very little appreciable effect."

Puntland's counter-terrorism approach is different from that of the national Somali government, with which it cut ties in March last year.



Prime Minister Kassim Majaliwa shares ideas with Attorney General Hamza Johari (L) in the course of one of the sessions held in the National Assembly in Dodoma city yesterday. Photo: PMO

'Wastewater flow into Lake Victoria risks its ecosystem'

FROM PAGE 1

(TPDC), to enhance underground water exploration.

The partnership should focus on increasing the capacity of local experts and employing modern technologies in borehole drilling, it said.

Swift action is needed to

ensure that five boreholes are drilled in each constituency, he said, appealing for the formation of a national committee to oversee water reservoir excavation projects.

This will help to ensure that water needs for various social and economic activities are met, it said, urging the gov-

ernment to expedite the drafting of legislation to manage the blue economy in line with the policy earlier slated to take effect in the course of 2024.

The committee strongly pleaded for the removal of value added tax (VAT) on essential goods and services used in water projects across

the country, "in recognizing the vital role of water services in economic development."

There is also a need for collaborative efforts by ministries to address informal settlements, ensuring that urban planning regulations are followed to enable the development of necessary infrastruc-

ture, including clean water and sewage systems, the MP noted.

Collaborative efforts be sought on water loss, to raise awareness about the importance of safeguarding water infrastructure, particularly among pastoralist communities, he added.



Judge Jacobs Mwambelele (3rd-R), Chairman of the Independent National Electoral Commission, has a first-hand account in Tanga city yesterday of progress in two-day practical training for personnel to be involved in the February 13 to 19 upgrading of the national Permanent Voters' Register at constituency level. Photo courtesy of INEC

World watching as SADC, EAC summit sits on DRC

By Guardian Reporter

HEADS of State of the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) and the East African Community (EAC) are today meeting in Dar es Salaam to address the worsening security situation in the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

A statement by the Foreign Affairs and East African Cooperation ministry said yesterday that the summit will further discuss and come up with

resolutions to the issue as the DRC is a member of both the SADC and the EAC.

Rwanda is an EAC member, with SADC and the EAC making efforts at separate mediation initiatives styled as the Luanda and the Nairobi processes respectively.

The meeting was preceded by ministers who commenced their conference yesterday to lay the framework for commonly agreed areas on addressing the deepening humanitarian crisis and growing inse-

curity in the region.

The main problem is violence by hundreds of armed rebel groups even as the main focus is on the Rwanda-backed M23 well-equipped franchise, observers noted.

President Emmerson Mnangagwa of Zimbabwe, who is also current SADC chairman, and EAC chairman President William Ruto of Kenya, will spearhead the deliberations.

Protagonists DRC President Felix Tshisekedi and Rwandan President Paul Kagame told regional and

international media of having agreed to participate in the talks.

A range of non-state actors will be on hand to provide a broader perspective on resolving the crisis, with troop-contributing countries to the SADC regional security efforts – South Africa, Tanzania and Malawi – expected to be closely involved in discussions.

Eastern DRC has been a battleground for decades with the M23 rebel group, essentially backed by Rwanda, escalating its

takeover of small towns along with the strategic city of Goma, the capital of North Kivu that is closest to the Rwanda border.

The militia is advancing towards South Kivu province, threatening the city of Bukavu where it also finds numerous supporters owing to the ethnopolitical mix of the region, analysts affirm.

The conflict has left a trail of death, destruction and a worsening humanitarian crisis. Multiple armed groups, including M23, are vying for control

of the region's vast mineral wealth, fueling persistent instability.

The SADC-EAC summit is expected to chart a roadmap for peace, with both blocs leveraging their collective influence and resources to de-escalate tensions and restore stability in the region.

With the world's attention on Dar es Salaam, the summit's outcome will be critical in determining the path forward for the DRC and the stability of the broader region, observers noted.

Trump set to lower USAID workers to beneath 300

WASHINGTON

THE United States Agency for International Development (USAID) is set to reduce its workforce significantly, with staffing levels expected to fall from over 10,000 to around 290, US media reported on Thursday.

The decision, made by President Donald Trump administration, was detailed by the New York Times, which cited sources familiar with the plans.

The agency, which provides substantial humanitarian assistance worldwide, will face a dramatic downsizing starting this weekend.

According to National Public Radio (NPR), US Secretary of State Marco Rubio was presented with a list of approximately 600 employees considered essential, but fewer than 300 were ultimately exempted from the cuts.

This move follows President Donald Trump's decision to freeze USAID's funding in January pending an internal review, affecting numerous global initiatives. USAID, one of the largest aid agencies in the world, is responsible for distributing US humanitarian aid to developing nations and countries in crisis. Trump has previously described the agency as being run by "radical lunatics" obstructing his "America First" foreign policy.

This week, the US government announced that a large portion of its employees, including those at USAID, would be placed on leave starting Friday night. Only those in critical positions will remain at work, according to a statement from the agency.

USAID, with a workforce of around 10,000 employees, operates predominantly outside the US, with two-thirds of its personnel working abroad. In 2024, the agency managed approximately \$50 billion in development aid.

Following the cuts, the remaining staff will focus on health and humanitarian efforts, the New York Times reports.

MNH Mloganzila pleads with Tanzanians to donate kidneys

By Correspondent James Kandoya

MUHIMBILI National Hospital (MNH) - Mloganzila has called on the public to consider volunteering as kidney donors to help people in need of life-saving transplants.

The hospital's Deputy Executive Director, Dr Julieth Magandi, made the appeal in Dar es Salaam yesterday during a ceremony to discharge five patients who successfully underwent kidney transplants using hand-assisted laparoscopic donor nephrectomy—a minimally invasive procedure. Dr Magandi said the latest discharges bring the total number of kidney transplants at Mloganzila to 15 while at MNH Upanga, the number has reached 100.

She highlighted that the procedures were conducted by local doctors in collaboration with experts from South Korea.

She further noted that the hospital attends between 90 and 100 dialysis patients daily, underscoring the urgent need for transplants.

Currently, at least 60 patients are on the waiting list, hoping to find compatible donors.

Dr Magandi emphasized the vital role of family members in kidney donation, as compatibility within relatives significantly increases the chances of a successful transplant.

"Many patients remain on dialysis while waiting for a kidney transplant, but the shortage of donors is a major challenge. We call on the family members to step forward, as their donation can dramatically improve their loved one's

quality of life," she said.

She also cited World Health Organisation (WHO) statistics, which indicate that 10 percent of the global population suffers from kidney failure. At Mloganzila alone, between 20 and 30 patients face this condition.

Dr Emmaculate Goima, a nephrologist at MNH Mloganzila, reassured the public that donating a kidney is a safe procedure for healthy individuals, who can continue living a normal life with just one kidney.

Given the challenges faced by patients waiting for transplants, health stakeholders are currently drafting a swapping policy to increase donor availability.

"Kidney swapping is crucial, as it allows individuals with incompatible donors to exchange with another pair, expanding the donor pool and improving transplant success rates—especially in cases of blood type or tissue incompatibility," she explained.

She further assured that kidney donors can resume work within three months after surgery with no long-term health risks.

Dr Khamis Isaka, also a neurologist at the facility, highlighted the advantages of hand-assisted laparoscopic donor nephrectomy, stating that the technique allows for a shorter hospital stay and faster recovery compared to traditional methods. One of the kidney recipients, Mariam Ernest, resident of Geita Region, expressed her heartfelt appreciation for the hospital's exceptional care and expertise.



Implementation of Dar es Salaam's Bus Rapid Transit infrastructure development project in progress at the New Postal Office section in the heart of the city yesterday. Photo: Correspondent Jumanne Juma

Official, ex-employee accused of diverting water to their rice farms

By Guardian Correspondent, Chato

ONE official of Chato Water Supply and Sanitation Authority (CHAWASSA) and former senior employee of entity are alleged to have illegally diverted water from the town's supply to irrigate their personal rice farms.

Despite ongoing complaints from local residents who have been without a reliable water supply for nearly two years as well as those who receive water on an unclear rationing system, it has now been revealed that large quantities of water is being diverted to farms owned by influential figures.

The reporter visited the site where the illegal diversion take place at Mtakuja B hamlet in Muunganowila Ward.

Residents, including Leonard Shilengwa, reported that the individuals have been using water without even installing proper meters to measure consumption.

John Daud also claimed that the illegal practice has been going on for three consecutive farming seasons.

He alleged that CHAWASSA employees (whose names are being withheld) have been complicit in the diversion, profiting personally from the unlawful use of public resources.

One individual is said to have irrigated

almost 10 acres of rice farmland, while another used 5 acres.

Paulo Manyilizu, Kahumo Village Chairman expressed his dismay at the actions of the CHAWASSA officials, criticising their lack of patriotism.

He pointed out that the water shortage is also affecting local health services, such as the Nyabilezi Health Centre, the nearby Geita Airport, and the residents of Buzirayombo, all of whom rely on the same water supply.

"This pipeline is supposed to serve the airport, the Nyabilezi Health Centre, and the people of Buzirayombo. All the areas have been struggling with a severe water

shortage. Even after discovering this water theft, I contacted the health workers at Nyabilezi, and they confirmed there is no water at the health centre. All the water has been directed to these farms," Manyilizu said. In addition, 11 users in the village have paid 120,000/- each since 2022 to have water connected to their homes.

Despite a visit by the Minister for Water last year, who instructed that the community be supplied with water, no action has been taken, and residents are continually told that the issue is "being addressed".

Charles Kapembe, the Ward Councillor for Muungano, commented that the sabotage of water infrastructure is likely the

main reason for lack of clean water in the area.

He expressed concern that the situation has led to significant health problems, as people are forced to spend large sums treating waterborne diseases.

"As you can see, there is no metering on this water. All of it is being used to irrigate private farms, benefiting a few people for their own gain. This is completely unacceptable, and legal action must be taken," he said.

In response to the accusations, Isack Mgeni, Director of CHAWASSA, admitted that there has been instances of water theft by some of the authority's officials.



It's watermelons aplenty as captured at Makole market in Dodoma Urban District earlier this week, with the going retail price ranging between 2,000/- and 5,000/- apiece – largely depending on size. Photo: Correspondent Peter Mkwavila

Truck owners decry vehicle seizures, poor infrastructure

By Guardian Reporter

SMALL Truck Owners Association of Tanzania (TAMSTOA) has urged the government to address the ongoing challenges faced by the industry, including truck seizures and inadequate road infrastructure.

In a meeting held in Dar es Salaam mid-week, TAMSTOA Chairman Shaban Chuki emphasized the need for urgent solutions to improve conditions for truck owners, particularly with regard to the difficulties faced in areas such as Temeke and Ubungo in Dar es Salaam.

He highlighted that the roads leading to the port remain problematic, and called for even basic infrastructure such as gravel roads, to alleviate congestion and ease transport for them.

"While the number of trucks on the roads has increased, the infrastructure has not kept pace, leading to persistent challenges for us as truck owners. We need to work together to find proper solutions that will benefit both the sector and the country's economy," he said.

Chuki also addressed the issue of truck seizures, especially in districts such as Temeke and Ubungo, where trucks transporting goods from the Dar es Salaam port face regular seizures.

He urged local leaders to recognize that the growing number of trucks is an opportunity for economic growth, not a burden. Despite their contribution to the national

economy, he said, truck owners feel undervalued.

"Temeke should understand that an increase in trucks is an opportunity for economic growth and not a nuisance," he added. "The trucks contribute to the country's GDP by supporting infrastructure development, but we are not adequately supported in return."

He also called for the establishment of designated truck parking areas and proper routes to ensure smoother operations. He expressed concern over the arbitrary seizures of trucks, which he said has led to the emergence of opportunistic individuals seeking bribes from drivers.

TAMSTOA also requested the government to designate specific areas for truck parking and has urged the Tanzania Revenue Authority (TRA) to revisit their approach to transporters.

He also called for an end to the truck seizures at Mikumi in Morogoro Region, a practice he says has created a breeding ground for corruption.

"Although we have made some progress in addressing truck seizures in Temeke and Ubungo, the problem is not yet resolved. We urge the government to continue working on these issues," he said.

In addition, the association is pushing for the government to expedite the expansion of key roads such as the Morogoro-Chalinze route and the Mbozi-Tunduma road to ease transportation across the country.

By Guardian Reporter, Dodoma

THE National Assembly has resolved that the responsibility of collecting land taxes should be reinstated to the Ministry of Lands, Housing and Human Settlements Development.

The decision comes after councils failed to efficiently carry out the task.

Presenting a report in the National Assembly yesterday, Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee on Land, Natural Resources and Tourism, Timotheo Mnzava, explained that the government had initially transferred the responsibility of collecting land tax to local government authorities to improve efficiency of

revenue collection.

However, the move has led to negative outcomes, especially in terms of monitoring and ensuring effective collection.

Dodoma City has been singled out as one of the areas facing the highest number of land disputes, primarily due to the presence of untrustworthy and non-compliant officials in the land sector.

Mnzava pointed out that the ministry lacks sufficient funding for this task, while the local councils entrusted have failed to carry out their duties adequately.

He further recommended that the ministry be allocated sufficient funds to carry out this responsibility and that it retains 20 percent of the collected revenue

Restore land tax collection role to ministry, gvt urged

to improve operational costs.

"The Ministry of Lands, Housing and Human Settlements Development should ensure that its capacity to collect revenues is strengthened to meet the targets for the 2024/25 fiscal year," he said. Furthermore, the parliament has directed the ministry, in collaboration with the President's Office (Regional Administration and Local Government) to ensure that councils repay 22.5bn/., which they had borrowed for the national land surveying, planning, and titling project.

It was revealed that 70 percent

of councils and institutions have failed to repay the funds since 2018.

On the issue of the land planning, surveying and titled project, Mnzava explained that the failure of local councils and institutions to repay their loans had hindered the government's goal of completing land planning and titling across the country.

The parliament has also called on the Ministry of Lands, Housing and Human Settlements Development to carry out thorough assessments of all loan applications from local councils under

this programme, ensuring that they have the capacity to repay the funds. In addition, the parliament urged the ministry to protect the sustainability of the Land Development Revolving Fund, which serves as a reliable source of funding for land planning, surveying, and titling activities.

Addressing the issue of undeveloped land held by investors, Mnzava revealed that citizens living near large-scale investment areas often face land shortages, as the lands remain undeveloped, in violation of the law.

The situation contributes to

land disputes, resulting in damage, injuries and destruction of infrastructure between investors and local communities.

He said the Parliament has resolved that the government should conduct an assessment of all large-scale landowners across the country to identify undeveloped plots and take appropriate legal action where necessary.

In regard to land disputes in Dodoma, Mnzava urged the government to ensure that all land transactions in the city are processed through the e-land system, which is already opera-

tional. Additionally, he called for an evaluation of the services provided by staff in the Land Office in Dodoma, with disciplinary measures to be taken against any untrustworthy employees.

Regarding the amendment of the National Land Policy of 1995 (2023 version), which highlighted the lack of land use planning in border areas, Mnzava stressed that the situation deprives citizens in the areas of the benefits available in the land sector.

"Parliament has resolved that the government should develop land use plan for border areas, ensuring national security is considered, to bring prosperity to citizens in the areas through the land sector," he said.



Akili Platform Tanzania director Roghat Robert (L) shares a light moment with pupils of Tabora municipality's Isike Primary School earlier this week as he had a word with them on gender-based violence and mental health. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

Govt urged to streamline compensation process for individuals affected by HWC

By Guardian Reporter, Dodoma

THE National Assembly has urged the government to streamline compensation process for individuals affected by human-wildlife conflicts.

Presenting the annual report of the Parliamentary Committee on Lands, Natural Resources and Tourism yesterday, the committee's Chairman Timotheo Mnzava explained that the government had made the decision to provide compensation to communities affected by wildlife conflicts.

However, he noted that compensation process has been slow,

exacerbating the hardships faced by affected citizens, including disabilities, property damage, and loss of lives.

Mnzava also revealed that some private investors who acquired government-owned hotels and lodges had violated the terms of the privatisation agreements. This has led to the establishments failing to operate in line with the privatisation contracts, undermining the intended benefits.

"The committee has resolved that the government prepares a report on the status of discussions from the Attorney General regarding the process of returning the

hotels and lodges to be under the government control and submit the report to the Speaker of the National Parliament by March 10, 2025," Mnzava said.

He also requested that Parliament direct the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism, in collaboration with the Treasury Registrar's Office, to conduct an evaluation and monitoring of all privatised hotels and lodges across the country. A report of their findings should be submitted to the Speaker of Parliament by March 10, 2025. On the matter of the presidential museums, Mnzava confirmed that the project is currently

in the initial design stage, with construction expected to begin within the 2024/25 fiscal year.

On the National Housing Corporation (NHC), Mnzava pointed out that the corporation has failed to complete certain strategic projects, contrary to the goal of finalising them by 2025.

He also noted concerns that NHC constructs high-cost housing, which undermines the affordability and intended benefits of the projects. "The situation has led to inflated project costs, reducing the overall benefits for the corporation and its stakeholders," he said.

He said the parliament has re-

CAG commends swift progress at Msalato international airport

By Guardian Correspondent

THE Controller and Auditor General (CAG) Charles Kichere has commended the swift progress of the Msalato International Airport which occupies 4,500 hectares.

Kichere made his remarks early this week during a visit to Dodoma to assess the ongoing construction of the airport.

Accompanied by officials from the CAG's office, Kichere praised Mohamed Besta, executive director of the Tanzania National Roads Agency (TANROADS), as well as the contractors working on the project.

He pointed out that while much of his time is spent reviewing project reports in the office, it is essential to visit the site in person to fully appreciate the significant developments being undertaken by the government under President Samia Suluhu Hassan.

"In our audit reports, we read about these projects, but it is important to see firsthand what is happening on the ground. Today, we have seen the tremendous progress that has been made," CAG Kichere said.

The CAG also encouraged the contractors to work around the clock to ensure the timely completion of the project. He urged local residents not to encroach on the airport area, as the airport serves as an important symbol for both Dodoma and Tanzania as a whole.

"The public views this airport as a key national investment," said engineer Besta, adding that the construction pace would continue to ensure the project is completed on time.

Eng. Kendrick Chawe, project supervisor said the airport's facilities will be technologically advanced and capable of handling 17 aircraft simultaneously. "There is ample parking space available, meaning we can accommodate 17 aircraft," he said.

The Msalato international airport is set to become a major transportation hub for air travel in Tanzania, East Africa, and beyond. Its completion set to drive social and economic growth, while enhancing Tanzania's international rankings.



Ridhiwani Kikwete (2nd-R), Minister of State in the Prime Minister's Office (Labour, Employment and Youth), shares a light moment with Ushetu constituency legislator Emmanuel Cherehani (R) and Special Seats legislator Janejery James at National Assembly grounds in Dodoma city yesterday. Photo: Correspondent Ibrahim Joseph

AfDB commits \$2.5 billion to infrastructure development in Tanzania

By Guardian Reporter

THE African Development Bank (AfDB) has committed US\$2.5 billion to the development of priority infrastructure projects in Tanzania.

Eng. Mumina Wa-Kyendo, the chief transport engineer at the AfDB Tanzania Country Office based in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania disclosed that the funding is for priority infrastructure projects, with more than 70 percent of the funds being allocated to transport infrastructure including roads, railways and airports.

Eng. Wa-Kyendo said that the projects benefit from the funds include

the Tanzanian stretch of the multi-national Tanzania/Kenya 400-km Bagamoyo - Pangani - Tanga - Horohoro/Lunga Lungu - Mombasa - Malindi (Kenya) road that is currently under construction in both countries and which forms part of the Coastal Transport Corridor of East Africa that stretches from Lamu in Kenya to Mtwara in Tanzania.

He further disclosed that the bank had set aside \$100 million for the Tanzanian stretch of the multinational road, which after completion is expected to ease the movement of people and goods along the East African coast by cutting the travel

distance between Dar es Salaam and Tanga by about 90km, translating to a time saving of over one hour. It will also mean that travellers will avoid the central corridor and instead access Tanga via Bagamoyo and Pangani towns.

"Other priority projects being implemented through AfDB funding include the Nyakanazi - Kabingo - Kasulu - Kumnazi road in western Tanzania, Mawala - Masasi road in southern Tanzania, Tabora - Kigoma - Uvinza railway that will go all the way up to Musongati in Burundi, and the Dodoma (Msalato) International Airport in Dodoma," Eng. Wa-

Kyendo said. Eng. Wa-Kyendo was speaking in Tanga at the end of a two-day inspection and supervision mission of the Bagamoyo-Pangani-Tanga stretch by a multi-level team of experts from the East African Community (EAC) Secretariat, Ministry of Works and Transport from Tanzania, Ministry of Roads and Infrastructure from Kenya, Tanzania National Roads Agency (TANROADS), Kenya National Highways Authority (KENHA), the Northern Corridor Transit and Transport Coordination Authority (NCTTCA) and Central Corridor Transit Transport Facilitation Agency (CCTTFA).

The inspection team was led by Eng. Robert Achieng, the Director of Infrastructure at the EAC Secretariat, the Tanzanian team was led by Eng. Japherson Nnko, the Director of Projects at TANROADS, and the Kenyan delegation by Eng. Kimeli Kipchumba, the Roads Secretary at the Ministry of Roads and Transport.

The AfDB official said that the bank's funding was conditional upon the efficient implementation of projects, which is key to unlocking additional funding.

Eng. Wa-Kyendo said that the bank takes seriously the development of transport infrastructure which is a

key facilitator to trade and integration of countries, even as he called for closer cooperation and sharing of best practices between the Northern and Central Corridor transit and transport coordination authorities.

He singled out the Arusha-Namanga-Athi River and Arusha - Holili/Taveta - Voi roads as examples of projects that were properly implemented (within time and budget).

"We need to have a region where transport works, put in place roads and railways of the best standards. This is because national and supra-national interests sometimes conflict," he said.

WHO delivers consignment of medicines, supplies to Liberia

MONROVIA

IN a significant boost to Liberia's healthcare system, the World Health Organisation (WHO) has delivered a consignment of essential medicines, supplies and one electroencephalography (EEG) machine and accessories to the Ministry of Health.

The contribution will strengthen critical services, including maternal and newborn care, blood safety, laboratory confirmatory testing services and mental health.

Speaking during the handover ceremony Dr Clement Peter, WHO Representative in Liberia said: "WHO is committed to strengthening Liberia's capacity to tackle critical health challenges."

He said: "We hope that the vital supplies, medicines and equipment will bring added value to the people we serve, impacting lives and improving quality of healthcare."

Liberia faces ongoing health challenges, including high maternal and newborn mortality rates. Maternal deaths are estimated at 742 per 100 000 live births, while newborn deaths stand at 37 per 1000 live births.

Postpartum hemorrhage remains a leading cause of maternal mortality, highlighting the urgent need for improved access to safe blood and blood products. WHO's donation addresses this need directly, including blood storage equipment and transfusion supplies. The resources will significantly increase access to safe blood for about 1.5 million people across three counties: Bong, Margibi, and Nimba.

Recognising the importance of community-based care, the consignment also includes supplies and medicines to bolster home-based maternal and newborn care in Rivercess and Sinoe counties, benefiting approximately 300 000 individuals.

In August 2024, Liberia declared drugs and substance use disorders (SUD) a public health emergency, demanding immediate action. To support mental healthcare, WHO delivered vital supplies and medicines to assist 1500 at-risk youth and EEG machine to support accurate and timely diagnosis of psychiatric and neuropsychiatric disorders.

Receiving the consignment, Dr Catherine Cooper, the chief medical officer stated: "On behalf of the minister and the people of Liberia, we want to express our gratitude to WHO for your continuous support to the health sector."



Nipasha newspaper journalist Tobias Mwanakatwe (L) receives an award from the Minister of State in the President's Office (Regional Administration and Local Government), Mohamed Mchengerwa, in Singida municipality on Thursday for winning a contest involving the writing of articles on education. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

TFRA, NEMC discuss challenges faced by fertiliser manufacturers

By Guardian Reporter

OFFICIALS from the Tanzania Fertiliser Regulatory Authority (TFRA) and the National Environment Management Council (NEMC) have met to address the challenges faced by fertiliser manufacturers in the country.

Held in Dar es Salaam on Thursday, the meeting was also attended by representatives from 14 small, medium, and large-scale fertiliser manufacturers.

TFRA executive director Joel Laurent said the purpose of the meeting was to build capacity on specific NEMC regulations and their implementation, particularly within the manufacturing sector in order to mitigate the health risks faced by workers and local residents.

"We have observed a lack of clarity regarding these regulations, which is why we have invited NEMC representatives to provide guidance, gather feedback, and discuss the practical application of these laws," Laurent said.

He further stated that the meeting would lead to positive outcomes, including the growth of the fertiliser industry, an increase in production, and better satisfaction of farmers' needs for high-quality fertilisers.

Additionally, Laurent noted that TFRA

explores effective strategies to ensure that locally produced fertilisers adhere to established quality standards, enabling them to compete in both domestic and international markets.

He emphasised that TFRA works closely with NEMC to help build the capacity of the fertiliser industry, ensuring compliance with environmental preservation requirements.

He also revealed that the Tanzania Agricultural Development Bank (TADB) has shown interest in offering loans to fertiliser manufacturers while reducing interest rates to ease their financial burdens and promote further investment in the sector.



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PSSSF hailed for conducting meetings digitally, efficiency

By Correspondent Joseph Mwendapole

THE management of Public Service Social Security Fund (PSSSF) has been praised for implementing the system to conduct meetings digitally, marking a significant step towards efficiency and sustainability.

The compliments were given yesterday in Singida Region by the Chairperson of PSSSF's Board of Trustees Joyce Mapunjo during the launch of the digital system, which aims to eliminate the use of paper in conducting meetings of the workers' council.

The launch took place on the first day of the two-day PSSSF staff council meeting.

Mapunjo highlighted the numerous benefits of abandoning paperwork for digital meetings, including cost savings, increased

productivity, and improved operational efficiency. She also took the opportunity to congratulate director general of PSSSF, Abdul-Razaq Badru, for the achievements over the past year. The accomplishments include improved services for members and retirees, as well as increased investment income.

"These improvements have significantly enhanced the sustainability of the Fund, aligning with the vision of the government," Mapunjo said. "Your success shows that there are things we can do to set an example for the entire country. I am truly pleased to work with you."

She further expressed her gratitude for the opportunity to collaborate with the team, stating, "I pray that we work together efficiently so that we can deliver excellent results, and the people we serve will

recognise PSSSF as the best."

She promised to work closely with the appointed board members, the director general and all PSSSF employees to meet the expectations of the president and stakeholders within the social security sector.

Badru described the council as a vital bridge between management and worker representatives, emphasising its legal foundation and constitution.

Badru outlined the goals and strategies for the 2024/25 financial year and evaluated the progress of the previous year's plans. He also noted that the meeting would focus on identifying challenges and discussing solutions to improve morale, productivity, and efficiency.

Reflecting on the achievements of the past 12 months, Badru credited the suc-

cess to the implementation of the "4R philosophy" promoted by President Samia, especially the reforms and rebuilding initiatives. "This is why the assessment conducted last year revealed a significant increase in the sustainability of our Fund, from 20 percent in 2020 to 36.4 percent in June 2024. Investment income has also risen," Badru said.

He expressed his gratitude for the cooperation he received during his 12 months as director general of the Fund. He attributed the Fund's success to a shift in work culture, enhanced social security education for members, increased pension benefits and a focus on investment for members.

He also highlighted the importance of hard work, creativity in services, and the Fund's contribution to achieving President Samia Suluhu Hassan's vision for the coun-

try. As of June 2024, the value of the Fund had reached 10trn/-, with investment income growing to 800 billion/-, up from 600bn/-.

The occupancy rates for PSSSF buildings also saw impressive growth, with residential buildings at 99 percent and commercial properties at 79 percent.

Lawyer Peres Janathan Kageze, representing the Union of Trade Unions (TUICO) in the financial sector, also commended the Fund for its efforts to increase its sustainability. "The sustainability of the Fund has risen dramatically from 20 percent to 36.4 percent due to the remarkable work being done," Kageze said.

Additionally, two PSSSF employees, Amina Kassim and Abdallah Adam, were recognised with certificates for being the best employees of the year.



Students of Ewong'on Secondary School at Chokaa village in Simanjiro District take part in a tree planting drive earlier this week. Photo: Correspondent Imani Nathaniel

Africa AI council launched, to target economic benefits

By Special Correspondent

SMART Africa, the coalition of 40 African countries representing over a billion people, has launched Africa Artificial Intelligence (AI) Council to position the continent as a major player in the global AI economy.

The Council, according to Smart Africa, which includes numerous stakeholders from government and the private sector, as well as prominent AI experts from the civil society and academia, will lead Africa's push to uniquely position itself in the AI age.

It stated that Africa, with the world's youngest and fastest-growing workforce, is well-positioned to benefit tremendously from the productivity gains brought about by AI technologies.

The launch of Africa AI Council comes as industry experts predict the technology could contribute up to \$30 billion to sub-Saharan Africa's economy by 2030.

Also, according to analysts, AI skills in young people can also serve as a catalyst for unlocking and driving innovation, resulting in a workforce capable of serving both Africa and the rest of the world.

To this end, Smart Africa said: "The continent has a unique opportunity to design the workforce of the future, driven by AI-enabled industries, thereby accelerating digital transformation and enhancing economic competitiveness."

"The Africa AI Council will serve as a catalyst for these ambitions, working in synergy with

ongoing national and continental efforts. By aligning and amplifying initiatives, the Council aims to unlock AI's vast potential to accelerate growth and foster inclusive transformation across Africa."

Lacina Koné, CEO of Smart Africa, commented: "The establishment of the Africa AI Council marks a significant step towards realising Africa's potential in the AI-driven global economy."

"AI is not just technology to us, it's an African arrow that, when thrown with the right ethical frameworks and inclusive policies, can pierce the way to African digital prosperity and resilience for the benefit of every citizen."

The inaugural 15-member council will be formally unveiled at the upcoming Global AI Summit on Africa, hosted by Rwanda's Centre for the Fourth Industrial Revolution (C4IR) and Rwanda's Ministry of ICT and Innovation, in partnership with the World Economic Forum.

C4IR and Qhala, a social impact assessment company, will partner with Smart Africa in developing the strategy and operationalisation of the secretariat that will run the council. Qhala has since raised start-up funding from the Gates Foundation to support Smart Africa in developing the Council's strategic plan.

According to Smart Africa, Qhala is already working on an AI governance toolkit, an AI talent readiness index, and a framework for the pan African AI Research Centre, all of which are intended to help the council's work.

Minister: 95pc of residential areas now have postal codes

By Guardian Correspondent, Dodoma

APPROXIMATELY 95 percent of areas across the country have now been incorporated into the residential postal code system, significantly improving identification and accessibility of the areas compared to the past.

Minister for Communication and Information Technology, Jerry Silaa made the statement here yesterday during the launch of the National Residential Address Week celebrations.

Silaa stated that the government's goal was to recognise the entire country, a target that has been largely achieved, with large part of the country's areas already

integrated into the system by 2022.

He explained that the government had directed the operation to be completed within four months, from February to May 2022, with coordination by the Communication, and Information Technology under supervision of regional commissioners.

By May 31, 2022, the operation had been successfully completed.

As a result, over 12.3 million residential address records were collected and stored in the digital residential address system known as National Physical Addressing (NaPA).

Silaa encouraged citizens to familiarise themselves with the system and use their residential addresses to identify their loca-

tions.

He also urged anyone facing difficulties to consult local government officials or the coordinators of the residential address system within their respective councils.

He further emphasised the government's commitment to ensuring that every house, building, plot, service, office, or business area is identifiable by residential address, which consists of a house number, street or neighbourhood name and postal code.

"The postal code, known in other countries as Zip Code, is a system for dividing areas to facilitate identification," he said.

He added that in Tanzania, the division is being done at the ward level, with each ward assigned own five-digit postal code,

streamlining the delivery and reception of services and promoting economic and social development.

"The residential address system is already being used by some citizens and institutions to simplify daily operations, and the benefits are becoming apparent. Services such as digital identification letters and location services are now being offered through the address system, with ongoing education to encourage further adoption," he noted.

Silaa pointed out that the residential address system's implementation is an ongoing process due to changes in housing, population, and services.

Various activities related to the system,

including collecting, verifying, and updating address data, improving the NaPA system's performance, and providing public education, continue to be carried out.

Deputy Minister of State in the President's Office (Regional Administration, and Local Government) Festo Dugange, shared that the ministry had already begun using the residential address system for all areas across the country, with street and road names now clearly identified, improving location recognition.

He also noted that residential addresses have been instrumental in delivering services in sectors like health and education, enabling stakeholders to effectively reach their target populations.

Aga Khan V assumes Imam, to continue development initiatives

By Guardian Reporter

PRINCE Rahim Aga Khan V has been appointed the 50th hereditary Imam of the Shia Ismaili Muslims following the death of his father, Prince Karim Al-Husaini Aga Khan IV, who died in Lisbon at the age of 88.

A statement issued by the Ismaili Muslim community stated that the transition ensures the continuity of the Ismaili Imam's long standing commitment to humanitarian development which was the hallmark of Aga Khan IV leadership.

It stated that over decades of service, Aga Khan IV worked tirelessly to enhance quality of life globally, focusing on Africa, Asia and other regions in need of development initiatives.

During his tenure, the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN) made significant strides in sectors such as education, healthcare, economic development, and cultural preservation.

Africa, particularly Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda and Mozambique became key areas for AKDN's initiatives, including investments in schools, hospitals, micro-finance, and sustainable development projects.

With the ascension of Aga Khan V, the Ismaili Imam has reaffirmed its commitment to continue the work initiated by Aga Khan IV.

Having been involved in AKDN's governance, Prince Rahim Aga Khan V has played a vital role in shaping strategies in climate change, environmental sustainability, and poverty alleviation.

AKDN's ongoing projects in Tanzania and across Africa include expanding access to quality education through Aga Khan schools and the Aga Khan University's East African campuses, strengthening healthcare systems via Aga Khan Health Services (AKHS), supporting economic empowerment through the Aga Khan Fund for Economic Development (AKFED) and financial inclusion efforts, and promoting environmental sustainability with green infrastructure and climate resilience programmes.

Born on 12 October 1971, Prince Aga Khan V is the eldest son of Aga Khan IV.

He was educated at Phillips Academy Andover and Brown University in the United States and has served on various AKDN boards, including chairing the Environment and Climate Committee. His leadership promises to continue the Imam's focus on sustainability and resilience in its development initiatives.

As the Ismaili community mourns the passing of Aga Khan IV, the Imam enters a new era with a continued dedication to global development, social progress and humanitarian advancement.



Assistant Inspector Geniune Kimario, police officer in-charge in Kisangura ward in Serengeti District, speaks on Thursday shortly after presenting a special chair to young Lucia Mwita (2nd-R), who has disability. Right is the child's father, Mwita Nyamanyi. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

World food commodity prices down in January

ROME

IN January, global food prices experienced a notable decline, driven primarily by decreases in sugar and vegetable oils, according to data released by the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) yesterday.

The FAO Food Price Index (FFPI) averaged 124.9 points in January 2025, down 2.1 points (1.6 percent) from its revised December level. The drop was driven by significant decreases in the inter-

national quotations for vegetable oils and sugar

The index, which tracks monthly changes in the international prices of a set of globally-traded food commodities, was 6.2 percent higher than its corresponding level one year ago but remained 22.0 percent below its peak reached in March 2022.

The FAO sugar price index was down 6.8 percent from December and 18.5 percent from its year-earlier level, mainly due to improved global supply prospects as a result of generally favourable weather

in Brazil and the Indian Government's decision to resume sugar exports.

Vegetable oil price index decreased by 5.6 percent from the previous month, reversing a recent increase, though it remained 24.9 percent higher than a year ago. The decline in January was mainly driven by lower world prices of palm and rapeseed oils, while those for soy and sunflower oils remained stable.

The FAO meat price index also dropped, falling by 1.4 percent in

January, as lower international ovine, pig and poultry meat prices outweighed an increase in bovine meat quotations.

Meanwhile, the cereal price index increased by 0.3 percent from December but remained 6.9 percent below its January 2024 level. Wheat export prices dropped only slightly, while maize prices increased, partly due to lower production and stock forecasts for the United States of America. The FAO All Rice Price Index declined by 4.7 percent in January amid ample exportable supplies.

The dairy price index increased by 2.4 percent from December and was up 20.4 percent from its January 2024 level. The rise was driven by a 7.6 percent monthly surge in international cheese quotations, which outweighed declines in butter and milk powder prices.

FAO also released a new Cereal Supply and Demand Brief, with fresh insights on cropping trends in 2025.

The winter wheat planting season in the northern hemisphere concluded in January, with early indications pointing to increased

sowings in France, Germany and the United Kingdom and a reduction in the Russian Federation, all influenced by weather conditions.

Maize harvests in the southern hemisphere will begin in the second quarter of 2025, with early indications suggesting improved yields in Argentina and Brazil, while record-high maize prices have driven an increase in plantings in South Africa.

FAO has raised its forecast for world cereal utilization in 2024/25, now estimated to rise by 0.9 percent to 2 869 million

Ukraine to open food hub in Egypt to expand access to African market

By Agencies

UKRAINE considers establishment of a logistics hub in Egypt to enhance distribution of its agricultural products to the North African market, Agriculture Minister Vitaliy Koval has said.

As a major global exporter of grains, oilseeds, and vegetable oils, Ukraine has been intensifying its efforts to expand into North African markets.

The move comes amid shifts in geopolitical dynamics, particularly following the collapse of Syria's Russian-backed leadership, as reported by Reuters.

"Under the instructions of Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskiy, we are exploring the creation of a food hub in Egypt," Koval, currently on a visit to Egypt, said via Telegram.

"Together with Ukraine's ambassador to Egypt, Mykola Nahorniyy, we have toured the port infrastructure and identified potential locations where Ukrainian businesses can establish facilities such as elevators, logistics centres, and warehouses."

Koval further explained that the goal is for Ukrainian farmers to not only export raw materials but also to process them within Egypt's special economic zones. This would allow

Ukraine to access the Egyptian domestic market and export value-added products, such as flour, pasta, and other foodstuffs, to countries with which Egypt holds free trade agreements.

"We aim to go beyond exporting raw materials by adding value here, which will enable Ukrainian products to reach new markets," Koval said.

He emphasised that Ukraine plays a crucial role in global food security and that the collaboration with Egypt's SCZone presents significant opportunities for Ukrainian farmers and exporters. This initiative is expected to facilitate greater accessibility of Ukrainian agricultural products in African markets.



We aim to go beyond exporting raw materials by adding value here, which will enable Ukrainian products to reach new markets



Nachingwea District Council chairman Adinan Mpyagila (L) and district commissioner Mohamed Moyo (R) symbolically present a three-wheel motorcycle to entrepreneur Mfaume Ng'ombo earlier this week. It was provided by the council through a 10 per cent loan. Photo: Correspondent Steven William

Climate change impacts on African mountains worsening, study shows

By Guardian Reporter and Agencies

A NEW study has revealed that climate change currently affects African mountain communities more severely than previously understood, with significant implications for food security, human health, and local livelihoods.

The research, led by the University of York, in the UK highlights the urgent need for targeted climate adaptation strategies across the continent's mountainous re-

gions.

Conducted across eight African countries—Cameroon, Ethiopia, Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya and Tanzania—the study gathered insights from 1,500 small-holder farmers living in ten mountain regions.

The findings, published in Nature Climate Change, indicate that mountain communities are experiencing a range of climate impacts, including rising temperatures, reduced fog, altered rainfall

patterns, and an increase in extreme weather events.

The changes are disrupting traditional agricultural practices, with farmers reporting decreased crop yields and rising incidences of pests and diseases.

Increased unpredictability in weather patterns is further complicating planting and harvesting schedules, making it difficult for farmers to rely on seasonal rhythms.

As a result, food security is deteriorating not just in mountain regions but also in

lowland areas, which depend on water and food from the mountains.

The research also highlights that many mountain communities are responding to these climate impacts by diversifying their livelihoods.

Some farmers have started animal rearing or vegetable farming, while others are adopting new crop varieties and investing in water and soil management.

However, the extent and nature of these adaptation efforts vary significantly be-

tween regions, underlining the need for locally tailored solutions rather than a one-size-fits-all approach.

Prof. Rob Marchant, a co-author of the study, stressed the critical importance of these findings, particularly for the socio-ecological and economic sustainability of mountain communities.

"African mountain regions are hotspots of biodiversity and cultural heritage, but they are increasingly vulnerable to climate change. Our research underscores the ur-

gent need for localised adaptation strategies to address these challenges," he said.

The study also emphasises the importance of considering the environmental, social, and political context of each region when designing climate adaptation strategies.

Policies must take into account the unintended consequences of national policies and the impact of ongoing violent conflicts in some areas, which limit farmers' ability to adapt.

The Basque Centre for Climate Change (BC3) has published a policy brief, Climate Change in African Mountains: An Increasing Challenge and Contribution of Local Adaptation Responses, which calls for increased investment in community-driven solutions and collaboration between local communities, governments, researchers, and international organisations.

The brief advocates for co-developing sustainable adaptation strategies that are specific to each region.



Advocate Mwanaisha Mdembe, Head of the Foreign Affairs Department and Shadow Minister for Industry and Trade with the opposition ACT-Wazalendo, briefs journalists in Dar es Salaam on Thursday about her intention to run for the city's Kigamboni parliamentary seat in the General Election set for late this year. Photo: Correspondent Imani Nathaniel

Ethiopia unveils digital services to modernise agriculture sector

MAYOTTE

ETHIOPIA has launched a roadmap aimed at advancing its agriculture sector by promoting digital technology across rural communities.

The roadmap, dubbed the "Digital Agriculture Roadmap (DAR) 2025-2032," is set to improve the way farmers and herders engage with technology and digital services, the Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation (EBC) reported on Tuesday.

Speaking at the launch event in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia's capital, Minister of Agriculture Girma Amente said the DAR is instrumental in modernising agricultural data, providing market information and enhancing financial accessibility for farmers and pastoralists.

"This roadmap is not just a document; it is a lifeline for our farmers and herders. By integrating digital services into agriculture, we can significantly enhance productivity and improve livelihoods across the nation," Amente was quoted by the EBC as saying.

The vision of the DAR is to create a digitally advanced agricultural sector where farmers and pastoralists have access to real-time data and modern tools, as well as improved market linkages, to drive productivity, sustainability and food security.

Amente said that the roadmap also aligns

with Ethiopia's broader Digital Ethiopia 2025 strategy, which has already begun yielding positive results in various sectors.

Central to the roadmap are 25 key areas where digital services can have a significant impact, including the digitalization of trade and market information, enhanced financial access for farmers, the establishment of robust market linkages, and improvements in agricultural extension and advisory services.



This roadmap is not just a document; it is a lifeline for our farmers and herders. By integrating digital services into agriculture, we can significantly enhance productivity and improve livelihoods across the nation

Malawi orders its troops to withdraw from DR Congo

LILONGWE

MALAWI's President Lazarus Chakwera has ordered the military to begin preparing to withdraw from their peacekeeping mission in the volatile eastern Democratic of Congo.

The Malawian troops are part of the southern African regional bloc's military mission (SAMIDRC) deployed to DR Congo to help tackle armed groups.

At least 20 peacekeepers, including 14 South Africans and three Malawians, were killed as M23 rebels captured the

key city of Goma, the capital of North Kivu province, last week.

President Chakwera said on Wednesday that his decision was meant to "honour the declaration of a ceasefire by the parties", even though the fighting is continuing.

In a statement read on state TV on Wednesday evening, he said the withdrawal of troops would "pave the way for their planned negotiations towards a lasting peace".

Malawi Information Minister Moses Kunkuyu told the BBC Newsday pro-

gramme that the planned withdrawal was being "made in good faith".

He said a meeting by southern African leaders last week in Tanzania, on the sidelines of the Africa Energy Summit, had passed a resolution "to call for a ceasefire from all parties in the conflict, just to pave way for peaceful negotiations".

"It is pursuant to that agreement that the president of Malawi has seen it fit to contribute to the peace-building effort by withdrawing troops from the region so that there is that peaceful negotia-

tion".

He did not indicate exactly when the troops would leave, but said what remained were the "operational aspects" and that they had communicated the decision to the DR Congo president and the southern Africa bloc.

On Monday, the Rwanda-backed M23 rebel group declared unilateral ceasefire "for humanitarian reasons", which was due to start the following day.

However, fighting has since resumed, and the rebels have reportedly taken the mining town of Nyabibwe in the South

Kivu province.

The Malawian president has been under pressure to withdraw his country's forces from DR Congo in the wake of the deaths of peacekeepers.

South Africa has faced similar pressure, but President Cyril Ramaphosa has vowed to keep his troops in DR Congo, saying they are subject to the SAMIDRC mission "which has operational timeframes and an end date". The mission was initially deployed in 2023 and was last year extended until December this year.



Garbage is piled up near vegetable and fruit vendors at the Sabasaba market in Dodoma city earlier this week, posing a health risk. Photo: Correspondent Peter Mkwavila

Mozambique sells 91pc of national airline stake to state-owned entities

MAPUTO

THE Mozambican government has approved the sale of 91 percent of the stake in LAM Mozambique Airlines, the national flag carrier, to three state-owned companies for \$130 million.

The announcement was made on Tuesday night at a press briefing in Maputo, the capital of Mozambique, by Inocencio Impissa, the spokesperson of the government.

According to him, Cahora Bassa Hydroelectric Plant, Mozambique Ports and Railways, and Mozambique Insurance Company are expected to acquire the stake, while the goal of the sale is to restructure LAM and purchase eight new aircraft.

"The expectation is that these companies, due to their autonomy and management approach closer to the private sector, will implement international business standards," said Impissa.

The spokesperson also said that since the three companies are state-owned, they will continue reporting to the government on progress made in LAM's recovery.

Over the past 10 years, the national airline has faced severe financial difficulties, at times operating with only two aircraft. The crisis was worsened by corruption schemes involving service acquisitions, leading to debt exceeding \$230 million, according to a report by Mozambique's state news agency AIM.

Saudi Arabia bans multiple-entry visas for 14 countries

RIYADH

IN a significant policy shift, Saudi Arabia has suspended the issuance of one-year multiple-entry family visit visas for citizens of 14 countries.

The decision, effective February 1, 2025, aims to curb unauthorised Hajj pilgrims entering through long-term visit visas.

The affected countries are Algeria, Bangladesh, Egypt, Ethiopia, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Jordan, Morocco, Nigeria, Pakistan, Sudan, Tunisia, and Yemen.

Under the new rules, visitors from these 14 countries can only apply for single-entry visas. The visas will have 30-day validity with a maximum stay of 30 days.

The move has sparked concerns among expatriates, businesses, and travellers. Although existing visas remain valid, new applicants will now be required to apply for single-entry visas, which come

with additional restrictions and documentation requirements.

The suspension marks a departure from Saudi Arabia's recent efforts to attract global visitors. While the government has not provided an official explanation, analysts suggest that security concerns and immigration management are key factors behind the decision.

For years, multiple-entry visas offered significant convenience to families, business professionals, and expatriates, allowing them to visit Saudi Arabia multiple times within a year without needing to reapply. The sudden suspension of this option disrupts travel plans for frequent visitors, making the process more complex.

Saudi authorities have emphasized the importance of national security and immigration integrity.

"We remain open to visitors from around the world, but must ensure the

safety and well-being of our citizens," stated Ahmed Al-Rajhi, Saudi Arabia's Minister of Human Resources and Social Development.

The suspension is expected to have far-reaching consequences for families, businesses, and regional travel. Many expatriates in Saudi Arabia depend on multiple-entry visas to host relatives, and the new restrictions may require visitors to apply for a new visa each time they travel, potentially straining family connections.

For businesses, particularly small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), the decision introduces logistical and financial challenges. Professionals who rely on frequent travel to Saudi Arabia for meetings and deals must now navigate a more cumbersome visa process, leading to increased costs and administrative burdens.

The suspension could also impact Saudi Arabia's tourism industry, which

has been actively promoted under the country's Vision 2030 initiative. Stricter visa policies may discourage travellers from affected nations, potentially slowing tourism growth.

Moreover, the move could strain Saudi Arabia's diplomatic relations with the countries impacted by the suspension. Governments of India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh may seek discussions with Saudi authorities to reconsider or modify the policy.

Saudi Arabia's decision also highlights broader regional concerns over immigration and security. The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) may review and harmonize visa policies, which could lead to changes across the region, affecting not only Saudi Arabia but also its neighbours.

Economists warn that these restrictions could have negative consequences for business investment. "This decision is a setback for regional connectivity,"

said Dr Fatima Al-Mansoori, an expert in Gulf affairs.

"It could impact trade and investment flows, particularly for businesses that rely on frequent travel."

The Saudi government is expected to reassess its visa policies in the coming months. While the timeline for changes remains uncertain, potential adjustments could include the introduction of new visa categories or streamlined single-entry application processes.

In the meantime, travellers from the affected countries must plan their trips carefully. Business professionals should explore alternative strategies, such as applying for business visas or scheduling fewer but longer visits.

Governments of the impacted nations may also engage in diplomatic negotiations to ease the restrictions, and if successful, these discussions could lead to revised policies that benefit frequent travellers and businesses.

Fortifying economy internally has taken long time to realise

THERE seems to be new thinking about economic and fiscal adequacy at high levels of government, although not much may have been decided yet.

This impression comes in the wake of an observation by the Prime Minister, leader of government business in the National Assembly, to the effect that the country needs to fortify its economy internally in order to reduce reliance on foreign aid.

The key issue is the need to mitigate the impact of a reduction in the flow of funds from outside not only with ongoing moves by the US but also a long-term vision, as other developed countries may adopt the policy.

No surprise could be expressed at the fact that the issue came up following sweeping changes in American government aid policy but even with some countries like Norway apparently chipping in either to speed up own commitments or to reduce the US aid cut impact.

The prime minister's answer or expression of need was candid indeed but it calls for hard choices for the country to palm off the effects of aid reduction. That is known as 'soft landing'.

To be sure, it is soft landing if the measures have considerable impact in current fiscal expectations for the remaining months of the financial year, while in the medium term it is a matter of sustainability of government commitments.

Here the principal areas of concern would be the key strategic projects being pursued, especially the standard gauge railway extension from Dodoma first to Tabora, Kigoma and Mwanza as well as to neighbouring countries.

What remains uncertain is how far the US policy changes will affect statutes of international organisations where US aid is multilateral rather than financed directly by federal government agencies.

Key among them are the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank Group, where the US holds a quarter of the financing - that is, how much they would have to sink in if the rest of the world wishes to change the statutes to raise the shares of other powers.

In that case, it could be said that no real urgency exists for the fiscal situation in the short term, but there is a difference between the sort of things that may trouble the legislature and what could be troubling to society.

The latter sphere is being noticed in aid projects or fairly long-term programmes now being rescinded or put to extensive modification - among them free delivery of drugs for people with HIV.

The societal impact will be significant as the cuts relate to such spheres, while WB and IMF re-vamping of funds would directly touch budgetary expectations, now just on the horizon.

In that case it would be hard to say that the PM would have had solid answers on government preparedness in the wake of current or planned aid cuts, especially in relation to the plea on fortifying the economy internally to forestall or substantially mitigate the impacts of such concussions.

It is in the next few months of completing the drafting of the national economic review for fiscal 2024/2025 and actions for the next financial year that solid answers will need to be put forward.

CBE setting for more sophisticated environment with informatics PhD

PERHAPS even as recently as five years ago, many people would have been surprised to hear that Tanzania's College of Business Education (CBE) is seeking to introduce doctorate level programmes in business, and especially in business informatics.

The reason for that move is the need to address the evolving needs of digital economy and technology at the national level.

Yet it is not clear how far such needs relate to tertiary level teaching of business subjects and informatics in particular - or it includes consultancy needs in, say, business and research capacity.

Looking at what was said of the programme, there are plenty of preliminaries that CBE appears to have achieved already.

One is the fact that it operates four campuses across the country, and can thus be considered not just a college level institution but something like a fully-fledged university in its own right. CBE's foreign partners comprehend the situation that way, in which case the idea that it is a college, or alternatively it would be an institute like Ardhi University used to be earlier would make no difference. Recognition is sufficient.

Such deliberations aren't idle, as the whole problem of standards or accreditation of institutions offering specific levels of training and certification is touchy not just for academics but even for public administration.

A number of tertiary level training institutions moved to take up the status of universities in the background of narrowing public sector job offers.

This arose from prevailing impressions that academic degrees are more usable than professional diplomas. Even though originally they were not intended to be competing, that is what actually occurred.

The programme is being taken up in collaboration with the University of Eastern Finland, with the top authorities saying the college developed the curriculum, combining business expertise with technological innovation.

They say the programme will focus on data analysis, information systems, digital transformation, solutions-based research also being targeted.

An issue of the wider environment in which this programme is anchored comes up - as to whether the economy is at the moment sufficiently sophisticated to facilitate such college pursuits.

Other references cited at a recent stakeholders' workshop on the programme's curriculum development were not exactly reassuring.

The key contributor, the National Council for Vocational Education and Training (NACTIVET), was expected to issue the relevant accreditation.

The difficulty with the referral institution is that it isn't especially specialised in accrediting tertiary level academic but polytechnic professions. That is part of what could induce skepticism in some circles.

This referral institution is relevant for professional types of training, which include business informatics, at certificate, diploma and advanced diploma level.

Yet colleges and institutes were rapidly taking up 'post-graduate' diplomas, whereas traditionally such courses follow a bachelor's degree, and a doctorate pursuit follows a master's qualification.

To reassure academia generally and the client base in particular, it might held if the degrees were conferred by the Finland university CBE is working with before the latter can build a base to transfer it to its own premises.

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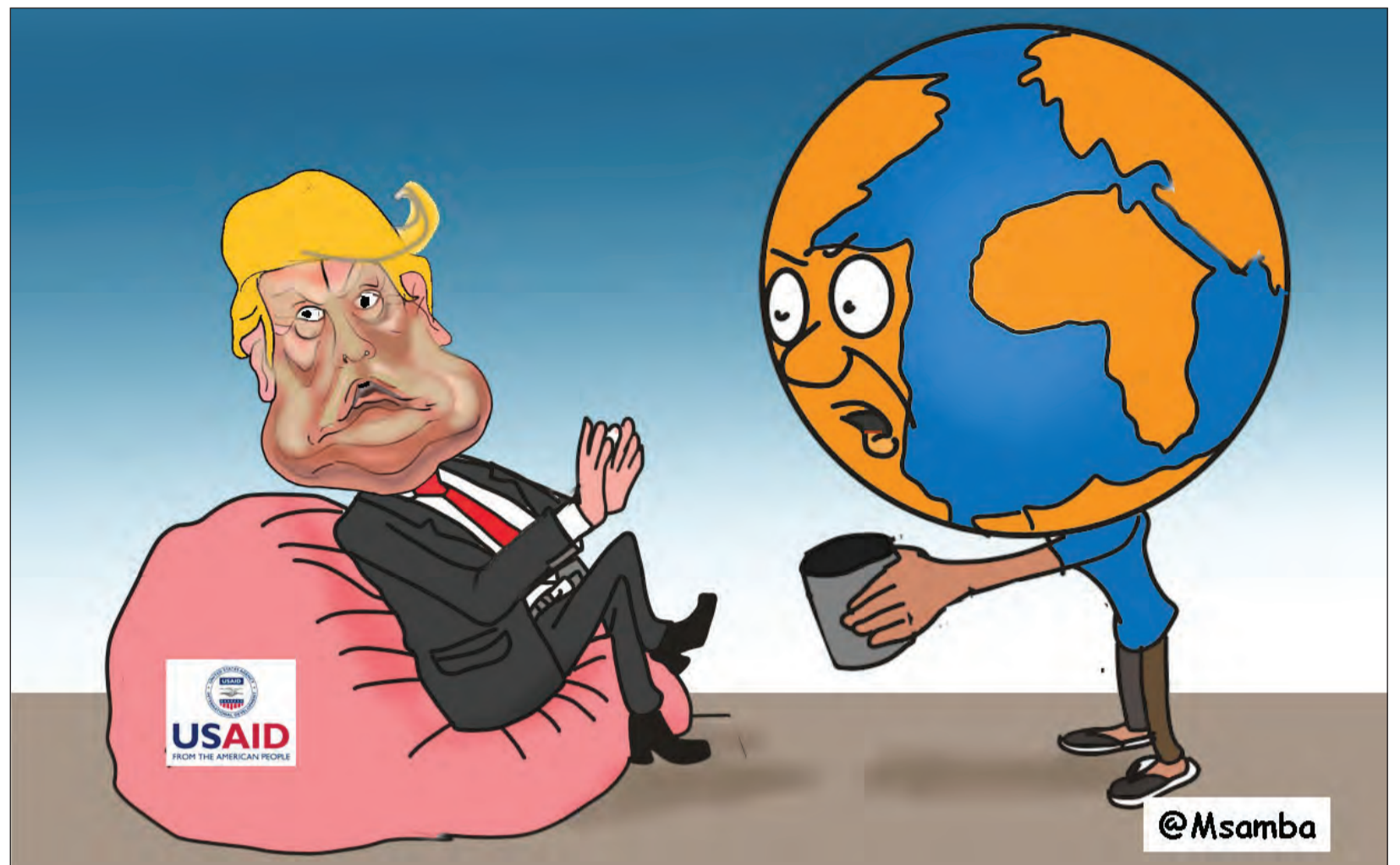
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Namibia set for first female president

By Jasko Rust

NAMIBIA'S historic election ushers in its first female president, but flaws in the process cast a shadow over SWAPO's victory.

Following the presidential and parliamentary elections on 27 November 2024, the South West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO) will once again form the government of Namibia and maintain its absolute majority in parliament. The current Vice President Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah (72) entered the race for the presidency as the big favourite. With 58 per cent of the vote, she will be the first woman to take over as Namibia's leader on 21 March 2025.

Like other former liberation movements in southern Africa, SWAPO had recently come under increasing pressure. As the ruling party, it launched into independence in 1990 with great euphoria and unrelenting success at the ballot box; election victories for the liberation movement, which had become a state party, with 70 or 80 per cent of the vote were the norm. Whilst the party did bring about fundamental changes, particularly in the education, health, justice and welfare sectors, over the years it lost its dynamism, creative imagination and ability to react.

Loss of trust in the ruling party

High unemployment, particularly among the youth, housing shortages, social inequality and the growing frustration among the population noticeably increased the pressure on the ruling party. The 2019 elections saw the first signs of change: President Hage Geingob only received 56 per cent of the vote, and SWAPO lost its two-thirds majority in parliament for the first time.

More than three decades after the end of colonial oppression and the apartheid regime, Namibia remains one of the most unequal countries in the world. The widespread poverty is insufficiently counteracted by the state. The supply of public goods such as electricity, water and health services is often either inadequate or unaffordable. After the 'independence of the flag', economic independence failed to materialise: Many citizens are still waiting in vain for an 'independence dividend'. The state does not respond adequately or promptly to the needs of the population and is prone to corruption and cronyism. This has led to a significant loss of trust in SWAPO, particularly among the younger generation.

As soon as the polling stations opened at seven in the morning, queues of 100 or more voters formed in many places. These queues remained throughout the day and even grew as the day progressed. The inadequate technical equipment for registering voters and the nationwide shortage of ballot papers meant that many registered citizens ended up going home frustrated without having cast



The current Vice President Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah (72) entered the race for the presidency as the big favourite. With 58 per cent of the vote, she will be the first woman to take over as Namibia's leader on 21 March 2025

their vote.

In its initial analysis, the African Union Election Observation Mission identified the main reason for the chaos: voters were free to decide at which polling station they wanted to cast their vote. This made reliable planning and resource allocation almost impossible. In the greater Windhoek area in particular, massive physical voter movements led to extreme overcrowding at all surrounding polling stations, which were already completely overloaded when they opened.

These events are already casting a shadow over the - for many observers surprisingly clear - election success of the future president.

Despite these serious shortcomings, the population maintained an admirable calm and composure. The most regrettable aspect was the national Electoral Commission (ECN), which was completely overwhelmed by the task assigned to it. After the media and social networks became increasingly vocal about the obvious irregularities during the course of the election day, and after some polling stations allowed voters to cast their ballots until early in the morning even after closing at 9 pm, the full extent of the disaster became apparent the following day: The major opposition parties declared on the evening of the election day that they would not recognise the results of this - in their view unsuccessful - election and would have them annulled by the courts.

In a controversial decision, the ECN ordered that voting could take place again on the following two days, but only in selected areas that are predominantly in the northern strongholds of the ruling SWAPO party. In the entire Windhoek metropolitan area, however, only one polling station was reopened.

The ECN has thus contributed to

even more incomprehension and annoyance, not to say astonishment, at this rather brazen behaviour, both among the political parties and among large sections of the population.

These events are already casting a shadow over the - for many observers surprisingly clear - election success of the future president. Under these circumstances, the start to the highest office of state is anything but ideal, especially in view of the enormous challenges facing Namibia. SWAPO will also only be able to act to a limited extent in parliament, as the opposition parties as a whole have gained significant strength.

Challenging times ahead

Yes, these elections have produced a result. Shortly before the end of the count, SWAPO declared that it was quite satisfied with the outcome. However, many Namibians are dismayed and ashamed of how these results came about. Even if the outcome is upheld in court, it will not be able to pacify the country internally and socially to the extent that the next five years of government can be confidently anticipated.

The change of era expected by some observers, which would have seen SWAPO in a coalition government with one or more opposition parties, did not materialise. It is possible that young voters under the age of 35 - who make up around 60 per cent of the registered electorate - did not participate in the election in as high numbers as expected. In particular, the so-called born frees, those born after independence in 1990, may not have been sufficiently represented in this election.

All of this will have to be analysed, and it may also be one of the aspects that the opposition will cite in its judicial review proceedings.

People deserve better than a

flawed process that makes them doubt the legitimacy of their leaders.

It is difficult to predict what this situation will mean for the transitional period until the new government is sworn in on 21 March, the traditional Independence Day. The country and its population have no experience of this kind. The frustration, especially among the young population, with SWAPO's government performance remains high and will probably not disappear any time soon, regardless of a court ruling on the legality of the election results.

Political scientist Ndumba Kamwanyah aptly summarises the situation: 'People deserve better than a flawed process that makes them doubt the legitimacy of their leaders. If these problems are not addressed, the country risks sliding into a future where elections are not seen as a celebration of democracy, but as a contest to see who can manipulate the system better. Namibia can and must do better.'

For the country, democracy and especially the new government under the leadership of the ageing liberation movement SWAPO, which has become a state party, an extremely challenging phase of the post-colonial era is thus looming.

Ultimately, SWAPO's decades of experience in government and mobilisation once again prevailed in the competition for voters' favour. No other party is as well organised throughout the country and is anchored in communities, trade unions, associations and churches.

The political opposition, on the other hand, is present and loud in the public debate and in the media, but is often weak and fragmented in terms of content and strategy.

Only united could it have posed a serious threat to SWAPO - a scenario that could well become a reality in the next elections in 2029.

Criminal justice commission touts compliance with legal procedures

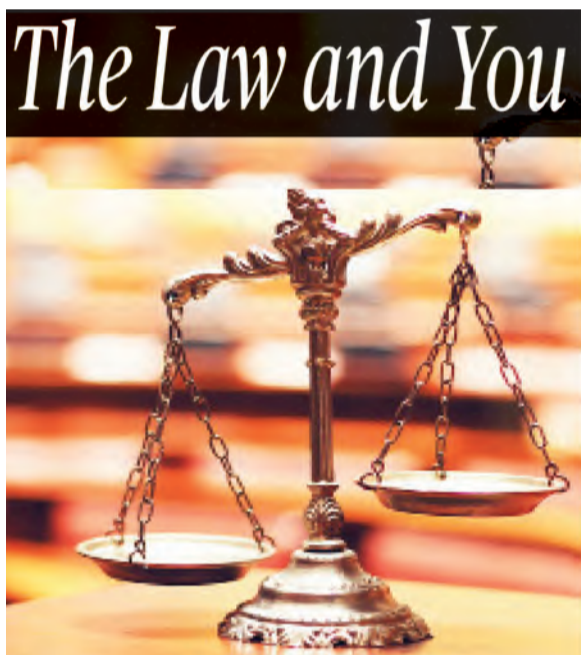
By Telesphor Magobe

LAST week, we briefly looked at some of the recommendations of the criminal justice commission formed by President Samia Suluhu Hassan and launched on January 31, 2023. The commission was chaired by retired Chief Justice Mohamed Chande Othman, and its aim was to look into criminal justice issues and recommend how to improve the criminal justice system and make criminal justice institutions more effective.

The recommendations focused on complaints Tanzanians have on the criminal justice system and criminal justice institutions in the country in relation to good governance and civil rights.

One of the areas touched was abuse of power. In particular, the commission decried false imprisonment as challenged in *Rev Christopher Mtikila v State Attorney* and in *Mary Peter Oturu v Onesmo Buswelo and Others*. In the latter case, the High Court of Tanzania ordered the government to compensate the aggrieved party Sh90 million in relation to unlawful custody the complaint was subjected to under the direction of a district commissioner.

Today, I invite you to continue looking at some



The Law and You



Former Tanzania Chief Justice Mohamed Chande Othman

issues raised by the criminal justice commission in relation to the abuse of power contrary to the provisions of the Regional Administration Act (Chapter 97) and the National Security Council (Chapter 61). Section 7 of the Regional Administration Act provides that a regional commissioner shall have power to cause to be arrested any person who in his or her presence commits or to his or her knowledge has committed any offence for which a person may be arrested and tried.

Likewise, section 15 of the Act provides that a district commissioner shall have power to order or cause to be arrested any person who in his or her presence commits, or to his or her knowledge has committed, any offence for

which a person may be arrested and tried.

But the criminal justice commission finds out that some regional and district commissioners abuse those provisions to the extent that some of the suspects are subjected to false imprisonment.

Thus, the commission recommends restraining regional and district commissioners' abuse of power, and any leader who defies legal directives be personally liable if an aggrieved person files a court case against him or her. In this case, the leader who abuses his or her powers shall be personally held responsible and the government shouldn't be part of it.

The commission also recommends that the regional and district commissioners shouldn't be accompanied by security committee members out of necessity and they shouldn't be introduced as chairpersons of security committees.

In addition to this, police officers and other executives who abuse their powers should be disciplined, and citizens should be enlightened to know their rights in the criminal justice system.

The commission also looks into the powers of executives and council officers stipulated in the Local Government (Urban Authorities Act) Chapter 288 as the Act authorises Urban Directors to deal with crime.

The provisions of section 74(1)(a) and (b) of the Act authorise a director who is informed that any person has committed a criminal offence to arrest the person and be taken to court. Moreover, the director shall have and may exercise and perform all powers and duties which are by law conferred or imposed upon police officers.

Section 100 of the Act authorises a director or ward executive to arrest any person who commits an offence contrary to council by-laws made by an urban authority in his or her presence. The Act also authorises a regional or district commissioner to give a permit to those officers to detain a suspect until he or she is taken to court.

In relation to these provisions, the commission recommends the police powers extended to those officers to be removed from the Act, instead those powers should be exercised by the Police Force. The powers of the director and ward executive to arrest and detain a person be removed, and instead those powers should be exercised by the Police Force.

Statements given by political leaders (ministers and other government leaders) sometimes tamper with people's rights. This situation causes complaints, especially the legitimacy of the powers exercised outside the legal bounds to direct state organs to arrest and detain people.

The commission finds that people's complaints are well founded and it is important to look into them to strengthen the foundations of good governance and rule of law. So, the commission recommends appointing authorities to direct all leaders who don't have legal powers to arrest to comply with legal procedures, and any leader who defies the directives should be personally held accountable and the government shouldn't be part of the problem.

It suffices to say that complying with legal procedures puts all government leaders and institutions in a better position of serving people. Any government power should be exercised within legal provisions.

Today's quote: "The rule of law is internationally recognized as a foundational element in guaranteeing peace, justice, human rights, effective democracy, and sustainable development." - Dr Alejandro Ponce, Chief Research Officer, World Justice Project (WJP).

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Tanzania education reforms: Promise of a brighter future

By Adonis Byemelwa

TANZANIA is ushering in a new era of education reform with the unveiling of the revised 2014 Education and Training Policy (2023 Edition) by President Samia Suluhu Hassan. This bold move signals a fresh commitment to overhauling a struggling system, tackling deep-rooted challenges, and redefining the future for millions of learners. The stakes are high, but so is the hope.

In a move poised to redefine learning, the policy extends compulsory education from seven to ten years, integrates Public-Private Partnerships (PPP), and places a renewed emphasis on vocational training and teacher welfare.

"Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world," Nelson Mandela once said, and Tanzania's bold steps reflect this ethos. The new policy is not merely a bureaucratic adjustment—it's a necessary pivot to address the evolving demands of an increasingly globalized and technology-driven world.

President Samia has emphasized that the review was prompted by rapid technological advancements, shifting labor market needs, and the growing importance of equipping young people with relevant skills.

Historically, education policies have mirrored the social, economic, and technological landscapes of their times. From the Industrial Revolution's focus on standardized curricula to the 20th century's push for equity and inclusion, reforms have always been a response to pressing needs.

Today, Tanzania's efforts align with a broader global movement recognizing that traditional education models must evolve. Sir Ken Robinson, a world-renowned educationist, long advocated for systems that foster creativity and adaptability. "The fact is that given the challenges we face, education doesn't need to be reformed—it needs to be transformed," he once remarked.

This is precisely what Tanzania is aiming for: an education system that does more than churn out graduates—it creates thinkers, innovators, and problem-solvers.

One of the most significant shifts in this policy is the extension of compulsory education. By requiring students to remain in school for ten years, the government acknowledges that many who completed primary school at 13 were ill-equipped for the workforce or self-employment.

The inclusion of technical and vocational training at an earlier stage is meant to bridge this gap, ensuring that education is not just theoretical but practical and aligned with job market realities.

Another groundbreaking move is the formal recognition of skills acquired outside the classroom. This acknowledges that learning is not confined to traditional education settings.



President Samia Suluhu Hassan inaugurates Chief Zulu English Medium Primary School in Songea municipality during her visit to Ruvuma Region on Tuesday, September 24, 2024. Photo: File

By integrating non-traditional learning pathways into the mainstream system, Tanzania is breaking away from rigid models that often overlook alternative talents and competencies.

Furthermore, entrepreneurship education will be compulsory from Form One to Form Four, reflecting a shift towards self-reliance and innovation in a world where traditional job markets are shrinking.

Language training is also being revamped to prepare students for global opportunities. With English, Chinese, French, and Arabic incorporated into the curriculum, Tanzania is positioning its youth to compete in international trade and diplomacy.

As Professor Sugata Mitra, a leading education researcher, has noted, "The best learning happens when learners have to create their understanding." The new language policy embodies this by giving students the tools to navigate an interconnected world.

Recognizing that teachers are at the heart of this transformation, the government is making their welfare a priority. From improved remuneration to

better working conditions, Tanzania understands that no policy can succeed without motivated educators.

Policy-makers worldwide have seen the impact of teacher-centered reforms. Finland, for example, transformed its education system by investing heavily in teacher training and autonomy, leading to consistently high performance in global assessments.

However, with transformation come challenges. The success of Tanzania's education reform hinges on effective implementation, sufficient funding, and unwavering commitment.

Former President Jakaya Kikwete, who now chairs the Global Partnership for Education (GPE), announced that since 2013, the organization has contributed 518bn/- towards education projects in Tanzania. Negotiations are also underway for an additional USD 88.56 million, with an extra USD 50 million earmarked for further support.

Education stakeholders have welcomed the reforms with optimism. Vice President Dr. Philip Mpango has emphasized that aligning education with technological advancements will help bridge the

skills gap, preventing the cycle of unemployment caused by mismatched qualifications. Speaker of Parliament Dr. Tulia Ackson has pledged legislative support to ensure smooth implementation, promising to amend any outdated laws that might hinder progress.

Tanzania's bold steps echo successful models worldwide. Singapore, for instance, has invested heavily in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education, ensuring its students excel in science and technology, a move that has fueled the country's economic rise.

Canada, on the other hand, has focused on inclusive education; ensuring students with disabilities are seamlessly integrated into mainstream classrooms. Both nations highlight the power of well-executed education policies in shaping a nation's future.

In Zanzibar, preparations are in full swing to align vocational education with the new policy. Minister of Education and Vocational Training Leila Mohamed Musa confirmed that teacher training programs have commenced, underlining the government's commitment to a smooth transition.

The shift towards skill-based learning is set to redefine how Tanzanian students engage with education, ensuring they are not just graduates but professionals equipped for the modern world.

Global education trends suggest that investing in skills-based learning is the key to future-proofing young generations. Harvard professor Tony Wagner has repeatedly argued that "The world doesn't care what you know; it cares about what you can do with what you know."

This principle underscores the urgency of Tanzania's reforms. The government is ensuring that students emerge from school not just with academic credentials but with skills that make them employable, entrepreneurial, and adaptable to evolving industry demands.

Moreover, by embracing PPPs, Tanzania is setting a precedent for sustainable educational investment. Countries like Germany have long benefited from strong government-private sector collaboration in education, particularly through vocational training programs that seamlessly integrate young people into the workforce.

This model has resulted in one of the lowest youth unemployment rates in Europe and serves as an inspiration for Tanzania's vision. Nonetheless, experts warn that successful implementation will require more than just policy revisions.

Dr. Andreas Schleicher, Director for Education and Skills at the OECD, notes that "Successful education reform is not just about changing policies but about building trust, engaging teachers, and ensuring long-term commitment."

This means Tanzania must not only secure fund-

ing and legislative backing but also ensure that teachers, students, and communities fully embrace and support the new framework.

Nevertheless, Tanzania's teachers, especially in public institutions face dire conditions—low wages, overcrowded classrooms, scarce teaching materials, and delayed salaries. Many are demoralized, overworked, and forced to take side jobs to survive. Without improving their welfare, even the best reforms risk failing before they begin.

As the nation moves forward, it must remain vigilant in measuring the impact of these reforms. Regular assessments, teacher feedback mechanisms, and continued engagement with stakeholders will be critical to ensuring the policy achieves its intended goals.

The ultimate test of success will be the readiness of Tanzania's youth to step confidently into the future, equipped with the knowledge, skills, and resilience required to thrive in a rapidly changing world.

As Tanzania embarks on this ambitious journey, one thing is clear: education is no longer about memorization and rigid structures—it's about adaptability, skills, and preparing for the future. The world is watching as the country sets an example in education reform, proving that when policy meets vision, the future is bright.

By Natasha Lindstaedt

USAID closure isn't just a humanitarian issue, it's a threat to American interests

THE website for the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the world's biggest aid donor, has gone dark.

Donald Trump's new administration plans to place the autonomous agency under the control of the state department. The secretary of state, Marco Rubio, has now declared himself as head of the agency to "align" it with Trump's priorities.

Several days ago, on January 26, Rubio said: "Every dollar we spend, every programme we fund, and every policy we pursue must be justified with the answer to three simple questions: Does it make America safer? Does it make America stronger? Does it make America more prosperous?"

But the decision to freeze USAID, which is part of Trump's policy to put "America first", places everyone at risk. Organisations that provide vital care for vulnerable people around the world are being forced to halt operations. The boss of one such organisation said: "People will die."

Elon Musk, the world's richest man and a close adviser to Trump, is playing an active role in the destruction of USAID. He has claimed - without providing any evidence - that the agency is "beyond repair". "It needs to die," Musk wrote on X.

Musk, who leads the newly formed Department of Government Efficiency (Doge), is gearing up to cut trillions of dollars from the US budget. However, by seeing cuts to USAID as a solution, Trump and Musk are catering to an audience that has a fundamental misunderstanding about US foreign aid more generally.

Surveys demonstrate that Americans believe 25% of the federal budget is spent on foreign aid. In reality, the US gives about 0.2% of its gross national product (GNP), the total value of goods and services produced by a country, to foreign aid - or less than 1% of its federal budget. This is far below the UN target of 0.7% of GNP.

But, despite this, USAID provided 42% of all humanitarian aid globally in 2024. This included about US\$72 billion (£58 billion) in aid in a wide range of areas, from helping people access clean water, sanitation, healthcare and energy, to providing disaster relief, shelter and food.

USAID also delivered programmes aimed at supporting democracy, civil society, economic development and landmine clearance in war zones, as well as working to prevent organised crime, terrorism and conflict. The gutting of USAID will have a profound impact on human security.

The Trump administration has granted a waiver for the continuation of "life-saving humanitarian assistance". This includes a programme that helps 20 million people living with HIV/AIDS access anti-retroviral drugs. But there are questions about the future of US Aids organisation, the President's Emergency Plan for Aids Relief (Pepfar).

To date, over 43 million people worldwide have died from Aids. But one of the biggest success stories of the George W. Bush administration was its launch of PEPFAR in 2003. The World Health Organization says that PEPFAR, working in partnership with USAID, has



Volunteers at a camp for internally displaced people unload sacks of wheat flour that were part of an aid delivery from USAID in Bahir Dar, Ethiopia, on Dec. 17, 2021. J. COUNTESS/GETTY IMAGES

saved 26 million lives.

PEPFAR employs more than 250,000 doctors, nurses and other staff across 55 countries. One of the functions that USAID performs is ordering and procuring the drugs used by PEPFAR to keep the millions infected with HIV alive. It remains to be seen whether federal payments to USAID's locally run partner organisations will be stopped.

We are, in any case, likely to see an uptick in other infectious diseases. USAID had been working to prevent current outbreaks of mpox and Marburg virus from spreading beyond Africa. It is not clear what the future is for these programmes.

And USAID's work with malaria, a disease that kills about 450,000 children under the age of five each year, is facing uncertainty. From 2000 to 2021, USAID's work helped to prevent 7.6 million deaths from malaria. Also in doubt is USAID's work to develop and implement the malaria vaccine, which was considered a game changer for combating the disease.

At the same time, USAID responds to an average of 65 natural disasters each year. In 2024 alone, it re-

sponded to 84 separate crises across 66 different countries. The government is letting go of all the staff important for implementing these types of programmes.

Dozens of senior USAID officials have been placed on leave, while contractors working on the agency's programmes have been furloughed. Up to 3,000 aid workers in Washington DC could reportedly be laid off this week.

What Trump's team misunderstand is that the work of USAID is also vital for preserving American interests. China, which has poured more than US\$1 trillion of assistance into infrastructure projects in Asia, Africa, Europe and Latin America since 2013, will now be given an opportunity to exert more influence around the world. The void in US aid is a gift for China in the battle for soft power.

Global aid sector in disarray

Foreign aid relies on certainty and transparency about the future of aid programmes. But the Trump administration has offered little clarity while US foreign aid programmes are all being reviewed. One aid organisation referred to the situation as an "absolute dumpster fire" due to the uncertainty.

There have already been reports of total confusion in health clinics previously supported by USAID, which were shut down without warning. Africa will probably be the region most negatively affected. Local workers

in healthcare-related projects on the continent will lose their jobs, while nurses, doctors and healthcare workers across clinics will be unable to continue their vital work.

The Democrats have claimed that Trump does not have the legal authority to eradicate a congressionally funded independent agency. They have said court challenges are already in motion and have pledged to try to block approval of Trump's state department nominations until the shutdown is reversed.

Trump did try to cut US foreign aid during his first term, but Congress refused. He then tried - and ultimately failed - to freeze the flow of aid appropriated by Congress. This time, Trump is not bothering to play by the rules.

Banning wildlife trade can increase trade in other threatened species

By Special Correspondents

GOVERNMENTS often use bans to protect wildlife that's most threatened by trade. However, in our recent study we ask the question: could banning wildlife trade in one threatened species increase the trade in other threatened species?

The expansion of online markets has made it easier for people to buy and sell wildlife. This potential for larger-scale commercial trade creates a potential threat to wildlife, particularly when populations are small, which is often the case for species that inhabit islands.

To deal with the risk of overexploitation, the government of Japan, one of the world's largest wildlife markets, banned the trade of three threatened species: the giant water bug, the Tokyo salamander and the golden venus chub.

While the ban successfully halted legal sales of the policy-targeted species, it had an unintended consequence: an increase in the sales of similar, non-banned species, some of which are threatened.

This pattern, known as the "spillover effect", suggests that when a species is no longer available, demand often moves to alternative species rather than disappearing entirely. However, these effects affected different species in different ways, with the spillover lasting for more than a year for water bugs, but disappearing over the same period for the salamanders and freshwater fish.



These spillovers can be problematic as they can drive buyers to seek exotic pet species from other countries or even continents. Based on past experience in Japan and elsewhere, we know that these are often then released into nature by those that can no longer keep them. This increases the pressure on native fauna through competition and the spread of disease which may threaten not only native wildlife but also human health. Our findings highlight the need for a more

comprehensive approach to wildlife trade regulations - one that considers both direct conservation efforts and indirect global impacts.

Balancing bans

While wildlife trade bans can play an important step, their ability to address over-exploitation on their own is limited. To conserve species, we need complementary strategies that can manage demand and monitor supply.

Prior to a ban, it is key to work to reduce the demand

for the species to be targeted or redirect it to species that are well managed and not of conservation concern. This would be likely to minimise the effects of any unintended spillover after the trade ban comes into effect. If buyers understand why a species is at risk and are offered sustainable alternatives, they may be less likely to shift their interest to other vulnerable wildlife.

Governments also need to enforce stronger monitoring to be able to track which

species are traded and in what amount. This may be hard to implement across all trade but is feasible when we talk about online legal trade, which represents a large part of the global wildlife trade. Instead of focusing only on banned species, authorities should keep an eye on similar species that could become the next target for trade.

For this to be effective, international cooperation, in the form of data sharing, for example, is critical since wildlife trade crosses borders.

Countries need to work together to track and regulate trade so that bans don't simply push demand to other regions.

Finally, promoting legal, ethical and sustainable alternatives - such as responsible captive breeding programs or well-managed wild source populations - can help meet consumer demand without harming wild species.

Our study serves as an important reminder: conservation has no silver bullets and we must be willing to

embrace a multitude of tools if we are to deal with the different sides of an issue as complex as the wildlife trade. If we only focus on banning species without considering how the market will react, we risk simply moving the risk of extinction from one species to the next. A well-rounded approach - one that includes consumer behaviour change, improved monitoring and sustainable alternatives - offers the best chance of protecting wildlife for the long term.

GEAPP pledges support to Mission 300, to be part of transformation

By Getrude Mbago

THE Global Energy Alliance for People and Planet (GEAPP) has reaffirmed commitment to supporting efforts in accelerating Africa's energy transition by being part of the recently unveiled Mission 300 initiative.

The mission, spearheaded by the World Bank (WB) and African Development Bank (AfDB), aims to connect 300 million more people to electricity across the African continent by 2030.

In an exclusive interview with this paper recently, Woochung Um, CEO of GEAPP said collaboration is essential for aligning resources, expertise, and efforts to meet the goals of Mission 300.

He said GEAPP's work is focused on three core pillars: accelerating the uptake of Distributed Renewable Energy (DRE), deploying Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS), and increasing the productive uses of electricity (PUE).

The efforts aim to create a reliable, affordable and sustainable energy system that addresses both the growing demand for electricity and the need for resilience in energy infrastructure.

A key element of GEAPP's strategy empowers governments to lead the way in achieving energy access goals. By offering technical assistance and policy advisory services, GEAPP helps governments design and implement energy transition programmes that are both practical and effective.

This includes providing support for countries such as Malawi, where GEAPP assisted in updating the country's Integrated Resources Plan (IRP), which is now developing a pipeline of grid and transmission investments. In Nigeria, GEAPP partnered with the government to establish the Energy Transition Office, which institutionalised the country's Energy Transition Plan.

He said the alliance's multi-faceted approach, which includes leveraging capital from philanthropic foundations, development finance institutions (DFIs), and private investors, helps to bridge the significant energy access gap that exists across Africa.

He said governments play a key role in establishing policies and frameworks, such as competitive tenders, pooled procurement, and long-term project timelines, which facilitate large-scale infrastructure projects and regional integration in line with the African Union's Agenda 2063.

For example, GEAPP supported the implementation of a tariff harmonisation pilot in Sierra Leone, which tested the impact of lowering tariffs on customers.

The result was a 41 percent reduction in electricity costs over the span of a year, leading to a 58 percent increase in energy use and boosting mini-grid utilisation.



The private sector's role in Mission 300 cannot be overstated. Private companies are vital in providing the innovation, finance, and resources needed to deploy DRE and utility-scale projects where electricity access is most needed.

Progressive capital partnerships, which bridge local, regional, and global partners across public, private and philanthropic sectors, are key to mobilising the necessary investment to meet the targets of Mission 300.

He said Mission 300 is truly a collective effort, with partners such as The Rockefeller Foundation, Sustainable Energy for All (SEforALL), and the Energy Sector Management Assistance Program (ESMAP) contributing to the success of this movement.

One of the most notable initiatives supported by GEAPP is the \$10 million commitment alongside The Rockefeller Foundation to the Mission 300 Technical Assistance Facility (TA Facility), which introduced several new energy access projects in 11 African countries.

By improving local skills, capacity and implementation efforts, GEAPP help to develop bankable projects that will accelerate electrification in key African

markets. GEAPP also works alongside the AfDB and the World Bank to design and implement the electrification efforts across various regions.

In Southern Africa, GEAPP's efforts are focused on just energy transition programs and fossil fuel decommissioning. In Malawi, for example, GEAPP partnered with the government to invest \$20 million in constructing a 20 MW Battery Energy Storage System (BESS), which will provide reliable electricity to nearly half a million people.

The project is part of GEAPP's broader ambition to roll out 5 GW of BESS projects in ten African countries by 2030 as part of the BESS Consortium. In Nigeria, GEAPP's Distributed Access Renewable Transformation (DART) programme has helped reduce solar equipment costs by up to 30 percent, making solar energy more affordable and accessible to the population.

The prospects for renewable energy development in Africa, particularly under Mission 300, are immense. DRE systems, in particular, offer a practical, affordable solution for underserved communities, where extending the national grid may not be feasible in the

short term.

Utility-scale renewable energy projects are also crucial, providing reliable electricity to urban centres and industries, fostering economic growth and aiding Africa's industrialisation. Furthermore, the integration of Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS) offers the opportunity to stabilise grids and ensure consistent power supply, addressing the intermittent nature of renewable energy sources. This is particularly important for countries that experience frequent power outages, which affect productivity and hinder economic development.

Regional grid integration and cross-border energy trade are also significant opportunities for Africa. By integrating energy systems across borders, countries can lower electricity production costs and create a more robust pan-African regional electricity market.

In addition, GEAPP encourages private sector innovation in green technologies, such as e-mobility and solar mini-grids, which will play an important role in addressing Africa's energy needs and boosting climate resilience.

In order to reach its energy goals, Mission 300 will require innovative financing tools that attract both local and international investments.

GEAPP's diverse financial toolkit addresses the funding gap by leveraging philanthropic capital to back projects in emerging markets, where private finance is often scarce.

"For example, GEAPP's \$50 million Naira-denominated facility with Chapel Hill Denham has unlocked financing to deliver affordable energy projects to low-income customers in Nigeria. Local currency lending, which addresses foreign exchange risks and reduces financial barriers for investors, has proven to be an effective approach for financing small-scale and rural energy initiatives," he said.

Local communities are at the heart of Africa's clean energy transition. GEAPP believes that community engagement and participation are crucial to the success of clean energy projects. By providing skills training, technical assistance, and empowering communities to manage energy projects, GEAPP enables individuals and businesses to benefit from the energy transition.

Through programmes like the Energising Agriculture Programme (EAP) in Nigeria, GEAPP has revitalised agricultural value chains in underserved areas, increasing incomes by more than 30 percent.

Woochung said Mission 300 is not just about providing electricity, but about creating jobs, improving living standards, empowering women, and fostering economic growth.

By implementing bold public sector reforms and attracting investments, Mission 300 can unlock Africa's energy potential and set the continent on the path to sustainable development.

GEAPP's work, alongside its many partners, continues to be a driving force in Africa's energy revolution, bringing the dream of universal energy access closer to reality.

Stakeholders at Egypt forum discuss ways to boost Africa's health security

CAIRO

THE 2nd vaccine and other health products manufacturing forum, organised by the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC), Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, the Regionalised Vaccine Manufacturing Collaborative (RVMC) and the Unified Procurement Authority of Egypt (UPA), opened in Cairo, Egypt, this week.

The forum convenes African Union ministers of Health, National Regulatory Authorities (NRAs), Regional Economic Communities (RECs), African Union organs, African manufacturers, manufacturers' associations, African Vaccine Manufacturing Accelerator (AVMA) investors, global and international partners, philanthropies and civil society organisations to discuss challenges and potential solutions to unlock the potential of local manufacturing and ensuring sustainable coordination efforts to manufacture vaccines and other health priority products in Africa.

Packed with panel discussions, partner presentations and reflections from member states and RECs, stakeholders reviewed progress, opportunities and strategies to remove barriers that have held back regional manufacturing in the past, such as reforms to the region's regulatory environment, continental demand and access to finance.

Since the inaugural manufacturers marketplace for vaccine manufacturing African Union member states, held in 2023 in Morocco, tangible progress has been made towards achieving health security ambitions, including:

The launch of Gavi's AVMA, which has committed up to US\$ 1.2 billion over ten years to support sustainable vaccine production across Africa.

The decision of the 37th ordinary session of the assembly of the Union that requested Africa CDC to establish a pooled procurement mechanism (PPM) for medical products from African manufacturers and to broaden the mandate of the Partnerships for African Vaccine Manufacturing (PAVM) to include manufacturing of

medicines, diagnostics and other health products.

Commitments of over US\$ 3.5 billion from global donors, and development finance institutions like the European Investment Bank (EIB), International Finance Corporation (IFC) and the U.S. International Development Finance Corporation (DFC).

An increase in the number of African NRAs attaining WHO maturity level 3 status for non-vaccine products, reflecting improvements in regulatory frameworks essential for local manufacturing.

The establishment of the RVMC with a secretariat to foster collaboration across governments, multilateral organisations, industry, civil society and funders, in support of regionally led strategies across regions to advance vaccine manufacturing.

"Today's meeting represents another step forward in Africa's journey toward health security. At Gavi, we are committed to playing our role in this multisectoral effort to invest and build capacity across the value chain. Building a sustainable vaccine and health products manufacturing ecosystem



would not only help meet the continent's health needs, it would also deliver economic growth and enable African nations to take charge of their health futures," said Dr Sania Nishtar, Chief Executive Officer, Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance.

"Africa's health security depends on our ability to manufacture the vaccines and health products we need, right here on the continent. By strengthening regulatory frameworks, securing sustainable financing and fostering partnerships, we are laying the foundation for a self-sufficient manufacturing ecosystem. Africa CDC remains committed to driving this agenda forward ensuring that no country is left behind in the pursuit of health sovereignty," said Dr Jean Kaseya, director-general, Africa CDC.

"RVMC is proud to co-host this event with our esteemed partners. While the world may not feel unified at present, the actions and ambitions from this year's forum pave the way for achieving regionalised vaccine manufacturing on the African continent, thereby improving

vaccine equity and health security for all. Progress will require bold leadership and innovative ideas, but RVMC is energized by the enthusiasm of this forum," said Dr Frederik Kristensen, managing director of the regionalised vaccine manufacturing collaborative.

"This forum is a testament to our collective determination to build a resilient, self-reliant, and sustainable healthcare ecosystem for our continent. It takes place at a crucial time, amidst significant milestones that are reshaping Africa's health manufacturing landscape," said Dr Hisham Stait, chairman of UPA.

Despite the barriers of a fragmented market, and gaps in access to finance and a specialised workforce, Africa's pharmaceutical market present a tremendous opportunity to better serve the 1.4 billion population. The forum provided an opportunity for all stakeholders to engage and elaborate on key steps to advance the agenda of local manufacturing, a key to independence and a must for Africa's health security.

WHO: Urgent action needed to bolster breast cancer control measures in Africa

BRAZZAVILLE

AN estimated 135 000 women could lose their lives to breast cancer by 2040 in sub-Saharan Africa if urgent actions are not taken to reverse the trends, a new World Health Organisation (WHO) report finds.

The WHO study assessed breast cancer control capacities in 42 of the 47 countries within the African region,

focusing on six critical areas: leadership, governance and financing, health workforce, health information systems, and service delivery.

The assessment revealed significant gaps and disparities in breast cancer control across the region highlighting critical shortage of healthcare workers essential for prevention, diagnosis, and treatment, as well as limited access to specialised cancer

centres, hindering progress toward the Global Breast Cancer Initiative (GBCI) goals.

The analysis finds that only 5 out of 47 countries in the region have established organized breast cancer screening programmes with many countries still relying on opportunistic screening programmes. Access to pathology in Africa remains limited, with only two countries meeting the standard of one

lab per 100 000 people. Breast cancer-related deaths in the region are largely driven by late diagnosis and insufficient prevention and care measures. In 2022 alone, 38 out of every 100 000 women were diagnosed with breast cancer and 19 per 100 000 tragically lost their lives to the disease.

To enhance breast cancer care in the region, the WHO report underscores the urgent need for investment in leadership, governance and financing as fundamental steps.

Strengthening these elements will pave the way for advancements in strategic planning, healthcare infrastructure, workforce training and, most importantly, equitable access to essential services.

The report calls countries to develop and adequately

fund comprehensive National Cancer Control Plans, providing a strategic framework for coordinated national efforts to combat breast cancer effectively. To address the severe shortage of cancer care healthcare professionals, WHO advocates for the expanding and enhancement of oncology training programs. Building a well-equipped workforce is essential to ensuring high-quality cancer

prevention, diagnosis, and treatment services.

Beyond workforce development, the report highlights the urgent need for organized breast cancer screening and early diagnosis programmes in countries. Ensuring these programmes are accessible to all women in the region is crucial, as early detection significantly improves treatment outcomes and survival rates.

Nigeria's plastic bottle collectors turn waste into wealth

By Alistair Fielding and Solaja Oludele

PLASTIC waste in Nigeria presents a dual challenge: cleaning up environmental pollution, and tapping into its economic potential.

Many countries worldwide face similar challenges. India, for one, has chosen policies that give producers of plastic the responsibility to manage their waste. Rwanda has banned single-use plastic and promoted recycling initiatives led by communities.

These approaches show it's possible to address plastic waste issues while fostering economic opportunities.

In Nigeria, informal collectors of plastic bottle waste are central to achieving both of these goals. They turn waste into monetary value.

Previous research has highlighted the environmental and economic benefits of collecting plastic bottle waste. There's been less attention on what shapes perceptions of waste collection as a business, particularly in Nigeria.

This article explores that gap, looking at the socio-cultural, economic and environmental influences on those perceptions.

I am a researcher in the areas of plastic waste management, environmental governance and sustainable development. My work includes studying homes made from recycled plastic bottles in sustainable community-based housing projects.

Here I'll be drawing from an exploratory survey conducted in the Ijebu area of Ogun State, Nigeria. Using a questionnaire, we surveyed 86 participants who had at least five years of experience in the plastic waste industry.

The study identified factors like education, family size, religion, gender, age, and economic dynamics as relevant to participation in the business of plastic bottle waste collection.

Understanding these influences might help the government to target policies.

Education level and information

Our study found that participants with higher education levels better understood the economic benefits of plastic waste collection as a systematic form of business. The less educated participants viewed waste collection more as a hand-to-mouth way of earning a living.

Education programmes built into waste management campaigns could improve recognition of waste collection as a structured and profitable business opportunity and develop a business-like culture among the collectors.



A plastic waste collector at a dumpsite in Lagos

Parenthood, family size and financial obligations
Family size was a factor affecting perceptions of plastic bottle waste collection as a business. People with large families saw waste collection as a feasible way to provide food, housing, education and other essentials.

However, the association of waste collection with income instability highlights the need to formalise and stabilise the sector. Waste collection must be made into a sustainable and reliable business model.

Religion and cultural norms

Religion and cultural beliefs emerged as influences from our survey. This was evident in the responses of people who followed African traditional religions and Islam.

These respondents viewed waste collection as fi-

nancially feasible, aligning with religious teachings that emphasise resource management and stewardship. For example, Islamic teachings on *israf* (avoiding wastefulness) and *zakat* (charity) promote efficient resource use and economic activities that benefit communities.

Similarly, African traditional religion often emphasises communal responsibility and the sustainable use of resources. These religious principles underscore the cultural acceptance of waste collection as both a practical and a morally guided economic activity.

Other cultural norms, such as the value placed on communal responsibility and cooperation, also influenced attitudes towards waste collection. In communities with a strong tradition of collective action, where unity and mutual support are highly valued,

waste collection is often viewed as a collaborative effort.

These cultural norms reinforce the idea that waste collection is not just an individual task, but a collective duty that benefits the entire community.

Gender dynamics

Gender plays a role in perception and practice in waste collection. Our survey found that male participants were more likely than female participants to perceive this activity as a business.

As constrained as they are by

Sudanese relief workers in the capital in fear of army reprisals

By Mat Nashed

SUDAN'S army is pushing the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) to retreat from Khartoum, sparking hope among many in the capital for renewed stability.

However, local relief workers said they fear they will be targeted in a wave of reprisals.

"Every time the army recaptures an area ... they start to target civilians and the humanitarian volunteers. This is why we are all so frightened," said Ahmed, a local relief volunteer in Sharq el-Nile, an area in Khartoum that the army is threatening to recapture.

A war on local relief workers

Local volunteers like Ahmed are members of Emergency Response Rooms (ERRs), grassroots networks that have led the humanitarian response since Sudan erupted into war in April 2023.

ERRs provide multiple services, such as supporting soup kitchens, safe spaces for women and children, and basic healthcare for the sick and wounded.

Most rely on donations from the Sudanese diaspora and funding from international NGOs and United Nations agencies.

Despite their vital humanitarian role, ERR workers face arrests, kid-

nappings and extrajudicial killings from both sides in the conflict.

Many have been targeted for their pro-democracy stances, which threatened the joint rule of the then-allied RSF and army after a popular uprising brought down their former boss President Omar al-Bashir in April 2019.

Four years later, the RSF and army turned their guns against each other after they cooperated to overthrow a civilian administration and sabotage popular aspirations for democracy. The war between the two sides has killed tens of thousands of people and generated the largest humanitarian crisis in the world by most measures.

On top of that, at least 112 ERR members have been killed since the start of the war, according to an ERR spokesperson. The actual toll could be higher amid fears that reporting attacks could bring violent retaliation.

As the army advances in Khartoum, many ERR members fear for their lives and are calling for protection.

"We have been thinking about how we get some kind of protection [for ERR members], and we need the international community to push and advocate for us," said Mokhtar Atif, the spokesperson for ERR volunteers in Khartoum North.

According to volunteers, analysts and international aid workers, the army often treats any person carrying out humanitarian activities in RSF areas as a traitor.

"Many volunteers are refusing to evacuate from Khartoum because there are badly needed UN aid convoys that should be coming in the next few days" and the ERR members need to distribute the aid to hungry civilians, said Hajooj Kuka, spokesperson for the Khartoum ERRs coordination committee.

"Many of these volunteers have made peace with the fact that they will be killed [by the army] and some have already sent messages to us and their friends] saying their goodbyes," he said.

Surveillance and killings

Several ERR volunteers said they know of fellow aid workers and civilians who were recently killed by the army and aligned militias in Khartoum North.

They said their teams are overwhelmed by the massive humanitarian crisis and cannot monitor attacks accurately.

Al Jazeera sent written questions to army spokesperson Nabil Abdullah, asking him to respond to the accusations that the army and aligned militias are targeting local activists and civilians as they recapture Khartoum.

He did not respond before publication.

However, the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights said in a statement that it is aware of at least 18 people killed in seven incidents by army-affiliated

fighters in Khartoum North on January 25.

The UN human rights office is also trying to verify footage that shows fighters from the Baraa bin Malik Brigade, a militia that supports the army, reading out a long list of names and saying "zaili" - Arabic for "killed" - after each name.

"The army has its own spies that monitor civilians interacting with the RSF," speculated one ERR member in Khartoum who requested anonymity for fear of reprisal.

Kuka gave another reason why he believes the army uses spies to monitor relief workers.

He said one of his ERR members was arrested a month ago after crossing from an RSF area in Khartoum to a nearby town controlled by the army.

The member was tortured - Kuka did not disclose how - and accused of collaborating with the RSF due to working in a medical centre that was providing care to the wounded and sick.

According to Kuka, the army told the ERR member that it had been monitoring the medical centre for a long time and considered all the staff RSF collaborators.

A few dozen people work at the centre.

"The army knows the people [who volunteer at the centre] by name, ... and they said they are going to get them," Kuka said.

Smears and accusations

Since the army launched its offensive to take the capital in late September, anonymous social media users have smeared local relief workers and other activists as RSF collaborators on closed Facebook groups and private WhatsApp chats, ERR members said.

"There is always disinformation that spreads whenever the army retakes a new area," Atif said.

Atif added that the posts began circulating just as the army recaptured Halafya in early October.

At the time, the UN-designated expert on Sudan, Radhouane Nouicer, said in a statement he was alarmed by reports that army-aligned militias had summarily executed at least 70 young men in Halafya on suspicion they were RSF collaborators.

"These smears on social media started in September just before the army executed lots of civilians in Halafya," Atif said.

Lists of alleged collaborators are spreading again as the army consolidates control over Khartoum North, ERR members said.

One list circulating over WhatsApp accuses 125 people - activists, politicians, medics and lawyers - of conspiring against the army and state.

Kuka said an ERR member is also on the list and several of his peers have also received death threats on Fa-

Crossword puzzle grid with clues and solutions. Clues include: Across: 1 symptom, 3 a female domestic servant, 6 a University teacher, 7 arrive, 9 an S-shaped line or moulding, 10 escape or avoid, 12 Islamic canonical law, 15 a Polynesian garland of flowers, 16 help or benefit, 17 Mountain on the border of Kenya and Uganda. Down: 1 affected mental illness, 2 an activity for amusement, 3 a state of mind, 4 messenger of God, 5 a hoofed browsing animal, 8 at all times, 11 cut the hair, 13 avoiding work, 14 Zion, 15 a part of the trunk.

Word search puzzle grid with words: LEMON, RUDE, RISE, DEAL, EAR: WED, EATEN, TENURE, HEADED, SHARED, EEL: FUME, ODOUR, IDLE, MEMO, FUSE. Includes instructions: "In this Puzzle you have no clues, only a list of words that all fit into the grid. The Guardian have given you a head start."

RADIO One advertisement for 'RATIBA YA VIPINDI JUMATATU - JUMAPILI'. Features a weekly program schedule table with columns for Monday through Sunday, listing various shows and their broadcast times. Includes social media icons for Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter, and the slogan 'Tembelea mitandao ya kijamii ya Radio One'.



PCCB recovers 76bn/- from embezzlers' worst hands

By Correspondent Cheji Bakari, Tanga

THE Prevention and Combating of Corruption Bureau (PCCB) has successfully recovered a total of 76bn/- after taking public servants to court on charges of misappropriation and embezzlement of public funds in Kilindi and Korogwe districts of Tanga region.

The accusations against them were failure to remit government revenue collected via the Point of Sale (POS) system, instead using it for personal benefit without following the established procedures for submission.

Ramadhani Ndwatah, PCCB's head in Tanga region made the observation yesterday during a performance report review for the period covering between October and December 2024.

Ndwatah asserted that after the case was brought to court, the government won the case, and the court ordered the accused to return the funds through various payments.

He also highlighted the case in Kilindi district, where the government won economic sabotage cases No. 13/2023, 11/2023, and 06/2024 against civil servants accused of embezzling government revenue collected through the POS system.

tem. "A total of 58mn/- was returned by the accused public servants under the court's order, along with other penalties," he said.

The PCCB regional boss also mentioned Korogwe district, where 9.2mn/- government revenue collected via Point Of Sale (POS) was returned following the government's victory in economic sabotage cases No. 09/2023 and 10/2023 against the suspects.

"In Tanga city, the government won economic sabotage cases No. 16558/2025 and 7/2023, where a total of 3.17mn/- was misappropriated from the implementation of development projects in the education sector," said Ndwatah.

Additionally, 5mn/- meant for loans to women, youth, and people with disabilities was misused. The funds were also returned under the court's orders, along with other penalties.

"We send a strong warning to anyone considering committing sabotage or misusing public resources. We urge them to abandon such behaviors and instead work in accordance with the ethical standards of public service. Otherwise, strict legal action will be taken against them," Ndwatah emphasized.

BoT affirms use of Tshs in local payments for services, contracts

By Francis Kajubi

The bank of Tanzania (BoT) has affirmed its order regarding a ban on using foreign currencies for payment of services and businesses offered within the country but only for cross-border transactions.

In June 2023 the central bank had issued a notice to remind the public that in August 2007 and December 2017 the government had issued notices prohibiting domestic payments for goods and services using foreign currencies among residents of the United Republic of Tanzania.

BoT's Manager of International Economics and the Real Sector, Vilela Waane said on Thursday in Dar es Salaam at a special meeting with bankers on the ban of foreign currencies within the economy that despite the notices, the bank continues to observe violation of such directives.

Waane said that it is on this background that the Minister of Finance in June 2024 amended Section 26 of the Bank of Tanzania Act 2006, ruled it an offense for residents to transact within the country using any currencies other than



Central bank's twin-towers were captured at Dar es Salaam headquarters. File photo

the legal tender.

Section 26 of the mentioned Act states: 'the bank shall have the sole right to issue banknotes and coins which shall be the only le-

gal tender in Tanzania.' "The section has been amended with an addition of two subsections one of which requires that a person who transacts using

any currencies other than the legal tender issued by the Bank commits an offense," said Waane. She said the Section has been added with a sub-

section that affirms the restriction of foreign currencies in local payments.

According to her, the central bank has learned that there has been a considerable usage of foreign currencies, especially the US dollar in payment settlement for services such as school fees, house rent and in some contracts regarding the trading of cash crops.

Emmanuel Akaro, BoT's Director Financial Markets said that the purpose of calling the meeting with stakeholders from commercial banks is to remind them and ask them to educate their customers about the restriction.

"Another goal is to warn commercial banks that accepting payments in currencies other than Tshs is facilitating the violation of the said Act," he said.

According to Akaro, the goal of ensuring that a Tanzanian currency is used in local payments is to control inflation among other financial irregularities.

He said in November 2024 when the dollar depreciated, the majority of businessmen were worried about making payments due to the use of dollars in purchases where they were supposed to receive less than what they paid," said Akaro.

ICT Commission roots for residential address in achieving digital economy



ICT Commission director general D. Nkundwe Mwasaga clarifies a point to the Minister for Communications, Technology and Information, Jerry Silaa (2nd-R) at the residential address campaign launch in Dodoma city yesterday. Looking on is the Deputy Minister of State in the President's (Regional Administration and Local Government) Dr. Festo Dugange.

By Guardian Reporter

THE ICT Commission has admitted that the campaign about residential addresses is an important platform to convey awareness to the public about its contribution to the digital economy.

Speaking at the launch of the campaign on Thurs-

day in Dodoma, ICT Commission Director General, Dr Nkundwe Mwasaga said the residential address system is an important tool in facilitating the delivery of various services that can stimulate the development of the digital economy.

He said that in this era where the Sixth Industrial Revolution depends on ICT, the Commission's

participation in sensitizing the public is important as they are a part of supporting planned residential systems.

"It is very important for us as the Commission, but for the nation to reach people in cities and rural areas so that they can understand the importance of residential addresses so that they participate in

building the economy," he said. Dr Mwasaga asserted that in today's world the digital economy is the economy of people. In order for people to digitize their activities, they need to be well-informed about the advantages.

The campaign launched by the Minister of Communications and Information Technol-

ogy, Jerry Silaa under the slogan: "Identify and Use Residential Addresses to Simplify the Delivery of Services" has also involved the Ministry of Regional Administration and Local Government.

Other institutions are NIDA, UCSAF, TTCL, TCRA, TCRA CCC, NEMC, Telecommunications Companies, NMB and TANAPA.

Dr Mwasaga said that the government, through the ICT Commission, is focusing on the establishment of regional ICT centers to promote innovation in the country.

To begin with, they will be opened in Arusha, Dar es Salaam, Lindi, Mwanza, Mbeya, Dodoma, Tanga and Zanzibar.

In addition, efforts are underway to establish centers to repair electronic devices in the regions of Arusha and Dar es Salaam.

In order to reach many people, the government is also dedicated at the district level to establish innovation centers. The districts to be covered first in this initiative are Masasi, Kibaha, Rufiji, Tanganyika, Bukoba and Butiama.

Panama says US 'spreading lies' over free canal passage

PANAMA CITY

Panama President José Raúl Mulino has accused the US of spreading "lies and falsehoods" after the US State Department claimed American government vessels were no longer required to pay a fee to transit through the Panama Canal.

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio has since rowed back on his department's claim, but called the fee for American vessels "absurd" due to a treaty binding the US to protect the canal if it comes under attack.

US President Donald Trump has repeatedly voiced his desire to regain control of the waterway since taking office and has refused to rule out retaking it by force. He is due to speak with Mulino on Friday.

The Panama Canal is a 51-mile (82km) passage that links the Atlantic and Pacific oceans across the Central American country.

All vessels are required to pay a fee, based on size and type, for crossing the waterway but US ships have priority of passage.

In a post on X on Wednesday, the

State Department wrote: "US government vessels can now transit the Panama Canal without charge fees, saving the U.S. government millions of dollars a year."

Mulino reacted to the statement by saying he rejects "this method of managing bilateral relations on the basis of lies and falsehoods."

He said he asked his ambassador in Washington to take "firm steps" to reject the claim, calling it "simply and plainly intolerable."

Mulino added that US government vessels, including navy vessels, paid

"\$6-7m [£4.8-5.6m] a year" for the right of passage.

"It's not as if the canal toll is breaking the economy of the United States," he added.

The Panama Canal Authority (ACP) also made a statement saying it had "not made any adjustment" to tolls, adding that it was open to establishing a dialogue.

After Rubio and Mulino's meeting, Panama announced it would not renew its membership of China's infrastructure-building programme, known as the Belt and Road Initiative.

Rubio welcomed this move, calling it "a great step forward", though Panama denied that the decision had been made at the request of the US.

Trump has expressed fears that China could close the canal to the US in the event of a crisis - something Panama and China have strongly denied.

On Wednesday, China's Foreign Affairs spokesman, Lin Jian, said its partnership with Panama was yielding "fruitful results" and urged the country to "resist external interferences."

Rubio met the canal's administra-

tor, Ricaurte Vásquez Morales alongside Mulino on Sunday. America's top diplomat demanded that Panama make "immediate changes" to China's "influence and control" over the waterway.

This echoed Trump's inaugural address, where he stated that the canal was being operated by China and he wanted to "take it back."

Mulino has denied these allegations and rejected the plan, saying that the trade route "is and will remain" in Panama's hands.

The US built the canal in the early

20th Century but, after years of protest, President Jimmy Carter signed a treaty with Panama in 1977 to gradually hand back control of the waterway. Trump has called this "a big mistake" since returning to office.

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio has been on a tour of Central America to discuss migration and drug trafficking in the region.

Rubio's statement responding to Mulino's accusation of US "lies" was given at his last stop, the Dominican Republic.

How telco price hikes could shape consumer behaviour

LAGOS

Airtime demand may not significantly change as the Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC) approved a 50 percent tariff increase this year.

According to analysts, Nigerians will still demand airtime and data irrespective of their new prices as the demand for the product is inelastic. The inelasticity of demand means that price changes will have little or no effect on the quantity demanded.

One of the most fascinating topics in economics is the theory of consumer behaviour, specifically the theory of demand. Consumers aim to strike a balance between price and quantity demanded. When the price of a product rises, they often seek cheaper alternatives. Yet, this reaction depends on whether the product in question is elastic or inelastic.

In telecommunications, the demand for SIM cards, recharge cards, and data is relatively inelastic. For example, a 50 percent increase in data price may not lead to a proportional reduction in demand, as data accounts for only about 6 percent of household spending. Any decline in demand, if it occurs, is likely to be less than 50 percent.

This stands in stark contrast to elastic goods like food, which make up about 57 percent of household spending. In such cases, a 40 percent price increase could result in a significantly sharper drop in demand.

"This situation typically occurs with everyday household products and services. When the price increases, people will still purchase roughly the same amount of goods or services as they did before the increase because their needs stay the same. A similar situation exists when there is a decrease in price—demand will not increase substantially because consumers only have a limited need for the product(s), said Tim Vipond, chair of the Board of CFI Education.

Taiwo Oyedele, Chairman of the Presidential Committee on Fiscal Policy and Tax Reforms, during a panel discussion at the launch of the 2025 Macroeconomic Outlook Report organised by the Nigerian Economic Summit Group (NESG), supports the view that telecom services are price inelastic. According to him, even if telecom tariffs increase by 50 percent, it is unlikely to cause a major shift in consumer demand, as telecom expenses account for a relatively small share of household spending compared to necessities like food. He even highlighted how some consumers prioritise data purchases over basic needs, reinforcing the idea that demand for telecom services remains strong despite price adjustments.

Furthermore, Oyedele debunks concerns that the price hike will significantly impact inflation. He explains that telecom services currently constitute just about 1 percent of the Consumer Price Index (CPI), and even if rebased, they would only account for around 2.5 - 3



percent. In a worst-case scenario, a 50 percent increase in telecom prices would only contribute an additional 150 basis points to telecom inflation, which translates to a mere two basis points in overall CPI. In practical terms, this means if inflation were projected at 15 percent, it would only rise marginally to 15.02 percent, making the impact negligible.

These insights reinforce the argument that while consumers may adjust their telecom spending habits slightly, overall demand is unlikely to decline substantially, and fears of inflationary pressure from the hike are largely overstated.

Data from five African countries show Nigeria pays the least for phone calls. Using MTN as a case study, BusinessDay research indicates that a Ghanaian pays an average of N16 per minute, a Ugandan pays N11.93-N34.66 per minute, South Africa pays N123.57 per minute, Cameroon pays N67.81, and a Nigerian pays an average

of N11 per minute.

Furthermore, Nigeria has one of the cheapest data per IGB in the world, at \$0.38, behind Ghana and South Africa, which have data per IGB at \$0.40 and \$1.77, respectively.

Having said the above, direct comparison using exchange rates may have exaggerated the average cost of living between countries, given that Nigeria's naira lost about 129 percent of its value within a year (2023-2024).

The same currency depreciation made the business environment difficult for Telcos, which suffered losses due to the naira devaluation.

If the approved 50 percent is implemented, the average minute charge will move from an average of N11 to N16.5, while the average IGB data plan will move to \$0.57, which is about N864.

The Nigerian telecoms industry has a storied history of pricing evolution. In its early days, phone calls were billed per minute at a rate of

N50. Even if your call lasted 50 seconds, you would still be charged for a full minute. The entry of Globacom (GLO) disrupted this model by introducing per-second billing, which was revolutionary at the time. Despite this, early per-second billing rates still translated to about N25 per minute.

Telcos, recognising consumer sensitivity to price, devised innovative tariff plans to attract users. MTN's 'Xtracool' plan, for instance, allowed users to make unlimited free calls between 12:30 a.m. and 4:30 a.m. for as little as N100 in their account balance. This plan became wildly popular among Nigerian youths, who adjusted their schedules to take advantage of the offer. GLO responded with equally competitive offers, such as the 'GLO Infiniter' plan, which allowed users to call designated numbers at rates as low as N0.01 per second.

Even the procurement of SIM cards was once a luxury. A SIM card that cost about

N46,000 in the early 2000s is now practically free, thanks to increased competition and liberalisation in the industry. This intense competition has not only lowered costs but also increased accessibility, making telecom services a vital part of daily life for millions of Nigerians.

Despite the industry's history of competitiveness, a tariff hike is inevitable due to the economic realities facing telcos.

The last upward price review occurred 12 years ago, in 2012/2013, when Nigeria had approximately 113 million subscribers. By 2014, this number had grown by 9.04 percent to 127 million. However, subscriber growth does not necessarily translate to higher average revenue per user (ARPU), especially in a low-income economy like Nigeria.

Nigerians' purchasing power is significantly lower than that of their counterparts in South Africa. This means that while Nigeria's subscriber base is larger, the ARPU is much smaller.

The proposed price hike may further marginalise those at the lower end of the economic spectrum, potentially limiting their access to affordable data and call services. Yet, it's worth noting that many Nigerians are unaware of the actual per-second or per-minute charges they incur, focusing instead on overall affordability.

The Nigerian telecoms industry has long been cited as a case study of how liberalisation and competition can drive down prices. However, this

principle may not apply universally across other sectors. Competition may force down telecommunications products—like SIM cards, recharge cards, and data. This is not the case for other goods, such as food items, petrol, etc., where liberalisation and competition may not always translate to a decrease in prices.

Telecom services rank among the top five items consumed by households, according to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS). Data, in particular, plays a pivotal role in Nigeria's creative economy, including financial services. It also supports student learning and skills acquisition. However, higher data costs could widen the existing skills gap, especially among low-income consumers.

This situation presents an opportunity for states to strengthen their economies. By addressing broader economic challenges such as job creation and income inequality, governments can help cushion the impact of such price hikes on vulnerable populations. Additionally, telecom companies must continue to innovate by offering flexible and competitive plans that cater to diverse consumer needs.

The Nigerian telecom industry has come a long way—from N46,000 SIM cards and N50-per-minute calls to today's more affordable options. While challenges like currency depreciation and an unfavourable business environment persist, they underscore the importance of resilience and adaptability for both the industry and its consumers.

Perfect slow way to boil an egg - according to scientists

LONDON

Scientists have cracked the perfect way to boil an egg - astonishingly, it takes half an hour.

It is one of the undisputed facts of life that it is notoriously difficult to cook a perfectly boiled egg. Breakfasts can often be disappointing affairs when, after cracking the shell and dipping your toasted soldier into what you hope will be a culinary delight, you instead find that your yolk is dry and crumbly, or even worse, the egg white is a slimy watery mess.

The problem is that the yolk and albumen (the white part of the egg) cook at two different temperatures. Yolk requires a temperature of just 65C (149F) to cook, while the albumen

needs a little more heat at 85C (185F).

Conventional methods for cooking eggs, therefore, represent a compromise between those two seemingly incompatible truths. Hard-boil an egg at 100C (212F), and the white will soon become tender and just right. The yolk, however, will be fully set - which is alright if you like that sort of thing, but disappointing if you're after a soft, runny yolk. Another method of cooking an egg, known as involves placing the egg in a water bath at temperatures between 60 and 70C (140-158F) for one hour. This leaves the yolk deliciously runny, but the white can be left slimy and clear. However, worry not, as researchers have now discovered the perfect method for boiling

an egg. What's more, they have shown that the result is not only tastier, but better for you too.

In their new paper, researchers led by Pellegrino Musto, a scientist working at Italy's National Research Council in Pozzuoli, first simulated the egg-cooking process using computational fluid dynamics (CFD). CFD is the science of using computers to predict how liquids and gases flow based on the physical laws governing them, such as conservation of mass, momentum and energy.

The simulations suggested a new method - one likely to be entirely unfamiliar to most chefs and amateur cooks - that might give superior results. The approach, which the authors call periodic cooking, involves alternat-

ing between cooking the egg in a pan of boiling water kept at 100C (212F), and placing it into a luke-warm bowl kept at 30C (86F). To get the best results, the egg must be transferred between the two temperatures every two minutes for a total duration of 32 minutes, so it is probably not best suited to home cooks who like to dip in and out of the kitchen leaving their egg unsupervised.

If you are willing to put in the effort, however, your rewards will be plentiful. When scientists tried the new method in real life, the resulting egg was exceptional. The researchers confirmed this superiority by analysing the texture, sensory qualities and chemical structure of their perfectly boiled egg

using Nuclear Magnetic Resonance and High-Resolution Mass Spectrometry.

The results showed that periodically cooked eggs had a soft yolk similar to that of a sous vide egg - so far so good. However, unlike eggs cooked sous vide, the white albumen was not runny and uncooked, but instead had a consistency closer to that of a traditionally soft-boiled egg. According to the paper's authors, this is probably because, while temperatures in the periodically cooked egg white ranged between 35C (95F) and 100C (212F) during cooking, the yolk remained at a consistent temperature of 67C (153F) throughout.

Perhaps most interestingly, chemical analysis revealed that the yolk of periodically cooked eggs contained more polyphenols - a group of micronutrients mostly found in plants, and touted for their health benefits - than eggs cooked by other methods. This class of compounds is renowned for its antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties. Plants make them as a defence against stressful environmental conditions such as UV radiation, droughts or predation by insects. However, research increasingly shows they can benefit humans too. For example, epidemiological studies suggest that high dietary intake of polyphenols is associated with decreased risk of cardiovascular disease, specific forms of cancer and neurodegenerative diseases.



India cuts interest rates for the first time in five years

NEW DELHI

India's central bank has cut interest rates for the first time in nearly five years to counter slowing growth in Asia's third largest economy.

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) reduced its repo rate from 6.5 percent to 6.25 percent, in line with the expectations of many economists.

The repo rate is the level at which the central bank lends to commercial banks.

The latest cut happens when India's GDP growth is seen slowing to a four year low of 6.7 percent.

RBI governor Sanjay Malhotra said the bank was keeping its policy stance "neutral", which would open more space to support growth, signalling further rate cuts.

Investment growth and urban consumption in the world's fastest growing major economy have been flagging. Corporate profits have also shrunk in the first half of this financial year.

But moderating inflation, an increase in rural demand and good agricultural output will help growth, said Mr Malhotra.

The rate cut could lead to marginally lower mortgage and credit card inter-

est rates as well as cheaper borrowing costs for companies.

The central bank's rate reduction follows a range of measures previously announced, including an injection of \$18bn (£14.48bn) into the domestic banking system, to ease a cash shortage in the economy.

It had also cut the cash reserve ratio - or the reserves commercial banks need to maintain with the RBI - by half a percent in December.

The RBI's rate move follows the Union Budget's \$12bn tax cut for the struggling middle class.

Despite this, Mr Modi's government aims to curb spending to reduce the budget deficit. With limited room for fiscal stimulus, economists expect the central bank to cut rates further by 0.5 percent - 1 percent to support growth, according to various estimates.

However, global uncertainties due to US President Donald Trump's tariff war, an outflow of foreign investor money and a depreciating currency - which could further weaken if rates come down - have complicated the RBI's task.

The Indian rupee is trading near record lows due to heavy foreign investor outflows from stock markets in recent months.



Beijing hits back after new tariffs

BEIJING

China will not initiate trade conflicts and is willing to resolve differences through dialogue, while regarding unilateral bullying measures, China will take necessary measures to firmly defend its own rights and interests, the Ministry of Commerce said on Thursday.

The ministry made the remarks following Washington's levy of an additional 10 percent tariff on goods imported from China.

The unilateral imposition of tariffs by the United States seriously violates the rules of the World Trade Organization and exacerbates global trade tensions. China is willing to work with relevant countries to firmly advocate for free trade and multilateralism, jointly address the challenges of unilateralism and trade protectionism, and maintain the orderly and stable development of international trade, the ministry said.

"China's countermeasures aren't meant to provoke trade disputes, but



to defend national interests and international fairness," said Cui Fan, a professor of international trade at the University of International Business and Economics in Beijing. "If the US persists in its unilateral actions, China

will not hesitate to take more powerful countermeasures. China has the confidence and ability to respond to any challenge and safeguard its own rights, and contribute to the stability of the global economy," Cui said.

Meanwhile, China launched a series of export control policies for rare metal products and related technologies on

Tuesday. The ministry said the export control on tungsten and other related items is an international practice. The listed items this time have certain attributes for military and civilian use, and the downstream products boast high military risks.

"The move indicates China's consistent stance of maintaining world peace

and regional stability. The Chinese government will approve export applications that comply with regulations," said He Yongqian, a spokeswoman for the commerce ministry.

The ministry also put US clothing company PVH Corp and biotechnology company Illumina Inc on its unreliable entity list on Tuesday. The two firms vi-

olate normal market trading principles, interrupt normal transactions with Chinese enterprises, take discriminatory measures against Chinese firms, and seriously damage the legitimate rights and interests of Chinese companies, the ministry said.

"China has always handled export controls and unreliable entity lists with caution. The Chinese government is willing to strengthen cooperation with different countries to jointly maintain the security and stability of global industrial and supply chains. We welcome foreign enterprises to invest and develop in China, and we are committed to providing a stable, fair and predictable business environment for law-abiding and compliant foreign enterprises," she said.

Separately, the US Postal Service announced on Wednesday that it will continue accepting all inbound mail and packages from the Chinese mainland and Hong Kong, quickly reversing the suspension that went into effect on Tuesday.

In addition, the US government has canceled the "de minimis" tariff exemption rule for small packages and low-value items imported from China – a measure that exempted shipments worth less than \$800 from import duties.

The Ministry of Commerce said the US levying of an additional 10 percent tariff on Chinese products and the adjustment of its "de minimis" policy will undoubtedly increase the cost of consumption for US shoppers and affect their purchasing experiences.

"No matter how a country adjusts its trade policy, cross-border e-commerce shopping boasts strong competitiveness, and the trend of digital development in international trade will not change. We hope that the US can follow the trend and create a fair and predictable policy environment for the development of cross-border e-commerce," said He.

Nigerian hospitals struggle with growing trust deficit

LAGOS

Abiodun Osibamowo, an experienced medical director and head of department of medicine at Reddington Multispecialist Hospital, sighed as he reviewed the chart.

A 74-year-old woman, who recently returned from the United States presented with a persistent headache. No history of hypertension. He explained to the relative anxiously waiting in the emergency room, that a magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) was necessary before any treatment decisions.

Just hours later, Osibamowo received a frantic call from the patient's son. They were transferring her to the US. He tried to reason with them, stressing the importance of the MRI, but they were adamant. Their minds were made up. They were taking her to the US, their faith in Nigerian healthcare wavering.

Disheartened but undeterred, Osibamowo continued his rounds. The following day, the elderly woman was back. Her condition had worsened. The MRI revealed a subdural hematoma - blood accumulating in the layers of the brain. It was a serious, potentially life-threatening condition. Even with the diagnosis in hand, the family still hesitated. This time, Osibamowo pulled out all the stops. He patiently explained the procedure, the expertise available, and the success rates for such surgeries in Nigeria. He connected them with a neurosurgeon, who further clarified the process. He answered every question, addressing their fears and misconceptions.

He knew this wasn't just about this one patient; it was about battling the pervasive distrust that plagued the system. "I convinced them. I got

a neurosurgeon. It was very easy. There was no complication. We drained the blood. And she was okay. They were thanking us because they didn't know that it was something that we could do here. They came back for a follow-up and she was doing perfectly okay. No more headaches. So, it's like many people don't understand.

Many don't believe such a complex procedure could be handled so efficiently and effectively in Nigeria.

It is a deep-seated mistrust that drives so many Nigerians to seek healthcare abroad, sometimes unnecessarily. It was difficult to believe when Muhammad Ali Pate, health minister claimed foreigners were flocking to Nigeria for care. Nigeria possesses pockets of excellence, specialised units with highly skilled doctors, cutting-edge equipment (though often in short supply), and relatively affordable costs compared to the US or Europe.

For complex cases like the 74-year-old woman, these pockets of excellence could be a lifeline. There are specialised centres that are gradually attracting patients from the diaspora for procedures such as laparoscopic radical prostatectomy, plastic or cosmetic surgery, interventional cardiology, minimally invasive surgeries, and organ transplants among others.

But they are like drops in the ocean as public discussions on healthcare in Nigeria always circle back to the fundamental issues: systemic inefficiencies, poor infrastructure, shortage of healthcare workers, poor patient experience, and a severe trust deficit.

The successes, though significant, are often overshadowed by the daily struggles faced by ordinary Nigerians often in government hospitals.



ITV PGM SCHEDULE

SATURDAY 8 Feb	SUNDAY 9 Feb	MONDAY 10 Feb	TUESDAY 11 Feb	WEDNESDAY 12 Feb	THURSDAY 13 Feb	FRIDAY 14 Feb	SATURDAY 15 Feb	SUNDAY 16 Feb	MONDAY 17 Feb	TUESDAY 18 Feb	WEDNESDAY 19 Feb	THURSDAY 20 Feb	FRIDAY 21 Feb	SATURDAY 22 Feb	SUNDAY 23 Feb
5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi	5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi	5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi	5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi	5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi	5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi	5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi	5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi	5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi	5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi	5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi	5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi	5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi	5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi	5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi	5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi

WORLD

War crimes court condemns Trump's sanctions against its staff

AMSTERDAM

THE International Criminal Court (ICC) on Friday said it condemned the decision by US President Donald Trump to impose sanctions on its staff.

Trump on Thursday authorized economic and travel sanctions targeting people who work on International Criminal Court investigations of US citizens or US allies such as Israel, repeating action he took during his first term. The move was a protest against the

court's arrest warrant for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and came as the Israeli leader was visiting Washington.

The ICC said the order would undermine its judicial work and urged its 125 member states "to stand united" for justice and human rights.

"The court stands firmly by its personnel and pledges to continue providing justice and hope to millions of innocent victims of atrocities across the world, in all situations before it," the



Exterior view of the International Criminal Court, or ICC in The Hague, Netherlands on April 30, 2024. AP

court said.

The ICC was established in 2002 to prosecute war crimes, crimes against humanity, genocide and the crime of aggression when member states are unwilling or unable to do so themselves.

It can prosecute crimes committed by nationals of member states or on the territory of member states by other actors.

The United States is not a member state.

Xinhua

'Go fetch': Russian MFA sees Trump's comments about Ukraine's rare earth metals as command

MOSCOW

RUSSIAN Foreign Ministry Spokeswoman Maria Zakharova has interpreted US President Donald Trump's statement that the United States is interested in obtaining rare-earth metals from Ukraine and is seeking relevant guarantees from Kiev as his way of telling Zelensky and company to "go fetch."

"Apparently, the US president saw that Kiev was ready to sell Ukraine out for the sake of retaining US military and financial support and apparently decided to approach this conflict from a commercial point of view," Zakharova told a news briefing.

"You know, what US President Trump said to Vladimir Zelensky doesn't even look very much like a deal. It looks like he's telling him to go 'fetch'. And this is a command that the Kiev regime knows how to follow," Zakharova said.

She stressed that the Americans have had their eyes on Ukraine's natural riches for some time.

"With the help of the corrupt Kiev regime, they managed to lay their hands on, in particular, farmland, including fertile land, without much effort. Now that they've gotten hold of this fertile soil, the sponsors of the Kiev regime are looking for what else is left there. This time, they've turned to what's under the ground," she said.

Zakharova recalled that Zelensky expressed this idea implicitly in his so-called "victory plan" in October 2024, when he proposed to "partners" to shake hands on an agreement with Ukraine "on joint protection of Ukraine's critical resources, joint investment and use of Ukrainian economic potential."

"What do they mean when they talk about the country's critical resources? Of course, this concerns rare earth metals - uranium, titanium, lithium and so on. On February 4, Zelensky hurried to assure Washington that he was ready to jointly develop these minerals and thanked the United States for its efforts in supporting Ukraine," Zakharova noted.

South Africa to deepen reforms to drive inclusive growth - president

CAPE TOWN

SOUTH African President Cyril Ramaphosa said on Thursday that his government will initiate a fresh wave of reforms to drive inclusive economic growth that benefits all citizens.

Ramaphosa made the remarks when delivering the State of the Nation Address (SONA), under the theme "A nation that works, for all," on Thursday evening at the Cape Town City Hall before a joint sitting of both houses of parliament.

This marked the first SONA under the Government of National Unity (GNU) formed after the outcomes of the country's 2024 elections. In the address, the president outlined the task of the government in implementing the three strategic priorities of the Medium-Term Development Plan: driving inclusive growth and job creation, reducing poverty and tackling the high cost of living, and building a capable, ethical and developmental state.

According to him, the Medium-Term Development Plan was adopted recently by the GNU, which sets out a clear and ambitious program for the next five years.

"Our most urgent task is to grow our economy so that we can create jobs, reduce poverty and improve the lives of all South Africans," said Ramaphosa. "We want a nation with a thriving economy that benefits all. To create this virtuous cycle of investment, growth and jobs, we must lift economic growth to above 3 percent."

"Over the coming year, we will initiate a second wave of reform to unleash more rapid and inclusive growth," Ramaphosa noted. While highlighting that South Africa will deepen reforms in several key sectors such as energy, mining, tourism and public service, he said an immediate focus is to enable national power utility Eskom, logistics group Transnet and other state-owned enterprises that "are vital to our economy to function optimally."

The president further noted that investment in infrastructure is another priority. "To achieve higher levels of economic growth, we are undertaking massive investment in new infrastructure while upgrading and maintaining the infrastructure we have," he said.

"Government will spend more than 940 billion rand (about 50 billion U.S. dollars) on infrastructure over the next three years." On the international front, Ramaphosa pointed out that South Africa chose "Solidarity, Equality, and Sustainability" as the theme of its presidency of the Group of Twenty (G20), which the country assumed on Dec. 1, 2024, to underscore the need for cooperation and partnership among the countries of the world.

"For the first time in its history, the G20 is being hosted on the African continent following the admission of the African Union as a member of the G20. It is an opportunity to place the needs of Africa and the rest of the Global South more firmly on the international development agenda," he said.

Xinhua

Xi says Harbin to deliver great sports gala for world

HARBIN

CHINESE President Xi Jinping said yesterday that China's northeastern city of Harbin, host city of the 9th Asian Winter Games, will deliver a spectacular sports gala for the world.

At a banquet held by Xi (pictured) and his wife, Peng Liyuan, ahead of the opening ceremony of the Games, the Chinese leader extended a warm welcome to international dignitaries who were in the city to attend the ceremony.

Among the guests were Sultan of Brunei Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah, Kyrgyz President Sadyr Japarov, Pakistani President Asif Ali Zardari, Prime Minister of Thailand Paetongtarn Shinawatra, National Assembly Speaker of the Republic of Korea Woo Won-shik, International Olympic Committee President Thomas Bach, and Olympic Council of Asia Vice-President Timothy Fok Tsun-ting.

China's ice-and-snow passion ignited by major sports events has invigorated global winter sports, Xi told the guests while addressing the banquet.

The 9th Asian Winter Games attracted a record number of participating countries and regions, as well as registered athletes, Xi said.

According to the organizers, over 1,200 athletes from 34 countries and regions across Asia will compete in the Games. Harbin will deliver for the world a sports gala that is distinctly Chinese, uniquely Asian and spectacu-



lar, Xi noted.

The theme of the Games -- "Dream of Winter, Love among Asia" -- embod-

ies Asian people's shared aspiration and desire for peace, development and friendship, Xi noted. He called on

Asia to uphold the common dream of peace and harmony, jointly respond to all sorts of security challenges, and contribute to building an equal and orderly multipolar world.

He also stressed the shared pursuit of prosperity and development, calling on Asian people to work together to promote progress and development, and provide sustained momentum for a universally beneficial and inclusive economic globalization.

To realize the common wish of friendship and affinity, Xi called for promoting inclusiveness, coexistence and mutual learning among diverse civilizations.

Harbin, dubbed China's "ice city", is the birthplace of the country's modern winter sports. The city also hosted the third edition of the Games in 1996.

The ice-and-snow culture and economy are becoming a new driving force for the high-quality development of Harbin and a new bond linking the city and the world, Xi noted.

As the Chinese people are celebrating the Spring Festival, which ushered in the Year of the Snake, Xi wished all athletes "excellent performance with the agility of the snake".

"Among the 12 animals in the Chinese zodiac, the snake represents wisdom and agility. The Year of the Snake will surely brim with vigor and vitality," he said.

Senior Chinese leaders including Cai Qi attended the event. Xinhua

Philippines' VP Duterte prepared for impeachment

MANILA

PHILIPPINE Vice-President Sara Duterte said yesterday she had been preparing since last year for impeachment and would welcome on her defense team her firebrand father, former president Rodrigo Duterte, if interested to join.

Sara Duterte said she had not read the complaint against her endorsed by majority of lower house members but her lawyers were gearing up for a trial in the Senate. The Senate's president has said that could take place in June.

Asked during a press conference if her resignation was an option, she said: "We're not there yet. Those things are still too far off."

Duterte's remarks were her first since the lower house impeached her on Wednesday, charging her with culpable violation of the constitution, graft and corruption, other high crimes and betrayal of public trust. She has denied wrongdoing.



Philippine Vice-President Sara Duterte gestures as she speaks during a press conference in Manila, Philippines yesterday. AP

It stemmed from allegations she misused public funds while vice-president and education minister, amassed unex-

plained wealth, and threatened the lives of President Ferdinand Marcos Jr, the first lady and the lower house speaker.

Yesterday she again reiterated she had made no assassination threat.

Duterte said her 79-year-old father was welcome to join her defense team "if he wants to", adding he may not lead the team given his age. Duterte is a former city mayor and prosecutor who was Philippine president from 2016-2022.

The vice-president has been embroiled in a long-running row with former ally Marcos and has previously dismissed moves against her as politically motivated.

For her to be convicted and removed from her post, the support of two-thirds of senators at the trial is required. Duterte has some key allies in the Senate, as does Marcos.

Duterte said she could not say if she would secure enough votes for an acquittal.

"The only thing I can say at this point is God save the Philippines," Duterte said before taking questions from journalists.

Agencies

Diversity of daily commodities reflects China's economic vitality

When selecting a pillow in Chinese market, one might find himself overwhelmed by the vast array of options.

Even within the category of functional pillows, there is a wide variety, from the traditional ones made of buckwheat, cassia seed, and bamboo charcoal to the increasingly popular memory foam, latex, zero-pressure, and down pillows. When considering wellness needs, there

are even more choices, with over a dozen types of Chinese herbal pillows alone.

The shapes of these pillows follow ergonomic principles, while their functions cater to personalized needs. The fillings are designed to aid in health and wellness. These small pillows embody both technological and industrial innovations.

This sense of being overwhelmed by choices is a

common experience across various subcategories in consumer goods. Daily necessities are indispensable in people's lives, offering an important window into China's economic growth and its high-quality development.

Where does the growth in consumption come from? It arises from the precise identification of new consumer demands.

For example, toilet paper

that easily clogs toilets has led to the rise of water-soluble toilet paper, which is both environmentally friendly and hygienic. Timed power outlets address safety concerns from leaving plugs in, while also saving energy. Stretchable storage boxes keep things organized; waterproof medical tape securely holds surgical dressings; safety box cutters make it easier to unpack deliveries. These small but clever products meet

the needs of consumption upgrades, making life more convenient.

The strength of the Chinese economy lies in the evolving and upgrading demands from a consumer market of over 1.4 billion people, which continuously stimulates changes and upgrades in production and supply. Demand is a broad concept but also reflects individual differences. For example, elderly consumers prior-

itize smart aging solutions and healthcare features when selecting daily necessities. Young people, who are keen on sharing and discovering new products on social platforms, often look for personalized, custom-made items, focusing more on brand value and shopping experience. Office workers, on the other hand, tend to choose practical items, like versatile power outlets and multifunctional storage boxes, that suit

their work environment and help reduce stress.

China's massive consumer market not only exhibits huge general demand but also embraces diverse individual needs. By tapping into these differentiated and personalized demands, many companies have been able to expand and strengthen themselves by aligning technological and industrial innovation.

People's Daily

China's winter economy snowballing as sports event, cultural tourism fuel public passion

HARARE

LOCATED in China's northernmost province of Heilongjiang, Harbin Ice-Snow World, a breathtaking ice-themed park known for its dazzling ice sculptures, is now one of China's hottest tourist destinations.

During the eight-day-long Spring Festival holiday that ended Tuesday, over 610,000 trips were made to the park. Daily trips on Saturday exceeded 100,000, setting a new record for single-day attendance. Since opening its doors this season, the park has received over 2.66 million visits.

The ice and snow tourism fervor is not limited to Harbin, but palpable nationwide. With its ambitious plans and growing public enthusiasm, China's winter economy is poised to become a cornerstone of its cultural and economic landscape, experts noted in the latest episode of the China Economic Roundtable, an all-media talk show hosted by Xinhua News Agency.

EMBRACE THE WINTER

The increasing popularity of Harbin Ice-Snow World is partly attributed to the city's upcoming role as the host of the 2025 Asian Winter Games, marking China's

second major winter sports event following the Beijing 2022 Winter Olympics.

Ai Yu, a senior official of the General Administration of Sport of China, noted that the success of the Beijing 2022 Winter Olympics has reshaped China's relationship with winter sports, and transformed the landscape of ice and snow activities across the country.

Public enthusiasm for winter sports has surged, extending far beyond traditional hubs such as Heilongjiang. The trend is now moving southward, westward, and eastward, with activities no longer limited to winter but available year-round, both indoors and outdoors, Ai said.

Dai Bin, president of the China Tourism Academy, highlighted the role of technology and investment in promoting winter sports, with artificial snow and ice facilities making winter sports accessible even in the warmest regions.

A survey from the academy showed more than 70 percent of the respondents are willing to engage in winter leisure activities, with over 60 percent planning to maintain or increase their spending on winter tourism. The 2024-2025 winter season is expected to attract some 520 mil-



This photo shows the recording site of the 12th episode of the China Economic Roundtable, an all-media talk show hosted by Xinhua News Agency. (Xinhua)

lion trips, generating over 630 billion yuan (about 87.87 billion U.S. dollars) in tourism revenue.

Winter has evolved from a season of dormancy to one of vibrant activities, Dai noted. "In the past, winter meant freezing temperatures and a pause in daily life. Now, people embrace the cold and explore northern regions."

MORE THAN JUST FUN

China's winter economy is not just about sports and tourism; it's also driving significant growth in manufacturing and services, experts said.

Peng Fuwei, a senior official of the National Development and Reform Commission, noted that the industry has formed a "dual-engine" structure, with winter manufacturing and services leading the way.

"China now produces a comprehensive range of winter sports equipment, from personal gear to high-end snow-making machines and snow groomers. In 2023, winter equipment sales reached about 22 billion yuan," he said.

Related service sectors are also thriving,

with winter sports fueling growth in areas like event hosting, catering, accommodation, and training.

Heilongjiang, for example, has developed cutting-edge technologies like multi-robot ice sculpting and has established itself as a hub for testing and refining automobiles under extreme cold conditions. "Thanks to robotics, our ice sculptures are built faster and more efficiently," said Qi Bin, deputy director of Heilongjiang's culture and tourism department.

New cultural experiences, such as snowfield hot springs and concerts, are also emerging, further enriching the winter tourism ecosystem, Dai observed.

TO MAKE THE SNOWBALL BIGGER

Seeking to leverage its vast ice and snow resources to drive economic growth, China is doubling down on its commitment to expanding its winter economy, which encompasses sports, culture, equipment, and tourism.

The sector has already reached a trillion-yuan scale, and the country aims to

grow it to 1.2 trillion yuan by 2027 and 1.5 trillion yuan by 2030, according to an official guideline released in 2024.

To achieve these goals, the government is integrating winter sports and tourism into its national development plans. "We will continue to support the industry through policies, funding, and infrastructure development," Peng said, adding that key regions in places including Heilongjiang and Xinjiang will receive targeted support to become world-class winter sports destinations.

There are also plans to sustain the momentum of winter sports participation, expand their reach, and integrate sports events with tourism, according to Ai.

To further tap the industry's potential, Dai called for extending the winter industry's value chain. This includes combining winter equipment with personal gear and creating new travel routes, all in a bid to build a robust ecosystem for the winter economy.

Ultimately, the goal is to make winter sports and tourism an integral part of people's lives, Dai added. "When people fall in love with winter activities, the foundation for a thriving winter economy will be firmly established."

Russia, US not yet discussing Putin-Trump meeting – Kremlin

NEW YORK

MOSCOW and Washington have not yet started discussing a possible meeting between Russian President Vladimir Putin and his US counterpart Donald Trump, Kremlin Spokesman Dmitry Peskov told CNN.

"They haven't had any initial contact to discuss whether they need to meet or not and if they need, when and how," he said. Peskov also advised CNN journalists "not to hurry."

On February 4, Trump said that Washington was holding very constructive talks with both Moscow and Kiev on resolving the conflict in Ukraine. He praised the progress of the consultations and expressed hope that potential agreements would exceed all expectations.

Regional peace mediator calls for dialogue to end crisis in eastern DRC

NAIROBI

THE security and humanitarian crisis in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) can only be resolved through dialogue, a regional peace mediator said Thursday.

Kanze Dena (pictured), the spokesperson of Kenyan former President Uhuru Kenyatta who is also the facilitator of the East African Community (EAC)-led Nairobi Process, said that the Luanda Process, a peace initiative launched in 2022 and endorsed by the African Union, and the Nairobi Process hold the greatest promise for a resolution and termination of the crisis in the eastern DRC.

"The two processes are complementary and interdependent," Dena told journalists in Nairobi, the capital of Kenya.

The Nairobi Process was structured around political dialogue which involved political factions as well as military intervention through the deployment of the East African Community Regional Force to provide peacekeeping support.

Dena noted that it is only through the close coordination of the bilateral negotiations between Rwanda and DRC and the Inter-Congolese Dialogue and Conferencing Process that the ongoing crisis can be brought to a fruitful conclusion.

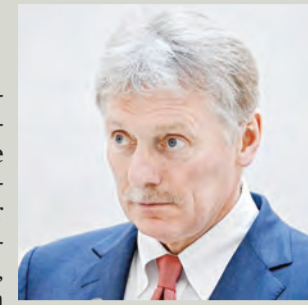
Dena observed that Kenyatta remains committed to finding pathways to peace, in collaboration with DRC, regional partners as well as international stakeholders.

The remarks came as Goma, the capital of North Kivu province and a key regional hub, remained in turmoil after the March 23 Movement rebels on Jan. 26 said that they had taken control of the city, a claim the Congolese government has not recognized.

Leaders from the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the East Africa Community (EAC) are due to hold a joint summit in Tanzania on Friday and Saturday to discuss the situation in the eastern DRC.

This follows an agreement between the Chairman of SADC who is also the President of Zimbabwe Emmerson Mnangagwa and his Kenyan counterpart William Ruto who is also the EAC chairperson.

Ruto said Monday that President Felix Tshisekedi of the DRC and President Paul Kagame of Rwanda have confirmed attendance at the meeting, which will be preceded by a ministerial meeting Friday before the heads of state convene Saturday.



More Mideast countries reject Trump's Gaza relocation plan

CAIRO

MORE countries in the Middle East on Thursday voiced their rejection of a proposal by U.S. President Donald Trump to take control of the Gaza Strip and relocate its residents elsewhere.

On Tuesday, Trump suggested that the United States will take over Gaza and redevelop it after Palestinians are relocated elsewhere. He made these remarks in a joint press conference at the White House with visiting Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

Many Arab and Muslim countries have voiced their opposition to the idea of displacing the Gazans from their homeland.

The Palestinian presidency on Thursday said that Palestine and its land, history, and holy sites are not for sale, emphasizing that the rights of the Palestinian people are neither negotiable nor subject to com-

promise.

In a press statement, Nabil Abu Rudeineh, the spokesman of the Palestinian presidency, said, "The Palestinian people, who have made immense sacrifices in defense of their national rights, will not relinquish even an inch of their land, including the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, and East Jerusalem."

Any proposed solutions, he insisted, must align with international legitimacy and the Arab Peace Initiative.

Egypt reaffirmed its commitment on Thursday to collaborate with international partners and allies to implement plans for Gaza's early recovery, rubble removal, and reconstruction within a specific timeframe.

This plan will be implemented as the Palestinians will remain in the Gaza Strip, who refuse to be displaced, according to a statement by the Egyptian Foreign Ministry.



The statement also rejected "any proposal or vision" that seeks to resolve the Palestinian issue by uprooting the Palestinian people, displacing them from their historical land, or seizing that land, whether temporarily or permanently, while affirming that Egypt will not be "party to any such actions."

The Libyan Foreign Ministry on Thursday also rejected any attempt to displace Palestinians from the Gaza Strip and the occupied West Bank.

"The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the State of Libya confirms its firm and supportive position on the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people ... foremost among which is the

scheme to undermine the Palestinian national cause.

In a statement issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Algeria reiterated its firm stance that achieving lasting peace in the Middle East is inseparable from upholding the rights of the Palestinian people to an independent state.

Algeria underscored its support for the establishment of an independent and sovereign Palestinian state based on the two-state solution, considering it "the only just and permanent resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict."

The Libyan Foreign Ministry on Thursday also rejected any attempt to displace Palestinians from the Gaza Strip and the occupied West Bank.

"The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the State of Libya confirms its firm and supportive position on the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people ... foremost among which is the

right of the Palestinian people to establish their independent state with Jerusalem as its capital," the ministry said in a statement.

"Libya stresses its absolute rejection of any practices aimed at the forced displacement or arbitrary expulsion of Palestinians, changing the demographic composition of the occupied territories, or imposing racist policies that perpetuate the occupation and violate the most basic human rights," the statement noted. It condemned any "acts of violence targeting civilians or acts used as a pretext to perpetuate the occupation and undermine the chances of achieving a just peace."

On Wednesday, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan rejected the proposal during a joint press conference in Ankara with his visiting German counterpart, Frank-Walter Steinmeier.

Xinhua

SE China's Fujian drives development of new business forms through ecotourism

HOW many new experiences can an ecotourism route offer?

In the case of the Wuyi Mountains national forest trail, the answer is "plenty."

On a warm winter's day, with a gentle mountain breeze on his face, He Weixin, an outdoor enthusiast from Xiamen city, southeast China's Fujian province, was struck by the lush greenery surrounding him as he walked along the Wuping section of the Wuyi Mountains national forest trail.

As sunlight filtered through the dense canopy of trees, He walked along a mountain trail paved with river pebbles in Jiwen village, Wan'an township, Wuping county, Longyan city, southeast China's Fujian province. Before long, sweat broke out on his forehead.

"The area is well-connected, with five walking loops to choose from. The surrounding environment is pristine and ideal for hiking and mountaineering," he said, impressed by how the trail design complemented the stunning scenery on either side.

The Wuyi Mountains national forest trail connects various stunning natural spots in Fujian, including the Tianjieshan national forest park, the Minjiangyuan national wetland park, and the Zhongshan River National Wetland Park, covering six nature reserves and two state-owned forest farms.

Jiwen village, a key stop along this forest trail, has made it an important part of its infrastructure for the development of forest tourism, according to Li Cailin, head of the villagers' committee of Jiwen village.

The section of the forest trail in Jiwen village is rich in natural broadleaf forests, according to Li, noting that the section, by making the most of ancient roads and existing footpaths, has managed to preserve the natural beauty and integrity of the local forest ecosystem.

Leveraging its rich forest resources, Wuping county has developed a range of forest-based wellness services, including rehabilitation and recuperation services, leisure activities, sports experiences, and nature education, attracting numerous visitors.



Teachers and students from Quanzhou Normal University conduct field sketching during a study tour in Taining county, Sanming city, southeast China's Fujian province. (Photo/Taining Converged Media Center)

"In recent years, we've been making use of the forest floor space to develop specialty industries like forest fungi cultivation, beekeeping, and medicinal herb farming," Li said. "When visitors come and see the good environment, many of them choose to buy some of our forest products taking home."

Statistics show that in 2024, Wuping county's under-forest economy covered an area of around 1.61 million mu (about 107,586.67 hectares) and generated a total output value of 4.71 billion yuan (about

\$646.85 million), while its forest-based wellness service facilities received nearly 3.48 million visits, producing a total output value of 1.42 billion yuan.

Not long ago, Jiang Anyao, a second-year graduate student from Shanghai Jiao Tong University, participated in a study tour at the Minjiangyuan national wetland park in Jianning county, Fujian, as a member of a team aimed to gain deep in-

sights into biodiversity.

"What plant is this?" "What's the name of the bird that was just foraging?"

Jiang and other members of the team asked questions and took notes as they explored the park's various ecological sites along the riverbank.

"Seeing it all firsthand really helps you appreciate the rich biodiversity of nature. It has made me realize just how crucial ecological conservation is," Jiang said.

Zhou Sixing, deputy director of the tourism development center of Jianning county, revealed that the county's hotels are so busy during public holidays that it's hard to book a room.

"The national wetland park is endowed with abundant natural resources and a unique ecological environment. So we have made observations of and introductions to the natural landscapes of the park a highlight of our study tour

program, helping participants learn the geological processes that formed the landscapes," Zhou said. Following the forest trail further north, visitors can reach Taining county in Sanming city, Fujian.

Taining county's Dajin Lake Geopark is known for its unique geological relics of water-based Danxia landform, characterized by reddish sandstone features.

The red and orange rock formations, reminiscent of a fiery sunset, reflect in the clear waters of Dajin Lake, offering breathtaking views to visitors.

As a black kite flew over the lake into mountains under the glowing sun, photography enthusiast Lin Na quickly snapped a picture of the moment.

"Every winter, the wetlands by the lake attract birds like egrets and black kites. I wait here to capture the perfect shot," Lin explained.

People's Daily



Yanga aim to maintain lead under new head coach Miloud Hamdi

By Correspondent Nassir Nchimbi

YOUNG Africans SC are determined to solidify their lead atop the Premier League under their newly appointed head coach, Miloud Hamdi, who joined the team midweek from Singida Black Stars.

Hamdi (pictured) watched from the stands as his new team secured a dominant 6-1 victory over KenGold at the KMC Complex on Wednesday.

Technical director Abdulhamid Moalin oversaw the match following the sudden departure of Sead Ramovic.

Ramovic's exit was reportedly triggered by an irresistible offer from Algerian side CR Belouizdad. However, the defending champions are quickly moving forward under Hamdi.

Their win against KenGold, coupled with Simba SC's 1-1 draw against Singida Fountain Gate, leaves Young Africans in first place with 45 points, one point ahead of their rivals who now have 44.

Following their group stage elimination from the CAF Champions League, Young Africans are now focusing on domestic competitions. This comes after the team reached the quarterfinals of the same competition last year.

According to Young Africans' Media and Information Manager, Ali Kamwe, the team's new coach has already started training sessions to prepare for their upcoming match against JKT Tanzania at Major General Isamuho Stadium on Monday.

Last season, the two teams played to a 0-0 draw at the same venue.

Kamwe acknowledged that JKT Tanzania are a tough team to beat at home

and emphasized that these early preparations are crucial for Young Africans to maintain their lead in the league.

"The coach is already focused on our upcoming game against JKT Tanzania, and that's how we'll maintain our lead in the Premier League. We know the league is tough, but we have to keep working hard," Kamwe commented.

He also stated: "We're pleased that the managerial change hasn't affected our form and strength. Coach Hamdi responded quickly to his appointment, providing the team with a program immediately. This shows his determination and ambition going forward."

Kamwe also defended striker Prince Dube, who has faced criticism for missed goal opportunities despite his strong contributions this season with seven goals, four assists, and 11 goal involvements.

"I believe the criticism of Dube is very unfair, considering his contributions to the team. His chance creation, assists, and goals are significant. It's important that we support him and put in good performances as a team," Kamwe stated.

He added: "We shouldn't fall into the trap of thinking our players aren't performing well when the numbers suggest otherwise. We're happy with Dube, especially now that he's started scoring. It shows his commitment to the team."

Young Africans striker Clement Mzize currently leads the Premier League in scoring with nine goals, followed by Elvis Rupia and Leonel Ataba, who each have eight.

Ngome eyes Black Mambaz scalp in 2025 Mapinduzi hockey tourney

By Correspondent Japheth Kazenga

DAR ES SALAAM hockey teams, Ngome and Black Mambaz, are set to face off in the city this morning as the battle for the trophy in the 2025 Mapinduzi tournament gathers pace.

It will be one of the day's two encounters in the men's event as the Tanzania Hockey Association (THA)-organized showpiece enters the second day at the Lugalo venue.

In the men's event's second clash, domestic hockey big guns Moshi Khalsa would lock horns with the Twende team in a fixture scheduled to start at 9 am.

In the women's showdown, Buza will take on Ilala in the day's first game slated for 1 pm, whereas Twende will face the TPDF squad in the following tie.

The THA Chairman Kaushik Doshi disclosed that six men's teams and four women's outfits are battling it out in the annual showdown - to be played for three days.

Tanzania People's Defence Force (TPDF) outfit, Moshi Khalsa, Black Mambaz, Zanzibar, Twende, and Ngome make the men's event teams.

The women's event teams are regular campaigners - Twende



Hockey players are in action during one of the 2024 Mapinduzi hockey tournament clashes at Ukonga venue in Dar es Salaam in March. PHOTO: COURTESY OF TANZANIA HOCKEY ASSOCIATION

and TPDF team, and Buza and Ilala - mostly made up of youthful female hockey players.

Contenders in the men's event have been placed in pools A and B, consisting of three squads apiece.

Defending champions Moshi Khalsa, the TPDF team and Twende make Pool A, with Pool B constituting Black Mambaz, Ngome, and Zanzibar.

Doshi pointed out that the

women's event would be played in a round robin system.

The THA boss added that the showdown has once again been sponsored by Reliance Insurance Co and Nas Tyre Service Ltd.

This year's showdown will come to an end tomorrow - with the trophy tie set for 10.30 am.

Notable absentees in the 2025 edition of the showpiece

are Arusha Twigas, Tanga Stars, JMK Youth Park, and Kili Vijana.

The season-opening hockey showdown is a continuation of efforts by THA to boost hockey promotion domestically.

The Mapinduzi hockey tournament champions are confirmed as the particular season's national hockey club champions and they are guaranteed participation in continental club tournaments.

By Field Level Media

LeBRON James poured in 42 points to join Michael Jordan as the only 40-year-olds to score 40 points in an NBA game as the host Los Angeles Lakers notched a 120-112 victory over the Golden State Warriors on Thursday night.

James also grabbed a season-best 17 rebounds to go with eight assists and six 3-pointers in an epic performance as the Lakers won their fourth straight game and 10th in their past 12.

Jordan scored 43 points for the Washington Wizards against the New Jersey Nets on Feb. 21, 2003, four days after his 40th birthday. James turned 40 on Dec. 30.

Austin Reaves added 23 points and Gabe Vincent scored 15 on five 3-pointers for the Lakers. Rui Hachimura and Jaxson Hayes had 11 points apiece and Jarred Vanderbilt collected 14 rebounds.

Stephen Curry had 37 points and seven rebounds for the Warriors. Curry scored 19 points in the fourth quarter, when he made four 3-pointers (he finished 6 of 20 for the game).

Buddy Hield and Moses Moody scored 14 points each, while Pat Spencer and Draymond Green added 13 apiece for Golden State.

Neither Warriors newcomer Jimmy Butler nor Lakers addition Luka Doncic (calf) played.

The Lakers shot 50 percent, including 13 of 35 from 3-point range.

Golden State made 40.6 percent of its shots, including 16 of 53 from behind the arc.

Curry drained a trey to bring the Warriors within 115-109 with 1:02 left, but Hachimura's dunk with 48.1 seconds left helped the

LeBron James scores 42 as Lakers hold off Warriors

Lakers hold on for their third straight win over Golden State this season.

Golden State trailed by 20 at halftime but pulled within 83-77 on a basket by Spencer with 3:11 left in the third quarter. The Lakers answered with a closing 7-2 push to lead 90-79 entering the fourth quarter.

James hit a jumper to start

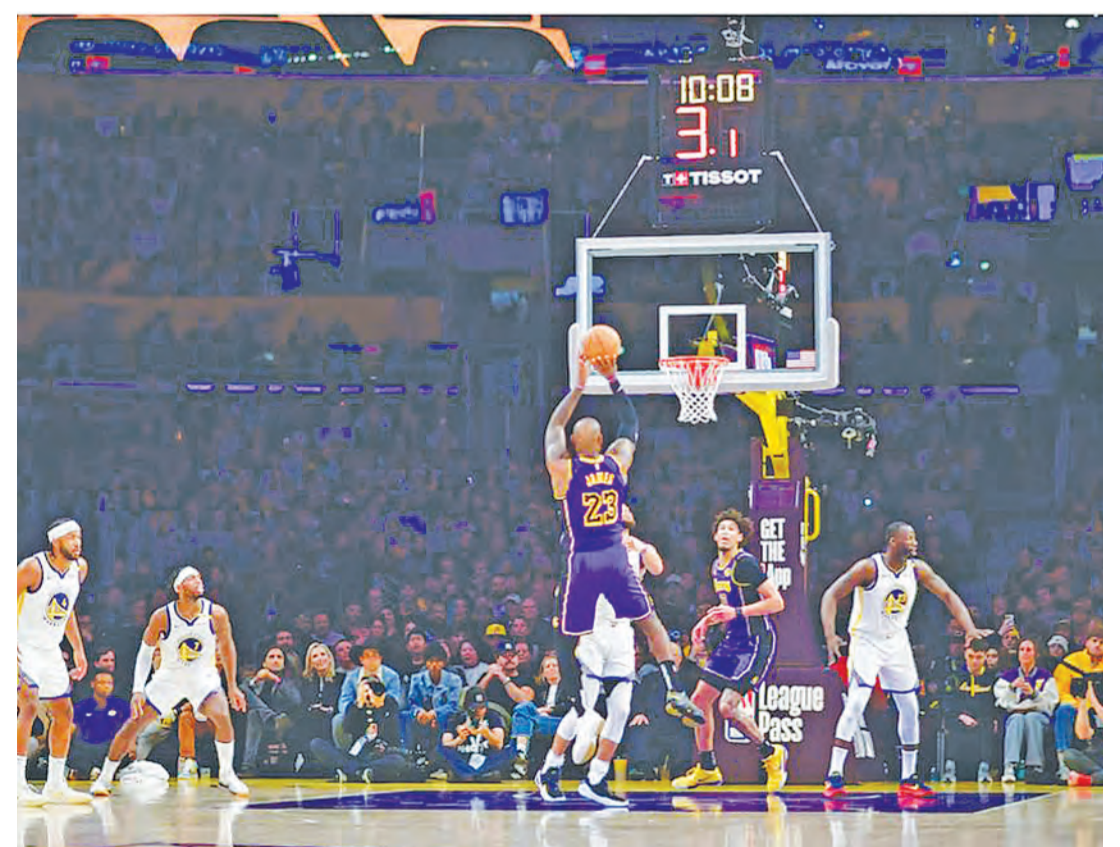
the final stanza before Golden State scored eight of the next nine points and crept within 93-87 on Moody's 3-pointer with 9:48 left.

A 3-pointer by Curry brought the Warriors within 109-104 with 3:40 remaining.

James drained a 3-pointer with 1:08 left to go over the 40-point mark.

The Lakers started fast and led 34-21 after the first quarter.

James drained three 3-pointers in 38 seconds -- the last from 34 feet -- as part of an 11-0 run in which Los Angeles took a 47-23 lead with 8:26 remaining in the half. The lead was later 26 before the Lakers settled for a 69-49 halftime advantage. **REUTERS**



Los Angeles Lakers forward LeBron James (23) shoots a three-point basket against the Golden State Warriors during the second half at Crypto.com Arena in Los Angeles, California, USA, on Thursday. Agencies

Holdes Yanga face Coastal Union in Federation Cup Round of 32

By Correspondent Michael Mwebe

FEDERATION Cup holders Young Africans face a challenging test against Coastal Union in the Round of 32 of this year's competition.

Last season, Young Africans claimed the title by defeating Azam FC 6-5 on penalties at the New Amaan Complex in Zanzibar, following a goalless draw after 120 minutes. The victory secured

their third consecutive Federation Cup triumph.

The draw for this season's competition was conducted yesterday in Dar es Salaam, under the supervision of Tanzania Football Federation (TFF) Competition Manager Baraka Kizuguto.

The Round of 32 matches is set to take place between March 4th and 14th.

Young Africans and Coastal Union share a memorable his-

tory in the tournament, having last met in the thrilling 2022 final, which ended in a dramatic 3-3 draw before the Jangwani Street-based side triumphed 4-1 in the penalty shootout.

The winner of the Young Africans vs. Coastal Union clash will advance to the Round of 16 to face either Police Tanzania or Songea FC.

Meanwhile, Simba, fresh off their victory over Kilimanjaro

Wonders, will take on Championship side TMA Stars, who have been in impressive form this season. The winner of that fixture will meet either Tanzania Prisons or Big Man.

In another intriguing matchup, Azam FC will battle Mbeya City, with the winner progressing to face either Mtibwa Sugar - currently leading the Championship - or Town Stars.

Regarding the venue for this

year's Federation Cup final, Kizuguto stated: "We are still receiving applications from different regions, so the bidding process is ongoing."

Full Round of 32 Draw:

Cosmopolitan FC vs. KMC FC
Mbeya Kwanza vs. Mambali Academy
Tanzania Prisons vs. Big Man
Kagera Sugar vs. Namungo
Police Tanzania vs. Songea United

Kiluvya United vs. Pamba Jiji FC
Mtibwa Sugar vs. Towns Stars
Giraffe Academy vs. Green Warriors

JKT Tanzania vs. Biashara United
Tabora United vs. Transit Camp
Mashujaa FC vs. Geita Gold
Simba SC vs. TMA Stars
Azam FC vs. Mbeya City
Singida Black Stars vs. Leo Tena
Young Africans vs. Coastal Union
Fountain Gate vs. Stand United

Flick thrilled with Barca offensive power after thrashing of Valencia

BARCELONA

BARCELONA displayed their devastating attacking prowess in a 5-0 victory over Valencia in the Copa del Rey quarter-finals on Thursday, a dominating performance which manager Hansi Flick said epitomised what he wants from his team.

Barca extended their unbeaten run to 10 games after opening up an early four-goal lead led by a hat-trick from Ferran Torres, who stepped in for LaLiga and Champions League top-scorer Robert Lewandowski as Flick rested key players.

"It is amazing and it is the style we want to play," Flick told TVE.

"The hunger this team has to always go after the next goal and then again and again is just remarkable.

"This is a young team that has learned how to play in harmony and with the rhythm we wanted and they are always focused in scoring goals."

Barcelona have scored 109 goals in 35 matches in all competitions this season, an average of over three goals per game and only one goal less than the 110 in 53 games they netted in the entire 2023-24 campaign.

Barcelona joined Real Madrid, Atletico and Real Sociedad in a two-legged semi-finals, with the draw set to take place on Wednesday.

"It was a great result which was very important for us, I'm very happy with the way the team played," Flick said.

"They were focused from the start, creating chances and being aggressive and it was good that we managed to score early, it helped us a lot."

REUTERS

No drama for Inter's Inzaghi despite defeat at Fiorentina

FLORENCE, Italy

INTER Milan suffered a 3-0 loss at Fiorentina in their rescheduled Serie A fixture on Thursday, but manager Simone Inzaghi does not want to make a drama of the defeat and feels it is still too early to worry about the league standings.

The original match on December 1 had been suspended when Fiorentina's Edoardo Bove collapsed on the pitch, and Inzaghi's side were deservedly beaten in Florence where the game recommenced at 0-0 in the 17th minute.

The manager will now need to prepare his side to meet Fiorentina again on Monday at the San Siro in the next round of league fixtures.

"Congratulations to Fiorentina. It's a deserved defeat, we didn't put anything on the field between running, aggression and determination," Inzaghi told broadcaster DAZN.

"Now is not the time to make dramas but it is a defeat that hurts for how it came and how it has matured.

"Now we will have three and a half days before meeting Fiorentina again. Today we didn't put on the field what we always put in."

Inter could have moved to the top of the standings on goal difference, but instead, the defeat leaves them three points behind Napoli. It is still early days, however, as far as Inzaghi is concerned.

The loss was all the more surprising given Fiorentina's situation. Six players who had been on the bench in the original fixture have since left the club, and because of the Serie A rules, they could not field any of their new signings.

REUTERS

LaLiga chief Tebas slams Real over referee complaint letter

MADRID

LaLIGA President Javier Tebas criticised Real Madrid on Thursday, saying the club had "lost their head" after lodging an letter of complaint against the Spanish league's referees.

Madrid sent the letter following their 1-0 defeat by Espanyol on Saturday, with controversy surrounding a decision not to award a red card to Espanyol defender Carlos Romero for fouling Kylian Mbappe as he ran up the pitch on a breakthrough.

"They are against everything. That's the reality. Real Madrid want to damage the competition, not just the referees," Tebas told a meeting of LaLiga clubs, the Spanish Football Federation (RFEF) and representatives of the Spanish refereeing committee (CTA), which Real did not attend.

"They have constructed a narrative of victimhood that culminated in the statement they released the other day. They have told a story of victimhood that is not true," the president added.

The LaLiga champions said the officials' decisions - including those of the video assistant referees (VAR) - were biased against them and "completely discredited".

REUTERS

Real Madrid brace for red-hot Atletico in critical derby test

MADRID

DESPITE sitting top of LaLiga, reigning champions Real Madrid may feel like they have a lot to prove when they host Atletico Madrid today with their in-form city rivals eager to seize the momentum in the title race and leapfrog them in the table.

Real have failed to beat any of their top-four rivals this season and head into Saturday's derby searching for a statement victory to silence some of their doubters.

It will be the first of two massive challenges facing Carlo Ancelotti's side in the coming days, with the team also travelling to England next week for the first leg of their Champions League playoff clash at Manchester City.

Beating Diego Simeone's Atletico today could be a turning point for Ancelotti's team, who have been under scrutiny for their inconsistent form as they seek to de-



FILE: Real Madrid players pose for a team group photo before the Champions League match against Brest at Stade de Roudourou, in Guingamp, France on January 29, 2025. REUTERS

pend their titles in both competitions.

Defeats to AC Milan and Liverpool in the Champions League hurt, but they were more severely exposed in two thrashings handed out by old rivals Barcelona.

A 4-0 loss at home in the league and a 5-1 demolition in the Spanish Super Cup raised questions as to whether Real had it in them to defend their European and domestic crowns.

Real have 49 points in LaLiga, one more than a red-hot Atletico, who have been in imperious form winning 19 of their last 21 games in all competitions.

Sterling performances from Antoine Griezmann, Julian Alvarez and Rodrigo De Paul have earned Atletico big wins at Barcelona and Paris St Germain, while Diego Simeone's side have arguably been playing some of the best football on the continent over the last few months.

While Real failed to secure a top-eight finish in the Champions League, Simeone's Atletico earned direct access to the last 16 after finishing fifth in the league-phase table.

They will also have recent history on their side when they step onto the Santiago Bernabeu pitch today.

Real have won only one of their last six capital derbies, a 5-3 extra-time victory in last year's Super Cup in Saudi Arabia.

Atletico also handed Real their only two defeats of a near-perfect 2023-24 season in which they won the LaLiga and Champions League double.

A win at Santiago Bernabeu would give Atletico the advantage in the table at a crucial stage of the campaign, with Real under pressure having to play two extra playoff games to stay alive in the Champions League while struggling with several injuries sustained to key defensive players.

Already missing both defensive stalwart Dani Carvajal and Brazil centre back Eder Militao for the season with torn anterior cruciate ligaments, Ancelotti then lost Antonio Ruediger and David Alaba with leg muscle injuries.

The Italian coach gave 20-year-old Jacobo Ramon his first senior start alongside fellow academy player Raul Asencio in Real's 3-2 Copa del Rey win at Leganes on Wednesday, but Ancelotti has tended to use midfielder Aurelien Tchouameni at centre back to cover for his injured stars.

Lurking in third place are Barcelona, three points behind Atletico and on a nine-game unbeaten run in all competitions.

They travel to 12th-placed Sevilla tomorrow.

REUTERS



Liverpool's Virgil van Dijk scores their fourth goal against Tottenham Hotspur during their Carabao Cup semi-final match at Anfield, in Liverpool, Britain on Thursday. REUTERS

Postecoglou's second season claim in doubt after Liverpool humbling

LIVERPOOL, England

TOTTENHAM Hotspur manager Ange Postecoglou said last year that he always wins something in his second season but Liverpool made that assertion sound hollow after a League Cup semi-final thrashing on Thursday.

Taking a 1-0 first-leg lead to Anfield, Spurs were crushed 4-0 to exit 4-1 on aggregate and without a single shot on target all night.

Tottenham still have the FA Cup and the Europa League to maintain the Australian's record -- one he highlighted after a painful home loss to Arsenal in September -- but both will be a challenge for a side battling a lengthening injury list.

There will be little time to rest, however, with a trip to Aston Villa in the FA Cup on Sunday, for a club whose only silverware this century was the 2008 League Cup.

"We have given up a

good opportunity tonight and we cannot shy away from that," Postecoglou, who took over at Spurs in 2023, told BBC radio. "We were in a good position to get to the final."

Liverpool, the holders and record 10-times winners now heading for their 15th League Cup final and third in four years, were relentless and simply too good.

Former Liverpool defender Jamie Carragher, now a Sky Sports pundit, was merciless in his criticism of Tottenham's performance.

"It was never in doubt before the game. It's Tottenham. When did Tottenham ever win a big game? When did Tottenham ever go anywhere and surprise you and win against the odds?" he said.

"The odds were massively in favour of Liverpool. They are at home at Anfield, they are the best team in the country and possibly in Europe right now.

"It is not just this Spurs

team. They never shock you and do something out of the ordinary."

Postecoglou, whose side are 14th in the Premier League, recognised it had been a tough night.

"Both of the first two goals we could have done better but ultimately what was really important was that we never played to our identity and strengths and shied away from the challenge a little bit," he said.

"Overall, we didn't start well and were way too passive and

let Liverpool get in a rhythm."

Postecoglou won Australian domestic titles with South Melbourne and Brisbane Roar in his second seasons and the Japanese league with Yokohama F Marinos. He also won the Asian Cup with Australia and two Scottish titles with Celtic.

Meanwhile, Liverpool will not get carried away by lofty expectations of winning a quadruple this season, captain Virgil van Dijk said after his side thrashed Tottenham Hotspur 4-0 at Anfield to set up a League Cup final clash

with Newcastle United.

Van Dijk completed the rout with a header after goals from Cody Gakpo, Mohamed Salah, and Dominik Szoboszlai as holders Liverpool sealed a 4-1 aggregate win on Thursday, booking their return to Wembley on March 16.

Arne Slot's side lead the Premier League with 56 points, six ahead of second-placed Arsenal. Liverpool have reached the Champions League's last-16 after topping the league phase and will face Plymouth Argyle in the FA Cup fourth round on Sunday.

Liverpool find themselves in a familiar position, chasing glory on four fronts once again, having come close in recent years. They are determined to avoid the collapse they faced under Jurgen Klopp last season.

"No, the expectation is that we have to manage and try and win every game ahead of us. And not quadruple or thinking about what 'could be' in the meantime," Van Dijk told CBS Sports after Thursday's game.

"Every game that we play is going to be difficult, from now until the end of the season. To be in every competition will be fantastic, hopefully, because that's what we work for.

"Let's see. I think we just have to enjoy the whole ride. Don't worry about other teams, just worry about ourselves. That's what I tell the boys."

After lifting the League Cup last year, Liverpool's Premier League title push faltered, and they were eliminated from the FA Cup by Manchester United and the Europa League by eventual winners Atalanta.

In the 2021-22 season, having won the League Cup and FA Cup, Liverpool's bid for an unprecedented quadruple was thwarted as Real Madrid defeated them 1-0 in the Champions League final and Manchester City pipped them to the league title by a point.

Liverpool face Everton in the league on Wednesday after their December 7 Merseyside derby was called off due to Storm Darragh.

REUTERS

Gwiji by David Chikoko



Real Madrid brace for red-hot Atletico in critical derby test

PAGE 19



Ramovic reveals reason behind sudden departure from Yanga

By Correspondent Nassir Nchimbi

FORMER Young Africans SC (Yanga) head coach Sead Ramovic has explained his sudden departure from the reigning Premier League champions, citing his desire to coach in a more competitive league as the main reason.

Ramovic (pictured) sparked controversy after leaving Young Africans for Algerian side CR Belouizdad.

The highly-rated tactician joined CR Belouizdad shortly after resigning from the Dar es Salaam-based club.

The German coach had joined Young Africans in November 2024 after leaving his position at Betway Premiership side TS Galaxy. He spent two months with Young Africans and performed admirably during his tenure.

In the league, Ramovic oversaw six games and secured maximum points in all of them. However, his team was eliminated from the CAF Champions League group stages a few weeks ago.

Currently, in the Tanzanian Premier League, Young Africans lead the standings with 45 points after 17 matches, holding a one-point advantage over second-placed Simba SC, managed by South African coach Fadlu Davids.

Ramovic stepped down from his position at Young Africans just an hour before the final training session ahead of a crucial league match against KenGold on Wednesday afternoon.

Ramovic has now spoken out about his decision to leave Young Africans, emphasizing that he wanted to challenge himself in a more competitive league.

"As a coach, you live for moments like this. The decision to leave Yanga wasn't easy, but the best opportunity came, and going to CR Belouizdad is an opportunity that I couldn't turn down.

"This league that I've chosen now in Algeria, you play week in and week out against high-quality opposition, and this is what I wanted for myself as a coach," Ramovic stated.

"Young Africans is the best club in Tanzania; there are really only about three teams that contend for the league in Tanzania, which are Young Africans, Simba SC, and Azam FC."

Following his exit, reports emerged suggesting that the 45-year-old coach was in conflict with some senior players. However, Ramovic refuted these claims.

"My move to CR Belouizdad was based on me challenging myself as a coach and wanting to better myself. It had nothing to do with money or alleged disagreements with players.

"I made the decision for myself to be in one of the best teams in Africa, but I knew such talks would surface about why I left Yanga, a club that I have so much respect for," he said.

CR Belouizdad, like Young Africans, failed to advance to the quarterfinals of the CAF Champions League.

Ramovic now takes charge of CR Belouizdad, who currently sit second in the Algerian Ligue 1. They have accumulated 26 points from seven wins, five draws, and three losses, trailing league leaders MC Alger by two points and holding a one-point advantage over USM Alger.

Fadlu Davids defends Chasambi after costly mistake in 1-1 draw



By Correspondents Seth Mapoli & Michael Mwebe

SIMBA SC head coach Fadlu Davids has defended winger Ladaki Chasambi following his costly mistake that led to a 1-1 draw against Fountain Gate in the Premier League at Tanzanite Kwaraa Stadium in Babati, Manyara, on Sunday.

The costly moment occurred in the 75th minute when Chasambi misjudged a back pass to goalkeeper Mussa Camara, leading to an own goal that gifted the hosts an equalizer.

Despite the setback, Simba had opportunities to regain the lead but failed to convert their chances.

Simba had taken the lead in the 57th minute through Cameroonian forward Leonel Ateba, who capitalized on a well-placed pass from Chasambi inside the box. The goal, which came after a quick free-kick from Jean Charles Ahoua,

marked Ateba's eighth of the season.

However, the lead was short-lived as Chasambi's misplaced pass allowed Fountain Gate back into the game.

Following the equalizer, the hosts resorted to defensive play, limiting Simba's attacking opportunities while launching occasional counterattacks that failed to yield another goal.

The draw sees Simba move to 44 points from 17 matches, trailing defending champions Young Africans SC (Yanga) by a single point at the top of the league table with 13 games remaining.

Speaking after the match, Davids (pictured) refused to blame Chasambi, urging fans and the team to support the young midfielder.

"But it's very important today that we protect

Chasambi, because of the goal we conceded and he's a young player. He's a big talent in Tanzania and we have to protect him, we have to guide him.

"Through these lessons you learn the hard way in football, through your career as you grow up and you know he has to learn from this, but we will protect him. We will guide him, we will help him fulfil his potential

because he's a top, top player," he said.

"Conceding a goal like this, we have to support Chasambi, because we can't put the blame on him. You know we can't, although it was 1-0 and we were totally in control. They had no problems against us, but we needed that second goal to be able to kill off the game."

Reflecting on missed chances, Davids acknowledged that it was not their day, particularly after striker Stephen Mukwala failed to score into an open net.

"If you create a chance like we did in the end, with no goalkeeper, open net and Mukwala hits it against Ateba, then you know it's not going to be your day.

"No, no, there was confusion with the last goal with both strikers going to score, which is normal. Fantastic by Mpanzu on the side, a ball in between the goalkeeper and the defense line and then one striker goes past it and Mukwala should put in an empty net."

"But you know if you can't score chances like that, then of course maybe you don't deserve to win, because then it's maybe not your day. But a good performance overall, an unlucky moment by the young boy, but we have to support him like I said."

Simba will now shift their focus to their next league match as they continue their pursuit of the title.

Hong Kong now wallops Tanzania in ICC Men's CWC Challenge League B build-up

By Correspondent Japheth Kazenga

THE build-up to the 2025 ICC Men's Cricket World Cup Challenge League B second leg culminated with Tanzania losing to Hong Kong A by 112 runs at the Kowloon Cricket Club in Hong Kong on Wednesday.

The tie turned out to be a challenging outing for Tanzania's cricketers, given they had stiff opposition from the tournament host.

Hong Kong A went in to bat first in the practice match, amassing a competitive total of 243 runs in 49.5 overs.

A steady performance by Sahal Malvernkar (64 off 88) and Zeeshan Ali (53 off 69) set the foundation for Hong Kong A to end with a convincing figure.

Tanzania's bowling was spearheaded by pacers Khalid Amiri (3-27) and Ally Mpeka (3-50), who kept Hong Kong's batsmen under pressure with key breakthroughs.

Needing 244 runs to come out victorious, Tanzania's batting lineup struggled to build partnerships and, ultimately,



Tanzania's senior men's cricket team player Khalid Amiri bowls during one of the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup Challenge League B first-leg matches in Uganda last year. PHOTO: COURTESY OF TANZANIA CRICKET ASSOCIATION

flattered having been skittled for 131 runs in 43.4 overs.

Skipper Kassim Nassor (25 off 48) and Amal Rajeevan (21 off 38) were the batsmen with

notable contributions for the batting side.

Despite their efforts, Tanzania's cricketers were bowled out for 131 in 43.4 overs.

Hong Kong A's bowlers dominated, with Daniel Mapp (5-18) and Daniel Pascoe (5-34), having managed to deliver a clinical performance.

Both teams once again prioritized giving maximum opportunities to their players as they prepared for the upcoming ICC Men's Cricket World Cup Challenge League B.

It was the second warm-up match for Tanzania, with the first also ending in defeat for the East African country's outfit.

In the first build-up clash, which witnessed Tanzania coming up against Italy, the East African country's outfit suffered a five-wicket loss.

A Tanzania Cricket Association (TCA) revealed while the result hardly went in Tanzania's favour, the practice matches are invaluable in fine-tuning strategies and assessing squad depth ahead of the main tournament.

He noted Tanzania's team, nicknamed "The Warriors in Blue", will regroup and come back stronger.

The ICC Men's Cricket World Cup Challenge League B, scheduled for February 7-16, will witness Tanzania locking horns with Bahrain, Italy, Singapore, Uganda, and host Hong Kong.

Flexibles by David Chikoko

