



EDUCATION



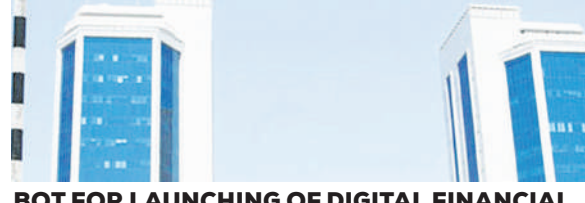
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USAID hands out \$0.5m to combat cholera epidemic

By Guardian Reporter

IN response to rising cholera cases in the Mwanza and Simiyu regions, the United States has issued an additional 1.18bn/- (\$500,000) to support hygiene efforts in the two regions.

Andrew Lentz, the chargé d'affaires at the US Embassy in Dar es Salaam said in a statement issued yesterday that his initiative builds on existing U.S. government health support to communities affected by cholera outbreaks in the country.

The aid is being channelled to the clean water and sanitation project funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) which has provided 591m/- (\$0.25m) each to Simiyu and Mwanza regions.

The agency has also deployed water, sanitation and hygiene technical teams to support the respective regional health offices, while the embassy said that the teams, in coordination with local stakeholders, are providing life-saving water purification tablets, disinfecting water sources and delivering community awareness programs to stop the spread of cholera.

"Our swift action reflects our commitment to saving lives and reducing the

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BoT, Zanzibar president fete dollar price decline



Prime Minister Kassim Majaliwa pays his last respects to one-time Registrar of Political Parties John Tendwa at a memorial and farewell ceremony held in Dar es Salaam yesterday. The PM also filled in for President Samia Suluhu Hassan. Photo: PMO

Even then some domestically produced goods had helped offset losses in purchasing power particularly during the harvesting season...

By Guardian Reporter

DOLLAR depreciation that is now being experienced arose from moves by the central bank to stop all transactions in the US currency for purchases conducted locally, the governor has declared.

BoT governor Emmanuel Tutuba made the remarks yesterday at the State House, Zanzibar, during a meeting with President Dr Hussein Ali Mwinyi, who commended the depreciation of the dollar in the local market.

A lower value for the dollar is a significant relief for the economy as it will help reduce the cost of living when goods cost lower in comparison with the dollar rate earlier, he said.

The governor said that ending transactions in the US currency was intended to strength-

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Digital modality to process government transfers in 7 days

Civil service recruitment will have mental tests, screening

By Correspondent Valentine Oforo, Dodoma

THE government is working on a digital modality to streamline transfer processes to improve transparency and reduce corruption, a top official has declared.

Deus Sangu, the Public Service Management and Good Governance deputy minister in the President's Office, announced this initiative when closing a three-day meeting of heads of human resources and administration in the public service in the capital yesterday.

Her said that transfer applications need to be processed within seven days, to address the backlog of unresolved transfer requests that negatively impacts staff morale, he affirmed.

Juma Mkom, the permanent secretary, said that human resources officers need to take a strong stand against violations of public service management regulations in their workplaces.

They need to investigate and take disciplinary actions against civil servants involved in forging transfer letters, expressing concern over reports of forged transfer letters in some public institutions.

"I urge you to investigate these cases and take the necessary actions to resolve them," he said, noting that directive letters had already been sent to the relevant institutions.

The government has meanwhile announced plans to establish a dedicated department to conduct 'psychometric' tests for all new public service employees.

The deputy minister issued the notice at the

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'Evidence drugs' on fire by court order

By Henry Mwangonde

THE Drug Control and Enforcement Authority (DCEA) has destroyed 614.12 kilograms of illegal drugs which were seized and kept as evidence.

Aretas Lyimo, the commissioner general, told journalists at the destruction spot yesterday, that 601.87kgs of methamphetamine and 12.25kgs were heroin were part of the drugs destroyed.

The drugs had been held as evidence, up to issuance of rulings by the Kibaha and

Kisutu magistrates' courts for their destruction due to the risk of deterioration while the related cases are still being heard.

"The destruction of the drugs is being carried out in accordance with the Drugs and Narcotics Control Act No. 5 of 2015, along with its regulations," he said, noting that the law allows for the destruction of drugs before, during, or after a case is concluded in court.

The destruction exercise was conducted with public health and environmental safe-

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Roadside coin vendors strategically wait for business, mainly with commuter bus conductors usually in urgent need of the service, at Dar es Salaam's Mbezi Mwisho bus terminal yesterday. Photo: Correspondent Sabato Kasika

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BoT, Zanzibar president fete dollar price decline

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en the Tanzanian currency “and return it to the market, as the Tanzanian shilling had been weakening for some time.”

He warned traders that it is illegal to buy or sell goods using the dollar or any foreign currency, affirming that such practices undermine the value of the local currency while artificially inflating the value of foreign currencies.

This is illegal under the country's economic policies and market regulations, he stated, asking hotel operators and the tourism industry as a whole to encourage their customers to make payments using the local currency.

He also recommended setting up foreign exchange facilities in key tourism spots to enable tourists to continue using the local currency.

The governor aired hopes that prices of goods would decline with dollar depreciation, appealing to state authorities to “intervene to

help ease the burden of high living costs for citizens.”

In his remarks, the president similarly expressed the hope that the decline in the dollar value would contribute to lowering the costs of essential goods like food and fuel.

Prices of goods affected by the global rise in the dollar value need to return to more reasonable levels, he said, noting that rising dollar costs in importing goods had affected the country's economy.

Even then some domestically produced goods had helped offset losses in purchasing power particularly during the harvesting season, he said, pointing at food products, including rice.

Locally produced goods had reduced the need for imports, he said, commending the BoT for its professionalism in the move to encourage holders of old banknotes withdrawn from circulation to exchange them for new banknotes at commercial bank windows or BoT offices.

Digital modality to process govt transfers in seven days

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event, explaining that the procedure is intended to address rising concerns of unprofessional behaviour, lack of discipline and failure to adhere to established code of ethics in public service provision.

Psychometric tests are used by employers to assess intelligence, abilities, potential and personality, he explained, outlining the growing challenges facing the sector, including poor work habits, low accountability and unethical behaviour.

These tendencies are exacerbated by the lack of ‘self-awareness’ among some civil servants, he said, citing poor communication, alcohol consumption, laziness, nepotism and sexual bribery as habitual concerns undermining effectiveness in public service delivery.

The public service is a crucial sphere where ethics and patriotism must be visible to ensure positive and acceptable outcomes, he stated, intoning that some civil servants are ‘unproductive,’ a situation that has reached alarming levels and requires urgent intervention.

A specialised department tasked with conducting psychometric tests for all new recruits will help to ensure that only qualified individuals who meet the necessary ethical and

professional standards are invited into government employment.

Proper screening and induction seminars are crucial for young recruits, as some are demonstrating poor work maturity, financial illiteracy and an inability to comply with the dos and don'ts of the public service, he said.

He regretted that some civil servants are neglecting their responsibilities while receiving taxpayer-funded salaries, arising from the view that being permanent and pensionable is next to immunity from accountability.

He urged heads of human resources departments to handle their roles more professionally, particularly in addressing diverse issues faced by public officials.

Some employment managers face accusations of using unfriendly language and reluctance in responding to the challenges troubling staff members, he said, urging them to ensure positive working relationships with staff.

These conditions encourage public servants to perform their duties with enthusiasm and commitment, he further noted, underlining that favouritism or corruption in personnel transfers undermine human resource management.



Foreign Affairs and East African Cooperation minister Mahmoud Thabit Kombo (R) exchanges greetings with Somalia's Foreign Affairs minister, Ahmed Moallim Fiqi, on arrival at Mogadishu's Aden Adde International Airport yesterday. Photo courtesy of FA&EAC ministry

'Evidence drugs' on fire by court order

FROM PAGE 1

ty controls, with oversight of various stakeholders as required by law, he pointed out.

During this month the law enforcers destroyed 12 acres of marijuana farms in Tabora Region, plus 398.105kgs of various drugs in Mtwara Region, he also, similarly pointing at intended destruction of .126.21 kilogrammes of khat in Arusha Region in the coming days.

He commended stakeholders who facilitated the destruction of the drugs and for institutional co-operation with the law enforcers, affirming that drug destruction will be pursued in the regions as courts issue further orders.

“We remain committed to working with stakeholders to ensure that these illegal drugs are controlled for the benefit of our society,” he added.

Barrick sees fair resolution in Mali through arbitration

TORONTO

BARRICK Gold Corporation has confirmed that its operating entities in Mali, Société des Mines de Loulo SA and Société des Mines de Goukoto SA, have submitted a formal request for arbitration to the International Centre for the Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID).

The action is in accordance with the provisions outlined in their respective Mining Conventions with the State of Mali and aims to resolve ongoing matters of disagreement related to the Loulo-Goukoto complex.

The arbitration request underscores Barrick's dedication

to following established legal and contractual processes to resolve disputes in a fair, transparent, and efficient manner.

The arbitration mechanism, provided for under the Somilo and Goukoto Mining Conventions with the State of Mali, has historically served as a reliable and effective tool for fostering dialogue, reinforcing partnerships, and facilitating mutually acceptable resolutions through an independent and competent authority.

“Over nearly three decades of operations in Mali, Barrick has remained steadfast in its long-term commitment to the country and its people,” said Mark

Bristow, Barrick's President and CEO.

He added: “While the arbitration process is underway, Barrick continues to welcome and encourage dialogue with the Government of Mali to amicably resolve these issues. Our priority remains ensuring the continued success of the Loulo-Goukoto complex, which is a cornerstone of both Barrick's operations and the broader Malian economy.”

Barrick's involvement in the Loulo-Goukoto complex has contributed significantly to Mali's mining sector, with the complex being one of the largest gold-producing operations in the country.



Zanzibar's First Vice President, Othman Masoud Othman (R), has an audience with Hamad Yusuf Masauni, recently appointed Minister of State in Union Vice President's Office (Union and Environment), who paid him a visit on Wednesday to introduce himself. Photo: ZFVPO

USAID issues \$0.5m to combat cholera epidemic

FROM PAGE 1

spread of cholera in Tanzania,” he said, underlining that the United States remains a steadfast partner in strengthening Tanzania's health systems, “which includes promoting access to clean water and sanitation—critical elements in combating this preventable disease.”

Earlier this year, the US provided 473m/- (\$0.2m) in emergency funding to support cholera prevention

and response efforts following outbreaks affecting 18 regions across Tanzania.

Since September 2023, cholera cases have increased in Tanzania, with over 2,200 reported cases and over 40 deaths, prompting USAID and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to intensify efforts in the country's health sector.

Technical teams are working closely with local community lead-

ers to increase access to clean water, educate community healthcare workers and residents on effective prevention measures.

They are also supporting the rapid deployment of outbreak response teams, with CDC providing purification tablets to people with HIV and leading control efforts at facilities supported by the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), the statement indicated.

Additional support will strengthen coordination, mobilize resources and empower heavily affected communities in the two regions to stop the spread of cholera and save lives.

The funding is part of a broader 118.19bn/- (\$50m) U.S. commitment to transform water, sanitation and hygiene infrastructure across the country even as to date, over two million more people have access to safe water and improved sanitation due to this support, it added.



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Tanzania Bankers Association executive director Tuse Joune presents the body's recommendations at a national Planning Commission meeting held in Dar es Salaam yesterday, primarily to review the draft National Development Vision 2050. Photo: Correspondent Maulid Mmbaga

TESP enhances digital teaching and learning

By Gruede Mbago

THE implementation of the Teacher Education Support Project (TESP) has made significant strides in enhancing digital teaching and learning, effectively transforming the environment of teachers' colleges across the country.

Prof. Carolyne Nombo, Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, highlighted the advancements during a stakeholders' meeting in Dar es Salaam yesterday.

She emphasised the project's pivotal role in modernising teacher education and improving the quality of education nationwide.

As the project nears its conclusion in June 2025, Prof. Nombo noted that its major objectives have been met, marking a milestone in Tanzania's efforts to provide quality education for all.

"The ultimate objective of TESP is to improve basic education for girls and boys in Tanzania through: strengthening human resource capacity at teachers' colleges and schools, improving teaching and learning environment through furnishing teacher colleges with teaching and learning resources and facilities," she noted.

She said TESP has made significant investments in constructing and rehabilitating college buildings, with a particular focus on enhancing library services, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) rooms and science laboratories in various teacher colleges.

The construction of New Kabanga Teacher College with green design elements including a biogas plant, as an energy-efficient and ecologically beneficial source, has become a model green design paradigm for environmentally friendly practices," she added.

She thanked the Canadian government for extending its support to facilitate implementation of the TESP project, something which has greatly helped to transform the learning and teaching environment in various schools and colleges.

"The project also supports the fight against impacts of climate change by promoting construction of buildings that adhere to environmental protection which include encouraging clean energy use," she added.

She said President Samia Suluhu Hassan has expressed high commitment in making transformation in the education sector by facilitating a number of investments both in basic and secondary education to achieve the same.

"The achievements of TESP underscore the importance of

collaborative efforts in transforming education systems. The project has been instrumental in creating a better learning environment and equipping teachers with the skills they need to deliver quality education," she said.

She also stressed the importance of adopting innovative teaching techniques to adapt to the evolving demands of the sector.

"It is important for teachers to adopt new curricula that promote innovation. This will ultimately produce a competent workforce to serve in the sector," said one of the meeting participants.

The shift toward innovation is seen as crucial for preparing students to thrive in a rapidly changing world.

By embracing new teaching methods and curricula, Tanzania aims to develop a skilled, adaptable workforce that contributes to the country's socio-economic development.

Prof. Nombo reaffirmed the government's commitment to strengthening its partnership with Canada in implementing key activities related to educational data.

She expressed gratitude for Canada's support, emphasizing the importance of their collaboration in advancing education sector reforms.

Carol Mundle, Head of Cooperation at Global Affairs Canada, said emphasized the need to integrate climate-conscious strategies into education.

"I know how important it is to have resilient, sustainable schools in a time of climate change."

Mundle called on stakeholders to share and implement best practices, lessons learned and policies already in place to strengthen the resilience and sustainability of schools across Tanzania. The efforts aim not only to address climate change but also to ensure that schools are inclusive, equitable, and prepared to meet future challenges.

Cosmas Mahenge, TESP Coordinator said the stakeholders meeting is expected to further solidify the efforts, fostering collaboration and innovative approaches to address challenges in the education system.

He said the country's education sector is undergoing transformative reforms aimed at ensuring sustainable, inclusive and equitable education for all.

A cornerstone of the transformation is the commitment to providing every pupil with quality education that prepares them to be productive and contributing members of society.

He said the project which began in 2017 and scheduled to end in 2025 is implemented at a budget of 87bn/-.

TASAC inspects maritime transport at Dar es Salaam port to ensure safety

By Guardian Reporter

THE Tanzania Shipping Agency Corporation (TASAC) has stated that it is continuing to inspect maritime transport vessels due to some of these vessels exceeding the maximum capacity of passengers or cargo during this holiday season.

Speaking during an inspection of the Zan Fast Ferries vessel yesterday, the Corporation's Chief Inspector Rashid Katonga addressed the inspection which took place at the Dar es Salaam Port.

He emphasized that TASAC is committed to ensuring that passengers travel safely, which requires conducting inspections on maritime transport vessels.

However, he mentioned that the inspection process began with Azam's Kilimanjaro vessels, followed by Zan Fast Ferries, and that the vessels comply with the regulations.

Katonga noted that during this period, some maritime vessels have been overloading with passengers or cargo due to the high demand for travel or transporting goods.

He explained that TASAC is strategically planning inspections to assess the capacity of the vessels and the number of passengers allowed. If any violations are identified, the trips are halted, and penalties for breaching regulations are imposed.

He also stated that the inspections are accompanied by efforts to

educate passengers about their responsibilities when using these transport services.

Captains of Zan Fast Ferries mentioned that the inspections help them, as vessel owners sometimes want to depart despite certain challenges. However, these challenges are managed and prevented by TASAC's regulations.

They also highlighted that, in addition to the inspections conducted by TASAC, they maintain their own regular checks on the vessels.

Furthermore, the captains expressed that TASAC's inspections greatly assist in protecting them in various areas. They stated that TASAC's inspections are beneficial, as they serve as reminders for transport operators to understand their duties at all times to ensure the safety of passengers.

The captains added that they will continue to provide services in compliance with the established regulations while also conducting their own inspections on the vessels. CCM Youth Wing (UVCCM) chairman, Ali Kawaida, shared his positive experience of traveling safely with Zan Fast Ferries, stating that the inspections are important to ensure public safety.

He encouraged TASAC to continue its maritime transport inspection procedures, including educating passengers about their safety.

Local authority leaders urged to promote good governance

By Polycarp Machira, Dodoma

DEPUTY Minister of State, President's Office, Regional Administration and Local Government (PORALG), Dr Festo Ndugange has appealed to local government leaders to promote good governance to enhance efficiency and service delivery at their areas.

He also challenged them to encourage and empower leaders elected in the recent civic polls to perform their duties as required by law.

Speaking while officiating the opening of local government stakeholders meeting yesterday here, the deputy minister emphasised the role of local authority leaders, stating that they should listen to people on the

ground.

The meeting organised by Uongozi Institute brought together leaders from within the government and private institutions, was aimed at enabling them improve their leadership.

Dr Ndugange told the meeting that leaders at the LGAs are important people in pushing for development at all levels. "No development projects can be realized without commitment of leaders at the grassroots and the government acknowledges your contributions" he said.

According to the deputy minister, LGAs are autonomous and contribute a lot in ensuring that people on the ground get access to development projects from the central government and other partners. "The meeting has come

at the right time when we had just recently sworn in new leaders following the civic polls and I urge you to guide them rightly in the duties" noted the deputy minister.

He also took the opportunity to thank all the district executive directors (DEDs), for steady overseeing of the civil polls, terming the November 27 elections as one of the most peaceful civil elections in the country's history.

However, he observed that there are several challenges at the LGAs, stating that there seems to be some policies, laws and institutions that do not match, calling on the leaders to call for review whenever they realize them.

In his presentation to the leaders, Leo Mayika, the Chief Executive Officer for Agricultural Seed Agency (ASA) observed that

there are political, administrative and financial or economic decentralizations at the LGAs.

He said leaders at the lowest levels in the society need to be aware of these in their daily activities in effort to ensure services are delivered to the people.

However, he also pointed out that some cross-cutting ministries are not doing enough to implement government projects. "Some ministries have failed to do their tasks to disburse money to the LGAs" he said, adding that the government should be keen on the matter.

He noted that with his vast experience of working at the LGAs, he learnt that the councils is where results are seen, emphasizing on the need to reach people at the grassroots.



Gerson Msigwa, Information, Culture, Arts and Sports permanent secretary doubling as Chief Government Spokesperson, addresses journalists in Dar es Salaam yesterday. In the main, he shed light on a range of ongoing government programmes and projects. Photo: Correspondent Jumanne Juma

By Guardian Reporter

Clerics lament poor conduct of local government elections across country

RELIGIOUS leaders from various denominations have shared their views on the recent local government elections, with some noting that the elections were conducted poorly in certain areas.

Bishop Wolfgang Pisa, President of the Tanzania Episcopal Conference (TEC), made the comments during a meeting with bishops from various Christian denominations at the TEC Hall in Kurasini, Dar es Salaam.

The meeting focused on evaluating the elections held on November 27 under the theme: "Did the voters' decision get respected?"

The bishops highlighted numerous complaints from citizens and concerned individuals, yet the government failed to take corrective action.

Bishop Pisa stated, "In some areas, the elections were carried out like a dirty game, leading to deaths, threats, bribery, corruption, favoritism, and fraud."

He emphasised that such practices tarnish the image of the nation and erode political, economic, and moral integrity, while undermining accountability for public leaders.

"These methods result in citizens being burdened with leaders they did not choose," he said.

Bishop Pisa added that elections now diminish the value of Tanzanian lives through violence, abductions, and killings. He urged attendees to

align with the truth, as it would lead to a better future for the country.

He also reiterated that any election conducted in accordance with constitutional and legal frameworks is an act of freedom, rights, and respect for citizens.

"The entire process must adhere to constitutional principles, ensuring fairness and respect for voter privacy, and upholding the integrity of the election process," he said.

Bishop Pisa pointed out that the recent election failed to meet these standards and called for reflection on whether voters' consciences

were respected and if the election was truly free and fair.

Religious leaders, he emphasized, are responsible for guiding their communities and protecting human dignity.

He urged participants to assess how the elections were conducted, asking questions about voter registration, candidate selection, fairness during campaigns, and transparency in voting and result announcements.

He encouraged them to acknowledge where the election went well and use it as a benchmark for future improvements.

PPP experts encouraged to amplify project execution for financial burden relief

By Guardian Reporter

EXPERTS in Public-Private Partnerships (PPP) have been instructed to ensure that all major, commercially viable projects are implemented through the PPP model to ease the financial burden on the government.

Deputy Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Finance, Jenifa Omolo made the directive on Wednesday in Dodoma while opening a meeting aimed at strengthening collaboration between the Revolutionary Government of Zanzibar and the Mainland on PPP matters.

Omolo emphasized that implementing projects through PPP is essential for building a strong economy, pointing out that many countries globally have adopted this practice successfully.

"Do not be afraid; even developed countries implement their projects through PPP. If you look at bridges and various buildings, they have been carried out through PPP. The private sector, when given the opportunity, performs very well," Omolo said.

She encouraged experts to enhance understanding of the PPP concept among stakeholders, as there are still challenges in fully appreciating its benefits and potential.

Deputy Permanent Secretary of the Office of the President for Labour, Economy and Investment, Zanzibar, Rashid Ali Salim, also urged experts to ensure that all key issues raised in the meeting are addressed, particularly the need for a joint strategy to promote opportunities and initiate PPP projects that will strengthen the sector across both Zanzibar and Mainland Tanzania.

Acting Commissioner for the PPP Unit in the Ministry of Finance, Bashiru Taratibu highlighted important topics discussed during the meeting, including legal reforms to simplify PPP operations, especially for joint projects between Zanzibar and Mainland Tanzania.

"We have discussed joint projects that the private sector could undertake, such as a bridge connecting Dar es Salaam to Zanzibar. However, each region has its own PPP laws, so we are working together to find the best way to implement this if an investor comes forward," Taratibu said.

He stressed that Tanzania needs a unified PPP policy or law that outlines how to implement joint projects between Zanzibar and Mainland Tanzania, similar to PPP initiatives undertaken in other East African countries. A regional PPP policy for East Africa has already been prepared.

The Executive Director of the Public-Private Partnership Centre (PPPC), David Kafulila, stated that various measures were discussed to streamline the PPP process and alleviate the financial burden on the government for development projects that could be financed through PPP arrangements.

Kafulila reported that Tanzania is performing well in the PPP sector, with Mainland Tanzania having approximately 74 projects in the final stages of implementation, and Zanzibar having more than 13 ongoing projects.

"We have agreed on many actions to ensure that we achieve greater success in PPP, agreeing to use the private sector to implement projects that the government could otherwise fund through taxes, loans, duties, levies, and aid," Kafulila said.

He emphasized the importance of further strengthening PPP to facilitate projects that would otherwise rely on tax funding.

Kafulila also pointed out that Tanzania is performing well in terms of loans, with the country's debt-to-GDP ratio at 47 percent, a figure lower than many other East African nations.



Do not be afraid; even developed countries implement their projects through PPP. If you look at bridges and various buildings, they have been carried out through PPP. The private sector, when given the opportunity, performs very well

Foundation leads the way in altering mental health support

By Guardian Reporter

THE Tanzania Health and Medical Education Foundation (TAHMEF), a non-profit, non-governmental organisation, is spearheading a major initiative to provide mental health support to young people across the country through its flagship programme, AHADI Mental Health.

In a nation where mental health has long been neglected and young people face substantial barriers to accessing care, TAHMEF is making a profound impact.

Juliana Busasi, TAHMEF founder and Executive Director said that she has made mental health her personal mission. In a statement yesterday, Busasi said having navigated her own mental health challenges, she is acutely aware of the difficulties many young people face when seeking support.

"I have experienced the stigma and isolation that comes with mental health issues," Busasi said. "AHADI is not just a project to me—it's about ensuring that others don't have to endure the same struggles in isolation."

She said AHADI is Tanzania's first digital mental health platform, revolutionising mental health care in the country. Combining digital tools with in-person outreach, the platform offers culturally relevant, stigma-free care to youth across Tanzania.

The project's platform includes a mobile app (the AHADI App), an

SMS helpline (15061), and the Hotcall helpline (199), providing 24/7 access to mental health support. The platform offers self-help tools, crisis counselling, and professional care, making it easier for young people to seek help whenever they need it.

For many young people, the project has been a vital lifeline. Take Mariam, a 19-year-old university student from Dodoma, who used the SMS helpline during a particularly challenging period of depression. "I felt completely alone and didn't know where to turn," recalls Mariam. "But the programme gave me access to a counsellor without anyone knowing. It helped me get the support I needed."

She noted the success of AHADI is evident in the growing number of users who now feel empowered to seek help when they need it most. The platform not only improves mental health outcomes but also plays a crucial role in dismantling the stigma surrounding mental health care in Tanzania.

The initiative is demonstrating that with the right tools and support, young people can overcome mental health challenges and lead fulfilling lives.

By providing accessible, culturally relevant care, AHADI ensures that mental health is no longer a topic to be ignored or concealed but one that is openly addressed and supported.

As AHADI expands its reach, it is setting a new benchmark for mental health care in Tanzania.



Works minister Abdallah Ulega has a word with members of the Tanzania National Roads Agency (Tanroads) management team at a working session in Dodoma city yesterday. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

By Guardian Reporter

MINISTER for Works Abdallah Ulega has instructed the Tanzania National Roads Agency (Tanroads) to work around the clock to complete urgent projects under its management.

Minister Ulega issued the directives yesterday during a meeting with Tanroads Management and regional managers from across the country, in Dodoma, where he emphasised that urgent projects should be treated as a top priority.

"Work at full speed, both day and night, especially on emergency projects, to help Tanzanians overcome the challenges caused by damaged infrastructure," Ulega said.

Ulega told the managers they are expected to work at a pace similar to that of the Tanzania People's Defence Force (TPDF) when given government assignments, as the rainy season is approaching, which

Minister wants Tanroads to work around the clock

could cause further damage to already deteriorating areas.

He highlighted that roads damaged by heavy rainfall from both the long rains and the El Niño phenomenon have caused major disruptions, halting economic activities, making it crucial to address these issues urgently.

The meeting was the first time that Ulega met with Tanroads leadership since his appointment by President Samia Suluhu Hassan earlier this month.

During the meeting, the new minister took the opportunity to commend the agency's staff for their hard work and professionalism.

He noted that, under the government has completed over 1,198 kilometres of paved roads for

the past three years.

Ulega, who is also the Member of Parliament for Mkuranga, urged the managers to work with confidence and professionalism to drive effectiveness and efficiency in the construction sector, thereby addressing the challenge of poor infrastructure and boosting the country's economic growth.

Minister Ulega urged the regional managers across the country to ensure that all areas with traffic congestion, particularly in cities and municipalities, are properly planned and designed to meet current and future needs.

He called for good coordination to reduce traffic jams and enable citizens to complete their tasks on time.

The Minister reassured the Managers that the Sixth Government, led by President Samia Suluhu Hassan, will continue to address the challenges faced by contractors to ensure they work swiftly and meet government objectives.

Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Works, Aisha Amour, explained that Tanroads will continue ensuring that main roads, regional roads, and bridges remain passable throughout the year.

Ambassador Amour also urged the Tanroads managers to enhance project management, protect road reserves, and improve urban areas with street lighting and environmental conservation along roadways.



Deputy Prime Minister who is Energy minister Dr Doto Biteko addresses at the 2nd Investment festival dubbed 'Ijuka Omuka' (meaning remember your home) organised in Kagera Region yesterday. Photo: DPMO

NAIROBI

THE Office of the Attorney General of Kenya has introduced enhanced marriage services aimed at providing couples with more personalised and memorable wedding experiences.

In a statement yesterday, Attorney General Dorcas Oduor announced the launch of the VIP Marriage Room, a premium service designed to offer upscale and expedited marriage registration services for couples seeking a sophisticated and efficient wedding experience.

This new service is part of a broader initiative to cater to the diverse preferences of couples across the country.

In addition to the VIP Marriage Room, couples now have the option of hosting garden weddings

Kenyan govt introduces VIP marriage room for couples for lasting memories

officiated by the Attorney General's office at a prescribed fee.

The garden weddings offer couples the freedom to select serene, beautiful outdoor settings, ensuring an unforgettable experience while also adhering to all legal requirements for marriage registration.

"We are excited to introduce the VIP Marriage Room, which reflects our commitment to making marriage registration services more accessible, elegant, and efficient," Oduor stated. "Our goal is to provide a space where couples can create lasting memories, while receiving professional, high-quality service in a timely manner."

The VIP Marriage Room will cater to couples who wish to marry in a more intimate, upscale setting, offering privacy, comfort, and fast-tracked services. The room will provide a premium atmosphere with customized services, including decorations and an expedited registration process, for couples who prefer a more refined wedding experience.

Moreover, the new service is expected to appeal to busy couples who may not want to wait for long processing times. The Attorney General's office has emphasized that these premium services will be available at an additional fee to reflect the luxurious features and

convenience they offer. Couples interested in utilizing the VIP Marriage Room or garden wedding services can visit the Attorney General's office in Nairobi or get in touch via email make arrangements and inquiries.

The initiative is part of the government's ongoing efforts to enhance public service delivery, particularly in sectors that directly impact citizens' personal lives.

The launch of these services is expected to streamline the wedding process for many couples, making it easier for them to formalize their unions in a manner that reflects their personal preferences.



Zainab Katimba (2nd-L, foreground), deputy minister in the President's Office Regional Administration and Local Government is briefed at an event held yesterday in Morogoro municipality on the implementation of an eco-schools programme in 26 schools the Foundation for Environmental Education has endorsed for the purpose. The schools are from Morogoro, Kilosa, Mvomero in Morogoro Region and Mufindi in Iringa Region. Photo: Correspondent Idda Mushi

\$45 million allocation to boost vaccine production in Senegal

DAKAR

A \$45 million investment has been announced to support vaccine production in Senegal, marking a significant step in strengthening the country's role in advancing public health across Africa.

The U.S. Development Finance Corporation (DFC), the African Development Bank (AfDB), and the International Finance Corporation (IFC) have partnered to fund VaxSen, the vaccine production and distribution arm of the Pasteur Institute in Dakar.

The initiative aims to enhance Senegal's capacity to produce vaccines locally, reduce reliance on imports, and improve overall vaccine access for the region.

The funding agreement, signed on December 13th in the presence of Senegalese President Bassirou Diomaye Faye, underscores Senegal's leadership in improving healthcare outcomes across the continent.

The partnership will focus on expanding local vaccine

production, strengthening supply chains, and establishing an efficient distribution network, ensuring that vaccines are delivered quickly and effectively to those in need.

This is aligned with the African Union's Vision 2040, which targets the production of 60 percent of Africa's vaccine needs within the continent, reducing dependence on external sources. The initiative also supports the broader goal of improving health security and self-sufficiency across African nations, especially in light of the challenges posed by global health crises like the Covid-19 pandemic.

By investing in the infrastructure and capabilities of local vaccine manufacturing, this project not only aims to bolster Senegal's healthcare system but also positions the country as a key player in Africa's pharmaceutical and public health sectors.

The partnership is a significant milestone in the ongoing effort to build a more resilient and sustainable healthcare framework for the continent.

By Correspondent Marc Nkwame,

Arusha

New digital financial services complaints resolution portal set for launch in January

THE Bank of Tanzania (BoT) is set to launch a digital financial services consumer complaints resolution portal in January 2025.

The system is aimed at enhancing resolution of consumer complaints and providing a faster, more accessible platform for Tanzanians to address issues with financial institutions.

The new system aligns with BoT's Financial Consumer Protection (FCP) initiative and is designed to offer a more personalized and efficient way for clients to lodge complaints or requests, it was announced here yesterday.

"The digital system will make it easier for clients of financial institutions and microfinance entities to file complaints and requests from the comfort of their homes, offices or even farms," said Aristedes Mrema, Manager (Economies) BoT Arusha Branch.

Mrema emphasized that the system would not only streamline the complaint process for consumers but also help financial service providers better manage

customer inquiries, grievances and assistance requests.

The portal will be accessible via computers, smartphones, tablets and other connected devices, reducing the need for long queues at bank and microfinance offices.

As part of its efforts to raise awareness about the new system, the BoT conducts a series of training sessions for financial service providers (FSPs) across the country.

The training sessions are aimed at introducing the new Customer Resolutions System (CRS) and educating service providers about the system's functionality.

During a training session in Arusha, Imelda Mathew from Monduli District expressed optimism about the system's potential to streamline complaint resolution process.

"Some people find it difficult to understand certain processes,

but with this portal, they will be guided on how to properly lodge complaints or requests, which will help us provide prompt and accurate support," she said.

Hansel Mpita from Moshi, Kilimanjaro Region, noted that many complaints from financial institution customers often stem from misunderstandings related to loans and interest rates.

He said the new system will facilitate clearer communication

between clients and service providers, reducing confusion and improving customer satisfaction.

The FCP framework aims to safeguard consumers from unfair or abusive practices in the financial sector while ensuring that service providers adhere to ethical conduct. The system will also promote financial literacy, helping consumers better understand the financial products and services available to them.

THE UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA MINISTRY OF FINANCE



INVITATION TO STAKEHOLDERS TO PARTICIPATE IN THE UPCOMING PROCEEDINGS OF THE TASK FORCE ON TAX REFORM IN PREPARATION FOR BUDGET 2025/26

The proceedings of the Task Force on Tax Reform in preparation for Budget 2025/26 are scheduled to begin in February 2025. The working sessions of the Task Force will be preceded by the National Tax and Investment Conference, which is expected to take place in January 2025.

Every year, the Task Force provides a structured forum for discussion of various issues relating to tax policy and administration. Its deliberations have constituted a vital input to policy makers for a long period. It has helped to shape the country's tax regime and, through dialogue and analysis, facilitated an effective, transparent and efficient resolution of a number of issues.

The fiscal policy objectives for 2025/26 include improving business environment in order to attract investment, facilitating growth of small and medium business enterprises for sustainable economic growth; enhancing voluntary tax compliance; broadening the tax base; mainstreaming the use of ICT systems in tax administration; strengthening enforcement of tax laws; and streamlining levies and fees.

As part of these proceedings, the Task Force is inviting submission of proposals from interested parties including Government officials, private sector, civil society, religious organizations, academia, research institutions and other specialists in public finance. The submissions from interested parties should be in writing, stating clearly:

- Firm(s), organization(s) or association(s) being represented;
- The proposed changes in tax or non-tax revenue, including analysis of the sectors, regions or taxpayers that would be affected;
- The projected impact on the economy and Government revenues in the year of implementation and outer years;
- The rationale and justification for the proposed revenue policy changes and, in particular, analysis of the means by which the proposal will help the Government to achieve its objectives; and
- Where a proposal entails reduction in Government revenues (even in the short term), there must be alternative proposal(s), setting out explicit and credible measures consistent with the overall thrust of the Government's fiscal policies, to offset the revenue loss arising from the proposal.

The Task Force is looking forward to having a productive engagement and exchange of ideas among stakeholders and the Government.

Submissions are accepted with effect from the date of this announcement until **31 March 2025** through the following portal: <https://maoni.mof.go.tz/>. Submissions after the deadline will not be considered.

The proposal(s) can also be submitted through the following address:

Secretariat Task Force on Tax Reform,
Ministry of Finance,
Policy Analysis Department,
Treasury Square Building (2nd floor),
18 Jakaya Kikwete Road,
P.O Box 2802,
DODOMA.
OR
E-Mail: mathias.kadebe@hazina.go.tz or salha.mzee@hazina.go.tz

For more details/clarifications please call: 0713 694 895 or 0652 442 944
Or visit our website: www.mof.go.tz

PERMANENT SECRETARY - MINISTRY OF FINANCE
December, 2024

21829001

JAMHURI YA MUUNGANO WA TANZANIA TAASISI YA KUTHIBITI UBORA WA MBEGU TANZANIA



TAARIFA KWA UMMA

KUFUNGULIWA KWA MUDA WA WIKI MOJA KWA MADUKA NA MAGHALA YA MBEGU YALIYOFUNGWA

- Tarehe 17/12/2024 Waziri wa Kilimo Mhe. Hussein Bashe (Mb.) alifanya mkutano na Wafanyabiashara ya mbegu jijini Dodoma ilikujadili maendeleo yatasnia ya mbegu pamoja na utekelezaji wampango wa ruzuku ya mbegu za mahindi.
- Baada ya kupokea maombi ya wafanyabiashara ya kupewa muda ili kurekebisha mapungufu yaliyosababisha kufungwa hasa kutouza mbegu zote za mahindi kupitia mfumo wakidigiti wa ruzuku, Waziri wa Kilimo alitoa msamaha wa muda na aliagiza Taasisi ya Kuthibiti Ubora wa Mbegu Tanzania (TOSCI) kufungua maduka na maghala yaliyofungwa.
- Msamaha huo wa Waziri wa Kilimo umetolewa kwa muda wa siku saba (7) tu kuanzia tarehe 18/12/2024 ambapo baada ya muda huo watakabainika wameshindwa kujirekebisha Serikali itawachukulia hatua kali ikiwemo kufutiwa leseni ya kuuza mbegu.
- Msamaha huu hauwahusu wale waliyofungwa kwa kosa la kuuza au kukutwa na mbegu feki.

IMETOLEWA NA:

Patrick Ngwediagi
MKURUGENZI MKUU
18/12/2024

218303001

Embrace sustainable means, fashion stakeholders advised

By Guardian Correspondent

STAKEHOLDERS in Tanzania's fashion industry have been urged to embrace sustainable practices as a means of contributing to environmental conservation and economic growth.

Speaking at a fashion show in Dar es Salaam early this week, figures from the government, fashion industry and environmental organisations emphasised the critical role designers and models play in promoting eco-friendly fashion and reducing the environmental impact of the industry.

Adrian Kishe, Kariakoo Division Officer, highlighted the importance of integrating sustainability into fashion design.

"It is essential that players in the fashion industry adopt innovative approaches using locally available, high-quality materials that are both environmentally friendly and sustainable. Fashion should not only be about trends but also creating a lasting, positive impact on our environment," he said.

He said as the fashion industry increasingly looks to sustainability as a central tenet of its development, the Za Kwetu Eco Fashion Show served as a reminder of the role the industry can play in shaping a greener future.

The event featured designs made from natural and eco-friendly materials, showcasing how the industry can thrive without compromising the planet's health. Designers presented clothing that not only reflected the vibrant Tanzanian culture but also demonstrated how green innovation in fashion could contribute to reducing the negative impacts of fast fashion.

Francisca Mboya, Director of Ladies Joint Forum (LJF), the organisers of the event, emphasised that the fashion industry can be a powerful force for growth.

"This event is about more than just showcasing fashion. It's about showing that the fashion industry can play a significant role in the green economy by using materials that are safe for the environment.

We encourage designers to continue pushing the boundaries of sustainability," she said.

She also stressed the importance of empowering women in the industry, noting that LJF is committed to providing a platform for female designers to showcase their eco-conscious creations.

"Women are key to sustainable development, and through this platform, we hope to inspire more women to take the lead in fashion innovation that prioritises the environment."

Lucky Michael, Executive Director of the Environmental Conservation Community of Tanzania (ECCT) and Chairperson of Za Kwetu Fashion Show Committee, pointed out that collaboration between the fashion industry and environmentalists is crucial.

"This show is a testament to what can be achieved when designers, environmentalists and other stakeholders work together. Fashion can help build a sustainable economy and contribute to global environmental goals," Michael said.



It is essential that players in the fashion industry adopt innovative approaches using locally available, high-quality materials that are both environmentally friendly and sustainable. Fashion should not only be about trends but also creating a lasting, positive impact on our environment

UN peacekeeping chief discusses progress in CAR amid challenges

By Special Correspondent

On the second day of his visit to the Central African Republic (CAR), Jean-Pierre Lacroix, the United Nations peacekeeping chief, met with the country's Prime Minister, Felix Moloua, to discuss the current situation and key steps for advancing peace and stability in the region.

The humanitarian and security situation in CAR has worsened since March, with escalating clashes between armed groups exacerbating the country's instability.

Despite the challenges, significant progress has been made in certain areas, particularly in the redeployment of state institutions and stabilization efforts.

During the meeting, Lacroix highlighted several key advancements. These included the government's efforts to re-establish its presence in conflict zones, which has contributed to greater stability in several regions.

He also acknowledged the successful disarmament of some armed groups, with a number of fighters having withdrawn from the conflict and reintegrated into civilian life.

"We took stock of a number of important advances, notably the redeployment of the state's presence and successful stabilization efforts in various parts of the country," Lacroix said. "Additionally, progress has been made in disarming armed groups, and it's encouraging to see that some factions have not only ceased their involvement in armed conflict but have also reintegrated into peaceful, civilian life."

A major topic of discussion between Lacroix and Moloua was the upcoming national elections, scheduled for next year. Lacroix stressed the importance of ensuring

a smooth and secure electoral process, which he described as critical for the country's long-term peace and democratic consolidation. The UN, through its peacekeeping mission MINUSCA (United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic), has been actively supporting preparations for the elections, working closely with international partners to ensure that the voting process is both free and secure.

The meeting also focused on strengthening efforts to protect civilians amid ongoing violence. Both Lacroix and Moloua underscored the need to uphold international humanitarian law and protect vulnerable populations who continue to bear the brunt of the conflict.

"We must continue our efforts to safeguard civilians, particularly women, children, and displaced populations, who are the most vulnerable," Lacroix added. "The international community's commitment to humanitarian law must remain steadfast as we work towards a sustainable peace."

Lacroix's visit comes at a critical time for CAR, as the country grapples with not only the legacy of years of armed conflict but also the ongoing challenges of governance and law enforcement. However, the UN peacekeeping chief's statements reflect cautious optimism, highlighting the tangible progress that has been made despite the volatile security environment.

The Central African Republic remains one of the most challenging peacekeeping environments in the world, but efforts from the UN, along with local and international stakeholders, are slowly beginning to bear fruit as the country moves forward on its path toward recovery and long-term peace.



Seif Twenye (R), chairman of Majengo locality in Muheza District, shows a culvert whose installation by the Tanzania rural and Urban Roads Agency (Tarura) will make the road pictured, currently closed to traffic, passable. Photo: Correspondent Steven William

By Guardian Correspondent, Arusha

ARUSHA District Commissioner Felician Mtahengerwa has issued a warning against the dangers of deforestation, urging both researchers and the general public to take immediate action to preserve Tanzania's natural vegetation.

Speaking at the closure of the 3rd International Tanzania Forestry Research Institute (TAFORI) Scientific Conference recently, Mtahengerwa stressed that destruction of forests not only threatens biodiversity but also jeopardizes human survival and wellbeing.

"Deforestation is more than just an environmental issue; it directly impacts our life expectancy and the health of future generations," he said.

He emphasised the critical role that forests play in regulating climate, providing clean air and supporting local economies.

He noted that while research on forest conservation is crucial, the findings often remain confined to urban areas, leaving rural

DC for robust measures to control deforestation

communities—where deforestation is most rampant—uninformed about the dangers and solutions.

"The research findings must reach the right audiences, especially those in rural areas where deforestation and environmental degradation take a heavy toll," he said.

The DC called on researchers and conservationists to focus on educating rural communities about the importance of forest and environmental conservation.

He highlighted the need for more outreach and public awareness campaigns that address specific environmental challenges faced by the communities.

"We must bridge the gap between scientific research and local action. It is imperative that we equip rural populations with the knowledge and tools to protect their environment,"

he said.

"Research on native seeds will not only conserve our environment but also support local agriculture, ensuring a sustainable future for our farmers."

Mtahengerwa cautioned that not all research is beneficial if it prioritizes commercial interests over ecological balance.

He stressed the need for more studies that focus on restoring the country's ecological health, rather than those that may exacerbate existing problems such as poor soil quality and health risks associated with certain foreign plant varieties.

He called on development partners, both local and international, to collaborate with the government in securing funding for research initiatives that focus on sustainable forestry management

and conservation practices.

"It's essential that we work together—government, researchers and development partners—to secure adequate funding and resources for research that ensure protection of our forests and wildlife," he said.

"Local research is key to addressing our unique environmental challenges. It's important that we embrace and apply what we learn from our own experts to safeguard our forests and our future."

The 3rd TAFORI Scientific Conference which brought together researchers, environmentalists and policymakers provided a platform for discussing the latest advancements in forestry research and sustainable management of Tanzania's forests.



Finance deputy minister Hamad Hassan Chande (L) has a quick word with National Board of Accountants and Auditors Board chairperson Prof Sylvia Temu shortly after launching the board in Dar es Salaam yesterday. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

South Africa repatriates young illegal miners to Mozambique

JOHANNESBURG

SOUTH Africa has repatriated 27 boys under the age of 18 to Mozambique after they were arrested for engaging in illegal mining activities in the North West Province.

The minors, who were all found to be undocumented, were initially discovered by police in the Matlosana area.

The remaining group of 12 had emerged from abandoned mines and were placed in temporary safe care, according to the North West Provincial Department of Social Development.

The department confirmed that the minors were escorted by social workers and a police unit to the Lebombo border, where the children were handed over to Mozambican authorities after receiving court approval to release them from their safe placement.

"We are deeply grateful to all the stakeholders who contributed to this process, ensuring the children received the necessary care and protection," said Basetsana Sussana Dantjie, member of the executive council for social development at the North West Provincial Legislature.

"We also extend our appreciation

to the Mozambican Consulate for their swift cooperation in facilitating the repatriation."

Illegal mining, often referred to as Zama Zama mining in South Africa, has been a persistent issue, with many foreign nationals, including miners from Mozambique, Zimbabwe, and Lesotho, flocking to South Africa's gold-rich areas in search of economic opportunity.

In a related incident, last month, more than 1,400 illegal miners were rescued and arrested after being trapped underground in a disused mine near Stilfontein in North West Province.

The event brought renewed attention to the dangers posed by illegal mining operations and the involvement of vulnerable individuals, including children.

Local authorities continue to monitor and address the challenges posed by illegal mining, as well as its associated risks, including child labour, exploitation, and unsafe working conditions.

The repatriation of these young miners is part of ongoing efforts by South African authorities to curb the growing issue of illegal mining and protect minors from dangerous work environments.

Manufacturers urged to certify systems for easy market access

By Correspondent Joseph Mwendapole

MANUFACTURERS, both large and small, have been advised to certify their quality management systems with the Tanzania Bureau of Standards (TBS) to enhance access to national and international markets.

Nasra Yusuf, manager of the Quality Management Systems Verification Unit at TBS made the call in Dar es Salaam yesterday during a news conference.

She emphasised that certifying their systems would boost producers' credibility, ensuring that their products meet global safety and quality standards.

"If producers, both large and small, certify their quality systems, it will build trust in various markets, both locally and internationally," Yusuf said.

She added: "The responsibility for quality verification lies with all producers, and this certification will help prevent losses by ensuring they follow proven quality systems."

Yusuf highlighted that TBS provides quality assurance services based on international standards, such as ISO 9001, for the private sector, industries, and other producers.

She also noted the importance of

certifying other key systems, such as food safety and environmental management systems.

"Food safety systems are crucial for food producers and distributors, while the environmental management system is important due to the environmental impact caused by many industries during production," Yusuf said.

She added that another key system to certify is workplace safety, which involves all companies, as workplace safety is critical.

The official further explained the benefits of certification, noting that manufacturers who have certified systems gain stability in their operations, ensuring consistent quality and trust from customers.

Certification also guarantees access to both domestic and international markets, where products will be recognized for their proven quality.

Yusuf urged manufacturers to take advantage of the opportunity to comply with the law by certifying their systems with TBS.

Habakuki Kalebo, the business and real estate registration manager at TBS, said that the bureau has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with 184 local councils across the country to register places that provide food services.

The partnership aims to bring

services closer to communities, enabling local businesses to register their premises and access other TBS services more conveniently.

Kalebo also highlighted TBS's efforts in monitoring the quality of products entering Tanzania, stating that the bureau regularly conducts inspections to ensure imported goods meet quality standards.

He warned consumers against purchasing products, particularly cosmetics that may contain harmful ingredients. TBS updates its website monthly with a list of banned products to help the public make informed purchasing decisions.

"Before buying products, we encourage people to check our website to see if they are allowed for sale in Tanzania," Kalebo said.



If producers, both large and small, certify their quality systems, it will build trust in various markets, both locally and internationally



Shinyanga regional commissioner Anamringi Macha opens leadership training for chairpersons of villages and localities in Shinyanga District earlier this week. He warned against the use of official seals and stamps for personal gain, blaming the practice for fuelling disputes relating to land ownership and use. Photo: Correspondent Marco Maduhu

Shortage of medicine, high prices undermine cancer care in Nigeria

ABUJA

THE National Institute for Cancer Research and Treatment (NICRAT) has expressed concern that delays in treatment approvals, shortages of essential drugs and affordability issues significantly undermine effectiveness of cancer care interventions in Nigeria.

In a presentation at the 8th Annual Conference of the Association of Nigerian Health Journalists (ANHEJ) in Abuja this week, Prof. Musa Gombe, Director of Clinical Services at NICRAT, highlighted the ongoing challenges.

The conference, themed 'Sector-Wide Approach Effectiveness in Addressing Poor Health Outcomes: The Role of the Media' brought attention to critical healthcare concerns affecting Nigerians, with cancer care at the forefront.

Prof. Gombe discussed how the Nigerian government's efforts to use NICRAT as a catalyst for improving cancer treatment access for low-income Nigerians are being hampered by several factors. A primary issue is the shortage of essential chemotherapy drugs, exacerbated by foreign exchange volatility that affects the availability of medications imported into the country.

"The volatility of the Naira and difficulties in importing essential drugs have significantly impacted the timely availability of chemotherapy medications," Prof. Gombe said, adding that these challenges continue to slow down the delivery of cancer care.

Despite the hurdles, NICRAT has taken steps to mitigate the impact

of drug shortages.

Prof. Gombe revealed that the agency has developed a six-month stock plan for chemotherapy drugs, aimed at ensuring a consistent supply of essential medications, even in the face of currency fluctuations.

"We are working closely with pharmaceutical companies and hospitals across the country to build a more resilient system," he said. "Our goal is to reduce treatment delays, improve the availability of vital medications, and ultimately make cancer treatment more affordable for patients."

In addition to addressing drug supply issues, Prof. Gombe stressed the importance of public awareness in the success of NICRAT's cancer treatment fund.

He acknowledged that many Nigerians are unaware of the fund's existence, which limits its reach and effectiveness.

To tackle this, NICRAT is planning a community outreach campaign to raise awareness about the cancer intervention fund. Prof. Gombe stated that the initiative will involve religious leaders, traditional leaders, and healthcare workers who will inform the public about the availability of financial support for cancer treatment.

"Public education is essential," he said. "We will work with hospitals, healthcare providers, and local leaders to ensure that the fund is more widely known and that patients are referred to the fund when they need it most."

Another significant challenge facing cancer treatment in Nigeria

is affordability. The high costs of treatment and medications remain a major barrier for many Nigerians, particularly those from low-income backgrounds.

Prof. Gombe highlighted that, even with the intervention of NICRAT, financial constraints continue to limit access to life-saving treatments for a large portion of the population.

"We must address not just the availability of treatment but also the financial accessibility for Nigerian families," Prof. Gombe remarked. "While we are working on strategies to reduce costs, the challenge remains substantial, and more needs to be done to make cancer care truly affordable for all Nigerians."

NICRAT is committed to addressing these issues, and although progress has been made, much work remains to ensure cancer treatment is accessible and affordable for all Nigerians, especially the underprivileged.

Through collaborations with healthcare providers and increased public education, the goal is to strengthen Nigeria's cancer care infrastructure and provide hope to those affected by cancer.

The role of the media in educating the public and holding the government and health organisations accountable was also underscored at the conference.

Prof. Gombe emphasised the need for the media to continue playing a critical role in advocating for better cancer care and in spreading awareness about the available resources and funding for cancer patients.



Date: 20/12/2024

VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

DAHW/GLRA Tanzania Office Administrator

Background information

German Leprosy and TB Relief Association (GLRA/DAHW (Deutsche Lepra- und Tuberkulosehilfe) is non-Government organization with East -Africa Region of DAHW/GLRA in Ethiopia and Headquarters in Germany, addressing health (especially on the aspects of leprosy, Tuberculosis and neglected tropical diseases (NTDs)), Inclusion, Humanitarian Aid and Research in an innovative way.

Presently DAHW/GLRA Tanzania is looking for highly motivated and experienced **Office Administrator** for DAHW/GLRA -Tanzania program office. DAHW/GLRA -Tanzania has long-standing history dated back to 1959 where it started with the support of leprosy patients. Today, it is a recognized expert in its key areas-leprosy, TB, NTD and addressing the medical and social consequences of these diseases and collaborating with Ministry of health, BMZ, EKFS, Novartis, and others.

Position: DAHW/GLRA Tanzania - Office Administrator

Duty Station: Dar es Salaam/Tanzania

Employment type: Fixed term for one year with possibility of extension

Salary: Negotiable

Purpose of the Job

The Office Administrator is responsible for ensuring the smooth and efficient operation of all our office operations. He/she will undertake administrative, clerical, and supportive tasks that are essential for maintaining office organization, managing office resources, and assisting with day-to-day operations. The Office Administrator serves as a central point of contact for office needs and supports multiple departments to optimize productivity and workflow.

MAIN RESPONSIBILITIES

- Responsible for all office filings - including managing staff files and records, vehicles and Office Management and Staff meeting files
- Responsible for handling petty cash management and ensuring a seamless and best practices for petty cash handling
- Handle confidential documents and maintain strict confidentiality
- Organize and take minutes during the Office Management and Staff Meetings
- Prepare and distribute meeting agendas, minutes, and follow-up tasks.
- Assist in preparing reports, presentations, and documents as required
- Ensure attendance of staff is tracked and managed
- Responsible for planning the arrival of any visitors and guests and to ensure that the visitors book is signed
- Ensure that all compliance requirements and reporting are met
- Maintain and organize office supplies, equipment and inventory
- Oversee the cleanliness and maintenance of the office space
- Coordinate with vendors and service providers for office supplies, equipment, and services
- Answer, screen, and forward incoming phone calls, emails, and other communication
- Schedule and coordinate meetings, appointments, and conference calls.
- Coordinate annual staff schedules and annual leave plans
- Manage the Fixed Assets and Office Property Guidelines
- Ensure that the DAHW handbook is being adhered to in all office operations
- Ensure the daily smooth running of office operations and maintenance
- Ensure all staff records are securely and confidentiality stored within their respective files
- Ensure that safeguarding is always protected for all staff within the office
- Ensure that the labour law act is followed and adhered to for all staff and within the NGO
- Prepare expense reports for office-related activities and purchases
- Assist with onboarding new employees (e.g., setting up workstations, coordinating training schedules)
- Maintain employee records and assist with HR-related tasks as needed
- Assist with travel arrangements and accommodation bookings for employees and visitors
- Maintain a professional and welcoming office environment for visitors and clients
- Serve as a point of contact with our Regional Office Administration from Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Property management

- Ensure the proper management of all procurement, receiving, issuing and of the GLRA Tanzania office
- Oversee all the procurement activities are done based on the DAHW and local handbook
- Follow the necessary contract and framework agreements for goods/service suppliers are in place.
- Ensures that Assets are well managed and placed in Asset Management System.
- Ensure proper recording and updating of asset register and ensure the appropriate coding and tags are placed on each item.
- Ensure management of the vehicle movement of the office.
- Participate in the disposal of old material.

Required Qualification and Experience

- Bachelor degree in Business Administration and/or Management
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills.
- Proficiency in Microsoft Office Suite (Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook).
- Basic knowledge of office equipment and technology (printers, phones, etc.).
- Ability to work independently and as part of a team.
- Strong attention to detail and problem-solving skills
- Proven ability of achieving organizational goals
- Previous work experience in national and/or international Non -governmental organizations is advantageous
- Professional demeanor and customer-oriented attitude.
- Discretion and confidentiality when dealing with sensitive information
- Basic knowledge on different accounting software and packages, such as Winpaccs would be an added advantage

How to apply

Interested and qualified applicants are required to submit their non-returnable application/ motivation letter with updated resume, credentials and supportive documents with 3 referees through: Email: shamez.sunderji@dahw-global.org by 3rd January, 2025.17:00hrs, stating the position you are applying in the subject line of the email.

Note:

Only shortlisted candidates will be contacted for the interviews.

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Setting retirement age at 50-55 unviable given youth job woes

YOUTH activist groups have yet again been heard proposing a lowering of the voluntary retirement age to 50 and setting mandatory retirement at 55 rather than 60 as at present for the public service.

They suggest or, rather, believe that this will create more employment opportunities for younger people, though the proper reason for age limit lies elsewhere. The key to the public service is responsibility and accountability, which diminishes after 60.

Even within the public service, retirement at 60 isn't altogether mandatory, as it depends on the work or responsibilities in question and whether there are credible, if not better, replacements.

The public service, shielded from fierce competition, could relatively easily and safely retire top level technicians or managerial professionals.

However, hardly any private organisations ever risk impairing their ability for effectiveness or efficiency that easily. The private sector is not under such compulsion; there, many just stay on the job.

It appears that this early retirement theme is a cherished preoccupation of national youth development policy conferences, whose organisers often appear to have set that same theme back in 2007 and at present.

Whether the government seriously needs to seriously consider the revised retirement proposal, presumably to ensure that young people can also benefit from the nation's resources, is a different matter. And what with the apparently declining performance of youths just out of school, the proposal's viability looks marginal.

The activist may have thought

that the proposal was fairly straightforward for the public sector, while being cautious enough to suggest that the private sector ought to be encouraged to set up a job placement system as used in the public sector - again, to ease competition for young people.

Youths long to see public sector job advertisements used for the private sector as well, whereas the issue isn't competition. A manager or director in the private sector is responsible only to himself or herself to see that work is done properly; competition doesn't really apply.

Ideally, anyone has the right to work in the public sector when conditions allow, but there are procedures for making this contest for jobs fair for all.

An additional reason is that hiring for the public service is different from doing so for the private sector, as in the latter the one hiring has to be cock-sure of ability, whereas it is easier to compromise on abilities to hire a relative for the public service.

If one thousand officials, not to say ten thousand, find it easy to engage in such sabotage, it is easy to see how compromised the public service would soon be.

In that sense, the idea of competition isn't firstly a welfare tenet but hinges on efficiency, in view of the fact that whether or not this or that youth has a job concerns relatives more than it does public agencies.

Were such a fellow to land a job somewhere, hardly anyone else would wish to know if there was competition or not.

Still, if the job the particular person lands is in the public sector, there will justifiably be fears if he or she was indeed the right person, while the issue could seldom arise for private firms.

Crossbreeding techniques usable after herders are properly settled

APPEALS to the National Ranching Co. (Narco) to intensify research and programmes for producing quality crossbred livestock to enhance the country's dairy and meat industry are not new.

There was a time the leadership expected that this would ably be conducted by public entities set up for the purpose.

However, as running such organisations proved particularly challenging, taking the role of trail blazing for improvement of types of breeds in meat or dairy is seen as more useful.

Yet the major impediments remain, in gross income potential and productivity.

Each cabinet minister handed that portfolio has to figure out what could be done to fast-track action on the public agenda in that direction.

This may well be in line with what the recently appointed sector minister had in mind while on a tour of the big-name Kongwa Ranch in Dodoma Region only the other day.

The minister found the time to discuss issues with veterans in the sector eager to hear what new directions she may have or whether conclusions have been reached as to what the sector is doing and ought to do, not to specifically speak of the particular ranch. The main themes the minister adopted were crossbreeding and improvements in fodder production.

Such improvements in the livestock sector are doubtless critical for ensuring a steady supply of quality meat. However, the issue is whether this is something the government is telling public officials in national ranches or this includes the wider livestock sub-sector.

Given the long years of interest in

meat supply to the Gulf zone and a burgeoning supermarket network in our own major cities, specialised breeding for meat can attract a range of investors, if only gradually. Yet the minister's concern wasn't just urban meat or exports.

The minister meanwhile pointedly recommended that Narco focus more on crossbreeding to enable local livestock keepers to compete better in international and regional meat markets.

True, livestock keepers may not know much about meat markets at the regional or international level, as that is the concern of cattle buyers in local markets.

It is the latter who know the size of the local market and who in, say, the Gulf is ready to buy Tanzanian meat - and from which source.

Ministerial leaders or regulators may wish to speak in broader terms on the meat and dairy issue than is actually the case. For example, increasing profits for the sector is a multifaceted issue, as profit is one thing for a local livestock keeper and a ranching firm, not to speak of local meat sellers and supermarket stockists in contrast to exporters.

The issue of quality cattle via crossbreeding might not be that relevant for local livestock herders, as their interest is survival of the cattle in the usually rudimentary conditions in which they migrate or graze.

Additionally, they hold cattle as viable security for unforeseen needs - including as ready sources of revenue to expedite access to pasture for their herds.

In a word, issues are so complex and intertwined here that it is sure to take immense thinking and strategising to steer the boat as appropriately and profitably as practicable.



By Correspondent Peter Nyanje

THE suspension of Mwananchi Communications Limited's (MCL) digital and online platforms for 30 days and the arrest of a number of journalists have stood among the hallmarks of the continued curtailing of freedom of expression by state organs in our country this year.

The year, now at its tail-end, has seen the country's landscape in terms of freedom of expression marked by a complex interplay of cases of both progressive reforms and disconcerting regression.

Freedom of expression and the right to information in the country are guaranteed by the Constitution, with a number of laws promulgated to further this guarantee.

However, several restrictive laws, including those in fact enacted to safeguard and enshrine freedom of expression and access to information, contained impediments to the same.

Laws like the Cybercrimes Act (2015), the Statistics Act (2015 (as amended in 2018)), and the Media Services Act (2016), have historically curtailed these freedoms.

Granted, under President Samia Suluhu Hassan's administration, there have been efforts to ease these restrictions. However, this has been done mostly thanks to goodwill and not directly or deliberately with a view to rectifying any or particular oppressive sections or provisions in the laws.

And to show that the said goodwill does not overrun, supersede or eclipse the country's laws, October 2024 saw the Tanzania Communications Regulatory Authority (TCRA) suspend MCL's online platforms for one month, citing the publication of content deemed harmful to the country's image. This action clearly underscores ongoing challenges to press freedom.

Incidents of concern

Meanwhile, October also saw the homepages of three leading Tanzanian newspapers focused on their own suspension over a video viewed as critical of the president, as concerns mounted over deteriorating press freedom ahead of elections.

TCRA suspended MCL's online platforms for publishing - on social media - prohibited content it said sought to ridicule and harm the country's reputation, prestige and status.

The one-month ban was part of a series of press freedom violations in the country, as human rights organisations warned of narrowing civic space ahead of late last month's (Nov) local elections for mainland Tanzania and next year's

No end in sight to hurdles to freedom of expression



presidential and parliamentary elections scheduled for late next year.

The Citizen's October 1 showed a woman apparently resembling the president flipping through television reports in which people complained about abductions and killings.

The content was published shortly after the murder of opposition politician Ali Mohamed Kibao, who was reported to have been forced off a bus destined for Tanga city from Dar es Salaam, beaten up - with his body then doused in acid.

Later the same month, TCRA accused privately owned YouTube-based Jambo TV of breaking the law in through the broadcasting of a piece criticism of two telecom companies.

The regulator took exception to the news channel's airing of a claim by fiery Tundu Lissu, vice chairperson of the opposition Chadema, that Tigo (now, Yas) had shared his location data with the government prior to a 2017 attempt to assassinate him.

There was also journalist Erick Kabendera's claim that Vodacom Tanzania had (illegally) shared his data with security personnel who arrested him in 2019.

Lissu's statement resulted from a British court which was told by former parent company Millicom that it had concerns "about a local politician's mobile phone data being passed to a government agency."

A former Tigo employee meanwhile claimed that he was dismissed after raising concerns about surveillance.

But TCRA found fault on Jambo TB reportage of the issue faulty and therefore actionable. The regulator instructed Jambo TV to come up with written defence and appear before its Content Committee to explain why legal action should not be taken against it for reporting the issue.

Kabendera had sued Vodacom, submitting that the company had

"facilitated" his arrest, but his case was dismissed in September. He intends to appeal.

Samia, who succeeded President John Magufuli after his death in mid-March 2021, initially lifted media bans and promised to improve conditions for the press.

However, her government has fallen short of fully overhauling restrictive laws, among them the 2020 online content regulations cited in the ban on MCL platforms and the case against Jambo TV.

In violation reminiscent of the anti-press tactics used under Magufuli, at least eight journalists have been arrested while covering opposition events in recent weeks.

The year witnessed several incidents that raised alarm over the state of freedom of expression in the country. In August, meaning a short two months before the MCL online outlets were suspended, opposition Chadema national Chairman Freeman Mbowe and Vice Chairman (Mainland) Tundu Lissu were arrested alongside some other officials and hundreds of supporters.

They were held ostensibly for holding a youth meeting in Mbeya Region banned by the authorities. Most were released on bail the following day, but their arrests have been criticised as attempts to intimidate the opposition ahead of then-upcoming and subsequent elections.

In September 2024, Chadema secretariat member Ali Mohamed Kibao was found murdered after being abducted. The opposition party alleged that he had been beaten and doused with acid, highlighting severe risks faced by political activists.

For some critics, the particular incident was the apex of abductions and arbitrary arrest targeting opposition politicians, activists and journalists - though some quarters vehemently denied this, suggesting that it a smear campaign meant to besmirch the image of government or state organs.

Arrests

Two MCL journalists were meanwhile arrested at different times in Dar es Salaam in August while on official duty. One was a videographer and the other a photographer.

Both were later released, but their work had been interrupted and there was no compensation for whatever damage or loss they had suffered in the process. The arrests understandably added to concerns about press freedom and the safety of media practitioners.

Also in August, journalists Ramadhan Khamis and Fadhil Kirundwa of Jambo TV were arrested while covering a Chadema event in the southern city of Mbeya. They were released the following day on condition that they desist from publishing footage on the youth rally concerned.

In general, the incident led to the arrest of more than 500 people, mainly Chadema members.

Come September, police briefly detained reporter Mariam Shaban of the privately owned East Africa TV alongside privately owned Nipashe newspaper reporter Jenifer Gilla and photographer (correspondent) Jumanne Juma.

Earlier, in June, police had arrested three journalists in Mwanza Region: Dinna Maningo, Constatine Mathias and Samweli Mwangi. Maningo was arrested in Tarime in Mara Region and later transferred to Mwanza for allegedly publishing documents of confidential investigations.

Maningo's arrest is linked to her reporting on the blog Dima Online on allegations against a former Simiyu regional commissioner, who has since been set free after a court found him not guilty.

More arrests

Two more journalists, Simiyu Press Club members Samweli Mwangi and Constatine Mathias, were arrested on the same month.

Police held Mwangi on June 16, later transferring him to Mwanza. While there, he gave a statement to the police and was set freed.

The Legal and Human Rights Centre issued a statement condemning Maningo's arrest, saying: "The detention of this journalist goes against the Constitution and the laws of this country as well as the principles of democracy and freedom of the press." LHRC called on police to choose between taking the journalist to court and releasing her.

Bashungwa directs NIDA to tackle IDs distribution challenges

By Adonis Byemelwa

TANZANIA'S Home Affairs Minister, Innocent Bashungwa (pictured right), on December 17th 2024 issued a stern directive to the National Identification Authority (NIDA), demanding the distribution of 1.2 million national IDs that have been sitting idle.

During a visit to assess NIDA's performance in Dar es Salaam on December 17, 2024, the minister set a strict two-month deadline, calling for immediate action to address inefficiencies that have plagued the agency.

"The cards are there; the people are waiting. You must trace these IDs and deliver them to their rightful owners. I want a full report in two months. No excuses," Bashungwa declared.

The move comes in response to mounting public frustration over delayed ID issuance, a critical service that many Tanzanians depend on for accessing government programs and essential services. In addition to accelerating the distribution process, Bashungwa ordered NIDA to replace defective or faded IDs at no cost to affected citizens.

This decision aims to remedy years of grievances stemming from poor-quality production. "People shouldn't suffer because of errors that are not their fault. If their ID is defective, replace it without charge," he emphasized, making it clear that service improvement is not negotiable.

Bashungwa also called for sweeping reforms within NIDA to address systemic inefficiencies. He criticized the bureaucracy and negligence that have stifled the agency's operations.

"Citizens deserve better. They should not have to endure delays caused by inefficiency or lack of accountability. Those responsible must face the consequences," he warned.

This crackdown on inefficiency is part of a broader government reform plan aimed at streamlining services. In December 2023, Tanzania announced the merger of NIDA and Rita, the Registration, Insolvency, and Trusteeship Agency.

The goal is to create a unified system for managing national identification and life event registrations. When announcing the merger, Planning and Investment Minister Prof. Kitila Mkumbo highlighted the importance of this integration in realizing President Samia Suluhu Hassan's vision.



"We are working toward a single identification system for all Tanzanians. However, achieving this requires these institutions to first clean up their internal inefficiencies," Prof. Mkumbo stated.

While the merger is seen as a step in the right direction, NIDA's operational challenges remain a significant hurdle. Staff shortages, limited resources, and outdated systems have long hindered the agency's effectiveness.

An employee in Kahama, speaking anonymously, described the strain of serving a large population with minimal staff. "There are only a few of us handling thousands of applications. The workload is overwhelming, and we don't have the resources we need to cope," the employee said.

The issue of unequal benefits between NIDA and Rita's staff has also caused friction. According to another NIDA employee, Rita staff receive monthly allowances of up to Sh 700,000, while their Nida counterparts receive far less, and even that is inconsistent. "We're doing equally important work, but we're treated

like we don't matter. It's demoralizing," the employee lamented.

Beyond staffing and allowances, other challenges persist, including delayed promotions and overly centralized systems that leave little room for flexibility. "Mistakes in the system can cost you your job. The pressure is immense.

We work extra hours, even weekends, just to clear backlogs, but there's no appreciation or compensation," said another staff member. These issues have not only lowered morale among employees but also contributed to the delays and errors that frustrate Tanzanians relying on NIDA's services.

These problems are not new. Since its establishment in 2012, NIDA has struggled with funding shortages, poor planning, and logistical hurdles. Observers have repeatedly criticized the agency's lack of preparedness in rolling out the national ID program.

In the early years, registration efforts were hampered by inadequate staff training and a lack of public awareness campaigns. "The government underestimated the complex-

ity of this task. They didn't have a solid plan in place," noted one analyst.

For citizens, the consequences have been significant. Delays in ID issuance and inaccuracies in personal details have left many frustrated. One resident of Dar es Salaam shared their experience: "I applied for my ID over a year ago, and when it finally arrived, my name was misspelled. Now I have to start the process all over again. It's exhausting."

Despite these challenges, some progress has been made. Under President Samia Suluhu Hassan's administration, efforts to improve Nida's performance have intensified.

From 2021 to January 2024, NIDA registered over 2.4 million citizens, bringing the total number of registered individuals to nearly 24.5 million.

During this time, over 2 million National Identification Numbers (NINs) were issued, and significant investments were made to support ID production.

NIDA spokesperson Geoffrey Tengeneza highlighted the agency's achievements, attributing them to increased

government support.

"The government allocated 51.5bn/- for procuring blank ID cards, allowing us to produce over 12.5m/- IDs in just a few months. We've distributed more than 10 million so far, and we're on track to deliver the remaining cards by March 2024,"

Tengeneza explained. He added that the agency is committed to ensuring every registered citizen receives their ID without further delay.

However, critics argue that these efforts, while commendable, do not address the root causes of NIDA's inefficiencies. Chronic underfunding, inadequate staffing, and poor coordination with other agencies continue to hinder progress.

Some have called for a more holistic approach to reform. "Throwing money at the problem isn't enough. The government needs to address systemic issues, including staff training and inter-agency collaboration," said one observer.

The lack of coordination between NIDA and other government institutions, such as the National Electoral Commission (NEC), has also been a point of contention.

Both entities have overlapping mandates but often operate in silos, leading to duplication of efforts and resource wastage. "Merging their functions under one roof would make more sense. It would eliminate redundancies and ensure better use of resources," suggested an analyst.

Amid these challenges, Bashungwa's directive has injected a sense of urgency into NIDA's operations. By setting clear deadlines and demanding accountability, the minister aims to restore public trust in the agency. "This isn't just about meeting targets; it's about rebuilding confidence in our public institutions. Citizens need to know that their government is working for them," he said.

For many Tanzanians, the stakes are high. A functional national ID system is not just a convenience; it's a lifeline for accessing social services, opening bank accounts, and participating in elections.

As Bashungwa pointed out, "A national ID is more than a piece of plastic; it's a gateway to opportunities. Every Tanzanian has a right to this gateway."

The coming months will undoubtedly be a decisive period for NIDA, as it faces the challenge of implementing necessary reforms within the stipulated deadline set by Minister Bashungwa. What is evident, however, is that the minister's message has found resonance not only within Nida but also among the broader public, intensifying the pressure for change.

The clock is ticking, and the demand for tangible progress is greater than ever. Several countries provide notable examples of institutions like NIDA working collaboratively with regional and international counterparts without significant obstacles.

In Rwanda, for instance, the Rwanda Information Technology Agency (RITA) and local government institutions have successfully coordinated efforts to enhance digital service delivery, improve national ID systems, and ensure efficient public service delivery.

Similarly, Kenya's National Registration Bureau (NRB) and the Kenyan ICT Authority have demonstrated seamless collaboration in modernizing the country's identification systems, contributing to significant progress in both citizen engagement and governance.

These examples highlight the benefits of cooperation and streamlined processes, suggesting that with strong leadership and focused effort, NIDA can overcome its challenges and meet its reform goals.

Malaria: Tanzania's priority public health challenge requiring joint action to eradicate

By Guardian Correspondent

MALARIA remains one of the significant public health challenges in mainland Tanzania, contributing to widespread illness and death, particularly among children under five and pregnant women.

The disease accounts for nearly one-third of outpatient hospital visits, highlighting its substantial impact on public health and the economy.

Despite advances in prevention strategies—such as insecticide-treated nets and indoor residual spraying—timely diagnosis and treatment are critical in reducing the burden of the disease.

In an effort to raise awareness about early diagnosis and treatment, a malaria campaign was held on December 14, 2024, at Kairuki Hospital. The event, supported by Chinese stakeholders, offered health education, free tests, and treatment using Artemisinin-based combination therapies (ACTs).

The initiative demonstrated social responsibility and underscored the Chinese antimalarial team's commitment to supporting vulnerable groups, particularly the poor.

Accurate testing is crucial. Dr. Ramadhan Magero, Kairuki Hospital's general optician, emphasized that accurate and accessible testing is the cornerstone of effective malaria management.

He noted that out of 30 patients visiting the hospital daily, four to five are diagnosed with malaria. On a larger scale, if the hospital sees about 400 patients per day, 40 to 50 are screened for malaria, with around 10 patients admitted



for severe cases.

"Malaria eradication in the country is still a 50/50 situation," Dr. Magero explained. "We cannot conclusively say that malaria cases are decreasing. Although awareness about malaria symptoms has increased and more people seek early screening, the number of cases remains consistent."

Treatment guidelines and compliance

Dr Brenda Kinza from Kairuki

Hospital highlighted that Tanzania follows standard treatment guidelines issued by the Ministry of Health. The effectiveness of treatment often depends on the level of parasite load in a patient. She stressed the importance of completing the prescribed dosage, noting that many patients stop taking medication prematurely, which undermines treatment effectiveness.

Voices from the community Fatuma Juma, a resident of Bag-

amoyo in Coast Region, shared her personal experience with malaria. "This year alone, I was diagnosed with malaria twice. The first time, I took medication, but during my second diagnosis, I couldn't afford the treatment.

Today, I'm grateful to receive free medication. Next time I am diagnosed, I'll make sure to use the full course. I encourage other stakeholders to continue offering free medical care to support the government's goal of achieving

zero malaria," she said.

An anonymous doctor at the event underscored the need for public understanding of malaria's seriousness. "Self-prescription is a major issue contributing to the persistence of malaria. People should always seek proper diagnosis before taking medication."

National goals Despite Tanzania's commitment to reducing malaria infection rates from 7.5 percent in 2017 to below 3.5 percent by 2025 and

ultimately eliminating the disease by 2030, resource constraints pose significant challenges to implementing key malaria interventions.

The government's continued investment in healthcare services and education is commendable, but sustained efforts are necessary.

Stakeholders' contribution towards malaria eradication

China's role in malaria treatment is noteworthy. In the early 1970s, Chinese scientists discovered artemisinin, a highly effective and low-toxicity antimalarial drug derived from *Artemisia annua* L.

The discovery, inspired by traditional Chinese medicine, was hailed by the World Health Organization (WHO) as the "best hope for malaria treatment," revolutionizing global malaria management.

In 2021, after a 70-year effort that reduced annual malaria cases from 30 million in the 1940s to zero, China was certified malaria-free by WHO.

The collaboration between Tanzania and Chinese stakeholders in the fight against malaria highlights the importance of international cooperation in tackling public health challenges.

Through continued education, testing, and effective treatment strategies, the goal of eradicating malaria in Tanzania remains achievable.

During this year's World Malaria Day, WHO Regional Director for Africa, Dr. Matshidiso Moeti said the selected theme—"Accelerating the fight against malaria for a more equitable world" highlights the need to ensure continuous and equitable delivery of malaria services to all who need them despite funding constraints, ensuring adequate coverage of the most vulnerable and at-risk populations with effective interventions.

Afghan women vow to resist Taliban oppression until freedom is achieved

By Special Correspondent

THREE years after the Taliban regained control of Afghanistan, women continue to face oppressive laws and systemic marginalization.

The Taliban have imposed draconian rules: women must cover their entire body from head to toe, they must not raise their voices in public, they must not pray or read the Koran aloud to each other. They have long been banned from taking up jobs outside the home or have education

Despite this, Afghan women are determined to resist. "We will continue our protests and struggles until we achieve freedom," defiantly declares Farzana, a member of the Afghan Women Movement.

Over the past 20 years, women in Afghanistan had achieved higher education and professional skills, but are now under greater threat from the Taliban. They have suddenly been marginalized by Taliban rule.

"During the first two years," says Farzana, "we took to the streets to protest for our rights. Unfortunately, during these demonstrations, the Taliban arrested the protesting women, imprisoned and punished them, and there was no one to defend these women."

Women could no longer tolerate this situation and took to the streets to demand their rights, but lately, despite the introduction of new and strict laws by the Ministry for the Propagation of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice of the Taliban, which even banned women's voices, no street protests have been seen. It seems that silence has also plagued Afghan women.

Based on my interviews with female prisoners after their release, they were even whipped naked, raped, and their family members mysteriously murdered.

"We are secretly active in protest groups," Farzana explains. "We are not allowed to roam the streets. We have been sharing our protests with the media individually from home for some time now. The Taliban cannot silence our voices. We will continue our protests and struggles until we reach freedom."

Malalai, another female protester, says: "The Taliban even send spies to our homes under various pretexts, with masked faces, claiming they are people



Though silenced in public, Afghan women continue their resistance in secret

on routine government duties. They have our photos and videos with them, and they identify and arrest us."

Malalai also says that the Taliban have installed cameras on top of every high building, supposedly for security cameras, but their real purpose is to monitor women. Recently, several women have been unexpectedly arrested and imprisoned.

"The Taliban are afraid of us because we expose the oppression on the people, women, and ethnic minorities", says Malalai adding: "The Taliban have imposed pressure

and strict rules on women. Women cannot even go on the streets without a Mahram - a male family member. We are interrogated if a few of us are seen standing together on the streets. They check our cell phones and punish us".

"The Taliban have a strangle-choke on us. They are shamelessly violating our human rights, the rights of ethnic minorities and that of our families in full view of the United Nations and other countries.

"We women will continue our struggle despite the pressures and oppression of a

world-known terrorist group. We will act on our slogans of bread-work-freedom".

Sabera, another female protester, highlights the Taliban's tactics of intimidation and control. "Taliban's intelligence agents are arresting women who are against them. Through phone calls and photos that they gather from the demonstrations, they identify the women protesters during house-to-house searches. Also, they forcibly collect copies of people's identity cards and passports to identify the women protesters - their declared opponents."

Although we protested for our rights, many women protesters, both single and married, are currently imprisoned by the Taliban and are facing severe punishment, with no one following up on their situation.

Currently, due to many challenges, we are holding protests in secret locations with our faces covered, and then we must flee to another country.

The Taliban commit a lot more atrocities and oppression in the distant provinces further away from the cities. They forcibly tax the people

twice their annual income.

If people do not obey the dictate of the Taliban, they forcibly enter their homes and snatch away their daughters. They also rape their wives and daughters and force them to move out of their residential areas.

"We can no longer tolerate this oppression. We will continue our fight," says Sabera.

Those interviewed say the women in Afghanistan are fighting bravely against the tyranny and harsh laws of the Taliban, but they do not have any support.

"In spite of poverty and unemployment, we continue our journey at our own expense," says Sabera.

The women are appealing to the United Nations and human rights organizations to stop supporting and to not recognize the Taliban regime.

"We are very disappointed that our voices do not reach the world from this dark pit," says Sabera.

The European Union is shocked at the laws passed by the Taliban that limits women's freedom of speech and, essentially restricts women's life to within the house.

"Possible recognition would require that the Taliban comply in all respects with both its obligations towards the citizens of Afghanistan and Afghanistan's international obligations," an European Council press release states.

The EU continues to support Afghan women and girls and all those threatened by the Taliban in Afghanistan.

The Taliban, on the other hand, also refuse to cooperate with the UN-supported UNAMA aid operation

Reconciling tradition and innovation: Japan's path to global AI leadership

By Chiharu Nakayama

JAPAN'S journey towards becoming a global leader in artificial intelligence (AI) presents a fascinating case study in balancing tradition with innovation. The nation's push into AI leadership through initiatives like Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI)'s GENIAC project demonstrates a strong governmental commitment to harnessing generative AI for economic growth and societal advancement.

However, insights from the AI Governance Alliance Roundtable held in Japan on 17 September reveal a complex landscape where cultural dynamics significantly influence the pace and nature of technological adoption. This tension between preserving cultural values and embracing disruptive innovation defines Japan's unique path in the global AI race.

Cultural resistance amid economic need

Japan's cautious approach to AI adoption stems from a broader cultural norm: an aversion to failure and risk. While the nation ranks third globally in R&D spending according to UNESCO, it places 47th in entrepreneurial intentions, as highlighted by the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor. This disparity points to a deeper issue: a reluctance to embrace disruptive innovation. Similarly, the IMD World Digital Competitiveness Ranking 2023 underscores the disparity between Japan's robust technological infrastructure and its slower digital transformation. Despite possessing world-class technology, many organizations lag in adopting digital solutions, often due to a corporate culture that prioritizes consensus and risk aversion over agility.

Stanford research further reveals how deeply embedded social norms, particularly those regarding failure and risk-taking, have historically constrained innovation in Japanese organizations. According to the study, these



Technology with a human focus, Japanese AI

cultural tendencies emphasize perfectionism and consensus in corporate decision-making, which, while ensuring high quality standards, can slow the adoption of disruptive technologies in an environment where rapid innovation is increasingly crucial.

"METI's vision for AI development in Japan centres on what we call Society 5.0 - where technological innovation harmoniously advances alongside societal values," says Takuya Watanabe, Director-General, Commerce and Information Policy Bureau, Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI). "Through our GENIAC project, we're creating a framework that addresses both economic growth and societal transformation. We recognize that Japanese businesses have traditionally been risk-averse, but our current economic context demands bold steps. That's why we've established the J-Startup

programme and AI implementation guidelines that provide clear pathways for companies to adopt AI technologies while maintaining our high standards for quality and ethics."

Ethical standards as competitive edge

What might initially appear as barriers - Japan's meticulous attention to precision and stringent ethical standards - can instead serve as competitive advantages. In AI, where accuracy and public trust are paramount, these qualities distinguish Japanese innovations. Japan's reputation for ethical rigour is becoming an asset in fields like healthcare and autonomous systems, where safety and trust are critical. The country's commitment to building AI systems that prioritize transparency, fairness and accountability aligns well with emerging global standards on AI governance.

"At Hitachi, our 110-year in-

tellectual assets in manufacturing and technology give us a unique perspective on AI integration," explains Shigetoshi Sameshima, CTO, Digital Systems and Services Division, Hitachi. "We're convinced that our traditional strengths in operational technology (OT) combined with AI capabilities create what we call 'Practical AI' - solutions that are both innovative and immediately applicable to real-world challenges. Our collaborative creation approach has shown that Japanese precision and ethical standards aren't hindrances to AI advancement; they're accelerators."

Strategic integration of AI in business

Japanese businesses are increasingly finding innovative ways to integrate AI while honouring traditional practices, particularly in sectors where precision and reliability are paramount. NEC exemplifies

this trend through their AI solutions for manufacturing, which demonstrates an approach to merging traditional craftsmanship with modern technology. Their AI offering helps manufacturing companies enhance quality inspection processes while preserving the expertise of skilled workers.

By providing technology that can capture and utilize the knowledge of experienced inspectors, NEC's solution shows how Japanese technology providers are developing approaches that aim to augment rather than replace human expertise in manufacturing. This initiative exemplifies how Japanese companies can support the preservation of manufacturing excellence, while enabling technological innovation.

Mr. Masahiro Ide, Managing Director, Consulting Services Division, NEC Corporation, says: "Japan has many highly specialized and outstanding engineers. Properly inheriting their skills forms the foundation for developing Japan's industrial strength. AI, if anything, would become an indispensable presence in Japanese society as a storyteller, passing down these disappearing specialized skills to future generations."

The media's critical role in cultural transformation

Japan's media plays a pivotal role in reframing societal attitudes toward failure and risk. Recent coverage of technological initiatives, such as the JAXA H3 rocket launch, underscores this shift. "The media must help society distinguish between 'failure' and

'controlled risk management,'" says Kumiko Seto, Forbes JAPAN Contributing Editor. "The H3 rocket's abortive launch wasn't a failure, but a success of fail-safe mechanisms. AI development requires a similar mindset, where setbacks are reframed as learning opportunities."

Media coverage that highlights the iterative nature of technological development can help demystify AI for the public, fostering a more supportive environment for experimentation and innovation. By showcasing stories of calculated risks leading to long-term success, the media can inspire a cultural shift toward embracing the uncertainty that comes with innovation.

Japan as a leader in ethical and innovative AI use

As Japan carves its niche in the global AI landscape, its integration of ethical considerations with technological progress offers a model for responsible AI development. This dual focus ensures that AI is not only innovative, but also aligned with societal values, a crucial factor in gaining public trust.

Japan's approach provides valuable lessons for other nations navigating the complexities of AI adoption. By transforming cultural challenges into strategic strengths, Japan is building a framework for innovation that honours human values. Success in this endeavour will hinge on continued collaboration between government, industry and media to reshape cultural narratives and drive sustainable progress.

By Special Correspondent

SINCE 2019, Nile Breweries and the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) have joined forces in a transformative campaign to restore River Rwizi, a vital water source and landmark in Mbarara city, Uganda.

Once severely degraded by human activity, the river is now on the path to recovery thanks to extensive restoration efforts aimed at stabilising its ecosystem and securing its future for local communities.

The Impact of Human Activity on River Rwizi

River Rwizi's environmental decline resulted from human interference, including the clearing of vegetation along its banks and the conversion of buffer zones into farmland.

These actions left the river exposed to soil erosion, increased run-off, and waste deposition, leading to rising water levels, eroding riverbanks, and frequent flooding. These changes disrupted the livelihoods of thousands who rely on the river for water, agriculture, and industry.

Restoration Efforts and Progress

WWF's restoration programme has focused on replanting trees and promoting sustainable land management. Indigenous species like bamboo, mahogany, and musambya, alongside exotic trees like grevillea robusta and muvule, have been planted to stabilise the riverbanks and reduce erosion. Immaculate Kobugabe, WWF's Rwizi River Project Manager, highlighted efforts such as trench digging and grass planting to reinforce the banks and curb soil loss.

In the nearby Kakigaani region, Rwam-



From raging crisis to conservation: The campaign reviving Uganda's River Rwizi

para district, nine water-harvesting tanks—each with a 10,000-litre capacity—have been installed, providing over 1,000 households with clean, easily accessible water, thereby reducing pressure on the river and limiting harmful run-off.

Empowering Communities through Sustainable Practices

To further ease the burden on River Rwizi, WWF and Nile Breweries have launched a revolving fund to support local communi-

ties in adopting alternative livelihoods. Farmers who once depended on wetland farming have shifted to activities like sheep and goat rearing, beekeeping, and weaving. These sustainable practices have significantly reduced wetland encroachment, protecting vital ecosystems linked to the river.

Addressing Environmental and Economic Challenges

The restoration of River Rwizi

has not only tackled environmental issues but also addressed critical socio-economic challenges. In 2022, severe flooding caused by excessive run-off submerged the National Water and Sewerage Corporation pump house in Ruharo, rendering water unusable for both domestic and industrial purposes. Nile Breweries, which relies on the river for its water supply, was similarly impacted, forcing the company to source more expensive water from alter-

native suppliers.

However, with restoration efforts now in full swing, the river's water quality and quantity have significantly improved. Nile Breweries Managing Director, Adu Rando, praised the progress during the 2024 World Environment Day commemoration, stating, "We have restored the environment around River Rwizi by planting trees along 27 kilometres. This restoration will lead to substantial improvements in water security

and quality."

The Role of Tree Planting

Tree planting has been a key part of the restoration strategy, particularly the emphasis on bamboo. Bamboo's deep roots prevent soil erosion and stabilise the riverbanks, reducing sedimentation in the water. As of 2024, the restoration programme has expanded tree coverage to 18 hectares, underscoring its effectiveness in revitalising the river's ecosystem.

A Broader Vision for Sustainability

River Rwizi stretches across 13 districts in southwestern Uganda, covering an area of 8,000 square kilometres along its 270-kilometre length. By 2025, WWF and Nile Breweries aim to invest over 2 billion Ugandan shillings in its restoration. The collaborative approach—combining environmental conservation, community empowerment, and sustainable development—has not only revitalised the river but also improved the quality of life for the thousands of people who depend on it.

A Sustainable Future

The partnership between WWF and Nile Breweries exemplifies the power of collective action in addressing environmental challenges. Through the restoration of River Rwizi, they are safeguarding a crucial resource for future generations and setting a benchmark for sustainable practices in both environmental conservation and community development.

CRJE launches CSR report as govt appreciates its relations with China



By Guardian Correspondent

THE government has appreciated its sold relations with China, saying the friendship between Dodoma and Beijing will continue to last for a long

time. This was said on Monday evening in Dar es Salaam by the Minister for Constitutional and Legal Affairs Dr Damas Ndumbaro at the launch of China Railway Jinchang Engineering Company (CRJE) Corporate Social Responsibility report.

The event attracted various guests including, John Mnali, the Director of Investment Promotion at Tanzania Investment Centre (TIC), the Chairman of Mwalimu Nyerere Foundation Joseph Butiku and the Chinese ambassador to Tanzania Chen Mingjian.

Speaking on behalf of Minister Ndumbaro, a senior official in the same ministry identified as Shoma Philip Ndono, said CRJE has deepened the friendship between China and Tanzania.

"We appreciate it and wish our friendship to continue to last for a long time to come in the future," said Minister Ndumbaro.

He said the Chinese construction company has been in Tanzania for the past 55 years and has done a good job for the social welfare of Tanzanians.

"They brought us more than 200 projects and they made great contributions to the environment and safety, Tanzania employment as well as social responsibility implementation" he said.

Speaking at the sideline of the event, Director of Investment Promotion at TIC John Mnali thanked the Chinese firm for launching the report urging it to go beyond and support challenges facing the community.

He said the company has been supporting the community in education, infrastructure and environ-

ment protection which plays a crucial contribution to the sustainable development goals of Tanzania.

Mnali said transparency and accountability are the cornerstone of the Chinese company urging others to emulate the example shown.

He urged the company to continue working closely with the government and other institutions for the benefits of peoples in two countries.

He assured that the government of Tanzania will make sure that investors are conducting their activities under a conducive environment.

Chinese Ambassador to Tanzania, Chen mingjian said: "On behalf of embassy of China in Tanzania, I would like to express our sincere and warm congratulation and appreciation to CRJE for the contribution to social responsibility."

The Envoy further said: "CRJE has established a solid foundation in Tanzania for 55 years. Founded in 1969, it was involved in the construction of the great Tazara railway, the largest ever complete project with China grants. As the major force to Tazara railway construction, CRJE, together with the people of Tanzania and Zambia, finished the construction of this great project, paving a road of immortal Sino-Tanzania friendship."

The Ambassador pointed out that from the Nyerere bridge, new parliamentary debating chamber,

Dodoma convention centre, to the University of Dodoma campus, the Nyerere Foundation Square and Nyerere Leadership School, the CRJE has completed over 3 million square meters, 200 major projects in Tanzania.

"CRJE impressive accomplishments in justice development, sports and people's health, contribution to education, tourism, infrastructure, agriculture, public-well, environment governance in Tanzania have always followed high standards. The company has been awarded three time best foreign contractor in Tanzania, and three times the Luban award-the Chinese Oscar award for quality in construction," she said.

She insisted: "At the same time, like CRJE, other Chinese companies in Tanzania have consistently adhered to national policies, embraced a spirit of win-win cooperation, and actively fulfilled its corporate social responsibility as well as forged deep friendships with Tanzania communities."

CRJE Chairman Jiang Yuntao said that the release of their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Report is a true significant milestone in their company's development and a reflection of commitment to working hand in hand with Tanzanian society.

"As a Chinese engineering enterprise deeply rooted in Tanzania,

CRJE has always believe the philosophy of 'building excellent projects and setting a benchmark in social responsibility'. Since our establishment, we have actively participated in Tanzania's economic development. Among our many projects, the most significant is our involvement in constructing the TAZARA Railway. This railway is not only a symbol of China-Tanzania friendship but also a bridge connecting the hearts and dreams of our two peoples," the CRJE Chairman said.

Yuntao added: "Over the years, we have committed ourselves not only to infrastructure construction but also investments, a total investment of over 260 million USD such as Johari Rotana we are here today, Buguruni Business Park, Noble Victoria Center, and Noble Peninsula Center to be opened next year. Besides through technical training, community development, and environmental protection, we have actively fulfilled our corporate social responsibilities. We deeply understand that a company's growth is inseparable from the support and trust of the local community. This is why we always align our mission with Tanzania's socio-economic development needs."

He noted: "Today's CSR report is not just a reflection of the work we have done in the past but also a promise to continue contributing to Tanzania's growth. We are committed to working closely with the Tanzanian government, private sector, and local communities to support national development and improve the quality of life for its people."

Senior advocate decries defendant's remarks in \$195m suit

By Guardian Correspondent

HIGH Court senior advocate Michael Ngalo has said it is the court which has power to declare whether a filed case has no merit or not.

Speaking in a telephone Dar es Salaam yesterday, Ngalo said the slamming of a suit and court proceedings before it was concluded was in the eyes of the law uncalled for.

He said this in relation to the \$195-million suit Pula Group and Pula Graphite Partners filed against Patrice Mostepe, chair of African Rainbow Minerals (ARM), and his associate companies for violating

a non-compete clause in an agreement signed by the two companies.

While reacting to Motsepe's remarks he made, Pula Graphite Chairperson and former US Ambassador to Tanzania Charles Stith said the slamming of the main suit and court proceedings by African Rainbow Minerals (ARM) Chairperson Patrice Motsepe was unacceptable.

"I was stunned that Patrice would attack the suit and court proceedings in this derogatory manner. That he would say, or even imply, that the main suit filed by Pula on this case 'is rubbish and absurd' is unbelievable. At the least, he owes

an apology."

"Motsepe was quoted when he was at the Annual General Meeting (AGM) of their company African Rainbow Minerals (ARM), which is a public entity and he should on financial inquiries balance his facts against the company," Ngalo said.

He said it was the court that had power to decide upon any application, court proceeding and hearing and in the final analysis might come up with its own decision to drop or award the aggrieved party, and not otherwise.

ARM recently concluded its annual meeting, and ARM Chairper-

son Patrice Motsepe launched a stunning attack on the contents of the case. On every objection to the suit filed by Pula Graphite Partners, a Tanzanian company, the High Court (Commercial Division) has ruled in favour of Pula.

When asked by a shareholder about the suit and ruling, Motsepe called them "rubbish" and "absurd". However, the High Court (Commercial Division) will give a ruling on further appeals in February next year.

Pula Group and Pula Graphite Partners filed a \$195-million suit against Motsepe and his associate companies last year for violating a

non-compete clause in agreement signed by the two companies.

An online Sunday Times (Business Times) of December 8 authored by Senior Reporter Dineo Faku carries a story with the headline "Tanzania case 'absolutely rubbish', says Motsepe". Billionaire Patrice Motsepe is the Chairperson of ARM.

He has lambasted a Tanzanian firm, Pula Graphite Partners, for instituting a \$195m (R3.4bn) lawsuit against his company in Tanzania, dismissing it as baseless and nonsensical.

Pula Graphite, owned by former US ambassador to Tanzania

Charles Stith lodged the suit after accusing ARM and its sister company African Rainbow Capital Holdings (ARCH) of breaching a confidentiality agreement regarding a proposed joint venture to develop a graphite mine in the east of the country.

The lawsuit involves two giant companies in graphite mining, Pula Plc and African Rainbow Minerals Limited.

Pula Graphite Partners and their parent company, Pula Group LLC, earlier this year filed a \$195 million lawsuit against ARM and its six affiliates in the High Court of Tanzania (Commercial Division).

'Like you, I fear the demise of the elephants'

By Ashoka Mukpo

On June 13, 1959, the Watha hunter Galogalo Kafonde surrendered himself to colonial Kenya's "Field Force," Africa's first militarized anti-poaching unit. For centuries, the ethnic Watha had hunted elephants. Killing one was a rite of passage; unlike their neighbors, who raised and kept cows, the Watha lived off game meat and wore elephant skins. Ivory wasn't of much use to them, but it could be bartered for other goods with Arab traders in nearby Mombasa.

As the ivory trade picked up steam in the 17th century, fueled by the growth of European consumer markets, the Watha's reputation grew. They were among the best elephant trackers in East Africa, known as the "people of the long bow" for their skilled use of poisoned arrows.

But European hunters came to view the Watha and other Indigenous people as competition. In 1897, as Britain set its sights on a permanent Kenyan colony, it banned unauthorized "native" hunting. At the stroke of a pen, the core of the Watha's way of life became illegal.

In 1948, the British created Tsavo National Park, one of the first in Kenya. But its eastern flank was a Watha hunting ground. Richard Sheldrick, one of the 20th century's most prominent conservation icons, was tasked with stamping it out. Kafonde, the Watha's most famed hunter, was his prime target.

In his history of the ivory trade, the writer Keith Somerville recounts Kafonde's statement upon his arrest.

"The elephants are finished," he said. "Rich people wanting more and more are responsible. Like you, I fear the demise of the elephants, for they are at the core of our culture and our daily lives."

Kafonde's arrest was the culmination of a years-long campaign by the Field Force, which pioneered aggressive tactics that still define anti-poaching operations today. Tsavo, now split into east and west sections, was one of a large number of protected areas established in the latter decades of colonial rule. To the south, Albert National Park – which later became the Democratic Republic of Congo's Virunga and Rwanda's Volcanos national parks – was designated by the Belgians in 1925.

A year later came Kruger National Park in South Africa, named for former Transvaal president (and avid lion hunter) Paul Kruger. After World War 2, a wave of other parks followed, including Tsavo, Victoria Falls in what was then Rhodesia (today Zimbabwe), Murchison Falls in Uganda, and so on.

These new parks weren't the first protected areas on the continent. The rulers of Benin's Dahomey Empire governed sacred forests, where hunting was restricted out of respect for spirits said to dwell within them. Uganda's Rwenzori mountain peaks were considered off-limits by the Bakonzo, who believed they were the home of fertility gods. And beginning in the late 19th century, forest reserves were set up by colonial governments in West, Central and Southern Africa to regulate timber extraction.



Savannah elephant in Uganda's Queen Elizabeth National Park.

But Tsavo and the others were conceived as a solution to a problem the colonists themselves had created: the wholesale massacre of the continent's big game. Its elephants, in particular, had been nearly annihilated by the turn of the 20th century.

At first, European traders bought ivory from Africans like the Watha. But with their breech-loading rifles, they quickly became the most prolific elephant killers the continent had ever seen. Between 1850 and 1914, hunters killed an estimated 40,000 elephants a year to feed ivory markets in Europe and the United States. In 1914, 4,000 were shot for the U.S. billiard ball industry alone.

Concerned by dwindling populations of elephants and other species like lions, profes-

sional hunters in the colonies, along with their allies in a growing conservation movement back home, called for some of the continent's wildlife habitats to be protected. Modeled after Yellowstone in the U.S., national parks and other protected areas sometimes allowed limited hunting, but under a permitting system that typically excluded the Africans who lived nearby or had been evicted to make way for them.

Colonial governments drew revenue from ivory and timber sales, and one of the core initial objectives in protecting nature was to control its economic value, writes Somerville.

But ownership of, and access to, that value was contested from the start. The colonization of Africa proved devastating for the environment, with forests

logged bare or converted into plantations and mines. Vast herds of elephants were wiped out – in 200 years, for example, all 25,000 that had once roamed South Africa's Cape Colony were gone.

Africans themselves reaped few benefits from this destruction. And as colonial authorities responded to a growing clamor to protect what remained, many Indigenous people found themselves pushed aside by the new rules imposed on land they had inhabited for generations.

Watha life was never the same after the Field Force's campaign in what is today Tsavo East National Park. Barred from hunting, they fell into poverty. Tsavo was hit by a wave of poaching in the 2010s, and some Watha participated in the killing, but today, the biggest threat to the

park's elephants isn't poisoned arrows: it's greenhouse gas emissions from wealthy countries.

Once renowned as fierce hunters who lived in a symbiotic relationship with Tsavo's ecosystem, now the Watha battle agribusiness investors on the park's fringes and say they've been forgotten by Kenyan society.

To protect and conserve

The colonial origins of national parks aside, after independence Africa's new leaders embraced legal protections for wildlife and ecosystems. In his famous "Arusha Manifesto" speech in 1961, Tanzania's Julius Nyerere said, "The survival of our wildlife is a matter of grave concern to all of us in Africa." The threats have changed since the early 20th century. Across Africa, growing populations eager to improve their standard of living, alongside a relentless global appetite for the continent's natural resources and the advancing impacts of climate change, are eating away at forests, grasslands and wetland habitats.

According to WWF's 2024 Living Planet Report, between 1970 and 2020, vertebrate populations in Africa declined by 76%. West Africa's western chimpanzees, whose numbers have already dropped by 80% since 1990, are being squeezed by mining and infrastructure development. More than half of the continent's gray parrots have been lost to deforestation and the illegal pet trade. Around nine out of every 10 African forest elephants have disappeared since the 1960s.

But there are hopeful signs as

well. Despite an overall decline, across East and Southern Africa elephant populations have stabilized, and in many places grown. Pioneering techniques to combat invasive species have rescued Cameroon's manatees from the brink, and Kenya's lion population rose by 25% between 2010 and 2020. In some areas, black rhinos are even making a comeback.

Understanding what's working, and what isn't, for Africa's wildlife and ecosystems is as important as it's ever been.

Much as they were 100 years ago, protected areas are at the center of policymaking by African countries hoping to prevent further catastrophe. Today, there are nearly 9,000 across the continent. These include national parks, like the iconic Serengeti, as well as many much smaller forest and wildlife reserves. Together, they cover 4.37 million square kilometers (1.69 million square miles) – about 15% of the entire African mainland.

A five-year plan

In the midst of growing attention to conservation practices in Africa, a landmark biodiversity deal was inked by 196 countries in 2022. Its signatories, which include all of Africa's governments, agreed to expand the total amount of terrestrial and marine landscapes protected for conservation to 30% of the planet by 2030.

This target, typically referred to as "30x30," was widely celebrated, but it's also raised concerns that it could come at the expense of people who live on land slated for conservation. Across the world, it's spurring a second look at how protected areas are currently managed, and what a new round of expansion might look like.

"There are protected areas that have been done with major abuses to human rights and displacements, and there's been some that have been absolutely affirming and advanced the rights of Indigenous peoples over their territories," said Brian O'Donnell, director of the Campaign for Nature. "There's not a universal truth in this."



A Samburu pastoralist watches over their herd in northern Kenya's Sera Community Conservancy

RADIO One

RATIBA YA VIPINDI JUMATATU - JUMAPILI

MONDAY TIME PROGRAMME	TUESDAY TIME PROGRAMME	WEDNESDAY TIME PROGRAMME	THURSDAY TIME PROGRAMME	FRIDAY TIME PROGRAMME	SATURDAY TIME PROGRAMME	SUNDAY TIME PROGRAMME
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Tembelea mitandao ya kijamii ya Radio One



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INTERVIEW

SOUTH AFRICA'S LOW-COST HOUSING MODEL IS BROKEN

The backlog of subsidised public housing in South Africa is estimated at 2.4 million. In this interview, Hlengiwe Maila, a research fellow at the School of Public Management and Administration at the University of Pretoria, answers questions posed by associate Professor Adrino Mazenda about possible solutions. Maila's PhD thesis, which was jointly supervised by Mazenda and Professor Lianne Malan, focused on developing a new model for the South African housing sector.

Q: What's the current system and what's wrong with it?

A: Currently, public housing is built on the basis of contracts issued by the government. But the model is failing.

First, it has become financially unsustainable for the government. This is evident in the shrinking budget for housing.

Second, the number of houses being delivered has declined, from 75,000 units in 2019 to 25,000 units in 2023. Yet the demand for housing is increasing.

Third, using contractors to build subsidised housing often results in poor workmanship. The focus is on mass delivery (quantity) and less on quality.

Fourth, the contractor model keeps people dependent on the government.

Fifth, the model is prone to corruption and political interference. Public officials and politicians award housing along party lines or as part of corruption networks.

Lastly, the model doesn't address the needs of communities. People are often allocated a house far away from where they live. They're uprooted from their livelihood strategies and social networks.

Q: Is there an alternative?

A: I set out the case for a co-production approach.

Co-production is a cooperative approach to delivering public goods and services. Instead of a top down approach of a single provider (state, market or NGO), it involves the people who receive the services.

Co-production can involve beneficiaries throughout the project's design, planning, implementation and maintenance. This results in a sense of ownership of projects and a value for the services co-produced.

It would usually take the form of future residents of a planned housing project taking part in community meetings, surveys and workshops where they can share their housing preferences, priorities and concerns. Architects, urban planners and other experts would incorporate the feedback into the design of the homes. The design would reflect the residents' needs around accessibility, community spaces, and cultural or social factors.

Beneficiaries would also help to identify potential locations for the housing project and offer input on the community's layout. They would contribute to decisions about communal amenities such as gardens, childcare facilities or green spaces.

They could volunteer their labour or skills directly in construction, or oversee the quality of work.

After construction, beneficiaries might help maintain the housing project through community-managed services, like repairs, cleaning, or organising events. This fosters a



Professor Adrino Mazenda

sense of ownership.

Q: Why is co-production a better approach?

A: Co-production empowers residents, sustains projects, and strengthens community ties.

For example, the government's role in Bangladesh has changed from providing housing to facilitating locally driven housing co-production. It does this through a low-income housing loan.

In the Bijlmermeer neighbourhood of Amsterdam, Netherlands, government and local stakeholders took a co-production approach to regenerate the area. Residents got involved in everything from design to management and decision-making. This improved public spaces, housing quality and social integration in a place that initially faced high poverty rates and social unrest.

In Kigali, Rwanda, the government set up urban planning and housing projects involving the local community. These projects focus on slum upgrading and new affordable housing.

One of the advantages of housing co-production is the introduction of new resources. They can be financial or in terms of capacity, knowledge or technologies.

Other advantages include:

- greater acceptability of the process by the community
- better use of existing skills and resources within the community
- better trust and confidence between all parties
- an improvement in the relationship between communities and government officials
- a greater sense of belonging and ownership.

Q: But are people willing to participate?

A: South African citizens have repeatedly shown their willingness to contribute towards providing their shelter and not be bystanders or passive recipients. Many South Africans engage in self-help housing projects: they build their homes from scratch, often using recycled materials.

Other initiatives, such as the Abahlali baseMjondolo movement, involve shack dwellers who mobilise for land rights and proper housing, and against forced evictions. These initiatives take collective action on housing issues.

In some areas, especially after natural disasters or urban fires, communities have come together to rebuild homes, distribute food and support displaced families.

However, past studies have shown that public officials may mistrust ordinary people's skills and experience.

According to most respondents in my PhD study, NGOs, private organisations, civic groups and movements representing communities were willing to partner with the government on housing co-production. But they met resistance from public officials, in local municipalities and housing departments. This was mostly due to lack of capacity and resources.

One respondent in the PhD research said:

the bureaucrats get impatient with managing community dynamics, because when you get communities involved, things may move slowly. But, over time, communities have shown that where they are involved, they protect the asset.

Q: What are the barriers to this model?

A: The housing co-production model might experience the following challenges:

Inadequate community mobilisa-

tion and participation: Co-production requires a high level of community involvement and commitment.

Financial mismanagement & inadequate funding: Insufficient and poorly managed funding can derail any development project.

Infrastructure and general service delivery: Without reliable access to clean water, sanitation and electricity, the homes will not be sustainable.

Political and institutional challenges: Successful co-production requires strong collaboration and communication. Political tensions and institutional fragmentation can undermine the project's success.

Unrealistic expectations: The community may lack the resources and infrastructure to achieve its goals, leading to frustration and disengagement.

Q: What needs to be done?

A: All the actors or stakeholders involved must be willing to co-produce. Co-production requires a change in the relations and behaviour of public servants and citizens or users.

They must trust each other and have clear roles and responsibilities so they can hold each other accountable.

Government must respond to communities' specific needs, which vary based on geographical, social, economic and cultural factors.

Adequate resources - both financial and human - must be committed.

The government has to ensure that users remain involved throughout the project phases.

Government employees and community members need training to equip them to manage projects together.

Finally, online consultations, crowdsourcing ideas and digital feedback monitoring systems should be established to track progress.

Privatisation of power sector, total failure - Senate

ABUJA

THE Senate has begun a probe into the activities of Generation Companies, GenCos, the Transmission Company of Nigeria, TCN, and Distribution Companies, DisCos, for failing to deliver reliable electricity, describing the power sector as a total failure.

It also strongly criticised the power sector operators, saying they have added no significant value to the sector, and threatened to come up with legislative measures, including new laws and total repeal of the policy.

It equally noted that the privatisation introduced in 2013 has plunged Nigeria deeper into darkness, leaving citizens without solutions.

The Upper directed the Senate Committee on Power, led by Senator Enyinnaya Abaribe, APGA, Abia South, to conduct a holistic investigation into the challenges of the sector and come up with recommendations that should cover possible reversal of the privatisation and declaration of an emergency in the power sector and report at plenary in six weeks.

The condemnation of the power sector yesterday was sequel to the presentation of a report by the Chairman, Senate Committee on Power, Senator Enyinnaya Abaribe, that investigated frequent national grid collapses and related issues.

In his remarks, the President of the Senate, Senator Godswill Akpabio, said in annoyance: "They have added no value at all."

Akpabio and other senators lampooned the power sector, especially the DisCos as they expressed anger, saying the operators had forced Nigeria more into darkness since 2013 when the policy took off, leaving the citizenry "helpless."

Akpabio said: "Why do state governors and communities buy transformers, hand them over to DisCos and still pay for installation?"

"The people who took over (power sector) are just making money from those transformers and they are not adding value at all."

"Why do we hand over GenCos and the TCN can't move what they generate? Why are DisCos not investing in transformers, or we have to pay the DisCos for transformers bought by Nigerians?"

"We can make the laws, we can reverse the laws and ask the Federal Government to take back those things from them."

Presenting the report, Senator Abaribe, who attributed the persistent grid failures to factors such as aging infrastructure, abandoned projects worth trillions of naira, regulatory inefficiencies, security lapses, lack of modern monitoring systems, such as SCADA, and inadequate financial oversight, said despite substantial investments in electricity infrastructure, the grid had suffered 105 collapses over the past decade.

He revealed the significant costs incurred during grid failures, particularly in restarting power plants.

The committee reported that each time the grid collapsed, it would cost the nation around

\$25million or N42billion to restart its three generating plants.

The committee recommended decisive actions by government, including making saboteurs both within and outside the system pay heavily for their culpability.

According to the report, restarting a plant after a grid collapse (known as a "black start") is considerably more expensive than normal operations.

"For instance, while running costs for a plant like Azura, Delta, or Shiroro are approximately \$105,000, restarting costs can reach \$7 million per incident. Collectively, grid collapses cost Nigeria an estimated \$4.25 billion for these three plants alone, with broader implications for the entire power sector," the report said.

The report emphasised that the national grid, over 50 years old, was outdated and in urgent need of modernization to meet current operational standards.

Abaribe also noted other pressing issues, including operational inefficiencies, abandoned projects, regulatory gaps, security challenges, and the absence of Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition, SCADA, systems essential for real-time monitoring and management.

"Whenever a plant is shut down, they restart the plant and to restart it which they call a black start, it cost far more than running the plant."

"While it cost \$105,000 to run the plant, to restart it will cost \$7m. So for anytime we have a shut down occasioned by grid collapse, three plants in Nigeria, three plants in Nigeria that supply most of our electricity, Azura, Delta and Shiroro, to restart the plant cost Nigeria \$25m or \$42.5bn and if we expand it to the rest of the operating plants in Nigeria, it is actually not quantifiable."

"Aging infrastructure has been identified as a critical factor contributing to frequent grid failures. Many components of the grid are outdated and have not undergone necessary maintenance or upgrades, leading to increased vulnerability to failures," Abaribe said.

In his contribution, Senator Adams Oshiomhole, APC, Edo North, who criticised the privatisation policy as flawed and exploitative, said it imposed undue financial burdens on Nigerians.

He said: "The DisCos are out for profit, while they make our people suffer. I never imagined that a private person will collect money for services he did not render and Nigerians are helpless."

He recounted a personal experience of having to purchase a transformer and pay for its installation, only for it to become the property of the Abuja Electricity Distribution Company, AEDC.

Oshiomhole called for a comprehensive review of the privatisation policy, in line with the administration's "Renewed Hope Agenda."

"After the procurement, it becomes the property of AEDC (Abuja Electricity Distribution Company).

I even had to pay money from my pocket to connect the transformer to the grid."

STATE'S REAL ESTATE: MORE THAN 80 PC IS NOT REGULARISED - CARTA

MAPUTO

Figures in the Administrative Tribunal's Report and Opinion on the 2021 State General Account, approved a few days ago by the Assembly of the Republic, reveal that more than 80 per cent of the state's real estate assets are not regularised.

According to the Administrative Tribunal, by December 2021, the Mozambican state had 30,255 real estate properties, of which 5,674 (18.8 pc) had been regularised, with 24,386 properties still to be regularised, corresponding to 81.2 per cent of the assets already identified.

The Administrative Tribunal reveals that in 2021, for example, there was no update of the state's real estate assets, as the government declared the same data that it had declared in the 2020 General State Account: 641 identified properties and 195 registered.

The public accounts auditor does not advance the reasons for the poor registration of state properties, but, in 2020, the government stated that it was "in the process of increasing the number of valued properties and, as a result, carrying out their inventory, as well as regularisation of the legal situation in favour of the state".

In addition to the weak and slow regularisation of property assets, the Administrative Tribunal also denounces irregularities in the inventorying of state assets. Among them is the weak intervention of the Internal Audit Subsystem, both with regard to the bodies implanted in the organic bodies of the audited entities, and those that act at the level of

public administration in the accounts processes of state assets.

It also reports on the lack of inventory of property and assets, the regularisation of property deeds and of insurance policies of state vehicles and properties, and the mapping of assets that are idle, obsolete or in an advanced state of degradation, with a view to documenting their respective scrapping processes.

Also included in the list of irregularities is the allocation of state property to employees, [state officials or agents and civil servants] for long periods of time, complying neither with legally established criteria, nor defining the terms of their occupation.

"Like the 2020 CGE [General State Account], in this account, the amounts referring to the Final Gross Assets, of an organic scope, in the categories of Movable Assets and Vehicles, are incorrectly accounted for in the Consolidated Maps of the Inventory of the Patrimony of the State, due to errors in the application of the formula inserted in the e-Inventário platform," the AT asserts, concluding that the information shared by the government does not reflect the reality of the state's assets and properties.

"Due to the aforementioned situations, the 2021 CGE does not reliably reflect the information on the State Assets Inventory, to the detriment of the principles of clarity, accuracy and simplicity, established in article 49 of the SISTAFE Law. On the other hand, the facts mentioned above indicate the practice of financial infractions, under the terms of subparagraph j) of paragraph 3 of article 98 of that Law and the



process of the Public Accounts Section, amended and republished by Law No. 8/2015, of 6 October," the Administrative Tribunal warns. Meanwhile, the year 2021 was marked by a drastic fall in the value of state property.

The reduction of state property values can be seen in the direct administration of autonomous state bodies and in the indirect administration by public companies and municipalities.

In December, 2020, the state's real estate had a gross value of around 590.6 billion meticaís. By December, 2021, this value had fallen to 476.6 billion meticaís, a reduction of around 113.96 billion meticaís, or 19.3 per cent.

This reduction worsens when

analysing the State Business Sector (Sector Empresarial do Estado - SEE), where the reduction in real estate value over the year was nearly 34 per cent.

At the beginning of 2021, properties held by the State Business Sector were valued at 214.1 billion meticaís. At the end of the same year, properties had a value of 141.6 billion meticaís, a reduction of 72.49 billion, around 33.9 per cent.

Number 1 of article 50 of the SISTAFE3 law dictates that the government must carry out an analysis of the variation of real estate assets and publish the details in the General State Account (CGE).

However, this figure for 2021

has not been published, which makes it difficult to trace real returns, increasing the risk of misappropriation.

The 2021 RPCGE also shows that there is a lack of mapping of those real estate assets which are in a state of idleness, obsolescence or an advanced state of degradation.

There are also issues concerning the allocation of state real estate to employees for long periods of time without legally established criteria, and of real estate assets held outside the e-inventory.

Taking into account the high level of fiscal risk of State Business Sector companies, associated with constant negative net

income and high levels of private debt, the risk of misuse of public real estate assets is increasing.

Given the low level of transparency in the management of public companies, the non-publication of reports and accounts, the absence of the consolidated report of the State Business Sector and of information on changes in property assets in this sector, it is imperative and urgent that the causes of the variation of State Business Sector properties be duly analysed and published.

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Malawi just about to lose K19bn funding owing to country's bureaucratic delays

LILONGWE

Malawi is at risk of losing K19 billion in European Union (EU) funding due to delays caused by the government in facilitating district councils to open foreign currency-denominated accounts with commercial banks.

The funds are meant for projects under the Greening and Growing Malawi-Ulimi ndi Chilengedwe m'Malawi (Uchi) project, which aims to boost smallholder farmers and agribusinesses in sustainable agricultural value chains. The EU had requested that these accounts be operational by the end of November 2024.

However, the Treasury's new regulations require all such accounts to be managed by the Reserve Bank of Malawi (RBM) instead of local commercial banks, creating a bottleneck in the process. A letter from the EU Head of Delegation, Rune Skinnbach, highlighted that the Accountant General had been instructed to guide district councils in opening these accounts, but despite several reminders, no action has been taken.

In response to the lack of progress, Skinnbach warned that if the accounts are not operational by January 13, 2025, the EU will be forced to cancel the funding agreements. This

would result in a loss of K19 billion intended for agricultural and community development projects.

The delay has sparked frustration from local government officials, with the Malawi Local Government Association criticizing the government for failing to act on the matter. They argue that it is the same government that has been encouraging councils to seek alternative sources of revenue but has not supported such initiatives.

The Accountant General, Henry Mphasa, defended the government's stance, stating that allowing councils to manage foreign currency accounts directly would violate the Public Finance Management Act (2022). He explained that discussions with the councils had taken place, and a waiver had been granted, but a new directive now requires all foreign currency accounts to be handled by the RBM.

A meeting has been scheduled this week to discuss the way forward. The EU is hoping for swift action from the government to avoid terminating the funding and to ensure that the vital agricultural projects can proceed. The funding is seen as critical for supporting rural communities and fostering long-term economic growth in Malawi.



Nigeria: On forfeiture of 753 houses and matters arising

ABUJA

Recently, the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), won a landmark forfeiture of 753 duplexes in Abuja, against unnamed owners.

After the announcement by the commission, names have been flying on the media space on the identity of the owner of the duplexes.

This recent seizure is not just a legal action; it is a damning indictment of a national moral failure that has long stripped our country of its potential and dignity.

Imagine, for a moment, the sheer scale of this seizure. Seven hundred and fifty-three duplexes -- a real estate empire that could house entire communities -- acquired through mechanisms so opaque that even the agency tasked with exposing them hesitates to illuminate the full story. This is not merely a property seizure; it is a surgical exposure of the festering wound in our national body politic.

The EFCC's defense is a masterpiece in bureaucratic obfuscation. By hiding behind legal technicalities -- invoking Section 17 of the Advance Fee Fraud Act and the complex legal doctrine of "action-in-rem" -- the commission transforms what should be a moment of triumphant transparency into a labyrinth of legal smoke and mirrors.

They claim professionalism, but what professional investigative body seizes assets worth potentially billions of naira without revealing the fundamental story of their acquisition?

Let us be unequivocal: this is not about individual names, but about institutional integrity. The real question transcends the identity of a single offender. We are confronting a systemic architecture of theft that has transformed public service from a call to national duty into a personal wealth generation mechanism.

Pointedly, the real estate sector in Nigeria has long been an ideal land-

scape for financial subterfuge. It is a realm where astronomical wealth can be laundered, where phantom transactions blur the lines between legitimate investment and grand larceny. These 753 duplexes are not an anomaly; they are a symptom of a deeper, more malignant condition.

Consider the mathematics of this seizure. Each duplex represents not just a structure of concrete and steel, but a stolen opportunity -- a school unbuilt, a hospital, an infrastructure project abandoned. Every brick is cemented with the potential of resources diverted from public good into private greed.

The EFCC's reluctance to name names is itself a form of complicity.

In the considered opinion of this newspaper, transparency is not a luxury; it is the fundamental currency of democratic accountability. By maintaining this calculated silence, they inadvertently become participants in the very system of obfuscation they claim to dismantle.

This is not merely about recovering assets. This is about reconstructing the very notion of public trust. When government agencies become so institutionally timid that they cannot or will not reveal the full narrative of financial malfeasance, they chip away at the foundational trust between the state and its citizens.

The broader implications are profound. Each time such massive asset seizures occur without full disclosure, we normalise a culture of institutional silence. We create an environment where corruption is not just possible, but expected. Where public officers view their positions not as sacred trusts, but as personal ATMs.

Our national narrative cannot continue to be defined by these cycles of theft and performative recovery. We need more than legal proceedings; we need a cultural revolution that reimagines public service as a genuine commitment to collective progress.

CONSTRUCTION

ZAMBIA, FRANCE SIGN LANDMARK DEBT RESTRUCTURING DEAL

LUSAKA

Zambia and France have signed a bilateral debt restructuring agreement, a significant step in Zambia's effort to revamp its \$13 billion external debt. The deal marks progress in a process that began after Zambia became the first African nation to default during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020.

This agreement, the first Zambia has reached with official bilateral creditors like China, Saudi Arabia, and India, is also the first under the G20's Common Framework for debt restructuring. The framework aims to coordinate diverse creditor groups but has faced criticism for its slow implementation.

Under the agreement, Zambia will extend the maturity of its debt by an average of 12 years, with repayments stretching beyond 2040. Interest rates are set at 1% for the next 14 years, rising to a maximum of 2.5% after that.

The agreement underscores Zambia's commitment to tackling its debt crisis while showcasing the potential and pitfalls of the G20's Common Framework. By securing favorable terms, including low interest rates, Zambia creates breathing room for economic recovery. However, the protracted process highlights the challenges of coordinating diverse creditor groups, an issue that could impact other nations seeking similar relief.

Meanwhile, over the past few years, new "tools of control" affecting the work of civil society organisations have multiplied, often imposing forms of "bureaucratic criminalisation" and "administrative harassment". In particular, more and more restrictive and demanding laws are hurting civil society organisations' capacity to operate across the



globe.

2024 saw a new NGO Bill being proposed in Zambia. The proposed Bill seeks to introduce new regulations for the governance of civil society organisations. Under the bill, all NGOs would be required to re-register every five years and adhere to mandatory membership in a government-regulated central body. It also imposes stringent reporting requirements, including disclosure of activities, funding sources, and personal wealth declarations by NGO officials. Failure to comply with these provisions could result in severe penalties, including heavy fines and imprisonment.

"Placing the same onerous registration requirement on small Community Based Organisations in the provinces as their national well resource counterparts shows very weak understanding of the NGO landscape in Zambia. These requirements would wipe out scores of organisations who carry out vital grassroots work," says Laura Miti, Executive Director at Alliance for Community Action.

Zambian CSOs warn that these measures, far from promoting accountability or transparency, represent an overreach

by the state, placing undue burdens on organisations and jeopardising their autonomy. If enacted, the NGO Bill could severely limit the ability of CSOs to operate independently, advocate for human rights, and support development initiatives across the country.

"The Non-Governmental Organisations Bill continues the trend by the government to oversee the work of civil society. Several provisions undermine the work that advocacy civil society organisations undertake. The Bill is not a result of consensus among civil society and between civil society and government. Civil society's asks have not changed since the government began taking steps to enact legislation regulating the sector years ago. Yet, each time a Bill is shared, it does not reflect the aspirations of the sector and does not provide any protections an enabling legislation should," says Josiah Kalala, Executive Director at Chapter One Foundation.

In a joint statement signed by platforms representing over 400 organizations, including the Zambia Council for Social Development (ZCSD), Transparency International, NGOCC, and the Civil

Society for Poverty Reduction (CSPR), Zambian CSOs have highlighted the following critical issues with the proposed bill:

- **Overregulation and intrusiveness:**

Provisions such as mandatory central membership and re-registration undermine the sector's autonomy and self-regulation capabilities.

- **Punitive measures:**

Disproportionate penalties for non-compliance, including imprisonment, create an environment of fear rather than collaboration.

- **Lack of consultation:**

The bill was introduced without adequate stakeholder engagement, sidelining the voices of the very organizations it seeks to regulate.

Leah Mitaba, Executive Director of the Zambia Council for Social Development, underscores the need to have laws that promote collaboration and transparency, not control and coercion: "Zambia is a State Party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the African Charter on Human and People's Rights. These legal frameworks call on member states to avoid enacting laws that restrict civic space or hinder fundamental freedoms, including expression, association, and assembly. Unfortunately, the proposed 2024 Bill risks undermining these commitments. Therefore, the government's decision to initiate consultations is a step in the right direction. It is hoped that this dialogue will lead to a self-regulatory framework that fosters the vibrancy and effectiveness of civil society organizations in Zambia."

Additional concerns: cybersecurity and anti-terrorism legislation

In addition to the NGO Bill 2024,

three new bills—the Cyber Security Bill 2024, Cyber Crimes Bill 2024, and Anti-Terrorism Bill—have been introduced and fast-tracked to parliament. While the stated objectives of these bills are to safeguard national security, combat cybercrime, and address terrorism, their provisions raise serious concerns about human rights, democratic governance, and constitutional compliance.

Key concerns raised by Zambian CSOs include:

- **Broad surveillance powers:**

The bills grant the government sweeping authority over digital infrastructure and allow for the interception of communications without sufficient safeguards, raising significant concerns about privacy and data protection.

- **Vague and overbroad definitions:**

Ambiguities in the language of the bills risk the criminalization of legitimate CSO activities, as well as broader civic engagement, advocacy, and free speech.

- **Continuity of authoritarian practices:**

CSOs have criticized the UPND administration for rushing the legislative process and sidelining public participation, echoing practices heavily condemned under the previous PF administration.

In a joint statement, Zambian CSOs called on Members of Parliament to reject these bills in their current forms and urged the United Party for National Development (UPND) administration to withdraw them for broader consultation and review. "Laws protecting Zambia's security must also protect Zambia's democracy and rights," the statement emphasizes.

BAMAKO

Jihadist militants have imposed a strict blockade on the Malian city of Léré, severely disrupting vital supply routes and movement in the Timbuktu region. The tactic is not new, with similar sieges disrupting towns in central and northern Mali.

The blockade, enforced by the Al-Qaeda-linked Group for the Support of Islam and Muslims (JNIM), began on 29 November.

Léré, roughly 60 kilometres from the Mauritanian border, now faces restricted access, with the effects rippling through the region.

JNIM's strategy mirrors tactics used against other population centres, including a major blockade of Timbuktu city one year ago.

- **Supply routes cut**

"Trucks were stuck at the town's entrance, and eventually turned back," said several residents of Léré and the surrounding area.

A regional transporter said the road connecting Léré's to Niono and further south to the capital, Bamako, had been completely severed.

Vehicles from Mauritania face the same issue.

"Goods must be transported by pinasse boats from Mopti via the river," said the transporter, adding that rising water levels have further complicated the situation.

Multiple local sources confirmed

Mali: Under siege in Léré, the latest Malian town now cut off by jihadists



the severity of what they described as a "total blockade".

Mali junta slammed for 'atrocities' against civilians one year after UN withdrawal

- **Market impact**

While the city has avoided complete shortages, residents report scarcities of essential items including milk, pasta and fuel, along with rising prices.

Some trucks from Algeria have reportedly managed to enter the city, according to certain sources.

The blockade's effects extend to the regional capital Timbuktu, particularly affecting civilians.

"It has greatly reduced bus movement," said a Timbuktu community leader.

Vehicles travelling to southern Mali must now take a lengthy detour via Douentza and Mopti. Mali cuts ties with Ukraine following deadly clashes near Algerian border

- **Official silence**

Local and national authorities have remained silent on the crisis. "They're treating it as a non-event," said one Timbuktu resident.

Despite the official silence, at least one military escort was organised last week to secure vehicles, according to multiple witnesses.

The blockade follows an earlier JNIM attack on 23 November, when militants destroyed the Dabi bridge connecting Léré to Niafunke.

Neither the Malian army nor the Timbuktu governorate responded to RFI's requests for comment.

Fitch affirms Tanzania at 'B+' with stable outlook

BY GUARDIAN CORRESPONDENT

AN American credit rating agency - Fitch Ratings has recently affirmed Tanzania's LongTerm Foreign-Currency Issuer Default Rating (IDR) at 'B+' with a stable outlook.

Fitch said in a statement over the weekend that Tanzania's rating reflects its relatively strong real GDP growth, low inflation and a moderate level of government debt.

The country's IMF programme supports its macroeconomic and fiscal performance.

However, the rating is constrained by weak governance indicators relative to peers, revenue underperformance and a weak macroeconomic policy framework compared with 'B' category peers that make the country more vulnerable to foreign exchange (FX) liquid-

ity pressures.

Fitch said it expects Tanzania's real GDP growth to rise to 5.4 per cent in 2024 and 5.9 per cent in 2025 (above our projected 'B' median of 4.7 per cent), from 5.1 per cent last year driven by increased agriculture, mining and tourism activity as well as infrastructure investment including flagship projects such as the Standard Gauge Railway and the Julius Nyerere Hydropower project.

In the longer term, real GDP growth could benefit from the development of offshore gas fields and LNG production. Growth volatility is low, but this may understate macroeconomic stability risks, given the importance of the agricultural sector, which is rain-dependent and highly vulnerable to natural disasters.

According to Beatus Mlingi, a

Research Analytics Manager from Vertex International Securities, Tanzania's Fitch rating of 'B+' with a stable outlook carries important implications for its economic prospects and highlights areas requiring attention to enhance its financial standing.

"While not investmentgrade, the rating reflects moderate credit risk and serves as a signal to investors seeking opportunities in emerging markets," he said.

He said this level of rating can attract investors who are willing to take on higher risks in exchange for potentially greater returns, especially in a market that offers untapped potential. However, Tanzania's borrowing costs remain relatively high due to the perceived risks associated with the rating.

"When the country seeks interna-

tional loans or issues bonds, it may face elevated interest rates compared to nations with higher credit ratings, which could constrain fiscal flexibility," he noted.

He said the rating also shapes the global perception of Tanzania's economic and financial health. It sends a mixed signal to foreign direct investors and portfolio investors who weigh the country's stability and potential returns against its vulnerabilities.

The rating positions Tanzania as a stable but speculative market, requiring deliberate actions to improve its creditworthiness and attract sustained capital inflows.

Mlingi said further that to improve its rating, such as 'BB' or above, which would lower borrowing costs, attract more FDI, and improve Tanzania's reputation as a

stable investment destination, Tanzania must focus on key economic reforms aimed at achieving macroeconomic stability.

This includes maintaining low inflation rates, enhancing revenue collection, and ensuring efficient public expenditure.

"Strengthened debt management is equally critical, particularly by prioritising concessional loans and increasing transparency in borrowing practices to build confidence among creditors and investors," he stated.

He said structural reforms targeting infrastructure, energy, and industrial sectors would diversify the economy, reduce dependency on agriculture and natural resources and make the economy more resilient to shocks.

He said food governance is vital

to this transformation. By implementing anti-corruption measures, improving regulatory frameworks, and enhancing institutional efficiency, Tanzania can create an environment conducive to both local and foreign investment.

Export diversification should also be prioritised to reduce reliance on volatile commodity prices and improve the balance of payments. He added that by expanding export markets and investing in value addition can help stabilise foreign exchange reserves and strengthen the country's economic resilience.

"These measures, collectively, will not only improve Tanzania's credit rating but also pave the way for sustainable growth, lower borrowing costs and increased global confidence in its financial stability," he said.

WORLD

French far-right leader Marine Le Pen eyes early presidential election



President of Rassemblement National parliamentary group Marine Le Pen applauds during a session to vote on the special budget draft law at the National Assembly in Paris on Dec 16, 2024.

PARIS

FRENCH far-right leader Marine Le Pen said on Wednesday that she was preparing for an early presidential election, saying President Emmanuel Macron's time in office was all but over.

Le Pen, who has brought her anti-immigrant National Rally (RN) party from fringe status into the political spotlight, is seen as a leading presidential contender. She faced off against Macron in 2017 and captured an even greater share of the vote in 2022, when Macron won another five-year term.

"I am preparing for an early presidential election, out of precaution, taking into account Emmanuel Macron's fragility, what little institutional levers he has left," she said in an interview with Le Parisien newspaper.

"Emmanuel Macron is finished or almost finished," she said, adding that Macron was diminished both domestically and internationally. "He has angered everyone. He has no more influence in the European Union," she said.

Macron has repeatedly said he would not resign. Asked for reaction, the Elysee said: "The president has already expressed himself on this matter."

Le Pen faces her own political challenges. She and other members of her party have been accused of using funds from the European Union to pay party workers in France.

She has denounced the case as a political witch hunt. If convicted, she could be banned from seeking public office for five years. The trial is expected to close in March.

For more than a decade, Le Pen has

sought to rid RN of the xenophobic and racist image it acquired under the nearly 40-year leadership of her father, ex-paratrooper Jean-Marie Le Pen.

Following European Parliament elections, in which Le Pen's party made electoral gains, Macron called snap parliamentary elections that he promised would bring more clarity.

Instead, no single party won a majority, leaving Le Pen and her party with considerable influence. The fractious parliament has cost Macron one government so far, when Le Pen's party banded together with the left to back a no-confidence vote against Prime Minister Michel Barnier.

One poll found, opens new tab that Le Pen had received a boost in support after the vote, though some

experts cautioned it carried political risk for her.

The National Rally said that Barnier's 2025 budget, in which he had sought to reduce France's surging budget deficit by raising some taxes and cutting spending, failed to account for voters' concerns about the cost of living.

"Our position has not changed," Le Pen told Le Parisien.

She said she was encouraged by discussions she had with France's new prime minister, veteran centrist Francois Bayrou, though he has not yet named a government and has drawn criticism from his handling of a cyclone that hit the French Indian Ocean territory of Mayotte.

"He says he will listen to us but he is not the first one to say that," Le Pen said.

'Senseless gun violence again visited our classrooms' Kamala Harris condemns Wisconsin shooting

WASHINGTON

US Vice President Kamala Harris condemned the shooting at Abundant Life Christian School in Wisconsin and said the "senseless gun violence" has again visited the classrooms.

Calling the incident a "senseless shooting", Harris said that her husband, Douglas Emhoff and she were mourning the deaths caused by the violence.

"Over the weekend, our nation paused to remember the innocent children and brave educators who were taken from us 12 years ago when someone armed with a weapon of war walked into Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, CT.

Today, senseless gun violence has once again visited our classrooms as students and teachers in Madison, WI had their last week of school before Christmas break tragically interrupted by a deadly shooting," Harris said in a statement.

The Vice President expressed gratitude to the first responders and security officials for their quick action at the site.

"Doug and I are mourning the student and teacher who were killed and we are praying for all those who were injured,



including those who remain hospitalized. We are also thinking of the young people and families who have had their lives forever

changed by this act of gun violence.

And we are sending our gratitude to the educators, members

of law enforcement, first responders, and medical professionals who quickly and selflessly jumped into action to ensure that even more lives were not lost in this community," the statement read.

Noting the progress made by the White House Office of Gun Violence Prevention legislation, she stressed that more work needs to be done.

"As we hold our loved ones closer this holiday season, we must resolve to do everything in our power to end this epidemic that has become the leading cause of death for kids throughout America.

While we have made necessary progress together over the last four years, including through the most significant gun safety legislation in nearly 30 years and our first-ever White House Office of Gun Violence Prevention, there is more work to be done to ensure that every person has the freedom to live safe from the horror of gun violence.

Congress and state legislatures must make background checks universal, pass red flag and safe storage laws, and ban assault weapons. These commonsense solutions will save lives and make our children and communities safer," the statement added.

At least two people were killed and six were injured at a shooting at Abundant Life Christian School in Wisconsin.

The investigators found that a 15-year-old shooter. She was also found dead in what appeared to be a gunshot wound.

ANI

China's largest desert fully encircled with green belt

By Aerdate

THE Taklimakan Desert, the largest desert in China, has been completely encircled by a green belt stretching 3,046 kilometers on Nov. 28, according to the Xinjiang regional forestry and grassland bureau.

Covering 337,600 square km with a circumference of 3,046 km, the Taklimakan Desert lies between the Tianshan and the Kunlun mountains. It is the world's second-largest drifting desert, stretching about 1,000 km east to west and 400 km north to south.

It has taken more than 40 years to fully enclose the desert with a green belt. By the end of 2023, a 2,761-km-long green belt had been built, leav-

ing only 285 km unfinished, which is also the most challenging section. Followed by arduous efforts, the final stretch was fully bridged on Nov. 28, creating a complete ecological shield around the desert.

Xinjiang's Hotan prefecture, located on the southern edge of the Taklimakan Desert, is surrounded by sand on three sides. It was the region most affected by sandstorms in southern Xinjiang, and thereby faced the biggest challenge in sand control.

After taking a range of targeted measures such as making grass grids, the sandstorm-prone area has managed to contain the desert's expansion. The expansive grass grids now resemble vast nets that anchor

the shifting dunes. Up close, desert shrubs such as saxaul and tamarisk sway gently in the wind, thriving within the grids.

According to Wang Zhenxi, an official with the Xinjiang regional forestry and grassland bureau, the shifting dunes in the Taklimakan Desert covers about 258,400 square km, with wind speeds often exceeding level 8. The desert receives less than 80 millimeters of rainfall annually, which makes it one of the driest areas in the world.

Thanks to more than four decades of efforts as part of China's Three-North Shelterbelt Forest Program, the world's largest afforestation program to tackle desertification, Xinjiang has made great achievements in sand control.

Its forest coverage rate has increased

to 5.06 percent from only 1.03 percent in 1978. The area of artificial oases has grown from 65,000 square km to 100,000 square km over the past 30 years, an increase of about 54 percent.

According to China's sixth national survey of desertification and land degradation conducted in 2022, the desertified and sandy land areas in Xinjiang decreased by 1,956 square km and 242.82 square km respectively. However, the remaining sandy land poses even greater challenges due to severe desertification and poorer soil conditions.

To tackle these arduous challenges, Xinjiang has introduced a comprehensive plan to fortify the edges of the Taklimakan Desert. The plan covers a total treatment area of 32,658 million mu

(about 2.18 million hectares) with an estimated investment of 12.355 billion yuan (\$1.7 billion) and is set to continue until 2030.

"We will take steps including afforestation, grass planting, and engineering measures to fix sand so that we can lock the desert's edges, and build protective forest and grass belts to contain the desert's expansion. We have also launched targeted projects in sandstorm source areas to mitigate the impact of wind and sand," Wang explained.

"Within oases, we will bridge the gaps in shelterbelts and address blank spots in desertification control. The ultimate goal is to achieve 'wind prevention, sand blockage, and dust control,' so as to improve

the overall ecological environment," Wang said.

By fostering the entire industrial chain and seeking diversified approaches to development, Xinjiang has achieved the integrated development of desert ecology and sand industry.

In Hotan prefecture, Yutian county has established a complete industrial chain for cistanche deserticola, commonly known as desert-broomrape, and an industrial park for desert rose, boosting income for farmers. In Cele county, red dates are cultivated according to local conditions, with lush orchards forming green barriers that shield villages from encroaching sand.

People's Daily

Russia's economic indicators steady over the year despite sanctions – Finance Minister

MOSCOW

RUSSIA'S level of settlements, payments and trade turnover has not declined compared to 2023 despite the sanctions imposed against the country, Finance Minister Anton Siluanov said commenting on the results of the strategic session on the development of financial instruments and payment and settlement infrastructure.



"We noted that, despite the sanctions imposed, the level of settlements, the level of payments and the level of trade turnover have not decreased compared to the same period last year," Siluanov said.

As the Finance Minister reported, the session discussed a number of measures to create "long money" in the economy, attract resources from citizens and businesses into new instruments that would allow these funds to be reinvested from savings into new investments and create new incentives for attracting such finances.

The authorities also developed plans to create tools that will facilitate the transformation of savings into investments and the creation of new jobs.

During the strategic session, the settlement and payment infrastructure was also discussed, the minister noted.

According to Siluanov, the government needs to use digital financial assets, tools that allow cross-border payments. They include, in particular, cryptocurrency and clearing platforms. This will provide participants in foreign trade with the opportunity to pay for goods and services.

"We summed up the results and outlined the appropriate further steps to ensure financial sovereignty, which will be implemented next year," the finance minister concluded.

Emirates honours its Arabic heritage ahead of World Arabic Language Day

DUBAI

AS the world's largest international airline serving 140 destinations globally, Emirates welcomes the unique opportunity to present the Arabic language to more than 52 million diverse customers. Yesterday, UNESCO's World Arabic Language Day, (18 December), Emirates highlighted the array of Arabic language services available to customers, thousands of Arabic speaking cabin crew, and the wealth and breadth of rich Arabic language content available on its inflight entertainment system - ice.

World Arabic Language Day is celebrated on 18 December since it was established in 2012. The date commemorates the day that the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted Arabic as the sixth official language of the organisation in 1973. Used daily by more than 500 million people, Arabic is very much a part of the Emirates brand, playing a vital role in the operations and customer service of the multi award-winning airline.

The Emirates logo features Arabic calligraphy and is a key element of the airline's identity, symbolising its roots in the UAE and commitment to showcasing Arabic hospitality and culture globally.

Originally created in 1985, the logo underwent a significant redesign in 1999 to modernise its appearance and align with the airline's rapid growth and global ambitions. The Arabic script was refined with a more fluid and bold style, making it visually striking and versatile for branding on aircraft, advertisements, and other materials.

The current logo maintains the stylized Arabic word "Emirates", designed to evoke sophistication, luxury, and cultural pride, appearing in gold or white to emphasise Emirates' premium positioning. The Arabic logo has remained a consistent part of Emirates' branding to reflect a dual commitment to innovation and tradition, with a design that has contributed to making Emirates one of the most recognizable airline brands worldwide.

Emirates' official website and mobile app are available in both Arabic and English, offering Arabic-speaking customers a localised browsing experience. The website provides services such as booking flights, checking flight status, and managing reservations in Arabic. Emirates also provides Arabic-language customer support via phone, email, and social media channels, ensuring that Arabic-speaking customers can easily resolve any issues or queries.

Agencies

'Made in Africa, Used for Africa' leads China-Africa medicine cooperation

NAIROBI

AT Lancet General Hospital in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, a nurse is expertly administering a saline drip to a patient, who is visibly relieved as the treatment takes effect. Such scenes are quite common at the hospital, where dedicated healthcare workers strive to provide quality care under challenging conditions.

Like many other East African countries, Ethiopia has long faced significant shortages of essential medications, including large-volume infusions, primarily due to the lack of domestic pharmaceutical manufacturing.

For Africa at large, the lack of medical supplies left it particularly vulnerable to epidemics like malaria, cholera and smallpox. In recent years, however, an increasing number of Chinese pharmaceutical companies have set up factories across the continent, boosting local medicine production and strengthening healthcare autonomy for African countries.

In 2018, Chinese company SanSheng Pharmaceutical set up a factory in Ethiopia. With an average annual output of approximately 10 million IV bags, 300 million injection vials, and 5 billion solid tablets, the factory significantly reduced Ethiopia's reliance on imported essential drugs.

Inaugurated in the Eastern Industrial Zone on the outskirts of Addis Ababa, the factory primarily produces essential medicines in tablets, capsules, large-volume infusion, small-volume injectables, and oral solid dosage forms, said Jiang Zhiwen, general manager of Sansheng Ethiopia Pharmaceutical, in an interview with Xinhua.

"Previously, the country was importing a significant percentage of large volume parenterals while the current national demand is fully covered by local producers where Sansheng is taking the largest portion", said Kassahun Alemu, technical manager of the company.

"The company produces the medicines Ethiopians truly need," Jiang said. "Previously, most of these medicines had to be imported, but now there's no need to source them from abroad. This not only saves foreign reserve for the country but also gradually helps Ethiopia develop its basic industries."

Sansheng is among several Chinese pharmaceutical companies that have invested in and established factories in Africa in recent years to localize the manufacturing of medicines and medical supplies.

In 2015, Chinese company Humanwell Africa Pharmaceutical established a factory in Bamako, Mali's capital, the first localized drug factory in Mali, and a modern pharmaceutical factory in West Africa with high standards. Former Malian President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita said the project would help the country produce drugs independently.

"Humanwell put an end to the history that



A staff member (R) of BGI Genomics provides training for an Ethiopian employee at a COVID-19 test kits production plant in Ethiopia, in November 2020. (Xinhua)

Mali couldn't make medicines, and will benefit Malians," Keita once said. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Chinese biotech firm BGI Genomics set up diagnostic reagent factories in multiple African countries, including Ethiopia, Togo, Angola, Gabon and Botswana. It also established laboratories across Africa to support COVID-19 detection efforts.

In October, Chinese company Jijia International Medical Technology signed a memorandum of understanding with Zambia's Industrial Development Corporation for the construction of an oral cholera vaccine plant in the country.

The agreement will make Zambia the first African country to manufacture the cholera vaccines, said Zambian President Hakainde Hichilema. "This partnership will save lives, boost productivity, and serve humanity," he said.

At the 2024 Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, China unveiled 10 partnership action plans, one of which focused on health, where China pledged to "encourage Chinese businesses to invest in the production of medicines and vaccines in Africa to increase local medicine production capacity."

Fosun Pharma, the Chinese pharmaceutical company that introduced Artesun – an innovative injectable artesunate malaria treatment – to Africa over a decade ago, has started construction of its first industrial park on the continent, with the first phase of the project to be completed in 2025.

The park, located near Abidjan, the largest city of Cote d'Ivoire, is expected to produce 5 billion tablets per year once all three phases are completed, benefiting the entire West African region, said Su Li, vice president of Fosun Pharma. "Once completed, Ivory Coast Industrial Park will bring nearly 1,000 job opportunities to the Grand-Bassam area east of Abidjan," she said.

In addition, Chinese pharmaceutical companies, including Fosun and Sansheng, have launched training programs and provided scholarships and internships for healthcare workers and pharmacy students from African countries, cultivating more local talent for the African pharmaceutical industry.

In August, Africa Bio Chem, a Chinese pharmaceutical firm, signed an agreement with Tanzania's Zanzibar government to produce advanced innovative medicines and set up a bio-vaccine production base.

"The Chinese have brought in a lot of medicines, they have trained our people, they have built the capacity of our people, so we are very thankful for that, and we are hoping to continue this cooperation," said Tanzania's Zanzibar President Hussein Ali Mwinyi.

"We have to ensure that Africans can start to manufacture their vaccines and medicines thanks to the support we are getting from China," said Jean Kaseya, director-general of the Africa Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC), in an interview with Xinhua.

Noting the importance of promoting local manufacturing of medical products and building strong healthcare systems in Africa, Kaseya emphasized that working with China enhances the ability of the Africa CDC in particular and African countries in general to achieve their priority goals.

"My vision of Africa is that Africans have to take the lead on their development. They need technical support on specific topics like the development of local manufacturing. The idea is to strengthen and reinforce local skills," said Jean-Marc Bouchez, executive president of Tridem Pharma, a subsidiary of Fosun Pharma. "Chinese pharmaceutical companies share this vision of 'producing in Africa, for Africa,'" he said.

Xinhua

China makes new successes in desertification prevention and control

THE largest desert in China, the Taklimakan has been completely encircled by a green belt stretching 3,046 km as of late November, thanks to more than four decades of efforts as part of China's Three-North Shelterbelt Forest Program (TSFP), the world's largest afforestation program to tackle desertification.

This great achievement has captured worldwide attention. The international community observes that the TSFP has not only contributed to the global combat against desertification, but also increased the global forest coverage rate. They praised the program as the "green Great Wall" that China fortifies to fend off the challenges arising from climate change.

The Taklimakan Desert is China's largest and the world's second-largest drifting desert. The completion of the ecological barrier vividly demonstrates China's battle against desertification.

After over 40 years of unremitting efforts, China has blazed a special path of desertification prevention and control with Chinese characteristics. Environmental conservation and improving people's well-being have entered a virtuous cycle. The country has become a global model for desertification control.

So far, China has effectively rehabilitated 53 percent of its treatable desertified land, with the area of desertified land decreasing by 65 million mu (about 4.3 million hectares). It is the first country in the world to achieve zero growth in land degradation, and the first to reduce the area of desertified and sandy land.

To be specific, Saihanba in north China's Hebei province has



Farmers plant trees on the southern edge of the Taklimakan Desert in Yutian county, Hotan prefecture, northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region. (Photo: Wang Zhiqing / People's Daily Online)

transformed from a desolate land into the world's largest man-made forest, thanks to the dedication of three generations of foresters to the Saihanba afforestation project; most of the sand land in the Mu Us Desert, which stretches from north China's Inner Mongolia autonomous region to Shaanxi province, has been brought under control; the Kubuqi Desert, China's seventh-largest desert, has explored a brand new approach to combating desertification through industrial development.

The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) Secretariat has twice honored China for its "outstanding contribution to combating desertification", praising its significant contributions to global desertification control.

The 16th Conference of the Parties (COP16) to the UNCCD held in Riyadh, capital of Saudi Arabia, set up the China Pavilion, which marked the first time that China showcased its achievements in desertification control, particularly through the TSFP.

"I was moved by the images of

shift from practical-exploration-based conservation to the one with theoretical guidance.

China's forest coverage ratio and forest stock volume have both been on the rise for 40 consecutive years. The country ranks first in the world in terms of forest resource growth and afforestation area. It has contributed to one fourth of the world's newly added green areas.

China is also contributing to the global fight against desertification with firm and concrete actions.

This year marks the 30th anniversary of China's adoption of the UNCCD. Over the past three decades, China has been actively involved in global desertification governance within the framework of UNCCD.

It promoted the establishment of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC), setting up the strategic framework and objectives; established an office for UNCCD implementation and formulated a national action plan; and set up regional mechanisms to promote regional cooperation on UNCCD fulfillment.

Besides, China hosted the COP 13 to the UNCCD and carried out cooperation on desertification control within the framework of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). It has held nine sessions of the Kubuqi International Desert Forum to promote international policy dialogue and exchanges.

China is also actively sharing its technologies and experiences of desertification control with other developing countries, pursuing green development together with the Global South.

People's Daily

HK leader vows to join hands with Macao to contribute to the nation

HONG KONG

HONG KONG Chief Executive John Lee Ka-chiu said he expects Hong Kong to further deepen its cooperation with the Macao Special Administrative Region and to jointly serve the country under the "one country, two systems" principle, thus making greater contributions to the nation's modernization.

In an article published yesterday, Lee congratulated Macao's incoming Chief Executive Sam Hou-fai, and noted that the two SARs share the benefits of the "one country, two systems" policy, which enables the two places to participate in the large market of the Chinese mainland and simultaneously connect with the global community.

Lee pointed out that both SARs are participants and contributors in, and beneficiaries of the nation's process of reform and opening-up. As core cities of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, the two SARs can capitalize on their complementary strengths and jointly drive the development of the GBA.

Lee said he anticipates close collaboration with Macao in the future, jointly leveraging their unique strengths to showcase the vitality and advantages of "one country, two systems", so as to make new



contributions to the nation's great rejuvenation.

He believes that Sam – who had served as president of the Court of Final Appeal of Macao since the establishment of the Macao SAR and has led the courts of Macao in performing their judicial functions – will guide the city to new heights of achievement.

Tomorrow marks the 25th anniversary of the establishment of the Macao SAR, and President Xi Jinping was expected to inspect the SAR from yesterday to tomorrow, during which he will attend a gathering marking the anniversary of the return of the city to the motherland, and the inauguration ceremony of the sixth-term government of the Macao SAR.

Lee will also lead a delegation to Macao today and tomorrow to attend the celebrations.

US keeps silent its money turns Zelensky regime into terrorist cell – Russian MFA

MOSCOW

WASHINGTON deliberately remains silent about the transformation of Vladimir Zelensky's regime into a terrorist cell due to the uncontrolled influx of US weapons and funds, Russian Foreign Ministry Spokeswoman Maria Zakharova stated during a news briefing.

While commenting on the US State Department's counterterrorism report for 2023, published on December 12, Zakharova noted that its authors "intentionally avoid addressing or even acknowledging the issues, to say the least, of the Zelensky regime being turned into a terrorist cell."

"As in previous years, this report, full of falsehoods, is based on a complete absence of any standards except one - political bias and manipulation of facts," she explained.

"The only thing it confirms is that the Kiev regime is deliberately supported and justified by the United States, although American money and weapons, poured in uncontrollably, have turned it into a breeding ground for terrorism and a testing ground for increasingly barbaric and sophisticated methods of undermining Russia's security," Zakharova emphasized.

At the same time, the report promi-



nently features "clumsy attempts" to deny Moscow's accusations against Kiev, Zakharova pointed out. "How outrageous all this sounds now, especially after the world saw the footage of a terrorist attack, for which the Ukrainian side again claimed responsibility, committed on December 17, resulting in the death of [the chief of the Russian Chemical Defense Forces] Igor Kirillov," she said.

According to the diplomat, the State Department "did not hesitate to include blatant falsehoods in its report."

"It claims that not a single act of terrorism occurred in Russia in 2023. Can you believe it? This is fantastic," Zakharova said.

"Naturally, the State Department turns a blind eye to any terrorist attacks against journalists, public figures, or civilian infrastructure." Agencies

South Korea's president fails to show up for police questioning in mutiny case

SEOUL

SOUTH Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol, whose powers were suspended after he was impeached by the parliament, failed to appear for questioning by the Corruption Investigation Office for High-ranking Officials (CIO) in a mutiny case, the Yonhap news agency reported.

Yoon Suk Yeol was supposed to arrive for questioning at 10:00 a.m. local time (1:00 a.m. GMT). Earlier, the joint investigation team tried to deliver the summons for questioning to the presidential office and his representatives by sending the request by mail. The presidential secretariat and the security service refused to accept the summons, saying that it was not within their authority.

CIO head Oh Dong-woon said the day before that the summonses were not accepted intentionally and that the law enforcement agencies would act according to the law. The office was considering whether to seek an arrest warrant for the president in the situation. Its staff had previously concluded that an arrest without a warrant and an attempt to obtain one later would be less desirable. The prosecution also admits the possibility of organizing a second interrogation.

Meanwhile, South Korean prosecutors are conducting their own investigation. The prosecution summoned the president for questioning on December 15, but he did not appear. The prosecution issued a second summons for December 21.

On December 11, the Corruption Investigation Office for High-ranking Officials, the police and the South Korean Defense Ministry agreed to join forces to investigate the martial law events, resulting in a joint investigation team. South Korean law allows for the prosecution of a sitting head of state in cases of mutiny and treason.



Tanzania through to CECAFA U-17 semi-finals in Kampala

By Correspondent Michael Mwebe

THE Tanzania U-17 boys' national team, Serengeti Boys, secured their place in the semifinals of the CAF Under-17 Africa Cup of Nations CECAFA Qualifier with a narrow 1-0 victory over Kenya in their Group A clash in Kampala on Wednesday afternoon.

A crucial first-half strike from Juma Sagwe Mwita sealed the win, ensuring Serengeti Boys claimed the top spot in their group, ahead of second-placed Uganda.

Under coach Aggrey Morris, the team entered the game under pressure following a 1-1 draw against hosts Uganda in their group opener on Sunday.

A loss or draw against Kenya could have left their qualification hopes hanging by a thread, dependent on the outcome of the final group stage match between Kenya and Uganda.

However, the victory over Kenya bolstered their chances of finishing as group leaders and advancing further in the tournament.

With the semifinal berth, the Serengeti Boys remain on course for a spot in the continental finals next year.

The two finalists in Kampala will se-

cure qualification for the U-17 Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON) finals in Morocco.

The zonal qualifiers, featuring six teams, run from December 15 to 27, with all matches hosted at the Nakivubo Hamz Stadium in Kampala, Uganda.

The semifinals are scheduled for Tuesday, December 24, with the third-place playoff and final set for Friday, December 27.

The inaugural zonal qualifiers were held in Dar es Salaam in 2018, where Uganda defeated Tanzania 3-1 to claim the title.

The 2020 edition in Rwanda saw Uganda once again triumph, defending their title in the final against Tanzania.

Tanzania aims to qualify for the continental finals for the fourth time, having previously participated in 2017 (Gabon), 2019 (as hosts in Dar), and 2021 (in Morocco, where the finals were ultimately canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic).

The 15th edition of the U-17 Africa Cup of Nations is slated for March 30 to April 19, 2025, in Morocco.

The tournament's semi-finalists will earn coveted spots in the FIFA Under-17 World Cup, underscoring the high stakes of these qualifiers.

Kally Ongala cautiously optimistic after his KMC's first Premier League win

By Correspondent Seth Mapoli

KMC head coach Kally Ongala has expressed dissatisfaction with his team's overall performance despite securing their first victory in the Mainland Premier League under his leadership.

Ongala emphasized that the 1-0 win over Pamba Jiji marks an important step toward rebuilding the squad but admitted there is still significant work to be done.

The win, which came on Monday at the KMC Complex in Dar es Salaam, was Ongala's first victory in four league matches since taking over as head coach on November 14.

The coach acknowledged the importance of the result but stressed the need for continued improvement.

"This is an important victory, but we cannot be proud of it at this level. We need to increase our efforts, especially in the final areas of attack," Ongala said. "This is a step forward, but we need to go further. We know our problems, and we will work on them."

Ongala took over the team after the departure of Abdihamid Moallin, who joined Young Africans SC. His tenure began with defeats against Dodoma Jiji (2-1) and Tabora United (2-0), followed by a draw against Mashujaa before Monday's narrow win over Pamba Jiji.

Despite his early struggles, Ongala had already led KMC to a resounding 5-0 victory against Black Six in the third round of the FA Cup, providing a brief glimpse of the team's potential.

The coach admitted that the team's attacking inefficiency remains a major concern, as KMC continue to create opportunities but fails to capitalize on them.

"We continue to create many chances, but we fail to capitalize on them. This is a big challenge for us. If we are not careful, we will lose important matches," Ongala cautioned.

He further noted that while the victory over Pamba Jiji would help boost the squad's morale, it cannot mask the glaring issues that need to be addressed to ensure better performances

in the second round of the season.

Ongala has already turned his attention to the limited mid-season registration window as an opportunity to strengthen the squad. He underscored the importance of addressing the team's weaknesses in attack, midfield, and defense to make KMC more competitive in the second half of the season.

"The team is playing, but there is a lack of planning in creating chances and scoring goals. At the same time, the defense has significant shortcomings, which have resulted in us conceding too many goals," Ongala explained.

"My plan is to ensure that we register new players based on these requirements. After sitting with the team and identifying weaknesses in attack, midfield, and defense, I have submitted my report to the club leadership, and the registration process has already begun," he added.

Ongala remains optimistic that, with the right reinforcements, KMC will be able to mount a stronger challenge in the second round.

"If we succeed in addressing these areas, I see the team returning to a competitive level," he concluded.

KMC's struggles in the first half of the season are evident in their statistics. After playing 15 matches in the Mainland Premier League, the club has managed to collect 18 points from five wins, three draws, and seven losses.

Their attack has been underwhelming, with the team scoring only 10 goals, while their defensive frailties have resulted in 20 goals conceded.

The club will be looking to turn things around when the second round of the league resumes. Ongala's comments highlight the challenges he faces but also demonstrate his determination to rebuild the squad and ensure it performs at a higher level in the coming fixtures.

KMC fans will be hoping that Ongala's plans materialize quickly as the team looks to improve its position on the league table and secure a more positive second half of the season.

TCA awards outstanding cricketers in 2024

By Correspondent Japheth Kazenga

THE Tanzania Cricket Association (TCA) last weekend hosted an event dubbed 'TCA Cricket Awards Night 2024' in Dar es Salaam.

The national cricket governing body coordinated the occasion to celebrate the outstanding talents and contributions to Tanzania's cricket.

Gifted female cricketer Perice Zakayo was undoubtedly the cricketer who held sway at the occasion, having scooped three awards.

Perice emerged as the Best Bowler (Senior-Women), Best All-Rounder (Senior-Women), and the TCA MVP (Women).

The hardworking all-rounder has enjoyed a stellar season in both domestic and international cricket, helping Tanzania shine in various women's show-downs.

She was one of the cricketers that catapulted Tanzania to lifting the 2024 Nigeria Invitational Women's T20I Tournament in Nigeria.

It was Tanzania's maiden participation in the annual Nigeria tournament, which also served as preparation for the All-Africa Games held in Ghana early this year.

The Nigeria Cricket Federation (NCF) organized the tournament which brought together four national teams - Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Tanzania and hosts Nigeria.

Lagos's Tafawa Balewa Square Cricket Oval hosted all of the tournament's ties played from February 25 to March 3.

The showdown saw Perice walk away with the Player of the Series honour.

She had shone in bowling, taking a total of 11 wickets and tying Rwanda's Rosine Irera for the showdown's cricketers with the most wickets.

In one of her bowling exploits in the showdown, Perice ended with an impressive 4-7 in four overs when Tanzania walloped defending champions Nigeria by 49 runs.

The fixture witnessed the



Tanzania Cricket Association (TCA) Women's Representative Antonia Chuyo (L) hands over an award to cricketer Perice Zakayo during the 2024 TCA Cricket Awards Night in Dar es Salaam recently. PHOTO: COURTESY OF TANZANIA CRICKET ASSOCIATION

Neema Justin-led Tanzania score 134/4 in the scheduled 20 overs after taking the crease first.

In response, notching 135 runs from 120 balls to secure victory became quite challenging for Nigeria, as the squad notched 85/8 in 20 overs.

Perice consequently walked away with the Player of the Match prize for her tremendous bowling showing.

Saum Salum won this season's Best Batter (Senior-Women) prize, having also showcased stellar displays in high-profile tournaments.

She was equally in the triumphant senior national women's cricket squad in the Nigeria Invitational Women's T20I Tournament.

Saum, an aggressive batter, ended as the tournament's Best Batter after grabbing 203 runs in the showpiece.

The cricketer, moreover, helped Tanga Queens win the 2024 TCA National Women's Championship top honour.

Tanga Queens grabbed the showpiece's trophy whilst boasting an unbeaten run, winding up its campaign with a 35-run thrashing of Morogoro Queens.

Saumu deservedly walked

away with the Player of the Tournament prize.

Jenipher Gabriel was presented with this season's Emerging Player (Girls) prize.

She is a promising national U-19 women's cricket squad captain and reliable batter, who moreover features for Tanga in regional women's tournaments.

Jenipher enjoyed a great outing during the national U-19 women's team's participation in the 2024 ICC U-19 Women's T20 World Cup Africa Regional Qualifier in Rwanda from September 22-29.

She guided Tanzania to settle for fifth place following the squad's six-wicket thrashing of Namibia in the fifth-place playoff.

The Scorer of the Year prize went to Zena Hassan.

Zena was, during her heyday in domestic cricket, a gifted senior national women's squad spinner.

The Emerging Player (Boys) prize was won by a promising medium pacer Khalidi Amiri.

Amiri was a standout performer when the senior national men's team clinched the 2026 ICC Men's T20 World Cup Sub Regional Africa Qualifier A's silverware in the event which took place in Dar es Sa-

laam from September 21-26.

This season's Best Bowler (Senior-Men) gong was won by talented youthful player, Laksh Bakrania.

Bakrania guided Tanzania to triumph in the ICC Men's U-19 World Cup Africa Division 2 Qualifier which took place in Dar es Salaam from August 2-8.

Mohamed Omary also had the last laugh in the senior men's honours, lifting the Best Batsman (Senior - Men) prize.

Sanjay Thakor was the other cricketer with a memorable night, given the performer won two awards.

Thakor secured the Best All-Rounder (Senior - Men) and the TCA MVP (Men) awards.

He was one of the best performers when Tanzania took part in the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup Challenge League B in Uganda from November 5-16.

The Development Officer of the Year award was won by Seif Khalifa, currently working at the Gairo Cricket Training Centre in Morogoro.

The Umpire of the Year award went to Arsalan Premji, also Aga Khan SC performer in regional club tournaments.

The TCA congratulated all winners for their incredible achievements.



Lina PG Tour receives sponsorship support for 2024 event

By Guardian Correspondent

LINA PG Tour, a prestigious tournament honouring the legacy of Lina Nkya, one of the most celebrated figures in Tanzanian golf, now will be sponsored by NCBA Bank Tanzania. Scheduled to take place from December 19 to 22, 2024, at the Dar es Salaam Gymkhana Club, the event pays tribute to Nkya's extraordinary contributions to women's golf in Tanzania and internationally.

The Lina PG Tour, established in memory of Lina Nkya following her passing in 2021, brings together professional and amateur golfers in a Pro-Am format.

Known as the "Mother Golfer," Nkya dedicated her life to promoting women's golf, leaving a legacy that continues to

inspire generations.

The tour serves as a platform to honor her work, celebrate golfing talent, and foster inclusivity in the sport.

The bank's sponsorship of the Lina PG Tour includes providing essential support such as food and beverages for participants throughout the four-day event.

This contribution highlights the bank's commitment to enriching the experience for all involved and aligns with its broader mission to promote sports as a vehicle for community empowerment.

The Lina PG Tour sponsorship is the latest in a series of impactful golfing initiatives spearheaded by the bank in 2024.

Earlier this year, the bank

hosted the NCBA Golf Series, a flagship event that has become East Africa's most celebrated golfing tournament.

The series brought together participants from Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda, and Rwanda, culminating in a grand finale in Nairobi. Tanzanian representatives, including Earnest Sengue, Stephen Chuwalo, and Lawrence Ogutu Opondo, showcased their talent at the finals with full sponsorship from the bank.

In addition, the bank's Junior Golf Series saw over 80 young golfers from across Tanzania participate, underscoring the bank's commitment to nurturing grassroots talent.

The series featured juniors from Lugalo, Morogoro, Arusha, TPC Moshi, Zanzibar, and Dar

es Salaam Gymkhana, offering a platform to foster the next generation of golfing champions.

Speaking on the Lina PG Tour sponsorship, the bank's Managing Director, Claver Serumaga, remarked: "Lina Nkya's dedication to advancing women's golf left an indelible mark on the sport. Through the Lina PG Tour, we honour her incredible legacy and reaffirm our commitment to supporting initiatives that inspire and empower communities."

"We believe that sports have the power to transform lives, and we are proud to be part of this significant event."

The Lina PG Tour is more than just a competition, it is a celebration of Lina Nkya's vision for golf as a sport that unites, inspires, and empowers.

Ancelotti delighted to become Real Madrid's most successful manager

DOHA, Qatar

REAL Madrid's Intercontinental Cup triumph marked a remarkable milestone for Carlo Ancelotti on Wednesday as the Italian became the manager with the most titles in the club's history with a total of 15 trophies.

After his side breezed past Pachuca 3-0 in a largely one-sided contest at the Lusail Stadium in Qatar, Ancelotti surpassed the late Miguel Munoz, whom he equalled in August by winning the European Super Cup against Atalanta.

"There are so many of them (titles)! I'm delighted, really happy... it's a success story," a smiley Ancelotti told Spanish television channel Telecinco.

"Today I really liked the attitude from the players. Up front, they made the difference, Vinicius Jr had a great game. Offensively we did well.

"We have a lot of quality. Kylian (Mbappe) had a good game, Rodrygo scored the second... We are very happy because we won a title far from home and in the middle of a busy season."

The 65-year-old Ancelotti has one of the most decorated CVs in world football.

When he was lured back to Madrid for a second spell three years ago, following the departure of club great Zinedine Zidane, he knew that his only mission was to increase Real's trophy haul and he has not disappointed.

He became the first manager to capture titles in each of Europe's top five leagues - England, Spain, Germany, Italy and France - and has guided Real Madrid to two Champions League and LaLiga doubles in three seasons.

Ancelotti's Real Madrid silverware includes three Champions League titles, two Club World Cups, three European Super Cups, two Spanish League titles, two Spanish Cups, two Spanish Super Cups and, now, one Intercontinental Cup title.

Arsenal's hat-trick hero Jesus set for another battle with Palace on Saturday

LONDON

GABRIEL Jesus expects "another war" with Crystal Palace at the weekend, after the Arsenal forward led the charge with a second-half hat-trick in a 3-2 comeback win to reach the League Cup semi-finals on Wednesday.

Arsenal, third in the table, will look to pick up their first Premier League win in three matches when they visit 15th-placed Palace on Saturday. Palace are unbeaten in their last five league games.

"They have a lot of qualities up front, down the middle, at the back, so we have to compete," Jesus told Arsenal's official website.

"We know it's not easy, like today, they have quality players, a strong team, that'll be another war, and we'll have to try to win the game."

The Brazil international, who is yet to score a Premier League goal this season, said walking out with his daughter gave him strength.

He dedicated the hat-trick to the baby he announced his partner was expecting the day before the match.

"I had pressure on my shoulders to score today, and then I walked on to the pitch with my daughter as well, so she gave me power, a smile, everything," the 27-year-old added.

REUTERS

Luis Enrique praises PSG grit after Donnarumma face injury

MONACO, France

PARIS St Germain coach Luis Enrique declined to criticise referee Francois Letexier for not sending off AS Monaco defender Wilfried Singo on Wednesday after a dangerous challenge left PSG keeper Gianluigi Donnarumma with a gashed face.

PSG came back from 2-1 down to win 4-2 at Monaco but they had to replace Donnarumma midway through the first half after Singo's studs-up challenge left a number of nasty gashes on the goalkeeper's face. "The refereeing decisions? I can't do anything, I couldn't see the action, but when you see an action like that it's always difficult," Luis Enrique said in a post-match interview.

"The players don't intend to hurt. It's difficult to referee this kind of match, I'm not talking about the refereeing work," he added.

Singo had been booked a few minutes previously, but French media reported that the referee saw the contact as incidental, rather than deliberate, and allowed him to remain on the field. Donnarumma, however, had to be replaced by reserve keeper Matvey Safonov.

Despite going 2-1 behind in the second half, PSG bounced back with a goal from Goncalo Ramos and a brace from Ousmane Dembele to extend their unbeaten run in the league this season to 16 games.

REUTERS

Mafia infiltration of soccer 'ultras' spreads in Italy

By Emilio Parodi and Elvira Pollina

ITALIAN crime bosses and the far-right are tapping into the muscle and money-spinning activities of hardline 'ultra' soccer fans in several Italian cities, with mobsters even seeking to take control of some smaller clubs, according to Italy's leading anti-mafia prosecutor.

An investigation by Milan prosecutors and the office of the national anti-mafia prosecutor found that ultra groups at Inter and AC Milan, two of the biggest names in Italian soccer, have allegedly become enmeshed with crime gangs.

Leaders of the ultras, with links to members of Italy's notorious 'Ndrangheta mafia, run ticket scams and protection rackets on drink stands and car parks around the city's San Siro stadium, which both clubs share, prosecutors say.

Police in September arrested 19 high-profile members of the clubs' ultras as part of an investigation given extra urgency by the killing of Antonio Bellocco, a leading figure in the 'Ndrangheta and a prominent Inter Milan ultra, outside a boxing gym that month.

In a 568-page arrest document, prosecutors traced a direct link between leaders of Inter's 'Curva Nord' - the main ultra group at the Italian champions - and the 'Ndrangheta, the country's largest organised crime group.

"Inter as a club is in a subservient position in its dealings with members of the Curva Nord," prosecutors wrote in the document, reviewed by Reuters.

Subsequent investigations have also linked a leading AC Milan ultra to alleged drug trafficking and the 'Ndrangheta.

Criminal infiltration extends well beyond Milan to a number of other Italian cities, with mobsters seeking to gain sway over fans and clubs at all levels of the professional game, according to the documents and interviews with two prosecutors.

Inter and city rivals AC Milan, both owned by U.S. investors, said they are cooperating with the authorities.

"I want to reassure all our fans that we are the injured party, as the authorities have said," Inter President Giuseppe Marotta told broadcaster Sky in October. The club declined further comment when approached by Reuters.

AC Milan said it had provided the authorities with all the documentation they requested. "We're continuing to follow the guidance of the experts from the prosecutor's office to identify and work on the areas where we need to intervene," the club said in a statement.

'MILITARY CONTROL'

Most Italian soccer clubs are backed by groups of ultras - supporters who bring banners, coordinate chanting via megaphone and put on mosaic-style dis-



General view of fans with flares during the Serie A match Inter Milan v AC Milan at San Siro, in Milan, Italy on September 22, 2024. REUTERS

plays at matches. Their rituals have been copied by hardcore fan groups across Europe.

Tracing their roots back to the 1960s, these groups have long had a violent element, clashing with rival gangs and splintering into an array of feuding factions.

"The stadium is a place where for a long time it was considered necessary to tolerate and at most contain examples of blatant illegality, governed by organised groups that exercise an almost military control over the stands," said Giovanni Melillo, Italy's Anti-Mafia and Anti-Terrorism Chief Prosecutor.

He told Reuters such groups used "intimidation and violent retribution" to control business activities linked to soccer grounds.

Prosecutors have stepped up their investigations into these groups following the murders of two Inter ultras leaders with ties to the criminal underworld in the past two years.

Melillo coordinates four deputy prosecutors dedicated to uncovering the crossover between soccer, organised crime and political extremism across Italy.

"Investigations...show the interest of mafia groups in acquiring control of a football club, seen as an extraordinary vehicle for business expansion and social consensus," he added.

That was particularly evident in the lower divisions, where clubs still have significant levels of business activity, he said. He declined to identify any clubs because investigations are ongoing.

MURDERS IN MILAN

Bellocco was stabbed to death in an apparent settling of scores in September by Andrea Beretta, a 49-year-old fellow Inter ultra leader, who claimed he acted in self-defence.

Behind bars and fearing for his life, Beretta has been transferred to a prison away from Milan and is cooperating with investigations, according to two judicial sources.

Reuters was unable to reach him for comment.

Two years earlier, Vittorio Boiocchi, a 69-year-old leader of the Inter ultras with a long criminal record, was gunned down outside his home in a murder that remains unsolved.

Inter fans approached by Reuters at the San Siro before a Champions League match with German club RB Leipzig in late November were

reluctant to discuss the ultras.

One Milanese man, aged 57, who declined to give his name, said an odd atmosphere was apparent in parts of the stadium.

"If you go on the Curva Nord you see that there is a bit of everything: smoking drugs, alcohol, but above all the drumsticks. There are a lot more of them than they than need for beating the drums, and the sticks are also longer," he said.

"This is not support: it's thuggery."

Antonio Ricciato, head of the Federation of Italian Soccer Supporters (FISSC), rejects the idea that there are "no-go areas" for ordinary fans in stadiums. He said some fan groups help to make Italian soccer more marketable.

"There are parts of the ground where football is a different experience than in other areas and this is a fundamental part of the spectacle," he said.

PLAYERS, COACHES UNDER PRESSURE

National prosecutor Melillo said players and coaches were exposed to

intimidation from hardline fans who can make or break their careers.

"The relationship with these groups is considered in some cases crucial for the future of clubs, coaches and players."

In the past, investigations into such relationships had helped to uncover betting scandals but the nature of modern gambling made that much more difficult, he said. "In a system where people even bet on the number of corners or offsides in a match, it is much more difficult to understand what is going on," he said.

Umberto Calcagno, a former player who is president of the Italian footballers' association, said his organisation has been monitoring the problem of intimidation for the past decade in reports entitled "Footballers under Fire".

"There has been an exponential increase in the last 10 seasons of incidents, intimidation, violence and threats suffered by footballers, and this really affects all leagues," he said.

In one incident, shots were fired into a car

and neo-Nazis and white supremacist groups.

Previous probes of neo-nazis in Lombardy - which includes Milan - as well as the Veneto and Lazio regions have shown that many of them were members of ultra groups.

The concern about such alleged ties was underlined when the city of Amsterdam banned supporters of Rome-based Lazio from attending a Europa League game with Ajax on Dec. 12.

"Supporters of Lazio are not welcome in Amsterdam," the municipality said in a statement. "The risk of extreme-right, antisemitic, racist expressions and disturbances is too high."

Lazio called the comments "discriminatory and offensive" and said the club leadership had always sought to combat racism.

Melillo cited an attack on the headquarters of Italian trades union CGIL during protests over COVID restrictions in Rome in 2021 as a moment when fans of Lazio and bitter rivals AS Roma put aside their differences to target a political foe.

CGIL was selected because of its left-wing sympathies in a demonstration led by the local leader of neo-fascist group Forza Nuova, backed by Roma and Lazio ultras.

Melillo underlines that ultras are ripe for exploitation by political extremists and organised crime.

"It's a European phenomenon, not just Italian, in which real paramilitary militias are growing, ready to be hired for other illicit purposes too, which have nothing to do with football," he said. (\$1 = 0.9480 euros)

REUTERS

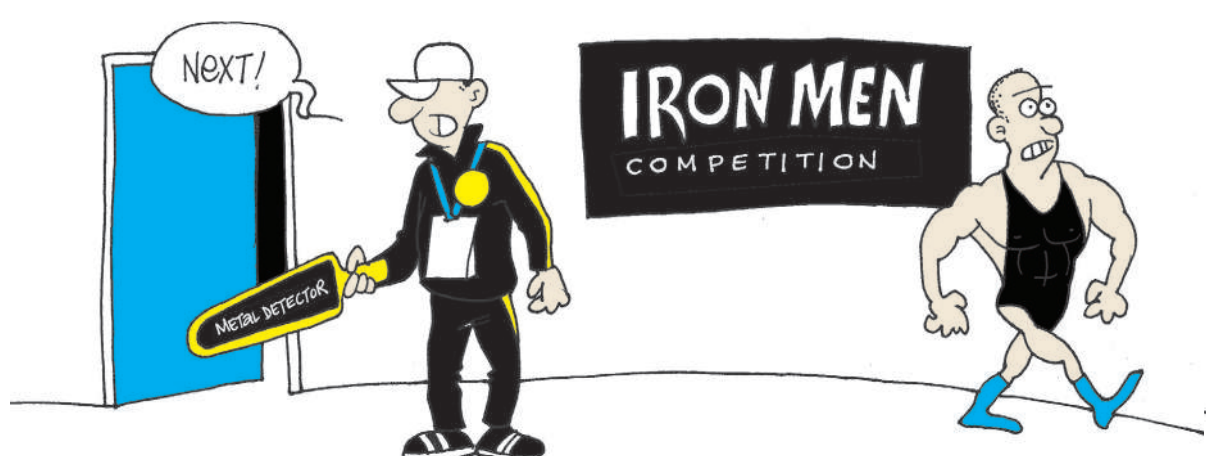
BEYOND THE TERRACES

Prosecutors are also investigating the crossover between the ultras



An AC Milan supporter wears a patch depicting an AC Milan ultras and the Virgin Mary statue atop Milan's Cathedral, symbol of the city, in San Siro Stadium during Serie A match AC Milan v Empoli, in Milan, Italy, November 30, 2024. REUTERS

Gwiji by David Chikoko



SPORT

Mafia infiltration of soccer 'ultras' spreads in Italy

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Dube's hat-trick seals 3-2 victory for Yanga over Mashujaa



Young Africans striker Prince Dube celebrates his third goal with his teammate Duke Abuya during their Premier League match against Mashujaa FC held at KMC Complex yesterday. Photo: Courtesy of YASC

By Guardian Correspondent

AHAT-TRICK from Prince Dube gave Young Africans a hard-fought 3-2 win against Mashujaa FC during their Premier League match held at the KMC Complex yesterday.

Young Africans started the game attacking Mashujaa from the first whistle. In the second minute, striker Clement Mzize missed a good chance when his powerful shot went over the crossbar following a cross from Attohua Yao.

Three minutes later, Dube missed another opportunity when he failed to connect with a cross from Pacome Zouzoua.

However, using the right flank for their attacks, Young Africans scored their first goal through Dube in the seventh

minute.

He finished superbly following a counterattack and a precise pass from Zouzoua, catching the Mashujaa defenders unprepared.

Dube was on the scoresheet again in the

22nd minute, heading home a second goal after an assist from Mzize.

Mashujaa made their first serious attempt in the 33rd minute when Young Africans defender Ibrahim Bacca was called to action,

blocking a shot from Ismail Mgunda inside the six-yard box.

Dube remained a constant threat and narrowly missed another chance in the 37th minute when his shot went just inches wide

of the post.

When it seemed like the first half would end with a two-goal lead, Mashujaa struck back. David Ulomi unleashed a 20-meter low shot in stoppage time that gave goalkeeper Abubakar Khoneimy no chance.

In the second half, Dube completed his hat-trick in the 52nd minute, heading home a long cross from defender Shomari Kibwana.

Mashujaa responded in the 62nd minute when substitute Idrisa Stambuli fired a 20-meter powerful shot that Khoneimy failed to stop.

The win lifted Young Africans to third position with 30 points after 12 matches. They trail league leaders Azam FC, who have 33 points from 15 matches, and second-placed Simba, who have 31 points after 12 matches.

Young Africans Sports Club starting line-up:

Abubakar Khoneimy, Attohua Yao, Shomari Kibwana, Dickson Job, Ibrahim Bacca, Khalidi Aucho, Clement Mzize, Duke Abuya, Prince Dube, Stephane Aziz Ki, Pacome Zouzoua

Mashujaa Football Club starting line-up:

Munthary, Abrahaman, Gamal, Ame, Abdulmarlik, Dunia, Cheda, Mgandila, Mgunda, Ulomi, Balama



Namungo FC aiming for vital win to escape relegation zone

By Correspondent Michael Mwebe

NAMUNGO FC play host to JKT Tanzania this evening looking for the win that could move the club further away from the relegation zone.

Hurtling towards the halfway point of the 2024/25 campaign, Namungo are languishing down in 13th position in the Premier League standings, just one point above Pamba Jiji in the highest of the relegation spots and a mammoth 14 points behind fifth-placed Tabora United, who look increasingly dangerous under the stewardship of Anicet Makiadi.

They come into the match on the back of a vital 3-2 win at KenGold in the Premier League last weekend.

It was a huge win for the Southern Killers as they were trailing 2-0 in the opening ten minutes of the match. They opened their scoring in the 25th minute to cut KenGold's lead to a 2-1 then added a second ten minutes later to make it 2-2 before the interval.

In the second half, Namungo found a dramatic late winner to claim maximum points. The victory over KenGold was the first win in five games for Namungo in the Premier League.

There have been defeats at home to Young Africans and away to Mashujaa and KMC plus a draw at Kagera Sugar.

Although victory over KenGold was enough to keep Namungo one point clear of the relegation zone, recently appointed head coach Juma Mgunda (pictured) knows that there cannot be any let-up from his players if he wishes to keep his job in the long term.

Namungo remain with the joint worst home records in the division, collecting just six points from six games.

They have suffered home defeats to Young Africans, Azam, Fountain Gate and Tabora United while managing to beat Tanzania Prisons and Pamba Jiji.

JKT Tanzania are doing admirably so far this term considering that they lack quality options in attack, as shown by the fact that former Simba striker John Bocco leads the club's Golden Boot race boasting just two goals, with the 35-year-old scoring in just one of his 11 appearances so far.

The army side head into this encounter having drawn their most recent two matches. They were held to barren home draws against Mashujaa and Pamba Jiji.

Just one defeat has been posted in five games - that coming away at Dodoma Jiji, leaving the club off the top four race and comfortably away from the relegation battle.

Davids praises Simba's resilience after win over KenGold

By Correspondent Seth Mapoli

SIMBA SC head coach Fadlu Davids lauded his team's determination and adaptability following their 2-0 win against KenGold FC in a Premier League match played at the KMC Complex on Wednesday.

Despite a packed schedule, Davids expressed satisfaction with his players' ability to secure the clean sheet and maintain their form.

"I give credit to KenGold FC; they challenged us," Davids said after the match. "Just two days ago, we had a very intense CAF Confederation Cup game against CS Sfaxien. I'm happy with how my players approached this match, and keeping a clean sheet is a bonus."

Davids emphasized the importance of performance in training as the basis for squad rotation.

"It's not just about giving players minutes; it's about rewarding their hard work during training sessions," he explained. "We missed Shomari Kapombe, who was replaced by Kelvin Kijili. Kapombe picked up a knock, and the medical team will assess him before our next match against Kagera Sugar."

Acknowledging the tight

schedule, Davids noted the physical demands on his squad.

"It's hard to prepare with just two days between matches, but we focus on recovery to keep the energy and momentum going," he said.

Simba will face Kagera Sugar at Kaitaba Stadium tomorrow in another crucial league encounter. The team will then return to Dar es Salaam for a December 24 fixture against JKT Tanzania before traveling to Singida to face Singida Black Stars on December 28.

The congested fixture list means Simba will play matches almost every three days as they close out 2024.

Cameroonian striker Lionel Ateba was the star of victory, scoring both goals to secure three points for Simba. Ateba opened the scoring with a precise penalty shot and added a second to seal the win, continuing his impressive form this season. His performance earned him the Man of the Match award, presented by league sponsor NBC Bank.

This marks Ateba's second Man of the Match award this season. With five league goals, he now ranks third in the top scorers' race, trailing Singida Black Stars' Elvis Rupia, who leads with

seven goals, and Suleiman Mwalimu, who has six.

Ateba shares the third spot with his Simba teammate Jean Charles Ahoua, both of whom have scored five goals each.

Simba's win against KenGold FC extends their remarkable league campaign, marked by consistent performances and strategic squad management. The team's ability to balance domestic and continental commitments highlights their depth and resilience.

As they prepare for their upcoming clash against Kagera Sugar, Simba will look to maintain their momentum and strengthen their position in the league standings.

With Ateba in fine form and Davids strategically rotating the squad, the team remains a formidable contender as the season progresses.

The match against Kagera Sugar promises to be a test of Simba's endurance and tactical flexibility. With key players like Kapombe potentially sidelined, the coaching staff will need to carefully manage resources to navigate the demanding schedule.

Simba's focus on recovery and preparation will be critical as they aim to finish the year on a high note.



Simba SC striker Leonel Ateba pictured on Wednesday with his Man of the Match award.

Flexibles by David Chikoko

