



### National Pg 3 Stakeholders in Dar to address fisheries challenges



### National Pg 4 Call for funding of STEM education programmes



### National Pg 6 Z'bar 1st VP highlights challenges faced by PwDs



# Collective harmony in peril, cautions Warioba

*If we start involving them, they will be divided, and such a large institution like the police being divided is dangerous. I think we've gone too far; we must find a way not to continue this process*

By Henry Mwangonde

THE need for top-level intervention on the conduct of the recent local government election, as well as abductions and killings has come up, with a warning that these incidents threaten national unity.

Judge (rtd) Joseph Warioba, a former prime minister, raised profound concerns on what he described as misuse of state security institutions, mishandling of the polls as well as past and more recent incidents of abductions or killings.

He raised the issues in a meeting with members of the Tanzania Editors' Forum (TEF), stressing that current developments pose a

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Two of eight people now in police hands in connection with an attempt to kidnap a businessman at Kiluvya in Kisarawe District, Coast Region, are led from a police vehicle yesterday and on to Dar es Salaam's Central Police Station after being arrested. Photo: Correspondent Imani Nathaniel

## Fuel prices slide, even with higher import costs

By Guardian Reporter

DESPITE a rise in the average cost of importing fuel (premiums), with petrol increasing by 7.26 percent, diesel by 12.8 percent and kerosene by 7.1 percent at the Dar es Salaam port, retail prices are in slight decline.

Dr James Mwainyekule, the Energy and Water Utilities Regulatory Authority (Ewura) director general, said in a statement yesterday retail fuel prices for products imported through various ports drop starting immediately.

Ex-Tanga port charges showed no changes, with petrol premiums rising by an average of 15.6 percent, meanwhile as there were no changes in diesel premium, imported through Mtwara port.

Ex-Dar es Salaam port retail prices for petrol, diesel and kerosene dropped by 1.5 percent, 2.3 percent, and 3.9 percent respectively, resulting in the price of one litre of petrol inching down to 2,898/- from 2,943/- in November. Diesel declines to



**It is illegal to sell fuel without visible price signage**

2,779/- per litre from 2,844/-, with kerosene selling for 2,831/- per litre, from 2,943/- earlier.

The regulator set ex-Tanga port retail prices at 2,905/- for petrol, 2,792/- for diesel and 2,877/- for kerosene per litre, lower than November prices of 2,948/- for petrol, 2,855/- for diesel and 2,989/- for kerosene.

For consumers using fuel from Mtwara port, prices slide to 2,908/- for petrol (from 3,015/-), 2,851/- for diesel (from 2,916/-), and 2,903/- for kerosene (from 3,016/-).

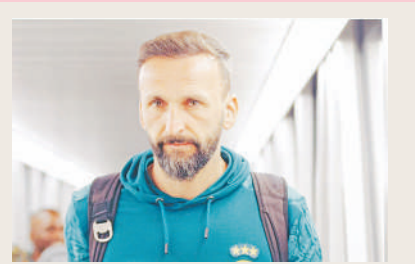
The agency appealed to oil companies to maintain competitive pricing, ensuring that prices do not exceed the maximum allowed or fall below the minimum set by the government, as per the 2022 petroleum price setting regulations.

Fuel stations must clearly display their prices on visible signage, showing the price per litre and any discounts or commercial incentives offered, the statement intoned.

"Where possible, customers are encouraged to purchase fuel from stations that offer the lowest prices to promote compe-

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## SPORTS Page 20



**Ramovic confident as Yanga travel to Algeria for Group A redemption**

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**Yamal's return inspired Barca to commanding win at Mallorca, says Flick**

## Samia cancels Independence Day national level ceremonies

### Earmarked funds to be redirected to social services

By Guardian Reporter

ACTIVITIES to mark 63 years of independence will be held at the regional level, with funds allocated for the celebrations to be redirected to social services, the government had announced.

Prime Minister Kassim Majaliwa issued this directive yesterday, citing instructions by President Samia Suluhu Hassan, the commander in chief of the armed forces.

He issued these instructions during a cabinet working session in the capital yesterday, noting that this year's commemoration will not include a military parade or other national activities.



**Fabrics in the national flag colours, along with portraits of the Father of the Nation and President Samia Suluhu Hassan**

Each region will see to it that districts engage in social activities, including tree planting, environmental clean-up efforts in community spaces such as markets, hospitals and centres for the elderly and those with special needs, he stated.

He urged the public to participate in these activities, taking pride in the unique achievements that have stemmed from the country's independence.

Regional commissioners need to fully adhere to the specific instructions issued by the government to ensure the commemoration activities are carried out efficiently, in order to pay homage to

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## Stone Town repainting: Three years projection

### Local tourism professionals are hopeful that the project will enhance the island's appeal to international and domestic tourists

By Guardian Reporter, Zanzibar

EXTENSIVE repainting of the Stone Town, a project taking off this week, is expected to take nearly three years to complete.

Ali Said Bakari, the Stone Town Conservation and Development Authority (STC-DA) director general, said here yesterday that preparations have been completed for the work to start on schedule, to uplift

one of East Africa's most historic and culturally significant areas.

The agency will oversee the revitalisation effort in collaboration with Infinity Group, a leading property development firm, to restore the beauty of Stone Town's public and private buildings, enhancing the visual appeal of the UNESCO World Heritage site, he said.

"We are excited to kick off this transformative initiative that will significantly

improve the appearance of Stone Town, while also benefiting the local economy," he said.

The repainting effort follows the successful renovation of the Old Fort, another iconic Zanzibar landmark, with the wider effort expected to generate significant economic benefits by attracting more tourists.

Over 120 people will be employed as part of the project, with local artisans and painters getting the chance to participate in restoring the fleet of more than 2,700 buildings, comprising homes, hotels, shops and restaurants.

Stone Town's unique architectural her-

itage has long been a draw for tourists. The town's coral stone buildings and intricately carved doors represent a blend of African, Arab, Persian, Indian and European influences. However, decades of weathering have taken their toll, leaving the buildings faded and worn.

Infinity Group chairman Samuel Saba said that the repainting project is aimed at preserving the traditional charm of the area while making it more vibrant and appealing to visitors.

"We're using environmentally friendly, long-lasting paints that are consonant with UNESCO guidelines and Zanzibar preserva-

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# Collective harmony in peril, cautions Warioba

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significant threat to the country's peace.

If the government does not take decisive action on these issues, it could lead to divisions that would jeopardize the country's peace in a systematic way, he stated.

The former premier opened his remarks with observations on the civic polls late last month, noting that the public had hoped the elections would be different from 2019, but the situation was unchanged.

"The same issues occurred, and the primary cause is election administrators. If we persist with this approach, we are creating an environment that could lead to unrest, threatening our peace," he declared.

He highlighted a key issue—the disqualification of many opposition party candidates on the grounds of incorrectly filled forms and procedural violations—which created the impression that ruling CCM candidates were in the clear.

"It is not possible for the public to believe that those disqualified made mistakes, as those disqualified were from one side. There are parties where candidates know and follow the rules, and there are others where candidates do not," he said.

He recalled the 1995 general election, which caused divisions and led to problems in Zanzibar, including hatred and hostility. He said he and a number of his colleagues advised top leaders to prevent such situations from persisting.

He stressed the importance of authorities responsible for overseeing elections to take measures to ensure their being properly conducted.

"From the discussions since 2019 until now, the perception surrounding this year's election is no different from that of 2019. As a result, next year's election will be the same unless we take action to avoid the same outcome as the previous one," he asserted.

If necessary dialogue should be pursued to resolve the challenges that have emerged, he said, elaborating that one thing is to urge the president to take action. "The problems we have, in a large way, require the president to take action. If there is a need to discuss, let's talk. I fear

that if we continue like this, the peace we have will be broken, and nothing is more important in this country than the peace we have," he emphasised.

In response to questions about the government's report after the elections, Warioba remarked, "I saw the government claiming a 100 percent success in this election, but how can they say they were 100 percent successful when we have lost lives? This shocked me. And honestly, I fear the issues I am raising could happen again."

"I am talking about Tanzanians, not political parties, but it seems when a Tanzanian dies or goes missing, it becomes a political issue. We are all Tanzanians, let us not view each other through the lens of party membership, because unity belongs to Tanzanians, and it is this unity that brings the peace we have."

He cited the work of the police, expressing disappointment that the force has been dragged into political tussles.

"The police are a very important body. They protect citizens and their property and should work with all the people. In recent years, we have dragged the police force into politics. They have made political statements, and this will cause division. The public will be split. Let the police do their regular work," he urged.

Emphasizing that the police are ordinary citizens like everyone else, with their own views and preferences, he said that when it comes to politics, they have their opinions. When they go to vote, each one has their preferences.

"If we start involving them, they will be divided, and such a large institution like the police being divided is dangerous. I think we've gone too far; we must find a way not to continue this process," he said.

On constitutional reforms, Warioba stated that he does not see political will for constitutional changes despite their importance.

*It is not possible for the public to believe that those disqualified made mistakes, as those disqualified were from one side...*

# Stone Town repainting: Three years projection

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tion rules," he stated, elaborating that the project is about both restoring the town's historical character and injecting it with fresh energy.

The project will create indirect jobs in various sectors, such as transportation, supply chain management and administrative positions, he said, noting that by sourcing most of the workforce locally, its economic benefits will reach a wide cross-section of the community.

Infinity Group has a track record of balancing modern development with cultural preservation, as evidenced by their previous project, Mnazi Mmoja Gardens, a public park that has become a hub for social and recreational activities.

While the painting will revitalize the area's aesthetics, preserving the authenticity of Stone Town's historic buildings is uppermost, as the repainting process will involve consultation with heritage experts, urban planners, and the Zanzibar

Antiquities Department.

This will ensure compliance with Zanzibar's rigorous cultural preservation standards, the company executive affirmed, underlining that future generations will be assured of experiencing the beauty of Stone Town as it has always been, "with a vibrant, updated look."

The repainting of Stone Town is expected to further enhance Zanzibar's status as a major tourist destination. The rejuvenation of the town, alongside other ongoing restoration efforts such as the Old Fort, will attract more visitors and enrich the cultural experience for those who already visit.

Local tourism professionals are hopeful that the project will enhance the island's appeal to international and domestic tourists.

Zainab Ally, operating a crafts shop said that residents had seen the positive impact of the Old Fort restoration, and expect the current project to have the same effect.

ensure they receive these receipts, which must include the station's name, date, fuel type and price per litre, it further noted.

These receipts serve as proof in case of complaints about overcharging or receiving substandard fuel, and also assist in facilitating the collection of government taxes from petroleum sales, the statement added.

# Fuel prices slide, even with higher import costs

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tion. It is illegal to sell fuel without visible price signage," the agency insisted.

Stations that fail to comply with these regulations will face penalties, it said, elaborating that fuel retailers need to issue receipts from electronic fiscal pump printers.

Customers are encouraged to



Masozi Nyirenda (L), Tanzania Education Authority's Director of Fundraising and Project Management, pictured yesterday making an inspection tour of progress in the implementation of a science laboratory project at Kasulu District's Nyakitonto Secondary School. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

# Samia cancels Independence Day national level ceremonies

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our Independence Day, he said.

Activities marking the 63rd anniversary of independence began

on December 2 and will reach the climax on December 9, where government institutions and security organs are instructed to decorate government buildings.

Fabrics in the national flag colours, along with portraits of the Father of the Nation and President Samia Suluhu Hassan, he said.

The theme for this year's celebra-

tion is '63 years of Tanganyika Independence: Strong leadership and citizen engagement are the foundation of our development,' the premier added.



Dodoma district commissioner Jabir Shekimwari pictured in Dodoma city yesterday opening a meeting organised by the Tanzania Chapter of the Media Institute of Southern Africa. Photo: Correspondent Ibrahim Joseph

# New UN aid Chief vows 'Ruthless' spending cuts amid funding crisis

By Special Correspondent

THE new head of the U.N. humanitarian aid agency says it will be "ruthless" when prioritizing how to spend money, a nod to challenges in fundraising for civilians in war zones like Gaza, Sudan, Syria and Ukraine.

Tom Fletcher, a longtime British diplomat who took up the U.N. post last month, said his agency is asking for less money in 2025 than this year. He said it wants to show "we will focus and target the resources we have," even as crises become more intense and long-lasting.

His agency, the U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, on Wednesday issued its global appeal for 2025, seeking \$47 billion to help 190 million people in 32 countries – though it estimates

305 million worldwide need help. "The world is on fire, and this is how we put it out," he told reporters on Tuesday.

The office and many other aid groups, including the International Red Cross, have seen donations shrink in recent years for longtime trouble spots like Syria, South Sudan, the Middle East and Congo and newer ones like Ukraine and Sudan. Aid access has been difficult in some places, especially Sudan and Gaza.

The office's appeal for \$50 billion for this year was only 43 percent fulfilled as of last month. One consequence of that shortfall was a 80 percent reduction in food aid for Syria, which has seen a sudden escalation in fighting recently.

Such funds go to U.N. agencies

and more than 1,500 partner organizations.

The biggest asks for 2025 are for Syria – a total of \$8.7 billion for needs both within the country and for neighbours that have taken in Syrian refugees – as well as Sudan at a total of \$6 billion, the "Occupied Palestinian Territory" at \$4 billion, Ukraine at about \$3.3 billion and Congo at nearly \$3.2 billion.

Fletcher said his office needs to be "ruthless" in choosing to reach people most in need.

"I choose that word carefully, because it's a judgement call – that ruthlessness – about prioritizing where the funding goes and where we can have the greatest impact," he said. "It's a recognition that we have struggled in previous years to raise the money we need."

In response to questions about how much President-elect Donald Trump of the United States – the U.N.'s biggest single donor – will spend on humanitarian aid, Fletcher said he expects to spend "a lot of time" in Washington over the next few months to talk with the new administration.

"America is very much on our minds at the moment," he said, acknowledging some governments "will be more questioning of what the United Nations does and less ideologically supportive of this humanitarian effort" laid out in the new report.

This year has been the deadliest on record for humanitarians and U.N. staff, largely due to the Middle East conflict triggered by Palestinian militants' deadly Oct. 7, 2023 attack in Israel.





Dr Khalid Salum Muhammed (L), Zanzibar's Works, Communications and Transportation minister, has an audience with Mwalimu Nyerere Memorial Academy board chairman Steven Wassira during the latter's visit to the Zanzibar House of Representatives on Tuesday. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

By Guardian Reporter

## EPZA highlights shared investment scheme for industrial development

THE Export Processing Zones Authority (EPZA) has identified the Collective Investment Scheme as a crucial funding mechanism for developing industrial sheds and warehouses to support various industrial activities.

EPZA Director General Charles Itembe made the statement made in Dar es Salaam on Tuesday, explaining that the scheme, which is based on recommendations from capital market stakeholders, aims to fund the construction of industrial sheds and warehouses for lease to industrial investors.

Itembe noted that surveys have shown strong demand for infrastructure essential for industrial operations, including industrial sheds and warehouses.

He emphasized that the initiative is critical for mobilising funds to develop such infrastructure in the Bagamoyo Special Economic Zone, where vital projects like roads and water supply are already underway.

"We are developing key infrastructure in the Bagamoyo Special Economic Zone and

simultaneously working to attract more investors," he said, adding that the initiative could help secure funding for industrial infrastructure before the project is completed.

With the Benjamin William Mkapa Special Economic Zone in Dar es Salaam now fully occupied, Itembe called for accelerated infrastructure development in Bagamoyo and other regions.

He pointed out that the scheme offers an attractive investment opportunity for both local and foreign investors, with the potential for returns similar to those of government and corporate bonds.

The initiative aims to bring together retail investors, institutional investors such as pension funds, corporate investors, and those funding sustainable projects.

Itembe also announced plans to release an information memorandum approved by the Capital Markets and Securities Authority

(CMSA) for marketing the scheme.

The Director General highlighted the success of the Benjamin William Mkapa Special Economic Zone, which has attracted investors in garment production for the US market, bank card manufacturing, and agricultural processing, generating an annual sales turnover of \$70 million and creating 5,000 jobs with \$400 million in capital investment.

EPZA has also attracted over 220 export-oriented factories, with \$5 billion in capital investment and \$3.5 billion in export sales. The government continues to prepare additional investment zones across the country.

Itembe concluded that the Bagamoyo area, covering 980 hectares, will be developed into an industrial city, with a focus on involving Tanzanians in the process and creating local wealth. Through public-private partnerships, the government plans to invest in both basic and advanced infrastructure.

## SWIO stakeholders meet in Dar to address fisheries challenges

By Getrude Mbago

KEY stakeholders and decision-makers from the South-West Indian Ocean (SWIO) region have gathered in Dar es Salaam for a two-day extraordinary session aimed at addressing critical issues surrounding fisheries management in the bloc.

Under the South West Indian Ocean Fisheries Commission (SWIOFC) of the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO), the first steering committee meeting for transforming fisheries sector management in the South-West Indian Ocean Region was presided over.

In his opening remarks, Abadallah Ulega, Minister for Fisheries and Livestock, emphasised the importance of collaboration among the member countries to tackle issues collectively. He stated that the meeting is timely, as the SWIO region faces multiple challenges in fisheries management, including overfishing, illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing, climate change impacts on marine ecosystems, and inadequate management of shared fisheries resources.

"Fisheries are the lifeblood of many coastal communities in the South-West Indian Ocean region. It is therefore crucial that we work together to safeguard these resources for future generations," Minister Ulega said.

He highlighted the need for integrated management approaches that balance conservation with the livelihoods of local communities. The minister further stated that Tanzania is fully committed to strengthening its national and regional efforts to combat illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing and enhance the sustainability of its fisheries sector.

He called for better coordination among the countries of the SWIO region to manage shared fisheries resources, ensuring that no country operates in isolation but instead works collaboratively to achieve common objectives. Minister Ulega also stressed the need for improved data collection, stock assessments, and the implementation of marine protected areas as part of a broader strategy to manage marine resources sustainably.

He welcomed the newly launched SWI-

OFish 5 project, which is part of a broader initiative to improve fisheries management in the region. The project aims to enhance the sustainable use of marine resources, protect marine biodiversity, and support the livelihoods of communities dependent on fisheries. He noted that the launch aligns with ongoing efforts to address challenges such as overfishing, climate change, and the pervasive problem of illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing.

Dismas Mbabazi, SWIOFC Secretary, stated that the session underscored the importance of strengthening regional cooperation among SWIO countries to enhance the management of shared marine resources. "The discussions over the two days will focus on the need for countries to align their national fisheries policies with regional and international standards on sustainable fisheries management," he said.

He added that experts would present strategies for improving monitoring, control, and surveillance systems to prevent illegal fishing practices, which threaten fish stocks and undermine the livelihoods of local communities. The SWIOFish 5 project is expected to support the development of regional frameworks for tackling IUU fishing through improved data-sharing and joint enforcement efforts.

Dr Patrice Talla, FAO Sub-regional Coordinator for Southern Africa, highlighted that climate change has become a growing threat to the fisheries sector in the SWIO region. Rising sea temperatures, ocean acidification, and changing fish migration patterns are all impacting the health of marine ecosystems. He said the session was crucial to discuss how countries can adapt to these challenges by improving climate resilience within the fisheries sector and promoting sustainable practices that protect marine biodiversity.

He noted that accurate data on fish stocks and fisheries activities are essential for making informed management decisions. The session will also address how to improve fisheries data collection systems and support scientific research on fish stocks, which will help establish sustainable catch limits and monitor the health of marine ecosystems.

# The Guardian Limited

## VACANCY

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182777



Accelerated Market roll-out of Clean Cooking Solutions in Tanzania

### INNOVATION CHALLENGE FOR CLEAN COOKING

#### Call for Applications

##### Summary

The CookFund programme is a five-year (2021 - 2026) programme established by the Government of Tanzania (through the Ministry of Energy) in collaboration with the European Union (EU) and implemented by UNCDF. The programme aims to contribute to Tanzania's climate change commitment by increasing the share of the population with access to sustainable cooking solutions. The CookFund provides catalytic grant funds to private enterprises to address the affordability challenges that hinders the accelerated use of clean cooking solutions in households. The clean cooking solutions supported by the programme include LPG, electric pressure cookers, bioethanol, improved charcoal stoves and briquettes. The programme is focused on five regions of mainland Tanzania, namely, Dar es Salaam, Mwanza, Dodoma, Morogoro and Pwani.

##### The Call for Applications

UNCDF is inviting interested and eligible individuals and companies from across Tanzania involved in the clean cooking value chain to submit applications to the CookFund Innovations Challenge. The challenge targets **innovative solutions** in stove and fuel technology, cooking products financing and behavioural change approaches with the potential to accelerate the acceptance and use of clean cooking in Tanzania. Youth and women innovators are **encouraged** to apply. Special consideration will be provided to youth and women applications.

**Application:** For the detailed Call for Applications Guidelines (including the eligibility criteria) and Application Form, please visit <https://uncdf.link/innchallenge>.

**Language:** All application forms must be submitted in English.

**Deadline for submission:** This application is open from 25th November 2024 to 15th December 2024.

**Pre-submission info session:** UNCDF will conduct an online pre-submission info session to provide guidance on how to prepare applications, increase the understanding on submission requirements and offer applicants an opportunity to raise questions. If you wish to participate, please send an email to [cookfund.tz@uncdf.org](mailto:cookfund.tz@uncdf.org) indicating "Innovations Challenge Pre-submission Info Session" in the subject line of your email. The specific date and time for the workshop will be communicated to those who will request participation.

Please note that participation to the online pre-submission info session is not a prerequisite for responding to this call.

For further information and/or questions, please contact:

UNCDF Tanzania, Email: [cookfund.tz@uncdf.org](mailto:cookfund.tz@uncdf.org)  
Tel: +255 22 260 0911



182824



## TAEC calls for increased funding for STEM education programmes

By Beatrice Philemon

THE Director General of the Tanzania Atomic Energy Commission (TAEC), Prof. Najat Mohammed has emphasized the need for increased funding and resources for Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) programmes to better equip students to address community challenges.

Prof. Mohammed made the remarks in Dar es Salaam yesterday during the 9th Science, Technology, and Innovation Conference and Exhibition (STICE) 2024. The event, organised by the Tanzania Commission for Science and Technology (COSTECH) in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology, brought together a wide range of stakeholders.

She stressed the importance of training teachers who are competitive and competent in STEM subjects, following the example of countries such as South Korea and the United States.

The Director-General (DG) called for the advancement of STEM education for both girls and boys, saying: "We need teachers who are competent in STEM subjects, teachers who understand effective teaching methodologies, and we need to develop our curriculum."

She explained the significance of preparing both teachers and students to thrive in a rapidly evolving technological landscape.

She also highlighted urgent issues such as climate change, healthcare advancements, and non-communicable diseases, noting that science is essential in addressing these challenges and developing innovative solutions.

According to Prof. Mohammed, countries with strong STEM human capital tend to be more competitive, productive, and economically prosperous. She urged students to pursue STEM subjects, as they open up numerous opportunities due to ongoing technological advancements.

She also pointed out several areas where STEM education can create opportunities, including potential partnerships with industries and international organisations, digital transformation enabling remote and innovative learning, and the increasing demand for skilled STEM professionals.

To advance STEM education in Tanzania, Prof. Mohammed

recommended revamping the curriculum to focus on sustainability and innovation, expanding teacher training programmes with an emphasis on emerging technologies, and encouraging early exposure to STEM through extracurricular activities.

Additionally, she proposed updating national policies to incentivise STEM programmes, introducing regulations for industry-academia collaborations, training and retaining STEM educators, and establishing mentorship programmes.

Sylvester Rugeihyamu, Head of the Mathematics Department at the University of Dar es Salaam (UDSM), underscored the importance of educating both parents and students about the value of science.

"Science is not difficult, but if you think it's difficult, you're cheating yourself," he said. He noted that many students do not understand the relevance of mathematics, leading them to avoid the subject because they don't see its connection to their future careers.

Prof. Nuhu Hatib, Chairman of AfricAcademy-Arusha Science, pointed out that one of the biggest obstacles to STEM education in Tanzania is the examination system.

"If we do not change our examination system, we will not be able to keep up with technological advancements or solve community problems like countries that have invested heavily in STEM education," he said.



**If we do not change our examination system, we will not be able to keep up with technological advancements or solve community problems like countries that have invested heavily in STEM education**

## Prisoners sentenced to less than six months to vote in elections

By Guardian Reporter, Moshi

PRISONERS and vocational training inmates sentenced to less than six months will be eligible to register as voters in the upcoming general election, the Independent Electoral Commission (INEC) has announced.

Voter registration for these individuals will be conducted under Regulation 15(2)(c) of the 2024 Voter Registration Improvement Regulations.

Mtibora Seleman, Director of Legal Services at INEC, made the announcement during an election stakeholders' meeting in Kilimanjaro, where discussions focused on improving the permanent voter register. He confirmed that the initiative is part of the first phase of stakeholder engagement aimed at ensuring all eligible citizens can exercise their right to vote.

He explained that the registration process will involve 130 voter registration centres in prisons across Tanzania and 10 centres in vocational training colleges in Zanzibar.

Based on the 2022 population and housing census, Seleman projected that 5,586,433 new voters will be registered, representing 18.7 percent of the 29,754,699 eligible voters. Additionally, he stated that 4,369,531 voters are expected to update their registration details.

Seleman urged stakeholders to collaborate with the media to ensure the public receives

accurate information about the voter registration process. He emphasised the importance of avoiding misinformation related to the Electoral Commission's activities.

"If we want this process to be successful, whether it's voter registration or any other election-related activity, we must work closely with the media," Seleman said. "Journalists must ensure they follow procedures and use reliable sources when reporting."

He also called on the Immigration Department to ensure that only Tanzanian citizens are registered as voters.

Kilimanjaro Regional Prisons Commander Leonard Burushi raised a concern regarding inmates sentenced to less than six months, who will be released before the voting period. He requested that the Commission issue clear guidelines for this group.

Basil Lema, Secretary of the opposition party CHADEMA, suggested that training sessions for regional stakeholders should be extended to lower-level political party members. He stressed the importance of educating party members to encourage them to update their voter information.

In response to questions about prisoners and detainees sentenced to less than six months, Seleman assured that regulations are in place to guide the registration process for this group. He also confirmed that further education on the process will continue.



Joseph Kazurunga from the gender desk at Msalala police station in Shinyanga Region addresses girl students at a recent '16 days of activism against gender-based violence' commemoration event jointly organised by various stakeholders. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

By Guardian Reporter

## TPA best public employer 2024

THE Tanzania Ports Authority (TPA) has been declared by the Association of Tanzania Employers (ATE) Best Public Employer of 2024, simultaneously awarding the authority the top Local Employer Award of the year.

This is the third consecutive year that TPA has been recognised as the best public employer in Tanzania.

Presenting the two top awards to TPA management over the weekend, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Energy, Dr Doto Biteko, urged TPA to

maintain its momentum and strive to achieve even greater success in the coming years. He noted that TPA is a sensitive and strategic national economic institution, adding that it is a point of pride that the authority is not only performing well economically, but has also proven itself to be an exemplary employer in Tanzania, employing thousands of port workers.

Dr Biteko, who was representing the Vice-President, Dr Phillip Mpango, in presenting the awards,

conveyed Dr Mpango's best wishes to the management and workers of the authority.

The ATE also declared and awarded TPA the honour of being the 2nd Runner-up, meaning that this year, the authority is the second best employer across all sectors of the economy. Furthermore, the authority was awarded the "Club of Best Performers" trophy, recognising TPA as one of the best institutions that Tanzania is proud of for excelling in discharging its responsibilities and serving the

public.

Earlier this year, TPA was also recognised as the best performer in the return on investment function, contributing 153.9 billion shillings to the government. TPA topped the list of 145 companies that paid a substantial dividend to the government.

The 145 companies presented a total of 636bn/- to President Samia Suluhu Hassan. Business entities contributed 278bn/-, while regulatory institutions contributed 358bn/-.



Christina Mndeme (C), Deputy Permanent Secretary in the Vice President's Office (Environment), presents documents on three project proposals to Ibrahim Cheikh Diong, Executive Director of the UN Loss and Damage Fund for Developing Countries. The event was held in the Philippines capital, Manila, yesterday. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

By Guardian Reporter, Arusha

## Tanzania strengthens tourism conservation to boost arrivals

TANZANIA is on track to achieve its goal of attracting 5 million tourists by 2025, with the government stepping up efforts to enhance tourist services and improve the appeal of its natural attractions.

Nkoba Mabula, Deputy Secretary-General for Tourism, Forests, and Conservation at the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism, underscored the government's commitment to boosting the tourism sector.

He made the remarks early this week here during the opening of a capacity-building training session for conservation officers responsible for managing tourism in forest reserves and cultural heritage sites.

Mabula highlighted the sector's growing impact on the national economy, noting that tourism's contribution to GDP has increased

to 17 percent. He also revealed that tourism revenue in 2023 had surged by 31 percent, reaching \$3.4 billion compared to \$2.6 billion in 2019. He attributed this growth to government initiatives aimed at improving services, attracting both domestic and international tourists, and leveraging digital platforms to showcase Tanzania's natural and cultural attractions.

The Deputy Secretary-General urged conservation officers to enhance promotional activities in the remaining months of the year to attract more visitors and further boost revenue.

Dr Thereza Mugobi, Director of

the Tourism Department at the Forest and Conservation Agency, emphasized that the training program would equip officers with skills to attract more tourists while ensuring sustainable tourism practices.

Adding to the discussion, Prof. Dos Santos Silayo, Commissioner-General of the Tanzania Forest Service (TFS), reported that tourism in forest reserves currently attracts over 250,000 international visitors annually, generating more than 1.6 billion Tanzanian shillings in revenue. He projected that the sector would host at least 300,000 visitors and generate over 3 billion

shillings in the 2024/2025 fiscal year. Prof. Silayo reassured participants that the government has strategies in place—including financial investments and infrastructure upgrades—to meet these ambitious targets while safeguarding the country's biodiversity.

Somen Mtereka, Chief Conservation Officer for the Tourism Desk at TFS, highlighted that the training would focus on enhancing capacity in managing and developing innovative forest-based tourism products. These efforts aim to diversify Tanzania's tourism offerings and improve the visitor experience.





Natural Resources and Tourism minister Dr Pindi Chana (4th-L) pictured in Dar es Salaam recently brandishing ignition keys at the handing over of five trucks and five machines worth a total of 6.4bn/- purchased for use by the Tanzania National Parks (Tanapa) through the Emergency and Recovery Support for Biodiversity in Tanzania - a project funded by the German Development Bank. Photo: Correspondent Miraji Msala

By Correspondent Joseph Mwendapole

MORE than 180.7m/- have been allocated for the construction and renovation of science laboratories, classrooms, and toilets in two schools within the Kasulu District Council, Kigoma Region.

The funding comes through a partnership between the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the Tanzania Education Fund, which is managed by the Tanzania Education Authority (TEA).

At Nyakitonto Secondary School, a total of 60.1m/- have been invested to renovate and complete three science laboratories - for Chemistry, Physics and Biology. Prior to this, the school had only one laboratory.

The school's headmaster, Akwilino Kidava, emphasized that this development would provide students with valuable hands-on learning opportunities, which he believes will not only improve the quality of science education but also

## Over 180m/- invested in school infrastructure in Kasulu District

boost student enrollment.

Meanwhile, Mkuyuni Primary School received 120.5m/- for the renovation of four classrooms and the construction of 12 toilets.

The school, which serves 1,057 students, had been facing significant overcrowding and a shortage of sanitation facilities, forcing students to study in shifts.

Mkuyuni Secondary School Second Master Ombeni Mbembati, noted that the improvements would greatly enhance the learning environment.

Kasulu District Education Officer, Iyogo Isuja, expressed gratitude to both UNICEF and TEA for their contribution, which will directly benefit the local community by improving the quality of education and overall learning conditions.

A Form three student at Nyakitonto Secondary School, Alex Malingumu, shared his excitement about the new laboratories, saying they will help students perform better in science subjects.

Adam Charles Ligula, the Chairperson of the Nyakitonto Secondary School Board, highlighted that the new science laboratories will serve as a strong incentive for students to pursue and excel in science-related fields.

Additionally, 13 more education projects worth 834.3m/- are being funded in Tabora, Kigoma and Songwe regions.

The projects involve the construction of laboratories, classrooms, and toilets for both primary and secondary schools, in a collective effort to improve educational infrastructure across the country.

## Tanzania pleads for support for researchers in land restoration

By Guardian Reporter, Riyadh

TANZANIA has appealed for global support to empower researchers and youth to effectively engage in science, technology and innovation (STI) initiatives towards bridging knowledge gaps on land restoration and drought resilience.

Khamis Hamza Khamis, the Union and Environment Deputy Minister in the Vice President's Office (VPO), made the remarks in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, yesterday during the ministerial dialogue on mobilizing political support and investments for the implementation of the African Great Green Wall Initiative (GGWI) at the 16th session of the UNCCD.

"Tanzania has developed a GGWI Action Plan (2023-2033), which requires approximately \$546 million for its implementation. We call upon our partners to support us in this regard. We also encourage the establishment of technology-sharing platforms to facilitate access to innovative land management tools for developing nations," he asserted.

Khamis urged for increased accessibility to global climate and land restoration financing mechanisms, such as the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and the Green Climate Fund (GCF).

He emphasized that Tanzania is committed to ensuring gender-responsive land restoration programs, including land tenure, and the participation of women and youth in sustainable land management initiatives.

Tanzania has been advocating for strengthening regional and global collaboration, with partnerships with neighboring countries through regional initiatives like the GGWI and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) being a priority, he remarked.

He reiterated the country's commitment to combating desertification, restoring degraded lands, and building resilience against droughts.

"We believe that collective action, informed by science and driven by innovation, is essential to achieving a sustainable future for our planet," he added, noting that Tanzania has put in place mechanisms to ensure vulnerable communities, especially women, youth, and other at-risk groups, are meaningfully

engaged in decision-making and benefit from land restoration programs.

Newly elected COP16 President Abdulrahman Alfadley, Saudi Arabia's Minister of Environment, Water, and Agriculture, noted that degraded land already affects three billion people globally and will "increase levels of migration, instability, and insecurity among many communities."

He stated that COP16 will focus on establishing the first global regime for drought resilience, addressing the systemic risks of drought highlighted in multiple articles of the UNCCD and decisions from the past seven COPs.

The Riyadh Global Drought Resilience Partnership, announced yesterday by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia as the UNCCD COP16 host, will leverage public and private finance to support 80 of the most vulnerable and drought-hit countries around the world.

United Nations Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed emphasized the growing challenges posed by land degradation and drought. She said, "Never before have so many people been affected by land degradation and drought. Forty percent of fertile land is now degraded. The results are dire - rising inequalities, hunger, and displacement."

Mohammed highlighted that land degradation and drought have threatened livelihoods and businesses, destroyed environments, and undermined the foundation of peace, stability, and security.

"Following the current trends, by 2050, three in four people will be affected by drought worldwide. But you are in Riyadh to turn the tide," said the UN Deputy Secretary-General.

During a visit to the Journalists Environmental Association of Tanzania (JET) pavilion, Abdallah Hassan Mitawi, the Union and Environment Deputy Permanent Secretary in the Vice President's Office (VPO), commended the association for its outstanding work in educating Tanzanians on environmental issues.

"We are grateful for the work you're doing in both Tanzania mainland and Zanzibar. Our doors are open for collaboration to ensure that more Tanzanians have access to the necessary information on environmental conservation," said Mitawi.

### LUANDA

ON Tuesday, U.S. President Joe Biden visited Angola's National Slavery Museum, a significant stop on his African tour. During the visit, he inspected historical artifacts such as shackles and a whip while addressing Africa's growing global significance.

Biden highlighted Africa's demographic trajectory, noting that by 2050, one in four people worldwide will be African. "The world's fate rests in their hands," he remarked.

This visit marks the first by a sitting U.S. president to Angola and is aimed at promoting billions of dollars in U.S. investments in the sub-Saharan nation. Among these is what Biden called the largest U.S. rail investment overseas.

"The United States is all in on Africa," Biden

## US President Biden visits slavery museum in Angola

declared during a meeting with Angolan President João Lourenço, who described the visit as a turning point in U.S.-Angola relations that date back to the Cold War.

On Wednesday, Biden is scheduled to visit the coastal city of Lobito to observe the Atlantic Ocean outlet of the Lobito Corridor. This project has received funding from the European Union, the Group of Seven industrialized nations, a Western-led private consortium, and African banks.

However, questions remain about the extent of U.S. financial commitments. It is unclear how much has already been delivered and how much remains contingent on

previous administrative frameworks.

Biden's visit fulfills a promise he made last year after reviving the U.S.-Africa Summit in 2022. However, delays in scheduling the trip have reinforced a perception among some Africans that the continent remains a lower priority for Washington. The last U.S. president to visit sub-Saharan Africa was Barack Obama in 2015.

During his tour of the National Slavery Museum, located at the former headquarters of Capela da Casa Grande - a 17th-century temple where enslaved people were baptized before

being shipped to the Americas - Biden reflected on Angola's historical significance. According to the White House, Angola was the departure point for an estimated 6 million enslaved individuals.

Looking to the future, Biden stated, "I know the future runs through Angola, through Africa." Speaking on a stage overlooking the water, he acknowledged the importance of preserving history. "History cannot and should not be erased," he said, adding, "While America was founded on the ideals of freedom and equality, it's abundantly clear today that we have not lived up to that ideal."

THE COMPANIES ACT, 2002  
COMPANY LIMITED BY SHARES

TSCHUDI TANZANIA LIMITED  
(In Liquidation: Company Number 159877022)

NOTICE OF FINAL GENERAL MEETING

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN to all the interested parties and the general public that a GENERAL MEETING of the Company will be held on 30<sup>th</sup> December 2024 at the registered office of the liquidator, at 10:30 in the morning EAT, at which the liquidator will lay an account of the winding up of the Company and provide any explanation thereof.

Liquidator (s) NEEMA RICHARD

Liquidator's address 368 MSASANI ROAD  
MIKUMI HOUSE  
OYSTERRAY  
P.O. BOX 9673  
DAR ES SALAAM  
TANZANIA

Date of appointment 2 October 2024

By whom appointed MEMBERS

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: 29 November 2024

Name In Block Letters: NEEMA RICHARD

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### PUBLIC TENDER NOTICE

#### SUPPLYING OF WATER PIPES AND FITTINGS NO. CRS TANZANIA - SC - FY25 - TN 001

Call for a Tender of Supplying Water Pipes and fittings.

Catholic Relief Services (CRS) was founded in 1943 by the United States Catholic Conference of Bishops to express solidarity with the poor and marginalized overseas. CRS' vision is that all of God's children fulfill their human potential in thriving families and communities; just, vibrant, and peaceful societies; and flourishing landscapes. In 2020, CRS is working in 115 countries around the world, reaching 140 million program participants with humanitarian response, education, health, agriculture, water and sanitation, peacebuilding, and microfinance interventions.

CRS Tanzania invites all eligible commercial companies in Tanzania to supply Water Pipes and Fittings in Chunya, Mbarali, and Mbeya City.

#### Tender Category

The list is under independent lot; Evaluation will be on lot basis.

Service number	Category
CRS TANZANIA - SC - FY25 - TN 001	Supply and delivery of Water Pipes and Fittings in Chunya, Mbarali, and Mbeya

#### Tender Documents:

The detailed invitation to tender documents is available from **05<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> December 2024**, during office hours, from Monday to **Thursday from 08 am to 5 pm and Friday from 08 am to 2 pm**. Interested bidders are invited to pick up a hard copy of the tender document at the CRS offices or request a soft copy. Requests for tender documents should be submitted on a company letterhead signed by the Director/Manager of the company in hardcopy or via e-mail to the **Administrative Manager - Elizabeth Sendama**, though Email: **elizabeth.sendama@crs.org** with Request for Tender Documents: **"CRS TANZANIA - SC - FY25 - TN 001 Supply and delivery of Water Pipes and Fittings in Chunya, Mbarali, and Mbeya City"** in the subject line.

Each company should submit the request once only and CRS will send the tender documents within 24 hours. The Request for tender document will not be accepted after **18<sup>th</sup> December 2024**.

The deadline for submission of the completed and sealed Tender documents is on or before **18<sup>th</sup> December 2024 at 4 pm**.



## Five suspects arrested in connection with murders in Mbeya and Kilimanjaro

By Guardian Correspondent Grace Mwakalingo

FIVE people have been arrested in connection with the murders of Michael Kalinga (36), Chairman of CCM-Youhgn Wing (UVCCM) in Chunya District, Mbeya, and Isack Malya, 71, a farmer from Kibosho Umbwe Onana, Moshi in Kilimanjaro Region.

In Mbeya Region, two suspects are in custody in connection with the murder of Michael Kalinga, who was attacked with a blunt object to the head. Kalinga, a resident of Makongolosi, Chunya, was found dead with his body abandoned in a forest 250 metres from the Makongolosi to Lupatingatinga road.

Mbeya Regional Acting Police Commander, Assistant Commissioner of Police (ACP) Wilbert Siwa, confirmed the arrests, stating that the incident occurred on December 2 at around 5:30 PM in Mikoroshini, Chunya.

Siwa explained that Kalinga's body was discovered with head injuries, and the suspects had stolen his motorcycle, a Kinglion model, registration number MC.464 ELL.

"Upon receiving information about the murder, the police launched an extensive search. On December 3, 2024, in Mlowo, Mbozi District, Songwe Region, we successfully apprehended the suspects," ACP Siwa said.

He added that the suspects were found in possession of the deceased's motorcycle, and investigations are ongoing.

Following the incident, the Mbeya Police Force issued a warning to

those involved in criminal activities, urging them to desist, as crime does not pay. The public is encouraged to engage in lawful activities to earn a living.

Michael Kalinga's father, Anderson Kalinga, confirmed that his son was buried yesterday in Makongolosi, Chunya District.

In Kilimanjaro, three suspects are being held in connection with the murder of Isack Malya, a 71-year-old farmer from Kibosho Umbwe Onana village, Moshi District. Malya was killed by a blunt object to the head.

Kilimanjaro Regional Police Commander, Assistant Commissioner of Police (SACP) Simon Marwa, confirmed that the murder occurred on December 2, at around 2:00 AM in Kibosho Umbwe Onana village.

On the day of the incident, Malya was at home when the suspects attacked him, hitting him on the head before fleeing the scene.

SACP Marwa stated that, with the help of local residents, police conducted a manhunt and successfully apprehended the suspects, who are now being interrogated. Once legal procedures are complete, they will be taken to court.



**Upon receiving information about the murder, the police launched an extensive search...**



Rashidi Katabanya (R), Chairman of the opposition Chauma in Shinyanga Region, fields questions from journalists in Shinyanga municipality at the weekend on the local government elections held across mainland Tanzania on November 27. Photo: Correspondent Marco Maduhu

## TBS urges grape processors to certify their products to access key markets

By Guardian Reporter, Dodoma

TANZANIA Bureau of Standards (TBS) has urged grape product processors to certify their products to ensure access to both local and international markets.

The bureau made the call over the weekend during the closure of the International Grape Investment Exhibition in Dodoma, held at Mashujaa Grounds.

Domisiano Rutahala, a TBS officer, spoke to journalists about the importance of the Bureau's participation in the exhibition, which aimed to educate producers—particularly entrepreneurs—on the benefits of certifying their products and using the TBS quality mark.

Rutahala explained that the exhibition, themed "Grapes: An Investment Opportunity and Catalyst for National Development," was designed to inform attendees about the certification process, emphasising that TBS is a supportive institution working closely with entrepreneurs.

He also highlighted that the government has allocated funds to provide this service free of charge.

"The government, through TBS, offers free product certification services to entrepreneurs," Rutahala said.

He pointed out that Dodoma is the only region in Tanzania that produces grapes, and many grape product manufacturers, especially

entrepreneurs, are based there. Rutahala expressed confidence that, following the education provided at the exhibition, many producers would seek certification.

To qualify for free certification, producers only need to provide an identity letter from the Small Industries Development Organisation (SIDO), after which the certification process will commence.

Rutahala also stressed that obtaining the TBS quality mark would enable grape producers to access both domestic and international markets, helping them avoid exclusion from key markets.

He added that under the

East African Community (EAC) agreement, certified products do not require re-testing when exported to other EAC countries.

"This is a valuable opportunity for entrepreneurs to access international markets," he said.

Rutahala urged producers, particularly entrepreneurs, not to manufacture products lacking TBS certification, as this would hinder their access to regional and international markets.

"We don't want producers to be excluded from the market by offering substandard products, which is why the government has invested significant funds to support product certification," he added.

## Zanzibar's 1st VP highlights challenges faced by PwDs

By Guardian Reporter, Pemba

ZANZIBAR'S First Vice President, Othman Masoud Othman, has highlighted the ongoing challenges faced by people with disabilities, including limited employment opportunities, discrimination, and inadequate access to assistive devices and medical equipment.

Othman, who also serves as the National Chairman of ACT Wazalendo, made the remarks during the commemoration of the International Day of Persons with Disabilities at Gombani ya Kale grounds in Chake Chake, Pemba.

In his address, Othman emphasised that these challenges have exacerbated the situation for people with disabilities in Zanzibar. He assured the public that the government is fully aware of these issues and is committed to improving conditions for disabled individuals moving forward.

In response to these challenges, Othman revealed that the government is actively working to amend policies, laws, and guidelines across various sectors to better integrate people with disabilities into national development processes. The aim is to create a more inclusive environment where people with disabilities can fully participate in all aspects of society.

"The government is working closely with various stakeholders, including government institutions, and the general public, to eliminate the barriers that people with disabilities face," Othman said.

He also pointed out that the theme for this year's International Day of Persons with Disabilities focuses on promoting the participation and inclusion of people with disabilities in leadership roles at various levels of government. The government has already taken steps to ensure this, including appointing individuals with disabilities to key leadership positions, such as deputy ministers, permanent secretaries, directors, high court judges, and councillors.

Othman also shared that the government has been allocating funds to develop services for people with disabilities, particularly

in healthcare, education, rehabilitation, and the provision of assistive devices. These efforts are already beginning to benefit the community.

For the 2023/2024 period, the government has provided 1,173 assistive devices to people with disabilities in both Unguja and Pemba, an increase from the 852 devices distributed in the previous year.

Minister of State for the Second Vice President's Office, Hamza Hassan Juma, who represented Othman at the event, commended the national collaboration on behalf of the government and stressed the importance of unity in addressing issues faced by people with disabilities.

Rashid Hadid Rashid, Pemba North Regional Commissioner, also spoke at the event, urging society to avoid discrimination against people with disabilities. He stressed that the government's ongoing efforts are focused on ensuring that the rights and opportunities for people with disabilities are accessible to all.

Salma Saadati, Chairperson of the Zanzibar National Council for Persons with Disabilities, called for greater inclusion of people with disabilities in decision-making processes, emphasising the importance of collective action from the government, community, and all stakeholders.

Haroub Soud Mzee, speaking on behalf of the Zanzibar Federation of Persons with Disabilities (SHIJIWAZA), highlighted the continued challenges faced by people with disabilities, particularly in relation to inadequate teaching facilities and limited economic infrastructure. He called on the government to allocate more resources to support people with disabilities, ensuring they have equitable representation in decision-making and appointments.

The International Day of Persons with Disabilities, observed annually on December 3, aims to raise awareness and promote a better understanding of the rights and opportunities available to people with disabilities.



Ened Munthali (R), Director of Policy and Planning in the President's Office (State House), briefs George Simbachawene (L), Minister of State in the President's Office (Public Service Management and Good Governance), yesterday as the minister inspected progress in the ongoing construction of an e-Government Authority office complex in Dodoma city. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

By Correspondent, Msalala, Shinyanga

THE 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence (GBV) campaign continues as stakeholders working with Barrick to raise awareness and promote the use of clean energy across various regions in the country.

As part of the campaign, Barrick and its partners educate the public about GBV while providing training on clean cooking energy and distributing gas stoves in Msalala, Shinyanga Region. The initiative brings together key partners,

## GBV, clean energy campaign gathers momentum in Msalala

including the Tanzania Police Force (through its gender desks), district councils, and nongovernmental organizations such as Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO), Life Changing Foundation (LCF), Jadra, Hope for the Girls and Women (HGWT), Bowmans Law Firm, and Taifa Gas, a leading gas production and distribution company.

Speaking at the opening of a training workshop in Kahama

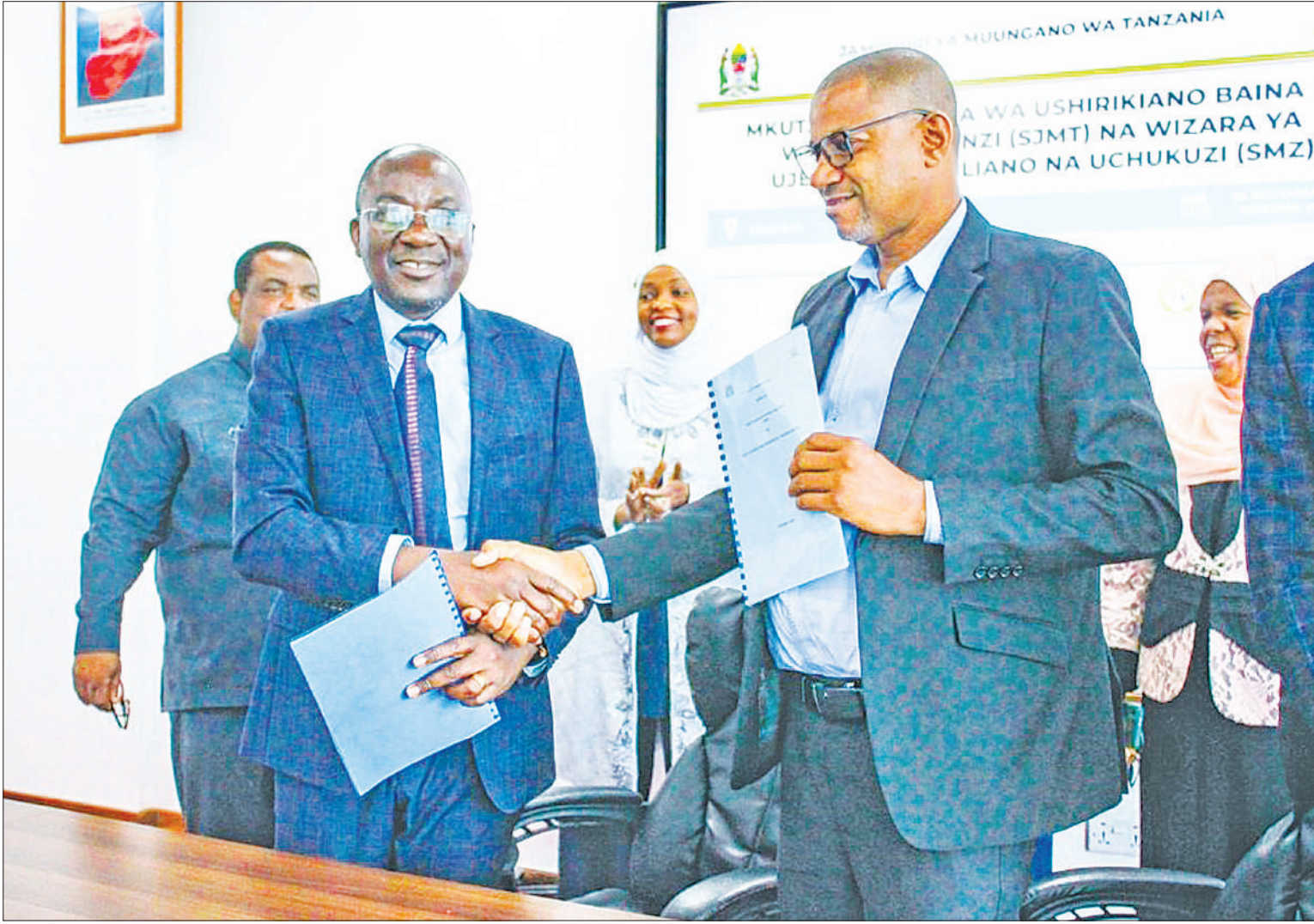
District, Msalala Police Zone Commander SSP Elias Zabroni Masome urged the community to unite in the fight against GBV. He highlighted specific concerns, including female genital mutilation (FGM) and the exploitation of children in agriculture and domestic labor, which often infringe upon children's right to education.

SSP Zabroni assured the public that Msalala police would take firm

legal action against anyone involved in GBV. He encouraged collaborative efforts to address these issues at the grassroots level.

Representing Barrick, Senior Community Relations Officer Zuwena Senkondo reaffirmed the company's commitment to working with the government and other stakeholders to combat GBV and support community development initiatives.





Contractors Registration Board registrar Reuben Nkori (L) and his Zanzibar counterpart, Mansour Mohammed Kassim, exchange documents in Works ministries. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

## Call for schools to merge spiritual growth with academic instruction

By Correspondent James Kandoyo

LEADERS of both public and private schools have been urged to combine spiritual growth with academic instruction to cultivate strong moral values and provide students with a solid foundation in religious principles.

Rev. Allen Mbiso of the Mbezi Beach Parish- Eastern and Coastal Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania (ELCT), made the call in Dar es Salaam over the weekend during the graduation ceremony of Jerusalem Nursery School.

Rev. Mbiso stressed the pivotal role schools play in shaping not only the academic abilities but also the character of children. He encouraged educators to prioritize spiritual and moral development, saying, "Education is not just about academic knowledge; it is about building good character and morals in students."

He emphasized that instilling discipline, respect, and a fear of God in students is essential for raising responsible, ethical citizens.

Kawe Ward Education Officer Beatus Amri commended Jerusalem School for its exemplary efforts in offering a well-rounded education that blends academic excellence with moral and spiritual guidance. He pointed out that schools in the ward have consistently

performed well academically and urged others to emulate the model set by Jerusalem School.

"My call is for all schools to continue investing in spiritual growth, morals, and equipping students with life skills that align with society's evolving needs," Amri said.

He praised the graduation ceremony for reinforcing the significance of holistic education, which encompasses proper upbringing, moral development, and practical skills.

Jerusalem School's Head Teacher, Mark Masangya, highlighted the institution's approach to education, which integrates academic, spiritual, and practical training. He explained that students are equipped with essential life skills such as tailoring, cooking, and farming, alongside their regular studies.

"We are committed to enhancing academic performance by improving teaching resources, training our educators, and creating an optimal learning environment," Masangya said.

He added that the school has implemented innovative strategies to ensure that students receive a comprehensive education, preparing them for both personal and societal challenges.

## Call: Veterinary experts need to lead efforts in ending animal diseases

By Guardian Correspondent, Arusha

VETERINARY experts in Tanzania have been urged to take a leading role in combating animal diseases in order to boost livestock exports and contribute to the nation's economic growth.

Prof. Eson Karimuribo, Chairman of the Tanzania Veterinary Association (TVA), made the call earlier this week during preparations for the 42nd TVA conference.

Prof. Karimuribo noted that in the 1970s and 1980s, Tanzania's livestock industry was severely impacted by various diseases. However, he emphasised that significant progress has been made since then, with many infectious diseases now eradicated, largely due to the tireless efforts of veterinary professionals across the country.

He further highlighted the vital role the TVA has played in collaboration with the government to combat livestock diseases, which has led to the acceptance of Tanzanian livestock for export. This has not only contributed to the country's revenue but also helped boost foreign currency reserves.

Prof. Karimuribo expressed appreciation for the government's continued support of the veterinary profession, particularly through increased funding for the Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries. The ministry's budget has been raised to 460bn/-, providing veterinary professionals with better working conditions to help improve national development.

The professor, who also serves as a lecturer at Sokoine University of Agriculture (SUA), pointed out that the government has allocated 28bn/- for livestock vaccinations. He said that this funding has provided a much-needed boost to veterinary professionals and further strengthened the country's ability to control livestock diseases and outbreaks.

Dr Caroline Ulomi, TVA Assistant Secretary and representative from the Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries, emphasised that the TVA is one of the oldest professional associations in Tanzania. She added that the TVA plays a crucial role in supporting the Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries in managing animal diseases and controlling outbreaks.

Dr Ulomi also noted that TVA veterinarians are deployed across various regions of the country, including with the President's Office, Local Government and Regional Administration, to ensure the safety and health of Tanzania's livestock.

Dr Gabriel Shirima, a lecturer at the Nelson Mandela African Institute of Science and Technology in Arusha, underscored the critical link between the health of livestock and human health. He further explained that increasing livestock numbers would contribute significantly to Tanzania's income, driving both economic growth and food security.

The TVA conference, which is expected to attract more than 2,000 local participants, will also host experts from the Commonwealth. The event aims to ensure that Tanzania and Africa maintain high-quality livestock, focusing on the health standards necessary to facilitate international trade.

The conference will serve as an important platform for sharing knowledge, discussing strategies, and advancing policies that will help Tanzania meet international livestock health standards, ultimately boosting the country's position in the global livestock export market.

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## Bonite Bottlers Triumphs at the 18<sup>th</sup> President's Manufacturer of the Year Awards

Bonite Bottlers Limited has reaffirmed its commitment to producing high-quality products, offering superior services, and maintaining efficiency in meeting customer satisfaction across the country.

The company, renowned for producing beverages such as Coca-Cola products, Kilimanjaro Drinking Water, and other non-alcoholic drinks, was recently recognized as a winner of the President's Manufacturer of the Year Award (PMAYA) for its dedication to ensuring its products meet both national and international standards. Bonite Bottlers Limited won the award in the category of non-alcoholic beverage manufacturers (large-scale industry).

Speaking with The Guardian Newspaper, Christopher Loiruk, Head of Sales and Marketing at Bonite Bottlers Limited, said the award underscores the company's strong commitment to achieving customer satisfaction by consistently producing and delivering high-quality products.

Loiruk emphasized that Bonite Bottlers Limited's achievement at PMAYA highlights its significant contribution to Tanzania's economy, its positive impact on consumers' lives, and its role in inspiring



other industries to invest in quality and advanced technology.

He added that one of the keys to winning the award is the company's dedication to producing high-quality products that adhere to both national and international standards and its investment in state-of-the-art technology.

Loiruk further noted that Bonite Bottlers Limited has distinguished itself in the market by offering exceptional customer service, producing a wide range of products to meet diverse needs, and maintaining close relationships with customers through skilled representatives across various regions.

The PMAYA recognition, he explained, holds great significance for the company, as it demonstrates the trust customers across Tanzania and East Africa have in Bonite Bottlers Limited's products.

"It is also proof of our company's commitment to ensuring every product we manufacture meets the required quality standards," Loiruk elaborated.

He pointed out that this marks the fourth time Bonite Bottlers Limited has won the PMAYA award, attributing this success to the company's focus on producing quality products from unique natural sources, which have earned the trust and loyalty of its customers.

Addressing the issue of counterfeit products, Loiruk explained that Bonite Bottlers Limited has established an extensive network of distributors and agents nationwide.

This network enables the company to quickly identify and address any product-related issues.

"We ensure our production process incorporates security features to prevent counterfeiting. Additionally, our staff regularly verify products at business locations, and we encourage the community to report any instances of counterfeit products or misinformation about our company to authorities," he added.

Beyond the award, Loiruk highlighted other achievements of Bonite Bottlers Limited, including its strong connection to the Tanzanian community through sponsorships of various social events, such as sports and entertainment, as well as its contributions during challenging times.

The 18th PMAYA ceremony was held in Dar es Salaam on November 8, with Dr. Philip Mpango, Vice President of the United Republic of Tanzania, as the guest of honor. PMAYA, organized by the Confederation of Tanzanian Indus-

tries (CTI) in collaboration with other stakeholders, aims to honor local manufacturers who contribute to the national economy by producing high-quality products valued by both domestic and international consumers.

Kilimanjaro Drinking Water, for instance, stands out as one of the most popular products, not only in Tanzania but also in neighboring countries, thanks to its quality, safety, and appeal to consumers of all ages.



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## CCTV cover a laudable idea for Kariakoo business but...

**M**OVES to float a tender for a contractor to install security cameras (CCTV) in downtown Dar es Salaam's sprawling Kariakoo market zone are being linked with not just curbing crime but also facilitating round-the-clock business operations.

Authorities in Ilala District, where the zone lies, are understood to have already started working on the matter following a notice issued on Monday.

They are said to be seeking a contractor to carry out the installation work, and apparently have begun earmarking and visiting sites where the cameras are to be installed.

It is not clear as yet how rapidly the selection of contractors will be conducted, as the listing of those who can apply or place bids is reportedly fairly long.

Those eligible range from public institutions or agencies, Tanzanian and foreign companies, special interest groups, Tanzanian manufacturers, joint ventures, foreign manufacturers and partnerships based on those groups.

Things would run one way if tendering or procurement regulations permitted prior selection of the sort of firms eligible to apply, thereafter ensuring fair play in that context.

But it could also be a different issue likely to be handled administratively, when the bids received are comparable.

Affirmations that the government has allocated funds for the project in Dar es Salaam city's 2024/2025 budget estimates was sort of captivating. This is considering that it would be in line with a directive by President Samia Suluhu Hassan that businesses be facilitated to operate on a non-stop basis.

Not much was done in the five months of the new financial year while the tendering, alongside the citing of where cameras can be installed, is being taken up on a note of urgency in a sense.

That too will likely have an administrative explanation,

particularly if there was a wish to finish with the civic polls first.

That there would be cameras in some places is a relative improvement to security, as muggings aren't prevented merely by light. It is also relevant that there is someone around whom potential criminals will worry about for fear that he might identify them.

With dimly lit streets or when the concentration of those unlikely to recognise muggers is minimal, or the thugs know they are surrounded by look-alikes who will pretend to go after them while actually the idea is to shield them, crime can continue virtually unabated. At times this has taken place right next to a police post, but one must go and complain if serious follow-up action is to be taken.

In addition, it isn't just relative security assurance that makes businesses run for non-stop but real need. And here experience shows that entertainment joints have some chance of attending to 'patrons' well into the late hours.

Most people are not neutral as to what time they sleep or wake up, in which case the reasons for some businesses to stay open well into the night aren't quite apparent.

Visiting the business zone during day hours and especially late afternoon shows that most people battle to get their purchases done with relatively early, just that.

The wish to make Kariakoo business district a non-stop operational zone seems to be tied up with the idea that it is taking a regional profile where people from all sorts of areas shop.

That is altogether true but it doesn't change the business model as 'rival' centres are being opened elsewhere, including Ubungu, where some traders at Kariakoo see it as an inordinate challenge.

Much of the business is wholesale, while it is the open-air market at Congo Street in Kariakoo proper and Karume Stadium at the far end of the zone that are filled by retailers. They host large numbers of people looking for bargains, but not really around the clock.

## Cancer: We are not making much progress with early detection or behavioural change

**E**ACH time there is an update on the combating non-communicable diseases, it often looks like the situation has been relentlessly worsening - with hardly any let-up or respite.

Specialists at the Muhimbili University of Health and Allied Sciences (MUHAS) have been stressing the pivotal role of early detection and prompt diagnosis in improving cancer treatment outcomes and reducing mortality rates.

As such news reaches prying ears, it is a vital piece of information to some, a familiar line to others, and perhaps stale to yet others.

Those following proceedings at symposiums, seminars, etc., discussing advancements in cancer care may have some more pointed areas to show one another, including if there are improved techniques in early detection.

It is one thing to show up at a hospital or dispensary and then taking some tests, and quite another to confirm that there is a disease and how malignant it is.

Part of the surprise at seeing new cancer figures each time is the fact that, for many people, the safeguards that used to provide shelter from fear of the disease no longer work.

Thus, appeals by specialists that patients both real and potential seek medical attention promptly if they notice unusual symptoms may

not be taken seriously enough by large numbers of people.

A specialist pointed at alarming statistics of the disease burden, with over 44,000 new cancer cases reported annually.

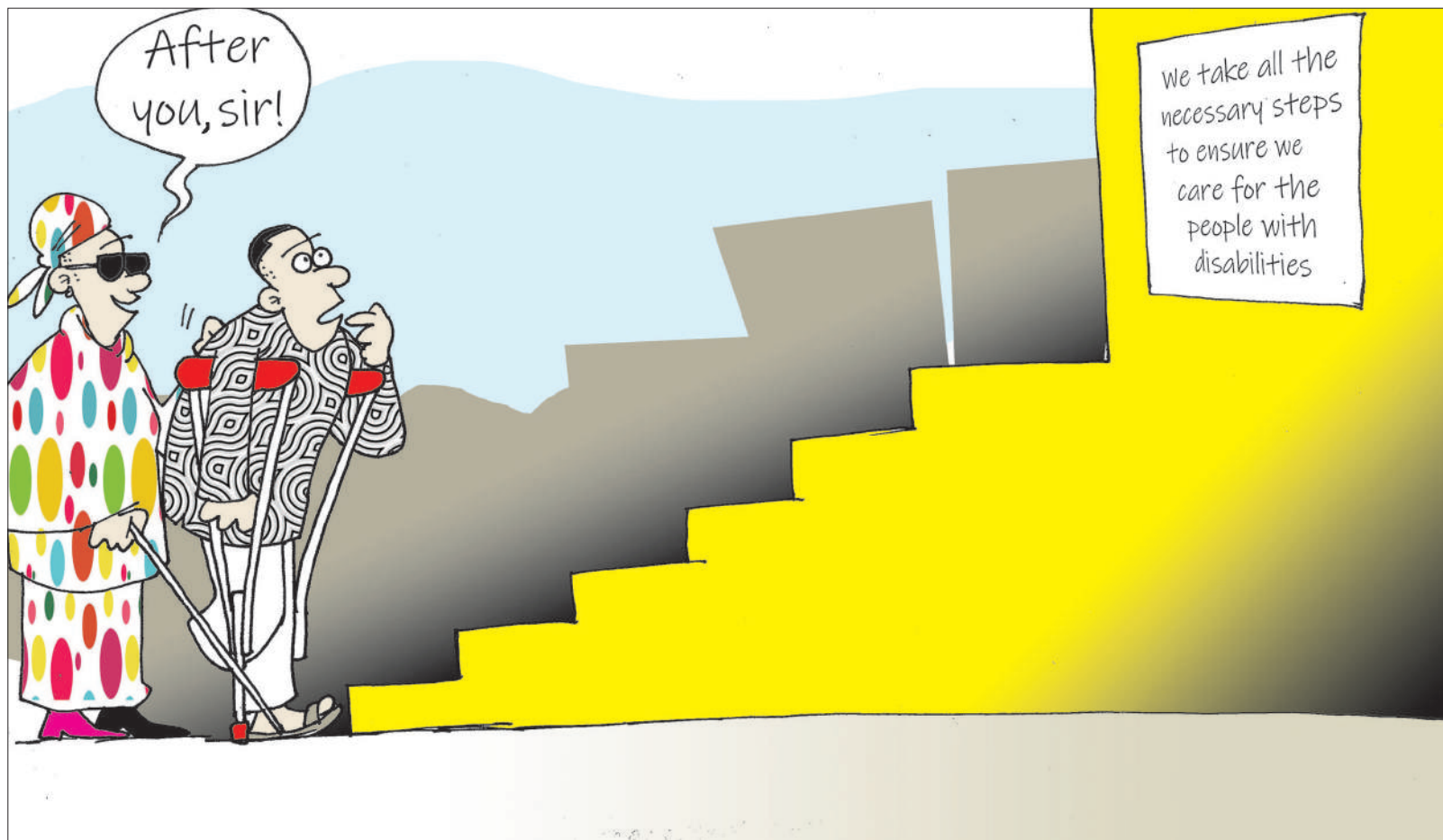
As often applies, there is a shortage of data relating to people confirmed to have fully recovered from cancer. Alternative cures are often not part of what specialists say, and it is thus hard to circulate sufficient information on such "miracles" cures, even when they are genuine.

Some findings that will be troubling indeed, for example in connection with why women accounted for 73 per cent of patients diagnosed to have cancer at Dar es Salaam's Ocean Road Cancer Institute.

Women don't have a monopoly of obesity and it is likely they do more routine chores than men especially at the household level. However, while some sources of cancer threats are typical for women, they are seldom raised for discussion.

Whatever the argument by experts and non-experts alike, scientific research on highly delicate and involving issues like healthcare ought to continue, continue and continue.

The reasons for this are obvious, and it is only to be hoped - and expected - that enough of the financial and other resources needed to ensure that this is done will be forthcoming.



## Advancing rights, choices of persons with disabilities in Tanzania

By Mark Bryan Schreiner

**T**HE phrase "disability is not inability" increasingly resonates within Tanzania's development dialogues, resulting from the strengthened political commitment and commendable strides made by the government in recognizing the rights and potential of persons with disabilities.

Yet, as indicated in the country's 2022 Population and Household Survey, persons with disabilities comprise an estimated 11.3 per cent of the population - a significant demographic whose full inclusion remains a goal to be achieved.

The Government of Tanzania has proactively championed the rights and inclusion of persons with disabilities through a wide range of initiatives promoting accessibility, empowerment and equal participation.

Achieving the development goals for an inclusive society as set by the government in Vision 2025, the Five Year Development Plan and Zanzibar's Development Plan requires accelerated efforts and strengthened partnerships to ensure that, indeed, no one is left behind.

## Expanding access to decision-making

Admittedly, like many other nations globally, Tanzania has been striving to enhance the representation of persons with disabilities.

However, the lack of support for capacity building and support for persons with disabilities to meaningfully engage in decision-making bodies and processes remain significant barriers to advancing the leadership of persons with disabilities at all levels of society.

To ensure that policies are informed by the diverse voices and experiences of all Tanzanians, including those with disabilities, the government is continuing with efforts to ensure inclusive and equitable representation in local and national elections and other decision-making processes.

## Promoting culture of inclusion

Stigma and discrimination, compounded by intersecting inequalities related to gender, age and ethnicity, remain pervasive challenges for persons with disabilities in Tanzania.

Deep-seated cultural beliefs often marginalise these people, making it difficult for them to access health, social and legal services, education and employment opportunities.

The advocacy efforts led by the government and various organisations of persons with disabilities, as supported by various development partners, are critical in challenging these harmful narratives.

However, a sustained, widespread cultural shift is needed for success to be made. Attitudes must change - not only in communities but also among policymakers, employers and service providers.

## Gendered impact on persons with disabilities

Recent research in Tanzania highlights the unique challenges faced by women and girls with disabilities, particularly as relates to gender-based violence and sexual and reproductive health.

Women and girls with disabilities are disproportionately vulnerable to gender-based violence. Many are discouraged from making decisions about marriage and access to family planning, which undermines their autonomy over their own bodies and reproductive choices.

The government of Tanzania has made great strides by ensuring that the rights of persons with disabilities feature prominently in the recently launched National Plan of Action to End Violence against Women (2023/2024-2028/2029), which was developed with technical support from the United Nations family.

Continued efforts to revise policies and normative guidance and translate these commitments into tangible improvements in the lives of women and girls with disabilities remain a priority.

## Access to inclusive, quality healthcare

The government of Tanzania, with support from the country's development partners, has made promising progress in enhancing access to equitable healthcare coverage.

This has been implemented in part thanks to pilot efforts to train healthcare providers in disability-sensitive sexual and reproductive services as well as inclusive survivor-centred gender-based violence case management.

Additionally, producing accessible information materials and enhancing access to assistive technologies for persons with disabilities are positive steps.

However, access remains a challenge for many persons with disabilities, especially in rural areas. Inaccessible healthcare facilities, inadequately trained healthcare providers, stigma and discrimination, alongside cultural

biases perpetuate this exclusion.

Greater investment, commitment and political will are required to ensure that best practices from the pilot efforts are taken to scale, particularly in Tanzania's underserved regions - where the need is most acute.

## Data for informed decision-making

Effective policy and planning rely on accurate and comprehensive data. Tanzania has made significant strides in institutionalising disability data collection.

Among the ready cases in point are the Persons with Disability Information Management System (PD-MIS) and Jumuishi, developed with technical support from the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).

The government of Tanzania showcased these efforts at this year's 57th Commission on Population Development in New York, which marked the 25th anniversary of the International Conference on Population Development (ICPD).

The thrust of the April 29 to May 3 event held at the United Nations headquarters was on assessing the status of implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and its contribution to the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development across a decade of action and delivery for the development sought.

Continued investment in analysis and strengthened utilisation of data on disability for policy and planning are essential to ensure that interventions are tailored to the specific needs and requirements of persons with disabilities.

## Empowerment and economic opportunity

Empowerment extends beyond service provision. It requires the creation of equitable opportunities and an enabling environment where persons with disabilities acquire the skills they need to have if they are to participate as fully in society as fully as possible.

Vocational training programmes, inclusive education initiatives and accessible infrastructure are vital for unlocking the potential of Tanzania's population with disabilities.

Initiatives like 'Chaguo Langu, Haki Yangu' (literally, My Right, My Choice), which is implemented by UNFPA and funded by the Government of Finland, have expanded access to education, vocational training and essential

services for women and youth with disabilities - in the process helping to effectively address barriers to their empowerment.

These measures benefit not just persons with disabilities but society as a whole, fostering innovation, economic growth and social cohesion.

## Partnering to accelerate rights of PwDs

There is also the need to further advance the goal of putting in place an inclusive society with equitable access for persons with disabilities.

The government of Tanzania, development partners and civil society must act decisively towards collaborating in scaling up disability-inclusive initiatives.

This involves allocating dedicated funding for supporting programmes meant to address the plight of people with disabilities, primarily by ensuring their sustainability and effectiveness.

As decisive is the importance of enforcing laws and policies that are in line with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), to which Tanzania is a signatory, and prioritising accessibility in all public projects.

This includes healthcare facilities, schools, transportation systems and social protection programs.

Most importantly, we must actively engage persons with disabilities in these efforts. They are not merely passive recipients of aid but active agents of change. By amplifying their voices and experiences, Tanzania can build a more inclusive society, one where disability is no longer a barrier to opportunity.

Tanzania has laid a strong foundation, but it is only the beginning. On this International Day of Persons with Disabilities, we need to seize the moment to champion disability inclusion, not as a charity act but as a fundamental issue of justice and equity.

As we continue planning towards our collective Vision 2050, Tanzania's path towards inclusive development stands as a shared responsibility - and it is one we cannot afford to postpone.

UNFPA confirms its commitment to continuing its partnership with the government of Tanzania and organisations of persons with disabilities in building societies that are more inclusive for all - to the benefit of persons with disabilities and the benefit of all Tanzanians.

• Mark Bryan Schreiner is the UNFPA's Representative in Tanzania.



# Impact of Tanzania's graduation from status of LDCs

By Telesphor Magobe

**G**RADUATION from the UN least of developed countries (LDCs) category is neither equivalent to becoming a middle-income country nor graduation from the concessional windows of multilateral development banks or from eligibility for official development assistance (ODA).

"In fact, as of April 2024, 20 of the 45 LDCs are classified by the World Bank as lower-middle-income countries and one as an upper-middle-income country," says Handbook on the Least Developed Country Category: Inclusion, Graduation and Special Support Measures (5th Edition) published this year.

A CDP Policy Note (2023) on potential impacts of LDC graduation for Cambodia, Comoros, Djibouti, Senegal and Zambia which are still on a waiting list states that when a country graduates from the LDC category, "it ceases to benefit from international support measures exclusive to LDCs. In some cases, these measures are available for a set period after graduation, known as a smooth transition period."

The CDP Policy Note states that LDC-specific international support measures in trade consist of 1) preferential market access for goods, 2) preferential market access for services, 3) special and differential treatment under the WTO agreements, 4) special and differential treatment and additional flexibilities under certain regional agreements, and 5) capacity-building, training and technical assistance related to trade.

Tanzania is among the 45 United Nations (UN) LDCs in the world, according to a UNCTAD least developed countries report 2024 released this month. There are 32 African LDCs and Haiti, 7 Asian LDCs and 6 Island LDCs.

The LDC category was established in 1971 as a special group of developing countries characterised by low levels of



income. The UN defines LDCs as "countries that have low levels of income and face severe structural impediments to sustainable development. Special measures were, therefore, deemed necessary for overcoming challenges to their development," according to Handbook on the Least Developed Country Category: Inclusion, Graduation and Special Support Measures (5th Edition) 2024.

A report titled "Trade impacts of LDC graduation" published by World Trade Organisation (WTO) in 2020 says "as graduating LDCs cross an important development milestone and begin to enter a more competitive environment, solidarity and partnership from the international community will be vital." It suggests that multilateral trade agreements (MTAs) governed by WTO contain several types of special and differential treatment (S&D) provisions for LDCs, which "are over and above the flexibilities accorded to developing countries, such as market access, transition periods, and exemptions from certain rules."

In addition, the report continues, since the establishment of the WTO in 1995, WTO members have taken important decisions to facilitate market access for both

goods and services originating in LDCs - decisions on duty-free and quota-free market access, decisions on preferential rules of origin for LDCs, and decisions on LDC Services Waiver and its operationalisation. "These are implemented, inter alia, through members' preference schemes designed for the LDCs."

The status of LDCs is reviewed every three years since 1991 by the Committee for Development Policy (CDP), which comprises of independent experts who report to the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations (ECOSOC). LDC criteria, refined in 2023, were revised and applied at the triennial review in May this year.

The following three criteria and thresholds for inclusion in the LDC category or for graduation from the category were applied in this year's review. 1) In relation to an economic criterion, the threshold for inclusion was set at \$1,088 or less, while the threshold for graduation was set at \$1,306 or more. 2) In relation to a human assets index, comprising a health subindex and an education subindex, the health subindex has the following three indicators: under-five mortality rate, maternal mortality ratio, and prevalence of

stunting.

The education subindex has the following three indicators: lower secondary school completion rate, adult literacy rate, and gender parity index for lower secondary school completion. The thresholds for inclusion and graduation were set at 60 or below and 66 or above, respectively.

3) In relation to an economic and environmental vulnerability index, comprising an economic vulnerability sub index and an environmental vulnerability sub index. The economic vulnerability sub index has four indicators: i) share of agriculture, forestry and fishing in gross domestic product, ii) remoteness and land locked, iii) merchandise export concentration, and iv) instability of exports of goods and services. The environmental vulnerability sub index has also four indicators: i) share of population in low elevated coastal zones, ii) share of the population living in dry lands, iii) instability of agricultural production, and iv) victims of disasters. The thresholds for inclusion and graduation were set at 36 or above and 32 or below, respectively.

"Inclusion requires the consent of the country concerned and becomes effective immediately after the General Assembly takes note of the recommendation of the Committee for Development Policy. No recommendations were made for inclusion at the triennial review in 2024," says the report. It adds that to graduate from the least developed country category, a country must meet the established graduation thresholds of at least two of the criteria for two consecutive triennial reviews.

"Countries that are highly vulnerable, or have very low human assets, are eligible for graduation." The report says further that "as an exception, a country with a per capita income that is sustainably above the income-only graduation threshold, set at three times the graduation threshold (\$3,918 for the 2024 triennial review), becomes eligible for graduation, even if it does not meet the other two criteria."

According to the report, the following seven countries have graduated from the LDC category, namely Botswana (December 1994), Cabo Verde (December 2007), Maldives (January 2011), Samoa (January 2014), Equatorial Guinea (June 2017), Vanuatu (December 2020) and Bhutan (December 2023).

The CDP has recommended graduation from the least developed country category for several countries in the past. Among them, Sao Tome and Principe is slated for graduation in 2024; Bangladesh, the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Nepal are scheduled for graduation in 2026; and Solomon Islands is scheduled for graduation in 2027.

Moreover, the report says at the 2024 triennial review, "Rwanda, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania were found to have met the graduation thresholds for the first time. All three countries met two of the three criteria, namely the economic and environmental vulnerability index criterion and the human assets index criterion. These countries are scheduled to be considered again in 2027 and, if they meet the criteria for a second time, could be recommended for graduation."

Tanzania has for the first time this year met criteria for graduation from the status of UN least developed countries (LDCs) since the establishment of the LDC category in 1971. At that time, Tanzania was categorised as a LDC and was one of the 25 initial LDCs. It will be assessed again during a triennial review in 2027 by the Committee for Development Policy (CDP), according to the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) report of May 2024. Besides Tanzania, other countries considered for this triennial review in 2027 are Rwanda and Uganda, which have also met criteria for graduation from the status of UN LDCs.

NAIROBI

## Focus on Africa: IPBES plenary session makes inaugural visit to biodiverse continent

**T**he Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services' (IPBES) first Plenary session in Africa is a "crucial acknowledgement of Africa's important contribution to biodiversity conservation, which is a global public good, a heritage that Africa has the privilege to share with the peoples of the world," says Dr. Luthando Dziba, from South Africa, co-chair of the IPBES Multidisciplinary Expert Panel.

The eleventh session of the IPBES Plenary—IPBES 11—is scheduled to be held in Windhoek, Namibia, from December 10-16, 2024.

Africa is one of the most ecologically diverse continents on Earth and is home to eight of the world's 34 biodiversity hotspots. Its unique ecosystems, species, and genetic diversity thrive in a wide range of spectacular landscapes and seascapes, including wide-open plains, deserts, mountains, forested cliffs, coral reefs, mangrove forests and the Great Rift Valley.

This rich biodiversity offers significant benefits to people but also presents a number of challenges and opportunities amid a spiralling global biodiversity crisis.

Dziba told IPS that the Plenary is the governing body of IPBES, made up of the representatives of IPBES member States—currently 147 from around the world—who meet annually to "either consider requests from countries for new scientific assessments or consider reports of assessments that have been conducted by IPBES experts, and to consider work related to the other functions of IPBES of knowledge generation, policy support and capacity-building."

"The IPBES members approve the summaries for policymakers of the IPBES assessment reports and also accept the full reports as well. IPBES Plenary sessions are spaces for the co-production of science-policy relevant information by both scientists and policymakers."

### Role of Biodiversity in Human Well-Being, Economy

IPBES primarily seeks to strengthen the science-policy interface for biodiversity and ecosystem services for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, long-term human well-being, and sustainable development.

IPBES plays a unique role in har-



Springbok in Sossusvlei, Namibia. IPBES 11 is scheduled to be held in Windhoek, Namibia from December 10-16. Credit: Gregory Brown/Unsplash

nessing the best expertise from across all disciplines and knowledge communities—to provide policy-relevant knowledge and to catalyze the implementation of knowledge-based policies at all levels in government, the private sector, and civil society.

Dr. David Obura, IPBES Chair, says he is fortunate to be chairing his first Plenary in Africa as the first ever African Chair of the platform.

"The African continent still has some of the most intact biodiversity remaining. But it is not just about biodiversity for itself; it is also how society and the economy depend on nature," Obura says.

"We, therefore, need to deepen our understanding of this connection, and this knowledge should in turn reflect within our policy processes across our countries. The importance of healthy nature and biodiversity in supporting our economies cannot be overstated, particularly because a large proportion of Africa's population is rural. These are farmers, pastoralists, and fishers who directly rely on productive and

healthy ecosystems."

Obura added that it is crucial to understand that ecosystems can only provide security for people if they are healthy, and that the IPBES work in Namibia over the next two weeks can help to propel continental and global ambitions in line with the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, which seeks to halt and reverse the decline of biodiversity and nature's contributions to people.

Obura also referenced the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and the urgent need to halt further losses in Africa in ways that are good for people as well. "It is all about supporting people while securing biodiversity," he said.

Amplify African Voice on Science-Policy Through IPBES Dziba agrees. He says this first ever African Plenary session for IPBES gives African countries an even louder voice as part of an important science-policy platform. The IPBES member States make requests for new scientific assessments that respond to or address their specific policy priorities.

The governments that are IP-

BES members essentially have "first access to scientific products that help guide policy on various topics such as invasive alien species, pollination and management of pollinators to support agriculture production, or other areas such as sustainable use of wild species, including Africa's biodiversity."

Dziba says that the eleventh session of the Plenary will be an opportunity to also raise the profile of IPBES with African experts, enabling a wider diversity of African researchers and knowledge-holders to see firsthand the value of IPBES as an intergovernmental science policy platform.

Even though Africa and its natural heritage have been a subject of scientific research for centuries, Dziba speaks of an ongoing struggle to improve participation by African experts in IPBES work. "The importance of bringing them on board is to leverage their extensive knowledge of the continent, the knowledge gaps they see and the opportunity to contribute from an African perspective. This inclusion will also give IPBES a stronger,

more inclusive voice and help shape positive global narratives about Africa."

A majority of the newest members of IPBES over the past two years are governments from the African continent. Ultimately, the goal is to ensure universal IPBES membership of all governments so that no region is left behind, towards a healthy and sustainable planet suitable for all life on Earth.

Obura speaks of the untenable state of lives and livelihoods—of large populations living hand-to-mouth—and the disconnect between people and nature as people migrate to cities where disconnection from nature increases.

Rich Biodiversity Supports Health, Water, and Food Systems

Obura explains that among the most important business of this first African Plenary session will be the consideration of two new landmark IPBES reports. The 'nexus assessment' will explore the critical interlinkages among crises in biodiversity, water, food and health—in the context of climate change. It will also explore dozens of specific options for action to address these crises sustainably together, rather than in single-issue silos, with a focus on ensuring the conservation and restoration of biodiversity for people and nature.

Dziba says there are lessons that member States can take from Africa too, as "the IPBES Regional Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services for Africa found the African continent is the last continent with a largely intact assemblage of megaherbivores (animals larger than 1,000 kilograms) such as elephants, giraffes, buffalo, rhino, and hippos."

He emphasized that this signifies that Africa "has done well

in conserving its biodiversity. Africa also has the largest diversity of large carnivores, such as lions, leopards, cheetahs, wild dogs, and hyenas. And so, as a continent, we are the last bastion of biodiversity conservation, and this is both a privilege and an immense responsibility to continue to protect that biodiversity." But that assessment also showed that Africa, like other regions of the world, is losing biodiversity at a rate unprecedented in human history.

The second assessment to be considered and launched at the upcoming session looks at transformative change—what it is, why it is so necessary, and how to achieve it for more just and sustainable futures, especially amid the ongoing global crises that are "expanding rapidly in their impacts on people. Africa is particularly vulnerable to these crises for many historical and current reasons. The question for all countries is how to initiate the deep positive changes needed across societies, economies, technology and governance to move in these nature-positive directions. The report will help lay out building blocks and tools to achieve that."

Ultimately, Obura says, the aim is to have the two reports accepted by the IPBES members in the Plenary to better inform and serve global and African stakeholders and governments in their decisions and actions.

"No effort will be spared to make the reports accessible to enable people to find what they need to make better decisions and choices towards a healthy and sustainable coexistence with nature."

IPS UN Bureau Report



## UNITED NATIONS

# South Africa's G20 presidency in 2025: A pivotal moment for the country and Africa

In 2025, South Africa will assume the presidency of the G20, a pivotal moment in the African country's international diplomatic efforts.

The Group of Twenty (G20), is an intergovernmental economic forum comprising 19 countries and two regional unions - the European Union (EU), and recently the African Union (AU). It represents 85 per cent of the global economy, 75 per cent of world trade and 67 per cent of the global population.

South Africa's leadership of this group therefore presents a unique opportunity to shape global policies and advocate for Africa's interests on the world stage. The G20 countries include Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, South Korea, Turkey, UK and US, as well as the EU and AU.

Chrispin Phiri, the spokesperson for the Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, says the theme for South Africa's presidency will be "Fostering Solidarity, Equality, and Sustainable Development." It seeks to address critical global challenges, with a strong focus on Africa's development.

Among the key areas the presidency will focus on include addressing the triple challenges of poverty, unemployment, and inequality, as well as Africa's development which entails placing Africa's development at the forefront in alignment with the African Union's Agenda 2063, "The Africa We Want".

Also expected to form part of the South African priorities is tackling polycrises such as climate change, energy, food security, and debt that disproportionately affects Africa and other developing nations. Issues of infrastructure development and global governance reform initiated by previous G20 presidencies.

Phiri says South Africa's foreign policy is deeply intertwined with its domestic priorities, and aims to foster a better, stable, and prosperous South Africa, Southern African Development Community (SADC) region, and Africa.

"South Africa's presidency is poised to have significant implications for the broader African region, particularly within the SADC. The nation's strategic position within the G20 will enable



Lutfiyya Dean (center), head of the South African delegation at Youth 20, stands with representatives from South Africa and the African Union at the Youth 20 Summit, where they discussed a transformative agenda for the G20 under South Africa's presidency.

it to lobby for policy gains that benefit South Africa, the SADC, and the entire continent, in which key areas of focus include promoting policies that ensure economic benefits for all South Africans, particularly the economically marginalized, for economic benefits," said Phiri.

Phiri highlighted the importance of South Africa's coordination with the African Union (AU), particularly in leveraging the G20 presidency to advance regional integration and cooperation.

As G20 president, South Africa will also focus on addressing global economic challenges and promoting sustainable development. The nation's policy agenda will be informed by its National Development Plan, Agenda 2063, and long-standing issues with

in the G20 framework.

Phiri said South Africa will advocate for reforming the global debt architecture to prevent debt crises from undermining the realisation of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); and also mobilise financing to address the substantial development financing gap, which has increased post-COVID-19; as well as address the issue of (Illegal Financial Flows) IFFs, which drain approximately \$88.6 billion annually from the continent, impeding progress toward Agenda 2063 and SDG targets will be key.

Professor Danny Bradlow, a Senior Research Fellow at the Centre for Advancement of Scholarship at the University of Pretoria, says South Africa's priorities should include addressing debt and develop-

ment financing, particularly for Africa.

Prof Bradlow wants South Africa to co-chair the Global Sovereign Debt Roundtable alongside the IMF and the World Bank. The forum offers an opportunity to push for a more creative approach to managing debt, linking it to broader discussions on development and climate finance.

"This presidency provides an opportunity to address some longstanding bottlenecks facing regional integration in Africa. For instance, one of the key challenges faced by the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) and Regional Economic Communities (RECs) are bilateral trade agreements that undermine Africa's regional integration efforts," says Prof. Bradlow.

He urged South Africa to use the momentum of the AU admission and its G20 presidency to highlight these and push for commitments that support regional integration, in close coordination with the relevant AU organs and knowledge partners.

Prof. Bradlow notes the need for South Africa to inherit and advance initiatives from Brazil's G20 presidency, such as the Hunger and Poverty Alliance and discussions on global taxation, particularly the contentious issue of a wealth tax on billionaires. He acknowledges that, while these are complex issues involving questions of sovereignty, they are crucial for generating resources for development finance.

On her part, the CEO of the South African Institute

of International Affairs (SAIIA), Elizabeth Sidiropoulos, stressed the importance of enhancing regional cooperation and integration.

"From a policy vantage point, South Africa's G20 Presidency seeks to respond to global economic and environmental challenges and sustainable peace, bearing in mind efforts to achieve the SDGs, the AU's Agenda 2063, as well as reforming institutions of global economic governance," said Sidiropoulos.

She pointed out that with the AU now being a member of the G20, there is a greater opportunity to amplify African priorities, and suggested that South Africa should focus on deepening the continent's advocacy within the G20, selecting key issues where it can make a significant impact.

She recommended that South Africa use its presidency to address longstanding bottlenecks facing regional integration in Africa.

South Africa's presidency of the G20 in 2025 is a pivotal moment for the nation and the continent. With the AU's recent inclusion in the G20, there is a historic opportunity to reshape global governance in a way that reflects the aspirations and challenges of the Global South.

Prof. Bradlow says South Africa's success will depend on its ability to balance immediate priorities with long-term global goals and ensuring that the G20 remains a platform for inclusive and equitable growth.

Source: Africa Renewal, United Nations.

## Israel-Lebanon ceasefire uncertain amid repeated violations

## UNITED NATIONS

On November 27, Israel, Lebanon, and a host of mediating states agreed upon a ceasefire agreement that would establish a permanent cessation of warfare between the two parties. As of December 3, there have been no reported instances of Hezbollah directing attacks toward Israel that resulted in any casualties. Despite this, there have been numerous reported violations committed by Israel, causing extensive harm to civilian lives and local infrastructure. Many parties have warned for the international community to hold Israel accountable for these violations.

The ceasefire agreement mandates both Israel and Hezbollah withdraw their forces from each other's territories and report any and all violations of peace to the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) and the committee of mediating nations. Israel has been given a 60-day period to retreat the entirety of its troops from southern Lebanon, while Hezbollah must withdraw its forces north of the Litani River.

According to a December 1 report released by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), 578,641 internally displaced persons began moving back to their place of origin in Lebanon. It is also stated that further airstrikes and military restrictions imposed by the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) have left many unable to return to their communities.

The Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Monitor issued a press release on December 2, reporting that Israel had violated the terms of the agreement at least 18 times in southern Lebanon alone. As of December 1, there have been 62 reported violations committed by Israel that have targeted civilians and infrastructure in Lebanon. It's been reported that Lebanese civilians were killed through the IDF opening fire on them and commanding drone strikes. Additionally, the IDF have is-



Two Lebanese children residing in a school-turned-shelter in Beirut following an escalation of hostilities in Lebanon. Credit: UNICEF/Fouad Choufany

sued further restrictions of movement south of the Litani River.

December 2 marked the deadliest day of hostilities in Lebanon since the ceasefire came into effect. It began when Hezbollah launched two projectiles toward Israel, responding to a series of violations committed by Israel over the past week. The attack, described as a "defensive warning strike", landed in an open area and caused no injuries.

In a statement posted to X (formerly known as Twitter),

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu confirmed plans to retaliate against Hezbollah, describing the attack as "a serious violation of the ceasefire", adding that Israel will "respond to any violation by Hezbollah-minor or serious."

Israeli Minister of Military Affairs Israel Katz urged Lebanon to uphold their conditions of the ceasefire. "If the ceasefire collapses, there will be no more exemption for the state of Lebanon. We will enforce the agreement with maximum impact and zero

tolerance. If until now we have differentiated between Lebanon and Hezbollah, that will no longer be the case," Katz said. He did not address Israel's numerous reported violations.

The IDF responded by launching a series of strikes on two southern Lebanese towns, Talousa and Haris, killing at least eleven civilians and causing considerable damage to local infrastructure.

In a statement issued on X, the IDF stated that they struck Hezbollah terrorists,

dozens of launchers, and terrorist infrastructure throughout Lebanon in response to several acts by Hezbollah in Lebanon that posed a threat to Israeli civilians, in violation of the understandings between Israel and Lebanon. They added that the state of Israel remains allied to the conditions laid out in the ceasefire agreement but will continue to defend itself.

Israeli Foreign Minister Gideon Saar denied Israel's reported violations of the agreement, adding that Israel would "not accept a return to

the situation as it stood [prior to the escalation of hostilities]." French Foreign Minister Jean-Noël Barrot was reported speaking to Saar over a phone call noting that it was urgent "for all sides to respect the ceasefire in Lebanon".

Despite this, the Biden administration has expressed concern that the "fragile" ceasefire agreement might unravel due to repeated violations of the agreement. Israeli public broadcaster Kan reported that the U.S. envoy Amos Hochstein issued a warning to Israel over its ongoing violations.

An Israeli official informed news publications that Hochstein believes that Israel is enforcing the ceasefire "too aggressively". Hochstein also reportedly expressed uncertainty over the endurance of the ceasefire, opining that the situation is dependent on how Hezbollah responds to the recent attacks.

Officials from the United States have confirmed that despite sporadic strikes from both sides of the border, they remain confident that the ceasefire agreement will not waver.

U.S. State Department spokesperson Matthew Miller told reporters; "Obviously, when you have any ceasefire, you can see violations of it. Broadly speaking, it is our assessment that despite some of these incidents that we are seeing, the ceasefire is holding." White House spokesperson John Kirby added that "there has been a dramatic reduction in the violence. The monitoring mechanism is in full force and is working".

IPS UN Bureau Report



By James Kandoya

**T**ANZANIA joined the global community in observing the World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims, held annually on the third Sunday of November. T

The day honours those who have lost their lives or sustained injuries in road accidents and acknowledges the dedication of emergency responders and healthcare workers.

It also serves as a platform to raise awareness about road safety, advocate for victims and their families, and push for policy reforms to reduce traffic-related tragedies as well as providing a platform for road traffic victims and their families to remember all people killed and seriously injured on the roads, acknowledge the crucial work of the emergency services, draw attention to the generally trivial legal response to culpable road deaths and injuries, advocate for better support for road traffic victims and victim families and promote evidence-based actions to prevent and eventually stop further road traffic deaths and injuries.

The Global status report on road safety, launched by WHO in December 2018, highlights that the number of annual road traffic deaths has reached 1.35 million. Road traffic injuries are now the leading killer of people aged 5-29 years.

The burden is disproportionately borne by pedestrians, cyclists and motorcyclists, in particular those living in developing countries.

#### A survivor's story

One compelling account is that of Abdulaziz Shambe, a 47-year-old survivor living in Magomeni, Kinondoni District, Dar es Salaam Region. Shambe told The Guardian that seventeen years ago, his life changed forever following a car accident along the Tanga-Morogoro highway.

He was involved in an accident where a tire burst caused his driver to lose control of the vehicle, resulting in a crash that left him with severe spinal injuries



## World Remembrance Day: A call for road safety reforms

and permanent lower-body dysfunction, confining him to a wheelchair.

Shambe said he was taken to Muhimbili Orthopedic Institute (MOI) whereas delays and improper handling exacerbated his injuries.

Shambe's recovery journey, including treatment in South Africa, cost approximately 60m/- (\$24,000), with daily accommodation expenses of \$100.

Despite support from family and friends, he lost his job at Tanganyika Investment Oil & Transport due to his condition. This financial burden, combined with the physical and emotional challenges, highlights the profound impact road accidents have on survivors, particularly when adequate support systems are absent.

#### A call for reforms

Shambe's experience underscores critical shortcomings in Tanzania's insurance and

disability support systems. His third-party insurance failed to provide compensation for his injuries, exposing the urgent need for reforms in accident coverage.

He advocates for road safety education, targeting universities to reduce reckless driving among young adults, updating outdated regulations, such as the Traffic Act of 1973, to address current road safety realities as well as expanding access to the National Health Insurance Fund (NHIF) for accident survivors.

According to him, the government should ensure availability of assistive devices like wheelchairs in health insurance packages.

"It's time to include assistive devices in health insurance to ease the burden on victims," Shambe emphasized, noting that affordable access to these tools could significantly enhance survivors' quality of life.

Statistics shows that 76.3 percent of victims are men, while women make up 23.7

percent. However, 85.9 percent sustain moderate disabilities while 10.6 percent recover fully and 3.3 percent die from their injuries. Only 0.2 percent of the victims suffer severe disabilities.

Dr. Lutfi Abdallah from the Emergency Medicine Department at Muhimbili National Hospital (MNH) highlights the need for improved trauma care and stronger communication between emergency responders and hospitals. He also stresses the importance of stricter law enforcement to reduce road trauma.

The World Health Organization (WHO) has declared 2021-2030 as the second decade of action for road safety, aiming to reduce road traffic deaths and injuries by 50 percent by 2030.

To achieve this, WHO urges countries to develop comprehensive road safety strategies, prioritize trauma care and post-crash care systems and foster high-level political

commitment to implementing these strategies.

For Tanzania, improving road safety and victim support systems is not just a policy challenge—it is a matter of human rights.

As Tanzania marks the World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims, stories like Abdulaziz Shambe's underline the pressing need for reforms in road safety regulations, insurance policies, and survivor support systems.

This day serves as both a moment of reflection and a call to action. By implementing better laws, expanding education, and improving healthcare systems, Tanzania can work toward reducing future tragedies and creating a safer environment for all road users.

"It's time to act—for the safety of our roads and the well-being of their users," said Shambe.

#### KATHMANDU, Nepal

**C**ourage and not compromise. That was the motto desperately launched by members of the civil society in the twilight of the negotiations of the Plastic Pollution Treaty in Busan, South Korea last week.

As we now know, the negotiations did not yield the results that would have helped Planet Earth set a groundbreaking target to reduce the amount of plastic being produced.

Meanwhile, the international community is onto another crucial meeting in Riyadh, the capital of Saudi Arabia to discuss global efforts against desertification. It is going to be another COP process, what is formally known as the 16th Session of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification or UNCCD. (COP16, December 2-13).

Apparently, this time, the host, Saudi Arabia, is going to lead a tremendous effort to ensure a strong outcome. Over the last two and half months, Riyadh, rather than being a global leader to ensure the survivability of our planet, a champion of sustainability, has been a disruptor.

The Saudis were among those who have been undermining the recently concluded Climate COP 29 in Baku and, to a lesser extent, the COP 16 on Biodiversity in Cali, Colombia.

But a review of what unfolded over the last two and half months, would also bring an indictment for act of omission not only to the Petro states but also to all developed nations.

Indeed, the eleventh-hour rallying cry—"courage, not compromise"—should have been embraced as the North Star by all those nations who were ready to take bold steps in the three recently concluded COP processes.

In Busan, as explained by the Center for International Environmental Law, CIEL, "negotiators had several procedural options available, including voting or making a treaty among the willing". Yet the most progressive nations, around 100 countries, including the EU and 38 African nations and South American countries, did not dare to go beyond the traditional approach of seeking a consensus at any cost.

Ironically what happened at COP 16 and COP 29 was equally a travesty of justice as developed nations did not budge from their positions. At the end, the final deals on biodiversity and climate financing, were in both cases extremely disappointing especially in relation to the former.

Indeed, in Cali, there was no agreement at all in finding the resources needed to implement the ambitious Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.

According to BloombergNEF (BNEF),

## Courage, not compromise? A rallying cry that failed at deadlocked COP meetings



Negotiations on a future global drought regime got underway at UNCCD COP16 in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia December 2-13.

in its Biodiversity Finance Factbook, "the gap between current biodiversity finance and future needs have widened to \$ 942 billion".

The Global Biodiversity Framework Fund (GBFF), the financial vehicle to implement the Framework, is still very far from becoming a true game changer.

The millions of dollars that a small group of European nations have pledged during the negotiations in Cali, are still a minuscule contribution in relation to what was agreed two years ago in Montreal where the second leg of the COP 15 was held.

There, the final outcome underpinning the Framework, required the mobilisation of financial resources for biodiversity of at least US\$200 billion per year by 2030 from public and private sources and identifying and eliminating at least US\$500 billion of annual subsidies harmful to biodiversity.

What unfolded in Baku at the climate COP was also, in terms of financing, embarrassing for developed nations. The hardly negotiated agreement of tripling the US\$ 100 billion per year by 2035 with a commitment to reach up to US\$ 1.3 trillion by the same year through different sources of money, including difficult to negotiate levies, is far from what is required.

On this front, the embarrassment was not only on the traditional developed nations but also on countries like China and the Gulf Nations who stubbornly rejected their responsibility to play their part in climate financing.

At least, as part of a last minute compromise, the developed nations (G7 and few others like Australia) will now co-lead the

responsibility of finding the resources. China and others wealthy nations that, according to an outdated UN classification are still officially considered as "developing", will contribute but only on voluntary basis.

As we see, the final outcomes of these three COPs were far from being courageous. Compromising, epitomized by concepts like "constructive ambiguity", agreeing on something that can be interpreted differently by the nations at the negotiating tables, instead dominated.

At this point, considering the frustrations of these mega gatherings, what could be done? Is the existing model of the COP with its complexities and endless delays and bickering, still viable?

The influential Club of Rome, on the last days of COP 29, had released a strongly worded press release asking for a major reform of the ways negotiations were carried out. "The COP process must be strengthened with mechanisms to hold countries accountable". The document went even further with calls to implement robust tracking of climate financing.

Also, with each COP, a series of new initiatives are always launched, often just for the sake of visibility and prestige.

The risk is having a multitude of exercises and mechanisms that drains resources that, are at the end, are neither productive nor meaningful but rather duplicative and ultimately, a waste of money.

We should be even more radical, I would say. For example, the international community should introduce the same peer to peer review process in place in the Human Rights Council that, frankly speaking,

is hardly a revolutionary tool. And yet, despite the fact that nations with a solid track record in human rights abuses remain unscathed in the Council, such a change would represent some forms of accountability in the areas of biodiversity and climate.

This could be envisioned as a reform that should accompany the implementation of the upcoming 3rd wave of Nationally Determined Contributions due by 2025. Getting rid of the consensus model is also something that should truly be considered.

Why not holding votes that would break the vetoes of even one single nation? Why being so attached to unanimity when we do know that it is not working at all?

As shown in Busan, it is the traditionally developed nations that lack courage and farsightedness in pursuing a procedure that might backfire against them. This is, instead, a cause that at least the EU, Canada and Australia should embrace. Yet we are still very far from reaching this level of audacity.

Another fanciful thinking relates to tie nations' actions to the possibility of hosting prestigious sports tournament. Why not forcing international sport bodies like FIFA to reward the hosting rights for its mega events only to nations which are climate and biodiversity leaders in practice rather than through empty but lofty declarations?

Unfortunately, there will never be consensus within the football federations that run FIFA governing body or say, within the International Olympic Committee. A more promising area, though also not easy to put into practice, would be to find ways in

which non state actors would have a real say in the negotiations.

Both the COP 16 and the COP 29 reached some breakthroughs in relation to giving more voice, for example, to indigenous people. In Cali, it was decided to establish a new body that will more power to indigenous people.

It is what is formally known, in reference to the provision related to the rights of indigenous people of the International Convention on Biodiversity, as the Permanent Subsidiary Body on Article 8(j).

The details of this new body will be object of intense negotiations but at least a pathway has been created to better channel the demands of a key constituency who, so far, has struggled to gain its due recognition. Also at COP 29 saw some wins for indigenous people with the adaption of the Baku Workplan and the renewal of the mandate of the Facilitative Working Group (FWG) of local Communities and Indigenous Peoples Platforms.

Surely there can be some creative solutions to strengthen what was supposed to be the platform to incorporate and engage non state actors, the Marrakesh Partnership for Global Action.

The members of civil society could come up with new ideas on how to formally have a role in the negotiations. While it is impossible to have non state actors at the par of member states party to the conventions around which the COPs are held, surely the latter should be in a better place and have some forms of decision power.

Lastly one of the best ways to simplify these complex and independent from each other negotiations, would be to work towards a unifying framework in relation to the implementation of the biodiversity and climate conventions.

On this, the Colombian Presidency of the COP 16 broke some important grounds with Susana Muhammad, the Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development of Colombia who chaired the proceedings in Cali, pushing for bridging the gap between biodiversity and climate negotiations.

None of the propositions listed here are going to be easy to implement. What we need is simple to understand but also extremely hard to reach.

Only more pressure from the below, from the global civil society can push governments to make the right choice: setting aside, at least for once, the word compromise and instead chose another one that instead can make the difference while instilling hope.

This word is called courage.

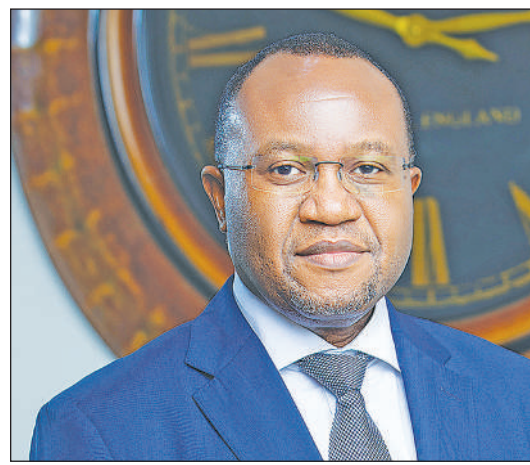
Simone Galimberti writes about the SDGs, youth-centered policy-making and a stronger and better United Nations

IPS UN Bureau









Thursday 5 December, 2024

# Half of global businesses fail on sustainability

By Guardian Reporter

**B**usinesses and other organisations need to improve reporting of the interconnections between their business activities with sustainability if they are to survive and thrive in the future, says new research from ACCA (the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants)

All professionals, and especially accountants, need to gather and use insights to better understand the relationship between sustainability-related matters and business activities if businesses are to survive, according to Making Information Connections for Sustainable Value Creation, the latest release in ACCA's sustainability reporting research series.

Those that fail to do so are at risk of not being alert to challenges impacting their resilience and future survival, and could also miss good opportunities, says ACCA.

ACCA is a globally recognised professional accountancy body providing qualifications and ad-

vancing standards in accountancy worldwide.

Founded in 1904 to widen access to the accountancy profession, we've long championed inclusion and today proudly support a diverse community of over 252,500 members and 526,000 future members in 180 countries.

Unfortunately, connectivity for sustainability-related matters is not common practice among organisations in their corporate reporting activities, including the publication of annual reports. Frequently the connections are not communicated - risking poor quality decision-making by all stakeholders.

A survey of over 1,000 finance professionals from around the world (see notes to editors) revealed that only half (49 percent) of their organisations explain how sustainability is reflected in their operations and only 38 percent explain how they manage sustainability risks.

According to the report, only 20 percent of businesses and organisations are prepared for climate-related disasters, new research from



ACCA revealed at COP29 climate summit

A mere 17 percent of businesses regularly rehearse their response to major disruptions, while 25 per-

cent have no mechanisms in place to build resilience at all

ACCA is recommending corporate disclosures build on the rules already laid down by the Inter-

national Sustainability Standards Board (ISSB).

This research has identified an opportunity for sustainable value creation by expanding the ISSB definition of connectivity and connected information in order to provide better information that will create more resilient business models.

Report author Sharon Machado, head of sustainable business at ACCA said: 'Successful organisations have always worked to make connections but if we're to make the progress on sustainability that the world needs then we're calling on businesses to supercharge those connections. Currently there is a real risk that progress will not be swift enough. Professional accountants are uniquely placed to connect sustainability-related information to financial information.'

The ISSB and some of ACCA's network of business experts shared their valuable insights to help connect information for quality decision-making and sustainable value creation.

Many of their recommendations call for professionals to leverage core 'business as usual' activities - but incorporate sustainability-related insights central to the organisation's survival.

The research launches in the same month that ACCA was recognised with a special nomination in the international category of the UN Trade and Development (UNCTAD) International Standards of Accounting and Reporting (ISAR) Honours 2024.

The award recognised ACCA's 360-degree approach to building capacity for sustainable business through high quality, connected sustainability and financial information.

ACCA has shared the research and guidance it has produced on a range of sustainability issues at the COP29 climate summit in Azerbaijan.

The research includes real-life examples and suggested activities to help professional accountant to be the connectors that organisations need to create sustainable value.

# Kenyan banks urged to employ more people with disabilities

NAIROBI

As the world Tuesday marked the International Day of Persons with Disabilities, Kenyan banks and financial institutions are being urged to employ more people living with disabilities and invest in programs that cater to their financial needs and services.

Kenyan banks have improved their accessibility to people living with disabilities by redesigning their entrances for easy access and creating special desks to serve them better, according to the Kenya Bankers Association.

Despite the progress made, still more is needed to create financial inclusion for such people in employment.

The association's report says only 1% of disabled people is employed in the banking sector. The acting head of the Kenya Bankers Association, Raymond Molenje, called for improved employment opportunities for them in the coming years.

"It's a challenge that we need to intentionally work on this and be able to see within the next year, two years we can move that to two, three percent," Molenje said. "For the government, there is a target for the government workforce; every institution ought to be at five percent, so that is government law, but as a private sector, we need to be even far ahead of the government."

Almost 1 million Kenyans live with some form of disability, according to the country's 2019 cen-

sus.

Seven banks in Kenya participated in a four-month-long project to understand the challenges faced by people with disabilities in accessing financial services in the country.

Equity Bank is one of the companies participating in the project. The bank's adviser on diversity, equity, and inclusion, Iram Bahawal, said some digital services do not tend to the needs of disabled people. "Some of these apps are not friendly to those with dyslexia; they are not friendly to those with epilepsy. They are not friendly to those with low vision," Bahawal said. "Looking at all this, some of these things are quick skills - we need to tweak some of these backend codes, and it becomes accessible."

Julius Mburu, advocacy officer from inAble, an organization that empowers people with disabilities, said such employment can improve the service delivery of banks to disabled people.

"Now that they are embracing disability inclusion and bringing people with disabilities on board as their workforce, they should endeavor to make sure that their internal assets for platforms, communications and their service delivery should be fluid and acry institution ought to be at five percent, so that is government law, but as a private sector, we need to be even far ahead of the government."

abilities," Mburu said.

The banking association and other stakeholders in the financial sector, moving forward, said they want to focus on mobile applications, online banking, bank statements, ATMs, social media, and employment software applications.

The banking association will review the recommendations received from the four-month projects in the coming months.

Kenya's banking sector in 2024 demonstrates resilience despite macroeconomic challenges, driven by high-interest rates, evolving regulatory pressures, and a focus on digital transformation.

Major banks have shown profit growth, with interim dividends increasing at institutions like StanChart and Stanbic. Banking stocks are trading below book value, making them attractive to investors. Meanwhile, regional trade and subsidiaries have bolstered revenue streams.

Banks are increasingly leveraging digital technologies to improve efficiency, reduce costs, and meet evolving customer needs. This focus on innovation is critical for maintaining competitiveness in a changing market.

Challenges include elevated non-performing loans (NPLs), potential regulatory shifts, cybersecurity threats, and geopolitical tensions. Additionally, a high-interest rate environment and uncertain tax regimes add complexity to the sector's outlook.



# Africa Energy Bank due to start despite insufficient capital

By Dare Olawin

The proposed Africa Energy Bank will start in the first quarter of 2025 even though the \$5bn needed for the take-off is not yet ready.

The Secretary-General of the African Petroleum Producers' Organisation, Omar Farouk, stated this on recently at the ongoing Practical Nigerian Content Forum in Yenagoa, Bayelsa State.

Farouk said the bank would not be kept waiting till the \$5bn was realised.

This is even as he said the bank would not be funded by any Western governments committed to energy transition.

Also, the Minister of States for Petroleum Resources (Oil), Heineken Lokpobiri, corroborated that the bank, whose headquarters will be in Abuja, would start operations within the first three months of next year.

According to Farouk, when talking about the Africa Energy Bank in 2022 many people thought it could not happen because Africa was too poor and too dependent.

However, he said by the time the bank takes off next year, it will be the first development bank that has been started from conception to realisation in record time in just two years.

"All the studies were completed in under two years. All the negotiations were completed in under

two years. We were able to sign the agreement with the founding member countries. In two years, we were able to get our member countries to sign and ratify the establishment documents, not all 18.

"We made it very clear that we need only two member countries to sign and ratify for it to become a treaty; other countries can join. And as today, Ghana was the first to sign and to ratify. Nigeria is the second. And that means we meet the requirements for the take-off of the bank.

"Nigeria was given the hosting right of the headquarters. Seven countries bid for that headquarters. Eventually, four were shortlisted, and the technical team went to the four countries to see what they had on the ground. On the fourth of July, the ministerial selection committee said Nigeria had the highest marks and Nigeria got it. It will be in Abuja," he said.

On staff hiring, the secretary-general said PwC was hired as a consulting firm to help with the project management of that bank.

"Last week Friday, I signed the contract with PwC, and it is their job to help us with the initial hiring recommendation. The final decision, of course, is ours," he stated.

Speaking about capital, Farouk revealed that even before signing the establishment of agreements, the bank was able to raise 50 per cent of what was needed to start off the

bank.

"The most important thing now is the capital. I want to say with all sense of pride that even before we had signed the establishment agreement, we were able to raise nearly 50 per cent of what we needed to be able to start the bank. By the way, I said \$5bn. But we are not going to wait until we are able to get \$5bn before we start. With \$500m, we get a skeletal bank working. And once you do that, you see other countries coming in. Everybody is like they are waiting to see. Is it going to be a reality?"

"And so far, a number of our member countries have been able to come even before we have started to say 'we trust you enough. We are giving you this. That is enough to show that this is a different Africa from the Africa of the past. We are taking our destinies into our own hands. We are committed to seeing that this bank takes off before the end of the first quarter of next year, and I sincerely hope that Nigeria will not fail us, because you will need to give us the building. We have seen the building, but it's not just a building. Yes, we need to be able to have a place that we can readily move in before the end of March," he said.

He added that the bank is looking up to investors.

"We are looking at \$5bn as our capital, and we have three classes of shareholders: Class A, essentially APPO member countries; Class B, non-APPO African countries; and Class C, any other investor across the world. But we are careful, we are not key on going out to countries or people who do not share our belief that oil and gas have a big role to play in the supply of the global energy mix in the foreseeable future.

"If you are committed to energy transition, we don't want your money, because we don't want you to come and put your money in that fund and derail us from our objectives. Because to you, \$5bn is nothing. To us, it's a lot of money. So, don't come and put \$3bn and then hijack the bank," he cautioned.

Speaking about the bank, the oil minister, Lokpobiri said by a resolution reached in Cameroon on November 1, the energy bank will come on stream by the first quarter of 2025.

"This is the bank that will start with \$5bn and will grow by 2028 to about \$120bn.

"But all these things can only be sustainable if we are able to sustain our local content, our local capacity to be able to grow this industry and provide the energy solutions that we need in Africa."





# Digitisation becomes Africa's great equaliser in financial services access

By Saviour Chibiya

Access to financial services in Africa had for decades been defined by disparities—between rural and urban areas, between men and women, between small businesses and larger enterprises.

It meant that millions, especially the continent's most vulnerable populations, were excluded from the formal economy, curbing entrepreneurship, restricting access to credit, and stifling upward financial mobility for far too long.

But by the turn of the millennium, change was afoot.

Early web pioneers like Ghanaian professor Nii Quaynor, often hailed as "Africa's father of the internet", were busy laying the groundwork for the continent's foundational online infrastructure. In 1994, Quaynor introduced Ghana's first internet service provider, going on to create the pathways that would gradually connect sub-Saharan Africa to the global digital ecosystem. His work, and that of others like him, signalled the beginning of a deeper integration, where technology would become a powerful tool for reshaping economies and unlocking untapped potential.

It wasn't long before the banking sector seized this opportunity. In 1996, Absa became the first bank in South Africa to launch an online banking service, a pioneering move that—while limited in its early functionality—began to shift how consumers engaged with financial services.

The rapid rise of smartphone and internet penetration across the continent has since been a key driver in the proliferation of digital financial services and mobile money, contributing to 49 percent of adults in sub-Saharan Africa now having a bank account—a rate that has more than doubled since 2011—and positioning the region as a global leader in mobile banking, with the highest number of live services,



es, subscribers, and transactions.

A farmer in rural Kenya can now secure financing for a tractor with just a few clicks; an SME owner in Ghana can transform their smartphone into a Point-Of-Sale (POS) device; a trader in Tanzania can access trade finance to import goods more seamlessly; and a labourer in Botswana can send remittances to his family in Malawi—all through the power of digital financial services.

Tourism packages By streamlining payment processes, expanding access to credit, and offering savings and insurance products via digital channels, these technologies have democratised access to essential financial services by lowering barriers and reducing dependency on physical banking infrastructure, enabling millions of previously underserved individuals—particularly women, youth, and small business owners—to participate in the formal economy.

But more needs to be done. Studies show that the gender gap in account ownership in sub-Saharan Africa is twice the average of developing economies, standing at 12 percentage points, while only 26% of youth hold accounts at financial institutions. Moreover, despite accounting for the majority of registered businesses on the continent and contributing significantly to GDP, many SMEs continue to grapple with limited access to finance.

Besides the cost factor of opening and maintaining a bank account for individuals in low-income or informal sectors, the lack of proper identification or official documentation presents another significant challenge for them. While essential for regulatory compliance, particularly with know-your-customer (KYC) protocols, much of Africa's unbanked population lacks government-issued IDs, proof of residence, or birth certificates—requirements that are often mandatory for opening a bank account. To meaningfully overcome these and other barriers, African banks should prioritise the development of advanced digital financial solutions tailored to the continent's unique socio-economic landscape—solutions that are adaptive, scalable, and, above all, people-centric.

One example of this kind of innovation is the introduction of mobile-based PoS systems, which reduce reliance on traditional hardware.

For instance, the roll-out of Absa's MobiTap across six African countries has enabled merchants and SMMEs to use Android smartphones as PoS devices, lowering the barriers to entry for digital transactions. This kind of solution empowers entrepreneurs by reducing costs and enabling them to conduct business more flexibly, regardless of their location or access to formal infrastructure.

Similarly, digital wallets are

gaining traction across Africa, largely due to their convenience and accessibility. With many users opting for mobile wallets over traditional card payments, the financial ecosystem is shifting towards digital-first solutions.

The uptake of innovations, such as Spark by Absa, a digital wallet that facilitates payments, bill payments, airtime purchases, and even cash withdrawals at ATMs, reflects the growing demand for simple, intuitive tools that enhance financial mobility.

Developing such solutions means going beyond merely digitising traditional services, however. Banks need to build dynamic, collaborative platforms that integrate financial, informational, and operational tools into one cohesive ecosystem.

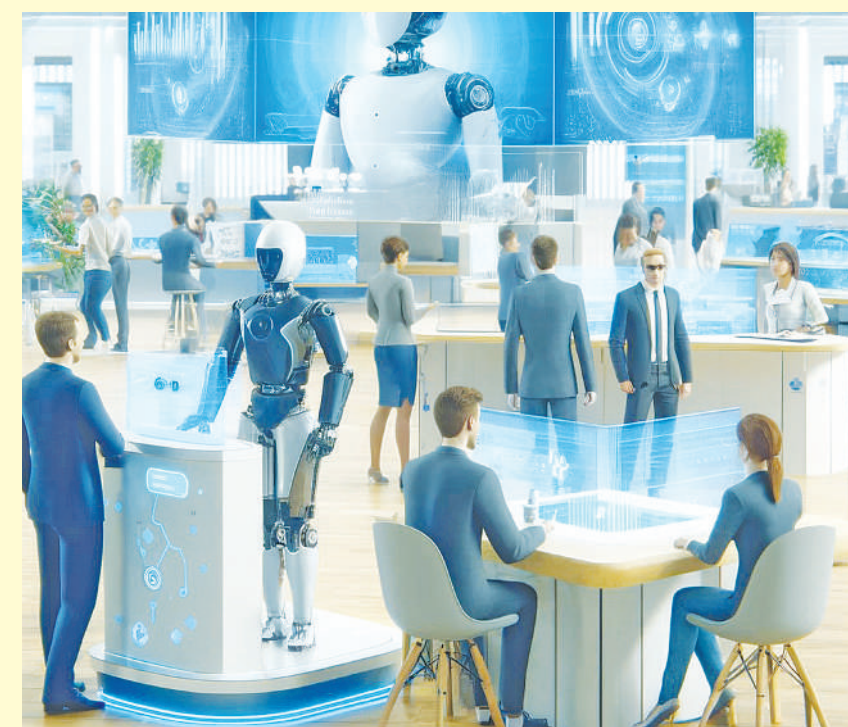
Achieving this requires leveraging data-driven insights, harnessing emerging technologies like Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning for personalised services, and creating interoperable systems that streamline transactions and enhance accessibility.

Furthermore, fostering strategic partnerships to drive capital provision and extend the reach of these services will be crucial in embedding financial solutions into everyday commercial activities.

Most importantly, banks should prioritise financial literacy and user empowerment, offering educational tools and resources within their platforms to ensure that clients not only have access to these services but also understand how to leverage them effectively.

The future of financial inclusion in Africa, then, hinges on the ability of its financial institutions to evolve with the needs of its people—turning technology into a powerful equaliser that drives sustainable, long-term development across the continent.

Saviour Chibiya (pictured), is a Zambian economist and corporate executive, who is the group executive for regional operations at Absa Group Limited.



## CIOs in banking must make AI explainable, trustworthy

By Derek Frost

The capabilities of AI-enabled tools are vast and transformative, with the potential to significantly enhance productivity, elevate customer experiences and pave the way for innovative products and services. In the banking sector, employees are optimistic about AI's impact on their job security but unconvinced their banks can use AI responsibly.

According to a study by Gartner, 74 percent of banking professionals across diverse functions anticipate that AI will bolster the value of and demand for their roles. Additionally, 63 percent foresee an expansion of their role's scope due to AI, while only 14 percent perceive AI as a threat to their job security.

However, though they may be confident in their own job security, only 38 percent believe that AI will increase job availability to everyone else. Moreover, only about half of bank employees surveyed think AI will strengthen privacy rights or create a more equal society.

This suggests that the challenge of adoption is not rooted in concerns over job security. Instead, employees express greater concern about the ethical implications of AI on their customers and colleagues. Therefore, it is important that chief information officers (CIOs) at banks understand this sentiment and work with other leaders to set responsible AI policies and practices that will improve AI tool adoption among employees.

### Adopting AI

To improve employee adoption of AI, the Gartner study recommends that bank CIOs implement the following steps:

Ensure that privacy protections and explainability are included in IT development and deployment standards for AI by promoting them on an ongoing basis, such as through governance agendas and project reporting. Such guardrails can help make AI decisions intelligible and assure staff that all stakeholder concerns are being considered and addressed.

Monitor and prevent AI ethics breaches by maintaining a regular dialogue with senior business leaders on the use of AI and expect the same dialogue between CIOs' direct reports and their business counterparts. This vigilance will help instil confidence among users and leaders.

Co-sponsor governance oversight by collaborating with legal and compliance to operationalise AI ethics inside IT and across the bank.

Bank CIOs and other AI leaders still have significant work to do to earn the trust of their workforce. They can help secure that trust by making privacy and explainability fundamental requirements for AI tools.

Sensitive customer and employee data is essential to training AI models for many banking use cases. However, as AI becomes more ubiquitous in the industry, opportunities to leak this sensitive customer data will increase dramatically.

To tackle those data privacy challenges, CIOs need to adopt a multi-faceted approach. They should mandate regular reviews of vendor contracts for privacy controls and security while also staying abreast of emerging AI security tools to guard against adversarial prompting and vector database

attacks.

To mitigate the impact of data breaches, CIOs should advocate for investment in synthetic data capabilities, enabling models to be trained on synthetic data wherever feasible. In situations where the use of real data is unavoidable, guidelines should be established for IT and business teams to train models using a federated approach.

Additionally, CIOs should implement policies for in-house or vendor-supplied tools to ensure that generative AI prompts can prevent sensitive information from being captured by large language models (LLMs) outside the bank's control.

Banking CIOs must also enforce principles of explainable AI to make AI trustworthy, practical and legal in the banking industry. While explainability has macro implications for regulators and customer trust as it relates to preventing or addressing AI model bias, it also plays a role in the day-to-day work of employees for many of the same reasons.

For instance, frontline employees need to be able to explain to customers who are turned down for a loan why their application was denied by the bank's AI-based credit decisioning model, or how the technology influenced the terms of their loan. Explainability also gives employees the opportunity to push back against the model or identify and report bias patterns that can negatively impact certain customers.

Without explainability, banking jobs can become less fulfilling and even demoralising, employees can feel as if they are mere appendages to the AI juggernaut, and inequality and discrimination can creep into the system more easily.

CIOs can foster explainability, whether during in-house design or as a requirement for vendors, by working with data scientists and domain experts to vet the approaches used (e.g., so-called model-agnostic or model-specific explainability frameworks). Ultimately, the explainability of the decision model must be understood by human beings, and results must be translated into human-digestible terms and domain-specific contexts.

CIOs should also ensure that solutions for bias mitigation are in place, such as fairness-aware algorithms that assess models for disparities and propose viable alternatives.

In conclusion, while AI holds immense promise for enhancing productivity and customer experiences, its potential can only be fully realised if employees adopt it and believe in its capacity to have a positive impact on people's lives. Current ethical concerns pose significant challenges to this adoption. Therefore, CIOs must collaborate across the bank to influence the prioritisation, development, deployment and governance of AI tools, addressing these concerns to boost adoption.

As they lead their function and engage with the rest of the bank to promote AI adoption, CIOs should focus on privacy, explainability, bias mitigation and elimination, use-case boundaries, and robust governance structures.

**Derek Frost (pictured) is Vice President at Gartner, a strategic technology analyst and management consultancy.**

## European Bank, AfDB to support Africa's SMEs



By Nigina Mirbabaeva

The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) and the African Development Bank Group are strengthening their strategic partnership to support small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in sub-Saharan Africa.

Building on successful past collaborations, including in North Africa, the two banks aim to jointly provide tailored financing solutions and business advisory support to high-potential SMEs

across the region. This integrated approach seeks to accelerate the growth of these SMEs to broaden their positive impact on local and regional economies.

Despite being the backbone of African economies and driving innovation, job creation, and sustainable development, SMEs face considerable challenges to growth, including, among others, limited access to financing opportunities and know-how.

By equipping promising SMEs with the necessary tools and resources to meet these challenges,

this partnership will foster their further development and wider economic resilience.

Leveraging the African Development Bank's in-depth on-the-ground expertise and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development's extensive experience working directly with SMEs, this collaboration represents a powerful framework for supporting African businesses and fostering the growth of the continent's private sector.

By combining resources and expertise, the AfDB and EBRD

are committed to creating a robust ecosystem that will attract additional investment and enable long-term sustainable economic progress across sub-Saharan Africa.

This partnership aligns with the African Development Bank's High 5 priorities and the EBRD's mission of promoting private and entrepreneurial initiative. Together, the two institutions aim to position African SMEs as key drivers of economic transformation and resilience.

The EBRD is a multilateral bank that promotes the development of the private sector and entrepreneurial initiative in 36 economies across three continents.

The Bank is owned by 73 countries as well as the EU and the EIB. EBRD investments are aimed at making the economies in its regions competitive, well governed, green, inclusive, resilient and integrated.

Access to credit among SMEs in Africa often face difficulty accessing formal credit due to insufficient collateral, lack of credit history and high-interest rates from commercial banks.

SMEs contribute over 33 percent to Africa's GDP and employ about 80 percent of the workforce, making them a key target for investment.

SME financing in Africa is gradually improving through innovative approaches, though addressing systemic barriers will require sustained effort.



# Nigeria's central bank to penalise banks over cash shortages at ATMs

LAGOS

Nigeria's Central Bank (CBN) has decided to take action to address the cash shortage at ATMs.

Starting on December 1, commercial banks failing to supply their ATMs and branches with cash will face penalties, announced CBN Governor Olayemi Cardoso on November 29, 2024, during the annual bankers' dinner in Lagos.

"To address this, we are conducting spot checks across deposit money banks, and we will impose penalties on underperforming institutions," he said.

Authorities encourage citizens to report any difficulties withdrawing money directly to the CBN through dedicated communication channels. A large public awareness campaign will accompany these new measures.

Since 2023, Nigeria has faced a liquidity shortage worsened by a controversial naira reform. While the initiative has helped boost digi-



tal payments through platforms like Opay and Palmpay, it has also led to a scarcity of cash at ATMs and bank branches. This situation has been made worse by the Central Bank's weekly withdrawal limit of 500,000 nairas (\$297).

To address the shortage, many

businesses and individuals have turned to Point of Sale (POS) agents, who have become an important source of cash.

However, this solution has raised concerns. In May 2024, the government ordered all 1.9 million POS operators to register with the Cor-

porate Affairs Commission (CAC).

"We will also urge full regulatory compliance by all stakeholders, including mobile money operators and POS agents, to promote digital transaction channels and improve service delivery," Cardoso said, stressing that financial institutions

involved in fraudulent practices or deliberate sabotage will face strict penalties.

Despite its push for a "cashless" economy, the CBN acknowledges that the transition must be supported by measures to meet immediate cash needs. "The CBN will continue to maintain a robust cash offering to meet the country's needs, particularly during high-demand periods such as the festive season and year-end," Cardoso said.

Nigeria's foreign exchange reserves have seen significant fluctuations in recent years but have increased since the naira reform. In October 2024, the reserves reached \$39.74 billion, a slight increase from \$38.35 billion the previous month, though still far from the declines seen in July 2021.

The Nigerian banking sector is one of the largest and most dynamic in Africa, with its performance often reflecting broader trends in the country's economy.

Governed by the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), which sets policies on capital requirements, in-

terest rates, and foreign exchange, the sector includes a mix of Tier 1 banks (large-scale operations with regional or international reach) like Access Bank, Zenith Bank, and First Bank, as well as smaller, more niche-focused institutions.

Nigerian banks are at the forefront of fintech adoption, leveraging digital tools for mobile banking, payment systems, and financial inclusion.

Expanding services to underbanked and unbanked populations remains a significant opportunity, supported by government initiatives and fintech collaborations.

With global ESG trends, Nigerian banks are exploring green bonds and sustainability-linked financing.

Despite economic challenges, many Nigerian banks report robust earnings driven by interest income, non-interest revenue, and cost optimization.

Exchange rate volatility and currency devaluation have posed risks, affecting banks with significant foreign-denominated liabilities.

KINSHASA

The Kibali mine, which produces almost all this volume, sold its gold at an average price of \$46,214.8 per kilogram in Q1 2024.

That is nearly \$20,000 less than how much Primera Gold (now DRC Gold Trading) sold its gold at in the same quarter. Meanwhile, global gold prices were up by 37 percent over the period.

Recent data from the Cellule Technique de Coordination et de Planification Minière (CTCPM) shows that at least 80 percent of gold mined in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) has been sold below global market prices since 2023. This includes gold from the Kibali mine, which is 90 percent owned by Barrick Gold and AngloGold Ashanti.

According to Bankable.africa, a kilogram of gold from Kibali was exported for \$46,214.8 in Q1 2024, while Primera sold artisan-collected gold from South Kivu for \$64,502 per kilogram. Even smallholders in Ituri and North Kivu sold at better prices; they exported unrefined gold at \$59,500 per kilogram.

The price discrepancy is not new. Primera Gold sold its gold at \$59,509 per kilogram and artisans at \$38,484.4 per kilogram last year, compared to Kibali's \$30,915.6 per kilogram.

Several factors may explain why Kibali's prices are lower



## 80pc of DRC's exported gold sold below market rates

than global prices. First, the gold from the mine may be sold as doré, an alloy that needs refining to reach the standard 99.9% purity required internationally. If Barrick or its partners cover some refining costs, this could lower the reported net price.

Logistical costs related to transporting and securing gold from remote areas like Kibali might also contribute to the price differences. Unlike Kibali, DRC Gold Trading and local artisans often sell raw gold directly to buyers without including refining and transport costs in their pricing.

Kibali Gold is a major contributor to DRC's gold export revenues, accounting for 88.2% of total exports reported in Q1 2024. The Congolese state and Haut-Uele province receive revenue through Sokimo's 10% interest and royalties based on sales value.

From January to September 2024, the Congolese government received \$27.8 million in mining royalties from Barrick, a modest increase from \$25.5 million during the same period in 2023. However, while global gold prices rose by 37 percent, Kibali's export volumes dropped by 8 percent.

Barrick Gold's and AngloGold Ashanti's financial reports do not clarify the pricing discrepancies compared to other players in the DRC. Enhancing transparency in sales price declarations and better oversight of major mining companies could help the country maximize its gold potential.

In addition to improving the monitoring of declared prices, developing local refining infrastructure could also be beneficial. Also, the government and mining companies must better communicate, to align practices with national interests while keeping investments attractive.

The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) is poised for significant developments in gold production in 2024. The country remains one of Africa's largest gold producers, with substantial contributions from industrial and artisanal mining.

Key projects such as the Kibali Gold Mine, managed by Barrick Gold, continue to lead production efforts. Kibali is expected to maintain robust output in 2024, supported by investments in sustainable practices, including transitioning to 85 percent renewable energy through solar power initiatives.

## Central banks extend easing cycle in Nov. as uncertain 2025 looms

LONDON

Monetary easing by central banks across developed and emerging economies trundled along in November with markets warily gearing up for a new year that could bring tectonic shifts to the global policy making backdrop.

Four of the six central banks overseeing the 10 most heavily traded currencies that held meetings in November lowered their lending benchmarks.

Central banks in New Zealand and Sweden each shaved 50 basis points off their interest rates while the US Federal Reserve and the Bank of England delivered 25 bps cuts.

Policy makers in Australia and Norway decided to leave interest rates unchanged, while their peers in Switzerland, Japan, Canada and at the European Central Bank held no rate setting meetings.

The outcome of the US election, which will see a return of Donald Trump to the White House on January 20, is expected to fuel fresh trade tensions that could boost U.S. inflation and curtail growth.

The latest moves come ahead of some potentially sizeable shocks for the global economy, with politics set to become increasingly unpredictable, said James Rossiter, head of global macro strategy at TD Securities.

"The name of the game in 2025 is now uncertainty, especially in the US and Europe," said Rossiter. "Central banks are going to have to adapt their strategies quickly."

The latest moves across G10 central banks brings the year-to-date tally of rate cuts to 650 bps, nearly matching the 2020 total of 655 bps, after major central banks delivered no cuts between 2021 and 2023.

Across emerging markets, 12 of the Reuters sample of 18 central banks in developing economies held rate-setting meetings in November. South Korea, Mexico, South Africa and the Czech Republic delivered 25 bps cuts each while China, Indonesia, Turkey, Malaysia, Israel, Hungary and Poland kept rates unchanged.

Brazil extended its rate hiking cycle, lifting its key interest rates by 50 bps.

S&P Global Ratings emerging market chief economist Elijah Oliveros-Rosen said that a changing outlook of fewer rate cuts from the Fed in the wake of the US election would shape policy making in developing economies.

"We also expect greater caution among most major EM central banks, and we've therefore toned down our expectations for their interest rate cuts in 2025," Oliveros-Rosen said in a note to clients. "On balance, we expect a stronger U.S. dollar against most EM currencies in 2025 than in 2024."

The latest moves in emerging markets took the tally of cuts since the start of the year to 1,810 bps across 46 moves - outstripping the total of 1,765 bps of easing in 2022, after 945 bps in 2023.

Total hikes for emerging markets so far in 2024 stood at 1,350 bps.



US Federal Reserve

## Egypt's external debt surges 307pc

CAIRO

Egypt's external debt skyrocketed by 307 percent, while its Gross National Income (GNI) rose by 69%, according to the World Bank's International Debt Report 2023.

Among Low- and Middle-Income Countries (LMICs), Egypt recorded a \$17.4bn short-term debt inflow in 2022, representing a staggering 19-fold increase from 2021 levels.

The report highlighted Egypt's financial milestones, noting its issuance of the region's first Samurai bond in 2022. This yen-denominated bond was issued in Tokyo under Japanese regulations, a landmark move for the Middle East and North Africa.

Breaking down Egypt's public and publicly guaranteed debt for 2022, the report classified 36 percent as private debt and 37 percent as multilateral debt. Within private debt, bondholders made up 23 percent, with other commercial creditors accounting for 13 percent.

Multilateral debt included contributions from the International Monetary Fund (14 percent), the World Bank's International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (9 percent), and other multilateral creditors (14 percent).

Bilateral debt represented 27 percent of Egypt's obligations, with Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and the UAE each accounting



for 5 percent, and other bilateral sources contributing 12 percent.

Globally, developing nations faced unprecedented financial strain in 2023, spending a record \$1.4trn on foreign debt servicing as interest costs hit a 20-year high. Interest payments alone surged nearly 33% to \$406bn, constraining budgets for critical sectors such as health, education, and environmental initiatives.

The report underscored that the burden was most severe for the poorest nations eligible for loans from the World Bank's International Development Association (IDA).

These countries collectively paid \$96.2bn to service their debts in 2023.

While principal repayments decreased by 8 percent to \$61.6bn, interest costs soared to \$34.6bn, four times the amount a decade ago.

On average, interest payments consumed nearly 6 percent of export earnings for IDA-eligible nations—the highest level since 1999—with some countries paying as much as 38 percent.

As credit conditions tightened, multilateral institutions, including the World Bank, became vital lifelines for vulnerable economies. Since 2022, foreign private creditors have received \$13bn more in debt-service payments from IDA-eligible nations than they provided in new financing.

In contrast, multilateral institutions



## WORLD

# Namibia elects first female president in historic vote

WINDHOEK

NAMIBIA made history on Tuesday by electing the country's first female president, 72-year-old Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah from the ruling South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO) party.

The announcement marks a significant milestone in Namibia's 2024 presidential and National Assembly elections. The Electoral Commission of Namibia (ECN) Chairperson Elsie Nghikembua declared the groundbreaking victory on Tuesday evening, acknowledging the culmination of an election period that began on Nov 27.

However, due to disruptions on the first day of voting, the process was extended in

some areas from Nov 29 or 30 to ensure that all eligible voters had the opportunity to participate.

Citizens turned out in large numbers to participate in the highly anticipated polls, with the ECN revealing that nearly 1.45 million eligible voters were registered, with presidential votes amounting to 1,099,582 and National Assembly votes at 1,092,685.

Nandi-Ndaitwah (pictured), who became the southwestern African nation's fifth president since independence in 1990, won by 57.31 percent, and was followed by her closest rival Panduleni Itula of the Independent Patriots for Change who amassed 25.50 percent.

In her acceptance speech, Nandi-Ndait-



wah said she is happy to be able to "provide the nation with guidance on our developmental agenda and the strengthening of our institution."

"I would also like to thank those who have shown their love of their country by ensuring that peace and stability continue to grow, particularly in the process of our elections," she added.

"As I am accepting these results, I would say once again on behalf of the SWAPO Party, the Namibian nation has voted for peace and stability, you have voted for unity and diversity, natural resources beneficiation, and youth empowerment for sustainable development. And this you will do through economic

transformation," she said.

Meanwhile, there are 104 members in Namibia's National Assembly, as per the country's constitution.

In the National Assembly elections held parallel to the presidential elections, President-elect Nandi-Ndaitwah's SWAPO Party won 51 seats, while Panduleni Itula of the Independent Patriots for Change party got 20 seats.

SWAPO has been Namibia's ruling party since the nation gained independence in 1990. In the 2019 elections, the late President Hage Geingob led SWAPO to victory, securing over 56 percent of the National Assembly voting.

Xinhua

## Israel PM Netanyahu thanks Trump for warning Hamas to release hostages

JERUSALEM

ISRAELI Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Tuesday thanked US President-elect Donald Trump for his strong stance on the hostage crisis involving Hamas.

In a post on X (formerly Twitter), Netanyahu expressed his gratitude, stating, "I want to thank President Trump for his strong statement yesterday about the need for Hamas to release the hostages, the responsibility of Hamas, and this adds another force to our continued effort to release all the hostages. Thank you, President Trump."

Trump's statement followed the release of a video by Hamas showing American-Israeli hostage Edan Alexander pleading for his release. In response, Trump posted a warning on Truth Social, saying, "Everybody is talking about the hostages who are being held so violently, inhumanely, and against the will of the entire World, in the Middle East - But it's all talk, and no action!"

He added that if the hostages were not released by January 20, 2025, when he would assume office, the US would take drastic measures. "Please let this TRUTH serve to represent that if the hostages are not released prior to January 20, 2025, the date that I proudly assume Office as President of the United States, there will be ALL HELL TO PAY in the Middle East, and for those in charge who perpetrated these atrocities against Humanity."

Trump made it clear that those responsible for the hostage situation would face severe consequences, stating, "Those responsible will be hit harder than anybody has been hit in the long and storied History of the United States of America. RELEASE THE HOSTAGES NOW!"

The warning, coming days after the release of the hostage video, has added pressure on those holding hostages in the Middle East. Netanyahu's public endorsement of Trump's statement highlights the growing international resolve to secure the release of those held captive.

ANI

## Xiplomacy: How Belt and Road cooperation paves way for shared global development

BEIJING

IT was a landmark moment for Peru's mega port of Chancay when a drawbridge unloaded a container from the COSCO "Peru" ship and loaded another onto the "New Shanghai" cargo vessel under the glow of brightly lit terminals on a mid-November night.

Minutes earlier, Chinese President Xi Jinping, on a state visit to the South American country, attended the inauguration ceremony via video link alongside Peruvian President Dina Boluarte. Together, they inaugurated the Chancay port, a flagship project of Belt and Road cooperation between China and Peru.

The inauguration symbolizes the transformative impact of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), first proposed by Xi in 2013. Over the past decade, the initiative has delivered a slew of practical projects worldwide, bringing tangible benefits to millions of people.

MAKING REAL DIFFERENCE

Addressing the fourth symposium on Belt and Road construction work in Beijing on Monday, Xi stressed comprehensively advancing high-quality cooperation under the BRI. Since the initiative was put forth in 2013, major achievements have been made in Belt and Road cooperation, which contributed to enhancing China's friendship with participating countries and promoting their economic and social development, he said.

The just-launched Chancay Port is such an example. This state-of-the-art, green and smart port, built with Chinese investment and expertise, reduces sea freight time from South America to Asia by half, from 45 days to 23.

Omar Alayo, a Peruvian engineer for the construction of the Chancay Tunnel, watched the port's inauguration ceremony. He said the flow of goods and technology along this new maritime route will shape history.

The launch of the port followed the successes of other BRI projects, including the Laos-China Railway. Operational since 2021, the railway has transformed Laos into a key land-linked nation, boosting foreign investment and reducing poverty among its predominantly agrarian population.

"With the railway, the mountain from Kunming to Vientiane is no longer high, and the road no longer long," Sommad Pholsena, vice president of the Lao National Assembly, still remembered Xi's words when addressing the railway's inauguration three years ago.

The railway has created new investment opportunities in agriculture and industry, and alleviated poverty for many Lao people, Sommad Pholsena said.



A passenger takes selfie photos with a high-speed electrical multiple unit (EMU) train on a platform of Padalarang Station along the Jakarta-Bandung High-Speed Railway (HSR) in Padalarang, Indonesia, Oct. 17, 2024. Xinhua

Similarly, the China-Europe freight train network has revitalized trade hubs from Chongqing, China, to Duisburg, Germany, driving industrial development and regional economic growth.

The China-Europe freight train service has so far operated 100,000 trains, with over 11 million TEUs of goods valued at more than 420 billion U.S. dollars transported.

Volker Tschapke, honorary president of Germany's Prussian Society, noted that the initiative fosters regional growth by integrating logistics with trade, creating opportunities that improve livelihoods across nations.

The BRI has improved infrastructure and connectivity, created tens of thousands of jobs, and helped countries realize their shared vision of peaceful development, win-win cooperation, and common prosperity, said Thong Mengdaiv, a lecturer at the Institute for International Studies and Public Policy of the Royal University of Phnom Penh.

GROWING PARTNERSHIPS

The BRI is witnessing growing partnerships around the world. So far, more than 150 countries and over 30 international organizations have signed Belt and Road cooperation agreements, with the initiative extending from the Eurasian continent to Africa and Latin America.

Last month, Xi and Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva jointly announced the alignment of the BRI with Brazil's development strategies.

"We have high expectations for the strategic alignment between our two countries, and believe it will further unleash Brazil's economic vitality," said Chief of Staff of the Brazilian Presidency Rui Costa. He also pointed out that Brazil's development strategies are highly compatible with the BRI.

When addressing a symposium marking the fifth anniversary of the BRI in 2018, Xi said that the broad support for the BRI shows aspiration from countries involved, developing countries in particular, for peace and development. "It does not differentiate countries by ideology nor play the zero-sum game. As long as countries are willing to join, they are welcome."

Since 2013, multiple countries and regions have forged synergy between their development strategies and the BRI, including Kazakhstan's Bright Path economic policy, Mongolia's Steppe Road Program, Saudi Arabia's "Vision 2030," the construction of the Eurasian Economic Union by Russia, and the African Union's Agenda 2063.

With the alignment of these strategies with the BRI, a number of flagship projects have been completed, converging dynamics of development for the countries involved.

Take the Jakarta-Bandung High-Speed Railway, a flagship project that dovetails the BRI with Indonesia's Global Maritime Fulcrum. For the past year since the high-speed train went into operation, the program has seen comprehensive collaboration of teams from both countries in areas such as high-speed rail operation management, talent development and transfer of technologies.

"This cooperation embodies the spirit of partnership based on equality and mutual benefit," said Veronika Saraswati, director of the Saraswati Institute and a China expert. Championing the principles of consultation, cooperation, and shared benefits, the BRI supports equal participation of all countries in decision-making, regardless of size, thus promoting the democratization of international relations. Xinhua

## Strategic defeat would mean destruction for Russia, Putin says

MOSCOW

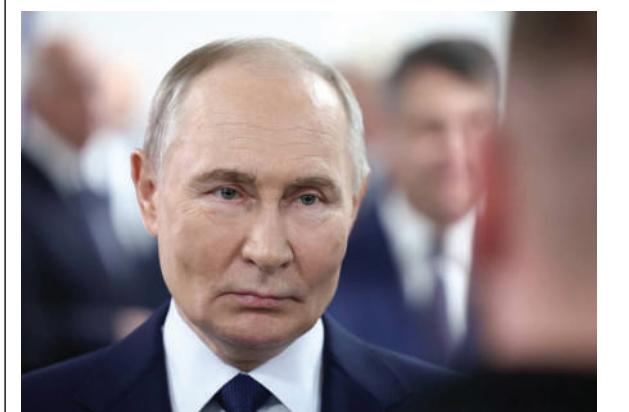
THERE have always been people in Russia who are ready to rise up to defend the country, President Vladimir Putin said at a meeting with the service members undergoing treatment at the Center of Innovative Technologies in Orthopaedics.

"Someone from the outside says, 'A strategic defeat should be inflicted on Russia. What does that mean? Destruction. Time after time. However, there have always been people who rise up to defend [the country],' Putin pointed out.

The head of state thanked the troops participating in Russia's special military operation for rising up to defend the country this time.

The president also stressed that a separate section would be established for the service members willing to get an education, and the authorities would assist them in entering universities.

"There will be a separate section for all those who want to improve their skills and expand their education. We are doing everything to make sure that those with ambition and an inner need to get an education or some training have a chance to do so," Putin said.



## Tesla's 'catfish effect' and China's 10-million-units milestone in NEV production

CHINAS annual production of new energy vehicles (NEVs) exceeded 10 million units this year, and this reminds many of Tesla's story in the country.

In April 2018, Chinese President Xi Jinping announced that China would ease as soon as possible foreign equity restrictions, in automobile industry in particular.

Three months later, Tesla unveiled a plan to set up a factory in Shanghai, with a total investment of 50 billion yuan (\$6.91 billion) and an annual capacity of 500,000 units. In January 2019, construction work of the factory commenced and the first vehicle manufactured by the plant rolled off production line in December that year.

The Shanghai Gigafactory of Tesla is the first wholly foreign-owned NEV manufacturing project in China. It was

commenced, completed and put into operation in the same year. As it provides huge opportunities for Tesla, the plant also generates the "catfish effect," forcing Chinese carmakers to speed up innovation.

One of the important reasons for China to be able to produce more than 10 million NEVs in a year is that Chinese carmakers, amid fierce competition in an open environment and facing the "catfish effect," stood up to challenges and actively sought for changes.

In this open competition, Chinese carmakers have sharpened their capabilities, making China the world's most dynamic innovation hub of NEV technology. In 2023, China became the largest vehicle exporter globally. It sold over 1.2 million NEVs to other parts of the world, up 77.6 percent year on year.

Since Nov. 1, a new version of the negative list for foreign investment access has come into effect, reducing the number of restrictions from 31 to 29. It indicates China's resolution in promoting higher-level opening up, as well as the country's courage to improve its opening-up capability and build new competitiveness through expanded international cooperation.

The "10-million-units" milestone is based on the accelerated integration between technological innovation and industrial innovation. A batch of Chinese NEV brands have emerged, becoming pace setters in sales and production, core technology and intelligent technology.

The "10-million-units" milestone marks a "green achievement" of the global new energy industry. It signifies

a new starting point of high-quality development for Chinese NEV manufacturers, and mirrors the rapid growth of new quality productive forces characterized by green development.

Green and low-carbon development is a general trend that cannot be stopped by "small yard, high fences." In the first three quarters of this year, China exported 928,000 NEVs, up 12.5 percent from a year ago. This proves global consumers' recognition for quality products and pursuit of green and low-carbon development, despite tariff hikes on these Chinese products.

Win-win cooperation creates a bright future, while exclusiveness only leads to a dead end. Win-win cooperation is the sure way to success in launching major initiatives that benefit all.

Leveraging its advantages in technol-

ogy and brand influence, as well as the super large Chinese consumption market, Tesla has seen a significant rise in its sales that is also driving the rapid development of the industrial and supply chains.

Currently, over 95 percent of parts used at Tesla's Shanghai Gigafactory are produced locally, and over 60 suppliers have entered the company's global supply chain system.

Thanks to China's complete supply chain system and top-notch intelligent manufacturing, a vehicle is rolling off the production line at Tesla's Shanghai Gigafactory every 30 seconds. In 2023, Tesla vehicles manufactured in China accounted for over half of the company's global production, and 36 percent of the vehicles manufactured in China were exported.

Tesla's success in the Chinese market is a win-win and all-win outcome. It conforms to the general trend of global division of labor in the industrial and supply chains in the era of economic globalization. It showcases the philosophy of win-win cooperation and harmonious coexistence.

Today, more and more multinational carmakers are leveraging China's advantages in market, technology and institutional opening up to realize their "coming to China for global success" goal. Chinese NEV manufacturers, by establishing overseas production facilities in Hungary, Spain, Myanmar, Malaysia, Brazil and more, are contributing their part to global green and low-carbon transition.

People's Daily



## Kremlin spokesman sees no grounds for Russia-Ukraine negotiations so far

MOSCOW

REASONS for Russian-Ukrainian negotiations are non-existent at this point, Russian Presidential Press Secretary Dmitry Peskov said.

"There are no grounds for negotiations at this point," he told the Izvestia newspaper.

In his words, a number of countries have already offered to host such talks, including Qatar.

"Indeed, the emirate is playing a very active role in mediation efforts on a wide range of issues, and is doing so in a very effective manner. Apart from that, our bilateral relations with Qatar are developing very well. And we are grateful to all countries, including Qatar, for their good will," Peskov said.

On October 27 and 28, the embassy of Qatar in Moscow hosted two ceremonies to hand over children to their relatives in Russia and Ukraine. At present, Qatar is in talks about expanding its role of a mediator, including on the issue of prisoner swaps.

Other countries that mediate efforts to resolve humanitarian issues between Russia and Ukraine are Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

Earlier, Russian President Vladimir



Putin, speaking at a Valdai International Discussion Club session, stated that Moscow was open to peace talks on Ukraine, but not on the basis of Kiev's "wish lists." The president emphasized that negotiations should be grounded in the agreements made in Istanbul, but adapted to today's realities. The Russian and Ukrainian delegations met in Istanbul on March 29, 2022.

The principles of the future agreement included commitments on Ukraine's neutral, non-aligned status and its refusal to deploy foreign weapons, including nuclear ones, on the country's territory. **Agencies**

## EAM Jaishankar meets global ministers at 29th CII Partnership Summit 2024 in Delhi

NEW DELHI

EXTERNAL Affairs Minister (EAM) S Jaishankar, during the 29th CII Partnership Summit in New Delhi, met with many international ministers and leaders and engaged in talks about India's growth and potential partnerships on the global stage.

Jaishankar also interacted with his cabinet colleague and Union Minister for Commerce and Industry, Piyush Goyal.

"Pleased to meet with Ministers Tayeb Zitouni of Algeria, Abdulla bin Adel Fakhro of Bahrain, Lyonpo Namgyal Dorji of Bhutan, Nir Barkat of Israel, Adolfo Urso of Italy, Damodar Bhandari of Nepal, Serigne Gueye Diop of Senegal, Patricia de Lille of South Africa and Deputy Ministers Dr Rithi Pich of Cambodia, Minn Minn of Myanmar, Ahmed Mohammed Al Sayed of Qatar on the sidelines of the CII Partnership Summit 2024 in New Delhi. Good interaction with them along with my Cabinet colleague Piyush Goyal ji on the growth story of India and how India can partner with them on the global stage," the EAM said on X.

The meeting included discussions with Algerian Minister of Domestic Trade and National Market Regulation Tayeb Zitouni, Bahrain Minister of Industry and Commerce Abdulla bin Adel Fakhro, Bhutan Minister of Industry, Commerce, and Employment Lyonpo Namgyal Dorji

of Bhutan, Israeli Minister of Economy and Industry Nir Barkat, Italy's Minister of Economic Development Adolfo Urso, Nepal's Minister of Industry, Commerce and Supplies Damodar Bhandari, Minister of Commerce and Trade Serigne Gueye Diop of Senegal, South African Minister of Tourism Patricia de Lille and Deputy Ministers in Cambodia's Ministry of Commerce Dr Rithi Pich, Minn Minn of Myanmar, and Qatar Minister of State of Foreign Trade Affairs Ahmed Mohammed Al Sayed.

The 29th CII Partnership Summit has brought together 61 participating countries, 30 global speakers, and 11 international ministers. The summit aimed at fostering productive partnerships and global cooperation, ensuring a shared vision for a sustainable and prosperous future.

Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) organized 29th CII Partnership Summit 2024 on 2-3 December in New Delhi. The CII Partnership Summit, held annually since 1995, has been regularly partnered by Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Government of India. The previous summit, held in March 2023, witnessed participation from 67 countries with over 2000 business delegates and more than 400 international delegates.

ANI

## Think tank report explicates how world knows a real China amid inbound travel boom

BOAO

A think tank report released on Wednesday offers an in-depth analysis of how the world is invited to experience a real China up-close, as foreign tourists swarm into the country buoyed by a raft of facilitation measures.

The report, "China Travel - Inviting the World to Experience a Real China," was issued by New China Research, a think tank under Xinhua News Agency.

The report summarizes and explains the domestic and global relevance of China's inbound travel boom. It notes that China has introduced a series of facilitation policies and measures for foreigners to come to China for work, study, or travel.

Starting on Dec. 1, 2023, visitors from France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain and Malaysia could enter China visa-free for up to 15 days for business, tourism, family visits, or transit.

The policy has expanded several times in the past year. So far, 38 countries enjoy unilateral visa-free access, and the maximum stay for visitors has been extended to 30 days as of Nov. 30.

According to the report, in the first half of 2024, the number of foreigners who entered China reached 14.64 million, up 152.7 percent year on year. Among them, approximately 8.54 million entered China visa-free, a year-on-year increase of 190.1 percent.

The report was released at the Xinhua CEIS Think Tank Annual Conference 2024 in Boao in south China's island province of Hainan. The CEIS is short for China Economic Information Service, a professional provider of economic information

and services under Xinhua.

To welcome international visitors in the post-pandemic era, China has streamlined its visa application process, refined its immigration process to increase efficiency at border-control points, made its payment services for international travelers more accessible and inclusive, among other efforts.

Noting that China continues to roll out facilitation measures at the national, local and market levels, the report says that against the backdrop of China's strategy of building a strong tourism country, the "China Travel" market faces extraordinarily broad vistas and plays an important role in driving the development of the economy.

"China Travel" enables the world to have a direct appreciation of the development achievements of Chinese modernization, and experience the charm of Chinese culture, the new scenes of life-changing technology, the beautiful life of Chinese urban and rural residents, and the ecological advancement in China, says the report.

The report has cited the story of a British couple as an epitome of "China Travel." Since the beginning of 2024, British blogger Chris Hutchinson has been taking his family on a China tour. At first, they withdrew money from banks and used cash to pay for their daily expenses.

"After learning to use WeChat and Alipay, everything became so much easier and simpler," he said. "It's incredible that everything can be done with a cell phone. Even at street food stalls, one can pay by just scanning the code!" added Hutchinson's wife Tamira. **Xinhua**

## Over decades, US promises of security ring hollow in African ears

NAIROBI

RARELY does a sitting president of the United States set foot on African soil. But it seems too late for Joe Biden to define an "all in on Africa's future" legacy in his trip to Angola at the end of his presidency.

Despite the release of U.S. Strategy Toward Sub-Saharan Africa in August 2022, the continent of about 1.4 billion people has reaped few tangible "security dividends" as promised. Instead, it witnessed a shift of the "global terrorism epicenter" into the Sahel region.

The arid belt saw nearly 4,000 terrorism-related deaths in 2023, coinciding with an extensive wave of coups. What lies behind the spiral of terrorism as Washington's self-proclaimed security aid expands? The question cannot be attributed to the current government alone.

Since the Sept. 11 attacks in 2001, successive U.S. administrations have prioritized short-term security measures, calculating the allocation of resources, and delivering them in their own interest. This approach has irritated Africans in their quest for long-awaited stability and prosperity.

"The most unfortunate development geopolitically is that the relationship between Africa and the United States or any other Western country has never changed over the past 20 years," said Gibson Nyikadzino, a Zimbabwean journalist and international relations analyst.

"It is only based on exploitation, so there is a continuity of an unequal relationship," he added.

### IN NAME OF PEACE, PROSPERITY

The trauma of the Sept. 11 attacks alerted Washington to the potential for a porous Africa to turn into a new hotbed of terrorism.

But betraying the promise to develop an African continent that "lives in liberty, peace, and growing prosperity," the United States opted for a military-first framework prioritizing short-term security over enduring stability.

Billions of U.S. dollars were poured into the transfer and sale of military equipment, the training of local forces, and the establishment of army bases, without addressing the underlying conditions that feed terrorism, such as Africa's development deficit.

Former American University Professor David Vine estimated that the U.S. army had maintained a presence in at least 26 African countries by 2021, with Niger, Djibouti and Somalia serving as key hosts for large military facilities on the continent.

In Somalia alone, Oxford University Senior Research Fellow Eniola Anuoluwapo Soyemi calculated, more than 2.5 billion dollars were pumped into counterterrorism assistance between 2007 and 2020.

But the 2020 U.S. Lead Inspector General's



Photo taken on April 27, 2018 shows a wreckage of a vehicle after a bomb attack by Boko Haram militia in Maiduguri, Nigeria, April 27, 2018. (Xinhua/NAN)

audit suggested that the United States failed to rein in the terrorist threat in Somalia, with al-Shabab remaining "adaptive, resilient and capable of attacking."

In 2009, the Washington-initiated Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership pushed Burkina Faso -- a West African country previously void of notable terrorist threats -- into a toxic culture of military primacy.

As the U.S. security assistance soaring from 200,000 dollars per year to 18 million dollars in 2018, a sudden influx of training, weapons, and intelligence, local powers "see military solutions to any problem," which resulted in Burkina Faso's fall into one of the world's worst-impacted regions by terrorism, former U.S. career diplomat Elizabeth Shackelford observed.

Washington's move, in some experts' eyes, resembles an act of adding more troops and armaments to the already escalating conflicts rather than seeking peaceful solutions.

"The huge resources dedicated to counterterrorism have been taken away from the enterprise of economic development, leaving many countries where the United States operates in dire need of development," said Adhere Cavince, a Kenyan scholar on international relations. "Instead of focusing on investing in productive sectors that would get Africa's youth away from terrorism, the United States is inadvertently fueling the vice that it aims to eradicate."

As Cavince pointed out, young people who lack access to jobs often fall prey to recruitment by terrorist groups. "Similarly, the U.S. penchant for propagating regime change in Africa has created volatility that has only fueled the emergence of militant groups. This has resulted in ungovernable spaces in countries like Libya and Somalia, giving room for

extremists and terrorist outfits to thrive."

"The U.S. approach to security is creating turmoil in Africa. It is cutting economic activity and driving governance by guns," Cavince said.

### MILITARY-FIRST APPROACH BACKFIRES

According to Cavince, there are not enough international terrorist groups in Africa to pose a direct security threat to Washington, which makes "the overwhelming U.S. ground-based forces numbering over 6,500 and dozens of military bases therefore not warranted."

Years of aid proved to no avail in helping African countries fend off terrorism, only to see the United States stamp its military marks across the continent.

The latest Global Terrorism Index report flagged a dramatic increase in terrorism-related deaths and a 1,266 percent jump in incidents in the Sahel from 2007 to 2023.

Boko Haram, a Nigeria-based militant group and a target of the U.S.-backed Multi-national Joint Task Force, continued to thrive after turning violent in 2009.

Its insurgency not only resulted in tens of thousands of deaths, but also displaced nearly 2.4 million people in the Lake Chad Basin region. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, some 12.5 million people remain in need of humanitarian assistance in the region, with 5.3 million people suffering food insecurity.

U.S. forces' blemish on the human rights record has also come to light. For example, it launched about 300 drone strikes and commando raids in Somalia without apologizing to the families of the civilians killed, according to reports by U.S. news outlet The Intercept.

Xinhua

## China contributes to global intellectual property rights governance

THIS year marks the 30th anniversary of China's entry into the Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT). In 1994, patent applications via PCT from China were only 98; by 2023, the number increased to nearly 70,000, ranking first in the world for five consecutive years.

Over the past three decades, China has emerged as the world's largest patent filer and is advancing toward becoming an intellectual property powerhouse, becoming a crucial player in the global innovation landscape.

A series of impressive data underscore China's vibrant innovation ecosystem. According to World Intellectual Property Indicators 2024 released by the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), innovators in China filed around 1.64 million patent applications worldwide in 2023, far exceeding other countries and regions.

In 2024, China moved up one spot to 11th place in the ranking of the world's most innovative economies, remaining the only middle-income economy in the top 30.

In recent years, China's green and digital economy has been gaining strong momentum, with cutting-edge technologies continuously fostering new industries, new models, and new growth drivers. Sustained scientific and technological innovation continues to empower new quality productive forces.

According to China National Intellectual Property Administration (CNIPA), in 2023, the number of invention patents approved in China's core industries of digital economy reached 406,000, a year-on-year increase of 21.2 percent, accounting for 44.1 percent of the total number of granted invention patents in the country. As of the end of 2023, China had 243,000 valid green and low-carbon patents.

Ding Minglei, a researcher with the Chinese Academy of Science and Technology for Development, said that China's intellectual property protection is becoming increasingly advanced. The country stands at the forefront of global high-tech innovation and patent applications, highlighting its strong innovative vitality and significant influence in global technological innovation, Ding added.

During the recently concluded seventh China International Import Expo (CIIE), many new technologies and products met the public for the first time, demonstrating the vibrant charm of cutting-edge technology. Among the standout exhibits are the world's first intelligent powered shoes that allow wearers to walk at running speed, an airless tire for lunar rovers that can withstand the moon's extremely harsh conditions, and a foldable handheld cleaning machine.

Since its inception in 2018, the CIIE has served as an "accelerator" driving the entry of new products worldwide into the Chinese market. The favorable atmosphere of intellectual property protection and the law-based

business environment are key factors that encourage global enterprises to launch their products and invest in China.

During the seventh CIIE, the Shanghai Municipal Bureau of Justice took the lead in establishing a foreign-related legal service center and a legal service volunteer team, providing global exhibitors with one-stop legal consulting services ranging from intellectual property administrative law enforcement, intellectual property right protection, and dispute resolution.

Ding said that in recent years, China has created a more fair and transparent business environment for foreign investors by improving laws and regulations, and strengthening law enforcement and judicial efficiency. These measures have effectively reduced costs incurred by technology transfer for foreign investors, increased their market profit expectations, and promoted the continuous inflow of high-quality foreign investment.

The number of applications, authorizations and holdings of intellectual patents of foreign com-

panies in China has increased rapidly year by year. By June this year, the numbers of effective invention patents owned by foreign applicants and valid trademark registrations by foreign applicants in China had reached 919,000 and 2.135 million respectively. This speaks to foreign investors' full confidence in China's intellectual property protection.

In recent years, China has actively promoted international cooperation in intellectual property rights. It has established stable cooperative relations with over 80 countries and regions, with over 200 intellectual property cooperation agreements currently being implemented.

In addition, the number of Patent Prosecution Highway (PPH) partners with China has increased to 33, covering 84 countries, providing strong support for Chinese companies' overseas intellectual property layout.

Intellectual property cooperation within multilateral frameworks such as China-Central Asia cooperation mechanism, China-ASEAN cooperation mechanism, BRICS, China-Mongolia-Russia cooperation mechanism, China-Africa cooperation mechanism, and China-Latin America cooperation mechanism has also made significant progress.

Furthermore, China actively participates in negotiations and discussions at the WIPO Assemblies and professional committees to improve international intellectual property rules.

In May this year, China facilitated the conclusion of the WIPO Treaty on Intellectual Property, Genetic Resources and Associated Traditional Knowledge, ending 25 years of negotiations and achieving a historical breakthrough.

Xinhua



Photo shows a lunar rover tire during the seventh China International Import Expo (CIIE) in east China's Shanghai, November 6, 2024. (Photo by Tang Ke / People's Daily Online)





## Coach Kiazayidi now praises Tabora United's resurgence

By Correspondent Nassir Nchimbi

TABORA United head coach Anicet Kiazayidi Makiadi has praised the hard work of his coaching staff and players for the team's remarkable turnaround in the Premier League.

The Beekeepers are unbeaten in their last five league matches, a stark improvement since the departure of former coach Francis Kimanzi.

Kiazayidi's appointment has brought a renewed sense of purpose to Tabora United. Under his leadership, the team has shown significant growth, highlighted by impressive victories over league giants Young Africans and a solid KMC side.

These results have proven their ability to compete with the top-tier teams in the Tanzanian Premier League.

Central to Tabora United's resurgence has been their attacking quartet of Heritier Makambo, Yacouba Songne, Morice Chukwu, and Offen Chikola.

The dynamic partnership of Makambo and Songne has been particularly impactful, with the duo contributing a combined 12 of the team's 16 goals this season.

Songne, who joined from Djibouti's AS Arta/Solar7, has been a standout performer with four goals and three assists.

Meanwhile, Makambo, formerly of Al Murooj SC in Libya, has contributed two goals and three assists. Their clinical finishing and creativity have been instrumental in Tabora United's rise up the league standings.

Kiazayidi's tactical acumen and motivational skills have played a pivotal role in Tabora's resurgence. His clear vision and ability to foster unity within the squad have translated into consistent performances on the pitch.

"The team's morale is high due to the hard work of both the coaching staff and players," he said. "We've seen

a remarkable transformation this season, with the team already securing six wins, compared to just five last year."

The coach (pictured) also emphasized the importance of teamwork and a clear footballing philosophy.

"We're clear about the style of football we want to play, and we've made significant progress toward our goals. However, we know that tough challenges lie ahead, so we'll continue to work hard and strive for success," he added.

Tabora United currently sit fifth in the Premier League standings with 21 points, having recorded six wins, three draws, and four losses.

Their recent form has made them one of the league's most formidable teams, but the challenges ahead are daunting.

On December 13, Tabora United will face a stern test against league leaders Azam FC at the Ali Hassan Mwinyi Stadium.

Azam, in blistering form with seven consecutive wins, lead the league with 30 points from 13 matches.

Simba SC and Young Africans, both with games in hand, closely follow in second and third place with 28 and 27 points, respectively.

Kiazayidi is confident in his team's ability to rise to the challenge, but he acknowledges the magnitude of the task at hand.

"Azam FC are in excellent form, and we'll need to be at our very best to compete with them. Our focus is on maintaining our momentum and giving our fans a performance to be proud of."

With their newfound confidence and determination, Tabora United are poised to give the league leaders a tough contest. Their impressive run of form under Makiadi has set the stage for an exciting clash that could redefine their season.

## Pak Stars close in on TCA Delaware Champions League knockouts

By Correspondent Japheth Kazenga

THE battle for qualification for the knockout phase of the 2024 Tanzania Cricket Association (TCA) Delaware Champions League has picked up, with Pak Stars A aiming for the phase after overcoming Aga Khan SC by four wickets early this week.

The Pak Stars A bowlers put on an impressive display to neutralise the Aga Khan SC batsmen in the match at Anadil Burhani Oval in Dar es Salaam.

Aga Khan SC took the crease first, finishing with 127/8 in 20 overs with some of the batsmen slotted in at the top order playing a pivotal role in securing the figure.

There was a slight wobble in the club's quest for completing the batting time with a bigger total as opener Abhik Patwa suffered an early exit.

The otherwise key performer ended one run short of two digits, having been sent back by Pak Stars A bowler Younas Afridi.

Patwa's club was left reeling at 12-1 after 1.5 overs and it was down to his opening batting partner, Dhruvit Mehta, and the remainder of the batsmen to step up their game.

Fellow opening batsman Mehta was a bit resolute, given the youthful performer notched 28 runs.

Mehta propelled Aga Khan SC to 67-2 once the gifted cricketer was sent back close to half-way through the innings.

The other youthful cricketer, Jumanne Mohamed, put on a stellar showing to significantly



Pak Stars A's cricketer Ivan Ismail showcased stellar batting to guide the club to a four-wicket defeat of Aga Khan SC in a 2024 Tanzania Cricket Association (TCA) Delaware Champions League clash in Dar es Salaam early this week. PHOTO: COURTESY OF CARAVANS CRICKET CLUB

boost the batting squad figure, nailing 49 runs.

He had his outfit reaching 112-5 with 15 balls left, making it a point that the outfit was all out to notch a formidable figure and ultimately end its losing streak.

Failure to get hold of batting collapse was once again a setback that Aga Khan SC found it difficult to get rid of, given the other batsmen were sent back in quick succession.

Middle-order performer Arslaan Premji was so far the cricketer with two digits, chipping in with 11 runs not out, as his teammates failed to repel Pak Stars A's bowlers.

Nine extras made up of eight wides and one leg bye somehow boosted Aga Khan SC's total.

Basit Raza (3-19) and Afridi (3-22) ruthlessly led Pak Stars A's bowling attack, seeing to it that Aga Khan SC ended up with an achievable figure.

In his four overs, Afridi completed his turn with a 5.50 economy rate, and his heroics were substantiated by taking the crucial wicket of Aga Khan SC batsman Mohamed.

Pak Stars A, led by Kashif Adnan, efficiently got down to the chase, posting 129/6 in a mere 9.4 overs.

The youthful Ivan Ismail gave

Pak Stars A the batting edge with his stellar performance, ending with 45 runs.

Ismail's ruthlessness saw Pak Stars A reach 86-2 once he was dismissed after 32 balls, giving fellow cricketers a much-needed boost.

Nisar Ahmed, who opened the innings with Ismail, made his experience count after nailing 29 runs- blasting four fours and two sixes.

The other key performer, Mohamed Omary, battled to push Pak Stars A closer to triumph after garnering 25 runs.

A brief stay for reliable players Zafar Khan and Zamoyoni Ramadhan at the crease could hardly weaken Pak Stars A's resoluteness, given the middle-order cricketers lived up to expectations.

Hassan Raza solidly partnered with Mohammad Ali to have the batting team putting the match beyond Aga Khan SC's reach with calculated knocks.

Hassan made his way back with bat in hand, posting eight runs, and the same could be said of Ali as the cricketer garnered eight runs.

Azhaar Premji and Mehta put on a spirited bowling display for Aga Khan SC to keep Pak Stars A at bay, posting 2-30 and 2-28, respectively.

The duo's impressive showing, however, could hardly frustrate Pak Stars A's batting surge.

Ismail duly laid his hands on the Player of the Match prize for his batting heroics, which were crucial to Pak Stars A's qualification for the knockout phase.



NCBA's managing director Claver Serumaga (C) and the bank's senior manager marketing Solomon Kawiche (L) posing with the 2024 NCBA Golf Series Finals' winners Earnest Sengue (2nd L), Lawrence Ogutu Opondo (2nd R) and Stephen Chuwalo. Photo: Correspondent

## Junior golf series to showcase the future of Tanzanian golf

By Guardian Correspondent

THE NCBA Junior Golf Series, a premier event dedicated to nurturing young talent, is set to take place on December 8 and 9, 2024 at the Dar es Salaam Gymkhana Golf Club.

With more than 80 junior golfers expected to participate, this highly anticipated tournament will gather young players from Lugalo, Morogoro, Arusha, and Moshi.

Additionally, the event will welcome participants from Mufindi and Zanzibar for the first time, emphasizing the bank's commitment to inclusivity and broadening access to golf development across the country.

The bank, the sole sponsor of the event, continues to affirm its commitment to sports development, focusing on cultivating talent at the grassroots level.

This dedication has been evident in the bank's ongoing support for junior golfers through various initiatives in Tanzania and across the region.

The upcoming tournament will further reinforce this mission by creating an inclusive and empowering environment for young athletes.

This year's tournament builds on the success of the 2024 NCBA Golf Series Finals, where Tanzanian juniors shone brightly. Winners such as Earnest Sengue, Stephen Chuwalo, and Lawrence

Ogutu Opondo from Arusha were sponsored by the bank to compete at the regional level.

Their achievements underscored the immense potential of young Tanzanian golfers and highlighted the bank's pivotal role in nurturing talent and providing transformative opportunities.

The event is designed not only as a competition but also as a platform for holistic development.

Participants will be provided with professional-grade golf equipment, enabling them to enhance their skills and deepen their love for the sport.

Additionally, all participants will receive branded t-shirts and festive gift hampers to commemo-

rate the occasion.

For juniors new to the sport, special clinics will be conducted to introduce them to golf, ensuring a broad appeal and fostering new interest. Activities for non-golfing juniors will also be available, emphasizing the event's family-friendly atmosphere.

The bank's dedication to junior golf has been unwavering, with the bank playing a pivotal role in supporting local and regional tournaments. From sponsoring Tanzania's junior golfers in international competitions to championing events in Kenya and Uganda, NCBA has become a trusted partner in the development of golf in East Africa.

Building on the successes of past events, the tournament incorporates valuable lessons to make this year's tournament even more impactful.

Looking forward, the bank plans to launch a special junior golf program in 2025. This initiative will include quarterly tournaments, offering young golfers consistent opportunities to compete, grow, and showcase their potential.

While this year's tournament will focus on players from Tanzania, plans are underway to expand the series to include participants from neighbouring countries.

The guest of honour for the event will be the bank's managing director, Claver Serumaga, who will represent the bank's ongoing

commitment to promoting junior golf.

His presence will highlight the importance of mentorship and community engagement in developing the next generation of golfers.

The series is more than just a tournament; it is a testament to the power of sports to inspire, unite, and uplift young people.

By providing a platform for these young athletes to excel, the bank is not only promoting golf but also nurturing the values of discipline, perseverance, and teamwork.

The tournament promises to be a celebration of youthful ambition and talent, setting the stage for a bright future for Tanzanian golf.



## Guinea rights groups say 135 killed in stadium crush

CONAKRY

SOME 135 people were killed in a crush at a soccer stadium in southeast Guinea on Sunday, a local group of human rights organisations said, sharing an estimated death toll more than twice as high as the official toll of 56.

A controversial refereeing decision sparked crowd violence and tear gas volleys from police during the match in the town of Nzerekore, leading to a deadly scrum as spectators tried to flee.

A collective of human rights groups in Nzerekore region said on Tuesday its higher estimate was based on information from the hospital, cemeteries, witnesses at the stadium, families of victims, mosques, churches, and the local press.

"We now estimate 135 people died at the stadium, mostly children under the age of 18," it said in a statement, adding that over 50 people were still missing.

The group blamed security forces for using excessive tear gas and prioritising the protection of officials over spectators.

It also said vehicles carrying officials and others escaping the stadium had struck spectators as they tried to flee what it described as an overcrowded venue whose gate was being obstructed by security forces.

It said it held the tournament organisers responsible as well as Guinea's ruling junta, as they provided technical and financial support for the event honouring military leader Mamady Doumbouya.

REUTERS

## Saudi Arabia's 2034 World Cup bid chief highlights human rights progress

RIYADH

HAMMAD Albalawi, head of Saudi Arabia's 2034 World Cup bid, stated that the country has made significant progress in human rights while aiming to attract "more fans than ever" to the 48-team showpiece event.

Saudi Arabia is the sole bidder for the 2034 World Cup, with FIFA set to vote on it next week amid concerns about the country's human rights record.

Albalawi said that the strides in human rights, especially in labour laws, are part of Saudi Arabia's commitment to transforming its social and economic landscape under Vision 2030.

"We have come a long way and there's still a long way to go. Our principle is to develop something that is right for us. Our journey started in 2016, not because of the World Cup bid," Albalawi told Reuters.

"We've launched initiatives granting employees the freedom to move between employers. Documents of these employees are now uploaded into government systems, ensuring they have rights within their contracts.

"Only a month and a half ago, the government announced a new government insurance policy... These are substantive examples, not because we're bidding for the World Cup, but because this is part of Vision 2030. This is part of who we are and what we are committed to.

"Our aim and aspiration is to bring more teams and more fans into one place than ever before."

Amnesty International and the Sport & Rights Alliance (SRA) said last month that FIFA must halt the process to pick Saudi Arabia as hosts of the 2034 tournament unless major human rights reforms are announced before the vote.

Albalawi said the World Cup will be held in a safe and family-friendly environment where visitors will enjoy both inside and outside the stadium regardless of the sale of alcohol, which was banned at the 2022 World Cup in neighbouring Qatar.

"I think today what you see in Saudi Arabia is an environment that is family friendly, safe and secure - something that people can actually enjoy on and off the pitch," he said.

"We've had over 100 global sporting events that already have taken place in Saudi Arabia. No alcohol was served in those tournaments. Yet, we had three million sports fans come in and enjoy those tournaments that have come and come again."

Albalawi also pointed to the rapid development of Saudi women's football and its infrastructure as an example of the country's development and social changes.

"Three years ago, there were zero girls playing football in school because the facilities weren't there," he said. "Today, the facilities are there and in two years after the facilities were built, we have over 80,000 girls playing football."

REUTERS

# Yamal's return inspired Barca to commanding win at Mallorca, says Flick

BARCELONA

THE return of teenage sensation Lamine Yamal to Barcelona's starting lineup following an injury layoff inspired the team to their 5-1 thrashing of Mallorca, manager Hansi Flick said on Tuesday.

During Yamal's four-week absence with an ankle injury leaders Barcelona picked up only one point in three La Liga matches, allowing the chasing pack led by Real Madrid to close the gap at the top to just one point.

The emphatic win on Tuesday at Mallorca finally ended their three-match winless streak and Flick was quick to flag up the impact Yamal has on the side.

"Today (Yamal) was very important for us, he always generates positive things for the team," Flick told Movistar Plus. "He could have scored



FC Barcelona's Lamine Yamal in action with RCD Mallorca's Leo Roman during the LaLiga match at Estadi Mallorca Son Moix, in Palma, Mallorca, Spain on December 3, 2024. REUTERS

one or two goals today, he played very well.

"Of course I am happy with the team perfor-

mance. In the first half we had a lot of chances

and we scored, but they equalised in a counter

attack but we kept going. The entire team is happy

with how things went tonight."

Flick did not even need his star striker

Robert Lewandowski to show up against Mal-

lorca. The Polish striker, who is the top-scorer in LaLiga with 15 goals, was handed a rest day after starting all 20 of Barcelona's previous matches in all competitions.

Lewandowski's replacement Ferran Torres pounced on some sloppy defending by Mallorca to give the visitors an early lead with a clever strike.

"Lewandowski needed to rest, we had to look after him," Flick said.

"And Ferran (Torres) had a very good game and scored the first goal, it's very important for him too. Whenever we need him, he's always there. Today we didn't need to play Lewandowski."

Barca top the standings on 37 points, four ahead of second-placed Real Madrid who have two games in hand. Atletico are third on 32 points and have one game in hand.

REUTERS

## Smiling Van Nistelrooy brings belief back to Leicester

By Emily Salley

HIS Leicester side had to ride their luck at times against West Ham, but victory for a smiling Ruud van Nistelrooy has already given Foxes fans their "belief" back.

The Dutchman was appointed on Friday to replace Steve Cooper, who was sacked after just 12 Premier League matches in charge of Leicester.

Van Nistelrooy watched his new side fall to a 4-1 thumping by Brentford alongside Leicester owner Aiyawatt Srivaddhanaprabha from the stands on Sunday.

However, his first game in charge got off to the perfect start on Tuesday as Jamie Vardy's early opener helped the Foxes on their way to a 3-1 win at King Power Stadium.

"In the end you look at the result and the three points, in the position that we are in, it's vital," Van Nistelrooy, 48, said.

"We know the level in the Premier League and we know every game we play that everything has to be right. We have to train and develop our defence, our counter attack, our possession.

"Lots of things to work on but very happy with the three points."

The win moves Leicester up to 15th in the Premier League, two points behind the Hammers.

"The third day working at the club, it's been very busy getting to know everyone. Everybody was involved with that and helping, it was busy and long days but worth it," Van Nistelrooy said in a post-match news conference.

"I was focused on the moment and today I will get myself a little beer and reflect on the last three days."

Graham Potter, the former Brighton and Chelsea boss, said it was the "perfect start" and means the supporters will have "that trust and belief in the new manag-



Van Nistelrooy's Leicester appointment came two weeks after he left his role as interim head coach at Manchester United [Getty Images]

er and that is so important."

"You can do all the talking you want but if the players actually believe him and follow what he is saying then it can be very powerful," he told Amazon Prime. "The best way to get belief is by winning football matches."

"Vardy extends goal record under new managers

Leicester captain Vardy pounced after just 98 seconds in Van Nistelrooy's first game in charge, before Bilal El Khannouss and Patson Daka struck to seal victory.

Vardy has now scored the first Premier League goal under six Leicester City managers in the top flight.

It was also Vardy who broke Van Nistelrooy's record for scoring in consecutive Premier

League games when he achieved 11 in a row for Leicester back in 2015.

Van Nistelrooy joked about it on Monday, and he said he told Vardy they had a "big issue" to get out of the way before they could start working together.

"We've had one full

day together. You could see some stuff worked and some was rusty. We've got more time for the manager to get his things across," Vardy told Amazon Prime after Tuesday's win.

Leicester defender Conor Coady added: "The lads put in a great

shift. We can play better. It was all about winning, it was one for the manager.

"The weekend was a dark place but you have to dig deep. We've got a long way to go but it's a great start."

"Good signs for Leicester"

West Ham had 31 shots in this match, their highest tally on record since 2005-06.

The last time an away team had more shots and lost was Chelsea against Birmingham in 2010.

Niclas Fullkrug nodded home a consolation for the visitors, but Danny Ings hit the post with a header, Jarrod Bowen several chances, while Coady cleared off the line from Crysenacio Summerville.

"The result is what matters, but I have also seen the game and West Ham were dominant," Van Nistelrooy told Match of the Day.

"I think our fighting spirit got us through the game and we were effective in scoring. A great night."

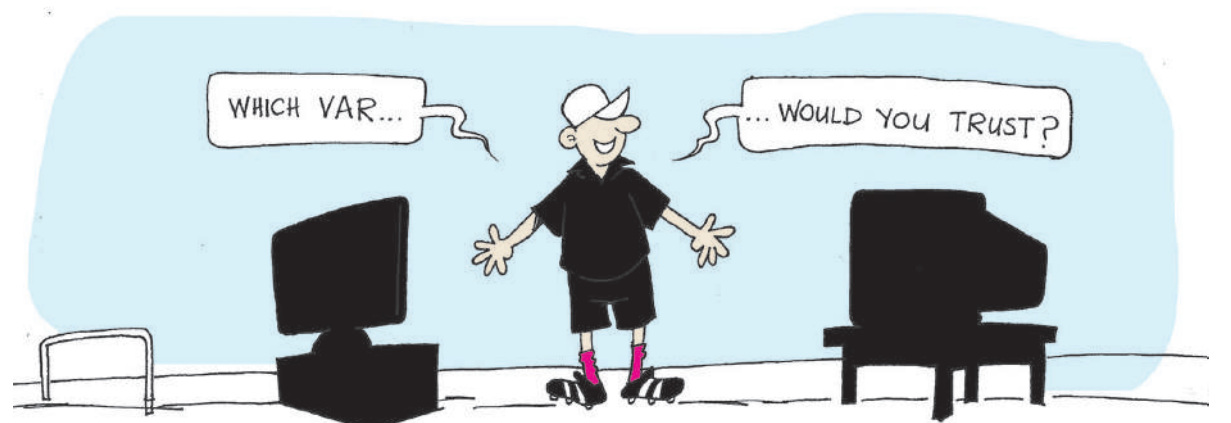
Former England goalkeeper Paul Robinson told BBC Radio 5 Live: "What a result this is for Ruud van Nistelrooy. We were talking about a Leicester team devoid of confidence and ideas before the game, but he's got a performance out of that group tonight.

"But there's something there for Van Nistelrooy to work on and what he's seen tonight would have given him a lot of delight.

"He's made some big changes. His in-game substitutions and management looks good. It's good signs for Leicester."

BBC

Gwiji by David Chikoko





## SPORT

Yamal's return inspired Barca to commanding win at Mallorca, says Flick

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## Azam FC eye strong finish despite slight performance dip

By Correspondent Nassir Nchimbi

DESPITE leading the Premier League table, Azam FC's head of media and information, Thabit Zakaria, has acknowledged a slight decline in their performance compared to the previous season.

After 13 matches this campaign, Azam have accumulated 30 points - two fewer than the 32 points they had at the same stage last year.

Zakaria (pictured) emphasized the team's determination to bridge this gap and regain momentum as they prepare for their upcoming matches.

Azam have been in stellar form recently, securing seven consecutive wins following early-season setbacks, including a loss to Simba SC and a draw against Mashujaa.

Azam currently sit atop the Premier League table with 30 points, but rivals Simba SC and Young Africans SC are close behind with 28 and 27 points, respectively.

Both rivals, however, have two games in hand, which adds pressure on Azam to maintain their winning streak and extend their lead.

Coach Rachid Touassi has played a pivotal role in Azam's resurgence. Under his leadership, the team has rallied from early disappointments, and their recent 3-1 comeback victory over Dodoma Jiji further solidified their confidence.

The return of influential midfielder Feisal Salum has bolstered Azam's attack. Salum has been in exceptional form, contributing four goals and five assists this season, making him one of the league's top performers alongside Simba's Jean Charles Ahoua, who has five goals and four assists.

Zakaria expressed the club's ambitions, saying: "We are currently two points behind our performance at this stage last season, where we had 32 points after 13 matches. Despite being at the top with 30 points, we need to maximize our upcoming games to match last season's success."

Azam's focus isn't solely on the Premier League. The team is also setting its sights on making a significant impact in the Federation Cup, where they face regional side Iringa Sports FC in the 64th round on Saturday.

Reflecting on last season's Federation Cup campaign, Zakaria said: "We bowed out of the Federation Cup last season after a penalty loss to Young Africans. This year, we aim to make a deeper run and possibly secure the title."

Azam's previous season saw them finish second in the Premier League, earning a spot in the CAF Champions League preliminary rounds.

However, their continental journey was cut short by APR in the first round with a 2-1 aggregate loss.

This season, Azam are keen to not only replicate their league success but also mount a stronger challenge for the title.

Zakaria concluded: "Our goal is to accumulate as many points as possible and assess our achievements at the end of the campaign."

After Saturday's Federation Cup match against Iringa Sports FC, Azam will face a challenging Premier League clash away to Tabora United on December 13 at the Ali Hassan Mwinyi Stadium in Tabora.

The team hopes to extend their winning streak and continue their march toward a successful season.

# Ramovic confident as Yanga travel to Algeria for Group A redemption



Young Africans head coach Sead Ramovic is pictured on Tuesday when his side arrived in Dubai on their way to Algeria. Photo: Courtesy of YASC

By Correspondent Seth Mapoli

YOUNG Africans SC (Yanga) have departed Tanzania for Algeria ahead of their critical Group A match against MC Alger in the CAF Champions League.

The high-stakes game is scheduled for December 7 at the Ali La Pointe Stadium, with kick-off set for 10:00 p.m. local time.

The Tanzanian champions are aiming to secure their first points of the group stage following a disappointing 2-0 defeat to Sudan's Al Hilal in their opening match at home.

However, their campaign gets a significant boost with the return of five key players from injury, providing much-needed depth and morale.

Young Africans' squad welcomes back Clement Mzize, Khalid Aucho, Chadrack Boka, and Aziz Andambwile, all of whom have recovered in time

for this pivotal encounter.

Their availability enhances the team's chances of competing effectively against a strong MC Alger side.

Aucho, in particular, is

expected to play a vital role in stabilizing the midfield and contributing to the team's creative and defensive efforts.

This clash marks the third meeting between

Young Africans and MC Alger in CAF competitions. The two sides last faced off in the 2017 CAF Confederation Cup preliminary round, with MC Alger winning one leg and the other ending in a draw.

Their competitive history sets the stage for another hard-fought battle.

After the first round of matches, Group A is led by Al Hilal, who earned three points following their victory over Young Africans.

MC Alger sit second with one point after drawing with DR Congo's TP Mazembe, who are third, also with one point.

Young Africans currently occupy fourth place without a point, making this match a must-win to keep their knockout stage hopes alive.

Head coach Sead Ramovic has emphasized the importance of a strong response following the opening loss. With a reinforced squad, he is expected to adopt a strategic approach to counter MC Alger's strengths.

The team's goal will be to secure a positive result and reignite their campaign.

Last season, Young Africans made history by reaching the CAF Champi-

ons League quarterfinals for the first time, only to be eliminated by Mamelodi Sundowns in a dramatic penalty shootout. Building on that success, the team is determined to advance further this year.

MC Alger will aim to leverage their home-ground advantage, despite the absence of fans due to a CAF-imposed stadium ban.

Known for their strong performances at home, the Algerian side will be targeting maximum points to solidify their position in the group.

Young Africans' journey in the CAF Champions League is still in its early stages, but the stakes are already high.

A victory in Algeria would not only improve their standing in Group A but also restore confidence among players and fans alike.

With Al Hilal leading the group and both TP Mazembe and MC Alger in the mix for qualification, the competition in Group A promises to be fierce.

Young Africans' performance in Algeria could be the defining moment of their group-stage campaign.

## Simba players now promise fierce fight against CS Constantine in CAF CC clash

By Correspondent Seth Mapoli

SIMBA SC players have declared their determination to secure a positive result in their second Group A match of the CAF Confederation Cup against Algeria's CS Constantine.

The Tanzanian club's head coach, Fadlu Davids, has emphasized that their sole focus is on winning the crucial encounter.

The game is scheduled for Sunday at 7:00 PM at the Mohamed Hamlaoui Stadium in Constantine, Algeria.

Simba's squad has already departed for Constantine, fully aware of the challenges posed by their Algerian opponents.

Speaking on behalf of the team, veteran midfielder Mzamiru Yassin (pictured) expressed the players' readiness to battle for points in a match he anticipates will be far from easy.

"We are in intense training because we understand the task ahead. This is not an easy match, as some might think. Our opponents have already proven their strength by winning away against a strong team like CS Sfaxien, who are historically dominant in this competition," Yassin said.

CS Sfaxien, a Tunisian side, has won the CAF Confederation Cup three times (2007, 2008, and 2013), underlining the caliber of teams in Group A.



CS Constantine's victory against such a formidable opponent highlights the level of competition Simba SC will face.

"We know they will be aiming for another win to boost their chances of qualifying for the quarter final. However, we are determined to disrupt their plans. Our mission is to return home with three points, or at least one," Yassin added.

Yassin, who joined Simba in 2016 from Mtibwa Sugar, commended the team's technical bench under Fadlu Davids for their comprehensive preparation and tactical approach.

"Our technical bench is doing an exceptional job. This is one of the best setups we've had in recent years, and it gives us confidence that we can reach the quarter-finals. However, achieving that requires hard work and focus," the defensive midfielder noted.

Simba's head coach, Davids, has echoed the players' sentiments, stressing the importance of preparation and competitive spirit.

"Victory is not a gift; it's earned through hard work and preparation.

We're building a team capable of winning matches and achieving the club's goal of reaching the quarter-finals," Davids said.

Acknowledging the strength of CS Constantine, Davids described them as one of the toughest teams in the group.

"They are a well-organized team with a strong squad. We respect them, but we are prepared to fight and get the result we need," he added.

Simba started their campaign with a 1-0 victory against Angola's Bravos do Maquis in Dar es Salaam. A positive result against CS Constantine would strengthen their position in the group as they aim to progress to the knockout stages.

CS Constantine, on the other hand, will be playing with added confidence after their away win against CS Sfaxien.

With both teams seeking to bolster their qualification hopes, Sunday's match promises to be a fiercely contested battle.

Simba's players remain optimistic and committed to their goal. As Yassin put it: "We believe in our ability to advance, but belief alone is not enough. It's about putting in the effort on the pitch, and that's what we intend to do."

## Flexibles by David Chikoko

