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TANZANIA

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# Groups, platform hopeful as rallies start

## Minister dissolves water users' body, reassigns engineer

By Guardian Correspondent, Kilosa

WATER minister Jumaa Aweso has dissolved the Ruaha Water Users Association, directing the Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Agency (RUWASA) to assign other duties to Kilosa district engineer Joshi Chum, citing poor implementation of water projects. The minister was on a tour to inspect water projects in Morogoro Region, taking time in the district to follow up on complaints by councillors and legislators raising queries over water supply bottlenecks in the Ruaha area. Leaders in the district have similarly expressed worries over delayed projects despite that the funds had already been disbursed by the government, he stated, affirming that poor project supervision had interfered with plans for ensuring availability of clean and safe water for residents in the area. While directing that the water engineer be assigned other duties in the ministry, he praised parts of his work as good job done, but still RUWASA must let him go, noting that there is plenty of work in the ministry. "Let us give the chance to another person," he emphasised. Water engineers across the country make sure they visit projects in their respective areas to sort out impediments arising in the work, to avoid repeated project delays. He expressed the wish to visit the breadth of water projects in areas he would visit, including projects delayed for a long period,



Prime Minister Kassim Majaliwa pictured yesterday making a follow-up on instructions he gave in October last year that adjustments be made by this month to ten doors to buildings at Namtumbo District Hospital in Ruvuma Region. Photo: PMO.

## BoT warns on SWIFT money sending frauds

By Guardian Reporter

THE Bank of Tanzania (BoT) has pointed at an increasing trend of fraud incidents in which one receives information to confirm huge payment has been made through the Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunications (SWIFT). A statement issued yesterday said that usually such notification demands that a specified amount be made to the sending address for the withdrawal procedure to be completed. The receiver is notified through email

or other means that the money has been sent to a bank account and the account holder is required to deposit a certain amount to access the wired amount, it said. BoT expressed concern over the trend, attributing it to unknown operators who tell the targeted account holder that the money is for projects and private use, issuing a blanket advice that such information is not true. "The public is advised to be vigilant with such dealings as most of the time they are aimed at deceiving the public," it said, reminding the public to adhere

to money transaction rules. Only this way shall targeted individuals stem such incidents, if they follow regulatory requirements like verifying the sender's information, not responding to such emails and restraining information from companies or individuals who promise to send money that isn't backed by any prior arrangements. The central bank similarly advised people meeting such messages to report to BoT or to the police for investigations to be conducted.

By Henry Mwangonde

VARIOUS political groups and women empowerment platforms have commended President Samia Suluhu Hassan for lifting the ban on political rallies, saying the decision was timely and will facilitate participation of more women in political affairs. Saum Rashid, acting secretary general for the Tanzania Women Cross Party Platform (TWCP) said the decision will make women overcome fear and exercise their right to participate in politics. When there are tensions and misunderstandings, women and children are the most affected, developing fear to participate in anything related to politics, she said. "This move has given us hope that the future is bright because when leaders sit and work together like this, it means the country is going to move forward," she stated. In Singida, the regional secretariat of the ruling party has commended President Samia for the development, saying this will facilitate fast tracking of development plans as the broad citizenry will feel they are taking part in national development. Regional chairperson Martha Mlata made the remark when addressing religious leaders, noting that the decision by the president will go a long way in expanding democratic space. Apart from uniting Tanzanians, the move will also cement the trust that the party has to Tanzanians as the president is also the national chairperson of the ruling party, she said. "The president has sat on a table with opposition leaders," she observed, affirming that this will trickle down to the people who will also work together in nation building. At the same time, political party leaders in Dodoma have appealed to the police not to create hindrances in delivering permission to hold rallies in the aftermath of the president removing the ban. They issued this appeal during a meeting with the regional secretariat around the regional commissioner, to discuss how to implement the new presidential directive. NCCR-Mageuzi regional chairman Meshack Masinga said despite the ban imposed by the late president John Magufuli, the police was even then at loggerheads with political parties. Martin Otieno, the regional police commander, said the police are ready to implement the directive, affirming that any party wishing to hold a rally will be given the support it needs. "We will offer support to any party in need of permit to conduct rallies as long as it follows the law," he said. CCM regional governing member Donald Mejeti said the party will conduct rallies which aimed at contributing to national development. In Rukwa region, CCM hosted a symposium to congratulate President Samia for lifting the ban on political rallies. It also sought to raise readiness among its members to respond to issues which will be raised by the opposition. Katavi regional chairman Idd Kimanta said at the symposium that the move will promote political stability as people will compete on issues. Earlier this week, President Samia announced the removal of restrictions imposed on political parties to conduct rallies, a ban that has been in place since early 2016.

## Ukerewe fishermen want Sokoine graduates to manage drying plant

By Guardian Reporter, Mwanza

BUKASIGA Fishermen Cooperative Association of Ukerewe District has signed an accord with the Sokoine University Graduates Entrepreneurs Corporation (SUGECO) where the latter will administer operations of a seafood drying plant. Abdallah Ulega, the Livestock and Fisheries

deputy minister graced the signing ceremony here yesterday, with the cooperative having obtained a bank loan for the purchase of equipment for drying of sardines. He said the government is working to create a good business and investment environment to enhance productivity in various areas, including the fishing

sub-sector. The government wishes to see businesses flourishing, so businessmen need to take advantage of the new investment opportunity to bring more quality products to the local and international markets, he said. "The president has always been instructing us to ensure that the country

has a good business and investment climate," he stated, referring to the cabinet of ministers. As leaders we shouldn't be an obstacle to investors, he declared. He asked SUGECO to closely monitor the operations of the Bukasiga association

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**The president has always been instructing us to ensure that the country has a good business and investment climate**



## Minister dissolves water use body, while reassigning district engineer

FROM PAGE 1

noting that this enables a supervisor to take stock of problems afflicting implementation of the projects.

Failures to take action against those who delay implementation may derail development efforts, he stated.

He explained the dissolution of the water users association by observing that its leaders were not sufficiently keen enough to supervise water projects, using the association for its own benefit.

The water authorities need to conduct thorough investigation on water associations countrywide as there are non-functioning associations whose employees were just misusing public funds, he stated.

The Ruaha Water Authority was set up to bring services closer to the people, he said, highlighting the need for the area DC, the MP and councilors on behalf of the residents to identify a place to build RUWASA offices, with the construction bill directed at the National Water Fund (NWF).

Mikumi MP Denis Londo said that along with the government's efforts, a total of 1bn/- from the constituency fund would be used for the construction of water wells and installation of water pumps in areas facing serious water problems.

The pumps will be installed in Ruaha, Kidodi, Luhembe, Masanze, Kizunguzi, Mabwelebele and Mhenda wards, he elaborated.

Neema Makweta, a local resident, said the minister's visit will be beneficial to the people on account of the directives given to leaders to improve performance in supervising projects.



Khalfani Abdalla Saidi (L), a pupil at Zanzibar's Salum Turkey Primary School, briefs Zanzibar President Dr Hussein Ali Mwinyi, First Lady Mariam Mwinyi, Second Vice President Hemed Suleiman Abdulla (R) and other officials yesterday on Physics lessons. This was during yesterday's launch of the school by Dr Mwinyi in Unguja's Kwa-Binti Amran suburb. Related photo on Page 7. Photo: Zanzibar State House

## Ukerewe fishermen want Sokoine graduates to manage drying plant

FROM PAGE 1

to ensure that the acquired loan is appropriately used and repaid, as repaying the loan on time would increase the lender's trust in the cooperative. Cooperative association members need to ensure good use of the purchased seafood dryers by adding

value to sardines in particular he said, noting that the government plans to provide a modern fishing boat to the association to enable the members to set up fish cages on shallow lake waters to propagate fish production. Ukerewe DC Denis Mwila praised SUGECO for agreeing to manage the

association's economic project, airing hopes that the seafood drying plant shall work properly. He also commended the cooperative for the project and the wish to see that the seafood dryers are working, as the signed agreement enhances chances of proper operation of the dryers and timely loan

repayment. With the seafood drying plant, the cooperative will produce quality sardines for local and international markets, he said, while the cooperative association secretary Paul Mayunga said the seafood drying factory uses sunlight dryers. Through SUGECO, the fishermen will

learn how to use the dryers efficiently, he said, highlighting that expectations of the cooperative is to increase income by increasing production of sardines. Some seafood was often rotting before reaching consumers due to poor drying and preservation methods, he added.



A shop official with Tanzanite Experience, a mining tourism company based at Manyara Kibaoni in Karatu District, explains to Minerals minister Dr Doto Biteko (C) on the firm's operations yesterday. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

## Brazil rejoining community of Latin American and Caribbean states, says Lula

SAO PAULO

BRAZIL has informed member countries of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) of its "full and immediate" reincorporation into the regional bloc.

The government of President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, who took office on Sunday, decided to rejoin the pro-integration forum that his predecessor Jair Bolsonaro had abandoned.

"The extra-regional partners with whom CELAC maintains a regular dialogue, including the European Union, China, India, ASEAN and the African Union, were also informed about the country's return to the regional consultation mechanism," Brazil's Foreign Affairs Ministry said in a statement on Thursday.

Brazil "actively participated in the creation of CELAC, by convening and hosting the first Summit of Latin American and Caribbean Countries in 2008 in Costa do Sauipe, in Bahia," the ministry said.

"Brazil's return to the community of Latin American countries is an essential step for the rebuilding of our diplomatic heritage and the full reintegration of the country into the international community," added the foreign ministry.

Lula is set to participate in the 7th Summit of Heads of State and Government of CELAC to be held on Jan. 24 in Buenos Aires, following an invitation by Argentine President Alberto Fernandez, whose country currently holds the rotating presidency of the bloc.

## Storm caution issued for Gaza Province

MAPUTO

AUTHORITIES in Mozambique have issued a storm warning for the southern coastal province of Gaza. The National Weather Institute has urged residents to take

precautionary measures to reinforce their houses and to not venture outside.

According to the Institute, gusts of wind could reach up to 60 km per hour with heavy rains predicted. Mozambique, considered one of

the African countries most severely affected by climate change, is in the middle of its rainy and cyclonic season, which occurs between the months of October and April, with winds coming from the Indian Ocean and floods originating in the

hydrographic basins of southern Africa.

In the 2020/2021 rainy season, the country was plagued by extreme weather events, most notably Storm Chalane and Cyclones Eloise and Guambe, in addition to other weeks

of intense rain and flooding. Last November, the National Institute for Disaster Risk Management and Reduction (INGD) said it expects at least 2.2 million people to be affected during the current rainy season.



Dodoma regional commissioner Rosemary Senyamule (L, standing) pictured in Dodoma city yesterday addressing a joint meeting of leaders of political parties called to discuss ways to implement President Samia Suluhu Hassan's recent unbanning of political rallies across the country. Photo: Correspondent Paul Mabeja

## 'Zanzibar Revolution has made big strides'

By Guardian Reporter, Zanzibar

FORMER Zanzibar President Dr Amani Abeid Karume has said that the Zanzibar Revolution has made great contribution in the development, something which needs to be protected and honoured.

Dr Karume said this on Thursday here when opening the 9th Trade Fair at Maisara grounds calling on youth to supervise and the foundations of the revolution for the country's development.

"Youth are the future nation, so it is good to honour and protect the revolution because before it, Zanzibaris were living a vulnerable life full of oppression and discrimination," he said.

He said that revolution is not conflict, but independence and that there is no one who owns the revolution stressing that all Zanzibaris should feel proud of it.

Dr Karume also urged Zanzibaris to continue promoting peace and unity so as to enable the country to achieve its development goals.

On trade fair, the former President said the event has been conducted at the Maisara grounds so as to keep the history initiated by the first Zanzibar President, Abeid Aman Karume after the revolution in 1964.

He supported this year's theme 'Gender Inclusiveness in Trade Development,' saying

that it promotes gender equality and gender mainstreaming in trade and goes along with the vision of the national leaders.

He commended the ministry of Trade and Industry Development for organising the trade fair and thus bringing positive impacts in the country.

Said Omar Shaaban, minister for Trade and Industry Development said the fair has attracted local and international companies to provide business opportunities, increase skills and scope for small and large industrial entrepreneurs as well as government institutions.

He said the trade fair is part of the implementation of the government's strategies to promote and stimulate economic activities and development in the Indian Ocean Archipelago.

Ali Khamis Juma, the ministry's permanent secretary said the trade fair was initiated so as to unite traders and increase collaborations between the locals and international traders for sustainable development.

He said that since it commenced in 2014, the trade fair has continued to grow with the number of participants increasing every year. It started with 109 participants and has now grown to 400 participants this year attracting traders from Uganda, Kenya, Egypt, Ghana, Zambia and India.

## IGP makes minor reshuffle of RPCs

By Guardian Reporter

INSPECTOR General of Police (IGP) Camilius Wambura has made a minor reshuffle of regional police commanders

(RPCs) in move meant to enhance efficiency.

According to a statement issued yesterday by the Police spokesperson, David Misime, IGP Wambura has transferred

Morogoro RPC, Senior Assistant Commissioner of Police (SACP), Fortunatus Muslim to the planning department, and Police headquarters in Dodoma.

He has been replaced by Assistant Commissioner of Police (ACP) Alex Mukama who was RPC in Songwe region.

He has also transferred Rukwa regional police command-

er, ACP Theopista Mallya to become RPC in Songwe region.

The IGP has also appointed ACP Shadrack Masija as RPC for Rukwa.

## Improvements at Namtumbo District Hospital impress PM

By Guardian Reporter

PRIME Minister Kassim Majaliwa has expressed his satisfaction with the improvement at Namtumbo district hospital in Ruvuma region as part of the implementation of the directives he made in October when he toured the construction process.

The PM toured the hospital in October last year and expressed his dissatisfaction with the construction process and directed that all the doors which were installed be removed and bring others.

During his tour then, the PM expressed dissatisfaction with the progress of the construction of Namtumbo district hospital which he found does match with the money invested in the project.

After touring the hospital again yesterday, the PM said was impressed with the progress and improvement made in which so far 67 new doors have been inserted out of the total 84.

PM Majaliwa said he will not sit and watch the pro-

ject being sabotaged while the government has injected more than 7bn/- into the project to ensure people receive quality service.

"Today I have witnessed quality doors. Why did we install such doors when we have the good one, this is not good because we are misusing government money," he said.

He said President Samia Suluhu Hassan is determined to ensure the money meant for development is released timely to ensure people are reached with quality services.

The Prime Minister called upon heads of department in all district councils across the country to ensure the implementation of various development projects in their areas. The hospital's construction is expected to cost 7.5bn/-whereby so far about 4.2bn/- has been released from the central government which planned for the construction of 20 buildings and is expected to serve more than 200,000 people.

Deputy minister in the

President's Office (Regional Administration and Local Governments), Dr Festo Dugange said the government was committed to ensure all the development projects were completed timely. Speaking on the construction of Namtumbo secondary school Dr Ndugange said his ministry will oversee implementation of all the directives issued by the Prime Minister to ensure the school was completed timely.

In another development, PM Majaliwa laid a foundation stone for the construction of Samia Suluhu Hassan girls' secondary school located in Namtumbo in Ruvuma region.

The programme to construct the school is done at a cost of 4bn/- through the secondary education quality improvement programme (SEQUIP, phase 1 and is expected to complete this year.

The school will upon completion accommodate 1,080 students and the first phase will accommodate 600 students.



Tabia Maulid Mwita (3rd-L), Zanzibar's Information, Youth, Culture and Sports minister, unveils plaque at yesterday's launch of a car park in Unguja's Michenzani suburb. The event was held as part of the countdown to the climax of celebrations to mark the 59th of the January 12 Zanzibar Revolutionary. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

## Makubi wants MSD to deliver essential drugs to health facilities in two months

By Guardian Correspondent, Mwanza

PERMANENT secretary in the Ministry of Health, Prof Abel Makubi, has been irked by poor performance of the Medical Stores Department (MSD) ordering officials to ensure delivery of essential drugs to health facilities across the country within two months.

Prof Makubi claimed that MSD has failed to deliver essential medicines to various health centres across the country resulting in debts.

He gave the order on Thursday in Mwanza city when talking to health stakeholders and leaders on ways to improve health care services

to Tanzanians in line with the implementation of the Universal Health Coverage Bill which is expected to start in July 2023.

Prof Makubi said MSD has caused inconveniences to the people as they struggle to get the medicines from public health facilities. He said the situation forces people to purchase the drugs from private pharmacies outside hospitals and health centres.

He said despite the centres paying for the medicines, MSD has failed to deliver them on time.

The PS said the government has developed infrastructures and buildings to improve health care

services, but the buildings will not be beneficial if there are no medicines. He said the government will not continue tolerating them if they fail to deliver the drugs on time.

"Health centres owe you a lot of money continuing to delay delivery of the medicines including those which can be found at different parts of the country is intolerable. I am giving you two months to deliver the medicines," said Prof Makubi, threatening to take serious actions against the officials.

However, he warned some health facilities, especially major hospitals, from inflating prices of various

medicines for patients receiving treatment through the National Health Insurance Fund (NHIF), saying the government will suspend their services.

He said the government will suspend operations of hospitals that engage in such fraud. He said health centres that entered into contract with NHIF must adhere to provided guidelines.

"The government will not hesitate to close down all the health facilities inflating prices of medicines. Payment claims should reflect actual costs spent by patients," remarked PS

Speaking at the meeting,

Mwanza Regional Commissioner, Adam Malima, said the region has a plan to construct regional referral hospitals in Ilemela, Misungwi, Magu and Nyamagana district councils.

He said the aim of increasing the number of hospitals in the region which currently has a single regional hospital is to improve provision of services to approximately four million city dwellers.

Malima asked the Ministry of Health to increase equipment and machines at the cancer department in the Bugando Medical Centre (BMC) for

patients to access most of the services in the city.

He said lack of some machines forces patients to seek medical services at the Ocean Road Cancer Institute (ORCI) in Dar es Salaam.

Representative from the President's Office, Regional Administrations and Local Governments, Monica Julius asked managers of the constructed projects at various hospitals and health centres to ensure value for money and that they are completed within schedule.

## Firm calls upon ZAA to lift imposed ban on its operations at Abeid Amani Karume International Airport's Terminal Three

By Correspondent Zuwena Shame

AIRPORT ground handling company—Transworld Aviation Ltd has called upon the Zanzibar Airport Authority (ZAA) to lift the imposed ban on its operations at the Abeid Amani Karume International Airport's terminal three.

The firms ask for intervention from the Tanzania Civil Aviation Authority (TCAA) since it was involved in the issuance of the operation permit.

Speaking in Dar es Salaam yesterday, the company's Legal and Investment Director, Peter Madeleka said they entered a contract with ZAA to conduct ground handling services at the airport for 15 years.

Madeleka said the company has so far operated for 5 years but it was banned from continuing with the job at terminal three. He said the ban has resulted in a loss because it is only operating at terminal 2.

"Most of our clients are internationals, operating from terminal 2 is costly because we must hire buses to pick passengers at terminal 3. Some international airlines have already issued notices to stop working with us," said Madeleka.

He said the company provide ground handling services to international airline companies such as Neos Spa (Italy), Kenya Airways

(Kenya), Astral Aviation (Kenya), Fly Dubai (Dubai), KLM (Holland), AirFrance (France), EuroWing (Germany) and Ethiopian Airlines (Ethiopia).

"We would like to urge ZAA to consider lifting the ban and respect the terms and conditions as per signed contract. Our agreement with ZAA did not specify terminals, it only stated that we will provide services at the Abeid Amani Karume International Airport.

He said the firm was banned from providing services at the airport since December 1st 2022 and it has so far incurred a loss of 540m/-.

He added the company had invested about \$40 billion and provided more than 170 jobs to Tanzanians from mainland and Zanzibar.

He claimed that ZAA has authorised a company named Dnata Zanzibar Aviation Services Company Ltd to provide ground handling operations at terminal 3, the thing that is not fair for other companies.

Reached for comments, TCAA Director General, Hamza Johari said they are aware of the matter and that it is in ZAA's hands and they are the ones who have been dealing with the matter from the beginning.

In a telephone interview, ZAA Deputy Managing Director Seif Abdallah said the allegations are not true.



Ruaha residents in jubilant mood earlier this week shortly after Water minister Jumaa Aweso (C) ordered out a district water engineer in Morogoro Region alleged to be behind the problems facing a local water project of strategic importance. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

## Z'bar govt assures citizens including those located in small islands of reliable power

By Guardian Reporter, Zanzibar

ZANZIBAR government has assured citizens that it is well prepared to connect all villages with power services including those located in small islands so as to open the door of development and investments.

Minister for Health, Nassor Ahmed Mazrui, said this yesterday when launching power at Kiboje village in Unguja District.

He said that power is an essential service which helps stimulate

economic growth by facilitating increase of income generating activities, fighting environmental destruction and opening investment doors.

"So, the government is well prepared to ensure that it connects all villages to power services. Something will help cut down deforestation due to much use of charcoal and firewood," he said.

According to him, strategies of the CCM election manifesto from

2020-2025 as well as the development vision 2050 see power service reaching all parts of the country to transform people's lives.

"Today, we have launched the availability of electricity in Kiboje and our aim is to reach all villages in Unguja and Pemba as well as small islands," he said.

Deputy Minister in Zanzibar's Ministry of Water, Energy and Minerals said that the government has set aside 160m/- for the supply

of power service at Kiboje village and nearby areas.

He also said that the power supply company has reduced connection fees for households to 100,000/- from the previous 200,000.

Zanzibar Electricity Corporation (ZECO) chief manager said that in Pemba a total of eight small islands have already been reached with power service, something which has transformed lives, opened investment doors.



Lenganasa Soipey, a Simanjiro District CCM official, addresses Naisinyai ward pastoralists yesterday on the problems the random sale of land can lead to. Photo: Correspondent Gift Thadey

## Search for victims continues after ferry capsizes in Nigeria

BUJA

A Search continued on Friday for some of the passengers who died after their boat broke apart on a river in Kebbi state in northern Nigeria.

On Wednesday 10 bodies were recovered by divers, a local official said.

The vessel, ferrying passengers returning from a farm on the River Niger, broke in half as it approached Samanaji village in Koko-Besse district.

It had been overloaded with

passengers "beyond its capacity," said Yahaya Bello Koko, the political administrator of the district.

"We have recovered 10 passengers with the help of local divers while searches for 10 others still missing" continue, said Koko.

"The 10 missing are presumed to have drowned, considering the long hours they have spent in the river."

More than 80 passengers were rescued, he added.

Federal and state emergency officials could not be immediately reached for comment on the incident.

Capsizes are common on Nigerian waterways due to frequent overloading and lack of maintenance.

Last October, Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari said that 76 people had died when an overloaded boat capsized in southeast Nigeria's Anambra state. Some 85 people were on board when the accident happened, in an area devastated by floods.

"The boat reportedly carrying 85 persons capsized following rising floods in Ogburu area of the state, with emergency bodies confirming

a death toll of 76," Buhari's office quoted him as saying. He directed the emergency services to provide relief to the victims.

"I pray for the repose of the souls of the deceased and for everyone's safety, as well as the well-being of the family members of the victims of this tragic accident," he added.

In May 2021 around 100 traders drowned when their boat ruptured because of overloading and sank in the same river, according to Kebbi state officials.

## AfDB data collection tool launched in Sudan

KHARTOUM

Collection of data on African Development Bank projects in Sudan will now be an easier and faster exercise following the bank's launch of the Remote Appraisal, Supervision, Monitoring and Evaluation (RASME) initiative.

The RASME platform makes it possible to collect field data remotely throughout a project lifecycle. It uses such electronic devices as smartphones, tablets and laptops to generate information in various digital formats. These include texts, images, figures and videos.

Launched recently in Sudan's capital, Khartoum, this new digital platform will make work easier for government officials, project implementing units, development partners and African Development Bank operations staff, who are often required to collect data on bank-funded projects.

The launch took place on the sidelines of a three-day training workshop for stakeholders of bank projects. The bank's chief regional IT coordinator for East Africa, Francis Kohoue, coordinated the workshop, together with bank consultant Gaspard Dodo and IT Officer Ibrahim Mohamed.

The bank's country manager in Sudan, Mary Monyau, underscored the importance of RASME in portfolio management. She said: "Effective portfolio management, anchored on reliable, accessible, and timely data, is fundamental for attaining project results. RASME is a key element in achieving the desired operational excellence in portfolio management."

Monyau added that RASME would provide task managers, project coordinators, monitoring and evaluation units and partners in the field with a systematic methodology for collecting data that can be verified using geo-

location and timestamps, stored securely, and analyzed.

Many participants lauded the timing of the training.

The director of international financial institutions in Sudan's Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, Alamin Abuelgasim Adam, said: "The RASME training has come at the right time when we are experiencing challenges in the collection of information in some parts of the country due to insecurity. The Government of Sudan has embraced technology and will adopt the tool. Through this tool, the government can obtain information about projects promptly. Through the new tool, monitoring and evaluation will be improved."

Other participants said the tool would be beneficial in the face of travel restrictions necessitated by Covid-19. The African Development Bank's country program officer in Sudan, Maurice Wanyama, said: "RASME will be useful in any pandemic context, such as Covid-19, where traveling to project sites may be limited. The tool will benefit projects in remote sites with security challenges, rough terrains, or other logistic constraints.

Before RASME, project data was collected manually with physical presence at project sites necessary.

Suada Mohamed Elsayed, the monitoring and evaluation officer of the Education System and Skills Development project financed by the bank, described RASME as a user-friendly tool that combines all options for data collection, analysis and reporting.

The bank is currently implementing RASME in 14 African countries. It plans to extend the platform to other countries to support stakeholders in preparing projects more effectively, tracking progress, and evaluating their impact on beneficiary communities openly and transparently.



Lands, Housing and Human Settlements Development minister Dr Angelina Mabula addresses Dar es Salaam officials yesterday at a meeting on the city's master plan. Right is the ministry's permanent secretary, Dr Allan Kijazi. Photo: Correspondent Jumanne Juma

## PS pleads for timely implementation of water projects in Musoma District

By Guardian Reporter

THE Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Water, Anthony Sanga, has directed authorities in Mara Region to ensure that the water projects in Mugango and Tegeruka wards in Musoma District commences immediately for the residents to start accessing the precious liquid by June, this year.

He made the directives on Thursday during public rallies in the wards and wanted institutions under the Water Ministry in the region to collaboratively work to ensure that the projects are completed on time.

He wanted the Musoma Urban Water Supply and Sanitation Authority (MUWASA), the Mugango-Kiabakari-Butiama water authority and the Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Agency (RUWASA) to work hard and address all the things that are thwarting the project.

The PS said that the implementation of the project is directives of President Samia Suluhu Hassan she issued when laying the foundation stone of the construction of the Mugango-Kiabakari-Butiama project in February, 2022.

"If you remember clearly, our president came here to lay the foundation stone for a project worth 70.5bn/-, the

project has two phases but she directed that it should be implemented in one phase," the PS said.

He informed that President Samia Suluhu has added 4.775bn/- so as to ensure that the mega Mugango-Kiabakari-Butiama water project is completed on time and benefit more people who are struggling to access the service.

"I want experts who are supervising the projects to start seeking contractors and sign an agreement to commence implementation by February, this year," he stressed.

Eng. Sanga commended Musoma rural legislator, Prof Sospeter Muhongo for moni-

toring well implementation of various water projects and asked residents in Mugango and Tegeruka wards to be patient and wait for the projects which will commence soon.

He insisted that the Mugango-Kiabakari-Butiama project should be completed by June, this year wanting authority to supervise this.

"When the regional commissioner visited the project recently he directed authorities to supervise it and ensure that it is completed by June 30, 2023, this is what the ministry supervises, there will be no additional time, so you need to work hard to achieve the goal," he explained.

Prof Muhongo commended the government for its efforts especially in the recent years of connecting villages with water services especially those that are far from water sources.

He said that once the on-going projects are completed, many wards including Etaru, Nyegina, Ifulifu, and Nyakantende will be reached with the service.

He said that in Mugango there are two on-going water projects including the one which President Samia issued 600m/- which has facilitated supply of water in the areas of Bugoji, Kanderema, Saragana, Nyambono and Mikuyu.

## Govt will use NFRA in buying maize from Rukwa farmers at a price of 500/- per kilo, says minister

By Guardian Correspondent, Sumbawanga

AGRICULTURE Minister Hussein Bashe has said from May this year, the government through the National Food Reserve Agency (NFRA) will start purchasing maize from farmers in Rukwa Region at a price of 500/- per kilogramme.

Speaking during stakeholders' meeting soon after completing his two-day tour in the region, Bashe assured the farmers that the government will purchase the maize at the price as to ensure that traders also purchase the crop at the same price or above.

He said that the purchase of the crop will start earlier than in previous years where the exercise started in July as it has constructed modern warehouses to keep the crop.

"Our goal is to bring productivity of the crop by directly benefiting farmers in their areas, we have enough warehouses and modern machines to clean the crops, so farmers should get prepared," he said.

Minister Bashe said that in some areas in Rukwa, maize starts to ripe and dry in April, so NFRA will purchase them early, dry it and store it in their warehouses to help the farmer to get their funds and continue with other economic activities.

"Apart from purchasing the maize, the government will continue issuing permits to sell the crop outside the country as long as the farm-

er/trader has found a reliable market abroad, we will also continue searching for more markets and connect Tanzanians with the opportunities," he explained.

He said that the government has a number of strategies aimed to transform the agriculture sector by conducting reforms and facilitating easy access to farming inputs to increase production and productivity in the sector.

He said that putting subsidies in fertiliser as well as hiring more extension officers to serve in rural areas is one of the strategies aimed to bring revolution in the sector by lifting up farmers in all areas.

Mussa Plus, one of the farmers in the region commended the government for its efforts that are now benefiting farmers in various areas as many of them are seeing the potential in the activity.

"As farmers, we are not ready to see the country fall into hunger, as long as the government is with us, we will continue farming and increase production. We have been equipped with skills on best farming practices, we receive subsidized inputs and other things which give us courage to continue expanding our fields," he asserted.

Regional Commissioner, Queen Sendiga urged farmers to utilise well the on-going rains by expanding farms so as to produce more crops to strengthen the country's food security and improve their lives.

## Monitor children's competency in 3Rs, deputy PS calls on education officials

By Guardian Correspondent, Dodoma

THE government has asked leaders in charge of education at regional and local authorities' level to monitor the progress of children at primary school to make sure they are competent in reading, writing, and arithmetic (3Rs).

A deputy permanent secretary in the President's Office, (Regional Administrations and Local Governments) Dr Charles Msonde, made the statement when speaking at a meeting with district, regional and academic officers in Dodoma.

He said some leaders forgot their responsibilities of monitoring teachers resulting in reduced efficiency. He said such laxities contribute to some pupils completing primary school education without knowing how to read and write.

"It is not acceptable; some few people are derailing government efforts to ensure provision of quality education. It is not possible that a child completes Standard Seven but he or she cannot read and write. As leaders you should examine yourself whether you are properly supervising the education sector or not," said Dr Msonde.

Dr Msonde thanked President

Samia Suluhu Hassan for providing funds for improvement of the learning and teaching environment at primary and secondary schools.

He said that all pupils selected to join secondary school education will be accommodated as construction of classes have reached 96 percent. He said the government is constructing 8,000 classrooms across the country.

"The government provides motivation to teachers to ensure they produce good graduates who will later become experts in the various development fields," he said.

Secretary of the Teachers' Service Commission (TSC), Paulina Nkwama asked the leaders to manage the basics of teachers' service by monitoring their conduct and ensuring they implement their duties accordingly.

Nkwama noted that it is important to control absenteeism amongst teachers because it is one of the sources contributing to lower performance of the education sector.

Director, education supervision department in the ministry, Vicent Kayombo urged the leaders to work on given directives by enhancing supervision at schools.



Village chairmen from Mirerani township in Simanjiro District on an inspection tour of Nduruma River dam and Kidawash canyon following recent floods in the area. Photo: Correspondent Gift Thadey

## TANGA to conduct house-to-house operation to ensure all children are registered for school

By Guardian Correspondent, Tanga

TANGA District Commissioner, Hashim Mgangilwa has announced a special house-to-house operation from January 9, this year to identify parents who haven't registered their children for pre and primary education.

He made the statement yesterday here when inspecting construction of classrooms at Saruji secondary school insisting parents to ensure that they register their children who have reached age to start

school. "We cannot go like this, leaving children behind, education is important for their life, so parents need to know this and ensure that they send their school-age children for registration and those needed to continue with studies, attend school," he said.

"We are inspecting the completion of classrooms construction, but we will also look on the trend of registering school age children. President Samia Suluhu Hassan has continued to finance the provision of free

education, so we need to ensure that our children go to school and achieve their life goals," he said.

He added that the district was still lagging behind on registration of school-age children as for pre-school we are at 65 percent and 50 percent for primary.

He also wanted leaders in wards and villages to supervise and ensure that the operation goes well to identify parents who are not sending children to school.

Tanga city director, Spora Liana said the registration of school-age children to start

pre and standard one is going on but the response is still low thus failing to reach the intended goals.

"We planned to register a total of 6,417 pre-school pupils but we have so far registered a total of 3,303 pupils which is equal to 51 percent and for primary, the target was to register 9,397 pupils and we have so far registered a total of 6,097 which is equal to 65 percent," she said.

She however said that the target for form one registration is 7,997 pupils.

Handeni District Commis-

sioner, Siriel Mchembe said that he will closely monitor the attendance of pupils once the schools are opened.

Mchembe wanted parents to ensure that children attend school and any student who will be found skipping classes, parents will be responsible for this.

"There are some parents who are so tricky on this, they have been claiming that they have shifted the absent pupil to another school which is not true, this time we will investigate deeply to ensure that all children are at school," he asserted.

# Govt announces the resumption of gemstone auctions

By Guardian Reporter

THE government has announced its decision to officially resume gemstone auctions to attract major buyers, traders and miners in the country.

Minerals Minister, Doto Biteko made the revelation at the launch of a minerals tourist shop owned by Tanzanite Experience Company at the Kibaoni area in Karatu District, Manyara Region.

He said through the auction, the Tanzanite Experience Company, through the newly launched shop will get a lot of gemstones for development of the centre and other areas.

Biteko said that through the centre which is located in the northern tourism circuit, the shop has been attracting a good number of local and foreign tourists.

"Tanzanian gemstones, especially Tanzanite, are mostly being purchased in large quantities by tourists who come to visit our national parks. Through them our minerals are promoted and marketed in the world," said Biteko.

He added that the ministry commends the investment which has been 100 percent done by Tanzanians in support of President Samia Suluhu Hassan's efforts to promote tourism through the 'The Royal Tour' film where several gemstones including Tanzanite were among the attractions.

He said the ministry encourages such kind of investment which directly supports the efforts made by the government to promote Tan-

zanite and other minerals in the world.

"This shop will sell various products of Tanzanite and Tsavorite minerals that for many years have been manufactured and sold abroad. This is a commendable move that our country continues to take in ensuring these minerals are processed within the country," added Biteko.

The Minister called upon people interested to invest in carving, mining and other minerals value addition activities to consult officials for permits. He said the government would wish to provide permits to such investors as they contribute to national income and create jobs for Tanzanians.

Director, Tanzanite Experience Company, Hassinne Sajani said the shop has been a major attraction to Tanzanians and foreign tourists who have been visiting it and purchasing various products.

He added that the company has employed 80 people whereas more than 80 percent are residents of Manyara Kibaoni.

He promised to further enhance the business to promote Tanzanian minerals and increase its value in the world.

The shop Manager, Junaid Khan said that more than 6,000 visitors have so far visited the shop.

Karatu District Commissioner, Dadi Kolimba said that mining business has opened up the Karatu district and increased income to the people. He commended the company for providing jobs to 80 residents of the area.



Water ministry permanent secretary Anthony Sanga (2nd-L) visits Mara Region's Mugango-Kiabakari-Butiama water project yesterday. Left is Musoma district commissioner Dr Khaifan Haule and second-right is Musoma Rural constituency legislator Prof Sospeter Muhongo. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

## Investigation into drug trafficking case facing three Dar es Salaam residents not ready, says prosecution

By Correspondent Zuwena Shame

THE prosecution in the drug trafficking case facing three Dar es Salaam residents has said that investigations have not been completed, advising that the accused should remain remanded un-

til January 19.

State Attorney, Caroline Matemu, before the Principal Resident Magistrate of the Kisutu Resident Magistrates Court, Mary Mrio, said the case should only come up for a mention.

The suspects were allegedly engaged

in illegal drug business and found with 15.19 kg of heroin. They are Selemani Ngulungwa, Sharifa Bakari and Faridi Said.

Matemu claimed before the court that investigation into the case is not complete and therefore requested the

court to set another date for its mention.

It was alleged that all suspects committed the offence on November 29th, 2022 in Mbagala Charambe area in Dar es Salaam where they were found with 15.19 kilograms of heroin.



A resident of Muheza in Tanga Region makes things easy for himself yesterday by deploying donkeys in transporting grass for feeding livestock under the zero grazing modality. Photo: Correspondent Steven William

## TOAM calls for timely realisation of ecological organic agriculture strategy

By Correspondent Valentine Oforo, Dodoma

THE Tanzania Organic Agriculture Movement (TOAM) has appealed to the government to support effective and timely implementation of the national ecological organic agriculture strategy.

Different civil society organisations (CSOs) in the agriculture chain, including TOAM, PELUM Tanzania, Swissaid and Sustainable Agriculture Tanzania (SAT) are cooperating with the ministry of agriculture to heighten the performance of the organic farming system in Tanzania.

The long-standing initiative engineered by the relevant stakeholders for years, has successfully pushed for formulation of a special draft for the official execution of the national ecological organic agriculture strategy.

Apart from hailing the government for the support in terms of experts and facilities Chief Executive Officer of TOAM

Bakari Mongo asked for further government support promote organic farming and organic foods.

He said Tanzania stands a better chance to practice organic agriculture, the biological farming system which produces foods that attract huge demands and prices at the worldwide market.

"Our initiatives have been greeted by a number of support from the government, but we call for more support since the aim is to supplement government efforts in organic agriculture performance in the country," he stated.

Bakari called upon other likeminded agro institutions from within and outside the country to chip in and support the move, extended appreciation for the Biovision Foundation for backing up the side with at least 200m/- last year.

Organic agriculture is a holistic production management system which promotes and enhances agro-ecosystem health, including biodiversity, biological cycles, and soil biological activity, whereby organic foods are products de-

rived from certified farm management systems using land husbandry techniques and biological manual methods instead of synthesis inputs.

Chairperson of the strategy's committee, Revelian Ngaiza, the Policy Advisor and National Coordinator for the Youth Involvement in Agriculture at the parent ministry, said the strategy focuses to ensure the country promotes both, conventional and organic farming in order to give the public a useful option to opt, whether to consume foods from organic farming or from conventional farming systems.

The demand for organically grown food products keeps on soaring globally, local agricultural pundits observed the environmentally-friendly type of farming is practiced by a small number of farmers across the country due to diverse constraints, including poor awareness.

Section 3.21 and 32.13 of the National Agricultural Policy, 2013 (NAP 2013) talks of the government's commitment

to promote organic agriculture in Tanzania, but little has so far been achieved.

Apart from the national agriculture policy, the government has also expressed high commitment to motivate and push for organic agriculture in the Agricultural Sector Development Programme (ASDP II), but also the country's 2017 Climate-Smart Agricultural Guideline details over how the government understands and is willing to promote agroecology.

According to the schedule, implementation of the strategy set for June this year will encompass a number of institutions and ministries including the Livestock Ministry, the Prime minister's Office (Regional Administration and Local Government), Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism, Tanzania Forestry Research Institute (TAFORI), the Sokoine University of Agriculture (SUA), Nelson Mandela African Institution of Science and Technology (NM-AIST), state-owned agricultural and seeds institutes, together with the private sector.

## Penalise people failing to take care of planted trees, RC orders

By Guardian Correspondent,

Singida

SINGIDA Regional Commissioner, Peter Serukamba has directed councillors in the districts to formulate by-laws that will punish people who fail to take care of the planted trees in their respective areas.

He said authorities in the region will take stringent legal measures against anyone failing to take care of the trees which will be planted this year.

Serukamba issued the order when addressing civil servants and leaders of various public institutions in Singida. He said the region plans to plant 3 million trees in all the districts, hence the need for the residents to take care of the trees and make sure they grow accordingly.

"To protect the trees that we are about to start planting, district council chairpersons through councillors should come up with by-laws to punish people who fail to take care of the trees," said the RC, noting the punishments should include penalties.

Serukamba said that million trees were planted in previous years but nobody took care of them. He said formulating the by-laws will make residents responsible for them.

He said on January 7th this year the region will launch a tree planting campaign at the Bombardier grounds in Singida municipality where residents will be given seedlings to plant at their homes.

"Each of the residents who will be given the tree seedlings would be responsible to take care of them until they grow. Let us do this voluntarily because we don't want to use force to make you plant trees," he said.

He said the region will also come up with by-laws to ensure cleanliness of the environment especially town centres. He said the move aims to prevent outbreak of diseases.

"Religious leaders should invest in sensitizing people on the importance of planting trees and cleaning their areas. Cleaning the environment does not require any kind of investments or funds," he added.

According to him, the on-going drought condition in many parts of the country has been contributed by the destruction of the environment; warning failure to protect forests will result in extreme weather conditions.

He said protecting forest as well as the environment will ensure good flow of water at various rivers and dams across the country.

## AEC to host New Year reception in London on 26 Jan

By Special Correspondent

THE voice of the African energy sector, the African Energy Chamber (AEC), will host a special New Year reception event at the Waldorf Hilton luxury hotel in London on 26 January where participants will be encouraged to explore new avenues in financing energy projects on the African continent.

During the event, investors and African energy leaders will be given a platform to support energy initiatives that drive economic growth and human development across the continent.

Upholding a results-focused business environment for international companies and investors operating in Africa's dynamic energy industry, the AEC's Invest in African Energy Reception Event will focus on developing an oil and natural gas market in Africa to serve as the foundation of the continent's energy industry and transition, facilitating a platform for strong domestic trading and investment while reducing barriers of entry into the sector and thus ushering a wave of opportunities for new players to participate in one of the world's most burgeoning investment destinations.

"African nations must focus on developing a natural gas market to serve as the foundation of the continent's energy industry," states NJ Ayuk, Executive Chairman of the AEC, adding, "Africa will be unable to meet the UN's sustainable development goals unless we tap into all resources available, which is why we must encourage and facilitate international investment, specifically from Europe, in oil and gas in order to fairly and economically participate in the global energy transition and drive socioeconomic development throughout the continent."



Members of the public follow proceedings at yesterday's launch by Zanzibar President Dr Hussein Ali Mwinyi of Salum Turkey Secondary School at Kwa Binti Amran. Photo: Zanzibar State House

## African states asked to embrace indigenous food crops

By Moses Wekesa

AFRICAN states have been asked to promote traditional food crops in the face of the ongoing debate on Genetically Modified Organisms Foods (GMOs).

An agricultural expert Do-

ris Anjawa says that if at all the states want to adopt GMOs then they should approve genes from the local crops to preserve the traditional foods.

She however urged the government of Kenya to provide the facts about GMOs in a simplified manner for farmers in

the local villages to understand and enable them participate in the ongoing discussion.

She noted that the government should also educate farmers on what GMOs are so that in future when approved they can understand the impact and benefits of the modified crops.

A farmer, Tom Mwanje observed that the debate on GMOs is due to failure by farmers to cultivate enough food crops to feed the country.

He noted that if farmers will put their focus in planting adequate traditional crops, then there will be no need of seeking

GMO crops to supplement food in the country.

Mwanje asked political leaders to support sensitization of farmers in planting traditional crops to address the challenges of food shortage and climate change.



Dodoma regional CCM chairman Adam Kimbisa (L) speaks with journalists in Dar es Salaam on President Samia Suluhu Hassan's recent lifting of a ban on political rallies. Photo: Correspondent Jumanne Juma

## France's African retired soldiers win last battle over pensions

PARIS

SOME of the last survivors in France from a colonial-era infantry corps that recruited tens of thousands of African soldiers to fight in French wars around the world will be able to live out their final days with family members back in Africa after a French government U-turn on their pension rights.

The decision to make claiming their pensions easier was confirmed on Wednesday (Jan.04).

It follows a years-long campaign on behalf of the "tirailleurs Sénégalais," who were recruited to fight from Senegal and other former French ruled nations in sub-Saharan Af-

rica.

The pension decision concerns only 22 of the former soldiers who collect a 950-euro monthly payment (US\$1,000), the government's Solidarity Ministry said.

They'll no longer have to spend six months of the year in France to be eligible and will continue receiving their pension payments even if they move away permanently, the ministry added.

The decision, applying a "principal of tolerance" for the veterans, will be formalized in a government letter to be published in coming days.

Many tens of thousands of African recruits served in tirailleur regi-

ments, in colonial wars, in both World Wars, and in France's Vietnam and Algeria wars before being disbanded in the early 1960s.

"After long years of fighting, we have finally won," Aïssata Seck, who campaigns for them tweeted. "The former tirailleurs are going to be able to see out their lives in their countries of origin."

Her grandfather was also a "tirailleur."

To be eligible for their French pensions, veterans from the infantry corps founded in 1857 and disbanded a century later had to spend at least six months of the year living in France.

That rule separated ageing former combatants

from their families in Africa and some died alone, away from loved ones, says Aïssata Seck, who campaigns for them. Her grandfather was also a "tirailleur."

"It was extremely painful for the families and for us," Seck said in a telephone interview Wednesday (Jan. 04) with The Associated Press. "They live for the most part in extremely different circumstances in France, away from their families."

In all, 37 of the former tirailleurs – most of them recruited to fight from Senegal, as well as Mali, Mauritania and Guinea – are known to live in France, says Seck.

The youngest of them is aged 90, and a dozen live in

separate rooms in a home in the Paris suburb of Bondy, where Seck serves as an elected official. They served as tirailleurs during wars for independence in Vietnam and Algeria, she said.

In Senegal, the head of the National Office for Veterans and Victims of War said the decision was overdue.

"For a long time veterans have asked to return with their pensions but were not successful. This decision will relieve them. These veterans live alone in their homes, they are not accompanied, they live in extremely difficult conditions," said the official, Capt. Ngor Sarr.

Sarr, 85, fought for the

French military in Algeria and Mauritania and then moved to France in 1993 so he could receive his pension. He said he then lost it when he returned to Senegal 20 years later.

"Many soldiers died, they didn't get this opportunity despite the role they played in liberating France," said Mamadou Lamine Thiam. His father also fought in Algeria and died in 2015, aged 85.

The announcement coincides with the cinema release in France of a movie highlighting the sacrifices made by African soldiers on bloody French battlefields in World War I. "Tirailleurs" features actor Omar Sy, a star of the "Jurassic World" franchise.

## Interpol's "most wanted" trafficker arrested in Dubai

ASMARA

AN Eritrean national described as one of "the world's most wanted human traffickers" has been arrested in Sudan after an international manhunt led by the United Arab Emirates, Interpol announced on Thursday.

The suspect – identified as Kidane Zekarias Habtemariam – is accused of leading a criminal organisation that abducts, extorts and murders East African migrants trying to cross the Mediterranean Sea from Libya, the France-based police agency said in an online statement.

He was arrested on Sunday in a major international police operation led by the United Arab Emirates, based on information shared via Interpol, said a statement from the UAE's Ministry of Interior.

A breakthrough in the manhunt came after UAE authorities began closely tracking Habtemariam's organisation and members of his family, uncovering money laundering patterns that led them to Sudan, the agency said. Interpol first began monitoring Habtemariam's activities in 2019.

Habtemariam had been the subject of two Interpol red notices, one from Ethiopia and the other from the Netherlands, the agency said. Dutch authorities accused Habtemariam of running a camp in Libya that housed thousands of migrants.

Habtemariam was convicted in absentia and sentenced to life imprisonment after escaping from custody in Ethiopia while on trial on people smuggling charges in 2020.

Libya has in recent years emerged as the dominant transit point for migrants seeking a better quality of life in Europe.

The oil-rich country plunged into chaos following a NATO-backed uprising that toppled and killed longtime autocrat Moammar Gadhafi in 2011. Human traffickers have benefited from the chaos in Libya, smuggling migrants in across the country's lengthy land borders with six nations.

According to a tweet posted by the UAE's interior minister, Saif Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, the international operation lasted nine months and also involved Dutch, Ethiopian and Sudanese authorities, Interpol said.

"Thanks to the professionalism and dedication of our police officers, the world's most wanted human trafficker will no longer be able to commit his despicable actions, Saeed Abdullah al-Suwaidi, director of the UAE's Federal Anti-Narcotics General Directorate, said in a separate statement cited by Interpol.

Sudanese police did not respond to requests for comment.

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Taking A New Look  
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## Africa can tackle repetitive droughts in Horn of Africa

In 2006, an acute shortage of food affected the countries in the Horn of Africa (Somalia, Djibouti and Ethiopia), as well as northeastern Kenya. The United Nations's Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) estimated on January 6, 2006, that more than 11 million people in these countries may be affected by an impending widespread famine, largely attributed to a severe drought, and exacerbated by military conflicts in the region.

Drought is a predictable event in the Horn of Africa, and when combined with other factors it causes conflict and terrible human misery. Previous droughts in 1983-85, 1991-92 and 1998-99 swiftly reversed gradual increase in livestock and caused losses in the cattle population of up to 62 per cent. These conditions of drought, together with other factors including high cereal prices, overpopulation in the region, abandoning traditional rangeland management methods and conflict, are leading to conditions of famine.[2] In the present 2006 drought, claims about factors transforming drought into famine include a ban on livestock imports to markets in the Persian Gulf States, which has reduced the income of livestock-dependent farmers, further increasing food insecurity.

The population in East Africa had increased rapidly in the decades before the food crisis. From 67 million in 1950 to 306 million in 2006. [

THE number of children suffering terrible drought conditions across Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia has more than doubled in five months, according to a UNICEF's report.

Approximately 20.2 million children were threatened with severe hunger, thirst and disease in Decem-

ber, compared to 10 million in July. This surge is due to climate change, conflict, global inflation and grain shortage.

Climate-linked health emergencies are on the rise across Africa and the deadly cholera outbreak in drought-hit Kenya is only the latest example.

In the Horn of Africa, nearly 70 per cent of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) region comprise arid and semi-arid lands prone to recurrent droughts. The east African region stretches from Eritrea in the north, through Ethiopia and Djibouti to the southern tips of Kenya and Somalia.

The region is experiencing its worst drought in more than 40 years. In the past 10 years, the Horn of Africa has endured three severe droughts (2010-2011, 2016-2017 and 2020-2021).

At least 36.1 million people in the region have now been affected by one of the most severe and longest droughts in recent history that are expected to continue well into 2023.

This includes 24.1 million people in Ethiopia, 7.8 million in Somalia and 4.35 million in Kenya. Many are at risk of starvation and millions face severe levels of hunger.

Lieke van de Wiel, UNICEF deputy regional director for eastern and southern Africa, said: "While collective and accelerated efforts have mitigated some of the worst impacts of what had been feared, children in the Horn of Africa are still facing the most severe drought in more than two generations."

It is estimated that approximately two million children in Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia require urgent treatment for severe acute malnutrition, the deadliest form of hunger.

## Eclipsing Ebola in Uganda is jolly good news for us

REPORTS from Uganda suggest that the recent flare up of the deadly contagious disease, Ebola has largely been curbed. Health authorities there say upwards of 43 days have passed without a new infection being reported and thus the waiting to make a formal declaration of complete routing or cessation of the pandemic is a matter of time. That is good news for all of Uganda's neighbours, and not least ourselves as we have plenty of people to people transit traffic across the border.

This turn of events is not surprising and at the same time it is not entirely reassuring, as Ebola has a way of making furtive outbreaks from time to time, pernicious in how they affect communities but their contagion has usually proved to be limited. Recent reports in Uganda talk of up to 142 confirmed cases of SVD, of which 55 died -slightly over one third and 87 recovered. In addition, 22 deaths among probable cases have been reported in individuals who died before a sample was taken, on the basis of an online chronicle on the latest updates, the update being stable from December 13 or thereabouts.

In that case the health precautionary facilities put up on border posts as well as officials tasked to man those facilities will be reduced to skeletal level, but health officials will face a problem because such flare-ups, aside from full scale outbreaks in an urban or densely populated area, tend to be relatively unpredictable. North eastern urban centres of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) have seen mild or intense flare ups from time to time, but they rarely cross into other ter-

ritories. That is why it was a bit surprising to hear of an outbreak in central Uganda, far from the usual epicentre(s) of the Ebola outbreak in North Kivu province, a frequent battle zone.

Ugandan authorities were also pursuing a vaccine suited for what experts call the Sudanese version of the disease, where the term refers to adjacent countries than to a tropical ecosystem which extends over the whole area. At the same time the term Sudan has often been identified with Africa generally as a region explored much earlier by Western geographers, so at times it is roughly the same as black African sub-species, termed Sudan for scientific purposes. Whether it was thus isolated in Uganda, the DRC or Central Africa wouldn't make a difference. In other words we can expect relative calm in relation to the Ebola threat for a while and even for good, but health authorities will be compelled to be on their guard for anything unexpected. For that matter we may have exercised extra alertness in relation to the Ebola outbreak due to the painful background of the COVID-19 pandemic, which noticeably struck neighbouring countries more forcefully than it did here. Tanzania opened its skies much earlier than other countries, and even the tourism up-scale has partially to do with the fact that Tanzania was more Covid-free than alternative travel destinations. Even then we had learnt to take overly stuffed safeguards, as no one knew for once if the Ebola outbreak would be mild. It was mild enough in Uganda, just so. We rushed to protect and that was right, as it is better to err in excess caution than in a lack of it.

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## Back to school



## Nigerians must wake up in 2023

By Monday Philips Ekpe

As 2022 made its way into history last weekend, like all the years before it, I was overwhelmed with gratitude to the Almighty for his goodness towards me. That was at a personal, private level. But something else bothered me: the drift of the country and what could well be its irreversible destination. And as if setting agenda for 2023, two foremost Nigerian elders stepped into the arena with their bombshells. Former President Olusegun Obasanjo, famous for his letter writing, penned yet another one titled, "My Appeal to All Nigerians, Particularly Young Nigerians." It was mainly to blame the current national travails squarely on the government of President Muhammadu Buhari, hand the country's redemptive chance to youths as a crucial challenge to their own era, and endorse Peter Obi, presidential standard bearer of the Labour Party (LP) in next month's general elections. In about 24 hours, Chief Edwin Clark, Leader of Pan Niger Delta Forum (PANDEF), also announced his backing for Obi. Since then, Obasanjo's intervention (some would prefer interference), in particular, has elicited strong criticisms. My take is that the propriety of his choice and fidelity of his views - both within his rights - will be tested in due course, making the vicious castigation of the retired general for his positions most unnecessary.

No matter the opposition to Obasanjo's submissions or the assessment of his person, I have been ruminating on a part of that appeal since. Hear him: "If we fall prey again, we will have ourselves to blame and no one can say how many more knocks Nigeria can take before it tips over. To be forewarned is to be forearmed. Future is not emotion. I challenge the youth to arise. Let nobody pull wool over your eyes to divide you and/or segregate you to make you underlings. Nigerian youth, wherever they come from North or South, East or West need education which is now denied to over 20 million children; Nigerian youth also need skills, empowerment, employment, reasonably good living conditions, welfare and well-being.

"My dear young men and women, you must come together and bring about a truly meaningful change in your lives. If you fail, you have no one else to blame. Your present and future are in your hands to make or mar. The future of Nigeria is in the same manner in your hands and literally so. If for any reason you fail to redeem yourself and your country,



you will have lost the opportunity for good and you will have no one to blame but yourselves and posterity will not forgive you. Get up, get together, get going and get us to where we should be. And you, the youth, it is your time and your turn. 'Eyin Lokan' (your turn).

"The power to change is in your hands. Your future, my future, the future of grandchildren and great grandchildren is in your hands. Politics and elections are numbers game. You have the numbers, get up, stand up and make your numbers count," put pungently, characteristically. One of the reasons enemies of the former head of state attack him for voicing out what many watchers of the nation have been saying at various fora is that, having presided over Nigeria for 11 years on military and democratic platforms and left the stage with baggage of his own, he lacks the moral authority to play the role of opinion leader in this regard. Some of those who detest his tactics and what they call his grandstanding even argue that he ought to hide his head in ignominy, if for nothing else, for having a visible hand in the emergence of all his successors in office since 2007, including Buhari.

The objections notwithstanding, it is apparent that all is not well with Nigeria at the moment. I will keep arguing that if indeed this government hasn't met the expectations of majority of the people and the standard of living here is in a free-fall, the foundations for the collapse were laid way back and conveniently, shamelessly and routinely explained away by successive administrations. Blaming previous governments has been elevated to an art, to the pain and disadvantage of the populace. All that must stop if we're to assume our rightful slot in the comity of truly civilised and pro-

gressive countries.

Sadly, it's not hard to discern that many Nigerians have since resigned to fate. The lukewarm posture of the people can be attributed to restraining factors, many of which have latched onto them for long. They have watched helplessly the hopes that came with the return of democracy in 1999 drain away as set after set of politicians and political office holders do little to sustain their faith in the system. This otherwise ideal form of government is perceived, as practiced in Nigeria and other unfortunate realms, as an enterprise in which unscrupulous business men and women invest and exploit to the detriment and shock of the generality of citizens.

Apathy in the electoral processes speaks volume. The notion that votes have hardly ever counted may not vanish overnight. Assurances by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) about the credibility of the forthcoming polls may also not have registered in most minds. The February and March elections present opportunities to carry out a primary civic responsibility, gladly. We must be self-motivated even if the nudge doesn't come from expected quarters. Nigeria is in dire need of quality leadership at every level of government. Wishes, aspirations and protests alone won't get this onerous job done. Only decisive steps like going to the polling venues on the designated dates and actually casting votes for one's preferred candidates could fill the void that ought to be in the psyche of every voter.

If the current state of affairs in our land does not offer enough motivation for deliberate and active action next month, what else will? I doubt if there is any Nigerian who is not affected directly or remotely by the

crippling forces of hyper-inflation, mass underemployment and unemployment, traumatised critical sectors, hydra-headed insecurity and dwindling standards of living. Thinking of getting used to them is tantamount to attempting to live with a nagging headache. It just can't work. The rational thing to do is to search for remedies, enduring ones, that is. Calls on young Nigerians to own the fight to re-engineer the country is hinged on the fact that apart from possessing the requisite vigour, the future also clearly belongs to them more. As things stand, the four frontrunners for president, namely Obi, Senator Rabiu Kwankwaso of the New Nigeria Peoples Party (NNPP), Wazirin Atiku Abubakar of the People's Democratic Party (PDP) and Asiwaju Ahmed Tinubu of the All Progressives Congress (APC), are all above 60 years old, technically excluding them from the youth bracket. Unless the very unexpected happens, one of them will enter Aso Villa in May. Nothing to worry about, really. Experience has shown that age is never a singular determinant of leadership qualities like strength, vision, competence, integrity, insight and wisdom.

What is required at this point is to get rid of divisive tendencies and the religious and ethnic fault-lines that undermine our ability to take hard decisions to save our beloved nation from tumbling down the cliff. The change triggers we need are already with us in abundance, thankfully, in the form of the teeming younger generation. A lot can be achieved in electing capable leaders and charting a totally new path for us if they, together with the rest compatriots, cross the barriers that have hindered the country's growth for too long.



# Indonesian palm oil sector expresses concerns over EU deforestation rules



By Neill Barston

THE Indonesian government and country's palm oil trade bodies have reportedly expressed concerns over the EU deforestation regulations based on due diligence principles being put forward under the European parliament, writes Neill Barston.

While the need for greater regulation and transparency in relation to commercial supply chains, including the cocoa sector has been widely welcomed across Europe and further afield, divisions are said to have emerged



**Today's meeting is also an opportunity to bind our regions closer together. One way to do that is through trade. Trade is a powerful tool for promoting growth and closer ties between our regions.**

with supply partners in South East Asia over the potential impact of any new legislation, according to industry organisations in the region.

Under the legislation being brought forward in the EU parliament, there would be an enhanced level of onus on individual companies to ensure that deforestation is not linked to products being imported to the EU from locations around the world, including key cocoa supplies in West Africa, and other major ingredients including palm oil from across South East Asia.

Consequently, as noted by the Indonesian Palm Oil Association,

the country's president Joko Widodo and his ministerial team have put forward their issues over policy development at the recent inaugural ASEAN-EU Summit, which aimed to mark historic trading partnerships of more than four decades between the EU and Indonesia and Malaysian regions.

Significantly, palm oil has remained a key ingredient within the confectionery and snacks trade globally, though its use has attracted controversy due to considerable variations in standards with regards to harvesting and wider agricultural practices with regards to

enhancing sustainability credentials.

Moreover, in a press conference after the event President Widodo is reported to have said: "Partnerships must be based on equality. There must be no coercion. There can no longer be one side that always dictates to the other and assumes that 'my standard is better than yours.'"

Indonesia's Foreign Affairs Minister Retno Marsudi added: "The President expressed concern on European Union policies that are discriminatory in nature and hamper Indonesia's commodity exports. The new policy that is in the headlights of

the President is the Deforestation Regulation."

As Joko Supriyono, Chairman of the Indonesian Palm Oil Association (GAPKI) noted in the wake of the key meeting, the country remains dedicated to its role as a key link in global supply chains: He said: "Indonesia remains committed to supplying the EU with sustainable commodities like palm oil. The EU institutions need to recognise Indonesia as a valued, reliable trade partner and affirm their commitment to pursue cooperation and partnership with Indonesia and our ASEAN neighbours."

From an EU perspective, President of the European Council, Charles Michel, speaking in an opening address of the recent meeting, stressed that the EU and South East Asia regions had a strong history of co-operation that spanned 45 years, which he believed could be built upon by closer ties, including the potential for a new free trade agreement.

He said: "The EU and ASEAN are the world's two most advanced regional integration organisations. We understand each other very well, we share the same values and the same spirit of cooperation, we both know the challenges of transforming the vision of a political community anchored in common interests and common rules into concrete reality for our citizens."

"Today's meeting is also an opportunity to bind our regions closer together. One way to do that is through trade. Trade is a powerful tool for promoting growth and closer ties between our regions. Our trade agreements with Vietnam and Singapore have already boosted our common trade and will continue to help drive our recovery and we are exploring trade agreements with other countries in your region. We also hope to develop an EU-ASEAN Free Trade Agreement."

# Telecom Egypt partners with Huawei to implement Africa's first green tower

CAIRO, Egypt

TELECOM Egypt, the first integrated operator of communications and information technology services in Egypt, in cooperation with Huawei Technologies, the leading global provider of information and communications technology (ICT) infrastructure and smart devices, announced the implementation of the first eco-friendly, integrated solution to provide mobile networks via utilizing environmentally friendly tower made of Fiber Reinforced Polymer (FRP), with wireless availability.

Through this cooperation, Telecom Egypt will become the first operator in Egypt and Africa to install this green tower which will serve as the optimum steel alternative, which causes high emissions of carbon dioxide. The tower is approximately 18m high, with a special camouflage fence made of environmentally friendly materials, supported by integrated wireless access solutions and a green solar energy system. The tower is characterized by its high resistance in severe environmental conditions, such as corrosion due to the exposure to chemicals and high temperatures.

The Managing Director and CEO of Telecom Egypt, Adel Hamed, said that the implementation of this type of mobile site in Egypt is unprecedented and has also underscored the efforts done by all those in charge of the project, and their capability of implementing the entire



site in a timely manner and a systematic way, as per the best international quality standards that have to do with the green concept solutions.

Mr Adel further explained that Telecom Egypt's green external sites also depend on modern technologies for wireless access devices, such as the technology of antennas integrated with signal

amplifiers, which contribute to reducing the energy consumption of one site by about 40%, if compared to traditional sites.

According to Mr Adel, these modern technologies also contribute to improving the signal quality by about 20%, when compared to regular antennas, which will further result in reducing the number of stations

to be installed, enhancing the preservation of the environment, and hence achieving the aimed-for sustainable development.

He also added that Telecom Egypt relies on state-of-the-art versions of operating software that support the latest features, pertinent to energy saving, such as the feature of turning off signal amplifiers for some frequencies

during low load hours, which helps in reducing energy consumption by an average of 24%.

Jim Liu, CEO of Huawei Egypt confirmed that the company dedicated great attention to developing the infrastructure of Information and Communication Technology in Egypt which is why they have joined hands with

Telecom Egypt, the leader in the telecommunications market in Egypt and the Middle East.

He added that Huawei is keen on harnessing all the necessary, innovative technologies to save energy to build a sustainable future, which certainly generates zero carbon emissions. He also pointed out that recent studies have shown that FRP poles produce 43% less carbon dioxide emissions, compared to steel, and reduce E2E energy consumption by nearly half for manufacturers and related transportation.

He also explained that energy solutions for green outdoor sites depend on passive cooling, which eliminates the need for air conditioning and thus leads to a 47% reduction in energy consumption compared to sites with indoor rooms for devices. He also clarified that the process depends on the integration of solar energy with the main electricity network, with relative dependence on green energy, namely the solar one, as the solar panels will provide about 2 kilowatts, which will lead to a reduction of carbon dioxide emissions by 20%.

It is worth mentioning that the goal of developing an environmentally friendly green site is to use smart materials instead of the traditional ones that were previously used in mobile terminals. For instance, reverting to FRP in manufacturing leads to minimizing steel sections up to 95%, which results in minimal pollution to the environment. Moreover, it is smarter to use integrated Radio Access Network (RAN) equipment, which has bandwidth carrier dynamic shutdown and time domain deep code shutdown, which will reduce power consumption by about 24% in a low traffic period.



## Comprehensive primary healthcare, crucial in early NCDs' detection

By Correspondent James Kandoya

AN approach to improve quality of primary healthcare through enhanced capacity of detecting early non communicable disease (NCDs) is very important to manage preventive, curative and rehabilitative services, experts have suggested.

Dr Maguha Stephano, Ocean Road Cancer Institute (ORCI) cancer screening and public advocacy manager said recently in an interview that NCD interventions through primary healthcare approach by strengthening early detection and timely treatment is very important.

The expert said evidence shows that intervention approaches are excellent economic investments because, if provided early to patients, they can reduce the need for more expensive treatment.

According to her, it is now estimated that by spending \$ 14 dollars (30,000/-) in introducing Human Papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine to a single girl, the government saves 5.5m/- that would be used to treat the same person (if not vaccinated) from cervical cancer.

"It is important to improve health care services offered in health centres to diagnose the diseases because they are - as close as feasible to people's everyday environment," she said, noting that primary health care ensures people must receive quality comprehensive care - ranging from promotion and prevention to treatment, rehabilitation and palliative care.

Once a health facility diagnoses a patient with a disease, the management can give a referral to the right facility to solve the problem.

The manager insisted that capacity building for human resources in primary and health facilities development apart from doctors will enhance the capacity of nurses and other health staff to deliver good services. According to her, most of the patients come to hospital at a late stage and therefore, end up in palliative care adding that they could get curative services if diagnosed early.

She explained that prevention will not only save lives, but also a huge boost for the economic development of the country countries.

"NCDs are lifelong disease therefore investing in prevention and diagnosis is the only solution to end the growing problem," she said, adding that many NCDs can be prevented by reducing common risk factors such as tobacco use, harmful alcohol use, physical inactivity and eating unhealthy diets.

She said the institute has extended its diagnosis services in zonal hospitals and up to regional hospitals to increase diagnosis.

Prof Francis Furia, a Lecturer at Muhimbili University of Health and Allied Science (MUHAS) also said capacity building for health facilities to diagnose the NCDs at early stage is very important to reduce huge expenditure patients used to incur if diagnosed at late stage.

# Biodiversity: 'Magical marine species' pushed toward extinction, says report



The dugong is said to have inspired ancient legends of mermaids

By Helen Briggs

A "sea cow" that evoked tales of mermaids is being driven to the edge of extinction, conservation experts warn.

According to an update of the official extinction list, the dugong is almost wiped out in some parts of the world.

Scientists have also sounded alarm over the loss of other marine creatures, including exotic coral and shellfish.

They said humans had created a "perfect storm" that

threatens marine life across the globe.

The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), which compiles the official Red List of endangered species, revealed the latest findings at the UN biodiversity conference, COP 15.

"We simply cannot afford to fail," said Dr Bruno Oberle, head of the IUCN.

He warned of the urgent need to address the linked climate and biodiversity crises, or "risk losing the crucial benefits the oceans provide us with".

The latest update to the list, which has now assessed more than 150,000 species, revealed "a perfect storm of unsustainable human activity decimating marine life around the globe," he said.

Countries are meeting in Montreal, Canada, to try to agree targets for addressing the loss of nature amid an extinction crisis threatening a million species on Earth. High on their agenda is a plan to protect 30% of land and sea for nature across the globe by 2030.

Environmental groups say progress in the first week has

been slow and are calling for a step change in both pace and ambition.

"We will continue to see threats to marine life and our whole natural world unless we secure an ambitious deal," said Bernadette Fischler Hooper of WWF.

The latest extinction list highlights risks to a type of pillar coral that forms finger-like structures found throughout the Caribbean. It is now classed as critically endangered. The coral is dying due to disease, climate change and pollution.

Meanwhile, many species

of abalone, the world's most expensive seafood, are threatened with extinction, due to poaching and unsustainable harvesting, made worse by disease, pollution and climate change.

Marine biologist, Prof Amanda Vincent, of the University of British Columbia, Canada, said the "awful status" of these species should shock us and engage us for urgent action.

"These magical marine species are treasured wildlife, from the wonderful abalone to the charismatic dugong and the glorious pillar coral, and we should safeguard them accordingly," she added.

Dugongs belong to the Sirenia, an order of aquatic mammals sometimes known as "sea cows". The Sirenia family also includes manatees.

In 2015, the IUCN classified dugongs as vulnerable to extinction worldwide due to a myriad of threats, including being caught up in fishing gear or struck by boat propellers, ocean pollution and the loss of the sea grasses on which they graze

They are now particularly concerned about two populations. One, living in waters off Mozambique, is down to just 250 individuals and is regarded as critically endangered. The other, in New Caledonia, east of Australia, is deemed endangered.

There are still dugongs living in the waters off around 40 countries. Australia has the world's largest population of dugongs today, largely thanks to having a sparsely populated coast with lots of sea grasses.

Earlier this year the dugong was declared functionally extinct in China. "Functional extinction" means that even if some dugongs are still alive off China's coast, their numbers are too small to maintain a viable population.

# Africa's maternal deaths need urgent action to meet SDG goals

By Francis Kokutse, Accra

AS the effects of COVID-19 on Africa's health sector become clearer, it looks the continent will need to take urgent steps to overcome the disruptions suffered in the breakdown in antenatal and postnatal care for women and newborns and neonatal intensive care units. The pandemic brought some setbacks to the gains achieved in maternal mortality over the past decade.

Consequently, the continent needs to race against time to improve its health sector to meet the Sustainable Development Goals against the backdrop of a new report, the Atlas of Health Statistics 2022, which called for increased investment to avert the growing number in maternal mortality across the continent.

The report said that inadequate investment in health and funding for programmes were some of the major drawbacks to meeting the SDG in the sector.

"For example, a 2022 WHO survey of 47 African countries found that the region has a ratio of 1.55 health workers (physicians, nurses, and midwives) per 1000 people, below the WHO threshold density of 4.45 health workers per 1000 people needed to deliver essential health services and achieve universal health

coverage."

It noted that 65% of births in Africa are attended by skilled health personnel - the lowest globally and far off the 2030 target of 90%, adding that "skilled birth attendants are crucial for the well-being of women and newborns. Neonatal deaths account for half of all under-5 mortality. Accelerating the agenda to meet its reduction goal will be a major step toward reducing the under-5 mortality rate to fewer than 25 deaths per 1000 live births."

The Ghanaian authorities might have taken note of the trend last year and launched a national campaign to avert all preventable deaths related to pregnancy dubbed "Zero Tolerance for Maternal Deaths."

Director of the Ghana Health Service (GHS), Dr Patrick Kuma-Aboagye, said the campaign was to remove all barriers and unfair treatments that increased the vulnerability of pregnant women and girls to maternal mortality and also push those with unintended pregnancies to indulge in unsafe abortions and other risky action.

Kuma-Aboagye said the campaign was critical to accelerating the decline of maternal mortality from 308 out of every 1,000 live births to 70 by 2030, in line with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). "The slow decline in maternal mortality in Ghana



is of great concern to the Ministry of Health, the GHS, and its partners."

Reacting to the Atlas report, WHO Regional Director for Africa, said Dr Matshidiso Moeti, said: "This means that for many African women, childbirth remains a persistent risk and millions of children do not live long enough to celebrate their fifth birthday."

She asked governments to take note.

"It is crucial that governments make a radical

course correction, surmount the challenges, and speed up the pace towards the health goals. These goals aren't mere milestones, but the very foundations of a healthier life and well-being for millions of people."

The report estimated that, in sub-Saharan Africa, 390 women will die in childbirth for every 100 000 live births by 2030. This is more than five times above the 2030 SDG target of fewer than 70 maternal deaths per 100 000 live births and much higher than the average of

13 deaths per 100 000 live births witnessed in Europe in 2017.

"It is more than double the global average of 211. To reach the SDG target, Africa will need an 86% reduction from 2017 rates, the last time data was reported, an unrealistic feat at the current rate of decline," the report said.

The region's infant mortality rate is 72 per 1000 live births. At the current 3.1% annual rate of decline, there will be an expected 54 deaths per 1000 live

concern that despite the worldwide reduction in maternal mortality rate, sub-Saharan Africa still accounts for two third of an average of 800 daily deaths of women from pregnancy and its complications.

Mebawondu said one of the key interventions is to ensure that pregnant women have access to antenatal care principally to identify danger signals early and enjoy delivery with the assistance of skilled birth attendants.

Accordingly, he has suggested that another way of reducing maternal mortality is to look into the use of technology. "The challenge of human resources for health in sub-Saharan Africa imposes a great responsibility on policymakers to explore technology in delivering health interventions to hard-to-reach populations.

Mebawondu said this must be preceded by adequate internet penetration and access, especially in rural areas, as such technology will help update and upgrade the health workers' skills and educate the women on the challenges of pregnancy.

"A database of all pregnant women in poor rural localities must be collated and followed up through such technology. In addition, technology can be used to enhance emergency response to common causes of maternal deaths like bleeding, sepsis, and eclampsia. It can also be used to deliver most needed family planning services," he said.

# How climate change impacts the Indian Ocean dipole, leading to severe droughts and floods



PROVIDENCE, Brown University

A study led by Brown researchers showed how melting ice water from massive glaciers can ultimately lead to droughts and flooding in East Africa and Indonesia.

With a new analysis of long-term climate data, researchers say they now have a much better understanding of how climate change can impact and cause sea water temperatures on one side of the Indian Ocean to be so much warmer or cooler than the temperatures on the other – a phenomenon that can lead to sometimes deadly weather-related events like megadroughts in East Africa and severe flooding in Indonesia.

The analysis, described in a new study in *Science Advances* by an international team of scientists led by researchers from Brown University, compares 10,000 years of past climate conditions reconstructed from different sets of geological records to simulations from an advanced climate model.

The findings show that about 18,000 to 15,000 years ago, as a result of melted freshwater from the massive glacier that once covered much of North America pouring into the North Atlantic, ocean currents that kept the Atlantic Ocean warm weakened, setting off a chain of events in response. The weakening of the system ultimately led to the strengthening of an atmospheric loop in the Indian Ocean that keeps warmer water on one side and cooler water on the other.

This extreme weather pattern, known as a dipole, prompts one side (either east or west) to have higher-than-average rainfall and the other to have widespread drought. The researchers saw examples of this pattern in both the historical data they studied and the model's simulation. They say the findings can help scientists not only better understand the mechanisms behind the east-west dipole in the Indian Ocean, but can one day help to produce more effective forecasts of drought and flood in the region.

"We know that in the present-day gradients in the temperature of the Indian Ocean are important to rainfall and drought patterns, especially in East Africa, but it's been challenging to show that those gradients change on long time-scales and to link them to long-term rainfall and drought patterns on both sides of the Indian Ocean," said James Russell, a study author and professor of Earth, environmental, and planetary sciences at Brown. "We now have a mechanistic basis to understand why some of the longer-term changes in rainfall patterns in the two regions have changed through time."

In the paper, the researchers explain the mechanisms behind how the Indian Ocean dipole they studied formed and the weather-related events it led to during the period they looked at, which covered the end of the last Ice Age and the start of the current geological epoch.

A study led by Brown researchers showed how melting ice water from massive glaciers can ultimately lead to droughts and flooding in East Africa and Indonesia.



The researchers characterize the dipole as an east-west dipole where the water on the western side – which borders modern day East African countries like Kenya, Ethiopia and Somalia – is cooler than the water on eastern side toward Indonesia. They saw that the warmer water conditions of the dipole brought greater rainfall to Indonesia, while the cooler water brought much drier weather to East Africa.

That fits into what is often seen in recent Indian Ocean dipole events. In October, for example, heavy rain led to floods and landslides in Indonesian islands of Java and Sulawesi, leaving four people dead and impacting over 30,000 people. On the opposite end, Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia experienced intense droughts starting in 2020 that threatened to cause famine.

The changes the authors observed 17,000 years ago were even more extreme, including the complete drying of Lake Victoria – one of the largest lakes on Earth.

"Essentially, the dipole intensifies dry conditions and wet conditions that could result in extreme events like multi-year or decades-long dry events in East Africa and flooding events in South Indonesia," said Xiaojing Du, a Voss postdoctoral researcher in the Institute at Brown for Environment and Society and Brown's Department of Earth, Environmental and Planetary Sciences, and the study's lead author. "These are events that impact people's lives and also agriculture in those regions. Understanding the dipole can help us better predict and better prepare for future climate change."

The dipole the researchers studied formed from the interactions between the heat transport system of the Atlantic Ocean and an atmospheric loop, called a Walker Circulation, in the tropical Indian Ocean. The lower



A man and students ride on a motorcycle on a flooded road, following rains during the monsoon season in Karachi, Pakistan August 10, 2022. REUTERS/Akhtar Soomro/File Photo

part of the atmospheric loop flows east to west across much of the region at low altitudes near the ocean surface, and the upper part flows west to east at higher altitudes. The higher air and lower air connect in one big loop.

Interruption and weakening of the Atlantic Ocean heat transport, which works like a conveyor belt made of ocean and wind currents, was brought on by massive melting of the Laurentide ice sheet that once covered most of Canada and the northern U.S. The melting cooled the Atlantic and consequent wind anomalies triggered the atmospheric loop over the tropical Indian Ocean to become more active and extreme. That then led to increased precipitation in the east side of the

Indian Ocean (where Indonesia sits) and reduced precipitation in the west side, where East Africa sits.

The researchers also show that during the period they studied, this effect was amplified by a lower sea level and the exposure of nearby continental shelves.

The scientists say more research is needed to figure out exactly what effect the exposed continental shelf and lower sea level has on the Indian Ocean's east-west dipole, but they're already planning to expand the work to investigate the question. While this line of the work on lower sea levels won't play into modeling future conditions, the work they've done investigating how the melting of ancient glaciers

impacts the Indian Ocean dipole and the heat transport system of the Atlantic Ocean may provide key insights into future changes as climate change brings about more melting.

"Greenland is currently melting so fast that it's discharging a lot of freshwater into the North Atlantic Ocean in ways that are impacting the ocean circulation," Russell said. "The work done here has provided a new understanding of how changes in the Atlantic Ocean circulation can impact Indian Ocean climate and through that rainfall in Africa and Indonesia."

The study was supported with funding from the Institute at Brown for Environment and Society and the National Science Foundation.

## BUSINESS

## Oil prices edge up on optimism over China's reopening

SINGAPORE

Oil prices rose as much as \$1 on Friday, extending gains from the previous session, supported by hopes of a China demand boost and after data showed lower US fuel inventories following a winter storm that hit at the end of the year.

Brent crude futures were 75 cents, or 1%, higher at \$79.44 a barrel at 0645 GMT, after settling 85 cents stronger at \$78.69 on Thursday.

US West Texas Intermediate crude futures were up 74 cents, or 1%, at \$74.41 a barrel. They had settled 83 cents higher at \$73.67 in the previous session.

"China's reopening optimism, especially further stimulus measures to boost the property sector, is the main bullish factor for the oil prices, which has improved the demand outlook in the near year," said Tina Teng, an analyst at CMC Markets.

"A softened US dollar has also added upside momentum to the oil markets," she added.

China announced more state support measures on Thursday, including establishing a dynamic adjustment mechanism on mortgage rates for first-time home buyers, in a bid to boost its highly indebted property sector, which accounts for a quarter of the country's economy.

The total number of passenger trips via road, rail, water and air during the upcoming Lunar New Year is expected to reach 2.1 billion this year, transport officials said on Friday, double the 1.05 billion during the same period last year.

Daily passenger flights scheduled during the holiday season beginning on Saturday are averaging 73% of pre-pandemic levels in 2019.

China, the world's largest crude oil importer, has ended its stringent zero-COVID policy, leading to a surge in COVID infections across the country.

In the US, data from the Energy Information Administration (EIA) showed on Thursday that distillate inventories, which include diesel and heating oil, dropped more than expected in the week to Dec. 30. They fell by 1.4 million barrels, compared with expectations of a 396,000-barrel drop.

Meanwhile, US gasoline stocks fell 346,000 barrels last week, according to the EIA data, compared with analysts' expectations for a 486,000-barrel drop.

On a weekly basis, however, oil prices were on track to end lower, with both the Brent and WTI contracts down around 7% on a week earlier. Concern about the possibility of a global recession have weighed on trading sentiment.

"Oil is trying to rally but demand concerns are keeping the gains small," said Edward Moya, senior market analyst at OANDA, in a note.

"The Saudis are slashing prices as the short-term crude demand outlook seems like it won't quite get a major boost from a robust China reopening."

The world's top crude exporter Saudi Arabia lowered prices for the flagship Arab light crude it sells to Asia to its lowest since November 2021 amid global pressures hitting oil.

## Halotel hands over brand new vehicle to promotion winner



Halotel deputy managing director, Bui Van Thang, symbolically presents a prize vehicle to Scolastica Sostenes Haule from Songea who won a brand new car after participating in promotion which lasted 10 weeks. The event was in Dar es Salaam. Looking on are Halotel business director, Abdallah Salum (L), Scolastica's husband (Second Right) and Halotel deputy chief financial Officer, Nagib Ferej (Right). Photo by a Correspondent

By Guardian Reporter

**H**ALOTEL Telecommunication Company has handed over a prize of brand new Toyota IST to the overall winner of a big prize draw during a promotion dubbed: '7bang bang.'

The promotion was run for 10 weeks, giving all Halotel customers an opportunity to win various prizes. Since the beginning of the promotion, over 140 winners have won various prizes including mobile vouchers worth up to 100,000/-, Samsung Galaxy A53 and A73 smart phone, or 50-inch smart TV.

Speaking during an event to hand over Toyota IST, Halotel Business Director, Abdallah

Salum, remarked: "Today, we have a lucky winner who won a new brand car after participating in our '7 bang bang' promotion.

"We thought it could be good if we hand over this award when we finalize this festive season along with thanking our customers for using our telecommunication services in the country."

Mr Salum added: "Today we are very happy to hand over to our customer, Ms Sholastica Sostenes Haule, who is the overall winner in our big prize draw."

He counseled Ms Haule to properly use the car to bring about positive changes in her life.

Mr Salum also used the opportunity to encourage other customers to continue using Halotel telecommunication network which has continued embracing creativity.

Haule thanked Halotel while encouraging her fellow customers to continue using the Halotel network and take part in promotions run by the company that won various prizes.

Apart from handing over the prize, the company used the opportunity to launch a modern Halotel shop at Palm Village Mall located alongside Mwai Kibaki road at Mikoche area in Dar es Salaam. The new shop will offer all services to customers.

The modernized shop will

offer among other services, simcard registration with fingerprint, sim swap, mobile vouchers, changing sim card from 3G to 4G, Halopesa and others.

Speaking at the event, Halotel's Sales Manager for Dar es Salaam, Rodrique Paul, said the launch of the new shop is in line with Halotel's strategy for improving provision of services to customers and fulfil its promise of giving customers an opportunity to access services near to their locations.

"We would like to welcome customers and all Tanzanians to our Halotel Shop here at the Palm Village Mall to get and enjoy better services from this shop," Mr Rodrique stressed.



Oil pump jacks at Vaca Muerta in Argentina. File photo

## Zanzibar exports decline as imports grow

By Guardian Reporter

ZANZIBAR goods exports fell by \$10 million during the year ending November last year.

Provisional data by the Bank of Tanzania (BoT) shows that the value of exports of goods decreased to \$72.8 million from \$82 million recorded during the year ended in November 2021.

The report exports of all goods, with exception of souvenirs and spices fell during the reported period.

Cloves exports slowed by 2.2 percent to \$49.6 million during the year ending November last year from \$50.7 million recorded during the year ended in November 2021.

However, the volume of exported closed increased by 7 percent to 7,300 tonnes from 6,800 while the unit price slowed by 8.6 percent to



Farmers sort harvested cloves in Zanzibar. File photo

\$6,777 per tonne from \$7,413 recorded in 2021.

"Cloves exports recorded an annual decline of 2.2 percent that is mostly explained by the cyclical nature of the crop," BoT says.

The report shows, despite of increased volume, seaweed exports

slowed by half to \$6.6 million from \$13.9 million respectively while the unit price decreased by more than half to

\$487.7 per tonne last year from \$1,075 recorded in 2021.

The value of exports of manufactured also slowed down by 2.6 percent to \$9.5 million during the year ending No-

vember last year from \$9.8 million recorded during the previous year while the value of exported fish and fish products decreased by 35.8 percent to \$1.3 million from \$2.1 million respectively.

Meanwhile, Imports of goods and services rose to \$557.1 million from \$430.6 million recorded in the year ending November 2021, driven by intermediate and consumer goods imports.

Intermediate goods imports rose to \$370.4 million from \$239.3 million, largely due to increase in imports of iron, steel, plastic articles, refined white petroleum, edible oil and wheat.

The rise in consumer goods imports was mostly influenced by other consumer goods categories, particularly pharmaceutical products, soap and detergent, and textile apparels.

## Green bonds to drive ESG debt out of slump in 2023

NEW YORK

Global sales of corporate bonds with environmental, social and governance (ESG) targets will rebound this year and top \$460 billion, Barclays said, after the asset class had its first setback in 2022 as higher interest rates weighed

on credit markets. ESG bond volumes swelled over the past few years but dropped by 22% in 2022 amid a broader slowdown in corporate bond issues, as companies faced significantly higher borrowing costs due to aggressive monetary tightening actions by

global central banks fighting inflation.

Corporate ESG bond issuance fell to \$362 billion last year from \$461 billion a year earlier, Barclays said in a credit research note. It expects ESG bond sales to grow by 30% this year and rebound to almost the same levels of 2021, pre-

dominantly driven by green bonds.

"We expect green bond issuance to continue to dominate the market thanks to strong demand and a long list of green projects that need funding as companies put decarbonisation plans into action," Charlotte Edwards,

Head of ESG FICC Research at Barclays, said in the note.

Shifting the planet's energy system away from fuels that emit greenhouse gases will cost \$2 trillion a year by 2030, according to estimates from the International Energy Agency. Companies and banks

have crafted new instruments to help fund the transition.

Among ESG debt options, green bonds' dominance is yet to be challenged by a newer type of instrument, sustainability-linked bonds, which carry penalties for borrowers if they fail to meet certain targets.

Companies can secure cheaper financing through green bonds, Barclays said, and their relative appeal has increased even further as investors doubted the key performance indicators used in the less mature sustainability-linked securities. "Volumes may have

been stunted by concerns from investors around greenwashing in the market (due to concerns around unambitious targets, immaterial KPIs and small penalties)," Edwards said.

Issuance of SLBs declined sharply to \$60 billion from \$95 billion in 2021.









## UN official calls for de-escalation of tensions following Israeli minister's visit to Al-Aqsa compound

UNITED NATIONS

A senior UN official on Thursday called for de-escalation of tensions following Israeli National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir's visit to the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound in East Jerusalem.

"As we have seen numerous times in the past, the situation at Jerusalem's holy sites is deeply fragile, and any incident or tension there can spill over and cause violence throughout the occupied Palestinian territory, in Israel, and elsewhere in the region," warned Khaled Khiri, UN assistant secretary-general for the Middle East, Asia and the Pacific.

"With that reality in mind, I reiterate the secretary-general's call for all parties to refrain from steps that could escalate tensions in and around the holy sites, and for all to uphold the status quo, in line with the special role of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan," he told the Security Council in a briefing.

The Al-Aqsa Mosque compound, known to the Jewish people as the Temple Mount, is sacred to both Muslims and Jews.

The Jerusalem holy site has been administered by the Jerusalem Islamic Waqf, a Jordanian body, since 1948. After Israel took over Jerusalem in 1967, it was obliged to respect the status quo and not to make any changes to the laws and institutions in occupied East Jerusalem.

According to a 1967 agreement between Israel and Jordan, non-Muslim worshippers can visit the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound but are prohibited from praying there.

Ben-Gvir's visit on Tuesday was the first to the site by an Israeli minister since 2017. While the visit was not accompanied or followed by violence, it is seen as particularly inflammatory given Ben-Gvir's past advocacy for changes to the status quo, said Khiri.

Ben-Gvir, known as an ultra-nationalist, was sworn in as Israel's national security minister last week, as Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's new extreme-right coalition government took office.

The visit was sharply condemned by the Palestinian Authority, many others across the region and the international community as a provocation that risked sparking further bloodshed.

Many also warned against any changes to the status quo at the holy sites, said Khiri. Following Ben-Gvir's visit, the Israeli Prime Minister's Office and other senior Israeli officials emphasized that the Israeli government is committed to upholding the status quo and said that the visit did not represent a deviation from it, he noted.

Over the past several days, the United Nations has remained in close contact with relevant parties to de-escalate the situation, and these engagements will continue in the coming days and weeks, he said. "At this sensitive moment, all efforts to lower tensions should be encouraged, while provocations, inflammatory steps, unilateral actions and threats of violence must be categorically rejected."

Leaders on all sides have a responsibility to lower the flames and create the conditions for calm," said Khiri. "The UN remains ready to assist and support these efforts." **Xinhua**

## Russian Ambassador dismisses allegedly 'defensive nature' of weapons transferred to Kiev

WASHINGTON

THE "defensive nature" of weapons handed over to Kiev by Washington has not been at issue long since, Russian Ambassador in the US Anatoly Antonov said.

The decision of the US administration to transfer Bradley fighting vehicles to Ukraine is "a confirmation that our interlocutors in the United States have not even tried to listen to our numerous calls to take into account possible consequences of such a dangerous course by Washington," the Ambassador noted, cited by the press service of the Russian diplomatic mission.

"It is finally becoming clear to the whole international community that in 2014 the US unleashed a real proxy-war against Russia by supporting nazi criminals in Kiev. Any talk about a "defensive nature" of weapons supplied to Ukraine has long become absurd," the Russian diplomat said.

"Even more remarkably, the Administration revealed the abovementioned decision after a phone conversation between [US] President [Joe] Biden and German Chancellor [Olaf] Scholz," Antonov stressed.

"The international community must not ignore the fact that Angela Merkel and Francois Hollande confessed: the Minsk agreements served to give time to Kiev to enhance its military capabilities. In view of close ties between Washington and Berlin it becomes clear that the West under US leadership simply deceived our country and started to purposefully weaken Russia much earlier than February 24, 2022," he added.

All the latest actions of the United States, including the decision to allocate a new military aid package for Kiev comprising Bradley fighting vehicles, directly indicate that Washington has no desire for the political settlement in Ukraine, Antonov said.

"Nobody should still have doubts who bears responsibility for prolonging this conflict. All the actions by the Administration indicate a lack of any desire for a political settlement," the Ambassador said, cited by the diplomatic mission.

"Even the unilaterally declared ceasefire by the Russian Federation along the entire line of contact in Ukraine during Orthodox Christmas was labeled as an attempt to 'find some oxygen'. All this means that Washington is committed to fighting with us 'to the last Ukrainian,' while the destiny of people of Ukraine means nothing to the US," Antonov added. **Xinhua**

## Aid delivery improves in northern Ethiopia, humanitarian problems remain - UN

UNITED NATIONS

AID delivery in northern Ethiopia has markedly improved while some areas remain hard to reach, a UN spokesman said on Thursday.

Since the cessation of hostilities in mid-November, food has been distributed to more than 2.2 million people. However, some areas are challenging to reach, including some border areas in the north and some off the main roads, said Stephane Dujarric, the chief spokesman for UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres.

He said the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) reported that between November and the end of December, more than 3,000 trucks carrying food, as well as health, shelter, water and other supplies, have been brought into the region through four road corridors. Some health and nutrition supplies were sent by air.

OCHA warns that malnutrition rates remain alarming. One-third of children screened in late December were acutely malnourished, and 4 percent were severely malnourished, said Dujarric.

Ethiopian Airlines resumed passenger flights to Mekelle and Shire in the Tigray region, the spokesman said. Also, the first bank resumed some operations in Mekelle, the capital city of Tigray, on Monday, with some others reopening in other parts of Tigray in December. **Xinhua**

## Changes needed in human behaviour to moderate climate change, says expert

LONDON

THE ultimate driver of climate change has been carbon emissions and thus each individual has a duty to reduce his or her carbon footprint, Ric Williams, professor in earth, ocean and ecological sciences at the University of Liverpool in the United Kingdom (UK), told Xinhua in a recent interview.

"All climate models are showing that the more carbon we emit, the warmer the planet will become," he said. "So, anything that we can do to reduce our energy usage, our consumption of goods, all of that is ultimately beneficial or needed to moderate climate change."

A new study published by the Met Office, the UK's national weather service, on Thursday confirmed that 2022 was the UK's warmest year on record. The provisional annual average temperature in the country slightly exceeded 10 degrees Celsius for the first time since comparable records began in 1884.

Back in December, the national weather service also predicted that 2023 would be one of the Earth's hottest years on record and is set to be the tenth year in succession that temperatures have exceeded pre-industrial levels by at least 1 degree Celsius. "This is exceptional," Williams said.

"We're expecting hotter and drier summers, and conversely, warmer and wetter winters, and there being more frequent extreme events. Asked whether the changes represent natural variability or are due to anthropogenic effects involving carbon emissions, the expert explained that when running



A woman uses a fan to keep cool on a bus on Westminster Bridge in London, Britain, July 11, 2022. **Xinhua**

climate models, "we are unable to explain the recent rises in global temperature unless we include carbon emissions." "There's a very strong scientific consensus now that carbon emissions are driving the warming of the planet," he said.

Williams told Xinhua that over the last ten years, the evidence had come through that what humans are seeing is exceptional. Citing the forecast of the Met Office, he said these consecutive changes were significant.

"We can always have an individual year that is warmer or cooler, but when it turns to decades being warmer than average, then it's almost certainly due to carbon emissions and anthropogenic effects," he said. In July 2022, the UK recorded its highest ever temperature (40.3

degrees Celsius at Coningsby in Lincolnshire).

The extreme heat has put a mountain strain on the country's infrastructure, raising serious concerns. The scholar noted that the UK needed to do more to prepare for climate variability, both extreme cold and extreme heat.

"In the last heatwave, we had outbreaks of wildfires occurring and parts of our infrastructure were starting to fail. So the central challenge for the government is to prepare us for what we should expect if we lived in southern Spain." Other parts of Europe have not fared better.

Temperatures there have increased at more than twice the global average over the past 30 years, the largest increase for any continent in the world, a report from the World Meteorologi-

cal Organization (WMO) showed in early November.

"The heatwaves that we experienced in the summer were actually much more pronounced in Spain and Portugal," and there was extreme flooding occurring in Germany, Williams said. "These climate extremes are being experienced across Europe and indeed across the world."

But controversies arose when many countries in the region considered turning back to coal to secure energy supplies during the prolonged energy crisis.

"We're in a difficult energy crisis right now. We all want the lights to stay switched on," and because of that, some governments intend to use coal-fired power stations to boost electricity supplies, he said.

But "this has to be a temporary measure. It's certainly heading in the wrong direction in terms of offsetting our carbon emissions," he added. "We've got particular problems now with the energy crisis ... but this shouldn't alter our longer-term plans to move towards non-fossil based forms of energy."

**Xinhua**

## Openness an intrinsic path toward global prosperity and development



The first direct export shipment under the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership starts at the Damaiyu port, Yuhuan, Taizhou, east China's Zhejiang province, June 6, 2022. (Photo by Duan Junli/People's Daily Online)

THE Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) agreement took effect for Indonesia on Jan. 2, which means the free trade pact has taken effect for 14 of its 15 members so far.

It fully indicated the huge appeal and vitality of the RCEP will inject new impetus into regional economic integration.

As the world's most promising free trade area covering the largest population and boasting the most diverse membership, the RCEP has released constant dividends through tariff reduction and expanding market access over the past year.

It has facilitated the free flow and efficient gathering of the factors of production, made closer the trade and investment cooperation among its members, and contributed to higher- and deeper-level regional economic integration.

The trade pact has injected strong positive energy into the prosperous development of the region and even the world at large, and brought tangible benefits to enterprises and people.

According to statistics, the exports of Korea and Singapore to other RCEP members grew by 18.7 percent and 19.1 percent

in the first half of 2022, respectively. In the first nine months of 2022, the trade volume between Thailand and other RCEP members increased 10.1 percent year on year.

Auramon Supthaweehuthum, head of the Department of Trade Negotiations under Thailand's Ministry of Commerce, said the most obvious benefit of the RCEP's implementation is that the trade pact has boosted trade between its members and further facilitated regional economic integration.

Indonesian Trade Minister Zulkfli Hasan noted the RCEP is expected to increase technology transfer and boost the development of supply chain in the region by expanding exports of goods and services.

Despite the fluctuations in global investment, most RCEP members have seen rapid growth in the utilization of foreign direct investment. The Asian Development Bank recently lifted its forecasts for economic growth in Southeast Asia, which to some extent reflected the positive impacts from the RCEP on regional and national economic development.

As the largest RCEP economy, China champions true multilateralism and follows open regionalism. It has worked with relevant parties to advance the high-quality implementation of the RCEP, so as to make the world's largest free trade area release more dividends.

From promoting the development of trade of goods and ensuring that

preferential rules of origin play their roles, to implementing customs procedure and trade facilitation rules at a high standard and further opening up the service trade sector, China has continued working with relevant parties to advance trade facilitation and investment liberalization.

In the first 11 months of 2022, China's total trade with other RCEP members reached 11.8 trillion yuan (\$1.7 trillion), up 7.9 percent year on year and accounting for 30.7 percent of China's total imports and exports.

According to a report released by the HSBC in November the last year, 93 percent of the surveyed enterprises said their trade with China might increase in the future, and over 40 percent of the respondents expected that their business in China would increase by at least 30 percent in 2023. The Asia-Pacific has entered a key stage of post-pandemic recovery. Economies in the region are seeing disorders in the supply chain, tension in food and energy supply, as well as increased pressure from inflation.

Under such a background, RCEP members have worked hand in hand to promote the implementation of the comprehensive, modern, high-quality and mutually beneficial free trade pact. Together, they have sent a positive signal of safeguarding multilateralism, following open cooperation, promoting free trade and striving for common prosperity. It is not only significant to the RCEP members, but also will inject new impetus into the

in-depth development of economic globalization.

Peter Drysdale, head of the East Asian Bureau of Economic Research at the Australian National University, pointed out that the RCEP has already demonstrated its potential of projecting Asian dividends to the globe in its first year of implementation.

Openness is a key driving force behind the progress of human civilizations and an intrinsic path toward global prosperity and development. China will keep staying committed to a win-win strategy of opening-up, open up more sectors of the economy in a more thorough fashion, and provide new opportunities for the rest of the world with its own development.

The country is willing to work with all relevant parties to implement the RCEP at a high standard, promote the building of an open world economy, and create bright prospects for the future of the world through openness.

**People's Daily**

## NBC Premier League signings that attracted attention last year

By Correspondent Ismail Tano

WITH Mainland Tanzania's NBC Premier League's second phase having got underway, plenty of competitive fixtures are set to be in view as the showdown's title race gains momentum.

This season's top flight has witnessed several huge signings that not only surprised domestic football enthusiasts but also dominated discussions in social media and made headlines in various media.

### Stephane Aziz Ki (ASEC Mimosas to Yanga)

Yanga's Burkinabe attacking midfielder Stephane Aziz Ki, who was signed from Ivory Coast's ASEC Mimosas, was introduced to the former's followers and the rest of the soccer fans at midnight.

Football stakeholders spent a long time talking about his registration because of the quality that he had showcased in the previous CAF Confederation Cup.

His move to Yanga was moreover marked by lots of drama because there were rumours the outfit's age-old rival, Simba, was also seeking his services.

### Bernard Morrison (Simba SC to Yanga)

News about the Ghanaian winger's exit from Simba started before the end of his contract with the side in 2021/22.

The winger eventually returned to Yanga, the first club he had played for in Mainland Tanzania once he had left South Africa's Orlando Pirates in 2020.

He so far played for Simba for six months, so his registration caused a big debate among domestic football fanatics because he had earlier controversially parted ways with Yanga.

### Tuisila Kisinda (RS Berkane to Yanga)

Winger Tuisila Kisinda's return to Yanga from Morocco's RS Berkane during the main registration period created a buzz, as Yanga fans were waiting for reinforcements for their club.

He played for Yanga for the first time in 2020/21 having left DR Congo's AS Vita and, after showcasing a stellar showing, he got an offer from the Morocco football giant and was

replaced by compatriot Jesus Moko.

Kisinda though made his way back to Yanga after lifting the 2021/22 CAF Confederation Cup silverware with RS Berkane.

### Abdulhamis Suleiman (Coastal Union to Azam FC)

The winger's good performance during his spell at Tanga's Coastal Union in the 2021/22 season won him a move to Azam FC at the end of the season.

Suleiman was in impressive form as Coastal Union suffered a 4-1 loss to Yanga in the 2021/11 Azam Sports Federation Cup final that took place in Arusha.

The footballer registered a hat-trick as Coastal Union spiritedly held Yanga to a 3-3 draw after 120 minutes of the tie, bringing the clash to penalties.

Azam FC beat Simba SC and Yanga to Suleiman's signature, he was among the most discussed signings because of his stellar showing in the Azam Sports Federation Cup final.

### Ali Ahmada (SportKubben to Azam FC)

Comoros shot-stopper Ahmada, aged 30, was one of the big signings made by Azam FC, taking the footballer from SportKubben of Norway.

The goalkeeper that boasts lots of experience in international tournaments, got off to a good start in NBC Premier League, although at the moment he seems to have fallen out of some Azam FC enthusiasts' favour as the shot-stopper conceded various goals.

### Habibu Kyombo (Mbeya Kwanza FC to Simba SC)

Simba SC's striker Habibu Kyombo had domestic football fanatics talking about his signing, having left Mbeya Kwanza FC, given the fans did not expect to see such a move.

The decision by Simba to part ways with experienced forwards Meddie Kagere and Chris Mugalu had its fanatics expecting Kyombo's signing will make up for the duo's exit, given the attacker netted seven goals for Mbeya Kwanza FC.

There were lots of discussions centering on Kyombo's move because he had reportedly moved to Singida Big Stars but later he was unveiled by Simba.

## Zahera out to improve Polisi Tanzania players' discipline ahead of relegation battle

By Correspondent Nassir Nchimbi

POLISI Tanzania FC head coach Mwinyi Zahera has admitted to facing difficulties in the squad, as it seeks to avoid relegation to next season's Championship League.

The Congolese gaffer disclosed that he has to fight two issues namely surviving relegation and indiscipline.

Zahera's statement comes after his team shared a point with Ruvu Shooting having settled for a goalless draw with the Coast Region side in a recent NBC Premier League duel.

The results left Polisi Tanzania still languishing at the bottom of the Premier League, while witnessing the outfit's new striker, Ibrahim Ahmad, getting marching orders.

Ahmad's red card is the fourth for Polisi Tanzania this season, given central defender Mohamed Mmanga was shown a red card on two occasions and winger Ambrose Awio was as well shown a red card once.

Zahera noted: "We are indeed in a difficult period because the team is fighting not to be relegated, while I am struggling with the issue of getting positive results we also have another issue to address, the discipline of the players is letting us down,

something that we have to look at."

"If you look at the cards that the player have been shown this season, you can see that they are arbitrary, with the current situation and the way we need to fight more, we have to increase attention starting with discipline in every game," he said.

Polisi Tanzania FC's last win was on November 17 in an away clash against Ihefu SC, in which the Kilimanjaro club registered its second win in the Premier League after beating Namungo FC previously.

Zahera, who took the head coach's role at Polisi Tanzania on December 2, has not tasted victory in the five games he has led the club.

He has seen the squad succumb to defeat in three games, starting with a 1-0 loss to Azam FC, a 3-0 loss to Yanga, and a 2-0 loss in a clash against KMC FC. Two ties had ended in a draw, as the Kilimanjaro squad managed a 3-3 draw with Coastal Union and then settled for a 0-0 draw with Ruvu Shooting.

So far Polisi Tanzania has allowed 31 goals to end as the team which has leaked a bigger number of goals, followed by Mtibwa Sugar which has allowed 30 goals, and Mbeya City FC which has conceded 29.

## Dar basketball squads should brace for tough opposition in 2023, says coach

By Guardian Correspondent

A section of basketball coaches in Tanzania has vowed to ensure they end Dar es Salaam's dominance in various tournaments at the domestic level this season.

Dar es Salaam's regional basketball squads dominated local basketball competitions held last year.

Zanzibar's Unguja squad gaffer Darweshi Shamuni is one of the tacticians that are eager to see to it his team successfully challenges Dar es Salaam teams this year.

Shamuni noted this is Unguja's time to hold sway, lifting all top honours in competitions organized by Tanzania Basketball Federation (TBF).

The coach's comments have been buoyed by the presence of sponsors in all basketball leagues in Zanzibar.

He said such progress will help the Isles' basketball squads rope in players that can match their Mainland Tanzania counterparts' prowess.

"We are out to make sure we do well in every competition this year, including winning the CRDB Bank Taifa Cup that was won by Dar es Salaam men's and women's squads last year," Shamuni disclosed.

The tactician asked TBF and Tanzania Netball Association (Chaneta) to meet and plan good



Players making Dar es Salaam's women's basketball squad pose for a picture when they battled it out in the recent CRDB Bank Taifa Cup tournament that took place in Dodoma. PHOTO: CORRESPONDENT

calendars that will ensure the two bodies' tournaments are not taking place at the same time. His request came in the wake of confusion that came about during last year's CRDB Bank Taifa Cup competition.

According to the tactician, his team missed several reliable ballers that had featured for the Isles' netball team in a competition that took place in Morogoro.

The Unguja team coach's comments were though strongly opposed by other coaches that revealed it will be difficult for

the Dar es Salaam squads to easily let go of their triumph. Junior basketball tactician Aloyse Joseph stated Dar es Salaam players are competent because they regularly battle it out in tough club tournaments including RBA League, whereas their Zanzibar counterparts feature in leagues that are not quite tough.

"The RBA League is one of the biggest leagues in East and Central Africa that allows players from abroad to play for the clubs participating in the league, unlike the Zanzibar

competitions," Joseph revealed.

Tememe basketball coach Kassim Jumbe stated that no team will prevent Dar es Salaam sides from clinching trophies in regional competitions.

"No one will oppose this, Dar es Salaam regional team and clubs are doing well, unlike other regions," Jumbe noted.

Dar es Salaam regional teams have for many years been dominating various competitions organized by TBF, including club competitions and the CRDB Bank Taifa Cup tournament.

## Simba SC's Mapinduzi Cup exit: Sidelining Mgunda led to a technical bench vacuum

By Correspondent John Kimbuta

A technical dispute is being engaged among the fans and pundits of leading NBC Premier League side Simba SC in the wake of its rather surprising exit from the 2023 Mapinduzi Cup tournament in Zanzibar.

As each of Mapinduzi Cup's groups has three teams, losing one match outright guarantees exit from the tourney as one of the other matches will be drawn, or the winning side gets good results twice. One team enters the semi-finals.

While Simba SC that faced Mlandege FC wasn't exactly a second-string side, it had that image as a whole string of first-team players were absent, giving the side that took the field a second-string side image.

Yet it remains true that pundits as well as the technical bench expected that the team on the pitch was capable of holding on their own and 'obtaining results' in the game, but it wasn't the case.

The issue is whether this expectation was justified and if it was the case, what thus went wrong.

The preliminary point is that on a one-to-one basis, Mlandege is unlikely to stand its ground in the NBC Premier League without being relegated, so the mainly reserve side ought to have been able to hold its ground against the side.

It implies that there is a greater psychological problem that by implication led to match fitness issues, as to whether the players were drilled to take the match seriously or took it for granted. Here the issue is much less what the coach said or directed but the habits and routine attitudes of players in such a situation.

While the discussion centered around the selection, some technical issues remained in abeyance, either in observations or in simply not talking about them.

A cardinal issue in that direction is the extent to which reserve players are expected to put up the same standards of soccer as the first eleven list, and if not precisely the same standards, what resilience levels are



Simba SC coach, Juma Mgunda.

to be expected.

To the mainstay of expression of views, the failure to obtain even a draw with Mlandege was a negative instance.

It is a matter of conjecture precisely what led to that situation, and thus what can be learned from it, but the mere fact that a new coach was in the stands seems to have played into it.

The issue is whether the slighted status of the acting head coach led to diminished player concentration, that is, the wish to please the coach

tend to accept the loss as a fair risk if it was the price of not overworking players needed for other tourneys.

Most important is the forthcoming engagements in the 2022/23 CAF Champions League fixtures as the all-important group stage is now unfolding, and that is everything.

In that sense, the club's exit from the early year fairly prestigious tournament while not being altogether crucial strategically is something that has been regretted by the club rank and file, simply.

Explaining it is a different matter, as the more obvious reason is the absence of a series of players who usually man the key positions, but failing to control a fairly strong Isles side even with a mixed side is not what could be expected. Nor for that matter did the then-acting coach project it.

The crucial dimension concerning the expected equivalence of the substitute players is that one is recruited to play for a side because he compares with others already in the team.

This matter is a principle in the sport as in other facets of life, that no one is indispensable in something that is neither his property nor his actual creation but a system in which such a person just fits in.

But in reality the people one has for a particular task, and the precise composition of the team make the real difference.

In that case, the fact that it was an essentially second-string side would have an impact, but it doesn't explain the failure even to obtain even a draw with the Isles side, as technically the city side was still a better lineup than whatever could be fielded by the Isles side.

That is why the psychological aspect is vital, and here the issue isn't physical match fitness but the mental disposition, that players were passing time waiting for the new coach to issue instructions.

Then one would make an effort to live up to the expectations of the coach, thus a clear vacuum can be said to have opened up in the first appearance of the side, and it was...fatal.

## Amid Chelsea interest, Benfica condemn 'disrespectful' Fernandez approach

LONDON

BENFICA coach Roger Schmidt said the club have no intention of selling Argentine World Cup star Enzo Fernandez for less than his buy-out clause amid interest from Chelsea.

"There is a club who want our player," Schmidt said, without naming Chelsea.

"They know that we don't want to sell the player, they try to get the player on their side" with "a lot of money".

Fernandez, who joined Benfica from River Plate in the summer has a 120 million euro (\$126 million) buy-out clause in his contract, and Schmidt said the bidding club was trying to avoid paying that.

"To make the player crazy and then to pretend they can pay the clause, and later they want to negotiate.

"They try to get the player on their side. It's disrespectful against all of us, against Benfica and I cannot accept what they are doing.

"There is a lot of money on the table. It confuses you a little bit," Schmidt said of the player who has missed training in an extended stay in Argentina.

The 21-year-old was voted best young player at the World Cup after breaking into the side out in Qatar. Chelsea have been struggling this season under new chairman Todd Boehly and co-controlling owner Behdad Eghbali.

The club sit 10th in the Premier League, ten points off fourth placed Man United at the half-way stage of the season.

The Londoners bought France international defender Benoit Badjiashile from Ligue 1 side Monaco on Thursday. Meanwhile, Bayern Munich have signed Netherlands midfielder Daley Blind, the club announced on Thursday evening.

The former Ajax and Manchester United player's contract will run until the end of the season, with the possibility of an extension.

Blind, 32, terminated his contract by mutual consent with Dutch giants Ajax in December, six months before it was due to expire, and was officially a free agent. Blind said he was thrilled to join the German champions ahead of the business end of the season.

"I can hardly wait to play here. We've got the most important part of the season coming up, where it's about titles - and a club like Bayern can win every trophy," Blind said.

"The hunger for titles here at the club was key in my decision. I hope I can bring my experience to help the team."

In a statement on the club's website, Bayern Sporting Director Hasan Salihamidzic welcomed the new arrival.

"We're delighted that Daley is joining our team. Daley is a versatile defender, capable of playing on the left or in the centre.

"He has great international experience and leadership qualities. I'm sure he'll help us."

Blind has been capped 99 times for the Netherlands and played in each of the side's five games at the World Cup in Qatar, scoring in their Round of 16 victory over the United States.

Blind, who came through the Ajax academy before playing 333 games with the senior side, won the Eredivisie title seven times and the Dutch Cup twice. He also had a four-year stint at Manchester United, where he won the Europa League, FA Cup and League Cup.

German tabloid Bild reports Blind, who plays with a heart defibrillator, undertook a medical check at Barmherzige Brueder Hospital in Munich on Thursday morning. Blind has demonstrated his versatility throughout his career, playing in midfield, defence and on the wings.

Bayern are looking for additional cover in defence, particularly after left back Lucas Hernandez tore his ACL while playing for France at the World Cup.

Blind is expected to fly to Doha on Friday with the rest of the Bayern squad to take part in the team's winter training camp.

Bayern re-start their Bundesliga campaign away at RB Leipzig on January 20 and meet French champions Paris Saint Germain in the Champions League Round of 16 on February 14.

AFP



Enzo Fernandez

# Man City now beats Chelsea 1-0, trims gap to Arsenal to 5 points

LONDON

MANCHESTER City trimmed the gap to Premier League leader Arsenal to five points by beating Chelsea 1-0 on Thursday after a double substitution by Pep Guardiola paid off immediately at Stamford Bridge.

Riyad Mahrez and Jack Grealish entered in the 60th minute and combined for the only goal three minutes later, with Mahrez tapping in from close range after a perfectly weighted cross by his fellow winger.

City only came to life in the second half after a curiously passive display before halftime, perhaps brought on by a confusing team selection by Guardiola that saw a number of players deployed in unusual roles.

Known for his overthinking at times, Guardiola accepted after the game he got it wrong. That's why he took off two full backs - Joao Cancelo and Kyle Walker - at halftime and restored Rodri to center midfield, with the Spaniard having also been in a hybrid role covering central defense,

too. Suddenly, City was all over Chelsea and creating chances, even if top scorer Erling Haaland was largely kept quiet and Kevin De Bruyne shone only fleetingly.

"In the second half, it was miles better in all departments," said Guardiola, who reserved special praise for half-time sub, the 18-year-old Rico Lewis, because he "changed the game."

The goal came after Guardiola's second



Manchester City's Algerian midfielder Riyad Mahrez (L) scores the opening goal during the English Premier League football match between Chelsea and Manchester City at Stamford Bridge in London on January 5, 2023. [Photo/Agencies]

too.

"We don't focus on the table... there's a long way to go," City defender John Stones said. "In previous years we have gone on long unbeaten runs and we need to do it again."

Chelsea stayed in 10th place, 19 points off the leaders. Graham Potter's team is as close to the relegation zone as the top four.

Chelsea lost forwards Raheem Sterling, who joined from City in the off-season, and Christian

Pulisic to injuries in the first half. Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang came on for Sterling in the fifth minute and was substituted in the 68th.

Another of the substitutes, Carney Chukwuemeka, struck a shot against the post at the end of the first half.

"When you consider everything, losing Raheem and Christian so early, the lads gave everything," Potter said.

"It was a spirited performance against a top

team, so apart from the result I'm proud of the players.

"It's tough at the moment, I must admit, and I feel for the boys. We have to stick together. It was disappointing to lose those guys but the players on the pitch and the ones that came in gave everything and that's all you can ask for."

The teams meet again in the FA Cup on Sunday, with City hosting on that occasion.

AP

## Gregg Berhalter 'saddened' by Reyna saga

By Henry Bushnell

GREGG Berhalter said Thursday that he would "like to continue in my role" as U.S. men's national team head coach.

Berhalter's contract expired on Dec. 31. U.S. Soccer is currently reviewing his performance over the past four years, and specifically at the 2022 World Cup. The review has been complicated by an investigation into a decades-old domestic violence incident involving Berhalter and his now-wife, Rosalind. The incident was brought to U.S. Soccer officials by the parents of midfielder Gio Reyna amid friction between Berhalter and Gio.

With the investigation and the review both ongoing, U.S. Soccer tabbed Anthony Hudson, one of Berhalter's assistants, to take charge of the USMNT at a January training camp. But U.S. Soccer sporting director Earnie Stewart confirmed Wednesday that Berhalter remains "under consideration" for the job going forward, pending the investigation.

Berhalter addressed and detailed the early-'90s domestic violence incident in a Tuesday statement. On Thursday, he gave his first media interview since the World Cup to the Harvard Business Review, via LinkedIn. When asked about the Reyna saga, he said his "entire family is saddened by these events."

"The worst part of it for me is, my heart aches for my wife," he said. "Because it was her story to tell, if she chose to or not."

Instead, when Danielle and Claudio Reyna, Gio's parents, brought the decades-old incident to Stewart on Dec.

11, Stewart was obligated to report it. U.S. Soccer hired a law firm to investigate it. That prompted Berhalter to publicly disclose it for the first time.

"I feel tremendously bad that my profession had to bring this to the public light," Berhalter said Thursday.

In the Tuesday statement, which was signed by both Gregg and Rosalind, Gregg wrote that, a few months into their relationship, while in college at the University of North Carolina, they were "out drinking at a local bar" when they "had a heated argument that continued outside. It became physical and I kicked her in the legs." (Danielle Reyna said Wednesday that Gregg's description "significantly minimize[d] the abuse on the night in question.")

Gregg and Rosalind later reconciled, got married in the late '90s, and have four kids. Berhalter said Thursday that their relationship remains "a loving relationship, a devoted relationship." After feeling the need to unearth the decades-old trauma, he said the family is "taking it one day at a time, and moving forward."

He had agreed to Thursday's Harvard Business Review interview long before the saga burst into public view on Tuesday and Wednesday. "We committed to doing this before all this stuff happened, and I wasn't gonna back down from it, because I said I would do it," Berhalter said, and then he answered questions for 30 minutes.

When asked whether he'd like to continue as USMNT head coach over the next four years, he said:



Gregg Berhalter claps to fans after the USMNT's World Cup Round of 16 loss to the Netherlands. (AP Photo)

"It's a fantastic group of players. A super high potential in this group. And we're competing in the World Cup in North America in 2026. So it would be an amazing challenge for this team."

"When we started in 2018, we wanted to change the way the world views American soccer. And I think

when you ask around our team, the world sees us in a completely different light. But now it's about being able to take that next step. And that next step is doing something that no U.S. team has ever done, and that's get to the semifinals and see what happens from there.

Gwiji by David Chikoko



# SPORT

**Man City beats Chelsea  
1-0, trims gap to  
Arsenal to 5 points**

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## Simba SC plots Mbeya City downfall in 2022/23 NBC Premier League

club KVZ 1-0. Oliveira, who has worked in Rwanda with Rayon Sports and Kenya with Gor Mahia before heading to Uganda to take charge of Vipers SC, has signed a two-year contract with Simba SC which officially started on Tuesday.

Before signing the contract, Simba SC's Chairman Murtaza Mangungu said that the Brazilian tactician would join the team in Zanzibar for the ongoing Mapinduzi Cup. He said the outfit's leadership believes the arrival of the coach will increase the side's technical bench's effectiveness.

The Msimbazi Street club, for more than three months, had been under Mgunda that was operating as an interim head coach.

"We are proud to have a coach like him that has what it takes to coach football, he has enjoyed great success in Rwanda, Kenya, and Uganda," the official noted.

The official said: "Simba SC's biggest responsibility is to see that the coach brings us to the goals we intend to achieve, and I believe this is possible due to the experience he has internationally."

"This coach moreover has a lot of experience in matches against our rivals because he has had good results, so we expect success from him when we face our rivals," Mangungu stated.

The 61-year-old coach had, before terminating his



Mbeya City FC's winger Richardson Ng'ondya (L) challenges Simba SC fullback Mohamed Hussein as the squads faced each other in a 2022/23 NBC Premier League first-phase tie at Sokoine Stadium in Mbeya in November last year. Mbeya City FC forced a 1-1 draw with Simba SC. PHOTO: COURTESY OF SIMBAS SC

contract with Vipers SC, led the Ugandan side to win 43 out of 57 games while notching draw in nine and losing six.

In all fixtures, Vipers SC

scored 99 goals. Oliveira has also managed to win the Premier League silverware in Uganda and the Best Coach of the Season award in the country.

The coach further catapulted Vipers SC to the group stage of the 2022/23 CAF Champions League for the first time since the establishment of the club.



Simon Msuva

## Msuva eyes spell in Saudi Arabia's top tier after Ronaldo arrival

By correspondents Nassir Nchimbi & Ismail Tano

TANZANIA'S attacking midfielder Simon Msuva has said the signing of the five-time Ballon d'Or winner, Cristiano Ronaldo, who recently joined Al-Nassr FC of Saudi Arabia, has awakened a competitive atmosphere in all divisions in the country.

Msuva, now based in Saudi Arabia, joined Al Qadsiah FC which participates in the country's First Division League as a free agent after leaving Wydad AC of Morocco.

Ronaldo's signing has become a talking point in the world's football fraternity as Al-Nassr FC fans are happy with the arrival of the football star, who once served Manchester United (England), Real Madrid (Spain), and Juventus (Italy).

Msuva said Ronaldo's registration in Saudi Arabia will increase competition in the country's Premier League and even in the lower divisions, one of which has the midfielder taking part.

The former Wydad AC midfielder said he believes the signing of the Portugal star will continue to provide opportunities for many fans in the world to follow Saudi Arabia's Premier League and lead to other big stars wishing to play in the country.

Msuva noted: "It's good to see the biggest players in the world like him taking his talent to this country, that means that people will be looking at the Saudi Premier League for many years to come." "For me, I see this as an opportunity, so I have to put in more effort to play in the top tier," Msuva stated.

The midfielder noted: "We are looking forward to participating in the Premier League like all other teams that are playing in the lower divisions aspiring and fighting to play in the Premier League in Saudi Arabia."

Msuva pointed out that he will have to wait until next season to see if he will have the chance to play against Premier League's Al-Nassr FC.

Such an opportunity will come to Msuva if Al Qadsiah FC either secures promotion to the Premier League or battles it out in the King's Cup which involves both Premier League and lower division teams.

Al Qadsiah FC is positioned 13th in the 18-team Saudi Arabia First Division League's table, having notched 16 points in 14 games.



Embattled Yanga midfielder, Feisal Salum (R), is pictured with one of his lawyers at Tanzania Football Federation (TFF) offices in Dar es Salaam yesterday as the footballer headed to the body for the hearing of a complaint lodged by the club against the footballer. The midfielder recently submitted a letter to Yanga, asking for the termination of his contract with the club. PHOTO: CORRESPONDENT JUMANNE JUMA

## Nigerian attacking midfielder confident of his future in Simba

By Correspondent Nassir Nchimbi

NIGERIAN attacking midfielder Nelson Okwa has denied reports he will be offloaded by Simba SC in the mini-registration period.

Okwa has been repeatedly mentioned as one of the players who will leave at Simba SC on loan to give room for registration of other players to be registered this season.

The midfielder has denied the information while playing for the squad in the 2023 Mapinduzi Cup taking place in Zanzibar.

Simba SC has already exited the annual showdown after losing 1-0 to Mlandege FC.

Okwa disclosed he does not know anything about leaving his club and instead recognizes his presence in the squad per the contract between him and

the management of the Msimbazi Street club.

The Nigerian midfielder stated: "I don't know anything about leaving Simba SC, I know that I am a legitimate player of this club according to the contract between me and the management, if I leave everything will be done as per procedures."

Okwa has been out of action for a long time nursing his injuries and, since his return, he has not had a chance to play in Simba SC's first team in the 2022/23 NBC Premier League.

"I see and read a lot of information either in newspapers or on social media about me, but I still insist I am a Simba SC player," he noted.

"I will continue to be here to fight for Simba SC in the domestic league and the CAF Champions League, I have recovered from my injuries and I hope to be fit for a long

time to help my team," Okwa disclosed.

Another player who is widely mentioned in the list of footballers that would face the axe at Msimbazi Street outfit is Okwa's compatriot, Victor Akpan.

Defensive midfielder Akpan has not managed to live up to expectations at the outfit, turning out to be a pale shadow of a footballer that showcased solid performance when he was featuring for Coastal Union.

Akpan has failed to break into Simba's first team this season and he had to wait for coach Juma Mgunda's arrival to get a few minutes on the pitch as a substitute.

Simba SC has already registered one foreign player, midfielder Said Ntibazonkiza, in place of attacker Dejan Georgijevic who terminated his contract with the squad in October last year.

## Flexibles by David Chikoko

