



**Guardian BUSINESS**

**TBT striving to enhance tea industry growth and support farmers' welfare**

**Firm pushes viable future with solar-powered tactics**

**WB boosts safety, efficiency on key railway route**

**Kikwete applauds growth of financial sector**

Page 3

**Govt launches action plan to protect turtles**

Page 5

**Govt for sensitisation to tackle tooth decay burden**

Page 6

Page 13

## Clerics plead: Good if next polls shut out selfish leaders

What kind of leaders should we elect? What do we look at when we vote, their wealth or their capacity to lead us? Let us choose leaders who live among us, whose behaviour is well known to us

By Guardian Reporters

**T**ANZANIANS need to exercise their right to vote and avoid choosing unfaithful and selfish leaders, a section of religious leaders have appealed in Good Friday sermons yesterday.

Archbishop Isaac Amani of the Arusha Catholic archdiocese was among those who issued this appeal, in a service conducted under the Union of Arusha Churches at the Sheikh Amri Abeid Stadium.

He said it was important for Tanzanians to start preparing for the elections in order to enable the country to have capable and patriotic leaders to accelerate development efforts among the people.

He expressed dismay at on-

going abuses against children, disturbed by married couples causing death on spouses, while rebuking public officials showing characteristics of being selfish, corrupt, dishonest or tribalist.

The service was preceded by a religious march by members of 13 churches, where the senior cleric asked local residents to act wisely when choosing leaders to seek out those with the right qualities, honesty and practicing true politics.

They ought to avoid insults and not be marked for their greed for wealth but ones who show concern for morality. "To get such leaders, it is compulsory for all people to register in the voters' permanent registra-

TURN TO Page 2



In marking Good Friday (yesterday), Christian faithful are symbolically nailed to crosses in a re-enactment of the biblical crucifixion of Jesus Christ. It was during Mass held at the Dodoma city cathedral of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania. Pictorial spread on Page 4. Photo: Correspondent Ibrahim Joseph

## CAG report raises concern on state of NHIF, embezzlement

By Guardian Reporter

A day after the Controller and Auditor General (CAG) presented the national audit report for the 2022/2023 financial year, a section of stakeholders have called on the government to take action on institutions persisting in incurring losses of public funds.

A major aspect of concern was the sustainability of the National Health Insurance Fund (NHIF), with Dr Paul Loisulie, chairman

of the Tanzania Higher Learning Institutions Trade Union (THTU) saying that repeated embezzlement reports especially for the same organizations was tiring and annoying.

"It has now become a normal thing, some leaders in the institutions or corporations take CAG reports with ease, so it is high time for the government to draw a line on this and stop tolerating these losses," he said.

The government needs to take immediate measures

on the listed embezzlers to help rescue the country's resources wasted by few, he said, advising public servants to "wake up and be patriotic to the nation by serving well in their positions."

Without doing so, public institutions will be on a downward slide, while people stand aside and watch, he said, insisting that "the time to take action is now."

He alluded to wider political aspirations that at this time we need to change our laws starting with the

mother law (Constitution), as this will help bring more accountability and protect our resources.

The policy on universal health coverage (UHC) was a journey that is still long and full of hills and valleys, he said, intimating that beneficiaries were losing hope and trust in the NHIF.

It is important for the government to give room to insurance companies to provide coverage that is

TURN TO Page 2

## IDA \$200m financing set to boost railways' resilience, efficiency

By Guardian Reporter

THE existing Dar es Salaam to Isaka meter gauge railway segment is set for major improvements, thanks to newly approved financing from the International Development Association (IDA), the soft loan window of the World Bank.

Nathan Belete, the World Bank country director, said in a statement yesterday that the \$200m financing for the second phase of the Tanzania Intermodal and Rail Development Project (TIRP-2).

It will be used to improve safety, climate resilience and operational efficiency along this railway segment, by strengthening the infrastructure and supporting transport studies to rectify existing bottlenecks.

The project components are also focused on strengthening climate resilience of the Kilosa-Gulwe-Igandu section; providing operational and institutional support, as well as supporting emergency response.

The project is expected to directly benefit nearly 900,000 people and indirectly impact an estimated 3.5million.

TURN TO Page 2

## MOI unveils 'small-hole' spine surgery

By Correspondent Joseph

Mwendapole

THE Muhimbili Orthopaedic Institute (MOI) has for the first time performed an endoscopic neurospine surgery making history in surgery and neurospine treatment.

Professor. Abel Makubi, the MOI executive director, said at a press conference in Dar es Salaam yesterday that the treatment setting up the new surgery service came up in the wake of an international conference of brain

and spine and nerve specialists.

The conference moved to set up a global neurosurgery course locally organised by the Institute in collaboration with Weill Cornell Medical College at Cornell University in the United States.

Upwards of 120 specialists participated in the course from various countries around the world, he said, highlighting that endoscopic spine surgery advances the principles of minimally invasive surgery. This includes minor

collateral tissue damage, reduced blood loss and faster recovery times, he said, elaborating that endoscopic spine surgery (ESS) allows for direct access to the spine through small incisions and direct visualization of spinal pathology via an endoscope.

So far 13 spine patients have been operated upon in this way with great success in two days at mid-week, as the institute started offering the service this week, he said.

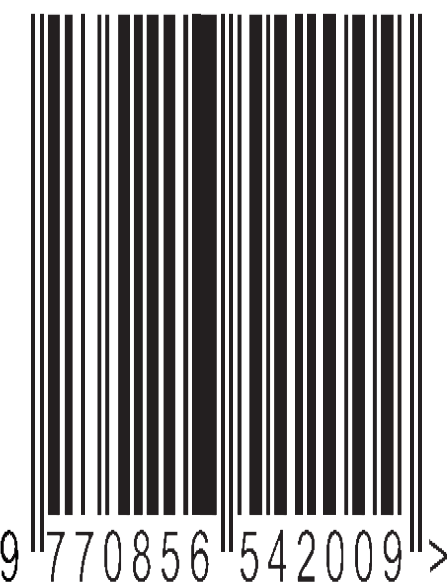
The service uses modern technology serving as the standard feature in

that type of surgery, designed to reduce costs for patients if they pursued such treatment abroad, while also promoting Dar es Salaam as a regional medical hub.

It is the first time for MOI and for the country to perform endoscopic spine surgery, he said, paying gratitude to the Weill Cornell facility for vital cooperation. Professor. Roger Hartl, the director of spine surgery at the US facility, said that Weill Cornell would be cooperating with MOI in building the capacity of special-

ists, facilitating scientific research and delivery of surgical equipment. That would make it a smart center for spine massage in Africa, he said, explaining that Weill Cornell is interested in seeing MOI become a center of excellence in treatment and training for nearby countries on spine surgery.

Carrying out operations using small hole is a novelty and the US facility was elated to see how MOI appreciates the cooperation being demonstrated, he added.





## IDA \$200m loan to boost railways safety, efficiency

FROM PAGE 1

roughly five percent of Tanzania's population, including railway users, residents along the line, traders and the Kinyasungwe catchment area residents specifically, he said.

"While the country's transportation network is extensive, there are persistent bottlenecks in terms of maintenance and capacity that are limiting its full use," the statement affirmed.

This investment will directly address the bottlenecks in the rail network to enhance efficiency, capacity and competitiveness to maximize Tanzania's unique position to facilitate regional connectivity, it stated.

There are currently two operational railway systems in the country covering a total of 3,682 km, with the central line targeted in the loan stretching 2,707 km, a meter gauge railway.

The statement had no indication that the meter gauge auxiliary lines of Dar to Moshi and Tanga to Moshi and then Arusha will be included in the project, which also takes up similar challenges along the Tanzania-Zambia railway line (975 km) and the standard gauge railway (SGR) being built in phases.

TIRP-2 builds on phase one of the IDA-financed Tanzania Intermodal and Rail Development Project (TIRP-1) which closed in September 2022, it highlighted, elaborating that TIRP-1 aided in improving the Dar es Salaam to Isaka (970 km) central line major portion.

This included the rehabilitation of tracks and bridges, helping to increase the axle load capacity from 13.9 tons to 18.5 tons for the section between Dar es Salaam and Tabora (840 km); and the completion of designs to rehabilitate intermodal terminals at the Dar es Salaam port, Ilala and Isaka, it said.

TIRP-1 also facilitated the acquisition of additional rolling stock for TRC and contributed to the development of economic and safety regulations for open-access train operations, it specified.

Yonas Mchomvu, a senior transport specialist and task team leader, said that the new project seeks to put up climate-informed infrastructure, adapting the corridor to natural disasters and mainstreaming climate resilience.

"Overall, the investment will improve incentives for the private sector to drive economic growth and generate wider economic benefits and greater efficiency," the specialist asserted.

The International Development Association (IDA) was set up in 1960, to distinguish loan programmes of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), usually known as the World Bank, with a soft loan window designated for newly emerging poor independent countries.

It helps the world's poorest countries by providing grants and low to zero-interest loans for projects and programs that boost economic growth, reduce poverty and improve poor people's lives.

IDA is one of the largest sources of assistance for the world's 76 poorest countries, 39 of which are in Africa. Resources from IDA bring positive change to 1.6bn people who live in IDA countries.

Since 1960, IDA has supported development work in 113 countries, with annual commitments averaging about \$21bn over the past three years, with about 61 percent going to Africa, it added.



NBC Bank managing director Theobald Sabi (R) presents a gift to former president Jakaya Kikwete during iftar the bank hosted for its customers in Dar es Salaam on Thursday. Story on Page 3. Photo: Guardian Correspondent.

## Clerics plead: Good if next polls shut out selfish leaders

FROM PAGE 1

tion book so that we can practice the right to elect righteous leaders that we trust, and the kind of leaders who fear God," he said.

Archbishop Amani urged the public not to elect leaders who attempt to reward them with small gifts and then disappear after winning the poll because their purpose was to gain wealth and not serve the people.

"What kind of leaders should we elect? What do we look at when we vote, their wealth or their capacity to lead us? Let us choose leaders who live among us, whose behaviour is well

known to us," he appealed.

"We have the right and responsibility to respect our leaders. However, we must cast a vote of no confidence in line with national laws and principles when they fail to fulfil their duties instead of ignoring their irresponsibility," he said.

The cleric said child abuse and abuse against spouses are unacceptable, and it's high time for the perpetrators to change, citing the suffering of Jesus as intended to eliminate such behaviour for mercy and fairness.

"Obedience to Christ has to motivate us to rearrange our lives daily and abstain from abusive acts against children and

our families. Such acts do not please God," he declared.

He said that corruption is evident in daily life, that it is not imaginary, while selfishness is surprising in its intensity, with some public officials openly exhibiting that they have little integrity. He also warned the youth against following trends and engaging in alcoholism, drugs, violent gangs and misuse of social media, as doing so closes their chances of leading moral and rewarding lives.

Bishop Dr Stanley Hotay of the Mount Kilimanjaro diocese of the Anglican Church, called on security organs in Arusha Region to curb thefts and im-

prove security especially during the Easter festive season.

He appealed to individuals with the right qualities and capacity to contest for leadership in this important election year. "We cannot stop corruption if God-fearing people and honest people do not contest for leadership," he declared.

Insisting that justice must be done, all people should be treated fairly, he said that complaints have always originated from people being led and not from the leaders as leaders must be the solution providers.

Festo Kiswaga, the Monduli DC, hailed religious leaders for establishing the union, as it

shows stark contrasts with the situation 10 to 20 years back where churches used to experience conflicts.

Archbishop Beatus Kinyaiya of the Dodoma Catholic archdiocese urged the public to put their faith in God in the face of trials and suffering instead of giving up or attempting to commit suicide.

In his Good Friday homily in the national event at the Cathedral of St. Paul of the Cross, the senior prelate said that people should not give up hope despite the difficulties they go through in their lives, underlining that endurance can lead to experience positive outcomes.



Traffic Police head of operations Nassoro Sisiwaya (L) looks on as one of his assistants removes the number plate from a supposedly defective truck yesterday, as the inspection of motor vehicles got under way in Iringa Region. Second left is acting Iringa Regional Traffic Officer Glory Mtui. Photo: Correspondent Francis Godwin.

## CAG report raises concern on state of NHIF, embezzlement

FROM PAGE 1

affordable in services while permitting civil servants to choose the fund or service provider that they want, he urged.

He however said that in the CAG report, clean audit reports have appreciably increased, showing that institutions have now improved in their comprehension and adherence to fiscal plans and expenditure procedures.

Dr Abdallah Seni, a lecturer at the University of Dodoma (UDOM), said there are supervision loopholes in listed public institutions with qualified audit reports, requiring reform to remove the loopholes by learning from other countries how they manage state-owned commercial entities.

Those entrusted to manage such organizations need to deeply educate themselves to uplift

efficiency in those institutions.

Tusekele Mabamba, a resident of the capital city, said it is important for the government to work on recommendations in the CAG report.

He expressed fears over reports of steady increase of people with mental health challenges, seeking ways to have a society freed from this challenge.

Another resident, Hussein Kivambe, said it is important to take action to identify people with symptoms of mental illness to reduce violent incidents that have left families in grief.

It is important to teach children mental health and how they can live to avoid poor mental health, he said, pointing out that this will greatly help the country to have a healthy generation and productive workforce.

## Filipino villager nailed to cross for 35th time

MANILA

A FILIPINO villager has been nailed to a wooden cross for the 35th time to reenact Jesus Christ's suffering in a brutal Good Friday tradition he said he would devote to praying for peace in Ukraine, Gaza and the disputed South China Sea.

On Friday, over a hundred people watched on as 10 devotees were nailed to wooden

crosses, among them Ruben Enaje, a 63-year-old carpenter and sign painter. The real-life crucifixions have become an annual religious spectacle that draws tourists in three rural communities in Pampanga province, north of Manila.

The gory ritual resumed last year after a three-year pause due to the coronavirus pandemic. It has turned Enaje into a village celebrity for his role as

the "Christ" in the Lenten reenactment of the Way of the Cross.

Ahead of the crucifixions, Enaje told The Associated Press by telephone on Thursday night that he had considered ending his annual religious penitence due to his age, but said he could not turn down requests from villagers for him to pray for sick relatives and all other kinds of maladies.

The need for prayers has also

deepened in an alarming period of wars and conflicts worldwide, he said.

"If these wars worsen and spread, more people, especially the young and old, would be affected. These are innocent people who have totally nothing to do with these wars," he said.

Despite the distance, the wars in Ukraine and Gaza have helped send prices of oil, gas and food soaring elsewhere, in-

cluding in the Philippines, making it harder for poor people to stretch their meagre income, he said.

Closer to home, the escalating territorial dispute between China and the Philippines in the South China Sea has also sparked worries because it's obviously a lopsided conflict, Enaje said. "China has many big ships. Can you imagine what they could do?" he asked.



# Farming kicks off at BBT-YIA block farm in Dodoma

By Correspondent Joseph Mwendapole

A TOTAL of 620 acres have been cultivated under Building a Better Tomorrow: Youth Initiative for Agribusiness (BBT-YIA) programme at Chinangali block farm in Dodoma Region, it has been said.

Speaking at the farm yesterday, BBT-YIA acting national coordinator Michael Nyanga said the programme aims to enable youth to engage in agriculture and fight the employment crisis in the country.

He said this while addressing editors and reporters who visited the farm to witness progress made so far.

Nyanga said that the Chinangali block farm with 1,772 acres has 261 youth who have already started growing sunflowers in almost half of the acres.

"We have continued to clear the remaining acres and our goal is that by May this year we will have finished clearing the entire area of Chinangali bloc and hand it over to the youth," he said.

He said that for the Chinangali area, they have focused on vegetable farming and that when they complete, each youth will be given five acres to contin-

ue farming and a title of the plot.

He said the production activities to be carried out by the youth will be managed by their cooperative called Chinangali BBT AMCOS Limited.

The coordinator said the government has built 38 houses for the youth who are also given free food for a period of six months until they harvest and sell their crops as well as a subsistence allowance of 150,000/- per month, adding that the government pays for their water and electricity bills.

He said the government will look for reliable markets for their produce every harvesting season.

"For example, the sunflower that is in the field already has a buyer waiting for it to be harvested and we will do the same for all the block farms in the country," he said.

He said the programme expects to enable three million youth to employ themselves in the agriculture sector by 2030.

Nyanga said that one of the goals of the project is to increase production in agriculture and eliminate poverty by enabling youth to produce a huge amount of agricultural products.

He said that BBT-YIA is implemented



Simanjiro district commissioner Dr Suleiman Serera (R) pictured during a tour on Thursday taking measurements of the proposed gate to the concrete fence being built mainly with a view to enhancing security around Mirerani ward's Songambebe Primary School dormitory for children with special needs. Photo: Correspondent Gift Thadey

in four projects which are large block farms where there are currently 2,000 acres across the country.

He said that the Ministry of Agriculture cooperates with an institution under the ministry called Agriculture Input Trust Fund which enables youth to get loans with a low interest rate of 4.5 percent.

He said that so far they have enabled 118

youth to get loans of 950m/- and that another area where they are implementing the BBT-YIA is extension services where they enable those who have graduated from colleges to provide extension services to farmers in the country.

"In the area of extension services, we have started with 251 youth in collaboration with Sokoine University of Agriculture (SUA) who we have sent to provide extension services

to cotton fields and currently these youth are providing services in 40 districts that grow cotton in the country," he said.

He said another area of the project is to drill 65,000 wells targeting farmers with 2.5 acres where they are setting up irrigation infrastructure and alongside 5,000 litres water tank and they expect to reach 1,40,000 farmers by 2030.

# Kikwete applauds 'tremendous' growth in financial sector

By Guardian Reporter

FORMER President Jakaya Kikwete has said he is impressed by the 'tremendous' growth and stability of the financial sector in the country in the last few years.

Speaking in Dar es Salaam on Thursday evening, Kikwete who once served as finance minister said financial inclusion is critical for poverty reduction and statistics show that more Tanzanians now have access to various financial services introduced by financial institutions.

The former head of state spoke at an iftar event organized by NBC Bank

for its customers where he urged financial institutions to increase their lending portfolios and innovate more services to meet the demand of various types of customers.

"When I give congratulations and thanks, I mean it sincerely because many financial sector reforms took place when I was Minister for Finance. So, I know well where we are now and where we came from," he said.

"Today, when I see banks announcing billions of shillings in profit, it clearly proves that the reforms we implemented at that time have been successful."

He commended NBC Bank, saying it is one of the pioneer institutions that drive growth in the financial sector, saying a profit of 122bn/- the bank announced last year is something to be proud of.

Given a historical context, Kikwete spent a considerable amount of time explaining how customers faced difficulties in accessing financial services at the few institutions before the government intervened and took various measures, including closing and restructuring ownership and management structure of some banks.

"All those challenges are now history. All I wanted to share with you is

that the financial sector is the lifeline of the economy. If the sector falters, it causes the economy to decline. Therefore, I congratulate NBC and all other institutions for continuing to provide services professionally while also strengthening their capital," he said.

Commenting on the bank's iftar events for its customers in various locations across the country, he said that such events increase trust among its customers and serve as evidence that the relationship between the bank and the customer extends beyond business by touching on their faith.

"Iftar events like these make your customers feel good because we see that we are being served by a bank that also values our spiritual interests," he said.

Speaking earlier, NBC Bank Managing Director Theobald Sabi said that the move has been a tradition of the bank for the past 15 years, meant to bring together and unite its customers as a way of showing solidarity during the holy month of Ramadan.

"This is also a month that reminds us to do what is good. Since NBC is always close to the faith of its customers, we decided to organize

these iftar events to join Muslims in achieving that," he said.

Sabi also highlighted the bank's special service 'La Riba' which is designed for customers who adhere to the Islamic faith, following the principles of the religion regarding financial matters and the view of the religion on interest.

The iftar event was attended by various guests, including government officials, religious leaders led by the Dar es Salaam Regional Sheikh Walid Alhad Omar, political party leaders, customers, agents and employees of the bank.

Big Announcement

It's Almost Time!...





# Good Friday service as held in Dodoma, Dar, Iringa, Mugumu



Vice President Dr Philip Mpango attends Mass at the Mwenyeheri Maria Theresa Ledochowska parish of the Catholic Church in Dodoma city yesterday. Photo: VPO



The re-enactment of the persecution and subsequent crucifixion of Jesus Christ in progress at Dar es Salaam's Azania Front Cathedral of the Evangelical Lutheran Church. Photo: Correspondent Jumanne Juma



Dodoma regional commissioner Rosemary Senyamule (L) makes Good Friday remarks to the congregation during Mass at ELCT's Dodoma city Cathedral. Photo: Correspondent Ibrahim Joseph



ELCT's Dodoma city Cathedral main choir performs during Mass. Photo: Correspondent Ibrahim Joseph



Crucifixion of Jesus Christ re-enacted at Iringa municipality's Bikira Maria Mpalizwa Mkwawa parish of the Catholic Church. Photo: Correspondent Francis Godwin



Priests Joel Marwa (R) and Johnson Kitunze of the Catholic Church's Mugumu parish in Serengeti District lead prayers in Mugumu township. Photo: Guardian Correspondent



Mass well under way at the ELCT's Azania Front Church in Dar es Salaam. Photo: Correspondent Jumanne Juma





John Kwagilwa (2nd-R), the Tanzania Rural and Urban Roads Agency (Tarura) manager for Muheza District, pictured on Thursday briefing Muheza district commissioner Zainabu Abdallah (L), during the latter's inspection tour of progress in the ongoing construction of Kwamtiga bridge in Genge ward. Photo: Correspondent Steven William

## PURA commended for good management of CSR projects

By Guardian Reporter

THE Petroleum Upstream Regulatory Authority (PURA) has been commended for proper management of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) projects undertaken by natural gas producing companies in Songo Songo Ward, Lindi Region.

Songo Songo Ward Councillor Hassan Swalehe Yusuph made the recognition recently when officials from PURA visited the Island to inspect the projects being implemented by the Tanzania Petroleum Development Corporation (TPDC) and PanAfrican Energy Tanzania (PAET).

"PURA has done a great job in formulating CSR guidelines which provide guidance on the implementation of these projects which has been a catalyst for citizens to have projects they desire and that meet their needs rather than projects decided solely by the investing companies," he said.

He added that the guidelines address challenges of conflicts that previously existed between citizens and investors, as projects were previously based more on the investors' preference rather than the actual needs of the communities.

During the visit, PURA delegation toured the new Songo Songo Health Centre, dormitories and science laboratory at Songo Songo Secondary School, all of which were constructed by PAET as part of its CSR projects on the island. The delegation also heard presentations on CSR projects implemented by TPDC, including providing free water and electricity services to the islanders, with efforts underway to provide them with a reliable ferry service.

Speaking during the visit, PURA geologist Desmond Rizzo expressed satisfaction with the efforts made by investors in the area and was pleased with how the councillor urged citizens to utilize the projects as intended.

Regarding the establishment of CSR guidelines, Rizzo said they aim to ensure that the communities surrounding the projects are involved in deciding which projects should be prioritized, rather than having projects that do not meet the real needs of the residents.

"I call upon residents of Songo Songo to be ready to come forward and participate in identifying the real needs in this area so that the projects implemented can solve existing problems and thus improve the lives of the islanders," he said.

## Govt readying agriculture policy with incentive packages

By Polycarp Machira, Dodoma

THE government is redrafting agriculture policy to introduce incentive packages for increased productivity, it has been announced.

Minister for Agriculture Hussein Bashe said here recently that through the first-ever agriculture financing policy, the government is committed to ensuring capital is accessible in the sector to make it active and effective for economic growth.

Speaking yesterday at a cotton stakeholders meeting, Bashe said the government is working on the incen-

tives package for increased productivity.

Participants were officials from regional and district commissioners' offices in the cotton farming areas, farmers, ginnery owners and cotton dealers.

Bashe said that the finance ministry has finalised the agriculture financing policy, adding that within one week it will be made available for stakeholders' inputs before being implemented.

"There is a need for a stand-alone agriculture policy because banks have been looking at the sector as

high-risk which is not totally the case because only less than 5 percent of loan defaulters come from the sector," he said.

The minister said that accessing loans in the agriculture sector is a challenge thus the policy to increase productivity in the agriculture value chain as it stands alone from other sectors.

The incentives include awarding tractors to the best farmers, saying that starting 2024/25 financial year, the government will be channeling 10m/- and 5m/- monthly to regional commissioners and district commis-

sioners for close monitoring and supervision of agriculture projects in their respective areas.

Also, the ministry will set aside a budget for fuel for extension officers to reach farmers in their locations since they have been given motorcycles already.

"The ministry has decided to support the regional and local authorities to develop the sector by working as a team to reach the set goals," he said.

Cotton Development Trust Fund (CDTF) Planning Officer Prosper Kulaya said the ministry of Finance has

verified and endorsed the payment of suppliers' debts worth 71.69bn/- for various services to the fund.

He told the forum that the government has also agreed to pay cotton buyers a loss amounting 24.41bn/- which they incurred during the 2019/20 farming season.

Kulaya said as of September 2023, the government through CDTF made payment of 9.46bn/- to suppliers and 20bn/- to cotton buyers in a fresh bid to revamp the cotton sub-sector.

Director General of Tanzania Cotton Board Marco Mtunga said there

is a tendency whereby farmers declare inflated farming acreages' during distribution of agricultural inputs.

He said they discovered the cheating during the exercise to evaluate the actual agricultural inputs needed so that the government could plan accordingly.

He gave an example of Igunga District in Tabora Region where they were informed that the cotton grown was 90,609 acres but when they went for verification they found out that 72,695 acres were nowhere to be seen.

## Aids patients advised to go for regular TB screening

By Guardian Correspondent, Njombe

AIDS patients have been advised to go for regular Tuberculosis (TB) screening for early diagnosis and treatment.

The call was made by Kissa Kasongwa, Njombe District Commissioner, recently during commemoration of World Tuberculosis Day.

"Let us first work together as a society to understand the effects of tuberculosis because many people hear about it but do not know its effects. I ask you to hang posters depicting the appearance of a person suffering from tuberculosis," she said.

Kasongwa advised AIDS patients to schedule regular visits to tuberculosis clinics in order to protect themselves from new infections.

"Because people with HIV can easily contract TB although not every carrier of the virus does so; it is important for us to come together and protect ourselves from the disease. TB can be spread in crowded places and

through people with compromised immune system," she said.

The DC said that every Tanzanian should take preventive measures against TB, citing data from the World Health Organization (WHO) which showed that Tanzania had 133,000 cases of the disease in 2021.

Dr Mashaka Kisulila said a total of 379 patients were diagnosed with TB in 2023 in Njombe Town Council, adding that among them, 135 had HIV infection, equal to 36 percent.

Kisulila said the goal was to reach 333 patients in 2023 but they passed the target.

"We reached 379 tuberculosis patients out of 1,650 patients who were diagnosed with tuberculosis and they have already started treatment," he said.

Kuruthum Sadick, Director of Njombe Town Council, urged people to develop a habit of going for regular medical check-ups for early diagnosis and treatment of various diseases.



Entrepreneurs hunt for customers for their home-made 'Maasai' sandals and slippers in Dar es Salaam's Kitunda suburb earlier this week. Photo: Correspondent Jumanne Juma

## Govt launches five-year action plan to protect turtles

By Jenifer Gilla

THE Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries has launched a five-year National Action Plan for conservation of turtles which involves strengthening control of illegal fishing and consumption of the creatures.

Launching the plan in Mkuranga District, Coast Region on Thursday, Minister for Livestock and Fisheries Abdallah Ulega said it was prepared to accelerate protection of the creatures because Marine Parks

and Reserves Act and the 2009 Fisheries Regulations classify turtles as endangered. He said the move also aims to promote tourism.

He said that despite fishing regulations prohibiting any live turtle harvesting, such activities have been thriving in the country for the purpose of selling its meat, which puts them at risk of extinction.

The minister emphasized that the creature is not for consumption but a major attraction for tourists who love

to see them alive, especially when they lay eggs. Researchers also use them to raise awareness about their contribution to the ecology and how humans can benefit from their presence.

Ulega said that the number of tourists has increased from 27,987 in 2021 to 40,088 in 2023, which contributes to the growth of the national income and the country's economy.

Therefore, if the creatures are not protected, they will disappear and set back the

government's efforts. He said in recognition of this, the Marine Parks and Reserves Unit (MPRU) in his ministry, in collaboration with stakeholders including the non-governmental organisations Sea Sense, WWF and USAID's Tuhifadhi Maliasili (Preserve Natural Resources) continue to provide education to coastal communities on conservation and encouraging stakeholders to utilize the National Action for Conservation of Marine Turtles to protect the creatures.

Sea Sense Executive Director Gozbert Katunzi said they managed to develop the National Action Plan from 2004 to 2009 in collaboration with USAID Tuhifadhi Maliasili and received funding from the US government.

"The development of the National Action Plan involved communities, government departments, the private sector and other stakeholders from Tanzania Mainland and Zanzibar," he said.

He said that for 20 years the

organization has been monitoring the trends of creatures that are at high risk of extinction, including sea turtles and data collected has been used to write various reports on the creatures.

Deputy Chief of Party, USAID Tuhifadhi Maliasili, Expert Pius, urged conservation stakeholders to support the government's efforts in implementing the National Action Plan to protect marine life.

He said that marine resources, including turtles face

a major threat of extinction due to illegal fishing. MPRU Senior Conservationist, Dr Godfrey Mpungura, said the National Action Plan has outlined strategies with various objectives including reducing direct and indirect causes of sea turtle mortality.

He said it also aims to reduce threats to critical marine turtle habitats and promote information and education programmes in coastal communities to continue caring for them.





National Irrigation Commission dam construction project engineer Salehe Ramadhani (3rd-L) shows visiting media editors a 12-billion-litre dam under construction at Membe in Chamwino District, Dodoma Region, yesterday. Photo: Correspondent Joseph Mwendapole

## South Africa's ex-president Zuma barred from election

PRETORIA

SOUTH Africa's former President Jacob Zuma has been barred from running in May's general election, the country's electoral commission (IEC) has said.

Zuma's backing of the new uMkhonto weSizwe (MK) party has been seen as a possible threat to the governing African National Congress (ANC).

The former president, who served from 2009 to 2018, has been suspended by the ANC.

He was the first name on the MK's candidate list, but the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) received objections to him potentially becoming a member of the National Assembly.

"In the case of former President Zuma, yes, we did receive an objection, which has been upheld," IEC chairperson Mosotho Moepya was quoted by News24 as telling a press conference.

Zuma received a 15-month prison sentence in 2021 for contempt of court and the constitution says anyone who has had a prison sentence of longer than 12 months is not eligible to run for election.

The IEC said that the ruling did not prevent the MK party from taking part in the 29 May poll, News24 reports.

For the first time since the start of the democratic era in 1994, the ANC's vote share could fall below 50 percent, according to several opinion polls. The MK party is seen as popular in Zuma's home region of KwaZulu-Natal.

## Govt for sensitisation to tackle tooth decay burden

By Guardian Correspondent, Mbeya

THE government has expressed plans to expand oral health services by providing more education on disease prevention and control to fight the increasing tooth decay challenges.

According to Tanzania's most recent national oral health survey in 2020, half of all Tanzanian adults, and four out of every five children, have never visited a dentist, with more than three-quarters of all

adults and 31 percent of children battling tooth decay.

This was said mid-week in Mbeya Region by Dr Baraka Nzobo, assistant director of oral and dental health in the Ministry of Health, while sensitizing Mbeya City Council nurses on the significance of oral and dental health for expectant mothers.

He said that the ministry carried out the study and found that oral and dental issues had the biggest impact on expectant mothers, increasing their risk of miscarriage, epilepsy

and premature birth.

He said the study found that 76 percent of adult Tanzanians had tooth decay and 67 percent had gum diseases, adding that both are fast-growing conditions.

He added that in light of these consequences, a unique campaign has been launched to encourage medical professionals, particularly nurses, to assist expectant mothers in mitigating the risks associated with oral and dental health issues.

"The study also found that 58

percent of children and 67 percent of adults had gum disease, and 33.1 percent of children suffer from tooth decay. This is a serious issue that needs to be addressed," he said.

Dr Maisara Karume, Mbeya Regional Oral and Dental Health Coordinator, said that the training was planned for nurses to enable them recognize and assist expectant mothers experiencing oral and dental health issues.

Dr Karume emphasized helping patients with cleaning techniques

soon after diagnosis in order to prevent further harm such as underweight infant birth and other consequences brought about by such health issues.

The doctor added that among the things expectant mothers are screened for in clinics are oral and dental health issues and education on how to prevent oral and dental issues for their children.

"This will make it easier for nurses to assist expectant mothers who visit clinics to prevent the conse-

quences that have impact on their children's and their own health," Dr Karume said.

Dr Caroline Sakaya, a dentist based in Morogoro Region, said that once women get sensitisation, it becomes easier for them to disseminate the information to other people and reduce the diseases.

She said that women can easily detect and teach their children about dental hygiene by making sure all the necessary procedures are followed.

## Poverty, pregnancy, culture still holding young women back

MONROVIA

POVERTY, early pregnancy and harmful cultural practices still hinder the progress of young women in West Africa, Liberia's former Vice-President Jewel Howard Taylor has said.

She was speaking at the opening of the West Africa Adolescent Girls Summit in the Liberian capital, Monrovia, which brought together 200 adolescent girls and boys from across the region, as well as government officials.

Taylor acknowledged that some gains had been made but said she hoped the young participants would be inspired and help create change in their home communities.

Young people can sometimes be excluded from decision-making processes because they are seen as inexperienced, apathetic, or incapable of contributing meaningfully to discussions, Ame Atsu David, regional co-director for Africa at the Global Fund for Children, told the BBC.

In a video address recorded for the summit, former Nigerian First Lady Aisha Buhari also outlined that there are enormous challenges facing young women and girls due to traditional religious norms.

She told the gathering that "religious misconceptions" had further hindered girls' access to formal education, relegating them to domestic duties.



Ruvuma regional commissioner Col Ahmed Abbas Ahmed (C) and members of the region's defence and security committee cross Mkenda Bridge, at the Tanzania-Mozambique border, during an inspection tour of Mkenda-Likuyu Fusi road on Thursday. Photo: Gideon Mwakanosya

## Russian navy warship docks in Eritrea port

ASMARA

IN a rare visit, a Russian navy warship has arrived at Eritrea's main Red Sea port of Massawa, amid tension in the region caused by Iran-backed Houthi militants.

Senior Eritrean military chiefs and officials were there to welcome the ship, the

Marshal Shaposhnikov, as it docked on Thursday.

Russia's ambassador to Eritrea was also present.

According to Eritrea's Minister of Information Yemane Gebre Meskel, the frigate belongs to Russia's Pacific Fleet.

He said, in a post on X, that it was there

to mark the "30th anniversary of diplomatic ties between Russia and Eritrea".

A US naval taskforce is deployed in the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden to protect commercial and military ships sailing up and down the vital trade route from Houthi attacks.

Eritrea has always viewed Western mili-

tary presence in the region with suspicion. The Horn of Africa nation has recently forged closer ties with Moscow.

The Houthis, who control northern Yemen, have been attacking ships passing through the Red Sea in response to the war in Gaza. The militants are part of the "axis of resistance" against Israel.

Despite Houthi claims that they only target ships connected to Israel, they appear to have been attacking other vessels with no links to the country.

In January, U.S and British warships began striking Houthi targets in retaliation to missile and drone launches by the militants.



## Easter weekend spoiled after bus crash leaves dozens dead

LIMPOPO

A BUS carrying worshippers from Botswana has plunged off a bridge in South Africa, killing 45 people on board.

An 8-year-old girl is thought to be the sole survivor and was airlifted to Johannesburg for treatment.

The child, who has not been named, was taken to hospital with serious injuries, the transport ministry said in a statement late on Thursday.

"It is alleged that the driver lost control, colliding with barriers on the bridge causing the bus to go over the bridge and hitting the ground, where it caught fire," South Africa's transport ministry said.

The bus was headed to an Easter weekend church service in Moria when it veered off the road between the towns of Marken and Mokopane in the northern province of Limpopo.

The bus - which was towing a trailer, according to broadcaster SABC - plunged off the Mmamatlakala Bridge linking two hillsides between Mokopane and Marken in Limpopo province, the state's transport

department said. The vehicle fell 50 metres (164ft) on to rocky ground below, it said.

The Zionist Christian church has its headquarters in Moria and its Easter pilgrimage attracts hundreds of thousands of people from across South Africa and neighbouring countries. This year was the first Easter pilgrimage to Moria since the Covid-19 pandemic.

The bus had a Botswana licence plate, local authorities said, but the nationalities of the passengers were still being checked.

Transport Minister Sindisiwe Chikunga went to the scene of the crash and promised a full inquiry would be held into its cause.

Rescue operations continued until the late hours of Thursday evening, as some bodies were burned beyond recognition, others trapped inside the debris and scattered on the scene, Limpopo's Department of Transport said in a separate statement.

While South Africa has one of the continent's most developed road networks, it also has one of the worst safety records.



Qur'an Preservation Society director Sheikh Athumani Kapolo (R) briefs journalists in Dar es Salaam on Thursday on the International Qur'an Preservation Competition scheduled to be held in the city tomorrow. He is with the contest's coordinator, Mtoro Bakari (L), and National Muslim Council of Tanzania (Bakwata) protocol director Mohamed Amran. Photo: Correspondent Jumanne Juma

## Bill seeks to ban all types of hair discrimination in France

PARIS

FRENCH lawmakers debated a bill on Thursday that would ban discrimination over the texture, length, colour or style of someone's hair.

Its authors hope the groundbreaking measure sends a message of support to black people and others who have faced hostility in the workplace and beyond because of their hair.

"It's about time," exclaimed Estelle Vallois, a 43-year-old consultant getting her short, coiled hair cut in a Paris salon, where the hairdressers are trained to handle all types of hair - a rarity in France. "I have a young daughter, who is mixed-race, and I tell myself that she's going to grow up

and it won't be an issue anymore and I'm really happy about this."

The draft law echoes similar legislation in more than 20 U.S. states. The bill was proposed by Olivier Serva, a French lawmaker from the French Caribbean island of Guadeloupe, who says if passed it would make France the first country in the world to recognize discrimination based on hair at a national level.

The bill would amend existing anti-discrimination measures in the labor code and criminal code to explicitly outlaw discrimination against people with curly and coiled hair or other hairstyles perceived as unprofessional, as well as bald people. It does not specifically target race-based dis-

crimination, though that was the primary motivation for the bill.

"People who don't fit in Euro-centric standards are facing discrimination, stereotypes and bias," Serva, who is black, told The Associated Press. The bill had a chance of passing in Thursday's vote in the National Assembly, the lower house of parliament, because it was supported by members of President Emmanuel Macron's centrist party Renaissance and left-wing parties. But it had faced opposition from conservative and far-right lawmakers who see it as an effort to import U.S. concepts about race and racial discrimination to France.

In the United States, 24 states have

adopted a version of the CROWN Act - which stands for Creating a Respectful and Open World for Natural Hair - banning race-based hair discrimination in employment, housing, schools and in the military. Federal legislation passed in the House in 2022 but Senate Republicans blocked it a month later.

Opponents of the French bill say France's legal framework already offers enough protection to people facing discrimination over their natural Afro hair, braids, cornrows or locks.

Authors of the bill disagree. One example they cite is a black French steward who sued Air France after he was denied access to a flight because of his braids and was coerced into wearing a

wig with straight hair.

Aboubakar Traoré won his case in 2022 after a decade-long judiciary battle. But the court ruled that he was not discriminated against over his hair but because he is a man, since his female counterparts were allowed to wear braids.

France does not collect official data about race, because it follows a Universalist vision that doesn't differentiate citizens by ethnic groups, which makes it difficult to measure race-based hair discrimination.

Advocates of the bill hope it addresses Black French people's long struggle to embrace their natural hair, often stigmatized as coarse and unruly.

Aude Livoreil-Djampou, a hairdress-

er and mother of three mixed-race children, said that while some people view the draft law as frivolous, it's about something deeper.

"It's not only a hair issue. It will give strength to people to be able to answer, when asked to straighten their hair, they can say: 'No, this is not legal, you cannot expect that from me, it has nothing to do with my professional competence,'" she said.

Livoreil-Djampou's salon takes care of all kinds of clients, from those with straight hair to those with tight curls. "It's very moving to have a 40-year-old woman, sometimes in a very high position, finally embracing her natural beauty. And it happens every day," she said.



Construction of a storm drain gets well under way beside a newly built road in Mbulu District, Manyara Region, as found earlier this week. Photo: Correspondent Jumanne Juma

## South Sudan to reopen schools after two weeks of extreme heat

JUBA

SOUTH Sudan's government on Tuesday said schools will reopen next week following a two-week closure due to extreme heat across the country.

The health and education ministries said temperatures were expected to steadily drop with the rainy season set to begin in the coming days.

South Sudan in recent years has experienced adverse effects of climate change, with extreme heat, flooding and drought reported during different seasons.

During the heat wave last week, the country registered temperatures up to 45 degrees Celsius (113 Fahrenheit).

Teachers have been urged to minimize playground activities to early morning or indoors, ventilate classrooms, provide water during school time and monitor children for signs of heat exhaustion and heatstroke.

Health Minister Yolanda Awel Deng singled out Northern Bahr El-Ghazel, Warrap, Unity and Upper Nile states as the most affected areas.

Higher learning institutions have remained open. Some schools in rural areas also had continued despite a warning from the education ministry.

## Visiting doctors stunned by condition of wounded children in Gaza

GAZA

IT WAS the constant stream of wounded Palestinian children that most stunned the international team of doctors visiting the hospital in central Gaza, overwhelmed by casualties from Israel's shelling and bombardment.

Tanya Haj-Hassan, a paediatric intensive care doctor from Jordan, described the cases she had seen in just the past 10 hours at al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital in the town of Deir al-Balah.

Haj-Hassan was part of a seven-doctor team that has been working at al-Aqsa Mar-

tyrs Hospital since the middle of March, set up by the relief groups International Rescue Committee and Medical Aid for Palestinians.

Their two-week visit has given them a first-hand look at Gaza's decimated health sector under the nearly six-month Israeli assault in the tiny territory.

Only around a dozen of Gaza's 36 hospitals are even partially functioning.

The rest have gone completely out of commission as they ran out of fuel and medicine, were surrounded and raided by Israeli troops, or were damaged in fighting.

The remaining facilities, including al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospitals, have to take in the flood of patients even as they struggle with limited supplies and overwhelmed staff.

"People are tired. Our team has been doing this for five days, we're exhausted. I can't imagine what the Gaza team who has been here for 162 days, doing this 24/7 - 162 days without resources - is dealing with," she told the Associated Press.

A similar team went to al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital in January.

This time, because Israel strikes in the area were surg-

ing, it was too risky for the team to stay at a nearby guesthouse and instead they have stayed in the hospital itself, giving them a 24/7 look at the deterioration during their two-week visit, said Arvind Das, the IRC's team leader for Gaza.

Mustafa Abu Qassim, a nurse from the Specialty Hospital in Jordan who is on the visiting team, was shocked by the crowded hallways.

"Patients are lying in the corridors. When we go looking, we don't find rooms for the patients," he said.

"They're all in the corridors, either on mattresses or

blankets on the floor, or a bed without basic components. So they are struggling a lot," he added.

Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital normally has a capacity of around 160 beds, according to the World Health Organization, but now it is struggling with some 800 patients, according to staff.

Normally, it has around 120 staff, but many of those are no longer able to come to work - leaving a skeleton crew of doctors and nurses juggling the massive load.

"Most of them have lost their children, their wives, or their parents," said Abu Qas-

sim about the staff that operate in the health facility.

Thousands of people driven from their homes by the Israeli military offensive are also living in the hospital grounds, hoping it will be safe.

The staff also face the same daily struggle others in Gaza have in finding food for their families and trying to ensure some safety for them.

Das says the doctors have been eating minimally, living on canned food. Many bring their children with them to the hospital to keep them close, Abu Qassim said.

Israel's bombardment and

offensive in Gaza have killed some 32,000 Palestinians and wounded nearly 75,000 more in the territory of 2.3 million people, according to Gaza's Health Ministry.

Israel's offensive was triggered by Hamas' October 7 attack on southern Israel in which militants killed around 1,200 people and abducted 250 hostages, around 100 of whom remain in captivity.

Since the start of the assault, Israel has cut off entry of food, fuel and medical supplies into Gaza except for a trickle of aid crossing the border at two crossings in the south.



SATURDAY 30 MARCH 2024

**Taking A New Look  
At The News  
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## Africa Food Systems Forum - 2024 up with radical transformation calls

AFRICAN countries, ever cautious about the gaps in agro-sector productivity and its impact on social stability almost everywhere, are readying for another session of exchanging experience and comparing notes.

The idea is chiefly to find out where the emphasis needs to be directed. Neighbouring Rwanda is gearing up to play host to the Africa Food Systems Forum 2024 summit in September to discuss policy measures capable of ensuring food security across the continent.

As the last summit was held in Dar es Salaam just over six months ago, new experience won't be radical from what was available then.

That doesn't mean there won't be much to preoccupy the usually numerous participants, organised in activist groups of all sorts whose intention is to slug the governments to go in the right direction with regard to the theses or key contentions of each of those groups.

While there is admittedly much in common between and among the various activist groups, their projections or policy designs on the future - with changes or 'business as usual' - are by no means identical.

Their counterparts and nemesis, the governments, also have a lot in common in their approaches to the food security issue but, much like the NGOs, they aren't identical.

The various major groups of NGOs, as there are non-governmental and quasi-governmental types of NGOs, were not identical in their views of the issues in the 2013 summit. But there must be a way in which each systemic group would take up the data during the year right up to a new summit.

That means that one expects changes in views or general positions here and there, a more vivid recognition of specific policy limitations which would have been pre-

pared over in the past summit, etc.

In the circumstances, there is likely a chance of seeing less resistance to specific reform agenda. There is thus no need to say how things might work out as that is also part of individual and collective reflections. A top Rwandan government official opened an official palaver on the forum earlier at mid-week, calling for transformation of agriculture to make it a more powerful engine of the economy.

Already some decoupling needs to be done as to the relationship between either of these elements and food security, whether it depends on agriculture or it is part of a transformed economy.

In other words, does economic change transform agriculture or is it the contrary, with agro-sector transformation as what enables economic uplift?

The premier forum for African agriculture and food systems is set to host about 5,000 delegates from the food ecosystem.

This will not be just for Africa but across the United Nations institutional network and specialised agencies, global NGOs and a series of 'quangos'. Now, quangos (or quasi-NGOs) are semi-public administrative entities outside the civil service that receive financial support from the government, which makes senior appointments to it.

Another strategic point that will receive a fresh layer of point is the idea that to transform the agriculture sector into a powerful engine for economic development, African countries need to embrace innovation and make evidence-based policy decisions.

Some new evidence will be there in September, including data on how far tribal and clan-based agro-sector systems can absorb innovation, as no credit can be backed by clan land.

## New UK trade scheme vital in partnerships, uplifting exports

THOSE fond of tracking and exploiting new opportunities have plenty to work upon in the aftermath of a seminar on business opportunities in the UK and its Developing Countries Trade Scheme (DCTS).

Tanzanian business leaders were put through the motions of how the trade arrangement works, which is likely to differ from available arrangements in the details, not the concept. The US scheme, the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), does not visibly involve incentives for creating partnerships with US firms. What the seminar was basically preoccupied with was that Tanzanian exporters need to produce quality products consonant with international standards.

In that case, that would involve trying to figure out what the ministerial authorities can do to ensure that these quality improvements or gains are taken on board.

An auxiliary aspect was that, under the scheme, UK companies will be able to forge partnerships with local firms. The principal aim is that such synergy boosts the competitiveness of manufactured goods for the UK market. True enough - but there is plenty more. Then there was the more outlandish issue of addressing the trade gap with the UK, where at present Tanzania exports just over one-tenth of what it buys from the UK. It is hard to see Tanzania closing the gap unless the UK actually outsourced a broad portion of its needs in manufactured goods and even in agriculture.

There would also have to be a proviso that Tanzania becomes the outsourcing venue of choice for a significant number of its larger

outsourcing companies. That sort of projection can only arise from a long-term policy trend and not from seminar inputs.

Forming consistent and numerous enough partnerships is a sort of common market, as it is a situation where the right of establishment is recognised - and hence the right to purchase property as well.

What is known as partnerships isn't always a situation where business operators meet and opt for a common strategy. Rather, it has to do with stocks and other property markets. A potential investor chooses what going company or one that has a market base and is not doing well. That firm is subsequently purchased and takes a new look in so doing, but it is hard to see that here now. While attempts to bring about such partnerships by share sale failed with state companies in the 2000 to 2005 period, indications are that the private sector isn't quite amenable to that sort of arrangement either.

It is more effective to set up branches of offer franchises to use the group brand name, technology and wider networking structures to enable the group to take up a portion of the outlying global market zone. Representative roles for UK firms are possible as is brand sharing by setting up autonomous firms recognisable as part of the wider network, while outright purchasing of local firms is still somewhat held at bay. There are limitations as to the sort of synergies that can be created with UK firms in particular, and how far the UK seeks to outsource productive activity to avoid the high wages in the UK and elsewhere isn't clear yet.

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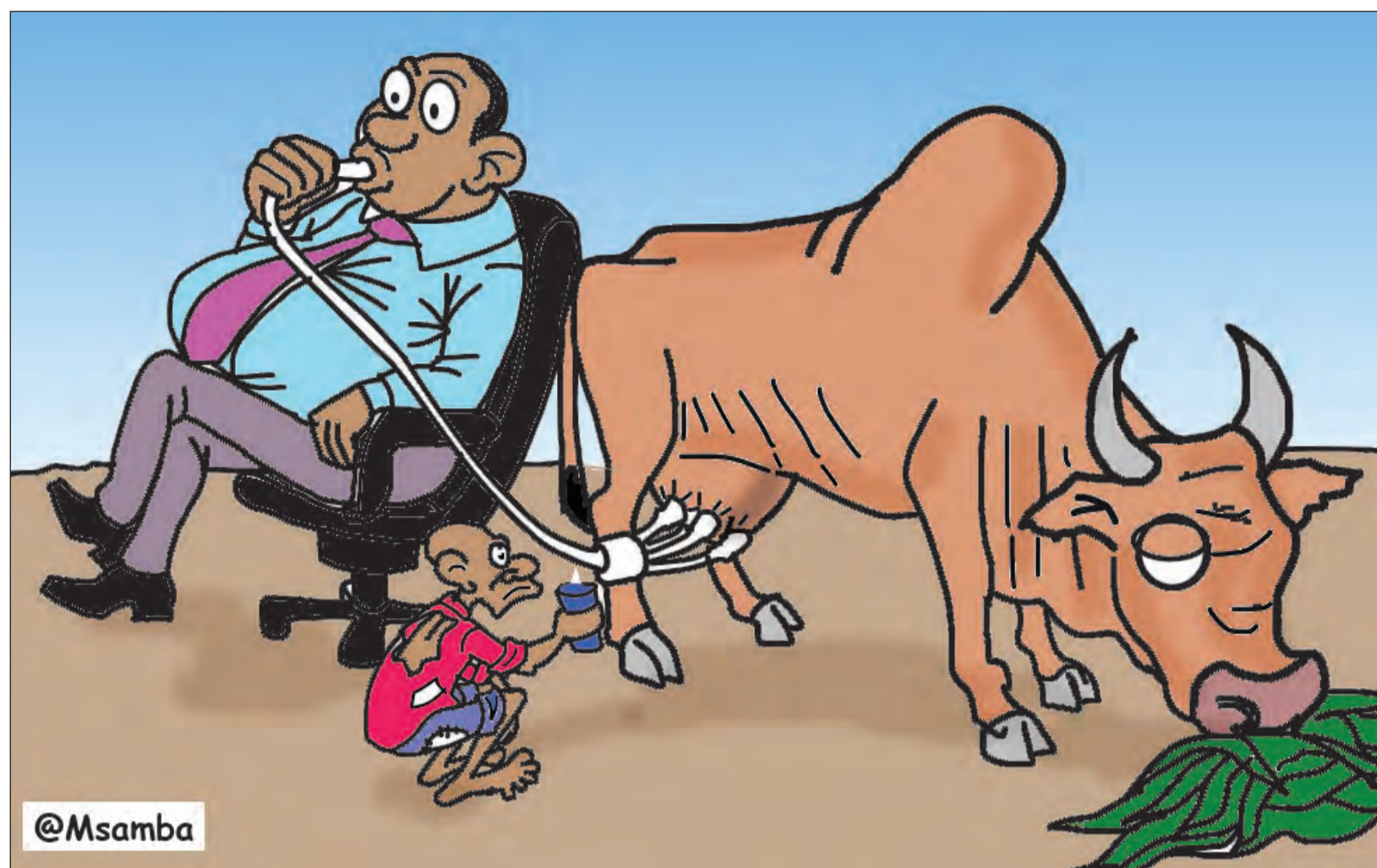
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## Those perfect lives are never as they seem

By Catherine Sanderson

SHARING our own bad news fixes faulty perceptions and improves mental health. Last April my husband was fired - unexpectedly and wrongfully - from a job he had held for more than 20 years. It was, as you can probably imagine, devastating.

For several weeks he shared this news with virtually no one - only a few family members and our closest friends.

Finally, after nearly two months, we shared this pretty major life update more broadly - and the response was overwhelmingly positive.

His friends started checking in regularly, inviting him to golf or play tennis. Other people reached out to provide helpful contacts about potential new jobs.

But most importantly, several people reached out with their own stories about facing similar circumstances, which they now shared with us for the first time.

In April, we felt scared and very much alone. By June, we felt surrounded by love and support. In many ways, sharing this hard news helped us build closer relationships.

I have thought a lot about the highs and lows of last spring over the last year - because so much of what we experienced illustrates a common finding from empirical research in psychology: people regularly share the good but hide or gloss over the bad. And this tendency has real and substantial consequences for mental well-being.

### Appearance is not reality

I was invited once to give a talk to a small group of alumni from a particular school. I arrived at the host's home, and it was lovely inside and out: elegant and comfortable furniture, beautifully manicured landscaping, and a staff of caterers passing out drinks and food on silver trays. The family was equally impressive: a stunning husband and wife and two charming young children. The evening was delightful and, as I got in my car at the end of the event, I thought: 'Oh, what a perfect life this family must have.'

And, in all honesty, I compared this perfect life I witnessed to my own much less perfect life: my messy house, my overgrown lawn, my gloomy children, and so on. So, really, what I thought was: This family has a perfect life, and my own can never measure up.

The next day, I mentioned having attended this event to a friend, who asked me if I knew this family's history. Of course, I did not. I then learned that this marriage was the husband's first but the wife's second.

She had married her college boyfriend a few years after graduation and less than a month after their wedding he died instantly when a plane crashed into his office in the North Tower of the World Trade Centre. He never saw their wedding photos.

I learned an important lesson about the faulty logic inherent in making comparisons: we never know the true story about other people's lives. Our comparisons are



based on the external reality they present or, in some cases, choose to present.

As economist Seth Stephens-Davidowitz points out, people spend six times as much time washing dishes as they do golfing, yet there are roughly twice as many tweets about golfing as there are about doing the dishes.

Similarly, although budget Las Vegas hotel Circus Circus and luxury hotel Bellagio have an approximately equal number of rooms, people report checking into the Bellagio hotel on Facebook about three times as often.

### Not as happy as you think they are

And even when these images are impressive, we never know what other people are really experiencing. As playwright Anton Chekhov wrote: "We see those who go to the market to buy food, who eat in the daytime and sleep at night, who chatter away, merry... But we neither hear nor see those who suffer - and the terrible things in life are played out behind the scenes."

There's strong support for Chekhov's intuition. In one series of studies, researchers asked college students how frequently they had experienced a variety of negative events, such as receiving a low grade or being rejected by a potential romantic partner, and positive events, such as attending a fun party and going out with friends, in the past two weeks. They were also asked to estimate how often other students had experienced these same events.

Can you predict their findings? For every single negative event, students believed they were experiencing these events more often than were their peers.

For example, although 60 per cent of students had received a bad grade in the past two weeks, they believed that only 44 per cent of their peers had had this experience.

On the other hand, students also believed that their peers were experiencing the positive events more frequently than they themselves were. For example, although only 41 per cent of students reported attending a fun party in the last two weeks, they believed that 62 per cent of their peers had had this experience.

Sadly, perceiving such discrepancies - even when they are wrong - is associated with negative consequences. Students who underestimated how often their peers were experiencing negative events and overestimated how often their peers were experiencing positive events reported feeling lonelier and less satisfied with life.

### The power of sharing our failures

So, what can we do? We can start by sharing not just the good, but the bad - as I eventually did following my husband's firing.

Many colleges and universities are now trying to counteract the negative consequences of such misperceptions by encouraging people to share their own failures.

For example, Smith College started a programme called "Failing Well", in which students and professors share their experiences of personal and professional failure in an attempt to create awareness of the negative events we all face.

Similar programmes have been adopted at other schools, including Stanford's Resilience Project, Harvard's Success-Failure Project, and the University of Pennsylvania's Penn

Faces.

Johannes Haushofer, a professor of psychology and public affairs at Princeton University (the fourth-oldest institution of higher education in the US), created a "CV of Failures" that recounts all the rejections of his academic career.

This list includes graduate programmes that rejected him, academic positions that turned him down, and scholarships that he did not receive.

His motivation for creating this document was his awareness that people's successes are often obvious, but their failures are not.

Haushofer notes: "Most of what I try fails - but these failures are often invisible, while the successes are visible. I have noticed that this sometimes gives others the impression that most things work out for me... This CV of Failures is an attempt to balance the record and give some perspective."

I've written two trade books, including *The Positive Shift* (from which this piece is adapted), which seems impressive. But here's the reality: Both books were rejected by numerous agents and publishers and neither has made any bestseller list.

So here's my biggest takeaway, based on empirical research in psychology: We can all find greater happiness by keeping in mind that what people present to others almost never tells the true story of what they are experiencing. As writer Anne Lamont says: "Try not to compare your insides to other people's outsides."

*\* A medium.com dispatch. Catherine Sanderson is an author and a psychology professor with Amherst College, a private liberal arts college in Amherst, Massachusetts, founded in 1821.*



By Adonis Byemelwa

## CAG's 2022/2023 Report: Need for decisive action to combat corruption and improve accountability

AS Tanzania's national debt balloons to a staggering 85trn/-, the shadow of corruption and mismanagement looms large over the country's government. Despite concerted efforts to enhance the performance of public entities through subsidies and expert oversight committees, the Controller and Auditor General's (CAG) report for the fiscal year 2022/2023 has unveiled a troubling trend of systemic financial mismanagement.

This alarming revelation comes amidst significant losses incurred by five key organizations: Tanzania Telecommunications Company Limited (TTCL), Tanzania Railways Corporation (TRC), Tanzania Investment Company (Tanoil), Air Tanzania Company Limited (ATCL) and Tanzania Postal Corporation. These findings raise serious concerns about financial accountability and transparency within Tanzania's government.

Presenting the audit findings to President Samia Suluhu Hassan at Chamwino State House in Dodoma on March 28th, 2024, CAG Charles Kichere revealed alarming figures indicating substantial financial losses suffered by these entities.

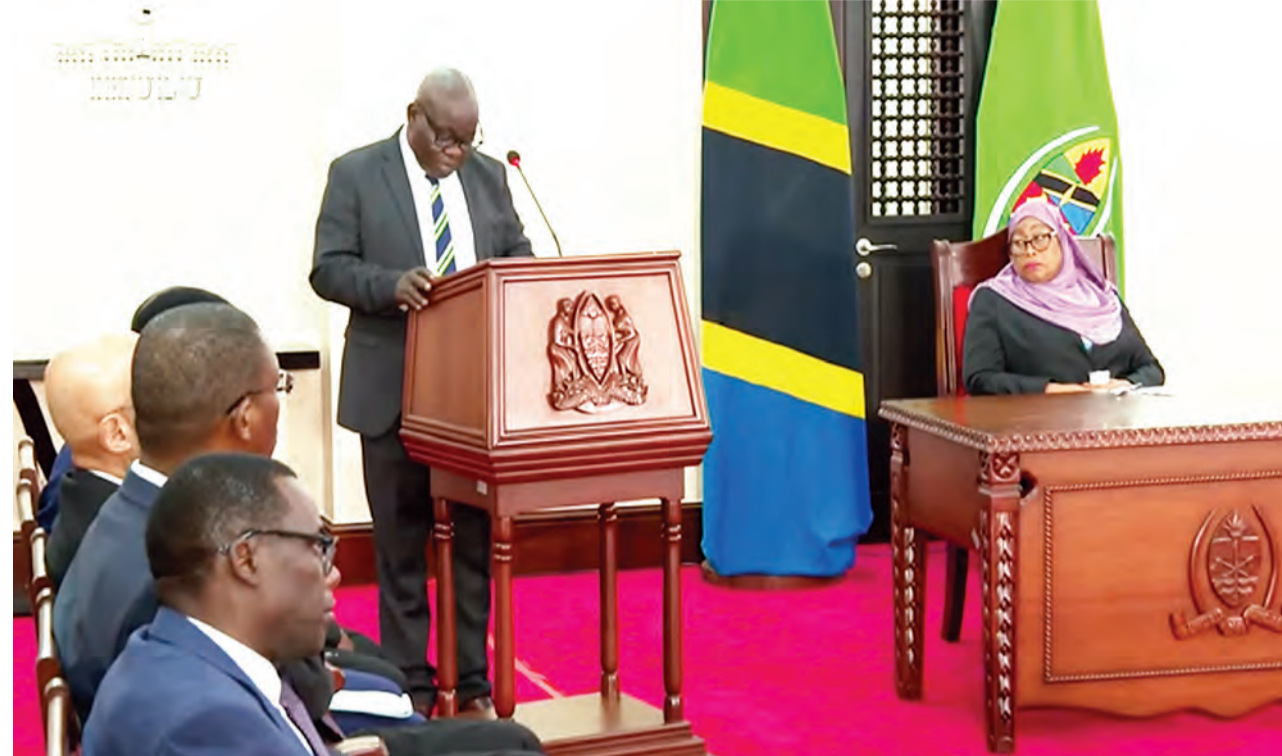
ATCL, for instance, reported a staggering loss of 56.64bn/- during the 2022/2023 financial year, marking a troubling 61 percent increase from the previous year's loss of 35.24bn/-. Despite receiving a significant government subsidy of 31.55bn/-, the company's inability to translate this support into operational success underscores deep-rooted issues within the organization.

Similarly, TTCL incurred a loss of 894m/-, albeit a decrease from the previous year's loss of 19.23bn/-. TRC, despite receiving a substantial subsidy of 32.81bn/-, reported a loss of 100.7bn/-, reflecting a 47.32 percent decrease from the previous year's loss of 190.01bn/-. Tanoil's financial woes persisted, with the company reporting a loss of 76.56bn/-, attributed to delayed payments to suppliers and decreased fuel sales revenue.

Tanzania Postal Corporation recorded a loss of 1.34bn/- for the 2022/2023 financial year, signaling ongoing challenges in operational efficiency and revenue generation. These losses underscore a pervasive pattern of financial mismanagement and inefficiency plaguing Tanzania's public sector, raising serious questions about the effectiveness of current governance and oversight mechanisms.

The CAG's recommendations to enhance operational efficiency, revenue collection, and cost reduction, while shifting away from inefficient investments, underline the urgent need for systemic reforms within Tanzania's government institutions.

Additionally, the call for competent, innovative, and commercially efficient leadership reflects a recognition of the fundamental role played by effective governance in



Controller and Auditor General, Charles Kichere presents report for the 2022/2023 fiscal year to President Samia Suluhu Hassan at Chamwino State House in Dodoma.

driving organizational success and accountability.

President Samia Suluhu Hassan's commitment to addressing the deficiencies highlighted by the CAG and the Prevention and Combating of Corruption Bureau (PCCB) is commendable, signaling recognition of the gravity of the situation and a determination to enact meaningful change.

However, addressing the systemic challenges outlined in the CAG report will require a comprehensive and concerted effort involving all stakeholders, including government officials, civil society organizations, and the private sector.

Beyond the immediate concerns raised by the CAG report, it is imperative to acknowledge the broader implications of systemic mismanagement of funds within Tanzania's government.

The erosion of public trust, the stifling of economic growth, and the exacerbation of socio-economic inequalities are just some of the consequences of ineffective gov-

ernance and financial mismanagement. Moreover, the persistence of these challenges undermines Tanzania's development aspirations and jeopardizes its standing in the global community.

The need for decisive action to combat corruption, improve accountability, and strengthen governance structures cannot be overstated. President Samia's calls for the introduction of a banking system to manage loans effectively and her emphasis on the importance of systems and discipline in resource management reflect a recognition of the need for systemic reforms to address the root causes of financial mismanagement.

President Samia's recent address at the State House in Dar es Salaam highlights the urgent need for systemic reforms to combat corruption and mismanagement of funds in Tanzania. Drawing parallels with success stories from countries like Singapore, New Zealand, and Rwanda, where bold reforms and strong political will have effec-

tively tackled corruption, accentuates the importance of decisive action in Tanzania.

These countries serve as shining examples of how political commitment, effective institutions, and active citizen participation can lead to meaningful progress in combating corruption and fostering accountable governance.

Moreover, President Samia's acknowledgment of Article 8 of Tanzania's constitution, empowering the people to hold the government accountable, aligns with the constitutional frameworks in these successful nations, where transparency and accountability are enshrined principles.

However, she also acknowledges the potential consequences of government negligence or failure to uphold these principles. In highlighting the frustrations and disillusionment among the citizenry due to recurrent reports of financial mismanagement, she implicitly warns that failure to address these issues could lead to public unrest and the erosion of trust in governmental institutions.

The recent revelations from the CAG report, coupled with President Samia's stern rebuke of negligent officials and her call for comprehensive reforms, underline the gravity of the situation. Failure to heed these warnings could indeed lead to citizens taking matters into their own hands, as suggested by the mention of the "hapless, jobless, and irate mob." This stark warning emphasizes the potential consequences of continued corruption and mismanagement, highlighting the importance of swift and decisive action to address these systemic challenges.

Therefore, President Samia's address not only underscores the imperative for systemic reforms to combat corruption but also highlights the constitutional mandate for accountability.

By drawing inspiration from success stories of other nations and recognizing the power vested in the people by the constitution, Tanzania can forge a path towards transparent governance and sustainable development, averting the potential consequences of public unrest and instability.

## Abortion: Navigating between the devil and the deep blue sea

By Telesphor Magobe

LAST week, we briefly looked at International Day of Forests marked each year on March 21. On that date last week, Tanzania joined other countries across the world to mark International Day of Forests as various groups of people participated in raising public awareness of environmental conservation such as tree-planting.

We said there were global and national efforts to conserve nature and mitigate nature-related hazards, but the situation as it is today threatens terrestrial species due to climate change effects and humans are the most contributing agents to the climate change/global warming problem.

We then recalled Pope Francis' remarks on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of Earth Day in April 2020, who citing a Spanish proverb that 'God always forgives, humans sometimes forgive, but nature never forgives', said: "If we have deteriorated the earth, the response will be very ugly...We see these natural tragedies, which are the earth's response to our maltreatment." Causing environmental degradation and pollution can be likened to cutting a branch of a tree on which a person is seated.

When it falls down the person also falls down, which most probably will be fatal or else the person falling down may sustain serious injuries and be incapacitated for the rest of his or her life. So, let us take care and keep in mind that if we want nature to care for us we must first care for it otherwise, as Pope Francis said while referring to a Spanish proverb, "nature never forgives us" although God forgives us and we sometimes also forgive each other.

Today, I invite you to briefly look at abortion. The Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (of Current English, Fifth Edition of 1995) defines abortion as "the act of causing a pregnancy to end early in order to prevent the baby

from developing and being born alive."

From the very beginning we can say that if our parents decided to abort none (of us) would have been alive today. All of us are alive today because our parents wanted us to live as we do and so they took care of us independently of how each one (of us) was conceived.

Fr Richard McCormick (of the Society of Jesus), Catholic priest (now dead), is quoted to have made this interesting observation in writing in the June 1974 Issue of Theological Studies: "Abortion is a matter that is morally problematic, pastorally delicate, legislatively thorny, constitutionally insecure, ecumenically divisive, medically normless, humanly anguishing, racially provocative, journalistically abused, personally biased, and widely performed. It demands an extraordinary discipline of moral thought."

A few months ago, a certain lady confided to me a sad story of what happened to her when she was still a girl many years ago. She told me that one day

she was sent to a market to buy a few essentials and since it was far from home, on her way back home and because it was already dark as she approached a bushy area suddenly a young man appeared from behind her, held her by force and led her to the bush where he raped her after threatening to harm her if she rose any alarm.

After raping her, the young man ran away and she collected herself and went home. The lady said it was a traumatic experience for her and whenever she recalls it she feels bad about it. She said when she arrived home she went straight to tell her mother what had happened to her, but her mother didn't want other villagers to know that her daughter had been raped because she would be stigmatised and so they arranged that she leaves the village for a town where people don't know her.

The lady said after leaving home for the town she breathed a sigh of relief although psychologically she was still traumatised. While in town she started another chapter of her life because the

rape resulted in an unexpected pregnancy!

I have decided to share this story because there are girls who once are raped go for abortion, but the lady I'm talking about didn't opt for abortion, instead she nursed her pregnancy until she delivered her first born baby, who she says she is now of great help to her whenever she is in a financial crisis.

After sometime the lady got a fiancé who proposed to marry her. So, she got married and when she became pregnant she delivered another baby girl. However, she said, their marriage didn't last long because she decided to desert her husband after learning that he was not the type of husband she wanted to live with.

The first born daughter to the lady is now an adult and is married and they are blessed with two children. The lady's second born daughter is a college student. I asked the lady how she feels when she recalls the ugly experience and said it makes her think all men are like her assailant and so she tends to have a distrust of men.

She said one time her assailant visited her after he heard that his daughter was sick, but the lady said didn't want even to talk to him, but because he was from her home village and the man came to see his daughter she allowed him on condition that he shouldn't expect there would be any affair with her besides seeing his daughter and she didn't want that the man stays at her house for a long time.

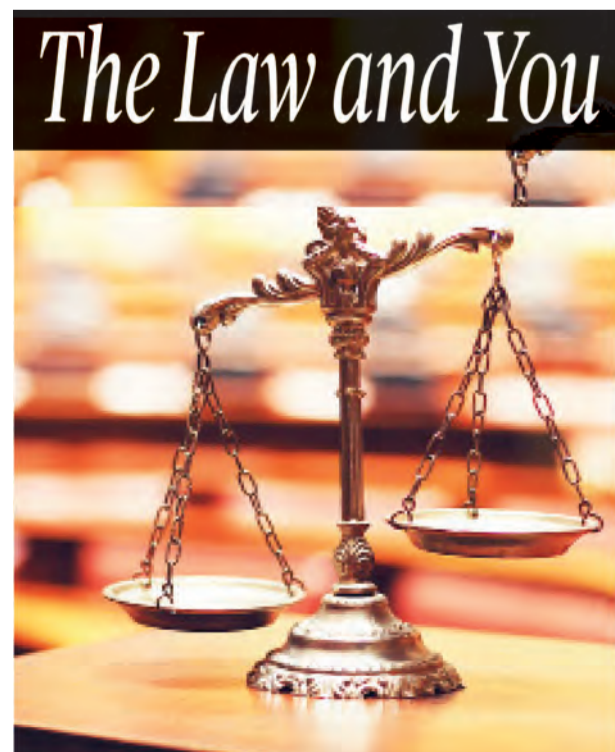
The lady said the man slept at her house for a night and the following morning he had to leave. I asked her again whether they occasionally or regularly communicated to each other, but she replied in the negative. Another question I asked her was whether the lady had ever told her daughter that she is born out of a rape incident and replied in the affirmative because, according to her, it was important that her daughter knows it and finds a way of coping with it instead of hiding it from her. This is one of the examples of how some people can cope with a traumatic experience in some way.

There are also sad stories about ladies who are raped during house breaking and armed robbery or during wartime. Some of those who are raped conceive and others don't, but in any case the victims of rape are always traumatised. There are also those who are raped by close relatives, including parents. What a despicable experience! In the circumstances, what's the right thing to do? Respect for one's own conscience.

In criminal justice, the Penal Code (R.E. 2022) criminalises 1) an attempt to procure abortion, 2) procuring own miscarriage and 3) supplying drugs and instruments to procure abortion (sections 150, 151 and 152 respectively). Punishment for the 3 offences (as stated above) is imprisonment for 14 years, 7 years and 3 years respectively.

**Today's proverb: "Many straws may bind an elephant."**

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





# The future of the care economy relies on collaboration and a 'care mindset'

By Kim Piaget

There is one investment that yields incremental interest in the long term, and that is people.

There are 8 billion of us (and counting), all of whom need looking after for the better part of our lives. Food production, child rearing, community clinics, sanitation, schooling, physiotherapy, telehealth and retirement homes, among many other processes and relationships, make up the vast and complex global care economy.

However, care goods, services, and infrastructure are insufficient, inaccessible and unaffordable to large chunks of the global population. Furthermore, the lack of recognition for care as a valuable component of social and economic life is holding back care workers and caregivers: from having decent work, accessing skilling opportunities, engaging without prejudice in care activities, participating fully in community life, and even from caring for themselves.

A new white paper, The Future of the Care Economy, authored by the World Economic Forum's Global Future Council for the Future of the Care Economy, now provides an overview of the state of the care economy. It also offers a base framework for stakeholders to start working together to make care affordable, accessible, sustainable, good quality, and most importantly, an economic priority for all.

## The care gap in the economy

Many economies have relied for too long on minimal, precarious and unfair care arrangements.

Based on 2022 US Bureau of Labour Statistics data, parents will have spent just over 750 hours per year caring for children under six - the equivalent of 4.6 standard work weeks or having a 16-student credit unit workload at a US university. In Colombia, women invest more time completing everyday household chores than in paid work (8.3 vs. 7.7 hours per day, respectively).

When government and businesses join efforts - whether to improve workforce conditions, help bridge the childcare gap, or shape urban spaces so an entire family's needs can be met within a single block - they are quite literally transforming the lives of those who provide and receive care.

Future-savvy stakeholders are not passing up on the opportunity to invest in care.

Businesses are retaining and gaining talent by offering multi-generational care benefits given their growing relevance and attractiveness, particularly in economies with ageing populations, or without social protection networks.

Governments are future-proofing their economies by championing care as an economic priority and expanding their normative framework to include the right to care amid demographic, green and technological transformations.

## Taking stock

The Future of the Care Economy highlights some of the key challenges care systems face.

The first is an overreliance on unpaid care. Close to two billion people in the world work as full-time carers but without pay. This represents 9 percent of global GDP, according to data from the International Labour Organization. In regions like Latin America, the share is estimated to be up to a quarter of regional GDP.

The majority of care work is undertaken by women, with migrant women emerging as the face of the



The world now has 8 billion people and we all need looking after at some point in our lives.

global care economy. Globally, women provide 2.5 times as many hours of unpaid care as men.

Another factor is the precarity of the paid care sector. Despite rising demand for care, wages in the care sector are low. In countries like the UK, care workers can be paid wages lower than 80 percent of the country's entire workforce.

In the US, between 1990 and 2017, carers' wages rose by just 12 percent when wage growth in other sectors was four times as much, the white paper reports.

At the same time, there is a gap in available care provision which can hold back unpaid caregivers from developing their skills and accessing employment opportunities, for example, parents caring for young children.

The International Labour Organisation estimates that the childcare policy gap leaves 9 in 10 parents having to seek alternative care themselves -- a situation that leads to primary caregivers, many of whom are women, to drop out of the workforce.

## Care as a growth engine

By 2030, the number of people age 60 and older will increase by 40 percent, and by 2050, it will double, according to the World Health Organization. This demographic shift will add to the already existing care access gap, creating more demand for care

workers. Care jobs, despite their precarious nature, are becoming increasingly important as automation forces other workers to reskill.

According to the Forum, two factors are essential to turning health care into a growth engine: greater public spending and more private investment.

Based on a study of seven Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development member countries, the report indicates that investing 2 percent of the GDP in the care industry could increase overall employment by 2.4 percent to 6.1 percent and create close to 22 million jobs. This is double what the same investment in construction would achieve.

Alongside public-sector commitment, there is also an onus on private companies to help shape the future of the care economy. More companies offering care benefits for their employees will not only drive growth in the care sector but also lower sickness, absenteeism and related productivity losses for businesses.

## Reimagining care networks

Given the complex nature of care services, there is a need for collaboration among government, businesses and communities to overcome different challenges that global care systems face.

To date, these disparate stakeholders have largely acted in isolation, and their links must be strengthened to forge a conjoint, proactive approach to care, so that it can become a force of prosperity and growth, the Forum says.

Investing in structures and processes that deliver quality care in the future will be vital. This includes enhanced responsiveness to the needs of carers and those cared for, ensuring a high quality of caregiving, the sustainability of the systems put in place as well as equity and shared responsibilities.

The future of the care economy also explores new care models and practices for reshaping and bolstering the care economy. These encompass enhanced national-level care systems as well as care frameworks for cities or conurbations and community-led approaches such as cooperative childcare facilities.

However, businesses should also take greater responsibility in the care economy, such as investing in care provision, and contributing to technology innovation - in digital care for example.

But this model for restructuring and enhancing the care economy can only be achieved through collaboration and with a prevailing 'care mindset', it reminds - upholding care as a priority in the economy, while ensuring equitable participation and fair compensation for care workers.

# CAPITAL RADIO

# RATIBA YA VIPINDI JUMATATU - JUMAPILI

MONDAY TIME PROGRAMME	TUESDAY TIME PROGRAMME	WEDNESDAY TIME PROGRAMME	THURSDAY TIME PROGRAMME	FRIDAY TIME PROGRAMME	SATURDAY TIME PROGRAMME	SUNDAY TIME PROGRAMME
05:00-09:00HRS MORNING JAM 09:00-13:00HRS LETE RAHA 13:00-14:00HRS DW-RADIO 14:00-16:00HRS CLUB 101 16:00-18:00HRS DALA DALA 18:00-18:10HRS HABARI 18:10-20:00HRS BOZOUK TIME 20:00-21:00HRS HALI HALISI 21:00-22:00HRS SPORTS  22:00-05:00HRS MUZIKI (MCHAGANGANYIKO)	05:00-09:00HRS MORNING JAM 09:00-13:00HRS LETE RAHA 13:00-14:00HRS DW-RADIO 14:00-16:00HRS CLUB 101 16:00-18:00HRS DALA DALA 18:00-18:10HRS HABARI 18:10-21:00HRS BOZOUK TIME 21:00-22:00HRS SPORTS 22:00-05:00HRS MUZIKI (MCHAGANGANYIKO)	05:00-09:00HRS MORNING JAM 09:00-13:00HRS LETE RAHA 13:00-14:00HRS DW-RADIO 14:00-16:00HRS CLUB 101 16:00-18:00HRS DALA DALA 18:00-18:10HRS HABARI 18:10-21:00HRS BOZOUK TIME 21:00-22:00HRS SPORTS 22:00-05:00HRS MUZIKI (MCHAGANGANYIKO)	05:00-09:00HRS MORNING JAM 09:00-13:00HRS LETE RAHA 13:00-14:00HRS DW-RADIO 14:00-16:00HRS CLUB 101 16:00-18:00HRS DALA DALA 18:00-18:10HRS HABARI 18:10-20:00HRS BOZOUK TIME 20:00-21:00HRS SPORTS 21:00-23:00HRS MALUMBANO YA HOJA 22:00-05:00HRS MUZIKI (MCHAGANGANYIKO)	05:00-09:00HRS MORNING JAM 09:00-13:00HRS LETE RAHA 13:00-14:00HRS DW-RADIO 14:00-16:00HRS CLUB 101 16:00-18:00HRS DALA DALA 18:00-18:10HRS HABARI 18:10-20:00HRS BOZOUK TIME 20:00-21:00HRS SPORTS 21:00-23:00HRS KIPIMA JOTO 22:00-05:00HRS MUZIKI (MCHAGANGANYIKO)	07:30-10:00HRS DK 90 DUNIANI 10:00-11:00HRS KADOGOO 11:00-13:00HRS BONGO HITS 13:00-14:00HRS DW RADIO 14:00-16:00HRS ZAIDI YA UMJUAUVO 16:00-18:00HRS ALIYEVUMA 18:00-21:00HRS BUZUKI TIME 21:00-22:00HRS SPOTI 22:00-05:00HRS MUZIKI (MCHAGANGANYIKO)	07:00-09:00HRS HABARI NA MATUKIO YA WIKI  09:00-11:00HRS THE SUNDAY 11:00-13:00HRS TOP 20 13:00-14:00HRS DW RADIO 14:00-16:00HRS CAPITAL MICHEZONI 16:00-18:00HRS UKURASA WA MBELE 18:00-21:00HRS JIACHIE 21:00-22:00HRS SPOTI 22:00-01:00HRS LADHA LAINI  01:00-05:00HRS MUZIKI (MCHAGANGANYIKO)

Tembelea mitandao ya kijamii ya CAPITAL RADIO



CAPITAL RADIO



## UN: 783 million people face chronic hunger, while the world wastes 19 per cent of its food

THE world wasted an estimated 19 per cent of the food produced globally in 2022, or about 1.05 billion metric tons, according to a new United Nations report.

The U.N. Environment Programme's Food Waste Index Report, published Wednesday, tracks the progress of countries to halve food waste by 2030.

The U.N. said the number of countries reporting for the index nearly doubled from the first report in 2021. The 2021 report estimated that 17 per cent of the food produced globally in 2019, or 931 million metric tons (1.03 billion tons), was wasted, but authors warned against direct comparisons because of the lack of sufficient data from many countries.

The report is co-authored by UNEP and Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP), an international charity.

Researchers analyzed country data on households, food service and retailers. They found that each person wastes about 79 kilograms (about 174 pounds) of food annually, equal to at least 1 billion meals wasted worldwide daily.

Most of the waste – 60 per cent – came in households. About 28 per cent came from food service, or restaurants, with about 12 per cent from retailers.

"It is a travesty," said co-author Clementine O'Connor, the focal point for food waste at UNEP. "It doesn't make any sense, and it is a complicated problem, but through collaboration and systemic action, it is one that can be tackled."

The report comes at a time when 783 million people around the

world face chronic hunger and many places facing deepening food crises. The Israel-Hamas war and violence in Haiti have worsened the crisis, with experts saying that famine is imminent in northern Gaza and approaching in Haiti.

Food waste is also a global concern because of the environmental toll of production, including the land and water required to raise crops and animals and the greenhouse gas emissions it produces, including methane, a powerful gas that has accounted for about 30 per cent of global warming since pre-industrial times.

Food loss and waste generate 8 to 10 per cent of global greenhouse gas emissions. If it were a country, it would rank third after China and the U.S.

Fadila Jumare, a Nigeria-based project associate at Busara Center for Behavioural Economics who has studied prevention of food waste in Kenya and Nigeria, said the problem further disadvantages many people who are already food insecure and cannot afford healthy diets.

"For humanity, food waste means that less food is available to the poorest population," said Jumare, who wasn't involved in the report.

Brian Roe, a food waste researcher at Ohio State University who wasn't involved with the report, said the index is important to tackling food waste.

"The key takeaway is that reducing the amount of food that is wasted is an avenue that can lead to many desirable outcomes – resource conservation, fewer environmental damages, greater food



Kalangala 1.6 MW Solar-Thermal hybrid power station

security, and more land for uses other than as landfills and food production," said Roe, who wasn't involved in the report.

The report showed notable growth in coverage of food waste in low- and middle-income countries, the authors said. But it may fall to wealthier nations to lead in international cooperation and policy development to reduce food waste, they said.

The report said many governments, regional and industry groups are using public-private partnerships to reduce food waste and its contributions to climate and water stress. Governments and municipalities collaborate with businesses in the food supply chain, whereby businesses commit to measure food waste.

The report said food redistribution – including donating surplus food to food banks and charities – is significant in tackling food waste among retailers.

One group doing that is Food Banking Kenya, a non-profit that gets sur-

plus food from farms, markets, supermarkets and packing houses and redistributes it to schoolchildren and vulnerable populations. Food waste is an increasing concern in Kenya, where an estimated 4.45 million metric tons (about 4.9 million tons) of food is wasted every year.

"We positively impact society by providing nutritious food and also positively impact the environment by reducing the emission of harmful gases," said John Gathungu, the group's co-founder and executive director.

The report's authors said they found that the differences in per capita household food waste between high-income and lower-income countries were surprisingly small.

Richard Swannel, a co-author and director of Impact Growth at WRAP, said that food waste "is not a rich world problem. It's a global problem."

"The data is really clear on this point: that there is a problem right around the world and one that we could all tackle tomorrow to save ourselves money and reduce environmental impact," he said.

## Cocoa prices hit shoppers with bitter chocolate costs but big brands see profits

ACCRA

SHOPPERS may get a bitter surprise in their Easter baskets this year. Chocolate eggs and bunnies are more expensive than ever as changing climate patterns eat into global cocoa supplies and the earnings of farmers in West Africa.

About three-quarters of the world's cocoa – the main ingredient in chocolate – are produced on cacao trees in Ghana, Ivory Coast, Nigeria and Cameroon. But dusty seasonal winds from the Sahara were severe in recent months, blocking out the sunlight needed for bean pods to grow. The season prior, heavy rainfall spread a rotting disease.

With exports from the Ivory Coast, the world's top producer, down by a third in recent months, the global price of cocoa has risen sharply. Cocoa futures have already doubled this year, trading at a re-

cord high of more than \$10,000 per metric ton in New York on Tuesday after rising more than 60 per cent the previous year. Farmers who harvest cacao beans say the increases aren't enough to cover their lower yields and higher production costs.

Yet the high Easter demand for chocolate carries a potential treat for big confectionery companies. Major global makers in Europe and the United States have more than passed on the rise in cocoa prices to consumers. Net profit margins at The Hershey Company increased to 16.7 per cent in 2023 from 15.8 per cent in 2022. Mondelez International, which owns the Toblerone and Cadbury brands, reported a jump to 13.8 per cent in 2023 from 8.6 per cent the year before.

"It is likely consumers will see a price spike on chocolate candy this Easter," Wells Fargo said in a report this month.

Mondelez said it raised chocolate

prices up to 15 per cent last year and would consider additional price hikes to help meet 2024 revenue growth forecasts. "Pricing is clearly a key component of this plan," Chief Financial Officer Luca Zaramella said in January. "Its contribution will be a little bit less than we have seen in 2023, but it is higher than an average year."

Hershey's also raised prices on its products last year and has not ruled out making further increases. "Given where cocoa prices are, we will be using every tool in our toolbox, including pricing, as a way to manage the business," Hershey Chairman, President and CEO Michele Buck said during a conference call with investors last month.

Consumer groups are keeping track. In the United Kingdom, British consumer research and services company which? Found that chocolate Easter eggs and bunnies from popular brands like Lindt and To-

blerone cost about 50 per cent more this year. It said some candy eggs were smaller, too.

Cocoa is traded on a regulated, global market. Farmers sell to local dealers or processing plants, who then sell cocoa products to global chocolate companies. Prices are set up to a year in advance. Many farmers blame climate change for their poor crops. Cacao trees only grow close to the equator and are especially sensitive to changes in weather.

"The harmattan was severe at the time the pods were supposed to develop," Fiifi Bofo, a spokesperson at the Ghana Cocoa Board, said, referring to the cool trade winds that carry enough dust to block out the sunlight needed for the trees to flower and produce beans.

Months of rain also are being blamed for black pod disease, a fungal infection that thrives in cooler, wet and cloudy weather, and causes

pod rot and harden.

"While we have a good price today, that's not it. The cacao hasn't even produced any (fruit)," Eloi Gnakomene, a cacao farmer in Ivory Coast, said last month. "People say that we've had a bit, but those living over that way, they've had nothing."

Opanin Kofi Tutu, a cacao farmer in the eastern Ghana town of Suhum, said the shortfall in production coupled with higher fertilizer costs are making it difficult to survive. "The exchange rate to the dollar is killing us," he said.

Chocolate isn't even one of the traditions Tutu associates with Easter. "I am looking forward to my wife's kotomir and plantain, not chocolates," he said, referring to a local sauce prepared with cocoyam leaves.

To help increase production, authorities are promoting education on farming methods that might mitigate the effects of cli-

mate change, such as the use of irrigation systems. The president of Ghana also has promised to step in to help farmers get a better deal.

"With the current trend of the world cocoa price, cocoa farmers can be sure that I will do right by them in the next cocoa season," President Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo said last month.

The National Retail Federation, an American trade association, expects spending this Easter to remain high by historical standards despite rising candy prices. Its latest survey showed that consumers were expected to spend \$3.1 billion on chocolate eggs and bunnies and other sweets this Easter, down from \$3.3 billion a year ago.

In Switzerland, home to the world's biggest consumers of chocolate per capita, domestic consumption melted slightly last year, falling by 1 per cent to 10.9kg per person, according to industry association Chocosuisse. It linked the dip to the rise in retail chocolate prices.

The nation's signature chocolate maker, Lindt & Sprüngli, reported increased profitability, with margins rising to 15.6 per cent from 15 per cent a year earlier.

"Lindt & Sprüngli Group's business model once again proved to be very successful in the financial year 2023," it said in a statement this month, noting that prices increases accounted for most of the growth.

Yet some smaller businesses that sell chocolate are finding it hard to keep up with the spike in cocoa prices while their sales decline.

Sandrine Chocolates, a shop in London that sells handmade Belgian chocolates, is struggling to survive after decades in business. The owner, Niaz Mardan, said the U.K.'s cost-of-living crisis and weak economy leave people worrying more about food than luxury chocolate, especially when cheaper alternatives were available at big grocery stores.

She has let go of her two employees and relies on sales at Easter and Christmas to stay afloat. "Many, many times, I thought to close the shop, but because I love the shop, I don't want to close it," Mardan, 57, said. "But there is no profit at all."



Panos Pictures







## BUSINESS

## Firm pushes viable future with solar-powered tactics



Xia Hesheng, President of Huawei Sub-Saharan Africa, speaks at a summit in Dar es Salaam. Photo: Guardian Photographer

By Guardian Reporter

In the midst of a thriving solar market in the country, Huawei Digital Power is poised to deepen its green ecological investment strategy and commitment to shared benefits with the rest of the world to achieve the vision of a world powered by the best solar energy.

During a Fusion solar partner summit held in Dar es Salaam yesterday, the firm's digital chief, Xia Hesheng, unveiled the plan.

With the theme 'Lighting up a Greener Africa', the goal is to unite Huawei Digital Power channel partners to introduce the latest sustainable energy solutions in the industry.

Xia Hesheng, President of Huawei Digital Power Sub-Saharan Africa Region, stated that in the near future, carbon neutrality and intelligence will guide humanity towards an era of ecological civilization.

"With the ongoing enhancement of photovoltaic generation efficiency and decreasing prices, the era of 'PV+ Storage parity' is approaching, making PV+ energy storage the most cost-effective and widely adopted power solution," he remarked.

As a prominent vendor in the ICT industry, Huawei Digital Power offers significant contributions to the energy sector transformation through its advanced technologies in 4T-Bit, Thermal, Watt, and Battery systems.

This means that for the long-term development of the PV industry, Huawei can provide partners with a strong innovative portfolio, quality, Delivery, Service, OEM Brand and Training," said Xia.

Huawei will establish a partnership system based on trust, profit, and simplicity.

The event also marked the release of Huawei Digital Power's channel partner policy, showcasing the company's dedication to fostering mutually beneficial relationships within an integrated eco-



**With the ongoing enhancement of photovoltaic generation efficiency and decreasing prices, the era of 'PV+ Storage parity' is approaching, making PV+ energy storage the most cost-effective and widely adopted power solution**

system.

The ecosystem partner policies are centered around four key 'PSEE' measures; Profitability, ensuring partners remain profitable; Simplicity, streamlining policies for easier collaboration; Enablement, continuously enhancing partner capabilities; and Ecosystem, investing in ecosystem development.

Xia emphasized that during the past two decades, Huawei has laid a strong foundation in Africa and established information connection services across the continent. Looking ahead to the next two decades, Huawei aims to collaborate with partners to deliver pervasive energy services throughout Africa. Nick Lusson, Vice President of Huawei Digital Power Eastern Africa Region, discussed the ongoing trends in the global smart PV industry, highlighting the rapid growth of smart string inverters, for which Huawei is a leading advocate worldwide.

He emphasized Huawei's dedication to escalating investments in smart PV technology to provide low-carbon and cleaner green energy to a wider audience, including individuals, households, and organizations. This commitment underscores Huawei's mission to extend clean energy access to every individual, home, and business.

## TBT striving to enhance tea industry growth and support farmers' welfare

By Correspondent Sabato Kasika

**W**ITH concerns raised by the Tea Board of Tanzania (TBT) regarding the obstacles impeding the growth of the nation's tea industry, director Mary Kipeja is taking steps to reinforce law enforcement measures that guarantee smallholder farmers receive their payments promptly.

The TBT director highlighted these concerns during an exclusive interview with the journalist after her presentation at a tea forum in Dodoma recently, whereby her focus was on discussing the successes, challenges, opportunities, and strategies aimed at increasing productivity in the tea value chain.

She believes that delayed payments not only exacerbate the financial strain on smallholder farmers but also discourage their continued engagement in tea cultivation.

This perpetuates a cycle of economic hardship within rural communities that are dependent on the tea industry.

"Between January 2023 and February 2024, the farmers are demanding a payment of 2.84bn/- from their produce that has not been settled," she disclosed.

In addition to emphasizing the importance of prompt payment to small-scale farmers, Mary also expressed her apprehension regarding the drop in prices in the global tea prices and the reluctance of both local and foreign stakeholders to participate in the Dar es Salaam tea auction.

With the auction being a crucial platform for trade and price discovery within the industry, the tepid involvement of stakeholders impedes the smooth



Tea industry leaders gather in Dodoma for a forum. Photo: Correspondent Sabato Kasika

functioning of the tea market and undermines the stability of the sector as a whole.

She was of the view that limited participation not only restricts market liquidity but also diminishes the competitiveness of Tanzanian tea in the global marketplace.

As a result, the devised strategy aims to ensure the active involvement of both local factories and foreign buyers in the Dar es Salaam tea auction.

Additionally, to empower farmers, the director stated, "We also aim to facilitate smallholder farmers in processing and selling tea directly at the auction. This will help reduce production costs by promoting farmers to form contracts with banks for the collective purchase of inputs from factories at lower prices."

Mary outlined additional steps they plan to take, including enhancing current factory technology and setting up new factories. Mobilization efforts are already in progress in

the Tanga region and will continue in the southern highlands, with support from financial institutions such as CRDB and NMB.

Furthermore, she discussed the board's strategies to attract processors from neighboring countries to the Dar es Salaam auction as well as utilizing port facilities in the city.

Mary also indicated that TBT will facilitate the construction of five tea processing factories and two tea blending factories, with the target of establishing one factory each year.

"We will improve tea laws and regulations to create a conducive environment for tea investors and facilitate the construction of irrigation systems in smallholder farms," she said.

Furthermore, she mentioned that the first Dar es Salaam tea auction commenced on November 13, 2023, and thus far, 12 auctions have been held, with a total of 624,708kg of tea being brought to the auction.

Moreover, at least 428,945kg of tea, worth \$298,461, has been sold during that entire period, with prices ranging from \$0.65 to \$1.00 per kg.

On his part, the Agriculture minister, Hussein Bashe, stated that the government will strengthen the tea industry by employing 200 extension officers to work with smallholder tea farmers.

"The government also plans to develop irrigation systems for tea farming to assist smallholder farmers of this crop in establishing irrigation infrastructure," Bashe said.

Chairperson of the Parliament standing committee on Agriculture, Industry, and Livestock, Deo Mwanyika, expressed his desire by stating that he would like to see more investors in the tea industry, as some of the current ones are not performing satisfactorily.

The tea sector in Tanzania has a rich history that dates back to the early 1900s when commercial tea cultivation began in

the country. The production of tea quickly gained momentum, and by the 1920s, Tanzania had established itself as a significant player in the global tea market. The industry continued to grow over the years, with smallholder farmers and large plantations contributing to the country's tea output.

Tanzania's tea sector is predominantly located in the Southern Highlands region, where the climate and altitude provide ideal conditions for tea cultivation. The sector is characterized by a mix of smallholder farmers and large estates, with the majority of tea being produced by smallholder farmers.

The tea industry plays a crucial role in the country's economy, providing employment opportunities for thousands of Tanzanians and generating revenue through exports. Exporting to markets such as the United Kingdom, Pakistan, and Egypt, Tanzania's tea sector plays a significant role in the global tea trade.

## WB boosts safety, efficiency on key railway route

By Guardian Reporter

TANZANIA'S vital Dar es Salaam - Isaka existing meter gauge railway segment is set for major improvements, thanks to newly approved financing from the International Development Association (IDA), a part of the World Bank Group.

A statement released yesterday by WB and made available to this paper, indicates that the \$200 million financing for the second phase of the Tanzania Intermodal and Rail Development Project (TIRP-2) will improve safety, climate resilience, and operational efficiency along this railway segment.

Apart from strengthening of infrastructure and supporting transport studies, the project components are also focused on strengthening climate resilience of the Kilosa-Gulwe-Igandu section; providing operational and institutional support; and supporting the emergency response.

The project is expected to directly benefit nearly 900,000 people and indirectly impact an estimated 3.5 million, roughly five percent of Tanzania's population. This includes railway users, residents along the line, businesses involved in trade, and communities along the Kinywasungwe catchment area.

"While the country's trans-



Nathan Belete, World Bank Country Director. File Photo

portation network is extensive, there are persistent bottlenecks in terms of maintenance and capacity that are limiting its full use," said Nathan Belete, World Bank Country Director. "This investment will directly address the bottlenecks in the rail network to enhance efficiency, capacity, and competitiveness so as to maximize Tanzania's unique position to facilitate regional connectivity."

There are currently two operational railway systems in the country covering a total of 3,682 km. These include the Tanzania railway (2,707 km), which is a meter gauge railway (MGR) under the Tanzania Railway Corporation, and the Tanzania-Zambia railway (975 km), in addition to a cape gauge railway (CGR) system under

the Tanzania-Zambia Railway Authority (TAZARA). A third system that entails a standard gauge railway (SGR) along the Central Corridor is being built in phases.

TIRP-2 builds on phase one of the IDA-financed Tanzania Intermodal and Rail Development Project (TIRP-1) which closed in September 2022. TIRP-1 supported the government in improving the MGR railway section between Dar es Salaam and Isaka (970 km).

This included the rehabilitation of tracks and bridges, which helped to increase the axle load capacity from 13.9 tons to 18.5 tons for the section between Dar es Salaam and Tabora (840 km); and the completion of designs to rehabilitate the intermodal terminals at the Dar es Salaam port, Ilala,

and Isaka. TIRP-1 also facilitated the acquisition of additional rolling stock for TRC and contributed to the development of economic and safety regulations for open-access train operations.

"The new project will invest in climate-informed infrastructure, adapting the corridor to natural disasters and mainstreaming climate resilience," said Jonas Mchomvu, World Bank Senior Transport Specialist and Task Team Leader. "Overall, the investment will improve incentives for the private sector to drive economic growth and generate wider economic benefits and greater efficiency."

The World Bank's International Development Association (IDA), established in 1960, helps the world's poorest countries by providing grants and low to zero-interest loans for projects and programs that boost economic growth, reduce poverty, and improve poor people's lives.

IDA is one of the largest sources of assistance for the world's 76 poorest countries, 39 of which are in Africa. Resources from IDA bring positive change to the 1.6 billion people who live in IDA countries. Since 1960, IDA has supported development work in 113 countries. Annual commitments have averaged about \$21 billion over the last three years, with about 61 percent going to Africa.



# Why trademark searches are essential in Tanzania

By Margreth Somme

**T**RADEMARKS play a pivotal role in a company's branding strategy, serving as the face of the company, distinguishing its products or services from competitors' offerings.

In today's intensely competitive business environment, where consumers are bombarded with numerous choices, trademarks provide a vital means of identification and differentiation.

A well-designed trademark not only captures the essence of a company's brand but also becomes a symbol of trust and quality in the eyes of consumers. It serves as a beacon, guiding customers towards products or services they trust and recognize.

For instance, the iconic Apple logo instantly evokes associations with innovation, quality, and reliability, contributing significantly to Apple's brand identity and customer loyalty.

Furthermore, trademarks facilitate brand recognition and recall, which are essential components of successful marketing campaigns.

Through consistent use and effective brand building, trademarks become ingrained in consumers' minds, leading to increased brand loyalty and repeat purchases. They serve

as a shortcut for consumers, signaling the source of a product or service and influencing purchasing decisions.

Moreover, trademarks can extend beyond mere words or symbols to encompass sounds, colors, shapes, and even scents, providing companies with a broad spectrum of branding possibilities. This versatility allows businesses to create unique brand identities that resonate with their target audience and stand out in the marketplace.

In essence, trademarks are not just legal protections; they are strategic assets that contribute to a company's competitive advantage, market positioning, and overall success in the business landscape.

Importance of conducting a trademark search

In today's highly competitive business world, trademarks are an essential element of any company's branding strategy.

A trademark distinguishes a company's products or services from those of its competitors, and helps consumers identify and remember a company's offerings.

In Tanzania, as in many other countries, trademarks are protected by law, and registration of a trademark is an important step in protecting a company's brand. However, it is equally important to conduct a thorough search before



registering a trademark in Tanzania.

Trademark search is the process of investigating existing trademarks in a specific market to ensure that the proposed trademark is unique and

not already in use by another company.

A trademark search should be conducted before registering a trademark to avoid conflicts with existing trademarks that may result in legal issues,

such as infringement or opposition.

Reasons for conducting a search

There are several reasons why searching registering a trademark in Tanzania is important.

A trademark search will help identify potential conflicts with existing trademarks that may be confusingly similar or identical. This will help avoid legal issues and potential litigation that may be time-consuming and expensive.

A trademark search will help identify any existing trademarks that may conflict with the proposed trademark. If there are existing trademarks that are similar or identical, this may result in legal issues such as infringement or opposition. These legal issues can be time-consuming and expensive, and may damage the reputation of the company.

Conducting a trademark search will help the owner avoid the rejection of the application due to the existence of a similar or identical trademark.

The Trade and Service Marks Act requires that, a trademark must not be identical or similar to an existing registered trademark, and the Registrar of Trademarks may refuse to register a trademark that conflicts with an existing trademark. This may result in additional costs for the applicant as well

as delays in the registration process.

Conducting a trademark search will help avoid infringing on the rights of existing trademark owners. Infringement can result in legal action and damages against the infringing party, which can be costly and damaging to a company's reputation.

A trademark search can also help in identifying potential areas for improvement in the proposed trademark. If a proposed trademark is similar to existing trademarks, it may be necessary to make modifications to ensure that the trademark is unique and distinguishable from other marks.

Save time and money: Registering a trademark in Tanzania can be a lengthy and costly process. Conducting a trademark search before registering a trademark can help avoid the rejection of the application, which can save both time and money for the applicant.

Protect brand reputation: A trademark is a valuable asset for a company and is often the most recognizable element of its brand. Registering a trademark that conflicts with an existing trademark can damage the reputation of the company, and may result in loss of revenue and customers.

Fulfill legal requirements: The Trade and Service Marks Act requires that, a trademark

must not be identical or similar to an existing registered trademark. Conducting a trademark search before registering a trademark is therefore a legal requirement, and failure to do so may result in rejection of the application.

In conclusion, conducting a thorough trademark search before registering a trademark in Tanzania is crucial for any company looking to protect its brand. It will help identify potential conflicts with existing trademarks, avoid rejection of the application, avoid infringing on existing trademark owners, avoid legal issues, save time and money, protect brand reputation, fulfill legal requirements and identify potential areas for improvement in the proposed trademark.

By taking the time to conduct a proper search, companies can ensure that their trademarks are unique, distinguishable, and legally protected.

**Margreth Somme (pictured), is an intellectual property & technology expert with Rive & Co, a law firm born from a partnership between ABC Attorneys and Stallion Attorneys. While the firm provides top-notch legal solutions, kindly note that this article is intended for informational purposes only and should not be considered as legal advice.**

## Coffee union calls on State to control issuance of licences

Nairobi

COFFEE farmers under the National Coffee Co-operative Union (NACCU) now want the government to intervene and stop the issuance of milling licenses to entities that have buying permits.

This comes amid concerns that "cartels" are out to frustrate the State-led reforms in the industry, with a section of brokers in the value chain said to be unsettled by the new regulations, which give farmers direct access to the auction.

In the latest developments, NACCU has raised concerns over the licensing of a section of commercial millers against the set rule.

For instance, Kiambu County government is said to have licensed Sasini PLC Millers and Kofinaf Company Limited, which both have affiliate entities holding buyers' licenses.

According to NACCU, Sasini PLC Mill is affiliated with Sasini (K) LTD who holds a buyers licence issued by the Agriculture

and Food Authority (AFA) and have actively been participating in the auction as buyers.

Kofinaf Company Limited mill is affiliated to Coffee Management Services (CMS) and C.Dorman Limited, who handed over their management to CMS, a sister company to C.Dorman who are licensed as buyers.

The move, NACCU says is in direct contravention of the Crops (Coffee) (General) Regulations 2019.

The regulations stipulate that a holder of a coffee buyer's licence or any other entity associated with such holder shall not be licensed as a commercial miller, broker, roaster, agent or warehouseman.

The union whose members form 70 per cent of the coffee producers in the country have since asked Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua to direct AFA and the Coffee Directorate, to suspend the coffee buying licences and activities of Sasini (K) LTD and C. Dorman, with immediate effect.



Coffee ready for milling at the Murang'a Coffee Mills. Photo: Alice Waithera

"This is high-level impunity," NACCU chief executive Festus Bett said.

The union wants the DP, who is leading coffee reforms in the country, to also direct an inquiry the licensing

"Could there have been commercial benefits or incentives between the licensee and the officials of county government? We also ask the DP to direct an investigation of how CMS Mills Eldoret obtained a com-

mercial milling licence from Uasin Gishu County Government, while they are affiliated to C.Dorman Ltd already licensed by AFA as coffee buyers," Bett added. Meanwhile, NACCU has

called on the Kenya Coffee Producers Association (KCPA) to refrain from frustrating the ongoing government-led reforms in the sector.

KCPA had this week indicated that farmers were facing delays including in payments.

"Some of the unexplained settlement delays date back from sale 10 done on December 19, 2023 to sale 20 on March 12, 2024," KCPA chairman Peter Gikonyo said.

However, NACCU has dismissed the claims saying the Capital Markets Authority's oversight over the auction and payments has turned around the sector.

"Our members are collaborating with Nairobi Coffee Exchange, CMA, government through Council of Governors and the Cabinet Secretary for Cooperatives and MSME to ensure full implementation of the Direct Settlement System (DSS) by The Co-operative Bank," Bett said.

In January, Cooperatives and MSME Development CS Simon Chelugui said the government would not relent on the coffee reforms being led by the DP.

The DP has been vocal on the reforms, warning "cartels" that their time was over.

"Dignity of farmers who toil in their farms only to reap peanuts from their produce will be returned and coffee made the black gold that it was for years," Gachagua recently said.

Agencies

## Import duty cut to Ksh2.5m per container after outcry



Kenyan Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua and PS Susan Mang'eni meet with small-scale traders from Nairobi County. Photo: DPCS

THE government has reversed a decision to increase import duty from Ksh2.5 million to Ksh3 million for a container of goods, yielding to pressure from traders who had complained about adverse effects on their businesses.

The decision followed a meeting between traders from 10 markets in Nairobi and the Ministry of Trade and Investments. The meeting also resolved that an unidentified quantity of goods belonging to local traders which had been held at the Port of Mombasa over standard concerns be released within two weeks.

The traders complained that they were being harassed by officers from the Kenya Bureau of Statistics (KEBS), Anti-Counterfeit Authority (ACA), and the Kenya Revenue Authority (KRA), over taxation, counterfeits, and import and export rebates.

"As a result of the engagement, a series of actionable recommendations was proposed: Implementing

a fixed benchmarking fee of Ksh2.5 million, from the current Ksh3 million, for all containers at the port to standardize costs and increase transparency," the ministry said in a statement following the meeting.

The traders had complained that the extra Ksh500,000 import duty imposed per container was not justified and that they were not consulted before the decision was made.

All seized goods are to be released within two weeks upon verification and clearance by ACA, said the ministry. "The recommendations laid out, born from candid and constructive dialogue with our trading community, pave the way for a robust framework of cooperation, aiming to address and resolve the longstanding challenges faced by our traders," Trade and Investment Cabinet Secretary Rebecca Miano said.

Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua who attended the meeting said that the KRA would negotiate with shipping lines and the Kenya Ports

Authority (KPA) to release the goods that have been held for weeks.

"KRA will negotiate with the KPA and shipping lines on the release of the withheld goods. On the withheld containers, the importers will pay the initial agreed duty, and KRA to expedite clearance of the containers for release to the traders by next week," Gachagua said.

He also asked the ministry to issue the traders with a single certificate of conformity and compliance from ACA and Kebs, instead of double inspection of goods by the two State agencies.

Following cries by the traders, the Ministry also said it would rotate all ACA officers to maintain the integrity of inspections and enforcement measures.

Most of the affected traders deal in electronics, second-hand clothes, motorcycle spare parts, textiles, stationery, Computer and ICT accessories, and clothing.



# Should Uchumi be suspended from trading on RSE?

Kigali

UCHUMI supermarkets in 2013 became the third company to cross-list its shares on the Rwanda Stock Exchange (RSE) after Nation Media Group (NMG) and KCB Group, both of which are Kenyan companies.

Uchumi, once a giant retail chain with supermarkets across Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania, became troubled over the years due to declining sales and rising amounts of debt that limited its ability to continue operating effectively.

The Kenyan retail store had set plans to open three stores in Rwanda in 2015 as part of its regional expansion strategy, only to shut those plans due to financial and management troubles.

The same year, two years after cross-listing on the Rwandan bourse, the firm closed its subsidiaries in Uganda and Tanzania and folded operations due to piling debts, executive misconduct, and merchandise theft - issues that had rocked the company for many years.

In March 2020 the company signed a Company Voluntary Agreement (CVA) with 121 suppliers of goods and services it owed money. The agreement would enable the firm to restructure its debts and recapitalize the business.



Uchumi Supermarkets in 2013 became the third company to cross-list its shares on the Rwanda Stock Exchange (RSE). Photo: Craish Bahizi

Since then, there has been little update about how this process has happened, and the troubles the company faces have deepened. Even with that, Uchumi still trades on the Nairobi Securities Exchange (NSE) and is cross-listed on the Rwanda Stock Exchange.

"If a company doesn't have assets, then it doesn't make sense that it would trade on the stock market," Kevin Karobia, Senior Investment Analyst at BK Capital told The New Times.

Uchumi traded 2600 shares on NSE on Thursday, March 28. De-

spite such little movements, there has barely been any movement on its stock on the Rwanda Stock Exchange.

"There is no demand for Uchumi shares. I don't have any investor who holds the stock, and there is no trading activity at all," Olivier Muneza, chief executive officer at Mo Capital, a brokerage firm based in Kigali, told The New Times.

"Stop trading Uchumi" Although Uchumi's counter on RSE is still open for trading, its stock has not seen any activity since October 2019. Analysts say it

does not make sense to continue trading its stock.

"From a business perspective, it is not viable as they are no longer operational, resulting in investors not benefiting from any dividends," Bob Karina, CEO of Faida Securities, said.

Karina, who's also the Founder and Chairman of Faida Investment Bank, told this paper that the stock's underperformance and stagnant price is not attractive to investors.

"Thus, there are few investors who trade due to low capital

gains," he noted.

Although Uchumi is still cross-listed on RSE, the company is not compliant with listing regulations as relates to the filing of the audited accounts, board composition and holding of annual general meetings.

The company has not issued any financial statement, it has not held board meetings consistently, and there is little known work about their operations, which questions its transparency despite operating only one retail store in Kenya.

"It is not in the best interest of anyone to trade its shares," Karobia said, adding that one of the paramount advantages of trading shares of a publicly listed company is that there is a lot of transparency and accountability.

"There is no transparency in Uchumi's case and no one knows about their corporate governance. You cannot make any sound investment decision in absence of this," he said.

Uchumi was suspended from trading on the Uganda Securities Exchange (USE) in July 2021 due to failure to comply with listing obligations.

"Uchumi failed to comply with listing obligations prescribed under the USE Fees, Charges and Penalties Rules of 2021 and the USE Listing Rules of 2021 respectively," USE said at the time.

This year, the Capital Markets Authority of Kenya said it was setting up a recovery board for troubled companies listed on NSE including Uchumi in a move aimed at protecting investor interests and reviving confidence in the stock market.

The move would see troubled firms such as Uchumi Supermarkets, TransCentury, Kenya Airways, and Mumias Sugar Company transferred to the special board

for two years to help them get back on stronger footing.

Failure to recover within that period would eventually lead to delisting of such companies from the exchange.

The New Times understands that Rwandan regulators - RSE and Capital Market Authority - have been monitoring Uchumi's restructuring process in Kenya and consulting with regulators in Nairobi.

However, efforts to get more details about this monitoring process and whether Rwanda Capital Market and RSE plan to suspend Uchumi were futile.

Hope for recovery? Despite efforts to save Uchumi, there are little signs that point to optimism that the financially troubled company will eventually get back to its feet.

This month, Mazars Consulting, the firm supervising the retailer's company voluntary agreement plan, said the firm has been quiet on the franchising strategy that was agreed years back.

Under CVA, a company makes a proposal to its creditors to offset debts and picks a supervisor of the plan.

Mazars said in the supervisory report on Uchumi that while progress has been made including settling about 82 per cent of the old debts, no much activity has been seen on either the franchising model or convincing the government to rope the retailer in its plans.

"There is however a concern that the new business model of franchising and engaging the government for inclusion on its economic transformation agenda appears to have been relegated if not dropped by the management altogether," Mazars report indicated.

Agencies



East African Business Council executive director John Bosco Kalisa speaks in a past interview. File Photo

## EABC pushes for raising of cap on duty-free goods

Kigali

THERE is a need to raise the cap on import duty-free goods to \$5,000 from the current \$2,000 in value to boost small-scale trade in the East African Community (EAC) under Simplified Trade Regime, a senior official at the East African Business Council (EABC) told The New Times.

"The aim of the proposal is to facilitate small traders so that they can do business and grow," EABC Executive Director John Bosco Kalisa told The New Times on March 22, indicating that apart from import duty waiver at customs, goods pay other taxes including value-added tax in countries where they are traded.

"You realise that when you impose a duty on a person whose goods are worth \$5,000, they will not get profit," he observed, citing trading in beans from Rwanda to Kenya that can earn the trader a tiny profit-margin.

EABC is an intergovernmental organisation that promotes private-sector business interests across EAC - a bloc currently comprising eight partner states namely DR Congo, Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Somalia, South Sudan, Uganda, and Tanzania.

Its proposal was alluded to by Uganda's first Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for East African Community Affairs, Rebecca Kadaga - speaking on behalf of EAC Council of Ministers - on March 12, during the East African Legislative Assembly (EALA) plenary sitting which was held in Nairobi, Kenya.

The plenary sitting adopted a report of EALA's Committee on General Purpose on the assessment of the role of women, youth, and vulnerable groups in cross-border trade in the EAC region, which was carried out from January 28 to February 2.

It exposed that over time, some women's volume of trade has grown above \$2,000 and can no longer be facilitated under the current Simplified Trade Regime (STR) arrangement.

Under the Simplified Trade Regime arrangement, goods whose value does not exceed \$2,000 are exempted from paying duties as a way to facilitate cross border trade in the region.

EALA recommended in the report to the EAC Council of Ministers to consider the revision of the regime threshold from \$2,000 to \$3,000 as an affirmative action towards supporting cross-border traders, especially women.

Agencies



### ITV PGM SCHEDULE

SATURDAY 30 March	SUNDAY 31 March	MONDAY 1 April
5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi	5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi	5:30 Soap rpt: Uzalo
6:00 HABARI	6:00 HABARI	5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi
6:40 KumeKucha	6:40 KumeKucha	6:00 HABARI
7:00 Habari	7:00 Habari	6:40 KumeKucha
8:00 Ai Jazeera	8:00 Ai Jazeera	7:00 Habari
09:00 Watoto Wetu	09:00 Watoto Wetu	8:00 Ai Jazeera
10:00 Soap rpt: Laws of love	10:00 Soap rpt: Laws of love	09:00 Watoto Wetu
11:45 Hawavumi lakini wamo rpt	11:45 Hawavumi lakini wamo rpt	10:00 Soap rpt: Laws of love
12:45 Mjuzi Zaidi	12:45 Mjuzi Zaidi	11:45 Hawavumi lakini wamo rpt
13:30 Ushauri wa Mzee	13:30 Ushauri wa Mzee	12:45 Mjuzi Zaidi
14:00 Tamasaha la Michezo	14:00 Tamasaha la Michezo	13:30 Ushauri wa Mzee
15:30 Mwangaza	15:30 Mwangaza	14:00 Tamasaha la Michezo
16:30 ITV Top 10 rpt	16:30 ITV Top 10 rpt	15:30 Mwangaza
17:20 Kipindi cha kikristo	17:20 Kipindi cha kikristo	16:30 ITV Top 10 rpt
18:00 Hapa na Pale	18:00 Hapa na Pale	17:20 Kipindi cha kikristo
18:15 Mapihi	18:15 Mapihi	18:00 Hapa na Pale
18:30 Matuko ya waki	18:30 Matuko ya waki	18:15 Mapihi
19:30 Jijeta	19:30 Jijeta	18:30 Matuko ya waki
20:00 Habari	20:00 Habari	19:30 Jijeta
21:05 Kipindi maalum: Biko	21:05 Kipindi maalum: Biko	20:00 Habari
21:10 Igizo: Mizengwe	21:10 Igizo: Mizengwe	21:05 Kipindi maalum: Biko
21:25 Kipindi maalum: Michezo Supa	21:25 Kipindi maalum: Michezo Supa	21:10 Igizo: Mizengwe
Jackpot	Jackpot	21:25 Kipindi maalum: Michezo Supa
21:40 Mjuzi Zaidi	21:40 Mjuzi Zaidi	Jackpot
22:20 Soap: Uzalo rpt	22:20 Soap: Uzalo rpt	21:40 Mjuzi Zaidi
00:30 Ai Jazeera	00:30 Ai Jazeera	22:20 Soap: Uzalo rpt

TUESDAY 2 April	WEDNESDAY 3 April	THURSDAY 4 April
5:00 Soap rpt: Uzalo	5:00 Soap rpt: Uzalo	5:00 Soap rpt: Uzalo
5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi	5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi	5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi
6:00 HABARI	6:00 HABARI	6:00 HABARI
6:40 KumeKucha	6:40 KumeKucha	6:40 KumeKucha
7:00 Habari	7:00 Habari	7:00 Habari
8:00 Ai Jazeera	8:00 Ai Jazeera	8:00 Ai Jazeera
09:00 Watoto Wetu	09:00 Watoto Wetu	09:00 Watoto Wetu
10:00 Soap rpt: Laws of love	10:00 Soap rpt: Laws of love	10:00 Soap rpt: Laws of love
11:45 Hawavumi lakini wamo rpt	11:45 Hawavumi lakini wamo rpt	11:45 Hawavumi lakini wamo rpt
12:45 Mjuzi Zaidi	12:45 Mjuzi Zaidi	12:45 Mjuzi Zaidi
13:30 Ushauri wa Mzee	13:30 Ushauri wa Mzee	13:30 Ushauri wa Mzee
14:00 Tamasaha la Michezo	14:00 Tamasaha la Michezo	14:00 Tamasaha la Michezo
15:30 Mwangaza	15:30 Mwangaza	15:30 Mwangaza
16:30 ITV Top 10 rpt	16:30 ITV Top 10 rpt	16:30 ITV Top 10 rpt
17:20 Kipindi cha kikristo	17:20 Kipindi cha kikristo	17:20 Kipindi cha kikristo
18:00 Hapa na Pale	18:00 Hapa na Pale	18:00 Hapa na Pale
18:15 Mapihi	18:15 Mapihi	18:15 Mapihi
18:30 Matuko ya waki	18:30 Matuko ya waki	18:30 Matuko ya waki
19:30 Jijeta	19:30 Jijeta	19:30 Jijeta
20:00 Habari	20:00 Habari	20:00 Habari
21:05 Kipindi maalum: Biko	21:05 Kipindi maalum: Biko	21:05 Kipindi maalum: Biko
21:10 Igizo: Mizengwe	21:10 Igizo: Mizengwe	21:10 Igizo: Mizengwe
21:25 Kipindi maalum: Michezo Supa	21:25 Kipindi maalum: Michezo Supa	21:25 Kipindi maalum: Michezo Supa
Jackpot	Jackpot	Jackpot
21:40 Mjuzi Zaidi	21:40 Mjuzi Zaidi	21:40 Mjuzi Zaidi
22:20 Soap: Uzalo rpt	22:20 Soap: Uzalo rpt	22:20 Soap: Uzalo rpt
00:30 Ai Jazeera	00:30 Ai Jazeera	00:30 Ai Jazeera

FRIDAY 5 April	SATURDAY 6 April	SUNDAY 7 April
5:00 Soap rpt: Uzalo	5:00 Soap rpt: Uzalo	5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi
5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi	5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi	6:00 HABARI
6:00 HABARI	6:00 HABARI	6:40 KumeKucha
6:40 KumeKucha	6:40 KumeKucha	7:00 Habari
7:00 Habari	7:00 Habari	8:00 Ai Jazeera
8:00 Ai Jazeera	8:00 Ai Jazeera	09:00 Watoto Wetu
09:00 Watoto Wetu	09:00 Watoto Wetu	10:00 Soap rpt: Laws of love
10:00 Soap rpt: Laws of love	10:00 Soap rpt: Laws of love	11:45 Hawavumi lakini wamo rpt
11:45 Hawavumi lakini wamo rpt	11:45 Hawavumi lakini wamo rpt	12:45 Mjuzi Zaidi
12:45 Mjuzi Zaidi	12:45 Mjuzi Zaidi	13:30 Ushauri wa Mzee
13:30 Ushauri wa Mzee	13:30 Ushauri wa Mzee	14:00 Tamasaha la Michezo
14:00 Tamasaha la Michezo	14:00 Tamasaha la Michezo	15:30 Mwangaza
15:30 Mwangaza	15:30 Mwangaza	16:30 ITV Top 10 rpt
16:30 ITV Top 10 rpt	16:30 ITV Top 10 rpt	17:20 Kipindi cha kikristo
17:20 Kipindi cha kikristo	17:20 Kipindi cha kikristo	18:00 Hapa na Pale
18:00 Hapa na Pale	18:00 Hapa na Pale	18:15 Mapihi
18:15 Mapihi	18:15 Mapihi	18:30 Matuko ya waki
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19:30 Jijeta	19:30 Jijeta	20:00 Habari
20:00 Habari	20:00 Habari	21:05 Kipindi maalum: Biko
21:05 Kipindi maalum: Biko	21:05 Kipindi maalum: Biko	21:10 Igizo: Mizengwe
21:10 Igizo: Mizengwe	21:10 Igizo: Mizengwe	21:25 Kipindi maalum: Michezo Supa
21:25 Kipindi maalum: Michezo Supa	21:25 Kipindi maalum: Michezo Supa	Jackpot
Jackpot	Jackpot	21:40 Mjuzi Zaidi
21:40 Mjuzi Zaidi	21:40 Mjuzi Zaidi	22:20 Soap: Uzalo rpt
22:20 Soap: Uzalo rpt	22:20 Soap: Uzalo rpt	00:30 Ai Jazeera
00:30 Ai Jazeera	00:30 Ai Jazeera	

MONDAY 8 April	TUESDAY 9 April	WEDNESDAY 10 April
5:00 Soap rpt: Uzalo	5:00 Soap rpt: Uzalo	5:00 Soap rpt: Uzalo
5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi	5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi	5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi
6:00 HABARI	6:00 HABARI	6:00 HABARI
6:40 KumeKucha	6:40 KumeKucha	6:40 KumeKucha
7:00 Habari	7:00 Habari	7:00 Habari
8:00 Ai Jazeera	8:00 Ai Jazeera	8:00 Ai Jazeera
09:00 Watoto Wetu	09:00 Watoto Wetu	09:00 Watoto Wetu
10:00 Soap rpt: Laws of love	10:00 Soap rpt: Laws of love	10:00 Soap rpt: Laws of love
11:45 Hawavumi lakini wamo rpt	11:45 Hawavumi lakini wamo rpt	11:45 Hawavumi lakini wamo rpt
12:45 Mjuzi Zaidi	12:45 Mjuzi Zaidi	12:45 Mjuzi Zaidi
13:30 Ushauri wa Mzee	13:30 Ushauri wa Mzee	13:30 Ushauri wa Mzee
14:00 Tamasaha la Michezo	14:00 Tamasaha la Michezo	14:00 Tamasaha la Michezo
15:30 Mwangaza	15:30 Mwangaza	15:30 Mwangaza
16:30 ITV Top 10 rpt	16:30 ITV Top 10 rpt	16:30 ITV Top 10 rpt
17:20 Kipindi cha kikristo	17:20 Kipindi cha kikristo	17:20 Kipindi cha kikristo
18:00 Hapa na Pale	18:00 Hapa na Pale	18:00 Hapa na Pale
18:15 Mapihi	18:15 Mapihi	18:15 Mapihi
18:30 Matuko ya waki	18:30 Matuko ya waki	18:30 Matuko ya waki
19:30 Jijeta	19:30 Jijeta	19:30 Jijeta
20:00 Habari	20:00 Habari	20:00 Habari
21:05 Kipindi maalum: Biko	21:05 Kipindi maalum: Biko	21:05 Kipindi maalum: Biko
21:10 Igizo: Mizengwe	21:10 Igizo: Mizengwe	21:10 Igizo: Mizengwe
21:25 Kipindi maalum: Michezo Supa	21:25 Kipindi maalum: Michezo Supa	21:25 Kipindi maalum: Michezo Supa
Jackpot	Jackpot	Jackpot
21:40 Mjuzi Zaidi	21:40 Mjuzi Zaidi	21:40 Mjuzi Zaidi
22:20 Soap: Uzalo rpt	22:20 Soap: Uzalo rpt	22:20 Soap: Uzalo rpt
00:30 Ai Jazeera	00:30 Ai Jazeera	00:30 Ai Jazeera

THURSDAY 11 April	FRIDAY 12 April	SATURDAY 13 April
5:00 Soap rpt: Uzalo	5:00 Soap rpt: Uzalo	5:00 Soap rpt: Uzalo
5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi	5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi	5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi
6:00 HABARI	6:00 HABARI	6:00 HABARI
6:40 KumeKucha	6:40 KumeKucha	6:40 KumeKucha
7:00 Habari	7:00 Habari	7:00 Habari
8:00 Ai Jazeera	8:00 Ai Jazeera	8:00 Ai Jazeera
09:00 Watoto Wetu	09:00 Watoto Wetu	09:00 Watoto Wetu
10:00 Soap rpt: Laws of love	10:00 Soap rpt: Laws of love	10:00 Soap rpt: Laws of love
11:45 Hawavumi lakini wamo rpt	11:45 Hawavumi lakini wamo rpt	11:45 Hawavumi lakini wamo rpt
12:45 Mjuzi Zaidi	12:45 Mjuzi Zaidi	12:45 Mjuzi Zaidi
13:30 Ushauri wa Mzee	13:30 Ushauri wa Mzee	13:30 Ushauri wa Mzee
14:00 Tamasaha la Michezo	14:00 Tamasaha la Michezo	14:00 Tamasaha la Michezo
15:30 Mwangaza	15:30 Mwangaza	15:30 Mwangaza
16:30 ITV Top 10 rpt	16:30 ITV Top 10 rpt	16:30 ITV Top 10 rpt
17:20 Kipindi cha kikristo	17:20 Kipindi cha kikristo	17:20 Kipindi cha kikristo
18:00 Hapa na Pale	18:00 Hapa na Pale	18:00 Hapa na Pale
18:15 Mapihi	18:15 Mapihi	18:15 Mapihi
18:30 Matuko ya waki	18:30 Matuko ya waki	18:30 Matuko ya waki
19:30 Jijeta	19:30 Jijeta	19:30 Jijeta
20:00 Habari	20:00 Habari	20:00 Habari
21:05 Kipindi maalum: Biko	21:05 Kipindi maalum: Biko	21:05 Kipindi maalum: Biko
21:10 Igizo: Mizengwe	21:10 Igizo: Mizengwe	21:10 Igizo: Mizengwe
21:25 Kipindi maalum: Michezo Supa	21:25 Kipindi maalum: Michezo Supa	21:25 Kipindi maalum: Michezo Supa
Jackpot	Jackpot	Jackpot
21:40 Mjuzi Zaidi	21:40 Mjuzi Zaidi	21:40 Mjuzi Zaidi
22:20 Soap: Uzalo rpt	22:20 Soap: Uzalo rpt	22:20 Soap: Uzalo rpt
00:30 Ai Jazeera	00:30 Ai Jazeera	00:30 Ai Jazeera

SUNDAY 14 April	MONDAY 15 April	TUESDAY 16 April
5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi	5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi	5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi
6:00 HABARI	6:00 HABARI	6:00 HABARI
6:40 KumeKucha	6:40 KumeKucha	6:40 KumeKucha
7:00 Habari	7:00 Habari	7:00 Habari
8:00 Ai Jazeera	8:00 Ai Jazeera	8:00 Ai Jazeera
09:00 Watoto Wetu	09:00 Watoto Wetu	09:00 Watoto Wetu
10:00 Soap rpt: Laws of love	10:00 Soap rpt: Laws of love	10:00 Soap rpt: Laws of love
11:45 Hawavumi lakini wamo rpt	11:45 Hawavumi lakini wamo rpt	11:45 Hawavumi lakini wamo rpt
12:45 Mjuzi Zaidi	12:45 Mjuzi Zaidi	12:45 Mjuzi Zaidi
13:30 Ushauri wa Mzee	13:30 Ushauri wa Mzee	13:30 Ushauri wa Mzee
14:00 Tamasaha la Michezo	14:00 Tamasaha la Michezo	14:00 Tamasaha la Michezo
15:30 Mwangaza	15:30 Mwangaza	15:30 Mwangaza
16:30 ITV Top 10 rpt	16:30 ITV Top 10 rpt	





I want to bring about a psychological change

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Microsoft co-founder Bill Gates interact with each other while discussing various crucial topics, in New Delhi yesterday. ANI

## 'AI used during New Delhi G20 Summit, digital facilities reaching India's villages'

NEW DELHI

NOTING that he decided not to let digital divide hamper the progress of the country and digital facilities are being extended to villages, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has said that he used Artificial Intelligence (AI) during the G20 Summit hosted by India last year and also uses it for some other tasks.

In an interaction with Microsoft co-founder Bill Gates, Prime Minister Narendra Modi highlighted the role and benefits of technology and Artificial Intelligence (AI) while also emphasising the need of regulations.

He said AI was used for interpretation and translation during the G20 Summit held in New Delhi.

The Prime Minister also told Bill Gates how his Hindi speech was translated into Tamil during Kashi Tamil Sangamam event and the use of AI in NaMo App.

"We had extensive discussions before the G20 Summit, and as you might have seen, the Summit's proceedings took a lot of turns. I believe we have now aligned with G20s core purposes and objectives, bringing them to the mainstream. I hope your first-hand experience echoes this sentiment," he said.

"Recently, I went to the Kashi Tamil Sangamam event. As I can't speak Tamil, I delivered my speech in Hindi, which was translated into Tamil in real-time using AI, allowing attendees from Tamil Nadu to understand me clearly," he added.

PM Modi said during the first and second industrial revolutions, India lagged behind because it was a colony. "Now, in the midst of a fourth industrial revolution, the digital element is at its core. I am confident that India will gain a lot in this," he said.

The Prime Minister said that children call their mother "aai" in some parts of the country.

"AI is very important. Sometimes, I jokingly say that in our country, we call our mother 'Aai'. Now I say that when a child is born, he says 'Aai' as well as AI as children have become so advanced," he said.

PM Modi referred to NaMo app and demonstrated how AI adds significant value.

"I am using my NaMo app, and I use AI extensively, which proves immensely beneficial across the country. Here is my photo booth, take a selfie. You can see, every

photo of you and me, from the last 20 years is available here, even if you're barely visible in a public event photo, as long as I am in it, and even if your one tenth part is visible, it recognises and retrieves it. This illustrates the day-to-day applications of technology and I believe, such innovations add significant value," he said.

"We should embrace these technologies to enhance daily life for everyone. My aim is to ensure that users feel comfortable and recognise its utility and encouraging them to innovate and contribute new features," he added.

PM Modi stressed the intelligent use of AI and said that using it as a magic tool would be a great injustice. He underscored that effort should be to surpass the capabilities of AI, not to rely on them because of personal laziness.

"Labeling AI merely as a magic tool, will lead to great injustice. If I am relying on AI due to laziness. For example, I am too lazy to draft a letter, so I use ChatGPT, which is not the right approach. Instead, we should compete with AI, challenge it, and strive to surpass its capabilities. Currently, I'm pushing AI to recognise and adapt to the myriad languages and dialects we have," he said.

"During an introduction with astronauts, I was trying to understand the work progress while I am interacting with the robot. I interacted with the robots a lot in varying tones which resulted in nuanced responses.

Then I called the robot with a changed name, and it led to no response at all. This prompted a conversation with AI, where, despite speaking for several minutes it failed to recognise my voice without hearing its name. I expressed the need for it to identify my voice, without a direct prompt.

I consistently present new challenges to AI, fostering its growth and adaptability," PM Modi said, referring to his interaction with the AI-powered robot.

He said government is using technology for ease of living of people.

"I had decided that I would not let digital divide hamper the progress of my country. Digital public infrastructure is a big requirement in itself. Today, I am extending digital facilities to all our villages," he said.

AI has been one of the focus areas of the government. The Cabinet had recently approved the comprehensive national-level IndiaAI mission with a budget outlay of Rs. 10,371.92 crore. The IndiaAI mission will establish a comprehensive ecosystem catalyzing AI innovation through strategic programs and partnerships across the public and private sectors.

ANI

## Russia does not threaten NATO, but there should be buffer zone in Ukraine – Orban

BUDAPEST

NATO countries are not threatened by an attack from Russia, but it will be better if a buffer zone in Ukraine remains between them, Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban has said in a conversation with former Austrian Chancellor Wolfgang Schuessel (in office from 2000 to 2007), published in the new English-language European Voices magazine and retold in the Hungarian media.



There is no risk of a Russian attack on a NATO member country, Orban said. Speaking about Ukraine, he also noted that Moscow would never agree to that country's admission to NATO because this would bring the alliance closer to Russia's borders. The Hungarian prime minister

suggested taking a look at the political map and said that it would be ideal for Ukraine, as Russia's near neighbor, to create a buffer zone with security guarantees, because if that did not happen, Ukrainians could lose their country altogether.

Schuessel disagreed, arguing that the West should immediately start negotiations with Ukraine on its admission not only to the European Union but also to NATO. **Agencies**

## ICJ orders Israel to halt Gaza famine, Hamas says truce needed

THE HAGUE/CAIRO

THE World Court on Thursday unanimously ordered Israel, accused by South Africa of genocide in Gaza, to take all necessary and effective action to ensure basic food supplies to the enclave's Palestinian population and halt spreading famine.

But Gaza's Hamas rulers said a ceasefire was needed to halt the humanitarian crisis.

The order from the International Court of Justice came as Israeli forces and Palestinian fighters battled in close combat around Gaza's Al Shifa Hospital, where the armed wings of Hamas and Islamic Jihad said they attacked Israeli soldiers and tanks with rockets and mortar fire.

Judges at the court said the people in the coastal enclave face worsening conditions.

"The court observes that Palestinians in Gaza are no longer facing only a risk of famine (...) but that famine is setting in," the judges said in their order.

The new measures were requested by South Africa as part of its case that accuses Israel of state-led genocide in Gaza.

Senior Hamas official Basem Naim said the ruling did not go far enough and Israel must be ordered to end its military offensive to halt the suffering.

"We welcome any new demands to end this humanitarian tragedy in Gaza and especially in the northern Gaza Strip, but we hoped the court ordered a ceasefire as an absolute solution to all the miseries our people in Gaza are living through," Naim told Reuters.

The UN Security Council voted on Tuesday to demand an immediate ceasefire and the immediate and unconditional release of all hostages. The United States abstained from, but did not veto, the vote.

There was no immediate comment from Israel's Foreign Ministry on the World Court ruling. Israel has said it is making efforts to expand access for humanitarian groups to Gaza overland, through airdrops and by ship.

Israeli leaders have said Hamas can end the war by surrendering, freeing all



A child walks past a pile of household refuse as he transports objects, in a street in Gaza City on Thursday. AFP

hostages it holds in Gaza and handing over for trial those involved in the Oct 7 attack.

The Israeli army said it continued to operate around the Al Shifa Hospital complex in Gaza City after storming it more than a week ago. Its forces had killed around 200 gunmen since the start of the operation "while preventing harm to civilians, patients, medical teams, and medical equipment", it said.

In a televised statement, chief Israeli military spokesperson Rear Admiral Daniel Hagari said troops operating at the hospital killed Raed Thabet, a Hamas quartermaster whom he described as one of the group's 10 most senior members.

### Shortages of food, water and medicine

Gaza's health ministry said wounded people and patients were being held inside an administration building in Al Shifa that was not equipped to provide them with healthcare. Five patients had died since the Israeli raid began due to shortages of food, water and medical care, the Hamas-run ministry said.

Ismail Al-Thawabta, the director of the Gaza Hamas-run government media office, said the Israeli army was carrying out "field killings and executions against hundreds of civilians", when asked about the army statement.

"Everyone inside the Shifa complex are civilians, and there are no military personnel inside the compound," he told Reuters.

Al Shifa, the Gaza Strip's biggest hospital before the war, had been one of the few healthcare facilities even partially operational in north Gaza before the latest fighting. It had also been housing displaced civilians. Unverified footage on social media showed its surgery unit blackened by flames and nearby apartments on fire or destroyed.

The armed wings of the Hamas and Islamic Jihad militant groups said in a statement they "bombed, with a barrage of mortar shells, gatherings of Israeli soldiers in the vicinity of the Al-Shifa Complex" in a joint operation.

Israel says it is targeting Hamas

militants who use civilian buildings, including apartment blocks and hospitals, for cover. Hamas denies doing so.

At least 32,552 Palestinians have been killed and 74,980 wounded in Israel's military offensive in the Gaza Strip since Oct 7, the territory's health ministry said on Thursday.

Thousands more dead are believed to be buried under rubble and more than 80 percent of Gaza's 2.3 million population is displaced, many at risk of famine.

The war erupted after Hamas militants broke through the border and rampaged through communities in southern Israel, killing 1,200 people and abducting 253 hostages according to Israeli tallies.

### Two more hospitals besieged

In Rafah, where more than a million people have been sheltering, health officials said an Israeli airstrike on a house killed at least 12 people.

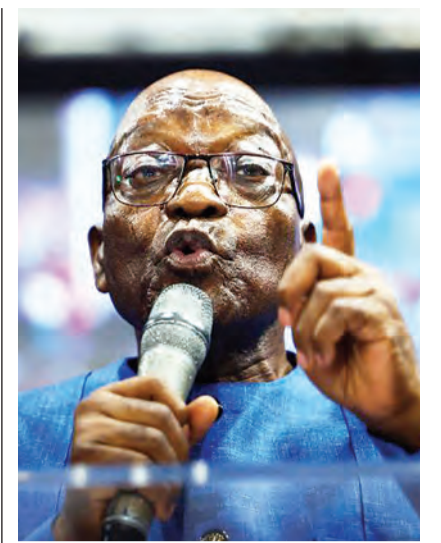
Israel says it plans a ground offensive into Rafah, in the far south of the enclave, where it believes most Hamas fighters are now sheltering. Its closest ally and main arms supplier the United States opposes such an assault, arguing it would cause too much harm to civilians who have sought refuge there.

Israeli forces also continued to blockade Al-Amal and Nasser hospitals in Khan Younis, in southern Gaza, while several other areas came under Israeli fire, residents said.

The Palestinian Red Crescent said seven people working for the organization arrested in a raid on Al-Amal hospital on Feb 9 had been released after 47 days in Israeli prisons.

Among them was the director of ambulance and emergency services in the Gaza Strip, Mohammed Abu Musabeh. Eight members of the association were still being detained, it said in a statement.

Agencies



## Zuma barred from running in May elections

CAPE TOWN

SOUTH Africa's former President Jacob Zuma has been barred from contesting upcoming elections scheduled for May, the electoral commission said, as reported by Al Jazeera.

South Africa will hold its general elections on May 29 in what is expected to be the most competitive vote since the end of apartheid in 1994.

Former President Zuma (pictured) has been campaigning for the recently formed uMkhonto WeSizwe (MK) (Spear of the Nation) party in an attempt to restart his career after he was previously in prison for contempt of court in 2021, according to Al Jazeera.

"In the case of former President Zuma, yes, we did receive an objection, which has been upheld," Electoral Commission President Mosotho Moepya said.

"The party that has nominated him has been informed," as have those objecting to the move, he added.

The governing African National Congress (ANC) is on the verge of dropping below 50 per cent of the vote for the first time since it came to power in 1994, Al Jazeera reported.

The party needs support amid a weak economy and allegations of corruption and mismanagement.

Reportedly, if the ANC secures below the 50 per cent threshold, it will force the party, once led by Nelson Mandela, to form a coalition to stay in office.

Notably, Zuma's tenure ended in 2018 with corruption allegations when incumbent Cyril Ramaphosa replaced him. He was later sentenced to 15 months in jail in June 2021 after refusing to testify for a panel that later probed financial corruption and cronyism under his presidency, as reported by Al Jazeera.

His jailing prompted protests, riots and looting that left more than 350 dead. Later, he was freed on medical parole just two months into his term.

An appeals court later ruled that Zuma's release was illegally granted and ordered him back to jail, Al Jazeera reported.

But on returning to a correctional centre, he immediately benefited from the remission of non-violent offenders approved by Ramaphosa.

The electoral commission said in a statement that under the constitution, "any person who was convicted of an offence and sentenced to more than 12 months imprisonment without the option of a fine" cannot stand in an election.

Additionally, Zuma is also facing corruption charges in an arms procurement scandal in the 1990s when he was vice president. **ANI**

## Democracy comes in many forms in richly diverse world

THE third "International Forum on Democracy: The Shared Human Values" was held in Beijing on March 20.

Chinese and foreign guests engaged in discussions on topics including "Democracy and Modern Governance," "Democracy and the Rule of Law in the Digital Times," "AI and the Future of Democracy" and "Democracy and Global Governance in a Multipolar World."

They fully recognized China's practices in implementing whole-process people's democracy, saying China's democracy works and works well and has

explored new paths for humanity's cause of democracy.

Democracy is an important hallmark of the progress and development of human civilization and an ideal that has always been cherished by the Communist Party of China (CPC) and the Chinese people.

China keeps to the path of socialist political advancement with Chinese characteristics, and follows whole-process people's democracy. Whole-process people's democracy integrates

process-oriented democracy with results-oriented democracy, procedural democracy with substantive democracy, direct democracy with indirect democracy, and people's democracy with the will of the state. It is a model of socialist democracy that covers all aspects of the democratic process and all sectors of society. It is a true democracy that works.

The annual sessions of the National People's Congress (NPC) and the National Committee of

the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), also known as the "two sessions," exactly mirror the effectiveness of China's democracy.

During the "two sessions" this year, nearly 5,000 NPC deputies and CPPCC National Committee members from all walks of life across the country gathered in Beijing, integrating aspirations and expectations of the people into the nation's top-level policy design. The government work report, compiled through exten-

sive consultation, was modified by about 10,000 people directly. Besides, officials from multiple ministries and departments responded intensively to public concerns on the sidelines of the sessions.

Through the "two sessions," foreign journalists witnessed that China's democracy gives full expression to people's will, protects their rights and interests, and works in concert with the people. They said that China's democracy is an im-

portant chapter in the story of democracy for humanity. As a populous country long plagued by weak economic foundations, China always draws wisdom and strength from its 5,000-year-old culture and fine traditions in developing democracy. Based on a correct understanding of its current development stage and its economic and social conditions, it focuses on identifying and resolving each and every problem and presses ahead with democracy step by step.

After long-term exploration, China has developed a path to democracy with Chinese characteristics, which ensures adequate democratic rights for all of its 1.4 billion people, unleashes their enthusiasm, initiative, and creativity, and builds a "Chinese miracle" of rapid economic development and long-term social stability.

China's whole-process people's democracy takes root in the vast land of China, aligns with China's national conditions and enjoys wholehearted support from the Chinese people.

People's Daily



# High-quality development of Chinese economy a boon for the world

BOAO

THE high-quality development pursued by China amid its drive to grow new quality productive forces will continue to unleash great potential for growth and business opportunities for multinational companies, according to distinguished speakers at the Boao Forum for Asia (BFA) Annual Conference 2024.

The speakers were attending a panel discussion on the outlook of the Chinese economy during the conference, which runs from March 26 to 29 in Boao, a resort town in southern China's Hainan Province.

During the fast-paced hour-long session, the discussion was kicked off with mention that the world's second-largest economy achieved 5.2 percent growth last year, despite the economy being weighed down by the real estate sector and a sluggish global economy, with the panelists agreeing it was not "too bad."

They also made one point crystal clear -- strong and sustainable growth in China holds great significance for both the country, and the world.

"Last year, China by itself contributed around one third of global growth. Our research also shows that for every one percentage point faster in China's growth, that raises on average the level of GDP in other economies in the medium term by about 0.3 percent," said Steven Alan Barnett, senior resident representative in China of the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

When commenting on China's economic performance last year, "solid"



Steven Alan Barnett, International Monetary Fund's Senior Resident Representative in China, speaks at a panel discussion themed on "China Economic Outlook" during the Boao Forum for Asia (BFA) Annual Conference 2024 in Boao, south China's Hainan Province, on Thursday. Xinhua

and "outstanding" were the two words used by Vivian Jiang, Chair of Deloitte China. "Even though the Chinese economy grew at a lower rate compared to years ago, what needs to be seen is that the quality of growth in China continues to improve."

"For instance, the growth of expenditures on research and development in China last year rose by 8.4 percent year on year, which was a much faster growth compared to the GDP growth, and this is important data for us as a professional services agency. The fast R&D spending growth means continued momentum for the Chinese economy going forward," she said.

The Chinese government has set an economic growth target of around 5 percent for 2024. "The 5 percent growth target, I believe, is a goal China can achieve. In the first two months of this year, we already

saw that most economic indicators were a lot better compared to the same period last year," said Liu Qiao, professor of finance and dean of Guanghua School of Management, Peking University.

Government data showed that in the first two months of 2024, China saw its imports and exports reach 6.6 trillion yuan (about 930 billion U.S. dollars), a historical high for the same period. Meanwhile, some 7,160 new foreign-invested firms were set up across China during the same period, up 34.9 percent year on year, the highest increase in nearly five years.

Liu said that the data from the beginning months of the year to some extent helped shore up confidence in the Chinese economy's overall growth for the whole year.

Amid concerns about the property sector's drag on the Chinese economy, Albert

Park, chief economist with the Asian Development Bank, said that the falling property prices in China were a downside risk, but the Chinese government has done a good job trying to manage the leveraging of the sector to address the longstanding imbalance between supply and demand.

China rolled out a raft of pro-growth measures last year, including those for the property sector such as cutting down the down payment ratio and easing rules on old policies that had restricted home purchase transactions when home prices were soaring.

"I think going forward this year and even beyond, the key part of the pivot to a high-quality development model is to continue to have consumption and be a key driver of growth," Barnett said, adding that China still has great potential for consumption growth.

Vivian Jiang, during her part, said that China's biggest confidence was its huge market, whether you look at its consumption or its digitalization and transformation efforts in traditional industries.

The government has recently announced a plan to promote large-scale equipment upgrades and trade-in of consumer goods, as part of its efforts to boost domestic demand and support continuous economic growth this year.

"This is a tailored measure that reflects China's transition toward green and low-carbon development, and digitalization, as well as its pursuit for going intelligent. This measure is also expected to be equipped with other auxiliary supportive policies, including those from the financial sector, to promote the overall industrial upgrade in the country," she said.

Xinhua



## UNHCR, partners seek new funding to help 2.3m South Sudanese refugees in 2024

JUBA

THE United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and its partners on Thursday appealed for 1.4 billion U.S. dollars in 2024 to meet the needs of 2.3 million South Sudanese refugees in East African countries.

The UN Refugee Agency and its 123 partners called for renewed support for South Sudanese refugees living in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Ethiopia, Kenya, Sudan and Uganda with the new funding appeal. Mamadou Dian Balde (pictured), UNHCR's regional director for the East and Horn of Africa and Great Lakes region, said significant strides and laudable efforts have been made over the last 10 years by partners.

"This year's Regional Refugee Response Plan builds on the incremental progress made and demonstrates that if given the resources, humanitarian aid combined with investments in resilience -- for both refugees and the host communities that welcomed them -- will facilitate longer-term solutions," Balde said in a statement. The UNHCR said a similar number of people living in local communities in the five asylum countries will benefit from services and support provided through a Regional Refugee Response Plan. The plan will build on inclusive policies led by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and the East African Community (EAC), and align with pledges made by governments, the private sector and donors made at the 2023 Global Refugee Forum last December.

According to the UNHCR, since the start of the conflict in South Sudan over 10 years ago, growing humanitarian needs compounded by dire food shortages, continued insecurity, and the impacts of climate change, have kept South Sudanese refugees in exile and prompted new displacement. Four consecutive years of flooding have also destroyed homes and livelihoods, triggering further cross-border movements, it said. The plan also aims to support the efficient delivery of humanitarian assistance and protection services, including the prevention of and responses to gender-based violence and sexual exploitation.

Balde said several countries in this region are certainly experiencing complex challenges that often demand significant financial requirements. "However, the people of South Sudan deserve our attention and support so they can contribute meaningfully to their societies and gain skills for when they eventually are able to return home," he added. Xinhua

FRENCH President Emmanuel Macron said on Wednesday during his visit to Brazil that a potential agreement between the European Union and the South American Mercosur trade bloc as it stands is a "very bad deal" and more climate commitments are needed.

"As it is negotiated today, it is a very bad deal, for you and for us," Macron told businessmen in Sao Paulo while on a three-day trip to Latin America's largest economy, amid troubled talks over a free trade deal between the two economic blocs.

"There is nothing that takes into consideration the subject of biodiversity and climate; nothing," Macron said. "Let's forge a new deal in

## Macron says EU-Mercosur proposal a 'very bad deal'

light of our goals and reality, a trade deal that is responsible on development, climate and biodiversity."

While Brazil has said it is ready to sign a deal, France has repeatedly expressed reservations and said its farmers have objected to the prospect that could allow in agricultural imports, notably beef, that do not meet strict EU standards. "We still have time," said Brazilian Finance Minister Fernando Haddad at the same event. "It's true we lost an opportunity at the end of last year, but we should not give up on this deal."

Haddad added that Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva had invested a lot of time in the deal and would keep investing in a closer relationship with the European market.

Earlier this month, European officials said "decisive progress" was possible by July.

Macron also called for much more direct investment from Brazilian firms into France and said the two countries could cooperate on investing in third markets, notably in Africa.

Lula has visited several African nations since he returned to power last year and said he wants to resume the "good and fruitful" relations his country used to have with the continent when he was first elected as president in



the 2000s.

His government has also looked to reverse policies under the prior government of far-right President Jair Bolsonaro that sought to undo climate protections.

At upcoming G20 and COP summits in Brazil, Macron said he planned to push for more international standards to financially incentivize banks, firms and investors to decarbonize industrial processes and better preserve the environment.

"We need to go much faster, much stronger, much farther," Macron said.

Macron also said he had spoken with Lula earlier on Wednesday about closer cooperation across their defense industries, saying he wanted to "go beyond" producing helicopters and submarines and saw "immense bilateral potential" in this sector. **Agencies**

## Venezuela slams US for 'trying to delegitimise' its elections

CARACAS

VENEZUELA categorically rejected the United States' attempts to "discount and delegitimize" the results of the upcoming presidential elections, its foreign ministry said on Thursday.

Citing a US statement released Wednesday, the ministry slammed the US for "trying to discount and delegitimize the next elections".

The response came after the US State Department said it was

"deeply concerned" that the Venezuelan National Electoral Council aimed to restrict opposition candidates from registering to participate in the July 28 elections.

Washington, the ministry said, intends to "minimize" the partic-

ipation of 37 political groups that have backed the registration of 13 presidential candidates.

The constitutional requirements of the electoral process have been fulfilled, along "with each point of the agreement signed between the legitimate

government of Venezuela and the self-proclaimed Unitary Platform", as the opposition alliance is called. Venezuela "is proud of its electoral system", and committed to "maintaining peace, economic growth and political stability", the ministry said.

## Uganda develops anti-tick vaccines to boost dairy, beef industry

KAMPALA

SCIENTISTS in Uganda have developed two anti-tick vaccines whose trials have been successful, and are now awaiting final approval from regulatory authorities, an official said on Thursday.

Frank Mugabi, a senior commu-

nications officer at the state-run National Agricultural Research Organisation, which regulates agricultural research, told Xinhua that the vaccines were developed after years of research.

"For more than a century, the control of ticks and tick-borne diseases depended on the use of

chemical acaricides. However, the use of chemicals was detrimental to the environment," Magabi said.

"Now we believe our scientists have made a major breakthrough since the ticks had developed resistance to the acaricides," he added. Mugabi said several trials had been carried out in various parts of the

country for both oral and injectable vaccines in the past 12 months. "Where the trials were carried out, we found that there were no issues related to ticks."

The beef and milk were also tested and there were no traces of the vaccines, meaning they were safe for consumption," the official said.

According to Mugabi, the vaccines were developed from a protein called subolesin that was extracted from native tick species.

He said a patent has already been obtained for the vaccines, which are waiting for the regulatory bodies to register and recommend them for use by farmers. According to Sci-

enceDirect, a database of research and scientific topics, Ugandan farmers lose more than 1.1 billion U.S. dollars in aggregated annual direct and indirect loss due to the rising spread of tick-borne animal challenges, with the commonest and economically damaging tick-borne disease being the East Coast Fever.

## China-Europe Railway Express ensures safe, unimpeded industrial, supply chains

RECENTLY, amidst the frequent geopolitical risks, the surging demand for China-Europe Railway Express has attracted widespread attention globally.

As a flagship project and iconic brand of the Belt and Road Initiative, the China-Europe Railway Express has pioneered a new pattern of transportation between Asia and Europe. It has established a new platform for economic and trade cooperation along the routes, building a lifeline of the industrial and supply chains in a turbulent world.

China-Europe Railway Express, which is fast, stable and reliable, offers strong support for the massive trade of goods between China and Europe, and is an important mode of land transportation in international logistics.

According to the latest statistics released by China State

Railway Group Co., Ltd., the number of China-Europe Railway Express freight trips reached 2,928 in the first two months of this year, transporting 317,000 twenty-foot equivalent units (TEUs) of goods, up 9 percent and 10 percent, respectively. As of the end of February, the freight service had connected 120 Chinese cities and 219 cities in 25 European countries.

The surging demand for railway transportation, especially the China-Europe Railway Express, has been frequently reported by international media, which highlights the role played by these trains in stabilizing and accelerating trade between China and Europe as well as countries along the routes.

China-Europe Railway Express has significantly improved the railway connectivity between Asia and Europe,

as well as the development of sea-rail, road-rail, and air-rail multimodal transportation, opening up a new channel for the supply chain across the Eurasian continent.

It has also enhanced customs clearance facilitation along the routes, continuously optimizing business environment at ports and improving cross-border transportation rules and regulations.

China-Europe Railway Express has constantly enhanced connectivity between Asia and Europe, accelerating mutual benefits and win-win outcomes.

New business models related to China-Europe Railway Express are emerging such as cross-border e-commerce trains, postal trains, and those connecting industrial parks and ports, bringing tremendous development opportunities to countries along the



A visitor learns about artificial intelligence products at an expo on smart customs clearance held in Beijing, Nov. 26, 2023. (Guo Junfeng / People's Daily Online)

According to Xulio Rios, a China expert from Spain, China-Europe Railway Express combines the needs of both China and Europe in a new and complementary manner, and one of its significant values is the ability to unlock the potential for economic and trade cooperation among countries along the routes.

China-Europe Railway Express provides strong support for high-quality Belt and Road cooperation, which promotes connectivity, mutual benefit, common development, cooperation and win-win outcomes.

At the opening ceremony of the third Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation, Chinese President Xi Jinping announced eight major steps

China will take to support high-quality Belt and Road cooperation, among which speeding up high-quality development of the China-Europe Railway Express and hosting the China-Europe Railway Express Cooperation Forum are important measures to build a multidimensional Belt and Road connectivity network.

In recent years, with the expansion of sources of goods and an increase in high-tech products, China-Europe Railway Express is transforming from a simple "corridor economy" to a "value-added economy", driving shared benefits along the routes through high-quality development.

The busy schedules of China-Europe Railway Express reflect China's determination and actions to expand high-level opening-up. The China-Europe Railway Express net-

work covers almost the entire Eurasian continent, effectively expanding economic and trade exchanges between China and countries along the routes, and accelerating the cross-border flow of factors and resources.

Statistics show that China's total imports and exports with the 25 European countries reached by China-Europe Railway Express grew from 4 trillion yuan in 2013 to 7.42 trillion yuan in 2022. The two sides have witnessed continuously expanding trade volume, as well as facilitated trade exchanges.

The "two sessions" this year, the annual sessions of the National People's Congress and the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, once again released positive signals of China expanding high-level opening-up.

People's Daily



## Yanga joins race for Dube as Azam FC standoff continues



Azam FC forward, Prince Dube. PHOTO: COURTESY OF AZAM FC

By Correspondent Seth Mapoli

The uncertainty surrounding striker Prince Dube's future with Azam FC has reached new heights, with reports alleging there is Young Africans SC's interest in acquiring the Zimbabwean's services with a hefty offer of around 521m/-.

Dube, aged 27, finds himself sidelined from the Azam FC squad after expressing his desire to part ways with the club.

In a bid to facilitate his departure, Dube reportedly offered 200m/- to terminate his contract prematurely.

However, Azam FC, adamant about enforcing the terms of the contract, demanded a staggering fee of \$300,000 (over 700m/-) for his release.

Amidst this standoff, Simba SC and Al Hilal SC of Sudan have also expressed interest in securing Dube's signature, prompting Young Africans SC, alias Yanga, to enter the fray.

Reports suggest that the Jangwani Street-based Yanga has submitted a

substantial offer to Azam FC for the prolific striker.

Yanga's proposal entails paying the agreed sum in installments. While Azam FC initially expressed openness to negotiations with clubs both domestic and international, the outfit has yet to officially respond to Yanga's offer.

Thabit Zacharia, the Information and Communication Officer at Azam FC, on the one hand, stated that the club's management had not provided him with any official updates regarding the offer.

However, he reaffirmed the club's willingness to entertain offers for Dube from interested parties.

"I don't have any updates beyond what I've already shared. So far, two clubs have expressed interest in Dube. If there are others interested, they're welcome to approach us. Our

doors remain open," he stated.

On the other hand, Ally Kamwe, Yanga's Media and Communication Manager, confirmed that they had indeed submitted an offer for Dube but emphasized that discussions would have to wait until the outfit participates in a crucial CAF Champions League quarterfinal fixture against Mamelodi Sundowns of South Africa.

Dube, who joined Azam FC in 2020 from Zimbabwe's Highlanders, is contracted to the Tanzanian outfit until 2026.

Should he make the move to Yanga during the upcoming transfer window, it could potentially reshape the team's attacking lineup, potentially impacting the roles of players like Kennedy Musonda, Clement Mzize, and Joseph Guede.

As the saga unfolds, all eyes remain on the negotiations between the clubs involved, with Dube's future hanging in the balance amidst mounting speculation and interest from multiple parties.

## Dar Baseball 5 Championships climax in Kibaha

By Correspondent Joseph Mchekadona

THIS season's U-15 Baseball 5 Championships which had attracted four zones climaxed in Kibaha, Coast Region on Thursday.

Abubakary Nachiwa- the Acting Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Tanzania National Baseball League (TNBL)- said so far four teams battled it out in the games, which were held for two days.

Initially, six teams from all six zones of the country, namely Zanzibar, Lake Zone, Southern Highland, Coast Zone, Central Zone, and Southern Zone, were to take part in the championships.

Due to logistic problems though, so far four regions from three zones participated in the showdown. Nachiwa mentioned them as Dar es Salaam, Coast Region, Dodoma, and Kilimanjaro.

The zones which failed to feature in the showdown are Zanzibar and Tabora which is part of the Lake Zone.

It turned out to be the first time that the U-15 Baseball 5 Championships were played in the country and Tanzania Olympic Committee (TOC) Secretary-General Filbert Bayi was expected to be the guest of honour in the closing ceremony.

Nachiwa disclosed: "The finals of

the U-15 Baseball 5 will be held tomorrow (Thursday) at Maili Moja in Kibaha, Coast Region. We planned to have six zones competing but due to some logistic challenges- Zanzibar and Tabora did not come."

"We thank sponsors of the championships, TOC and World Baseball and Softball Confederation (WBSC) for having many young players playing baseball, we are happy that the response we have got is very good and competition among teams was very high," he said.

Tanzania finished fourth in the African WBSC Baseball 5 World Cup Qualifiers which was held in Cape Verde early this year.

It has for that matter applied for the wild card to take part in the coming World Cup slated for October in China, with Nachiwa saying he is confident the country's application will be accepted.

Tanzania was in Group A of the qualifiers alongside Tunisia, South Africa, and the host Cape Verde.

Sindani Katanga, Ali Mohammed Ali, Abdulmouminim Ally, Brown Manyama, Enerster Petro, Frida Msaiki, Mwajuma Uledi, and Neema Elias formed the national baseball team.

Annuar Saidi was the squad's coach whereas Alpherio Nchimbi was the team manager.

## The power of sports sponsorship in community empowerment

By Godwin Semunyu

TANZANIA'S soccer is currently enjoying an unprecedented surge of success. Young Africans (Yanga) and Simba SC are in the 2023/24 CAF Champions League quarterfinals, while senior national squad 'Taifa Stars', and women's side, 'Twiga Stars', secured spots in AFCON tournaments.

Tanzania hosted the African Football League for the first time, and the joint 'Pamoja Bid' for hosting the 2027 AFCON with Kenya and Uganda is highly praised.

It is an exciting time to be a soccer fan in Tanzania – the country's football stakeholders ought to seize the moment and embrace the opportunities ahead.

At the heart of this soccer renaissance lies the remarkable growth of the local top flight, NBC Premier League, now ranked sixth in Africa.

While I proudly declare my allegiance as an NBC staff, credit must be given where it is due – the best league yields the best teams and results.

Structured governance by the Tanzania Football Federation (TFF), backed by governmental support and significant investments from Azam Media Limited and NBC Bank, has turned the NBC Premier League into a formidable force.

What started as corporate sponsorship is transforming the country's whole community. Thanks to broadcast investment, all 240 NBC Premier League matches are telecast live on Azam TV, making it the only league in East and Central Africa with such extensive coverage.

Such an achievement came with a larger fan base and increased commercial value



Mtibwa Sugar's fullback, Abdul Hillary, negotiates his way past Prisons' center-back, Jumanne Eifadhili, when the clubs met in a 2023/24 NBC Premier League duel played at Manungu Stadium in Morogoro on March 9. PHOTO: COURTESY OF MTIBWA SUGAR

that attracts top bucks, creating a war chest for top talent recruitment and infrastructure development.

Soccer stakeholders have to picture this during the just-ended 2023 AFCON played in Ivory Coast, the NBC Premier League supplied 22 players from five different nations.

Additionally, out of the eight teams in this season's CAF Champions League last-eight phase, the NBC Premier League stands alone with two teams.

Yet, what is more appealing is the fact that the impact has eclipsed beyond football. The NBC Premier League now catalyzes economic empowerment, generating employment opportunities and financial transactions across the broader economic spectrum.

With over 8,000 direct jobs, ranging from players, technical benches, stadium stewards, club officials, and millions of other jobs in the supply chain, the league has become a vital contributor to job creation, employing individuals with diverse skill sets and qualifications.

Match days in the NBC Premier League have transformed into dynamic economic drivers, turning towns into lively centers of commerce and energy, where businesses thrive and local economies flourish.

This spread of economic impact reaches far and wide. I enjoy the excitement and atmosphere in my home village of Turiani during big matches, par-

ticularly when popular clubs head to the town to lock horns with my beloved Mtibwa Sugar FC.

Ever heard of the economics term 'tractor effects'? The league causes what is termed in economics as the 'tractor effect' on Tanzania's economy by trickling down the gains to every sector along the value chain—from merchandise sales to betting, tourism, and entertainment, the list is endless.

The NBC Premier League's global appeal has reached countries like Kenya, Uganda, Zambia, Malawi, Rwanda, and the DRC through broadcast exports, engaging an international audience and boosting Tanzania's global brand.

It serves as Tanza-

nia's tourism gem, pushing the brand Tanzania worldwide. Witnessing Yanga and Simba SC launch their fan clubs in towns like Lubumbashi and Mombasa fills me with great pride.

Investing in sports is not merely a luxury but a strategic imperative for Tanzania's socioeconomic development.

The resilience and sound base of the NBC Premier League should be our stepping stone.

With AFCON coming home in 2027, Tanzania's soccer stakeholders ought to capitalize on this momentum and build towards a brighter future— one goal at a time. As the skeptics ask 'why?', our resounding answer remains 'Why not!'

## Makudubela hails Yanga players' mentality ahead of Sundowns tie

By Correspondent Nassir Nchimbi

YANGA's winger Mahlatse 'Skudu' Makudubela has lifted the lid on the mentality of his teammates ahead of their much-anticipated CAF Champions League quarterfinal clash against Mamelodi Sundowns.

Sundowns will confront Yanga in a potentially explosive first-leg quarterfinal encounter at the Benjamin Mkapa Stadium in Dar es Salaam in the evening.

The Mainland Tanzania champion will then visit the South African football powerhouse, nicknamed 'Masandawana', a week later in Pretoria for the reverse fixture on April 6.

Makudubela, the first South African to play for Yanga, is a product of the Sundowns academy. He opened up on how his teammates feel about facing the inaugural African Football League champion.

The winger revealed: "I think it is a very good stage, everyone in Africa will be watching the quarterfinals, all eight teams making it this far means there is no easy team, there is no easy draw."

"The general feeling [within the team] is that we're here by merit. We've competed in the group stages and come this far," the winger pointed out.

"Yanga is here by merit, we deserve to be here, we could have drawn any team and it happens to be Mamelodi Sundowns, which is very exciting for us. We're looking forward to being in the next round when they make the semi-final

draw," the player added.

Interestingly, Yanga's head coach Miguel Gamondi was a league winner with Sundowns in 2006. Makudubela, the former Marumo Gallants winger further revealed the demand placed on them by Gamondi.

"With Coach Gamondi, every game we play, be it a league game, be it a cup game he always wants to win. Our coach is a winner. Gamondi is a high-level competitor," the footballer noted.

Makudubela disclosed: "He's a very good tactician and very advanced. And he's turned the team around. He's also excited to play his former team."

"Everybody at the club is looking at this game, and we're going to make sure we qualify for the next round."

Makudubela, however, admits the clash would not be a stroll in the park for the Jangwani Street giants.

The winger said: "We look forward to it. We know it's not going to be an easy game. Sundowns is a very well-structured club, technically and tactically."

"The players they have, the history speaks because of the things they have achieved. But, for us, we understand that to be the best, you need to compete against the best."

Makudubela - who is yet to become a regular starter at the club- is slated to have his part in this game due to his experience with South African football, with Gamondi expected to give the footballer a chance to play his part against his former side.



Yanga's winger, Mahlatse 'Skudu' Makudubela.



## More than pride on line in Bayern-Dortmund clash

BERLIN

EVEN though both sides are in the shadow of Xabi Alonso's unbeaten Bayer Leverkusen, there is still plenty to play for in today's Bayern Munich-Borussia Dortmund clash.

With a 10-point lead with eight games to play, Leverkusen are on course for a maiden Bundesliga crown.

Second-placed Bayern could be as many as 13 points behind at kick-off, should Leverkusen win at home against Hoffenheim earlier today.

A Leverkusen title would mark the first time since 2009, and just the fifth time in the past three decades, that neither Bayern nor Dortmund has finished atop the table.

Today's match between the traditional powers remains crucial for both sides. Bayern risk a first loss at home to their biggest domestic rivals since 2014.

They will also want to keep up their momentum ahead of a visit to Arsenal in the Champions League quarter finals in early April, the last piece of silverware the trophy-hungry club can reasonably expect this season.

While pride may be at stake for Bayern, fourth-placed Dortmund are in danger of missing the Champions League next season, with RB Leipzig one point behind.

For a club which relies heavily on Champions League income, missing out on the top four could have huge ramifications for Dortmund.

Former Bayern captain Philipp Lahm said fireworks were guaranteed on Saturday.

"A rivalry has risen between Dortmund and Bayern. It's the Bundesliga, it's the match of the round on Saturday," Lahm told AFP. "A lot is at stake, especially for Dortmund, because the Champions League is the minimal goal they want to achieve."

Lahm welcomed Leverkusen's challenge, saying "it's very, very important that the Bundesliga is exciting again and that someone can push or even take over Bayern."

In a stellar 659-game career, Lahm faced Dortmund more than any other opponent. He captained Bayern to a 2-1 win over their rivals in the 2013 Champions League final.

Since that match, Bayern have won 23 of 32 games between the clubs.

Bayern legend Lothar Matthaeus told AFP that he backed his former side to continue their recent dominance.

"The title race is over for Bayern Munich. This game is more important for Borussia Dortmund, but Bayern's DNA is to win each and every game -- and they'll do it again."

Having shaken off an ankle injury which kept him out of England's March friendlies, Harry Kane is fit and ready to take on Dortmund.

In his first 'Klassiker' appearance in November, Kane scored a hat-trick to demolish the home side.

Kane has 31 goals in 26 league games this season. Dortmund manager Edin Terzic praised the striker on Thursday, telling reporters "Harry Kane has an outstanding tally in his first Bayern season."

"He's extremely important for them in attack as we saw first hand. He has scored as many goals as our top three goalscorers put together."

AFP

## Mbappe set to measure up to Marseille for final time with PSG

PARIS

KYLIAN Mbappe is set to sample the fiercest rivalry in French football for the final time before his expected departure at the end of the season as Paris Saint-Germain make the trip to Marseille tomorrow.

There is no love lost between the two biggest clubs in France, even if Marseille have struggled to compete with PSG for honours since the Qatari takeover of the capital side over a decade ago.

The Parisians come into this game with a huge 12-point lead at the top of the table from nearest challengers Brest with just eight matches remaining, meaning Mbappe is surely certain to win a sixth title in seven seasons with the club.

Marseille, in contrast, are seventh, three points outside the European places despite a recent revival under new coach Jean-Louis Gasset, a former PSG assistant boss.

Mbappe has already told PSG that he intends to leave at the end of the current campaign when his contract expires, with Real Madrid his expected next destination. That means he is unlikely to sample the heated atmosphere of the 67,000-capacity Velodrome again any time soon after this Sunday.

This will be his second visit there this week, after he turned out for France at the same venue in their 3-2 friendly win over Chile on Tuesday.

The 25-year-old's status as national team captain did not prevent him from being whistled by sections of the crowd in the Mediterranean city, who were unable to forget his connection to PSG for the evening.

"Honestly I would understand if I were jeered," he had said before the France game. "I am a PSG player. If I am whistled, that's life. I wouldn't take it personally."

AFP

# Arsenal face Man City Premier League summit meeting

LONDON

ARSENAL travel to Manchester City tomorrow seeking to complete a rare double over Pep Guardiola's men in a match that could prove decisive in the three-way Premier League title race.

Liverpool can move three points clear of current leaders Arsenal and four ahead of City if they beat Brighton at Anfield earlier in the day.

At the other end of the table, Nottingham Forest are in action for the first time since a four-point penalty for breaching financial rules plunged them into the relegation zone.

AFP Sport looks at three talking points as the English top flight returns after the international break.

"Can Arsenal storm Man City fortress?"

Arsenal became just the fourth team to win each of their first eight Premier League games of a calendar year when they beat Brentford in early March -- the previous three clubs to do that all went on to win the title.

The Gunners' record against City in the Premier League is dire, with 12 defeats in their past 13 games, though their lone victory came at the Emirates in October, courtesy of Gabriel Martinelli's deflected strike.

"It feels like a big win," said Arsenal manager Mikel Arteta. "It is a special one."

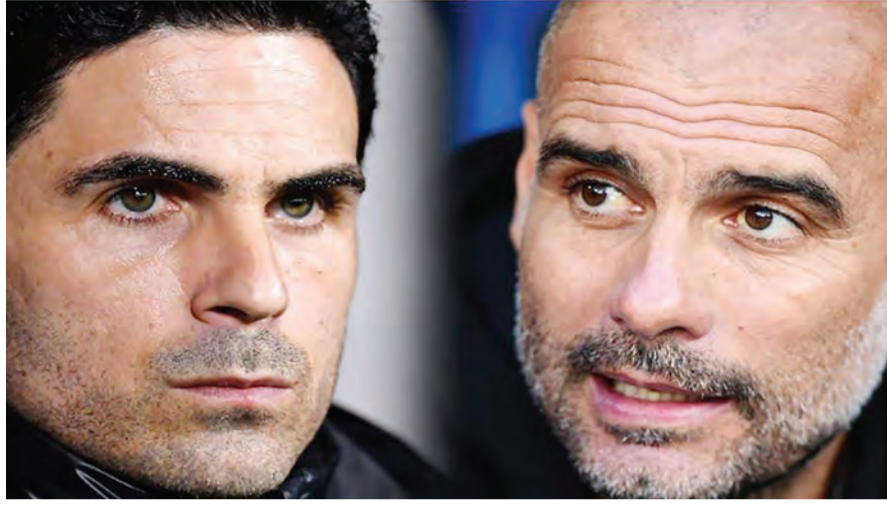
Arteta's men look a more battle-hardened force than last year, when they stumbled at the end of the season, opening the door for City to cruise past to a third straight title.

Repeating the feat at the Etihad is a different order of magnitude. City are unbeaten in their last 38 home games in all competitions.

Brentford were the last visiting team to leave with a win and that was in November 2022.

If Arsenal do manage to complete their first league double over City since 2007/08, it could be the boost they need to get them over the line.

"Liverpool focus on league



Mikel Arteta (left) was Pep Guardiola's assistant at Manchester City for three years. Agencies

Liverpool's exit from the FA Cup at the hands of Manchester United ended their push for a trophy quadruple in Jurgen Klopp's final season at Anfield.

The German manager, who has kept his team on track despite a deep injury crisis, brushed off any idea of a negative psychological impact after the 4-3 defeat at Old Trafford.

"In general, the team is in an outstanding situation in the moment," he said. "That we got through all of these different, difficult situa-

tions is absolutely exceptional."

Liverpool trail league leaders Arsenal on goal difference and will hope the Gunners and City cancel each other out in Manchester.

Brighton have drawn their past two matches at Anfield but they have not won consecutive league games since September and Liverpool will be confident they have the firepower to win as their injury crisis eases.

"Forest seek lift after points penalty

Nottingham Forest's draw against Luton on March 16 left them three points clear of the relegation zone but they are now looking up at Rob Edwards' team after their punishment for breaking profit and sustainability (PSR) rules.

Forest lodged an appeal against the sanction as they prepare to host Crystal Palace today.

Forest are the second top-flight team to be penalised for PSR breaches this season after Everton were hit with a 10-point penalty

in November, which was reduced to six on appeal.

The punishments are creating an air of uncertainty at the basement of the Premier League, adding to the normal pressures of a relegation battle.

Everton, four points above Forest, could face further punishment after being charged with a second breach of the rules.

Forest are in deep trouble in just their second season back in the top flight, but they can take heart that all the sides around them are struggling as well.

Fixtures

Today (1500 GMT unless stated)

Newcastle v West Ham (1230), Bournemouth v Everton, Chelsea v Burnley, Nottingham Forest v Crystal Palace, Sheffield United v Fulham, Tottenham v Luton, Aston Villa v Wolves (1730), Brentford v Manchester United (2000)

Tomorrow

Liverpool v Brighton (1300), Manchester City v Arsenal (1530)

AFP

## What has gone wrong for Saudi-backed Newcastle?

LONDON

NEWCASTLE enjoyed a meteoric rise during the first 18 months of their new era under the control of the Saudi sovereign wealth fund but the Magpies' progress has stalled this season.

Eddie Howe's men are languishing in 10th place in the Premier League with 10 games to go and any hope of the club's first major trophy since 1969 is over for another year.

AFP Sport looks at what has gone wrong on Tyneside.

\*Rules limit spending

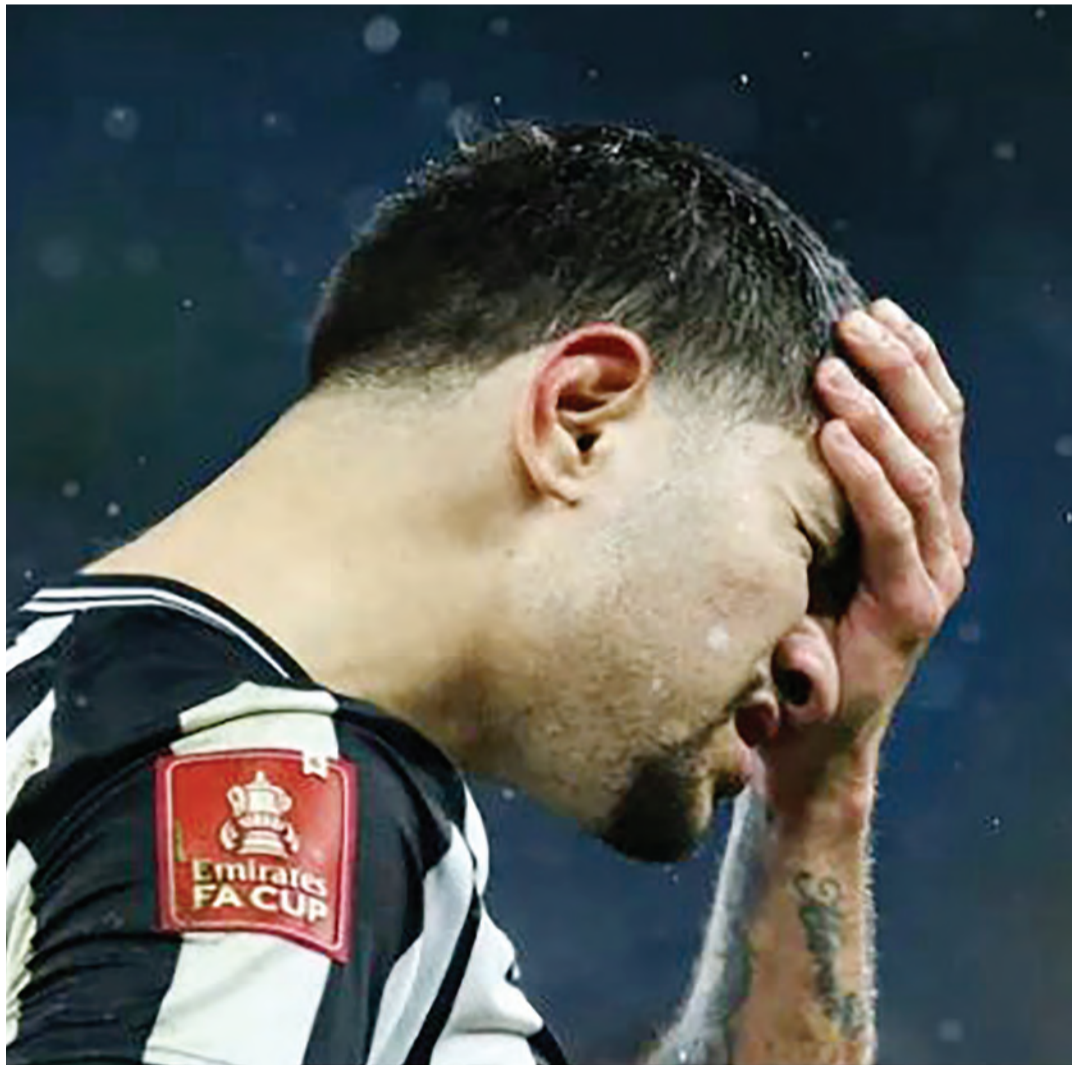
In a season in which the Premier League's profit and sustainability rules (PSR) have begun to bite, few clubs have been as affected as Newcastle.

In stark contrast to the early days of Abu Dhabi's huge investment at English champions Manchester City, Newcastle have been limited on how heavily they can lean on their new-found wealth from the Gulf.

Despite qualifying for the Champions League for the first time in 20 years, Newcastle still had to tread a fine line to avoid exceeding PSR after spending more than £250 million (\$315 million) in the first three transfer windows under the new ownership.

Chief executive Darren Eales has admitted they may even need to sell one of their prized assets in the summer if they are to invest again in the squad, with Bruno Guimaraes and Alexander Isak among those linked with moves away.

"If we're going to get to where we want to get to, at times it is necessary to trade your players," Eales said after the club posted a £73 million loss for the 2022/2023 season.



Newcastle's rise under the ownership of the Saudi sovereign wealth fund has stalled this season. Agencies

\*Injuries and suspensions

To compound their problems with PSR, Newcastle have reaped little reward from their outlay of more than £100 million in the 2023 summer transfer window.

Most of the transfer budget was splashed on Italian international Sandro Tonali, but he only played 12 games for the club before being hit with an eight-month ban for betting offences during his time with AC Milan.

Another major signing, Harvey Barnes, has been one of a host of key players who have spent months on the sidelines due to injury.

England internationals Nick Pope and Calum Wilson have missed chunks of the campaign, while Joelinton and Sven Bot-

man will be absent for the rest of the season.

Newcastle's season came off the rails during a gruelling December and January period as injuries mounted.

Howe's men lost eight times in 10 games as they exited the Champions League at the group

stage, lost a League Cup quarter-final to Chelsea on penalties and sank down the Premier League table.

\*Tough draws

Fortune has definitely not favoured Newcastle in the cup competitions.

Gwiji by David Chikoko



AFP



# SPORT

A timeline of allegations against Sean 'Diddy' Combs

PAGE 19

## Coach: Mamelodi Sundowns prepared for Yanga's test

By Correspondent Seth Mapoli

YOUNG Africans SC is today set for the CAF Champions League quarterfinal first leg against Mamelodi Sundowns at Benjamin Mkapa Stadium in Dar es Salaam, with the tie set to begin at 9 pm.

The South African champions' head coach Rulani Mokwena maintained that they need to be careful with the game due to the big changes the outfit has deployed for it.

Mokwena added that the quality of the players making Young Africans SC, alias Yanga, and those of Mamelodi will have great power to decide the game.

According to him, his team is prepared to win against Yanga but the other caution, apart from the experienced stars Yanga boasts, is the presence of the latter's head coach Miguel Gamondi who knows almost the entire philosophy of Mamelodi because he used to work at the club.

Mokwena noted: "We need to win, we have planned to do so, we will not look at the size of our name, we want quality to decide the game. It will not be an easy match for either side. We respect Yanga under a coach who knows Mamelodi-Gamondi is a great coach."

The South African gaffer pointed out: "We are preparing to meet Yanga without looking at which player is either absent or present, we are preparing to meet Yanga who are complete and are at their best."

Yanga's gaffer Gamondi was an assistant coach at Mamelodi Sundowns when they won their seventh league title in the 2005/06 season.

He shared his thoughts ahead of the match and why it was important for Tanzania to have two of its best clubs competing in the biggest club competition in Africa.

"So far so good. What is important is to keep playing out style and identity. We must keep fans happy because fans in this country are passionate and love this game. We try to do our best and always get results, which is important. Hopefully, we can continue with this consistency and win the match ahead of us," Gamondi disclosed.

Speaking about facing Mamelodi Sundowns for the first time, Gamondi stated: "Sundowns are one of the biggest teams performing well in the continent along with Al Ahly, no doubt they are the best on the continent."

Gamondi revealed: "They are where they are today because of the consistency they have shown over the years. I like the style of play of Sundowns. They play the type of football that I like. I was a coach at Sundowns, and I know what they like to do, and what they are building now is not only important for South Africa but also the African continent because it's an advert for Africa."

"For us, it is probably going to be the toughest opponent we will get but, at the same time, it will be a great learning experience for Young Africans to play with a quality side and technical staff. I think this will be a great advert for African football," the Argentine noted.

Speaking of what would be a good finish for you in this competition, Gamondi said: "The goal of the club was to reach the group stage and after reaching that, we said we want to compete and competed against big clubs like Ahly and came second."

The gaffer revealed: "Now we want to do well in the knockout because it will be a good evaluation of where we are. It is a learning experience and for sure, we will play our best. We may not be in the best condition for this game as some players came back with injuries from the FIFA break but we will try our best and show that we deserve to be at this stage of the competition. In football, you never know."

He added: "Logic says Sundowns is the bigger team and they have played longer together and invested a lot of money, but football is 11 vs 11 and we hope that we will get a result. We are a competitive team, and we will do our best."

Yanga is under Gamondi, the coach who knows Mamelodi well and will enter the game to continue his quest to guide his club to win the premier Africa inter-club showpiece title.

# Yanga out to upset Mamelodi Sundowns in CAF CL tie



Tanzania's Yanga footballers are pictured training in Dar es Salaam recently in preparation for the 2023/24 CAF Champions League quarterfinals and NBC Premier League. PHOTO: COURTESY OF YANGA

By Correspondent Michael Mwebe

YOUNG Africans SC goes head-to-head with Mamelodi Sundowns in a CAF Champions League quarterfinal first-leg match in the evening.

The game is scheduled to be played at the Benjamin Mkapa Stadium in Dar es Salaam, with kick-off slated for 9 pm.

This will be the third meeting between Young Africans SC, popularly known as Yanga, and Mamelodi Sundowns. The two sides met in the 2001 CAF Champions League preliminary round.

Sundowns won the first leg 3-2 in South Africa before drawing 3-3 in the return leg played at CCM Kirumba Stadium in Mwanza to go through on a 6-5 aggregate victory.

The Mainland Tanzania champions, on the one hand, squeezed into the quarterfinals on a head-to-head record. They finished level with Algeria's CR Belouizdad on eight

points, four adrift of Group D winners Al Ahly, but in results between the teams, the Algerians' 3-0 home win was eclipsed by Yanga's 4-0 triumph in Dar on the penultimate match of the group stage.

Against Sundowns, they

will be banking on their good home form. In the three matches they played in the CAF Champions League Group stage this season, Yanga won two and drew one against Al Ahly.

Ali Kamwe, the outfit's Media and Communica-

tion Manager, clarified they have no suspension worries and has urged supporters to rally behind the team as they look to make home advantage count.

Head coach Miguel Gamondi about the difficult timing of the game coming

just after the international break which has disrupted his preparation.

"These types of games coming after the FIFA break are a little bit difficult. It complicates preparations because when you have seven or eight players in national teams it is difficult to prepare tactically and player's focus. I think it is a similar case for Sundowns," the Argentine noted.

Sundowns, on the other hand, eased into the quarterfinals after winning CAF Champions League Group B and they are determined to win the prestigious tournament for the second time this year.

The South African champions head into the clash in great form, having racked up seven wins in their last 10 games across all competitions - including a triumph over TP Mazembe earlier this month.

Overall, Rulani Mokwena's side are unbeaten in their last 15 games in all competitions. They are also on a decent run of form on the road.

This season in the group stages, they have only lost one away game, but they did beat Pyramids and Nouadhibou.

At this stage last season, they thrashed CR Belouizdad 4-1 in the first leg away in Algiers, before winning 2-1 at home.

They then held Wydad Casablanca to a goalless draw on the road before settling for a 2-2 draw at home to be eliminated on away goals rule at the semi-finals.

## Gamondi raises alarm over Yanga's injury challenges before CAF CL's last eight duel

By Correspondent Seth Mapoli



Yanga's head coach, Miguel Ángel Gamondi. PHOTO: COURTESY OF YANGA

YANGA is gearing up for what promises to be an electrifying first leg of the team's CAF Champions League quarterfinal encounter against Mamelodi Sundowns at Benjamin Mkapa Stadium in Dar es Salaam today.

Ahead of this crucial encounter, scheduled to kick off at 9 pm, Yanga's head coach Miguel Gamondi has confirmed that Khalid Aucho, Pacome Zouzoua, Kouassi Yao, and Kibwana Shomari will be sidelined for this evening's CAF Champions League clash against Mamelodi Sundowns.

The highly anticipated first-leg match is scheduled to take place at Benjamin Mkapa Stadium with the second-leg fixture set for April 5 at Loftus Versfeld Stadium in Pretoria.

"We cannot afford to risk fielding them while they are nursing injuries, especially with another crucial

match on the horizon," Gamondi noted during a pre-match briefing held in the city yesterday.

Gamondi further disclosed that the team's first-choice goalkeeper Djigui Diarra, and midfielder Stephane Aziz Ki have just returned to the country this morning, leaving their fitness levels yet to be assessed.

Yanga's midfielder Zawadi Mauya has expressed determination ahead of their upcoming game despite facing challenges with player availability.

In a statement, Mauya acknowledged the difficulty posed by the absence of eight players from the camp but assured fans of their readiness to secure a positive outcome.

He emphasized the team's strong motivation to make history for the country and Africa as a whole.

Mauya stated: "The schedule of the game has come to a difficult period... but we are well prepared

to ensure we get results. We have a strong motivation to create history great for the football of our country and Africa in general."

Entry gates into the stadium will be opened from 11:00 am and many activities will happen inside the venue as the clock ticks towards the kick-off time of 9 pm.

In response, Mamelodi Sundowns' head coach Rulani Mokwena expressed confidence in his team's ability to secure a favourable outcome against Yanga, relying on their wealth of experience.

"We have thoroughly analyzed their performance throughout the group stage matches. Yanga is a versatile team, and we expect them to present different challenges," Mokwena commented.

The South African club is vying for the outfit's second CAF Champions League title, having previously clinched the prestigious trophy in 2016.

## Flexibles by David Chikoko

