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President Samia Suluhu Hassan signs a condolence book at the Iranian Embassy in Dar es Salaam yesterday following the recent deaths of Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi and several top Iranian government officials in a helicopter crash. Left is Hossein Alvandi Bahin, the Iranian Ambassador to Tanzania. Photo: State House

Mobile land clinics help clear 4,565 disputations

By Guardian Reporter

A TOTAL of 4,565 land disputes were resolved in the 2023/24 financial year largely on account of deploying mobile land clinics in a countrywide campaign, the government has stated. Jerry Silaa, the Lands, Housing and Human Settlements Development minister, made this observation when presenting budget estimates for the 2024/25 financial year pegged at 171.3bn/- in the National Assembly yesterday.

The government is determined to ensure that chronic and routine land disputes need to be resolved so that people live freely and conduct economic activities unhampered, he said, affirming that during the outgoing financial year, the government approved 191 applications for 11,613 hectares of land from local and foreign investors. The Treasury handed the ministry

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SGR locomotive, wagon tests now start mid-June

I call on the TRC management to work out on possible options that will enable customers to book three months tickets depending on customer preference

By Correspondent James Kandoya

INITIAL operations for the electric powered train from Dar es Salaam to Dodoma are expected to kick off June 14, conducted up to July 25 before actual operations proceed. Transport minister Prof Makame Mbarawa made this affirmation soon after inspecting ongoing construction of overpass bridges and electric multiple units (EMU) in Dar es Salaam yesterday, affirming that test drives are being conducted for electric locomotives and coaches. In her 2024 New Year message, Pres-

ident Samia Suluhu Hassan directed that operation of the electric train need to start by July 1, to meet public expectations on the transformative project. These initial operations are meant to verify performance of systems and components, including ticket booking, he said.

The government will ensure that ticket prices are favourable to customers, with EMU services lined up for passengers from Dar es Salaam to major stations such as Morogoro, Dodoma,

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Assistant Inspector of Police Stephen Tarimo, currently stationed in Kapele ward in Momba District, has a meal with Kapele Primary School pupils on Thursday. It was shortly after he made a presentation on the need for school children to prevent child marriages and fulfil their life dreams by sticking to their studies. He specifically appealed to them to freely offer information on sexual violence and other offences. Photo courtesy of Issa Mwandangala

'Tobacco industry nets 37m users aged 13 to 15'

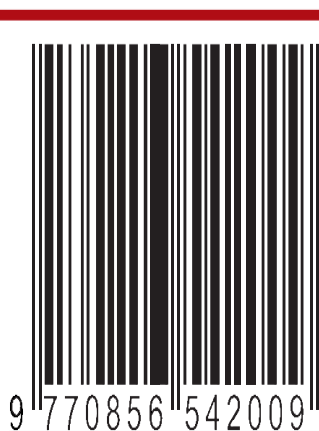
By Guardian Reporter

THE tobacco industry actively targets teens with new tactics, and an estimated 37m children worldwide aged between 13 and 15 years use tobacco, on the basis of a new report by the World Health Organisation (WHO). Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, the WHO director-general, made this affirmation in a statement

accompanying the report, launched in collaboration with STOP, a global tobacco industry watchdog. He cautioned that in many countries, the rate of e-cigarette use among adolescents exceeds that of adults, citing the WHO European region, where 20 percent of 15-year-olds surveyed reported using e-cigarettes in the past 30 days. Despite significant pro-

gress in reducing tobacco use, the emergence of e-cigarettes and other tobacco and nicotine products presents a grave threat to youth and tobacco control, the report underlined. "History is repeating itself, as the tobacco industry tries to sell the same nicotine to our children in different

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Dr Mwinyi, Sudanese specialist discuss links

By Guardian Reporter

ROBUST collaborations with various stakeholders is needed to increase the number of medical specialists in Zanzibar hospitals, President Dr Hussein Ali Mwinyi has declared.

Zanzibar presidential communications statement said that the president issued this appeal on Thursday at the State House during a meeting with Dr Suzan Homeida, the founder and CEO of Frontierpoly21 based in the Rwandese capital of Kigali.

The Sudanese medical consultant heads the Frontier Polyclinic and Diagnostic Centre seemingly set up in 2021 in the wake of the deepening civil strife in her country, specialising in "more health info and tips you need in life," with internet links identified as #Health #healthcare #HealthyLiving #MedicareForAll, the latter forming the sphere of discussions with the Isles leader.

Such collaboration will help reduce the number of Zanzibaris seeking medical treatment abroad, especially for non-communicable diseases like heart, cancer, spine and brain, he said, asking Frontierpoly21 to look at the possibility of getting trained medics and specialists from Sudan.

The government in Zanzibar seeks to increase the district hospitals capacity, where Dr Homeida could work with Zanzibar on increasing the capacity of the Lumumba Regional Hospital, lacking skilled professionals in a number of areas, the president indicated.

Zanzibar needs more col-

laboration in specialised heart surgery, cancer and the nervous system involving the spinal cord and brain, he said, noting that a lot of money is spent to finance treatment for such diseases in India, Kenya, Turkey and elsewhere.

"The government was investing efforts to deploy medical specialists in newly built district and regional hospitals to further bring quality services closer to people," he said.

In her remarks, Dr Homeida hailed Zanzibar for its achievements in the health sector citing the construction of modern hospitals at the regional and district level, promising the government to cooperate with it to realise current objectives in the Isles health sector.

Dr Homeida dwelt on the Zanzibar tourism sector, noting the various opportunities in the sector, with considerable likelihood of growth in tourism attractions including medical tourism in the near future, underlining that she has a dream of establishing the largest health college in the city of Dar es Salaam. It would be patterned after the University of Medical Sciences and Technology (UMST) in the Sudanese capital of Khartoum, she said, and another health sector training facility in Zanzibar.

That initiative will open up many opportunities and develop the health sector, with her presence in Zanzibar giving her new experience on opportunities for further success in promoting the health sector in the islands, especially for the new district hospitals, the visiting specialist affirmed.



Former Prime Minister Cleopa Msuya contributes to discussion on the National Development Vision 2050 from his Dar es Salaam residence yesterday. Right is Dr Asha-Rose Migiro, a member of the vision's drafting committee. Photo: Correspondent Imani Nathaniel

'Tobacco industry netted 37m users aged 13 to 15'

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packaging," the director intoned, specifying that tobacco firms are actively targeting schools, children and young people with new products that are essentially a candy-flavoured trap.

"How can they talk about harm reduction when they are marketing these dangerous, highly-addictive products to children?"

The report said more than 70 percent of youth e-cigarette users would quit if the products were available only

in tobacco flavour, rather than enticing flavours like candy and fruit.

Ruediger Krech, the WHO director of health promotion, said in the statement that tobacco firms are intentionally designing products and utilising marketing strategies that appeal directly to children.

"The use of child-friendly flavours like cotton candy and bubble gum, combined with sleek and colourful designs that resemble toys, is a blatant attempt to addict young people to these harm-

ful products." The deceptive tactics underline the immediate need for strong regulations to protect young people from a lifetime of harmful dependence, said the report.

The WHO urged governments to protect young people from the uptake of tobacco, e-cigarettes and other nicotine products by banning or tightly regulating the products.

Jorge Alday, the STOP director at Vital Strategies, said that addicted youth represent a lifetime of profits to the industry. "That's why the

industry aggressively lobbies to create an environment that makes it cheap, attractive and easy for youth to get hooked.

"If policy makers don't act, current and future generations may be facing a new wave of harm, characterized by addiction to and use of many tobacco and nicotine products, including cigarettes."

Youth advocates around the world are taking a stand against the tobacco and nicotine industry's destructive influence and manipulative

marketing. They are exposing these deceptive practices and advocating for their own tobacco-free future.

Youth organisations from around the world participated in the latest session of the Conference of the Parties to the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (COP10) to deliver a powerful message to policy makers.

"Future generations will remember you as the ones who protected them or the ones who failed them and put them in danger," the COP10 declaration asserted.



Finance minister Dr Mwigulu Nchemba speaks at an event to mark European Union Day held in Dar es Salaam on Thursday. Photo courtesy of Finance ministry

Mobile land clinics help clear 4,565 disputations

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an additional 287,666bn/- to its original estimates to pay debts of bidders, employees and contractors, he specified, elaborating that 178,577bn/- is needed to move people from game reserves and water sources to other areas which are suitable for settlements.

During fiscal 2023/24

people in six areas were compensated at a total of 20.1bn/- to move out of their places, the minister noted, affirming that the government set aside 478 square kilometers of land from the Ruaha National Park to be parcelled out to evicted people.

He urged that open spaces be protected from

invasions so that they are used for public purposes as playgrounds and recreation spaces, specifying that 249,340 plots and 7,559 farms were valued and approved during the year.

Priorities for the next financial year include strengthening resolution mechanisms on land conflicts and increasing the

pace of surveying plots, he said, emphasizing that the government was keen on eradicating land disputes as they affect lives and impede economic progress.

Information and communication technology (ICT) systems will be boosted in record keeping, service delivery and access to land information, plus strength-

ening the land disputes resolution mechanism, he said, also pointing at speeding up land use planning, surveys and provision of title deeds, increasing efficiency in levy collections and taxes by mobile phone applications.

"The ultimate goal is to cut on the demand for houses in urban areas," he stated, citing tasks entrusted to the

National Housing Corporation (NHC) to construct affordable housing under the 'Samia Housing Scheme'.

This is chiefly targeting Dar es Salaam Region, where construction in Kawe area on the northern outskirts of the city has reached 35 percent, set for completion before the new fiscal year ends, he added.

SGR locomotive, wagon tests now start mid-June

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Tabora, Isaka and Mwanza while the broader locomotive and wagon facility will serve the breadth of designated stations, he explained.

"I call on the TRC management to work out on possible options that will enable customers to book three months tickets depending on customer preference," he said, urging the public to start booking tickets before operations actually start.

Engineers say that the three overpass bridges will be completed before July 10 for trial operations to be initiated, he said, with TRC director general Masanja Kadogosa elaborating that three locomotives and 28 coaches have undergone test drives, complying with demands of the Land Transport Regulatory Authority (LATRA).

Test drives for six other locomotives and 14 coaches were being conducted as demanded by the regulator, he said, pointing out that initial operations demanded first to build staff capacity and coordination of systems to take note if there are shortcomings.

This would build trust in the community about the project when it rolls out, thus ensuring its optimal use, he said, noting that on April 22 Prime Minister Kassim Majaliwa launched the first drive test for the electricity powered train.

The designated stretch was the Dar es Salaam to Makutupora portion, which includes the capital, Dodoma section, with the premier stating that the test drive was timely.

The government has invested a lot in transport to enhance connection from the port of Dar es Salaam to inland regions and neighbouring countries, as improved rail infrastructure construction was ongoing in various places, the premier had affirmed.

Zanzibar to install security cameras near tourist hotels

By Guardian Reporter, Zanzibar

THE government of Zanzibar is set to install security cameras around all tourist hotel zones to control crime incidents.

Minister of State in the President's Office (Regional Administration, Local Government and Special Departments) Masoud Ali Mohamed announced this in the House of Representatives yesterday when responding to members who contributed to the ministry's budget estimates for 2024/2025 financial year.

He said the government was in the study stage to implement the programme to protect meant properties owned by investors.

He said the responsibility of providing security as well as assuring investors of their safety belongs to the government, adding that this was the reason behind implementation of the programme.

Mohamed mentioned the areas that will be involved in the installation of security cameras as Nungwi where there are

many tourist hotels, Kiwengwa, Pwani and Shangani as well as the southern region of Unguja where construction of tourist hotel projects continues.

"I would like to inform the members of the House of Representatives that the intention of the Revolutionary Government of Zanzibar is to install security cameras in all tourist hotel zones to control crime incidents," he said.

He said the government has started taking steps to deal with crime incidents, including establishing a tourism police unit that works in all tourist hotel zones.

He added that police have succeeded in controlling small incidents of crime that emerged such as looting of tourists' personal belongings such as mobile phones and cameras.

"To a large extent, we have succeeded in controlling crime incidents such as tourists being robbed of their belongings through the establishment of a tourism police unit that has helped a lot," he said.



Jerry Silaa, the Lands, Housing and Human Settlements Development minister, presents budget estimates for the ministry during fiscal 2024/2025 in the National Assembly yesterday. Photo: Correspondent Ibrahim Joseph

IGP orders RPC to safeguard professionalism nationwide

By Guardian Correspondent, Mwanza

INSPECTOR General of Police Camilius Wambura has directed all Regional Police Commanders to immediately start implementing directives of the Criminal Justice Reform Commission to measure their performance.

He issued the directives yesterday here during an event to award medals to inspectors and other senior officers in the Lake Zone where he said the target is to make Tanzania Police Force among the

best institutions in Africa.

He said instructions by top leaders of the government are to stop doing business as usual and work professionally by adhering to Police General Orders (PGO).

He directed all RPCs to fully cooperate with colleagues at lower levels to ensure that they regularly review the instructions of the Criminal Justice Reform Commission.

IGP Wambura said the government has continued to recognize the contribution of the police in

maintaining order and security of the general public.

He said that the force had no promotion for a long time, saying this time the government decided to promote and award officers alongside employing new recruits.

He said major improvements have been made to transform police, including purchasing vehicles and other equipment.

IGP Wambura said the force was determined to ensure that it promotes peace and security in the country through law enforcement.

He said as a leader of the institution, he was concerned with complaints raised against police, including corruption allegations.

Among the complaints is the institution's failure to prevent crime, the use of excessive force, delays in investigations of cases, acts of corruption, the suspects' property being lost while in police hands among others.

Some of the recommendations and instructions given by the commission to the Police Force include reforms to enable major improve-

ments to eliminate existing operational defects. Other reforms suggested include the use of PGO which the commission said have been developed without considering the conditions and legal scope contained in section 7(2) of the Law of the Police Force and Auxiliary Services and other laws.

Some challenges in the PGO include investigation of controversial deaths, identification and parading of suspected criminals before being proven by the court of law.

Speaking on behalf of the officers

who received the medals, Mwanza Regional Police Commander Wilbroad Mutafungwa said the medals will increase their morale, discipline and responsibility in their work and promised to continue to carry out their duties professionally.

Wambura presented medals to 32 officers from the Lake Zone on behalf of President Samia Suluhu Hassan to commemorate 60 years of the union between Tanganyika and Zanzibar, long service medal and good conduct.

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CP Faustine Shilogile (L), the community police commissioner, opens a working session for officers, inspectors and rank and file police in Dodoma city yesterday. Photo: Police HQ

Over 600 to visit tourism exhibition in Arusha city

By Guardian Correspondent, Arusha

OVER 600 consumers of tourism products and services from 40 countries across the world are expected to attend the Karibu Kilifair tourism exhibition scheduled to take place from June 7 to 9 this year at Prison Grounds in Arusha city.

The exhibition is expected to bring together various tourism stakeholders from within and outside the country to showcase their tourism-related products and services.

Dominic Shoo, Senior Managing Director at Kilifair told reporters here yesterday that the exhibition will bring together 468 tourism stakeholders from 37 countries around the world.

He said due to the successful growth of the tourism sector, the exhibition aims to introduce new tourism products and services.

He mentioned some of the countries whose delegates have confirmed participation include Germany, South

Africa, the UK, Italy and other countries.

The guest honour is expected to be Minister for Natural Resources and Tourism Angellah Kairuki.

"Organizing exhibitions involves a lot of costs. The main goal is to ensure that consumers of tourism products and services benefit from these exhibitions," he said.

He called on residents of other regions to visit the exhibitions and get information about the tourism sector.

Head of marketing and sales Noel Petro said 70 percent of corporate customers in the tourism sector get inspired by such exhibitions.

He asked the government to build permanent exhibition halls to facilitate promotion of tourism and its products at any time.

"The exhibitions are unique to us because they bring an opportunity to sell products and tourism services to a wider section of consumers," he said.

Minister wants RCs to coordinate repair of roads affected by deluge

By Guardian Correspondent,

Morogoro

MINISTER of State in the President's Office (Local Government and Regional Administration) Mohamed Mchengerwa has directed all Regional Commissioners to meet experts in their respective areas to discuss how to

repair roads and other infrastructure destroyed by heavy rains that hit the country recently.

Mchengerwa issued the directive in Malinyi District, Morogoro Region yesterday during his tour to inspect development projects, including repair of roads which were damaged by heavy rains.

He said the rains badly

destroyed infrastructure, adding that it was necessary for regional authorities to meet and discuss the way forward on how to restore the infrastructure.

Mchengerwa promised to provide funds amounting to 800m/- to the Tanzania Rural and Urban Roads Agency (Tarura) to repair road infrastructure in Malinyi Dis-

trict that were destroyed to relieve citizens of the challenge of transportation that they currently face.

The roads which need to be repaired by the Tarura funds in the district include Kichangani which connects the areas of Lugala, Misegese and Igave which for now is impassable in many sections. The minister instructed

Morogoro Regional manager for Tarura Emmanuel Ndyamukama to engage a contractor to repair the road and complete it within a period of two weeks.

Mchengerwa said the goal is to enable people of Malinyi to transport grain and various products they produce which are important to them and to the national economy.

Morogoro Regional Commissioner Adam Malima commended the minister for his quick response and handling of 800m/- for construction of the road.

Malinyi District Commissioner Sebastian Waryuba commended the government for providing the funds for restoration of infrastructure in the area.

Said Tila Malinyi, Ward Councillor, hailed the minister for earlier sending his representative to sympathise with the people of Malinyi due to the floods.

He said the floods caused damage to road infrastructure and bridges, leading to the emergence of various challenges, including rising prices.

AMREF for collaborative efforts to eradicate fistula

By Guardian Reporter

AMREF Health Africa Tanzania has expressed its commitment to continue supporting the government's initiatives to end obstetric fistula in the country.

In a statement to mark this year's International Day to End Obstetric Fistula themed 'Break the Cycle: Prevent Obstetric Fistula in Tanzania,' the organisation said along with partners it has reached 179 fistula survivors with psychological and livelihood support and reintegrated them in their communities.

The statement said for more than 60 years, Amref Health Africa Tanzania has been working to contribute to improving the health of Tanzanians.

"Since 1957, Amref Health Africa Tanzania has been the major supporter of the government of Tanzania's health care initiatives, particularly the Ministry of Health in development of national health policies, strategies and guidelines for equitable health service delivery in the country," the statement reads in part.

It further said the organization employs a holistic approach to ensure obstetric fistula becomes a history in Tanzania by primarily preventing its occurrence, providing treatment support to women who end up with fistula and ensuring seamless socioeconomic reintegration into their communities.

"To complement the government's efforts towards prevention of obstetric fistula, Amref Health Africa Tanzania supported in strengthening availability of quality Basic Emergency Obstetric and Newborn Care (BEmONC) and Comprehensive Emergency Obstetric and Newborn Care (CEmONC) services, improving nutritional practices of women of reproductive age and children in hard-to-reach communities through community awareness interventions," the statement further said.

The statement added that Amref Health Africa works to empower adolescent girls and young women on reproductive and sexual rights strategically to prevent early pregnancies as well as promoting their nutritional rights.



Jenista Mhagama (R), the Policy, Parliament and Coordination state minister in the Prime Minister's Office, (PMO) listens to David Msungu (L), the director of Global Survey Co. at an exhibition organised by the Ministry of Lands, Housing and Human Settlements at parliamentary grounds in Dodoma yesterday. Photo: Correspondent Ibrahim Joseph

TBS destroys fake food in Lake Zone operation

By Guardian Reporter

TANZANIA Bureau of Standards (TBS) has destroyed seven tonnes of fake and substandard imported food and cosmetics in its operations conducted recently in various parts of the Lake Zone.

The destroyed products

which did not meet standard benchmark include chemically-induced cosmetics, children's milk and various food products.

Speaking soon after destroying the products here yesterday, TBS Lake Zone Senior Quality Control Officer Nuru Mwasulama said that the prod-

ucts were seized in various parts of the zone and that the exercise was continual.

She said the objective of the bureau is to stimulate business growth by emphasizing to traders to engage in legitimate businesses without causing health effects to consumers.

"The role of TBS is not only

to seize and destroy but also create awareness and understanding to stakeholders. One of the destroyed cosmetics was discovered due to reports given by consumers," she said.

She warned traders with the habit of selling expired products to stop, adding that the government will never spare

anyone once caught.

The official further urged the public to be careful when purchasing products warning people to avoid using fake or expired goods for their own benefit.

She said that TBS has always been impounding and destroying goods which do not comply

with set standards to safeguard people's health and the country's economy.

Deus Mlenga, TBS Quality Control Officer, urged the public to report on time any chemically-induced or expired cosmetics whenever they see them.

He stressed the need to take

precautions when purchasing goods in the market, including food items by inspecting the date of manufacture and the expiration date.

Mlenga said that the increase in cancer and other health and economic problems are among the effects of using counterfeit products.

JKT invites 2024 Form Six leavers to report for drilling

By Polycarp Machira, Dodoma

THE National Service (JKT) has instructed 2024 Form Six leavers to report to their respective training camps between 1st and 7th June 2024 for three-month mandatory training.

Addressing a press conference at JKT headquarters in Dodoma yesterday, Brig Gen Hassan Mabena said preparations for the new intake are complete.

"The National Service invites youth who completed advanced secondary education in 2024 in all schools across Tanzania Mainland to attend the training in accordance with law," he said.

Mabena said the youth are required to report at the following JKT camps as assigned to each school leaver: Rwamkoma (Mara), Msange (Tabora), Ruvu (Coast), Mpwapwa and Makutupora (Dodoma), Mafinga (Iringa), Mlale (Ruvuma), Mgambo and Maramba (Tanga), Mtabila (Kigoma), Itaka

(Songwe), Luwa and Milundikwa (Rukwa), Nachingwea (Lindi), Kibiti (Coast) and Oljoro (Arusha).

He said the full list of names and allocation to all camps is available on the JKT website www.jkt.go.tz. The information can also be accessed through USSD CODE *152*00*, select 8(Elimu) then 5(JKT).

He urged those reporting for training to carry the requirements as outlined in the joining instructions.

However, Mabena urged the public to be wary of any deceptions from people with bad intentions, stating that there are always misleading information during such exercises.

"Let me warn members of the public that none of the requirements are sold at JKT as candidates have to purchase them before joining their respective camps," he said, adding that the National Service only provides training equipment, freely.



Brigadier-General Hassan Mabena, the National Service (JKT) head of administration, briefs journalists in Dodoma yesterday when inviting 2024 Form Six leavers to report to their respective training camps from June 1 to June 7, for the three-month mandatory military training. Photo: Correspondent Renatha Msungu

Project in Kongwa focuses on smallholder livelihoods

By Special Correspondent

THE International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI) has launched the second phase of its 'Enabling a resilient and prosperous community through participatory agroecological practices (ResComm II) project.

ResComm II which will be implemented in Kongwa District, Dodoma Region, uses community-based agroecological approaches to improve food and nutritional security, and is being integrated into Tanzanian government initiatives.

Speaking during the launch at Lengaji village in the district re-

cently, Anthony Whitbread, leader of the Sustainable Livestock Systems Programme at ILRI highlighted the project's dual focus on nutrition and income opportunities.

"The purpose of this initiative is to demonstrate the potential outcomes of approaching challenges faced by farming communities collectively and collaboratively," he said.

He noted that Dodoma region is heavily reliant on agriculture, and food security is one of the primary goals of Tanzania's Development Vision 2020-2025.

ResComm II will work with farmers, researchers, government and

private sector experts to transform agriculture and promote sustainable landscape management.

The project will be implemented in eight villages of Kongwa District namely Sagara A, Sagara B, Moleli, Lengaji, Laikala A, Laikala B, Ng'humbi and Mlali as well as three villages in Mpwapwa District. It will run from 2024 to 2026, he said.

Patrik Aus der Au, representing the Liechtenstein Development Service (LED), one of the project partners, commended the project's focus on integrating agroecological practices to address climate change challenges.

Kongwa District Commissioner

Mayeka Simon reiterated the importance of addressing climate variability, urging farmers to use improved seeds and appropriate farming practices advocated by the project to increase productivity.

Henry Limubi, who owns one of the model farms, said ResComm I—the first phase of the project—had turned things around on his smallholding. "Climate change has made farming more challenging but adopting agroecological practices has improved my yields, resulting in higher income. Waterproofing prevents soil erosion and using improved seeds has increased productivity on my farm," Janeth Musa

Yusufu, a farmer from Lengaji village who cultivates sorghum and maize pledged to apply knowledge from ResComm II believing that ResComm II has come at the perfect time.

"It is a good opportunity to women farmers to learn good agronomic practices. I would like to ask the project implementers to put many efforts on capacity building to enhance awareness creation in our villages. I believe this is going to change our lives."

Over 200 participants attended the launch and visited model farms to witness the impact of technologies designed to address climate

change challenges. For example, the technology of waterproofing construction has helped smallholder farmers and livestock keepers increase productivity and improve soil health.

ResComm II, funded by Biovision and LED, builds on the achievements of ResComm I (2021-2023). It will be implemented by ILRI in collaboration with Tanzania Agricultural Research Institute (TARI), the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT), the Tanzania Livestock Research Institute (TALIRI) and Sustainable Agriculture Tanzania (SAT).

Over 200,000 herders trained on modern animal husbandry

By Guardian Correspondent, Dodoma

OVER 250,000 livestock keepers from 12 regions have been trained on modern livestock keeping and breeding skills to increase income and transform livelihoods.

The training has been provided by the Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries in collaboration with private sector stakeholders.

Alexander Mnyeti, Deputy Minister for Livestock and Fisheries made the remarks in the National Assembly yesterday when responding to Athuman Maige, (Tabora North) who wanted to know when the government will start modern livestock keeping training for livestock keepers at ward level to boost productivity.

Mnyeti said training is provided to ensure livestock keepers and extension officers can be productive and practise commercial livestock keeping to meet market demands.

He said the ministry has also been training extension officers and livestock keepers from wards and villages in various parts of the country.

He said in the 2023/24 financial year, a total of 1,058 were trained compared to 515 of farmers who were trained in the year 2022/23.

He further said in the 2024/25 year, the ministry expects to commence implementation of a five-year Tanzania Climate-Smart Dairy Transformation Project (T-CSDTP) which will benefit a total of 600,000 people in the dairy value chain.

He said the major goal of the project is to transform the dairy value chain to improve livelihoods, increase food security and mitigate impacts of climate change.

"This project will boost productivity in livestock keeping especially in the dairy sub-sector," he said.



Eva Makilagi Luoga (3rd R), the CCM Women's wing (UWT) Babati district chairperson, presents a UWT membership card to Magdalena Ombay, a resident of Maisaka Street, during her visit at the area on Thursday. Photo: Correspondent Gift Thadey

UN head for greater Africa's role in global peace, security

By Special Correspondent

UNITED Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres told the Security Council on Thursday that peace was the key to unlocking Africa's future and strengthening the continent's voice and influence in building peace globally.

"Now is the time to unleash Africa's peace power. We need to strengthen Africa's leadership on the continent

itself, and on the global stage," he said at a debate on its critical role in addressing global security and development challenges.

Guterres described Africa as "an important voice for the global good" and said it had shown "many examples of unity and solidarity in a fractured world."

"We see this unity in Africa's focus on ending poverty and hunger, supporting refugees fleeing across

borders, and achieving sustainable development. And we see it in the continent's efforts to work together to build a modern, diverse, innovative, and powerful continental economy to benefit all Africans," he said.

But Guterres added that there was first a need to find peace in Africa itself saying "too many Africans are caught up in the hell of conflicts or living with the relentless danger of terrorism and violent extremism in

their communities."

He said the UN and the African Union (AU) were working together to defuse conflicts before they escalate, manage them effectively when they occur, and build sustainable peace when they are resolved.

"Our partnership with Africa is based on the clear perception that we must work with the African Union based on the principle of African-led solutions for African prob-

lems," he said.

He added that there was a need to rectify "structural inequalities" at the UN and give African countries a seat at the negotiating table.

"Africa deserves a voice in the global peace and security architecture. But Africa's voice can only be heard if African countries can participate in global governance structures as equals," he said.

"This must include correcting the

lack of permanent African representation at this Council. It must also include reforming the global financial architecture, especially its handling of debt, so that African countries have the support they need to climb the development ladder."

He said the UN's "Summit of the Future", due to take place in New York in September, will be an opportunity to push forward on these issues.



Dr Fatuma Maganga (2nd R), the Singida regional administrative secretary, addresses Iramba district entrepreneurs on Thursday at a financial education training session conducted by Treasury officials, ahead of issuance of loans to youths, women and people living with disabilities. Others are Treasury financial management officers Elizabeth Mnzava (L), and Salim Kimaro (2nd L) and Avelina Kapologwe, a community development officer with the President's Office (Regional Administration and Local Governments). Photo: Courtesy of Ministry of Finance

Google says fibre optic cable to connect Africa

By Special Correspondent

GOOGLE has announced plans to build the first subsea fibre optic cable connecting Africa and Australia.

Dubbed Umoja Fiber, the cable will be anchored in Kenya and will pass through Uganda, Rwanda, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Zambia, Zimbabwe, and South Africa, including the Google Cloud region, before crossing the Indian Ocean to Australia. Umoja's terrestrial path was built in collaboration with Liquid Technologies to form a highly scalable route through Africa, including access points that will allow other countries to take advantage of the network.

Umoja, which is the Swahili word for unity, joins Equiano in an initiative called Africa Connect.

"Umoja will enable African countries to more reliably connect with each other and the rest of the world.

Establishing a new route distinct from existing connectivity routes is critical to maintaining a resilient network for a region that has historically experienced high-impact outages." Brian Quigley, Google Cloud's VP for global network infrastructure, said in a blog post Thursday.

"We are grateful for the partnership from leaders across Africa and Australia to deliver Africa Connect to people, businesses, and governments in Africa and around the world," he added. The announcement follows recent widespread outages across Africa, which have been attributed to undersea fibre cuts. In March this year, for example, a suspected underwater rock slid off the coast of Cote d'Ivoire resulting in several submarine cables being offline. The cables included ACE - Africa Coast to Europe, SAT-3 - Submarine Atlantic 3/West Africa Submarine Cable, WACS - West Africa Cable System and MainOne. The outage impacted 13 African countries located on the West African seaboard, causing either degraded services or near-total Internet outages.

A similar incident happened this month causing internet outages across East and South Africa.

"Access to the latest technology, supported by reliable and resilient digital infrastructure, is critical to growing economic opportunity. This is a meaningful moment for Kenya's digital transformation journey and the benefits of today's announcement will cascade across the region." - Meg Whitman, U.S. Am-

Senegal initiates Africa's climate risk programme to uplift farmers

DAKAR

THE government of Senegal in partnership with several international organizations including the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) has officially launched the Africa Integrated Climate Risk Management Programme (AICRM).

The programme aims to strengthen resilience of small-holder farmers to the impacts of climate change in seven Sahel countries participating in the Great Green Wall: Burkina Faso,

Chad, Gambia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, and Senegal.

Other partners in the initiative include the Green Climate Fund, the African Development Bank (AfDB) and the African Risk Capacity (ARC) Group, the World Food Programme (WFP). The Government of Senegal is working through the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Sovereignty and Livestock.

In Senegal, the programme aims to increase the resilience and improve the livelihoods and food and water security of 169,200

households in nine regions of Senegal.

The total cost of AICRM-Senegal is \$19.77 million, out of which about 60 percent financed through a grant by the Green Climate Fund, and the remaining financed by IFAD, AfDB, ARC and the Government of Senegal. The programme will be implemented for a period of six years, until 2029.

The programme will build on IFAD-funded initiatives already underway or completed in the country and will benefit from synergies with the IFAD-supported

Sahel Regional Programme, which is currently being implemented.

According to the representative of the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Sovereignty and Livestock (MASAE), Ndèye Hélène Diallo, who chaired the kick-off workshop, "the AICRM Senegal programme, with its holistic and integrated approach to climate risk management, will be both an appropriate response and a proven model for addressing climate change issues.

The option taken by this pro-

gramme to consolidate the achievements and existing investments of projects and programmes is to be welcomed and encouraged."

For Matteo Marchisio, IFAD's Country Director in Senegal, the support once again demonstrates IFAD's commitment to supporting the development of Senegal's agricultural sector. "IFAD is committed to continuing its engagement with the Republic of Senegal in support of our shared goal of improving economic prosperity and food and nutrition security. I

am particularly pleased to witness the launch of this project, which I believe will help Senegal move towards agricultural development that is more resilient to the effects of climate change and that benefits all the country's people," he said.

The AICRM programme will support Senegal's transition to low-emission agricultural development through sustainable forest and soil management, the promotion of solar power micro-grids and the use of solar energy in agricultural value chains.

Farmers seek state's help to fight worms

By Special Correspondent

MAIZE farmers in Murang'a County, Kenya have called for the government's intervention to control the spread of fall-army worms which destroy their crops.

The farmers decried the destruction caused by the worms may subject them to hunger in near future.

They complained that some of the pesticides they source from local agro-vets are not effective as even after treating the crop, parts of the plants are completely destroyed by the insects.

One of the farmers from Kiharu area, Josephat Ndirangu decried that almost half of his one-acre maize farm has been destroyed by the fall-army worms.

"I have used various pesticides but they have not been effective. The pesticides are quite expensive, also pushing some of us to employ traditional methods to control the worms," he said.

The farmer said this season due to destruction of the crops, he is expecting to get not more than two sacks of maize from the farm where he usually gets four or five sacks.

"We want the government to deploy extension officers to visit our farms and advise the right pesticides to use to control the worms," he said.

Another farmer Peter Macharia said a big part of his maize crop farm was completely destroyed by the worms after he was unable to purchase and spray the crops. He said the prices are beyond his reach, saying the ministry of agriculture should be spraying farms on behalf of farmers as a way to mitigate food insecurity.

"Prices of the best pesticides are beyond reach to many subsistence farmers. If the government is committed to attain food security there is a need to support us in controlling these insects which are affecting our crops," he said.



A commuter bus carries luggage on top while its conductor hangs on the side, as captured by our roving photographer at Michenzani area in Zanzibar yesterday. Photo: Correspondent Jumanne Juma

US museum returns ancient statues stolen from Thailand

BANGKOK

THAILAND'S National Museum hosted a welcome-home ceremony on Tuesday for two ancient statues that were illegally trafficked from the country by a British collector of antiquities.

The objects - a tall bronze figure called the Standing Shiva or Golden Boy and a smaller sculpture called Kneeling Female - are thought to be around 1,000 years old.

They were returned from the collection of New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art. This most recent repatriation of artwork

comes as many museums in the U.S. and Europe reckon with collections that contain objects looted from Asia, Africa and other places during centuries of colonialism or in times of upheaval.

The Metropolitan Museum had announced last December that it would return more than a dozen artefacts to Thailand and Cambodia after they were linked to the late Douglas Latchford, an art dealer and collector accused of running a huge antiquities trafficking network out of Southeast Asia.

He was indicted in the United States in 2019 for allegedly orchestrating a long-running scheme to sell looted Cambodian antiquities on the international art market. Latchford, who died the following year, had denied any involvement in smuggling.

Speaking at Tuesday's ceremony, the Metropolitan's curator of Asian and Southeast Asian art, John Guy, called the returned works "unrivalled masterpieces" of their period and said the handover was "a very meaningful moment to recognize the impor-

ance of the art of Thailand in world culture."

"The Met initiated the return of these two objects after reviewing information and established that the works rightly belonged to the Kingdom of Thailand," he said. "This return followed the launch of the Metropolitan's Cultural Property Initiative last year, an initiative driven by the Met's commitment to the responsible collecting of antiquities and to the shared stewardship of the world's cultural heritage," Guy told his audience in Bangkok.

Thai Culture Minister Sudawan Wangsuphakjiosol expressed her country's gratitude for the return of the items.

"These artifacts that Thailand has received from the Met are the national assets of all Thais," she said.

Last month, the Metropolitan Museum signed a memorandum of understanding in New York with Thailand "formalizing a shared commitment to collaborate on exchanges of art, expertise, and the display and study of Thai art."

Biden praises Ruto's intervention in Haiti

WASHINGTON

UNITED STATES President Joe Biden on Thursday hailed William Ruto's leadership, congratulating him on his intervention in politically unstable Haiti.

President Ruto's presence at the White House marks the first state visit to the United States by an African leader for more than 15 years.

"We are going to provide logistics, intelligence and equipment. In fact, some of the equipment has already arrived. Kenya is strengthening its police force and other countries are planning to do the same," said President Biden.

He said: "The US is going to support the collective effort in this area. Of course, Kenya is not going it alone. We are working with

Congress to provide \$300 million for the Multinational Security Support (MSS) mission, and an additional \$60 million for equipment support. We have also received and continue to receive significant contributions from other partners. President Ruto and I agree that the Haitian people deserve better, that they deserve peace and security."

The 1,000 Kenyan officers preparing to deploy to Haiti will be part of a multinational force backed by \$300 million in US support, but not American troops.

"Kenya believes that the responsibility of peace and security anywhere in the world, including in Haiti, is the collective responsibility of all nations and all peoples," Ruto said.

The Biden administration has praised Kenya for stepping up in Haiti when so few other countries have agreed to do so. Haiti is the Western Hemisphere's poorest nation and has been mired in political instability and natural disasters for decades.

The Haiti mission will also include support from the Bahamas, Barbados, Benin, Chad and Bangladesh.



Dr Edwin Kilimba, the AMREF (T) HIV care and treatment project director introducing the project to officials of the health, social welfare and nutrition department in the President's Office (Regional Administration and Local Governments - PO-RALG) in Dodoma recently. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

Chad swears in president, ends years of military rule

N'DJAMENA

CHAD swore in Mahamat Deby Itno as the president on Thursday after holding elections earlier this month, completing a disputed transition to democratic rule after he seized power three years ago.

Deby Itno, also known as Mahamat Idriss Deby, took power after his father Idriss Deby Itno was killed while fighting rebels in 2021

after ruling the country for three decades.

The long-delayed May 6 election came after three years of military rule.

His main rival, Succès Masra, who contested the results earlier this month, resigned from his post as prime minister on Wednesday.

Masra had been involved in protests against Deby Itno's decision to extend his time in power, and

fled the country in 2022.

He was allowed to return last year and was appointed prime minister.

Masra, who claimed to have won the election, filed an appeal to challenge the preliminary results, which showed Deby Itno had won, but it was dismissed.

The oil-exporting country of nearly 18 million people hasn't had a democratic transfer of power

since it became independent in 1960, after decades of French colonial rule.

In his first presidential address, Deby Itno said his government would focus on boosting Chad's agricultural and farming sectors, and investing in education, access to water and healthcare.

"I have heard your yearning for change, and I've understood you. Let's all play our part, individually

and collectively, to bring about the change we all hope, desire and expect," he said.

Western leaders congratulated Deby Itno despite irregularities in the vote, which included Chad's decision to ban 2,900 EU-trained observers from monitoring the election.

Chad is seen by the U.S. and France as one of the last remaining stable allies in the vast Sahel

region following military coups in Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger in recent years.

The ruling juntas in all three nations have expelled French forces and turned to Russia's mercenary units for security assistance instead.

The British government also said the election marked an important milestone in the return to civilian rule.



An unidentified volunteer places sandbags to hold an electricity transmission pole to prevent it from falling as it started to bend during ongoing rains at Kivule area on the southern outskirts of Dar es Salaam on Thursday. Photo: Correspondent Jumanne Juma

Solar power saves lives at hospitals in Sierra Leone

FREETOWN

SIX main hospitals in Sierra Leone now enjoy clean, reliable and affordable energy following installation of solar power systems with batteries as part of a project managed by Sustainable Energy for All (SEforALL).

The installations were completed in late 2023 at the Ola Durning Children's Hospital (ODH), Princess Christian Maternity Hospital (PCMH), Masanga Hospital, Kambia, Kabala and Bonthe Government Hospital.

A total of 0.6 megawatt-peak of power capacity was installed, which means that the six hospitals can provide critical medical attention any time of day or night.

"We are delighted to see hospitals like Kambia, Bonthe and Masanga sporting solar panels, which provide them with reliable, clean, environmentally friendly power. This means that communities can now begin to expect greatly improved service delivery and round-the-clock critical medical care in these hospitals. Together, we are saving lives, and we couldn't be prouder," said SEforALL Sierra Leone Country Manager Ngozi Beckley-Lines.

One of the biggest and least talked about challenges facing healthcare systems in Africa is unreliable power, particularly in the healthcare sector, which leads to life threatening complications and preventable deaths. Sierra Leone is one of the most-affected countries, with a recent analysis suggesting that 38 percent of health facilities lack access to power. The problem is exacerbated by high rates of neonatal, infant, and under-five mortality, which are 34, 82, and 111 deaths per 1,000 live births, respectively, according to UNICEF, while 1,360 mothers die in every 100,000 live births.

The Sierra Leone Healthcare Electrification project has shown that this is a solvable problem. In fact, the project is now expanding to provide solar installations at one additional hospital and 25 community health centres across the country. This is a game-changer for a country that has been making strides towards provision of high quality, accessible, affordable and equitable healthcare.

The project is supported by UK funding and partners like Sierra Leone's Ministry of Health, Crown Agents, and EM-ONE Energy Solutions Canada. Commenting on the partnership, Sierra Leone's Minister of Health Dr Austin Demby said:

"It is encouraging to see the energy and health industry players working together to support the government's initiatives and solutions to enhance service delivery and health outcomes for our citizens. With such strong collaborations and investments as well as the Government's robust policy and regulations, I have no doubt that our nation will make enormous strides toward attaining universal access and a gradual transition to clean and sustainable energy."

According to SEforALL, the Sierra Leonean project is expected to provide a template that can be used to electrify thousands of other health facilities across the country and beyond. Such efforts are also an opportunity to grow local renewable energy workforces. The Sierra Leone Healthcare Electrification Project featured a 'Women in STEM' programme, where 12 young women trainees were involved in the project's planning and delivery, helping them gain real-world experience to grow their careers in the renewable energy sector.

A 2023 joint report by the World Health Organization (WHO), SEforALL and the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) indicated that approximately 1 billion people in low and middle income countries can only access healthcare facilities with unreliable electricity supply or no electricity at all. The back-up option is the use of noisy, polluting, expensive diesel generators, which not only further compromises the health and safety of the patients, but is also harmful to the environment.

Thousands attend funeral of Iran's President Raisi

TEHRAN

IRAN on Thursday interred its late president at the holiest site for Shiite Muslims in the Islamic Republic.

Thousands of mourners in Iran joined a massive funeral procession for the late President Ebrahim Raisi.

A large truck carried Raisi's coffin through the city of Birjand, surrounded by a sombre crowd walking alongside the giant vehicle.

Raisi will be the first top politician in the country to be buried at the shrine, which represents a major honour for the cleric.

The death of Raisi, Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian and six others in the crash last Sunday comes at a politically sensitive moment for Iran, both at home and abroad.

Raisi, who was 63, had been discussed as a possible successor to Iran's supreme leader, the 85-year-old Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

It was a final sign of respect for a protégé of

Iran's supreme leader, who was killed in a helicopter crash.

President Raisi's burial at the Imam Reza Shrine in Mashhad caps days of processions through much of Iran, seeking to bolster the country's theocracy after the crash that killed him, the country's foreign minister and six others.

Thousands of people stood in the streets of Mashhad to see Raisi's coffin draped in Iran's flag.

Tanzania-Uganda Business Forum eases the way to greater integration

WE often hear of ministerial meetings sorting out difficulties in intra-regional business activities or proposals of this or that nature from business association.

However, it is not as often that we hear of direct business meetings being conducted for similar purposes, including investments.

That is why the mere fact that a two-day Tanzania-Uganda Business Forum was being held in our commercial capital, Dar es Salaam, was something of a landmark. Quotable sources explained that the event was dedicated to the enhancing of business relations between the two countries. In particular, top government officials said that the government was determined to push Tanzanians' participation in industrial ventures, eyeing the developing regional and continental markets.

The opening address saw reference to the need for implementing a blueprint involving amendments to various laws, policies and regulations to address loopholes and create a more conducive business and investment environment. That can mean different things to different people, as just the previous day legislators were picking up a query on the East African Logistics Centre in Dar es Salaam.

A point of dispute relating to the centre from members of the business community was the fear that their centrality and even monopoly in import business in particular would be eroded. The foreign business community seeks assurances of fair play on the ground but sections of the local business community see fairness differently, including that things should not become harder for them because of foreigners.

In other words, locals believe that they can stand competition from other local businessmen but don't

countenance effective competition from foreign entrepreneurs.

They would wish to see their foreign counterparts classified as 'big' investors or commercial interests, whereas they are 'just investors', with certain amounts of capital - and these levels are not standardised. What the city centre lobby fails to see is that so long as someone has entered the country legally for a useful purpose and then opted to stay, she or he can also conduct a trade for a living without standing as an impediment to any trade.

The fact that the government has strengthened service delivery by creating and linking 55 electronic government systems in 50 public institutions has eased some things.

However, loopholes remain - including in areas like multiple land allocations or printing of ownership documents online, as well as reports on the siphoning of local government funds when dishonest officials create phony control numbers at sale points.

What was likely to be more animating for business dealers was that 13 laws had been amended in a bid to reduce or remove taxes, fees and charges as well as place exemptions on customs duties.

That the systems are linked could be true locally but efforts were being made for them to be interoperable at border points so as to facilitate rapid clearance of trucks, etc.

What is usually referred to as the Tanzania electronic investment 'single window' appears to be working for investment flows where capital is the issue, with money being transferred or permits sought.

Trading is a different matter as bottlenecks are faced more than with respect to investments and at a regional level it is trading that comes up first, not investments.

Global travel agents' exposure requires stakeholder 'appetiser'

IT is undeniable that 60 per cent of global travel and tourism decisions are influenced by travel agents, but merely hosting 120 of the world's most influential agents will not necessarily see the profile or visibility of Tanzania's northern circuit skyrocket.

To be sure, little of what the tour agents were being exposed to was quite visibly new, in which case what tour organisers are saying, as to the landmark experiences as likely to lead to a substantial surge in tourism could be over-optimistic.

The reason is that Tanzania has for nearly a decade trailed only Brazil globally in natural attractions but this has not checked its being classified way below the world's most exciting travel destinations.

There was, for instance, an expectation or projection that the country would arrive at over five million tourists annually by 2025.

Indeed, certain levels of the state tourism establishment have ritually been repeating this expectation even as recently as at the start of this year.

Clearly, it was untenable from the start and not interrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic for that matter, as no formal projection in the preceding years was leading to an astronomical figure like 5 million tourists in a matter of a few years.

The strategic input of Tanzania, the Royal Tour' fast-tracked the recovery to pre-pandemic levels, largely. That is a helpful background to look at the commercial bonanza in our northern tourism capital, Arusha. It is there that African Queen Adventures, a Tanzanian travel agency and the Istanbul Tourism Association (ISTA) of Turkey, organised the sight-seeing get-together for mid-spring before the peak summer travel season in the northern hemi-

sphere.

There wasn't much that the local organisers were saying in relation to the visit except expectations of 'business to business' networking, that is, between companies.

However, the only business being transacted, outside the periodic auctioning of hunting blocs, is one of bringing tourists to Tanzania - instead of identifying of travel firm could put up a business in a specific environment depending on its tastes and the sort of tourists it can find, to prepare that environment.

The fact of not being pluralistic in the hospitality infrastructure except perhaps with upper class hotels diminished the tourism mix that can be expected or projected from the ground, as the marketing agent is the same, namely state agencies running national parks or game reserves.

Hunting is chiefly done in game-controlled areas, but these have much less to do with tourism - which means that the product mix is largely tied up with sight-seeing and not camping or staying for a while in a spot dotted with a specific culture. It would definitely be the culture of the hotel operator, the chefs present, the music, television.

Fortunately, youths are now learning quite a few foreign languages, with Chinese in a sort of surge because of the 'business tourism' aspect of issues. If a good number of the parks and reserves were all managed by look-alike public servants, at some point a tourist would know that there would be many attendants speaking German or Spanish, English or French and any other language.

That would apply if an investor from the particular country took up the facility or obtained a spot to set up a hotel or a camp. It can surely be done.

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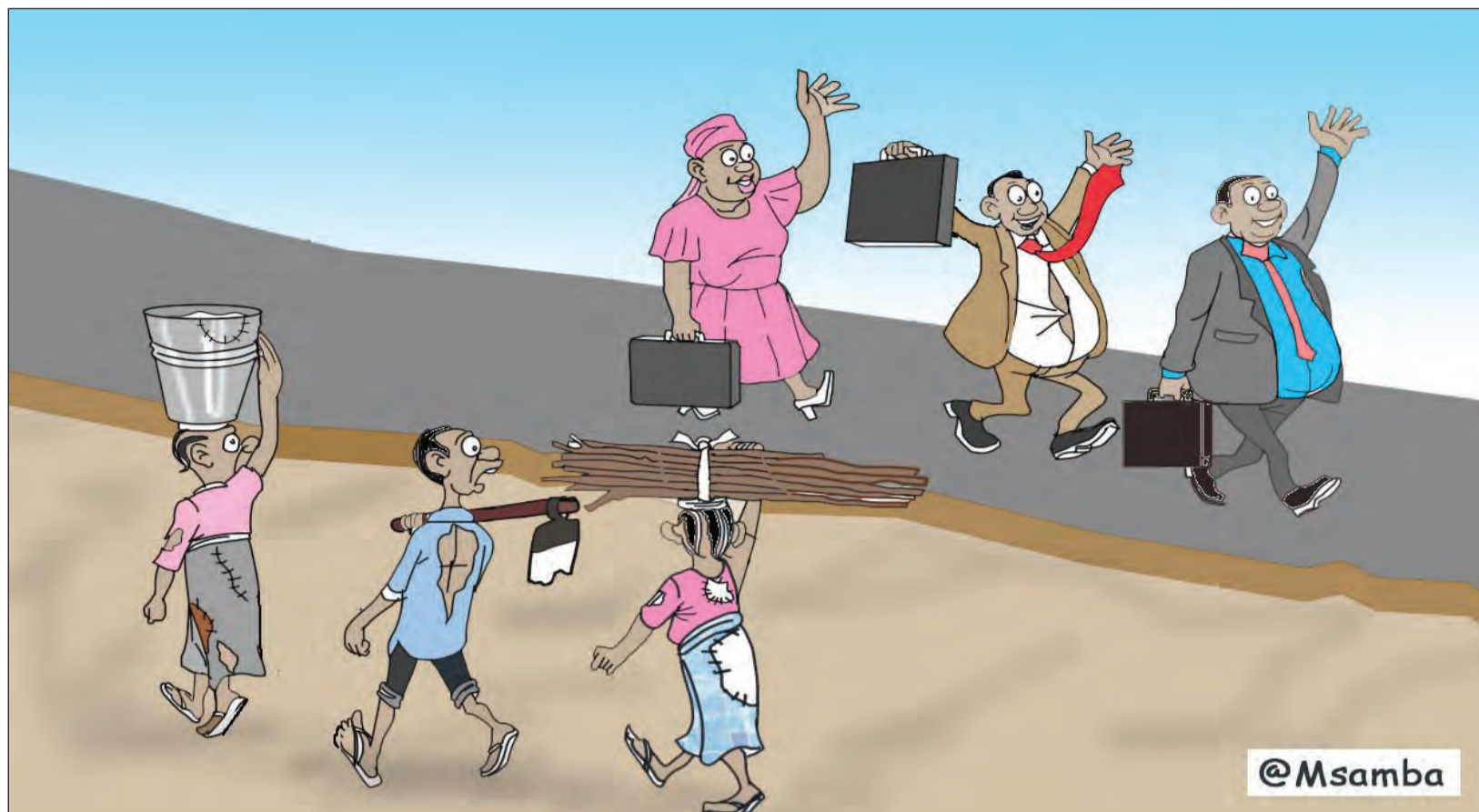
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Democracy, civic space and fundamental freedoms are under attack, but civil society is here to stay

By Sarah Strack

DURING the Forus network's General Assembly which took place in Gaborone, Botswana, civil society organisations from across 65 countries highlighted the challenges facing them globally in an increasingly polarised and crisis-hit world.

Participants discussed strategic foresight, policy demands and capacity strengthening - scanning the horizon for emerging and chronic issues affecting civil society, activists, journalists and human rights defenders worldwide.

Solidarity and local power

Year after year, civil society organisations have witnessed growing violence particularly directed against those defending human rights and the environment, as well as leaders of indigenous groups.

"Democracy, civic space and fundamental freedoms are under attack in various countries across the globe. Socio-economic disparities and gender based violence are on the rise in most geographies.

The world is again failing to achieve its commitments made under various developmental, environmental and financial frameworks. It's time for global civil society and human rights actors to reflect jointly and strategise on our future course of action," says Zia ur Rehman, Regional Coordinator of the Asia Development Alliance who joined the Forus network in Botswana for the General Assembly.

The event also pointed to other conflicts and challenges - from the "chronic" humanitarian crises to conflicts and the impacts of climate change and migration patterns. Civil society from all continents crafted a collective way forward, informed by local realities.

Local civil society from Botswana shared their journey in fighting gender-based violence.

"Gender-based violence is a national pandemic, a violation of grand magnitude of human rights. Civil society organisations in Botswana continue to do such a commendable job in trying to help the country to overcome this scourge.

As BOCONGO, we remain committed to support and advance the work of our members in this regard," says Kagiso Molatlhwa, BOCONGO Executive Director. A message echoed by Gender Links an organisation working across the Southern African region, who says, "ending gender-based violence starts with empowering women".

A year that could set the tone for the future

In terms of civic engagement, this year has been called the 'super election' year, with billions of people voting while navigating "the geopolitical



Forus General Assembly in Gaborone, Botswana. Credit: Forus

disinformation maze". The potential repercussions of such a pivotal year pushed civil society to reflect on how to preserve fundamental freedoms and civic participation in turbulent times.

According to research, elections in many jurisdictions have been affected by violence and arbitrary arrests, targeting opposition candidates and political leaders, as well as civil society, human rights defenders, journalists, media workers and election observers. At the same time political misrepresentation and manipulation online is a known concern.

The Forus network emphasized the strength of collective action and care in achieving local and global goals. From mutual support and "regenerative activism" to the protection of democratic values, alternative models and innovative approaches to address democratic challenges, civil society is calling for renewed international solidarity and shared visions to protect one another.

"We are concerned about the closure of civic spaces that are becoming stronger every day, but the search for alliances allows us to strengthen and recognize the important work of civil society, promoting sustainable development to build a more just and equitable society," says Francisco Garcia of the national civil society platform in Honduras, ASONOG.

After a major UN civil society

conference wrapped up in Nairobi earlier this month in preparation for the "summit of the future" coming up this September, civil society globally calls for "bold and honest" conversations among governments and civil society to drive forward a shared vision for reinvigorated and inclusive multilateralism.

The power of the network

The Forus General Assembly was organised in partnership with the national civil society platform BOCONGO and the regional coalition Southern African Council of Non-Governmental Organisations (SAF-CNGO) with support from the European Union and the Agence Française de Développement.

"Our gathering was a wonderful opportunity to reiterate our resolve to continue our struggles against inequalities to make this world a better place to live where everyone enjoys rightful spaces and choices of life," says Zia ur Rehman, Regional Coordinator of the Asia Development Alliance.

"Your current life is a result of your thought life," says Moses Isooba, Executive Director of the Uganda National NGO Forum, highlighting the importance of spending time together to "exude deep conceptual clarity" of where the Forus network wants to go.

ANONG, the national civil society platform in Uruguay, highlighted the importance of civil society

meeting across countries, for exchange and community-building. Transforming actions are born from these spaces of construction and reflection which represent an impulse to continue our work for the defense of human rights".

Monametsi Sokwe from the Southern African Council of Non-Governmental Organisations, concluded by highlighting the importance of continuing to innovate to address emerging challenges, fighting for sustainable development, and creating a resilient and inclusive society.

"Civil society organisations are essential throughout the world, providing humanitarian aid, supporting community resilience, fighting for human rights, justice, equity, democracy and peace.

They fight for the creation and animation of spaces where we can all learn from each other, and even from our differences, to act for the collective well-being. Such spaces are precious, and dialogue is crucial to making progress.

Together, we can overcome the challenges of our time, by opening to the rich diversity that the world has to offer, while respecting our values. This will help us to find new solutions to the aspirations of our peoples and to safeguard our planet," said civil society leader Mavalow Christelle Kalhoule, Forus Chair and President of SPONG, the Burkina Faso NGO network.

IPS

By Telesphor Magobe

Tanzania can rise to great heights with resources now at its disposal



review in 2027.

There are three main criteria 1) an income criterion, based on a three-year average estimate of the gross national income (GNI) per capita in US dollars, using conversion factors based on the World Bank Atlas methodology. For the 2024 triennial review, the threshold for inclusion is set at \$1,088 or less, while the threshold for graduation is set at \$1,306 or more.

2) A human assets index (HAI), consisting of a health sub-index and an education sub-index. The thresholds for inclusion and graduation have been set at 60 or below and 66 or above, respectively, for the 2024 triennial review. 3) An economic and environmental vulnerability index (EVI), consisting of two sub-indices: economic vulnerability and environmental vulnerability. The thresholds for inclusion and graduation have been set at 36 or above and 32 or below, respectively, for the 2024 triennial review.

Currently, 45 countries belong to the UN LDC category, according to UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA)'s report of May 8, 2024. Out of the 45 LDCs, 33 of them

are African countries (including Tanzania), 8 Asian countries (Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar, Nepal, Timor-Leste and Yemen) and 1 Caribbean country (Haiti) and 3 Pacific countries (Kiribati, Solomon Islands and Tuvalu).

According to the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the list of LDCs is reviewed every three years by the Committee for Development Policy (CDP), which comprises experts who report to the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). "Following a triennial review of the list, the CDP may recommend, in its report to the ECOSOC, countries for addition to the list or graduation from LDC status." Now, imagine that even with such triennial reviews and entry into lower-middle income economy status, Tanzania is still recognised as a LDC.

During the establishment of the LDC category in 1971, Tanzania was among the first 25 countries to belong to the category and then 28 other countries were added to the list in subsequent years, as more African countries gained independence and faced severe development challenges—in some cases compounded by the effects of independence, war and

conflict—and/or faced a sustained deterioration of economic conditions. This made the total list of 53 LDCs.

So far, even countries have graduated from LDC status, namely Botswana (December 1994), Cabo Verde (December 2007), Maldives (January 2011), Samoa (January 2014), Equatorial Guinea (June 2017), Vanuatu (December 2020) and Bhutan (December 2023). Sao Tome and Principe graduates this year after the UN General Assembly issued a resolution on its graduation, thus making the list of LDCs remain with 45 countries.

These are "the most disadvantaged of the developing countries, which comprise about 14 per cent of the world's population, but account for less than 1.3 per cent of global gross domestic product (GDP) and for about 1 per cent of global trade," according to DESA. This makes them also have exclusive access to certain international support measures, particularly in development assistance and trade.

The Global Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) 2023 suggests that across 110 countries 1.1 out of 6.1 people are poor and over 18 per cent are estimated to live in acute multidimensional poverty and 534 million out of 1.1 billion poor people—half of all poor people—live in sub-Saharan Africa. "Poverty reduction is possible as 15 countries halved their global MPI value well within 15 years." It suffices to say that with political will Tanzania has the potential to rise from the LDC category to an emerging market economy. Let's keep the fire burning!

"As gentle as a fawn—as a turtle dove—as sleep—as falling dew."

• The author is a Dar es Salaam-based lawyer. He can be reached at t22magobe@gmail.com

LAST week we briefly reflected again on child upbringing albeit on a different aspect from what we have already covered. We did it in light of sections 9 (parental duty and responsibility) and 13 (protection from torture and degrading treatment) of the Law of the Child Act (R.E 2019).

We particularly looked at section 9(3)(b) which provides that every parent shall "provide good guidance, care, assistance and maintenance for the child and assurance of the child's survival and development."

The rationale for this was to stress the role of parents as busy as they could be not to forget to take care of their children to ensure their children don't turn into juvenile delinquents and be future law-breakers. Instead, they should be responsible and law-abiding people. We concluded that the parental duty is non-delegable to teachers for schoolchildren.

Today, I invite you to briefly reflect on Tanzania's meeting of criteria for graduation from the status of UN least developed countries (LDCs) for the first time. Looking at the abundance of resources the country has it is almost impossible to think that Tanzania can belong to the category of "poorest countries" in the world since the UN established this category in 1971.

But there we are and, thanks to the Committee for Development Policy's 26th session of March 4-8, 2024 held in New York, Tanzania and two other East African countries, namely Rwanda and Uganda, met for the first time criteria for graduation from the UN LDC status. The three countries will be assessed again during a triennial

The Law and You



Horn of Africa's deep groundwater could be a game-changer for drought resilience

By Bradley Hiller and Jude Cobbing

EXTREME heat and drought have ravaged the Horn of Africa with devastating consequences. For many in Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia and Somalia, it continues today. For others, the spectre of drought looms ever near.

The region recently suffered its worst drought in almost half a century and experienced six consecutive failed rainfall seasons. Adaptive capacities are low and humanitarian impacts confronting: 50 million people were directly affected; 100 million more indirectly affected; 20 million risked acute food insecurity and potential famine; more than 4.4 million required humanitarian aid; and refugees numbered in the hundreds of thousands.

Recurrent drought spikes food prices, adversely impacts GDP and intensifies insecurity and conflict risk. Climate change is a disaster risk multiplier, exacerbating extreme drought-flood cycles and exposing already vulnerable populations to potential displacement.

The Horn of Africa contains the world's largest population of nomadic herders, representing half the population in some countries, and who are increasingly chasing rains that never come. Less mobile smallholder farmers are also impacted. Over 40 million people in regional border areas have little or no water infrastructure.

In response, relief agencies and governments struggle to support water and food insecure displaced persons and affected host communities. In 2022, the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR) received less than half the required financial resources to respond to regional droughts. And although drought forecasting capacities are increasing, it is the delivery of tangible and sustainable drought resiliency outcomes on-the-ground that matters most.

Deep groundwater can ease drought on Africa's Horn

Contrary to popular belief, water is not limiting drought resiliency in the region. Rather, it is a lack of access to water during drought events for those who need it most. Fortunately, the solution may lay directly beneath their feet.

Globally, groundwater supplies half of all drinking water and approximately one-third of irrigation and industry water. In contrast to surface water (and shallow groundwater resources), which is often diminished during drought events, deeper groundwater resources may provide unpolluted, climate-resilient and voluminous supplies.

Take sub-Saharan Africa. Groundwater volumes (renewable and non-renewable) are estimated to be equivalent to thousands of years of average total flow of the Nile River. Yet, it is estimated that less than 5 percent of annual available renewable groundwater in the region is utilized.

Similar characteristics are present in the Horn. Studies confirm that plentiful and accessible groundwater – typically less than 200m deep – is often avail-



Access to water and drought resilience are persistent problems across the Horn of Africa.

able, and periodically recharged, in recurrent drought hotspots.

This has been further confirmed by recent reinterpretations of vintage oil exploration well data.

For example, 400,000 olympic-size swimming pools of rechargeable fresh groundwater was discovered in Somalia, and a deep aquifer in nearby Tanzania is estimated to provide water for two million people, with flow rates up to twenty times higher than shallow bores.

However, such resources remain largely unaccessed, despite the Somalia resource being considered the "most cost-effective and sustainable solution to water scarcity affecting millions", and separate findings that groundwater, coupled with mechanized piping, can be 50 times cheaper than rainfed supplies and water trucking during drought relief operations.

Multiple factors may be contributing to delayed progress. Globally, a predominant groundwater conservation narrative warns of overexploitation, pollution, salinization and subsidence. As recently as 2020, deep groundwater was classified as an "unconventional water resource" by the United Nations.

Prior to that, there was a perception that groundwater across sub-Saharan Africa was widespread but low in volume. Today, data on local resource dynamics

remains outstanding and political economy, financial and knowledge and capacity challenges remain.

However, narratives are shifting. Groundwater is now considered critical to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and there are high-level calls for concerted action to "properly develop and protect groundwater" and to make the "invisible, visible".

The UNDP's recently launched Groundwater Access Facility aims to sustainably utilize large volumes of untapped groundwater resources in the region to support those most affected by chronic drought and severe food insecurity. Shifting to tangible actions is the next step.

A strategic network for tackling drought

One option that merits further investigation is a strategic network of deep groundwater bores to support regional drought resiliency.

This concept builds upon knowledge that deep groundwater is accessible in areas where it is needed most, and is increasingly cost-effective; recurrent drought hotspots are well-known and increasingly forecastable; stakeholders most affected by drought events, their locations and their seasonal migratory patterns are increasingly well-understood.

A network of deep bores could potentially be harnessed full-time for multiple-use community water

supply or only during drought emergencies, depending on factors such as resource sustainability and local management preferences. Boreholes could be specially designed and constructed to reliably function under even the most severe drought conditions.

Inclusive and participatory approaches could empower communities as drivers of change, engaging them in aspects of planning, design, operation, maintenance and ownership. For example, local communities could determine optimum borehole locations for periods of acute water stress.

Funding may be sought from government and relief/development agencies – justified by ex-ante resilience building generating greater humanitarian, socio-economic and cost benefits than ex-post relief efforts.

Deep borehole development could form part of broader climate-resilient, integrated water resource management.

For example, where flood follows drought, excess surface water may be diverted for infiltration into groundwater reserves.

Deep boreholes could be linked to small-scale agro-forestry initiatives to support emergency food and feed production. Boreholes could become assets around which to coordinate drought relief programmes.

By Constance Malleret

Seed-sowing drones can be the answer to global deforestation

WITH a loud whir, the drone takes flight. Minutes later, the humming sound gives way to a distinctive rattling as the machine, hovering about 20 metres above the ground, begins unloading its precious cargo and a cocktail of seeds rains down onto the land below.

Given time, these seeds will grow into trees and, eventually, it is hoped, a thriving forest will stand where there was once just sparse vegetation.

That is what the startup which operates this drone, a large contraption that looks a bit like a Pokemon ball with antennae, hopes.

The 54 hectares (133 acres) here which have been badly degraded by agriculture and cattle farming in the Brazilian state of Bahia are just the start. Franco-Brazilian company Morfo has set itself the target of restoring one million hectares of degraded land in Brazil by 2030, using seed-sowing drones and a rigorously researched preparation and monitoring process.

How big a problem is deforestation?

Deforestation is a rapidly growing problem in many countries. In Brazil, for example, deforestation in the Amazon destroyed an area bigger than Spain between 2000 and 2018, a study by the Amazon Geo-Referenced Socio-Environmental Information Network (RAISG) showed in 2020. Although preliminary data from the government's space research institute (INPE) shows Amazon deforestation fell by 50 percent last year, forest loss continues to rise in other biomes, like the Cerrado.

In Afghanistan, years of war and fighting have had a devastating effect on forests. Many have been completely destroyed. According to the research group World Rainforests, more than one-third of Afghanistan's forests were destroyed between 1990 and 2005. By 2013, this had risen to half because of the additional problem of illegal logging.

And, in Colombia, internal violence and displacement have pushed armed groups, farmers and cattle farmers into the forests, causing more deforestation. In 2016 alone, after a peace deal was rejected by some armed groups, deforestation rose by 44 percent. President Gustavo Petro has since overseen a decrease in forest loss, by as much as 49 percent in 2023 according to Global Forest Watch, but deforestation has increased in other Amazon countries like Bolivia.

Wildfires in many parts of the world, notably Australia, California and around the Mediterranean in recent years, have also contributed to deforestation. Most recently, thousands of people have been evacuated in the past week because of wildfires in British Columbia and Alberta in Canada.

Why is forest restoration important?

"Climate change is happening, temperatures are rising, it's already too late. So we need to be planting [trees] now," says Adrienne Pages, Morfo's co-founder and CEO.

Healthy forests are a critical resource in the fight against climate change; they provide valuable ecosystem services such as carbon storage, temperature regulation, water resources and biodiversity conservation. Nearly one billion people depend on forests for their livelihood, according to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

Simply conserving those forests which remain is insufficient, so the United Nations has urged countries to meet pledges to restore a combined one billion hectares of degraded land by 2030 to avoid large-scale ecosystem collapse.

But that is a daunting task. Brazil, for example, has promised to reforest 12 million hectares by the end of this decade - a target which requires planting an area the size of England, or eight billion trees, according to (o)eco, the Brazilian environmental journalism platform.

How can drone technology help?

Traditional reforestation, where seedlings are grown in a nursery and then planted by hand, is effective, but it is labour intensive and time consuming. Drones can help speed up the process and reach areas which are dangerous or inaccessible to humans.

Morfo uses two drones which have been adapted to



Using drones to sow seeds can help reforestation efforts

carry 10kg to 30kg of seeds and can sow up to 50 hectares per day, piloted automatically or manually depending on the terrain. The height at which the drone flies and the density and type of seeds it disperses all depend on a sowing plan, designed following an examination of the land's environmental conditions.

"For us, it's not about the drone. The most important thing is the preparation and the seeds," says Pages.

With data from drone and satellite imagery as well as information collected by a team on the ground, data scientists use computer vision - a form of artificial intelligence - to develop models that can recognise trees and seed species. These are used to automate the creation of an optimal seeding strategy and to monitor results.

"The scalability of the solution is what's important to us. The starting costs of the project are going to be high, to allow for diagnosis, research, adequate preparation, but after that, costs per hectare are relatively low and fall as the area grows," says Pages.

What sorts of seeds are used?

"Seed availability is one of the biggest concerns. And the survival rate of seeds is low, so you need to have a lot of seeds," says Mikey Mohan, the founder of ecoresolve, a US-based ecosystem restoration company.

Morfo is working to address this. It has developed a biodegradable seedpod to sow smaller and more fragile seeds which have an 80 percent survival rate in the lab. The project in southern Bahia, a region where the Atlantic Forest began to be cleared for agriculture centuries ago and which is now overrun with monocultures of eucalyptus and sugarcane, is a testing ground for different seeding methods to work out how best to grow native species.

It is also researching these species' resistance to climate change to ensure the trees being planted here will be standing

100 years from now without the need for human intervention.

Overall the Atlantic Forest, a biome that stretches along Brazil's densely populated coastline, has lost more than 88 percent of its original tree cover, according to the NGO SOS Mata Atlantica.

"Our goal is to restore a functional ecosystem. The idea is to assess which species are more efficient and optimise the quantity of seeds we are using," explains Morfo's chief scientific officer, Emira Cherif.

Sowing non-native cover plants first - low-growing vegetation like leguminous plants which protect the soil and provide other benefits such as fixing nitrogen in the soil - can increase the germination rate of native pioneer species.

Sourcing seeds is one of the ways companies like Morfo are including local communities in their restoration efforts. "Seed collection is a good way of valuing people, of creating lasting green jobs, and of protecting a standing, growing forest," says Pages.

Last year, Morfo worked with 1,000 seed collectors across Brazil, such as Crispim Barbosa de Jesus, a 51-year-old subsistence farmer who started supplementing his income by collecting seeds after taking a course offered by a local NGO.

Barbosa, who worked cutting down trees for coal in his youth, sees the forest in a new light since becoming a seed collector. "Nature is so beautiful, you see the resistance of the trees. I feel better when I'm in the forest," he says, adding that "collecting seeds is a job that elevates people". He currently leads a team of seven, mostly young, men - including two of his sons - to provide native seeds to a handful of clients, including Morfo.

Where else are drones being used to reseed forests?

A small but growing number of companies around the world are using drones for ecosystem restoration. A peer-reviewed paper co-authored by Mohan in 2021 identified 10 such companies, many partnering with NGOs and helping restore areas af-

ected by wildfires in Australia and North America.

In Brazil, nascent small-scale projects are primarily focused on private land. Morfo has a new partnership with Rio de Janeiro city authorities, but the 500 hectares (1,236 acres) it has planted for other clients so far - in the Amazon and Atlantic Forest - is all private land which has been degraded by mining or agriculture.

How effective is drone reseeding?

The newness of this reforestation method means there is little conclusive data on the long-term results of seed-sowing drones. A year into Morfo's experiment in Bahia, however, preliminary signs are promising.

"Bahia experienced a big heatwave at the end of 2023. It was very dry, but you can see that our plants are doing quite well thanks to [the cover plants]," says Cherif, whose team of researchers spent a week in April measuring and cataloguing every sapling that has germinated since seeding last year.

The collection of this kind of data is key to scaling up the use of drones, according to Mohan. "To use drones on a larger scale, we need more research to understand the [seed] survival rate and how it can be increased," he says. "You want to make sure that whatever you plant can actually transform into a tree."

CAPITAL RADIO

RATIBA YA VIPINDI JUMATATU - JUMAPILI

MONDAY TIME PROGRAMME	TUESDAY TIME PROGRAMME	WEDNESDAY TIME PROGRAMME	THURSDAY TIME PROGRAMME	FRIDAY TIME PROGRAMME	SATURDAY TIME PROGRAMME	SUNDAY TIME PROGRAMME
05:00-09:00HRS MORNING JAM 09:00-13:00HRS LETE RAHA 13:00-14:00HRS DW-RADIO 14:00-16:00HRS CLUB 101 16:00-18:00HRS DALA DALA 18:00-18:10HRS HABARI 18:10-20:00HRS BOZOUK TIME 20:00-21:00HRS HALI HALISI 21:00-22:00HRS SPORTS 22:00-05:00HRS MUZIKI MCHAGANGANYIKO)	05:00-09:00HRS MORNING JAM 09:00-13:00HRS LETE RAHA 13:00-14:00HRS DW-RADIO 14:00-16:00HRS CLUB 101 16:00-18:00HRS DALA DALA 18:00-18:10HRS HABARI 18:10-21:00HRS BOZOUK TIME 21:00-22:00HRS SPORTS 22:00-05:00HRS MUZIKI MCHAGANGANYIKO)	05:00-09:00HRS MORNING JAM 09:00-13:00HRS LETE RAHA 13:00-14:00HRS DW-RADIO 14:00-16:00HRS CLUB 101 16:00-18:00HRS DALA DALA 18:00-18:10HRS HABARI 18:10-21:00HRS BOZOUK TIME 21:00-22:00HRS SPORTS 22:00-05:00HRS MUZIKI MCHAGANGANYIKO)	05:00-09:00HRS MORNING JAM 09:00-13:00HRS LETE RAHA 13:00-14:00HRS DW-RADIO 14:00-16:00HRS CLUB 101 16:00-18:00HRS DALA DALA 18:00-18:10HRS HABARI 18:10-20:00HRS BOZOUK TIME 20:00-21:00HRS SPORTS 21:00-23:00HRS MALUMBANO YA HOJA 22:00-05:00HRS MUZIKI MCHAGANGANYIKO)	05:00-09:00HRS MORNING JAM 09:00-13:00HRS LETE RAHA 13:00-14:00HRS DW-RADIO 14:00-16:00HRS CLUB 101 16:00-18:00HRS DALA DALA 18:00-18:10HRS HABARI 18:10-20:00HRS BOZOUK TIME 20:00-21:00HRS SPORTS 21:00-23:00HRS KIPIMA JOTO 22:00-05:00HRS MUZIKI MCHAGANGANYIKO)	07:30-10:00HRS DK 90 DUNIANI 10:00-11:00HRS 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

International community advised to end impunity for violence directed at conflict-time healthcare

By Special Correspondent

GOVERNMENTS and international agencies must do more to end impunity for violence against healthcare, campaigners have urged, as a new report shows that attacks on healthcare during conflicts reached a new high last year.

The report from the Safeguarding Health in Conflict Coalition (SHCC), an umbrella organisation of health and human rights groups, documented 2,562 incidents of violence against or obstruction of health care in conflicts across 30 countries—over 500 more than in 2022.

The group pointed out that the 25 percent rise on the previous year came as tens of millions of people in conflict-affected countries were already suffering from war, massive displacement, and staggering deprivation of food and other basic needs.

But beyond the inevitable suffering such violence against healthcare causes, the report's authors highlighted that one consistent feature of the attacks was the continued impunity for those perpetrating them.

They say that despite repeated commitments, governments have failed to reform their military practices, cease arms transfers to perpetrators, and bring those responsible for crimes to justice.

And they have now called on national leaders and heads of international bodies, including UN agencies, to take strong action to ensure violence against healthcare is ended.

"There has to be a change in how we ensure accountability for violations of international humanitarian law when the protection of health care and health workers is not respected because current mechanisms do not provide adequate protection. We need to ask some hard questions," Christina Wille, Director of the Insecurity Insight humanitarian association, who helped produce the report, told IPS.

Attacks on healthcare have become a prominent feature of recent conflicts—the SHCC report states that the rise in attacks in 2023 was in part a product of intense and persistent violence against health care in the occupied Palestinian territories (oPt), Myanmar, Sudan, and Ukraine.

And human rights groups have increasingly drawn attention to the deliberate targeting of healthcare facilities and medical staff by attacking forces.

Hospitals and other medical facilities are designated as protected civilian objects under international humanitarian law and it is illegal to attack them or obstruct their provision of care. Ambulances also have the same status. This designation does not apply if the hospital or facility is used by combatants for purposes deemed harmful to an enemy, but even then, an attacking force must give warning of its attack and allow for an evacuation.

But in many conflicts, forces seem to be increasingly ignoring this.

The SHCC report highlights that right from the start of two new wars in 2023, in Sudan and the conflict between Israel and Hamas, warring parties killed health workers, attacked facilities, and destroyed health care systems. Meanwhile, attacks on health care in Myanmar and Ukraine continued unabated, in each case exceeding 1,000 since the start of the conflicts in 2021 and 2022, respectively, while in many other chronic conflicts, fighting forces continued to kidnap and kill health workers and loot health facilities.

At the same time, the report identified a disturbing new trend of combatants violently entering hospitals or occupying them as sites from which to conduct military operations, leading to injuries to and the deaths of patients and staff.

SHCC Chair Len Rubenstein said that in many conflicts, the conduct of combatants revealed "open contempt for their duty to protect civilians and health care under international humanitarian law (IHL)" and specifically highlighted how Israel, "while purporting to abide by IHL, promoted a view of its obligations that, if accepted, would undermine the fundamental protections that IHL puts in place for civilians and health care in war."

"The report highlighted a lot of disturbing trends—there seemed to be no restraint on attacking hospitals right from the start of conflicts, we also saw for instance, a rise in hospi-



A health worker in Gaza continues with an inoculation campaign. The Safeguarding Health in Conflict Coalition has called for international action to end violence against or obstruction of health care in conflicts. Credit: UNWRA

tals being taken for military use, and it was also very disturbing to see children's medical facilities being deliberately targeted," he told IPS.

"These trends highlight the need for leadership [on increasing accountability]. Accountability for attacks on healthcare is not a silver bullet—accountability for murder does not stop all murders, for instance - but no consequences are a guarantee of further violations," he added.

Christian de Vos, Director of Research and Investigations at Physicians for Human Rights (PHR), which is a member of the SHCC, suggested a lack of accountability for attacks on healthcare in previous conflicts had emboldened certain forces to do the same in new wars.

"This goes back to the historical evolution of attacks on healthcare and the consequences of impunity. The patterns of attacks on healthcare that Russian forces, together with the Syrian government, perpetrated in the Syria conflict have a lot of links to how Russia has fought its full-scale invasion of Ukraine," he told IPS.

In its report, the SHCC has made a number of recommendations to help end attacks on healthcare and hold those behind them accountable.

These include UN and national authorities and the International Criminal Court (ICC) taking new measures to end impunity, strengthening prevention of conflicts, improving data collection on attacks at global and national levels, bolstering global, regional, and domestic leadership—especially

through the WHO and UN—on protecting healthcare, and supporting and safeguarding health workers.

Some of these plans would also see a key role played by local actors, including NGOs and other groups active in healthcare and human rights.

SHCC admits, though, that some of these are likely to be hard to implement.

"Our recommendations are aspirational and we accept that their implementation could be difficult in the context of the inherent difficulties of conflicts, but there are some areas where we think definite change could be achieved," said Wille.

She explained that developing capacity for local health programmes to be more security and acceptance conscious could be strengthened.

"There is a need for training for the healthcare sector on how to understand, approach, and manage security and risk in conflict. Such support should be given to those responsible for overseeing plans for healthcare provision in conflicts so that services continue to be provided but with as much safety as possible," she said.

She added that governments could also make a real difference by pushing to ensure 'deconfliction'—the process by which a health agency announces to all parties who they are, where they work and what they are doing, and how it can be recognized and which in return receive assurances that they will not be targeted by all sides in a conflict.

"Such mechanisms exist, however, at the moment, far too often they are not respected or applied in several conflicts. Governments

can insist on the implementation of de-confliction, and this would also be a great help," she said.

However, if significant change is to be made in ensuring accountability for attacks on healthcare, experts agree that it can only be done with strong political commitment on the issue.

"We have seen over the years that there hasn't been this commitment and what we need is a strong commitment that will go beyond just words and statements condemning these attacks to real concrete action," Rubenstein said.

He stressed that the massive, targeted destruction of healthcare seen in some recent conflicts had changed the wider political perception of the effects of such attacks.

"What has changed is the knowledge of the magnitude of these attacks and the enormous suffering they bring, not just directly at the time of the attacks but long after as well. This knowledge can stimulate the kind of leadership we need on this," he said.

De Vos said that especially the Israel-Hamas war and the prominence of attacks on healthcare in that conflict had "shown clearly the devastation and suffering such attacks cause."

"This might bring about the change [in will to ensure accountability] that we would like to see," he said.

But while there may be optimism among experts around the chance for such change, they are less positive about the prospects for any reduction in the volume of attacks on healthcare in the immediate future.

"Unfortunately, the trajectory is not a positive one—there's no ceasefire in Gaza, the war continues in Ukraine, and conflict is ongoing in the places where we have seen the most of these attacks on healthcare. It's a pretty grim state," said De Vos.

Italian museum recreates Tanzanian butterfly forest to raise awareness on biodiversity research

By Special Correspondent

IN a lush greenhouse high in the Alps, butterflies of various species and colours flutter freely while butterfly pupae are suspended in a structure as they grow into adult insects.

This is the Butterfly Forest in the tropical mountain greenhouse in Trento, Italy, a project by the Museo delle Scienze (MUSE), an Italian science museum. It's modelled on Udzungwa Mountains, a mountain range and rainforest area in south-central Tanzania that's one of the world's biodiversity hotspots.

The Butterfly Forest features plant species endemic to the region, as well as birds, reptiles, amphibians, fish and invertebrates from different parts of the world, all inside 600 square meters of forest with cliffs, inclinations and a waterfall.

It was created this spring to create public awareness on some of the research that MUSE is doing in Udzungwa Mountains to study and protect the world's biodiversity against threats such as deforestation and climate change.

Butterflies are a biodiversity indicator

Deforestation leads to habitat loss, which causes declines in nectar sources for butterflies, changing the functioning of the ecosystem. It can also limit the movements of the insects causing a decline in biodiversity and potential extinction of vulnerable butterfly species.

Changes to soil and air tempera-

tures are altering the life cycles of the insects, impacting their development rates, mating behaviours, and migration patterns. Butterfly populations are declining in many areas, especially in places under intensive land use.

"Our aim is that of being able to study better, to understand better what is happening," said Lisa Angelini, a botanist and director of the MUSE greenhouse.

"Our work consists of monitoring and trying to develop projects in order to bring attention to biodiversity-related issues."

Butterflies are pollinators that enable plants to reproduce and therefore facilitate food production and supply. They are also food for birds and other animals.

Because of the multiple roles of butterflies in the ecosystem and their high sensitivity to environmental changes, scientists use them as indicators of biodiversity and a way to study the impact of habitat loss and other threats.

"Insects in general play a fundamental role in the proper functioning of ecosystems," said Mauro Gobbi, an entomologist and researcher at MUSE.

Butterfly research is essential for conservation. Through a partnership with the Tanzania National Parks Authority, MUSE established the Udzungwa Ecological Monitoring Centre in 2006 to support research as well as in development of environmental education programs for schools.

"Research on butterflies is essential for informing conservation efforts and ensuring the long-term survival of the insects," said Arafat Mtui, research coordinator at Udzungwa Ecological Monitoring Centre.

Conservation efforts such as habitat restoration and good land management practices, which address climate change impacts, are essential for protecting butterfly populations, he added.

With at least 2,500 plant species, more than 120 mammals, and thousands of invertebrate species, Udzungwa Mountains is rich in biological diversity.



Ornithologist Francesca Rossi shows a female *Papilio lowi* chrysalis, at a butterfly nursery rack at the greenhouse of the Museo delle Scienze (MUSE), a science museum in Trento, Italy. (Photo/Luca Bruno)

It's part of the Eastern Arc Mountains of Kenya and Tanzania that are a proposed UNESCO Heritage site. It has more than 40 endemic species of butterflies.

MUSE's work here is vital because of this variety, said Sevgan Subramanian, principal scientist and head of environmental health at the International Centre of Insect Physiology and Ecology in Nairobi.

"If you want to have a monitoring of the health of the ecosystem, monitoring such indigenous or endemic insect population diversity is very critical, so that we have an idea whether the ecosystem is still healthy or not," he said.

"We are losing species, we are losing them forever"

Gobbi, the entomologist, said high-altitude environments like Udzungwa Mountains National Park are suitable for studying the effects of climate change because they usually have no direct human impact.

He and other scientists have warned that failure to protect insects from climate change effects will drastically reduce the planet's ability to build a sustainable future.

Scientists at MUSE said the main challenge in butterfly conservation is changing the current farming

policies to increase the amount of low-intensity farmland, and promote diverse landscapes preserving the remaining patches of natural habitats.

"Often our grandparents used to say 'there are no longer as many butterflies as there used to be,'" he said.

This is "absolutely supported by scientific research, which confirms that butterflies, like other insects, are in crisis. We are losing species, we are losing them forever, and this is going to break the balance of ecosystems."

In southern Africa, record drought linked with El Niño leaves a trail of scorched harvests and hunger

By Special Correspondent

THOUGH a natural phenomenon - a disruption of rainfall patterns caused by the warming surface waters of the eastern Pacific Ocean - El Niño is the last thing a region regularly struck by extreme weather caused by climate change needs.

From Angola to Zimbabwe, El Niño left normally fertile soils arid, interrupting the production of staples such as maize. This severely reduced people's access to food as stocks dwindled amid soaring prices.

Meanwhile, cherished and valuable livestock died. Malawi, Zambia, and Zimbabwe have declared national emergencies after rains that failed to arrive in November and December crushed harvests in January and February.

"Governments are doing their best but cannot deal with a shock on this scale," says Haile. "Appealing to the international community is not a decision they take lightly - it's a mark of how serious the situation has become." This means preventative measures such as crop insurance are "overwhelmed."

Nearly 5 million people in the worst-affected countries need assistance. Limited amounts of food are in store in countries such as Tanzania and South Africa but it's nowhere near enough. Zambia should be a 'breadbasket' its regional neighbours can rely on, but it too is heavily dependent on rainfed agriculture, "so there are no reserves," says Haile.

In recent months, the number of people WFP is targeting with assistance in the country has more than doubled from 475,000 to 1 million. The Government is also looking to import from outside of the region - which could take three to four months.

In a video posted on WFP Zambia's X (formerly Twitter) account, Mervis Sheleni, who heads a women's savings group in Rufunsa district, has spoken of how resilience projects for smallholder farmers like herself are being hit in the country.

"In 2023 we would sell our harvests such as pumpkins, groundnuts and other crops by the roadside, but the situation is no longer the same because of the drought," she said. "When it comes to savings, those who could save the most and those who could save larger amounts are saving less too. Even if you got a



A field of maize spoiled by drought in Zambia, one of the countries that has declared an emergency as it grapples with the effects of El Niño.

group loan ... repaying would be an issue because there is no harvest." Haile adds that, during a drought, women are exposed to singular risks as it falls to them leave the safety of their homes "to be going for miles and miles trying

to find wood and food," while girls will be the first to leave schools to help their mothers. "El Niño disproportionately affects women and girls," he says.

WFP urgently needs US\$409 million to provide critical assistance over six months. The Catch-22 is that there can't be funding until we have "commonly agreed numbers on how many people are impacted," says Haile.

"Then we'll know how much food we need and for how long." Those numbers, however, are not due until late May or June. "We cannot wait," he says.

Paul Turnbull, WFP's Country Director for Malawi - where WFP is staging its biggest El Niño response in Southern Africa - agrees. "We need to get cracking now while there's still time to act," he says. "We are trying to get ahead of the game by arranging for imports as soon as possible."

According to the Government, the harvests of around 2 million farming families have been hit. "That equates to about 9 million people out of 20 million people in Malawi - higher than the 40 percent of the population we had anticipated," says Turnbull.

WFP is aiming to reach 2 million people in Malawi. "We are seeing a surge in cases of moderate and severe acute malnutrition at the health centres," says Turnbull.

"In the middle of the lean season back in November, we found that nine out of ten Malawian families were indulging in some sort of negative coping mechanism - adults not eating so their children could eat, people selling things they would normally use for productive purposes."

"We can avert a hunger catastrophe for the hardest-hit families, but time is not on our side"

Turnbull adds that in 2024, "there will be a lot of pressure on the logistic system, especially the ports" region wide. Even in a good year, they get quite congested with fertilizer in the period leading up to the planting season, in October-November.

"So we need a lot of coordination and effort to get the food that's needed for the other affected countries in the region through the ports and into the countries."

Menghestab Haile fears untold consequences without an urgent collective response. "If there is no food in the neighbouring countries, what would be the implications for DRC?" he says, adding that displaced people in the conflict-riven Democratic Republic of the Congo depend on food imports from neighbours.

"At this stage, we've yet to establish how many are moving from rural to urban areas, but people will move," adds Haile. "When you have nothing in your place, and we have seen it in other places, when there is no food in your environment, then you move, you assume that there might be something better in the urban areas. And that's why also the governments are starting early."

While this highlights the importance of resilience programmes such as school feeding which encourage people to stay put, relief has to come first.

"We can avert a hunger catastrophe for the hardest-hit families, but time is not on our side," says WFP Malawi's Turnbull. "I'm calling on the international community to step up now and help us save lives."

"We need to address it, but for the longer term, if we're going to build resilience and reduce the number of people needing relief in the lean season, then resilience is the way to go."

Then Southern Africa might not look quite so poorly on a map.

THE GUARDIAN CROSSWORDS/WORD FIT-111

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

1 a river in Kenya
 2 not forbidden
 4 semitic people in middle East
 5 an agent in Kiswahili
 7 otto
 8 tremble or vibrate

Down:
 1 Kwanza is the basic monetary unit
 2 Second largest continent
 3 am not
 4 concerned with the principles of right and wrong behaviour
 6 Lake Victoria in Kenya
 8 the rank, lands, or reign of an emir
 9 Football team in Tanzania
 13 Czars
 16 a large tailless primate of a group including the gorilla, chimpanzees, orang-utan, and gibbons

Across:
 1 extreme happiness in Hinduism
 5 expressing motion or direction to a point on or within
 7 Berlin is her mother city
 10 leave out or exclude

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

COCAINE ETHICAL RWANDA
 NAIROBI FORMAT DHI
 ELSE, WOT REACHABLE UMBO
 DRY, LEI ADDICT LBDR
 ART, DE THANA FORCEOUT

Yesterday's solution

D O D O M A T N I N O N C
 R E R A T E O V E R B A
 I M P A C T S M N O T E P A D
 V I E S S T O P E R A S E R
 E R N I E R O I P E A
 R A D A R R R E C A P L
 C N A N N A S A S I D E O
 C L A S S O G A A R O N
 E E V I C T E D O M E

RADIO One **RATIBA YA VIPINDI** **JUMATATU - JUMAPILI**

MONDAY TIME PROGRAMME	TUESDAY TIME PROGRAMME	WEDNESDAY TIME PROGRAMME	THURSDAY TIME PROGRAMME	FRIDAY TIME PROGRAMME	SATURDAY TIME PROGRAMME	SUNDAY TIME PROGRAMME
05:00 AM HALI YA HEWA / KUMEPAMBAZUKA I BBC	05:00 AM HALI YA HEWA / KUMEPAMBAZUKA I BBC	05:00 AM HALI YA HEWA / KUMEPAMBAZUKA I BBC	05:00 AM HALI YA HEWA / KUMEPAMBAZUKA I BBC	05:00 AM HALI YA HEWA / KUMEPAMBAZUKA I BBC	05:00 AM HALI YA HEWA / KUMEPAMBAZUKA I BBC	05:00 AM HALI YA HEWA / KUMEPAMBAZUKA I BBC
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01:00-05:00 HRS MUZIKI MCHANGANYIKO	01:00-05:00 HRS MUZIKI MCHANGANYIKO	01:00-05:00 HRS MUZIKI MCHANGANYIKO	01:00-05:00 HRS MUZIKI MCHANGANYIKO	01:00-05:00 HRS MUZIKI MCHANGANYIKO	01:00-05:00 HRS MUZIKI MCHANGANYIKO	01:00-05:00 HRS MUZIKI MCHANGANYIKO



AfDB President Dr Akinwumi Adesina sees Desert to Power as the bank's "baobab" project, given its large scale, scope, and impact on people's lives and the economy. Photo courtesy of AfDB

AfDB's Desert to Power project to bring energy to underserved African segments

By Guardian Reporter

THE African Development Bank (AfDB) initiative known as 'Desert to Power' spans across 11 countries in the Sahelian belt and aims to provide sustainable energy solutions, positively impacting the lives of 250 million people by delivering 10 gigawatts of solar power by the year 2030.

A statement released yesterday and shared with this journalist reveals that the driving force behind one of the world's most ambitious energy projects is the Desert to Power initiative. This initiative aims to bring energy to one of the least developed and most marginalized parts of the continent.

The transformative and bold effort seeks to harness the vast, sun-drenched Sahel region in Africa, one of the most vulnerable regions globally, and turn it into a solar energy powerhouse. The initiative targets 11 countries: Burkina Faso, Chad, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, and Sudan.

By harnessing the immense solar potential of the region, Desert to Power aims to generate 10 gigawatts of solar power by 2030, providing electricity access to 250 million people.

This groundbreaking project, conceived by Bank President Dr. Akinwumi Adesina, is referred to as the Bank's "baobab." Dr. Adesina described Desert to Power as a transformative project that will require collective efforts to bring about meaningful change, emphasizing its importance during a COP meeting.

Last December, the Bank approved the 225 kV Mauritania-Mali Power Interconnection and related Solar Power Plants Development Project (PIEMM) which is a priority operation under that Desert to Power Initiative.

The project will help develop regional electricity trade in the Sahel, allow Mali to import about 600 GWh of electricity from renewable energy sources from Mauritania each year and enable both Mali and Mauritania to increase their national electricity access rate and to improve the performance of their electricity sub-sector by reducing fuel consumption, and shutting down several generators with exorbitant operating costs thus reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Ultimately, the project is expected to connect 100,000 new households (80,000 in Mauritania and 20,000 in Mali).

The initiative presents a major step along the way to solving Africa's critical energy access issues and reducing dependence on fossil fuels like heavy fuel oil. These are key drivers of environmental fragility in the region, worsening climate warming behind many of the dramatic weather events now regularly hitting the continent.

The Bank has also successfully leveraged climate finance from international sources like the Green Climate to blend with the Bank's own resources to support the Desert to Power initiative.

Additionally, the Bank's Sustainable Energy Fund for Africa (SEFA), the Bank's largest in-house blended finance facility with commitments of over US \$500 mil-

lion from 10 donors, including Denmark, the United States, the United Kingdom, Italy, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Germany, the Nordic Development Fund, and the Global Energy Alliance for People and Planet, is providing catalytic capital for private sector projects across the Desert to Power countries and beyond.

As of today, the desert-to-Power portfolio counts 10 investment projects and over 15 technical assistance operations across 7 of the 11 countries of operation.

The initiative has drawn plaudits from policy makers, diplomats, politicians and media commentators.

The authoritative British newspaper the Financial Times (FT) recently hailed it as a showcase example of imaginative development projects of the type Africa needs to engage its populations and prevent regional unrest exploited by anti-state actors.

In an article, endorsed by its editorial board, the FT called on Western governments to back the project along with similar initiatives directed at improving people's daily lives. Development brings stability, it argued.

The initiative is part of a broader effort to transition Africa towards more sustainable energy sources, helping mitigate deforestation and its associated impacts.

In Africa, deforestation is a significant issue, with an area equivalent to the size of Switzerland being cleared of forest annually, largely for cooking and heating purposes. This loss of forest exacerbates dust storms, disrupts rain patterns, and accelerates desertification, posing severe threats to biodiversity and local climates.

The Bank's investment in solar energy is crucial for several reasons. Firstly, reliable and affordable energy is essential for reducing reliance on charcoal, which is not only a leading cause of deforestation, but also an expensive option for many households. The continent's rapid population growth has intensified energy demands, with the population doubling and doubling again to at least 1.2 billion, nearly half of whom lack access to electricity.

While there are ongoing reforestation projects in countries like Kenya, Congo, Madagascar, and Malawi, the rate of forest loss far outpaces these efforts. The immediate need is to electrify the continent quickly, choosing sustainable energy sources such as solar, wind, and hydro over more harmful fossil fuels.

Africa's potential for renewable energy is vast but largely untapped. The continent has an almost unlimited solar capacity (11 TW), significant hydro resources (350 GW, with only between five and six percent currently harnessed), wind power (110 GW, with only two percent utilized), and geothermal energy sources (15 GW).

Despite this potential, 600 million people in Africa live without access to electricity. The continent accounts for just six percent of global energy demand and slightly over three percent of electricity demand. This underscores the importance of scaling up renewable energy investments to meet the continent's energy needs sustainably.

Cotton farmers urged to adopt modern farming for enhanced productivity, economic growth

By Correspondent
Marco Maduhu

SHINYANGA Region Commissioner, Anamringi Macha, calls on cotton farmers to transition from traditional practices to modern, expert-recommended agricultural methods for increased productivity, higher yields, and economic growth.

Commissioner Macha made this appeal during a visit to Kishapu district, where he inspected cotton sales centers managed by the Primary Cooperative Associations (AMCOS).

During his visit, he emphasized the critical need for farmers to adopt modern farming practices to enhance productivity. He underscored that the main challenge is not the cotton crop itself but the outdated farming methods currently employed, which lead to low yields.

Drawing on directives from President Samia Suluhu Hassan to improve cotton cultivation as a means of driving economic growth, RC Macha highlighted the significant potential for increased productivity through the adoption of modern agricultural techniques.

He stressed that transitioning to more productive agricultural practices is essential for boosting farmers' income and overall economic well-being.

In Kishapu, Macha observed a stark contrast between traditional and



Shinyanga RC, Anamringi Macha engages with cotton farmers, advocating for a shift to modern farming practices to boost yields and enhance economic prosperity. Photo: Marco Maduhu

modern farming outcomes. He noted that while farmers using traditional methods often achieve only about 200 kilos per acre, those employing professional, modern techniques can harvest between 1,800 to 2,000 kilos per acre. This substantial difference underscores the need for a shift towards modern farming practices.

To facilitate this transition, Macha urged farmers to engage actively with agricultural extension officers for training in productive farming techniques. He directed these officers to conduct regular field visits to educate farmers on modern agricultural practices.

The government has equipped extension officers with transportation resources to ensure they can

reach and support farmers effectively.

Additionally, RC Macha stressed the importance of ensuring that cotton sold by farmers is clean and free from contaminants such as sand or water.

He assured farmers that the government is committed to maintaining a competitive cotton price, which currently stands at 1,150/- per kilo. This price support aims to encourage farmers to invest in better farming practices, knowing they will receive fair compensation for their produce.

Moreover, Macha emphasized the prudent use of proceeds from cotton sales. He advised farmers to allocate their earnings toward essential needs, including purchasing food, educating their children, and improving their living

standards by investing in modern homes. Such investments, he suggested, would have long-term benefits for the farmers and their families.

Charles Mashenene, a local cotton farmer, acknowledged the widespread use of traditional farming practices among his peers, attributing it to a lack of awareness about modern agricultural methods.

He expressed concerns over the effectiveness of pesticides currently available, noting that many fail to eliminate insect attacks on cotton, which significantly reduces harvest yields. This issue, he indicated, further underscores the need for improved agricultural education and the adoption of more effective farming practices.

For him, the call by

the RC Macha for cotton farmers to adopt modern agricultural practices is a crucial step towards increasing productivity, improving yields, and enhancing economic growth.

He believes that by engaging with extension officers, utilizing clean and uncontaminated cotton, and wisely investing their proceeds, farmers can significantly improve their livelihoods.

It was noted that the government's commitment to supporting these efforts through competitive pricing and resources for extension officers is essential in facilitating this transition. With these measures in place, the future of cotton farming in Shinyanga looks promising, poised for significant advancements and greater economic prosperity.

Efficient, transparent use of taxpayers' money urged for development in Tanganyika District

By Neema Hussein,
Tanganyika

PUBLIC servants in Tanganyika district, Katavi region, are encouraged to efficiently and effectively utilize taxpayers' money allocated by the central government to fund development projects within the council.

It is imperative to prioritize the transparent and responsible utilization of allocated funds to foster sustainable growth and enhance the overall well-being and quality of life for the residents in the community.

Yesterday, Onesmo Buswelu, the District Commissioner for Tanganyika, reiterated the importance of responsible financial management in a tax collection committee meeting. His emphasis highlights the vital role effective fund allocation plays in the district's progress.

"By upholding accountability and efficiency in financial management, we can create a positive impact on the development and prosperity of the region, ultimately leading to a better future for all individuals within the community," he affirmed.

He emphasized to public servants that these funds represent the hard-earned contributions of taxpayers and must be managed with the highest level of responsibility and integrity. Any mishan-



Onesmo Buswelu (C), District Commissioner for Tanganyika, stresses the need for responsible financial management's importance at a tax collection committee meeting. Photo: Neema Hussein

dling or misappropriation of these funds not only impedes progress and growth but also undermines the trust and confidence that the public places in the government.

On the other hand, Bernwad Peter, assistant manager of Tanzania Revenue Authority (TRA) in Katavi region, underscored the council's ambitious objective; to surpass the collection of over 200 million Tanzanian shillings (TSh) for the financial year 2023/2024.

Meeting this target is crucial to uphold the regional development agenda and allocate adequate resources for a variety of public services and infrastructure projects. Bernwad has been leading efforts to modernize tax collection methods, such as promoting electronic receipts among traders and buyers.

The switch to electronic receipts marks a pivotal advancement in enhancing transparency and efficiency in tax collection. It diminishes the likelihood of tax evasion, simplifies

procedures for both the TRA and taxpayers, and cultivates a more transparent and efficient tax system.

On a related note, the council's Chairman, Hamad Mapengo, has acknowledged the significant challenges in tax collection. He pointed out that a strained relationship between TRA officials and traders has often hampered efforts to maximize tax revenue. This strained relationship can lead to resistance and non-compliance among traders, further complicating the tax collection process.

Despite these challenges, Mapengo expressed optimism and a strong commitment to overcoming these obstacles. He, along with the councilors, is ready to collaborate with all stakeholders to explore innovative and effective methods for enhancing tax collection. This includes engaging with the business community to rebuild trust and cooperation, thereby creating a more conducive environment for tax compliance.

Furthermore, establishing a col-

laborative partnership between TRA officials and traders is deemed essential for attaining the council's revenue objectives. Through mutual cooperation, they can pinpoint and rectify the underlying causes of non-compliance and resistance, laying the groundwork for more robust and sustainable tax collection strategies.

Analysts posit that the council faces a substantial challenge in ensuring the effective utilization of public funds and improving tax collection to bolster its development aspirations. The coordinated efforts of public servants, guided by leaders such as Onesmo Buswelu, Bernwad Peter, and Hamad Mapengo, play a pivotal role in this mission.

They believe that by embracing modern tax collection methods, advocating for transparency, and nurturing collaboration between the TRA and the business community, the council can enhance its financial management practices and propel the region's development efforts.

RC appeals for probe into Mhunze mart renovation amid environmental worries

By Marco Maduhu, KISHAPU

SHINYANGA regional commissioner, Anamringi Macha, has called for a special inquiry into the renovation of Mhunze auction in Kishapu district. The area, which appears to be a wetland with springs bubbling with sludge, has raised significant concerns about the suitability of the site for the ongoing construction project.

RC Macha is urging for this investigation to prevent the government from incurring financial losses, potentially amounting to millions of shillings, if the construction continues without addressing the underlying environmental issues.

During his inspection of the renovation progress at Mhunze auction yesterday, Macha observed firsthand the troubling condition of the wetland. He noted the presence of bubbling springs and the sludge emerging from the ground, which could pose severe risks to the structural integrity of the renovation project.

Macha made it clear that his intention is not to halt the renovation altogether but to proceed with cau-



Shinyanga RC Anamringi Macha (3rd - R), voices concerns as underground mud surfaces at Mhunze auction in Kishapu district. Photo: Marco Maduhu

tion. He emphasized the importance of engaging experts to thoroughly investigate the potential risks associated with the muddy springs.

His primary concern is to ensure public safety and the prudent allocation of government funds. "We must be vigilant and ensure that the resources we are investing are

not wasted," Macha stated. "This is about safeguarding both the investment and the people who will use this facility."

Engineer Ahmad Abdalah, representing the Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries which oversees the Mhunze Auction construction, acknowledged the challenges presented by the site's conditions.

Abdalah revealed that the ministry plans to engage geology experts to assess the potential impact of the muddy springs on the project's safety. "We are aware of the issues and are taking necessary steps to address them," he said. "Our goal is to ensure that the construction is safe and sustainable in the long term."

The concerns are not limited to the structural aspects of the construction alone. Livestock sellers who frequent the auction have also voiced their worries. Many have reported incidents where their animals became trapped in the mud, resulting in financial losses and posing significant safety risks.

One seller shared his experience: "Last week, I lost two cattle because they got stuck in the mud and couldn't be rescued in time. It's a serious problem that needs urgent attention."

The call for a special inquiry and the planned engagement of geology experts reflect a proactive approach

by the local government and the Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries to address these environmental challenges.

The aim is to find a solution that will allow the renovation to proceed safely and efficiently, without jeopardizing the investment or the safety of those who use the facility.

Furthermore, this situation highlights the importance of conducting thorough environmental assessments before undertaking construction projects, especially in areas with known ecological vulnerabilities. It serves as a reminder that balancing development with environmental conservation is crucial for sustainable progress.

RC Macha's call for a special inquiry into the renovation of Mhunze auction underscores a commitment to responsible governance and the safeguarding of public funds.

The authorities should aim to ensure that the project is completed successfully and that it serves the community without posing undue risks. This not only protects the investment but also promotes public trust in government initiatives aimed at improving local infrastructure.

Govt unveils robust drive to achieve food security goals

By Christina Haule

The government has laid out a comprehensive strategy to achieve six sustainable development goals related to food security by 2030, as outlined in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for the period 2021-2030.

This ambitious plan underscores the country's commitment to eradicating hunger, ensuring food security, improving nutrition, and promoting sustainable agriculture.

Gungu Mibavu, the Director of Marketing and Food Safety at the Ministry of Agriculture, announced these initiatives during the inauguration of a workshop for food safety stakeholders.

The workshop, held in Morogoro, was funded by the United Nations and organized by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). It gathered various

experts and stakeholders to discuss and strategize on enhancing food safety and security measures within the country.

Mibavu elaborated that the food security plans, established as country strategies during the 2021 UN food security program, are integral to the ongoing national agenda for food security.

These plans are designed to address various facets of food production, distribution, and safety, ensuring that every citizen has access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food.

Several key strategies were highlighted by Mibavu, including increasing the production of food crops, livestock, and fish.

According to him, the efforts aim to create food stability and surpluses within the country, reducing dependency on food imports and enhancing self-sufficiency. Successful

implementation of these strategies has already been observed, with notable improvements in agricultural output and food availability.

Sihaba Vuai, the sustainability coordinator for systems and food in Zanzibar, reinforced the government's commitment to prioritizing agricultural products, fruits, spices, and livestock in their food reform initiatives.

Vuai stressed that these efforts are not only about increasing production but also about ensuring sustainability and resilience.

Vuai mentioned that the government intends to foster stronger collaboration with agricultural stakeholders to bolster the sector. This collaboration will focus on enhancing food production techniques, improving infrastructure, and building resilience to climate change.

By addressing these

critical areas, it was noted that the government aims to create a more robust and sustainable agricultural sector capable of withstanding various challenges. Additionally, environmental conservation is a major focus of these initiatives. The government recognizes that sustainable agricultural practices are essential for long-term food security.

Efforts are being made to promote environmentally friendly farming techniques, reduce waste, and protect natural resources. These measures will help ensure that agricultural practices do not deplete the land and resources needed for future food production.

Media reports has that the government's comprehensive strategy for achieving food security by 2030 is a multifaceted approach that addresses production, sustainability,



Gungu Mibavu, Ministry of Agriculture's Director of Marketing and Food Safety, reveals a strategy for food security at a workshop for stakeholders. Photo: Correspondent Christina Haule

and environmental conservation.

With the support of international organizations like the FAO and the UN, and through collaboration with local stakeholders, the nation is making significant strides towards ensuring that all citizens have access to adequate, safe, and nutritious food.

This ongoing commitment to food security and sustainable development is crucial for the well-being of the population and the health of the environment. As these strategies continue to be implemented and refined, they will play a pivotal role in shaping a more food-secure and sustainable future for the country.

MUBS, logistics firm sign deal for practical skills for students

Kampala

Makerere University Business School-MUBS together with Multilines International Limited have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that will among others create practical opportunities for the students.

It is hoped that the initiative will promote academic excellence, especially in logistics and freight industries in the country.

According to the MoU signed on Thursday, "the partnership signifies a commitment to fostering a symbiotic relationship between academia and industry, with a focus on enhancing the practical skills and knowledge of students at Makerere University Business School in particular the faculty of logistics and transport."

Multilines International Limited is a private company specializing in air freight/sea freight, road transport, customs clearance, warehousing management, storage, removals, and tax consultancy.

The MoU provided that Multilines International Limited will offer opportunities for internships, practical training, and mentorship programs to students, providing them with real-world insights and experiences to complement their academic learning.

The MoU paves the way for joint research projects, knowledge exchange programs, and industry forums that will drive innovation and promote sustainable meaningful business practices to the business community and shaping the future of business in the country.

Speaking after the signing, the Principal MUBS, Professor Moses Muhwezi said that the institution although deals much in business and management areas, it has developed new areas such as logistics and transport.

Professor Muhwezi explained that the collaboration will not only help students pursuing their careers in logistics and transport but it will help all the students in diverse disciplines especially in business since it is a very important cross-cutting issue.

He also called upon people dealing in Logistics in the country to come up with a law aimed at regulating the profession such that it's distinct and clear from others and students be proud of it other than it hiding in other business professions.

The Chief Executive Officer of Multilines International Limited, Gerald Mukyenga said some students graduate, and get jobs but afterward, they start saying they are going to learn on the job.

Mukyenga emphasizes the need for students to be equipped with both theoretical and hands-on training when they are still on the ground at the University.

He noted that one cannot pay salaries and again go ahead to start teaching a salary earner without the skills and expertise to do certain works.

Mukyenga added that students need to learn how to mitigate the business challenges that the world is facing and they can only do so through research and opportunities like those highlighted in the MoU where more will be learned during its implementation which will last three years.

Washington

DURING the historic US-Kenya state visit, Equity Group organized a roundtable discussion at the US Senate which united top congressional leaders, government officials, and representatives from the US and Kenyan private sectors.

Together, they brainstormed strategies to shape US-Africa trade legislation and enhance public-private partnerships. The goal was to achieve mutual policy objectives and foster prosperity for both nations.

Equity Group, in collaboration with its U.S. partners, will capture insights from the Capitol Hill roundtable in a report to help inform U.S.-Africa trade legislation.

During the roundtable, speakers exchanged insights on approaches to increasing greater trade and investment and access to financing for small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

"We believe a transformed Africa leads to a more balanced world, and Kenya is the gateway to the continent," said Dr. James Mwangi, Equity Group MD and CEO. "That is why we are here today - to be in partnership with you."

Senator Benjamin Cardin (D-MD), Chair of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, delivered opening remarks that highlighted the significance of the U.S.-Kenya

Firm hosts Capitol Hill forum to boost Kenya-US private sector partnerships



High-level US and Kenyan officials and private sector reps met on Capitol Hill to discuss enhancing partnerships for shared goals and prosperity.

State Visit and the Capitol Hill roundtable. "A strong private sector is vital to sustained economic growth, job creation, and resilience," said Senator Cardin.

Reta Jo Lewis, President and Chairwoman of the Export-Import Bank of the United States (EXIM), introduced a high-level roundtable featuring remarks from U.S. government officials and representatives from the U.S.

and Kenyan private sector and a robust discussion to help inform U.S.-Africa trade policy and expand public-private partnerships. Chair Lewis emphasized her support for future partnership between EXIM Bank and Equity Group, along with U.S. exporters.

Carole Kariuki, CEO of Kenya Private Sector Alliance (KEPSA), spoke about how the business network works to improve Ken-

ya's regulatory and business environment to make the country an attractive investment destination.

"We are the bridge between the private sector and government," said Kariuki. "We advocate for you to government about what are best practice policies, the right laws, and the right structures for ease of doing business. We listen to you, our investors."

Senator Cory Booker (D-New

Jersey), who participated in the state visit meetings with Kenyan President William Ruto along with Senator Cardin, called for a narrative change on Africa. "Too many people frame Africa in the absolutely wrong light. But the future of humanity is in Africa," said Senator Booker. "It is a continent of endless possibilities, vast resources, and is holding solutions to all of humanity's problems." The senator recently visited Kenya, where he witnessed firsthand the country's "extraordinary entrepreneurial spirit".

Congresswoman Barbara Lee (D-California), the most senior African American woman in Congress and chair of the powerful Appropriations subcommittee responsible for funding all U.S. international programs, emphasized the importance of achieving tangible outcomes from the three-day U.S.-Kenya State Visit. She highlighted the historical significance of the meeting, noting that it is the first time the U.S. has engaged in talks with an African Head of State since 2008. "We haven't paid the type of attention that we need to pay to Kenya and the continent. This needs to change and you're helping to make that change," said the congresswoman during the Capitol Hill roundtable.

WORLD

Biden pledges new US-Kenya partnership on tech, security

WASHINGTON

US President Joe Biden welcomed Kenyan President William Ruto to the White House on Thursday for a state visit, pledging new partnerships on technology, security and debt relief to the leader of the East African country.

Ruto's is the first state visit by an African president to the White House since 2008.

On Thursday evening, Ruto was the guest of honor at a lavish state dinner that drew a wide range of guests, from singer-songwriter Don McLean to NFL commissioner Roger Goodell, the CEOs of Walmart and Pfizer as well as former President Bill Clinton. Former President Barack Obama, whose father was Kenyan, made a brief appearance before the meal.

Greeting Ruto on the South Lawn of the White House, Biden reminisced about his own visits to Kenya as a young man, hailing 60 years of diplomatic relations between the two countries after Kenya's independence.

"We agreed on the significant opportunity for the US to radically recalibrate its strategy and strengthen its support for Africa," Ruto said standing with Biden, Vice President Kamala Harris and other cabinet officials. Earlier, he had met privately with Biden in the Oval Office.

Biden said he would designate Kenya as the first sub-Saharan African country to be a major non-NATO ally. Qatar, Israel and 16 other countries share that designation.

In a joint statement, Biden and Ruto said they would work together to support the Somali government in its fight against terrorism and asked warring parties in Sudan to allow humanitarian access to aid and agree to a ceasefire.

The Kenyan president arrived in the US on Monday and visited Atlanta, then spoke with business executives in the White House on Wednesday.

Yesterday, he was expected to discuss digital inclusion in Africa with Vice President Kamala Harris at an event hosted by the US Chamber of



Kenya's President William Ruto speaks during a news conference with President Joe Biden in the East Room of the White House on Thursday in Washington. AP

Commerce.

Green energy, health deals

The leaders announced new US-backed investments in green energy and health manufacturing, along with a detailed plan to cut Kenya's high debt load.

The US International Development Finance Corporation announced \$250 million in new investments in Kenya through the US International Development Finance Corp. That includes \$180 million for a major affordable housing project, a US government official said, bringing the US financing institution's portfolio in Kenya to over \$1 billion.

The two leaders made a joint call

for the international community to reduce the heavy debt burden of developing countries and do more to support poor countries that want to invest in development and climate technologies.

They also called for the US Congress to pass a bill to renew a US-Africa trade pact.

On Wednesday, Biden told reporters he plans to visit Africa in February after the US presidential election, an announcement that presumes the Democratic president will defeat his Republican opponent Donald Trump. Biden had earlier pledged to make a trip to Africa sometime in 2023.

Agencies

African countries resist West's attempts to drag them into Ukrainian crisis – Lavrov

MOSCOW

THE African countries are resisting the West's Russophobic campaign and attempts to drag them into the Ukrainian crisis, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said at a reception for foreign diplomats on the occasion of Africa Day.

"I would like to express my gratitude to the African friends for their responsible position on the Ukrainian crisis. I have already mentioned the African countries' initiative on this score. You continue to be committed to fair assessments and fair approaches, despite the insistent attempts to drag the African countries into the West's Russophobic campaign," Lavrov told his African colleagues.

The top Russian diplomat noted the special potential of cooperation between Russia and Africa.

"The potential of Russian-African cooperation in all areas is vast, indeed. We will continue to jointly tap it in order to bring our relations to the level of a truly strategic partnership," Lavrov concluded.



Xi chairs symposium, urges further reform to advance Chinese modernisation

JINAN

CHINESE President Xi Jinping on Thursday stressed the need to deepen reform further across the board with efforts centering on advancing Chinese modernization.

Xi (pictured), also general secretary of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee and chairman of the Central Military Commission, made the remarks while chairing a symposium in Jinan, Shandong Province, attended by representatives from businesses and academia.

"Reform is the driving force for development," Xi said, noting that to deepen reform further on all fronts, efforts should be focused on the overarching goals of improving and developing the socialist system with Chinese characteristics, and modernizing China's governance system and capacity.

He added that China should take resolute steps to remove the ideological and institutional barriers hindering the advancement of Chinese modernization, and double down on its efforts to resolve deep-seated institutional challenges and structural issues.

Xi's trip to Shandong is the first local inspection he has made since the CPC Central Committee Political Bureau held a meeting on April 30.

It was decided at the meeting that the third plenary session of the 20th CPC Central Committee will be held in Beijing in July, and that the session will primarily examine issues related to further comprehensively deepening reform and advancing Chinese modernization.

Nine representatives including entrepreneurs from state-owned, private and foreign-funded enterprises spoke at the symposium to put forward opinions and suggestions on deepening reform across the board, covering such issues as developing venture capital investment, upgrades of traditional industries, improving the corporate governance of private enterprises and optimizing the business environment for foreign enterprises.

It is the CPC's consistent approach and fine tradition to conduct in-depth research and extensively solicit opinions from various parties before making major decisions and formulating important documents, Xi said, adding that relevant departments should carefully study and absorb opinions and suggestions for further deepening reform in an all-round way that were brought up during the symposium.

China should adhere to and develop its basic economic system and work to build a high-level socialist market economy system, Xi said.

Economic system reform should start from meeting realistic needs and tackling the most urgent matters, and should advance theoretical and institutional innovation in the process of solving practical problems, he added.

"The Chinese people's aspiration for a better life is the goal we have been striving for, and the ultimate purpose of advancing reform and promoting development is to improve the livelihood of the people," Xi said.

Xinhua

England's soccer fortunes add sporting drama to UK election

LONDON

DOES British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak risk scoring an own goal by calling an election during the 2024 European Championship soccer tournament in July? Sunak, himself a soccer fan, might be hoping for a boost to his struggling campaign if England do well, although whether there really is a link between sport and elections is disputed by experts.

Given the national team's habit of morale-busting defeats in major tournaments, the chance of another hit to the English psyche appears just as likely a backdrop to the election.

On a positive note, however, England, runners-up three years ago, are among the favorites under manager Gareth Southgate with a team full of in-form attacking players including Harry Kane, Jude Bellingham, Phil Foden and Bukayo Saka.

Sunak unexpectedly called a national election for July 4 when the European Championship in Germany will be entering its most exciting phase.

Voters will head to the polls four or five days after England's first knockout match, assuming the team avoid the embarrassment of elimination in the group stage.

There is also a chance England will have been pitted against their hosts and old rivals Germany in that last-16 game, a prospect that will fill many fans with dread.

Scotland are competing in the tournament too, potentially offering relief to the ruling Scottish National Party which, like Sunak's Conservatives, is floundering in opinion polls.

Political pundits have offered non-sporting explanations for Sunak's decision to call an early election, including a fall in Britain's once double-digit inflation to close to 2 percent and signs that his flagship plan to send asylum-seekers to Rwanda might not get off the ground.

The timing has raised eyebrows, however, for the unusual overlap of an election campaign with the summer sporting calendar.



Britain's Prime Minister and Conservative Party leader Rishi Sunak enjoys a hot drink and a Tunnock's during a visit to the Global Energy Group facility at the Port of Nigg, ahead of a campaign event in the build-up to the UK general election on July 4, in north-east Scotland on Thursday. AP

That has raised memories of one of the most painful of England's defeats.

In June 1970, a 3-2 loss to West Germany in a World Cup quarter-final was followed four days later by a shock election defeat for incumbent Prime Minister Harold Wilson, triggering debate about the impact of the match.

Link or no link?

Much has been written since about a possible link between

sport and elections.

A 2010 paper by academics at Stanford and Loyola Marymount University in the United States said wins for local college American football teams earned political incumbents an extra 1.61 percentage points of support in subsequent Senate, gubernatorial and presidential elections.

Others have found no clear connection.

Stefan Mueller and Liam

Kneafsey, at University College Dublin and Trinity College Dublin, mapped Irish election outcomes over decades with Gaelic football and hurling match results and found no correlation with support for incumbents or ruling party politicians.

Kneafsey said there were signs that some kind of influence on voters did occur.

"Whether they actually switch their votes, that's probably a higher bar to clear and certainly the results there are inconclusive," he said.

While that debate continues, it is clear that politics do weigh on the minds of soccer fans.

At a Euro 2016 match, three days after Britain's shock Brexit referendum decision, many England fans joined in a crude chant directed at the European Union which ended with the words: "We all voted out". England were beaten 2-1 by underdogs Iceland and were knocked out of the competition.

Another risk for Sunak is that sports fans resent his scheduling of the election at a time when not only Euro 2024 is taking place - from June 14-July 14 - but also the Wimbledon tennis championships which run from July 1-14.

Campaigning will also overlap with cricket's T20 World Cup involving England and Scotland from June 2-29.

Some academics will be happy, however, as they will be able to do more research into the links between sports and voting patterns.

"We could actually do with politicians having more elections during this time to definitively test this," Kneafsey said.

Agencies

UN human rights expert urges to lift unilateral sanctions against China

UNILATERAL sanctions against China do not conform with a broad number of international legal norms and cannot be justified as countermeasures under the law of international responsibility, a United Nations (UN) expert said on May 17.

Alena Douhan, UN special rapporteur on unilateral coercive measures and human rights, said the unilateral sanctions against China can be qualified as unilateral coercive measures at a press conference in Beijing following her 12-day visit to the country.

Unilateral sanctions have been imposed against China since 2017 with mounting US pressure on Chinese technological companies and the imposition of export controls, designation of companies' officials and the launch of



Alena Douhan, the UN Special Rapporteur on unilateral coercive measures and human rights, speaks at a press conference in Beijing on May 17, 2024. Photo: Liu Xin/GT

administrative and civil charges. These have been followed by further sanctions and restrictions related to Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region and Hong Kong SAR, by expanding the list of targets to include key sectors of economic activity, including in agriculture, construction, trade, new and green technologies, energy, finance, telecommunications and others. "During my visit I received numerous reports on the unilateral sanctions' adverse impact and the consequent socio-economic implications affecting peoples' lives," Douhan said.

Douhan also called on sanctioning parties to lift and suspend all unilateral sanctions applied to China, Chinese nationals and companies without authorization from the UN Security Council.

"I wish to reiterate the illegality of extraterritorial application of unilateral sanctions and I call on states, in particular sanctioning states, to effectively address over-compliance of businesses and other entities under their jurisdiction in order to mitigate or completely eliminate any adverse humanitarian impact," said the expert.

During her trip, she visited Beijing, Shenzhen, and Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, where she talked with government officials and representatives from non-government organizations, businesses, academic institutions and other sectors.

Douhan will present a report based on her visit to the UN Human Rights Council in September.

People's Daily

US-Europe divisions deepen as Norway, Ireland, Spain recognise Palestinian statehood

BEIJING

NORWAY, Ireland and Spain on Wednesday decided to recognize Palestine as a state, marking a significant shift in European policy more than seven months into the current Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

However, U.S. National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan dismissed the three nations' move as "unilateral recognition" at a press briefing on Wednesday, asserting that President Joe Biden believes the two-state solution should be achieved "through direct negotiations through the parties."

As Israel and Hamas failed to reach a ceasefire agreement during talks in Cairo earlier this month mediated by Egypt, Qatar, and the United States, the U.S. opposition to the recognition has highlighted expanding transatlantic divisions.

RECOGNITION WAVE

In Wednesday's coordinated announcements, Norway was the first to act. Norwegian Prime Minister Jonas Gahr Støre declared at a press conference that "a Palestinian state is a prerequisite for achieving peace in the Middle East." Ireland quickly followed. In Dublin, Irish Prime Minister Simon Harris said the decision should not wait "indefinitely" when it

is "the right thing to do." He expressed confidence that more countries would take this important step in the coming weeks. Spain joined in soon after.

Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez said that Spain recognizes Palestine "for peace, for justice, and for consistency," urging both parties to engage in dialogue to achieve a two-state solution. In the past week, several other European countries, including Malta and Slovenia, have also signaled their intent to follow suit.

Belgian Prime Minister Alexander De Croo said Wednesday that Belgium was waiting for the "right moment."

Shada Islam, a Brussels-based commentator on EU affairs, suggested that the recognition by Norway, Ireland, and Spain is "almost certainly" going to be followed by Belgium, Malta, and Slovenia in the coming weeks. Some of the United States' traditional allies are considering recognition.

French Foreign Minister Stéphane Sejourne said that such recognition is not taboo, though he stressed the timing, saying conditions had not yet been met. German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock made a similar statement. Wednesday's recognition drew anger from Israel, which announced it



From left, Spain Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez, Norway Prime Minister Jonas Gahr Støre and Ireland Prime Minister Simon Harris.

is recalling its envoys to the three countries.

EXPANDING U.S.-EUROPE RIFTS

While the recognition has received mixed reactions in Europe, the continent's stance on Israel has gradually shifted, especially as more than 35,000 Palestinians have been killed since Oct. 7 last year.

This shift has exposed rising rifts between the United States and Europe. Støre also revealed that Norway supports granting Palestine full membership status in the United Nations.

The United States, however, vetoed a draft resolution in April recommending that the General Assembly admit Palestine to the United Na-

tions, drawing widespread disappointment.

Britain and Switzerland abstained from the vote, while the remaining members of the UN Security Council voted in favor.

Days earlier, the United States showed support for Israel by denouncing an International Criminal Court (ICC) application to arrest two Israeli government officials, including Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, and three Hamas leaders. Biden called the application "outrageous," saying in a statement that "we will always stand with Israel against threats to its security."

In April, Biden also piled up U.S. aid to Israel by signing a security assistance bill that included approximately 14.1

billion U.S. dollars in funding to support Israel.

The Biden administration is considering potential sanctions against the ICC over the arrest request, said U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken on Tuesday. The United States and Israel are not members of the ICC.

In contrast, the French Foreign Ministry stated its support for the ICC, saying it supports "the fight against impunity in every situation."

Belgian Minister of Foreign Affairs Hadja Lahbib called the ICC request "an important step in the investigation of the situation in Palestine."

EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell asserted that "all states that have ratified the ICC statutes are bound to execute the Court's decision."

As UN agencies continued to warn of dire consequences in Gaza, including famine and epidemics, EU leaders in March unanimously called for "an immediate humanitarian pause leading to a sustainable ceasefire" in Gaza.

Despite this, the United States has maintained its truce-for-hostages stance, though its language has become more ambiguous under pressure.

On March 22, the UN Security Council rejected a U.S.-proposed draft resolution on a Gaza ceasefire. Nabil Kahlouche, a strategic studies specialist from the Algiers-based National Institute of Strategic Global Studies, argued that tying a ceasefire to the release of Israeli detainees contradicts the logical sequence of events, and that "releasing detainees should follow the cessation of aggression, not vice versa."

The EU statement also called for "the unconditional release of all hostages," without linking it to a ceasefire.

"I believe it is important that on issues of such moral and geopolitical significance, national EU governments are able to make decisions based on their own values and interests, regardless of what their EU partners say and irrespective of the stance taken by the U.S.," Islam told Xinhua.

Xinhua

West in disarray as Moscow seizes initiative in Ukraine, says Russian intel chief

MOSCOW

WESTERN politicians are in disarray because Moscow now has all the strategic initiative in the conflict around Ukraine, Sergey Naryshkin (pictured), head of Russia's Foreign Intelligence Service (SVR), told reporters.

"Mixed and often conflicting statements and assessments regarding developments in Ukraine are coming [from] the West. The reason is that Western elites are pretty much in disarray after realizing the fact that all the strategic initiative on the battlefield has passed to the Russian Armed Forces," he pointed out.

According to the SVR chief, after a year and a half of "droning on about Russia's so-called strategic defeat on the battlefield," Western politicians find themselves in a much different position today.

Agencies



UAE's media, broadcast conference successfully concludes its 30th edition

DUBAI

THE 30th edition of CABSAT, the flagship conference for the broadcast, satellite, content creation, production, distribution, and entertainment industries, drew to a successful conclusion in Dubai, the United Arab Emirates, on Thursday.

The third day of the conference, organized by the Dubai World Trade Centre with record-breaking turnout, welcomed over 18,000 visitors, featuring announcements of collaborations, and memorandums of understanding between exhibiting organizations, in addition to highlighting emerging trends and technologies, and encouraging insightful discussions.

Almanasa, Iraq's OTT streaming platform, announced a strategic partnership with Roya Media Group, a provider of premium digital content.

This collaboration aims to deliver a streaming experience to audiences across Iraq by combining the strengths of both platforms to offer a diverse and extensive library of entertainment options.

The partnership was announced at the CAB-



Photo shows rice cultivated in a desert greenhouse in Hotan, northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region. (Photo from the official account of the Institute of Urban Agriculture, Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences on WeChat)

SAT Co-Production Salon, a dedicated meeting lounge for business opportunities in investment in Arabic content.

As well as the Co-Production Salon, CABSAT 2024 showcased several exclusive conference events, like the Content Congress and the SATExpo Summit, to global industry leaders, regional government officials, and other business stakeholders for three days of networking and knowledge sharing opportunities.

"Enabling and accelerating local talent is crucial to consistently secure the incredible expansion

of the regional content creation economy, and Dubai Studio City is proud to have been a platform for more than 358,000 minutes of such unique stories to come to life in 2023," said Majed Al Suwaidi, senior vice-president of Dubai Media City, Dubai Studio City and Dubai Production City at TECOM Group PJSC.

"Committed to unlocking the visions of Dubai Economic Agenda 'D33' and Dubai Creative Economy Strategy, we are proud to serve as a global platform for regional storytellers and were pleased to champion their vibrancy and creativity

as Strategic Partner of CABSAT's milestone 30th edition this year."

This year's landmark 30th edition also features demonstrations of technology that attendees were able to interact with. A big hit with visitors and exhibitors alike, the GlamBot, a high-speed camera attached to a robotic arm that is designed to snap dynamic images in a mirrored tunnelgave the conference a sense of Hollywood glamor and created covetable moments to share on social media.

This year's edition CABSAT also enjoyed its own red carpet experience at the Broadcast-ProME Manufacturer Awards, which recognized firms for their products that make a difference in the region's broadcast sector, with the team picking up a plaque for their contributions.

Abiy urges China's CCCC to expand engagements in Ethiopia

ADDIS ABABA

ETHIOPIAN Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed on Thursday called on the Chinese construction company, China Communications Construction Company (CCCC), to further enhance its positive engagements in Ethiopia.

The call was made during his meeting with Wang Tongzhou, chairman of the CCCC, in the Ethiopian capital, Addis Ababa, according to the Office of the Ethiopian Prime Minister.

Noting the CCCC's "active engagements" across various construction activities in the East African country, Abiy (pictured) emphasized the need for the Chinese construction company to further strengthen its positive contribution to the country's construction sector.

During his discussion with Wang, the Ethiopian PM "shared the various national potential areas that warrant further engagement and investments from the CCCC," the statement indicated.

The CCCC has won acclaim for its robust engagements across large-scale infrastructure development projects in Ethiopia, including industrial parks, roads and major national development projects.

Last week, Ethiopian Airlines commended the CCCC upon the successful completion of its newly inaugurated 50 million-U.S. dollar domestic passenger terminal pro-

ject at Bole International Airport, which is set to more than double the terminal's annual passenger handling capacity.

The Addis Ababa-Adama expressway, regarded as the first expressway in Ethiopia and East Africa, is one of Ethiopia's flagship infrastructure projects constructed by the CCCC.

The expressway went operational in September 2014. The CCCC is also praised for its success in the construction of the China-aided Friendship Square in Addis Ababa, a landmark development project covering an area of around 30 hectares, containing an artificial lake, a plaza that can accommodate tens of thousands of people at a time, several restaurants and areas for sports exercise.



'Overcapacity' in China's new energy industry is pseudo-proposition

THE narrative of "overcapacity" in China's new energy industry is a pseudo-proposition, whether viewed from the principles of market economy and the law of value, or analyzed under the context of global division of labor and international market.

It is contrary to economic logic and reality to claim that China is exporting its excess capacity. Under economic globalization, production capacity is determined by supply-demand relations.

According to the law of the market, the equilibrium between supply and demand is in constant flux, with imbalance being the norm in any market economy. Addressing the imbalances primarily relies on market regulation in accordance with the law of value.

China is an open market that embraces globalization. This requires Chinese new energy enterprises to adopt both domestic and international strategies in their development visions and resource allocation.

Cross-border trade would not have existed if each country only focused on meeting their domestic demand.

The rise in Chinese exports of electric vehicles, lithium-ion batteries and photovoltaic products in recent years is a result of global division of labor and market demand. It's absurd to relate capacity issues to global trade and attrib-

ute China's expanding exports to overcapacity.

As a matter of fact, it's simply not the case that green products are in excess supply globally. On the contrary, the global demand for such products far outruns the supply.

According to the International Energy Agency, the global demand for new energy vehicles (NEVs) is expected to reach 45 million units by 2030, 4.5 times that of 2022, and the global demand for newly installed capacity for photovoltaic products will reach 820 gigawatts by 2030, about four times that of 2022.

The current production capacity for green energy in the world falls significantly short of the global demand, especially when more than 130 countries and regions have raised their carbon neutrality targets. Given the huge potential of global demand, China's green production capacity is far from enough. It's a complete fallacy that China's "overcapacity" in new energy sectors harms the global market. In an article, Bloomberg said to the extent that there's grounds for hope around the energy transition right now, it's largely thanks to the availability of cheap, clean Chinese products.

In today's world, both supply and demand should be considered in a global context. It is an economic principle beyond human control that the production capacity of a

country is decided by its own comparative advantages.

China's new energy products are competitive because China, as an early player in the industry, has fostered technological advantages through long-term research and development, and developed comprehensive strengths by leveraging its robust domestic industrial capabilities, enormous market, and rich human resources.

Despite being priced higher than in the domestic market, Chinese NEVs and other related products are still highly sought after in many countries overseas. This demonstrates that China's competitive advantages in production capacity are determined by both global demand and the efficiency of Chinese enterprises, in accordance with the law of the market.

It is driven by the entrenched protectionist beliefs that some countries labeled the Chinese new energy industry with "overcapacity." Such a false narrative is just an excuse to justify the imposition of trade barriers on China's exports. What is truly excessive is not China's new energy capacity, but rather the abuse of protectionism by these countries to suppress the legitimate development of other countries.

They keep saying all the time that they oppose unfair trade and non-market practices, but in fact they are po-

liticizing economic and trade issues, disturbing free trade with non-market approaches.

By spreading the false narrative of "overcapacity" in China's new energy industry, they aim to stifle China's industrial development and seek more favorable competitive positions and market advantages for themselves.

Those who spread such a narrative to justify protectionism have nothing to gain from it and will only destabilize and disrupt global industrial and supply chains, hinder the world's green transition, and curb the growth of emerging sectors. Neue Zürcher Zeitung, a Swiss newspaper, said on its website that the West's complaints about China's "overcapacity" are hypocritical and short-sighted and the Western industrialized countries would do better to face up to the competition and push for equal market access in exchange for good and cheap Chinese green energy products.

Any remark or practice that politicizes or overstates the concept of national security regarding economic and trade issues is against the law of economy, which neither helps with a country's industrial growth nor the recovery of the global economy. Attempting to sabotage others and gain a competitive edge through the "overcapacity" hype is both immoral and impractical. **People's Daily**

Brown matches career playoff high with 40 points, Celtics beat Pacers to take 2-0 lead in East



Boston Celtics forward Oshae Brissett (12) celebrates after dunking against the Indiana Pacers during the second half of Game 2 of the NBA Eastern Conference basketball finals on Thursday, May 23, 2024 in Boston. AP Photo

BOSTON

JAYLEN Brown was a big enough problem for the Indiana Pacers even before an All-NBA snub that may have given him an added desire to show how much he can do for the Boston Celtics.

"I think he cares about it in a way that motivates him, and I think he doesn't really care about it at all," Celtics coach Joe Mazzulla said after watching Brown match his playoff career high of 40 points in Boston's 126-110 victory over Indiana in Game 2 of the Eastern Conference finals Thursday night.

"He understands that winning is the most important thing," Mazzulla said. "He just cares about the right stuff."

Two nights after his game-saving 3-pointer and one day after he was left out of the voting for the league's top 15 players, Brown scored 10 points during a 20-0 Boston run that turned a first-quarter deficit into a second-quarter lead that the Celtics never relinquished.

Asked if the All-NBA snub motivated him, Brown said, "I wouldn't say that." Asked to elaborate, he said colorfully: "We're two games from the finals. I don't got time to (care)."

Jayson Tatum and Derrick White scored 23 points apiece and Jrue Holiday had 15 points and 10 assists for the top-seeded Celtics, who lost Game 2 in both of their previous series this postseason.

Pascal Siakam scored 28 points for Indiana, which heads home for Games 3 and 4 on Saturday and Monday nights in an arena where they have won 11 straight games – including six in the playoffs – since March 18. Tyrese Haliburton, who had 25 points and 10 assists in the series opener, had 10 points and eight assists Thursday before leaving the game in the third.

Pacers coach Rick Carlisle said

Haliburton injured his left hamstring – the same injury that kept him out of 10 games in January.

"We need Ty, but 'next man' mentality," Siakam said. "We've got to play together. This team got where we're at by playing together. ... It's on us to continue."

One game after the Celtics jumped to a 12-0 lead and Indiana spent the rest of the first half clawing its way back, the lead changed hands 10 times in the opening quarter, with the Pacers holding a 27-22 edge with 1:14 left.

Then Boston scored the next 20 points.

Indiana missed nine straight shots and committed four turnovers during the drought that lasted more than six minutes. Brown scored 10 on his own during the run and had 24 at the half; he opened the third quarter with two quick baskets to give the Celtics a 61-52 lead.

But Siakam also came out hot in the second half, hitting four baskets in the first four minutes – a pair of 2s and a pair of 3s – to make it a two-point game. Boston pulled away again – this time for good, scoring 16 of the next 21 points.

Indiana never got within single digits again.

Brown scored 26 points Tuesday night, when the Celtics won thanks to some unforced errors by the Pacers – especially Haliburton – down the stretch. On Wednesday, Brown was left off the All-NBA teams; last year's selection to the second team qualified him for a five-year super-max extension that made him the highest-paid player in the NBA.

"I mean, he has it going," Holiday said. "Y'all see what I see. Great player. Great leader. But wants to win. And takes things into his own hands. So I'm glad to have him on my side. I ride with him. The way JB's been playing, man, it's outstanding."

AP

Simba eye Zambian striker Ricky Banda to bolster offensive line

By Correspondent Seth Mapoli

IN an effort to address their underwhelming offensive performance this season, Simba Sports Club have initiated negotiations with Zambian striker Ricky Banda.

Currently the standout player for the Red Arrows FC in the Zambian league, Banda (pictured) has caught the eye of Simba's management, who are eager to bring him on board to strengthen their attacking lineup.

Banda's prowess on the field is well-documented. As the leading striker for the Red Arrows, he has scored 10 of the team's 43 goals this season, playing a pivotal role in their league-leading campaign.

The Red Arrows top the Zambian league with 67 points, well ahead of Zesco United, who trail with 56 points.

Banda's contributions have been crucial in their success, though he still trails former Green Eagles player Freddy Kouablan, who still leads the league with 14 goals.

Kouablan, incidentally, has also made a mark in the NBC Premier League, netting six goals for Simba since his transfer from Zambia's Green Eagles FC last season.

Despite not having finalized a deal, initial talks between Banda and Simba are promising.

Banda has expressed a willingness to don Simba's red and white jersey, signaling his readiness for a move.

However, Simba face stiff competition from Zesco United and APR FC, who are also keen on acquiring the talented striker.

Simba's hope lies in their financial muscle, as they aim to outbid Zesco, a club owned by the electricity corporation of Zambia.

The urgency for Simba to secure Banda's services is driven by their need to revamp their



striking options. The club plans to part ways with striker Par Omar Jobe at the end of this season after he failed to meet expectations.

Jobe's departure would leave a gap that Simba hope Banda can fill effectively.

The team's current top scorers, Clatous Chama and Said Ntibazonkiza 'Saïdo', have netted seven and nine goals respectively, while Kouablan has added six goals in the NBC Premier League.

Kouablan's performance has been a beacon of hope, and Simba is looking to build on this success by adding Banda to their ranks.

Banda's potential transfer

is also fueled by his desire to move beyond the Zambian league. He has expressed a keen interest in joining Simba, which could be a decisive factor in the negotiations.

His familiarity with Simba is not limited to admiration from afar; Banda has firsthand experience playing against them.

In a memorable clash during the 2021 CAF Confederations Cup, he scored one of the two goals in the Red Arrows' 2-1 home victory over Simba.

Despite this, Simba advanced to the group stage after securing a 3-0 win at the Benjamin Mkapa Stadium.

Standing at 1.86 meters, Banda's physical presence and

versatility in scoring—whether with his head or feet—make him a formidable opponent.

His all-around ability to find the back of the net has made him a thorn in the side of many defenses this season, underlining why Simba is so keen on his acquisition.

As the negotiations progress, Simba fans eagerly await the outcome, hopeful that Banda's addition will reignite their team's attacking prowess.

If the deal goes through, it could mark a significant turning point for Simba, providing them with the offensive firepower needed to compete more effectively in both domestic and continental competitions.



Youths enjoy playing soccer during a training session at Karume Stadium in Dar es Salaam on Thursday. Photo: Correspondent Jumanne Juma

Kitambi urges players to rally behind team to ensure survival for Geita Gold

By Correspondent Nassir Nchimbi

IN the battle to survive in the NBC Premier League, Geita Gold head coach Denis Kitambi is optimistic about getting positive results in the upcoming last fixtures after failing to win their last eight games.

Geita Gold have lost four games and recorded the

same number of draws since their last win came on March 9 against Dodoma Jiji.

Today, the Gold Miners will play an away game against Singida Fountain Gate while in their last game, they will host Azam FC at Nyankumbu Stadium.

Geita Gold are fighting to survive with chances to remain in the NBC Premier

League log still on their cards as they are two points away from a playoff berth.

Kitambi has said his charges are ready to engineer a move away from the drop zone by bagging maximum points from their remaining two matches.

"We understand we had a poor season, but after reviewing our mistakes now

we are ready to put everything behind us and do well on the pitch. "Being without a win in the last eight games

shows how maturity among our squad is lacking in the league. We need not only the missed chances to be turned into goals but also discipline among my players. In our last league game against Simba, we failed to control

our emotions, resulting in a red card that cost us our team," he said.

Kitambi has rallied his players to be ready for the biggest performance while promising a solid finish for the season.

"During times like these, we need more than ever to push ourselves to the limit while knowing that we have

to be perfect with no room for errors because we are running out of time to survive," he added.

Geita Gold suffered a 4-1 defeat at the hands of Simba on Tuesday, results that have raised concerns on their quest for survival.

"We meet teams that have different ambitions in the league during these last

games, but what is needed is to score. We failed to convert various chances into goals in our previous games, now we have to score to be able to survive.

"We need to get wins in our last two matches and at the end of the day we can look at the league log and know our fate for next season," said Kitambi.

Mbappe to bring curtain down on PSG career in French Cup final

PARIS

KYLIAN Mbappe will bring the curtain down on his Paris Saint-Germain career today and has the chance to sign off with another trophy in the French Cup final against Lyon.

It will be Mbappe's 308th and final appearance for his hometown club, for whom he signed in August 2017 from Monaco in a 180 million-euro deal.

That is assuming the France captain, now aged 25, plays in the game in Lille. He sat out PSG's last two Ligue 1 matches of the campaign, their 2-1 win at Nice on May 15 and Sunday's 2-0 win at Metz.

It seems that he was left out of those matches to keep him fresh for the Cup final, with PSG having already wrapped up the Ligue 1 title, although coach Luis Enrique hinted that he has not been entirely happy with his star man's application of late.

"This week we will see who is ready, who is not, and who has the most desire," he said last weekend.

"The French Cup final is very important for us." Mbappe's time with PSG has been laden with silverware, at least on the domestic scene.

He has helped the Qatar-owned club win the Ligue 1 title six times and the now-defunct League Cup twice. Victory against Lyon on Saturday will allow him to claim a fourth winners' medal in the French Cup.

But of course his time at the Parc des Princes has also been marked by a lack of success where it matters the most, in the Champions League.

Mbappe scored 42 goals in 64 appearances for Paris in Europe's elite club competition, but PSG could not lift the trophy in those seven years -- and have still never won it.

With Mbappe there was a run to the final in Lisbon in 2020, when PSG lost 1-0 to Bayern Munich in a game played behind closed doors at the height of the pandemic.

There were two other appearances in the semi-finals, but he was unfit and an unused substitute in the second leg of the last-four loss to Manchester City in 2021, and simply did not perform when it really mattered in the defeat by Borussia Dortmund this season.

With Real Madrid expected to be his next destination, Mbappe will be hopeful of finally becoming a Champions League winner once he has moved away from Paris and from France.

What trace will he leave behind in his home country?

Mbappe has been a superstar ever since he broke through as a raw teenager in a brilliant Monaco team that won Ligue 1 in 2017.

He is an icon in France, and will continue to be so while playing his club football abroad, just as Michel Platini, Zinedine Zidane and Thierry Henry were in the past.

But he will be determined to sign off with one more trophy, with PSG having the opportunity to win both the Ligue 1 title and the French Cup in the same season for the first time since the Covid-curtailed 2019/20 campaign.

Mbappe's own history in French Cup finals has not always been happy, even if he has been on the winning side three times.

AFP

Beaten Leverkusen hope to 'find themselves' in German Cup final

BERLIN

BAYER Leverkusen face second-division Kaiserslautern in today's German Cup final licking their wounds after a first loss in almost a year.

Xabi Alonso's side were thoroughly outclassed in a 3-0 loss to Atalanta in the Europa League final on Wednesday, their first defeat in any competition since May 2023 -- a run of 51 games.

Energetic and dynamic this season with a taste for late goals, Leverkusen looked a shadow of the team which thundered past Bayern Munich to win their first ever Bundesliga title this season.

In a year when Alonso pledged to stick around with the club despite reported interest from Liverpool and Bayern, Leverkusen looked on track for a remarkable three trophies.

Now they need to rebound to stop their underdog opponents, who flirted with relegation to the third division for much of the campaign, spoiling what has been an incredible season.

A loss will recall the club's infamous 'Neverkusen' season in 2002, when they somehow emerged empty-handed despite being five points clear in the league with three games remaining, while also qualifying for the German Cup and Champions League finals.

Leverkusen's unbeaten run, which broke a 59-year-old record set by Portuguese giants Benfica in 1965, was bound to end sometime but it was the manner in which the club capitulated which will concern Alonso the most.

The Germans were outmuscled by a determined Atalanta, with the reliable Florian Wirtz and Granit Xhaka, so important this season, having off nights.

Winger Jonas Hofmann summed up the club's struggles on Wednesday night, lamenting "many mistakes, individual mistakes, bad passes and simple technical errors," saying the performance was "not Bayer-like". AFP

Ahly, Esperance boast surprise stars ahead of final showdown

CAIRO

CAF Champions League finalists Al Ahly of Egypt and Esperance of Tunisia boast amazing defensive records ahead of the second leg in Cairo today, with goalkeepers Mostafa Shobeir and Amanallah Memmiche the unexpected stars.

Shobeir has not conceded in eight Ahly appearances, including the 0-0 draw in the first leg of the title decider last weekend, since replacing injured captain Mohamed el Shenawy.

El Shenawy, rated among the best shot-stoppers in Africa, was available for the encounter in Tunisia, but sat on the bench with Swiss coach Marcel Koller keeping faith in Shobeir.

Shobeir is a 24-year-old son of former Egypt international Ahmed Shobeir, one of many great goalkeepers produced by record 11-time Champions League winners Ahly, including Essam el Hadary.

Mostafa Shobeir was superbly protected by Mohamed Hany, stand-in captain Ramy



Karim Fouad (L) of Al Ahly and Yan Sasse of Esperance battle for possession during the first leg of the 2024 CAF Champions League final in Tunisia. (Agencies)

Rabia, Mohamed Abdelmomen and Karim Fouad, with Esperance failing to get a single goal attempt on target.

Substitute Fouad was introduced after only seven minutes when veteran Tunisian international full-back Ali Maaloul limped off.

The rise of Memmiche, who celebrated his 20th birthday last month, was equally meteoric as he understudied captain Moez Ben Cherifia when Esperance began their campaign last September.

Memmiche and veteran Ben

Cherifia swapped roles for the return qualifier against Douanes from Burkina Kaso and he has been the first choice since.

The Tunisian has kept 11 clean sheets in 12 Champions League matches and comfortably dealt with a shot from leading Ahly scorer Hussein el Shahat -- the lone first-leg goal attempt on target.

His only blemishes came at the group stage against Al Hilal, who beat him three times in a match moved to Tanzania because of the armed conflict

in Sudan.

One of the goals he conceded came from a penalty and another was a Yassine Meriah own-goal. A yellow card completed a rare miserable outing for Memmiche.

- 'Equal chances' -

Meriah and fellow defenders Mohamed Ben Ali, Algerian Mohamed Tougai and Amine Ben Hamida have been near ever presents in the Esperance African campaign this season.

Most African football pundits believe the goalless first leg confirms Ahly as favourites to win a record-extending 12th Champions League title in 17 final appearances.

But Koller, who is chasing an eighth Egyptian or African trophy since joining the African titans two years ago, disagrees ahead of a second leg set to be watched by a sell-out 75,000 crowd.

"Ahly and Esperance have equal chances of success. We may have more experienced African campaigners, but only what happens on the pitch counts," he told reporters.

"I do not view the final as two matches, but rather 180

minutes of football in Rades and Cairo. Naturally, our goal is to win at home and retain the title. "Concentration will be a key factor. One slip could prove decisive between two evenly matched sides."

After a tough time as a manager in Europe, including just four matches with AEK Athens before being sacked, Portuguese Miguel Cardoso has been much more successful as Esperance coach.

Not only are they in the final of the premier African club competition, but well placed to win the Tunisian championship a record-extending 33rd time.

"We were unable to capitalise on our chances in the first leg. Hopefully, it will be a different story this Saturday," he said.

"It was disappointing not being able to exploit home advantage and the backing of fantastic supporters, but this final is far from settled."

Tradition favours Ahly as only two of 10 previous Champions League finalists held 0-0 at home in a first leg went on to lift the trophy.

AFP

..CAF Champions League final: Five Ahly v Esperance facts

CAIRO

FIVE facts before second leg of CAF Champions League final in Cairo today, with Al Ahly of Egypt and Esperance of Tunisia level on aggregate after goalless first leg.

Ahly are seeking back-to-back titles a record-extending fourth time after victories in the 2005 and 2006, 2012 and 2013 and 2020 and 2021 seasons. Esperance achieved the feat once, winning in 2018 and

2019.

This is the 15th consecutive final from 2010 featuring at least one north African club, with Ahly involved in nine and Esperance in five. Egypt lead the way in Champions League victories with 17 while Tunisia

boast six.

Ahly have hosted Esperance 11 times at various stages of the Champions League, winning five matches and drawing six. The most recent was a 2023 semi-final second leg which Ahly won 1-0 through a

Hussein el Shahat goal.

Ahly have scored 19 goals in 13 Champions League matches this season with El Shahat (five) and Mahmoud Kahraba (four) the most prolific marksmen, but Esperance have managed just nine with Brazil-

ian Yan Sasse claiming three goals.

If Ahly remain unbeaten in the 2024 Champions League after second leg, they will match the feat of their 2005 team, which included stars like Essam el Hadary, Wael Gomaa, Mohamed Aboutrika, Mohamed Barakat and Emad Moteab. Esperance were unbeaten when crowned 2019 champions.

AFP

Ten Hag faces Man Utd judgement day as Man City eye history in FA Cup final

LONDON

MANCHESTER United manager Erik ten Hag hopes to bolster his chances of avoiding the sack by ruining Manchester City's history bid in the FA Cup final today.

For the second successive season, Wembley will stage a Manchester derby in the showpiece fixture.

Last year, City beat United 2-1 in the final on route to an incredible treble-winning campaign that included Premier League and Champions League glory.

City remain England's pre-eminent force, as they showed by clinching an unprecedented fourth successive Premier League title last weekend.

United left Wembley still optimistic about the future despite that defeat 12 months ago because Ten Hag had ended their six-year trophy drought by winning the League Cup earlier in the season.

But the Red Devils return to north London shaken by a turbulent campaign that leaves the Dutchman fighting to save his job.

United finished eighth in the Premier League -- their lowest final position since 1990 -- and failed even to make it out of the Champions League group stage.



Manchester United manager Erik ten Hag is fighting to save his job. Agencies

Ten Hag has blamed United's woes on injuries, but that might not convince the club's new co-owner Jim Ratcliffe to keep faith with him.

The Dutch coach reportedly caused friction among his squad after clashing with Jadon Sancho and Marcus Rashford, setting the tone for a series of embarrassing defeats against Crystal Palace, Bournemouth, Fulham, Copenhagen and Galatasaray among others.

United only made it to the FA Cup final after blowing a three-goal lead and surviving a penalty shootout against second-tier Coventry in a semi-final that underlined the flaws in Ten Hag's erratic team.

England boss Gareth Southgate, former Chelsea manager Mauricio Pochettino and Ipswich

mier League and FA Cup two years in a row.

"I came here to win trophies," Ten Hag said. "I'm just focusing on the job I have to do. That is first to win the game on Saturday and then keep going in the project."

Beaten in six of the past seven Manchester derbies, United must lift the Cup for the first time in eight years to avoid their first season without European action since 2014/15.

A Europa League place is hardly the prize United fans dream of, but Andre Onana, the club's goalkeeper, wants to repay their support with victory at Wembley.

Onana, who has endured an error-strewn first campaign at United, said: "It's been a difficult season for them and for us.

"For me, it was difficult at the start and they were behind me so I'm very thankful. Let's end on Saturday at Wembley. We will fight until the end."

City's dominant reign in the Premier League has extended to six titles in seven years, a dynastic spell that has led many pundits label them the greatest English team of all time.

Pep Guardiola's men pipped Arsenal by two points after winning their last nine league games, leaving them on the brink of more history at Wembley this weekend.

"To do what we've done year in, year out, I don't think many teams would be able to do that, especially in this Premier League," City captain Kyle Walker said as he contemplated a

potential second successive double.

Walker believes Guardiola's drive and intensity are central to City's seemingly unquenchable thirst for success.

"I think it starts from the manager, first and foremost. He's addicted to winning. He is addicted and it rubs off on us," he said.

Ominously for United, City playmaker Bernardo Silva said his side, who have won the FA Cup twice in the Guardiola era, are at their best when the stakes are highest.

"Sometimes at the beginning of the season when we don't have that much pressure, the team relaxes when it shouldn't and at the end of the season we always compensate for it," he said.

AFP

Gwiji by David Chikoko



SPORT

Ahly, Esperance boast surprise stars ahead of final showdown

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Simba eye second place in high-stakes NBC PL match against KMC

By Correspondent Seth Mapoli

SIMBA SC are gearing up for a pivotal NBC Premier League clash today against Kinondoni Municipal Council (KMC) Football Club at Sheikh Amri Abeid Stadium, in Arusha.

The match, scheduled for 4:00 PM EAT, promises to be a decisive encounter as Simba eyes the second position in the league standings.

In their first-round clash at the Azam Complex Stadium, Simba and KMC delivered an exciting 2-2 draw.

Simba's goals came from Saidi Ntibanzokiza in the 57th minute and Jean Baleke in the 62nd minute. For KMC, Waziri Junior Shentembo found the back of the net in the 30th and 83rd minutes, making for a thrilling match.

Recent encounters between the two teams highlight Simba's dominance. The Msimbazi Street-based side has won three of their last five matches, with the other two ending in draws.

KMC have yet to defeat Simba in these last five meetings, a streak the Reds aim to continue.

Simba currently hold 63 points from 28 matches, having scored 56 goals and conceded 25 in the third position. In contrast, KMC sit in the fifth position with 36 points from the same number of matches, scoring 27 goals and conceding 38.

This match marks the first of a double-header for Simba at the Sheikh Amri Abeid Stadium.

Simba's interim head coach Juma Mgunda has expressed confidence in his team's preparations.

"Preparations for Saturday's NBC Premier League game against KMC are complete," Mgunda stated. "The team is in good condition, ready for the tough match against KMC."

Despite the rigorous preparations, Simba will be missing some of their key players. Striker Pa Omar Jobe, who sustained an injury in the previous game against Geita Gold, and Kibu Denis, who is still not physically fit despite returning from injury, will not be available for the match.

Mgunda acknowledged these absences but highlighted the return of two important players.

"The thing to be grateful for is that some of our injured players, Luis Miquissone and Clatous Chama, have recovered and we have brought them for tomorrow's game," he said.

Simba's preparations for the match against KMC have been thorough, despite the absence of some key players. The return of Miquissone and Chama boosts the team's morale and depth.

Coach Mgunda's strategy will likely focus on maintaining a solid defense while capitalizing on the offensive prowess of the returning players.

Mgunda also emphasized the importance of fan support.

"I am a believer in the presence of fans in the stadium. We really appreciate their contribution and we ask them to come in large numbers tomorrow to give support to the team," he said.

Goalkeeper Ally Salim echoed his coach's sentiments about the team's readiness and the importance of the match.

"We, as players, are ready for the game. We know it will be a difficult game. We respect KMC, but we are here to fight until the end to get three points," Salim stated.

Simba's ambitions for the season are clear. They aim to secure a top-two finish, with the ultimate goal of participating in the CAF Champions League next season.

Simba and Azam FC are neck-and-neck, both with 63 points. However, Azam hold the edge due to a superior goal difference of five goals. This makes the two remaining matches crucial for both teams.

While Simba face KMC, Azam will be playing Kagera Sugar at Azam Complex, Chamazi. This simultaneous fixture adds an extra layer of intensity to Simba's match, as any slip-up could be detrimental in their race to close the goal difference gap with Azam.

KMC, on the other hand, are expected to provide strong opposition. Despite their fifth position in the league, they have shown resilience throughout the season. Simba's defense will need to be vigilant to counter KMC's attacking threats.

The match is also significant for KMC as they aim to climb higher in the league standings and finish the season on a positive note.

The presence of fans at Sheikh Amri Abeid Stadium is anticipated to provide a vibrant atmosphere, something coach Mgunda and his players have acknowledged as a crucial element of their success.

Race for second, relegation battle take centre stage across the country

Champions League spot, third place and a Confederation Cup ticket are the positions remaining to jostle for in the top half in today and Tuesday's final rounds.

Azam and Simba are both on 63 points in the race for second place which holds the final CAF Champions League ticket.

Azam currently occupy second place and only ahead of third-placed Simba thanks to a superior goal difference.

They have a tricky assignment ahead of them, as they host Kagera Sugar who need at least one point to confirm safety.

Simba meet fifth-placed KMC at Sheikh Amri Abeid Stadium.

The match was initially set to be played at Major General Isamuhyo Stadium in Dar es Salaam but later moved to Arusha at the request of hosts Simba.

For the top four, Coastal Union remain the clear favourites to clinch the CAF Confederation ticket.

They are five points ahead of their closest top-four challenger and only need to avoid defeat at home to JKT Tanzania.

Down at the bottom half of the log, eight teams can still be relegated either directly or through the play-offs.

The eight teams are Kagera Sugar, JKT Tanzania, Singida Fountain Gate, Dodoma Jiji, Mashujaa, Tabora United, Geita Gold and Mtibwa Sugar.

Two of the six will go down automatically while relegation and promotion playoff offers a second chance for the 14th and 13th placed sides at the end of the regular season.

Kagera Sugar, JKT Tanzania, Dodoma Jiji and Singida Fountain Gate all need

points to be sure of avoiding relegation, while Mashujaa hope to beat them to it.

For the four sides below the red line, Mtibwa Sugar and Geita Gold can be relegated this weekend, while Mashujaa's survival can be confirmed.

The most important match is a relegation six-pointer between the 13th-placed Mashujaa and rock-bottom Mtibwa Sugar.

The match will take place at Lake Tanganyika Stadium.

Mashujaa are eight points ahead of Mtibwa Sugar and can clinch survival with a win today.

Failing that, it will have a second chance at home to Dodoma Jiji in the final round.

If Mtibwa Sugar lose they will be relegated with a game to spare.

Tabora United have the unenviable task of fac-

ing hosts Young Africans who, despite wrapping up its third straight title with three games to spare, want to make their fans who are expected to turn up for the trophy presentation ceremony at Benjamin Mkapa Stadium happy.

Today, May 25:
All matches kick-off at 4pm:

Coastal Union v JKT Tanzania (Mkwakwani Stadium, Tanga), Simba v KMC (Sheikh Amri Abeid, Arusha), Ihefu v Dodoma Jiji (Liti Stadium, Singida), Azam v Kagera Sugar (Chamazi Complex, Dar).

Mashujaa v Mtibwa Sugar (Lake Tanganyika Stadium, Kigoma), Singida Fountain Gate v Geita Gold (CCM Kiumba, Mwanza), Namungo v Tanzania Prisons (Majaliwa Stadium, Ruangwa), Young Africans v Tabora United (Benjamin Mkapa, Dar)

By Correspondent Michael Mwebe

THE 2023-24 NBC Premier League will stage its penultimate round of matches this afternoon, with all eight fixtures kicking off simultaneously across the country.

With Young Africans crowned champions last week, second place and a CAF



Confederation of African Football (CAF) President Patrice Motsepe (L) speaks to journalists after arriving at the Abeid Amani Karume International Airport in Zanzibar yesterday to attend the closing ceremony of the African Schools Football Championship. Looking on the right is the Tanzania Football Federation (TFF) President, Wallace Karia. Photo: Correspondent Jumanne Juma.

Yanga's uphill battle to retain Aziz Ki amidst interest from top African clubs

By Correspondent Seth Mapoli

YOUNG Africans SC, the 2023/2024 NBC Premier League champions, are facing challenges in securing a new contract for their attacking midfielder Stephanie Aziz Ki.

Despite extensive negotiations, Aziz Ki has yet to commit to the club, citing multiple offers from other teams.

Reports indicate that Young Africans have been engaged in discussions with Aziz Ki, but the midfielder has hesitated to sign a new deal. This hesitation is attributed to the various attractive offers he has received, particularly from foreign clubs.

Currently topping the

league's scoring charts for the 2023/24 season with 17 goals, the Burkina Faso international is expected to make a final decision about his future early next month.

According to sources within the club, the negotiations, led by Young Africans' president Hersi Said, have been positive but inconclusive.

"Aziz Ki, along with his agent who is also his mother, has had productive talks with Young Africans," a club insider revealed. "However, he has asked for more time and took the contract with him, promising to sign it later."

The source further explained that Aziz Ki appears particularly interested in an offer from a South African

team. "Despite receiving a lucrative new contract from Young Africans, Aziz Ki has yet to sign it. His interest seems to be leaning towards the offer from South Africa, suggesting a potential departure," the insider added.

Contrary to some reports, the source dismissed claims that Aziz Ki is considering offers from other local Tanzanian teams, calling such rumours mere propaganda.

"The offer from Young Africans is substantial, making it unlikely for Aziz Ki to join another local club. His delay in signing is due to the foreign offers, not local ones," the source emphasized.

Ali Kamwe, Yanga's infor-

mation and communication officer, confirmed that negotiations are ongoing and that Aziz Ki has not yet signed the new contract.

"I want to assure our fans and members that we are working hard to retain all the players we need for next season. If a player wishes to leave, it will not be to a local team but possibly to a club abroad," Kamwe stated.

Kamwe also reiterated the club's ambitions for the upcoming season, emphasizing their goal to win the Premier League and improve their performance in the CAF Champions League.

As the negotiations continue, the team's supporters remain anxious about the po-

tential loss of one of their key players. Aziz Ki's decision will significantly impact the club's strategy and performance in the forthcoming seasons.

With Aziz Ki at the helm of their midfield, Young Africans have enjoyed a successful run in the NBC Premier League. His performance has been instrumental in their current standing, making his retention crucial for the club's future ambitions.

The club's management is keenly aware of the stakes and is doing everything possible to secure Aziz Ki's services for the coming years. However, the allure of international opportunities, particularly from South Africa, poses a significant challenge.

Flexibles by David Chikoko

