



TRANSPORT



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HEALTH



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Global NGO: Quarter of world freshwater life 'nears extinction'

GLAND, Switzerland

A QUARTER of the world's freshwater fauna, including fish, dragonflies, crabs, and shrimps, face a high risk of extinction, a global conservation activist group has established in a new report.

A statement issued here on Wednesday by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and published in the science journal Nature appearing at midweek, said that the report was a result of over 20 years of work by more than 1,000 experts from around the world.

The IUCN reached its conclusions after analysing 23,496 freshwater species on the IUCN 'red list,' the largest global assessment of its kind to date, the statement noted.

Catherine Sayer, IUCN's freshwater biodiversity lead scientist and the paper's main author, said that as the IUCN marks 60 years of its red list, "it is a stronger barometer of life than ever."

"Lack of data on freshwater biodiversity can no longer be used as an excuse for inaction," she said, in the background of study findings that 4,294 species are at high risk of extinction.

Crabs, crayfish and shrimps are at the highest risk (30 per cent), along with freshwater fishes (26 per cent), plus dragonflies and damselflies (16 per cent).

It asserted that 89 freshwater species have already gone extinct since 1500, with an-

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Overhaul call centre team, minister instructs Tanesco



Pakistani nationals heading to the Kisutu resident magistrate's court in Dar es Salaam to hear charges of economic sabotage and trafficking of 22.52 kilogrammes of heroin and 424.77 kilogrammes of methamphetamine yesterday. Photo: Correspondent Imani Nathaniel

He stressed the need to expedite the construction process, noting that 18.9bn/- is being invested in the Kairuki and Muhimbili stations, all with domestic funding

By Henry Mwangonde

THE Tanzania Electric Supply Co. Ltd (TANESCO) has been directed to overhaul its call centre staff as its performance is unsatisfactory.

Energy minister Dr Doto Biteko, who is also deputy prime minister, issued this directive after visiting the company's call at Ubungo, its former headquarters, in Dar es Salaam.

He voiced his frustration with the centre's operations, particularly a malfunctioning toll-free number that has raised numerous queries, despite his previous directive to resolve the matter last year.

"This is a large entity, and it is disheartening to see it operating with a 'business as usual' mentality. I am giving you one week to ensure the toll-free number is functioning properly," he said.

TANESCO is an entity that should be contributing positively to the country's economy but it is instead undermining its efforts by offering poor customer service, he stated.

Visiting the compressed natural gas (CNG) so-called mother station at the University of Dar es Salaam (UDSM), set to begin operations next month, he expressed satisfaction



It will have four pumps that can serve more than eight vehicles at any one time

with the situation.

After inspecting the construction progress of the station, a unit of the Tanzania Petroleum Development Corporation (TPDC), he said that the construction is 80 per cent complete and progressing well. All required equipment had already been delivered, he affirmed.

"The contractor has assured us that by February 3 vehicles will begin refuelling with gas here for the first time. Our goal is to eliminate the queues you often see, as the response from Tanzanians switching to the gas system has been substantial," he stated.

He said that President Samia Suluhu Hassan has directed that more stations be built in Dar es Salaam, the commercial capital and largest gas fuel consumer.

He pointed at plans to increase the number of stations to 15 by the end of the year, along with setting up mobile stations—one in Morogoro and two in Dodoma. The aim is to enable a transition from using polluting energy sources to cleaner, more sustainable energy.

He stressed the need to expedite the construction process, noting that 18.9bn/- is being invested in the Kairuki and Muhimbili stations, all with domestic funding.

Aristides Katto, the project manager from TPDC, stated that once completed, the sta-

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SPORTS

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Simba and Yanga embark on high-stakes continental campaigns

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Postecoglou's trust in youth repaid as Bergvall, Gray shine for Tottenham

Drug enforcers seize Pakistani 'narco ship'

Sic sober houses were created, bringing the total to 62 across the country

By Henry Mwangonde

A VESSEL with registration B.F.D 16548 flying the Pakistani flag has been seized by law enforcers on the country's shores loaded with methamphetamine.

Aretas Lyimo, the Drug Control and Enforcement Authority (DCEA), commissioner-general, cited this development at a press conference in Dar es Salaam yesterday, profiling a DCEA report

on the status of drug seizures and control efforts for 2024.

Investigations show that the vessel has been used for various illegal activities for the past 28 years, he said, as it was making regular trips from Pakistani ports through Iran to load drugs before offloading its cargoes in various shores on the western rim of the Indian Ocean, he said.

Eight Pakistani nationals were arrest-

ed and were lined up for hearing charges before a court in the city yesterday, he said, noting that heroin and methamphetamine are commonly trafficked by sea.

The seized vessel has a capacity to carry up to eight tonnes of illegal drugs at a time, he said, affirming that legal proceedings are ongoing. "Once the court is satisfied, the vessel will be confiscated and become government property," the law enforcer intoned.

In 2024, DCEA reported the seizure of 2,327,983.66 kilograms of illegal drugs, a

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Regulator scraps 120 veterinarians

By Guardian Correspondent, Dodoma

THE Veterinary Council of Tanzania (VCT) has revoked the registrations of 120 veterinarians for failing to pay long-overdue fees, making them ineligible to provide veterinary services.

Dr George Mtinda, the VCT assistant registrar, said at a press conference here yesterday that the move stemmed from their failure to pay the annual 30,000/- fee, in which case the veterinarians are prohibited from offering services.

After reviewing the list of defaulters, the council concluded that the veterinarians



The association renews its appeal to members to settle their debts to avoid consequences such as service suspension and legal action

had accumulated substantial debts over an extended period, disqualifying them from providing services under the regulations, he said.

"The council has authorized the revocation of the registrations of 120 veterinarians for failing to meet the qualifications required to provide veterinary services, due to their prolonged outstanding debts," he said.

"Those whose registrations have been revoked can reapply by settling the fines, fees and outstanding debts. If they remain unregistered for two years, they

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Overhaul call centre team, minister instructs Tanesco

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tion will be able to distribute gas to other stations via vehicles. It will

have four pumps that can serve more than eight vehicles at any one time, he added.

Drug enforcers seize Pakistani 'narco ship'

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significant increase from the 1.9m kilograms seized in 2023. This substantial haul could have caused significant harm to the nation if it had reached the market, he stated.

Cannabis was the most seized drug during the year, followed by methamphetamine, heroin and fentanyl-based prescription drugs. For the first time, a new drug, the 3-4 methylene-dioxy-pyrrolidone (DMV), was discovered and confiscated, he said.

"The year-end operation involved the seizure of the vessel. We confiscated 673.2 kilograms of methamphetamine and heroin. Of these, 448.3 kilograms were hidden inside the vessel and linked to eight Pakistani nationals, while 224.9 kilograms were seized along the seashore in Dar es Salaam," he explained.

He similarly noted that the government has purchased patrol boats, now being put to final procedures, which involve the formation of a task force to monitor criminal activities in Lake Victoria, where drug trafficking is especially worrying.

With more than 600 passageways along the coastline and lakeshores,

DCEA is working with other security agencies to combat crime, he said, appealing to the public to live up to its crucial role in reporting illegal activities in these areas.

He also highlighted the government's ongoing investment in public education on drug-related issues. In 2024, approximately 28m people were reached in education outreach on drug problems.

Two rehabilitation centres for drug addicts were opened in Coast and Tanga regions, bringing the total number of medically assisted therapy (MAT) clinics across the country to 18, with 18,170 affected individuals being treated there, he said.

Six sober houses were created, bringing the total to 62 across the country, he said, noting that assessments of drug availability and distribution indicate a significant decline in heroin use within the country.

Many users now turn to alternative substances such as prescription drugs with addictive properties, he asserted, hinting at plans to further strengthen drug control efforts. DCEA will enhance international cooperation and leverage modern technologies to monitor networks of drug traffickers, he added.

Global NGO: Quarter of world freshwater life 'nears extinction'

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other 187 likely to disappear, while the data isn't as yet conclusive, the statement indicated.

Freshwater ecosystems, though covering less than one percent of the earth's surface, are home to 10 per cent of all known species but they are vanishing at an alarming rate, it stated.

Nowhere is this loss more profound than in the Western Ghats, a freshwater biodiversity hotspot and home to many endemic species. The study identifies this region as one where freshwater species are most threatened.

"There are over 300 species of freshwater fish in the Western Ghat, also known as the Sahyadri, a mountain range that stretches 1,600 km along the western coast of the Indian peninsula.

Covering an area of 160,000 square kilometres, it traverses the states of Gujarat, Maharashtra, Goa, Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu.

Dr Rajeev Raghavan, assistant professor at the Kerala University of Fisheries and Ocean Studies at Kochi, said that more than half of the threatened species are found only here and nowhere else on earth, making them exceptionally vulnerable to environmental threats.

Kerala has the highest number of threatened freshwater fishes in India (estimated at about 74), and the Periyar River is the most significant in terms of 'conservation attention' as it harbours the maximum number of endemic and threatened freshwater fishes in Kerala, he further noted.

Other highly affected regions identified in the study include Lake Victoria in Africa, Lake Titicaca in South America and Sri Lanka's Wet Zone, the statement affirmed.

Pollution tops the list of threats,

affecting 54 percent of at-risk freshwater species. Agriculture and urban development exacerbate the problem as pesticides, fertilisers and untreated wastewater flow unchecked into rivers and lakes, it stated.

Dams and water management projects, which alter natural flow regimes and block migratory routes, are the second-largest threat, impacting 39 per cent of species. Invasive species, overharvesting, and climate change further compound the challenges, it said.

The Kerala don says that conservation strategies designed for iconic terrestrial species such as tigers and elephants do little to benefit freshwater species in shared habitats like the Western Ghats.

For instance, the critically endangered humpbacked mahseer (Tor remadevii), a mega fish that can grow up to 60 kg, is severely threatened by habitat loss, he said.

"Protecting freshwater fauna requires tailored interventions, such as restoring river ecosystems, regulating fishing and preventing the spread of invasive species," the don affirmed, who is also the South Asia chairman of the NGO's freshwater fish specialist group, while the authors stress the importance of incorporating freshwater species data into broader conservation strategies.

Stephanie Wear, the Conservation International senior vice president at the Moore Center for Science at Palo Alto, California, in the United States, said that "freshwater ecosystems are not resources for exploitation; they are lifelines for humanity.

"Saving them will require bold, collective action across disciplines, sectors and borders. Our health, nutrition, drinking water and livelihoods depend on them," he added.

Zambia embarks on vaccination drive in cholera-affected district

LUSAKA

A CHOLERA vaccination campaign targeting 191,153 people has started in a northern Zambian district following fresh outbreaks.

According to state media reports on Wednesday, the cholera vaccination campaign in Nakonde district began on Tuesday, targeting those aged one and above, with 200,000 doses re-

ceived, said District Health Director Philip Munkonge. "We are hopeful that the administration of the vaccine will be successful so that people can get immunity from contracting the disease," Munkonge was quoted by the Zambia Daily Mail as saying.

He added that public awareness efforts were conducted, and all preparations were finalized to ensure proper vaccine administration.



"A motorbike rider transporting charcoal from Chanika to Gongo la Mboto, Ilala District in Dar es Salaam carrying his passenger on top of the sacks without regard for safety as captured yesterday. Photo: Guardian Photographer

Regulator scraps 120 veterinarians

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will need to undergo examinations before being re-registered," he specified.

Paying the annual fee is a legal obligation for veterinarians to renew their registrations each year, he said, noting that the council has so far registered over 1,200 veterinarians.

"Those whose registrations

have been revoked will not be allowed to continue providing services, and anyone found practising without valid registration will face legal consequences, including prosecution," he cautioned.

Although the revocation may result in a shortage of veterinary professionals, it is a necessary legal requirement, he said, reaffirming that anyone practising without proper authorization will

be operating illegally and will not be recognised by the council," he said, urging veterinarians to comply with the legal registration process to prevent unnecessary complications.

James Kawamala, the Tanzania Veterinary Association secretary, expressed regret over the move, acknowledging its negative impact, while acknowledging that the government had carried out

its duties.

The government had consistently reminded veterinarians and the association had diligently carried out its responsibility to alert its members, he said, attributing the situation to negligence.

The association renews its appeal to members to settle their debts to avoid consequences such as service suspension and legal action, he added.



Tanga Urban MP Umyy Mwalimu (L), speaks with Works minister Abdallah Ulega, while on a visit to inspect the construction of the Tanga-Pangani road. Photo: Correspondent Oscar Assenga

Escalating violence in eastern DRC forces more than 100,000 people to flee, says UN

UNITED NATIONS

MORE than 100,000 people have fled five days of fighting in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) between government forces and M23 rebels, UN humanitarian aid workers said on Wednesday.

The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) said the clashes occurred in the Masisi territory of North Kivu province and, according to OCHA partners, killed at least two people and wounded six others.

"In the last quarter of last year, violent attacks by different non-state armed groups have increased in

the eastern part of the DRC, resulting in population displacements," the office said.

At the end of December 2024, more than 2.7 million people were displaced in North Kivu province. Between September and December 2024, the UN partners reported at least 138 people killed and more than a hundred others kidnapped.

OCHA said the conflict causes people to be constantly on the move as fighting ceases or resumes, increasing their vulnerabilities. It also affects humanitarian access, and many organizations maintain a limited presence, closely monitoring the security situation to resume

operations.

The office called on all parties to the conflict and those with influence over them to ensure the safety of civilians and humanitarians and ensure unhindered and unimpeded humanitarian activities.

Stephane Dujarric, chief spokesman for UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, said the special envoy for the Great Lakes region, Huang Xia, also expressed concern at the rapidly deteriorating security situation in the eastern part of the DRC.

Dujarric said Huang urged the parties to the conflict to prioritize dialogue within the framework of

the Luanda and Nairobi regional peace processes and to refrain from any acts likely to constitute violations of national and regional commitments made under the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the DRC and the region.

"To this end, he calls for the urgent convening of the Twelfth High-Level Meeting of the Regional Oversight Mechanism of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework, to enable the heads of state of the region to address the ongoing crisis in eastern DRC," the spokesman told reporters at a regular briefing.



Livestock and Fisheries Minister Dr. Ashatu Kijaji arrives at Majulai grounds in Mwangoi Ward to address Mlalo Constituency residents in Lushoto District, Tanga Region during her two-day visit on Wednesday. Photo: Correspondent Ashrack Miraji

By Guardian Reporter, Zanzibar

Mwinyi orders compensation for residents near highways

ZANZIBAR President Dr. Husseini Mwinyi has directed the Ministry of Infrastructure, Communication and Transportation to compensate residents whose buildings are near main roads, citing safety concerns. Dr Mwinyi issued the directive yesterday during the inauguration of Micheweni Shumba port and Kiuyu Maziwang'ombe roads in Micheweni District, Pemba North Region, to mark the 61st anniversary of the 1964 Zanzibar Revolution. President Mwinyi explained that some residents have built homes near main roads, urging them to avoid encroaching on road reserves. He also reaffirmed that the promises to construct the Micheweni Shumba port and Kiuyu Maziwang'ombe roads had been

fulfilled and emphasised that the government would continue to build new roads at tarmac level, particularly in Micheweni District. Furthermore, President Mwinyi assured residents that, in addition to the high-quality roads, plans to install streetlights would also be implemented. Zanzibar Minister for Infrastructure, Communication, and Transport, Dr. Khalid Salum Mohamed, highlighted the modern standards of the roads and commended the government. He urged citizens to appreciate the progress made under President

Mwinyi's leadership. Dr. Mohamed reiterated that the government remains inclusive in its development initiatives and called on citizens to support further efforts. Permanent Secretary in the Ministry, Dr. Habiba Hassan Omar, provided a technical report, saying that the road projects are part of the 2020/2025 CCM election manifesto. The Micheweni Kiuyu Maziwang'ombe and Shumba Port roads, totalling 10 kilometres are part of the larger initiative encompassing 274.9 kilometres of internal roads in Unguja and

Pemba. Of the total, 140.9 kilometres are in Unguja, and 134.9 kilometres are in Pemba, with construction ongoing across both islands. In November 2021, the ministry contracted the Turkish company IRIS for the construction of 275.9 kilometres of internal roads to gravel and tarmac levels in both islands. A subsequent agreement signed in March 2024 with Turkiye's MAWI company will focus on asphalt surfacing, costing \$79,167,226. The total cost for the roads in Unguja and Pemba is \$159,467,226, or \$57,798.92 per kilometre.

Prisons plants 1,500 trees to back environmental conservation drive

By Guardian Correspondent, Dodoma

TANZANIA Prisons Service has planted a total of 1,500 trees in Msalato Ward, Dodoma City, as part of its efforts to support the national drive to protect the environment and mitigate the effects of climate change. The tree planting exercise is in response to the directive issued by President Samia Suluhu Hassan, which was communicated through the Vice President's Office. During the planting event here recently, Daimu Mmolosho, Senior Assistant Commissioner of Tanzania Prisons Service (Office of Agriculture, Livestock and Environmental Conservation) called on local residents to take an active role in environmental protection and sustainability.

"This initiative is part of our broader mission to promote positive change and strengthen efforts in environmental conservation. This includes making Dodoma greener, more sustainable city for all its residents," Mmolosho said. He explained that the project was in line with instructions from the Vice President, Dr Philip Mpango, who had specifically directed that trees be planted along the city's ring road in joint efforts with the Prisons Service. "We work to fulfil the national policy of greening Dodoma, and as part of this, we are collaborating closely with the people of Msalato to make the tree-planting initiative successful," Mmolosho said.

According to him, the Tanzania Prisons Service has been actively involved in a range of environmental conservation projects across the country, with similar initiatives planned for other regions. As part of its mandate, the service has also been engaging local communities to help raise awareness about the importance of protecting the environment. Msalato Ward Executive Officer Devotha Selufara noted that the

ongoing tree planting initiatives aim to combat deforestation, improve air quality and ensure better sustainable future in the face of climate challenges. She also emphasised the importance of preventing livestock from damaging the newly planted seedlings.

"Tree planting is not just the directive from the Vice President to green Dodoma, but also local efforts to beautify and protect Msalato. We are proud to play our part in this important initiative," Selufara said. Amina Athuman, Msalato Ward resident, expressed her appreciation for the tree planting project, highlighting the benefits it would bring to the local environment.

"The trees will help reduce winds peed and protect the area from soil erosion. More importantly, they will beautify the surroundings and provide fresh, clean air for our community," Athuman said. She also thanked both the local government and the national authorities for their commitment to improving environmental conservation efforts in the area.

"This is a great step towards greener Msalato, and we are thankful for the leadership shown in initiating this project. We hope it will inspire others to take action in their own communities," she said.

“We work to fulfil the national policy of greening Dodoma, and as part of this, we are collaborating closely with the people of Msalato to make the tree-planting initiative successful”

Govt reiterates plan to update TAZARA

By Correspondent Halfani Chusi

THE government has announced plans to rehabilitate and upgrade the Tanzania-Zambia Railway (TAZARA) to enhance its efficiency so that it meets its objectives. This was said in Dar es Salaam yesterday by Deputy Minister for Transport, David Kihenzile, after his visit to TAZARA headquarters in Dar es Salaam. Kihenzile said the visit was part of instructions from Transport Minister Makame Mbarawa, who tasked him with evaluating the railway's performance and identifying challenges for swift resolution. "I travelled from Tazara to Mwakanga station, a 20-kilometre stretch, to assess its performance," Kihenzile said after disembarking from the train.

He noted that Tanzanians have great confidence in the railway system, pointing out that over the past three years, more than five million passengers have travelled, surpassing those going to Zambia from Kidatu and Makambako. Kihenzile highlighted the need for new carriages, engines, and track upgrades. He reassured that the government had already acknowledged the needs and begun addressing them. "I assure passengers that President Samia Suluhu Hassan visited Zambia two years ago and met with her counterpart there. In September last year, three presidents – from China, Tanzania and Zambia – met and agreed that the railway, operational since 1975, needs upgrading," Kihenzile explained, accompanied by ministry officials.

He noted that the railway, which was designed to carry 5 million tonnes of cargo annually, had only transported 447,000 tonnes last year – around 9 percent of its capacity. Kihenzile emphasised that the rehabilitation will take time, but the goal is to improve the service for citizens who rely on it. Fuad Abdallah, TAZARA Regional General Manager for Tanzania, also mentioned the need for priority upgrades to bridges, tunnels, track switching areas, engines, and carriages capable of carrying heavier loads. "We are currently facing challenges with old carriages that can't carry heavy containers. While the track is designed for 5 million tonnes, the existing engines and carriages can only handle 500,000 tonnes," he said.



Finance Minister Dr. Mwigulu Nchemba (R) bids farewell to Ambassador of Republic of Korea to Tanzania Eunjung Ahn after their meeting in Dodoma yesterday. They discussed various economic cooperation matters, including several development projects. Photo: Ministry of Finance

Maisha Bila Makato

azam Pesa

Tuma Pesa Bure

ADA ZA WATEJA

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KIWANGO (TSH)	KUTUMA PESA KWENDA AZAMPESA (TSH)			KUTUMA PESA KWENDA MITANDAO MINGINE (TSH)			KUTUMA PESA BENKI (TSH)			KUTOA PESA (TSH)		
	ADA	TOZO	JUMLA	ADA	TOZO	JUMLA	ADA	TOZO	JUMLA	ADA	TOZO	JUMLA
0 - 999	BURE	BURE	BURE	8.5	BURE	8.5	51	BURE	51	150	10	160
1,000 - 1,999	BURE	BURE	BURE	12.75	BURE	12.75	85	BURE	85	242	10	252
2,000 - 2,999	BURE	BURE	BURE	29.75	BURE	29.75	170	BURE	170	349	10	359
3,000 - 3,999	BURE	BURE	BURE	38.25	BURE	38.25	170	BURE	170	486	14	500
4,000 - 4,999	BURE	BURE	BURE	57.8	BURE	57.8	340	BURE	340	567	27	594
5,000 - 6,999	BURE	BURE	BURE	68.85	BURE	68.85	340	BURE	340	734	54	788
7,000 - 9,999	BURE	BURE	BURE	153	BURE	153	340	BURE	340	822	56	878
10,000 - 14,999	BURE	BURE	BURE	153	BURE	153	850	BURE	850	1,123	102	1,225
15,000 - 19,999	BURE	BURE	BURE	420.75	BURE	420.75	850	BURE	850	1,129	195	1,324
20,000 - 29,999	BURE	BURE	BURE	420.75	BURE	420.75	850	BURE	850	1,254	306	1,560
30,000 - 39,999	BURE	BURE	BURE	459	BURE	459	850	BURE	850	1,575	351	1,926
40,000 - 49,999	BURE	BURE	BURE	520.2	BURE	520.2	1,700	BURE	1,700	2,070	419	2,489
50,000 - 99,999	BURE	BURE	BURE	573.75	BURE	573.75	2,380	BURE	2,380	2,430	573	3,003
100,000 - 199,999	BURE	BURE	BURE	956.25	BURE	956.25	2,550	BURE	2,550	3,285	707	3,992
200,000 - 299,999	BURE	BURE	BURE	1,224	BURE	1,224	3,400	BURE	3,400	4,590	821	5,411
300,000 - 399,999	BURE	BURE	BURE	1,453.5	BURE	1,453.5	3,400	BURE	3,400	5,400	838	6,238
400,000 - 499,999	BURE	BURE	BURE	1,759.5	BURE	1,759.5	3,825	BURE	3,825	5,850	982	6,832
500,000 - 599,999	BURE	BURE	BURE	1,912.5	BURE	1,912.5	3,825	BURE	3,825	6,300	1,245	7,545
600,000 - 699,999	BURE	BURE	BURE	2,448	BURE	2,448	3,825	BURE	3,825	6,750	1,532	8,282
700,000 - 799,999	BURE	BURE	BURE	3,289.5	BURE	3,289.5	4,250	BURE	4,250	6,750	1,700	8,450
800,000 - 899,999	BURE	BURE	BURE	3,289.5	BURE	3,289.5	4,250	BURE	4,250	6,750	1,750	8,500
900,000 - 1,000,000	BURE	BURE	BURE	4,590	BURE	4,590	5,100	BURE	5,100	6,750	1,776	8,526
1,000,001 - 3,000,000	BURE	BURE	BURE	4,590	BURE	4,590	5,100	BURE	5,100	6,750	1,875	8,625
3,000,001 - 10,000,000	BURE	BURE	BURE	4,590	BURE	4,590	5,100	BURE	5,100	7,125	2,000	9,125

TUKIO

Kuangalia salio/Taarifa ndogo **ADA**

TAARIFA YA MWEZI **ADA**

Mwezi jana/Mwezi huu **BURE**

Hakikisha namba na majira ya mpokeaji kabla ya kutuma pesa.

Hakikisha unatunza namba yako ya siri, usimpe mtu yeyote namba yako ya siri lwe wakalo wa Azampesa au mfunyazi wa Azampesa.

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MALIPO YA SERIKALI

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Huduma kwa wateja, Piga namba 0800 785 555



INVITATION FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST – PREQUALIFICATION OF SERVICE PROVIDERS FOR PROVISION OF TERMITE CONTROL SERVICES AT MCHAURU VILLAGE.

I. INTRODUCTION

Geita Gold Mining Limited ("The Company"), a subsidiary of AngloGold Ashanti ("AGA") is in north-western Tanzania, in the Lake Victoria goldfields of the Geita region, about 5 km from Geita town.

The Company is in the process of pre-qualifying Service providers for Termite Control Services at Mchauru Village and therefore, inviting eligible and interested applicants to submit expressions of interest as detailed below.

NB: THE DOCUMENTS REQUESTED BELOW MUST BE SUBMITTED WHEN EXPRESSING INTEREST IN THIS SERVICE. SHORTLISTED CANDIDATES WILL BE SUBJECTED TO THE ANGLOGOLD ASHANTI VETTING PROCESS.

Scope of Service:

REFERENCE NUMBER	DESCRIPTION
GGME01959	TERMITE CONTROL SERVICES AT MCHAURU VILLAGE

II. INFORMATION REQUIRED

PRE-QUALIFICATION REQUIREMENTS
COMMERCIAL
Company Profile and Updated Organogram
Company Code of Conduct and Ethics
NSSF Compliance Certificate
Copy of Certificate of Incorporation, the most recent BRELA Search, and the latest BRELA Application of Annual Return.
Copy of Valid Tax Clearance Certificate (TCC), TIN Certificate and VAT Registration Certificate
Copy of Company Memorandum and Article of Association
Compliance with Mining Act-Approved Local Content Plan.
FINANCIAL POSITION AND TERMS OF TRADE
Applicant's Audited Financial Statements for the last three (3) years.
Bank Statements of the Applicant's active bank accounts for the past 6 months
SAFETY AND ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS
OSHA Compliance Certificate
Environmental Compliance Certificate
Workers' Compensation Fund Certificate
Safety and Environmental Policy
OTHER POLICIES
Gifts / Hospitality / Sponsorship Policy / Procedure
Policies / Procedures dealing with Forced and Child Labor
Policies / Procedures dealing with Abuse, Discrimination and Harassment
Grievance Procedure
Human Rights Policy / Procedure / Programme
PAST EXPERIENCE
Provide at least 3 recommendation letters from different clients for similar works
TECHNICAL CRITERIA (GGME01959)
Submit Tanzania Plant Health and Pesticides Authority (TPHPA) Registration Certificate as Approved and Current Pesticide dealer's Operator License
Approved Codes of Practice for Termite Control and Fumigation Services
CVs of Key Technical personnel's; Registered and Approved by TPHPA
A list of six termite control and fumigation projects executed in recent 3 years with value of each project (Proof of Contracts and Completion Certificates from the Clients).

III. Interested applicants must submit their expression Letters of Interest ("LOI") by quoting **GGME01959 - TERMITE CONTROL SERVICES AT MCHAURU VILLAGE** on the subject of the email together with supporting information to the Company, which states the full name, address, telephone, and e-mail address of the Company, name of the principal contact, and signed by an authorized representative.

IV. All LOIs and supporting documentation (in PDF format) must be received by the Company via e-mail at geita.eoi@anglogoldashanti.com without copying any individual from the Company. Submissions must not be later than **8.30 AM on 20th January 2025**. (the "LOI" Submission Deadline). EOI submissions must not exceed 10MB per email. In case the size of the email exceeds 10MB, applicants must split the submissions into multiple emails.

V. Shortlisted Candidates will be notified within forty-five (45) calendar days from the submission deadline. Candidates not contacted within the forty-five (45) calendar days should consider themselves unsuccessful.

=END OF ADVERTISEMENT=

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Heavy rains demolish 12 houses in Njombe

By Guardian Correspondent, Njombe

HEAVY rains and strong winds have destroyed 12 houses at Ikwete and Malombwe streets in Lyamkena Ward, Makambako Town Council, Njombe, leaving residents homeless and a 15-year-old boy injured.

Ikwete Street Chairman Amon Neston reported that nine houses were damaged in his area during January 3 storm, which struck at around 2pm.

Malombwe Street Chairman

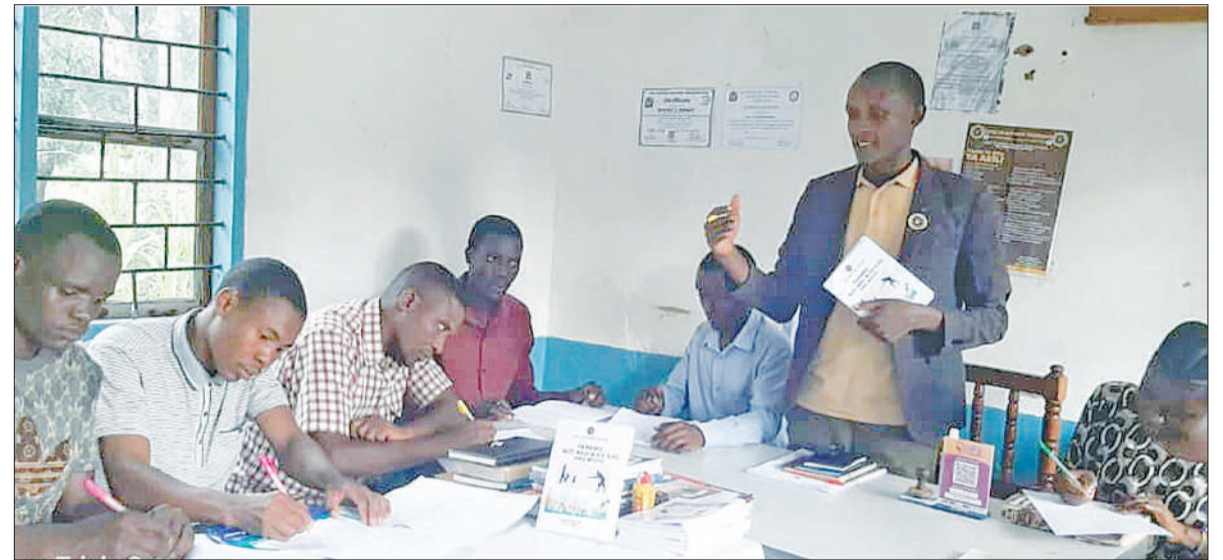
Daniel Japhet confirmed the destruction of three houses in his area and urged the government and stakeholders to provide food and construction materials for the affected families.

One of the victims, Joyna Ndawala, appealed for help, highlighting that many residents lost not only houses but also their food supplies in the disaster.

Makambako Town Council Disaster Management Committee, led by Environment Officer Gift

Kivia, has assessed the affected areas and will submit report to the Town Council Director Kenneth Haule for further action.

Since the start of the 2024/2025 rainy season, heavy rains and strong winds have destroyed 32 houses and CCM office in Makambako Town Council. This includes 13 houses in Mlwa Ward on November 29, seven houses and CCM office in Utengeli Ward on December 14, and 11 houses in Lyamkena Ward on January 3.



Akili Platform Tanzania director Roghat Robert speaks at a training session on how to visit families with children who have intellectual disabilities in Tabora yesterday. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

By Guardian Reporter, Zanzibar

ZANZIBAR Second Vice President, Hemed Suleiman Abdulla, has stated that the government will continue to consider both main islands of Unguja and Pemba in planning and implementation of key development projects such as infrastructure.

He made the remarks during the laying of foundation stone for the construction of the Shumba port in Pemba as part of celebrations to mark 61st anniversary of the Zanzibar Revolution.

He noted that completion of Shumba port will enhance maritime transport services in the North Pemba Region, as the port serves as a vital link between Tanga Port and Mombasa Port in Kenya, thus

Govt to consider both Unguja, Pemba in key development projects - Abdulla

facilitating economic activities.

He emphasised that construction of the port and other ports being built in Zanzibar was in line with the 2025 CCM election manifesto, which aims to create employment opportunities for local residents and stimulate economic growth in the region.

The Vice President instructed the contractor building the port to increase work output and extend working hours so that the port can be completed on schedule and benefit the people.

Additionally, he urged citizens to appreciate and support government efforts in bringing development

and to maintain peace and unity in the country by resisting political divisions that serve the interests of a few individuals opposed to Zanzibar's progress.

Minister for Infrastructure, Communication, and Transport, Dr. Khalid Salum Mohammed, stated that his ministry continues to implement various projects, including construction of roads, airports and ports in both Unguja and Pemba, to strengthen the economy.

Dr. Mohammed explained that the construction of port infrastructure aims to improve transportation and logistics services in the country.

By Guardian Correspondent, Songea

THE Tanzania Rural and Urban Roads Agency (TARURA) in Ruvuma Region has issued a stern warning to residents against vandalism of road infrastructure, including removal of street name signs, key public assets developed through government efforts.

Silvester Chinengo, TARURA Ruvuma Regional Manager underscored that roads are shared resources and urged residents to protect it for sustainable use.

"People must safeguard the infrastructure to ensure its longevity. Acts of vandalism undermine the government's

TARURA warns against infrastructure vandalism

development initiatives," he said.

He pointed out that dumping waste in drainage systems, extracting sand under bridges and riverbanks, and other forms of damage compromise natural environment and structural integrity.

TARURA works closely with village authorities, and district and regional administrations to combat vandalism and maintain roads effectively.

Chinengo encouraged

communities to take ownership of road infrastructure to ensure the same remains safe and serves everyone efficiently.

For the 2024-2025 fiscal year, TARURA Ruvuma has been allocated 38,394bn/- to build 1,445 kilometres of roads, 50 bridges and 57 culverts.

Of the 51 signed contracts, 40 percent of the work is completed, with some road projects reaching 70 percent under the transportation barriers removal initiative.

By Guardian Reporter

THE Tanzania Bureau of Standards (TBS) has issued a warning to online content creators distributing misleading food-related videos, stressing that legal action will be taken against those found in violation of the law.

The warning comes in response to the recent circulation of a video on social media showing a woman washing her feet in a basin of mangoes and then packaging juice for sale.

The video sparked public outcry, with many calling for authorities to take legal action, as it misrepresented food production practices and posed a potential health risk if others were to imitate the behaviour.

In its statement shared on social media early this week, TBS Acting Marketing Manager Debora Haule said that the agency had identified a troubling trend of content creators spreading misleading videos online, depicting inappropriate food preparation practices.

Haule said that there is a disturbing trend of content creators

TBS warns content creators over misleading information

posting inappropriate and often unethical videos in an effort to gain followers on social media platforms.

She explained that some of the videos showed people preparing juice by crushing fruits with their feet, a practice that violates The Standards Act (Cap 130).

Under the law, it is prohibited to produce, prepare, distribute, sell, or advertise food products that could endanger consumer health or mislead the public. Additionally, food products cannot be sold or advertised in unregistered areas.

TBS assured the public that it will collaborate with law enforcement agencies to ensure that anyone found creating misleading food-related content faces legal consequences.

On January 7, police in Mwanza detained 21-year-old threewheeler rider John Isaya, resident of Bukala Ward in Sengerema District, for allegedly creating and sharing misleading content on TikTok

platform. In the video, he falsely claimed to be selling his child, who was strapped to his back, for 1.6m/-.

Such incidents, among others, have drawn sharp criticism from the Minister for Community Development, Gender, Women and Special Groups, Dr Dorothy Gwajima.

On January 6, she issued a warning, stating that her ministry would hold accountable anyone producing content that violates ethical standards, professionalism or the law.

Dr Gwajima highlighted the growing number of unprofessional online content creators, emphasising that their actions could have harmful effects on society.

However, she also stressed that, if content creators adhered to professional standards and legal requirements, their work could contribute positively to social development and people's wellbeing across all sectors.



Dar es Salaam Regional Commissioner Albart Chalamila (C) leads members of organizing committee for the Africa Heads of State Energy Summit, set to take place later this month in Dar es Salaam. They were inspecting various facilities yesterday ahead of the arrival of heads of state. Photo: Correspondent Jumanne Juma

Mlimba DC sets record with 2.2bn/- in loans for women, youth, PwDs

By Guardian Correspondent, Morogoro

19 youth groups, and 4 groups of people with disabilities.

Mlimba District Council in Morogoro Region has set a record by providing 2.2bn/- in loans for women, youth and people with disabilities, surpassing other districts in the region.

He also noted an outstanding repayment of 109,185,500/- from groups in Mchombe, Igima, Mofu, and Idete wards, saying legal action will be taken against those responsible.

The loans were distributed earlier this week at the council's office by Kilombero District Commissioner Dunstan Kyobya.

Kyobya asked Abdul to ensure all groups in every ward receive loans. He stressed that it is unacceptable for issues of one group to prevent eligible citizens in other wards from receiving loans. He also urged strict repayment enforcement.

During the distribution, Mlimba District Executive Director Jamaly Abdul explained that 1,011,701,575/- of the total amount came from 10 percent of internal revenue allocated for the 2023/2024 and 2024/2025 financial years while 1,194,364,886/- came from loan repayments.

“Of the amount, 882,426,584.40/- will go to women’s groups, 882,426,584.40/- to youth groups and 441,213,292.20/- to people with disabilities”

Of the amount, 882,426,584.40/- will go to women's groups, 882,426,584.40/- to youth groups and 441,213,292.20/- to people with disabilities.

Abdul added that the funds will be distributed in three phases, with the first phase allocating 746,795,000/- to 49 groups—26 women's groups,

REA to distribute subsidized gas cylinders in six districts

By Guardian Correspondent, Dodoma

THE Rural Energy Agency (REA) has launched a new initiative to distribute 19,530 gas cylinders in six districts of Dodoma Region at a price subsidised by 50 percent.

The initiative is part of the government's efforts to improve access to clean cooking energy in rural and peri-urban areas meant to reduce reliance on traditional fuels such as firewood and charcoal.

The project is implemented after an agreement with local energy firm at a cost of 406.7m/- which will see the distribution of 6-kilogramme gas cylinders along with the necessary tools at a reduced price of 20,825/-, down from the previous price of 41,650/-.

The initiative was officially launched by Dodoma Regional Commissioner, Rosemary Senyamule, during a ceremony in Chamwino District on Tuesday.

Senyamule emphasised that the project forms part of the government's broader commitment to providing affordable and sustainable energy solutions to promote both public health and environmental protection.

“The initiative will also include training for local residents on how to use clean energy safely. The aim is to improve health outcomes, protect the environment, and provide affordable energy alternatives for cooking,” Senyamule said.

She further encouraged residents across Chamwino and other districts to take advantage of the opportunity to improve their economic status while also safeguarding the environment.

“We urge everyone to embrace clean energy alternatives to reduce pollution and enhance their livelihoods,” she said.

REA Acting Director General, Emmanuel Yesaya, explained that each of the six districts will receive 3,255 gas cylinders.

The distribution is part of the agency's ongoing efforts to improve access to clean cooking energy, which is expected to drive both economic and social development.

He said the project will contribute to mitigating climate change, safeguarding the environment, and promoting a healthier, more sustainable future for communities across the region.

Janeth Mayanja, Chamwino District Commissioner, highlighted several additional benefits of the project, noting that it would help reduce the pressure on local forests, which are often depleted for firewood and charcoal, contributing to deforestation and reduction of climate change impact.

She said the initiative will also address public health issues related to smoke from burning traditional fuels, which is a leading cause of respiratory illnesses.

“Moreover, this project will help reduce gender-based violence, which is common in rural areas where women and children are often tasked with collecting firewood. By switching to gas, women will have more time to engage in productive economic activities, hence contributing to combat poverty,” Mayanja said.



The initiative will also include training for local residents on how to use clean energy safely. The aim is to improve health outcomes, protect the environment, and provide affordable energy alternatives for cooking

KCB BANK Tariff Guide

SERVICE	TZS	USD/EURO	KES	GBP
STATEMENTS				
Monthly Statement	Free	Free	Free	Free
Duplicated Statements per page (excluding community account)	2,000 per page/Free via email	1,300pp	78pp	0.70pp
Interim Statement per page (excluding community account)	2,000 per page/Free via email	1,300pp	78pp	0.70pp
Balance Enquiry	1,500	equivalent	equivalent	equivalent
ATM VISA DEBIT CARD				
ATM Card Issuance (for the first time)	7,500.00	5	n/a	n/a
ATM withdrawal from KCB ATMs (per transaction)	1,000.00	equivalent	n/a	n/a
ATM withdrawal from Non-KCB ATMs (Tanzania)	2500	13	n/a	n/a
ATM withdrawal from Non-KCB ATMs (International)	15% of the withdrawal amount minimum of TZS 6,500	15% of the withdrawal amount minimum of USD 30	n/a	n/a
ATM mini statements	Free	Free	n/a	n/a
Daily withdrawal Limit	2,000,000.00	1,000	n/a	n/a
POS and E-commerce daily limit	5,000,000.00	2,500	n/a	n/a
Minimum withdrawals	5000	equivalent	n/a	n/a
ATM Card Replacement (lost/destroyed cards)	7,500.00	5	n/a	n/a
Blocking/unblocking ATM cards	Free	Free	n/a	n/a
Card Renewal	7,500.00	5	n/a	n/a
Quarter maintenance fee	1,000	1	n/a	n/a
Camera viewing	30,000	equivalent	n/a	n/a
Optional Issuer fee	10%	10%	n/a	n/a
Other banks' ATM outside Tanzania	6,500	3	n/a	n/a
ATM declined transaction	2,500	1	n/a	n/a
Online declined transaction	2,500	1	n/a	n/a
CREDIT CARD FEES				
Joining Fee	10,000	n/a	n/a	n/a
Annual Fee	10,000	n/a	n/a	n/a
Replacement charges for lost card	10,000	n/a	n/a	n/a
East African Payments (EAPS)	10,000	n/a	n/a	n/a
Cash Withdrawal	6%	n/a	n/a	n/a
Late payment	10%	n/a	n/a	n/a
Interest rate	3%	n/a	n/a	n/a
Supplementary	15,000	n/a	n/a	n/a
STANDING ORDER				
within KCB	2,500	equivalent	equivalent	equivalent
Outward to other banks	5,000	3	n/a	n/a
Setup/Amend Standing Order	10,000.00	7	500	4
Unpaid Standing Order (penalty)	10,000	10	500	10
CHEQUES				
Unpaid Cheque (insufficient funds)- Outward	15,000	13	n/a	n/a
Unpaid Cheque (insufficient) - Inward	65,000	52	n/a	n/a
Unpaid Cheques - technical	15,000	15	n/a	n/a
Counter Leaves	13,000	equivalent	equivalent	equivalent
Bankers Cheque	30,000.00	30	n/a	n/a
Stop payment-per set up	25,000	25	1,300	13
New cheque book retail	600 per leaf	equivalent	equivalent	equivalent
TT'S INTERNATIONAL				
Outward	55USD (equivalent) over the counter /45 USD (equivalent) for IB	55USD over the counter /45 USD (equivalent) for IB	equivalent	equivalent
Inward TT (excluding community accounts)	13USD (TZS equiv client)	13USD (Euro equivalent)	equivalent	equivalent
Recall of funds/Cancellation of TT	10USD (TZS equiv client)	10USD (Euro equivalent)	equivalent	equivalent
Intercompany transfers (KCB to KCB Regional Transfers)	40USD (TZS equiv client)	40USD (Euro equivalent)	equivalent	equivalent
Amendment of TT (Customer induced)	10USD (TZS equiv client)	10USD (Euro equivalent)	equivalent	equivalent
LOCAL TO TRANSFERS				
EFT (KCB Tanzania to any local bank) Excluding Community Account	TZS 1 to 50,000 - 500, TZS 50,001 to 500,000 - 1,000, TZS 500,001 to 5,000,000 - 1,500, TZS 5,000,001 to 20,000,000 - 2,000.	n/a	n/a	n/a
TIPS (Bank to Bank)				
TBS/Local RTGS (excluding community account)	0 - 10,000,000 - 2000, 10,000,000 - 50,000,000 - 5000, above 50,000,000 - 10,000	equivalent	n/a	n/a
MINIMUM A/C OPENING BALANCE				
Current Account-Company (SME&CORPORATE)	100,000	100	5,000	13
Current-Personal	50,000	100	5,000	65
Mapota Account	10,000	10	500	10
KCB Junior Account	10,000	10	500	10
KCB Student Account	10,000	10	500	10
KCB Simba Savers	50,000	50	n/a	n/a
A/C CLOSURE				
Closing account	Free	Free	Free	Free
OTHER SERVICES				
Search of old documents	20,000	13	900	10.5
Forex Cash Deposits (smaller denominations below US \$ 50)	n/a	8% for denominations that are less than USD 50	n/a	8% for denominations that are less than USD 50
Dormant Account Activation	Free	Free	Free	Free
ACCOUNT MAINTENANCE FEES				
Counter Withdrawals (excluding Simba TZS, Cub & Community accounts)	<10million 2,500 > 10million 0.1% max 20,000	0.50%	0.50%	0.50%
Ledger Fees - Current Accounts (excluding community and salary)	personal current account 10,000, business 20,000, corporate account 30,000	personal current 10USD/Business 10USD/Corporate 20USD	700	personal current 10GBP/Business 16GBP/Corporate 20GBP
Ledger Fees - Savings Accounts (Exclude Simba, Cub, Salary & Student Accounts)	Mapota 1,500	7	176	7
THIRD PARTY ENCASHMENT				
Withdrawal fee to be paid by the beneficiary	6500/13USD	13	13	7
Annual setup fee (SME's and Corporate) to be paid in by the account holder	50,000	50	4,400	33
SALARY PROCESSING				
Salary processing	4,000 over the counter / 3,000 IB	equivalent	130	equivalent

SERVICE	TZS	USD/EURO	KES	GBP
CERTIFICATE OF BALANCE				
Balance of Account (Flat fee per certificate)	39000	equivalent	equivalent	equivalent
Auditors Confirmation (flat per certificate)	30000	equivalent	equivalent	equivalent
Reference Letters	30000	equivalent	equivalent	equivalent
TRADE FINANCE				
IMPORT LETTER OF CREDIT				
LC ISSUANCE/extension/increase amount		1.3% Per Quarter		
Normal Amendment		130 USD		
Release Commission/IC document processing		20 USD		
RETIREMENT		0.30% minimum 100 maximum 200		
CANCELLATION		260 USD		
EXPORT LETTER OF CREDIT				
ADVISING		200 USD		
NEGOTIATION		0.60% min 200 max 300		
DISCREPANCY		Free		
AVAILIZATION		0.80%		
DOCUMENTS FOR COLLECTION				
Documents HANDLING FEE		150 USD		
COURIER		150 USD		
GUARANTEE				
Issuance fee		1.30%		
AMENDMENT /Reduce of amount		130 USD		
DISCREPANCY		55 USD		
EXAMINATION				
OTHERS				
SWIFT		50 USD		
Tracer		50 USD		
COURIER		150 USD		
MOBILE BANKING CHARGES				
Balance enquiry		Free		
Mini statement		300		
Invite Friend		Free		
Cheque book		300		
Stop cheque		300		
Stop card		300		
Change Pin		Free		
Full statement		500		
BILL PAYMENTS				
TANESCO/ULUKU		11% of the transacted amount		
DAWASCO		1300		
DSTV		Free		
STARTIMES		Free		
ZIKU		Free		
SMILE		Free		
UHURU		Free		
AZAM		Free		
SASATEL		Free		
SEND MONEY TO E-WALLET(TIPS)				
Mpesa				
Airtel Money		1000 to 100000 - 1000, 100001 to 200000 - 1500, 200001 to 400000 - 2000, 400001 to 600,000 - 3000, 600001 to 1,000,000 - 5,000, 800001 to 1000000 - 7000, 1000001 to 2000000 - 10000, 2000001 to 3000000 - 15000.		
Tigo Pesa/Ezy Pesa				
T.Pesa				
HoplaPesa				
AzamPesa				
IB TRANSACTION CHARGES				
M Pesa		5000-50000-1000, 50,001 to 100,000 - 1500, 100,001 to 200,000-2,500,200,001 to 400,000 - 3,000, 400,001 to 600,000 -3,500, 600,001 to 800,000 - 4,000, 800,001 to 1,000,000 - 5,000, 1,000,001 to 1,500,000 - 7,500,1,500,001 to 2,000,000 -10,000, 2,000,001 to 2,500,000 - 12,500, 2,500,001 to 5,000,000 - 15,000.		
Airtel Money				
Tigo Pesa				
INTRACOMPANY TRANSACTION CHARGES				
Inter-company cash withdrawals charges		0 up to 60 USD charge 4 USD		
		60.01 up to 250 USD charge 7.50 USD		
		250.01 up to 1,250 USD charge 13 USD		
		1,250.01 up to 6,250 USD charge 26 USD		
		Above 6,250 USD charge 1.20% of daily cumulative withdrawals		
Inter-company cash deposit charges		0 up to 250 USD charge 3USD		
		Between 250.01-1250 USD charge 7USD		
		Between 1250.01- 6250 USD charge 13 USD		
		Above 6250 USD charge 0.60% of daily cumulative deposits		
Intercompany standing orders across all companies		Intercompany standing order 13 USD		
LOANS				
Processing/arrangement/appraised fees				
Asset finance		2.40%		
Business loans:		2.40%		
Overdrafts:		2.40%		
Penalty on unpaid loan instalment:		10% above approved rate		
Early repayment:		NA		
Valuation fees:		As per service provider rates		
Legal fees:		As per service provider rates		
Loan insurance fees:		1%		
Interest rates:		+ or - Base Lending Rate		
Personal loans:		19%		
Business loans:		+ or - Base Lending Rate		
*Base Lending Rate		19% for TZS and 9% for USD		
*All rates are subject to negotiation based on the product				
NB:				
1. All staff account will be charged when transacting over the counter and charges excluded on all digital platform				
2. Community account will be charged on salary processing over the counter and charges excluded on internet banking				
Please note: All taxes included				
Name/Title		Signature	Date	
Lulu Shikonyi - Head of Operations		Signed	10.01.2025	
Juma Abdul - Head of Retail Banking		Signed	10.01.2025	
<p>Pay conveniently with your KCB card - no extra fees!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☑ KCB credit card ☑ KCB debit card <p>For People. For Better.</p>				

Headline inflation for December up to 3.1pc

By Polycarp Machira, Dodoma

THE annual headline inflation rate for the month of December, 2024 increased to 3.1 percent from 3.0 percent that was recorded in November, the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) has said.

In a statement released yesterday, the bureau stated that the increase recorded in the National Consumer Price Index (NCPI) explains that speed of price change for commodities for the year ended December 2024 had increased compared to the speed recorded for the year ended November, 2024.

According to the NBS, the overall index went up from 113.34 recorded in December, 2023 to 116.87 in December, 2024. Food and non-alcoholic beverages inflation rate for December, 2024 increased to 4.6 percent from 3.3 percent that was recorded in November, 2024.

On the other hand, annual inflation Rate for all items without food and non-alcoholic beverages for December, 2024 decreased to 2.5 percent from 2.9 percent that was recorded in November, 2024.

"NCPI has shown a relatively stable price movement from December, 2023 to December, 2024 ranging between 113.34 and 116.87," reads the statement. In addition, annual headline inflation rates over the same period have shown a stable trend that ranges between 3.0 percent and 3.1 percent.

The overall index between November and December 2024 also increased by 0.7 percent. The increase is attributed to price increase for some food and non-

food items.

Some food items that contributed to the increase of the index include finger millet grains by 2.6 percent, maize grains by 6.9 percent, sorghum flour by 2.6 percent, bread and bakery products by 4.7 percent, poultry by 3.5 percent, beef by 6.3 percent and goat meat by 3.2 percent.

Others are pork meat by 1.4 percent, dried sardines by 2.4 percent, fruits by 2.3 percent, groundnuts by 2.5 percent, vegetables by 1.9 percent, round potatoes by 4.0 percent, sweet potatoes by 3.0 percent, fresh cassava by 3.5 percent, cocoyam by 2.3 percent, dried beans by 3.4 percent and dried lentils by 3.4 percent.

Some non-food items that contributed to the increase of the index include firewood by 1.9 percent, charcoal by 1.8 percent and major kitchen appliances like refrigerators and cookers by 1.3 percent.



NCPI has shown a relatively stable price movement from December, 2023 to December, 2024 ranging between 113.34 and 116.87

Environmental-friendly aviation operations to be discussed at pending forum in Arusha

By Correspondent Marc Nkwame,

Arusha

AFRICAN airports, airlines and related ground handling services need to take responsibility of protecting the environment by adopting cleaner operations.

This will be a key focus at the 73rd Airports Council International (ACI) Africa Board and Committee Meeting in Arusha, scheduled for April this year, shortly after Eid and Easter holidays.

Transport Minister Prof. Makame Mbarawa told journalists in Arusha yesterday that the upcoming ACI meeting offers a vital platform for Tanzania and other African nations to exchange expertise to enhance skills in aviation industry.

"Tanzania will also benefit from hosting this meeting as our aviation personnel will learn from their counterparts while the event will also boost conference and wildlife tourism," he said.

President Samia Suluhu Hassan is expected to attend the continental meeting which will run from April 24 to 30. The event will be hosted by the Tanzania Airports Authority (TAA) and will coincide with the Regional Conference and Exhibition.

Prof. Mbarawa noted that experts from various aviation subsectors, including airports, airlines, and ground handling, will assess air transport's environmental impact and discuss ways to address pollution for a more sustainable future in the industry. Delegates will also tackle issues related to safety and economic challenges in the sector.

Abdul Mombokaleo, Director General of TAA, highlighted that Tanzania is taking significant steps to make its airports more environmental friendly, digitally powered, and in compliance with international standards.

"Airports are essentially special economic zones as terminals house various businesses, industries, and sectors such as tourism," he said.

Under the theme 'Navigating towards a Greener Future: Harnessing Sustainable Aviation and Tourism for Economic Prosperity' the ACI gathering will focus on

sustainable practices to promote economic growth while ensuring environmental conservation in aviation and tourism.

The event will bring together aviation and tourism leaders, policymakers, and industry experts from across Africa and beyond, providing delegates with opportunities to network, share insights, and explore innovative solutions that will shape the future of both industries in Africa.

The more than 400 participants will convene in Arusha, a renowned destination for global and regional events, for a week of networking and knowledge sharing.

The previous ACI Africa Board Meeting took place in Johannesburg, South Africa, in September 2024, as part of the 33rd ACI Africa Annual General Assembly, Regional Conference, Exhibition, and Airshow.

ACI Africa, representing 75 members from 54 African countries, oversees the management of more than 265 airports and 59 business partners across the continent.

Tanzania, which hosts the 73rd ACI Africa Board Meeting, is home to 58 airports, with Julius Nyerere International Airport (JNIA) in Dar es Salaam being the largest and busiest, handling over 70 percent of Tanzania's air passenger traffic, which amounts to around 3 million passengers annually. The country also has over 300 private aerodromes, mostly owned by mining companies and tour operators in national parks and game reserves.



Airports are essentially special economic zones as terminals house various businesses, industries, and sectors such as tourism



A coconut vendor looks for customers along Nyerere Road near Dar es Salaam Rapid Transit station yesterday. Photo: Correspondent Jumanne Juma

MOI appeals for blood donation to save lives of accident victims

By Correspondent Joseph

Mwendapole

THE Muhimbili Orthopaedic Institute (MOI) has called on Tanzanians to donate blood to help save lives of accident victims.

The appeal was made yesterday by Cresencia Mwibari, Acting Director of Nursing Services at MOI, during her response to patients and their relatives in the

waiting area.

Mwibari highlighted the significant need for blood as the institution uses an average of 20 to 30 bottles daily to treat victims of various accidents, including road accidents.

"I urge fellow Tanzanians to donate blood at our institute. This hospital cares for accident victims who arrive with injuries and blood loss; a large percentage of patients require blood transfusions," she

said.

"Our institution uses a significant amount of blood daily. If more people come forward to donate, it will ensure a good supply and help us work more efficiently. We encourage the public to come in large numbers," Mwibari added.

She also reminded long-term, safe blood donors visiting the institution for medical services to bring their blood donation cards for verification by MOI laboratory

department.

One patient, Philemon Ndaki, praised the staff for providing excellent care. Ndaki underwent surgery four years ago and continues to attend regular clinic at the institution.

"I came here in critical condition, but the expert care I received allowed me to recover fully. Now, I am doing very well. MOI staff are incredibly kind," he said.



Athumani Toto, Chairman of Chadema in Singida Region, speaks with party leaders and members from all constituencies in the region yesterday during a strategic meeting in preparation for the party's national congress scheduled for January 21, 2025. Photo: Correspondent Thobias Mwanakatwe

Employ digital technology to enhance patrols, TFS advised

By Henry Mwangonde

MINISTER for Natural Resources and Tourism, Dr. Pindi Chana, has urged Tanzania Forest Services Agency (TFS) to adopt digital technologies to enhance forest protection, particularly in combating bushfires and illegal encroachment.

Speaking at the handover of vehicles worth 2 bn/- to the agency yesterday, Dr. Chana stressed that forest conservation must respond to new threats, including tactics

used by invaders.

"We have vast areas to conserve, but limited resources and evolving threats from those opposing conservation efforts make it challenging. We must leverage technology to overcome the challenges," she said.

Dr. Chana recommended the use of drones and satellites for more effective monitoring and patrolling of forests. She also called for increased collaboration with local governments, citing bushfires and illegal encroachment as major

threats to forest conservation.

The minister praised TFS for securing internal funding to invest in critical equipment and materials to support its operations. She also emphasised the need for a call centre to improve communication during forestry-related emergencies.

Dr. Chana noted that the government's investment in clean cooking energy has been transformative in reducing pressure on forests.

Earlier, TFS executive director Prof. Dosantos Silayo presented

the agency's performance report, showing that 11.6bn/- was allocated for purchase of vehicles to support operations.

Prof. Silayo also reported that 423 out of 438 forest-related conflicts raised in the past year were resolved. Additionally, 100,075 visitors toured the country's forests as part of a tourism campaign.

TFS is also encourages local governments to make bylaws to regulate bushfires. So far, Mufindi and Kilolo districts have successfully implemented such measures.

By Guardian Correspondent, Njombe

Avocado farmers blame unstable electricity, unable to pump water

AVOCADO farmers in Njombe Town Council have expressed concerns about unreliable electricity which hampers their ability to pump water from low-lying areas during dry season.

Speaking during a working visit by Njombe Regional Commissioner Anthony Mtaka, the farmers highlighted the critical need for electricity to sustain their agricultural activities. The visit focused on exploring opportunities to enhance production of high-quality seeds in the region.

Steven Mlimbila, one of the farmers, said significant investments

have been made in avocado farms in areas like Kifanya, but the lack of electricity remains a major obstacle.

"We have extensive farms under cultivation, but water access is our biggest challenge. While roads are already in place, we urgently need electricity to ensure reliable water supply," Mlimbila said.

He explained that although

Njombe produces modern, high-quality seedlings sought internationally, some Tanzanians still import avocado seeds, undermining efforts to strengthen the local agriculture sector.

Another farmer, Eligius Wella, called on Tanesco to extend electricity to farming areas, enabling investors to maximise productivity.

Mtaka emphasised that Njombe has invested heavily in superior seedlings and crop seeds, making it unnecessary to import from abroad.

"There's a booming seedling business in Njombe. Without vigilance, it could become a cyclical trade where someone buys seedlings in Tanzania, exports them to neighbouring countries and then

re-imports them back to Tanzania," Mtaka cautioned.

He acknowledged the farmers' concerns about electricity shortages and pledged to address the issue.

Njombe Regional Agriculture Officer Wilson Joel said that Njombe produces approximately 1.5 million seedlings per season, highlighting the region's significant potential.

Njombe Regional Trade Officer Lusungu Mbede stressed the importance of maintaining high standards in both seedlings and avocado production to secure global market acceptance.

Countries such as Burundi and DRC purchase avocado seedlings from Njombe due to their exceptional quality.



Nyansaho Foundation representatives in Serengeti District, Mara Region, hands over roofing sheets to Kassim Matiko (4th L) one of residents of Merenga Village, Nyansurura Ward, whose house was destroyed by strong winds and rain recently. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

PUBLIC NOTICE



Mariam Ramadhan Massanja

Precision Air Services PLC wishes to inform the general public that Miss. **Mariam Ramadhan Massanja** is no longer associated/employed with the Company effective from **07th January 2025**.

Please be advised that any business transaction, communication, or arrangement with Miss. Mariam Ramadhan Massanja whose picture is attached above shall not be binding to the Company.



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MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING



Specific Procurement Notice

Request for Bids

Employer:	Ministry Of Education and Vocational Training
Name of Project:	Zanzibar Improving Quality of Basic Education (ZIQUE)
Contract Title:	SUPPLY TWO VEHICLES (10-Tons CARGO TRUCK) LONG BASE WITH LIFTING CRANES.
Country:	Tanzania-(Zanzibar)
Credit:	IDA- 72580-TZ
RFB No:	TZ-MOEV-467042-NC-RFB.
Issued on	11 January 2025

Background.

- The Government of United Republic of Tanzania represented by Revolutionary Government of Zanzibar under Ministry of Education and Vocational Training (MoEVT) has received a credit from the International Development Association (IDA) towards the cost of Zanzibar Improving Quality of Basic Education Project (P178157). Subsequently, (ZIQUE) intends to apply part of the proceeds of this credit to cover eligible payments under the contract for which this request for bid (RFB) is issued.
- Now, The **Zanzibar Improving Quality of Basic Education (ZIQUE)** on behalf of the Revolutionary Government of Zanzibar invites you to submit a priced quotation for supplying cargo trucks- long base with lifting crane as per requirement.
- A complete set of the bidding documents (in English) is available to interested eligible Bidders upon the submission a request to the address below and upon payment of a non-refundable fee of **Tanzanian Shillings Two Hundred Thousand Only (TZS 200,000.00)**. The method of payment will be by Bank through the control number by requesting it from this email pmu@moez.go.tz and sebastian.mu-zuma@moez.go.tz or contact **Secretariat at room # 26** at the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training, Mazizini.

- The bidding document will be shared through email after proving that payment has been made for the purchase of the bidding document. **Please note that the Proof of payment should be enclosed on the first page of the bid submission envelope.**
- All Quotations in one original plus one (1) copy, properly filled in and enclosed in plain envelopes marked "**Supply two vehicles (10 tons Cargo) Truck Long Base with lifting crane**" must be delivered to the Procurement Management Unit Located at the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training, Mazizini Area at room No. 26.
- All Bidder must be accompanied by a bid security (Bank guarantee) of **Tanzania Shillings 2,500,000.00** each in an acceptable form in the amount of the Banker's cheque or Bank guarantee valid for twenty-eight (28) calendar days beyond the bid validity period, i.e. 148 calendar days after the bid's submission deadline marked "**Procurement of two vehicles (10 tons Cargo) Truck Long Base with lifting crane**" **TENDER No. TZ -MOEV-467042-NC-RFB** at room number #26.
- Bids shall be submitted physically or through courier services such as (DHL) before **Friday 07th February 2025 at 10.00 am** and shall be opened promptly thereafter in public at **10:15 am**.
- Supplier's representatives who choose to attend are allowed during the opening at the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training, Mazizini Area on the first-floor **room, No. 37**. Late Bids or Quotations that are not opened in public shall not be accepted for evaluation irrespective of the circumstances.

PRINCIPAL SECRETARY,
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING
ZANZIBAR.

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Setting up data track on 'students at risk' can prevent dropping out

IMPROVEMENTS are being made with regard to various stages of schooling as well as its various aspects at a particular level, where one specific focus is checking the pace of secondary school dropouts. Ministerial officials say an electronic modality is being developed to track pupils at risk of dropping out of secondary school due to this or that challenge. The initiative is inserted within the Secondary Education Quality Improvement Programme (SEQUIP) flagship drive.

Notice on the plan for tracking drop out risk pupils was made at the opening of a training for teachers of science, mathematics and computer subjects in Simiyu and Mara regions, which took place in Tarime at midweek.

Just how far this initiative can substantially alter the situation in the secondary education environment is something else, but the effort is intense enough. There is even a component for 'safe schools,' an initiative that has reached 2,262 secondary schools so far.

The World Bank, the brains behind the initiative, sums up its vocation as taking measures that reduce gender-based violence, corporal punishment, bullying and other forms of violence in and around schools. The critical input is that it gives girls better quality choices and opportunities for completing their secondary education. For all those placed under the quality uplifting drive, having the skills to tackle challenges and risks that might cause them to drop out is pivotal, indeed for girls and boys alike, despite different

challenges.

In a sense, the programme just did the right thing in having taken note of the fact that threats which young people face out of school often follow them to school, especially with day secondary schools. One way out of it is the vast expansion of boarding spaces for girls, while boys by and large remain in day schools for public secondary schools. Ensuring that learning environments are safe and equitable is definitely not just rhetoric even if the climb has thorns to disentangle.

At another level, it can be seen that supporting pupils to complete secondary education with quality learning outcomes, is one thing, amenable to general formula as well as administrative initiatives. On the other hand, seeking to ensure that those in school do not drop out is a different matter; pupils face different intensities of particular challenges in their homes and immediate environment. That isn't fatal in so many cases where pressure is being experienced, with an effort.

That is why it can be suggested that the 'safe schools' drive can in a sense house the drop out risk data track, as abandoning school is an effect of an unsafe environment, partially in school and mainly in the domestic environment. It is within implementation of the safe schools component that education supervisors can identify 'at risk' pupils, first by shielding them from identifiable threats affecting them in general. Then efforts will be made to find specific threats hovering on individual pupils, within that same framework of 'safe studies.'

PPPC leveraging initiative can help uplift land title 'compact'

AS policy advisers within the Treasury seek out ways of making the public-private partnership mode of public financing work, some old projects where bonds were applied for in the past and failed are being floated again. Officials of the Public-Private Partnership Centre (PPPC) domiciled at Treasury are scheduled to visit Ilemela municipality in Mwanza city to assess the use of land in loan leveraging, or bonds.

That looks to be a different effort from another initiative upwards of 10 years ago if not 15 years, a bond floating that wasn't put to a Treasury guarantee and could not take off. Wishing to bring back the municipal project under PPP framework may have involved clear reexamination on the components involved, their levels of risk, etc.

There is still an open ended question of what precisely the Treasury team will be looking at in assessing key areas for PPP projects. The background report says the team is being sent following a visit by Ilemela municipality councilors to PPPC to float the idea of leveraging their land resources for such projects. It reminds some veteran news watchers of what happened in 2004. A resident foreign economist wrote on the subsequent property formalization drive after a visit by Prof Hernando de Soto, a veteran United Nations economic affairs adviser, that many people gladly took up the proposition of land or property formalization without codifying property rights.

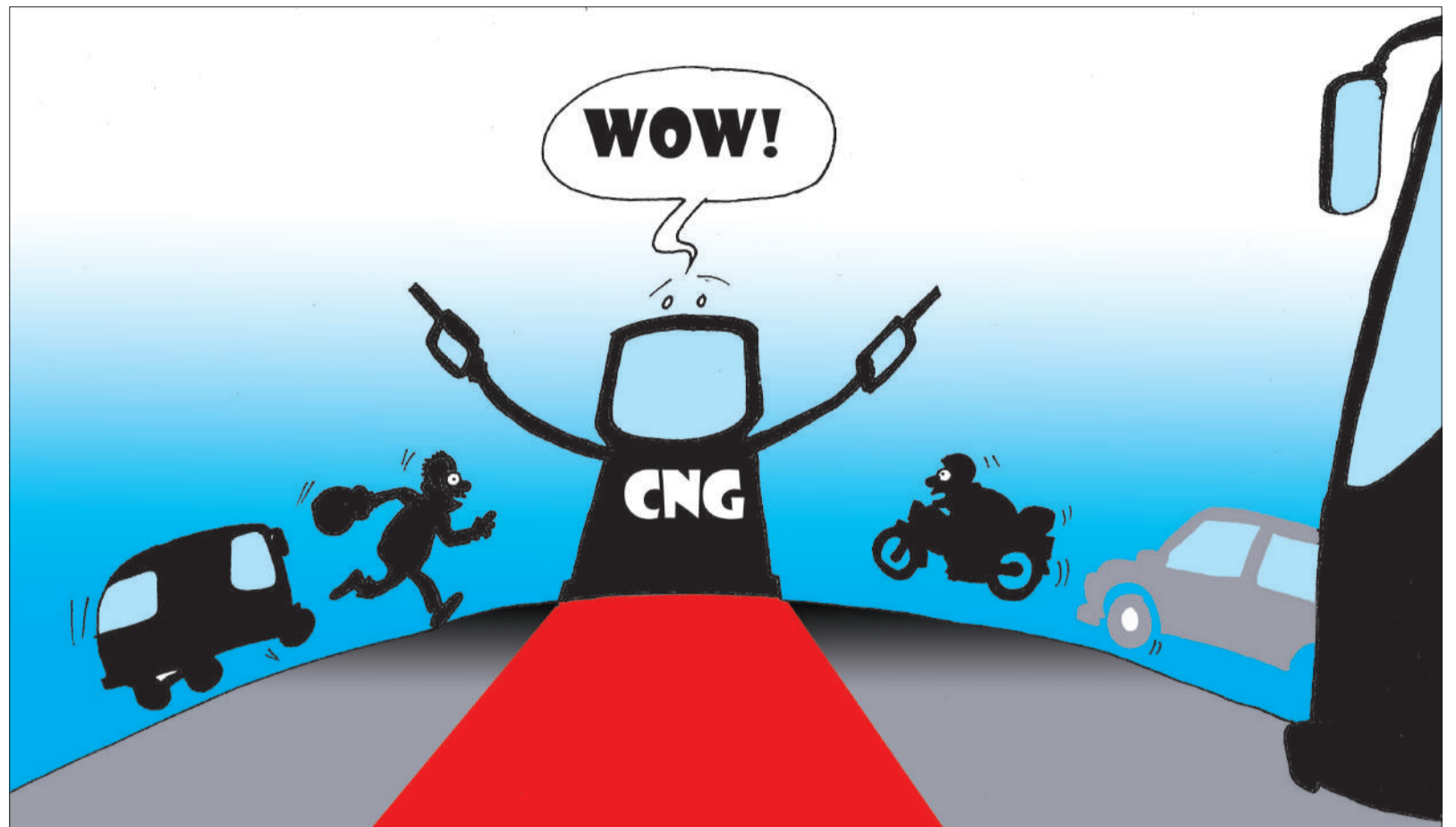
Formalisation needs ability to transfer or cede by court order as a vital complement as this is what makes land 'dead capital' in the terms used by Prof de Soto. It is not enough that land or property in the sense of farm or house plot is formalized (mapped), registered or given a title deed, unless property rights are codified such that the property belongs to that person, not a third party like a village, municipality, etc. It hence brings up the issue of what

land or property the council initiative seeks to leverage in order to obtain funds for key projects.

The visiting economist, in a research note for the Norwegian embassy late 2006 that is still available online put it explicitly that formalization programme as it stood at that time would not help the poor gain access to credit. Yet, the issue in terms of economic dynamics is less the idea that the poor get access to credit as most critics prefer, given the idea of an inclusive economy, but the ease of transferring such land to others. Old houses in central parts of Dar es Salaam and big regional capitals are priced at upwards of 300m/- presently, but instead of transferring the title and obtaining the capital, current policy seeks that banks issue credit on the basis of the title deed just as it stands!

During the PPPC visit, the management there informed the municipal officials of the DDC project implemented through PPP, a high rise building within the city business district where the city council was operating an entertainment business and accessories. That means Ilemela can seek out investors where they would put up projects whose benefits would be contractually shared, the way city house owners pact with developers. They take the ground floor which is best suited for business, and the developer takes most upper floors.

The MP for the area, a former cabinet minister, said the municipality has allocated land but has yet to find an investor, thus thought up the PPP method as the right approach. There is a site where there is need to build a stadium, especially for designated Africa Cup of Nations 2027, apart from a bus terminal and a modern market. Yes, the municipality could find investors for the projects on condition that it is the capital provider who manages, and municipal council acts as landlord. At DART they proposed that they collect the fares and repay the capital provider the sums they wish, at leisure!



THE new Ghanaian president, John Dramani Mahama, was sworn in on Tuesday this week in Accra, as the nation looks for solutions to its worst economic crisis in a generation.

He takes office as the country faces a deep economic crisis.

Mahama has already promised to find sustainable solutions to Ghana's financial turmoil, to fight corruption, to improve its energy supply, and to manage the regular power outages from which the country suffers.

"We're facing a critical situation in the energy sector," Mahama said. "The electricity company of Ghana is the 'sick man' of the whole value chain and we need to quickly fix it."

The new president also started working on reinforcing Ghana's partnership with other stable African nations, travelling to Kenya just before the end of the year to

By Melissa Chemam

AS the first African country to lead the trillion-dollar G20 group, South Africa will spend 2025 pushing debt relief, climate change and international justice issues. This means there's a lot at stake for Brics and developing nations.

"We will work towards solidarity, equality and sustainable development that will have an impact on many people around the world," President Cyril Ramaphosa said in his New Year address.

"Every South African will be part of the journey towards a better future for all."

Pretoria aims to put African development priorities firmly on the G20 agenda - and more broadly, those of the Global South.

South Africa took over the rotating presidency of the grouping in December, and will host its main annual summit in November 2025, before handing over to the United States.

'Not unexpected'

The forum unites 19 of the world's largest economies plus the European Union, who meet regularly to coordinate global policies on trade, health, climate and other issues. The group granted the African Union membership in 2023.

South Africa is the last member of the G20 to hold the presidency of the group, which was set up in 1999 to create a platform for the world's most dynamic economies beyond the G7.

William Gumede, of the University of the Witwatersrand's School of Governance in Johannesburg, says it's important not to overstate the significance of an African country taking the helm.

John D Mahama takes oath as Ghana's president amid severe economic crisis

meet President William Ruto.

Mahama is Ghana's main opposition figure and tried twice before to win back the country's top post.

As the leader of the National Democratic Congress (NDC) party, he defeated Mahamudu Bawumia, who represented the ruling New Patriotic Party (NPP), in elections on 7 December.

Ghana's parliament passed a provisional budget mid-December, which allows the government to spend 68.1 billion Ghanaian cedis (€4.2 billion) through March, narrowly averting an unprecedented government shutdown.

Parliamentary speaker Alban Bagbin said the parliament had approved the provisional budget

in a sitting that stretched deep into the night.

Promises to fight corruption

Mahama recently appointed an anti-corruption task force, as he had promised in his campaign programme, to tackle graft and reclaim misappropriated state funds.

The five-member group will try to recover all the public funds embezzled along with the proceeds of corruption in the West African country in recent years. During his campaign, Mahama said that unchecked procurement processes are one of the main problems in this respect.

Emmanuel Wilson Junior, an anti-graft advocate and lawyer with the organisation Crusaders

Against Corruption, hailed the initiative and urged the incoming administration to act swiftly.

"This is a step in the right direction. Ghanaians are tired of corruption being swept under the carpet. We expect this team to be proactive and ensure real accountability," Wilson told French news agency AFP.

Finally, Mahama and his government should also seize the opportunity to ensure the promotion and protection of human rights, the NGO Amnesty International said a statement.

These issues include gender equality and women's rights, the right to freedom of peaceful assembly, and the right to a healthy environment for everyone in the country, Amnesty said on Monday.

Africa takes center stage as South Africa maps ambitious G20 Agenda



South African President Ramaphosa at G20 meeting

"The G20 has a rotating presidency, so it was at some point coming to South Africa. It is not out of the ordinary, it is not unexpected," he told RFI.

"The only irony is that this comes after Brazil and it appears that all the Brics countries in the last couple of years have been taking over the presidency. But, it is just by rotation," he added, referring to the economic bloc comprising Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa, Iran, Egypt, Ethiopia and the United Arab Emirates.

A challenging time

South Africa's G20 presidency comes as the country and its governing African National Congress (ANC) party faces significant internal challenges.

Economic stagnation, high unemployment and political uncertainty have cast a shadow over the country's leadership aspirations.

But its leadership also stands to

create opportunities for growth.

"Such events help improve infrastructure and create at least temporary jobs, which is happening now, especially in Cape Town," he said.

Events throughout the year, including cultural performances with international guests, will allow South Africa to showcase itself to global partners.

Debt relief, climate change and peacekeeping are expected to dominate this year's G20 discussions.

"The climate change crisis is worsening," Ramaphosa said in early December, as he unveiled his G20 priorities. "Many economies carry the burden of unsustainable levels of debt."

Pretoria's new coalition government, formed in June last year, is also advocating for a transition to cleaner technologies, such as solar power, which is increasingly being adopted in southern Africa.

And it wants to promote unity and diversity as a positive tool not only for South Africa, but more broadly for developing economies.

Foreign affairs

The presidency is likely to influence South Africa's foreign relations, particularly with the United States.

Some key summit dates remain unconfirmed, possibly awaiting news of Donald Trump's plans following his inauguration on 20 January.

If Trump attends the G20 summit, it will mark his first major global appearance outside industrialised nations.

"Putin is not going to come, but speculation is raging about Trump. For him, it would be big and symbolic," Gumede said.

But it may not be smooth sailing for relations between the US and South Africa.

Cameron Hudson, a senior fellow at the Centre for Strategic and International Studies in DC, noted that tensions between South Africa and the US could complicate matters.

"Pretoria has long had pro-China, pro-Russia and anti-Israel positions, which will not work well with Donald Trump," he said.

Talks at this year's forum could potentially influence South Africa's foreign policy, shifting it to a more neutral stance, Gumede suggested.

"The new unity government has shared no criticism of Trump so far, not even from the ANC," he told RFI. And that could help improve relations between the US and the African continent in general.

By Telesphor Magobe

Creating fairer, more just world amidst intensifying global crises

If you listen to or read international news, you will realise that many parts of the world are engulfed in conflicts or wars - that can be internal or external. Internal conflict or war can be caused by disputed periodic elections where ballot stuffing or electoral fraud has occurred.

It can also be caused by unequal distribution of national resources or where development is uneven - that is, where one or more groups of people perceive themselves as socially, economically and politically excluded from enjoying the national wealth. External conflict can be caused by economic, geographical, political and military factors.

'The Global State of Democracy 2024: Strengthening the Legitimacy of Elections in a Time of Radical Uncertainty' states that: "Undermined electoral integrity - genuine or perceived - can contribute to political crises that weaken democratic processes and institutions, trigger violent conflicts and instability, and harm governments' domestic and international legitimacy."

In sub-Saharan Africa's fledgling democracies, ballot stuffing or electoral fraud is common so much so that people's wishes are disregarded as they often get the political leaders they didn't vote for. This can cause violence and deaths and can lead to political instability.

Dr Kevin Casas-Zamora, Secretary-General of International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA) says: "The success of democracy depends on many things, but it becomes utterly impossible if elections fail. Since democracy is an ideal that must be believed if it is to be true, a failure of perception is as serious as a failure of substance. To keep democracy



alive, we must preserve public trust in electoral pathways to political change."

International IDEA is an intergovernmental organisation with a mandate to support sustainable democracy worldwide. With its headquarters in Stockholm, and regional and country offices in Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Europe, and Latin America and the Caribbean, it assesses the performance of democracies around

the world through its unique Global State of Democracy Indices and Democracy Tracker.

Another report titled 'Global Terrorism Index 2024' states that violent conflict remains the primary driver of terrorism, with over 90 per cent of attacks and 98 per cent of terrorism deaths in 2023 taking place in countries in conflict.

"All 10 countries most impacted by terrorism in 2022 were also involved in an armed

conflict. The intensity of terrorism in conflict is also much higher than in non-conflict countries, with an average of 2.7 fatalities per attack compared to 0.48 fatalities," the report says. It also suggests that the epicentre of terrorism has shifted from the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) to sub-Saharan Africa (See also Journey to Extremism in Africa: Drivers, Incentives and the Tipping Point for Recruitment,

2017).

With what is going on across the world, some people talk about the likelihood of a third world war and some world leaders have been threatening to use nuclear weapons. The number of countries in conflict and in war with each other is also rising.

'Global Peace Index 2024: Measuring peace in a complex world' suggests that "the world became less peaceful for the 12th time in the last 16 years, with the average level of country peacefulness deteriorating by 0.56 per cent over [the year before]."

While peacefulness improved in 65 countries, it deteriorated in 97 countries. According to GPI 2024, sub-Saharan Africa recorded a fall in peacefulness, "with the average score in the region deteriorating by 0.89 per cent over the past year. [It] is the second least peaceful region behind the Middle East and North Africa, with three of the 10 least peaceful countries in the world found in the region."

Despite all this, there are also global efforts to create a fairer and more just world. According to the United Nations Department of Economic and So-

cial Affairs (UNDESA) this can be achieved through a "people-centred approach to development that emphasises equity, inclusion and social justice".

Sustainable development goal (SDG) Target 16.1 states: "Significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere [by 2023]." In light of this, every country has committed to reducing violence and related death rates across the world.

There is a growing concept of "global citizenship" advancing through intercultural (multicultural) education in the sense that wherever we are and in whichever country or community we live we are all interdependent as people, but also as nations, and communities and so we should collaborate to make our communities and nations, and consequently this world a better place to live in for all of us.

UNDESA envisages that the Second World Summit for Social Development scheduled for Qatar on November 4-6, 2025 will be a pivotal moment to re-commit to social development, and strengthen synergies with economic progress and environmental sustainability. While some parts of the world are engulfed in conflicts or wars there are also global efforts to create a better world in which we will be able to coexist with our differences. Let's then work towards this end, and kindle hopes!

Curbing illicit financial flows crucial to unlocking Tanzania's economic potential

By Evans Rubara

TANZANIA'S extractive sector, often heralded as a cornerstone of economic growth, masks a troubling reality: the epidemic of illicit financial flows (IFFs). These clandestine transfers of illegally earned capital not only siphon off critical resources but also undermine the nation's development and the welfare of its citizens.

While the extractive industry promises prosperity, it simultaneously facilitates a cycle that perpetuates poverty and stunts economic progress.

Illicit financial flows encompass a variety of illegal financial transfers, primarily arising from corruption, tax evasion and smuggling. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) underscores that these flows drain resources from African nations, exacerbating poverty and stifling economic advancement.

The High-Level Panel on Illicit Financial Flows from Africa defines IFFs as money that is illegally earned, transferred, or utilized, typically through commercial tax evasion or trade mis-invoicing.

In Tanzania, the mechanisms driving these illicit flows are complex and entrenched. Mis-invoicing stands out as a prevalent method, where companies manipulate the reported value of exported goods or inflate the costs of imports.

This tactic is particularly rampant in mining and oil sectors, where the inherent value of commodities makes them susceptible to manipulation. The use of intricate corporate structures and shell companies obscures the origins of wealth, enabling both local and multinational firms to evade taxes by shifting profits to jurisdictions with lower tax rates.

The government has identified transfer pricing as another significant contributor to IFFs. In this practice, parent companies charge their subsidiaries inflated prices for goods and services, effectively draining revenue from the Tanzanian economy. Such strategies erode the tax base, limiting the government's capacity to invest in essential development initiatives.

The ramifications of IFFs extend beyond Tanzania's borders. Neighbouring countries, such as the Democratic Republic of the Congo, (DRC) are similarly afflicted, losing billions annually



through illicit outflows in their mining sectors.

Kenya grapples with substantial losses, estimated at \$1.8 billion per year due to trade mis-invoicing. The collective impact of these practices stifles economic development and deprives local communities of the rightful benefits of their natural resources.

In Tanzania, the consequences of IFFs are dire. At community level, the loss of revenue deprives regions of vital resources needed for infrastructure, healthcare, and education, perpetuating a cycle of poverty.

Environmental degradation caused by extractive activities further exacerbates the plight of local communities, who often lack the means or leverage to hold corporations accountable for the harm inflicted upon their land.

Allocation of revenues from Tanzania's extractive sector is pivotal for addressing critical needs in infrastructure, healthcare and education, essential for breaking the cycle of poverty.

Allocating 40 percent of revenues from extractive sector to infrastructure development is vital for enhancing transportation networks and energy supply, thus facilitate economic

growth and improve access to essential services, especially in rural areas where such infrastructure is often inadequate.

Similarly, a 35 percent allocation for healthcare is necessary to strengthen primary services, improve facilities and train healthcare workers. This investment is crucial for enhancing health outcomes and ensuring accessibility for vulnerable populations, ultimately reducing the financial burden on families seeking medical care.

Moreover, setting aside 25 percent of the budget to education imperative for constructing schools, provide learning materials, and training teachers.

A well-educated populace is essential for sustainable development, equipping individuals with skills for economic participation. Therefore, strategic revenue allocation can significantly reduce poverty and foster lasting community impacts (Tanzania Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative, 2021; World Bank, 2022).

On a national scale, the erosion of Tanzania's tax base due to IFFs severely constrains government investment in critical sectors, including healthcare and education. This limitation stifles progress toward devel-

opment goals, leaving citizens vulnerable and marginalized.

Over the past decade, key economic indicators reveal the significant impact of IFFs on Tanzania's economy. The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth rate, which peaked at 7.0 percent in 2013, has since declined to a low of 4.8 percent in 2020. This volatility underscores the destabilizing influence of IFFs, hindering the country's ability to maintain consistent, robust growth.

Moreover, Tanzania's tax revenue as a percentage of GDP remains stagnant, hovering around 12-14 percent. This low ratio is a direct outcome of the erosion of the tax base, which limits the government's capacity to fund essential public services and developmental initiatives.

Persistent current account deficits, reaching -3.6 percent of GDP in 2020, further indicate the damaging effects of capital outflows through IFFs.

Addressing the issue of IFFs necessitates comprehensive policy reforms. First and foremost, Tanzania must enhance its tax administration and enforcement capabilities by strengthening the Tanzania Revenue Authority.

Implementing robust regulations

around transfer pricing is crucial to prevent profit shifting and tax avoidance. Moreover, prioritizing transparency in the extractive industries - mandating comprehensive public disclosure of payments made by companies to the government - can help restore some accountability.

Equally vital is the strengthening of the financial sector regulatory framework. Improving oversight of banks and financial institutions is essential to prevent their complicity in facilitating IFFs.

Implementing enhanced know-your-customer (KYC) and anti-money laundering (AML) measures are also crucial to curbing illicit activities.

Promoting transparency and accountability cannot be overstated. Establishing beneficial ownership registries can illuminate the true owners of companies and assets, complicating efforts to conceal illicit proceeds. Increasing public access to information regarding government contracts and budget allocations will further enhance accountability.

Investing in capacity building within government agencies is essential for effectively combating IFFs. Providing training and technical assistance to institutions like the Financial Intelligence Unit will bolster their ability to detect and prosecute IFF-related crimes. Collaboration with international organizations can facilitate access to best practices and resources necessary for tackling these flows.

Promoting inclusive and sustainable development is imperative. Ensuring that the benefits of economic growth are equitably distributed and reinvested in local communities is vital. Policies must aim to diversify the economy and reduce reliance on extractive industries, which are particularly vulnerable to IFFs.

The issue of illicit financial flows in Tanzania's extractive sector poses a grave threat to the nation's development. By confronting the mechanisms of IFFs and enhancing transparency, Tanzania can reclaim its wealth and ensure that its natural resources benefit its people.

A concerted effort by the government, civil society, and the international community is essential to confront this pressing challenge and unlock the true potential of Tanzania's economy for the benefit of its citizens.

Evans Rubara is an experienced natural resources management specialist with a deep focus on extractive geopolitics, environmental politics and sustainability. He can be reached at erubara@outlook.com

Latin America in 2024: Politics, turmoil and hope

By Alexandra Popescu

THROUGHOUT a year in which Latin America saw elections in six countries and prepared for the biodiversity COP16 in Colombia, the region continued its struggle with extreme weather events, criminal activity threatening ecosystems and development encroaching on communities and wildlife habitats.

At the same time, community efforts toward conservation, environmental justice and implementation of nature-based solutions kept up. Below we selected several key stories we reported on last year - they are good opportunities to refresh one's memory about what has happened, but also set our expectations for the issues carrying on into 2025.

Political change across the region

In El Salvador, the re-election of Nayib Bukele posed environmental concerns, as his agenda prioritizes development, security, and attracting foreign investments over the country's natural assets. In 2017, El Salvador was the first country in the world to ban mining but fears that Bukele would reverse that ban have since become a reality.

In Panama, presidential race winner Jose Raul Mulino has stated he didn't have plans to re-open the Cobre Panama mine, but his plans are also more focused on job development and infrastructure than on environmental issues. Last year, the government's relocation of the island community of Gardi Sugdub - a first for the country - highlighted Panama's tangible struggle with climate change impacts.

Families are migrating from Gardi Sugdub, a tiny island belonging to the Indigenous Guna Yala people of Panama, packed with houses to the edge of the water, due to sea level rise.

Mexico's election of its first woman president, Claudia Sheinbaum, has brought hope that more of the country's environmental issues will get attention from the government. Sheinbaum is the former mayor of Mexico City and an environmental scientist by trade.

She co-authored the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report that won the 2007 Nobel Peace Prize, yet her campaign has been light on rigorous environmental policy, some critics have said. As the successor of AMLO, her support of the controversial Tren Maya and oil giant Pemex has raised red flags about her commitment to conservation and the energy transition.

Venezuela's electoral campaign, with Nicolas Maduro's victory still highly contested, had little space for environmental issues, even though the country has plunged into a crisis so severe that many observers have called it an ecocide. Mining has torn through the Amazon Rainforest.

A neglected oil industry has polluted the coast. Protected areas are plundered for their timber and exotic species. Funds for scientific research have all but dried up. Funds for park guards have dwindled, as well.

A year of wildfires and drought

Wildfires have scorched millions of hectares of forest across South America so far this year. From Bolivia to Brazil, Peru to Argentina, the continent has been gripped by one of its worst fire seasons in decades, with deforestation and drought fueling the flames.

Bolivia has been hit the hardest, with more than 7 million hectares (17 million acres) of forest and natural vegetation



The Amazon has experienced its worst fire season in 19 years, while Pantanal wetlands have already burned 15 percent of its area.

scorched by late September. This made 2024 Bolivia's worst year for fires on record. There were three times more fires in Bolivia in 2024 than in previous years, devastating biodiversity and Indigenous territories.

Brazil, home to 60 percent of the Amazon, also faced extreme fire activity. In the Brazilian Pantanal, more than 1.3 million hectares (3.2 million acres) burned by October, marking one of the most destructive fire seasons in recent history.

Peru has also declared a state of emergency in six regions as fires spread across the country. By late September, the fires had killed 20 people, injured more than 160, and burned more than 12,300 hectares (30,400 acres) of natural vegetation, while severe drought in the Amazon left several Indigenous communities isolated. Meanwhile, Colombia reported 44,000 hectares (109,000 acres) destroyed by fires in September alone.

In Mexico, heat waves have also had severe impacts: by August 2024, the country had recorded at least 125

heat-related deaths and 2,308 cases of heat stroke, along with power outages, wildfires, and mass die-offs of threatened howler monkeys.

In early 2024, Venezuela experienced record-breaking fires. Apart from the highest number of fires in any January and February for the last two decades, wildfires continued into early May, devastating national parks and affecting the capital of Caracas. To that point, up to 2 million hectares (4.94 million acres) of land appear to have already burned, experts estimated.

Mining, energy and infrastructure projects expanded

In Bolivia, lithium extraction has brought on new issues for communities neighboring the industry. In Salar de Uyuni, a lithium plant opened in 2023 has been using untested equipment and has been possibly mismanaging its use of freshwater, raising concerns for residents about whether the Bolivian government can responsibly manage the rapid growth of the industry.

In Nicaragua, despite US sanc-

tions, harmful mining has continued unabated. Between 2021 and 2023, the amount of Nicaraguan land concessioned for mining more than doubled, from 923,681 hectares (2,282,465 acres) to 1.8 million hectares (4,447,896 acres), according to the Ministry of Energy and Mines. Mining concessions now take up around 15 percent of the country's total land area.

In Colombia, approval of the \$420.4 million Alacrán mining project in northern Colombia has alarmed residents, who say they might lose their food and drinking water to unregulated pollution, causing them to relocate to other parts of the country.

In Guyana, a series of ongoing road projects traveling over 500 kilometers (310 miles) from the capital of Georgetown to the city of Lethem, in the south, are supposed to improve access to more rural parts of Guyana while facilitating international trade, most notably with Brazil. But the project also crosses sensitive wetlands and Indigenous communities, raising concerns about how the government will manage future development there.

Earlier in the year, Mongabay reporter Maxwell Radwin and videographer Caitlin Cooper embarked on a journey aboard the Tren Maya, traveling from Cancún to Palenque and back, on a mission to uncover critical issues associated with the rail project, including impacts on communities and ecosystems.

Criminality encroaches on ecosystems

In Ecuador, an investigation by Mongabay and Codigo Vidrio found that for the last seven years, the Los Lobos criminal group has become deeply entrenched in illegal gold mining across all of the country's provinces, taking over the mineral's supply chain. The group that has entered even protected areas, has spread fear among local and Indigenous communities.

The Maya Biosphere Reserve,

which stretches 2.2 million hectares (5.3 million acres) across northern Guatemala, has seen a wave of land invasions in 2024 in areas that have historically not faced threats of colonization. As new trails open up and fires spread, officials have raised concerns not just about deforestation but about potentially losing control of the area altogether.

In Colombia, the Chinese-owned Buritica gold mine lost control over 60% of its operations as its tunnels have been invaded by informal miners associated with Colombia's largest criminal armed group, the Gaitanista Army of Colombia (EGC), also known as the Gulf Clan. Armed groups have increasingly gained power in the country: one report found that one of Colombia's biggest active FARC dissident groups, the Central Armed Command (EMC), controls much of the Amazon rainforest in the departments of Guaviare, Meta and Caquetá.

In the Peruvian Amazon, cocaine has gained more ground. According to official data from MAA, the surface area of coca production in Peru is increasing, particularly in the central Peruvian Amazon, along the Andes Mountains in the regions of Ucayali and Huánuco, leading to further threats and killings of Indigenous leaders. At the same time, experts have warned that organizations associated with the drug trade have diversified into mining, logging and land-grabbing enterprises, redrawing the map of criminal networks in Latin America.

Green finance has also continued stirring controversy. In early 2024, investigation revealed that several companies registered in Latin American countries claiming to have U.N. endorsement have persuaded Indigenous communities to hand over the economic rights to their forests for decades to come. Indigenous communities in Peru, Bolivia and Panama were promised jobs and local development projects in exchange for putting on the market more than 9.5 million hectares (23.5 million acres) of forests. The U.N. entities cited by the companies have rejected any involvement.

Conservation efforts carry on, despite obstacles

While Latin America might be battling many chronic issues, it still abounds in stories about conservation successes and new solutions to older problems. In Beni, Bolivia, a new approach to ranching has succeeded in bringing more sustainable practices and helping regenerate native grasses in the local savannas.

In Peru, conservationists have come together to help protect the critically endangered Lima leaf-toed gecko (*Phyllodactylus sentosus*), which lives in Lima's archaeological sites, while in Iquitos, communities are struggling to protect turtle species from illegal trade and local culinary traditions.

Research has shown that in Ecuador community-led conservation initiatives were more effective in curbing páramo loss than state-protected areas, while in Guyana, local Indigenous communities have set up a conservation zone for the rare red siskin (*Spinus cucullata*) finch to protect it from illegal trade and habitat loss.



Plant of Bolivian Lithium Deposits, in Uyuni.

CAPITAL RADIO

RATIBA YA VIPINDI JUMATATU - JUMAPILI

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

Tembelea mitandao ya kijamii ya CAPITAL RADIO



CAPITAL RADIO

Developing countries are being choked by debt: This could be a year of breaking free

By Ben Phillips, Bangkok

THE debt disaster is back. Indeed, the aid agency CAFOD reports that developing countries today face “the most acute debt crisis in history”.

At least 54 countries are in a debt crisis – more than double the number in 2010. A further 57 countries are at risk of debt crisis. In the past decade, interest payments for developing countries overall have risen by 64pc, and for Africa by 132pc.

African countries are paying over 100 billion dollars a year to creditors. The share of African countries’ budgets going on debt payments is four times higher than in 2010.

Net finance flows to developing countries are now negative – that is, debt service repayments are now higher than inflows to governments.

“It’s time to face the reality,” says World Bank chief economist Indermit Gill. “The poorest countries facing debt distress need debt relief if they are to have a shot at lasting prosperity. Private creditors ought to bear a fair share of the cost when the bet goes bad.”

“Debt is choking the countries of the Global South,” says the Anglican Archbishop of Cape Town Thabo Makgoba, “denying us what we need for health and education. Please, let us breathe!”

The scale of the crisis has not shocked world leaders into action, however. So far, the G20 debt restructuring mechanisms have come nowhere close to what is needed.

The recurrence of the debt crisis is even cynically held up as a reason not to resolve it. “They got debt forgiven in 2000,” goes the mantra, “now they are back, which means it failed and there is no helping them.”



Asian Peoples' Movement on Debt and Development (APMD)

It’s a false narrative that deliberately ignores two key points: first, that the debt cancellation secured by the broad Jubilee 2000 movement saved and transformed millions of lives, including affected countries switching from most children not completing primary school to most children completing; secondly, that the reforms needed to prevent a recurrence of catastrophic debt payment levels have been held up by creditors.

But being untrue hasn’t taken away the power of the “debt cancellation failed” story for excusing and enabling inaction.

Debt restructuring has continued to be a painfully slow, ad hoc process, dominated by rich countries and dependent on persuading creditors. That’s not a bug, it’s a feature. It’s not surprising that private lenders, who today make up

the largest share of creditors of affected countries’ debt, have obstructed efforts to resolve the crisis: without sufficient compulsion that is what they will continue to do.

It seems almost unnecessary to add that we have now entered an era where anything requiring multilateral cooperation has gotten even harder. And yet, 2025 also brings two powerful reasons for hope.

First, the moment.

As the first ever African chair of the G20, South Africa has seized the opportunity to lead an inter-governmental push for action on debt, successfully bringing it to the core of

global economic diplomacy. The South African G20 presidency has set out a bold agenda that prioritises tackling what they name in frank terms as the “crippling sovereign debt levels that force many countries to sacrifice their developmental obligations to service unmanageable debts”.

South Africa has set out what would be transformative frame for G20 delivery: “We must take action to ensure debt sustainability for low-income countries. A key obstacle to inclusive growth in developing economies is an unsustainable level of debt which limits their ability to invest in infrastructure, healthcare, education and other devel-

opment needs”.

“South Africa will seek to advance sustainable solutions to tackle high structural deficits and liquidity challenges and extend debt relief to developing economies. South Africa will also seek to ensure that the sovereign credit ratings are fair and transparent and to address high risk premiums for developing economies. Key to addressing the debt question is dealing with the Cost of Capital.”

Second, the movement.

Intergovernmental diplomacy alone, however well played, can never break through the power imbalances of global finance. The resolution of the debt crisis

needs a determined and organized mass movement of people. This movement is rising.

Amongst those who are coming together in the broad Jubilee 2025 movement are civil society organisations from climate justice marchers to human rights activists, trade unions from every sector and every part of the world, and artists raising their voices to demand the breaking of the chokehold of debt.

At the heart of the Jubilee 2025 movement are the faith communities, who were also at the heart of Jubilee 2000. As the Jubilee name signifies, debt cancellation is not a mere technical economic issue, it is a moral one, with deep roots in biblical traditions and in ethical understandings of the common good.

“We urgently need a new debt Jubilee,” leaders of diverse faiths from across Africa declared in their joint call to action, “to bring hope to humankind, and bring the planet back to the brink.” Faith communities combine deep local organising and wide global networking, mobilise in the Global South and Global North amongst the most excluded and amongst the better off, and have proven to be especially hard for decision-makers to ignore.

A moment of hope, powered by a movement of hope. Debt distress need not be destiny. This is not a prediction that the campaign on debt will succeed, but rather an assessment that it has a fighting chance. “More than a question of generosity,” Pope Francis declared in his Papal Bull for 2025, debt cancellation is “a matter of justice.”

Notably, he titled the document *Spes non confundit* – “Hope does not disappoint.”

Ben Phillips is the author of How to Fight Inequality.



New research supports hypothesis of four species of giraffe, not one

By Special Correspondent

THE elegant giraffe of Africa’s savannas are vanishing fast due to the climate crisis, habitat loss and poaching and need to be saved before they become extinct forever. A new research paper urges reclassifying the taxonomy of the animal, which can spur more targeted conservation measures.

The International Union for the Conservation of Nature currently recognises just one species of giraffe, divided in nine subspecies.

However, multiple studies over the past 50 years have highlighted the dis-

tingness between different types of giraffe in terms of pelage pattern, cranial and postcranial morphology, genetics, ecology, and behaviour.

A new study, titled *Heads up-Four Giraffa* species have distinct cranial morphology has now added to the growing evidence for this hypothesis.

The researchers assembled the largest known dataset of *Giraffa* skulls (515) to investigate patterns of cranial variability using 3D geometric morphometrics.

The results showed distinct sexual dimorphism and differences in skull shape between what the

researchers say are not one but four species of giraffe: the northern giraffe (*Giraffa camelopardalis*), reticulated giraffe (*G. reticulata*), Masai giraffe (*G. tippelskirchi*), and southern giraffe (*G. giraffa*).

“Regardless of the official taxonomic status of the giraffe lineages, conservation efforts should be focused on distinct forms, avoiding admixtures and translocations between non-related populations. Based on the current results and the consideration of the ossicones as a key trait of the giraffe anatomy and behaviour, it is suggested that conservation effort

focus on the four distinct species of giraffe, and in some cases even on their subspecies,” the researchers wrote.

In November last year, the US Fish and Wildlife Service proposed to list giraffe under the US Endangered Species Act. The move will cover five subspecies of the animal.

“Our results highlight the importance of focusing future giraffe conservation efforts on each taxon to maintain their unique characteristics and biodiversity in the wild,” the researchers stated in the study, published in the journal *PLoS ONE*.

Rwanda’s horticulture exports rise by 29percent

KIGALI

RWANDA’S horticulture exports increased by 29.1 per cent to reach slightly over \$75 million (approx. Rwf104 billion) in 2023/2024, up from \$58.16 million in the previous fiscal year, shows a new report.

Specifically, the annual report for 2023/24 published on Monday, January 6 by the Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources, indicated that vegetable exports saw a revenue increase of more than 22 per cent, while fruit exports experienced an impressive growth of nearly 61 per cent.

Overall, vegetables contributed over \$42.3 million (or 56 per cent of the total) generated from the sale of almost 62,000 tonnes of the commodity, fruits \$30.6 million (or 40.7 per cent) from more than 34,700 tonnes, while flowers contributed \$2.1 million (2.8 per cent) from more than 412 tonnes.

The positive performance of the overall horticulture exports can be attributed to several factors, including heightened global demand for horticultural products, which boosted both exports and re-exports, the report pointed out.

“These gains reflect improvements in production practices, including the adoption of advanced

irrigation systems, more efficient fertiliser use, and better cultivation techniques, all of which have enhanced the quality and quantity of produce available for export,” the report said.

During the 2023-2024 fiscal period, the report indicated, efforts were concentrated on three critical areas, namely boosting fruit and vegetable yields, enhancing strategies for pest and disease control, and building the expertise of farmers and industry stakeholders throughout the country.

However, as per the report, the horticulture sector faced challenges, particularly with flower exports, which saw a decline of 52 per cent in revenue to \$2.1 million in 2023/2024 from \$4.5 million in the previous fiscal year.

This downturn can be largely attributed to the impact of the Russia-Ukraine conflict, which affected supply chains and market dynamics, especially since these countries are major importers of flowers from the Netherlands—the primary market for Rwandan flowers, it said of the factor for the drop.

To sustain the overall upward trend in horticulture exports, it will be crucial to address the challenges faced in the flower export market while continuing to enhance pro-

duction and marketing strategies for vegetables and fruits, the report recommended.

The horticulture sector’s performance surpassing the annual target (that was slightly more than \$51.5 million) by more than 68 per cent suggests that market conditions were more favourable than initially anticipated, the report concluded.

It added that if trends in demand and favourable pricing continue, the horticulture sector has strong potential for further expansion and could make a sustained positive impact on the trade balance.

As per the report, Rwanda has expanded its horticultural exports, encompassing vegetables, fruits, and flowers, to various markets worldwide, including Africa, Europe, America, Asia, and Australia.

Notably, most vegetable exports were directed towards DR Congo (67 per cent), the United Kingdom (13 per cent), and France (4 per cent), among other destinations, the report showed.

For fruit exports, it indicated, they found significant markets in DR Congo, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), and Vietnam. In the case of flower exports, Rwanda primarily shipped flowers to the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, and North Korea.



Cerebral palsy in Nigeria: One woman's mission to help her daughter and others

By Nkechi Ogbonna

ALTHOUGH Babatunde Fashola, affectionately known as Baba, is 22 years old, he is less than 70cm (2ft 4in) tall.

He has cerebral palsy and requires lifelong care. He can neither speak nor walk and is fed via a tube attached to his stomach.

As a baby, he was abandoned by his parents but 10 years ago, he found a home at the Cerebral Palsy Centre in the Nigerian city of Lagos.

"Baba weighs about 12kg [26lb]. He is doing well," the facility's founder, Nonye Nweke, tells me when I visit.

Nweke and her staff work around the clock to support him and other youngsters living with permanent brain damage.

Although there is a lack of official data, cerebral palsy is believed to be one of the most common neurological disorders in Nigeria. In 2017, a medical professor from the University of Lagos said 700,000 people had the condition.

For many of those living with cerebral palsy in the country, their condition was caused by a common phenomenon among newborns - neonatal jaundice.

This is caused by a build-up of bilirubin, a yellow substance, in the blood, meaning the babies' skins have a yellow tinge.

Professor Chinyere Ezeaka, a paediatrician at the Lagos University Teaching Hospital, said that more than 60 per cent of all babies suffer from jaundice.

Most babies recover within days. More severe cases need further medical intervention - and even then the condition is easily treatable.

Children are basically exposed to ultra-violet light to dissolve the excess bilirubin in their red blood cells. The treatment lasts a few days depending on the severity.

However, in Nigeria this treatment is often not immediately available, which is why the country is among the five with the most neurological disorders caused by untreated jaundice in the world, according to data from the World Health Organization (WHO).

Any treatment for neonatal jaundice "must occur within the first 10 days of life, else [the condition] could cause permanent brain damage and severe cerebral palsy", says Prof Ezeaka.

To make matters worse, the West African country lacks facilities to care for those with neurological disorders. There are just three cerebral palsy centres, all privately run, in Nigeria, which has a population of more than 200 million.



The Cerebral Palsy Centre cares for 12 children

Nweke - a single mother - set up the Cerebral Palsy Centre after struggling to find support for her own daughter, Zimuzo.

"When I took her to a day-care centre, they asked me to take her back because other mothers would withdraw their children. As a mum, I must say it was quite devastating," Nweke said.

Zimuzo is now 17, and Nweke's Cerebral Palsy Centre provides full-time support for others with similar experiences.

On the day I visit, colourful playtime mats and toys are neatly arranged on the floor. Mickey Mouse and his friends converse on a wide-screen television in the lounge.

Twelve youngsters, some as young as five, gaze at the TV, their bright environment ignored for a moment. They are all immobile and non-speaking.

At lunchtime, caregivers help the youngsters eat. Some take in liquified food through tubes attached to their stomachs.

Carefully and slowly, the carers support their heads with pillows and push the contents of their syringes into the tubes.

The youngsters are fed every two hours

and require regular muscular massages to prevent stiffness.

But they are the lucky 12 receiving free care from the Cerebral Palsy Centre, which is funded exclusively by donors.

The facility has a long waiting list - Nweke has received more than 100 applications.

But taking on more youngsters would require extra financial support. The cost of caring for someone at the centre is at least \$1,000 (£790) a month - a huge amount in a country where the national minimum wage is about \$540 a year.

"As a mum, I must say it's quite overwhelming. You have moments of depression, it gives you heartaches and it is quite expensive - in fact it's the most expensive congenital disorder to manage," Ms Nweke says.

"And then of course, it keeps you away from people because you don't discuss the same things. They are talking of their babies, walking, enjoying those baby moments. You are not doing that. You are sad," she adds.

Nweke explains that she adopted Zimuzo from an orphanage.

A few months after taking her new daughter home, Nweke realised Zimuzo was not developing in the same way as the children around her were. She was assessed at a hospital and diagnosed with cerebral palsy.

Nweke was told she could take Zimuzo, who was then just a few months old, back to the orphanage and adopt another baby instead, but she refused.

"I decided to keep her and I began researching what the disorder was about, the treatment and type of care my child would need - she's my life.

"I was also told by the doctors she won't live beyond two years. Well here we are - 17 years later," says a smiling Nweke.

A lack of awareness and adequate medical support hinders the diagnosis and treatment of neonatal jaundice in Nigeria. Nweke also says the common local belief that children with congenital disorders are spiritually damaged or bewitched leads to stigmatisation.

Some children with neurological disorders - mostly in Nigeria's rural areas - are labelled witches. In some cases, they are abandoned in prayer houses or cast out

of their families.

Nweke is not alone in her mission to dispel myths and improve care.

The Oscar Project - a charity aimed at improving the diagnosis and treatment of neonatal jaundice - recently began operating in Lagos.

The project is named after Vietnamese-born British disability advocate, Oscar Anderson, whose untreated jaundice caused his cerebral palsy.

"We're equipping health facilities at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels with the equipment to treat jaundice, primarily light boxes, but also detection and screening equipment," Toyin Saraki, who oversaw the launch, said.

Project Oscar, backed by consumer health firm Reckitt, is training 300 health workers in Lagos. The hope over the first year is to reach 10,000 mothers, screen 9,000 children and introduce new protocols to try and prevent babies with jaundice from developing cerebral palsy.

In a country where the public health system is overstretched, the government has little to say about the disorder, although it lauded the Oscar project's goals.

Treatment for neonatal jaundice is significantly cheaper than the cost of lifelong care, doctors say.

First launched in Vietnam in 2019, Project Oscar has helped about 150,000 children in the Asian country.

Anderson, 22, says he wants to prevent other children experiencing what he has been through.

"People with disabilities are not to be underestimated," he said.

He is working to ensure screening for every newborn infant for neonatal jaundice, and, with the support and courage of mums, midwives and medical professionals, ensure there is better understanding and quicker treatment.

However, achieving this is a hugely ambitious goal in Africa's most-populous country, where thousands of babies are born each year with neonatal jaundice.

Regardless, Anderson is determined to defy the odds.

"The work doesn't stop until every baby is protected against neonatal jaundice," he says.

By Special Correspondents

KENYA'S pregnant teenagers aren't getting the support they need. These young women face massive hurdles, like access to healthcare, and social and economic challenges. Importantly, they often face stigma and discrimination.

Even in instances where programmes are developed to help, they face push-back. Critics argue that such support would inadvertently encourage more girls to become pregnant. Teenage mothers are painted as undeserving of such help because people attribute teenage mothers' circumstances to personal choices and overlook the effects of the broader structural factors that shape their situation.

This isn't helpful. Teenage pregnancy rates in Kenya are high. About 15.3% of adolescent girls start childbearing before the age of 18 years. The global figure is estimated at 13%.

This proportion is much higher (27%) in Nairobi's slums, which are characterised by overcrowding, chronic poverty, poor infrastructure, crime and violence.

We conducted a study in a slum in Nairobi to understand why teen mums were being socially excluded before and after pregnancy, along with the implications for their health and socioeconomic situation.

We found that adolescent girls and young women weren't being given the tools they needed to prevent pregnancy, like education or contraception. Once they were pregnant, some were rejected at home, abandoned by their partners, and excluded from schools and community. If these girls are not better supported, they will miss out on empowerment opportunities and end up poor.

It's essential to focus both on preventing teenage pregnancies and support-

My father insisted that I have the baby, but not in his house



Mary Atieno, a pregnant teen from Nairobi, poses in her school uniform in 2022.

ing young mothers.

Support before pregnancy

We carried out a study involving 594 pregnant and parenting girls aged 15-19 years. We conducted in-depth interviews with 22 of these girls and also spoke to their parents, key informants (including teachers), policymakers, community leaders, non-governmental organisation representatives and health workers.

Our study found that young women weren't getting the support or guidance to prevent pregnancy.

Many of their parents worked in domestic or menial jobs with long hours and low wages, while some were unemployed. Due to their precarious employment and long hours away from home, they were unable to adequately provide for and supervise their daughters.

Adolescent girls from such poor families sometimes engaged in sex with men, expecting money, food and gifts in return. Their typical partners were young men working menial jobs, such as boda-boda (motorbike) riders, garbage collectors, car washers, casual labourers in construction pro-

jects and plumbers.

We asked these girls why they did not use contraceptives to prevent their pregnancies, despite not wanting to become pregnant. They explained that they lacked accurate information about contraceptive methods, having not been taught about them, and only learned about them after becoming pregnant.

These girls didn't get accurate sexual and reproductive health information at home and at school. At home, parents didn't talk to them. At school, there was a lack of sex education.

These factors increased

their vulnerability to early and unintended pregnancies.

Support after pregnancy

The girls interviewed recounted that their parents reacted harshly to the news of their pregnancies, becoming verbally and physically abusive. In extreme cases, some were even chased away from home, as one girl shared:

I started living with my boyfriend, but my father came and asked me to leave, saying he did not want me there ... so I was left wondering what my father wanted because he had sent me away from home with my clothes at 10pm telling me he did not want me and took me to the person that got me pregnant. Now, my father had asked me to leave, yet my maternal side did not want me with the pregnancy saying I did not leave them pregnant and that I should go back to the person who got me pregnant.

Some girls chose to move in with their boyfriends to escape emotional and verbal abuse from their parents. They also faced rejection from partners, friends and the community. They were ridiculed and labelled as a bad influence, with parents warning their daughters to dissociate from them.

As a result, pregnant girls sometimes isolated themselves, avoiding interaction within the community. They refrained from attending church or clinics for antenatal care and only ventured out in the dark or disguised their pregnancy when they had to go out during the day. They're often expelled or withdrawn from schools.

Most expressed feelings of shame, stress and constant sadness. The burden of rejection from home and the community, combined with feelings of sadness, disappointment and shame, severely affected their mental health. Some reported suicide attempts.

Stigmatisation

Self-isolation was a coping mechanism, but it led to many missing out on antenatal care, which is crucial for identifying early pregnancy danger signs and reducing the risk of birth complications and maternal death.

Only one in three of 594 pregnant and parenting adolescents we surveyed (34.6%) completed four antenatal care visits, and approximately 3% completed eight visits as many were in their third trimester before initiating antenatal care.

Their exclusion from school affected their economic empowerment. Many of these girls were out of school and vocational training. A few worked in low-paid, menial jobs.

If the exclusion of adolescent mothers is not addressed, efforts to achieve economic empowerment and gender equality, as outlined in the sustainable development goals, will not succeed. Therefore, it is imperative to focus not only on preventing adolescent pregnancy but also on supporting and empowering adolescent mothers.

REPORT PREDICTS MILD RECOVERY OF GLOBAL CEMENT CONSUMPTION

BY ALFIE LLOYD-PERKS

Global cement consumption is languishing 9 percent below the pre-pandemic level, with around half of this deterioration took place in 2024.

According to the new report by World Cement, key drivers have been high interest rates, the downturn in Chinese real estate, and weaker demand in mature markets.

However, profit margins have generally improved, aided by stable pricing and lower input costs.

The report indicates that in 2025 a mild recovery in global cement consumption is predicted, in the range of 1 - 2 percent excluding China.

Interest rate cuts are expected to trigger a revival in housing demand, with economists looking for 100 - 150 basis points in the benchmark US rate by the end of 2025.

"Fewer elections should result in lower political uncertainty, although the risk of tariffs under the incoming Trump administration is a substantial threat," the report reads.

However, cement consumption is expected to recover in



both Western Europe and the US, driven by improved housing demand.

Africa
 According to the report, cement demand in Africa is expected to increase 2 - 3 percent in both 2024 and 2025.

Although inflation is elevated in some markets, interest rates are expected to decline and lead to higher housing demand.

Strong growth is forecast in Algeria, driven by robust government spending. A recovery is predicted in Egypt, with real estate making a comeback despite a tough economic backdrop. After years of stagnation, South Africa is poised for a solid

economic rebound.

The perennial problem of load-shedding has been fixed and the new coalition has begun to turn around the economy.

Kenya continues to face headwinds, although lower interest rates are expected to pave the way for a stabilisation. Nigerian demand is expected to slow in 2025 despite interest rate cuts.

Western Europe
 After three years of decline, a modest recovery in cement consumption is predicted.

Falling interest rates have already stabilised a number of housing markets, and the ECB is expected to cut rates more

sharply than elsewhere. EU recovery funds have been disbursed slowly to date, leaving plenty of potential for 2025.

Germany is expected to go to elections in the coming weeks, which may bring an end to its political paralysis.

The housing market has collapsed in the last two years and is expected to bottom out in 2025, underpinned by rate cuts and the Growth Opportunity Act. Public works may improve over the medium term if the new government amends the debt-brake. The UK and France have both raised taxes dramatically, shredding confidence in the private sector. This is expected to hamper the cement demand recovery.

Italy is predicted to maintain a steady growth, with reduced renovation subsidies offset by EU recovery funds. Spanish cement consumption has recently turned around, and is expected to experience a solid year driven by rate cuts and immigration. Nordic markets have endured a tough two years in cement consumption, and are forecast to recover in 2025.

United States
 The US cement market endured a difficult 2024 due to a

weak housing market and poor weather. This provides an easy base for 2025, which is expected to grow 3 percent as demand increases across all segments. Rate cuts are projected to revive the residential market, tax cuts will boost business confidence and public works are forecast to increase under the infrastructure bill.

World Cement assume the incoming administration will not fully deliver on plans for tariffs and mass deportations, which would have a significant negative economic impact. The decarbonisation of the cement sector is much more likely to run into headwinds, however.

Latin America
 The cement market in Latin America is expected to improve at a modest pace in 2025. Argentina is recovering from the economic shock treatment of President Milei, during which public spending and cement demand fell sharply. A rebound is predicted in 2025 as the economy stabilises.

Demand in Colombia has fallen due to high interest rates, delayed public works, and an overhaul of the housing subsidy. A gradual turnaround is predicted next year.



S. Africa's property market poised for growth in 2025

JOHANNESBURG

There is a growing sense of optimism in the residential property market, says Paul Stevens, chief executive officer of Just Property. This is supported by economic reforms, political stability and shifting trends in buyer and tenant behaviour. Stevens's insights into the opportunities and challenges that lie ahead paint a picture of a market poised for growth.

South Africa's economy is beginning to show signs of recovery, with inflation declining from 5.3 percent at the start of 2024 to 3.8 percent by October. This decline sits comfortably between the target range of 3 - 6 percent and has allowed the South African Reserve Bank (Sarb) to lower interest rates twice in recent months.

"While these cuts were smaller than anticipated, they signal a trend that should bring relief to consumers," Stevens explains. If inflation numbers remain at this level, he anticipates at least a 1% reduction in interest rates over the course of 2025, which would ease financial pressures on households and boost market activity.

The May 2024 elections and the formation of a Government of National Unity (GNU) have fostered optimism, strengthening South Africa's currency and public sentiment.

"The GNU has given people and investors hope for the future," Stevens notes. However, he acknowledges challenges, such as reducing the number of state employees in a country grappling with high unemployment. The government's per-

formance in tackling these issues will be critical in maintaining momentum, he says.

Stevens says that while the Western Cape has been a consistent magnet (with property prices increasing by 39 percent between 2019 and 2023, according to Lightstone), Eastern Cape towns, including Gqeberha (Formerly Port Elizabeth), are emerging as hotspots, bolstered by significant investments in infrastructure.

He adds that property prices in KwaZulu-Natal rose by 19 percent during the same period, with most of the growth occurring on the north coast in areas such as Umhlanga, Ballito, Salt Rock, and Umdloti.

Security estates and sectional-title properties are increasing in popularity due to safety concerns and affordability. "Developers are focusing heavily on gated communities, which appeal to a wide demographic," says Stevens.

He predicts that this trend will continue to grow, reshaping the urban living landscape. "While freehold properties still constitute a significant portion of the property market in South Africa, the shift towards sectional-title units and estates is gaining momentum."

The high-end/luxury market remains robust, particularly in the Western Cape, Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal and the Northern Cape. Stevens attributes this to cash buyers who are less sensitive to interest-rate fluctuations. "This segment is resilient and continues to perform well, driven by both local and international demand," he explains.

Zanzibar targets to construct 3,600 affordable homes

By Rahma Suleiman, Zanzibar

In a bid to improve the living standards of the people, the Zanzibar Housing Corporation (ZHC) is planning to implement the 3,600 affordable homes project in different areas, targeting low and middle income families.

This initiative comes as Zanzibar is currently experiencing sharp increase of housing demands, driven by a combination of population growth, urbanization, increasing foreign investments and various economic activities.

The project will involve the construction of 3,000 homes in Chumbuni, 24 in Kiembe Samaki, 500 in Kisakasaka, 120 in Ny-

amanzi, as well as other locations.

The plan was unveiled recently by the Minister of State, President's Office for Economy and Investment, Sharif Ali Sharif, during the inauguration of residential and commercial buildings at Darajani Mnadani area in Unguja. The minister stated that after the 1964 revolution, citizens of Zanzibar were provided with better and safer housing under the leadership of first President Abeid Amani Karume.

He said these efforts have been carried forward by his successors to the currently eighth phase in order to achieve the goals of ensuring decent shelter for the people of Zanzibar.

He noted that the 1964 revolution brought signifi-

cant changes to the archipelago islands, as people were previously living in mud houses.

"The government has prioritized four key areas, including social services, infrastructure, tourism, and the blue economy," Sharif said.

Sharif commended the corporation for executing these housing projects and improving the lives of citizens.

The government of Zanzibar estimates a housing deficit of 60,000-80,000 units, with affordable housing forming a significant part of this gap.

The Deputy Minister for Land and Housing, Salha Muhammed Mwinjuma, said the CCM Party Manifesto directs the construction of 120 new houses and the renovation of 300 existing ones.



Low cost housing project in Zanzibar

The Director of the Zanzibar Housing Corporation, Sultani Said, stated that they are focused on building more affordable houses for citizens in the near future.

Zanzibar's population is currently growing at around 3.1 percent annually, with a high concentration of people in urban areas such as Stone Town and its surrounding suburbs, which has increased pressure on housing infrastructure, particularly for low- and middle-income residents.

The influx of high-end tourism investments has shifted attention to luxury developments, leaving a gap in housing solutions for the local working-class

population.

Also, the rapid migration of people from rural areas to urban centers, particularly Stone Town and its surrounding areas, has intensified housing shortages in urban zones.

Many new migrants are also currently struggling to afford formal housing options, leading to increased demand for affordable alternatives.

Economically, a large proportion of Zanzibar's population earns low wages, particularly those employed in sectors such as agriculture, tourism, and informal trade, limiting their ability to afford housing in the private market, pushing demand for subsidized or low-cost

homes.

Currently, the real estate market in Zanzibar has prioritized high-return investments such as hotels and luxury villas, leaving limited attention to affordable housing projects.

To cater for the need for shelter, the Zanzibar government has initiated programs to provide affordable housing, such as allocating land for low-cost residential developments and partnering with private developers.

The government says with the continued growth in population and urbanization, the demand for affordable housing in Zanzibar will likely intensify.

Uganda charity builds decent homes for vulnerable families

JINJA

A charity in Uganda has commissioned three new homes for vulnerable families in the Jinja District. They were constructed by Community Girl Child Empowerment Network (CGCEN) with funding from Hiro Charity.

Moses Isanga, President of Hiro Charity, said the initiative was part of the organization's efforts to provide safe and secure housing for vulnerable families.

"We recognized the urgent need for safe and secure housing in our community. Many families were living in dilapidated homes, exposing them to harsh weather conditions and other risks," he said.

Ruth Nazziwa, a widow and mother of five, opens the door to her new home for the first time, beaming with joy and gratitude. The new house, provided by Hiro Charity and constructed by CGCEN, marks a new begin-

ning for Ruth and her family, offering them a safe, secure, and dignified place to call home. Ruth Nazziwa, a widow and mother of five, opens the door to her new home for the first time, beaming with joy and gratitude. The new house, provided by Hiro Charity and constructed by CGCEN, marks a new beginning for Ruth and her family, offering them a safe, secure, and dignified place to call home.

"As an organization fo-

cused on supporting vulnerable families, we recognized the urgent need for safe and secure housing. In our community, many families struggle to provide basic necessities, including shelter. We have been supporting these families with scholastic materials, but we realized that they were returning to dilapidated homes, exposing them to harsh weather conditions and other risks. Some families were living in structures so fragile that you could see

their legs outside while they slept," Isanga said.

Isanga explained that the demand for safe housing in the area is overwhelming, noting that many families headed by widows need such kind of support.

"These families are struggling to survive, living in homes that are barely habitable. We have families living in homes with ant hills, and others living in grass-thatched huts that are at risk of burning down."



Ruth Nazziwa, a widow and beneficiary, receives the keys to her new home from Moses Isanga, President of Hiro Charity, in Jinja District, Uganda.

CRUCIAL WAYS TO CONSERVE LAND TO AVOID LANDSLIDES IN TANZANIA

By Dr Felician B. Kilahama

Mid-December 2024 intermingling Early-January 2025 were graceful instants for the world celebrating jubilant occasions regarding Christmas/new-year holidays. Nevertheless, Tanzanians continued the merriments while eagerly waiting for the spring rains; but also seriously contemplating vis-à-vis deaths and losses due to landslides befalling on mainland.

It should be remembered, the landslide that happened in Katesh, Hanang district occurred in Disemba 2023 and same month 2024 another similar incidence happened in Same district, Kilimanjaro region.

Under normal circumstances, the landslides are the consequence of unsustainable land uses instigating forests/natural vegetation to disappear quickly thereby endangering human-life and other living-things.

Tanzania is endowed with natural forests/vegetation and tracking-back 64-years ago, the mainland was covered with natural-forests. Information issued 2015 by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism; through the project to measure/evaluate forestry resources; indicated the area under forests/woodlands being 48.1 million hectares (55 percent mainland area). The "Miombo" forests/woodlands branded as most-widely spread type of natural-vegetation on villages' lands. Nevertheless, the report revealed other forest-types covering mountains.

For instance, the Eastern Arc mountains chain also including the Kilimanjaro and Meru Mountains plus the Southern Highlands: Livingstone and Rungwe, alas forests in National Parks like Udzungwa, Ngorongoro Conservation Area and tremendous forests/woodlands in Kagera, Katavi, Kigoma, Rukwa Regions.

Although the 48 million hectares indicated is acknowledged as remarkable national endowment this remain a parable taking into account that natural-forests/woodlands are rapidly declining. During past four decades, rates of deforestation have increased such that more than four-hundred thousand hectares (>400,000ha) are disappearing



every-year.

This is associated, amongst other factors, with increasing population being less than 10 million (1961) to more than 60 million people (2022). As numbers of people escalate also needs for new-settlements, agriculture and livestock keeping increase.

Likewise, the villages (more than 12,000 in 2022 national records) but also towns and cities expanding rapidly while the urban-town planning services remaining behind.

Additionally, demand for forest products (timber, poles, logs or charcoal) increased to extent of stimulating the high-rate of deforestation.

Combining above factors together with other negative-impacts emanating from shifting-farming and uncontrolled livestock-grazing plus annually incidences of wild-fires and inadequate government capacity to protect/manage natural-forests/woodlands; negative impacts continued causing many parts on the mainland devoid of natural land-cover. Thus, net impressions consist of continued widespread soil erosion plus incidental landslides due-to land being devoid of natural-cover like grass/leaves, plants, trees and forests/woodlands.

Ecologically, natural-forests/woodlands and locally-endowed vegetation, to great extent, cover the ground/soil hence preventing soil erosion that could have occurred due to forces of winds/rain water.

The disasters occurring on mainland, for example, landslide in Hanang, Manyara Region in 2023; destroyed some neighbourhoods of Katesh like Gendabi. The landslide occurred due to heavy rainfall December 2-3, 2023; it was an unprecedented landslide from Hanang mountain causing unexpectedly overflow of rocks, logs downhill, and lots of water flowing from the mountain.

That extraordinary situation, created lots of confusion and/or uncertainty amongst the residents of Katesh plus neighbourhoods.

Additionally, the landslide destroyed more than 100 houses and killed some people. In that contexts, the government in collaboration with other stakeholders such as Church organizations; spent time and financial resources to assist affected citizens by constructing new homes and restoring critical social-services.

Again, December, 2024 in Same District, Kilimanjaro Region, landslides befallen due to inadequate natural forests/vegetation

to covered/protect land while ensuring soils and other soil-nutrients remaining intact. Ecologically, forests/trees, grasses and/or other natural vegetation are practical pillars in preserving the land/soils based on their roots naturally oriented to hold/anchor and uphold soils in-situ.

Additionally, forests/trees reduce the speed/force of falling rainwater thus, enabling most of the rain-water to gradually percolate into the ground/soil without causing serious environmental damages. In areas faced with strong and unpredictable speed of winds, the forests/trees regulate the force/speed of such prevailing winds hence preventing loose-soil particles from being blown & transported to distant places.

There have been rampant practices involving farming on steep-slops without taking-care to prevent soil-erosion and/or landslides in environmentally sensitive areas. The disasters that happened in Katesh and Same in Manyara and Kilimanjaro Regions respectively, the main reasons hinged on land/soils in the mountainous areas being bare due to unsustainable farming and lifestyle systems in respective areas.

When the heavy rains ap-

peared, lots of rain-water dropped on almost bare-ground and soils quickly loosened to the extent of causing exceptionally heavy landslides, including falling logs and stones from mountains seeping into residential areas and caused remarkable losses. For instance, the situation that happened in Same district left six (6) people dead and 25 houses demolished hence leaving some residents without homes. The information released by the media December 24, 2024 noted that most affected sites in Same district included: Bombo, Maore, Mti, Msindo and Vuje Wards.

In 1963 there was a similar disaster in Shume-Manolo area in Lushoto district, Tanga Region after the then-Minister of Lands (first Cabinet of Ministers after independence); allowed the farmers to undertake farming on mountains' slopes. The act of clearing forests to plant maize didn't spare some residents. When heavy rains came, large landslides took-place including falling large rocks, stones and other hard-materials and destroyed residents' homes. The permission to cultivate in mountainous areas was a political move however, professionally and ecologically it was not right decision. Nevertheless, this happened based on the

government good intention to help citizens undertake farming but the results turned into unbearable outcry. Thereafter, the government instituted embargo thereby prohibiting farming activities on mountainous slopes.

It is crucial that leaders/authorities, government and those outside government, should realize that the forests/natural vegetation in mountainous areas are key to ensure stable environmental conditions at all times of the year. Hence, efforts should be made to preserve and conserve natural resources for the good of our nation. Conservation policies and strategies regarding climate change and/or national aspirations for environmental security, should be implemented including enhancement of legal instruments and practices.

If it is declared that in certain places humans shouldn't enter to cultivate nor establish settlements, cut trees or animal grazing, let it be so and enforce accordingly. Also village authorities should establish by-laws to ensure mountainous areas and wetlands are specifically preserved and properly managed. Let's not wait for disasters to happen then rush for actions: it is said "prevention is better than cure" hence the earlier we prevent disasters from happening the better. Those in power, at all levels, should not be ashamed of taking prompt/timely decisions/actions against the wrongdoers even if close-relatives or intimate-friends are the culprits.

The principle Law to maintain, protect and manage the environment on the Mainland, should place strong emphasis on sensitive areas and ensure not devastated by humans for disorganized personal interests. This must include forests/natural vegetation in vulnerable areas are not cleared/burnt whatsoever. The rules/regulations concerning forestry/bee resources be adhered accordingly including enduring good behaviour and patriotism. In-nutshell, for humans to live in comfort environment; efforts must be made to make forests/trees and natural vegetation in the wild are able to sing/cheer with joy, at the same-time, sustaining conducive environs for current and the generations ahead.

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Battery minerals demand expected to outpace supply - McKinsey

BY SCHALK BURGER

Demand for battery raw materials will outpace base-case supply for certain materials, requiring additional investment and leading to fear of shortages and price volatility, among other challenges, strategy and management consulting company McKinsey projects.

The fast-growing demand for batteries, for example from the automotive and energy sectors, has caused unprecedented levels of investment by raw materials producers and battery manufacturers.

However, based on current market observations, battery manufacturers can expect challenges securing supply of several essential battery raw materials by 2030, McKinsey notes in its "Toward security in sustainable battery raw material supply" report.

Battery producers use more than 80 percent of all lithium mined today. This share could grow to 95 percent by 2030. Some of the announced supply growth is supported by the adoption of direct lithium extraction

technology, which is a cost-efficient source of lithium that unlocks large, previously inaccessible deposits.

With technological advancements shifting in favour of lithium-heavy batteries, lithium mining will need to increase substantially to meet 2030 demand, McKinsey estimates.

"The net-zero transition will require vast amounts of raw materials to support the development and rollout of low-carbon technologies."

Battery electric vehicles (BEVs) will play a central role in the pathway to net-zero. McKinsey estimates that worldwide demand for passenger cars in the BEV segment will grow six-fold from 2021 through 2030, with annual unit sales increasing to roughly 28-million from 4.5-million.

"For producers of battery cells and raw materials, ensuring a reliable and ample supply of sustainable and affordable materials will be crucial to their competitiveness, the ongoing rollout of BEVs, and the net-zero transition overall," says McKinsey.

Because the adoption of



Battery producers use more than 80 percent of all lithium mined today. This share could grow to 95 percent by 2030. File photo

BEVs is central to decarbonisation of the transportation segment of the economy, it is vital to reduce greenhouse gas emissions along the full value chain. On average, about 40% of battery emissions stem from upstream raw materials mining and refining processes.

Over time, as the industry reduces emissions from the most emission-intensive materials, the relative emissions intensity of smaller materials will increase. For example, manganese currently accounts for 4 percent of emissions a lithium nickel manga-

nese cobalt oxide (Li-NMC) battery.

However, decarbonisation efforts already under way are estimated to substantially reduce emissions from lithium by 50 percent, nickel by 50 percent, and aluminium by 70 percent, thereby earning them a low-carbon classification, the report says.

"If these reductions are achieved, then manganese's contribution to total remaining emissions could nearly double. Targeted abatement strategies, based on a solid understanding of emissions sources and decarbonisa-

tion levers, will be required across all materials used.

McKinsey identifies opportunities for best-in-class battery producers to substantially reduce emissions over two horizons by taking actions to decarbonise in each step of the value chain.

By 2030, which is horizon one, producers could potentially reduce emissions by more than 70 percent, to less than 24 kilograms of CO2 equivalent per kilowatt-hour (kg CO2e/kWh). By 2040, which is horizon two, they could further reduce emis-

sions to less than 12 kg CO2e/kWh.

Most ambitious battery makers have set goals to reach 10 kg CO2e/kWh as early as 2030, the company says.

Further, despite the forecasted rise in battery materials demand, 2024 has been a challenging year for the industry, owing to the slowdown of economic growth and pressure on price levels, especially for battery materials, such as nickel and lithium.

Although overall demand for batteries and raw materials is increasing rapidly, supply is and will remain largely concentrated in a few naturally endowed countries, including Indonesia for nickel; Argentina, Bolivia, and Chile for lithium; and the DRC for cobalt.

Refining typically takes place elsewhere, often in China for cobalt and lithium, Indonesia for nickel, and Brazil for niobium.

This value chain setup poses additional considerations for regions such as the European Union (EU) and the US, both of which have high demand for imported materi-

als and often rely heavily on single-country sources. For example, the EU imports 68 percent of its cobalt from the DRC, 24 percent of its nickel from Canada, and 79 percent of its refined lithium from Chile.

Recent supply chain disruptions, such as those affecting magnesium, silicon and semiconductors from 2021 to 2023, have increased buyers' needs to boost supply chain resilience for critical battery raw materials, McKinsey says.

Buyers' risks of import dependency are further heightened by recent trade restrictions introduced by exporters, including China's export controls on some materials, such as synthetic graphite and natural flake graphite products used in BEVs, and Indonesia's ban on nickel ore exports.

Meanwhile, with increasing feedstock supplies and regulatory support for recycling, recycled-materials supply for battery manufacturing is expected to reach, depending on the material, up to almost 50% of total demand by 2040.

CONSTRUCTION

HOW MODULAR CONSTRUCTION DRIVES PRODUCTIVITY, CIRCULARITY

BY YOON HONG HUH & YEONGMIN

YOU

Growing trends within the construction industry point towards significant convergence with manufacturing through modular construction.

Productivity and efficiency gains from shortened project timelines and less disruptive on-site work are some of the advantages of modular construction.

Circularity in built environments will become more commercially viable in the future with modular construction practices.

The construction industry is often perceived as being stagnant and facing considerable difficulty in making technological progress. This is largely due to its capital-intensive nature and reliance on manual labour and conventional machinery.

In response, a more innovative and sustainable path forward is emerging through modular construction – a method of construction that incorporates the advantages of manufacturing into traditional construction practices.

Modular construction is characterized by prefabrication, where components of buildings, usually with standardized designs, are manufactured off-site. The modules are then transported to the construction site to be assembled into full structures. Specific methods of assembly may vary. Panelized construction, for example, involves the manufacturing of panels, such as walls, ceilings and floors that



are bolted together and erected at the site, while volumetric construction requires prefabricating three-dimensional room-sized modules that are later stacked and joined together.

The benefits of modular construction

Modular construction in itself is not a novel invention. Its roots can be traced back to ancient civilizations in places, such as Egypt and Sri Lanka, where structures were assembled from segments that were crafted separately. Centuries of technological progress, however, have given rise to modular construction that is modernizing the construction industry and paving the way for a more resource-efficient built environment in a few key ways:

1. Improved productivity and efficiency

Despite being the largest emitter of greenhouse gases, the construction industry has been slow

in adopting innovations. Modular construction allows structures to be built at a much faster rate compared to traditional construction, revolutionizing the way projects are completed. According to McKinsey & Company, volumetric modular construction can shorten a project timeline by up to 50% by significantly decreasing the amount of work required on-site, as well as cutting various overruns of traditional construction, such as redesigning.

2. Significant project cost savings

Improved efficiency, as well as reduced labour requirements for modular construction, create the potential for significant reductions in project costs. McKinsey & Company predicts that there is potential for up to 20% of total cost savings to be realized through productivity boosts from modular construction methods. While additional costs of logistics

and factory operations currently complicate this equation, there is a clear path forward for future optimizations that can translate into real gains in cost efficiency.

3. Improved systems outcomes and community health

Modular construction offers a less disruptive alternative for communities affected by construction, significantly reducing the negative impacts on residents and their surroundings. Let's look at an internal study conducted by Elements Europe, a subsidiary of my company, GS E&C, of its Camp Hill project of 550 residential units of steel modular construction located in Birmingham's city centre in the UK. The analysis showed that approximately 3,700 fewer deliveries, translating to 56% fewer vehicle movements overall, will be required compared to a traditional construction project of equivalent size and scale. The

reduction in vehicles helps alleviate negative consequences, such as traffic congestion and pollution, while improving air quality – an imperative in British urban environments where clean air zones and low emission zones are frequently implemented to safeguard public health.

4. Modular construction's role in circular built environments

According to the European Commission, construction is responsible for creating roughly a third of the world's total waste, as well as producing nearly 40 percent of the world's total carbon dioxide emissions. Although construction aims to improve people's lives through projects ranging from family homes to skyscrapers and public infrastructure, it simultaneously causes unparalleled environmental destruction and significantly harms the planet at a rate unmatched by any other industry.

The future of construction depends on advancing built environments towards circularity – a goal that modular construction can help achieve by enabling the reuse and repurposing of building components, reducing waste and promoting sustainable resource cycles.

Today, there are only a handful of instances – mostly in smaller, non-commercial cases – where building components from permanent structures have been reused or buildings have been reconstructed from existing ones. With the rise of modular construction, however, these can become a foreseeable reality.

Although largely explored at the conceptual level and yet to be profitably implemented, the ability to dismantle and reuse modules instead of demolishing permanent structures presents an exciting opportunity, particularly given the recyclability of building materials and components.

Even without the commercial rise of circular construction methodologies, modular construction has illustrated a significant reduction in carbon footprints. A study of the Camp Hill project's carbon output has shown approximately a 35 percent reduction in embodied carbon throughout the project life cycle. With total embodied carbon levels of 915 kgCO₂e/m², the project has moved notably closer to achieving the Royal Institute of British Architects' world-leading targets on carbon reduction, which includes bringing down embodied carbon levels to <800 kgCO₂e/m².

Modular construction presents a new paradigm for an industry that has struggled to innovate and adapt. In an age of technological advancements and increasingly stricter ESG regulations, modular construction will continue to provide an industry advantage.

However, long-term viability and the demand for modular structures will heavily depend on the commercial perspectives of the construction industry and its stakeholders. Beyond cost efficiency and profitability, a strong focus on environmental impact and sustainable innovation must be a key incentive to adopting modular construction practices

BY EMILY NEWTON

In 2025, the construction industry will see a shift unlike any other. Green construction practices are no longer an option but a necessity to meet the demands of a quickly evolving world. With climate issues, resource scarcity and environmental concerns pressing on, the time to implement sustainable options is now. Explore the sector's top trends and see how international companies can embrace these green construction trends.

1. Smart, sustainable materials lead the charge

Eco-consciousness remains a top priority for the construction industry, which is responsible for almost 40 percent of energy-related emissions worldwide. To decrease its carbon footprint, the demand for greener options is on the rise.

Low-carbon concrete, recycled steel and sustainably sourced wood are becoming staples, reducing carbon since no new material is produced while maintaining durability. Some ingenious materials making waves include mycelium-based insulation, which was shown to have comparable performance to traditional insulating materials like polystyrene.

Self-healing concrete is also rising in popularity thanks to its capacity to repair itself. Saturated with bacteria that bind the materials around them into a new form, this material can grow in

5 top trends shaping green construction practices in 2025

the pores of the concrete, which adds to its impermeability, reducing maintenance costs and enhancing the longevity of structures. Construction firms are leveraging these materials to meet the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification standards, better align themselves with the environment and gain a competitive advantage.

2. Net-zero buildings are the new standard

Net-zero construction – which yields as much energy as it depletes – is becoming a sector norm. Advancements in solar panels, geothermal systems and passive design principles have made this once lofty goal a reality.

These structures help meet ambitious emission reduction targets simply by being carbon neutral in and of themselves. The efficient design and renewable energy sources lower the op-



erational expenses, making net-zero homes highly attractive to eco-conscious buyers. Expect to see entire communities of smart, net-zero homes pop up as developers aim to meet the demanding environmental benchmarks.

Businesses are already pushing for these carbon-neutral residences. NetZero Development is constructing mid- and high-rise residential buildings using off-site manufactured pieces and renewable power sources to fuel the construction process and the completed establishments. BillionBricks – another net-zero home developer – claims to

assemble homes that are 20% cheaper since they're 70% made of locally sourced materials.

3. Circular construction: rethinking waste

Roughly one-third of the world's waste comes from the building and construction industry. This massive amount of dumped materials forces builders to rethink where waste is going. Instead of sending leftover materials directly to the landfill, green construction practices are shifting from demolition to deconstruction to enable the repurposing of materials when a

structure's life cycle ends.

The modular designs allow the materials to become upcycled and used in new projects, extending their life. Some companies in the construction industry have reduced their non-toxic landfill waste by 7% by diverting waste through recycling.

4. Decarbonization through prefabrication

Prefabricated buildings have long been hailed as efficiency champions. Crafting building components in a controlled environment ensures precise material use, quicker assembly and less waste. If these production facilities are powered by renewable energy, prefab construction will become a key contributor to the decarbonization of the construction sector.

When paired with circular construction, prefab buildings will become a force to be reckoned with at the end of the building's life span. Giants in the modular

construction industry are already producing a wide range of affordable homes and commercial structures, changing how buildings are designed, erected and recycled.

5. Government-driven support and incentives

Countries with net-zero targets are becoming creative in boosting their percentage of green buildings through incentives and establishing standards. Take Singapore, for example. The country is focused on retrofitting existing buildings to become more energy-efficient under the S\$63 million Green Mark incentive.

Conversely, China is set to apply green building standards to all new urban buildings by 2025. This follows their 2020 action plan to reach 70 percent of Green Building Labeled new structures by 2022.

New York has also actively pursued retrofitting efforts for buildings, aiming to put carbon caps on its structures. Starting in 2024, buildings exceeding 25,000 square feet will be penalized should they fail to hit emission targets. Owners could face over \$250 for every ton above the emission limit.

Adopting these trends can significantly reduce global carbon emissions and resource consumption. They ensure long-term economic viability in the construction sector as enterprises pivot toward greener, more sustainable practices. With the environment in focus and sustainable goals in mind, the planet becomes a safer future-proof home for its inhabitants.

Algeria set to issue Sukuk to finance infrastructures

ALGIERS

Algeria is pushing ahead with plans to issue its first sovereign Islamic bonds (Sukuk) in early 2025 to fund domestic projects covering infrastructure and other sectors.

Authorities are working on a new law to regulate the issuance of Sukuk in the local stock market as per the 2025 budget law that was endorsed by

Parliament in late 2024, according to Director General of Algiers bourse Yazid Benmouhoub.

"This is a significant move by the Government because it will secure stable project finance and largely boost dealings in the stock market," he told Algeria's Arabic language Aljomhouria newspaper on Tuesday.

"It will benefit local individual investors as well as Islamic banks and

other Sharia-compliant financial and insurance institutions."

Algerian officials said in October that key projects targeted by the Sukuk issuance involve infrastructure, schools, hospitals and facilities that will contribute to boosting growth and improving life quality for citizens in the North African OPEC producer.

They added that such a move would also strength-

en investors' confidence in the domestic market, attract foreign capital, lessen reliance on foreign debt and boost Algeria's financial reputation.

"The issuance of government Islamic bonds as per the 2025 budget law is an important step that will support major domestic projects through innovative instruments... the decision is also compatible with the government policy of bolstering



Islamic finance and expanding the investors' base," said Sofiane Mazari, head of Islamic finance at Cr dit Populaire d'Alg rie (CAP) bank.

In comments in November, Algeria's Finance Minister Laaziz Fayed

announced that the Finance Ministry would issue the Sukuk in early 2025 as part of the country's budget which he said includes several projects in infrastructure and other sectors.

Fayed said the new bonds are part

of the Ministry's plan to diversify sources of public project finance, absorb swelling liquidity and attract as many investors as possible to fund domestic infrastructure projects without the need for borrowing or raising taxes.

"We are working to set new principles and regulations for such bonds in line with the Islamic Sharia (law)," the Minister said.

"We aim to make these bonds a safe means of investment to allow investors to make high profits...this will be possible through a package of incentives that we intend to issue including tax exemptions for Sukuk investors," he added without specifying the value of the Sukuk or the exact date of issuance.

WORLD

European nations respond to Trump's remarks on Greenland, stress respect for sovereignty

OSLO

EUROPEAN nations have voiced opposition to remarks made by U.S. President-elect Donald Trump regarding the potential use of military force to seize control of Greenland, reigniting tensions over his previous interest in the autonomous Danish territory.

In a press conference on Tuesday, Trump (pictured) said he would not rule out the possibility of military action in Greenland and the Panama Canal. This prompted swift reactions from European leaders, emphasizing the sanctity of sovereignty and international law.

German Chancellor Olaf Scholz said that the inviolability of borders is a fundamental principle of international law, which applies to every country, regardless of its size or power.

He said that in discussions with Euro-

pean partners, there was a lack of understanding regarding recent statements from the United States. France's Foreign Minister Jean-Noel Barrot warned of the resurgence of "might makes right" policies, calling on Europe to bolster its strength. Speaking to France Inter radio, Barrot noted that Greenland is a "territory of the European Union and of Europe."

"It is undoubtedly no way that the European Union would let other nations of the world, whoever they are, attack its sovereign borders," he said.

The European Commission refrained from directly addressing Trump's remarks, emphasizing the importance of respecting sovereignty.

"It is clear that the sovereignty of states has to be respected," said spokesperson Anitta Hipper. Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen reiterated that Greenland's



future rests solely in the hands of its residents. "Greenland has made it clear that it is not for sale," she said. Greenland's Prime Minister Mute Egede echoed these sentiments.

"Greenland belongs to Greenlanders. Our future is ours to shape," he posted on Facebook. Danish Foreign Minister Lars Lokke Rasmussen called for calm.

"I have no perception that we are in a foreign policy crisis," he said in a press conference. In Poland, Deputy Foreign Minister Andrzej Szejna described Trump's rhetoric as part of a "post-campaign rush," urging restraint until his inauguration on Jan. 20.

Trouw, a Dutch newspaper, warned of potential North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) complications if the U.S. pursued military action against Denmark, a fellow member of the military alliance. Slovak media Dennik N described Trump's statement that "nobody knows" whether Denmark has the right to Greenland

as untrue, adding that Greenland has significant autonomy, but it is part of Denmark, which is America's ally in NATO.

On Tuesday, Donald Trump Jr., the eldest son of Trump, visited Nuuk, the capital of Greenland, describing the trip as a private tourism visit.

"We are just here as tourists, to see it all," he told reporters, declining to comment on broader American interest in Greenland.

However, his father, Trump, expressed a different tone when noting the visit on his social media platform Truth Social. "Don Jr. and my Reps landing in Greenland.

The reception has been great. They, and the Free World, need safety, security, and PEACE! This is a deal that must happen. MAGA. MAKE GREENLAND GREAT AGAIN!" Greenland, an autonomous territory within the Kingdom of Denmark, gained home rule in 1979 and expanded self-government in 2009.

Agencies

Kremlin keeping eye on US claims to Canada, Greenland – spokesman

MOSCOW

MOSCOW is closely watching the recent developments around US claims to Canada and Greenland but believes that the issue is part of Washington's bilateral relations with Ottawa and Copenhagen, Kremlin Spokesman Dmitry Peskov said at a briefing.

"In fact, such claims are largely part of the United States' bilateral relations with Denmark and other countries," he noted in response to a TASS question. "We are closely following these dramatic developments - thank God, it has not gone beyond statements yet," Peskov added.

US President-elect Donald Trump said on January 7 that Greenland should join the United States in order to ensure national security and protection against the Chinese and Russian threats.

Trump said during his first presidential term back in 2019 that the US could purchase Greenland, which is currently part of Denmark and has broad autonomy rights. In both cases, authorities in Greenland and Denmark dismissed the idea as ridiculous.

In addition, the US president-elect has been actively promoting the idea of Canada joining the US as its 51st state.

Trump points out that the move would not only ensure Canada's economic stability but would also defend the country against external threats, which, according to the US president-elect, come from "Russian and Chinese ships."

Agencies

Escalating violence in eastern DRC triggers more than 100,000 people to flee, says UN

UNITED NATIONS

MORE than 100,000 people have fled five days of fighting in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) between government forces and M23 rebels, UN humanitarian aid workers said on Wednesday.

The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) said the clashes occurred in the Masisi territory of North Kivu province and, according to OCHA partners, killed at least two people and wounded six others.

"In the last quarter of last year, violent attacks by different non-state armed groups have increased in the eastern part of the DRC, resulting in population displacements," the office said.

At the end of December 2024, more than 2.7 million people were displaced in North Kivu province. Between September and December 2024, the UN partners reported at least 138 people killed and more than a hundred others kidnapped.

OCHA said the conflict causes people to be constantly on the move as fighting ceases or resumes, increasing their vulnerabilities. It also affects humanitarian access, and many organizations maintain a limited presence, closely monitoring the security situation to resume operations.

The office called on all parties to the conflict and those with influence over them to ensure the safety of civilians and humanitarians and ensure unhindered and unimpeded humanitarian activities.

Stephane Dujarric, chief spokesman for UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, said the special envoy for the Great Lakes region, Huang Xia, also expressed concern at the rapidly deteriorating security situation in the eastern part of the DRC.

Dujarric said Huang urged the parties to the conflict to prioritize dialogue within the framework of the Luanda and Nairobi regional peace processes and to refrain from any acts likely to constitute violations of national and regional commitments made under the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the DRC and the region.

"To this end, he calls for the urgent convening of the Twelfth High-Level Meeting of the Regional Oversight Mechanism of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework, to enable the heads of state of the region to address the ongoing crisis in eastern DRC," the spokesman told reporters at a regular briefing.

Chadian president meets Chinese FM to advance bilateral cooperation

N'DJAMENA

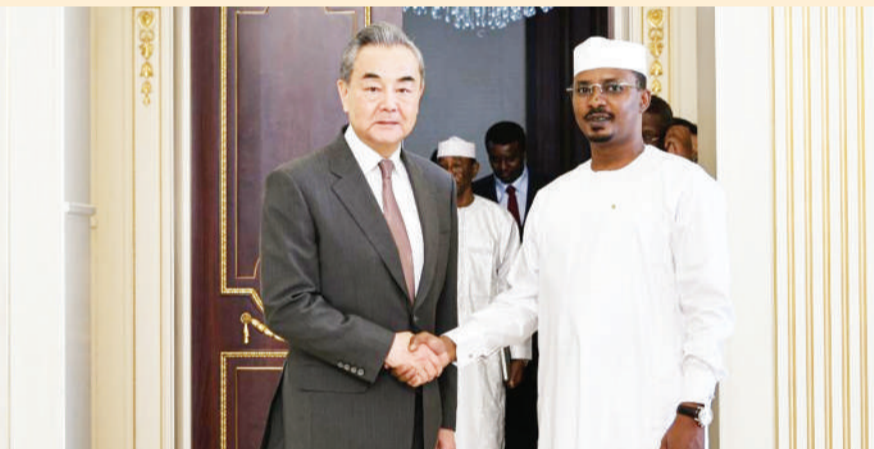
CHADIAN President Mahamat Idriss Deby Itno met with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi here on Wednesday to discuss advancing bilateral cooperation.

Mahamat asked Wang, also a member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, to convey his sincere greetings and respect to Chinese President Xi Jinping.

Xi is a visionary leader, steering China toward remarkable economic achievements and a pivotal role on the global stage, Mahamat said. He congratulated China on successfully hosting the Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) in Beijing last year, which he said has significantly advanced China-Africa relations.

China's cooperation with Africa has always been based on mutual respect, equality, and mutual benefit, yielding fruitful results, he said. He also expressed gratitude to China for its enduring support for Africa's development, particularly Chad's progress.

China is Chad's important strategic partner and a reliable friend, with their bilateral relations serving as a model of mutual respect and win-win cooperation, Mahamat said.



Chadian President Mahamat Idriss Deby Itno (R, Front) shakes hands with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi, also a member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, during their meeting in N'Djamena, Chad, on Wednesday. Xinhua

Chad firmly supports China's efforts to safeguard its territorial integrity and achieve national unity while opposing interference in its internal affairs, he stressed.

China is committed to upholding global fairness and justice, playing a constructive role in addressing key international issues, the Chadian president said, noting that Chad is willing to strengthen communication and coordination with China to uphold shared positions and protect common interests.

For his part, Wang conveyed Xi's warm greetings to Mahamat.

Wang said that after Mahamat took office, his first visit outside the region was to China to attend the FOCAC Beijing Summit, with the visit concluding successfully and contributing to the summit's achievements. During the visit to China, the two heads of state jointly elevated the bilateral relationship to a strategic partnership, ushering in a new phase of cooperation between the two countries.

China has always advocated that all

countries, big or small, strong or weak, are equal, Wang said, noting that China opposes all forms of hegemony, bullying, and unilateralism. He expressed China's willingness to strengthen strategic coordination with Chad and continue to provide steadfast mutual support.

China appreciates Chad's efforts in staying independent and self-reliant, and pursuing development and revitalization that suits its national conditions and is ready to work with Chad to actively implement the important consensus reached by the two heads of state and the outcomes of the FOCAC Beijing Summit, Wang said.

China seeks to deepen exchanges on governance experience, solidify political trust through shared values, and comprehensively expand mutually beneficial cooperation to support Chad's development and revitalization and jointly build an all-weather China-Africa community with a shared future for the new era.

During the meeting, Mahamat expressed sincere condolences to the Chinese government and people over the earthquake in China's Xizang Autonomous Region.

On the same day, Wang also met with Chadian Prime Minister Allamaye Halina and held talks with Foreign Minister Abderraman Koulamallah. Xinhua

Sufi Traditions: The living spirit of India's inclusive ethos

INDIA, a land of unparalleled cultural diversity, has always been a cradle of inclusivity, where myriad faiths, traditions, and philosophies have coexisted for centuries. Among the most profound contributors to this ethos are the Sufi traditions that continue to resonate deeply within the fabric of the nation. Sufism, with its message of love, harmony, and inclusiveness, not only transcends religious boundaries but also embodies the very spirit of India.

Sufism, a mystical branch of Islam, emphasizes the purification of the soul, unity of humanity, and devotion to the Divine. The Sufi saints who arrived in India centuries ago became bridges between cultures, communities, and faiths. Their teachings, expressed through poetry, music, and lived examples, spoke to the universal longing for peace and love, making them accessible to people across religious and social strata.

Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti, known as Gharib Nawaz (Benefactor of the Poor), exemplifies this tradition. His

dargah in Ajmer remains a beacon of hope, visited by millions from all walks of life. His message, rooted in compassion and service, continues to inspire India's inclusive spirit. The langar (community kitchen) at his dargah epitomizes this inclusivity, feeding people regardless of caste, creed, or status—a living testament to the belief in equality.

PM Modi's Chadar Offering: A Symbol of Unity

In a remarkable gesture that underscores the enduring legacy of Sufi traditions in India, Prime Minister Narendra Modi annually sends a ceremonial chadar (sacred cloth) to the Ajmer Sharif Dargah on the occasion of Urs, the death anniversary of Khwaja Gharib Nawaz. This act is a profound statement of the government's respect for the Sufi saint's teachings and his role in uniting people across religious and social divides.

During his visit to the Ajmer Dargah, Union Minister for Minority Affairs Kiren Rijiju highlighted the



importance of such traditions in preserving India's rich heritage of inclusivity. Rijiju remarked, "The Ajmer Sharif Dargah is not just a shrine; it is a symbol of India's pluralistic and inclusive ethos. The Prime Minister's offering is a message of harmony and unity for the nation and the world."

Sufi traditions have historically played a pivotal role in fostering social cohesion. The Sufi saints spoke in the languages of the people, using

vernacular poetry and music to communicate their ideas. Saints like Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya in Delhi and Baba Farid in Punjab emphasized the futility of religious bigotry and promoted a message of universal brotherhood.

Their shrines, scattered across the length and breadth of India, became spaces where communal and spiritual harmony thrived. Even in times of social and political upheaval, these shrines acted as sanctuaries of peace and tolerance. The qawwalis and other Sufi musical traditions have become symbols of cultural synthesis, blending Persian, Arabic, Turkish, and Indian influences into one harmonious expression.

In a world increasingly polarized by divisions, the inclusive ethos of Sufism offers a reminder of what binds us together as human beings. Sufism does not seek to convert or conquer; it seeks to unite and heal. This aligns seamlessly with the ancient Indian philosophy of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam—the world is

one family. In India, where debates around identity often dominate public discourse, Sufism stands as a counter-narrative—a call to return to the foundational principles of co-existence and mutual respect. The traditions of the Sufis remind us that spiritual fulfillment lies not in exclusion but in embracing diversity.

Upholding the Legacy

As modern India marches forward, it is imperative to nurture and celebrate these traditions that have defined its identity for centuries. The heritage of Sufi shrines and their messages of love must be preserved not only as relics of the past but as vital tools to address present and future challenges of intolerance and discord.

Investing in the restoration of these shrines, supporting their cultural expressions, and promoting interfaith dialogues inspired by Sufi teachings can ensure that these traditions continue to thrive. Additionally, introducing Sufi literature,

poetry, and music into educational curricula can help younger generations connect with these timeless values.

The Sufi traditions of India are more than just a spiritual legacy—they are a roadmap to an inclusive and harmonious future. Acts like the Prime Minister's chadar offering and Minister Rijiju's words affirm the deep respect India holds for its Sufi heritage. In celebrating Sufism, we celebrate the best of India's pluralistic ethos. As the poet Rumi, one of the most revered Sufi figures, said: "Out beyond ideas of wrongdoing and rightdoing, there is a field. I'll meet you there." That field is the essence of Sufism—and it is the soul of India. Let us ensure it remains alive and vibrant, for it is a gift not just for the nation but for the world.

The writer is the Gaddi Nashin at the Dargah Ajmer Sharif and is also the chairman of the Chishty Foundation.

FIPIC at 10: India's strategic engagement with the Pacific Island countries

By Rahul Mishra and Shubhamitra Das

AS India celebrates ten years of its 'Act East Policy' in 2024 and is poised to enter the second decade of Acting East, FIPIC (Forum for India-Pacific Islands Cooperation), a major initiative taken by the Narendra Modi government in 2014, has also marked a decade since its launch in 2014.

Over the past ten years, India's engagement with Island countries of the Pacific has widened and deepened albeit not at the same pace as with ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) - a regional grouping comprising countries of the Southeast Asian region.

Since 2002, India has been a dialogue partner of the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF), but meaningful engagement only began in 2014 with the Modi government's establishment of the FIPIC.

This initiative has significantly broadened the scope of India's relationship with the Pacific Island Countries, focusing on trade and investment while also strengthening India's support for multilateral frameworks and bolstering efforts to address climate change and governance challenges through various forms of development assistance.

In the decade since its inception, FIPIC has hosted three Summits [(Suva (Fiji), Jaipur (India), Port Moresby (PNG)]. The 2023 Summit marked a turning point in bilateral and multilateral cooperation, highlighting the increasing range of collaboration areas, including trade, cybersecurity, medical aid, and infrastructural development. India's commitment to multilateral diplomacy and ambition to be a reliable partner in the Indo-Pacific region are key drivers of its deepening engagement with the Pacific Islands.

The Indo-Pacific region has become a focal point of India's foreign policy, given its strategic importance and potential as a mechanism for cooperation. India's vision of a 'Free, Open, and Inclusive Indo-Pacific,' embodied in initiatives such as the IPOI (Indo-Pacific Ocean Initiative) and SAGAR (Security and Growth for All in the Region), underscore the inevitability of regional interdependence. Furthermore, India's growing strategic partnership with Australia, New Zealand, Fiji, and Papua New Guinea, among others, has complemented its diplomatic and strategic outreach.

Pacific Island Countries: More Important Than Ever for India

Often dismissed as 'dots on the map,' the Pacific Islands hold tremendous geopolitical significance due to their vast maritime territories, exclusive economic zones (EEZs), and more importantly their role in the growing voice of the Global South on the climate change front.

These Island countries are rich in marine resources and offer immense potential for marine research, innovation, and contributions to global energy and food security. Moreover, the resilience of these islands in the face of climate change and their collective identity as the 'Blue Pacific' strengthen their international presence. Despite their status as microstates, the Pacific Islands have emerged as key stakeholders in addressing critical global challenges like climate change.

The geopolitical significance of the region is further amplified by the escalating US-China rivalry. China's growing influence and military activities in the region have heightened these nations' vigilance, making the Pacific Island countries a critical theatre for global strategic competition.

The Pacific Islands also serve as a testing ground for international development strategies. Their small economies and scattered geographies make them unique beneficiaries of tailored development projects.

Only a handful of Non-Fijians have received this honour till date.



These initiatives can be pivotal in creating resilient infrastructures, advancing clean energy technologies, and promoting sustainable fishing practices. Such efforts highlight the importance of regional partnerships that address both local needs and global priorities, reinforcing the strategic significance of the region.

India's Benign but Potentially Pivotal Role

India's engagement with the Pacific Islands is multifaceted, encompassing diplomatic, economic, and cultural dimensions. As a leading 'voice of the Global South,' India positions itself as a partner that shares common developmental challenges and aspirations with the Pacific Island nations. This shared identity allows India to advocate for these nations on global platforms, particularly on issues like climate change, trade equity, and sustainable development.

India-Pacific Islands cooperation stands on a solid footing, with partnerships in healthcare, education, and renewable energy. India's support for telemedicine and digital education initiatives has helped bridge gaps in healthcare and education in remote island communities. India's International Solar Alliance has included Pacific Island nations, enabling them to access affordable solar energy technologies.

While two-way trade volumes remain modest in comparison with Australia or China, there is significant potential for growth in sectors such as agriculture, fisheries, and tourism. India's investment plans in infrastructure projects, including ports and transportation networks, aim to enhance connectivity and economic integration within the region and may complement initiatives taken by like-minded countries such as Australia.

Towards a More People-Centric Approach

One of the most effective ways for India to deepen its relationship with the Pacific Islands is through people-to-people connectivity. Educational exchanges can play a pivotal role in this regard. Establishing Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) between the University of South Pacific and Indian universities could facilitate collaborative research and academic exchanges. Such initiatives would not only enrich the knowledge base on the Pacific Islands but also foster cultural understanding and mutual respect. Diaspora connections with Fiji need to be harnessed more systematically for mutual gains.

India could also fund field trips for Indian university students to the Pacific Islands, enabling them to study the region's unique cultures, histories, and political systems firsthand. These programmes could be complemented by scholarships for Pacific Island students to study in India, creating a network of future leaders with strong ties to both regions.

Civil society cooperation is another avenue for strengthening ties. Joint projects between Indian and Pacific Island civil societies can address shared challenges such as climate change, disaster management, and community development. These collaborations can facilitate the exchange of best practices and build grassroots-level connections that reinforce bilateral and regional partnerships.

Addressing Governance Challenges

Governance is a critical area where India can make valuable contributions to the Pacific Islands. Many Pacific Island nations face challenges related to weak institutions, limited resources, and vulnerability to corruption. India's experience with decentralized governance at the local community levels, particularly through its Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRI), offers a model that could be adapted to the unique contexts of the Pacific Island countries.

The PRI system, which emphasizes local participation and representation, could empower communities in the Pacific Islands to take ownership of development initiatives. By fostering transparency and accountability through mechanisms like social audits, PRI principles can help ensure the effective implementation of devel-

opment projects. These efforts can also contribute to achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly in gender equality, poverty reduction, and sustainable resource management.

India's governance model could be particularly beneficial in Melanesia, which includes some of the region's largest and most strategically significant countries, such as Papua New Guinea. Fiji and Papua New Guinea occupy key positions in the Indo-Pacific region. Strengthening governance and development in these countries could have ripple effects throughout the region enhancing stability and cooperation.

Strengthening Regional Partnerships The Quad, a strategic grouping of India, Australia, Japan, and the United States, offers a platform for coordinating efforts in the Pacific region. Through initiatives such as vaccine diplomacy, infrastructure development, and maritime security, the Quad can complement India's bilateral and multilateral engagements with the Pacific Islands. These partnerships not only enhance India's strategic presence but also contribute to the overall security and development of the Indo-Pacific region. Having included Southeast Asian students in the Quad fellowship initiative, the same could be extended to the Pacific Island countries as well.

A Vision for the Future

Looking ahead, India must continue to build on the successes of FIPIC while addressing emerging challenges and opportunities. Expanding trade and investment, particularly in sustainable industries, will be crucial in fostering economic growth and resilience in the Pacific Islands.

At the same time, India should prioritize capacity-building initiatives that empower local communities and institutions to drive their development. Climate change will remain a central focus of India's engagement with the Pacific Islands.

Ultimately, India's engagement with the Pacific Islands represents a unique opportunity to demonstrate its commitment to inclusive and sustainable development. By fostering partnerships based on mutual respect and shared values, India can strengthen its role as a trusted partner of the Pacific Island countries and contribute to a more equitable and prosperous Indo-Pacific.



India could also fund field trips for Indian university students to the Pacific Islands, enabling them to study the region's unique cultures, histories, and political systems firsthand. These programmes could be complemented by

Russia donates over 1,600 tons of grain to Ethiopia as aid to refugees

MOSCOW

THE Russian side has donated 1,630 tons of grain to Ethiopia as food aid to refugees in the Gambela region, a source in Russia's embassy in the republic told TASS.

The UN World Food Program (WFP) welcomed the move, the source added.

"The donation is vital as the WFP is facing a depletion of resources for food aid. The donation by the Russian Federation will enable the UN WFP to provide food aid to 163,240 refugees in the Ethiopian region of Gambela," the embassy said, adding that amid a severe shortage of financing the majority of refugees supported by the WFP only receive 60% of their minimum daily food needs.

Russian Ambassador to Addis Ababa Yevgeny Terekhin, who participated in the grain supply ceremony, which took place in the UN WFP logistics hub, said that the countries are connected by "long-established strong friendly relations."

He also noted that in the second half of the 1980s, during the so-called devastating famine, the Soviet Union provided humanitarian aid to Ethiopia. "Now we continue this friendly tradition of providing help to our Ethiopian brothers and sisters. We hope that Russian grain supplies will help Ethiopia assist the population in need in regions affected by the drought," the diplomat stressed.

Terekhin also thanked deeply colleagues from the WFP for assisting in ensuring transportation and distribution of grain.

"Russia cooperates closely with the UN World Food Program, which is involved in providing emergency food aid. Our country finances the activities of the WFP to the tune of around \$60-70 mln each year. Those funds are spent on purchases of food, including from Russia, which is later delivered to conflict zones."

I am thoroughly convinced that the close cooperation between UN contributing countries and agencies, with the WFP being the most notable among them, is crucial for saving lives across the globe," he emphasized.



Russian Ambassador to Addis Ababa Yevgeny Terekhin (C)

CPC calls for confidence, perseverance in fight against corruption

BEIJING

THE disciplinary body of the Communist Party of China (CPC) has called for confidence and perseverance in the protracted war against corruption as the current situation remains grave and complex.

The call was made in a communique adopted at the fourth plenary session of the 20th CPC Central Commission for Discipline Inspection (CCDI), held from Monday to Wednesday in Beijing.

Xi Jinping, general secretary of the CPC Central Committee, Chinese president and chairman of the Central Military Commission, attended the session and delivered an important speech.

The plenary session reviewed the discipline inspection and supervision work during 2024 and assigned tasks for 2025. It adopted a work report delivered by Li Xi, a member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee and secretary of the CCDI, on behalf of the Standing Committee of the CCDI.

The attendees agreed that, under the guidance of Xi's speech, they will advance the fight against corruption with determination and work to eradicate the breeding grounds and conditions for corruption.

The year 2024 saw notable progress in disciplinary and supervisory work, the communique said. Hedonism and extravagance were targeted, while the practice of pointless formalities and bureaucracy were cracked down.

Xinhua

Emirates set to become the world's first Autism Certified Airline

DUBAI

EMIRATES has launched an inspiring journey to officially become the world's first Autism Certified Airline, inviting customers with autism and sensory sensitivities to experience Emirates' seamless services and personalised hospitality, making travel more accessible for all.

The inaugural designation is set to be formally awarded by the International Board of Credentialing and Continuing Education Standards (IBCCES) in the coming months, when more than 30,000 Emirates cabin crew and ground staff will have completed the initial training. Emirates also plans to roll out new standards and services that will improve the on ground and inflight travel experience for both customers on the autism spectrum and their families and companions, to be announced later in the year.

For many members of the global autism community, international air travel is a highly challenging experience, or something to be avoided com-

pletely, due to the high level of sensory stimuli that can be involved.

A survey on AutismTravel.com revealed that 78 per cent of families are hesitant to travel or visit new locations, and that 94 per cent of respondents would take more vacations if they had access to places where staff are autism-trained and certified. As part of Emirates' mission to make travel more inclusive and accessible for all, this significant step also supports Dubai's ambition to become the most accessible destination in the world.

Driven by its commitment to creating a welcoming travel experience for all customers including individuals with autism and those with sensory sensitivities, Emirates worked collaboratively with IBCCES, a leading organisation in autism and neurodiversity training and certification, to conduct an onsite review and comprehensive audit.

As part of a vast research endeavour, IBCCES surveyed more than 14,000 people with a variety of disabilities, includ-



ing people with autism, those with sensory sensitivities and their families and caregivers. The survey data was collated alongside numerous interviews, an International Air Transport Association (IATA) industry survey, and feedback from 1,200 industry professionals - helping develop the most beneficial standards for both passengers and airline staff. In addition to the feedback collated, IBCCES experts also conducted several Emirates flight audits on both long and short haul routes.

The collation of detailed data ensured input from key

stakeholders including the lived experiences of people with autism, global thought leaders, industry professionals and healthcare experts - combined to create new industry standards that accommodate passengers with autism and sensory sensitivities during air travel. Using a data-driven approach, Emirates and IBCCES partnered to create a new blueprint for serving passengers with accessibility requirements, encompassing the entire journey - from ground services to in-flight services, and Emirates will lead the way in bringing these new stan-

dards into practice in aviation for the first time. The thorough certification process includes ensuring at least 80% of customer-facing staff complete the dedicated training, alongside a commitment to ongoing training and improvements.

As part of the designation, Emirates' ground staff and cabin crew will undertake a new, focused training on autism and sensory awareness to equip them with the understanding and skills to address needs of travellers with autism and sensory sensitivities, along with their families. The training educates Emirates' teams on

the spectrum of autism, misconceptions and challenges faced, the myriad ways to assist customers dependent on their individual needs, and potential stimulus and triggers that staff should be aware of. The new training builds on the foundations established by the Emirates 'Introduction to Autism and Hidden Disabilities' training, which was completed by 23,000 staff in 2023.

Throughout 2025 and beyond, Emirates will be introducing new standards and services for customers with autism and sensory conditions that will ensure more enjoyable and accessible travel.

One such service is the introduction of 'sensory guides' - digital aids developed as part of the audit conducted by IBCCES in collaboration with Emirates that empower travellers to make informed decisions about the various environments encountered, and plan what suits their needs and preferences. The guides were created by conducting comprehensive facilities audits across Dubai locations and the

inflight experience, measuring sensory inputs in public areas such as sound levels, lighting, and potential sights and smells. Another development expected in 2025 will be the introduction of neurodiverse sensory products, for customers on Emirates flights - sensory fidget toys or aids that can encourage focus, help to reduce self-stimulatory behaviour and distress.

Last April, Emirates achieved a Certified Autism Center™ Designation for all four of its Dubai Check In facilities including its dedicated hub in Terminal 3 at Dubai International Airport (DXB). In December 2023, Dubai Airport was celebrated as the first international airport to receive the Certified Autism Centre™ Designation. Continuing to drive the accessible travel agenda forward, Emirates' new training programme, as well as new standards and protocols to be implemented in stages in 2025 and beyond, will enable neurodiverse customers to fly more comfortably.

Agencies



Sinner now begins Australian Open title defence against Jarry, Sabalenka gets Stephens

By Shrivathsa Sridhar

JANNIK Sinner begins his Australian Open title defence against Nicolas Jarry while women's champion Aryna Sabalenka takes on 2017 U.S. Open winner Sloane Stephens after the draw, opens new tab for the year's first Grand Slam was made at Melbourne Park yesterday.

Novak Djokovic launches his latest bid for a record-extending 11th Australian Open title and 25th Grand Slam crown against U.S. wildcard Nishesh Basavareddy but his path to the Melbourne Park final will not be an easy one.

In the third round Djokovic could face Reilly Opelka, the big-serving American who beat the Serb in Brisbane this week, while third seed Carlos Alcaraz is a potential opponent in the quarter-finals.

Spaniard Alcaraz, who added the French Open trophy to his collection in 2024, begins his campaign to capture the one Grand Slam that has eluded him when he meets Alexander Shevchenko.

World number one Sinner (pictured) must hit the ground running after being paired with Chilean Jarry, who beat the Italian in their first meeting in 2019 and took him to three sets in a losing effort in Beijing last year.

Women's second seed Iga Swiatek plays Katerina Siniakova while third

seed Coco Gauff faces an early challenge against fellow American Sofia Kenin, the Australian Open champion in 2020.

Paris Olympics gold medalist Zheng Qinwen, runner-up last year, meets a qualifier first up and is on a collision course with Sabalenka in the quarter-finals.

Two-times champion Naomi Osaka meets Frenchwoman Caroline Garcia in a rematch of their first round encounter last year which the Japanese player lost in straight sets shortly after her return to the tour from a long maternity break.

There are question marks over Osaka's fitness, however, after an abdominal injury forced her to quit while leading Clara Tauson in her first WTA final in almost three years in Auckland on Sunday.

Australia's Nick Kyrgios, who has struggled with injuries since losing to Djokovic in the 2022 Wimbledon final, is due to take on Jacob Fearnley but his return to Melbourne Park remains in doubt due to an abdominal strain.

Fellow Australian Alex de Minaur has a difficult opener against Dutchman Botic van de Zandschulp, who stunned Alcaraz at last year's U.S. Open.

The main draw gets underway on Sunday.

REUTERS

Giannis Antetokounmpo breaks Bucks' double-double mark vs. Spurs

By Field Level Media

DIAMIAN Lillard scored 26 points and Giannis Antetokounmpo added 25 points as the Milwaukee Bucks beat the visiting San Antonio Spurs 121-105 on Wednesday night.

Lillard also had eight assists, while Antetokounmpo added 16 rebounds and eight dimes for his 432nd career double-double, moving past Kareem Abdul-Jabbar for the top spot in Bucks history.

Brook Lopez posted 22 points for Milwaukee, which set up its clinical win with a commanding 34-19 second quarter.

Keldon Johnson combined 24 points with 11 boards in 25 minutes off the bench for San Antonio, while Chris Paul contributed 18 points and seven assists.

Victor Wembanyama had an unimpressive evening with 10 points on 4-of-10 shooting, though he added 10 rebounds and a game-high three blocked shots.

Wembanyama started well, leading the visitors to an early lead. The towering 21-year-old swatted an Antetokounmpo shot into the stands, knocked down a one-legged 3-pointer and hit an up-and-under circus shot.

Antetokounmpo responded to the challenge, throwing down four dunks in an 11-point opening quarter as Milwaukee rode a 10-0 burst to move ahead 31-27 going into the second period.

The Spurs reduced the gap to one point before Lillard, who was scoreless in the opening frame, piloted a 15-0 spree after a Bucks timeout.

The home side continued to have it all on their terms as they finished the half strongly.

AJ Green followed a corner 3-pointer over Wembanyama with a 30-foot trey, and Antetokounmpo followed sinking a fadeaway by rejecting Devin Vassell's attempted driving dunk.

Lopez's fourth trey on the cusp of halftime then stretched



San Antonio Spurs forward Victor Wembanyama (1) leaps for the opening tipoff over Milwaukee Bucks center Brook Lopez (11) during the first quarter at Fiserv Forum in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, USA, on Jan 8, 2025. Agencies

Milwaukee's advantage to 65-46.

Lillard's step-back 3-pointer saw the Bucks' advantage balloon to 70-49 before Paul paced a brief San Antonio fightback.

The veteran was aggressive from the perimeter, and his fifth 3-pointer in as many attempts trimmed the Spurs' deficit to 80-72.

Milwaukee eased the lead back out to 91-78 with a quarter to play. The Bucks sprinted away in the fourth, with Gary Trent Jr. burying 4 of 4 from long range in the quarter as the margin topped out at 26 points.

Meanwhile, Jamal Murray had 21 points and nine assists, Russell Westbrook and Michael Porter Jr. scored 19 points each and the host Denver Nuggets beat the Los Angeles Clippers 126-103 on Wednesday night.

Julian Strawther contributed 16 points, Christian Braun added a season-high 12 points along with nine rebounds for Den-

ver. The Nuggets, who lost to the visiting Boston Celtics on Tuesday, are 8-0 in the second game of back-to-backs.

Both teams were without a star player. Clippers forward Kawhi Leonard returned to Los Angeles earlier Wednesday to be with his family because of the wildfires burning in Southern California. Denver center Nikola Jokic missed his second straight game due to illness.

Norman Powell scored a game-high 30 points, James Harden finished with 16 and Ivica Zubac and Kevin Porter Jr. added 10 each for the Clippers, who have lost four of their past five games.

The teams split four games this season, with three of those played on the Nuggets' court.

Both teams struggled to score early in the third quarter, and Denver's lead stayed within 16 for the first few minutes before the Nuggets started to extend their advantage.

Jordan made two free throws and dunked off a pass

from Westbrook, Murray made two from the line, Westbrook scored on a fastbreak layup and a putback to give the Nuggets an 83-59 lead.

Denver continued to build its advantage. Westbrook converted a three-point play and Peyton Watson fed Jordan for another dunk to make it 94-67 with 4:36 left in the third, and the Nuggets headed into the final period up 98-77.

Murray hit two 3-pointers in the first few minutes of the fourth as Denver went up 109-80.

The Nuggets used a 20-3 first-quarter run to go ahead 30-13 and led 33-19 after one period. They made five straight 3-pointers in the second quarter to push the lead to 55-30 with 7:28 left before halftime.

Los Angeles scored the next 10 points to get back into range and the teams went into intermission with Denver ahead 66-50.

REUTERS

From dream to virtual reality, Woods and McIlroy's indoor league has debut match

By Frank Pingue

AFTER a one-year delay, the new tech-infused indoor golf league created by Tiger Woods and Rory McIlroy finally launched on Tuesday in Florida under bright lights in primetime, ushering in what organisers hope is a new chapter for the sport.

Unlike the genteel atmosphere reserved for typical golf events, TGL made a rollicking debut complete with strobe lights, smoke machines, enthusiastic player introductions and a DJ that helped to keep the mood elevated.

The virtual hole designs were also unlike anything players experience on tour, with golfers finding themselves playing on an active volcano, over an ocean cove, in a desert canyon, among mountain peaks and on a boomerang-shaped fairway.

While not competing in the season opener, 15-times major champion Woods and four-time major winner McIlroy were among those in attendance and both patrolled the playing area dur-

ing warm-ups inside the custom-built arena that seats 1,500 people.

"Considering this was just a dream conjured up, Rory and I were talking about it; it's hard to believe that dream came into reality and we are able to take golf into another stratosphere, really," Woods said during the TV broadcast.

"It's not traditional golf, yes, but it is golf and that's the main thing and providing a different type of atmosphere."

TGL is a hybrid of virtual and real-life play featuring teams of mic'd up PGA Tour players hitting shots at a five-storey-high simulator screen before moving to a green that can rotate 360 degrees, creating hole-to-hole variations.

The threesomes played alternate shot, or triples, over the opening nine-hole session, then switched to singles for a head-to-head round where each competitor played two full holes over the final six.

After players shook hands, 2019 British Open champion Shane Lowry of The Bay Golf

Club realized he forgot his tee and, with a 40-second shot clock ticking, rushed to retrieve one before hitting the first shot in TGL history.

The fast-paced action also featured some unique rules, with Lowry's team opting to play "The Hammer" early on to double the par-three third's points value.

Lowry, Wyndham Clark and Ludvig Aberg held a commanding 6-1 lead over New York Golf Club's Xander Schauffele, Rickie Fowler and Matt Fitzpatrick after the threesomes session before sealing a 9-2 victory.

"It's absolutely amazing to see this come to fruition," McIlroy said on the broadcast. TGL was supposed to launch early last year but was delayed after the inflated dome of the host facility was damaged and later replaced with a steel-supported structure.

Woods will make his TGL debut next week with Jupiter Links Golf Club while Northern Irishman McIlroy is set to make his first start on Jan. 27 as part of Boston Common Golf.

REUTERS



FILE: Tiger Woods of the U.S. and Northern Ireland's Rory McIlroy on the 10th during a practice round of The Masters at Augusta National Golf Club in Augusta, Georgia, U.S. on April 3, 2023. REUTERS

Ancelotti defends Vinicius ahead of Super Cup clash

JEDDAH, Saudi Arabia

REAL Madrid forward Vinicius Jr is available to play in the Spanish Super Cup, despite his recent two-match suspension, and on Wednesday manager Carlo Ancelotti continued to defend his player despite the club losing their appeal.

Vinicius was sent off for slapping Valencia goalkeeper Stole Dimitrievski in Friday's LaLiga match, and after an appeal, the Spanish FA suspended the striker for two league games, clearing him for later yesterday's Super Cup semi-final against Mallorca.

Ancelotti had been confident of winning the appeal, believing it to be a yellow card offence, and also said that Vinicius is under enormous mental stress due to previous incidents of racist abuse directed at him in Spain.

The manager still believes the suspension decision was wrong.

"We are delighted with Vinicius in every aspect," Ancelotti told a press conference ahead of Thursday's game in Jeddah.

"Both he and I hear what happens on the pitch. I keep saying that it is difficult to be Vinicius. The sanction is not correct.

"When you talk about Vinicius' provocation, you deflect the shot from the insults he receives."

Real have already played Mallorca this season, when they were held to a 1-1 draw in the opening game of the campaign, and Ancelotti is happy that their Super Cup tie will go to penalties without extra time should they end level again.

"We know the opponent very well and they know us. It's going to be very competitive, they cost us a lot in LaLiga. They have good characteristics and can fight for the game," Ancelotti said.

"You think you will play a good game and win it. If you don't win, there's the penalty shootout.

"It changes a lot. It avoids extra time, which can be more complicated to manage."

The winners will face Barcelona in the final on Sunday.

REUTERS

Barcelona boosted by Olmo and Victor news before beating Bilbao

JEDDAH, Saudi Arabia

BARCELONA received a massive boost before their Spanish Super Cup semi-final win over Athletic Bilbao on Wednesday, with news that the suspended duo Dani Olmo and Pau Victor can play in the final, to the delight of manager Hansi Flick and his team.

The decision of Spain's National Sports Council (CSD) to allow Barca to provisionally register the pair came while the team were on the bus going to the stadium.

Barcelona signed the two players in the close season but due to the club being unable to meet LaLiga's wage cap, they were allowed to be registered for the first half of the season only.

"Now we have one more reason to win this match," Flick told Movistar Plus before the game, and his side ran out 2-0 winners to reach Sunday's final against either Real Madrid or Mallorca who play on Thursday.

"I think it was, for us, a good signal before the match. We are a team and we wanted to win for Dani Olmo and Pau Victor, but also for the club," Flick told a press conference after the game.

"Of course, I'm really happy for these two players, but I'm also happy for the whole team in the end.

"I don't want to talk about what happened in the past, but we have to keep going and I hope this benefits us in the future."

Gavi and Lamine Yamal scored the goals to take Barcelona into the final, and both players expressed their joy at the news.

Olmo's trademark celebration, where he points to his wrist as if checking the time, was replicated by Gavi when he opened the scoring.

"I told him before that I was going to do it if I scored and I've dedicated it to him," Gavi said. "Both Dani and Pau are players who help us a lot and we are all happy because they can play now."

Yamal, returning from injury, doubled Barca's lead, and the winger is also happy that they will have the option of lining up with Olmo and Victor in the decider.

"In the end we are very happy that they can play now, I hope that in the final they will be with us," Yamal said.

"If the coach puts them on, let them give it their all."

REUTERS

Postecoglou's trust in youth repaid as Bergvall, Gray shine for Tottenham

LONDON

A PAIR of 18-year-olds gave Tottenham Hotspur fans reason to believe in a bright future on Wednesday as Lucas Bergvall and Archie Gray shone in a 1-0 victory over Liverpool in the first leg of their League Cup semi-final.

Bergvall's first goal for the club, a sublime 86th minute finish, capped an authoritative performance from the Swedish midfielder while Gray impressed once again as a makeshift central defender.

With his squad decimated by injuries, Postecoglou has had to throw Bergvall, Gray and Djed Spence in at the deep end, while 21-year-old goalkeeper Antonin Kinsky made an impressive debut against Liverpool just days after arriving from Slavia Prague.

While Tottenham's season has been chronically inconsistent there are signs that, given time, they can flourish under the Australian coach.

"Name me another Premier League team that's got two 18-year-olds and one playing out of position consistently," Postecoglou told reporters.

"I'm so happy they're at our football club and you know, in two or three years' time, I just pray to God I'm the beneficiary of their talent, mate, because if somebody else is getting it, I won't be happy."

Fans have been critical of Tottenham's transfer policy, which



Tottenham Hotspur's Lucas Bergvall scores their first goal against Liverpool during their Carabao Cup semi-final first leg match at Tottenham Hotspur Stadium, in London, Britain on January 8, 2025. Agencies

has an emphasis on recruiting young talent rather than paying huge wages to established superstars.

Bergvall, who was signed from Djurgarden for 8.5 million pounds (\$10.5 million) a year ago before being loaned back to the club, was "brilliant" against Liverpool and was only going to get better, Postecoglou said.

"I just don't think people really understand the level of performance that these young guys are giving us at the moment," he added.

"We had a goalkeeper on debut. Djed's playing left back, unbelievably well. Lucas is just growing all the time.

"He's got that ability as a footballer to create space for himself. He's got the quality, but he works awfully hard for the team as well.

"I've got no doubt that when we get our players back, the foundations are really strong, with a group of players we can really grow with."

Postecoglou was also full of praise for Kinsky, who looked totally at ease despite making his debut in such a massive game.

"I threw him a mammoth task today to play against the best team arguably in the world at the moment, in a big game, a semi-final. He just handled it awfully well," Postecoglou said.

While they still have to go to Anfield for the second leg next month, Tottenham will head there believing they can reach the final and deliver the club's first silverware since 2008.

"We haven't achieved anything, but I think just that feeling of having a victory against a top opponent in a big game, I'm really pleased for everyone," Postecoglou said.

Meanwhile, Swedish teenager Lucas Bergvall opened his Tottenham Hotspur account in thrilling fashion with the winner in Wednesday's League Cup semi-final first leg but should

not even have been on the pitch according to Liverpool captain Virgil van Dijk.

The 18-year-old had already been booked in the 68th minute and escaped a second yellow for a mistimed tackle on Kostas Tsimikas moments before sealing a 1-0 win for his team.

Liverpool were incensed, especially as Tsimikas was still off the field when Bergvall thumped his shot past Alisson.

"I think it was quite obvious it was going to be a second yellow (for Bergvall)," Van Dijk said.

"I think it was pretty clear. It was a coincidence and a minute later he scores the winner. It is what it is. The referee made a mistake in my opinion and I told him that."

"Everyone on the sidelines knew it was supposed to be a yellow. There's a linesman there, a fourth official there, there's VAR, a referee and he doesn't get a second yellow."

"I'm not saying this is the reason why we lost tonight but it was a big moment in the game."

Liverpool tasted defeat for only the second time since manager Arne Slot took charge and defeat ended a 24-match unbeaten run in all competitions, although the holders still have next month's second leg at Anfield to turn things around.

While magnanimous in defeat, Slot was also adamant that Bergvall should have been dismissed.

"The decision he made had a lot of impact on the result to tonight. There's not a lot I can say from that," the Dutchman said of referee Stuart Attwell.

"The fourth official told me why he thought it wasn't a second yellow and he heard that probably from the referee."

"I never like to lose but if you have to lose it's better to lose when you still have the second leg to come."

Meanwhile, Tottenham Hotspur midfielder Rodrigo Bentancur was conscious and under observation in hospital after suffering a freak injury early on in his side's League Cup semi-final first-leg victory over Liverpool on Wednesday.

The Uruguayan attempted to get his head on a corner early on but appeared to twist awkwardly and hit the ground in obvious distress. After nearly 10 minutes of treatment on the pitch he was taken off the field on a stretcher.

"I don't want to speculate because I don't really know either," Postecoglou told reporters when asked what exactly Bentancur had done. "All I know is he was conscious when he came off. Obviously it was some sort of head injury, but he was conscious when he was coming off the field."

"And he's been taken to the hospital for observation. But I'm not really clear on how it happened. Unless I get a doctor out here, I'm not going to speculate because it's just not fair on people around him."

"But it was a head injury. And there was concern from players out there so obviously there was something going on."

Bentancur recently returned from a seven-match domestic ban after making inappropriate remarks about Tottenham Hotspur captain Son Heung-min during a TV interview in Uruguay.

REUTERS

Deschamps confirms he will leave France job in 2026, successor not yet named

PARIS

FRANCE coach Didier Deschamps confirmed on Wednesday he will leave the national team after the 2026 World Cup, saying it was time to stop as Zinedine Zidane appears as the heavy favourite to take over.

The French soccer federation (FFF) told Reuters on Tuesday that Deschamps, who is France's longest serving national team coach, will not seek to renew his contract which expires in 2026 but FFF president Philippe Diallo said it was too soon to name a replacement.

Les Bleus have yet to qualify for the 2026 World Cup.

"In 2026 it will be over. In my head it's very clear. I've done my time, with the same desire and passion to maintain France at the highest level but 2026 is (a) very good (time to stop)," Deschamps (pictured) told TFI.

"One has to be able to say stop, there's a life after this. The most important (thing) is for France to stay at the top as they have been for many years."

Deschamps took over from fellow 1998 World Cup winner Laurent Blanc in 2012 and led France to the World Cup title in 2018, two

years after reaching the European Championship final on home soil.

Having had won trophies with every club he managed before becoming France coach, Deschamps also claimed the 2021 Nations League title with Les Bleus.

The former France captain, one of only three people to win football's most prestigious prize as a player and a coach, guided the national team to the World Cup final again in 2022, losing to Argentina on penalties after one of the best matches in the tournament's history.

His former France teammate Zidane, who headed a double in the team's 3-0 victory against Brazil in the 1998 World Cup final, has repeatedly said he would like to manage Les Bleus after a sterling coaching career at Real Madrid, whom he guided to three consecutive Champions League titles from 2016-18.

"I won't get into that debate (on Zidane). Didier has a two-year contract and, out of respect for him, his staff and the players, the question of his succession does not arise today," Diallo told French sports daily L'Equipe on Wednesday.

REUTERS



Gwiji by David Chikoko



Postecoglou's trust in youth repaid as Bergvall, Gray shine for Tottenham

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Coach Murray ready for any Djokovic outbursts at Australian Open

MELBOURNE

NOVAK Djokovic's former rival-turned-coach Andy Murray does not want the Serbian to suppress his emotions on court and is even willing to be the target of any angry outbursts as long as the 24-times major winner gives his all at the Australian Open.

Murray played Djokovic 36 times from 2006 to 2022, losing 25 including four Australian Open finals. The Briton, who retired after last year's Olympics, joined Djokovic's team in November.

"I would think that I'd be one of the people that would maybe hopefully understand that side of things," Murray told reporters yesterday ahead of the Grand Slam in Melbourne.

"I know it's not easy out there and it's stressful and at times he's going to want to vent towards his team and his box. Provided he's giving his best effort and trying as hard as he can, I'm absolutely fine with him expressing himself how he wants."

Murray also said he did not expect Djokovic to ask him to be his coach. But after the Scotsman's wife Kim supported the idea, the three-time Grand Slam winner agreed to help the 37-year-old in his quest for a record-extending 11th Australian Open title.

"Obviously I expect when the matches start ... it's stressful. When you're trying to achieve great things it's not easy," Murray added. "But the rewards at the end of it can be great and that's something I'm looking forward to."

The Australian Open main draw starts on Jan. 12, with Djokovic facing American wildcard Nishesh Basavareddy in the first round.

Meanwhile, moments after Nishesh Basavareddy reached his first ATP semi-final at the Auckland Classic yesterday, the American teenager named Novak Djokovic as his favourite player and said he had modelled his game after the 24-times Grand Slam champion.

The 19-year-old will get the chance to show Djokovic how much he has learned from him after he was lined up to face the Serb in the first round of the Australian Open when the draw for the Melbourne Park major was made later in the day.

"My favourite has always been Djokovic," said Basavareddy, who rallied to beat Alex Michelsen 2-6 6-2 6-4 in the Grand Slam tune-up event.

"I've looked up to a lot of different players and modelled my game after a lot of players, but he's been my favourite."

Basavareddy's strong return game has perhaps unfairly been compared to Djokovic's but the youngster with Indian roots has built a reputation on the ATP Challenger Tour by winning two titles and reaching four more finals last season.

Those results prompted the Stanford University student to turn professional in December but even he could not have foreseen his rise after becoming the youngest American to reach a tour-level hardcourt semi-final since an 18-year-old Reilly Opelka in 2016.

"It means a lot," said Basavareddy, who is ranked 133rd in the world.

"This is one of my first tour events and to make a deep run gives me a lot of confidence going forward. Hopefully I can keep pushing on."

His immediate focus will be a rematch against Gael Monfils, another of the elite tour's veterans, who beat him in the opening round at Brisbane last week.

"I'm the underdog. These guys have more pressure and more points to defend. I'm playing loose and free so that helps me a lot," said Basavareddy, who upset defending champion Alejandro Tabilo in the second round.

"I've been getting a lot of messages. This is the first time a lot of my friends and family are seeing me play on TV, so it's something new."

REUTERS

Simba and Yanga embark on high-stakes continental campaigns on Sunday



Young Africans squad pictured yesterday arriving in Istanbul, Turkey, en route to Nouakchott, Mauritania, for their CAF Champions League Group A clash against Al Hilal on Sunday. Photo: Courtesy of YASC.

By Correspondent Nassir Nchimbi

TANZANIA'S top football clubs, Simba SC and Young Africans, are gearing up for crucial international fixtures this Sunday in continental competitions.

Simba will face Bravos do Maquis in the CAF Confederation Cup in Angola, while Young Africans take on Al Hilal in the CAF Champions League in Mauritania.

Simba, who departed yesterday for Angola, will battle Bravos at the Nacional da Tundavala Stadium in Lubango.

Speaking before their departure, Simba head coach Fadlu Davids acknowledged the challenge posed by Bravos, emphasizing the importance of strategy and balance.

"We will be playing against a team that performs exceptionally well at home. We must be very smart, both with and without the ball, to control the game effectively."

"We cannot afford to repeat

the same mistakes we made against CS Sfaxien. We need to defend well and attack efficiently. A draw could also set us up perfectly for the next stage of the competition," Davids stated.

He further highlighted the team's focus on clinical finishing, noting that scoring goals will be critical against a resilient Bravos side that thrives on home-

ground advantage.

"This game is crucial for our ambitions. We must give it our all to secure a favourable result," he added.

Simba are currently second in Group A with nine points, tied with group leaders CS Constantine but trailing on goal difference.

Simba have scored nine goals and conceded four, while Bravos, in third place

with six points, have netted five goals and conceded three. CS Sfaxien remain at the bottom without a point.

A draw against Bravos would secure Simba 10 points, ensuring progression to the next round.

Meanwhile, Young Africans departed for Mauritania yesterday for their CAF Champions League encounter against Al Hilal.

Despite traveling without key players Maxi Nzengeli, Attohoula Kouassi Yao, and Aziz Andambilwe, who are recovering from injuries, the team is optimistic.

Young Africans head into the match on the back of an impressive 3-1 win over TP Mazembe but face a tough challenge against Al Hilal, led by coach Florent Ibenge.

Al Hilal have already secured a place in the knock-out stages.

Currently, Young Africans are in third place in Group A with four points. To secure a quarter-final spot, they must win both their remaining matches against Al Hilal and MC Alger to reach 10 points.

Al Hilal lead the group with 10 points, MC Alger have five, and TP Mazembe sit last with two points.

Young Africans' Media and Communication Officer, Ali Kamwe, expressed the significance of the upcoming match, stating that the team is fully prepared for the challenge ahead.

"This match is about more than football; it's a battlefield, and battle plans are never shared."

"We know what is at stake, and every player is committed to giving their best performance. Our journey in the Champions League depends on these moments, and we are ready to fight for a positive outcome," Kamwe affirmed.

Davids' rotation plan leads to key player absences for Bravos showdown in Angola

By Correspondent Seth Mapoli

SIMBA SC's Information and Communication manager, Ahmed Ally, has confirmed that key players Aishi Manula, Steven Mukwala, Valentine Nouma, and Joshua Mutale are not part of the squad traveling to Angola for the upcoming CAF Confederation Cup match against Bravos do Marquis.

The game is scheduled for Sunday, January 12, 2025.

While Mutale is sidelined due to injury, the other players have been left behind for tactical reasons, according to the team's spokesperson.

Ally explained that Simba's head coach, Fadlu Davids, has been regularly rotating his squad to ensure the team is well-prepared for each match.

"Coach Davids has considered the specific demands of the game against Bravos and has decided to travel with 22 players, leaving others back in Dar es Salaam," Ally said. "There is no issue with the players remaining behind as

it is part of the normal rotation process."

Despite being part of the team's training sessions, Manula (pictured), the former first-choice goalkeeper, is not traveling with the team. It is rumoured that Simba may consider loaning him out before the January transfer window closes.

The 22 players selected for the trip to Angola are expected to play a crucial role in Simba's bid to advance to the CAF Confederation Cup quarter-finals.

The team departed Tanzania early yesterday morning for Angola, where they will face Bravos in what is a critical match for their progress in the tournament.

The team traveling to Angola includes three goalkeepers: Moussa Camara, Hussein Abel, and Ally Salim. In midfield, Simba have included Mzamir Yassin, Fabrice Ngoma, Yusuph Kagoma, Elie Mpanzu, Augustine Okejepa, Kibu Denis, Debora Fernandes, Ladack Chasambi,



Awesu Awesu, Jean C. Ahoua, and Edwin Balua.

In attack, Simba have two strikers: Leonel Ateba and Valentin Mashaka. Defenders in the squad include Karaboue Chamou, Che Malone Fondoh, Abdurazak Hamza, Mohamed Hussein, Shomari Kapombe, and Kelvin Kijli.

This selection, while missing a few familiar faces, demonstrates coach Davids' strategy of maintaining a strong squad for the upcoming

match, with the primary focus being on securing the crucial points needed for a place in the tournament's next stage.

With just two matches remaining in Group A, Simba are currently in second place with nine points, only behind CS Constantine, who also have nine points but lead due to a superior goal difference of +5 compared to Simba's +2.

A win against Bravos would guarantee Simba's spot in the

quarter-finals, giving them the opportunity to face CS Constantine at home in Dar es Salaam on January 19.

Bravos are currently in third place in the group with six points, while CS Sfaxien, who have no points, are at the bottom of the table.

A victory against Bravos is crucial for Simba to secure qualification and maintain their momentum in the competition.

After their clash with Bravos, Simba SC will focus on their final group match against CS Constantine.

The match, set to be played at Benjamin Mkapa Stadium on January 19, will be a pivotal encounter in determining who finishes top of the group.

Simba are well-positioned to advance, but with the competition growing fiercer as the group stages conclude, every game is crucial for their ambitions of winning the CAF Confederation Cup this season.

Flexibles by David Chikoko

