



Legal Aid Week: Appeal for services to reach rural areas

Page 3

NHC to designate Urafiki new region after takeover

Page 4

Beekeeping efforts deter human-wildlife conflicts

Page 5

Guardian SPECIAL REPORT

BUSINESS Breach of regulations amplify urban filling station construction projects

Investors mobilise \$50mn for boosting CNG adoption

RwandAir to double passengers, enhance cargo transport

Page 13

Envoys: TRA ignores tax accords with CTI



A section of the crowd of Arusha residents who showed up at the free medical camp organised by the Arusha Regional Commissioner Paul Makonda with the participation of specialists doctors at the Sheikh Amri Abeid Stadium in the region yesterday. More than 20,000 patients already treated for four days in the camp. Photo: Correspondent Beatrice Shayo

The government has placed good governance and respect for the rule of law as key pillars of progress and prosperity, says Makamba

By Henry Mwangonde

ENVOYS from 10 countries including the United States have raised concern over tax administration practices by the Tanzania Revenue Authority (TRA) on foreign investors, calling for government intervention. Their letter on the matter, which was sent to Foreign Affairs and East African Cooperation minister January Makamba, was delivered by the French Embassy and seconded by the envoys of nine other countries.

TURN TO Page 2

NEMC uplifts small miners gold refining

By Correspondent Joseph Mwendapole

THE National Environment Management Council (NEMC) has installed modern gold refining equipment in four laboratories operated by key institutions overseeing the mining sector. Dr Betrina Igulu, the coordinator of the council's mercury control project, explained this development in a press briefing on progress in the NEMC programme to reduce the use of mercury. The laboratories equipped with modern technology are those belonging to the Commissioner for Minerals, the Chief Government Chemist, the Geological Survey Tanzania (GST) and of NEMC itself. The technology system installed is used by various countries in gold refining, intended to enable small scale miners to abandon the use of mercury

TURN TO Page 2

'Bring to court employers withholding contributions'

By Guardian Reporter

SOCIAL security funds need to initiate legal proceedings on employers failing in their responsibility of submitting employees' contributions on time. Prime Minister Kassim Majaliwa issued this instruction when adjourning the parliamentary Budget session yesterday, noting that there are employers showing chronic inability to submit the contributions on time. They need to be dragged to court as per the laws, he said. "Pension funds' boards and managements should properly use enabling legal provisions

It is important for our employers to adhere to the country's labour law by submitting employees' contributions on time so as to avoid inconveniences in future

to ensure that contributions are submitted on time. Retirees should not struggle to get their pensions and other benefits, he stated. Employers are required to submit employees' contributions every month, and if six months pass without submit-

ting the contributions, the fund is entitled to take legal measures, thus dragging the employer to court, he explained. "It is important for our employers to adhere to the country's labour law by submitting employees' contributions on time so as to avoid inconven-

iences in future," he said. He urged pension funds to invest in innovative measures to facilitate timely payment of members' monthly pensions or retirement benefits, "to ensure their peace of mind after serving the nation diligently." The government has set aside 787bn/- in fiscal 2024/25 estimates for provision of loans to 250,000 higher learning students, where 80,000 are freshmen women, he said, alluding to new guidelines on loan issuance, where the loans are

TURN TO Page 2

World Vision (T) hands over 824.5m/- projects

We have also constructed a dispensary building at a cost of 183m/- as well as a maternity ward at 87,033,661/- enabling over 2,000 residents to access quality health services

By Guardian Correspondent, Morogoro

WORLD Vision Tanzania has handed over to the government a number of completed projects worth 824.5m/- covering health, water and child protection in Zombo, Ulaya and Muhenda wards in Kilosa District, Morogoro Region. Shaka Hamdu Shaka, the Kilosa district commissioner, said at a handover event at Zombo ward on Thurs-

day that works implemented under the wider project benefit over 14,000 people in 13 villages. This stimulates change in facilitating even the vulnerable to access essential social services like water, education and health, he said, noting that the main project took off in 2015, with the construction of classrooms, libraries, dispensaries as well as water supply infrastructure. It has brought relief to the residents who for years have been grappling to access the

important services, applauding the global charity for stimulating change in the district and putting an unforgettable mark on the life of the residents. He emphasized the need to safeguard the projects to secure livelihoods and ensure their sustainability for future generations, while Elisei Chilala, the project coordinator, said that the first project involved construction of a water tank, pump hut, installation of solar power

TURN TO Page 2

SPORTS Page 20



Simba Day rescheduled to August 3 at Benjamin Mkapa Stadium

Page 18



Something must change for Kagame Cup to reclaim relevance



NEMC uplifts small miners gold refining

FROM PAGE 1

as it has shown serious health effects on those who use it, she said.

The national strategy to combat the use of mercury has helped thousands of gold miners to abandon mercury use, opting to take up modern technologies like cyanide application.

Many gold small-scale miners use mercury in gold filtering as it is cheap and easy to administer compared with other technologies, she said, noting that after extensive exposure to the effects of mercury use, they are collaborating with various stakeholders in shifting from mercury use.

NEMC has succeeded in reaching thousands of gold miners in various regions, laying emphasis on the safe use of mercury, reducing its use and where feasible abandoning its use altogether.

Small gold miners should completely abandon this method and use modern technologies to reduce the harm to themselves and surrounding water-based ecosystems, the coordinator appealed.

NEMC has collaborated with the Ministry of Health and the Office of the Chief Government Chemist in conducting an assessment of areas where abandoning mercury use is low, she stated.

The government has been revising various laws and guidelines relating to the use of mercury, she said, pointing at the harm mercury has on the body, impairing the body's immune system.

That exposes the miner or other person to the risk of contracting diseases like cancer which leads to permanent disability, thus NEMC was seeking out small-scale miners on the correct use of mer-

cury.

They are also instructed on alternative mercury technologies, she said, asserting that in using mercury to filter gold, the miner obtains just 30 percent of the gold, whereas with cyanide application up to 90 percent of the gold is retrieved.

The NEMC strategy is to ensure that various technologies are available at a low cost for miners' access, thus more readily abandoning the use of mercury.

"Our strategy is to ensure that modern technologies are available at levels that small-scale miners can afford and use as a strategy to eliminate the use of mercury in quarries," she said.

Dr Menan Jangu, the NEMC director of research, said that the council seeks to ensure that miners are safe all the time in their activities, asserting that the mining sector contributes a lot to total national income. It also has a big impact on the environment, starting from extraction and processing, especially when mercury is used.

Mining must be carried out in a way that does not affect the environment in the country, he said, pointing at the presence of 1.5m small miners. If they work in a dangerous environment many Tanzanians will be affected, he cautioned. "That is why Tanzania, in collaboration with the Global Fund and the World Bank, came up with a project to deal with the use of mercury in seven regions," he said.

Many miners find it easy to use mercury compared to other technologies, but its side effects are diseases such as cancer, stroke, infertility and many others, he added.



Prime Minister Kassim Majaliwa exchanges ideas with the Minister of State in Prime Minister's Office (Labour, Employment, Youth and the People with Disabilities), Deogratius Ndejemi (C), and Deputy Minister of State Patrobas Katambi in the National Assembly (L) debating chamber in Dodoma city yesterday. Photo: Correspondent Ibrahim Joseph

World Vision (T) hands over 824.5m/- projects

FROM PAGE 1

and supply of water at Zombo village.

It was followed by building schools with 10 water fetching centres benefiting more than 400 villagers, costing upwards of 100m/-.

A water project at Madudumizi village took up 100,566,200/-, seeing a deep water well, a water pumping house, solar power facility, two water tanks and supplying water in the village,

school and dispensary. Seven water centres were built for the use of more than 2,400 people, he said.

At Ulaya Mbuyuni village a water well was rehabilitated along with a 50,000 litres water tank to supply water to the village, school and dispensary. Five water fetching centres took up 145,786,614/- benefiting 2,418 people, he said.

"We have also constructed a dispensary building at a cost of 183m/- as

well as a maternity ward at 87,033,661/- enabling over 2,000 residents to access quality health services," he said.

Medical equipment worth 7.23m/- comprising two delivery beds, two hospital beds, two examination beds as well as one digital BP machine were provided, along with two baby scales and two sets of birth control equipment.

Four classrooms, administration building, library

and purchase of 120 desks at Madudumizi Primary School was altogether pegged at 198, 929,592/-, with 762 pupils enrolled there, he said.

Iddi Kyande, a Madudumizi resident, appreciated World Vision efforts, saying it was a joy to the villagers who for years woke up early in the morning to begin the long walk to get water.

Hadja Iddi, a resident, said they used to walk up to 2km daily searching for water which is also not safe,

affecting income generating activities and impacting family life too.

Vicent Lusinde, the Zombo ward councillor, said that Nyalali, Madudumizi and Nyameni-Zombo endured water snags for long, thus the water projects in the villages are a saviour.

They will greatly help women, the major victims of waking up during night to seek for the precious liquid, to obviate all these conflicts, he added.



Dr Menan Jangu, the National Environment Management Council's Director of Environmental Research, shows journalists in Dar es Salaam yesterday a newsletter carrying a report on the harm the use of mercury can cause. Right is the council's Mercury Control Project coordinator, Dr Betrina Igulu. Photo: Correspondent Joseph Mwendapole

'Bring to court employers withholding contributions'

FROM PAGE 1

handed over three months starting on June.

During fiscal 2023/24 the government issued loans to 224,056 higher learning students, taking up 743.2bn/- or 94.6 percent of budgeted funds, he said, listing the relevant spheres as diploma, degree and practical legal studies, plus the Samia scholarships for science students.

The Higher Education Students' Loans Board (HESLB) targeted loan collections amounting to 230bn/- but its achievement was way below target, at 161bn/-, affirming preparations to re-launch issuing

10 percent local government earnings as loans to special groups.

Section 37A (1) of the Local Government Authorities requires LGAs to set aside 10 percent of their total estimates for empowerment of groups of women, youth and people with disabilities (PwDs) at the 4:4:2 ratio, whose conduct was criticised by the Controller and Auditor General (CAG) and in April, last year the government suspended the procedure.

Current plans are to set aside 228bn/- to be issued to special groups, the premier affirmed.

Envoys: TRA ignores tax accords with CTI

FROM PAGE 1

The letter says that there are acute drawbacks in economic policy and tax administration as "the good work being done by so many to restore Tanzania's reputation as a destination for Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) is now being undermined."

It appreciated significant progress in attracting and expanding quality international investment into Tanzania over the past few years while affirming that this progress faces significant disruption due to TRA notices, not backed by evidence for its claims, demanding payments and account reconciliations dating back up to 15 years for foreign investors

Envoys signing up to the letter are from the UK, the Netherlands, Ireland, France, Belgium, Germany, Canada, Sweden, South Korea and the United States. They express dis-

satisfaction that while the specific countries have made significant progress in attracting and expanding quality international investment into Tanzania over the last few years, negative tendencies were hampering this progress.

The letter demanded good governance and best practices through regular trade missions and meetings with foreign investors as a business community, noting that business investment registrations from those countries increased from \$3bn in 2022 to \$5.5bn in 2023, reflecting good progress in consultations conducted by the Tanzania Investment Centre (TIC).

"Many businesses have faced 'bank agency notices' that freeze accounts, halt operations and negatively impact employee salaries and supplier cash flow," the letter complained, pointing out that the relevant foreign companies have seen

tax concession agreements with the TIC ignored by the revenue authority.

Despite those agreements, the firms are advised that the TRA will neither recognize nor honour the agreements because they have not been "gazetted," suggesting that those accords lack enforcement vested in legislation.

"Investors also report that TRA agents levy extraordinary tax bills not supported by Tanzanian law, threaten investors and Tanzanian partners when companies protest or appeal these practices, and freeze or seize bank accounts and company assets without notification nor timely legal recourse," the envoys intoned.

Over the years, these companies have undergone audits by major international audit firms, approved by the Tanzanian government, to ensure adherence to international

auditing standards, the letter noted, unhappy that despite these rigorous procedures, companies are now receiving notices with additional demands for tax payment.

"For instance, one company received a notice for 1.2bn/- demanding resolution within three working days," it said in astonishment, elaborating that the envoys understand that this trend has caused a significant number of businesses to register bankruptcy.

Hundreds of companies have slowed or halted business operations to resolve inflated and incorrect assessments while foreign shareholders review or pause investments in Tanzania, it asserted.

"While our businesses strive to comply with Tanzanian laws and meet their obligations, the current approach does not foster a conducive business environment and risks divestment and a return to de-

clining confidence in Tanzania as a destination for quality FDI," the envoys declared.

They requested for a meeting with ministers for the Treasury, Investment as well as Trade as well as TRA commissioner general "to discuss a more amicable and constructive way forward."

"We are grateful for your earliest consideration of and response to this urgent issue," the letter said amicably, noting that the envoys remain committed to working collaboratively with the Tanzanian government to find solutions to these challenges which shore up.

The intent is to further rebuild confidence in Tanzania's business environment, in line with the country's ambition to achieve inclusive economic growth and become an upper middle-income country, they stated.

In response, minister Makamba

agreed to engage the envoys. He said the government has placed good governance and respect for the rule of law as key pillars of progress and prosperity.

"We pride ourselves with a political and economic governance regime that is attractive to investors and facilitative of private sector development," he reiterated, asking investors referenced in the letter "to prepare a compendium/presentation detailing, in specificity, their grievances."

The success in attracting FDI into Tanzania over the past three years testifies to the confidence that the global investment community has in the country, he said, assuring the envoys that "this government takes very seriously any alleged transgression, by any public entity that endangers the success of any business in our country and our reputation as investor-friendly destination."

Legal Aid Week: Appeal for services to reach rural areas

By Guardian Reporter, Zanzibar

CHAIRPERSON of Zanzibar House of Representatives Mwanaasha Khamis Juma has asked the Department of Constitution and Legal Aid Services to expand its services to rural areas and reach marginalised groups, including women and children facing challenges emanating from marriage conflicts and divorce.

The department is domiciled within the President's Office (Constitution, Legal Affairs, Public Services, and Good Governance).

She made call yesterday at a symposium held here as part of celebrations to mark Legal Aid Week in the isles.

She said there are still many challenges that face women who do not get legal help due to various challenges, including lack of access to legal services.

She named other challenges as loss of inheritance rights when their husbands die as well as being deprived of landed property they were supposed to own when divorced.

She said women also lose their rights in land ownership as part of three acres given by the government of Zanzibar which they are supposed to be the number one beneficiary.

He asked the department to provide legal services to groups that are usually ignored mostly women and children.

She asked the department to be ready to bring reforms in the laws that they feel need to be worked on with the aim of bringing efficiency and eliminating injustices and oppression of women.

Director of Constitution and Legal Aid Services Hanifa Ramadhan Saidi said they were working to ensure that legal aid services reach all groups including women and children.

She said that since the establishment of the department about six years ago, the department has noticed that women are in dire need of legal services.



Archbishop Yuda Thadei Ruwa'ichi (C) of the Catholic Church Archdiocese of Dar es Salaam makes remarks in Dar es Salaam on Thursday when gracing a fundraising dinner in support of the construction of the Agape Centre for Spiritual Studies and Social Skills. He is with Auxiliary Bishop Stephano Musomba (L) and Bishop Henry Mchamungu. Photo: Correspondent Miraji Msala

Accord to allow Zanzibar residents to access health services at NHIF centres

By Polycarp Machira, Dodoma

THE National Health Insurance Fund (NHIF) and Zanzibar Health Service Fund (ZHSF) yesterday signed agreement to enable Zanzibar get health insurance services through NHIF-registered centres using ZHSF cards.

Under the arrangement that comes to force on 1st July, 2024, some 6,000 people from the isles working in government and private offices, formal and informal sector in addition to over 6,000 dependents will now

access health services just like mainland residents.

Addressing a press conference here yesterday, NHIF Director General Benard Konga said the agreement applies to employees or workers in public and private sector; workers in informal sector, foreigners living in Zanzibar whose residence exceeds six months, retirees, students studying in colleges or institutions of higher education in Zanzibar.

He added that in order to carry out the mandate as per Act No 1 of 2023, ZHSF, and by acknowledging experi-

ence that NHIF has in implementing health insurance services in the country, it will from next month start providing services at centres registered by NHIF in the mainland.

Konga explained that officials from the two health funds had two days of deliberations before yesterday's signing, adding that preparations for the cooperation are at advanced stages.

Some of the preparations, he said, include notifying all the service providers who have agreed

to serve the clients brought by the new arrangement and that all regional offices are ready to provide services. On the other hand, identification systems have been strengthened to ease the process whenever clients seek services at the registered centres and immediate disbursement of funds as soon as the customers get services.

ZHSF Director General Yaasin Ameir Juma said that the fund is a new institution established under Act No 1 of 2023 to provide health services to residents of Zanzibar

at affordable cost and sustainable sources for health services.

He explained that the fund started implementation of its duties and registration of public servants in June, 2023 and by October, 2023, the registered centres started providing services in Zanzibar while registration of private sector members began in March, 2024 as registration for non-formal sector members is still underway.

He said compulsory health insurance in Zanzibar applies to all employees or workers in public and

private sector; workers in informal sector, foreigners living in Zanzibar whose residence exceeds six months, retirees, students studying in colleges or institutions of higher education in Zanzibar.

According to him, under the new arrangement, ZHSF will collaborate with NHIF in the programme implementation.

According to East African cooperation, members of insurance funds in individual countries should have access to health services in any country in the regional bloc.

TARI, Chinese academy sign MoU to boost research ability

By Correspondent James Kandoya

TANZANIA Agricultural Research Institute (TARI) has signed a five-year Memorandum of Understanding with the Chinese Academy of Tropical Agricultural Science (CATAS) to enhance research capacity in nine areas.

TARI Director General Dr Thomas Bwana and CATAS Director General Huang Zhenggen put pen to paper in a ceremony witnessed by Deputy Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Agriculture Dr Hussein Omar.

Speaking after the signing ceremony in Coast Region on Thursday, Bwana said that the MoU aims to widen the capacity of TARI to do more research after the first one signed in 2019.

Dr Bwana said that the partnership will enhance the capacity of TARI in areas such as exchanging research information of crops such as cassava and sugarcane and sisal.

He said other areas are human capacity development, infrastructure development, exchange of research information, value addition, agricultural laboratory, seed production and research in crops such as cotton, coffee and cassava.

Dr Bwana said that China is advanced in cassava research, including markets, value addition technology and factories, adding that the agreement will help the country to achieve its goal of

contributing more through the agriculture sector.

"It is our hope that the collaboration will increase the capacity of TARI to provide solutions to challenges farmers encounter," he said.

Vice Government, People's Government of Hainan Province, Gu Gang, said that the collaboration will add more value to TARI capacity in all matters related to research in sugarcane, cassava and sisal. Gang expressed his government's commitment to supporting institutes like CATAS to support Tanzania's agriculture sector.

In his remarks, Dr Omar said that the government target is to increase growth of the agriculture sector from the current 4 to 10 percent by 2030.

Dr Omar said that the collaboration was an opportunity for TARI to ensure that agriculture is truly the backbone of the country's economy by contributing more to the nation's income.

He said the signing of MoU shows a shared commitment between Tanzania and China to develop the agriculture sector. TARI was established by the Parliamentary Act No. 10 of 2016 to enhance and strengthen the agricultural research system in Tanzania. It is a semi-autonomous body under the Ministry of Agriculture, responsible for all agricultural research activities conducted by the National Agricultural Research System (NARS).



Zanzibar First Vice President Othman Masoud Othman opens the Fifth All Eye Health Workers and Partners Congress in Zanzibar's Urban West Region Thursday. Photo: Maelezo - Zanzibar

WHO avails infection control tools to strengthen health systems in Kigoma

By Guardian Reporter

THE World Health Organization (WHO) has donated equipment and supplies to strengthen infection prevention control (IPC) and water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) in health facilities as well as preparedness and response against epidemics in Kigoma Region.

This has been implemented with funding from the UN Multi-Partner Trust Fund OF

ice. This is part of the United Nations Kigoma Joint Programme's efforts to work collaboratively with regional and local government authorities, communities and other stakeholders in the region to bolster human health security in Kigoma.

Speaking at the hand-over ceremony on Thursday, Dr Jairo Hiliza, Public Health Officer at WHO, underscored the commitment

of WHO to ensuring that the lives of the people in Kigoma Region are protected against health threats. He noted that the overall goal is not only to strengthen the health preparedness mechanism of the region but also to ensure that no one is left behind in the health for all agenda.

"WHO aims to foster a stronger health system and build resilience against health emergencies. Our unwavering support for the re-

gion remains resolute as we strive towards the achievement of universal health coverage for Tanzania."

Kigoma Region is one of the regions in Tanzania bordered by neighbouring countries.

Nesphory Sungu, Kigoma Regional Health Officer, expressed gratitude for the equipment donated.

He stated: "Our health facility lacked some of these IPC/WASH essential equipment and supplies. I would like to

thank WHO for continued support. This support will ultimately help us to improve people's health and ensure the provision of safe services for both our healthcare providers and patients."

For Dr Ibrahim Saleh, Manager for Public Health Emergency Operations Center (PHEOC) in Kigoma Region, the equipment especially for the emergency operation centre will kickstart the operationalization of the centre

to serve the people of Kigoma Region.

"We are happy to receive these items and equipment which shows great cooperation and collaboration with our stakeholders particularly WHO that has worked together to ensure the region is safe from disease as well as all health emergencies," he said.

The Kigoma Joint Programme cuts across multiple sectors to improve development and human security

in Kigoma. The programme involved 17 UN agencies and was developed in cooperation with the regional authority based on the needs of the people living in Kigoma and the capacities of the UN in Tanzania.

WHO leads the health and nutrition theme of the programme, and contributes to implementing various projects in WASH, emergencies and health system strengthening.



Lands, Housing and Human Settlements Development minister Jerry Silaa briefs the National Assembly in Dodoma city yesterday on the land-related dispute between the Mkungunero Reserve and residents of Kiteto District villages bordering the reserve. Photo: Correspondent Ibrahim Joseph

TBS destroys 2.5 tonnes of bad goods in southern zone

By Guardian Correspondent, Mtwara

THE Tanzania Bureau of Standards (TBS) southern zone has destroyed 2.5 tonnes of substandard and counterfeit goods worth 20m/- to protect people's health.

Among the destroyed products are cosmetics containing toxic substances that are banned in the country, expired alcoholic beverages, juices, soda, energy drinks, cooking oil and second-hand underwear.

William Mhina, TBS Manager for southern zone, told journalists on Thursday here that the products were seized in the period between January and June, this year following inspections carried out in Lindi, Mtwara and Ruvuma regions.

He said that the impromptu operations were targeted warehouses as well as wholesale and retail shops near borders and other areas.

"The objective of carrying out the operations was to remove from the market low quality and hazardous products to protect unsuspecting consumers and the environment," he said.

Mhina said that the cosmetic products that were destroyed include those that have been banned in Tanzania because they contain toxic substances such as mercury, lead, hydroquinone, butylme-

thyl propional, steroids, zinc, pyrothione and mercury.

"The cosmetics containing toxic ingredients have short-term and long-term effects, including affecting the skin, eyes, reproductive system for women, growth issues in children and cancers, especially skin cancer," he said.

He tasked producers, distributors and sellers of various products to make sure that they introduce products that have TBS quality seal, otherwise be prepared to face stern legal measures.

The official emphasised that as per the law regulating standards, it is prohibited for producers, distributors and sellers to introduce into the Tanzanian market products whose quality has not been verified by TBS.

"Some business people have been selling products even after the expired date has elapsed and this is mostly done by unscrupulous traders," he said.

In terms of underwear, he said that the clothes have been banned because they cause skin diseases such as fungus and bacterial infections.

He urged people to read information on the packaging of products before purchasing to find out if they have not expired and if they have been approved by TBS.

IUCN Africa conservation meet 2024 starts in Nairobi

By Special Correspondent

THE International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Africa Conservation Forum opened yesterday in the Kenyan capital, Nairobi, under the theme African Solutions for Nature and People: Creating transformative responses to the biodiversity and climate crisis in Africa.

Over 500 delegates are in attendance for the three-day

forum, which has brought together IUCN members and stakeholders from across Africa and beyond to discuss biodiversity, conservation and the sustainable development challenges faced by the continent.

Dr Alfred Mutua, Kenya's Cabinet Secretary for Tourism and Wildlife, warmly welcomed participants.

In his address, he emphasised the importance of placing local communities at the

heart of all conservation efforts.

"For conservation to be truly effective and sustainable, we must ensure that local communities are not only involved but are also primary beneficiaries," he said.

Dr Mutua acknowledged Kenya's rising human-wildlife conflicts and the lack of adequate funding for conservation, advocating for innovative partnerships to enhance

Africa's conservation efforts. "Kenya, with its rich biodiversity, is actively implementing the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan, focusing on locally-led and appropriate solutions for nature and people," he stated.

"As a Union, we are glad to see the growing recognition of the need for inclusive conservation in the African region, and the engagement of so many different organisations

and individuals in achieving our common goal of ensuring equity, justice and rights during its implementation," said IUCN President H.E. Razan Al Mubarak.

"It is the first time we are holding a forum as one African continent, and I know this was the correct decision, because the voices of Africa are better and stronger together. People must be at the centre of our actions. United, we can create

solutions that help people and nature thrive, recognising the rights of Indigenous peoples and local communities," said IUCN Director General Dr Grethel Aguilar at the forum opening ceremony.

The event, held under the theme 'African solutions for nature and people - creating transformative responses to the biodiversity and climate crisis in Africa', gives participants the opportunity to use

the Union's platform to amplify their voice and influence policy at regional and global levels.

It is one of several IUCN regional conservation fora, held across the globe this year, that offer Members an opportunity to shape the agenda for the IUCN World Conservation Congress, to be held in the United Arab Emirates in 2025. The IUCN Congress in turn sets the global conservation

NHC to designate Urafiki new region after takeover

By Correspondent James Kandoya

THE National Housing Corporation (NHC) has unveiled plans to designate Urafiki area in Ubungo District, Dar es Salaam Region, as its new region to improve efficiency and stimulate development.

This comes after the state-owned real estate entity acquired the long defunct Urafiki Textiles Limited and its sprawling assets, including residential flats and commercial units at 3bn/- last month.

Hamad Abdallah, NHC director general, disclosed this in Dar es Salaam on Thursday when briefing the members of NHC board of directors who toured different projects to understand challenges and set the way forward.

He said that the decision to designate Urafiki as one of its regions further aims to improve coordination of projects and services to clients at Urafiki area. "Urafiki is one of the fastest growing areas in Dar es Salaam, Establishment of a new region here will increase effective supervision of our projects," he said.

Abdallah said that the move also aims to bring positive changes in the lives of Urafiki dwellers and strengthen management and supervision, adding that NHC targets to ensure sustainable development and community welfare.

NHC Real Estate Manager Elias Msese said that Urafiki area has a total of 399 housing units and encompasses six commercial buildings, 32

residential buildings, one primary school, 32 retail shops, 3 warehouses, 10 vehicle parking spaces, four garages, one filling station, three car wash bays and one industrial park.

He said currently, NHC collects 1bn/- in rent every month, adding that the amount will significantly increase when further modifications and rehabilitation projects are implemented in the area.

NHC board chairperson Dr Sophia Kongela commended the corporation for development achieved after the handing over process and called on the management to fast-track the development of the area.

The current NHC regions are Upanga, Kinondoni, Ilala and Temeke in Dar es Salaam and Mwanza-Geita-Simiyu, Mtwara, Tabora and Mbeya-Njombe.

On May 24 this year, NHC Public Relations Manager Muungano Saguya announced the acquisition of Urafiki area during a visit to inspect the area.

He expressed his optimism about the acquisition, emphasizing that it was expected to improve infrastructure, boost the local economy and enhance the city's landscape.

"We have purchased the area which spans over 50 acres through an open auction," Saguya stated. "With this new ownership, the National Housing Corporation is committed to improving this area in line with our goals of providing modern and high-quality housing for citizens."



National Housing Corporation director general Hamad Abdallah takes around in Dar es Salaam on Thursday with the agency's board members, who were on an assessment tour of progress in the ongoing implementation of the Samia Housing Scheme project. Photo: Correspondent Joseph Mwendapole

By Guardian Correspondent

THE government has reiterated its commitment to protecting investors and sugar factories by creating a good environment for investment and doing businesses.

Minister of State in the President's Office (Planning and Investment), Prof Kitila Mkumbo told the National Assembly on Wednesday that the government is devoted to protecting investments in the country and that a number of reforms have been made to achieve the goal.

The minister was responding to some of the MPs' concerns when winding up the debate on the National Development Plan 2024/25.

He refuted claims that the government was not doing enough to promote local sugar producers and that the measures taken aim at dwindling production and killing industries.

Prof Mkumbo said the gov-

ernment has invested heavily in the sector, saying so far 7.2bn/- has already been allocated for production of sugarcane seedlings that are distributed to sugarcane growers in various parts of the country.

He added that the government has also allocated 12.5bn/- for irrigation infrastructure for sugar cane farms in Kilimanjaro region.

He added that a feasibility study for an irrigation project is being conducted in Kilombero, Morogoro Region by an Ethiopian based company.

Prof Mkumbo informed the august house that the government has also exempted 244bn/- tax on sugar factories across the country, purposely to enable them operate profitably and produce more sugar.

"The government has been

doing all these to promote sugar production and protect our local factories. Therefore, it is very disturbing when a person accuses the government of weakening local producers," he said.

"The investment in sugar industries across the country is worth 4.2trn/-. This is a huge investment; killing this business means the government sabotaged itself which is im-

possible," said Prof Mkumbo. He reiterated the government stand that it is committed to protecting

On Monday, MPs overwhelmingly supported the government's proposal to give the National Food Reserve Agency (NFRA) powers to buy and store sugar to end recurrent price spikes.

Agriculture minister Hussein Bashe tabled the pro-

posal last month when he presented his docket's 1.249trn/- budget for 2024/25 in Parliament.

Since it required amendment of the law governing NFRA, the proposal is contained in the Finance Bill, 2024, which MPs debated last Monday.

Bashe informed Parliament that the sugar factories entrusted with importing the sweetener to cover for the shortfall in local production did not fulfil their responsibilities effectively.

UNFPA unveils strategy to fight FGM, child marriage

JOHANNESBURG

WITH the clock ticking towards the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) has announced a new initiative to help create a safer world where women and girls can live free from violence and harmful practices, to achieve their fullest potential.

The Social Innovation Toolkit, a central component of the Regional Innovation and Digital Transformation Strategy for East Africa, aims to address critical challenges such as female genital mutilation (FGM) and child marriage, and empower young people through digital innovation.

The initiative was unveiled at the Financing Innovation and Digital Transformation in Africa Dialogue in Sandton, Johannesburg recently.

"Innovation is a key accelerator to achieving the ambitious SDG targets," said Chinwe Ogbonna, UNFPA Deputy Regional Director for East and Southern Africa. "Our Social Innovation Toolkit is designed to equip young people, especially adolescents and girls, with the resources they need to develop innovative solutions to end harmful practices."

The toolkit, titled Addressing Harmful Practices through Social Innovation: A UNFPA Innovation Guide for 'YOU' and Startups, offers valuable resources for

young innovators. It provides practical guidance and connects users to social enterprise growth support both within and outside Africa. This interactive, self-help toolkit fosters the development of new ideas and encourages young people to participate actively in their own development.

"Innovators in Africa face challenges such as lack of investment, limited entrepreneurship support and poor market access," said Sydney Hushie, Regional Innovation Specialist for UNFPA East and Southern Africa.

"Despite these challenges, young people are leading change in their own ways. This toolkit will support their efforts and help scale their innovative solutions."

He said UNFPA will continue to work with young people as active agents of change to end harmful practices across Africa.

"We implore young innovators to take advantage of this toolkit and other initiatives to support this collective effort," added Hushie.

The launch event brought together a range of key partners, including representatives from the African Development Bank, Uyoyo Edosio, Frank Asiwani of the Africa Venture Philanthropy Alliance.

The dialogue highlighted the role of innovation and digital technology in advancing sustainable development and tackling issues like FGM.



Residents of a settlement on Rukuba Island in Musoma Rural constituency view forlornly and helplessly earlier this week what remained of their houses, razed by a fire that rendered 45 households homeless. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

AfCFTA out to create over 200,000 jobs for Tanzanians, other countries

By Special Correspondent

THE African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) Secretariat, Mastercard Foundation and TradeMark Africa have announced a four-year fisheries programme to be implemented across seven countries to enable over 240,000 job opportunities and boost trade in fish and fish products by about \$100 million by 2028.

The countries include Tanzania, Nigeria, Kenya, Uganda, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Zambia and selected Island states.

The "Women and Youth Economic Empowerment in Fisheries" programme will enhance the participation of women and

youth in fisheries in line with the adopted AfCFTA Protocol on Women and Youth in Trade. This announcement was made recently during the 14th Meeting of the Council of Ministers responsible for Trade in Zanzibar.

The programme is designed to address structural challenges women and youth face when participating in the fisheries value chain. It will offer training, facilitate access to markets and finance, catalyse supply chain linkages, create digital solutions, simplify trade regimes, enhance compliance to standards and enable streamlined cross-border market access.

The programme is a culmination

of work between the AfCFTA Secretariat and the Mastercard Foundation. This work started with the development of the AfCFTA private sector strategy, where priority value chains were identified to boost intra-Africa trade and production. TradeMark Africa will implement the programme to benefit Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises (SMEs) in the said countries.

Africa's fisheries sector plays a major role in food security and the economic well-being for millions of households, with the World Bank noting that the industry employs at least 12 million people. The majority of these are said to be women involved in process-

ing, marketing, and post-harvest processes.

While the AfCFTA presents a unified preferential market opportunity, women and youth may not automatically benefit from such prospects if they are not adequately supported.

Secretary General, AfCFTA Secretariat, Wamkele Mene said: "The AfCFTA presents huge opportunities, while fostering entrepreneurship and job creation in a market of 1.4 billion people. The AfCFTA's Protocol on Women and Youth in Trade has been developed to foster inclusive economic development by eliminating barriers to trade for women and young people in Africa. We are glad the pro-

gramme aligns with our vision of bringing this marginalised group along on this journey to increase intra-Africa trade in "Creating One African Market" to ensure prosperity for all Africans. We encourage the potential beneficiaries to take advantage of this programme."

TMA Deputy Chief Executive Officer, Allen Sophia Asimwe, remarked: "The start of this programme is an important step forward in our support for inclusive trade, economic empowerment, and sustainable jobs creation for women and youth in Africa's fisheries sector. Addressing the structural barriers which are unique to women and young people in the fish value chain is a critical neces-

sity that aims to enhance the participation and competitiveness of program participants in the sector. With this collaborative effort, the sector will be better positioned as a pathway for economic growth, food security, and poverty alleviation in Africa."

Executive Director, Pan-African Programmes, the Mastercard Foundation, Daniel Hailu, stated: "This programme has the potential to catalyse dignified and fulfilling work opportunities for young men and women, foster intra-African trade, and contribute to economic growth and poverty alleviation. Together, we are laying the foundation for a more equitable and sustainable future for all."

Summer grain harvest grows despite drought

By Special Correspondent

DESPITE challenges from a mid-summer drought, South Africa's latest crop estimates show a slight increase in summer grains and oilseed production, offering cautious optimism amidst sectoral pressures.

South Africa's agriculture sector is navigating through a challenging harvest season marked by the lingering effects of a mid-summer drought. The latest update from the crop estimates committee reveals a cautious optimism tempered by reduced production forecasts across key crops.

The committee's fifth production estimate for the 2023/24 season now pegs the total summer grains and oilseed harvest at 16 million tonnes, a slight 0.6 percent increase from the previous month. This adjustment, however minor, provides a clearer snapshot of what farmers can expect from this year's harvest, following near-complete harvesting activities nationwide.

Maize, the cornerstone of the country's agricultural output, shows varied fortunes with white maize production expected to reach 6.3 million tonnes (up 0.1 percent month-on-month), while yellow maize sees a more substantial increase to 7.1 million tonnes (up 1.3 percent month-on-month).

This divergence reflects regional planting patterns and differing impacts of seasonal rainfall, underscoring the sector's resilience amidst climatic challenges.

"Despite the slight upward revision in maize production, we are mindful of the significant year-on-year declines of 26 percent for white maize and 10 percent for yellow maize," noted Agbiz chief economist Wandile Sihlobo.

"These reductions highlight the severe consequences of adverse weather conditions, especially in regions traditionally associated with each maize variety."

Looking ahead, the estimates suggest South Africa remains capable of meeting domestic consumption needs, projected at approximately 12 million tonnes annually. With an estimated surplus of 1.4 million tonnes for export, albeit lower than the previous season, the country retains a pivotal role in regional maize markets. In contrast, oilseed production presents a more sobering picture with unchanged estimates for soybeans at 1.7 million tonnes and sunflower seeds at 649 250 tonnes, reflecting yield challenges across planting regions.



Garbage collectors at work at Dar Salaam's Sinza Cemetery yesterday, most without protective gear. Photo: Correspondent Sabato Kasika

Beekeeping efforts in Manyara deter human-wildlife conflicts

By Guardian Correspondent

BEEKEEPING initiatives undertaken by villagers surrounding Lake Manyara National Park have been seen to be playing an important role in reducing cases of human-wildlife conflicts.

Supported by the Tanzania National Parks (TANAPA) through its Community Development Department, the Beekeeping and Honey Harvesting project is established

at Silalei Village in Monduli District with over 80 beehives in operation.

A community group with a membership of 30 villagers, mostly women, is also active in environmental conservation activities within the precinct.

The Lake Manyara National Park's Conservation and Public Relations Officer Maingo Ole Killel made the statement recently here, adding that bees are the best guardians of the forest and natural

growth. "Bees usually scare illegal loggers and people who trespass into forests and other protected areas to harvest resources or burn charcoal," said Killel, adding that this was an effective way to protect the environment.

On the other hand, beekeeping ventures also help the villagers to earn sustainable income through selling bee products such as honey and wax, used for food and medicine as well as in the production of beverages.

With the beehives hanging on the park's perimeter borders, they help to keep elephants from leaving the conservancy and stray into villages where they may cause problems. "Elephants are afraid of bees and the bees' buzzing sound scares and stops them from getting out of the park and cause mayhem in residential areas or local farms," the conservator stated.

The forest cover surrounding the area happens to be an important

source of natural spring water which flows into a large dam which is a major supplier of water to people and their livestock.

According to local residents, before the beekeeping project, the area's natural growth used to suffer destruction from illegal loggers and other trespassers but with the participatory conservation efforts between the park management and local villagers, the important forest is now protected.

Tobico Lesiara, a member of the village projects' committee, said they started beekeeping initiatives in the course of last year and were grateful to TANAPA because in a few days, they will be harvesting honey and beeswax.

Eva Mallya, Assistant Commissioner for Conservation at Lake Manyara National Park, said the park is surrounded by a total of 51 villages with whom they maintain good relations and cooperation.

Niger to export oil via Chad amid differences with Benin

NIAMEY

NIGER plans to use Chad's pipeline to export its crude oil to the international market due to disagreements with Benin over the use of the pipeline passing through the Beninese port of Sémé, reports the Nigerien press agency.

During a council of ministers meeting on early last week, Niger's Prime Minister Ali Mahamane Lamine Zeine raised the possibility of resuming oil exports through Chad.

According to Burkina Information Agency, the Nigerien government has decided to establish a committee to reactivate the work necessary to achieve this objective.

This decision follows a mission dispatched to Niger on May 30 by Chadian President Mahamat Idriss Deby Itno.

The ANP reports that the mission was a response to the increasing tension between Niger and Benin over oil shipments.

The dispute escalated on June 5 when BENIN arrested and tried Nigerian state clerks at the Beninese port terminal of Sémé Kodji for

"usurpation of title and use of falsified computer data." In retaliation, Nigerien authorities closed the flow valves for Nigerien crude oil to Benin and awarded the Sarauniya Mangou Medal of Sovereignty to its agents acquitted or given suspended sentences by the Beninese justice system.

The announcement of Niger's decision to use Chad's pipeline for oil exports was followed by a visit from former Beninese presidents Nicéphore Dieudonné Soglo and Thomas Boni Yayi to Niamey.

They met with Niger's President General Abdourahamane Tiani to discuss the ongoing disputes between the two countries.

The border between Niger and Benin remains closed due to security concerns cited by Niamey authorities, who accuse Benin of harbouring terrorist bases. This closure has led to a surge in prices in Benin, exacerbating tensions in Cotonou.

Following the fall of Niger's President Mohamed Bazoum, Benin's authorities supported a military intervention through ECOWAS forces to reinstate the deposed president and dislodge General Tiani from power.



Mara regional commissioner Col Evans Mtambi (in cap) accompanied by Bunda district commissioner Dr Vincent Naano (3rd-L) when inspecting progress in the construction of a girls' secondary school at Bulamba village yesterday in preparation for the enrolment of Form Five students. Others are the school's headmistress, Nyaeri Mwisawa (L); Mara regional administrative secretary Gerald Kusaya (R) and the site construction manager, Timothy Mwanjala. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

Africa's climate tech startups now ahead in investment race

By Special Correspondent

THE green revolution in tech startup funding continues on the continent with a new report showing Africa's climate tech startups have overtaken their fintech counterpart, hauling almost half of all funding amassed so far in 2024.

Startup funding favours African climate tech startups, with companies in this sector attracting 45 percent of the total funding raised by tech startups in Africa so far in 2024.

According to an analysis by

startup funding data tracker in Africa, The Big Deal, the sector has received \$325 million so far in 2024. While significant in percentage terms, a major downturn in overall funding for African startups over the past two years has weighed on overall funding for the sector, after years of growth.

"Climate Tech funding has been growing in absolute numbers in the past 5 years (\$340m in 2019, \$344m in 2020, \$613m in 2021, \$959m in 2022 and \$1.1b in 2023)," the report reads.

"After its share of total investments reaching 36 percent in 2023, it seems on track to grow again in 2024 even though topping last year's US\$1.1b invested in Climate Tech seems unlikely at this stage," the analysis added.

Despite raking in an impressive US\$187 million in May, a surprise funding surge of 149 percent compared to investment funds tech startups raised in April, the sector has overall been dropping compared to previous years.

The Big Deal report attributes the slowdown primarily

to a significant slump in funding within the fintech space. Once dominant, fintech startups have only managed to raise \$158 million so far in 2024, representing just 22 percent of total funding.

At the same time last year, funding to fintech stood at US\$852 million of the \$1.7 billion raised by this time last year. This represented more than 50 percent of total funding then.

However, this year, Africa's climate tech has overtaken fintech. The climate tech sub-sectors attracting the

most funding in 2024 so far are Logistics & Transport (29 percent, \$215 million) and Energy & Water, which is a not-so-distant third (18%, \$132 million).

"But what's particularly interesting is to look at the proportion of funding that is going to ventures that can be considered as 'Climate Tech,'" the Big Deal explained, highlighting that Climate Tech covers a wide range of use cases.

Climate tech companies offering fintech solutions in various African markets raised

\$30 million, while logistics and transport firms secured US\$95 million. Tech startups in agriculture and food innovations received US\$68 million, and deep tech climate solutions garnered \$10 million. Leading the pack, energy and water tech companies attracted US\$132 million in investments.

The continued funding interest in climate tech breathes hope into the future of climate transition and action in Africa, as innovators leverage technology to accelerate resilience efforts.

The impact of increased funding is already being felt, with global investors providing much-needed resources and expertise. This support has enabled innovations, such as battery-swapping technology solutions, to increasingly grow across the continent.

Chinese electric vehicles manufacturer, BYD, for instance, this week announced a partnership with Kigali-based EV line, Ampersand, to ramp up production to more than 40,000 electric motorcycles by the end of 2026.

How to Buy Nipashe and The Guardian Newspapers at www.ippmedia.com or epaper.ippmedia.com

Through the website epaper.ippmedia.com

1. Open the epaper.ippmedia.com website from your browser, select the version of publication you want to purchase, whether **Nipashe** or **The Guardian** by clicking "Read"
2. It will send you to another page where you need to fill in your information and the package you want to join. Then click "**subscribe**"
3. It will take you to the payment page where you can pay with either **bank card** or **by mobile money** transfer after correctly filling in your required information
4. Through **mobile Money**, choose the mobile network, write your number and tick the box to accept the terms and conditions. The **push SMS** will pop out on your phone to deduct

the amount after allowing the transaction from your mobile account. When the payment is completed, you will receive a payment confirmation **email** and **SMS**, then login into your account and start reading the publication of your choice

5. Through the **bank card**, you enter your card information and allow the amount to be deducted from your account after accepting the terms and conditions. Then log in to your account and finally enjoy the publication of your preference

Through the www.ippmedia.com website

6. Open your browser www.ippmedia.com website on the right hand side you will see "**E-Paper**" click on it and follow the processes same as **number 1-5**



Thousands in South Sudan face catastrophic food insecurity-UN

JUBA

SOUTH Sudan faces a “perfect storm” of violence, floods, an economic crisis and hunger, with 79,000 people in Jonglei State facing catastrophic food insecurity, UN humanitarian aid workers said on Thursday.

“Overall, more than 7 million people in the country face food insecurity - an increase of more than 20 percent compared to 2023 at mid-year,” the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (Ocha) said.

It blamed underfunding the humanitarian response and new arrivals due to the conflict in neighbouring Sudan as adding to the storm.

“The number of people facing catastrophic conditions - IPC 5, the highest level - in parts of Jonglei State in South Sudan is projected to almost double through July - rising to 79,000 people, compared to 35,000 people at the same time last year,” UN Ocha said.

The office said South Sudan is preparing for the worst floods in 60 years. Starting in September, the humanitarian community aims to provide life-saving assistance to 2.4 million of the 3.3 million people expected to be affected by flooding in

northern, north-eastern and central parts of the country.

Ocha said that \$264 million would be needed but underfunding of the humanitarian response in South Sudan is an ongoing challenge.

Six months into 2024, this year’s appeal for broader response efforts is less than 20 percent funded, with just more than 353 million of the nearly \$1.8 billion required.



The number of people facing catastrophic conditions - IPC 5, the highest level - in parts of Jonglei State in South Sudan is projected to almost double through July - rising to 79,000 people, compared to 35,000 people at the same time last year



Ahmad Salim Omar (R), Tanga regional coordinator of a coastal community network, presents a patrol boat to Mkinga district administrative secretary Palango Abdul at Boma Mahandakini village on Thursday for use in mounting patrols meant to protect marine resources. Photo: Correspondent Boniface Gideon

AI apparatus to revolutionise extreme weather forecasting

By Special Correspondent

EXTREME weather events causing floods, drought and wildfires are becoming more frequent and severe with climate change, affecting countries around the globe.

The Horn of Africa is particularly prone to heavy rains which cause devastating localised flooding, loss of livelihoods, and even life.

Now, scientists are using artificial intelligence (AI) to predict extreme weather in the region which could help save lives as

climate change becomes more severe.

The United Nations World Food Programme is working with researchers from the University of Oxford University physics department to develop a reliable AI weather forecasting system through machine learning.

“So it’s a hybrid approach where we have artificial intelligence to then fill in the gaps where the physical models lack understanding or representation because it’s too complex,” said Oxford climate scientist, Shruti Nath.

“They are then able to represent these complicated processes in a data-driven method so that we can best be able to forecast what the true observed reality is.”

By using satellite data of clouds banks and the temperatures at the tops of the cloud, the AI makes predictions and tries to identify upcoming extreme weather.

“So for the AI, there is the part where it predicts. But to predict, it needs to first train. And we train on historic observational data. So the input towards our AI device is the weather forecasts,” she said.

It is taking these weather forecasts and training to be able to match them to the observed reality based on the state-of-the-art satellite observations and station data.

Like all AI models, it is constantly improving, the code rewards accurate predictions and penalises inaccurate ones.

“So as the training time progresses, the model will learn more and more, and it’s rewarded for giving accurate predictions that match true observed reality. And if it doesn’t do that, it’s penalized.”

In countries like the United Kingdom, supercomputers are used to

forecast the weather. But the cost of the computers, the data gathering stations, and radar banks that feed them are high, making them inaccessible for developing nations.

However, the AI forecasting code produced by the University of Oxford can be operated from a laptop.

“Once it’s trained, you can just run it on your laptop to produce 50 predictions of all the possibilities of what the future weather is going to look like,” said Nath.

Predicting the weather in the Horn of Africa is notoriously hard because of its changeable nature

and a lack of weather stations observing and recording data.

Currently the pilot programme is being operated in Kenya and Ethiopia, but there are plans to roll it out across the wider area.

If it proves successful, it could be used in other parts of the world where extreme weather, driven by climate change, is devastating lives.

With a 48 hour warning from the AI weather forecast, those in danger can be forewarned through text messages, emails, and even radio and television broadcasts.



Mbarali District Council planning officer Anyagile Mwanyamaki pictured in Mbeya city on Thursday at an annual working session on the implementation of the national sustainable environmental restoration and biodiversity reserve project. Photo: Correspondent Ismail Ngayonga

Putin hosts Congolese leader for bilateral talks in Moscow

MOSCOW

RUSSIAN President Vladimir Putin welcomed his Congolese counterpart Denis Sassou Nguesso in the Kremlin on Thursday.

Sassou Nguesso is the latest African leader to visit Moscow, which has stepped up ties with African nations since 2022. The Russian leader hailed Sassou Nguesso’s contribution to developing Russian-Congolese ties.

“You personally have done a lot for the development of Russian-Congolese relations. You took part in two Russia-Africa summits, and you are making the necessary efforts to develop our cooperation in almost all areas. I mean the political level, and recently trade and economic relations have been noticeably developing. We are grateful to you for your joint work on the international stage. Overall, everything is working out for us,” said Putin.

Sassou-Nguesso has been in Russia since Tuesday. This is his second trip to the country in less than a year. Last July, he travelled to Saint Petersburg to attend the Russia-Africa summit.

This trip is expected to culminate in the signing of agreements on energy, trade and security cooperation.

“We would like to discuss with you and other officials the best way to advance the cooperation between our countries in all the fields, including economy, finance, defence, and security. We need security nowadays,” said Sassou Nguesso.

Putin also awarded Sassou Nguesso with an Order of Honour for his contribution to developing Russian-Congolese ties.

Russia has worked to bolster ties with African countries in a bid to counter western sanctions and isolation over the war in Ukraine.

Most African nations have adopted a neutral stance on the conflict, calling instead for a ceasefire and peace talks.

West African defence chiefs for \$2.6 billion security plan

ABUJA

DEFENCE chiefs of West Africa on Thursday proposed a plan to deploy a 5,000-strong “standby force” to fight the region’s worsening security crises, a measure that analysts say might not work due to challenges of funding and division within the regional bloc.

The plan, which will cost \$2.6 billion annually, was proposed to heads of state at a meeting of defence officials in Nigeria’s capital of Abuja. The plan was also aimed at preventing further coups following a

string of military takeovers that have destabilized the region, Nigeria’s Defence Minister Mohammed Badaru said.

Thursday’s meeting is the first time the bloc is mapping out publicly the financing of its long-talked-about standby force. However, analysts identified challenges it might face, including the shortage of funds from member states required to contribute money and securing the support of coup-hit countries most affected by the security crises.

“More than ever, we are at a pivotal moment in the history of our community to address insecurity,” said Omar Aliou Touray,

president of the regional bloc of ECOWAS Commission, as he urged member-states to support the force. Their proposals are expected to be considered at the upcoming summit of the regional heads of state.

The resurgence of coups in West and Central Africa - with four of its nations being run by military governments - has divided the 15-nation ECOWAS and destabilized the region, especially the coup-hit countries of Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger, which are worst-hit by the deadly violence now spreading to coastal nations.

ECOWAS has unsuccessfully tried to re-

turn democracies in these countries. Their best shot with now-lifted economic sanctions resulted in the three coup-hit countries withdrawing their membership and opening more windows for Russian mercenaries in the region.

Touray, the ECOWAS commission president, said the bloc invited officials from the coup-hit countries of Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger to attend Thursday’s meeting and join in forming such a force. It was not immediately clear if the countries would agree to this.

“I don’t think ECOWAS has the capacity

to launch military interventions without foreign assistance,” said Ulf Laessing, head of the Sahel programme at the Konrad Adenauer Foundation.

Such a standby force can only work if ECOWAS gets the commitment of all its member states and if the bloc maps out a strategy to deal with Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger, said Kars de Bruijne, a senior research fellow at the Clingendael Institute think tank.

“Delivering (on such plans) has been the issue with ECOWAS for a long time,” he said.

That RCs must really be in charge surely demands structural changes

POLITICAL and other observers will likely already be on the lookout for discernible changes in the country's regional administration, with a minister of state in the President's Office quoted as having issued a strident call in that direction.

The minister had demanded that regional commissioners adopt appropriate leadership models of solving problems facing the public and not wait for interventions from above. That is largely true, but it is limited to issues of defence and security. When it comes to project implementation and accounting - that is as to who clears the use of funds, power lies with districts.

In the event of problems, these usually check that out with ministerial departments but not the regional administration.

What in fact remains for regions is particularly selective, and might include demanding investigation into the use of funds by the Prevention and Combating of Corruption Bureau. One difficulty with that sort of avenue is that legislators are elected to bring resources to the local level and take comfort in having done that, while any administrative issues there may be are left to district commissioners (DCs).

It is unclear how far the DCs need to countersign documents on how municipal, town and district councils spend cash or how that method is applied at lower levels, as large sums of money are directed there as well.

In these days of carbon credits business, for instance, eight villages were handed 14bn/- to share out in Katavi Region, implicitly for their exclusive use!

With this, it is hard to map out where the sphere of responsibility of regional commissioners (RCs) will be, outside land-related conflicts and other forms of disorder.

Similarly, even there the scope

of RCs handling issues is limited. In the most recent Kariakoo business district closure of shops, three ministers were on the spot to sort out matters.

Finally, a national delegation of the traders' community negotiated at length with a team led by Prime Minister Kassim Majaliwa in person.

Shop closures have plenty to do with the upholding of public order, but definitely RCs aren't in charge of how things can be handled.

That is why one has to make an effort to find out usable clues on how far RCs can live up to demands by the government that they have been entrusted by the president to lead the regions, and thus they must trust themselves and take sober decisions, resolving all challenges taken to them.

Outside the sphere of law and order, one finds it relatively hard to find out where RCs can be effective, with an option or prerogative of interfering with district administration. The second-stage decentralisation in the 1990s or later vested districts with most executive powers on the managing of development projects with ministerial oversight - not regions.

Yet there is no doubt that there is plenty of affinity of this system with the country's more important development partners.

The likes of the World Bank are by far the most important partner in the devising and execution of numerous small projects, where it has an easier way advising local implementers on what to do.

At times these make decisions on projects on the basis of what they hear on the ground, most especially from their own field pressure groups if they are displeased with central government action.

Meanwhile, district officials need to keep both donors and their own councillors happy. A rather tricky situation, for sure.

Huge potential for potato farming could ease policy burden on maize

EXPERTS with the Southern Agricultural Growth Corridor of Tanzania (SAGCOT) have raised eyebrows. They are focusing on Ruvuma Region as having viable potential as 'chips basket' as distinct from the usual 'bread basket' label.

The reason for this is that bread is largely an urban preoccupation while maize is there but is proving elusive both in its regulatory and its nutrition aspect.

The issue is that maize has slid from standing as a market crop owing to fears of its prices rising, in which case potatoes could balance the demand if maize is scarce.

That looks a little savvy in strategic terms in that having plenty of potatoes in markets all over the country across the year could help cut down the sensitivity of rising maize prices.

During 40 years of agro-sector marketing development the government has struggled, intervening to tame market forces whenever there has been an appreciable rise in maize flour prices.

The major reason is that maize isn't a plantation crop where producers overflow the market and export potential is actually surplus produce after local demand is satisfied at low prices.

That is why there is potential for this situation to change if a number of factors converge, one being commercial planting of potatoes without any chance of 'food reserve' setting of prices.

It means that producers can sell at low prices for both local and export markets, as proto-mechanised farming is usually cheaper than family-based cultivation in

the minimum or living wage that the latter requires.

Yet authorities can trample the market over local producers when worried about urban tensions if maize flour is too high, impacting on household consumption, outdoor eating budget ceilings, etc.

The best way to amplify the cultivation of the crop is if there is fertile land not claimed by some original inhabitants, as leasing out such land often induces trouble.

With the possibility of purchasing land from villagers all but out of question, it would be up to the government to balance out its appetite for wildlife sanctuaries by shed some it for a new staple, counterbalance with maize, making it an ordinary crop that can be market-based.

The particular crop stands as a national staple and each one, especially in urban areas has the right to obtain it cheaply.

SAGCOT officials say that this potential is true for parts of Songea, Namtumbo and Madaba districts, at least going by demonstration farming said to have "pleasantly surprised many people".

Still the agricultural sector improvement agency isn't designed for more complex objectives, as its goal is to ensure that round potato farming is successful and sustainable.

This ought to mean bringing about positive outcomes manifested in improvement in the lives of farmers, with no link whatsoever with the wider food market issues and policy snags in that area.

SAGCOT has done commendable scientific work; it is up to planners and legislators to take up the issue while aiming even higher.

The Guardian Limited Key Contacts

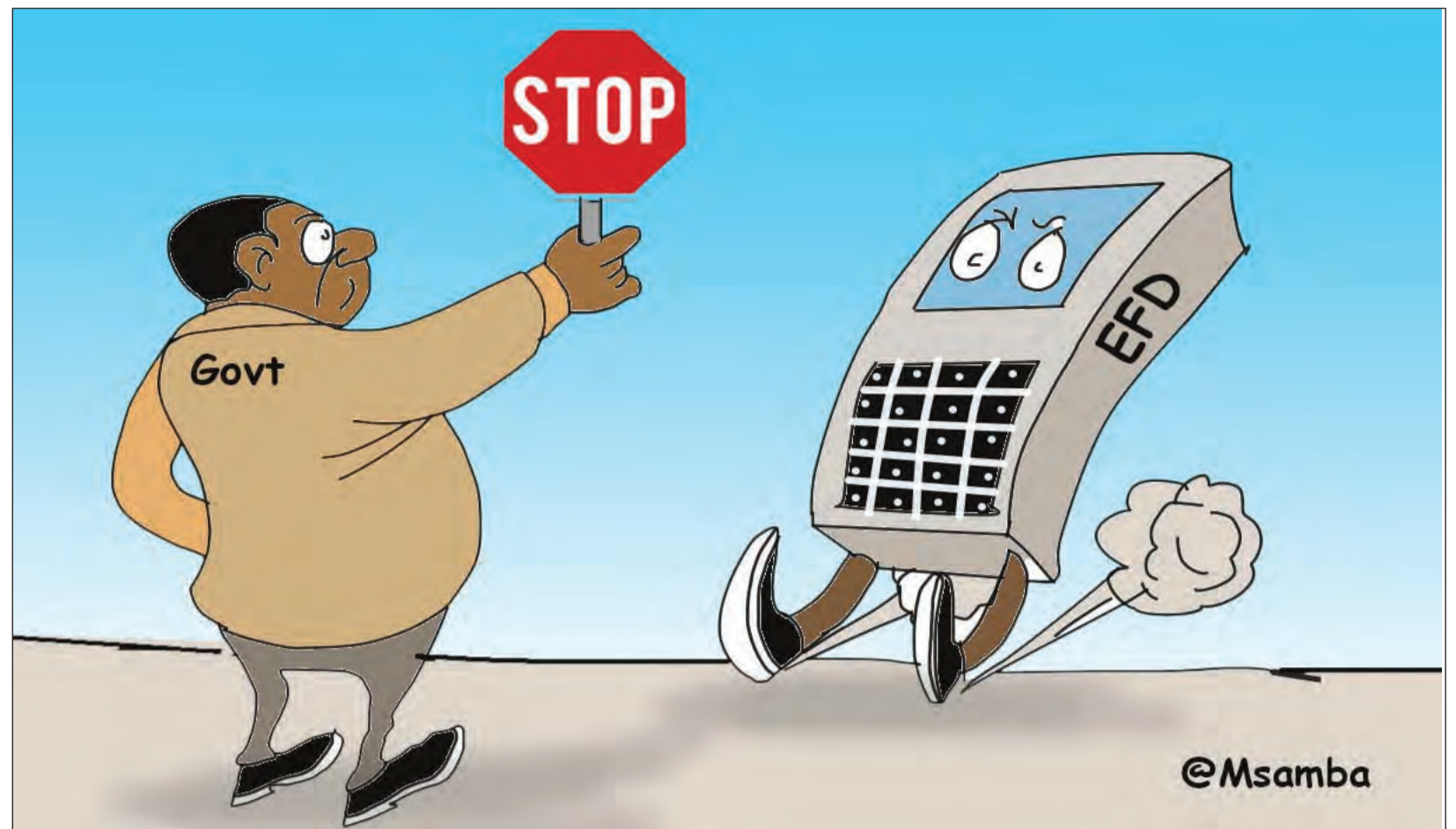
MANAGING EDITOR: WALLACE MAUGGO
CIRCULATION MANAGER: DENNIS NTAITA
feedback@guardian.co.tz

Newsdesk

General Line: 0745 700710
News Editor: LUSEKELO PHILEMON
0757 154767
E-mail: guardian@guardian.co.tz

Advertising

Cel: + 0677 020701 E-mails: Advertise@guardian.co.tz
Website: Ippmedia.com, epaper.ippmedia.com



With civil war pushing Sudan towards famine, the West and BRICS should rein in foreign states meddling in the conflict

By Peter Fabricius

FOURTEEN months after Sudan's civil war began, the country faces humanitarian disaster. At least 16,000 Sudanese have died in the military power struggle that erupted in April 2023 when General Mohamed Hamdan 'Hemedti' Dagalo's Rapid Support Forces (RSF) attacked General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan's regular Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF).

The African Union's Peace and Security Council (AU PSC) on 21 June expressed "grave concern over the unprecedented catastrophic humanitarian situation, indiscriminate killings of... civilians, and... destruction of infrastructure, including hospitals, schools, water purification and electricity generation plants".

The warfare has included mindless cruelty, including mass rape and ethnic pogroms by the RSF, particularly in Darfur's western region.

But the gathering famine is now most worrying. The war has displaced nearly 10 million people, destroyed agricultural infrastructure and collapsed the country's economy. The WFP says nearly 18 million Sudanese face 'acute food insecurity' - almost five million of whom are in 'emergency levels of hunger.'

The war has raged across the country, with the SAF dominant in the east and RSF in the west, including Darfur. In its previous incarnation as the Janjaweed, RSF rampaged, killed, looted and raped in Darfur in the early 2000s. The current epicentre of the clashes is El Fasher, capital of North Darfur and the last SAF stronghold in the area. Although SAF is supported by militias, the RSF has besieged the city.

"The El Fasher area hosts over a million civilians, many... already displaced by the conflict and teetering on the edge of survival," says the International Crisis Group (ICG). "Even a prolonged siege threatens their lives, but an escalating battle for the city could lead to mass slaughter and other atrocities."

The most pressing need is to deliver humanitarian aid to the millions who risk starvation - but even that is proving almost impossible. As several commentators have pointed out, both the SAF and RSF have denied virtually all humanitarian access to each other's strongholds. The ICG says the RSF should allow civilians to leave El Fasher safely, although these people have nowhere to go, since most belong to ethnic groups the RSF has targeted.

Strategic starvation

In Foreign Affairs last week, World Peace Foundation Executive Director and Sudan expert Alex de Waal wrote that the looming famine is no accident: both Burhan and Hemedti are using mass starvation as a weapon



Refugees that fled fighting in Sudan head towards a barge in Renk, South Sudan. August 27, 2023. File photo

of war.

"The RSF fighters operate like human locusts, stripping cities and countryside bare of all movable resources... to sustain their war machine. The SAF... has blocked humanitarian aid to the vast areas of the country under RSF control." De Waal says by one projection, as much as 5% of Sudan's population could die of starvation by year-end.

The international community is protesting but achieving little to end the war or ensure emergency aid reaches the neediest. Early on, the United States and Saudi Arabia convened talks between the two sides, culminating in an agreement to allow humanitarian aid and protect civilians. Neither side has complied.

This month, the United Nations Security Council adopted Resolution 2736, demanding civilian protection and unimpeded humanitarian access, an immediate cessation of hostilities, and an end to the El Fasher siege and external interference. The G7 has said much the same.

The AU has made some attempts, but not enough, including futile efforts last year to bring the parties to the negotiation table. Last Friday, as El Fasher's looming catastrophe became ignorable, the PSC again called on both sides to begin peace talks and at least allow humanitarian aid into the war zones.

It commended efforts by AU Commission Chairperson Moussa Faki Mahamat, the AU High-Level Panel on Sudan and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development to convene next month's all-

inclusive Sudan political dialogue process in Addis Ababa. The PSC directed Mahamat to set up a committee comprising a leader from each of Africa's five regions to urge Burhan and Hemedti to meet face-to-face to resolve this ultimately personal power struggle between them.

Outside interference

However, a big question mark hangs over any peace efforts by Africa alone, because of foreign forces' unprecedented meddling in the conflict.

The fingers of suspicion point mainly towards the Gulf. The United Arab Emirates (UAE) is widely suspected of arming and funding the RSF, while Saudi Arabia is believed to be backing the SAF. De Waal says this includes permitting Egypt, Qatar and Turkey to provide it with weapons and block peace initiatives. Last year Iran sent drones to the SAF as part of efforts to revive its links with Sudan's Islamists, who support the SAF, he says.

Meanwhile, Russia seems to be playing both sides. Wagner has been involved in Sudan for years, backing the RSF. But Moscow recently shifted to a more even-handed posture as it wants to establish a naval facility in Port Sudan (where Burhan's government has retreated) in exchange for arms to the SAF.

De Waal believes only Saudi Arabia and UAE can bring Burhan and Hemedti to talks. Like the ICG, he has urged Washington and the West to use their influence on the two Gulf states to do that.

However, there is another locus of pressure on Saudi Arabia, the UAE and other interferers. The BRICS bloc now includes Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Egypt, Iran and Russia - all suspected of meddling in Sudan. Yet when its foreign ministers met in Russia this month, they all intoned the mantra of "African solutions for African problems" regarding Sudan - saying nothing about their own complicity.

Conversely, the ICG found it encouraging that in last week's PSC communiqué, the AU condemned external actors for the first time - even if it didn't name them.

Sudan's beleaguered democrats could also still play a role. The Coordination Body of Civilian Democratic Forces (Taqaaddum), comprising Sudanese civil society and political actors, held its founding conference in May. It brought together nearly 600 participants from Sudan's 18 states and elected former prime minister Abdalla Hamdok as its leader.

As Chatham House notes, Taqaaddum has been accused by both warring sides of bias towards the other, and must remain united and strong so it can contribute to peace efforts. Taqaaddum probably remains hostage to Burhan and Hemedti's reckless ambitions. But its conference was a useful reminder that neither of the two leaders destroying the country for their own gain would be the rightful heir were peace achieved.

They joined forces in October 2021 to hijack the transition to civilian democracy, and neither deserves a role in Sudan's future. **DM**

By Dani Thomas

How bees could help war-wrecked families in Ukraine

BEESWAX could be crucial to help preserve food in war zones like Ukraine, according to researchers.

UK scientists have been helping beekeepers in the besieged country to develop new wax wrappings for perishable foods amid Russian attacks.

Russia has targeted Ukraine's energy infrastructure in recent months, causing blackouts, meaning there may be no refrigeration in some areas during the summer.

Ukraine is the largest producer of honey in Europe and researchers based in Cardiff have been analysing individual beehives to decide which could offer the best protection.

"People will know Ukraine is not in a great place at the moment," said Professor Les Baille, from Cardiff University.

"As everyone knows, food goes off very quickly if there's no way of preserving it.

"Using a beeswax wrap that can kill bugs, seems like a natural way of addressing this issue."

The research team have created different "recipes", which mix together combinations of ordinary items still likely to be available in war zones, to create wraps which can preserve food.

They have been able to test different combinations to come up with some of the most potent for food preservation.

"The magic is in the mixture," said Prof Baille.

He said "a piece of cloth or even paper" is combined with beeswax and other naturally occurring antimicrobial plants, like sage, to form the wraps.

"Beeswax wraps are traditionally used to extend the life of sandwiches, but they can be used for other products as well," he added.

As part of the effort to help Ukrainians preserve their food for as long as possible, the team at Cardiff University have been working with academics and beekeepers in the country to test beehives around Ukraine to see which are best suited to the task.

"They have lots of beeswax and they have lots of bees," said Prof Baille.

"By finding the right wax that has the right properties, you have the chance to extend the life of your food further.

"That's particularly important when you don't have refrigerators and you don't have a source of power.

He said it would not keep things fresh indefinitely, but could extend the life for a couple of days.

Ukrainian counterparts at Kharkiv Polytechnic Institute have been spreading the information from Cardiff University online and across social media, in the hope Ukrainians will be able to try it for themselves this summer.



Ukraine is Europe's largest supplier of honey

Kharkiv has seen heavy fighting in recent weeks. "The situation in conflict zones and near the frontline is very hard.

"People there have no electricity or very often there are blackouts in these regions," said Dr Yuliia Yudina, from the National University Pharmacy at Kharkiv Polytechnic Institute.

She said the power cuts had led to a "significant" amount of food

waste. "[The wrap] can be used for bread to keep it fresher, fruit and vegetables to keep them fresher."

Prof Baille and his team of microbiologists hope their work with Ukraine will help others in war zones around the world harness the natural antibiotic properties of honey - which was once used by civilisations like Ancient Greece.

"We've actually had a response from the military in Ukraine, picking up this idea.

"For us, if we can just do a small thing to make this better, from our safe homes, then it's worth it."

Gaza: Long campaign by Israel may follow war

By Sebastian Usher

ISRAELI Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's recent comments that the intense phase of fighting in Gaza was about to end essentially confirmed what has become increasingly clear in the past few months.

The Israeli army has portrayed its current operation in the southern city of Rafah as its last major ground offensive in Gaza.

It went ahead, despite concerted international opposition. It has involved Israeli strikes that have killed large numbers of Palestinian civilians. But it has not seen the remorseless level of bombardment that characterised earlier assaults on Gaza City and Khan Younis.

Israeli forces backed by tanks are still battling with Palestinian fighters in the west of Rafah, while the army continues to demolish swathes of buildings in the city.

The IDF has said that it has severely degraded three of the four Hamas battalions that it has said remain in Rafah, which was Israel's main aim. That holds out the possibility that the army may soon declare that the operation has been completed.

None of this has been any solace to the people of Gaza. There's been little or no respite for them. Casualty figures from the health ministry in Gaza - run by Hamas - are still recording around 40 to 60 deaths a day.

Israel is carrying out strikes every day elsewhere in Gaza - both in the north and in the centre. There is no current prospect of an end to this. Key to Mr Netanyahu's strategy in Gaza is the freedom for Israel to mount attacks when and where it considers necessary, even if at some point all its troops have been withdrawn from the enclave.

In Washington, the Israeli defence minister Yoav Gallant has been discussing with top US officials what he himself called Phase C - the third, less intensive stage - of Israel's campaign from relatively early on in the conflict.

He told the US special envoy Amos Hochstein in one of his first meetings during his four day visit that the transition to Phase C would "impact developments on all fronts, and that Israel was preparing for every scenario both militarily and diplomatically".

That message is one he will have continued to drive home in subsequent discussions with the US Secretary of State Antony Blinken and the Secretary of Defence Lloyd Austin.

The reference to all fronts is very much focused on the situation on Israel's northern border, where there's been a recent upsurge both in fighting and rhetoric in Israel's confrontation with the Lebanese armed movement Hezbollah. It's led to speculation that a new, all out war could be looming between Israel and another of its long-term antagonists in the region.

Mr Netanyahu has said that further scaling down the fighting in Gaza would free up troops to redeploy to the border with Lebanon. To underline the priority this front is increasingly assuming for Israel, Mr Netanyahu has been up near the border, observing a drill by troops.

The Israeli President Isaac Herzog has also just spent two days in the region, not just visiting the military but also several of the communities that have been affected by Hezbollah's near-daily attacks since 8 October. Lebanese communities have also suffered as Israel has struck back.



Palestinians gather outside a damaged house following Israeli bombardment early on May 22, 2024 in the town of az-Zawayda in the Deir el-Balah governorate in central Gaza, where many civilians from other parts of the besieged Gaza Strip have taken refuge. AFP

Day After

Whatever happens on Israel's northern border, the conflict in Gaza, even if at a far lower level of intensity, shows no sign of coming to an end. Moves towards a ceasefire have lost momentum again, with neither Israel nor Hamas appearing ready to fully embrace all elements of the proposal laid out by President Biden.

There's been much talk of what happens on the Day After. The Israeli war cabinet was dissolved by Mr Netanyahu after one of its members, Benny Gantz, left it, citing the prime minister's failure to lay out a post-war plan as the main reason for his resignation.

It's still unclear if there is such a plan. In a recent interview with a friendly Israeli media outlet, Mr Netanyahu said that it was clear that "military control in the foreseeable future will be ours".

He went on to give what were perhaps his most detailed comments so far on how he envisions the post-war situation in Gaza: "We also want to create a civilian administration, if possible with local Palestinians, and maybe with external backing from countries in the region, to manage humanitarian supply and later on civilian affairs in the [Gaza] Strip."

This chimes with what the Biden administration is hoping to achieve. Latest reports suggest that Egypt and the UAE are prepared to take part in a security force that might operate in Gaza after the war.

But the very concept of a Day After in Gaza may itself be somewhat optimistic. Hamas and Islamic Jihad fighters continue to be able to reappear in areas from where they were driven out earlier in Israel's campaign, in what has essentially become a form of guerrilla warfare.

The Israeli military's chief spokesperson, Rear Admiral Daniel Hagari has recently described the aim of destroying Hamas - making it disappear - as "simply throwing sand in the eyes of the public".

He said that Hamas was an idea rooted in the hearts of the people and that "anyone who thinks we can eliminate Hamas is wrong".

This is a message that does not appear to have got through to Mr Netanyahu.

He has held hard to his maximalist goal of a total defeat of Hamas, militarily and politically - although that may undergo some element of reformulation in the coming weeks and months. That is why he has continued to insist on Israel having the freedom to continue military operations when necessary, even if a ceasefire is agreed.

When he reiterated that in his interview with Channel 14, there were reports of disappointment among US officials that he was essentially negating the cornerstone of the ceasefire plan that President Biden not only announced but described as Israel's own proposal.

Hamas seized the opportunity to accuse Mr Netanyahu of preventing a ceasefire agreement - although officially the White House has put the onus on Hamas.

In Israel, the families of the hostages still held in Gaza - alive or dead - have also increasingly denounced Mr Netanyahu as being the main obstacle in the way of securing the release of their relatives.

In their latest demonstration, hostages' families again blocked roads across Israel. On one highway, they set a metal cage on fire, with the word Help emblazoned on it.

In a statement, they said: "Netanyahu has given up on the hostages. They can be buried in Gaza so long as he keeps his seat."

This third phase of Israel's war in Gaza may be at a lower intensity. But with no sign that it will end any time soon, the prospects of a ceasefire, the release of hostages and the beginning of a process in which Palestinians can rebuild their lives remain on hold.

Biden's incoherent debate performance heightens fears over his age

By Anthony Zurcher

BEFORE Thursday evening, many Americans had expressed concerns about Joe Biden's age and fitness for office. To say that this debate did not put those concerns to rest may be one of the greatest understatements of the year.

The president came into the debate with a low bar to clear, and he stumbled. He was flat. He was rambling. He was unclear.

About midway through the debate, the Biden campaign said that the president was battling a cold - an attempt to explain his raspy voice. That may be so, but it also sounded like an excuse.

For 90 minutes, more often than not, he was on the ropes. Particularly early in the evening, some of his answers were nonsensical. After losing his train of thought he ended one answer by saying, "We finally beat Medicare" - an odd reference to the government run healthcare programme for the elderly.

Biden's own former communications director Kate Bedingfield was on CNN immediately after the debate, and she was clear: "There's no two ways about it, that was not a good debate for Joe Biden."

She said his biggest issue was to prove he had the energy and the stamina, and he didn't do that.

As the debate progressed, like a boxer on the ropes, Biden started to take big swings against his opponent in an attempt to change the momentum. A few of those swings landed, provoking Donald Trump into angry responses.

That the first few topics raised by CNN's moderators were on the top voter issues of economy and immigration - which polls show Americans trust Trump more on - only made the problem worse for the president, however.

"I really don't know what he said at the end of that sentence, and I don't think he did, either," Trump said after another Biden response. That line may have summed up the night.

A more focused Trump

Trump largely offered a disciplined, nimble performance. He avoided the kind of interruptions and beligerence that undermined his first debate showing in 2020 and turned the discussion back to attacks on Mr Biden's record whenever possible.

He repeatedly made assertions that weren't supported by facts as well as outright falsehoods, but Mr Biden largely was unable to corner him on them.

When the topic turned to abortion, for instance, the former president repeatedly shifted attention to what he said was Democratic extremism. He claimed, incorrectly, that Democrats support abortions after babies are born.

Abortion is an issue that has proven to be a weakness for Trump and Republicans in general since the overturning of *Roe v Wade* - which had protected the constitutional right to abortion - by the Supreme Court in 2022. But Mr Biden's attacks in an area where he could have scored points fell flat.

"It's been a terrible thing, what you've done," the president said.

A fighter on the ropes

Shortly after the debate finished, Vice-President Kamala Harris acknowledged that the president had a "slow start" but said that he had finished strong. That is overly optimistic spin, but it's true that Mr Biden steadied himself as the debate progressed.

In one memorable line, the president noted Trump's conviction on charges that stemmed from an alleged romantic liaison with adult film star Stormy Daniels, and said his opponent had "the morals of an alley cat".

"I didn't have sex with a porn star," Trump snapped



US President Joe Biden and former US President and Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump participate in the first presidential debate of the 2024 elections at CNN's studios in Atlanta, Georgia, on Thursday. AFP

back.

Trump also appeared on the back foot when talking about his response to the 6 January attack on the US Capitol. He initially tried to turn a question about his responsibility for the riot into a condemnation of Mr Biden's record, but this time the president wouldn't let him off the hook.

"He encouraged those folks to go up to Capitol Hill. He sat there for three hours as his aides begged him to do something," Mr Biden said. "He didn't do a damn thing."

The former president also repeatedly ducked and

dodged when it came to whether he would accept the outcome of the 2024 election.

What happens next?

This was the earliest debate in modern US history, in part because the Biden team wanted it that way. One reason is they sought to shift focus to Trump earlier in the campaign season, hoping that American voters would be reminded of the chaotic nature of his presidency.

But more people will be talking about Mr Biden's performance rather than Trump's after this debate.

Another reason the Biden team may have wanted an early debate is that it would give their candidate more time to recover from a weak performance. In the end, this may be what gives them comfort after Thursday night.

The Democrats have their party convention in August, when they will be able to offer a more scripted vision of a second Biden term for Americans. There is another debate in September, which - if it happens - will be fresher in American minds as they head to the polls in November.

But many Democrats may be wondering whether a second chance at Trump on the debate stage will turn out any different for their man. And some, at this point, may be thinking about how they might get a different presidential nominee.

The Biden campaign has almost two months to calm the waters. It would take an open revolt for Democrats to abandon their candidate - who comfortably won enough primary delegates to secure the party's nomination.

At least so far, no prominent Democratic officials have publicly broken ranks, even as some have reportedly raised alarms in anonymous conversations with journalists. When asked by the BBC about the possibility of opening the convention to other candidates or replacing the president, Deputy Campaign Manager Quentin Fults said they were "not going to dignify that with a response".

"President Biden is going to be the Democratic nominee, and President Biden is going to win this election," he added.

If Biden's campaign can rally his troops in the days ahead, the first assertion may be true. Trump himself has proven that politicians can face daunting adversity and grind through.

After this debate, however, many Democrats may have serious doubts about his prospects for November.



US President Joe Biden takes pictures with supporters as he visits a Biden-Harris campaign debate watch party in Atlanta, Georgia, on Thursday. AFP

CAPITAL RADIO

RATIBA YA VIPINDI JUMATATU - JUMAPILI

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

Tembelea mitandao ya kijamii ya CAPITAL RADIO



CAPITAL RADIO

Innovative funding models for sustainable healthcare

By Oluwaseyi Atoyebi and Sharon Karbo

THE healthcare landscape across Africa is as diverse as its people, yet many countries share common challenges in funding and delivering healthcare services. Over time on the continent, healthcare financing has been marked by inadequate government investment, high out-of-pocket expenses by individuals, and low insurance penetration.

According to the World Health Organisation, out-of-pocket expenses make up over 40 per cent of total health expenditures in many African countries. Also, recent data from the World Bank shows that the current annual healthcare expenditure per capita in sub-Saharan Africa stands at \$83.35 per person compared to that of the European Union and United States which are \$4,215.43 and \$12,473.79 respectively.

The heavy financial burden has led to immense healthcare spending for households, thereby increasing poverty and health inequalities coupled with rising costs of drugs, brain drain in the health sector, and increased maternal mortality rate.

This issue has become imperative because achieving the health-related Sustainable Development Goals by 2030 requires urgent attention to the economic challenges of healthcare financing in Africa, most especially for policymakers and healthcare leaders. The SDGs emphasise universal health coverage and equitable access to quality health services. But with the current economic landscape in Africa, progress towards these goals is being hindered.

While some governments are making strides towards better health financing, others are lagging due to various political, economic, and social challenges.

Recently, some countries across the continent have shown strong political will with significant budget allocations to improve health by implementing financing models through Health Savings Accounts, which are tax-advantaged savings accounts linked to high-deductible health insurance plans (South Af-

rica and Kenya); community-based health insurance schemes, which are voluntary, non-profit health insurance programmes organised at the community level (Rwanda, Ethiopia, and Ghana); Public-Private Partnerships (Nigeria and Kenya); Social Health Insurance systems, which collect contributions from employees, employers, and government subsidies to provide health coverage (Ghana, Kenya, and Tanzania); micro-insurance schemes, which provide low-cost health insurance products tailored to low-income populations (Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda), and mobile health financing solutions that use mobile technology to facilitate health savings, insurance enrollment, and claims processing (Tanzania, Kenya, and Uganda).

However, despite showing political will, they still face challenges such as a lack of regulatory frameworks, implementation for large informal sectors (like HSAs), financial sustainability due to rising healthcare costs, low enrollment (micro-insurance schemes), limited financial risk pooling (CBHI), potential conflicts between public health goals and private profit motives (like PPPs), difficulty in scaling up to achieve significant population coverage, and low penetration in smartphone usage. According to 2023 data from Statista, 51 per cent of people in sub-Saharan Africa own smartphones, the highest rate of adoption globally. However, this region still has the largest usage gap globally, with 59 per cent of the population, or 680 million people unconnected. These challenges coupled with inadequate health policies have the potential to hinder progress and access to quality healthcare.

To mitigate these challenges, there is a need for Africa to adopt strategic innovation for these models tailored to its unique socio-economic landscape. For instance, towards improving PPPs in Kenya, the Managed Equipment Services project has seen private entities supply, install, and maintain medical equipment in public hospitals, significantly improving service quality and availability.

Hence, expanding such mod-



els across Africa can bridge funding gaps and improve healthcare outcomes. In addition, exploring hybrid models that combine HSAs with social health insurance, government subsidies for low-income HSA contributions, and developing mobile-based HSA platforms to reach informal sector workers would lead to potential benefits to extend coverage beyond middle and high-income earners to low-income populations.

Likewise, the adoption of Performance-Based Financing, which ties funding to the achievement of specific health outcomes, can help

enhance accountability. This model incentivises healthcare providers to improve service quality and efficiency as seen in Burundi which led to notable improvements in maternal and child health services.

Furthermore, introducing health bonds, which are promising means for raising funds specifically for health initiatives by focusing on measurable improvements, such as reduced maternal mortality or increased vaccination rates, can ensure accountability and drive significant health advancements. Social impact bonds can attract investment by linking returns to health

outcomes as part of CSR.

Also, the CBHI scheme has shown promise in Rwanda and has reduced the financial burden on individuals and increased access to essential health services. Therefore, scaling CBHI across more regions, integrating CBHI with the NHIS, using mobile technology for premium collections and claims processing, and bundling health insurance with other microfinance products can promote equity and sustainability in health financing. In addition, the proliferation of mobile phones in Africa provides a unique opportunity to leverage mobile health solu-

tions for healthcare financing.

As regards this, mobile money platforms can help facilitate micro-insurance payments, remittances for health expenses, and even direct health-related crowdfunding by integrating with popular mobile money platforms. For example, in Tanzania, the Wazazi Nipendeni initiative uses SMS to educate pregnant women while integrating mobile money for healthcare savings.

Lastly, placing a special levy on large profitable companies can support the enrollment of the low-income population in national health insurance and social security schemes. As done in Gabon, introduced taxes in 2009 raised additional funds to subsidise healthcare for low-income groups. One such tax was on money transfers, whereby a 1.5 per cent levy on the post-tax profits was imposed on companies that handle remittances.

The second was a 10 per cent tax on mobile phone operators in the country. The two taxes raised an equivalent of \$30 million for health in 2009. Innovative taxes in some countries include those associated with tobacco (British American Tobacco in Nigeria), alcohol, environmental pollution, petroleum products, community support, and risky behaviour such as drunken driving. Many of these taxes and levies target behaviour and products that negatively affect health.

Even though these innovative models show promise in addressing some of Africa's healthcare challenges, their success depends on careful adaptation to local contexts, strong governance, and continuous innovation. Policymakers must consider the unique challenges and opportunities in their countries when implementing these models.

The key considerations for successful implementation across the board include ensuring equity and inclusivity, particularly for low-income and informal sector workers, building robust regulatory frameworks and governance structures, investing in technology infrastructure and digital literacy, fostering partnerships between governments, the private sector, and communities, and implementing rigorous monitoring and evaluation systems to guide ongoing improvements. By addressing these factors, African countries can work towards developing more effective, equitable, and sustainable healthcare financing systems, ultimately improving health outcomes for their populations.

Hot cocoa prices bring sweet profits, danger to Ecuador producers

By Special Correspondent

JULIA Avellan had been tempted to quit the cocoa business before prices unexpectedly exploded on the international market this year, bringing historic profits to Ecuador's farmers.

Cocoa prices skyrocketed in March after a poor harvest in West Africa, and remain at record-highs since partially sliding back

But the "golden" cocoa bean has not escaped the attention of criminals in the small South American nation, wracked by gang violence in recent years.

Avellan, 41, walks through her lush plantation in the central Los Rios province, stopping to slice open a reddish cocoa pod, extracting the slimy bean that will be fermented, dried and roasted on its way to becoming chocolate.

Cocoa prices skyrocketed in March after a poor harvest in West Africa, reaching \$10,000 per ton in New York. Prices have since dropped back but are still three times higher than last year.

Countries whose governments do not regulate cocoa prices -- such as Ecuador -- have seen some of the best profits.

Avellan said she has sold a quintal (100 pounds, 45 kilograms) of cocoa beans for \$420, compared to around \$60 before the boom which barely covered her investments and "made you feel like quitting as a cocoa farmer."

"Thanks to these prices, we are going to be more sustainable for our family. We will be able to take care of our plants with even more dedication, because now it truly is the golden seed," she told AFP.

Stolen trucks transporting cocoa

But the bounty has also ushered in danger in a country brought to its knees by organized crime, forcing everyone from shrimp farmers to banana growers to fork out millions in extra security.

"These prices are historic, we have never had them," said Ivan Ontaneda, president of the national association of cocoa exporters (Anecacao).

He said exporters had already spent around \$20 million on security last year, and fears are high that cocaine will end up in their shipments.

Los Rios is one of the most violent provinces in Ec-



cuador with a murder rate of 111 per 100,000 inhabitants.

The figure is even higher than in neighboring Guayas state, whose port capital Guayaquil is the main hub for cocaine trafficking to the United States and Europe.

"My colleagues have been kidnapped. Not even eight days ago, a young

man was kidnapped. They have stolen cars (trucks loaded with cocoa) from companies," said Avellan.

The threat of crime leads to an "increase in costs" in the cocoa chain, Marco Landivar, manager of a processing plant for the exporter Eco-kakao, told AFP.

"The cargo has to go with private security, all movements to port have double custody," he adds.

In recent months, unfavorable weather conditions and devastating diseases in aging plantations have battered crops in West Africa, tipping the scale in favour of the Latin American country.

In Ecuador, small farmers produce 80 percent of the country's cocoa beans, while the rest are grown by larger plantations.

The beans, the seed of the fruit of the cocoa tree, are dried under the hot equatorial sun in storage centers before being shipped off to delight chocolate lovers around the world. In 2023, cocoa generated \$1.3 billion for Ecuador. In the first four months of this year alone, the country has sold \$774 million worth, according to the central bank.

Ecuador's main markets for cocoa are Indonesia, Malaysia, the United States, the Netherlands and Belgium.

The soaring cocoa price has also led to wild speculation and demand for "much more liquidity, which the export sector does not have at the moment," said Ontaneda. He said it was like "blood for the sharks" on the floors of stock exchanges.

"Speculative funds entered the market to buy cocoa in paper form," before it was harvested, sending prices soaring.

While some local producers reap the benefits, Ontaneda and other experts warn that the soaring prices will force people to cut back on their chocolate habits.

Investors mobilise \$50mn for boosting CNG adoption

LAGOS

THE Federal Government (FG) yesterday, disclosed that investors have mobilised \$50 million in the past six months to support infrastructure development for Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) adoption in the transportation sector.

Additionally, the government said it is also offering a 50 percent discount on conversion kits, priced between N1.2 million and N1.5 million to encourage transporters to switch to CNG, which can save up to 77 percent in energy costs.

Speaking at a stakeholders meeting on the benefits of adoption of CNG as a sustainable and economical energy alternative for transporters, the Programme Director, Presidential Initiative on Compressed Natural Gas Programme, PC-NGI, Mr. Michael Oluwagbemi, said the government is also working with banks to provide funds for the programme.

The forum which was organised by Portland Gas and PCNGI, had the theme: Driving sustainable transportation: Accelerating CNG adoption in Nigeria.

Represented by Mr. Tosin Coker, Oluwagbemi said the government will, in the coming days, roll out buses and tricycles powered by CNG to support public transportation in Abuja.

According to him, "In December 2023, we hosted our first investor forum, which saw tremendous participation from companies now investing in the sector. I am pleased to report that well over \$50 million has been mobilised directly by the sector since then more than any amount mobilised in the last ten years combined. We are also enabling ordinary Nigerians, particularly transport operators, to convert their vehicles.

"Last month, on May 29, we announced the Conversion Incentive Program, making it easier for Nigerians to adopt CNG. This effort is supported by private sector partners, development funds and banks, all eager to finance this transformative initiative.

"More importantly, in an effort to reduce the cost of public transport, we are catalysing the sector by supporting the introduction of CNG buses and tricycles (kekes). In the next few days, you will witness these buses on the streets of Abuja, even as we also start to make conversion kits available at 50% discount to the transport sector", he added.

Speaking on the benefits of switching to CNG fuel, the Managing Director, Portland Gas Limited, Mr. Folajimi Mohammed, noted that besides being cheaper than petrol and diesel, CNG provides more mileage for transporters and vehicle owners.

Mohammed explained that the technology allows for the retention of the old petrol/diesel system, allowing owners to switch fuel when needed.

He said: "CNG is a cleaner-burning fuel, resulting in lower emissions and better air quality. CNG is generally cheaper than petrol, leading to significant fuel cost savings. CNG vehicles have a longer engine life due to the cleaner burning properties of the fuel.

"The conversion involves installing a CNG tank, fuel lines, regulators, and other accessories in the vehicle. Certified CNG conversion centres handle the entire conversion process, which typically takes three hours. The vehicle's existing petrol system is kept intact, allowing the driver to switch between petrol and CNG as needed.



CNG vehicle

SPECIAL REPORT

Breach of regulations amplify urban filling station construction projects

By Francis Kajubi

THE breach of regulations regarding the distance to be considered in construction of petroleum products filling stations is among the two major factors that amplify the mushrooming of the stations within urban human settlements.

This journalist has learned that the second major factor behind the vast increment of filling stations within people's residence is for the majority of the 184 country's district councils, particularly those in urban areas, administering changes of land use permits from original residential housing development permits to filling stations construction permits without prior consultation with the National Environment Management Council (NEMC) on environmental pollution and conservation related issues.

The Petroleum (Wholesale, Storage, Retail and Consumer Installation Operations) Rules 2020 made under Section 259 (1) of the Petroleum Act Cap 392 of 2012 by the Energy and Water Utilities Regulatory Authority (EWURA) sets a mandatory distance of 200 meters an equivalent to a space of two joined football playgrounds in construction of one filling station to another but it is not the case in most of the country's urban districts.

A four-month observation survey by this journalist in urban Dar es Salaam, Dodoma city, Chalinze in the Coast region and Morogoro town has discovered that most of the filling stations are constructed in a distance that doesn't exceed 150 meters as required by EWURA's rules.

The then minister for Land, Housing and Human Settlements Development, Dr Angeline Mabula on September 6, 2022 when opening the ministry's head of departments' meeting held in Dar es Salaam directed them to ensure that land use planning departments at the district councils collaborate with EWURA's officials in changing the current 200 meters distance to 500 meters because she had learned that filling stations were too closely constructed in urban areas.

This journalist has learned that the ex-minis-



Jerry Silaa, Minister for Lands, Housing and Human Settlements Development. File Photo.

ter's directive is yet to be aligned with the EWURA's law and those of the district councils' land use and planning regulations.

As a result of this situation, public safety is under high threat following the mushrooming of fuel filling stations within urban human settlements.

In the survey, this journalist has observed that two filling stations in Posta central business district have been constructed in a distance less than 150 meters.

Along Morogoro road there are three closest filling stations built in this manner. From Mbezi Shule in Kinondoni district council to Mbezi Mwisho in Ubungo district council through Goba highway there are two closest filling stations.

Along Mandela road, there are three closest filling stations, the first one just immediately after the Mwenge commuter bus stop, the second station at Mpakani commuter bus stop while the third station is positioned just opposite to Mlimani city shopping mall.

There are two closest filling stations along the Mwenge-Ubungo road while along the Buguruni-Ilala Boma road there are three stations.

There are three closest filling stations along the Temeke road from Tazara to Tandika center while in Kigamboni district there are four stations along the Kigamboni ferry-Kibada

road.

The survey has further discovered that there are four closest stations along Pugu road in Ilala district located from Mzambarauni to Mwisho wa Lami in Gongo La Moto. The Kiwalani-Buza road in Teneke district has three closest stations.

The survey further shows that from Ubungo Maji to Kimara Temboni suburb there are four closest filling stations. The similar scenario has been observed in Dodoma city, Chalinze district council and Morogoro town.

Alfred Mbyobyo, Dar es Salaam Residence Planning Officer, said that his office has been always keen in ensuring that the Land Act No. 4 Cap 334 of 1999 and EWURA's laws are fully observed in the whole process of issuing permits for construction of the filling stations in the city.

Jamal Baruti, NEMC Manager for Review of Environmental and Social Impact Assessment, said in a recent interview that land use and planning departments at urban district councils have been consulting the authority to verify plots for construction of fuel stations while they have already issued the investors with change of land use permits and title deeds.

"Issuance of land to develop fuel filling stations without prior consultation of the authority is against the Environmental Impact

Assessment and Audit Regulations (Amendment) 2018. However, it is also against the Land Act No. 4 Cap 334 of 1999," said Baruti.

Mabusi Peter, Ilala Regional Senior Assistant Commissioner of the Fire and Rescue Force said that construction of fuel filling stations within human settlements' puts at threat people's lives and their properties.

A section of Dar es Salaam residents interviewed by this journalist expressed to be irritated by the mushrooming of fuel stations in their areas of residence.

Isaac Shilo, a Makumbusho-Buguruni commuter bus driver and resident of Keko Street in Dar es Salaam said that people with permanent residential houses have nowhere to run but to endure whatever the situation faces them linked to fuel stations businesses nestled within human settlements.

"People residing in rented houses are forced to relocate from one neighborhood to another fearing safety-related risk likely to be posed by the uptick of fuel stations in areas of congested human residence," said Shilo.

Sophia Emmanuel, a Vingunguti Street resident in the city wondered why the government continues issuing licenses for establishment of fuel stations while on the other hand it is campaigning on the shift to compressed natural gas

(CNG) consumption for vehicles.

"In my opinion, the shift to clean energy sources for vehicles from petroleum products is just a matter of politics because the government itself seems not to believe in it," she said.

Helen Josephat, Sala-sala Street resident in Dar es Salaam said that she is suspicious whether corruption is involved in the process of acquiring the permits for construction of fuel stations without adherence to environmental and land laws.

With regard to corruption, On December 23 last year, Jerry Silaa, Minister for Lands, Housing and Human Settlements Development claimed to have been enticed to accept a bribe from one of the investors in the fuel business in Dar es Salaam who had set up a petrol station at Mikochehi Street without following required procedures by regulatory bodies on environmental issues.

Silaa is on record claiming that the businessman in question had promised him a 300mn/- bribe with the intention of silencing him from questioning the construction of the petrol station nearby people's residential houses.

The Prevention and Combating of Corruption Bureau (PCCB) is yet to comment on the allegedly corruption claims raised by the lands minister six months on.

PCCB Director General CP Salum Hamduni issued an alert on construction of fuel filling stations on March 28, 2024 when presenting the bureau's performance report for 2022/23 financial year to President Samia Suluhu Hassan at the Chamwino State House in Dodoma.

Hamduni said that 79 percent of the 38 screened filling stations in urban areas were issued with construction permits with the respective district councils. The remaining 21 percent were denied permits due to environment management and safety related reasons.

"PCCB has learned that there has been a reasonable surge in construction of fuel filling stations within human settlements. I recommend that the fastest growth in the number of filling stations should be closely monitored," said Hamduni.

RwandAir to double passengers, enhance cargo transport

KIGALI

THE ruling Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF-Inkotanyi) has promised to significantly expand the national aviation industry, which will see the doubling of the number of passengers transported by the national carrier, RwandAir, and to enhance its cargo transport within the next five years.

This is contained in the ruling party's five-year political programme which it intends to implement should the Rwandan people entrust them with a new mandate during the general elections slated for July 14-16.

Currently, RwandAir operates 13 aircraft, including three Airbus A330s, seven Boeing 737s, two Bombardier CRJ900s, and two De Havilland Canada Dash 8-Q400s.

The airline serves nearly 30 destinations across east, central, west,

and southern Africa, as well as the Middle East, Europe, and Asia.

The RPF manifesto indicates that in cooperation with the private sector, efforts will be made to use green transport, and the construction of the new international airport in Bugesera District will be completed while Musanze and Rubavu airports will be expanded and repaired.

Yvonne Makolo, the CEO of RwandAir, on June 6, said that adding more destinations will support efficient and reliable connections for business and provide significant opportunities for enhanced trade between Rwanda and the rest of the continent.

"As a landlocked nation, we recognize the importance of air freight in Rwanda's economic growth across Africa and beyond. Our geographic location at the heart of Africa enables us to connect every part of the

continent, and we eagerly anticipate expanding this connectivity even further," she said.

RwandAir is not only looking to improve passenger numbers. Cargo transport services will also be improved using dedicated cargo planes according to the RPF manifesto.

Makolo emphasized the importance of cargo operations.

"Cargo is really a key growth area for us, and throughout the pandemic, it was the one revenue stream that was growing year-on-year," Makolo stated.

In addition to expanding operations, RwandAir is collaborating with other airlines to enhance customer experience.

Through a loyalty partnership, passengers can now earn and redeem points across reciprocal route networks and access airport lounges at hubs in Doha and Kigali.

The RPF manifesto also highlights that a model school will be built to teach the skills of piloting and managing airports. The Centre of Excellence for Aviation Skills (CEAS) is aimed at building local capacity and empowering the labour force in the aviation industry in the region and beyond.

Earlier this month, the inauguration of Rwanda Civil Aviation Training and Innovation Center (RCAT-IC) marked a 'significant' leap forward for the country's aviation sector as it looks to increase the number of aviation professionals and address the issue of high training costs and scarcity of aviation schools.

During the official launch of RCAT-IC by Rwanda Civil Aviation Authority (RCAA), on June 20, Andrew Mutabaruka, a quality assurance officer at RCAT-IC, said that establishing the training facility aims to address



RwandAir's plane takes off at Kigali International Airport.

shortages in aviation professionals and boost the number of qualified aviation professionals in the country.

He said this will help bridge crucial gaps and propel the industry to new heights.

"Civil aviation is a specialised industry requiring unique skills, knowledge, and attitudes. We've always had an inadequate number of professionals due to the high costs and limited training schools

worldwide. Specifically, our country lacked (capabilities) to fill these gaps," Mutabaruka said.

"The impact on the aviation community will be substantial, as this school will increase the number of aviation professionals nationally. Since it will be open to individuals beyond our borders, we can help close gaps globally, especially in Africa, where the aviation industry is still growing."

Minimum wage: Let each state negotiate what it can pay

LAGOS

Governors from the Southern part of Nigeria, under the aegis of the Southern Governors' Forum, yesterday called for the consideration of the ability of each state to pay the new minimum wage.

Their call came as the Nigerian Governors' Forum, NGF, said Wednesday night that it will continue to engage stakeholders to reach a mutually agreeable solution to the new minimum wage crisis.

Although President Bola Tinubu was, in an unusual manner, present at the National Economic Council, NEC meeting often chaired by Vice President Kashim Shettima, said no word about the new minimum wage. The vice president said nothing about it either.

This is even as Organised Labour yesterday raised alarm that both public and private sectors' workers were becoming restive over delay in concluding the new minimum wage, and were pushing Labour leaders to declare industrial action to quicken the process.

The governors in a 16-point communique issued yesterday, also advocated that each state be allowed to negotiate the new wage with the labour unions.

"The Forum discussed the minimum wage issues demanded by labour and unanimously agreed that the minimum wage should be reflective of the cost of living and that each state should be allowed to negotiate its minimum wage. "This led to the forum's discussion on fiscal federalism and devolution of powers," the communique read.

Rising from a meeting of the Nigerian Governors' Forum, NGF, in Abuja in the early hours of yesterday, governors of the 36 states of the federation promised to remain dedicated to the process and assured that better wages would result from the ongoing negotiations.

At the meeting were governors of Oyo, Zamfara, Anambra, Delta, Gombe, Kano, Imo, Kwara, Ondo, Kaduna, Kebbi, Ebonyi, Sokoto, Ogun States, among others.

In a communique signed at the end of the meeting by

NGF chairman and governor of Kwara State, AbdulRahman AbdulRazaq, the governors said: "The Forum discussed the new national minimum wage.

"The governors agreed to continue engaging with key stakeholders to reach a mutually agreeable solution. We remain dedicated to the process and assure that better wages will result from the ongoing negotiations."

Recall that President Bola Tinubu had in January, set up a tripartite committee to negotiate a new minimum wage for workers.

The committee comprises the organised labour, representatives of federal and state governments as well as the Organised Private Sector, OPS.

However, the committee members failed to reach an agreement on a new realistic minimum wage for workers, forcing labour to declare an indefinite industrial action on Monday, June 3, 2024.

Businesses were paralysed as labour shut down airports, hospitals, the national grid, banks, National Assembly, and state assemblies' complexes.

The labour unions had said the current minimum wage of N30,000 can no longer cater for the well-being of an average Nigerian worker, asking government to offer workers something economically realistic in tandem with current inflationary pressures, attendant effects of the twin policies of petrol subsidy removal and unification of the forex windows of the current administration.

Labour eventually relaxed its strike on June 4, 2024, following assurances from the President that he is committed to a living wage above N60,000.

Both the Trade Union Congress, TUC, and Nigeria Labour Congress, NLC, leaderships subsequently resumed talks with representatives of the Federal Government, states, and the Organised Private Sector.

On Friday, June 7, 2024, the two sides (labour and the governors) still failed to reach an agreement.

While labour dropped its demand from N494,000 to N250,000, the government added N2,000 to its initial N60,000 offer, making it



A paper Naira

N62,000.

Also recall that both sides had submitted their reports to the President who was expected to make a decision and send an executive bill to the National Assembly for a new minimum wage to be passed into law for his assent.

In his Democracy Day speech on June 12, 2024, President Tinubu assured Labour that an executive bill on the new national minimum wage would soon be sent to the National Assembly for passage.

The President, who was expected to decide on the N62,000 proposal of the government and private sector side; and the N250,000 demand from Labour, also said this week that he would carry out a wider consultation on the matter.

Meanwhile, indications have emerged that both public and private sector workers are becoming restive over the delay in concluding the new minimum wage, and are mounting pressure on labour leaders to declare industrial action to quicken the process.

According to sources, the workers are complaining that all the promises of palliatives by government to cushion the effects of fuel subsidy removal are not forthcoming, with the suffering caused by removal of fuel subsidies becoming unbearable.

One of the labour leaders in

the public sector unions, who spoke to Vanguard, said: "The public sector workers, otherwise known as the civil servants, have been lamenting the hardship and suffering they have been passing through.

"Their major complaints are that while the minimum wage has been protracted and prolonged, the suffering and the hardship brought about by government policies, especially the removal of subsidy, has worsened their conditions of living.

"They noted that the palliatives promised by the government are not forthcoming and that many of the state governors are not paying palliatives. Even the federal government has not been consistent in its payment.

"Some of the governors said they are waiting for the minimum wage. It has been double jeopardy for us as workers because while the palliatives are not coming, the new minimum wage is also in limbo. However the hardship has become unbearable as the costs of basic necessities are no longer affordable.

"There are families to feed, school fees to pay. The workers are becoming very restive and are urging us to take action, including industrial action, to quicken the resolution. They think the government is unnecessarily dragging the process and that we need to do

something urgent."

Similarly, the private sector workers are on the same page as their counterparts in the public sector, as one of their leaders told Vanguard that the pressure by workers was getting out of hand.

"They keep asking when we are resuming the suspended strike for the government to know that we are suffering. Besides the hardship and suffering created by the fuel subsidy removal, the problems in the private sector has been compounded by the foreign exchange crisis and the recent hike in electricity tariff.

"Like other workers, they keep reminding us that what they are earning can not take them to the bus stop, let alone take them home them home, yet the minimum wage they have been hoping would come early to lessen their pains, appears elusive. They believe as labour leaders, we are not doing enough to push the government to hasten the process," a labour leader in the sector said.

However, speaking on the restiveness of workers over the delay in concluding the minimum wage, a member of the Tripartite Committee on the New Minimum Wage, NNMW, on the labour side and the President-General of the Maritime Workers Union of Nigeria, MWUN, Prince Adewale Adeyenu, said: "There is nothing we

can do now other than to continue to appeal and explain the situation to them (workers) to take it easy. You know the process of sending it to the National Assembly is still on and I am sure the National Assembly is waiting for Mr President's final nod on the matter.

"We have been exercising patience for many months now. It is like the story of the tortoise that was incarcerated for years and when his incarceration took one or two days for him to come out, he started shouting that he should be released.

"We have been telling our members to exercise patience. We know some of them are restive, we can assure them that no matter how long the minimum wage will be paid, there will be arrears at the end of the day."

Reacting in the same manner, the Senior Staff Association of Nigerian Universities, SSANU, frowned on the alleged unnecessary delay by President Bola Tinubu.

SSANU said the President was supposed to have concluded all needed consultations with the necessary stakeholders before the Tripartite Committee on the new Minimum Wage submitted its report.

Speaking at the National Executive Council, NEC, meeting, in the University of Benin, Edo State, SSANU President, Comrade Mohammed Ibrahim, noted that the President, during

his campaign, had promised to pay Nigerian workers a living wage that would take care of their immediate needs.

Ibrahim, who is the national internal auditor of the Nigeria Labour Congress, NLC, while responding to President Tinubu's request to consult with governors and other stakeholders before taking a position on the amount to be decided, said: "So I can say that at the level of SSANU, we are not too happy about the slow motion because the President of this country, President Bola Tinubu, campaigned on the mantra of ensuring that when he comes on board, he will make sure there will be a living wage for Nigerian workers.

"It is based on that most of our workers believed him and worked for him and voted him in and, therefore, the least we expected is this unnecessary delay.

"Consultation shouldn't be at this level. Consultation should have been before the tripartite committee. Consultation should have been when the tripartite committee started.

"Mr. President can summon or invite the leadership of labour and discuss with them. The labour leaders are Nigerians, they are people who also reason and, therefore, what we expect is that once Mr President provides the platform, they will naturally key in but where you have to shift the goalposts in the middle of the game doesn't tell much and good for the government.

"So our advice is that Nigerian workers are feeling the heat more than any other person because we are the ones that oil the engine of the economy. And if you are expecting the best from the workers, you should be able to take care of their welfare and well-being, you should also make them feel secure within their places of work.

"But where they are handicapped, where they are starved, where there is hunger, there will naturally be anger, and there will be indiscipline. So, we ask Mr. President, to fast-track this consultation and make it snappy and the government needs to understand that the more you delay, the more you accumulate arrears and arrears must be paid."

DALIAN

As generative artificial intelligence is increasingly applied to a widening range of sectors, more efforts are needed to ensure the safe application of the fast-growing intelligent technology through global governance and cooperation, said renowned experts and entrepreneurs at the 15th Annual Meeting of the New Champions, also known as the Summer Davos Forum, in Dalian, Liaoning province.

The application of large language models in industries is key to the development of generative AI technology in China, said Zhu Min, former deputy managing director of the International Monetary Fund, adding that China's AI models are more vertical and application-oriented due to the country's abundant application scenarios.

Generative AI refers to computer algorithms trained with huge amounts of data capable of generating content such as images, text, audio and video in a humanlike fashion. It is the key technology underpinning US-based research firm OpenAI's ChatGPT.

Xue Lan, dean of Schwarzman College and dean of the Institute for AI International Governance at Tsinghua University, emphasized that people's willingness to use AI, research capabilities and the establishment of an AI ecosystem led by businesses are critical elements driving the growth of the

Generative AI safety prioritised



Participants interact with an AI-enabled robot during the Summer Davos Forum in Dalian, Liaoning province.

AI-powered economy.

Although AI generates huge benefits, it also brings about various problems, so Xue called for efforts to supervise or regulate the use of such fast-developing technology to guard against potential risks.

Noting that technological advances in AI are much faster than changes in regulations related to AI,

he said China and the United States should strengthen cooperation to promote the safe and healthy development of AI.

Aparna Bharadwaj, managing director and partner at global consultancy Boston Consulting Group, said in an interview with China Daily during the forum that Chinese consumers are the most positively

inclined toward AI, adding they are very open and willing to embrace the possibilities of AI technology, which presents an incredible opportunity for Chinese businesses.

Bharadwaj said the most important competitive advantage that China owns in applying generative AI technology lies in consumer acceptance levels, which are much higher

than the global average.

"Chinese consumers are very digitally savvy, digital technology evolves in China much faster, and Chinese businesses have been bringing digital innovation much faster in the market," she said.

According to a report released by BCG, 86 percent of interviewed Chinese consumers are aware of

generative AI, compared with nearly 80 percent globally.

About 56 percent of these Chinese respondents are very positive toward AI, while less than 10 percent are concerned about this disruptive technology. Meanwhile, 43 percent of global consumers say they are excited about generative AI, but more than 25 percent expressed reservations.

"China has always been an innovation leader in the world. And there's a very high possibility for that innovation also coming from the space of generative AI," Bharadwaj said, adding that she is optimistic about the development potential of such technology in China.

Moreover, Chinese companies are always early adopters of digital technologies and have applied such technologies in a wide range of fields much faster, she said.

Bharadwaj also underlined the significance of protecting user privacy and data security.

"This technology is evolving rapidly, and governments are learning how to regulate it, and they have to be ahead of the curve with the private sector to be able to regulate it."

Wang Guan, chairman of Learnable.ai – an AI startup – said AI-powered models could be applied in the education sector and are playing a role in assisting teachers to mark various types of exam papers.

Wang said the company's large language models have been used in various sectors, such as education, energy, aviation, manufacturing and transportation, to help businesses improve efficiency.

Rwf6bn meat processing plant to be set up in Rusizi

KIGALI
A plant that will process 200 cows, 300 sheep and goats, as well as 200 pigs per day in addition to producing 20 tonnes of sausage daily will be completed soon in Rusizi District, a local outlet reported yesterday.

Construction works of the factory are at over 80 per cent, according to developers.

The first phase of the facility dedicated to slaughtering will cost over Rwf4 billion while the second part, which will enable production of sausage, will cost over Rwf2 billion.

Rusizi District officials said the factory, owned by Kime Ltd, will boost livestock farming in the district, improve meat and sausage standards, and ensure a sustainable market for livestock farmers.

"We are optimistic that such investment will change the lives of Rusizi farmers, create jobs, and boost food processing in addition to ensuring the quality of meat and nutritious food," said Anicet Kibiliga, the Mayor of Rusizi District.

Upon completion, the facility is projected to generate 250 jobs.

Nehemie Niyomuhoza, a pig farmer in Gihundwe sector, said that the plant will in-

centivise farmers to increase livestock production through breed improvement.

"Realising the need for a sustainable supply of livestock for the factory, we're optimistic about expanding our livestock farming business due to promising sustainable markets and fair prices," she said.

Niyomuhoza currently raises 10 modern pigs, but the presence of the meat factory could mean an opportunity for her to expand her pig farm. This expansion will also likely attract other farmers seeking new market opportunities.

According to Solange Uwituze, Deputy Director General in charge of Animal Resources Development at Rwanda Agriculture and Animal Resources Development Board (RAB), the livestock processing plant in Rusizi is among key projects being financed by the government through subsidized grants and loans.

Under the Project for Inclusive Small Livestock Markets (PRISM), the Ministry of Agriculture has mobilized at least 15.5 million euro of investment to finance those in value chain development of livestock in 10 districts under the support of Enabel, the Belgian development agency.



Visitors tour the new plant that will process 200 cows, 300 sheep and goats, as well as 200 pigs per day in Rusizi District.

The meat processing plant, which is being built on 3.5 hectares, will consist of three sections dedicated to slaughtering ruminants such as cows, goats and sheep, and processing pigs while the third section will help add value to the meat by producing sausage.

"The sections were established to respect choices of consumers," Jean Baptiste Mugambira, Managing Director of KIME Ltd, said. "For the ruminants slaughtering section, there are also three slaughter lines-one for cows, one for sheep and the other for goats."

Apart from government funding, Kime Ltd raised capital from local banks.

"We got finance from banks apart from ENABEL which gave us Rwf440 million," Mugambira noted.

Kime Ltd officials told the outlet that the slaughtering part of the factory will be completed within two months, while the sausage production unit will take six months.

"We hope that slaughtering the livelihood in standard places such as bushes or exporting live animals will stop. Farmers and livestock traders will easily have access to the

market," he said.

Rwanda's meat exports more than doubled, reaching \$22.3 million in the fiscal year 2022/2023 from \$8.8 million in 2021/2022, according to data from the National Agricultural Export Development Board (NAEB).

On export volumes, more than 8,721 tonnes of meat were exported from the country in 2022/2023, compared to over 5,485 tonnes in the previous fiscal year, representing a 59 percent increase.

With the demand for pork set to rise, Rwanda is facilitating the construction of more

pig abattoirs countrywide.

Pig farming in Rwanda has seen substantial growth in the past decade due to increasing demand for pork both locally and for export.

This has resulted in a nearly twofold increase in the national pig herd, with the number of pigs rising from 684,708 in 2010 to an estimated 1.7 million in 2023, according to the Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources (MINAGRI).

The country was producing an estimated 23,000 tonnes of pork per year as of 2019, and targets to increase pork production to 68,000 tonnes by 2024.

Cow population grew from 1 million in 2005 to around 1.5 million in 2022, while goat and sheep population has slightly increased from 3.48 million to 3.61 million in the same period.

In general, the country seeks to reach safe and quality meat production of 215,000 tonnes per year in 2024.

With the demand for pork set to rise, Rwanda is building more pig abattoirs countrywide.

The pig sector in Rwanda has seen substantial growth in the past decade due to increasing demand for pork both locally and for export.

This has resulted in a nearly twofold increase in the nation-

al pig herd, with the number of pigs rising from 684,708 in 2010 to an estimated 1.7 million in 2023, according to the Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources (MINAGRI).

The country was producing an estimated 23,000 tonnes of pork per year as of 2019, and targets to increase pork production to 68,000 tonnes by 2024.

The new slaughterhouses will work as collection centres of pigs where the pork will be produced and supplied to other areas of the country, according to RAB.

Fabrice Ndayisenga, the Head of the Department of Animal Resources Innovation and Technology Transfer at RAB, said the government aims to increase meat consumption from small livestock farming, including pig farming, to 80 per cent, with cows accounting for 20 per cent.

About Rwf1.3 billion has been invested in constructing 10 pig abattoirs which have been completed in the districts of Ruhango, Huye, Nyamagabe, Nyamasheke, Karongi, Rulindo, Gicumbi, Burera, Musanze, and Rutsiro.

"The new facilities will modernise the country's pork industry, increase food safety standards, and boost the economy for pig farmers," he said.

China, EU expedite talks on EV tariffs

BEIJING
CHINA and the European Union are expediting consultations on the latter's anti-subsidy investigation into Chinese electric vehicles, and aim to reach a mutually acceptable solution by addressing the reasonable concerns of both sides, said China's Ministry of Commerce on Thursday.

As China and the EU agreed last week to start consultations, He Yadong, spokesman for the Commerce Ministry, said the essence of China-EU cooperation lies in complementary advantages and mutual benefits. Both sides have vast potential for collaboration in the field of green transition.

He said the EU is encouraged to work with China to expedite consultations, achieve positive progress and reach mutually acceptable solutions to prevent trade frictions from escalating, which could affect China-EU economic and trade relations.

Even though Chinese EVs account for just a small share of the EU's EV imports, the European Commission, which represents the interests of the EU as a whole, in mid-June unveiled additional provisional tariffs ranging from 17.4 percent to 38.1 percent for Chinese EV manufacturers despite widespread market concerns and China's objections.

Additional provisional EU duties of up to 38.1 percent on imported Chinese-made EVs are scheduled to take effect by July 4, with the tariffs expected to be finalized on Nov 2.

With some time remaining before the EU's final decision on imposing tariffs on Chinese EVs, government officials and business leaders said that initiating talks can be an effective approach to prevent further escalation and resolve differences.

During his meeting with Chinese Minister of Commerce Wang Wentao in Beijing on Wednesday, Wille Rydman, Finnish minister of economic affairs, said both the EU and China have successful experience in resolving trade and economic disputes, the Ministry of Commerce said in a statement released on Thursday.

Finland supports addressing differences through dialogue and consultation within the framework of World Trade Organization rules, said Rydman.

Cui Fan, a professor specializing in international trade at the University of International Business and Economics and director of research at the China Society for WTO Studies, said that globally, the development of new energy in various countries involves some level of policy intervention to address market imperfections.



Chinese new energy vehicles on display during an auto expo in Brussels earlier this year.

SATURDAY 22 June			
5:30	Uwanja wa Mazoezi	6:00	HABARI
6:40	Kumekucha	7:00	HABARI
8:00	Ai Jazeera	9:00	Watoto wetu
10:05	Shika Bamba 5	10:35	Mjuzi Zaidi rpt
11:15	Chetu ni chetu rpt	11:50	Havavumi lakini wamo
12:50	Art and Lifestyle	13:30	Shamba lulu
14:00	Art and Lifestyle	14:20	Soap rpt: Laws of love
14:55	Habari za saa	15:00	Meza huru
15:00	Meza huru	16:30	Watoto wetu
17:00	Music: The Base	17:30	HABARI
18:15	Mapishi	18:30	Kipindi maalum: TMDA
19:00	Alya ya jami	19:30	Soap rpt: Laws of love
19:30	Shika Bamba	20:00	HABARI
20:00	HABARI	21:05	Igizo: Haikufuma
21:05	Igizo: Haikufuma	22:30	Soap rpt: Uzalo
21:35	Kipindi maalum: Mchezo Supa	23:00	Jiji letu
21:45	Art and Lifestyle	23:30	Music: The Base
22:15	ITV Top 10 rpt	00:30	DWTV
23:00	Havavumi lakini wamo		
23:40	Soap rpt: Uzalo		
00:30	Ai Jazeera		

SUNDAY 23 June			
5:30	Uwanja wa Mazoezi	6:00	HABARI
6:40	Kumekucha	7:00	HABARI
8:00	Ai Jazeera	9:00	Watoto wetu
10:05	Shika Bamba 5	10:35	Mjuzi Zaidi rpt
11:15	Chetu ni chetu rpt	11:50	Havavumi lakini wamo
12:50	Art and Lifestyle	13:30	Shamba lulu
14:00	Art and Lifestyle	14:20	Soap rpt: Laws of love
14:55	Habari za saa	15:00	Meza huru
15:00	Meza huru	16:30	Watoto wetu
17:00	Music: The Base	17:30	HABARI
18:15	Mapishi	18:30	Kipindi maalum: TMDA
19:00	Alya ya jami	19:30	Soap rpt: Laws of love
19:30	Shika Bamba	20:00	HABARI
20:00	HABARI	21:05	Igizo: Haikufuma
21:05	Igizo: Haikufuma	22:30	Soap rpt: Uzalo
21:35	Kipindi maalum: Mchezo Supa	23:00	Jiji letu
21:45	Art and Lifestyle	23:30	Music: The Base
22:15	ITV Top 10 rpt	00:30	DWTV
23:00	Havavumi lakini wamo		
23:40	Soap rpt: Uzalo		
00:30	Ai Jazeera		

MONDAY 24 June			
5:00	Soap rpt: Uzalo	6:30	Uwanja wa Mazoezi
6:00	HABARI	6:40	Kumekucha
7:30	HABARI	8:00	Kumekucha Michozo
8:55	Habari za saa	9:00	Kumekucha Michozo
9:30	Soap rpt: Laws of love	9:55	Habari za saa
10:00	Watoto wetu	10:30	Shamba lulu
11:45	Havavumi lakini wamo rpt	12:45	Mjuzi Zaidi
12:45	Mjuzi Zaidi	13:30	Shamba lulu
13:30	Ukafiri wako	14:00	Tamasha la Michezo
14:00	Tamasha la Michezo	14:55	Mwanga
15:30	Mwanga	16:30	ITV Top 10 rpt
17:20	Kipindi cha kikristo	17:30	Hapa na Pale
18:00	Hapa na Pale	18:15	Mapishi
18:15	Mapishi	18:30	Makikoma ya wiki
18:30	Makikoma ya wiki	19:30	Igizo: Haikufuma
20:00	HABARI	21:05	Igizo: Mzenge
21:05	Igizo: Mzenge	22:30	Kipindi maalum: Mchezo Supa
21:40	Mjuzi Zaidi	22:15	Soap rpt: Uzalo rpt
22:15	Soap rpt: Uzalo rpt	00:30	Ai Jazeera

TUESDAY 25 June			
5:00	Soap rpt: Uzalo	6:30	Uwanja wa Mazoezi
6:00	HABARI	6:40	Kumekucha
7:30	HABARI	8:00	Kumekucha Michozo
8:55	Habari za saa	9:00	Kumekucha Michozo
9:30	Soap rpt: Laws of love	9:55	Habari za saa
10:00	Watoto wetu	10:30	Shamba lulu
11:45	Havavumi lakini wamo rpt	12:45	Mjuzi Zaidi
12:45	Mjuzi Zaidi	13:30	Shamba lulu
13:30	Ukafiri wako	14:00	Tamasha la Michezo
14:00	Tamasha la Michezo	14:55	Mwanga
15:30	Mwanga	16:30	ITV Top 10 rpt
17:20	Kipindi cha kikristo	17:30	Hapa na Pale
18:00	Hapa na Pale	18:15	Mapishi
18:15	Mapishi	18:30	Makikoma ya wiki
18:30	Makikoma ya wiki	19:30	Igizo: Haikufuma
20:00	HABARI	21:05	Igizo: Mzenge
21:05	Igizo: Mzenge	22:30	Kipindi maalum: Mchezo Supa
21:40	Mjuzi Zaidi	22:15	Soap rpt: Uzalo rpt
22:15	Soap rpt: Uzalo rpt	00:30	Ai Jazeera

WEDNESDAY 26 June			
5:00	Soap rpt: Uzalo	6:30	Uwanja wa Mazoezi
6:00	HABARI	6:40	Kumekucha
7:30	HABARI	8:00	Kumekucha Michozo
8:55	Habari za saa	9:00	Kumekucha Michozo
9:30	Soap rpt: Laws of love	9:55	Habari za saa
10:00	Watoto wetu	10:30	Shamba lulu
11:45	Havavumi lakini wamo rpt	12:45	Mjuzi Zaidi
12:45	Mjuzi Zaidi	13:30	Shamba lulu
13:30	Ukafiri wako	14:00	Tamasha la Michezo
14:00	Tamasha la Michezo	14:55	Mwanga
15:30	Mwanga	16:30	ITV Top 10 rpt
17:20	Kipindi cha kikristo	17:30	Hapa na Pale
18:00	Hapa na Pale	18:15	Mapishi
18:15	Mapishi	18:30	Makikoma ya wiki
18:30	Makikoma ya wiki	19:30	Igizo: Haikufuma
20:00	HABARI	21:05	Igizo: Mzenge
21:05	Igizo: Mzenge	22:30	Kipindi maalum: Mchezo Supa
21:40	Mjuzi Zaidi	22:15	Soap rpt: Uzalo rpt
22:15	Soap rpt: Uzalo rpt	00:30	Ai Jazeera

THURSDAY 27 June			
5:00	Soap rpt: Uzalo	6:30	Uwanja wa Mazoezi
6:00	HABARI	6:40	Kumekucha
7:30	HABARI	8:00	Kumekucha Michozo
8:55	Habari za saa	9:00	Kumekucha Michozo
9:30	Soap rpt: Laws of love	9:55	Habari za saa
10:00	Watoto wetu	10:30	Shamba lulu
11:45	Havavumi lakini wamo rpt	12:45	Mjuzi Zaidi
12:45	Mjuzi Zaidi	13:30	Shamba lulu
13:30	Ukafiri wako	14:00	Tamasha la Michezo
14:00	Tamasha la Michezo	14:55	Mwanga
15:30	Mwanga	16:30	ITV Top 10 rpt
17:20	Kipindi cha kikristo	17:30	Hapa na Pale
18:00	Hapa na Pale	18:15	Mapishi
18:15	Mapishi	18:30	Makikoma ya wiki
18:30	Makikoma ya wiki	19:30	Igizo: Haikufuma
20:00	HABARI	21:05	Igizo: Mzenge
21:05	Igizo: Mzenge	22:30	Kipindi maalum: Mchezo Supa
21:40	Mjuzi Zaidi	22:15	Soap rpt: Uzalo rpt
22:15	Soap rpt: Uzalo rpt	00:30	Ai Jazeera

FRIDAY 28 June			
5:00	Soap rpt: Uzalo	6:30	Uwanja wa Mazoezi
6:00	HABARI	6:40	Kumekucha
7:30	HABARI	8:00	Kumekucha Michozo
8:55	Habari za saa	9:00	Kumekucha Michozo
9:30	Soap rpt: Laws of love	9:55	Habari za saa
10:00	Watoto wetu	10:30	Shamba lulu
11:45	Havavumi lakini wamo rpt	12:45	Mjuzi Zaidi
12:45	Mjuzi Zaidi	13:30	Shamba lulu
13:30	Ukafiri wako	14:00	Tamasha la Michezo
14:00	Tamasha la Michezo	14:55	Mwanga
15:30	Mwanga	16:30	ITV Top 10 rpt
17:20	Kipindi cha kikristo	17:30	Hapa na Pale
18:00	Hapa na Pale	18:15	Mapishi
18:15	Mapishi	18:30	Makikoma ya wiki
18:30	Makikoma ya wiki	19:30	Igizo: Haikufuma
20:00	HABARI	21:05	Igizo: Mzenge
21:05	Igizo: Mzenge	22:30	Kipindi maalum: Mchezo Supa
21:40	Mjuzi Zaidi	22:15	Soap rpt: Uzalo rpt
22:15	Soap rpt: Uzalo rpt	00:30	Ai Jazeera

SATURDAY 29 June			
5:30	Uwanja wa Mazoezi	6:00	HABARI
6:40	Kumekucha	7:00	HABARI
8:00	Kumekucha Michozo	9:00	Watoto wetu
10:05	Shika Bamba 5	10:35	Mjuzi Zaidi rpt
11:15	Chetu ni chetu rpt	11:50	Havavumi lakini wamo
12:50	Art and Lifestyle	13:30	Shamba lulu
14:00	Art and Lifestyle	14:20	Soap rpt: Laws of love
14:55	Habari za saa	15:00	Meza huru
15:00	Meza huru	16:30	Watoto wetu
17:00	Music: The Base	17:30	HABARI
18:15	Mapishi	18:30	Kipindi maalum: TMDA
19:00	Alya ya jami	19:30	Soap rpt: Laws of love
19:30	Shika Bamba	20:00	HABARI
20:00	HABARI	21:05	Igizo: Haikufuma
21:05	Igizo: Haikufuma	22:30	Soap rpt: Uzalo
21:35	Kipindi maalum: Mchezo Supa	23:00	Jiji letu
21:45	Art and Lifestyle	23:30	Music: The Base
22:15	ITV Top 10 rpt	00:30	DWTV
23:00	Havavumi lakini wamo		
23:40	Soap rpt: Uzalo		
00:30	Ai Jazeera		

SUNDAY 30 June			
5:30	Uwanja wa Mazoezi	6:00	HABARI
6:40	Kumekucha	7:00	HABARI
8:00	Ai Jazeera	9:00	Watoto wetu
10:05	Shika Bamba 5	10:35	Mjuzi Zaidi rpt
11:15	Chetu ni chetu rpt	11:50	Havavumi lakini wamo
12:50	Art and Lifestyle	13:30	Shamba lulu
14:00	Art and Lifestyle	14:20	Soap rpt: Laws of love
14:55	Habari za saa	15:00	Meza huru
15:00	Meza huru	16:30	Watoto wetu
17:00	Music: The Base	17:30	HABARI
18:15	Mapishi	18:30	Kipindi maalum: TMDA
19:00	Alya ya jami	19:30	Soap rpt: Laws of love
19:30	Shika Bamba	20:00	HABARI
20:00	HABARI	21:05	Igizo: Haikufuma
21:05	Igizo: Haikufuma	22:30	Soap rpt: Uzalo
21:35	Kipindi maalum: Mchezo Supa	23:00	Jiji letu
21:45	Art and Lifestyle	23:30	Music: The Base
22:15	ITV Top 10 rpt	00:30	DWTV
23:00	Havavumi lakini wamo		
23:40	Soap rpt: Uzalo		
00:30	Ai Jazeera		

MONDAY 1 July			
5:00	Soap rpt: Uzalo	6:30	Uwanja wa Mazoezi
6:00	HABARI	6:40	Kumekucha
7:30	HABARI	8:00	Kumekucha Michozo
8:5			

WORLD

US PRESIDENTIAL DEBATE 2024:

Donald Trump refuses to take responsibility for January 6 Capitol attack

ATLANTA

FORMER US President and Republican challenger in the 2024 US Presidential elections, Donald Trump has refused to take any responsibility for the January 6 attack on the US Capitol, saying he offered "10,000 soldiers or National Guard" ahead of his speech that day, but was turned down.

On being asked about his actions and inactions on January 6, 2021, when rioters attacked the US Capitol, Trump, initially during the Presidential debate on Thursday night (local time) hosted by CNN, tried to sidestep the question by indicating other points in order to criticize Biden.

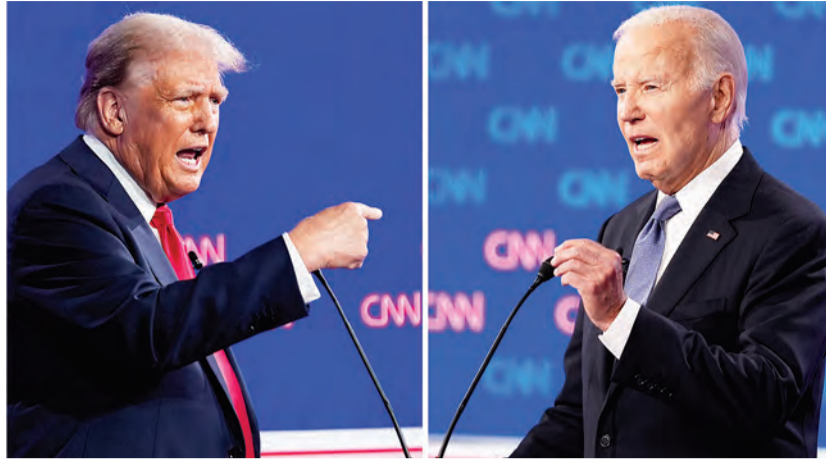
"On January 6, we had a great border, nobody coming through—very few. On

January 6, we were energy independent. On January 6, we had the lowest taxes ever, we had the lowest regulations ever. On January 6, we were respected all over the world, all over the world we were respected, and then he comes in," Trump stated, utterly evading accountability or confronting the uprising on Capitol Hill.

In 2021, a group of Trump supporters entered the US Capitol to protest the certification of the 2020 presidential election results from several US states that Trump claimed were fraudulent.

US authorities have arrested more than 725 individuals in nearly all 50 states for criminal offences relating to the riot.

Meanwhile, Biden pointed out that Trump had urged people to go to Capitol Hill and had spent three hours "watching, being begged to do something, to call



This combination of photos shows Republican presidential candidate former President Donald Trump, left, and President Joe Biden during a presidential debate hosted by CNN, on Thursday in Atlanta. AP

for a stop, to end it," by his vice president and several other Republican colleagues, rather, he spoke of these individuals as outstanding American patriots, reported CNN.

"And now, he says, if he loses again -- such a whiner that he is -- that there could be a bloodbath," Biden said.

Pelosi, the Speaker of the House at the time of the disturbance, allegedly refused 10,000 National Guard men, claimed Trump during the debate Thursday night.

However, his claims were soon slammed by former US House Speaker, Nancy Pelosi.

"Numerous independent fact-checkers have confirmed again and again that Speaker Pelosi did not plan her own assassination on January 6th. The Speaker of the House is not in charge of the security of the Capitol Complex -- on January 6th or any other day of the week. Cherry-picked, out-of-context clips and the unhinged ravings of the instigator of the insurrection do not change that fact," Pelosi's spokesperson Ian Krager said, according to

CNN.

The fact that Trump and his supporters are "still trying to whitewash the deadly insurrection" was deemed "pathetic" by Krager.

"The American people saw for themselves the dangers to democracy on January 6th and can see right through Republicans' revisionist history," he said, as per CNN.

President Joe Biden launched his re-election campaign in April 2023, describing the contest between him and Trump as a "stark choice" for voters between the continuation of democracy in America and its possible "destruction" under Trump. Whereas, Trump launched his bid for the US Presidential polls in November 2022.

Biden is the oldest president to ever hold office and would be 86 at the end of a second term.

Polling shows that voters are far more concerned about Biden's age than his opponent's. But if Trump wins, he would break Biden's record as the oldest president before the end of his term. ANI

ICC allows UK to submit arguments on jurisdiction over Israelis in Gaza case

THE HAGUE

JUDGES at the International Criminal Court (ICC) ruled on Thursday that the United Kingdom can submit legal arguments to judges mulling the prosecution's request for arrest warrants for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Defence Minister Yoav Gallant.

Court documents made public on Thursday showed that the UK, an ICC member state, filed a request with the court earlier this month to provide written observations on whether "the court can exercise jurisdiction over Israeli nationals, in circumstances where Palestine cannot exercise criminal jurisdiction over Israeli nationals (under) the Oslo Accords".

The judges said the court would also accept submissions from other interested parties on the legal issue, but set a July 12 deadline for filings.

Granting the UK's request might delay the judges' pending decision on arrest warrants for Netanyahu and Gallant over Israel's war in Gaza, as ICC prosecutor Karim Khan had requested in May.

The ICC has had an ongoing investigation into any alleged crimes within its jurisdiction committed on Palestinian territory and by Palestinians on the territory of Israel since 2021.

In that year, ICC judges ruled that the court has jurisdiction after the Palestinian authorities signed up to the court in 2015, after being granted United Nations observer state status.



The decision, however, left a ruling on the interpretation of the 1993 Oslo Accords regarding Palestinian jurisdiction over Israeli

nationalists for a later stage in the proceedings. The UK's argument is that the Palestinian authorities cannot have jurisdiction over Is-

raeli nationals under the Oslo Accords, and so it cannot transfer that jurisdiction over to the ICC to prosecute Israelis. Agencies

'Thank Indian govt for facilitating, holding this election in Delhi, Mumbai, Hyderabad and Pune'

NEW DELHI

AS voting begins in Iran for snap presidential elections, the country's Ambassador to India, Iraj Elahi said that Iranians will elect their president according to the country's Constitution, which is by the direct vote of the people.

He also thanked India for facilitating and holding this election in Delhi, Mumbai, Hyderabad, and Pune, extending

gratitude to the Indian government.

While speaking to ANI in an interview, Elahi said, "Iranians will elect their president according to the Constitution of Iran, by the direct vote of the people. Four people are competing for the post. I think it will strengthen the sovereignty of Iran, internally and internationally. I thank the Indian government for facilitating and holding this election in Delhi, Mumbai, Hyderabad, and Pune...

We hope that in the new government of Iran, the bilateral relations between India and Iran will strengthen."

Notably, polling centres have been set up in these Indian cities, so that Iranians living in India can cast their vote.

The polls have opened for the snap Presidential elections in Iran on Friday, to elect the successor of Ebrahim Raisi, who met a tragic fate in a chopper crash on May 19 this year. 58,640 polling sta-

tions are set up across the country in public spaces including mosques and schools.

"The deceased President, Raisi played an important role in strengthening and progressing the relations of the two countries. The main contract of Chabahar was signed and we hope that in the coming months, that contract will be implemented," the Iranian envoy said. ANI

Xi, Venezuela's Maduro exchange congratulations on 50th anniversary of ties

BEIJING

CHINESE President Xi Jinping and Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro yesterday exchanged congratulations on the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic ties between the two countries.

Noting that China and Venezuela are good partners of mutual trust and common development, Xi said that since the establishment of diplomatic ties half a century ago, the two sides have supported each other in the changing international landscape, worked together to defend international fairness and justice as well as the legitimate rights and interests of developing countries, and forged an "iron-clad" friendship.

Xi noted that during President Maduro's successful state visit to China last September, they jointly announced the elevation of the China-Venezuela relationship to an all-weather strategic partnership, ushering bilateral relations into a new era.

China is ready to work with Venezuela to uphold the original aspiration of establishing diplomatic ties, continue the traditional friendship, and take the 50th anniversary of diplomatic ties as a new starting point, to continuously enrich the connotation of the China-Venezuela all-weather strategic partnership, make a greater contribution to world peace and development, and jointly promote the building of a community with a shared future for mankind, Xi said.

For his part, Maduro said since the establishment of diplomatic relations between Venezuela and China 50 years ago, bilateral ties have made considerable progress, adding in particular, the establishment of an all-weather strategic partnership between Venezuela and China is of historic significance.

Venezuela firmly supports China in safeguarding national sovereignty, opposes any attempt to contain China, and is willing to actively participate in the implementation of the Belt and Road cooperation and the three major global initiatives proposed by President Xi, continue to firmly promote Venezuela-China friendship and deepen bilateral cooperation and multilateral coordination, he noted.

He added that Venezuela firmly believes that under the wise leadership of Xi, China will surely achieve the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. Xinhua



Chinese President Xi Jinping (R) and Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro

Disrespect for immunity of countries could be step toward war – Medvedev

ST. PETERSBURG

FAILURE to recognize that countries and their officials have immunity can sometimes be a step toward war, Russian Security Council Deputy Chairman Dmitry Medvedev said.

"As for immunity, this topic has already come up here, and I have already talked about it. In short, failure to recognize the immunity of a country, including immunity of property, immunity of officials, is a most decisive step toward the beginning of war, and in some situations even a world war," he said.

He was commenting on arrest warrants issued by the

International Criminal Court against former Russian Defense Minister Sergey Shoigu and Chief of the General Staff of the Russian Armed Forces Valery Gerasimov.

Medvedev said the warrants run counter to international law.

"Russia, like most countries of the world, including, incidentally, the United States of America and the largest countries - China, India - is not a party to this theatrical institution called the ICC," he said. "Attempts to apply to us the norms of an international treaty, to which we are not a party, are obviously senseless. They are part of foreign

Voting starts for Iran's 14th presidential election

TEHRAN

VOTING started for Iran's 14th presidential election at 8 am local time (0430 GMT) yesterday, with nearly 59,000 polling stations have been set up in more than 95 states in the country.

Iran's Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei cast the first ballot at a polling station and made a brief speech calling for the unity of the Iranian people during the election.

Over 61 million people are eligible to vote in the election, according to authorities.

Iranian nationals residing in Syria also started casting their votes on Friday morning. Among approximately 12,000

Iranian residents in Syria, over 6,000 are eligible to vote, according to Iranian Ambassador to Syria Hossein Akbari.

To accommodate the voters, seven polling stations and a mobile ballot box for special circumstances have been established in Syria, Akbari told reporters at the Iranian embassy, one of the polling stations in Syria.

"The citizens are participating in these elections with full freedom to vote for their preferred candidate," said Akbari.

Earlier on Thursday, Hadi Tahan Nazif, spokesman for Iran's Constitutional Council, elaborated on the details of the election and voting process at a press conference in the Ira-



Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei casts his ballot during the parliamentary runoff elections in Tehran yesterday. AFP

nian capital Tehran.

Nazif stressed that following the "painful" death of for-

mer president Ebrahim Raisi in a helicopter crash on May 19, the entire preparatory pro-

cess of the snap election was completed in close to 40 days, which shows the "strength and power" of the country's Islamic establishment.

He said election observers, including those of the Constitutional Council, would be present at all polling stations inside the country and abroad to supervise the voting process according to law.

He stressed that the Iranian Interior Ministry would be the official reference for announcing the election results, advising the candidates and their fans against any hasty speculation following the voting process.

Iran's 14th presidential election, initially set for 2025, was

rescheduled following Raisi's unexpected death.

Initially, six candidates -- Amir-Hossein Ghazizadeh Hashemi, the current vice-president, Alireza Zakani, the mayor of Tehran, Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf, the parliamentary speaker, Saeed Jalili, the former top negotiator for nuclear talks, Mostafa Pourmohammadi, a former interior minister and justice minister, and Masoud Pezeshkian, a former health minister -- were qualified to enter the race.

But Hashemi and Zakani, two principlist candidates, withdrew from the race in favor of Qalibaf and Jalili, who are also in the principlists' camp.

In remarks on the sidelines of a cabinet meeting on Wednesday, Iran's Interior Minister Ahmad Vahidi said that over 61 million Iranians are eligible to vote yesterday.



The citizens are participating in these elections with full freedom to vote for their preferred candidate

From AI to new energy, China's emerging industries a boon for the world

DALIAN

the event.

FIVE years on, the Annual Meeting of the New Champions brought worldwide business gurus, political leaders and academic elites back to northeast China's coastal city of Dalian, exploring new horizons for future growth.

Many dialogues at the event, also known as Summer Davos, led to a consensus that China's high-quality development amid its drive to foster new quality productive forces had been a boon for countries and multinational companies across the globe, helping them weather the predicament of the world economy.

In various domains, ranging from technological development represented by artificial intelligence (AI) to green innovation spearheaded by new energy technologies, industry insiders at the event recognized that China is among the flagbearers, eyeing more spillover effects from China's progress.

China's continuous recovery and long-term improvement, as well as the transformation, upgrading and profound changes in its economy, will surely provide new and broad space for the development of global enterprises, said Chinese Premier Li Qiang, when attending a symposium for foreign business representatives at

NEXT FRONTIERS WITH AI

According to Chen Liming, chair of Greater China of the World Economic Forum, future growth points will revolve around technological innovation and green low-carbon exploration, creating new engines for growth amidst global transformations.

Rapid advancements in areas including AI and energy transition are set to provide unprecedented momentum for the high-quality and steady development of the global economy, Chen noted.

For many distinguished panelists at the event, China serves as a prominent trendsetter and a second-to-none magnet for related industries amid the trend of exploring new frontiers of AI and new energy sectors.

"China's AI industry remains at the forefront globally. As a strategic technology that will lead the future, AI is considered a crucial engine for creating new quality productive forces," said Cai Wei, chief strategy officer of KPMG China Advisory, noting that the rapid development of AI in China is empowering various industries, enhancing efficiency and providing new opportunities for businesses and individuals alike.

Speaking to Xinhua, Zhang said that China's development opportunities, openness and massive data resources are surely benefiting both domestic and foreign companies. "We also



A girl interacts with an artificial intelligence (AI) robot at the fourth China International Consumer Products Expo (CICPE) in Haikou, capital city of south China's Hainan Province, April 15, 2024. Xinhua

China is leading the way in AI spending and serves as a significant contributor to the world economy growth brought by AI-related sectors, said Jessica Zhang, senior vice president, APAC at Automatic Data Processing Inc., an American provider of human resources management software and services, regarding China as one of the major global players in AI sector.

speaking to Xinhua, Zhang said that China's development opportunities, openness and massive data resources are surely benefiting both domestic and foreign companies. "We also

see these great opportunities in China, and will continue investing in China and building our own channels to AI and AI tools."

For Kang Xi, an assistant professor at Vanderbilt University in the United States, AI technologies advanced in China will benefit other countries.

"The technology advancements in many countries including China are open-sourced, with a spillover effect benefiting other developers globally," Kang told Xinhua. "China's computing power and its vast consumer data are going to refine the foundation of AI models and

also help create customized smaller models that can be implemented in other countries."

SHARING GREEN DEVELOPMENT

Besides AI, China has been vigorously developing the new energy sector to meet its dual carbon commitments and help fight the climate crisis.

China provides 50 percent of the world's wind power equipment and 80 percent of global photovoltaic equipment. It has driven down the cost of renewable energy and helped some other countries obtain clean, reli-

able, and affordable energy.

Espen Mehlum, head of Energy Transition Intelligence and Regional Acceleration, World Economic Forum, spoke highly of China's green transition and highlighted its reference significance.

"We need to make sure that the clean energy revolution touches all countries of the world. That's where China is playing a leading role," Mehlum said, adding that China's related industries are effectively reducing the cost of clean energy for consumers in many countries and providing them access to this green technological revolution.

Benoit Boulet, associate vice principal, Innovation and Partnerships, at McGill University in Canada, also hailed China's vigorous energy transition efforts.

"We have to move away from fossil fuels as quickly as possible to renewable energy," Boulet said. "China is really pushing hard right now, and I think that's a signal to the world."

Business leaders from across the world reaffirmed their commitment to China's opportunities at the event, applauding the country's rapid progress in new energy and AI as well as its open and expansive market.

Xinhua

'Julian Assange's actions put people in danger'

WASHINGTON

THE day WikiLeaks founder and whistleblower Julian Assange walked free after signing a plea deal with the United States, the US State Department termed his actions for which he pleaded guilty had put the lives of people, especially Washington's allies and diplomats, at risk.

US State Department Mathew Miller also pointed that Assange served as a "conduit" for Russian intelligence interfering in the US presidential elections.

Assange arrived in Australia after pleading guilty to violating US espionage law, in a deal that set him free of the 14-year legal case.

He arrived to a grand welcome in Canberra, as cheers erupted from his supporters gathered at Canberra Airport in the Australian capital. Assange hugged his wife Stella and waved at his supporters.

"I do think it is important when we talk about Julian Assange to remind the world that actions for which he was indicted, for which he has now pled guilty are actions that put the lives of our partners, our allies and our diplomats at risk, especially those who work in, especially those who work in dangerous places like Afghanistan and Iraq," Miller said in a press briefing on Wednesday.

The State Department spokesperson said that WikiLeaks published the documents without redacting names which exposed the names who were in contact with the State Department at that time and hurt the US' ability to build relationships.

Scientists call for halt to elephant hunting along Kenya-Tanzania border

NAIROBI

THE hunting of elephants along the Kenya-Tanzania border for their tusks should be stopped to save the giant land mammals from extinction, a group of international scientists said on Thursday.

In a letter published by Science, an international journal, 24 biologists, zoologists, and conservationists warned against trophy hunting of elephants along the Amboseli ecosystem that spans the Kenya-Tanzania border amid threat to tourism and the livelihoods of local communities.

According to scientists, five male adult elephants with tusks weighing more than 100 pounds (about 45 kg) were shot by trophy hunters in Tanzania in late 2023 and early 2024, posing a new threat to the survival of the iconic giant herbivore.

These elephants, according to wildlife biologists, were among the most magnificent species of the cross-border population studied for 51 years by the Amboseli Elephant Research Project (AERP) in Kenya.

Despite being banned



in Kenya for the last 50 years, trophy hunting is permitted in neighbouring Tanzania though hunters are not allowed to shoot elephants in the vicinity of Amboseli National Park to help protect the cross-border species.

Cynthia Moss, the founder and director of the AERP, noted that elephants in this ecosystem that straddles Kenya and Tanzania have thrived in the decades when the hunting ban was honored.

"These elephants are not only sources of great scientific knowledge and key attractions for the ecotourism economy, but also represent a unique and irreplaceable natural wildlife heritage for the people of both countries and the

world," Moss said.

Genetically predisposed to have some of the largest tusks on the African continent, the Amboseli elephants have historically been protected from both legal and illegal hunting, said Joyce Poole, director of ElephantVoices, an international elephant protection lobby, and a lead author of the letter. Poole noted that the Amboseli cross-border elephant population holds immense scientific value, representing one of the last gene pools for large tusks, hence the need to place a ban on their hunting and safeguard their genetic future.

The scientists in their letter observed that 70 percent of African elephants are

found in transboundary populations, and their hunting could disrupt ecosystem balance in neighboring countries.

Hosting more than 2,000 elephant populations, the Amboseli National Park and ranges cover about 30,000 square kilometers across Kenya and Tanzania, noted the scientists.

In addition, there are 65 elephant families in this population while 17 families totaling 365 members frequently cross into Tanzania, said the scientists, adding that older males with huge tusks are the primary target for trophy hunters.

EU, Ukraine sign security agreement

BRUSSELS

THE European Union (EU) and Ukraine signed a security agreement during a European Council summit in Brussels on Thursday.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky attended the summit and signed the security pact during a ceremony together with European Council President Charles Michel and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen.

According to the document, the EU and its member states have so far collectively provided nearly 108 billion euros (about 115.6 billion U.S. dollars) in assistance to Ukraine.

"The EU is determined to continue providing Ukraine and its people with all the necessary political, financial, economic, humanitarian,

military and diplomatic support for as long as it takes and as intensely as needed," the document noted.

The EU also agreed to use the extraordinary revenue stemming from frozen Russia assets to support Ukraine, according to the agreement.

The agreement also emphasized that Ukraine should continue its reforms in line with its path towards the EU, and strengthen transparency and accountability measures concerning the assistance received.

Von der Leyen pledged on social platform X to keep delivering the weapons, military training and the aid Ukraine needs. "This highlights: we are in for the long haul," she added.

Xinhua



European Council President Charles Michel (R) and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky arrive for a European Council summit in Brussels, Belgium, June 27, 2024. The European Union (EU) and Ukraine signed security agreements during a European Council summit in Brussels on Thursday. Xinhua

US ambitions to 'rule the world' doomed to failure, Lavrov tells forum

MOSCOW

THE Biden administration's desire to inflict a strategic defeat on Russia will certainly fail, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said, addressing the 10th Primakov Readings international forum on Wednesday.

The Russian foreign minister also said that Moscow was seeking to prevent the West from posing a threat to its security.

TASS has gathered key statements by Russia's top diplomat.

On futility of US ambitions to achieve global dominance

The desire of individual countries to ensure military-political dominance ended in tragic consequences for those nations and their patrons in the past, Lavrov recounted.

The dollar has lost its reputation globally, and this was highlighted by former US President Donald Trump in one of his recent speeches, he said.

Statements by US officials saying that certain resolutions of the United Nations Security Council are not

obligatory may "boomerang" and come back to haunt them, Lavrov warned.

On Ukraine conflict

Also, Lavrov blasted Western claims that restoring Ukraine within the 1991 borders would stop the conflict, calling such a notion ridiculous.

Meanwhile, the West is trying to persuade "certain Arab countries" to host another conference on Ukraine, Lavrov said.

However, participants in any future peace conferences must take full account of the UN Charter, he added.

On security threats

Russia's top diplomat maintained the ambitions of the Biden administration were nothing new, as he referred to ideas to inflict a strategic defeat on Russia which he



said were knowingly doomed to failure or the desire to contain Moscow, Beijing and Iran simultaneously which he dismissed as "naive."

According to Lavrov, the only thing Russia really wants is "to stem threats to our security from the West."

Russia is open to dialogue with Europe based on the recognition of new territorial realities enshrined in the country's constitution.

On multipolarity and fight against neocolonialism

While each era of multipolarity is unique, Lavrov said he could see the fundamental difference between the current period and the previous ones in that it is worldwide, with non-European, non-Western centers of power and development being available.

Russia's neighbors in western Eurasia "could become a lynchpin of the evolving multipolar world order as soon as they come to their senses and realize that the policy course being dictated by Washington is a dead end and runs counter to their own interests," he argued.

Russia and its allies are for putting an end to decolonization as they promote a new strategic initiative seek-

ing to "free developing countries from recent signs of neocolonialism."

On Russia's troika with India, China

Russia has plans to convene meetings with India and China again, Lavrov said: "It [the Russia-India-China (RIC) troika] does not convene often, but that's not our fault."

Russia and China will take any and all steps to ensure their continued growth, despite US counteraction, Lavrov insisted.

Everybody will benefit if this "troika" makes common cause toward aligning their positions, while the West has been making every effort to undermine the process, he maintained.

On the Middle East

Russia expects Israel to listen to "the voice of the majority countries" on the situation in Gaza, Lavrov said.

The Russian foreign minister decried the "terrible words" uttered by an Israeli official that there are no civilians in Gaza and that all people there are terrorists starting from three years of age.



Ghanaian striker Jonathan Sowah. Agencies

Yanga in talks to sign Ghanaian striker Jonathan Sowah

By Correspondent Seth Mapoli

YOUNG Africans are reportedly in discussions to acquire striker Jonathan Sowah from Al-Nasr Benghazi of Libya.

Sowah, who joined Al-Nasr Benghazi in January, has mutually terminated his contract with the club, making him a free agent.

The 25-year-old Ghanaian striker had signed with the North African club on January 27, 2024, with a contract set to expire on December 31, 2025. His transfer to Al-Nasr Benghazi was reportedly worth 200,000 Euros. However, after just six months, both parties agreed to part ways.

Reports suggest that if Young Africans successfully sign Sowah, they may release their current striker, Joseph Guede, to make room for the new acquisition.

Guede, who joined the side in January from Tuzlaspor FC of Turkey, has scored six goals in the Premier League since his arrival. Additionally, there are speculations that the club might also part ways with striker Kennedy Musonda.

Sowah is no stranger to Young Africans, having played against them in the CAF Champions League group stage matches last season. In the first leg on December 8, 2023, Sowah scored a goal in a match that ended 1-1. However, the Jangwani-based side triumphed in the second leg with a 3-0 victory.

During the 2023-2024 season, Sowah made notable contributions in the CAF Champions League, scoring three goals in seven appearances. In the domestic arena, Sowah netted

four goals in eight appearances for Medeama Sporting Club in the Ghana Premier League before his move to Libya.

Sowah had an impressive run with Medeama during the 2022-2023 season, playing a crucial role in their title-winning campaign. He scored 12 goals and provided an assist in 20 league appearances.

His exceptional performance earned him a spot in the Ghana national team, the Black Stars, for the 2023 Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON), although Ghana was eliminated at the group stage under the management of then-head coach Chris Hughton.

The potential signing of Sowah is seen as a strategic move for Young Africans, as they aim to enhance their squad and dominate the CAF Champions League following their quarter-final finish last season.

Young Africans have also secured the Premier League title for the third consecutive time and won the Federation Cup.

In preparation for the upcoming season, Young Africans are scheduled to travel to Europe and South Africa for their pre-season tour. Additionally, they will participate in Gor Mahia's pre-season special tournament in Kenya in July.

The addition of Sowah to Young Africans' roster is anticipated to bolster their attacking options and increase their chances of success in both domestic and continental competitions. His proven track record and experience in high-stakes matches make him a valuable asset for the Jangwani-based club.

Something must change for CECAFA Kagame Cup to reclaim relevancy

By Correspondent Michael Mwebe

THE 2024 CECAFA Kagame Cup tournament is still shrouded in uncertainties with a few days to its official kick-off.

Growing up, the CECAFA Kagame Cup used to be huge and there were so many epic games, unlike this edition where there is no buzz for a tournament that is meant to bring together regional giant clubs.

Instead negative reports about the tournament are hitting the press. Although there is no official statement from the organisers yet, media reports indicate at least four teams have pulled out of the tournament.

Azam, Burundi's Vital'O, Malawi's Nyasa Bullets, and TP Mazembe have pulled out. Top drawers Simba and Young Africans are also unlikely to participate as it stands.

Simba will travel to Egypt for a training camp as part of their preparations for the 2024/25 domestic and international campaign.

According to club media officer Ally Ahmed, the club is set to leave for Egypt during the first week of July.

Young Africans are yet to confirm their pre-season plans but they are mulling overseas pre-season training tours that collide with the Kagame Cup schedule.

While each club has its own valid reasons for withdrawing or delaying to confirm participation in CECAFA Kagame Cup, if they could be honest without ramifications they would con-



The Council of East and Central Africa Football Associations (CECAFA) president Wallace Karia. Agencies

cess they see little value in this tournament in its current format.

It wouldn't be surprising if these clubs are asking themselves: 'What on earth are we going to do in the Kagame Cup?'

What can't be disputed is that the tournament has lost its lustre. Back then, clubs would not miss a chance to participate in the CECAFA Kagame Cup.

Fast forward to the last edition held in Tanzania in 2021, Young Africans and Azam used their third string sides. Their squads were mainly composed of youth and fringe players. Simba did not even bother to participate.

It was a low-key affair on and off the stadiums. The fans stayed away from attending the tournament games. Obviously, to them, it's not value for money. They can't part with their hard-earned money to watch Young Africans U-20 playing Azam fringe players.

We can't go on like this where the tournament has lost its identity and appeal, yet it rumbles on and on and on. Something has to change.

For the Kagame Cup tournament to remain relevant it has to take a different direction. The question is which direction would make the regional tournament relevant again?

The task is a daunting one and it needs people to think outside the box. CECAFA president Wallace Karia believes the tournament's major challenge is the calendar.

"The calendar has been tight. Clubs and national teams have had commitments and they are the ones who provide the players for the competition," Karia said during the CECAFA General Assembly early this year.

"We need to look at the best way to play Kagame Cup but we will also go back to President Paul Kagame and ask him which ways he can support and in-

crease the prize money because our teams are now big and cannot play competitions for little money."

The tournament's major challenge indeed is that it is held between June and August when most teams are either featuring in international competitions or the pre-season ahead of a new campaign.

However, is the tournament actually relevant anymore? The expansion of the CAF Champions League and Confederation Cup means the big regional clubs' objectives have changed.

Winning the Kagame Cup is good but not good enough. Qualifying for the CAF Champions League and Confederation Cup group stages is more prestigious and lucrative than winning the Kagame Cup.

We can't say the Kagame Cup is completely outdated but the aura of the event has greatly diminished with more East African clubs making the CAF inter-club competitions their main priority.

Team officials and players no longer put much value into the regional tournament. They see it as an inconvenience to their continental targets.

The CECAFA Kagame Cup in its current format doesn't seem all that important in the modern football landscape.

It comes as no surprise that with every edition, nations are opting against hosting it while more clubs are declining the invitation to take part, putting more pressure on the organisers over the viability of the tournament.



Names of all 30 first round picks fill the NBA draft board at the end of the first round, June 26, 2024. (AP Photo)

NBA draft finally worth the longer wait for some players after moving to a two-day format

NEW YORK

JAYLEN Wells sat in the stands at Barclays Center in his snazzy white suit, hoping to hear his name called in the first round of the NBA draft.

A day later, at a second site in a second borough, Wells was finally on his way to the NBA – wearing the same white suit.

"Actually, I had two suits planned and then I was like, I just love this one so much," the forward from Washington State said Thursday. "I was like, 'I've got to wear it again.'"

Wells was one of the early selections in the new two-day NBA draft, taken with the No. 39 pick

by the Memphis Grizzlies. The league went to the format this year instead of having its draft drag too late into the night.

The second round was held at ESPN's Seaport District studios in Manhattan after the first round took place as usual at the home of the Brooklyn Nets. Ten players and their families attended, though Bronny James wasn't present to hear his name announced after the Los Angeles Lakers took the son of the NBA career scoring leader LeBron James at No. 55, near the end of draft.

With extra time between rounds and between picks – it's now four minutes between selections in the

second round, up from two previously – the new format might help teams make more confident selections.

It's a little more difficult for the players.

"Two days kind of makes it more stressful," UCLA's Adem Bona, who was taken by Philadelphia with the No. 41 pick, said with a laugh. "If it's one, it's like, 'All right, I'm getting my name called today!'"

But he said he was happier that the new format allowed him to have extended family present. The native of Nigeria who played in high school in California said he had aunts and cousins from

Canada with him Thursday, which wouldn't have been the case a night earlier in Brooklyn.

The draft resumed with the Toronto Raptors taking Jonathan Mogbo of San Francisco with the No. 31 pick.

It felt like a normal second round, with a flurry of trades as teams tried to move up and others sought to move out of the draft.

But the setup was all new, with players and their families sitting in a room off the studio set and a nice view of boats docked in the harbor below on a gorgeous summer afternoon.

"It's nice, but I was down there nervous," said Harrison Ingram,

the North Carolina product taken by the San Antonio Spurs at No. 48. "I was panicking, my mom was nervous, my sister is up there hyperventilating, so a whole lot of stuff going on."

He also went to Barclays Center and returned Thursday wearing the same blue suit. Ingram said he always wanted to go to the NBA draft and didn't want to miss his chance, but he wished it had been under the old format.

"First time they're doing two nights, so it was tough to go there, hear everybody being called," Ingram said. "A lot of my friends, I was happy for them, but knowing that my day might not come

until tomorrow and I have to go to sleep, I couldn't fall sleep until like 3 or 4 a.m., just up thinking about where I'm going to be the next however many years of my life."

Duke's Kyle Filipowski and Johnny Furphy of Kansas, the two players who remained in the green room after the first round, didn't return for the second round. Filipowski was finally selected at No. 32 by Utah with the second pick of the second round. Furphy went a few picks later at No. 35 to San Antonio, which traded his rights to Indiana.

Disappointing Netherlands team spoiling the Oranje fans' party at Euro 2024

BERLIN

THE Netherlands' soccer team is becoming a party-pooper for its thousands of exuberant orange-clad fans at the European Championship.

The Oranje have impressed off the field but not on it at Euro 2024, where Ronald Koeman's team limped into the knockout stage after finishing third in Group D.

Koeman, who was a key defender on the Dutch team that won Euro '88 in West Germany, is back for his second stint as coach. But he's clearly unhappy with his charges, who are maintaining a longstanding Dutch tradition of disappointing at major tournaments.

"We have to come up with some response as a team for the next match, because that's what's at stake, it could be the final knockout for us," Koeman warned after his team's 3-2 loss to Austria on Tuesday.

It was Austria's first win over the Netherlands since 1990 and the latest lackluster display from a team boasting highly regarded individual players across all positions who seem to underperform when playing in the national team's famous orange shirt.

Memphis Depay missed several shooting chances in the opening 2-1 win over Poland, goalkeeper Bart Verbruggen was the key player in the scoreless draw with France, and it was Donyell Malen's turn to miss chances in the defeat to Austria. The luckless Malen also scored an own goal.

Wednesday's final group games determined the Netherlands will play Group E winner Romania in the round of 16 in Munich on Tuesday. A Dutch win could set up a quick rematch with Austria in Berlin in the quarterfinals, if Austria gets past Turkey in its round of 16 clash.

Koeman's team is missing influential Barcelona midfielder Frenkie de Jong, who failed to recover from an ankle injury in time for the tournament. Midfielder Teun Koopmeiners dropped out after getting injured warming up for a test match.

The demise of Ajax Amsterdam, a four-time European champion, is another factor hampering the Netherlands. Ajax had long been known as the country's "football factory," producing young players who would go on to star for the national team. Many a Dutch squad has been built on an Ajax backbone.

But last season was one to forget for the storied club. Ajax had issues off the field and on, slumping to last place in the Eredivisie before former player John van 't Schip took over as coach and steered it to fifth.

Koeman has only two Ajax players - forwards Steven Bergwijn and Brian Brobbey - in his squad for Euro 2024. Neither has played a minute in the tournament so far. The 26-man Netherlands squad is made of players from 19 different clubs which doesn't help Koeman's ability to forge a cohesive unit.

Dutch disappointment in recent tournaments is nothing new, but it's humbling for a country that has contributed so much to modern soccer. The Dutch team of the 1970s led by Johan Cruyff was known for "total soccer," where every outfield player could play in any position, and it reached World Cup finals in 1974 and 1978.

Coach Bert van Marwijk led the Netherlands to the 2010 World Cup final with a negative style of play, and his team was criticized by Cruyff after its group stage exit at Euro 2012.

But Dutch expertise is still valued abroad. Manchester United and Liverpool both have Dutch coaches in Erik ten Hag and Arne Slot, respectively.

Koeman is not afraid to make changes, but so far, none have paid off. He started with speedy right-back Jeremie Frimpong up front for the France game and dropped Xavi Simons for the Austria game, then brought him on in the first half for the disappointing Joey Veerman.

Veerman had a brilliant season helping PSV Eindhoven to the Dutch title but hasn't been able to build on that at Euro 2024. It's been a recurring problem for Dutch players, who rarely carry their club form to the national team.

The 21-year-old Xavi is a reported target for Bayern Munich after a stellar Bundesliga campaign for Leipzig, with 10 goals in 43 games across all competitions last season. But Koeman publicly criticized his work off-the-ball in qualifying and he repeated that criticism after the draw against France.

Confidence is an issue. Both Malen and Tijani Reijnders lacked composure and mishit the ball when presented with scoring opportunities against Austria.

Koeman was scathing of his players after the match.

"We're going to need some time because I can list quite a few mistakes," the coach said. "We started very badly in many aspects. We did not defend well. There were many openings for the opponent and we weren't aggressive. There was a lack of pressure and we lost the ball as well, particularly at the start. We were really very bad."

Despite the problems, the Netherlands will be favored to overcome Romania in the round of 16, potentially giving Koeman another shot at Austria in the quarterfinals.

AP

Euro 2024 takeaways: Fans and fearless teams are stars as tournament waits on stellar players

FRANKFURT, Germany

IT took 36 games in 13 days across 10 cities in Germany to play the group stage of the European Championship in men's soccer.

Eight teams have gone home and the original lineup of 24 is down to the 16 who will start the knockout rounds Saturday.

There were huge surprises on the field and big disappointments, deliriously happy fans and seriously disgruntled ones. Here is a look at what's played out so far.

HAPPY FANS

Fans are arguably the biggest stars of Euro 2024, reminding viewers of the joyful shared experience a soccer tournament can be.

Germany was perhaps the perfect stage - an affordable and easily accessible host in the heart of Europe - for fans to reconnect. Even with a beer. The last Euros was played under strict pandemic protocols in 2021 and European fans just did not travel in large numbers to the past two World Cups played in Russia and Qatar.

So, an orange mass of 50,000 Dutch fans bounced through the streets of Leipzig and Berlin.

Similar numbers of Scots in Cologne got gushing praise from the city's mayor, even after a bagpipes-playing residency on the steps of its signature cathedral.

Electrifying support from Georgia and Romania fans through epic rain storms at their games helped lift teams toward overachieving.

Fans marches from city center to stadium that are com-



England's Jude Bellingham reacts at the end of a Group C match against Slovenia in Cologne, Germany, June 25, 2024. AP Photo

mon in European soccer are now a thing at Euro 2024.

"It is becoming more and more a key element in the tournament," said Football Supporters Europe executive director Ronan Evain. "German authorities have decided for a long time now to encourage them."

UNHAPPY FANS

Plastic cups thrown by fans at England coach Gareth Southgate after another in-sipid game. Belgium captain Kevin De Bruyne ushering teammates away in a collective post-game snub to fans booing them.

France coach Didier Deschamps suggesting people can change the TV channel if they do not like watching his richly talented team that is not yet much fun.

Meanwhile, fans of Austria and Romania - surprise winners of their groups ahead of, respectively, France and Belgium - are having a great time.

STARS DIMMED

Superstars have not hit top form yet. Injuries have not helped and others seem jaded in national teams after stand-out seasons at clubs where they enjoy stronger connections with teammates.

Cristiano Ronaldo, now 39, has seemed frustrated and not just by the parade of selfie-seeking fans evading security staff to get close to him.

Jude Bellingham faded after an impressive first 45 minutes. Harry Kane pushed back against unprecedented criticism. Kylian Mbappé, now the man in the mask, is managing the risk of playing with a broken nose.

All that can be forgotten when Euro 2024 restarts Saturday.

WHO DARES

A parable of Euro 2024 is the linked and contrasting fortunes of Georgia and Scotland. Neither had ever advanced to the knockout stage of a Euros or World Cup, but this was

Georgia's debut and Scotland's 12th try.

Scotland and Georgia were in the same qualifying group last year. The Scots took four points from their two games against each other to advance as runner-up to Spain.

Scotland beat Spain 2-0 in Glasgow. Georgia was routed 7-1 in its home game against Spain, and later advanced to Euro 2024 through the playoffs path for low-ranked teams.

So how did they approach Euro 2024? Scotland played with caution verging on fear, picking five defenders even in can-win games against Switzerland and Hungary. And exited winless as perhaps the tournament's worst team to watch.

Georgia was fearless, riding the star quality of Napoli winger Khvicha Kvaratskhelia, and was in probably the most thrilling game so far: a 3-1 loss to Turkey. Georgia then drew 1-1 with the Czech Republic, after leading, and stunningly beat Portugal 2-0.

The lowest-ranked team at Euro 2024 is a joy for neutrals to watch and got the deserved reward of a round of 16 game. Against Spain.

FEWER PENALTIES

Since referees used video review at the 2018 World Cup there was a surge in the number of penalties awarded. From 13 at the 2014 World Cup, to 29, then 23 at the 2022 World Cup.

At the last Euros there were more penalties awarded in the 36-game group stage - 14 - than in the group stages of the previous three tournaments combined.

At Euro 2024, just eight penalties were awarded in the group stage - six scored, two failures by Croatia - that seems to follow the downtick at the last World Cup.

Defenders have learned not to step on an attacker's foot, not to wrestle or pull jerseys so much when marking at set pieces, and avoid extending their arms. Euro 2024 referees also seem to let defenders be strong in the challenge.

Yellow cards for diving in each of Portugal's first two games, provoking a one-game ban, for winger Rafael Leão perhaps also sent a message to attackers.

TRAINS STRAIN

Euro 2024 was planned with a starring role for trains to carry fans - and even teams to some games - who had good memories of free or cheap transport at the well-organized 2006 World Cup.

The service level of Deutsche Bahn, a tournament sponsor, has clearly dropped since then but it has been essential.

"The trains didn't improve but people got used to them," FSE's Evain told the Associated Press.

Even if trains often were late, they are scheduled to run late into the night - getting fans to their hotel or apartment rental in a cheaper city rather than depend on price-gauged rooms near the stadiums.

"This is shaping the tournament," Evain said.

Providing anything like a similar service will be a challenge for Euro 2028 organizers in the UK and Ireland.

AP

Ralf Rangnick's reputation took a hit at Man United. He's changing the story at Euro 2024

DUESSELDORF, Germany

CRISTIANO Ronaldo said he'd never heard of him and Manchester United fans have few fond memories of his short-lived spell as manager of the Premier League club.

But Ralf Rangnick is rewriting his legacy at Euro 2024 with his Austria team emerging as one of the surprise packages of the tournament.

Topping a group that included France and the Netherlands, the Austrians have announced themselves as contenders for the European Championship and advanced to knockout phase on the opposite side of the draw to Spain, Germany, France and Portugal.

Not bad for the German coach whose previously solid reputation took a hit after an unsuccessful six months as interim manager of United through 2021-22, which included a run of just three wins from his last 14 games and heavy losses to Manchester City, Liverpool and Brighton.

"This guy is not even a coach," Ronaldo said in his explosive interview with Piers Morgan in November 2022. "If you are not even a coach, how are you going to be the boss of Manchester United?"

While Rangnick's previous job had been head of sports and develop-



Austria's head coach Ralf Rangnick celebrates after their win in a Group D match between the Netherlands and Austria at the Euro 2024 soccer tournament in Berlin, Germany, Tuesday, June 25, 2024. (AP Photo)

ment at Russian club Lokomotiv Moscow, his coaching credentials had been long-established in Germany, where he earned the nickname the "Professor".

So effective was Rangnick's brand of soccer - dubbed "gegenpressing" (counter pressing) - that it was widely-regarded as having influenced a generation of German coaches including Jürgen Klopp, Julian Nagelsmann and Thomas Tuchel.

"He had a huge influence on all of us at this time," Tuchel has said, having played under Rangnick earlier in his career.

Rangnick's success has largely been with smaller clubs, winning promotions with Hannover, Hoffenheim and Leipzig.

Perhaps it is no surprise then that he is excelling with an Aus-

trian team which wasn't considered among the favorites leading up to the Euros. But the signs of his impact were clear during the qualifiers as Austria booked its place at the Euros as runner-up and one point behind No. 3-ranked Belgium.

"You can see a clear development since the coach joined the team," midfielder Marcel Sabitzer said. Bayern Munich clearly shared that opinion when targeting him as a successor to Tuchel at the end of the season. Rangnick opted

to stay on at Austria and has only enhanced his reputation at the Euros.

While his team suffered defeat to France in its opening game, the 1-0 loss was only courtesy of an own goal. Austria then recovered to beat Poland 3-1 and the Netherlands 3-2. That's earned Rangnick's side a meeting with Turkey in the round of 16 on July 2.

"It's incredible to finish top of the group that was the hardest possible based on UEFA coefficients," Rangnick said. "We started with an unlucky own goal against France, dealt with all the pressure put on us to win against Poland, and then to end as group winners is something very special."

As well as his coaching career, Rangnick also

has a reputation for his work as an executive, having identified numerous emerging players and coaches during his time as sporting director of Leipzig. United had planned to keep him on as a consultant at the end of his spell as interim manager and tap into his soccer expertise.

It would have been fascinating to see what sort of an impact he would have had at the 20-time English league champion after saying the team needed an "open heart operation" and as many as 10 new players.

Ultimately plans for the consultancy role were scrapped after Rangnick accepted the Austria job in '22.

He hasn't looked back since.

AP

Gwiji by David Chikoko



SPORT

Euro 2024 takeaways: Fans and fearless teams are stars as tournament waits on stellar players

PAGE 19

Simba Day rescheduled to August 3 at Benjamin Mkapa Stadium



Simba's information and communication manager, Ahmed Ally. Agencies

By Correspondent Seth Mapoli

SIMBA Sports Club have officially announced that this year's Simba Day will be celebrated on August 3 at the Benjamin Mkapa Stadium.

The announcement was made by the club's information and communication manager, Ahmed Ally.

Traditionally held on August 8, each year, Simba Day has been rescheduled due to the Community Shield tournament coinciding with the original date.

"It is now official that the

peak of Simba Day will be August 3. It will not be possible to hold it on August 8 as usual, based on the Tanzania Football Federation calendar, as we will start the Community Shield tournament on that day," said Ally.

Before the main event, Simba Week will kick off on July 24, featuring vari-

ous social activities such as blood donation drives and contributions to those with special needs. These activities reflect the club's commitment to community service and engagement.

Ally elaborated on the lineup of events planned for Simba Day, highlighting the mix of entertainment and a friendly match.

"On that day, there will be great entertainment before starting the game itself, which we will use to introduce our team towards the 2024/25 Premier League season," he said.

Simba have made it a tradition to use Simba Day to unveil new players and bid farewell to departing ones. The day is also marked by a friendly match, providing fans a glimpse of the team's preparations and new roster for the upcoming season.

This year, in preparation for the next season, Simba will travel to Egypt for their pre-season training. The team has already made several player registrations, with the new additions set to be introduced on Simba Day.

The club has also released several players to make way for the new arrivals, signaling a fresh start as they aim to improve their performance.

The past three seasons have been challenging for Simba. Last season, the club was eliminated at the quarter-final stage of the

CAF Champions League by Al Ahly. In the domestic league, they finished third in the Tanzania Mainland Premier League and were knocked out of the Federation Cup by Mashujaa FC.

Despite these setbacks, the club is optimistic about the upcoming season. The comprehensive preparations and new signings are expected to bolster the team, as they strive to reclaim their dominance in Tanzanian football and make a deeper run in continental competitions.

Simba Day has become a significant event for the club, not only for introducing new players but also for fostering a sense of unity and excitement among fans. The week-long celebrations leading up to the main event will further strengthen the bond between the club and its supporters.

As Simba gear up for the new season, fans eagerly await the announcements and festivities planned for Simba Week and Simba Day. The club's commitment to community service and engagement, combined with their efforts to strengthen the squad, promises an exciting and hopeful future for Simba.

Coastal Union target squad bolster with continental experience

By Correspondent Nassir Nchimbi

AHEAD of the pre-season preparations, Mainland Tanzania Premier League envoys in the CAF Confederations Cup, Coastal Union, have confirmed they will sign few players with continental football experience to strengthen their campaign.

Coastal Union's commendable fourth-place finish in the domestic league standings with 43 points from 30 games secured their spot in the CAF Confederation Cup for the 2024/25 season.

The tournament will be significant for the club, marking their return to international competition since their participation in the 1989 African Cup Winners' Cup, where they were eliminated in the first round.

The competition was later merged with the CAF Cup to form the current CAF Confederation Cup in 2004.

The achievement has generated excitement among the club's supporters and heightened expectations for their performance in the international arena.

The club spokesman, Abbas El Sabri, has said that the team under coach David Ouma has the quality that needs few new players to upgrade their squad roster to boast the foundation that they created last season.

Coastal Union remain tight-lipped on new signings. However, Sabri assures fans that player acquisition is underway. He acknowledges some targeted players are under contract with other clubs.

He said Coastal Union prioritized retaining key players and conducts negotiations meticulously.

Their proactive approach in the transfer market reflects their commitment to achieving success in the upcoming season.

"We believe our core squad is already strong. However, we're looking to add a few players, ideally no more than five, to give the team an extra edge. Our focus is on experienced players who have participated in multiple CAF interclub competitions.

"Like the Champions League or Confederations Cup, their experience in these high-pressure continental tournaments will be a valuable asset and bring winning momentum to our team," he said.

Sabri also said to ensure they are well-prepared, Coastal Union are not only targeting key signings but also focusing on overall team development. The club's management understands that a balanced and cohesive team is essential for navigating the rigors of international competition.

"We need to be patient in acquiring the top players we have targeted for next season. Our immediate task is to retain the players who performed well last year. There's competition to keep them, but we are optimistic. Once the registration process is complete, we will announce our new signings," he said.

Reports suggest that Saido Ntibanzokiza, who left Simba, is monitored to make a move to Coastal Union.

The addition of Ntibanzokiza would significantly enhance Coastal Union's offensive capabilities, complementing their efforts to assemble a formidable squad for the CAF Confederation Cup.

Ntibanzokiza scored 11 goals last season, leading Simba's scoring charts. His striking abilities make him a valuable addition to any team, and Coastal Union's management sees him as a key player to bolster their attack.

Coastal Union are also said to target Young Africans' former defender Djuma Shabani, who spent the entire last season without a team. He is a free agent and an attractive prospect for Coastal Union as they prepare for the CAF competition.

Shabani's recent history includes a brief stint with Azam. However, he was unable to register with the club due to their quota of 12 foreign players being filled.

Makudubela now reflects on future after triumphant season with Yanga

By correspondent Seth Mapoli

AFTER a remarkable debut season with Young Africans, South African winger Mahlatse 'Skudu' Makudubela finds himself at a crossroads, contemplating his future in Tanzanian football.

The 34-year-old played a pivotal role in Young Africans' successful campaign, helping the team secure both the Premier League and Federation Cup titles, marking his first league championship win.

Makudubela joined the Jangwani-based side on a free transfer in July 2023 after his former club, Marumo Gallants, was relegated. Despite Gallants' relegation, Makudubela had a standout season, contributing significantly to their impressive run to the CAF Confederation Cup semifinals, where they were ironically eliminated by Young Africans.

With his contract at Young Africans set to expire at the end of June, Makudubela's future remains uncertain. Speculation about his next move has been fueled by his recent comments expressing a desire to win a CAF Champions League medal, hinting at potential transfers to either Rwandan champions APR FC or Young Africans' domestic rivals, Azam FC.

Speaking to a sports media agency, Makudubela outlined his ambitions for the upcoming season.

"The first target would be to add a CAF Champions League medal," he stated. "I'm hoping for a great season ahead, whether in South Africa or Tanzania."

Currently, back in South Africa for the offseason, Makudubela reflected on his historic move to Young Africans, becoming the first South African foot-



South African winger Mahlatse 'Skudu' Makudubela. Agencies

baller to play in the Tanzanian league. He described the transfer as unexpected.

"It happened very quickly," he explained. "I was about to sign with another South African team when Young Africans' president, Mr. Engineer Hersi Said, called me. We played against them in the Confederation Cup, and I think that's where they spotted me.

They'd been following me, but our games gave them a closer look."

The call from the president was a pleasant surprise for Makudubela, who emphasized that his opportunity to join Young Africans was well-earned.

"It's a big thing for my career to go abroad and play for such a team. Young Africans are a big club in Tanzania," he said. "Honestly, it came as a

surprise in the first place, but I looked at my qualities, the efforts I've been putting in, and everything I've served South Africa with, so I think I deserved the opportunity."

Makudubela's journey from the South African league to the Mainland Tanzania Premier League underscores his adaptability and determination. His impact at Young Africans has been profound, not only in terms of his on-field performances but also in how he has embraced the challenge of playing in a new environment and culture.

His success in Tanzania has also highlighted the potential for South African players to explore opportunities in other African leagues.

As Makudubela weighs his options, his achievements with Young Africans have undoubtedly enhanced his reputation. Winning the league and cup double in his debut season has set a high bar for his future endeavors, and his desire to compete at the highest level in African football remains strong.

For Young Africans, retaining Makudubela could be crucial for their ambitions in the CAF Champions League. His experience and skill set have been invaluable assets to the team.

However, should he decide to move on, his time with Young will be remembered as a period of success and growth for both the player and the club.

The coming days will be critical in determining Makudubela's next steps. Whether he continues his journey in Tanzania, returns to South Africa, or explores new opportunities elsewhere, his career trajectory will be closely watched by fans and pundits alike.

Flexibles by David Chikoko

