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Absa Bank boss reveals reasons behind record-breaking financial performance Page 13

TanESCO maps out geothermal sourcing

Govt spends 1.29trn/- on school outlays since 2021

By Francis Kajubi, Dodoma

THE government has during the past two years spent 1.29trn/- on school outlays in a bid to improve the teaching and learning environment in public primary and secondary schools.

Prime Minister Kassim Majaliwa made this observation at the National Assembly yesterday in the ad hoc question hour for the premier, indicating that of the disbursed amount 484.3bn/- was allocated for 342 pre-primary and primary schools, with 9,189 classrooms.

In responding to a question on compulsory school contributions, the premier referred to a report on achievements realised so far towards implementation of the Education and Training Policy (ETP) 2014 revised last year and the new education curriculum whose review started in April 2021 on instructions by President Samia Suluhu Hassan.

The funds covered building 346 teachers' residential units, 28 dormitories and renovation of 45 old schools, he said, elaborating that the bulk of 837.8bn/- was allocated to local government authorities.

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President Samia Suluhu Hassan exchanges greetings with Chief Justice Prof Ibrahim Hamis Juma shortly after arriving at Chinangali grounds in Dodoma city yesterday to grace Law Day anniversary celebrations held there at national level. Photo: State House

Samia tasks ministry with new arbitration framework

By Guardian Reporter, Dodoma

PRESIDENT Samia Suluhu Hassan has asked the Constitutional and Legal Affairs ministry in collaboration with arbitration stakeholders to work together to bring up an arbitration policy framework.

Gracing the national Law Week and Law Day climax, the president laid emphasis on the need for judges of the High Court and magistrates to deliver fair judgements in order to bring to an end complaints by the people over serving sentences they did not deserve.

In the annual event, tied the Judiciary new year, she affirmed that handing out justice is a task related to what is divine. "Handing out an unfair verdict is a sin and that is shameful on the basis of Scripture, she said.

"It is shameful where a magistrate hands an unfair verdict and the family of the jailed person lives with difficulty in the streets, thus magistrates should avoid unfair verdicts," she told the gathering.

Citing paragraph 107(a) section 2(a) to (e) of the 1977 constitution, she said it lays out precepts to be followed when courts deliver verdicts in various issues.

The key requirement is to exercise fairness to all without discrimination for wealth or status, she asserted.

That provision also demands that justice delivery should not be delayed without being excessively constrained by technical provisions which could impede the exercise of justice, she further noted.

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Zanzibar President Dr Hussein Ali Mwinyi pictured in Zanzibar yesterday assenting to the enactment or amendment of various Zanzibar laws, including on Kadhi Courts, Investment, and the Public Auditor's Office. Photo: Zanzibar State House

Resignation normal, Mwinyi tells new Zanzibar ministers

By Guardian Reporter, Zanzibar

ZANZIBAR President Dr Hussein Ali Mwinyi has described the resignation of former Tourism and Heritage minister Simai Mohamed Said as an example of accountability and political responsibility when challenges occur in a sector that one is leading.

He made this remark here yesterday in a swearing in ceremony for newly appointed ministers and their deputies, following Simai's resignation, with Mudrik Ramadhan Soraga taking over the portfolio.

Declaring that resignation is not a new phenomenon in Zanzibar, he described it as normal, affirming that it was not necessary for him to have done so as he was in charge of the sector.

"In September 2011, in the wake of the MV Spice Island accident that killed 192 people, the minister resigned," he recalled, asserting that resignation isn't punishment as it doesn't mean that he caused that accident. "No! It's part of responsibility," he emphasized.

He similarly raised the case of a bomb blast accident at the Gongo la Mboto military base in Dar es Salaam on February 16th, 2011 when he was Defence and National Service minister, where dozens of people died.

He affirmed having sent a resignation letter to President Jakaya Kikwete, who declined to accept the resignation, as the minister himself had not made it public.

"The procedure requires

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Oldonyo Lengai active volcano is flagship project

By Correspondent Marc Nkwame, Arusha

DEVELOPING geothermal power sources in to cater for rising electricity supply needs is beginning to take shape with plans to harness an active volcano near Lake Natron in Arusha Region.

Mathew Mwangomba, the general manager for the TANESCO subsidiary, the Tanzania Geothermal Development Co. (TGDC), laid out these plans here yesterday at the two day Tan

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Yanga, Kagera Sugar lock horns as league resumes

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Afccon 2023: Bouchra Karboubi on being a referee, police officer in Morocco and mother



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TANESCO maps out geothermal sourcing

FROM PAGE 1

Tanzania energy cooperation conference, an annual gathering of power sector stakeholders.

Tanzania has so far identified 52 sites in 16 regions that have ample potential to generate geothermal power, he said, noting that initial development for the proposed Oldonyo Lengai project is expected to start next month.

TGDC is also developing the Lake Ngozi geothermal power plant in Mbeya Region, slated to add 70 megawatts of power to the national grid, he said, affirming that geothermal energy is more sustainable and affordable.

Upwards of 16 regions have been found to have ample geothermal potential, which altogether comes to 5,000MW generated from the ground, with initial plans projecting 200 MW supply by 2025, he explained.

He told the gathering that the country has over 15,000 megawatts "buried underground and yet to be tapped," intoning that this accounts for nearly 10 per cent of the total geothermal potential found across the continent by available data.

Gissima Nyamo-Hanga, the TANESCO managing director, said that the state power firm, seeking to ensure that electricity is available throughout all seasons and around the year, intends to tap wind and solar power, along with emerging geothermal sourcing.

He even talked of generating electricity from coal and nuclear power plants in the future, looking across the border where Kenya already yields over 1000 MW from geothermal sources.

The Olkaria IV power plant near the highlands city of Nakuru is one of the world's largest single turbine geothermal power plants, generating 140MW, he said, he told the conference bringing together key stakeholders from public sector firms and private power companies.

Organisers said the conference was geared to solution-driven dialogues, relaying progress on energy projects across the region.

With ongoing investments in infrastructure and a commitment to renewable energy sources, Tanzania is well on its way to becoming a pivotal player in fostering sustainable energy cooperation and development across East Africa, solidifying its role in the regional energy landscape, he asserted.

Regional power utilities, development finance institutions, independent power producers, financiers and solution providers gathered for the fifth Tanzania energy cooperation conference, otherwise known as a stakeholders' summit, as an invaluable opportunity for a two-day immersion into proactive and solution-oriented discussions.

The summit examined a broad range of issues, including successful examples of public private partnerships in generation and transmission, as well as the role of DFIs in enhancing credit to accelerate projects.

Focus was also directed at Tanzania's plans to become a critical regional player through transmission and interconnection projects, examining what is needed for Tanzania to reach its total renewable energy potential, he added.



Court of Appeal and High Court judges follow address by President Samia Suluhu Hassan at the climax of national Law Day celebrations held in Dodoma city yesterday. Photo: Correspondent Ibrahim Joseph

Govt spends 1.29trn/- on school outlays since 2021

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The funds were used to build 486 secondary schools with 21,990 classrooms, 280 teachers' residential units, 221 dormitories, conducting renovations of 21 old secondary schools, 151 laboratories and 23 assembly halls, he said.

As of January 26, 2024 a total of 1,268,917 pre-primary pupils were enrolled, while 2,366 of the young pupils fall into the special needs group, he said.

A total of 1,549,743 pupils were admitted to standard one, where 3,311 pupils come from the special

needs group, he further noted, highlighting that this year's standard one enrolment stands at 89.6 per cent of the target, where 1,729,180 children aged seven were expected to be enrolled.

This year's secondary school enrolment so far stands at 1,092,984 students but the enrolment is still being pursued, he said, underlining that the growth in enrolment arises from the free education policy.

The new curriculum is being implemented with effect January 2024 covering pre-primary, standard one and three, while at the secondary education level the new

curriculum focuses on technical education.

It currently covers Form one students across 96 public and private schools, he said, noting that implementation of the curriculum goes abreast with training teachers across all wards, with the training effort involving 78 district education officers out of the targeted 184.

Implementation of the new policy will take into consideration training of qualified teachers to fit the new orientation, he said, pointing at accomplishments by the government in preparing the national qualification framework for monitoring the performance of

teachers and in teachers' colleges.

An evaluation shows so far parents and stakeholders in the education sector are satisfied with the new curriculum especially for technical and vocational training that targets at extending skills knowledge to learners and therefore enable those finishing school to fully engage in productive work or self-employment, he stated.

He tasked ministers for Education, Science and Technology as well as for Regional Administration and Local Governments to exercise restraint on schools over unnecessary contributions demanded by school committees on

parents. Jane Jerry (Special Seats) expressed worries whether the government is preparing and recruiting enough qualified teachers capable of delivering on the new curriculum.

In response, the premier acknowledged the shortage of specialised teachers on account of retirement, illnesses or death, especially in technical education.

"The plan is prioritizing recruitment of technical and science teachers. Last year's permit for 4,000 posts 2,500 targeted science teachers," he added.



National Assembly Speaker Dr Tulia Ackson pictured in Dodoma city yesterday addressing leaders with disabilities who are members of the Tanzanian Teachers Union. They called on her to congratulate on her election in late October 2023 as Parliamentary Union President. She is with the union's secretary general, Japhet Maganga (L), and a member of the union's executive committee, Shani Ulumbi. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

Resignation normal, Mwinyi tells new Zanzibar ministers

FROM PAGE 1

you to tell the person who appointed you to accept the resignation and then announce it," he elaborated, explaining that at that time, President Kikwete said this was an accident, so he had no reason to resign.

"No one had heard that I wanted to resign at that time," he stated, quipping that he was saying that in public and had never said it before.

Another reason for a minister to resign is when the government decides something and the minister does not agree with it, in which case the minister has the right to resign, he said.

"But there is one thing we must remind each other when you are responsible in any way you must be honest," he remarked, intoning that if there is a conflict of interest "you should announce it and be transparent if we have blocked something and you are doing business. Announce it," he said.

He urged ministers to be truthful rather than going on social media and convincing the public to contrary, insisting that when resigning, one needs to tell the public the reason for resignation.

"I am saying this because I want ministers to realize that the ministry is not a position that you will spend your life with," he said, noting that

there are many ways that one may leave the ministry. Either you will be removed or you will be responsible for the problem that will have occurred, he said.

Ministers need to know that there are problems that may arise in the sectors they lead, so they should be ready to take responsibility, he said, urging the ministers to increase the speed of acting responsibly "so that in the remaining two years they serve the people, realise the promised objectives and even exceed the goals."

Changes in the cabinet are not a strange event in politics and sometimes one compromises to get efficiency, he said, asking ministers to understand that the positions are not permanent until the end of the term, "so everyone should work hard to fulfil what the ruling party promised the people."

He asked the newly appointed ministers to do what they were appointed to do to serve the people, noting that he has made changes in tourism and the blue economy, which are vital for the Zanzibar economy.

Tourism is currently the number one sector of Zanzibar's economy and it contributes 30 per cent of the national income, so it is good to put a lot of effort into that sector, the president added.

Samia tasks ministry with new arbitration framework

FROM PAGE 1

She similarly demanded stakeholders in the delivery of justice nationwide to evaluate their work and identify their shortcomings to work on them so as to improve that sphere of the delivery of justice.

Plenty of effort has been directed at criminal justice so there is need to increase efforts in civil cases, she said, noting that there are also complaints on that side.

Numerous cases that are delayed, routine demands are heavy, some saying that it takes up to 12 months for a plaintiff before a district court or resident magistrate's court to be heard to conclusion, the president intoned.

Glancing in the direction of the High Court she said that it takes upwards of 24 months for a case to be heard up to delivery of judgement, asserting that this takes too much time, with the parties involved wasting so much time on the issues instead of doing something useful for the society.

Demanding that this situation be reexamined, the president asked justice delivery stakeholders to speed up delivering verdicts in commercial litigation and contentions so that they are rapidly ended and other things proceed.

"We recognise that investments are linked with legal aspects so in commercial disputes it is better for our courts to prioritise such issues as well," she said, emphasising that there is need to look at how best to start using arbitration in such disputes instead of people going to court.

drew on lessons of the Samia Legal Aid outreach activity, saying that there is a vast need for legal aid nationwide, as there are numerous problems relating to land, marital disputes, inheritance, gender-based violence and civil claims.

Chief Justice Prof. Ibrahim Juma, in his remarks, said that the time for blaming one another is gone and it is time for implementation, and the judiciary promises to be at the forefront of efficient conduct of its duties.



Japan's Ambassador to Tanzania, Yasushi Misawa (R), and the UNFPA Representative in Tanzania, Mark Bryan Schreiner, pictured in Dar es Salaam on Tuesday signing an MoU on the implementation of a mother and child health project in Kigoma Region. Japan has released 921m/- for the purpose. Photo: Correspondent Sabato Kasika

Value addition in seven districts due to make honey strategic crop

By Francis Kajubi, Dodoma

THE government issued 64,593 modern beehives to beekeepers in the past five years as part of a plan to make honey a strategic economic crop.

Dunstan Kitandula, Deputy Minister for Tourism and Natural Resources said this in the National Assembly yesterday when responding to a question by Athuman Maige, Tabora North MP who wanted to know the government's efforts towards making honey a strategic cash crop.

He said during the period, the government facilitated the establishment of seven honey processing and packaging factories in Sikonge, Mlele, Nzega, Tabora, Manyoni, Kibondo and Bukombe districts.

"The plants have been doing value addition for honey to be traded at local

and foreign markets. The government is currently implementing various programmes with the target of boosting honey production," he said.

According to him, the government has been lobbying for honey markets in Europe and Asia. He said that the government in collaboration with development partners is administering honey production projects in five regions of Tabora, Singida, Katavi, Kigoma and Shinyanga.

He added that the government is finalizing the beekeeping sector development plan that is meant to fast-track honey export and creation of employment especially for youth and women.

He said beekeeping is one of the key economic activities, especially by communities living near reserved forests. Beekeeping guarantees food security for such communities.

In a supplementary question, Joseph Kakunda, Sikonge legislator (CCM) wanted to know when the ministry will consider budgeting and research in the honey value chain and market intelligence as the crop is scheduled to be economically strategized.

The deputy minister responded that the plan is being finalized, calling for parliamentarians to be patient since the ministry was keen on making the plan a reality.

Last October, Tanzania's High Commissioner to the United Kingdom, Mbelwa Kairuki, and encouraged Tanzanians to exploit opportunities brought about by the Developing Countries Trading Scheme (DCTS) which came into effect on 19 June 2023 so as to explore the UK's Generalised Scheme of Preferences (GSP).

New TANAPA conservation commissioner takes oath of office

By Guardian Correspondent, Arusha

NATURAL Resources and Tourism Minister Angellah Kariuki yesterday swore in Mussa Kuji as new Tanzania National Parks (TANAPA) Conservation Commissioner.

Shortly after the swearing in ceremony, Kariuki directed Kuji to uphold conservation efforts by ensuring no other activities are carried out within national parks.

"Collaborate with other players to devise strategies for attracting tourists to generate the much-needed foreign currency," said the minister, adding that improving welfare of TANAPA staff should also be high on his agenda.

President Samia Suluhu Hassan on January 11, 2024, appointed Kuji, an unsung business and financial expert with over 30-year experience as new TANAPA Conservation Commissioner.

Sources within TANAPA see appointment of Kuji as a deliberate attempt to combine conservation interests with those of tourism business as well as of financial management in the state-run agency.

Kuji holds a Master's degree in Business Administration from Maastricht School of Management in the Netherlands and a Bachelor degree in Commerce and Accountancy from University of Dar es Salaam.

TANAPA first recruited Kuji in the early 1990s when he started rising from an accountant officer to director of corporate services.

Kuji has also been harmonising public and private interests to forge good rela-

tionship with other tourism players.

"I thank President Samia Suluhu Hassan, Minister for Natural Resources and Tourism, Angellah Kariuki, and the TANAPA Board of Trustee for trusting me to run this key conservation and tourism agency," Kuji said.

He promised to implement the president's dream of transforming tourism for the sector to generate revenues and back the country's

economic development endeavours.

"We will improve infrastructure and attract investors to ensure national parks provide quality services," he said.

"We will work with Tanzania Tourists Board, Tanzania Association of Tour Operators, Hotels Association of Tanzania and other players to reverse the trend," he said.

Available statistics show the tourism sector regis-

tered 37.5 percent growth in revenue in 2023, fetching the national coffers \$3.3 billion by November from 1.797 tourists who visited the country, equivalent to 27 percent increase in the number of visitors.

The number of both receipts and tourist arrivals surpass those registered before the COVID-19 pandemic in 2019, when the country earned \$2.526 billion from 1,527,230 foreign visitors.



Shaaban Robert Secondary School

FORM V ADMISSION 2024

Application forms for the Form V -2024 are now available at the School office Monday through Friday, from 8:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. for the following combinations:-

Physics, Chemistry, Biology	-	(PCB)
Physics, Chemistry, Mathematics	-	(PCM)
Physics, Geography, Mathematics	-	(PGM)
Physics, Mathematics, Computer Science	-	(PMC)
Chemistry, Biology, Geography	-	(CBG)
Economics, Commerce, Accountancy	-	(ECA)
Economics, Geography, Mathematics	-	(EGM)
History, Geography, Economics	-	(HGE)
History, Geography, Language (English)	-	(HGL)
History, Kiswahili, Language (English)	-	(HKL)

1. Applicant should not be above 18 years of age.
2. Fee for Registration is Tshs. 25,000/- only.

Scholarships and bursaries are available for the deserving candidates with outstanding academic results and the needy, respectively.

The Headmaster
P. O. Box 736
DAR ES SALAAM
Tel: 2114903 / 2114935
Cell No. 0693 081688
E-mail: info@shaabanrobert.sc.tz

SNV

Netherlands
Development
Organisation



PUBLIC NOTICE

SNV is a not-for-profit international development organization. Founded in the Netherlands 50 years ago, we work in more than 20 countries in Asia, West Africa, and East and Southern Africa. Our global team of local and international advisors work with local partners to equip communities, businesses, and organizations with the tools, knowledge and connections they need to increase their incomes and gain access to basic services – empowering them to break the cycle of poverty and guide their own development. Our new Strategic plan (2022-2030) commits us to work in three intersecting sectors (Agrifood, Water and Energy), with a focus on the three cross-cutting issues of climate change, institutional strengthening and governance and gender and social inclusion, to support the achievement of nine of the US Sustainable Development Goals.

SNV has been operating in Tanzania since 1972. Currently, SNV is implementing seven projects in the Agrifood, Water and Energy sectors, with staff based in offices in Dar es Salaam, Arusha, Mwanza, Dodoma, Bariadi and Sumbawanga, and partners throughout the country. SNV is an open and learning organization that focuses on improving the lives of Tanzanians through a market-based approach inclusive of women and youth.

On 8th December 2023, SNV Tanzania signed a grant agreement with NORAD worth NOK 200 million (equivalent to TZS 48,623,448,135), to be implemented over five (5) years. The project focuses on two geographic areas, both of which experience food insecurity and malnutrition, but which are distinctly different: the central-northern zone (Singida, Dodoma, Manyara) which suffers from acute food insecurity, and Southern Highlands (Songwe, Rukwa) which faces chronic malnutrition. The project targets 168,000 SHFs and 100 MSMEs and farm organisations, with special emphasis on vulnerable SHFs. With a focus on four high-potential value chains (sorghum, sunflower, common bean, and vegetables). SNV will partner with Farm Africa and five local organisations including two local CSOs, RECODA and MIICO.

The project will tackle barriers to SHF food security through three interconnected outcome pathways:

1. Increased productivity: strengthening SHF climate-smart agricultural knowledge, skills, and access to inputs and finance.
2. Increased and diversified food supply to local markets: fostering collaborations among market actors, promoting digital solutions, and empowering SHFs and MSMEs.
3. Improved utilization of household resources to provide nutritious and diverse food: promoting nutritious diets, household food budgeting, and enabling women to have greater influence in HH decisions.

This notice is for compliance with Non-Governmental Organizations (Amendments) Regulations, 2018 GN609 of 19th October 2018.

For more information on SNV's program in Tanzania, visit our website: www.snv.org/Tanzania



World Food Programme
Programme Alimentaire Mondial
Programa Mundial de Alimentos
برنامج الأغذية العالمي

SAVING
LIVES
CHANGING
LIVES

CALL FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (EOI)

WFP Emergency (cash or in-kind food) Response CSP 2022-2027 Strategic Outcome 1 – Crisis Response

1. BACKGROUND

WFP Tanzania is seeking Expressions of Interest (EOIs) from competent national and international NGOs with presence and operations in Tanzania, who specialize in emergency response to populations affected by man-made or natural disasters, either in the form of emergency food assistance or emergency cash assistance.

2. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

- This EOI is open to any national and international Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) with appropriate authorization to operate in Tanzania as a non-governmental, non-profit, non-political organisation (submission of certificate of registration).
- Provision of Cover Letter introducing the organization and its experience in the subject area.
- Letters of recommendation from last 3 donors/partners.
- Shortlisted applicants will be contacted for further information and Due Diligence and capacity assessment, this process involves submission of several documents to WFP.

3. SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS:

The prospective Partner is requested to submit using your own template for narrative proposal and for budget (in simple format) showing their experience and capacities to implement activities in all of the following areas: Setting up of the emergency food and/or cash response, Implementation and supervision and Monitoring and reporting. The proposal and budget should not exceed 15 pages.

Upon receipt of the above information from prospective partners, WFP will evaluate and pre-assess applicants. NGO that fulfills the criteria listed above will be included in the roster. Presence in the Roster does not guarantee that the NGO will be selected to implement food and/or cash transfer interventions, rather, presence in the Roster means that in the event of a major crisis in a particular geographic area requiring WFP direct intervention, NGO from the Roster will be invited to submit a detailed project proposal and budget (updating the project proposal and budget submitted in response to this EOI).



Full details of the EOI can be accessed by scanning this QR Code (Filter by Tanzania and WFP) it will direct you to download the EOI from the UN Partner Portal without login.

A. SUBMISSION AND CONTACT INFORMATION

Interested organizations should submit their expressions of interest electronically to the WFP Dar es Salaam Office through, Tanzania.partnership@wfp.org or in the UN Partner Portal (for organizations already registered in the UNPP), specifying Expression of Interest-Emergency Response in the subject line. The deadline for submission is 19 February 2024, at 23:59 (Midnight, EAT). Only shortlisted NGOs will be contacted.



Chadema 'ready' to stage peaceful demos in three major urban areas

By Carlos Banda

THE opposition Chadema has announced it will hold a second wave of peaceful demonstrations to demand electoral reforms and emergency plan to address inflation and high cost of living.

This was said in Dar es Salaam yesterday by the party's secretary general, John Mnyika, during a press conference where he said the demonstrations will take place in three major cities of Arusha, Mwanza and Mbeya this month.

"The demonstrations will start in Mwanza city on February 13th followed by Mbeya city on the 20th and lastly Arusha city on the 27th. February is dedicated to demonstrating. The key agenda is to put pressure on the government to make legal and constitutional amendments to enable elections that are free and fair and continue the process of making the new constitution and remove the tabled election bills from parliament because they are not in public interest," he said.

He added that once the preparations are complete, the party will announce the routes that to be used by each of the three scheduled demonstrations on their respective dates.

Mnyika said they are sur-

prised that the government did not take actions to respond to the queries of the public immediately after the first round of peaceful demonstrations in Dar es Salaam last month, adding that the government's silence signifies that it had dismissed the public's outcry on the rising cost of living.

"We have not heard any statement from the government concerning the removal of the election bills from the parliament and replace them with emergency plan to address inflation and the high cost of essential goods. This shows that the government has purposely disregarded the opinions of the people," he said.

The ex-Kibamba MP also called upon lawyers and legal practitioners commemorating the Law Day to continue demanding the rights of the public to have free and fair elections and to ensure Tanzanians live good and affordable life despite the existing challenges and shortcomings in the judicial system.

Mnyika said that years had passed without the government complying with the East African Court of Justice's verdict that it should amend the constitution to allow private candidates to contest for leadership positions.



Tanga regional commissioner Waziri Kindamba (C, squatting) exchanges greetings with a herders' community child whose family relocated recently from the Ngorongoro Conservation Area in Arusha Region to Msomera village in Handeni District, Tanga Region. The RC was on a routine tour of the village yesterday. Photo: Correspondent Hamida Kamchalla

Project focuses on inspection capacity to boost agricultural trade

By Correspondent James Lanka, Moshi

THE government has partnered with the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) and the European Union (EU) and formed Plant Health and Biosafety Intelligence Unit (PHBIU)—a project meant to strengthen plant health services.

The project aims to ensure plant health and food safety in order to enhance safe agricultural trade, both domestically and internationally.

Speaking during the ongoing 10-day workshop on project implementation

held in Moshi Municipality yesterday, PHBIU's Plant Health expert Mushobozi Baitani said that the project has prioritised building strong inspection capacity.

Baitani explained that inspections are carried out on traders who want to export their agricultural products, to ensure that they have proper documentation and that no harmful pests are introduced to the destination countries.

He also emphasised the importance of protecting Tanzania by inspecting imported goods to prevent harm to farmers and ensuring the use of pesticides within acceptable limits for human consumption.

Commenting on the special project dubbed Strengthening Plant Health Services for Enhanced Food Security (STRE-PHT), project coordinator Mdili Katemani from Tanzania Plant Health and Pesticides Authority (TPHPA), highlighted some achievements brought about by the project in various areas.

He mentioned them as establishment of 14 small laboratories at border points, airports and sea ports as well as procurement of seven vehicles, 19 motorcycles and 20 unmanned aerial vehicles (drones) equipped with cameras to enhance pest monitoring.

Furthermore, 45 plant health inspectors have been trained in operating the drones and the renovation of small laboratories at border stations and the main laboratory has been completed.

Katemani explained that these laboratories will be equipped with tools capable of detecting plant pests, diseases, and insects in various crops, especially those being exported and imported.

He added that this will facilitate smooth export of agricultural products, ensuring that Tanzanian produce is free from pests and thereby strengthening the market.



Request for Proposals (RFP) Capacity Development Needs Assessment

WWF is an international non-governmental organization founded in 1961 working to build a future where people live in harmony with nature. The mission of WWF is to stop degradation of the planet's natural environment by conserving biological diversity, ensuring that the use of renewable natural resources is sustainable, and promoting the reduction of pollution and wasteful consumption, through cooperation with local communities to secure sustainable and resilient rural livelihoods as a key conservation approach with energy and climate change adaptation and mitigation as a cross cutting approach in all program.

WWF Tanzania has received grants from EU for supporting implementation of "Integrated Approach for Transformation of Tanzania Fuel Wood Value Chain Project-TFWVC". This is a 3-year project that intends to strengthen capacity of Tanzania government public institutions particularly Tanzania Forest Agency Services (TFS), Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism (MNRT), LGAs and Resident Magistrate, Attorney General Chambers and public prosecutors to promote sustainable forest management and wood-fuel production in rural areas, with an overall aim of enhancing environmental sustainability, in particular the sustainability of the wood-fuel value chain. The project is being implemented in Dar es Salaam, Mwanza, Tabora, Morogoro, Tanga and Coastal regions. The project has allocated some funds for conducting capacity development needs assessment, collate data and information that will inform the designing and delivery of the capacity building programmes and interventions aforementioned targeted beneficiary institutions. Based on the above background, WWF is seeking a team of consultants/ experts to undertake the consultancy work. The assessment will include a detailed capacity assessment to establish gaps and needs of MNRT, TFS, LGAs and Resident Magistrate, Attorney General Chambers and public prosecutors in the project areas in forest law enforcement, evidence gathering and prosecution procedures, delivery of forest extension and publicity services.

In order to effectively support specific and tailored capacity development for each target institution under the project, WWF Tanzania intends to hire a team of experts to conduct capacity development needs assessment to establish gaps and the required capacity development to inform the designing, strategy development and approach for the capacity building programs.

Terms of Reference (ToRs) has been prepared to guide the experts on the requirement for this assignment. Interested applicants may get the detailed Terms of Reference (ToR) and specifications through the following website; https://www.wwf.or.tz/jobs_and_opportunities/consultancies_and_tenders/ please, submit your full proposal to procurement email at: procurement@wwftz.org. (Only electronic application will be accepted) and please, also remember that, for uniformity reasons, Technical and financial proposals should indicate the title of the assignment "A Consultancy Work for Capacity Development Needs Assessment" addressed to;

Secretary
Procurement Committee,
WWF Tanzania Country Office, Plot 252 Kiko Street Mikocheni,
P. O. Box 63117, Dar es Salaam.

The application should be submitted to the above email by or before, before 1700 hrs local time, **Friday, 16th February, 2024.**

WWF has a principle of zero tolerance for fraud and corruption, if you encounter such an incident, then report by sending an email to fcci@wwftz.org.

Zero-waste store promotes environmentally sustainable trading, other habits in Namibia

WINDHOEK

ZERO Waste Store Namibia, in Windhoek, the southwestern African country's capital, is transforming the shopping habits of locals to promote environmentally sustainable practices.

Brigitte Reissner opened the store in 2019 to help cut

waste in the environment. Unlike ordinary retailers, the store operates under the principle of waste minimization, offering items for sale without any packaging. It also advocates the consumption of organic products.

According to Reissner, customers bring their own

containers and fill them with the desired quantity of products, minimizing the need for single-use packaging.

The weight of the container is measured and recorded, and each product is assigned a unique code corresponding to the container filled.

"The unique feature of the store is that customers take what they need, avoiding an excess of products at home and inspiring individuals to take responsibility for their environmental impact," she said. The store also promotes reusable paper bags, which, unlike plastic ones, can be composted.

The practice supports the government's pollution control efforts. Namibia implemented a ban on plastic carrier bags in all "Protected Areas" in 2018, followed by the introduction of a plastic bag levy in August 2019.

Reissner, now in her 50s and having worked previously as a hairdresser in Windhoek for over 25 years, opened the store after witnessing the negative impact of waste on the climate and environment.

To prepare for this endeavor, she conducted extensive research in neighboring South Africa, at the time witnessing a boom of zero-waste stores. She also consulted with zero-waste enthusiasts like United States-based author Bea Johnson and later completed an online course on establishing zero-waste stores.

"I was also looking for something new that, coupled with my passion for environmental protection, would make a positive impact," Reissner said.

While zero-waste stores have gained popularity in various parts of the world, they are relatively new in Namibia, with only two known such stores. The other one is in the country's coastal town of Swakopmund.



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CALL FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST - EoI /COUN/03/2024
THE CENTRE FOR COUNSELLING, NUTRITION AND HEALTH CARE (COUNSENUTH)
CONSULTANCY FOR PROVIDING SERVICE ON COUNSENUTH PROGRAM DATA MANAGEMENT (CPDW)
SYSTEM, MAINTENANCE AND M&E SUPPORT.

The Centre for Counselling, Nutrition and Health Care (COUNSENUTH), is a Non-Profit, indigenous Non - Governmental Organization established in 1998 with an initial registration number SO. NO 9495 under the Ministry of Home Affairs, currently with a new certificate with registration number OONGO/RI/00199 under the Ministry of Community Development, Gender, Women and Special Group. COUNSENUTH's headquarter is located at Plot No. 8 Sam Nujoma Road, Mikocheni B. The official address is P.O. Box 8218, Dar es Salaam. COUNSENUTH is on the lookout for a dynamic and proficient entity to take charge of our Program Data Warehouse (CPDW) System Maintenance and Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) Support. If your organization specializes in ensuring seamless data operations and optimizing M&E processes, we want to hear from you! RESPONSIBILITIES:

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- Implementing upgrades and updates for enhanced performance.
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Call for Application.

Interested experts (Individuals or Firms) are requested to submit their expression(s) of interest which shows detailed proven experience in ICT systems development, hosting, maintenance and M&E support, familiarity with industry standards and best practices, and ability to ensure data security and confidentiality. Applicants must have relevant registration, valid licenses, TIN Number, etc. The expert also needs to state his/her methodology on how he/she is going to perform the work, the cost for performing the work and the timeframe.

Each item should be applied separately.

Application closing date: 15th February 2024

Please send your expression of interest via email provided below:

Executive Director,
COUNSENUTH,
08 Sam Nujoma Road, Mikocheni B,
P.O. Box 8218, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.
E-Mail: info@counsenuth.or.tz



Tigo Pesa chief officer Angelica Pesha (C, seated) and Dr Benson Ndiege (R), who doubles as Registrar of Cooperative Societies and Tanzania Cooperative Development Commission (TCDC) CEO, sign an MOU in Dodoma city on Wednesday on the dispatching of crop harvest payments to farmers through the Tigo-Pesa platform in collaboration with TCDC and farmers' cooperative unions. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

Needy pupils in Kisarawe get essentials from charity

By Correspondent James Kandoya

A TOTAL of 100 pupils at Ngobedi Primary School in Kisarawe District, Coast region, have received items worth 5m/- from the Welfare Association of Pakistanis (WAP) in Tanzania.

Speaking during a handing over ceremony on Tuesday this week at the school, Head Teacher Abdalah Mhango thanked the association for the support to the needy pupils.

He named the items donated as school bags, uniforms, shoes, socks, exercise books and writing materials.

Mhango said the support will motivate pupils to attend school comfortably, adding that it may also contribute to improvement of their performance.

"We thank members of the association for their love and consideration for children in need. It is our hope that we will continue to cooperate in improving teaching and learning environment," he said.

He said that the school which was established in January 2022 has a total of 1,181 pupils out of which 565 are male and 616 are female.

WAP Vice Chairman Muhammad Waheed said that the decision to donate to pupils was to compliment the government's efforts in enabling pupils to study well.

He said WAP was also planning to donate to other neighbouring schools to ensure all pupils with difficulties attend school.

"We are happy to support Tanzanians pupils to enable them attend school. This is only one school; we will do the same in other neighbouring schools," he said.

The leaders said the association promised to provide 100 desks for pupils and chairs for teachers and a water tank, adding that they have also plan to build a new primary school.

Waheed said that the association plans to conduct free eye screening to Dar es Salaam residents in the next two month.

WAP is a registered Pakistani community organization which works for the betterment of both Pakistani and Tanzanian communities to improve welfare of the people.

'Team of experts assessing climate change impact countrywide'

By Francis Kajubi, Dodoma

THE President's Office (Union and Environment) and sectorial departments have embarked on a countrywide assessment of impacts of climate change.

Minister of State in the Vice President's Office (Union and Environment) Dr Selemani Jafo said this in the National Assembly yesterday when responding to a primary question by Mtambwe MP (ACT-Wazalendo) Khalifa Mohamed Issa.

Issa said that Unguja and Pemba islands have been affected by climate change which causes some of the residential areas to submerge.

He wanted to know when the government would conduct a survey and come up with short and long measures to address the situation.

Responding, Dr Jafo said the government has started construction of a wall in the affected area, adding that a team of experts from sectorial departments has been dispatched to conduct assessment countrywide.

"The work is in progress. We will present in the National Assembly areas which need to be worked upon on the two sides of the union to ensure safety of our people," he said.

Dr Jafo asserted that the impact of climate change is huge and needs collaboration with other stakeholders to counter the impact.

In her supplementary question, Special Seats legislator Mariam Kisangi (CCM) wanted to know whether the government has put in place any strategy to fight climate change.

Responding, Deputy Minister in the docket Khamis Hamza Khamis, said that the union government has prepared and implemented various strategies to counter climate change impact.

He named the strategies as the National Climate Change Response Strategy 2021- 2026 and National Environment Implementation Strategy 2022-2032

As for Zanzibar, he said the isles' government has set up its strategy on climate change from 2014 to 2030.

"These plans generally explain the challenges and various measures to be taken in the fight against climate change in the country," he said.

Former Zambian president pleads for early election

RUSAKA

ZAMBIA'S ex-President, Edgar Lungu, has urged citizens to demand an early election, alleging that his successor, Hakainde Hichilema (HH), has mismanaged the nation's economy.

Lungu also criticized Hichilema for his handling of the cholera outbreak, which has claimed nearly 600 lives since October.

Addressing the public on Wednesday, Lungu emphasized the need for Zambians to exert pressure on President Hichilema, stating that an early election is "imperative." He urged citizens to vocalize their demand for

Hichilema's resignation and the initiation of early elections.

Responding swiftly to Lungu's statements, government spokesperson Cornelius Mweetwa dismissed the allegations, urging Zambians to afford the president sufficient time to fulfill his campaign promises.

Mweetwa also accused the former president of damaging the country's economy during his six-year tenure.

Lungu, who announced his political comeback in October, faced the consequence of the government withdrawing his retirement benefits.

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Smallholders appeal for media campaign to promote healthy foods

By Correspondent Zuena Shame, back from Kampala

MEDIA outlets in EAST Africa have been urged to run more stories on agroecology farming to promote healthy foods that are free from chemicals.

Hakim Baliraine, chairperson of the Eastern and Southern Africa Small Farmers' Forum (ESAFF)-Uganda made the call recently during the first East Africa agroecology conference for journalists and communicators which took place in Kampala.

Baliraine said that since media are the most trusted tools in many countries, if they focus and play their crucial role of disseminating information, then knowledge about agroecology in promoting healthier people and sustainable agricultural practices can reach many people.

"When media are armed with knowledge about agroecology, they can advocate for and disseminate information on farming methods that prioritize soil health, biodiversity and water conservation. This, in turn, contributes to sustainable agriculture, ensuring long-term availability of nutritious food," he said.

He said that when media realize agroecological principles, they can highlight how the same contribute to increased food security through diversified crops and farming techniques that help communities withstand environmental challenges and reduce the risk of crop failure.

"Many people consume unhealthy foods and hence get health conditions

such as obesity, heart diseases and diabetes but agroecology often promotes diverse crop rotations and polyculture which lead to nutrient-rich and diverse diets. Media can play a role in educating the public about nutritional benefits of a diverse range of crops and how agroecological practices contribute to improved food quality," he added.

ESAFF-Uganda national coordinator Nancy Mugimba said that many people are concerned about eating and consuming healthy foods and one of the future plans is for journalists and communicators to expand beyond EA countries to regionally as well as globally.

Mugimba said that the forum expects to organize agroecology course modules for media houses and editors so as to equip them with the knowledge and understanding needed to cover agricultural and environmental issues more comprehensively to foster a more informed and responsible media landscape.

The conference with the theme 'Agroecology Through the Lens' was attended by 10 participants from Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda and Rwanda as part of Agroecology School of Journalists and Communicators 3rd cohort after completion of 12 weeks online course on agroecology organized by ESAFF-Uganda.

Apart from the conference, ESAFF also engaged journalists and communicators in a farm tour where they were exposed to various agroecological practices.



Aivan Maganza (2nd-L), chairman of the opposition Tanzania Labour Party youth wing, addresses journalists in Dar es Salaam on Tuesday. He called for the holding of general meeting, chiefly to elect the party's national chairperson. He is with fellow TLP members (from-R) Mohamed Seif Mohamed from South Pemba, Mariam Omary Hamis from Dodoma and Damary Richard. Photo: Correspondent Sabato Kasika

Female pupils in Njombe get basic hygiene facilities

By Guardian Correspondent, Njombe

FEMALE pupils at Manyunyu Secondary School in Njombe Region now have improved hygiene after a foundation built a 12 toilets and a facility for disposal of used sanitary pads.

The benefactor, Flaviana Matata Foundation (FMF), also handed over to the school, a sink for washing hands and a special room designated for pupils with special needs that was sponsored by Segal Family Foundation.

Receiving the donation

here on Wednesday, Dr Magreth Matonya, director of special needs education at the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology lauded the foundation for its contribution to various regions in the country.

She said the foundation has been at forefront in addressing challenges impeding female children from realizing their dreams as well as reminding the public and the government to improve accessibility of education for girls by improving school infrastructures, especially facilities for female pupils.

Dr Matonya said FMF has been sponsoring

education for female pupils originating from challenging backgrounds, providing them with safe menstrual education and reproductive education alongside provision of sanitary towels as well as supplying them with teaching and learning tools plus funding education for girls who cannot afford going to school under a special policy called Re-Entry.

Speaking over the phone during the handover ceremony, Minister for Education, Science and Technology Prof Adolf Mkenda, said he was thrilled by the work done by FMF which has enabled female

pupils to achieve positive outcomes in their lives.

"The availability of hygiene services is a basic right for every person and it is our duty to ensure these pupils have access to the resources they need to ensure they perform well in school and lead healthy lives," he said.

Flaviana Matata, Founder and Executive Director of FMF, said the foundation is operating in five regions including Njombe by supporting the government to build capacity of female pupils.

"The support provided by FMF is vital for provision of hygiene services for girls,"

she said.

"This initiative does not only create a clean and improved environment but it also addresses the challenges that hinder girls from carrying on with their studies. We believe that through addressing these challenges, we are advocating for positive changes now and in the future.

Matata said the project is set to benefit more than 900 pupils annually at Manyunyu Secondary School, adding that the infrastructure will solve challenges such as absence of toilets as well as menstrual waste disposal facility.

THE UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA
TANZANIA COMMUNICATIONS REGULATORY AUTHORITY
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PUBLIC NOTICE

APPLICATION FOR LICENCE UNDER THE CONVERGED LICENSING FRAMEWORK

NOTICE is hereby given to the public that the Tanzania Communications Regulatory Authority has received applications for Licences under the Converged Licensing Framework from the following applicants: -

S/N	NAME OF APPLICANT	TYPE OF LICENCE	SHAREHOLDERS / NATIONALITY	SHARES %
1.	Sauti Ya Upanyaji Media Group Limited	District Content Television Broadcasting (Free To Air)	1.Nabii Joshua Aram Mwanyala-Tanzanian 2.Erick Alam Mboma- Tanzanian 3.Jalia Tino Msigwa-Tanzanian	80 10 10
2.	Enjoy INC Limited	District Application Services	1. Ramadhani Rajab Iddi-Tanzanian 2. Saravai Rashid Mshana-Tanzanian	40 20

Pursuant to Section 8 Of Electronic and Postal Communications Act, Cap 306 of the Laws of Tanzania, written comments are hereby invited from any interested person in respect of the grant of licence to the applicants to reach the Authority, within 14 days of publication of this notice. Such comments will be taken into consideration when the Authority considers the applications.

Comments should be addressed to:

Director General
Tanzania Communications Regulatory Authority
P. O Bo 474
14414 DAR ES SALAAM
Tel: +255 22 241 2011-2
Fax: +255 22 2412009
E-mail: dg@tcra.go.tz

Dr. Jabiri K. Bakari
DIRECTOR GENERAL

Issued on 31st January, 2024

Mawasiliano Towers, 20 Sam Nujoma Road, P.O Box 474, 14414 DAR ES SALAAM, TANZANIA.
Phone: +255 22 2199760-9 / +255 22 2412011-2 / +255 784558270-1 Fax: +255 22 2412009-10
Email: barua@tcra.go.tz, dg@tcra.go.tz, Website: www.tcra.go.tz

TUMAINI COMMUNITY SERVICES ORGANIZATION

Tel: +255 25 250 2520
Email: info@tumainico.org

P.O.Box 198
Lupaway Streer, Mbeya, Tanzania

E-Mail: info@tumainico.org Website: www.tumainico.org

TENDER NO: TCSO/ECD/2023/02

INVITATION TO TENDER

RFQ Title: Delivery of Mobile Tablets devices.
Date of solicitation: 2/2/2024
Submission Date and time: - 15/2/2024 11:10 A.M Hrs.
Question & clarification: 8/2/2024

Introduction

Tumaini Community Service Organization (TCSO) was established on 15th August 2019 and registered in united Republic of Tanzania, under reviewed NGO policy. The organization has been in partnership with Pact Tanzania in implementing The Adolescents and Children HIV Incidence Reduction, Empowerment and Virus Elimination project for Mbeya region and Songwe region.

Pact in collaboration with Tumaini integrate Early childhood care and development activities into the ACHIEVE project to improve the health and well-being of orphan and other vulnerable children (OVC) with a focus on children and adolescent living with or most at risk of contracting HIV and their caregivers. The project is funded by the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and implemented by a Pact.

Tumaini Community Service Organization through ECD project, will provide mobile Tablets devices for 122 CCWs.

Items specification and requirements

Item	Specification	Other	Quantity	Estimated Delivery Time
Tablets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build : Aluminum body Display: 8.7" Internal memory:at least 32 GB RAM;at least 4GB CPU: Oct core (48x2.3 GHz cortex_A53& 4x1.8 GHz Cortex_A53) CHIPSET; Mediatek MT8768T Helio P22T(12nm) NETWORK:GSM/HSPA/LTE OS:At least Android 11 Battery: Non removable Li-Ion 5100 mAh battery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Built in camera:8MP Resolution:800x1340pixel,5:3 ratio(~179 ppi density) Wi-Fi 802.11 a/b/g/n/ac,dual-band,Wi-Fi Direct Dedicated microSD card slot USB :USB Type -C 2.0 GPS, GLONASS, BDS, GALILEO 	122	1 Week
122 screen protectors and cover	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Glass screen protector Silicon cover 			

The complete tender document (TOR) Containing general terms& conditions, requirements are available in www.tumainico.org all interested bidders should access and download full terms of references via www.tumainico.org

All questions and clarification should be directed to procurement@tumainico.org with subject "Tender Clarification"

How to submit:

- Quotation should be submitted in an enclosed and sealed envelope.
- The eligible vendors should physically submit their proposal to Tender committee, P.O. Box 198 Mbeya, Head office. All sealed envelopes need to be marked as "Tender for Delivery of Tablets
- All quotes must be in Tanzanian shillings and enclosed in a plain sealed envelope.
- All the pages of bid submitted must be signed.
- The deadline for proposal submission will be 15 February 2024, 11:10 AM, and TCSO will open the bids on 15 February 2024 11:40 AM

Please note.

- Late or incomplete submission will not be accepted.
- Selection will be based on criteria listed above and on TOR
- Issuance of request for quotes does not constitute award/ contract commitment by TCSO.
- TCSO reserves the right to disqualify and offer based on offeror failure to follow solicitation instructions.
- Proposal submitted through email will not be considered.
- One bidder having business relationship shall submit not more than one tender. A breach of this condition will render the tenders of both parties liable to rejection.

National Museum of Tanzania draws up structure meant to impress tourists

By Beatrice Philemon

THE National Museum of Tanzania (NMT) has introduced a new organization structure aimed at promoting cultural and natural heritage overseas to attract more foreign tourists.

Noel Lwoga, NMT director general said this recently at the official launch of India-Tanzania Friendship Exhibition that took place at NMT premises as part of India's celebration of its 75th Republic Day.

So far, the museum has already formed a new marketing department which has tourism and marketing officers who brainstorm on marketing and promotional campaigns.

"We have decided to come up with new structure after identifying that the number of foreign tourists visiting the national museum is very small as compared to local tourists," he said.

Also, he said there are a lot of international tourists who are not aware about what the museum has to offer in tourism sector.

"While in Tanzania for leisure, business, safari, professional filming and other issues, you can come to the national museum and enjoy various tourist attractions; don't stay at a hotel all the time," he said.

The entrance fees charged for local tourists who visit the national museum are 2,500/- per adult, students part with 1,000/- while foreigners are charged 12,000/- per adults and students 6300/-.

Elaborating on the number of tourists visiting the museum, he said from January to December 2021, a total of 446,560 local and international tourists visited the museum, 687,600 visited in 2022 and 920,000 in 2023.

He said 95 percent of tourists visiting NMT attractions are local tourists mainly students, people from private institutions and artists.

Manoj Verma, Charge d'Affaires, High commission of India, said the exhibition was organized for Indian community to visit the area to see the shared history that has shaped the enduring friendship between India and Tanzania.

"I request the National Museum of Tanzania to keep strengthening this exhibition with more and more exhibits in coming days and months to make this exhibition permanent," he said.

He also urged the Indian community to collaborate with NMT and enrich the exhibition, asking them to spread awareness in the wider community so that more people come and see this exhibition in large numbers.



College of Business Education rector Prof Edda Lwoga (C) briefs journalists in Dar es Salaam yesterday on plans by the institution to start online master's degree studies in six courses. She is with academic director Dr Shima Banele (L) and acting deputy rector (Academic, Research and Consultancy), Dr William Gomera. Photo Correspondent Joseph Mwendapole

CBE introduces online master's courses, cites convenience

By Correspondent Joseph Mwendapole

THE College of Business Education (CBE) has urged Tanzanians to take advantage of its online Master's degree programme to save time and cost compared to conventional classes.

The call was made in Dar es Salaam yesterday by CBE Rector Prof Edda Lwoga when speaking to journalists at the college's premises about the introduction of online programmes.

She said that CBE has been providing 10 Master's degree programmes in the fields of business and Information and

Communication Technology (ICT) and decided that it is the right time to start teaching masters online.

"At the moment we have started six online Master's degrees in six fields and we have already started receiving applications for the March intake," she said, adding that studying online has several advantages that have made it popular amongst many people.

Prof Lwoga said studying online enables learners to pursue studies from anywhere and at their convenient time regardless of location or time.

"Online learning often reduces the costs associated with education such as transportation, accommodation and

learning materials. This makes education more affordable and gives people the opportunity to pursue studies without having to move or allocate a large budget," she said.

She said the method gives a wide range of choices and allows students to choose subjects that match their goals and interests, regardless of where they live.

Prof Lwoga said online learning often connects the student with modern technologies such as online platforms, discussion forums and collaboration tools and enhances learning experience.

She said that this method enables students to collaborate with colleagues from dif-

ferent parts of the country and abroad.

She said that through this method, students can study at their own pace, repeat challenging parts or explore more subjects that interest them and that it allows everyone to build a solid understanding of the topics.

"Online learning brings innovative learning resources and often comes with many digital resources such as videos, e-books and learning games and this improves teaching methods and makes lessons more interesting," she said.

She said online students gain experience in the use of technology which is an important skill in today's world of work

and enables them to be ready for the challenges of technology at work.

"In general, studying online can be an option that attracts many because of the convenience, cost-effectiveness and availability of learning resources," she said.

The Rector mentioned some of the introduced online programmes as Masters in Business Administration, Human Resources Management, Business Administration, Finance and Banking and Marketing Management.

Others are Masters in International Business Management, Supply Chain Management and Project Management, Monitoring and Evaluation.

THE UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA MINISTRY OF FINANCE



INVITATION TO STAKEHOLDERS TO PARTICIPATE IN THE UPCOMING PROCEEDINGS OF THE TASK FORCE ON TAX REFORM IN PREPARATION FOR BUDGET 2024/25

The proceedings of the Task Force on Tax Reform in preparation for Budget 2024/25 are scheduled to get underway in February 2024. The working sessions of the Task Force will be launched by the National Tax and Investment Conference for the year 2024 which will be held in February.

The Task Force provides a structured forum for discussion of various issues relating to tax policy and administration. Its deliberations have constituted a vital input to policy makers for a long period. It has helped to shape the country's tax regime and, through dialogue and analysis, facilitated an effective, transparent and efficient resolution of a number of issues.

The Task Force Secretariat is expected to organise a schedule of meetings with stakeholders for presentations and discussions in this financial year. The Government will take lead by giving an update of policy objectives, agenda and challenges as well as an appraisal of tax policy priorities for Budget 2024/25. This will provide participants with a broad context for this year's proceedings and motivate analysis and discussion on impacts of various proposals in-depth.

The fiscal policy measures aim at improving business environment in order to attract investments, facilitating growth of small and medium business enterprises for sustainable economic growth; enhancing voluntary tax compliance; broadening the tax base; mainstreaming the use of ICT System in tax administration; strengthening enforcement of tax laws in order to address tax evasion challenges and minimize revenue leakages; and streamlining levies and fees in order to improve business and investment environment.

The Task Force invites submission of proposals from Government officials, private sector, civil society, religious organizations, academia, research institutions and other specialists in public finance. The submissions from interested parties should be in writing, stating clearly:-

- Firm(s) Organization(s) or Association(s) being represented;
- The proposed changes in tax or non-tax revenue,

including analysis of the sectors, regions or taxpayers that would be affected;

- The projected impact on the economy and Government revenues in the year of implementation and outer years;
- The rationale and justification for the proposed revenue policy changes and, in particular, analysis of the means by which the proposal will help the Government achieve its overarching economic, fiscal and poverty-reduction objectives; and
- Where proposals entail a reduction in Government revenues (even in the short term only), there must be alternative proposals which set out explicit and credible measures consistent with the overall thrust of the Government's fiscal policies to offset the proposed revenue shortfall.

We are looking forward to having a productive engagement and exchange of ideas this year among stakeholders and the Government.

Submissions are accepted with effect from the date of this press until **31 March 2024** through the following portal: <https://maoni.mof.go.tz/>

For Hard Copy, please submit your proposals to the following address:

Secretariat Task Force on Tax Reform
Ministry of Finance and Planning,
Policy Analysis Department,
Treasury Square Building (2nd floor),
18 Jakaya Kikwete Road,
P.O Box 2802,
DODOMA.

E-Mail: mathias.kadebe@hazina.go.tz or salha.mzee@hazina.go.tz

For more details/clarifications please call: **0713 694 895** or **0652 442 944**

Or visit our website: www.mof.go.tz

Dr. Natu E. Mwamba
PERMANENT SECRETARY - MINISTRY OF FINANCE
February, 2024



7th Floor, Jangid Plaza, Plot No. G6, Chaburuma Road (Off-Ali Hassan Mwinyi Road)
P.O. Box 80214, Dar es Salaam, Tel +255 22 2126729/30. Fax +255 22 2121695. Email: icap-tz-info@columbia.edu

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- ICAP does not outsource any part of its recruitment and hiring process and strongly condemns any fraudulent and illegal actions of individuals falsely impersonating ICAP.
- ICAP does not and will never solicit money for participation in any part of its recruitment and hiring process, including application submission, interviews, and negotiation. ICAP will not be responsible for fraudulent correspondence, theft or any losses whatsoever that may result from anyone engaging in fraudulent recruitment activity.
- ICAP does not solicit nor accept any application submissions by phone or email. ICAP only accepts applications through its electronic recruitment portal at: <https://icapacity.icap.columbia.edu/en-us/listing/>
- All current ICAP human resources staff will be recognizable by a valid staff ID and work email ending in @cumc.columbia.edu which is used for all official correspondence. ICAP maintains a zero-tolerance policy for fraud by any staff member.
- Please be cautious and if you have any questions, kindly reach out to the ICAP Tanzania head office in Dar es Salaam or email icap-tz-hr@cumc.columbia.edu

Clean energy uptake has twists, turns for institutions, households

REPLACING charcoal and firewood with clean cooking energy sources is increasingly becoming a pivotal agenda of the Vice President's Office - its Union and Environment "wing", to be precise.

The respective minister of state has time and again made strident appeals to the public in that regard.

It was at another occasion to take forward the clean cooking energy drive, after a major gas firm recently donated 700 gas cylinders for free distribution to residents of Kisarawe District, Coast Region.

What appears to be on course to be realized is a shift by public and private institutions preparing food for more than 100 people each day to shift to using gas - not charcoal.

However, it appears they are also dragging their feet on the issue, as it may have unforeseen budgetary implications. They well might ask the government to reimburse them.

What is surprising is that the shift was supposed to take place by January 31, but those who attended the minister's recent press briefing on the issue say the minister did not drop a hint on the progress made in that direction so far.

In that sense, his remarks were a repeat of the rallying of public opinion in that direction, at which point the limitations to taking up that cry could surface to the glaring light of public scrutiny, when heads of institutions are being asked why they are late on the shifting 'deadline'.

The ministry will unlikely put up another deadline unless it is certain that the challenges can be effectively addressed so that each institution is directed to take the step, unlike up to the moment where each will have been looking over the shoulder to see who is shifting.

So far, all has been rather happy at

gas cylinders donation events, as basically it is a matter of marketing companies lining up to support the cooking energy shifting policy.

But there are still challenges with marketing strategy in the donations, including whether to give to the poor (especially women in rural and even urban areas) or to lower middle-class cadres like teachers, as was the case in the latest event.

It is interesting noticing that, perhaps by coincidence, the minister in question here also happens to be the Kisarawe District constituency legislator.

Trying to map out this effort in the cooking energy shift implementation framework yields few answers, as poorer community members will unlikely put up cash to buy cylinders if arrangements were made for teachers to get them for free.

Critics could perceive this 'universal gas cylinder coverage' drive as a sort of admission of failure - that even the relatively well to do will unlikely care to budget for shifting to gas, hoping to get donations.

This compulsive donation effort on the part of the minister is however useful as a policy antidote where the marketing - and, implicitly, donation - effort is abandoned and instead a clear policy is brought up in the next budget estimates.

It might be looked at planning or hoping to get all home-use-type cylinders (the small and medium as well as the taller cylinders for small-scale businesses) for free and making up for that by a gradual offsetting of the debt to respective companies.

But then they will do much better business and the gap to be filled in their finances could be minimal; which would ordinarily also have to be complemented with inward-looking re-filling pricing level for things to be truly easy for poorer households. Rather tricky, come to think of it...

The hype about big threats of artificial intelligence need not be overstretched

MEMBERS of the Association of Tanzania Employers (ATE) are preparing for a continental social partners summit expected to lay out solutions to challenges facing employers, including those occasioned by the advent of artificial intelligence (AI).

That formulation, as given by the ATE leadership, was realistic about challenges and a bit idealistic about solutions as artificial intelligence is basically about downloading computer or internet applications suited to specific operations.

In a sense, it is a bit of fine-tuning everyday use of such applications, starting with the search engine, putting together sounds and images with which one can create a fake 'event'.

ATE executive director & CEO Suzanne Ndomba-Doran said in a briefing that there is an urgent need to focus on employment creation skills and sustainable enterprises to ensure inclusive growth and socio-economic resilience, while tackling challenges raised by the midwife of this quest - AI.

She expressed a little disbelief to the usual claim by social analysts that AI is a threat to job security, in the sense of non-replacement of certain levels of workplace cadres over time, with emphasis that it is vital to invest in technology.

The point for employers, both public and private, is how AI will reduce costs and enable wider market reach, rather than net job creation or job reduction as all technological advances have a habit of cutting on manual jobs.

According to the executive, this is one reason we will have many private sector stakeholders attending the meeting - and who are thereafter ex-

pected to deliberate together on how they can continue developing skills and create jobs.

In her words: "Understanding that socio-economic transformation of the African continent through job creation requires the combined commitment and effort of all social partners and stakeholders, International Organisation of Employers (IOE) member organisations in Africa invited trade unions, governments, international organisations, financial institutions and think-tanks to work together with employers to advance this transformation through job creation."

Reports from ILO indicate that over 72 million youths in Africa are not part of any education or training system and the majority of young women are not employed.

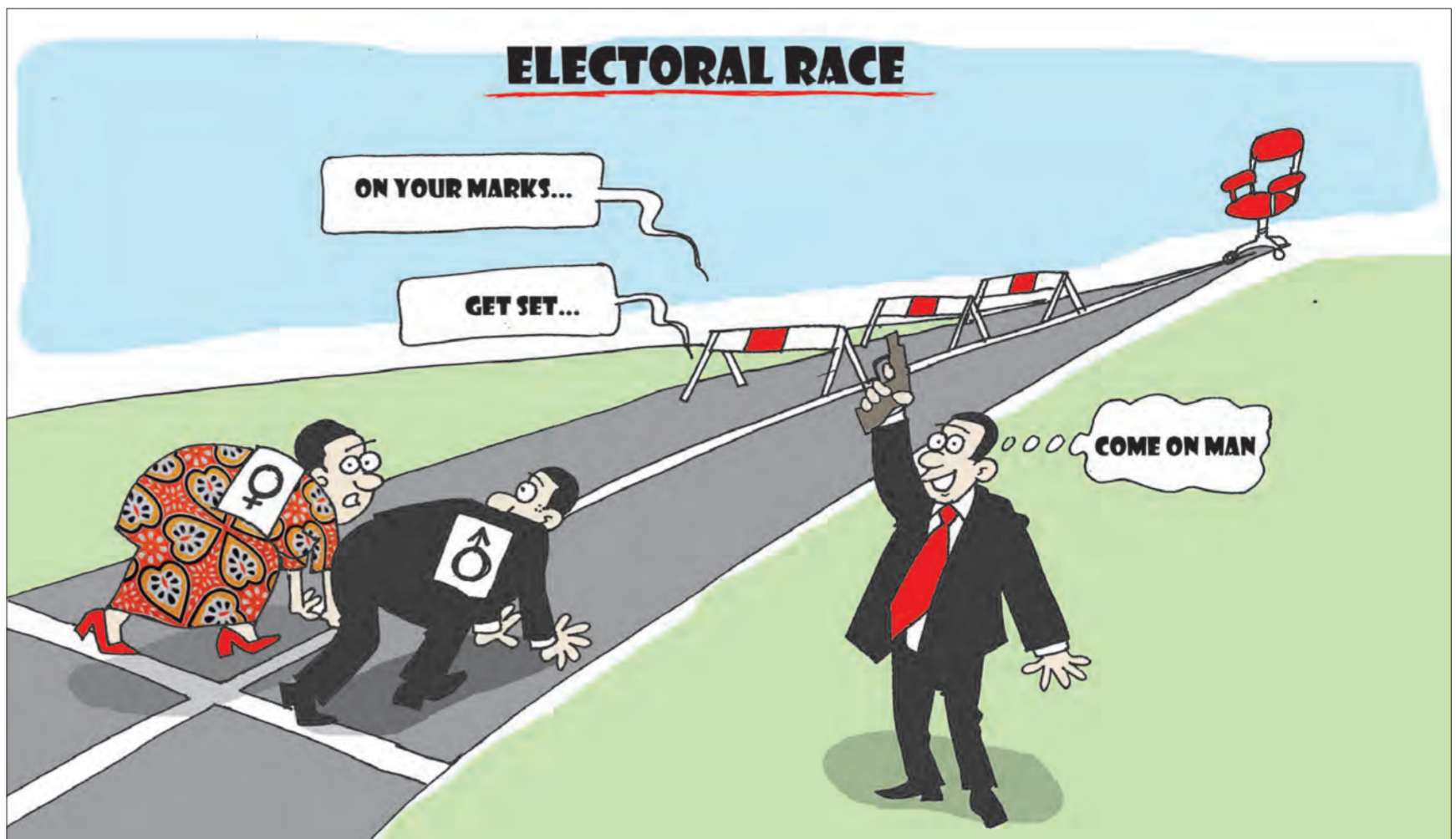
Ndomba-Doran meanwhile also explained that tackling youth inactivity and gender inequalities are essential to achieving global Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) number 8 - on decent work for all by 2030.

"The informal sector has continued to dominate Africa's economy with approximately 85.5 per cent of employment on the continent classified as informal, a situation which limits access to prosperity, social protection and decent working conditions for millions of workers," she said.

She added: "I believe the resolutions reached at the summit will provide guidelines and journals that will be used to influence employers on all issues pertaining to artificial intelligence and other matters."

ATE is set to host the February 7-8 summit 2024 in collaboration with IOE and with support from the European Union and Business Africa.

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Discrimination a killer of dreams for people affected by leprosy

GENEVA

TUJI Sode detached himself from his family and hid himself from the public, embarrassed by his condition, which in biblical times meant exclusion from society and even death.

Sode, a university student in Ethiopia, has Hansen's Disease - also commonly known as leprosy. Leprosy is a bacterial disease that, left untreated, can cause severe disability and deformity.

Sode recalls the severe discrimination because of his leprosy. He developed a disability because the disease was detected too late for treatment. He admits to having tried different solutions to be cured.

"I did it myself and sought local remedies like holy water," Sode said in a video message at the launch of the Global Appeal 2024 to End Stigma and Discrimination Against Persons Affected by Leprosy.

"Discrimination restricts our opportunities for education, employment, and marriage, forcing us to detach from our families, lose property, and live a life that depends on begging," said Sode, who called for global efforts to change the misconception about leprosy and fight entrenched stigmatisation and discrimination.

Debilitating discrimination

Sode's pain was echoed by Kofi Nyarko, who represents a leprosy information service, IDEA, in Ghana.

"It is very painful," Nyarko says: adding: "For a disease like leprosy, if you get your treatment, you will be cured. However, because of this discrimination against us, the disease affects us for many years, and it is hurting us a lot."

Nyarko appealed to the World Health Organisation (WHO) to help abolish all laws against people affected by leprosy.

The resultant discrimination against people with leprosy continues unabated, reversing efforts to eliminate the disease that crops up in several countries in Asia, Africa, South America and the United States.

More than 2 million people have leprosy, according to the WHO, and there are 200,000 new cases each year.

The resultant discrimination against people affected by leprosy has prevented early detection and treatment of the disease, subjecting those affected to a life of hardship, poverty and isolation.

This is the drive behind the launch of the 2024 Global Appeal, calling for an



WHO director general Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus (L) with WHO Goodwill Ambassador for Leprosy Elimination, Yohei Sasakawa. Photo: Agencies

end to "unwarranted discrimination that persons with leprosy continue to face".

Speaking at the launch of the 2024 appeal, WHO Director General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said that the world was on track to eliminate the disease but medical interventions were not enough without addressing the conditions in which the disease thrives: discrimination and stigmatisation.

"Although leprosy has now been curable for more than 40 years, it still has the power to stigmatise," Ghebreyesus said, emphasizing that eliminating the disease requires renewed political commitment, access to services, and awareness-raising.

Ghebreyesus said the global appeal demonstrates a need for renewed commitment to end leprosy by 2030.

Yohei Sasakawa, the current WHO Goodwill Ambassador for Leprosy Elimination and the chair of the Nippon Foundation that supports the Sasakawa Leprosy (Hansen's Disease) Initiative, was meanwhile emphatic that leprosy was not a curse or a punishment from God but a disease that can be cured by early detection and with raised public awareness.

Sasakawa has committed his life to fighting against the discrimination of people affected by leprosy, visiting more than 120 countries and crusading for "zero leprosy".

fluent partners from a range of fields to build solidarity and ensure that its message reaches far and wide.

Maya Ranavare, President of Apal in India, said the discrimination against persons affected by leprosy necessitates a collaborative effort by all, making it imperative for countries to enact laws and policies that acknowledge and address discrimination while involving persons affected by leprosy.

"Countries must also recognise their obligation to prevent third parties from discriminating against persons affected by leprosy as mandated by international and domestic law," Ranavare said.

Deterring discrimination

Leprosy was officially eliminated in the world as a public health problem in 2000 and in most countries by 2010. The WHO has set global numerical targets that link "elimination" to "interruption of transmission" in its most recent global strategy (2021-2030).

The Tanzania Leprosy Association has been working to end discrimination against persons affected by leprosy and their families, as this has excluded them from participating in economic and social activities.

"The discrimination has contributed to poverty and life hardship," says Mohamed Mtumbi, the association's executive secretary, noting that community sensitisation through education has been the most effective way to change community perceptions about leprosy.

Mozammel Hoq, Secretary of the Rangpur Federation in Bangladesh, appealed to the WHO to ensure that all policies formulated for persons affected by leprosy are properly implemented and that the WHO should form a welfare trust for them.

Beatriz Miranda-Galarza, the UN Special Rapporteur on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Persons Affected by Leprosy, reported that each year thousands of people, including women, children, and the elderly, face discrimination linked to leprosy.

She added that there were disempowering caregiving approaches that perceived people affected by leprosy as passive recipients of care.

"There is a demanding need for the establishment of a support and care system grounded in human rights principles," Miranda-Galarza said, adding that states, countries and international organisations must incorporate the fundamental rights of individuals affected to access quality care and support into their policy frameworks.

Quick analysis on mandatory health insurance for all policy

MID YEAR 2023, there were rumors that it will be mandatory for every Tanzania citizen to be enrolled in health insurance scheme. It went all along until a Universal Health Insurance Bill was tabled in the National Assembly, this was the time, were people were notified of the said bill, notification in the sense that the same was published for people and different sectorial department to give out their opinion.

Time went all along until the bill was passed by the Legislature and then tabled before President Samia Suluhu Hassan, whom on November 19th, 2023 she accented the said bill and was published on the Gazette of United Republic of Tanzania No. 48 Vol. 104 of 01st December, 2023, thus became a complete law. This law is what is known as Universal Health Insurance Act, No. 13 of 2023.

As lawyers we are responsible of informing the public, on the same law being endorsed by the legislature and the same being published in the Government Gazette. It is presumed that the same is known to the whole public.

This is also in-line with legal position that, that ignorance of law is not a defense or an excuse, famously known in Latin as "ignorantia juris non excusat" starts to apply.

Thus we opted to exercise our duty so that the public can

have the basics or general understanding on the above law.

First of all the law can be found in Kiswahili language which is known to Tanzanians at large and it contains 9 parts, which are introductory part, mandatory health insurance system for all, health insurance scheme, group of service available, membership and contribution within the scheme, quality assurance, other conditions, repeal of various laws and statutes and also temporary conditions and lastly amendment of various acts.

Let us take you through the first part, as the matter of practice this part contained introduction and interpretation of various relevant terms and other related issues. In this part, specifically states that applicability of the law is only to be enforceable in Tanzania Mainland and not Zanzibar.

It says goals for enactment is to ensure availability of better health services through health insurance for all and, to place a better system in health insurance scheme for the general public.

The second part is identified as health insurance for all system. In this part, Section 5 categorically provides that, it should be mandatory for the following groups to have health insurance, these are each citizen, and each employer is required to make monthly contribution in re-

spect of health insurance. Further, any foreigner above 18 years, who will be in Tanzania for more than 30 days and he or she does not have a health insurance recognized by United Republic of Tanzania, is required to register at one of the recognized health insurance schemes.

Section 7 of Act provides that the Tanzania Insurance Regulatory Authority (TIRA) shall be governing authority regarding this scheme. Authority assigned various tasks but not limited to registration of various health insurance schemes, ensure that various service providers provide their service within the ambit of the law, make sure the service provided ought to be within the standards of the particular scheme, conduct various investigation, give guidelines as to the price of the schemes also report to the respective Ministry annually or when directed on the whole regulatory service etc.

On the third part, the law introduces two health schemes, one being the public health



insurance scheme, in this the law adopts the former National Health Insurance Fund (NHIF) as the public health insurance scheme and also provides for private health insurance scheme, on which it adopts the former schemes that are not struck out in this new law and others that are to be introduced subject to the regulation to be made thereafter. Further in this part provides for issues that can amount to termination of a health scheme.

Fourthly, it establishes Community Health Fund (CHF) and also Health Scheme which provides necessary service. In this all of the products assist a member to get assistance from the lower level of service to the national referral medical service. It is mandatory to have a later one if one cannot afford CHF. It establishes a scheme for providing further service which this to be establish and the respective ministry has to issue regulation as for the same to be established.

On the fifth part which touches contribution and

membership, the same provides for who is to become a member, and this again had inherited the members who were former members of the various schemes before the enactment of this Act.

Issue of contribution is entirely left private schemes while on the other hands ministry was given task to introduce pricing through regulations which is yet to be in place. We are waiting for the regulations to be enacted to establish reasonable rate which can be afforded by many residents in our country.

An issue on rate is now a million-dollar question. But this touches people who are on a group of private sector like small entrepreneurs. In a very special way this Act also establish fund for people with no income of which they are to registered and recognized in a special funds scheme, the law, in which there shall be a special established funds which shall be injected with funds to handle this special group.

The sources identified by the act are parliamentary contribution, fund generated from tax in different products such as alcohol products and cosmetics.

The sixth part of the statute, it provides for quality control. The control is vested to TIRA and the Health Ministry. Among the tasks that the law has placed to them is to ensure that there is an agree-

ment between service providers and medical facilities such as hospitals, dispensary and health centers.

The seventh part talks on continuity of various schemes, costs and investment in various schemes relating to health insurance. Further in this part also there are various offences which have been placed and its penalty or let's say consequences.

Section 36 provides that giving false information amount to an offence which if done by a member its fine is not less than 500,000/- and not more than 5,000,000/- or imprisonment of not less than 6 months and not more than 12 months.

If an offence is done by a health scheme or fund, the fine is not less than 10,000,000/- and not exceeding 100,000,000/- and the court can issue other damages as it deems fit. If an offence is conducted by a medical facility, then fine is not limited to 5,000,000/- and not exceeding 50,000,000/-.

Section 37 provides that it will be an offence for any person not to register himself or herself in any health insurance scheme however there is a grace period of three years starting from the date of enactment. And after that if found guilty a person shall be subjected to registration and also pay fine of 10 percent of the contribution per each year.

The last part covers repealed laws and also amendment of various laws affecting the health insurance scheme industry.

As part of our opinion, never late than never because this law was supposed to be in place since then but happily,

today the law is here. The law has a wide scope in which it covers every resident in this country including foreigners.

Now, it is the responsibility of the public and entrusted authoritative organs to ensure provisions of the law are properly enforced whereas the ministry should prepare regulations which can accommodate all Tanzanians by introducing reasonable contribution or premium so that each resident can afford.

On the other side, it is commonly known that properly applicability of this law will increase volume of medical business in our jurisdiction; therefore hospital owners are also encouraged or advised to ensure better and modern services to the patients. We have been witnessing good numbers of people travelled outside of the country for medical treatment while their costs are incurred by the government.

With this law, we hope number would be decreased hence better health services and more revenue to our government.

Note: the material and information contained in this article are for general information purposes only. They only provide either elementary or basic legal knowledge on the above subject. Anyone considering legal action should consult an experienced lawyer to understand current laws and how they may affect a case in question.

You can send questions or comments to our email info@legisattorneys.co.tz or postal address Managing Partner, Legis Attorneys, P. O. Box 3750, DSM. You can visit our website www.legisattorneys.co.tz

The amazing Amboni caves: A site in Tanga worth visiting

By Correspondent-Emmanuel

Onyango

In November last year, members of the Switzerland based Foundation Botnar organized a tour at the Amboni caves on the outskirts of Tanga city, accompanied by a number of local and international journalists.

This was after the philanthropic foundation inspected some of its projects in Tanga city, which is implementing in collaboration with Tanga city council.

In Tanzania, the foundation works with Tanga city council since May 2018 whereas it provides fund to intended youth groups running their activities under the city's "Tanga Yetu" initiative.

The funding organisation also champions the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and digital technology to improve the health and wellbeing of children and young people in growing urban environment living in other cities around the world.

The foundation visit in Tanga was conducted in cooperation with members from other countries where it is helping to raise youth standards of living. The countries are Ecuador, Romania, Columbia, Ghana, Kenya and France.

Tanga is among Tanzania's coastal city which is nestled on the fringes of Indian Ocean and boasts of many vibrant historical features which have shaped the culture and identity of its people.

From the ancient Arab trade routes to colonial rule, Tanga has mosaic fascinating narrative stories full of remarkable events that have left an indelible mark on the Eastern coast of Africa.

Being advantageously located near Pemba and Zanzibar Islands and other cities such as Mombasa in the neighbouring Kenya, Tanga became a vital trading centre for ivory and slave trade in early 19th century. The region was under the in-



The Amboni caves in Kionomi ward, Tanga Region. Photo: Emmanuel Onyango



Other interesting adventures include bats that are flying out of the cave through the entrance, mostly in the evening time.

fluence of Arab domination during the rule of the Sultanate of Zanzibar who had a powerful kingdom and later played a crucial role in the resistance against the encroaching colonial powers of the then Germany East Africa.

The presence of Amboni caves has enabled the region to acquire an international acclaim due to the underground precious limestone with the cave inside it which was discovered by German colonialists way back in 1892.

The name Amboni originated from a woman called Mboni who owned large land plots near the caves. When German colonialists came, they failed to pronounce her name prop-

erly and called her Amboni.

Known in Kiswahili as 'Mampango ya Amboni', the limestone cave complex in Kionomi ward—some 8 kilometres from city centre along the Tanga-Mombasa highway to the Kenyan border.

Reports by geologists show that, "there are altogether ten caves but only one is used for guided tours. The caves are estimated to have been formed about 150 million years ago.

The longest cave measures 755 meters while geologists and researchers say the area was submerged by water for about 20 million years.

A recent spot check by this writer at the caves had some gloomy aspects in it. Indeed, it

was an exciting trip which took about twenty minutes from the city centre.

While travelling all through the way, the outlook of the scenery was greenish where a stranger can take a glimpse of some birds and primates (colobus monkeys) in small forests along the way. The forests are preserved by the government through the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism.

On arrival at the gate, the team was received by a tour guide—Hashim Kaaya who gave an episode narration of the inside story about the caves. He said there are about 13 stations inside the cave which are full of wonders with attractions that includes natural features

made by ocean water as a result of eroded weak limestone parts.

The shapes of the cave rocks which are whitish in colour have astonishing physical and geological features that attract tourists as well as students who visit the area for learning purposes.

One of the most leading attracting features to visitors includes rock drawings which are not conspicuously seen as the pavements through which people pass as they are covered by darkness.

There are some which cannot be reached. These have a look similar to living things such as a head of a lion, bird, a crocodile, an elephant, and leopard.

Other interesting adventures include bats that are flying out of the cave through the entrance, mostly in the evening time.

What people love most about this experience is that, "they get to know how indigenous people use the caves for various activities and how conservation of the caves means to them".

Amboni caves are attributed to several awe-inspiring and mythical stories as well as a number of local legends. The area has been associated with fascinating stories whereby traditional rites are still continuing to be held up to the present time.

A glimpse through beyond at the entrance, there is a small chamber that seem to be a dwelling spot where the indigenous people used to dance to their traditional songs and beat drums.

It is in this area whereby visitors are also requested to leave big bags at a designated spot before entering some tight spots. However, the breathtaking formations seen while walking through the squeezes make the trip worthwhile.

The first chamber of the Amboni caves holds a religious meaning as they are used as

shrines for prayers and making sacrifices in what most people regard as superstitious.

The work is done by ethnic groups such as the Sambia, Bondei, Digo and Segeju who lives in local communities close to the area. Various items are put in the chamber by villagers during prayers as gifts offered to the spirits locally referred to as "Mizimu".

Local people consider the caves as supernatural features where divine powers have resided ever since the caves were formed millions of years ago.

According to the tour guide, there is a painstaking story being spoken about the cave which occurred way back in 1941. He narrated that, one foreigner tried to explore the unknown depths of the caves alone and ignored a strong warning that far beyond was dangerous.

The foreigner was accompanied by his dog along the darkened pavement but to the great dismay he was never seen again up to now. But an amazing phenomenon to be noted about his adventure is that the dog he had was later found in the then Tanga town.

There are many interesting features of these caves that stimulated the imagination of people for thousand years. In some parts of Africa, caves have some legend stories being used as a passage to different destinations or used as hideout for people who fought for independence.

Some freedom fighters found niches which were connected to the surface where they could light fires and used these passages to different destinations. While others used rocks that provided them with natural shelters from extreme rain, heat, and wind.

The Amboni caves are currently being maintained by the Tanzania government through the Department of Antiquities in the Ministry of Tourism and Natural Resources since it was handed over in 1963.

Thirst for lithium in Europe threatening livelihoods and biodiversity in Portugal



By Marta Vidal

PAULO Pires walked up the hill with his flock of sheep and dogs on a warm day in August, as a stream of water gushed down an ancient irrigation channel that has been maintained by local communities over many generations.

"There is a lot of wealth here," said Pires, now resting in the shade of an oak tree by the flowing water.

For centuries, Covas do Barroso's water, pastures and forests have been managed collectively to integrate farming, livestock and forestry in a sustainable manner.

But Pires is worried

Savannah Resources, a company based in the United Kingdom, aims to develop Western Europe's largest open-pit lithium mine in Barroso, bordering the Peneda-Geres National Park in northeastern Portugal.

"When I was a child I used to come here with my friends and we bathed in the spring," said Pires, pointing to an area littered with plastic pipes and blasted rocks, the remnants of lithium prospecting carried out in 2017 in the village's common lands.

Pires first saw the wounds opened by the search for miner-

Protesters vent their frustrations in the central square of Covas do Barroso, Portugal. Photo: Diana Takacsova

als and has since felt a sense of dread thinking about an open-pit mine on his doorstep.

"We're afraid of the noise, of the dust, of water contamination. Where will I take my sheep?" he said.

The lithium mine could threaten the pastures and mountainsides that Pires's livelihood depends on. It could also harm his home in the village of Romainho a few hundred metres away from the proposed mining site.

In May, Savannah Resources received preliminary approval from Portuguese authorities to develop an open-pit lithium mine on about 840 hectares (2,076 acres), three-quarters of which is community-owned land.

Lithium for Europe

The mountainous region of Barroso is believed to contain some of Europe's most significant resources of lithium, a key component in batteries to power electric cars and store renewable energy.

The Savannah Resources project is expected to produce enough lithium for about half a million electric car batteries each year.

Under the banner of a "green transition", the race for lithium has accelerated around the

world.

The European Commission has estimated that demand for lithium will grow 60 times by 2050. Maros Sefcovic, the Commission's vice president, said climate goals cannot be achieved without critical materials like lithium.

To prevent the European Union from being dependent on outside countries, the EU's Critical Raw Materials Act aims to facilitate mining activities and set a target that at least 10 percent of Europe's raw materials should come from local supplies.

"It's an extraordinary opportunity," said Ana Fontoura Gouveia, Portugal's secretary of state for energy and climate, who believes the country's mineral resources will play a key role in the EU's ambition to secure more of the battery value chain.

According to Gouveia, lithium could generate 9 billion euros (\$9.8m) in investment.

Another company, Lusorecursos, received the green light from Portugal's environmental agency in September to open a lithium mine inside the Geres-Xures Transboundary Biosphere Reserve, which is a few kilometres from Covas do Barroso.

Prospection and exploration

requests have surged in recent years.

Portuguese authorities announced they would launch an international public auction of lithium mining concessions, but the sale has been repeatedly postponed over concerns about the social and environmental impact of mining - and a recent corruption probe.

In November, an investigation into alleged corruption related to lithium mining, hydrogen and data centre projects led to the resignation of Portuguese Prime Minister Antonio Costa after prosecutors detained his chief of staff. The former secretary of state for energy and president of the Portuguese environmental agency were named suspects.

Campaigns by local communities against lithium mining have urged authorities to suspend all lithium projects, which they say lack transparency. But prospecting works have continued in Barroso, even as governmental buildings and the companies' offices were searched.

Savannah Resources says the project in Barroso could create hundreds of jobs and contribute more than 1 billion euros (\$1.09bn) to Portugal's gross domestic product. But the promises of economic development have failed to convince locals,

my children a devastated land?"

A vocal opponent of the mining project, Queiroga, has vowed to use all means to stop it, including legal challenges to halt the operations.

Savannah Resources has promised to follow "the best quality standards" and comply with all regulations. Locals bemoan what they call an absence of transparency and say they were not consulted about the mining plans.

For Nuno Forner, from the environmental association ZERO, the public lack of trust in mining companies is understandable given the industry's long history of environmental destruction and lack of accountability.

"There are 199 abandoned mines and many continue to affect local populations today," he said.

Several companies would rather pay a fine than subsidise the rehabilitation of mining territories.

Speaking at a conference on so-called "green mining" held in Lisbon in 2021, Peter Handley, the head of the European Commission's raw materials unit, said mining in the past was a "very dirty operation" that is becoming "highly technological these days".

"Open-pit mining, heavy machinery powered by fossil fuels, hundreds of trucks on the roads. How can any of this be called green?" asked Queiroga. "Green is what we have: our forests and our landscapes which will be destroyed by this project."

Experts have raised concerns about the cumulative impact of the two large-scale mining projects on local ecosystems, biodiversity and threatened species.

"Barroso is a biodiversity hot spot with a mosaic of meadows and forests. There are 106 species of butterflies, including some of the rarest in Europe. They may disappear if their habitats are destroyed," warned Ernestino Maravalhas, a lepidopterist who has published several books on Barroso's biodiversity.

In addition to having indigenous livestock breeds and the rare Garano horse, Barroso is home to important populations of Iberian wolf, a priority species classified as endangered, and critically endangered freshwater pearl mussels.

Environmentalists argue the anticipated harms far outweigh the benefits of lithium mining in Barroso.

"The impacts on the territory, on water and on people's health will be very significant," said Forner.

A green transition should include rethinking the way we use the earth's limited resources, he said.

"We need to reduce the quantity of private vehicles and invest in public transport. Replacing one car with another won't really solve our problems."

CAPITAL RADIO

RATIBA YA VIPINDI JUMATATU - JUMAPILI

MONDAY TIME PROGRAMME	TUESDAY TIME PROGRAMME	WEDNESDAY TIME PROGRAMME	THURSDAY TIME PROGRAMME	FRIDAY TIME PROGRAMME	SATURDAY TIME PROGRAMME	SUNDAY TIME PROGRAMME
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Tembelea mitandao ya kijamii ya CAPITAL RADIO



CAPITAL RADIO

Nearly 400 Ethiopians die of starvation

ADDIS ABABA

Nearly 400 people have died of starvation in Ethiopia's Tigray and Amhara regions in recent months, the national ombudsman said on Tuesday, a rare admission of hunger-related deaths by a federal body.

Local officials have previously reported starvation deaths in their districts, but Ethiopia's federal government has insisted these reports were "completely wrong."

Ethiopia's ombudsman office sent experts to the regions, which are gripped by drought and still reeling from a devastating civil war that officially ended 14 months ago. They concluded that 351 people have died of hunger in Tigray in the past six months, with 44 more deaths in Amhara.

Only a small fraction of needy people in Tigray are receiving food aid, according to an aid memo seen by The Associated Press, more than one month after aid agencies resumed deliveries of grain following a lengthy pause over theft.

Just 14 percent of 3.2 mil-

lion people targeted for food aid by humanitarian agencies in Tigray this month had received it by Jan. 21, according to the memo by the Tigray Food Cluster, a group of aid agencies co-chaired by the UN's World Food Programme and Ethiopian officials.

The memo urges humanitarian groups to "immediately scale up" their operations, warning that "failure to take swift action now will result in severe food insecurity and malnutrition during the lean season, with possible loss of the most vulnerable children and women in the region."

The UN and the US paused food aid to Tigray in mid-March last year after discovering a "large-scale" scheme to steal humanitarian grain. The suspension was rolled out to the rest of Ethiopia in June. US officials believe the theft may be the biggest diversion of grain ever. Donors have blamed Ethiopian government officials and the military for the fraud.

The UN and the US lifted the pause in December after introducing reforms to curb theft, but Tigray authorities say food is not reaching those who need it.

Two aid workers said that



the new system – which includes fitting GPS trackers to food trucks and putting QR codes on ration cards – has

been hampered by technical issues. Aid agencies are also struggling with a lack of funds.

A third aid worker said the

food aid pause and the slow resumption meant some people in Tigray have not received food aid for over a year. "They

went through multiple rounds of registration and verification, but no actual distributions yet," the aid worker said.

Around 20.1 million people across Ethiopia need humanitarian food due to drought, conflict and a tanking economy. The aid pause pushed up hunger levels even further.

The US-funded Famine Early Warning System has warned that crisis levels of hunger or worse "are expected in northern, southern and south-eastern Ethiopia throughout at least early 2024." A former head of the WFP has described these hunger levels as "marching towards starvation."

In Amhara, which shares a border with Tigray, a rebellion that erupted in August is impeding humanitarians' movements and making distributions difficult, while several regions of Ethiopia have been devastated by a multi-year drought.

Malnutrition rates among children in parts of Ethiopia's Afar, Amhara and Oromia regions range between 15.9 percent and 47 percent, according to a presentation by the Ethiopia Nutrition Cluster. Among displaced children in Tigray, the rate is 26.5 percent. The Ethiopia Nutrition Cluster is co-chaired by the UN Children's Fund and the federal government.

Foundation hosts project seeking to equip pupils with creative life skills

By Guardian Reporter

THE Sahara Group Foundation has hosted the first edition of the Sahara STEAMers programme to equip participants with knowledge and skills to create innovative solutions that address problems across various sectors.

Held in Dar es Salaam recently, the National Demo Day competition, according to the organisers, was meant to nurture and create Africa's next-generation leaders and social innovators.

The Sahara STEAMers programme, an afterschool initiative in partnership with STEM Cafe, was established in 2022 with the primary aim of fostering innovation, creativity, and excellence in Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics (STEAM) education among secondary school pupils in Africa.

This year's edition gave participants the opportunity to present innovative solutions to a panel of judges. Captivated by the pupils' dedication to making a tangible impact on their communities, the Director of Sahara Group Foundation, Ejiro Gray, lauded the pupils' passion, intelligence, creativity and problem-solving skills.

She expressed immense pride in all the participating teams, stating: "The 2023 Sahara STEAMers programme showcased the intelligence, creativity, and passion of the pupils, many of whom were experiencing their first exposure to technology and the practical applications of STEM learning in addressing real-life problems and inventing innovative solutions."

Gray urged pupils to seize opportunities to hone skills they have acquired from the programme, and use them to drive positive change in the society.

She said that for some of the pupils, their participation in the Sahara STEAMers programme marked their first real interaction with technology and its practical applications in addressing real-world challenges, urging them to persist in cultivating their newfound skills and embracing future opportunities to refine them for driving positive societal change.

Gray said that the inspiring display witnessed at the event was not merely a fleeting moment but a clear manifestation of the steadfast commitment of both Sahara Group Foundation and Sahara Tanzania Limited to empower young minds across Africa.

"This commitment is geared towards nurturing a future generation equipped to lead with innovation, compassion, and a lasting impact, thereby shaping a world where positive change becomes an inherent part of their journey, she said.

Kunle Onadeko, terminal operations manager at Sahara Tanzania Limited underscored the pivotal role of the Sahara STEAMers programme in nurturing young talents and fostering their innovative skills.

He said: "The Sahara STEAMers programme transcends being a mere initiative; it acts as a catalyst for transformative change."

Onadeko emphasized that the quality of innovations on display is proof of the significant impact that comes from investing in young people and igniting their minds to see no limits.

Farmers in Kilolo spot hidden potential in modern beekeeping

By Getrude Mbago

FARMERS in Kilolo District, Iringa Region and other parts of the country have been urged to embrace beekeeping to protect biodiversity, conserve forests and enhance livelihoods.

Kilolo District Commissioner Peresi Magiri made the call recently when handing over 50 modern beehives and other beekeeping equipment to beekeeping groups.

The handover is part of interventions under the European Union (EU) funded Capacity Building related to Multilateral Environmental Agreements in African, Caribbean and Pacific Countries - Phase III (ACP-MEAs 3) project, which is implemented by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in six districts across the country.

According to him, the potential of beekeeping is yet to be realized, emphasizing the opportunity for farmers to use the country's land and forests for beekeeping activities.

"There are numerous benefits that beekeeping offers, not only in terms of honey production but also as a crucial element in crop pollination, therefore ensuring food security," he explained.

Magiri encouraged the community to see bees as friends rather than foes, as they play an important part in human sur-



Kilolo District Commissioner Peresi Magiri (R) and an official from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) hand over modern beekeeping tools to one of the beneficiary farmers in the district recently.

vival and development.

Furthermore, he emphasized that engaging in beekeeping can help reduce activities such as deforestation for charcoal production, as beekeepers can generate income from selling bee products.

The distributed beekeeping equipment, which includes high-quality beehives and protective gear, is expected to increase honey production, and improve the efficiency of honey

processing, meeting formal market standards.

"We appreciate FAO and EU for their support, our promise on this is that we will ensure that these tools are well managed and protected to bring the intended outcomes to the villagers," he said.

Local beekeepers expressed gratitude for the support they received, acknowledging the impact it will have on their livelihoods.

Enock Sarufu, a beekeeper at Irindi village in Mahenge ward thanked FAO for supporting the community with the tools and training on modern beekeeping, which will help them transform their activities and increase productivity in the bee subsector.

Helena Kisumbe, another beekeeper, emphasized the importance of sharing beekeeping skills to empower women in the community.

"Women have been taking beekeeping as a business confined to men, we have been told today by experts that all genders can effectively chip in and perform well in the business and later reap big to improve incomes," she said.

Amani Kamagi, a projects teacher at Dabaga Secondary School, commended the effort, emphasizing its relevance in enhancing the school curriculum and equipping students with essential skills in beekeeping and environmental conservation.

"We attended today's training to learn more about best practices in beekeeping. I am pleased that what we learned is essential and I plan to use the knowledge to enhance our school project," he said.

He underscored the value of providing schoolchildren with basic beekeeping and environmental protection skills so that they can grow up with the knowledge to transform their societies.

Beekeeping is recognized as a cornerstone in achieving ecological sustainability and economic development.

Through comprehensive training and the provision of modern tools, initiatives like the ACP-MEAs 3 project aim to promote environmentally friendly beekeeping practices, benefiting both beekeepers and the ecosystem.

War in Sudan sees eight million people displaced

KHARTOUM

THE number of people uprooted by the war between rival generals in Sudan is almost eight million, the United Nations has said.

UN High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi, who is on a visit to Ethiopia, called for "urgent and additional support to meet their needs", his agency said in a statement disclosing the numbers.

The conflict between Sudan's army chief Abdel Fattah al-Burhan and his former deputy, Mohamed Hamdan Daglo, commander of the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF), erupt-

ed in mid-April last year.

Diplomatic efforts to end the violence continue but have failed to bear fruit, and numerous ceasefires have been broken.

Nearly eight million people have been displaced internally or fled to other countries by the "brutal conflict", the UN said.

"I heard stories of heartbreaking loss of family, friends, homes and livelihoods," Grandi said in the statement.

Over 100,000 people have fled into Ethiopia, one of the six neighbouring countries sheltering the refugees, according to UN estimates.

The number of people

who have gone to Chad since the war began crossed 500,000 last week, and an average of 1,500 flee into South Sudan each day, the UN statement said.

"Without further donor support, it will be extremely difficult to deliver much-needed help to those who need it most," Grandi said.

The Sudan war has killed at least 13,000 people, according to a conservative estimate by the Conflict Location and Event Data Project.

Both sides have been accused of war crimes, including the indiscriminate shelling of residential areas, torture and arbitrary detention of civilians.



BRAINS: A climate-smart initiative that will integrate bean, fruit trees, and business enterprises in Africa

By A Special Correspondent

THE government of Canada has announced a CAD \$20 million grant to the Alliance of Biodiversity International and the International Center for Tropical Agriculture (Alliance) and the International Centre of Insect Physiology and Ecology (icipe), to develop low carbon, climate resilient systems, that are favourable to women and the youth, using bean, fruit trees and beneficial insects farming and business enterprises.

Titled: 'Building Equitable Climate-Resilient African Bean and Insect Sectors (BRAINS)', the initiative will be implemented across 15 sub-Saharan African countries, directly benefitting 5 million small-holder farmers, 2.5 million consumers and school-age children, and a range of value chain actors.

Indirectly, BRAINS will profit 50 million consumers, businesses and households. This support is part of a CAD \$78 million development funding by the Government of Canada, announced by Canada's Minister of International Development, during a visit to Ethiopia and Egypt in May 2023. Read more

"The BRAINS initiative is an example of the power of partnerships. It will harness the extensive experience, innovations, networks, efficiencies of scale and broad geographical reach, of The Alliance, through the Pan-African Bean Research Alliance (PABRA); and icipe, into a system-based approach.

This strategy will promote value chains and markets that are gender-transformative and resilient to climate change." - Abdou Tenkouano, icipe Director General.

"Integrated bean, fruit tree and edible insect economies present a great opportunity for transformative change in Africa. They are effective vehicles to accelerate inclusive climate adaptation outcomes at scale. They can also improve diets, food and nutrition security, and livelihoods for millions of consumers." - Juan Lucas Restrepo, Director General, Alliance of Biodiversity International and CIAT.

Developed and facilitated by The Alliance, PABRA has over the past 27 years increased production and strengthened the value chain of common beans in 31 countries in sub-Saharan Africa, where the crop is central to food and nutrition security and income generation.

Through interventions like the 'Improved Bean Productivity and Marketing in Africa', a project supported by Global Affairs, Canada, PABRA's demand-led research innovations include:



Various food grains at a market in India.

breeding climate resilient farmer and consumer preferred bean varieties; efficient seed systems for timely deliver of these varieties; post-harvest and agronomic approaches and soil enrichment and nitrogen fixation strategies.

The PABRA innovations also encompass pre-cooked beans and more nutritious bean products that contribute to energy savings in rural areas and to school feeding programmes.

Through the Bean Corridor approach, PABRA intensifies bean production; expands marketing and consumption by eliminating bottlenecks in the bean value chain, and by pivoting profitable, inclusive markets for small-holder farmers and small and medium enterprises.

This contribution ensures that

improved beans and nutrient-rich bean products are accessed by even the most marginalised communities.

For more than 50 years, icipe has developed integrated pest managements (IPM) options for many devastating pests and diseases of fruit, vegetable, legumes and cereals.

Examples include the icipe-led continent-wide initiative that has developed and disseminated a highly effective, systems-approach, nature-based IPM package for fruit flies. The programme is supported by the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), Canada, alongside other donors.

The icipe IPM package consists of pre- and post-harvest methods that meet the requirements of domestic and export markets,

thus contributing to income generation, employment creation, food and nutritional security, and reduction in the overuse and misuse of pesticides.

Icipe is also leading the way in using edible insects to transform the current food system into a more sustainable and vibrant, climate-smart, circular economy.

Edible insects farming is environmentally friendly - "...insects have a low ecological footprint, and they emit smaller amounts of greenhouse gases, compared to other animals."

Moreover, insects such as black soldier flies are effective recyclers of organic wastes into nutritious, chitin-rich organic frass fertilisers that enhance soil health. icipe has designed improved, low-tech options for

mass-rearing of edible insects and supported the development of harmonised standards and policies for safe, equitable use and trade in edible insect.

Through massive awareness raising and training efforts, the Centre has contributed to the emergence of small- and medium-scale, insect-based enterprises. The icipe-developed edible insects value chain cuts across the food system including farming, waste management and inputs, while also interacting with other key systems like energy, trade and the health of people, animals and the environment.

Through BRAINS, The Alliance and icipe will collaborate with national agricultural research institutes, through a South-South participatory development approach, to integrate bean, fruit trees systems and insects for food and feed farming.

The systems will be complemented with components of the icipe climate-smart push-pull technology, which intercroops legumes and fodder grass to control cereal pests; and the Centre's modern, climate-smart and sustainable beekeeping technologies.

"The BRAINS partnership will co-develop demand-led, climate-adapted bean varieties and fruit trees, primarily mango and avocado, supported by environmentally-friendly pest and disease management options; organic soil fertility enhancement, through insect-based frass biofertilisers; and enhanced pollination services by the bees.

Moreover, beans enhance nitrogen fixation and soil enrichment; fruit trees and beekeeping-friendly trees are perennial and drought-tolerant, thus helping to protect landscapes, restore soil function and fertility, and helping in carbon sequestration," said Dr Sunday Ekesi, Head, Capacity Building and Integrated Sciences, icipe.

"The Alliance-PABRA and icipe will leverage each other's capacities and partnerships to elevate value chains of target commodities. The two organisations will complement each other, share experiences and facilities and expand partnerships and ultimately deliver the right products to catalyse women and youth farmers and entrepreneurs; attract investments and diversify portfolios to increase climate resilience," said Jean Claude Rubyo Bean Programme Leader & Director, PABRA, Alliance of Biodiversity and CIAT.

The transfer of the technologies will emphasize: the participation of women and in the project design and decision-making; as well as digitally enabled agronomic advisory services that are farmer-relevant, accurate and gender-responsive.

The value chain innovations created by The Alliance- PABRA and icipe will lead to new trade partnerships and new markets; cooperatives and an investment platform for beans, fruits, edible insects and pollination services; and collaborations with finance investors and funds for financially inclusive, and gender-responsive investments.

“...insects have a low ecological footprint, and they emit smaller amounts of greenhouse gases, compared to other animals.”

RADIO One

RATIBA YA VIPINDI JUMATATU - JUMAPILI

MONDAY TIME PROGRAMME	TUESDAY TIME PROGRAMME	WEDNESDAY TIME PROGRAMME	THURSDAY TIME PROGRAMME	FRIDAY TIME PROGRAMME	SATURDAY TIME PROGRAMME	SUNDAY TIME PROGRAMME
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STAMICO will now start production of building materials

By Correspondent

Valentine Oforo, Dodoma

THE National Mining Corporation (STAMICO) has announced the plan to start producing pebbles, which focuses on supplying building materials for the country's real estate sector.

The project, now at preliminary stages at Chigongwe ward of Dodoma capital city, will see the state-owned mining corporation producing between 150 and 200 tons of the key construction minerals per hour, bringing production to at least 2,000 tons in a day.

The development in the country's mining sector was unveiled by the Acting Executive Director of STAMICO, Deusdedith Magala, when the parliamentary standing committee on Energy and Minerals paid a special visit to the project recently.

Briefing the committee over the project, Magala expressed that research has established the existence of 13.1 tons of chip in Chigongwe ward, the vast resources to be harvested for over eight consecutive years.

Explaining about the project's marketing plan, the director informed that when the production commences, twenty percent of the products will be produced for serving the real estate sector.

The remaining eighty percent will cater for other development projects, including roads construction, railways, airports and sports grounds.

Speaking during the event, Mineral Minister, Anthony Mavunde hailed the state-owned mining corporation for initiating the key strategic project, observing that the development will solve the challenge of shortage of construction minerals in the diverse development projects that continues inside and outside the city of Dodoma.

"This project has surfaced at the most right time as the government is currently implementing a series of construction projects meant to facelift various infrastructures in the capital city, together with other real estate projects, including construction of the government city," Minister Mavunde observed.

On his side, the chairman of the parliamentary standing committee on energy and minerals, Dr. David Mathayo, apart from hailing STAMICO, challenged the state owned firm to ensure installation of modern equipment in order to produce at needed speed and standards.

He underscored the need for STAMICO to ensure construction and implementation of the project is in line with the set environmental impact requirement.



Minerals minister, Anthony Mavunde speaks when the Parliamentary Committee on Energy and Minerals paid a visit to the Stamico's project at Chigongwe ward in Dodoma. PHOTO: Correspondent Valentine Oforo

A \$560BN REAL ESTATE WARNING HITS BANKS IN NEW YORK, TOKYO



A view of Tokyo

NEW YORK

THE US commercial real estate market has been in turmoil since the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic.

But New York Community Bancorp and Japan's Aozora Bank Ltd. delivered a reminder that some lenders are only just beginning to see the pain.

New York Community Bancorp's decisions to slash its dividend and stockpile reserves sent its stock down a record 38 percent and dragged the KBW Regional Banking Index to its worst day since the collapse of Silicon Valley Bank last March.

Tokyo-based Aozora Bank plunged more than 20 percent after warning of a loss tied to investments in US commercial property. In Europe, Deutsche Bank AG more than quadrupled its US real estate loss provisions to €123 million (\$133 million) in the fourth quarter from a year earlier.

The concern reflects the ongoing slide in commercial property values coupled with the difficulty predicting which specific loans might unravel.

Setting that stage is a pandemic-induced shift to remote work and a rapid runup in interest rates, which have made it more expensive for strained

borrowers to refinance. Billionaire investor Barry Sternlicht warned this week that the office market is headed for more than \$1 trillion in losses.

For lenders, that means the prospect of more defaults as some landlords struggle to pay loans or simply walk away from buildings.

"This is a huge issue that the market has to reckon with," said Harold Bordwin, a principal at Keen-Summit Capital Partners LLC in New York, which specializes in renegotiating distressed properties. "Banks' balance sheets aren't accounting for the fact that there's lots of real estate on there that's not going to pay off at maturity."

Moody's Investors Service said it's reviewing whether to lower New York Community Bancorp's credit rating to junk after Wednesday's developments.

Banks are facing roughly \$560 billion in commercial real estate maturities by the end of 2025, according to Trepp, representing more than half of the total property debt coming due over that period.

Regional lenders in particular are more exposed to the industry, and stand to be hurt harder than their larger peers

because they lack the large credit card portfolios or investment banking businesses that can insulate them.

Commercial real estate loans account for 28.7 percent of assets at small banks, compared with just 6.5% at bigger lenders, according to a JPMorgan Chase & Co. report published in April. That exposure has prompted additional scrutiny from regulators, already on high alert following last year's regional banking tumult.

While real estate troubles, particularly for offices, have been apparent in the nearly four years since the pandemic, the property market has in some ways been in limbo: Transactions have plunged because of uncertainty among both buyers and sellers over how much buildings are worth.

Now, the need to address looming debt maturities – and the prospect of Federal Reserve interest rate cuts – are expected to spark more deals that will bring clarity to just how much values have fallen.

Those declines could be stark. The Aon Center, the third-tallest office tower in Los Angeles, recently sold for \$147.8 million, about 45 percent less than its previous purchase price in 2014.

"Banks – community banks, regional banks – have been really slow to mark things to market because they didn't have to, they were holding them to maturity," said Bordwin. "They are playing games with what is the real value of these assets."

Multifamily loans

Exacerbating the nervousness surrounding smaller lenders is the unpredictability of when and where soured real estate loans can occur, with just a few defaults having the potential to wreak havoc. New York Community Bancorp said its increase in charge-offs were related to a co-op building and an office property.

While offices are a particular area of concern for real estate investors, the company's largest real estate exposure comes from multifamily buildings, with the bank carrying about \$37 billion in apartment loans. Nearly half of those loans are backed by rent-regulated buildings, making them vulnerable to New York state regulations passed in 2019 that strictly limit landlords' ability to raise rents.

At the end of last year, the Federal Deposit Insurance Corp. took a 39 percent discount when it sold about

\$15 billion in loans backed by rent-regulated buildings. In another indication of the challenges facing these buildings, roughly 4.9 percent of New York City rent-stabilized buildings with securitized loans were in delinquency as of December, triple the rate for other apartment buildings, according to a Trepp analysis based on when the properties were built.

'Conservative lender'

New York Community Bancorp, which acquired part of Signature Bank last year, said Wednesday that 8.3 percent of its apartment loans were considered criticized, meaning they have an elevated risk of default.

"NYCB was a much more conservative lender when compared to Signature Bank," said David Aviram, principal at Maverick Real Estate Partners. "Yet because loans secured by rent-stabilized multifamily properties makes up a larger percentage of NYCB's CRE book in comparison to its peers, the change in the 2019 rent laws may have a more significant impact."

Pressure is growing on banks to reduce their exposure to commercial real estate. While some banks have held off on large loan sales due to uncertainty over the past year, they're expected to market more debt now as the market thaws.

Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce recently started marketing loans on struggling US office properties. While US office loans make up just 1 percent of their total asset portfolio, CIBC's earnings were dragged down by higher provisions for credit losses in the segment.

"The percentage of loans that banks have so far been reported as delinquent are a drop in the bucket compared to the defaults that will occur throughout 2024 and 2025," said Aviram. "Banks remain exposed to these significant risks, and the potential decline in interest rates in the next year won't solve bank problems."

Absa Bank boss reveals reasons behind record-breaking financial performance

By Guardian Reporter

The two-year journey of transformations led Absa Bank Tanzania to achieve the record-breaking financial performances, after its profit before tax spiked by 132 percent to 75bn/- last year, compared to 32bn/- earned in 2022.

Speaking during a press conference on the bank's performances in 2023, the managing director Obedi Laiser said; "we have the reasons to celebrate for these achievements by thanking our customers, the regulator (Bank of Tanzania) and the government for their supports to attain this milestone".

Laiser said the bank's good performances were mainly caused by strong economic performance, customer-focus oriented measures and innovative products and services, amid the challenging global

economy.

"The strong economic performances and improved business environment, coupled with modernisation of financial policies by the central bank, led into growth of businesses, including the financial sector, which enabled us as banking industry, to perform better," he said. "It is evident that, if an economy catches the flu, the banking sector sneezes."

Laiser asserted that the market research conducted to identify the customer needs over the last two years, enabled Absa Bank to formulate products and services, specifically targeting the Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) segment outside Dar es Salaam, which led into grow our balance sheet.

"Our focuses outside Dar es Salaam, where we have concentrated for many years, de-



Absa Bank Tanzania Managing Director, Obedi Laiser (C), addresses a media conference on the bank's financial performances for 2023 in Dar es Salaam yesterday. Others are Bernard Tesha, Absa Bank Tanzania Acting Chief Finance Officer (L), and Aron Luhanga, the Head of Marketing and Corporate Affairs. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

liberately enable us to grow our lending and deposits," he noted.

He said, despite the chal-

lenging global economy, caused by ongoing Ukraine-Russia war, shortages of foreign exchange, Absa Tanzania

continued to introduce innovative products and services, which contributed to strong financial performances.

"With the shortages of foreign currency in the market, we introduced products including risk free forex swap, which enabled us to grow transactions," he said.

Laiser said during the period of transformations, the bank continued to improve its digital financial platforms; for both SMEs and large customers segments, led into growth of volumes of the bank's financial transaction.

In October last year, the bank launched its agency banking services by registering 135 agents in just two months, which managed to mobilise deposits amounted to 2bn/- with financial transactions ranging between 600-800 per month.

Laiser is optimistic that by the end of this year, the bank will increase number of agents to 800 before targeting 5,000 agents by the end of 2025.

He mentioned other measures taken by the bank include increased controls of expenses as well as motivation to employees.

The expenses control measure led into improvement of

the bank's cost-to-income ratio to 53 percent, lower than the central bank's regulatory threshold of 55 percent.

"This is great achievement on our cost-to-income ratio and has been decreasing year-on-year," he explained.

Giving the highlights of the bank's performances for last year, Laiser said year-on-year revenue grew by 30 percent on the back of a 21 percent growth in net interest income and 41 percent of non-interest income.

The Return on Equity (RoE) stood at 32 percent, making it the third in banking industry to achieve such the highest RoE.

According to the MD, the bank's gross loans and advances grew by 25 percent reaching 784bn/- last year from 638bn/- in 2022, which was contributed by the growth of credits to customers outside Dar es Salaam region.

The rate of Non-Performing Loans (NPLs) reduced to 4.5 percent, well within the regulatory threshold of 5 percent, from 6.5 percent recorded in 2022.



UK HOUSE PRICES POST BIGGEST MONTHLY RISE

LONDON

RESIDENTIAL property prices rose at their strongest rate in a year in January, as falling mortgage rates and greater buyer confidence continue support the property market, latest data from Nationwide has revealed.

According to the building society, property price increased by an average of 0.7 percent in the month of January, with the average property now costing £257,656, up from £257,443 a month earlier.

The figures also show that property prices dipped 0.2 percent in January 2024 compared with the corresponding month last year, but this does mark a significant improvement on the 1.8 percent annual decline recorded in December.

Robert Gardner, the building society's chief economist, said the house price increase was mainly down to recent cuts in mortgage rates, with fall falls anticipated this year, but he cautioned that the outlook for the housing market still 'highly uncertain'.

"While a rapid rebound in activity or house prices in 2024 appears unlikely, the outlook is looking a little more positive," GHardener said. "How mortgage rates evolve will be crucial, as affordability pressures were the key factor holding back housing market activity in 2023."

Industry reactions: Iain McKenzie, CEO of The Guild of Property Professionals, commented: "UK house prices seem poised for a strong 2024, with January's data signalling further market recovery."

"Despite the surprising uptick in inflation in December, buyers appear to believe there are bargains to be had, and are returning to the market faster than expected."

"Tomorrow's Bank of England base rate announcement will be pivotal for those who have delayed their decision. Prospective buyers hope the temporary December blip won't lead to a spike in interest rates, which has plateaued at 5.25 percent since September."

"But with inflation expected to continue falling, many are optimistic we've reached the peak of the rate-rise cycle - potentially prompting further cuts to the base rate."

"This is likely to motivate

lenders to continue reducing mortgage rates, enhancing accessibility to homeownership, particularly for first-time buyers eager to enter the property market."

Nicky Stevenson, managing director at Fine & Country, said: "The housing market has started the year strongly, and increasing buyer demand has pushed average prices up in the first month of the year."

"The housing market has been resilient during a turbulent period for the economy, and although the recent rise in inflation is a reminder that there could be more bumps ahead, there are many reasons to be positive."

"Mortgage approvals continue to rise month on month, as buyers return to the market at a steady rate. Many of them have been enticed to begin or resume their property search as a result of falling interest rates."

"Yet the Bank of England has a big decision on its hands tomorrow when it decides what will happen with the base rate."

"Another pause in rate hikes, or even a fall, will keep encouraging buyers to the market, but a move in the opposite direction could put a bit of a damper on activity in the early part of 2024."

Verona Frankish, CEO of Yopa, commented: "The property market has started the year where it left off in 2023 - very much on the front foot. We're seeing buyers return with confidence, spurred on by a reduction in mortgage rates, and there has also been an increase in for sale stock reaching the market as sellers look to ride this wave of improving market sentiment."

"While we expect that interest rates will remain at 5.25% this week, this will only help to steady the market further, providing buyers with the confidence that they can proceed with their purchase without the goal posts of mortgage affordability moving during the process."

Jason Tebb, president of OnTheMarket, said: "The housing market has got off to a strong start this year with consistently falling mortgage rates encouraging buyers and sellers to take action."

"Despite the market feeling more buoyant with an increase in stock and enquiries, affordability concerns remain an issue following consecutive rate rises last year and the continued high cost of living. This is particularly

the case in London and the South East, while nearly half of first-time buyers need to call upon family and friends to help pull together a deposit."

"Although mortgage rates are falling, they are higher than many have grown used to in the wake of the pandemic, so buyers remain sensitive on price. Sellers keen to take advantage of the surge in buyer interest must continue to be realistic with regard to their pricing expectations."

Nathan Emerson, CEO of PropertyMark, commented: "The reported month on month increase in house prices will start to encourage homeowners to feel more confident that they can potentially make their next move. 2024 seems to be starting off more positive for the housing market, and let's hope that trend continues. If the Bank of England decide to bring down interest rates too, this should give sellers even more confidence and ease the pressure on affordability. Hopefully this is the start of a period of economic recovery for the nation."

Sam Mitchell, CEO of Purplebricks, said: "Confidence is returning to the housing market and we have seen the number of buyers, viewings and offers all increase dramatically through January as banks continue to actively compete on rates. With the general election likely to take place later in the year than originally anticipated, there is enough certainty to prolong this strong start to 2024."

"With the number of homes coming to the market up just 2% year on year, competition for properties is building. It's more of a sellers' market now than we've seen since the Truss budget in 2022. Assuming inflation continues to slow, we expect this upward trajectory in the market to continue until we enter the political uncertainty that inevitably comes with an election."

Dominic Agace, chief executive of Winkworth, said: "2024 has started more briskly than expected. There is a consensus of opinion now aligning around a soft-landing scenario for the UK, with inflation predicted to be back on track by April, leading the way to a path of up to five interest rate cuts this year. There is a sense that perhaps the worst of the squeeze is behind us and we are seeing a gradual return to normality. This is borne out by

our buyer registrations which are 26% year to date ahead of 2023 and 1% ahead of the three-year average."

"There is still a lot of refinancing to be done in the market, with those realising far higher rates than initially locked in at and we are seeing sellers coming to the market in equal numbers to potential buyers [23% head of last year and 12% ahead of the three-year average]."

"While we don't expect to see price declines this year, we do not expect to see significant price rises either, with these numbers instead feeding through into activity amongst buyers and sellers, which has been held back over the past 18 months."

Tom Bill, head of UK residential research at Knight Frank, commented: "UK house price declines are bottoming out as the economic news improves. Inflation has fallen faster than predicted, which means financial markets believe rates will drop by a full percentage point in 2024. Whatever the Bank of England decides to do, mortgage lenders set their rates based on these lower expectations, which is increasing demand. Mortgage approvals are creeping up and we expect UK house prices to rise by 3% this year. A general election later rather than sooner would allow more momentum to build."

Matt Thompson, head of sales at Chestertons, said: "The gradual introduction of more attractive mortgage products boosted buyer confidence in January, resulting in more buyers entering the market. This increase in activity was further driven by pent-up demand from house hunters who were unable to find a property last year and are motivated to finalise their search. Sellers also feel more confident about attracting the right buyer for their home which led to a slight increase in the number of properties being put up for sale in January."

Jonathan Hopper, CEO of Garlington Property Finders, added: "Prices are stabilising in many areas, the number of homes coming onto the market is slowly ticking up and we're seeing would-be buyers who held back last year begin their property search in earnest. With the Nationwide's latest data adding to the sense that prices have bottomed out, increasing numbers of buyers have decided to act now before prices start to pick up again."

The advantages and disadvantages when buying property into South Africa as expat

JOHANNESBURG

OVER the past decade, property sales linked to emigration have seen a noticeable rise, comprising 8% of all sales in the most recent FNB Estate Agent Survey. This surge is linked to the ongoing trend of skilled South Africans moving overseas in search of better economic prospects and a higher assurance of safety. The emigration trend may also be a significant contributor to the current oversupply of homes on the market, especially in wealthier parts of Johannesburg.

"The ongoing emigration trend has sparked a predominantly negative connotation for those South African homeowners who remain, either by choice or necessity, as there is anxiety that a mass exodus could tank property prices," explains Grant Smee, Managing Director of Only Realty Property Group.

"Given the significant concern surrounding this issue, it's no wonder that Chas Everitt's recent report of an upswing in 'reverse emigration' - the emerging trend of an increasing number of former expats returning to South Africa and buying property - has been a frequent topic of conversation at dinner tables across the country," he adds.

Smee himself is unsurprised that many expats are choosing to return, given the abundance of lifestyle benefits living in South Africa offers, as well as the relative ease and affordability of buying property here, as opposed to international markets.

"As an example, the average price of a one-bedroom flat in Central London is currently £668,883 (R16.2 million) according to Foxtons UK. Even for someone earning pounds, in a high-paying role, that is hugely expensive and you're not getting much 'bang for your buck'."

House prices in South Africa versus abroad

In contrast, R16 million in South Africa could net you a four-bedroom home with a sea view in Fresnaye, one of Cape Town's most exclusive suburbs or a five-bedroom mansion with a heated pool and sauna in Johannesburg's Houghton Estate.

Australia is another hugely popular destination for South African emigrants, with the Sydney suburb of St Ives having the highest population of expats according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics. The average price of a three-bedroom home in the neighbourhood stands at \$2,680,000 or R33.8 million.

"Keeping in mind that none of these comparative properties overseas are particularly fancy or large homes, it's unsurprising that many expats, especially those with families, are choosing to return to South Africa where the money they earned while working overseas can go much further," says Smee.

"South Africa also offers a host of lifestyle benefits, many of which are reserved as luxuries for the ultra-rich in other countries. These include af-

fordable private education, spacious homes, domestic labour and comparatively affordable private healthcare, holiday destinations and world-class restaurants."

The decision to buy property in South Africa is further boosted by attractive lending conditions from the country's banks, with a high national bond approval rate of 66.4% according to the Q4 2023 oobarometer from ooba Home Loans.

However, there are potential disadvantages of choosing to invest in property here versus overseas, which Smee outlines as follows:

Drawbacks of buying property in South Africa

Economic fluctuations: The value of the rand is weak in comparison to currencies like the dollar, pound and euro, and external economic factors like South Africa being grey-listed could cause it to plummet further. "When the time comes to sell your property, the rand may be weaker than it was at time of purchase, and this could result in you making a loss."

Load shedding: The ongoing energy crisis has had a significant impact on the property market, with houses that come equipped with alternative power systems in hot demand. "Expats buying South African property should look for homes with solar panels or other off-grid resilience measures, or prioritise installing these soon after taking ownership."

Political instability: 2024 is an election year in South Africa, carrying the prospect of market and societal uncertainty depending on the outcome. "Major governmental changes, regardless of party affiliation, could result in protests and service delivery disruption which in turn impacts property values."

Crime Rates: High crime rates in certain areas can affect the overall safety and security of property owners. "As a prospective buyer, you should research the crime rates in specific neighbourhoods before making a purchase."

Slow House Price Inflation (HPI): Property price growth has remained stagnant over the last three years, and the country has experienced a sustained Buyer's Market with homes taking a long time to sell. "This is good news if you're an expat looking to exercise your purchasing power, but could be detrimental should conditions not improve by the time you wish to sell."

Ultimately, Smee believes that the benefits of buying property in South Africa outweigh these possible challenges. "We have one of the most 'affordable' luxury property markets in the world, with an 8.7 out of 10 affordability score according to international luxury property specialists Proven Partners."

"Add factors like great weather year-round, beautiful natural scenery, world-class dining and friendly locals into the mix and it's no wonder that expats are flocking home in droves," he concludes.



CONSTRUCTION

Developers irked by shortages of parking spaces in Kariakoo area

By Correspondent James Kandoya

REAL Estate developers have called on the government to demolish at least 15 or 20 public owned buildings in order to construct elevated structures for car parking at Kariakoo in Dar es Salaam to attract more businesses.

This was said by Jeddah Hasabubaba, the director of Pine Tech Limited based in Dar es Salaam said this in an exclusive interview conducted by Property Watch earlier this week.

He said currently, there is a serious shortage of parking spaces for customers who are currently visiting Kariakoo markets and other neighbouring areas.

The director said that finding a vehicle parking lot in Kariakoo is anxious and stressful.

"There are a lot of people who are complaining about the shortage of parking spaces at Kariakoo Central Business District (CBD)," he said

Hasabubaba has called for President Samia to intervene by directing the public entities owning old properties in the area to allocate such spaces to reduce anxious and stresses facing vehicle owners who are visiting the CBD for shopping and other businesses.

"Once the Head of States has agreed, the construction of the elevated structure will commence under Public Private Partnership (PPP)," he said.

He said the imbalance is partially due to ineffective land use planning and miscalculations of space requirement during first stage of the area's planning.

Also, he said, shortages of parking spaces, high parking fees and vehicle congestion are only a few examples of everyday problems.

The director said that as a result, the area will attract few visitors, which may lead into weak business growth and low revenue collections.

"We are ready to construct the elevated structures under PPP to increase parking for more customers visiting Kariakoo to ensure the businesses prosperity" he said.

He said elevated structures used for car parking is not a new phenomenon in the country and even beyond borders, but Kariakoo must be given the

TCB, TADB AGREE TO SPUR AGRICULTURAL FINANCING



Tanzania Agriculture Development Bank (TADB) managing director Frank Nyabundenge (2nd L) and TCB Bank Chief Executive Officer Adam Mihayo (2nd R) sign the credit guarantee agreement for farmers, livestock keepers and fishermen at the agricultural bank's headquarters yesterday in Dar es Salaam. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

By Gwamaka Alipipi

THE Tanzania Agriculture Development Bank (TADB) through the Smallholder Credit Guarantee Scheme (SCGS) has signed a guarantee agreement with Tanzania Commercial Bank (TCB) as part of extending agriculture financing in Tanza-

nia.

Through the five years agreement, TADB will issue a 70-percent guarantee to TCB to issue credits to smallholder farmers involved in crops farming, fishing and livestock keeping value chains.

Speaking at a signing event yesterday, TADB Managing Director Frank Nyabundenge said

this is the second phase of the agreement after the expiration of the first one signed in 2018.

He said during the first agreement, TADB guaranteed 7bn/- to TCB to issue loans amounted to 34.1bn/-, which benefited 2,238 smallholder farmers, including 416 youths and 448 women.

"The agreement we have en-

tered today has increased our guarantee to 21bn/- with the aim of extend financing to smallholder farmers who are mostly excluded by banks and other financial institutions due to the what is claimed as risks," he said.

He said in 2018, the government gave TADB 57bn/- which grew to 250.7bn/-, noting that by December last year, through

the SCGS, the state owned bank issued 250.77bn/- credits to 19,400 direct beneficiaries and 897,900 indirect beneficiaries.

He said the beneficiaries were from 27 regions and 129 districts from Tanzania mainland, whereby 95 percent of them are smallholder farmers involved in agriculture livestock keeping and fishing activities.

Nyabundenge said, during this year, the government has provided TADB with a capital worth 52bn/- to further expand the guarantee fund.

SCGS Manager George Nyamrunda said for a long time, there have been challenges with banks providing loans to smallholder farmers for fear of incurring losses, a move which prompted the government to establish the guarantee scheme.

"We issue guarantees of up to 50 percent to institutions giving loan to farmers to protect them from risks, so that when a farmer fails to repay, TADB compensates and we have increased the guarantee to 70-percent this year," he said.

TCB Chief Executive Officer Adam Mihayo said through the agreement, they will increase the scope of issuing loans to reach out more farmers, fishermen and women as well as livestock keepers.

He said since the beginning of the partnership, 16 financial institutions have benefited, which include commercial banks, community banks and financial institutions with the ability to serve farmers.

House prices might affect workers' productivity in OECD

LONDON

HIGHER house prices may be partly to blame for the sluggish growth of labour productivity in the OECD countries in recent decades. The adverse impact seems to be less severe in more complex economies - those that produce a greater diversity of products based on specialised know-how.

Increasing the productivity of a workforce is crucial. It matters for the performance of the aggregate economy and it is a key driver of variations in living standards across countries (OECD, 2024).

But labour productivity growth has been sluggish in many advanced and emerging economies in recent decades. As a result, turning this worrying trend around has been a central priority for the global development agenda (Colford, 2016).

Research suggests that the state of the housing market - including changes in house prices and housing investments - can affect productivity.

In particular, rising house prices can have a negative effect on labour productivity (see Maclennan and Long, 2023; Dodson et al, 2017; Maclennan et al, 2015; Maclennan et al, 2018; Maclennan et al, 2021; Pawson et al, 2021).

These studies offer a theoretical explanation of the link between housing and productivity (which we have summarised below).

But there is a lack of empirical, macro-level research examining the connection between house prices and the growth of labour productivity across OECD countries, spanning different periods.



The study shows that there are significant variations in the relationship between house prices and labour productivity across the sampled countries, and that this is based on their levels of economic complexity.

The overall slowdown has been attributed to various factors. These include ageing populations, increasingly stable educational attainment, limited expansion into more varied and complex methods of production, and the deceleration of reallocation within and between economic sectors.

Shocks to productivity growth (such as the pandemic), slow adoption of information and communication technologies (ICT) and declining contribution from ICT-intensive sectors in the United States, and restrictive product market rules (for example, state control of business enterprises, or legal and administrative barriers to entrepreneurship) in some parts of Eu-

rope have also contributed (Dieppe, 2020).

Since the global financial crisis of 2007-09, a slowdown in 'capital deepening' has been the main driver of slow labour productivity growth in developed economies (Dieppe, 2020). This means that the amount of capital - machinery, computers, buildings and so on - per worker is not growing as quickly as it was before. This then acts as a drag on the growth of labour productivity.

How house prices affect labour productivity

The housing market, and changes within it such as increased house prices and investment in property, can influence labour productivity in both favourable and adverse ways. This could happen via at least three different pathways.

First, elevated house prices might redirect capital investment towards property (typically regarded as low-productivity assets), diminishing

available capital for labour in productive and innovative sectors.

At the same time, increased house prices can potentially enhance overall economic productivity by empowering potential entrepreneurs (with home ownership), enabling them to start new businesses. These ventures themselves often direct investments away from property and into other activities, fostering innovation in product development.

Second, elevated house prices and rents can potentially compel lower-income families to relocate further away from areas with significant job concentrations. This can weaken the effectiveness of labour market matching (getting the right people into the right jobs). This displacement may result in reduced labour productivity.

Finally, rising housing costs can divert households' funds away from investment in education and training, both of which are key deter-

minants of labour productivity. In addition, rising house prices (and growth in housing wealth due to higher house prices) can reduce labour participation and hours of work for homeowners (especially for older women and younger partnered people). This can lead to a reduction in labour supply and slower productivity growth (Atalay et al, 2016).

On the positive side, increases in house prices and higher mortgage indebtedness could lead people to work for longer, which could help to mitigate declining rates of employment and productivity slowdown due to population ageing (Cigdem-Bayram et al, 2017).

Labour productivity is measured in terms of gross domestic product (GDP) at market prices per hour worked. It measures how efficiently labour input is combined with other factors of production (such as land, capital and entrepreneurship) and used in the production process (OECD, 2024).

The average of labour productivity growth rates in the OECD sample set out above is 2%, ranging from -7% in Greece to 21% in Ireland.

Other factors can affect the labour productivity growth rate beyond house prices. But some of these may also be correlated with both house prices and productivity growth, and are therefore important to consider.

These include annual changes in the level of globalisation, enrolment in tertiary education, gross capital formation (annual percentage growth in capital stock), participatory democracy index, property rights and working-age population.

To isolate the effect of house prices on workers' productivity in our recent study, it is necessary to include the effects of these factors in our analysis. We also control for country-level characteristics such as culture, history, geography and climate, which may also affect labour productivity growth.

There is a significant and negative relationship between real

house prices and labour productivity growth in the sample of OECD countries. So, higher house prices are associated with weaker growth in workers' productivity across the 24 nations, from 1972 to 2019.

Specifically, if real house prices go up by 33 points on the index, this is linked to a decrease in labour productivity growth of about 0.6 percentage points.

This drop in productivity is roughly a quarter of what we typically see in changes in productivity rates between low and high growth rate countries. So, house price appreciation may well have led to impaired labour productivity in most developed countries.

Economic complexity is a measure of the productive capabilities of a country. In our recent study, we split the sample into two categories based on their levels of complexity.

The first group includes nine economies that are highly complex and sophisticated (in descending order from the most complex economy): Japan, Germany, Switzerland, Sweden, Austria, Finland, the UK, the United States and South Korea. The remaining economies are in the second group.

These categorisations are based on the average scores on the Economic Complexity Index (ECI) between 1995 and 2021, developed by the Growth Lab at Harvard University (2019). The idea is that countries that are home to a great diversity of productive 'know-how' (particularly complex specialised knowledge) are able to produce a greater diversity of sophisticated products.

In highly complex economies, house prices will have a weaker effect on the growth of labour productivity compared with less complex ones. This is due to a lesser degree of capital reallocation from other sectors to the housing market during housing booms within more complex economies. As a result, this reduces the negative impact of a house price boom on productivity.

WORLD

WHO chief: Halting funds to UNRWA will be catastrophic

GENEVA/JERUSALEM/UN

THE head of the World Health Organization (WHO) warned on Wednesday that cutting funds to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) would have "catastrophic consequences" for people in war-torn Gaza.

"No other entity has the capacity to deliver the scale and breadth of assistance that 2.2 million people in Gaza urgently need," WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus told a press conference in Geneva. "Decisions by various countries to pause funds for UNRWA, the largest supplier of humanitarian aid in this crisis, will have catastrophic consequences for the people of Gaza," Tedros said.

Speaking of the situation in Gaza, he said that the WHO faces significant challenges in supporting health systems and workers there, with over 100,000 people having restricted access to healthcare due to fierce fighting.

Most hospitals in Gaza have already ceased functioning due to heavy bombardments and shortages of fuel and supplies. The Nasser

Hospital in central Gaza is only minimally functional, the UN has said.

The risk of famine increases due to persistent hostilities and limited humanitarian access. The WHO urges reconsideration of funding cuts, emphasizing the urgent need for assistance, safe access to humanitarian aid, release of hostages, protection of healthcare facilities, and a ceasefire.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, however, has called for the closure of the UNRWA, amid allegations of some UNRWA employees' involvement in the deadly Hamas attack on Israel on Oct 7, 2023.

"The time has come for the international community and the UN itself to understand that UNRWA's mission must be ended," Netanyahu on Wednesday told UN ambassadors from eight countries who were visiting Jerusalem.

The United States and at least 10 other countries have suspended funding to UNRWA after Israel accused about "a dozen of its workers of participating in the Oct 7 attack" that killed around 1,200 in Israel.

The UN chief addressed serious allegations against staff members of the UNRWA, saying



Director-General of the WHO Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus

that he was "personally horrified by these accusations"

UNRWA employs about 13,000 people in the Palestinian Gaza Strip which has faced a humanitarian crisis since Israel's massive airstrikes in response to the Hamas attack. The Gaza-based Health Ministry said Wednesday that the strikes killed at least 26,900 Palestinians and wounded 69,950 others.

UN chief calls for deescalation

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres urged appeals for measures to reduce tensions in Gaza and its neighboring regions.

"I call for urgent steps to deescalate the situation and spare the region from more violence before it is too late," the top UN official told the meeting of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People on Wednesday.

"As we seek to address mounting needs in

Gaza, we also remain focused on the deteriorating situation in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem," said the secretary-general. "I am extremely alarmed by the high levels of settler violence in the occupied West Bank. Palestinian attacks against Israelis also continue."

"All of this violence must stop, and the perpetrators held accountable," he said.

Meanwhile, the secretary-general addressed serious allegations against staff members of the UNRWA, saying that he was "personally horrified by these accusations". He outlined steps being taken to address them, highlighting the importance of UNRWA's "vital work".

He also emphasized the need for more crossing points to ease congestion and ensure continuous humanitarian access, alongside a plea for an "immediate humanitarian ceasefire".

Russia will not stop POW exchanges with Ukraine – Putin

MOSCOW

RUSSIA will not stop prisoner exchanges with Ukraine over the downed Ilyushin-76, Russian presidential candidate Vladimir Putin said at a meeting with his authorized agents.

"Will it stop the exchanges or not? We will not stop the exchanges. We have to bring our own guys back home," he said.

An Ilyushin-76 military transport plane was shot down from Ukrainian territory by a US Patriot system on January 24. There were 74 people on board, 65 of whom were Ukrainian prisoners of war heading for an exchange. There were no survivors. The Russian Defense Ministry called the incident a terrorist attack. An investigation is in progress.

Russia continues to exchange prisoners of war with Ukraine. Over the past 24 hours, 195 Russian servicemen were exchanged for 195 Ukrainian servicemen. The UAE brokered the swap, the Russian Defense Ministry said.

Agencies



'India-middle East-Europe corridor is a game changer for India, others'

NEW DELHI

UNION Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in her interim budget speech on Thursday said that the recently announced India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC) would be a strategic and economic 'game changer' for India and reiterated PM Modi's statement that the corridor would become the basis of world trade for centuries.

"The recent India Middle East Europe economic corridor is a strategic and economic game changer for India and others. In the words of the Prime Minister, the corridor and I quote, the corridor will become the basis of world trade for hundreds of years to come and history will remember that this corridor was initiated on Indian soil," the minister said.

Addressing the Lok Sabha, the Union Finance Minister in her budget speech said, "The vision for Viksit Bharat is that of prosperous Bharat in harmony with nature with modern infrastructure and providing opportunities for all citizens and all regions to reach their potential. With confidence arising from the strong and exemplary track record of performance and progress earning Sabka Vishwas, the next five years will be years of unprecedented development and a golden movement to realize the dream of developing India by 2047."

The Union Minister also underscored the success of India's G20 presidency and said that during the tough times engulfed by the COVID-19 pandemic, India navigated its way and addressed global problems.

"A new world order is emerging after the COVID pandemic. India assumed the G20 presidency during a very difficult time for the world. The global economy was going through high inflation, high interest rates, low growth, very high public debt, low trade growth, and climate change. The pandemic has led to a crisis of food, fertilizers, and finances for the world while India successfully navigated its way," she said.

"The country showed the way forward and built consensus on solutions for those global problems. The recent India-Middle East-Europe economic corridor is a strategic and economic game changer for India and others," the FM added.

At the G20 Summit which took place in India on September 9-10, India, the US, UAE, Saudi Arabia, France, Germany, Italy and the European Union signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to establish the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor.

The corridor will encourage and provide impetus to economic development through enhanced connectivity and economic integration between Asia, West Asia, the Middle East and Europe, as per sources.

Earlier in September, while addressing the 78th session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), US President Joe Biden lauded the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor and said the project will spur opportunities for investment across two continents.

Biden said that the rail port project is part of an effort to build a more sustainable integrated Middle East.

"Connect India to Europe through the UAE, Saudi Arabia Jordan and Israel will spur opportunities for investment across two continents. This is part of our effort to build a more sustainable integrated Middle East," Biden said.

On the sidelines of the G20 summit in New Delhi, Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced the ambitious project and was flanked by US President Biden, Saudi Arabian Prime Minister Mohammed bin Salman and leaders of the EU.

ANI

PM Modi calls Interim Budget 2024 'inclusive, innovative'

NEW DELHI

PRIME Minister Narendra Modi yesterday called the Interim Budget presented by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in Parliament yesterday, "inclusive and innovative".

PM Modi (pictured), in his first post-budget remarks, said that the Interim Budget empowers the four pillars of Viksit Bharat.

"This interim budget is inclusive and innovative. It has confidence in continuity. It will empower all four pillars of Viksit Bharat: Yuva, Garib, Mahila and Kisan. This Budget gives the guarantee of making India a

developed nation by 2047," PM Modi said.

He further said that this budget is a reflection of the young aspirations of a young India.

"This budget is a reflection of the young aspirations of a young India. Two important decisions were made within the Budget. For research and innovation, a fund of Rs 1 lakh crore has been announced," he added.

He further noted that the Budget stresses the empowerment of the poor and middle class as well as creating new employment opportunities for them.

"It has been announced to construct 2 crore more houses



for the poor. We aim to have 3 crore 'Lakshpati Didis' now. ASHA and Anganwadi workers will also get the benefit of the Ayushman Bharat scheme," he added.

The Prime Minister further said that in the budget, keeping fiscal deficit under control, capital expenditure has been given a historic high of Rs 11,11,111 crore.

"If we speak the languages of the economists, in a manner this is 'sweet spot'. With this, besides building India's modern infrastructure of the 21st century, innumerable new job opportunities for the youth will be prepared," he added.

He further noted that the in-

come-tax remission scheme will provide relief to 1 crore people from the middle class.

"In this budget, important decisions have been taken for the farmers," he added.

In a landmark announcement during the presentation of the Interim Budget 2024-25, Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman revealed the government's ambitious plan to create a corpus of Rupees One Lakh Crore to propel private investment in sunrise technologies.

This corpus will herald what the Finance Minister described as a "golden era for our tech-savvy youth."

ANI

Wang: China willing to work for global peace and security

BEIJING

FOREIGN Minister Wang Yi told diplomatic envoys and representatives of international organizations in China on Wednesday that the country is ready to work with all countries to cement the foundations of peace and security and pool strength for friendship and cooperation.

Addressing a New Year reception hosted by the ministry at the National Center for the Performing Arts in Beijing, Wang also expressed China's willingness to join hands with other countries to follow the right path of multilateralism and build a future of development and prosperity.

The event was attended by more than 400 people from diplomatic missions stationed in China, international organizations as well as Chinese government departments.

Looking back on the past year, Wang said the Chinese people have opened the door to share development opportunities with people across the world and embraced



global friends with open arms, thus constantly injecting valuable stability and positive energy into the world.

"More countries and peoples have come to realize that we as humanity are in it together come rain or shine and the future of the global village lies in our own hands," he said, noting that it has been proved that decoupling and supply chains disruption would lead to nowhere.

Speaking of the China-Russia relation-

ship, Wang said China will take the 75th anniversary of diplomatic relations in 2024 as an opportunity to further strengthen their comprehensive strategic partnership of coordination for a new era.

"We will uphold our comprehensive strategic partnership with the European Union and work for the solid and sustained progress of China-EU relations," he said.

Wang also said China will deepen friendship, mutual trust and converge interests with its neighbors and join hands with fellow developing countries to pursue greater development and revitalization.

"We will actively implement the Global Civilization Initiative to promote mutual understanding and affinity between people of different countries," he said.

As for the China-US relationship, which has been halted from deteriorating further, Wang said China will steer clear of distractions and focus on implementing the common understandings reached between the two heads of state at their summit in San Francisco in November to strive for a

healthy and sustainable China-US relationship and explore the right way for the two countries to get along.

Noting that the year of 2024 is crucial for the advancement of Chinese modernization in all aspects, Wang said that building a community with a shared future for mankind is the noble goal China is pursuing in its major-country diplomacy with Chinese characteristics for the new era.

"We will work closely with the international community for the common good of humanity and make the world a better place for all," he said.

Martin Mpana, ambassador of Cameroon to China and dean of the foreign diplomatic corps in China, sent best wishes to the Chinese people for a happy New Year on behalf of the diplomatic corps.

He said countries around the world look forward to making joint efforts, under the guidance of the three global initiatives proposed by China, to make the world safer, more peaceful, and more prosperous.

Xinhua

DIFFERENT regions in China have developed specialized industrial clusters.

For example, Baoding of Hebei province is known for its wide range of high-quality luggage, and Wenzhou of Zhejiang province is renowned for its women's shoes. In Guangdong province, Shantou is a hub for toy production. Foshan is famous for its furniture, and Zhongshan is a leading producer of lighting products.

These regional industrial clusters have become the backbone of the supply chain, providing consumers with diverse options and products of excellent quality.

A total of 50 industrial belts with an annual turnover of over 10 billion yuan (\$1.4 billion) were recorded across China in 2023, according to a report recently issued by Chinese e-commerce giant

China home to 50 10-billion-yuan industrial belts - report

Alibaba's Taobao and Tmall Group.

These 10-billion-yuan industrial belts are located in 21 cities including Jinhua, Guangzhou, Hangzhou, Foshan, Jiaying and Baoding, and engaged in a variety of businesses such as women's apparel, furniture, mobile phone, skincare and jewelry.

The report studied cities at the prefectural level or above, and defined 10-billion-yuan industrial belts as those reporting the total annual transaction volume of over 10 billion yuan in certain first-level product categories on Alibaba's Taobao, Tmall and 1688 platforms.

According to the report, the 50 industrial belts are densely located in the Pearl River Delta and Yangtze River Delta, which are considered the most

developed regions for manufacturing and e-commerce economy in China.

Guangdong province, boasting a solid manufacturing foundation and strong advantages in commerce, is home to 21 10-billion-yuan industrial belts, according to the report. Cities in the Pearl River Delta including Guangzhou, Shenzhen, Foshan, and Dongguan have particularly impressive industrial clusters in sectors such as women's apparel, furniture, mobile phones, and digital accessories.

Jinhua in east China's Zhejiang province, relying on "the world's largest small commodity wholesale market" Yiwu, houses eight 10-billion-yuan industrial belts, the highest among all cities across China.

The impressive performance of Jin-

hua comes from the strengths of multiple well-developed counties. Yiwu, known for its traditional industries in office supplies and sports products, has successfully tapped into the trend of new consumer demands, making it an outstander in the e-commerce era. In Yongkang, which boasts sports and outdoor industrial clusters, thousands of traditional lithium drill enterprises have transformed into producers of fascia guns.

Guangzhou and Shenzhen in Guangdong province have five 10-billion-yuan industrial belts respectively, and Quanzhou in southeast China's Fujian province has four. Baoding, with its luggage industry, is the most northern city on the list. Ganzhou in east China's Jiangxi province is also on the list with its resi-

dential furniture industry.

Twenty-three of the 10-billion-yuan industrial belts are engaged in the clothing industry, the report says, and nine are in the women's apparel sector.

The women's apparel sector in Guangzhou is the first super large industrial belt in China with an annual transaction of over 100 billion yuan, according to Taobao and Tmall data. Dayuan village in the city alone, known for its high sales on Taobao, has reported a transaction scale of over 10 billion yuan.

Besides, the report also nominated growth-oriented industrial belts with an annual transaction volume exceeding 1 billion yuan and a year-on-year growth rate ranking top 30. These industrial belts are located in 24 regions including Zhengzhou, Beihai, Xingtai

and J'ian.

Statistics show that the large industrial belts are mainly concentrated in the consumer goods industry, while many fast-growing ones are from the industrial goods sectors.

According to insiders, with the advancement of e-commerce platforms, production and processing links are increasingly shifting towards third- and fourth-tier cities and county-level areas. Besides, transaction costs are continuously decreasing, enabling different segments within industrial belts to collaborate on a larger scale. This trend is most pronounced in growth-oriented industry belts.

All the industrial belts mentioned in the report are an epitome of the integrated development of e-commerce and industries over the past more than 20 years. **People's Daily**

Xi stresses development of new productive forces

BEIJING

Xi Jinping, general secretary of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, has urged efforts to accelerate the development of new productive forces and firmly promote high-quality development.

Xi made the remarks on Wednesday while presiding over a group study session of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee.

He stressed that high-quality development is an unyielding principle in the new era.

"Developing new productive forces is the intrinsic requirement and an important focus of promoting high-quality development, and it's necessary to continue to well leverage innovation to speed up the development of new productive forces," Xi said.

Noting that promoting high-quality development has become the consensus and conscious action of the whole Party and society in the new era, Xi said there are still many factors restricting high-quality development, which must be guided by a new productivity theory.

With innovation playing the leading role, new productive forces mean advanced productivity that is freed from traditional economic growth mode and productivity development paths, features high-tech, high efficiency and high quality, and comes in line with the new development philosophy, said Xi.

New productive forces are driven by revolutionary technological breakthroughs, innovative allocation of production factors, and deep industrial transformation and upgrading, taking the improvement of workers, means of labor, subjects of labor and their optimal combinations as its basic connotation, and a substantial increase in total factor productivity as its core hallmark, Xi said.

Marked by innovation, and with high quality as the key, new productive forces are advanced productivity in essence, Xi said.

Xi pointed out that sci-tech innovation can generate new industries, new models and new growth drivers, which are the core elements of the development of new productive forces.

Xi called for strengthening sci-tech innovation, especially original and disruptive innovation, accelerating the realization of high-level self-reliance in science and technology, and fighting hard for breakthroughs in core technologies in key fields, so that original



and disruptive sci-tech innovation outcomes can keep emerging for fostering new growth drivers of new productive forces.

Xi stressed that sci-tech innovations should be applied to specific industries and industrial chains in a timely manner. Efforts should be made to transform and upgrade traditional industries, foster emerging industries, make arrangements for future industries, and improve the modern industrial system. Xi highlighted enhanced efforts to develop the digital economy, promote the deep integration of the digital economy and the real economy, and build digital industrial clusters with international competitiveness.

New productive forces are in itself green productive forces, Xi said. In this regard, efforts should be made to expedite the green transformation of growth models and contribute to carbon peaking and carbon neutrality.

Xi also pointed out the need to strengthen green manufacturing, develop green services, foster green energy, advance green and low-carbon industries and supply chains, and establish a green and low-carbon circular economy system.

The economic policy toolbox to support green and low-carbon development will be optimized continuously to give play to the driving role of green finance, according to Xi.

"We should further deepen reform in an all-round way and form a new type of relations of production appropriate to the development of new productive forces," Xi said.

Xi stressed efforts to deepen reforms of the economic system and the science and technology management system, work hard to remove bottlenecks that hinder the development of new productive forces, and establish a high-standard market system.

Xi underlined efforts to smooth the virtuous cycle of education, science and technology as well as talent in accordance with the requirement of developing new productive forces, and improve the mechanism of talent training, introduction, use and flow.

Xinhua

Sudanese warring parties hold 1st high-level talks in Bahrain

SENIOR leaders from Sudan's army and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) met three times this month in Bahrain, sources with knowledge of the talks said, the first such contact between the two warring sides in nine months of conflict.

Unlike previous talks on war in Sudan, the meetings in Manama were attended by influential deputies from both forces and by officials from the Egypt and the United Arab Emirates, key supporters of the army and RSF respectively, according to the four sources, two of whom were present at the talks.

The unannounced talks, which the sources said were also attended by the United States and Saudi Arabia, come after repeated attempts by both powers as well as East African nations to broker a ceasefire and a political deal to end the war made little headway.

The war in Sudan erupted last April over disputes about the powers of the army and the RSF under an internationally-backed plan for a political transition towards civilian rule and elections.

The army and the RSF had shared power with civilians after the fall of former leader Omar al-Bashir in a popular uprising in 2019, before staging a coup two years later.

Agencies

Russia disrupts no international bonds cooperating with Iran, North Korea – MFA

MOSCOW

RUSSIA does not break any international commitments by interacting with Iran and North Korea, Russian Foreign Ministry Spokeswoman Maria Zakharova told a briefing.

"Russia does not disrupt anything by interacting with Iran and North Korea. We develop our relations on a bilateral basis, on the basis of mutual respect. It is beneficial to both of us. Our country breaks no international commitments," Zakharova said, commenting on Western media's publications on the alleged use of Iranian and North Korean weapons in the special military operation zone.

"What, how and why we do anything within relations with other countries is entirely our own business," the diplomat added.

Zakharova has repeatedly stressed that accusations by Western countries of illegal military-technical cooperation between Russia and the DPRK are unfounded and unsubstantiated. Earlier,



Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov denied Washington's claims that Pyongyang was providing military assistance to Moscow.

Russia and Iran have repeatedly rejected allegations that Iran supplies drones to Russia for use in Ukraine. Kremlin Spokesman Dmitry Peskov called such reports a falsification and emphasized that the Russian army uses domestically produced drones.

In November 2022, Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian said that the republic had supplied drones to Russia, but in small quantities and a few months before the start of the special military operation.

Houthi attacks, US airstrikes escalate Red Sea crisis, disrupt global shipping

SANAA

GEOPOLITICAL tensions in the Red Sea have boiled for nearly three months, driven by Houthi attacks on commercial ships and U.S. airstrikes on Houthi targets, disrupting shipping, forcing major container companies to change routes, raising costs and stressing European and African supply chains.

Analysts have also warned that the current course could make the Red Sea a "battlefield for revenge and counter-revenge," with unexpected events to possibly trigger major escalations.

CYCLE OF VIOLENCE

Yemen's Houthi rebels fired several missiles at a U.S. destroyer in the Red Sea on Wednesday, intensifying the two-month crisis that has disrupted global shipping and raised fears of a wider conflict in the region.

The Houthis said they targeted the U.S. destroyer USS Gravelly in support of Palestinians in Gaza and in retaliation for the U.S.-led aggression against Yemen.

They also declared all U.S. and British warships in the Red Sea and the Arabian Sea as "legitimate" targets, and vowed to block Israeli vessels from passing through the Red Sea until the Gaza siege is lifted.

This was the latest in a series of more than 30 Houthi attacks on ships since late October when the rebels began their campaign to disrupt maritime trade and supply chains in the strategic waterway.

Yaseen Tamimi, a Yemeni political writer and analyst, said the Houthis still have enough firepower to pro-



This screenshot captured from a video released by the Houthi group on Jan. 10, 2024 shows Houthi military spokesman Yahya Sarea making a statement. Yemen's Houthi group announced on Wednesday that it has launched "a large batch" of drones and missiles toward a U.S. navy vessel in the Red Sea, which was "assisting" Israel. In a statement, the group's military spokesman Yahya Sarea said that the group's fighters launched a large number of "ballistic and naval missiles and drones" toward a U.S. ship, adding the attack was a "preliminary response" to the U.S. sinking of Houthi ships on the Red Sea on Dec. 31, 2023. (Xinhua)

long the crisis as airstrikes from the U.S.-led coalition have not significantly impacted the Houthi missile capabilities.

GLOBAL SHIPPING DISRUPTION

Following the outbreak of the crisis, container ships, the main users of the Suez Canal-Bab el Mandeb Strait route, have become the first casualty.

Major shippers like Maersk, MSC, and CMA CGM have switched to the longer Cape of Good Hope route, slashing daily transits by 39 percent and cargo tonnage by 45 percent through the Suez Canal since two months ago, UN Conference on Trade and Development data showed.

Shipping costs per 20-foot equivalent unit from China to Europe have soared, affecting international trade and straining European and African supply chains. Meanwhile, Tesla, Volvo, Suzuki Motors and Michelin have reportedly halted production in Europe temporarily due to component

shortages caused by the crisis.

Adding to mounting concerns, Houthi attacks are no longer limited to container ships. As container traffic shifts around the Cape, bulk carriers and oil tankers are more often becoming targets. The recent strike on the British oil tanker "Marlin Luanda" underscores this new risk, which could hamper oil flows from the Gulf and Indian ports to Europe. The situation has also hit insurance coverage.

Major insurers are said to exclude vessels linked to the United States and Britain from coverage when crossing the Red Sea, according to a report from Bloomberg.

Moreover, underwriters are increasingly asking ships to steer clear of these countries, resulting in logistics and cost challenges. With companies rushing to import goods before Asian holidays, the Red Sea crisis could worsen existing supply chain problems, Clarkson Securities said in a recent report.

REGIONAL UNCERTAINTIES

As tensions build up in the Red Sea, a drone attack on a U.S. outpost near the Syria-Jordan border that killed three American soldiers and injured dozens more has further destabilized the already complex situation in the Middle East.

The White House blamed Sunday's attack on Iranian-backed militias. Vowing to respond, the United States is reportedly preparing retaliatory strikes against Iran and its allies. Iran, in turn, has issued strong warnings, threatening a "decisive" response to any U.S. aggression.

Tamimi warned that the current trajectory could turn the Red Sea into a "battleground for retaliation and counter-retaliation." Noting the limited effectiveness of U.S. and British airstrikes against Houthi sites in Yemen, he said they haven't deterred attacks on commercial shipping. He also criticized the U.S. stance in the Gaza conflict, which he believes has further complicated efforts to end the humanitarian crisis.

In the Red Sea crisis, all parties have said they want to avoid a regional war but shift responsibility for managing the risks to each other, he said, adding that lack of communication and willingness to engage in diplomacy raises concerns about the potential for miscalculation and unintended consequences. Xinhua

'US-India drone deal holds significant potential for strategic technology cooperation'

WASHINGTON

says US State Department
By Reena Bhardwaj | Updated: Feb 01, 2024 04:47 IST
Washington, DC [US], February 1 (ANI): The US State Department expressed optimism about the proposed drone deal with India, emphasising its "significant potential" to advance strategic technology cooperation.

The deal was announced during

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit last year, marking substantial growth in the US-India defence partnership over the past decade.

Matthew Miller, a spokesperson for the US State Department, highlighted the importance of the deal in furthering strategic technology cooperation with India and enhancing military collaboration in the region.

While addressing the media, Miller said, "So I'll say that generally, the US-

India Defence Partnership has seen significant growth over the past decade. This is a proposed sale that was announced during Prime Minister Modi's visit last year."

"We believe it offers significant potential to further advance strategic technology cooperation with India and military cooperation in the region," he added.

He also acknowledged the crucial role of Congress in the arms transfer

process, emphasising routine consultations with members of Congress on foreign affairs committees before formal notifications.

"Of course, Congress plays an important role in the US arms transfer process. We routinely consult with members of Congress on the foreign affairs committees before our formal notification so we can address questions that they might have.

ANI

China further facilitates exit-and-entry services for better mobility of personnel

EVERY DAY when the land port of Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge opens, a vibrant and bustling scene is on -tourists from the Chinese mainland conversing in different local dialects and Hong Kong and Macao families embarking on trips to the mainland are coming and going. Such lively atmosphere can be observed at various other ports across China, too.

According to statistics, around 424 million trips were made in and out of border ports in China in 2023, an increase of 266.5 percent compared to the previous year.

Among them, 206 million trips were made by mainland residents and 183 million by residents of Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan, up 218.7 percent and 292.8 percent year on year, respectively.

The number of trips made by foreigners in and out of these border ports soared by 693.1 percent year on year to nearly 35.48 million.

The convenient and efficient personnel exchanges are attributed to various policies facilitating entry and exit. Since 2023, a series of innovative measures in immigration management have been implemented to adapt to the fast-paced and high-frequency international exchanges, greatly promoting the flow of people between China and foreign countries.

Starting from May 15, 2023, the National Immigration Administration (NIA) of China has further adjusted and optimized the policies and measures for entry and exit management, intending to facilitate the vitality of people's mobility across borders.

The Beijing General Station of Exit and Entry Frontier Inspection has carried out systematic refurbishment and technological upgrades on its fast channel, including facial and fingerprint detection, automatic front-facing image capture, and video anti-tailgating. These measures ensure that the implementation of relevant policies results in faster and safer customs clearance.

"It's just easy to follow the instructions," said a woman surnamed Li, who added that the fast channel of customs clearance is very tech-ish, providing a better experience and avoiding long queues.

It is reported that more than 11,500 passengers used the fast channel on the first day of the full resumption of fast customs clearance at Beijing ports.

"The transit time was at least 30 minutes shorter than the last time," said a Russian traveler named Andre, commenting the visa-free transit policy of China.



South Korean tourists go through border inspection in Yantai, east China's Shandong province, Dec. 31, 2023. (People's Daily Online/Tang Ke)

On Jan. 11, 21 foreign travelers subject to 24-hour visa-free transit were exempt from border inspection procedures at Chengdu Tianfu International Airport, southwest China's Sichuan province. They were the first batch of international travelers to enjoy the new policy.

These passengers from Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, who were transiting to a third country, received their boarding passes for the next flight at the check-in counter in the transit area of the airport. After completing the security check, they directly boarded the plane for departure.

With this policy, foreign nationals holding international connecting flights within 24 hours are exempt from immigration inspection procedures and can transit directly to a third country or region via nine airports, including Beijing Capital International Airport, Shanghai Pudong International Airport, Guangzhou Baiyun International Airport, and Chengdu Tianfu International Airport.

This is one of the five measures introduced by the NIA to facilitate foreign nationals coming to China.

"It was convenient and efficient. The entire process was quick," said Oliver from Germany who recently arrived at Beijing Capital International Airport and experienced port visa application.

Since the relaxation of port visa application requirements, the immigration inspection at Beijing Capital International Airport has been well-organized, with a simple and fast clearance process, ensuring efficient passage for inbound and outbound travelers.

Since 2023, the NIA has been providing convenience for foreign nationals through port visas and multiple-entry visas issued within the country. It has gradually restored passenger clearance at waterway ports, fully resumed exit and entry of international cruise passengers, reinstated visa-free transit policies and expanded their application to more countries, and provided convenient services for talent attraction. These measures have achieved solid results, ensuring a continuous and smooth flow of foreign nationals coming to China.

A new version of the Foreign Permanent Resident ID Card of the

People's Republic of China was put into use on Dec. 1, 2023. With five-starred elements symbolizing the Chinese national flag on it, the card is safer, more good looking and more practical.

"The card will better facilitate my life and travel in China," said the technical manager of a production base of Sweden cable manufacturer Habia Cable in Changzhou, east China's Jiangsu province, who was the first to receive the new ID card in Jiangsu province.

An NIA official noted that the issuance of the new ID card is an important measure to ensure high-level opening up and improve the level of information services for foreign nationals in China. It is conducive to better serving overseas talents in their investment, innovation, work, and life in China, and making more contributions to the high-quality development of the Chinese economy and society.

"As China continues to expand its opening-up, more and more Chinese people are going abroad, while an increasing number of foreigners are coming to China for business, tourism, work, study, and living.

The immigration management authorities will continue to deepen reforms and innovations in immigration management, introduce more convenient policies and measures, and accelerate institutional opening up in immigration management service," said another official from the NIA.

People's Daily

Afcon 2023: Bouchra Karboubi on being a referee, police officer in Morocco and mother

By Celestine Karoney - BBC Sport Africa, Abidjan

BOUCHRA Karboubi is a guardian of the law. On the pitch she uses her whistle and cards to maintain order but in her day job, handcuffs come in handy.

Karboubi is an international football referee and a policewoman in Meknes, a city in northern Morocco.

"Being a policewoman for me, means applying justice," she told BBC Sport Africa.

"As a referee, it's me who applies the law and it's a win-win because it's a job and it's my passion and they are linked to each other."

Karboubi is the only referee out of the six female match officials at the 2023 Africa Cup of Nations in Ivory Coast.

In 2022, Salima Mukansanga of Rwanda made history by becoming the first woman to referee a men's Afcon match in Cameroon.

Karboubi emulated that feat last month, and led an all-female team of officials - another tournament first - when Nigeria beat Guinea-Bissau in the group stage.

The Moroccan's central role in the ongoing tournament makes her the first North African woman to referee at a men's Afcon.

"The emotions were enormous. It is an honour for me, for my family, for my country and for African women in general," she says about her participation.

The 36-year-old, however, adds there is more to her identity than her two jobs.

"It's true that at work I'm a police officer and on the field I'm a referee. But at home, I am a woman, I am the woman of the house and the mother of a daughter."

Breaking stereotypes
Growing up, Karboubi



Moroccan referee Bouchra Karboubi took charge of the Group A match between Nigeria and Guinea-Bissau at Afcon 2023 as part of an all-female officiating team. Agencies

loved playing football but stopped because there was no organised women's football at the time.

So, she decided to go into match officiating where she saw more opportunities as a referee.

Karboubi faced resistance from her family in chasing her dreams, telling UN Arab Women in 2021: "I come from a small conservative town; therefore, it was difficult for my family to accept the fact that I wanted to pursue my career in sports."

Her brothers were her biggest hurdle.

They once found her assistant's flag and tore it up, leaving teenage Karboubi in tears but she sewed it up and went on to training.

But in 2007, her father watched her referee a women's game, and from then on she got support to follow her chosen path. Today, she is a trailblazer for Arab women on the field.

Besides being the first Arab woman to referee a men's match in 2020, Karboubi is also the first Afri-

can woman to qualify as a video assistant referee (VAR).

Morocco and Egypt are the only countries in Africa that have fully implemented the use of VAR in their domestic leagues.

"I am lucky to be Moroccan because that was the first African country to introduce VAR," Karboubi explains about her introduction to video officiating.

"I was then able to officiate as an assistant video referee in the final of the 2021 men's Afcon and it was an honour for me."

"It meant that women could work in all areas like men. We have always fought to be with men. We were able to show that we could be [there]."

Karboubi's first international refereeing role was the 2018 Women's Africa Cup of Nations in Ghana.

*Police inspector

Female referees across the world are making their mark on the beautiful game.

In 2022 France's Stephanie Frappart be-

came the first woman to officiate at a men's Fifa World Cup, taking charge of the group-stage game between Costa Rica and Germany

Despite these strides made so far, Karboubi feels women must still go an extra mile to prove their competence.

"It's true that women, to get to this level, they must work extra hard. First physically, because to be ready for a men's match we must be physically fit like the men," she explains

"After that the technical expertise, that we must have of course, on the rules of the game."

"If a man makes mistakes, they will say that he's a man, he's only human. But a woman will be criticized twice as much because she is a female referee."

At work back in Morocco for the police, Karboubi is an inspector and receives support from her colleagues who are always curious about her officiating duties.

"They make little remarks to me; 'Why didn't

you do that? Why did you do that? Why did you whistle for a penalty? Explain to us why the red card' but they always encourage me, and I appreciate their support for me," Karboubi said.

She believes the two jobs complement each other.

"Refereeing helped me a lot as an athlete to be a good police officer, and being a police officer helped me have a strong personality on the field as a referee."

The mother of one has ambitions to officiate at the men's World Cup one day, after making her Fifa debut in the women's tournament last year.

She hopes her achievements so far in two male dominated fields can inspire young women in the Arab world and beyond that no field is off limits.

"It may have been a male dominated field, but today we have been able to show that even women are able to do it," she said.

"So, I would tell girls who have that goal to work hard and never give up."

African heavyweights tumble like dominoes at 2023 Cup of Nations

ABIDJAN

FROM Ivory Coast's remarkable resurrection to heavyweight exits and underdog successes, there may never have been a more unpredictable major international football tournament than the ongoing Africa Cup of Nations.

The last 16 concluded on Tuesday with the continent's top-ranked team, 2022 World Cup semi-finalists Morocco, being dumped out by South Africa after Achraf Hakimi missed a crucial late penalty.

Tournament hosts Ivory Coast returned from the dead, narrowly escaping a humiliating elimination in the group stage, but this AFCON has already proven to be a graveyard for many of the traditional powerhouses.

"It is not the end of the world," insisted defeated Morocco coach Walid Regragui, whose country will host the next Cup of Nations.

"We are not the only ones. Lots of the favourites have been eliminated. We will come back stronger."

The three most successful teams in the history of the competition are out -- Egypt, Cameroon and Ghana have 16 titles between them but the first two were sent packing in the last 16 after the Black Stars limped out in the group stage.

All five of Africa's representatives at the 2022 World Cup have already gone home. Senegal's exit on penalties at the hands of Ivory Coast continues a trend which has seen no reigning champion win a knockout tie at the Cup of Nations since Egypt in 2010.

Indeed, the last three champions have all been eliminated, with Algeria exiting in the group stage for the second AFCON in a row following their triumph in 2019.

- Hakimi, Mane, Salah out -

Mohamed Salah, Riyad Mahrez, Sadio Mane and Hakimi, four of the very biggest stars of African football, will watch the rest of the tournament on television, if they can even bring themselves to do so.

Most remarkably, none of the quarter-finalists at the last edition, two years ago in Cameroon, have reached the last eight this time.

That might suggest that the decision to expand the competition to 24 teams -- a change brought in from the 2019 edition in Egypt -- has helped make many smaller nations more competi-

tive and created a greater strength in depth across Africa.

"There are no small teams anymore" has quickly become a bland cliché, and yet there is some truth to it.

In terms of pedigree, two names stand out among the quarter-finalists.

Nigeria, Africa's most populous country, have impressed with African player of the year Victor Osimhen leading from the front.

They look good bets for a fourth title, 11 years after their last, although there is a danger that might be a little too logical, given how the competition has been going.

Ivory Coast -- the only one of the top seeds when the draw was made who are still alive -- have twice been champions, including as recently as 2015. They also have the advantage that supposedly comes with playing at home.

Then again no host country has won the AFCON since Egypt in 2006, and the Elephants have been a basket case, suffering their heaviest ever home defeat as they almost went out in the first round, and then sacking their coach.

- History-makers -

Three of the last eight are into the quarter-finals after winning a Cup of Nations knockout tie for the very first time.

Angola, ranked 28th in Africa, will measure themselves against Osimhen's Super Eagles, while Guinea face the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Most striking of all has been the run of Cape Verde, the tiny Atlantic Ocean island nation with a population of 600,000.

They beat Ghana and drew with Egypt on the way to topping their group, before seeing off Mauritania.

Helped by players of Cape Verdean heritage born in countries such as Portugal, France, the Netherlands and Ireland, the Blue Sharks have been outstanding and face South Africa next.

"You can see that it is not easy for the big footballing nations to win games either now," Cape Verde captain Ryan Mendes told Canal Plus Afrique.

"They have players who play for big clubs, but us so-called small teams play with a lot of heart, and we have a lot of quality at the same time."

"We don't have the same status, but we do have love for our country as well as ability," he added.

AFP



Youngsters Issa Ali (R) and John Michael playing football barefoot during a training session at the Jakaya Kikwete grounds in Dar es Salaam recently. PHOTO: JUMANNE JUMA

Coach Shime confident in U-17 women match against Zambia

By Correspondent Nassir Nchimbi

TANZANIA women's senior national team coach head coach, Bakari Shime, is elated by the ongoing progress among his charges heading to the African U-17 Women's World Cup Qualifying match against Zambia slated away on Saturday at Nkoloma Stadium.

Serengeti Girls will resume their second leg affair against Zambia on February 11 at Azam complex.

The winners over two legs will face Uganda or Cameroon in the third round.

Three African teams qualify for the 2024 FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup to be held in the Dominican Republic after round four of the qualifiers.

Speaking about the preparations, Shime said the team continues to train hard

and is delighted to see the ongoing preparations for the game.

Shime said the quality of his players has improved by a large percentage, they have the spirit of the game and he believes they will work hard and get good results.

"The team is ready to start the fight for the qualification, I have the best team that knows the importance of doing well in the next game and the benefits that come

with good results of this match.

"I think we are almost ready. We only have a few pieces just to finalise. We are left with just about 20 percent, we are getting there. I have the best girls to represent the nation, I am elated to how they respond to training and how

they will follow instructions with the aim of qualifying," said Shime.

Speaking on the prowess of Zambia, Shime said: "Zambia is one of the best teams as you can see they lastly qualified for the World Cup back in 2014. I think they will want to achieve again and we have to be aware of that."

"For us, the training is going well. We have been working hard and have shown a lot of commitment. We need to encourage each other so that we can perform in the game against Zambia," he added.

Tanzania is looking forward to repeating the achievement by booking a ticket to qualify for the World Cup finals this year after participating in the finals for the first time held in 2022 in India.



Victor Osimhen on a mission with Nigeria at Cup of Nations

ABIDJAN

MANY of the biggest stars at this year's Africa Cup of Nations have already been eliminated before the quarter-finals, but the continent's reigning player of the year Victor Osimhen is still standing as he aims to lead Nigeria to the title.

The 25-year-old Napoli striker may have been the obvious bet to finish as the tournament's top scorer, having netted 10 times in qualifying, twice as many goals as the next most prolific marksmen.

Nevertheless, he has found the net just once going into today's last-eight tie against outsiders Angola in Abidjan. However, that does not tell anything like the whole story of the masked forward's AFCON so far.

Osimhen scored in Nigeria's first match in Ivory Coast, which ended in an underwhelming 1-1 draw against Equatorial Guinea.

He won the penalty which captain William Troost-Ekong scored in the 1-0 victory over Ivory Coast, and then played all 90 minutes of the final group game against Guinea-Bissau when he could well have been rested.

Osimhen then turned in an awe-inspiring performance in the 2-0 last-16 win over the Super Eagles' old rivals Cameroon, harassing and pressing the opposition defence all evening and setting up the opening goal.

"He didn't score but he had a fantastic game. It is not easy to stop that guy! Ask the defenders of the opposition how they suffer," said Nigeria's charismatic coach, Jose Peseiro.

The Portuguese manager has made clear that he sees not conceding goals as the key to success at the tournament, despite boasting an embarrassment of attacking riches beyond Osimhen.

But his tireless number nine is the first line of defence with the amount of running he puts in, which is all the more impressive in the sapping heat and humidity of West Africa.

Osimhen collapsed to the turf at the Felix Houphouët Boigny Stadium when the half-time whistle went against Cameroon, but recovered suitably to continue chasing down the opposition defence in the second half while also whipping the Abidjan crowd up into a frenzy.

"Osimhen plays with passion. That's what every country wants their players to do," former Ghana striker Asamoah Gyan, Africa's all-time top scorer at World Cups who played in two Cup of Nations finals with the Black Stars, wrote on X.

As for the goals, Osimhen and Nigeria will hope he is saving them up for the final stages of the competition.

According to data made available by statisticians at Opta Analyst, Osimhen has had 15 shots at this AFCON, at least two more than any other player.

Only three of those have been on target and he has just that one goal, but his "expected goals", or xG, is 2.78, the highest in the tournament – higher even than five-goal top scorer Emilio Nsue.

More than anything, however, Osimhen's performances and his incredible work-rate back up what he told AFP in an interview at the Nigeria team base earlier in the tournament.

"I don't want to put myself in the centre but of course a lot of people say this. But I think more like a team player," he said.

"I really don't care even whether I start or not. For me to be there playing with them is a big one for me. I just want to keep on helping the team."

As modest as he may be, Osimhen has to be the first name on Peseiro's teamsheet as Nigeria eye their fourth continental crown.

AFP

Diawara making AFCON history with Guinea

ABIDJAN

THIS Africa Cup of Nations is far from over but it has already been a historic tournament for Guinea after they won a knockout tie for the first time, an achievement which left their coach Kaba Diawara in tears.

"For my staff and I this is really exceptional. It goes beyond football," the former Arsenal striker tells AFP in an interview at the team's hotel in Abidjan ahead of today's quarter-final against the Democratic Republic of Congo.

They have made it to this point after Mohamed Bayo's last-gasp goal secured a 1-0 win over Equatorial Guinea.

"People might say why is he crying when it's only the last 16, but it was really the moment of truth for us. So I couldn't hold back the tears and my staff were the same. We were crying our eyes out."

Guinea were runners-up in 1976, but that was an era when there were no knockout ties, and the final four played a round-robin format to decide the winner. They had already got out of their group at six separate AFCON tournaments this century without going further, including in 2006 when Diawara scored in a 3-2 defeat by Senegal.

This time, however, there are several factors spurring on the Syli National. For a start, this Cup of Nations is in Ivory Coast, a country bordering Guinea, and Diawara's team were roared on by huge support against Equatorial Guinea.

AFP

Nigeria, S. Africa among quarter-finals favourites in 'crazy' AFCON



Star Nigeria forward Victor Osimhen salutes supporters after an Africa Cup of Nations last-16 win over Cameroon. Agencies

ABIDJAN

FORMER champions Nigeria, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ivory Coast and South Africa have earned the right to be favourites in the Africa Cup of Nations quarter-finals today and tomorrow.

But, given a tournament in which seven of the top 10-ranked teams, led by 2022 World Cup semi-finalists Morocco, have been eliminated, that tag could prove a curse.

Here, AFP Sport previews the ties with Guinea and Mali hoping to go one step further after

previously being runners-up, while Angola and Cape Verde pursue first semi-finals appearances.

*Nigeria v Angola

Napoli star Victor Osimhen came to the tournament as an acclaimed goal-scorer, but it is his incredible workrate in searing heat which epitomises the Nigerian title challenge.

Concerns about the William Troost-Ekong-marshalled defence have proven unfounded with only one goal conceded in four matches and, particularly against Cameroon, the Super Eagles impressed.

Angola are one of the nations that have mocked the form book in the Ivory Coast, winning three straight matches after never managing more than one win at a time in eight other appearances.

Gelson Dala is the joint second highest scorer with four goals and Mabululu has notched three ahead of a clash between the highest and lowest ranked survivors.

*DR Congo v Guinea

DR Congo coach Sebastien Desabre said before the tournament that his target was a quarter-finals spot for a country that

won the tournament twice decades ago when known as Zaire.

Having achieved his primary goal, he can realistically believe that a first semi-final place since 2015 is possible, and once again their opponents could be the Ivory Coast.

While the Congolese upset record seven-time champions Egypt after a penalty shootout, Mohamed Bayo snatched an added-time winner for Guinea over group-phase surprise side Equatorial Guinea.

"It is not a gift to face us," warned Guinea coach Kaba Diawara, who kept consistent Bundesliga scorer Serhou

Guirassy on the bench for most of the last-16 encounter.

*Mali v Ivory Coast

After scraping into the knockout stage as the third-placed qualifiers with the worst record, Ivory Coast stunned title-holders Senegal and are now being talked about as potential champions.

"We are not going to get carried away," stressed Emerse Fae, given the task of coaching a senior team for the first time after the post-group phase sacking of Jean-Louis Gasset.

The return to fitness of Borussia Dortmund forward Sebastian Haller and Brighton winger Simon Adingra increase the attacking options, while Mali rely largely on Lassine Sinayoko for goals.

A Mali team coached by Abidjan-born Eric Chelle are seeking a first victory over Ivory Coast in the tournament having drawn one and lost four of previous Cup of Nations meetings.

*Cape Verde v South Africa

Cape Verde may be ranked 73rd in the world, but coach Pedro 'Bubista' Brito told his players before the Cup of Nations that he expected them to at least reach the semi-finals.

It seemed a tall order for a collection of footballers who play for mainly modest clubs across Europe, and were born there to a Cape Verdean parent, or had a grandparent from the island state.

But after they beat Ghana, then held record seven-time champions Egypt despite resting a number of first-choice players, South Africa have been warned not to underestimate the Blue Sharks.

"Our win over Morocco is history. Cape Verde are as determined as us to reach the semi-finals and we dare not underestimate them," said coach Hugo Broos, a 2017 AFCON winner with Cameroon.

AFP

AFCON: Goal glut, jet-set Motsepe, joy amid gloom

ABIDJAN

FROM endless shock results to a goal glut and vibrant crowds, it has been an action-packed Africa Cup of Nations, and there are still eight matches to go in the Ivory Coast.

Here, AFP Sport captures some highlights from a Confederation of African Football president who does not miss a match to stars proud that they are making struggling compatriots happy.

*Scoring feast

The record number of goals scored in a 24-team Cup of Nations is 102 at the 2019 tournament in Egypt, where Nigerian Odion Ighalo was the leading individual with five.

But that mark has already been overtaken in the Ivory Coast, where there have been 105 goals in 44 matches, and there are another eight knockout games to come.

Emilio Nsue, a 34-year-old who plays in the Spanish third division, tops the charts with five goals, but cannot increase his tally as Equatorial Guinea were last-16 losers.

*Mobile CAF president

As the TV cameras scanned the crowds at the eight last-16 ties across the west African country, one person was visible at each match – CAF president Patrice Motsepe from South Africa.

Traditionally, the top African football official would attend one venue each day, but billionaire businessman Motsepe has



CAF president Patrice Motsepe.

taken match attendance to a new level.

Explaining how Motsepe could watch matches in northern city

Korhogo and southwestern city San-Pedro in the same evening,

a CAF official said Motsepe uses a private jet.

*Broos eyes double

Frenchman Herve Renard is the only coach to win the Africa Cup of Nations with two countries, guiding Zambia to glory in 2012 and repeating the feat with the Ivory Coast three years later.

Now, veteran Belgian Hugo Broos has a chance to equal the record with South Africa, having taken Cameroon to the title in 2017.

Charles Gyamfi of Ghana and Hassan Shehata of Egypt hold the record for Cup of Nations titles with three each.

*Hardship to happiness

A common thread among the many giant-killers in the Ivory Coast has been the joy players feel at bringing some happiness to fellow countrymen battling daily financial hardship.

Many Africans are struggling as the cost of living soars, so Cup of Nations victories in a conti-

nent where football is the dominant sport bring joy, with instant street parties common.

"Economically, times are tough for many Angolans so it is great to hear that our successes have lifted spirits back home," said captain Fredy ahead of a last-eight clash with Nigeria.

*Yaya backs Bafana

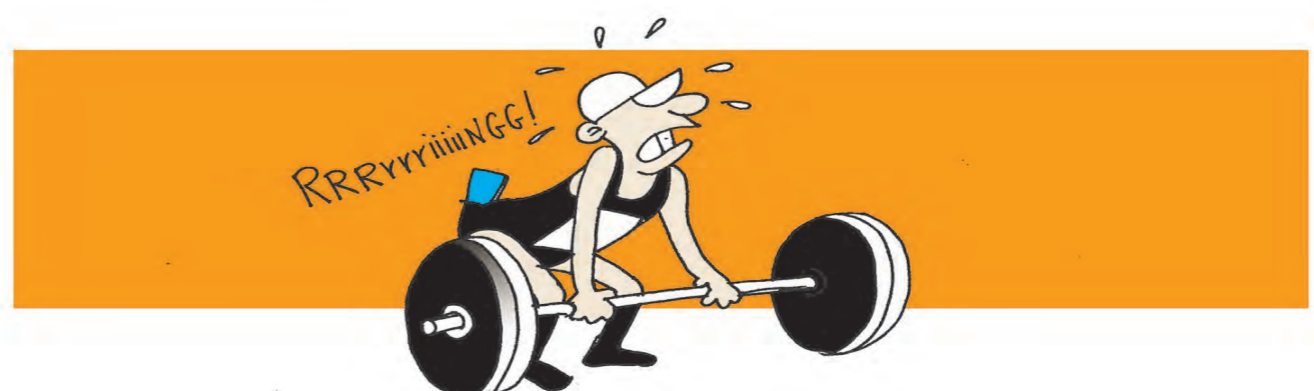
While victory for South Africa over 2022 World Cup semi-finalists Morocco on Tuesday took many followers by surprise, Ivory Coast legend Yaya Toure was not among them.

Speaking before the tournament kicked off, the former Manchester City midfielder star included Bafana Bafana among the teams he believed could go far in the competition.

Claude Le Roy, the Frenchman who coached at nine previous Cup of Nations tournaments with six different countries, also backed 1996 champions South Africa to be serious contenders.

AFP

Gwiji by David Chikoko



SPORT

AfCoN: Goal glut, jet-set Motsepe, joy amid gloom PAGE 19



Simba striker Pa Omar Jobe confident to silence doubters

By Guardian Correspondent

SIMBA Sports Club striker Pa Omar Jobe has vowed to silence his doubters and prove he can score goals for the club.

The Msimbazi Reds new boy made his debut against Tembo on Wednesday in a second-half cameo appearance.

He opened his goal-scoring account with a delightful finish to make it 4-0 for Simba.

The Gambian striker was added as a deadline arrival on January 15. He is a direct replacement for Jean Baleke.

His signing has divided fans but the lanky forward is confident and keen to silence all his doubters.

"We are here to prove ourselves. We are not here for holidays. If, at all, it were for holidays I would have stayed in Europe because I was playing in Europe. You know if I come back to Africa and I am from Africa, playing in Europe is easier than Africa."

"I have something to prove. If I am here, I have to score goals because we are strikers, not just to play the beautiful game but to score goals for the club, that's why I am here.

"People have doubts about me because of my size and other stuff, but that's not important because I did it in Europe. Last season I scored 13 goals. If I can play in Europe, what about Africa? I will prove everybody wrong," he said.

Despite scoring on his debut, Jobe was not pleased with his performance but believes things will change as he gets used to the weather in Dar.

"It is very hot here. I have been here for almost four days, so if I am used to the weather things will be different. The performance was not good because I had the first chance and I shot wide, I could have passed the ball or scored probably but this is football.

"As a striker, if you lose a chance no matter what happens you should find another one. This is football, you get chances, you score some, and you lose some," he added.

The well-travelled striker, who has played for clubs in Gambia, Senegal, Bangladesh, Macedonia, Kazakhstan and Belarus, acknowledged he has a big task to fulfil in a big club in Africa.

He added: "Simba is a big club in Africa. Before coming here, I heard about it. I have played in the CAF Champions League, this is not the first time. Before going to Europe, I played in the CAF Champions League in my country, we played in Algeria.

"I have experience of the CAF Champions League, but Simba is a big club. Even in my country people talk about Simba. When I moved here people congratulated me because they know Simba is a big club.

"I have a big task on my side because I have a big role to play and I have to make the fans happy."

Yanga, Kagera Sugar lock horns as Premier League resumes



Fred Felix Minziro

By Correspondent Michael Mwebe

YOUNG Africans are taking on hosts Kagera Sugar today as the serial winners of NBC Premier League aim to get to the top of the table once more with a one-point gap on Azam.

The reigning champions are currently trailing Azam by one point in the three-horse title race, as they are also ahead of their arch rivals Simba by seven points.

On the other hand, Young Africans have a game in hand to deal with, meaning fate is still well within their own hands.

They have also won 10 games, which is the same as the league leaders Azam and three more than their rivals Simba.

It has been a good return to action for Young Africans this week after their Federation Cup huge win over lowly Hausung FC that saw Clement Mzize grab himself a hat-trick alongside finishes from Jonas Mkude and Mahlatse

Makudubela.

Five of Young Africans' 2023 Africa Cup of Nations representatives are now back in the team, meaning Bakari Mwamnyeto, Dickson Job, Ibrahim Hamad 'Bacca', Mudathir Yahaya, and Kennedy Musonda

are available for selection.

New signings Joseph Guede, a striker that joins from Turkey as a free agent, could be make his debut.

Djigui Diarra and Stephane Azizi remain unavailable due to their national team involve-

ment in the African Cup of Nations, while Augustine Okrah is sidelined with an injury.

On the flip side, Kagera Sugar's poor form continued last time out, as they suffered a 4-0 home defeat to Azam.

The loss means that Kagera Sugar has suffered three back-to-back defeats.

The visitors' main issue of late is that they simply don't score enough goals, as they have failed to score in all their three previous outings.

Kagera Sugar's lack of goals has been a big reason for their 14th position in the table. They are now two points adrift of the safety of 12th placed Tabora United.

Newly appointed head coach Fred Felix Kataraiya 'Minziro', who will be taking charge for the first time, has the unenviable assignment of ensuring Kagera Sugar does not lose a fourth consecutive game.

Having lost each of their last four meetings with Young Africans, Kagera Sugar are also hoping to claim their first head-to-head victory since winning 3-0 in January 2020.

A 4-0 victory over First League side Dar City in Tuesday's Federation Cup second round game provided the much needed morale boost to stop Young Africans from walking away with maximum points at Kaitaba Stadium.



Police Force brass band entertains during the Law Day ceremony held at the High Court, Dar es Salaam Zone yesterday. PHOTO: CORRESPONDENT JUMANNE JUMA

Serengeti Girls confident ahead of Zambia clash in World Cup Qualifiers

By Correspondent Michael Mwebe

TANZANIA U17 women's national team head coach Hilda Joseph Masanche is optimistic her charges are in the right shape ahead of the 2024 FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup Qualifiers.

Tanzania, who qualified for the 2022 FIFA U-17 World Cup that took place in India, will have a tough hurdle against Zambia this weekend.

However, coach Masanche believes the team is in the right shape to face Zambia in the first leg of the first round of the African qualifiers.

The first leg is slated for tomorrow at Nkoloma Stadium while the return leg will be played a week later at Chamazi Complex, in Dar es Salaam.

Speaking after the

team's first training session at Zanaco Stadium, Masanche expressed her squad's readiness to take on their Zambian counterparts.

"We thank God that the youngsters are well, they are in good physical condition. As you have seen, we have come for practice to prepare for our game. The crucial thing we did today was to go through our game plan that we started at home. We concentrated on important areas," she said.

Following the two encounters, the winners based on the aggregate score will progress to the third round of the qualifiers.

After the second round, the third round of qualifiers is scheduled between May 10 and 12, with the return legs set for May 17-19, 2024.

The final round will officially take place between June 7 and 9 for the first legs.

The best three teams that win after the fourth round will qualify for the 2024 FIFA U-17 Women's

World Cup to take place in the Dominican Republic.

Goalkeepers:

Mariam Shabani (Bunda Queens) Mwanaidi Maulid, Salome Saint (Geita Queens)

Defenders:

Sarah Joel (Fountain Gate Princess), Edina Makamba (Oyster Bay Queens), Lidya Maximilian (JKT Queens), Masika Mwakisua (Yanga Princess), Sarah Lucas (Bunda

Queens), Kulwa Rocketi (Fountain Gate Princess), Felister Richard (Baobab Queens), Winifrida Castor (Yanga Princess)

Midfielders:

Ester Maseke (Bunda Queens), Melikia William

(Bunda Queens), Naomi Samwel (Geita Queens), Mary Arone (Laliga Academy, Spain), Semeni Juma (Bunda Queens), Sabina Alex (Geita Queens), Jamila Celentine (JKT Queens), Yasinta Joseph

(JKT Queens)

Forwards:

Mwatima Mwarabu (JKT Queens), Winfrida Hubert (JKT Queens), Jamila Rajab (Bunda Queens), Asha Ramadhan (Yanga Princess)

Flexibles by David Chikoko

