



**BUSINESS** Organisation extending loans to health investors at 'budget' interest rates

CBK raises extra Ksh32 billion in August tapsale

Nigeria's battered naira may get a breather on Fed's rate cut



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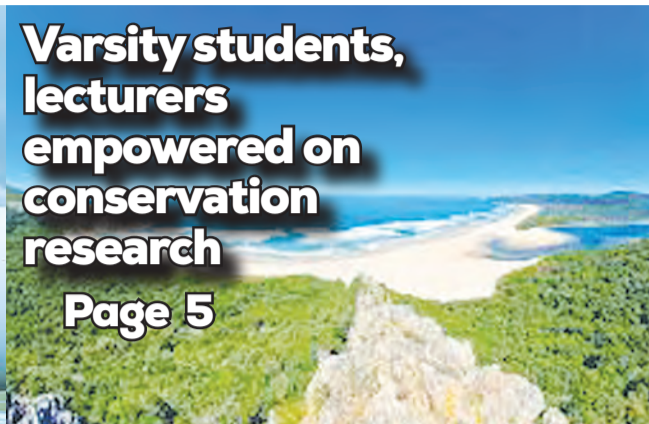


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# Nearly 3,000 suffer from kidney failure



Prime Minister Kassim Majaliwa gets off a Tanzania Railways Corporation standard gauge railway train wagon at the John Pombe Magufuli station in Dar es Salaam yesterday on arrival from Dodoma city. Right is TRC director general Masanja Kadogosa. Photo: PMO

## Govt pains over 80bn/- dialysis treatment costs

By Guardian Reporter

TANZANIA has nearly 3,000 patients suffering from kidney failure, with the government spending between 56bn/- to 80bn/- annually on dialysis supplies to ensure a steady supply of treatment drugs and caregiving.

Dr Omari Ubuguyu, assistant director of non-communicable diseases at the Health ministry made note of this situation in Dar es Salaam on Thursday at a workshop on media awareness on non-communicable diseases (NCDs).

Collective efforts are needed to enhance awareness to prevent the NCDs challenge and in delivering treatment, he said, pointing at the critical role of the media in educating the public on the situation, similarly expressing concern about the spread of misinformation.

The Tanzania Non-Communicable Diseases Alliance (TANCDAs) organised the event which brought together experts, disease campaigners and representatives from various media outlets, with the ministerial director affirming that 70 percent of the 3,000 individuals face major health issues related to high blood pressure and diabetes.

He urged members of the public to have their blood sugar levels tested at least twice a year, even as testing four times a year is recommended. For those living with diabetes, regular testing is crucial to assess how well they are managing their condition and the effectiveness of medication, he said.

He urged Tanzanians to have their blood sugar levels checked at least twice a year. "If you can-

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## Dar port visit: We have answered critics, states CCM publicity secretary

By Correspondent Joseph Mwendapole

THE Tanzania Port Authority (TPA) has reported a significant increase in cargo at the port of Dar es Salaam, with the number of containers rising from 7,151 in April to 20,151 in July this year.

Amos Makala, the ruling party secretary for Ideology, Publicity and Training was at the port as Josephat Lukindo, the TPA operations and co-ordination manager, outlined the investor's drive

to boost efficiency, as DP World invested in modern machinery through its Dar es Salaam subsidiary.

The key factor is a \$250m by the Dubai based global port management operator, to improve operations at berths 0 to 7, as a section of the port facilities was shifted to DP World in April.

The work included repairing existing equipment and acquiring new assets such as 20 tractors, 31 trailers, seven 10,000 KV generators for backup power and cranes for

heavy cargo handling, the manager noted.

Additionally, modern IT systems were installed to replace outdated technology, significantly enhancing operational efficiency. This upgrade has contributed to an 18.2 percent increase in container cargo volume over three months, he said.

Improvements have placed the port of Dar es Salaam in a position to compete with major Afri-

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## MPs, Treasury in battle over contractors' dues

By Guardian Reporter

UNPAID debts to contractors, suppliers and service providers came up as a major debating issue in the National Assembly yesterday, with MPs calling on the government to address the matter urgently.

Bupe Mwakang'ata (Special Seats) said during the question and answer session that the government will pay contractors and suppliers in Rukwa Region awaiting payment for up to five years.

The various individuals have faced severe financial hardship, including asset seizures due to delayed payments, she said, noting that many contractors and

suppliers have had to borrow from banks to complete their work, yet the government has not paid them on time.

"As a result, numerous individuals have lost their homes and vehicles. When will the government settle these debts?" the MP demanded, pointing out that numerous debts have been verified for over six months but remain unpaid, with arrears ranging from two to five years.

Esther Maleko (Special Seats) expressed concern over the same problem, straining relations between the government and contractors, wondering if the government does not recognise the urgency of resolving these debts,

*As a result, numerous individuals have lost their homes and vehicles. When will the government settle these debts*

even with the financial ruin many contractors are facing.

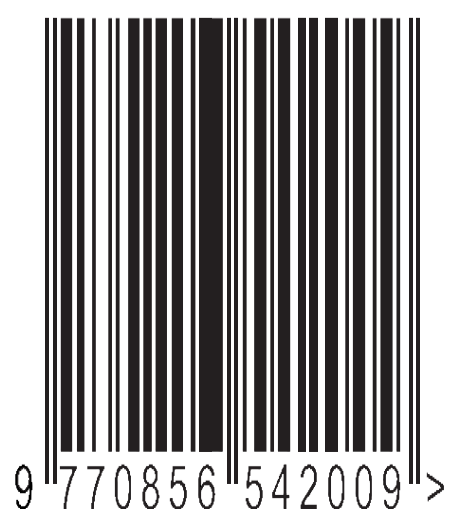
Cecilia Paresso (Special Seats-Opposition) asked the government to explain delays of pay-

ments to foreign contractors which are paid with interest, whereas local contractors do not receive timely payments, and have no eventual interest payment.

Cecilia Paresso, Special Seats MP (Chadema), requested an explanation from the government as to why delays in payments to foreign contractors incur interest, while local contractors do not receive timely payments or interest.

Dr Mwigulu Nchemba, the Finance minister, said in response that while the government has not halted payments, it has been

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## 'Reduce electricity prices after completing JNHPP'

By Guardian Reporter

THE government has been urged to review electricity prices following the completion of the Julius Nyerere Hydropower Project (JNHPP) to provide relief to consumers, the legislature has demanded.

Masache Kasaka (Lupa) asked in a supplementary question in the National Assembly why the government had not revised electricity prices despite the completion of the major power project.

Currently, the average price for one

subsidised unit of electricity is 100/- (for normal usage of up to 75 units per month) while without subsidy the cost stands at 292/- for a unit, official figures show, while for consumers using more than 75 units per month, they pay 292/- per unit with subsidy, instead of 320/-.

Judith Kapinga, the Energy deputy minister, explained that electricity costs encompass production, distribution, transmission and preliminary investment costs, while current electricity prices include government subsidies designed to reduce the bur-

den on specific sections of consumers.

Compared to other East African countries, Tanzania's electricity prices are relatively low, she said, noting that the government is firm on subsidies to ensure that prices remain affordable for the public.

In the basic question, Suma Fyandomo (Special Seats) demanded when the government would reduce the unit price of electricity, to which the deputy minister responded that the price is related to all the cost sources.

"The current price does not reflect the ac-

tual cost; it includes government subsidies. The average price for one subsidised unit of electricity is 100/- (for normal usage of up to 75 units per month), while without subsidy, it is 292/-.

For those using more than 75 units per month, they pay 292/- instead of 320/-," she said.

The government was constantly evaluating the costs of TANESCO services to adjust prices by changes in all the cost areas, she added.

## Nearly 3,000 suffer from kidney failure

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not test four times a year, then at least twice a year. For example, those living with diabetes should do this as it helps assess the effectiveness of their sugar control and the medication they are using," he said.

Poor control of blood sugar can lead to additional health complications, he said, asserting that for those with high blood pressure, regular monitoring is essential to prevent damage to other organs.

Many patients with kidney failure are not lacking in medication but may not be receiving optimal care, he said, noting that donating a kidney for transplantation can be tricky as the body might still reject it.

"Some people receive transplants from relatives or others but the body may not accept it without ongoing medication," he said, stressing regular health monitoring and adopting lifestyle changes. These include exercise to manage health effectively, he stated.

Dr Waziri Ndonde, a TANCDA health and exercise specialist, said that maintaining certain bodily elements such as hydration and muscle strength, especially for those over 65 demands regular exercise.

"Older people should engage in balance exercises to prevent falls, as many elderly individuals suffer from weakened legs and muscles," he said, underlining that people should adhere to recommended dietary guidelines. Failure to do so makes it difficult to manage non-communicable diseases effectively, he declared.

Prof. Andrew Swai, the Diabetes Association of Tanzania (TDA) chairman, said that in the 1970s, non-communicable diseases

were considered prevalent only in developed countries, with low prevalence levels in Africa.

In 1986, research conducted in Dar es Salaam, Morogoro and Mara regions showed diabetes prevalence at just one percent among those over 25, with hypertension below two percent and obesity over five percent.

Research nearly 30 years later, in 2012 showed that diabetes affects nine percent of the population and hypertension affects 26 percent. Cancer rates have also increased, with the government expanding Ocean Road Hospital due to rising care needs," he said, asserting that the changes are due to lifestyle and dietary shifts.

Adeline Munuo, an expert with the Tanzania Food and Nutrition Centre (TFNC), pointed at excessive salt consumption as leading to increased hypertension, particularly among young people.

"Adults should consume no more than a small teaspoon of salt per day, but many exceed this limit," she said, stressing the need for a balanced diet with various food groups.

She listed these as including grains, tubers, fruits and vegetables, animal products, healthy oils, and legumes, saying food has to relate to activity level, body condition, and age.

Theresa Shayo, a diabetes and hypertension patient staying in Chanika suburb of Ilala District, shared her experience of living with these conditions for 21 years. She highlighted observing medical advice, advising young people to avoid alcohol and tobacco.

Following expert guidance to prevent these diseases is crucial, the patient intoned.

## Dar port visit: We have answered critics, states CCM publicity secretary

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can ports, citing comparisons with Moroccan ports. During his visit, the ruling party executive expressed satisfaction with TPA performance and the positive impact of the DP World investment, as it put paid to critics earlier opposing the deal in vehement terms.

He cited criticisms raised in relation to other investments, such as the purchase of a fleet of airplanes for Air Tanzania Co. (ATCL), the standard gauge railway and the Julius Nyerere Hydropower Project.

The criticisms have been shown to have been proven unfounded as these projects have delivered benefits, he said, reaffirmed ruling party support for government investments in crucial infrastructure.

Such initiatives are aligned with the party's election manifesto, he emphasised, noting that the progress observed at the port of Dar es Salaam was totally satisfactory.

Juma Kijavala, the TPA deputy director general, expressed surprise at the swift success of DP World investment, citing measures taken to improve operational efficiency to attract local and international traders.

The port's enhanced services will enable it to compete globally, he added.



Doctors and nurses at Muhimbili National Hospital's Mloganzila campus in Dar es Salaam in jovial mood on Thursday moments after performing knee surgery on a patients through collaboration with Dr Ram Mohan Reddy, a specialist from India's Yashoda Hospital. It was at an ongoing five-day camp. Photo: Correspondent Joseph Mwendapole.

## MPs, Treasury in battle over contractors' dues

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managing a backlog of long-standing debts.

He urged MPs to understand government efforts in addressing the debts, noting that some of them are outstanding for up to seven years. Debts from as far back as 2013 have been settled, while it is not feasible to allocate sufficient sums in one year

to clear the debts as it impacts other government activities, he stated.

The government will be clearing these debts for service providers, suppliers and contractors, he said, citing nearly 400bn/- allocated for the purpose last financial year, while in this year's estimates the amount has been raised to 600bn/-.

The government is committed to increasing those allocations on the basis that economic activities and capital layouts are not adversely affected, he stated, affirming that future budget estimates will be adjusted to ensure a substantial portion of these debts is cleared, to settle all outstanding amounts if possible.

He said that foreign contracts

are hired on the basis of international interest rates, whereas domestic contracts are hired on the basis of what the government provides, while the Treasury was making efforts to limit interest payments due for foreign contractors/

It has introduced new contractual arrangements for irrigation geared to avoid late payment costs, he said.

Hamad Hassan Chande, the deputy minister, had earlier stated that the government allocates funds specifically for paying verified and approved debts, as audited by the government internal auditor.

During fiscal 2023/24, upwards of 600bn/- was allocated to settle these debts, and by the end of June a total of 491.25bn/- had been disbursed, he added.



UTT-AMIS expert Rahim Mwanga serves as facilitator yesterday at a public session on financial education in Mikumi township in Kilosa District, Morogoro Region. Photo courtesy of Finance ministry

## Africa consolidates its position ahead of CoP 29

NAIROBI

THE Africa Group of Negotiators has come up with key priorities ahead of another round of climate talks scheduled for November.

The group, led by Kenya's Special Envoy on Climate Change Ali Mohamed, will push for the adoption of the New Collective Quantified Goal on Climate Finance.

"Africa is calling for the adoption of a new goal of finance with a quantum of \$1.3 trillion with a clear share of public grants," she said.

On Tuesday, Kenya's Permanent Representative to the UN Gertrude Angote said Africa is the least responsible yet the continent continues to bear some of the most severe weather events.

"The intersection of climate change, peace and security is increasingly be-

ing recognised at the global level yet it remains underrepresented in formal negotiation process. This gap needs to be addressed to ensure that they receive the attention it deserves," Angote said.

Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change are set to convene for the climate change negotiations, formally known as COP 29, from November 11 to 22, in Baku, Azerbaijan.

Angote read the priorities on behalf of Ali during a three-day consultative meeting by African Union member states at Windsor Hotel.

The NCQG is a new global climate finance goal that the Conference of the Parties will set from a floor of \$100 billion per year, before 2025.

The new goal is in the context of meaningful mitigation actions and transparency on implementation, taking into

accounts the needs and priorities of developing countries.

Deliberations on setting the new goal aim to strengthen the global response to the threat of climate change in the context of sustainable development and efforts to eradicate poverty.

This includes by making finance flows consistent with a pathway towards low greenhouse gas emissions and climate-resilient development.

Angote said climate change poses a significant threat to social-economic development, exacerbating the existing vulnerabilities and triggering insecurity challenges across the continent.

"The increased frequency and intensity of extreme weather events have led to resource conflicts, displacement heightened tension among communities. This in turn has strained social cohesion in the governance system."

Climate change has undermined peace and stability and the continent will be calling for the operationalisation of the global goals on adaptation.

Africa will also demand the full operationalisation of loss and damage fund with sufficient resources to respond to the impacts of climate change.

Angote added that there is a need for enhanced mitigation ambition; a move that developed countries must take the lead.

Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the UN Office to the African Union, Parfait Anyango, decried the current state of imbalance.

Studies suggest that a third of current oil reserves, half of the natural gas reserves and nearly 90 per cent of remaining coal reserves must remain in the ground to achieve the 1.5°C global warming target under the Paris Agreement.

## Two new radars to elevate climate change monitoring

By Guardian Correspondent, Mwanza

THE government plans to install two new weather radars in Dodoma and Kilimanjaro regions to further enhance climate monitoring.

Currently, weather radars are operational in Dar es Salaam, Mwanza, Mtwara, Mbeya and Kigoma regions and the installation of the new radars will bring the total number of radars across the country to seven.

Minister for Transport Professor Makame Mbarawa unveiled this on Wednesday here during training on radar meteorology.

Organised by Tanzania Meteorological Authority (TMA) and the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO), the training aimed at enhancing the skills of meteorologists and forecasters in using radar data for weather forecasting.

He highlighted the critical role of weather and climate in Africa's economy, especially in sectors such as agriculture, livestock, fishing, tourism, energy, and transport.

He pointed out that recent disasters, including extreme weather events, have caused significant loss of life and property, making effective weather ob-

servations and early warning systems essential for protecting vital sectors.

"For example, on Lake Victoria alone, between 3,000 and 5,000 deaths occur annually due to accidents caused by extreme weather," he said.

He underscored the need for improved early warning services in the region, stating that quality radars are crucial for revolutionising weather forecasting and enabling more precise forecasts of changing atmospheres on land and water bodies.

Dr Eunjin Choi from WMO Education and Training Department emphasised the importance of weather radar systems in modern meteorology. She explained that the advanced tools provide real-time data essential for accurate weather forecasting and understanding atmospheric conditions.

The training offered an opportunity to enhance technical skills and exchange knowledge among meteorologists.

TMA acting Director General Dr Ladislaus Chang'a commended the government's commitment to investing in meteorological infrastructure which plays a crucial role in preventing disasters due to the accuracy of forecasts.



Community Development, Gender, Women and Special Groups minister Dr Dorothy Gwajima pictured in the National Assembly in Dodoma city yesterday tabling a bill on amendments to various pieces of legislation relating to the rights of children. Photo: Correspondent Ibrahim Joseph

## PM wants residents of EAC to access medical services in all member states

By Guardian Reporter

PRIME Minister Kassim Majaliwa has called for the elimination of barriers that prevent patients from East African Community (EAC) member states from accessing medical services within the bloc.

This, according to him, will help boost regional economy and promote the growth of medical tourism.

ism.

He made the call in Dar es Salaam yesterday during the launch of the 12th annual East Africa Healthcare Federation (EAHF) Conference.

The PM said that EAC member countries have made significant investments in the health sector and reduced the costs associated with sending patients abroad for treatment.

"Currently, very few patients need

to travel outside our countries for medical care as almost all diseases can now be treated within East Africa," Majaliwa said.

The PM also called on healthcare investors to consider investing in Tanzania. He noted that the government has established investor-friendly policies, particularly in the health sector to address the high demand for quality medical services in the country.

"We welcome all investors interested in the health sector. We have favourable policies, robust laws and regulations. The need for investment in healthcare is substantial, and we are eager to acquire new technologies for advanced services," he said.

Majaliwa further encouraged regional health stakeholders to explore strategies for strengthening healthcare systems and developing

coordinated approaches to combat diseases.

"This platform should be used to create joint strategies for tackling epidemics, infectious and non-communicable diseases, as well as emerging diseases related to climate change," he said.

Deputy Minister for Health Dr Godwin Mollel said that government investments at grassroots

levels have facilitated early disease detection.

"Referrals abroad have significantly decreased. Previously, nearly all patients arriving at Ocean Road Cancer Institute were often in advanced stages of illness. Thanks to the investments, over 70 percent of patients come with the disease at an early stage," he said.



Construction of Dar es Salaam's rapid transit bus project infrastructure in progress along the Gongo la Mboto stretch of Nyerere Road yesterday. Photo: Correspondent Sabato Kasika

## Z'bar to prioritise good performing contractors

By Guardian Reporter, Zanzibar

SECOND Vice President of Zanzibar Hemed Suleiman Abdullah has said that the government will continue to award contracts to high-performing contractors who will be given priority in various projects.

He made the statement yesterday during the launch of refurbishment of educational infrastructure which includes renovation of dilapidated schools, at a ceremony in Cheju, South Unguja Region.

He encouraged local contractors to remain committed to the country's development for the benefit of both current and future generations.

Abdullah said that the government's goal is to ensure that pupils receive quality education free of charge and attend full school calendar.

He further stated that the government was enhancing educational infrastructure by constructing new multi-storey schools and renovating old, dilapidated ones.

Ali Masoud, Deputy Regional Administrative Secretary for Unguja South, said that education infrastructure development aims to improve quality of education by increasing the number of classrooms and providing pupils with a better learning environment.

He noted that the government plans to build 2,037 new classrooms, bringing the total to 4,310 by the end of the current government term in Zanzibar.

Masoud added that the education infrastructure project will cost 384.8bn/- and will help alleviate pupil overcrowding in classrooms.

Minister for Education and Vocational Training Lela Muhammed Mussa said that the government provides free education and has invested 800bn/- in the sector over the past three years.

She mentioned that the construction of schools is expected to be completed by December this year and urged the contractors to meet the set deadlines.

Unguja South Regional Commissioner Ayoub Muhammed Mahmoud said that the region expects the construction of three new multi-storey schools and pupils' dormitories to improve learning.

## Youth leaders, stakeholders gather to explore economic opportunities

By Guardian Correspondent

OVER 200 young people, leaders and stakeholders from various parts of Dar es Salaam gathered in the city yesterday to explore strategies for leveraging available economic opportunities for regional development.

The youth exposition forum was part of the Youth Ready (YR) project, a four-year initiative led by World Vision Tanzania and supported by the Barrett Family Foundation of Canada.

The YR project aims to empower out-of-school youth to become healthy, productive and socially engaged agents of change.

During the forum's opening, Joseph Mhaiki, a representative from World Vision Tanzania, said that the forum aimed to discuss business innovation, digital literacy and global leadership, encouraging youth to seize opportunities and

drive positive change.

Mhaiki said this was done in collaboration with the United Nations Association (UNA) Tanzania and Women's Health and Development Organization (KIWOHEDE).

"Together, we reaffirm our commitment to empowering youth to spur national development," he said. He said that under the Youth Lead initiative is currently implemented at Kivule and Kipunguni wards in Ilala district, Dar es Salaam with the aim of reaching 1400 youth before expanding to other areas. He said the programme focuses on areas where youth are empowered for success in work and life through strengthened skills, voice, vision, resilience and positive relationships.

"The empowered youth will be linked to meaningful opportunities and support to take the next steps in their personal development and livelihood pathway plans," he said.

He said the programme will work closely with various partners to ensure that it is well implemented and bring out intended outcomes by transforming mindsets and lives of youth. Ibrahim Mwenda, executive director of UNA Tanzania, stressed the importance of increased collaboration for youth empowerment.

"This forum, which will continue to evolve, will help open the minds of young people to the opportuni-

ties available to them," he said.

Shigeki Komatsubara, UNDP Resident Representative, encouraged youth to harness digital tools for their development.

Monica John, a participant and Youth Lead programme beneficiary, shared her positive experience, noting that the training which she received under the programme expanded her understanding of opportunities and how to capitalise on them.



CCM's Ideology, Publicity and Training secretary, Amos Makalla (R), receives a gift from Tanzania Ports Authority deputy director general Juma Kijavara while on a familiarisation tour of Dar es Salaam Port on Thursday. Photo: Correspondent Joseph Mwendapole

## Villagers appeal for roads repair to bolster economy

By Guardian Reporter, Zanzibar

RESIDENTS of Ole Simaongwe, Shumindu and Makaani villages in Chake Chake, Pemba, have called on the government to repair bad roads which have become major obstacles to their activities, particularly during the rainy season.

In an interview with this paper, the residents said that the roads are vital for both local communities and businesses, as they are key to economic development and government revenue.

They stated that the roads are in poor condition and become nearly impassable during rainy periods, stressing the urgent need for bridges to be installed as the current state poses a risk to lives, including schoolchildren and women involved in farming.

Fatma Ali Hamad, resident of Ole Simaongwe Village, described the road as old, built several decades ago. She expressed frustration with its deteriorated state.

"This road has been here for a long time, stretching from Kangagani to Dodeani. It used to facilitate trips to the local health clinic but now we have to use another road which is very far away," she said.

Bimkubwa Hamad Juma said that part of the road's bridge is

damaged, making it impassable during rainy seasons. Women and children are especially affected, as they are unable to cross.

Another resident, Hamad Khatib Hamad, noted that the road leading to Kwareni also requires repair because it plays a significant role in economic growth. He underscored the need for urgent attention to the infrastructure.

"Many farmers depend on this road, yet it remains unrepaired. During the rainy season, it worsens as vehicles get stuck in the mud," he said.

Hadia Ali Hamad appealed to the government to prioritise road repairs to enhance their economic situation and help lift the community out of poverty.

Sheha Hamad Said noted that the issue has been reported to the district commissioner's office but repairs have not yet been undertaken. He explained that the roads are crucial for boosting both local and national economy and should be prioritised in the road maintenance programme.

Ibrahim Saleh Juma, an officer from the Ministry of Works, Communications and Transport, said that the government has a plan to construct the roads.

## India prepares for trade council meetings with Kenya, Tanzania to expand exports

By Special Correspondent

INDIA plans to conduct joint trade council meetings with its top trading partners in Africa - Kenya and Tanzania - scheduled for September this year as the country eyes doubling trade with African nations to \$200 billion by 2030.

"The Commerce and Industry Ministry is consulting with industry councils and other ministries and departments for the JTC meetings with Kenya and Tanzania next month with

a focus on existing barriers and opportunities. An inter-ministerial consultation has been planned for the same. Africa is an important market as it holds a lot of potential and could help in its efforts to diversify," a person tracking the development told businessline.

In a note to the industry, the government sought information on tariffs barriers as well as non-tariff barriers such as regulatory issues.

"Both Tanzania and Kenya are promising markets and

with some focussed attention there is a possibility for trade and investment to grow manifold," the source said.

Some of the general problems faced by Indian exporters in the two African countries include procedural obstacles leading to administrative and bureaucratic delays as well as standards and measures imposed for various sectors impeding imports, the source added. "The government hopes to identify specific problems affecting different

sectors so that solutions could be sought," the source said.

India-Tanzania bilateral trade increased to \$7.9 billion in 2023-24, posting a 22 percent growth over the previous year, which elevated Tanzania to the position of India's second-largest trade partner in Africa, up from the third position last year, per a statement issued by the Indian High Commission in Dar es Salaam earlier this year. India's exports were valued at \$4.6 billion during the fiscal, imports

were at \$3.3 billion.

India exports essential commodities such as petroleum products, industrial machinery, and tractors, which facilitate industrialisation and economic growth, the statement added. It also supplies life-saving pharmaceutical products at competitive prices. "Indian motorcycles and automobiles are quite popular among Tanzanians," the statement added.

Tanzania exports a variety of agriculture products to In-

dia including cashew nuts, pigeon peas, soybeans and avocado and also gold and coal.

India's exports to Kenya in 2023-24 were valued at \$ 3.35 billion while imports were at \$176.34 million. Exports from India to Kenya were are similar to Tanzania and include petroleum products, pharmaceuticals, machinery, cereals, sugars & confectionery, plastics & articles, vehicles, electrical machinery & equipment, organic chemicals and paper & paperboard.

Kenya's exports to India comprise tea, coffee, soda ash, edible vegetables, copper and articles, fertilisers, metal scrap, miscellaneous chemical products, lead and articles and zinc and articles.

Top officials from the Ministry of External Affairs led a delegation comprising officials from Ministry of Agriculture, business chambers and 25 Indian agricultural companies and institutions to Kenya in April this year to explore opportunities in the agriculture sector.

## ATCL's cargo plane to start new route to the Comoros next month

By Correspondent Joseph Mwendapole

WITH increased demand for cargo transportation between The Comoros and Tanzania, Air Tanzania Company Limited (ATCL)'s Boeing 767-300F cargo plane is scheduled to commence flights to Moroni next month.

The new plane can carry up to 54 tonnes of cargo and has a flight range of seven to 10 hours without needing to refuel.

Esther Mahiga, head of ATCL Centre in Comoros, made this affirmation yesterday during a meeting with Tanzanian Ambassador to Comoros, Said Yakubu, at the embassy. Mahiga also introduced Kamarouddine Waziri Zamane, ATCL's agent in Comoros, representing ComAir.

"Currently, ATCL operates three flights a week between Dar es Salaam and Moroni. We plan to increase this to four flights weekly, with the new B767-300F cargo plane starting on September 13," Mahiga said.

She added that the new service is in response to requests from Tanzanian and Comorian business communities for improved transportation of perishable goods, given the geographical challenges of Co-

moros.

Ambassador Yakubu expressed his satisfaction with the enhanced air travel service provided by ATCL, noting that it has significantly improved connectivity between Tanzania and the Comoro Islands over the past three years. He said that this increase in trade necessitates more frequent cargo flights. "Trade cycle between Tanzania and the Comoros has expanded, and we are committed to strengthening our cooperation to benefit both nations," Yakubu said.

He welcomed the introduction of cargo flights as a positive development for business growth and pledged continued support from his office to assist ATCL's operations in line with the government's efforts to boost business activities.

Since the arrival of ATCL's first B767-300F cargo plane in June 2023, the airline has transported a range of cargo, including vehicles, minerals, medicines, furniture, spare parts, and perishable goods such as fruits, meat and seafood.

The aircraft has serviced various destinations within and outside Africa, including N'Djamena (Chad), Mumbai (India), Dubai (UAE), Nairobi (Kenya), Kinshasa (DRC), Lusaka (Zambia) and Entebbe (Uganda).



Tanzania Ambassador to the Comoros, Said Yakub (3rd-R), hosts talks with Air Tanzania Company Limited officials who called on him in his office yesterday in connection with plans by the firm to introduce cargo flights between Dar es Salaam and the Comoros capital, Moroni, soon. Second right is the head of the ATCL Centre in the Comoros, Esther Mahiga. Photo: Correspondent Joseph Mwendapole

## 'New policies needed for African food processing industry to grow'

NAIROBI

DEMAND for processed food is on the rise in Africa as the population grows, according to a 63-page report from a group of food experts known as the Malabo Montpellier Panel.

Ousmane Badiane, co-chair of the panel, said the growing middle class wants to consume African foods with modern conveniences like improved packaging and ready-to-eat options.

"The combination of population growth and income growth and urbanization has resulted

in a large and growing middle class," Badiane said. "What's interesting about this middle class, though, is that they want to continue to eat the traditional food items that they have grown up with, but they want to eat it differently."

One such food is manufactured by Forna Health Foods in Uganda. Forna makes composite flour, which consists of mixing 12 different flours to produce porridge for children and older people.

The company director, Hilary Bainemigisha, said their food

products are nutritious and easy to prepare. "We have two versions. We have one that doesn't need to be cooked. It is popular among corporate people who are at the office. It is popular among travellers, students, people in hospitals who have no facilities but can access hot water in a flask," Bainemigisha said. "But even... the version for cooking, you only need to cook water or milk up to boiling point then you add in the paste and you stir." But Bainemigisha said the company faces hurdles, such as accessing a sufficient supply

of raw food outside the harvest season. Because of that, she added, providing good food at a fair price is not easy.

"Away from the harvest season, prices of grain are high. But for us, the product must remain at the same price. So, our profit margin reduces greatly the farther away we go from harvest," Bainemigisha said. "But during harvest, we need to invest in storage such that we buy a lot during harvest, and stabilize our profit margin. Secondly, we mix too many flours and

that means our production costs are high."

The food processing sector also faces challenges due to a lack of infrastructure and logistical operations. The U.N.'s Food and Agriculture Organization says 30 percent to 40 percent of food produced in Africa is lost before it reaches the customer. The food waste or loss amounts to an estimated \$1 trillion each year. Agricultural experts blame African governments for failing to protect technology innovators whose work is

copied and stolen, which has led to people shying away from doing business in Africa. Badiane said the processing sector is critical to modernizing rural areas, and needs more government attention. "This is the environment around the emerging processing sector, which I think in many cases hasn't yet gotten the level of attention it needs from governments. But this is the most important next thing in developing and modernizing the rural areas," Badiane said. "It's far away from the rural areas, but this is going to be the trigger for progress and

modernization of the rural areas." The researchers say Ghana, Kenya, Senegal and South Africa have made progress in encouraging the growth of food processing firms.

They say those countries have established food safety and quality control, invested in technical and vocational education and training, offered tax breaks, assured the supply of raw materials, and provided access to financial credit, which helps processors acquire better machinery and improve production capabilities.

## Project empowers varsity students, lecturers on conservation research

By Guardian Correspondent, Morogoro

STUDENTS and lecturers from three public universities have been equipped with skills and tools to enable them conduct research on endangered species, thanks to CONTAN project funded by the European Union.

The institutions benefiting from the initiative are Sokoine University of Agriculture (SUA), the College of African Wildlife Management (CAWM), and the University of Dar es Salaam (UDSM).

Speaking at a stakeholders' meeting here midweek, Prof Amandus Muhairwa, SUA Deputy Vice Chancellor (Planning, Finance and Administration) outlined the project's anticipated impact, emphasising that the universities have received both training and high-tech equipment for sample collection, analysis and preservation.

"We have achieved notable success at SUA, enabling our faculty to receive international-level training on biodiversity and to acquire essential teaching tools, including microscopes," Prof. Muhairwa said.

Dr Charles Kilawe, a lecturer at SUA and one of the CONTAN project coordinators, said that the four-year project began in 2021 with a goal to equip students with skills needed to identify and protect endangered species in collaboration with wildlife and forest

conservationists.

"Through this project we have acquired state-of-the-art microscopes which are available only at CAWM and SUA in the country. We have also purchased additional equipment such as generators and storage cabinets for preserving dry plant and insect samples used in various research activities," he said.

Theodora Aloye, head of Udzungwa Mountains Conservation Area, highlighted the project's success in increasing community awareness about the importance of conserving endangered species.

"The project provided temporary employment and income to villagers around the Udzungwa Mountains Conservation Area. Students have conducted training sessions and villagers were hired to prepare the environment and collect plant and insect samples," she said.

She noted that the Udzungwa Mountains Conservation Area was chosen as a learning site for CONTAN due to its unique features, including its well-preserved forest and diverse flora, insects and wildlife.

Hadija Mchelu, an assistant lecturer in the Department of Ecosystem Management and Conservation at SUA shared how the project enhanced her research capabilities.



A prisons officer leads American citizen Brandon Dashaurn out of the Kisutu Resident Magistrate's Court in Dar es Salaam yesterday shortly after the former was sentenced to 30 years' imprisonment for drug trafficking. Photo: Correspondent Imani Nathaniel

## WHO urges rapid access to mpox diagnostic tests, invites manufacturers to emergency review

By Special Correspondent

THE World Health Organisation (WHO) has asked manufacturers (IVDs) to submit an expression of interest for Emergency Use Listing (EUL)

WHO has been in ongoing discussions with manufacturers about the need for effective diagnostics, particularly in low-income settings. The request for EUL expressions of interest by manufacturers is the latest devel-

opment in these discussions.

Testing is key for people to get treatment and care as early as possible and prevent further spread.

Since 2022, WHO has delivered around 150 000 diagnostic tests for mpox globally, of which over a quarter have gone to countries in the African Region. In the coming weeks, WHO will deliver another 30 000 tests to African countries.

With as many as 1000 suspected cases reported in the Democratic Republic of the Congo alone this

week, the demand for diagnostic tests is on the rise. In this heavily affected country, WHO has worked with partners to scale up diagnostic capacity to respond to the upsurge of cases. Since May 2024, six additional labs have been equipped to diagnose mpox, enabling a decentralization of testing capacity from major cities to affected provinces. Two of these labs are in South Kivu, selected to respond to the outbreak of the new viral strain, called 1b.

Thanks to these efforts, testing

rates have dramatically improved in the country, with four times as many samples tested in 2024 so far as compared to 2023.

WHO has also updated its diagnostic testing guidance to detect the new virus strain and is working with countries to roll it out. Earlier, WHO issued target product profiles to guide manufacturers in the development of new diagnostic tests.

WHO Director-General Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus

declared on 14 August 2024 that the upsurge of mpox in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and in a growing number of countries in Africa constitutes a public health emergency of international concern (PHEIC) under the International Health Regulations (2005).

Manufacturers of IVDs are now asked to submit available quality, safety and performance data to WHO as soon as they can. IVDs are tests done in laboratories to

detect a pathogen. Detection of viral DNA by PCR (Polymerase Chain Reaction) testing is the gold standard for mpox diagnosis. It detects the virus's DNA in samples taken from skin lesions, such as fluid or crusts from vesicles or pustules. Testing of blood is not recommended for routine diagnosis and antibody detection methods may be used for retrospective case classification but not for diagnosis.



Maharagande Mbalala, Opposition ACT-Wazalendo's Constitution and Legal Affairs shadow minister, addresses journalists in Dar es Salaam yesterday on reports of violations of the rights of people said to live in wildlife conservation areas in Tabora Region. Photo: Correspondent Imani Nathaniel

## IMF hinges Nigeria's 3.1pc economic growth outlook on stronger reforms

LAGOS

PERMANENT Representative of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in Nigeria, Dr Christian Ebeke, has said that achieving Nigeria's projected 3.1 percent economic growth outlook for 2024 is dependent on implementation of stronger reforms.

Dr Ebeke, who spoke at the Lagos Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) International Business Conference and Expo 2024 with the theme: "Invest Nigeria", on Tuesday, stated that Nigeria needs to embark on further reforms on governance and business regulations for the country to grow slightly from the 2.9 percent rate of 2023.

According to him, such reforms will transform its growth momentum into something more durable.

He, however, said that Nigeria had recorded progress in its credit market, as well as financial and external sectors.

"Insecurity, tight financial conditions, multiple taxes, insufficient power and corruption are foremost constraints identified by businesses.

"What comforts the IMF is that these issues can be addressed by the Nigerian government, and they are currently being addressed through reforms by the federal government.

"And we are encouraged by the fact that these issues can be reversed," the report by Vanguard newspaper quoted IMF official as saying.

He also said that Nigeria should close the structural gaps like India, by reducing governance and business regulation bottlenecks by 25 percent.

## Heifer backs agriculture tech to reinforce Africa's food systems

By Special Correspondent

HEIFER International, a global non-governmental organisation focused on technology and innovation, has committed to supporting young African inventors who are leveraging technology to tackle hunger across the continent.

The announcement comes ahead of the Africa Food Systems (AFS) Forum 2024, scheduled to take place in Kigali, Rwanda, from 2 to 6 September.

The forum will convene thousands of industry executives, policymakers, innovators, development agencies, private sector lead-

ers, farmers, and agri-entrepreneurs to discuss critical issues and opportunities within the sector.

Heifer International has announced that it will be attending the event alongside young innovators from six African countries, with whom the organisation has been collaborating to enhance their solutions for the benefit of smallholder farmers throughout Africa.

"We are inspired by the remarkable contributions that young visionary African innovators are making towards transforming our food systems, and we are actively supporting their innovations," said Adesuwa Ifedi, Senior Vice President of Africa Programmes at

Heifer International.

Ifedi explained that through its various programmes, Heifer provides the catalytic financing and market knowledge necessary for these innovators to refine and scale their agri-tech solutions to address the challenges faced by smallholder farmers.

"By integrating finance and technology, we are helping smallholder farmer's transition from mere subsistence to thriving businesses, supporting them in scaling their operations and achieving profitability, while creating much-needed employment opportunities for young people across the value chain," Ifedi said.

Heifer's involvement with smallholder farmers has shaped their understanding of what is crucial for transforming Africa's food systems. At this year's AFS Forum, Heifer aims to engage with key partners, stakeholders, and policymakers to further this dialogue and leverage their experience to expedite the transformation of food systems.

"Heifer is thrilled to facilitate connections between generations in agriculture, recognising that the future of Africa's agriculture hinges on the next generation's ability to introduce suitable technology and innovation into the sector," he added.

The 2024 AFS Forum will highlight and discuss innovations, technological advancements, policies, business models, and investments needed to accelerate the transformation of sustainable food systems in Africa. The forum also provides an opportunity for public and private sector leaders to address the urgent need and strategies for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030 and meeting the commitments of the Malabo Declaration by 2025.

Since its founding in 1944, Heifer International has worked with over 46 million people worldwide to end hunger and poverty sustainably.



Kahama district commissioner Mboni Mhita (3rd-L) receives a donation of medical equipment and supplies from Exim Bank's Head of Marketing and Communications, Stanley Kafu, at Kahama Municipal Hospital in Shinyanga Region on Thursday. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

## South Africa lion breeders face uncertainty after ban

JOHANNESBURG

SOUTH AFRICA'S phase-out of breeding captive big game and ban on the use of lions for commercial gain has left some big-cat breeders worried about their business prospects.

A ministerial task team appointed by former minister of environment, Barbara Creecy, recommended in December 2022 closure of the breeding sector, but did not provide financial incentives for lion owners once the ban took effect. The government implemented the recommendations in April, with no deadline for breeding to cease.

No changes to the plans have been made since South Africa's national election in May, which resulted in President Cyril Ramaphosa leading a unity government and the appointment of a new environment minister.

South Africa has over 8,000 lions living in captivity, the largest captive lion population in the world, surpassing the country's wild lion population.

Willie Le Roux, a game lodge owner and wildlife artificial reproduction researcher, said his lodge has been involved in artificial reproductive research with local and international universities since 2006, and in 2017 produced the first lion cubs through artificial insemination.

"(The government) can't have it both ways ... they can't give us (permission) for the research, but then cut off our stream of income," Le Roux said.

Le Roux's lodge allows tourists to participate in guided educational walks with lions, which he said helps pay his employees and fund his research facility.

## African delegates explore North Carolina agriculture

By Special Correspondent

THE North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University College of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences (CAES) welcomed a delegation of government leaders from the Republics of Malawi and Zambia to campus this summer to showcase agricultural research and techniques the nations may consider adopting.

The visit, facilitated by the N.C. Department of Agriculture and Con-

sumer Services and the N.C. National Guard, aimed to strengthen civilian partnerships between the African nations, the United States (US) government and the agricultural sector.

This initiative is part of the National Guard Bureau State Partnership Program, which pairs U.S. states with partner nations to enhance national security and foster collaborative development.

The delegation, led by Zambia's Minister of Defense Ambrose Lufu-

ma, comprised around 50 members who toured various facilities at the University Farm. Highlights included the Automated Milking System in the dairy unit, breeding techniques in the beef cattle unit, poultry production, and high-tunnel horticultural research, including ginger cultivation.

The visitors also explored the Cooperative Extension program, which they are considering implementing in their own countries.

Both Zambia and Malawi rely heavily

on agriculture as a key economic driver and source of employment but face significant challenges, including a prolonged drought that has severely affected food security in south-central Africa, noted N.C. Agriculture Commissioner Steve Troxler. "Agriculture is crucial for the rural livelihoods of both nations," Troxler said. "While both countries are actively working to boost agricultural productivity through various policies and initiatives, they face numerous

challenges. This is where assistance from N.C. agriculture becomes vital."

The delegation gained insights into strategies for increasing crop yields, leveraging technology to optimise food production on limited land, and adopting climate-resilient agricultural practices, including water conservation methods.

"This partnership is immensely valuable," said Dr. Antoine Alston, CAES Associate Dean for Academics. "Food security is a critical issue, and N.C.

A&T is uniquely positioned to support the National Guard's efforts in our national interest. Our small-farm programs are particularly suited for adaptation and can be beneficial for our partners in Malawi and Zambia."

During their visit, the group also toured the Piedmont Triad Farmers Market, North Carolina State University's livestock farm, and Commissioner Troxler's Guilford County farm.

## US to extend African railway aspirations through Tanzania

NAIROBI

THE United States government is set to expand the Lobito Corridor - a railway project that runs from Angola to Zambia through the Democratic Republic of the Congo - all the way to the Indian Ocean through Tanzania.

The railway would connect African countries to global markets and enhance regional trade and economic growth, supporters say.

Speaking to reporters online on Wednesday, Helaina Matza, the US acting special coordinator for partnership for Global Infrastructure and Investment, spoke about progress made on upgrading and extending the Lobito Corridor.

Matza, who just finished a weeklong trip to the DRC and Tanzania, said the trip focused on "relaunching our partnership with the DRC and engaging with the Tanzanian government and private sector on next steps towards extending the economic corridor to the Indian Ocean. As President [Joe] Biden has said from day one of the launch of this flagship effort, this corridor has never just been about building infrastructure. It's about offering high-quality, sustainable infrastructure projects that deliver lasting economic growth."

The US government, with the support of the European Union, African

financial institutions, and the governments of Angola, the DRC and Zambia, is working to rebuild and revive the Benguela railway line that the countries used to export materials and minerals even before independence.

The project will be financed by \$250 million supplied by the US International Development Finance Corporation.

US officials say the improved railway line is meant to enhance export possibilities for Angola, the DRC and Zambia. The partly refurbished railway has already carried shipments of Congolese copper to Angola's Lobito port for shipment to the city of Baltimore on the US East Coast.

Erastus Mwencha, former deputy chairperson of the African Union Commission, said transport systems like the Lobito Corridor can help improve trade among African countries.

"One of the reasons intra-Africa trade is low is because of poor transport networks," Mwencha said, adding that goods can sometimes be brought from Europe to Africa at more competitive rates than goods being moved from one African country to another.

But Mwencha is worried that the ports and railways used to export Africa's raw materials remain largely the same as they were during colonial times, and that Africa is also still operating on a colonial-era business model.



Water minister Jumaa Aweso (L) and Makete constituency legislator Festo Sanga consult in the National Assembly debating chamber in Dodoma city yesterday with the House in session. Photo: Correspondent Ibrahim Joseph

## Africa's nuclear dreams fusion of high hopes, massive hurdles

By Special Correspondent

AFRICA'S nuclear energy ambitions face significant challenges as experts question whether the continent's infrastructure can support such a leap.

Industry leaders from the US and Africa's nuclear energy sector met in Nairobi this week to discuss how to move forward.

The four-day conference aimed to address the obstacles hindering the adoption of nuclear energy on the continent.

While South Africa remains

the only African nation with nuclear power plants, Kenya and Rwanda are eager to follow.

This summit is the second major convention on the issue, following a similar event in Accra, Ghana, in October-November 2023. That event was organised by the US Department of Energy in collaboration with the Nuclear Power Institute of the Ghana Atomic Energy Commission.

Experts are questioning the feasibility of building nuclear power plants in Africa.

"There is a lot of talk about nuclear programmes in Af-

rica, but these ideas are closer to fantasy than industrial reality," said Mycle Schneider, project coordinator at the World Nuclear Industry Status Report (WNISR).

The International Atomic Energy Agency states that an average large nuclear reactor is around 1,000 megawatts (MW) or one gigawatt (GW). However, only four African countries have a grid larger than 10,000MW or 10GW - Algeria, Libya, Morocco and Nigeria. Most other African nations have much smaller grids.

"Kenya's grid is about 3.3GW, so the largest unit should be

around 300MW, which is much less than a large nuclear reactor," Schneider said.

"In Rwanda, the total national grid is 300MW. So we're in a situation where an ordinary nuclear power plant would absolutely not have the grid size needed in most African countries," Schneider argues that African countries need decentralised energy production systems, a mix of renewable energy and power systems that can be built quickly, unlike nuclear power plants.

"The wonderful opportunity on a continent like Africa is that in many places everything has

to be done from the beginning," he said.

"The fact that there are no grids or very small grids can be an opportunity to implement advanced, highly flexible grids designed for the future, with decentralised production of solar, wind or other energies, and biomass."

The US has sent top nuclear energy officials to the summit to offer Africans insights on nuclear technology. The US is also keen to strengthen its ties with Kenya through this summit and to support other African economies.

"By emphasising internation-

al cooperation, sharing innovative solutions and shaping policies, the summit aims to drive positive change and serve as a platform to strengthen existing relationships and forge new ones to enhance cooperation in the nuclear energy sector," the Atlantic Council, a major participant, said in a statement.

Kenya is promoting the construction of a 1,000MW plant starting in 2027, which is expected to cost around 500 billion Kenyan shillings (about €3.5 billion).

The country hopes to raise investments during the summit to be able to complete it

by 2032. Kenya to build first nuclear power plant by 2034 amid local opposition.

But for Schneider, nuclear energy is expensive, and demands time and highly skilled workers that very few countries have. Therefore is also no economic, industrial or practical drivers to make the nuclear option viable in Africa.

"Russia and China are dominating the nuclear power sector and so it seems like this stems from US geopolitical interest to counter their role on the continent more than anything else," he said.

## Sub-Saharan Africa set to become 25pct of global workforce - study

By Special Correspondent

SUB-SAHARAN Africa's working-age population will surge to 25 percent of the global total, posing both significant economic opportunities and potential challenges, a new report by asset management firm Bridgewater has revealed.

The report indicates that Sub-Saharan Africa's working-age population will grow substantially in the coming decades, increasing from approximately 10 percent to 25 percent of the world's total working-age population.

This demographic shift could position the region as a major driver of global economic expansion, provided productivity levels rise accordingly.

However, the report also warns of a potential downside. Without significant improvements in economic development, the region could continue its current trajectory of "anaemic" growth, which would negatively affect both the region itself and the global economy.

"To change this trajectory, developed economies need to dramatically increase financial support for the region and the private sector needs to increase allocations, which

will require action by policy makers in the region and in developed economies," Bridgewater chief executive officer Nir Bar Dea wrote in the report's introduction.

The report, authored by Devon Long and Eka Zhao, estimates that if productivity growth in Sub-Saharan Africa can be increased by 3 to 4 percent annually over the next 25 years, the region could raise its global output share from 3 percent to 10 percent. Achieving this goal, however, will require addressing critical barriers such as infrastructure deficiencies and human-capital gaps.

To close the investment gap and improve investment quality, the authors recommend that investments should not only be profitable but also generate social benefits that justify their costs. This approach would facilitate advancements in health-care and education without accumulating unsustainable debt.

International private capital is seen as a key element in bridging the investment gap. However, challenges such as high perceived risk, underdeveloped infrastructure, immature capital markets, and regional fragmentation must be overcome to attract and deploy these funds effectively.



Regency Hospital paediatrician Dr Rahim Damji (2nd-R) and nurses pictured yesterday after attending to Chinese citizen Liya Zhang (31), who had given birth to triplets at the hospital shortly earlier. Photo: Correspondent Joseph Mwendapole

## Saudi market opens for meat from South Africa

By Special Correspondent

SAUDI ARABIA has lifted a 21-year ban on imports of South African meat products, opening up a lucrative market for South African producers, according to Ambassador Mogobo Magabe.

Speaking during a recent virtual Outward Selling Mission to Saudi Arabia, hosted by the Department of Trade, Industry and Competition (DTIC), Magabe emphasised the significance of this development.

The event, themed "Unlocking Trade Opportunities through Collaboration," was attended by over 250 participants and involved key stakeholders, including the South

African Embassy, the Saudi Food and Drug Authority, the South African National Halaal Authority, and the Red Meat Producers Organisation.

"The lifting of the ban was one of the strategic outcomes of President Cyril Ramaphosa's State Visit to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia where he held constructive and fruitful engagements with the Crown Prince and Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Mohammed bin Salman. The two leaders signed fifteen agreements that included collaboration in agriculture, mining and tourism," said Magabe.

He added: "It is an opportune time for the South African meat

producers to take advantage of the lifting of the ban and export their products to the Kingdom. This can contribute in growing our economy, and strengthening our bilateral economic relations with Saudi Arabia."

Zanele Sanni, chief director of export promotion and marketing at the DTIC, encouraged South African companies to utilise the virtual session to market their respective products to potential Saudi buyers with the aim of concluding sustainable export contracts that would increase trade between the two countries.

"As government, we are mandated to support local industries to enhance their manufacturing capacity

and find suitable export markets for their products through strategic mechanisms like these. We are committed to enhancing bilateral economic ties with Saudi Arabia."

"In recent years, both countries have had high-level political and business exchanges, leading to lifting the 21-year ban on South African meat exports to Saudi Arabia. This has opened the substantial Saudi Arabian market to South African producers," said Sanni.

She expressed South Africa's appreciation to the Saudi Arabian authorities for having already approved twelve South African companies to export beef meat to Saudi Arabia, and seven com-

panies for lamb and mutton meat products.

"This demonstrates the high standards met by South African companies. It also confirms that the meat-producing sector in South Africa is highly developed and strategically positioned to meet the demand of the Saudi Arabian market," noted Sanni.

Dr Botlhe Modisane, chief director of animal production and health at the Department of Agriculture, said Saudi Arabia provided a high potential market for South African exporters to tap into, in terms of fresh or chilled beef meat and frozen beef products.

"Saudi Arabia currently accounts for about 1 percent of agricultural exports from South Africa. South Africa anticipates expanding its export market share with Saudi Arabia given the signing of the recent trade agreements. Saudi Arabia is a net importer of beef.

Its imports of frozen beef and fresh or chilled meat imports recorded approximately 71 percent and 90 percent growth rates respectively," said Modisane.

The session was also addressed by the representatives of the South African National Halaal Authority (SANHA), Hammid Mulla and of the Red Meat Abattoir Association, Dr Gerhard.



Albert Masao, the Tanzania Forest Services Agency forest conservator for Ilala District, runs a seminar on the benefits of forest conservation for leaders of community groups from Kivule and Majohe wards in Dar es Salaam yesterday. Photo: Correspondent Sabato Kasika

## Cameroon to share cocoa location data to meet EU environment rule

By Amindeh Atabong, Yaounde

CAMEROON'S cocoa and coffee association on Wednesday signed agreements with six cocoa exporters to roll out a platform that will provide plantations' location data to comply with an impending EU regulation on deforestation-free products.

The European Union is Cameroon's biggest market where it shipped about 80 percent of total cocoa bean exports, amounting to 185.613 metric tonnes in the 2023/2024 farming season, according to data from the country's National Cocoa and Coffee Board.

Under the new EU rule, which takes effect by the end of this year, the chocolate-making ingredient and other products won't be accepted on the EU market if they were produced on deforested or degraded land after December 31 2020, a date that corresponds with existing international commitments.

The traceability platform, managed by Cameroon's Cocoa and Coffee Interprofessional Council, would allow EU buyers to request coordinates of plantations belonging to cocoa farmers, officials said. The platform would then anonymously query the data holders as most cocoa farms have already been georeferenced by industry operators.

"This is an excellent initiative of the private sector, with the involvement of the government. It's not only about respecting EU rules but to show that the product is the best in the world," Jean-Marc Chataigner, EU ambassador to Cameroon, said.

Chataigner added that the EU was yet to be involved in the process.

Narcisse Olinga, deputy director in charge of external trade, told Reuters that 260,000 metric tonnes, or about 80 percent of Cameroon's cocoa output, already meets the EU traceability requirement.

## Spain to launch new strategy for its relations with Africa

By Special Correspondent

SPANISH Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez has said that the country will launch a new strategy for its relations with Africa in the coming weeks, with West Africa and the Sahel being considered priority regions. He did not provide further details.

After first visiting Gambia, then Senegal as part of a three-day tour of West Africa to tackle irregular migration, Sanchez reaffirmed commitment to

heighten cooperation with Africa.

The Spanish Prime Minister began his tour in Mauritania on Tuesday where he announced that Spain will expand its circular migration program to Mauritians and renew cooperation between the two nations' security forces to combat people smuggling and trafficking networks.

He continued his tour going south to Gambia on Wednesday and is expected to meet with Senegal's president and prime minister on Thursday.

The three coastal nations have become the main departure points of migrants trying to reach the Canary Islands, a Spanish archipelago located close to the African coast and used as a stepping stone for migrants and refugees trying to reach continental Europe.

More than 22,000 people have disembarked on its shores since January, according to Spain's Interior Ministry, more than double the number of irregular arrivals for the same period last year.

Sanchez said during a conference in

Senegal that he was a "strong advocate" for migration but also stressed that "security is a top priority."

"Regular migration. I am a strong advocate of it. It opens avenues for prosperity, for economic and cultural development. It is good for both the country of origin and the host country," said Sanchez.

"We are living in a complex context. We are all aware of this, marked by the growing pressure of outflows along the Atlantic Route. And in this scenario, I insist that my government and Spain are

committed to the continuity and strengthening of our bilateral relations," he added.

Among those making it to the Canaries are thousands of Malian refugees fleeing violence and instability in the Sahelian nation as well as youth from Senegal, Mauritania and other West African countries who are seeking better job opportunities abroad. There are also increasingly more teenagers and children traveling alone to the Canary Islands, which has overwhelmed the local government responsible for their care.

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## Generation of nuclear power relevant, if the math is right

WHAT may have been seen or regarded as an undercurrent in Tanzania's electricity generation policy is becoming a factual strategic design, with a high-level admission that the country intends to develop nuclear energy as an alternative source of electricity.

These plans were spelt out at the second US-Africa nuclear energy high-profile conference in the Kenyan capital, Nairobi.

It is evident that what lies behind that brainstorming session is the likelihood of new generation power sector project designs, complete with an implicit affirmation that nuclear is a clean energy source.

There is plenty that is clean about nuclear energy but not all of it, as there are huge problems of putting nuclear power stations out of use.

It applies as well in a more routine manner with respect to what to do with spent fuel, which basically is radioactive water that can spell trouble if buried underground - and permeates underground water.

Not surprisingly, the idea is not being aired with plenty of fanfare as it is anything between a jeweller's find and a cup of worms strategically speaking, with too many precautions are needed in the entire value chain.

It is also helpful to check in the legacy of this kind of power generation why so many countries make efforts, if not to de-nuclearise their power sectors altogether, at least not building such stations anymore. Contentions on nuclear power generation predate action on fossil fuels.

Yet this method seems primed for another lease of life, not just in developing countries not having experienced such contentions but for a different reason.

The contest on fossil fuels is

ingrained not just on safety fears but on systematic climate change that puts nearly everything in the world on the balance. So far, there is only a pointillist demand to reduce carbon dioxide production - and here nuclear energy is just a modest improvement while experts are still deaf on re-greening all the deserts.

What could at least be discerned at the Nairobi conference bringing together energy sector executives, policymakers and energy experts from various African countries is the clear impression that the US is interested in this sphere of modernisation.

How far such need is tied up with the need for higher power generation levels is unclear, as it relates to optimal capacity for generation from other sources - and it is evident that there can be limits. Damming rivers for high power generation is one such method, but it appears that there aren't enough rivers to get 10,000MW of hydropower.

On the contrary, it is arguable whether sea wind power and wind power generation are similarly limited in potential or whether it just depends on the capital layout.

The difference at the level of policy making and especially for strategic project pursuits is that such projects tend to be small-scale, whereas nuclear power is a massive undertaking.

Once the government nails such joint venture, indications are that Tanzania will have been assured of power for up to one decade, with room for a similar project or its expansion.

It is not surprising that policymakers think of a major undertaking of this sort, saving administrators energy and time to negotiate 50 solar or wind power ideas.

## Bad eating habits tied to real poverty, gender divide and, slightly, education

ANXIETY among health professionals and researchers on the implicit link of malnutrition and status of being large scale growing regions has not abated, even if it is largely low-intensity in character.

The latest disquiet came from a research or administrative admission that, although Morogoro Region is among leading rice producers, it has a relatively poor nutritional status attributed to inappropriate food consumption.

There were also references to harmful traditions, like preventing women and definitely children from meat and eggs, while milk is a cash produce.

A recent evaluation meeting on the implementation of nationwide nutrition pact in the region brought up this realisation from nutrition subsector officials.

The officials pointed at customary restrictions on consumption of animal products as contributing to intense nutritional deficiencies.

While efforts were directed at the fact of having a variety of vegetables and fruits each season but insufficiently added to daily meals, perhaps the issue isn't lack of knowledge.

There are cash demands as well as ownership ties, where it matters who owns the cattle or chicken, who earns the cash for food and what their expenditure priorities are, leading to a bare grain diet.

One needs fairly detailed research on availability of various types of food, their costing structure and family incomes (so to

speak).

This is because when the woman in a family is the main source of income, a balanced diet is more likely. When it is a man, however, there has to be plenty of cash in his pocket to provide enough for a balanced diet.

That is in part why there are biting ironies in current government efforts to raise the level of civic responsibility, which ought to start at home.

Tradition is often a praised term in public discussion among African countries and it is not clear if those tied to traditions realise how much it is also the source of woes, often incalculably.

There are no easy answers to malnutrition except by a sharp growth in income levels less by self-employment in informal sector settings but regular jobs and assured incomes.

With regular incomes, most men would likely take up proper fatherly roles in their families, as an aspect of their dignity, while marginalisation or systematic curbs in income expectations would continue to risk leading to frustration.

Naturally, the seething anger burning inside can't be emptied on society except in criminal action and that is dangerous, so it tends to be emptied on the household. It is a situation usually identified with mental health situations but, as usual, health sector professionals will focus on education while the real issue is emancipation from system-driven grinding poverty.

## Happy birthday Tanzania People's Defence Forces



@Msamba

# In Tonga the UN Secretary-General declares global climate emergency

By Catherine Wilson

THREE months ahead of the COP29 United Nations (UN) Climate Change Conference, the United Nations Secretary-General, António Guterres, has called for an emergency response from the international community as new data from the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) reveals a critical deterioration in the state of the climate.

Scientists have called for limiting the global temperature rise to 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels to prevent overheating of the atmosphere and a damaging rise in sea levels.

But, due to inaction on reducing greenhouse gas emissions, there is an 80 percent chance that the 1.5 degree threshold will be breached within the next five years, reports the WMO.

"This is a crazy situation: rising seas are a crisis entirely of humanity's making. A crisis that will soon swell to an almost unimaginable scale with no lifeboat to take us back to safety," the UN Secretary-General declared in Nuku'alofa, the capital of Tonga, a Polynesian nation of about 106,000 people located southeast of Fiji, on Monday.

He has been on the ground in the Pacific Islands, witnessing firsthand how people's lives are hanging in the balance as they suffer a relentless battering of climate extremes, such as cyclones, floods, rising seas and hotter temperatures.

"Today's reports confirm that relative sea levels in the southwestern Pacific have risen even more than the global average, in some locations by more than double the global increase in the past 30 years," Guterres said. "If we save the Pacific, we also save ourselves. The world must act and answer the SOS before it is too late."

According to a newly released UN report, *Surging Seas in a Warming World*, the increase in the global mean sea level was 9.4 cm, but in the southwest Pacific it was more than 15 cm between 1993 and 2023.

Expanding oceans, due to melting Arctic and Antarctic ice, are projected "to cause a large increase in the frequency and severity of episodic flooding in almost all locations in the Pacific Small Island Developing States in the coming decades."

Ninety percent of Pacific Islanders live within 5 kilometres of coastlines, leaving them highly exposed to encroaching seas. Climate change impacts pose a serious threat to human life, livelihoods and food security, and the implications for increasing poverty and loss and damage are "profound and far-reaching," the report claims.

For years, Pacific Island leaders have led the way in calling for world leaders and industrialized nations to take rigorous action to halt the increasing carbon dioxide emissions destroying earth's atmosphere. In Tonga, the



UN Secretary-General António Guterres visits a house in Lalomanu that has been abandoned due to storm damage and flooding as a result of climate change during his trip to Samoa. Credit: UN Photo/Kiara Worth

Secretary-General joined many of them at the 53rd Pacific Islands Forum Leaders' summit on the 26-27 August, including the summit's host and Prime Minister of Tonga, Hon. Siaosi Sovaleni, Papua New Guinea's Prime Minister, James Marape, Samoa's leader, Fiame Naomi Mata'afa and Tuvalu's PM, Feleti Teo.

And he took the opportunity to amplify their voices and their climate leadership. 'Greenhouse gases are causing ocean heating, acidification and rising seas. But the Pacific Islands are showing the way to protect our climate, our planet and our ocean,' he said.

The UN chief took time to listen to the voices of local communities and youth, gaining valuable insights into how the people of Tonga are responding to climate extremes and disasters.

In January 2022, a tsunami, triggered by the eruption of an undersea volcano known as Hunga Tonga-Hunga Ha'apai, descended on Tonga. It reached the main island of Tongatapu and others, affecting 80 percent of the country's population, destroying livestock and agricultural land and causing damage of more than USD 125 million.

Guterres met with people in the coastal villages of Kanokupolu and Ha'atafu, which were devastated when the tsunami swept through and surveyed the ruins of beach resorts and coastal infrastructure while witnessing the resilience and determination of those who have rebuilt their homes and lives.

Two years ago, the UN also launched 'Early Warnings for All', a project aimed at installing early warning systems in every country by 2027 in order to save lives and prevent damage.

"With the increase in the intensity of tropical cyclones and flooding [in the Pacific], simple weather forecasting is not enough for people to prepare for these natural disasters," Arti Pratap, an expert on tropical cyclones who lectures in Geospatial Science at the University of the South Pacific in Fiji, told IPS. She said it was important to "focus on building the capacity of communities to make use of the information provided by national meteorological services in the Pacific on an hourly, daily and monthly basis for decision-making."

Many farmers, for instance, "tend to rely on readily available traditional knowledge on weather and climate and its interaction with the environment around them, which they are familiar with. However, traditional knowledge may not be sufficient in the background of global warming," Pratap said.

The UN initiative involves the setting up of meteorological observation stations, ocean sensors and radars to better predict extreme weather and disaster events.

According to the UN, providing 24 hours' notice of an approaching disaster can reduce damage by 30 percent. As part of the project, Guterres launched a new weather radar at Tonga's International Airport.

His week-long tour of the Pacific Islands, which also included time in Samoa, New Zealand and East Timor, was an opportune moment for Guterres to open conversations about the goals that will be on the table at COP29, to be held in Baku, Azerbaijan, on 11-22 November.

The key priorities of this year's climate summit will be, among others, limiting the global temperature rise to 1.5 degrees Celsius and achieving broad agreement on the scale and provision of climate finance. "The one thing that is very clear in my presence here is to be able to say loud and clear from the Pacific Islands to the big emitters that it is totally unacceptable, with devastating impacts of climate change, to go on increasing emissions," Guterres declared in Nuku'alofa on August 26, 2024.

And, for many Pacific Islanders, gaining better access to climate finance is vital. The development organization, Pacific Community, reports that the region will require at least USD 2 billion per year to implement climate resilience and adaptation projects and transition to renewable energy. This far exceeds what the Pacific is currently receiving in climate finance, which is about USD 220 million per annum.

"Despite the commendable pledges from the United Nations and world leaders, such as the Paris Agreement, the existing global finance mechanisms still hinder community-based and youth organizations from accessing critical support," Mahoney Mori, Chairman of the Pacific Youth Council, told local media during a meeting between the UN Chief and Pacific youth leaders in Tonga's capital.

"As a first step, all developed countries must honor their commitment to double adaptation finance to at least USD 40 billion per year by 2025," the UN Secretary General said on World Environment Day on June 24.

Tonga's Prime Minister, Hu'akavemeiliku Siaosi Sovaleni, summed up the views of many in the Pacific as world attention focused on his island nation with the visit of the UN Secretary-General: "We need a lot more action than just words," he said at the Pacific leaders meeting. Referring to a minor earthquake that shook the islands as leaders converged on Tonga, he added, "We put on a show with the rain and a bit of flooding and also shook you guys up a little bit by that earthquake, just to wake you up to the reality of what we have to face here in the Pacific."



By Telesphor Magobe

# Corporal punishment in schools as indicative of violent behaviour

THE other day, I watched one of the online TV and heard of a puzzling story of a schoolgirl who had been admitted to hospital. The schoolgirl said she was badly beaten up (got 70 canes) by teachers at school to the extent of failing to sit for an exam. Although it was not said why she was beaten up like that, as a parent I was astounded to hear from her and from a medical doctor who confirmed what had happened to her.

I believe there are other forms of punishment which can help a schoolchild correct his or her behaviour, but not necessarily corporal punishment which inflicts pain on schoolchildren.

I remember when I was still in primary school some teachers would punish us when we did wrong, but in a manner that did not inflict physical or mental harm on us. Yet, it made us show remorse for what we did. Corporal punishment can be replaced with manual work or any productive activity.

This is a form of punishment which can help in behavioural change, but it is not necessary that schoolchildren should be subjected to corporal punishment. In my opinion, the administration of corporal punishment is a form of violence teachers and even parents and caretakers induce on children.

We have to bear in mind that violence breeds violence. Teachers who lack teaching skills tend to use force in teaching even if schoolchildren don't understand what they teach. Teachers of this kind may prefer corporal punishment to other forms of punishment because they think a child learns better when he or she is beaten up, but it is not true. There is an often cited proverb "Spare the rod and spoil the child" by teachers and parents who prefer corporal punishment to other forms of punishment as a way of correcting them.

But who learns better while he or she is feeling pain in his or her body? Can a schoolchild concentrate on the subject he or she is taught while at the same time is feeling pain? I don't think so. Some teachers have to change their mindset and learn more about teaching skills, not just forcing schoolchildren to understand them even when they are clear to their pupils or students.

Teaching doesn't need any cane, but it only needs teaching skills which help schoolchildren like the subject they are taught. A skilled teacher can lead schoolchildren to concentrate on the subject through a play or singing a song. Playful learning is recommended as an effective teaching strategy.

Under the Education (Corporal Punishment) Regulations, 2002, the school head or a teacher appointed in writing by the school head may administer corporal punishment to a pupil or student and the maximum canes the pupil or student may undergo at a time are 4 (but not as many as 70 as it happened to the girl I



have referred to above) and the pupil or student must have committed a grave offence, which is deemed by the school to have brought or is capable of bringing the school into disrepute, but not in any other circumstance.

However, when a pupil or student is punished the teacher administering corporal punishment must take into consideration the offence, age, health and sex of an offender. In one school in Kagera Region, the administration of corporal punishment led to the death of a pupil. This means administration of corporal punishment in schools may occasion death or bodily injury as it has happened to the schoolgirl I have referred to. Children or schoolchildren must be protected against torture and degrading treatment.

Section 13(1) of the Law of the Child (R.E 2019) states that: "A person shall not subject a child to torture, or other cruel, inhuman punishment or degrading treatment, including any cultural practice which dehumanises or is injurious to the physical and mental well-being of a child."

Moreover, subsection (2) states: "No correction of a child is justifiable which is unreasonable in kind or in degree according to the age, physical and mental condition of the child and no correction is justifiable if the child is by reason of tender age or otherwise incapable of understanding the purpose of the correction."

I believe that the more corporal punishment is administered to schoolchildren the more they are induced to violence and as they grow up they too will

start being violent to their own children or schoolchildren in the case of those entrusted to teach schoolchildren. We may correct children even when we don't cane them. We should make corporal punishment rare and when it is used it should only be in grave offences, but it shouldn't be felt as a necessity because there are other forms of punishment which are more effective in inducing behavioural change in children than corporal punishment.

**Today's proverb: 'It is always time to do good'.  
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## Milked: Plant milks are now dominating the dairy aisle

By Special Correspondent

THE World Plant Milk Day on the 22nd of August is an international day that celebrates plant-based alternatives to dairy milk. Founded by Robbie Lockie, Co-founder of Plant Based News, in 2017 and established as a partnership with ProVeg in 2018, the campaign has attracted the attention of millions of people around the world and helped accelerate the transition from dairy milk to the rich variety of plant-based alternatives.

From soy to oat to cashew to barley: the diversity of vegan milks continues to grow in tandem with the global shift towards plant-based consumption.

As of this year, ProVeg South Africa has logged an incredible range of non-animal dairy products available to South African consumers; including 126 plant milks, 91 vegan cheeses, 30 vegan yoghurts, 10 vegan butters and 94 vegan ice creams.

The influx of new options comes as no surprise as the plant-based milk market is on its way to increase from US\$ 20.1 billion in 2024 up to US\$ 47.9 billion by 2034, at a Compound Annual Growth Rate of 9.1 percent over the next decade.

Globally milk alternatives continue to hold the largest share of all plant-based categories -15% across the total market - as ongoing innovations intrigue a broader group of consumers. In terms of variety, almond milk continued to make up most sales of alternative milks in 2023, but oat, soy, and coconut saw the most dollar sales growth.

Since plant-based milk, for example, coconut milk and soy milk, have numerous health and environmental benefits, the adoption is booming acutely on a global level. The amplified customer choice for plant-based food and beverages has encouraged the plant-based milk market to accelerate.

Plant milks, also known as plant-based milk alternatives are generally an extract of legumes, cereals, nuts, and/or seeds, diluted in water. They are very similar to animal milk in terms of texture, appearance, and use. Depending on the raw materials and fortification, they differ in their nutritional composition and taste, but none of them contains any lactose or cholesterol.

People choose plant milks over dairy milk for a variety of reasons. Whether it is for their nutritional value, animal welfare reasons, lower environmental impact, to avoid lactose or dairy milk allergens, or simply out of taste preference.

Plant milks have been consumed for centuries in various cultures, but their popularity has skyrocketed over the past decade. Considering that 75 percent of the world's adult population is lactose intolerant, it is not surprising that plant milk is the top-selling product in the entire veggie sector.

One in two American and European consumers uses plant milk, either by itself or in addition to cow's milk, while in the Asia-Pacific and Latin American regions, it's more than two-thirds of all consumers. Consumers are becoming increasingly interested in products that can improve their health and offer a more sustainable op-



tion.

Fortified plant-based milk products are not only healthier than traditional animal-based dairy products, boasting high nutrients and a lower fat content and calories, but they also have a much lower impact on the environment.

Brands like Oatly use clever marketing strategies to make the health and sustainability benefits of their products clear to consumers, encouraging them to give milk relatively recently entered the South African plant milk market, of which there are only two options available, one local

producer and an international barista blend. Interestingly, South Africa is the largest producer of macadamia nuts in the world, predominantly exporting to China.

Variability is a key driver for plant milk sales. In addition to handling a variety of ingredients like nuts, grains, and legumes, plant milk makers can produce different textures, from thick and creamy for nut milks, to light and watery for grain milks.

Indeed plant-based milk producers continue to innovate and expand into new territory. This here has seen the

South African release of Mwah! - the first barely milk on our market, as well as Giraf Macadamia and Maizly - the world's first corn-based alternative.

Unlike meat alternatives, plant-based milk products are often merchandised alongside their animal-based equivalents. Instead of positioning plant-based milk products in a separate 'vegan' aisle or cooler, they tend to be positioned right near or alongside dairy milk products.

This merchandising 'nudge' takes plant-based milk products to where a higher potential of shoppers are, familiarises

the average consumer with these products and normalises their being on a par with animal milks. Accessibility, variability and health reasons have stood plant-based milks in good stead as a rising food commodity.

ProVeg's report on plant milk shines a light on the top-selling product in the entire plant-based alternatives market. Based on current studies, this detailed report explores the role that plant milks can play in terms of global healthy and sustainable nutrition, from producers through to distributors and consumers.

By Adonis Byemelwa

# Shinyanga's alarming surge in livestock deaths demands immediate action to save livelihoods

**I**n the heart of Shinyanga District, a silent crisis unfolds with each passing day. The once-thriving herding communities are now facing an alarming surge in livestock deaths, a dire situation that threatens to unravel the economic stability of entire families and shake the nation's financial foundation.

On August 20, 2024, a council meeting became the epicenter of a heated discussion as the district's leaders gathered to confront this escalating emergency. Ngassa Mboje, the district council chairman, painted a grim picture of the challenges at hand, revealing a crisis that is not only devastating the local livestock population but also putting the economic survival of countless herders in jeopardy.

As the cattle, goats, and sheep fall victim to an unknown disease, the heart of Shinyanga beats with uncertainty, calling for urgent and impactful solutions to save its livestock, its economy, and its people.

Mboje lamented the alarming increase in livestock deaths, sharing his own distressing experience. "I have 100 cattle, but half of them have died," Mboje said, illustrating the gravity of the problem.

"Residents cry daily over livestock deaths and we don't know what disease it is. There's a growing belief that the vaccines might be causing this issue. We urge the government to rescue us from this situation."

The economy of Shinyanga District heavily relies on agriculture and livestock. Mboje emphasized that the loss of livestock undermines the economic stability of residents and, consequently, affects the national economy. "Our economy depends on agriculture and livestock, so as livestock die, our national economy deteriorates," he stressed.

Edward Maduhu, the district's agriculture, livestock, and fisheries officer, confirmed the rise in livestock deaths but admitted that accurate statistics are lacking. He mentioned plans to establish their laboratory for in-depth investigations to identify the cause of the deaths.

"We have reported to the regional animal disease coordinators in Mwanza for further assistance," Maduhu added.

Herders in Shinyanga District have voiced their frustrations over the loss of their livestock. They reported that this crisis has led some to fall back economically as their entire herds have perished. The region hosts a variety of livestock including cattle, goats, sheep, donkeys, pigs, and chickens.

Current statistics from the Shinyanga Regional Website reveal the scale of the region's livestock sector: 1,221,784 cattle, 757,772 goats, 372,351 sheep, 24,558 pigs, and 19,460 donkeys.

As well, Shinyanga is home to a significant native chicken population of 2,081,006, alongside 216,980-layer chickens and 10,729 broilers. The majority of this livestock consists of indigenous breeds, underscoring the deep-rooted agricultural traditions that define the region's economy.

Cattle sales are a primary source of income for herders, followed by goat sales. In the fiscal year 2015/2016, the government collected a total of 319,230,000 shillings from livestock taxes and transport fees, achieving 90.61% of the revenue target. In 2021, cattle herders complained about the lack of markets for hides from slaughtered animals and requested the government to provide better-quality livestock breeds for more productive farming.

Charles Masaganya, a cattle herder from Kahama District, discussed the challenges they face. "We ask the government to provide us with breeds that meet current industry standards. Hides are undervalued, and often we discard them. We lack markets and only have middlemen who offer unsatisfactory prices," Masaganya said, expressing his dissatisfaction with the situation.

Frank Mushi, a senior lecturer at the Livestock Training Agency (LITA), noted that livestock hides produced in the country often fail to meet international market standards because many herders do not recognize their value.

Mushi explained that indigenous cattle hides are less valued due to their small size and the presence of bumps. "Many herders do not understand the importance of hides, and most cattle raised have lim-



The June 2024 livestock exhibition and auction, spanning three days, was officially launched by Deputy Minister for Livestock and Fisheries, Alexander Mnyeti (with stick). File

ited utility," Mushi remarked.

Shinyanga Regional Commissioner Anamringi Macha acknowledged the lack of a market for the hides produced in the Kahama district, which results in lost revenue for the government.

Speaking on behalf of the five strategic regions involved in strengthening the leather value chain—Arusha, Manyara, Kagera, Geita, and Shinyanga—former Regional Commissioner Zainab Telack emphasized the government's commitment to developing the leather market in the country. She urged herders to adopt different types of livestock farming as the current cattle have defects that spoil the hides.

In the Lake Zone, despite the large livestock population, challenges such as inadequate equipment, poor infrastructure, limited farmer education, and few specialists compared to the region's size persist.

This zone comprises six regions—Mwanza, Mara, Shinyanga, Simiyu, Kagera, and Geita—with over 6.89 million cattle, 3.64 million goats, and 1.228 million sheep. Dr. Subira Mwakabumbe, acting officer-in-charge of the Lake Zone Animal Disease Research and Identification Centre, reported several issues including cattle plague (CBPP), goat pox, swine fever, rabies, tick-borne diseases, dermatophytosis, and foot-and-mouth disease. "In the 2016/17 period, 178 out of 866 reported cattle cases of cattle plague died," Dr. Mwakabumbe said, adding that 2,430 pigs died from swine fever.

Dr. Mwakabumbe highlighted that tick-borne diseases are a significant problem in the Lake Zone. "43,971 cattle were affected by these diseases, with 2,692 deaths," she noted. She also mentioned that the center faces challenges due to a lack of vehicles and equipment for disease monitoring.

Former Deputy Minister for Livestock and Fisheries, Abdallah Ulega, during a recent visit to Mwanza, acknowledged the challenges including a shortage of veterinary medicines.

Ulega stressed that there are significant investment

opportunities in the livestock product and veterinary medicine sectors. "The government is committed to addressing these issues, and herders should utilize these centers for education," Ulega said. He added that the government plans to launch a nationwide vaccination program according to Animal Diseases Act No. 17.

Dr. Sero Luwango, assistant director of the veterinary health unit, mentioned that abortion in cattle has been a persistent issue for herders. "When cattle have this disease, they abort at around seven months, and without vaccination, herders face further infections," Dr. Luwango said. "Often, this disease leads to severe malaria and headaches and affects other body parts."

In response to the escalating livestock crisis in Shinyanga District, urgent and decisive action is imperative to establish sustainable solutions. The government must spearhead the modernization of animal husbandry practices to mitigate the adverse effects on both the local and national economies.

Improving veterinary services and infrastructure is a critical first step. The establishment of well-equipped veterinary clinics and laboratories across the district would enable timely diagnosis and treatment of diseases affecting livestock.

Enhanced infrastructure will also

facilitate the swift movement of veterinary supplies and access to medical care for animals, which is crucial for preventing outbreaks and managing existing cases effectively.

Investing in advanced breeding techniques is another essential measure. By introducing high-quality breeds that are resistant to prevalent diseases and better adapted to local conditions, productivity can be significantly increased.

This will not only improve the health of the livestock but also enhance the economic returns for herders. Additionally, providing access to improved feed and nutrition will support better growth rates and overall animal health.

Education plays a pivotal role in this transformation. Training programs for farmers should be expanded to cover modern husbandry practices, disease prevention, and efficient management techniques. Empowering farmers with knowledge will enable them to make informed decisions and adopt best practices that can enhance productivity and sustainability.

Furthermore, investing in better disease diagnostics and treatment facilities is essential. State-of-the-art diagnostic tools and rapid testing capabilities can help in the early detection of diseases, reducing the spread and impact of outbreaks.

These facilities should be strategically located to serve the entire

region, ensuring that all herders have access to the necessary resources.

Globally, countries like the United States, Brazil, and China lead in livestock populations, with the U.S. boasting over 94 million cattle, Brazil housing around 228 million, and China home to approximately 95 million cattle. Tanzania, with its diverse livestock sector, ranks significantly lower with an estimated 1.2 million cattle.

This disparity underlines the urgent need for substantial improvements to boost Tanzania's livestock industry. The Sokoine University of Agriculture, a leading institution in Tanzania, plays a vital role in advancing livestock management and veterinary sciences. Its research and development efforts are crucial in shaping effective policies and practices to address the current challenges in Shinyanga and beyond.

To secure the future of Tanzania's livestock sector, integrating modern practices is essential. Transforming animal husbandry will not only rejuvenate the industry but also strengthen the economic stability of herding families and improve the nation's position in global livestock rankings. As we face these challenges, there is a pressing need to innovate and invest in the sector, ensuring a robust and prosperous future for Tanzania's livestock industry.

## 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
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Tembelea mitandao ya kijamii ya CAPITAL RADIO



CAPITAL RADIO

# Empowering communities to safeguard bird havens in Africa

By Special Correspondent

**S**INCE 2020 the EAFI Small Grants Programme has empowered local communities protect vital bird habitats.

Each spring, an awe-inspiring natural spectacle unfolds across the East Atlantic Flyway – a pivotal aerial highway stretching from the icy Arctic down the western flanks of Europe and Africa, spanning 49 countries. Millions of shorebirds and waterbirds, depart their southern wintering grounds and embark upon one of the most extraordinary migrations on earth.

Fuelled by ineffable biological impulses, these feathered voyagers undertake a breathtaking journey along tried and tested routes. Against the background of this spectacular migration, these birds face various perils along the way including habitat destruction caused by agriculture expansion and intensification, urbanisation, energy production, hunting and trapping as well as pollution among others.

Acknowledging these challenges BirdLife partners established the East Atlantic Flyways Initiative (EAFI) in 2015. EAFI aims to improve species status by identifying priorities, strengthening partner capacity, and implementing a local-to-global conservation approach through a partner-led enterprise spanning the flyway.

In 2020 the EAFI Small Grants Programme was established by the Task Force supported by Vogelbescherming Nederland (VBN), the Dutch BirdLife Partner. The program aims at empowering grassroots efforts to protect vital habitats across the flyway. EAFI grants have catalysed remarkable successes in just a few years by supporting local partners with small grants of € 15,000 per organisation in Morocco, Senegal, Guinea-Bissau, Cote d'Ivoire, Nigeria and South Africa.

"The EAFI small grants have proven transformative for migratory bird conservation by investing in on-the-ground efforts tai-

lored to each region's challenges. From monitoring and research to livelihood projects and environmental education, these seed funds empower local stakeholders to lead their own solutions," notes Jaime Garcia Moreno, International Coordinator of the EAFI program at VBN.

In Nigeria, the fund enabled the Nigerian Conservation Foundation (NCF) to carry out waterbird monitoring, including an extensive survey of the entire Nigerian coast in January 2022 and identifying additional sites that required monitoring. During the monitoring, 2871 individual waterbirds belonging to 55 species and 16 families were recorded.

"The most important stakeholders in the conservation of the biodiversity in the coastal areas are the local communities whose actions alter the state of these species and habitat" stated Stella Egbe, Senior Conservation Manager at NCF.

In Senegal's 273 ha Tocc Community Nature Reserve, a Ramsar site, critical for migratory birds, EAFI's investments in 2022 allowed 30 community members to construct ecotourism infrastructure, provided means to monitor across the lagoon using a boat, and ramp up advocacy for habitat preservation and it indirectly impacted 1212 people at the site. The community has benefited significantly from the distribution of seeds and agricultural inputs. Further, 13 beneficiaries received seeds and inputs for cultivating crops such as chilli peppers, onions, eggplants, cabbages, carrots, and watermelons. Additionally, four beneficiaries engaged in rice cultivation. These initiatives have contributed to enhancing food security, diversifying income sources, and promoting sustainable agricultural practices within the community.

"The support we received has been very beneficial in the food security, promoting sustainable agricultural practices, which provide us with selling of vegetables



to generate income," explains Aida Boh, president of the Women Group Sope Naby in the village of Pakh, located in the reserve.

In Guinea-Bissau's biodiverse Mansôa Basin, a Key Biodiversity Area (KBA), and critical site for waterbirds, EAFI funding enabled first the monitoring of Black-tailed Godwit (*Limosa limosa*) and Black-Crowned Crane (*Balearica pavonina*) despite the expansion of rice field and use of fertilisers – underscoring the area's critical importance. Through the small grant program support, ODZH is producing the first recommendations to manage this area.

"These migratory species face existential perils at every turn of their nonstop odysseys, but their incredible resilience and determination rekindle our own – we simply must rise to be equally tenacious in fighting to keep their aerial highways open and their oasis layovers protected", says Francisco Wambar, ODZH's Chief Executive Officer.

The forests and mangrove isles of Côte d'Ivoire's 550 ha Ehotilé Islands National Park, a Ramsar site provide a lifeline for winged

wanderers like the Eurasian curlew – yet had remained understudied. Through EAFI funding 26 local citizen scientists were trained. The citizen scientists were instrumental in documenting over 30 bird species in need of protection at the site.

"Migratory birds at the site are faced with various threats including urbanization and poaching. We are now in the process of developing conservation plans for the threatened species", notes Narcisse Tehe, SOS-Forêts Project lead.

Conservation efforts can only truly endure if local stakeholders are vested in the cause through environmental education, sustainable livelihoods, and ownership over the process. "They must be equipped with tools for their future while developing pride about being guardians of their natural heritage. Only then can we forge an unbreakable cherishing for these avian critical passages" notes Amara Koffee, member of the Ehotilé National Park ornithologists committee.

In Morocco, researchers from GREPOM are spearheading the

development of a national shorebird action plan to enact targeted policies safeguarding havens like the 3600-hectare Bas Loukkos marshes in northwest Morocco. The marshes listed as a Ramsar site, hosts thousands of godwits annually during migration from Europe.

In South Africa, BirdLife partner BirdLife South Africa worked with municipal authorities to revise recreational use bylaws and establish "no wake" zones in areas where boat wakes were undercutting the estuary banks. Signage demarcating these zones and other sensitive erosion areas were erected throughout the estuary. An important focus was training Over 40 residents and work crews in habitat restoration and monitoring techniques.

"We recognize the vital role of local communities and organizations in protecting migratory birds along the flyway. This dedicated EAFI Small Grants Fund will empower them to take ownership and implement priority actions outlined in our strategy 2023-2032", notes Geoffroy Citegetse, EAFI

Manager at BirdLife International.

The small grant will support various activities, including habitat restoration, community-based monitoring, awareness campaigns, and capacity-building initiatives. EAFI aims to foster a bottom-up approach to conservation by providing flexible funding directly to grassroots initiatives, leveraging the local knowledge and commitment of those living along the flyway.

"We want to ensure that our strategy is not just a document on a shelf, but a living, breathing effort that translates into tangible results. These small grants will be a catalyst for change, enabling communities to lead the way in safeguarding the incredible migratory species that rely on the East Atlantic Flyway", adds Moreno.

"With a strong emphasis on collaboration and capacity-building, the small grants fund will also facilitate knowledge-sharing and best practice exchange among grantees, creating a ripple effect of conservation impact across the region", concludes Citegetse.

# Empowering women and youth through multi-crop thresher machines in Tanzania

By Special Correspondent

**T**HE Pan-Africa Bean Research Alliance (PABRA-Africa) and Imara Tech (Imara Tech) are implementing a new initiative, "Scaling Multi-Crop Threshing Machines for Women and Youth Empowerment project in Tanzania," in the Singida region.

The project aims to reduce labor for women and youth by providing machines that can thresh, shell, and winnow nine different crops, including maize, sunflower, sorghum, millet, finger millet, green grams, pigeon peas, lablab, and beans.

Funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) through the International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center (CIMMYT) and implemented by the Alliance of Bioversity International and CIAT (The Alliance) and PABRA in collaboration with the Tanzania Agricultural Research Institute (TARI), the initiative aims to support Imara Tech in promoting Multi-Crop Threshers (MCTs) manufactured by the company, specifically targeting women and youth in the farming community as service providers.

This is a continuation of PABRA's support for women and youth-led small and medium enterprises (SMEs), including Imara Tech, to scale up their businesses and, in turn, creating sustainable employment for women and youth in rural Tanzania.

In 2019, The Alliance in collaboration with TARI and the Soybean Innovation Lab of Missouri State University, started training local artisans in Tanzania, including the youth-led Imara Tech, in the manufacture of MCTs, to reduce market barriers, alleviate the drudgery faced by wom-



en involved in threshing and winnowing crops, diversify enterprise opportunities, enhance livelihood prospects, and decrease pre- and post-harvest losses.

Although still unable to fully meet the growing demand, over 800 MCTs have been sold to individual and group threshing service providers.

These MCTs are expected to save labor time, maintain grain quality, and address bottlenecks in the value chain of the nine crops. Currently, according to Imara Tech, Tanzanian smallholder farmers spend 1.35 billion hours and \$28 per ton to manually thresh their crops each year. The widespread adoption of these machines is projected to reduce labor time by up to 1.2 billion hours and decrease costs to US\$15 per ton.

To support the rollout of this initiative, the implementing partners, led by The Alliance and Imara, began promoting threshing machines with farmer groups on July 23, 2024. These groups had placed orders following recent sensitization meetings, which included demonstrations of the machines' functionality, quality, and benefits.

The meetings were attended by women and youth farmers' representatives represented their groups, and partners such as Farm Africa, The Agricultural Markets Development Trust (AMDT), and QSTEK in Singida, Ruvuma, Manyara, Mbeya, Iringa, Njombe, Songwe, Rukwa and Dodoma regions.

Dr Justus Ochieng, the Project Coordinator from The Alliance and PABRA, who was present at the launch, expressed gratitude to all

the farmers for their enthusiasm and commitment in placing orders for the machines through their groups

"The threshing machines are designed to ease the workload of women and youth, who are primarily responsible for labor-intensive tasks that consume a significant portion of their productive time.

These machines will also create employment opportunities and generate income for these beneficiary groups, and the project will cover 50 percent of the cost of these machines to enhance their affordability," explained Ochieng.

Assistant Regional Administrative Secretary of Singida Region, Stanslaus Chowaji, the guest of honour during the launching event early this month, inaugurated the distribution of thresh-

ing machines to 10 out of the 45 interested farmer groups in the region.

Chowaji urged farmers to take good care of the machines, emphasizing that they will benefit not only themselves but also their fellow villagers, who will be able to rent threshing services.

"These machines will reduce labor drudgery, create employment opportunities, and generate income at both the group and individual levels. However, it is also important to properly manage the machines and the income from renting them, including opening a group bank account to save the earnings.

This will help cover maintenance costs, which will be necessary over time," he said.

Imara Tech and the Alliance signed a Memorandum of Understanding to strengthen the collaboration, aiming at bringing the MCT technology closer to the end users. "Our collaboration with The Alliance on this project has been incredibly beneficial, helping us expand our sales and reach areas we might not access on our own. Additionally, it will significantly enhance the quality of our machines through access to modern production technology," said Alfred Chengula from Imara Tech.

Project implementation partners and beneficiaries pose with multi-crop threshers after the launch at Farm Africa's office in Singida Region

Pendo Kitundu, a farmer from Iguguno village, attended the launch in the Singida region and expressed her appreciation for the initiative, saying the new machines will address many of the challenges they faced when threshing crops manually.

"For a long time, we have been threshing crops by hand and with sticks among other traditional methods, which led to broken grains and contamination with sand, stones, and residues, causing us to sell grain at prices lower than expected. With these machines, the challenges we face will be heavily reduced by improving the quality and increasing the value of our crop grains," she said.

By Eseoho Arhebamen-Yamasaki

# How to tackle gender disparity in African climate change research

**A**FRICAN women researchers are transforming the continent while functioning as community organizers and entrepreneurs. Yet African women experience significant barriers in the continent's research and academic landscape.

In Nairobi, Dr. Nzambi Matee created a fix for plastic waste using eco-friendly paving blocks. In Kenya, Veronica Okello researches sustainable processes for removing heavy metals from the environment. In Nigeria, Dr. Francisca Okeke studies the effects of solar activity in the ionosphere on earth's magnetic field to support climate solutions and Dr. Amina Ahmed El-Imam heads research teams working on renewable fuel.

These are some recent scientific contributions from African women. Before them, the late biologist Dr. Wangari Maathai, who bagged a Nobel Prize for climate activism, paved the way.

African women researchers are transforming the continent while functioning as community organizers and entrepreneurs. Yet African women experience significant barriers in the continent's research and academic landscape.

A paper by the United States National Institutes of Health states that in Guinea, a mere 6 percent of researchers are women. African institutions have poor systems for examining and ensuring the representation of women and lack strategies for supporting women's work-life balance. In addition, existing employment processes advantage men. Compared to women in other regions, cultural and gender norms and unequal education further limit African women who manage a greater percentage of domestic duties.

Without African women, research excludes issues relevant to women worldwide and causes bias in research conclusions. Female researchers can provide unique perspectives and novel problem-solving methods, resulting in more complete and inventive answers. Climate change, which disproportionately affects Africa, further accentuates the disparity experienced by African women scientists, who are more active than men in the agricultural, health, and environmental sectors—areas that are heavily impacted by climate change.

In her foreword to "Women Researching in Africa: The Impact of Gender," Dr. Tirsit Woldeyohanes writes of her childhood in Ethiopia: "Females who strive to be independent and go outdoors are derided and called critical and discouraging names. These hurdles from society have the power to compromise girls' ability to learn and achieve higher education."

Male researchers in Africa have greater representation, produce more research, publish more papers, and achieve positions of greater seniority, securing senior roles faster than women researchers.

Men are also better paid. A 2020 World Economic Forum report found that sub-Saharan African women earned 68 percent of what their male counterparts earned. UN Women reported women earn 21 percent less than men in East and South Africa. There is reportedly a pay gap for women of up to 77 percent in Nigeria.

Without up-to-date scientific publications and proficiency in current techniques and technologies, African women researchers will lag behind their peers in



A staff member at the Environment and Agribusiness Laboratories (ENVAL) in Côte d'Ivoire

wealthier nations.

### Lack of financing

The UN maintains that resolving gender gaps is essential to achieving thriving, sustainable societies. To achieve progress in gender equality, we must understand why an inadequate number of female researchers in Africa exists.

The journal Nature points to the lack of financing as particularly relevant

in explaining why African women scientists face more challenges in pursuing careers in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) than women in high-income nations. At the heart of this disparity is inadequate government funding, which Fadhel Kaboub, president of the Global Institute for Sustainable Prosperity, traces to colonialism's continuing suppression of African economies.

African countries are impoverished by external debt. They are a primary source of low-priced, raw materials for wealthier nations yet must consume the expensive industrialized results from those nations.

These nations are destinations for discarded technologies and products, exacerbating issues of environmental degradation. Against this backdrop, African women must overcome tremendous limitations to sustain research careers, but there is hope.

One example of hope can be found in Nigeria, Africa's most populous nation. In 2012, Nigeria implemented a Science, Technology, and Innovation (STI) policy with the mainstreaming, increase, and incentivization of women in STI as an objective. Expanding mentorship opportunities was a strategy in the policy.

"In some parts of the Eastern region [of Nigeria], they don't believe that a woman can take decisions, talk less of being able to help the nation. Thankfully, my father was a teacher, and his orientation helped a lot... I am grateful for the opportunity to mentor a lot of female scientists," notes Dr. Okeke, in a newspaper article.

Nigeria must fully execute its plan to increase the number of women scientists. More African countries must follow, harnessing networking and career-building opportunities, combating sociocultural barriers, and providing funding support.

### The role of the youth

The future of Africa - its youth - hangs in the balance. The 2024 Summit of the Future is a timely event. The UN states that "Young people are the driving force behind innovation, progress, and positive change in our world. Their energy, creativity, and fresh perspectives are es-

sential for shaping a sustainable and inclusive future for all."

Early Career Researcher (ECR) programmes that target and mentor youth are necessary for Africa's nearly 600 million women and girls.

In the research ecosystem, academic publishers can also help nurture African women researchers' careers by building ECR programmes for women and girls that leverage Open Access (OA) policies to expand the availability of scholarly materials and by providing training. OA publications can be read gratis, are referenced more frequently, and facilitate cross-border collaboration among scholars.

Without up-to-date scientific publications and proficiency in current techniques and technologies, African women researchers will lag behind their peers in wealthier nations.

Publishers can help link academic institutions to funders to help researchers cover financial gaps. Further, publishers can nurture networking among institutions on the continent, encouraging collaborations between institutions to ensure research cohesion. This will deepen clarity about continent-wide issues like climate change.

In sum, tackling gender disparity in African research requires holistic strategies that include addressing national debt and cultural biases, provision for OA, and targeted measures to support girls and women ECRs.

**THE GUARDIAN CROSSWORDS AND WORD FIT - 165 -**

By Felix Magezin: 0787009794 / felixmagezi@gmail.com

**ACROSS:**

- Capital city of Angola
- arrive
- Nairobi is her mother city
- a glossy black long-tailed bird of the cuckoo family found in Central America
- a person's sense of self-esteem

**DOWN:**

- a sudden powerful forward movement
- an Indian peasant
- a unit of linear measure equal to 1,760 yards
- a clear savoury jelly made with meat stock
- plant growing in water
- rest on a chair
- a gesture of greeting in Arabic-Speaking
- a large area of water surrounded by land
- make slightly angry
- radical and extreme
- of a great distance
- pursuing a profession
- mealie
- a way out
- leave out or exclude
- a small brooch
- a long and distinct period of history
- a barrier constructed to hold back water

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

MODERN	NAIANT	ARENA
USE	ARGIVE	REWARDED
NEWSMAN	DNL :MUN	AT-SIGN
URETER	SUM	E-MAILER
MARA	NTEMI	RANV

**Yesterday's solution**

B	I	B	L	E	M	T	B	O	A	T	M	A	N		
O	R	E	S	T	A	G	E	R	A	G	E	R	M		
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**RADIO One** **RATIBA YA VIPINDI** **JUMATATU - JUMAPILI**

MONDAY TIME PROGRAMME	TUESDAY TIME PROGRAMME	WEDNESDAY TIME PROGRAMME	THURSDAY TIME PROGRAMME	FRIDAY TIME PROGRAMME	SATURDAY TIME PROGRAMME	SUNDAY TIME PROGRAMME
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## BUSINESS



## CBK raises extra Ksh32 billion in August tapsale

NAIROBI

The Central Bank of Kenya (CBK) has raised a further KSh32.02 billion from the tap sale of the August Infrastructure bond reopened last week.

The paper received bids worth KSh35.2 billion against the KSh15 billion offered - a 234.6 per cent oversubscription.

The apex bank however accepted 91.4 per cent of the bids received, locking in KSh32.02 billion.

The weighted average yield of accepted bids came in at 17.73 per cent with the coupon rate stalling at 14.39 per cent. With the current inflation rate, the real yield for the paper is 13.4 per cent.

The 17 year paper was undersubscribed in the August reopening, receiving bids worth KSh29.5 billion against the KSh50 billion offered - a 58.9 per cent subscription rate. The underperformance prompted CBK to issue a tapsale to try to meet its initial capital target.

In the weekly T-bills auction, investors continuously preferred the short term 91-day paper receiving bids worth KSh16.95 billion against the KSh4 billion on offer - a 437.4 per cent oversubscription.

Both the 182-day and 364-day papers remained undersubscribed, receiving bids worth KSh4.4 billion and KSh2.2 billion - 44.5 per cent and 22.5 per cent subscription rates respectively.

The CBK received bids worth KSh24.2 billion for the 3 papers against the KSh24 billion on offer - a 100.8 per cent oversubscription. The government accepted 97.7 per cent of the total bids received.

Yields on all the three papers saw decreases on the back of CBK's decision to lower rates by 25 basis points to 12.75 per cent earlier this month after maintaining rates at the highest since 2012. The easing of the benchmark rate was prompted by the easing inflation below the midpoint and the stronger shilling offering relief for bank borrowers.

With diminishing "higher for longer" stances, investors are rushing to lock in higher rates to maximize their real returns. With the government looking to tap additional external funding, this puts pressure on the domestic market by lowering demand for cash by the government from the domestic market.

The stream of Kenyans migrating to the Gulf in the last five years has significantly reshaped migration patterns and the resulting remittances. In 2019, for example, remittances from the United Kingdom totalled US\$ 20.6 million compared to just US\$ 3.3 million from Saudi Arabia. The shift is also indicative of the evolving migration laws that have made it harder for Kenyans to move to European countries, while Gulf countries have become a favourite destination due to their burgeoning labour needs.

Remittance inflows in July 2024 totalled USD414.3 million compared to USD 378.1 million in July 2023, an increase of 9.6 per cent. The cumulative inflows for the 12 months to July 2024 remained steady at USD 4,572 million compared to USD 4,076 million in a similar period in 2023, an increase of 12.2 per cent. "The remittances inflows continue to support the current account and foreign exchange market. The US remains the largest source of remittances to Kenya, accounting for 52 per cent in July 2024," said CBK in its weekly bulletin of August 16, 2024.

In 2022, Kenya and Saudi Arabia held the first Joint Commission for Cooperation (JCC) in Riyadh and outlined labour and consular affairs, ICT, transport, and development as the salient areas of cooperation. Among the major unresolved issues are claims of indentured servitude and the high number of deaths among Kenyans working the Gulf. In a presentation in July, Prime CS and CS for Foreign Affairs Musalia Mudavadi told the Senate that there had been 316 recorded deaths of Kenyans in the Gulf, more than half of them in Saudi Arabia.

# Organisation extending loans to health investors at 'budget' interest rates

By Francis Kajubi

**P**harmAccess, an international organisation focused on improving health services, has extended low-interest loans worth 4.89billion/- (\$1.8 million) in Tanzania for 2023 to private health facilities owners and pharmaceutical store owners so that they can widen the scope of their services.

Speaking yesterday in Dar es Salaam on the sidelines of the 12th East Africa Healthcare Federation Conference Dr Heri Marwa, PharmAccess Country Director said during this year the organisation has allocated \$3 million for the same purpose.

He said that during last year the loans were issued to more than 130 service providers, while in this year the number is expected to increase.

At the conference themed: 'Enhancing Cross Border Medical Referrals and Quality of Care in the East Africa Region', Dr Marwa said that the organisation has been working in collaboration with health service providers in the private sector and in collaboration with the government in improving public health services delivery.

He said PharmAccess works with private hospitals and pharmacies, especially those owned by professional medical doctors and nurses, by providing low interest loans to widen their services outreach.

Through the 'Afya Mkopo' service which it provides in collaboration with one of the giant mobile companies in Tanzania, it has been issuing loans without collateral conditions.

On the part of the government, he said the organisation has been collaborating with the Ministry of Health in Tanzania Mainland and the Ministry of Health in Zanzibar in improving health insurance services and supporting the preparation of regulations and health insurance packages.

"We have been promoting medical tourism to various countries so that people come and get treated here in Tanzania following reasonable investment that the government has made in the health sector," he said.

For the medical tourism campaign, he said the organisation has developed health care quality standards through different levels from level one to level five.



Nicole Spieker, CEO PharmAccess

Nicole Spieker, CEO PharmAccess said the organization helps to drive innovations in health systems to make sure that they are strengthened to deliver health services in African countries.

She said the organization mostly works with the private sector because 50 percent of health services in the continent are offered

by private facilities.

"Our facilitation is making easy access to affordable loans for medium size health care facilities through medical credit funds for improving quality of services," said Spieker.

According to her, the organization also stimulates public-private partnerships for universal health-

care coverage. The organization also pushes for digital revolutions in the health sector targeting inclusiveness.

She said the alignment of its services to digital revolutions targets at easing data collection, storage and access, proper data management, accelerating policy review and resources availability.

# Nigeria's battered naira may get a breather on Fed's rate cut

LAGOS

A likely rate cut in the United States may bring much-needed relief to one of the world's worst performing currencies this year.

Nigeria's naira has been under pressure, plunging by almost 100 percent since the flotation of the local unit last June, allowing the currency to be determined by market forces.

But the latest signal of a rate cut given by Jerome Powell, US Federal Reserve chief on Friday, August 23, 2024 at the Jackson Hole symposium may be the respite needed to strengthen the battered naira.

The Federal Open Market Committee (FOMC), the monetary policy-making arm of the Federal Reserve System, has held rates steady for the seventh consecutive time. But with the US inflation within the Fed's target, lowering monetary policy rate is not unlikely in the coming months.

The 71-year-old said "time has come for policy to adjust," adding that "the direction of travel is clear, and the timing and pace of rate cuts will depend on incoming data, the evolving outlook, and the balance of risks."

Powell's hints of a rate cut sent US Treasuries rallying as the dollar fell, indicating that investors were an-

ticipating lower interest rates, which typically increase the value of bonds while decreasing the dollar's attractiveness compared to other currencies.

The rise in euro and yen weakened the greenback against a basket of six currencies including those two, according to Thompson Reuters data.

The index fell 0.81% from late Thursday to 100.64, having been slightly firmer before Powell's speech.

This development could be a breather for Nigeria's bruised naira whose depreciation due to recent economic challenges and policy shifts, has exacerbated inflationary pressures and deepened cost of living for many Nigerians.

"A weaker dollar could help ease some of the pressures on the naira," said a Lagos-based financial expert, stressing that lower interest rates in the US make the dollar less attractive to investors, leading to a depreciation of the currency.

The Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) has so far maintained a hawkish position in its mandate to achieve price stability. It raised the benchmark interest rate by a combined 800 basis points to 26.75 percent in less than a year.

The apex bank, in its efforts to en-



sure stability in the foreign exchange market, sold a record \$815 million directly to businesses from manufacturers to airlines on August 6, the biggest single day intervention under new governor Olayemi Cardoso.

Despite efforts by the Abuja-based bank to shore up the local currency, the naira has barely budged, closing at 1,570.14 per dollar on Friday at the Nigerian Autonomous Foreign Exchange Market (NAFEM), according to data from the FMDQ Securities Exchange Limited.

"If the dollar weakens as a result of the Fed's actions, the naira might experience a degree of appreciation or at least a slowdown in its depreciation," said Ibrahim Bakare, a professor of Economics at Lagos State University, emphasizing that this could offer some relief to Nigeria's economic crisis.

Economists polled by Reuters are however optimistic that the FOMC may lower rates by 25 - 50 basis points in their meetings in September and December.

A move in September would pivot the Fed away from a restrictive interest rate policy in place since it started hiking to fight inflation in March 2022, hoisting the fed funds target range from about zero to 5.25%-5.5%, where it has stood since July 2023.

"The signal of a rate cut, potentially in September has created a lot of optimism in the market," said Tobi Ehinmosan, macroeconomic analyst at Lagos-based FBNQuest Capital, adding that this has sent the dollar tumbling in recent weeks.

"However, what we aren't sure yet is the pace or speed at which the Fed will cut rates. Personally, I'd think they will cautiously lower rates to continue monitoring incoming data and price developments," the fixed income analyst added.

Analysts have said the September lowering of benchmark interest rates by the US Federal Reserve could potentially lead to the stability of exchange rate in Nigeria.

This is as "lower US interest rates will push investors to seek higher yields in emerging markets, which could lead to increased demand for Nigerian assets and, consequently, support for the naira," said a Lagos-based investment banker.

Ehinmosan, cited earlier, said a weakened dollar would potentially ease the demand pressure for for-

ign currency, as the dollar would be less attractive for investors.

"This could translate to relative stability of the Naira. However, the recent improvement in FX liquidity must still be maintained to achieve this," he noted.

The potential rate cut is not only expected to bring a breather to the ailing naira or ensure its stability, it is equally likely to bring prices, especially imported goods down.

Nigeria is contending with a near three decade-high inflation rate at 33.40 percent in July. Even though prices dropped for the first time since late 2022, the rate is well above the CBN's preferred rate.

According to Samuel Sule, the chief executive officer of Renaissance Capital Africa, a US rate cut may provide "the appropriate backdrop" as the exchange rate stabilises.

Given Nigeria's reliance on imported items, a weakened dollar could also reduce the prices of imported items, said Ehinmosan, noting that a fall in dollar may fan hope of respite to consumers.

"We all know that the exchange rate is a significant driver of Nigeria's core inflation basket. As such, a stronger naira would have a positive pass through on Nigeria's inflation reading," the macroeconomic and fixed income analysts said.

# China to advance high-quality BRI ties with Africa

JINAN

China will take further steps including deepening partnership in emerging fields, such as green development and the digital economy, to promote high-quality Belt and Road cooperation with African countries in the coming years, according to a new report released on Thursday.

Officials said the cooperation under the Belt and Road Initiative has brought mutual benefits and shared prosperity for both sides, injecting fresh impetus into the economic and social development of African nations and helping build a stronger China-Africa community with a shared future.

They said the two sides will step up efforts to advance cooperation in policy coordination, infrastructure construction and strengthening of economic and trade ties, hoping to see the healthy, green and digital development of the BRI.

The report, which has been prepared by the Office of the Leading Group for Promoting the Belt and Road Initiative and the National Development and Reform Commission, said that China and Africa will continue to advance BRI cooperation in fields such as healthcare, green development, the digital economy and artificial intelligence.

China and Africa will implement several livelihood projects such as growing mushrooms using Chinese technology, biogas promotion and greenhouse cultivation, the report said, adding that the enhanced cooperation aims to further increase Africa's capacity in realizing independent and sustain-



A train driver prepares for departure at Idu Railway Station, the starting point of the Abuja-Kaduna Railway in Abuja, the capital of Nigeria.

able development as well as help it accelerate poverty alleviation.

Speaking at a news conference in Beijing, Xu Jianping, director of the NDRC's Department of Regional Opening-up, said, "China has signed memorandums of understanding with 52 African countries and the African Union on jointly developing the Belt and Road."

Over the past few years, China and African countries have made steady progress in BRI coopera-

tion, particularly in fields such as infrastructure connectivity, alignment of rules and standards, and people-to-people exchanges.

So far, Chinese companies have participated in building and upgrading more than 10,000 kilometers of railways, nearly 100,000 km of highways, nearly 1,000 bridges and 100 ports, and 66,000 km of power transmission and distribution lines in African countries. They have also helped build

a backbone communications network of 150,000 km in Africa, the report said.

China-Africa trade reached a record high of \$282.1 billion in 2023, showing strong resilience. As of the end of last year, China's direct investment stock in Africa exceeded \$40 billion, official data showed.

Xu, from the NDRC, said the two sides will make more efforts to advance cooperation in the fields of

healthcare, green development, the digital economy and innovation. They will deepen healthcare cooperation, advance green development, build a digital Silk Road, and actively explore new models for cooperation in technological innovation.

According to Xu, China and African countries will accelerate a cooperation mechanism for pairing up Chinese hospitals with African medical facilities and also facilitate the construction of China-Africa friendship hospitals.

The two sides will jointly implement green development initiatives and support the development of renewable energy, such as solar and wind power, through various means including green credit, environmental protection funds and green bonds.

In terms of digital development and innovation, China and African nations will strengthen construction of related infrastructure, promote high-speed internet access in Africa, and support the development of smart cities in the continent.

More efforts will also be made to advance cooperation in information technology tools, including 5G, big data, cloud computing, fintech and AI, and support the establishment of China-Africa joint

laboratories, partner institutes and technological innovation cooperation bases, Xu said.

China and Africa will build closer innovation cooperation partnerships, thoroughly implement the Belt and Road Science, Technology and Innovation Cooperation Action Plan, build the China-Africa innovation cooperation center, and continue to hold the China-Africa Innovation Cooperation and Development Forum, he said.

"China will help African countries cultivate more high-tech talent as well as share its experience in scientific and technological innovation development with them, jointly creating an open, fair, just and non-discriminatory environment for technological development," Xu added.

Li Juan, deputy director of the National Health Commission's International Cooperation Department, said that as of now, China has established ties with 46 hospitals in 41 African countries and regions, jointly building 25 specialized cooperation centers. "We will continue to send high-level medical teams to African countries that need them, deepen cooperation between paired-up hospitals in China and Africa, and support the construction of key specialized centers, thereby jointly enhancing the development of medical services and healthcare in China and Africa," she added.



## Six NSE-listed companies posts Kshs. 54.7 mn profit

NAIROBI

The Nairobi Securities Exchange (NSE) has recorded a profit of KSh54.7 million in H1 this year, citing revenue growth from non-trading income streams like interest and consultancy.

The profit in this year's first six months slumped compared to H1 2023 when the company recorded profits of KSh69.38 million due to increased marketing costs and reduced equity transactions.

Expenses stood at KSh339.4 million in the financial period under review compared to 2023 when the figures were at KSh287.1 million, NSE attributing this to inflationary pressures and the impact of the shilling on dollar-denominated expenses.

The NSE has also stated that after cabinet approval, the state will sell its shares in 6 companies listed at the bourse in this second half of the year.

"The divestiture of the state's shareholding in the six listed companies is a testament of the government's preference of the NSE as the most efficient platform for privatizations," the NSE stated.

The NSE has said that investor confidence has rebounded indicated by a 19% improvement in the NSE-All Share Index (NASI) during the first six months this year. Equity turnover fell by 19.86% as investors focused their attention to the high-interest bond market.

"Equity transactions levy however reduced by 19.9% from KSh141.6

million in H1 2023 to KSh113.5 million in H1 2024 due to high interest rates on bonds which have shifted secondary trading activity in equities to bonds and the impact of KSh22 billion block transaction in H1 2023," the NSE said.

This also led to a rise in bond levy, from KSh31 million last year to KSh86 million in H1 this year. The bond market also witnessed a magnanimous turnover in H1, recording KSh781.8 billion in that period compared to 2023 when it stood at KSh309.9 billion.

The NSE plans to achieve a 50-50 balance in revenues derived from trading and non-trading activities. The company's consultancy unit introduced in 2023 raked in KSh14.4 million in the first half this year. Interest income rose from KSh55 million in 2023 to KSh72 million this year.

The company's assets fell slightly from KSh2.15 billion in H1 2023 to KSh2.11 billion in H1 2024. The NSE's tax obligations also rose from KSh22.75 billion last year to KSh25.3 billion in the financial period under review.

The bourse intends to list one exchange traded fund after approval from the Capital Markets Authority (CMA). NSE intends to reposition its capital mobilization for listed companies and generate alternative financial instruments for investors.

In July this year, NSE listed a KSh3 billion SUKUK Islamic bond on the unquoted securities platform. The bond, which is Shariah-compliant, is the first of its kind in East Africa.

## Highest contributing sectors to Nigeria's GDP in Q2

LAGOS

Nigeria's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) grew by 3.19 percent (year-on-year) in real terms in Q2 2024, from 2.98 percent in Q1 2024 and 2.51 percent in the same period last year, according to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS).

"The performance of the GDP in the second quarter of 2024 was driven mainly by the Services sector, which recorded a growth of 3.79 percent and contributed 58.76 percent to the aggregate GDP," the report said.

According to the GDP report by NBS, here are the highest contributing sectors to the GDP growth in the first quarter of 2024:

### Agriculture

The Agriculture sector contributed 22.61 percent to overall GDP in real terms in the second quarter of 2024, lower than the contribution in the second quarter of 2023 at 23.01 percent and higher than the first quarter of 2024 which stood at 21.07 percent.

### Information and Communication

The Information and communication sector contributed 19.78 percent in the second quarter of 2024, higher than in the same quarter of the previous year at 19.54 percent and higher than in the first quarter of 2024 at 17.89 percent.

### Trade

The trade sector's contribution to GDP was 16.39 percent, lower than the 16.8 percent in the previous year, and higher than the 15.7 percent recorded in the first quarter of 2024.

### Manufacturing

The Real contribution to GDP in the 2024 second quarter was 8.46 percent, lower than the 8.62 percent recorded in the second quarter of 2023 and lower than the 9.98 percent in the first quarter of 2024.

### Finance and Insurance

The contribution of Finance and Insurance to real GDP totalled 6.57 percent, higher than the contribution of 5.26 percent recorded in the second quarter of 2023 by 1.31 percentage points, and lower than 6.81 percent recorded in Q1 2024 by 0.24 percentage points.

The contribution of mining and quarrying to real GDP in the second quarter of 2024 was at 5.83 percent, higher than the rate of 5.58 percent recorded in the corresponding quarter of 2023 and lower than the 6.47 percent recorded in the first quarter of 2024.

### Oil Sector

The Oil sector contributed 5.70 percent to the total real GDP in Q2 2024, up from the figure recorded in the corresponding quarter of 2023 and down from the preceding quarter, at 5.34 percent and 6.38 percent respectively.

### Real Estate

The real estate sector contributed 5.17 percent to real GDP in Q2 2024, lower than the 5.29 percent it recorded in the corresponding quarter of 2023. It was also lower than the 5.20 percent recorded in the first quarter of 2024.

### Construction

The Construction sector's contribution to total

real GDP was 3.17 percent in the second quarter of 2024; lower than its contribution of 3.23 percent in the same quarter of the previous year, and lower than in the immediate past quarter where it contributed 4.01 percent.

### Professional services

Professional, Scientific and Technical Services contributed 3.00 percent to aggregate GDP in Q2 2024, lower than 3.05 percent in Q2 2023 and lower than the 3.19 percent recorded in Q1 2024.

Uche Uwaleke, director, Institute of Capital Market Studies, said that the aggregate GDP growth of 3.1 percent in the second quarter of 2024 may not significantly impact people owing to the growing population.

"3.1 percent is still weak if we look at the average we have done in the last 5-6 years. It's been under 2.5 percent and there's a situation where the population is growing above the GDP growth rate, so there won't be much of that impact," he said in an exclusive interview with Arise News.

The CFG Advisory, a financial consulting firm, has predicted a continuous expansion in Nigeria's gross domestic product (GDP), putting the year end outlook at 3.25 percent on sustained policy formulation.

The Lagos-based financial services group disclosed this in its latest year end outlook entitled "The Reform Fatigue Quagmire".

The report stated that though the GDP is expected to continue to rise, albeit marginally, "GDP growth of 3 percent is not sustainable for our population of 200 million. Nigeria requires 8-10 percent GDP growth for sustainability".

This is as the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) reported that the country's GDP grew in real terms to 3.19 percent in the second quarter of 2024 from 2.98 percent in the previous quarter.

Nigeria's economy is still in "stagflation", according to the report, due to the ongoing reforms which aims to rein in runaway investment and ensure sustainable growth trajectory.

This is even as the country's nominal GDP has seen significant decline in recent times, slipping from top to the fourth largest economy in Africa after South Africa, Egypt and Algeria.

According to the report, only three sectors of the economy experienced double digit growth in 2023 - Mining & Quarrying 26.16 percent, Water and Waste 11.93 percent and Financial Services 28.21 percent.

"Manufacturing was a paltry 1.45 percent reflecting the lack of productivity in the Nigerian Economy. Policy implementation to enhance productivity is critical to revive all the other sectors of the Nigerian economy for recovery from stagflation and sustainable growth," the report stated.

The financial services firm said that in 2011 and 2014 the Nigerian GDP grew in excess of 8 percent, adding that in both years, inflation was within a band of 11 to 13 percent with a 12 to 15 percent interest rate.

"Our analysis and charts of the historical data, confirms that when inflation and interest rates are within this band, and real rates are positive, high GDP growth rates are assured. A pointer for Monetary Policy formulation," it said.

The World Bank forecasts Nigeria to be the third most populous country in the world by 2050, with an annual population growth rate of 2.6 percent per centover the next ten years.

Analysts have however predicted that Nigeria may continue to suffer economic crisis if its GDP growth does not commensurate with its burgeoning population.

In its report, the CFG Advisory stated that the country's "growth potential is limited by policy inconsistency, economic mismanagement and unchecked fiscal spending".

The CFG Advisory report also revealed that Nigeria's headline inflation is expected to decline to 25.50 percent up from 33.40 percent it stood in July, 2024.

Africa's most populous nation has been contending with rising prices which has resulted in a cost of living crisis and sparked a nationwide protest.

The 28-year high consumer price, though dropped from 34.19 percent in June, marking its first decline in nearly two years, is still considered high when compared to 28.04 percent last July.

According to the financial reporting group, the key drivers of inflation has

been the sustained increase in food prices across the country, exacerbated by the removal of subsidy which has resulted in higher cost of petroleum products.

The electricity tariff adjustments and 75 percent increase in money supply to N100trn by Q2 2024 have equally stoked prices, adding to the woes of ordinary Nigerians.

The CFG Advisory however noted that Nigeria's economy is on the right pedestal and may sustain its momentum provided that the government is more committed and sincere to implement its various policies to the latter.

"The fundamentals of the Nigerian Economy are sound. Poor economic leadership has failed to realize the potential and grow the economy," it said.

"The success or failure of our projections, will depend on their commitment and sincerity to implement their well laid out policies. The goal is to drive the economy out of stagflation and meet the sustainable GDP growth target."







JKT Tanzania striker John Bocco. Photo: Agencies

## Bocco announces focus on club career and future coaching ambitions

By Correspondent Nassir Nchimbi

AFTER months of speculation, JKT Tanzania striker John Bocco has ruled out a return to international duty, stating that it's time for younger players to take the reins while he focuses more on his club career.

The veteran striker, who has represented Tanzania since 2009, also revealed plans to retire from club football in the near future as he prepares to transition into a coaching career.

Bocco, a former Simba SC captain, made his long-awaited return to the pitch on Tuesday, marking his 17th season since his debut in 2008. His current team, JKT Tanzania, played to a 0-0 draw against Azam FC in the Premier League opener at Isamuho Stadium.

Bocco's last league appearance came on December 23 of the previous year while playing for Simba against Kagera Sugar. His extended absence sparked speculation about his potential retirement from professional football.

However, the JKT Tanzania talisman clarified these rumors, explaining that he had never announced his retirement. Instead, he had been focusing on coaching the Simba youth team during his time away from competitive matches.

The striker last played for the Tanzanian national team in September 2021, during a match against Algeria. Bocco's contributions have been pivotal to Tanzania's football, especially in their qualification for the 2021 Africa Cup of Nations.

The former Azam FC and Simba SC skipper, who has represented Tanzania in 84 matches, is the fifth-most capped player in the country's history, with 16 goals to his name for the national team.

When questioned about his pros-

pects with Taifa Stars, Bocco confirmed that he no longer envisions himself playing for the national team in the future.

"I'm not coming back to the national team. It's time for others to step up. I'm concentrating on my club career. I'm planning to retire from club football soon, and I'll announce it when the time is right," he stated.

Bocco also addressed speculation that he had already retired due to his extended absence from the field last season with Simba. He clarified that he had not officially retired and was, in fact, working on his coaching credentials.

"I hadn't stated that I'm retiring. I didn't come out of retirement. Simba gave me the chance to coach their youth team because of my coaching courses, which I gladly accepted. Now, I'm back to playing football," he added.

At 34, Bocco is optimistic about JKT Tanzania's future. Having recently joined the team, he believes they have the potential for great achievements.

Known for his impressive scoring streak of 16 consecutive seasons with Azam and Simba, Bocco is expected to be a key contributor to JKT Tanzania's success this season.

He emphasized JKT Tanzania's dedication to hard work and unity as crucial factors for their upcoming season, stressing the importance of these qualities for achieving success.

Bocco also urged JKT Tanzania's fans to continue supporting the team and highlighted the significance of unity among fans and players, believing it can foster a positive atmosphere and boost the team's morale.

As Bocco prepares for the next chapter in his career, his focus remains on making a significant impact at JKT Tanzania and laying the groundwork for his future in coaching.

## Hemed Morocco confirms squad readiness for AFCON qualifier against Ethiopia

By Correspondent Nassir Nchimbi

TANZANIA national team (Taifa Stars) interim head coach Hemed Morocco Suleiman has confirmed a clean bill of health for his squad ahead of the Group H AFCON qualifier against Ethiopia on September 4 at the Benjamin Mkapa Stadium.

Coach Morocco also urged fans to show up in large numbers to support the national team in their opening match of the 2025 Africa Cup of Nations qualifiers.

After their match against Ethiopia, Taifa Stars will face Guinea on September 10 at the Charles Konan Banny Stadium in Yamoussoukro, Ivory Coast.

"According to our medical staff, all players are in good condition and are adapting well to our training regimen. This isn't new for us; our players are familiar with our approach, as some have participated in previous AFCON tournaments while others are pushing for their first appearance."

"I am optimistic that under our methods, we can create a strong team. We have been training since Thursday and are making steady progress. Recognizing the significance of this match, we urge fans to come out in large numbers to support the team," said the coach.

Under Morocco's guidance, Taifa Stars have selected a squad predominantly composed of locally-based players. Experienced players Mbwana Samatta and Simon Msuva are absent, with Msuva currently finalizing a club move.

Notably, defender Dickson Job, who was dropped dur-



National soccer team (Taifa Stars) players pictured yesterday during a training session at KMC Complex in Dar es Salaam. Photo: Courtesy of TFF

ing the World Cup qualifiers against Zambia, has been reinstated to the 23-man squad.

Additionally, Tanzania Football Federation (TFF) spokesman Clifford Ndimbo has called on Tanzanian football enthusiasts to fill the stadium on September 4 to cheer on the team as they aim to qualify for their fourth AFCON tournament.

Ndimbo announced that all players would arrive in camp later yesterday following their club commitments. He emphasized the significance of the match, urging fans to rally behind the team and provide unwavering support.

"All players summoned to the squad have arrived, except for the Young Africans players who were still involved in the Premier League. We expect their arrival today,

along with any players based abroad.

"We are gearing up for crucial matches against Guinea and Ethiopia, just four days apart. We'll host Ethiopia on September 4 and then travel to Guinea on September 10. We're hoping for strong fan support to create a vibrant atmosphere," he said.

The official reiterated that Tanzania's qualification for the 2027 AFCON underscores the importance of participating in the 2025 tournament as a crucial stepping stone toward a successful campaign in 2027.

"Our goal is to qualify for the 2025 Africa Cup of Nations, just as we did in 2023. Success in 2025 is essential for our continued participation in the tournament, including the 2027 edition.

"Ticket sales for the upcom-

ing matches have begun. Prices are 2,000/- and 5,000/- for VIP B and C, while VIP A tickets will be distributed to invited guests and VVIPs. We encourage Tanzanians to come out in force and support our team," said Ndimbo.

Taifa Stars' previous appearances in AFCON were at the 1980 edition held in Lagos, Nigeria, and the 2019 AFCON held in Egypt. Their last campaign was in Ivory Coast in the 2023 edition.

Morocco's charges will be vying for their fourth campaign next year, while Tanzania has automatically qualified for the 2027 edition as joint hosts with Uganda and Kenya.

The 2025 AFCON finals are scheduled to take place in Morocco from December 21, 2025, to January 28, 2026.



The Simba Queens squad pictured on Thursday before their CECAFA Women's Champions League qualifiers against Uganda's Kawempe Muslim Ladies at the Abebe Bikila Stadium in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Kawempe Muslim Ladies won 2-0. Photo: Courtesy of Simba Queens

## Simba Queens to refocus on domestic league after CECAFA qualifiers setback

By Correspondent Nassir Nchimbi

SIMBA Queens head coach Juma Mgunda has expressed disappointment in his squad after failing to win the third-place silverware in the CECAFA Women's Champions League qualifiers against Kawempe Muslim Ladies.

The Tanzanian side was defeated 2-0 by the Ugandan team at the Abebe Bikila Stadium in Addis Ababa on Thursday afternoon. Goals from Sumaya Nabu in the first half and Agnes Na-

bukenya in the second half were enough to end Simba Queens' hopes of securing third place.

Despite a strong start in the group stages, where they defeated Kawempe Muslim Ladies 3-0, Simba Queens couldn't replicate that performance in the playoff match.

Simba Queens faced consecutive defeats after a challenging semifinal match against Kenya's Police Bullets FC, where they narrowly lost 3-2 on Monday.

Speaking after the match, Mgunda acknowledged the

tough competition and emphasized the need for improved performance in future tournaments, with a particular focus on securing the Tanzania Mainland Women's Premier League title.

"Despite the loss today, our focus remains on winning our country's championship to qualify for next year's CECAFA tournament. We'll return home determined to rectify our mistakes and strengthen our team," said Mgunda.

"We conceded easy goals

and repeated mistakes from previous games. We lacked discipline, and the Ugandan side capitalized on our errors. This defeat is painful, but as a coach, I must analyze the reasons behind it to improve our performance in the Tanzania women's league."

Simba Queens had an impressive run in Group B, emerging as one of the tournament's standout teams. They began their campaign with a commanding 5-0 victory over FAD Djibouti, showcasing their attacking prowess and setting a high benchmark.

This win was followed by a 3-0 triumph over Uganda's Kawempe Muslim Ladies, solidifying their status as favorites before their unfortunate exit in the semifinals.

Simba Queens last qualified for the CAF Women's Champions League in 2022 when they were crowned champions in the CECAFA Women's Champions League qualifiers in Dar es Salaam.

Looking ahead, Simba Queens will return to domestic action next season with the Community Shield mini-tournament, where they will face Yanga Princess in the semifinals.

The team aims to defend their title and chase their fifth Tanzanian championship after winning in 2020, 2021, 2022, and 2024.

As the Simba Queens regroup and focus on their domestic league ambitions, they remain committed to correcting their mistakes and building on their strengths to reclaim their position as one of East Africa's top women's football teams.



# Explainer: The new Champions League format aims to give clubs what they wanted from UEFA

MONACO

THE Champions League gets a fresh look with more teams playing for more prize money from more games against more opponents. The draw was held Thursday.

UEFA has long been pressured by club officials to deliver more from the marquee event in club soccer and it settled on a new single-standings league phase to replace the traditional group stage.

The first new Champions League format since 2003 promises almost everything Europe's wealthiest and most influential clubs wanted.

There are four more places in a 36-team lineup; at least eight games each instead of six; Champions League games scheduled in January for the first time; a prize money rise of at least 25% to a minimum 2.5 billion euros (\$2.8 billion).

The new-look competition will feature a series of rematches of recent finals.

Among defending champion Real Madrid's opponents are Liverpool and Borussia Dortmund. The Spaniards beat Dortmund in last season's final and Liverpool for the titles in 2022 and 2018. Madrid will host Dortmund and travel to Liverpool, though the match dates are not confirmed until Saturday.

Manchester City also gets a Champions League final reunion - hosting Inter Milan which it beat to win its European title in 2023. Bayern Munich will host Paris Saint-Germain in a rematch of the 2020 final that the German giant won 1-0.

Out goes the traditional group-stage format that the Champions League used for 21 seasons.

The 32 teams would be drawn into eight groups of four each playing six games. Teams played each group opponent home and away from September into December. The top two advanced to the round of 16. A separate draw was made for each knockout round of home-and-away games until the single-game final.

In comes a single-standings league - 36 teams each playing eight games against eight different opponents through January. Teams get a balanced schedule facing two opponents from each of four seeding pots.

The top eight in the standings go direct to the round of 16 in March. They will be seeded in a tennis-style tournament bracket with no separate draws for each round until the final. The 2025 final is at Bayern Munich's stadium.

Teams ranked ninth to 24th go into a knockout playoffs round in February. The bottom 12 teams are eliminated.

In the playoffs round, teams ranked Nos. 9-16 are seeded in the draw to play second legs at home against unseeded teams Nos. 17-24.

Why change such a successful competition?

The simple answer is clubs wanted more money. The Champions League showcases the highest quality play in world soccer. It has let UEFA steer billions of euros (dollars) of prize money raised from global broadcasting and sponsor deals to clubs who pay the highest transfer fees and salaries.

Those clubs also wanted to play more of what they regarded as prestige games against a bigger range of high-quality opponents.

The group stage, clubs said, became too repetitive with only three opponents and lacked drama. More games against stronger opponents would be more valued by broadcasters, viewers and new fans worldwide.

Their leverage over UEFA was potentially launching their own breakaway competition. Indeed, then-leaders of the influential European Club Association in early 2021 were negotiating Champions League reform with UEFA and also plotting their own Super League.

The Super League was launched by 12 Spanish, Italian and English clubs in April 2021 and failed within 48 hours amid a backlash in England by fans and threats of government legislation.

Still, the Champions League format shaped mostly by rebel Super League clubs was broadly approved one year later by UEFA and will kick off next month.

What are the upsides and risks of the new format?

The 36 teams are guaranteed more money and brand-building exposure to a global audience. Players should get more higher-quality games to accelerate their development.

The extra games - 189 total in the competition compared to 125 for the past two decades - can confirm the Champions League as the pinnacle of club soccer.

Two extra match rounds in January gives the Champions League a new foothold in the increasingly packed soccer calendar. Though, could it overload players after many looked fatigued at the 2024 European Championship, and ahead of FIFA launching its month-long Club World Cup next June?

# Real Madrid gets Champions League final rematches with Liverpool, Dortmund in new format fixtures

MONACO

THE Champions League will have a series of rematches of recent finals in the bigger slate of games paired Thursday in the new format of European soccer's signature competition.

Real Madrid will have re-runs of its past three Champions League title wins, against Liverpool and Borussia Dortmund, in a revamped eight-game schedule for each team now the traditional group stage is abolished.

Madrid has added France superstar Kylian Mbappé to its stellar team since beating Dortmund in last season's final. It also beat Liverpool in the 2022 and 2018 finals among its record 15 European titles.

Madrid will host Dortmund and travel to Liverpool, though the match dates are not confirmed until Saturday.

Manchester City also gets a Champions League final reunion - hosting Inter Milan which it beat to win its European title in 2023.

Bayern Munich will host Paris Saint-Germain in a rematch of the 2020 final that the German giant won 1-0.

Defending champion Madrid's slate of opponents also include home games against seven-



This photograph shows a screen displaying fixtures of the group stage of 2024-2025 UEFA Champions League football tournament, at the Grimaldi Forum in Monaco on August 29, 2024. (Photo: AFP)

time European champion AC Milan, Salzburg and Stuttgart with trips to Atalanta - the Europa League winner that Madrid beat in the UEFA Super Cup this month - and twice to France, to play Lille and debutant Brest.

A complex draw ceremony in Monaco aided on stage by Cristiano Ronaldo gave eight-team slates of opponents for all 36 teams in the bigger and more lucrative Champions League, that has a prize money fund of at least 2.5 billion euros (\$2.8 billion).

The traditional 32-team group stage played each season since 2003 was scrapped in favor

of a single-standings league. Now, 36 teams each will play eight games against eight different opponents through January.

The top eight in the standings in January go direct to the round of 16 in March. Teams ranked ninth to 24th go into the knockout playoffs in February. The bottom 12 teams are eliminated.

Man City's away games at PSG and Juventus were balanced by one of the easier slates of home games: against Club Brugge, Feyenoord and Sparta Prague.

The English champion also must travel to Slovan Bratislava, one of the lowest-ranked teams,

which meant avoiding Girona, its Spanish sibling in an Abu Dhabi-backed global network of clubs. Man City is the flagship club and its owners had to put their Girona shares into a blind trust to comply with UEFA integrity rules.

Bayern also will host Barcelona, which it routed 8-2 in the quarterfinals of the 2020 title run, and travel to Aston Villa, the surprise winner of their 1982 European Cup final.

Liverpool will host Bayer Leverkusen, the German champion coached by its former star midfielder Xabi Alonso, in a standout

match of the expanded league phase.

Leverkusen will host city rivals Inter Milan and AC Milan, and also travel to Atlético Madrid.

The new-style draw was made at a gala ceremony in a beach-side concert hall in Monaco with soccer greats Ronaldo and Gianluigi Buffon.

After each team's ball was picked by Buffon from one of four bowls - seeded according to results in the past five years of European club competitions - Ronaldo theatrically pressed a button for the reveal of how a software program allocated two opponents from each of the four

seeding pots.

The new format was created by UEFA under pressure from influential clubs who wanted more guaranteed games and a wider variety of high-profile opponents, believing the old group stage was predictable and lacked drama. The later knockout stages have typically involved only wealthy clubs from the richest domestic leagues.

"If you see the number of competitive matches in this format, unbelievable. It's amazing," PSG president Nasser al-Khelaifi said. "That's what everybody wanted to change."

AP

# Bizarre rebrand for Aleksander Ceferin is just one lingering question from the new Champions League

By Miguel Delaney

THE one thing to remember with this new Champions League, if you actually managed to register the vast list of fixtures quickly presented on the screen, is that we won't truly know how it works until it's actually played.

It might work well. Uefa feel the modelling has been successful, and Thursday's draw has thrown up some exciting games, with storylines. Some of the last five finals are being replayed, including Real Madrid-Liverpool. The Reds also face Xabi Alonso's Bayer Leverkusen, as Arsenal host Mikel Arteta's former club in Paris Saint-Germain and Aston Villa get to replay their victorious 1982 final against Bayern Munich.

There are certainly more games between wealthy clubs, which is of course the reason why we're all here. This format was agreed the morning after the ill-fated Super League was launched in April 2021, and it was the very threat of that plan that essentially forced Uefa into this in the first place.

It weighed over everything, to the point the two words were almost said. Zlatan Ibrahimovic was about to describe the competition as Aleksander Ceferin's Super League in a bizarre promo video, only for the Uefa president to theatrically cut him off. Even before that, there were

the coded digs at one of the chief architects of the Super League, in former Juventus head Andrea Agnelli.

Awards were given to Gigi Buffon, one of the Italian club's greatest legends, and Cristiano Ronaldo, the player Agnelli specifically signed to try to move Juve into a higher sphere. Buffon described this as the most important club competition, while Ronaldo had a starring line pressing the gameshow-style button that revealed the software's pick of fixtures.

There was still a moment when it looked like the fixtures came up a millisecond before the button was pushed, maybe giving away it was just there for show.

Then again, that was part of the point. Given that Uefa themselves said most of it had to be done electronically since a manual draw would take four hours, they could have literally just pressed a button that set the whole thing and then sent out some emails.

They still wanted some kind of show in order to both foster the competition's sense of spectacle, and because that's what you do in modern entertainment. The irony was that the actual format didn't quite suit this.

One of the virtues of the classic 32-team eight-group system was that you instantly saw who you were up against and could immediately register what it meant.

That had an inherent tension. You only have to consider, too, how you can essentially recall the groups for a World Cup, say, within a day.

On that, the common complaint about the old Champions League was that the group stage had become stale. This is true, but it wasn't down to format. The format worked in exhilarating fashion in the World Cup, to the point Fifa had to abandon plans for their own restructure.

The problem was financial disparity, where 15 of the 16 wealthiest clubs always qualified, and that hasn't been addressed. This format is almost certain to make it worse, since it has all been done at the behest of the super clubs.

Less wealthy clubs may get more money, but that is out of a much bigger pot, with even more going to the richest. That is the point of

these extra games.

That very calendar also undermined the point of this draw show. Against the cleanliness of eight groups of four, this was just long lists of fixtures, that were up in a flash and almost too quick to register.

It almost became a case of trying to see the more eye-catching games. It didn't work in terms of tension or buzz, because we don't yet know how it's going to work in practice. There was also the fact that the actual match schedule won't be out until Saturday. So, although Bayern Munich's trip to Villa Park came out last, it may end up one of the first games.

They weren't the only questions from the draw. There was also the bizarre starring role of "Mr President", as the Uefa chief was literally called. Ceferin was everywhere, more central

to it all than genuine legends that have won the trophy like Luis Figo and Alessandro Del Piero.

There was at least an amusing barb at Zlatan over never winning this competition, which was admittedly well delivered by Ceferin.

As much as a launch for the new Champions League, then, it almost felt a relaunch for the Uefa president - as if he wants to make himself front and centre. It is a move that stands out all the more amid recent controversies about changing statutes so he might get to have one more term and stay on for four more years.

Another irony is that Ceferin has been largely in the background throughout his time at Uefa.

Even people in football would struggle to pick him out. It has only been at big moments, like with the Su-

per League, where he has been visible. He was largely happy to leave this kind of thing to Giorgio Marchetti.

Now, as if belatedly struck by how Gianni Infantino first created his international profile through conducting this very draw, Ceferin is right there in the middle.

The question is why. He's just a football administrator. It remains one of football's great mysteries, and one of its modern problems, how its inexplicable governance structure imbues so much authority in what are executive presidents.

It means the power of the club game or the World Cup is afforded to random middle-aged white men. That is something almost not discussed enough in modern football, especially since it's so important.

THE INDEPENDENT



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## Yanga secure opening win in NBC Premier League, Gamondi slams CAF scheduling issues



Young Africans winger Max Nzungeli celebrates his goal against Kagera Sugar on Thursday during their Premier League match at Kaitaba Stadium in Bukoba. Photo: Courtesy of YASS

By Correspondents Seth Mapoli & Michael Mwebe

**M**AINLAND Premier League defending champions, Young Africans, have started their 2024/2025 season with a commanding 2-0 win against Kagera Sugar.

The match, held at Kaitaba Stadium, showcased the Jangwani-based side's determination to retain their title as they navigated a challenging pitch to secure all three points in their opening fixture.

Young Africans head coach, Miguel Gamondi, expressed satisfaction with the result but emphasized the need for continued improvement.

"It's a good start. Winning with two goals away is always positive," he said, reflecting on the importance of beginning the season on a strong note.

Gamondi provided insights into how he approached the game from a tactical perspective.

"It was a good game, but challenging because of the

pitch," he noted, breaking down the match into two distinct halves.

"In the first half, we played exceptionally well, creating six, seven, maybe eight chances, but we only managed to score one goal. That's been our problem; we need to be scoring two or three goals per game when we create so many opportunities."

Young Africans dominated the first half, with their attacking prowess on full display. Despite their numerous chances, only one found the back of the net, thanks to a strike from Maxi Mpia Nzungeli in the 26th minute. This goal set the tone for the rest of the match, with the side maintaining control but failing to fully capitalize on their opportunities.

"The second half was different," Gamondi explained.

"We didn't play as well and didn't create as many chances. We had two or three, and we scored one, but the other team only created one real chance, I think. But overall, it's okay. It's three points, a good start, and we need to keep progressing. There's always room for improvement, and it's important to keep winning as we improve."

Clement Mzize sealed the victory in the 88th minute with a well-taken goal, ensuring Young Africans left Kaitaba Stadium with a deserved 2-0 win. The victory marks a strong start for the defending champions in a league that features 16 teams, all vying for the coveted title.

On the other side, Kagera Sugar's head coach, Paul Nkata, expressed pride in his team's resilient performance against a highly experienced Young Africans squad.

"The team we played is very experienced with good players. Most of the players are in the national team, and they are a very hard nut to crack on our side, but it was not easy for them, I can assure you of that. Even the second goal came very late when they were thinking, 'Maybe let us take one goal,'" Nkata said.

"At least we have seen our mistakes, and we are going to work on them. The next game is going to be a very different story after playing two matches because I have to know who is who and where he can play," he added.

The victory placed Young Africans among the top teams on three points, having played just one game, while Kagera Sugar found themselves at the bottom of the table after suffering back-to-back defeats.

With their Premier League campaign now underway, Young Africans are also gearing up for their next challenge in the CAF Champions League. Their upcoming match against Ethiopia's CBE in mid-September is a crucial encounter in the second round of the CAF Champions League preliminary stage.

However, Gamondi expressed concerns about the timing of the fixture.

"I can't say too much because we have 14 players on national team duty, so we can't fully prepare for the game. They'll only return two or three days before the match," he pointed out.

The coach highlighted the difficulties of preparing for a high-stakes match with a squad that will be incomplete until just days before kickoff.

"It's crucial for us to go to Ethiopia with great determination, especially considering the altitude. We don't know much about the other team, but our goal is to secure a strong result there so we can finish the qualification at home in Tanzania," Gamondi added.

He drew parallels to last season's experience, where Young Africans faced CR Belouizdad FC in the CAF Champions League following an international break,

a situation that presented similar challenges.

The coach also took the opportunity to advise the Confederation of African Football (CAF) on the issue of scheduling matches immediately after FIFA international dates.

"We've always said, even last season, that it's not ideal when they schedule FIFA international dates, and then immediately after, we have a Champions League game. The players travel a lot and play two intense games," he said, voicing his frustration with the situation.

Gamondi acknowledged that Young Africans might have a slight advantage this time, as many of their players will already be in Ethiopia due to national team duties. However, he insisted that the limited preparation time remains a significant concern.

"It's not just us; many teams, like Mamelodi Sundowns, have players on national duty and face this same issue," he emphasized, calling for CAF to reconsider its scheduling practices.

Young Africans' victory over Kagera Sugar marks a promising start to their Premier League title defense, but the team is already looking ahead to the challenges that lie ahead in both domestic and continental competitions.

The squad's ability to adapt and perform under difficult circumstances, such as the upcoming CAF Champions League match, will be critical to their success this season.

**TONIGHT @ 9:00**

**EATV MONDAY**

11:00 DADAZ  
12:00 KIPENGA XTRA  
13:00 Zote Kuntu  
13:30 Kali Za Wana  
13:55 Dondoo Za Michzo  
14:00 SKONGA (r)  
14:30 Planet Bongo (r)  
15:00 Funguka  
15:30 Akili & Me  
15:55 Dondoo Za Michzo  
16:00 Zote Kuntu  
16:55 Dondoo Za Michzo  
17:00 SSELECT  
17:55 Kurasa  
18:00 Kali Za Wana  
18:30 #HASHTAG  
19:00 EATV SAA 1  
20:00 DADAZ (r)  
21:00 5SPORTS  
22:00 Zote Kuntu  
23:00 Kurasa  
23:05 EATV SAA1 (r)

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05:00 Supa Breakfast  
09:00 MAMAMIA  
12:00 Kipenga Xtra  
13:00 Planet Bongo  
16:00 EA Drive  
19:00 Kipenga  
21:00 The Cruise

**88.1FM DAR ES SALAAM**

## KMC boss Abdihamid Moallin rues failure to kill off Coastal Union

By Correspondent Michael Mwebe

KMC head coach Abdihamid Moallin expressed his disappointment after his side failed to secure a victory in their Premier League opener, despite dominating against Coastal Union at KMC Complex on Thursday afternoon.

KMC controlled the match from the start, showcasing their superiority in their first outing of the Premier League season. However, their dominance did not fully reflect in the scoreline, allowing Coastal Union to stage a late comeback.

Ibrahim Elias gave KMC a well-deserved lead in the 33rd minute, but the team was unable to capitalize on their momentum and extend their advantage.

Coastal Union's Maabad Maulid scored an equalizer against the run of play three minutes into stoppage time, leaving both KMC players and coach Moallin frustrated with the missed opportunity to secure all three points.

In his post-match interview, Moallin emphasized that his team should have secured the win when they had the chance, criticizing the failure to close out the game while leading 1-0.

"We did not put the game away when we had chances to score the second goal. In this league, when you are up by 1-0, it is never safe," said Moallin.

"It is unfortunate that we dropped two points, but we are grateful for everything, and we will continue to work to correct our mistakes for the second game."

Moallin also stressed the importance of taking advantage of scoring opportunities and ensuring that his team decides the game's outcome when in control.

"We will have time to prepare. We have to kill the games when we can. Don't let anyone decide the game - you decide the game when you have the chance to, and that's what we failed to do today. We have to get better," he said.

Despite the disappointment, Moallin praised his players for their efforts and commitment during the match, acknowledging the need for improvement but remaining optimistic about the season ahead.

"We have a lot of work to do, but I am happy and proud of the guys for their efforts. They really played well and pushed hard. We have a lot of things to work on, but we take the point and have 29 games remaining now," he concluded.

## Simba face Al Hilal in crucial friendly as CAF campaigns loom

By Correspondent Seth Mapoli

SIMBA are set to face Sudanese giants Al Hilal Omdurman in a high-stakes international friendly match today at the KMC Complex in Dar es Salaam.

The match, scheduled to kick off at 4:00 PM, is anticipated to be a crucial test for both teams as they prepare for their upcoming continental assignments.

Al Hilal are gearing up for their CAF Champions League campaign, having successfully navigated through the preliminary stages. Their first-round encounter will see them face Ivorian side San Pedro, a matchup that promises to be a stern challenge for the Sudanese club.

This friendly against Simba offers Al Hilal a valuable opportunity to assess their squad's readiness before diving into the rigors of the Champions League.

On the other hand, Simba are focusing on the CAF Confederation Cup, where they are set to take on Al Ahly Tripoli in the first leg of the competition's opening round. This match will be held between September 13 and 15 in Libya.

Today's friendly against Al Hilal will provide Simba's head coach, Fadlu Davids (pictured), with a vital assessment of his team's preparedness for their upcoming continental clash.



Simba have had a mixed start to their season. Following their pre-season preparations, they have participated in four competitive matches: two in the Community Shield and two in the Premier League. The results have been promising overall, with the team securing three victories and suffering just one defeat, which came against their arch-rivals Young Africans in the Community Shield.

During these matches, Simba managed to score eight goals while conceding only one, highlighting their attacking prowess and defensive solidity.

The match against Al Hilal comes at a crucial time for Simba. With just two weeks remaining before their CAF Confederation Cup clash against Al Ahly Tripoli, Davids will be looking to fine-tune his squad and address any lingering issues.

The friendly will serve as an important gauge of the team's readiness and provide Davids with the opportunity to make the necessary adjustments to ensure Simba are fully prepared to overcome the Libyan side and progress to the group stages of the competition.

However, Simba will have to navigate this friendly without several key players who have been called up for international duty ahead of the 2025 Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON) qualifiers.

Among those absent are goalkeeper Moussa Camara, who has been selected for the Guinea national team, and striker Steven Mukwala, who has joined the Ugandan national team. Additionally, left-back Valentine Nouma has been included in the Burkina Faso squad, while Tanzanian internationals Ali Salim, Mohammed Hussein, and Edwin Balua have been called up to the Taifa Stars squad.

Despite these absences, Simba have

received a boost with the return of attacking midfielder Joshua Mutale. The Zambian international has resumed training after a week-long layoff due to injury.

Although initial reports suggested Mutale would be sidelined for two weeks, his quicker-than-expected recovery has come as a relief to the team. However, Davids may opt to rest him for today's match to ensure he is fully fit for the more critical fixtures ahead.

In the absence of some of their regular starters, Cameroonian striker Leonel Ateba is expected to lead Simba's attack against Al Hilal.

Ateba, who joined the club from USM Alger in Algeria, was unavailable for Simba's recent Premier League match against Fountain Gate due to incomplete permit procedures.

However, all necessary formalities have now been completed, and the striker is poised to make his debut for Simba SC in today's friendly.

As Simba take to the field against Al Hilal, all eyes will be on how the team performs in the absence of key players and how well the new signings, particularly Ateba, integrate into the squad.

The outcome of this match could serve as a significant indicator of Simba's prospects in their continental campaign, as they aim to make a strong impact in the CAF Confederation Cup.

## Flexibles by David Chikoko

