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Partnership: UK approves £1bn funding across 5 years

By Guardian Reporter

TANZANIA and the United Kingdom (UK) yesterday signed a mutual prosperity partnership aimed at unlocking £1bn (over 3trn/-) backed investment in the country for the next five years (2024/25 to 2029/30).

Prof Kitila Mkumbo the Planning and Investment state minister in the President's Office, said at the signing ceremony in Dodoma City yesterday that the partnership also aims to open up £300m (970bn/-) in UK private sector foreign direct investment flows and increase UK-Tanzania trade by £100m (300bn/-).

The partnership will see Tanzania collaborating with the UK to invest in strategic minerals entailing adding value in the country, he stated.

Dr Tausi Kida, the Planning and Investment permanent secretary, and the UK High Commissioner David Concar signed the agreement, also witnessed by the UK Minister for Development and Africa, Andrew Mitchell.

Prof Mkumbo said the government has prioritised processing and value addition of various products especially strategic minerals, vital for green energy sources where manufacturing batteries needs rare metals, etc.

The visiting minister said in his remarks that Tanzania has the best chance to attract investments compared with most African countries due to harmony, peace and institutional stability.

On leaving Tanzania, the minister was set to visit Rwanda, to attend commemorations for the 30th anniversary of the genocide, which broke out on the night of April 6, 1994, directed against Tutsis and Hutu moderates.

He is also slated to visit the Nyakabingo tungsten mine, as part of efforts to show British strategic in rare metals, meet with Rwandan artists and creative industry professionals to discuss how creative arts aided Rwanda's post-conflict recovery, officials said.

A major aspect of the visit was devoted to funding announced covering £15m for the Tanzania Health Resilience Programme across five years, with £12m-meantr for a two year extension of the scaling up of family planning, to support cooperation on sexual and reproductive health and rights.

The support is billed to reach over 0.9m people, while a £5.5m component will support climate change and environmental projects. The funding will run until 2026, promoting clean cooking technologies, clean energy access and urban resilience.

Half of Tanzania's population is under 15 years of age and the number of women of reproductive age increases by around four percent annually.

The demand for quality sexual and reproductive health services that protect the rights of women and girls is high and will increase in the coming years given the country's fertility rate said to be around five births per woman, the minister had reflected.



Shi'a Islam faithful take part in an International Quds Day march in Dar es Salaam yesterday. The Day is marked each last Friday of the Islamic holy month of Ramadhan to express support for Palestinians. Photo: Correspondent Jumanne

Sources affirm that employees of ZMMI filed a complaint at Muembe Madema Police Station in Urban West Region in Unguja "where they were issued with RB number 1390-2024 for office invasion while they were at work."

Liquor board shuts big shop, citing Ramadhan

By Guardian Reporter, Zanzibar

POLICE in Zanzibar have confirmed closure of the popular liquor shop, the Zanzibar Maritime and Mercantile International Co Ltd (ZMMI) for allegedly selling alcohol during the holy month of Ramadhan.

Zubeir Chembera, the deputy

director of criminal investigations, told reporters here yesterday that the company's shop was closed by the Zanzibar Liquor Control Board (ZLCB) on April 2.

Officers from ZLCB arrived at the shop as part of daily routines to investigate accusations of violation of liquor control legislation, and during

questioning an argument erupted between the officers and the shop's staff, he said.

Due to the misunderstanding the workers were instructed to close the shop and go with the officers to ZLCB offices for more deliberations, where they were instructed to pay a fine and execute the penalty given to them after

the discussion with the officers. This is what is provided for in the liquor control law, he said.

Zainab Sururu, the ZLCB board secretary, when reached for comment,

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Dabo: Azam FC poised for return with renewed focus

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Serengeti Girls overcome Ngorongoro Girls in 2024 TCA U-17 Women's Easter Series

Ministry ready on economic diplomacy efficacy criteria

By Francis Kajubi, Dodoma

THE government has finalised reviewing embassies efficiency measuring techniques by key performance indicators to test consistency in economic diplomacy.

Stephen Byabato, the Foreign Affairs and East African Cooperation deputy minister for EAC Affairs, told the National Assembly yesterday that the review focuses on increasing exports, attracting foreign direct investments, promoting tourism and to stimulate development partnership.

In realising this objective, the government

has prepared the strategy to be launched in three weeks' time, to set out a proper format for economic diplomacy, whose other priorities include widening opportunities for employment and education in different countries or with international companies.

Similarly, it seeks to strengthen the country's image globally and to strengthen the ministry's ability in coordinating economic diplomacy, he stated, affirming that the strategy provides room for sectorial ministries and the private sector to be involved in its implementation.

"The ministry in collaboration with sec-

torial ministries is preparing a map that displays the location of investment opportunities to be promoted in this strategy," he stated.

Deputy minister Ambassador Mbarouk Nassor Mbarouk of the same ministry said that in strengthening diplomatic relations the government is doing all it takes in attracting foreign countries to open consulates in Zanzibar.

Soud Mohammed Juma (Donge) had demanded to know government plans for opening consulates in Zanzibar for various countries already having diplomatic rela-

tions with Tanzania.

The ministry has been canvassing foreign countries to open consulates in Zanzibar for commerce, tourism, cultural interaction, educational opportunities and flow of expertise, he said, citing efforts by national leaders to push this agenda when meeting with foreign envoys.

The Zanzibar Revolutionary Government was especially insistent on the matter, he stated, listing five countries as having already set up consulates in Zanzibar, namely China, Oman, India, Mozambique and the United Arab Emirates (UAE).



Somalia expels Ethiopian ambassador amid row over Somaliland port agreement

MOGADISHU

SOMALIA has expelled the Ethiopian ambassador from the country and ordered the closure of two consulates.

It accused Ethiopia of infringing on Somalia's "sovereignty and internal affairs".

Somalia also recalled its ambassador from Ethiopia's capital, Addis Ababa, for "comprehensive consultations".

Ethiopia's foreign ministry spokesperson Nebiyu Tedla told Reuters news agency the government did not have information on the matter.

The expulsion highlights an escalation in diplomatic tensions in the region following landlocked Ethiopia's port deal with the self-declared republic of Somaliland earlier this year.

Its independence has not been internationally recognised and Somalia condemned the deal as an attack on its sovereignty.

In January, Ethiopia signed a deal with Somaliland to lease a 20km (12 miles) strip of coastline, so it could build a navy base.

The deal is not legally binding, though it is seen as a statement of intent and can lead to a treaty imposing obligations on those parties who have signed.

In exchange, Ethiopia reportedly told Somaliland it would offer it possible recognition in the future - which angered Somalia.

Somaliland seceded from Somalia more than 30 years ago, but is not recognised by the African

Union (AU) or the UN as an independent state.

Following this deal, Somalia's President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud launched a diplomatic campaign and travelled to Eritrea and Egypt - two countries with fraught relations with Ethiopia.

Somalia demanded a public reversal of the deal by Ethiopia but this has not happened.

Somalia has described the deal as an act of aggression, adding that it was an "impediment to... peace and stability".

Earlier this week Ethiopian delegates met officials from the semi-autonomous Somali province of Puntland, which has difficult relations with the central government.

This year Puntland said it would operate as a functionally independent state amid a dispute over Somali constitutional changes.

The two Ethiopian consulates that Somalia has ordered to close are in Hargeisa and Garowe, the capitals of Somaliland and Puntland, respectively.

The prospect of armed clashes between the two countries seems unlikely at this point. Ethiopia is one of the countries contributing soldiers to an AU peacekeeping mission in Somalia, which complicates the situation.

There are already concerns that the Islamist group al-Shabab might be using tensions between the two countries to recruit fighters and increase security threats.

Escalations in the row between Somalia and Ethiopia could only worsen that.



Zanzibar President Dr Hussein Ali Mwinyi makes remarks shortly after gracing iftar hosted by the Omani Consulate in Zanzibar's West District on Thursday. Photo: Zanzibar State House

Liquor board shuts big shop, citing Ramadhan

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requested that the inquiry should be directed to the principal secretary in the Zanzibar President's Office (Regional Administration, Local Governments and Special Department).

Issa Mahfoudh Haji, the mentioned principal secretary, said of the incident that he was unaware of the matter as he had

just returned to Zanzibar from Uhuru Torch lighting ceremony in Moshi, thus requesting to be given time to respond.

As this closure was being confirmed, five bars operated by sensitive public institutions at Maisara, Chukwani, Migombani, Mombasa and Ubago suburbs were selling liquor and food before the rest of the public break the fast.

Sources affirm that employees of ZMMI filed a complaint at Mueembe Madema Police Station in Urban West Region in Unguja "where they were issued with RB number 1390-2024 for office invasion while they were at work."

Observers linked the closure with events late January where the then Tourism and Heritage minister Simai Mohammed Said

resigned, citing unfavourable and disruptive working conditions.

Days before his exit, the then incumbent had warned about a liquor shortage in the archipelago, worried that it would affect the tourism sector.

He objected to the Zanzibar Liquor Board licensing newcomers at the expense of old-timers in the liquor importation

business, with the often detested liquor business seen as a vital component of the tourism sector.

Data from the Zanzibar Commission for Tourism (ZCT) show that the tourism sector contributes 30 percent of the Isles' economy, on the basis of an online entry dated 30th March, 2021.

UK delivers £15m healthcare package

By Special Correspondent

BRITAIN has announced a vital package of support for communities in Tanzania, which aims to protect mothers and babies, tackle diseases, and boost access to green energy.

Andrew Mitchell, the UK Minister for Development and Africa, said in an announcement on Thursday that a £15m five-year initiative will help to improve Tanzania's health system and save lives, particularly of mothers and babies.

The funding will provide a necessary boost to Tanzania's health system, with the UK working alongside the government to reduce preventable deaths, combat disease outbreaks, and increase the quality of and access to primary healthcare services. This will help strengthen Tanzania's capacity to detect, prevent and respond to health threats.

Family planning services will also receive additional support, as the UK commits a further £12m to extend its scaling up family planning programme for two years, delivering vital family planning services to an additional 0.9m people.

The programme currently supports four million people, and will help prevent 1,400 maternal deaths, one million unintended pregnancies, and over 200,000 unsafe abortions, he said.

The statement affirmed that Tanzania continues to face significant levels of poverty, exacerbated by high population growth underlining that investment in women and girls' health and rights is a priority in UK-Tanzania relations.



Russia's Ambassador to Tanzania, Andrey Avetisyan (R), shows Home Affairs minister Hamad Masauni a document on cooperation between Tanzania and Russia during talks held in Dar es Salaam yesterday. Photo courtesy of Home Affairs ministry

"Every woman has the right to choose when and whether she has children, and to a safe pregnancy and childbirth," the minister said, elaborating that threats from multiple diseases place immense strain on its healthcare system.

This implies that women cannot get the family planning services they want and need, making them vulnerable to unsafe abortions - and putting their health and lives at risk, thus UK funding will help reduce maternal deaths, creat-

ing a safer environment for women and their children, he explained.

The impacts of climate change continue to be felt in many parts of Tanzania, heightened by the effects of El Niño. In recent months heavy rains have triggered floods and landslides, displaced thousands of people, and disrupted social services, livelihoods, and infrastructure, he said.

An additional £5.5m of new programming aims to provide vulnerable com-

munities with greater access to clean energy, while improving urban resilience.

It seeks to slow down deforestation, reduce emissions and air pollution, and build urban resilience through improving waste management and climate information services, he further noted.

In a scheduled visit to Tanzania, the minister is slated to see first-hand how UK aid is assisting with family planning services, meeting with beneficiaries of UK funded health programmes.

Mitchell will also visit a site specialising in ending violence against women and girls, meeting the anti-Human Trafficking & Child Protection Taskforce, and open a new UK diplomatic office in the capital, Dodoma.

In his meetings with senior government officials, the key agenda was given as how the UK can support sustainable and inclusive growth, focusing on opportunities to increase cooperation in economic development.



Prof Joyce Ndalichako (R), until earlier this week Minister of State in the Prime Minister's Office (Labour, Youth, Employment and Persons with Disabilities), pictured in the National Assembly debating chamber in Dodoma city yesterday having a quick word with her successor, Deogratius Ndejemi. Photo: Correspondent Ibrahim Joseph

MP makes case for dual citizenship 'for economic, diplomatic benefits'

By Francis Kajubi, Dodoma

THE government has been urged to embrace dual citizenship in its legislations so that it reaps economic and diplomatic benefits from Tanzanians who reside abroad.

Suma Fyandomo, Special Seats MP, argued in the National Assembly yesterday that dual citizenship's economic and diplomatic benefits are beyond remittances by Tanzanians residing abroad.

She questioned the government's hesitation in granting people with Tanzanian origin dual citizenship, pointing out Kenya as the only country in the East African Community (EAC) which benefits economically and diplomatically.

"Kenya for instance through dual citizenship has been attracting \$4.2 billion a year but Tanzania has been attracting only \$520 million a year mostly through remittances. Why is the government so worried about dual citizenship?" she asked.

Fyandomo raised the issue in her primary question on the hesitation of the government in revisiting its legislation to allow dual citizenship.

In his response, Daniel Sillo, Deputy Minister for Home Affairs, said the prevailing law on citizenship does not allow dual citizenship for adults but for the under 18 year-old citizens who are supposed to opt as they turn 18 years.

He said the Tanzania Citizenship Act Cap 357 R.E. 2002 states that Tanzania has three types of citizenships namely citizenship by birth, citizenship by descent and citizenship by naturalization. "The government is finalizing procedures for granting adult Tanzanians who are residing abroad with the special status identity so that they can enjoy the freedom of residing in Tanzania," he said.

According to him, the government has nothing to lose be it economically or diplomatically by not allowing dual citizenship.

"The special status grants all economic and diplomatic opportunities that Tanzanians who reside abroad can apply in participating in their motherland's affairs," he said.

Ministry starts aligning education sector with new curricula

By Guardian Correspondent, Dodoma

THE Ministry of Education, Science and Technology has started working on the education sector development plan 2021/22-2025/26 to align with the new curriculum and policy revisions done last year and expected to be completed within six months.

Improvements of pre, primary, secondary and teacher training curricula is meant to give learners knowledge and abilities they

need to employ themselves or be employed both domestically and internationally.

Speaking on Thursday during the Annual Joint Education Sector Review (AJESR) meeting for 2023/2024, Prof. Carolyne Nombo, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, said that the work is carried out by national and international experts in collaboration with education stakeholders.

"The ministry has begun to im-

prove the plan in light of outcomes of the 2022 housing and population census as well as modifications of policies and curricula. We anticipate completing it in September this year and the experts will reach out to all groups. UNICEF is in charge of organizing education development plan review," she said.

She said the ministry was still reviewing a number of documents and programmes that are being used to put new rules and curricula in place for the 2023 edition.

She clarified that the government has implemented a significant change to the 2014 education policy and new curricula for pre, primary, secondary and teacher training and the Education and Training Policy 2014.

"The cornerstones of the nation's educational system are the curricula and education policies. I can promise you that they have been worked on with utmost expertise, taking into account the demands of the market and our environment,"

she said. She said that stakeholders would discuss the curricula and policies to determine how best to put them into practice throughout the meeting.

Daniel Baheta, Chief of education at the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in Tanzania, said that investing in technology that enhances learning and teaching will help address Tanzania's teacher shortage, particularly in the fields of science, mathematics and languages.

He said UNICEF and other development stakeholders will continue to support Tanzania financially based on the government's priorities for enhancing the education system.

Prof James Mdoe, Deputy Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, said the attendees would develop strategies for implementing the different plans for improving the education sector, including curricula and education policy.



PRESS RELEASE ON WORLD HEALTH DAY

Dar es Salaam, Tanzania - On April 7th, 2024, the global community will observe World Health Day, with this year's theme "My health, my right" advocating for universal health coverage and the importance of access to quality healthcare for all. In Tanzania, this theme resonates deeply with older adults, highlighting their fundamental right to prioritize and safeguard their health as they age.

In Tanzania, Older People play a vital role in communities, contributing their wisdom, experiences, and knowledge. However, many face challenges accessing healthcare services, which are essential for maintaining their well-being. The theme of "My health, my right" emphasizes the importance of empowering Older People to advocate for their health needs and ensuring they have access to the healthcare services they require.

Older People in Tanzania face a variety of health concerns, including chronic diseases, mobility issues, and mental health challenges. Access to affordable and quality healthcare services is crucial in addressing these issues and enabling Older People to lead healthy and fulfilling lives. By recognizing their right to health, society can work towards creating a more inclusive and equitable healthcare system that meets the needs of older adults.

Furthermore, empowering Older People to take an active role in managing their health is essential. This involves providing them with access to information, resources, and support to make informed decisions about their health. By promoting health literacy and encouraging proactive healthcare practices, Older People can better advocate for their well-being and access the services they need.

As Tanzania celebrates World Health Day, let us reaffirm our commitment to promoting the health and rights of older adults. By ensuring that they have access to quality healthcare services and empowering them to take charge of their health, we can create a society where Older People can age with dignity and respect. Let us reflect on the value of health and the role each of us plays in promoting wellness for all, regardless of age.

For more information, please contact: -

HelpAge Tanzania, 134 Migombani Street, Regent Estate Mikocheni, P.O Box 9846, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. Tel +255 22 2700169, Email: helpage@helpagetan.org Website: www.helpagetan.org Instagram: [helpage Tanzania](https://www.instagram.com/helpage_tanzania); X(Twitter) [HelpAgeTz](https://twitter.com/HelpAgeTz); LinkedIn: [HelpAge Tanzania](https://www.linkedin.com/company/helpage-tanzania).

NOTICE OF PUBLIC AUCTION

ORBITER DEBT COLLECTION AND AUCTIONEER COMPANY LTD, MBUZAX AUCTION MART AND COMPANY LTD AND MUDU COMPANY LIMITED under the instructions of INTERNATIONAL COMMERCIAL BANK TANZANIA LIMITED (ICBTL) are going to conduct PUBLIC AUCTIONS of the following LANDED PROPERTIES after 14 (fourteen) days from the date of publication of this NOTICE. The properties are held by ICBTL as security against the loan and credit facilities availed by the following borrowers.

This NOTICE OF PUBLIC AUCTION is also a fourteen days' (14) notice to the borrower/Mortgagor/Guarantors of the loan/credit facilities about the auction sale.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPERTIES TO BE AUCTIONED

NO	NAME OF THE BORROWER/MORTGAGOR	LOCATION AND DETAILS OF THE PROPERTY	DATE, TIME AND VENUE OF AUCTION	AUCTION BROKER
1.	MAFIGOLO GENERAL SUPPLIES (Borrower)	Residential property bearing Title no. 101460, located on Plot no. 2004, Block 'C', Mbezi Luguruni area, Mbezi magari saba bus stop near Carvary Montessori School, Ubungu Municipality, Dar Es Salaam	30/04/2024 from 09:00 am. VENUE: At the place where the mortgaged property is located.	ORBITER DEBT COLLECTION & AUCTIONEERS COMPANY LIMITED TEL NO: 0713751800
	NAETWE GODFREY MLELE (Owner/ Mortgagor) P.O. Box 55178 Dar Es salaam			
2.	AGNES GABRIEL NTUNGUKA (Borrower)	Residential property bearing Title no. 110150, located on Plot no. 239, Block '17' Johannesburg street, Buyuni Chanika Area, ILALA - Municipal Dar Es Salaam	23/04/2024 from 09:00 am. VENUE: At the place where the mortgaged property is located.	ORBITER DEBT COLLECTION & AUCTIONEERS COMPANY LIMITED TEL NO: 0713751800
	ABUBAKAR MUSSA BAGAYA (Owner/ Mortgagor) P.O. Box 5894 Dar Es salaam			
3.	CARGO STAR LIMITED (Borrower)	Residential property bearing Title no. 84639, located on Plot no. 14, Block 'K', UKONGA Stakishari area, near Mongo la ndege primary school, Ilala Municipality, Dar es salaam	29/04/2024 from 09:00 am. VENUE: At the place where the mortgaged property is located.	MBUZAX AUCTION MART AND COMPANY LTD TEL NO: 0755506970
	LEO JOSEPH MANYARA (Owner/ Mortgagor) P.O. Box 10000 Dar Es salaam			
4.	DABENCO ENTERPRISES LIMITED (Borrower)	Residential property bearing Title no. 138799, located on Plot no. 6 & 8, Block 'D', Nianjema, BAGAMOYO URBAN near Kimara N'gombe Church	28/04/2024 from 09:00 am. VENUE: At the place where the mortgaged property is located.	MUDU COMPANY LIMITED TEL NO: 0768672367
	GODFREY AUGUSTINE MPINGE (Owner/ Mortgagor) P.O. Box 76164 Dar Es salaam			
5.	MATESO GROUP CO LIMITED (Borrower)	Residential property bearing Title no. 110468, located on Plot no. 185, Block '9', Ilala Buyuni area, Dar es salaam near	24/04/2024 from 09:00 am. VENUE: At the place where the mortgaged property is located.	ORBITER DEBT COLLECTION & AUCTIONEERS COMPANY LIMITED TEL NO: 0713751800
	PETER ROWLAND LAIMOS (Owner/ Mortgagor) P.O. Box 19188 Dar Es salaam			
6.	LINUS PATRIC KALANDAMWAZEY T/A SICHULA ENTERPRISES (Borrower)	Residential property bearing Title no. 84643, located on Plot no. 2046, Block 'B', Kimara area near Kimara mwisho bus stop, Maximilian street in Ubungu Municipality, DAR ES SALAAM	27/04/2024 from 09:00 am. VENUE: At the place where the mortgaged property is located.	MBUZAX AUCTION MART AND COMPANY LTD TEL NO: 0755506970
	EVA STEPHEN MHINA (Owner/ Mortgagor) P.O Box 111937			
7.	SALOME ANDREW KOMBA T/A SALOME COMMERCIAL CENTRE (Borrower)	Residential and commercial property bearing Title No. 55928, located on Plot No. 1030, Mbezi Tangi bov u kwa komba, Kinondoni Municipality, Dar es Salaam.	03/05/2024 from 09:00 am. VENUE: At the place where the mortgaged property is located.	MUDU COMPANY LIMITED TEL NO: 0768672367
	SALOME ANDREW KOMBA (Owner/ Mortgagor) P.O. BOX 50161, DAR ES SALAAM			

Interested Buyers are hereby invited to inspect the property mentioned above on the following terms and conditions.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS:

- The landed property will be sold on "as is where is", "as is what is" and "whatever there is" basis.
- The successful bidder will be required to pay 25% of the Auction price on the same day and the remaining 75% within 14 days from date of auction.
- In case the successful Bidder defaults in payment of the remaining seventy five percent (75%) within fourteen (14) days from the date of auction, ICBTL shall forfeit the advance payment and the auction shall be repeated.
- All costs of transfer of ownership and eviction shall be borne by the successful bidder.
- Inspection of the properties can be done by the interested buyers any day from the day of this advertisement any time between 09.00am and 05:00pm.
- For further information contact the auction broker as detailed above.



Dodoma district commissioner Jabir Shekimwari (in cap) comes to the help of a child undergoing eye screening at a one-day free health check-up camp involving experts from various hospitals. The event was held in Mpunguzi ward in Dodoma Urban District yesterday. Photo: Correspondent Peter Mkwavila

Security organs 'need' training on human rights, says CHRAGG

By Guardian Reporter, Zanzibar

THE Commission for Human Rights and Good Governance (CHRAGG) has said that security and defence organs need further training on how to fairly enforce law when carrying out their duties.

Speaking to journalists in Zanzibar on Thursday, CHRAGG Commissioner Khatibu Mwinyi Chande said it is important to provide officers in the bodies with more education about respecting and safeguarding human rights and good governance, as some of them have been applying excessive force thus violating human rights.

He said the special investigations conducted by the commission between March and May 2022 and March and June 2023 showed that out of the 90 complaints the commission received, 71 involved human rights violations and 19 involved transgressions of good governance principles.

"Of the 90 concerns that were addressed at the time, 17 new and 77 previous ones were received," he said.

Chande said that the commission was able to wrap up its investigation into 11 complaints but it was still proceeding with 66 more.

He said that the commission carried out one special investigation between March and May 2022 and two investigations between March and June 2023. The investigations involved speaking with the complaint parties or conducting parallel investigations to ascertain the veracity of the complaints while visiting the locations of events. Referring to the investigation into the death

of detainee Amina Adam Said, who was allegedly detained after being suspected of obtaining fraudulent money, and the dispute between city guards and Madema police station regarding who killed her, he said the investigation unveiled that before being taken to Madema police station, the late Said and her two companions were detained by the city guards for a number of hours.

According to him, after detaining them for long hours, they started calling their various relatives to solicit money. The facts indicated that force, including beatings, was used in the exercise of returning the money, which is illegal.

The commissioner declared that Said's death was a result of an unexplained cause because the examination was conducted on the deceased's body but it was impossible to determine the cause of death.

Nevertheless, he said that the investigation's circumstantial evidence demonstrated the late and her two co-accused suffered cruel treatment, including beatings, and they were threatened with having to return the money they had allegedly embezzled.

He went on to say that the Police Force opened an investigation file after learning of her death, and once it was finished, forwarded to the Director of Public Prosecutions. A committee comprised members from both the police and the Zanzibar government special departments was then formed to look into the matter but unfortunately the report was incomplete until the commission finished the probe.

LHRC outlines shortcomings of election law ahead of polls

By Carlos Banda

THE Legal and Human Rights Centre (LHRC) has criticized the government FOR allowing civil servants to continue serving in the National Electoral Commission (NEC) instead of the commission employing its own staff and ensuring it operates independently.

Dr Anna Henga, LHRC executive director, said on Thursday that the organisation had made an analysis of laws governing election of the President, Members of Parliament and Councillors number 2 of 2024, Political Parties Act 2024 and the Law on the Independent Electoral Commission No. 2 of 2024.

She said the decision to have civil servants as NEC staff depletes the trust and freedom of the electoral body.

"Among the recommendations given by LHRC and other stakeholders was for NEC to hire its own staff to ensure its complete independence when executing its responsibilities to boost the confidence of election stakeholders. This recommendation was not taken into account instead public servants have continued to work for the electoral body," she said.

"Section six of the election law has removed the words District Executive Directors in cities, municipalities and townships and replaced it with Senior Public Servants to become election supervisors. Section seven

of the law has continued to recognize council directors as voter registration officers."

She also said that section eight still identifies public servants as election coordinators in regional levels, who can be legally interpreted as council directors to use their position to supervise elections, a practice that does not bring relief to the election system.

Dr Henga argued against the current NEC staff members including the chairperson, vice chairperson and commissioners who continue to hold their positions until their five year ends despite the use of the new election law.

"Despite stakeholders being thrilled with the implementation of the rec-

ommendations to have an independent system to formulate the commission and section 10 which stipulates that an interview panel will be created to recruit the chairperson, vice chairperson and members of the electoral commission. At the same time, section 27 of the law says the chairperson, vice chairperson and members of the commission currently present will continue with their duties even after the new law starts operation," she said.

"This means the panel established under section 9 of the law will not interview the chairperson, vice chairperson and other members of the commission who are currently in power until they complete their tenure after five years. In other words, their roles

are expected to end between 2028 and 2029. That is when the interview panel will become operational."

Concerning the decision not to have the commission questioned in court, Dr Henga said that such decision violates article 13(6) (a) of the Constitution of the United Republic of Tanzania of 1977.

"According to sections 36(6), 53(6) and 65(7) of the election law, the decision on the presidential candidate, Member of Parliament and councillors will be final and will not be challenged in court, something we proved is a violation of the constitution," she said.

The LHRC executive director said the recommendation to have an inde-

pendent candidate which was passed by the regional and country courts was also not considered in the new law.

Dr Henga said that gender issues, people with disabilities and youth have not been fully considered as stakeholders expected, including holding political parties accountable for not being gender inclusive in the party and national elections.

"According to section 10 (C) of the law, it is compulsory for a political party to have a gender and inclusion policy. However, this section has not outlined a system of measures taken to hold accountable political parties that fail to adhere to this requirement," she said.

Zambia makes pledge to strengthen transport, trade links with Tanzania

By Special Correspondent

TANZANIA and Zambia have expressed commitment to continue collaborating in enhancing cargo transportation and trade between the two neighboring countries.

Zambia's Minister for Transport and Logistics Frank Tayali disclosed his country's determination to foster transportation with neighboring countries, including Tanzania, while addressing the third Land-Linked Zambia Transport and Logistics Conference held in Lusaka yesterday.

Tayali said that Zambia complements regional development plans as the strategic link of the corridor network in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), using its land-linked status to facilitate trade and serve its neighbors.

Tanzania's Ambassador to Zambia, Lieutenant General Mathew Mkingule, speaking on the sideline of the conference on behalf of the Minister for Transport, Prof Makame Mbarawa, said the conference enabled Tanzania to create visibility to various transport infrastructures available including Ports under TPA and the Air Tanzania Company Limited (ATCL) aircraft.

"As we know, every business requires transport infrastructures. We conveyed our message on Tanzania's economic infrastructures, including the Dar es Salaam and Mtwara ports, and other ports in our major lakes such as lakes Victoria, Tanganyika, and Nyasa," he said.

He said that Tanzania has reduced charges to neighboring countries, including Zambia, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Malawi, and Zimbabwe to boost trade.

Lieutenant General Mkingule said Tanzania further outlined its roads connecting with Zambia as well as the Tazara railway.

Representative of the Tanzania Ports Authority (TPA) in Zambia Hamisi Chambari on behalf of the Director General of TPA, said the symposium enabled the authority to meet with SADC member states, including Zambia, among other transport stakeholders who use Tanzania's ports.

Chambari said TPA is ready to cooperate with all stakeholders, including traders and business institutions of the neighboring countries to elevate the Eastern, Central, and Southern African economies.

He said the conference enabled the authority to familiarize with customers' wants and use them as the benchmark to improve service delivery. The two-day conference, themed "Connecting Zambia and SADC by land to facilitate trade, investments, and ease of movement of goods and people," which kicked off on Thursday, brought a diverse group of transport sector institutions, including TPA as a co-sponsor.

The conference was a call to action for SADC member countries in the advent of the African Continental Free Trade Area Agreement (AfCFTA) to explore transport corridors and business partnerships within and beyond Zambia for seamless movements of goods and services.



Rufiji district commissioner Maj Edward Gowele (3rd-L) fills in for his Mkuranga counterpart on Thursday in presenting a cooking gas cylinder to Furaha Mawikia, one of the female residents of Mwalusembe, Kinene, Kitomondo and Kisele villages gifted over 400 gas cylinders and stoves at the event. Looking on are the Seychelles' Honorary Ambassador to Tanzania, Maryvonne Pool (3rd-R), Oryx Energies Tanzania Safety Health and Environment manager Janet Mutashobya (2nd-R) and Mkuranga district administrative secretary Omary Mwanga (2nd-L). Photo: Guardian Correspondent

UNDP commits 4bn/- to community-led biodiversity projects

By Correspondent Valentine Oforo

THE United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has signed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to roll out \$1.6 million (4.04bn/-) to empower a total of 44 civil society organizations across Tanzania mainland.

The funding is under the Global Environment Facility (GEF) Small Grants Programme channelling support

to CSOs which are on biodiversity conservation projects under the 7th Operational Phase of GEF funding.

The signing ceremony was held on Thursday in Dar es Salaam, led by UNDP Resident Representative Shigeki Komatsubara. Also present were representatives from the Vice President's Office, civil society organizations as well as members of the national steering committee for the GEF small grants programme.

As per the signed MoU, over the next 20 months, the grants will enable communities to implement biodiversity conservation actions, empowering them to manage their environment, generate alternative income sources, as well as addressing local environmental challenges.

In his remarks during the signing ceremony, Komatsubara said that the projects encompass an array of activities, including tree planting, beekeeping, forest conserva-

tion, water source preservation, livestock management, beach management and sea turtle conservation, wetland management, ecotourism and agroforestry activities among others. "These initiatives aim to build the capacity of local communities to address environmental issues with locally driven solutions," he said.

"Tanzania's vast natural resources require active community involvement for conservation and sustainable uti-

lization, essential for local and national development."

Lilian Lukumbuzi who represented GEF operational focal point in the Vice President's Office, commended CSOs that qualified for the SGP programme and encouraged more CSOs to apply for the funding.

"We urge all CSOs to utilize the funds to realize their set objectives. The project's implementation will create value for money, quality and tangi-

ble outputs," she said.

The 44 projects will benefit approximately 5,000 Tanzanians residing in rural areas, with a targeted emphasis on key landscapes, including the Serengeti ecosystem, West Kilimanjaro/Lake Natron, and the Jozani ecosystem in Zanzibar. The Vice President's Office oversees the Small Grants Programme in Tanzania. In 2023, it allocated \$2 million for community-based projects on biodiversity conservation,

climate change and sustainable land management during the 8th operational phase of GEF. The GEF Small Grants Programme is a corporate programme of the GEF that provides financial and technical support to local civil society and community based organizations to develop and implement innovative local actions that address global environmental issues while also improving livelihoods and reducing poverty.



UNESCO Country Representative Michael Toto briefs journalists in Dar es Salaam yesterday on this year's edition of World Press Freedom Day (May 3) celebrations, to be held in Dodoma city under Union of Tanzania Press Clubs coordination. He is with Director of Information Services and Chief Government Spokesperson Mobhare Matinyi (C) and UTPC president Deogratius Nsokolo. Photo: Correspondent Joseph Mwendapole

Govt to construct four modern facilities for cancer treatment

By Correspondent Valentine Oforo, Dodoma

THE Ministry of Health is finalising a process to construct four modern health facilities for cancer treatment in the country, it has been said.

Health Minister Ummu Mwalimu told the National Assembly yesterday that the facilities will be constructed at the Dodoma-based Benjamin Mkapa Hospital, Aga Khan Hospital, Kilimanjaro Christian Medical Center, Mbeya Zonal Referral Hospital and another one in Zanzibar.

"The project will include construction of the facilities structures as well as installation of cloud-connected medical equipment to ensure high-tech radiotherapy cancer treatments," she said.

She was responding to a question by Tunza Malapo (Special Seats) who wanted to know plans by the government to improve cancer treatment services in the country.

Reacting to the question, the minister Mwalimu said that Tanzania currently has only three health facilities that provide cancer treatment through use of radiotherapy, which is a low number in comparison to the increased number of cancer patients.

The three hospitals that are currently offer cancer treatments through radiotherapy are the Dar es Salaam-based

Ocean Road Cancer Institute, Bugando Medical Center (Mwanza) and the Ifakara-based Good Samaritan Cancer Hospital in Morogoro.

"Statistics show that at least 40,000 new patients are diagnosed with cancer annually, of which over 70 percent go to health facilities for treatment while already in critical condition," she said.

The minister added that only between 28 and 30 percent of cancer patients in the country seek treatments at the right time. "Cancer cases are treatable but only if a patient seeks treatment at the right time and that is why the government is currently working to improve availability of cancer treatments services and raise awareness on the importance of early diagnosis," she said.

With cervical cancer being the leading type of cancer across the country, minister Mwalimu said the ministry emphasizes vaccination to curb its prevalence.

"The ministry is currently rolling out special vaccinations meant to prevent girls across the country from getting cervical cancer. The vaccination is safe and very effective," she said.

Together with the vaccination, the minister spoke of plans by the ministry to carry out a countrywide awareness creation campaign with both preventive and curative messages.

PM Majaliwa to grace press freedom day in Dodoma

By Correspondent Joseph Mwendapole

PRIME Minister Kassim Majaliwa is scheduled to grace this year's national commemoration of the World Press Freedom Day (WPF) to be held in Dodoma city on May 3.

Deogratius Nsokolo, president of the Union of Tanzania Press Clubs (UTPC) said this in Dar es Salaam yesterday, adding that this year's WPF theme is 'Press for the planet: Journalism in the face of the environmental crisis.'

WPF is held around the world every 3 May every year since the United Nations approved the day in

1993. In 2024, the day is dedicated to the importance of journalism and freedom of expression in the context of the current global environmental crisis.

Nsokolo said that in Tanzania, stakeholders and journalists have continued to celebrate the day by engaging in various activities, including a national meeting that goes along with the slogans that carry or lead the celebration.

He said that the celebration is important because it helps to promote understanding of journalists about various cross-cutting issues that the media industry should speak about,

including reminding the society about the importance of protecting and respecting the freedom of the media and respecting the right to get information.

"The WPF celebration event brings journalists to celebrate the basic principles of press freedom, to evaluate the state of the media in the country and also this celebration serves as an opportunity to stimulate dialogue about the responsibilities of journalists in promoting transparency, accountability and democracy in the country," he said.

He said the celebrations provide

an opportunity for in-depth discussions on various issues affecting media industry, including protection and safety of journalists in the country, gender equality, technology and innovation, the economy of the media and stimulating changes in various policies and laws related to media in order to create a good environment for journalists to work.

Mobhare Matinyi, Chief Government Spokesperson, said the celebration is an important platform to raise various challenges faced by journalists, including policy ones and look at the way activities of media industry are conducted in the

country.

He said that before the day of the celebration, there will be a conference of media stakeholders where various opinions will be asked and the government will take and work on them to continue improving the environment of journalism in the country.

"Thomas Jefferson who was President of the United States once said that if he had to choose between a government without the media or media without a government, he would choose the latter. Although it is impossible to have a media without the government,

the American leader was conveying a message about the importance of the media," he said.

Kalisha Holmes, representative of American Embassy in the country, said that the WPF is important and the United States has always been side by side with journalist institutions to make the day a success.

"The United States is very proud to be part of this year's celebration of WPF and the American Ambassador here in the country, Michael Battle, has promised to attend this year's celebrations in Dodoma," she said.

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Industry and Trade ministry permanent secretary Dr Hashil Abdallah (L) and Nilan Fernando, a US Millennium Challenge Corporation director, meet in the course of talks in Dodoma city yesterday. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

It's landmark for JKCI in chest, abdominal blood vessel repair

By Correspondent Joseph Mwendapole

SPECIALISTS at the Jakaya Kikwete Cardiac Institute (JKCI) are for the first time performing surgery through a small hole to repair ruptured blood vessels in the chest and abdomen to five patients.

This was said in Dar es Salaam yesterday by executive director of JKCI Dr Peter Kisenge when speaking to journalists, explaining that patients with such problems were previously referred to go for treatment abroad.

Dr Kisenge said that the surgeries were performed by Tanzanian doctors in collaboration with experts from India, adding that one patient had already been operated on while three others were to be operated on yesterday and one today.

"For the third time we are setting a record; we have done a major treatment to repair blood vessels that have dilated and ruptured. This is a problem that many people experience and lose their lives suddenly and we were taking some of them abroad but now we treat them here," he said.

"It is a big procedure to be performed not only in Tanzania but the entire East and Central Africa. We have set a record. We thank the government for providing 900m/ for specialist treatment in our Institute," he said.

Dr Kisenge, who is also a cardiologist, said that blood vessels in the stomach and chest expand and burst due to many reasons, including high blood pressure that is not properly treated, smoking, excessive alcohol consumption and being overweight.

He said that at the institute, there are 30 patients waiting to get such treatment where the cost is 80m/ if a patient is treated here in the country and 150m/- abroad.

"We will continue to provide this treatment here and introduce other new treatments because our experts are learning every day. This surgery we performed by opening the chest takes eight hours but through a small hole, it takes two hours. This is a good method, although the cost is high but the government has given money so that the people can be treated," he said.

Dr Gireesh Warawdekar, a specialist in heart and vascular surgery from India, said that the surgery goes hand in hand with training to JKCI specialists so that they can serve Tanzanians with such problems.

"This type of surgery we perform through a small hole by using a Cath Lab machine is a difficult procedure but it is good because it does not take much time to do and patient stays in hospital for a short time and does not go through a difficult period of pain like in open chest surgery," he said.

Extractive sector major player for transparency, accountability

By Carlos Banda

EXTRACTIVE industry stakeholders have expressed readiness to support the government achieve transparency and accountability in the oil, gas and mineral sectors.

Mark Robinson, executive director of Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) said this in Dar es Salaam yesterday, adding that its primary goal is to actively support the ongoing governance reforms in Tanzania.

"These efforts have strengthened governance at a crucial time when Tanzania has seen a substantial increase in the revenue from the ex-

tractive sector and its contribution to national income. We also identified opportunities in our discussion with ministers of energy and mining to further leverage the EITI experience to support the government's broader development agenda," he said.

"The key areas of focus include how to improve the business environment to attract investments, strengthen revenue collection mechanisms to enhance tax and foster opportunities for local employment and community benefits from extractive projects."

Robinson also said that the discussions also addressed the changes in the energy sector, especially in the

context of changing demand for oil, gas and minerals where he remarked that the shifts underscored the imperative for transparent and accountable oversight of Tanzania's considerable natural resources.

"In pursuit of this objective, it is essential for Tanzania to ensure the open publication and disclosure of contracts in the extractive sector and share information on the beneficial owners of companies in the sector. And we believe this will help Tanzanians understand the terms under which those resources are extracted and who are the ultimate beneficiaries of the rights to extract. The EITI board

and international secretariat that I lead stand ready to support Tanzania's efforts in promoting transparency, accountability and sustainable development in the extractive sector," he said.

Concerning the striking issues in Tanzania's extractive sector, EITI executive director said that Tanzania's profile had changed, indicating a considerable growth, highlighting that there has been a three-fold increase in the past five years to the national income.

"There are major new projects coming soon. Our board chair was here for an international event and so we decided it would be a great opportunity to meet President Samia Suluhu Has-

san at a high-level meeting to discuss these issues and she displayed considerable insight, knowledge and recognition of the importance of these to ensure transparency at this juncture in Tanzania's development of its extractive sector," he said.

Robinson said that Tanzania has made progress on how the government issues information on many areas of the extractive sector in the sense of production, exports and revenues but there is still room for improvement, including legislation to support and clarify how such information can be shared.

Adam Anthony, executive director

of HakiRasilimali, said that Tanzania achieved 67 points in some areas in terms of accountability and transparency in the extractive sector, adding that the major challenge is on two key areas namely transparency of contracts and ensuring information on beneficial owners is available in the public registry.

"There is still a legal and policy challenge in extractive industry contract accountability although the government has displayed its readiness but this is also a challenge for the companies working in the sector as well as when it comes to publishing information on beneficial owners," he said.

Madagascar calls for departure of EU ambassador over criticism

ANTANANARIVO

AUTHORITIES in Madagascar have asked the EU ambassador, Isabelle Delattre Burger, to leave the island, following remarks she made that they said were critical of the government.

She reportedly criticised a new law that was passed in February for convicted child rapists to be surgically castrated.

The EU confirmed that the ambassador would leave her post in July or August.

A spokesperson for the embassy said they wanted good relations with Madagascar but warned of what he described as political and financial consequences.

The new castration law has faced criticism from international rights groups, but was supported by local activists who praised it as an appropriate deterrent to curb rape cases.

In early February, the Malagasy parliament passed a bill allowing chemical and surgical castration of people convicted of raping minors.

Amnesty International condemned the measure as "cruel, inhuman and degrading."

A few weeks later, the European Union's ambassador, who has been critical of the government in the

past, blasted the measure during a press conference.

The measure is "contrary even to the Madagascar constitution" and to international norms, Burger said.

Burger was summoned to Madagascar's foreign ministry following the remarks.

On Thursday, a spokeswoman for the European Commission said Madagascar called on Brussels to replace the envoy.

"Madagascar foreign affairs minister addressed a letter to the high commissioner to express his dissatisfaction and to ask the EU proceed to replace the head of its delegation," Nabila Massrali, told AFP by telephone from Brussels.

The EU is studying the demand "in consultation with the Malagasy government," she said, adding that regular ambassador rotations are due to take place in September.

Clara Randrianjara, the head of communications for the Madagascar foreign affairs ministry, said "this letter should have remained confidential" and declined to comment further.

The EU is one of the main donors to Madagascar, which heavily depends on international aid and where nearly 75 percent of the 29 million people live in poverty.



Kahama district commissioner Mboni Mhita pictured yesterday addressing a meeting at Bukondamoyo in Mhungula ward. The thrust was on challenges commonly facing residents of the locality. Photo: Correspondent Shaban Njia

MP wants sim card levy to pay health insurance for poor people

By Francis Kajubi, Dodoma

GAIRO Member of Parliament Ahmed Shabiby has called for introduction of sim card levy to pay for health insurance for people from underprivileged families in both urban and rural areas.

Debating the Prime Minister's Office budget for 2024/25 tabled in the National Assembly on Wednesday, Shabiby argued that even if the Universal Health Insurance

(UHI) by National Health Insurance Fund (NHIF) comes into effect before June this year, poor people will find it difficult to subscribe.

He said that Tanzania Communications Regulatory Authority (TCRA) fourth quarterly report for 2023 showed that active subscriptions stood at 70.3 million up from 67.1 million in the third quarter, suggesting that a special levy should be introduced to pay health insurance for poor people.

"If a 2,000/- monthly levy is placed on every active sim card, that makes 24,000/- a year and the government will successfully collect 1.7trn/-. This is only for ordinary mobile services consumers," he said.

According to him, if large scale mobile services consumers such as private entities are subjected to the levy, over 2trn/- can be collected on an annual basis.

He said the decision can give the government a guaranteed source of funds to pay

for health insurance covers.

Shabiby queried that if rural families couldn't afford the lowest subscription in the Community Health Fund (CHF) what about the minimum contribution of 350,000/- being proposed?

CHF had commenced with the lowest annual subscription of 30,000/- but people from poor economic backgrounds could not stand it hence his argument that a collective strategy must be put in place

by the government to assist poor people to manage treatment costs.

On another development, Shabiby argued that most public health facilities should be privatized. He said the same approach has been adopted by South Korea where 90 percent of facilities are private and only primary health ones are public and the approach has shown positive results.

African banks out to fund gold mining in Zimbabwe

HARARE

AFRICAN development banks are seen as the most likely funders of Caledonia Mining Corporation's planned \$250 million gold mine in Zimbabwe, the mining company's CEO Mark Learmonth said on Wednesday.

Caledonia, which already owns the Blanket gold mine in Zimbabwe, has updated a feasibility study ahead of the planned construction of a new mine at Bilboes to produce at least 170,000 ounces annually, making it potentially the country's biggest gold mine.

The southern African country has significant mineral resources, including platinum group metals, gold and lithium, but has struggled to attract investment due to economic instability and jitters over property rights after the government seized white-owned farms at the turn of the century.

Caledonia, backed by investors including BlackRock and Cape Town-based fund manager Allan Gray, is one of the few foreign investors - along with Anglo American Platinum

and Impala Platinum - to brave Zimbabwe's tough economy marked by foreign currency shortages and episodes of hyperinflation.

The company is in preliminary talks with the "most likely lenders", Learmonth said during a conference call.

"They are going to be African development banks who have indicated a high degree of interest in this project," he said.

Learmonth said debt would form the bulk of the funding for the Bilboes project.

"We will not be approaching the market for any non-debt funding until we've got a better idea of what the debt capacity is because, frankly, nothing is going to be as cheap as debt funding," Learmonth said.

He said once funding was in place, "optimistically" a year from now, construction of the mine would likely take two years after financial close.

Caledonia's operating profit plunged 62 percent to \$15.18 million in 2023, from \$40.28 million a year earlier, mainly due to higher administrative and production costs.



President Samia Suluhu Hassan pictured in Dar es Salaam earlier this week presenting a certificate of registration to DTB Tanzania CEO Ravneet Chowdhury in recognition of the bank's compliance as a data collector and processor. It was at earlier this week's launch of the Personal Data Protection Commission. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

Women rights activists react on DRC's first female PM

KINSHASA

WOMEN rights activists in the Democratic Republic of Congo have congratulated President Felix Tshisekedi for appointing Judith Suminwa Tuluka as the first female prime minister in their country.

They have hailed the move as a big step towards gender equality and are looking forward to an improvement in the country's security and social conditions.

President Felix Tshisekedi's appointment of Tuluka as the country's Prime Minister, took many Congolese by surprise.

The Central African nation has never had a female prime minister since it gained independence from Belgium in 1960.

Tuluka (pictured) is an economist who worked in the banking sector and the UN before being appointed a minister of planning in 2023.

She has taken over her new role amid an escalation of violence in the east of the DRC. But she promised to work towards peace and development.

The new premier is tasked with forming a new government and executing the president's priorities



of ending insecurity, uniting the country and fighting poverty.

Early this week, President Tshisekedi announced the appointment of Tuluka as the country's first female prime minister on Monday, which marks a significant step towards gender equality in Congolese politics.

Tuluka, a former planning minister, assumes her new role at a critical juncture for the nation, particularly in the strife-torn eastern region. The area, rich in minerals and resources, has been plagued by relentless violence, leading to the displacement of millions of civilians and earning the

dubious distinction of being one of the world's worst humanitarian crises.

Addressing the nation in her inaugural speech aired on state television, Tuluka pledged to prioritize peace and development efforts, particularly in the conflict-ridden eastern provinces. She expressed deep concern for the plight of those affected by the ongoing violence and reaffirmed her commitment to finding sustainable solutions to the crisis.

However, Tuluka's appointment comes amidst the arduous task of forming a new government, a process expected to involve extensive

negotiations with various political factions.

Despite the challenges ahead, her appointment symbolizes a significant breakthrough in Congolese politics and offers hope for greater inclusivity and representation in governance.

The situation in eastern Congo remains dire, with numerous armed groups vying for control and perpetuating a cycle of violence and instability. Both local and international peacekeeping efforts have struggled to contain the conflict, further exacerbating the suffering of the civilian population.



Chamwino district commissioner Janeth Mayanja (in green-yellow-black dress) joins a traditional dance at a meeting held in Dodoma city yesterday to congratulate President Samia Suluhu Hassan on achievements Tanzania has made during her three years' leadership. Photo: Correspondent Peter Mkwavila

Gavi targets all children in CAR with immunisation

GENEVA

THE Global Vaccine Alliance (Gavi) has announced that it will increase its support to strengthen data systems, human resources and community engagement for immunisation in the Central African Republic (CAR).

The commitment follows dialogue with President Faustin-Archange Touadéra, Prime Minister Félix Moloua, Minister of Health Dr Pierre Somse and Alliance partners during a two-day visit to CAR by Gavi CEO Dr Sania Nishtar in her first visit to a Gavi-implementing country since taking on the role in mid-March.

"Investing in prevention is the smartest use of our limited health resources and within this investment, vaccination is the best buy to protect our children. My goal is to ensure everyone is protected against life-threatening diseases even in the hardest to reach regions of our country," said President Touadéra.

In consultation with Alliance Partners representatives in CAR, Gavi and the Ministry of Health aligned on three key health systems priority needs for investment supporting immunisation: data, health workforce and engagement at community level.

Repurposing of existing funds would amount to an additional \$3 million in support of these three country-led priorities jointly identified in Bangui.

Among topics discussed were recent coverage survey findings in the Central African Republic, and the Ministry of Health's proactive approach to utilizing data insights for strengthening routine immunisation.

The discussions underscored the importance of data-driven decision-making for impactful results, particularly to better identify zero dose and under-immunised children across the country.

South Africa's ex-speaker of parliament charged with corruption

JOHANNESBURG

SOUTH Africa's ex-Speaker of Parliament Nosiviwe Mapisa-Nqakula has been charged with 12 counts of corruption and one count of money laundering.

She made her first court appearance after handing herself over to a police station on Thursday morning.

The politician is accused of soliciting bribes in return for awarding contracts during her time as defence minister.

She denied any wrongdoing in court and said: "I do not have a propensity to commit crime." But prosecutor Bheki Manyathi told Pretoria Magistrates' Court there was "ample evidence" against Mapisa-Nqakula. She was later

released on bail.

After weeks of investigations, Mapisa-Nqakula resigned on Wednesday, but said this wasn't an "indication or admission of guilt".

She said given the "seriousness" of the probe she could not continue her role.

President Cyril Ramaphosa said on Thursday that Mapisa-Nqakula should be commended

for taking the decision to resign.

"We should recognise that her level of integrity for our democracy has made her do this," he said.

Last month a special police unit raided her Johannesburg home in connection with the corruption investigation.

The 67-year-old veteran of the African National Congress

(ANC) party became speaker in 2021. Before that, she served as defence minister for seven years.

Last week, Mapisa-Nqakula's lawyers filed a request for a court order to prevent her arrest, saying it would infringe on her dignity.

On Tuesday, judges rejected her bid on the basis that the matter was not urgent and

they could not speculate on an arrest that was yet to happen.

Mapisa-Nqakula is accused of making several demands for money, amounting to \$120,000 (£96,000), from the owner of a company to secure a tender to transport army equipment back to South Africa from elsewhere on the continent, the Business Day newspaper reports.

This is the latest in a long line

of corruption scandals to engulf the ANC.

Her decision to stand down is likely to have triggered relief in some ANC circles as she has relieved the party of having to publicly defend her.

The ANC has officially commended her decision, saying the party valued her commitment to maintaining the image of the organisation.

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Raising benchmark rate at 3.5pc inflation worrisome

THERE will evidently be mixed feelings as those relying on bank credit brood over the likely impact of changes being planned in borrowing costs.

This follows a policy shift by the Bank of Tanzania (BoT) which could see the bank's benchmark interest rate rise to six per cent for the second quarter of this year.

Credit market analysts contacted for comment on the issue have included those comprehending the move and those rather sceptical as to the impact of the envisage move.

The BoT governor set out the key interest rate shift to 6 per cent, which eclipses the debut benchmark policy rate of 5.5 per cent in January, where the central bank talked of altering policy criteria from money supply to inflation and credit movements.

It is widely expected that critics will try to figure out if there is indeed a change in policy, or whether there can be a change of focus at all, since the end result is taming inflation in that the supposedly different methods add up to one.

While easy money quickens commerce, it may also fuel inflation, so how far is the move right?

On the basis of BoT's own data, inflation is not more than 3.5 per cent at present - and, in that sense, the situation called for no effort at money tightening even by being euphemistically referred to as credit tightening.

If one were to talk about convergence criteria, it is clear that there is no convergence at 3.0 per cent inflation as well as 3.0 per cent public debt to gross domestic product (GDP) as in the European Union.

That looks puritanical for many observers especially as inflation rates in the East African Community zone are targeted at single digit, and at most at 5.0 per cent.

According to the BoT governor, who stands as the national monetary policy committee chairman,

the decision followed macroeconomic forecasts conducted last month.

It is these which apparently raised the requirement for an increase in the scope of monetary policy actions, chiefly meant as intervention to contain lingering inflationary pressures.

That would have been sort of warranted had inflation been at 6.0 per cent, despite that being within the convergence zone of single-digit rates - even at 8.0 per cent or a bit higher.

The clearly relevant datum in the monetary policy move is the shortage of the dollar, with the central bank raising lending rates mainly to discourage investors from starting new projects.

That would imply a less visible private sector stampede for dollars in ordering capital goods from outside by the private sector.

Treasury reckons that more dollars from various operators will be deposited with greater ease in commercial banks, so it will keep or boost its reserves at no extra costs.

The point is that the government doesn't see the need to compete with the private sector for 'dollar catchment' in the market as that would add to debts of parastatals or higher costs for construction in government projects if they are in need of dollars on a routine basis. It isn't macroeconomic but fiscal issues. This is another illustration of why refusing to privatise majority shares carries risks of unravelling the carefully nurtured 'doing business climate' for both foreign and local investors.

The risk lies in raising the level of foreign currency supplies from own sources to a much higher level than would otherwise be the case.

All respective margins would affect investment decisions and, in this case, the bar has been raised a bit high - to the benefit of competitors for investment flows.

Tracking customer service performance in easing of business as usual' attitude

DIGITAL methods are starting to be applied on a wider range of issues with the country's state-run power supply monopoly, Tanesco, now required to provide customer service reports on a monthly basis to show how it routinely responds to challenges facing consumers.

This follows a directive by the Energy minister who also has additional responsibilities as Deputy Prime Minister.

Facts can be especially stubborn, however, and it is doubtless that parastatals aren't shaken out of their usual habits by orders from above but by ownership changes. In the latter context, they are put to competition, which demands inward discipline.

Merely asking the entities to write customer service reports each month isn't much more than telling someone to list excuses for failing to do this or that, whereas ordinarily the utility is supposed to have ways of controlling or forestalling such situations.

Take the recent massive outage due to overflow of water at Kidatu power station such that it flooded control rooms. What happened is like hearing that the flooding was so fierce that it crushed walls and dismantled machinery or pulled off parts of a power generating plant.

When the massive outage took place, the sector minister visited the place and all leaves for all concerned suspended.

That sort of raised fears that the reason something wasn't done at the right time was that some people were on some form of leave, with

the all-important stations making do with skeletal staff.

Exactly like those on holiday or vacation, those on duty supposedly assumed that all would be well, with no little need for close follow-up, till the overload. As each repair or rectification initiative has its bureaucratic benefits in travel, negotiations, tendering, etc., a risky situation can be left where it is so that at some point some major disbursement will be needed.

Parastatal officials know that the government has to be pushed, constantly, into raising the funds it provides for development projects.

Meanwhile, private sector firms usually allocate funds for prior strengthening of systems such that they scarcely ever have to worry over massive repairs. We see ownership in traditional terms as a matter of pride, not operational aptitude.

There was a time when parastatals were being asked to write and publish customer service charters, so that they could presumably operate commercially.

These were in part used as a format for commercial pay rates pegged to expatriate executives' pay.

But this time around it is something else that is being targeted, including uplifting the public image of the corporations so that they don't become a 'talking point' or serve as cannon fodder for opposition critics.

Even within that quest, though, there is room for such reporting to brush up usual habits. So, let's keep marching on as to war and see how the future unfolds.

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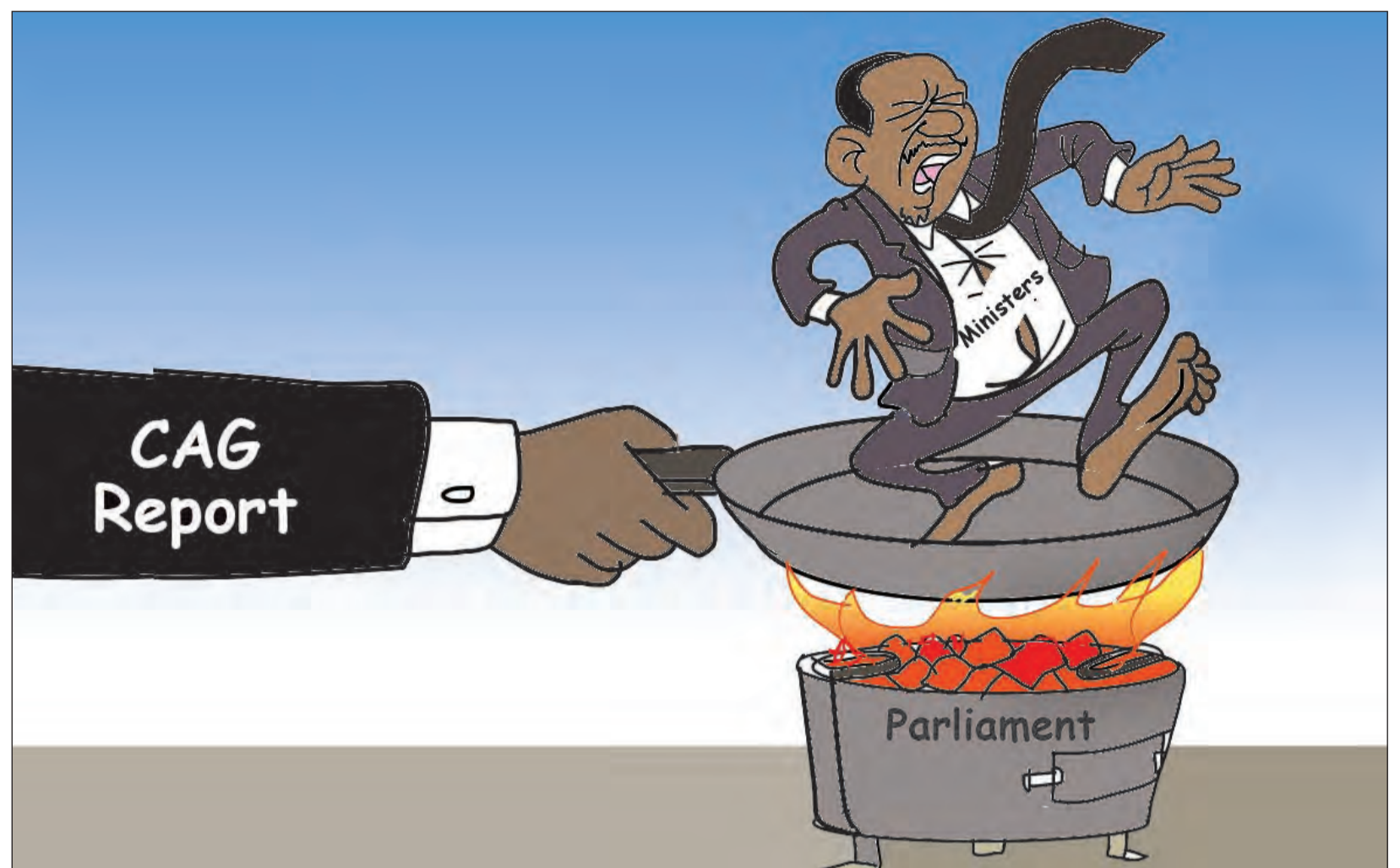
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'I get quite irritated when people say that the news or journalism is dying'

By Lucinda Jordaan

SOUTH Africans gear up for the seventh democratic elections in 30 years this May 29 May. Adriaan Basson, editor-in-chief of one of the country's largest newsrooms, shares his deepest concerns, in this EDITOR TO EDITOR interview with The World Editors Forum (WEF), the leading global community of editors and an integral part of the World Association of News Publishers (WAN-IFRA). Excerpts:

Q: South Africa always manages to surprise the world, and grab the headlines. What, lately, has been keeping you up at night?

A: Elections, and AI (artificial intelligence). There is always a lot of mixed uncertainty and excitement when it comes to election seasons - but in terms of the industry, I am worried about AI, and the potential destructive impact it can have on journalism. It is not in how we, as a company or as a newsroom, apply AI. Rather, it is how the Internet will use AI to attempt to replace or replicate journalism. I think that is something one has to be incredibly sharp on going forward.

How is this election different, for you, if at all?

South Africa celebrates 30 years of democracy this year, so it is a good time to reflect on how the media has covered elections in that time. I was at school in 1994, when the old traditional media were still very much in play. Now, 30 years later, there is this whole new world of social media platforms - and newspapers are on their knees.

Digital platforms are now by far the most read platforms, and this, on mobile phones. So the technology and the immediacy of the coverage have completely changed. People can now get immediate access to incredible data that wasn't available in 1994. And I think it is good; I think data and information empower people.

Of course, we have a massive stay-away problem in South Africa. The majority of voters, specifically young people, just do not vote. We as journalists and as publications should probably get better at: being more creative, partnering with others to try and devise a campaign to get young people to come and vote. It is a role we haven't previously had to play but I think that, with our vast voter turnout problem, it certainly is something we have to look at now.

What is the greatest challenge faced by journalists, and editors, now? Are South African journalists at any risk in covering the elections?



Journalists at work in Madagascar

For the majority of the country, there is no immediate threat to journalists covering political rallies or manifestos. But KwaZulu-Natal is becoming a problem. We have seen inter-party violence; there was an assassination again just the other day, and KwaZulu Natal unfortunately has a troubled past in terms of political violence in the 90s. So I have alerted my editors to ensure that reporters are properly equipped with bulletproof vests, safety helmets and security equipment, especially for those reporters who go into volatile areas.

How do you envisage the future of journalism, and News24, in these shifting times?

I believe that technology doesn't change the core principles of what good journalism is. We will remain fearless and independent - and we should continue to inform, educate and entertain.

In fact, I get quite irritated when people say that the news or journalism is dying because newspapers are dying. It is not. Journalism is not linked to one format. Journalism is much stronger.

I don't know what the platforms of the future will be like. I don't know if News24 will still be a website or if it will be a hologram projected from your watch to a screen... We don't fret about that too much.

I just adapt - we must just adapt to the format, but stay true to our principles: have probing journalism; ask critical questions; continue teaching young journalists how to ask questions and how to properly interrogate those in power. For me, those are the critical things - and I think that needs to be our focus: to

entend young journalists coming through - not only at News24, but elsewhere as well. But our industry is in crisis in terms of the funding model.

Let us talk about that. Last year was particularly challenging for South Africa's media, according to Reuters, and this was highlighted in the Competition Commission inquiry into digital platforms, for which you also entered submissions.

It is quite shocking to hear how fragile the news economy in South Africa is - what lapse of money that the digital platforms are taking from advertising. If we can't fix the business model, I am afraid there are going to be fewer and fewer journalists and newsrooms.

We have built a subscription model on top of our free news model, which has been quite successful, but obviously it is not something everyone can afford. But we were forced to do it. There was no other way for us to continue surviving and maintaining a sustainable business. So the journalism industry country-wide is not in a great space.

On the upside, people increasingly understand why they should pay for news, and they are paying for news. We now have about 108,000 subscribers, which is the largest customer base in the country.

These are serious challenges. What, then, gets you out of bed every morning?

Just enormous gratitude for being able to do this wonderful job and for being able to tell the story of South Africa on this platform, with the size we are - and making it an amazing read. It is a privilege, every day. It keeps me going, knowing that what we do is impactful and can change the world for people.

*** Adriaan Basson is a multi-award-winning investigative journalist who has authored four books on corruption and current affairs. A newsroom veteran, his career started at Afrikaans daily Beeld in 2003. He tackled investigations at The Mail & Guardian, was a founding member of award-winning investigative unit amaBhungane, and was assistant editor at City Press, before returning to Beeld as editor in 2013. He was named CNN African Journalist of the Year for news and is a recipient of the Taco Kuiper Award. He was appointed editor-in-chief of News24 in 2016.**

I feel that we have amazing, tal-

By Telesphor Magobe

A guarantor can be entangled in principal debt payment



LAST week, we briefly looked at abortion, which we said is “the act of causing a pregnancy to end early in order to prevent the baby from developing and being born alive,” according to Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary (of Current English, Fifth Edition of 1995).

It was not the intention of the columnist to exhaust circumstances under which abortion is legal or illegal, but wanted to share a sad, but inspiring story of a rape victim, how she was traumatised, unexpectedly conceived and delivered a baby girl, whom she so loves to date. However, since the rape victim was traumatised, she tends to have a distrust of men because she thinks all of them are like her rapist and hardly can they genuinely love. This negative attitude has marked her life.

Today, I invite you to briefly look at a bank loan guarantee. John was a friend of Juma and family. Juma had a wife called Mwajuma, who was running a salon business and wanted to expand it because she was operating it at a profit. So, she thought of asking for a 4m/- bank loan. Because John was close to the family, Mwajuma thought of asking him to be her guarantor. So, she invented a story that the bank wanted to loan her 4m/- and had directed her to have two guarantors, the first her husband and another person and that the family thought of him as the second guarantor.

When John was approached and because he was

close to the family he believed it and accepted to be the second guarantor after Mwajuma’s husband. John believed even if the principal debtor defaulted the two guarantors would be able to pay the remaining amount of loan which was payable within one year. But the bank needed only one guarantor and because John had agreed to Mwajuma’s request the bank knows John is the sole guarantor of Mwajuma.

When the day of loan issuance was due Mwajuma called John, who was at his workstation, asking him to go to the bank where Mwajuma and her husband were waiting for him. To make it easier Mwajuma asked John to hire a motorcycle and that she would pay for it. So, John hired a motorcycle to the bank he was directed to find Mwajuma and her husband. When he arrived he found Mwajuma’s husband talking to a person by a mobile phone outside the bank. Since he was in contact with Mwajuma as soon as Mwajuma saw him she led him to a bank teller to sign a loan form because he was “the only person being waited for.”

John was given a form, which consisted of several pages, but was only shown by the bank teller where to sign and signed it. The teller opened other pages where he had to sign

and John signed them also, but he never read and knew what was on the form. After signing all that he needed to sign, the bank teller thanked him for cooperation.

John was not even given a copy of it. After that Mwajuma was issued with a Sh4 million loan. As John wanted to return to his workstation Mwajuma told him that she would drive her there after taking her husband to his workstation first which was nearby and then take John to his, which she did.

As John was disembarking from the car Mwajuma gave him 100,000/-, saying “thank you my brother-in-law for your generosity of time and for accepting to guarantee me.” John asked her why she had to give him 100,000/-, but she said it was just an expression of her gratitude and that it was just fine for her.

So, John accepted it and they left each other. Mwajuma’s business didn’t last long as after some time it closed down. She then changed her phone numbers so much so that when the bank wanted to contact her she was unreachable.

Eight years elapsed and then one day a person who identified himself as calling from the bank contacted John, informing him that the person he had guaranteed to borrow 4m/- from the bank had defaulted and was unreachable and

so John had to look for her and the two should agree when pay the bank loan which had by then accumulated to 30m/-.

John was shocked at that and asked the person if the lady had failed to pay her 4m/- loan in a year and the bank didn’t call him to look for Mwajuma why the bank kept silent until the debt accumulated to 30m/- and how would she be able pay 30m/- if she was unable to pay 4m/- in one year?

“Is what you are telling me not amounting to fraud?” John asked the bank person, who replied: “It is not, but you shouldn’t be disturbed with it because the principal debt is just 2m/-.” John then told the bank person that what he could do was to show the bank person where Mwajuma lived on condition that he shouldn’t be disclosed so that the bank could go and meet Mwajuma in person if she were unreachable by phone.

This story can enlighten us on these five key things. 1) Never sign anything if you don’t know or you don’t understand what it says. 2) If anything, take a form with you home to read it carefully and if you don’t understand it, seek legal advice. 3) Don’t accept to be just shown where to sign and you sign it without reading and understanding the terms and conditions. 4) Don’t accept to be a loan guarantor if you don’t have money to settle the loan on your own in case the principal debtor defaults. 5) Ensure you get a true copy of what you sign and keep it well.

In the case of John, he didn’t know the terms and conditions of what he signed, was not given any copy of the form he signed and didn’t know whether he was the sole guarantor or they were two of them. He just trusted what Mwajuma told him because he was a family friend. Next week we will briefly look at what recent case law says on the principal debtor and guarantor.

Today’s proverb: “Men are as old as they feel, women as old as they look.”
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The Law and You



Plea by MP spurs debate on various disparities, paving the way for pension reform

By Adonis Byemelwa

IN a no-nonsense display of advocacy, Special Seats Member of Parliament Ester Bulaya ignited a fiery debate in the Tanzanian parliament on 4th April 2024, demanding urgent action from the government to address the mounting debts owed to pension funds and overhaul pension calculations. Bulaya’s impassioned plea unfolded during a critical review of the government’s performance and financial projections, shedding light on the dire situation faced by retirees across various sectors.

Bulaya’s call for reform resonated deeply as she highlighted the plight of retirees, including soldiers, teachers, nurses, and doctors, who grapple with financial insecurity despite years of dedicated service. The heart of Bulaya’s argument centered on the government’s failure to fulfill its promises regarding pension benefits.

Contrary to parliamentary instructions and advice, there is now an urgent need to uncover the truth behind the total package of an MP’s earnings, which may or may not reach or even surpass the 18m/- figure surmised by opposition leader Freeman Mbowe. Mbowe’s criticism of parliamentary self-interest and obsession with personal enrichment schemes has struck a chord, especially as the majority of Tanzanians continue to suffer in poverty.

Mbowe’s allegations extend beyond parliamentary earnings to spousal benefits, revealing a system that seems more focused on personal gain than addressing the needs of the marginalized citizenry. As the debate rages on, questions arise about the true intentions of those tasked with representing the interests of the people.

Additionally, Mbowe’s claims shed light on the generous benefits enjoyed by MPs, with retiring members taking home a staggering 272m/-, free from deductions, after just five years of service. This revelation underlines the stark disparity between the lavish benefits afforded to MPs and the meager pensions received by ordinary retirees. As Bulaya fights for pension reform, Mbowe’s revelations expose the stark reality of a system that prioritizes personal enrichment over the welfare of the people.

“Slipping is not falling, pick yourself up,” Bulaya declared, emphasizing the need for immediate attention to the grievances of retirees. She lamented the disparity between the initial demands for retirees to receive 50 percent of their benefits in a lump sum and the government’s disbursement of only 33%. This discrepancy, she argued, leaves many retirees financially vulnerable and unable to meet their basic needs.

Moreover, Bulaya highlighted systemic issues within the pension system, citing discrepancies between promised benefits and actual disbursements. She pointed to the government’s mismanagement of pension funds, citing instances where investments resulted in substantial losses, further exacerbating retirees’ financial burdens.

“The lump sum benefits are what help them, not what you give them every month,” Bulaya asserted, urging the government to prioritize the financial

well-being of retirees.

The contentious pension calculation regulations, implemented in July 2022, faced staunch opposition from the Trade Union Congress of Tanzania (Tucta). Tucta President Tumaini Nyamhokya expressed dismay over the departure from previous agreements, advocating for a return to more favorable pension terms to ensure retirees’ financial security.

According to Nyamhokya, the 50 percent lump sum benefit was a crucial aspect of previous agreements, providing retirees with much-needed financial stability. However, the new regulations introduced oppressive calculation rules, dampening the morale and efficiency of workers.

“The consolidation of funds has been Tucta’s demand since 2004,” Nyamhokya stated, highlighting longstanding calls for reform within the pension system. He emphasized that the new regulations deviated from previous agreements, creating uncertainty and hardship for retirees.

The Social Security Regulatory Authority (SSRA) responded to mounting pressure by clarifying the government’s debt obligations to social security funds and stressing the need to address outstanding liabilities. Despite assurances of government commitment to resolving these issues, retirees remain skeptical about the prospects of receiving their entitled benefits.

Ester Bulaya’s impassioned plea in parliament has ignited a nationwide conversation on social security in Tanzania. Her call for fair treatment of retirees, echoed by police officers across the country, underscores the pressing need for pension reform as economic challenges loom large.

Bulaya’s emotional appeal resonated deeply,

prompting parliamentarians and the public to confront the stark realities faced by retirees. As Tanzania grapples with economic uncertainties and widening inequality, ensuring the welfare of retirees emerges as a critical imperative for fostering a more equitable society.

Amidst these challenges, success stories from countries with robust pension systems offer valuable insights. The importance of transparency, accountability, and sustainable investment practices cannot be overstated, as these elements are crucial for safeguarding retirees’ welfare and bolstering economic resilience.

The plight of police officers regarding pension calculations has taken center stage, with concerns intensifying as retirement deadlines draw near. The exclusion of certain personnel from recent adjustments has sparked debate and raised questions about fairness and equality within the pension system.

As the issue gains traction, stakeholders are calling on Parliament to revisit laws affecting workers’ welfare. Legal experts, including Bob Chacha Wangwe and former Member of Parliament John Heche, warn that existing regulations may inadvertently perpetuate discrimination by categorizing employees based on benefits, in contravention of constitutional provisions.

Inspector General of Police Camillius Wambura’s acknowledgment of the matter highlights the government’s commitment to addressing grievances. President Samia Suluhu Hassan’s administration has assured ongoing discussions, signaling a willingness to prioritize the welfare of police officers and retirees alike. The urgency to rectify the pension calculation debacle is underscored by stakeholders’ calls



On April 4th, 2024, Special Seats Member of Parliament Ester Bulaya sparked fiery deliberations in the National Assembly regarding the Public Service Social Security Fund (PSSSF).

for alignment with international best practices and expert recommendations. Legal expert Peter Mshikilwa emphasizes Parliament and the Government’s responsibility in addressing these challenges. As police officers and retirees await a resolution ensuring fairness and equity in the pension system, the imperative for reform becomes increasingly pressing.

Amidst these challenges, triumphant stories from countries with exemplary social benefits for retirees offer valuable insights. Denmark’s robust pension system ensures retirees enjoy a comfortable standard of living, setting a benchmark for safeguarding welfare through transparent and sustainable investment practices. Norway’s commitment to fairness and equity in its pension scheme fosters social cohesion and economic stability. Meanwhile, Australia’s superannuation system provides retirees with a reliable income stream, thanks to its mandatory contribution scheme and stringent regulations.

In a stirring contrast, Member of Parliament Ester Bulaya’s impassioned plea for pension reform and Freeman Mbowe’s revelations regarding MP benefits shed light on the stark disparities within Tanzanian society. This stark contrast underscores the urgent need for transparency, accountability, and genuine commitment to addressing the needs of retirees and the marginalized population at large.

However, amidst these challenges, there are glimmers of hope from international success stories in countries like Denmark, Norway, and Australia. These nations have implemented robust pension systems that prioritize retirees’ welfare and ensure a dignified retirement for all citizens. By adopting best practices from these countries, Tanzania can chart a path toward comprehensive pension reform.

As stakeholders continue to advocate for change, there is optimism for a brighter future where retirees in Tanzania can enjoy security and dignity in their golden years. This convergence of local challenges and global solutions underscores the importance of collective action and progressive policy-making in shaping a more equitable society.

Abandoned children: A growing problem in northern Syria

By Sonia Al Ali

WAEL Al-Hassan was returning from work in the Syrian city of Harim when he heard the sound of a baby crying. He was returning from work on December 10, 2023. He stopped momentarily, turned on his mobile phone flashlight to investigate, and spotted a baby girl, around one month old, wrapped in a white blanket, lying by the roadside.

He felt saddened by the infant's condition and said, "She was crying loudly, and I saw scratches on her face from cat or dog claws. I then carried her in my arms and took her home, where my wife breastfed her, changed her clothes, and took care of her."

The phenomenon of abandoning newborns is increasing in northern Syria, where individuals leave their newborns in public parks or alongside roads, then leave the area. Passersby later find the infants, some of them dead from hunger or cold.

Al-Hassan said that the next morning, he handed the baby girl over to the police to search for her family and relatives.

Social rejection

Social worker Abeer Al-Hamoud from the city of Idlib, located in northern Syria, attributes the primary reason for some families abandoning their children to the widespread poverty and high population density in the province. Additionally, there is fear of the security situation (the area is not in the control of the Syrian regime and is often under attack), the prevalence of divorces, and spouses abandoning their families after traveling abroad.

Al-Hamoud also points out another reason, which is the spread of the phenomenon of early marriage and marrying girls to foreign fighters who came from their countries to Syria to participate in combat. Under pressure from their families, wives often have to abandon their children after their husband's death, sudden disappearance, or return to their homeland, especially when they are unable to care for them or provide for them financially. Moreover, these children have no proper documentation of parentage.

Furthermore, Al-Hamoud mentions another reason, which is some women are raped, leading them to abandon their newborns out of fear of punishment from their families or societal stigma.

Al-Hamoud warns that the number of abandoned children is increasing and says there is an urgent need



Children eating and drinking at the children's house in Idlib. Abandoned children is a growing issue in the region. Photo: Sonia Al-Ali.

to find solutions to protect them from exploitation, oppression, and societal discrimination they may face. She emphasizes that the solutions lie in returning displaced persons to their homes, improving living conditions for families, raising awareness among families about the importance of family planning, and launching campaigns to integrate these children into society.

Alternative families

It's preferable for members of the community to accept these children into their families, but they face difficulties in registering the births.

Thirty-nine-year-old Samaheer Al-Khalaf from the city of Sarmada in northern Idlib province, Syria, sponsored a newborn found abandoned at a park gate, and she welcomed him into her family.

She says, "After 11 years of marriage to my cousin, we were not blessed with children, so we decided to raise a child found in the city at the beginning of 2022."

Al-Khalaf observes that the Islamic religion's prohibition on "adoption" prevents her from registering the child under her name in the civil registry. Additionally, she cannot go to areas controlled by the Syrian regime to register him due to the presence of security barriers.

She says, "I fear for this child's future because he will remain of unknown lineage. He will live deprived of his civil rights, such as education and healthcare, and he won't be able to obtain official documents."

Children's house provides assistance With the increasing numbers of children of unknown parentage, volunteers have opened a center to receive and care for the children abandoned by their

families.

Younes Abu Amin, the director of Children's House, says, "A child of unknown parentage is one who was found and whose father is unknown, or children whose parentage has not been proven and who have no provider."

"The organization 'Children's House' opened a center to care for children separated from their families and children of unknown parentage in the city of Sarmada, north of Idlib," says Abu Amin. "The number of registered children in the center has reached 267, ranging in age from one day to 18 years. Some have been placed with foster families, while others currently reside in the center, receiving all their needs, including shelter, food, education, and healthcare."

Upon arrival at the center, Abu Amin notes that the center registers each child in its records, transfers them to the shelter department, and makes efforts to locate their original family or relatives and send them to them or to find a foster family to provide them with a decent life.

Abu Amin explains that the center employs 20 staff members who provide children with care, psychological support, and education. They work to create a suitable environment for the children and support them psychologically to help with emotional support.

He emphasizes that the center survives on individual donations to cover its expenses - which are scarce. There is an urgent need for sufficient support, as the children require long-term care, especially newborns.

A young girl Marah (8) and her brother, Kamal (10), lost their father in the war. Their mother remarried, leaving them to live in a small tent with their grandfather, who forces them to beg and sell tissues, often leaving them without food for days.

Consequently, they decided to escape from home. Kamal says, "We used to sleep outdoors, overwhelmed by fear, cold, and hunger, until someone took us to the child center."

Upon reaching the center, they returned to their studies, played with other children, and each other, just like children with families.

Kamal expresses his wish, "I hope to continue my education with my sister so we can rely on ourselves and escape from a life of injustice and deprivation."

These children, innocent of any wrongdoing, are often left to fend for themselves, bearing the brunt of war-induced poverty, insecurity, homelessness, instability, and early marriage.

By Hanin Ahmed

HANIN Ahmed, who has a master's degree in gender and development from Ahfad University for Women, is an activist in the field of women's and youth rights from Omdurman, Sudan.

I still haven't recovered from the shock that struck me when the brutal war started between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) on 15 April 2023.

But like many Sudanese, I put my fears aside and organised an effort with my neighbours to address the most pressing needs of our community. We organised an emergency response room (ERR) for a central section of Omdurman, my home city on the west bank of the River Nile opposite the capital of Khartoum.

Hundreds of ERRs - decentralised, non-hierarchical and driven by youth - have sprung up across the country since the outbreak of the fighting, representing the frontline of the humanitarian response as the situation in Sudan continues to worsen.

Our work is in desperate need of international support. Since the start of the war, more than 8 million people have been displaced inside and outside of Sudan. Half of Sudan's population - 25 million people - needs humanitarian assistance and protection. The UN estimates that more than 17 million are facing acute food insecurity. About 5 million people are on the brink of famine.

The situation in Sudan is "truly the stuff of nightmares," Edem Wosornu, director of operations and advocacy in the United Nations' Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, said in testimony before the UN Security Council on 20 March 2024.

She described how critical infrastructure has been

Sudan faces humanitarian disaster as five million at risk of starvation

looted and destroyed, how farmers have been forced to abandon their farmlands, how the price of basic food commodities has been driven up by 83%. Sudan is "one of the worst humanitarian disasters in recent memory". In the coming weeks and months, 222,000 children could die of malnutrition, she said.

Yet most international aid agencies have suspended work and evacuated international staff. According to a recent UN report, "more than 3,000 humanitarian organisations have ceased working in Sudan due to the fighting, including 2,900 national organisations and 110 foreign and regional organisations."

The warring parties have hindered the delivery of humanitarian assistance into hard-to-reach areas. The report describes "bureaucratic and administrative obstacles, including long delays in issuing visas and travel permits for staff of United Nations and other humanitarian organisations".

Our ERR for Old Omdurman, a part of the city that includes 18 neighbourhoods, doesn't have a physical room where we coordinate actions, which would be too dangerous. Instead, our "room" is a series of WhatsApp groups that enables us to communicate with each other when connectivity permits.

We have about 100 members - students, labourers, homemakers, engineers, doctors, accountants, IT experts, and gender specialists (like me). Many of us were part of the pro-democracy resistance committees that organised mass protests to end the dictatorship of Omar al-Bashir in 2019.

Basic necessities

We strive to provide basic necessities, often working in coordination with colleagues who are part of a larger ERR network in Khartoum state. Our ERR in Old Omdurman established 15 soup kitchens that offer Sudanese dishes like balela (cooked chickpeas) and ful medames (cooked fava beans) and food baskets with sugar, beans, chai, onions, flour and other staples.

Ten of the soup kitchens are located within evacuation centres, where displaced families shelter until we are able to arrange for their resettlement. Makeshift schools have been established in some of the evacuation centres to keep the children occupied and out of harm's way.

When we learn about a person who has been injured, we organise the delivery of medical supplies or arrange for transportation to a working healthcare facility. We provide rape protocols and psychological support for women who have been sexually assaulted. A group of volunteers collects the bodies of the deceased - sometimes soldiers from the warring parties - and follows the rituals for burial according to the Muslim religion. We have organised the repair of downed power lines and damaged water stations.

Our work can range from training volunteers on how to provide protection to issuing warnings via social media when we learn that a military attack is going to happen. Such indispensable work is happening throughout Sudan. In Darfur, where the RSF and allied militias have been accused of conducting a ter-

ror campaign of ethnic killings and sexual violence, a network of ERRs has been established with more than 96 soup kitchens. In the Nuba Mountains in South Kordofan, community-led mutual aid efforts are ongoing.

My family suffered through a difficult few months after the war started. Whenever our house shook from the roar of MIG warplanes or the blast of anti-aircraft fire, we would hide under our beds. I tried to reassure my terrified 13-year-old brother, telling him, "We are in a war but we are with you and God is with us, so do not be afraid." During quiet moments, when we heard the mosques' call to prayer or the tolling of church bells, I felt a kind of reassurance.

But in fear for our lives, we decided to leave Omdurman, all 18 members of my family. I eventually reached New York while the rest of my family remain for now in Egypt. From my base in the United States, I am working with other ERR representatives from across Sudan and the diaspora to urge the international community to support our efforts on the ground. In January, a group of us met with UN officials in New York and US government representatives in Washington.

We are asking international donors to minimise bureaucratic requirements and streamline reporting mechanisms to ensure that funding can be speedily delivered, either directly to ERRs or via international partnerships. ERR volunteers should be recognised as humanitarian workers who should receive the same protections and considerations as other humanitarian workers in conflict zones.

The world can take inspiration from what Sudanese volunteers have been able to achieve amid global inaction and indifference. The work of the ERRs offers a guide on how the Sudan of the future can be governed: cooperative, peaceful, people-centred and dedicated to the common good.

CAPITAL RADIO

RATIBA YA VIPINDI JUMATATU - JUMAPILI

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

Tembelea mitandao ya kijamii ya CAPITAL RADIO



CAPITAL RADIO

Social protection key solution for directing climate finance to poor small-holder farmers

By Marco Knowles

CLIMATE change is exacerbating inequalities between and within countries, disproportionately affecting poor households in rural areas.

As the new FAO report *The Unjust Climate* finds, floods widen the income gap between poor and non-poor households in rural areas by approximately USD 21 billion a year, and heat stress by more than USD 20 billion a year.

Despite the critically important role that small-scale farmers play in growing the food that feeds us and in stewarding the natural resources that determine the health of planet Earth, only 1.7 percent of climate finance currently reaches them.

Every year, over a trillion dollars are allocated to combating climate change and its consequences. Far too little of this financing reaches the most vulnerable. Shockingly, despite the critically important role that small-scale farmers play in growing the food that feeds us and in stewarding the natural resources that determine the health of planet Earth, only 1.7 percent of climate finance currently reaches them.

Decision makers are therefore faced with a massive challenge – what policy instruments can

they rely on for directing climate finance to poor small-scale farmers to enable them to adapt to the changing climate?

As *The Unjust Climate* highlights, social protection policies and programmes are an important part of the solution. Encompassing interventions such as cash transfers, public works programmes, social insurance and vocational training, these programmes are specifically designed to reach the poor and the vulnerable.

They enable small-scale farmers to invest in new technologies, diversify incomes, adopt new farming assets and accumulate savings, to better adapt to climate change. Moreover, the ministries and agencies that manage these programmes have the necessary expertise for working with vulnerable population groups, as well as the information systems for identifying them and payment systems through which to deliver assistance.

A number of countries are already directing climate finance towards impoverished small-scale farmers through social protection. This is not just helping them survive, it is empowering individuals, households and communities to build a better future for themselves and our planet. In Paraguay, the “Poverty, Reforestation, Energy



Women from the village of Boula-Ngara, in Chad, build a windbreak fence to protect the nearby river, enabling them to cultivate a market garden to meet the food needs of their families.

and Climate Change” (PROEZA) project, has a social protection component that incentivises poor women and Indigenous Peoples to adopt sustainable agroforestry practices.

By combining these cash payments with tailored technical support, small-scale farmers are able to adapt their agricultural practices to be more resilient to the droughts to which they are increasingly exposed due to climate change, and to increase the production and marketing of native crops such as yerba mate.

In Botswana, a social protection programme is being used to upskill male and female small-scale farmers so that they can be employed as eco-rangers and restoration workers – at once improving the health of communal rangeland ecosystems and allowing people to earn higher incomes that are less susceptible to climate change.

In Tunisia, vulnerable small-scale farmers in the Government’s social protection system are being supported to graduate from poverty through an intensive support package combining sustainable agricultural practices, climate-proofed off-farm income generation and in-kind grants.

Evidence that we, at FAO, have gathered from across the world confirms that these types of

programmes are effective in simultaneously improving people’s wellbeing, as well as achieving goals related to both adapting to, and mitigating, climate change.

And yet, despite the proven social and environmental benefits of directing climate finance to small-scale farmers through social protection, there are still far too few cases where this is being done. When we reviewed programmes financed through the world’s major climate funds, we found that of 484 programmes reviewed only 3 percent channelled financing to small-scale farmers through social protection.

It is time to step up and take action to channel more climate finance into social protection so as to better reach small-scale farmers.

Firstly, we need to share and discuss evidence and experiences through sustained and broad-based policy dialogue at every level – from the local to the global. This will help trigger a shift in mindsets from considering social protection as a handout in times of emergencies towards considering social protection as strategic investment in achieving inclusive, climate-resilient and low-carbon development that leaves no one behind.

Secondly, members of the boards of institutions such as international climate funds (such

as the Green Climate Fund, the Global Environment Fund and the Adaptation Fund) and multilateral development banks (for example, the World Bank, the African Development Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank), which mobilise, house and channel climate financing, have a crucial role to play in ensuring that the investment frameworks of these institutions explicitly recognise the importance of social protection in inclusive climate action.

Thirdly, we need to engage and support communities themselves to mobilise and join forces to call for the scaling up of social protection as a tool for inclusive climate action, through collective action at the local level and through wider civil society partnerships that bring together small-scale farmers and other marginalised groups within society, so that together we can harness the power of social protection to address the climate crisis.

Unless, the global community, put in place concrete measures that enable small-scale farmers to overcome the challenges they face due to climate change, it will be hard to rise to the challenge of eradicating poverty, hunger and malnutrition. This can no longer wait: urgent investment in social protection for inclusive climate action is an imperative.

India’s farmers could use monsoon forecasts better

NEW DELHI

AGRICULTURE in India need not ‘gamble’ with the monsoons if accurate weather and climate forecasts are proactively made available to farmers, according to the results of a new experimental study conducted by the University of Chicago.

Approximately 70-90 percent of total annual rainfall across most of India, a major agricultural producer, occurs during the June to September

monsoon, which varies widely in onset timing and quantity, making predictions difficult for farmers, says the study published February 26, 2024, as a non-peer-reviewed working paper.

While the Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) has advanced monsoon forecasting systems, researchers from the Energy Policy Institute at the University of Chicago found that farmers in southern Telangana state, where the study was conducted,

tended not to rely on IMD or other forecasts.

“For whatever reason, few of the farmers we talked with in Telangana were using a forecast about the timing of the local start of the monsoon to help guide their planting decisions,” says Amir Jina, senior fellow at the Energy Policy Institute, University of Chicago and author of the study.

While Indian farmers have traditionally depended on official forecasts issued by the IMD, first estab-

lished in 1875, the Chicago team relied on forecast data generated by the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research (PIK).

“The PIK model produces a probability distribution of potential onset dates, which can be summarized as a likely onset date range, making it easy for farmers to understand,” the study said.

“This particular study looks at a new approach to forecasting the onset of the Indian Summer Monsoon over southern India’s

Telangana region that can predict the arrival of the monsoon across India four to six weeks in advance,” says Fiona Burlig, co-author of the study and assistant professor at the Energy Policy Institute, University of Chicago.

PIK, under a climate capacity programme that covers East Africa, Peru, and India, focuses on staple crops in India, makes use of semi-empirical modeling frameworks, and combines them with satellite remote sensing earth observation

data.

In the experimental study, PIK forecasts enabled farmers to make early decisions about key inputs such as the type of crops, labour supply, and fertilizer purchases, significantly improving profitability. “PIK forecasts were especially accurate over Telangana State, the site of our experiment,” says Burlig.

Burlig and her team studied how farmers across 250 villages in Telangana changed their planting strategies once they were convinced of the high accuracy of the monsoon forecasts. An early monsoon typically means a longer growing season, suited to cash crops like cotton, while later monsoons would help farmers decide to grow lower-value subsistence crops like paddy, the researchers said.

“This is measured proof for IMD how important the work of forecasting is for farmers in India and can help thinking about how to measure even more benefits of other types of forecasts from the IMD that the farmers use. All the progress IMD makes should be validated and encouraged by this basic fact,” Jina tells SciDev.Net.

“Farmers find that climate change is increasingly making predictions of the monsoon’s arrival and other weather patterns difficult,” says Burlig. “Our study, which was conducted in an area of low agricultural productivity, demonstrated how the new forecasts were able to deliver accurate monsoon predictions even in a changing climate.”

Because climate change increases weather variability, farmers are reluctant to take risks and typically tend to underinvest for the season ahead, Burlig said. A pre-season survey by the team in Telangana found wide variations in farmers’ estimations of when the monsoon would arrive.

The study experimentally evaluated monsoon onset forecasts in 250 villages, which were divided into a control group, a forecast group that received information well in advance of monsoon onset

and a benchmark index insurance group.

Agricultural insurance lowers farmers’ risk exposure but does not improve their information, the study says. Overall, farmers who received insurance increased the land they cultivated and their investments in seeds, fertilizer, and other inputs by 12 percent compared to those who did not receive forecast information.

“The findings of the experimental study are well within what is expected,” said Arun Shanker, principal scientist at the Central Research Institute for Dryland Agriculture, Hyderabad. Studies like these, he said, are important because resilience to climate change will depend greatly on increasing agricultural productivity with available water resources.

However, Roxy Mathew Koll, a climate scientist at the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology, says the University of Chicago’s study is “severely outdated” as it is based on a pre-2016 prediction model. “Since then, IMD has moved to the dynamic, advanced, ‘Climate Forecast System’ that provides both regional and pan-India forecasts at a high resolution.”

“The Potsdam model and forecasts are not based on a full-fledged, dynamic system like the IMD climate forecast system and have limited application,” Koll, a lead author of the IPCC reports and former chair of the Indian Ocean Region Panel, tells IPS.

Soma Sen Roy, scientist at the IMD and India representative at the World Meteorological Organization, said the IMD issues forecasts at all-time scales – now casting, medium range, extended range, seasonal, and long-range forecasting throughout the year. “These forecasts are not specifically linked to the monsoons, for which special forecasts are issued.”

Said Jina: “Our research underscores that all the investments and improvements the IMD has made in recent years, and continues to make, are useful and important for farmers.”



Child malnutrition in Peru driven up by poverty and food insecurity

By Mariela Jara

QUECHUA farmer Felipa Noamesa, who lives in the southern Peruvian department of Cuzco, prepares a cream of fava bean soup for breakfast every morning with bread and vegetable soup with noodles. Her children are grown up, so her priority is that her five-year-old granddaughter does not suffer from anemia or malnutrition, two problems she frequently sees in her community.

"At my neighbors' homes there are little children who don't want to eat, who have swollen tummies, who have parasites, whose eyes look yellow and who fall asleep at school because they can't stay awake," the 44-year-old indigenous horticulturist told IPS during an interview at her plot of land in Paruro, the town where she lives with her husband, her daughter and her five-year-old granddaughter, Mayra, who she takes care of while her mother goes to school.

"Peru will have a couple of generations with much greater health problems, much lower productivity and many more restrictions to generate sustainable livelihoods in the broad sense." -- Carolina Trivelli

At their house they don't eat beef, pork or lamb, but they do eat guinea pigs (Cavia porcellus), an Andean rodent of recognized nutritional value, which she raises in a small shed next to her house, close to their organic garden.

"For lunch I make broth, stew or roast guinea pig and combine it with fresh corn, potatoes, vegetables from my garden and cheese," she said in her home in Paruro, the seat of the province of the same name, located more than 3,000 meters above sea level.

Peru, a country of 33 million people, faces a political and institutional crisis aggravated by the interim presidency of Dina Boluarte, who in December 2022 replaced Pedro Castillo, ousted and imprisoned for an attempt to seize control of all branches of power after less than 19 months in office.

The institutional crisis is compounded by an economic recession, the reduction of agricultural production due to climatic phenomena such as El Niño, and a poverty level that climbed to 30 percent in 2023, according to official provisional data.

Against this backdrop, the levels of anemia and malnutrition in children under five years of age are of concern.



Boiled ears of fresh corn, pieces of cheese and beans, and roasted corn are common foods in the diet of rural Andean families in Peru. However, the decline in agricultural production due to droughts and other climatic events has reduced their access in quantity and quality. Photo: Mariela Jara

According to official figures presented last year, chronic malnutrition affected 11.7 percent of the population, but with a greater impact in rural areas: 24 percent compared to seven percent in urban areas.

Other forms of malnutrition also present worrying indicators: 42 percent of the population aged six to 35 months has anemia, with a higher percentage in rural areas (51.5 percent) than in urban areas (39 percent). Meanwhile, nine percent of children under five years of age are overweight or obese.

In the Andes highlands department of Cuzco, with a population of 1.4 million divided among its 13 provin-

ces, child malnutrition reaches 14 percent and anemia 51 percent. It is only surpassed by the central-western department of Huanavelica, which reports 29 percent child malnutrition. This situation reflects the harsh impact of inequality and poverty.

A price the whole country will pay

Carolina Trivelli, an economist and researcher at the Institute of Peruvian Studies, which has worked for more than 50 years in the country, said that as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and the subsequent economic crisis, access to nutritious and healthy food for individuals and families has declined.

"Unfortunately chronic malnutrition stopped going down and has remained steady at around 11.7, 11.5, 12 percent over the last three to four years," the former minister of Development and Social Inclusion during the government of Ollanta Humala (2011-2016) told IPS in an interview at her home in Lima.

She said this has to do with the specific situation of families, the public apparatus and structural conditions such as high food inflation that affects the ability of families in a context of recession to afford food in sufficient quantity and quality to combat malnutrition. In addition, there is anemia, overweight and obesity.

Trivelli said these three elements make up a set of malnutrition problems that particularly affect the most vulnerable groups, including children from the poorest socioeconomic sectors.

When looking at the figures for consumption of food needed to address anemia and chronic child malnutrition, the difference between the consumption levels of the poorest 20 percent and the wealthiest 20 percent is enormous. So not only is there a problem of access to affordable food, but it is a major issue among the most vulnerable sectors.

"Peru is going to pay the cost of this, all Peruvians are going to pay it over the next two generations," she warned.

The expert in agricultural economics said that "Peru will have a couple of generations with much greater health problems, much lower productivity and many more restrictions to generate sustainable livelihoods in the broad sense."

Focus on water and sanitation
Calca, another of Cuzco's provinces, contains some

of the municipalities with the most worrying rates of malnutrition and anemia. For example, in the municipality of San Salvador, population around 6,000, child anemia stands at 26 percent.

This fact is related to the quality of their housing, most of which is in a precarious condition, while they have low levels of access to services, especially those who live in the countryside.

"From the mayor's office we are prioritizing food security projects for raising chickens and guinea pigs so that families can improve their nutritional intake, and we are also delivering iron syrup to health posts to be supplied to children and their mothers," the mayor, Ernesto Fisher, told IPS from San Salvador.

In a telephone interview, Fisher, in office since 2022, said that to eradicate the problem it is necessary to address water and sanitation deficiencies in his town. To this end, the municipal government is designing projects aimed at guaranteeing water resources for irrigation of family crops, drinking water and sewage services connected to the public network.

"Without sanitation it is impossible to talk about fighting anemia and malnutrition. We will not be able to complete it in this administration, but we will leave the projects on track so that eight years from now all of San Salvador will have running water and sanitation," he promised.

He called on the national authorities, especially President Boluarte, to prioritize projects that help close inequality gaps such as securing water for different uses. "The rest will come later," the mayor said, stressing that this should be the top priority.

It's not just about budget funds

Peru's public policies reduced chronic child malnutrition between 2008 and 2016, as documented by the World Bank, which pointed to it as a successful experience.

However, the current situation shows that the problem is no longer seen as a priority. Trivelli said that it is not just a question of budget funds, but of combining multiple efforts simultaneously so that resources are spent effectively.

"We can give a family all the food and training they need, but if they don't have sewage, a safe water source, and proper solid waste management, the problems of chronic malnutrition and anemia are not going to be reduced. If those children go to a school that does not have toilets, we will continue to reproduce the cycle," she said.

Statistics show that it is the poorest people in rural areas and children who are directly affected by policies that do not place them at the center of their actions.

Trivelli argued that anemia and chronic malnutrition in children should be considered a priority problem of public interest addressed by a body at the highest political level, such as the Presidency of the Council of Ministers, in order to overcome the current scattered approach.

"We are not talking about a health issue only but about a crisis of food, development and poverty, and it needs to be part of the public agenda," she insisted.

IPS

THE GUARDIAN CROSSWORDS AND WORD FIT - 94 -

By Felix Magezin: 0787 00 97 94 // felixmagezi@gmail.com

13. the Azerbaijani language
14. the organ of sight in human
15. nightclubs with dance music
18. traditional Japanese masked drama with dance and song, evolved from Shinto rites
19. tiny drops of water
20. a list of dishes available in a restaurant

DOWN:
1. a very brief period of moment
2. at sometime in the future
3. citrus fruit
4. interfere with the normal arrangement
7. bold and shameless
8. try to find something by looking around
12. trouble or afflict in mind
14. the first woman to be created
16. take, hold, or deploy as a means of achieving something

ACROSS:
1. Russia's Capital
5. a large hole in a ground
6. largest port in Kenya
9. the sea eagle
10. a pigsty
11. seafood in Kiswahili

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

ROVE HOT CHILDREN
ASURA HOMER CHANGES
ART NELLIES ITALIAN
NOT D-LOCK AMADAVAT
AIT GRIOT SINKS

Yesterday's solution

LUANDA L MUN SUM
A N R COME ARENA SO
KENYA ANI REWARDED
EGO SURGE
RYOT E L A T S I G N E
E M I L E I E M A I L E R
A S P I C R E E D R A N V N
S I T R A R A N T E M I

Peru will have a couple of generations with much greater health problems, much lower productivity and many more restrictions to generate sustainable livelihoods in the broad sense

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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Tembelea mitandao ya kijamii ya Radio One

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BUSINESS

Gen Mbadi ready to sweep mess at UNBS and Trade Ministry



General Wilson Mbadi, State Minister of Trade. File Photo

Kampala

General Wilson Mbadi, the newly appointed State Minister of Trade, has issued a strong warning to both the Uganda National Bureau of Standards (UNBS) and the Trade Ministry staff. He emphasized that under his leadership, there will be zero tolerance for incompetence and laxity.

Gen Mbadi, who until recently served as the Commander of the Defense Forces, said that despite the vital role that the UNBS should play in maintaining market standards for both domestic and export goods, the institution seems to be trapped in corruption, disorder, and incompetence.

Mbadi was speaking on Thursday during the handover ceremony held at Farmer's House in Kampala. General Mbadi emphasized that despite Uganda's strides in industrialization, a concerning number of products and produce face rejection due to UNBS and the quality control department's neglect. He stated his readiness to take swift action to rectify these issues.

Mbadi's transition to a political role in a ministry adds to the growing number of serving officers being deployed to such positions. This move has sparked debates, with many suggesting that the President's decision to entrust military personnel in strategic areas stems from his confidence in their ability to deliver tangible results.

General Mbadi underscored the significance of the trade ministry, highlighting its crucial role in national affairs. Despite not being deeply technical in trade and industry matters, he emphasized his understanding of the pivotal role that trade plays in ensuring security at a strategic level.

Mbadi comes into the ministry at a time, as it grapples with a myriad of challenges, including internal bickering among staff, allegations of corruption, and reported procurement irregularities within the ministry and its supervised agencies.

Daniel Richard Makayi Nangalama, the acting UNBS Director, highlighted

the issue of understaffing, revealing that they were currently working with only 500 staff compared to the approved staff ceiling of 1,200. Additionally, he mentioned the challenges they faced due to inadequate funding, which hindered their ability to acquire the necessary equipment and technology for standardization.

Available information shows that to improve the services of UNBS to the Public, the agency urgently needs over 31 billion Shillings, of which 7 billion is for staff recruitment and salary enhancement, 14 billion for the decentralization Project of UNBS Services, and 10 billion for operations (certification, standards development, verification of equipment, calibration and surveillance).

Despite these explanations, Gen Mbadi maintained his stance, expressing his concern over the various shortcomings within UNBS. The only positive aspect he acknowledged was the EU-funded project aimed at developing harmonized standards for Uganda, aligning them with those required elsewhere in East Africa.

Minister of Trade, Industry, and Cooperatives, Francis Mwebesa, disclosed that the trade ministry is also contending with internal issues, including allegations of staff underperformance.

He revealed that many of the staff present at the meeting were unfamiliar to him despite his tenure of two and a half years at the ministry. "I will be frank. This is the first meeting to attract such a number. The majority of these staff, including senior personnel, have been absent from management meetings and are rarely seen in their offices. Some claim to be working virtually," said Mwebesa.

He remarked that with General Mbadi's new appointment, the ministry would be revitalized. Furthermore, he issued a stern warning to the staff, stating that from the next management meeting onwards, absenteeism would not be tolerated and disciplinary action would be taken.

Agencies

Zanzibar ready to enforce rules on use of antibiotics in poultry farms

By Dickson Ng'hily

EXPERTS urge Zanzibar's government to promptly enforce antibiotic regulations in poultry production and establish antimicrobial stewardship for compliance with biosecurity measures in chicken farming.

If implemented, these measures are designed to protect the well-being of both animals and consumers, while also fostering sustainable farming practices.

The findings of a study recently published in the Pan African Medical Journal, dubbed: "Prevalence of Multidrug-Resistant Extended-Spectrum Lactamase-Producing E. coli in Live Chicken and Chicken Products in Zanzibar," sheds light on the concerning presence of antibiotic-resistant E. coli strains in poultry.

The research highlights the importance of poultry farming for food security and nutrition, while also cautioning that the excessive and improper use of antibiotics in poultry production are key factors contributing to the emergence of antibiotic-resistant bacteria.

Muhiddin Omar from the Zanzibar Health Research Institute, along with four other scientists, carried out the research at the bustling Mwanakwerekwe chicken market in Unguja. A comprehensive total of 520 samples were gathered during the study.



Out of the collected samples, 395 (76.0 percent) were taken from the cloaca and internal organs of broilers, layers, local indigenous chickens, while 125 (24.0 percent) were obtained from meat chickens.

A phenotypic analysis revealed an overall prevalence of ESBL-producing E. coli in 39 samples (4.9 percent).

It is noted that among the different types of chickens, the highest prevalence of ESBL-producing E. coli was found in broilers at 18 samples (46.2 percent), followed by layers at 15 samples (38.5 percent), and local indigenous chickens at 6 samples (15.4 percent).

Moreover, a significant antimicrobial resistance to commonly used antibiotics in treating chicken infections was observed.

Specifically, high levels of resistance were observed for tetracycline (97.6 percent), ampicillin

(96.3 percent), sulfamethoxazole/trimethoprim (79.2 percent), norfloxacin (71.0 percent), ceftriaxone (71.0 percent), nalidixic acid (69.4 percent), and cefotaxime (62.9 percent).

Besides, a significant portion of the isolates, 22 (54.8 percent), demonstrated resistance to gentamicin and kanamycin. However, all isolates displayed complete susceptibility (100 percent) to amoxicillin-clavulanate and meropenem medications.

The Mwanakwerekwe study follows a previous study conducted in mainland Tanzania in 2022, which revealed extensive antibiotic usage in the country's poultry industry.

It emphasized the substantial health hazards associated with this practice, including the development of antibiotic resistance and the potential transmission of resistant bacteria to humans, possibly leading to illness.

Dr Nickson Ng'umbi, a veterinary practitioner, explained this journalist saying: "Antibiotics work by either eradicating bacteria or impeding their growth, enabling the animal's immune system to combat infections more effectively."

Therefore, he stressed the importance of veterinarians refraining from administering animal medications intended for human use, noting that such medications are explicitly labeled as "Not for Human Consumption."

The independent vet underlined the importance of using the correct drug and dosage for animals, cautioning against the use of antibiotics meant for humans.

He shared that misdiagnosis and improper treatment with human antibiotics pose a serious risk to animals, citing pneumonia and skin infections as common bacterial infections in animals that can be ef-

fectively treated with the right antibiotics.

But for Dr Hadija Suleiman, a medical practitioner, worried about lack of data on antimicrobial use in the country, and the consequences of weak regulatory frameworks leading to antibiotic resistance.

She emphasized the need for education on drug resistance among livestock and poultry keepers to address public health concerns related to antibiotic-resistant bacteria.

Anita Jumanne, a poultry farmer, admitted to using human medications for her chicks due to ease of access and affordability.

She acknowledged receiving advice from seasoned farmers in WhatsApp groups and noted the positive impact on her business.

However, Dr Michael Bihari stressed the importance of ethical veterinary practices, cautioning against the use of human drugs for animals and emphasizing the differences between animal and human drugs.

Neema Mhando, a poultry consumer, expressed concern over the use of medications in poultry farming and called for government intervention to ensure food safety and quality.

She stressed the need for farm registration and monitoring to protect consumers from potential risks associated with antibiotic use in poultry production.

Bank of Kigali closes office in Kenya

Nairobi

BANK of Kigali, one of the leading financial institutions in Rwanda, has received greenlight from the Central Bank of Kenya to close its physical services in the country, The New Times has learnt.

The Central Bank of Kenya (CBK) said in a statement dated April 5 that the closure takes effect on April 2, and that it was a voluntary decision from the parent company, BK Group Plc.

"The voluntary termination of BK's (Bank of Kigali) presence in Kenya follows a strategic decision taken by the Bank of Kigali Group Plc (BoK's parent company) to focus more on digital service delivery channels. CBK authorized the establishment of the Bank of Kigali's Representative Office in



Bank of Kigali closes Representative Office in Nairobi. File Photo

Kenya on February 12, 2013."

The development comes nearly 11 years after BK opened its office in Nairobi, in a move to expand its business in the region.

It became the first foreign bank from the East African Community to be granted authority to operate a Representative Office in Kenya in 2013.

According to CBK, representative offices of foreign banks only serve as marketing and liaison offices for their foreign parent banks and affiliates and are not permitted to undertake banking business.

When Bank of Kigali opened its Representative Office in Kenya in 2013 it was seeking to explore potential business opportunities in the country to evaluate the prospects for a long-term presence in Kenya.

Bank of Kigali is cross-listed on the Nairobi Securities Exchange.

BoK, headquartered in Kigali, is a banking institution founded in 1966, licensed and supervised by the National Bank of Rwanda under the Law governing the banking organization.

Agencies

Govt gives distillers 21 days to meet licensing requirements



Interior C Secretary Kithure Kindiki addressing the media in Kilifi. Photo: Elias Yaa

Nairobi

TWENTY-FOUR out of 29 distillers and manufacturers of second-generation alcohol having their licenses revoked if they don't comply with government guidelines, Interior CS Kithure Kindiki has said.

The government through the Ministry of Interior has given the distillers 21 days from Monday, April 8, 2024, to comply.

"Licences, permits and authorizations for the 24 entities remain suspended up to and until all the compliance issues are satisfactorily addressed within 21 days effective Monday, April 8, 2024 failure to which the licences, permits and authorizations

shall stand to revoke," Kindiki said in a statement Friday.

This was arrived at after the government conducted a vetting process for all 29 active manufacturers and distillers of second-generation alcohol.

Last month, Interior CS announced that licenses, permits and authorizations for the manufacture and distillery of second-generation alcohol, were to undergo fresh vetting.

The vetting was to take place 21 days after March 6, 2024, to ensure compliance of establishments with security, safety, health, labour, environmental and other standards as defined in relevant National laws.

Revealing details on Fri-

day, Kindiki said that the vetting process was carried out by eight agencies: National Authority for the Campaign Against Alcohol and Drug Abuse (NACADA), Kenya Bureau of Standards (KEBS) and Kenya Revenue Authority (KRA).

Others are the Directorate of Occupational Safety and Health Services (DOSHS), the AntiCounterfeit Agency (ACA), the Public Health Department, the National Environmental Management Authority (NEMA) and the Department of Weights and Measures.

The CS also revealed that only 2 out of 29 distillers and manufacturers of second-generation alcohol passed the vetting by the multi-agency

team and were allowed to continue with production

Three manufacturers and distillers of second-generation alcohol were allowed to resume production, subject to meeting specific requirements outlined to them.

In February, Kindiki ranked the illicit brew menace with bandits and terrorists.

The CS said that he would be very ruthless with the war against illicit brew.

"We are going to treat it (illicit brew menace) the way we have treated the problem of terrorism and banditry by having a continuous permanent operation until this problem is gone," Kindiki said.

Agencies

Firm boosts production with advanced hatchery tech

By Guardian Reporter

TANZANIA'S Silverlands is poised to boost its production capacity to deliver an impressive 7.3 million-day-old chicks annually by integrating Royal Pas Reform technologies into its state-of-the-art hatchery operation in Arusha upon completion.

Currently, Tanzania, with a population of over 62 million, produces approximately 32 million broiler chicks annually, while Zambia, with a population of 21.1 million, boasts an annual production capacity of 79 million broiler chicks.

Therefore, the production would complement the significant demand for chicken in the market, where opportunities are abundant, and the potential for growth is tremendous

in the country's poultry sub-sector.

Information provided to this journalist has that the Silverlands hatchery project included the implementation of cutting-edge technology, such as a comprehensive climate control system and advanced process control and data management systems.

Adriaen Sligcher, Pas Reform's Sales Director in Southern Africa, commenting on the installation saying: "We were very grateful for the guidance of Royal Pas Reform's Stewart Bradnick and his team, resulting in a first-class hatchery project. Undoubtedly, we will see further expansion in the near future."

Established in 2013 to meet Tanzania's growing demand for quality poultry products at affordable prices, Silverlands



operates from its headquarters at Makota Farm, Ihemi village in the Iringa, managing two separate units: a poultry and feed business, as well as a

broiler and layer breeder stocks from internationally reputed breeder supply companies to ensure that farmers receive day-old chicks

It was noted that the com-

pany imports broiler and layer breeder stocks from internationally reputed breeder supply companies to ensure that farmers receive day-old chicks

with the latest genetics for optimal results. On the other hand, it has secured exclusive distribution rights for the Sasso bird in the country, a dual-purpose, slower-maturing chicken.

By distributing Sasso day-old chicks, the firm provides enhanced genetics to small-scale rural farmers, along with technical support and training, opening up markets previously out of reach.

This initiative aims to increase poultry production and productivity, improve rural household income and nutrition, and empower women.

Similar to Royal Pas Reform, Silverlands focuses on developing lasting relationships with customers. In 2016, it established the Silverlands Poultry Training Centre at Makota Farm.

The goal of the training courses offered is to equip participants with the knowledge needed to effectively manage a poultry unit. The training centre has proven to be highly valuable, with an active Facebook community of over 27,000 members.

"We are excited to have collaborated with Silverlands on this critical new hatchery. It will contribute to the development of new skills and prosperity in the region, aligning with its commitment to social responsibility in the communities it serves," stated Sligcher.

Adding: "We also anticipate organizing a hatchery managers course with Silverlands soon, further enhancing the knowledge base for potential hatchery managers in Tanzania."

Modern industrial poultry processing plant opens in Dar

By Guardian Reporter

THE Hill group has successfully established an industrial poultry processing plant, fulfilling a long-standing goal to revolutionize Tanzania's chicken market and introduce significant changes and innovations in the industry.

Information available at Poultry News Africa, indicated that the plant processing capacity starts at 3,000 bph [50 bpm], although the line has been prepared for an upgrade to 6,000 bph [100 bpm].

At the start of the process, floor scales connected to Innova weigh incoming live birds. After electrical stunning, killing is done manually, as production is 100 percent halal.

Scalding and plucking are also done using Marel equipment. After the combined VOC vent cutter and opening machine, the automated evisceration line features a Nuova eviscerator with a separate pack line for manual harvesting.

The eviscerator runs with 8 units at a 12" pitch. Expanding to 16 units for 6,000 bph is an easy job and doesn't require a

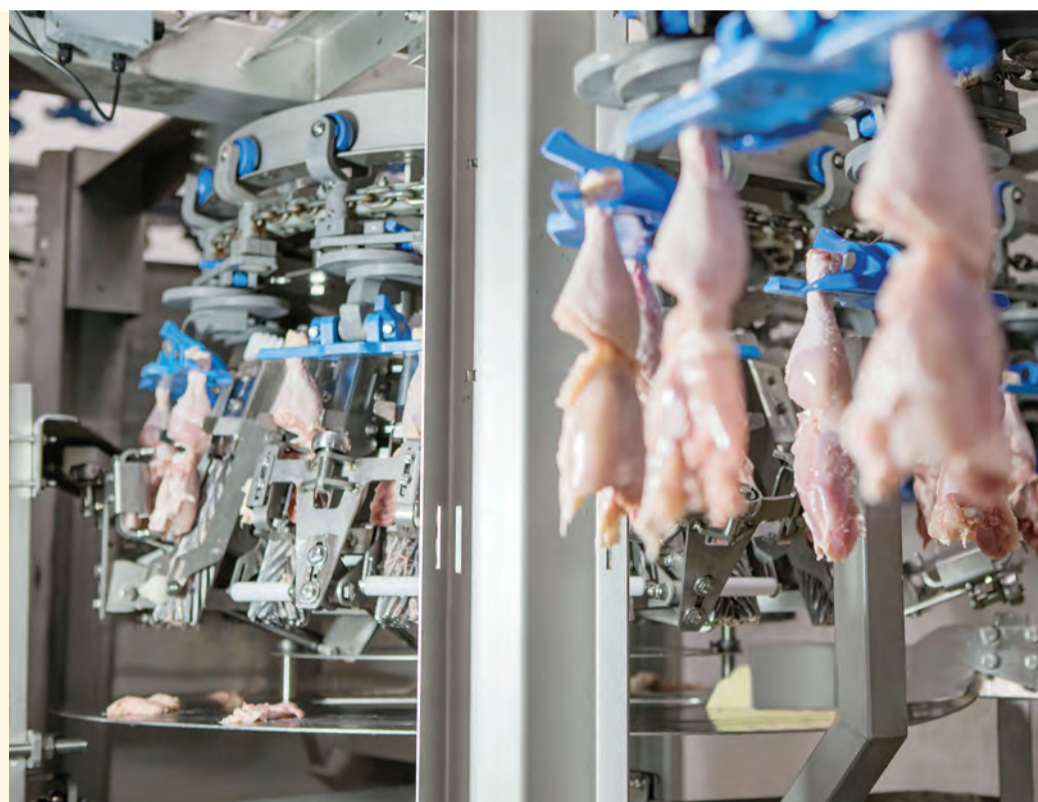
big investment.

Hillary Shoo, Managing Director of Hill Group tells how he entered the poultry processing business. "In 2014, I met Marel for the first time, at the IPPE in Atlanta. Back then I already had the idea of building a poultry processing plant. I was comparing companies and the first thing that impressed me about Marel was their communications."

He adds: "Marel was the only company to come up with quick replies to my questions. They put a project manager on my job, who took me through all the various stages. This was very valuable, as I was completely new to the business. For instance, I didn't know that I also had to deal with wastewater and offal."

The Hill Group processing plant has been operational in Dar es Salaam since July 2023. It is the successful result of the close connection between Marel's dedicated project team and Hillary Shoo, who was personally involved in every detail throughout the entire process.

"Marel supported us in completing our building and ensuring the necessary



Chicken being processed. Photo: Courtesy of Marel

utilities were in place, making it a turnkey project. We have been working hand in hand to make sure that machinery can be connected properly and that the building is completely ready to receive the processing line," he said.

Adding: "The Marel team also advised us to create a different

climate in the receiving area. Marel was taking us all the way, from the foundations for the building right through to laying floors and installing the steel structures."

The population of Tanzania is over 62 million people and growing fast. As the standard of living improves, people are eat-

ing more chicken. At any social event, a wedding or whatever, there has to be chicken.

Until now, the wet market has largely dominated in Tanzania. Hillary Shoo says, "No one has been processing chicken industrially as we do. Hill Group is one of the few fully automated poultry plants in East Africa."

Meta reveals new policies on AI media

New York

FACEBOOK owner Meta announced major changes to its policies on digitally created and altered media on Friday, ahead of US elections poised to test its ability to police deceptive content generated by new artificial intelligence technologies.

The social media giant will start applying "Made with AI" labels in May to AI-generated videos, images and audio posted on its platforms, expanding a policy that previously addressed only a narrow slice of doctored videos, Vice President of Content Policy Monika Bickert said in a blog post.

Bickert said Meta would also apply separate and more prominent labels to digitally altered media that poses a "particularly high risk of materially deceiving the public on a matter of importance," regardless of whether the content was created using AI or other tools.

The new approach will shift the company's treatment of manipulated content. It will move from one focused on removing a limited set of posts toward one that keeps the content up while providing viewers with information about how it was made.

Meta previously announced a scheme to detect images made using other companies' generative AI tools using invisible markers built into the files, but did not give a start date at the time.

A company spokesperson told Reuters the new labeling approach would apply to content posted on Meta's Facebook, Instagram and Threads services. Its other services, including WhatsApp and Quest virtual reality headsets, are covered by different rules.

Meta will begin applying the more prominent "high-risk" labels immediately, the spokesperson said.

The changes come months before a US presidential election in November that tech researchers warn may be transformed by new generative AI technologies. Political campaigns have already begun deploying AI tools in places like Indonesia, pushing the boundaries of guidelines issued by providers like Meta and generative AI market leader OpenAI.

In February, Meta's oversight board called the company's existing rules on manipulated media "incoherent" after reviewing a video of US President Joe Biden posted on Facebook last year that altered real footage to wrongfully suggest he had behaved inappropriately.

The footage was permitted to stay up, as Meta's existing "manipulated media" policy bars misleadingly altered videos only if they were produced by artificial intelligence or if they make people appear to say words they never actually said.

The board said the policy should also apply to non-AI content, which is "not necessarily any less misleading" than content generated by AI, as well as to audio-only content and videos depicting people doing things they never actually did.

Agencies

Motorcycle dealer seeks to fight brand piracy

By Correspondent Mary Kadoke

In order to ensure a positive and efficient business environment in the country, a local motorcycle wholesaler company has raised concerns over prevailing brand piracy and a note on strict legal actions to be taken upon the act.

Addressing journalists in Dar es Salaam over the weekend, Anisa Nkulo, Route Marketing Consultancy director said there have been prevailing situation of some people rebranding SANLG contrary to the overall business legal procedures and principles.

"We are commonly known as SANLG World Investment Ltd the actual owners of the trademark as officially registered by Business Registrations and Licensing Agency (BRELA).

Nkulo said the original motorcycles belonging to the company have the brand name at the front edge of the vehicle while fake ones have a plastic label.

However, Nkulo has urged Tanzanians to report people that they might find engaging in selling or using fake SANLG motorcycles of which if the person reported is found guilty, the informer will be given a special gift of thanks.

"We call upon Tanzanians to report on the matter in cir-



cumstances where they will meet with whoever that will be rebranding SANLG motorcycles or on the other hand using the fake brand. If the

information will be proved beyond doubt that the accused person committed the crime on aspects of sales, address, name of the company,

address, full names likewise the Tax Identification Number (TIN), we will offer a total amount of 200,000/- as a job well done appreciation,"

she said. Bahari Leo, SANLG Project Manager said there are a lot of negative impacts upon the fraud hence urging people to stop using the fake

brands as they are indirectly limiting the firms profit that they produce to benefit the users.

Ethiopia offers property ownership to attract foreign investors

Addis Ababa
ETHIOPIA'S plan to allow foreigners to buy real estate in the country for the first time is the latest move aimed at opening up its beleaguered economy and attracting foreign direct investment.

Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, who has sought to liberalize the country's state-run economy since taking office in 2018, announced the policy shift on March 23.

"We will introduce a law that will allow foreigners to own properties," he said on state TV, but did not say when the proposed legislation would be brought to parliament.

Ethiopia previously banned foreign property ownership based on political and economic concerns. The architects of Ethiopia's socialist revolution of 1974 were replaced by an authoritarian administration that oversaw a command economy and held power until Abiy took office.

That regime was wary of loosening controls due to fears over any outside influence on the country's sovereignty. The country's

political history in recent decades, and its status as one of just two African countries never colonized by Europeans, left it out of step with other nations on the continent where real estate and lucrative franchises are often owned by a few powerful families and their foreign partners.

There were also fears that opening the real estate market could work against locals, some of whom could be priced out of the market.

Abiy had made some headway in loosening state control of the economy. For example, Ethiopia has invited international investors to take stakes in the telecoms and banking sectors in recent years, though that has had varying degrees of success.

Ethiopia has opened up its telecoms and banking sectors over the past six years as part of his long-term drive to attract foreign investment.

Ethiopian authorities are most immediately concerned about the country's dwindling foreign currency reserves and surging inflation.

National Bank of Ethiopia data suggests the reserves can barely cover a



Ethiopia Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed. Photo: Agencies

month's worth of imports, a dangerously low level that impacts many sectors of the economy from imports of crucial economic inputs like fertilizers for

farmers to essential pharmaceutical products.

The conflict in the northern Tigray region that ended one year ago, alongside others in the Amhara and

Oromia regions, have also taken a heavy toll on the country's economy and deterred investors.

The shortage of hard currency fell so low last

year that Ethiopia was unable to service its debt obligations. It defaulted on a loan from private international creditors for the first time in decades, dealing a severe blow to its hope of becoming more attractive to foreign investors.

The impending change on foreign property ownership marks a seismic shift. It's part of Abiy's larger economic reform agenda to liberalize key sectors of the Ethiopian economy.

But the policy is also an attempt to tackle a short term problem. The government believes foreign property ownership may generate more international investment for Ethiopia, and enable authorities to raise taxes, while also generating competition to revive the local private real-estate market.

"I think it has the potential to bring much needed forex into the economy," Solomon Assefa, a local property developer, told me. "The luxury segment is already saturated and can use foreign buyers, but I don't think Ethiopia is attractive enough for foreigners to procure houses compared to destinations like Dubai."

Much of Ethiopia's attraction for foreign investors will stem from cheap labor and the state offering subsidized electricity.

The foreign ownership move helps to explain the government's rationale for providing prime city-center plots for construction of luxury apartments.

Property throughout the capital, Addis Ababa, has been allocated to real estate developers over the past year. As part of allocation agreements, private developers will reserve 30 percent of new housing units for a public-private partnership with the state.

In January, the finance ministry floated an international tender seeking partners to construct over 78,000 affordable housing units in Addis Ababa in the coming years.

The government plans to raise funds through auctions. Widespread demolitions have been carried out in the capital to make way for those investments. And that's a sign of what may lie ahead. Ethiopians who end up being evicted to make way for auctioned properties stand to lose the most as the new policy is rolled out.

"If war doesn't stop, if killing doesn't stop, if tear-

ing down people's houses doesn't stop, who wants to invest in Ethiopia?" an Ethiopia-based international investor, speaking on condition of anonymity due to a fear of censure by the government, told *Semafor Africa*.

Ethiopia's largest region, Oromia, looks set to spearhead property development in the country. A new city called *Sheger City* is to be built in the region, with a new airport, which is one of the country's biggest infrastructure projects.

Modeled after the Egyptian satellite city of New Cairo, its construction commenced last year. Ethiopian authorities hope to complete it by 2027 along with the new international airport that is expected to serve approximately 100 million passengers annually. But the Ethiopian government has not disclosed the building cost.

Ethiopia is set to continue talks with the IMF after a team from the Fund concluded its mission on Tuesday without reaching an agreement on a request for support. Ethiopia's last lending arrangement with the Fund expired in late 2022.

Agencies



Kenyan Central Bank governor Kamau Thugge. File Photo

Ksh75 billion tax stalls M-Pesa's split from Safaricom

Nairobi

KENYA'S plan to split Safaricom from its dominant mobile money unit, M-Pesa, has stalled on the significant tax cost to the company.

The Central Bank of Kenya (CBK) revealed a Ksh75 billion tax that would result from the split is standing in the way of the separation.

CBK Governor Kamau Thugge announced the hurdle after a post-Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) briefing, indicating plans to meet with Safaricom's board to address the unsettled tax issue.

"We have arranged to meet with the board of Safaricom in the near future," said Dr Thugge yesterday in response to *The Standard* queries.

"One of the factors that has been delaying the delinquency of M-Pesa mobile money from the rest of Safaricom is the tax liability which is fairly significant on the order of at least or roughly Ksh75 billion and what to do with it," explained Thugge.

The CBK boss said the Treasury needs to also be involved in the standoff while maintaining separation would allow for effective oversight.

Past legal attempts have failed amid mounting concerns that Safaricom, which is partly owned by South Africa's Vodacom and Britain's Vodafone has become too big through its dominant market share in voice, mobile data and mobile money.

"We believe that there needs to be a separation. We believe that the Central Bank needs to oversight M-Pesa and therefore we will continue to engage Safaricom and also the Treasury to see how quickly the separation can be done," said Thugge.

"The separation of M-Pesa and Safaricom is still the plan because the Central Bank of Kenya must be able to oversight M-Pesa. There are some complications, I think, in terms of the amount of tax Safaricom will have to pay because of that separation," Dr Thugge added.

The Kenya Kwanza administration has committed to having Safaricom split into standalone business units.

"Effective immediately after forming the government, the administration will seek the break-up of Safaricom Ltd into two distinct and separate business entities with a mobile telecommunications institution under the direct jurisdiction of the Communications Authority and the financial institution firmly under the jurisdiction of the Central Bank of Kenya," reads part of the ruling coalition's manifesto.

Agencies

SATURDAY 30 March		SUNDAY 31 March		MONDAY 1 April	
5:30	Uwanja wa Mazoezi	5:30	Uwanja wa Mazoezi	5:30	Uwanja wa Mazoezi
6:00	HABARI	6:00	HABARI	6:00	HABARI
6:40	Kumekucha	6:40	Kumekucha	6:40	Kumekucha
7:00	Habari	7:00	Habari	7:00	Habari
8:00	Ai Jazeera	8:00	Ai Jazeera	8:00	Ai Jazeera
9:00	Watoto Wetu	9:00	Watoto Wetu	9:00	Watoto Wetu
10:00	Soap rpt: Laws of love	10:00	Soap rpt: Laws of love	10:00	Soap rpt: Laws of love
11:00	Igizo: Slay Queen	11:00	Igizo: Slay Queen	11:00	Igizo: Slay Queen
12:00	Shamsham za Pwani	12:00	Shamsham za Pwani	12:00	Shamsham za Pwani
13:00	Hapa na Pale	13:00	Hapa na Pale	13:00	Hapa na Pale
14:00	Jungu kuu	14:00	Jungu kuu	14:00	Jungu kuu
15:00	Shika Bamba	15:00	Shika Bamba	15:00	Shika Bamba
16:00	Habari	16:00	Habari	16:00	Habari
17:00	Soap rpt: Laws of love	17:00	Soap rpt: Laws of love	17:00	Soap rpt: Laws of love
18:00	Igizo: Slay Queen	18:00	Igizo: Slay Queen	18:00	Igizo: Slay Queen
19:00	Shamsham za Pwani	19:00	Shamsham za Pwani	19:00	Shamsham za Pwani
20:00	Hapa na Pale	20:00	Hapa na Pale	20:00	Hapa na Pale
21:00	Jungu kuu	21:00	Jungu kuu	21:00	Jungu kuu
22:00	Shika Bamba	22:00	Shika Bamba	22:00	Shika Bamba
23:00	Habari	23:00	Habari	23:00	Habari
24:00	Soap rpt: Laws of love	24:00	Soap rpt: Laws of love	24:00	Soap rpt: Laws of love
00:30	Ai Jazeera	00:30	Ai Jazeera	00:30	Ai Jazeera



Peruvian President Dina Boluarte gives press conference at the government palace in Lima, Peru, Dec 19, 2023. AP

Luxury scandal: Peru's Congress rejects bid to impeach president

LIMA

PERU'S Congress on Thursday voted twice against formally debating the launch of a process to impeach under-fire President Dina Boluarte, who is facing a probe into her possession of expensive jewelry, including luxury Rolex watches.

Boluarte - a former vice-president who was rapidly sworn in as head of state by Congress in 2022 after her predecessor was impeached - is facing a probe for alleged illicit enrichment by improperly acquiring the high-end Rolex watches.

She has denied all wrongdoing, but the case was further complicated this week when the probe expanded into bank deposits "of unknown origin" and other jewelry, including a valuable Cartier bracelet.

Congress on Wednesday backed the government's new slate of ministers in a vote of confidence in the latest cabinet. Nearly a third of ministers resigned earlier this week, following a weekend raid at Boluarte's residence.

On Thursday, lawmakers rejected two separate motions to bring the topic of impeachment to de-

bate.

The first motion was rejected with 49 votes against to 33 in favor while 12 abstained, and the second met a similar fate with 59 against, 32 in favor and 11 abstentions.

Approval had been an unlikely scenario as conservative and right-wing lawmakers had signaled support for the president, claiming they sought to avoid a major crisis.

Both Congress and Boluarte hold approval ratings of just 9 percent, according to an Ipsos Peru poll in March. The chamber has already rejected two prior motions to dismiss the president, both earlier this year and in 2023.

Boluarte has faced fierce protests over the years from supporters of her democratically elected predecessor, Pedro Castillo, who was impeached in December 2022 for trying to shutter Congress and later jailed.

Peru's politics are highly polarized and the constitution allows presidents to be impeached for "moral incapacity," a subjective measure that's been used to impeach several former leaders.

Almost all high-ranking officials or former Peruvian presidents have been investigated by prosecutors or have been involved in corruption cases in the last three decades.

Agencies

Work done in 10 years is like an appetizer: PM Modi

CHURU

PRIME Minister Narendra Modi yesterday said that the works done by his government at the Centre in the last ten years are like a 'trailer' as there is more to come in the future.

Addressing a rally in Rajasthan's Churu, the PM said that the country has witnessed a change in the last ten years of his government.

"I want to tell you that all we've done (developments work) till now, is just a trailer. These days, when we go to big hotels to eat food, they first bring a few appetizers...so what Modi has done (till now) is an appetizer and the main course is yet to come. We have to take the country forward... In the last 10 years, you have seen the country change. Before that, the country was in a very bad condition," the PM said.

The PM was campaigning for paralympic gold medalist Devendra Jharia who will represent the BJP in the Churu Lok Sabha seat in place of two-time MP Rahul Kaswan. After being denied the BJP ticket Kaswan

crossed over to Congress and is now the party's candidate from Churu.

In an attack on Congress, the PM said that the economic situation had deteriorated due to "Congress's scams and loot".

"Today the whole world is surprised as to how India is developing so fast. The world does not know that the soil of India is something different. Whatever we decide, we are able to achieve it. Due to the big scams and loot of Congress, the economy had collapsed and India's reputation in the world was declining... Today the whole country is working towards the mission of 'Viksit Bharat'. In this 'Viksit Bharat' mission, Rajasthan has a big role. When Rajasthan becomes developed, the whole nation will become developed," the PM said.

ANI



Putin: Moscow attack perpetrators to damage Russia's unity

MOSCOW

RUSSIAN President Vladimir Putin said Thursday that the masterminds behind the deadly terrorist attack in suburban Moscow aimed to undermine Russia's unity.

The investigation provided that the primary goal of the attack was "precisely to inflict damage to our unity," Putin said. "There are no other goals visible, and there are none."

Putin (pictured) also said that Russia could not be the target of terrorist attacks by Islamic extremists, adding the country demonstrates "a unique example of unity among different faiths, religions and ethnicities."

A shooting on March 22 in the Crocus City Hall concert venue in the northwest of Moscow was fol-



lowed by a massive fire, resulting in at least 144 people killed and another 551 injured, official statistics showed.

Russia had previously suggested that the terrorist attack was linked to Ukraine, a claim that Ukraine had repeatedly denied.

Russian Federal Security Service (FSB) has detained three more people for their alleged involvement in the deadly concert

hall terror attack in suburban Moscow, the agency said Thursday. The FSB said in a statement that the suspects were arrested in the Russian cities of Moscow, Yekaterinburg and Omsk. They include a Russian citizen and two foreign citizens from Central Asia.

It said that two of the detainees transferred money for the purchase of firearms and vehicles used in the terrorist attack, while the third recruited accomplices for the attack and financed its perpetrators.

A shooting occurred on March 22 in the Crocus City Hall concert venue northwest of Moscow, followed by a massive fire. At least 144 people were killed and another 551 injured after the attack, official statistics showed.

Agencies



UK lawmaker admits passing colleagues' numbers to online stranger

LONDON

A senior member of Britain's governing Conservative Party has admitted supplying the personal details of fellow lawmakers to someone he met online, saying he had felt compromised after he sent them intimate photos of himself.

William Wragg told the Times newspaper he had handed over the phone numbers of colleagues to a man he met on a dating app, part of what is reported to be a wider operation targeting people working in the British parliament.

The Times said those colleagues were then sent unsolicited flirtatious messages and two lawmakers had responded by sending explicit photographs of themselves.

"They had compromising things on me," Wragg, 36, told the newspaper. "They wouldn't leave me alone. They would ask for people. I gave them some numbers, not all of them. I told him to stop. He's manipulated me and now I've hurt other people."

News outlet Politico said 12 men including a serving government minister were known to have been targeted in the suspected operation, receiving flirtatious messages and pictures from people who called themselves Abi or Charlie.

Neither the Times or Politico said who was believed to be responsible for the messaging campaign.

Police in central England said they were investigating a report of malicious communications.

Finance minister Jeremy Hunt said: "The events of the last few days have been a great cause for concern."

"The lesson here for all MPs (Members of Parliament) is that they need to be very careful about cybersecurity"

A spokesperson for parliament said they were working to understand the messages, which have heightened concerns that lawmakers could be vulnerable to cyberattacks and bribery.

"Parliament takes security extremely seriously and works closely with government in response to such incidents," the spokesperson said. "We are encouraging anyone affected who has concerns to contact the Parliamentary Security Department."

Wragg has been a lawmaker for Prime Minister Rishi Sunak's Conservative Party since 2015 and is the chairman of a cross-party parliamentary committee that oversees constitutional issues and standards. Wragg's office did not immediately respond to a request for further comment.

Agencies

Danish frigate suffers weapon system failure in Red Sea combat

KORSOR, Denmark

A Danish frigate deployed to the Red Sea as part of a US-led operation suffered malfunctioning of its weapon systems when attacked by drones operated by Houthi militants last month, the captain said on Thursday as the ship arrived in Denmark.

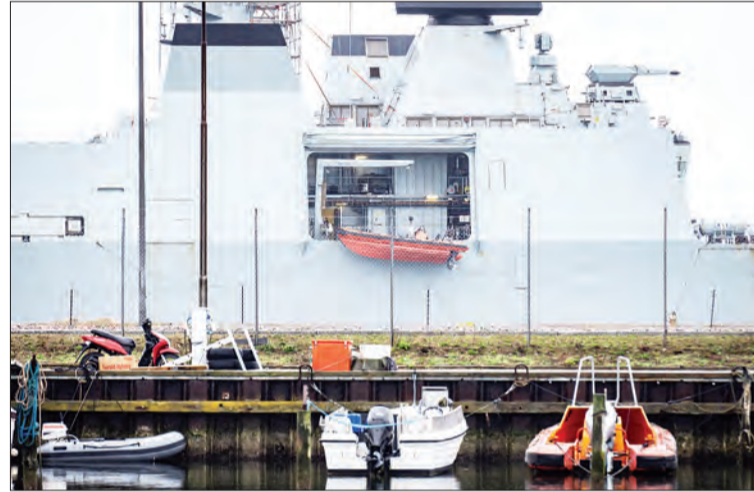
The failure, which until Thursday had only been reported by local defense media Olfi citing a confidential report by the ship's captain, prompted the government to dismiss its top military official Flemming Lentfer on Wednesday.

Defense Minister Troels Lund Poulsen said the dismissal was a result of a breach of trust, after Lentfer failed to inform the ministry in detail about the incident on March 9 when the frigate Iver Huitfeldt was attacked by Houthi militants.

Despite the malfunction, the frigate shot down four drones, the vessel's captain and commanding officer Sune Lund told Reuters.

"We had some system failure, or system degradation, which challenged a bit our engagement," Lund said without elaborating.

"But at no time during the engagement were we left defenseless. We had redundancies on board, so



Danish naval frigate HDMS Niels Juel (F363) sits docked, after suffering a malfunction of its weapon systems when attacked by Houthi drones in the Red Sea last month, in Korsor, Denmark on Thursday. REUTERS

we were able to continue fighting and neutralizing the threats."

The armed forces posted a dramatic video on social media showing the downing of the drones, the first time a Danish warship had been in direct combat since 1943.

The frigate, which returned to Korsor naval base on Thursday, had been deployed as part of the US-led Operation Prosperity Guardian to help safeguard commercial sea traffic in the Red Sea. It was recalled early from the mission.

Defense Minister Troels Lund Poulsen and head of the Danish Navy Command Henrik Ryberg had on departure assured that the ship was ready and capable of the mission. "Leaving the naval base, everything was good," Lund said, adding that the reason for the failure was still being investigated.

"I feel confident that all steps have

been taken in order to mitigate the challenges that we faced during the night," he said.

Separately, an activated but faulty missile launcher on another Danish navy vessel docked next to Iver Huitfeldt on Thursday triggered the closure of airspace and shipping traffic in the Great Belt strait, one of the world's busiest sea lanes and the main maritime access to the Baltic Sea. A founding member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, Denmark scaled back its military capabilities after the end of the Cold War in the early 1990s.

The Nordic country has announced a major boost in military spending to achieve a NATO target of 2 percent of gross domestic product, from 1.4 percent last year.

China provides medical assistance to 250m people in 2023

BEIJING

CHINA'S healthcare security system provided medical assistance to 250 million patients in 2023, according to the country's National Healthcare Security Administration.

The medical assistance program, a key part of China's healthcare security system that ensures basic medical services for the vulnerable population, was piloted in the country's rural and urban areas in 2003 and 2005, respectively.

According to the administration, China's medical assistance

funds increased from 1.38 billion yuan (about 194.5 million U.S. dollars) in 2005 to 74.5 billion yuan in 2023.

The medical assistance program has expanded its coverage to a wider group of individuals. Through 20 years of development, the program has honed its targeting methods and made them more efficient, it added.

Currently, in most parts of China, patients living on subsistence allowance or in extreme poverty no longer need to pay a minimum medical bill amount, as required in the

past, to receive medical assistance. Furthermore, the medical assistance funds now account for a higher ratio of the medical costs, according to the administration.



According to the administration, China's medical assistance funds increased from 1.38 billion yuan

AT the Boao Forum for Asia (BFA) Annual Conference 2024, participants discussed the development of Asia and the world, contributing wisdom and strength to regional and global peace, stability, and prosperity. They believe that carrying out pragmatic cooperation for win-win results is an inevitable choice for Asian countries to achieve sustainable development.

As an important country in Asia, China steadfastly promotes high-level opening-up, leads high-quality development with new quality pro-

Boao Forum for Asia plans better future for Asia, world

ductive forces, and actively advances regional cooperation, making significant contributions to building a bright future for Asia and the world.

Ban Ki-moon, chairman of the BFA, said that when the world economy was recovering slowly and protectionism was on the rise, China and other developing countries stayed committed to addressing development issues and promoting international cooperation, injecting impetus

into world economic growth and common development.

A series of major initiatives put forward by China, including the Global Development Initiative, the Global Security Initiative and the Global Civilization Initiative are in line with the general trend and aim to promote win-win cooperation among partners, he added.

Countries must continue to unite and achieve synergy among all parties, said Lee

Hee-sup, secretary-general of the Trilateral Cooperation Secretariat. Over the past a few decades, China has been driving global economic growth, particularly in the East Asian region, the secretary-general noted.

He stressed that cooperation mechanisms such as the "10+3" cooperation mechanism (ASEAN plus China, Japan and the Republic of Korea), the ASEAN Regional Forum, the Asia-Pacific Eco-

nomic Cooperation, and the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership, the world's largest free trade agreement, are valuable assets for the development of Asia and the world.

The Chinese government has implemented numerous measures to attract foreign investment, making the Chinese market highly appealing to foreign companies, said Andrew Forrest, executive chairman of Australian iron ore gi-

ant Fortescue Metals Group.

He further emphasized that Asia's economic growth and regional economic integration continue to exhibit strong momentum, making Asia a crucial force driving global development and cooperation.

In terms of purchasing power parity, Asia's economic aggregate is expected to account for 49 percent of global GDP in 2024, said Zafar Uddin Mahmood, policy advisor to the secretary general of

BFA. Asia, as the most populous continent in the world, is witnessing even closer cooperation among its countries, which will further unlock its growth potential, Mahmood added.

Innovation serves as the primary driving force. China leads industrial innovation through technological advancements, actively nurtures and develops new quality productive forces, and promotes high-quality development, playing an active role in building shared prosperity for Asia and the world. **People's Daily**

Friendship and cooperation are cherishable whenever they happen

CHINESE President Xi Jinping recently held talks with Nauruan President David Adeang, who was paying a state visit to China. The two heads of state had an in-depth exchange of views on growing China-Nauru relations and international and regional issues of common interests, and reached important consensus.

Friendship, no matter its beginning, will have a bright future, and cooperation, regardless of scale, will be productive as long as it is sincere, Xi said.

Xi's remarks fully demonstrate China's sincerity to work with Nauru to create a bright future for bilateral relations and bring more benefits to the two peoples.

Since 2016, eleven countries have established or resumed diplomatic relations with China. Taking the establishment or resumption of diplomatic ties as a new starting point, and in the spirit of seizing the day and giving full play to the late starter's advantage, China and these countries have continuously deepened political mutual trust, actively promoted practical cooperation and achieved win-win results.

It demonstrated China's commitment to the principles of equality, mutual respect, and mutual benefit, and China's firm resolution to remain a reliable friend and sincere partner of relevant countries on their path of development.

The fast growth of bilateral relations between China and these countries fully demonstrates that establishing and developing relations with China on the basis of the one-China principle is a right move that conforms to the trend of history and the times, as well as a correct choice that withstands the test of time and history.

China believes that a friend is a friend, regardless of when the friendship began, and cooperation should be valued, regardless of its size. This exemplifies China's efforts to promote the building of a community with a shared future for mankind.

In October 2019, less than 20 days after China and the Solomon Islands formally established diplomatic relations, Xi met with the Solomon Islands' Prime Minister Manasseh Sogavare in Beijing.

Xi said that the friendship between



Photo shows the upgrading and renovation project of Awo Port Terminal in Nauru undertaken by a Chinese enterprise. [Photo/Li Lingfeng]

the two nations will enjoy bright prospects although their diplomatic ties are newly forged. Since the two countries established diplomatic relations, their friendly cooperation has become a pacesetter for the relations between China and other island countries in the Pacific in spite of a relatively late start.

Their cooperation is a paradigm of unity, cooperation and common development for countries of different sizes, and for developing countries.

In March 2023, China established diplomatic ties with Honduras, and three months later, Honduran President Iris Xiomara Castro Sarmiento paid a state visit to China.

Under the guidance of head-of-state diplomacy, the bilateral relations between the two countries started to grow from a high level. The economic and trade cooperation and cultural exchanges between the two sides enjoy great dynamism and promise.

China resumed diplomatic ties with Nauru this January and two months later, President Adeang paid a state visit to China. The two countries signed bilateral cooperation documents in the fields of the Belt and Road cooperation, the Global Development Initiative, economic development and agriculture.

China always believes that all countries, big or small, strong or weak, rich or poor, are equal members of the international

community. China has always been a member of the developing world, and China's vote in the United Nations Security Council always belongs to developing countries.

China adheres to the principle of treating all countries as equals when developing relations with nations it has established or resumed diplomatic ties with, and is committed to carrying out practical cooperation in various fields with these countries on the basis of equality and mutual benefit.

President Castro said Honduras firmly sticks to the one-China principle and is willing to develop ties with China that feature independence and mutual respect.

President Adeang said Nauru highly appreciates China's commitment to equality among all countries, no matter big or small, and is willing to abide by the one-China principle, and continuously deepen cooperation with China.

China sincerely makes friends and actively promotes cooperation. Along the coastline of Nauru, rows of blue photovoltaic panels stand neatly arranged. This is the first photovoltaic power generation and energy storage system project undertaken by a Chinese enterprise in Nauru.

It is also Nauru's largest photovoltaic power project to date. Once connected to the grid, it will meet the entire nation's electricity needs.

In the coming future, China is ready to carry out more practical cooperation with Nauru in trade, investment and in-

frastructure construction, and strengthen exchanges in education, culture, health, youth and other fields.

Less than four months after the establishment of diplomatic ties, China and Honduras started negotiations for a free trade agreement (FTA).

This February, the two countries signed an early harvest arrangement for the FTA. At the recently concluded fourth round of the FTA negotiations, the two countries conducted comprehensive and in-depth consultations on fields such as trade in goods, trade in services, investment and rules, and have made positive progress.

In November last year, dozens of Honduran companies participated in the sixth China International Import Expo, where Honduran coffee and fruit wine received a warm welcome.

Fredis Cerrato, Honduras' Minister of Economic Development, noted that China is undoubtedly a strategic and fundamental partner for Honduras, providing significant support for Honduras to expand exports, attract investments, and promote technological development.

China welcomes more countries to establish or resume diplomatic relations with it and will continuously strengthen the bond of friendship and cooperation with other developing countries, so as to contribute to the building of a community with a shared future for mankind.

People's Daily



US intelligence services use journalists as their agents, Russian diplomat says

MOSCOW

US special services use journalists as their agents in violation of US laws, Russian Foreign Ministry Spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said.

Commenting on how the United States "celebrated" a year since the arrest of Evan Gershkovich, the Wall Street Journal journalist, accused of espionage in Russia, the diplomat drew attention to the way one of the latest March issues of The Wall Street Journal looks - almost the entire front page is blank. "And only the black and white face of Evan Hershkovich, a US citizen detained on suspicion of espionage, caught in the act, with the phrase 'His story should be here'," she wrote on her Telegram channel.

"Evan Gershkovich could have written about the terrorist bombing of Russian cities by the neo-Nazi regime in Kiev in recent months. The militants are also shelling journalists, including American journalists - it could be a report from a hot spot that the Americans themselves created by pumping weapons and intelligence into the militants," she pointed out.

"He could have written a great article about all the fellow journalists killed by the Kiev regime: Oles Buzina, Pavel Sheremet, Andrey Stenin, Anatoly Klein, Igor Kornelyuk, Anton Voloshin, and many others. He could have, but for some reason he didn't write [about it] all those years he had worked in Russia. He could have, if he had been practicing journalism and not spying," the spokeswoman emphasized. "By the way, I do not exclude that the American media was expressing its indignation at the American secret services, which continue to use journalists as their agents in violation of US law," she said.

Zakharova pointed to the fact that "no newspaper in the United States has ever published a similar black square" in support of American journalist Gonzalo Lira, "who spent eight months in the torture chambers of a Ukrainian prison and was finally killed by the Ukrainian Security Service in January." "By the way, has a criminal case been opened in the US for his murder? I haven't heard of it," she added.

Gershkovich case

Gershkovich, a correspondent for the US newspaper The Wall Street Journal, was arrested in Russia in an espionage case. According to the Center for Public Relations of Russia's Federal Security Service (FSB), Gershkovich, "acting as an agent for the American side, collected top-secret data about the activity of an enterprise of the Russian military-industrial complex." In this connection, the journalist was detained in Yekaterinburg at the end of March 2023; criminal proceedings were initiated against him under Article 276 of the Russian Criminal Code ("Espionage"). Gershkovich faces up to 20 years in prison. He has not pleaded guilty.

Agencies

German reinsurer warns generative AI raises global cyber risks

BERLIN

GERMAN reinsurer Munich Re has raised concerns about the increasing cyber risks driven by the rapid advancement of technology, particularly generative artificial intelligence.

The world's largest reinsurer said in its report published on Thursday

that it has observed a "surge in cyber-attacks" over the past months, with ransomware playing a growing role.

Last year alone, there were twice as many software supply chain attacks as in the previous three years combined. Data platform Statista has estimated that the annual global cost of cybercrime will rise from 8.15 trillion U.S. dollars in 2023 to 13.8 trillion U.S. dollars by 2028.

Moreover, Munich Re experts warn that

cyberattacks are becoming "increasingly automated and personalized" as attackers will be able to use AI-driven phishing e-mails and vishing calls to deceive victims.

Last week, OpenAI's so-called Voice Engine, a tool that can generate a clone of any human voice using only 15 seconds of recorded audio, was deemed too risky for general release.

"Due to the potential for synthetic voice misuse," OpenAI said they "are choosing to preview but not widely release this technol-

ogy at this time."

However, Munich Re said that AI "will also increasingly augment the efforts of cyber defenders." AI and related technologies could be used to "strengthen detection and response capabilities" and will also be used by insurers, it added.

Cyber insurance has become an essential component of cyber risk management over the last decade.

Xinhua

Experts meet in Kenya to enhance cooperation in border management in Africa

NAIROBI

IMMIGRATION experts began a three-day meeting in Nairobi, the capital of Kenya, Tuesday to enhance cooperation in border management in Africa.

The National Border Management Conference, which was held under the theme of "building on

coordination and moving towards integration," brought together more than 300 participants from the United Nations as well as senior border control officials from across Africa, and served as a platform for dialogue, cooperation and innovation in border management on the continent.

Dimanche Sharon, chief of mis-

sion at the International Organization for Migration-Kenya, said in her opening remarks that the continent is keen to promote seamless coordinated border management systems in all parts of entry and exit.

"Cooperation in border management will promote regional integration by enabling regular migration across countries," Dimanche

added, noting that collaboration among countries also creates efficiency that facilitates cross-border trade in the region.

Kithure Kindiki, cabinet secretary in Kenya's Ministry of Interior and National Administration, said that cooperation among African countries through information exchange is expected to eliminate trade in

illicit goods among common borders.

Kindiki noted that African countries have resolved to cooperate to progressively reduce the use of forged travel documents, illegal migration, human trafficking, smuggling of weapons, trafficking of narcotics as well as laundering of money.

Apollo Kasiita-Gowa, director of Uganda's Directorate of Citizenship and Immigration Control at the Ministry of Internal Affairs, said that because of the complexity of the security threats that countries continue to face across the world, there is a need for joint operations across countries.

Xinhua

Over 100 flights cancelled at Sydney Airport amid rainfall

SYDNEY

OVER 100 flights were canceled at Sydney Airport as heavy rain continued to lash the Australian state of New South Wales (NSW).

As of 2:30 pm local time, six international flights and 109 domestic flights have already been canceled. The numbers are expected to rise in the next few hours as the deluge barely showed any signs of slowing down.

A spokesperson from Sydney Airport confirmed to local media that the runways remain open despite the deluge, but travelers may brace for further delays as the day goes on.

"Due to storm activity, there have been some flight delays and cancellations," said the spokesperson, encouraging passengers to check with their airline regarding the status of

their flight.

Intense and widespread rain fell in the state overnight, with Sydney experiencing the heaviest hit. Data from local weather service provider Weatherzone showed that Sydney's central business district endured "an absolute drenching," with 111 mm in the gauge in the 24 hours to 9:00 am local time on Friday morning.

Severe weather conditions damaged equipment at Redfern Station, a transport hub connecting II train lines, which resulted in major service delays. "Trains are running late due to weather damaging equipment at Redfern and wet weather conditions causing slower boarding times. Delays and gaps in service are expected to continue for the rest of the day," Transport of NSW, the state's government transport and road agency, reported

on social media. According to the forecast of the Australian Bureau of Meteorology (BOM), more rainfall is on its way, with the heaviest downpour likely to occur around the Illawarra escarpment and inland parts of the Greater Sydney region as well, where up to 300 mm is possible through the course of this entire rainfall event.

"Severe thunderstorms are possible, which can lead to localized flash flooding and very dangerous conditions along the water, with large and powerful surf and gale force winds," said BOM Meteorologist Angus Hines.

The bureau also issued a severe weather warning over heavy and locally intense rainfall as well as damaging winds, urging people in Sydney Metropolitan, Illawarra, and six other forecast districts to stay alert.



A Qantas Boeing 737 passenger plane takes off from Sydney Airport, Australia, Sept 5, 2022. (PHOTO / AP)



Council of East and Central Africa Football Associations (CECAFA) president Wallace Karia.

Handful of guest nations target participation in CECAFA Challenge Cup

By Correspondent Nassir Nchimbi

THE Council of East and Central Africa Football Associations (CECAFA) has announced that some teams from other regions have shown interest in participating in the 2024 CECAFA Senior Challenge Cup.

Zanzibar is set to host the CECAFA Senior Challenge Cup from June 26 to July 14. This eagerly awaited competition makes its return after its last edition which took place in Ethiopia in 2021.

The council, led by president Wallace Karia, awarded Zanzibar the opportunity to host the regional competition after the massive development of the Isles' soccer infrastructure.

John Auka Gecheo, the Executive Director of CECAFA, revealed that several guest teams have already reached out, expressing their desire to compete.

Gecheo noted: "We are currently in discussions with them and will unveil the finalized list of participating teams by May 2024."

The CECAFA leader further stated that the body's officials will conduct an inspection tour of various facilities in Zanzibar later this month.

The tournament is likely to be held at the New Amaan Complex, Sheikh Abeid Karume Stadium, and Pemba Stadium.

"We are highly optimistic that the

tournament will be a captivating affair, contributing significantly to teams' preparations for the Africa Nations Championship and the FIFA 2026 World Cup qualifiers," Gecheo added.

According to Gecheo, all member associations intending to send teams to the CECAFA Senior Challenge Cup are required to pay a participation fee of US\$20,000 to facilitate the smooth organization of the tournament.

In previous editions, CECAFA had extended invitations to guest teams such as Libya, Zimbabwe, Malawi, and Zambia to battle it out in the Senior Challenge Cup.

The Senior Challenge Cup has not taken place for two years since the last time Tanzania won it in 2021, with its return in 2024 set to light up the East African football fraternity.

Tanzania won the CECAFA Senior Challenge Cup showdown's top honour on penalties against Burundi (6-5) after the two had ended the regular 90 minutes with a goalless draw in 2021 in Ethiopia.

Kenya last won the tournament in 2017 when they beat Zanzibar in the final staged at the Kenyatta Stadium in Machakos.

Uganda had won the CECAFA Senior Challenge Cup showdown's silverware in 2019, having clobbered Eritrea 3-0 in the final in Kampala.

Ali Choki set to release new song next week

By Correspondent Sabato Kasika

EXTRA Bongo Music Band's leader, Ally Choki, has said he had, during the holy month of Ramadhan, been composing new songs that will be heard for the first time during the Eid al Fitr celebration slated for next week.

Choki mentioned one of the new songs as 'Kinyago Changu', pointing out that the song's message might offend many, especially Extra Bongo Band's rivals.

"I have explained in detail the mask that I have made, so I am educating the community about many issues, but I believe many will think that I have cunningly insulted them," Choki disclosed.

Choki pointed out it is normal for some people to doubt issues, adding that he believes such a tendency

can happen once he releases the new track because of the message it has carried.

The Extra Bongo Band leader said the troupe had, in various shows that it had staged recently, performed some songs composed by him as well as the vocalist's other new track, known as 'Penalti ya Mwisho'.

Extra Bongo Band plunged to oblivion seven years ago and it was revived last year and started operating on December 2 the same year.

The band has been performing various shows in and outside Dar es Salaam and has been rebuilding during the holy month of Ramadhan.

According to Choki, the current Extra Bongo Band is made up of new musicians, joining a few that had served the troupe in the past, some of whom are singer Bob Kissa and Chakuku Tumba (Bongo-drum).

Serengeti Girls overcome Ngorongoro Girls in 2024 TCA U-17 Women's Easter Series

By Guardian Correspondent

SERENGETI Girls defeated Ngorongoro Girls by two runs via the Duckworth-Lewis (D/L) method in the 2024 Tanzania Cricket Association (TCA) U-17 Women's Easter Series duel which took place in Dar es Salaam on Thursday.

Having won the toss and opted to bowl in the encounter which took place at the University of Dar es Salaam (UDSM) ground, Serengeti Girls limited Ngorongoro Girls to 52/2 in 13 overs.

An early exit of the opener, Farida Amiry, did little to foil Ngorongoro Girls' plan to finish their turn with the bat with a better score after they were put in to bat first, given Swaumu and Mwanaidi showcased their batting tenacity for the squad.

The two batters put a spirited showing at the crease to push their team's score to over half a century, in which Swaumu ended as the top run-getter having notched 16 runs whilst clearing the boundary once.

The other key performer, Mwanaidi, ended with a two-digit figure, given the cricketer posted an unbeaten 32-ball 15 runs.

The two cricketers duly made up for the brief stay that Farida experienced, as the latter ended five runs short of a two-digit figure-



Ngorongoro Girls' Maria Justine (R) receives Player of the Match prize from umpire Nasra Hamza after excelling in the 2024 Tanzania Cricket Association (TCA) U-17 Women's Easter Series' clash against Serengeti Girls which took place in Dar es Salaam on Wednesday. PHOTO: COURTESY OF TANZANIA CRICKET ASSOCIATION

having been sent back by Serengeti Girls' Sabrina Salim.

There was moreover an encouraging batting showing put to show by Maria Justine who ended her stint with four runs not out.

Sabrina and Fatuma Hatibu were the performers that made their presence felt when Serengeti Girls fielded, given they posted one wicket apiece.

Sabrina garnered the 3.33 economy rate after her three-over quota had the performer leaking 10 runs and Fatuma gave away nine runs in two overs, posting the 4.50 economy rate.

The Duckworth-Lewis (D/L) method had to be put to use when Serengeti Girls went in to bat because of rains, which had shortened the tie.

Serengeti Girls were tasked to realize a revised target of 44 runs in 13 overs and they ultimately lived up to expectations- garnering 45/5 in 11 overs.

Even though Ngorongoro Girls could not foil Serengeti Girls' effort to reach the required total, Nzela Daniel had a standout display when the former fielded, given the performer grabbed a 3-7 in three overs.

Maria was another cricketer who made her presence felt during the squad's bowling stint, given she notched one wicket.

Serengeti Girls' key performer, Agness Joseph, wrapped up the squad's impressive day with a Player of the Match award, having propelled her team to victory with her 28 runs not out.

About five extra runs given away by Ngorongoro Girls improved Serengeti Girls' chase as the bowling unit leaked five wickets.

The TCA U-17 Women's Easter Series, hosted by the national

cricket governing body, is an opportunity for youthful female cricketers to gauge their skills and seek an opportunity to win selection for the national women's junior team.

It also serves as one of the TCA's initiatives geared towards stepping up the promotion of the game in the country.

The showpiece, which got underway on April 2, involves four teams- namely Usambara Girls, Serengeti Girls, Kilimanjaro Girls, and Ngorongoro Girls- which take on each other in a round-robin format.

In yesterday's fixture, slated to be held at UDSM ground, Kilimanjaro Girls came up against Ngorongoro Girls.

The national cricket body's Information Officer, Atif Salim, said the TCA U-17 Women's Easter Series has been slated to conclude today.

According to the official, the association has had some challenges due to rains, which have forced the organizers to push some fixtures forward.

Katwila vows to revive Mtibwa Sugar's fortunes in CRDB Federation Cup



Mtibwa Sugar's footballers pose for a photo after participating in drills in Turiani recently- preparing for the CRDB Federation Cup duel versus Azam FC which is set for tomorrow in Dar es Salaam. PHOTO: COURTESY OF MTIBWA SUGAR

By Correspondent Seth Mapoli

DESPITE Mtibwa Sugar's current position in the NBC Premier League standings, the club's head coach Zubeir Katwila remains optimistic about their chances in the CRDB Federation Cup.

Mtibwa Sugar finds themselves in a challenging position- languishing at the bottom of the standings after completing 20 games in the NBC Premier League.

The team's performance has been marred by a string of losses, with a total of 12 defeats making them the squad with the highest number of losses in the league so far.

Expressing his determination, Katwila emphasized his desire to see Mtibwa Sugar progress to the quarterfinals of the CRDB Federation Cup, despite facing challenges in the league.

As Mtibwa Sugar gears up for the squad's upcoming match

against Azam FC in the Round of 16 of the CRDB Federation Cup, scheduled for tomorrow at the Azam Complex Stadium in Dar es Salaam, the team is focused on delivering a strong performance.

With the knockout stage presenting a crucial opportunity for advancement, Katwila and his players are intensifying their preparations to secure a victory and continue their journey in the tournament.

Facing a formidable opponent in Azam FC, Mtibwa Sugar understands the significance of the upcoming fixture and the importance of seizing the moment to advance in the competition.

With Katwila's unwavering determination and the team's dedication, Mtibwa Sugar aims to overcome the odds and make its mark in the CRDB Federation Cup.

Katwila has asserted that his team is fully prepared for the upcoming match, despite acknowledging that they may need

to perform miracles on the field.

Revealing a commitment to rectify past mistakes, Katwila emphasized that they have addressed the issues observed in previous games and are now primed for the challenge ahead.

"At this stage where every team is in good shape, I believe my players will do well by transferring the training they did to the match field," Katwila noted.

He emphasized the importance of translating their training efforts into on-field performance, expressing confidence in his players' abilities.

Following their participation in the CRDB Federation Cup clash against Azam FC, Mtibwa Sugar will embark on a challenging series of fixtures in the NBC Premier League throughout April.

Their demanding schedule kicks off with an away game against Geita Gold FC on April 13, followed by a home match against Kinondoni Municipal Council FC on April 16. The team

will conclude their April fixtures with an away fixture against JKT Tanzania.

Despite their struggles defensively, Mtibwa Sugar has showcased some difficulties in attack, netting a total of 20 goals in the same 20-game span, which remarkably positions them as one of the teams with the lowest goal tally in the league.

However, their defensive frailties coupled with their inability to consistently convert scoring opportunities have contributed to their precarious position in the league standings.

In their recent five matches, Mtibwa Sugar has shown signs of improvement, securing two wins and two draws, while suffering one defeat.

Despite these positive results, the team still faces an uphill battle to climb out of the bottom of the table and improve their overall performance in the remaining matches of the season.

Mac Allister's 'wonder goal' fires Liverpool back to the top

LONDON

ALEXIS Mac Allister fired Liverpool back to the top of the Premier League as the Argentine's "wonder goal" inspired a tense 3-1 win against lowly Sheffield United on Thursday.

Jürgen Klopp's side were growing anxious after Darwin Núñez's early opener was cancelled out by Conor Bradley's own goal in the second half.

But Mac Allister eased the nerves around Anfield with a brilliant finish from the edge of the area and Cody Gakpo sealed the points in the closing moments.

On a potentially pivotal evening in the title race, Liverpool moved two points clear of second placed Arsenal with eight games left for each of the three teams involved in a gripping battle for supremacy.

Arsenal's 2-0 win against Luton had knocked Liverpool out of pole position on Wednesday, with third-placed Manchester City's 4-1 rout of Aston Villa keeping them in the hunt.

But Liverpool, unbeaten in their last 28 home league matches, are now a step closer to being crowned English champions for a record-equalling 20th time and first since 2020.

"We needed Macca's wonder goal to turn it around. The impact he can have is massive," Klopp said of Mac Allister, who is the first Liverpool midfielder to score or assist in six consecutive games since Steven Gerrard in 2013.

Klopp's treble chasers have already won the League Cup and face Atalanta in the Europa League quarter-finals as they eye a memorable farewell for the German in his last season.

However, they will have to improve on this erratic display to hold off Arsenal and champions City, who are three points adrift of Liverpool.

"Our general game until I think we made the changes was not great. That's what we have to admit," Klopp said. "It's tricky, they had such a low block, but you have to do better."

"That's how it is. You have to change games from the bench when needed and so I'm really happy with that."

Liverpool head to Manchester United in the league tomorrow for a crucial clash with their bitter rivals.

The Reds had to come from behind to beat Brighton last weekend, but Klopp insisted he was feeling "calm" as the title race approaches a dramatic climax. Even so, his heart must have been beating a little faster than usual when United almost snatched a shock lead.

Jack Robinson's long throw reached the unmarked James McAtee in the area and on-loan Manchester City youngster's volley forced a reflex save from Caoimhin Kelleher.

From the resulting corner, Ben Brereton Diaz almost tapped in at the far post as the Liverpool defence stood statuesque.

AFP

Inter eyeing Milan derby title triumph as Roma host capital clash

MILAN

INTER Milan travel to Udinese on Monday still with a chance of winning the Serie A title in the upcoming Milan derby, while Roma host their own colourful local rivalry with Champions League football in the balance.

It is not unusual for derby talk to dominate local chatter in Milan in the run-up to the match but eyes have been on this fixture for weeks as Inter could humiliate their rivals.

A 14-point lead at the top of Serie A with eight matches left means it's only a matter of time before Inter beat second-placed AC Milan to a 20th league crown.

Regardless of what happens, 11 points will be enough for Inter but Simone Inzaghi's side could yet claim the Scudetto in front of massed ranks of Milan fans at the next derby on April 22.

Tickets for that match have, as the Gazzetta Dello Sport put it on Wednesday, been "pulverised" with the Inter contingent restricted to 7,500 of the more than 70,000 places at the San Siro.

Inter defender Alessandro Bastoni claimed that the "when or how doesn't really matter" but winning the title in the derby would be sweet revenge for being beaten to it by Milan on the final day of the season two years ago.

It is a serious possibility too, as should the two teams line up at the derby with 13-15 points separating them, Inter can win the title with five games to spare by beating Milan.

Should that gap increase to between 16-18 points Inter would only need a draw against Milan, who host Lecce on Saturday.

And with both teams having on-paper easy fixtures over the next two weeks, Inter should have the chance to win the title with a sixth straight derby win, having smashed Milan 5-1 in September.

"It's too early to talk about Inter getting their second star (for 20 titles)," said Milan captain Davide Calabria last week.

AFP

Liverpool face Man Utd title test as top four battle heats up

LONDON

PREMIER League leaders Liverpool head to Manchester United looking to move a step closer to equalling their bitter rivals' record of 20 English titles.

In a gripping title race, Arsenal and Manchester City will hope for a Liverpool stumble, while the top four battle and relegation survival fight are also heating up.

AFP Sport looks at three talking points ahead of this weekend's action:

- No 'revenge' mission for Liverpool -

With memories of their painful FA Cup quarter-final defeat at Manchester United still fresh for Alex Mac Allister and his Liverpool teammates, it would have been no surprise if the Argentine midfielder had branded their return to Old Trafford as a revenge mission.

Jürgen Klopp's side twice blew the lead in a 4-3 defeat that was clinched by Amad Diallo in the final seconds of extra-time.

The end of Liverpool's quadruple bid stung the Merseysiders but they can make amends by defeating Erik ten Hag's men as they bid to move level with United's record 20 top-flight titles.



Jürgen Klopp (Agencies)

Mac Allister, whose thunderous strike put Liverpool on course for their 3-1 win over Sheffield United on Thursday, insisted avenging their FA Cup loss was not the primary motivation with so much already at stake.

"I don't know if it's revenge but for sure it will be an important game for us because if we want to win something we have to win every game and that's the aim," said Mac Allister, whose team are two points clear of second-placed Arsenal with eight games left.

Arsenal head to Brighton aiming to keep the pressure on Liverpool, while third-

placed City -- three points behind the leaders -- travel to Crystal Palace.

- Top four race heats up -
Tottenham are not the "finished article" according to boss Ange Postecoglou as his top four hopefuls face a vital weekend in the race to qualify for the Champions League.

Postecoglou's side were held to frustrating 1-1 draw at West Ham on Tuesday but Aston Villa's 4-1 defeat at Manchester City 24 hours later kept the north Londoners firmly in contention for a top four berth.

Fifth-placed Tottenham are two points behind fourth-

placed Villa with a game in hand.

Struggling Nottingham Forest visit the Tottenham Hotspur Stadium today, while Villa host Brentford.

Both sides will be expected to win and a shock slip-up could be a decisive moment, with Postecoglou conceding his team are still a work in progress.

"I would love to have a joystick and put them where I want them but it doesn't work like that. We are not the finished article and we know that," he said.

Villa are aiming to play in the Champions League for the first time since 1983 and boss Unai Emery said his players relish the pressure.

"We will play a lot of matches in the next weeks, starting on Saturday. It's clear we are motivated and excited to try to be competitive," he said.

- 'Only way is up' in survival battle -

Nottingham Forest midfielder Morgan Gibbs-White is confident his side will not crack as the tension mounts in the struggle for survival.

Gibbs-White scored as fourth-bottom Forest defeated Fulham 3-1 on Tuesday to improve their hopes of beating the drop with a first win in seven games in all competitions.

"Credit to the whole team. It looks like the only way is up from here, hopefully," Gibbs-White said.

Forest have been deducted four points for breaching the Premier League's profitability and sustainability rules, while Everton were hit with a six-point punishment -- reduced from 10 on appeal -- for similar financial offences.

Everton face boss Sean Dyche's former club Burnley in a crucial clash at Goodison Park today when the Toffees will bid to snap a club record 13-game winless Premier League run.

Dyche's side are seven points above second-bottom Burnley as they chase their first league win since beating the Claret in December.

Third-bottom Luton host Bournemouth looking to close the three-point gap on Forest.

Fixtures (all times GMT)

Today
Crystal Palace v Manchester City (1130), Aston Villa v Brentford, Everton v Burnley, Fulham v Newcastle, Luton v Bournemouth, Wolves v West Ham, Brighton v Arsenal (1630)

Tomorrow
Manchester United v Liverpool (1430), Sheffield United v Chelsea (1630), Tottenham v Nottingham Forest (1700)

Cole Palmer's late chaos leaves Erik ten Hag facing the end game at Man United

By Miguel Delaney

AN end-to-end match perhaps had the only finish it could. Chaos as late as the 101st minute, and pure spectacle. It might well finish Erik ten Hag at Manchester United.

Cole Palmer rose above so much of it to score a 98th-minute penalty and then follow it with that late deflected winner. It summed up so much that the comeback - after the only period of the game where Chelsea were somewhat flat - came from a moment of unfortunate calamity. Poor Diogo Dalot slipped, and the referee felt he had no option but to point to the spot. Palmer of course scored.

Ten Hag will of course now face potentially unsustainable pressure. The worst was that you couldn't even say his team really faced the same. Except, for the second game in a row, they conceded so late. They have now given up five points in five days due to three goals after the 97th minute.

That just isn't what should be happening two years into his reign. As for Mauricio Pochettino, suddenly jubilant as he and his staff ran onto the pitch, there is still so much that's confusing.

For all the apparent chaos of this game, there was one discernible pattern. This was the sixth consecutive game that Chelsea had conceded at least twice.

That made much of this both unpredictable but also utterly predictable. The way both teams

have been playing of late meant there was no real surprise that it was open or that there were comebacks. You could have been told almost any scoreline here without seeing the game and believed it - bar perhaps a 0-0. That was impossible after just four minutes.

Chelsea just swept through United for Malo Gusto to square for Conor Gallagher. The midfielder shot first time, but it still shouldn't have been enough to beat Andre Onana in the way it did. It was hardly a strong hand. There was barely strong contact from Antony when Marc Cucurella went over 15 minutes later, but a penalty was still given. Cole Palmer took the opportunity, as he was always going to do.

Chelsea, you could similarly say, were always going to concede.

It could never have been as smooth as the opening 20 minutes suggested. United have a lot of issues but they also have a lot of prime individual quality, which is another contrast with this Chelsea. Pochettino's team instead contributed some all-too-typical individual errors.

On 34 minutes, Moises Caicedo played a ball right across his own half, which was yards for a Chelsea player. It is simply inviting problems against pace as electric as Alejandro Garnacho's.

He was more alert than any Chelsea defender, picked up the ball, and just soared through. The Argentine of course finished. Chelsea of course didn't learn the



Another frustrating day at the office for Ten Hag (Reuters)

lesson.

It is one of the structural flaws in Pochettino's side that does remind you of the Frank Lampard days. When they are solid in defence, they are prosaic in attack. When they're flowing in attack, they're porous in defence. So it was here.

Once breached, Chelsea were always on the brink. It was like all assurance went. It took United just five minutes to equalise, Diogo Dalot

sending over the most gorgeous cross. That was matched by the quality of Bruno Fernandes's header, which was almost Eric Cantona-like. That isn't the first time that's been said. It wasn't to be the last time there was extreme openness in either half, or a goal.

This could easily have been 5-5. There was a period of the game when the two sides seemed to be just exchanging hard shots on the break that

the goalkeepers were palming away. Onana did at least compensate for his earlier error with some very strong hands.

Antony then compensated for his earlier foul - harsh as it was for a penalty to be given - with another inspired moment.

With Chelsea again pouring forward, and United once more seeing how much space there was to exploit, the ball came to the Brazilian on the right. He whipped

over an inspired ball for Garnacho to run onto and force past Djordje Petrovic. Pochettino could only sit there - and then bring on Alfie Gilchrist and Trevoh Chalobah to win the game.

United meanwhile brought on Mason Mount, to the boos of the home crowd. That feels quite harsh given he is a player who has scored the goals that delivered them to one of their two Champions League finals, and then set up the winner in that game. It's not like he was even that insistent on leaving Chelsea, either, given so much surrounding his exit was circumstantial.

Mount actually performed well when he came on. It was more than could be said for his team as a whole. Those boos soon turned to raucous jubilation.

It was almost out of nothing, from a game that had everything except real quality. It might well mean Ten Hag no longer has the United job.

THE INDEPENDENT

Gwiji by David Chikoko



SPORT

Liverpool face Man Utd title test as top four battle heats up

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Mamelodi Sundowns Ladies FC and South Africa women's national team's keeper, Andile Dlamini. PHOTO: COURTESY OF MAMELODI SUNDOWNS LADIES FC

South Africa dominates nomination for COSAFA Women's Goalkeeper of the Year Award

JOHANNESBURG

THE nominees for the category of the Women's Goalkeeper of the Year at the inaugural 2023 COSAFA Awards have been unveiled.

The winner will be announced at a gala awards ceremony in Durban on April 19, with a panel of judges from across the region having assessed their performances for the period of January 1 to December 31, 2023.

The judging covers their form for club and country. The three nominees are Andile Dlamini, Mercy Sikelo, and Kaylin Swart.

Andile Dlamini (Mamelodi Sundowns Ladies & South Africa)

Andile was on the bench for all four of South Africa's games at the 2023 Women's World Cup but did help Mamelodi Sundowns Ladies triumph in three showdowns.

The club lifted titles in a domestic tournament, namely South Africa's Hollywoodbets Super League, COSAFA Women's Champions League, and CAF Women's Champions League, with Andile conceding only one goal along the way in the latter two and none in the continental finals.

Mercy Sikelo (Ntopwa Ladies FC & Malawi)
It was a bumper year for Mercy, who played a leading role as her club, Ntopwa Ladies FC, claimed the FAM Women's Championship with a penalty shoot-out win over Ascent Academy, in which Sikelo saved the decisive kick.

She then went on to help Malawi claim a maiden COSAFA Women's Championship crown with a 2-1 victory over holders Zambia in the final.

Kaylin Swart (JVW FC & South Africa)
Kaylin played all four games for South Africa at the 2023 Women's World Cup but did concede two goals in every match. However, the quality of the opposition must be taken into account.

She helped South Africa qualify for the 2024 Women's Africa Cup of Nations finals as the first-choice keeper in the team.

She had a solid year with her South African club-Janine van Wyk Football Club, who finished third in the domestic league.

The judging panel from across the 14 member nations that make up COSAFA are renowned for their knowledge of Southern African football.

The panel constitutes Houssamidine Ben Ahmed (Comoros), Ivan Capuepue (Angola), Rob Delpont (South Africa), Gerard Govinden (Seychelles), Peter Kanjere (Malawi), Jesse Kauraisa (Namibia), and Kagiso Kgaogano (Botswana).

Sibusiso Masilela (Eswatini), Sandra Mwila (Zambia), Boitelo Radebe (Lesotho), Heriniaina Samson (Madagascar), Benoit Thomas (Mauritius), Steve Vickers (Zimbabwe) and Raimundo Zandamela (Mozambique) also make the panel. AGENCIES

Dabo: Azam FC poised for return to NBC PL with renewed focus



Azam FC players are pictured taking part in drills in Dar es Salaam recently, shaping up for this season's NBC Premier League and CRDB Federation Cup fixtures. PHOTO: COURTESY OF AZAM FC

By Correspondent Seth Mapoli

WITH the NBC Premier League and CRDB Federation Cup on the horizon, Azam FC is sharpening its tools under head coach Yousouph Dabo.

The Senegalese coach sees his outfit's upcoming clash against Mtibwa Sugar as a critical test that will unveil the team's sharpened edge.

Azam FC is scheduled to face Mtibwa Sugar tomorrow in the knockout stage of the CRDB Federation Cup. The match will be played at Azam Complex Stadium in Dar es Salaam.

Speaking in Dar es Salaam recently, Dabo underscored the significance of securing a victory against Mtibwa Sugar.

Beyond the result itself, however, he highlighted the value of the match in evaluating his team's progress after their extended training period.

"This game will serve as a barometer for our improve-

ment during the league break," Dabo asserted.

"We've been diligently training to address the weaknesses we identified in past matches. The friendly games we played were instrumental in getting my players back to a good level of performance."

"The Mtibwa Sugar encounter will be a true reflection of where my team stands."

Following the Mtibwa Sugar match, Dabo acknowledged the upcoming challenges in the Premier League.

However, he exuded con-

fidence in his team's ability to excel. He plans to secure victories in all upcoming matches, starting with the away game against Namungo FC which will take place on April 13.

"The Mtibwa Sugar match marks the culmination of this pre-league period,"

Dabo explained.

"We'll be returning to the league with an away fixture against Namungo FC on April 13 before playing Mashujaa FC at home on April 16."

Currently, Azam FC sits comfortably in second place in the NBC Premier League table with 47 points. Their record boasts 14 wins, 5 draws, and only 2 losses after playing 21 games.

This season, Azam FC has emerged as a formidable force, particularly in their attacking prowess, having notched an impressive 47 goals, trailing only behind Young Africans SC, alias Yanga.

Spearheading their offensive charge is midfielder Feisal Salum, boasting 13 goals and five assists, contributing to a total of 18 goals. Additionally, Kipre Junior has played a pivotal role with seven goals and eight assists.

In the club's recent performances, Azam FC has demonstrated resilience, securing victories in 3 out of their last 5 matches, while drawing in the remaining two.

Notably, their triumph over Yanga, the reigning champions of the NBC Premier League, in their previous encounter, has turned heads and underscored their potential as serious contenders in the league.

Azam FC's next Premier League match is against Namungo FC on April 13 and, after that, they face Mashujaa FC on April 16 and Ifhefu SC on April 27.

Zahera confident as Namungo FC faces tough NBC PL fixtures

By Correspondent Seth Mapoli

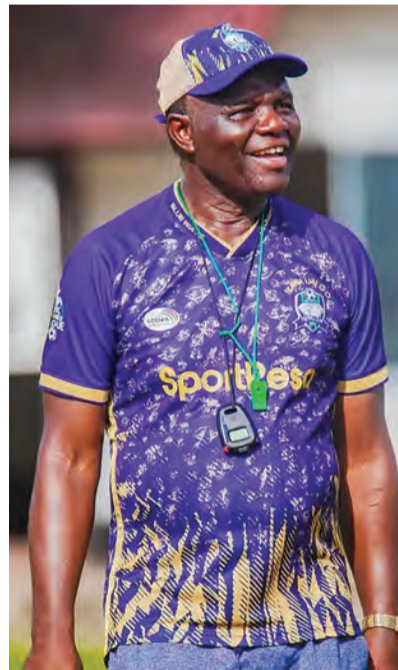
NAMUNGO FC's head coach, Mwinyi Zahera, has hailed their 5-3 triumph over Kagera Sugar in the penalty shootout of the Round of 16 clash of the CRDB Federation Cup as a promising indicator of their title contention aspirations.

The nail-biting victory, secured at Majaliwa Stadium in Ruangwa earlier this week, propelled Namungo FC to the forefront as the first team to secure a spot in the tournament's quarterfinals, with the show-down's title currently held by Young Africans SC.

Zahera emphasized the anticipated challenge posed by Kagera Sugar, acknowledging their recent encounter in the league as a reference point for their competitive approach.

"As a seasoned coach, it's imperative to respect our opponents. Having been in football for a considerable period, I anticipated the intricacies of the game, thus ensuring thorough preparations that ultimately led to our triumph," Zahera, drawing from his experience as a former head coach of Young Africans SC, noted.

Following the CRDB Federation Cup match, Namungo FC will now bat-



Namungo FC's head coach, Mwinyi Zahera.

tle it out in the NBC Premier League in April. They are scheduled to play against Azam FC on April 13 and, thereafter lock horns with Coastal Union on April 17.

The Lindi team will conclude the April fixtures with a tie against Sim-

ba SC, with the date slated to be announced later. All these matches will be played at Namungo FC's home stadium-Majaliwa Stadium.

Zahera expressed his confidence ahead of a challenging fixture list in the NBC Premier League.

After securing a hard-fought victory in the CRDB Federation Cup, Zahera turned his attention to the upcoming league matches.

The Congolese coach noted: "The league is very competitive right now. Every team is well-prepared, especially in this final stretch of the season."

"Our April fixtures are particularly difficult, with games against Simba SC and Azam FC, both are title contenders," Zahera revealed.

Despite the daunting task ahead, Zahera remains optimistic, revealing: "It won't be easy but we will fight hard and strive for positive results."

Namungo FC currently finds itself six points away from challenging for a top-four finish and a potential CAF Confederation Cup spot.

Their performance against Kagera Sugar in the CRDB Federation Cup is a testament to their resilience and determination.

Contrary to Zahera's elation, Kagera

Sugar's head coach Fred Minziro expressed disappointment over the outcome, highlighting his team's missed opportunity to progress further in the tournament.

"We anticipated a different result, aiming to advance to the next stage. However, our aspirations were thwarted, primarily due to the unfortunate penalty shootout loss," Minziro lamented.

Minziro issued his complaint with emphasis on the significance of the match for Kagera Sugar's advancement ambitions.

"We now shift our focus to preparing for the remaining Premier League fixtures," Minziro added, highlighting the imperative of regrouping and strategizing for upcoming league encounters.

The intense clash not only underscored the competitive nature of Tanzanian football but also showcased the resilience and strategic prowess of both teams in their pursuit of glory.

As the tournament progresses, Namungo FC's victory serves as a testament to their determination and preparedness, while Kagera Sugar faces the challenge of regaining momentum in their quest for success.

Flexibles by David Chikoko

HOW DID YOU CELEBRATE APRIL FOOLS' DAY?

WHO ME?

