

COOPERATION



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PAYMENTS



DEVELOPING STATES PAID \$443.5 BILLION ON PUBLIC DEBT IN 2022

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Solar energy: Investors call for 50kw cap scrapped off



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Minister lists parastatals set for mergers or deregistration

By Henry Mwangonde

THE government has announced that it will deregister four and merge 16 public entities in a move aimed at boosting efficiency, performance and increasing revenue.

Prof Kitila Mkumbo, the Planning and Investment state minister in the President's Office, said at a press conference yesterday that among key institutions set to be merged is the National Identification Authority (NIDA) and the Registration Insolvency and Trusteeship Agency (RITA).

Others are the Tanzania Agricultural Development Bank (TADB) and the Agricultural In-

puts Trust Fund (AGITF), he said, highlighting the Tanzania Smallholders Tea Development Agency (TSHDA) and the Tanzania Tea Board (TTB).

The Tanzania Dairy Board (TDB) will merge with the Tanzania Meat Board and the Centre for Agricultural Mechanisation and Rural Technology (CARMATEC), he stated.

The Small Industries Development Organization (SIDO) and the Tanzania Engineering and Manufacturing Design Organization (TEMDO) will merge to form one institution, he said.

Similarly, the Tanzania Investment Cen-

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Prime Minister Kassim Majaliwa bestows Charles Nyoni with the rank of assistant superintendent at the closing ceremony for senior and second level leadership course for Prisons officers at Ukonga Prison Officers Academy in Dar es Salaam yesterday. Photo: PMO

SPORTS

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Yanga hopes to heap misery on rock-bottom Mtibwa Sugar

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Man Utd face daunting test at Premier League leaders Liverpool

UN commends Tanzania's engagement in DRC peace

By Guardian Reporter

THE United Nations (UN) has commended Tanzania for taking a lead in safeguarding peace in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and the Great Lakes Region as a whole.

Ambassador Huang Xia, special envoy of the UN Secretary-General for the Great Lakes, aired this sentiment at a meeting with Foreign Affairs and East African Cooperation minister January Makamba in Dar es Salaam yesterday.

He said the United Nations secretariat commends Tanzania for helping to protect the foundations of peace, affirming that it is the right time for the Great Lakes countries to help in ensuring peace in DRC.

Peace needs to be affirmatively created in eastern DRC to help the country make vital strides in economic growth, he said, while the minister commended the UN for spearheading efforts to restore peace in the DRC.

This is vital for the region as it will help

the region protect its people, enabling them to take part in economic activities more effectively, he said.

He said that Tanzania believes that peace is the main requirement for the wellbeing of every individual and nations at large, expressing readiness to collaborate with the UN and regional agencies on the issue.

Vice President, Dr Philip Mpango had expressed that position back in July, when representing President Samia Su-

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EAC: Somalia signs accession protocols

Within six months after the signing of the treaty, Somalia shall be required to deposit the instrument of ratification with the secretary general

By Guardian Reporter

SOMALIA yesterday signed the treaty of accession with the East African Community (EAC), the penultimate step for the Horn of Africa nation to join the bloc.

The EAC secretariat said in a statement that the signing was held at the State House in the Ugandan capital of Entebbe, where President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud signed for the new partner state, with South Sudan President Salva Kiir Mayardit, the chairperson of the EAC Summit, the ultimate decision making organ of the EAC grouping the Heads of State.

President Yoweri Museveni witnessed the signing as host of that event, flanked by EAC Secretary General Dr Peter Mathuki, the statement noted.

The Heads of State at their 23rd ordinary meeting in Arusha late last month accepted recommendation of the council of ministers on finalised negotiations with Somalia, resolving to admit it into the bloc.

The summit delegated the chairman, President Mayardit, to agree with Somalia on the signing event for the Treaty of Accession, it said, as the Heads of State directed steps to be taken thereafter.

Within six months after the signing of the treaty, Somalia shall be required to deposit the instrument of ratification with the secretary general, they stated, similarly directing the EAC council of ministers to develop a roadmap for the integration of

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Zanzibar President Dr Hussein Ali Mwinyi (R) receives a sample map of the new business town, Nyamanzi West District "B" in the Zanzibar West Urban Region from Omar Said Shaaban, the Trade and Industrial Development minister, at the State House yesterday. Photo: State House



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Minister lists parastatals set for mergers or deregistration

FROM PAGE 1
The government formed a team of experts to carry out an in-depth analysis of public organisations to assess their performance and to give advice on maintaining them, merging some or deregistering which others, he elaborated.

The assessment took into consideration the participation of the private sector in investment and business growth, he stated, affirming that the public sector needs to focus on areas which do not attract private sector investments. They will be required to invest in strategic areas as per their functions, he stated.

The reorganisation also reduces the number of public entities needing subsidies, with subsidies being directed to institutions whose spheres of work are less hospital to the private sector, he stated.

No employment will be lost for public servants in the deregistered institutions since their entitlements will be taken into consideration, he said.

The government expects the mergers and deregistration of institutions to be completed during the current financial year as this is a progressive exercise and the monitoring and evaluation will be pursued in phases, the minister added.

The Tanzania Pyrethrum Board (TPB) will be deregistered and its functions transferred to Cereals and Other Produce Regulatory Authority (COPRA), he said, explaining the measures as part of implementation of directives by President Samia Suluhu Hassan.

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UN commends Tanzania's engagement in DRC peace

FROM PAGE 1
The VP had declared that Tanzania is committed to contribute towards the SADC mission in the DRC, as part of efforts to ensure the goal of restoring peace and stability is attained.

Tanzania was fully supportive of SADC efforts to strengthen the defence and security situation in Eastern DRC, the VP had emphasised.

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Tanzania was fully supportive of SADC efforts to strengthen the defence and security situation in Eastern DRC, the VP had emphasised.

EAC: Somalia signs accession protocols

FROM PAGE 1
Somalia into the community. The council is expected to present a report on progress on this aspect at the next meeting of the

summit, which includes leaders of Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan, Uganda and Tanzania, forming what is now Africa's fastest integrating bloc.

Congolese lobby calls for peaceful elections to end recurrent conflict

NAIROBI
A group of Congolese activists have launched a platform to promote peaceful campaigns and elections in their country, with the aim of ending years of unrest, particularly in the eastern regions.

Known as the 'Friends of a Peaceful Congo', the group gathered in Nairobi, Kenya to launch what they call the 'Alliance Fleuve Congo (Congo River Alliance)', which is targeting political parties, civil society groups, resistance and community self-defence forces, the DRC army and community and diaspora leaders.

The idea is to reduce inter-communal tensions before and after the December 20 elections.

"To all patriots sharing this urgent need for change, you are invited to join us, without delay, to save our country and to establish cohesive governance in unity and peace, the rebuilding of a State that rises to its sovereign responsibilities on the basis of the law and which assures the safety of all," Mr Corneille Nangaa, their spokesman, said in Nairobi on yesterday.

The group did not say whether it was endorsing any candidate but was critical of the regime of the incumbent President, Felix Tshisekedi.

Some 22 candidates are running in the presidential election slated for December 20, the same day as parliamentary and local elections. They include incumbent Felix Tshisekedi, Nobel laureate Denis Mukwege, 2018 aspirant Martin Fayulu and former Katanga Governor Moïse Katumbi.

The group accused President Tshisekedi's government of failing to

restore stability to the country, which is facing insecurity from armed groups. Around 120 armed groups remain active in the east of the DRC, where violence has resumed since October, pitting the M23 rebel group against government forces and their allied militias. Kinshasa accuses Rwanda of fuelling the M23 violence, but Kigali has denied the accusation.

This week the US put pressure on the M23 and government forces to declare a ceasefire. The rebels said they would respect the pause but would fight back if attacked.

The group said Tshisekedi's tenure has been "characterised by unethical practices such as corruption, embezzlement of public funds, tribalism, dispossession of public and private property, discrimination, lies, tribalism and witch hunt".

They claimed public institutions have been turned into his tools. Indeed, Tshisekedi has blamed outside interference for the failure to end the war in the east.

Last week, while campaigning in Kivu, he accused some unnamed candidates of being proxies for foreign governments. Katumbi is one of the candidates recently accused of holding a Zambian passport, despite the Constitutional Court allowing him to run.

Friends for a Peaceful Congo, whose exact profile or membership was not given, called on President Felix Tshisekedi and the military to lead the Congolese to a peaceful election and ultimately a peaceful transfer of power.

"We launch on this day a call for the unity of all political, social and military forces of the Democratic Republic of Congo," Corneille Nangaa said.

AGENCIES



Community Development, Gender, Women, and Special Groups deputy minister Mwanaidi Ali Khamis (L) receives a briefing on the functions of prosthetic device of a person who has been amputated below the knee from Alkado Benedicto, prosthetist and orthotist at CCBRT hospital (R) during her visit at the CCBRT pavilion to commemorate the Social Welfare Week and the 50th anniversary of the Institute of Social Work which is ongoing at Mnazi Mmoja grounds in Dar es Salaam yesterday. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

African asylum seekers drop by 75 pc, minister

By Nikolaos Prakas

INTERIOR Minister Constantinos Ioannou yesterday discussed Cyprus' policy implemented in recent months to make the country a less attractive destination for migrants with Nigerian and Lebanese officials, while in Geneva, Switzerland for the international forum on refugees.

While meeting the Nigerian Humanitarian Affairs Minister Dr Betta Chimaobim Edu, he informed her about the campaign launched on social media to promote Cyprus as an unattractive destination to those seeking asylum.

Ioannou said that they need to work on replacing "illegal migration" with "legal" routes of migration.

According to the interior

minister, the campaign combined with a series of other measures taken, resulted in the reduction of African arrivals by 75 per cent this year compared to 2022.

Edu in turn briefed Ioannou on the new programme to retain the population currently underway in Nigeria. Through this programme, the government in Nigeria informs the citizens of the country, especially the youth, about the employment prospects for those staying in Nigeria.

The two ministers agreed to provide the Nigerian government with the material used for the Cyprus' information campaign, so that it could be used by the Nigerian authorities as part of the information programme they are implementing at the national level to contain the population.

In an interview the previous

day with Reuters, Ioannou raised the issue of promoting parts of the EU to curb migration to Cyprus, something he also discussed on Friday with the ministers he met.

Ioannou met Lebanon's Minister of Interior and Immigration Abdallah Bou Habib, with whom they reviewed developments in the eastern Mediterranean region.

Considering that in recent months there has been an increase in sea arrivals and given that a significant number of boats depart from the coast of Lebanon, Ioannou said there is the urgent need to strengthen controls by the Lebanese authorities.

He reiterated the need to support Lebanon, recognising the problems the country faces due to its proximity to Syria and the pressures it receives from massive

flows of Syrians.

Bou Habib expressed his country thanks to Cyprus for its initiative to promote at the European level the logistical and financial support of Lebanon.

Also, both ministers agreed that the EU's position towards the Syrian regime should be immediately reviewed, taking into account the latest contacts and commitments of the regime to the High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) over required steps to restore security in the territory of Syria for the repatriation of its citizens.

They noted the need to promote investments in Syria, which will create prospects for rebuilding the country and, by extension, development prospects that will contribute to the containment of the population.



Zanzibar Second Vice President Hemed Suleiman Abdulla speaks during the inauguration of Zanzibar Afya 'Call Centre' at Magomeni grounds yesterday. Photo: SVPO

Somalia seeks global support to address forced displacement

GENEVA

SOMALIA is seeking global support to address forced displacement caused by multiple challenges, including a "prolonged conflict of climate change," the country's commissioner for refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) said yesterday.

"These challenges have forced millions of Somalis to flee their homes and seek refuge in neighbouring countries and beyond," Safia Hassan Mohamed said at a press conference on the sidelines of the Global Refugee Forum in Geneva.

Underlining that her country is one of the nations that produces the least carbon globally, Mohamed said: "But it is also one of the worst affected by an ongoing climate crisis."

While the country is dealing with IDPs, she said it also hosts 30,000 refugees and asylum seekers from neighbouring countries.

"We believe refugees and IDPs are agents of change, they bring skills and knowledge to the community they live with," she added.

Voicing support for the Global Compact on Refugees, a

framework for more predictable and equitable responsibility-sharing, the commissioner urged: "We call on the global community to share the burden with Somalia as we strive providing dignity, protection, and solutions for displaced population."

Over three million people have been displaced as a result of climate conflict, with the majority of them being women, girls, and children, Mohamed said.

During the forum, she said Somalia pledged to offer "durable solutions for 50,000 displaced people in four years."

These solutions will be provided

through legal frameworks, disaster risk reduction, and ensuring their inclusion in society and the economy.

The three-day forum, which is set to conclude on Friday, is the largest quadrennial international meeting on refugee issues.

It is co-convened by five states - Colombia, France, Japan, Jordan, and Uganda - and co-hosted by Switzerland and the UNHCR.

With refugee numbers rising due to armed conflicts, environmental pressures, and natural disasters, among other factors, this year's forum will work to address a growing international issue.



Children with autism and neuro developmental disorders look at educational animation during the official launch of the FIDI animation at Gabriella Children's Rehabilitation Centre (GCRC) in Hai District, Kilimanjaro Region recently whereby the Tai Tanzania team came to officially display the animation to Gabriella Centre. The GCRC team, along with the children had the opportunity to reflect after watching the FIDI animation. This awareness animation has come at a crucial time when many parents and communities struggle to recognise the signs of autism, often confusing it with negative beliefs. Photo: Correspondent James Lanka

Tanzania, Finland hold diplomatic talks

By Guardian Reporter

TANZANIA and Finland have held diplomatic discussion aiming to strengthen promote and maintain cooperation in a number of priority sectors for mutual benefits.

Finland becomes the first Nordic country to hold diplomatic talks with Tanzania, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and East African Cooperation said in a statement.

It said that although Tanzania has good relations with the Nordic countries, the held discussion will further cooperation between Tanzania, Finland and other countries in the European Union (EU).

Tanzania was presented by the Minister for Foreign Affairs and East African Cooperation, January Makamba while the Finnish government was presented by Pasi Hellman, Under-Secretary of State for International Development at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland.

Speaking at a meeting, Makamba said the six phase government is determined to protect citizens and ensure good governance.

Makamba explained that improvements made in the Political Parties Act as well as the Elections Act have resulted in enhanced freedom of politicians to conduct their activities in the country.

"Tanzania will continue to protect and promote the fundamental human rights, democracy and good governance as important pillars to bring about sustainable development in the country," he said.

Meanwhile, Hellman said that cooperation between Finland and Tanzania has existed for more than 50 years and has been strong throughout the period. He said the government of Finland is determined to continue strengthening cooperation with Tanzania in various sectors.

"This is the first diplomatic discussions between our nations that aims to further strengthen our cooperation, exchange knowledge and experience on various issues related to diplomacy and development in different sectors," said Hellman.

He said through the meeting, the leaders, among other things, discussed business and investment issues, women economic empowerment, regional cooperation between Europe and Africa,

generation equity, climate change as well as issues related to defence and security.

The meeting was attended by official from the Tanzania Investment Centre (TIC), Finland Embassy in Dar es Salaam and Permanent Secretaries from the ministries Foreign Affairs and East African Cooperation, Education, Transport, Community Development, Gender, Elderly and Children, and Vice President's Office (Environment).

"This is the first diplomatic discussions between our nations that aims to further strengthen our cooperation, exchange knowledge and experience on various issues related to diplomacy and development in different sectors"

By Guardian Reporter, Zanzibar

'Zanzibar to take measures to control outbreak of diseases'

ZANZIBAR Second Vice President Hemed Suleiman Abdulla has said the government will continue to create a good environment as well as taking measures to control the outbreak of diseases.

He made the statement yesterday at the launch of the Zanzibar Afya Call Centre at Magomeni Stadium in Unguja. The call centre will be specifically for reporting disease outbreaks.

Hemed said the health sector in Zanzibar is taking steps to improve availability and provision of quality services and control disease outbreaks which are a major challenge due to the lack of effective communication channels from citizens to health workers.

He said establishment of the call centre would reduce the challenges and ensure rapid response.

He said Zanzibar is one of the

countries affected by the outbreak of COVID-19 whereas people lost their lives. He said the pandemic also affected the economic growth due to various measures taken to control its spread.

Hemed added that the launch of the communication center will save as a tool in facilitating access to communication between citizens and health care providers when outbreaks and emergencies occur.

He urged citizens to use the centre accordingly to facilitate access to quality services at appropriate time.

"The presence of this centre is a relief to the people as well as residents. It will be used to direct people to the right place to receive medical treatment in accordance

with their illness and procedures set by the Ministry of Health," he said.

The second VP said the call centre for epidemic diseases will help to educate Zanzibar residents on health insurance packages including how to join, benefits and beneficiaries

Minister for Health, Nassor Ahmed Mazrui said that operationalization of the centre requires sufficient funds and resources to work efficiently and professionally.

Mazrui asked employees of the centre to be honest and work professionally to match the government's speed in serving the people of Zanzibar.

A Representative from the United

Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), Awety Atie said they are working closely with the government in implementing development projects including renovation of the call centre epidemic diseases.

Atie said the efforts are meant to control the outbreak of diseases in the Isles.

He said UNICEF will continue to provide aid and cooperation to the government of Zanzibar in running the centre for a period of five years.

He asked citizens to use the centre by seeking clarification and solutions on health issues by calling a toll-free number-190 or sending a text message through number 30 to assist with proper medication procedures.

FOR SALE IN ARUSHA

Bitumen

PG70-22

Sealed drums

Contact:

0767020869

WWF Tanzania Country Office
 Plot 252, Kiko Street, Off Mwai Kibaki Rd, Mikochehi
 P O Box 63117, Dar es Salaam Tanzania
 Tel: 255 22 2700077
 Fax: 255 22 2775535
 procurement@wwftz.org
 wwftz.or.tz

REQUEST FOR TENDER
Carpentry workshop equipment supply and installation, commissioning, training workshop operators and after sell services

1. WWF Tanzania is an international non-governmental organization dealing with Environmental protection in Tanzania since 1990 and it has supported the Government of Tanzania in implementing various projects on Marine, Forest, Fresh Water, Energy and Wildlife. WWF global mission is to stop the degradation of the planet's natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature, by:
 - Conserving the world's biological diversity;
 - Ensuring that the use of renewable natural resources is sustainable and
 - Promoting the reduction of pollution and wasteful consumption
2. World Wide Fund for Nature – Tanzania Country Office (WWF – Tanzania) through the forest program has set aside sum funds that has supported the construction of a pilot community carpentry workshop in one selected village (Sauti moja) in Tunduru district, employing a selected group of youth to improve the product value of VLFs and improve livelihoods.
3. WWF Tanzania through is seeking to procure the services of a qualified supplier of Carpentry machinery and equipment listed in the detailed document. The supplier will also be responsible for the installation of carpentry workshop equipment ensuring that it is installed correctly and safely.
4. WWF Tanzania therefore, invites bids for Supply, Installation, testing and Commissioning for the full sets required of carpentry equipment, and will also provide training for users and have them able and capable of using the equipment.
5. The applicant will also need to show the complementary support that he will render within the period of 24months and also, the after sale support and cost associated for it. This will also be part of the evaluation process.
6. Full terms of reference, list of the equipment, the carpentry facility design sketch and other details as scope of work for this tender are available on WWF website at https://www.wwf.or.tz/jobs_and_opportunities/consultancies_and_tenders/ Interested parties should submit Only electronic bids through the procurement email @ procurement@wwftz.org to reach WWF 10:00am, Monday, 8th January, 2024. addressed to;

Secretary, Procurement Committee
 WWF Tanzania
 White Star Street, Off Whie Star Streeti Road Plot 252, Mikochehi
 P. O. Box 63117, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania
 Tel: +255 22 277 5346/277 2455/270 0077 Fax: +255 22 277 5535;
 website. wwftz.or.tz
7. Evaluation of the tender will be done based on WWF procurement guidelines and that WWF Tanzania is not bound to accept any lowest or highest proposal/bid. Only Successful candidate(s) shall be contacted.
8. WWF has a principle of zero tolerance on fraud and corruption, if you encounter such an incident, then report it by sending an email to fcci@wwftz.org

UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA
 PRESIDENT'S OFFICE
 REGIONAL ADMINISTRATION AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT
 KINONDONI MUNICIPAL COUNCIL

11ST December, 2023

PUBLIC NOTICE

THE KINONDONI MUCIPAL DIRECTOR, WISHES TO INFORM THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY OPERATING IN KINONDONI MUNICIPALITY THAT, YOU ARE REQUIRED TO PAY YOUR BILLBOARDS LEVY BY 31ST DECEMBER, 2023.

OUR MUNICIPAL LEVIES COLLECTION POINTS (TEGETA-KIBO COMPLEX; MWENGE; BUNJU; NAMANGA; MIKOCHENI AND AT THE MUNICIPAL HEADQUARTER WILL BE READY TO SERVE OUR CUSTOMERS.

IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE DEADLINE, THE MUNICIPAL WILL RESULT IN REMOVING ALL UNLIEVED BILLBOARDS.

ISSUED BY THE GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATION UNIT,
 KINONDONI MUNICIPAL COUNCIL

All correspondence should be sent to Municipal Director, 2 Morogoro Road, P.O. Box 31902, 14883 Dar es Salaam, You can also contact us by Phone 022 2170173, Quotation 022 2172605, E-mail: md@kinondonimc.go.tz

CITES allows Tanzania to engage in elephant trading

By Correspondent Marc Nkwame

TRADING or hunting elephants is now feasible under rules of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) will now be able to conduct unhampered wildlife trading.

Dr Fortunata Msoffe, the Wildlife acting director for the Natural Resources and Tourism ministry, The African elephant species in Tanzania has been taken from Appendices I which means the jumbos are no longer facing threats in the country.

Moving into Appendix II lists, Tanzanian elephants join species that are not necessarily now threatened with extinction.

Tanzania is the only country in the Eastern Africa region which according to CITES has shown remarkable improvement in the protection of important wildlife species, such as the elephant.

THE Conference of the Parties of has upgraded Tanzania's status as far as elephant's conservation is concerned meaning the country The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES), is a global body which regulates and monitors trade in endangered flora and fauna species to ensure it does not threaten their long-term survival in the wild.

Speaking at the threshold of the National Wildlife Forum in Dar-es-salaam, the told journalists that the declaration was made during the recently held CITES Conference of Parties meeting of November 2023.

Animal and plant species covered by CITES are listed in three appendices, according to the degree of protection they need.

In fact the country is forging ahead in the nation's ambitious Wildlife Conservation Action Plans including that of preserving elephants which according to experts, is now paying dividends.

"Elephants are among the endangered species in Tanzania. The number of Jumbos had dropped from over 100,000 jumbos down to around 40,000 but now the giant mammals' population is on the rebound, with their population surging beyond 65,000" said the Acting Director of Wildlife Dr Msoffe.

During the 2009 estimates documented that Tanzania had around 110,000 jumbos, placing the country in the second position after Botswana, which by then had close to 150,000 elephants.

However, the number of trumpeting Jumbos in Tanzania, according to the 'Great Elephant Census' report of 2015, had

drastically dropped from over 100,000 estimated in 2009, down to 45,000 average, in 2015.

"That indicates a loss of more than 60 percent in the country's elephant population in less than ten years," pointed out the Acting Director of Wildlife.

However, the number has since escalated to reach more than 63,000 elephants as of now.

But some observers believe the country could be having around 80,000 jumbos since some of these large mammals, especially those in the Southern Circuit sometimes migrate to neighboring countries such as Zambia.

The elephants in Mkomazi also occasionally cross into Kenya's Tsavo National Parks and back.

Tanzania ranks third in having the largest population of elephants third in the world after Botswana which has a total of 130,000 elephants and Zimbabwe with 100,000 Jumbos.

In the fourth position comes Gabon with 50,000 elephants, then Kenya with 36,000 Jumbos ranking in the fifth position globally.

On the other hand, India is at number 6 with 32,000 elephants, followed by Zambia at number 7, with 26,000 such mammals.

Other countries in the top ten in the world as far as elephants' population is concerned, include Namibia (25,000); South Africa (24,000) and Congo Brazzaville (16,000).

The Democratic Republic of Congo on the other hand, tags at number 11, with a total of 13,500 Jumbos.

According to the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), there are approximately 415,000 African elephants left in the world. There are around 40,000 to 50,000 Asian elephants left.

Ivory trade, habitat loss, poaching and human-wildlife conflicts have been posing threats to elephant populations.

Still, the elephant population in southern Africa has increased by 5 percent since 2016 to nearly 228,000, according to results of a first ever aerial census conducted in 2022.



That indicates a loss of more than 60 percent in the country's elephant population in less than ten years

Security organs, stakeholders join in efforts to combat GBV

By Beatrice Philemon

THE Prevention and Combating of Corruption Bureau (PCCB) has collaborated with the police force and stakeholders to provide gender based violence (GBV) education to different groups including young girls.

The trained groups include motorbike and taxi riders, commuter bus drivers and conductors.

Janeth Mawinza, Executive Director of a Dar es Salaam based non-government organization-WAJIKI said yesterday that they are collaborating with PCCB and the police to provide such education as part of measures to reduce such incidents in the community.

She said that WAJIKI conducts the training through a campaign dubbed 'Break the Silence, Safe Travel without Sextortion to Girls and Students.

She lauded the Women Fund Tanzania Trust (WFTT) for issuing 80m/- to WAJIKI for the implementation of the campaign and other activities.

The main goal of the campaign is to prevent teenage pregnancies for girls and students that contribute to school drop-outs; she said adding they aim to support girls so that they meet their educational goals.

WAJIKI has been able to provide training on sexual corruption

(sexortion) and the effects it has on students and girls. It has also reached more than 8000 motorcycle, taxi and commuter buses drivers in Dar es Salaam Region, she added.

Mawinza said through the knowledge and skills they gained from WAJIKI, some motorbike and taxi drivers have placed placards on their vehicles with different messages against GBV.

She said some of them were wearing t-shirts and reflectors jackets carrying different messages to support the campaign against sextortion.

More than 14,500 drivers have become champions whereas they visit primary and secondary schools in Temeke and Ilala districts in Dar es Salaam to educate students about sextortion and its impacts.

"There are those who can directly report such incidents to our offices and police gender desks where legal actions are taken against the culprits," she said.

Ismail Abdalal, a motorbike driver lauded WAJIKI and WFTT for introducing the campaign for girls and students in Dar es Salaam Region.

"Right now more organizations including government institutions visit different schools to educate students and girls about GBV. This has helped to increase their knowledge and understanding on the matter," he stated.



Director of Confederation of Tanzania Industries (CTI), Leodegar Tenga speaks to journalists yesterday about the President Manufacturer of the Year Awards (PMAYA) which is expected to be held on Sunday in Dar es Salaam. Left is head of corporate affairs NBC Bank, Godwin Semunyu and Exim Bank marketing manager, Kauthar D'souza (R). Photo Correspondent Joseph Mwendapole

By Guardian Correspondent,

Morogoro

MINISTER of State in the Prime Minister's Office (Policy Coordination and Parliamentary Affairs), Jenista Mhagama said yesterday that the government has succeeded in fulfilling its responsibility in assisting victims of the mudflow tragedy in Katesh town, Hanang District, Manyara Region.

Opening a meeting of the ministry's workers council in Morogoro Region, Mhagama said efforts are on-going to restore damaged infrastructures including roads. The meeting was meant

'Govt efforts ongoing to restore the damaged infrastructure in Katesh'

to discuss implementation of the office's budget for the 2023/2024 financial year.

Mhagama said the government under President Samia Suluhu Hassan has done a great job in dealing with the disaster in collaboration with stakeholders.

She said the ministry is determined to coordinate and deal with all the disasters as well as other national issues, adding that it continues to closely monitor responsible authorities currently

working in Hanang to restore things into normal.

"We have dealt with the matter in a proper manner that has also impressed President Samia. We have received credit and praise from different people within and outside the country," said Mhagama, urging the ministry employees to continue collaborating to ensure efficiency.

The Ministry's Permanent Secretary, Dr Jim Yonazi said the workers' meetings were mandatory after being introduced by former

President, Julius Nyerere.

Tanzania Union of Government and Health Employees (TUGHE) Secretary, Samwel Nyungwa commended the ministry's management for ensuring workers meet to discuss various issues in regard to execution of their duties.

"As the union, our responsibility is to make sure that workers get their rights and carry out their responsibilities by ensuring timely completion of and implementation of the set plans," he said.



Graduates of Cabin Crew College of Air Tanzania Co. Ltd (ATCL) in a jovial mood during their graduation ceremony held yesterday in Dar es Salaam. Photo Correspondent Joseph Mwendapole

JK applauds NIT for introducing pilot courses

By Guardian Reporter

FORMER Tanzania President Jakaya Kikwete has commended the National Institute of Transport (NIT) for introducing pilot courses, saying the move will help to increase the number of workers in the aviation sector.

Speaking at NIT 39th graduation ceremony, Kikwete said that it is expensive to train pilots abroad. He said providing the course locally would save both the government and parents from paying a lot of money to colleges outside the country.

"The government has purchased two airplanes for pilots training, two engines for students undergoing the flight engineering course and cabin crew mock-ups for training flight attendants," said the former President, adding that Kilimanjaro

International Airport (KIA) has been given a 60 hectares land which will be used for training.

He advised graduates to continue learning to further upgrade their skills for the nation to have a good number of qualified aviation experts.

Kikwete applauded NIT for expanding the scope of providing training by covering other sectors such as air, marine and railway transport. He also launched a book that carries the history of the NIT since its establishment in 1975.

Deputy minister for Transport, David Kihenzile said the ministry has successfully managed to support improvement of the institute infrastructure including teaching and learning environment.

"There is an increased demand for highly skilled human resources in the transport sector in East and Southern Africa," he said, adding

the increased demand forces NIT to provide training that is in line with market requirements.

He said the institute's five-year strategic plan (2021/2022 - 2025/2026) shows that it will continue to strengthen provision of training aimed at producing skilled experts in all sub-sectors in transportation.

NIT Acting Rector, Dr Zainabu Mshana said the institute continues to build the capacity of its lecturers and staff by sending them for further studies to enhance their level of knowledge and skills whereas in the 2023/2024 academic year, a total of 71 staff benefited with the programme.

She added that NIT has improved its structures and increased the number of aviation instructors and aircraft maintenance engineers to meet the demands in the aviation

industry. She said projects to improve the structures have been implemented since October this year.

"We have strategies to prepare human resources that will meet the needs in the labour market in the transport sector by taking into consideration the on-going implementation of strategic national flagship projects," she said.

She mentioned that the strategy includes reviewing its courses at Diploma and Degree levels, a move which enables graduates to secure jobs in foreign countries.

Mshana noted that NIT is improving the teaching and learning environment whereas it is repairing and constructing classrooms, garages, laboratories, offices and procurement of training equipment that are compatible with global technological advancements.

ITU, ATU announce 18,326 new FM channels for Africa

By Guardian Reporter

THE International and the African Telecommunications Unions (ITU and ATU) have announced that 18,326 new FM channels for Africa have been identified and deemed usable.

The two organisations also announced that satellite resources for 31 African countries and 14 others outside Africa, valued at billions of US dollars, have been reclaimed.

At a ceremony in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, on the fringes of the concluding World Radio communications Conference 2023 (WRC-23), ITU and ATU noted that the two achievements are as a result of implementation of decisions sanctioned at the previous WRC in 2019 in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt.

ATU Secretary General, John OMO, who hosted the Dubai celebrations to mark the two achievements called on African Administrations to take full control and responsibility for the resources and create new opportunities in the telecommunication/ICT industry for the African people.

Omo said: "ATU is grateful to all partners who collaborated with us and we urge you to continue supporting us in promoting telecommunication/ICT infrastructure, digital services, ICT human capacity development, and creating an enabling environment for the advancement of our sector."

ITU Secretary General, Doreen Bogdan commended ATU for spearheading the achievements.

"You have achieved a major milestone for the continent, and for ITU - at a time when nearly 40% of the Sustainable Development Goal targets relies on the availability of earth observation data collected by satellite systems," she said.

Bogdan also announced that in 2024, the ITU will organize training activities to build African countries' capacity to apply WRC-23 decisions related to the fixed and broadcasting satellite services.

"We're also committed to providing the necessary capacity building support to address spectrum or satellite-related challenges to any Member State that requests it from us," she added.

Chief Court Administrator calls upon leaders in public, private institutions to manage their emotional intelligence

By Correspondent Valentine Oforo,

Arusha

THE Chief Court Administrator, Prof Elisante Ole Gabriel has called upon leaders in public and private institutions to manage their emotional intelligence in order to maintain mutual relations with the other workers to promote efficiency.

Prof Gabriel, in his presentation at the 14th annual general conference of the Procurement and Supply Professionals' held in Arusha Region where he insisted on the need for leaders to also acquire necessary skills on how to control their emotional stresses.

The don was presenting a topic titled "Emotional Intelligence and Working Balance"

"A smart leader must be equipped with vital awareness on how to deal with possible sources of stresses at working places and life, the development which will assist him/her to professionally lead others," he unveiled.

He told the procurement professionals that a normal human being has two major behaviour parts, which are software and hardware parts.

"The software is the unseen part and the hardware is the visible part, and these two are critical in human behaviour," he said.

He reminded them that, in leadership the goal is not only to supervise others, but how to manage personal emotions in order to maintain good relationships with others and make sober decisions for ensuring the intended visions are achieved.

"In order to be a good leader, you must know who you are, how you interact with others at working

places, but most importantly, you must understand your position," he said.

For instance, he stated that personal lifestyle has a great possibility to influence the performance of a leader and other workers at working places.

In this, he underscored a need for all leaders and workers to master how best to balance work and personal life in order to contain possible stressors.

"Some of the possible stressors include living above your budget, selfish, too demanding, arrogant, family member's pressure, as well as spousal conflicts," he mentioned.

As human beings are usually facing a number of challenges and stresses, he urged the leaders to take a major role of helping the workers in their respective departments and institutions to overcome such stresses.

For instance, he unveiled that, records depict that within a period of just four years, between 2016 and 2019, a total of 666 people in Tanzania committed suicide due to various stresses.

These, according to Prof Gabriel, ended their life through different bad ways, such as self-hanging, self-shooting, self-stubbing, as well as poisoning.

Together with that, he cautioned the leaders not to use their positions to suppress the workers under their supervision, but rather to give them a helping hand to assist them psychologically as well as professionally.

"The best example is President Samia Suluhu Hassan, I can assure you that she is the best president in the world who has mastered how to manage emotional intelligence and stress," he added.

Govt commits to support youth in agriculture sector

By Guardian Correspondent

Moshi

THE government has reaffirmed its commitment to support youth in the country to realise their dreams through engagement in various projects including agriculture.

Deputy Minister in the Prime Minister's Office responsible for Labour Employment, Youth and People with Disabilities, Patrobas Katambi made the remarks when launching the 3rd cohort of the Agriculture Markets Development

Trust (AMDT) mentorship program for women and youth in the agribusiness sector.

Deputy Minister Katambi said the government recognises the role of youth and women in economic development. "The government has committed to support youth in economic related activities that is why we have set aside loans for them at district level," he said

He applauded the AMDT and other stakeholders who help the government to solve various

challenges facing the agriculture sector.

"The organization has been working to improve agricultural markets systems and helping youth to alleviate various challenges in agribusiness", he added.

Katambi urged the trained youth to learn more and exchange experiences with their colleagues to achieve the desired goals.

Speaking on behalf of others mentees, a participant identified as Sharif Masoud, commended the

government for supporting youth engaging in agriculture.

He said they are ready to collaborate with the government and other organizations which have shown interest to support the agribusiness sector.

Mary Kalavo, who is a Senior Manager for Gender, Youth and Business Enabling AMDT told the deputy Minister that the mentees are from Lindi, Mtwara, Manyara and Dodoma region.

She said since it started three years ago, the mentorship program has benefited 69 women and youth from various regions.

According to her they have noted changes with some of the mentees have managed to export their products abroad.



Deputy minister in the President's Office Public Service Management and Good Governance Ridhiwani Kikwete (C) accompanied by Muhimbili Orthopaedic Institute Director General Prof Abel Makubi (L) when he visited MOI shortly after opening the training for public servants yesterday. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

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NGO donate 40 wheelchairs to people with disabilities in Kilimanjaro Region

By Correspondent James Lanka,

Moshi

MOSHI based non-government organisation-Songambe Initiative Organisation (SIO) has donated 40 wheelchairs and a walker to people with disabilities in Kilimanjaro Region.

Speaking with stakeholders at a special 4th SIO annual general meeting (AGM) in Moshi this week, the founder and managing director of the organisation, Faustina Urassa explained that, her NGO has donated the equipment and other assistive devices for the needy people in the region

The NGO deals with the people with disabilities particularly with spinal cord injuries but also partners with other organisations and well-wishers to collect funds for the donation.

"There is high need of

wheelchairs, walkers and other assistive devices to the people with different physical disabilities in Kilimanjaro region, so my appeal to other NGOs, faith-based organisations (FBOs), community-based organisations (CBOs) and other well-wishers is to collaborate to support them," she said.

She further explained that, in 2023 they also visited people with physical disabilities particularly with spinal cord injuries at their homes as well as at KCMC zonal referral hospital to create awareness to them through peer-to-peer education, and they reached a total of 117 victims.

One of the beneficiaries, Sylvia Chama from Rombo District who is also a victim of spinal cord

injury explained that, there is a big challenge of including people with disabilities on the lack of assistive devices due to the bad infrastructure as well as awareness on menstrual hygiene and reproductive health.

"In most cases this special group is forgotten and equipment like sanitary towels that are provided to them don't suit them accordingly," teacher Chama further explained.

She added that, the complications faced by women and girls with disabilities are in most cases doubled due to factors such as inability to afford sanitary towels that are expensive considering their little income and even worse to those that are unemployed, pressure sores due sitting for long

periods of time.

"However, through platforms such as this education has been spread and therefore measures are being taken to combat the problems for the betterment of everyone in the society," she pointed out.

Speaking at the special AGM, the District Education Officer (DEO) for Special Needs Education, Innocent Kahoko applauded the role played by Songambe Initiative organisation in the special needy education.

"You are really doing a laudable work of supporting the government's efforts in the provision of special needy education for all through an inclusion programme, my appeal to the other stakeholders is to imitate you," he insisted.



Some members with spinal cord injury who are beneficiaries of various projects carried out by the non-governmental organisation Songambe Initiative listen to the director of the organisation Faustina Urassa (not pictured) at the fourth special general meeting (AGM) of the organisation held in Moshi to discuss the challenges facing them yesterday. Photo: Correspondent James Lanka

Z'bar rolls out budgeting, reporting system to bolstering transparency, accountability

By Guardian Reporter

ZANZIBAR government has adopted and rolled out a Planning, Budgeting and Reporting System (PlanRep) that will provide transparency, consistency and continuity and bring a sense of accountability between planners, implementers and decision-makers.

USAID Public Sector Systems Strengthening Plus (PS3+) supported the deployment PlanRep in Zanzibar through the Ministry of Health, Finance and a Zanzibar agency under the revolutionary government of Zanzibar (eGAZ) took ownership and adopted the system.

The government adopted and rolled out the system to all ministries to the lower levels and through the USAID PS3+ project, local government officials receive technical assistance to improve their capacity for evidence-based, inclusive planning and management.

They needed digital transformation driven by their plan to have the recently launched five-year digital strategy. That is evidence-based planning, budgeting, expenditure, and revenue collections as linkages between the systems.

The system is expected to make a big shift in the way government officials have been planning, budgeting, and reporting and help them to save time, have the consistency of data and cost efficiency and improve service delivery.

Given this, the USAID PS3+ a five-year project funded by the US government and implemented through the USAID with support from the US President's Emergency Plan for Aids Relief (PEPFAR).

The project's overall objective is to strengthen government systems at both national and local levels to improve the access, use, and quality of service deliveries across agriculture, education, health, and other sectors, with a major focus on support for underserved populations.

USAID PS3+ is led by Abt Associates, in partnership with Tanzania Mentors for Action (TMA), the University of Dar es Salaam (UDSM), and the Local Government Training Institute (LGTI).

In 2021, USAID PS3+ signed the Memorandum of Understanding with the Ministry of Health Social Welfare, Elderly, Gender and Children in Zanzibar to support the strengthening of public sector systems.

PS3+ provided Technical Assistance in the Design and customization of the PlanRep system to conform to the Zanzibar modus operandi. PS3+ Technical team provided training, capacity building and mentorship along with supportive supervision on using the systems.

"Before PlanRep, the Government of Zanzibar was using manual and non-responsive tools such as excel to prepare the plans and budgets, tools that lack automatic linkage between the plans, budgets, and expenditure systems. There was a lack of autonomy in the organization's plans and budgets with unclear vision and linkages to national objectives."

The USAID PS3+ supports the government in institutionalizing public systems specifically through the digitization of information systems that are responsive to Citizen's needs for quality services at the local level, with a focus on underserved populations.

Zanzibar Government Budget Officer, Khadija Alhaji Bakari said at the centre of the transformation are two central government financial systems, the Zanzibar Planning, Budgeting and Reporting System (ZanPBRS) and the 'Mfumo wa Bajeti na Matumizi Serikalini' system (BAMAS).

"Before these systems existed, Ministries, Departments, Agencies (MDAs) and Local Government Authorities (LGAs) in Zanzibar used manual and non-responsive systems like Excel to plan, budget, and track expenditures where users face technical issues without prompt resolution, system communicates inadequately or lacks customization," she said.

She said it resulted in numerous errors and inconsistent data, required extensive cross-checking due to the absence of automatic linkages, and reduced efficiency leading to substantial costs. Manual systems also left limited opportunities for authorities to detect funding misuse.

"Following this system what used

to take weeks or months to complete can now be done in a few days," she said.

According to her, the close collaboration between the USAID PS3+ activities, the government of Tanzania and the government, ZanPBRS and BAMAS are dramatically improving planning and budgeting processes, transparency, and service delivery.

In 2021, following a successful collaboration between the PS3+ Activity and Tanzania to implement a web-based planning system for public services on the mainland, the government decided to bring the system to Zanzibar.

PS3+ worked closely with the government to develop, design, and customize ZanPBRS. In addition to providing technical assistance in the form of coding, system installation, and server configuration, PS3+ trained more than 230 RGOZ staff to build their capacity to use, manage, and institutionalize ZanPBRS.

"As roll out of ZanPBRS began, PS3+ also collaborated with the government to develop BAMAS, the system that provides interoperability between ZanPBRS and the government's expenditure management system, MUSE," she said.

Zanzibar's Finance and Planning Ministry Permanent Secretary, Dr Juma Malik Akil said with ZanPBRS, MDAs and LGAs can now digitally and seamlessly submit plans and budgets for approval, reducing delays in executing public initiatives aimed at improving quality of life for citizens, such as the construction of clean water access points or the procurement of essential medical supplies.

"Thanks to BAMAS, once funds are allocated, MDA and LGA staff can track and report their spending in ZanPBRS for monitoring by officials. The increased transparency provided by BAMAS ensures that the budget the government allocates goes where it's supposed to and improves service delivery to the citizens in our communities," he said.

According to him, the roll out of ZanPBRS and BAMAS is still ongoing. As of March 1, 2022, the RGOZ is fully funding and leading this process, a testament to its commitment to institutionalizing improved public systems and supporting the island's digital transformation.

Meanwhile, eGAZ Director, Said Seif said the government has developed a five-year roadmap known as the "Digital Economy and Statistics Map." We need the skills to effectively utilize digital tools, enhance efficiency, and bolster capacity building through human capital development and training.

eGAZ is well-equipped with skilled local professionals who are capable of implementing the system. Providing them with training on the BAMAS system and ensuring ongoing support when the system is deployed into the government is crucial for its success.

"Zanzibar needed a new digital system to simplify the government's work, leading to the launch of BAMAS that was built with the integration of budget and expenditure data, enabling them to work together within one system," he said.

LGA, expenditure system unit manager, Saleh Bakari Hamis said BAMAS system was introduced in the local government. The challenges associated with the previous system, which made it difficult to evaluate and monitor the budget, have been successfully overcome.

He said BAMAS has led to an increase in local government expenditures, making it economically efficient and effective. The three "E's" (economically efficient and effective) are now realized through this system.

LGA Assistant Development Officer, Mohammed Nyage said previously they operated with a cash-based system that couldn't effectively address all their expenditure needs. "BAMAS has enabled us to plan, allocate resources to the community, and utilize our expenditures for specific projects, such as constructing large markets, providing water to the community, and building roads," he said.

Dr Tamimu Hamad Said from Kiwinge District Hospital in Zanzibar, said they lacked infrastructure and equipment, and the dispensary was quite small. Budget allocation from the government was also inadequate.



Felix Omonya Wanjala, the programme management officer, Division of Africa, Department of Technical Cooperation at International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) presents his remarks at the special meeting over occupational radiation protection, held in Arusha Region. The event attracted nuclear experts from 35 countries across the continent. Photo: Correspondent Valentine Oforo

'Developing states paid \$443.5 billion on public debt in 2022'

By Guardian Reporter

DEVELOPING countries spent a record \$443.5 billion to service their external public and publicly guaranteed debt in 2022, the World Bank's latest international debt report shows.

The increase in costs shifted scarce resources away from critical needs such as health, education, and the environment.

The 75 countries eligible to borrow from the World Bank's International Development Association (IDA)—which supports the poorest countries—paid \$88.9 billion in debt-servicing costs in 2022.

Over the past decade, interest payments by these countries have quadrupled, to an all-time high of \$23.6 billion in 2022. Overall debt-servicing costs for the 24 poorest countries are expected to balloon in 2023 and 2024—by as much as 39 per cent, the report finds.

Indermit Gill, the World Bank Group's Chief Economist and Senior Vice President said: "Record debt levels and high interest rates have set many countries on a path to crisis. Every quarter that interest rates stay high results in more developing countries becoming distressed—and facing the difficult choice of servicing their public

debts or investing in public health, education, and infrastructure. The situation warrants quick and coordinated action by debtor governments, private and official creditors, and multilateral financial institutions—more transparency, better debt sustainability tools, and swifter restructuring arrangements. The alternative is another lost decade."

Haishan Fu, Chief Statistician of the World Bank and Director of the World Bank's Development Data Group said: "Knowing what a country owes and to whom is essential for better debt management and sustainability. The first step in avoiding a crisis is having a clear picture of the challenge. And when problems arise, clear data can guide debt restructuring efforts to get a country back on track towards economic stability and growth. Debt transparency is the key to sustainable public borrowing and accountable, rules-based lending practices which are so vital to ending poverty on a liveable planet."

According to the report, surging interest rates have intensified debt vulnerabilities in all developing countries. In the past three years alone, there have been 18 sovereign defaults in 10 developing

countries—greater than the number recorded in all of the previous two decades. Today, about 60 per cent of low-income countries are at high risk of debt distress or already in it. Interest payments consume an increasingly large share of low-income countries' export, the report finds. More than a third of their external debt, moreover, involves variable interest rates that could rise suddenly.

Many of these countries face an additional burden: the accumulated principal, interest, and fees they incurred for the privilege of debt-service suspension under the G-20's Debt Service Suspension Initiative (DSSI).

The stronger US dollar is adding to their difficulties, making it even more expensive for countries to make payments. Under the circumstances, a further rise in interest rates or a sharp drop in export earnings could push them over the edge.

It said that debt-servicing costs have climbed, new financing options for developing countries have dwindled. In 2022, new external loan commitments to public and publicly guaranteed entities in these countries dropped by 23 per cent to \$371 billion—the lowest level in a decade.

Private creditors largely

abstained from developing countries, receiving \$185 billion more in principal repayments than they disbursed in loans.

New bond issuance by IDA-eligible countries fell by more than three-quarters to US\$3.1 billion.

With financing from private creditors drying up, the World Bank and other multilateral development banks stepped in to help close the gap. Multilateral creditors provided \$115 billion in new low-cost financing for developing countries in 2022, nearly half of which came from the World Bank.

Through IDA, the World Bank provided \$16.9 billion more in new financing for these countries than it received in principal repayments—nearly three times the comparable number a decade ago. In addition, the World Bank disbursed \$6.1 billion in grants to these countries, three times the amount in 2012.

The latest international debt report marks the publication's 50th anniversary. It highlights key insights from the World Bank's International Debt Statistics database—the most comprehensive and transparent source of external debt data of developing countries.

The new edition also features an expanded analytical framework, one that goes beyond the latest data to examine near-term outlook for debt as well. It also includes an overview of the Bank's debt-related activities and an analysis of emerging trends in debt management and transparency.



Agriculture minister Hussen Bashe (R) gives directives to Muheza council officials in Tanga Region during his visit to survey residential plots in Muheza District recently. Photo: Correspondent Steven William

Radiation safety experts call upon global action to improve patient and health worker protection

By Correspondent Valentine Oforo, Arusha

LOCAL and foreign experts in the nuclear sector have called for further investment and initiatives to ensure the safety of workers with access to various sources of radiation.

They claimed that the sector has seen an exponential decrease in the number of needed equipment that must necessary be used by the workers in the sector.

Nuclear experts from at least 35 different countries across Africa are convening in Arusha Region for a five days tailor-made meeting to discuss and share experience over occupational radiation protection within their countries.

Held under the theme, 'RAF 9068 Enhancing Occupational Radiation Protection in IAEA Member States' the five - day professional conference involves countries which are members of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), including the host Tanzania.

Dr Taoffeq Tge from Nigeria expressed that the vision behind the meeting is to review the progress achieved by the countries during the past four years of implementation of the project for the Occupational Radiation Protection in Africa (2020-2023).

"The theme of this project's final coordination meeting is important as the general goal is to ensure that workers under the radiation sector are protected," he said, hailing Tanzania for hosting the meeting through the Tanzania Atomic Energy Commission (TAEC).

He added that participants came up with key agendas for the improvement of the safety of all workers dealing with radiations.

"Despite useful efforts being implemented by IAEA, experience shows that some countries do not need protective gadgets to support their workers under diverse sources

of radiation.

Felix Omonya Wanjala, programme management officer, Division of Africa, Department of Technical Cooperation at AEA said implementation of the timely project aimed to promote safety of workers within the nuclear technology sector.

"Our vision is to set viable strategies to protect the workers from various possible hazards and diseases from the nuclear sector," he said, noting the core target is to improve quality of work and workers safety.

Workers in question work in hospitals, industries, agriculture and other sectors, he said.

"This project was purposefully introduced by IAEA to support member countries to adopt modern equipment, but also implementing friendly policies for protection of the workers under nuclear technologies," he expressed.

Wanjala added that within four years of implementing the project, a number of successes have been recorded in terms of safety of workers attached to the sector.

"IAEA will continue to be in the forefront in supporting member countries to attain high safety of workers as well as the general use of radiation," he noted.

He said plans are underway to launch another integrated project next year to strengthen performance of the key sectors across the continent.



Our vision is to set viable strategies to protect the workers from various possible hazards and diseases from the nuclear sector

Chinese team arrives in the country to review TAZARA before takeover

By Guardian Reporter and Agencies

A task force from the state-run China Civil Engineering Construction Corporation (CCECC) has arrived in Dar es Salaam to conduct a comprehensive business and technical inspection of the Tanzania-Zambia Railway Authority (TAZARA) before China's proposed takeover of the railway line.

The CCECC is negotiating a concession deal with the governments of Tanzania and Zambia to operate TAZARA, as geopolitical tensions rise over control of trading routes for critical minerals in Africa.

The Chinese task force will carry out the inspection from Dar es Salaam to Kapiri-Mposhi to assess TAZARA's operational and business model, setting the stage for the submission by CCECC of a revitalisation proposal for TAZARA to the shareholders of the railway line – the governments of Tanzania and Zambia.

CCECC, a subsidiary of the China Railway Construction Corporation, is expected to negotiate a public-private partnership (PPP) concession under the build-operate-transfer model with the two governments to operate TAZARA.

The Chinese company wants to upgrade the 1,160km cross-border railway by investing an estimated \$1 billion.

"CCECC's task force team will engage in substantive discussions covering critical aspects, including the operational and management model of TAZARA, the proposed financing plan facilitated by the China Development Bank, local taxation policies, and related matters," TAZARA's spokesman,

Conrad Simuchile, said in a statement.

The 11-member Chinese due diligence team is led by Peng Danyang, Managing Director of the Ethiopia-Djibouti railway line.

Danyang's role in the inspection team suggests that China could model the TAZARA concession on the Ethiopia-Djibouti railway line, which operates under a PPP model, involving the governments of Ethiopia and Djibouti and a subsidiary of CCECC.

The governments of Tanzania and Zambia and CCECC have set April 2024 as the target for conclusion of negotiations for takeover of the railway line by China.

The concession is expected to give a much-needed lifeline to the almost 50-year-old Chinese-built line, which is grossly underperforming.

Observers say China's keen interest in taking over TAZARA is linked to its desire to use the railway line for strategic mining exports from Zambia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

China owns substantial copper and cobalt mines in Zambia and the DRC.



The governments of Tanzania and Zambia and CCECC have set April 2024 as the target for conclusion of negotiations for takeover of the railway line by China



Dar es Salaam Water and Sanitation Authority acting Chief Executive Officer Kiula Kingu (R) exchanges MoU with the China Communications Construction Company Eng. Chen Jian (L) for the implementation of water supply projects in Pangani, Kwana Coast Region and Kibada including the Tanzania Institute of Accountancy in Dar es Salaam with a value of more than 48 billion/- . The event took place in Dar es Salaam yesterday. Photo: Correspondent Imani Nathaniel

Despite notable progress, road safety remains urgent global issue, says WHO

By Guardian Reporter

THE World Health Organisation (WHO) global status report on road safety 2023 shows that the annual number of road traffic deaths has decreased slightly to 1.19 million per year.

Yet with more than 2 deaths occurring per minute and over 3200 per day, road traffic crashes remain the leading killer of children and youth aged between 5 and 29 years.

The latest report shows that, since 2010, road traffic deaths have fallen by 5 per cent to 1.19 million annually. Road crashes remain a persistent global health crisis, with pedestrians, cyclists and other vulnerable road users facing an acute and rising risk of death.

WHO Director-General, Dr Tedros Ghebreyesus said: "The tragic tally of road crash deaths is heading in the right direction, downwards, but nowhere near fast enough. The carnage on our roads is preventable.

We call on all countries to put people rather than cars at the centre of their transport systems, and ensure the safety of pedestrians, cyclists and other vulnerable road users."

Michael Bloomberg, founder of Bloomberg LP and Bloomberg Philanthropies and WHO Global Ambassador for Non-communicable Diseases and Injuries said: "Our mission at Bloomberg Philanthropies is to save and improve as many lives as possible, and one of the best ways to do that is to make more of the world's roads safe for all."

Bloomberg said that for more than a decade now, they made encouraging progress together with the WHO and partners. "Road safety demands stronger commitments from governments worldwide - and we will continue to urge more leaders to take lifesaving action."

Among UN Member States, 108 countries reported a drop in road traffic-related deaths between 2010 and 2021.

Ten countries succeeded in reducing road traffic deaths by over 50 per cent are Belarus, Brunei Darussalam, Denmark, Japan, Lithuania, Norway, Russian Federation, Trinidad and Tobago, United Arab Emirates and Venezuela.

Thirty-five more countries made notable progress, reducing deaths by 30 and 50 percent.

The report shows that 28 percent of global road traffic deaths occurred in the WHO South-East Asia Region, 25 percent in the Western Pacific Region, 19 percent in the African Region, 12 per cent in the Region of the Americas, 11 per cent in the Eastern Mediterranean Region and 5 per cent in the European Region.

It said that nine in 10 deaths occur in low- and middle-income countries, and fatalities in these countries are disproportionately higher when set against the number of vehicles and roads they have.

The risk of death is 3 times higher in low-income than high-income

countries, yet low-income countries have just 1 percent of the world's motor vehicles.

Fifty-three per cent of all road traffic fatalities are vulnerable road users including pedestrians (23 percent); riders of powered two- and three-wheelers such as motorcycles (21 per cent), cyclists (6 per cent); and users of micro-mobility devices such as e-scooters (3 per cent).

Deaths among car and other 4-wheeled light vehicle occupants fell slightly to 30 per cent of global fatalities.

Pedestrian deaths rose 3 per cent to 274 000 between 2010 and 2021, accounting for 23 per cent of global fatalities.

Deaths among cyclists rose by nearly 20 percent to 71 000, accounting for 6 percent of global deaths. Meanwhile, research indicates that 80 per cent of the world's roads fail to meet pedestrian safety standards and just 0.2 per cent have cycle lanes, leaving these road users dangerously exposed.

While 9 in 10 people surveyed identify as pedestrians, just a quarter of countries have policies to promote walking, cycling and public transport.



Ruvuma Regional Commissioner Col Thomas Laban (2nd R) presents a trophy to Prof Makenya Maboko (L) who was the main speaker at the 33rd scholars symposium at the Open University of Tanzania held in Songea, Ruvuma Region recently. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

AfDB approves 20bn/- for eastern Africa power pool

KAMPALA

CHIEF Executive Officer of Electricity Regulatory Authority Uganda Ziria Tibalwa Waako has said the Independent Regulatory Board (IRB) has received approval of \$5.4 million (Shs 20b) from the African Development Bank (AfDB) for the operationalization of the Eastern Africa Power Pool (EAPP) that is aimed at providing reliable and affordable electricity in the region.

"We came together as regulators of

Eastern Africa to operationalize the regional power pool to ensure that the region enjoys the renewable, affordable energy resources to fuel its economy," she said.

Waako made the remarks at the close of the 7th annual Board Meeting of the Independent Regulatory Authority (IRB) of the Eastern Africa Power Pool (EAPP) held in Entebbe.

"We got approval from the African Development Bank to equip this office. We have also got approval from the World Bank today

(Wednesday) for the consultant who is going to prepare the market rules as well as the market trading platform," she said.

Waako who also doubles as the chairperson of the IRB of the Eastern Africa Power Pool said this is to ensure that member countries meet the two broad agendas of transforming their economies into industrial economies in order to create employment and seek improved welfare of their societies.

"The IRB was established in 2005 as an organ of EAPP anchored in

COMESA but operationalized in 2012 when it was allowed to exercise its independence. Since then, we have been putting in place relevant organs to ensure that we establish ourselves to a level where we are now approaching the operationalization of the IRB," she said.

The lead coordinator at the IRB Ephrem Belayneh said the next steps for IRB will be furnishing the offices and buying necessary equipment which will benefit the member countries in many ways in addition to cheaper power.

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Demanding new revenue sources each year not always practicable

DISCUSSIONS are earnestly beginning as even the more disenchanted of political parties seem to be addressing policy issues rather than confining themselves to explosive issues of the legitimacy of public authorities. One such occasion was an overview of opposition views on recommendations of the

Controller and Auditor General (CAG), where discussion zeroed on the Tanzania Revenue Authority (TRA) seeking new ways of collecting taxes. That was a keen gesture in principle, but needed a policy blueprint to fathom the case.

To comprehend that issues relating to taxes are not that easy to issue political advice that helps good governance, it is vital to remember that taxation is nearly what there is about governance generally. A senior opposition official affirmed at a press conference that the party wants the government to implement recommendations made by the CAG, to solve issues relating to decrease in sources of revenue. There was for instance a reference to the Public Accounts Committee of the National Assembly advising that TRA seek new tax sources.

There is at times a dilemma in literary evaluation of an ironic statement, as to who was well meaning in affirming it, where it was at the source, or at the instance of its being repeated. The PAC was in fact in error in suggesting that TRA ought to seek new sources of revenue as its work is to collect taxes that the legislature has willed and approved for that financial year. In actual fact it isn't even the Treasury that seeks new revenue sources but MPs, as representatives of the public; in that capacity they collect views and in turn advice the government.

In that case the PAC would have been somewhat evasive in delivering that idea, namely that there is need

for new sources of revenue, but in failing to take the issue directly to the legislature, allowed the wider House to breathe with a sigh of relief. Had the matter been put to the legislature, it could have led to the Treasury being asked to find such sources, for the simple reason that MPs do not wish to inflame the feelings of different groups of voters that they wish them bad by raising taxes in their direction, deliberately. Opposition analysis of the matter did not skirt that dilemma and in asking TRA to do it, just skips the issue.

Still the point opposition officials made was somewhat clearer and to the point, in saying that the opposition calls upon the government in general to come up with new sources of income. As always, it avoided anything hostile to this or that group of voters or producers, by urging that the government works simply to improve the production infrastructure in the country. Treasury officials were likely to smile broadly at that suggestion, as improving something as vast as the production infrastructure needs vast amounts of cash, revenues, in the first place.

The opposition official notably affirmed that at present the public witnesses a decline in trade activities, the closure of a number of companies, while business is hard as numerous individuals struggle to survive, which includes paying small taxes.

There are contending sentiments on this aspect, one being that the general remedy to this kind of situation is fewer taxes, and the government has been scrapping nuisance taxes especially in agro-sector sphere. If the opposition official had this problem in mind, the proposal ought to have related to reducing taxes further, so that businesses breathe; but it may also affect other expenditure.

An investors' haven has fewer communal relics as years pass

WELL meaning public officials are at times compelled to grapple with the sort of misunderstanding that visits foreign investors in various areas, and from recent remarks by top officials of the Tanzania Investment Center (TIC), it is vital that public officials routinely encourage people rural resident in particular, to value infrastructure or properties belonging to investors as these are partners in development. There is of course no error in that affirmation, but unless it can be enforced by public security, there are few chances that rural dwellers heard it.

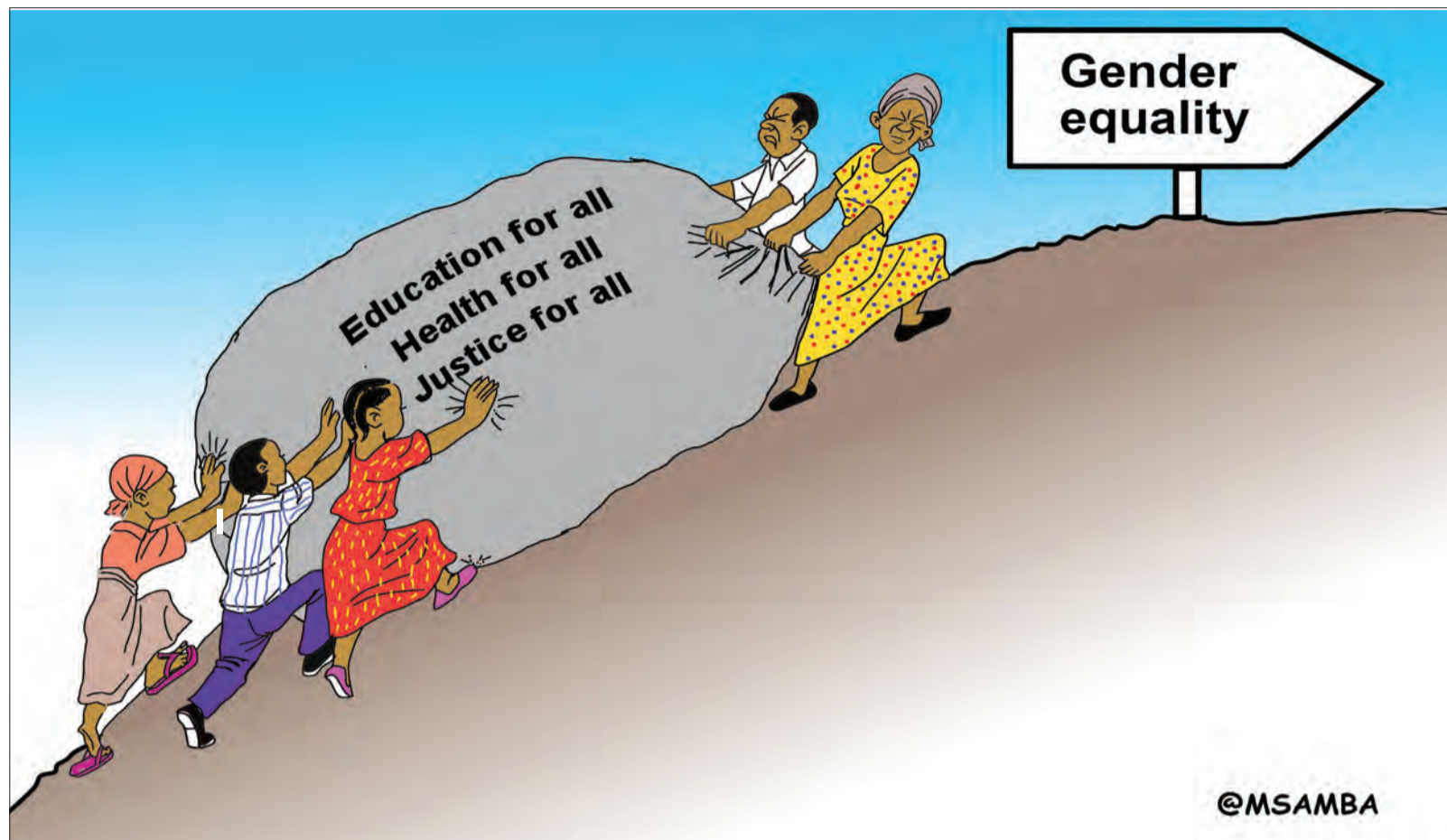
Again, it isn't a matter of whether they heard that appeal or they did not, the issue is whether there are conditions where such appeals are materially usable given the degree to which ordinary people go to pursue their interests even against common sense. When a livestock herder rides cattle into a maize farm or such other and they destroy everything, the reason isn't that the herder doesn't know the difference between maize and grass, or the value of maize to 'food security,' but that he quite simply doesn't care. If a similar person with such a hunter-gatherer mentality comes across 'production infrastructure owned by investors,' there is no moral reference for scruples on his part; he fears guards.

That is for instance was almost always happened at gold mine sites in Tarime, Mara Region, where the relationship between nearby residents and investors was so bad it was characterized by guards

regularly opening fire on thieves, at times in liaison with local guards on shift on a particular day. Things became so bad that some people may have decided to get the villagers away from the area with negligence for mercury-laden waste water seeping into the neighbourhood. Villagers had hideous burns and lost undocumented numbers of livestock which sampled that waste for drinking; misery arising from animosity.

The fact that these issues are scarcely being raised in policy debate even among scores of NGOs that have this sort of situation as part of routine crisscrossing the country for research or for awareness raising for this or that issue, is by itself surprising. The simple reason is that we have been nurtured since the time most of those who are now 50 or 60 were children, that capitalism is a bad thing. We take notice when a capitalist has done something we have reason to object, and scarcely take notice if the opposite happens, where a capitalist is badly treated.

So TIC should not plan their work schedule as if there is civil society out there that observes laws, and will be obliging to respect properties of investors, etc. The more an investor isn't shielded by urban surroundings with rules of property in place, when isolated in a rural location the rules of 'hunting and gathering' do apply, as the danger rises the more one gets away from urban areas. The trouble is that our collective will is to chiefly protect communal ties as premise for land ownership and thus security, while everything boils up for productivity, welfare.



©MSAMBA

By Kayode Komolafe

FORMER President Olusegun Obasanjo's recent advocacy for an African variety of democracy as a replacement for liberal democracy should be viewed within the wider ideological currents on the globe.

This is because of the undeniable topicality of the proposition made by the former president.

The liberal democratic order is actually in retreat; it is prone to ideological and political assaults from virtually every continent. This finds expression in Trumpism in the United States as well as the upsurge of right-wing populism in parts of Europe, Asia and Latin America. Obasanjo's important voice should be counted as another missile on liberal democracy from Africa. Besides, there is indeed an ideological movement canvassing Afro-democracy as the antidote to Africa's political underdevelopment.

In a keynote address to a forum in Abeokuta last Monday, the former President argued that the western-style liberal democracy "is not working" and suggested the alternative of African democracy. Characteristically, Obasanjo puts the matter bluntly like this: "We are here to stop being foolish and stupid. Can we look inward and outward to see what in our country, culture, tradition, practice and living over the years that we can learn from, adopt and adapt with practices everywhere for a changed system of government that will service our purpose better and deliver."

In short, Obasanjo is saying that "we must interrogate the performance of democracy in the West where it originated from and with us the inheritors of what we are left with by our colonial powers."

The proposition of African democracy by Obasanjo and others should also be rigorously examined for its inherent conceptual problems.

First, it is important to give Obasanjo his due so as to have proper background to his present posture as a reluctant democrat now seeking intellectual refuge in Afrodemocracy. Although an authoritarian streak runs through his politics, Obasanjo has always been quite at home with ideas. That is when he is not encumbered by the pettiness of his politics, some of his critics would probably say.

As military head of state in the late 1970s, Obasanjo earned the reputation of being receptive to ideas from some of the nation's best scholars, public intellectuals and technocrats who were close to the seat of power. On leaving power, he became a fellow in the Institute of African Studies at the University of Ibadan. He also established the African Leadership Forum to which statemen and leaders of

African democracy or democratic Africa?

thought from different parts of the world were invited as guests to his base in Otta, Ogun State. The Forum published the synopses of its proceedings, which were well-received in many respectable quarters. Obasanjo is the author of a number of books, some of which have provoked enormous controversies. In particular, the controversy generated by one of Obasanjo's books, "Constitution for National Integration and Development," is worth recalling for the purpose of this discussion of Afrodemocracy. The book is essentially a manifesto for building a one-party state. Obasanjo's intervention came amidst the political transition programme of President Ibrahim Babangida's military regime. Babangida was working towards the creation of two parties by the state; one "a little to Right" and the other "a little to the Left." Progressive politician and publisher, Arthur Nwankwo, responded to the publication of Obasanjo's book arguing vigorously against the idea of a one-party system with all its jack-boot implications. The late Chancellor of the Eastern Mandate Union, Nwankwo, saw through Obasanjo's formulation and concluded that it was a recipe for dictatorship in the Nigerian bourgeois setting. The exchanges between Obasanjo and Nwankwo were later published by the latter in a 219-page book entitled "Before I Die." The combative book is a compilation of some intellectual fireworks. In one of the replies to Nwankwo, Obasanjo wrote intriguingly: "Utilizing a Marxist methodology to proffer a critique of work informed and instructed by a non-Marxist paradigm is a form of mental laziness and the avoidance of a rigorous and balanced mental exercise." Obasanjo is, of course, decidedly right-wing in his views. Apart from writing books, he has engaged in spirited intellectual engagement with other personalities with the instrument of letter writing in the course of his illustrious career. A recent book by the editor-in-chief of the online newspaper "Premium Times", Musikilu Mojeed, is entitled "The Letterman: Inside the 'Secret' Letters of former Nigerian President, Olusegun Obasanjo." It is a story of Obasanjo's letter writing spanning decades.

Now, the proponents of African democracy as a cure to whatever deficits detected in liberal democracy seem to miss one point. The point is the universality of the core values and traditions which provide the ideological fibre for the liberal democratic system in any part of the globe. This, of course, is not in contradiction with the fact that the practice of liberal democracy has its national and even racial flavours in different parts of

the world. The fundament of liberal democratic culture is as universal as the wearing of Jeans and T-shirts or using mobile technology. Advocating African democracy in a country with a predominantly youth population is like persuading members of the Generation Z that the social media is an imposition by the West on Africans or that bankers being in smart suits at work was forced on Nigeria by the colonialists. That would be a Sisyphean exercise by anybody to undertake in the 21st Century.

Instead of such fantasies, however, the contemporary challenge is how to deepen the democratic content of the polity in such a way that it could enhance the overall development of the entire society.

To start with, liberal democracy is not the only form of democracy. Others forms include social democracy, popular democracy and people's democracy. The taxonomy of the forms of democracy is, of course, ideologically determined. And the ideas propelling these forms are universal in terms of relevance.

Obasanjo and other proponents seem to be ignoring these distinguishing features. Take a sample. Liberal democracy focuses on the individual liberties; social democracy places a great premium on socio-economic justice in the system while popular democracy's emphasis goes beyond the mere participation of the people in the democratic process to include the material power to hold those in power accountable.

By the way, liberal democracy based on the rule of law is not the only thing Africa "inherited" from the West. Unlike liberal democracy, however, the other things of great influence on Africa are taken as the way of life by Africans. These are science, capitalist competition, modern medicine, consumerism, and the protestant work ethic. Scottish-American historian Nial Ferguson calls these factors "the killer applications" which non-western societies should "download and upgrade." In his book, "Civilization: The West and the Rest," Ferguson argues that these factors have enabled the West to take a lead over other parts of the world in the present civilization. The dominance of this western civilization is just about five centuries old. Before its emergence other civilizations existed which also dominated their areas of influence. For example, the Ottoman Empire and Ming Dynasty in China had existed before this western civilisation. From an undisguised neo-colonialist perspective, Ferguson targets the younger generation in telling this story of western greatness while celebrating the days of the empire. He is worried that the West is taking freedom for granted in the face of

the ascending authoritarian tone of populist politicians in the West. Well, no empire lasts for ever, as they say.

The ideas of liberal democracy are as much universal in application as the ideas of science, modern medicine and the consumerist society. The domestic application may vary but the fundamental principles are the same everywhere.

Freedom of the individual, for instance, is basic to liberal democracy. In all liberal democratic systems this is held as sacrosanct. India is an Asian country that was also colonised by Britain just like Nigeria. India's experiment with liberal democracy is not immune to problems. It is said jokingly in some sanguine quarters that an Indian election in which only a few dozens of people are killed is considered a relatively peaceful election in the largest democracy on earth. Yet Indians of various political parties are not seeking Asian democracy because colonialism forced liberal democracy on the Asian people.

Incidentally, this year marks the centenary of political party formation in this country, with the birth of Herbert Macaulay's Nigerian National Democratic Party (NNDP) in 1923. The Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) is just about a quarter of a century old. In other liberal democratic climes, there are politicians of the same age as Obasanjo who have been leaders of their parties as conservatives, liberals or radicals for decades. They defend fiercely the ideologies of their political parties.

The reverse has been the case in the politics of Obasanjo, who has had the privilege of being elected as President twice on the platform of PDP. On Sunday, a fellow columnist, Simon Kolawole, did justice on this page to the emergent issues from the Obasanjo advocacy. Rather than repeat the valid points made by Kolawole, this column today is only an attempt to look at Afrodemocracy beyond Obasanjo's advocacy.

One day Obasanjo elected to tear his party membership card because of intra-party disagreements and he made a public of show of it. This spectacle was staged years after he proclaimed as a sitting president that an election would be a "do or die" matter. Only a few weeks ago, Obasanjo's deputy, former Vice President Atiku Abubakar claimed that he intervened to ask Obasanjo to spare Lagos state from being "taken" in the 2003 governorship election. The language of the election was that the PDP "captured" the states controlled by the Alliance for Democracy (AD). So, the question may be asked: was what happened in the southwest in 2003 an election or a conquest by Obasanjo's PDP. Obasanjo was once the leader of the party; he determined who could be the party chairman at will.

UNITED NATIONS

UN Staffers face threat of being forced out of the US at retirement

Going back to the 1970s, thousands of UN staffers were given legal status opting for permanent residency in the US - after their retirement.

But that longstanding privilege now seems to be in jeopardy forcing retirees to return to their home countries uprooting their lives in the US.

The United States Immigration and Nationality Act has for long allowed long-serving UN staff members, who held the traditional G-4 visa status, and who met certain criteria, to apply for Legal Permanent Residency, also known as a "Green Card," under the "Special Immigrant" category (EB-4), upon separation on retirement.

The UN's Department of Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance (DM-SPC) last week sent an "urgent notice" to staffers that the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) has temporarily suspended accepting applications to Register Permanent Residence or Adjust Status (I-485 form) under the "Special Immigrant" category (EB-4).

This development may affect the ability of staff members who hold G-4 visas to continue to reside in the United States following their separation from service on retirement.

The suspension may also affect recent retirees; children of current or retired staff members, as well as a surviving spouse, who have been planning to apply for Legal Permanent Residency under the "Special Immigrant" category.

The UN has advised staffers to seek legal advice from an immigration firm about their future status in the US.

Speaking off-the-record, a long-time UN staffer told IPS the programme is in jeopardy with no clear indication when it will resume or get resolved.

The Secretariat building in New York City, where staff of the UN Secretariat carry out the day-to-day work. Credit: UN Photo/Manuel Elias



The reason is apparently a backlog of applications, but it may even be political, he said. "You may never know".

Basically, he said, it has been suspended because of some changes that came into effect early this year in the immigration laws - and also due to the existing backlog of applications.

"This means no priority processing for G4 visa holders from the UN. The situation is quite serious as it was taken by surprise many in the Secretariat".

"We have been told that within 30-days, we have to leave the US upon separation unless the individual manages to change the status by going through an immigration lawyer. I don't see it restored in the near future. A big disappointment and a mess to say the least."

Most UN staffers who own apartments or house and property - and are on short notice - will have to dispose them before they leave the US while others with children in US colleges will have to make adjustments.

"It's an absolute nightmare", said one staffer

whose retirement is due in February next year when he will be forced out of the US.

Meanwhile, in Geneva, which houses more than 40 international organizations, mostly affiliated to the United Nations such as the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the World Health Organization (WHO) and the International Labour Organization (ILO), staffers apply for "resident permits" on their retirement.

After they have lived 5-10 years, including years spent at the UN, they are entitled to

permanent residency leading to Swiss citizenship.

Currently, the US is home to over 9,000 staffers who work in the Secretariat and in UN agencies in New York, including the UN Development Programme (UNDP), the UN children's agency UNICEF and UN Women - with some on retirement after living the US for over 30 to 40 years.

IPS UN Bureau Report

Africa's great blue wall



A female orca splitting a herring bait ball while diving through it to get one. (Underwater Sea Scapes WINNER for 2023 Photo Competition The annual Photo Competition for UN World Oceans Day)

VICTORIA, Seychelles

As an Islander from the Seychelles, Africa's smallest country, I find that the ocean is intricately woven into my heritage. It not only defines my roots but also shapes the trajectory of my journey. When I think of the future, I can't help but also look at the boundless possibilities reflected in the vast expanse of the ocean.

I am therefore encouraged that the growing trend of African leaders turning their attention to the ocean as a catalyst for achieving "climate positive growth". This is the premise of the Nairobi Climate Action Summit, where African leaders emphasized that Africa possesses both the potential and the ambition to be a vital component of the global solution to climate change.

African leaders are emphasizing that 'climate positive growth' will be built by Africans, for Africans. Of course, support is needed - no one can achieve the scale of change needed without massive upscaling of investment.

The Great Blue Wall is an initiative which aims to catalyze the promise of

'climate positive growth' into action. Under the Comoros Presidency, the African Union seeks, now more than ever, a 'blue future'.

Spearheaded by African countries in the Western Indian Ocean, as outlined in the Moroni Declaration adopted in June 2023, the Great Blue Wall initiative aims to shield African countries from impacts of climate change and natural disasters uplifting and delivering economic empowerment to local coastal and island communities.

The existing industrialized fishing practices of distant nations is completely detached from the eco-system which supports the biomass and hence poses a threat. The Indian Ocean Tuna Commission has underlined overfishing of tuna species, especially the big-eye tuna and yellow-fin tuna.

At the same time, the warming ocean, increasing acidification of the water and consequent bleaching of coral reefs affects the availability of the prey species such as mackerel for the much-prized tunas.

Coastal African nations find themselves at risk, often reaping limited benefits from their marine resources,

similar to challenges faced with mineral exports from the mainland. FAO and other UN agencies are working with African countries to allow them to reap more benefit from their marine resources.

The Great Blue Wall aims to conserve marine resources through Marine Protected Areas as well as empower local communities by boosting the sustainable fisheries value chain and establishing of additional economic opportunities through eco-tourism and related economic activities.

The 2022 Kunming-Montreal Framework on Biological Diversity delivered a global pledge to place 30% of the world's oceans under protection - further reinforced by the 2023 adoption of an agreement on protecting marine biodiversity beyond areas of national jurisdiction.

A regenerative model also implies actively investing in the ocean for climate resilience. In this instance, mangroves in particular are nature's best line of defense. Mangroves provide some of the most effective protections against coastal erosion, while they are also critical spawning grounds for nu-

merous commercial fish species and crustaceans.

Marine-based eco-tourism is also one of the most valuable forms of economic activity to provide opportunities for local populations. These are some of the elements that underpin the transformation from 'extraction' to 'regeneration'.

How does this fit into Africa's drive for sustainable industrialization?

The Great Blue Wall not only offers a model for a 'regenerative blue economy' but also addresses broader challenges associated with Africa's maritime space.

As Africa's trade heavily relies on sea transport, ensuring climate-resistant port infrastructure becomes pivotal, most pressing is the development of Africa's maritime corridors for trade to build on the promise of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).

Reliable and affordable energy is a key enabler of sustainable value chains. Opportunities exist for offshore wind energy, for example, as being explored by Morocco. Meanwhile, floating solar is being tested in Seychelles, while us-

ing the ocean temperature differential for cooling purposes is being piloted in Mauritius.

Financing the vision

As the Great Blue Wall envisions climate resilience built on community-focused economic empowerment, financing is key. The gap in climate finance is glaring - all the while conflicts divert resources away from climate and development priorities. The climate finance gap highlighted by the High Level Expert Panel on Climate Finance co-chaired by Nick Stern and Vera Songwe showed that \$2.4 trillion was required by 2030.

Large-scale climate finance availability would allow the Great Blue Wall initiative to mobilize quickly and at scale. Additionally, the Great Blue Wall also aims to generate income streams that support communities, reducing dependency and helps to boost domestic resource mobilization.

Among these opportunities including tapping into the potential of 'blue carbon' or issuing carbon credits based on the sequestration potential of oceanic resources. Successful small scale projects such as Mikoko Pamoja in Kenya have delivered high quality results for local communities through mangrove rehabilitation.

Recognizing increased debt burdens of African countries, the opportunity to use debt swap instruments to replace existing expensive debt with more affordable longer-term lending could potentially liberate fiscal space to be redeployed to finance some of the priorities of the Great Blue Wall. The Seychelles debt for climate swap of 2015 for example delivered new and predictable flows of finance for marine conservation.

Looking ahead: COP28 and beyond

The Great Blue Wall has high-level political backing and is a priority for the African Union and its partners. Efforts are underway to expand its adoption to other African countries, connecting the ambitions of the countries along the Indian Ocean to those along the Atlantic.

At COP28, the focus was on mobilizing seed financing for this ambitious project which not only provides climate adaptation, but also seeks to fundamentally transform the economic model for management of marine resources.

The Great Blue Wall captures the essence of the 'climate positive growth' we hope to see.

Sustainability, human wellbeing depend on rethinking, redefining value of resources



engine of the global economy. If not responsibly managed, mining activities can lead to soil erosion, habitat destruction and contamination of water sources, impacting the local ecosystems and nearby communities who depend on those ecosystems.

A prominent example is the handling of mining waste and mining tailings, the residue remaining after mineral processing. Recent research reveals that a third of the world's mine tailings facilities are located within or near protected areas, posing a significant threat to biodiversity and ecosystem integrity in the event of facility failures or accidents.

Unfortunately, these accidents are not as uncommon as one may think. The disaster of the Brumadinho (Brazil) tailings storage facility in 2019 unleashed a toxic tidal wave of around 12 million cubic meters, which killed 270 people and destroyed a significant area of the Atlantic forest and a protected area downstream.

Economic models are human-made and can be changed. If we are serious about sustainability and long-term human wellbeing, they must be transformed to better account for the irreplaceable value that natural resources provide.

This shift, advocated for by participants at the World Resources Forum 2023, requires acknowledging the interconnectedness of economic, ecological and social systems, underpinning the need for new accounting models to integrate ecological and social indicators.

Profound changes need to permeate climate negotiations and international policies, if future COPs are to play a meaningful role in preserving life on this planet. This year we witnessed once again how climate change discussions tend to overlook the central role played by the excessive and irresponsible use of resources, and apply a tunnel vision focused on CO2 emissions which are a key aspect to tackle, but essentially a symptom of a more profound ill.

The cure goes through integrating natural resource management in the institutional fabric and extending the relevant policy options beyond the prevailing energy supply. Ecological health and human wellbeing are interlinked objectives which call for reassessing our values and rethinking how we use natural resources.

ST. GALLEN, Switzerland

While the COP28 presidency celebrated an "historic deal" to transition away from fossil fuels, we must remind ourselves that the future wellbeing of human societies in a livable planet depends on more than that.

Keeping fossil fuels in the ground is a necessary condition, but not a sufficient one. To achieve the ultimate goal, we need to fundamentally rethink the value of natural resources and reassess their link to long-term human wellbeing.

Having a world climate conference with a tunnel vision on fossil fuels

does not help us in that.

At stake is the long-term ability of human societies to provide for wellbeing, especially in light of a growing global population and widening inequalities. Over the past decades, resource use has significantly improved living standards for many, particularly in high-income countries, but this now comes at an unprecedented cost to the environment and human health.

According to the UN International Resource Panel, today resource extraction and processing are responsible for 90% of biodiversity loss and water stress, 50% of carbon emissions and 1/3 of air pollution health impacts.

The resounding consensus of the recent World Resources Forum Conference: in order to achieve wellbeing for all within planetary boundaries, humanity needs to rethink how it values resources.

The use of resources has more than tripled since 1970 and, if current trends continue, global material consumption is predicted to double again by 2060. This growth is especially prominent for metals and non-metallic minerals, which are the backbone of major industries and the enablers of the energy and digital transitions.

The International Energy Agency forecasts that global demand for critical raw materials will quadruple by 2040 - in the case of lithium, demand is expected to increase by a factor of 42.

Resources are the bridge between economic productivity and ecological balance. A bridge that, in most policy and governance frameworks, has often

remained invisible. The main reason for this lies in an economic model not valuing natural resources.

Economists have severely downplayed the dependence of economic activity on resources and the natural systems that generate them. This has contributed to overexploitation, environmental degradation and the exacerbation of global challenges, such as climate change and biodiversity loss.

Distorted economic incentives and market signals are now ubiquitous, such as in the well-known cases of the deforestation of the Amazon rainforest or the depletion of fish stocks due to overfishing. Others are less discussed, especially in relation to the mining sector, which will become the

CAPITAL RADIO

RATIBA YA VIPINDI JUMATATU - JUMAPILI

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



CAPITAL RADIO

With increased FP uptake, Tanzania is likely to attain SDGs, say experts

By Guardian Reporter

FOR any country to attain quick economic and social development, it needs to match the resources with its growing population.

This will ensure that the resources are properly and equitably channelled to various economic and social services development like schools, roads improvement, health services, including clean and safe drinking water among many others for the benefit of its citizens.

With the current growing population, however, many countries including Tanzania are finding it hard to provide the needed economic and social services to its citizens due to limited resources.

The National Family Planning Coordinator at the Ministry of Health, Zuhura Mbuguni said recently at a health workshop in Arusha that Tanzania has taken Family Planning (FP) very seriously as it was one of the many contributing factors to attaining the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's) come 2030.

"The government has embedded the 17 SDGs with FP. Scaling up the initiative would ensure the

attainment of most of these goals," she said.

The SDGs are a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and improve the lives and prospects of everyone, everywhere.

The goals were adopted by all UN Member States in 2015 as part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development which set out a 15 year plan to achieve them.

Thus, for Tanzania to achieve this, it is determined to ensure that its citizens exercise child spacing, to better plan their families through modern and traditional methods.

The move would ensure that the increase in population is matched with the availability of resources to cater for the growing population and bring about the needed social and economic development.

Zuhura said, the government has already taken a step which ensures effective implementation of several health guidelines like, the National Policy Guidelines for Reproductive Health (RH) and Child Services, the Family Planning Standard Guidelines 2013, the National Family Planning Research Agenda 2013 and the National Family Planning Outreach among



others.

She said the government priority is to improve the uptake of postpartum in FP and address social norms that hinder individuals from using contraceptives while at the same time increasing appropriate information on FP and contraceptives.

The government has also taken steps to improve the availability of contraceptives, by increasing the number of trained health care providers to offer FP services while expanding a range of contraceptive methods and raising awareness amongst communities on the benefits of FP.

This, she said, was due to the fact that the realisation of SDG's depended much on how the country plans and controls its population, so as to allow equitable distribution of social and economic development to the communities.

According to her, putting the focus

on child spacing would help to improve nutrition in families which in turn reduces poverty at household as well as national level.

"Family Planning creates a manageable social size to improve food security, hence reducing hunger and ensuring healthy lives," she said.

However, she noted that despite the good progress on FP initiatives by the government and other health stakeholders, the country has failed to attain the set target of reaching the 47 percent of women in marriage to access contraceptives between 2019 and 2023.

The Tanzania Demographic Health Survey (TDHS), 2022 cites that only 31 percent (equivalent to 5,575,000) of married women are using FP methods, where 9-11 percent are on injectables, 3-4 percent are on pills, 14-15 percent on implants, 2-4 percent of women are on sterilization while 7-8 percent of them are

using traditional methods.

She therefore called for the need to equip service providers, supervisors, planners and decision makers with the knowledge on FP importance so as to scale up the uptake and be able to realise the SDGs.

"Scaling up the uptake with a wide range of contraceptives will mean that every woman in need is able to choose, obtain and use a wide range of high quality, affordable contraceptive methods whenever needed," she said.

She said FP saves lives by reducing abortion, unwanted pregnancies, child and maternal mortality and also HIV infections due to the use of condoms.

According to a Sexual Reproductive Health (SRH) and FP trainer James Mlali, Tanzania was having the highest population growth, recording a 30 percent population increase in ten years to 60 million people in

2022, Population and Housing Census from 45 million people in 2012.

He said the move calls for more efforts on FP so that the country's population can match with the improvement of social services.

During a recent scientific health conference on maternal and child health that took place in Dar es Salaam, Dr Jaria Aljoe from the UNFP called for partners to increase FP commodities through financing and supporting interventions across borders to ensure its accessibility.

She said accessibility of FP commodities was crucial if countries are to reach their FP set targets, as it was likely to contribute to reducing child and maternal mortality.

"Most governments still depend highly on donors to fund FP commodities, we have signed contracts to ensure governments come in to support FP initiatives," she said.

Alex Komba, a Medical Imaging Technologist working at the Eastern and Southern Africa hub, specializing in family planning, adolescent, early reproductive health and health policies said the 2030 SDGs happens to be the only global partnership focused on family planning.

"We do rally behind the FP voice to be able to advance global health, to support gender equality and to support countries like Tanzania to be able to thrive," he said.

Komba said: "Our commitments are country led, that means, we do work with countries to support them achieve their national family planning goals."

He said as a global support network, their engagement was not only looking at the health sector, but rather inter-sectoral approach, focusing on FP 2030 countries commitments by using the respective country's summary report which focuses on addressing on improving modern contraceptive prevalence rates.

FAO unveils innovative locust pesticide management system in Kenya

NAIROBI

THE UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) has introduced, in Kenya, Locust Pesticides Management System (Locust-PMS) that enhances the invasive pests' management and reduces the risks of pesticides to humans and the environment.

Locust-PMS which has been developed by FAO for both locust breeding and invasion countries, enables countries to record and monitor the stocks of pesticides available for locust control operations.

When effectively implemented, the Locust-PMS reduces the risks of pesticide exposure to human and natural resources.

The introduction follows a hands-on training exercise a team of experts from Kenya received in the use of the latest version of Locust-PMS at the Desert Locust Management Centre (CNLAA) in Morocco, where the system has been efficiently operational at the six pesticide stores and two warehouses.

Esbon Agira, was one of the experts from Kenya who received



the training and he said, "Before the desert locust invasion, we were not prepared as a country. The last time Kenya faced the locust invasion of that magnitude was 70 years ago. There were thus no dedicated experts in desert locust management, and we lacked appropriate equipment and adequate pesticides to conduct control operations."

However, the impact of the locust upsurge on food security and livelihoods in Kenya was averted thanks to the urgent intervention of FAO and other partners.

The interventions which in-

cluded using pesticides to spray locusts in the invaded areas, left the experts wondering how they were going to manage the remaining pesticides and dispose of the empty containers hence the need for the training.

The Locust-PMS training was supported by the FAO-implemented project with financial support from USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA).

The system downloaded on tablets is used to register pesticide products, collect data from the quantity of pesticides, useable and obsolete pesticides, spray, survey, empty contain-

ers, and safety equipment in the store, to personnel, vehicles, and information and communication systems used in desert locust control and survey operations.

The pesticide database is kept in a cloud where it can be updated and also generate QR codes to keep track of pesticide products and equipment.

Country desert locust control teams can easily access the Locust-PMS application by downloading it from Google Play Store under the name "FAO Locust PMS".

The CNLAA centre using the Locust-PMS app proved that with proper information on the stock, the shelf life of pesticides can be extended by analysing the stock.

"The Locust-PMS enables proper monitoring and quality checks of the pesticide which can allow extension of shelf life, of course with proper storage conditions. The expiry date doesn't limit usability or viability of the pesticides," said Barack Eliud Baraka, desert locust Officer, Kenya, providing insights after the 5-day practical training. "When you have a good register

of your stock, it saves time and resources that would have gone into procuring unnecessary pesticide stocks and equipment. It would be even easier to sell the extra stock to other countries through triangulation arrangements," said Collins Marangu, Director of Plant Protection and Food Safety Directorate in Kenya's Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development," he added.

"We are looking forward to making locust management effective in Kenya and enhance our preparedness."

Triangulation refers to FAO-facilitated arrangements in which a donor funds the repacking and movement of a stock of pesticides from a country that has an excess stock to a country in direct need of the product concerned. If well conducted, FAO believes such arrangements have the potential to decrease excess stocks.

The Locust-PMS replaces the old pesticides management system - Pesticide Stock Management System (PSMS) - also developed by FAO.

Commonwealth launches e-learning course to help African countries access billions in climate finance

DUBAI

A new commonwealth e-learning course launched yesterday will improve the ability of African countries to access billions of dollars in climate finance.

The Commonwealth Secretary-General, Patricia Scotland KC, launched the 'Commonwealth Climate Finance Essentials E-learning Course' recently in Dubai during the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP28).

Speaking at the event, Secretary-General Patricia Scotland said: "Despite contributing least to the problem, small and vulnerable states are bearing the

biggest burden. Increasingly frequent and extreme weather events are causing widespread destruction to livelihoods and infrastructure - and destroying economies."

"While the international community is stepping in to provide support, it's not enough. Small and vulnerable states also need to navigate the demanding conditions necessary for accessing available climate funds," she said.

The Commonwealth's e-learning course is a significant step towards helping government officials better understand the complex structures of multi-billion-dollar funds and access the finance they need, said Scotland.

Saber Hossain Chowdhury, Special Envoy of the Prime Minister of Bangladesh for Climate Change, drew attention to the capacity challenges faced by developing countries in accessing climate finance on time.

He specifically pointed to the prolonged approval process, citing instances where Bangladesh had to wait nearly nine years to receive funds after submitting project applications.

Chowdhury said: "The course is a great tool. All the good practices from the Commonwealth are brought together and are now available in the form of e-learning. It will help with building that capacity that is so very

essential."

Through this course, he added, countries equipped with the necessary capacity would not only have priority in accessing funds, but also ensure support reaches those most in need.

Orlando Habet, Belize's Minister of Sustainable Development, Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management, endorsed the new course.

He said: "Climate finance is critical for small island developing states and least developed countries. We have been told that the process of finding finance takes too long. This course will assist us to cut down on that time."

The minister also thanked the Commonwealth Secretariat for deploying a national climate finance adviser to Belize. He added that the adviser has been assisting his country in securing funding to implement the national climate plans.

The course builds on the extensive experience of the Commonwealth Climate Finance Access Hub. The hub has helped 17 small and vulnerable states in Africa, the Caribbean, and the Pacific to access more than \$322 million in climate finance for projects to mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change.

Agencies

83 new suspected cholera cases reported in Sudan's Red Sea state

KHARTOUM

THE General Department of Emergency and Epidemic Control of Sudan's Ministry of Health has announced that 83 new suspected cases of cholera were recorded in Red Sea State.

The cholera vaccination campaign in Gedaref and Gezira states concluded last November, after receiving 2.2 million vaccine doses as the first batch from the Global Mechanism for the Elimination of Cholera.

The Technical Committee for Emergency and Epidemic Control reviewed its cumulative report on the disease during its meeting with the State Health Sector Director General on Wednesday at the Emergency Operations Center in Port Sudan. The number of acute watery diarrhoea (cholera) cases in the state reached 1,702, including 63 deaths, from the time of the first notification in October to December 12th.

The statement from the General Department of Emergency, obtained by Sudan Tribune, indicated that the number of suspected cases on Tuesday reached 83, including 42 in Suakin locality, 27 in Port Sudan locality, and the remaining cases in Tokar, Sankat, Haya, Qanab, Oliba, and Aqiq localities.

The meeting heard reports on environmental health, the public health laboratory, infection control, interventions, rapid response teams, disease surveillance, reports of isolation centres, totalling 7 centres, follow-up and supervisory visits to targeted localities, and monitoring of the current situation.

The statement added that the meeting discussed daily intervention packages and schedules of implemented activities, as well as addressing challenges faced in strengthening and sustaining field intervention packages.

The meeting also emphasized intensifying interventions in environmental health activities, providing medical supplies, and conducting rapid examinations in isolation centres and hospitals to expedite case sorting.

The cholera epidemic erupted in Gedaref and Khartoum states last September before spreading to other states, including Al-Jazira, the Red Sea, and the White Nile, where it is projected to infect over three million Sudanese, according to the United Nations.

BUSINESS

Coca-Cola Kwanza, Oryx Gas make 'brave women' dreams come true



CMSA lauds TCCLA's listing at Dar bourse

By Correspondent James Kandoya

THE Capital Market and Securities Authorities (CMSA) has pleaded for the Tanzania Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture (TCCIA) to consider long term investments so as to increase value of shares and enhance shareholders' dividends.

CMSA Chief Executive Officer Nicodemus Mukama (pictured) expressed the concern yesterday in Dar es Salaam at the listing of TCCIA's shares at the Dar es Salaam Stock Exchange (DSE) targeting at boosting its liquidity in the market.

"TCCIA's investment decision at the DSE is meaningful in terms of participation. The investment is going to increase liquidity in the market and facilitate government policies of economic empowerment to Tanzanians because they are going to be paid as dividends," he said.

"Furthermore, it is going to facilitate the implementation of financial inclusion framework where right the government is implementing the policy to ensure the Tanzanians participate in formal financial inclusion in enhanced."

He assured them "We are committed to ensuring a conducive environment for the development of sustainable financial markets in Tanzania."

TCCIA Investment PLC Chief Executive Officer Peter Kifunguomali highlighted investment areas that

will benefit after listing of shares.

"We decided to raise additional capital for issuing shares where each shareholder one will have one share and get additional shares at a price of 145. Currently the share price is 200/292," he said.

The investment portfolio of TCCIA consists of shares listed in the DSE, Nairobi Stock Exchange and other exchanges in the East Africa Community. Therefore these funds are also going to be invested in government securities and government bonds.

More than 1700 shareholders of TCCIA participated heavily, and subscribed for these shares that were good successfully.

All shares on offer were 100 per cent all successfully and have been allotted adding that the initial sell of the company was 145 per share.

Dividends are a major factor in reducing overall portfolio risk and volatility.

In terms of reducing risk, dividend payments mitigate losses that occur from a decline in stock price.

Currently, DSE has 28 listed companies of which 22 are local companies and 6 are cross-listed companies.

There are 27 listed equity securities, 16 licensed brokers, and 6 custodian banks. The most traded stocks on the DSE are those of the National Bank of Commerce (NBC), Tanzania Breweries Limited (TBL), and CRDB Bank.



Health minister, Umy Mwalimu (centre) poses in a group photo with beneficiaries of the brave women campaign.

By Guardian Reporter

IN the bustling streets of Tanzania, from Dar es Salaam to the Tanga Region, a revolution is stirring.

The protagonists are not political figures or high-powered business executives, but resilient women vendors who have taken control of their economic future in the food sector.

This success story is the result of the Mwanamke Shujaa campaign, a transformative initiative that has been enlightening, equipping and empowering women in Tanzania.

The Mwanamke Shujaa campaign, translating to "A Brave Woman", is an initiative by Coca-Cola Kwanza, a subsidiary of Coca-Cola Beverages Africa, in collaboration with Oryx Gas and the Institute of Social Work (ISW).

The campaign aims to facilitate economic inclusion, particularly for women, through a holistic approach, blending education, employability and entrepreneurship training.

This year, the campaign has achieved a significant milestone, having empowered over 1,600



...the success of this year's campaign, reiterating the company's commitment to creating shared opportunities for ...

women vendors, marking a significant stride towards gender equality and sustainable development.

The campaign's slogan, "Jiamini, Jithamini, Jijenge," encapsulates the essence of the initiative - to instill self-confidence, self-esteem and self-reliance among women.

By enabling women to economically benefit from the value chain of various activities they undertake in their communities, the campaign underlines Coca-Cola Kwanza's commitment to women's economic empowerment.

Each woman involved in the campaign received a 15kg gas cylinder, a two-plate gas cooker, an apron, a cooking table and a crate of soft drinks. These tools of trade not only improve their productiv-

ity but serve as symbols of their economic independence and entrepreneurial spirit.

One such testament to the transformative impact of the initiative is Fatuma Ahmed Salehe from Korogwe.

She attests to the substantial growth of her business since her involvement in the programme, noting the entrepreneurial skills she gained and how the modern cooking tools have made her job easier and more efficient.

"I can now spend less time cooking and serve more customers," she states, reflecting her enhanced productivity and income-generating capacity.

Salum Nassor, Director of Public Affairs, Communication and Sustainability at Coca-Cola Kwanza, lauds the success of this year's campaign, reiterating the company's commitment to creating shared opportunities for businesses and communities.

The company's growth strategy focuses on creating inclusive growth opportunities for communities, women, youth and people with disabilities. Looking ahead, he reveals plans for expanding the

company's reach in other sectors of the economy in 2024.

Unguu Sulay, Managing Director of Coca-Cola Kwanza, reaffirms the company's commitment to shaping a more equitable future for communities. "Coca-Cola Kwanza is thrilled to contribute to women's economic inclusion initiatives through educational, employability and entrepreneurial programmes," he states.

On the part of the project partners, Benoit Araman, the Oryx Gas Managing Director, expresses his company's commitment to collaborate with Coca-Cola Kwanza on this noble cause.

He underscores Oryx Gas' mission to support enterprises and society in boosting the economy, increasing the usage of gas in the country and preserving the environment.

The Mwanamke Shujaa campaign transcends mere programme status, representing a transformative and indispensable strategy that effectively addresses the ever-evolving demands of women's entrepreneurship and business endeavours, consistently and resolutely.

Solar energy: Investors call for 50kw cap scrapped off

KIGALI

SOLAR developers and investors are rallying on the government to review a package of existing incentives, particularly allowing for installations generating over 50 kilowatts of renewable energy.

The current provisions, which only allow for installations generating less than 50 kilowatts, not only stifle market growth but also underestimate the role of solar energy solutions in enhancing energy access in the country.

Several investors voiced the call on Wednesday, December 13, during a major awareness campaign of solar energy in Rwanda's commercial and industrial sectors.

Organized by the Energy Private Developers' (EPD) association and Project Development Program (PDP), the campaign saw leading private companies in Rwanda share insights into the sector's achievements, as well as major challenges.

Eder Munyampenda, country manager at Sawa Energy, a regional firm enabling businesses to generate savings on the electricity bill by going solar with no upfront costs, said the lifting of the cap would be "a game-changer" for the industry.

"A game changer would be making sure that the regulatory environment is fruitful for private developers to enter the market."

He added: "So I think we have a cap size right now of 50 kilowatts in the current regulation. Increasing that cap, and allowing us to deploy bigger systems would be, I think, a game changer for private developers in this space."

Equally challenging in the industry, Munyampenda pointed out, "Is education amongst consumers. So, when I go to a client, they're very doubtful. Will this work? Will this operate my elevator? So that's one of the biggest barriers is the actual education of the wider public."

"And it's us, it's our job as players in the industry to educate and to make sure that these solar systems are looked at as viable energy producers. And the third thing is to make sure that you are committed to operation and maintenance because that kills the consumer confidence."

At Sawa Energy, he said, businesses are offered a chance to go solar at no upfront cost.

"So, what we do is we enter into a long-term agreement with the clients where we give them the system, we own, operate, maintain the system throughout the lifetime of the contract, and we offer them a discounted price to the grid or the EUCL pricing that they're already consuming."

Hosting an awareness campaign, "is extremely important. I think it's important for people to be in the



Officials pose for a photo during a major awareness campaign of solar energy in Rwanda's commercial and industrial sectors mid this week.

market, see the market challenges, improve the market, and give people and clients confidence in solar. The sun is hitting our roofs anyway. We are green country, the sun is hitting our roofs, let's harness it, let's use it to go green, but also to provide savings to businesses."

Munyampenda shared similar sentiments with James Ngugi, Country Manager at Davis&Shirriff, one of the leading Pan-African energy solutions firms.

"Solar is very critical to us as we participate in the global agenda of highlighting the benefit of renewable energy in terms of the environmental benefits, we all know that the economic benefit for the Rwanda market is just opening up for solar."

"So, for us, our tagline first of all is improving people's lives and we want to do that with our expertise.

We have been in the game for 20 years in Rwanda, but in the group, we are almost 80 years old, and our main business right now is solar, and actually we are the biggest solar module importers in East Africa. So having all the players here, would in essence ensure that we can be able to remove these policies that curtail business like the 50 cap."

According to Ngugi, the majority of off-takers (clients) who want to make their system renewable, are not successful because of the existing regulatory environment.

"But the good thing, we have just been told by the policymakers that it is something they are reviewing and they can offer."

"We are present here, all our salespeople are engineers, and we also partner with global partners like Huawei for all the systems we are do-

ing. We need to ensure that we size correctly, we give the right solution and we warranty it."

For context, Ngugi highlighted that a client can have solar panels at a warranty of 25 years, batteries up to seven years, and the installation system is going up to a year warranty.

Gilbert Ntabakirabose, Renewable Energy Advisor Project Development Program Country Representative, Rwanda, and Burundi, reiterated the need to scrap off the 50kw peak, citing that the move is more cost-effective for off-takers.

"Having this put in place is when we can save a high amount of money."

Ntabakirabose said that in the quest to scale solar solutions in Rwanda, GIZ provides three services. The solar efficacy study determines how much carbon dioxide emission is saved, among others.

"We have managed to meet with our targeted audience including policymakers and local developers. And I would recommend that we adopt the use of solar energy in the commercial and industrial sector."

For Serge Wilson Muhizi, Energy Private Developers' Chief Executive Officer the time is now to go green.

"And also, here in Africa, we are very lucky that we have the sunshine, which is almost the whole day. So, we have to take advantage of it,

because there are other countries from different continents, who can't boast of the same opportunity. That is why we are encouraging people to go green. It's less costly and also more effective and efficient."

Speaking shortly after the campaign, Mr. Serge Wilson asserted that among the gaps exposed is the lack of awareness.

"So, we still have a very huge gap, especially for the off-takers and the demand side."

"So that's why we say, let's see how we come up with this kind of campaign and see how we can raise this awareness, especially to the off-takers or the demanding side, and to show that there are available different solutions including a financing model which can accommodate them like leasing from one year to 25 years."

"So, one of the requests which is coming from this kind of campaign is that the government can put in place a policy framework that can allow the private sector to have the production which is above 50 kilowatts."

Policymakers weigh in

Speaking to the media on the sidelines of the campaign, Fidel Abimana, Permanent Secretary at the Ministry of Infrastructure announced that the government is working towards introducing a new package of incentives for local developers.

Single paybill lifts non-tax collections up to Sh8.6bn

NAIROBI

Non-tax revenue collection by State agencies grew by Sh8.6 billion in the first quarter of the present financial year to June next year, propped up by the implementation of the single-pay bill collection system.

Fresh data from the National Treasury shows that non-tax revenue—known as ministerial appropriation-in-aid (A-I-A) and which includes fees and fines collected by State corporations—increased to Sh92.8 billion, marking a 10.3 percent growth from the same period of the previous year's Sh84.2 billion. The State had set a target of Sh82.4 billion in A-I-A, fees and fine collections for the period.

Increased collections of A-I-A helped compensate for the missed targets for tax collections as the economy continues on a rough patch characterised by a weak shilling and global shock.

The increase in non-tax revenues captured the attention of President William Ruto who hailed the transparent and secure manner all revenues have been administered in his Jam-

huri Day speech.

"We are, therefore, taking strong measures to ensure that all revenue is administered transparently, efficiently, and in a secure manner. One of our best interventions is the use of digital technology and the migration of government revenue collection to a single pay bill," said President Ruto on Tuesday. "Since this measure was implemented, we have witnessed a significant rise in total revenues collected. Besides enhancing revenue collection, digitisation has eliminated revenue leakages through corruption and theft."

Dr Ruto then gave all State agencies until the end of this year to migrate to the e-Citizen platform.

"It is important that we sustain this progress in promoting integrity, transparency, and efficiency in revenue management. And for this reason, I direct that all agencies observe the December 31 deadline to finalise the migration to the e-Citizen platform."

The government in August directed all ministries, counties, departments, and agencies to migrate to the single digital platform Paybill number 222222 and all other payment



President William Ruto

platforms to be shut down within 30 days of the circular issued by the head of public service on July 10.

The Paybill number might, however, be dealt a blow after two petitioners challenged the directive, arguing that it is unconstitutional.

Fredrick Ogola and lawyer Benard Odera Okello argue that the State acted unilaterally

and arbitrarily by directing the closure of all government digital payment systems, to allow on-boarding all government services, at the national and county levels, into one digital payment platform eCitizen. go.ke.

Several agencies have moved to increase the fees and fines they charge as the State moves to supplement the tax collec-

tion in what is aimed at reducing Exchequer disbursement.

Some of the State agencies that have increased non-tax revenues include the Immigration Department which wants higher passport application and visa fees.

Other government services that are to be raised include land transaction fees as well as service charges by the National

Transport and Safety Authority.

A big chunk of the tax revenues is being used to service debts, leaving the government with little revenue to pay salaries for civil servants.

Early this month it was reported that about Sh350 billion ministries and public entities expected to collect as fees for the provision of services during the current financial year could be exposed to a high risk of loss, as concerns emerge over controls set to prevent leakages.

This follows President William Ruto's directive to have all payments for public services channelled digitally to a single account.

Auditor-General Nancy Gathungu said she had raised concerns with the Treasury to tighten controls to protect public money in the shift to the single account.

"We must be very keen to ensure that controls are not compromised on the directives issued on how to manage revenue collection. I have already raised some concerns with the Treasury on internal controls. When we decide to put all our eggs in one basket then we must be sure that we have

sealed all the loopholes on revenue collection," she said at a forum on a new Public Finance Management tool being rolled out for the public service.

She told Budget and Appropriations Committee chairman at the event that she would raise the issue with the National Assembly.

"So, Hon Ndindi Nyoro, that is an area we will come to you when you are doing revenue allocation and when we are even tracing the revenues."

The implication of the directive that took effect in July was that billions of shillings individual public entities collect would now be paid to the Treasury through a paybill gazetted last December as opposed to separate accounts.

During the current financial year budget, the Treasury projects that ministerial appropriations-in-aid—the funds ministries and State entities collect from the public for services will be Sh348.6 billion.

However, the Auditor-General said there exist issues with structures instituted to ensure checks and balances in the programme that stopped all cash payments in favour of the single account held at the Treasury.

Jumia to close down food delivery business

NAIROBI

E-commerce platform Jumia has announced plans to shut down its food delivery business in all the seven African markets it operates in including Kenya by the end of this month, citing unfavourable conditions.

In a statement on Thursday, Jumia which runs the food delivery business in Kenya, Nigeria, Uganda, Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria and the Ivory Coast, said employees currently attached to the venture will transition to durable consumer goods business.

"Following a strategic review of Jumia Food, the company determined that its food delivery business is not suitable to the current operating environment and macroeconomic conditions and will close its operations in all mar-

kets by the end of December 2023," read the statement.

The firm added that the food delivery business accounted for 11 percent of its gross merchandise value (GMV) during the nine months to September 2023, noting that it has never been profitable since its inception.

GMV refers to the total value of orders for products and services, including shipping fees, tax, and before deductions of any discounts or vouchers, irrespective of cancellations or returns for the relevant period.

Jumia's withdrawal from the food market comes at a time when the space in Kenya has been teeming with new entrants, a trend that intensifies competition.

Other delivery firms include Glovo, Uber Eats and Dial-A Delivery.



Jumia Group CEO Francis Dufay termed the move a strategic shift that would place the firm on the path to profitability, noting that food delivery had failed to show potential.

"The more we focus on our physical goods business, the more we realise that there is huge potential for Jumia to grow, with a path to profitability. We must take the right decision and fully focus our management, our teams and

our capital resources to go after this opportunity," said Dufay.

"In the current context, it means leaving a business line, which we believe does not offer the same upside potential—food delivery."

By the close of 2021, Jumia had made a cumulative loss of \$87.8 million (Sh13.5 billion in current exchange rates) in the Kenyan business since it set up local operations in May 2013.

In June this year, an internal sur-

vey by Jumia revealed that beauty products were the most ordered items on the platform among Kenya's rural customers, contributing 16 percent of all upcountry deliveries ahead of phones and home items such as furniture and beddings.

According to the survey, urban customers mainly purchased food items that included groceries and uncooked cereals.

Morocco leading the MEA region towards mobile anti-fraud growth

RABAT

Morocco has emerged as the Middle East and Africa (MEA) region's leader in combating mobile fraud.

This is according to Evina, a business that provides enhanced cyber security for carrier billing and mobile money.

In a new 2023 edition of the Direct Carrier Billing (DCB) Index, Evina claims to have delved into the current changes in the area of DCB, particularly in the Middle East and Africa.

This annual report sheds light on the development and potential of the DCB market in this region, as it evolves as a key player in the mobile payments sector.

The company also claims that, as a streamlined approach that allows customers to charge goods directly to their mobile carrier bill, its use is growing in locations with increased mobile penetration, propelling new countries to the forefront.

Notably, the company claims that the market's overall rating has increased from 2.8 to 2.9, since the DCB Index



employs a 1 to 5 rating system, with 1 being the lowest and 5 being the highest level of DCB development and potential.

Morocco leads the ranking with a score of 3.6, while South Africa falls to second with a score of 3.5 this year.

"The improvement signals the

market's advances in innovation and opens doors for further development, particularly in anti-fraud technology," it notes.

"For the first time, new countries such as Algeria, Botswana, and Saudi Arabia have been included, providing a more comprehensive understanding

of the region's DCB landscape."

Morocco leads this year's rating with the highest score, highlighting its large and dependable DCB industry, according to Evina.

According to the business, South Africa is the runner-up, with strong mobile money use

and potential for DCB growth.

"The Index also helps to enhance Ivory Coast as the fastest-growing market and draws attention to the increasing market dynamics in Africa," it continues. "In the Middle East, Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates are making significant progress with favourable ratings, while Saudi Arabia has an exceptional 3.4 rating, proving its relevance and raising the region's average score." "This year's ranking shows a modest increase in the overall level of security among DCB players operating in the MEA region," says David Lofti, CEO of Evina.

He adds: "This is a wonderful trend, but it should not obscure the rising discrepancy in security levels amongst players. Some players are investing in their development and security on the DCB and reaping significant benefits in terms of growth and profitability, whereas others are caught in a downward spiral in which they find themselves unprotected and under attack by fraudsters who target the world's least protected regions and avoid defended players.

MTN:Nigeria tower contract award to ATC is conclusive

LAGOS

MTN Nigeria has stated that there is no going back on its decision to award the 2500 tower sites contract to the American Tower Corporation (ATC), which the company announced in September - this after the tower company outbid competitors to clinch the contract, expected to expire in 2024 and 2025.

This is contrary to media reports that the mobile network operator is reconsidering its choice in light of an allegedly better offer from IHS Towers.

In response to this assertion, MTN Nigeria stated on Tuesday that it has not received a revised offer from IHS and that any reports that it is now reconsidering its decision to award the 2500 tower sites contract to ATC are inaccurate.

MTN Nigeria recently awarded tower contracts to ATC giving it 13% share of the total tower assets. Karl Toriola, MTN Nigeria boss, disclosed that IHS currently has 14,600 sites representing 60% of MTN Nigeria's total tower assets, compared with ATC's 2,300 representing 13% of the assets.

Tobechukwu Okigbo, chief corporate services, MTN Nigeria said, "The agreement with ATC over the 2,500 sites is final, having gone through a rigorous process involving our highest governance approvals. Our preference is always for bilateral renewal, subject to competitive pricing and terms. In this instance the ATC proposal was superior."

MTN plans to continue to engage with IHS Towers on further opportunities that arise, including the renewal of the next vintages of towers that come up for renewals in 2025. However, there will also be participation from other parties.

Despite concerns that giving the contract to ATC may cause disruptions and possibly have a detrimental effect on the environment, Okigbo said such concerns are "factually incorrect, and misleading" as tower transfers between two infrastructure companies do not necessarily lead to network disruption. MTN Nigeria is expectant that the transition will be smooth.

"Through our partnership with ATC, we are setting the stage for a new era of connectivity in Nigeria, one that not only meets the growing demands of our customers but also aligns with our focus on expense efficiencies, commitment to sustainability and environmental responsibility," said Okigbo.

The telco is also expecting ATC to adhere strictly to NCC guidelines and NESREA regulations on deploying telecoms sites.

"We are deeply committed to achieving net-zero emissions and part of the differentiated value ATC provides is a commitment to operating green sites, ensuring significant reduction in carbon emissions. Contrary to the allegations of harmful environmental impact, the partnership with ATC will reduce greenhouse gases," Okigbo said

IMF approves \$268 million SDR for Rwanda to tackle climate shocks

KIGALI

International Monetary Fund (IMF), on December 14, approved the disbursement of \$268 million (approx. Rwf333 billion) in Special Drawing Rights (SDR) to support Rwanda's balance of payments in dealing with climate shocks.

This is part of the IMF's Resilience and Sustainability Facility (RSF), which allocated the country an amount of \$319 million in December 2022, and first tranche of the overall 14-month financing under Stand-by Credit Facility (SCF).

In essence, RSF is an initiative that aims at helping low-income and vulnerable middle-income IMF members address longer-term structural challenges such as climate change with longer-term low-cost financing.

The PCI aims at supporting the government to build on the progress in macroeconomic, fiscal, and financial reforms to deliver more inclusive, resilient, and sustainable growth.

According to the IMF, the reforms emphasize policies to ensure macroeconomic stability and reforms to mitigate pandemic scars and to build socioeconomic resilience to shocks and insure against downside risks.

While the recalibrated policy mix is expected to rebuild external buffers, curb inflation, and improve debt sustainability, IMF projects growth to moderate from 8.2 percent in 2022 to 6.2 percent and 6.6 percent in 2023 and 2024, respectively, part-



Richard Tusabe, Minister of State in charge of the National Treasury in the Finance Ministry speaks at the event in Kigali

ly related to continued fiscal consolidation and tight monetary and exchange rate policies.

"Despite the challenging environment, macroeconomic policy performance remained broadly in line with program objectives under the PCI. Progress on the climate agenda under the RSF arrangement remains exceptionally strong."

Bo Li, Deputy Managing Director, and Acting Board Chair, said that implementing an appropriate and carefully calibrated policy mix under the new Stand-by Credit Facility (SCF) is key to rebuilding buffers and safeguarding macroeconomic stability.

"Rwanda's commitment to building a resilient and greener economy is commendable and should be sustained. Enhancing social protection programs, improving human capi-

tal accumulation, and promoting private sector-led economic diversification will be critical to navigate challenging times and advance living standards."

Maintaining the momentum on RSF-supported climate-related reforms -including green taxonomy- will help close adaptation gaps and increase resilience to climate-induced shocks, he added.

The board also recommended continued exchange rate flexibility to contain inflationary pressures and preserve external stability, and maintain an appropriately tight monetary policy stance to durably bring inflation back to the target.

The government of Rwanda and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) mission team on Tuesday, April 4, reached a staff-level agreement on

successful implementation of the economic and financial policies required to complete the first reviews under both the policy coordination instrument (PCI) and the resilience and sustainability facility (RSF).

The agreement, which is subject to approval by the IMF Executive Board in May, will allow Rwanda to access the first tranche of the financial arrangement of about \$74.6 million under the RSF programme.

In a statement, the IMF mission team noted that Rwanda's economic performance under both RSF and PCI programmes has been strong, with all reform targets and measures envisaged for the reviews progressing well and expected to be completed ahead of the Executive Board discussion.

Speaking at the conclusion of the

mission, Haimanot Teferra, the IMF Mission lead, said: "The mission is grateful for the authorities' excellent cooperation and candid and constructive discussions and reaffirms the IMF's support for the government's efforts to implement its economic reform program."

After two weeks of deliberations with various government officials, the IMF mission highlighted Rwanda's strong economic growth in 2022 supported by manufacturing and services sectors which offset weak agricultural production and slowdown in construction activity.

It noted, however, that inflationary pressures caused by rise in food prices as well as high commodity prices and tight global financing conditions have weakened Rwanda's external position.

Rwanda's economy registered strong growth at 8.2 percent in 2022, while headline inflation remained elevated at 20.8 percent in February.

The IMF mission pointed out that Rwanda remains vulnerable to economic shock from the external environment, necessitating the urgent need to re-build policy buffers.

It called for timely implementation of the revised excise and corporate income tax laws to raise domestic revenues, while containing non-priority current and capital expenditures.

On monetary policy, the mission urged speeding up reforms to enhance monetary policy operations and deepening money and government securities markets to improve the efficiency of monetary policy transmission.

It noted that while the banking sector remains well-capitalized and liquid, authorities need to continue monitoring credit risk and prudent loan classification and provisioning.

"The National Bank of Rwanda should pursue a more decisive monetary policy tightening to contain inflationary pressures and promote exchange rate flexibility to ensure external stability," Teferra said.

"Data-dependent monetary policy and strengthening communication would help to contain the second-round effects and anchor inflation expectations."

The IMF team commended sustained reforms to tackle pandemic effects and enhance socioeconomic resilience.

Visiosoft securing Savant seed funding

PRETORIA

Visiosoft, a South African manufacturer of Internet of Things (IoT) devices, has received seed funding from investment firm Savant to speed its global expansion.

Visiosoft specialises in the design, development, and manufacturing of IoT devices, with a particular emphasis on communication infrastructure.

The start-up unveiled its global ambitions this week, citing a "transformative investment" from Savant, a deep-tech and hardware investor, as an anchor of the move.

With over 70 000 devices currently on the market, the company says it now aims to expand its footprint with Savant support, as the extra financing will allow it to enter new areas.

"The funds will be directed towards enhancing the team's capabilities and ensuring ample working capital to meet commercial demands," the company stated in a statement.

The company, based in Bellville, Cape Town, stated that it is on a "trajectory to scale in Africa and developed global markets," and that "the strategic investment from Savant positions the company to continue leading the way in IoT innovation, providing impactful solutions for a connected world."

"This strategic infusion of capital not only reinforces our commitment to excellence but also solidifies our position as a key player in the IoT industry," Johan Dirker, president and CEO of Visiosoft, said

"Savant crucially identifies globally competitive, cutting edge, technological innovation and highly capable teams emanating from Africa," said Savant partner Thaheer Mullins. "Visiosoft is one example of this, and they have already begun the process of internationalisation."

"They've had a scaled revolutionary impact in South African business and industrial context. We are excited to be a part of the journey to establish an internationally competitive firm."

Savant said in a statement that its investment in Visiosoft demonstrates the company's dedication to "nurturing cutting-edge technology" enterprises.

According to the company: "With a 20-year legacy of supporting innovation, Savant sees Visiosoft as a home-grown opportunity to drive growth in local industries while competing on the international stage."

"This investment represents a significant milestone for both Visiosoft and the EPF Tech Fund, reaffirming our commitment to nurturing innovation and driving positive change in South Africa. Visiosoft is primed for extraordinary success thanks to Savant's considerable knowledge and network. We are pleased to work with Savant and Visiosoft as they start on the next phase of their journey." Joanna Jacqueline Govender is the Chief Executive Officer of the EPF Tech Fund



The funds will be directed towards enhancing the team's capabilities and ensuring ample working capital to meet commercial demands



MONDAY - WEDNESDAY FROM 10:30 PM

ITV PGM SCHEDULE

SATURDAY 16 Dec	5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi	6:00 HABARI	6:40 Kumekucha	7:00 Habari	8:00 Ai Jazeera	9:00 Watoto wetu	10:05 Shika Bamba 5	10:35 Mjue Zaidi rpt	11:15 Chetu ni chetu rpt	11:50 Hawavumi lakini wamo	12:50 Art and Lifestyle	13:20 Shamba lulu	13:50 Soap: In Love with Ramon rpt	14:55 Igizo: Mizengwe	16:10 Igizo: Slay Queen	17:00 Shamsam za Pwani	18:00 Jiji Letu	18:15 ITV Top 10 rpt	19:00 Jungu kuu	19:30 Shika Bamba	20:00 Habari	21:05 Igizo: Slay Queen	21:40 Art and Lifestyle	22:50 Hawavumi lakini wamo	23:40 Soap: Uzalo rpt	00:30 Ai Jazeera
SUNDAY 17 Dec	5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi	6:00 HABARI	6:40 Kumekucha	7:00 Habari	8:00 Ai Jazeera	9:00 Watoto wetu	10:05 Shika Bamba 5	10:35 Mjue Zaidi rpt	11:15 Chetu ni chetu rpt	11:50 Hawavumi lakini wamo	12:50 Art and Lifestyle	13:20 Shamba lulu	13:50 Soap: In Love with Ramon rpt	14:55 Igizo: Mizengwe	16:10 Igizo: Slay Queen	17:00 Shamsam za Pwani	18:00 Jiji Letu	18:15 ITV Top 10 rpt	19:00 Jungu kuu	19:30 Shika Bamba	20:00 Habari	21:05 Igizo: Slay Queen	21:40 Art and Lifestyle	22:50 Hawavumi lakini wamo	23:40 Soap: Uzalo rpt	00:30 Ai Jazeera
MONDAY 18 Dec	5:30 Soap rpt: Uzalo	6:00 Uwanja wa Mazoezi	6:40 Kumekucha	7:00 Habari	8:00 Ai Jazeera	9:00 Watoto wetu	10:05 Shika Bamba 5	10:35 Mjue Zaidi rpt	11:15 Chetu ni chetu rpt	11:50 Hawavumi lakini wamo	12:50 Art and Lifestyle	13:20 Shamba lulu	13:50 Soap: In Love with Ramon rpt	14:55 Igizo: Mizengwe	16:10 Igizo: Slay Queen	17:00 Shamsam za Pwani	18:00 Jiji Letu	18:15 ITV Top 10 rpt	19:00 Jungu kuu	19:30 Shika Bamba 5	20:00 Habari	21:05 Igizo: Slay Queen	21:40 Art and Lifestyle	22:50 Hawavumi lakini wamo	23:40 Soap: Uzalo rpt	00:30 Ai Jazeera

9:30 Soap: In Love with Ramon rpt	10:05 Habari za saa	10:35 Watoto wetu	11:00 Habari za saa	11:30 Mjue Zaidi	12:00 Ai Jazeera	12:30 Art and Lifestyle	13:00 Mjue Zaidi	13:30 Ai Jazeera	14:00 Habari za saa	14:30 Watoto wetu	15:00 Art and Lifestyle	15:30 Soap: Slay Queen	16:00 Habari za saa	16:30 Mjue Zaidi	17:00 Igizo: Filimi	17:30 Habari za saa	18:00 Mjue Zaidi	18:30 Ai Jazeera	19:00 Art and Lifestyle	19:30 Habari za saa	20:00 HABARI	20:30 Kumekucha	21:00 Habari	21:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi	22:00 Soap rpt: Uzalo	22:30 Habari	23:00 Music: The Base	00:30 Ai Jazeera											
WEDNESDAY 20 Dec	5:00 Soap rpt: Uzalo	5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi	6:00 HABARI	6:40 Kumekucha	7:30 HABARI	8:00 Kumekucha Michozo	8:55 Habari za saa	9:00 Kumekucha Kishindo	9:30 Soap: In Love with Ramon	9:55 Habari za saa	10:00 Watoto wetu	10:25 Igizo: Filimi rpt	10:55 Habari za saa	11:00 Hawavumi lakini wamo rpt	11:55 Habari za saa	12:00 Ai Jazeera	12:30 Bundeisiga na DW rpt	12:55 Habari za saa	13:00 Dalka 45 rpt	13:30 Mageshi	14:00 Kipindi maalum: NSSF rpt	14:15 Chetu ni chetu rpt	14:55 Habari za saa	15:00 Meza huru	16:00 Watoto wetu	16:30 Music: The Base	18:00 Jiji Letu	18:15 Igizo: Mizengwe	18:30 Jarida la wanawake	19:00 Kipindi maalum: BOT	19:30 Soap: In Love with Ramon	20:00 Habari	21:05 Abuu Yako	21:20 Kipindi maalum: Tanesco	21:50 Ripti maalum:	22:30 Soap: Uzalo	23:00 Habari	23:30 Music: The Base	00:30 Ai Jazeera
THURSDAY 21 Dec	5:00 Soap rpt: Uzalo	5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi	6:00 HABARI	6:40 Kumekucha	7:30 HABARI	8:00 Kumekucha Michozo	8:55 Habari za saa	9:00 Kumekucha Kishindo	9:30 Soap rpt: In Love with Ramon	9:55 Habari za saa	10:00 Watoto wetu	10:25 Igizo: Mizengwe	10:55 Habari za saa	11:00 Hawavumi lakini wamo rpt	11:55 Habari za saa	12:00 Ai Jazeera	12:30 Bundeisiga na DW rpt	12:55 Habari za saa	13:00 Dalka 45 rpt	13:30 Mageshi	14:00 Kipindi maalum: NSSF rpt	14:15 Chetu ni chetu rpt	14:55 Habari za saa	15:00 Meza huru	16:00 Watoto wetu	16:30 Music: The Base	18:00 Jiji Letu	18:15 Igizo: Mizengwe	18:30 Jarida la wanawake	19:00 Kipindi maalum: BOT	19:30 Soap: In Love with Ramon	20:00 Habari	21:05 Abuu Yako	21:20 Kipindi maalum: Tanesco	21:50 Ripti maalum:	22:30 Soap: Uzalo	23:00 Habari	23:30 Music: The Base	00:30 Ai Jazeera

21:45 Chetu ni chetu	22:30 Soap: Uzalo	23:00 Habari	23:30 Music: The Base	00:30 Ai Jazeera	FRIDAY 22 Dec	5:00 Soap rpt: Uzalo	5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi	6:00 HABARI	6:40 Kumekucha	7:30 HABARI	8:00 Kumekucha Michozo	8:55 Habari za saa	9:00 Kumekucha Kishindo	9:30 Soap rpt: In Love with Ramon	9:55 Habari za saa	10:00 Watoto wetu	10:25 Igizo: Filimi rpt	10:55 Habari za saa	11:00 Hawavumi lakini wamo rpt	11:55 Habari za saa	12:00 Ai Jazeera	12:30 Bundeisiga na DW rpt	12:55 Habari za saa	13:00 Dalka 45 rpt	13:30 Mageshi	14:00 Kipindi maalum: NSSF rpt	14:15 Chetu ni chetu rpt	14:55 Habari za saa	15:00 Meza huru	16:00 Watoto wetu	16:30 Music: The Base	18:00 Jiji Letu	18:15 Igizo: Mizengwe	18:30 Jarida la wanawake	19:00 Kipindi maalum: BOT	19:30 Soap: In Love with Ramon	20:00 Habari	21:05 Abuu Yako	21:20 Kipindi maalum: Tanesco	21:50 Ripti maalum:	22:30 Soap: Uzalo	23:00 Habari	23:30 Music: The Base	00:30 Ai Jazeera
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21:30 Capchat Rpt	23:00 Ai Jazeera	01:00 Ai Jazeera	Sun 17 Dec	08:00 Ajazeera	09:00 In good shape	10:00 Capchat rpt	11:00 Sports Gazette rpt	11:30 DW	12:30 Jajina rpt	12:30 Bundesliga Kick Off rpt	13:00 In good shape rpt	13:30 Dw	15:15 Abu yako	15:30 Rev rpt	16:00 Dalka 45 rpt	16:45 Mizengwe rpt	17:00 The Decor	17:30 Meza huru	19:00 Eco@Africa	19:30 Cookery pgm: Culinary Delights	20:00 Jajina	20:30 Out & About rpt	21:00 Dw News Africa	21:30 Capchat live	22:15 Telenovela rpt: The Three Sides of Ana	00:00 Ai Jazeera	Mon 18 Dec	06:00 Ai Jazeera	09:00 Kumekucha Michozo rpt	10:00 Meza Huru Rpt	11:30 Business edition	12:00 Out and About	12:30 Our earth	13:00 Telenovela rpt: The Three Sides of Ana rpt	14:00
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WORLD

Opposition cries foul as Congo readies for vote

GOMA/KINSHASA

AS Democratic Republic of the Congo gears up for elections next week, the opposition and independent observers warn that issues including illegible voter cards, blocked campaign planes, and electoral list delays threaten the legitimacy of the results.

For months, the CENI election commission has rejected criticism it is failing to deliver a free and fair vote as promised, even as it flags logistical setbacks organizing the presidential and legislative ballot across Africa's second-largest country.

Tensions have escalated in the final weeks of campaigning before the Dec 20 vote. Challengers to President Felix Tshisekedi have cried foul over what they call an uneven playing field and ratcheted up accusations the authorities plan to tip the election in their favor including through voter roll chicanery. The CENI and presidency deny this.

At stake is not just the legitimacy of the next administration, but also wider stability, as disputes over perceived electoral malpractice often spark violent unrest in Congo. Unrest also has potential global implications as the country of 95 million people is the world's biggest producer of cobalt, a

key component in batteries for electric cars and mobile phones.

"There is no longer democracy in this country," said presidential hopeful Moïse Katumbi, a mining magnate who is seen as a frontrunner in the crowded opposition field of over two dozen candidates. Katumbi told Reuters he had planned to use nine planes to canvas support across the forested country that is nearly the size of France, but had not received authorization from the civil aviation authority, hamstringing his campaign.

As seasonal rains make Congo's largely unpaved road network impassable, other opposition contenders have alleged efforts to suppress campaigns and logistical hurdles to reaching voters, which they say contravene the electoral law requiring all candidates have an equal footing in the race.

Such issues are particularly fraught in Congo, which in 59 years of independence only saw its first handover of presidential power in 2019, albeit after a poll tarnished by allegations of fraud and unrest.

On Dec 8, Tshisekedi challenger Denis Mukwege published a statement accusing authorities of trying to derail his campaign by tearing down his posters and requisitioning aviation fuel to curb



A supporter of the President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and leader of the Union of Democracy and Social Progress (UDPS) party, Felix Tshisekedi, waves a flag as they campaign in Kinshasa on Thursday. AFP

opposition travel.

Government spokesperson Patrick Muyaya denied Mukwege's allegations and the opposition's broader claims of unfair treatment. "The opposition is trying to portray itself as the victim," he said by phone. "We are not in the game of blocking others in order to succeed."

Lack of trust

Tshisekedi, 60, has pitched himself to the 44 million registered voters as the least disruptive choice for a country battling myriad eastern rebel groups and entrenched poverty.

His administration has vowed to support CENI efforts to deliver the election as promised, but long-running controversies over voter lists and ID cards have already thrown the credibility of the vote into doubt, say the opposition as well as independent religious and civil society observers.

The Carter Center, a US election monitoring group, has said concerns about the quality and transparency of voter registration have contributed to an atmosphere of mistrust. It noted errors and delays publishing voter lists and issues with smudged and illegible voter cards. "The conditions of confidence have not been met for a peaceful election and for the results not to be contested tomorrow," said Tresor Kibangula, political analyst at the Ebuteli research institute. "Very few people believe the CENI," he said.

Six candidates, including Tshisekedi's main rivals, joined forces in October to demand a number of urgent measures to prevent potential fraud.

In late November, the CENI insisted all would be well after a senior member of the influential Congolese Catholic Church said the

electoral process was off-track and questioned its transparency.

In the final days of campaigning, monitors again sounded the alarm about delays posting the final list of voters in each polling station.

"We fear there will be a mess on election day," Luc Lutala, coordinator of the Symocel observer mission, said on Tuesday. "Voters who don't know where to vote are voters stripped of the right to vote."

In the capital Kinshasa, where the majority of billboards carry posters of a resolute-looking Tshisekedi, some voters are unsure if they will be able to take part.

Secondhand clothes-seller Nenette Bila, 47, said she had not been able to replace her smudged ID card at a local election center. "I had to use an iron to get the writing on the voter card to appear, but it's still unreadable and I'm furious," she said at Huileries market.

UK parliamentarians laud India's achievements under PM Modi's leadership

LONDON

IN a notable event organised by the Indian Minorities Foundation in London, UK parliamentarians came together to celebrate the achievements of India under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

The 'Namaste London: Resurgence of a New India' event not only acknowledged India's progress but also honoured the significant contributions of the Indian Diaspora to both their host and home countries.

The event, attended by cross-party UK parliamentarians and diaspora leaders, included the UK launch of 'Igniting Collective Goodness: Mann Ki Baat@100', capturing Prime Minister Narendra Modi's dialogue with the nation since October 2014. Additionally, the book 'Heartfelt: The Legacy of Faith - Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Sikhs' by the NID Foundation was unveiled, showcasing the diverse dimensions of India's cultural tapestry.

Indian High Commissioner to the UK Vikram Doraiswami was among those who addressed the event.

Member of Parliament from Sutton and Cheam, Paul Stuart Scully,



India Prime Minister Narendra Modi

expressed his pride in the strong relationship between the UK and Indian families and communities. Drawing from his own Indian minority heritage, he emphasised the values of philanthropy and entrepreneurship instilled in him, emphasizing continuous learning from Indian friends.

"I've seen first-hand how the UK and Indian families and communities work so well together. I'm, in fact, the product of an Indian minority myself," he told ANI.

Scully, who serves as the tech minister, highlighted the parallel growth of Bengaluru and London

as digital hubs, fostering collaboration in startups, scale-ups, and entrepreneurship.

"As the tech minister, I was in Bengaluru earlier this year at the G20 Digital Tech Ministers' meetings, and I found out that Bengaluru was the fastest-growing digital hub in the world. Number two was London," he added.

He commended Prime Minister Modi for energising India and fortifying the UK-India relationship, further strengthened by the presence of the UK's first prime minister of Indian heritage, Rishi Sunak.

"Prime Minister Modi, he really

energises India, he energises the relationship between the UK and India, obviously helped by our first prime minister of Indian heritage, Prime Minister Rishi Sunak as well. That really helps to bind us together, our communities and businesses together," Scully also said.

When queried about the social structure in India under Modi's leadership, Scully affirmed that the dynamism and energy of a new India, driven by imagination and innovation, have brought people together.

"What I've seen of the structure around the country in India, it has brought people together under that sort of energy. That dynamism of a new India really is powering ahead to not only be one of the world's leading economies but towards helping in the developing world as well. That can only happen through imagination and innovation, but dynamism and energy. And Prime Minister Modi has really helped drive that," he also said.

Councillor Ramji Kanji Chauhan, Mayor of Harrow Weald, emphasised the positive changes in India's political landscape under Modi's leadership, aiming for a better qual-

ity of life for its citizens.

"I think in the political aspect, it's (India) changed a lot for the people. And that can only be good when you can change things to make a difference for the people in that country, to make sure they live better, eat better and work together better. I think that's the best thing anybody can do," Chauhan said.

Lord German, a current member of the House of Lords, applauded India's heightened position on the world stage, acknowledging its leadership not only economically but also socially and culturally.

"Well, there's no doubt that the position of India on the world stage is now much greater than it was nine years ago. It is taking a lead in many areas, not just economically, but also socially and culturally as well. I think there is clearly a big dramatic shift in the economy as ideas thinking, dramatic new developments in terms of production and being able to manufacture globally and export globally," he said.

He commended India's contributions to the understanding of diversity and different cultures, reflecting positively on the UK-India relationship. **ANI**

US expands investments in Africa, seals USD 14.2 bn in deals to counter Chinese influence

WASHINGTON

THE United States has engaged in an extensive effort to bolster its ties with African nations, finalising numerous trade and investment agreements totaling USD 14.2 billion in the past year, Voice of America reported.

This initiative aims to counteract the increasing influence of China on the continent. The 547 new agreements, a 67 per cent surge from 2022, signify a significant commitment to fostering economic and strategic partnerships, according to British Robinson, coordinator for the Prosper Africa trade and business initiative.

"The US business and investment community is increasingly recognising Africa's extraordinary market potential and dynamism. The continent is home to the world's youngest population, an asset that creates significant opportunities for viable business deals that create jobs and foster shared prosperity," Robinson emphasised during a virtual media briefing on December 12.

Judd Devermont, US National Security Council senior director for African Affairs, highlighted the record-breaking year in US-Africa relations, with the U.S. on track to fulfil its commitment to invest USD 55 billion over three years.

"As we wind down 2023, we have already delivered on more than 40 per cent of this commitment. In fact, by the end of year two, we anticipate surpassing 70 per cent of our goal, if not more," Devermont stated, outlining the diverse areas where these resources have been applied, according to Voice of America.

The developments follow President Joe Biden's commitment at the US-Africa Leaders Summit in Washington, where he pledged to intensify US involvement on the continent to counterbalance China's expanding influence through initiatives like infrastructure projects and loans.

Devermont, Biden's top Africa adviser, stressed that Africa holds not just economic but also political significance.

"President Biden last year called for the African Union to become a permanent member of the G20, and in September we proudly welcomed this development," Devermont said, adding, "We're now advocating for a third seat for Sub-Saharan Africa on the IMF board, and of course we reiterate our call for permanent representation for Africa at the UN Security Council."

The US has adjusted its investment and trade strategies in regions affected by conflict. In Sudan, for example, sanctions have been imposed not only on individuals but also on companies and various asset classes, according to Jonathan Pratt from the US Department of State Bureau of African Affairs, as reported by Voice of America.

"Sanctions haven't just been on individuals; they've also been on companies and different asset classes. And so that's one strategy that we've used in conflicting countries and locations," he said.

In countries like Niger, dealing with political unrest, the US prioritises peace through negotiations, supporting sanctions imposed by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). The US is also open to gradually lifting freezes on assistance and potential investments if these countries return to a democratic path.

"We've been very supporting of the ECOWAS (Economic Community of West African States) sanctions that have been put in place.

And then to support that effort we have leveraged our own assistance and investments, which we've announced very clearly, if the country and the leadership there turns back to a democratic path, we're willing to explore progressively lifting that freeze in assistance and potential investments," Pratt said, adding that the US also uses "a combination of sanctions plus leveraging our engagement and assistance."

Devermont underscored the importance of trade investment and highlighted the significance of the Africa Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).

"One of the most important initiatives that has come out of the continent in the last couple years has been the Africa free-Continental Free Trade Area.

And we signed an MOU with the AfCFTA at this summit because the goals of the AfCFTA to unite 1.3 billion people in a single market and to trade a nominal GDP that's larger than India's is a huge boon. And in that process, harmonising regulations, reducing trade and non-trade barriers, that will benefit all countries whether they are experiencing a crisis or not."

In summary, the US is intensifying its engagement with Africa, not only to advance its economic interests but also to counterbalance China's growing influence and promote stability and democracy on the continent, Voice of America reported. **ANI**

To deepen, pursue tangible progress of China-Vietnam comprehensive strategic cooperation

BOTH China and Vietnam are socialist countries led by communist parties. Connected by mountains and rivers, they have shared ideals, the same social system and similar paths of development. They enjoy broad common interests.

The two sides have fought side by side and offered mutual support to each other in the struggle for national independence and liberation, learned from each other and made joint efforts in exploring socialist development paths suited to their own national conditions and modernization paths with their own characteristics.

The traditional friendship between the two countries forged and cultivated by the older-generation leaders of the two parties and the two countries, represented by Comrade Mao Zedong and Comrade Ho Chi Minh, has grown ever stronger with the passage of time.

Sharing the same ideals and a shared future are the most salient features of China-Vietnam relations, and the traditional friendship featuring "camaraderie plus brotherhood" between China and Vietnam is the most vivid illustration of China-Vietnam relations.

Under the strategic guidance of Xi Jinping, general secretary of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee and Nguyen Phu Trong, general secretary of the Communist Party of Vietnam (CPV) Central Committee, the comprehensive strategic cooperative partnership between the two countries have been constantly deepened and expanded. The two sides have reached important consensus on elevating their bilateral relations, and the China-Vietnam ties are facing important opportunities for development.

China and Vietnam have maintained

frequent high-level exchanges and continuously deepened political mutual trust.

Following the successful conclusion of the 20th CPC National Congress, Xi immediately extended an invitation to Trong for a visit to China. The two leaders reached new and important consensus on consolidating the traditional friendship between China and Vietnam, strengthening strategic coordination and deepening mutually beneficial cooperation, charting the course for the development of China-Vietnam ties in the new era.

This year, over 10 members of the Political Bureau and Secretaries of the Secretariat of the CPV Central Committee have visited China, including President of Vietnam Vo Van Thuong, Prime Minister of Vietnam Pham Minh Chinh, and permanent member of the CPV Central

Committee Secretariat Truong Thi Mai, maintaining close strategic communication with China's Party and state leaders.

The communication and cooperation between departments and regions of both sides have become increasingly close, and the exchange of experiences in party and state governance continues to deepen. As emerging economies and developing countries, China and Vietnam should join hands to uphold international fairness and justice, practice true multilateralism, and make significant contributions to the peace, development, and progress of mankind.

China and Vietnam have reaped fruitful results in practical cooperation, and their mutually beneficial cooperation is also generating good outcomes.

Leveraging their geographical proximity and complementarity of industries, the two countries have accelerated syn-

ergizing the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and the Two Corridors and One Economic Circle strategy. They have worked together to build production capacity cooperation platforms, advance cooperation in key areas such as connectivity, green energy and digital transformation, and maintain smooth and stable production and supply chains.

China and Vietnam have continuously deepened their economic and trade cooperation. China has maintained the largest trading partner and a major source of investment for Vietnam for years.

In the first 10 months of this year, the number of China-invested projects in Vietnam ranked first among all foreign investment projects in the country, with investment amount increasing by 98 per cent year on year.

Projects built by Chinese companies, such as the Cat Linh-Ha Dong metro line

in Hanoi and the Soc Son waste-to-energy plant, have been put into operation. Chinese photovoltaic companies are also developing fast in Vietnam. These projects have contributed significantly to Vietnam's economic and social development.

China and Vietnam have continuously deepened people-to-people and cultural exchanges, resulting in a vibrant people-to-people friendship.

The two sides have remained true to their original aspiration, vigorously promoted their traditional friendship, and engaged in flexible and diverse people-to-people exchange activities.

Trong noted that the Friendship Pass is the only cross-border port in the world named after the word "friendship," which embodies the special traditional friendship featuring "camaraderie plus brotherhood" between the Vietnamese and Chinese people. **People's Daily**

Israel says to continue Gaza offensive despite ceasefire calls

JERUSALEM

ISRAELI leaders told US National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan on Thursday that Israel will continue its military offensive in the Palestinian enclave of Gaza Strip, despite the international calls for a ceasefire.

Sullivan was in Israel for meetings with officials as the United States voiced its concerns about the rising civilian casualties in the continued Israeli strikes on Gaza.

Speaking to the press alongside Sullivan, Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant said that the war against Hamas "will require a long period -- it will last more than several months."

The two met in the Israeli Defense Ministry in Tel Aviv to discuss the Israeli offensive in Gaza, its border conflict with Lebanon, and dozens of hostages remain kept in Gaza, according to a statement released by the Israeli Defense Ministry.

Referring to the Yemeni Houthi forces' attacks on Israeli-linked ships as well as Eilat, an Israeli resort city on the shore of the Red Sea, Gallant said that Israel will support "international efforts in countering naval threats and will defend itself against any threat."

Later, Sullivan met with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who thanked the US for its "support for Israel in the supply of munitions, in blocking the attempts at the UN to stop the fighting, and in the assistance in returning our hostages."

Sullivan said that Israel has "the support of the United States as you take on this terrorist threat."

Need for more balanced, representative, democratic UNSC, says UNGA President

NEW YORK

UNITED Nations General Assembly (UNGA) President Dennis Francis has said there is need for a UN Security Council (UNSC) that is more balanced, more representative, more responsive, more democratic, and more transparent.

"As President of the General Assembly, I share the view that we need a Council that is more balanced, more representative, more responsive, more democratic, and more transparent," Francis said while delivering his remarks at the 'Perspectives on UN Security Council Reforms from Global South Think Tanks - The L-69 UN Security Council Reforms Event'.

He said conflicts are spreading across the globe. "The Security Council - whose primary responsibility is to maintain international peace and security - however, seems caught in a concerning state of paralysis," he said.

He further said that the council with "the unsatisfactory discharge of its crucial mandate, is perceived as falling short of its mandate - consequently, compromising the credibility of the entire UN itself."

The UNGA President said the UNSC's continued inaction on matters that threaten international peace and security is damaging.

As per Francis, there is a need for new, innovative pathways for change.

"And in this regard, I welcome any innovative solutions emanating from exchanges such as these - to move forward the intergovernmental negotiations," he said.

"While some of today's challenges could not have been envisioned eight decades ago, the need for reform has been apparent for some time now. And, while the road to reform is a long and arduous one, I firmly believe a positive outcome is not only possible but achievable," he added.

He further said that as the UNGA President, he is committed to facilitat-

ing dialogue among member states around this important topic.

"And I take this opportunity to urge member states to overcome entrenched positions and to move towards substantive progress - through genuine and good faith dialogue. Our objective must be to find and/or create ways to move beyond a perpetual stalemate," he said.

"While it is ultimately up to Member States to find agreement, it is important that we hear the voices of the diverse stakeholders, including those here with us today," Francis added.

The UNGA President then went on to thank India "for its exemplary leadership in addressing global challenges, for its continued championing of matters of interest to the Global South, and for remaining a critical voice in seeking solutions to our major multilateral challenges facing the international community."

"These strengths have been on full display, particularly during the pandemic, as well as, more recently, during India's G20 Presidency," he said.

Recently, External Affairs Minister (EAM) S Jaishankar called on the United Nations to make reforms to stay relevant in the modern world and said that the issue cannot remain "indefinite" and "unchallenged".

The EAM was addressing the 78th United Nations General Assembly in New York.

The EAM took a jibe at some nations and said, "In our deliberations, we often advocate the promotion of a rules-based order. From time to time, respect for the UN Charter is also involved. But for all the talk, it is still a few nations that shape the agenda and seek to define the norms. This can't go on indefinitely nor will it go unchallenged. A fair, equitable and democratic order will surely emerge once we all put our minds to it. And for a start, that means ensuring that rule-makers do not subjugate rule-takers."

ANI

Nearly 7 million people in Somalia need aid amid crisis in 2024 - UN

MOGADISHU

SOME 6.9 million people in Somalia will require humanitarian assistance in 2024, the UN humanitarian agency said on Thursday.

The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) said the number is a reduction of 16 percent from 2022 and will target 5.1 million in 2024 for a total requirement of 1.7 billion U.S. dollars.

"Humanitarian assistance has prevented worse food security and nutrition outcomes in many areas, but the response was challenged, in part, by funding shortfalls across all sectors," OCHA said in its latest report on the humanitarian action plan 2024 for Somalia.

According to the report, while Somalia managed to walk back from the brink of famine in late 2022 and early 2023, close to four million people continue to be food insecure and in need of assistance.

This is against a backdrop of decades of conflict, ongoing military operations and climatic shocks displacing thousands of people every month, the report said. OCHA said excessive seasonal rains, flash and riverine floods have been particularly acute this year due to a concurrence of El Nino conditions and a positive Indian Ocean Dipole phenomenon, resulting in loss of life, destruction of property, loss of access to basic services, further displacements, and an aggravation of the prevalence of cholera and other water-borne diseases.

The floods are the latest in a series of extreme weather events in recent years to hit Somalia, where communities find themselves at the sharp end of the global climate crisis. The UN agency said about four million people are internally displaced in Somalia due to the impact of climate change, conflict and insecurity, and other factors. "Limited access to basic services such as shelters and food renders women and girls more vulnerable to gender-based violence and disrupts their ability to live in dignity," it said. According to OCHA, humanitarian partners have cumulatively reached about 8.4 million people with some form of assistance as of September.

Xinhua

Putin hails close relations with Beijing

MOSCOW

RUSSIA'S trade volume with China this year is expected to grow by 30 percent to \$220-230 billion, Russian President Vladimir Putin said on Thursday at an annual news conference.

"I would like to repeat, the Russia-Chinese relationship has maintained the highest level in history," Putin said, calling the co-operation between the two neighbors "unprecedented".

Russia and China are working together on various aspects, such as infrastructure construction and high-tech development, and Sino-Russian relations have been able to ensure global stability, Putin said.

Putin noted the visit by Chinese President Xi Jinping to Moscow in March played an important role in boosting bilateral relations, and the two heads of state agreed on further development of practical cooperation.

Putin made the remarks as he held his annual televised Direct Line question-and-answer session with Russian citizens, a traditional event that this year is being combined with his year-end news conference with Russian and foreign journalists. It was held at the Gostiny Dvor event center in central Moscow.

Around 600 people took part in the question-and-answer session. Reporters from some "non-friendly" countries were present, the Russia 24 TV channel said, referring to foreign media outlets from nations opposed to Russia's special military operation in



Russian President Vladimir Putin speaks during his annual press conference and question-and-answer session in Moscow, Russia, Dec 14, 2023. (PHOTO / XINHUA)

Ukraine, including the United States.

Putin spoke about the economy first, noting inflation in Russia may rise to 8 percent by the end of this year, though the government and the Bank of Russia are taking steps to bring it to the targeted levels.

Meanwhile, foreign national debt is decreasing, which demonstrates macroeconomic and financial stability. National debt has decreased from \$46 billion to \$32 billion, Putin said.

When answering a video question from soldiers on the front line in east Ukraine, he said Russian forces have destroyed 747 Ukrainian tanks and nearly 2,300 armored

vehicles since Kyiv launched its counteroffensive in June.

Russia is ready to build relations with the US, Putin said when asked about the possibility of normalization of ties with the West nearly two years after the conflict with Ukraine erupted.

'Imperialism politics'

Putin called the US an "important and necessary country" in the world but said its "imperialism politics" get in the way of relations with Moscow.

Russian troops are improving their positions along the entire front line in Ukraine,

Putin said.

Asked about Ukrainian attempts to secure a foothold on the left bank of the Dnipro River in the southern Kherson region, Putin said this was Kyiv's "last attempt" to bring its counteroffensive back to life. Russia has taken the Kherson side of the waterway since the start of the special military operation.

"I think this is silly and irresponsible from the leadership of the country. But it's their business," he added.

Agencies

Domestic drones empower various industries in China

By Kang Pu

IN recent years, unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) have picked up pace in empowering various industries in China.

Thanks to technological advances and commercialization of research findings, UAVs' application has been expanded into more and more fields, such as agricultural and forestry plant protection, emergency rescue, cultural relics protection, and power line inspection.

In Beijing's Yanqing district, two sets of DJI Dock 2, a new drone dock developed by Chinese drone maker DJI, stand guard day and night at the southern and northern parts of the Badaling section of the Great Wall.

With the support of the drone docks, drones autonomously perform 10 patrol flights on five routes over the scenic area on a daily basis. The routes cover basically all the areas open to visitors.

Video footages from the drones are sent to the management center of the scenic area in real time, so that uncivilized tourist behavior can be discovered and discouraged in time. At night, infrared cameras on the drones make it hard for rule-breakers, including overnight campers, to evade surveillance.

In addition, the DJI Dock 2 can autonomously generate high-precision 3D models of key areas of the scenic area every two weeks. Through comparison of the 3D models, relevant personnel can notice changes in the natural conditions of the scenic area, such as landslides and wall shifts, in a timely manner, and carry out targeted examination and repair.

In Wensu county, Aksu prefecture, northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region, plant protection drones have made farmers' work in the fields much easier.

"Defoliant can remove the leaves from cotton trees while retaining the branches and cotton, thus preventing leaves from mixing with cotton and affecting cotton quality during harvest," said Zhu Rui, a drone pilot of a Wensu county-based company specializing in agricultural plant protection-related services.

"This M-22 drone was jointly developed by my company and our partners. It can spray chemicals over 400 mu (about 26.67 hectares) to 500 mu of cotton fields per day," Zhu said, while operating a drone to spray defoliant over a cotton field.

"Agricultural and forestry plants including walnut trees, Chinese date trees, apple trees, wheat crops, and shelter forests are all taken care of using plant protection drones. They have significantly eased farmers' workload and increased their income," Zhu noted.

According to Zhu, drones can increase farmland yields by over 10 percent and reduce the average cost per mu of farmland by more than 30 percent.

In April this year, when a forest fire erupted in Longjingwan village, Baoluan township, Fengdu county, southwest China's Chongqing municipality, dense vegetation and complex terrain made it dangerous for emergency response teams to approach the forests without an accurate judgment of the situation.

Fortunately, several drones soon arrived over the scene, helping rescue teams get a clear understanding of the fire lines, ignition points and the geographical



A farmer operates an unmanned aerial vehicle for agricultural plant protection to spray pesticides over a rice field at a national modern agricultural industrial park in Hai'an city, east China's Jiangsu province. (Photo by Ji Haixin/People's Daily Online)

conditions of the locality.

"Commander, there are two fire lines to the southeast and southwest, plus three separate ignition points. The terrain is gentler to the northwest. I suggest entering the scene from that direction," a rescuer reported.

With the help of drones, the fire was quickly extinguished.

Last year, Fengdu county equipped all its townships, subdistricts and relevant authorities with 36 domestically produced drones, achieving full coverage of drone-empowered intelligent oversight, according to Tang Shouyuan, county mayor of Fengdu.

"As air vehicles, drones are not limited to ground transportation constraints and can perform complex operations," Tan Xiang, executive secretary general of the Research Center for UAV Applications and Regulation, Chinese Academy of Sciences, pointed out.

In recent years, China's drone industry has achieved notable progress, with products enjoying higher reliability, lower costs, and diversified application scenarios, Tan said, noting that China has become one of the world's largest industrial drone markets.

"Widespread application of industrial drones in agricultural plant protection, electricity supply, geography, security, marine science, meteorology, environmental protection, construction, healthcare, among other fields, has profoundly transformed people's modes of production and lifestyles," Tan said.

Technological innovations have played a crucial role in underpinning the extensive application of drones across industries.

Pointing out that some people in many sectors still have to work in complex and dangerous environments and perform repetitive tasks, Zhang Xiaonan, strategic director of

DJI, said technological progress is supposed to help frontline workers complete missions more easily.

"Where there are pain points, there are sources of inspiration for innovations," Zhang noted.

The DJI Dock 2, for instance, allows drones to autonomously complete flight missions without the need for a pilot to operate them.

The technical team of DJI envisioned the Dock as the "home" of drones. Equipped with various software and hardware, the "home" enables drones to make flight plans, perform flight missions, collect data, recharge, and complete other operations autonomously.

It took DJI 10 years to gain insights into users' pain points, hone its Dock products, and finally win market recognition, according to Zhang.

The DJI Dock 2, as the second version of DJI Dock, is smaller but smarter. Compared to the initial version, the DJI Dock 2 has experienced a size reduction of 75 percent and a weight reduction of 68 percent, alongside significant increases in effective operational radius, flight time and professional surveying and mapping capabilities.

The continuous emergence of sci-tech achievements has contributed to the formation of a solid foundation for China's drone industrial chain, according to Tan.

Drone technologies in China have undergone constant improvements, during which a good number of outstanding companies have achieved a strong presence in the drone industry, and a globally competitive complete industrial chain encompassing research and development, production, sale, and services has taken shape, Tan said.

People's Daily



A junior swimmer is pictured competing in the recent Justfit Inter-Schools Games which took place at the Dar es Salaam Gymkhana Club (DGC) swimming pool. PHOTO: CORRESPONDENT JUMANNE JUMA

Giants look to reclaim glory in 2023/24 NBC Premier League

By Correspondent Seth Mapoi

AFTER chalking up disappointing results in the 2023/24 CAF Champions League, giants Simba SC and Young Africans SC are eager to bounce back as they return to the pitch this weekend in the NBC Premier League.

Simba SC endured a tough run in Group B of the premier continental tournament, suffering a 1-0 defeat to Morocco's Wydad Casablanca at Stade de Marrakech, Marrakesh on December 9.

The Msimbazi Street side had earlier managed to record a 0-0 draw with Jwaneng Galaxy in Francistown on December 2.

In Simba SC's home fixture, the outfit was held to 1-1 by ASEC Mimosas in Dar es Salaam on November 25.

Young Africans SC, alias Yanga, equally faced setbacks in continental fixtures, losing 3-0 to Algeria's CR Belouadza in the first tie which took place in Algeria on November 24.

Yanga thereafter recorded a 1-1 draw with Egypt's Al Ahly at Benjamin Mkapa Stadium in Dar es Salaam on December 2 and went on to notch a similar result in a match against Ghana's Medeama SC in Kumasi last weekend.

Simba SC was yesterday slated to take on Kagera Sugar at Uhuru Stadium in Dar es Salaam, while Yanga will, later today, lock horns with Mtwara Sugar at Azam Complex Stadium.

Addressing the media upon returning to Dar es Salaam, Yanga's head coach, Miguel Angel Gamondi, expressed his team's readiness for the upcoming match against Mtwara Sugar.

The Argentine gaffer was adamant despite their struggles in continental ties, he remains optimistic about achieving positive results and maintaining fitness.

The tactician emphasized his commitment to guiding the team back to the top, even though the squad faced challenges in continental competition.

Simba SC's head coach, Abdelhak Benchikha, acknowledged the demanding schedule in the continental showdown but remains confident about the team's prospects in the Premier League games.

The Algerian gaffer was confident despite having limited knowledge about his outfit's yesterday opponents, he was determined to lead his team to success.

"We have returned home and begun preparations for our next league game. I am hopeful that the team will perform well, despite our less-than-ideal results in the continental showpiece," the Algerian coach noted.

In the current Premier League standings, Simba SC was, as of yesterday, sitting fifth with 19 points from eight matches, while Yanga was placed second with 24 points after playing nine games.

Burial procedures contentions for great guitarist Lokassa a disgrace

By Correspondent Michael Eneza

DISTURBING reports are being heard from Kinshasa, capital of the Democratic Republic of Congo, on the difficulties now enduring for eight months, over burial arrangements for rhythm guitar great Lokassa ya Mbongo, an acknowledged quasi-investor of Soukous music in that country.

He played music with scores of bands and, in his final years, lived chiefly in the United States, where he died. He left a vow to be buried in his native Congo, which was obeyed, but burying still waits.

Early in April, things looked either routine or rosy, that the musician would be buried soon enough, but that was not to be.

An online item said the funeral service for legendary Congolese guitarist and composer, Denis Kasiya Lokassa ya Mbongo, is set for today in Nashua, New Hampshire, which was on April 1.

Yet, by September 14 an almost identical news item was being splashed, that a funeral service for Lokassa was held on April 1, at the Conner Healy Funeral Home and Cremation Centre in Nashua, New Hampshire in the United States, but hardly anything has been accomplished as for the burial itself. It is a shocking environment.

Another news item just after the musician's death in mid-March said that Lokassa's body was lying at a funeral home in Nashua, noting that he had been battling diabetes and a mild stroke he suffered back in 2017.

Much later, on October 7, an online report affirmed that Lokassa's body was lying in a morgue in Kinshasa, the capital of the Democratic Republic of Congo after being flown back from the US.

The singer has directed that



The late Congolese guitarist Denis Lokassa Kasiya, popularly known as Lokassa ya Mbongo. AGENCIES

his burial take place in DRC rather than abroad.

A rather disturbing entry dated one month ago reported a BBC news item affirming that it is a pity that Lokassa's body is lying in wait for the government of DR Congo to approve \$75,000 for his burial.

Pundits were disputing the circumstances for the failed burial of the musician after bbc.com headlined on 'family pain as Congo tar lies unburied for seven months'.

Of those who shared their views, the first asked 'What pain? Why must they wait for state funding?'

They can ask well-wishers for some donations. Kinshasa has a cemetery, he said, demanding to know what a worthy burial is, wondering if they are not just playing politics.

Another fellow said that it is a pity Lokassa's body is lying in wait for the government of DR Congo to approve \$75,000 for his burial.

Most, if not all, of the great musicians of DR Congo, Dr. Nico and Franco included, did not profit from their music due to lax and or non-enforcement of the country's copyright laws.

Therefore, they derived either little or no royalties from their intellectual property.

Their surviving families are left with the unenviable task of calling upon the government to bury their loved ones. Not so many would be as magnanimous on the situation.

Observers say that disputes over burial arrangements are not exactly new in DRC, for instance, in the different case of a former Prime Minister, Etienne Tshisekedi, whose son, Felix, is finishing his first term as President.

The former premier was not buried in DRC two years after he died in Belgium, as the body remained in a facility in Belgium, as a row was being conducted between his family and the government as to who is responsible for the burial arrangements, where he is buried and how the costs, or their level, are shared out, like at present.

Chroniclers say the deadlock ended when Félix became President, in which case he now properly organized for tens of thousands of people to attend the funeral mass in a stadium in the capital, led by Archbishop of Kinshasa, Fridolin Ambongo.

Had his son not been at the helm, the government would have insisted on a more commonplace burial, not that of a national hero.

Something similar is being demanded as to the burial of the late outstanding Soukous guitarist as well.

There is a slim chance that nearly the same thing may happen as leading opposition candidate Moise Katumbi, a former provincial governor in the minerals-rich Katanga Zone to the south of the country, has a stone-throw chance of winning the presidential vote later this month.

He volunteered as a private citizen to put up the needed sums of money for a fitting burial but it is apparent that attention was not directed in that regard sufficiently, for there would still be a sticky issue of the protocols to be followed, like using the massive 80,000 capacity Martyrs' Stadium.

At a more distant level, it can be recalled that the presidents of Rwanda and Angola were among the huge crowds paying their respects to the fallen former Prime Minister, and undoubtedly they have all heard of Lokassa ya Mbongo, but chances are that the matter would be just left to ministerial officials for culture, sports, etc.

In a similar vein, it can be set out that while it can be comprehended that a former Prime Minister is the subject of tussling as to his burial, a deceased musician is a different person altogether.

And the happy ending with an outright win for Katumbi, the point will then be sealed that there is something odious about demanding upwards of 185m/- from the government so that a musician is buried.

That this is a state matter instead of family responsibility is a Congolese issue, unclear on this side of Lake Tanganyika. Is it perhaps a 'crisis of the mind'?

Ecobank to sponsor Africa Cup of Nations finals

By Guardian Correspondent

THE Confederation of African Football (CAF) has announced Ecobank, the leading pan-African banking group, as an official sponsor of the 2023 TotalEnergies Africa Cup of Nations which will take place in Côte d'Ivoire next year.

The TotalEnergies CAF Africa Cup of Nations, the biggest event in Africa, will kick off on January 13 2024 in the West African country.

Jeremy Awori, Ecobank

Group's Chief Executive Officer, said: "The TotalEnergies CAF AFCON tournament highlights the immense sense of pride that Africans across our continent and around the world feel during the matches."

"As the pan-African bank, we are proud to associate Ecobank with the Confederation of African Football to contribute to the success of 2023 TotalEnergies Africa Cup of Nations, the largest and most-enjoyed football tournament, inspiring

passion across Africa."

The Ecobank Group boss noted: "Football transcends borders. It brings communities together, fully aligning with Ecobank's commitment to drive regional integration."

"It is an honour for Ecobank to play a key role in bringing millions of Africans together to live their passion for football, making sure that loyal customers benefit from this experience," Awori revealed.

Ecobank, according to

Awori, carries the pan-African spirit in its DNA and this partnership with the Confederation of African Football demonstrates the institution's commitment to its pan-African heritage.

The institution pointed out it is, via the sponsorship, reinforcing its connection with hundreds of millions of Africans who will be celebrating the magic of football in the 2023 AFCON.

Sixteen of the 35 African countries in which Ecobank has a presence

are among the 24 that are expected to participate in the showpiece in Côte d'Ivoire.

Ecobank Group is the leading private pan-African banking group with unrivaled African expertise.

Present in 35 sub-Saharan African countries, as well as France, the UK, UAE and China, its unique pan-African platform provides a single gateway for payments, cash management, trade, and investment.



Former First Lady, Salma Kikwete (C), takes the floor to dance a traditional dance by Kusini Kacha troupe during the meeting bringing together businesswomen in Dar es Salaam recently. PHOTO: CORRESPONDENT JUMANNE JUMA

Tukuyu Sound Band composes three songs

By Correspondent Sabato Kasika

DAR ES SALAAM's dance music troupe, Tukuyu Sound Band, has completed producing three songs titled 'Ngwangwa', 'Fumbo', and 'Chini Ya Jua', to bid farewell to 2023 and prepare for New Year.

The troupe's director, Kalala Junior, said that the band is of late performing the songs in various shows.

"We have the three songs to bid the 2023 farewell and welcome 2024, we have already started performing them in our shows," Junior revealed.

He pointed out that the songs had been arranged with high-quality techniques, adding that they had been appreciated by dance music enthusiasts before the band entered the studio to record the tracks.

"You are welcome at our shows to witness how these new songs are exciting dance music fans," he said.

The vocalist revealed usually when new songs are played in entertainment venues and are quickly appreciated, such a gesture is a sufficient indication that they can do well in the market.

"At Tukuyu Sound Band, we believe that we have done a good job, that's why our songs have been accepted early on before we have recorded them," he said.

Meanwhile, musicians that formed the now defunct troupe, Akudo Impact, have united and organized a show, dubbed 'Akudo Reunion'.

The show is expected to take place at the Kibozone Hall located at Mbezi Malamba Mawili, Dar es Salaam on December 23.

Some of the former Akudo Impact musicians who will participate in the show are Christian Bella, Tarsis Masele, Zagreb Butamu, Allan Kabasele, and many others who worked for the

band.

The show's organizer Denis Mutegeki pointed out another dance music band, Jode Musica, led by senior vocalist 'Mulemule FBI' will be there to decorate the show.

"I can only say that a big explosion of dance music is going to happen at Kibozone on December 23 this year," Mutegeki said.

He said the Akudo Reunion show would see the artist entertain revelers with several popular songs the troupe had composed.

They are 'Yako Wapi Mapezi', 'Safari Sio Kifo', 'Walimwengu si Binadamu', 'Penzi Lako Limezidi Asali', and others that the band had won fame with.

"Other musicians who made the band are Pitshou Shemesha (solo guitar), Tchims Kamyanyola, Dekanto (bass guitar), Njegere, and Andrew Sekedia (keyboard)," he said.

'Vulnerable' Barcelona under scrutiny as they head to Valencia

BARCELONA

BARCELONA's trip down the coast to face Valencia in La Liga on Saturday has taken on a new dimension following their midweek Champions League defeat by Royal Antwerp.

The Catalans still topped Group H but it was a chastening end to their group-stage campaign.

Coming on the back of a 4-2 hammering at league leaders Girona last week, there is the unmistakable sound of knives being sharpened for coach Xavi Hernandez.

"Xavi's team does not have a game pattern," howled the Catalan newspaper Sport, normally a diehard cheerleader for Barcelona.

"It is disoriented, the players constantly make childish mistakes and, on top of that, they are vulnerable in defence. In other words, nothing works. Nothing at all."

Xavi's problems have been compounded by reports that club president Joan Laporta has been interfering in team selection.

"Tensions are being generated that make no sense," said Xavi after an insipid performance against Antwerp. "I'm worried, it's normal. The team is not comfortable. We're on a bad run, we've had two negative results."

"The feelings are not good. We have to be self-critical. We have to improve to win things."

Another defeat on Saturday against 11th-placed Valencia and, for sure, the pressure will rise even more for Xavi and his players.

Barca go into the match in fourth place, seven points behind Girona who close the 17th round of La Liga on Monday against 12th-placed Alaves.

Girona have one draw and nine wins in their last 10 matches.

"These players are really making history and this is what makes me happiest," said Girona coach Michel Sanchez after his side had whipped their fellow Catalans.

Real Madrid, meanwhile, can take over the lead, even if only for 24 hours, if they can beat 13th-placed Villarreal on Sunday.

Carlo Ancelotti's side were held to a 1-1 draw by seventh-placed Real Betis last weekend, dropping to second place, two points behind Girona.

Real Madrid go into the game on the back of a 3-2 win over Union Berlin on Tuesday to wrap up a clean sweep of Champions League group stage victories.

"We've done very well in this first part of the season so far," said a satisfied Ancelotti after the win.

Atletico Madrid travel to Bilbao to take on fifth-placed Athletic on Saturday with Antoine Griezmann looking to add to his goal tally as he chases down Luis Aragones as the club's all-time record goalscorer.

AFP

Kane, Guirassy face off as Bayern host surprise package Stuttgart

BERLIN

REIGNING Bundesliga champions Bayern Munich face a tough task to bounce back from last weekend's humbling at Eintracht Frankfurt when they host surprise title challengers Stuttgart tomorrow.

The meeting with third-placed Stuttgart at the Allianz Arena will pit two of Europe's form strikers against each other in Bayern's Harry Kane and the visitors' Serhou Guirassy.

Thomas Tuchel's Bayern slipped four points behind early leaders Bayer Leverkusen, albeit with a game in hand, after their 5-1 thrashing by Frankfurt, with Stuttgart just one point further adrift and hoping to leapfrog their opponents in the table.

Kane has been a revelation for the Bavarian giants since joining in the summer from Tottenham, with 18 goals in 13 league matches.

Guirassy sits just behind the England captain with 16 goals from 12 Bundesliga appearances this term, already the 27-year-old's best tally for a single season less than half the way through the campaign.

The Guinean boasts an even better goals-per-minute ratio than Kane, having scored a goal every 55 minutes, compared to the Bayern striker's every 63 minutes.

Guirassy's superb form has been key to Stuttgart's stunning turnaround under coach Sebastian Hoeness.

Hoeness, who coached Bayern's reserve team to a third-division title and is the nephew of former Bayern president Uli, took over Stuttgart in April, with the club sitting dead last and on course for relegation.

But a run of just two defeats in their final 12 games of last season in all competitions saw Hoeness take Stuttgart to the German Cup semi-finals and stay in the top flight with a two-legged relegation playoff victory over Hamburg.

The five-time German champions have gone from strength to strength under Hoeness this term, winning 13 of 17 matches.

AFP

Man U face daunting test at Premier League leaders Liverpool

LONDON

MANCHESTER United travel to the home of bitter rivals Liverpool this weekend desperate to avoid another humiliation but with all the signs pointing to a tough afternoon at Anfield.

Tottenham were to kick off the action at struggling Nottingham Forest later yesterday, while in-form Aston Villa, fresh from impressive wins against Manchester City and Arsenal, travel to Brentford.

Here, AFP Sport looks at three talking points ahead of the action.

*Manchester United enter lion's den

Struggling Manchester United, who left Anfield last season with their tails between their legs after a 7-0 drubbing, are facing a Liverpool team top of the Premier League and brimful of confidence.

Erik ten Hag's team, dumped out of Europe this week by Bayern Munich, have lost 12 of their 24 games in all competitions this season.

Toothless up front, porous at the back and with a lengthening injury list, it is difficult



Jurgen Klopp

Erik ten Hag

to find any positives for the visitors ahead of tomorrow's game.

Thanks in part to the inconsistency of the teams around them, United still find themselves sixth in the Premier League, just three points behind Tottenham and six behind fourth-placed Manchester City.

But they will travel to Anfield full of trepidation. With the exception of last season's 2-1 win at Old Trafford, United's recent record against Liverpool is dire -- they have lost four of the past five meetings, conceding 21 goals in the process.

Liverpool are everything that United are not -- sharp in front of goal, full of self-belief and with a never-say-die attitude that has helped them win

18 points from losing positions this season.

Ten Hag has urged his side to focus on finishing in the top four to qualify for the Champions League next season but if results do not go their way this weekend, they could be nine points off fourth spot and slipping out of the picture.

*Chelsea seek way out of slump

The soap opera at Manchester United has taken the focus off the situation at Chelsea, where Mauricio Pochettino is struggling to get a tune out of his injury-hit squad.

The Blues, who host bottom side Sheffield United today, are 12th in the table after three defeats in their past four matches, far closer in terms of points to the relegation zone than the top of the table.

Pochettino, in his first season at the club, believes Chelsea need to dip into the transfer window again in January even though they have spent more than £1 billion (\$1.25 billion) over the past three transfer windows.

The Argentine has been dogged by absences, with captain Reece James back on the treatment table with a hamstring injury, alongside a list of other senior players including Ben Chilwell, Wesley Fofana and Christopher Nkunku.

On paper, the visit of Sheffield United appears to be a golden chance for Chelsea to return to winning ways but the Blades, under newly returned Chris Wilder, beat Brentford last week for just their second win of the season.

And Chelsea's home form gives little room for hope -- they have won just two of their eight league matches at Stamford Bridge.

*Dyche proves to be the man for Everton crisis

Last month Everton were docked 10 points by the Premier League for breaching financial rules, leaving them 19th in the table, level with Burnley, who were then bottom.

But three straight wins have

lifted the Goodison Park club four points above the relegation zone and they are looking up rather than down.

Everton have won nine games out of their past 13 in all competitions and would be in mid-table were it not for their heavy punishment, against which they have appealed.

The Goodison Park fans have been vocal in their opposition to the severity of the points deduction and the team have given them plenty to cheer.

Manager Sean Dyche admits he has been pleased with his side's form but says there is still "a lot of work to be done" as he prepares to return to Burnley, who he managed for 10 years between 2012 and 2022.

Fixtures (times GMT)

Today (1500 unless stated) Bournemouth v Luton, Chelsea v Sheffield United, Manchester City v Crystal Palace, Newcastle v Fulham, Burnley v Everton (1730)

Tomorrow (1400 unless stated)

Arsenal v Brighton, Brentford v Aston Villa, West Ham v Wolves, Liverpool v Manchester United (1630)

AFP

Fifa vs football agents: the battle for the transfer market that you haven't heard about

By Miguel Delaney

IT was another of those off-field moments that didn't receive too much attention at the time, but will profoundly influence the game for years. The January transfer window will certainly be affected.

On 30 November, an Arbitral Tribunal in the United Kingdom ruled that Fifa would not be able to impose a cap on agent commissions for football transfers in the territory. The decision immediately freed the various agencies to start consulting with clubs on January plans knowing what budgets they could work within, and have forced the global governing body "back to the drawing board".

Potential alternatives, like limiting the number of possible transfers, strengthening home-grown player rules to spread talent and even salary caps have since been floated but all ideas are naturally at a very early stage. Fifa would argue this reflects how the impetus behind the agent reforms was simply to control transfer spending to improve competitive balance in the sport. In other words, to ensure it is less dictated by money and more teams stand a chance of winning.

The logic behind that was that the current agent industry incentivises transfer money, which further concentrates talent at the wealthiest clubs, increasing financial disparity. One of the examples put forward is that, if Erling Haaland or Kylian Mbappe were to move, the agent fees would cost £50m. Only five clubs in the world could feasibly afford that. That, they argued, is why caps on commissions are essential. Fifa



The ongoing fight between football agents and Fifa is dictating the transfer market (Getty)

have since released figures that show a 42.5 per cent increase in agent service fees from 2022 to 2023, at \$888.1m, with the commissions surpassing \$1m in the women's game for the first time.

Agents in the UK successfully persuaded the tribunal that a measure like that completely misunderstood how their business worked, to go with similar rulings in Germany, Spain and France. The argument put forward was that such a measure would actually affect the representation of the thousands of players who don't have such commercial appeal, as well as having huge unintended consequences. Among those would be more unscrupulous actors seeking to represent players outside the industry.

The tribunal similarly agreed with the agents' position that Fifa reverse-engineered the justification for limiting caps, from a general populist will to curb agents. It was deemed as going against competition law. "Fifa recognised that it would have to find a legal justification to support it," the judgement read.

Such decisions come as the European Commission and other continental bodies take an increasing interest in the idea of a European model of sport as a cultural good, which could yet have a bearing on the

European Super League decision on 21 December. The European Commission had previously called for reform and Fifa would point to how their level of legal scrutiny in a submission to the European Court of Justice (ECJ) went far beyond what is seen as the more superficial reading of the UK tribunal. One key paragraph on the ruling was that "the tribunal has not been able to discern any justifiable connection between the fee cap and the claimed abuses and market failures".

The ECJ decision on Fifa's reforms, which would rule whether they can be implemented in the rest of the continent, will come around late 2024 or early 2025.

They would also point to the irony of how the ruling is based on competition law but the real-world effect is highly anti-competitive for the sport.

Fifa also claimed some victories against challenges. Agents can now only represent one party in any deal, whereas before they could feasibly represent all, and the client must be the party who actually pays the representatives. Protections for minors are increased and there will be the introduction of a clearing house.

It was the cap on commissions that was by far the most influential issue regarding how the industry works, which is why Fifa must now have a considerable rethink. A meeting with the Football Agent Working Group has been scheduled to discuss the outcome of the proceedings. The potential options are: to stop the whole project of agent reform, which is unlikely; to suspend the whole project until the ECJ decision, which they do not want to do; to simply suspend the cap; to suspend all

rules in litigation; or, press ahead with everything but have countries like England as exemptions.

The last point is viewed as unworkable, especially when the Premier League is by far the biggest spender in the game. English clubs were responsible for almost a third of global agent commissions in 2023, at \$280m. It would create an unfair and almost absurd system.

This is why, for the long term, alternative options are being looked at.

It is instructive how many people in football talk about how so many of the game's problems would immediately be solved if they had the foreign player rule that was in place before the Bosman ruling in 1995. It would instantly force more talent to be spread around, while ensuring the wealthiest clubs couldn't just keep spending. That would even mitigate the effect of sportswashing projects.

A regression to such a rule is seen as completely off the table, though. Most immediately, it would be viewed as discrimination in the European Union.

Fifa may instead seek to mimic the effects in terms of spreading talent through other means. Limiting transfer

spending or a salary cap are options but, again, competition authorities would be all over them. Limiting the number of transfers would meanwhile just require one club to pose a legal challenge, arguing they are overtly affected by such a measure. Player representative unions would similarly be against that as they don't want opportunities blocked. The increasing feeling is that Fifa "may have to think outside the box".

That is heightened by the fact many of the rules are in place from an era that doesn't really exist any more. The regulations assume all clubs are independent of each other. Instead, 2022 research from "Play the Game" indicated that there are at least 100 European clubs in multi-club ownership systems, with at least 156 such projects in existence.

This creates huge issues for concepts like sustainability rules since they assume market value is being paid in all transfer deals. This may not be the case if it's two clubs owned by the same group.

It is for now just another case of the regulations being behind the reality of the game. The transfer market is arguably the most profound example of this.

THE INDEPENDENT

Gwiji by David Chikoko



SPORT

Man U face daunting test
at Premier League leaders
Liverpool

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Simba SC sets date, venue for Annual General Meeting

By Guardian Correspondent

SIMBA SC will hold the outfit's Annual General Meeting (AGM) at the Julius Nyerere International Convention Centre, Dar es Salaam on January 21, 2024, the club confirmed in a notice on Friday.

According to the press release, the agenda of the meeting will include matters involving tabling and discussion of the financial report this year, and approving next season's budget among others as described in Article 22 of the club's 2018 constitution.

In addition, registered Simba SC members will converge in Dar es Salaam to ratify the amended club constitution. The amendments have been necessitated by the need to comply with the National Sports Council of Tanzania recommendations.

The club's Board of Directors has formed a special committee to coordinate the entire Constitution amendment Process under the National Sports Council of Tanzania's recommendations.

The seven-member committee will collect opinions from stakeholders and come up with a draft document that will be presented at the AGM for voting. Advocate Hussein Kitta Mlinga will chair the committee and will be assisted by Advocate Aziza Omary Msangi.

Other Committee members include Ustadh Masoud, Zulfika Chandoo, Advocate Moses Stewart Kaluwa, Hamis Mkomwa, and Mohamed Khamis Soloka.

The Assembly takes place annually where club members convene and review activities carried out in the previous twelve months plus planning for the future. Some of the key areas of address in the meeting include activity reports, financial statements and approval of budgets.

Imani Kajula, Simba SC Chief Executive Officer, has hinted the club is looking to approve a 24bn/- budget for next year in line with their big ambitions. Earlier this year, Simba approved a budget of 13.7bn/-.

Simba SC is currently competing in the CAF Champions League and is also in contention for the NBC Premier League. The club is trailing both Azam FC and Young Africans SC though they have games in hand.

In the CAF Champions League, Simba SC is currently languishing at the bottom of Group B after playing three games without registering a victory.

On Tuesday the squad will host Moroccan giants Wydad Casablanca in a must-win clash at the Benjamin Mkapa Stadium.

“

Imani Kajula, Simba SC Chief Executive Officer, has hinted the club is looking to approve a 24bn/- budget for next year in line with their big ambitions. Earlier this year, Simba approved a budget of 13.7bn/-

Yanga hopes to heap misery on rock-bottom Mtibwa Sugar



Yanga's winger, Ducafel Moloko (L), dribbles past Mtibwa Sugar left-back, Idrisa Rashid, as the former's fellow player, center-back Dickson Job (C), closes in when the clubs took on each other in a previous Premier League clash held in Dar es Salaam.

By Correspondent Michael Mwebe

YOUNG Africans SC welcomes Mtibwa Sugar to Azam Complex Stadium in Dar es Salaam in the evening as the former looks to cut Azam FC's lead at the top of the NBC Premier League table to one point.

The reigning Premier League champions, alias Yanga, are in second place in the table, now four points adrift of league leaders Azam FC.

The Jangwani Street-based Yanga, nevertheless, has three games in hand compared to the Chamazi Street-based outfit.

The draw in Ghana last time stretched their winless run to three games in the CAF Champions League and now they shift focus to the league looking for a solid response to boost their morale ahead of Wednesday's crucial reverse tie with Medeama.

Yanga's head coach Miguel Gamondi was delighted with the adequate preparation time they had for this game.

Gamondi said: "We can't complain, we prepared well. We had a very good week to recover after the long trip from Ghana." "As you know we have some suspended and injured players and certainly we will try to do our best tomorrow."

"We respect our oppo-

nents and need to think about tomorrow's game and our minds are also in Wednesday's crucial game as well. We are happy to have this full week of training and prepare the team well."

As for Mtibwa Sugar, they remain at the foot of the table - four points behind Mashujaa FC which is positioned 15th. They are nine points from safety as we approach the half mark.

Zubeir Katwila's side is heading into this clash on the back of a 1-0 defeat to host Namungo FC last week, who saw 48% possession while Mtibwa Sugar racked up 11 shots. They have now lost all of their last five matches.

Still, there is no hiding the fact that Mtibwa Sugar has won one of their 12 NBC Premier League outings this season, recording two draws and nine losses along the way.

To make matters worse for Mtibwa Sugar, they have managed to win just a solitary game of their last 18 away league games, underlining their struggles on the road.

Coach Katwila - who is on his second spell with Mtibwa Sugar - has acknowledged there is pressure though insisted he is not letting it affect how he prepares his team for another important game against a strong team such as Yanga.

"We have lost games and we need results. Tomorrow is another game where we can try to get a result," the former Mtibwa Sugar midfielder disclosed.

"In football, pressure is inevitable whether you are winning or losing. So, there is pressure, but it is about handling it in such a calm way that I can instruct players and give them the tactics needed in a battle against a team like Yanga," the tactician noted.

The coach stressed: "We know that Yanga is a strong team and has players who can decide the match. So it is upon me to be calm."

"When you are calm then you can offer tactical and technical instruction to players needed in trying to get results. There is no lack of pressure, even Yanga has pressure as well," he noted.

Mid-season transfer window officially opens

By Correspondent Michael Mwebe

THE mid-season transfer window was officially opened yesterday allowing clubs looking to freshen up their squads to register new players.

The transfer window is open for teams in the top three tiers of Tanzanian football to make new signings including the Women's Premier League and the First Division League.

Transfer deadline day will occur on January 15 next year with the window slamming shut at 11:59 pm. Loan deals are also able to be completed during the month-long window.

So far, teams have had an appreciation of the capabilities of their squad in the NBC Premier League campaign which is almost at the halfway stage.

Coaches have identified areas they need to fortify and become more competitive for the rest of the season.

The league frontrunners Azam FC, Simba SC, and Young Africans could all be in the hunt for new signings as they aim to mount credible title campaigns.

Some clubs had already agreed on some deals in anticipation of the window opening with Young Africans, alias Yanga, reported to have snapped up Zanzibar-born left-footed attacking midfielder Shekhan Ibrahim Khamis from JKU SC.

Yanga head coach Miguel Gamondi hinted at the possibility of signing a center forward to complement his goal-scoring midfielders Stephane Aziz Ki, Maxi Nzengele, and Pacome Zouzoua.

So far, no big players have been



Namungo FC's Michael John (L) keeps Ihefu SC's midfielder Joseph Mahundi in check when the sides met in a recent Premier League tie in Dar es Salaam. PHOTO: CORRESPONDENT JUMANNE JUMA

linked with Yanga but a few players are reported to be on their way out on loan.

Reports suggest the likes of Chrispin Ngushi, Denis Nkane, Farid Mussa, and Gift Fred are listed as possible loan candidates as they struggle for game time under Gamondi.

Azam FC's biggest target going into 2023/24 is the NBC Premier League title and the outfit would need to be strong to dethrone Yanga.

They already have depth but it is to be seen if they will make big signings as they did in the last transfer period with the signing of Ghanaian goalkeeper Abdulai Idrissu.

Idrissu and Ali Hamada are currently in South Africa for injury treatment and it remains to be seen if they will be looking for

a replacement.

Azam FC only has youngster Zubeir Foba as an option between the posts. Congolese right-back Djuma Shaban has been training with Azam FC and could be immediately signed.

Simba SC is said to have reached a full agreement to sign midfielder Ladack Chasambi from Mtibwa Sugar. Simba SC is also eyeing Chadian defensive midfielder Eric Mbanguoussoum from Morocco's Union Touarga Sportif.

While there is a battle for the league title up the log, there is also a close fight for survival down the table.

Several teams are currently flirting with relegation and would be eager to sort themselves out and avoid demotion. Bottom-placed Mtibwa Sugar,

Mashujaa FC, Geita Gold FC, Ihefu SC, Tanzania Prisons, and Kagera Sugar form a group of teams that are within points of each other.

The top four hopefuls Singida Fountain Gate FC and Tabora United

are constrained in this transfer window due to the FIFA player transfer ban unless they pay the owed dues in time. Both clubs are faced with more than one case of failure to pay former players.

Wydad AC parts ways with coach ahead of CAF CL tie vs Simba SC

By Correspondent Seth Mapoli & Agencies

BEFORE the upcoming CAF Champions League clash against Simba SC, Wydad Casablanca is grabbing headlines with the abrupt dismissal of the squad's head coach Adil Ramzi.

This decision, occurring just five months into Ramzi's leadership and following his four-year tenure in Dutch outfit PSV's youth side, marks a notable shift for the Moroccan soccer outfit.

In a statement addressed to the outfit's fans, Wydad Casablanca expressed gratitude, saying: "It was a pleasure. Thank you for the good memories, and we wish you all the best in your new challenge."

This season, Ramzi managed the team in 20 games, securing 12 victories, two draws, and six losses.

In the Moroccan Premier League 'Botola Pro', they led in nine matches, winning six, drawing one, and losing two.

In their latest Premier League match, Wydad Casablanca, under Ramzi's guidance, clinched a 1-0 victory over Union Touraga, securing 19 points and holding the fourth position.

However, they have two games in hand behind leaders FAR Rabat, which has played 11 games and accumulated 23 points.

Wydad Casablanca, battling it out in Group B alongside Simba SC in the CAF Champions League, is set to face the latter at the Benjamin Mkapa Stadium in Dar es Salaam on Tuesday.

Simba SC, which has notched two points, needs a win to revive hopes in the group, recalling the team's 1-0 victory over the Moroccan side in the continental showdown quarterfinals at the Benjamin Mkapa Stadium on April 22 this year.

Despite winning the first encounter, Simba SC was eliminated via penalty shootout in the rematch in Morocco after losing 1-0 in normal time.

The defeat came after Simba SC had been rated as one of the most prominent outfits in African football. In recent days, Wydad Casablanca has faced challenges securing good results on the pitch, prompting fans to demand decisive action from the leadership.

Flexibles by David Chikoko

BRUSHING TEETH IN PUBLIC IS BAD OMEN IN USWAHILINI. IT'S LIKE TELLING PEOPLE YOU ARE ASSURED OF PUTTING SOMETHING IN YOUR MOUTH THAT DAY

WE DON'T DO THAT IN USUANI!

