



theguardiantz

theguardiantld

feedback@guardian.co.tz

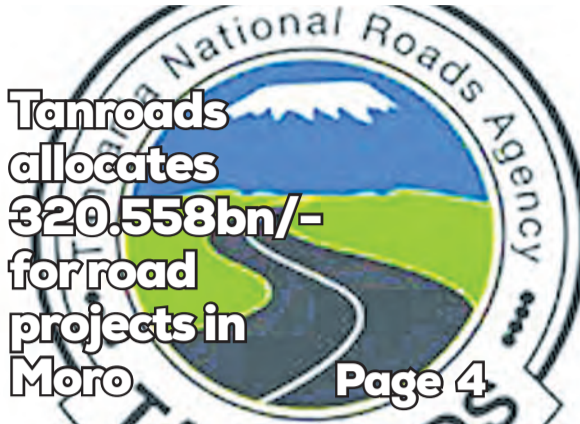
+255 745 700710

LIKE & FOLLOW US

ISSN 0856 - 5434 ISSUE No. 9373 • PRICE: Tsh 1,000, Kenya sh100 TANZANIA SATURDAY 11 JANUARY, 2025



Mwinyi urges pupils, teachers to work hard
Page 3



Tanroads allocates 320.558bn/- for road projects in Moro
Page 4



Primary school pupils in Iringa introducing donkey care clubs
Page 5



Miloud aims to revolutionize Singida Black Stars with attacking flair
Page 20

Police confirm holding Dr Slaa for questioning

By Guardian Reporter

THE special police zone command in Dar es Salaam has confirmed holding leading Chadema activist and former secretary general Dr Wilbroad Slaa for questioning.

SACP Jumanne Muliro, the zonal commander, issued this confirmation midday yesterday, in the wake of widespread reports that he was arrested early Tuesday while exercising near his home.

The veteran opposition leader who for several years held diplomatic posts was arrested in the early hours of Tuesday and was being held for questioning on matters that are yet to be clarified.

Social media reports were affirmative yesterday that Dr Slaa was arrested while working out near his residence in Mbweni, where at the time of his arrest he sent a voice recording to a networking group on the incident.

In the recording he said he was being

detained by the police and was being taken to the Mbweni Police Station on the northern parts of the city.

"I'm just letting you know that the police have come for me. I will inform you of what happens next. I'm being taken to Mbweni station," he said in the recording.

On a local radio interview yesterday, the zonal commander explained that while the questioning is ongoing, they are reviewing the legal procedures and will decide on the next steps accordingly.

"It is true that Dr Slaa is with us, and we are conducting interrogations with him regarding certain matters. The questioning is going well, and we are examining the legal procedures to determine what actions to take next," he said.

"We are reviewing the legal framework to guide our actions, and further information will be released later," he summed up. As of now, the exact charges or reasons for Dr Slaa's arrest remain undisclosed.



Education, training policy for launching end January

By Polycarp Machira, Dodoma

PREPARATIONS for the Education and Training Policy, 2023 edition have been completed, with the launching expected at the end of this month.

Prof Adolf Mkenda, the Education, Science and Technology minister, made this affirmation in a press conference here yesterday, noting that the updated policy in-

cludes an improved curriculum endorsed by the cabinet in October 2023 and is partially being implemented.

"Both the new policy and curriculum are designed to be fully integrative and holistic, with equal emphasis placed on all subjects and learning domains, from mathematics to sports," he stated.

"The education sector is undergoing significant reforms, as we

have already started implementing the new policy and curriculum since January 2024," he elaborated.

The changes have been rolled out for pre-primary education, primary school grades one to three, and form one in secondary schools, following consultations with stakeholders, he said.

Some of the key issues raised by stakeholders include the use of English as the primary medium of

instruction, and a stronger focus on science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM), he explained.

The policy review and curriculum changes resulted from guidelines from President Samia Suluhu Hassan in a major address to the National Assembly in April 2021, di-

TURN TO Page 2



Vice President Dr. Philip Mpango speaks with the outgoing resident ambassador of the United States, Michael Battle (2nd L), at the Chamwino State House in Dodoma yesterday. Photo: VPO

2025: Govt seeking over 1,500 projects, \$15bn capital flows

By Henry Mwangonde

THE government has set a target of enlisting 1,500 investment projects taking up \$15bn by December this year.

Prof Kitila Mkumbo, the Planning and Investment state minister in the President's Office, cited these projections at a press conference in Dar es Salaam yesterday, presenting investment trends during 2024.

Key sectors in growth projections include manufacturing, agriculture, transport, clean energy, tourism, mining and services, he said, intimating

that there are prospects of positioning Tanzania among the top five countries in Africa for investment and capital inflows.

He set out eight measures intended to facilitate these objectives, like granting permits to members of the Diaspora to establish investment promotion centres.

The government is also initiating designated special economic zones, while drafting a new investment law merging the Tanzania Investment Centre (TIC) and the Export

TURN TO Page 2

Vision 2050: CSOs pushing for ending maternal deaths, better food security

By Getrude Mbagu

CIVIL Society Organisations (CSOs) have highlighted key areas for improvement, including maternal and child health, affordable healthcare, inclusive social protection and food security for a better Vision 2050.

Lucas Kifyasi, acting chairman for the CSO working group and a United Nations Associa-

tion for Tanzania official, commended the government for its efforts in developing the Vision.

Many of the CSOs' 2024 proposals were incorporated into the first draft, he said in a meeting with Stanslaus Nyongo, the Planning and Investment deputy state minister in the President's Office, along with members of the national preparatory committee for Vision

2050 in Dar es Salaam yesterday.

CSOs under the coordination of the Foundation for Civil Society (FCS) presented views on the draft of vision and long term national development plan.

They focused on eliminating maternal and child deaths, establishing comprehensive health insurance for vulnerable groups and ensuring food security, he stated.

"We have worked with communities from grassroots to national levels, collecting insights and feedback through digital tools, to ensure the Vision reflects the needs of all Tanzanians," the leading activist affirmed.

CSOs also pushed for transformative changes in the education sector, proposing a focus

on technological innovation to align with global industrial trends and support the country's youth in the digital age.

Furthermore, they called for social protection mechanisms that are inclusive of all social groups, ensuring no one is left behind.

TURN TO Page 2



2025: Govt seeking over 1,500 projects, \$15bn capital flows

FROM PAGE 1

Processing Zones Authority (EPZA), he said.

The relevant bill has already been put to a first reading in the legislature and is currently under review by the parliamentary standing committee, he said.

The second phase of the business and investment environment improvement programme is also being prepared, following evaluation of the first phase, showing key successes in enhancing the business and investment climate, he asserted. Evaluation highlighted challenges that the government and stakeholders are actively addressing, in seeking to position Tanzania as a leading regional investment destination, he stated.

Assessing local government authorities' efforts in improving the business environment and promoting investment will also be conducted, he stated.

Infrastructure development

in special economic zones will be pursued, including the Bagamoyo special economic zone, to support industrial growth, he said, underlining that the government is keen on promoting domestic investment.

The goal is to ensure that 50 percent of all investment projects arise from within the country, he said, pledging collaborate with various public agencies to focus on local investors, particularly small and growing businesses.

Capacity will be enhanced at regional administrative secretariats to improve the investment environment at regional and district levels countrywide, he stated.

By end of last year, TIC had registered 13,282 investment projects attracting \$127.176m, and expected to create upwards of 1.98m jobs, he specified, noting that the projects are various stages of implementation.

Within the January to December 2024o period, the centre registered 901 projects, compared to 526 projects registered in the same period in 2023, he added.



Prime Minister Kassim Majaliwa, accompanied by Uganda's Minister of State for Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries, Fredrick Bwino Kyakulaga (R), shortly after arriving at the Entebbe International Airport yesterday. He is representing the country at the Africa Agriculture Programme Summit taking place today. Photo: PMO

Education, training policy for launching end January

FROM PAGE 1

recting a review of the 2014 education policy.

She emphasised that national curricula reform is crucial to producing a skilled workforce that meets the demands of the country's industries and services, the minister noted.

The new curriculum is structured across five educational stages: 1+6+4+2/3+3+, explained as one year of pre-primary education, six years of primary school, four years of ordinary secondary education, two years of advanced secondary or three years of technical education, and

three years of tertiary or higher education, he stated.

Thorough and complete implementation of all aspects of the policy will be vital, as past education policies had suffered from incomplete execution despite their promising potential, he declared.

Implementation would

proceed in phases to ensure progress and avoid any regression, he said, noting that this is also an opportunity for other stakeholders, including the private sector, to contribute towards enhancing the country's education system and making it more productive.

The Education and Train-

ing Policy, 2023 edition, represents a significant shift in the country's education framework and is expected to revolutionise the sector. The government is committed to its effective implementation with all stakeholders needing to work collaboratively to make the vision a reality, he added.



The former Chadema presidential candidate Dr. Wilbrod Slaa appearing at the Kisutu Resident Magistrate's Court in Dar es Salaam yesterday, where he was charged with spreading false information on the X platform. Photo: Correspondent Imani Nathanie

Vision 2050: CSOs pushing for ending maternal deaths, better food security

FROM PAGE 1

The CSOs' expectation is for the country to build a diverse and inclusive economy, fostering economic growth and resilience, strengthening social equity along with gender equality economically, politically

and socially.

It should also seek to increase employment through priority sectors, investing in the protection of justice tied to maintaining peace, strengthening the rule of law, the protection of life and security of property among the people, he specified.

"CSOs also seek strong investment in promoting good governance and accountability, enhancing the participation of citizens in leadership and development activities, along with strengthening democracy and transparency," he said.

In his remarks, the

deputy minister lauded CSOs for helping to obtain best suggestions for Vision 2050.

"You have helped us obtain good opinions. You are role models for women. Through your network, you have done a great job, provided excellent analysis, and as a ministry, we will work

on all your suggestions," he said.

Recommendations from CSOs underscore the need for Vision 2050 to address the realities faced by Tanzania's most vulnerable citizens, including youth, women, the elderly and people with disabilities, ensuring their active

participation in the nation's growth, he stated.

As the country moves towards long-term development goals, collaborative efforts between government and civil society will be crucial for creating a robust, equitable and sustainable future for all Tanzanians, he added.

Kagame calls on DRC to negotiate with M23 rebels

KIGALI

RWANDAN President Paul Kagame has called on Congolese authorities to open negotiations with the M23 rebel group, which has recently seized several key towns in the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

The group's continued territorial advances are exacerbating an already volatile situation in a region that borders Rwanda.

M23, one of the most prominent armed groups operating in the region, is among over 100 militia factions vying for control in eastern Congo, an area rich in valuable minerals. Last year, the fighting displaced over a million people, underscoring the devastating humanitarian impact of the ongoing conflict. Speaking on the current situation, Kagame emphasised the need for the DRC government to take responsibility for its internal challenges. "If the DRC government is not encouraged to take its own responsibility for its people and its country and everybody joins them to blame others for their problems, how do you expect Congo to address these problems that affect all of us?" he said.

The M23 rebel group has made significant territorial gains in recent weeks, capturing the towns of Katala and Masisi. The latter is located just 80 kilometres

from Goma, the regional capital of North Kivu province. This expansion by M23 has sparked increasing tensions in the region.

In a detailed explanation, Kagame pointed out the historical roots of the M23 group, noting that many of its leaders and fighters originated from Uganda, where they had sought refuge during previous conflicts in 2012 and 2013. "These leaders of M23 and the majority of their fighters came from Uganda where they had been as refugees who fled the problems of 2012/2013 when these people [rebels] moved to Uganda and others came here," he said.

The Rwandan president also expressed confusion over how the conflict, initially sparked by Uganda-based rebels, has come to be framed as Rwanda's issue. "The fighting was started by the main group that was in and from Uganda. So how did it become Rwanda's problem? Honestly! What is the basis and for how long do we explain this? Up to what point?" Kagame questioned.

Despite Kagame's calls for dialogue, the DRC government has consistently accused Rwanda of backing the M23 rebels, a claim Rwanda denies. The Congolese government has also rejected Kagame's suggestion to engage in talks with the group, further complicating efforts toward peace.

Gaza death toll surpasses 46,000 as violence continues unabated

By Agencies

FOR Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, the loss of family members continues even as ceasefire talks between Israel and Hamas are ongoing.

Fatma Abu Awad suffered the

heartbreaking loss of six relatives on Tuesday due to two Israeli airstrikes that struck just 15 minutes apart.

Fatima expressed her despair, saying, "We have been waiting for news of a truce every day, but it never comes. Instead, I received news

about my sons, my daughter-in-law, and my grandchildren. Six lives were taken. How much longer will this war continue? How long will the bombings persist? How long will Muslims be killed? We have reached 46,000 martyrs, and no one seems to care."

On Thursday, relatives of Israeli hostages who died in Gaza urgently called for a quick resolution to secure the release of all remaining hostages, following the recovery of another hostage's body by Israeli soldiers from the besieged area.

Rachel Goldberg-Polin, mother of deceased Israeli hostage Hersh Goldberg-Polin, stated, "We urge all world leaders to negotiate and bring home the 99 remaining hostages. They come from 23 different nations, representing Christians, Jews, Muslims, Hindus, and Buddhists."

Many families remain anxious about the safety of their loved ones as the conflict in Gaza rages on.

Israel reports that about a third of the remaining 100 hostages are believed to have died, with estimates suggesting that as many as half could be deceased.

Govt hails US contributions to Tanzania's development

By Guardian Reporter

MINISTER for Finance, Dr Mwigulu Nchemba has reiterated the country's appreciation for the United States' substantial contributions to the country's development.

The contributions, which span a range of sectors, are largely channeled through various funded projects and programmes.

A notable highlight is the recently signed \$1.14 billion aid agreement aimed at supporting key sectors such as health, education, and economic growth.

Dr Nchemba made remarks yesterday in Dodoma, during a farewell meeting with the outgoing US Ambassador to Tanzania, Michael Battle.

The meeting also provided an opportunity for discussions on the expansion of bilateral cooperation, particularly in trade and investment, with both parties expressing optimism about future collaboration.

"We are deeply grateful for the 1.14 billion USD aid provided by American institutions through the Development Objectives Agreement (DOAG) programme.

This reflects the United States' commitment to our nation's development. These funds will be directed towards critical sectors including health, education, economic development, and good governance, thereby contributing to Tanzania's National Vision 2025 and the Five-Year National Development Plan (2021/22-2025/26)," Dr Nchemba said.

He also highlighted the ongoing partnership with the US through the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) programme.

He praised the opportunity this presents for Tanzania to improve key infrastructure and governance areas, as the country works to strengthen its development framework.

He further noted that the current government, under President Samia Suluhu Hassan, has made significant strides in consolidating democracy, advancing human rights, and promoting good governance, all of which align with the nation's long-term development objectives.

Dr Nchemba reaffirmed Tanzania's commitment to deepening its relationship with the United States, particularly in the areas of trade, investment, and social development.

He also expressed his gratitude to Ambassador Battle for his invaluable contributions to strengthening US-Tanzania ties during his tenure.

The outgoing US Ambassador, emphasised the long-standing and productive relationship between the United States and Tanzania.

Ambassador Battle expressed pride in the progress made over the years and the shared commitment to continued partnership.

"Tanzania and the United States have been steadfast development partners for many years. This partnership has strengthened over time, and we are now looking ahead to a new phase of cooperation, with a focus on enhancing trade and investment. The strategic use of the Indian Ocean's commercial corridor, coupled with the burgeoning opportunities in the Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) sector, holds immense potential for both our nations," said Ambassador Battle, who was accompanied by his Deputy, Andrew Lentz revealed that the United States prepares a new initiative under the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA).

This will focus on expanding trade and market access both within the United States and globally. Notably, the new approach will prioritise bilateral trade agreements between individual countries, moving away from the multilateral framework of previous years.

He said the shift is expected to create more tailored opportunities for African nations, including Tanzania, to benefit from enhanced economic cooperation with the United States.

The farewell discussions were attended by a number of high-ranking officials, including the Deputy Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Finance, Amina Khamisi Shaaban, senior leaders from the Ministry of Finance, and representatives from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and East African Cooperation.



An ophthalmologist from the Dr. Agarwal's Eye Hospital, Mwanza branch, Dr. Abubakari Mwatute (R), conducts an eye examination on a local resident, John Lucas, during a free eye treatment outreach program in Shinyanga yesterday. Photo: Correspondent Marco Maduhu

Govt extends voluntary registration deadline for public data collectors

By Polycarp Machira, Dodoma

THE government has extended the voluntary registration deadline for private and public institutions to comply with the Personal Data Protection Act (PDPA) to April 30, 2025.

The move follows the failure of many institutions to meet the original registration deadline, which was last month. The extension comes after President Samia Suluhu Hassan's directive in April 2024 to ensure all data controllers register with the Personal Data Protection Commission (PDPC).

As of yesterday, more than 1,600 institutions had complied

with the law, according to PDPC Director General Dr Emmanuel Mkilia.

However, he highlighted that the number remains low compared to the total number of institutions expected to comply.

"This figure is too small compared to the number of institutions in the country that should have registered," Dr Mkilia said, warning that the commission will take serious action against those who fail to meet the revised deadline.

The PDPA defines a data controller as any entity—be it an individual, legal entity, or public body—that oversees the processing of personal data.

He emphasized that starting May 1, 2025, the PDPC, in collaboration with law enforcement agencies, will initiate legal action against institutions that have not complied with the law. This could include substantial fines and other penalties.

The law requires organizations to establish robust procedures for the collection, processing, and protection of personal data.

During the launch of the commission in April 2024, President Samia expressed concerns over the misuse of personal information, urging all data collectors and processors, both public and private, to

register with the PDPC by December 2024.

The Personal Data Protection Act also introduced strict penalties for non-compliance. Corporate entities found in violation can face fines of up to 5 bn/- (approximately \$2.125 million), while individuals can be fined up to 20m/- (approximately \$8,500). The maximum jail term for violations is ten years.

With the implementation of the PDPA now in effect, businesses and institutions are required to adhere to its provisions, particularly when transferring personal data across borders or handling sensitive data related to employees and customers.



Finance Minister Dr Mwigulu Nchemba (R), bids farewell to the outgoing U.S. Ambassador to Tanzania, Michael Battle, shortly after their meeting in Dodoma yesterday. Photo: Courtesy of MF. Photo: Correspondent James Lanka

Ministry outlines 6 strategies to strengthen communication

By Correspondent Paul Mabeja, Dodoma

MINISTER for Home Affairs, Innocent Bashungwa outlines six communication strategies for the ministry and security agencies, aimed at strengthening communication between the government and the communities it serves.

During the launch event yesterday here, Bashungwa instructed all heads of security agencies in the country to implement the strategies, to en-

sure that citizens receive timely information about the various activities being carried out by the government.

He explained that the strategies cover the Tanzania Police Force, the Prisons Service, the Fire and Rescue Force, the Immigration Department and the National Identification Authority (NIDA).

"It is important to note that the preparation of these strategies follows government directives requiring ministries and security agencies to develop communication strategies. The

primary goal is to strengthen communication between the government and the communities we serve," Bashungwa said.

He added that the preparation and launch of these strategies would act as a catalyst for the Ministry and its security agencies to begin implementation immediately, ensuring efficient execution.

"I have reviewed these strategies and observed the various planned communication activities. Professional implementation of these strategies will significantly enhance public

communication and media relations."

"One of the key objectives of these communication strategies is to raise awareness and encourage community participation in matters of public safety, the protection of property, and the maintenance of peace and stability in our country," he emphasized.

Furthermore, he directed that communication units within security agencies be allocated budgets to support the effective implementation of these strategies.

Earlier, the Permanent Secretary for the Ministry of Home Affairs, Ally Gugu, explained that the purpose of these strategies is to improve awareness and community involvement in public safety and property protection, alongside maintaining peace and national stability.

He further stressed that these strategies will be implemented over the next two years, after which an evaluation will be conducted to identify any shortcomings and make necessary improvements.

Mwinyi urges pupils, teachers to work hard

By Guardian Reporter, Zanzibar

ZANZIBAR President Dr Hussein Ali Mwinyi has urged parents and teachers to continue work hard, including motivating children to study diligently and achieve their dreams.

He emphasised that the government will remain committed to provide conducive environment for education.

Dr Mwinyi made the remarks on Thursday during the inauguration of the new Kojani Primary School in Pemba North Region.

The President explained that the government's goal in constructing schools is to ensure students have access to quality education in better learning environment.

Dr Mwinyi expressed his satisfaction with the excellent management of the Kojani School project, which was overseen by officials from the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training, Zanzibar Building Agency (ZBA) and the contractor.

He commended the timely completion of the project, which met high standards.

Regarding employment, Dr Mwinyi directed the Ministries of Health, Education, and Public Service to ensure that when job opportunities arise, particularly in Kojani, local youth should be

given priority.

He also instructed these ministries to ensure the implementation of the directive.

He also directed the Ministry of Health to send a maritime ambulance boat to Kojani island to facilitate the transfer of patients and improve healthcare services for the local population.

He assured the people of Kojani that the government would also increase staffing for the island to ensure essential services are provided to the community.

Addressing the issue of climate change and the encroachment of seawater on people's homes, Dr Mwinyi promised that the government would consult with experts to find the solution to the problem.

Zanzibar First Lady, Mariam Mwinyi urged development partners to support efforts to overcome the challenges faced by school girls.

Khamis Abdalla Said, Principal Secretary in the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training, disclosed that the construction of the new school cost 5.382bn/-.

The school features 32 classrooms, laboratories, a computer room, a library, and an examination hall, with a capacity to accommodate 1,305 pupils in a single shift.

Tanzanian physician receives esteemed recognition in India

By Guardian Reporter

DR Kaushik Ramaiya, a leading physician and chief executive officer (CEO) of Shree Hindu Mandal Hospital in Dar es Salaam, has been awarded the esteemed Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Award (PBSA) 2025 for his outstanding contributions to the field of medicine.

The award was presented by the President of India at the 18th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD) Convention held in Bhubaneswar, Odisha on January 10, 2025.

Dr. Ramaiya, a Tanzanian citizen of Indian origin, has devoted much of his career to advancing medical research, particularly focusing on non-communicable diseases such as diabetes, cardiovascular risks, and metabolic disorders.

His extensive research on glucose tolerance and cardiovascular disease among Indian communities in Africa has made a significant impact on public health initiatives.

In his role as CEO of Shree Hindu Mandal Hospital, Dr. Ramaiya has been instrumental in improving healthcare services, especially for vulnerable populations such as children with Type 1 diabetes and individuals affected by HIV/AIDS.

His collaborative work with the Ministry of Health and local health authorities in Tanzania has led to the successful implementation of Diabetes and Non-Communicable Disease programs across the country.

"I am deeply honored to receive this prestigious award," said Dr. Ramaiya, "This recognition is not just for me but for the entire team at Shree Hindu Mandal Hospital and all those working tirelessly to improve healthcare in Tanzania and beyond."

Dr. Ramaiya is the fourth Tanzanian of Indian origin to receive the PBSA, following previous honorees such as Jayantilal Keshavji Chande (2005), Dr. Rajni Kanabar (2010), and Hajiat Shamim Parkar Khan (2019).

The Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Award, presented by the Government of India, is the highest recognition given to non-resident Indians and persons of Indian origin who have made remarkable contributions to their respective fields, both in India and globally.

Dr. Ramaiya's work exemplifies this spirit, as he continues to foster strong ties between India and Tanzania through his medical expertise and philanthropic endeavours.

India boasts one of the largest Diasporas globally, serving as a significant asset for the nation. The Indian diaspora has facilitated the establishment of cultural connections and broadened India's influence on the world stage by promoting its rich culture, heritage, traditions, and cuisine across the world. The India diaspora also contributes substantially to the development of their host countries, enhancing bilateral relations.

To honour the contributions of the Indian diaspora, the

Government of India has been observing Pravasi Bharatiya Divas annually since 2003. January 9 was chosen as the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas to commemorate the return of Mahatma Gandhi to India from South Africa in 1915.

The PBD Convention, celebrates the accomplishments of the Indian diaspora worldwide. This year's theme, "Diaspora's Contribution to a Viksit Bharat" (Developed India), underscored the significant role of the global Indian community in driving India's growth and its cultural influence across the world.

As part of the PBD celebrations, India also launched the Pravasi Bharatiya Express, a special tourist train offering a three-week journey through culturally significant sites in India. Several members of Tanzania's Indian diaspora were invited to participate in the initiative, further strengthening cultural and bilateral ties between the two nations.

Dr. Ramaiya's award highlights not only his personal achievements but also the contributions of the Indian community in Tanzania, which continues to play a crucial role in the nation's healthcare, economy, and cultural exchange with India.

The Pravasi Bharatiya Divas is a biennial event held to strengthen the engagement of the overseas Indian community with the Government of India and reconnect them with their cultural roots. The event is held over a period of three days, from January 8 to 10, and each time held in different state in India, allowing the attendees to explore the unique historical, cultural, and tourism offerings of the host state.

The Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD) convention commenced with the Youth Pravasi Bharatiya Divas on January 8, 2025, in collaboration with the Indian Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports. The convention was officially inaugurated by the Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi, on January 9, 2025.

Chief Guest of PBD 2025, President of Trinidad and Tobago, Christine Carla Kangaloo, addressed the gathering virtually.

PM Modi inaugurated four exhibitions of - (1) Vishwaroop Ram - The Universal Legacy of Ramayana (2) Diaspora's Contribution to Technology and Viksit Bharat.

(3) Spread and Evolution of Indian diaspora in the world with special focus on Mandvi Muscat and (4) Heritage and Culture of Odisha.

PM Modi also virtually launched the inaugural journey of the Pravasi Bharatiya Express, a special tourist train tailored for invited members of the global diaspora under Pravasi Teerth Darshan Yojana as part of PBD celebrations. Three Persons of Indian Origin (PIOs) - Nila Jivan, Bhavini Rajput, and Sandeep Rajput have been invited from Tanzania for Pravasi Bharatiya Express program. This unique initiative, introduced this year, offers the invited guests a three-week expedition to various culturally and religiously significant sites throughout India.



President of India, Droupadi Murmu presents the Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Award for 2025 to the CEO and Consultant Physician at Shree Hindu Mandal Hospital Dar es Salaam, Dr Kaushik Laxmidas Ramaiya in Bhubaneswar, Odisha, India yesterday for his exceptional service to the community in the field of medicine. Photo: Correspondent

VP praises US-Tanzania partnership at farewell meeting with US Envoy

By Guardian Reporter

VICE President Dr Philip Mpango has expressed the country's gratitude for the longstanding partnership with the United States, acknowledging the significant contributions the US has made to Tanzania's development across various sectors.

Dr Mpango made the remarks yesterday during a farewell meeting with the outgoing US Ambassador to Tanzania, Michael Battle, at the Chamwino State House in Dodoma.

He highlighted the critical role that US support has played, particularly in the health sector, including the fight against HIV/AIDS through the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), as well as in maternal and child health services and the M-Mama programme, which has improved access to es-

sential healthcare for mothers.

The Vice President emphasized that Tanzania looks forward to strengthening its ties with the United States under the next Ambassador. He underscored the potential for further growth in trade and investment and expressed interest in establishing direct flights between the two nations to boost tourism and people-to-people exchanges.

Dr Mpango also noted the importance of expanding cooperation in technology, recognising the US's leadership in global technological innovation. He pointed out how advancements in technology are vital to achieving the government's goals, such as promoting clean cooking energy and increasing agricultural productivity, which are key priorities for Tanzania's future development.

Additionally, the Vice President

stressed the need for continued collaboration in education, particularly in providing training and capacity-building for the youth, to ensure a skilled workforce that can drive the country's economic growth and development.

Dr Mpango reaffirmed the Tanzanian government's commitment to holding free, fair and peaceful elections in October 2025, in line with the country's broader democratic agenda under the leadership of President Samia Suluhu Hassan.

The Vice President also took the opportunity to commend Ambassador Battle for his exceptional service during his tenure in Tanzania, particularly his leadership during difficult periods such as the Covid-19 pandemic.

Dr Mpango extended his heartfelt condolences following the death

of the 39th President of the United States, the late Jimmy Carter, a global champion of democracy and peace. He also offered condolences for the recent tragic fire in Los Angeles, which claimed lives and caused extensive damage.

In his remarks, Ambassador Michael Battle expressed his gratitude to the Government of Tanzania for its support throughout his tenure and pledged that his successor would continue the strong collaboration and achievements made during his time in the country.

Ambassador Battle also praised President Samia's development agenda, noting that it represents not only a model for political and social reforms but also a powerful example to the world of how Tanzania is fostering good governance and improving public service delivery for its citizens.



Personal Data Protection Commission (PDPC) Director General Emmanuel Mkilia (L) briefs journalists in Dodoma yesterday, urging all public and private institutions that collect and process personal data to register before April this year. Photo: Correspondent Ibrahim Joseph

Tanroads allocates 320.558bn/- for roads infrastructure projects in Moro

By Correspondent Ashton Balwigwa, Morogoro

THE government, through the Tanzania Roads Agency (TANROADS), has allocated 320.558 bn/- for road infrastructure projects in the Morogoro Region, including the concrete paving of 189.6 kilometres.

TANROADS Regional Manager for Morogoro, Alinanuswe Kyamba, made the announcement during the 42nd meeting of the regional road board held in Morogoro town.

The projects are aimed at

boosting the economy, particularly through the agricultural sector.

Kyamba listed the roads involved and their respective lengths as follows: Ifakara-Mbingu (62.5 km), Mbingu-Chita (37.5 km), Bigwa-Mvuhu (78 km), and Ubena Zomozzi-Ngerengere (Kizuka Amy Camp) (11.6 km).

He further revealed that the government has allocated 37.84 bn/-, funded by the World Bank, for the construction of bridges in the Chakwale and Nguyami areas in Gairo District.

Additional bridges ear-

marked for construction include Mjonga, Bwage, and Doma, located in the Mvomero District, as well as Ngerengere and Kihonda in the Morogoro District.

In addition to the funds, Kyamba highlighted that 16.153 bn/- has been allocated for the construction of the Namhanga and Fuluwa bridges, bringing the total investment to 53.994 bn/-.

The government has also allocated 4.716 bn/- to repair roads and bridges that were damaged by the El Niño rains and the Hidayah Cyclone.

Morogoro Regional Commissioner, Adam Malima,

emphasized that the region could make significant economic strides if its road infrastructure remains operational throughout the year.

Malima, who chaired the meeting, urged TANROADS and the Tanzania Rural and Urban Roads Agency (TARURA) to ensure the strengthening of road infrastructure in areas prone to damage.

The Regional Commissioner called on TARURA to work closely with district councils in executing their budgets to ensure a shared understanding and efficient implementation.

UN predicts world economic growth at quiet 2.8pc in 2025

By Agencies

THE world economy resisted battering by conflicts and inflation last year and is expected to grow a subdued 2.8 percent in 2025, the United Nations said Thursday.

In "World Economic Situation and Prospects 2025," U.N. economists wrote that their positive prediction was driven by the strong although slowing growth forecast for China and the United States and by the robust performances anticipated for India and Indonesia. The European Union, Japan, and United Kingdom are expected to experience modest recovery,

the report says.

"We are in a period of stable, subpar growth," said Shantanu Mukherjee, chief of the Global Economic Monitoring Branch at the Economic Analysis and Policy Division at the U.N.'s Department of Economic and Social Affairs.

"This may sound a bit like what we were saying last year, but actually if you lift the hood and take a peek at the engine things are humming," he said.

The report says the U.S. economy outperformed expectations last year thanks to consumer and public-sector spending, but growth is expected to slow from 2.8 percent to 1.9 per-

cent this year.

The report points out that China sees its own strong growth slowing slightly from 4.9 percent in 2024 to 4.8 percent in 2025 due to lower consumption and property-sector weaknesses that are failing to make up for public investment and export strength. This is forcing the government to enact policies to lift property markets, fight local government debt and boost demand.

China's "shrinking population and rising trade and technology tensions, if unaddressed, could undermine medium-term growth prospects," the report reads.



Tanzanian nationals who illegally traveled to South Africa leave at Kisutu Resident Magistrate's Court in Dar es Salaam yesterday shortly after being sentenced to pay a fine of 40,000/- or to serve a six-month imprisonment each. Photo: Correspondent Imani Nathaniel

CHRAGG conducts investigation of killings in Pemba North Region

By Guardian Reporter

THE Commission for Human Rights and Good Governance (CHRAGG) in Zanzibar has embarked on investigation of the recent deaths of two individuals in the Pemba North Region.

CHRAGG expressed its profound sorrow over the deaths of Athuman Hamad Athuman and Amour Khamis Salim, residents of Kiungoni village, Wete, Pemba, which occurred in December 2024.

In a statement availed to the media yesterday, CHRAGG's Commissioner for Zanzibar, Khatib Mwinchande said that the deaths constitute a violation of the right to life as outlined in Article 14 of the Constitution of the United Republic of Tanzania (1977)

and Section 13(2) of the Zanzibar Constitution (1984).

He said deaths undermine the efforts of both the Zanzibar and Union governments to enhance security, peace, and the safety of citizens and their property.

Commissioner Mwinchande mentioned that media reports and social media indicated that the deceased were initially taken by officers of the Zanzibar Drug Control Authority while alive, on suspicion of involvement in bicycle theft and cannabis use but following day they died.

He clarified that the deaths constitute inhuman treatment, which violates Article 13(6)(e) of the Constitution of the United Republic of Tanzania (1977) and Section 13(3) of the Zanzibar Constitution (1984).

He also stated that the murders represent a breach of the right to freedom and the right to live as a free person, as outlined in Article 15(1)(2) of the Constitution of the United Republic of Tanzania (1977).

Commissioner Mwinchande stated that the murders violate the principles of good governance, particularly the rule of law.

He reaffirmed CHRAGG's commitment to investigating this incident and continuing its investigations into similar events, with the aim of upholding good governance and the rule of law in the country.

Commissioner Mwinchande called on the public and communities to cooperate with CHRAGG and other authorities involved in the investigation.

He reminded citizens and institutions of the importance of combating actions that violate the law, the rule of law, and human rights, as the right to life is a fundamental right for all.

On a final note, Commissioner Mwinchande expressed his condolences to the families, friends, and relatives of the late Athuman Hamad Athuman and Amour Khamis Salim for their tragic loss, urging citizens to remain calm and patient while the relevant authorities continue with investigation about the murders.

The late Athuman Hamad Athuman passed away at the age of 75, and Amour Khamis Salim died at 28. Both were residents of Kiungoni, Wete, Pemba, and were reportedly arrested by officers from the Zanzibar Drug Control Authority.

Primary school pupils in Iringa introducing donkey care clubs

By Polycarp Machira, Iringa

SEVERAL primary schools in Iringa District have introduced innovative donkey care clubs to teach pupils how to properly care for their family's working donkeys, instilling a sense of responsibility and compassion in the next generation of donkey owners as well as shaping the future of donkey welfare.

The clubs are more than just educational spaces; they offer children the chance to learn about animal care through interactive activities such as poetry, song, and dance, making lessons both engaging and memorable.

The ultimate goal is to empower children to become key advocates for the well-being of donkeys, helping to dispel myths and improve the treatment of these hardworking animals.

At schools such as Kinyeri, Mtera, Makatapora, and Migori primary schools, the clubs have become an integral part of the curriculum.

Pupils meet twice a week for lessons, often using their break times to learn practical skills such as feeding, grooming, and providing medical care for donkeys.

Faith Kennedy and Maureen John, one of the participants, shared how their understanding of donkey care has transformed. "Before joining the club, I didn't realise how important donkeys are to our community," Kennedy said.

She said: "Without our donkeys, my parents wouldn't be able to pay for my school fees or buy new clothes. Now, I want to share what I've learned with my family and community."

During an inter-school donkey care competition held at Migori Primary School recently, pupils showcased their newfound

knowledge and expressed gratitude for the chance to be part of the clubs.

"I was frightened of my donkeys and never fed or watered them. But I've realized this animal is not a beast of burden but a valuable part of our lives," said Jane Said, one of the pupils.

The programme is supervised by Charles Koti, livestock officer at Migori Ward, who explained that donkeys are friendly animals that contribute significantly to the local economy.

"For a donkey to be truly friendly, it must be cared for, fed well, and given proper shelter," Koti said.

He added that around 120 pupils participate in the program annually, with children aged 10 to 12 years being the main caretakers of donkeys at home.

The project is being implemented by INADES Formation Tanzania with funding from Brooke East Africa, an organisation dedicated to improving the welfare of working animals.

Charles Bukula from INADES Formation Tanzania highlighted the importance of empowering children with the knowledge to care for donkeys, as they are the foundation of their communities.

The initiative aligns with broader efforts to protect donkeys and prevent cruelty.

Recently, leaders from across Africa made strides in advocating for animal rights by imposing a ban on the slaughter of donkeys for their skins.

The decision, made during the African Union summit in Ethiopia, builds on earlier calls for action to protect donkeys from being killed for the production of gelatin, which is used in Chinese medicine and various consumer products.

Minister calls for more support to Kilindi District development

By Correspondent Cheji Bakari,

Kilindi

MINISTER for Works, Abdallah Ulega has called for more support towards development in Kilindi District urging the residents to continue also supporting the government for the country's economic development, commending President Samia Suluhu Hassan's contributions to the district's development.

Speaking at a public meeting in Mafileta village, Jaila Ward early this week, following an inspection tour of the Handeni-Mafileta road construction project, Ulega highlighted the government's focus on improving road infrastructure.

He stressed the critical role of all-weather roads in strengthening connectivity between northern and central Tanzania.

Ulega visited the construc-

tion site of the 20-kilometer stretch, which is part of the road's first phase, to assess its progress.

He reassured the local community that the Handeni-Mafileta road project remains a top priority for the government, promising that sufficient funding would be allocated to ensure the completion of the project. The Handeni-Kibirashi-Singida road project, which is being funded of 25bn/- from the government's internal budget, also going well.

The project has received an extension on its contract timeline to ensure its successful completion.

During the meeting, Mohamed Kumbi, CCM chairman in Kilindi District, raised concerns regarding the state of roads linking Kilindi to neighbouring districts. He pointed out that substandard rural roads, managed by the Tanzania Rural and

Urban Roads Agency (TARURA), hinder the effectiveness of various government initiatives under President Samia's leadership. However, Kumbi assured minister Ulega that, despite the challenges posed by the road conditions, the people of Kilindi remain grateful to President Samia for her ongoing efforts in improving the region. He noted her administration's focus on sectors such as education, healthcare, water, and electricity.

Tamko Mohamed Ally, Kilindi District Administrative Secretary thanked minister Ulega for his visit and reaffirmed the support of the Kilindi community towards President Samia's development initiatives.

She expressed confidence that the efforts would continue to foster economic growth and enhance the quality of life in the district and throughout Tanzania.



Zanzibar Minister of State, President's Office, Labor, Economy and Investment Sharif Ali Sharif (R), listens information from the Housing Corporation construction engineer Juma Saleh Juma (L), shortly before inaugurating residential and commercial buildings at Mnadani Darajani as part of the 61st Zanzibar Revolution anniversary celebrations yesterday. Photo: Courtesy of MAELEZO - ZNZ

Tanzania women architects' body wins Gold World Habitat Award

By Guardian Correspondent

TANZANIA Women Architects for Humanity (TAWAH) has been awarded a prestigious Gold World Habitat Award, in partnership with UN-Habitat, for its project that transforms the lives of women and the elderly in Mhaga, in Kisarawe District, Coast

Region. TAWAH's initiative tackles housing poverty and gender inequality by teaching women construction skills from its large training Centre in Mhaga.

The training enables them to build affordable, environmentally friendly homes for elderly residents who would otherwise be living in unsafe and uncomfortable hous-

ing, at a time in their lives when they are most vulnerable.

So far 17 homes have been completed, some with support from Habitat for Humanity. In total, 80 trainees have learnt construction skills like masonry, carpentry and painting, how to make bricks from soil, improve infrastructure, set up and use rainwater harvesting and wastewater recycling

systems, and receive support to set up their own businesses.

The initiative also promotes gender equity, with evidence showing men increasingly working alongside their wives on home improvement projects. By providing women with marketable skills and economic opportunities, TAWAH is promoting self-reliance and transforming com-

munities. TAWAH's project receives regular international attention for its innovative approach and potential for replication. The organisation is committed to expanding its impact and hopes to establish new training centres in other regions of Tanzania.

David Ireland, CEO of World Habitat, said: "This gold winning pro-

ject offers a replicable, affordable, equitable and sustainable model to improve home, habitat and livelihoods in rural areas. TAWAH's work has not only impacted the lives of the female trainees but their elderly neighbours, in their communities, the natural environment and indeed society's misconception of what 'women's work' is.

Victoria Heilman, CEO

of TAWAH said: "This award acknowledges the resilience and strength of Tanzanian women who are at the heart of our mission. Through training women in sustainable construction techniques and empowering them to build homes for those in need, we are redefining the role of women in construction and driving change in communities traditionally under-

served." The Gold World Habitat Award is a global recognition that celebrates innovative housing solutions that contribute to social and environmental sustainability. This award underscores TAWAH's dedication to architectural solutions that make a meaningful difference in the lives of disadvantaged communities in Tanzania.

Ivory Coast President Ouattara signals desire to run for 4th term

ABIDJAN

IVORY Coast President Alassane Ouattara (83) has signalled that he would like to continue serving as president, though he emphasized that his party has not yet made a formal decision regarding its candidate for this year's election.

Ouattara, who was re-elected for a contested third term in 2020, has previously stated that he intended to step down after his third term but also suggested that the political landscape would need to change before he could do so.

He has hinted that he would only step aside if his old political rivals also committed to exiting the political stage, making it a potential condition for his retirement.

"I am in good health and eager to continue serving my country," Ouattara told the diplomatic corps in Abidjan on Thursday, signalling the strongest indication yet that he is considering a fourth term.

His comments come after months of speculation about his future and the political dynamics ahead of the upcoming election in October 2025.

The ruling party, the Rally of Houphouëtists for Democracy and Peace (RHDP), expressed its support for Ouattara's potential candidacy in September 2024. However, the official nomination has yet to take place. Despite the strong backing from his party, the 2025 election will be a critical moment for the country, which has seen political tension and division since Ouattara's third-term bid in 2020. At that time, opposition parties boycotted the election, alleging that the move violated constitutional limits on presidential terms.

Ouattara's decision to run for a fourth term is likely to deepen the debate around presidential term limits in Ivory Coast. The constitution was amended in 2016 to reset the term limit clock, which allowed Ouattara

to run for a third term in 2020. His potential fourth term would continue to be a contentious issue, especially among opposition factions that argue for a return to stricter term limits to avoid prolonged leadership.

While Ouattara's popularity remains high among many Ivorian citizens, his bid for re-election could further polarize the political landscape, especially considering the history of unrest and violent confrontations that have marked the country's recent political history. Political analysts will be watching closely for any developments leading to the official announcement and the potential candidates from opposition parties who will challenge Ouattara in the upcoming election.

The official decision on the candidate from the RHDP and any further announcements are expected in the coming months as the country prepares for the election in October 2025.



Dodoma City Education Officer Issa Kambi (L) and the screening center for children with disabilities supervisor Neema Mkama (C) speak with a parent who is registering their child at Nkuhungu Primary School center at Chamwino Ward, in Dodoma on Thursday. Photo: Correspondent Peter Mkwavila

Mozambique tense as opposition leader Mondlane comes from exile

MAPUTO

SUPPORTERS of Mozambique's opposition leader Venâncio Mondlane have been injured as police tried to break up the crowds who had come to meet him after his return from self-imposed exile on Thursday.

He had left the country saying he thought his life was in danger follow-

ing October's disputed presidential election that sparked deadly protests.

Mondlane landed at the main airport in the capital, Maputo, amid tension and heavy security, with thousands having gathered to welcome him.

His return came ahead of next week's swearing-in of Daniel Chapo as president. He was the candidate of the ruling

Frelimo party, and was confirmed as the winner of October's poll by the constitutional court.

The final official results from declared by the country's highest court just over a fortnight ago gave Chapo 65 percent of the vote and Mondlane, in second place, with 24 percent.

Frelimo has been in power for the past five decades since independ-

ence from Portugal.

Children shot dead after joining pot-banging protests in Mozambique

After having emerged from the airport building, video shows Mondlane kneeling on the ground with a Bible in his hand being cheered by supporters.

The 50-year-old Pentecostal preacher began to pray and then said that he had won the election.

"I, Venancio Mondlane, president-elect by the Mozambican people... elected by the genuine will of the people - swear on my honour to serve the Mozambican homeland and its people," he declared.

He said he was returning to be closer to the protest movement that has seen weeks of nationwide demonstrations in which dozens of people

have been killed.

Reuters Women dressed in black hold their hands in the air as they wait to greet the Mozambican opposition leader Reuters

Supporters turned out in large numbers to greet Mondlane

On Thursday, three people were shot and injured at one of the capital's markets following a brief rally held by Mond-

lane, police spokesperson, Orlando Mudumane said.

Witnesses said that as the police were trying to disperse the crowd shots were fired. Those injured were then taken to hospital.

There are other unconfirmed reports of fatalities.

The police spokesperson also told journalists that two off-duty officers

had been attacked and killed in another province - Nampula.

In his first comments on arrival in the country, Mondlane said that he was ready to talk about how to resolve the tension over the disputed poll, which he says was stolen from him.

"I'm here in the flesh to say that if you want to negotiate... I'm here," he said.



Development stakeholders from Babati Town in Manyara Region, inspect gravel donated by the CCM Parents' Wing district Chairman Emmanuel Khambay (not picture) for the construction of toilets at Kwaang'w Primary School on Thursday. Photo: Correspondent Gift Thadey

UK Prime Minister Starmer's plan to tackle people-smuggling operations

LONDON

THE United Kingdom (UK) Prime Minister announced on Thursday that his administration will implement sanctions against individuals involved in people-smuggling operations that transport migrants across the English Channel in unsafe boats. This initiative is part of a broader strategy to curb these perilous journeys.

Labour leader Keir Starmer expressed his strong commitment to halting the dangerous crossings of the English Channel in small boats.

He highlighted that this issue is being exploited by criminal gangs profiting immensely from the abhorrent practice of people smuggling.

Alongside the various initiatives already in place, Starmer announced the introduction of a new sanctions' regime, akin to those employed against terrorists.

This will empower authorities to confiscate the assets of these gangs, restrict their travel, and effectively dismantle their operations.

He emphasized that this initiative marks a significant milestone,

as it is unprecedented on a global scale.

Keir Starmer emphasized that the sanctions, which include travel restrictions and asset freezes, will focus on "illicit finance networks that enable smugglers to exploit vulnerable individuals."

The government plans to introduce these new sanctioning powers, pending approval from Parliament, within the next year.

Since taking office in July, Starmer's Labour Party has committed to dismantling the criminal organizations that facilitate the dangerous crossings of thou-

sands of migrants each year across one of the busiest shipping routes globally.

Starmer has characterized these crime syndicates as a significant threat to global security, equating them to terrorist organizations.

However, the effectiveness of these sanctions remains uncertain, as British authorities can only freeze assets located within the UK, while many smugglers operate from abroad.

Officials recognize the challenge of disrupting this trade, which is often managed by loose-

ly structured criminal groups, a task that has proven elusive for past administrations.

They assert that these sanctions are just one component of a comprehensive strategy that also includes enhanced border surveillance in the UK and strengthened law enforcement collaboration with France and other nations.

Foreign Secretary David Lammy stated that the UK aims to be "the first nation globally to establish a new sanctions framework specifically aimed at irregular migration and organized immigration crime."

Nigeria, China deepen ties with pledge on security, finance and economic devt

ABUJA

NIGERIA and China have pledged to deepen their cooperation in key areas such as clean energy, defense, finance, and infrastructure development, with China committing to support Nigeria's issuance of Panda bonds to fund crucial infrastructure projects.

The agreement was made public during discussions between Nigerian Foreign Minister Yusuf Tuggar and Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi on Thursday.

The two countries also outlined efforts to address regional security challenges, with Wang's visit marking the continuation of high-level engagements between the nations.

His trip to Nigeria is part of a broader four-nation tour of Africa, an annual diplomatic mission designed to strengthen Beijing's growing influence across the continent.

Wang's visit follows a series of recent exchanges, including intergovernmental committee talks in Beijing last June and a state visit by Nigerian President Bola Tinubu to China in September 2024. These meetings have paved the way for the elevation of Nigeria-China relations to a "comprehensive strategic partnership," Wang announced during a press conference in Abuja.

One of the key highlights of the talks was China's promise to "favourably study and consider" Nigeria's request to expand an existing currency swap agreement. This expansion would further bolster economic ties between the two nations and provide Nigeria with additional financial flexibility.



The newly elected Mirerani Township Authority Chairman in Simanjiro District, Manyara Region, Hans Nkya (2nd R), speaks while thanking the members who unanimously elected him with all 35 votes during the election held on Thursday. Photo: Correspondent Gift Thadey

MSF suspends operations at key Khartoum hospital

KHARTOUM

DOCTORS Without Borders (MSF) has announced to suspend operations at Bashair hospital, one of the few remaining medical facilities in the southern part of Khartoum, Sudan, amid continued violence in the country's ongoing civil war.

The difficult decision comes after months of escalating attacks on both hospital staff and patients in the capital.

In a statement, MSF highlighted the dire situation at Bashair hospital, where armed fighters have repeatedly entered the facility, threatened medical personnel, and demanded that fighters be prioritised for treatment over other patients.

Despite numerous attempts by MSF to negotiate with all parties involved in the conflict, the attacks have persisted. One of the most tragic incidents occurred in November, when a patient was shot and killed inside the hospital. In December, attackers fired weapons in the emergency ward, further endangering both medical staff and patients. As a result, MSF has suspended all medical activities at the hospital for safety reasons.

MSF Secretary-General Christopher Lockyear described the decision as "tragic" and noted that it was made after careful consultation with all warring parties. However, he emphasised that it had become impossible to continue

operations in such a violent and unsafe environment. "We can't continue to operate in a situation which is immediately violent as that," Lockyear told the AFP news agency. Despite the suspension, MSF is continuing its work in 11 other states across Sudan, providing essential medical care and humanitarian aid to those affected by the conflict.

Bashair hospital, located in an area under the control of the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), has been a critical lifeline for victims of airstrikes, which have been frequent in Khartoum and other conflict zones. The hospital has also been treating malnourished women and children, who are especially vulnerable in the midst

of the ongoing crisis. However, with the escalation of violence, access to healthcare has become increasingly limited. MSF has warned that up to 80pc of hospitals in conflict zones have been cut off or rendered non-functional, exacerbating the humanitarian crisis.

The civil war, which erupted nearly 20 months ago between Sudan's army and the RSF, has triggered the world's largest reported displacement and hunger crisis. Tens of thousands have been killed, and millions more have been forced to flee their homes. Over 30 million people are currently in urgent need of aid, with many unable to leave conflict zones due to violence and lack of resources.

Namibia, China set to further promote mutual cooperation

WINDHOEK

NAMIBIAN President-elect Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah on Monday met with Wang Yi, a member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee and Chinese Foreign Minister, in Windhoek, Namibia.

Wang conveyed warm greetings from Chinese President Xi Jinping to Ndaitwah, congratulated her on being elected Namibia's first female president and expressed his best wishes for greater achievements in Namibia's nation-building efforts. He said that Chinese foreign ministers have made Africa the destination of their first overseas visit for 35 consecutive years, a tradition that underscores China's unique diplomatic approach.

Noting that this year marks the 35th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Namibia, Wang said bilateral cooperation has immense potential for the future.

He recalled the successful Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) held in Beijing last year when the Chinese president announced 10 partnership action plans to jointly advance modernization. Wang expressed China's readiness to align with Namibia to accelerate the implementation of the summit's outcomes to ensure continuous progress in their comprehensive strategic cooperative partnership.

China will continue to support Namibia in pursuing a development path suited to its national conditions, said Wang, praising Namibia's steadfast adherence to the one-China principle. He said that China is willing to work with Namibia to deepen political trust, strengthen interparty exchanges and share governance experiences to enhance mutual understanding and provide guidance for bilateral relations.

China remains committed to supporting Namibia's economic development by helping transform its

resource advantages into developmental and societal benefits, jointly advancing modernization in both countries, Wang said.

With 2025 marking the 80th anniversary of the founding of the United Nations, Wang called for stronger strategic coordination in multilateral fields to safeguard the common interests of Africa and developing countries, while upholding international fairness and justice.

Ndaitwah asked Wang to convey her sincere greetings to President Xi Jinping and gratitude for his congratulatory message following Namibia's presidential election. Ndaitwah said that in 2018, the leaders of Namibia and China elevated their bilateral relations to a comprehensive strategic cooperative partnership, which was of great significance.

She welcomed Wang's visit to Africa and Namibia at the beginning of the new year, noting that he is the first foreign minister she has met since the election, which reflected the high regard both sides hold for the bilateral relations.

Underlining the sister-party relationship between the South West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO) Party and the CPC, Ndaitwah thanked the CPC for sending representatives to observe Namibia's election and expressed a desire to continue strengthening exchanges and cooperation between the two parties.

Ndaitwah said the people of the two countries have sustained longstanding friendship and Namibia will continue to consolidate and promote bilateral cooperation and remain committed to the one-China principle. She expressed readiness to implement the outcomes of the FOCAC Beijing Summit and enhance cooperation with China in trade, education, agriculture, infrastructure and energy resources, to bring new opportunities for Namibia's economic and social development and deliver benefits to the people of both nations.

Kenya reports surge of tea export volumes and the earnings in year 2024

NAIROBI

KENYA'S tea export volumes surged 20.8pc in the first ten months of 2024, boosted by increased demand in destination markets, the Tea Board of Kenya (TBK) said Wednesday.

The TBK said export volumes stood at 500.8 million kg, an increase from 414.5 million kg recorded in the same period of 2023.

The East African nation earned 155 billion Kenyan shillings (about 1.19 billion U.S. dollars) from exports during the first 10 months, a rise from 1.09 billion dollars in a similar period in 2023, said the TBK in a report released in the Kenyan capital of Nairobi.

"The export earnings were higher on account of higher export volumes and a stable exchange rate," the TBK said.

The Kenyan shilling exchanged at an average of 129 to the U.S. dollar during the period.

With the country earning an average of 199 million dollars per month from tea, earnings in 2024 are expected to surpass the 1.39 billion dollars earned in 2023, according to the TBK.

Meanwhile, tea production also surged 7pc in the first 10 months of 2024, boosted by favourable weather conditions. Pakistan, Egypt, the United Arab Emirates, Russia and Sudan remained the main markets that shipped more tea from Kenya during the period.

Kenya is expanding its market, especially in Asia, with the government recently opening a tea trade centre in Fujian Province of China to facilitate distribution in the country.



Contractor workers in progress of the rain water drainage system construction along Bibi Titi Mohamed Road in Dar es Salaam yesterday. Photo: Correspondent Imani Nathaniel.

Two nurses abducted at Limpopo clinic as gunman overpowers security guards

LIMPOPO

POLICE in Limpopo, South Africa have launched an extensive manhunt after two nurses, who were on duty at a clinic, were abducted at gunpoint, assaulted and then raped.

Limpopo MEC for Health, Dieketseng Mashego said she is appalled by the horrific incident, expressing "shock and disgust at the barbaric actions."

Apparently, a heavily armed man entered the Chuene Clinic, overpowered three security guards, and tied them up before abducting the two nurses.

Limpopo Department of Health said the incident occurred around 1am on Friday while the two nurses were on night duty. The ordeal lasted for hours, and the nurses only reappeared around 5am on Friday.

Mashego said the inci-

dent is a major setback for the province's efforts to have clinics working for 24 hours. "This deplorable incident is a serious setback to our department's efforts to ensure that clinics can function 24 hours a day," said Mashego.

"My heart goes out to the two nurses who have suffered immense physical and psychological trauma. How can we convince our staff to work night shifts

to serve the community if the same community turns against them in such a violent manner?"

Mashego has appealed to community members to help authorities with information which can lead to the arrest of the perpetrator.

"This incident is not just an attack on our clinic; it is an affront to the very fabric of our community. The individuals responsible for

this crime are not strangers; they may be living among us. Surely, as community members, we must know something," said Mashego.

"I urge every member of our community to rise up and assist the police in their investigation. We must come together, share any information, and support law enforcement in their relentless pursuit of justice.

"The safety of our community and the wellbeing

of our healthcare workers depend on our collective action," the MEC pleaded.

Police were called to the crime scene, and psychological support has been arranged for the victims.

Mashego has vowed that her department will not rest until the perpetrator is found and brought to justice, emphasising the commitment to work closely with law enforcement agencies.

Call centre habits just reflect routine public sector attitudes

There are times when those in authority have to take a step or two about ingrained public sector attitudes where it is their own convenience rather than public expectations which matter. In that sense, if responding to a toll free number when one is not actually stationed at that post as a full time job and within working hours is not followed by overtime allowances, then it is put off use. Everyone will understand as there will be no dispute in their corridors as to the right to such allowances.

A modicum of trouble could at times arise if a top level government officials calls that number and it doesn't respond, thus having to call an individual number to alert whoever it is that there is a disruption somewhere, for whatever reason. That roughly appears to have been the scenario in which the Energy minister who is also deputy prime minister told the public when visiting the company's call office at Ubungo, its former headquarters in the commercial capital. It is unclear how many toll numbers actually work, if there are public emergencies.

So there was nothing surprising when DPM told journalists of a malfunctioning toll-free number that raised numerous queries, and even better, that as minister in charge of the sector, he had at a certain moment in the past directed that the toll number issue be rectified. Public sector officials know how to sit out incoming cabinet ministers, for them to, yes, accept the system, and this appears to have been at work as well. Orders of that sort can't just be ignored by some small official but procedure.

DPM was entirely on the mark to say that the power utility is a large entity, and that it is disheartening to see it operating with a 'business as usual' mentality. Still all there was to be corrected was the toll number, and indeed it may be put to service in one week as the sector minister demanded, but as they did it earlier, functioning properly will just be for a time. They know the minister can't be going there each six months for the issue, nor would the CEO fall just for that complaint.

There is a principle that DPM mentioned at the gathering, and it is one of those things that public sector firms have learned to sit out until they are forgotten. He said that the utility is a key entity that should be contributing positively to the country's economy, that is, revenues, but then it undermines government efforts by offering poor customer services. That was a bit of an understatement, as public sector firms or agencies compete for size of subsidy; ideas of operating profitably are a discomfort.

To be sure, there is every reason for the TANESCO staff to see a 'silver lining,' as the sector minister saw plenty of positive things in his tour of energy sector outlays in a small part of the city. He visited the compressed natural gas (CNG) so-called mother station at the University of Dar es Salaam that is set to begin operations next month, and expressed satisfaction with the situation. To those who read the lips, the support uplifts expectations that verify the Tanzania Petroleum Development Corporation (TPDC) will make an effort to build gas fuelling stations at the pace it can, and eventually dominate the fuel business when most vehicles change to CNG.

REA efforts on subsidized gas stoves boost clean energy shift

A SUBTLE campaign to distribute as many gas cylinders to rural areas, whether subsidized or outright free of charge, is being pursued by the Rural Energy Agency (REA). It has lately launched a new initiative to distribute 19,530 gas cylinders in six districts of Dodoma Region at a price subsidised by 50 percent. That follows hundreds or even thousands of gas cylinder promotion events to role model groups like teachers, or food vendors, and especially the women, for a real take off.

Regional officials there said that this initiative is part of current efforts to improve access to clean cooking energy in rural and peri-urban areas, for a drastic reduction in reliance on traditional fuels like firewood and charcoal. Even by the din of how much the theme is repeated, it is likely that more people down the social ladder may start shifting on their own. When it has become fashionable, it may even eventually look out of place for one to still insist on purchasing charcoal, etc.

There is even a public-private partnership in the effort, as the subsidized cylinder distribution project is implemented after accord with a few local energy firms. Six kilogramme cylinders and stove will be sold at 20,825/- instead of 41,650/- usual prices in the capital at the moment, pushing the affordable and sustainable energy solutions agenda a step further. Plenty is being said about promoting public health and environmental protection in the drive, but in the analysis the real impact that some people are starting to figure out is culture shift to gas. At a certain point last year there was concern raised at higher government level that there are things to be tied up in the gas shift drive,

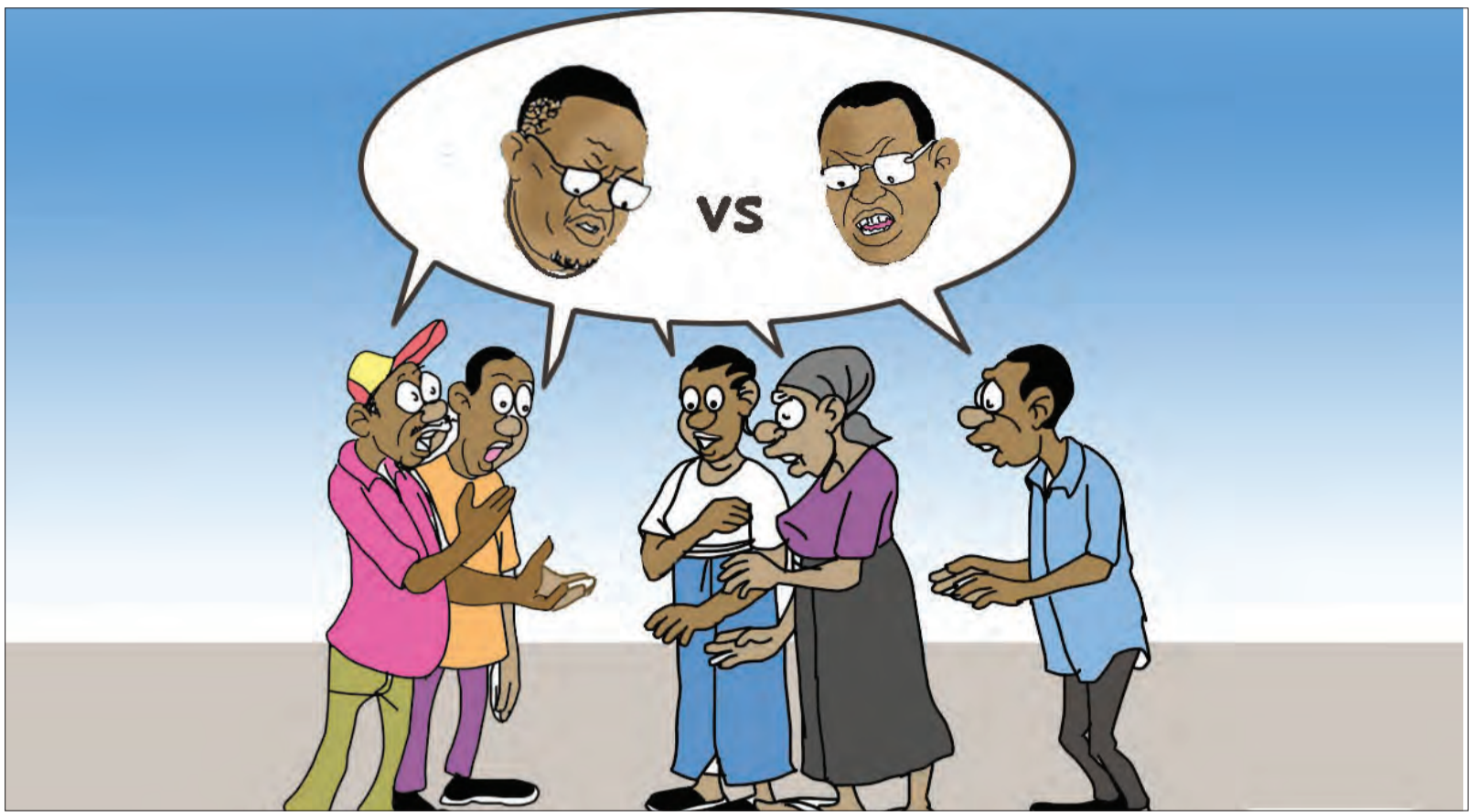
a few of which need some research work to be sorted out. The matter has not come up again in the past few months, and some will be wondering if the reason is that the issue is being forgotten so allow smooth marketing of gas cylinders, not pointing at challenges. The other, positive side of the query is that perhaps some mechanical or machine building outfits are working on the issue, to make transitioning to gas more rapid and durable. Bottlenecks can discourage a number of those trying to shift to gas, if they are disappointed.

Distributing subsidized gas cylinders for instance provides an affordable energy alternative at the start, but there is still an issue of subsidized refilling prices. It is unclear how far senior officials believe their own affirmations when the RC for instance urged everyone to embrace clean energy alternatives to reduce pollution and enhance their livelihoods. Surely it is elementary that price sensitivity is essential to any workable livelihood budgeting, not projecting health at an adult stage?

Recounting public health benefits of the transition, like cutting out smoke from burning traditional fuels, causing respiratory illnesses is helpful merely in pondering on transitioning to CNG. It is the same thing with reducing gender-based violence in rural areas where collecting firewood poses problems.

Each of those targeted will be more captivated by prices rather than moved by disease or mood disturbances tied with firewood trips. Thus by subsidizing the price and facilitating switching to gas, it is the government which shall reap the benefits of a rapid shift to clean energy, a hallmark of effective governance.

The Guardian Limited Key Contacts	Newsdesk	Advertising
Managing Editor: WALLACE MAUGGO Circulation Manager: EMMANUEL LYIMO, 0716 500500	General Line: 0745 700710 News Editor: LUSEKELO PHILEMON 0757154767 E-mail: guardian@guardian.co.tz	Mob 0782253676 E-mails: advertise@guardian.co.tz Website: www.ippmedia.com, epaper.ippmedia.com



Nigerian military not afraid of ICC investigation

By Yakubu Mohammed

NIGERIA'S Chief of Defence Staff (CDS), Christopher Musa, said the country's military is open to investigations for alleged war crimes committed by counterterrorism soldiers deployed to conflict zones, especially in the North-east.

The military chief disclosed this in a recent interview with Al Jazeera when asked to comment on a lawsuit filed by Amnesty International at the International Criminal Court (ICC) in The Hague, accusing the military of war crimes such as attacks on civilians, extrajudicial executions, torture, rape, and enforced disappearances in the insurgency-torn North-east.

The rights group said more than 10,000 civilians have died in military custody since the Boko Haram insurgency began in the North-east. This was not the first time the organisation had made this allegation. In 2020, Amnesty said many of the civilians died in Giwa Barracks, a military detention facility in Borno State.

"We are ready" "We are ready to go [to the ICC]," the CDS, Musa, said when the Al Jazeera journalist asked him to comment about the Amnesty lawsuit. "We are not afraid of anybody... I think they have their own intent on why they are doing that."

"We are not scared of anything because we don't have anything of such," he added. Musa disputed the war crimes allegations, saying they were attempts to "demoralise my troops."

"They want us to look bad," Musa said. "I just can't understand why anybody will wake up and say that we are killing people when we are actually not doing the same."

He explained that many humanitarian organisations, including the United Nations and Amnesty, are working in Giwa Barracks where more than 10,000 civilians allegedly died in detention.

Musa said he wondered if Amnesty was trying to say other humanitarian bodies in the detention facility are complicit in the crime it is accusing the military

of. According to him, if the military was doing anything wrong in the detention facility, other organisations present there would have voiced out.

The CDS made these remarks two weeks after President Bola Tinubu exonerated the armed forces of any wrongdoing, saying there was no reason for his government to probe them, especially on issues bordering on mismanagement of funds.

Is the Nigerian Armed Forces corrupt?

Asked about the procurement scandals and corruption in the military, Musa answered emphatically, saying: "We are not (corrupt). We are just a few good guys trying to do some job. But some people are just hell-bent on ensuring we don't succeed. We don't produce the equipment that we use."

"We do not produce the equipment we need. It takes two to tango. So, if they are saying there is corruption. It takes somebody to give and collect. Which means those having these weapons are equally guilty," he said, adding the country has a procurement procedure "which is being followed."

The CDS lamented the hurdles the Nigerian government faces in procuring equipment.

"Even with our money at times, we find it difficult getting equipment, and the question is why?" Musa asked, noting that insurgency in Nigeria lingers because "we have been denied access to equipment, even when we have our money..."

The CDS also addressed other issues such as why the insurgency has continued for more than a decade.

He described the insurgency as an "asymmetric warfare" different from a conventional war such as the ones Nigerian troops fought in Liberia and Sierra Leone.

"You are dealing with people who have a sense of belonging, believing what they are doing is right (ideology). You don't see it on their foreheads. You don't know who they are. They are just like normal human beings... because you have to respect human rights. You have to take up the laws of war. It makes it a bit more



Nigeria's Chief of Defence Staff Christopher Musa

difficult because identifying who the enemy is, is unlike the conventional type..."

The army general also addressed the killing of civilians in airstrikes in places in Borno, Kaduna and Niger states.

He apologised for the accidental airstrikes and described them as "professional mistakes."

"Some things are beyond your control. You don't control the weather, we don't control the atmosphere," he said. "So even when you have it right, mistakes do come in and when it happens, we take responsibility and we make amends."

Asked about justice, accountability and compensation, the CDS said the military has a "standing court martial for people who have committed offences."

He explained that measures and incentives have also been put in place to "make amend for the [affected] communities" like Tudun Biri in Kaduna State.

"We have suspended the commanders that were on ground. We have taken responsibility for what they have done," he said of the Tudun Biri accidental bombing in December 2023.

Musa also disputed claims that France has established a military base in Nigeria.

"We do not encourage any foreign base. We have the capacity to secure our country, to secure the subdivision, and to assist Africa," he said. "All we need is to continue to do joint training which we do, and get equipment that we need to help us project this war."

According to him, such a base would "create more problems".

Before the case Amnesty said it filed at the ICC, the court had been investigating the military for similar issues.

Premium Times reported that the ICC launched a preliminary examination into alleged war crimes by Nigerian security forces on 18 November 2010. The preliminary examination was completed 10 years later as the court opened a national investigation into murder, rape, torture and other human rights violations by counterinsurgency military operatives deployed to terrorised areas in the North-east.

However, a former ICC prosecutor, Fatou Bensouda, explained that Nigerian military authorities informed her that "they have examined, and dismissed, allegations against their own troops."

Since the national investigation into the matter was opened in 2020, the ICC has continued to engage the Nigerian government. The court, however, vowed to take charge of the prosecution "in the absence of genuine efforts by Nigerian authorities to bridge existing impunity gaps."

Expressing the government's dissatisfaction about the ICC's "prolonged investigation," the Attorney General of the Federation and Minister of Justice, Lateef Fagbemi, made a case at the 23rd Session of the Assembly of States Parties to the Rome Statute of the ICC, held in The Hague, Netherlands.

Fagbemi said probing the military will demoralise the troops "laying their lives to defend the country against terrorists."

Despite well-documented evidence that showed that soldiers, as well as terrorists, committed war crimes, Fagbemi urged the ICC to stop probing the military.

"While we respect the court's mandate to intervene when states are unable or unwilling to prosecute such crimes, it is important to emphasise that there must be respect and regard for the principle of complementarity," the minister had said, emphasising that "the ICC is meant to act as a court of last resort, intervening only when national legal systems are unable or unwilling to address grave crimes."

"I must assert that Nigeria does not fall under any such situation," he continued.

"Our nation has consistently demonstrated both the will and the capacity to investigate and prosecute serious crimes, including those committed by Boko Haram and other terrorist groups. We are proud of the Nigerian military, which has systems and structures in place to ensure their operations are guided by international humanitarian law and human rights principles."

While the Nigerian government says its military has always acted professionally, there have been several cases of mass killing of civilians.

For instance, the New Humanitarian documented how the military, in 2021, invaded Bula Ali village in Borno State where they killed at least eight civilians, including minors they suspected to be affiliated with Boko Haram insurgents. The village had experienced a similar military invasion three times before. The military, however, declined to comment when the newspaper confronted it with its findings.

Also, a HumAngle investigation showed that many of some 25,000 civilians who went missing in Borno State are believed to be victims of extrajudicial killings and clandestine mass burials by the military and its local ally, the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF).

Outside the war against Boko Haram and its splinter groups, the Nigerian military has also targeted civilians in the North-west and North-central regions of the country including the Tudun Biri bombing.

This correlates with what the ICC said in one of its reports.

"The Office has examined information regarding a wide range of alleged crimes committed on the territory of Nigeria since 2010. While the Office's preliminary examination has primarily focused on alleged crimes committed by Boko Haram since July 2009 and by the Nigerian Security Forces since the beginning of the non-international armed conflict between the Nigerian Security Forces and Boko Haram since June 2011, it has also examined alleged crimes falling outside the context of this conflict," the ICC said.

2025: 44 years since JK Nyerere's famous 'sherry party' speech to foreign diplomats

By Guardian Correspondent

There is an expression that 'every cloud has a silver lining,' which basically indicates seeing light at the edge of any crisis. A related expression is a quasi-theoretical formulation that when the old order is pregnant with a new order, it may as well go away peacefully if it has the intelligence to do so, and otherwise, force is the midwife of history. So the issue is to view 'force' that is being felt, applied and destabilizing Africa in this order of things.

The first expression indicates that chaos will not just persist indefinitely on the continent, as there is reasonable chance that the key issues will be grasped as time goes on, despite that Africa is fairly resilient in its way of doing things. Outlines of probable solutions were all on the table at the end of the 1970s, especially with the rise of a conservative troika in the West, plus a like-minded papacy, in the years 1979 to 1981, signalling vast change.

African countries were being asked at the start of the 1980s to dismantle public sector dominated economies, precisely the way Britain moved to change things under hardliner conservative Margaret Thatcher, who served for 11 years as premier, from 1979.

One of her first actions in office was to stop listening to the white minority lobby in Salisbury (later Harare), called Lancaster House meetings to iron out a constitution, for procedural delivery of independence. Zimbabwe became free by 1980, on that basis.



President Samia Suluhu Hassan in a group photo with various leaders and envoys representing their countries in Tanzania during the 2023 Diplomatic Sherry Party held at the State House in Dar es Salaam.

Africa was coming under pressure from the Bretton Woods institutions, namely the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, as they were hewn out of trans-Atlantic post-war institution building consultative meeting between the United States and Great Britain in 1944.

Critics will argue that this pressure was academic in its outlook, of the sort 'one size fits all' formulation, or 'what is good for the goose is good for the gander.' They resisted the pressure to apply the same economic policy solutions in their economies like the UK under Thatcher, or generalized deregulation in the US under conservative Ronald

Reagan who took office early 1981, demanding broad changes.

This situation was sort of turning point in the overall political philosophy of Tanzanian president Julius Nyerere, for there was now less room for international platforms where socialism and democracy were being presented in tandem as in the mid-1960s to the mid-1970s. The first and second oil price shocks in 1973 and 1974 had shaken Tanzanian economic resilience to the core, and with the Uganda war, the situation was visibly critical. Pressure was rising to skip socialism, restore the status quo ante.

Nyerere led Africa's re-

sponse to this pressure, shifting from a principled stand on socialism as such to economic nationalism, in that Africa had the right to choose economic policies it wants, and have also a right to be assisted by the IMF, being loaned funds at concessionary terms, as members of the IMF. Nyerere told a diplomatic sherry party early January 1981 that the IMF was shifting from being an 'international monetary fund' to becoming an 'international ministry of finance.' The diplomats extensively interrogated themselves, while Mwalimu carved out a global audience that fused into the 'occupy' movement by the late 1990s, pushing changes to end

privatization 'conditionality.'

Surprisingly enough, while Nyerere's followers upon his 1981 speech as it spread among Western universities and supported by established socialist critics of the IMF and the World Bank, among adversaries of the US and UK conservative leaders in particular, the retired president, towards the end of his life, was having a rethinking. He gave a completely different impression to his view of Africa's future in a vital last major public appearance, speaking to the South African legislature in October 1997. He repeated those remarks at a UDSM event two months later, when marking 40 years of Ghana's independence, as a

leadership event.

He appealed for an economic union between Africa and Europe so that Africa can develop, as experience had shown that fusing poor and rich economies leads to a redistribution of the capital. Africa would gain access to capital from Europe as well being assured of its markets, a position that the European Union was to actually suggest a few years later, but Nyerere's later remarks were unknown to the public. They weren't circulated or debated, so Tanzania again led East Africa in delivering a resounding 'no.'

Close to 25 years later these antecedents to the current 'compact; at the political and

economic level are worth revisiting, as one after another African countries explode in this other electoral result contest, cool down and prepare to do so again in future. The Nyerere of 1981 won the day and to this day IMF and the World Bank don't demand that the private sector be overhauled but it is hard to say they have overall solutions. Quite like African states, they push incremental reforms of this and that sort, which largely work, intercepted here and there by youth explosions, etc.

Yet it is the Nyerere of 1997, whom those in authority and in academia chose to ignore, who actually showed the way for the future of Africa, but as it is the case with most real prophecies, it takes anywhere from 40 to 70 years for a fundamental projection to be realized. Africa is sinking under the weight of its own population, which the land cannot hold (and feed, clothe or house, let alone access medicare). Their youth, in cities, explode.

There is no capital flowing in for peasants to hand their land to do small business en masse, thus needing little patches of land while agriculture is modernised and food is cheapened. This occasions lower wages in relation to current living wage demands and thus facilitates industry, absorbing youths abandoning rural areas. As it was the case in Europe or America, and even largely in Asia or South America, economic ruin and the political search for a 'witch' eventually leads to vast reform and social stability.

By Telesphor Magobe

SINCE we were born and grew up with our parents or guardians or any person who was duty bound to raise us, when we became adults sometimes we shared about what we went through in life whether at home, at school or in any place we were.

Each one of us can see whether the way he or she was brought up has brought about fulfilment to him or her or not. There are certain experiences we went through which we would pass on to our own children, but there are others we wouldn't like to do so because they were devoid of good upbringing. We can build on what we see as positive and leave all that we see as negative. Remember this saying: "The way the child is brought up is what he or she will become."

Each country has put in place a law which protects children because they are among vulnerable persons who because of what they are they can easily be abused, discriminated against or disregarded simply because they are children and they cannot defend themselves.

There have been global, regional and national efforts to put in place a legal framework which provides for the rights and welfare of children, and Tanzania is not left behind in this.

In 2009 it enacted the Law of the Child Act (R.E. 2019), which reflects the content of the Convention of the Rights of the Child (1989) and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (1990). These two human rights instruments provide for general principles which prioritise the best interests and welfare of children wherever they are and wherever they will be.

Despite having this general legal framework which protects the rights and welfare of



Positive parenting, protection of children's best interests, welfare

children, more is still needed to ensure children are brought up in an enabling and friendly environment so that they may realise their potential, live decently and be fulfilled in life.

Section 4 of the Law of the Child Act provides for the protection of children's best interests. Subsection (1) provides that "The best interests of a child shall be a primary consideration in all actions concerning children whether undertaken by public or private social welfare institutions, courts or administrative bodies."

Article 3 of the Convention of the Rights of the Child too pro-

vides for the best interests of the child. Sub-article (1) provides that "In all actions concerning children, whether undertaken by public or private social welfare institutions, courts of law, administrative authorities or legislative bodies, the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration."

Likewise, Article 4 of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child provides for the best interests of the child. Sub-article (1) provides that "In all actions concerning the child undertaken by any person or authority the best interests of the child shall be the

primary consideration."

Article 25(2) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR, 1948) also provides that "All children, whether born in or out of wedlock, shall enjoy the same social protection." Although "the UDHR was originally formulated as 'soft law'... many of its provisions are also now part of customary international law," according to The Universal Declaration of Human Rights in the 21st Century: A Living Document in a Changing World (2016).

Section 7 of the Law of the Child Act provides that children are entitled to live with their

parents or guardians unless it is decided by court that doing so leads to a significant harm to them, subjects them to serious abuse, or is not in their best interests. Thus, the law provides in section 8 that it is the duty of parents or guardians or any person having custody of a child to maintain that child and ensure his or her basic rights, needs and interests are met.

Where children's basic rights, needs and interests are not well-protected and met they live in an unfriendly environment and in such a situation they are deprived of almost all what they need to live as dig-



Workers who manage their time well are better equipped to assess their job suitability and seize opportunities, thereby avoiding costly delays and inefficiencies.

nified persons. UNICEF in its State of the World's Children 2024 report suggests that "a global demographic transition is moving us towards a world where the number of children is plateauing - by the 2050s the world will be home to about as many children as it is today, around 2.3 billion."

It adds that in some societies, "children will account for fewer than 1 in 10 members of the population, raising questions about their visibility and respect for their views and rights. In others, large populations of children and young people will offer potential demographic dividends. In the coming decades, urbanisation will continue to rise."

The report is emphatic that the intention to serve the best interests of children represents "a litmus test for decisions taken by the legislature, courts, businesses and other stakeholders where they relate to children's wellbeing." It says the right to life, survival and development emphasises the need to support every facet of their growth, including their physical and mental health, and their social and cultural situation.

Respecting their views reflects the importance of ensuring their voices are heard and considered in matters that affect them. The more children's best interests are protected against abuse the more children will live as dignified persons and fulfil their expectations. Therefore, positive parenting is needed so that children feel loved and cherished.

Today's quote: "Children are like wet cement. Whatever falls on them makes an impression." - Haim Ginott.

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

By Julianna Bragg

SCIENTISTS have unearthed nearly 200 dinosaur footprints, dating back 166 million years to the Middle Jurassic Period, at Dewars Farm Quarry in Oxfordshire, England.

The remarkable find, first spied in 2023 when quarry worker Gary Johnson sensed “unusual bumps” on the ground while extracting limestone for road construction, has been nicknamed the “dinosaur highway” as a nod to the extensive pathways left by these prehistoric creatures.

While other Jurassic pathways have been documented globally, the recent “highway” discovery in Oxfordshire is the largest known dinosaur track site in the United Kingdom.

Around 100 volunteers from the University of Birmingham and the University of Oxford collaborated this past June for one week, excavating the tracks and recording as much information as possible about the expansive site.

The discovery holds particular significance as it aligns with the 200th anniversary of the first-ever described dinosaur, the *Megalosaurus*, which was found in Oxfordshire in 1824.

“There’s a really long legacy in this area of exciting dinosaur tracks and body fossils,” said Kirsty Edgar, a professor of micropaleontology at the University of Birmingham in England who was involved with the excavation.

The recently uncovered tracks connect to a previously discovered dinosaur path in the same Oxfordshire quarry back in 1997, but it’s no longer accessible.

However, with advancements in technology, the new trackways will provide scientists with an opportunity to analyze previously unavailable information about these extinct animals and unlock secrets about their movements, dietary habits and social dynamics.



A Dewars Farm artist constructed an image of the *Megalosaurus* (left) and *Cetiosaurus* (right) as imagined during the Middle Jurassic Period in what’s now Oxfordshire, England.

Scientists uncover 166 million-year-old ‘dinosaur highway’

A prehistoric roadmap

During the excavation, scientists uncovered five extensive trackways, with the longest continuous pathway measuring more than 150 meters in length (492 feet), according to a University of Birmingham news release.

Four of these paths contained tracks from colossal, long-necked, four-legged herbivorous dinosaurs of the subgroup known as sauropods – most likely *Cetiosaurus*, which reached up to 18 meters (59 feet) in length, with the largest tracks measuring 90 centimeters (around 35 inches) long, according to Edgar.

Lawrence Tanner, a paleoecologist and professor of biological and environmental

sciences at Le Moyne College in Syracuse, New York, likened sauropods to modern elephants due to their massive size and herbivorous diet. He explained that most of the tracks were from hind legs, noting that, similar to elephants, sauropods’ hind feet were larger and often stepped over the impressions left by their front feet.

“The general rule of locomotion is that the faster the animal is moving, the farther apart the footprints will be,” Tanner, who was not involved in the excavation, said.

The fifth pathway contained prints from the *Megalosaurus*, a massive predatory dinosaur known for its distinctive, three-toed feet. *Megalosaurus*

is believed to be up to 9 meters in length (30 feet), and in Oxfordshire, researchers found 65-centimeter (2.1-foot) long footprints.

From the footprints, researchers were also able to determine the direction and speed at which the dinosaurs were moving. Most of the giants were moving northeast at an average speed of around 5 kilometers per hour (3 miles per hour), which is comparable to the pace of a human walking, Edgar said.

Scientists believe larger theropods, such as the *Megalosaurus*, lacked running capabilities, unlike their smaller theropod counterparts, which possibly had the ability to run at fast speeds. Tanner said this

theropod seemed to be moving at a leisurely pace, as indicated by the footprints.

Researchers noted that the *Megalosaurus* path intersected with the sauropod trackways, suggesting the predator moved through the area shortly after the herbivores.

While it’s difficult to pinpoint where the dinosaurs were headed, Tanner indicated they may have been traveling along the shoreline to navigate around trees or to search for food sources.

Ideal preservation conditions

The preservation of such an expansive ancient trackway is rare and was made possible by the unique conditions

of the land during this time frame of the Jurassic Period.

The distinct footprints indicate the area was once covered in soft sediment, with an ideal amount of water to conserve the impressions.

Edgar compared the site’s ancient environment to the Florida Keys, with its carbonate mud banks and nearby water source.

The tracks were also quickly covered, likely by a storm, protecting them from erosion caused by wind, water or other animals, according to Edgar.

While Jurassic bone discoveries often draw significant attention, dinosaur tracks provide more specific insights into the lives of these extinct

animals, Edgar said. Unlike bones, which can be transported to different areas by wind, water or scavengers, footprints remain in the exact locations where they were made.

Tracks not only indicate the size of the dinosaurs but also provide clues about their behavior, such as group dynamics and predator-prey interactions. If well-preserved, the impressions can also shed light on how these creatures reacted to environmental changes, according to Tanner.

“It’s like a snapshot into the day of the (dinosaurs’) life, and what they were doing,” Edgar said.

Planning future discoveries

During the excavation, researchers captured more than 20,000 images of the footprints with aerial drone photography. The team will use these images to create detailed 3D models to further investigate the interactions and biomechanics of the dinosaurs.

Over the next six months to a year, researchers will be working to quickly analyze the data collected and prepare to release their findings to the public.

“We have these 3D models for the first time, which means that anyone, as soon as we publish them, will be able to see the site and (its) legacy,” Edgar said.

As a result of the limited time researchers had to document the site to prevent further disruptions to the quarry site, Edgar noted that a large portion of the surface remains unexplored, potentially offering even more information about the diverse creatures that once roamed the area.

“As quarrying continues, as long as we can, I think we’ll be continuously evaluating and working with the quarry workers as new areas are exposed,” Edgar said. “We would hope to be doing excavations each summer.”

CNN

The man who could become Canada’s future PM

By Nadine Yousif

AT 20 years old, Pierre Poilievre already had a road map for Canada.

Canada’s Conservative Party leader - now 45 - laid out a low-tax, small government vision for the country in an essay contest on what he would do as prime minister.

“A dollar left in the hands of consumers and investors is more productive than a dollar spent by a politician,” he stated.

Poilievre is one step closer to making his vision a reality, and even gave a nod to the essay in a recent interview with conservative psychologist and commentator Jordan Peterson.

For months, Poilievre’s Conservatives have enjoyed a large lead over the struggling Liberals in national surveys, suggesting they would win a majority government if an election were held today.

Now Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has announced he’s standing down, and with an election likely to be called soon, Poilievre is promising a return to “common sense politics”.

For Canadians frustrated with a sluggish economy and a housing and affordability crisis, he is offering an alternative to what he has labelled as Trudeau’s “authoritarian socialism”.

A win would make him part of a wave of populist leaders on the right who have toppled incumbent governments in the west.

While it has invited comparisons to Donald Trump - and he has fans like Elon Musk and others in the US president-elect’s orbit



Pierre Poilievre with his wife, Anaida, have two young children

“I have always believed that it is voluntary generosity among family and community that are the greatest social safety net that we can ever have.”

- Poilievre story is very much a Canadian one.

A Calgarian with his eyes set on Ottawa

Poilievre was born in Canada’s western province of Alberta to a 16-year-old mother who put him up for adoption. He was taken in by two school teachers, who raised him in suburban Calgary.

“I have always believed that it is voluntary generosity among family and community that are the greatest social safety net that we can ever have,” he told *Maclean’s Magazine*

in 2022, reflecting on his early life.

“That’s kind of my starting point.”

As a teenager, Poilievre showed an early interest in politics, and canvassed for local conservatives.

Poilievre was studying international relations at the University of Calgary when he met Stockwell Day, who served as a cabinet minister under former Conservative Prime Minister Stephen Harper.

At the time, Day was seeking the leadership of the Canadian Alliance - a

right-wing party with Alberta roots that became part of the modern-day Conservatives in a 2003 merger - and he tapped Poilievre to help with campus outreach.

“He impressed me from the start,” Day told the BBC in an interview. “He seemed to be a level-headed guy, but full of energy and able to catch people’s attention.”

Day’s leadership bid was successful, and he set out for Ottawa with Poilievre as his assistant. Some time after, Poilievre walked into

his office on a cold winter night to ask his opinion about potentially running for office.

Poilievre went on to win a seat in Ottawa in 2004 at the age of 25, making him one of the youngest elected Conservatives at the time. He has held that seat since.

From “Skippy” to party leader

In Ottawa, Poilievre was given the nickname Skippy by peers and foes alike due to his youthful enthusiasm and sharp tongue.

He built a reputation for being “highly combative and partisan,” said Randy Besco, an assistant professor of political science at the University of Toronto.

Behind the closed doors of Conservative caucus meetings, Poilievre showed his diplomatic side, Day said.

“Pierre was always good at saying, ‘Okay, you know what? I hadn’t thought of that,’ or he would listen and say: ‘Have you thought of this?’” said Day.

Still, confrontational politics became a cornerstone of Poilievre’s public persona. After becoming Conservative leader in 2022, he would target Trudeau with biting remarks as a way to connect with disaffected voters.

It has landed him in trouble at times. In April, he was expelled from the House of Commons for calling the prime minister a “wacko”.

Poilievre told the *Montreal Gazette* in June that he is a fan of “straight talk”.

“I think when politeness is in conflict with the truth, I choose the truth,” he said. “I think we’ve been too polite for too long with our politi-

cal class.”

His combative style has also been divisive, and he has been criticised for oversimplifying complex issues for political gain.

While Canadians have been open to the opposition leader’s message as a change from Trudeau’s brand of progressive politics, just over half of them hold an unfavourable opinion of him, according to the latest polls.

Poilievre has also had to shift his sights since Trudeau’s resignation announcement, to get ahead of the inevitable match-up between him and the next Liberal leader.

Poilievre on populism, immigration and Trump

The Conservative leader has been described as a “soft” populist for his direct appeals to everyday Canadians and criticism of establishment elites, including corporate Canada.

He came out in support of those who protested vaccine mandates during the 2021 “Freedom Convoy” demonstrations that gridlocked Ottawa for weeks.

He has pledged to deliver “the biggest crackdown on crime in Canadian history”, promising to keep repeat offenders behind bars.

On social matters, Poilievre has rarely weighed in - something Prof Besco said is typical of senior Conservatives, who see these topics as “a losing issue”.

While Poilievre voted against legalising gay marriage in the early 2000s, he recently said it will remain legal “full stop” if he is elected.

The Conservatives also do not support legislation to regulate abortion, though they allow MPs to vote freely on the issue.

“I would lead a small government that minds its own business,” Poilievre said in June.

Amid a public debate in Canada in recent months on immigration, the party has said it would tie levels of newcomers to the number of new homes built, and focus on bringing in skilled workers.

Poilievre’s wife, Anaida, arrived in Canada as a child refugee from Caracas, Venezuela.

The Conservative leader has pushed for the integration of newcomers, saying Canada does not need to be a “hyphenated society”.

One of his major promises - to cut Trudeau’s national carbon pricing programme, arguing it is a financial burden for families - has raised questions over how his government would tackle pressing issues like climate change.

Canada also faces the threat of steep tariffs when Trump takes office later this month, with the US-Canada relationship expected to be a major challenge.

Poilievre has pushed back at Trump’s comments suggesting Canada become a 51st US state, vowing to “put Canada first”.

He has not stepped much into foreign policy otherwise, with his messaging focused instead on restoring “the Canadian dream”.

Above all, Poilievre says he wants to do away with “grandiosity” and “utopian wokeness” that he believes has defined the Trudeau era, in favour of the “things that are grand and great about the common people”.

“I’ve been saying precisely the same thing this entire time,” he told Mr Peterson.

BBC

By Getrude Mbago

Tanzania's electrification drive: A step towards sustainable rural devt

As Tanzania prepares to host the upcoming Africa heads of state Energy Summit later this month, the nation has already made major strides in its quest to improve energy access, particularly in rural areas.

The Rural Energy Agency (REA) has made a leap forward, achieving 99.9 percent electrification of all villages in mainland Tanzania by the end of 2024, a milestone that highlights the country's commitment to sustainable development, social equity, and economic empowerment.

Looking back at the progress Tanzania has made in providing electricity to its rural communities, as of October 2007, only 506 out of Tanzania's 12,318 villages—just 2 percent of the rural population—had access to electricity. Fast forward to December 2024, and 12,301 villages have been connected to the national grid.

The progress is a testament to the government's sustained efforts in extending energy services to some of the most remote areas of the country.

Speaking in Dar es Salaam recently during a media workshop, Director of Rural Electrification at REA, Eng. Jones Olotu, expressed his pride in the achievement, noting that the project has brought electricity to over 99.9 percent of the nation's villages.

"When we started, only 506 villages had electricity. Today, we have connected 12,301 villages, leaving just 0.1 percent without electricity," Olotu said.

The initiative, funded by both the Tanzanian government and international partners, has been vital in transforming rural lives.

Beyond the impressive coverage in villages, the project is also tackling electrification at the hamlet level. As of 2024,

33,657 out of Tanzania's 64,359 hamlets have been connected to the grid, which accounts for 52.3 percent of the total.

The government is working towards connecting the remaining 30,702 hamlets over the next five years, contingent on funding availability. The ambitious plan is not just about providing power; it's about creating opportunities for rural communities.

"By electrifying villages and hamlets, we are creating investment opportunities, boosting local economies, and reducing rural-urban migration," Olotu said.

The impact of this electrification project goes beyond just lights and power; it empowers rural residents by opening doors to new industries, better education, healthcare, and water systems. It's also an essential step in reducing poverty, as access to electricity enables rural entrepreneurs to start businesses and create jobs.

As part of the electrification effort, the government is also focused on providing free connections to citizens, with a nominal fee of 27,000/- required for installation. This is a part of the government's strategy to ensure that the rural population, especially in remote areas, can access essential services without being burdened by prohibitive costs.

The availability of electricity is crucial for other sectors like healthcare, water, and education. "Electricity is vital for operations in hospitals and clinics, for running water pumps in rural areas, and for lighting up schools and classrooms," he said. Ensuring that



rural areas are electrified is not just about convenience—it's about creating an environment in which these sectors can function effectively and contribute to the overall development of the country.

Currently, only 17 villages remain without electricity, and contractors are working hard to ensure these villages are connected by the end of January 2025.

He expressed confidence that the final push will bring the country's electrification efforts to a close, with the government turning its attention to electrifying households.

"Our goal is to ensure that every household, particularly in rural areas, has access to electricity. Once we finish electrifying the remaining villages, we will focus on hamlets, where we have already

started work, and then extend the connections to individual homes," Olotu said.

Tanzania's energy vision on the African stage

The success of Tanzania's rural electrification efforts is a significant achievement that aligns with the continent's broader energy goals.

As energy poverty remains a key challenge across Africa, the upcoming Africa Heads of

State Energy Summit scheduled on January 27 to 28, provides a platform for Tanzania to showcase its achievements and contribute to the regional dialogue on energy access, sustainability, and development.

The Tanzanian experience is a model of how a country can overcome the challenge of energy access in rural areas by committing to large-scale

infrastructure projects, collaboration with international partners, and a clear focus on the social and economic benefits of electricity. It also underscores the importance of energy in addressing some of Africa's most pressing issues, from healthcare and education to poverty alleviation and gender equality.

"We are focused on providing electricity not just as an energy source, but as a tool for socio-economic transformation," said Olotu. As Tanzania continues to make progress in rural electrification, it sets a powerful example for the rest of Africa, showing how energy access can drive inclusive development and help build a more prosperous and sustainable future.

Ambassador Noel Kaganda, Director of Multilateral Cooperation at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and East African Cooperation, highlighted Tanzania's achievements in the energy sector.

"By December 2024, the country's electricity generation capacity reached 3,169.20 megawatts. Access to electricity has surged from 14 percent in 2011 to 78.4 percent in 2020, driven by REA connecting nearly all villages to the national grid," he said.

He said the summit presents an opportunity to showcase Tanzania's progress in energy development and strengthen its global standing.

As Tanzania approaches the 100 percent electrification of its villages, the government's efforts offer a blueprint for other African nations facing similar energy challenges.

By Lincoln G. Peters

Several critics of the Liberian government accuse President Joseph N. Boakai of prejudicing the Joint Police Investigative report on the recent fire incident at the Capitol Building while rejecting the findings on grounds that they lack independent and organized evidence.

Fire gutted the Rotunda of the Capitol Building here early Wednesday morning on December 18, 2024. The Rotunda is the Joint Chambers of the Liberian Legislature. Until what has been confirmed as an arson attack, the facility was being used by majority bloc members of the House, who controversially elected ruling UP lawmaker Richard Nagbe Koon as Speaker amid legal resistance by embattled Speaker J. Fonati Koffa.

The majority bloc failed to obtain 49 out of 73 Representatives as required by the Constitution to remove Koffa, who they accused of conflict of interest and corruption but ousted him.

The fire incident occurred in the wake of an unresolved political turmoil between members of the majority bloc led by Representative Richard N. Koon on the one hand and a minority bloc headed by embattled Speaker Fonati Koffa.

A day after the incident, the Inspector General of the Liberia National Police, Col. Gregory Coleman, announced the arrest of 73 persons who were part of an anti-government demonstration on the grounds of the Capitol a day before the fire incident. A dozen others were considered persons of interest, including opposition lawmaker Representative Frank Saah Foko, who embattled Speaker Koffa had accompanied to the Liberia National Police Headquarters for questioning because of the statement he (Rep. Foko) had made in the past.

Also among the arrested individuals were security officers who were present on duty dur-

Boakai prejudices capitol fire investigation



Flames consume the top floor of the parliament building. Photo / AP

ing the night of the arson. Some were immediately released based on information provided. The fire did cause significant damage to the entire joint chamber.

Police IG Coleman, flanked by the Director General of the Liberia National Fire and Rescue Service, G. Warsuwah Barvoul, told journalists that they had already identified suspects involved in the arson attack and that contacts had been made with messages sent for them to come forward.

"Today, January 8, 2025, at this point, we are here to officially inform the nation that we have sufficient evidence to call the act at the Capitol Building an act of ar-

son," Inspector General Col. Gregory Coleman told journalists here on Wednesday.

But, responding to the report on Wednesday, January 8, 2025, via a live talk show in Monrovia, Montserrado County District # 8 Ex-representative Moses A. Gray said the Police investigation is not something to trust because it will never contradict what President Boakai has already said.

According to Gray, when the fire incident occurred, the President linked it to arson, which he blamed on hooligans, despite not investigating the cause of the scene.

"The President went and told the country that the act

is an act of hooligans, and such will not be tolerated, and that statement from the President prejudiced the investigation. This is a calculated attempt by the government to target members of the opposition community. Do you expect the report to differ from what the President said? Let the government call on international experts; we don't trust this report," he stated.

Gray also accuses the police of being a party to the conflict because, since the power struggle between the Majority bloc and the Minority lawmakers, the Liberia National Police had provided security at the facility until a fire gutted it.

Now, he argues that since the incident, Police officers on duty have not been probed or placed under any investigation. Therefore, it's now important that they be investigated because once the police director can't investigate them, he should recuse himself as a party to the attack.

"A character like the Police IG Gregory Coleman should recuse himself from the investigation. Firstly, look at the fight between the Majority Bloc and the Minority bloc. The police, being political, provided maximum security for the majority bloc and left the minority vulnerable. The police, again, provided maximum security for

the Capitol Building through the Majority bloc request; the police IG is on record of saying that."

Gray continues that the Police IG and others provided maximum security for the ruling Unity Party during the 2023 campaign, something, he notes, has made IG Coleman a partisan security officer therefore, he says the Police Chief lacks what it takes to investigate and have the matter adjudicated independently.

"The evidence is so significant to the court, and those who are to adduce evidence if they are compromised, it means that the investigation is not independent. Without any investigation, IG Cole-

man brought some folks and called them suspects. Does that mean he will be fair?"

"Also, this man took a court detainee from behind the bar and sent him to Guinean junta," making reference to a Guinean national arrested in Liberia and turned over to the Guinean military amid reports that he was executed for alleged subversive activities.

Former minister of youth and sports for youth development under the former ruling CDC, Isaac Doe, argues that the Police IG is a political appointee. So, they don't expect his investigation to defer from President Boakai's statement.

According to him, Coleman had arrested, assaulted, and intimidated peaceful Liberians exercising their constitutional right, something he believes clearly shows that the IG does not have respect for the rule of law.

But responding to these allegations, the Managing Director of the Liberia Water and Sewer Corporation and campaign spokesperson for the ruling UP, Mohammed Ali, counters that whether the police like anyone or not, when they gathered their pieces of evidence, those pieces of evidence end up in court.

According to him, the court will determine whether the police did justice and due diligence to the investigation.

"I see a fair police headed by Gregory Coleman. And that is why I think the Joint Security should do its best to gather the best evidence because I can trust them as much as I want and distrust them as much as I want. It will not survive in court if they don't gather the right evidence. I am looking at gathering the right evidence that will survive in court so that if you charge people, they can be proven guilty," he underscores.

Migrants, army face-off along South Africa-Zimbabwe border

By Tendai Marima

EVERY day, Fadzai Musindo walks across the border between Zimbabwe and South Africa - sometimes via the official border post but usually by taking the more dangerous informal route.

Streams of men, women and children regularly cross the bridge separating the two countries, but for the 43-year-old mother of three, it is a necessity so she can earn enough to fend for her children.

Musindo works as a "runner", physically carrying goods into Zimbabwe for people who shop in South Africa and need their wares transported to the other side. Amid Zimbabwe's ailing economy and scarcity of certain items, the job has become popular.

But using the formal Beitbridge border post presents more challenges and expenses than solutions for Musindo.

"I need to save the pages on my passport so I can't stamp every day. If I did that, I would have to buy a passport every year, I can't do that," she said, determined to put off paying the \$150 fee for a replacement travel document for as long as possible.

So to make it across to South Africa and back, Musindo walks to the banks of the Limpopo River, one of the largest in Africa, where groups of young men known as goma-gomas smuggle people over for a small fee.

The crossing is technically illegal, and dangerous - with irregular migrants at risk of being raped or robbed. But Musindo says she walks with other women to avoid the risks.

Once across, Musindo uses the legal walkways. But through the bush and across the crocodile-infested Limpopo, the 5km (3-mile) stretch is uncertain terrain. The goma-gomas promise they can evade the police and soldiers patrolling the bushes along the river, but since South Africa's army (SANDF) launched a new border safeguarding operation last year, many are more worried than before.

On patrol

Deployed under the SANDF's Operation Corona, groups of soldiers with rifles in hand, patrol along the 233km (145-mile) Limpopo border on the lookout for smugglers and people crossing illegally.

On a patrol in late November, the soldiers camouflaged themselves in the surrounding grassland, waiting to see who would cross.

Eventually, two young men passed by, leading a group of three women and a child



A soldier on standby as people returning to Zimbabwe with goods, cross the Beitbridge border from South Africa

through the bush; not far behind, a few more young men followed their bush guides into South Africa.

But as the soldiers appeared from the tall grass, the young men ran away, leaving the group at the army's mercy.

A pregnant woman was caught and taken into custody by the soldiers. The mother of the young boy managed to flee back to the no man's land between Zimbabwe and South Africa, but her son and friend were apprehended and made people over for a small fee.

For those who ran away on foot, Major Shihlangoma Mahlahlane, who leads the joint technical operation for Operation Corona, explained that the SANDF cannot pursue them.

"In the middle of the river, it's no man's land that's where it divides Zimbabwe and South Africa so when we chase them away they know we can't do anything," Mahlahlane said.

"We need to stop and come back otherwise we will engage with the Zimbabwean authorities. There is nothing we can do about it."

The enhanced border operation, which began in September and will run until the end of April, covers South Africa's borders with Botswana, Mozambique and Zimbabwe.

The SANDF says since it started, fewer undocumented travellers have been taking the risk of crossing through informal means, even though smuggled goods remain a problem. However, many still take a chance.

Technical challenges for law enforcement have also created opportunities for smugglers. In 2020, a 40km (25-mile) fence was erected between South



An officer on patrol near the Limpopo River, dividing South Africa from Zimbabwe, while people on the other side wait for an opportunity to cross. The soldiers are permitted to go only up to a certain distance within the riverbed.

Africa and Zimbabwe at a cost of \$2.1m - but sections have since been cut. Despite efforts to reinstall the boundary, there are gaping holes in the stretch of barbed wire. A holey fence, combined with a seasonally dry river allows people to brave crossing, officials say.

Causing 'distress'

Across Limpopo's sandy banks at night, the goma-gomas light fires to keep warm and send signals to other crossers about where to come and wait. They bide their time until the next chance to make the crossing with more people emerges.

But those taken into custody by the army face a different fate. Immigration officials will send them back to Zimbabwe, but Major Mahlahlane fears that even if they get deported, they may come back again in the hope of seeking better op-

portunities.

"Pregnant women cross into South Africa and after they give birth they try to have their child registered as a South African, so they can try to obtain the child grant," he said.

But, while public hospital facilities in South Africa are far better than those in Zimbabwe, accessing the monthly grant of 530 rand (\$29) per child in South Africa is not an automatic process even for single South African mothers.

The South African Border Management Authority (BMA), set up in April 2023 to improve border control, has deported and arrested more than 410,000 people at different sites since a new coalition government came to power in May last year. The government, made up of 11 parties that campaigned on curbing migration, has promised to speed up de-

portations as some cases take months to resolve.

However, Loren Landau, a professor at the African Centre for Migration and Society at the University of Witwatersrand in Johannesburg, which produces academic research on migration trends across the continent, cautions that the fast-track removals of irregular migrants could create other problems.

"Part of the BMA's mandate is to ensure people move out of South Africa quickly and when they are deported quickly they don't have access to social workers or lawyers, families get separated and it causes more distress.

"Often people come back and instead of using the trusted routes people tend to go underground which could be far more dangerous for vulnerable people and minors," Landau

said.

A bus-to-bus, car-to-car operation

On the other side of the Limpopo, the Zimbabwean government has launched a crackdown on smugglers and illicit goods brought in by buses, private cars and trucks.

According to Tafadzwa Muguti, the secretary for presidential affairs and devolution, a task force which includes the Zimbabwe Revenue Authority (ZIMRA), immigration and the police will search all vehicles crossing.

Anyone who cannot account for their goods will have them confiscated and penalties for those who contravene import regulations.

He said the operation intensified over the recent festive season, "a period when smuggling activity often peaks as Zimbabwean expatriates returning home are known to bring goods that evade customs duty, exacerbating the challenges faced by local manufacturers".

The Beitbridge border, one of Africa's busiest, sees more than 13,000 travellers and more than 400 buses crossing daily. Alongside the regular movement, people and goods are smuggled in and out of South Africa daily.

ZIMRA estimates Zimbabwe has lost up to \$1bn in undeclared import revenue, so the tax agency officials search each border transporter. But the operation has caused lengthy delays at the busy border, frustrating those travelling for the festive season.

Always another way

For Musindo, however, the border operation has meant further delays to her work as a runner, as it has cut off the possibility of using faster, alternative means to make the crossing.

"When it's like this, I can wait more than five hours in the queue [at the border post] with someone's luggage; on some days it can be even longer, so even though the border can be full with people, in a day I can get 200 rand [\$11] if I'm lucky to carry for two customers," she lamented.

Being stuck in long queues can be frustrating for travellers, but for Musindo, waiting for hours while people wade through the queues to get their passports stamped means she earns less money as more time is spent waiting. Though crossing via the Limpopo River is riskier, it takes just 45 minutes, she says.

Aware of the dangers, Musindo does not always use the informal route but says when the border is full, she can go back and forth across the river three times a day, instead of only once at the official post.

"It's better when there are no delays, I get much more [money]; but for now there is no other way," she explained.

Meanwhile, in the bushes of the Limpopo, more South Afri-

can forces are on patrol, clamping down on movement.

"Because the river is dry, people are exploiting the gaps. They will not focus on the point of entry, but they would rather come and exploit a gap," said Major Mahlahlane. At times, the river is seasonally dry and more so due to the drought, but the onset of the rains has not deterred people.

He added that the army is not concerned about Zimbabweans who are in South Africa legally. "There will be more security forces along the border ... but we are focusing on illegal activity."

Some South African villages along the Limpopo River are also complicit in the illegal ferrying of goods using donkey carts, he said. Cigarettes are common contraband that goes into the South African market. The steep import levies charged by South Africa make smuggling a lucrative option for those looking to evade duties. Since Operation Corona began, more than 8 million rand (\$500,000) worth of cigarettes have been seized along border settlements, officials said.

'The issue is not at the border'

However, permanently clamping down on illicit trade could be difficult for South Africa as the runners and goma-gomas who have crossed the river route for decades could find other paths.

"Whenever we invest in more border security there is a race with smugglers, the more we securitise, the more sophisticated people become in getting their goods across, they will always find other means," Landau said.

Reducing irregular migration in the long term requires a multifaceted approach, according to James Chapman, head of advocacy at the Scalabrini Center, a non-profit organisation that protects migrants and refugee rights.

"Border management requires a sustainable, multi-pronged approach ... in a manner that is in keeping with fundamental human rights and South Africa's legal framework."

However, Landau maintains border control is a political issue, with xenophobia having spurred waves of attacks on foreigners in the past. He argues the main challenge is not migration, but the state of South Africa's poor urban areas.

"A long-term solution depends on what the problem is and where it is, the issue is not at the border, the problem is in the cities, in townships that have been overtaken by criminal gangs and addressing that issue is key," he said.

Crime and inequality are pervasive issues in post-apartheid South Africa and in marginalised communities, African foreigners are often the target of public frustration.

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 UMUJAVYO 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

BUSINESS

Mombasa port reaps big from red sea crisis, posts 133 percent jump in traffic

First telecoms tariff hike in 10 years to fuel investments

LAGOS

TELECOMMUNICATIONS companies have been mandated to increase their investments in network infrastructure following the approval of hikes in their tariffs after 11 years of lobbying.

This follows an assertion by Bosun Tijani, the minister of communications, innovation, and digital economy, on Wednesday that tariff hikes will happen in the interests of the industry's sustainability. "Tariff will go up," he asserted.

The condition of this increase is tied to a commitment that telcos will increase investments in the sector. The sector's investments have declined in recent years, leading to a slump in network quality in the country.

"This balance of tariff increases, alongside investment commitments, means that not only will the telecoms industry have the confidence to invest and a clear pathway back to sustainability – but the higher prices will lead to better networks, more relevant services and so the better customer experience that enables growth," stated Karl Toriola, the chief executive officer of MTN Nigeria.

Telcos have slowed investments in the country due to rising costs and record losses. Foreign investments in the telecoms sector fell to a six-year low of \$14.74 million in the third quarter (Q3) of 2024, according to capital importation data from the Nigerian Bureau of Statistics.

Between January and September 2024, MTN Nigeria's core capital expenditure (capex) dropped 27.79 percent to N217.64 billion, while Airtel's capex fell 36.59 percent to \$149 million.

This investment decline is tied to a N514.93 billion loss between January and September 2024 for MTN and a 46.9 percent decline to \$755 million in Airtel Nigeria's revenue in the period.

"The increasing demand for digital services across sectors such as education, banking, and healthcare requires us to continually upgrade our networks to deliver more capacity and improve service quality. These investments come at a cost that must be shared proportionally to guarantee long-term viability," said Dinesh Balsingh, CEO of Airtel Nigeria.

To adjust to these harsh realities, telcos renewed their push for tariff hikes in April 2024. According to the Association of Licensed Telecom Operators of Nigeria (ALTON) and the Association of Telecommunication Companies of Nigeria (ATCON), telecom operators have been advocating for higher prices for the last 11 years.

They argued that telcos need cost-reflective tariffs in the face of adverse economic headwinds like record inflation of 34.6 percent in November 2024 and losses resulting from foreign exchange fluctuations.

"For a fully liberalised and deregulated sector, the current price control mechanism, which is not aligned with



Bosun Tijani, the Minister of Communication, Innovation, and Digital Economy

economic realities, threatens the industry's sustainability and can erode investors' confidence," the associations said.

To adjust to rising operational costs, telcos asked for a 100 percent increase in tariffs, noted Toriola of MTN. He argued that this is necessary in the face of a 300 percent increase in operating expenses.

Balsingh of Airtel Nigeria stated that these tariff adjustments will ensure the sector's sustainability and lead to improvements in service delivery. "By enabling us to expand coverage, strengthen network security, and introduce cutting-edge technologies, the adjustments will directly enhance the quality of connectivity for Nigerians. Our priority is to ensure that no one is left behind in the country's digital transformation journey," he emphasized.

According to Tijani, the minister of communications, the increase in tariffs will fall short of telcos' 100 percent request but will help return the sector to a path of growth.

He said, "It won't be 100 percent. We need to ensure that as a sector, we put the right regulations in place that can ensure the growth of this sector, continue to contribute to job creation, but also enable other key sectors in the country as well."

He noted that the government commissioned a study to evaluate the sector's financial needs while minimising the potential impact on consumers.

Aminu Maida, executive vice chairman of the Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC), highlighted that the tariff adjustments will be accompanied by measures to simplify billing systems and increase transparency.

"We have revised our quality of service regulations, bringing the entire value chain into scope for compliance, from MNOs to tower codes and transmission companies. So, when we see these tariff modifications, it's also going to come with simplification," he said.

While the new rates have not been announced, Tijani noted that the NCC will roll out new rates soon. However, the National Association of Telecoms Subscribers (NATCOMS) has stated that it will kick against tariff hikes because they do not favour subscribers, who will be paying more for calls, data, and SMS.



The Port of Mombasa recorded a 14 percent increase in cargo handled from January-October period with Uganda contributing to bulk of the performance.

MOMBASA

TRANSSHIPMENT traffic through the Mombasa Port jumped by 132.9 percent, an increase of 280,593 twenty-foot equivalent unit (TEUs), to 491,666 TEUs in 2024 as the critical gateway benefitted from the Red Sea crisis.

"The performance was enhanced by significant growth in containerized and bulk cargo volumes, with transshipment traffic receiving a boost from some major shipping lines choosing Mombasa port as their transshipment hub thus enabling smaller feeder vessels to serve eastern, southern Africa ports as well as the Indian Ocean Islands from the port of Mombasa," Kenya Ports Authority (KPA) Managing Director William Ruto said.

Uganda is the top destination for cargo traffic through the port, accounting for 65.7 percent of transit cargo in 2024. The KPA statistics indicates 8,811,289 tons for Uganda were handled in 2024 up from 7,115,079 tons, representing a 23.8 percent increase from 2023. Other notable transit destinations include South Sudan (12.7 percent), the Democratic Republic of Congo (11.8 percent), Rwanda (5.1 percent), and Tanzania (3.4 percent).

In December alone, the port handled a total cargo throughput of 3,746,363

tons, an increase from the 3,029,482 tons recorded in December 2023.

Container traffic experienced a significant upward trend in December 2024, with 188,495 TEUs processed compared to 152,326 TEUs handled in December 2023. In the same month, transshipment traffic grew by 25.8 percent while transit traffic grew by 22.2 percent.

The Kenya Ports Authority (KPA) is set to upgrade its Terminal Operating System (TOS) at the Port of Mombasa as part of strategic changes to improve the quality and speed of cargo handling and shipping clearance.

Ahead of the December holidays, KPA reported higher vessel calls at the Mombasa port prompting additional deployments of feeder vessels and transshipment lines. Apart from fully optimising port workers during the busy season, the authority also sought support from other freight stakeholders like Kenya Railways to evacuate rising volumes of cargo to their intended destinations.

The upgrade of the port follows developments made over the last three years intended to strengthen Kenya's competitiveness in the region. These include the KSh32 billion Phase Two of the second container terminal, the KSh40 billion Kipevu Oil Terminal (KOT) and the

KSh1 billion Cruise Ship Terminal.

The Port of Mombasa recorded a 14 percent increase in cargo handled from January-October period with Uganda contributing to bulk of the improvement. Kampala's throughput grew by 1.526 million tons, accounting for 26.5 percent of the port's overall growth.

The authority hopes that the infrastructural uplift will cement Mombasa's position as a regional hub for sea transit. However, concerns by traders over high taxes and increased costs at the port have resulted in Dar es Salaam garnering interest as viable option.

The Port of Mombasa recorded a 14 percent increase in cargo handled from January-October period with Uganda contributing to bulk of the performance.

"Uganda was mainly responsible for the increase in performance, growing by 1,526,169 tons or 26.5 percent. With just two months remaining, the Port which last year cumulatively witnessed container traffic 1,623,080 TEUs, is on track to exceed its revised target of 1.8 million TEUs and is likely to achieve a remarkable 1.972 million TEUs in container traffic," Jones Buchere, acting Communications Manager at Kenya Ports Authority (KPA) said.

The performance surpassed the set target of

32,151,000 by 5.1 percent. The Port handled 1,643,240 TEUs of container traffic against 1,322,999 TEUs handled in the same period in 2023 registering a growth of 320,241 TEUs or 24.2 percent.

KPA estimates that the port will handle approximately 40,535 million tons in cargo throughput, 480,241 TEUs in transshipment traffic and 13,416 million tons in transit traffic.

Both imports and exports also recorded moderate growth of 31,915 TEUs or 5.4 percent and 30,923 TEUs or 5.4 percent, respectively. During the period under review, total transit cargo registered 11,180,185 tons against 9,303,171 tons handled in the same period in 2023, posting a strong positive variance of 20.2 percent.

"The increased throughput is attributed to expanding sectors like agriculture, manufacturing, and construction, which rely on Mombasa for efficient import and export processes," KPA Managing Director Cpt. William Ruto said.

KPA is planning for Berth 23 and a specialized berth at the Dongo Kundu Special Economic Zone are in place to ensure continued competitiveness. Currently, KPA is also accelerating the construction of Berth 19B that will add further 300,000 TEUs.

Norway becomes the trailblazer for electric vehicles

OSLO

NORWAY set a goal for all new cars sold to be electric by 2025, a decade ahead of the European Union. Subsidies and incentives have helped the Nordic country almost realize its goal.

Norway has become the poster child for the transition to electric vehicles (EVs). Last year, official government statistics showed that almost nine out of every 10 cars sold were electric.

In 2023 – the most recent year that data is available – the global EV adoption rate was just 18 percent, according to the International Energy Agency.

The Nordic country has made a remarkable commitment to combating climate change, driven by strong gov-

ernment policies, robust infrastructure, and a supportive public.

Norway aims for all passenger cars sold to be zero-emission vehicles by the end of this year, a decade ahead of the European Union – of which it is not a member.

Norway's wealth and size undoubtedly played a role in its EV success. The country has a population of 5.5 million and is one of the world's richest nations, thanks to substantial oil reserves – the largest in Europe after Russia. However, these factors alone don't fully explain the remarkable progress made.

Robbie Andrew, a senior scientist at the Oslo-based CICERO Center for International Climate Research, thinks Norway's decades-long commitment to domestic EV develop-



ment was a critical factor.

"In the 1990s, Norway made efforts to create a company to manufacture EVs," Andrew told DW, noting how the absence of a powerful domestic auto industry lobby facilitated

these initiatives.

Although early attempts at EV production had limited commercial success – only a few thousand vehicles were sold – they fostered public awareness and acceptance of

electromobility. This paved the way for the widespread adoption of battery-powered cars from global manufacturers like Tesla and Volkswagen.

Favorable state policies

have, undoubtedly, helped smooth the transition to electric vehicles. Norway levied no VAT (Value-added tax) or import duties on EVs, which can make up between a third and almost half of the cost of a new car.

EVs were also exempt from toll road charges and parking fees. They could even use bus lanes in and around the capital, Oslo. Higher-income groups benefited the most from the tax breaks and the newly purchased EV was often a second family car.

Having almost reached the 2025 adoption goal, the government recently rolled back some of those incentives. VAT is now partially applied to large and luxury EVs, costing more than 500,000 kroner (\$44,200, €42,500). Drivers from low-income groups still gain from many of the incentives and falling electric vehicle prices.

Bjorne Grimsrud, director

of the Oslo-based transportation research center TOI, thinks the government incentives have been "very costly" but affordable, given the country's wealth and desire to be climate-neutral by 2050.

"The government used to collect 75 billion kroner annually from taxes and tolls on cars, but that has been cut in half," Grimsrud told DW.

Other countries, including Germany, have been accused of backsliding on climate-mitigation goals by cutting subsidies for new electric vehicles long before targets are reached. On Monday, the KBA federal transport authority revealed that 27.4% fewer EVs were registered in 2024 in Germany, Europe's largest auto market.

Those decisions will need to be reconsidered, if Germany, a major EV manufacturer, is to meet its target of having 15 million electric vehicles on the road by 2030.

Diageo, Sequoia Capital in case alleging suspicious payments

NEW DELHI

INDIA'S federal investigating agency has accused liquor giant Diageo and Sequoia Capital of making suspicious payments to a politician's firm to seek favourable government decisions, it said in a document Reuters reviewed on Friday.

In the document, the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) says Diageo Scotland made a suspicious fund transfer to Indian politician Karti Chidambaram's firm after a 2005 ban on sale of its duty-free products hit sales of its Johnnie Walker whisky.

In the case document on its website, the agency said an investigation showed a payment of \$15,000 to the firm was intended to influence public servants to lift the ban on Diageo, rather than for consultancy work as it had been described.

"In order to lift the ban, Diageo Scotland approached Karti P Chidambaram," the agency said in the document, part of its formal case registered against Diageo and Sequoia, after an investigation launched in 2018 into investment approvals.

It did not say when the al-



leged payment by Diageo was made.

The agency said Diageo suffered a huge loss from the

2005 embargo on its products by the India Tourism Development Corp, a firm majority-owned by the government

that had a monopoly on sales of imported duty-free liquor.

Telephone calls to seek comment from Karti Chid-

ambaram, the son of former finance minister P Chidambaram, went unanswered. A member of India's main op-

position Congress party, he is a lower house MP.

A spokesperson for Diageo's India unit, United Spirits, in

which the British giant owns a stake of about 56%, declined to comment. Diageo's British unit did not immediately respond to a request for a comment on the development.

The case presents a new challenge for Diageo after anti-graft police launched an investigation last year into billing and discount practices in the capital, New Delhi.

The company has said it is cooperating with that agency.

Separately, the CBI case document accused the Mauritius unit of Sequoia Capital of suspicious transactions with the firm of Karti Chidambaram, who was in a position to influence public servants to secure approval for an Indian investment in 2008.

Sequoia's proposal, the CBI said, was approved in November by Karti's father, P Chidambaram, who was finance minister at the time. In response to a text message from Reuters, P Chidambaram, also a Congress politician, said he had no comment.

The CBI case document does not name the former finance minister as one of those accused in the case.

Sequoia did not immediately respond to a Reuters request for comment on the accusations.

A detailed investigation will look for any violations of India's criminal law, including its anti-graft law that sets penalties for bribes to public servants, the CBI added in the document.

NAIROBI

THE government is planning to extend the period of validity for travellers using the Electronic Travel Authorization (ETA) system, which has been subject of controversy over recent months, the Cabinet Secretary for Tourism and Wildlife, Rebecca Miano, revealed in a recent interview.

"We need to review the ETA to make it quicker. The biggest recommendation from the report and from travellers is that it should be for multiple entry. This means, if you have your ETA now, you can use it for a year or two," CS Miano told a local outlet in a recent interview.

The performance of the ETA system spurred an uproar from Kenyans who taunted it for worsening the situation. Many travellers to Kenya have to apply online for authorisation before leaving their country.

The process could take three days to affirm eligibility for travel. To last minute travellers, this system adds an extra complication that's further worsened by the inherent inbuilt need for predictability, which makes it hard to change itineraries to, for example, extend one's stay.

"We have active engagements with other ministries, including the ministry of Interior and Transport, as well as other stakeholders to receive feedback and sort out these issues," CS Miano said.

The decision to do away with the visa requirement at Kenya's points of entry was meant to ease foreign investment and tourism. However, some Kenyans criticized the ETA system when it was being rolled out, citing that it was totally antithetical to a 'visa-free' policy - adding that it would backfire in the long run.

CS Miano, however,



Tourism ministry reveals it's plans to review travel system

maintains that the ETA system is more efficient than the visa requirement - pointing out these challenges as 'normal' occurrences at the onset of implementing any new system. She said that the ETA system will simply be reviewed and streamlined, rather than being set aside completely.

"There is a thin line between asking for a Visa and the ETA based on the ease of feeling and getting the ETA. The first meeting we will have this January will be multi-sectoral to look at what we need to do to make the ETA better and improve our visa openness index," Miano said.

The CS added that some of the concerns the government has received include the bulk of information that is needed

when applying for the authorization. According to many travellers, most of this information could automatically be acquired if the system was plugged into data from the immigration department. This would eventually save time needed to complete the process and relieve the strain of application.

According to Miano, the tourism sector is on the recovery path after the stagnation that has lingered since the pandemic. Besides injecting KSh 400 billion to the economy annually, it remains a major forex earner and a crucial source for employment (1.5 million jobs).

Although there was a 21 percent increase in the number of international tourists travelling to Kenya in the first half of 2024, the declining rank in the

ease of travelling could be a hindrance to the greater prospects of the tourism industry. The ministry has an array of plans this year to rejuvenate a sector facing stiff competition from upstarts like Tanzania and Mauritius.

This involves diversifying tourism products from the traditional safaris and beach experiences. Miano says that there would be keen interest in cultural tourism - aggressively promoting festivals and showcasing UNESCO cultural sites in the country. The CS is also pushing for greater investment in sports tourism, nature and wellness tourism, and even agro tourism.

The diversification of tourism products will also go hand in hand with broadening the demographic of international

tourists Kenya has been known for - Europe and the US. Intense marketing will also be focused on Asian and Caribbean countries.

"To support that, we have launched nine circuits divided into the regions we have in the country. You can go to the coast circuit, the northern circuit, the western circuit, and the mountain circuit - each of these circuits giving you a niche experience of those products," Miano said.

The CS also believes that retaining tourists is important in the marketing process. By upgrading infrastructure along various tourists' spots, encouraging hospitality, and properly accrediting and classifying hotels to meet tourists' expectations - international visitors will broadcast their unforgettable experiences to others. The multiplier effect has been noted to account for 45 percent of the tourists who visit Kenya.

Firms raise N2.68trn from debt securities in two years

LAGOS

OVER the past two years, Nigerian companies have turned to the debt securities market to raise an impressive N2.68 trillion through commercial papers and corporate bonds, according to findings by BusinessDay.

In 2023 alone, businesses secured approximately N1.63 trillion, with N126 billion sourced via long-term corporate bonds and a substantial N1.504 trillion through short-term commercial papers.

This trend was carried into 2024, as the market saw the issuance of N1.05 trillion in debt instruments. Notably, 45 companies raised N983.2 billion through commercial papers, while four companies issued corporate bonds valued at N69.4 billion, underscoring the continued reliance on fixed-income instruments for capital needs.

Within the two years, MTN Nigeria tapped the market the most, raising about N522.4 billion in 11 issuances. It was followed by Dangote Cement, which raised N340.68 billion during the period.

In this story, BusinessDay tracks some of the companies that have

sourced the highest financing from the Nigerian capital markets scene.

MTN Nigeria issued 11 commercial papers between 2023 and 2024, raising a total of approximately N522.36 billion. The most recent issuance, under the group's N250 billion Commercial Paper Programme, saw the company secure N72.18 billion through Series 13 and 14. The yields offered by MTN during the period range from 10.41 percent in Series 4 to 29 percent in Series 14, underscoring the rapid shifts in Nigeria's monetary environment in just two years.

Nigeria's largest cement maker, Dangote Cement Plc made consistent appearances in the Nigerian capital market scene, raising about N340.68 billion in 13 issuances which occurred over both years. Dangote Cement is executing a N300 billion Commercial Paper Programme, with yields on the instruments ranging from 12.20 percent in Series 4, issued in February 2023, to 23.28 percent in Series 16, issued in August 2024.

The sharp increase in yields, as seen in the offerings by Dangote Cement and MTN Nigeria, underscores the mount-

ing challenges faced by Nigerian businesses. The steep rise in interest rates has not only strained profit margins but also heightened the cost of capital, forcing companies to navigate a more constrained operating environment.

Flour Mills of Nigeria has been a consistent participant in the fixed-income market since 2023, raising N46 billion through bond issuance in that year and a total of N255.08 billion through commercial paper issuances over the two-year period.

A review of FMN's financial results as of September 2024, shows that commercial papers and bond issuances have been the major source of the group's borrowings. As of September 30, 2024, the group had an obligation of N128.7 billion owed to CBN's Real Sector Support Facility, however, owed about N13.9 billion worth of commercial papers and bonds.

Dangote Sugar Refinery in 2024, raised about N141.8 billion in commercial papers in five issuances which are part of its N150 billion commercial paper programme. About N111.94 billion of this amount has been paid.



EU called on to rectify trade barrier practices

BEIJING

CHINA will urge the European Union to rectify its trade barrier practices through bilateral consultations and other measures, with the aim of creating an open, fair, just, nondiscriminatory and predictable environment for Chinese companies to invest and operate in Europe, the Ministry of Commerce said on Thursday.

The ministry also announced in a statement that China has concluded that the EU's practices in investigating Chinese companies under the EU's Foreign Subsidies Regulation and related rules amount to trade and investment barriers.

He Yadong, a ministry spokesman, said at a news conference in Beijing on Thursday that China's investigation found that there are numerous unreasonable practices in the European Commission's foreign subsidies investigation regarding China.

These practices, which violated the World Trade Organization's core principles, including nondiscrimination, have caused restrictions and obstacles for Chinese companies' products, services and investments entering the EU market, thereby damaging the competitiveness of Chinese businesses and their products, the spokesman said. The primary companies affected by the EU's investigation are manufacturers in industries such as railway locomotives, photovoltaics, wind power and security inspection equipment.

At the request of the China Chamber of Commerce for Import and Export of Machinery and Electronic Products, and in accordance with relevant laws and regulations, China launched the investigation into the trade and investment barriers arising from the EU's practices in investigating Chinese companies.

Market observers noted that the EU risks facing countermeasures by China, such as additional tariffs, anti-dumping investigations and targeted sanctions.

Cui Fan, a professor at the University of International Business



and Economics in Beijing, said that through those practices against China, the EU is undermining fundamental principles that are intended to drive technological innovation within the EU, and has disrupted the normal business operations and economic interests of many Chinese companies in various EU member states.

According to the probe conducted by China, about 93 percent of stakeholders who responded to a questionnaire said they believed that the EU's Foreign Subsidies Regulation investigation has caused restrictions or obstacles for market entry for Chinese companies, products and investments, according to a document that was attached to the statement from the Ministry of Commerce.

The responses indicate that the EU's foreign subsidies investigation has resulted in both direct and in-

direct economic losses for Chinese companies. Chinese companies were forced to withdraw biddings for projects valued at about 7.6 billion yuan (\$1.04 billion), while other affected projects totaled over 8 billion yuan, according to the document.

As the EU is currently facing a series of economic and social challenges, including inflation, energy shortages and rising prices of raw materials, it has been adopting protectionist measures to shield its increasingly weakened manufacturing industries, said Cui, the UIBE professor.

Similar views were expressed by Chen Huiqing, head of the legal services branch at the China Chamber of Commerce for Import and Export of Machinery and Electronic Products.

"The EU actions targeting China in recent years reflect a shortsighted approach. In the long term, fostering a close cooperative relationship with China, while engaging in healthy competition, remains the most favorable strategy for the sustainable development of European industries," Chen said.

Thomas Roemer, global head of the coatings and adhesives business entity of German chemical group

Covestro, said his company firmly supports fair, open and rules-based global trade and investment activities.

"Protectionist measures can have huge negative impacts on business and the broader economic environment," Roemer said.

The company, based in Leverkusen, Germany, is currently building its largest site for thermoplastic polyurethane, a versatile material known for its exceptional properties, in Zhuhai, Guangdong province.

Also optimistic about the Chinese market, Swiss instrument manufacturer Endress+Hauser Group is expanding two of its plants in Suzhou, Jiangsu province.

Matthias Altendorf, president of the company's supervisory board, said these expansion measures, along with a planned investment of 2 billion yuan over the next three to five years, are a key part of the group's long-term strategy in China.

Despite external headwinds, trade between China and the EU grew 1.3 percent year-on-year to 5.09 trillion yuan from January to November last year, accounting for 12.8 percent of China's total foreign trade, according to statistics from the General Administration of Customs.



MONDAY - WEDNESDAY FROM 10:30 PM



Boeing and Google each give \$1m for Trump inauguration

ACCRA

US aviation giant Boeing has told BBC News it is donating \$1m (£812,600) to an inauguration fund for President-elect Donald Trump.

Google has also confirmed that it has made a similar donation as the two firms join a growing list of major American companies contributing to the fund.

The list also includes oil producer Chevron and technology giants Meta, Amazon and Uber.

Trump's inauguration, marking the start of his second term in the White House, is set to take place on 20 January.

"We are pleased to continue Boeing's bipartisan tradition of supporting US Presidential Inaugural Committees," Boeing said.

The company added that it has made similar donations to each of the past three presidential inauguration funds.

Boeing is working to recover from a safety and quality control crisis, as well as dealing with the losses from a strike last year.

The company is also building the next presidential aircraft, known as Air Force One. The two jets are expected to come into ser-

vice as early as next year.

During his first term as president, Trump forced the plane maker to renegotiate its contract, calling the initial deal too expensive.

Google became the latest big tech firm to donate to the fund, following similar announcements by Meta and Amazon. It also said it will stream the event around the world.

"Google is pleased to support the 2025 inauguration, with a livestream on YouTube and a direct link on our homepage," said Karan Bhatia, Google's global head of government affairs and public policy.

Car companies Ford, General Motors and Toyota have also donated a \$1m each to the inaugural committee.

In the energy industry, Chevron confirmed that it has made a donation to the fund but declined to say how much.

"Chevron has a long tradition of celebrating democracy by supporting the inaugural committees of both parties. We are proud to be doing so again this year," said Bill Turene, Chevron's manager of global media relations.



US President-elect, Donald Trump

ITV

SATURDAY 11 JAN

55:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi
6:00 HABARI
6:40 Kumekucha
7:00 Habari
8:00 Al Jazeera
9:00 Watoto wetu
10:05 Shika Bamba 5
10:35 Hawavumi lakini wamo rpt
11:30 Chetu ni chetu rpt
12:15 Art and lifestyle
12:50 ITV Top 10 rpt
13:50 Soap rpt: Laws of love
15:45 Igizo: Bongo DSM
16:10 Igizo: Haikufuma
17:00 Shamsam za Pwani
18:00 Hapa na Pale
18:10 Mjue zaidi rpt
19:00 Jungu kuu
19:30 Shika Bamba
20:00 Habari
21:05 Kipindi maalum: Tatu Mzuka
21:15 Igizo: Haikufuma
21:45 Kipindi maalum: Mch-ezo Supa Min Jackpot
21:55 Art and Lifestyle
22:15 ITV Top 10
23:00 Hawavumi lakini wamo
23:40 Soap: Uzalo rpt
00:30 Al Jazeera

SUNDAY 12 JAN

5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi
6:00 HABARI
6:40 Kumekucha
7:00 Habari
8:00 Al Jazeera
09:00 Watoto Wetu
10:00 Soap rpt: Laws of love
11:45 Hawavumi lakini wamo rpt
12:45 Mjue zaidi
13:30 Usafiri wako
14:00 Tamasha la Michezo
15:30 Mwangaza
16:30 ITV Top 10 rpt
17:20 Kipindi cha kikristo
18:00 Hapa na Pale
18:15 Mapishi
18:30 Matukio ya wiki
19:30 Igizo: Haikufuma
20:00 Habari

21:05 Igizo: Bongo DSM
21:20 Kipindi maalum: Mch-ezo Supa Jackpot
21:40 Mjue Zaidi
22:15 Soap: Uzalo rpt
00:30 Al Jazeera

MONDAY 13 JAN

5:00 Soap rpt: Uzalo
5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi
6:00 HABARI
6:40 Kumekucha
7:30 HABARI
8:00 Kumekucha Michezo
8:55 Habari za saa
9:00 Kumekucha Kishindo
9:30 Soap: Laws of love rpt
9:55 Habari za saa
10:00 Watoto wetu
10:25 Jagina
10:55 Habari za saa
11:00 Hawavumi lakini wamo rpt
12:00 Al Jazeera
12:30 Afya ya jamii
12:55 Habari za saa
13:00 Igizo: Bongo DSM rpt
13:20 Shikabamba
13:50 Usafiri wako
13:55 Habari za saa
14:00 Usafiri wako
14:20 Igizo rpt: Haikufuma
14:55 Habari za saa
15:00 Meza huru
16:30 Watoto Wetu
17:00 Music: The Base
18:00 Hapa na Pale
18:15 Mapishi
18:30 Makala
18:55 Kipindi maalum: Tume ya Uchaguzi
19:30 Soap: Laws of love
20:00 Habari
21:05 Kipindi Maalum: Maisha ni Nyumba
21:35 Kipindi maalum: Mchezo Supa Jackpot
21:50 Chetu ni chetu
22:30 Soap: Uzalo
23:00 Jiji letu
23:30 Music: The Base
00:30 Al Jazeera

WEDNESDAY 15 JAN

5:00 Soap rpt: Uzalo
5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi
6:00 HABARI
6:40 Kumekucha
7:30 HABARI
8:00 Kumekucha michezo
8:55 Habari za saa
9:00 Kumekucha kishindo
9:30 Soap: Laws of love
10:00 Watoto wetu
10:30 Jungu Kuu rpt
10:55 Habari za saa
11:00 Mjue zaidi
11:40 Igizo: Bongo DSM
11:55 Habari za saa
12:00 Al Jazeera

TUESDAY 14 JAN

5:00 Soap rpt: Uzalo
5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi
6:00 HABARI

6:40 Kumekucha
7:30 HABARI
8:00 Kumekucha Michezo
8:55 Habari za saa
9:00 Kumekucha Kishindo
9:30 Soap: Laws of love
9:55 Habari za saa
10:00 Watoto wetu
10:25 Jagina
10:55 Habari za saa
11:00 Hawavumi lakini wamo rpt
12:00 Al Jazeera
12:30 Afya ya jamii
12:55 Habari za saa
13:00 Igizo: Bongo DSM rpt
13:20 Shikabamba
13:50 Usafiri wako
13:55 Habari za saa
14:00 Usafiri wako
14:20 Igizo rpt: Haikufuma
14:55 Habari za saa
15:00 Meza Huru
16:30 Watoto wetu
17:00 Music: The Base
18:00 Hapa na Pale
18:15 Mapishi
18:30 Makala
18:55 Kipindi maalum: Tume ya Uchaguzi
19:30 Soap: Laws of love
20:00 Habari
21:05 Kipindi Maalum: Maisha ni Nyumba
21:35 Kipindi maalum: Mchezo Supa Jackpot
21:50 Chetu ni chetu
22:30 Soap: Uzalo
23:00 Jiji letu
23:30 Music: The Base
00:30 Al Jazeera

WEDNESDAY 15 JAN

5:00 Soap rpt: Uzalo
5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi
6:00 HABARI
6:40 Kumekucha
7:30 HABARI
8:00 Kumekucha michezo
8:55 Habari za saa
9:00 Kumekucha kishindo
9:30 Soap: Laws of love
10:00 Watoto wetu
10:30 Jungu Kuu rpt
10:55 Habari za saa
11:00 Mjue zaidi
11:40 Igizo: Bongo DSM
11:55 Habari za saa
12:00 Al Jazeera

12:30 Bundesliga
12:55 Habari za saa
13:00 Dakika 45 rpt
13:55 Habari za saa
14:00 Chetu ni chetu rpt
14:40 Mapishi
14:55 Habari za saa
15:00 Meza huru
16:30 Watoto Wetu
17:00 Music: The Base
18:00 Hapa na Pale
18:15 Doc rpt: Beyond Narrative
18:30 DW Afrimaxx
19:00 Jarida la wanawake
19:30 Soap: Laws of love
20:00 Habari
21:05 Abu Yako
21:05 Kipindi maalum: Watumishi housing
21:20 Kipindi maalum: Tanesco
21:50 Ripoti maalum
22:25 Soap: Uzalo
22:50 Kipindi maalum: Mchezo Supa Jackpot
23:00 Jiji letu
23:30 Music: The Base
00:30 Al Jazeera

THURSDAY 16 JAN

5:00 Soap rpt: Uzalo
5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi
6:00 HABARI
6:40 Kumekucha
7:30 HABARI
8:00 Kumekucha michezo
8:55 Habari za saa
9:00 Kumekucha kishindo
9:30 Soap rpt: Laws of love
9:55 Habari za saa
10:00 Watoto wetu
10:30 Kipindi maalum: Takukuru
10:55 Habari za saa
11:00 Ripoti maalum
11:55 Habari za saa
12:00 Al Jazeera
12:30 Jarida la wanawake rpt
12:55 Habari za saa
13:00 Jungu kuu rpt
13:30 Art and Lifestyle
13:55 Habari za saa
14:00 Shamsam za pwani rpt
14:55 Habari za saa
15:00 Meza huru
16:30 Watoto wetu
17:00 The Base
18:00 Hapa na Pale
18:15 Mapishi

18:30 Jagina
19:00 Usafiri wako
19:30 Soap: Laws of love
20:00 Habari
21:05 Malumbano ya hoja
22:50 Kipindi maalum: Mchezo Supa Jackpot
23:00 Jiji letu
23:30 Music: The Base
00:30 Al Jazeera

FRIDAY 17 JAN

5:00 Soap rpt: Uzalo
5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi
6:00 HABARI
6:40 Kumekucha
7:30 HABARI
8:00 Kumekucha michezo
8:55 Habari za saa
9:00 Kumekucha kishindo
9:30 Soap rpt: Laws of love
9:55 Habari za saa
10:00 Watoto wetu
10:30 Usafiri wako
10:55 Habari za saa
11:00 Kipindi maalum: Watumishi housing
11:20 Jagina
11:55 Habari za saa
12:00 Al Jazeera
12:30 Kipindi maalum rpt: Tanesco
12:55 Habari za saa
13:00 Kipindi maalum rpt: Maisha ni nyumba
13:30 Makala
13:55 Habari za saa
14:00 Kipindi maalum: Tume ya Uchaguzi
14:30 DW: Afrimaxx rpt
15:00 Meza huru
16:30 Watoto Wetu
17:00 The Base (DJ Show)
17:30 Kiislam
18:00 Hapa na Pale
18:15 Mapishi rpt
18:40 Doc rpt: Beyond the narrative
19:00 Kipindi maalum: Takukuru
19:30 Soap: Laws of love
20:00 Habari
21:05 Kipima Joto
22:50 Kipindi maalum: Mchezo Supa Jackpot
23:00 Jiji letu
23:30 The Base
00:30 Al Jazeera

WORLD

US House votes to sanction International Criminal Court over Israel

WASHINGTON

THE US House of Representatives voted on Thursday to sanction the International Criminal Court to protest its issuing arrest warrants for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his former defense minister over Israel's campaign in Gaza.

The vote was 243 to 140 in favor of the "Illegitimate Court Counteraction Act," which would sanction any foreigner who investigates, arrests, detains or prosecutes US citizens or those of an allied country, including Israel, who are not members of the court.

Forty-five Democrats joined 198 Republicans in backing the bill. No Republican voted against it. "America is passing this law because a kangaroo court is seeking to arrest the prime minister of our great ally, Israel," Representative Brian Mast, Republican chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, said in a House speech before the vote.

The House vote, one of the first since the new Congress was seated last week, underscored strong support among President-elect Donald Trump's fellow Republicans for Israel's government, now that they control both chambers in Congress.



This photo shows an exterior view of the International Criminal Court, in The Hague, Netherlands, on April 30, 2024. AP

Trump will be sworn in on Jan. 20 for a second term as president.

The Senate's newly appointed Republican majority leader, John Thune, has promised swift consideration of the act in his chamber so Trump can sign it into law shortly after taking office.

The ICC is a permanent court that can prosecute individuals for war crimes, crimes against humanity, genocide and the crime of aggression in member states or by their nationals. The court has said its decision to pursue warrants against the Israeli officials was in line with its approach in all cases, based on an assessment by the prosecutor

that there was enough evidence to proceed, and the view that seeking arrest warrants immediately could prevent ongoing crimes.

Congressional Republicans have been denouncing the ICC since it issued arrest warrants for Netanyahu and his former defense chief Yoav Gallant, accusing them of war crimes and crimes against humanity in the 15-month-long Gaza conflict. Israel rejects the allegations.

The Republican-led House passed the act seeking to sanction the ICC in June, but the measure was never taken up in the Senate, which at the time was controlled by a Democratic majority.

Trudeau: Canada to hit back if Trump follows through on tariff threat

OTTAWA



CANADIAN Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said on Thursday that his government would hit back if incoming US President Donald Trump follows through on his tariff threat.

"We would definitely respond, as we did years ago when President Trump put tariffs on steel and aluminum. We responded by putting tariffs on Heinz ketchup, on playing cards, on bourbon, on Harley Davidsons, on things that would hurt American workers," Trudeau said in an interview on CNN.

The prime minister said Trump, a very skillful negotiator, is using talk of Canada becoming the 51st state to detract from tariff impact.

"Everything the American consumers buy from Canada is suddenly going to get a lot more expensive and that's something we need to be focusing on a little bit more," Trudeau said.

Local media reported that Canadian officials are preparing a list of American-made products to target with counter-tariffs in the event the Canadian government must respond to US tariffs on Canadian goods.

Trump has threatened to impose a 25-percent tariff on all Canadian goods imported into the United States.

Europe loses to Putin in Ukraine despite billions in aid – president

BELGRADE



EUROPEAN countries are losing billions of euros in their support for the conflict in Ukraine, but even these amounts of funding for Kiev are insufficient as Ukraine is still losing to Russian leader Vladimir Putin, Republika Srpska (Bosnia and Herzegovina entity) President Milorad Dodik said in an interview with Radio Television Republika Srpska (RTSR).

"What about Europe? Which Europe? It lost billions to the conflict in Ukraine and is still losing. But who is winning? Putin is, because he was right from the very beginning. It was he who said in 2007 that we should not do this (expand NATO - TASS)," Dodik stressed.

The Republika Srpska president paid special attention to US Secretary of State Antony Blinken's statement about arming Kiev, also noting that former German Chancellor Angela Merkel (in office from 2005-2021) also resorted to misleading within the Minsk agreements.

"Why do they blame Putin for protecting Russia? Would they really stop at that point? If you don't allow yourself to be harmed, then you will at least have something. If you allow yourself to be hurt, you've accepted that you're being harmed," Dodik said.

Earlier, he argued that Russia was legitimately defending its interests in Ukraine by protecting the rights of the residents in the regions that became part of Russia. He pointed out that "Russian President Vladimir Putin warned in Munich about the unacceptable expansion of NATO, but his concerns were ignored. Subsequently, they admitted to violating the Minsk agreements in order to arm Ukraine."

Putin's speech at the Munich Conference

Putin delivered a keynote speech on foreign policy at the Munich Conference in 2007, which caused a broad international reaction. He then emphasized that "unilateral, sometimes illegitimate actions have not solved a single problem, and often generate new hotbeds of tension," while "certain norms of some states, primarily the US, overstep their limits and impose them on other nations." The president noted that "international law should be universal."

A "balance of interests" is needed in the field of security, and the world can develop only in a multilateral way, Putin emphasized.

A number of experts agree that much of what the Russian leader warned about is coming true these days. NATO expansion, a unipolar world, disarmament problems, the degradation of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the Iranian nuclear problem, European energy security - these and other issues raised by Putin in Munich in 2007 have become even more acute today.

China to align development initiatives with Nigeria's Renewed Hope Agenda: FM

ABUJA

CHINA is willing to work with Nigeria to implement the outcomes of the Beijing Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) and advance the 10 partnership action plans in Nigeria, paving the way for new progress in bilateral relations, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi said here on Thursday.

Nigeria, as a major African country with global influence and an important member of the Global South, plays an irreplaceable role in Africa's pursuit of peace and development, Wang said during his meeting with Nigerian Foreign Minister Yusuf Tuggar.

Wang, also a member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, said that China has always viewed the development of its relations with Nigeria from a strategic and long-term perspective and is ready to strengthen solidarity and cooperation with Nigeria, provide mutual understanding and support on issues concerning their core interests, and achieve mutual benefit and win-win results during their development and revitalization processes.

Nigerian President Bola Ahmed Tinubu successfully visited China last year, during which the two heads of state elevated bilateral relations to a comprehensive strategic partnership, opening new and broader prospects for bilateral cooperation, Wang noted.

Under the strategic guidance of the two heads of state, all-around cooperation between China and Nigeria has yielded remarkable results, bringing tangible benefits to their people, he added.

China is ready to align Belt and Road cooperation and the 10 partnership action plans with the priority areas of Nigeria's Renewed Hope Agenda by leveraging traditional advantages in infrastructure cooperation, expanding trade and financial collaboration, and creating new highlights in investment cooperation to further deepen practical ties between the two countries, Wang said.



Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi (L), also a member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, shakes hands with Nigerian Foreign Minister Yusuf Tuggar during their meeting in Abuja, Nigeria, on Thursday. Xinhua

He called on Nigeria to safeguard the safety and legitimate rights and interests of Chinese enterprises and personnel operating in the country.

China appreciates Nigeria's support for its three major global initiatives, namely the Global Development Initiative, the Global Security Initiative, and the Global Civilization Initiative, Wang said, adding that China supports Nigeria in playing a greater role in international and regional affairs, uniting regional countries, and maintaining regional stability.

He reiterated China's steadfast support for Africa in voicing demands for climate justice at the United Nations Climate Change Conference, saying China is ready to strengthen coordination with Nigeria and other African countries on climate change issues to safe-

guard the development interests of the Global South. For his part, Tuggar said Nigeria and China have deep historical ties, rooted in mutual respect and trust, which have produced substantial achievements.

Nigeria and China share no differences and strengthening their cooperation conforms to their mutual interests, he said.

Nigeria admires China's remarkable achievements in economic development and technological innovation, praises its global influence, and is committed to fostering friendship and cooperation with China to create a brighter future for their people, Tuggar said. Tuggar reaffirmed Nigeria's unwavering adherence to the one-China principle and pledged continued support for China's stance on the international stage, noting that

it is the right thing to do.

The FOCAC Beijing Summit was a success with significant outcomes, he said, adding that Nigeria is committed to implementing the summit's outcomes and advancing China-Nigerian relations to a higher level.

Tuggar also expressed condolences over the earthquake in China's Xizang Autonomous Region, commending the Chinese government's swift and effective disaster relief efforts.

Xinhua

Access restrictions, looting and shortages add to Gaza hunger crisis - UN

UNITED NATIONS

CRITICAL supply shortages, severe access restrictions and violent armed looting are contributing to a hunger crisis across the Gaza Strip, UN humanitarian officials said on Thursday.

The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) said aid partners had exhausted all supplies at their warehouses at a time when Israeli authorities continue to deny most requests to bring food assistance from the Erez West crossing to areas south of Wadi Gaza.

OCHA also said 120,000 metric tons of food assistance is stranded outside Gaza. The food is enough for the entire population for more

than three months. UN partners warned that if additional supplies are not received, the distribution of food parcels to hungry families will remain extremely limited.

More than 50 community kitchens providing more than 200,000 meals daily to people in central and southern Gaza would also be at risk of shutting down in the coming days.

The World Food Programme (WFP) reported that, as of Monday, only five of 20 bakeries supported by WFP are still operational across the Gaza Strip, all in North Gaza governorate.

To stay up and running, the bakeries must rely on continued fuel deliveries by partners from southern Gaza. OCHA warned that the

lack of fuel to power generators is also crippling Gaza's health system, putting the lives of patients at risk.

"Despite ongoing challenges, we and our partners are working to reach people throughout the Strip with critical support," the office said.

"Across Gaza, between Dec. 22 and Wednesday, our partners report that some 560,000 people received primary and secondary healthcare services."

The office said the continuing hostilities in North Gaza governorate have severely disrupted healthcare services for survivors who remain there.

Access to Al Awda Hospital in Jabalya -- the only hospital in North Gaza still partially functioning -- is

extremely limited. OCHA said that Israeli authorities continue to deny UN-led efforts, including the most recent attempt on Wednesday, to reach North Gaza governorate.

The humanitarians said that across the Gaza Strip, out of 15 coordinated humanitarian movements, the Israeli authorities facilitated only five missions while four were impeded, three were denied and another three were canceled due to security or logistical challenges.

The office also said the Gaza Ministry of Health reported that more than 46,000 Palestinians have been killed in the Gaza Strip since October 2023; most of the fatalities were women and children.

Eight newborn babies died of hypothermia in the last month alone.

OCHA said relentless operations by the Israeli Defense Forces are causing mass casualties and widespread destruction.

The conditions are particularly alarming in besieged North Gaza, where the movement of humanitarian personnel is heavily restricted. Rocket fire by Palestinian armed groups toward Israel also continues, endangering civilians there, as well.

Stephane Dujarric, chief spokesman for UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, said: "The secretary-general again strongly condemns the widespread killing of -- and injury to -- civilians in this conflict. He calls on all to respect international humanitarian law and demands the protection of all civilians."

Civilians must be protected and

respected at all times and their essential needs must be met. There must be an immediate ceasefire and the immediate and unconditional release of all the hostages being held in Gaza."



Across Gaza, between Dec. 22 and Wednesday, our partners report that some 560,000 people received primary and secondary healthcare services

Medvedev doubts Trump's ability to swiftly resolve Ukraine crisis

MOSCOW

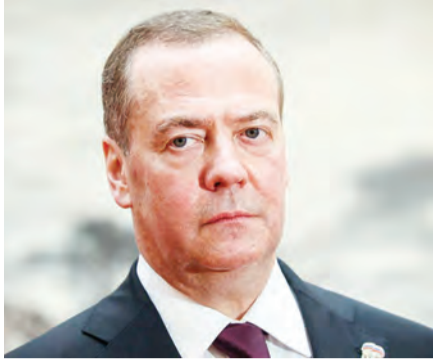
THE Ukraine crisis is unlikely to be resolved quickly, even through US President-elect Donald Trump's mediation, Russian Security Council Deputy Chairman Dmitry Medvedev said.

"I really don't know what Trump will be able to do during his second term in office, but he surely will not let anyone get bored from the very start.

The goal is clear: rapid success in resolving the Ukraine conflict looks unlikely, while the US economy continues at its own slow pace and even the fight against immigrants is not promising major victories," he wrote on Telegram.

That said, Trump's idea of making Greenland and Canada part of the US can hardly be taken seriously, Medvedev went on to say. In his view, Trump "has simply decided to reshape the world.

The plan is to create a new, Trump-style political geography and turn the present-day dull and grey globe into a bright and



colorful one." "All these ideas are nothing but wild and unrealistic speculations," he noted.

"First, America is supposed to grow much larger by seizing vast Canada (and why not - it will make a good big state, and the entire continent will belong to the Yankees), as well as by taking Greenland from Denmark (it's not clear what it really is but there is a lot of land there)," the Russian Security Council deputy chairman said ironically, describing the possible train of thought of the next US president.

The pravasi at the crossroads

By Hindol Sengupta

IN 1894, Swami Vivekananda wrote in a letter about his work in America, "I find I have mission in this country too... One blow struck outside India is equal to 100,000 within." Even though Vivekananda was talking about his own context, that of being a citizen of colonized India, he could have well been talking about the impact of the Indian diaspora, perhaps the most prominent, and successful diaspora communities in the world.

Today, the Indian diaspora stands at 35.4 million, including 19.5 million PIOs and 15.8 million NRIs. The USA has the highest number of Persons of Indian Origin (PIOs) - over 2 million.

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) has the highest number of Non-Resident Indians (NRIs) - over 3.5 million. They not only send back the largest quantum of remittances received by any country from its diaspora, but also are usually considered a model minority, more educated, wealthy, and assimilated than any other in any country where they exist in considerable numbers.

One-third of tech employees in Silicon Valley, and more than 60 per cent of CXOs in the top 300 global companies, are of Indian origin. From banana cultivation in New South Wales in Australia to running Microsoft and Google, the Indian imprint stretches across the world.

The Indian diaspora, which sent back more than \$120 billion last year, has been a positive talking point in the country's outreach and diplomacy for several decades now. In a sense, the nearly \$50 billion Indian outbound students now spend when they leave home to study in colleges and universities overseas, balances out by the growing record levels of remittances that the growing Indian diaspora sends back home.

From Iceland to New Zealand, the Indian diaspora has managed to build bridges and connections where, sometimes, none previously existed.

To celebrate, and highlight, what an important material and narrative resource the diaspora is, we have had the Pravasi Bharatiya Diwas each year since 2003 on the 9th of January, the very day on which Mohandas Gandhi landed in India from South Africa to transform the Indian freedom movement and in the process become Mahatma.

In 2015, the Diwas moved to a biennial format involving not only prominent members of the diaspora but also experts helping with the understanding of the power and influence of the diaspora.

The event also includes the handing of the Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Awards to achievers from the community - till date

296 of these have been given out, and they are the highest honours members of the diaspora or diaspora institutions can receive (apart from the high civilian Padma awards given to individuals). While every prime minister has sought to engage the diaspora, it is undeniable that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has taken personal interest and nurtured a very and intimate relationship with the diaspora in whichever country he has visited.

In fact, the vibrant and colourful personal relationship of the prime minister with the Indian diaspora is one of the most visible parts of the Modi framework of foreign policy.

In the recent past, the Diwas has been organised in collaboration with various state governments, and this year, the 18th convention is being organised in Bhubaneswar, Odisha from 8th-10th January with the theme Diaspora's Contribution to a Viksit Bharat.

This is a perfect moment to reflect upon the crossroads India stands at with its successful diaspora. The global controversy and backlash over immigration - legal and illegal - has consequences for all countries like India who have a large and growing diaspora.

What India does not want is for any dent to appear in the story of the Indian diaspora as the most enterprising and well-adjusted and assimilated community among diasporas. It would not want any lazy or untoward conflation of the story of the Indian immigrants with other immigrants from other parts of the world. There is an opportunity and a challenge in this.

This is the moment to hold up and showcase the successes of the Indian diaspora - the greater the spotlight on the success stories, the more discernible and distinguished the Indian diaspora story will be.

The more it gets coupled with a broader global narrative, the more the confusion and the challenge. New platforms and methods must be found to keep the Indian diaspora story distinct. What is most critical in this is that the Indian diaspora itself invests more critically and in a more lasting, long-term manner in telling its own story.

For most of its history, the Indian diaspora has been content to succeed as individuals, even families, but the comprehensive joining of dots, and telling the overall tale remains. This is a pledge worth making during the upcoming Pravasi Bharatiya Diwas. As Swami Vivekananda would have understood, this is urgent mission now.

Hindol Sengupta is a historian and author of 12 books. He is professor of international relations at O. P. Jindal Global University.

Zambia starts vaccination campaign in cholera-affected district

LUSAKA

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

According to state media reports on Wednesday, the cholera vaccination campaign in Nakonde district began Tuesday, targeting those aged one and above, with 200,000 doses received, said District Health Director Philip Munkonge.

"We are hopeful that the administration of the vaccine will be successful so that people can get immunity from contracting the disease," Munkonge was quoted by the Zambia Daily Mail as

saying. He added that public awareness efforts were conducted, and all preparations were finalized to ensure proper vaccine administration. He further said that 781 shallow wells in cholera-prone areas have been treated to ensure that people have access to clean water.

Cholera broke out in the district in December, with 17 cases reported so far. All patients have been treated and discharged, with no new cases reported in the past four days.

The district was among those affected during Zambia's cholera outbreak from October 2023 into 2024, which resulted in over 20,000 cases and more than 700 deaths nationwide.

AU summit on agriculture development opens in Uganda

MOSCOW

IKAMPALA, Jan. 9 (Xinhua) -- An extraordinary African Union (AU) summit on agriculture opened Thursday in Kampala, the capital of Uganda, as experts and government officials seek measures to boost the continent's development in the sector.

The three-day meeting, which started with the ministerial meeting and will culminate in the heads of state and government meeting, will review the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Program (CAADP), the continent's blueprint plan to fast-track agriculture development.

Ugandan Prime Minister Robinah Nabbanja, who opened the meeting, urged countries to work together to implement the policy proposals that they have come up with. She said it is deplorable that the continent, which is endowed with arable land and water bodies, relies on food imports from elsewhere in the world.

"This summit should come up with concrete proposals on how Africa can come out of such a situation. For us to guarantee our future as Africans, we must feed ourselves," Nabbanja said.

Frank Tumwabwe, Uganda's minister of Agriculture, Animal Industry, and Fisheries, said the Kampala meeting will come up with a strategy and action plan to implement the CAADP for the next decade.

The meeting, held under the theme "Building Resilient Agri-Food Systems," comes after the first CAADP strategy was launched in 2003 as part of the strategies towards the realization of the African Agenda 2063, according to the minister.

"It is by focusing on execution that we can make a meaningful impact on our continent. This calls for advances in technological research and practices, agricultural practices



Participants attend the official opening of an extraordinary African Union (AU) summit on agriculture in Kampala, Uganda on Thursday. The summit on agriculture opened Thursday in Kampala, the capital of Uganda, as experts and government officials seek measures to boost the continent's development in the sector. Xinhua

that are resilient to climate change and other shocks," Tumwabwe.

Ethiopian Minister of Agriculture Girma Amente said agriculture plays a critical role in the sustainability of a bigger part of the continent's population and the continent should address the challenges of climate change in the face of new global challenges.

Josefa Sacko, AU commissioner for Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy, and Sustainable Environment, said the new draft strategy that will be presented to the

heads of state and government for approval is a result of a 2024 African Union Commission (AUC) report indicating that no AU member country would achieve the Malabo CAADP goals by this year.

Sacko said the leaders directed the AUC to develop a new 10-year strategy that would respond to the challenges facing Africa's Agri-Food Systems.

World Bank data show that over 70 per cent of the continent's population derives its livelihood from agriculture. Xinhua

What's happening in Syria 1 month after al-Assad's downfall and what to expect?

DAMASCUS

On the eighth of December 2024, the 54-year al-Assad's rule over Syria abruptly ended, following an 11-day military campaign led by opposition fighters advancing from the north. Since then, Syria's new government has scrambled to restore order, rebuild institutions, and reach out to regional and global partners. However, running a country as complex as Syria has proven to be a significant challenge.

STABILIZATION EFFORTS

Shortly after the collapse of Bashar al-Assad's government, leaders of the Hayat Tahrir al-Sham, the primary force behind the offensive, formed an interim government with ministers who had been serving in the so-called Salvation Government in the north-western province of Idlib, a major opposition bastion during Syria's prolonged 13-year war.

The new interim government has made efforts to reassure the public, emphasizing their commitment to preserving state institutions and preventing the chaos seen in post-regime transitions in countries like Iraq and Libya.

Domestically, they reopened major roads, lifted certain restrictions, and reestablished some basic public services to restore normalcy.

Their security measures, however, remain a contentious issue. Sweeping crackdowns on suspected remnants of the old order, along with sporadic reports of detentions or minor abuses, indicate the delicate balance between restoring order and protecting individual rights.

The new cabinet also prioritized reviving internal services such as electricity distribution, reopening key airports, and overseeing the resumption of government offices. One month after the government change, experts in Syria believe it's too early to judge the current situation.

"It's only been a month, so it's too early to make final judgments. The administration tried first to keep the country stable, which is seen as a positive step. Forming a provisional cabinet helps ensure state continuity and aims to improve citizens' daily lives," Mohammad



Syrians fleeing Syria are stuck at the border with Lebanon in the Masnaa border crossing area on Dec. 12, 2024.

al-Omari, a Syrian political analyst, told Xinhua.

DIPLOMATIC EFFORTS

On foreign policy, Syria's new leadership moved swiftly to repair relations with Arab nations and other global stakeholders. The reopening of Damascus International Airport for international flights, including its first civilian flight from Qatar in 13 years, symbolizes a significant step toward normalizing relations.

Qatari and Turkish delegations visited Damascus, while Syria's interim Foreign Minister Asaad Hassan al-Shibani traveled to Saudi Arabia, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, and Jordan to mend ties and call for the lifting of Western sanctions. Stressing inclusivity, economic collaboration, and a commitment to meeting the aspirations of the Syrian people, the interim government sent a message of openness for dialogue.

SECURITY CHALLENGES

Despite diplomatic efforts, security threats persist as Israeli troops repeatedly advance into Quneitra and Daraa provinces in southern Syria, causing road closures and school disruptions.

Northern Syria continues to experience clashes between Turkish-backed factions and the U.S.-supported Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), as Türkiye seeks to eliminate perceived threats from Kurdish-led groups.

Meanwhile, the new interim government has been working to con-

tain the proliferation of small arms, much of it left behind by former government forces on Dec. 8.

Civilians and even teenagers have reportedly acquired weapons from abandoned military sites, leading to several accidents. To address this, the interim government has set up centers for handing over weapons across major cities in Syria as part of the efforts to stabilize the country and prevent any possible chaos that would result from the proliferation of weapons.

ECONOMIC WOES

While the markets in Damascus are bustling with goods and necessities that are costlier than ever, electricity outages plague many areas.

Additionally, government institutions are not yet fully operational. In response, the interim government announced Wednesday that two power-generation ships from Türkiye and Qatar, each capable of producing hundreds of megawatts, were on their way to boost Syria's electricity grid.

This would help curb severe power shortages and expand services by nearly 50 percent, according to official reports. Meanwhile, Syria's Oil Ministry said that efforts are also underway to restart refineries with anticipated shipments of crude oil. Still, battered infrastructure, inflation, and ongoing sanctions hinder a swift recovery.

ROAD AHEAD

Rebuilding social cohesion is believed to be the most critical chal-

enge. Observers believe that the new leadership must reassure minority groups, refugee communities, and various political factions that their rights and interests will not be overlooked in the new era.

All eyes now are on the planned national dialogue conference involving minority groups, political parties, and civil society groups, though a date has yet to be set. The authorities have promised to invite representatives from all segments of society, hoping for a balanced representation of ethnic, religious, and political parties and groups.

Official statements emphasize the need for displaced Syrians to return, though no comprehensive framework for reintegration has yet to be announced.

"The biggest challenges in the months ahead are threefold: navigating security developments like Israel's actions and the conflict between Türkiye and the SDF, pushing forward the political process through the national dialogue, and improving living conditions," al-Omari said.

He added that the new authority must work hard to convince Western countries to lift the suffocating economic sanctions on Syria.

On Monday, the U.S. Treasury introduced a six-month general license that permits specific dealings with the Syrian government, such as energy-related transactions and related activities, to facilitate the delivery of humanitarian aid.

Syria's interim foreign ministry on Wednesday welcomed the exemptions and waivers regarding economic sanctions on Syria, attributing the development to "intensive sessions" and praising the "tremendous work of Syria's remarkable teams." Syria's interim foreign minister on Wednesday pledged to restore the country's full territorial unity and ensure the return of refugees.

"Our happiness will remain unfinished until every inch of Syrian land is reunited, and displaced people and refugees are back in their homes," al-Shibani said in a statement marking the one-month anniversary of the government change. Xinhua



Utah Jazz guard Collin Sexton (2) shoots the ball over Miami Heat center Bam Adebayo (13) during the first quarter at Delta Center in Salt Lake City, Utah, USA, on Jan 9, 2025. Agencies

Tyler Herro scores 23 to carry Heat past Jazz

By Field Level Media

TYLER Herro scored 23 and Jaime Jaquez Jr. added 20 points in a 97-92 win over the Utah Jazz on Thursday in Salt Lake City.

Herro and Jaquez each drained key free throws in the waning moments as Miami improved to 2-1 on its six-game trip.

Bam Adebayo contributed 15 points, seven rebounds, three assists, three steals and two blocked shots in the victory. Adebayo hit two buckets in a row with under three minutes left to break an 86-86 tie.

Lauri Markkanen and Collin Sexton each scored 23 points for the Jazz, who lost their second straight outing. Utah overcame an 11-point third-quarter defi-

cit but ended up losing for the ninth consecutive time at the Delta Center.

Neither team shot well, with the Jazz making 39.8 percent of their shots and the Heat shooting 39.6 percent.

Walker Kessler hauled in 15 rebounds with nine points, while Kyle Filipowski had 11 boards, two steals and a block with four points in the loss. The Jazz started strong, taking a 20-10 lead when Markkanen dropped in a 3-pointer.

Miami surged back and held a 46-41 halftime lead by holding Utah to 14 points in the second quarter.

The Heat went up by 11 points after opening the third quarter on a 10-4 spurt.

Markkanen hit back-to-back 3-pointers in an 8-0 Utah run to tighten things up, and the Jazz took a 70-

68 lead at the end of the quarter with a late Isaiah Collier layup.

The Heat scored six straight midway through the fourth to go ahead by four, but the Jazz caught up with 3:31 to go after buckets by Sexton and Kessler.

Adebayo then hit two shots in a row, Jaquez nailed a 3 and Herro sank two free throws as the Heat used a 9-2 run to snag a 95-88 lead with 20.9 seconds remaining. Jaquez put Miami up by five by sinking two foul shots with 11.8 left to clinch the win.

Meanwhile, Buddy Hield scored 19 points to help lead the Golden State Warriors to a 107-104 win over the host Detroit Pistons on Thursday.

Stephen Curry had 17 points, nine rebounds and six assists, while Trayce Jackson-Davis added 14

points and 10 rebounds for Golden State, which ended a two-game skid.

Cade Cunningham had 32 points, eight assists, six rebounds and three steals, and Malik Beasley scored 21 points for Detroit, which had its five-game winning streak snapped.

After trailing by 18 midway through the fourth quarter, Detroit rallied and cut the deficit to 102-98 with 1:21 remaining in the game on a basket by Jalen Duren.

A dunk by Beasley with 23 seconds left sliced the gap to 104-102.

Curry hit two free throws with 14.6 seconds remaining to give the Warriors a 106-102 lead, and then Cunningham split a pair of free throws with 11.1 seconds to go to make it a three-point game.

Golden State's Gui Santos

was fouled after rebounding Cunningham's miss on the second free throw, and he split a pair of free throws with 9.6 seconds left to put Golden State up 107-103.

Cunningham was fouled again and made the first of two free throws with 4.8 seconds left to make it 107-104, and then got his own rebound after missing the second one on purpose.

However, Beasley missed a 3-point attempt for a tie just before the buzzer.

Leading 82-78 with 10:21 left, Golden State went on a 10-0 run to grab a 14-point lead with 7:35 remaining on a 3-pointer by Hield.

The Warriors increased the lead to 98-80 with 5:40 to play after two free throws by Curry. The Pistons then scored 11 straight to make it 98-91 with 2:53 left following a 3-pointer by Beasley.

The Warriors held a 70-53 lead with 7:53 remaining in the third quarter before the Pistons mounted a surge, going on a 11-0 run that featured 3-pointers from Ronald Holland II, Cunningham and Tobias Harris. Golden State was up 82-74 entering the fourth quarter.

REUTERS

Coco Gauff more comfortable with her game after changing mindset

MELBOURNE

COCO Gauff is feeling more comfortable than ever in her game heading into the Australian Open and while changes to her playing style have had an impact the world number three says it is her different mindset which has made the biggest difference.

Gauff (pictured), who won her only Grand Slam title at the U.S. Open in 2023, has been in top form in recent months, winning the China Open and clinching her first WTA Finals title in November.

She took that form into the United Cup, beating world number two Iga Swiatek in the final to help the United States win their second title at the mixed team tournament.

"I feel more comfortable now than ever," said the 20-year-old, whose Flushing Meadows title defence ended in the fourth round last year.

"I think not even from the fact of the changes (in playing style). I just realized the importance of winning or losing a match.

"As athletes, losing feels like the end of the world, and winning feels like something we should do, not something we should be grateful for. No one makes us feel like that except ourselves. I think I just realized it's never that important."

Gauff made some adjustments to her game, including grip changes, after bringing in new coach Matt Daly in place of Brad Gilbert last year.

After struggling with her serve throughout 2024, Gauff said she now had more tools to work with on the court.

"I think just going for my shots more, being more okay with missing, taking chances," she added.

"Before, I feel like I won a lot of matches just being able to get a lot of balls back. I realized that's not the way to play if I want to have more success on tour because girls are hitting harder and harder every day,

being

more aggressive.

"I'm able to be aggressive, but also run around the court if I need to."

Gauff faces compatriot and former Australian Open winner Sofia Kenin in the first round at Melbourne Park.

Meanwhile, two-times Australian Open champion Naomi Osaka is confident she will play her opening match against Caroline Garcia at the Grand Slam even though the results of a scan on her abdominal injury were not "fantastic".

Osaka, the 2019 and 2021 Melbourne Park champion, was in tears on Sunday after the injury forced to quit her first WTA Tour final in almost three years.

The Japanese player was leading Clara Tauson 6-4 in the Auckland final when she decided she could not go on.

"The MRI, it wasn't fantastic but it wasn't bad at the same time," Osaka told reporters on Friday. "So saying all that, I'm pretty optimistic about playing my match. I mean, for sure I'm going to play my match.

"I've been practising pretty well for the two days that I've been here, so it seems to be going good."

Osaka, who began working with new coach Patrick Mouratoglou in September, said she was encouraged by her Auckland display.

"Obviously I did pretty well. I know I lost, debatably lost in the final. In my head I won it," she said.

"I'm excited to play here. I'm also excited to be here with Patrick because we technically haven't lost yet. So yeah, it's going to be a good run I think."

Osaka meets Caroline Garcia in the opening round of the Australian Open for the second straight year, the Frenchwoman getting the better of her 6-4 7-6(2) in 2024.

Even if she loses to Garcia once again there is no danger of Osaka bearing any ill-will towards her.

"I really respect her a lot. I feel the same energy coming from her," Osaka added.

"I also like the fact that we were born on the same day, so we have the same birthdays. I can't ever have bad blood with a fellow Libra."

REUTERS



South Africa sports minister joins calls for Afghanistan cricket boycott

By Mark Gleeson

SOUTH Africa Sports Minister Gayton McKenzie said he supported calls for a boycott of Afghanistan in the Champions Trophy in Pakistan, adding his voice to those of British politicians who have called on England not to play them next month.

England and South Africa are in Afghanistan's group in the One Day International competition and under pressure to boycott the fixtures in response to the Taliban government's crackdown on women's rights since returning to power in August 2021.

South Africa are scheduled to open their Champions Trophy campaign against Af-

ghanistan in Karachi on Feb. 21 but McKenzie (pictured) urged his country's cricket governing body not to honour the fixture.

"Cricket South Africa, the federations of other countries and the ICC (International Cricket Council) will have to think carefully about the message the sport of cricket wishes to send the world, and especially the women in sports," he said in a statement on Thursday.

"It is not for me as the Sports Minister to make the final decision on whether South Africa should honour cricketing fixtures against Afghanistan. If it was my decision, then it certainly would not happen."



"As a man who comes from a race that was not allowed equal access to sporting opportunities during Apartheid, it would be hypocritical and immoral to look the other way today when the same is being done towards women anywhere in the world," he added.

Cricket South Africa responded with a statement on Thursday, saying they would take their lead from the ICC, and that a "unified and collective approach from all ICC members" was needed.

"CSA finds the treatment and suppression of women's rights in Afghanistan abhorrent and firmly believes that women's cricket deserves equal recognition and re-

sources," the statement said.

"As the Champions Trophy is an ICC event, the position on Afghanistan must be guided by the world body in accordance with international tournament participation requirements and regulations."

More than 160 British politicians have signed a cross-party letter to the England and Wales Cricket Board, calling for a boycott of England's fixture against Afghanistan in Lahore on Feb. 26.

ECB chief executive Richard Gould responded by also calling for a uniform approach from all member nations towards Afghanistan's participation in international cricket.

Australia are the other country scheduled to take

on Afghanistan, in Lahore on Feb. 28.

Cricket Australia indefinitely postponed a bilateral men's Twenty 20 series against Afghanistan last March citing "deteriorating human rights for women and girls in the country under Taliban rule".

But they did play them at the World Cup in India in late 2023 and at the T20 World Cup last June.

Cricket Australia chairman Mike Baird last month said he was "very proud of the position we've taken" after they were accused of hypocrisy.

"We've taken a position, and we're proudly standing up where we think we should," he said.

REUTERS

Carlo Ancelotti anticipates 'unpredictable' Super Cup Clasico

JEDDAH, Saudi Arabia

THE fans should expect the unexpected when Real Madrid face Barcelona in the Spanish Super Cup final tomorrow, Real coach Carlo Ancelotti said after his team outclassed Mallorca in the semi-finals.

Jude Bellingham and Rodrygo scored second-half goals to help Real to a 3-0 win over Mallorca after Barcelona beat Athletic Bilbao 2-0 in the other last-four clash.

"The Clasico has been unpredictable lately," Ancelotti told reporters on Thursday.

"There were games we won easily, like the 4-1 last year in the Super Cup. We also won 4-0 twice in Barcelona while they beat us 4-0 at the Bernabeu.

"It's hard to think what kind of game the next one will be. It will be entertaining because there is quality on the pitch. And obviously we want to end up being better than Barcelona."

Real took time to open the scoring against last year's Copa del Rey finalists Mallorca, who sit sixth in the LaLiga standings 13 points off leaders Real.

England midfielder Bellingham broke the deadlock after the hour mark, closing an excellent team move featuring Rodrygo and Kylian Mbappe.

"We started very well, but we could have opened the scoring a little earlier, in the first half," Ancelotti said.

"After the good start it became more difficult for us. It was a demanding game because Mallorca played the game they had to play.

"They were defending very well, closing spaces, trying to look for opportunities with crosses. A couple of times they created problems for us."

Real finished the game without midfielder Aurelien Tchouameni, who was replaced by Raul Asencio early in the second half following a clash of heads with a Mallorca defender.

Bellingham looked uncomfortable after going down in the final minutes but completed the game while Valverde was substituted with 15 minutes remaining by Dani Ceballos.

"The doctor preferred to take him (Tchouameni) off the pitch because it was a blow to the head," Ancelotti said. "Bellingham and (Federico) Valverde were overloads. We were not expecting the heat and it affected the rhythm of the game."

REUTERS



Manchester City verdict: What's at stake for the Premier League champions?



File: Manchester City's Kyle Walker and teammates celebrate with the trophy after winning the Premier League after their match against West Ham United at Etihad Stadium, in Manchester, Britain on May 19, 2024. REUTERS

By Martyn Herman

PREMIER League champions Manchester City's well-chronicled troubles on the field this season could pale into insignificance in the coming weeks if an independent commission rules that the club has breached multiple financial regulations. City's unexpected meltdown on the pitch has all but knocked Pep Guardiola's side out of contention for a fifth successive title and they are even in danger of exiting the Champions League at the first stage.

But while form is temporary and fixable, a much larger and darker cloud has stationed itself over the Abu Dhabi-owned club that in the last decade has amassed a vast haul of silverware and become the dominant force in English

soccer. Three judges appointed by the independent chair of the Premier League Judicial Panel spent more than two months listening to evidence and submissions in relation to the 115 charges brought against City two years ago. City have always denied any wrongdoing and said at the time of the referral to the Premier League's independent commission that they were surprised by the league's "issuing of these alleged breaches."

All eyes will now be on the verdict, which is expected soon, and, in the event of City being found guilty of the most serious charges against them, how draconian the punishment might be. While Everton and Nottingham Forest both fell foul of the Premier League's Profit and Sustainability (PSR) rules

last season and were duly docked points, the allegations against City are in a different league, both in terms of their seriousness and duration.

The multitude of charges run from 2009 to the 2022-23 season but arguably the most damaging allegation is that every season from 2009-10 to 2017-18 the club failed to provide accurate financial information to give a "true and fair view" of revenues, including sponsorships, and operating costs.

City have denied the allegations and employed a crack team of lawyers to fight their case.

"Has money come in from the owners which they pretend to be from the sponsors? If that is the case, then that is fraud. That is about as serious as it gets," soccer finance expert Kieran Maguire, author of the Price of Foot-

ball, told The Overlap.

In the event of City being found guilty of some or all of the charges against them, the punishments could range from a massive fine and huge deduction of points to titles being stripped or even expulsion from the Premier League.

While being relegated or ejected from the Premier League is perhaps the least likely outcome, City could effectively be relegated if they were hit with an unprecedented deduction that some reports speculate could be more than 60 points.

"If they are found guilty, I think the first point there is nobody should be really using Everton and Forest as a benchmark, certainly if we talk about points deductions as a potential punishment," Dan Plumley, a football finance expert at Sheffield Hallam

University, told Reuters. "They were relatively straightforward breaches of PSR within that three-year window and were dealt with in line with those circumstances, so I think trying to kind of multiply points deductions out for this one is completely futile."

Plumley thinks it is unlikely City would be stripped of any of the Premier League titles they won during the span of the allegations against them and says the potential for the saga to rumble on through an appeals process and thereby throw the end of the season into chaos is worrying.

"It's within the Premier League's discretion as to whether they go down that route, my take on that is I think it's always seemed unlikely," he said. "To go back and retrospectively unpick that. There are lots

of other factors there you need to consider and it's not as simple as giving it to the next placed team, it would throw up a whole range of permutations."

The Premier League is regarded as one of the best-run and most successful competitions in world sport and Manchester City, in many respects since Guardiola instilled his magical brand of football, have been a benchmark for excellence.

The most pessimistic City fans will console themselves with Guardiola's vow to stay whatever fate befalls the club.

Owner Sheikh Mansour and chairman Khaldoon Al Mubarak have bathed in glory for a decade, but where a guilty verdict and accompanying punishment would leave City's hierarchy is another question entirely.

REUTERS

...What to know about the hearing and charges

LONDON

MANCHESTER City are expected to find out the verdict following their alleged violations of the Premier League's financial regulations after a hearing was held last year.

WHAT ARE THE CHARGES AGAINST MANCHESTER CITY?

City, who have won eight Premier League titles, one Champions League, three FA Cups and six League Cups since being bought by Sheikh Mansour's Abu Dhabi United Group in 2008, were charged with 115 violations of Premier League regulations.

The charges cover a period starting from 2009 and continuing into the 2022-23 season. City have always denied any wrongdoing.

For every season from 2009-10 to 2017-18, City are alleged to have breached rules requiring clubs to provide accurate financial information to give the league a "true and fair view" of the club's revenues, including sponsorships, and operating costs.

The Premier League also contends that City were in violation of rules

BREACH	CHARGES
Failure to provide accurate and up-to-date financial information	54
Failure to provide accurate financial reports for manager and player compensation	14
Failure to comply with UEFA's regulations, including Financial Fair Play rules	5
Breaching Premier League Profitability and Sustainability rules	7
Failure to co-operate with Premier League on investigations	35

requiring clubs to comply with European soccer governing body UEFA's Financial Fair Play (FFP) regulations for the seasons from 2013-14 to 2017-18.

The Premier League alleged City did not cooperate with the league during the entirety of its investigation, which began in 2018, including providing documents and information.

City have also been charged with breaching the league's Profitability and Sustainability (PSR) rules in the 2015-16, 2016-17 and 2017-18 campaigns.

The Premier League further alleged that City did not fully disclose contracts detailing manage-

rial remuneration from the 2009-10 to the 2012-13 seasons, when Roberto Mancini was in charge, and player compensation from the 2010-11 to the 2015-16 campaigns.

WHAT'S THE LATEST ON THE HEARING AND WHY DOES IT MATTER?

The hearing held by an independent commission comprised of three judges appointed by the independent chair of the Premier League Judicial Panel. The hearing began on Sept. 16 last year and ended on Dec. 6.

The hearing, which was not a court case, was conducted privately and

lasted for 12 weeks. Lawyer David Pannick led City's defence while the Premier League was represented by Adam Lewis KC, according to British media reports.

In a separate independent hearing in October, both City and the Premier League claimed victory after an arbitration panel ruled on sponsorship deals, known as Associated Party Transactions (APT), that the club was blocked from completing.

In November, City manager Pep Guardiola penned a two-year extension until 2027 and said he would stay to the end of his contract with the English champions even if they were relegated.

WHY DO FINANCIAL FAIR PLAY RULES MATTER?

Financial Fair Play was designed to stop reckless spending and restrict rich benefactors from injecting large amounts of cash into clubs, a practice which distorts the transfer market, pushes players' wages to astronomical levels and has a knock-on effect as other clubs try to keep up.

WHAT IS PSR?

The Premier League's Profit and Sustainability Rules allow clubs to lose no more than 105 million pounds (\$129.34 million) over three seasons, or 35 million pounds a season.

WHAT HAPPENS IF MANCHESTER CITY ARE FOUND GUILTY?

Should City be found guilty of some or all of the charges they could face penalties or huge fines, points deductions, being stripped of their titles or even be demoted from the Premier League.

In 2020 they were banned from the Champions League for two years

by UEFA for overstating sponsorship revenue between 2012 and 2016, but they successfully appealed to the Court of Arbitration for Sport.

Everton and Nottingham Forest had points deducted last season for PSR breaches, although Leicester City avoided a similar fate after winning an appeal against the Premier League.

WHAT ARE THE IMPLICATIONS FOR THE PREMIER LEAGUE?

Relegating City or stripping the club of their league titles would tarnish the competition,



Ancelotti anticipates 'unpredictable' Super Cup Clasico

PAGE 19



By Correspondent Seth Mapoli

Hamdi Miloud aims to revolutionize Singida Black Stars with attacking flair

By Guardian Correspondent

SINGIDA Black Stars head coach Hamdi Miloud has declared his vision to transform the club into a formidable force in the Premier League, leveraging the talent and quality of his players.

Miloud (pictured), a dual Algerian-French national who succeeded Patrick Aulsebrook, is committed to building an attacking and entertaining football system.

"We have a team with great talent, and I have seen their potential," Miloud said recently during a training session as the team prepared to resume league action on March 1.

"Football is not just about winning but also about providing entertainment to the fans. My goal is to ensure my team plays attractive football that will make Singida Black Stars fans proud of their team."

Miloud, a UEFA A-license holder, emphasized that his approach to the game would focus on a blend of offensive prowess and defensive discipline.

"We will play attacking football, but we will also be very focused on defense," he explained.

The coach added that achieving these goals requires hard work, unity, and dedication from every player.

"There will be no shortcuts in achieving our objectives. Each player must show a high level of efficiency," he stressed. "I have great faith in my players. Each of them has a unique talent, and with good cooperation on the field, we can achieve our goals."

Miloud's commitment to introducing an attractive football system has been met with optimism by fans and stakeholders alike, especially as Singida Black Stars aim to solidify their position as one of the top teams in Tanzanian football.

To bolster the team's attack, Singida Black Stars hope to sign striker Jonathan Sowah from Al-Nasr of Libya.

Sowah is expected to complement an already potent forward line that includes Elvis Rupia, who leads the Premier League's scoring charts with eight goals.

Miloud believes Sowah's addition will enhance the team's offensive capabilities, aligning with his vision of a powerful and entertaining attacking style.

"We are preparing for major changes in the way we play. Clean and attractive football will be the foundation of our team," he said.

The club's management has also expressed confidence in Miloud's ability to maintain the team's momentum and secure consistent results.

Under his leadership, Singida Black Stars aim to challenge for a top-four finish and build a platform for long-term success both domestically and on the continent. Singida Black Stars have been one of the standout teams this season, surprising many with their competitive performances.

Currently enjoying a strong position in the league, the team has demonstrated their potential to compete at the highest level.

Miloud's tactical acumen is expected to provide the edge needed to sustain their challenge as the season progresses. With the resumption of league fixtures approaching, Miloud has urged his players to embrace his philosophy and work tirelessly to achieve the club's ambitious goals.

"Extra work and dedication are non-negotiable. We need to build a team that not only wins but also entertains," he said.

The appointment of Miloud signals Singida Black Stars' intent to establish themselves as a force in Tanzanian football.

The coach's focus on unity, efficiency, and a dynamic playing style aligns with the club's broader ambitions of becoming a top contender in both the domestic league and continental competitions.



Simba skipper confident ahead of CAF Confederation Cup match against Bravos



Simba SC skipper Mohammed Hussein pictured on Thursday arriving in Luanda, Angola with his side for their CAF Confederation Cup Group A match against Bravos do Marquis to be held tomorrow. Photo: Courtesy of SSC

SIMBA SC's captain, Mohammed Hussein Zimbwe Jr, has expressed confidence and high spirits within the team as they prepare to face Angola's Bravos do Marquis in a must-win CAF Confederation Cup match scheduled for tomorrow.

The match, which will take place in Angola, is crucial for Simba as they aim to secure a spot in the quarterfinals.

Hussein addressed the media moments before the team departed from Dar es Salaam for Angola on Thursday morning. The squad, filled with determination, is eager to earn at least a point in this final group-stage encounter.

With just one point required from the game, Simba could advance to the next stage of the competition, and the players are focused on bringing home a positive result.

"We are traveling to Angola with a strong desire and morale to secure a win away from home. Our preparations for this match have been excellent, and we're confident we can deliver a good performance," Hussein said.

He also reflected on the team's recent success, which has fuelled their motivation.

"Our last victory in Tunisia gave us a massive boost in terms of

confidence, and we are going into this game against Bravos with even more belief in our abilities."

The skipper further reassured the team's supporters, emphasizing that they will not be under any pressure during the crucial match.

"We are not feeling any pressure. We want to assure our fans and members of Simba that we are fully committed to fighting for the win. We ask our supporters to keep us in their prayers as we give everything on the field to make them proud," he added.

As it stands, Simba are in second place in Group A with nine points, tied with Algeria's CS Constantine. However, CS Constantine lead the group on goal difference.

A draw or a win against Bravos will be enough to secure a place in the quarterfinals, put-

ting Simba in a strong position to continue their campaign in the prestigious continental competition.

The team's resilience and positive attitude are visible, and they are determined to carry on from where they left off after their successful campaign in Tunisia. With a strong group of players and an experienced coaching staff, Simba's chances of progressing remain high, and the team is eager to prove themselves on the continental stage once again.

Fans of the Tanzanian giants are hopeful that the squad will put up a formidable performance and maintain their solid form to progress further in the CAF Confederation Cup.

The club's supporters, who have stood by the team through thick and thin, are eager for the team to return from Angola with a favourable result.

This game against Bravos represents more than just a match for Simba; it's an opportunity to continue their journey in one of Africa's most prestigious club competitions.

The outcome will not only determine their fate in the CAF Confederation Cup but also boost their morale as they head into the second half of the season, with their domestic league campaign in full swing.

Simba have shown throughout the group stage that they are capable of competing at the highest level in African club football, and they now find themselves just one step away from securing a spot in the knockout rounds. A win or draw against Bravos will send them to the quarterfinals, where they will face even tougher competition, but Hussein and his teammates are ready for the challenge.

Wydad eye Mzize and Aziz Ki amid Yanga's strong Champions League push

By Correspondent Seth Mapoli

WYDAD Athletic Club, one of Morocco's premier football teams, have continued to show interest in acquiring two key players from Tanzania's Young Africans SC - striker Clemment Mzize and midfielder Stephanie Aziz Ki.

Reports indicate that Wydad have submitted formal applications to bring the duo to their squad for the upcoming Moroccan Premier League campaign, but the club has upped its offer by including a potential deal for both players.

According to a statement from Wydad, the club is prepared to offer \$800,000 for each player.

This move comes as Wydad look to bolster their squad with the hopes of strengthening their competitive edge in domestic and continental competitions.

However, Young Africans, the defending champions of the NBC Premier League, have firmly rejected the proposal, citing the players' importance to their ongoing CAF Champions League campaign.

The Tanzanian club made it clear that Mzize and Aziz Ki are not for sale as they focus on advancing in the prestigious CAF Champions League.

"We are not willing to sell these players due to our participation in the CAF Champions League

competition and our chance to advance to the quarter-finals," Young Africans' management said in a statement, emphasizing the team's dedication to the continental competition.

Wydad's pursuit of Mzize and Aziz Ki is part of a wider strategy by head coach Rulani Mokwena, who is eager to enhance his squad for future challenges.

Mokwena, who previously coached Mamelodi Sundowns in South Africa, was impressed with both players during the teams' encounters in the CAF Champions League.

His desire to strengthen his squad led to the club's renewed focus on these



two individuals, whose performances have caught the eye of several top clubs.

Mzize, who has been in excellent form for Young Africans this season, has become one of the most talked-about players in

East Africa. His clinical finishing and presence in attack have made him a standout performer, and his potential move to Morocco could be a significant step in his career.

Aziz Ki, on the other hand, is widely regarded

for his creativity and work ethic in midfield, bringing balance to Young Africans' playing style.

Together, they have formed a formidable duo that has helped propel Young Africans into the spotlight on the continental stage.

Despite Wydad's interest, Young Africans' focus remain firmly on their upcoming CAF Champions League fixtures. Young Africans, who are the only Tanzanian team still in contention for the competition, have a crucial match tomorrow against Al Hilal in Mauritania.

Al Hilal, the leaders of Group A with 10 points, have already qualified for the quarter-finals, while Young Africans sit in third place with four points.

A win for Young Africans would significantly boost their chances of advancing to the next stage of the competition, keeping their hopes alive for a spot in the quarter-finals.

Flexibles by David Chikoko

