



BUSINESS America rate hikes push NSE to the biggest fall in history

Coffee industry renews push for minimum returns fund



Group seeks inclusion of oil-rich communities in new energy plan



CRIME



GUIDELINES TO ESTABLISH GENDER DESKS PAGE 3

TECHNOLOGY



TPA TO USE LATEST ENTERPRISE RESOURCE PLANNING SOFTWARE PAGE 5

EDUCATION



CLASSROOMS CONSTRUCTION IN SONGEA DISTRICT PAGE 6

APPOINTMENT



FORMER CJ APPOINTED AS CHAIRPERSON OF ETHIOPIA COMMISSION PAGE 7

'Democracy formula now being finalised'



Nuns choose artificial Christmas trees in preparations for decorating houses of worship and parish premises, captured along One Way Street in Dodoma yesterday. Photo: Correspondent Ibrahim Joseph

By Guardian Reporter, Zanzibar

TOP officials of the Political Parties Council have assured stakeholders that the government is finalising perusing of recommendations made by the democracy taskforce on strengthening democracy and good governance.

Juma Ali Khatib, the council chairman, told journalists here yesterday that the government is in the final stages and is likely to announce way forward soon, noting that allowing political rallies is one among the recommendations now being studied by the government.

He explained that representatives of political parties and council members held a meeting with the minister, George Simbachawene (Policy and Parliamentary Coordination at PMO), in charge of political parties.

He assured the delegation that many issues raised by the task force are being taken on board, with the government in the final stages to reaching a decision on the issue.

The minister urged patience among stakeholders, he stated, noting that Union

President Samia Suluhu Hassan and Zanzibar President Dr Hussein Ali Mwinyi show commitment to work on the issues raised by the task force.

To promote democracy under the multi-party system, the government was in final stages to formulate regulations on holding political rallies, he stated, raising the issue of financial support for parties.

This will help run various duties where parties are involved, he said, affirming that the office of the

TURN TO Page2

Drugs: DCEA lands three at Kisutu court

By Guardian Correspondent

THREE people including a woman yesterday appeared before the Kisutu resident magistrate's court in Dar es Salaam charged with drug crimes.

Before chief magistrate Mary Mrio were Sulemani Thabiti, Sharifa Bakari and Faridi Said, all city residents.

Reading the charges, state attorney Tumaini Mafuru said the suspects committed that offence in selling narcotic drugs, contrary to the law. The suspects were arrested on November 29, with 15.19 kilograms of heroin, he said.

The magistrate declined to take pleas as the court has no jurisdiction to hear the case, being shifted to the High Court for trial. As drug offences are non-bailable, the suspects were remanded to wait completion of investigations and trial.

TURN TO Page2

IDA \$50m credit to uplift Z'bar schools

By Guardian Reporter

THE World Bank has approved a \$50m (over 100bn) credit from its International Development Association (IDA) soft loan division to rejuvenate school teaching in Zanzibar.

Nathan Belete, the World Bank regional director accredited to Tanzania, said in a statement yesterday that the loan is intended to elevate teaching competencies, learning outcomes and

reduce the gender gap in transition rates for basic education in the islands.

The new funding will benefit more than 400,000 primary school pupils in Zanzibar, half of them being girls, to access a more conducive learning environment.

The focus will be on reduced class sizes and strengthened teacher support to improve girls' ability to make the transition to secondary school, the statement indicated, as part of the

project 'Zanzibar Improving Quality of Basic Education' (ZIQUE).

"Zanzibar has made important progress in providing universal access to basic education. However, in order to increase growth and eradicate poverty by 2050, significant investments are needed to improve foundational learning outcomes," it further noted.

TURN TO Page2

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year wishes for 2023

The management and staff of The Guardian newspaper wish our esteem readers and advertisers Merry Christmas and Happy New Year filled with health, wealth, and joy - Editor

Govt liaising on ex-civil servants' actual benefits



Small traders at Kibirizi estuary in Kigoma region selling fish to passers-by at open market as captured by our roving camera yesterday. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

By Guardian Reporter

AXED civil servants need to contact social security funds, namely the Public Service Social Security Fund (PSSSF) and the National Social Security Fund (NSSF) offices in each region for correct information of who is entitled for terminal benefits.

Jenista Mhagama, the Public Service Management and Good Governance minister in the President's Office directed yesterday that employers should establish help desks to exclusively handle demands of sacked civil servants for smooth

processing of terminal benefits based on their contributions.

She said a team within the ministry was being formed to oversee implementation of a directive by President Samia Suluhu Hassan that civil servants removed over fake certificates be paid their social security contributions.

This directive is in response to a prevailing situation where employers, chiefly ministerial departments and agencies are delaying documentation and thus payment processes,

TURN TO Page2



'Democracy formula now being finalised'

FROM PAGE 1

registrar of political parties has to request such funds from the Treasury.

Council members expect that the office of the registrar has to set create a package where funds for the office are not mixed with funds intended for council activities, he said.

He praised efforts by President Samia in construction, where water and power infrastructure is uppermost, especially the Julius Nyerere hydropower project (JNHPP). The task force, chaired by former University of Dar es Salaam (UDSM) vice chancellor Prof Rwekaza Mukandala, proposed lifting the ban on political rallies and reviewing regulations on the functioning of the parties.

The Political Parties Act (chapter 258 of the laws of Tanzania) needs to be amended, the task force indicated, urging that financial provision for the office of the Registrar of political parties be enlarged "for smooth execution of duties and responsibilities" in relation to operations of the council. It demanded that the National Electoral Commission be elevated to an independent body, not receiving directives from any person, including the government or the ruling party, and its operations be subjected to scrutiny, and review, by the Court of Appeal.

The task force also set out 40-percent women representation in political parties, grouped along with people living with disabilities. It also supported current criteria for subsidising political parties, while asking that 10 percent of total subsidies need to be channelled to other registered parties.

Reacting to the recommendations, President Samia said the report calls for the creation of a government team to analyse various issues including the constitution making process. Some issues raised in the report can be implemented immediately but others needed more time and consultations, she had asserted.



Prime Minister Kassim Majaliwa receives a briefing from Muhimbili National Hospital director general, Prof Mohamed Janabi, when the Premier visited the facility in Dar es Salaam yesterday. Photo: PMO

IDA \$50m credit to uplift Z'bar schools

FROM PAGE 1

Tanya Savrimootoo, senior education economist with IDA, said critical innovations will be supported by ZIQUE, including the deployment of a school-based modality for the delivery of continuous professional development (CPD) for teachers.

It also involves the use of education technology to enhance teaching in the classroom and large-scale learning assessment,

allowing the government to systematically monitor and report on learning outcomes and to devise strategies to address learning gaps and challenges.

School fees in pre-primary and primary schools were abolished in 2015 and in secondary schools in 2018, touching off a significant increase in enrolment in government schools, altogether accommodating over 467,000 students.

However, significant challenges

remain to ensure all students progress through the education system with adequate learning levels. ZIQUE is meant to help address the education sector sort out key challenges through process and policy changes to strengthen effectiveness of service delivery, the Bretton Woods expert noted.

ZIQUE beneficiaries include students living with disabilities, particularly the visually impaired, by developing adapt-

ed learning materials. Others stand to benefit from inclusive designs of new classrooms and schools now being built, she said, noting that ZIQUE similarly targets over 13,000 primary and secondary school teachers in government schools.

They constitute 69 percent of female teachers, while over 520 head teachers are lined up for the competence uplifting effort. Key education department officials tied up with the successful

implementation of each component of the project will be equally involved, she said.

The project was designed through consultations with development agencies like the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Kwarara Media Education Center working with the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA).



Minister of State in the President's Office Public Service and Good Governance, Jenista Mhagama, urges the implementation of the President Samia Suluhu Hassan's directive about social security funds of employees who were promoted in the public service by forging certificates. Photo: PSCG

Drugs: DCEA lands three at Kisumu court

FROM PAGE 1

The case was adjourned to January 6 for mention to allow for investigations being pursued, by request of the prosecutions, in the case arising from the Drug Control Enforcement Authority (DCEA) arresting 11 people recently.

The agency alleged the possession of 34.89kg of heroin and 50 'biscuits' made from marijuana, with DCEA commissioner general Gerald Kusaya alerting the public on drug dealing. He urged members of the public to keep off from the illicit trade as authorities were intensifying the war

on narcotic drugs. "The time has now come for these people to look for a genuine business. We are well organised this time around," he stated.

The government was working day and night to ensure we have a generation free from effects of narcotic drugs, he said, pledging to make good the trust the president has shown upon the DCEA cadre "and we will not let her down." He said the media and other stakeholders need to cooperate with state organs in the war against trafficking of narcotic drugs. Media outlets have a key role to enable these efforts to succeed, he added.

Govt liaising on ex-civil servants' actual benefits

FROM PAGE 1

following the president's directive issued by the minister responsible for Labour late October.

The former employees were removed from the public service on the basis of a certification review conducted by an inter-departmental task

force during the fifth phase government. Minister Mhagama decried the habit of some employers failing to assist the ex-civil servants fill up key documents, including the commitment bond form. The President's Office has been receiving complaints from

concerned civil servants on employers being reluctant to observe the government directive especially in relation to the 'commitment bond form.'

The former employers must provide the concerned civil servants with full support and avoid engaging in extortion over the matter, the min-

ister cautioned, noting that public employers are required to assist the sacked employees visiting their offices. They should facilitate completion of payment procedures including submitting the necessary documents to social security funds, she stated.

Citing a directive from

President Samia, the minister responsible for Labour directed that civil servants sacked for producing fake certificates be paid their social security contribution.

Prof Joyce Ndalichako, overseeing the Labour, Employment, Youths and the Disabled portfolio at

PMO, said payment for the former employees ought to start the following month, that is, November 2022. PSSSF and NSSF would return the employees' contributions paid to those funds without involving the employer's contributions. In 2016 the late

President John Magufuli sacked nearly 10,000 civil servants for having presented fake certificates to get public service jobs, while more than 10,000 so-called ghost workers were axed from the public sector payroll as part of a wide ranging crackdown on corruption.



Access Microfinance Bank Tanzania chief executive officer Julius Ruwaichi hands over more than 100 delivery kits to chief medical officer of Temeke district referral hospital, Dr Joseph Kimario (C) and senior nursing officer Nuswe Ambokile. The support is a continuation of the bank's celebrations of its 15th anniversary. The kits were delivered to expectant mothers who are not able to buy them. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

Government allocates 5 billion/- for improving learning infrastructure

By Guardian Correspondent, Dodoma

THE government has allocated 5bn/- for improvement of learning infrastructure at primary and secondary schools in Dodoma region.

Regional education officer, Gift Kyando said when presenting a report on implementation of education projects to the regional consultative committee.

"We received the funds on October 31st this year through district councils; the money is meant for completion of various projects for improvement of learning infrastructures at primary and secondary schools," he said, calling upon leaders to properly supervise the projects so that they are completed on time.

Kyando said that one of the major challenges that Dodoma region face is absenteeism especially for secondary school students.

He mentioned reasons contributing to absenteeism as lack of meals at school and parents ignorance whereas some of them do not prioritise educating their children. He said that at some places local leaders and teachers fails to fulfil their responsibility to control absenteeism while some students dodge classes over long walking distances to and from school.

"Until October 28 this year, a total of 18,083 students, of which 13,083 are from primary and 5,602 from secondary schools, equivalent to 2.5 per cent were absent for more than 90 days," he stated.

The education officer added that the region received 6.7bn/- from the central government for construction of 339 classrooms at secondary schools.

He said the money has been given to the schools to make preparations to receive Form One students in the 2023 academic year.

"The classrooms construction work is progressing on well; we expect the structures to be completed before schools reopen in January 2023," he said.

Speaking at different times, Dodoma residents applauded the government for continuing to provide funds to raise the level of education in the region.

A resident of Chang'ombe ward, Furaha Danson said that after the government invested in improving education infrastructures, the quality of education has also improved with more students passing their national examinations.

He said the government should continue providing funds in the next three years to further improve the education sector.

"Dodoma has started to make progress in the education sector; we are grateful to the President for seeing the importance of investing in the education sector where the fruits have started to be seen," he said.

Government drafting guidelines to establish gender desks in country

By Guardian Correspondent, Dodoma

The government is drafting guidelines to establish gender desks in all public places including markets aimed at addressing Gender Based Violence (GBV).

The guidelines will also facilitate establishment of such desks in public bus

stops, fishing and port areas to monitor and make easy reporting of such cases.

The acting Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Community Development, Gender, Women and Special Groups, Juma Samweli made the remarks when opening stakeholders meeting which is also responsible for drafting the

guidelines.

He said completion of the draft will be a solution to addressing GBV issues as well as improve women empowerment in targeted areas.

"For this task to be successful there is need for all stakeholders to get involved so that by the end of this year the draft is in

place and handed over to the ministry's management for further action," he said.

The government in collaboration with a Non-Governmental Organisation Equality for Growth (EFG) 2019 has been implementing a programme aimed at addressing GBV in 15 markets around Dar es Salaam and six in Shinyanga

region.

He said public places such as markets have been centres of GBV incidents and reports which include obscene language with women being the most affected.

Earlier, the Director of Gender Development Badru Abdunuru said the finalization of the draft

is a good step towards addressing GBV in public places but also a stepping stone to fighting the malpractice.

The coordinator of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) Yohana Sekimwari said he was impressed that the meeting brought together all stakeholders who will be

useful in the formulation of the draft.

The formulation of the draft resulted from recommendations from the Tanzania Demographic Health Survey-2015/16 which revealed that 40-per cent of women aged 15 to 49 had faced GBV with 17 per cent having faced sexual harassment.



Mwanza regional commissioner Adam Malima (with jacket) accompanied by region's defence and security committee members visit various areas in the city yesterday invaded by small traders along the pedestrians pathway. The committee directed within 19 days the vendors should go back to allocated places. Photo: Correspondent Vitus Audax

Processors of fishing products urged to make use of technology

By Guardian Correspondent

PROCESSORS of fishing products in Lake Tanganyika have been urged to make use of technology in their activities to further improve the product's value chain and reduce loss.

This was stated by the Fisheries and Aquaculture value chain specialist, Hashim Muumin during capacity building training for processors, fishermen and traders organized by the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the World (FAO) through its FISH4ACP and Flexible Multi-partner Mechanism (FMM) projects that took place in Kigoma Region.

The official said the FISH4ACP project is being implemented in 12 countries in Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific, while in Tanzania it is implemented in Katavi, Rukwa and Kigoma regions.

It aims to reduce loss of fish products before and after fishing activities, during processing and

when transported to local and foreign markets.

"The training has been conducted through films recorded in Kenya, Uganda and Ghana to enable fish processors to learn the best ways to process their products. We train them to use improved stoves that are environmental friendly and safer ways to dry sardines," he said.

He said through the projects they are expecting to construct fish drying infrastructure and install fish processing machines.

"We want to get quality fish products from Lake Tanganyika; the training we provide to processors are expected to boost production as well as quality of fish," he added.

Assistant director in charge of quality control of fisheries products and markets, from the Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries, Steven Lukanga said the fish sub-sector contributes 1.8 per cent of the national income while eating fish contributes to

30 percent of nutrients from meat products.

Lukanga said: "Our fish consumption is still low at an average of 8.5 kilos instead of 20.5 kilos per year. The training has come at the right time as it will help improve fishermen activities. It is important to ensure proper storage of fish as soon as they are catch."

Vinza district fisheries officer, Venance Msongambe said the education will help fish stakeholders and processors to avoid working as usual, and instead apply recommended storage and drying procedures.

One of the fish processors, Selestina Silvester commended FAO to training them as they are going to use the acquired skills to improve the quality of their products.

Chairman of fishermen associations in Kigoma region, Francis John urged fishermen to grab the opportunities under the FISH4ACP project by adding value to their products. observers noted.

Formulate guidelines to help authorities in mitigating climate change effects, govt urged

By Beatrice Philemon

ENVIRONMENTAL conservation stakeholders have called upon the government to formulate wide-ranging guidelines that will guide local government authorities in mitigating the effects of climate change.

FORUM on Climate Change (FORUMCC)'s Climate Program Officer, Baraka Machumu said this yesterday at the just-ended one day workshop on COP27 outcomes: Youth, Media and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) that was organ-

ized by Africa Youth Transformation (AYT) that involved CSOs across the country.

"Although Tanzania is now working hard to address climate change and its effects, currently we don't have any climate change guidelines and mechanisms that can guide rural people and government institutions in dealing with climate change issues including mitigation and adaptation," he said.

He said it's a time for Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), NGOs and other stakeholders to collaborate with the government to formulate

climate change guidelines and frameworks that will guide us to combat the effects of climate change and other activities relating to climate changes.

Stewart Kitila from Tanzania Sustainable Development Platform added that local government authorities should be trained on how to collect data relating to the effects of climate change to enable the government to understand how the climate is changing, have proper data about the effects occurred, take action on it and prepare for the future.

Also CSOs and NGOs should be also working with the private sector in dealing with the climate change issues so that they can be also aware about the climate change and its effects and later on take action on it.

He said there is a need to provide capacity building for negotiators who will be dealing with climate change issues to become highly qualified experts on negotiation issues.

Highlighting on COP27 outcome for journalists and youth from different CSOs, Agricultural Non-State

Actors Forum (ANSAP)'s Program Officer, Werner Msoka noted that COP 27 clearly acknowledged that sustainable and just solutions to the climate crisis can be generated through meaningful and effective social dialogue and participation of the youth and CSOs.

African youth experts, startups and entrepreneurs presented their grassroots initiatives for climate adaptation and mitigation in addition to innovative solutions using systematic and cross cutting approaches that tackle local challenges.

She said in 2019, climate variability and change cost around 1 percent of Tanzania GDP annually and likely to increase to 2% of GDP by 2030 according to the (URT 2019). Large dependence on climate-sensitive activities, particularly agriculture, tourism, fishing, and livestock keeping.

Current climate variability and future climate change impacts are projected to be significant enough to curtail Tanzania from achieving key economic growth, sustainable development, and poverty reduction targets" she SAID.

Coffee farmers in Kenya decry increasing cost of production

NAIROBI

COFFEE farmers have raised concerns over the increased cost of production by Sh10 per kilo of cherry.

Kenya Coffee Producers Association (KCPA) chairman Peter Gikonyo said the current cost of production is Sh41 per kg of cherry from the previous Sh31 per kg of cherry.

"High costs in coffee production cuts across all farm inputs including certified seeds, chemicals and fertilizers," he said.

Speaking during an interview, Gikonyo said the government initiative on fertilizer subsidy is welcome in addressing high production costs.

However, the cost of chemicals and even soil testing costs remain a challenge.

Gikonyo said for many years, coffee farmers have endured challenges including low coffee production, low and unpredictable prices, poor farmer financing and conflicting coffee laws and policies.

This is in addition to low utilization of technology, maximum residual limits in traded coffee and trading challenges at the Nairobi Coffee Exchange among other challenges.

Gikonyo said the production of coffee in Kenya has generally been declining over the years.

This is from the high of 130,000 metric tonnes to the current 48,000 metric tonnes.

He said this has been occasioned by frustration and demotivation of coffee farmers with poor prices, inadequate knowledge and skills gap and high cost of doing business.

He said coffee farmers have been taken for a ride for a long time and that the reforms proposed in the past have equally not worked.

Gikonyo noted that various reforms have been enacted but no meaningful results have been realized as the drivers of the changes pursue the initiatives without the input of the major producers.

"So as coffee farmers we observe farmer disillusionment, disorganized industry governance and poor return for our produce. Many farmers are abandoning coffee farming and taking up real estate," Gikonyo added.

Former agriculture minister Peter Munya gazetted new rules - crops (Coffee) (General Amendment Regulations 2022 which the current parliament wants to annul.

National Assembly agriculture committee chairman MP John Mutunga accused the former CS of disregarding Parliament by drafting the regulations and gazetting them before submitting them to the National House as should be the practice.

Mukurweini MP John Kaguchia said the current parliament is determined to rescue the coffee industry from its current woes.

He said policymakers will revive the Senate Coffee Bill 2020 and mend it to ensure farmers benefit.

"Despite Kenya producing some of the best coffee in the world, farmers have continued to grapple, with endless miseries. We will work with all the stakeholders to ensure comprehensive and receptive legislation has been achieved," said Kaguchia.



Resource development department official President's Office (Public Service Dr. Edith Rwiza welcomes public service management and good governance permanent secretary, Xavier Daudi to close capacity-building training for division officers held at the University of Dodoma on Thursday. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

Uganda and IMF reach \$240 million agreement in financing

KAMPALA

UGANDA and the International Monetary Fund have reached an agreement for 240 million US dollars in financing.

The IMF staff made the announcement Wednesday (Dec. 21). The deal on economic policies concludes the 2nd & 3rd reviews under the Extended Credit Facility arrangement or ECF.

The Extended Credit Facility

(ECF) provides financial assistance to countries with protracted balance of payments problems.

This scheme provides financial assistance to countries with protracted balance of payments problems. It's the Fund's main tool for providing medium-term support to low income countries.

Uganda will access the funding in the coming weeks, once the review is formally completed by the IMF executive board.

The funds will bring the total IMF financial support under the ECF-financed program to about US\$ 625 million.

The economic recovery is underway according to the fund. Growth in the fiscal year 2022/23 (July-June) was projected at 5.3%, 0.7 percentage point lower than at the time of the first review in March.

According to the international body, this reflects weaker global

demand and the impact of rising inflation and interest rates on domestic demand.

The announcement came after the IMF team led the head of the World Economic Studies division in the IMF's Research Department conducted a virtual mission to Uganda from October 31 - November 22, 2022 to discuss progress on reforms and the authorities' policy priorities.



Shinyanga district administrative secretary Boniphace Chambi plants a tree during the launch of tree planting in Shinyanga where 1.5 million trees are expected to be planted. Photo: Correspondent Marco Maduhu

Don't be too harsh to students, commissioner cautions teachers

By Correspondent James Kandoya

COMMISSIONER for Education, Dr Lyambene Muthabwa has warned school teachers for being too harsh to students citing the situation creates fear and affects performance both in classroom and during national examinations.

He wants teachers to shun away from issuing more corporal punishment as this cannot change student's mindset.

Speaking in Dar es Salaam during the opening of the Tanzania Education Support Programme (TESP) stakeholders meeting organised by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, he said a good teacher is the one who is thirsty to see all his students love school, understand and succeed.

He noted that research has shown that, in order for a student to focus on lessons of the teacher, love and respect is one of the most important things as this will make the student to like the teacher and the subject and thus concentrating well in the studies.

TESP is a programme implemented by the Ministry for Education, Science and Technology and undertaken with financial support of the government of Canada provided through Global Affairs.

He said using corporal punishment as a way to change student behaviour is not correct and must be stopped because it makes students hate their teachers and contributes to poor performance.

"The quality of good teachers is love. It is through love that students will like to study his or her subject.

Teaching is a worthy job," he said.

Muthabwa said a good teacher is loved by his or her students and normally is marked as a role model of most students.

According to him, any type of intimidation and corporal punishment should stop because it contributes to poor performance.

He said Canada has been a great supporter of TESP in upgrading teachers' facilities across the country.

Cosmas Mahenge, TESP coordinator said that the programme worth (53 million Canadian dollar) has conducted several professional developments across the country.

He named professional development made so far as training to over 5000 tutors in teaching subjects, Information Communication Technology (ICT), gender responsive pedagogy and inclusion cumulative.

Others are the construction and rehabilitation of libraries and laboratories in seven teachers colleges and supply of Information Communication Technology (ICT) facilities in 35 teachers' colleges.

According to commissioner, another success was training to non-teaching staffs in 35 teachers colleges and 271 members of college management teachers.

Head of Morogoro Teachers College, Augustino Sahili commended the government and Canada for the support to capacity building for teachers while also strengthening teaching facilities.

He said the training has enabled them to deliver quality education to their students including teaching techniques which are modern one.

WB approves two programmes worth 1.9trn/- to support maternal, child health services in Tanzania

By Guardian Reporter

THE World Bank has approved two financing programs for Tanzania worth \$775 million (1.9trn/-) to support Inclusive and Resilient Growth and Maternal and Child Health Investment.

Statement from the Ministry of Finance and Planning said the support under the new International Development Association (IDA) consists of a \$500 million credit

for Inclusive and Resilient Growth Development Policy Financing and a \$250 million credit plus an additional \$25 million grant for the Tanzania Maternal and Child Health Investment Programme.

"We have agreed with the World Bank that the money should enter the country earlier and will be directed to support the private sector to fully participate in economic development, promote transparency

and accountability, agriculture and maternal health," Finance Minister Mwigulu Nchemba was quoted saying.

Tanzania has experienced a contraction of its tourism sector and a spike in import prices for fuel and other commodities in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine.

"The World Bank is putting its full support behind policies aimed to

ensure a robust private sector-led recovery that will help the country reach its economic potential, while also making growth more inclusive and resilient to future shocks," said Nathan Belete, World Bank Country Director for Tanzania.

Prudent macroeconomic management has allowed the country to weather these external shocks and minimize the erosion of hard-won development gains.

The Tanzania Inclusive and Resilient Growth Development Policy Financing is the first in a series of two operations to support policy and institutional reforms that are critical to unleashing private sector growth, increasing transparency, boosting Tanzania's risk management capacity, and building economic resilience against future shocks driven by climate change and other external factors.

The second financing package of \$275 million for the Tanzania Maternal and Child Health Investment Programme will help the country improve the quality of essential healthcare services and scale up delivery.

It includes a \$250 million Programme for Results (PforR) for Tanzania mainland and a \$25 million Investment Project Financing (IPF) project for Zanzibar.



Ndurumo village residents in Nsimbo council in Katavi region, mourning a child who hanged himself on a mango tree. Photo: Correspondent Neema Hussein

KiliMedAir set to provide rescue services for tourists, other trekkers on Mt Kili and Meru

By Correspondent James Lanka,

Moshi

THE KiliMedAir Aviation Company is executing a special initiative aimed to provide full rescue services for tourists and other trekkers who experience high altitude mountain sickness on Mount Kilimanjaro and Meru.

In an interview with this paper yesterday, the firm's sales and marketing officer, Abel Casimir Shoki said the services for the hikers includes helicopter evacuation from high altitudes while on the mountain as well as high altitude mountain sickness medication at the company's Kilime-dair Wilderness Medicine Clinic located at Shanty Town, in Moshi Municipality.

"Apart from providing moun-

tains evacuation and high altitude diseases treatment to the Mount Kilimanjaro and Meru trekkers, we are also providing scenic flights whereby any tourist can be taken to any tourist destination of their preference like Scenic over Lake Natron, Mount Kilimanjaro and Meru views, Zanzibar beaches, and the Serengeti Wildebeest migration, among many others," he explained.

He added that they have medical evacuation by providing reliable helicopter medevac with EMS 138 configured helicopters from remote areas like Mount Kilimanjaro and Meru and all national parks in Tanzania covered by Insurance.

"Apart from rescue, we are also providing helicopter charters services whereby our customers can hire our helicopter for dif-

ferent activities like VIP transfer, aerial survey, crew transfer, filming and photography, precious cargo transfer, anti-poaching, hunting, personal events as well as marketing promotions, among many others," Shoki said.

He further explained that their clinic is highly specialized in mountain medicine, diving medicine, emergency medicine, traveller and tropical medicine.

"KiliMedAir also offers other services like doctor en-route, pre and post climb consultations and general medical consultations," he added.

Recently, one of the company's helicopters took the Minister for Information, Communications and Information Technology Nape Nnauye when he climbed Mount Kilimanjaro to connect to the internet, the highest peak

of the mountain Kibo. According to him, the helicopter took the minister from Kibo hut to Moshi town.

"KiliMedAir Aviation Limited provides you with the most reliable and effective Helicopter services. With a base in Moshi Tanzania, we conduct search and rescue services on Mount Kilimanjaro, and other Tanzania's National Parks," he asserted.

Tanzania has a growing demand for private Air Tax Services, from Tourism industry, entertainment, professionals, executives, entrepreneurs, politicians, private sectors and government entities. KiliMedAir also provides you with the best, convenient, affordable and comfortable helicopter services in a most reliable and professional manner.

AfDB embarks on new strategy to further boost Africa's competency in pharmaceutical expertise

By Guardian Reporter

THE African Development Bank Group has formally introduced its new initiative that will join hands with the African Union to boost Africa's capacity to produce drugs, vaccines, diagnostics, and therapeutics all along the value chain.

The African Pharmaceutical Technology Foundation (APTF) was the focus of a forum hosted by the African Development Bank under the theme: "Technology Access for Pharmaceutical Manufacturing: The African Pharmaceutical Technology Foundation."

The event was part of the 2nd International Conference on Public Health in Africa held recently in Kigali, Rwanda.

According to the AfDB, the continent imports more than 70 percent of the medicines it needs at the cost of \$14 billion annually.

Changing the game to enable African countries develop their capacity to manufacture pharmaceutical products has public health, strategic and economic rationales. Dr Yvan Butera, Rwandan Minister of State for Health said: "This new initiative comes as a solution, since most African countries still face challenges in receiving medicines on time."

Solomon Quaynor, Vice-President for Private Sector, Infrastructure and Industrialisation at the African Development Bank Group, said Covid-19 had exposed the gaps in Africa's health care system.

"The Covid-19 pandemic has exposed the fragility of global health systems and the gaps in the production of critical drugs on the continent," he added.

Quaynor said: "The APTF is a groundbreaking institution that will significantly enhance Africa's access to technologies that underpin the manufacturing of pharmaceutical products."

Presenting the APTF at the event, Prof Padmashree Gehl Sampath, Special Adviser on pharmaceuticals and health infrastructure to Dr Akinwumi Adesina, President of the African Development Bank Group, stressed that the foundation was designed to help African countries bridge the technology gaps in sustainable domestic manufacturing.

Prof Sampath said: "Pharmaceutical companies in Africa have three specific

impediments to technology access: access to technology and related know-how for production, mobilization of domestic resources for technological upgrading, and the lack of possibilities for horizontal and vertical product diversification. Many technological risks need to be indemnified to build Africa's pharmaceutical sector, including shifting away from a product-by-product approach which puts African companies at risk."

The co-chair of the International Negotiating Body of the World Health Organization (WHO) on Pandemic Prevention, Preparedness and Response, Dr Precious Matsoso, reflected on how important technology issues are for future pandemic preparation. She said establishing the African Pharmaceutical Technology Foundation "would provide the much-needed support to address technology barriers for equitable access."

Dr Richard Hatchett, Chief Executive Officer of the Coalition of Epidemic Preparedness Initiative, stressed that the initiative will help in saving lives on the continent.

The Foundation, approved by the African Development Bank's Board of Directors in June 2022, is expected to boost Africa's access to technology for manufacturing the full range of pharmaceutical products, focusing on building supply chains and expanding access to building block technologies of various kinds.

The Foundation will also serve as a transparent inter-mediator advancing and brokering the interests of the African pharmaceutical sector on the global stage, to enhance access to proprietary technologies, know-how, and related industrial processes, through licensing and other market-based and non-market mechanisms.

The WHO, the Coalition on Epidemic Preparedness, the South Centre, Geneva, and the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development of Germany have expressed keen interest in working with the Foundation in the coming year.

Panelists stressed the need to establish partnerships between African pharmaceutical companies and their counterparts in other continents, such as Europe.

TPA to start using world's newest enterprise resource planning software - official

By Correspondent Cheji Bakari, Bagamoyo

THE Tanzania Ports Authority (TPA) has started using the world's latest Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) software system to close its financial accounting and other operations in ports.

TPA's director of Information and Communication Technology (ICT), Ann Beth said this here at a two-day capacity building workshop for journalists from eight regions of seaports and lake ports which are Tanga, Mtwara, Dar es Salaam, Mwanza, Katavi, Kigoma, Rukwa and Mbeya.

She said that system software was for the first time installed in 2015 but unfortunately it did not function properly now after due to effort put in, it has started working in the 2021/22 fiscal year, something which will strengthen transparency and bar revenue loss loopholes.

"At its core, ERP is an application that automates business processes and provides insights and internal controls, drawing on a central database that collects inputs from departments including Accounting, Human Capital Management (HCM) Quality Management (QM) Funds Management (FM) and Materials Management (MM) Payroll (PY)," she explained.

According to her, until last year they were using Common Business Oriented Language (COBOL) to close financial accounting but due to efforts put in, the authority has succeeded to commence full use of the ERP system in financial accounting and other management issues.

"Due to directives of President Samia Suluhu Hassan and other several parliamentary committees who visited the authority in different times on the system, TPA injected its efforts to ensure that it installs it and commence operations. The system helps control all financial matters electronically to secure revenues," she added.

She explained that software applications are critical to companies because they help them implement resource planning by integrating all the processes needed to run their companies with a single system.

"International and other growing business companies around the world like Amazon, Toyota eventually reach a point where spreadsheets no longer cut it. That's where enterprise resource planning software comes in, ERP systems collect and organise key business information and help organisations run lean, efficient operations, even as they expand," she said.

CPA Sylvester Massawe, one of traders at Kariakoo market told this paper that investing in modern digital systems was important both in public and private sector and businesses as well.

"In many offices, staff waste time hunting for documents and potentially duplicating work because there is no one place to look for up-to-date information on all aspects of the business relevant to them; this also makes it difficult to see the full cause and effect of developments affecting your business," he said.



Vodacom Tanzania PLC managing director Philip Besimire briefs Tanzania Traffic commander SACP Ramdhani Ng'azi when the latter visited Vodacom headquarters to introduce himself in Dar es Salaam yesterday. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

Africa lags behind on universal access to electricity

By Special Correspondent

AFRICA is the world's least electrified continent. Nearly 600 million people remain without access to electricity in Africa.

Yet the pandemic, with its attendant lockdowns, supply chain disruptions and diversion of fiscal resources by governments did even further damage.

According to the Energy Progress Report 2022 published by the United Nations, Covid-19 has slowed progress towards universal access to electricity and clean cooking fuels and

technology.

According to the report, sub-Saharan Africa's share of the global population without electricity rose from 71 per cent in 2018 to 77 per cent in 2020. Most regions of the world saw declines.

One of the factors preventing countries from expanding access is cost. Achieving electrification for all in sub-Saharan Africa would require investing at least \$31 billion per year by 2030.

For context, only \$5 billion was received in 2017.

Gyude Moore is a senior policy

fellow at the Center for Global Development. He has also served as Liberia's minister for public works.

He joins the show with insights on where to direct investment in order to expand access.

Many Sub-Saharan African countries have about one or less engineer per 10,000 inhabitants, according to the World Bank. Industrialized countries have 20-50 for the same number.

The skills gap in Africa is especially huge in applied sciences, engineering, and technology (ASET).

Graduates lack the skills and competencies required in modern enterprise, partly because university curricula are outdated.

As a result, many are going abroad for studies. We follow the story of two female students in Romania.

Coffee production in Kenya is under threat - climate change means frequent droughts and irregular rains are drying coffee berries.

For most farmers, trying to mitigate these effects is a costly and time-consuming endeavour.

Three councils in Songea district finish classrooms construction

By Guardian Correspondent, Songea

THREE Councils within Songea District in Ruvuma Region have successfully completed the construction of 96 classrooms under a programme by President Samia Suluhu Hassan.

District Commissioner of Songea Polelet Mgema revealed this after inspecting 29 grades of 79 which has been constructed within Songea Municipal council.

"For us in Songea we have completed the work directed to us by the Head of State and we have done this with much success," he said.

The DC said the completion of the classrooms means all the pupils joining form one next year will sit comfortably in the new classrooms to facilitate their learning.

He said all the classrooms have been constructed at a cost of 1.9bn/- at a quality standard as tiles and other important furniture which are important for learning.

The official hailed the government for disbursing the 1.9bn/- to Songea District saying of the money has constructed 10 classrooms at Madaba council which cost about 200m/- and 10 others at Songea which cost about 200m/-.

He however said the task to construct the classrooms in Songea will create a good picture for Songea as 80 percent of the classrooms are located in Songea.

Commenting on the development, Monica Haule a resident of the district commended the government for the development saying it will go a long way into addressing classroom challenges in secondary schools within the district.

The government set aside 3.5bn/- for the construction of 156 classrooms in secondary schools in Ruvuma Region to address the shortage that the region was facing as well as accommodate students beginning form one next year.



Dodoma region education officer, Gifto Kyando, speaks at a working session about education development in the region yesterday. Photo: Correspondent Ibrahim Joseph

Seychelles extends contracts of Tanzanian prison officers, more exchanges expected

VICTORIA

THE contracts of 13 Tanzanian prison officers working at the Seychelles main prison facility at Montagne Posee, which ends next month, will be extended while others are expected to be recruited.

The extension was one of the subjects discussed by the Commissioner of

Prison, Raymond St Ange, and Ramadhan Nyamka, Tanzania Commissioner General of Prisons (CGP), who is on a four-day mission in Seychelles.

St Ange told reporters on that "the first cohort in 2018 included 23 Tanzanian officers and they were here until 2021. We now have 13 officers and are reviewing

our engagement and we plan to recruit new Tanzanian prison officers to balance it out with those recruited locally."

The relationship between the Seychelles Prison Services (SPS) and the Tanzania Prison Services (TPS) started after the signing of a memorandum of understanding on May 1 in 2018.

Now that the TPS has a new Commissioner General of Prisons (CGP), Ramadhan Nyamka, the two parties discussed further avenues to continue exchanging expertise and review their existing agreement in a bid to improve the prisons in Seychelles.

In addition to the Tanzanian prison officers, TPS will

also send two trained nurses to work at the Montagne Posee prison as a stopgap while the local prison services review its process of hiring local nurses.

Additionally, the two prison services plan to cooperate in the training of Seychellois officers so that they may look at how other jurisdictions function.

Two Seychellois officers will visit the 123 prisons in Tanzania in a bid to gather experience as to how officers there manage 33,000 inmates.

SPS is also seeking assistance for training in specialised areas such as medical and psycho-social help for inmates with behavioural issues.



Small traders display their merchandise at Magufuli Bus Terminal in the outskirts of Dar es Salaam yesterday against the city by-laws as captured by our photographer yesterday. Photo: Correspondent Sabato Kasika

Horn of Africa faces most severe drought in more than two generations - UNICEF

GENEVA

THE number of children suffering from dire drought conditions across Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia has more than doubled in five months, the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) said on Thursday.

Around 20.2 million children are under threat of severe hunger, thirst and disease - compared to 10 million in July - as climate change, conflict, global inflation and grain shortages devastate the region.

"While collective and accelerated efforts have mitigated some of the worst impact of what had been feared, children in the

Horn of Africa are still facing the most severe drought in more than two generations", stated UNICEF Deputy Regional Director for Eastern and Southern Africa Lieke van de Wiel.

Nearly two million children across Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia are estimated to need urgent treatment for severe acute malnutrition, the deadliest form of hunger.

Meanwhile, water insecurity has more than doubled with close to 24 million people now confronting dire water shortages.

At the same time, drought has internally displaced over two million people and driven

approximately 2.7 million children out of school, with an additional four million others at risk of dropping out.

"Humanitarian assistance must be continued to save lives and build the resilience of the staggering number of children and families who are being pushed to the edge - dying from hunger and disease and being displaced in search of food, water and pasture for their livestock", said van de Wiel.

As increased stress is driving families to the edge, youth are facing child labour, child marriage and female genital mutilation (FGM).

And widespread food insecurity and displacement are triggering sexual violence, exploitation, abuse, and other forms of gender-based violence (GBV).

"We need a global effort to mobilize resources urgently to reduce further devastating and irreversible damage to children in the Horn of Africa", continued the senior UNICEF official.

Thanks to the generous support of donors and partners, UNICEF continues to provide life-saving services to children and families across the Horn of Africa, as it prepares for further shocks, builds resilience and strengthens key services.

WHO releases standards of competency for health workers providing family planning, abortion care

By Guardian Reporter

THE World Health Organisation (WHO) has developed the family planning and comprehensive abortion care toolkit for primary health care workforce, which outlines key competencies for health workers, as well as guidance on how to develop programmes and curricula for their education and training.

It has been released following updates to WHO's landmark family planning handbook and recommendations on abortion care.

The toolkit is one of several resources planned to help countries implement these important guidelines for women's health.

Health workers need the right skills - but also the right knowledge and attitudes.

Health care providers need to know practically how to perform specific clinical interventions, such as how to insert and remove contraceptive implants, or how to provide a medical abortion.

They also need strong communications, decision-making and partnership skills, so that they are equipped to actively listen to patients and convey information effectively, while always placing the individual at the centre of their practice.

How health workers behave and perform their tasks - and thus, how people perceive the care that they receive - is influenced by health workers' feelings, values and beliefs. Effective, non-judgemental and person-centred care requires that health workers treat people with full respect for human rights, as well as for the choices of the individuals seeking care.

The new toolkit lists these attitudes, along with other values, that all health workers providing family planning and abortion services should strive towards.

The toolkit is intended to be used

by anyone whose work includes some aspect of family planning and abortion care, including policymakers, government officials, institutional leaders, programme and curriculum managers and educators.

Policymakers can refer to these competencies to regulate service providers, to ensure that the care provided in their country meets internationally recognised standards.

Team leaders at healthcare facilities can use the competencies to define what tasks a health worker in a particular role needs to be able to perform, to develop job descriptions, to recruit staff, and to conduct performance reviews.

For those involved in education, this toolkit can have a central role in training current and future health workers, with the different competencies used as learning objectives that help teachers and students assess learning progress and identify knowledge gaps.

There is also a dedicated section within the toolkit that outlines how these competencies can be included in pre-service training, post-graduate studies and continuing professional development.

In 2023, WHO plans to publish a third component of the toolkit, supporting its implementation and dissemination, as well as monitoring and evaluation.

The family planning and comprehensive abortion care toolkit for the primary health care workforce was developed collaboratively by the United Nations' Special Programme of Research, Development and Research Training in Human Reproduction (HRP) and WHO's Health Workforce Department.

The competencies also provide a shared language about attitudes, knowledge and skills needed in family planning and abortion service delivery.

Cholera spreading fast as conflict escalates in Eastern DR Congo

KINSHASA

CHOLERA cases are rapidly increasing in Nyirangongo, a region in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) hosting the largest number of people displaced by the recent escalation of conflict, with children accounting for nearly four in every five cases, Save the Children said.

Nyirangongo in eastern DRC has recorded more than 973 cases in just the last two weeks, including 438 cases among displaced people, many of whom are living in informal camps or sheltering in schools, churches and other sites.

Since clashes between the Congolese army (FARDC) and the armed groups resumed in February 2022, over 450,000 people in North Kivu have been displaced from their villages, with more than 240,000 taking shelter in Nyirangongo. An escalation of conflict last weekend, along with the rainy season impeding road access to the area, will make combating the spread of the disease even harder.

Save the Children is calling for urgent action to prevent a health disaster.

Amavi Akpamagbo, Country Director at Save the Children in DRC, said: "One of the most concerning things about this outbreak is that children are more exposed. The data from health authorities shows that over 77% of recorded cases are among children aged 14 years and younger, with 119 children currently hospitalized or in cholera treatment units."

"Children who have already been devastated by one of the worst food crisis in the world are now at risk of the effects of cholera. We know that malnourished children who contract cholera are at least three times more likely to die due to their weakened immune systems. This makes it even more urgent to act now."

In the Rutshuru region, also in the east of the country, people have had to flee their homes, leaving everything behind. Children, women and men sleep outdoors, many unprotected from the weather, without sufficient food, water and access to sanitation facilities which are critical to prevent the further spread of cholera.

The World Health Organization last month said that more than 14 African countries have reported cholera cases since January 2022 with this acute diarrhoeal disease endemic in several DRC provinces.



Ilaia Special Seat ward councillor, Beatrice Edward, airs her views on the strategies for fighting female genital mutilation at a meeting held at Mzinga ward in Dar es Salaam recently. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

Human Rights Council president appoints new chairperson of Ethiopia Commission

By Guardian Correspondent and Agencies

THE President of the Human Rights Council, Ambassador Federico Villegas, has appointed Tanzania's former Chief Justice Mohamed Chande Othman to the Council-created Commission of Human Rights Experts on Ethiopia as its new chairperson.

Othman's appointment comes following the resignation of Kaari Betty Murungi as

Chairperson and Member of the Commission. Ambassador Villegas thanked Murungi for her role on the Commission and wishes her well in her future endeavours.

The former Chief Justice of Tanzania (2010-2017), Othman was appointed by UN Secretary-General Ban-Ki-moon in 2015 as Chairperson of the Independent Panel of Experts on the Dag Hammarskjöld Investigations. In 2019-2020, he served as a member of the Independent Ex-

pert Review of the International Criminal Court and the Rome Statute System, having been appointed by the Assembly of State Parties of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.

Othman's previous experience includes that of Prosecutor General of Timor-Leste (2000-2001), Chief of Prosecutions of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (1998-2000), and Senior Legal and Justice Sector Adviser for

UNDP-Cambodia. He has also served as a member of the UN Human Rights Council's High-Level Commission of Inquiry into the Situation in Lebanon following the Israel-Lebanon Armed Conflict in 2006 and as the UN Human Rights Council's Independent Expert on the human rights situation in the Sudan (2009-2010).

The three-person Commission of Human Rights Experts on Ethiopia was created by the UN Human Rights Council

on 17 December 2021 with a mandate to investigate alleged human rights violations and abuses in Ethiopia committed since 3 November 2020 by all parties to the conflict. On 7th October 2022, the Council decided to renew the mandate of the Commission for a further period of one year.

The Commission is scheduled to deliver its next update to the Human Rights Council during its 52nd regular session (27 February-31 March 2023).



Workers along Morogoro Road -Magomeni Mapipa in Dar es Salaam at work as captured by our photographer yesterday. Photo: Correspondent Sabato Kasika

AU member states vow to boost nutrition and food security in Africa

By Guardian Reporter

AFRICAN Union member states meeting in Abidjan have called upon governments to speed up investment, coordination and implementation of programs to improve nutrition and food security in Africa.

African leaders gathered for a three-day meeting to draw attention to the 2022 African Union Year of Nutrition. The meeting ended with the signing of an "Abidjan Declaration."

It was organised by the government of Cote d'Ivoire in collaboration with African Development Bank's African Leaders for Nutrition initiative, the African Union Commission, and other partners.

King Letsie III of Lesotho said: "This must be the time for Africa and its leadership to rise to the occasion and provide sustainable solutions to the malnutrition and hunger crisis in the continent."

King Letsie III, who is the African Union and African Leaders for Nutrition's Nutrition Champion, spoke about African Union's Executive Decision in July 2022 that called for a multisectoral policy framework for addressing malnutrition, as well as financing targeted and high-level political commitment to end malnutrition in all its forms.

King Letsie III commended the Ivorian government for its leadership on the nutrition agenda, including sponsoring the Africa Union Year of Nutrition.

African Union Commission Chairperson Moussa Faki said: "It is not normal that Africans are underfed and malnourished - We need to develop our internal capacity to produce for indigenous needs."

Vice President of Cote d'Ivoire, Tiémoko Meyliet Koné, called African leaders to action. "The urgency for our continent is to save lives and offer better returns to our youngest, who represent the hope and the future of our community and nation."

Vice President Koné said his government is committed to working with the African Union, regional member countries, the bank and the African Leaders for Nutrition initiative and partners to improve nutrition targets.

"In the case of this year of African nutrition - women, men and children will be the actors and the beneficiaries placed at the heart of development and progress," Koné added.

Dr Beth Dunford, Vice President for Agriculture, Human and Social Development at the African Development Bank, said the African Leaders for Nutrition would be working with the African Union Commission toward greater impact out of the African Year of Nutrition.

She stated that the African Leaders for Nutrition, hosted by the bank, aims to increase financing resources for nutrition by mobilizing African governments to adopt stronger policies and increase financing for nutrition.

Families urged to join fights against gender based violence

By Correspondent Scolastica Msewa

FAMILIES have been urged to provide public education on preparedness against all forms of gender based violence to vulnerable groups including women and children.

This was said by the director of LUTOGO, the Dar es Salaam based non-profit organisation advocating for the fight against social violence to women and children, as well as environmental protection, Lulu Mwalubadu during the climax of 16 days on the campaign

against gender based violence.

Different studies have shown that gender based violence start from the family level and is mostly involving close relatives who are within the families.

Speaking at his office recently, Mwalubadu said parents and the society in general should openly speak with children on preparedness against any forms of social violence by close relatives and other members of the society.

She said social violence reported in different parts of the country are done

by people close to victims, so it is necessary to enhance preparedness awareness among women and children.

"We must protect our children and all vulnerable groups against gender based violence because not everyone's life is safe," she said.

She said parents and guardians must take precautionary measures through increased public awareness to children and women as part of enhancing social protection against all forms of violence.

She mentioned some of the precautionary measures as not allowing guests

to share rooms with children, even if they are close relatives such as uncles or domestic workers.

She said her organisation is expected to conduct public awareness in different parts of the country by reaching the vulnerable groups including youths, students and pupils, women and men.

"We expect to get supports from different organisations and institutions to ensure that this public awareness of reaching as many people as possible to reduce gender based violence," she said.

SATURDAY 16 JANUARY 2021

Taking A New Look
At The News
ESTABLISHED IN 1995

Festive season is time when people fall victims to crime

Hello country men, women and young people! We know that we are experiencing a lot of fun with our families and friends as today is Christmas eve and end of year next week. Moving all the way from 1st January to the end of the year is quite a long way and when we reach this period, it is worth celebrating. It is good that God is still keeping us alive.

This is a period which should be characterised by making reflections on what we have achieved in the year in relation to the goals that we set at the beginning. Give ourselves a pat on the back for the successes that we have registered. If we performed well in our studies and other fields of work, it is because we worked hard. If things did not go well, probably the strategies that we used were not very effective. We should not despair because adequate planning for the year ahead will change the trend of events in our lives. We should take time to look back on what we have gone through.

Today is Christmas eve and the night is a happy moment for most people in places where the Yuletide is observed.

Generally, the Yuletide is a period of happiness, and so many joyful events are organised at this time such as Christian conventions and crusades, pleasure travels, marriages and marriage anniversaries and holidaying as a pastime.

However, in this same period there occur disasters such as road crashes, and deaths and injuries resulting from activities meant for pleasure, including swimming and

drinking.

For instance, due to the high number of people wanting to travel elsewhere to spend the Christmas as against the comparatively limited number of commercial vehicles, some drivers endeavour to speed to certain destinations and back to pick more passengers.

Their act is also meant to take advantage of the situation to make more money.

In some cases, the unexpected happens and lives and property are lost.

Sometimes too, others over-indulge in eating, drinking and acts of debauchery and contract diseases as a result.

Criminal activities also rise in the season and, relatedly, some people also get into arguments and fights that can disturb public peace.

In view of all these, those of us working on The Guardian newspaper wish to appeal to homes, the youth especially, churches, driver unions, national road safety authority, passengers, the police and other security services, as well as entertainment centres to play their respective roles in making the festive season pass as the happy occasion that it should be.

We believe the driver unions and the police would not shirk their responsibility in checking driver misbehaviour, particularly regarding alcohol intake, drug abuse and recklessness on the road.

The police should go the extra mile to ask passengers about how well-behaved or reckless drivers have been on the road and, at least, caution them.

They and other security services should be more serious in checking crime in this season.

Key to successful agriculture in Africa is more fertilizer

Fertilizer is any material of natural or synthetic origin that is applied to soil or to plant tissues to supply plant nutrients. Fertilizers may be distinct from liming materials or other non-nutrient soil amendments. Many sources of fertilizer exist, both natural and industrially produced. For most modern agricultural practices, fertilisation focuses on three main macro nutrients: nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium with occasional addition of supplements like rock flour for micronutrients. Farmers apply these fertilisers in a variety of ways: through dry or pelletized or liquid application processes, using large agricultural equipment or hand-tool methods.

A fertiliser is any material of natural or synthetic origin (other than liming materials) that is applied to soil or to plant tissues to supply one or more plant nutrients essential to the growth of plants. Many sources of fertiliser exist, both natural and industrially produced.

In the later half of the 20th century, increased use of nitrogen fertilisers have been a crucial component of the increased productivity of conventional food systems.

Management of soil fertility has been the preoccupation of farmers for thousands of years. The use of commercial fertilizers has increased steadily in the last 50 years, rising almost 20-fold to the current rate of 100 million tonnes of nitrogen per year. Without commercial fertilisers it is estimated that about one-third of the food produced now could not be produced.

The use of phosphate fertilisers has also increased from 9 million

tonnes per year in 1960 to 40 million tonnes per year in 2000. Yara International is the world's largest producer of nitrogen-based fertilisers.

Fertilisers enhance the growth of plants. This goal is met in two ways, the traditional one being additives that provide nutrients. The second mode by which some fertilisers act is to enhance the effectiveness of the soil by modifying its water retention and aeration. For decades, fertilisers were too expensive for African farmers. They had to be imported, and transportation into the continent was expensive.

Now, though, Africa is turning a corner toward producing more of it locally. A Moroccan company has signed a nearly \$4 billion deal to build a fertiliser plant in Ethiopia. A Danish company is helping the Democratic Republic of Congo build a \$2.5 billion fertiliser plant. The African Development Bank Group helped fund a new fertiliser plant in Nigeria that's already boosting farmers' yields.

And this August in Ghana, the vice president stood proudly before the largest fertiliser plant ever built in the country. Mahamudu Bawumia said the factory was the solution Ghana's farmers had been demanding.

African countries have some of the lowest rates of fertiliser use in the world, but efforts to change this come with some serious dilemmas. Some nutrients farmers add to the soil both nourish crops and contribute to the climate change that's already damaging food production in Africa. The wide acceptance and government support for fertiliser in Africa has been a long time coming.

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Climate loss and damage: The time to act is now

By William Minter

As the US-Africa Summit had ended with are some concrete, cost-free steps the US can take to help poorer countries suffering the effects of pollution by wealthier countries.

The climate summit in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt last month approved a fund to compensate the most vulnerable countries for "loss and damage" they have suffered due to global warming caused primarily by industrialised countries.

A compromise brokered by the European Union resulted in overwhelming consensus to create the fund, as the United States backed down on its opposition to the fund.

While climate activists rightly celebrated the victory, the compromise decision had a fatal flaw. "We have the fund, but we need money to make it worthwhile," said Mohamed Adow, executive director of Power Shift Africa. "What we have is an empty bucket."

In the meantime, the damage continues to mount. Adding in the cumulative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the war in Ukraine, and more, the world now faces a "polycrisis." Those who contributed least to these crises, in the Global South and within the Global North as well, continue to suffer disproportionately from the loss of lives and livelihoods.

Far from taking the lead on the climate, as President Joe Biden claimed in his speech to the COP27 summit, the United States continues to be a major obstacle to global action. The president did pledge to ask Congress for \$2 billion to assist developing countries in responding to climate change.

But he carefully avoided using the language of "loss and damage" or acknowledging in any way that the United States had an obligation to pay. Without congressional approval, Biden's pledge will almost certainly end up as an empty promise.

A few countries, such as Denmark and New Zealand, have set up designated funds designated for loss and damage. Overall, however, rich countries are certain to default on their promises, as they did on their pledge at COP15 in Copenhagen in 2009 to come up with \$100 billion a year in "new money" by 2020. The funds provided not only fell short of the goal, but most were in fact diverted from other urgent development needs.

New thinking on climate change



Secretary of State Antony Blinken welcomes African leaders and guests at the 2022 US-African Leaders Summit.

and the 21st century polycrisis is coming not from any of the great powers, but from the Global South. The woman who is taking the lead comes from one of the smallest countries on the planet, with less than 300,000 people on only 166 square miles. Prime Minister Mia Mottley of Barbados gave a speech that eclipsed Biden's remarks. Her speech was based on the Bridgetown Initiative, which she launched in September.

From Egypt, Prime Minister Mottley flew the next day from Egypt to Durban, South Africa to deliver the 20th Nelson Mandela Lecture, where she elaborated on her vision and her plan.

Mottley put the case for loss and damage like this:

"If I lived next door to you, and every day I am dumping on your property, dumping on your property, and the money you had to send your children to school or to pay medical care for your wife all of a sudden, now has to be taken up to clean up the property because you can't sleep at night, you can't eat food in peace, then you would say that I should be sued and that I must stand responsibility for the fact that I am causing you to spend the majority of your earnings on being able just to live."

"As a former attorney general," she added, "I say we don't ask you for open-ended liability, but what we do ask you for is justice."

While making the case for additional grants, Mottley also laid out other options that might be more saleable to policymakers now.

One such option would be a windfall profits tax on oil and gas

companies. Many countries in the EU have adopted these this year. And despite the political clout of the fossil fuel industry in Congress, polls show overwhelming approval among voters in the United States as well as other holdout countries such as Australia.

As Mottley puts it, oil and gas corporations "whose balance sheets far exceed that of many countries in the world ... have a responsibility to put something on the table in a loss and damage fund for those who are now having to pay out and pay out."

The other option, which is winning approval within the International Monetary Fund (IMF), is to use the IMF mechanism of Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) to make more funds available immediately. This is the international equivalent of the Federal Reserve deciding to increase the money supply. SDRs are based on a basket of five convertible currencies (the dollar, the euro, the pound sterling, the Chinese renminbi, and the Japanese yen). In 2021 the IMF allocated \$650 billion SDRs in response to COVID-19, its largest allocation ever, thus providing about \$62 billion to 75 lower-income countries. This cost nothing to the United States or any other country, while providing desperately needed relief to African and other vulnerable countries.

Rich countries also have the option of reallocating a portion of their SDRs, which they do not need or use for themselves, to other countries. France just announced the release of \$5.26 billion in SDRs (about 14 percent of its allocation) to the most vulnerable countries. Likewise, the Biden administration

has proposed an allocation of \$21 billion, a slightly larger percentage of its allocation.

While Mottley points out the need for a total rethinking of the IMF and World Bank, such actions by the IMF can and should be implemented immediately. This would be a substantive start towards reorienting these institutions, which have historically favored the Global North at the expense of the Global South.

In preparation for the US-Africa Leaders Summit on December 13-15, Biden's Africa staff have prepared a policy agenda refreshingly free of focus on competition with China and Russia. Judd Devermont, the National Security Council senior director for Africa, told the Washington Post that President Biden would announce U.S. support for adding the African Union to the G20, a step that could be taken at the G20 Summit in September 2023.

If President Biden could also announce \$21 billion in SDRs to vulnerable countries, effective immediately, that would indeed be a signal to African and other vulnerable countries that the United States is capable of putting global problem solving over geopolitical competition.

And there would be no cost to U.S. taxpayers. Without assured congressional approval, however, such an announcement could also be another empty gesture. O

William Minter is the editor of AfricaFocus Bulletin. Zeb Larson is a writer based in Columbus, Ohio. The commentary was first published by Foreign Policy in Focus.

Ignorance of the law is no defence against civil or the criminal liability

By Telesphor Magobe

DEAR esteemed reader, last week we briefly looked at spouse-beating and came to the conclusion that it is prohibited by law - meaning that there is no person who has a right to beat or assault his or her spouse as provided for in Section 66 of the Law of Marriage Act (1977) and also in the Penal Code (R.E. 2022) in the case of assault.

We particularly cited Section 241 of the Penal Code, which states that: "Any person who commits an assault occasioning actual bodily harm is guilty of an offence and liable to imprisonment for five years."

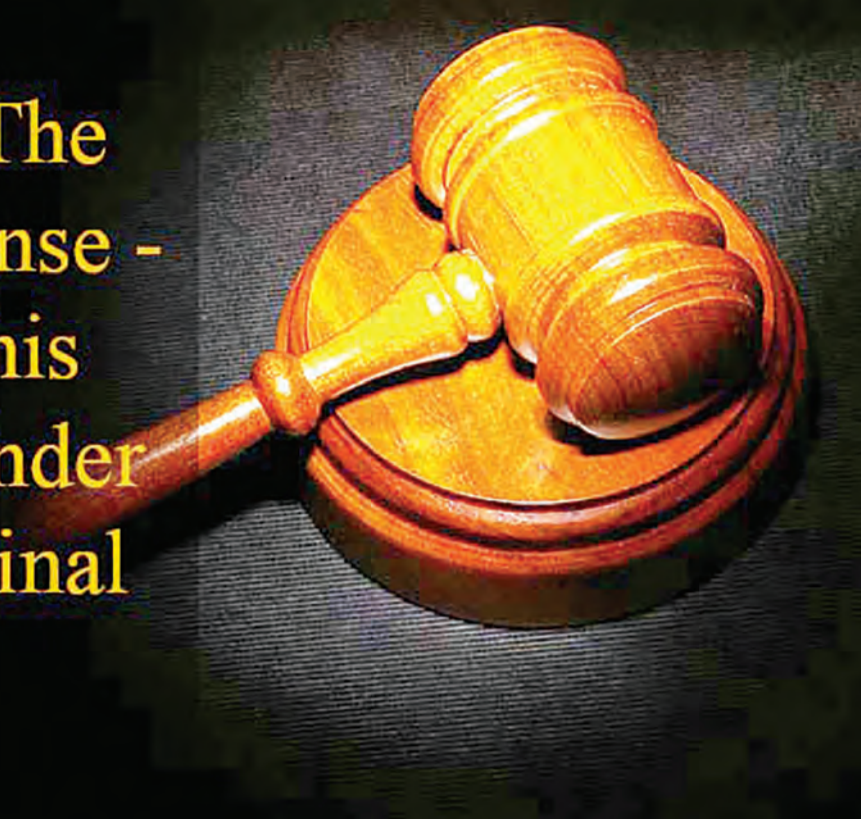
Spouse-beating or assault (also known as domestic abuse or violence) under the guise of jealousy or the heat of passion has cost the lives of many married persons and it is not impossible to control or prevent it if we really want.

So, it is good to learn how to live together as husband and wife or as partners (in case of those intending to marry each other) without causing any harm to your spouse or partner because it is more humane to behave in this way than to be cruel or barbaric to your spouse or partner.

Once you cause a temporary or permanent deformity, suffering, mental distress or death to your spouse or partner it doesn't benefit you or your partner in any way except ending in regret and frustration. So, let each one of us take care lest one gets into trouble for doing what the law prohibits.

Today, I invite you to take time to reflect on how much legal provisions we have cited throughout in this column have helped you in any way to be a law-abiding and responsible citizen or simply a better person than you were before. As you may remember at one time we said that

Ignorance Of The Law Is No Defense - What Does This Really Mean Under Colorado Criminal Law?



We have also heard some people say that "knowledge is power" - meaning that when we know something we become an authority on it. People can consult and ask us to help them achieve what they want from us.

in Tanzania ignorance of the law is not a defence for civil or criminal liability.

One cannot do something that violates the rights of another person and when this person files a complaint against you and as a defence from civil or criminal liability, one cannot successfully claim that one didn't know it was forbidden by law. So, whether you know or don't know that a certain action is prohibited by law when you do it, you will be liable for it.

This means that the law requires every Tanzanian citizen to know and abide by the law he or she is subject to and there are many laws and those laws are amended from time to time and also some new laws are enacted.

As a layperson it is almost impossible to know all existing laws and all amendments made to them, let alone new laws. But there is no easier way of knowing the law than making an effort to know them, at least to be sure that whatever one does is in accordance



with the law.

Perhaps what we can do is to set some goals for the next year after seeing those areas in which we have failed to achieve this year. The best way to do it is to make efforts to turn ordinary things into extraordinary ones - to do the best. There was a time I started buying books (including law books) little by little

each time I got some money.

At the end I found myself with a home library and whenever there is something that needs reference I can easily read my books and find what I need to know. I also have a good collection of online articles and books (including law books) and many laws are also available online. What one is supposed to do is just to have a laptop or desktop computer and internet access.

All this is to help you my esteemed reader to familiarise yourselves with the law you are subject to and for sure once you start doing it you will eventually find yourself that you have achieved something and once you do that then be sure that this column has helped you to achieve what you didn't have before.

Don't mind even if you find that the column hasn't helped you much. Perhaps you can start now and all this is for your own good. So, let us make the best out of the New Year 2023 by doing little by little and step by step to familiarise ourselves with the law we are subject to. At the end we will be able to find ourselves that we have achieved so much. It is better to try something and fail to do it than fail to try. What a shame!

We have also heard some people say that "knowledge is power" - meaning that when we know something we become an authority on it. People can consult and ask us to help them achieve what they want from us.

But when we don't know anything then we become dependent on those who know it. Why can't we try it ourselves? So, let us inculcate a culture of reading and learning what we don't know.

Today's proverb: "Young people think older persons are fools; older persons know young people to be so."

The author is a lawyer based in Dar es Salaam. He can be reached at tmagobe@gmail.com

Cooking smoke: The silent killer we warmly invite in our kitchens

By Correspondent Emmanuel Onyango

SEVERAL studies have rightly described cooking smoke as a silent killer in developing countries. For, it has been associated with increased occurrence of acute respiratory infection and several chronic illnesses such as chronic bronchitis, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and lung cancer.

Using biomass fuel for cooking has also been linked to coronary heart disease, cataracts, stroke and allergic rhinitis. Studies have also linked kitchen smoke to several respiratory symptoms including dyspnea, severe dyspnea and cough, chest tightness and wheezing.

Sadly, about 50 per cent of the world's households rely on wood, stubble, dung, and grass for cooking fuel. These products are burned in open fires and inefficient stoves in poorly ventilated rooms. Biomass smoke contains many harmful pollutants such as particles and carbon monoxide.

Despite different initiatives in transitioning to clean cooking solutions, there are still barriers in adoption both in urban and rural areas. Low income households that sustain their living on a daily basis are unable to afford initial cost and inflexible quantities of safe cooking solutions.

Other barriers include unavailability of energy, traditions, lack of awareness and prohibitive necessary infrastructure to reach the end-user especially in rural areas. Furthermore, this sub-sector has not been given necessary attention even through cooking is a vital daily activity that cannot be avoided in every household.

Dr Pauline Chale, a physician at the Muhimbili National Hospital (MNH) in Dar es Salaam says that about 10 million patients are affected with diseases related

with lung infections on annual basis countrywide.

According to her, most patients are affected due to regular contact with carbon monoxide due to use of biomass fuel, adding that over 33,000 people die annually from illnesses that are attributable to indoor air pollution with women and children the most affected.

She said that between July and September this year, MNH - the biggest referral hospital in the country - received 480 patients with lung complications yet it has only three medical specialists in the area.

The use of biomass energy has also been linked to deforestation because of wanton felling of trees from which charcoal and firewood are made. This is a perennial problem in many parts of the country with the most affected regions being Coast, Lindi, Morogoro, Tabora and Ruvuma.

Worldwide, around 2.4 billion people still cook using solid fuels such as wood, crop waste, charcoal, coal and animal dung and kerosene in open fires and effective stoves

Switching to clean cooking stoves and fuels has been the cheapest means which transforms lives by improving health, protecting the climate and the environment, empowering women and helping consumers save time and money.

It is estimated that 3.2 million people die prematurely every year from illnesses attributable to the household air pollution caused by incomplete combustion of solid fuels and kerosene used for cooking.

In Tanzania, biomass accounts for close to 90 percent of the primary energy consumption in households whereby 63.5 per cent of the households use firewood as the main source of cooking energy, and 26.2 per cent use charcoal.

The remaining share comprises



of 5.1 per cent liquefied petroleum gas and 3 per cent electricity while the remaining 2.2 per cent use other alternative energy sources.

In early November this year, the Ministry of Energy organized the first clean national cooking energy conference in Dar es Salaam which addressed the barriers and sought to increase the penetration of modern cooking solution.

The conference that served as a platform for a dialogue with all energy stakeholders in the country was graced by President Samia Suluhu Hassan who pledged to facilitate Tanzania's transition to an increased use of clean energy.

The Head of State issued

directed a team of experts to ensure that carbon emission due to dirty cooking methods is minimized by 80 per cent within 10 years.

The team is supervised by Prime Minister's office and coordinated by the Ministry of Energy in collaboration with other ministries such as Community Development and Local Government and is tasked to accelerate progress towards minimizing effects of climate change.

Winding up the deliberations of the conference, Minister for Energy January Makamba announced the establishment of 'Clean Cooking Energy Fund' in the coming 2023/24 financial year, an initiative aimed at

reducing the use of dirty solid biomass.

The move goes alongside the formation of the task force team composed of experts from the government and private sector and development partners that will propose a guideline and the national strategy towards use of clean cooking energy.

The conference also suggested strategies towards achieving affordable, clean and reliable cooking solutions in line with objective of National Energy Policy (NEP) 2015 which is accompanied by two policy statements.

They are "To enhance fuel switching from wood fuel to modern energy, and to facilitate adoption of appropriate

cooking appliances to promote alternatives to wood fuel". Achieving clean cooking in the country is also in line with the World Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) number 7.

Challenges posed on clean cooking solutions have long been a subject of debate among East African Community (EAC) member states, yet a clear solution has not been found primarily due to difficult economic situation amongst majority of citizens.

The World has lost 420 million hectares of land and approximately 10.34 per cent of its total forest area in the last 30 years, according to the 2022 edition of the State of the World's Forests released in May this year.

Security Council reform: Big five are the heart of the problem



By James Paul

THE UN Charter mandates the Security Council to maintain international peace, but wars rage on and nations arm themselves with ever more lethal weapons. No wonder that the Council's critics are so many and calls for its reform so urgent.

On December 11, 1992, with post-Cold War optimism, the UN General Assembly voted to gather comments from member states

An emergency Security Council meeting on Ukraine. Credit: UN Photo/Evan Schneider

on Council reform. Eighty governments made submissions, many sharply critical.

In the thirty years since, there have been endless meetings and initiatives. Year after year, governments, scholars, NGOs, and citizen movements have advanced proposals for Council renovation. In all that time, little progress has been made.

The Council's five Permanent Members (the P-5) are the heart of the problem. Armed with

veto, never-ending Council membership, and many other special privileges, they perpetuate their power, protect their global interests and shield their incessant war making.

They shape international law to suit themselves. The United States, the global giant, has by far the most dominant role in the Council. But it is adverse to following the rules itself and rarely inclined towards peaceful conflict solutions. Many ask: should the foxes guard the

global chicken coop?

Various powers outside the P-5 want to be elevated to the highest rank. Brazil, India, Japan and Germany have long announced that they want to join the Permanent club. They argue that they would bring fresh ideas to better "represent" world regions and promote world peace.

Nigeria, South Africa and Egypt want to belong to the exclusive club too, bringing (they say) an African voice. But

(to use an African metaphor) would these new crocodiles protect the world's little fish? It seems unlikely!

Other reformers insist on more seats (and longer terms) for the Elected Members of the Council, presently ten in number. Smaller members are very vulnerable to pressure, threats and bribes from the P-5. Further, these lesser countries manage to have only the slightest influence on the Council's proceedings.

They are, said the exasperated Singapore ambassador, "like short-term commuters on a long-distance passenger train." So, a simple increase in Elected Members would not be a sure bet.

Limiting the veto or abolishing it entirely would have a very positive result but, needless to say, the P-5 fiercely oppose it. Reformers have also pressed for fairer membership elections and more frequent open public meetings.

Yet (with the exception of cosmetic tweaks) the reform process constantly runs up against P-5 blocking power. Their veto can stop any reform proposal dead in its tracks. But we should not forget that the world is changing and that autocratic power in history never lasts forever!

All reform proposals reflect an idealistic notion that the Council can be changed to restrain the enormous power, appetite and influence of the strongest and richest nations. This idea is rooted in the dream of democratic institutions within nation states, that rich and poor can elect representatives and determine policy in what passes for the general interest.

Difficult as it is at the national level, how could it possibly work in the war-torn world of global politics? Might one day the P-5 Ancien Regime collapse in a great crisis, under desperate pressure from a global citizens' movement? What would it take to set such a process in motion? It may seem impossible, but so was the French revolution. We can be skeptical, but if we want peace we must press for change.

So, watch out, P-5 autocrats! Change is coming!

(IPS UN Bureau)

After 43 years of negotiations, Security Council reforms move at the snail's pace

By Thalif Deen

THE reform of the Security Council, the most powerful body at the United Nations, has remained a never-ending political saga.

According to the President of the General Assembly, Csaba Kőrösi of Hungary, 43 years have passed since the question of Security Council reform first appeared on the UN agenda.

"It has been 17 years since world leaders expressed their support for the so-called 'early reform' of the Council, calling it an essential element of the overall effort to reform the United Nations".

"And it has been 13 years since the General Assembly launched an intergovernmental negotiations (IGN) process", he added.

But a lingering question remains?

Will reforms be ever achieved in the lifespan of the United Nations, which has made significant contributions as a humanitarian relief organization but remains deadlocked as a political body, outliving its usefulness?

After more than four decades, the reform process has been at a virtual standstill - or perhaps moving at the combined pace of a paralytic snail and a limping tortoise.

Pointing out the deadlock, Kőrösi said there are groups of Member States who are very much for the expansion of the permanent and non-permanent membership. There are others who favour expansion only - of non-permanent memberships.

And then, there are countries that favour the preservation of existing veto rights, while oth-

ers would like to abolish all veto rights.

There are also countries supporting the expansion of non-permanent memberships with similar veto rights or reformed veto rights compared with the one today, he pointed out.

"It would be intellectually very easy to suggest a solution but it's not my role. I cannot step out of my role. So, it will be the responsibility of Member States to iron out a compromise"

"As we stand, compromises are not on the horizon," he declared.

Stephen Zunes, Professor of Politics, University of San Francisco, who has written extensively on the politics of the Security Council, told IPS given that the veto-wielding members of the Security Council have a strong stake in maintaining the status quo, it is hard to imagine that these latest efforts at reform will be any more successful than previous attempts.

This can only hurt the credibility of the United Nations, whose enforcement mechanisms will continue to be trapped in a 1945 worldview, he noted.

"It was the Soviets who primarily abused their veto power during the first quarter century of the United Nations. During the next four decades, it was the United States which emerged most frequently as the lone dissenting vote blocking scores of otherwise unanimous Security Council resolutions".

During the past decade, he pointed out, it has been Putin's Russia which has emerged as the greatest obstacle to unity.

In almost every case, the negative consequences of vetoes by Washington and Moscow have



most seriously impacted not each other, but peoples of the Global South.

"It is a travesty that while only 16% of the world's population is white, 80% of the permanent seats in the Security Council are held by majority white countries," said Zunes.

Currently, the 15-member Security Council is composed of five permanent members (P5) - the US, UK, Russia China and France, armed with veto powers, along with 10 non-permanent members, without veto powers, elected for two years, on the basis of geographical rotation.

Meanwhile, the contenders for permanent seats include India, Japan, Germany and Brazil - with or without vetoes.

Africa seeks two seats, and the countries staking their claims include Nigeria, South Africa and Egypt. But the 55-member African Union is now seeking a seat of its own. Last week, Algeria made a case for a permanent seat on behalf of North Africa.

The reform process known as Intergovernmental Negotiations (IGN), that began in 2009, is co-chaired by Permanent Representatives Alya Ahmed Saif Al-Thani of Qatar and Martin Bille Hermann of Denmark.

David M. Malone, Rector of the United Nations University and Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations, told IPS: "I fear Security Council reform involving permanent seats - rather than

working methods, and perhaps some variations on elected seats, with some of these perhaps becoming semi-permanent with or without vetoes - is likely to be blocked for as long as the UN is around, not least precisely because the world has changed so much that each of the P-5, with the possible exception of China, has something to lose, if even modest reform on composition occurs".

Adding more vetoes is likely to make the Council even less effective than it is now, and likely slower, he pointed out.

"The reason I put my comment this way is that each of the P-5 has its own reasons for not wanting further competition in terms of power within the Council", he said.

France may fear the emergence of the idea of an European Union (EU) seat, if the debate gets serious. For the UK, more permanent seats would simply devalue its own, which is a rare jewel (at least in terms of self-image) in the crown after BREXIT.

The US already finds it very hard to get its own way, said Malone, a former Permanent Representative of Canada to the United Nations.

Nobody wants more Russias, particularly at the moment. And China, while formally supporting more permanent seats for countries of the Global South has, noticeably, done nothing concrete to help make this happen.

"The circumstances generating a new multilateral dispensation

representing the global community in the sphere of security are likely to arise only after a global catastrophe, just like the UN's creation was an outcome of World War II".

And who really wants another World War II type disruption of the current global order, even recognizing the gross equity deficit in the Security Council's current disposition? he asked.

"As I've observed (and, for my country, at times, on and off played a role relative to) the Council for slightly more than thirty years, I've come to think of the Security Council reform issue (as it pertains to composition, rather than to, say, working methods) as a parlour game greatly enjoyed by delegates and observers of the UN."

They so enjoy it because they know the score is bound to be a nil-one in the final reel.

So, the debate is gratis and gratuitous, however good the intentions of a number of delegations may be, said Malone author of *The UN Security Council in the 21st Century* (as co-editor; 2015, Lynne Rienner Publishers) and the second edition of *Law and Practice of the United Nations* (co-authored with graduate textbook; 2016; Oxford University Press).

Martin S. Edwards, Professor and Chair, School of Diplomacy and International Relations at Seton Hall University in South Orange, New Jersey, told IPS since President Biden opened the door

on this, it makes every bit of sense to rise to the moment.

"But it also means that the window here is narrow, as he will soon have to focus on reelection. And we know that the UN is not going to be a focus in a Republican administration. So, the time for serious dealing is now."

Recognizing US domestic constraints is important for a second reason as well. What many do not understand is that for the P5, these proposals require ratification, he said.

For the US, that's a 2/3 vote in a polarized Senate. It is difficult for me to imagine circumstances that would cause Republican Senators to give President Biden a win. And delay on the part of countries will again cause that window to close, Edwards noted.

Many countries are seeking the perfect at the expense of the good. For example, if the issue is representation, then is pursuing a veto really needed?

"Countries have spent several years trying to delegitimize the veto, so it makes little sense to ask for it. Rhetorically, no one wants to propose anything less, and this also makes it difficult to find a deal: you either have a veto or you don't".

Some of these proposals are clearly self-serving, said Edwards.

By itself that's not a bad thing, but since the goal of the African countries was to develop a common negotiating position - the Ezulwini Consensus - it would be a shame for African countries to try to break it.

"To me, there are two questions about that consensus, which is two permanent seats and two elected seats for Africa. Can Africa live with less? And then what does the rest of the SC look like?"

The P5 countries were accorded veto power because of their status as both great powers and the victors in World War II. They continue to exercise that power even though they do not represent the changing global demographic composition or realities of current geopolitical power.

Moreover, whereas the Council was bestowed with the powers to maintain peace and international security with enforceable mechanisms, it has generally failed to reach consensus on enforcing some of its own resolutions, declared Edwards.

(IPS UN Bureau Report)

UN says \$1.7B needed to support vulnerable in South Sudan in 2023

JUBA

THE humanitarian community in South Sudan on Tuesday launched its 2023 humanitarian response plan, seeking \$1.7 billion in funding to provide life-saving assistance to the most vulnerable in the country next year.

"The plan seeks US\$1.7 billion to provide life-saving assistance and livelihood support to 6.8 million of the most vulnerable people affected by conflict, climatic shocks and protracted displacement across the country," said a statement by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

Sara Beysolow Nyanti, the UN humanitarian coordinator for South Sudan, said: "Our immediate priorities in 2023 include sustaining our response to people with urgent humanitarian and protection needs, especially women, children, the elderly, and people with disabilities."

"Humanitarian partners need unimpeded and safe access to deliver timely and essential life-saving assistance. We also need urgent funding to prevent further deterioration of the humanitarian situation," she added.



CCI connects households in Dar with rainwater harvesting systems

By Getrude Mbago

THE Centre for Community Initiatives (CCI) has supported twelve households in Mjimpya Street, Mnyamani ward in Ilala district with rain water harvesting systems and tools, in efforts aimed to improve access to water and reduce climate change vulnerability.

Implemented in collaboration with the Kenya based-Kounkuey Design Initiatives (KDI) with support from SwediBio based at the Stockholm Resilience Centre in Sweden, the initiative involves installing three water tanks with a total volume of 750 litres in each beneficiary household.

Speaking recently when a team from CCI visited some of the beneficiaries of the project, the organisation's water and sanitation Engineer Samwel John said the core zeal is to ensure that residents living in informal settlements continue to access basic services through various innovative approaches.

"We came up with the project focusing on marginalised families living in informal settlements, to start with we have already supported 12 households that are now benefiting from the project by smoothly accessing water services right their homes due to the systems which we have installed," he said.

According to him, the systems allow the households to collect and store water in the tanks when the rain falls and then use them for days ahead according to their demand.

Maria Salum, one of the beneficiaries said: "I see this as a miracle to me, because due to my age it was hard to walk far to search for water but now I can access them here at my home, I really appreciate this."

Maria (70), who lives with three grandchildren, said water shortage at the area was too high in the recent months where prior to the project, she was purchasing water from vendors, something which was costly.

"But now whenever the rain falls, I am sure of getting enough water that will help me for weeks, rain water helps us to get drinking water but we also use them in other house uses," she said.

She hailed CCI for bringing the project to the area as it hasn't only helped strengthen access to water but also reduce flooding as the amount of rain water which was falling down and causing flooding is currently harvested and stored for home uses.

Alex Martin, one of the project



beneficiaries in Mjimpya said the project will greatly help reduce flooding in the area which is most challenging during the rainy season.

"This is a flood-prone area and we have to live with fear especially during the rainy season, but with this new project and if more houses will be connected to it, we will greatly reduce the problem as well as strengthen water access," he explained.

Martin said the rain water will not only benefit his family of six people but also four other families who have rented at his house.

He hailed CCI for bringing the project and called on the government and other stakeholders to expand it to reach more people, especially those living in flood-prone areas.

Dr Tim Ndezi, CCI executive director, said apart from helping reduce flooding, the project will also strengthen availability of water for people to use and consume during

the dry season.

"This activity aims to be a sustainable alternative source for clean water during a drought and help implement adaptation measures to reduce flooding in the informal settlements," he said.

He said rain water harvesting should be promoted to enhance water supply and also reduce climate change vulnerability as more water will be collected from the roof.

Dr Ndezi underscored the need for the country to put strong strategies and invest heavily in rain water harvesting which is part of the Nature Based Solutions (NBS) so as to reduce climate change vulnerability.

Early this year, the government said that it was working to come up with a national work plan to strengthen rain water harvesting so as to improve water access and stimulate economic growth in the country.

Deputy Minister for Water Maryprisca Mahundi made the

statement in the Parliament in February, this year when responding to a question by Mohamed Maulid Ali (Kiembe Samaki).

Mahundi acknowledged that investing in proper harvesting can increase water availability and save roads and bridges infrastructures from being destroyed by floods.

She noted that Tanzania has been experiencing heavy rainfalls almost every year where and sometimes causes destruction in properties, crops and infrastructures such as roads and bridges, but if the rain water harvests and tamed into dams and wells, will save infrastructures and improve access to water.

The deputy minister said that among others, the plan will focus on promoting and encouraging institutions, schools and the community at large to adopt and install rainwater harvesting technologies so as to ensure supply of enough water throughout the year.

'Plastic pellet pollution can end through coordinated all efforts'

By Special Correspondent

THE building blocks of almost all plastic items on the planet are little lentil-sized petrochemical-derived pellets, called nurdles that are melted together and shaped to create larger plastic products.

These nurdles are the raw material for making water bottles, automobile parts, food containers and countless other products we use in daily life.

These pellets pose a huge pollution problem long before they are turned into the products we know and use – littering beaches, absorbing and accumulating bacteria from seawater, smothering sea-grass meadows and being mistaken as food by marine animals.

Yet this pollution is entirely preventable, according to a recent report by the international conservation organization Fauna & Flora International (FFI).

According to Tanya Cox, FFI marine plastics senior technical specialist, the group worked collaboratively with a broad range of academics, trade associations, corporations, NGOs and policymakers to identify different sources of microplastic pollution.

They aimed to identify potential improvements in policies and practices through mandatory measures that can help eliminate the pollution sources by preventing pellet loss at all stages of the supply chain.

Plastic pellets are a significant

source of microplastic pollution around the globe, accumulating on beaches and coastlines, breaking down into tiny bits from weathering and destabilizing ecosystems. Yet nurdles are not paid enough attention in discussions of plastic pollution, the report stated.

Coastal countries are particularly vulnerable to cargo vessel nurdle spills, Cox said, because global shipping routes pass close to coastlines. In 2021, the cargo ship MV X-Press Pearl caught fire off the coast of Sri Lanka carrying more than 1,600 metric tons of plastic pellets.

The pellets that were spilled, in what is now considered the largest spill on record, contaminated not only the waters around Sri Lanka, but also far-away shores where ocean currents carried these billions of pellets.

"If there's another incident like the X-Press Pearl, any neighbouring state is vulnerable to the impact that pellet pollution has once it is in the environment," Cox said.

According to the report, plastic pellets contain toxic additives; they absorb and accumulate bacteria and environmental pollutants from the water in which they float. These contaminants impact biodiversity, marine life and human health.

Frequently, the small pellets are mistaken for food by marine animals. Once ingested, the contaminants act as a "poison pill" for sea life. It is suspected that pellets are harming species across the taxonomic spectrum, the report stated.

They are eaten by a wide variety of marine life, from zooplanktons – which are at the base of the marine food web – to migratory birds, sea turtles and mammals such as seals. Microplastics are now ubiquitous: They're in the food we eat, the water we drink and even the air we breathe. The full potential impact of plastic pollutants on human bodies, however, is still currently being studied.

"This is a preventable source of pollution that is beyond the immediate control of the consumers," Cox said. "It's not something that the public can necessarily eliminate by changing their behaviour in the same way that plastic bag pollution can be tackled."

In general, individuals can address the overall plastic pollution problem by reducing plastic bag use or shifting to more environmentally friendly alternatives. But individuals can do little to reduce plastic pellet pollution since nurdles are leaked into the environment at various stages along the industrial supply chain – before plastic products are made and before consumers buy them.

To end plastic pellet pollution, the FFI report called for a "robust, coordinated regulatory approach from industry, governments, and the International Maritime Organization (IMO)." Pellet pollution is a global challenge and all countries must commit to mandatory measures that prevent pellet loss and spills on land and at sea, Cox said.

"In order to fully tackle this problem, there has to be complementary, coordinated legal measures that require companies to do everything they can to prevent plastic pellet loss," she said.

Plastic pellet pollution results from both chronic and acute loss, according to the FFI report. Chronic losses are small in scale – such as pellets leaking from poorly sealed sacks that are easily ripped or punctured during manual and mechanical handling – while acute losses involve a larger number of pellets entering the environment in one go.

"They were being spilled in large quantities at different points in the supply chain. Because of general lack of awareness and understanding of the risk of impact, there's not enough attention on proper handling," Cox said.

Whether small-scale or large-scale, these leaks and spills all contribute to pellet pollution occurring on both land and at sea.

According to the report, land-based plastic pellet pollution generally occurs during the production, transport and conversion supply chain stages, wherever and whenever there is careless handling, poor training and limited awareness of impact.

Sea-based plastic pellet pollution can happen during maritime transport, when damaged or improperly sealed containers and unsecured containers fall overboard, the report stated. It can also happen dur-

ing maritime disasters as with the MV X-Press Pearl.

Once in the environment, plastic pellets are costly, time-consuming and difficult to retrieve and clean up. Thus, they'll likely remain in the environment doing harm for at least hundreds of years.

Preventive measures, said Cox, are the same regardless of the volume of pellets being handled. The bottom line is to institute safety measures all along the supply chain to ensure fewer pellets reach the environment.

Despite growing evidence documenting the sheer scale of global plastic pellet pollution, attempts to prevent losses and minimize impacts have been limited, as efforts are voluntary and mainly focus on land-based sources, Cox said.

The FFI report outlined pellet loss prevention recommendations that should be applied by industries, governments and the IMO to address the issue across land and sea and at every stage of the supply chain.

The first recommendation: Put regulations in place to tackle pellet pollution on land. FFI urged that all companies handling plastic pellets, regardless of company size or location, be legally required to provide independent, third-party verification that pellet loss prevention measures are implemented and maintained. Moreover, the prevention measures must be monitored for effectiveness at every stage of the supply chain. Standards and

certification schemes should meet minimum requirements established in legislation.

The second recommendation addressed a need for improved packaging and labeling of pellets for transport. Legislation should stipulate the use of improved packaging that is resistant to impact, tear and degradation. Moreover, improved communication throughout the supply chain to reduce risk of chronic and acute pellet loss should be done by displaying clear warning labels indicating that the contents are dangerous goods and harmful to aquatic environments.

The third recommendation would put regulations in place to curb sea-based sources of pellet pollution. The report enumerated three key measures that the IMO should take to ensure pellet loss at sea is minimized: Legally classify pellets as marine pollutants, develop standardized disaster response protocols to aid containment and clean-up of future shipping disasters and establish clear protocols or guidance related to liability and compensation claims in the event of accidental loss.

Additionally, the U.N. Environment Assembly has adopted a landmark resolution to develop the world's first Global Plastics Treaty that would aim to end plastic pollution through a legally binding international instrument that addresses the full life cycle of plastic, including its production, design and disposal.

Humanitarian crisis looms in South Africa's defaulting municipalities



By Estelle Ellis

ON Thursday morning, Graaff-Reinet resident Sias Smith looked at the prepaid meter in his house. "It was full of money. My money was in there. I owe Eskom nothing. But there was no electricity."

This was supposed to be joyful Christmas. Instead, residents were hit by another six hours without electricity – on top of rolling blackouts.

For the first festive season since 2019, there were no Covid-related restrictions. People in the Karoo were getting ready to make some money as visitors returned, en route to the province's beach towns. And families unable to travel for a while were finally home for Christmas.

Now the milk was turning, dessert ingredients were melting, people worried about their meat, drinks were no longer cold, the taps were dry, and there was anger in the streets of Graaff-Reinet. Farmers, businesspeople and residents gathered at the municipal offices.

"If there was anybody in there, they refused to come out," Smith said. "Neither the mayor nor the municipal manager was answering their phones."

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Angry residents briefly closed the N9 highway. "But you know what I told them – these are just ordinary people. They want to get home to their families for Christmas. They still have a long way to go. Let's find a different way," said Smith.

So they retreated to the dusty streets of the Karoo town, where their tempers simmered in the heat on Thursday afternoon, as they waited for the water truck to arrive and the electricity to resume.

"Our homes are full because our people are here for the holidays. The food is going off because we haven't had electricity for 14 hours and no water. The municipality has sent a water truck, but many people need help, and there is not enough water for everybody," said Smith.

While Dr Beyers Naudé Local Municipality, which has its seat in Graaff-Reinet, owes R285-million in outstanding fees to Eskom, the municipality has a written undertaking from Eskom that as the dispute had been referred for arbitration, the municipality would not be included in the load reduction schedule.

Large parts of the Karoo are in crisis after Eskom began load reduction on top of loadshedding. (Photo: Donna van der Watt)

'No communication from Eskom'

Mayor Willem Safers said they had received no communication from Eskom. The dispute about the outstanding fees payable to Eskom and a wheeling agreement (for using municipal infrastructure to distribute electricity) was in arbitration, he said.

Samantha Graham-Mare is the Democratic Alliance's Public Works spokesperson and a Graaff-Reinet resident. She said water provision would be compromised in all eight towns in the Dr Beyers Naudé Municipality, including some of SA's most vulnerable and poor communities like Klipplaat and Rietbrons. Under the current load shedding schedule alone, some areas in the municipality had no water for weeks as reservoirs ran dry.

Defaulting municipalities countrywide were hit by a load reduction plan suddenly implemented by Eskom. The Eastern Cape, with its many defaulting municipalities owing more than R3-billion to the power utility, was particularly hard hit.

The Walter Sisulu Local Municipality, based in Burgersdorp, has been in and out of court for years over its unpaid Eskom account of R444-million. It too was hit by load reduction and 12-hour outages, but said this was not because it owed Eskom money, but because the demand for electricity was too high in "the entire country".

Escalating crisis

As many of the towns in this municipality work on a single pump to provide

water, the water crisis escalated with the power crisis.

There is also a chance that these outages will affect the Nootgedacht water scheme (which brings water to the province and specifically to Nelson Mandela Bay), after a big plant in Steynsburg was also hit by load reduction.

Cradock had been hit by an unrelated water crisis, made worse by load shedding, but Eskom respected a court order obtained by the town's business forum a few years ago that prevented the power utility from implementing load reduction. But even with normal load shedding, the chairperson of the Cradock Business Forum, Wilhelm Smit, said he was paying a monthly bill of R32,000 to keep a generator going that allows him to run his fuel station.

According to information shared with the Eastern Cape legislature, municipalities in the Eastern Cape owe Eskom R3-billion. The Enoch Mgijima Local Municipality (Komani) is the biggest defaulter with a debt of R743-million, the Walter Sisulu Local Municipality (Alwal North, Burgersdorp) owes R444-million, the King Sabata Dalindyebo Municipality (Mthatha) owes R132-million, the Raymond Mhlaba Municipality (Fort Beaufort) owes R265-million, the Inxuba Yethemba Local Municipality (Cradock) owes R325-million and the Dr Beyers Naudé Local Municipality owes R285-million.

On Thursday afternoon, the Raymond Mhlaba Municipality informed resi-

dents in Fort Beaufort that they would be subject to load reduction in addition to normal load shedding.

Ken Clark, the CEO of Twizza and an independent councillor in the Enoch Mgijima municipality, said they had received no advance notice of load reduction.

"This will explode into something that is hard to understand. The lack of action from the President must be addressed. It must start there."

Municipal account

Clark had been involved for the past five years in attempts to force the Enoch Mgijima Municipality to pay its account.

"Now it has come to this," he said. "We have to deal with this as a matter of great urgency. There will be court action because we as consumers owe Eskom nothing. We are paying our electrical bills. The accountability is within the ANC itself."

He said there were fears for the water situation in Komani as continual power outages would affect the water purification plant. "I guess that will be our next big issue."

"We were not told about load reduction at all, but it is clear that Eskom has a big crisis and they have no idea how to manage it."

By Thursday night, despite promises to do so, Eskom had not issued a statement on the crisis.

DM/MC

Hazim Mustafa: 'I just went and I bought buffaloes from the farm'

By Victoria O'Regan

HAZIM Mustafa is a Sudanese millionaire, living in Dubai, who was identified by News24 in September as possibly being "Mustafa Mohamed Ibrahim Hazim" who allegedly paid \$580,000 for 20 buffalo owned by President Cyril Ramaphosa, Daily Maverick's Rebecca Davis reported.

Earlier this month, Mustafa told Sky News that he paid \$580,000 in cash for 20 buffalo from Ramaphosa's Phala Phala farm in December 2019 – but had no idea that the animals, or the farm itself, were owned by the President.

eNCA's Annika Larsen visited Mustafa and his South African wife, Bianca O'Donoghue, at their home in Dubai, to get Mustafa's version of events, leading up to his purchase of the buffalo, which he still hasn't received.

'Normal business transaction'

Speaking to Larsen about the Phala Phala purchase – and dressed in head-to-toe Gucci – Mustafa said he was surprised to be dragged into the media spotlight of an international scandal, for what he considered to be "a normal business transaction".

"It's nothing to do with His Excellency the President – I just went there and I bought cattle and buffaloes from the farm," said Mustafa.

Mustafa is a Sudanese business-

man who has lived in Dubai since 2011. He claims to have made his fortune from agricultural imports and exports.

"I started my business from scratch... My main business line is agricultural imports and exports, to supply fertilisers, and export [crops]."

Mustafa said he hadn't done much business in South Africa before his infamous buffalo purchase – "only one transaction about six years ago of flower seeds".

\$600,000 in cash

However, on 23 December 2019, Mustafa arrived at OR Tambo International Airport in Johannesburg with \$600,000 in cash, which he claims he declared. According to him, he was in South Africa for his wife's birthday.

"I know the regulations all over the world: If you declare it, you have no problem – as long as you are not smuggling," said Mustafa, saying his plan was to buy a house for his wife in Cape Town.

Mustafa said he had also planned to buy game in South Africa and, after receiving an urgent call that he had to return to Dubai for a meeting, he decided to use his cash to purchase game and planned to return to South Africa at a later stage to go house-hunting. The buffalo, Mustafa said, were a business purchase, as they are very profitable.

When asked by Larsen why he didn't take the cash back with



From left: Hazim Mustafa. (Photo: Supplied) | South African President Cyril Ramaphosa. (Photo: Gallo Images / Jeffrey Abrahams)



him to Dubai, he responded: "It's a headache to take it back and bring it back again. And it's already there, so..."

Sun City

The couple were staying at Sun City in North West, and it was at the hotel that Mustafa said he first heard about Phala Phala.

"I was sitting at the hotel – Sun City – and I met one guy who was also in breeding, and he told me that the best quality you can find was in Phala Phala, which [was] not so far from [there]. He didn't know that I had money,"

said Mustafa, who added that he couldn't recall the man's name.

According to Mustafa, the mysterious breeder told him he would be able to purchase a larger quantity of buffalo than normal at Phala Phala as the farm was "facing some financial issues". Mustafa drove out to Phala Phala on Christmas Day, where he says he met the acting farm manager, Sylvester Ndlovu, who showed him the buffalo in the farm's Camp 6.

"Then we agreed on the price. I gave [Ndlovu] the money," said Mustafa, adding that Ndlovu in-

formed him it would take some time to arrange the documentation to get the animals through customs.

According to Mustafa – and also indicated on the receipt shown in the eNCA interview – he paid \$580,000 for 20 buffalo from Phala Phala.

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He says he didn't know the farm and the buffalo belonged to Ramaphosa until the theft of the money was reported in the media in June this year.

"When I saw the news in June 2022 that there was money under a mattress, it never came into my mind that that's my money. I thought: What the hell? The President's farm should be the most secure area."

Mustafa claims he didn't link the two, "until maybe two months after", when Ramaphosa declared the money was the proceeds of Mustafa's game purchase.

Mustafa said he never went back to South Africa to undergo questioning by law enforcement officials, but was questioned by the police via phone and email. When required to submit documents to the police, he emailed copies of the documents.

Public Protector's office

He said he was contacted by the Public Protector's office for the first time "a few days ago. The last call I had was three days ago from the Public Protector's office."

He claims to have had no contact with Ramaphosa or his office and has still not received the buffalo for which he paid \$580,000.

"When are you ever going to get the buffalo you paid for?" Larsen asked him.

"For sure, now – after the investigation finishes – either I will go or I'll send my legal team to negotiate with them. If [the buffalo] are not there – the quality and quantity which I asked and which I chose, then they should refund... me," responded Mustafa.

DM

Coffee industry renews push for minimum returns fund

NAIROBI

THE Kenya Coffee Planters Association (KCPA) has asked the government to implement the guaranteed minimum returns promise in the wake of poor prices that has seen the value of the commodity remain low for the past two months.

Peter Gikonyo, KCPA chairman, said the fund will be instrumental to cushioning farmers at a time the value of their crop is diminishing and is projected to remain low in the coming months due to a surge in production globally.

Coffee prices have remained low for the past two months, with a 50-kilo bag selling at less than \$200 for the last two months from a high of \$300 in May.

President William Ruto in the run-up to the August election had promised farmers guaranteed returns from their produce as a measure of safeguarding the growers in times of loss.

"We want the government to implement the guaranteed minimum return as promised in the manifesto in order to improve the livelihood of farmers who are facing one of the lowest prices amid a rising cost in production," said Mr Gikonyo.

The price of the produce on the global market is expected to be subdued in the current crop season following a rebound in production in Brazil, the world's top producer

of Arabica.

Kenya enjoyed good earnings from the beverage in the last crop year as a sharp decline in production saw the price of the commodity remain high during that period.

Coffee earnings in the last crop year grew to \$210.7 million from \$129.8 million a year earlier, garnering a 62.30 per cent rise.

The coffee crop year starts every October. Traders say favourable weather in Brazil has prompted tree flowering and is set to continue over the next months, leading to a bumper crop.

Daniel Mbithi, the chief executive at Nairobi Coffee Exchange, says projections indicate there will be a good crop on the global market and could impact local prices.

The international prices of the produce have in the past two months been subdued by an increase in volumes.

Last week the price of coffee at the auction rebounded in the latest sale on the back of quality beans that are now streaming in the market.

The market report from the Nairobi Coffee Exchange (NCE) indicates a 50-kilogramme bag of the beverage traded at \$188 (Sh23,095) up from \$180 (Sh22,113) in the previous sale.

The latest prices came as a boost to farmers who in the last two months have been witnessing depressed prices from the sale of their produce.



America rate hikes push NSE to the biggest fall in history

NAIROBI

THE value of shares at the Nairobi Securities Exchange (NSE) is on course to dip by the largest margin in history this year following rate hikes in the developed world and the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

The market capitalisation stood at Sh1.99 trillion at the close of trading on Thursday, down from Sh2.59 trillion on the first day of trading this year, translating to a loss of Sh597 billion.

The loss of Sh597 billion is the worst annual slide the market has recorded since its inception in 1954 and topples the Sh203 billion that was wiped out in 2020 due to Covid-19 economic hardships.

The market is being weighed down by a reduced appetite for emerging markets after a jump in interest rates in developed countries such as the US.

The developed markets are currently battling high inflation that has forced their central banks to adjust rates upwards, attracting foreign investors who have been fleeing emerging markets like the NSE.

The effects of the rate hikes emerged in April when the market witnessed the first round of foreign investors' exit, triggered by the Russian invasion of Ukraine in February.

A major risk event such as the Russia-Ukraine war usually sees investors rushing back to bonds and the safest assets, hurting the flow of foreign investors to the NSE given that the foreigners traditionally account for over half of trading at the Nairobi bourse.

Big counters such as Safaricom, Equity Group and KCB—which are favoured by foreign investors—have so far shed more than Sh612 billion.

This means smaller and mid-sized stocks like Unga Limited, NCBA Group, Kapchorua and Car and General have helped cushion the bourse from further losses.

"Foreign investors are being attracted to higher returns offered in advanced markets as compared to the returns in the local bourse. This in turn has led to them dumping stocks for higher-yielding securities," said Erick Musau the executive director of research at the Standard Investment Bank (SIB).

The Fed has raised short-term borrowing costs faster this year than any time since the 1980s to take the heat out of the economy and ease price pressures.

The United States Fed Fund rate - the rate at which financial institutions lend money to each other on a short-term basis - is ranging at between 4.25 and 4.5 per cent, up from 0.08 per cent at the start of the year.

The benchmark US 10-year bond rate - a closely watched gauge of market inflation expectations over the next decade - has climbed to 3.68 per cent, up from 1.63 per cent at the start of the year.

This has sent stocks tumbling across the globe as investors pulled out of equities on the expectations that inflation would surge.

Smaller markets like the NSE



Nairobi Securities Exchange (NSE) CEO Geoffrey Odundo.

have taken deeper hits because investors, particularly foreigners, get attracted to the western bonds and equities that are viewed as safe havens in times of global uncertainty.

Foreign investors, who in recent years have accounted for more than half of traded turnover at the NSE, have been on a selling run this year, putting the large stocks on the back foot.

Major exits have been witnessed on counters with a high foreign investor preference such as Safaricom, Equity Group and KCB Group, triggering steep price falls.

Safaricom is valued at Sh989.6 billion after its share price dipped to Sh24.7 from a high of Sh37.95 at the start of the year, translating to a paper loss of Sh530.8 billion over the period.

The telecom operator accounts for 49.5 per cent of the entire Nairobi bourse.

Equity bank, the country's biggest lender by market capitalization, has seen its paper value fall by 14 per cent or Sh28.3 billion and KCB has shed 16.2 per cent (Sh24.2 billion).

"In the local market, companies have posted robust performance mainly in the banking sector, the good performance, therefore, means that what is hurting the NSE is largely external and investors in strong companies should not worry much," said Mr Musau.

"Company valuations are looking good at the moment and the growth momentum for giants like Safaricom are impressive with players announc-

ing interim dividends."

Wealth at the bourse is concentrated in the four largest firms—Safaricom, Equity Group, KCB and EABL—which account for 71 per cent of the total market capitalisation.

This means that any downturn in their share prices pulls down the NSE's indicators significantly even when other smaller stocks may be performing well.

In June aggressive interest rate rises by major central banks in the developed world are causing pain to Kenya's businesses, households and investors through costly loans, losses at the Nairobi bourse and weakened shilling.

The market outlook turned gloomier this week after the Bank of England and the Swiss National Bank followed the US Federal Reserve in pushing up interest rates to tackle soaring inflation.

In the UK, the Bank of England raised rates for the fifth consecutive time while the Fed delivered its first 0.75 percentage point rate rise since 1994, with the aftermath echoing thousands of miles in emerging economies such as Kenya.

Experts say the rate hikes in the developed world are encouraging capital flight from developing economies, raising the rates on sovereign debt and destabilizing their currencies.

These effects have started to reflect in the Kenyan economy. Investors, particularly foreigners, are shifting their money from the Nairobi Securities Exchange (NSE) to western cap-

itals as they find investments in their rates more attractive, pushing the bourse to multi-year lows.

Treasury cancelled the sale of Sh115 billion Eurobond on surging yields on international markets in what will push the State to borrow more from the domestic market, ultimately putting pressure on bank lending rates.

Another danger to emerging economies like Kenya in a rising interest rate environment is currency depreciation, which is already causing pain to importers and transmitting inflation through costly imported goods like fuel, cars and industrial raw materials.

"Investors are finding markets such as Kenya least attractive after adjusting for risks and returns due to the Western rate hikes," said Eric Musau, executive director for research at Standard Investment Bank.

"The rate hikes are the main reason behind the slump witnessed in recent weeks at the market."

The stock market has suffered one of its worst weeks since the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic, as investors take fright over aggressive interest rate rises by major central banks and the threat of a prolonged economic slump.

The value of all stocks stood at Sh1.965 trillion compared to Sh2.636 trillion at the start of the year, wiping out Sh757 billion of investor wealth since January. Kenya last saw this level of valuation five years ago.

Group seeks inclusion of oil-rich communities in new energy plan

LAGOS

A group, Spaces for Change (S4C), has called for the inclusion of oil-rich communities in the nation's Energy Transition Plan (ETP).

Nigeria's ETP was developed to realize the adoption of natural gas as a transition fuel to aid the process of phasing out carbon-polluting fuels like crude oil by 2060.

S4C said findings from its research report show that the ETP

neither made arrangements for cleanup, remediation, compensation, and rehabilitation of oil-rich communities nor for addressing the massive environmental damage that has accompanied the country's protracted dependence on fossil fuels.

The report titled, "Energy Transition in Nigeria's Oil-Rich Communities", was unveiled by S4C in collaboration with Youths and Environmental Advocacy Centre (YEAC) and Extractives 360 (E360), with support from Africa

Center for Energy Policy (ACEP) in Lagos.

The report also shows that energy transition proposals by corporations made veiled references to communities.

Presenting the findings of the report, Mrs. Victoria Ibezim-Ohaeri, Founder, S4C, said that there is the need for ETP to address environmental injustice and create livelihood for Oil-rich communities.

She stated: "National transition plans and policies neither made arrangements for cleanup, reme-

diation, compensation, and rehabilitation of oil-rich communities nor for addressing the massive environmental damage that has accompanied the country's protracted dependence on fossil fuels.

"This burgeoning venture is envisaged to become moribund in the new green economy, but ETP did not make provision for the development of alternative livelihoods for local populations involved in this trade which is potentially a recipe for renewed violence".



Producer inflation reaches highest points since 2019

NAIROBI

A sharp increase in producer inflation, which measures the price movement of manufactured goods before they are dispatched to retailers, has hit a three-year high as players grapple with supply disruptions and the effects of a global economic slowdown.

Data from the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS) indicates that the cost of manufacturing as measured by the Producer Price Index (PPI) hit 16.53 per cent in June before easing to 15.78 per cent in September but remained the highest since 2019 September when the inflation rate stood at 1.40 per cent.

The high cost of PPI was passed to consumers by the manufacturers as they sought to recoup the additional cost incurred in production.

This resulted in prices of consumer goods such as edible cooking oil, wheat and maize flour rising to historic levels.

"The third quarter year-on-year producer inflation was 15.78 per cent in September 2022 compared to 7.72 per cent in September 2021," said KNBS in a report.

PPI, which is a key economic number in developed economies captures price movement ahead of retail and is an early indicator of inflation.

In the period to September, the mining and quarrying sector recorded the highest price



Youth Affairs, Sports and Arts Cabinet Secretary Ababu Namwamba with Kenya Association of Manufacturers (KAM) chairman Rajan Shah and Head of German Development Corporation at the German Embassy Daniel Guenther.

increase at four per cent followed by manufacturing and water supply at 17.7 and 2.1 per cent respectively.

However, there was a relief in electricity as the cost dropped by 6.9 per cent, according to KNBS.

The sharp increase in production cost in the second quarter of 2022 was attributed to the Russian-Ukraine war, which hit the prices of raw materials and led to a sharp jump in freight charges.

Seaports along the Black Sea, a major trade corridor, were opened in August after the Unit-

ed Nations and Russia reached a deal, leading to an easing of freight charges and the cost of raw materials, especially grains such as wheat.

After the opening of the corridor, the price of wheat declined to a low of \$365 a tonne from a high of \$540 in April when the war was at its peak.

Russia invaded Ukraine towards the end of February with the effects of the war felt in the second quarter.

The Kenya Association of Manufacturers (KAM) says the mini-

mum wage introduced in May and high logistics costs have also had an impact on the cost of production locally.

"The freight charges at both international and local markets have remained high and the effects of the minimum wages are now being felt in the second half of the year. These, among other factors, have had an impact on the rising cost of production," said Rajan Shah, chairman of KAM.

The government set the minimum wage for this year at be-

tween Sh8,109.90- Sh34,302.75 per month, up from Sh7,240.96 to Sh30,627.45.

Mr Shah said the increased cost of freight charges locally has been occasioned by the high cost of fuel, especially diesel, which is heavily used in the transport sector and has remained high for the better part of the year.

Though the price of fuel has declined marginally in the last two months, they have remained high at Sh136 a litre (diesel) on average when compared with a year ago when it was at Sh107.

South African online retail passes R50-billion in 2022

CAPE TOWN

ONLINE retail in South Africa passed the R50-billion milestone in 2022, driven by an ongoing boom in demand for home deliveries, according to new research by the World Wide Worx.

"Online Retail in South Africa 2022", a study conducted by World Wide Worx with Mastercard, reveals that the total growth for online retail in South Africa in 2022 came to 35%, bringing the total of online retail in South Africa to R55-billion. This comes after 40% growth the previous year took the total to R42.3-billion in 2021.

"One can call this the pandemic dividend," says World Wide Worx MD Arthur Goldstuck, principal analyst on the research project. "The 2020 boom in home deliveries has continued for the past two years, as retailers compete aggressively in every area of online shopping."

Online sales were boosted by Black Friday, with all banks reporting massive increases in card and online spending on what has become one of the biggest shopping days of the year. For the year, stellar performers included Checkers Sixty60, which grew turnover by 150% from July 2021 to July 2022, Mr Price, which reported online retail sales up 48.2% for the year to April 2022, and Pick 'n Pay, which reported in its annual results for the year to the end of February 2022 that online sales had seen annual compound growth of 72.5% over the previous two years.

The relentless rise of ecommerce is occurring at the same time as total retail stagnates.

Stats SA, in its Statistical Release for Retail Trade Sales for January 2022, reported that total retail for 2021 had reached R1,166-trillion, up from R1,063-trillion in 2020 - making for healthy 9.7% growth, but after a 4.4% fall in 2020.

For 2022, the data is less promising, with the most recent quarterly report, for the three months to the end of September 2022, showing retail trade sales had declined by 0.6% in the year to September. The last quarter saw a 1.9% fall for the three months to the end of September, representing a second quarter of retail decline.

One of the biggest drops came in the category of food, beverages and tobacco, with a 8.1% fall in sales. Online retail sales, however, benefit from a fundamental shift in shopping behaviour.

Gabriel Swanepoel, country manager of Mastercard South Africa, says: "Since physical shopping was limited during the hard lockdown, it was during this time that we first saw a rise in consumers resorting to online shopping. Due to this, consumers got comfortable - but with comfort of use we are seeing emerging consumer needs and expectations that go beyond being able to shop online."

The result is that growth in online retail comes not from increasing demand, but from consumers shifting existing purchase behaviour from physical shops to online stores and apps.

"Based on our observation, consumers are expecting online retailers to offer fast delivery with apps such as Uber Eats and Superbalist, that offer same day delivery," says Swanepoel. "Additionally, there seems to be an expectation from the highest levels of security before shopping at a particular online retailer."

"Lastly, we are seeing consumers wanting an omnichannel shopping experience, that allows customers to pick up where they left off on one channel and continue the experience on another."

Consequently, consumer attitudes seem to have changed, and we anticipate that with those changes we will see the evolution of online shopping and some interesting innovations from the retailers, thus responding to these changes."

The World Wide Worx findings are compiled from accumulated figures and projections from listed companies, interviews with unlisted online retailers, and data on card transactions.

Naira redesign: We ordered 500m new notes, says CBN

LAGOS

AGAINST the backdrop of complaints by the banking public that banks are not dispensing enough of the redesigned Naira notes the Governor of Central Bank of Nigeria, CBN, Mr Godwin Emefiele, has said that a total of 500 million units of the newly redesigned currency notes were ordered from the minting company.

Meanwhile, the apex bank has explained that its research has shown that operators of mobile money services, otherwise known as Point-Of-Sale, PoS, were comfortably accommodated within the revised withdrawal limits.

It also allayed the fears that the new cashless policy of the Bank would impede job creation.

Emefiele spoke through the deputy governor of the apex bank in charge of the Financial System Stability at the CBN, Mrs Aisha Ahmed, yesterday when appearing before the House of Representatives plenary session in Abuja at the instance of the lawmakers to brief them on the new monetary policies that had become controversial in some quarters.

He said that the timing for the implementation of the monetary policies especially the cash withdrawal limit not was neither here nor there, adding that the 90 days notice in the estimation of the bank was enough to get Nigerians sensitized.

He, however, informed that CBN was partnering the National Orientation Agency, NOA, and other similar bodies to fully create the needed public enlightenment on the new policies.

It will be recalled that the House had through a motion last week mandated Emefiele to cause appearance on the seemingly vexatious policies of the banker's bank.

Ahmed, who took a barrage of questions from the lawmakers, said: "You asked a question. We ordered 500 million pieces of currency from the Mint. That is what has been ordered."

"You said this will mean that people will start losing their jobs because people would stop going to the banks. No, I think this will create more opportunity, not just for people working in the banks to retool. Technology change and innovation is a phenomenon happening all over the world. Of course, it is changing the types of jobs that people are doing."

But it is also opening up new opportunities for them to do other things.



Central Bank of Nigeria.

So, I don't see this as going to limit that. Indeed, the examples of agents (mobile bank agents) is a strong example that says that we created something, a platform, a business that was not there 10 years ago because we needed to solve a problem around ensuring that all areas in Nigeria were covered financially.

That is just a small example of what technology can do. So, I don't see this policy as making people lose their jobs.

Benefits outweigh risks

"You talked of fear of online banking and the issue around fake alerts. The truth is that for any initiative, there will be challenges. What matters is that the benefits must outweigh the risks. The CBN has an active consumer protection department that is looking at issues of fraud, issues of cyber security and issues of bank conduct in terms of how they charge customers and every time, we hold the banks to account when they flout those rules."

"You talked about the e-Naira and the regulatory backing. The e-Naira is a digital representation of the physical Naira. And so, it does have backing in law from our perspective. That is our answer to that."

"On counterfeiting, the question was if the sensitisation is not late. I think sensitisation is something that has to happen through it all. You cannot start with sensitisation and then leave it. Before the new note came out, we did inform the public and we started our sensitisation. Now that it is out and it is being used side by side with the old notes, we are continuing that sensitisation."

"I can quickly address the question about the National Orientation Agency. We are trying to partner the NOA in order to deliver the messages that we want to deliver to the grassroots. And we are not only partnering them. We are partnering many other stakeholders."

"In terms of timing, it is neither here nor there. I think we felt that 90 days based on what we know of official access points, availability of points for people to go and pay in their funds and the fact that we actually released the new notes earlier than planned, we felt that we were in a good position to conclude at the timelines that we gave. We are open to feedback and people's views on that."

Goals

Reduction in incidences of crime - armed robbery, kidnapping, terrorism financing, advance fee fraud, graft, ransom payment and extortions, etc; deepening the Nigerian payment system through more innovation and cheaper costs; Financial inclusion, the route to scaling financial inclusion is through electronic channels. Mobile phone penetration in Nigeria is 152m (according to NCC).

EFINA survey shows that 81 percent of Nigerians excluded have mobile phones; USSD helps to overcome the need for internet

connectivity to smartphones; economic opportunities for small businesses and rural communities to facilitate trade and improve livelihoods, thereby boosting economic

WORLD

Capitol riot panel's report sets out case to try Trump

WASHINGTON

THE congressional panel probing the Jan 6, 2021 attack on the US Capitol released its final report late on Thursday, outlining its case that former US President Donald Trump should face criminal charges of inciting the deadly riot.

The House of Representatives Select Committee also made public the transcripts of a number of its interviews and witness testimonies earlier on Thursday and on Wednesday.

The report, which runs to more than 800 pages, is based on nearly 1,200 interviews over 18 months and hundreds of thousands of documents, as well as the rulings of more than 60 federal and state courts.

The report lists 17 specific findings, discusses the legal implications of actions by Trump and some of his associates and includes criminal referrals to

the Justice Department of Trump and other individuals, according to an executive summary released earlier this week. It report also lists legislative recommendations to help avert another such attack.

On Monday, the committee asked federal prosecutors to charge the Republican former president with four crimes, including obstruction and insurrection, for what they said were efforts to overturn results of the November 2020 election and sparking the attack on the seat of government.

"Rather than honor his constitutional obligation to 'take care that the laws be faithfully executed,' President Trump instead plotted to overturn the election outcome," the House panel had said earlier in a 160-page summary of its report.

In comments posted on his Truth Social network after the final report's release, Trump called it "highly partisan"



A video of former president Donald Trump is shown on a screen, as the House select committee investigating the Jan 6 attack on the US Capitol holds its final meeting on Capitol Hill in Washington, Dec 19, 2022. AP

and a "witch hunt". He said it failed to "study the reason for the (Jan 6) protest, election fraud."

The request by the Democratic-led panel to the Justice Department does not compel federal prosecutors to act, but marked the first time in history that Congress had referred a former president for criminal prosecution. Trump announced in November that he would run for president again.

Among the transcripts released on Wednesday and Thursday was one that showed a former lawyer for ex-White House aide Cassidy Hutchinson told her to "downplay" her knowledge of events leading to the Capitol riot, telling her "the less you remember, the better."

Attorney Stefan Passantino advised Hutchinson in preparing for a February deposition before the panel to say that she could not recall certain events, she told the committee in September, according to the transcript of her testimony.

Trump gave a fiery speech to his supporters near the White House the morning of Jan 6, and publicly chastised his vice president, Mike Pence, for not going along with his plan to reject ballots cast for Democrat Joe Biden.

The former president then waited hours to make a public statement as thousands of his supporters raged through the Capitol, assaulting police and threatening to hang Pence.

The 2020 election results were being certified by Pence and lawmakers when the Capitol was attacked after weeks of false claims by Trump that he had won that election.

Refugee tide places huge strains on Europe

THIS year European countries have faced the largest refugee crisis since World War II, with the Russia-Ukraine conflict displacing millions of people.

As the conflict continues, more people from Ukraine are expected to leave the country this winter, putting Europe under severe stress and testing its ability to handle the human tide.

By this month more than 7.8 million refugees from Ukraine had settled in various parts of Europe since the Russia-Ukraine conflict broke out on Feb 24, of which more than 4.8 million were registered for temporary protection or similar national protection schemes, the UN Refugee Agency said.

Neighboring Poland remains the main country of arrival for refugees. Other European countries such as the Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Italy and Romania have also taken in many.

After returning from a trip to Ukraine this month, Jan Egeland, head of the Norwegian Refugee Council, said he expects another wave of hundreds of thousands of refugees from Ukraine over the winter, and he says he fears the humanitarian crisis in Europe will only get worse.

The European Union welcomed Ukrainian refugees soon after the conflict broke out. In early March it adopted an emergency plan allowing them to enter its 27 member countries without visas and granting them the right to live

and work in the EU for up to three years. Many Europeans also opened their doors to Ukrainian refugees.

The EU has also adopted regulations to unlock funds that will ensure that member states hosting refugees have sufficient resources to meet the growing needs for housing, education and healthcare.

The EU has also taken measures to allow for greater flexibility in the use of EU cohesion policy funds, for instance by extending the possibility to transfer resources between programs and to obtain 100 percent EU financing, as well as by providing for additional pre-financing of projects to offer member states immediate relief.

Hosting Ukrainian refugees could cost EU countries 43 billion euros (\$46 billion) this year, according to estimates by the think tank Bruegel in Brussels.

That cost accounts for about a quarter of the EU's overall budget for this year, which was set at 172 billion euros, and is likely to increase with more refugees entering the bloc.

Tian Dewen, deputy director of the Institute of Russian, Eastern European and Central Asian Studies at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, said Ukrainian refugees in Europe are treated differently to refugees from the Middle East and North Africa.

"Accepting Ukrainian refugees in the first place is politically correct for European countries. Moreover, Ukrainian refugees are highly educated,



A boy with his mother in an indoor sports stadium being used as a refugee center in the village of Medyka on a border crossing between Poland and Ukraine, in March. AP

young and white, and are more likely to integrate into local European society in the future, so they are generally welcomed in Europe."

For instance, about 73 percent of Ukrainian refugees who have settled in Germany since Feb 24 have a university degree, SchengenVisaInfo.com reported.

However, as the number of refugees in the continent has increased, European countries that have faced surging energy prices and living costs find it more challenging to help those in need.

The EU has imposed nine rounds of sanctions on Russia, regardless of the pain inflicted on their own economies and the resulting surge in energy prices and living costs for their people.

In October inflation in the eurozone reached a record 10.7 percent, the European Statistics Office said.

The Polish government said recently that it plans to charge Ukrainian refugees for food and housing once they have stayed

in state accommodation for four months.

More than a million Ukrainian refugees have made a temporary home in Poland, Ukraine's western neighbor, since the Russia-Ukraine conflict broke out.

But after an initial outpouring of public support for refugees, resources are drying up, and refugees are having a harder time finding accommodation and getting support, with Poland facing a cost-of-living crisis and budget strains.

"Citizens of Ukraine who stay in Poland in collective accommodation centers will (pay some of) the costs of housing and meals," the government said.

Those staying in such accommodation, for example government-funded hotel rooms or school dormitories, longer than 120 days will have to shoulder half the cost up to 40 zlotys (\$8.87) a day for each person. After 180 days this will rise to 75 percent of the cost up to 60 zlotys. The new rules

will apply from March 1.

The UK government is cutting the money it gives councils for helping Ukrainian refugees by almost half, blaming pressures on public finances.

Councils will receive 5,900 euros for each Ukrainian refugee who arrives in their area, the BBC reported. Until now that figure has been 10,500 euros.

He Yun, an associate professor in the School of Public Administration at Hunan University, said that recently there have been disputes among countries over migrants, and some European countries have started to change their policies toward refugees.

There are two reasons for this, she said. First, this is the second refugee crisis in Europe in seven years, the first having been a result of the war in Syria. Many local communities are still coping with assimilating those from the last influx in 2015, and do not have the basic infrastructure to accommodate many new arrivals.

Agencies

EU should re-examine green transition plans, says energy expert

NICOSIA

THE European Union (EU) will have to re-examine its commitment to cut the use of fossil fuels by 30 percent and reach a target of producing 40 percent of energy from renewable sources by 2030, Charles Ellinas, an energy expert with a long international experience in hydrocarbons, said.

Ellinas, with over 35 years in senior management positions in the oil and gas sector behind him, told Xinhua in an interview that the EU's energy planning also discourages energy companies from investing in the development of new energy sources at a time when it seeks ways to replace Russian natural gas.

The EU aims at reducing natural gas consumption by 30 percent by 2030, with the ultimate goal of reaching climate neutrality by 2050. In mid-December, it also reaffirmed its commitment to replace 40 percent of the energy generated from fossil fuels with green energy in just seven years.

Ellinas said that all things considered, the EU plans on energy will prove "unrealistic," as several of its member states already say that they could not reach the 40 percent strategic target.

One of the reasons that make this 40 percent target unattainable is climate change, which has led to a drop in the velocity of winds, on which northern Europe mainly depends to produce green energy, he said.

He added that drought has led to lower quantities of water available for the effective operation of hydroelectric plants. "The EU needs to accept that natural gas has a significant role to play beyond 2030 and encourage European utilities to enter into long-term gas purchase contracts," Ellinas said.

He said that energy companies are facing problems as a result of the apparent contradiction between seeking new sources and trying to promote the green transition in such a short time. He recalled that in October, the EU's gas consumption was 25 percent lower than a year earlier, and that the EU's energy policies discourage investments in new oil and gas fields, including in the Eastern Mediterranean.

"The international oil companies have said that they need long-term contracts to back up new projects, but the current European Union targets, which create technical barriers, make them reluctant to proceed with large investments, which are required to develop new energy sources," Ellinas said.

He said that this is also an obstacle to the prospect of setting up an energy hub in the Eastern Mediterranean either by Cyprus or by Israel, two countries that aspire to become energy providers to Europe after the disruption of Russian gas supplies.

Ellinas said that the Eastern Mediterranean is prolific in natural gas, with large quantities waiting to be discovered. But he pointed out that exploration for this wealth is discouraged by the insistence of the EU on a short time limit for doing away with natural gas.

Airlines scrap 4,400 US flights as winter storm disrupts travel

WASHINGTON

Over 4,400 flights have been canceled over a two-day period as a powerful winter storm hits the United States, coinciding with the start of a holiday season that some predict could be the busiest ever.

More than 2,350 US flights had been canceled Thursday and another 2,120 flights for Friday were scrapped, according to flight tracking website FlightAware, while passenger railroad Amtrak canceled dozens of trains through Christmas, disrupting holiday travel for tens of thousands.

Another 8,450 flights were delayed Thursday – including more than one-third of those operated by American Airlines, United Airlines, and Southwest Airlines.

Southwest canceled 865 flights Thursday, about one-fifth of all its scheduled flights, and had already scrapped another 550 for Friday.

The Federal Aviation Administration said Thursday that the winter storm was bringing blizzard conditions to the Midwest, with major travel disruptions expected in Chicago, Detroit and Minneapolis-St. Paul.

Delta Air Lines, which had canceled 140 flights Thursday out of 4,400 and 90 on Friday per FlightAware, warned "additional cancellations will be necessary Friday as the storm continues to impact operations in Detroit and the Northeast."

As of 7:30 pm ET Thursday (0030 GMT), 25 percent of departing flights at Chicago's O'Hare International Airport and 37 percent of flights at Chicago Midway were canceled, while 27 percent of departing Denver flights had been canceled.

Amtrak said it was canceling several dozen scheduled train trips in the Midwest through Christmas because of the weather conditions, including trains in Michigan, Illinois, and Missouri and trains between New York and Chicago.

Brandon Mattis, 24, was at New York's La Guardia Airport seeking to get to Atlanta, Georgia, to join the rest of his family for Christmas celebrations. His flight had been canceled, he said.

"We're trying to search on our phones. Figure out other routes. Maybe even taking a bus from here to Atlanta, which it'll take us about 21 hours. So, that's really inconvenient.

AS Chinese elements caught eyes at the just-concluded 2022 FIFA World Cup held in Qatar, a good number of brands owned by China's small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) drew wide attention for their contributions to major venues of the world-class sporting event.

Among these SMEs, Avant Sports Industrial Co., Ltd., a sports facility provider based in Shenzhen, south China's Guangdong province, provided bleacher seats for stadiums where the World Cup matches were staged. The seats are not only retractable, but also can be moved and disassembled as a whole.

Jiangsu Fute Lighting Group Co., Ltd., a lighting equipment supplier in Yangzhou city, east China's Jiangsu province, provided the Qatar World Cup venues with road lamps that in-

Chinese SMEs shine on international stage

tegrate multiple functions and can serve as lamps, charging piles, and 5G base stations and can be used to monitor the environment.

China Green Container Co., Ltd., a container house manufacturer in Guangdong province, provided 2,000 container hotels for the Qatar World Cup. Each of the container hotels can be assembled by four workers in four hours.

Jiangsu Tianhong Science and Technology Industrial Park Co., Ltd., a company engaging in the manufacturing, processing, and sale of metal and non-metallic materials in Suqian, Jiangsu province, won the bid to provide highly flame-retardant alumi-

num plastic plates for Al Janoub Stadium, one of the venues for the Qatar World Cup.

The products of these Chinese SMEs, which boast high quality and the integration of sci-tech achievements, have presented a new image of Chinese manufacturing.

SMEs constitute a large part of a country's manufacturing capacity. Featuring a huge number and wide involvement in various industries, SMEs exist in different segments of industrial chains. If SMEs can develop unique competitive advantages, they can not only enjoy continuous popularity on markets, but become "hidden champions" with great competi-

tiveness in their respective industries and play a greater role in industrial upgrading by improving the short slabs of industries.

Chinese SMEs' outstanding performance at the Qatar World Cup is believed to be the epitome of the continuous improvement and upgrading of the country's manufacturing sector.

Industrial upgrading can be a daunting and complex task. In particular, SMEs, which often have limited resources and capital and lack experience in risk prevention, need the help to realize transformation and upgrading.

In an effort to improve the SMEs' weak links, various authorities across

China have continuously adopted innovative measures. From releasing a to-do list for solving problems hindering the development of enterprises that use special and sophisticated technologies to produce novel and unique products, rolling out measures to improve the competitiveness of SMEs, to implementing an interim system for the cultivation and management of high-quality SMEs, China has vigorously supported the growth of SMEs and improved their growth environment to help them grow into industry leaders with unique competitive advantages.

SMEs are more motivated to sharpen their strengths, as they are willing

to invest and bear hardships.

Shenzhen Moldbao Technology Co., Ltd., a company based in Shenzhen that specializes in digital services related to molds and precision parts and components, has helped more than 50 percent of the core enterprises in China's electronic information industry innovate products.

"Molds are referred to as the 'mother of industry' in the manufacturing sector. We have spent 20 years building a database with a cumulative total of more than one million pieces of information about precision manufacturing processes, solving problems concerning the manufacturing of molds, including low output, slow delivery, and heavy reliance on manpower," said Cheng Yafei, founder and CEO of the company.

People's Daily

Russia: US' weapon supply to Ukraine direct action in conflict

KYIV/MOSCOW/TEHRAN

THE supply of Western weapons to Ukraine does not help resolve the conflict but prolongs the suffering of the Ukrainian people, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said yesterday.

If the United States delivers the Patriot surface-to-air missile systems to Ukraine, they will become legitimate targets of the Russian Armed Forces, Peskov told a daily briefing.

On Wednesday, US President Joe Biden pledged visiting Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky to offer military aid, mentioning in particular the Patriot missile battery he just approved for Ukraine in a new tranche of security assistance totaling \$1.85 billion.

Russia regards the supply of the Patriot missile systems to Ukraine as "another significant step towards America's direct involvement in the conflict," said Konstantin Kosachev, deputy speaker of Russia's upper parliament house, the Federation Council, on Thursday.

Meanwhile, Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu inspected Russian forces in the zone of the special military operation, the Russian Defense Ministry said on Telegram.

Shoigu checked the conditions for the deployment of personnel and military equipment at temporary deployment points and heard reports from unit commanders.

Talks on Zaporizhzhia plant

Separately, Russian officials and a delegation of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) held a new round of consultations on cooperation in ensuring the safety of the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant (NPP).

Alexei Likhachev, director-general of Russia's State Atomic Energy Corporation Rosatom, and IAEA Director-General Rafael Grossi participated in the talks among other representatives, Rosatom said in a statement.

Both sides discussed approaches to the creation of a safety zone at the Zaporizhzhia NPP and noted the closeness of their positions on the creation of such a zone, said Rosatom, which operates the power station.

They agreed to continue negotiations in order to reach mutually acceptable terms as soon as possible.

The parties underlined the task of ensuring a reliable supply of electricity and heat to the NPP and its host city of Enerгодар, the statement showed, adding that both sides regarded the conversation as substantive, useful and frank.

The Zaporizhzhia NPP, which is one of Europe's largest nuclear power plants, has been controlled by Russian forces since early March. Ukraine and Russia have traded accusations of strikes on the facility.

Iran not involved

In a statement published by the Iranian Foreign Ministry on Thursday, Iran reiterated that it has sent no military hardware to any side in the Russian-Ukrainian conflict.

The remarks by Iranian Foreign Ministry Spokesman Nasser Kanaani came in response to Zelensky's "repeated accusations" against Iran in his speech to the US Congress on Wednesday, according to the ministry statement.

"Iran has always respected the territorial integrity of all countries, including Ukraine," said Kanaani, warning Zelensky that "there is a limit to Iran's patience with such baseless accusations."

Ukraine and Western countries accuse Iran of sending suicide drones to Russia for use in the conflict in Ukraine. Iran has repeatedly rejected the allegations as "baseless."

Netanyahu agrees to annex West Bank in coalition deal

JERUSALEM

ISRAEL'S Prime Minister-designate Benjamin Netanyahu has agreed to annex the occupied West Bank in a coalition deal that was made public yesterday.

Netanyahu, who signed a series of coalition deals on Wednesday and Thursday, announced that he had succeeded in forming a coalition government that is set to bring him back to power as the leader of the most right-wing government in Israeli history.

In a deal that Netanyahu's Likud party signed with the Religious Zionism, a pro-settler party led by Bezael Smotrich, Netanyahu promised to draft and advance a plan to annex the West Bank that Israel seized in the 1967 Middle East war. The Palestinians hope to establish an independent state on the 1967 borders with East Jerusalem as the capital.

According to the agreement, a copy of which has been seen by Xinhua, "the Prime Minister will lead the formulation and promotion of a policy within which (Israeli) sovereignty will be extended to Judea and Samaria." Judea and Samaria is a frequently used Israeli term for the

West Bank.

The timing of the move is not mentioned, but the agreement stated that the implementation of the plan will take into account "national and international interests of Israel."

A coalition deal that Netanyahu signed with Jewish Power, an extreme-right party led by Itamar Ben-Gvir, says that a law that bans candidates who incite racism from running in parliamentary election will be canceled.

Netanyahu's reliance on ultranationalist and ultra-Orthodox parties for his return to power has raised concerns in Israel.

"The government being formed here is dangerous, radical and irresponsible. This will end badly," outgoing Prime Minister Yair Lapid, leader of the centrist party of Yesh Atid, warned in a televised address yesterday evening.

"Netanyahu is weak, and they (his partners) have formed the most extreme government in the nation's history," said Lapid.

Netanyahu needs to finalize the agreements with his coalition partners and appoint ministers before a deadline on Jan 2, 2023, the latest date his government can be sworn in.



Women in science can change world

FROM climate change to the energy crisis to COVID-19, the answers to our most universal challenges lie in science. Yet in seeking them, we still exclude the brainpower of half the world: women and girls.

Just 28 percent of engineering graduates, one-third of scientific researchers worldwide and three percent of Nobel laureates are women. At the Chinese Academy of Sciences and Chinese Academy of Engineering, only seven percent of academics are women.

Such imbalances not only risk replicating gender biases and inequalities in new technologies, but also lead to expertise and talent shortages across science, technology, engineering and mathematics globally that society can ill afford. For a future that truly includes everyone, women and girls must be able to participate in science fully and equally.

When they do, the rewards are high. Take Tu Youyou, who became the first Chinese Nobel laureate in physiology or medicine in 2015, decades after discovering the malaria treatment, artemisinin. "Every scientist dreams of doing something that can help the world," she said. When more women become scientists, more people are able to do so.

This is clear in China, where over half of all patent applicants are now women. Women are also building more than half the country's internet companies, like Zhou Qunfei, a migrant worker who later founded touchscreen manufacturer, Lens Technology, becoming one of the wealthiest women in tech.

Yet despite making invaluable STEM contributions in China and beyond, women risk being left behind in the fourth industrial revolution. An estimated 80 percent of high-paid jobs created in new green economy sectors, including clean energy, will be in STEM fields dominated by men.

This means women and girls could be overlooked and underrepresented in future technologies - unless they are supported in STEM today.

With just eight years to realize the Sustainable Development Goals and a peaceful, prosperous future for all, that our planet can sustain, expanding our pool of innovators and experts, by including



Scientist Tu Youyou, a 2015 Nobel Prize laureate, does research in her lab in Beijing. (Photo/Xinhua)

women fully, is more urgent than ever.

Four steps are vital to achieve this.

First, gender stereotypes and biases holding women and girls back in science must be changed. Microsoft reported that girls in Europe become interested in STEM around the age of 11, but lose interest by 15, suggesting social influences redirect them. Women are also underrepresented in STEM leadership, as well as less likely to be recruited, despite being qualified. Thirty-two percent of Chinese women scientists encountered employers who only sought out men during their first job searches, according to Nature. To fix this, gender quotas should be applied at all levels to safeguard against discriminatory hiring practices. Gender equality education should also be strengthened, from classrooms to corporations, while a supportive environment for women and girls must be created within families and by employers, to encourage more empowering norms.

Second, removing structural inequalities in scientific fields is essential. Female researchers tend to be awarded less funding, have fewer resources and opportunities, while leaving careers earlier than male colleagues. Globally, more than one-third of women left full-time STEM careers after their first child. This also happens in China - but three-quarters of those who left said they would return, if sufficient childcare was available. So along with supporting women and girls entering STEM, an inclusive environment is needed to retain

them. Research institutions, employers, governments and all stakeholders must increase family-friendly policies and investments, including childcare facilities and services, paternity leave and flexible working arrangements.

While structural changes take time, special measures for women offer more immediate solutions. For example, given that raising children requires extended leave - a responsibility falling disproportionately on women - allowing female researchers longer to secure funding can help. In 2011, the National Natural Science Foundation of China lifted its grant age limit for women from 35 to 40, boosting the percentage of women winning grants from a major fund for young scientists from 33 to 43 percent in one year. Along with the Ministry of Science and Technology, NSFC also raised the number of female scientists on review panels and recommended female applicants be prioritized, when all else was equal. Building on past efforts, in 2021, MoST, along with the All-China Women's Federation and 11 other departments, also launched Measures on Supporting Female Talents in Playing a more Prominent Role in Science and Technology, facilitating nationwide action.

Third, unpaid care and domestic work has forced women to quit or slow their careers. Among married women scientists surveyed by Nature, 30 percent reported doing most housework, versus only six percent of men. The pandemic has deepened this divide. Com-

parative data for 2019 and 2020 suggests women scientists as primary caregivers for children experienced a 17 percent research time decline. Female academics are posting fewer preprints and starting fewer projects than male peers. Instead of free riding on women's unpaid work, society should collectively assume the costs, by recasting public spending on care as a social investment. Care and domestic work deserves recognition. It must also be redistributed between men and women.

Increased paternity leave is one way to encourage this. For example, the proportion of men taking paternity leave increased from 4 percent to 39 percent when Norway introduced 4-weeks of full payment paternity leave in 1993 and further increased to 89 percent as Norway gradually extended paternity leave entitlements to now 15 weeks. In China, there are no regulations or legislation at the central level regarding paternity leave, and while in some provinces, men are entitled to as many as 30 days of paternity leave, more will need to be done to rebalance the burden of care.

Last, outstanding women scientists must be promoted as role models and mentor younger women. Research reveals that women without mentors report the lowest career optimism.

Women and girls should be supported early on to take interest in science and be guided in their careers. This can also build networks and connections - social capital crucial to their career advancement.

China's courier sector handles 100 billion parcels in 2022

CHINA'S courier sector saw its delivery volume exceed 100 billion parcels on Dec. 1, seven days earlier than in 2021, according to statistics from the State Post Bureau.

This hard-won achievement indicated the resilience of the Chinese courier industry, as well as the outcomes of China's coordination of COVID-19 policy with economic and social development.

In the first 12 days of December, over 4.3 billion parcels were collected nationwide, up 5.6 percent year on year.

China's huge express delivery network boasts a total mileage of 43 million kilometers and 410,000 service stations. It serves nearly 700 million people on a daily basis.

The courier industry, impacted by COVID-19 pandemic, has faced unprecedented pressure since this year.

To ensure unimpeded logistics, relevant departments issued a series of policies, such as removing all the temporary checkpoints at the entries and exits of expressways, setting up a whitelist mechanism, and launching real-time monitoring.

Besides, enterprises in the courier industry also took active actions to ensure smooth operation of the express delivery network, including rerouting delivery lines and establishing emergency response mechanisms.

The Chinese courier industry maintained a sound online operation, and its channel advantages started to show. Driven by the industry, the demand for online consumption has kept releasing continuously.

In the first 10 months of this year, online retail sales of physical goods nationwide increased 7.2 percent, leading to a 1.5 percentage point rise in market growth.

It accounted for 26.2 percent of the total retail sales of social consumer goods, up 0.5 percentage points from the January-September period.



An intelligent robot carries farm produce on a cable way in Yangjia village, Hezi township, Anyuan county, Ganzhou, east China's Jiangxi province, April 2022. (Photo by Zhu Haipeng/People's Daily Online)

On the online shopping festival "Double 11" this year, which falls on Nov. 11, 552 million express delivery parcels were handled across the country, 1.8 times the usual daily average.

These figures well proved that the fundamentals sustaining China's continuous market recovery remain unchanged, and the country's consumption expansion and structural upgrading are still going on.

The 100-billion-parcel mark mirrored the infinite potential of the Chinese economy. In particular, 100 million of the parcels were shipped to and from rural areas.

Nowadays, via the express delivery network, more and more agricultural products have been brought to the national market, and more and more industrial products are flowing to the countryside.

Thanks to the constantly improving rural logistics and commercial facilities, the vitality of rural consumption

has been further activated.

The above point is well proved by statistics. According to China's National Bureau of Statistics, retail sales in rural areas went up 0.8 percent during the January-October period this year, 0.3 percentage points higher than the urban figure.

At present, express delivery services are available in 90 percent of all Chinese administrative villages, and the courier sector will only further drive the development of modern agriculture.

As rural residents' income grows, their consumption ability and willingness are expected to be further expanded, which will further release the potential of rural consumption.

The 100-billion-parcel mark indicated the strong vitality of the Chinese economy. Compared with 2021, this mark was crossed earlier and with higher quality this year.

Though deliveries were slower in some places and during certain

periods of time, the proportion of deliveries completed within 72 hours among all parcels increased by 2.1 percentage points in key regions. Besides, home delivery, pay on delivery, and other services were widely provided. As of September this year, 90 percent of express delivery packages met environmental protection standards, and 9.78 million recyclable packing boxes had been used.

The courier industry, growing strong and advancing steadily amid challenges and risks, mirrors the vitality and resilience of the Chinese economy.

People's Daily

Simba general election heads into final stages



Boniface Lihamwike

By Correspondent Nassir Nchimbi

SIMBA's election committee is today expected to end the interview process for candidates who are vying for the club's chairman and board member positions in the election which will be held on January 29, next year.

The election committee under chairman Boniface Lihamwike had the task of reviewing all candidates' forms, the exercise which ended on Wednesday.

The committee was also expected to interview the candidates from December 22 to 24.

According to Lihamwike, the criteria of values and interests of the club were also considered during the process.

"You know that a candidate can have all the qualifications, school certificates, experience in football even more than 10 years, but it should be remembered that the criterion of values and interests of the club is also considered in a large percentage," he said.

"When you talk about the interests of the club, it should be looked at more broadly. The interests are not just to give money to help the club or in any other way, but also not to cause a conflict within the club that will bring a rift to the members. So that will also be checked," he said.

Championship promotion race starting to take shape

By Correspondent Michael Mwebe

THIRTEEN games have already been played into the Championship season. Of course, there is still a long way to go, but the race for promotion to the NBC Premier League is beginning to heat up.

Sixteen teams are battling in Tanzania's second tier as they all dream to reach the promised land of the NBC Premier League.

The top two teams will be automatically promoted to the NBC Premier League with two more up for promotion playoffs at the end of the season.

JKT Tanzania have picked up 10 wins and one draw to lead the table. Head coach Malale Hmasini has built a squad with Championship experience in abundance, one that possesses excellent game management skills, especially in shutting out their opponents.

They boast the best defensive record in the division, having conceded just four goals. However they lost to Mashujaa on Saturday to end their impressive four game winning run and will be keen to bounce back today as they host Pamba.

They will wrap up the first half of the campaign against struggling sides, Copco Veterans and Gwambina, giving them a good chance to stretch their lead at the top.

Second-placed Kitayosce trail JKT Tanzania by two points, but now one point clear of Pamba after thrashing Fountain Gate 3-0 last week.

Having scored 24 league goals this season, the Tabora-based side are the highest scorers in the division

"For any candidate who does not go through our initial stages, he will be given the opportunity to appeal to the Tanzania Football Federation (TFF) Election Appeal Committee, if he deems it appropriate to do so."

Lihamwike said that this election now seems to be very difficult as the candidates who took the forms are many compared to all the elections he has managed for the club, even though he has promised to lead it safely.

He named the candidates for the club's chairman position as Geoffrey Nyange, alias Kaburu, Murtaza Mangungu, who is defending his seat, and Yusuph Omary Yenga.

The candidates running for board member positions are Abubakari Zebo, Abdallah Rashid Mgomba, Hawa Mwaifunga, Iddy Kajuna, Laurian Mganga, Elisony Edward Mweladzi, Lameck Lawrence, Nadir Atul, Omary Juma Mazora, and Andala David Sizya.

Others are Christopher Kabalika Mwansasu, Hassan Bakar Kakayo, Ishak Ashraf Mukadamu, Seleman Haroub Said, Sharing Jembe, Aziz Mohamed, Amina Ngaluma, Issa Masoud Idd, Hudhaifa R Kassim, Penda A Mapugilo, Engineer Rashid Khamis, Asha Baraka, Iddi H Kitete and Dr. Rehema A. Simba.

and there's not much that can hold them back at the moment. They also have a favourable fixture list; after they face Mbuni this weekend, they take on Pan African on January 21.

The next four games could prove pivotal to the direction in which the remainder of the season goes for Mwanza-based Pamba.

They have four back-to-back away games between now and February. They travel to JKT Tanzania before making three more trips to Fountain Gate on January 14, Ken Gold on January 21 and Mbeya Kwanza on February 2.

Mbeya Kwanza, who shifted base from Dar to Songea after losing five games in a row, currently find themselves fourth following an impressive turn-around.

They are on a six game-winning streak.

Mashujaa and Fountain Gate at fifth and sixth place respectively are only separated by goal difference from fourth placed Mbeya Kwanza.

That tells you everything you need to know about the competitiveness of the Championship.

Early season pacesetter Mbuni, who won their opening four games, are now on a five-game losing streak that has seen them drop to eighth position.

Having come up from the First League last term, nobody expected Mbuni to challenge for back-to-back promotions this season.

They are still in a fairly good position, but they will surely be eager to rediscover the kind of form that got them to the top of the table in the early rounds.

Dar swimmers improve time in World Championships

By Guardian Correspondent

TANZANIA'S national swimming team coach Alex Mwaipasi says he has been satisfied with the standard shown by four swimmers who represented the country in the World Swimming Championships held in Melbourne, Australia.

Tanzania was represented by Ria Save and Sophia Latiff, who featured in the women's category, while Hilal Hemed and Colins Saliboko battled it out in the men's category.

Mwaipasi said much as the swimmers did not bring medals, they had managed to improve their personal best time (PBs) in the event which involved prominent swimmers in the world.

He said the Tanzania swimmers made efforts to fight for their country but due to various challenges surrounding the game in the country, they did not meet their target.

Mwaipasi said he told all four swimmers to give their all in order to meet the target and all of them did well during the four-day event.

"I told the swimmers before the championships that they were supposed to struggle to improve their time and they attained it and the next step is to improve their time again in the next



Tanzania's swimmers, who competed in the just ended World Championships which took place in Australia, pose for a photo with Tanzania Swimming Association (TSA) officials, coaches and parents shortly after their arrival at the Julius Nyerere International Airport in Dar es Salaam recently. PHOTO: CORRESPONDENT

international championships," Mwaipasi noted.

"Our swimmers still have time to improve their swimming standard, I would not like to mention each swimmer's performance, and there are clubs' coaches who would be tasked to make sure they all train intensively in order to improve their time in the game," Mwaipasi revealed.

Tanzania Swimming Association (TSA) vice chairperson Asmah Hilal said they had been impressed by the swimmers' performances and the results had given the officials some challenge to work hard in order to develop the game.

Asmah said currently TSA is struggling to improve the standard of the game

in the country, adding that the association is still facing challenges including lack of sponsors and infrastructures like a modern 50 meters swimming pool.

"The results have encouraged us, as you know, we did not have modern facilities when compared with other countries," Asmah said.

Pele: One of sports greatest, helping to uplift image of Africans globally

By Correspondent Michael Eneza

AS Argentina's captain and world superstar Lionel Messi was adding the World Cup trophy in his third and final tournament, the health condition of his often compared Brazilian world legend Pele was worsening.

Edson Arantes do Nascimento was still well enough to salute Messi in his enthusiastic and exquisite achievement on the world stage.

Once that activity was fully accomplished, the health graph of the Brazilian legend, with three World Cup trophies under his belt, rapidly lost pulse.

Pele lifted his first World Cup trophy in 1958 in Sweden, scoring in the final match at the age of 17, which so far has few comparisons if one notes that the best young player in the 2022 World Cup finals in Qatar was Enzo Fernandez of Argentina, aged 21.

French superstar Kylian Mbappe bagged the World Cup trophy in 2018 at the age of 19, which has airs of distantly comparing with Pele, and this year won the golden boot award as the highest scorer in the tournament. Still he was hugely sad at the results.

On the last minutes of additional time on the 2022 World Cup final match, a massed defense had one defender sweeping the ball from his feet when he had beaten two others, and was on the verge of scoring, doing one better than Messi and Alvarez, or Neymar and other artistic forwards on the Brazil line up.

A CCN report on February 16, 2022 said of Kylian Mbappe scoring a wonderful last-minute goal to inspire Paris Saint-Germain to a 1-0 victory against Real Madrid in their UEFA Champions League last 16 first leg tie.

Pele wasn't to see a black player take stage as world's best in this final stage of his life but saw Eusebio (of his own era), Romario, Ronaldinho Gaucho, who was red-carpeted as he arrived in Qatar, and there is Vinicius Jr at present.

While people talk of Pele, or for that matter, Messi or Mbappe as individuals, there is a thread that unites Pele and other great black sportsmen (leaving women aside for a moment, doing great things in tennis and athletics).

The major heritage line of reclaiming the dignity of black peo-



ple via sports on the world stage can rapidly be stretched out as starting with Jesse Owens of the United States in the 1936 Berlin Olympics.

Winning four gold medals in sprint events, he brought legendary white supremacist chancellor Adolf Hitler to storm out of the stadium, to avoid shaking his hand in congratulation.

Theories of Aryan superiority lay dead, there and then.

From Owens there is the interlude of war and cessation of World Cup competition until 1950, and eight years later Pele took the world stage at 17.

He was part of a brilliant crop

of dazzling footballers mesmerizing soccer enthusiasts around the world for decades, and even today. Brazil is arguably the world's most talented or say, individually skilled side, but is outsmarted in organization and precision, for instance Germany thrashing Brazil 7-1 at Belo Horizonte in the 2014 World Cup semi-final.

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and precision, for instance Germany thrashing Brazil 7-1 at Belo Horizonte in the 2014 World Cup semi-final.

In the UEFA circuit, with scores of top Brazilian players for Barcelona, the side was once smashed 8-0 by Bayern Munich, with experts predicting a rout.

Pele and his Brazilian teammates dazzled world football when it was still in early stages, the revolution starting after it lifted the Jules Rimet Cup for the third time in 1970, whereupon managers in the UEFA circuit started looking for answers.

The result was 'total football' innovation of 'all in defense and all in attack,' doing the trick in 1974 as Germany and the Netherlands took center stage, ahead of the still glittering Brazilian national side. By that time Pele, Garrincha especially, had left.

The other personality to add to the dignity of black people at the world stage was US heavyweight boxer Muhammad Ali.

In the early 1960s and then in the 1970s Ali dominated media hype on world boxing, rather than the ring itself, despite his stinging successes and communicative epithets captivating much of the world and riling others.

Some of his household epithets was his boxing style that he described as 'stinging like a bee and dancing like a butterfly,' which was innocuous enough, then in 1976, taunting Joe Frazier in a return title fight in the Philippine capital of Manila, he memorably said 'it will be a thriller, killer and chiller when I meet the gorilla in Manila'.

Having lost his title for refusing the draft to fight in Vietnam in 1967 and thereafter he was largely shielded from accusations of racism or bits of it.

Ali became a champion of two more causes far removed from sport, namely the global opposition to the Vietnam War, and then raising the banner of Islam for his anti-war concerns.

A write up of September 13, last year said that when Ali arrived to be inducted in the United States Armed Forces, however, he refused, citing his religion forbade him from serving.

The cost for his refusal would prove to be drastic, the stripping of his heavyweight title, a suspension from boxing, a \$10,000 fine, and a five-year prison sentence. Unquestionably the stuff heroes are made of.

Man City knock out holders Liverpool in League Cup thriller

LONDON

NATHAN Ake's header proved decisive as Manchester City knocked holders Liverpool out of the League Cup in a dramatic 3-2 win at the Etihad Stadium on Thursday.

This last-16 clash marked the return to competitive action of two of English football's heavyweights following the World Cup break and their latest encounter was a high-octane affair.

Premier League champions City twice led through Erling Haaland and Riyad Mahrez, only for Liverpool to waste little time in drawing level thanks to goals from Fabio Carvalho and Mohamed Saleh.

But after Ake made it 3-2 shortly before the hour mark, the visitors were unable to fashion a third equaliser.

City manager Pep Guardiola named six World Cup players in his starting XI.

Ake, Manuel Akanji, Aymeric Laporte, Rodri, Kevin De Bruyne and Ilkay Gundogan were all involved from the kick-off.

Liverpool boss Jurgen Klopp, whose side pipped Chelsea 11-10 in a marathon penalty shoot-out at Wembley in February as the Reds won the League Cup for a record ninth time, also named a strong side.

The German's forward line included Salah, making his first appearance in the League Cup outside of finals since October 2020, Darwin Nunez and Carvalho.

Liverpool captain Jordan Henderson was included on the bench but fellow England international Trent Alexander-Arnold was not involved at all, with Netherlands defender Virgil van Dijk also omitted after his World Cup stint.

Haaland and Cole Palmer both missed the target when well-placed to score early on but it was not long before the Norway star made amends.

Haaland, seemingly given a free run against Liverpool's defence, turned in De Bruyne's near-post cross in the 10th minute after getting in front of Joe Gomez to score his 24th goal of the season.

Liverpool, however, were level within 10 minutes when Carvalho finished from a James Milner cross after the former City midfielder was allowed too much room in the penalty area.

The visitors made two changes at half-time, Fabinho and Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain coming on for novice midfielder Stefan Bajcetic and Carvalho.

But Liverpool fell behind again before either of the two substitutes could get into the game.

Only 76 seconds into the second half Mahrez fired home from the right side of the penalty area following a cross by Rodri.

City's lead, however, evaporated just over a minute later as Nunez sprinted past Laporte down the left, with Salah making light of a mediocre centre to draw Liverpool level at 2-2.

But a rollercoaster contest then saw City go ahead for the third time when, after a quickly-taken corner, Ake powered in a 58th-minute header from a superb pinpoint cross by the outstanding De Bruyne.

Oxlade-Chamberlain went down in the penalty after a collision with Ake in the 69th minute but David Coote denied the Reds a spot-kick and, with VAR not in use, the referee's decision stood.

Liverpool, however, had an excellent chance to make it 3-3 when a superb ball from Naby Keita left the onside Nunez free down the right touchline.

But after sprinting clear of the City defence, Nunez, albeit from an acute angle, pulled his shot wide of the far post.

AFP



Mikel Arteta rallies Arsenal for 'unprecedented' title opportunity

LONDON

ARSENAL boss Mikel Arteta called for his side to embrace their "unprecedented" opportunity to clinch their first Premier League title since 2004.

The Gunners led the league as the top flight paused for the World Cup, and will return to action on Boxing Day when they host West Ham under the lights.

Their league-leading form has created an electric atmosphere at the Emirates, but Arteta insisted his side's title hopes were grounded in more than just the increasingly vocal expressions of optimism from supporters.

"It's not just a feeling, it's as well facts and the stats are supporting that the team is deserving to win games, which is especially my job," he told Jamie Carragher on Sky Sports' Monday Night Football.

"You know, I want the team to play a certain way, and the more consistent we are on that the more we are going to win.

"Unfortunately football you can shoot 30 times and concede one shot and you can lose 1-0, but I think in the long run you're going to be where you deserve to be and we have the confidence that we are on the right path, but as well we have all



Mikel Arteta

the red lights and alarms because what is coming in the second part of the season is something unprecedented and we need to be ready for it.

"There is excitement, and we should be excited and we should be embracing the opportunity that we have ahead of us understanding that we have to do much better a lot of things that we are already doing really, really well and that's it."

Arteta's starting XI has been the second-most consistent across the top flight, though he admitted an increasingly crowded fixture list will likely force him into more rotations.

He said: "That's something that obviously we are very aware of. The type of game that we've had to play in Europe has allowed us to make a lot of changes and have a fresher squad for the weekend and then we've repeated the starting XI a lot.

"In the second half I don't think that's going to be the same type of numbers. We're going to be playing every three days, the congestion and the amount of games that we have to play is going to be incredible, and we're going to have more resources and more players to be able to do that."

The Gunners enter the second half five points clear of Manchester City, setting up a potentially po-

etic finish to the Premier League season should Arteta's side best that of his childhood hero Pep Guardiola.

"He was my idol," said Arteta, who met Guardiola when he was 15 years old. "He was the one to try to emulate."

Guardiola kept trying to persuade his Spanish compatriot to join his coaching staff, which Arteta eventually did when he retired from playing and became assistant manager at City in 2016. Convinced players to adopt their philosophy, he said, was relatively straightforward, despite some decisions "going against the culture of English football".

Arteta said: "It's going to take a while to break that wall, but when you have a person that is so determined, so clear, so focused and has such strong beliefs you just die for him."

Now the 40-year-old is forging his own path into unprecedented territory, hoping to guide the club he once captained to his first title as their manager.

While he can draw inspiration from Guardiola's success, Arteta warned: "That's the secret of it. It's great to get some things from other managers or even to copy, but you cannot copy and paste. It doesn't work, unfortunately."

(Agencies)

Schedule around World Cup adds to pressure on players' health - FIFPRO

LONDON

THE packed schedule around the World Cup will add to pressure on players' physical and mental health, according to global union FIFPRO.

Manchester City return to Premier League action next week with 16 of their players having played a combined 5,180 minutes and covered 486 kilometres in Qatar, the PA news agency's player burnout study showed.

Arsenal will have to resume their title bid without striker Gabriel Jesus, who was injured in Brazil's final group game against Cameroon. That followed pre-tournament injuries that ruled out the likes of Ballon d'Or winner Karim Benzema and Bayern Munich's ex-Liverpool forward Sadio Mane, and FIFPRO general secretary Jonas Baer-Hoffmann insists proper rest periods are desperately needed.

While not referring to specific players, Baer-Hoffmann told PA: "You have a scientifically-proven correlation between the kind of overload the players are going through and the risk of injuries and we have - especially amongst those elite players - a seemingly-high prevalence of certain injuries that are common when the body is not properly recovered.

"We've seen some players who before the World Cup played 10, 15 matches in a row without a proper recovery time - which we consider to be at least five days between matches. That is something players need - not between every game, but they need that periodically after four, five, six matches.

"When you have play-

ers playing 15 of those games, then going into an intense World Cup and now looking at January with another seven or eight games, you just increase the probability that these kinds of injuries will occur."

The World Cup had been moved to the winter to avoid the summer heat in Qatar, creating scheduling issues for domestic leagues which were exacerbated by the long shutdown for the Covid-19 pandemic.

"For some of those players this goes back now over a two, two-and-a-half-year period," said Baer-Hoffmann. "They had increasingly-congested calendars during the Covid period, now this season the World Cup created pressure on leagues and all of this is coming together.

"You cannot pinpoint one single competition that is 'the straw that broke the camel's back', it's the accumulation of all of them.

"The schedule is taking players' ability for granted and doesn't protect them. That's bad for those players, obviously, but it's also harmful for the game - those players may not be available, or their careers could be cut short without reaching their full potential."

FIFPRO's pre-tournament report into the "Player Workload Journey" highlighted eventual Golden Boot winner Kylian Mbappe, who lit up the final with a hat-trick despite France's defeat, as having played over 75 per cent of his minutes in matches on less than five days' rest.

Mbappe had played over 27,000 minutes of senior football, the equiv-

alent of 300 full matches, by the age of 23.

As well as physical fatigue and injuries, the effect on mental health following a major tournament can be significant.

FIFPRO produced a report addressing "post-tournament blues" after being approached by former Canada goalkeeper Stephanie Labbe earlier this year.

In an article for the union's website, Labbe wrote: "You can spend four years leading up to this one pinnacle moment, then suddenly it stops and you think: 'What's next?'"

The phenomenon is not unique to football, with England cricketer Liam Plunkett admitting just days after winning the 2019 World Cup that he was struggling with the rapid transition to being "sat on the sofa watching Netflix" and wondering if another similar high would ever come around.

Baer-Hoffmann continued: "It's not just the physical recovery, it's also the mental ability to readjust, to get yourself ready for the remainder of the season - which of course, when you play a tourna-



Kylian Mbappe had played a huge volume of football by the age of 23. (PA)

ment in the middle of a season, is very different.

"When you combine all these factors - there has basically been no preparation period, there's no retraining period now after the tournament, which usually is about a month - all of those coming together are things that worry us."

Baer-Hoffmann highlighted a similar situation in prospect around the 2024 Olympics - where the women's competi-

tion is played with senior squads as opposed to the predominantly under-23 men's sides.

He said: "If you look at the women's game, there's talk of some confederations hosting their continental championships in the same spring before the Olympics in 2024.

"How are players supposed to do that? How are they supposed to play a one-month continental competition in May, and then the Olympics in July,

when their season - like in the (American) NWSL - maybe runs from March to October? They'll be missing three months of club football, effectively.

"All these things are just not decided with the players' best interests in the centre of the decision-making. That's where we have this continuous problem and until we break that cycle, we'll keep having these problems."

(Agencies)

Gwiji by David Chikoko

SEASON'S GREETINGS TO ALL FANS



SPORT

Mikel Arteta rallies Arsenal for 'unprecedented' title opportunity

PAGE 19



Hasheem Ibwe

Tension keeps building ahead of Azam versus Yanga Christmas encounter

By Correspondent Nassir Nchimbi

TENSION is building for the highly anticipated NBC Premier match between Azam FC versus Young Africans (Yanga) to be played at the Benjamin Mkapa Stadium in Dar es Salaam tomorrow.

These teams last time drew 2-2 in the match played at the venue in the first round of the league.

Hosts Azam FC have drawn two games in a row after winning eight games this season.

Yanga are four in four wins from last five after that famous loss to Ihefu SC.

The defending champions have continued to show quality this season with 44 points after playing 17 games having drawn two games against Simba and Azam and lost one against Ihefu.

Azam's acting information officer Hasheem Ibwe has said that they are ready for the game, and they believe that their team will fight to get the three important points after picking up two points in the Lake Region games.

Ibwe made this statement yesterday where he said: "Coach Kalimangonga Ongala and the entire technical bench are very interested in this match as it could be a title decider.

"If we win this match we will be officially back in the championship race. We know that victory will make us reduce the points' gap with those above us. We believe there are still many matches and you never know what will happen.

"For Azam FC, we don't look forward to draw again. The draw with Geita Gold FC it was the last for now. We are going for victory. Now, we want to win every game in front of us."

On Yanga's side, assistant coach Cedric Kaze said they respect their opponents and they are prepared to compete in order to achieve their goals, although they recognize the quality of Azam.

"Each player has shown his individual efforts in training. The goal is to give our fans the best Christmas. We have studied Azam very closely from their previous ten games so as to encounter them very smartly," he said.

"We are expecting a tough and competitive game because Azam is one of the teams that are chasing us by points. We do not expect to drop a single point so that we can cement our place at the top position until the end."

Dar City ballers clinch 2022 RBA Division 1 League title

League.

Dar City ballers led by a foreign player from Kenya Michael Makiadi got off to a good start in the last Wednesday duel and commanded 15-9 lead in the first quarter.

The second quarter witnessed Dar City keeping on dictating terms as the squad put pressure on DB Oysterbay and came out with 25-13 lead.

The third quarter turned out to be more thrilling given DB Oysterbay ballers cheered by their fans that turned out in large number put spirited showing and took a slim 11-10 lead.

Dar City ballers regained control of the tie in the last quarter and posted 13-10 lead which made certain of their victory.

Makiadi turned out to be the leading scorer for Dar City given the performer slotted in 20 points.

Teammate Akoki Lau from South Sudan notched 14 points whilst executing two three-pointers.

DB Oysterbay wound up the final with its Kenyan professional Yang Ogweni notching 14 points, whereas fellow baller Dominick Kipingi slotted in 11 points.

Ogweni also led in posting rebounds masterly, ending with five rebounds, while making two blocks for the losing finalists.

He also provided five assists that led to the valuable



The DB Oysterbay basketballers ready for the start of this season's Regional Basketball Association (RBA) Division 1 League final against Dar City squad which took place in Dar es Salaam on Wednesday. Dar City ballers defeated DB Oysterbay to clinch the trophy. PHOTO: CORRESPONDENT

points.

Dar City squad's coach Mohamed Mbwana congratulated DB Oysterbay for showcasing impressive showing in the duel.

"Honestly lack of experience frustrated DB Oysterbay outfit's efforts, the squad's ballers consequently could not match my players that are quite experienced," Mbwana stated.

The tactician further said his outfit is looking into preparing intensively for 2023 RBA League via participating in drills regularly which will put the squad in better position to clinch the league's title.

DB Oysterbay's coach Isihaka Masoud said many turn overs conceded by his players contributed to their defeat.

"We took the ball to our opponents' side but poor finishing cost us in the match," Masoud revealed.

The gaffer said his ballers had on several occasions lost concentration and the weakness proved costly.

Masoud revealed: "I ought to congratulate my squad for the achievement, I believe we will surprise many in 2023 RBA League."

Simba Queens' boss explains slow start to the season



Simba Queens and Yanga Princess players vie for the ball during their Tanzania Women's Premier League match held at the Benjamin Mkapa Stadium in Dar es Salaam on Thursday. The match ended in a 1-1 draw. PHOTO: JUMANNE JUMA

By Correspondent Michael Mwebe

SIMBA Queens head coach Charles Lukula has explained the reason behind their slow start to the season.

Lukula explained that in his post-match press conference at the Benjamin Mkapa National Stadium, as he responded to a question from the media after the derby draw with Yanga Princess.

The Tanzania Women's Premier League defending champions have had a slow start to the 2022/23 campaign, after registering just one win from their opening three encounters.

Lukula charges pulled off a comfort-

able 4-0 victory over Tigers last week, but had to come from behind to settle for a one-all draw with Yanga Princess on Thursday.

They suffered a shocking opening day loss at home against leaders JKT Queens.

The Ugandan coach says the opponents may have mastered their game plan after an impressive outing in the CAF Champions League in Morocco and feels they did not have time to rest with the league campaign having started immediately after they returned from the continental tournament where they finished fourth.

He added it is not a big concern and

in four games they should look different as well.

"It was a good game. I congratulate the players for putting up a decent fight. In the first half we conceded that goal through a set piece but when we returned for the second half they played and we got a goal.

"You know derby games are always tough, if you earn a point you have to be thankful. This campaign is tough, and every team is battling for something. Even Fountain Gate Princess are playing very good football, they are not at the top by accident.

"My players played a good game that everyone could see as opposed

to when we were down against JKT Queens. We are glad for the shared point. We are going back to the training pitch to change a few things ahead of the Fountain Gate Princess game.

"We were in the CAF Women's Champions League where everyone could see our tactics and analyses how to play against us.

"The league started just one week and half after we returned so we had no time to rest while our opponents had more time to fine tune their squads. After we have played four matches, you will see a good Simba Queens team."

Flexibles by David Chikoko

"MAY THERE BE PEACE ON EARTH"

