



Agency, digital channels spur banking deposits mobilisation

NACHU project set to produce 0.23mn tonnes of graphite for fifteen years

Silicon Valley Bank failures and next financial crisis

@TheGuardianTz01

theguardian.tz

The Guardian Digital

+255 745 700710

LIKE & FOLLOW US

ISSN 0856 - 5434 ISSUE No. 8799 • PRICE: Tsh 1,000, Kenya sh100 TANZANIA THURSDAY 16 MARCH, 2023

National Pg 3
Tanapa speaks on death of famous lion

National Pg 4
Tanzanians urged to imbibe reading culture

National Pg 6
'No buying avocados directly from farmers'

Page 13



President Samia Suluhu Hassan inspects an Air Force guard of honour shortly after jetting into Pretoria yesterday for a one-day state visit to South Africa at the invitation of President Cyril Ramaphosa.. Photo: State House

'Widen scope of integration to learning at EA varsities'

By Henry Mwangonde

EDUCATIONAL exchange programmes among higher learning institutions in East Africa need to be reactivated to harmonise competence, promote integration and enhance the international character of public universities, the government has declared.

Prof Adolf Mkenda, the Education, Science and Technology minister, issued this appeal when officiating at the 12th academia-public-private partnership forum (APPPF) and exhibition in Dar es Salaam yesterday, pointing at the Inter-University Council for East Africa (IUCEA) as enabling countries to widen the scope of integration through education.

"During the liberation struggle stu-

dents were able to choose either to study in Nairobi, Dar es Salaam or Kampala; we need to reintroduce that practice because it was promoting academic competition," he stated.

Integration will also facilitate knowledge sharing among students and lecturers, linking universities with one another to facilitate expertise sharing and give students a wider chance to choose where to study, he emphasised.

The government was reviewing the curriculum to meet labour demands including ensuring that graduates are equipped with the necessary skills, he told the symposium held with a focus on nurturing sustainable skills development

TURN TO Page 2

Development partners sign accord over new hydropower financing

By Henry Mwangonde

THE government yesterday signed a \$325 million (750 bn/-) loan agreement with the European Union (EU), the French Development Agency (AFD) and the African Development Bank (AfDB) to finance the Kakono hydropower project in Kagera Region.

Finance and Planning minister Dr Mwigulu Nchemba said at the signing ceremony yesterday that the project is in line with the country's Third Five Year Development Plan (FYDP III) and part of broader agenda to build a competitive and industrial economy by improving reliable access to energy.

Of that amount, AfDB will issue \$161.47, AFD lend euro 110m, the European Development Fund euro 35m and the government top up with 17.6bn/-, he said.

The project will increase grid electricity from least-cost renewable sources to address

electricity deficits in north-western Tanzania, the minister noted.

Céline Robert, the AFD country director, said the pact was a new milestone in achieving the 2025 Vision for the energy sector.

"Through the construction of a hydropower plant of close to 88MW and its associated infrastructure, the project will significantly increase renewable power generation capacity and contribute to the government's aim to generate five gigawatt (GW) of electricity by 2025," she said.

"This new run-off-the river power station and the related improvement of the grid will foster economic development in Kagera Region, paving the way for Tanzania-Uganda grid interconnection, she elaborated.

Adding the power station will ease the energy transition to clean sources of energy by reducing carbon intensity of the power sector, the director observed.

AfDB country manager

Patricia Laverley said the Kakono power plant is set to increase energy production, helping to address electricity supply deficit, helping to improve the quality of supply.

This in turn will help in efforts to build a competitive and industrial economy for human development through reliable access to energy, she stated.

Cedric Merel, the head of cooperation in the EU Delegation said the 86.7bn/- in grants illustrates the EU and Global Gateway strategies to promote renewable energies, investing in key strategic infrastructures in partner countries.

The EU's ongoing support to the energy sector in Tanzania is considerable with about 450bn/- invested at macro and micro levels, he said.

"The money has been of paramount importance in supporting energy sector reforms, energy efficiency, clean cooking, rural electrification and investments while supporting the private sec-

'PO-RALG too relaxed over CAG questions'

By Augusta Njoji, Dodoma

THE Local Authorities Accounts Committee (LAAC) of the National Assembly is furious over the relaxed attitude of the President's Office, Regional Administration and Local Governments (PO-RALG) for its unsatisfactory responses to twelve resolutions presented to the House by the committee.

LAAC chairperson Halima Mdee (Special Seats), opposition gave three weeks to the ministry to submit actual responses, citing unsatisfactory responses on steps taken against 155 local councils that failed to reclaim a total of 47bn/- loaned to vulnerable groups.

She issued those instructions to senior PO-RALG officials here

TURN TO Page 2

LPG Expo trending on 'gas cylinder per dwelling' plan

By Guardian Reporter

DOMESTIC market uptake for liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) is projected to grow to up to ten kilos per capita annually in the next ten years, the private sector affirms.

Benoit Araman, the Tanzania LPG Association chairman made this observation in Dar es Salaam yesterday

at the opening of the East Africa LPG Expo for stakeholders from different countries. A total of 50 exhibitors of gas tools and technologies are set to discuss techniques to promote wider use of clean cooking energies.

The two days event was jointly organized by LPG Expo in collaboration with the Tanzania LPG Association, supported by

the Ministry of Energy, EWURA and the World LPG Association in the French capital of Paris.

The Oryx Gas (T) managing director said Tanzania's LPG market is growing daily and offers opportunities for investment and business development. The country

TURN TO Page 2



SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT ON COMPLETION OF TWO YEARS UNDER THE ABLE LEADERSHIP OF HER EXCELLENCY DR. SAMIA SULUHU HASSAN

The Guardian Limited will publish a special supplement with "The Guardian" and "Nipashe" Newspapers, with a special report focusing on the achievements of the Government under the leadership of President **Dr. Samia Suluhu Hassan**

20th March 2023

We wish to invite you to be a part of this special supplement by publishing your **Special features, Congratulatory messages, Advertorials and Advertisements.**

The Guardian Nipashe

TO BOOK YOUR SPACE PLEASE CALL US TODAY ON +255 677 020 701

Email: advertise@guardian.co.tz or Visit us at The Guardian Limited, Mikochehi Light Industrial Area, Opposite ITV / Radio One, Dar es Salaam
Web: www.ippmedia.com / epaper.ippmedia.com

677020701

'Widen scope of integration to learning at EA varsities'

FROM PAGE 1

for graduate employability.

The intention is to enable the private sector and the government to foster joint dialogue and enhance the linkage between the private sector and higher education institutions, by closer engagement with the public sector, he further noted.

Symposium participants included academic and research institutions, private sector foundations, federations and some of their members, students and employers' associations from EAC partner states and multi-lateral organisations. The forum features exhibitions to showcase success stories, providing a platform to share updates on research, innovations by academia-industry partnerships, and work on potential collaborations, officials said.

Fostering academia-private-public sector dialogues on topical issues on skills development, youth employability, knowledge generation and research is essential for higher learning adaptation, they stated.

Prof Gaspard Banyankimbona, the forum executive secretary, said

the conference creates space for collaboration among stakeholders, enabling experts in various sectors to respective areas of interest. It creates room for collaboration and matching labour market demands to obtain skilled graduates.

"This platform creates room for discussion on how universities can prepare able citizens for the 21st century because time is changing and there is a need for graduates from East African universities to change and move together," he asserted.

Changing times call for universities to be capacitated, including being habituated with incubators for innovation, he stated, elaborating that it is time for EAC countries to support universities with necessary resources to be research bases generating innovative solutions for industrial or other hurdles facing the region and in the wider context.

Prof Charles Kihampa, executive secretary for the Tanzania Commission for Universities (TCU), said the symposium offers room for discussions covering the higher education sector in the region.



Finance and Planning minister Dr Mwigulu Nchemba (C) and the French Development Agency (AFD) Country director, Céline Robert (L), pictured in Dar es Salaam yesterday signing a 272.6bn/- agreement for the implementation of Kakono waterfall electricity project in Kagera Region. Right is Dr Saada Mkuya Salum, Minister of State in the Zanzibar President's Office (Finance and Planning). Photo: Guardian Correspondent

'PO-RALG too relaxed over CAG questions'

FROM PAGE 1

yes-ter-day after the committee went through the parliamentary resolutions last November following the annual report of the Controller and Auditor General (CAG) for fiscal 2020/21. The issue of the loans was stubborn and disciplinary authorities ought to take action against responsible officials in district councils, "but so far nothing

has been done," she stated.

Emphasizing that the money was not given as presents but loans that were supposed to be repaid, she said it was discovered that 19 councils received more funds than what had been endorsed by the legislature.

By contrast, 163 councils received less than was approved but PO-RALG responses on the issue did

not satisfy the committee, she specified, pointing out that 47bn/- was seen to have been spent more than the budget endorsed by Parliament. Demand for explanation went unanswered, she stated. Another issue is public employees' claims for benefits "and so far this has not been satisfactorily responded to," she said, specifying that the committee has given the

government three weeks to provide responses/ That will set the parameters for recommending to the legislature the measures to be taken against all those involved in mismanaging budget fund, the chairperson intoned. If those officials are used to work habitually, "this panel has big expectations of doing great things," she said, insisting that if

responses are given, they should be complete and answering actual queries. This is a legal obligation that we will pursue for the benefit of the nation, she asserted, with committee member Esther Bulaya (Special Seats, opposition) said for 10 years about 700 CAG Audit queries on local councils have not been addressed to reflect requirements of the law.

City LPG Expo trending on 'gas cylinder to each dwelling' plan

FROM PAGE 1

has an LPG consumption growth of two percent annually on per capita terms, a huge potential being unleashed, he stated. The local market is supplemented by access to landlocked countries, which facilitates investment decisions by a range of participants, he said, noting that the LPG association was pursuing a vision of one gas cylinder per dwelling and household in the next ten years.

Using LPG blends with climate change adaptation needs, health and improving community livelihoods, women empowerment, plus developing skills and the wider economy, he said.

The association is working on the clean cooking initiative launched by President Samia Suluhu Hassan to provide Tanzanians with clean cooking solutions by up to 80 percent of households in the next half decade, he stated. Felchesmi Mramba, the permanent secretary, said the min-

istry is coordinating efforts to bring on board issues of clean cooking, to reach the vast majority of the population by 2033.

"For this strategy to become reality we really need to focus on increasing investment in clean cooking fuels such as LPG, natural gas and e-cooking," he elaborated.

The National Energy Policy of 2015o cites the development of least cost domestic energy resources, user friendly energy pricing, and improved energy reliability and efficiency. It encourages private sector participation in the sector, seeks to cut forest depletion and widen expertise in the area, he pointed out.

He urged clarity on environment and health parameters in relation to cooking energy, as to effects of traditional fuels like charcoal and firewood. The need to encompass the benefits of LPG use for cooking, cost awareness and safety issues for household users have to be set out clearly in the discussion, he added.



Defence and National Service minister Innocent Bashungwa (L) and India's Defence minister, Rajnath Singh, exchange greetings in Bengaluru, India, on the sidelines of the recent Aero India 2023. They held talks on relations between the two countries. Aero India is a biennial air show and aviation exhibition. It is organised by the Defence Exhibition Organisation, a wing of India's Defence ministry. Photo courtesy of Indian High Commission in Dar es Salaam

Committee wants Mkulazi sugar factory to be in business by June

By Guardian Correspondent, Morogoro

THE Parliamentary Standing Committee for Social Welfare and Community Development has directed the government to make sure the Morogoro based Mkulazi sugar factory starts production by June, this year. Chairman of the committee, Fatma Taofiq gave the directive yesterday

shortly after members visited the factory at Mbigiri village in Kilosa District. Construction of the factory which has reached 89 percent will boost production of the sweetener and reduce imports. "I commend President Samia Suluhu Hassan for providing funds for construction of the factory; it is our expectation that productions will begin this year to

curtail sugar shortage and reduce prices," she said.

She said the sugar factory, which is jointly owned by the National Social Security Fund (NSSF)—96 per cent and the Prisons Force by 4 percent, will have the capacity to produce 50,000 tonnes of sugar annually and provide jobs to 3,316 people.

"When the factory starts operating; job

priorities should be given to villagers surrounding it. Of the 3,000 people, the majority should be people from Kilosa District and Morogoro Region," said Taofiq. Prof Joyce Ndalichako, Minister of State, Prime Minister's Office (Labour, Youth, Employment and Persons with Disability) said the Mkulazi factory was constructed with funds from NSSF in collabora-

tion with the Prisons Force. She said the aim is to boost sugar production to reduce imports.

She added that a total of 344bn/- would be used until completion of its construction as well as procurement of sugarcane processing machines, expansion of farms and irrigation infrastructures.

The factory's chief executive, Selestine Some said plans are

to cultivate sugarcane in a 3,600 hectares farm through irrigation. He said they will procure modern farming tools to enhance productivity.

One of the committee members, Ally Kingi who is the legislator for Jang'ombe Constituency in Zanzibar urged the factory management to construct dams to facilitate irrigation of the farms during drought.

We put premium on final exam results at the expense of the aim-competence

RESULTS of final national examinations are a big deal in our part of the world. For, this opens or closes opportunities for candidates after school. As a result, schools and candidates do all they can to post the flying colours.

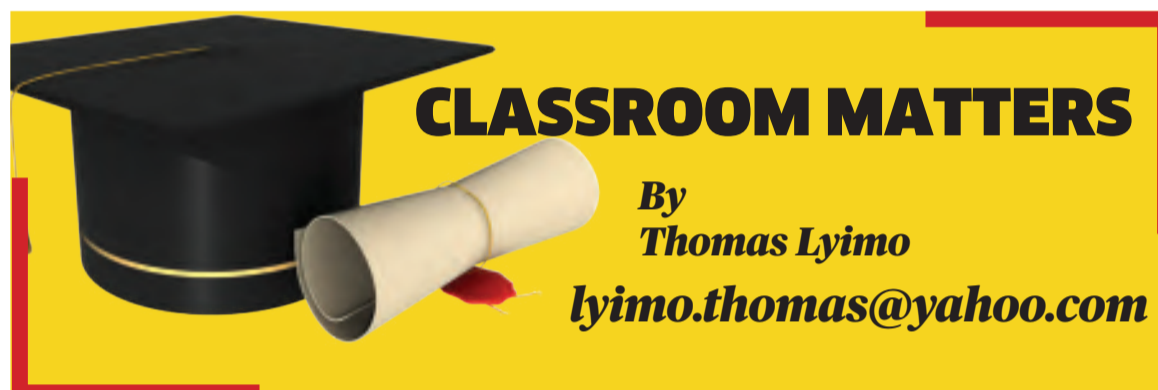
Yet, there are many cases where learners who are exceptionally intelligent on paper turn out to be very incompetent if not dumb. Secondary schools complain about quality of pupils they receive from primary, high schools complain about those they receive from lower secondary, universities complain about those from form six and employers cry over quality of graduates 'half-baked' by universities.

Putting premium on examinations has led to special treatment of classes that are about to be examined and as a result, development of an idea of a special candidate class. These candidate classes have been a pivot where all pressure of the education operations in a school rests.

If one examines critically the idea of a candidate class two reasons to justify it may be put forth. One of the reasons is the use of candidate classes to determine the performance of the entire school staff. As examination results always come with approval or disapproval of the performance of the school, much pressure surrounds the teaching of those classes.

In some cases, candidate classes are taught like if the pupils have not studied anything before. It seems as if the work for years is forced to be accomplished in months, something which is likely to cause some discomfort as psychologists hold that learning is a leisure and not punishment.

The strategy of using candidate classes as means of attracting more students to a school also promotes those classes to a level which goes beyond normal. Parents determine the strength of schools based on their final national examination results. This adds pressure to candidate classes as they are forced to hold normal



If all classes are prepared well, then there is no need to bother much with candidate classes as good results are the product of combined work done in all classes.

school life.

School is a service but has also become a business of late and no investor wants a loss. To succeed in a school business, a big number of pupils is essential and other factors other than examination results rarely attract pupils to a school.

As examination results measure the performance of schools and the results are to come from those candidate classes, teaching candidate classes sometimes looks like a war. Teachers struggle to produce good results to promote image of the school and in some cases to defend their em-

ployment.

With the idea of a candidate class well popularized in schools and outside schools, it sometimes becomes a song of no listener when one talks of competence. The question is how can evidence of competence be manifested while examination results are what are considered. The idea of a candidate class polished by examination results has deprived some teachers who are driven by competence orientation of an opportunity to build foundations for pupils since all is demanded is super final exam results.

One of the effects of the idea of

a candidate class is overworking pupils. Human beings especially children need time to rest so as to promote their health. When they are troubled by an idea of a candidate class by being forced to do a lot of academic work in limited timeframe is when they fail to plan on how to enjoy resting which is necessary for their health.

Some scientists associate lack of sleep or rest to some problems such as anxiety. Pupils suffering from anxiety experience challenges in learning. The idea of a candidate class needs to be reviewed because it can limit progress in education in some ways.

Another effect of candidate class is teaching examination questions instead of useful content. Because what is needed is good examination results, there occurs a pressure forcing teachers to teach examination questions so as to prove that they did good job. Teaching examination questions deprive pupils their right to deeper understanding of concepts. Creativity and innovation are the results of deeper understanding of concepts and not cramming examination questions.

Also, putting premium on exam results make teachers ignore the rest of the classes which are not examined nationally in a particular year. The result of this tendency is increase of burden of candidate class because some pupils enter candidate class without satisfactory preparation because most of the efforts were directed at the candidate classes.

Without the idea of a candidate class, the focus on all classes would be equal and hence more academic benefits to pupils. If all classes are prepared well, then there is no need to bother much with candidate classes as good results are the product of combined work done in all classes.

Putting candidate classes above others may increase the risk of child abuse either verbally or through corporal punishment. This occurs due to the fact that a candidate class is used to show the results of the work that is done in a school.

Candidate classes work as agencies of promoting school performance to the extent that a force that exceeds the limits may be used only to enforce good examination results. Because much is expected from the candidate classes, teachers may be persuaded to use negative enforcement to motivate good performance in examinations.

Pupils should be taught well as per the syllabus and be given time to internalize what they have learned so as to enhance deeper understanding of concepts. Teachers should only teach using examination question after finishing teaching syllabus content.

By Correspondent Mutayoba Arbogast

Noma: The neglected killer disease aptly dubbed 'the face of poverty'

NOMA is a little known disease but with devastating consequences to underprivileged rural communities. Its name is a Greek word which means 'to devour'. True to its name, the necrotizing disease that destroys the mouth and the face has 90 per cent mortality rate if not treated, according to the World Health Organization (WHO).

Known scientifically as cancrum oris, the disease mostly affects young children between the ages of two and six years suffering from malnutrition, living in extreme poverty and with weakened immune systems. Noma is often described as 'the face of poverty,' admits WHO in its Noma information brochure published in 2016.

It starts as a lesion (a sore) of the gums, inside the mouth. The initial gum lesion then develops into an ulcerative, necrotizing gingivitis that progresses rapidly, destroying the soft tissues and bones of the mouth and further progresses to perforate the hard tissues and skin of the face.

According to WHO, the disease affects 140,000 children annually, mostly in Sub-Saharan Africa with rare case reported in Latin America and Asia. Although known for over 1,000 years, WHO declared Noma a public health problem back in 1994 and health experts now want more to be done.

Speaking at a recent virtual meeting organized by Africa Science Centre (AfriSMC) health experts called upon stakeholders of early childhood development to mobilize more resources and direct the same toward the fight against Noma.

Elise Farley, an epidemiologist

and researcher and Claire Jeantet, Noma campaign manager at Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF) said they conducted 12 in-depth interview with caretakers looking after Noma patients admitted at Noma Children's Hospital and 15 traditional healers in their home village in Sokoto State, Northwest Nigeria which gave some interesting insights.

"We explored perceptions of Noma, relationship dynamics, healthcare practices and intervention opportunities, and came to realize that among other things, traditional healers could play a crucial role in the health-seeking decision-making process of patients", said Farley.

She added that the study found that intervention programmes should include traditional healers through training and referral partnership to save lives.

They found that once a patient succeeds to arrive at the hospital, they receive antibiotics and nutritional treatment. But for extreme cases, the wounds get dressed as patients wait for constructive surgery.

"But because some wounds are complex and change over the time, small children have to wait until they are older before they can receive the surgery," she said.

This writer posed a question to the presenters seeking to know the state of Noma in Tanzania but the response was that AfriSMC has not researched about that dis-



ease in the country but plan were underway for the study.

In an attempt to get the situation in the country, this writer reached out to Aminiel Aligasha, Public Relations Officer at the

Muhimbili National Hospital who recommended an expert in the Ministry of Health but who did not provide answers for four days.

Kagera Regional Medical Officer Dr Isessanda Kaniki was

not reached in several attempts meant to establish the situation at regional level especially in rural communities where Noma is most prevalent.

"Owing to the rapid progres-

sion of the disease and the high mortality rate associated with its acute phase, numerous cases of Noma remain undetected," says WHO.

The world health body says the causative agent of Noma remains unknown but it seems unlikely that a single infectious agent (virus or bacteria) is responsible for the disease.

However, WHO it is a result of complex interactions in immunosuppressed children living in extreme poverty and the validation of a hypothesis pointing to a causative sequence responsible for the disease is ongoing.

"In addition to known factors such as malnutrition, coinfections—measles and malaria—and poor oral hygiene, a number of social and environmental factors such as maternal malnutrition and closely-spaced pregnancies that result in offspring with increasingly weakened immune systems, could be strongly related to the onset of the disease," reads the brochure in part.

WHO outlines the following as symptoms of Noma: extensive destruction of intraoral soft and hard tissue, presence of a lesion with a well-demarcated perimeter surrounding a blackened necrotic centre, bluish-black discoloration at the corresponding external facial surface of the cheek or lips, separation of the slough, leaving a hole in the face, difficulty eating, rapid perforation of the cheek, exposure of the teeth and denuded bones, more extensive destruction of the cone shaped tissues below the intraoral cone than those at the top of the cone located on the surface of the face, progressive drying of the facial gangrene and anorexia.

'Weapons of mass control' no longer sole monopolies of the authoritarian regimes

By Thalif Deen

WHEN the US was planning to sell fighter planes to a politically-repressive regime in South-east Asia in a bygone era, a spokesman for a human rights organization, responding to a question from a reporter, was quoted as saying there were no plans to oppose the proposed sale because "it is very difficult to link F-16 fighter planes to human rights abuses."

If fighter jets are fair game and cannot be used to violate human rights, the same cannot be said of "weapons of mass control" (WMCs), including water cannons, tear gas grenades, pepper spray and rubber bullets—used mostly against civilian demonstrators.

But these weapons, contrary to popular belief, are not just the sole monopolies of authoritarian regimes in Asia, the Middle East and South and Central America but are also used by Western democracies such as the US, Spain and France – along with Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Gaza, Guinea, Hong Kong, Iran, Iraq, Peru, Sudan, Tunisia and Venezuela.

A Reuters report published in October 2019 about the mass resistance in Hongkong said the protests erupted over planned legislation that would have allowed extraditions from Hong Kong to mainland China.

The police reportedly fired over 6,000 tear gas rounds, around 2,400 rubber bullets, some 700 sponge grenades and over 500 bean bag rounds.

A new report from Amnesty International (AI), released March 14, says security forces across the world are routinely misusing rubber and plastic bullets and other law enforcement weapons "to violently suppress peaceful protests and cause horrific injuries and deaths, -and called for strict controls on their use and a global treaty to regulate their trade".

The report, My Eye Exploded, published jointly with the Omega Research Foundation, is based on research in more than 30 countries over the last five years.

It documents "how thousands of protesters and bystanders have been



Protestors in Sri Lanka. Credit: Akila Jayawardana and Hiran Priyankara/Sunday Times

maimed and dozens killed by the often reckless and disproportionate use of less lethal law enforcement weaponry, including kinetic impact projectiles (KIPs), such as rubber bullets, as well as the firing of rubberized buckshot, and tear gas grenades aimed and fired directly at demonstrators".

"We believe that legally-binding global controls on the manufacture and trade in less lethal weapons, including KIPs, along with effective guidelines on the use of force are urgently needed to combat an escalating cycle of abuses," said Patrick Wilcken, Amnesty International's Researcher on Military, Security and Policing issues.

Amnesty International and the Omega Research Foundation are among 30 organizations calling for a UN-backed Torture-Free Trade Treaty to prohibit the manufacture and trade of inherently abusive KIPs and other law enforcement weapons, and to introduce human rights-based trade controls on the supply of other law en-

forcement equipment, including rubber and plastic bullets.

Dr Michael Crowley, Research Associate at the Omega Research Foundation, said a Torture-Free Trade Treaty would prohibit all production and trade in existing inherently abusive law enforcement weapons and equipment.

These include intrinsically dangerous or inaccurate single KIPs, rubber-coated metal bullets, rubberized buckshot and ammunition with multiple projectiles that have resulted in blinding, other serious injuries and deaths across the world.

The Amnesty report says these weapons have led to permanent disability in hundreds of cases and many deaths.

There has been an alarming increase in eye injuries, including eyeball ruptures, retinal detachments and the complete loss of sight, as well as bone and skull fractures, brain injuries, the rupture of internal organs and haemorrhaging, punctured hearts

and lungs from broken ribs, damage to genitalia, and psychological trauma.

A recent report in the Sri Lanka Sunday Times said dissent in Sri Lanka is often met with tear gas and water cannons fired by the Sri Lanka Police. Mass demonstrations that culminated in a protest site, resulting from an economic and political crisis last year, were often subdued with police tear gas and water cannon blasts.

Some protesters have died while some deaths were attributed to complications following tear gas attacks. Sri Lanka Police are now being accused of abusing the use of the riot control agent. Lawyers have also filed complaints with human rights authorities, the police, and courts.

Sri Lankans who have been exposed to tear gas allege they have suffered long-term coughs, phlegm, irritation of the throat, and in some cases, asthma. Between March and July 2022, the Police had fired more than 6,700 tear gas canisters.

Meanwhile, according to an evalu-

ation by Chile's National Institute for Human Rights, police actions during protests which began in October 2019 resulted in more than 440 eye injuries, with over 30 cases of eye loss, or ocular rupture.

At least 53 people died from projectiles fired by security forces, according to a peer-reviewed study based on medical literature between 1990 and June 2017. It also concluded that 300 of the 1,984 people injured suffered permanent disability. The actual numbers are likely to be far higher, according to the report.

Since then, the availability, variety and deployment of KIPs has escalated globally, furthering the militarization of protest policing.

The Amnesty report finds that national guidance on the use of KIPs rarely meets international standards on the use of force, which states that their deployment be limited to situations of last resort when violent individuals pose an imminent threat of harm to persons. Police forces routinely flout regulations with impunity.

In the United States, the report said, the use of rubber bullets to suppress peaceful protest has become increasingly commonplace.

One demonstrator hit in the face in Minneapolis, Minnesota on 31 May 2020 told Amnesty International: "My eye exploded from the impact of the rubber bullet and my nose moved from where it should be to below the other eye. The first night I was in the hospital they gathered up the pieces of my eye and sewed it back together. Then they moved my nose back to where it should be and reshaped it. They put in a prosthetic eye - so I can only see out of my right eye now."

In Spain, the use of large, inherently inaccurate tennis-ball-sized rubber KIPs has led to at least one death from head trauma and 24 serious injuries, including 11 cases of severe eye injury, according to Stop Balas de Goma, a campaign group.

In France, a medical review of 21 patients with face and eye injuries caused by rubber bullets noted severe injuries including bone fragmentation, fractures and ruptures resulting in blindness.

Civic Space - the bedrock of democracy - is scarce and contested

By Mandeep S.Tiwana

ON 29 and 30 March, the US government, in partnership with Costa Rica, Netherlands, South Korea and Zambia, will co-host the second virtual Summit for Democracy. Several elected leaders and state representatives will come together to highlight achievements in advancing democratic principles.

This online global gathering intends to 'demonstrate how democracies deliver for their citizens and are best equipped to address the world's most pressing challenges'. Yet evidence gathered by civil society researchers indicates that all is not well with the state of democracy worldwide. Civic space, a key ingredient of democracy, is becoming increasingly contested.

Pundits have long argued that democracy is not just about majoritarian rule and nominally free elections. The essence of democracy lies in something deeper: the ability of people - especially the excluded - to organise, participate and communicate without hindrance to influence society, politics and economics.

Civic space is underpinned by the three fundamental freedoms of association, peaceful assembly and expression, with the state having responsibility to defend and safeguard these freedoms.

Yet, as revealed by the 2022 People Power Under Attack report from the CIVICUS Monitor, a collaboration of over 20 research organisations across the globe, states themselves are the biggest violators of civic freedoms.

Among the top violations recorded globally are harassment and intimidation of activists, journalists and civil society organisations to deter them from their human rights work; arbitrary detentions of protesters as punishment for speaking out against



Protests in Myanmar. Credit: CIVICUS



The gendered nature of repression against women and LGBTQI+ protesters seeking equal rights remains a sadly persistent reality.

those in power; and restrictive laws designed to prevent people mobilising and exercising their fundamental civic freedoms.

Shockingly, two billion people - 28 per cent of the world's population - live in the 27 countries where civic space is absolutely shut down, where mere expressions of democratic dissent can mean prison, exile or death.

These countries categorised as 'closed' on the CIVICUS Monitor include powerful authoritarian states such as China, Egypt, Iran, Russia, Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates, as well as dictatorships with one-party or one-family rule such as Afghanistan, Belarus, Cuba, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Myanmar, Nicaragua, Syria and Turkmenistan, among others.

However, the problem extends beyond autocracies. Worryingly, there's been a perceptible decline in civic space in democracies. In the UK, the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022 gives police unprecedented powers to restrict protests on grounds of preventing serious 'distress, annoyance, inconvenience or loss of amenity'.

A deeply draconian public order bill to further limit protests in response to civil disobedience activities of climate and environmental activists is also on the cards. As a result, the country has been downgraded to the 'obstructed' category on the CIVICUS Monitor.

Civic space in India, which calls itself the world's biggest democracy, is under attack, with continuing intimidation of independent media,

think tanks and civil society groups that oppose serious human rights violations and high-level corruption.

Tactics include raids on office premises of organisations on flimsy grounds and denial of permission to access international funding. Prominent victims include the BBC, Centre for Policy Research and Oxfam India.

Tunisia, where democracy was until recently starting to grow roots, is now experiencing severe regression due to the high-handed actions of President Kais Saied, who has assumed emergency powers, undermined judicial independence and misused the law enforcement machinery to persecute critics.

India and Tunisia are now both in the second lowest category, 're-

pressed', on the CIVICUS Monitor.

Despite continuing civic space impediments, people are speaking out: the CIVICUS Monitor recorded significant protests in over 130 countries in 2022. The rising costs of food and fuel have sparked mobilisations even in authoritarian contexts.

Protests initially driven by people's financial pain have tended to grow quickly into mass mobilisations against regressive economic policies, corruption by political leaders and systemic injustice.

Women have often been at the forefront of protests, as seen in Iran, where a brave mobilisation to demand rights has seen thousands of protesters ruthlessly persecuted through mass imprisonment, police brutality and targeted executions.

The gendered nature of repression against women and LGBTQI+ protesters seeking equal rights remains a sadly persistent reality.

However, in the midst of civic space regressions, some successes spurred by civil society action have also come. In Honduras, a group of water and environmental rights activists called the Guapinol defenders were released in February 2022 after two and a half years of pretrial detention following a concerted global campaign calling for an end to their unjust imprisonment.

In Sri Lanka, mass protests led to the resignation in July 2022 of corrupt authoritarian president Gotabaya Rajapaksa, who presided over widespread economic mismanagement and civic space restrictions; however, since then the old guard has reasserted its control over government, resuming repressive tactics to undermine constitutional guarantees, pointing to the need for continuous vigilance over civic space.

Aflatoxin awareness to smallholder farmers vital to mitigate risks - ESRF

By Correspondent Daniel Semberya, Lushoto

SMALLHOLDER farmers have been urged to apply good agricultural practices to mitigate health risks that may be caused aflatoxin.

Presenting research findings on inclusive innovation for agri-food system resilience in Lushoto, Tanga last week, a researcher from the Economic and Social Research Foundation (ESRF), Aghata Kiama said that 51 per cent of milk samples collected in Tanga region were contaminated with aflatoxin M₁, 7 per cent of which are above the East Africa Community (EAC) regulatory limits.

During their research they collected maize, bran and milk from households, and analysed their aflatoxin contents.

The research was conducted by the Economic and Social Research Foundation (ESRF), in collaboration with the Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF-AFRICAP) where a total of 428 farmers' households from Pangani, Muheza, Korogwe and Lushoto were involved.

Samples of maize, milk maize bran and animal feed were collected from these families with the intention of analysing aflatoxin and contents of nutrients.

Kiama said that 141 samples of maize collected were analysed and found with aflatoxin. She noted that 15 samples of milk collected, 4 samples were found with aflatoxin M₁, with contents of between 611 and 3331 pg/ml, which is above the regulatory limits of the 50 pg/M₁.

Findings showed that 51 percent of milk samples in Tanga region



Some of the participants who attended the agriculture and food system resilience: increasing capacity and advising policy dissemination workshop, in Lushoto District, Tanga Region in a group discussion on the impacts of aflatoxin. Photo: Correspondent Daniel Semberya

are contaminated with aflatoxin M₁, 7 percent of which are above the East Africa Community [EAC] regulatory limits.

She said samples from the valley were the most contaminated ones. "Conversion ratio of AFBI in bran to AFMI in milk equals 1.8 per cent."

Aflatoxin M₁ (AFMI) is the hydroxylated metabolite of aflatoxin B₁ (AFBI) and can be found in milk or milk products obtained from livestock that have ingested contaminated feed.

She noted that only 30 percent knew about aflatoxins in grains.

Kiama noted that during their research the primary sources of information on aflatoxin, among others included extension officers (35%) and experience from the 2019 AFRICAP survey (23 pc).

"There is an urgent need to devise and apply novel methods to complement good agricultural practices and mitigate aflatoxin contamination in the feed, maize and milk value chains. Creation of awareness on aflatoxin management through training of farmers and other stakeholders is vital," she said.

She said factors favouring aflatoxin

contamination include drought during crop growing period, crop contact with bare soil (during harvesting), high temperature and humidity (harvesting and/or storing wet/humid crops).

Regarding aflatoxin in maize, Kiama said that according to their research findings, there were higher aflatoxin occurrences in 2021 as compared to 2019. According to her, there were higher contents of AFG₁, G₂ and B₂ in 2019, while AFBI and total aflatoxins were higher in 2021.

She pointed out that aflatoxin contamination level is affected

among many other things by agro-ecology, mother's education level and household aflatoxin awareness. Kiama revealed that the greatest presence of aflatoxins in samples is from valley bottom in Korogwe District Council.

Lushoto District agriculture livestock and fisheries officer, Eliezer Moses said that poor preservation of maize bran and crop by-products, are some of the major contributing factors of aflatoxin among small holder farmers.

He said that in order to mitigate aflatoxin, education awareness on the preservation of crops, es-

pecially grain/cereal crops like maize, is needed to farmers from the time of planting, harvesting and good preservation.

Moses said, "If maize crop is kept with moistures it causes funguses, which in turn causes aflatoxin. When cows or any other animals consume maize bran that is not well-preserved causes aflatoxin in milk."

He said that his office is going on offering education awareness on how to mitigate aflatoxin to a group of farmers.

Aflatoxins can accumulate on crops and grains in tropical and semitropical regions and, apart from maize, contaminate a wide variety of food crops and products, such as sorghum, millet, cassava, paprika, rice, ground nuts, chili, and cotton seeds.

The prevailing global climate change is shown to increase aflatoxin risk in tropical and subtropical regions.

Meanwhile, ESRF in collaboration with University of Leeds (UoL) is implementing the Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF) and Newton Consolidation Accounts (GNCA) 2022/23 project titled "Towards Inclusive Innovation for Agri-Food System Resilience: Learning from GCRF-AFRICAP."

The objective of the project is to consolidate, synthesise, translate and share the Tanga GCRF-AFRICAP research (2019-2021) work findings.

The focus will be given to findings of pertinence to local farmers' and community adaptation of agricultural and land management practice and district-and regional-level planning in the context of climate change and food systems.

AfDB and partners invest \$618 million in Nigeria's digital and creative industries

ABUJA

THE African Development Bank and partners on Tuesday launched a new Investment in Digital and Creative Enterprises (iDICE) programme.

The initiative, with investments totaling \$618 million, will attract direct investments in more than 200 technology and creative start-ups and provide non-financial services to about 450 digital technologies, small and medium enterprises. With a potential to generate \$6.4 billion into the Nigeria's economy, iDICE is expected to create 6 million new jobs for young Nigerians.

Speaking at the launch event in the capital Abuja, Nigeria's Vice President Osinbajo emphasised the importance of a coordinated approach to innovation across Africa. "Government must provide more support for start-ups and small businesses, and investors must provide more funding," Osinbajo said.

The African Development Bank Group is the largest funder of iDICE, providing \$170 million. The French government, through the Agence Française de Développement, will contribute €100 million (\$116 million), and the Islamic Development Bank pending approval from its board is expected to provide \$70 million. The Nigerian government, through its executing agency, the Bank of Industry, will provide \$45 million in counterpart funding. Other institutional and private sector investors are also expected to provide additional funding for the implementation of the strategic initiative.

African Development Bank President Akinwumi Adesina stressed the need to leverage the huge potential of iDICE for sustainable job creation and economic transformation. "We are retooling Nigeria to be more competitive in an increasingly digital world. We are creating hope for a new Nigeria, driven by the power of the youth."

The African Development Bank expects the iDICE model to be rolled out in other regional member countries through the Bank's Youth Entrepreneurship Investment Bank initiative, which will be designed to create a financial and non-financial services ecosystem to support start-ups run by young Nigerians, and to create jobs.

The French Ambassador to Nigeria, Emmanuelle Blatmann, said the digital technology and creative industries had enormous potential to create jobs and spur economic growth in Nigeria. "The iDICE programme...is designed to support young entrepreneurs and innovators who are driving these industries forward," she said.

Through iDICE, around 175,000 young people, including university students, will gain direct access to technology to build creative skills, stimulate innovation, and help new businesses to flourish. iDICE will help consolidate Nigeria's leadership position as Africa's pre-eminent hub for young entrepreneurs and start-up investments. In 2022, African start-ups raised \$5.4 billion, with Nigerian companies receiving the largest share at \$1.2 billion.

KIGALI

HEALTH experts have warned that the increase of non-communicable diseases (NCD) and the effects of climate change are threatening health security in Africa. This was discussed during the four-day Africa Health Agenda International Conference (AHAIC) that concluded recently in Kigali, Rwanda.

Africa still faces complex and interconnected health issues, according to Mohammad Abd El Fatah, undersecretary for preventive affairs at the Ministry of Health and Population in Egypt. More coordination among African nations and inclusive leadership are required to address upcoming health risks.

Githinji Gitahi, director-general of Amref Health Africa, the main AHAIC convener, said the conference took place at a critical time when the African continent has been shaken by the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change, wars and higher cost of living.

Although the burden of COVID-19 has lessened, recent outbreaks of other diseases such as ebola, marburg and cholera demonstrated that health security was at risk, same for the effects of climate change such as droughts, hunger and floods that are costing lives across the continent, he added.

The continent's disease burden is heavy because 40 per cent of neglected diseases, 95 per cent of malaria and 36 per cent of tuberculosis cases occur here, Dr Githinji said.

He reminded that by 2030, deaths from non-communicable diseases are projected to exceed those from infectious diseases, child deaths, premature deaths and all women's deaths combined. The death toll from diabetes itself might increase by 28 per cent by then, when 55 million people in Africa may die from diabetes and about 0.7 million from cancer, he added.

Yet, it was pointed out that because most NCDs are avoidable, implementing cost-effective preventative and curative interventions can greatly reduce the burden of NCDs. According to the interna-



Africa health security at risk: NCDs and the climate change top causes

tional health regulator, reducing risk factors such as tobacco use, poor diets, physical inactivity and alcohol abuse can prevent up to 80 per cent of heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes and over a third of cancers.

Besides, he said although Africa contributes less in the emission of greenhouse gases and global warming, the continent remains the first to be affected by its effects. Therefore, he urged Africa not to continue negotiating country by country, but as a collective to ensure that Africa Union's New Public Health Order, World Health Organization (WHO) Triple Billions 2025 target and strategies reflect people's desires.

The current dispensation in delivering health services to the continent was not sustainable, highlighted the acting director of Africa Centres of Diseases Control, Ahmed Ogwel.

All 55 African Union member states must work together to address the shared health threats faced in Africa and beyond more holistically, he said.

Climate change adaptation and mitigation were major topics of discussion at the conference, converging to considering decarbonising the health system through steps like proper waste management and industry practices as priority.

Other factors taken into account

included the requirement for pharmaceutical manufacturing, genomic data and unified regulatory frameworks, all of which were seen as essential to developing effective pandemic preparedness strategies.

The conference concluded that the climate change and health challenges facing Africa require evidence and developing compelling arguments for advocacy on behalf of vulnerable communities. Furthermore, it also suggested that the response to climate change must consider the needs of women and youth, not as token participants in discussions, but as active designers and implementers of health and climate policies.

The four crime cartels that brought Eskom, South Africa to their knees

By Kevin Bloom

INTELLIGENCE reports obtained by Daily Maverick link two senior members of President Cyril Ramaphosa's Cabinet to four criminal cartels operating inside Eskom. Although we cannot yet reveal the names of the Cabinet members for legal reasons, we can divulge that the intelligence links the cartels to the sabotage of Eskom's power stations and to a programme of political destabilisation.

The organogram was the size of the boardroom table. Approaching it, there was a distinct feeling that what we were about to see could never be unseen. The country we thought we lived in, from that moment on, would be an entirely different place.

In the body of the organogram, below the so-called "territorial ruler" and his primary enforcer, who was identified by name as the "henchman" and "assassin", were the leaders and foot soldiers of the four cartels: the Presidential Cartel, the Mesh-Kings Cartel, the Legendaries Cartel and the Chief Cartel.

There were photographs of the major players, in some cases alongside the companies with which they were affiliated, but a lot of the information was yet to be confirmed. Still, in a column running between the cartels was a box titled, "Illicit procurement process to defraud Eskom". This, we knew, was the covert information on how it all worked.

"What we have here," said our source, "is not evidence. It's intelligence. You guys will have to do the work of joining the dots."

There were other conditions that came with our access to this "safe house", out in a quiet suburb of Gauteng's metropolitan sprawl. We had been asked to leave our phones in the car, so it went without saying that revealing any clues that could lead to the identification of our sources was an absolute no-go zone.

Also, for the moment, we were told, very firmly, that we could not quote from the intelligence reports until we were given the green light.

The reason for this was simple: our sources, former state intelligence operatives who were now working for the private sector, are still active in the field.

"If you want to get killed," said our



Finally, the text explained, the end-user would approach the procurement manager, "or an employee referred to as a Mphati in collusion with the cartel".

primary source, "you come play here."

We nodded, and turned our attention back to the organogram. Aside from the identity of the "territorial ruler", it was the "illicit processes" that drew our attention.

At the top of the column was an item marked "Soldier", where it was explained that the cartel leader or one of his subordinates would "approach a specific end-user" – for instance, an "engineer" in the generation or distribution division of Eskom – to begin the process.

"The end-user [Eskom insider] is in cahoots," the text noted, "and receives a substantial amount in cash, including extra funds to bribe the other employees in the supply chain to ensure their cooperation."

Next, the text went deeper into how the end-user operated and what he intended to accomplish, beginning with the "payment of an upfront bribe" to the store manager of a power station.

"The store manager then verifies how much of a specific type of equipment is available on inven-

tory to be covered in a purchase order. Should the equipment to the value of the intended purchase order be available in stock, the existing equipment in stock will be hidden or displaced somewhere in the power station to justify the procurement/purchase request for additional equipment.

"Also, for the cartels to create a supplementary business to supply essential components or renew or continue maintenance contract works, the cartel will plot the destruction of infrastructure with insiders so that a breakdown can justify repairs or the supply of components via the cartel vendors."

The text then went into information that is already in the public domain, such as "malicious damage" to conveyor belts and the "sabotage" of the railway line feeding the Majuba Power Station – the last example, it was noted, so as "to ensure the survival of their coal transport trucking companies supplying coal to Eskom".

Finally, the text explained, the end-user would approach the pro-

urement manager, "or an employee referred to as a Mphati in collusion with the cartel".

This Mphati, it was noted, had become "a very influential contact at the power station". As the man in charge of procurement, he "receives an upfront inducement that serves as an acceleration fee to issue a purchase request (RFQ)". And here, according to the intelligence, was where the "illicit procurement process" got set in motion.

"The procurement manager/buyer instructs the financial department to approve the expenditure that must, according to the supply chain directives of Eskom, have the signatures of both the end-user and the store manager."

So there it was, the scam in all its torrid glory, a simple outline of a criminal network so vast and heinous that it was bringing the country to its knees. The cartel members, with the backing and protection of the "territorial ruler", would, by this stage in the process, have the South African taxpayers' funds all but in their leather bags.

In the column's third section, the

intelligence went on to explain:

"The purchase request (RFQ) is then taken to a senior buyer who will receive their share of the bribe/pay-off. After that, three compulsory quotes will be obtained. All three quotations will originate from the same cartel as all three approaching members are members/soldiers of the same cartel. "The soldiers/vendors manipulate the quotations so that a specific pre-chosen company is inevitably appointed as the final vendor, and a purchase order (PO) is issued accordingly. In addition, the buyers often will create a false urgency by sending official emails to the vendor to expedite delivery, which will then be used to justify a higher price. It will also then record that the PO is bona fide."

But that wasn't all. The fourth section, titled "Bribed security officers sign off on non-existent product delivery", was pretty self-explanatory, with Eskom's security staff in the secret employ of the cartels putting their signatures to "ghost deliveries" and verifying that the equipment had been inspected at the main gate.

"The end-user and store manager will receive the ghost delivery and sign the receipt to deliver the non-existing equipment. The hidden equipment is retrieved from where it was hidden and placed back into storage as if the equipment had been delivered."

It was at this juncture that we came across the sentence which, we knew, would make our work incredibly challenging.

Aside from the fact that all bribes up and down the line were paid in cash, there was the following problem:

"All the procurement documentation from the purchase request to the delivery note will procedurally correspond with the equipment on inventory, making it difficult for forensic audits to identify fraud and malpractice."

The 'territorial ruler'

The date was early December 2022, just days before the ANC's elective conference at Nasrec.

We knew, from a series of previous conversations with our sources, that the intelligence gathered in the field suggested a direct link between the sabotage, the cartels, and an orchestrated programme of political destabilisation.

Not a day had passed in November without power cuts across the country, and now, in December, we were headed for an extended bout of Stage 6.

The name of the "territorial ruler" at the top of the organogram was therefore no surprise to us, although it still came as something of a shock.

'Stone-age' era donkey-drawn carts ply Zimbabwe's abandoned remote routes



By Jeffrey Moyo

FROM the Masvingo-Beitbridge highway in Zimbabwe at a spot popularly known as Turn-P, the road passing through Neshuro Township has been degraded, disused, and derelict for over two decades, with buses avoiding the route. Now donkey-drawn carts that operate alongside jalopy vehicles have become the new alternative for remote travellers around Mwenezi villages.

The scotch carts have become even more common in areas around Maranda and Mazetese in Mwenezi as villagers switch to them for transport to hospitals and clinics.

Such has become a life for 64-year-old Dennis Masukume of the Mazetese area. The diabetic patient is forced to use al-

Bad roads in rural Zimbabwe mean the communities have to rely on donkey carts and jalopy cars as bus operators shun the routes. Credit: Jeffrey Moyo/IPS

ternative means of transport.

"I board a scotch cart every time I want to travel to Neshuro hospital for my medication, which means I use the scotch cart up to somewhere in Gwamatenga where I then get some private cars that ply the route to Neshuro at nominal fares," Masukume told IPS.

At Tsungirirai Secondary school and Vinga Primary school in the Mwenezi district, the rare availability of public transport means that even teachers have to cope with scotch carts each time they have to travel to Maranda, where they catch jalopies to the Masvingo-Beitbridge highway on paydays.

In fact, with road infrastructure badly damaged in most rural areas in

Zimbabwe, villagers are resorting to olden ways of transport using scotch carts and walking to reach places where they can access essential services like health care.

The unpaved rural roads have become impassable for buses.

Now, some villagers are capitalizing on the crisis, using their scotch carts to earn a living.

Mwenezi district, located in Masvingo Province, south of the country, has become famed for routes plied by scotch carts.

Entrepreneurs have turned to making easy money from scotch carts. Twenty-four-year-old Clive Nhongo, who resides closer to Manyuchi dam in Mwenezi, said the bad roads had meant good business for him.

"I'm charging a dollar per passenger every trip I make with my scotch cart taking people anywhere around my area, and I can tell you I make about 20 USD daily depending on the number of customers I get, considering that villagers rarely travel here," Nhongo told IPS.

While many villagers fume at the damaged roads and lack of a proper modern transport system, many, like Nhongo, have something to smile about.

"I provide the alternative transport, and until roads are rehabilitated and buses return on our routes, I might remain in business, which is fine for me," said Nhongo.

He (Nhongo) has made wooden seats and installed them on his scotch cart to accommodate passengers.

More and more villagers, cornered with transport woes amid derelict roads in villages, are now having to rely on donkey-drawn scotch carts owned by village entrepreneurs like Nhongo.

Public transport operators like 56-year-old Obed Mhishi, based in Masvingo, Zimbabwe's oldest town, said there was no way he could endure damaging his omnibuses plying routes with defunct roads.

Donkey-drawn carts have taken over

"It's not only me shunning the routes the ones in Mwenezi and its villages, but we are many transport operators shunning the routes owing to deplorable roads, and yes, scotch cart operators are capitalizing on that to fill the vacuum. That's business," Mhishi told IPS.

Yet even as scotch cart operators cash in on the growing crisis in the Southern African country, local authorities have said donkey-drawn scotch carts have never been regularized to ferry people anywhere in Zimbabwe.

An official working at Mwenezi Rural District Council, who said he was not authorized to speak to the media, said, "scotch carts don't pay road tax, nor do they have insurance for passengers."

But for ordinary Zimbabwean villagers in Mwenezi, like 31-year-old Richmore Ndlovhu, with dilapidated roads that have been neglected for years, the scotch carts have become the only way – insurance or not.

Buses that used to reach areas like Mazetese now prefer not to go beyond the Masvingo-Beitbridge highway, where scotch carts and a few jalopy vehicles scramble for passengers alighting from buses. These are the passengers wanting to proceed with their journeys into villages.

Zimbabwe's rural roads in districts like Mwenezi have remained unpaved for more than four decades after gaining independence from colonial rule.

Meanwhile, Zimbabwean President Emerson Mnangagwa has been on record affirming that his country would become a middle-income state by 2025, just about two years from now.

Yet for opposition political activists here, like Elvis Mugari of the Citizens Coalition for Change, Mnangagwa may be building castles in the air.

"With corruption in his government and the sustained hatred for the opposition, Mnangagwa won't achieve a middle-income Zimbabwe. That is impossible," Mugari told IPS.

Batai Chiwawa, a Zimbabwean development expert, blamed the regime here for taking the whole country backwards.

"Is it not taking the country to the stone age era when villagers now have to use scotch carts as ambulances? Is it not a return to the dark ages when people now have to walk long distances because there is no public transport in their villages? This is embarrassing, deeply embarrassing, when people start using scotch carts as public transport in this day and era," Chiwawa asked when commenting to IPS.

IPS UN Bureau Report



Agency, digital channels spur banking deposits mobilisation

By Guardian Reporter

AGENTS and digital channels are continuing to support banks deposits mobilisation, improving the sector's asset quality in the post pandemic economic recovering.

According to the Bank of Tanzania's (BoT) Monetary Policy Committee statement issued on Tuesday evening, the banking sector remained adequately capitalized, liquid and profitable in January 2023.

"Banks' deposits and assets increased indicating improved economic activities, complemented by use of agent banking and digital financial services," said the statement issued by the BoT governor.

The sector was also stable and exhibited strong resilience to shocks, the statement notes.

The economic bulletin for the last quarter of 2022 showed that banks deposits amounted 32.5trn/- by December last year, compared to 27.7trn/- recorded during the end of 2021.

Individual residents deposits amounted 25.3trn/- by the end of December, 2022, an increase of 4trn/- compared with 21.5trn/- recorded during the end of December, 2021.

The consolidated zonal economic report for September last year showed that agents banking deposits recorded 21.2 million transactions valued 18.2trn/-, twice of 11 million transactions valued 9trn/- recorded by September 2021.

According to the report, banking agents in Tanzania mainland were 64,657 in September 2022, compared with 44,686 recorded as of September 2021.

"Agency banking services improved across all zones associated with increased number of agents, following relaxation of eligibility criteria and integration of banking services with non-bank payment systems," the report says.



The MPC statement went on saying that banking assets quality improved with the ratio of non-performing loans reaching 5.85 percent, down from 8.42 percent in January 2022.

The committee held its 225th Ordinary Meeting to evaluate the implementation of monetary policy, review the performance and outlook of the economy, and deliberate on monetary policy actions for the subsequent two months.

The MPC says was satisfied that the implementation of less accommodative monetary policy in January and February 2023 succeeded to contain inflation within the target, while supporting recovery of economic activities by maintaining adequate liquidity and strong credit intermediation to the private sector.

The policy stance also helped to cushion the economy from adverse global economic shocks and heightened commodity prices, while supporting the attainment of agreed benchmarks

under the IMF Extended Credit Facility (ECF) arrangement.

Based on assessment and outlook of global and domestic economies, the MPC approved the Bank of Tanzania to continue implementing less accommodative monetary policy in March and April 2023.

The policy stance will help to control inflation below the target of 5.4 percent, while supporting credit growth to various economic activities.

In addition, the policy stance will support the attainment of IMF ECF targets for the third quarter of 2022/23, which are set as indicative targets and laying foundation for achieving the performance criteria for June 2023.

"The Bank shall continue to support the broader macroeconomic objectives of the Governments, while closely monitoring the emerging risks from external shocks and take necessary measures when need arises," the statement reads.

Regarding the recent econom-

ic performance, the MPC noted that, in 2022 the global economy was weakened by economic shocks and climate-related constraints.

As a result, global growth is expected to slow in 2023, before rebounding in 2024.

Commodity prices in the world market remained high in 2022, though trended downwards in the second half of the year. As a result, inflation has been declining since the last quarter of 2022, though remains above central bank targets in many countries, especially advanced economies.

Specifically, the MPC noted that the domestic economy is performing well with leading economic indicators suggesting positive outlook.

Considering actual growth of 5.2 percent in the first three quarters of 2022 in Mainland Tanzania, it is likely that growth could be around 5 percent, which is higher than the projected growth of 4.7 percent for 2022.

The Zanzibar economy is esti-

mated to grow at 5.4 percent in 2022, owing to implementation of ongoing initiatives to enhance the blue economy and the resumption of tourism.

The MPC projects higher growth for both economies in 2023, reinforced by growth of credit to the private sector, improved business and investment conditions, rebounding of tourism activities, as well as prudent monetary and fiscal policies.

The growth projections are also supported by ongoing trend of easing global inflationary pressures and improvements in the supply chain.

However, MPC noted that inflation has been on upward trend over recent months, because of the ongoing war in Ukraine, which has caused an increase in import prices of consumer goods.

In January 2023, Mainland Tanzania inflation edged up to 4.9 percent, compared with 4.8 percent in the preceding month, but remained within the country's

target of 5.4 percent, and EAC and SADC regional benchmarks of 8 percent and 3-7 percent, respectively.

In Zanzibar, inflation experienced an upward trend, reaching 8.4 percent in January 2023, mainly because of the increase in both food and non-food inflation.

The MPC therefore, remains optimistic that inflation will remain within target in the second half of 2022/23, as prices of global consumer goods and inflation in trading partners ease, coupled with the expected increase in food supply in the country.

The moderation will also be supported by cautious liquidity reducing monetary policy operations pursued by the Bank.

Money supply recorded a satisfactory annual growth of 12.8 percent in January 2023, broadly in line with the target of 10.3 percent for 2022/23, mainly on account of strong growth of private sector credit that reached around 23 percent.

According to MPC statement, in the first seven months of 2022/23, domestic revenue performance was strong, broadly in line with the targets.

Domestic revenue was 97.1 percent and 96.1 percent of the target for Mainland Tanzania and Zanzibar, respectively, mainly attributable to ongoing recovery of economic activities, supported by improved tax administration and taxpayers' compliance.

Government expenditures were also aligned to the available resources and the need to close the infrastructure gap and protect the economy from external shocks, in a bid to ensure sustainable and inclusive growth of the economy.

The external sector continued to be affected by the ongoing war in Ukraine and protracted effects of COVID-19 pandemic.

Consequently, the current account deficit widened to US\$5.2 billion in January 2023, from US\$2.6 billion in the year ending January 2022, driven by high imports bill that outweighed the increase in exports.

Foreign reserves amounted to US\$4.8 billion at the end of January 2023, sufficient to cover 4.3 months of imports, in line with the country benchmark of at least 4 months of imports.

Nachu project set to produce 0.23mn tonnes of graphite for fifteen years

By Guardian Reporter

THE Ruangwa district based Nachu project is expected to produce 230,000 tonnes of graphite annually, which will make Tanzania the world class graphite source.

This was said by Peter Tsegas the Resident Director of Magnis Energy, which owns 30 km² SML with huge deposits of high purity graphite in an exclusive interview with the Guardian.

According to Tsegas, the resources of the project are expected to last 16 years, but more exploration shows that it could last for the next 40 years.

He said the company has so far spent nearly 250mn/- on implementing different community projects including construction and renovation of schools and clinics, provide science books for schools and supporting women activities.

He said Tanzania will therefore get recognition in the new graphite space and markets by major players in the green technology industry including Tesla, which last month signed agreement with the company to supply graphite.

"We are planning to provide training on farming activities and additional activities such as welding, mechanic, seam stressing to enable the surrounding community to provide services and products to the project," he said.

For more details, see interview on page 15

Silicon Valley Bank failures and next financial crisis

By John Power

THE collapse of Silicon Valley Bank (SVB) has sent shockwaves through financial and tech circles.

On Friday, United States regulators seized the assets of the Santa Clara, California-based bank after depositors began withdrawing funds en masse amid fears over the lender's financial health.

Since then, financial regulators around the world have raced to contain the fallout of SVB's collapse, the biggest bank failure in the US since 2008, and shore up confidence in the global financial system.

Why did SVB collapse?

As SVB's name suggests, the bank's business focused heavily on US technology startups. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the lender saw a surge in deposits as tech companies profited from providing entertainment and delivery services to people confined to their homes.

SVB invested much of this cash in US government bonds – traditionally one of the safest types of invest-

ment. SVB's troubles began when the US Federal Reserve started raising interest rates last year in response to soaring inflation, causing the value of those bonds to fall.

As economic conditions for the tech sector became more strained following the pandemic boom, many of SVB's customers began to draw on their funds to keep above water. Short on cash, SVB was forced to sell its bonds at big losses, prompting concerns about its financial health.

Within 48 hours, spooked depositors had withdrawn enough funds to cause the bank's collapse.

"SVB collapsed because of a stupid rookie mistake with their interest-rate-risk management: They invested short-term deposits into long-term bonds. When interest rates rose, the value of the bonds fell, wiping out the equity of the bank," James Angel, an expert on regulation of global financial markets at Georgetown University, told Al Jazeera.

"This is the same phenomenon that wiped out the US Savings and Loan industry in the 1980s. Some

people never learn."

Campbell R Harvey, a professor at Duke University's Fuqua School of Business, said that SVB's woes were a lesson in the need for banks to diversify their assets.

"It does seem that it catered to a particular clientele, and we all know that tech has taken a hit – and if you're undiversified, you'll take the hit also," Harvey told Al Jazeera.

"Your loan book needs to be diversified," Harvey added. "It's not obvious that this bank actually did this."

What has been the fallout of SVB's collapse so far?

Two days after the collapse of SVB, US regulators seized the assets of Signature Bank, a New York-based lender known for its business with the cryptocurrency sector, marking the third-largest bank failure in US history.

In an effort to stem the fallout, US regulators announced on Sunday they would guarantee all deposits at both lenders.

The Federal Reserve also unveiled a lending program, the Bank Term Funding Program (BTFFP), that aims

to bolster confidence in the financial system by giving banks the option to borrow directly from the Fed to avoid having to rely on loss-making bond sales.

US President Joe Biden has sought to assure the public the situation is contained, saying, "Americans can have confidence that the banking system is safe."

Nonetheless, bank shares, including those of the US "big four" – JPMorgan Chase, Bank of America, Wells Fargo, and Citibank – have dipped sharply amid fears of contagion across the financial sector.

First Republic Bank, a mid-tier bank based in San Francisco, California, saw its stock price plunge as much as 60 percent.

Bank shares in Europe and Asia have also taken a significant hit.

In the United Kingdom, financial authorities announced they had facilitated the sale of SVB's local unit to HSBC, Europe's biggest bank, in order to safeguard 6.7 billion pounds (\$8.1bn) in deposits.

Canadian regulators announced they had temporarily taken control of the

country's SVB unit, while Germany's Federal Financial Supervisory Authority said it had provisionally closed the local branch of the lender.

Could SVB's collapse cause a financial crisis like 2007-2008?

While the fallout of SVB's collapse is still playing out, economists broadly agree that its failure is markedly different from the implosion of financial institutions, such as Bear Stearns and Lehman Brothers, that precipitated the 2007-2008 global financial crisis.

Unlike institutions like Lehman Brothers, SVB's business was concentrated in one sector and had relatively little dealings with other banks.

"The SVB situation definitely has people worried but I don't think it's likely to turn into a Lehman type of situation, especially given how aggressively the Fed has intervened, including by promising to protect even uninsured deposits," David Skeel, professor of corporate law at the University of Pennsylvania Law School, told Al Jazeera.

The state of mortgage financing market in Tanzania and its challenges: Part one

THE Tanzanian housing sector's fast-growing demand is mainly driven by strong and sustained economic growth with GDP growth averaging 6-7 percent over the past decade and is one of the fastest growing economies on the African Continent with a projected GDP growth of 5.3 percent in 2023 according to World Bank and the African Development Bank (AfDB).

According to the last Tanzania Mortgage Market Update report of September 30th, 2022, published by Tanzania Mortgage Refinance Company (TMRC), the total mortgage portfolio balances amongst banks stood at 522.95bn/- equivalents to US\$225.46 million as compared to TZS 509.99 billion equivalents to US\$ 220.23 million reported on June 30th, 2022.

This means the mortgage market in Tanzania grew by 2.54 percent in the value of mortgage loans as of September 30th,

2022 from June 30th, 2022.

The ratio of outstanding mortgage debt to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) increased to 0.30 percent in September 2022 which makes our mortgage market to be among the smallest in the East Africa region. As of September 30th, 2022, thirty-two (32) banking institutions were offering mortgage loans, and the mortgage market was dominated by five top lenders, who commanded 64 percent of the market.

CRDB Bank Plc was a market leader commanding 37.07 percent of the mortgage market share, followed by Stanbic Bank (8.11 percent), Azania Bank (7.34 percent), NMB Bank Plc. (7.25 percent), and Exim Bank (4.50 percent).

According to National Housing Corporation (NHC), the Tanzanian housing demand is estimated at 200,000 houses annually and a total housing shortage of 3 million houses hence, as a



Kelvin Mkwawa

country we are having an acute shortage of affordable and quality housing. This implies that the demand for housing is extremely high but is constrained by many challenges. Addressing these challenges is critical to our economic growth as the housing sector can create jobs hence increasing wealth to people in that sector.

It is evident that the middle-income class is growing as the incomes are rising in the country but still most people cannot afford mortgage financing. In the series of two articles, I will discuss three challenges affecting mortgage financing in the country and the roles of the government and private sector to address those challenges:

Government Financial Role - It is crucial to note that the acceleration of the mortgage finance market is dependent on the strength of the overall economy. Thus, the Government's financial role must be clearly defined and should support the housing market whereby the balanced risks between the government and private sector are in place to accelerate the growth of the housing market. One of the main reasons why our mortgage finance market is the smallest in East Africa is the lack of local long-term funding to facilitate

the provision of mortgages. The Government has realized the importance of its role in advancing the mortgage market thus, it has undertaken various initiatives to respond to the concerns. First, the Government established the Tanzania Mortgage Refinance Company (TMRC) in 2010 to support the growth of the mortgage market. TMRC was created for the sole purpose of that and even though it has a positive effect on the market, it still has a long way to go to achieve its goal. As of September 30th, 2022, TMRC had extended loans worth 145.20bn/- (\$ 62.60 million) to fifteen (15) primary mortgage lenders (PML) through Refinancing and pre-financing mortgage loans.

The loans advanced by TMRC to PMLs were equivalent to 28 percent of the total outstanding mortgage debt hence a significant opportunity exists for TMRC to continue refinancing the remaining 72 percent of the

mortgage market portfolio. Secondly, the government has been working hard to develop capital markets so they can support the development of mortgage finance through local currency long-term financing and the development of a secondary mortgage finance market.

We have seen the efforts to raise capital that are starting to yield results such as the establishment of the Watumishi Housing investments fund and NHC joint venture policy and I believe more can be done. The secondary market will provide the banks with an outlet to adequately manage their exposure to mortgage financing.

Next week, I will discuss the remaining two challenges that affect the growth of mortgage financing in Tanzania.

Kelvin Mkwawa, MBA is a seasoned banker based in Dar es Salaam. He can be reached through Email address: Kelvin.e.mkwawa@gmail.com



By Katerina Liu

The appointment of Kazuo Ueda as the Bank of Japan's new governor in February, alongside two male deputy governors, has thrown into light the topic of gender equality - or lack of - at central banks. These appointments will set back progress for gender parity by at least another five years in an institution that does not have a good track record on this issue.

There has been some progress in improving female representation at the senior level in central banks globally. Contrary to Japan, Bank Indonesia has just appointed Filianingsih Hendarta as deputy governor and the rate-setting board has achieved gender balance. But there is much further to go.

Greater diversity in the workplace, not just for gender, introduces new perspectives and attitudes while avoiding echo chambers. Fresh perspectives encourage innovation. More specifically for central banks, inclusion really matters. If those at the senior level - and the rest of the institution - reflect the demographics of the country, then it ensures that monetary policy serves the whole population, not just a portion of it.

OMFIF's Gender Balance Index measures gender parity in central banks by scoring institutions based on the presence of men and women among high-level staff, weighted by seniority. The

Central banks are far from achieving gender balance

score for each institution is then calculated by taking the ratio of the female and male components, where perfect gender balance is given a score of 100.

According to last year's GBI, central banks have a long way to go to reach parity. The aggregate GBI score for Asia Pacific reflects the recent appointments by the Bank of Japan - the region's score only increased to 13.5 from 7.5 between 2017-22 (Figure 1). Globally, GBI scores have only risen to 31.6 from 30.8 over this period. Latin America and the Caribbean is the only region with consistent improvement but it is still far from a perfect score.

The path towards gender parity has not been linear. Since 2014, the number of female governors in central banks has only increased by one. Figure 2 shows a decline in female governors from 2014 before it starts to increase again in 2019. Mirroring gender balance scores, progress for the number of female governors is happening, but at an incremental and inconsistent pace. Central banks will have to do more to make it easier

for women to advance through the ranks to achieve gender balance.

To do so, central banks will need to focus on their internal policies, which will be explored in detail in this year's GBI report. OMFIF has surveyed 46 central banks on their recruitment practices, HR policies and gender equality initiatives. The findings of this survey will be released in April.

Preliminary analysis of the survey suggests that flexible work arrangements are the most commonly adopted policies among respondents - particularly remote work arrangements, which had already been widespread due to the pandemic. Parental leave is another promising result. All central banks have some form of policy in place, but they vary widely.

Paid leave can range from a couple of months to more than a year for mothers, while paternal paid leave can be anything between a day to a year. Flexible work and parental leave policies are crucial for providing flexibility and control over caring responsibilities, for both women and men. If

parental leave policies were more generous, it could ease the pressure of care on women, who could then be more likely to remain at work.

However, flexible work and parental care policies only help with one dimension of promoting female representation. Based on past GBI findings, there is a clear pipeline problem in promoting women to the top and central banks can do more to rectify this.

Quotas and targets for hiring entry-level staff or selecting senior management may help to ensure that women have a foot in the door. Pay gap assessments would shed light on whether women receive equal pay for equal work. Mentorships and leadership programmes can equip women with the skills to confidently navigate their careers. There are solutions to achieving gender balance - central banks first need to act.

Katerina Liu is a Research Analyst at Official Monetary and Financial Institution Forum (OMFF), an independent think tank for central banking, economic policy and public investment.

The underrated value of social networking

BY
GODWIN JAHA SEMUNYU



ONE of the biggest lessons from the Covid-19 pandemic is that we are, first and foremost, social creatures that thrive through relations.

More than ever, companies strive to put a human face through community outreach; buying decisions are increasingly influenced by word of mouth. Recruiters admit to preferring referral hires. Your network is indeed your net worth.

However, with the increased pressure to balance work-life demands, one can easily find excuses not to socialize and network. "It is draining, time-consuming, and awkward at times, plus I am not a people person," they say.

I am an introvert; networking is not for me.

Networking involves meeting people with common interests to establish, build and nurtures long-term, mutually beneficial relationships. It is not an opportunity to make new friends but to advance your professional and business goals.

However, unlike an agentic extrovert like myself, who can walk into a room full of people and start a conversation with a stranger. Introverts may find it extremely draining and intimidating. But all is not lost.

While it is impossible to sleep as an introvert and wake up as an extrovert, you can start slowly; the easiest way is to join various groups with similar interests - gym, jogging club, sports team, professional society, book club, Viccoba, to name but a few. Start with a smaller group and grow into it.

The old tricks of social gestures like complimenting someone's outfit or a book they are reading, introducing yourself first, and offering to help when you see them struggling will help you break the ice. Take it from there. The more you meet new people, the more you

build confidence. Sky is not the limit.

Is networking overrated?

Experts agree that the most connected people are often the most successful since frequent interaction with people from different spheres of life gives you a broader spectrum and open-mindedness.

Your open-mindedness and understanding teach you to become better. If you are an entrepreneur, networking provides support and solutions and access to new leads and markets. Study shows that 65% of new business comes from referrals, and 92% of people trust referrals from people they know.

For those looking for career growth, the burden is on you to take control of your career development in today's workforce. The more people you meet and get to know, the more people will know you and vouch for you. The notion of waiting until one is in a career transition to build relationships with other professionals is outdated.

Quality over quantity

You do not have to network with everyone. The size of your network doesn't matter - it is the quality that counts. Be intuitive to the relevance of your networking choices.

Additionally, remember to keep the old connections afloat. Calling, texting, emailing, or have coffee occasionally. A birthday or Christmas message will do. Recruit and retain.

From today onwards, keep the gadgets away whenever you are in public and access your networking opportunities. - Thank me later.

Godwin Jaha Semuny is a seasoned Marketer and Head of Corporate Affairs at NBC Bank (T). These are his personal views. He can be reached at: godwingodizo@gmail.com



Stanchart wealth unit assets rise to Sh148 billion

NAIROBI

STANDARD Chartered Bank Kenya grew its assets under management by 13 percent to Sh148 billion in 2022, helped by rising demand by Kenyans for alternative investments such as fixed income and mutual funds offered on the platform.

The bank earned Sh4.26 billion from the wealth unit during the year, up by 35 percent from Sh3.16 billion in 2021, highlighting the growing importance of the segment towards its non-funded income, which was up 19.6 percent growth to Sh11.3 billion.

The growth points to an increasing number of wealthy Kenyans who are turning to professional fund managers to look after their money, banking on professional expertise to cut risk and identify the best investment options.

The shift has also been informed by the relatively flat performance of other traditional asset classes such as equities and property in recent years due to factors such as Covid-19.

"People are diversifying, and are conscious that they do not want to put all their funds say in a fixed deposit or savings account ... we have seen a balance between existing clients who have continued to grow their wealth, and also new ones coming in," said Standard Chartered Kenya chief executive officer.

The assets have grown at an annual compound rate of 34 percent from Sh19 billion in 2016. Expansion of the wealth division offers StanChart an opportunity to grow and diversify earnings, with the business offering more stable revenue.

It also serves to build synergies with the banking operations, with the institution having catered to affluent clients for decades. Last year, the lender also introduced an online money market fund known as SC Shilingi Fund, which has attracted customers seeking investments of as low as Sh100.

The fund ended last year with assets under management of Sh1.27 billion, with the lender saying on Tuesday that 89 percent of those taking it up are new to investing through such products.

These alternative products also reflect the drive by banks to diversify their income mix beyond the traditional lending business and to protect their bottom line amid increased competition in the sector.

In the year to December, Stanchart reported that its net profit grew by 38 percent to Sh12.44 billion, driven by higher interest income and revenue from foreign exchange trading.

Peter Tsegas: Nachu project to put Tanzania on world's graphite space

LAST month, Magnis Energy Technology and its Tanzanian subsidiaries Uranex and Magnis Energy Technologies signed a contract with Tesla, to supply between 17,500 tonnes and 35,000 tonnes per annum of Anode Active Material (AAM) by February 2025 from its Nachu Graphite project based in Ruangwa district. The Guardian Reporter spoke to PETER TSEGAS (pictured right), the Resident Director of Magnis Energy on the economic importance of the project to local communities and the nation at large.

Tell us about Uranex and Magnis Energy Technologies. URANEX is a subsidiary mining company fully owned by Magnis Energy Technologies of Australia and its Nachu Graphite Project (NPG) in Ruangwa District, Lindi Region will become a well-recognized world-class graphite source.

What are Uranex's main activities in Tanzania?

The company is involved in the exploration and mining of graphite. It owns a 30 km² SML with huge deposits, of high purity graphite, in the Nachu area in Ruangwa district, in the Lindi region. The company has been conducting exploration activities since 2013. It has moved onto its construction phase now.

The resources of the Nachu Graphite Project are expected to last 16 years, but more exploration shows us that it could last for the next 40 years. 230,000 tons of graphite concentrate are expected to be produced per year.

What are the expected economic impacts of URANEX in the country as a whole?

The project will have enormous benefits for Tanzania since graphite is one of the minerals of the future. Flake

graphite is the dominant anode input for Electric Vehicle Batteries, and the world is on the transition to cleaner sources of energy.

What is more, it will have its economic and financial benefits trickle down to surrounding communities and the country at large through the provision of services and products by Tanzanian companies and local suppliers in Ruangwa.

We are expecting the development of the project to create about 1,600 jobs locally, mostly benefiting Tanzanians.

It has been ten years since the beginning of the Nachu Graphite Project, how has it been going?

First, we started with exploration activities after acquiring all necessary licenses, permits and approvals from responsible government authorities.

Despite the Covid pandemic, things have evolved and progressed. We are now in the construction phase of the project where the initial construction work have begun.

The project has resulted in land take and owners losing their homes and means of survival. How has the compensation process been?

The compensation process went very smoothly. Most of the 1,140 Project Affected People have been compensated, only a couple of them remain. An independent consultant was engaged to ensure that the compensation process met International Standards (IFC PS 5 as required by the World Bank). Also, the Chief Government Valuer was involved to ensure that the process was fair.

In the first phase, those who will need to be resettled are having better and high-quality houses built for them. In total, 59 houses are be-



ing built on 56 plots on land purchased by Uranex. Those houses will be handed over to the PAP's at the time of the relocation. These will cater for the people who have houses in the SML.

The area is not heavily populated, so few people had permanent structures on the site.

Resettlement has been a major issue; how has it been going?

As I said earlier, the area was not heavily populated, so it will be easy to relocate the people to the Resettlement village. In the next phases, we are planning to provide social services such as schools, health facilities, and marketplace amongst others.

In terms of job creation and skills development, how has the local community benefited?

We have always endeavored to provide jobs to people in the surrounding local communities when there are openings. In terms of skills development, we are planning to provide training on farming activities and additional activities such as welding, mechanic, seam stressing to enable the surrounding community to provide services and products to the project.

Also health and education is a principal requirement for the sustainability of the project.

Locally, we have seen Ru-

angwa grow tremendously. For instance, when the project was starting we used to receive basic supplies such as meat, chicken and vegetables from as far as Dar es Salaam, but now these products are sourced from within the surrounding communities. Uranex is proud to have been and will continue to be part of that growth.

Tell us about measures to control expected environmental and social impacts on the community?

During the development of the project, we will strive to use the cleanest source of energy available to reduce the impact on the environment and the surrounding communities. We have engaged discussions with the Tanzania Petroleum Development Corporation to construct a 90-kilometre natural gas pipeline from Mingoyo that will supply us with gas for our power plant.

We will also ensure that our trucks are fitted with LNG engines to reduce our carbon footprint on the environment.

What is more, our processing of graphite flakes does not require the use of hazardous and harsh chemicals, unlike the processing of many other minerals.

We will also try our best to mitigate the emission of dust in the areas surrounding the SML. We have a mining closure plan, as per requirements of the Tanzanian legal framework, which will require us to restore the area once the project is completed.

Besides the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in the Ruangwa District, what other CSR activities have URANEX done in the country?

The Nachu Graphite Project is yet to become fully operational and thus our CSR actions have mainly been

around Ruangwa District, in the Lindi Region, but we plan to roll out the activities throughout the country once we start the development of the mine.

In Ruangwa District, we have conducted various activities in areas such as education and health: We constructed and renovated schools and clinics, provided science books for secondary schools, supported many events like Women's Day celebrations, etc. in the district. We have spent nearly 250mn/- on such activities since our establishment in the region.

What are the main challenges that you're facing?

The main challenge we faced is accessing finance for the development of the project due to several factors including market demand and there are many projects across the world which are looking for funding, it is a very competitive world.

Of course there are infrastructure challenges which we are addressing and together with the government seeking to build and upgrade a lot of the existing infrastructure.

Now that you have signed a big contract with TESLA, what should we look forward to in the Nachu Graphite Project?

The deal comes at a critical juncture for both companies while Tanzania as a country is set to benefit tremendously in terms of investment, new revenues, technology transfer, and creation of well paying, high quality employment to Tanzanians due to the inherent level of an extended value chain.

Definitely exciting times ahead as Tanzania gets recognition in the new graphite space and markets by major players in the green technology industry.

Regional bank bosses grab 'bargain' stocks from SBV turmoil

NEW YORK

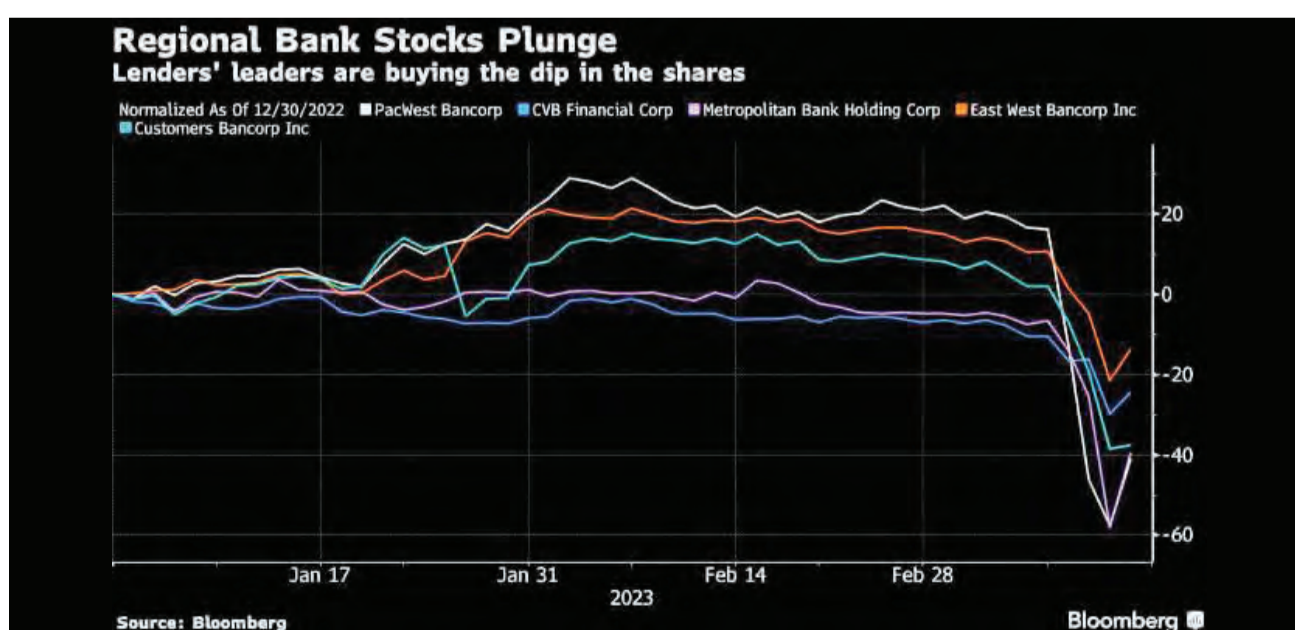
Regional bank leaders are snapping up shares of their companies' stocks, taking advantage of a selloff fueled by the fallout from Silicon Valley Bank's collapse.

More than 100 executives at lenders across the US, including PacWest Bancorp, Metropolitan Bank Holding Corp. and CVB Financial Corp., spent at least \$13.9 million combined boosting their stakes, according to data compiled by Bloomberg. Most of the transactions took place in the past few days.

Pershing Square Capital Management's Bill Ackman on Monday described the stocks as an "incredible bargain," with the KBW Regional Banking Index slumping 20 percent for the month through yesterday's close.

Many of the trades are already turning a profit as regional bank stocks rallied on Tuesday to erase part of the earlier rout.

That includes the \$1 million investment for Phillip D. Green, chief executive officer of Cullen/Frost Bankers Inc., who made one of the biggest disclosed bets. Green bought 9,500 shares of the Texas-based company for about \$106.60, according to a regulatory filing. The stock closed Tuesday at \$111.52, up about 4.6 percent from that price.



Green's purchases were to show confidence in the firm and as a "sign of support," said Bill Day, a spokesperson for Cullen/Frost.

East West Bancorp Inc. Chief Financial Officer Irene Oh bought nearly \$500,000 worth of stock on Monday, according to a filing. The Pasadena, California-based lender released a statement earlier that day reiterating its capital and balance sheet strength.

"Irene Oh's purchase is a strong signal about the strength of EWBC and the quality of our franchise," Julianna Balicka, the firm's director of investor relations and corporate finance, said in an email. "The selloff in bank stocks created a compelling entry point to buy."

Jay Sidhu, chairman of Customers Bancorp Inc., picked up about \$500,000 of the crypto-friendly

bank's stock on Monday, while President Sam Sidhu bought more than \$100,000 worth on Tuesday, according to a filing.

"Clearly, we have strong conviction in the organization," Sam Sidhu said by phone.

Metropolitan Bank Holding Corp. CEO Mark DeFazio also added shares, buying about \$500,000 worth through indirect ownership. Multiple

members of the New York-based lender's board also made purchases.

"I view these transactions as opportunistic following yesterday's significant selloff and these purchases also express a vote of confidence in their firms," Webush analyst David Chiverini said in an email.

Monday filings also showed PacWest CEO Paul Taylor bought about \$500,000 worth of shares on Thursday at an average price of \$22.20 per share. After plunging Friday and Monday, the stock gained 34 percent to close at \$13.05 on Tuesday.

"It's pretty rare to see that many insiders step in," Bruce Cox, founder of the Harrington Alpha Fund, said by phone. His firm took a long position in PacWest last week amid the sell-off, and added to it on Monday.

The relative strength index for the KBW Bank Index and its regional counterpart flashed their most oversold signal in two decades on Monday.

"Regional bank shares are climbing higher as if there's an 'all clear' signal," LPL Financial Chief Global Strategist Quincy Krosby said. "Questions remain whether there are risks still embedded on balance sheets, particularly if depositors continue to demand funds."

IQAir survey: Pakistan's Lahore ranked most polluted city

NEW DELHI

LAHORE in Pakistan jumped more than 10 places to become the city with the worst air in the world in 2022, according to an annual global survey by a Swiss maker of air purifiers.

The report published on Tuesday by IQAir also said that Chad in central Africa had replaced Bangladesh as the country with the most polluted air last year.

IQAir measures air quality levels based on the concentration of lung-damaging airborne particles known as PM2.5. Its annual survey is widely cited by researchers and government organizations.

Lahore's air quality worsened to 97.4 micrograms of PM2.5 particles per cubic meter from 86.5 in 2021, making it the most polluted city globally.

India's Bhiwadi, on Delhi's outskirts had pollution levels at 92.7, and Delhi followed close behind at 92.6.

The World Health Organization (WHO) recommends a maximum PM2.5 concentration of 5 micrograms per cubic meter.

While Chad had an average level of 89.7, Iraq, which had the second most polluted air for a country, averaged 80.1.

Pakistan, which had two of the five cities with the worst air in 2022, stood third in the country-wide ranking at 70.9, followed by Bahrain at 66.6.

Bangladesh's air quality improved from 2021, when it was tagged as the country with the worst air. It is ranked fifth in the latest report, with PM2.5 levels coming down to 65.8 from 76.9.

India has some of the most polluted cities in the world, but ranked eighth in the latest report, with PM2.5 levels at 53.3.

The report said India and Pakistan experienced the worst air quality in the Central and South Asian region, where nearly 60 percent of the population lives in areas where the concentration of PM2.5 particles is at least seven times higher than WHO's recommended levels.

It said one in 10 people globally were living in an area where air pollution poses a threat to health.

The US Pacific territory Guam had cleaner air than any country, with a PM2.5 concentration of 1.3, while Canberra had the cleanest air for a capital city, with 2.8.

The index was prepared using data from more than 30,000 air quality monitors in more than 7,300 locations in 131 countries, territories and regions.

More than 2,000 Afghan evacuees in detention in UAE

WASHINGTON

HUMAN RIGHTS Watch yesterday accused Emirati authorities of arbitrarily detaining for more than 15 months as many as 2,700 Afghan evacuees who have no legal pathways to refugee status or resettlement elsewhere.

Many of those housed in Emirates Humanitarian City are suffering from depression and other psychological ailments, have no access to legal counsel, and have inadequate educational services for their children, a Human Rights Watch report said.

"Living conditions have also deteriorated significantly, with detainees describing overcrowding, decay of infrastructure, and insect infestations," the report said of the facility in Abu Dhabi.

The report said Human Rights Watch received no responses to requests for comment from the UAE ministries of interior and foreign affairs.

The US State Department office that handles the relocation of Afghans told the group in a letter that the US commitment to resettling eligible Afghans - including those in Emirates Humanitarian City - is an "enduring one", the report said.

Emirati officials previously have said the UAE offered to temporarily host thousands of Afghan refugees evacuated after the Taliban takeover of Kabul in August 2021.

The UAE, they have said, was committed to ensuring Afghan evacuees lived in safety, security and dignity, and Abu Dhabi was working with the US embassy to re-settle them.

Private evacuation groups and the Emirati military flew thousands of Afghans into the UAE during the chaotic US withdrawal from Afghanistan that ended 20 years of war. Several private groups continued chartered evacuation flights after the US departure.

The evacuees were housed in Emirates Humanitarian City and Tasameem Workers City - apartment complexes converted into refugee housing - and many eventually were cleared for resettlement in the United States, Canada and other countries.

Between 2,500 and 2,700 Afghans, however, did not qualify for resettlement elsewhere and as of January remained in what the report called "arbitrary detention".

"Emirati authorities have kept thousands of Afghan asylum seekers locked up for over 15 months in cramped, miserable conditions with no hope of progress on their cases," said Joey Shea, Human Rights Watch's UAE researcher.

Sixteen Afghans interviewed late last year by the group said they could not freely leave the site, with security guards or minders watching them closely on hospital visits and during the only shopping mall visit they have been permitted. The report said Emirati authorities are not abiding by international law and UN guidelines for dealing with asylum seekers and migrants, making their detention "arbitrary".

The UAE is not a party to the UN Refugee Convention. Human Rights Watch called on the UAE to immediately release the Afghans, allow them access to "fair and individualized" processing to determine their refugee status and protection requirements, and permit them to live where they want until their cases are resolved.

The organization urged the State Department to use its leverage to win the release of the Afghans and expedite any applications for asylum or humanitarian parole.

Agencies

How China contributed to global anti-COVID fight, economic recovery

BEIJING

THE world community recently marked three years since the World Health Organization (WHO) called the COVID-19 outbreak a pandemic.

Global observers said that over the years China, from saving lives to minimizing the impact on people's daily life, has succeeded in balancing the fight against COVID-19 with economic and social development, enabling the country to continue serving as an engine for the global economy.

By assisting other countries in fighting the pandemic and calling for concerted efforts to build a global community of health for all, China has also made significant contributions to global health governance, they said.

PEOPLE-CENTERED PHILOSOPHY

China has succeeded in fighting COVID-19, said Magdy al-Dahshan, former vice dean of the Faculty of Medicine of Egypt's Al-Azhar University. "The huge population of China was a challenge, but China has taken strong and precautionary measures in order to protect its people."

According to data released by the WHO, as of March 1, there are more than 758 million confirmed cases and more than 6.85 million COVID-related deaths in the world. China is among the countries with the lowest rates of severe illness and mortality.

Over the past three years, China has been adjusting its epidemic response in light of the evolving situation. It has also invested heavily to expand its treatment capacity and ensure medical supplies in the country's less-developed rural areas. Hospitals spared no effort in treating the elderly and other vulnerable people.

Beyond its border, China has supplied aid to other countries and shared its experience in battling the coronavirus. So far, it has provided anti-pandemic supplies to 153 countries and 15 international organizations and co-hosted more than 300 exchange activities on epidemic prevention and control and medical treatment with over 180 countries and regions and more than 10 international institutions.

"The Chinese government has been extremely consistent with its people-centered principle in its fight against COVID-19. Its main goal has been to preserve every life," said Eduardo Regalado, a researcher at the International Policy Research Center of Cuba.

A BOOSTER TO WORLD ECONOMY

In the last three years, China has effectively coordinated epidemic response with economic and social development, with an average economic growth of 4.5 percent from 2020 to 2022, outpacing the world average of around 2 percent. It has reinforced its status as an engine for the global economy.

According to a survey by the China Council for the Promotion of International Trade, 99.4 percent of foreign enterprises surveyed are confident about China's economic prospects in 2023.

"Growth in China is projected to rise to 5.2 percent in 2023, reflecting improving mobility," the International Monetary



Photo taken on March 29, 2022 shows packages of Sinovac COVID-19 vaccine at the Phnom Penh International Airport in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. (Photo by Ly Lay/Xinhua)

Fund said in an update to its World Economic Outlook report.

Despite the pandemic, China's GDP reached a record high of 121 trillion yuan (17.5 trillion U.S. dollars) in 2022 after the country broke the thresholds of 100 trillion yuan in 2020 and 110 trillion yuan in 2021, according to official data.

Khairy Tourk, professor of economics with the Stuart School of Business at the Illinois Institute of Technology in Chicago, hailed China's COVID-19 policies which have saved millions of lives as a significant factor behind the revival of the Chinese economy.

"You have healthy workers coming back to work in factories, healthy environment. The COVID-19 policies were the best proof that it is good to have short-term pain for long-term gain," he said.

Meanwhile, international investment banks and financial institutions generally believe that China will continue to be the "engine" and "stabilizer" driving the recovery of the world economy.

According to the General Administration of Customs, China's total goods trade reached a record 42.07 trillion yuan (6.2 trillion dollars) in 2022, up 7.7 percent year on year, topping the world for six consecutive years. Exports rose 10.5 percent to 23.97 trillion yuan (3.5 trillion dollars), and imports rose 4.3 percent to 18.1 trillion yuan (2.6 trillion dollars).

Describing China as one of the largest driving forces of the global economy, Russian Finance Minister Anton Siluanov said

that after optimizing the COVID-19 policy, China will help resist the global economic downturn with its rapid development.

China's contributions were reflected in its stable production and robust exports that had supported a global economic recovery on the supply side and through sound macroeconomic policies conducive to the country's steady economic growth and the world, said Liang Guoyong, a senior economist of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development.

FOR GLOBAL HEALTH, WELFARE

In a phone conversation with Ma Xiaowei, director of China's National Health Commission in mid-January, WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus commended China's efforts to cope with COVID-19 and thanked China for maintaining long-term technical exchanges and sharing epidemiological information and data with the WHO.

The two sides agreed to continue to strengthen technical exchanges and cooperation on epidemiological response and work together to protect global health security.

Since the onset of the pandemic, China has been calling for solidarity with the international community. The country has firmly advanced international cooperation against COVID-19, calling for building a global community of health for all.

In the past three years, China has been sharing COVID-19 information with the

WHO and countries across the world. China was the first to identify the pathogen and publicize key information including the genome sequencing of the virus. It also set up a technical exchange mechanism with the WHO.

China is also the first country to propose COVID-19 vaccines as a global public good, support vaccine intellectual property rights exemption, and champion cooperation on vaccine production with developing countries, which has injected strong impetus into bridging the global immunization gap.

During the pandemic, vaccine inequity jeopardized global efforts in fighting the virus, said Romina Sudack, a member of the Study Group on China and Argentina of the National University of Rosario.

However, China has provided millions of doses of vaccines to other countries, which have been the most readily available vaccines for people in developing nations, she said, stressing that China has been implementing the vision of a community with a shared future for mankind with concrete actions.

"I have been impressed by China's active participation in promoting global health with a shared future. Chinese leadership under President Xi Jinping has focused on pursuing the greater good and shared interests across the world, which has boosted China's efforts in maintaining good cooperation in global health," said Emery Nzirabatinya, a Rwandan international relations expert.

Xinhua

China lauded for its constructive role in promoting resumption of ties between Saudi Arabia, Iran

CHINA, Saudi Arabia and Iran recently reached an agreement in Beijing and released a joint statement announcing that Saudi Arabia and Iran have agreed to re-establish diplomatic relations.

This dialogue marked a successful practice of the Global Security Initiative, and the reconciliation between the two major countries in the Middle East has been welcomed by the international society. It is believed that China has played a constructive role in well managing today's international hotspot issues.

The United Nations spokesman Stephane Dujarric applauded the agreement and praised China's role in the process, saying "good neighborly relations" between Iran and Saudi Arabia are "essential" for the stability of the Gulf region.

The Arab Parliament noted the agreement not only helps recover stability and solve crises in the Middle East but also is conducive to safeguarding peace for all people in the world.

Saudi Arabian Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud said on social media that Saudi Arabia supports seeking political settlements and dialogues. He noted that countries in the region have a shared future and common interests, which makes it necessary for them to join together to build a model of prosperity and stability for their peoples to enjoy.

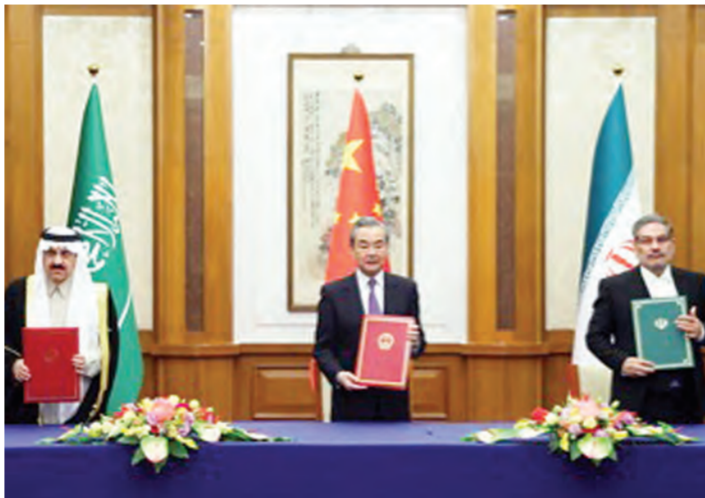
"Clearing up the misunderstandings and looking to the future in Tehran-Riyadh relations will definitely lead to the development of regional stability and security and expansion of cooperation," said Secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council Ali Shamkhani.

He appreciated China's constructive role in supporting the development of relations between the two countries.

Pakistani Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari called the resumption of diplomatic ties between Iran and Saudi Arabia "fantastic news."

As a host of the dialogue, China has always played a constructive role in promoting the settlement of international issues and won trust and recognition from relevant countries, he noted, adding that China's efforts are laudable and the country has demonstrated its leadership role in resolving disputes and encouraging solidarity.

Lebanese Foreign Minister Abdallah Bou Habib said Saudi Arabia and Iran's agreement to resume diplomatic relations will exert positive impacts on the region. He



On March 10, 2023, a joint trilateral statement was signed by the People's Republic of China, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and the Islamic Republic of Iran. (Photo courtesy of China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs)

called on Arabs to engage in an Arab-Iranian dialogue based on respect for the sovereignty of states, non-interference in their internal affairs, and good neighborliness. He also hailed China and other countries for their efforts on related issues.

Iraqi Prime Minister's Media Office said in a statement that the agreement between Saudi Arabia and Iran will promote harmony among Islamic countries, contribute to regional peace and stability and create more opportunities for regional development and prosperity.

Yemeni government said constructive dialogues and peace talks are the best approach to settling disputes and promoting peace for regional countries. It is hoped that the agreement between Saudi Arabia and Iran can alleviate tensions in the Middle East and help the region achieve stability and peace at an early date.

Member of the Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs Diya Alhelmy said the agreement between Saudi Arabia and Iran demonstrates China's wisdom and major country responsibility, adding that it has set a good example of settling disputes through peaceful means and made positive and admirable contributions to solving regional hotspot issues.

Hani Farid Wofaa, editor-in-chief of the Saudi Arabian newspaper Al Riyadh, said dialogues are the best approach to responding to the concerns of all relevant parties, and Saudi Arabia and Iran's decision to resume diplomatic relations was in response to China's initiative for developing good neighborly relations between the two countries.

Respecting the sovereignty of states and not interfering in the internal affairs of states remains an important principle that must be upheld by the two countries in resuming ties, and their resumption of diplomatic relations will surely place positive impacts on the stability of their own, of the region, and of the world at large, the editor-in-chief added.

Professor Seyyed Mohammad Marandi with the University of Tehran said China has played a constructive role in promoting the resumption of diplomatic ties between Iran and Saudi Arabia. China's active mediation brings countries closer and contributes to regional security and stability, he noted, adding that dialogues are conducive to promoting peace, stability and people's wellbeing.

People's Daily

Russian ambassador views US drone's Black Sea flight as provocation

WASHINGTON

THE reconnaissance mission of the MQ-9 unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) of the United States above the Black Sea was a provocation, Russian Ambassador to the US Anatoly Antonov has said.

"The aircraft was flying with its transponders off, and it entered the zone of the special military operation.

It [the information about the zone] was made public via international channels. We, Russia, have warned everyone about it. I think this was a real provocation," he told reporters after consultations at the US Department of State, where the diplomat was invited over the incident.

"They provoked us to take a certain action, which would allow them to accuse Russia and the Russian military of being non-professional," the Russian diplomat said, answering to a question from TASS.

In Antonov's words, US Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs Karen Donfried expressed US concerns over the incident during these consultations.

"The US side has voiced its protest over what they described as unprofessional actions of the Russian side," the diplomat said.

When asked whether it was the first incident in which a US aircraft was spotted near the Russian border, flying with its transponders turned off, the ambassador said the question should be referred to "our colleagues from the Defense Ministry."

He reaffirmed that the Russian fighter jets did not use weapons against the US aircraft.

"I would like to stress that Russian pilots acted in a very professional manner. There was no contact, no use of weapons on the part of our fighter jets," Antonov added.

Earlier, the Russian Defense

Ministry said that Russian airspace control systems have detected an American MQ-9 unmanned aerial vehicle on Tuesday, flying over the Black Sea near the Crimean Peninsula towards the state border of the Russian Federation. The drone flew with its transponders off, violating the boundaries of the temporary airspace regime established for the special military operation, communicated to all users of international airspace, and published in accordance with international standards.

The ministry added that as a result of quick maneuvering, the drone went into an unguided flight with a loss of altitude and collided with the water surface. The ministry stressed that the Russian aircraft did not use on-board weapons, did not come into contact with the unmanned aerial vehicle, and returned safely to their home airfield.

MQ-9 Reaper is a modular reconnaissance and strike unmanned aerial vehicle developed by General Atomics Aeronautical Systems. It is equipped with a turboprop engine and can develop a speed of more than 400 kilometer per hour.

The maximal flight duration is 24 hours. The drone is capable of carrying air-to-surface and air-to-air missiles, and laser-guided bombs.



The winners and losers from Taifa Stars' AFCON Qualifiers' squad

By Correspondent Michael Mwebe

TAIFA Stars head coach Adel Amrouche has made his 31-man squad for the 2023 African Cup of Nations Qualifiers double-header against Uganda public.

The national side has unsurprisingly thrown up praise, debate, and criticism left right, and center.

A healthy mix of experienced heads and youngsters will be involved for Taifa Stars as they look to retain hope of qualifying for the 34 edition of the African Cup of Nations finals in Ivory Coast next year.

Here, The Guardian takes a look at the winners and losers from Amrouche's first squad as Tanzania ahead of the back-to-back games later this month.

Winner - Bakari Mwanjeto

The signs were not good for Bakari Mwanjeto when he was left out of the national squad for the October friendlies after a drop in form for his club, Young Africans, alias Yanga.

It was a telling omission, having been an important member of the group since making his debut in 2020.

A much-improved end to his club season has seen him restored to the national squad and he is likely to continue partnering with his clubmate, Dickson Job, in defense.

Winner - Feisal Salum

So important is the midfielder for Taifa Stars that he has been named in the squad, despite having not played competitive football since December 24 due to a legal tussle with his club, Yanga.

The technical bench has taken a big gamble which has drawn up strong responses of both praise and criticism.

Feisal has been a lynchpin of the midfield in recent times and will be a starter if fit.



Taifa Stars' new head coach Adel Amrouche (L), chats with his assistant, Hemed Suleiman 'Morocco', when the former was unveiled as the team's new gaffer in Dar es Salaam recently. PHOTO: COURTESY OF TANZANIA FOOTBALL FEDERATION

Winner - Yahya Mbegu

The 22-year-old is a surprise inclusion in Taifa Stars' bigger group but has been rewarded for an impressive season for Ihefu SC, which followed spells at Polisi Tanzania and Geita Gold FC.

The former Simba B outfit's left full-back has started 22 of 25 Premier League games for both Geita Gold FC and Ihefu SC this season.

He has attracted interest from Simba SC who are looking for an option that will give competition to Mohamed Hussein, the default number one choice in the outfit's backline.

Winner - Ibrahim Bacca

The Zanzibar-born central defender is a fringe player at Yanga but has not looked out of place when called to action by the club's head coach Nasreddine Nabi.

Bacca, however, is also surprised by his inclusion in the Taifa Stars squad.

Loser - Shomari Kapombe

Kapombe looked like a sure-fire bet to be in Amrouche's squad as he played a crucial role in the 2022/23 CAF Champions League Group Stage games for Simba SC.

However, he has been axed at a time when his form at the club level is well above par.

His place in the first team is likely to be taken by his namesake, Kibwana Shomari, of Yanga.

Loser - Sixtus Sabilo

Despite scoring nine goals in the 2022/23 NBC Premier League for Mbeya City FC so far this term, Sabilo was left out of the squad - but he will no doubt have his eyes on future opportunities.

The uncapped player is only six goals behind the league's top scorer, Fiston Mayele of Yanga.

No other Tanzanian has scored more Premier League goals than Sabilo this season, but even netting after Amrouche's appoint-

ment has not been enough to convince the technical bench.

Tanzania's forwards include Mbwana Samatta, Simon Msuva, and Kelvin, all of whom play abroad, making it difficult for Sabilo to get a crack in the squad.

Loser - Mohamed Hussein

The left full-back is enjoying his best season in quite some time for Simba SC and has amassed five assists in 23 league appearances, which makes it strange indeed that he has been omitted from the Taifa Stars squad.

However, Hussein did not cover himself in glory in his last appearance for Taifa Stars against Uganda's Cranes when the two teams locked horns in the African Nations Championship (CHAN) qualifiers' match played at Benjamin Mkapa Stadium.

Cranes' youngster, Travis Mutyaba, made the most of the fullback's mistake to score the all-important goal for the Ugandan squad.

Switzerland Embassy pledges to support Tanzania's culture and arts sectors



Deputy Head of Mission for Switzerland's Embassy in Tanzania, Leo Nascher (L), listens to Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Culture, Arts, and Sports Said Yakubu, after the former visited the latter's office in Dodoma recently. PHOTO: CORRESPONDENT

By Correspondent Cheji Bakari, Tanga

SWITZERLAND'S Embassy in Tanzania has pledged to fully cooperate with the Ministry of Culture, Arts, and Sports in expertise and consultation, as well as linking the ministry with international culture and arts stakeholders.

The cooperation targets to develop the sectors which offer employment to youths.

Deputy Head of Mission for Switzerland's Embassy in Tanzania, Leo Nascher, made such a commitment when the official met Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Culture, Arts, and Sports Said Yakubu at the latter's office in Dodoma recently.

Nascher also doubles as Head

of Culture and Arts International Relations Unity between Switzerland and Tanzania.

He stated that Switzerland's Embassy in Tanzania is one of the Culture Development Sector Platform's partners made up of various embassies.

The official noted the initiative is currently headed by Netherlands and Switzerland as co-chairmen, hence, his country will use such an opportunity to link Tanzania with international culture and arts stakeholders to develop the sectors.

Yakubu explained the government's intention to supervise culture, arts, and sports sectors that offer youths employment.

According to Yakubu, the youths have a substantial con-

tribution to economic growth in the country.

Yakubu revealed they will look into finding ways for exchanging experiences and professionalism in the sectors.

The official moreover held talks with Tanzania Basketball Federation (TBF) president Michael Kadebe and stated that the government is out to monitor and develop priority sports codes, football, athletics, boxing, netball, swimming, and basketball to bring productivity in the sports sector in the country.

Kadebe paid a courtesy call and introduced himself before the Permanent Secretary after the latter was appointed by President Samia Suluhu Hassan to hold the title.

"The ministry's efforts and plans focus on sports infrastructures and leisure spots in Dar es Salaam and Dodoma," the Permanent Secretary stated.

"The projects include renovating Benjamin Mkapa Stadium and constructing a sports arena in Dar es Salaam with the capacity to host 15,000 people, there is as well construction of a sports arena in Dodoma with the capacity to host 16,000 people," Yakubu noted.

Kadebe explained that currently TBF is organizing and coordinating basketball tournaments in all regions of Tanzania to get the national champion. The TBF leader also visited Deputy Permanent Secretary, Nicholas Mkapa.

Simba leadership lauds Taifa Stars' selection

By Correspondent Nassir Nchimbi

SIMBA SC's leadership has acknowledged the decision by Tanzania's national soccer squad 'Taifa Stars' head coach Adel Amrouche to leave out several senior players in the national team.

Amrouche made his squad public ahead of the 2023 Africa Cup of Nations qualifiers' double-header match against Uganda's Cranes slated for this month.

The two teams will lock horns in the first leg at Suez Canal Stadium, Ismailia, on March 24 and the rematch has been slated for March 27 at Benjamin Mkapa Stadium in Dar es Salaam.

Mzamiru Yassin is the only Simba SC outfield player to make it into the Taifa Stars selection, with Msimbazi Street outfit's goalkeepers, Beno Kakolanya and Aishi Manula, also selected.

Shocking news among soccer supporters in Tanzania is the absence of right back, Shomari Kapombe, and left fullback, Mohamed Hussein, both playing for Simba SC, in Taifa Stars.

Kapombe and Hussein are the leading defenders in assists in this season's NBC Premier League.

The Taifa Stars' provisional squad will begin camp in Dar es Salaam at the end of this week.

Simba SC Information and Communication Manager, Ahmed Ally, said the decision by the new Taifa Stars' head coach to leave the players is, for the Msimbazi Street outfit, correct because the squad needs them this time.

He pointed out that despite recognizing the ability of the two players in the national team's roles, Taifa Stars' head coach has seen that it is time for them to give room for other footballers.

They will for that matter use the opportunity to continue working on the outfit's plans to win the 2022/23 CAF Champions League's Group C game against Guinea's Horoya Athletic Club, set to take place in Dar es Salaam on March 18.

"We are happy to see that Mohamed Hussein and Shomari Kapombe will have more time to concentrate and the club's duties," Ally noted.

Ally revealed: "They are matured enough to cope with absence from

the Taifa Stars squad... this makes them have a good time to serve Simba SC, especially in our Saturday match against Horoya AC."

"Kapombe will have time to prepare for the club duels due to having recently suffered from frequent injuries," Ally pointed out.

"I also still trust their ability and I believe they will return to the national team," he noted.

"These two are experienced players who realize their potential of being absent from the national team stars are yeast for them to earn their next selection."

Simba SC will welcome Horoya Athletic Club on Saturday for their quarterfinals decider.

Should Simba SC win, the squad will automatically finish second in Group C and book a place in the last eight.

Tanzania will head to Egypt to face Uganda on March 23 before the return duel against the same opponent takes place at Benjamin Mkapa Stadium in Dar es Salaam on March 27.

Taifa Stars' players with their clubs in brackets are keepers Aishi Manula (Simba SC), Beno Kakolanya (Simba SC), and Metacha Mnata (Young Africans).

Kibwana Shomari (Young Africans), Datusi Peter (Kagera Sugar), Yahya Mbegu (Ihefu SC), David Luhende (Kagera Sugar), Dickson Job (Young Africans), Bakari Mwanjeto (Young Africans), Abdallah Mfuko (Kagera Sugar), Ibrahim Baka (Young Africans), and Haji Mnonga (Aldershot Town United, England) are players in the defensive area.

Mudathir Yahya (Young African), Sospeter Bajana (Azam), Mzamiru Yassin (Simba), Yusuph Kagoma (Singida Big Stars), Ramadhani Makame (Bodrumspor, Turkey), Feisal Salum (Young Africans), Ally Msengi (Swallows, South Africa), Himid Mao (Ghazi El Mahalla SC, Egypt), and Khalid Habib (KMKM FC) make the midfield.

The squad also has forwards Anuary Jabir (Kagera Sugar), Simon Msuva (Al-Qadsiyah-Saudi Arabia), Mbwana Samatta (KRC Genk-Belgium), Novatus Dismas (Zulte Waregem-Saudi Arabia), Kelvin John (KRC Genk-Belgium), Ben Starkie (Basford United-England), Abdulhamis Suleiman (Azam), Edmund John (Geita Gold FC), and Said Khamis (Al-Fujairah-UAE).

KMC FC all out to avoid relegation, says Hitimana

By Correspondent Nassir Nchimbi

KINONDONI Municipal Council FC head coach Thierry Hitimana is optimistic to see to it the outfit hold on to its place in next season's Premier League football with five games to go this season.

The Kinondoni Municipal Council-owned club came out victorious in its previous game to end the eight-match winless run.

The squad, popularly known as 'Kino Boys' registered its first win against Kagera Sugar on March 9 to end its less impressive run.

The Dar es Salaam outfit, on Friday, will welcome Geita Gold FC at Uhuru Stadium in the countdown for league survival.

Kinondoni Municipal Council FC currently sits 12th in the league log after 25 games, winning six encounters and collecting 26 points in the process with no guarantee for league survival. Hitimana said they realize they are in a difficult time but they will fight the remaining games to be safe.

"We have a lot of work to do due to the existing games and the position we are in, the remaining games will be like the finals," the

Rwandan coach noted.

"We believe that we will get a good result, winning one game after eight games have brought back a sense of confidence among the players which was lost for a long time," Hitimana pointed out.

"To realize the importance of playing top-flight football we need to keep winning games to ensure survival."

"Our victory against Kagera Sugar puts us in a good position after having a 10-day rest the prayers are back focused and I'm pleased to see the hunger of each player during training," the tactician added.

"We had an injury crisis among our players but I'm happy I'm slowly gaining my players back," Hitimana noted.

Speaking on their upcoming game against Geita Gold FC, Hitimana said: "It is going to be a tough game because we are facing the team that has lost two consecutive matches and they are eager to return to winning ways."

"Kinondoni Municipal Council FC is prepared, but we are targeting to come out with a good result to improve our chances in the league standings," the coach revealed.

Arteta won't compromise on Arsenal's bid for Europa and Premier League glory

LONDON

MIKEL Arteta insists Arsenal will not down tools in the Europa League to help their bid to win a first Premier League title for 19 years.

Arteta's Premier League leaders sit five points clear of second placed Manchester City with 11 games left.

Bowing out of the Europa League could aid the Gunners' hopes of holding onto the lead in the title race as it would allow more recovery and preparation time.

But Arteta does not share that view because the Arsenal boss is trying to restore a winning culture to a club mired in mediocrity for much of the past two decades.

Arsenal host Sporting Lisbon in the second leg of their Europa League last 16 clash today with the tie delicately balanced after a 2-2 draw in Portugal last week.

"Our priority is the two competitions," Arteta said.

"The best way to prepare for any competition is to win the previous match and having the confidence and the proper emotion to approach the next game."

Arteta's philosophy has so far been proved right.

Arsenal have won six and drawn one of their seven Premier League games immediately following their Europa League matches this season.

Despite arriving back in London in the early hours of Friday morning, the visitors cruised to a 3-0 win at Fulham on Sunday with the game won by half-time.

It is master against the apprentice in the Premier League title fight as Arteta takes on his former boss in City manager Pep Guardiola.

Arteta was Guardiola's assistant for three years between 2016 and 2019.

The influence of Guardiola is clear to see Arsenal's style of play under Arteta, but also in the mentality the Spaniard is trying to instill.

- Winning 'addiction' -

City lifted the League Cup for four consecutive seasons under Guardiola between 2018 and 2021.

Rather than preferring a less congested fixture schedule, the City boss believes that winning trophies is an "addiction."

The FA Cup is where Arsenal have been able to get their hit over the past 19 years, winning the competition five times, including in Arteta's first season in charge.

But Arsenal have only won one European trophy in their history - the 1993/94 Cup Winners' Cup.

Arteta is desperate to change that appalling record for a club of Arsenal's size and is not willing to compromise despite the risk his young squad could run out of gas in the final months of the season.

If Arsenal are to make it to the final in Budapest on May 31, they will have to progress past a stellar cast of big names in Europe's second tier competition.

Manchester United have one foot in the quarter-finals after a comprehensive 4-1 win over Real Betis at Old Trafford.

Juventus still have work to do when they travel to Freiburg defending a slender 1-0 first leg lead.

Six-time winners Sevilla may be fighting a relegation battle in La Liga but are always a threat in the knockout stages of the Europa League and take a 2-0 lead to Istanbul against Fenerbahce.

Jose Mourinho led Roma to their first European trophy in 61 years by lifting the Europa Conference League last season.

The Italian giants are also well-placed to reach the last eight after beating Real Sociedad 2-0 at home last week.

AFP

Haaland's five-goal haul a warning to Man City's Champions League rivals



LONDON

MANCHESTER City are into the Champions League quarter-finals for a sixth consecutive season, but Erling Haaland's five-goal haul in a 7-0 destruction of RB Leipzig put Europe on warning that this time may be different for the Premier League champions.

Pep Guardiola admitted before Tuesday's last 16, second leg that his reign at City will be defined by either winning or failing to win the Champions League despite his side's dominance of the Premier League in recent

years.

Seven years on from Guardiola's arrival, City are still waiting for their first European crown.

That is why they pushed the boat out on agents' fees and wages to win the race to sign Haaland from Borussia Dortmund for a bargain £51 million (\$62 million) last summer thanks to the Norwegian's buyout clause.

In just 35 games Haaland has already rewritten City's history books by scoring 39 goals in a single season.

More Champions League landmarks were reached on Tuesday as Haaland's five goals equalled the record

shared by Lionel Messi and Luiz Adriano for the most in a Champions League game.

In the process the 22-year-old also became the youngest player to pass 30 in Europe's premier club competition with 32 in just 25 appearances.

"I was so tired after my celebrations," said Haaland. "My super strength is scoring goals."

City have not always possessed that clinical edge when it has mattered in the latter stages of the Champions League.

Missed chances have been a common theme of Guardiola's European exits by the finest of mar-

gins.

"He was so hungry," said RB Leipzig boss Marco Rose, who coached Haaland at Dortmund.

"He scored goals with the foot, with the head, he won second balls, he made deep runs. It all looked really simple tonight. It was a special night for him."

"It would be boring" - It could have been even more special had Guardiola not withdrawn Haaland with 25 minutes to go.

"I told him I would love to score a double hat-trick, but what can I do?" added Haaland.

Guardiola replied by joking his star striker's life

"would be boring" if he broke all the records before his 23rd birthday.

But what both player and manager have in common is a desire to finally make City European champions.

Despite Haaland's stunning statistics, there have still been teething problems in his first season in England.

At times he has cut a frustrated figure as runs in behind went unnoticed by his teammates in Premier League defeats at Manchester United and Tottenham.

But Guardiola has also insisted that Haaland adjusts to City's style by becoming an all-round striker just as capable of linking the play as of predatory finishes inside the box.

"Today he scored five goals and I think he had 30 or 35 ball contacts. This is what we were looking for because we had the feeling when you are involved in the game defensively, offensively, when the ball comes to score a goal, you are more precise," Guardiola said.

"He can do it, but it is difficult to score goals when you don't touch the ball for 40 or 50 minutes."

"Sometimes it's his fault because sometimes he doesn't move... but the other (times) it is our fault where we didn't find him."

The fear for City's opponents at home and abroad is that those minor issues may have been ironed out in time for the final and most decisive three months of the season.

Meanwhile, RB Leipzig defender Benjamin Henrichs said his side were "eaten up" by an Erling

Haaland-led Manchester City who romped to a 7-0 home victory to reach the Champions League last eight on Tuesday.

Haaland scored five goals, including a first half hat-trick, as City blew the German visitors out of the water to qualify 8-1 on aggregate.

Henrichs was at a loss to explain how his side, who came into the match on level pegging from the first leg, could lose so convincingly.

"I think we were eaten up out there," he said. "I've never lost 7-0 in my career. It's a totally brutally bitter evening for us."

Henrichs said Haaland, who moved from Bundesliga side Borussia Dortmund to Manchester City last season, dominated Leipzig with his physicality.

"He's a brutally physical player. He's difficult to defend and brings so much to the game."

"The way he played today says a lot about his quality."

Asked about a contentious first-half penalty the German defender conceded after a VAR review, Henrichs said "we can't talk about our own performance."

Leipzig manager Marco Rose, who coached Haaland at Dortmund and Red Bull Salzburg, said he knew the threat posed by the Norwegian.

"I know Erling well and I know his quality -- and how he can perform. When Erling sees the goal, he wants to score."

Haaland, 22, has scored 39 goals in 36 games for City, including 10 goals in six matches in the Champions League.

AFP

Fifa's love of cash is ruining the World Cup

BY OLIVER BROWN

AN obsession with the gigantic so pervades Fifa that the 2026 World Cup is to take 72 games merely to reach the knockout phase, eight more than any previous instalment has required in its entirety. While even Uefa is seeking to limit its geographic footprint at next summer's Euros, restricting groups to specific regions of Germany to cut internal travel, the global governing body is devising a cross-continental epic of such sprawl that even Phileas Fogg might have urged them to think twice.

Vancouver to Miami as a mid-tournament commute, anybody? Or how about Boston to Guadalajara? Each journey requires at least 5½ hours' flying time, roughly the same as New York to London with a decent jet stream behind. Still, none of this can deter the organisers from spouting their usual pablum about carbon-neutral commitments. "You can fly less and cycle more," states official Fifa advice. Quite some gall from an organisation whose last major tournament, in Qatar, accounted for an estimated 3.6 million tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions, more than countries such as Botswana or Costa Rica

produce in a year.

Still, let us be grateful for small mercies. At least Fifa has shelved the abomination of three-team groups, which, at Gianni Infantino's preferred rate of World Cup expansion, risked exhausting the alphabet. For its next shebang, there will be 104 matches across the United States, Canada and Mexico, eclipsing the total at the 1930, 1934, 1938, 1950 and 1954 finals combined. After all, nothing screams concern for player welfare quite like turning football's greatest show into an unprecedented 5½-week levathan.

You want to believe Fifa's calculation is that more games equals more entertainment. But when money is the overwhelming motive, the structure of this World Cup only adds up to more injuries, more mediocrity, more ennui. Ludicrously, it will take 72 matches over a month just to reduce the field from 48 nations to 32. If you thought those goalless affairs in Doha between Denmark and Tunisia or Uruguay and South Korea were grim, just wait until you have endured the sight of Iraq, Mali, Jamaica and North Macedonia - all of whom would have qualified for Qatar under the enlarged system - scrap-

ping it out for third-place group finishes.

The central problem is that 48 is an inelegant number for sustaining the jeopardy with which the groups culminated last December. Where a World Cup of 32 keeps slicing in half neatly until only the champions are left standing, one of 48 leaves the same ugly permutations that have disfigured the last two 24-team Euros. In 2016, Albania were left kicking their heels in Lyon for three days before finally realising they had been eliminated.

At least the switch to four-team groups precludes the possibility of brazen collusion, as witnessed in West Germany's prearranged 1-0 win over Austria in 1982. "The non-aggression

pact of Gijon," the Germans called it, while Algeria, who exited courtesy of this cosy alliance, thundered about a "scandal". But the preposterously outsized event that awaits in 2026 serves few people well outside Fifa, who are chasing £9 billion from the extravaganza.

It does little to benefit the top players in Europe, already facing an engorgement of the Champions League in 2024 from 32 teams to 36, and from 125 games to 189. It threatens to stretch fans to financial breaking point, as they frantically consult Skyscanner for the best routes between Kansas City and Monterrey. And it is hardly likely to be welcomed by parents, some of whom must now

take out second mortgages just so their children can complete their Panini scrapbooks.

It is possible to be too Euro-centric about all this. After all, the reactions to a World Cup on steroids are starkly different in Africa, where former Nigeria midfielder Sunday Oliseh said: "For us, it's heaven-sent. We are a continent of 54 nations. We have always thought that it should be more represented." Infantino is scrupulous about appeasing Africa, mindful that it furnishes him with a vast voting bloc that will guarantee his re-election as president on Thursday. Why would he care less about the vexations in Europe when it is Africa that helps shore up his job security?

The central flaw, though, in Fifa's world view is that it sees no virtue in scarcity. Just as it has tried to make the World Cup biennial, denuding much of what made Lionel Messi's coronation so rare and magical, it now wants to turn the 2026 tournament into an aimlessly protracted qualifying event. The notion of less being more is alien to the Zurich suits, for whom the answer is always to over-saturate and, by extension, to swell their already monstrously large cash reserves. As revenue-raisers, they have few equals. But as orchestrators of suspense and intrigue in their grandest production, they have lost the plot.

THE TELEGRAPH

Gwiji by David Chikoko



Haaland's five-goal haul a warning to Man City's Champions League rivals

PAGE 19

Simba SC star Dilunga returns to full training

By Correspondent Michael Mwebe

SIMBA SC has announced that midfielder Hassan Dilunga has made a full return to the club's training.

Dilunga is undergoing the entirety of the session along with his teammates, making a step closer to making a comeback to the pitch.

The 29-year-old midfielder has not played for Simba SC this season. His last appearance came in a duel against Mbeya Kwanza FC in a 2021/22 NBC Premier League game on February 6.

He underwent surgery on a knee mid-last year and was touted for a comeback in January but is now able to take part in full training once again.

Simba SC said on the squad's website: "Midfielder Hassan Dilunga has officially started training today after being out for more than a year due to an injury layoff."

The statement disclosed: "Dilunga suffered a knee injury in February last year and underwent surgery in June in South Africa and, according to medical diagnosis, he was supposed to stay out of the pitch for more than eight months to recover."

The former Young Africans and Mtwara Sugar midfielder expressed his delight at joining his teammates for the first time.

Dilunga noted: "I feel good, if it were possible to play without being registered, maybe I could play for five to ten minutes. After my diagnosis and surgery in June, I was told I would be back to training after nine months."

The midfielder pointed out: "And here I am now back to training as part of my recovery. I have missed playing football but the doctors have urged me to take it slow."

"I am grateful for Simba SC's management who took care of my financial needs all that time," Dilunga revealed.

However, Dilunga would not feature in any competitive game this season as his name was not included in the Simba registration for the 2022/23 campaign.

Simba SC will monitor his progress before deciding whether he is ready to be re-signed for next season.

The Msimbazi Street outfit revealed: "Dilunga was not among the players registered this season, so he will continue training until the end of the season while the medical panel continues to evaluate and treat him."

"If his health continues to improve as it is now, then Dilunga will be registered for next season."

The Robert Oliveira-coached Simba SC is next in action on Saturday when they host Horoya in the CAF Champions League Group Stage.

Simba SC is occupying second place in the Group C table with six points and is looking for another home victory to go through to the quarter-final stage of the 2022/23 CAF Champions League.

Simba SC, Yanga kept apart in ASFC last eight



Yanga's forward, Fiston Mayele (L), attempts to outfox Simba SC defender, Joash Onyango, during the 2021/22 Azam Sports Federation Cup (ASFC) last four's tie which took place in Mwanza in May last year. Yanga won 1-0. PHOTO: COURTESY OF YANGA

By Correspondent Michael Mwebe

THE draw for this season's Azam Sports Federation Cup (ASFC) quarter-finals, held in Dar es Salaam on Wednesday, saw the big three, Azam FC, Simba SC, and Young Africans SC, alias Yanga, avoid each other in this stage of the tournament.

With eight NBC Premier League teams left in the draw, it meant that all-top-flight ties were produced for the quarter-finals. As was the case last year, this season's quarter-final draw was accompanied by the semi-final draw.

The quarterfinal ties will be played between April 1-3, with the winners going through to the semi-finals. The exact date and times of the fixtures are to be confirmed.

Simba SC has been drawn against Ihefu SC. These two sides are due to meet in the 2022/23 NBC Premier League match in Mbeya early next month.

Ihefu SC has proved a gutsy opponent and will take inspiration from the outfit's victories over Azam FC and Yanga

in the league this season.

Azam FC, winners of the Federation Cup in 2019, will host Mtwara Sugar at Azam Complex Stadium.

Mwanza's Mapinduzi FC was knocked out by Azam FC in the round of 16 while Mtwara Sugar knocked out Kinondoni Municipal Coun-

cil FC in the round of 16.

Azam FC reached the semi-finals of the Federation Cup last season before losing to Coastal Union and the former has generally been tough to beat in the tournament.

Mtwara Sugar has been a mixed bag in the competi-

tion, going out in the first round in multiple editions but winning the tournament in 2018.

The winners of the quarterfinal encounter between Simba SC and Ihefu SC will face the winners of the duel between Azam FC and Mtwara Sugar in the semi-

finals.

Simba SC's bitter rivals Yanga, meanwhile, have a tough-looking tie at home to newly promoted Geita Gold FC as the Jangwani Street club continues the quest for another domestic double.

Yanga and Geita Gold FC met at this stage last season and were only separated by a penalty shootout after 90 minutes had ended in a 1-1 draw, the penalties ended with Yanga grabbing the victory.

The Jangwani Street outfit went on to defeat Simba SC and Coastal Union in the semi-finals and final to win the Federation Cup in the last campaign.

It is also a repeat of a league game that was played last week with Yanga coming from behind to win 3-1 against Geita Gold FC and extend their winning run to 11 league games.

The last quarterfinal tie will pit high-flying Singida Big Stars against Mbeya City FC, with the winners facing either Yanga or Geita Gold FC in the semi-finals.

The semi-finals will be played across the weekend of April 29 and May 1 in Lindi and Mtwara.

The final will be played at Mkwakwani Stadium in Tanga, with the showpiece taking place on June 3.

A trophy as well as medals for players, the technical bench, and 50m/- prize money will be handed over to the ASFC winner.

The showdown's winner moreover earns a ticket to represent the country in the CAF Confederation Cup next season.

Strikers hammer TCA Combine in 2023 DC Division A

By Guardian Reporter

STRIKERS Cricket Club has kept its hopes of achieving success in this season's Dar es Salaam Cricket (DC) Division A 50 Overs League alive, commanding a comprehensive 82-run win over the TCA Combine squad in the city on Sunday.

Top-order cricketer, Mausif Khan, had a solid game at the crease, helping Strikers Cricket Club smoothly keep the relatively modest opponents in TCA Combine in check in the game which was reduced to 45 overs.

Strikers raced to 201/10 in 38.4 overs once the club had secured the opportunity to take the crease first in the Group B match that took place at Dar es Salaam Gymkhana Club venue.

There were several good knocks showcased by experienced all-rounder Issa Kikasi early on, with the opener posting 17 runs which included two fours.



Strikers outfit's cricketers jubilate after one of the outfit's performers took a wicket in a past Mwalimu Nyerere Division A 50 overs tournament tie that took place at the University of Dar es Salaam ground. PHOTO: COURTESY OF STRIKERS CRICKET CLUB

His dismissal after seven overs then had Strikers facing a slight wobble that witnessed two top-order cricketers, Athumani Siwa, and Shaffi Muharram, returning in quick succession.

The two batsmen were the victims of tricky deliveries executed by TCA Combine's Issa Safari, as Siwa was sent back for duck after 2.2 overs, Muharram made his way back a bit earlier, also for

duck.

The duo's exit left Strikers with paltry nine runs after 2.2 overs and the side had to depend on Kikasi to improve its total.

There was a significant improvement when Khan took the crease, given the cricketer nailed 61 runs consisting of 11 boundaries.

He had Strikers' score moving to 97 runs after 13.5 overs, when he was sent back by TCA Com-

bine's Halidi Amiri, having been trapped via leg before wicket (lbw) by the youngster.

Low-order cricketer, Hassan Rahim, posted 16 runs, as was the case for Amin Solanki, captain Jatin Darji chipped in with 14 runs, and Abdulrazak Mohamed and Raymond Francis posted 13 runs and 12 runs not out respectively.

Hamza Ally ended with a four-wicket haul for the

TCA Combine outfit, with his efforts being complimented by fellow bowlers, Safari and Ayoub Hamisi.

Safari chipped in with three wickets, giving away 52 runs in eight overs, Hamisi ended his stint with two wickets whilst leaking 32 runs in 5.4 overs.

Despite working hard in the chase, TCA Combine's youngsters could not live up to expecta-

tions, notching 119/10 in 35.1 overs to ultimately lose the encounter.

The only significant display at the crease was shown by Ally, as the youngster scored 33 runs consisting of two fours and a six.

They had a frustrating start to the chase, experiencing early exits of openers, Ally Hassan and Omari Hilali, within the first five overs, leaving the batting outfit with mere 19 runs.

Murtaza Mustafa, deployed at number three, ensured TCA Combine's score was improved after notching 22 runs, he had his outfit reaching 71 runs after 20 overs.

Ally took the crease and he, too, did all he could to ensure TCA Combine fought for a successful chase after scoring 33 runs.

The young cricketer propelled TCA Combine to 81 runs after 23.6 overs, exiting the crease after the cricketer was caught by Strikers' Solanki from spinner Siwa's bowling.



Hassan Dilunga

Flexibles by David Chikoko

