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Biteko lauds President Samia's for devt projects in Magu



## National Pg 4

NFRA purchases over 72,000 tonnes of maize



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**JUST WHERE HAVE THE BUSES GONE?**  
It was literally too many people chasing too few goods at the Magufuli Bus Terminal in Dar es Salaam's Mbezi Luis suburb yesterday, with hundreds of would-be passengers stranded for long hours. The mess was blamed on a sudden shortage of buses - itself reportedly induced by a festive-season rush for travel from the commercial capital to various upcountry stations. Efforts by the relevant authorities to mitigate the harm appeared to have all but failed. Photo: Correspondent Miraji Msala

## Ngorongoro: Samia forms commissions for key land issues, assessing relocation

*These commissions are expected to address pressing issues in the conservation area and provide solutions that balance the needs of the residents and environmental conservation*

By Guardian Reporter

PRESIDENT Samia Suluhu Hassan has formed two commissions to address issues in the Ngorongoro Conservation Area (NCA). Dr Moses Kusiluka, the chief secretary, said in statement issued on Monday that the commissions will examine land issues on the one hand, and the relocation exercise on the other, and each will have specific membership and work schedule.

One commission will address land-related concerns raised by residents, while the other

will evaluate the progress of voluntary relocation efforts in the area.

This initiative follows a promise made by the president on December 1, at a meeting with Maasai traditional leaders of the area, at the State Lodge in Arusha.

The president decided at the meeting to form commissions to address the concerns raised by the elders, and in the current announcement the Land Issues Commission has nine members, while the Relocation Assessment Commission is made up of

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## Zanzibar now to reconstruct its traditional narrow roads

By Guardian Reporter, Zanzibar

NARROW roads which traditionally mark the face of Zanzibar city are in the process of being improved.

President Dr Hussein Ali Mwinyi made this observation here yesterday when inaugurating a 6.5-km road linking Zanzibar airport to Mnzimmoja in the city centre, a critical infrastructure project valued at over \$5m.

Improving transportation in Zanzibar is crucial, he said, affirming that expanding the narrow roads is costly but it is a necessary investment. "That's why we are building roads with two lanes to ease traffic flow," he stated

He assured the public that the new infrastructure, with proper drainage systems on road edges, would mitigate flooding in residential areas.

"Once this work is complete, no homes will be at risk of being flooded due to inadequate drainage," he said, while urging residents to uphold peace, unity and harmony as the key to achieving sustainable development.

The completion of the airport road is part of ongoing efforts to transform the Zanzibar urban infrastructure, he said, explaining that the road is part of a broader initiative that includes rebuilding 100.9 kilometres of roads in Unguja

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## LATRA seeks rail, road, cable tourism investors

By Guardian Reporter

PRIVATE investors are being asked to take up projects in rail transport services and special road transport in major cities.

Henry Magombana, assistant director for road services at the Ministry of Transport told a stakeholders' meeting in Dar es Salaam on Monday, called to discuss new regulations aimed at introducing cable-car transport and private railway operators, among other objectives.

Organised by the Land Transport Regulatory Authority (LATRA), the meeting sought for stakeholders to share their views on a series of proposed regulations designed to improve governance and operational standards in the land transport sector.

The regulations discussed include the LATRA (Licensing of Railway Operators) Regulations of 2024, the LATRA (Cable



**This regulation is aimed at ensuring safety for investors, infrastructure development and operational standards**

Transport) Regulations of 2024, and the Transport Licensing (Exclusive Public Transport Licence) Regulations of 2024.

He said that the government was introducing the regulations for improvements made to current transport laws, thus invited stakeholders to review suggested regulations.

Among the transportation areas that LATRA wants the private sector to invest in is express bus transportation in cities, citing cable transport services, where the regulator will begin to register service providers in the sub-sector, issuing special licenses for the purpose.

Stakeholders will be able to apply for licenses once the regulations are finalised, he said, affirming that this initiative is aligned with the government's ongoing infrastructure development efforts, particularly in

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## TPDF praises returning Central Africa peace keeping battalion

*"The successful completion of the mission not only strengthens Tanzania's standing in global peacekeeping but also underscores the country's unwavering commitment to promoting peace, stability and security worldwide"*

By Correspondent James Kandoya

THE seventh batch of Tanzanian peacekeepers serving in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) has safely returned to the country after completing a year-long mission

Brigadier General George Itang'are, attached to eastern zone division of the Tan-

zania People's Defense Force (TPDF), said at a reception ceremony at the Mapinga military training college in Bagamoyo District, Coast Region, that the battalion left the country on December 18 last year for the fairly distant destination.

Standing in for the chief of staff, Lieutenant General Salim Hajj Othman, he praised the soldiers' dedication, asserting that they had representing the country very well,

both as a military contingent and as citizens of Tanzania.

He described experience that the peacekeepers gained as invaluable, underpinned by the core values of loyalty, trustworthiness and courage, while remaining steadfast in their oaths.

Serving in the mission helps to build character, he said, receiving battalion commander Lieutenant Colonel Joseph Mushilu who presented a certificate of recognition awarded by the United Nations.

The certificate highlighted the battalion's significant contribution to the citizens of the Central African Republic, he said, while the battalion commander noted that the recognition "stands as a testament to the bravery,

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**Ahoua's late penalty secures Simba vital win over JKT Tanzania**

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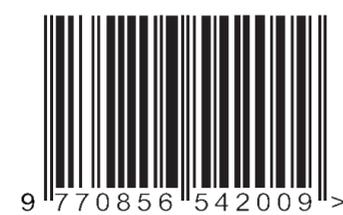


**Yanga ready to extend winning streak against Dodoma Jiji in Premier League**

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## Ngorongoro: Samia forms commissions for key land issues, assessing relocation

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eight members.

Appeal Justice Dr Gerald Ndika will chair the Land Issues Commission, whose members include Philemon Luhango, a retired chief secretary. Others as Zakia Meghji, a veteran former cabinet minister, as well as Judge George Masaju, a former attorney general and lately presidential legal affairs adviser.

Other commission members are Dr Richard Muyungi, a State House adviser on environment and climate change, Ambassador Salome Sijaona, Prof. Wilbard Kombe from Ardhi University, Prof Emmanuel Luoga from the Sokoine University of Agriculture, Ngorongoro Pastoral Council secretary Mollel James Moringe, and Moi Aprakwa Sikorei, a community leader in the area.

The Relocation Assessment Commission will be chaired by former

permanent secretary Musa Iyombe, with members listed as ex-permanent secretary Sihaba Nkinga and Alphayo Kidata, a former revenue authority director general. Its other members are Ambassador Valentino Mlowola who once headed the anti-corruption bureau, Ambassador Mohamed Mtonga as former chief internal auditor, Ambassador George Madafa and Haruna Masebu, a former director general for the National Housing Corporation (NHC).

The team also brings in two residents of the area, a teacher, Edward Maura Nduleti and Rehema Mois-are, a resident of Ngorongoro.

These commissions are expected to address pressing issues in the conservation area and provide solutions that balance the needs of the residents and environmental conservation, the statement indicated.



Livestock and Fisheries minister Dr Ashatu Kijaji (2nd-R) has a feel of Nile perch fillet while on a tour of a fish processing factory in Muleba District, Kagera Region, on Monday. Photo: Correspondent Tobias Mwanakatwe

## Zanzibar to reconstruct traditional narrow roads

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Island, while setting out to build elevated roads to minimise congestion.

He asked motorists to stop parking on pedestrian paths, calling it a dangerous habit.

"We have seen irresponsible behaviour where people park on pedestrian walkways and dump debris on roadsides. This must stop," he said, calling on the regulatory authorities to ensure the roads remain in a good condition.

He stressed the importance of preserving road reserves, cautioning against invasive construction in those areas, as building on road reserves increases the cost of construction by demolition and compensation.

"People must stop building in these areas to protect our road development projects," he said, linking the rebuilding with other priority areas, as the main spheres are tourism, infrastructure and social services.

"We must keep our city clean and well-lit, and all new roads will have streetlights to enhance safety and the environment," he further noted, while the Infrastructure, Communications and Transport minister Dr Khalid Salum Mohamed elaborated

on the projects.

He said that that 86 kilometres of roads, including internal city roads, have been completed, with additional roads expected to be finished by November 2025.

He reflected on initial uncertainty surrounding the construction of the Mnazimmoja Road, highlighting funding doubts as the project began, due to the fact that the old road, built in the 1970s, did not meet modern standards.

The new road will improve connectivity and contribute to Zanzibar's economic growth by linking urban and rural areas more effectively, he said.

Dr Habiba Hassan Omar, the principal secretary, said that the completed road is a key component of the 100.9 kilometres of roads initiative, to uplift transportation in Zanzibar.

Idrissa Kitwana Mustafa, the Unguja Urban-West regional commissioner, said that the new road will reduce road accidents and fatalities, making travel safer for all.

The completion of the road is a significant achievement in the government's efforts to modernise infrastructure, improve transportation and support economic growth, he added.

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professionalism and commitment of our soldiers."

Their return marks not only the completion of a critical mission abroad but also a proud moment for the entire army, he said, highlighting that over 2,600 Tanzanian military and police personnel are currently serving in six United Nations peacekeeping operations.

These officers are involved in vital tasks such as protecting civilians and community policing, contribut-

## TPDF praises returning Central Africa peace keeping battalion

ing significantly to peace and stability in a number of conflict zones, he stated.

MINUSCA is part of a broader UN peacekeeping network, which includes MINURSO in Western Sahara, MONUSCO in the Democratic Republic of Congo, and UNMISS in

South Sudan.

As of September 2021, the mission in the Central African Republic had over 15,000 personnel, including troops, police and civilians, supporting the country's uneasy transition to peace following decades of conflict.

"The successful completion of the mission not only strengthens Tanzania's standing in global peacekeeping but also underscores the country's unwavering commitment to promoting peace, stability and security worldwide," the divisional commander declared.



Brig Gen George Itang'are (L) receives a souvenir from Lt Col Joseph Mushilu, Commandant of the seventh batch of Tanzanian peacekeepers on the United Nations mission in the Central African Republic which has recently completed its mission. It was at a "welcome back" ceremony held at a military training college in Bagamoyo District. Photo courtesy of TPDF

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rail and road construction.

Habibu Suluo, the LATRA director general, said that the regulations are meant to improve public and freight services, with stakeholder feedback being incorporated to enhance their effectiveness.

The special licenses for road service providers in urban areas will primarily focus on bus rapid transit (BRT) systems, he said, underlining that the government wants the private sector to provide these services.

## LATRA seeks rail, road, cable tourism investors

"For instance, private bus operators in the city can form a consortium and be awarded contracts to operate with specific fare structures as even the routes will be designated for these services," he said.

The main goal is to address urban transport within the city limits of Dar es Salaam, covering routes

within the city and slightly outside, not long-distance travel to other regions, he stated.

Cable transport is mainly designed to promote tourism, as research has shown that many people using cable transport services do so for leisure purposes.

"This regulation is aimed at en-

suring safety for investors, infrastructure development and operational standards," he specified.

Engaging stakeholders is essential for ensuring the regulations effectively address industry challenges and promote sustainable development in the transport sector, he added.



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Same district commissioner Kasilda Mgeni (L) leads the paying of respects to two of several people who died recently when their houses were crushed by boulders swept away by floodwaters following a downpour. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

## Eight people die in horrific head-on collision, says RPC

By Guardian Reporter, Handeni

EIGHT people have died and several others sustained injuries in a head-on collision between a lorry and a Toyota Coaster in Michungwani village, Segera Ward, Handeni District in Tanga Region yesterday.

Regional Police Commander in Tanga, Almachius Mchunguzi said that the accident occurred at around 11:00am, at Kwachuma, Segera Ward in Handeni District, on the Segera-Chalinze main road.

The injured have been identified as Godlisen Minja (20), a businessman and resident of Mabibo, Dar es Salaam; Riziki Mboya (28), a driver and resident of Njia-panda, Moshi; Lina Swai (25), a businesswoman; Gospan Lema (24) electrician and resident of Dar es Salaam.

Others are Loyce James (27), a resident of Buguruni in Dar es Salaam; Lucy Urrio (24), a resident of Dar es Salaam; Yohana Stephano (35), the lorry driver and resident of Goba, Dar es Salaam; and Samuel Hossen (24), the conductor, also a resident of Dar es Salaam.

RPC Mchunguzi said that the accident involved a lorry owned by Starling Gulf Trading Company, travelling from Tanga to Dar es Salaam, and a small Toyota Coaster bus, owned by Naman Joel Mkuambo, travelling from Dar es Salaam

to Kilimanjaro.

"The accident occurred when the driver of the Toyota Coaster lost control of the vehicle, swerving into the opposite lane and causing a head-on collision with the lorry," Commander Mchunguzi said.

All the injured have been taken to Magunga Hospital in Korogwe District for treatment, while the bodies of the deceased await post-mortem and identification by their relatives.

He called on all drivers to consistently observe road safety regulations including adhering to speed limits and observing road signs.

Handeni District Commissioner Albert Msando, who also chairs the District Security and Safety Committee, posted on his Instagram account, urging drivers arriving at Manga village to adhere to road safety laws to avoid accidents.

"The accident was a result of the driver's negligence. Due to repeated carelessness, I have instructed the District Police Commander (OCD) to take legal action against anyone violating road traffic laws in Handeni, and the culprits should appear in court.

He also advised passengers to speak up if a driver is driving recklessly. They should stop the vehicle and demand refund. They should also report the matter to the police for action to be taken.

## Biteko praises President Samia on major devt projects in Magu

By Guardian Reporter

DEPUTY Prime Minister and Minister for Energy, Dr Doto Biteko has expressed his appreciation for President Samia Suluhu Hassan's continued efforts and funding of key development projects in Magu District, Mwanza Region and across the country.

Speaking at the Magu Constituency implementation meeting on Monday, Dr. Biteko praised President Samia for her leadership and the economic growth that has seen Tanzania's economy grow by 5.1 per cent.

He noted that her efforts have earned her recognition not only within the country but also internationally, with institutions like the World Bank and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) commending her achievements.

"President Samia has done extraordinary work that deserves all our praise," Dr Biteko said.

He added: "Some may be uncomfortable with the accolades, but it is important to acknowledge that even global organisations are praising her leadership and the 5.1 per cent economic growth that Tanzania has experienced."

Dr Biteko also highlighted that the development taking place in Magu was no accident.

"This progress is the result of meticulous planning and hard work. I would like to commend the members of the CCM in Magu for their role in supporting these efforts, as they have helped secure the 143.9bn/- allocated for various local projects," he said.

Among the key government initiatives in the region, Biteko pointed out the construction of tarmacked roads connecting all regions of the country, the expansion of schools, and the development of transport infrastructure, including the introduction of passenger and cargo flights.

"The development is there for everyone to see, and we are proud of these accomplishments," he said.

On the issue of electricity, Dr Biteko revealed that the government has allocated 600m/- to provide solar power to a village that had previously been without electricity.

He also mentioned ongoing plans to extend the electricity grid to islands in the region.

In addition, Dr Biteko commended Magu MP, Boniventura Kiswaga, for his diligent oversight of development projects in the constituency, urging CCM members to continue supporting their leaders at all levels.

Kiswaga highlighted the government's financial commitment to local development.

He revealed that President Samia's government has allocated 78bn/- for emergency projects and 48bn/- for the construction of the Simiyu Bridge, which will significantly improve transportation in the region.

In the water sector, Kiswaga reported that 12bn/- has been allocated for the construction of a water tank with a capacity of 5 million litres, which will supply 14 wards in Magu District.

He also noted that additional funds have been allocated for water projects in Ihale and other rural areas, including the construction of a 2 million-litre tank and deep well drilling projects.

Education has also been a priority, with the district receiving over 31bn/- for the construction of secondary schools.

"We have completed several secondary schools and are continuing to build more in rural areas. Our goal is to bring education closer to the people," Kiswaga said.

In health, the district has received 10bn/- for the renovation and construction of health centres, improving access to healthcare for the community.

Mwanza Regional Commissioner, Said Mtanda, commended the legislator for his leadership in ensuring that local residents were kept informed of the development work in the area.

"In the past three years, under President Samia's leadership, the government has allocated 5.6trn/- for development projects, including here in Magu," he said.

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## NFRA purchases over 72000 tonnes of maize

By Guardian Reporter, Ruvuma

THE National Food Reserve Agency (NFRA) in Songea, Ruvuma Region has purchased over 72,000 tonnes of maize from farmers during the 2024/2025 agricultural season.

Zenobius Kahere, the manager of NFRA in Songea, said that the maize was collected through 21 designated collection points across seven districts of the region, with the exception of Tunduru District, where most residents are engaged in cashew farming.

Kahere highlighted that Ruvuma is one of the regions designated as a national food reserve due to its ability to produce maize and other food and cash crops. At times, NFRA also supplies other regions facing food shortages within the country.

"We opened collection points in seven of our eight districts, and we were able to collect over 72,000 tonnes of maize. By November, these points were closed, and the current work involves transporting the maize from the collection points to various warehouses for storage," Kahere said.

He also noted that maize farmers were satisfied with the government-set price of 700/- per kilogram, particularly when compared to the lower prices offered by private buyers, who were purchasing maize at prices ranging from 300/- to 450/- per kilogram.

However, Kahere pointed out a significant challenge regarding the quality of maize brought to the market by farmers from various areas, as it did not meet NFRA's

standards.

"This issue forced farmers to spend considerable time at the collection points to clean and select the maize to meet the required quality before it could be accepted and weighed," he explained.

To address this challenge, Kahere revealed that for the 2025/2026 farming season, NFRA, in collaboration with various stakeholders, plans to educate farmers on essential practices, such as the use of quality seeds and adherence to guidelines from planting through to harvesting.

According to Kahere, this initiative will help farmers produce maize that meets the required standards, thus reducing losses, cleaning costs, and time spent at collection points.

He encouraged farmers to take advice from agricultural extension officers and other experts as they prepare for the upcoming farming season, ensuring they produce a successful, marketable harvest.

"Farmers should not hesitate to seek guidance from extension officers in their areas on modern farming techniques, rather than continuing to rely on traditional methods," Kahere emphasised.

During a seven-day visit to Ruvuma, President Samia Suluhu Hassan congratulated farmers for their hard work in producing abundant crops, contributing significantly to food security in Tanzania.

She urged farmers to avoid selling their maize to middlemen at lower prices, instead encouraging them to sell at the government-set price of 700/- per kilogram.

## Appeal to social institutions towards improving elderly service provision

By Correspondent Maulid Mmbaga

David Sendo, chairman of the National Advisory Elderly Council, David Sendo has said the elderly in Tanzania face social insecurity that put them at risk of great horizon of abuse, social exclusion, serious illness and abject poverty. Although, there are several social institutions addressing the risks facing the elderly in the country, still the elderly's adverse conditions remain unabated.

They have urged the government to implement a sustainable strategy over the next 25 years to protect them from acts of violence and ensure their safety across the country.

They have called for the issues to be included in the National Development Vision 2050.

Speaking Dar es Salaam over the weekend during a meeting to review the draft development vision 2050, David Sendo, emphasised that one of the most prevalent forms of violence against the elderly is the confiscation of their properties, often by family members or others.

The meeting brought representatives from the National Advisory Elderly Council and the Planning Commission.

Sendo also highlighted the need for dedicated systems to address sexual violence against the elderly, alongside a national plan to eradicate all forms of violence targeting this vulnerable group.

He called for stronger interventions and enhanced social welfare services to better support the elderly.

"There must be comprehensive interventions to address sexual violence, as well as services that support child care, development, psychological support, and mental health for victims of various disasters—similar to those provided recently to victims in Hanang and Kariakoo," Sendo said.

He also stressed the importance of initiatives to strengthen family support systems, behaviour modification for children and adults in conflict with the law, and improving the overall welfare of the elderly.

This includes better management and monitoring of health services for seniors, both in government and private healthcare facilities, tailored to meet their specific needs.

Sendo recommended the

creation of a dedicated law for the elderly, aimed at facilitating access to services they are entitled to under current policies. He also suggested the introduction of social pensions to improve the economic well-being of older citizens.

"The elderly should be recognized and provided with free health insurance as a mark of appreciation for their contributions to national development," he said.

Furthermore, Sendo called for greater representation of the elderly in decision-making processes at village, local, and regional levels.

He advocated for the establishment of programs to economically empower the elderly, including access to loans from various financial institutions.

"We also want to see the strengthening of social welfare systems and institutions, including the introduction of laws to better coordinate and manage quality services for the elderly. The social welfare budget should be prioritised, and there should be a special, independent welfare unit within ministries, regions, and councils to support the elderly and other vulnerable groups," he said.

Sabu Matimbwa, member of the National Advisory Elderly Council stressed the importance of including the elderly in the region's scientific and technological advancements, noting that many older individuals have been left behind in these developments.

He further advocated for the economic empowerment of the elderly to be a priority. Elder Limo highlighted the need for universal health insurance policies to specifically address the elderly, ensuring they have access to free treatment.

He emphasized the importance of providing adequate protection for this vulnerable group and condemned any acts of cruelty against them.

Dr Linda Ezekiel, acting Executive Secretary of the National Development Vision 2050, acknowledged the government's commitment to incorporating the views of various stakeholders, including the elderly, into the development vision.

"The government values the contributions of the elderly and is committed to ensuring their concerns are reflected in the National Development Vision 2050," Dr Ezekiel said.



Residents of Ilongero, Kijota and Mtiko wards in Singida Rural District hold gas cylinders and stoves Special Seats legislator Martha Gwau presented to them at the weekend in supporting President Samia Suluhu Hassan's drive on the use of clean cooking energy. Photo: Correspondent Tobias Mwanakatwe

## NCA registers 551,512 tourists in five months

By Guardian Correspondent, Karatu

NUMBER of tourists visiting the Ngorongoro Conservation Area (NCA) has increased to about 551,512 tourists recorded in a five-month period compared to 350,091 within the same period.

Minister for Natural Resources and Tourism, Dr Pindi Chana said that in Karatu District, Arusha Region yesterday, at the ceremony for the swearing-in of the new Ngorongoro Conservation Area Authority (NCAA) Conservation Commissioner, Dr Elirehema Doriye.

Dr. Chana swore in the Commissioner on behalf of

President Samia Suluhu Hassan.

She said that of the total number of tourists, 350,091 were foreign visitors, while 201,421 were domestic.

She also said that NCAA has seen a rise in its revenue, collecting more than 138.68bn/- during the same period.

She noted that for the 2024/25 financial year, the authority had demonstrated strong performance in revenue collection and instructed NCAA Conservation Commissioner, Dr. Elirehema Doriye, to intensify efforts in revenue management.

She also directed Dr Doriye to enhance the use of Information and Communication Technology

(ICT), improve professional relationships, manage employee rights, strengthen stakeholder engagement, and promote domestic tourism awareness.

At the time NCAA had already launched a special campaign to boost domestic tourism, known as 'Merry & Wild, Ngorongoro Awaits'.

The campaign encourages more Tanzanians to visit Ngorongoro's tourist attractions, including the Olduvai cultural heritage site, Empakai Crater, Olmoti, and Tanzania's third-highest mountain, Loromalasi. It also promotes the Ngorongoro-Lengai UNESCO Geopark.

The chairman of the NCAA

Board of Trustees, retired General Venance Mabeyo, congratulated Dr. Doriye on his appointment.

He urged him to continue overseeing conservation efforts, tourism, and community development activities with professionalism, patriotism, and perseverance, in line with the oath he took.

Earlier, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism, Dr Hassan Abbasi, congratulated Dr Doriye on his appointment and successful completion of conservation military training, urging NCAA staff to offer full cooperation to fulfilling the authority's objectives.



Jamal Baruti (C), acting Director of Law Enforcement at the National Environment Management Council, addresses journalists in Dar es Salaam yesterday. Photo: Correspondent Joseph Mwendapole

By Correspondent Joseph Mwendapole

## NEMC embarks on noise pollution fight during Christmas, New Year celebrations

THE National Environmental Management Council (NEMC) has set up a special operation team to monitor and enforce environmental regulations during the Christmas season, targeting noise pollution and other environmental violations in entertainment venues.

Speaking yesterday in Dar es Salaam, Jamal Baruti, the acting Director of Law Enforcement at NEMC, announced that the team will be active across all zones in the country, focusing particularly on regions with high potential for environmental challenges.

For Dar es Salaam and the Coast, teams will be dispatched to investigate and resolve any reports of environmental violations in compliance with the law.

Baruti highlighted that the NEMC's special team will work closely with regional and local government authorities, law enforcement agencies, and citizens to ensure the effectiveness of the operation.

The NEMC has also set up a "Call Centre team" that will be available 24/7 to receive and act on information related to environmental law violations from the public.

"We are encouraging citizens, businesses, and institutions to ensure they comply with environmental laws, particularly concerning noise and vibrations that exceed legal standards, as well as improper sewage disposal, which

pose serious health risks," Baruti said.

He added: "We urge everyone to obtain the necessary permits from relevant authorities before hosting any gatherings to ensure they follow legal procedures."

The operation comes after a rise in noise pollution, especially during the Christmas and New Year seasons, where excess sound levels and vibrations have been reported in entertainment venues such as clubs, bars, and public gatherings.

In addition, the improper discharge of wastewater from factories has been a significant concern, especially in rapidly growing urban areas like Dar es Salaam, Arusha, Mwanza and

Mbeya.

Baruti emphasised that the NEMC is committed to continuing its efforts to educate the public and encourage compliance with environmental laws to protect both present and future generations. He also warned that anyone found violating environmental regulations will face appropriate legal and administrative action.

"Those who fail to comply with the Environmental Law and its Regulations will face the necessary consequences," he said.

With the festive season underway, NEMC is determined to ensure that environmental standards are upheld, safeguarding the health and well-being of the public.



Celestine Simba, a former speaker of the "people's parliament" through the opposition Chadema, briefs journalists in Dar es Salaam yesterday on her intention to vie for the chairpersonship of the party's women's council. Photo: Correspondent Imani Nathaniel

## Government forms probe team to study quality of mineral trade and revenue

By Polycarp Machira, Dodoma

THE government has formed a nine-member team to investigate the scale of mineral trade in the country in a move aimed at streamlining the sector and increasing foreign currency.

The team will study activities of all mineral dealers and establish a number of issues, among them if they remit back money in the country in foreign or local currencies.

Through the relevant ministry, the team has already conducted extensive audit that has helped reduce the number of dealers from 700 in 2022 to 150 in 2023, eliminating those who do not qualify to provide the service.

While the sector's contribution to the economy increases steadily, the government has noticed several loopholes used by dealers which deny the government a lot of money in forex.

Speaking during a meeting with the dealers here yesterday, Minister for Minerals Anthony Mavunde said most mineral dealers in the country sell abroad in foreign currencies but deposit shillings in the local banks.

He said mineral laws and regulations demand that dealers or sellers of minerals outside the country should deposit foreign currencies in the local banks.

The minister expressed concerns that while the government has opened doors for any capable persons in the country to participate in mineral trading, some of the dealers misuse the freedom.

"Unlike some countries, Tanzania has allowed anyone willing and capable to participate in mining business and investments but it is unfortunate that some people are not willing to adhere to the set requirements" he said.

He called on the dealers to support the government's efforts in streamlining the sector by

sticking to the law by selling outside the country and depositing back in foreign currencies and later exchange into local currency for local dealings.

According to the minister, mining sector has been on the high growth contributing 9.1 percent to the GDP up from 6.8 percent in the last financial year. He said between July 2022 and July 2023, gold export reached 2.24trn/-.

Mavunde noted that the sector contributes to 56 percent of the total exports, adding: "The government depends a lot on exports that earn the country foreign currency which is needed for buying goods and services outside the country."

He explained that in 2022, transactions done by local dealers reached over \$ 905.6 million whereby diamond dealers contributed \$18.1 million as rare minerals reached \$ 29.1million.

He added that the government plans to award the dealers who contributed to the noted achievements during the mining forum scheduled for October, 2025.

Deputy Chairperson of the Tanzania Mineral Dealers Association (TAMIDA) Leopold Kimaro said there are several issues that need to be addressed by the government in supporting operations of the dealers.

He thanked the government for the efforts in strengthening the sector, saying: "No ministry or sector has recorded such steady growth within such a short time."



**No ministry or sector has recorded such steady growth within such a short time**

## Speaker optimistic as Z'bar sees rise in tourist arrivals

By Guardian Reporter, Zanzibar

THE Speaker of the Zanzibar House of Representatives, Zubeir Ali Maulid, has expressed pride in the continued achievement of isles' tourism sector which has seen surge in tourist arrivals for various attractions.

The speaker made the remarks yesterday during the launch of a new hotel project at Fukuchani, North Unguja Region, as part of the 61st anniversary celebrations of the Zanzibar Revolution.

He affirmed that the government is committed to ensuring that tourists visiting Zanzibar find excellent accommodation options

in beautiful surroundings for relaxation.

He noted that the government has created a conducive environment for major investors in the hospitality subsector in line with the government's strategy to boost the industry.

"Indeed, Zanzibar government is doing everything possible to provide a favourable environment for investors," he said.

He also mentioned that reports show a steady increase in the number of tourists visiting Zanzibar. In 2023, the island received 640,000 tourists and aims to reach one million by 2030.

The speaker further highlighted

that the government has continued to create a favourable policy and legal framework, enabling expansion of accommodation through numerous construction projects for tourists.

"The rise of such projects has been greatly driven by the growing demand from tourists who prefer to stay longer in the beautiful surroundings of our islands," he said

He explained that investment in the construction of accommodation for tourists is now the second-largest subsector attracting substantial capital after investment in hotels.

Statistics show that 37 percent of

all registered investment projects with the Zanzibar Investment Promotion Authority (ZIPA) during the four years are hotel projects, followed by 22 percent in commercial housing projects.

"The statistics confirm that the image of our tourism sector is changing rapidly," he r said.

ZIPA Chief Executive Officer Salehe Saad Muhamed reported that over the past four years, the authority has signed 424 projects across Zanzibar worth a total of \$ 5.9 billion.

He noted that in North Unguja alone, there are 99 projects worth \$ 2 billion which have created 22,000 jobs.

By Guardian Correspondent, Rungwe

RUNGWE District Council in Mbeya Region has begun distributing beehives to women, youth and people with disabilities (PwDs) to help increase their income through honey production and support environmental conservation.

Acting Rungwe District Community Development Officer Numwagile Bughali made the remarks here recently, noting that the beehives are part of the 10 percent of the council's internal revenue which by law must be allocated to the special groups.

The groups receiving the beehives are required to place them in protected forests and water sources to ensure the environments remain secure.

He stated that the council plans to distribute over 200 beehives across all wards in the district, with 50 already been distributed to Syasya and Igembe villages in Masoko Ward.

Once the distribution is complete

## Groups get beehives in new income, conservation drive

in the ward, the council plans to continue with other wards, particularly those with government-protected forests.

"This is part of implementing the law. We believe this will provide a reliable source of income as you harvest honey and other bee products to sell," Numwagile said.

Rungwe District Council Chairman, Mpokigwa Mwankuga, urged the groups receiving the beehives to follow expert guidance to ensure the success of their projects.

He added that the groups currently receiving the beehives are model groups, and the council will continue to monitor their progress, with the possibility of providing additional hives if they perform well. "The government's goal is to empower the special groups economically, ensuring they are not dependent on the surrounding

communities," he said.

After receiving the beehives, some beneficiaries expressed their gratitude to the government and promised to take care of the hives to achieve the government's goal of improving their economy and protecting the environment.

James Mwakangale, one of the beneficiaries, shared that before receiving the beehives, they had only a few but the government had provided them with more capital.

Since starting beekeeping, he has already seen positive results and decided to request additional hives from the council after the government reintroduced the 10 percent loans.

Tedy Mwakisopo, a beekeeper at Syasya village, mentioned that initially, when she started beekeeping, the community did not believe she would succeed as many thought the activity was for men.



Members of groups of women and youth from Msoko ward in Rungwe District, Mbeya Region, pictured yesterday carrying beehives issued to them by local government authorities for placing in forests and close to water sources in part as an environmental protection strategy. Photo: Correspondent Nebart Msokwa




TERMS OF REFERENCE (ToR) FOR BASELINE SURVEY

<b>Assignment:</b>	Conducting A Baseline Survey
<b>Contract Duration:</b>	30 days
<b>Delivery/Product:</b>	Baseline Report
<b>Project Title:</b>	Empowering citizenry agencies for strengthened public financial governance and sustainable growth in Tanzania
<b>Deadline for Bid Submission</b>	10 <sup>th</sup> January 2025

WAJIBU - Institute of Public Accountability in collaboration with Policy Forum, is looking for a qualified individual or institution to conduct a Baseline Survey under a 30-month, European Union-funded action titled "Empowering Citizenry Agencies for Strengthened Public Financial Governance and Sustainable Growth in Tanzania". The project aims to improve systems and state actors' transparency and accountability and increase inclusive citizens' participation in public financial accountability that will be implemented in Tanzania Mainland and Zanzibar. The baseline study aims to assess the current status of key indicators to better understand prevailing conditions and perceptions of the programs' populations in the implementation areas and serve as a point of comparison for continuous monitoring and evaluation, and future final evaluations. Results will also be used to refine program targets, and where possible, to understand the relationship between variables to inform program design. The output of the baseline survey will be used as a benchmark to gauge project achievements during the implementation and at the end of the project.

**The specific objectives of the baseline survey are;**

- i. To assess the level of transparency and access to information related to public financial governance at the national and local level specifically at project targeted areas,
- ii. To determine the capacities of citizenry agencies and domestic accountability actors including media on public financial governance and what role they play in promoting accountability and transparency to service delivery,
- iii. To assess the existing platforms and opportunities for state and non-state actors to engage and debate on public finance, domestic resource mobilization and anti-corruption efforts.
- iv. Measuring the level of public participation in public financial accountability processes including in their participation in the budget preparation and execution monitoring processes.

For further information on how to apply, Terms of Reference (ToR), and the deadline for application, kindly visit the website [www.wajibu.or.tz](http://www.wajibu.or.tz).

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## Students' fundraising to provide clean water for school in Liberia

By Special Correspondent

NEW YORK'S William Floyd Middle School (WFMS) students and teachers were recently recognised for their outstanding fundraising efforts that will provide clean drinking water to students in Liberia.

Through a month-long campaign in early 2024, students raised an impressive total of \$1,118.92, which was donated to Strides for Africa. The funds will go towards the construction of a new water well at Zokeseh Public School in Nimba County, Liberia.

The fundraising campaign was matched by Milburn Flooring and Renu Contracting and Restoration, effectively doubling the impact.

The collaboration will benefit over 770 people in the school and surrounding community, providing access to clean water for the next 20 to 25 years.

The project was initiated by WFMS's seventh-grade English Language Arts (ELA) classes as part of their unit on A Long Walk to Water, a novel by Linda Sue Park that explores the challenges faced by people in developing countries in obtaining clean drinking water.

Principal Camelle Person praised sixth-grade teacher Michael Rivera for his guidance, noting his previous experience working with Strides for Africa.

"This fundraising effort connected what our students were learning in the classroom to real-world issues, allowing them to discover how they could help those in need," said Principal Person.

Person added: "By participating in the project, students not only deepened their understanding of the novel's themes but also

took on the role of global citizens. They learned the impact of collective action, the importance of community involvement, and the value of making a positive difference in the world."

As a gesture of appreciation for their hard work, Strides for Africa's Development Coordinator Jacob Breit hosted a special assembly to congratulate the students.

During the assembly, Jacob showed before-and-after pictures of the Zokeseh water well, highlighting the significant impact of the WFMS students' contributions.

The assembly was attended by the eighth-grade students who were involved in the completed project and the current seventh graders, who will soon begin fundraising for a new well at Troupoe Public School in Liberia.

The assembly culminated with Jacob presenting a personalised plaque to William Floyd Middle School as a token of gratitude. Seventh-grade ELA teachers Mary Rose Warasila, Amanda Zabbia, and Taylor Pierce accepted the plaque on behalf of the school. A second plaque was awarded to Michael VanDenburg of Milburn Flooring and Renu Contracting and Restoration, with Principal Person accepting it on his behalf.

"Since first partnering with your school in 2016, we have successfully completed enough clean water projects to benefit thousands of people," said Jacob Breit. "We are incredibly grateful to the students, families, and friends of the William Floyd community, and it is an honour to visit each year."

The students' efforts mark a lasting legacy, as the Zokeseh water well project will continue to provide clean water for years to come.

## UN Emergency Fund allocates \$6 million to support refugees fleeing Sudan in Egypt

CAIRO

THE United Nations Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) has allocated \$6 million to bolster the ongoing humanitarian response for refugees fleeing the devastating conflict in Sudan and seeking protection in Egypt.

The allocation will enhance the United Nations' efforts in Egypt by complementing the delivery of vital life-saving services, including emergency food and cash assistance, water, sanitation, and hygiene services, as well as protection measures for refugees.

The conflict in Sudan, which escalated dramatically in April 2023, has triggered what is now considered the world's fastest-growing refugee crisis.

The violence between rival military factions has forced millions to flee their homes, and the situation continues to deteriorate. According to the Government of Egypt, an estimated 1.2 million Sudanese refugees are currently seeking safety and shelter in Egypt, making it the largest recipient of Sudanese refugees escaping the ongoing war.

"As the number of refugees continues to rise daily and winter approaches, their needs are increasing," said Elena Panova, the United Nations Resident Coordinator in Egypt.

She added: "These CERF funds will provide additional assistance and protection to newly arrived refugees, addressing both their immediate and long-term needs."

The funding is particularly timely as winter conditions exacerbate the vulnerability of refugees, especially those living in informal settlements and overcrowded camps.

The funds mark CERF's second allocation for Sudanese refugees in Egypt. The first allocation, announced in May 2023, provided \$5 million to support urgent humanitarian needs over a six-month period. That funding enabled UN agencies and partners to directly assist 320,000 people, including both refugees and host communities, addressing their most pressing needs.

The initial allocation supported key sectors, including cash transfers, protection services, responses to gender-based violence, food security, shelter, and healthcare

services. It also contributed to strengthening social cohesion between refugees and Egyptian host communities, an area critical to mitigating tensions in areas heavily impacted by the influx of refugees.

The new \$6 million allocation aims to build on the achievements of the previous funding, further enhancing efforts to address the urgent and growing needs of Sudanese refugees in Egypt. With many refugees living in overcrowded urban areas and informal settlements, the funds will help provide critical services such as: Emergency food distribution and cash assistance to meet basic needs, Water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) services to reduce health risks.

Protection services, including psychosocial support and gender-based violence prevention as well as winterization support to protect refugees from the harsh winter conditions.

Additionally, the funds will support efforts to strengthen the capacity of local systems to handle the growing refugee population, ensuring that both refugees and host communities can access essential services.

Despite the significant contributions from CERF and other humanitarian partners, the situation in Egypt remains challenging. The number of Sudanese refugees continues to rise, straining local resources and exacerbating vulnerabilities, particularly for women, children, and the elderly. The humanitarian community is calling for continued support to meet the mounting needs, especially as the conflict in Sudan shows no signs of abating.

Panova emphasized, "The international community must continue to step up efforts to support Sudanese refugees and the Egyptian communities hosting them. These funds represent a vital lifeline, but much more will be needed to address both the immediate and long-term challenges of this crisis."

The UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), World Food Programme (WFP), World Health Organisation (WHO) and UN Women, among other partners, work together to provide a coordinated and comprehensive response.



Journalists have an eyewitness account on Monday of progress in the expansion of Ibadakuli Airport in Shinyanga municipality. Expected to cost 44.8bn/- and currently 80 per cent complete, it is expected to become operational in April next year. Photo: Correspondent Marco Maduhu

## Call: Help trace attackers of people with disabilities

By Polycarp Machira, Dodoma

MEMBERS of the public have been urged to help the government identify people who engage in violence against people with disabilities as the country prepares for General Election next year.

The call was made here yesterday by the Founder and Chief Executive of Albinism Awareness Foundation (AAF), Suleiman Magoma, noting that while the government is doing all it takes to prevent such vices, individual members of the society also have a big role to play.

He also appealed to parents of children with disabilities to give them opportunity to learn and participate in everything just like their able-bodied colleagues.

Magoma made the remarks while presenting donations to a cross-section of people with disabilities in Dodoma city.

During the event AAF through friends and well-wishers donated food stuff, drinks, clothes, sunscreen, sunglasses, crutches, telescopes and sanitary pads to different groups of PWDs, including those with albinism.

"We appreciate the government's

efforts in protecting people with disabilities, including those with albinism but the society should not relent in the fight to reveal perpetrators", he said.

Speaking at a brief event held at Viwandani Secondary School in the city, Magoma said his organization annually holds the event in support of the less fortunate members of the society, especially those with disabilities.

He expressed gratitude to those who supported him to realize the goal of touching other peoples' lives saying: "I am grateful to those supporting this noble initiative

to help make the less fortunate members of the society feel loved and supported, especially at the year-end festivities".

Tanzania Federation of Disabled People's Organisations (SHIVYAWATA) Dodoma Region Secretary Justus Mwantalima, expressed gratitude to AAF, saying the donation came at the right time when some people with disabilities needed it most.

"I urge other well-wishers to do the same too since needs of the PWDs are so many and cannot be realized by just one person or organization," she said.



Youths pictured yesterday carrying customers' goods for delivery outside Dar es Salaam's Mabibo mixed-goods market in the wake of a boom in business there largely induced by the onset of the festive season. Photo: Correspondent Miraji Msala

TRIPOLI

LIBYA is set to host its inaugural Forbes Middle East Investment Summit in May 2025 following an agreement between its Ministry of Communication and Political Affairs and Forbes Middle East's local representative, JRN Consultancy.

Minister Walid Ellafi hailed the partnership as a "historic moment for Libya," underscoring the country's ambition to attract global investment and drive economic growth.

The summit aims to highlight key investment opportunities in sectors including energy, infrastructure,

## Libya to host first Forbes Middle East investment summit next year

technology, tourism and agriculture. Forbes Middle East CEO Khuloud Al Omian expressed her enthusiasm for the event, noting that it would serve as a vital platform to connect Libya with global investors. "Forbes Middle East is dedicated to fostering growth and collaboration across the region," she said.

The summit will focus on critical areas such as renewable energy development,

infrastructure modernization, and entrepreneurship opportunities. It will also spotlight Libya's growing tourism industry and agricultural development plans, with a particular emphasis on sustainable and innovative solutions.

Ruwaida Abela Northen, CEO of JRN Consultancy, highlighted the summit's role in positioning Libya within the global investment landscape. "This event will showcase

Libya's potential to a global audience, reinforcing its strategic position as a gateway between Africa, Europe, and the Middle East," she said.

The Forbes Middle East Investment Summit will mark a significant step in Libya's efforts to boost its international business profile and attract foreign investments that will contribute to the country's long-term economic development.



Korogwe Township Council executive director Mwashabani Mrope (R) leads officials under her command in inspecting education infrastructure in one of six secondary schools lined up to accommodate students selected to join Form One early next month. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

## Njombe RC calls for abolition of myths, superstition, harmful cultural beliefs

By Guardian Correspondent, Njombe

RELIGIOUS and cultural leaders including community groups have been urged to actively educate the public to abandon superstitions, revenge-driven behaviours and excessive greed for wealth and power.

Njombe Regional Commissioner, Anthony Mtaka made the call yesterday in a special statement, addressing issues such as stunted growth, gender-based violence, and killings in the region.

He urged the message to be read in all places of worship during Christmas Day services and on the New Year eve.

Mtaka also requested that the statement be read in places of

worship from January 3 to 5, 2025.

In his statement, Mtaka expressed deep concern over the rising incidents of gender-based violence and killings in parts of the region in 2024, describing these acts as serious violations of human rights that cause both physical and psychological harm to the victims.

“These acts are a grave violation of human dignity and tarnish the good image of our region. They should be condemned in the strongest terms by all the people of Njombe, as they are not part of our cultural heritage, our national identity, nor our Tanzanian values. Such actions do not reflect the true nature of God’s creation,” Mtaka said.

He further called on law

enforcement agencies to take strong legal actions against anyone involved in these crimes, ensuring that justice prevails.

“I emphasise that our justice institutions must play a key role in supporting the victims of these disgraceful acts and ensuring that perpetrators are held accountable. It is vital that citizens cooperate with the authorities by reporting any such incidents to government offices,” Mtaka said.

Regarding the issue of stunting, Mtaka highlighted that Njombe faces a significant challenge, with 50.4 percent of children under the age of five being affected, according to the 2022 Health, Demographic, and Malaria Indicators Survey.

“This is a tragic situation that requires concerted efforts from all of us, as stunting has severe impacts on both the physical and mental development of children. It contributes to poor school performance, reduced cognitive ability, and diminished creativity,” he said.

The Regional Commissioner noted that the regional government, in collaboration with various stakeholders including the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), Tanzania Food and Nutrition Centre (TFNC), United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and other partners, is actively engaged in a campaign to accelerate efforts to reduce or eliminate stunting.

## Three EA countries meet to resolve boundary disputes

KAMPALA

SENIOR officials from Uganda, Kenya and South Sudan have renewed their commitment to resolving long standing boundary disputes.

The commitments were made during the 4th Tripartite Technical Boundary Committee (TTBC) meeting, held late last week in Kampala.

The meeting aimed to assess progress on agreements reached during previous meetings in December 2019, September 2021, and December 2021, while revising work plans and budgets for establishing a tri-junction boundary point.

Delegates also agreed on timelines for reaffirming and demarcating the shared boundaries between the three countries.

Opening the meeting, Vincent Bagiere Waiswa, Permanent Secretary at Uganda’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs, emphasized the significance of boundary demarcation for regional cooperation and stability.

“The tri-junction is a vital geographical and political point, which, once established, will help mitigate conflicts orchestrated by historical clashes that have arisen from disputes over unclear boundaries,” said Bagiere.

He also highlighted the importance of implementing previously agreed work plans, noting that the tri-junction boundary would promote development and security in the region.

This progress marks a significant milestone for Uganda, Kenya, and South Sudan in their collective effort to address historical boundary disputes and advance regional integration.

The Ugandan delegation was led by Jacqueline Banana, Acting Head of the Department of Regional Peace and Security. Juster Nkoroi, Head of

the Kenya International Boundaries Office (KIBO), represented Kenya, while Dr David Nailo Mayo, Chairperson of South Sudan’s Transboundary Committee, led the South Sudan delegation.

Kenya’s head delegate Juster Nkoroi, commended the progress achieved through cooperation between the three nations.

“The three countries have successfully implemented all activities of the establishment of the tri-junction, including seven sensitization exercises, the High-Level Ateker Leaders Meeting held in Moroto in November 2024, and the Peace Caravan, including benchmarking tours in July 2023,” she noted.

Nkoroi reiterated Kenya’s commitment to implementing the Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) on reaffirmation, delimitation, and demarcation of boundaries. She emphasized Kenya’s readiness to meet the African Union’s deadline of 2027.

Dr Mayo, representing South Sudan, praised the support of the African Union Border Programme since its inception in 2007.

“The AU Border Programme has been working diligently on border matters, and their assistance has been enormous, especially in supporting delegates to border meetings,” he said.

Mayo pledged South Sudan’s dedication to ensuring that the boundary disputes are resolved collaboratively and in a timely manner.

The three-day meeting concluded with the signing of the official report detailing the next steps for implementing the tri-junction boundary.

Delegates reaffirmed the importance of resolving border disputes to foster regional stability, strengthen cooperation, and enhance development opportunities for communities along the borders.

## Botswana lifts ban on vegetable imports from South Africa

GABORONE

Botswana has officially lifted its ban on the import of several vegetables from South Africa, including broccoli, turmeric, pumpkin, eggplant, and cauliflower, effective immediately.

The move is welcomed by both South African farmers and consumers in Botswana, offering benefits to both sides.

Wandile Sihlobo, chief economist at Agbiz, noted that the lifting of the ban is a significant relief for South African farmers. Since import restrictions were introduced by neighbouring countries such as Botswana and Namibia, vegetable prices in South Africa had fallen by approximately 4 per cent.

The end of the ban is expected to help reverse this trend, providing South African farmers with better access to the regional market once again.

The decision to lift the import ban is also beneficial for consumers in Botswana. Sihlobo highlighted that vegetable price inflation in Botswana had reached 13.6 per cent, while South Africa experienced a deflation of -2.6 per cent in November.

The lifting of the ban will give Botswana consumers access to a broader range of vegetables at better prices, helping to ease inflationary pressures.

The lifting of the ban is seen as a step towards restoring goodwill within the Southern African Customs Union (SACU). Sihlobo added that Namibia should now follow Botswana’s lead in relaxing restrictions.

Going forward, he stressed the importance of countries communicating their trade ambitions clearly and avoiding trade barriers that harm consumer welfare. As a major agricultural producer in the region, South Africa is encouraged to expand its export markets beyond Southern Africa, focusing on regions such as Asia and the Middle East.

Mogomotsi Moatswi, chair of the Botswana Horticulture Council, expressed support for the government’s decision. The bans were originally introduced in 2022 as a strategy to stimulate local agricultural production and reduce Botswana’s reliance on imports.

The Ministry of Lands and Agriculture stated that import restrictions would be imposed only when local production is sufficiently high to meet national needs.

While the lifting of the ban is seen as a positive step, Moatswi also called for further action to support local agriculture. He suggested that the Botswana government should invest in the industrialisation of fertiliser, seed, and irrigation manufacturing to fully unlock the region’s agricultural potential.

Sihlobo also pointed out that South Africa can play a key role in helping Botswana and other Southern African countries enhance their agricultural output.

He cited the citrus industry as a successful example where South African agricultural research is shared across the region. Additionally, South Africa has recently imported vaccines for the livestock industry from Botswana, showcasing the mutual benefits of collaboration.

The lifting of the vegetable import ban will take place in stages. While the restrictions on turmeric, patty pan, pumpkin, sweet potato, green pea, broccoli, cauliflower, gem squash, baby marrow, green bean, sweet melon, mushroom, calabash, cantaloupe, and eggplant have been lifted immediately, the easing of restrictions on other vegetables such as beetroot, butternut, cabbage, carrot, garlic, ginger, green mealie, herbs, lettuce, onion, potato, sweet pepper, tomato and watermelon will be implemented gradually by 1 April 2025.

The phased approach will be based on demand and capacity, with periodic reviews in line with SACU guidelines.



It’s roaring business at an open-air makeshift market in Muheza town on Monday, mainly for clothes and school supplies in preparation for Christmas and New Year celebrations. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

CAIRO

EGYPT’S foreign minister discussed Red Sea and developments in Somaliland with his Somali counterpart on Monday during bilateral talks in Cairo.

The meeting happened around a month after Ethiopia and Somalia agreed to hold “technical talks” to resolve a dispute sparked by Ethiopia’s deal with Somalia’s breakaway region of Somaliland.

Somali Foreign Minister Ahmed Moalim Fiqi reiterated that the talks were successful in curbing further violence in the region, which would’ve led to “a dangerous explosion that could have burned

## Egypt, Somalia discuss issues of Red Sea, breakaway Somaliland

everyone’s interests.”

Turkey has been mediating between the two east African countries as tensions between them have simmered since Ethiopia signed a memorandum of understanding with Somaliland in January to lease land along its coastline to establish a marine force base.

In return, Ethiopia would recognize Somaliland’s independence, which Somalia says infringes on its sovereignty and

territory.

The resulting declaration said the sides agreed the talks, which would begin by February 2025 and conclude within four months, would respect Somalia’s territorial integrity while recognizing “potential benefits” of Ethiopia’s access to the sea.

Fiqi again lauded the agreement for its maintenance of “Somalia’s sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity.”

Separately, Egyptian Foreign Minister Badr Abdelatty spoke on the importance of the Red Sea’s autonomy as a strategic location, saying that “the presence of any party other than coastal countries of the Red Sea is unacceptable.”

In a joint statement after meeting, the two ministers agreed on the importance of developing bilateral relations to the level of a comprehensive strategic partnership.

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## Lip-service to toxic chemicals must end

THERE cannot be saying that the issue of climate change in general or its environmental degradation aspect has come under enough deliberation and we need a breather.

This is talk about humankind's very survival and development, and it just cannot be rested before enough remedial action is taken across the globe and we are sure that the future can only be better and not static or worse.

For instance, all manner of experts have endlessly exchanged ideas on a slew of supposedly safe ways of getting rid of toxic chemicals and other materials from the environment.

Many have had their focus on fake electronic and plastic-based goods, most of them imported, and how they are usually disposed of.

Going by the way some deliberations have gone, it is clear that many of us know precious little about how to effectively and safely deal with problems associated with the use of goods with inherent potential to wreak havoc on the environment.

There are suggestions that demanding the return of suspicious goods to their countries of origin is a wiser option than burning or burying them because, in any case, most such items never really break down and rot and will remain a health hazard for very long. But there is no consensus even on this relatively clear issue.

In years gone by, Tanzanian agencies including the Cleaner Production Centre, Fair Competition Commission, Tanzania Food and Drugs Authority and Tanzania Bureau of Standards played a pivotal role on this front.

There is near consensus, though, that it pays to produce and consume goods and services that respond to the people's basic needs and lead to a better life while cutting on the use of natural resources, toxic materials and the emission of toxic waste and other pollutants.

One reservation, though, has been why there appeared to be much

greater interest in diagnosing the problems than in recommending solutions when the disposal of hazardous waste has been at the centre of many "battles" in the country and elsewhere.

One environmentalist says dealing with the issue would be a much less daunting challenge if people cared to remember that every household contributes to the accumulation and disposal of hazardous waste in the form of things like cleansers, paints, batteries or motor oil.

The expert further notes that each person has options available to him or her for reducing dependency on hazardous materials by using less while at the same time ensuring careful disposal.

It is noted that many labels on containers have precise precautionary information on contents and ways to handle, store, use, recycle, reuse and safely dispose of toxic waste. However, this is not to rule out deliberate foul play.

For instance, experts say it is a NO-NO-NO to burn any hazardous material on the ground or to dispose of it "down the sink" unless one is sure it can safely be disposed into the sewer system.

Yet how often do we care to use latex gloves when handling waste or to wrap empty containers in several layers of newspaper before disposing of them alongside household refuse as a way of preventing environmental contamination and reactive potential?

We commonly flush pesticides, herbicides, oil paints, paint cleaners, and oil and transmission fluids into the water system while adding motor vehicle batteries to household garbage, while this is another NO-NO-NO!

Wise purchase, use, storage and disposal of chemicals we cannot do without can greatly reduce the negative environmental impact of these chemicals. This is time-tested expert advice we all need to heed - without fail. Question: Do we all have the ability, willingness and readiness to do so?

## Mixed reactions on visa restrictions on South Sudanese political leaders

NEWS that the United States has announced steps to impose visa restrictions on multiple individuals that the State Department views as responsible for, or complicit in, undermining or impeding peace in South Sudan took the Horn of Africa and the neighbourhood by storm over the weekend.

The US Department of State pointed at repeated failure of South Sudan's leaders to "use their nation's resources to the benefit of its people", citing failure to end public corruption and "elite capture of the country's resources". The US authorities appear all but tired of waiting.

The statement similarly levelled a finger at apparent failure to protect the people of South Sudan from abuses and violations of their human rights, systematically eroding civil and political rights, exacerbated by failure to maintain peace.

The statement curiously revealed that US foreign policy maker had hoped to join the people of South Sudan last week in celebrating their country's first election since the country became independent.

Yes, it has been at war for most of that time, never having solidified a national ethic.

There is no need for pointing fingers at whoever might be responsible for this situation, as it is difficult to precisely name the guilty parties in each particular crisis.

The picture we get on the issue

of South Sudan is not entirely new for those with an inkling of what happened in Southern Africa with the liberation movements.

Angola never arrived at peace and stability until dissident nationalist leader Jonas Savimbi died in the battlefield zone, with online entries saying he was assassinated.

Another entry by the US Institute of Peace placed an unflattering appraisal of the Angolan guerrilla leader at the turn of the century, saying he is dissatisfied with any scenario in which he is not Angola's president and thus he chose war over peace. Ditto for South Sudan.

Still, realism has to be given its proper place, as intransigent leaders are merely a reflection of an intransigent power base.

Despite the horror, pain that this situation implies, it is consonant with a certain sense of dignity for that power base so long as their cherished leader is still around.

When pressure is exercised from outside and perhaps leads to a certain level of compromise, it helps to propel political movement that was not available earlier, at least to an extent.

No one can disrupt the ranks of loyalty in such circumstances and demand reform. None.

The US move may not represent a pivotal intervention in the situation there but even the few ripples it will bring about could give social groups like religious leaders an anchor to make some suggestions. As they say, Rome wasn't built in a day.



By Lydia K. Igarabuza

FOR the part of the brain that controls alcohol, drug and various other forms of addiction, holidays like today's (Christmas) can prove the perfect storm.

Family drama, money issues, too little rest, the baptism, anniversaries, the wedding, the initiation and so forth...

I mean it's a complex web of emotions that can trigger stress, loneliness and anxiety, pushing individuals battling substance addiction into leaning heavily on their drug or drugs of choice as a means of escapism.

Apart from that, the part of the brain that controls addiction is the brain's reward system driven by dopamine - a neurotransmitter in the brain associated with feelings of pleasure and reward.

Holidays also amplify exposure to pleasure stimuli such as food, drinks and anything else to get 'high' on.

The combination of heightened dopamine release from these stimuli and emotional or social triggers can make it harder to resist addictive behaviours. That is why, in every family's Christmas event, there is always that odd uncle, aunt, sister, brother, son, daughter acting weirdly and very loud from the word go!

While it is considered socially acceptable to consume alcohol and take drugs during holidays, it is important to understand the difference between social use and addiction.

One instance of misuse may be a teachable moment for the people concerned and may serve to remind them why they don't like to experiment with mind-altering substances.

And the experience may even be enough to make them stop using the substances. On the other hand, substance addiction is characterised by compulsive, uncontrolled behaviour - and it is harmful.

It is a pattern that one will continue to engage in despite whatever the negative consequences because, as the brain adapts to prolonged substance use, the initial "reward" mechanism diminishes.

This leads to cravings that can drive a person into chasing that lost "rewarding" feeling - no matter what, who or where - until death does us part, literally!

### The stage is set

So commonly, a typical Christmas day would start by church attendance from, say, 7 a.m. to midday. While at church, preparations for the feast of the day, the festive family lunch, would be taking place at home.

Christmas carols would be playing on the radio or TV. The

## 'Dope' Xmas: Now this is from the horse's mouth...

house would be spotless clean - and the mood jolly.

After church, a few guests would be invited to join the family for lunch. Most would likely be from the neighbourhood.

By 1 p.m., the household count would be no fewer than 15 people, one to five of whom would be secretly battling addiction!

The holiday season brings families together, creating moments for people to see their loved ones in person, some for the first time in months.

Times like these present moments for Question-&Answer sessions and life lectures from great aunts, great uncles and so on and so forth.

And for those suspected of alcoholism and drug addiction, it is often time for intervention, as the rare chance they get for having a face-to-face interaction with the individuals because addictive behaviour dwells in secrecy.

Many individuals with substance addiction will as much as possible avoid family and friends. To them, family events become a nuisance. Yet, in some cases, they are a perfect time to take advantage and con everybody out of money, steal the evening champagne, collect anything and everything that can be sold.

I mean the opportunities are endless, with all this happening while the 'suspects' frequently stock up on the free drinks and charge up the DJ, becoming the life of the party while recklessly falling over guests, tables and exhibiting erratic outbursts.

Family members at this point are in shock and anguish, wondering how to control the situation while asking themselves: "Why is he/she doing this"? It's high time someone intervened...

### The tell it all

Suspicion of substance addiction is often triggered by physical and behavioural patterns whose levels of impact depend on the drug of choice although a common 'betrayal' is physical appearance.

This usually comes in the form of bloodshot eyes, the unexplained weight loss, lack of appetite, unusual smells, impaired coordination or tremors, lack of energy or unusual bursts of energy and many more.

Unfortunately, intervention time at this Christmas lunch was planned for 3 o'clock - sometime after the guests had left. By that time, the suspects would already have anticipated the move.

With stacked up alcohol bottles in the large pockets of their dark

coats or jackets, they would already have rolled up stock for the road and a carried on bags stuffed with the pilfered items, while they are themselves soon nowhere to be seen.

If lucky, or at least fortunate, the intervention would have revealed that people battling substance addiction generally take a lot of effort to conceal their problems from others.

They may not ask for help - and this because they feel that their problems are hopeless and the only thing they can do is to secretly continue consuming the substances they are addicted to because their brain system has been irredeemably hijacked.

This repetitive use and misuse will eventually result in loss of function, isolation and complete dependency. The respective individuals will go on to progressively deteriorate physically and otherwise.

Their immune system will become impaired, putting them at risk of contracting Hepatitis, HIV and liver or kidney damage. They will soon no longer care about their children or spouses.

Some will eventually face serious challenges with employment, business, education and home life. They will constantly find themselves in legal quicksand, accidents or multiple arrests and other forms of disorderly conduct, mostly associated with substance abuse.

They will have unexplained changes in friends and hobbies, often suffering from delusions or hallucinations and becoming increasingly paranoid.

### Suspects on the loose

After the Christmas get-together, most people at the gathering start to disperse. Hardly anyone will any longer remember about the suspected alcohol and drug addicts with mental and other disorders.

They will all be glad that no addict managed to ruin the big day and shame the host family, further.

Indeed, they used the jolly occasion talking about it. Some are still worried and don't know what to do or where to find the individuals now that there will be no such family gathering again until the same time the following year. What will happen between now and Christmas 2025 is more confidential than top secret... It is an undecipherable riddle, an inscrutable enigma.

Members of some families are evasive and show no empathy for the drunkards. To them: "It's their

fault. We have told them before. They have chosen to idolise alcohol and drugs and given up their entire lives for it. They are stupid and should just be left to sort themselves out."

When substance use disorder and addiction is left unaddressed, it imposes significant strain on the victims' well-being and healthcare resources, creating heightened morbidity and mortality rates.

Misconceptions about substance use disorders, often viewed as moral failings rather than a medical condition, lead to delayed treatment-seeking responses.

Consequently, when acute symptoms arise, requiring urgent intervention, family members are pushed into prioritising initial stabilisation such as forced institutional arrests over long-term treatment plans.

According to the World Health Organisation's 2021 report, a staggering 39 million people suffered from substance use disorders - yet only one in five received treatment.

The United Nations Commission on Narcotic Drugs (Pledge for Action 2024) campaign meanwhile found that substance use disorder treatment and health services continue to fall short of needs and deaths related to drug use have increased.

Additionally, the rates of transmission of HIV, Hepatitis C and other blood-borne diseases associated with substance use disorders - including injecting drug use - remain high in some countries.

### Government intervention

Fortunately, come June 26, 2023, President Samia Suluhu Hassan made a declaration to integrate the interests of people with substance use disorders within what is now the reconstituted Community Development, Gender, Women and Special Groups ministry.

This decision reflects recognition of the complex challenges faced by individuals with substance use disorders and highlights the importance of taking an integrated, structured approach to tackling the disorder and promoting recovery.

I wish you all a Merry Christmas. Ensure you keep yourself safe. Next week, we will look at the imperative need to tackle societal perceptions relating to substance abuse and enhance early intervention strategies. Please, share your views via: Email newinfluenceinitiative@gmail.com. Follow: https://x.com/NII\_Tanzania.

# Merry Christmas to me! But which Christmas?

By Songa wa Songa

**F**IRST things first. Disclaimer: I'm not going to delve into the story of an ancient locale called Bethlehem and the birth of a noble man in a not-so-noble family. I'm not trained to do that kind of thing.

On the contrary, I can give you a nice Christmas gift by sticking to the festive part of the day. For, this blesses both the believers and the non-believers. Or so it used to be.

My assertion is that Christmas in those bygone days of scarcity and moderation used to be more special and more enjoyable than these days of abundance and opulence.

I'll give this piece a light touch on how we raise Gen Zs and Gen Alphas compared to how we Gen Xs and our predecessor the boomers grew up.

### The big day

Before Gen Zs made their grand entrance into this world between 1995 and 2010, the world was not only different technologically but also in celebrating Christmas.

Scarcity is known to add value to things, events, situations, etc. Before mobile phones, the internet and flat screen TV sets in almost every living room, Christmas was the only day to live large and remember it until another Christmas.

### Nice, new clothes

All parents and guardians knew - and never forgot - their duty to ensure that children had their nice, new clothes to be worn on Christmas day.

Budget-conscious parents did this as early as August, latest October, just to dodge non-God-fearing shop owners who would double or triple the prices of clothes and shoes in December to make a killing a few days before Christmas.

The rule was clear on the Christmas clothes and shoes bought well before Christmas: wash and iron but don't wear until Christmas.

But in these days of abundance, parents just walk into shopping malls any day of their choice and buy nice new clothes for their children for no reason at all. Imagine children having their own wardrobes in their own rooms full of new clothes, some of which they go the whole year without wearing!

### Good, rare Christmas meal

For those of us born and raised in the Lake Victoria Zone, Christmas was that blessed day when we took mandatory break from ugali with Nile perch or sardines. On this day, we would devour big juicy pieces of a well-fed lamb or bull served with rice.

That towering hen or cock that was always a preserve of well-respected in-laws was our meal on Christmas. Once a year, adults



allowed children to take leave from the dry chicken legs, wings and necks to enjoy juicy breasts and thighs.

Of course, Christmas breakfast was not porridge. Delicious Christmas chapatis - call them pancakes if you will - were served with hot full-cream milk. In fact, sometimes it was chapatis, maandazi (buns) and rice. You touch here and there like a prince or princess, thanks to Christmas.

Fast forward to 2024 and juicy meat and aromatic rice is a daily meal. And there is this neighbour of mine who thinks she has the right to disturb my nose with that strong, nice spiced pilau every evening. Imagine someone cooking pilau every day for no reason at all!

### Cash, sweets and other gifts

Unlike Gen Zs and Gen Alpha (born 2010-2020), the Gen X managed with whatever little was available. We were not permitted to beg or demand things from relatives or strangers.

However, there was exception on Christmas day: we were allowed to ask for cash gifts with which we spoiled ourselves with soda, biscuits, sweets and other treats. Most boys and girls from humble backgrounds enjoyed the taste of soda or ice cream only on Christmas day.

That was then - and this is 2024. Most parents stock crates of soda (and beer) that never run out. Our refrigerators are full of fatty and sugary foods and treats for our children to enjoy an abuse in some cases.

### Quality family time

When Christmas was still



Christmas, we would visit families and friends and share meals. Those who lived in cities because of work would return to their rural homes complete with their families for Christmas reunion.

These days most of us identify ourselves as urbanites. We have made cities our permanent homes and we have lost connections with our extended families, great ancestors and roots in general.

Going back home in December 'to eat' Christmas, which used to be a tradition for many communities in Tanzania, is nowadays a thing of - and for - the Chagga people. If you are back to Kilimanjaro and are reading this piece, order a big mug of mbege (that popular traditional brew) on me. I'll foot that bill come January.

### Out with friends

In the late afternoon, after enjoying the sumptuous Christmas lunch, outing was a must. In our village, we used to gather at a nearby trading centre to spend cash collected from parents and relatives on soda, bubble gums, biscuits and other treats.

In Dar es Salaam, a trip to the beach was a must on Christmas afternoon. Those from well-to-do families were chauffeured there in private cars. Others came together in groups and hired minibuses. I and several buddies used to trek from Mwananyamala to Coco Beach. It was a wonderful site to behold.

But some folks have since made beach trips a daily affair instead of a Christmas thing. Daily trip to the beach! Are you a penguin?

### Cards and Christmas trees

The colourful Christmas wishes cards addressed you as Dear so-and-so. Who has called you dear this Christmas? How many Christmas messages have you received? You have WhatsApp and Facebook messages? Poor thing!

In the good bygone days, come December, Christmas cards and Christmas trees were the biggest money minters alongside cassette tapes with Christmas songs such as Jingle Bells.

Now we are in the era of plastic Christmas 'trees' imported from the Far East that can be used, packed back in the box and be reused for even ten Christmases! Real Christmas tree growers are out of business.

**In the good bygone days, come December, Christmas cards and Christmas trees were the biggest money minters alongside cassette tapes with Christmas songs such as Jingle Bells.**

### Digital natives

The 'Z' in the name Gen Z means 'zoomer' as this is the first generation known to 'zoom' the internet. Also known as digital natives, Gen Zs and Gen Alphas have grown up with screens and mobile handsets in their homes, meaning that they have no memory of analogue life.

Although they are tech savvy and have lots of learning opportunities, this also means that their screen time is more than play time - and so they are prone to anxiety and online gaming addiction.

In the good days gone by, even those in privileged families would only enjoy 30 minutes or so of Tom & Jerry - largely thanks to the then legendary CTN, which used to link up with American cable television channel Cartoon Network.

Before the onset of the flat screen, that rear-projection television set in the living room was usually fixed inside a cabinet - complete with a padlock. It was switched on by carefully chosen and vetted individuals in the house - and only at known times.

But 2024 caught up with us, when flat screen TV is a must-have asset, and the Gen Zs and Alphas are spoiled for choices. They normally start the day with the boisterous Mickey Mouse Clubhouse, PJ Masks and Swashbuckle before slowing it down a bit with Twirlywoos after which they watch Bluey and Om Nom. The list is endless...

It's really good entertainment, infotainment and education for our children and grandchildren - but too much of anything is harmful. I personally know many families where parents don't dare even touch the remote control; it belongs to children.

Gen Alpha folks are even overly bold: they want their show on whether they are watching or not. Unless Tanesco decides otherwise with electricity, the TV is on all day in most houses I know.

Experts meanwhile warn that, for preteens, excessive screen time can lead to behaviour disorders known as conduct disorder and oppositional defiant disorder.

A recent study found that playing video games and watching online videos are linked to developing obsessive-compulsive disorder.

So? Now, now: So let's allow our children and grandchildren to enjoy technology but with moderation. Merry Christmas.

**• Songa wa Songa is a senior journalist with The Guardian newspaper. He can be reached at songa.songa@guardian.co.tz**



# RATIBA YA VIPINDI

## JUMATATU - JUMAPILI

MONDAY TIME PROGRAMME	TUESDAY TIME PROGRAMME	WEDNESDAY TIME PROGRAMME	THURSDAY TIME PROGRAMME	FRIDAY TIME PROGRAMME	SATURDAY TIME PROGRAMME	SUNDAY TIME PROGRAMME
05:00 AM HALI YA HEWA / KUMEPAMBAZUKA I 06:00 AM AMKA NA BBC 06:30 AM NIPASHE 06:50 AM MATANGAZO 07:00 AM NEWS BULLETIN 07:10 AM MATANGAZO 07:15 AM TAARIFA ZA BARABARANI 07:25 AM UDONDOZI WA MAGAZETI 07:40 AM KUMEPAMBAZUKA II 08:00 AM HABARI NYEPESI 08:10 AM KUMEPAMBAZUKA III 09:00 AM HABARI ZA BIASHARA 09:10 AM MATANGAZO 09:20 AM BRAND TALK 10:00 AM NEWS BRIEF 10:03 AM DEATH ANNOUNCEMENTS 13:00 HRS NEWS BULLETIN 13:30 HRS DJ SHOW 16:00 HRS NEWS BRIEF 16:03 HRS DEATH ANNOUNCEMENTS 16:30 HRS HOJA YA LEO 18:30 HRS DIRA YA DUNIA BBC 19:30 HRS SPOTI LEO 20:10 HRS RADIO ONE DOCTOR 21:00 HRS NEWS BRIEF 21:05 HRS DAKIKA 45 22:00 HRS NEWS BULLETIN (24 HRS) 22:15 HRS AFRO TIZI 23:00 HRS NEWS BRIEF 23:03 HRS AFRO TIZI 01:00-05:00HRS MUZIKI (MCHANGANYIKO)	05:00 AM HALI YA HEWA / KUMEPAMBAZUKA I 06:00 AM AMKA NA BBC 06:30 AM NIPASHE 06:50 AM MATANGAZO 07:00 AM NEWS BULLETIN 07:10 AM MATANGAZO 07:15 AM TAARIFA ZA BARABARANI 07:25 AM UDONDOZI WA MAGAZETI 07:40 AM KUMEPAMBAZUKA II 08:00 AM HABARI NYEPESI 08:10 AM KUMEPAMBAZUKA III 09:00 AM HABARI ZA BIASHARA 09:10 AM MATANGAZO 09:20 AM KUMEPAMBAZUKA SHERIA 10:00 AM NEWS BRIEF 10:03 AM DEATH ANNOUNCEMENTS 10:10 AM YALIYOMO YAMO 13:00 HRS NEWS BULLETIN 13:10 HRS DEATH ANNOUNCEMENTS 13:30 HRS DJ SHOW 16:00 HRS NEWS BRIEF 16:03 HRS DEATH ANNOUNCEMENTS 16:30 HRS HOJA YA LEO 18:30 HRS DIRA YA DUNIA BBC 19:30 HRS SPOTI LEO 20:10 HRS NEWS BULLETIN / MUZIKI 21:00 HRS NEWS BRIEF 21:05 HRS AFRO TIZI 22:00 HRS NEWS BULLETIN (24 HRS) 22:15 HRS AFRO TIZI 23:00 HRS NEWS BRIEF 23:03 HRS AFRO TIZI 01:00-05:00HRS MUZIKI (MCHANGANYIKO)	05:00 AM HALI YA HEWA / KUMEPAMBAZUKA I 06:00 AM AMKA NA BBC 06:30 AM NIPASHE 06:50 AM MATANGAZO 07:00 AM NEWS BULLETIN 07:10 AM MATANGAZO 07:15 AM TAARIFA ZA BARABARANI 07:25 AM UDONDOZI WA MAGAZETI 07:40 AM KUMEPAMBAZUKA II 08:00 AM HABARI NYEPESI 08:10 AM KUMEPAMBAZUKA III 09:00 AM HABARI ZA BIASHARA 09:10 AM MATANGAZO 09:20 AM BRAND TALK 09:30 AM KUMEPAMBAZUKA MICHEZO 10:00 AM NEWS BRIEF 10:03 AM DEATH ANNOUNCEMENTS 10:10 AM YALIYOMO YAMO 13:00 HRS NEWS BULLETIN 13:10 HRS DEATH ANNOUNCEMENTS 13:30 HRS DJ SHOW 16:00 HRS NEWS BRIEF 16:03 HRS DEATH ANNOUNCEMENTS 16:30 HRS HOJA YA LEO 18:30 HRS DIRA YA DUNIA BBC 19:30 HRS SPOTI LEO 20:00 HRS NEWS BULLETIN / MUZIKI 21:00 HRS NEWS BRIEF 21:05 HRS AFRO TIZI 22:00 HRS NEWS BULLETIN (24 HRS) 22:15 HRS AFRO TIZI 23:00 HRS NEWS BRIEF 23:03 HRS AFRO TIZI 01:00-05:00HRS MUZIKI (MCHANGANYIKO)	05:00 AM HALI YA HEWA / KUMEPAMBAZUKA I 06:00 AM AMKA NA BBC 06:30 AM NIPASHE 06:50 AM MATANGAZO 07:00 AM NEWS BULLETIN 07:10 AM MATANGAZO 07:15 AM TAARIFA ZA BARABARANI 07:25 AM UDONDOZI WA MAGAZETI 07:40 AM KUMEPAMBAZUKA II 08:00 AM HABARI NYEPESI 08:10 AM KUMEPAMBAZUKA III 09:00 AM HABARI ZA BIASHARA 09:10 AM MATANGAZO 09:20 AM BRAND TALK 09:30 AM KUMEPAMBAZUKA UKIMWI 10:00 AM NEWS BRIEF 10:03 AM DEATH ANNOUNCEMENTS 10:10 AM YALIYOMO YAMO 13:00 HRS NEWS BULLETIN 13:10 HRS DEATH ANNOUNCEMENTS 13:30 HRS DJ SHOW 16:00 HRS NEWS BRIEF 16:03 HRS DEATH ANNOUNCEMENTS 16:30 HRS HOJA YA LEO 18:30 HRS DIRA YA DUNIA BBC 19:30 HRS SPOTI LEO 20:00 HRS NEWS BULLETIN / MUZIKI 21:00 HRS NEWS BRIEF 21:05 HRS AFRO TIZI 22:00 HRS NEWS BULLETIN (24 HRS) 22:15 HRS AFRO TIZI 23:00 HRS NEWS BRIEF 23:03 HRS AFRO TIZI 01:00-05:00HRS MUZIKI (MCHANGANYIKO)	05:00 AM HALI YA HEWA / KUMEPAMBAZUKA I 06:00 AM AMKA NA BBC 06:30 AM NIPASHE 06:50 AM MATANGAZO 07:00 AM NEWS BULLETIN 07:10 AM MATANGAZO 07:15 AM TAARIFA ZA BARABARANI 07:25 AM UDONDOZI WA MAGAZETI 07:40 AM KUMEPAMBAZUKA II 08:00 AM HABARI NYEPESI 08:10 AM KUMEPAMBAZUKA III 09:00 AM HABARI ZA BIASHARA 09:10 AM MATANGAZO 09:20 AM BRAND TALK 09:30 AM KUMEPAMBAZUKA MOTOMOTO 10:00 AM NEWS BRIEF 10:03 AM DEATH ANNOUNCEMENTS 10:10 AM MIWANI YA MAISHA 11:00 AM MTA WA MAGOMA 13:00 HRS NEWS BULLETIN 13:10 HRS DEATH ANNOUNCEMENTS 13:30 HRS CHAGUO LAKO 15:00 HRS MUZIKI NA MICHEZO 16:00 HRS NEWS BRIEF 16:03 HRS DEATH ANNOUNCEMENTS 16:15 HRS MIDUNDO 18:00 HRS BONGO TEN 19:30 HRS SPOTI LEO 20:00 HRS NEWS BULLETIN 20:15 HRS CHEMSHA BONGO 21:00 HRS NEWS BRIEF 21:03 HRS WEEK END SHOW I 22:00 HRS NEWS BULLETIN (24 HRS) 22:15 HRS WEEK END SHOW II 23:00 HRS NEWS BRIEF 23:03 HRS WEEK END SHOW III 01:00-05:00HRS MUZIKI (MCHANGANYIKO)	05:00 AM HALI YA HEWA / KUMEPAMBAZUKA I 06:00 AM AMKA NA BBC 06:30 AM NIPASHE 06:50 AM COMMERCIALS 07:00 AM NEWS BULLETIN 07:15 AM NEWSPAPERS REVIEW 07:30 AM KUMEPAMBAZUKA - FAMILIA 10:00 AM NEWS BRIEF 10:03 AM DEATH ANNOUNCEMENTS 10:15 AM MIWANI YA MAISHA 11:00 HRS TOP 20 13:00 HRS NEWS BULLETIN 13:10 HRS DEATH ANNOUNCEMENTS 13:30 HRS CHAGUO LAKO 15:00 HRS MUZIKI NA MICHEZO 16:00 HRS NEWS BRIEF 16:03 HRS DEATH ANNOUNCEMENTS 16:15 HRS MAMBO YA PWANI 18:00 HRS AFRICAN PANORAMA 19:30 HRS SPOTI LEO 20:00 HRS NEWS BULLETIN 20:10 HRS MIBAVU ZANGU 21:00 HRS NEWS BRIEF 21:03 HRS MAMBO MSETO 22:00 HRS NEWS BULLETIN (24 HRS) 22:15 HRS RAFIKI I 23:00 HRS NEWS BRIEF 23:03 HRS RAFIKI II 01:00-05:00 MUZIKI (MCHANGANYIKO)	

# 'They're gone': Victims' families in Syria demand truth, justice, closure

By Justin Salhani and Mat Nashed

IN May 2012, Maysa Awad hugged her family goodbye in Yarmouk, a bustling Palestinian refugee camp near Damascus.

Maysa was leaving her family home - many Syrians live in Yarmouk, too - to go live with her husband Mohamed Jamaa in Damascus.

The 21-year-old was going to give birth to a baby boy in the coming weeks, so her youngest brother Amar and older sister Wafaa came along to support her.

They left behind their mother Nasra, father Ahmed and two younger brothers, 19-year-old Mohamed and 17-year-old Ahmed.

Nasra is the only one they ever saw again.

## The siege of Yarmouk

Weeks after Maysa left, Bashar al-Assad's regime imposed a suffocating blockade on Yarmouk to cut off supplies to opposition fighters hiding in the camp.

The brutal tactic enabled the regime to recapture areas, such as Yarmouk, Ghouta, Homs and even Aleppo, the economic hub and most populated city before the war, while pushing tens of thousands of civilians to the brink of starvation, including Maysa's family.

For about six months, tens of thousands of people had little access to water, food or medication and were becoming weaker and frailer by the day.

Then, in late December, rumour spread that safe passage was opening for civilians between the neighbourhood of Sbeineh and Hajar al-Aswad, where the Awad family lived. Nasra, Ahmed and their two children trekked along the road with hundreds of people until they reached a regime checkpoint.

Military officers told the women and girls to return to the camp and for the men and boys to stay put.

"As the women were walking back, they heard heavy gunfire behind them," said Maysa.

"We know our father and brothers are gone, but we want someone to find out exactly what happened that day," she said.

## Truth and closure

Maysa spoke to Al Jazeera from a hospital in Damascus, where her mother was receiving dialysis. During the siege of Yarmouk, Nasra lost



A woman scans for her sister on the wall of a hospital in central Damascus, where photos of missing people are plastered.

half of her weight, dropping from 90 to 45kg (198 to 99lbs). She has since regained some of her weight.

Her family is one of thousands grieving the loss of loved ones who went missing after they were disappeared or killed during the Syrian war, according to victims, local monitors and legal experts.

Maysa said she wants investigators to look for mass graves at the "Reno checkpoint near the cable company" around Yarmouk. She wants answers for closure and she wants to pursue justice against the perpetrators.

Under the rule of former President Bashar al-Assad and the war he waged on millions of Syrians to quash any idea of opposition, at least 231,278 people were killed in conflict-related violence, according to the Syrian Network for Human Rights.

SNHR said the regime was responsible for the vast majority of casualties as it barrel-bombed bakeries, markets and hospitals, starved cities into submission, carried out extrajudicial killings and detained and tortured real or perceived opponents to death.

The real scale of the horror is still unknown since not all mass killings have been uncovered.



Nasra Awad rests in a hospital bed in Damascus, Syria. She survived the siege on Yarmouk, but she believes her husband and two teenage sons were killed by regime forces.

Hadi al-Khatib, the founder of Syria Archive, a project that has catalogued six million visuals of atrocities since the start of the war, believes his team's archive can help investigators spot mass graves after reviewing footage of atrocities in different locations.

"This is something the Syrian Archive had as a goal since its establishment at the start of the war, which is to make sure it contributes to transitional justice processes," he told Al Jazeera.

Reno is the name of a checkpoint between Hajar al-Aswad and Sbeineh.

Maysa believes her father and brothers were among 300 people murdered there.

## Protecting evidence

The al-Assad family meticulously documented its brutal repression in thousands of binders stored in government buildings, intelligence branches and in the sprawling labyrinth of torture chambers and prisons.

When Bashar al-Assad fled to Russia with his family, he left behind documents that could uncover the fate of tens of thousands of missing people and implicate regime officials in atrocities, experts said.

Protecting these documents and securing mass graves is imperative to building cases against perpetrators, Veronica Bellintani, head of international law support at the Syrian Legal Development Programme, said.

Bellintani is concerned that

some documents could be deemed ineligible if lawyers can't trace their provenance, a difficult task after thousands of people entered prisons and searched through bundles of papers looking for their loved ones.

"There will always be arguments [in a court] that documents are fabricated or tampered with ... This is why the chain of custody ... from a prison to a prosecutor is so important," Bellintani added.

Foreign journalists and media personalities are also casually handling documents without knowing how important they are, Bellintani continued.

"The pain families have been facing and the need to show the world the horror of the Syrian regime - both understandable sentiments - have taken priority over understanding our collective responsibility to protect these documents," she said.

## Memory and justice

Over the course of the war, citizen journalists and activists documented human rights violations over social media, making Syria one of the first conflicts to be broadcast online.

However, much of the content was eventually taken down for "violating the content regulations" of social media platforms, said al-Khatib from Syria Archive.

The videos and photos that remain online serve as proof of the atrocities committed during the war.

Sanad Verification Agency found and verified a video on YouTube that captures the death of a young man named Ibrahim on June 30, 2012.

He was at the funeral of a protester who was shot dead by regime forces days earlier, according to witnesses.

Ibrahim was one of the pallbearers who was carrying the body in procession when a car bomb went off, killing him and many others.

The video shows bodies burning and strewn on the ground, while bystanders run and scream for help.

Ibrahim's father, Abu Tarek, couldn't hold back his tears when he spoke to Al Jazeera about the blast. Days after the al-Assad regime fell, he went to a graveyard in Eastern Ghouta to visit Ibrahim.

"I want what happened to my son to happen to Bashar and his helpers," Abu Tarek said.

Maysa shares the sentiment, although she is still trying to confirm the death of her father and brothers.

Since the fall of the regime, she has visited several morgues around Damascus in hopes of finding their bodies.

# Nurses need care too: How curbing self-sacrifice can prevent burnouts

By Ester Ellen Trees Bolt

REFLECTING on my mother's decade-long nursing career, I often wonder why so many nurses leave the profession after just a few years.

In the UK, the shortage of nurses has reached alarming levels. Fewer students are enrolling in nursing programmes, and nearly half of newly registered nurses leave within five to ten years.

Meanwhile, the demand for healthcare continues to grow, as outlined in England's NHS Long-Term Workforce Plan, which sets out how the NHS will ensure there are enough nurses and doctors to support patients.

The problem is not confined to the UK: nursing faces a global crisis. The high turnover of skilled professionals has serious implications for healthcare systems worldwide.

The Netherlands is also experiencing troubling trends,

with predictions of a significant healthcare staffing shortfall in the coming decades.

## Culture of self-sacrifice

I interviewed nurses in the Netherlands about their workplace experiences including burnout for my research.

And I found that one of the main reasons nurses leave is because of the profession's culture of self-sacrifice. While empathy, compassion, and dedication are hallmarks of nursing, these qualities can lead to them working too hard. Nurses often push themselves so hard to meet their patients' needs that they neglect their own health. Nursing often reinforces the culture of self-sacrifice, with an unspoken expectation that nurses should prioritise patients' needs.

My research shows that nurses are actively seeking employment to avoid burn-



out, but this often involves changing employers - a decision that is personally and organisationally intense and costly. I argue that, to ensure they remain in the workforce long term, nurses should be trained in setting boundaries and prioritising self-care.

Nurses, particularly in long-term care, frequently form strong emotional bonds with their patients, which makes

it challenging to draw boundaries between professional responsibilities and personal attachment. Interviews with nurses highlight the emotional toll of this. Several nurses mentioned feeling guilt when calling in sick, knowing their patients and colleagues depended on them.

Some described how increased workloads, due to colleagues' absences, eventu-

ally left them too overworked to continue. Others reported being constantly contacted to work extra shifts, even on their days off, due to staffing shortages caused by absenteeism and turnover.

These stories reflect the relentless pressure nurses face. For many, the instinct to help others is both a source of pride and a path to burnout. When nurses don't set

boundaries, their bodies often force them to stop - through illness and exhaustion.

## How to change

Although nurses are the backbone of healthcare systems, the profession is undervalued and often viewed as less professional compared to other medical roles. This perception disrespects the complexity of nursing and dis-

courages young people from entering the field.

To address these issues, nurses need more support from employers and colleagues, including doctors and HR teams. Public campaigns must celebrate nursing as a highly skilled and indispensable profession, challenging outdated stereotypes.

Burnout prevention also requires systemic changes. Nursing education must teach self-care and boundary setting as essential skills. Research indicates that nurses often report improved mental health and job satisfaction after switching employers, suggesting that organisational culture is pivotal in retaining staff - and that some workplaces are already leading the way.

Self-sacrifice culture is a double-edged sword. While it reflects the compassion and dedication that define nursing, it poses a serious threat to the sustainability of the profession. To retain nurses, they need to be viewed as true professionals and be acknowledged for the value they deliver to the overall care processes. By fostering a culture that values personal boundaries, supports wellbeing, and elevates the professional identity of nursing, we can ensure that nurses are cared for just as much as they care for others.

Failure to act will have far reaching consequences not just for nurses but for patients and healthcare systems around the world.

By Ignatius Banda

As the population in African cities grows, governments are struggling to provide sustainable public transport solutions, conditions that have led to gridlock in major business districts.

Projections show rapid growth of urban populations across the continent, and town planners are hard-pressed for time on how new spaces and infrastructure will be created for efficient public transport.

A growing number of cities are expected to hit a population of more than 10 million people by 2035, but social services are failing to match the overload on existing infrastructure, with public transport being one of the major sticking points.

In countries such as Zimbabwe, where government-owned transport utilities have been overtaken by thousands of illegal taxi operators, local authorities are fighting an uphill battle to bring order out of the urban chaos.

In the country's two major cities, Harare and Bulawayo, municipalities have put in place measures to decongest the public transport sector, but these have fallen flat as both registered and unregistered operators have routinely ignored the decrees to work from designated points.

For example, in 2015, the city of Bulawayo awarded a multi-million-dollar contract for the construction of what was hoped to be a futuristic public transport terminus, but operators have shunned it, claiming its positioning in the central business district is bad for business.

While the Egodini Mall Taxi Rank and Informal Traders Market was also expected to provide trading space for vendors in anticipation of business from travellers, it is marked by empty vending bays, with traders preferring crowded CBD sidewalks instead.

City mayor David Coltart has



A congested street in Bulawayo where public transporters pick up passengers at an undesignated point

# African public transport services struggle to match urban growth

conceded that the project risks becoming a white elephant, and construction of the next phase of the project has been halted to deal with these challenges, highlighting the challenge growing cities face in their efforts to modernise amenities.

Zimbabwe's public transport headaches come against the backdrop of the Second World Sustainable Transport Day this November, where policymakers and agencies

rethink urban mobility.

Other pertinent issues include ways of incorporating public transport into the broader improvement of "safety and security, reducing pollution and CO2 emissions while increasing the attractiveness of urban environments," according to a United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) briefing during the 2023 World Sustainable Transport Day.

According to UN Habitat,

the day was declared by the UN General Assembly "in recognition of the important role of safe, affordable, accessible, and sustainable transport systems for all in supporting sustainable economic growth, improving the social welfare of people, and enhancing international cooperation and trade among countries."

However, to achieve this, UNECA says African governments must put in place "remedial measures" that will

ensure the continent's transportation systems are more sustainable and environmentally friendly.

"African governments must prioritize inclusive urban planning," said Atkeyelsh Persson, chief of the Urbanization and Development Section at the Economic Commission for Africa.

"Key areas of focus should include upgrading infrastructure such as roads and utilities," Persson told IPS.

This comes as Zimbabwe and other regional countries seem to be going backwards in realising UNECA's goals as they are struggling to cope with rapid urbanisation and provide sustainable urban transport solutions for city dwellers.

During last year's inaugural World Sustainable Transport Day, UNECA said the continent was in urgent need of developing sustainable and resilient public transport in-

frastructure if Africa is to "optimise the development of interconnected highways, railways, waterways, and airways."

The agency noted that Africa's rapid urbanisation was also a call to escalate sustainable urban transport solutions, but with government cuts in public spending and also the drying up of private investors in the sector, public transportation has only deteriorated.

"Despite this growth in urban populations, the rate of growth in housing, infrastructure, and basic amenities has not kept pace with this urban growth," said Nyovani Madise, a demographics professor and President of the Union for African Population Studies.

"This has resulted in mushrooming of urban informal settlements, waste and pollution, congestion on the roads and overcrowding," Madise said.

While UNECA has called for the optimisation of interconnected transportation, Zimbabwe's once thriving railways has become virtually non-existent, with the National Railways suspending its passenger train service citing operational challenges.

As part of desperate efforts to deal with the shrinking space for public transport, the Bulawayo municipality is planning to take over parking space at the National Railways of Zimbabwe train station for use as a long-distance bus terminus.

The unusual move was triggered by an increasing number of long-distance buses in Bulawayo who have joined smaller private taxis picking up passengers in undesignated points.

These developments have further highlighted the difficulties some African countries face in balancing urban population growth and public transport needs, which could be a missed opportunity towards UNECA's proposed "socially inclusive, environmentally sustainable, and well-governed continent."

IPS

By Special Correspondents

LIONS are a symbol of Africa's last wild places. It's a species central to many of the continent's cultures and religions. But lion populations have reportedly declined over the past 50 years, especially in parts of west and east Africa.

Concern over this decline has prompted large financial commitments to shore up numbers. These investments must go hand in hand with the critical work of closely monitoring lion populations. It's important to understand how their numbers and their distribution respond to conservation actions such as anti-poaching, managing conflicts with cattle farmers, and securing protected areas.

Many traditional methods used to count lions can produce unreliable results. And many existing estimates are based on assumptions about vast expanses which have not been surveyed.

We are researchers with over 50 years of combined experience in conservation, big cat ecology, and the complexities of people and wildlife living together. We have long suspected wildlife tourism rangers operating within our study locations in Uganda could help us find lions in hard-to-reach places and map their distribution.

After all, tourism rangers are government employees whose primary role is to guide tourists in observing and photographing wildlife daily. They have a deeper understanding of animal behaviour than most others.

We therefore set out to study the efficacy of wildlife tourism rangers in collecting data necessary for estimating lion population

numbers. We compared their performance to another commonly used field method to count big cats: remote infrared camera traps. We found that an approach led by wildlife rangers could be very useful in counting lions in many parts of their African range.

## Counting the lions of the Nile River

As the morning sun rises on the banks of the River Nile in north-western Uganda, two wildlife rangers turn on their iPhones, pre-loaded with tracking software which will help them monitor where they have searched for lions. Lilian Namukose and Silva Musobozi head into the heart of Murchison Falls National Park. Here, their daily work is to locate and photograph the region's largest predator: the African lion.

The study area is the Nile Delta region (255km<sup>2</sup>) of the park, Uganda's largest protected area. The region flanks the upper reaches of the Nile River, Africa's longest waterway. It is a biodiversity hotspot but faces immense human pressures, from commercial oil extraction and wire snare poaching.

For these reasons it is critical to establish robust measures of how many lions still exist there, and develop monitoring schemes which will be long lasting.

Over 76 sampling days we collaborated with Namukose and Musobozi, who drove 2,939km searching for lions. At the same time, we deployed infrared camera traps across 32 locations in the same study area. This allowed us to compare how these two methods performed head-to-head in exactly the same study area and time period. What we measured was the



# Lions conservation in Africa: Wildlife rangers do a better job than machines

number of individually identifiable lions through their unique whisker spot patterns, suitable for advanced scientific analysis called spatial capture-recapture modelling.

At the end of our survey period the rangers detected 30 lions 102 times, generating an estimate of 13.91 individuals per 100km<sup>2</sup> with acceptable precision. By contrast, the infrared camera traps could not reliably identify lions. There were only two usable detections because of poor image quality.

One of the most important results of our surveys was that the ranger-led survey was 50 percent cheaper than running camera traps, and each detection by a camera trap was 100 times more expensive than a detection by a ranger.

What rangers could mean for lion conservation across Africa Our survey of Murchison's Nile Delta region showed us two key things. First, rangers' intimate knowledge of lion behaviour (especially specific thickets, and regions of high

lion activity) helped us achieve high lion detection rates. Second, using tourism rangers as lion monitors gives rangers an entry point into the conservation science field.

This approach not only empowers rangers as active conservation stakeholders, but builds the local capacity that's needed in many of the places where lions still roam. This science capacity is key if lion populations are to be monitored accurately and regularly (ideally yearly).



**For these reasons it is critical to establish robust measures of how many lions still exist there, and develop monitoring schemes which will be long lasting.**

This is all the more critical in key source sites of lions in Uganda which have experienced significant declines in recent years, especially Kidepo Valley and Queen Elizabeth National Park. The current lion population in Uganda is estimated at 291 individuals, far lower than many other places in east Africa (the Maasai Mara alone holds about 400 lions).

Silva Musobozi, one of the rangers who did the fieldwork of the scientific study, adds:

Rangers are arguably the closest group to wildlife on the ground and have good knowledge of animal behaviour. Through capacity building and training, rangers can be better incorporated into the scientific and management process.

By Nawal Al-Maghafi and  
Jasmin Dyer

**T**WO-YEAR-old Shaina is hooked up to an intravenous drip at one of the few functioning hospitals in Haiti's capital, Port-au-Prince. Her mother, Venda, desperately hopes it will alleviate the acute malnutrition the emaciated young girl is suffering from.

Shaina is one of 760,000 children who are on the brink of famine in Haiti. Terrified of the gang warfare raging in her neighbourhood, for weeks Venda was too frightened to leave her home to seek treatment for her daughter. Now that she has made it to the paediatric ward, she hopes it is not too late for Shaina.

"I want to get proper care for my child, I don't want to lose her," she says tearfully.

Haiti has been engulfed in a wave of gang violence since the assassination in 2021 of the then-president, Jovenel Moïse, and now an estimated 85% of the capital is under gang control. Even inside the hospital, Haitians are not safe from the fighting, which the UN says has killed 5,000 people this year alone and left the country on the verge of collapse.

The hospital's medical director explains that the previous day, police clashed with gang members in the emergency ward among terrified patients. The victims of the violence are everywhere. One ward is full of young men with gunshot wounds.

#### Pierre is one of them

He says he was walking home from work when he was caught in the crossfire of one street battle, with a bullet ripping through his collar bone.

"I think if the government were more stable and had put in place better youth programmes, they would not get involved in the gangs," he says of the young men who make up a large proportion of the groups terrorising the capital.

To combat the growing violence, the UN Security Council authorised the establishment of a Multinational Security Support Mission (MSS) in October 2023.

Funded primarily by the US, the Kenyan-led force deployed to Haiti six months ago tasked with restoring law and order. On a patrol in downtown Port-au-Prince, the ferocity of the gang violence is clear.

Kenyan officers drive along the streets in heavily armoured personnel carriers (APC) through once bustling areas of the capital that now lie deserted. Shops and houses are boarded up. Burnt out cars and



Negotiant (centre) now lives with her family in a camp for displaced people

## On patrol with Kenyan forces inside Haiti's gang warzone

debris are piled high along the side streets - barricades built by the gangs to block access.

The convoy weaves its way through the rubble when suddenly it comes under fire.

Bullets slam into the APC's armour as the Kenyan police shoot back with their assault rifles through gun ports in the vehicle's walls. After nearly an hour of back-and-forth gunfire, the convoy moves on.

But it is not long before there are signs of more horrific gang violence. A human body burns in the middle of the street.

One of the Kenyan police in our APC says he suspects it was a gang member cornered and killed by a rival group, his body set alight to send a gruesome warning. The Kenyan officers on our patrol are by now well accustomed to seeing this sort of brutality on the streets of Port-au-Prince, but they also tell us they are exhausted.

Four hundred officers arrived in June - but they are hugely outnumbered. In July, Haiti's government estimated there were 12,000 armed gang members in the country.

The Kenyans were promised



Pierre was caught in the crossfire of a gang battle

additional personnel. When the UN authorised the mission, a force of 2,500 was envisioned, but that support, which was supposed to arrive in November, has yet to materialise.

Despite the situation, the force's leadership remains optimistic. Commander Godfrey Otunge is under pressure from the Kenyan government to make a success of this mission.

The mission commander says there is "overwhelming support" for the MSS in Haiti.

"The population are demanding that our team extend and go to other places and pacify," he says.

The uphill struggle they face is clear at a former Haitian police station, which had been occupied by a gang but has now been re-taken by the Kenyan forces.

It is still entirely surrounded by gangs and, as officers head up to the roof, they come under sniper fire. The Kenyan officers shoot back while urging everyone to remain low. The Kenyan officers say some of their much-delayed additional forces will arrive by the end of this year, bringing their total to 1,000.

And the support is urgently needed. There are areas in Port-

au-Prince which are under such tight gang control they are virtually impenetrable for the police.

In one such area, Wharf Jérémie, almost 200 civilians were killed by a single gang over the space of one weekend earlier in December.

In total, as many as 100 gangs are estimated to be operating in the Port-au-Prince area, with boys as young as nine joining their ranks.

And the problem only appears to be growing. According to the UN children's agency, Unicef, the number of children recruited to the gangs has soared by 70% in a year.

One of the gang leaders to whom they flock is Ti Lapli, whose real name is Renel Destina.

As head of the Gran Ravine gang, he commands more than 1,000 men from his fortified headquarters high above Port-au-Prince.

Gangs like his have exacerbated an already dire situation in Haiti, and are known to slaughter, rape and terrorise civilians.

Gran Ravine is infamous for carrying out kidnappings for ransom, a practice which has earned Ti Lapli a place on tTi Lapli tells us that he and his gang members "love our country a lot" - but when pressed on the rapes and murders gangs like his inflict on civilians, he claimed his men "do things they weren't supposed to do [to members of rival gangs] because the same is done to us".

The reason children join Gran Ravine is simple, he says: "The government doesn't create any jobs, it's a country with no economic activity whatsoever. We are living on trash, it's basically a failed state."

He failed to acknowledge the strangulating impact gangs like his have on Haiti's economy. Often afraid to leave their homes for work, civilians are regularly extorted for money, too. With 700,000 residents forced to flee their homes due to the violence inflicted by groups such as Gran Ravine, the capital's schools have become camps for internally displaced people.

Negotiant is one of those who has had to seek shelter. He sits with her five children, squeezed onto the small section of a school balcony they now call home.

"Just weeks ago I was living in my own house," she says. "But gangs took over my neighbourhood."

She explains that she left for an area of the city called Solino, until that too was overrun by gangs and she fled along with hundreds of other people.

"Today, again, I'm on the run to save my life and my children," she says.

**BBC**

## UN report shows prospects for global life expectancy

By Telesphor Magobe

**I**MPROVEMENT in the provision of health services, an increase in the consumption of healthy foodstuffs (balanced diet), personal hygiene and keeping an active lifestyle for optimal health and weight have contributed to improvement in global life expectancy, which has reached 73.3 years in 2024.

This is an increase of 8.4 years since 1995. In 2054, global life expectancy is projected to reach 77.4 years, according to the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA)'s World Population Prospects 2024.

This has impacted the world's population "expected to continue growing over the coming 50 or 60 years, reaching a peak of about 10.3 billion people in the mid-2080s, up from 8.2 billion in 2024. After peaking, the global population is projected to start declining gradually, falling to 10.2 billion people by the end of the century (by 2100)," says UNDESA. In 2050, the world's population is projected to reach 9.7 billion people.

On the other hand, in 2024, the global fertility rate stands at 2.25 live births per woman, down from 3.31 births in 1990.

"More than half of all countries and areas globally have fertility below the replacement level of 2.1 live births per woman. This is the level required for a population to maintain a constant size in the long run (without migration), with each generation being followed by another of roughly equal size," says UNDESA.

The report suggests that by the late 2030s, half of the women in countries with populations that have already peaked will be too old to have children by natural means. "Because the share of women in the reproductive age range (roughly, between 15 and 49 years) is projected to decline rapidly in such countries, the impact on population size of policies aimed at raising fertility levels is likely to diminish over time," it says.

China, Italy, the Republic of Korea and Spain, are among the 24 countries reported to experience "ultra-low" fertility, with fewer than 1.4 live births per woman over a lifetime. The report says a return to 2.1 births per woman within the next 30 years is highly unlikely (0.1 per cent) in the 24 countries with "ultra-low fertility" in 2024 that have already peaked.

In Tanzania, life expect-



tancy is at 66.8 years in 2024 an increase of 0.13 years from life expectancy of 66.67 years in 2023. Improvement in life expectancy in the country has been contributed by improved healthcare and healthy living awareness campaigns (UNDP, 2024).

This is evidenced in the setting up of more referral hospitals, regional hospitals, district hospitals, dispensaries, health centres and clinics, which have gone hand in hand with an increase in the number of

medical practitioners, health experts and nurses.

The government also collaborates with the private sector in the provision of health services. Improvement in life expectancy has also boosted Tanzania's population from 12,313,469 in 1967 to 61,741,120 persons in 2022. The population is projected to reach 151.3 million persons in 2050 [Population and Housing Census (PHC, 2022)].

Studies show that active physical activity (a healthy

lifestyle) removes between six and 10 per cent of the major non-communicable diseases (NCDs) of coronary heart diseases, type 2 diabetes, breast and colon cancer, and increases life expectancy, according to Mainland Tanzania Food-Based Dietary Guidelines (FB-DGs, 2023).

World Health Organisation (WHO) shows a global share of deaths from NCDs rose to 73.9 per cent by 2019, while a share of communicable diseases dropped to 18.2 per cent.

Akik et al. (2024) in their study titled "Research Priorities for Non-Communicable Diseases in Humanitarian Crises: Focus on Cardio-Metabolic Syndrome" suggest that NCDs pose a significant burden for public health, and are the leading cause of global morbidity and mortality.

Thus, according to the authors, NCDs account for 41 million (74 per cent) of global annual deaths, with the vast majority of these deaths (77 per cent) occurring in low-

and middle-income countries (LMICs).

"The global demographic and epidemiological transition, with trends such as population aging, increased life expectancy and changes in lifestyle, have led to shifts in the global burden of disease, including increased prevalence of NCDs."

Diabetes in particular is one of the top 10 leading causes of death. It is also a major cause of blindness, kidney failure, heart attacks, stroke and lower-extremity amputation, leading to debilitating complications.

"Much of the burden caused by diabetes can be prevented with evidence-based, individual-level and population-level interventions," says Dr Jérôme Salomon, Assistant Director-General, Universal Health Coverage/Communicable and Non-communicable Disease in a WHO report 2024 titled "Guidance on global monitoring for diabetes prevention and control: Framework, indicators and application."

The report suggests that the risk of dying from any one of the four main NCDs (cardiovascular diseases, cancer, chronic respiratory diseases or diabetes) between the ages of 30 and 70 decreased by 20 per cent globally between 2000 and 2019.

However, in lower middle-income countries, the mortality rate of the patients suffering from diabetes, increased by 33 per cent. Countries which have reduced the impact of NCDs have also raised their life expectancy.

## BUSINESS

## Gachagua allies attack govt over illicit brew remarks

NAIROBI

ALLIES of former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua have lashed out angrily at Interior Principal Secretary Raymond Omollo over his remarks that the government is effectively addressing the fight against illegal alcohol abuse and that Gachagua's claims of reluctance since he was thrown out of office are baseless, selfish, and politically driven.

Key Gachagua surrogates, including senators Karungu wa Thang'wa, Joe Nyutu, and Seki Lenku; hardline ruling party MPs James Gakuya, Jayne Kihara, John Kaguchia, George Koimburu, and Peter Kihungu; and other backers have accused PS Omollo of ignorance for failing to recognise that the deliberate procedures embodied in present efforts to control illicit brew are not sufficient in themselves, as the problem has assumed the dimensions of a national emergency, with Mt Kenya region being affected the most.

"In fact, we believe the PS was being dishonest in only acknowledging deaths in Nakuru County because there have been deaths everywhere, especially in the Mt Kenya region," the leaders stated in their declaration.

They further insisted, "The return of illicit alcohol is a serious threat that will once again destroy families and communities across the nation, particularly in the Mt Kenya region."

Yesterday, PS Omollo, on behalf of the State Department for Internal Security and National Administration, condemned Gachagua's allegations made during a church service in Naivasha. The former DP had accused President Ruto's government of slowing the fight against illicit liquor and deliberately targeting Mt Kenya region residents with counterfeit alcohol distribution and sales. The PS described these accusations as reckless and unbecoming of a leader of Gachagua's stature.

While acknowledging that drug and alcohol abuse, drug trafficking, and related criminal activity remain serious problems affecting the lives of most Kenyans, the PS spoke ambitiously about the government's commitment to fighting illicit brew, outlining the promising strategies taken, such as the involvement of police and chiefs, in nationwide efforts to reduce overall substance abuse.

However, following the deaths of three individuals after consuming illicit alcohol in Lanet, Nakuru County, Gachagua's allies challenged PS Omollo to disclose the details of all 29 companies said to be dealing in second-generation alcohol. They demanded to know when and where these companies were vetted, as well as the names of the 15 companies that were vetted and licensed, along with the areas where they distribute their products.

That was after the PS stated that all the 29 active manufacturers and distillers of second-generation alcohol in the country were vetted by a multi-agency team, including the Interior Ministry, the National Authority for the Campaign Against Alcohol and Drug Abuse (NACADA), the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions (ODPP), the Kenya Bureau of Standards (KEBS), and the Kenya Revenue Authority (KRA). Of

these, only two were initially found fully compliant before a comprehensive re-vetting exercise involving 22 of the 27 dealers who had failed the initial test was done, leading to the licensing of 13 additional manufacturers to make a total of 15.

"The PS should specifically confirm whether the 13 companies he recently licensed were intended to sell exclusively in the Mt Kenya region and if he vetted them entirely by himself," the legislators demanded.

Not satisfied, they further urged the government to clarify the steps being taken to curb the resurgence of illicit alcohol in regions like Mt Kenya, despite the claimed vetting of manufacturers and distillers.

Ever since the impeachment of Deputy President (former) Rigathi Gachagua started, the Kenyan political scene has been lively, and politics has been sweet-sweeter than what Radio Maisha sports presenter Stephen Mukangai usually says is the sweetest thing in the whole world, followed by football. If you know, you know.

Yesterday, the embattled Deputy President was discharged from Karen Hospital, where he had been admitted on the very day he was supposed to appear before the Senate for cross-examination on the charges leading to his impeachment.

He said Dr Gikonyo, who has been his doctor for the past 20 years, told him that if only he had delayed for another twenty minutes, maybe this could have been one of the longest weekends in the country's history, with Mashujaa Day and a state burial in line. But who knows if he would have even been accorded a state burial under President William Ruto, whom he now refers to as "vicious?"

I am not being insensitive. Gachagua himself told journalists yesterday that, long before his impeachment process began, the President had tried to kill him twice. "Undercover police accessed my room on August 30, but we detected it. Again, on September 3, while in Nyeri, there was an attempt to poison me," Gachagua claimed.

"For the last one year, it has been very difficult for me, but I am a very persevering and enduring man," he added.

The embattled DP, insisting that he is not yet the former Deputy President because the courts still have to determine the active case concerning his impeachment—having barred the swearing-in of Prof Kithure Kindiki as the new DP after his nomination by the President to replace him—revealed that by Sunday, when he was being discharged from the hospital, the government had already withdrawn his security detail and recalled the state vehicles he used.

Adding to the political drama, Gachagua stated that during Mashujaa Day celebrations in Kwale, private helicopter owners at Wilson Airport were reportedly instructed not to fly him there. Consequently, he had to return home in his private Toyota RAV4, driven by his son.

During his interview with reporters, while maintaining his stance of being a truthful man, Gachagua said he believes he is being hounded by President William Ruto for telling him the truth.

## Mufindi District reaping big from tree planting projects



Daudi Chafu, Itulavatu Village Executive Officer (right) take journalists on a straw through one of the village's tree plantation farms. Looking on is Revocatus Mgaya, TASAF Mufindi District Coordinator. Photo: Francis Kajubi.

By Francis Kajubi

THE Tanzania Social Action Fund (TASAF) has invested in tree planting projects in Mufindi district in Iringa region as an effort to conserve the environment, combat possible climate change crises and generate income for village governments so that they can establish rural development projects.

The projects in question are related to establishment and development of tree plantations, producing fish in ponds and conducting irrigated farming.

Revocatus Mgaya, TASAF Mufindi District Coordinator, told journalists recently that the Fund in the district is implementing various development projects in 118 villages out of the 121 villages in the district.

Beneficiaries of these projects in the district were more than 6,500 of which until the end of September this year, there were about 4,000 ben-

eficiaries after a chunk of them had graduated.

Mgaya said the projects implemented by TASAF in Mufindi district are tree planting projects which are carried out by TASAF beneficiaries through public works programs (PWP). The works are held for ten days every month.

He said that the trees that are planted are those that are used to produce timber, hardwood and fruit.

The fruit trees planted are avocados, papayas and mangoes. More than 60 secondary and primary schools in Mufindi district have planted fruit trees in their fields, which is an average of two hectares per school.

"Among the benefit of tree planting projects is to create revenues for the district by selling poles for construction activities and production of electric poles;

We have planted many fruit trees in the school premises so that they can be taken care of by the beneficiaries in re-

spective areas and they can get fruits for themselves," said Mgaya.

The trees have been planted in the villages of Ludilo, 80 hectares have been planted to produce poles and hardwood.

In the village of Ifupira, 35 hectares of this type of trees have been planted. Itulavatu village has planted 14.5 hectares of these trees.

Itulituli village has planted 11 hectares. Another village is Ikaning'ombe where 11 hectares have been planted. All these projects are managed by the village governments on behalf of TASAF.

He said that TASAF is also implementing dam projects for fish breeding and irrigation farming. The projects are implemented through the PWPs arrangements in 106 villages.

Daudi Chafu, Itulavatu Village Executive Officer said that TASAF projects have been an important stimulus for economic activities through tree planting, agriculture and fish farming using ponds.

"There many beneficiaries who have graduated from the programme and others continue to benefit from it through PWP and the under 18 monthly grants. TASAF has been a catalyst for development for rural residents," said Chafu.

Janeth Kisweswe, Itulavatu Primary School Teacher said that the fruit farm project funded by TASAF has been very beneficial.

She said the same project started in 2022 the goal is to reap fruits for food and to sell some of them to Mufindi town markets where sales generated are up to 120,000/- per season.

"The earned sales are used to prepare resources for the school such as the printing of exams. The school farm is one hectare and has 100 avocado trees," she said.

Abdul Diuchile, TASAF Senior Programme Expert said that the aim of the projects is to boost the citizen's income from being paid through PWP and running production projects.

LAGOS

MARY Ogunloye, an accountant who works for a top audit firm in Ikoyi, Lagos, had made it an annual ritual to buy gifts and hampers for neighbours and friends at Christmas.

However, Ogunloye has changed this habit due to the high cost of these items. She now thinks of her family alone, complaining that the intensifying cost-of-living crisis has hit her hard.

"I will be sharing a bag of rice with my loved ones this Christmas. I will buy a roll of tomato puree to add to it," she said, noting that she is cutting down on spending this season owing to inflationary pressures.

"I cannot afford to buy hampers and gift cards again this year as they are very expensive now. I used to buy a hamper at N35,000 last year, but this now sells at N120,000," she said.

Debora Ayodele, a sales representative at a firm in Ikeja, Lagos, said her family is cutting down on gift items to orphanages this Christmas due to their surging prices. Ayodele said she would not be giving any gifts to her family pastors and neighbours.

"You cannot go to the market with a budget anymore, because prices keep rising daily," she said. "Things are hard in the country and we cannot afford to give



## Christmas shoppers shun pricey gifts on inflation

expensive gifts."

More Nigerians shopping this holiday are treading softly as that they cannot afford to fund their habits due to an accelerating inflation and shrinking wallets.

Since last year, Nigerians have been more cautious and practical about their spending, doing more bargain shopping and buying only essentials.

The headline inflation stood at 34.6 percent in November 2024, with food inflation standing at 39.9 percent, according to the most recent National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) CPI report.

Pay is failing to keep pace with costs in Africa's most populous nation, with civil servants and low-income households squeezed.

This is amplifying a cost-of-living crisis,

hurting citizens' physical and mental health while exacerbating existing conditions, according to experts.

The World Bank, in its latest Nigeria Development Update report, said sluggish growth and rising inflation in Nigeria have pushed more people into poverty.

The global bank said at least 129 million people (64.5) live below the national poverty line.

The price of a 50kg of local parboiled rice has risen by 66 percent to an average of N100,000 in December 2024 from N60,000 in December 2023, according to BusinessDay's market survey.

In a country where the minimum wage is N70,000 (below \$50 per month), the ballooning costs of food, clothes,

and shelter are leaving many in the lurch.

Businesses have been hard hit as households cut down on purchases to survive the current economic hardship.

"Sales have been very slow unlike last year because there is no money at the moment," Chioima Chukwu, a frozen food seller at Berger, said. "Most of my customers are complaining that there is no money."

Inventory of unsold products in the manufacturing sector rose to N1.24 trillion in the first half (H1) of 2024 from N272 billion in the same period of last year, the Manufacturers Association of Nigeria (MAN)'s half-yearly review report said.

MAN attributed the increase in inventory to weakened consumer purchasing power,

brought about by diminishing real household income, resulting from the ongoing escalation of inflationary pressures and the aftermath of the subsidy removal.

"The high levels of unsold inventories reflect the challenges faced by consumers and the need for interventions to stimulate demand and improve the sector's performance," the MAN report said.

Also, business activity dropped to 48.9 points for a second straight month of economic contraction, according to the November PMI report by Stanbic IBTC Bank.

Petrol price has jumped by over 100 percent since December 2023 as naira fall heightens inflation. The naira exchanges at over 1500/\$ at both official and parallel markets, making imports more expensive.

Abidemi Adebayo, floor supervisor of Matoris Supermarket, said sales have been slow this festive season owing to consumers' low purchasing power.

He said the number of shoppers this year isn't as high as that of last year. "Last year, we were sold out on all our hampers. People had shopped for everything. However, this year, we still have hampers for sale, which wasn't the case last year."



Interior Principal Secretary, Raymond Omollo

# Brazil shuts down BYD factory site

RIO DE JANEIRO

**B**RAZILIAN authorities have halted the construction of a factory for Chinese electric vehicle (EV) giant BYD, saying workers lived in conditions comparable to “slavery”.

More than 160 workers have been rescued in Brazil’s northeastern state of Bahia, according to a statement from the Public Labour Prosecutor’s Office (MPT).

They were allegedly put in a “degrading” environment and had their passports and salaries withheld by a building company.

BYD said in a statement that it had cut ties with the firm involved and remained committed to a “full compliance with Brazilian legislation”.

The factory was scheduled to be operational by March 2025, and was set to be BYD’s first EV plant outside of Asia.

The workers, hired by Jinjiang Construction Brazil, lived in four facilities in Camaçari city.

At one such facility, workers were made to sleep on beds without mattresses, according to prosecutors.

Each bathroom was also shared among 31 workers, forcing them to get up extremely early in order to be ready for work.

“The conditions found in the lodgings revealed an alarming picture of precariousness and degradation,” the MPT said.

“Slavery-like conditions”, as defined by Brazilian law, include debt bondage and work that violates human dignity.

The MPT added that the situation also constitutes “forced labour”, as many workers had their wages withheld and faced excessive costs for terminating their contracts.



BYD said affected workers had been moved to hotels.

It added that it had conducted a “detailed review” of the working and living conditions for subcontracted employees, and asked on “several occasions” for the construction firm to make improvements.

BYD, short for Build Your Dreams, is one of the world’s largest EV makers.

It sold more electric vehicles than Elon Musk’s Tesla in the last three months of 2023, as the two battled for top spot in the sector.

The company has also been expanding its foothold in Brazil, which is its largest overseas market by a wide margin.

It first opened a factory in São Paulo in 2015, producing chassis for electric buses.

Last year, it announced that it would invest 3 billion reais (\$484.2m) in Brazil to build an EV manufacturing plant.

EV sales in China have been boosted by government subsidies, which encourage consumers to trade their petrol-powered cars for EVs or hybrids.

But there is a growing backlash abroad against what some see as the Chinese government’s unfair support for domestic car makers.

Major markets like the US

and EU have placed tariffs on EVs from China, with more tariffs expected during the incoming administration of US president-elect Donald Trump.

The rescue of 163 workers who were being held in conditions analogous to slavery and the closure of the lodgings and parts of the construction site of the plant where the car manufacturer Build Your Dreams (BYD) is installing a factory in the municipality of Camaçari, in the metropolitan region of Salvador, was communicated on Monday morning (23) to the company and to Jinjiang Group, one of the contractors hired to carry out the work.

The rescued workers will remain in the lodgings, but will not be able to work and will have their employment contracts terminated.

The embargoed accommodations and construction sites will also remain inactive until they are fully regularized with the agencies that make up the task force. The task force responsible for the inspections and developments of this action is composed of the Public Ministry of Labor (MPT), the Ministry of Labor and Employment (MTE), the Public Defender’s Office of the Union (DPU) and the Federal High-

way Police (PRF), in addition to the Federal Public Ministry (MPF) and the Federal Police (PF).

A joint virtual hearing of the MPT and MTE has been scheduled for the afternoon of the 26th so that BYD and Jinjiang can present the necessary measures to guarantee minimum accommodation conditions and also to negotiate the conditions for the general regularization of what has already been detected. The inspection, however, will continue with the analysis of requested documents and the need for new on-site inspections has not been ruled out.

During the series of inspections, which began in mid-November and will continue over the next few days, 163 workers were identified in conditions analogous to slavery at the outsourced company Jinjiang, a service provider for BYD. These workers were distributed across four main lodgings, two located on Rua Colorado and two on Rua Umbus, in the municipality of Camaçari. A fifth lodging, intended for workers in administrative roles, was also inspected, but despite identifying some irregularities, no workers were rescued.

The conditions found in the lodgings revealed an alarming picture of precariousness and degradation. In the first lodging on Colorado Street, the workers slept on beds without mattresses and had no lockers for their personal belongings, which were mixed in with food supplies. The sanitary situation was especially critical, with only one bathroom for every 31 workers, forcing them to wake up at 4 a.m. to form a line and be ready to leave for work at 5:30 a.m.

The second lodging on Colorado Street, intended mainly for welders, presented similarly precarious conditions. Although there was material on the beds, these were in fact only 3cm thick coverings, insufficient to provide minimum conditions for use, with some beds not even having such coverings.

All the accommodations shared serious infrastructure and hygiene problems. The bathrooms, in addition to being insufficient, were not separated by sex, did not have adequate toilet seats and presented poor hygiene conditions. The lack of a suitable place to wash clothes led workers to use their own bathrooms for this purpose.

The situation in some of the food courts was equally

precarious. The kitchens operated in alarming conditions, with no adequate cupboards for food storage. In one particularly serious case, construction materials were found near the food, and food was stored near the bathrooms in unsanitary conditions. Only one of the barracks had an improvised dining hall, with wooden benches and tables in a semi-covered area, which was still insufficient for all the workers, forcing most of them to eat their meals in their beds.

In one of the rooms, occupied by a cook, pots with prepared food were found left open on the floor, exposed to dirt and without refrigeration, to be served the following day. The workers consumed water directly from the tap, without treatment, and even took it to work in bottles.

The conditions at the construction site also revealed serious irregularities. The cafeteria at the workplace used coolers to serve meals, without ensuring minimum hygiene conditions. The chemical toilets, only eight for approximately 600 workers, were in a deplorable state, without toilet paper, water or adequate maintenance, in addition to not respecting the minimum distances established by regulation.

The workers were exposed to intense solar radiation, showing visible signs of skin damage. Several workplace accidents were recorded, including one case in which a worker suffered an accident due to sleep deprivation caused by inadequate housing conditions and long working hours. Another serious case involved a worker who suffered an eye injury in April and, despite requesting ophthalmological care, never received the appropriate medical follow-up.

The work presented multiple irregularities related to the work environment,

leading to the embargo of deep excavation activities and the partial closure of the establishment, specifically the kitchen of one of the accommodations on Rua Colorado. A circular table saw was also closed for not having any safety measures.

In addition to the degrading conditions, the situation constitutes forced labor, due to several indicators found during the inspections: the workers were required to pay a deposit, had 60 percent of their wages withheld (receiving only 40 percent in Chinese currency), faced excessive costs for terminating their contracts, and had their passports withheld by the company. Early termination of the contract implied the loss of the deposit and the amounts withheld, in addition to the obligation to pay for the return ticket and reimburse the cost of the outward ticket.

To give you an idea, if a worker tried to terminate the employment contract after six months, he would leave the country without actually receiving anything for his work, since the discount of the deposit, the ticket to come to Brazil and the payment of the return ticket would, in practice, constitute a total confiscation of the amounts received by the workers throughout the employment relationship.

The working day, in turn, was already set in the contract at ten hours per day, which was aggravated by the lack of regular granting of the breaks provided for in the instrument. A worker who was the victim of a work accident was identified as having not had a break for 25 days. This worker reported tiredness and drowsiness at the time of the accident, demonstrating that the long working hours and the housing conditions, which prevented rest, were crucial factors in the accident.



## Cadbury loses lifelong royal warrant

LONDON

**C**HOCOLATE maker Cadbury has been dropped from the list of royal warrants for the first time in 170 years.

The Birmingham-based chocolatier was awarded its first royal warrant as chocolate and cocoa manufacturers by Queen Victoria in 1854, but it has lost its royal endorsement under King Charles.

Cadbury’s US owners, Mondelez International, said it was disappointed to have been stripped of its warrant.

The King has granted royal warrants to 386 companies that previously held warrants from Queen Elizabeth II, including John Lewis, Heinz and Nestlé.

Companies holding

the Royal Warrant of Appointment, granted for up to five years, are recognised for providing goods or services to the monarchy.

Among the King’s new list of warrant holders are many firms selling food and drink, such as Moët and Chandon, Weetabix and chocolate makers Bendicks and Préstat Ltd.

Warrant holders are allowed to use the coat of arms of the royal they are associated with on packaging, as part of advertising or on stationery.

Earlier this year, the King was urged by campaign group B4Ukraine to withdraw warrants from companies “still operating in Russia” after the invasion of Ukraine, naming Monde-

lez and consumer goods firm Unilever, which has also been stripped of the endorsement.

“Whilst we are disappointed to be one of hundreds of other businesses and brands in the UK to not have a new warrant awarded, we are proud to have previously held one, and we fully respect the decision,” a Mondelez spokesperson said.

Unilever added it was “very proud” of the long history its brands had supplying the royal household, most recently receiving a warrant from Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

Prof David Bailey, from Birmingham Business School, said the decision to strip the chocolate manufacturer of its warrant would affect

its costs, as the brand would have to remove it from all packaging.

A royal warrant was a “kind of seal of approval,” which was thought to bring significant benefits to the UK economy, he added.

Speaking to BBC Radio WM, Prof Bailey said British companies also benefited from being awarded the royal endorsement.

“What is a royal warrant for, if it isn’t to help British jobs and British production?” he asked.

The British chocolate giant celebrated its 200th anniversary earlier this year, after founder John Cadbury opened a grocer’s shop selling cocoa and drinking chocolate in Birmingham on 4 March 1824.

## Inside KRA’s simplified way of filing VAT returns

NAIROBI

**I**NDIVIDUALS and businesses using iTax, TIMS, eTIMS and customs business systems will have an easier time filing returns via the newly introduced VAT Pre-Populated Return System as all transactions have been captured and automatically uploaded on every taxpayer’s portal.

The development presents a paradigm shift from manual data analysis in preparation of VAT returns to using an automated system that fills in every transaction captured from every payment digital platform integrated with iTax, TIMS, eTIMS and customs business systems.

“The VAT pre-populated return filing system reflects KRA’s commitment to simplifying tax processes,” said the Commissioner for Domestic Taxes, Mrs Rispa Simiyu. “We are empowering businesses with a more transparent, efficient, and user-friendly tax reporting system as we explore further possibilities of a fully web based VAT return and a taxpayer dashboard to provide real time view of all the sales and purchases for a given taxpayer.”

Simiyu said the Kenya Revenue Authority (KRA) seeks to



transform tax administration with the VAT pre-populated return filing system for subsequent months once per tax filing period is due on the 20th of every month.

“This is a significant step towards simplification of the VAT return filing process while leveraging on technology to enhance VAT compliance and customer experience,” she said. To enhance tax compliance every VAT registered business (taxpayer) is required to issue and transmit electronic tax invoices to KRA through TIMS/eTIMS

for all sales as required by law.

Using the automatically generated QR code reader and an invoice checker accessed on itax.kra.go.ke, taxpayers can verify whether their purchase invoices have been generated from TIMS/eTIMS or not and whether they include buyer details required for input tax claims.

Mrs Simiyu said every VAT registered taxpayer should verify the accuracy of their pre-populated VAT returns prior to submission to avoid errors in their filled VAT returns.

# Aircraft shortages leave travellers stranded

LAGOS

**C**HRISTMAS travellers are stranded at various Nigerian airports as they cannot find enough airplanes flying to their destinations.

The situation has led to flight cancellations and delays as aircraft demand overshoots supply.

Even the recent airplane additions by airlines are not enough as they have even accentuated the high level of aircraft shortages in the industry.

"It has been an array of flight delays and outright cancellations at the airport today, December 22," said Amina Jacob, an aggrieved passenger, told BusinessDay.

"Passengers arrived at the Lagos airport on board their flight to Kaduna, only to be told that the flight would no longer operate for that day," Jacob said.

She attributed that the reason for the flight cancellation to lack of planes to fly, hinting that the airline should still have been able to operate if there were adequate airplanes.

Last month, operators leveraged loans and partnerships to bring in aircraft to feed local routes during the Yuletide period, following a noticeable passenger glut resulting from depletion in aircraft size across the aviation sector.

Three weeks ago, the Nigeria Civil Aviation Authority of Nigeria (NCAA) had hinted that a total of 10 airplanes were heading for Nigeria to help reduce the Yuletide flight pressure as plans were made to avert chaos and rumpus at Nigerian airports this season.

BusinessDay's findings however show that demand has continued to overshoot supply as airlines have been unable to fly all its passengers without delays and cancellations. In addition to fleet size, the current harmattan haze has made it difficult for pilots to take off and land on schedule, thereby worsening the delays and cancellations.



Obi Jackson, a Lagos airport domestic passenger, told BusinessDay that his Lagos-Abuja bound flight on Sunday was delayed for over three hours.

He argued that airlines now deploy delay strategies when they know they do not have the planes to airlift passengers that have booked for flights.

"They tell us they are delaying flights because of bad weather, but this delay has been happening before the harmattan weather. It only worsened because of the passenger surge during this season," Jackson said.

Bi-Courtney Aviation Services Limited (BASL), operators of the Murtala Muhammed Airport Terminal 2 (MMA2), has stated that there have been recent incidents of unruly and violent behaviour by air passengers as a result of flight delays and cancellations. A statement by BASL said the actions are unacceptable and go against the standards of conduct expected within its facility.

"While we understand the frustration that can arise from flight cancellations and delays,

we urge passengers to address their concerns through appropriate channels, as outlined in Part 19 of the Nigeria Civil Aviation Regulations (Nig.CARs). These regula-

tions clearly define the rights and responsibilities of passengers as well as the obligations of airlines, travel agents, and tour operators. "BASL has a zero-tolerance pol-

icy toward any form of unruly or violent behaviour. Such actions will result in immediate legal action, prosecution to the fullest extent of the law, and potential in-

clusion on no-fly lists. We remain committed to ensuring the safety, security, and well-being of all passengers, staff, and stakeholders," the terminal operator stated.

Ndukwe Ginika Ogechi, CEO Geena Travels and Tours Limited, told BusinessDay that flight delays and cancellations have continued to frustrate passengers who have been left stranded at the airport, shattering their plans.

"On Sunday alone, over three airlines delayed flights within an hour. Some airlines now announce on their website that passengers should expect flight delays as a result of the current harmattan haze.

"I think the major problem these airlines are having at this period is most likely weather-induced," Ogechi said.

A recent viral video showed passengers rushing and falling upon themselves to get on board an Air Peace flight at Abuja airport.

Air Peace Airlines has however responded to the post, saying the flight delay on the day was caused by harmattan haze. It noted that it has deployed adequate aircraft to airlift passengers to their destinations.



**MONDAY - WEDNESDAY FROM 10:30 PM**



## China for proactive fiscal policy in 2025

BEIJING

CHINA will implement a more proactive fiscal policy next year, with sustained and intensified efforts to deliver a well-coordinated package of measures aimed at ensuring economic stability and driving growth, said Finance Minister Lan Fo'an on Monday.

He made the remarks at the national work conference for the fiscal system held in Beijing from Monday to Tuesday, during which he summarized the achievements of the fiscal system in 2024 and outlined its key tasks for 2025.

"First, we will increase the fiscal deficit ratio, increase spending, and accelerate expenditure progress. Also, we will issue larger-scale government bonds to provide stronger support for stabilizing growth and optimizing economic structure," said Lan.

Lan highlighted improving spending structures and ensuring precise allocation, with a stronger focus on enhancing people's livelihoods, boosting consumption, and fostering long-term growth.

"We will continue efforts to prevent and mitigate risks in key areas, ensuring stable and sustainable fiscal operations," Lan added.

It is really important to prioritize the "three guarantees" - safeguarding basic living needs, ensuring salary payments, and maintaining grassroots operations - by increasing fiscal payment transfers to local governments to strengthen their financial ca-

capacity, he said.

Lan emphasized that in 2025, the ministry will remain focused on expanding domestic demand, supporting the development of a modern industrial system, and advancing efforts to safeguard and improve people's well-being.

Key priorities will also include supporting the integrated development of urban and rural areas, fostering balanced regional growth, advancing ecological progress, and promoting high-level opening-up.

"To expand domestic demand, we will vigorously boost consumption and increase personal income through multiple channels," said Lan.

"Also, including enhancing support for consumer goods trade-in programs, improving the financial guarantee mechanism for public cultural services, and advancing a new round of initiatives to strengthen the network of national comprehensive freight hubs can boost more social investment through government investment," he said.

Lan said that supporting the development of a modern industrial system requires a strong focus on enhancing technological innovation, fully backing breakthroughs in key core technologies, accelerating industrial transformation and upgrading, and thoroughly implementing reward and incentive policies for "little giant" enterprises, or those specialized and innovative small and medium-sized enterprises.

ITV

**WEDNESDAY 25 DEC**

- 5:00 Soap rpt: Uzalo
- 5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi
- 6:00 HABARI
- 6:40 Kumekucha
- 7:30 HABARI
- 8:00 Al Jazeera
- 9:00 Art and Lifestyle
- 9:30 Soap: Laws of love
- 10:00 Watoto wetu
- 10:30 Jungu Kuu rpt
- 11:00 Mjue zaidi
- 11:40 Igizo: Bongo DSM
- 12:00 Al Jazeera
- 12:30 Jagina
- 13:00 Dakika 45 rpt
- 14:00 Chetu ni chetu rpt
- 14:40 Mapishi
- 15:00 Meza huru
- 16:30 Watoto Wetu
- 17:00 Music: The Base
- 18:00 Hapa na Pale
- 18:15 Doc rpt: Beyond Narrative
- 18:30 Jarida la wanawake
- 19:00 Kipindi maalum: BOT
- 19:30 Soap: Laws of love
- 20:00 Habari
- 21:05 Aibu Yako
- 21:05 Kipindi maalum: Watumishi housing
- 21:20 Kipindi maalum: Tanesco
- 21:50 Ripoti maalum
- 22:25 Soap: Uzalo
- 22:50 Kipindi maalum: Mch-ezo Supa Jackpot
- 23:00 Music: The Base
- 00:00 Al Jazeera

**THURSDAY 26 DEC**

- 5:00 Soap rpt: Uzalo
- 5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi
- 6:00 HABARI
- 6:40 Kumekucha
- 7:30 HABARI
- 8:00 Al Jazeera
- 9:00 Jungu kuu
- 9:30 Soap rpt: Laws of love
- 10:00 Watoto wetu
- 10:30 Shamba lulu
- 11:00 Ripoti maalum
- 12:00 Al Jazeera
- 12:30 Jarida la wanawake rpt
- 13:00 Kipindi maalum rpt: BOT

13:30 Art and Lifestyle

14:00 Shamsam za pwani rpt

- 15:00 Meza huru
- 16:30 Watoto wetu
- 17:00 The Base
- 18:00 Hapa na Pale
- 18:15 Mapishi
- 18:30 Jagina
- 19:00 Usafiri wako
- 19:30 Soap: Laws of love
- 20:00 Habari
- 21:05 Malumbano ya hoja
- 22:50 Kipindi maalum: Mch-ezo Supa Jackpot
- 23:00 Music: The Base
- 00:00 Al Jazeera

**FRIDAY 27 DEC**

- 5:00 Soap rpt: Uzalo
- 5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi
- 6:00 HABARI
- 6:40 Kumekucha
- 7:30 HABARI
- 8:00 Al Jazeera
- 9:00 Ripoti maalum
- 9:30 Soap rpt: Laws of love
- 10:00 Watoto wetu
- 10:30 Usafiri wako
- 11:00 Kipindi maalum: Watumishi housing
- 11:20 Jagina
- 12:00 Al Jazeera
- 12:30 Kipindi maalum rpt: Tanesco
- 13:00 Kipindi Maalum rpt: Maisha ni nyumba
- 13:30 Kipindi Maalum rpt: Sema na mahakama
- 14:30 DW: Afrimaxx rpt
- 15:00 Meza huru:
- 16:30 Watoto Wetu
- 17:00 The Base (DJ Show)
- 17:30 Kiislam
- 18:00 Hapa na Pale
- 18:15 ITV Top 10
- 19:00 Shamba lulu
- 19:30 Soap: Laws of love
- 20:00 Habari
- 21:05 Kipima Joto
- 22:50 Kipindi maalum: Mch-ezo Supa Jackpot
- 23:00 The Base
- 00:00 Al Jazeera

**SATURDAY 28 DEC**

- 5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi
- 6:00 HABARI

6:40 Kumekucha

7:00 Habari

- 8:00 Al Jazeera
- 9:00 Watoto wetu
- 10:05 Shika Bamba 5
- 10:35 Hawavumi lakini wamo rpt
- 11:30 Chetu ni chetu rpt
- 12:15 Art and lifestyle
- 12:50 ITV Top 10 rpt
- 13:50 Soap rpt: Laws of love
- 15:45 Igizo: Bongo DSM
- 16:10 Igizo: Haikufuma
- 17:00 Shamsam za Pwani
- 18:00 Hapa na Pale
- 18:10 Mjue zaidi rpt
- 19:00 Jungu kuu
- 19:30 Shika Bamba
- 20:00 Habari
- 21:05 Kipindi maalum: Tatu Mzuka
- 21:15 Igizo: Haikufuma
- 21:45 Kipindi maalum: Mch-ezo Supa Min Jackpot
- 21:55 Art and Lifestyle
- 22:15 ITV Top 10
- 23:00 Hawavumi lakini wamo
- 23:40 Soap: Uzalo rpt
- 00:30 Al Jazeera

**SUNDAY 29 DEC**

- 5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi
- 6:00 HABARI
- 6:40 Kumekucha
- 7:00 Habari
- 8:00 Al Jazeera
- 9:00 Watoto Wetu
- 10:00 Soap rpt: Laws of love
- 11:45 Hawavumi lakini wamo rpt
- 12:45 Mjue zaidi
- 13:30 Usafiri wako
- 14:00 Tamasha la Michezo
- 15:30 Mwangaza
- 16:30 ITV Top 10 rpt
- 17:20 Kipindi cha kikristo
- 18:00 Hapa na Pale
- 18:15 Mapishi
- 18:30 Matukio ya wiki
- 19:30 Igizo: Haikufuma
- 20:00 Habari
- 21:05 Igizo: Bongo DSM
- 21:20 Kipindi maalum: Mch-ezo Supa Jackpot
- 21:40 Mjue Zaidi
- 22:15 Soap: Uzalo rpt
- 00:30 Al Jazeera

**CAPITAL TV**

**WED 25 DEC**

- 06:00 Al Jazeera
- 09:00 Kumekucha Michezo rpt
- 10:00 Meza Huru Rpt
- 11:30 Tomorrow Today rpt
- 12:00 Dw News Africa rpt
- 12:30 Our Earth
- 13:00 Telenovela In Love With Ramon rpt
- 14:00 Capchat
- 15:00 Out& About rpt
- 15:30 Special Pgm : Culinary Tourism rpt
- 16:00 Bussines Edition Rpt
- 16:30 Culinary delight rpt
- 17:00 Innovation rpt
- 17:30 Meza huru
- 19:00 Sports Gazette
- 19:30 Chetu ni chetu
- 20:00 Monday Agenda Rpt
- 20:45 Telenovela: In Love With Ramon ep#
- 21:30 Capital Prime News
- 22:00 Dakika 45:
- 22:45 The Décor
- 23:15 Al Jazeera

**THURS 26 DEC**

- 06:00 Al Jazeera
- 09:00 Kumekucha Michezo rpt
- 10:00 Meza Huru Rpt
- 11:30 Spots gazette
- 12:00 Innovation
- 12:30 Culinary delight rpt
- 13:00 Telenovela rpt: In Love With Ramon rpt
- 14:00 Our Earth rpt
- 14:30 DW news Africa rpt
- 15:00 Beyond the Narrative rpt
- 15:45 Décor Rpt
- 16:00 Tomorrow Today
- 16:30 Business edition rpt
- 17:00 In good shape
- 17:30 Meza huru
- 19:00 Out & About Rpt
- 19:30 Eco@Africa
- 20:00 Our Earth Rpt
- 20:45 Telenovela: In Love With Ramon ep#
- 21:30 Capital Prime News
- 22:00 Capchat rpt

23:00 Al Jazeera

**FRID 27 DEC**

- 06:00 Al Jazeera
- 09:00 Kumekucha Michezo rpt
- 10:00 Meza Huru Rpt
- 11:30 Capchat
- 12:30 Décor Rpt
- 13:00 Telenovela In Love With Ramon rpt
- 14:00 Culinary rpt
- 14:30 Ripoti Maalum
- 15:00 Dk 45 rpt
- 16:00 Dw News Africa rpt
- 16:30 The Monday Agenda rpt
- 17:30 Meza huru
- 19:00 Rev
- 19:00 Beyond the Narrative RPT
- 20:00 Aibu Yako
- 20:15 Local Pgm: Business Edition
- 20:45 Telenovela: In Love With Ramon ep#
- 21:30 Capital Prime News
- 22:00 Malumbano ya Hoja Rpt
- 00:00 Al Jazeera

**SAT 28 DEC**

- 08:00 Al Jazeera
- 09:00 Rev rpt
- 09:30 Jagina rpt
- 10:00 Culinary delight rpt
- 10:30 Innovation rpt
- 11:00 Out n'about rpt
- 11:30 Sports Gazette rpt
- 12:00 Shamba Lulu rpt
- 12:30 Our Earth rpt
- 13:00 Business edition rpt
- 13:30 Aljazeera
- 14:30 Telenovela: In Love With Ramon rpt
- 17:15 Beyond the Narrative rpt
- 18:15 Capchat rpt
- 19:15 Bundesliga Kick Off rpt
- 19:30 The Decor
- 20:00 Special Pgm : Culinary Tourism
- 20:30 Tomorrow Today
- 21:00 Out n' About
- 21:30 Capchat Rpt
- 23:00 Al Jazeera
- 01:00 Al Jazeera

## WORLD

## Global disease resurgence in 2024 shows rising health threat

BY BLOOMBERG

SOME infectious diseases saw a huge surge in 2024, with the spread attributed in part to climate change, declining vaccination rates and the advent of new pathogen variants.

The findings, part of a preliminary analysis by London-based disease forecasting firm Airfinity Ltd, seek to renew the focus on the rise of preventable and climate-sensitive diseases, as well as a coordinated global response.

By late December, the world saw dengue cases jump to a new record of over 13 million, more than double last year's number as infections nearly tripled in Central and South America, and killed almost 10,000 globally this year. Cases of pertussis, also known as whooping cough, rose almost 10 times the total number of 2023. Many others such as mpox, oropouche fever and poliomyelitis were also on the rise.

The year also saw unprecedented number of human contracting avian influenza

caused by the H5N1 virus in the US, where 61 cases have been reported by late December. Rwanda also reported its first outbreak of Marburg virus, which can cause severe and potentially fatal hemorrhagic fever in people.

The analysis, which relied on data from 128 sources from 206 countries, found that extreme temperature and changing climate patterns contributed to the surge of diseases, some of which are caused by viruses, bacteria and parasites borne by vectors including mosquitoes and ticks.

Warmer temperatures mean some of these vectors are able to survive and reach newer regions. This year is expected to be the hottest on record, with the average global temperature reaching 1.62C above pre-industrial levels in November, according to the European Union-funded Copernicus Climate Change Service.

Besides, falling immunization rates after the Covid-19 pandemic and emergence of new strains of diseases also contributed to the wider spread.



A health worker gets her temperature checked during the launch of the mpox vaccination campaign at the General Hospital of Goma, on Oct 5, 2024. AFP

Mpox, the typically less contagious and milder cousin of smallpox, has killed hundreds of people this year after a more severe strain appeared in the Democratic Republic of Congo and prompted the World Health Organization to declare it as a global public health emergency for the second time. A declining immunization rates globally post-pandemic led to a comeback of measles which saw a 380 percent jump in the US and 147 percent increase in Europe.

Airfinity also found that large-scale population movement and disruption in vaccine campaigns

due to military conflicts led to the resurgence of polio in Afghanistan and Pakistan, the two remaining endemic countries of the diseases which affect children mostly.

"The resurgence of preventable and climate-sensitive illnesses highlights the importance of adhering to preventive measures while advancing innovation to address diseases," said Kristan Piroeva, an analyst at Airfinity, and called for global data sharing, surveillance of trends for a coordinated public health response.

## Kremlin says gas supplies to Europe 'difficult' as Ukraine transit deal nears end

MOSCOW

THE transit of Russian gas to European countries is currently "very difficult" and requires attention, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said on Monday.

Peskov (pictured) made the remarks after a meeting between Slovak Prime Minister Robert Fico and Russian President Vladimir Putin in Moscow on Sunday where the parties discussed the transit of Russian gas as Ukraine declined to renew a gas transit deal with Russia. "You have heard the statement from the Ukrainian side, and you know about the position of those European countries that continue to buy Russian gas and that consider it necessary for the normal operation of their economies," Peskov said, noting it is a very complicated situation that requires attention.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said Thursday at a European Union Summit that he will not extend Ukraine's five-year gas transportation deal with Russia, which expires at the end of 2024.

The move has raised concern for Slovakia, which has a long-term contract with Russian energy giant Gazprom. Although Putin confirmed Russia's readiness to continue supplying gas to the West and to Slovakia, Fico said this was "practically impossible" once the gas transit agreement expires at the end of the year. **Agencies**

## India, ADB sign USD 500 million loan to support green, sustainable infrastructure projects

NEW DELHI

INDIA and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) signed a USD 500 million loan to support green and sustainable infrastructure projects aligned with the country's climate commitments.

The agreement was inked on December 20 and the ADB loan, with a sovereign guarantee, will be extended to the India Infrastructure Finance Company Limited (IIFCL), according to a statement by the Union Finance Ministry. Signatories to the Financing Environmentally Sustainable Growth in Infrastructure Project were Juhli Mukherjee, Joint Secretary, Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance, for the Government of India, and Country Director Mio Oka for ADB.

Mia Oka said, "ADB financing will help IIFCL provide long-term capital for infrastructure projects focusing on connectivity and energy transition as well as under-resourced sectors like urban projects, education, and health care."

In a press release, Ministry of Finance stated, "To meet its net-zero commitments, the country needs immense private capital investment that will require innovative financing platforms and risk-mitigation instruments to address inherent sector risks and market asymmetries. As a strategic development finance institution, IIFCL is well-suited to meet these needs." Last week, the central government and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) signed a USD 350 million policy-based loan under the second subprogram of Strengthening Multimodal and Integrated Logistics Ecosystem (SMILE) program.

The Ministry of Commerce and Industry in an official statement stated that this policy-based loan aims to expand India's manufacturing sector and improve the resilience of its supply chains. The signatories to the loan agreement were Department of Economic Affairs (DEA), Ministry of Finance; Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), Ministry of Commerce and Industry; and the ADB. The SMILE program is a programmatic policy-based loan (PBL) to support the government in undertaking wide-ranging reforms in the logistics sector in India. The programmatic approach comprises two subprograms, which aim to expand India's manufacturing sector and improve the resilience of its supply chains.

The program establishes and operationalizes a comprehensive policy framework to enhance logistics efficiency through strengthening the institutional bases for multimodal logistics infrastructure development at the national, state, and city levels.

The ministry also noted that it will also help in standardizing warehousing and other logistics assets to strengthen supply chains and incentivize greater private sector investment, improving efficiencies in external trade logistics and adopting smart systems for efficient and low emission logistics. **ANI**

## China stands committed to steady development of China-US ties

BEIJING

WHEN meeting with U.S. President Joe Biden on the sidelines of the 31st APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting in the Peruvian capital of Lima, Chinese President Xi Jinping reiterated China's commitment to maintaining the steady development of China-U.S. relations.

China's goal of a stable, healthy and sustainable China-U.S. relationship remains unchanged; its commitment to mutual respect, peaceful coexistence and win-win cooperation as principles for handling China-U.S. relations remains unchanged; its position of resolutely safeguarding China's sovereignty, security and development interests remains unchanged; and its desire to carry forward the traditional friendship between the Chinese and American peoples remains unchanged, Xi told Biden.

These statements clearly reflect China's longstanding approach to its relationship with the United States, underscoring its commitment to boosting dialogue and cooperation, and managing differences.

Competition between major countries does not conform to the trend of the times. Nor is it a solution to America's domestic problems or the urgent challenges facing the world. As nations worldwide are struggling to cope with numerous global crises, there is an in-



A student from Beijing teaches a student from Medgar Evers College Preparatory School of New York to practice Chinese calligraphy during a culture exchange event in New York, the United States, Feb. 2, 2018. Xinhua

creasing expectation for a stable and constructive China-U.S. relationship.

China and the United States should rise above their differences and advance dialogue and cooperation, not only for their shared interests, but also to make a meaningful contribution to global peace, stability and prosperity.

China and the United States are like two massive vessels navigating a vast ocean. To keep China-U.S. relations on the right course without losing direction

or speed, still less colliding with each other, both sides must uphold mutual respect, peaceful coexistence and win-win cooperation.

This approach is not only a key conclusion from the decades-long history of bilateral ties, but also the prudent path forward for the two nations in the new era.

China adheres to the path of peaceful development, greater democracy in international relations, the five principles of peaceful coexistence, and the

building of a new type of international relations featuring win-win cooperation. Beijing will not engage with Washington on an unequal footing, nor will it accept coercion from the so-called "position of strength."

China is ready to advance China-U.S. relations, but it will not back down on issues concerning its core interests. It is China's resolute stance that the one-China principle and the three China-U.S. joint communiqués are the political foundation of China-U.S. relations, and that the Chinese people's right to development cannot be deprived or ignored.

In a world of challenges, decoupling is not a viable solution, and building "small yards with high fences" does not benefit a major country. Any bid by Washington to overstretch the concept of national security and use it as a pretext to suppress China's development will only backfire.

As for the longstanding friendship between the Chinese and American people, history has shown that people-to-people exchanges and cultural interactions have always served as a reliable safeguard for the stability of China-U.S. relations and a lasting driver of bilateral cooperation.

In challenging times, it becomes all the more critical to strengthen the bonds of friendship and promote mutual understanding between the Chinese and Americans. The U.S. side must recognize that normal interactions between the two peoples should not be disrupted by political factors as the bright future of bilateral ties depends on the people.

Looking forward, it is hoped that the U.S. side will demonstrate vision and join China to rise above differences, reject zero-sum thinking, and foster a relationship based on mutual respect, peaceful coexistence and win-win cooperation. **Xinhua**

## UN Security Council voices 'deep concern' over deteriorating crises in Haiti

UNITED NATIONS

THE UN Security Council on Monday expressed "deep concern" over the deteriorating crises in Haiti, condemning the continued gang violence and calling for solidarity with the Haitian people.

In a press statement, the members of the Security Council reiterated their deep concern over the ongoing and deteriorating political, economic, security, human rights, humanitarian and acute food inse-

curity and nutrition crises in Haiti, as well as restrictions on humanitarian access, and reaffirmed the commitment of the international community to continue to support the people of Haiti.

The council members strongly condemned the continued destabilizing criminal activities of armed gangs and stressed the need for the international community to redouble its efforts to provide humanitarian assistance to the population and to support the Haitian

National Police, including building its capacity to restore law and order through the Multinational Security Support Mission.

In particular, they strongly condemned the reports that an armed gang has killed at least 184 people between Dec. 6 and 8 in the Wharf Jeremie neighbourhood in the capital of Port-au-Prince. The council members emphasized the need to create security conditions conducive to an inclusive political process and free and

fair elections in Haiti and encouraged the mission to accelerate its deployment, as well as support for the mission.

The council members reiterated their condemnation and deep concern over the serious gravity and rising numbers of abuses committed against children in Haiti, recalled the importance of ensuring the protection of children and urged all actors, especially gangs and criminal networks, to immediately end and prevent all abuses against children.

## Braving Antarctica 14 times: How Chinese construction contributes to global polar expedition

THIS year marks the 40th anniversary of China's polar expedition. On Nov. 1, China's 41st Antarctic expedition team set sail, starting a mission expected to last nearly seven months. I also embarked on my 14th journey to Antarctica, leading the Antarctic project builders from China Railway Construction Engineering Group (CRCEG) back to the Inexpressible Island in the Ross Sea.

Our mission is to complete the interior decorating, mechanical and electrical installations, and other tasks at China's Qinling Station, allowing the Chinese Antarctic expedition team to move into this new research station as soon as possible.

What is it like to journey to Antarctica 14 times?

During more than 2,000 days and nights I spent in building the Chi-

nese research station in Antarctic, I experienced bone-chilling coldness while also nurturing a fervent passion for contribution. Throughout this period, the Chinese engineers and scientific teams have worked closely together, achieving a number of milestones in polar expeditions that weave an inspiring Chinese story.

This story demonstrates our unyielding perseverance in the battle against the fierce natural environment.

The Qinling Station is located on the Inexpressible Island of Antarctica, which is of high scientific research value but exposes harsh construction conditions. In winter, the temperature can plummet to minus 40 degrees Celsius, accompanied by prevailing off-shore winds that

are exceptionally strong, dry, and frigid. The automated meteorological stations set up by the expedition team were frequently toppled by violent gales.

In January this year, when the curtain wall panels were being installed at the station, gusts of wind hitting 120 kilometers per hour whipped up snow and created a blinding whiteout that cut visibility to less than five meters. We could only hold onto a rope and feel our way forward.

Facing such adversities, we have continuously strengthened our resolve and built the Qinling Station into the one with the largest construction team, the most materials unloaded, the largest single building, and the shortest construction time among all Chinese scientific

research stations in Antarctica.

This story highlights our pioneering spirit of innovation.

Innovation in equipment - Back in the 1980s, the construction of the Great Wall Station and Zhongshan Station used very little machinery but largely relied on manual labor. Today, at the construction site of the Qinling Station, we deployed 34 sets of machinery, including aerial work platforms and loaders, which significantly enhanced construction efficiency.

Innovation in technology - We adopted the Building Information Modeling (BIM) technology, which enabled a modular, prefabricated approach to construction, akin to assembling "building blocks." It allowed us to complete the largest single building in just less than 60

days.

Innovation in materials - New materials such as weathering steel have been applied to make steel tougher in ultra-low temperatures and allow it to withstand the highly corrosive coastal environment.

The extensive use of advanced equipment, innovative technologies, and specialized materials has provided strong support for our construction, allowing us to constantly set new records. By leveraging scientific methods and technological advancements, we have been making new milestones in this icy frontier.

This story reflects China's commitment to green and low-carbon development. Strict ecological and environmental standards pose an additional challenge for our Ant-

arctic construction efforts. We employed modular construction methods to minimize the generation of construction waste. We also introduced innovative waste treatment technologies and utilized materials free of formaldehyde and fluorine, fulfilling our commitment to leave minimum environmental impact on Antarctica.

The Qinling Station utilizes passive ultra-low energy building technology, with over 60 percent of its energy derived from renewable sources like solar and wind power. This has effectively reduced energy consumption and carbon emissions. These measures reflect our commitment to upholding the green and low-carbon principle in every aspect of our construction.

**People's Daily**

# Concern aired over solar cell tariffs by US

HOUSTON

THE new solar cell tariffs planned by the United States targeting companies from some Asian countries, including China, will increase inflation and consumer prices and disrupt supply chains in the US market, analysts said.

Earlier this month, the US Department of Commerce announced that 21.31 to 271.2 percent tariffs would be imposed on solar cells from Cambodia, Malaysia, Thailand and Vietnam, depending on the manufacturer.

On Dec 11, the Office of the United States Trade Representative, or USTR, announced the doubling of tariff on solar cells imported from China – from 25 to 50 percent – effective Jan 1, 2025.

Ed Hirs, an energy fellow at the University of Houston, said the Chinese solar manufacturers would pursue other markets and expand solar installations across Asian and African countries “at a very rapid pace”.

“Those nations may well turn out to be the most profitable market segment, more so than the United States at this point,” Hirs told China Daily.

Hirs said the tariffs would first affect consumer spending “before we see it really having an impact on solar farm development and manufacturing of solar cells in the United States”.

“The first impact, if these tariffs do go into place, is going to be a very quick and certain increase in inflation,” he said.

“Applying these tariffs and targeting the Chinese companies or the nations, Thailand, Malaysia, Mexico, Canada, this is going to disrupt supply chains,” said Hirs, referring to not only the new tariffs but also potential ones by the future Donald Trump administration.



Photo taken on Jan 6, 2017 shows the workshop in solar cell plant of Trina Solar in Bac Giang province of Vietnam. (PHOTO / XINHUA)

When it comes to the solar panel market in the US, Hirs said that if the current manufacturers can absorb the tariffs by lowering their prices, the impact will be zero.

“If the manufacturers keep pricing at the current levels and they add a 25 percent tariff on to those, it will certainly slow down the purchasing of panels in the US,” Hirs said.

The US residential solar market has already experienced a contraction in the past two years, according to an analysis by Zoe Gaston, a solar analyst at Wood Mackenzie, a UK-based energy research firm.

## Attrition in market

“There has been plenty of attrition in the resi-

dential solar market, especially in the past two years,” Gaston wrote. “Wood Mackenzie expects a 19 percent year-over-year reduction in residential installations in 2024.”

The Inflation Reduction Act enacted by the Joe Biden administration has promoted investment in the solar industry in the US in the past two years. Another analysis by Wood Mackenzie showed the first solar panels meeting the requirements of the act’s domestic content will be available soon.

The analysis found that solar panels made with US-produced solar cells were priced above 45 cents per watt while similar panels made in the US using imported cells cost buyers around 35-36 cents per watt.

# Whose interests does record-high US defence budget serve?

BEIJING

THE recent approval by the U.S. Congress of the 895-billion-U.S. dollar defense policy bill for 2025 is a sobering reminder of Washington’s insatiable appetite for military spending.

Behind the rhetoric of “defending the homeland” and “countering global adversaries,” the primary driver of the record-breaking National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 2025 appears to be a far more sinister ambition: the expansion of American military hegemony, a goal that often destabilizes other regions and feeds into its own military-industrial complex.

The staggering U.S. military outlay continues to rise, an endless cycle that has persisted from the Vietnam War to the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, where U.S. military intervention often exacerbated rather than mitigated conflicts.

Today, the focus has shifted to the so-called “great power competition,” a belligerent narrative fueling global tensions and justifying the ever-growing budgets of U.S. defense contractors. The 2025 defense policy bill is a case in point.

With its 107 mentions of China, the bill reads like a manifesto of Washington’s increasingly paranoid agenda to confront China and lawmakers’ blatant effort to safeguard the interests of American defense contractors.

Not only does the bill target sensitive sectors like lidar and semiconductor equipment, but it also extends to more trivial areas, such as the import of Chinese garlic. This absurd inclusion reveals just how far Washington is willing to go to weaponize its regulatory powers in the name of national security.

In reality, the mounting military expenditures serve the needs of special interest groups, rather than address real security threats. The military-industrial complex – a symbiotic relationship between government officials and private defense contractors – has benefited from nearly every military conflict the United States has entered over the past few decades.

A report from the “Costs of War” project under Brown University shows that Pentagon spending has totaled over 14 trillion dollars since the start of the war in Afghanistan. One-third to one-half of that total has gone to defense firms, many of which have direct ties to former government officials.

This “revolving door” between government service and the defense industry is one of the most glaring symbols of the corruption at the heart of America’s military policy.

According to The New York Times, at least 50 former Pentagon and national security officials, most of whom left the federal government in the last five years, are now working in defense-related venture capital or private equity as executives or advisers.

They continued to interact regularly with Pentagon officials or members of Congress to push for policy changes or increases in military spending that could benefit firms they have invested in. Meanwhile, skyrocketing military spending has imposed a huge burden on the U.S. fiscal budget, squeezing resources that could have been used for social welfare.

According to the Institute for Policy Studies, a think tank based in Washington, U.S. taxpayers on average contributed 1,087 dollars to Pentagon contractors, compared with 270 dollars for basic education.

A growing number of Americans are discontented with the continued consumption of national resources by the military-industrial complex, while crucial areas of people’s livelihoods receive insufficient attention.

As noted by Bernie Sanders, the independent senator representing the state of Vermont, who voted against the bill, the United States does not “need a defense system that is designed to make huge profits for a handful of giant defense contractors while providing less of what the country needs.” In reality, under the cover of “national security,” the American military policy continues to serve the interests of a powerful few, not the general public.

# Global charity calls for expanded aid for displaced Sudanese civilians living in South Sudan

JUBA

INTERNATIONAL medical charity Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF) on Sunday called for urgent humanitarian support for displaced Sudanese civilians who have fled to neighboring South Sudan.

MSF said over the last weeks the number of recently displaced people has surpassed 80,000, including hundreds with war wounds as the conflict in Sudan intensifies.

Emanuele Montobbio, MSF emergency coordinator in Renk county of Upper Nile State, one of the main entry points for the displaced into South Sudan, said since the beginning of December, over 5,000 people crossed into the country each day as the fighting escalated near the border in Sudan’s White Nile and Sennar states.

He said MSF is scaling up its response to the humanitarian crisis in Renk and surrounding informal settlements along the border, noting that the influx of people in the area and its surroundings has overwhelmed already scarce resources, leaving the displaced people in crisis.

“We have added 14 tents around the hospital to make space for the war-wounded patients that are arriv-

ing at Renk County Hospital, there is no place for other tents in the surroundings, while patients and their families keep coming to the hospital,” Montobbio said in a statement issued in Juba, South Sudan’s capital.

Montobbio said the medical charity is working alongside the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to treat war-wounded patients and manage the growing influx of critical cases and the mass casualty response in pre- and post-operative care wards, but the situation is completely overwhelming and it’s not enough.

“Just a few dozen people have been treated with surgical interventions and tetanus vaccinations in recent weeks, while over 100 wounded patients, many with serious injuries, still await surgery,” he said.

Roselyn Morales, MSF deputy medical coordinator in South Sudan, said outside the transit centers within Renk and in informal settlements, thousands are forced to live under trees or in makeshift shelters, with limited access to food, clean water, healthcare, or any other basic services.

“We urgently call on both South Sudanese authorities and international organizations to rapidly scale

up their response in Renk and beyond, ensuring that the essential and lifesaving needs of the affected population are addressed without delay,” she stressed.

MSF said that two Renk transit centers, designed to accommodate a maximum of 8,000 people, are now sheltering over 17,000 while most returnees and refugees initially entered South Sudan through the official Joda border crossing, an increasing number are now crossing through informal routes to the east of Renk in which more than 82,000 new arrivals have been recorded in areas including Joda, Duku Duku, Jerbana, Shemmedi, Gosfami and Atam.

Alhida Hammed, a wounded displaced person from Blue Nile State in Sudan receiving treatment at the MSF facility in Renk described the horrific situation back home.

“The houses were blazing, and everyone was running in different directions. We have been displaced and now live under a tree, I have no desire to return home, home is no longer a home it is filled with bad memories,” she said.

Bashir Ismail from Mosmon in Blue Nile described the destruction

he witnessed from the air raids in his area. “I used to only hear about air raids, but recently, it became a reality,

I was at the market buying some items when the bombing started, and something hit me in the chest it was the most painful experience of my life I was so disoriented that it felt like I had lost my memory the next thing I knew, I was in Renk County Hospital,” he said.

MSF said it is deploying mobile clinics to provide primary healthcare in informal settlements in Gosfami, Atam, Jerbana, and Joda, where displaced people are concentrated.

It said on Dec. 17 alone, MSF teams conducted over 250 medical consultations in Gosfami and referred severely ill people to Renk County Hospital and are launching activities in response to the urgent need for water and sanitation in Atam and Jerbana.

Additionally, relief items have been delivered to these areas for distribution to 2,500 displaced families.

Despite these efforts, the response remains insufficient due to the absence of other humanitarian organizations in these informal settlements, which has left a significant gap in support for the displaced population, MSF said.

# Three years on, China-Laos Railway keeps unleashing vitality

ON Dec. 3, the China-Laos Railway embraced a new chapter in its historic journey with the celebration of its third anniversary of operation. The international railway, stretching from Kunming in southwest China’s Yunnan province to the Lao capital Vientiane, has continuously bolstered transport capacity and enhanced regional connectivity.

With its influence extended to other Southeast Asian countries such as Thailand, Cambodia, and Malaysia, the railway has become a golden transport corridor linking Chinese and international markets, benefiting countries along the route.

At dawn, Onkeo, a local girl, weaved through a crowded platform at the Vientiane Railway Station, ready to board her train. Every month, she takes the China-Laos Railway to visit her grandmother in her hometown of Muang Xay, a city in northern Laos.

“In the past, it took a full day and night to travel from Vientiane to Muang Xay by car, but now, it’s just about three hours by train,” Onkeo said. As Laos’ first modern railway, the China-Laos Railway has not only changed the way local people travel, but provided international travelers with a new option.

Three years since its launch, the average daily number of passenger trains handled by the Lao section of the railway has grown from 4 to 14, with daily passenger trips surging from over



A Lancang-Mekong Express train runs on the China-Laos Railway in Luang Prabang, Laos. (People’s Daily/)

1,000 to nearly 15,000.

According to data from Laos’ Ministry of Information, Culture, and Tourism, over 85 percent of the travelers from Vientiane to Luang Prabang chose the China-Laos Railway as a favorable mode of transport.

Thonglor Duangsavanh, editor-in-chief of Vientiane Times, noted that Laos previously struggled with inconvenient transport options. The China-Laos Railway provides tourists with an accessible and affordable way to travel, he added. He expected more tourists to visit Laos by train to experience the country’s unique natural landscapes and way of life.

As of Nov. 30 this year, the China-Laos Railway had handled 42.92 million passenger trips, with the Lao

section alone having seen 7.41 million passenger trips and 10.74 million tons of goods. The range of goods transported via the railway has expanded from initially over 10 varieties, such as rubber, fertilizers, and general merchandise, to over 2,700 types currently, including electronics, photovoltaics, telecommunications equipment, and automobiles. This has effectively driven industrial upgrades and international trade along the route.

Lao Prime Minister Sonexay Siphandone told People’s Daily that over the past three years, the China-Laos Railway has allowed Lao people to travel much more easily and facilitated the movement of goods and passengers in the whole region. It has played a crucial role in enhanc-

ing regional connectivity and trade facilitation, said Siphandone.

In addition to driving economic growth, the China-Laos Railway has also boosted employment in Laos. Over the past three years, thousands of Lao trainees have joined training programs to learn professional skills in locomotive operation, maintenance, passenger and freight transportation, and shunting, among others. As of October this year, there are over 1,000 Lao employees working on the railway, accounting for 61.3 percent of the total workforce. They are playing an increasingly prominent role in railway safety management, passenger and freight transportation, equipment operation and maintenance, and other areas. Besides, the railway has created over

100,000 jobs in Laos.

With the launch of the Lancang-Mekong Express service, the transit time from Kunming to Vientiane has been reduced from three days to just one day. Besides, the China-Laos Railway has formed an international logistic artery by linking with the China-Europe freight train service and the New International Land-Sea Trade Corridor, which has shortened the time needed to transport goods directly from Laos, Thailand, Malaysia, and other Southeast Asian countries to Europe to 15 days. The interconnected railway has provided a more convenient and efficient logistics corridor linking China with South Asia and Southeast Asia, contributing to regional economic development and prosperity.

Over the past three years, the Lancang-Mekong Express has handled over 15,000 international cargo trains, transporting over 10.6 million tons of import and export goods, with a cargo value exceeding 44 billion yuan (\$6.05 billion).

According to Deng Yu, head of freight business at Laos-China Railway Co., Ltd., the Chinese goods transported via the China-Laos Railway can be transshipped through Laos to other ASEAN countries such as Thailand, Vietnam, and Myanmar. Additionally, the Lao goods exported to China can reach 25 Chinese provinces, autonomous regions, and municipalities, Deng added.

Driven by the China-Laos Railway, Southeast Asian countries are speeding up railway development and strategic coordination to enhance regional connectivity.

In July this year, the Thailand-Laos cross-border passenger train service began its operation, enhancing rail connectivity between Thailand and Laos while linking up with the China-Laos Railway; Thailand is speeding up the construction of the China-Thailand Railway; the ASEAN Express, an international freight train connecting Malaysia to Thailand, Laos and China, has already been launched, boosting Malaysia’s trade connectivity with China and Southeast Asia.

People’s Daily

# Short-handed Magic fend off Jaylen Brown, Celtics



Orlando Magic guard Cole Anthony (50) controls the ball from Boston Celtics guard Payton Pritchard (11) in the third quarter at Kia Center in Orlando, Florida, USA, on Dec 23, 2024. Agencies

By Field Level Media

**T**RISTAN da Silva scored a team-high 18 points and the Orlando Magic overcame a 15-point halftime deficit to beat the visiting Boston Celtics 108-104 on Monday.

The Celtics were within one point until da Silva capped the scoring by making a 3-pointer with 9.9 seconds to play. The Magic received 17 points from Trevelin Queen and 16 from Jalen Suggs in the victory.

Jaylen Brown had 35 points and nine rebounds for the Celtics, who were 8-for-33 from 3-point range. Kristaps Porzingis and Derrick White each finished with 17 points.

Orlando's Goga Bitadze was ejected with 3:36 remaining for grabbing Porzingis by the throat following words between Porzingis and Suggs. Bitadze had eight points and nine rebounds in 21 minutes of action.

Jayson Tatum was scratched from the starting lineup minutes before tipoff due to an illness and did not play in the game.

Tatum, Boston's leading scorer, was coming off a 43-point performance in a 123-98 victory over the Chicago Bulls on Saturday. It's the third game Tatum has missed this season, and the Celtics fell to 2-1 without him.

Boston had its first double-digit lead after a Brown dunk made it 24-14 with 2:34 left in the opening quarter. The Celtics had a 32-21 advantage after 12 minutes and led 58-43 at halftime.

Orlando was 16-for-47 from the field (34 percent) in the first two quarters, and the 15-point halftime margin was Boston's largest lead of the first half.

The Magic took their first lead, 73-71, when Cole Anthony made a layup with 2:10 remaining in the third quarter. Orlando outscored Boston 36-21 in the period, and

the contest was tied at 79 entering the fourth.

The Magic had a seven-point lead following a Jonathan Isaac 3-pointer with 10:09 remaining, and they led 95-87 after a Queen 3-pointer with 7:28 to play. Orlando extended its lead to 103-93 on a da Silva 3-pointer with 4:01 left.

The victory improved Orlando's home record to 12-2. Meanwhile, Malik Beasley scored 21 points and Cade Cunningham added 20 points with 10 assists as the visiting Detroit Pistons turned defensive pressure into a 117-114 victory over the Los Angeles Lakers on Monday.

Jaden Ivey logged 18 points and Tim Hardaway Jr. added 15 as the Pistons won consecutive games for the first time in more than a month and came out on top after scoring a season-best 133 points in a road victory over the Phoenix Suns on Saturday.

Detroit forced Los Angeles into 20 turnovers

and scored 28 points off those miscues.

LeBron James delivered 28 points, 11 rebounds and 11 assists as the Lakers saw their three-game winning streak come to an end. Anthony Davis scored 19 points with 10 rebounds for Los Angeles, Max Christie scored 17 points and Austin Reaves added 12.

The Pistons swept the season series 2-0 after they earned a 115-103 victory over the Lakers at home on Nov. 4.

Up by just a point to start the fourth quarter, the Pistons went on a 9-2 run early in the period to take a 102-96 lead with 9:55 remaining.

Cunningham scored on a putback with 3:02 left that put the Pistons on top 117-106 before the Lakers made a late run. A Christie 3-pointer and four points from James, including a driving layup with 46.3 seconds remaining, got Los Angeles within one possession at 117-114.

The Lakers thought they had James at the free-throw line with 28.9 seconds remaining, but a foul on Tobias Harris was overturned via replay. Cunningham could have put Detroit up two scores but missed a 3-point attempt with 5.7 seconds remaining.

The Lakers were unable to score in the final 3.7 seconds after James was short on a 29-foot 3-point attempt at the buzzer.

The Pistons led 34-32 after one quarter before the Lakers moved ahead 64-62 at halftime. Detroit stayed close even though Los Angeles shot 62.9 percent from the floor in the opening two quarters.

The Pistons took 11 more shots than the Lakers in the half by forcing nine turnovers and grabbing four offensive rebounds to one for the Lakers. Beasley made four 3-pointers in the first half while scoring 14 points.

REUTERS

## India skipper Rohit backs Kohli to find fix for off-stump woes

MELBOURNE

INDIA captain Rohit Sharma has backed Virat Kohli to overcome his problems with deliveries outside the off-stump in Australia, saying yesterday that players of his calibre always find a way to succeed.

Kohli (pictured) arrested a long run of poor form with an unbeaten century in the first test in Perth but has frequently chased balls moving away from his stumps in the current five-match series, resulting in his dismissal.

"Modern-day greats will figure out their own ways (to deal with the issue)," Rohit told reporters ahead of the Boxing Day test in Melbourne.

Rohit's own batting frailties in the longest format have been laid bare in recent matches. The captain has managed scores of three, six and 10 since rejoining the team for the second test following the birth of his son.

His move to the middle order has done little to inspire confidence but Rohit was tight-lipped about a potential switch back to the opening slot where he can be

devastating.

"Let's not worry about that. I think 'who bats where?' is something that we need to figure out within ourselves. It's not a thing I should be discussing in every press conference.

"Whatever it takes for our team to look good or gives us the best chance to succeed, we'll try and do that."

After winning the first test by 295 runs, India crashed to a 10-wicket defeat in Adelaide before battling to a draw in the rain-hit third match in Brisbane.

"At 1-1, I think it's a fair reflection," Rohit added.

"Both teams have played solid cricket and these two tests are going to be so important for both teams.

"We want to break it down to Melbourne and focus on what we can achieve here, get things right and play well."

India added uncapped Mumbai all-rounder Tanush Kotian to the squad for the final two tests after ruling out the inclusion of seamer Mohammed Shami due to a knee injury.

REUTERS



Tournament Director Stephen Farrow, former tennis player Casey Dellacqua, Australia team captain Lleyton Hewitt, host Todd Woodbridge and Sydney General Manager Paul Daly pose with the trophy at the draw for the United Cup at the Museum of Contemporary Art (MCA) in Sydney, Australia, October 21, 2024. REUTERS

## Game in good hands despite high-profile retirements, says United Cup chief

SYDNEY

THE retirements of tennis greats Roger Federer, Rafa Nadal and Serena Williams has made promoting events more difficult but organisers must grab the opportunity to push new talent into the spotlight, the United Cup's tournament director said.

The popular \$10 million mixed team event aims to do just that when it kicks off the new season on Friday, with tournament chief Stephen Farrow confident the sport is in good hands.

"It's true to say that from a promotional standpoint, it's very easy if you've got Roger Federer or Rafa Nadal turning up," Farrow told Reuters after the draw

for the 18-team tournament as held in Sydney recently.

"You're talking about people who are absolute superstars of the sports arena ... with those guys moving on, it does make it a bit more difficult to promote and tell the story of the athletes playing the event.

"I always see that as a positive, because it's on all of us in tennis to tell the story of this new talent.

"We've got a lot of them playing the United Cup. They're incredibly exciting and captivating to watch. I'm not worried about the future."

Grand Slam contenders Alexander Zverev, Taylor Fritz, Iga Swiatek and Coco Guff will all be in action for their countries at the Dec. 27-Jan. 5 tournament

staged in Perth and Sydney as they prepare for the Australian Open starting on Jan. 12. Farrow also said the United Cup was still building its brand and boosting awareness with fans and players.

"Last year we saw a really big step forward when we moved to a new format with one women's singles, one men's singles and one mixed doubles. It was incredibly competitive.

"Now we've established ourselves on the tennis calendar two weeks from the Australian Open. We've seen with the field this year that players want to play this event."

Spain take on Kazakhstan while China meet Brazil on the opening day in Perth.

REUTERS

## United boss Amorim questions Rashford camp after 'new challenge' comments

LONDON

MANCHESTER United manager Ruben Amorim has questioned the decision-making of those close to striker Marcus Rashford, who has been left out of the squad for the last three games.

The Portuguese coach did not include Rashford for Sunday's 3-0 defeat at home to Bournemouth in the Premier League amid speculation that the forward want to leave Old Trafford.

Amorim initially left him out for the 2-1 derby win at Manchester City on Dec. 15, two days before the 27-year-old said in an interview that he was "ready for a new challenge" after having been at Old Trafford since the age of seven.

While Amorim said his team was "better with Marcus Rashford," the former Sporting coach has now questioned the decisions from those around the player for his comments.

"It is a hard situation. I understand that these players have a lot of people around them, making choices that are not the first idea from the player," Amorim told Sky Sports.

"I am always here to help Marcus as another player. I have to do what I have to do. They chose to do the interview as it is not just Marcus. I understand that.

"As a coach I focus on performance and the way you train. The rest, it is better for me and the club to deal with that when the time comes.

"At the moment I focus on improving Marcus and we need a talented guy like Marcus. I forget the interview now and see what I see on the pitch."

Rashford has scored three goals since Amorim took over last month, but was taken off in the 56th minute of their 2-1 Europa League victory at Viktoria Plzen on Dec. 12, with supporters booing the striker as he left the pitch.

The striker has yet to rediscover the form that saw him score 30 goals in all competitions in the 2022-23 season.

REUTERS

## Inter's Inzaghi pleased with Como win, backs Martinez despite dry spell

MILAN

INTER Milan coach Simone Inzaghi (pictured) hailed his side's 2-0 Serie A, opens new tab home win over Como on Monday and said he was not worried about hard-working captain Lautaro Martinez's goal drought.

Despite the defending champions lacking the firepower from last week's 6-0 thrashing of Lazio, Inzaghi stressed his team were up to the challenge posed by battling Como.

"Clearly we are maintaining a very high level. All teams are running ahead, there are opponents like Como who come to play great games, but we played an important game as a mature and aware team," the Italian told reporters.

"I feared this match a lot, we had some weaknesses in the back line. We played a game of concentration, in the first half we weren't as sharp as usual. Then in the second half we raised the intensity and struck at the right moments."

Goals from Carlos Augusto and Marcus Thuram earned Inter the victory that keeps them third with 37 points and a game in hand on leaders Atalanta, who sit on 40 points.

Martinez has struggled to reach the form that made him Serie A top marksman last season and has failed to score in over a month since securing a 1-0 win over Venezia in early November.

Yet Inzaghi remains confident in his forward, saying the Argentine is playing a key role in his side's packed schedule.

"I was a striker. I know these moments happen," he said. "Lautaro was one of the outstanding performers against Lazio.

"The forwards are working hard, we ask a lot of them and are trying to rest them as much as possible in the circumstances.

"I told Lautaro to relax, because he has always scored goals and always will, luck will turn and he should only be worried if he doesn't get scoring opportunities."

REUTERS



# FIFA amends transfer regulations following Lassana Diarra ruling



Real Madrid's Lassana Diarra in action against FC Barcelona's Lionel Messi during their UEFA Champions League Semi Final Second Leg at The Nou Camp, in Barcelona, Spain in May, 2011. Agencies

LONDON

FIFA has adopted an interim framework concerning the Regulations on the Status and Transfer of Players, world soccer's governing body said on Monday, following a Court of Justice of the European Union ruling.

In October, the EU's

top court said some of FIFA's rules on player transfers went against European Union laws and free movement principles in a case linked to former Chelsea, Arsenal and Real Madrid player Lassana Diarra.

The interim regulatory framework affects the calculation of compensation payable if

there is a breach of contract and the burden of proof in relation to both compensation payable and an inducement to breach a contract.

The framework adds a general definition of 'just cause' which says it "shall exist in any circumstance in which a party can no longer reasonably and in good faith be expected to con-

tinue a contractual relationship'.

The interim regulatory framework is no longer based on the specific calculation criteria deemed problematic by the court.

Instead, compensation will be calculated in an objective and transparent way at a level required to restore the party that suffered dam-

age due to a breach of contract to the position in which they would have been had the breach not occurred.

FIFA requested talks with all key stakeholders before making their interim amendments, which take effect on Jan. 1 2025, but players' union FIFPRO declined to take part in discussions.

FIFPRO has issued a statement criticising FIFA's decision, and said it was unable to reach a consensus under which it could negotiate amendments to the regulations to reflect the ruling.

"We do not agree with the temporary measures announced by FIFA which have been introduced without a proper collective bargaining process," FIFPRO said.

"The measures do not provide legal certainty to professional footballers and do not reflect the judgement by the European Court of Justice."

In 2014, Diarra left Lokomotiv Moscow one year into a four-year deal and the Russian club took the matter to FIFA's Dispute Resolution Chamber, arguing he had breached the rules when his contract was terminated after the player decided to leave without just cause following a pay cut.

Diarra received an offer to join Belgian club Charleroi but the club backed out after FIFA refused to sign the International Transfer Certificate, preventing the midfielder being registered with the Belgian federation.

According to the CJEU ruling, it is unlawful to refuse to sign the ITC.

In 2015, FIFA ordered Diarra to pay 10 million euros (\$11 million) in damages to Lokomotiv, prompting the player to sue soccer's world governing body and the Belgian FA for damages before a local court.

REUTERS

## Arsenal's Saka out for many weeks with hamstring injury, Arteta says

LONDON

ARSENAL forward Bukayo Saka will be out for "many weeks" after suffering a hamstring injury during Saturday's 5-1 Premier League win at Crystal Palace, manager Mikel Arteta said.

Saka will miss Friday's league game against Ipswich Town at the Emirates, along with several others, but Arteta is hopeful the 23-year-old will return to fitness before the season concludes.

Saka has recorded five goals and 10 assists in the league this season, helping Arsenal to third place in the standings. He was forced off in the 22nd minute of their match against Crystal Palace and later left the stadium on crutches.

In October and November, the England international missed three Nations League games as well as Arsenal's league defeat at Bournemouth, and their Champions League win over Shakhtar Donetsk due to injury to the same leg.

"I'm not sure if it's exactly the same (type)," Arteta told reporters on Monday.

"It is in the same leg. He had the third minor injury - I don't know

how big this is going to be. But he already had two."

"It's not looking good. He's going to be out for many weeks... It could have been much worse. It could have been something else that can take you out for a year."

When asked how he plans to replace Saka, Arteta said: "I'm putting some ideas together but I haven't got there yet."

"Gabriel (Jesus) and Ethan (Nwaneri) have played there, (Leandro) Trossard can play there in relation to how that unit moves. Kai (Havertz) could play there. We will see, try different things and ask how they feel about it."

Arteta also confirmed winger Raheem Sterling



Arsenal's Bukayo Saka receives medical attention after sustaining an injury during their Premier League match against Crystal Palace at Selhurst Park, in London, Britain on December 21, 2024. REUTERS

has injured his knee and is also going to be out for many weeks.

"Obviously we didn't predict this situation with Bukayo and Raheem... If something has to happen (in the January transfer window) we will be open. But the main focus is now how to unlock the potential that is in this squad."

The Spaniard added that Saka's injury was caused by a build-up of many reasons, including the number of games he has played.

"Bukayo and Declan (Rice), they've played over 130 games in two seasons so what's going to happen in the third one, the fourth one? If it continues the same way, it's probably unsustainable," Arteta said.

"And we have to find ways to physically turn them into monsters. That they can cope with anything."

REUTERS

## Gwiji by David Chikoko



# SPORT

**Arsenal's Saka out for many weeks with hamstring injury, Arteta says** PAGE 19



## Bares targets top-five finish after first-round assessment

By Correspondent Seth Mapoli

MASHUJAA Football Club head coach Abdallah Mohamed, popularly known as 'Bares', has expressed optimism about his team's prospects in the Premier League.

After completing the first round of the season, Bares (pictured) is confident that Mashujaa can secure a top-five finish by maintaining consistency and improving their performance in the second round.

The first round saw Mashujaa play 15 matches, securing four wins, seven draws, and four losses. The team scored 13 goals while conceding 11, amassing a total of 19 points that placed them in seventh position on the league table.

Despite the mixed results, Bares remains upbeat about his team's progress. He highlighted the positives from the first round, stating that the team largely achieved its objectives.

"The first round was successful despite dropping points in seven drawn matches. That's not necessarily a bad thing, as our primary goal was to be in a stable position," he said.

He added that Mashujaa's current position reflects their preseason aspirations.

"In terms of points and league standing, we are where we wanted to be at this stage. Now, the focus shifts to the second round, which we anticipate will be more challenging.

"Every team will be fighting for their place on the table, whether to secure the title, qualify for continental competitions, or avoid relegation," he said.

Bares acknowledged that the second round will require an elevated level of commitment and strategic planning. He pointed out that the January transfer window will allow teams to strengthen their squads, making the competition even stiffer.

"The second round is critical. Teams will come back stronger, aiming to improve their positions or secure their survival for next season. The addition of new players during the short transfer window will undoubtedly intensify the competition," Bares said.

For Mashujaa, the objective remains clear: to finish in the top five. To achieve this, Bares emphasized the need for tactical discipline and consistency.

"Our end-of-season goal is to be in the top five. To get there, we must avoid costly mistakes, especially in games where we can secure maximum points. Strengthening our attacking areas to capitalize on opportunities will also be crucial," he stated.

Bares revealed that while Mashujaa does not have significant weaknesses, the team is working on bolstering its depth.

"We are focusing on increasing our strength in key areas. Ideally, we want two to three capable players for each position. This ensures that if one player is unavailable due to injury, we have equally strong replacements," he explained.

The coach expressed confidence in his squad's ability to rise to the occasion, emphasizing the importance of maintaining momentum and improving their finishing in front of goal.

Mashujaa's seventh-place standing puts them within reach of the top-five target, but Bares is aware of the stiff competition from other teams with similar ambitions. He urged his players to remain disciplined and committed as they prepare for the next phase of the league.

Dodoma Jiji is the first hurdle in Mashujaa's second-round journey, and will test the team's ability to secure points away from home. Known for their resilience on home turf, Dodoma Jiji presents a formidable challenge.

Next, Mashujaa will host Tanzania Prisons, a side renowned for their defensive discipline and ability to grind out results. Coastal Union, another tricky opponent, will follow, bringing their competitive spirit to the encounter.

The fourth fixture against Azam FC is arguably the toughest in this stretch. Azam, one of the league's title contenders, will provide a stern test of Mashujaa's credentials.

# Ahoua's late penalty secures Simba vital win over JKT Tanzania



JKT Tanzania goalkeeper Yacoub Suleiman pictured yesterday failing to stop a penalty shot from Simba midfielder Jean Charles Ahoua (not in picture) during their Premier League match at KMC Complex. Simba won 1-0. Photo: Courtesy of SSC

By Guardian Correspondent

SIMBA SC clinched a hard-fought 1-0 victory over JKT Tanzania in their Premier League match yesterday at the KMC Complex, thanks to a stoppage-time penalty scored by substitute Jean Charles Ahoua.

The decisive moment occurred in the 90+1 minute when Simba's relentless attack forced JKT Tanzania into critical errors.

Substitute Mohamed Bakari fouled Simba defender Shomari Kapombe inside the 18-yard box, and another JKT defender compounded the situation by handling the ball.

Referee Kepha Kayombo wasted no time pointing to the penalty spot, while Bakari was shown his second yellow card, followed by a red.

Ahoua stepped up to take the penalty and displayed nerves of steel, calmly sending JKT Tanzania goalkeeper Yacoub Suleiman the wrong way to net the only goal of the match.

Simba showed intent from the start, mounting their first attack as early as the 5th minute when Awe-

su Awesu was fouled, earning a free kick.

Valentino Nouma's delivery was dangerous but was successfully cleared by JKT Tanzania's defense within the six-yard box.

Goalkeeper Suleiman had a busy evening and came to JKT's rescue several times. In the 16th minute, he made an impressive save, tipping Leonel Ateba's header over the crossbar after a pinpoint cross from Nouma.

Later, in the 37th minute, Suleiman punched away a free kick from Elie Mpanzu, awarded after Ladack

Chasambi was fouled.

Simba returned from halftime with renewed vigor, creating multiple scoring opportunities. In the 56th minute, Ateba unleashed a powerful strike following a well-placed pass from Mpanzu, but Suleiman once again denied the attempt with a brilliant save.

Ahoua, who would later be the hero of the match, came close in the 68th minute. His well-taken free kick narrowly sailed over the crossbar, keeping the scoreline level until the dying moments of the game.

This vital win extended Simba's lead at the top of the Premier League table. They now have 37 points from 14 matches, maintaining a four-point lead over second-placed Young Africans, who have 33 points from 13 matches.

Azam and Singida Black Stars are tied in third place, both with 33 points after 15 matches.

The victory underscores Simba's determination to maintain their dominance in the league, with their strong attack and solid defense proving critical in high-pressure moments

like this match.

**Simba Sports Club starting line-up:**

Moussa Camara, Shomari Kapombe, Valentino Nouma, Abdulrazack Hamza, Fondor Che Malone, Fabrice Ngoma, Awesu Awesu, Leonel Ateba, Elie Mpanzu, Ladack Chasambi

**JKT Tanzania Football Club starting line-up:**

Yacoub Suleiman Ally, Salum Khamis Salum, Edson Katanga, Wilson Nangu, Said Ndemla, Hassan Nasoro, Hassan Kapalata, Najim Maguru, David Brayson, Iddy Gamba, Ramadhan Kichuya

## Yanga ready to extend winning streak against Dodoma Jiji in Premier League

By Correspondent Seth Mapoli

YOUNG Africans SC (Yanga) will take on Dodoma Jiji FC today in a crucial Premier League match as they aim to maintain their winning momentum.

The match is scheduled to kick off at 4:00 PM at the Jamhuri Stadium in Dodoma.

The defending champions are coming into the fixture on the back of two consecutive victories after overcoming a challenging spell of poor form. With their sights set on climbing to the top of the league table, Young Africans are determined to secure all three points.

Speaking ahead of the encounter, Young Africans head coach Sead Ramovic (pictured) acknowledged the challenge posed by Dodoma Jiji, especially on their home turf.

"We have analyzed Dodoma Jiji's performance closely. They play very well at home and are a tough team to face in front of their fans," said Ramovic. "Three points today are crucial for us to stay on track with our plans."

He emphasized the importance of his team's commitment and focus. "Victory tomorrow will depend on the dedication of everyone involved. If we don't give our best in every situation, the chances of winning will diminish. Despite the tight sched-

ule, we are determined to fight for the three points and maintain our momentum," added Ramovic.

The statistics heavily favour Young Africans in recent encounters with Dodoma Jiji. In their last five meetings, the Jangwani-based outfit has emerged victorious in all, scoring 13 goals while conceding only four.

Their most dominant performance in this fixture was a 4-0 win, which remains the largest margin of victory in their head-to-head clashes.

Young Africans have played 13 matches this season, securing 33 points to place second in the league standings. They have scored 23 goals and conceded only six, demonstrating their strength in both

attack and defense.

However, they have suffered two losses this campaign, highlighting areas for improvement.

Dodoma Jiji, on the other hand, find themselves in 11th place after 14 matches. They have managed four wins, four draws, and six losses, collecting a total of 16 points.

Their recent form is concerning, with only one win in their last five matches, alongside one draw and three losses.

For Young Africans, a victory will keep the pressure on the league leaders and bolster their chances of defending their title.

Dodoma Jiji, meanwhile, will be desperate to secure points to climb away from the lower half of the table and improve their home record.

After this encounter, Young Africans will face Fountaine Gate and then they will shift their focus to continental duties, facing TP Mazembe in the CAF Champions league group stage.

These matches are expected to test the team's depth and resilience.

Dodoma Jiji, meanwhile, will turn their attention to league matches against Mashujaa FC, Pamba Jiji, and Namungo FC as they seek to regain form.

The clash between Young Africans and Dodoma Jiji promises to be an exciting encounter, with both teams having much to fight for.

While Young Africans look to continue their dominant run and stay in contention for the league title, Dodoma Jiji will aim to leverage their home advantage



to pull off an upset.

With a history of high-scoring games between the two sides and the

stakes high for both teams, fans can expect a thrilling contest at the Jamhuri Stadium.

## Flexibles by David Chikoko

