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Australia's tail wags to frustrate India in Melbourne test



Songwe Regional Police Commander Augustino Senga displays some of what he said were banned imported cosmetics impounded during a police crackdown at Keresia in Chapwa ward, Momba District, on Saturday that saw several suspects arrested. Photo courtesy of Police Hqs

PSSSF issues 126bn/- since July, by new computation

By Correspondent Ashton
Balaigwa, Morogoro

ATOTAL of 126bn/- was disbursed to 13,167 retirees from July 1 to December 15 this year by the Public Service Social Security Fund (PSSSF). Yessaya Mwakifulule, the PSSSF public relations and education manager, said this at a training session for the Morogoro Journalists Club here over the weekend.

The payments were made in implementation of government directives, revising the formula for computing retirement benefits. The relevant pay-outs began in September after the Labour, Youth, Employment and Persons with Disability state minister in the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) issued the directive, he said. In the payments, two percent of the funds was directly funded by PSSSF and seven percent cov-

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Lake Nyasa ship placed on weekly schedules

By Correspondent Nebart Msokwa, Kyela

MV Mbeya II passenger ship will now operate weekly, linking Kiwira port in Kyela, Mbeya Region and Mbambabay port in Ruvuma Region, being shifted from its fortnight schedule. David Kihenzile, the Transport deputy minister, spoke of this change when visiting Kiwira port, explaining that it will enhance transportation efficiency, improving connectivity between the two regions.

The change takes effect right away, with the ship departing from Kiwira on Thursday and arriving at Mbambabay the following day, and

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Minister tours BRT road project works

By Guardian Reporter

WORKS minister Abdallah Ulega at the weekend conducted a surprise inspection of the ongoing Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) infrastructure projects in Dar es Salaam, issuing instructions for speeding up the work.

He told the contractors that the projects must be completed before the onset of the heavy rains in two months or thereabouts, to reduce traffic congestion in the city.

He reiterated instructions that work be conducted day and night to ensure that the projects are completed on time, underlining that the rainy season brings

its own challenges, "and we do not want to see the public suffering."

He said it is vital to speed up the project as part of implementing directives by President Samia Suluhu Hassan and the polls manifesto for 2020-2025, targeting easing urban traffic congestion.

He inspected expansion work on BRT Route 1 from Ubungo to Kimara, and the Mwenge to Tegeta road which is part of BRT Route 4.

Expressing satisfaction with the speed of work being carried out by the contractors after starting to implement the 24 hour work directive.

He praised efforts by the Tanroads management for doing a good job, demanding that contractors work around the clock without wasting time. Tanzanians are eager to see these projects completed, and the government wants it done, he said.

Mohamed Besta, the Tanroads CEO, assured the minister of close monitoring of the contractors to ensure the projects are completed on time.

The roads agency will see to it that work is done day and night, pursued at full speed to achieve

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VPO, city council start plastic waste recycling

By Guardian Correspondent,

Dodoma

A CIRCULAR economy model to reduce plastic waste in urban areas while creating economic opportunities for local communities is being put on pilot stage at the Dodoma City Council.

Ally Mfinanga, the city en-

vironmental officer, told journalists here yesterday that this initiative is a major step towards sustainable waste management.

The Vice President's Office (Union and Environment) in collaboration with the city council is launching the pilot project, being rolled out in Chamwino ward, to encourage innovative methods of plastic waste man-

agement by promoting recycling and reusing plastic materials.

He said the project is designed to address the growing waste problem while providing economic benefits for residents, by waste collection and recycling.

It is expected that the project

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PSSSF issues 126bn/- since July, by new computation

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ered by the government as employer.

Under the new legal framework starting on July 1, 983 retirees were scheduled to receive their payments by December. Additionally, 1,984 retirees benefiting from the 7 percent increase on their payouts were also paid, bringing the total to 2,967 retirees.

Addressing concerns from retirees regarding discrepancies in previous payments, the manager said that the issues have been resolved with the improved computation method.

PSSSF revisited the records of retirees, compensating 3,364 individuals under the 2 percent category and 9,803 under the 7 percent increase group covering government employees, altogether 13,167

retirees.

Disbursed 126bn/- reflected ongoing efforts towards accurate and timely payments, improving public service and social security, he said.

He said that PSSSF seeks to improve transparency and service delivery, engaging with the public and ensuring that retirees receive their rightful benefits without delays.

Zaida Mahava, the fund's eastern zone manager, highlighted that improved payment processes has reduced complaints.

The fund is also introducing digital tools to ensure members, especially those in rural areas, can conveniently access services, he said.

Nickson Mkilanya, the press club chairman, said the training session will help the scribes in more accurate projection of the fund's services.



Work on storm water drainage infrastructure well in progress yesterday along the Kimara-Korogwe stretch of Dar es Salaam's Morogoro Road, which is undergoing expansion. Photo: Correspondent Sabato Kasika

Minister tours BRT road project works

FROM PAGE 1

the goal of reducing traffic congestion in the city, he stated.

Allen Natai, the BRT project manager, also reported that the construction of the bus rapid transit infrastructure is progressing well.

The minister visit was part

of wider government efforts to ensure major development projects are completed on time and meet the required standards.

This wish has provided a new momentum for implementing bus rapid transit infrastructure projects in the city, observers noted.

Lake Nyasa ship placed on weekly schedules

FROM PAGE 1

make the return trip on Saturday, to anchor in Kyela on Sunday.

"The revised schedule is designed to improve transportation efficiency," he said, affirming that residents will benefit from the government's investments in transport infrastructure," he said.

The previous schedule faced constraints - from rising water levels in the

lake, disrupting operations, while the weekly schedule eases the transport of goods and passengers.

This will in turn boost economic activities among the lakeside communities, he said, while Kyela MP Ally Mlagila said the new timetable will improve connectivity between the two regions.

Remote communities relying on the ship for transportation of goods and other needs will especially benefit, he

said.

Ludewa MP Joseph Kamonga also applauded the initiative, pointing out at the need to upgrade freight ships to complement passenger services and ensure that goods can be transported who ease.

Introducing weekly services for MV Mbeya II a step forward in boosting regional trade and enhancing transportation options for traders and other

port users in the Lake Nyasa area, he said.

Manga Gasaya, the Lake Nyasa ports manager, said that poor road infrastructure linking Kyela town to the ports is a major challenge.

The government needs to address this issue to facilitate smoother connections between the ports and surrounding areas, he added.



Kilimanjaro regional commissioner Nurdin Babu (2nd-R) views various home-made cultural items as well as medicinal leaves, seeds, roots, representing the skills of Kilimanjaro Region. It was during the Kilimanjaro Cultural Festival held at the weekend. Photo: Correspondent Idda Mushi

VPO, city council start plastic waste recycling

FROM PAGE 1

will enable residents to realise the value of plastic waste, by using machinery to grind plastic bottles collected from various locations.

The materials will then be transported to Dar es Salaam, where they will be processed into new plastic products, including household items, furniture and electrical components.

In addition to the environmental and economic advantages, the project aims to enhance community involvement in environmental protection, he stated.

While the new project expects those involved in waste collection being trained to participate in the recycling process, ordinarily isolated individuals collect such waste and deliver to processing centres

for a usable fee.

The project is part of wider efforts to promote sustainable waste management practices and combat environmental pollution, he said, pointing at government commitment to support recycling initiatives.

"The pilot project is expected to be evaluated in the coming months, with the goal of expanding the initiative to other regions of the country," he asserted.

"By focusing on recycling, the project aims to reduce the amount of plastic waste in urban areas and create a more sustainable, eco-friendly environment. It also provides a model that can be replicated in other parts of Tanzania and beyond, contributing to the global fight against plastic pollution," he added.

Food and nutrition crisis deepens across Sudan as famine identified in other areas

ROME

WFP and UNICEF urge immediate humanitarian access and action to avert what could become the worst hunger crisis in recent history ROME/NEW YORK, 24 December 2024 - Four months after famine was first confirmed in Zamzam camp in Sudan's North Darfur state, more areas in North Darfur and the Western Nuba mountains have been identified as experiencing famine conditions, as access to food and nutrition for millions of people across the country continues to deteriorate, the World Food Programme (WFP) and UNICEF warned today.

The latest Famine Review Committee (FRC)* report and new projections from the Integrated Food

Security Phase Classification (IPC)* identify famine with reliable data in at least five areas of Sudan - Zamzam, Abu Shouk and Al Salam camps in North Darfur, and in the Western Nuba Mountains for both residents and internally displaced persons (IDPs). Famine is projected in five additional areas between December 2024 and May 2025 - Um Kadadah, Melit, El Fasher, At Tawisha and Al Lait in North Darfur. The report also highlights the risk of famine across 17 more areas during the same period.

More than 24.6 million people across Sudan - more than half of the population analyzed - are now experiencing high levels of acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 3 or above.) This includes 8.1 million in Emergency conditions (IPC Phase 4) and at least

638,000 people in IPC Phase 5 (Catastrophe.)

These findings mark an alarming escalation of hunger and malnutrition during what is typically the harvest season, when food availability should be at its highest. The FRC's classification of increasing hunger in such a season indicates that the harvest is not reaching everywhere given the continued conflict that limits markets and movement of goods. Without immediate, unhindered humanitarian access and urgent international support, famine risks spreading further in 2025, threatening the lives of millions of people, mainly children, and exacerbating what is already one of the world's most severe food crises.

Conflict, displacement, and restricted humanitarian access re-

main the primary drivers of this crisis. In North Darfur's Zamzam camp, where famine was first confirmed in August 2024, conditions remain critical despite some humanitarian food assistance deliveries. Sustained violence and economic hardship have disrupted markets, displaced millions, and driven prices of staple goods to unaffordable levels for most people.

The next hunger season is projected to begin well before the upcoming rains - the period between harvests when food insecurity typically rises - with humanitarian access hindered by both man-made blockages and logistical challenges. Immediate action to preposition supply stocks is critical to prevent human suffering on an unpre-

cedented scale.

Furthermore, areas of intense conflict, including parts of Khartoum and Al Jazeera, may already be experiencing famine conditions (IPC Phase 5). However, a lack of reliable or recent data from these areas makes it impossible to confirm. This underscores the urgent need for further assessments to confirm the extent of the crisis and provide urgently needed humanitarian assistance.

The agencies urge the international community to prioritize funding for humanitarian efforts and leverage diplomatic channels to secure a ceasefire and unrestricted access. It is imperative that all parties to the conflict ensure safe, immediate, unhindered access to areas classified as IPC Phase 3 and

above. Without immediate action, Sudan's crisis threatens to escalate further in 2025, with millions more at risk.

"A protracted famine is taking hold in Sudan," said WFP's Director of Food Security and Nutrition Analysis, Jean-Martin Bauer. "People are getting weaker and weaker and are dying as they have had little to no access to food for months and months. WFP is doing everything we can to get a steady and constant flow of food assistance to the hungry and hardest-to-reach places in Sudan. We are constantly adapting our operations as the conflict evolves, delivering assistance where and when we can. But recent operational progress is fragile as the situation on the ground is volatile and dangerous."

Hundreds expected to usher in Year 2025

By Correspondent Peter Mkwavila, Dodoma

PRESIDENT Samia Suluhu Hassan is tomorrow expected to join Tanzanians at the national overnight prayer to be held at Nyerere Square in Dodoma City, marking a major event to conclude the year and usher in 2025.

Archbishop Dr Godfrey Malasi of the Tanzania Fellowship of Churches (TFC) told reporters over the weekend, outlining that the event will bring together leaders from various religious denominations, political figures, and worshippers from across the country, all coming together to pray for peace, stability, and prosperity in Tanzania as the nation prepares to step into the new year.

Dr Malasi, who coordinates the annual national prayer services, emphasised the importance of unity during the event, calling on all Tanzanians to join hands in praying for the country's spiritual, social and economic progress.

"Let us conclude the year with gratitude and begin 2025 with blessings that will touch our lives and the nation as a whole," Dr Malasi said.

The prayer service will focus on three main areas: giving thanks for the blessings of the past year, seeking divine blessings for the upcoming year, and promoting national development in all sectors of society.

The event aims to strengthen the spirit of unity and national identity, providing an opportunity for Tanzanians to come together in solidarity and faith.

The service is expected to be attended by thousands of worshippers and will be live-broadcast to allow many more Tanzanians across the country to participate.



HelpAge Tanzania instructor John Eddy (R) pictured at Mwamalisa in Kishapu District on Friday leading a group discussion on ways to combat gender-based violence. Photo: Correspondent Marco Maduhu

'Zanzibar infrastructure development to boost national economy'

By Guardian Reporter, Zanzibar

THE Zanzibar government is focused on strengthening infrastructure, including the construction of urban and rural roads, to enhance the national economy.

Second Vice President of Zanzibar, Hemed Suleiman Abdulla, made the remarks during the ground breaking ceremony for Mazizini, Chukwani, and Maungani roads, which stretch over 28.164 kilometers. This event was part of the 61st anniversary celebrations of the Zanzibar Revolution.

He emphasised that the government's goal is to ensure that all areas requiring road infrastructure

are developed to tarmac standards, addressing transportation challenges for citizens in both urban and rural areas.

He stressed that the primary objective of the Revolution was to liberate all citizens, regardless of their religion, ethnicity, or background, and provide sustainable development to help them overcome economic challenges.

Hemed assured that, in collaboration with other leaders, he would work to promote the positive developments taking place in the country, including the construction of roads, which are key to economic growth for all residents of Unguja and Pemba.

He also called on drivers and other road users to follow traffic laws and safety guidelines to avoid unnecessary accidents that lead to fatalities, permanent disabilities, and damage to infrastructure built at great cost to the government for the benefit of all citizens.

Hemed condemned the actions of some individuals who incite divisions among people and use bad language, which could disrupt peace—one of the most significant values of the 1964 Revolution. He urged citizens to continue preserving, protecting, and defending the Revolution for the benefit of current and future generation.

Dr. Khalid Salum Muhammed,

Zanzibar's Minister for Works, Communications, and Transport said that the government is committed to solving transportation issues in Zanzibar by constructing modern roads, launching plans for public transportation train system, and starting maritime taxi project to further improve transport options.

Dr. Khalid urged citizens to be patient during the ongoing development of various projects and to cooperate with contractors to achieve the government's goals of improving citizens' livelihoods.

Dr. Habiba Hassan Omar, Ministry's Permanent Secretary, explained that the Mazizini to Maun-

gani roads are part of an internal road construction project. The 28.164 kilometers of Mazizini Road, built by China Civil Engineering Construction Company (CCECC), will significantly improve transportation for residents in the affected areas.

Dr. Habiba noted that the completed project will cost over 21 million US dollars, funded by the Zanzibar Revolutionary government. It will meet high standards, including proper drainage, pedestrian bridges, and safety road markings to accommodate all road users, especially those with special needs.



Tanzania Environmental Advisors Association chairman Emmanuel Hanai (R) moves to pick and taste wild fruits at the weekend when a group of alumni Singida municipality's Mwenge Secondary School alumni toured Nyuki village to learn about beekeeping. The village is well known for apiculture. Photo: Correspondent Thobias Mwanakatwe

Residents in Sudan grapple with effects of climate change as well as conflict

KHARTOUM

RESIDENTS in war-torn Sudan, where the conflict is approaching its two-year anniversary, are also grappling with the effects of climate change.


Among them is peace and climate activist Nisreen Elsaïm, who was driven from her home that was situated in an area affected by the violence as well as flooding.

"The morning of Saturday, 15th of April 2023 was a very normal morning until we heard a very big explosion to the point that our whole house was shaking.

And then, unfortunately, these explosions and sounds never stopped. And basically, until now, it's over 600 days since the war started in Sudan.

MTANDAO WA JAMII WA USIMAMIZI WA MISITU TANZANIA		
STATEMENT OF RECEIPTS AND EXPENDITURE FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2024		
This publication of the Statement of Receipts and Expenditure is per regulation 13(a) of the Non-Government Organization Act (Amendments), Regulation 2018, which requires Non-Government Organizations receiving funds exceeding TZS 20 Million to publish bi-annually the funds received and its expenditure.		
DESCRIPTION	January – June 2024 ACTUAL – TZS	January – December 2023 ACTUAL – TZ
RECEIPTS		
Opening fund balance	202,234,857	258,890,397
Disbursement from donors	2,417,348,566	888,157,140
Total receipts for Donor implemented activities	2,619,583,423	1,147,047,537
PROGRAMMES EXPENDITURES		
Programme administration expenses	450,428,709	579,630,264
OTHER PROGRAMME EXPENDITURE		
Personel expenses	323,633,896	365,182,416
TOTAL PROGRAMME EXPENDITURES	774,062,605	944,812,680
FUND BALANCE	1,845,520,817	202,234,857
Programme Administration Expenses include depreciation charge for the year and other accrued expenses. Fund balance represents the obligation to conduct Donor-Funded activities per Contractual commitments made between Donor/Development partners and the organisation/recipient, where funds have not been transferred, and such activities have not yet occurred.		
Executive Director Mtandao wa Jamii wa usimamizi wa misitu Tanzania, Plot NO.323, Msasani Village Mwaikibaki Rd, P.O. Box. 21522 Dar es Salaam, Tanzania email: info@mjumita.or.tz website:https://mjumita.or.tz/		

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BIDS PROPOSAL

FOR

ESTABLISHMENT OF SODA ASH PROCESSING PLANT AT ENGARUKA BASIN

THE NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION (NDC) was established as a statutory body by an Act of Parliament in 1962 and it is wholly owned by the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania. NDC has responsibility for promoting economic development in Tanzania in partnership with the private sector. NDC has several mineral concessions in the country, among which is the Engaruka Basin's Soda Ash concession

PROJECT LOCATION AND ACCESSIBILITY
Engaruka Basin is located at Monduli District, Arusha Region. It is 50km Northeast of Mto wa Mbu Town and 58km Southeast of Lake Natron. The area can be accessed through the Arusha – Kiteto Road, then through Mto wa Mbu to Loliondo road. Arusha to Engaruka basin is about 190km.

THE SELECTION OF POTENTIAL INVESTOR is a competitive process and will be based on rigorous evaluation process which may include but not limited to proposal adequacy and clarity, management set up, expertise and relevance to the project, institutional capacity (financial, technical and technology), sustainability and experience in undertaking similar or related project.

PROPOSAL DOCUMENT: Interested Investor may apply for the Establishment of Soda Ash Processing Plant at Engaruka Basin, and follow the requirements as described in the Bid document found on the NDC website: www.ndc.go.tz/publications. Completed proposals must be submitted in English via the NDC email: pmu@ndc.go.tz. All Bids proposal shall be addressed to the Managing Director and be submitted at or before **13th February, 2025, 1159 Hrs. (11:59 am) East African Time**. Applicants shall pay a non-refundable application fee of **USD 250 or Tanzanian Shillings equivalent through CRDB account number 0150441547100 for TZS Or NBC account number 011105017528 for USD**. **The Corporation has the right to reject all proposals and shall incur no any liability.**

The information and documents submitted for the purpose of Bids proposal will be treated strictly confidential and for this purpose only. Response to Applications in respect of the Establishing of Soda Ash Processing Plant at Engaruka with the following address;

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JKCI open fourth branch in Dar

By Correspondent Christina Mwakangale

IN a bid to bring heart treatment services closer to the citizens, the government, through the Jakaya Kikwete Cardiac Institute (JKCI) has opened a fourth branch in Dar es Salaam.

The other centres are JKCI-Upanga, JKCI-Dar Group, JKCI-Kawe (Mkapa Health Plaza), and JKCI-Oysterbay Plaza, all located in Dar es Salaam Region.

Dr. Peter Kisenge, JKCI Executive Director disclosed this over the weekend when speaking to journalists in Dar es Salaam during the opening of the JKCI-Oysterbay Plaza branch.

He said the institution has been reaching out to citizens in different locations, including rural areas, to offer specialised heart

disease diagnosis and treatment services.

He mentioned that the JKCI-Oysterbay Plaza branch began offering specialised heart services last weekend, with the aim of providing opportunities for citizens to access services in various locations and reduce congestion at the main institution in Upanga.

"We have been reaching out to citizens in different regions to provide services, and now we have decided to open more branches of the Institute. This is also part of bringing services closer to the people. Here today, we are giving local residents the opportunity to receive services nearby, while also providing an opportunity for those coming from far away, in order to reduce congestion at the main centre," Dr. Kisenge said.

Dr. Kisenge, who is also a heart disease specialist, stated that JKCI continues to reach different groups of people to offer heart disease screening and treatment, encouraging everyone to make heart health a priority and to regularly check their health.

"We have been reaching various groups of people to conduct heart disease screenings. During this year-end period, we are offering services to artists and athletes every Saturday and Sunday at our Kawe clinic. We have already provided this service to journalists in the past, and we plan to reach out to them again," he said.

He urged artists and athletes

to continue participating in heart screening tests, emphasising that prevention is better than cure, and early detection would allow for timely treatment and recovery.

Among the citizens who visited the new branch, one person, who wished to remain anonymous, said that having health-care services closer to the community motivates people to visit hospitals and undergo health screening tests, thereby reducing the misuse of medication.

"Often, when we experience symptoms like pain, headaches, colds, coughs, or chest discomfort, we go to a pharmacy to buy medicine without being checked, but if we have a hospital nearby, it will help us to first get a diagnosis and advice from a doctor before buying medication," they said.

The manager of the JKCI-Oyster Plaza clinic, Nyanjura Nyaruga, said the clinic has seen a great response from people seeking heart disease screening and treatment.

Nyaruga, who is also a Cardiac Nurse Specialist, explained that the clinic offers services such as heart clinics, vascular clinics, pediatric heart disease clinics, laboratory services, physiotherapy for heart patients, and emergency services.

"Citizens should not hesitate to visit our clinic because we are committed to deliver quality services, and we will be providing services 24 hours a day," said Nyaruga.



With most school reopening soon across Tanzania for the new academic year, business in school uniforms and various other supplies is gradually gaining momentum. This is a shopping booth in Dar es Salaam's Manzese suburb, as captured yesterday. Photo: Correspondent Jumanne Juma

DC directs training of artisans on new e-procurement system

By Guardian Correspondent, Chunya

CHUNYA District Commissioner, Mbarak Batenga, has directed training of local artisans and business people on the new electronic public procurement system.

The initiative, according to the DC, will empower locals, enabling them to participate in government project tenders and fostering local economic growth.

Batenga issued the directive over the weekend during his tour of ongoing development projects in the district.

He noted that delays in project completion often stem from outsourcing artisans from outside the area.

He said by training and empowering local artisans, the district aims to expedite project execution while boosting the local economy.

"All local artisans must be trained and assisted in registering on the system to compete for and execute government projects within their own communities," Batenga said.

The commissioner also cautioned project committees against accepting substandard materials, stressing the importance of strict supervision to ensure projects are completed on time and meet required quality standards.

Acting District Executive Director, Cuthbert Mwinuka, pledged to implement the new training initiative and form special committees to oversee project execution, ensuring enhanced efficiency and better management of resources.

The move is expected to support sustainable development and create more opportunities for local artisans, contributing to the overall development of Chunya District.

DC calls for strategies to combat malnutrition

By Correspondent Halima Ikunji, Tabora

IGUNGA District Commissioner Sauda Mtondo, has said efforts should be made to increase the production of nutritious food to address the rising issue of malnutrition.

She also called for long-term strategies to combat the problem in the district.

Sauda made this statement recently during a meeting with the district nutrition committee, where she called on nutrition experts to enhance their efforts in order to

achieve positive results in the community, including improving the health of residents.

She emphasised the importance of the committee, as it holds the health interests of the district's residents, urging them to come up with effective and strategies for the benefit of the people.

She pointed out that one of the council's strategies is to increase the production of nutritious food to improve the health of the people and reduce malnutrition and related diseases caused by poor nutrition.

"This meeting is very important as it discusses

the broader interests of the community and their health. I believe the budget that will be passed will focus on the council's goal of improving nutrition among the community," she said.

She explained that economic development cannot be achieved without healthy people, stressing that health begins with good nutrition.

Joseph Mafuru, acting Igunga District's executive director suggested that experts explore the possibility of utilising open spaces near schools to establish nutrition gardens, including vegetable gardens.

"Education officers, please help identify open spaces near schools that are suitable for vegetable farming and other food gardens to ensure our children have food at our schools," he said.

Lucia Kafumu, head of health, social welfare, and nutrition department in the council, advised nutrition officers to start vegetable gardens and other nutritious food production and poultry.

She also urged them to improve their plans to ensure that the nutrition challenges facing the community in the district are addressed and bring positive outcomes.



Philemon Kiemi, executive director of Nyuki Village in Singida municipality, pictured at the weekend briefing 1991-1994 alumni of the municipality's Mwenge Secondary School on beekeeping. The village is well known for apiculture. Photo: Correspondent Thobias Mwanakatwe

Mzumbe exemplary taxpayer, says TRA

By Correspondent Ashton Balaigwa, Morogoro

THE Tanzania Revenue Authority (TRA) has commended Mzumbe University (MU) in Morogoro Region for leading in tax payment between July and November, this year.

The commendation was said by Dr. Ephraim Mdee, director of research and policy at TRA headquarters, on behalf of the authority, in Morogoro during the presentation of a certificate of appreciation and recognition of the university's contribution in tax payment.

Dr. Mdee stated that the authority recognises and values institutions that pay government taxes in accordance with the existing laws, regulations, and procedures.

"I take this opportunity to commend Mzumbe University, you have been a leader in tax payment, we are collaborating with you and you have been at the forefront in this. We are here to congratulate you and formally present this certificate to recognise your accountability," said Dr. Mdee.

Dr. Mdee mentioned that every December, the authority holds events to express gratitude to exemplary taxpayers in the country by recognising their contributions and providing them with certificates, a practice that is done nationwide.

"This exercise is carried out across the country to gather feedback from taxpayers so that it can be acted upon," emphasized Dr. Mdee.

He added that Morogoro region has performed well in revenue collection and continues to perform excellently.

Dr. Mdee also noted that in the past five months, up to November 2024, the Authority in the region reached 102% of its revenue collection target, surpassing it due to the cooperation shown by taxpayers.

Meanwhile, the acting Vice Chancellor of the University, Professor Allen Mushi, stated that Mzumbe University focuses on teaching leadership programme, finance, law, and businesses.

Professor Mushi said that what is taught in the classroom must align with practical application.

"What we teach in the classroom aligns with practice. We teach our students issues of leadership, accountability, discipline, rights, and responsibilities," emphasised Professor Mushi.

Along with Mzumbe University, TRA leaders visited several traders, including those at the Chief Kingalu Market in Morogoro Municipality.

Some traders, including the chairperson of street vendors association in Morogoro Region, Faustine Francis, advised the authority to expand its tax education efforts to the public and traders growing commercial areas.

The chairperson of the association said the goal is to make them more aware so that ultimately, they voluntarily pay taxes for the sustainable development of all Tanzanians.

The authority has expanded services for traders by establishing Taxpayer Identification Number (TIN) issuance points and payment number services at the Chief Kingalu main market and at the Kihonda Ward Office in Morogoro Municipality.

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cheerful holidays!

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The Guardian

Nipashe



Residents of Mnadani ward in Dodoma Urban District engaged in routine weekly environmental cleanliness on Saturday. Photo: Correspondent Peter Mkwavila

Mwenge Secondary School alumni plant 1,000 trees

By Correspondent Thobias Mwanakatwe, Singida

ALUMNI of Mwenge Secondary School in Singida Municipality, who attended the school from 1991 to 1994, have planted 1,000 trees at the school to improve conservation.

The trees included fruit-bearing varieties to improve pupils' nutrition and shade trees for relaxation. They were planted by a diverse group of alumni now working as Members of Parliament, teachers, university lec-

turers, doctors, engineers, police officers, and religious leaders.

Engineer Emmanuel Hanai, the group's chairman, highlighted the importance of tree planting and forest conservation.

He called on Tanzanians to actively engage in environmental conservation, especially in light of the government's efforts to participate in carbon trading.

"We urge all Tanzanians to conserve the environment. This issue is critical, especially with international environmental efforts taking place

at major summits. However, these efforts must start at the grassroots level with the people," Hanai said.

Hanai also emphasized the adoption of clean energy to reduce dependence on charcoal, a major contributor to deforestation.

Iramba East legislator Francis Mtinga underscored the importance of purposeful tree planting, noting that many trees planted in previous efforts have failed to survive.

During the commemoration of Tanzania Mainland's 63rd Independence Day on December 9, this year,

Singida regional natural resources officer Charles Kidua revealed that, between 2019 and 2024, a total of 33,253,602 trees were planted in the region, but 13,399,031 trees had died due to poor maintenance and other challenges.

Kidua emphasised the region's goal to improve the survival rate of planted trees, aiming to increase the success rate from 63 per cent to 90 per cent by 2030, and to expand forest reserves to cover 100,000 hectares by the same year.

Cultural heritage is opportunity to boost economic growth - RC

By Correspondent Idda Mushi, Moshi

KILIMANJARO regional commissioner Nurdin Babu has urged local residents to leverage the Kilimanjaro Cultural Festival (KCF) to celebrate their traditional rich heritage and promote economic development.

Speaking here over the weekend at the launch of the KCF's second edition, Babu emphasised the significance of reviving traditions and customs of the region's ethnic groups, including the Chagga, Maasai and Pare, through showcasing indigenous foods, beverages, and languages.

"We want Chagga Pare, and Maasai children to compete in their native languages and understand their culture. At a recent event, a child couldn't even say 'mchanga' (sand) when asked about their ethnic group. If we do not act now, these languages will disappear," Babu said.

The Regional Commissioner stressed the importance of major initiatives to strengthen the region, which already benefits from a strong sense of security and stability.

Babu also pledged the region's full support for the festival, instructing the organisers to collaborate with the Kilimanjaro Regional Administrative Secretary (RAS), Kiseo Nzowa, to ensure the event's continues to succeed.

He further urged Kilimanjaro's residents, particularly the youth, to use the festival as a learning platform to understand the value of traditional foods, beverages, and parenting prac-

tices, alongside the importance of preserving indigenous languages and customs.

He also called for permanent facilities to host the growing festival, suggesting that organisers work with the Moshi Municipality and Moshi district Council to secure land for this purpose.

The festival, which initially started from a WhatsApp group of Kilimanjaro residents, has grown in scope and influence.

KCF chairman Ansi Mmasi acknowledged the festival's role in preserving and promoting the traditions of Kilimanjaro's ethnic groups while simultaneously driving economic growth.

"Even those who do not initially appreciate cultural matters will eventually recognise their economic value and the opportunities they bring," Mmasi said.

Mmasi also shared exciting plans for the future, including the promotion of cultural tourism attractions, such as waterfalls and traditional sites, to draw visitors to Kilimanjaro. The goal is to integrate culture with economic growth by encouraging tourists to experience local traditions, foods, and homestays.

Regarding the Kilimanjaro homestay programme, which was launched last year, Mmasi revealed that over 300 houses have been identified for inclusion in the programme, with more than 40 already inspected and approved for use as tourist accommodations.

On his part, Nzowa praised the festival's efforts, highlighting the importance of preserving cultural traditions as a means of maintaining community identity.

Mozambicans fleeing to neighbouring Malawi amid post-polls unrest

MAPUTO

MORE than 2,000 Mozambican families have sought refuge in Malawi last week, Malawian authorities said, as dozens of people were reported killed in spreading unrest over a disputed election in October.

Some businesses including banks were closed in Mozambique's capital Maputo on Friday and patrols were set up in some areas following a deadly prison riot and breakout on Wednesday.

Mozambique has been gripped by violent protests for about two months since the electoral commission said the ruling Frelimo party had retained power and its candidate won the presidency in the election. Frelimo denies opposition accusations of electoral fraud.

A decision by Mozambique's Constitutional Council to validate the election results on Monday triggered more demon-

strations.

Monitoring group Plataforma Decide put the death toll at 125 since the court's decision and at 252 since late October.

A senior Malawian official said that as of Wednesday, 2,182 Mozambican households fleeing the violence had crossed into Malawi's Nsanje district, which borders Mozambique.

"The situation remains dire as these individuals urgently require humanitarian assistance," Nsanje district commissioner Dominic Mwandira said in a letter to the country's commissioner for refugees seen by Reuters.

Mozambique's main opposition leader Venancio Mondlane, who the Constitutional Council said had come second in the presidential election and who rejects the results, has called for more protests from his supporters but urged them not to loot and damage infrastructure.



Corporal Hansi Ngolo, a police officer based in Kwezitu ward in Muheza District, pictured at the weekend addressing village leaders on ways to forestall or combat crime particularly with the New Year around the corner. Photo: Correspondent Steven William

TARI urged to expand innovation for enhanced rice farming, market access

By Correspondent Christina Haule, Morogoro

THE Agricultural Research Institute of Tanzania (TARI) has been urged to broaden its innovations to ensure farmers gain not only improved rice farming techniques but also essential knowledge to access reliable markets for their produce.

This appeal comes in response to persistent market shortages faced by farmers in Morogoro and other regions.

Dr. Musa Ally Musa, Morogoro Regional Administrative Secretary

(RAS) made the call here recently when speaking at the training, funded by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) with support from the Republic of Korea, targeted rice farmers from Iringa District in Iringa Region and Ulanga and Malinyi districts in Morogoro Region. It focused on modern farming techniques and the rice value chain.

He emphasised the need for addressing market access challenges during the opening of a four-day training session in Morogoro, stressing that while improving production is crucial, reliable market

access is equally essential.

"Without established and accessible markets, efforts to boost rice production may falter, leaving farmers unable to sell their crops and facing financial difficulties," he said.

Dr. Musa also addressed ongoing challenges with government initiatives, such as delayed payments by the National Food Reserve Agency (NFRA), despite its mandate to purchase rice from farmers.

He highlighted the potential of markets in neighboring countries, like Comoros, but noted that many farmers lack access to these oppor-

tunities and are sometimes exploited by fraudsters.

Additionally, Dr. Musa called on TARI to preserve indigenous seed varieties to prevent their extinction, noting that many modern seeds are single-use, requiring farmers to repurchase seeds every planting season.

He also emphasised the importance of gender inclusion in training programmes, as women play a significant role in farming and should have equal access to education and resources.

Dr. Sophia Kashenge, TARI's director of technology transfer and

relations, urged young people to view agriculture as a promising sector, especially given the need for its annual growth to reach 10 per cent by 2030 to ensure food security and meet the demands of a growing population.

"Food production in Tanzania is currently strong, with a surplus of 4 million tons. However, leveraging technology is vital to tackle challenges such as climate change, technological advancements, and population growth," Dr. Kashenge said.

Diomedes Kalisa, FAO-Tanzania representative, noted that the

training aims to make Tanzanian farmers more competitive. He highlighted Tanzania's position as East Africa's leading rice producer and the third-largest in Africa, after Nigeria.

Kalisa commended the collaboration between the government, agricultural stakeholders, and farmers, which has strengthened the rice sector. He also stated that the FAO-supported project, launched in 2020 and set to conclude in December, aims to enhance agricultural activities and ensure food security at both household and national levels.

Spend loan money on proposed businesses only, borrowers told

By Correspondent Elizabeth

John, Wanging'ombe

WANGING'OMBE District Commissioner Zakaria Mwansasu has urged beneficiaries of the 10 percent loan scheme in the area to properly utilise the funds to achieve intended business goals.

He made the remarks recently during the launch of a loan scheme for 118 groups of women, youth and people with disabilities (PwDs).

Mwansasu stressed that the funds availed by councils should not be spent on personal expenses such as buying food, paying school fees or purchasing clothes.

He emphasized that the funds were intended solely to support specific business goals and warned that any group that fails to repay the loan would face legal consequences.

"Gog and work hard; avoid

lavish spending because any group that defaults on repayment will be subjected to legal action," he said.

Festo Dugange, Deputy Minister in the President's Office (Regional Administration and Local Government), commended Wanging'ombe District for its transparency in issuing loans from its own internal revenue which exceeded 1bn/- for the first time.

He expressed gratitude to Wanging'ombe District Executive Director Peter Nyaja for supervising the initiative which aligns with the government's directive for transparent financial management.

Agnetha Mpangile, Chairperson of Wanging'ombe District Council, praised women's groups for their timely loan repayments and urged them to maintain unity and cooperation in future endeavours.

Nyanja reported that the

district had raised over 1bn/- in revenue and would release a total of 1.089bn/- in loans during the first phase of the programme.

The second phase is scheduled for March 2025 after mobilisation of more financial resources.

Lupiana Kitaponda, one of the loan beneficiaries, expressed gratitude to the government for restoring the 10 percent councils' internal revenues for the loan scheme.



Gog and work hard; avoid lavish spending because any group that defaults on repayment will be subjected to legal action



Mwanza regional traffic police commander Sunday Ibrahim pictured yesterday sensitising long-distance bus crews on the need to observe road safety regulations. It was during impromptu vehicle inspection conducted at Usagara in Misungwi District. Photo: Correspondent Peter Adolph

Villagers in fundraiser drive for completion of dormitory

By Correspondent Mutayoba Arbogast, Bukoba

A LOCAL community-based organisation Umoja wa Maendeleo Kikukwe (UMKI) at Kikukwe Village, Misenyi District in Kagera Region has launched a resource mobilisation campaign aimed at completing construction of a girls' dormitory at Kikukwe

Secondary School.

The initiative seeks to rally support from both local community and the diaspora to raise 25m/- for roofing materials as part of the 150m/- budget allocated for the entire project.

The campaign was launched at the weekend during Kikukwe Day, an annual celebration marking UMKI's four-year anniversary at Kikukwe Secondary School.

During the event, UMKI General Secretary Magreth Kyai updated attendees on the construction project and other community initiatives.

Kyai expressed gratitude to the government for its 50m/- allocation in the 2024/25 fiscal year but stressed that govern-

ment support alone would not be sufficient to meet the project's full cost.

She said 286 iron sheets valued at approximately 25m/- are needed to complete roofing of the dormitory.

Kyai was optimistic that with ongoing community support, the dormitory would be completed by early 2025 to provide a safe space for

schoolgirls in the area.

She noted that the dormitory's completion is expected to help reduce gender-based violence (GBV) among schoolgirls and address troubling statistics from the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) which reported 2,382 rape cases in 2023.

Jones Majula who repre-

sented UMKI Chairperson praised the community's commitment to development and reaffirmed the organization's dedication to improving education, fostering economic growth and enhancing overall community welfare.

He also announced that next year's celebrations would span an entire week, featuring a variety of activities, includ-

ing community bike rides open to all.

Kikukwe Village Chairman Josephat Ikula expressed commitment to mobilising local residents for additional contributions.

He emphasized that the community must not rely solely on government funding to achieve its development goals.



Shinyanga district commissioner Julius Mtairo (3rd-L) represents President Samia Suluhu Hassan on Friday in presenting a goat, foodstuffs and soft drinks to children with disabilities cared for at Buhangija Centre in Shinyanga municipality. It was all meant as a New Year goodwill gesture. Photo: Correspondent Marco Maduhu

Network to support implementation of Vision 2050, other govt initiatives

By Getrude Mbago

AN international network of social enterprises dedicated to creating opportunities by supporting programmes that tackle unemployment, Nice Global Impact, has affirmed its commitment to expanding its activities in Tanzania to align with the government's long-term development goals outlined in the country's Vision 2050.

Through innovative projects and strategic partnerships, the firm aims to contribute to the nation's long-term development goals, focusing on economic empowerment, education and sustainable growth.

Addressing reporters in Dar es Salaam at the weekend, Nice Global Impact Chief Executive Officer Yousef Mubarak said the firm is dedicated to working closely with local communities, government agencies and international partners to create lasting solutions that drive progress and improve lives of Tanzanians.

"Our focus on empowering communities through education, economic opportunities and global partnerships will help pave the way for lasting growth and development in Tanzania," he said.

He said the network's efforts in Tanzania have been steadily growing over the past seven years. It has

launched several high-impact projects aimed at addressing key development challenges faced by Tanzanian communities.

"The initiatives are directly aligned with Tanzania's development vision which focuses on creating a prosperous, inclusive and sustainable economy while significantly reducing poverty and enhancing human development," he said.

Mubarak noted that one of the organisation's flagship initiatives is the Clean Cooking Project, a \$4-7 million pilot initiative aimed at addressing both environmental and health challenges.

"This project promotes clean cooking solutions tar-

getting women and youth across Tanzania. The project aims to reduce carbon emissions, improve household health and provide sustainable energy solutions for millions of Tanzanians with plans to scale up the project to reach 10 million beneficiaries over the next five years," he said.

Salum Lupande, Nice Tanzania CEO, said another key initiative is empowering women traders through training and financial support.

He said the firm implements a \$1 million programme that provides zero-interest loans to women traders particularly in Zanzibar.

"This initiative is designed

to support women across various sectors from agriculture to small-scale manufacturing by providing access to capital and sustainable livelihoods. The project aims to foster economic growth by enabling women to become key contributors to the nation's industrial and entrepreneurial landscape," he said.

Nice Global has signed a memorandum of understanding with the Zanzibar Ministry of Industry and Trade to implement training programmes aimed at enhancing the skills of women traders.

"The training programmes are designed to help women meet international business

standards, enabling them to grow their businesses, create jobs and contribute to the country's industrialisation process" he said.

He added that the organisation has been a strong advocate of quality education, having impacted over 120,000 individuals globally through its educational initiatives.

In the countries where it operates such as Tanzania, Indonesia and Kyrgyzstan, the firm has worked to strengthen capacity of over 50,000 teachers and school administrators, ensuring that they are equipped with the necessary skills to provide quality education.

Suez Canal tests new lane section to increase travelling

CAIRO

THE Suez Canal has successfully tested a new lane that allows ships to travel in both directions along a 10-km stretch in its southern section, the Suez Canal Authority (SCA) announced at the weekend.

SCA Chairman Osama Rabie said two ships used the new channel after dredging work was completed. He called the project a "major qualitative leap" that will significantly improve the canal's capacity and efficiency.

Rabie added the lane will help ships navigate strong currents and weather conditions.

Transportation expert Mohamed Shehata explained that the extension provides a crucial backup route in case of accidents or disruptions in the main canal. "This added layer of resilience will ensure the continued flow of global trade even in unforeseen circumstances," he told Xinhua.

Shehata added that the expansion is a strategic move to prepare for increased shipping traffic as stability improves in the Red Sea region.

This news comes after Egyptian President Abdel-Fattah al-Sisi revealed on Thursday that Suez Canal revenues dropped by more than 60 percent in 2024 due to regional issues. He said Egypt lost about 7 billion U.S. dollars in revenue due to problems in the Red Sea and Bab al-Mandab Strait, which have disrupted shipping and global trade.

Despite the revenue drop, the president has instructed the SCA to continue developing the canal, improve navigation services, and promote its importance to global trade.



Waste generated by operators of small-scale businesses at a Mwenge roadside in Dar es Salaam awaits collection, as witnessed yesterday by roving photographer Sabato Kasika

Chinese firms urged to support development efforts in Zambia

LUSAKA

CHINESE enterprises in Zambia should take a leading role in driving the country's innovation and aligning with global technological and industrial transformation, Chinese ambassador to Zambia has said.

"I urge Chinese businesses to seize emerging opportunities in Zambia in sectors such as solar power, green mining, information and communication technology and electric vehicles while expanding collaboration in green development and the digital economy," Ambassador Han Jing said on Friday night during the annual conference and business forum organized by the Chinese Chamber of Commerce in Zambia.

The event included awarding of certificates to Chinese enterprises in recognition of their contributions in various areas, including outstanding corporate social responsibility and employment advancement.

The ambassador commended

the Chinese Chamber of Commerce in Zambia for its pivotal role in promoting trade and investment cooperation between the two nations.

Zambian Minister of Commerce, Trade and Industry Chipoka Mulenga praised Chinese enterprises for investing in value addition to the country's raw materials.

"Our government is focused on promoting value addition to raw materials, and we are pleased that Chinese enterprises have already begun investing in this area," Mulenga said.

He noted that two Chinese companies have established factories in Zambia to produce electric cables from locally sourced copper.

"Zambia is learning lessons from China, which has made significant efforts to promote value addition to raw materials as a strategy for economic growth," Mulenga added. "We are grateful that Chinese firms have responded to our call for investment in value addition."

Chinese doctors offer free health services to 200 people in Pemba

By Guardian Reporter

MORE than 200 people, including children, on Pemba Island in Zanzibar, received free medical services at the weekend provided by three Chinese medical teams.

The joint free medical services were organized by a Chi-

nese medical team stationed in Zanzibar, another in Tanzanian Mainland and a bilharzia control team in Zanzibar.

A total of 16 medical experts from the teams performed health examinations, offered free clinic services and distributed urgently needed medicines to residents of Mbuzini

community.

Meanwhile, the teams educated residents about the prevention of common infectious diseases and encouraged them to receive timely vaccinations.

Masoud Mohd Sleiman, a local health official in Pemba, expressed gratitude to the Chi-

nese medical experts for their work, noting the importance of strengthening cooperation with China in the medical and healthcare fields to jointly promote development of local health services.

Zanzibar Elimination of Schistosomiasis Transmission (ZEST) is a partnership that



A total of 16 medical experts from the teams performed health examinations

aims to eliminate schistosomiasis (bilharzia) as a public health problem in Zanzibar.

Zanzibar government, Public Health Laboratory - Ivo de Carneri (PHL-IdC) Pemba, Natural History Museum (NHM) in London, Schistosomiasis Control Initiative (SCI), Swiss Tropical

and Public Health Institute (Swiss TPH) and other institutions and individuals support the initiative.

The idea is to eliminate schistosomiasis as a public health problem in Zanzibar in 3 years and interrupt transmission in 5 years.

Pan-African Parliament appeals for restraint, dialogue in Mozambique

JOHANNESBURG

THE Pan-African Parliament (PAP), the legislative body of the African Union based in Johannesburg, called for restraint in Mozambique at the weekend and urged dialogue to resolve the ongoing crisis in the country.

In a statement issued by PAP, its Southern Caucus expressed "profound sadness and deep concern" over the unfolding crisis in Mozambique. "We grieve the tragic loss of life, with hundreds of individuals reported to have perished amidst the unrest, and we are deeply troubled by the fear and instability that now cloud the future of this great nation," the statement said.

On Monday last week, Mozambique's Constitutional Council declared Daniel Chapo, the presidential candidate of the ruling party Frelimo, as the winner of the General Election held on Oct. 9. According to local media reports, more than 100 civilians have died in the post-election chaos, and hundreds have been injured. "The Southern Caucus unequivocally condemns violence and calls upon the people of Mozambique to exercise restraint, embrace calm, and prioritize dialogue over discord," said Duduzile Zuma-Sambudla, chairperson of Southern Caucus of the PAP, in the statement.

"As your brothers and sisters in the southern African region, we stand with the people of Mozambique in solidarity, urging calm and collective resolve to navigate these trying times," she said, urging all political parties, civil society and stakeholders in Mozambique to resolve their differences through "genuine and constructive" dialogue.

Zuma-Sambudla said that the unrest in Mozambique also poses significant risks to neighbouring countries and the broader southern African region. "Political instability disrupts travel and trade, economic activities, displaces communities, and threatens regional integration. As a region, we cannot turn a blind eye to these challenges brought on by the political unrest," she said.



Riziki Pembe Juma, Zanzibar's Community Development, Gender, Elderly and Children minister, unveils plaque when laying the foundation stones for staff houses at Pangatupu District Hospital in Zanzibar's Unguja North Region at the weekend as part of the run-up to celebrations marking the 61st anniversary of the January 12 Zanzibar Revolution. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

Somalia inches closer to overseeing its own security

MOGADISHU

THE United Nations Security Council has endorsed the African Union Peace and Security Council's decision to replace the African Union Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS) with the African Union Support and Stabilisation Mission in Somalia (AUSSOM), marking a further step in transitioning

national security responsibilities to Somalia's own forces.

Adopting resolution 2767 (2024) (to be issued as document S/RES/2767(2024)) by a vote of 14 in favour to none against, with 1 abstention (United States), the Council authorized African Union members to take all necessary measures for 12 months, starting 1 January 2025, including supporting

the Federal Government of Somalia in degrading Al-Shabaab and affiliates linked to Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), also known as Da'esh.

The Council also welcomed the progress made so far by Somalia in assuming progressively greater responsibility for its national security, including the Somali security forces taking over responsibilities

from 7,000 drawn-down ATMIS forces since 2022.

African Union member States were authorized to continue to deploy up to 12,626 uniformed personnel, including 1,040 police personnel, to AUSSOM until 30 June 2025 and to complete by this date the realignment of all African Union troops from ATMIS to AUSSOM. The text contains a section dedicated to

financing AUSSOM, including references to Council resolution 2719 (2023) – which establishes a framework for financing African Union peace support operations through UN assessed contributions.

The Council requested the Secretary-General to implement, within existing resources made available through the rightsizing of the UN Support Office in

Somalia, the "hybrid" implementation of the 2719 framework to AUSSOM from 1 July 2025, combining UN assessed contributions with funds mobilized by the African Union and other partners. This application is contingent on the Council's confirmation by 15 May 2025 of sufficient progress on operationalizing the modalities of resolution 2719 (2023).

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There's more to making roads safer than merely bettering infrastructure

FOR confirmation on whether there are more or fewer accidents as time passes or each year-end situation depends, one consult would need to consult reliable databases.

Still, many things change in the way accidents occur. For example, the Tumbi (Coast Region) section of the Dar es Salaam-Morogoro highway for years used to be known as notorious for grisly crashes involving long-distance buses. It is however now several years since the place occupied headlines for another tragic road crash.

It is certain that not all accidents are reported each day they happen, but those taking five, ten or more lives usually get front-page newspaper citation or are prominently featured in radio and TV broadcasts as well as by social media.

This is all the more so as each major accident shakes the public psyche, either as testimony for failed public administration in relation to traffic regulations or simply in habits.

There are however hidden avenues that can't be tested, including whether a driving licence holder is indeed fit to drive all the time.

There are also psychological issues which are largely individual but which can have cultural prolongations as we all inherit things that form part of character and at times they can make a difference on how we react to certain situations.

It isn't possible to test what sort of people are likely to be on 'over-drive', seeking to achieve certain short-term wishes by all means, but when faced with a 100-kilometer road stretch and a slow vehicle crawling endlessly, irritation is almost always ensues. Then it depends on luck that no other vehicle will also be rushing.

It is also evident that the number

of people travelling to and from urban areas and villages during Christmas and New Year is often elevated, while the 'will to rush' is even more explicit than earlier.

So there is a more elevated scenario for the number of motor vehicles on a particular destination, with caution at greater risk of being thrown to the winds. That appears to have been the case in the past few days, with an average of one ghastly crash per day.

In the third big accident in as many days, ten people died in a head-on collision involving a van and a bus at Kibaoni village in Rombo District, Kilimanjaro Region, on Thursday.

According to the regional police commander, the van's driver was trying to overtake another vehicle without caution. That obviously would be a case of faulty judgment but, given the number of vehicles on the road and the rush, it is partly owing to roads having been widened on highways that few crashes into ravines.

There are numerous spots that were notorious for road accidents but most are now tamed, if you will, including owing to infrastructure improvement efforts since the 1990s.

At first it was a matter of linking regional capitals with tarmac roads, followed by districts, and then the widening of municipal roads - all this in a bid to ease congestion.

Widening highways has usually taken place when the roads are periodically resurfaced, crucial for safe overtaking.

However, as experts have long demonstrated, there is a lot more to reducing the incidence of road crashes than merely ensuring we have better infrastructure (this could 'backfire') or lining long stretches of roads with traffic police officers on patrol.



How South Africa, Kenya and Zimbabwe measure up with respect to child offenders

By Special Correspondent

Around the world, hundreds of thousands of children are not free. They are deprived of their liberty in settings such as migration holding camps and criminal justice processes.

According to the United Nations (UN) Global Study on Children Deprived of Liberty, there are about 410,000 children detained in the criminal justice system every year, globally. This number excludes those in police custody. In some countries, such as Zimbabwe, information about the number of children in police custody is not easily available.

Children end up in detention when they are accused of committing criminal offences. Legally, children (defined as aged under 18) should not be detained except as a measure of last resort. But in practice children are often detained before and after trial.

We argue that the best interests of the child is a powerful legal principle to ensure that children are only detained as a measure of last resort.

In child justice, the meaning and scope of the best interests of the child are multifaceted. The principle is provided for in terms of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, ratified by all UN member states except the United States.

It is generally accepted under international children's rights law that the best interests principle performs multiple functions. It can shape the content of other rights of children in the criminal justice system. It can be directly applied to a specific factual situation. And it can be an interpretative legal principle or a rule of procedure. The flexibility of the principle allows any person, authority or court to tailor its application to the context.



Best interests of the child principle

The best interests of the child principle is enshrined in the constitutions of South Africa, Kenya and Zimbabwe. It requires that in all matters concerning the child, the best interests of that child are of paramount importance.

In practice, courts use the principle to evaluate whether laws and court processes protect the rights of children involved in the justice system. Further, the principle can be used to justify, support or clarify a specific approach to dealing with a matter concerning a child offender.

The right not to be detained, except as a measure of last resort and for the shortest appropriate period, aims to protect children from the harmful effects of incarceration. It is based on the understanding that childhood (particularly adolescence) is mostly a period of experimentation and learning.

At that stage of life, children are striving to understand many issues, and their mental capacities are still developing. Given their ability to accept correction, children have a better claim to rehabilitation, reorientation and reintegration. That's why child offenders should only be sent to prison if there is no other suitable alternative response to the crimes they commit.

The research

In our research we examined legal developments in South Africa, Kenya and Zimbabwe. We wanted to determine how these countries' courts interpret the best interests of the child offender to give effect to the right not to be detained - except as a measure of last resort, and for the shortest appropriate period. The choice of countries was informed by a shared legal heritage and the protection of children's rights in their constitutions.

The study reviewed literature on international children's rights law, domestic legal instruments and case law. It specifically looked at the legal and policy position on pre-trial and post-conviction detention in each of the selected countries.

We observed that the constitutions of the three countries protect the best interests of the child - and the right not to be detained except as last resort. All criminal justice processes in the three countries should thus comply with constitutional standards on the detention of children.

There is evidence that child justice processes in South Africa comply with the constitutional standards on detention as a measure of last resort. Kenya is following the steps of South Africa, although there is room for improvement.

In Zimbabwe, there is a need for law reform to ensure that criminal justice

processes comply with constitutional dictates. But it is worth noting that in some instances courts have been trying to enforce compliance, albeit using different interpretations of the best interests principle, and the right not to be detained except as a measure of last resort.

Findings

Firstly, the best interests of the child principle obligates the police to ensure child offenders are not detained in police cells, except as a last resort. During arrests, the police are required to respect the dignity and best interests of the child.

Courts in South Africa and Kenya have made it clear that the police must use child-friendly justice approaches. Some of the measures required by law include allowing the child offender to sleep at home and instructing a parent or guardian to bring her or him to court. But in practice child offenders are always detained in police cells before appearing in court. This is the case in all three countries.

It may be that police lack knowledge of child justice laws. Detaining children may also reflect police attitudes and the belief that children must be punished in order to learn. In Zimbabwe, the treatment of child offenders during arrest or detention in police cells is not documented.

Read more: Protection, not public shaming, is the way forward for child offenders

Secondly, the best interests of the child play a central role in sentencing. South African courts have consistently applied the best interests principle and used detention as a measure of last resort. In many instances, courts choose sentencing options that ensure the rehabilitation and reintegration of the child into society.

The appropriateness of an alternative sentence is determined by the seriousness of the offence. A sentence may be, for example, a wholly suspended prison term or community service (provided it does not interfere with the child's education).

Kenyan courts appear to be following the South African example. They are progressively interpreting the best interests of the child as a special protection mechanism in the context of detention as a measure of last resort. This approach is commendable and ensures that child offenders are given a second chance.

We observed that in Zimbabwe there are differences in the way courts approach cases concerning child offenders. In some instances, judges adhere to the right not to be detained unless there is no other option under the circumstances. But sometimes judges use detention as a punitive measure against child offenders and as a measure of first resort, without considering the best interests and other less restrictive alternatives.

There is abundant evidence that South Africa and Kenya are doing fairly well in protecting the rights of child offenders. We recommend that Zimbabwean courts, too, should promote the best interests of the child offender through avoiding arbitrary detention in clear violation of constitutional imperatives.

Youth groups ought to put state support to the best use possible

MEMBERS of the Motorcycle Riders' Association in Arusha District have something to smile about in the wake of reports that President Samia Suluhu Hassan has issued 10m/- to support the setting up of a cooperative society.

There was even a donation of two motorcycles to ease the activities of the association's leaders needing to visit members and address their concerns, including resolving issues at the district and regional levels.

Mention of the funding was made at the association's general assembly, with the support widely viewed as a gesture meant to encourage youths in a slew of sectors to find ways of standing on their own.

By itself, 10m/- can't be used for much. However, when it leverages intense efforts by fairly empowered youth, it can work a lot more profitably and serve as an example for others to organize rewardingly.

Again, there were public administration issues carried into the meeting to ease their being propagated, one revolving around the launch of a digital identification application for motorcycle riders and even wider use.

Surprisingly, it was explained that provision of financial support was decided upon request by the association that they lacked funds with which to complete the cooperative society's registration. That could easily be said to have resulted from insufficient preparations.

As if the support was pivotal for the pursuit of some necessary en-

agements, the youth wing leader appealed to the police and the Prevention and Combating of Corruption Bureau (PCCB), to investigate the reported misuse of over 200m/- the association had banked.

There is no indication if the association's financial administration methods will be reliable this time, where the bit about digital identification may have convinced the youth wing or a certain level of leadership to agree to help.

The association was also pleased with a move by the government to reduce fines for motorcycle riders from 30,000/- to 10,000/-.

The step could have irritated a broad section of those detesting overly perceived notoriety by the riders like fond of speeding even across pedestrian paths, etc.

What the might find somewhat difficult to achieve is the wish that the government reduces the cost of acquiring a driving licence to 30,000/-, arguing that the 99,000/- now applicable is a burden too heavy to bear.

There are obviously things the riders would not say with respect to their earnings, but there is no harm seeking alleviation of tax burdens, as no sector in the economy is known to relish higher taxes.

The riders thus just can't be an exception. However, if they mess up again, the police or PCCB will not come following whatever executive sweetener is thrown into play. It is each one's duty to obey the law - in cooperative societies, too.

By Felister Peter

THIS December the world witnessed the launch of the first ever Tanzania's national tourism and conservation awards—a major step in promoting the country's tourism sector.

By recognizing the contributions of key stakeholders, Tanzania is set to enhance growth of the sector, attract more local and international tourists as well as creating a number of opportunities for Tanzanians.

Introduction of national tourism and conservation awards would have a significant impact on Tanzania's travel industry as it will help to raise awareness of the country's natural beauty, wildlife, and rich cultural heritage.

The government's decision to recognise local businesses, conservationists and park authorities will encourage a more competitive environment, where operators are motivated to innovate and improve services.

One of the key factors contributing to this achievement is the visionary leadership of President Samia Suluhu Hassan and her strategic initiatives, including the 'Royal Tour' and 'Amazing Tanzania' films. The two have significantly contributed to elevate the country's global tourism profile.

The launch of these national awards reflects Tanzania's commitment to strengthening both the tourism and conservation sectors, which play a critical role in the country's economic development.

During the launch in Arusha City on December 20th, 2024, Prime Minister Kassim Majaliwa who presided over the ceremony said the awards are meant at recognising individuals and organisations that contribute to the preservation of the country's natural resources, wildlife and tourism services.

Majaliwa said the awards are designed to highlight outstanding efforts in wildlife conservation, tourism promotion, and the effective management of national parks and game reserves.

He emphasized that the awards would be held annually, celebrating key stakeholders in the tourism

National tourism and conservation awards to promote sector's growth



Prime Minister Kassim Majaliwa launching national tourism and conservation awards in Arusha Region recently. Left is Dr Pindi Chana, Minister for Natural Resources and Tourism and right is Paul Makonda, Arusha Regional Commissioner. Photo: Guardian Correspondent.

and conservation sectors.

The initiative reflects Tanzania's on-going commitment to strengthening its tourism industry, which has seen rapid growth in recent years.

"Tanzania's natural heritage is our wealth, and the sustainable management of this wealth is vital for the future of our country. The awards will encourage innovation and responsible practices in both tourism and conservation," said the Premier.

He added: "Tanzania's tourism sector has experienced sig-

nificant growth, with foreign tourist arrivals increasing by 96 percent from 2021 to 2023. The industry now contributes 25 percent of Tanzania's foreign earnings and supports millions of jobs across the country."

The Prime Minister noted that the government's focus on promoting sustainable tourism and improving infrastructure will continue, with these new awards serving as a catalyst for further development.

The awards will also raise global awareness of Tanzania's

rich biodiversity and cultural heritage, attracting more international tourists who prioritize sustainability. Local businesses, park authorities, and conservation organizations will be encouraged to compete for recognition, driving improvements in services and operations.

The government also expressed gratitude to key partners, including the African Union Border Programme (AUBP), the German Development Agency (GIZ) and the East African Community (EAC),

for their continued support of Tanzania's conservation and tourism initiatives.

In addition to boosting Tanzania's tourism industry, the awards initiative is expected to foster greater international investment in the country's tourism infrastructure, including hotels, eco-lodges, and tour operators, offering travellers a range of experiences from safaris to coastal retreats.

Minister for Natural Resources and Tourism, Dr Pindi Chana commended President Samia for her dedication to en-

suring the rapid growth of the natural resources and tourism sector.

She added that the ministry has implemented various strategies to enhance conservation and promote tourism, including leveraging diverse technologies, advancing the 'The Royal Tour' programme as well as introducing new tourism products to increase the number of tourists and revenue generated from tourism activities.

Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism, Dr Hassan Abbasi, said the ministry has decided to take the initiative to motivate stakeholders in the crucial sectors to perform better—thus contribute to the national economy.

Dr Abbasi added that the ministry has also presented eleven honorary awards to various stakeholders in recognition of their contributions to development of the sectors.

He said Tanzania continues to excel in attracting both local and foreign tourists, breaking records set before outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. According to the United Nation's Tourism Barometer report for the first half of 2024 (January to July), Tanzania ranked first in Africa among countries with the highest number of international tourist arrivals, he said.

"This year has been a remarkable success for our tourism sector. We have launched the awards and we are celebrating the sector's achievements, including winning the World Travel Awards as the World's Leading Safari Destination for 2024," said the PS.

Dr Abbasi emphasized that the newly launched awards aims to honour stakeholders, companies and conservationists who have made significant contributions to the growth of the tourism sector and the advancement of conservation efforts in the country.

Positive upbringing linked to happy, healthy, fulfilled adulthood

By Telesphor Magobe

ALMOST all senior citizens everywhere complain about the behaviour of young people, and almost all young people too complain about the behaviour of senior citizens, who see young people as lacking social etiquette (a code of social conduct), or persons who were not brought up well due to various reasons, mainly family reasons. They see young people as a threat to them.

Some of the young people use foul language and don't care whether they are in the presence of children, peers or senior citizens. They drink excessively, use drugs, are promiscuous and instead of working spend all their time betting on national or international football teams and gambling. Some of them lead loose and dissolute lives. Others behave well as they know what they are supposed to do and do it.

Young people too blame all socioeconomic evils on senior citizens because some of them when they were working were in the positions of authority, but have done nothing to improve social services and people's standards of living. Instead, they have contributed considerably to the poverty trap people are in families and in the country. They have failed to bring about development despite the fact that they spent many years in positions of authority.

Young people want senior citizens who are still working to let young, innovative, and energetic blood to take over for their time is gone. Sometimes they tell senior citizens their time is over, and their ideas are old-fashioned and irrelevant to both current and future generations. They hardly listen to senior citizens for any meaningful advice because they see that they have nothing to offer to today's fast evolving world.



What senior citizens complain about young people can be associated with upbringing—the way they have been groomed, including seeing, hearing and internalising what is happening in and around them. The upbringing of children needs to change so that they are brought up in a more friendly and enabling environment because it is only through this that they can appreciate values that make them good persons.

The UN Economic and Social Affairs (UNESA)'s World Population Prospects 2024 report suggests that by the late 2070s, the number of older persons aged 65 years and higher globally is projected to reach 2.2 billion, surpassing the number of chil-

dren (under 18). "By the mid-2030s, it is projected that there will be 265 million persons aged 80 years or older, more than the number of infants (1 year of age or less)." The trend is likely to continue through 2054. The report says this social phenomenon shows the need for developing and strengthening healthcare and social protection systems and supporting national policies to create equitable, fair and inclusive societies for people of all ages. So, young people shouldn't look at senior citizens as useless and having nothing to offer to this rapidly evolving world.

When we look at child upbringing, we realise that many parents, guardians or caretakers

instruct children to behave in a certain way, usually by force. In this way, children do not appreciate any value attached to what they are told to do or not to do because they do it just because if they don't do it they will be punished. They can be caned and in some cases be denied breakfast, lunch or supper or can be denied a gift they were promised.

Thus, what senior citizens criticise in young people today has been contributed by the environment in which young people grew up from their childhood to the age group they are in today. May be it is not helpful to directly blame young people or senior citizens, but it is good to see that the entire system of child upbringing needs to be im-

proved so that children are not just forced to do what they are required to do or not to do, but they can be helped to see the importance of doing or of not doing of what they are told to do or not to do.

Many parents, guardians or caretakers treat children harshly when they make mistakes. Instead of teaching them how to correct their misbehaviour they shout at or rebuke, slap or beat them up. There are parents who from morning to evening just shout at their children using sharp remarks as if they are adults. Forgetfulness happens naturally. When parents forget things forgive themselves, but when children forget what they have been told to do or not to

“**Happy families bring up their children in a friendly and enabling environment in which children experience love, peace, happiness and fulfilment.**”

do are shouted at, rebuked or beaten up. Is this the way of bringing up children? Not at all!

Children can be brought up in a friendly way and in this way they can understand and do what are told to do or not to do. Happy families bring up their children in a friendly and enabling environment in which children experience love, peace, happiness and fulfilment. In other families, children are often punished and for them when they are with their parents, guardians or caretakers it is almost always wailing because they are shouted at, rebuked, slapped or beaten up. When a child grows up in such an environment he or she hardly learns anything positive. Who can learn from being shouted at, rebuked, slapped or beaten up? A child learns better when he or she is shown how to do a certain thing and when his or her best interests are respected and protected. But when he or she is not shown, instead is rebuked, slapped or beaten up, how can he or she learn from it?

Rebecca Handman in her book "Positive Power of Positive Parenting" says "positive parenting is about showing children love, warmth and kindness. It's about guiding children to act the way you want by encouraging and teaching them. It's about helping children thrive by sending the powerful message: You are loved, you are good, you matter." When children grow up seeing themselves as loved and cherished they have the peace of mind and become fulfilled. In this way, they become good, responsible and law-abiding persons. So, let us show children positive parenting to improve their mental health, and wellbeing as they grow up.

A year of extreme weather that challenged billions

By Esme Stallard

CLIMATE change has brought record-breaking heat this year, and with it extreme weather, from hurricanes to month-long droughts.

This year is expected to be the hottest on record, and new research shows that people around the world experienced an additional 41 days of dangerous heat due to climate change.

Researchers from the World Weather Attribution (WWA) group at Imperial College and Climate Central said the study shows "we are living in a dangerous new era".

From Brazil to Indonesia we take a look back at the climate events that affected the lives of billions in 2024.

Billions suffer under heat wave
This was a year of heat - temperature records were broken on land and in the sea multiple times.

In April dozens of countries, from Lebanon in the west to Cambodia in the east, suffered a prolonged heat-wave, bringing the risk of dehydration and heat stroke.

But Julie Arrighi, director of programmes at the Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Centre, said that the impacts are not felt equally.

"Young people and those over 65 particularly those with pre-existing health conditions [are at risk] - they are physiologically less able to cope with extreme heat," she said.

She said people in conflict settings also suffered disproportionately because of their housing situations, including living in temporary shelters, which can magnify heat, or a disrupted water system.

Research has shown that populations over time can adjust to higher temperatures, but even taking this into account scientists at WWA and Climate Central estimate in 2024 the world's populations experienced 41 additional days of dangerous heat - compared to a world without climate change.

Dr Friederike Otto, lead of WWA and Senior Lecturer in Climate Science at Imperial College London, said: "The impacts of fossil fuel warming have never been clearer or more devastating than in 2024.

"We are living in a dangerous new era - extreme weather caused unrelenting suffering."



Successive heat waves added to the many pressures faced by the almost two million people displaced by the conflict in Gaza

Lifblood of the Amazon dries up

A regional heatwave around the Amazon region was made worse by a natural climate phenomenon called El Niño, but the researchers at the WWA and Climate Central said that climate change remained the driving force.

Coupled with higher temperatures, rainfall was also reduced across part of South America. Officials in Colombia reported that levels in the Amazon river were reduced by 90% severely affecting power supply, crop yield and leading to wildfires.

Nearly half a million children are thought to have been affected as schools in Brazil and Colombia

were closed due to a lack of drinking water, according to UNICEF.

The Amazon river is also an important lifeline for the rainforest of the same name - which provides support to thousands of species and supports the world's efforts to tackle climate change.

"We fear [climate change] might push the forest irreversibly to a drier state, leading to a reduction of moisture flow and carbon sink, as well as loss of biodiversity," said Dr Regina Rodrigues, professor of Physical Oceanography and Climate at Federal University of Santa Catarina in Brazil.

"All these critical processes are essential not only locally and regionally but also globally in order to main-

tain life as we know it," she said.

Philippines: an unprecedented typhoon season

While some suffer from a lack of rain, others got too much of it.

The Philippines experienced a record-breaking six typhoons in just 30 days across October and November - this came after six months of storms. The country is one of the most vulnerable to these tropical storms because of its location close to warm ocean waters.

Landslides and floods triggered by the storms this season killed more than 1,200 people across Southeast Asia.

There is currently no evidence that climate change is increasing the

number of typhoons, hurricanes or cyclones (the same phenomenon but named differently across the world), although research suggests it may be increasing their intensity.

But an assessment of the season by WWA scientists concluded the record ocean temperatures that occurred in 2024 were "conducive" to the formation of such storms, and those temperatures have been enhanced by climate change.

Dr Zach Zobel, associate scientist at the Woodwell Climate Research Centre, who was not involved in the study, supported the WWA approach but added: "[This season] didn't tell us anything we didn't already know was coming in a 1.3-1.5C [warmer] world.

"Scientists have been warning about these extreme events becoming more frequent for years if not decades," he said.

Ocean temperatures fuel an early hurricane

Even the richest nations were not able to fully protect themselves from extreme weather this year. The US experienced two back-to-back hurricanes - first Hurricane Helene and then Hurricane Milton - which left more than 260 dead and \$115bn (£92bn) worth of damage, according to research from Christian Aid.

Scientists had predicted an "extraordinary" season because of the elevated ocean temperatures in the Atlantic, which fuel hurricanes.

But while Hurricane Beryl was the Atlantic's earliest category five hurricane on record on 2 July, there was a lull in the middle of the season before Hurricane Helene hit.

Dr Otto said that typically large storms can take heat out of the ocean preventing new hurricanes forming for some time, but qualitative evidence suggests "because the whole upper ocean was extremely hot this effect didn't happen."

She added the WWA is looking to undertake further analysis on this in the future.

Extreme rains in Nigeria, Chad, Sudan

Flooding in Sudan and Nigeria in August and September showed that extreme weather can be exacerbated by poorly maintained infrastructure.

Heavy rains starting in July brought extensive flooding which led to several dam collapses killing dozens of people and forcing thousands from their homes.

The report from WWA and Climate Central estimates these heavy rainfall episodes have become common events due to human-caused warming, and are expected to occur on average every three to 10 years.

Julie Arrighi from the Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Centre, said: "Our studies continue to show the need to enhance preparedness for extreme weather to reduce loss of life and damages.

"We are not well prepared for life at 1.3-1.5°C of warming."

BBG

Shrinking wings, bigger beaks: Birds are seen reshaping in world warming

By Special Correspondents

FOR wildlife, climate change is a bit like the "final boss" the protagonist faces in a video game: big, hulking and inescapable.

This formidable enemy has forced wildlife to alter where and how they live. Higher temperatures exert so much stress on wildlife that over generations, they are forced to change and adapt.

We wanted to better understand how this pattern of change was playing out in Australian birds.

Our two pieces of recent research identified that, in response to warming, more than 100 species of Australian birds have developed smaller bodies and bigger beaks over time.

Shape-shifting wildlife

When we talk about shape-shifting, we're not talking about werewolves or Ant-Man. Rather, we are referring to body size getting smaller and appendages such as beaks, tails and limbs getting bigger.

This enables animals to shed excess heat more efficiently by providing more surface area to do so - something engineers know when designing radiators, for instance.

Just as the hot water pipes in radiators help dissipate internal heat through the periphery, bird beaks are perforated with blood vessels that transfer heat from the body's core to the beak surface, where it is then lost to the environment.



The Common Bronzewing is one of the birds that has increased beak size in response to climate change.

This way, for both a radiator and a beak, increasing the surface area of the structure (while minimising the distance the heat has to travel from the core) maximises the heat loss.

The link between body shape and heat loss has led to the prediction that animals will change body shape over time, in response to climatic warming.

Three years ago, Deakin University researchers published a paper

showing examples of such changes occurring in a handful of diverse species all across the world.

Now, we significantly expand on this with two recently published studies focusing on Australian birds. We identified decreasing body sizes and increasing beak sizes over time, in response to climatic warming. Combined, the studies include over 100 species of birds from across Australia.

What we did and what we found

Our studies used two different data sets and methods to detect shrinking and shape-shifting.

The first used an extraordinary dataset collected by community scientists of the Victorian Wader Study Group and the Australasian Wader Studies Group, who have been monitoring Australian shorebirds for nearly 50 years.

Their monitoring includes meas-

urements such as bill length, wing length and body mass in more than 100,000 individual birds. The data allowed us to identify increasing beak sizes and decreasing body sizes in both resident and migratory species of shorebirds in northern and southern Australia.

For example, iconic migrants like red knots and sharp-tailed sandpipers have both increased beak size over the last 50 years.

The second dataset, collected by Deakin researchers, used 3D scans of museum specimens to measure the beak surface area of specimens from the past century. Through this approach, more than 5,000 specimens were measured for beak surface area, which was supplemented by measurements of wing length.

The results showed the same pattern of bigger beaks and smaller body sizes were identified across a vast range of birds, all the way from ducks to songbirds. For example, the chip-stealing silver gull and dazzling common bronzewing have both increased beak size over the past century.

Australia is heating up. The shape-shifting and shrinking that we see in birds indicate ways in which they may be adapting to cope with these higher temperatures.

Short-term weather versus long-term trends

One surprising aspect, reflected in both studies, is that short-term spells of excessive heat can cause responses in bird shape that contradict the long-term trends.

While body size decreases in response to shorter-term periods of higher temperature, bill size also shrank. Since beak sizes increase over the long-term because of climatic warming, why would they decrease in response to short-term bursts of higher temperature?

Climatic warming does not only affect the temperature birds experience, but also their environment.

In an environment with high baseline temperatures, such as Australia, periods of high temperature may mean less food. This can hamper the growth of young birds.

In this way, both body and beak size would decrease after hot temperatures due to stunted growth as food gets more scarce.

And in short-term periods of extreme temperatures, having a big beak can be a liability. Hot air from the environment will actually move into the beak, causing the bird to heat up too much, with potentially fatal consequences.

Whatever their cause, the contrasting trends between short and long-term responses to hot environments show things are complex in a changing climate.

A question of survival

It might be tempting to view shrinking and shape-shifting as proof animals are successfully adapting to climate change.

However, that would be a premature conclusion: it shows us that some species are responding, but we don't know how these changes impact their survival prospects.

Such questions are difficult to answer but form the focus of our current research. Importantly, while both studies show bigger beaks and smaller bodies across species overall, both also show certain species are adapting more than others.

And many are not shrinking or shape-shifting at all in response to climate change.

Is that because these species don't need to adapt, or because they can't?

If the former, we can breathe a small sigh of relief. If the latter, we should be very concerned.

In the aftermath of COP29, the UN Climate Change Conference in November in Azerbaijan, discussion of how climate change impacts fauna should be high on everyone's agenda.

NAIROBI

MIRRIAM Wambui, a 13-year-old student, speaks Chinese with the confidence of a seasoned linguist despite having only two years of exposure to the language.

Wambui's talent is evident. She won the national title in the Chinese Bridge competition in Kenya, ranked sixth in Africa, and placed in the top 30 globally at the 17th Chinese Bridge Chinese Proficiency Competition for Foreign Secondary School Students held in Tianjin, China, on Oct. 28.

"I was thrilled to be announced the winner during the Chinese Bridge Kenya edition competition, especially since I only had two weeks to prepare after enrolling in the competition quite late," Wambui said in a recent interview.

Wambui's journey with the Chinese language began through her eldest brother, who traveled to China in 2015 to pursue a Master's degree in Chinese. When he returned to visit their family in Kahawa Sukari, northeast of Nairobi, in 2019, Wambui was captivated by his fluency in Chinese and intrigued by China's manufacturing prowess.

"My brother came back with a cellphone I had never seen before, and everything he brought, including electronics, was made in China. I became curious about this country that seemed to produce so much," she said with a giggle.

Inspired, Wambui enrolled in Chinese language classes at Sukari Presbyterian Junior Secondary School two years ago. In May 2024, she made a bold request to her Chinese teacher: she wanted to join the team representing her school in the Chinese Bridge competition.

"My teacher was shocked because it was just two weeks until the competition. All along, I had been waiting to be chosen, but when it became clear that I wasn't, I decided to ask for the opportunity because I believed in myself,"



A milestone in Mandarin Chinese language education! The annual in-service training for Mandarin teachers, organized by the Kenyatta University Confucius Institute

13-year-old girl's Chinese language journey sparks interest in Kenya

I want to become an ambassador in the future and learn more about Chinese language and culture.

she recalled.

Wambui's belief in herself was paid off. She impressed the judges with her speech, essay and performance at the competition held at Kenyatta University, Kenya's second-oldest university.

"I won a laptop, a trophy and a fully sponsored two-week trip to China. It was so exciting," she said.

In October, Wambui traveled to China with her teacher, an experience she describes with

delight. "I loved it. The people were so welcoming, everyone was so nice," she said.

Her success has inspired other students at her school to take up Chinese. According to her teacher, Charity Atunga, Chinese is now the most popular of the three optional languages offered, with 90 out of 200 students choosing to learn it.

Atunga, who has four years of experience teaching Chinese, said that the language's popularity is growing rapidly in Kenyan

schools.

"There's a lot of support from parents and the school administration, which makes the learning experience positive. The students also see the benefits, such as scholarships," said Atunga, who has accompanied two of her students to China.

Atunga herself is a beneficiary of Chinese language scholarships. After studying in China, she worked for several Chinese businesses and educational institutions before becoming a

teacher.

Salome Nyambura, director of Kenyatta University's Confucius Institute, hosts the Chinese Bridge competition for high school students across the country. Through this partnership, more than 300 Kenyan students have traveled to China.

"It's a testament to the growing interest in Chinese culture and language in Kenya," Nyambura said, highlighting a new crash program at the university for teachers wanting to learn Chinese. "The classes are full, showing a strong desire to introduce Chinese programs in

schools."

Kenyatta University, partnered with Shandong Normal University, hosts the Chinese Bridge competition for high school students across the country. Through this partnership, more than 300 Kenyan students have traveled to China.

"I want to become an ambassador in the future and learn more about Chinese language and culture," said Wambui, who has been awarded a six-month scholarship in China.

By Shivani Gupta

JUST two kilometres from the main village road in Fatehpur, in the Patiala district, you'll find a green signboard for 'Gill Organics'. Set up next to a large pond, this farm cultivates a wide range of vegetables – from beetroot to broccoli – in small patches of land.

Patiala-based Harpreet Singh and his family are embracing a unique approach to secure their vegetable needs. Working in real estate in the city, Harpreet does not have to worry about watering his plants or insects attacking his vegetables. Instead, he owns a small patch of land on Gill Organics' farm for a brief period and receives freshly harvested and organically grown produce at home.

Last winter, Harpreet visited Gill Organics with his children. Together, they plucked vegetables like radishes, clicked some photos, and took the freshly harvested produce back home to the city after spending some quality time at the farm.

"That visit reminded me of my childhood when my family would grow vegetables on our farm. But as we moved to the city, we lost that comfort of chemical-free food," he says.

Now, Harpreet's family gets 65 percent of their vegetable needs fulfilled from their 150-square-yard patch of land.

"We get spinach, cauliflower, potatoes, onions, spring onions, bottle gourds, and much more. They don't taste bitter compared to store-bought ones. The spinach is so good that it remains green even after cooking, while the market variety turns brown," he says.

"Earlier, we had to dip them in vegetable washing liquids before cooking them. Now, we just wash them under running water, and they are good to go. This gives me peace of mind that my children are eating chemical-free food," Harpreet smiles.

The brains behind this setup are cousins Mantaj Sidhu and Baljit Singh Gill, who launched Gill Organics about a year and a half ago. They established a system that allows families to access



Gill Organics supplies fresh harvests to families in Patiala, Ludhiana and Chandigarh.

Punjab techie quits high-paying Google job to help urban families grow their own food

fresh, chemical-free vegetables without the intensive labour and time commitment of maintaining a full-scale farm.

"This approach is not just about personal satisfaction; it's a conscious decision to prioritise the health of their family and the environment," says Mantaj.

In conversation with The Better India, he explains how they are revolutionising the way urban families secure organically grown produce from the comfort of their homes.

"Quit my job abroad to transform farming back home"

Leaving a successful career as an account manager at Google in Dublin, Mantaj returned to India in 2022. His

reasons were twofold: to be closer to his family in Punjab and to address a critical issue he observed – the prevalence of food adulteration and the lack of regulation in India's food supply chain.

"As someone who values clean and healthy eating, I wanted to ensure that my parents and by extension, others – had access to food that is safe, chemical-free, and grown sustainably," he says.

Reflecting on the differences he observed in farming methods in India and Ireland, Mantaj shares, "These are two completely different worlds when it comes to organic farming. Firstly, it's not as big an issue over there because

agricultural produce is highly regulated, and the food is not chemically treated as excessively as it is in India. Here, we often have no idea whether the food was sprayed with chemicals once, twice, or 10 times. Sometimes, farmers overuse chemicals to ensure there are no pests and to maximise their crop yield."

He further shares, "In Europe, the norms regarding food safety are so strict that many pesticides permissible in India are banned there. Additionally, there are thriving farmer's markets in every city in Ireland where farmers sell their produce like vegetables, homemade jams, and other products. I think it's just

a cultural difference – such markets are well-supported, have dedicated spaces, regular schedules, and significant footfall, which is lacking in India."

Upon returning to India, Mantaj wanted to embark on an entrepreneurial journey, and organic foods seemed the most obvious choice for him. This led him to launch his venture, Gill Organics, along with his cousin, Baljit. The duo focuses on providing access to safe, chemical-free, and sustainably grown organic food.

"The core focus of this initiative is to create a robust system that bridges the gap between the demand and supply of organic food while instilling

trust in the largely misused term 'organic,'" he points out.

A new way to bring organic food to your table

Explaining how the setup works, Mantaj says, "What makes our approach unique is that we invite people to our farm and allocate a portion of land where we grow vegetables on their behalf. We offer 18 types of vegetables, depending on the season. Families can visit for regular monitoring and pluck the produce whenever they want. For convenience, we also deliver the fresh harvest to their homes. Our setup provides complete traceability of seasonal harvests."

Mantaj shares that the idea was to make producing organic food easier for urban families. "Living in cities, you often don't know the source of your food. Many families desire to eat organic food but they lack sufficient land, time, and expertise to grow it. Only those deeply passionate about gardening can afford to farm," he adds.

Before onboarding families, Mantaj insists they visit the farm to understand organic farming as well as its limitations. The farm uses cow dung and vermicompost as fertilisers, and for pest management, they rely on UV lights, sticky traps, and traditional remedies like khatti lassi (sour buttermilk).

"Mulching is another significant practice at our farm. Instead of burning stubble, we spread it across the farm. This helps organisms like earthworms thrive in the soil, and less water is needed because the soil retains moisture for longer," he explains.

Currently, Gill Organics operates in three cities – Patiala, Ludhiana, and Chandigarh. For a six-month subscription, families are charged between Rs 30,000 and Rs 35,000.

The cousins have already partnered with 35 urban families and dedicated 1.5 acres of land to growing organic food for them. With a long waiting list of families eager to onboard, Mantaj is also focusing on expanding the land to two acres next season.

Looking back on his decision to quit a high-paying job at Google, Mantaj reflects, "My choice was met with worry and scepticism from family and friends, as leaving such a prestigious position seemed unconventional. While working at a place like Google brings financial stability and social prestige, I didn't want to be defined by those labels."

He continues, "Moving ad revenue numbers for big companies doesn't give the satisfaction I feel when someone appreciates our organic vegetables, knowing they are sourcing them for their cancer-ridden parents or their pregnant wives. I might not be earning as much since leaving Google, but money eventually follows. I'm glad I'm making good use of my time and skills while improving people's lives, so I'm truly enjoying it."

Maada Bio makes Africa's strong case for reforms at the UN Security Council

By Kingsley Ighobor

At most international forums, including the annual UN General Assembly high-level debate, Sierra Leonean President Julius Maada Bio consistently highlights the injustices of the global system, particularly Africa's absence in the permanent category and underrepresentation in the non-permanent category of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC).

President Bio is the coordinator of the African Union Committee of Ten Heads of State and Government on UNSC Reform, known as C-10, a platform he uses to amplify his UNSC reform advocacy.

This year, he has been particularly vocal, as Sierra Leone currently holds a non-permanent seat on the Security Council and presides over the Council for the month of August.

For example, in his statement in the Security Council chambers on 12 August, President Bio emphasized the outdated nature of the current UNSC structure.

"The current structure of the Security Council reflects an outdated world order, an era that fails to recognize Africa's growing importance and contributions," he remarked.

In a subsequent interview with Africa Renewal, the president pointed out that the continent is home to 1.3 billion people and 54 of the 193 UN member states—a significant part of the global community.

"We cannot just be a territory for proxy wars. We know what our problems are, and we should have a say in how to solve them," he asserted, adding that more than 60 percent of the issues discussed in the Security Council pertain to Africa.

It is unjust for Africa to be side-



President Julius Maada Bio of Sierra Leone chairs the Security Council meeting on international peace, pushing for Africa's rightful representation at the UN

lined in the 21st century, he argued, declaring: "I call on all African leaders and on all those who stand for justice and democracy around the world to fight this unfairness."

As the UN prepares to celebrate its 80th anniversary in 2025, President Bio asserted that the celebration would only be meaningful if the current configuration of the Council is reformed, reflecting the frustration of many African leaders who feel the continent's concerns are often overlooked.

Africa's demands

Africa is demanding at least two permanent seats in the UN Security Council and two additional non-

permanent seats, bringing the total number of non-permanent seats to five.

Additionally, Africa advocates for the abolition of the veto power. However, if the veto is retained, President Bio insisted that it must be extended to all new permanent members as a matter of justice.

The President broke down the potential support for Africa's push for greater representation on the Security Council into two categories: support from within the continent and support from major global powers.

While support from within the continent comes naturally, he ac-

knowledged the challenges posed by the P-5, (the five permanent members of the Security Council), who wield enormous power in the Council. "The main issue we have is the P-5. They are manning the gate. They have to let us in."

Despite these challenges, he was encouraged that "They [P-5] have recognized the fact that Africa has been treated unfairly."

He stressed: "There is a new spirit; the world has changed, and leaders have come and gone. What I'm trying to do is convince my colleagues in Africa and the world at large that the injustice done to Africa cannot be accepted."

The United Nations Secretary-General, António Guterres, supports Africa's demands for UNSC reforms. "We cannot accept that the world's preeminent peace and security body lacks a permanent voice for a continent of well over a billion people – a young and rapidly growing population – making up 28 percent of the membership of the United Nations," Mr. Guterres said at the 12 August meeting. He added, "Nor can we accept that Africa's views are undervalued on questions of peace and security, both on the continent and around the world."

To ensure the Council's full credibility and legitimacy, he empha-

sized the importance of "heeding the longstanding calls from the UN General Assembly, various geographic groups – from the Arab Group to the Benelux, Nordic, and CARICOM countries – and some permanent members of this Council itself, to correct this injustice."

I call on all African leaders and on all those who stand for justice and democracy around the world to fight this unfairness.

Lessons from Sierra Leone's civil war

Sierra Leone's brutal civil war (1991-2002) may have shaped President Bio's views on conflict resolution and international diplomacy.

"After all the fighting, after all the destruction, we resolved our problems at the negotiating table," he reflected, emphasizing the importance of dialogue and consensus-building.

Drawing from Sierra Leone's experience, he envisioned Africa playing an important role in global peace and security. "We have learned quite a lot—partnership, multilateralism, dialogue, and the need to build consensus.

"What we are bringing to the table within the UN Security Council is how we can be a bridge, how we can support multilateralism as a way for peace and security around the world."

Women's empowerment

Beyond global governance, Sierra Leone has adopted progressive gender policies under President Bio's leadership. For example, the country passed a law mandating, among other provisions, that at least 30 percent of positions in both the private and public sectors, including in the cabinet, be held by women—a huge step toward gender equality.

Earlier this year, Sierra Leone also enacted a law banning child marriage.

"It would be wrong for us to talk about development if you keep more than half of your population in the kitchen or do not empower them enough to be part of the force that is going to change the nation," he declared.

Empowering women, he stressed, begins with education. This focus

By Adonis Byemelwa

THE Open University of Tanzania (OUT) recently honored 76 teachers who completed an intensive professional development programme as part of the Collaborative Learning for STEM (CL4STEM) initiative.

The significant achievement is part of a national effort to improve the quality of Science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education in Tanzania.

Teachers who were recognized have undergone specialized training that focuses on integrating modern teaching techniques and technology into STEM classrooms, ensuring that students across the country are equipped with the necessary skills to thrive in the digital age.

The event, held at OUT's main campus, highlighted the ongoing transformation in Tanzanian education, particularly in STEM subjects, which have historically seen limited engagement compared to the arts and humanities.

The educators who graduated from the CL4STEM program represent a new wave of educators dedicated to making STEM learning more engaging, accessible, and effective for students.

The ceremony was attended by high-ranking officials from OUT, project leaders, and representatives from various educational organizations, all of whom praised the teachers for their commitment to educational excellence.

In his speech, the Vice-Chancellor of OUT, Prof Elifas Bisanda, expressed deep admiration for the teachers' dedication.

"These educators are not only transforming the way STEM is taught but are helping to shape the future of our country by inspiring the next generation of innovators, scientists, and engineers," he remarked.

He further emphasized the importance of continuing to push for innovation in education to ensure that students are prepared for the challenges of a rapidly evolving global economy.

The CL4STEM initiative, which is funded by the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) and the Global Partnership for Education



The CL4STEM programme places a significant emphasis on gender equity and inclusivity

OUT honouring STEM educators with a vision for national education overhaul, improvement

Knowledge and Innovation Exchange (GPE-KIX), has proven to be a successful model in enhancing STEM education across Tanzania.

The program has allowed teachers to enhance their pedagogical skills, focusing on interactive teaching methods and critical thinking rather than traditional rote learning. It aims to make STEM subjects more relatable to students, allowing them to see the practical applications of what they learn and how they can be used to address real-world problems.

For many of the teachers

who participated, the program was a transformative experience. "I have learned to approach my teaching in a completely new way," said Neema Joseph, a teacher from Iringa who took part in the program.

"The methods we were taught allow us to engage our students more effectively and show them how exciting STEM can be. Before, the subject seemed like a series of abstract concepts, but now it feels more tangible and accessible."

The CL4STEM program also places a significant emphasis

on gender equity, ensuring that both male and female students have equal opportunities to excel in STEM subjects.

In Tanzania, like many parts of the world, women have historically been underrepresented in the fields of science and technology.

The initiative works to create a more inclusive learning environment, encouraging girls to pursue and succeed in STEM subjects alongside their male counterparts.

Dr. Joyce Lugalla, project coordinator for CL4STEM at OUT, described the initiative as "a game-changer" for Tan-

zania education. "We are seeing firsthand the impact this program is having not only on the teachers but also on their students," she said, adding...

"Our goal is to inspire a love for STEM that goes beyond the classroom and encourages young people to pursue careers in these fields. The expansion of this program to schools in Iringa is just the beginning."

The expansion of CL4STEM is set to reach 51 schools in the Iringa Region, where the initiative will train even more teachers, provide digital resources, and integrate the program into the national curriculum.

According to OUT, this is part of a broader vision to ensure that STEM education becomes a cornerstone of the national education strategy, offering students the tools they need to compete in a global marketplace.

This expansion also aligns with the Tanzanian government's long-term goals of enhancing educational quality and providing more oppor-

tunities for youth in fields like technology, engineering, and mathematics.

As part of this expansion, the university plans to provide teachers with digital tools and resources that will help them stay up-to-date with the latest developments in STEM education.

By incorporating technology into the classroom, OUT hopes to inspire students to see the potential of these fields and motivate them to pursue further education and careers in STEM disciplines.

The long-term vision is to create a self-sustaining network of teachers who can share knowledge and experiences, building a national community of STEM educators.

The success of CL4STEM is also a testament to the power of collaboration. The initiative draws on the expertise of educators from India and Nigeria, who have worked closely with Tanzanian teachers to exchange ideas and best practices.

This international collaboration helps to ensure that the program remains responsive to local needs while also drawing on global insights into what works best in STEM education. "The partnership between different countries and institutions has been crucial to the success of this program," said Professor Bisanda.

"By sharing experiences and learning from each other, we can create a more holistic approach to STEM education that is both relevant and practical for our students. It is through these kinds of collaborations that we can hope to achieve real change in education."

Looking to the future OUT is committed to continuing the expansion of the CL4STEM initiative and exploring new ways to improve STEM education across Tanzania.

The goal is to establish a model that can be replicated across the entire country, ensuring that every student, regardless

of location, has access to high-quality STEM education.

The success of this program will not only impact individual students but will also contribute to the broader development of Tanzania as a nation, preparing its youth to take on the challenges and opportunities of the 21st century.

For many of the teachers involved in the program, the recognition ceremony was not just an opportunity to celebrate their achievements but also a reminder of the importance of their work in shaping the future of Tanzanian education.

"This program has given me the tools to be a better teacher," said Hamisi Mussa, another teacher who completed the program. "But more importantly, it has allowed me to inspire my students to believe in themselves and the power of education."

As the CL4STEM initiative continues to grow and evolve, it remains clear that the impact of these dedicated teachers will be felt for years to come.

Their efforts are creating a lasting impact, ensuring that the next generation of Tanzanian students is not only prepared for the challenges of a rapidly evolving world but is also empowered with the skills and knowledge required to excel in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields.

This initiative offers students more than just academic success—it gives them a chance to thrive in an increasingly interconnected global economy. By equipping them with critical thinking, problem-solving, and technical expertise, these students are poised to lead in industries that are shaping the future.

Furthermore, these educational advancements provide them with the tools to address the complex issues facing their country and the world, from climate change to technological innovation.

BUSINESS

Illegal trade booms in South Africa's 'super-strange looking' plants

JOHANNESBURG

A biodiversity hotspot in a remote part of South Africa has become the hub of an illegal trade in protected plant species, with organised crime groups capitalising on overseas demand.

"They've not just stolen our land or our plants, they've stolen our heritage as well," a livestock farmer angrily tells the BBC, as she expresses dismay at the social and ecological crisis that the poaching has caused.

Most of the plants in question are a variety known as succulents, named for their ability to hold water and survive in arid climates.

Many of the world's succulent species are only found in the Succulent Karoo desert, which spans South Africa and Namibia.

Succulent species range in size, shape and colour - some look like small multi-coloured buttons and some look like cacti, sprouting colourful flowers at certain times of the year.

While these varieties can be cultivated in nurseries, global demand is also fuelling the poaching of these plants from the wild which are then smuggled and sold online to buyers in the US, Europe and East Asia.

In Kamieskroon, a small town in the centre of South Africa's Namaqualand region, the rolling hills have become a haven for poachers.

Some of the species are highly localised, and so can be wiped out by just a small amount of poaching.

"In South Africa, we know already of seven species that has been wiped out completely and there are certainly more species that will go extinct very soon," says Pieter van Wyk, a nursery curator at the /Ai / Ais-Richtersveld Transfrontier Park.

It is hard to obtain figures for how many plants are being poached, but the non-governmental organisation Traffic reports that 1.6 million illegally harvested succulents were seized by South Africa's law enforcement agencies between 2019 and 2024. This only represents the contraband that was detected, so the true figure is likely to be far higher.

The South African government is well aware of the problem, and unveiled a strategy in 2022 to combat poaching. It includes running com-

munity programmes about the need to protect the environment.

Namaqualand has a rich diversity of succulent plants, with an estimated 3,500 species.

According to Mr Van Wyk and other conservationists, plant poaching has been booming since the Covid-19 lockdown in 2020.

With international traders unable to travel to South Africa during that time, they turned to local people to collect succulents for them and post them out of the country.

Mr Van Wyk says this coincided with an increase in global demand.

"People had more time to try to find something to keep busy with, and plants were one of the only things that in your house, could connect you to the outside world."

This has been seized upon by organised crime syndicates who hire teams of plant poachers and then market the wild plants on social media and e-commerce platforms.

"The syndicates saw this as an opportunity of making something viral... telling a wide as possible public: 'We have this super-strange looking thing that comes from the African continent,'" Mr Van Wyk says.

"Then the public just loses their heads and they say: 'I want to buy one', and [the syndicates] arrange for the species to be poached," he adds.

The uptick in organised crime activity in the region is having knock-on effects on local communities.

"This is a low-income area, people are not rich here, and people will exploit opportunities for income," explains Malinda Gardiner from Conservation South Africa.

Expressing a similar view, the livestock farmer whom the BBC spoke to says there is always an influx of money in her community when poaching takes place.

"When we see young men going up in the mountain areas, we know they're poachers," adds the farmer, who asks not to be identified for fear of reprisals.

"They use screwdrivers to uproot the succulents and they carry backpacks and sacks to keep the stolen plants."

A few days after that, there is an outbreak of binge drinking and illegal activity.



Succulents in flower in the Karoo



An electric SGR train stops at Dar es Salaam Station in Tanzania

An awakened Africa joins hands with Global South to advance modernisation

NAIROBI

IN 2024, Africa has taken center stage on the global development agenda, demonstrating the continent's resilience and its deepening ties with the Global South in the international arena.

From the 19th Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement and the 3rd South Summit held in Uganda to the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) Beijing Summit, Africa has showcased its determination and capability to unite the Global South in achieving shared development and pursuing modernization.

According to the International Monetary Fund, Africa is one of the fastest-growing regions in the global economic landscape in 2024. Amid rapid and profound changes in the world, the vast continent's potential and vitality have solidified its role as a key player in shaping the future.

Amid a complex and evolving global landscape, African nations are seeking self-reliant development through regional integration.

According to the African Development Bank, Africa's economic growth is projected to rebound to 3.7 percent in 2024, exceeding the global average, and climb to 4.3 percent in 2025, making it the world's second-fastest-growing region after Asia.

Many African countries held elections this year. From the Comoros in East Africa to Senegal in West Africa, most elections were conducted smoothly and orderly. The new governments have placed economic development at the forefront of their agendas, recognizing that self-reliance is essential for carving out a competitive position on the global stage.

To this end, African countries are accelerating the

implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). The agreement has been enacted in several nations, including South Africa, Ghana and Kenya. According to a report by Al-Mal News, an Egyptian daily, intra-regional trade is projected to grow from 192.2 billion U.S. dollars in 2023 to 520 billion dollars by 2030 following the launch of the AfCFTA.

The World Bank forecast that the AfCFTA could increase the continent's income by 7 percent by 2035 and lift 30 million people out of extreme poverty. Meanwhile, countries are ramping up investments in technological innovation and talent development, driving industrial upgrades through initiatives such as establishing research funds and developing technology parks.

According to a report by the International Telecommunication Union, the number of internet users in Africa has surged from 181 million in 2014 to nearly 646 million in 2024, and this figure could exceed 1.1 billion by 2029, which will enable Africa to integrate more effectively into the global economy.

Africa's development is fueled not only by its strong internal momentum but also by the rise of the Global South. At this year's G20 summit in Brazil in November, China outlined its eight actions for global development, including pursuing high-quality Belt and Road cooperation and supporting African development. These pragmatic measures have been widely recognized by developing countries.

Moreover, China, Brazil, South Africa and the African Union (AU) jointly launched an Initiative on International Cooperation in Open Science to bring the benefits of global scientific and technological

innovation to the Global South.

"We committed ourselves to have a vision that transcends national borders and individual interests while recognizing that the force of Africa resides in its unity," said Moussa Faki Mahamat, chairperson of the AU Commission, at the fourth Ordinary Session of the sixth parliament of the Pan-African Parliament in South Africa in November.

In 2024, Africa has reaffirmed its strong commitment to building a more just and equitable international order. This is evident in its advocacy for reforms in global governance, efforts to mediate geopolitical crises and advancements in energy transition.

On Jan. 1, Egypt and Ethiopia officially joined BRICS, marking another African addition to BRICS cooperation following South Africa's participation.

The expansion of the BRICS membership highlights the bloc's intention to enhance multilateral cooperation and uphold the voice and interests of developing countries at various international and regional forums, said Egyptian President Abdel-Fattah el-Sisi.

In November, the AU participated as a full member in the G20 summit for the first time, joining others to call for a fairer international financial system, advocating for debt relief, and safeguarding the interests of developing countries. On Dec. 1, South Africa assumed the G20 presidency, becoming the first African nation to hold this position. The theme of its presidency, "Solidarity, Equality, and Sustainability," reflects a distinct African vision for future global governance.

The AU's entry into the G20 "provides a platform for African nations to address critical global issues," said Balew Demissie, a communication and publication consultant at the

Policy Studies Institute of Ethiopia.

"Through its participation, the AU can address challenges such as poverty, underdevelopment, and climate vulnerability while strengthening regional solidarity and increasing Africa's influence on global policy decisions," Demissie said.

Analysts observed that Africa is reassessing its developmental trajectory, seeking to break free from the constraints of Western development models and striving for political, economic and cultural independence. This shift is often described as Africa's "second awakening" since the national liberation movements in the mid-to-late 20th century.

Over the past year, countries such as Niger, Senegal and Chad have called for the withdrawal of the U.S. and French military forces from their territories.

Africa is no longer content to be the "silent majority" and is emerging as a key force in reshaping the international order, with African leaders actively pursuing political solutions to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict within multilateral frameworks and underlining their resolve to promote global peace, development and justice.

The AU's Agenda 2063 envisions Africa as "an integrated, prosperous and peaceful continent, driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in the global arena." To achieve this vision, African countries are playing an active role in Global South partnerships.

"Africa has a stake in a truly multilateral global order," said Mwangi Wachira, former World Bank economist and advisor to the Kenyan government. "Hopefully, it will have more than a token role in the ongoing drive for an equitable multilateral global order."

In September, the FOCAC Summit held in Beijing marked another historic milestone in China-Africa relations and for the broader Global South. China and Africa vowed to join hands to implement 10 partnership actions to advance modernization.

As a member of the Global South, China has consistently advocated for an open global economy, and helped developing countries, particularly African nations and the least-developed countries, to actively participate in international industrial cooperation and benefit from economic globalization.

In November, the 7th China International Import Expo (CIIE) in Shanghai showcased a range of African products, including South African avocados, Tanzanian honey and Mauritian sugar, which made their debut this year. The expo highlighted China's commitment to openness and its efforts to help African products gain access to the vast Chinese and global markets.

Devesh Dukhira, chief executive of the Mauritius Sugar Syndicate, said that the Chinese market's long-term contribution will be substantial, thanks to the CIIE and the China-Mauritius Free Trade Agreement.

By synergizing the Belt and Road Initiative and the Global Development Initiative with Agenda 2063 and African nations' development strategies, China and African countries are continuously exploring new areas of collaboration.

Starting Dec. 1, China has given all the least-developed countries with which it has diplomatic relations, including 33 African nations, zero-tariff treatment for 100 percent tariff lines, becoming the first major developing country and the first major economy to take such a measure. This policy will boost African industrial growth, create jobs and reduce poverty.

In March this year, Chinese and African scholars jointly released the China-Africa Dar es Salaam Consensus, emphasizing the agreement among Global South countries on development path and philosophy.

Festive season remittances boost Kenya's forex reserves by \$191m

NAIROBI

KENYA'S foreign exchange reserves rose by 191 million U.S. dollars this week, reaching a seven-week high of 9.2 billion dollars, the central bank said in its weekly financial markets update released Friday evening.

The new reserves, equivalent to 4.6 months of import cover, increased from 9.01 billion dollars on Dec. 19, according to the apex bank. The

rise was attributed to increased inflows from export earnings and remittances during the festive season.

This week's increase reverses a negative trend that began in November, when forex reserves declined to below nine billion dollars on Dec. 5.

Governor of the Central Bank Kamau Thugge said on Dec. 6 during a monetary policy briefing in Nairobi, the capital, that the institution expects re-

serves to rise by up to 2.23 billion dollars by the end of 2024.

Thugge said that the increase would result from higher remittances during the festive season, stronger export earnings and disbursements from the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

In November, the IMF disbursed 78.4 billion shillings (about 605 million dollars) to Kenya under a funding program scheduled to conclude in April

2025.

Meanwhile, diaspora remittances have been rising as inflation in source markets in Europe and America eases. Kenya's diaspora remittances reached a record 4.01 billion dollars in the first 10 months of 2024.

Similarly, exports have grown by 12 percent over the same period, driven by increased shipments of tea, vegetables and fruits, according to the central bank.

"The usable foreign exchange reserves remained adequate at 9.2 billion U.S. dollars, meeting the CBK's statutory requirement to maintain at least 4 months of import cover," the central bank said.

The increase in forex reserves ensures the bank has sufficient dollars to support the shilling, which strengthened ahead of the festive season to an average of 129.29 against the dollar from a low of 130.



App transforms farming for rural women in Tanzania

By Kizito Makoye

IN the sun-scorched soils of Moshi, where every drop of rain counts, two female farmers have defied the odds through technology. Mwajuma Rashid Njau and Mumii Rajab, once locked in a daily struggle to survive, have found a mobile phone their best ally.

For years, farming was a way of life they struggled to master. Their fields, a patchwork of red earth and wilting crops, symbolized hardship rather than prosperity. Pests came with the seasons, the soil quality deteriorated, and their harvests barely provided enough to feed their families. But now, a simple app-Kiazi Bora-has changed everything.

On a sweltering afternoon, Njau was out in the field, staring helplessly at the rows of wilting sweet potatoes ravaged by pests, when he realized things could be different. She had no idea how to stop it-until she opened the Kiazi Bora app on her phone.

"This app has changed everything," Njau, 38, says with a tired but hopeful smile. "I didn't know where to start, but now I can check my phone, and it tells me exactly what to do."

The Kiazi Bora app, designed specifically for small-scale farmers like Njau and Rashid, focuses on helping them grow nutritious orange-fleshed sweet potatoes (OFSP) to feed their families and earn income. The app offers simple instructions on planting and pest control to farmers with little education.



Women in Kilema village harvest orange sweet potatoes. Credit: Kizito Makoye/IPS

The app, Kiazi Bora ("quality potatoes" in Kiswahili), wasn't just another farming tool-it was powered by cutting-edge AI voice technology. And for the first time, it spoke their language.

Creating Kiazi Bora wasn't easy. Kiswahili, a language spoken by over 200 million people, presented unique challenges for AI developers. The problem? There simply wasn't enough high-quality voice data to train the technology.

"One of the biggest challenges has been the availability of diverse, high-quality data," said EM Lewis-Jong, Director of Mozilla Common Voice, a global project dedicated to

making AI accessible to speakers of underrepresented languages.

"Kiswahili is a diverse language with many regional variants, and our tools are primarily designed for English, which complicates things further."

To solve this issue, SEE Africa, the nonprofit behind Kiazi Bora, turned to Mozilla's Common Voice platform. Unlike other AI data collection methods, which often rely on scraping the web or underpaid gig workers, Common Voice harnesses the power of community. "We use a crowd-sourced model where people voluntarily contribute their voice data," explained Lewis-Jong. "This

ensures that the data reflects the true diversity of the language, including different accents and dialects."

This community-driven approach has already seen tremendous success. In Tanzania, the Kiazi Bora app is now used by over 300 women, empowering them with knowledge on how to grow and market their crops. "These women are learning in Kiswahili, their first language, which makes a huge difference," noted Gina Moape, Community Manager for Common Voice. "We've seen firsthand how access to information in their own language improves both their nutrition and their ability to participate

in economic activities."

But Kiazi Bora is just one example of how voice-enabled technology can make a real impact.

For Mozilla, these projects reflect a broader vision: democratizing AI so that it serves everyone, not just speakers of dominant languages. "If data creation is left to for-profit companies, many of the world's languages will be left behind," said Lewis-Jong. "We want a world where people can create the data they need, capturing their language as they experience it."

That's why Mozilla's Common Voice is not just a tool but a movement. Its open-source

platform allows communities to collect and contribute voice data that anyone can use, fostering local innovation across Africa. "We're particularly excited about the potential for African languages," Lewis-Jong added. "Our long-term vision is to integrate more African languages into global voice recognition technologies, and Common Voice is a critical part of making that happen."

For Rashid, 42, who had once lived in uncertainty, the app was a useful tool. "Before, I felt powerless," she recalls. "When pests attacked, I would just watch as my crops withered. Now, I can fight back. I know what to do."

Both women have honed their skills and improved crop yields. The app taught them how to manage soil health, optimize planting schedules, and handle pest outbreaks.

Their orange-fleshed sweet potatoes stand out in contrast to the dusty earth, a sign of resilience and renewal.

The duo, who were entangled in a cycle of poverty, now speak with pride about their success.

"We've learned to control our future," Njau says.

Through Kiazi Bora, Njau and Rajabu have unlocked opportunities to improve their livelihoods and break free from poverty.

Njau, who had to drop out of school when her family moved to a remote village, calls the app her "teacher." She explains, "I never completed school, but this app has taught me everything I need to know about farming. It's like a teacher that's always there when I need it."

The voice-enabled Kiswahili features make it user-friendly. "The app speaks to me in a language I clearly understand," Njau says.

Through the app, Njau and Rajabu learned how to process potatoes into flour and pastries, which fetch a higher

market price.

Rajabu explains, "I didn't know you could make flour from sweet potatoes or that you could sell it for more money. Now, I have customers who buy the flour because it lasts longer than fresh potatoes." This new skill has allowed them to diversify their income.

In just a year, their income increased from zero to USD 127 per month. The extra income has enabled them to take care of their families, reinvest in their farms, and secure a better future. "With the money I've made, I've been able to send my children to school and even save some for emergencies," says Njau.

The potatoes, which are rich in vitamins, have helped them fight malnutrition in their communities. While neither Njau nor Rajabu had children with malnutrition, they both knew families who struggled with it. Thanks to the app, they now understand the importance of incorporating OFSP into their daily meals to ensure their children stay healthy.

Rajabu was quick to share the app with her relatives. "I told my sister about it, and now she's also growing OFSP. Her children are healthier, and she's even making money from selling sweet potato flour," she says proudly.

For both women, the app has empowered them as farmers, businesswomen and community leaders. "I feel confident now," Rajabu says. "This app has changed my life, and I know it can help other women like me."

Both Njau and Rajabu see immense potential for Kiazi Bora to help other rural women. They advocate for expanding the app beyond OFSP farming to include other crops like vegetables and edible roots, as this could further diversify their income streams and enhance food security in their communities.

IPS UN Bureau Report

By Special Correspondent

MALAWI'S government is demanding the astonishing sum of \$309bn (£245bn) in unpaid taxes and royalties from a US-based gemstone company for rubies exported from the southern African state over the last 10 years, its attorney-general has told the BBC.

Columbia Gem House, a family-owned business which says that it upholds fair trade practices, dismissed the claim as "baseless and defamatory".

The government is also demanding \$4bn from French gas giant TotalEnergies in unpaid revenue from an oil storage deal, and \$9.5m from Turkish tobacco firm Star Agritech, said Attorney General Thabo Chakaka Nyirenda.

TotalEnergies declined to comment while Star Agritech denied owing any money.

The amount being claimed from the three multinationals is nearly 300 times Malawi's national debt of around \$1.2bn, and 22 times its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of \$14bn.

Malawi was forced to take a \$174m bailout from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) last year after running into financial trouble.

Speaking to the BBC Focus on Africa podcast, Nyirenda said that Columbia Gem House had been under-reporting the value of rubies it had exported from Malawi.

He added that "some of the evidence that we'll be using comes from Columbia Gem House itself, such as declarations they have made in the US, and what they have reported on their website, which they have now deleted".

"The amount is not just [for] one year, it goes over 10 years back. It also includes the interest," Nyirenda said.

Columbia Gem House said



Malawi seeks billions of dollars from US firm over ruby sales

that the government's sums do not add up.

The \$309bn claim "implies Malawi has somehow produced and exported trillions of dollars' worth of coloured gemstones", the firm said in a statement.

"They haven't done this by any stretch of the imagination," it added.

Columbia Gem House said it does not operate in Malawi, but buys its gemstones from Nyala Mines, a Malawian-owned company in which the government has a 10% stake.

However, Nyirenda told the BBC that as a minority shareholder, the government was not involved in the day-to-day management of the company, and "the name of Nyala Mines had been changed to disguise its ownership".

An attempt by the US embassy in Malawi to settle the dispute fell through when the attorney general failed to attend an online meeting, which he put down to "technical challenges".

Mining contributes only 1% to Malawi's GDP, although the government has announced plans to scale this up in the next few years.

Malawian economist Wisdom Mgombezi said the government may be making the claims now because of its financial difficulties.

"They're looking at all potential sources of income, but if you look at the claim versus the size of the economy, it's just way too much," he told the BBC.

The dispute with TotalEnergies is rooted in a deal Malawi entered with it in 2001, according to Nyirenda.

The French multinational was to provide fuel to Malawi and was to get tax incentives in return, he said.

The profits from the arrangement were to have been shared equally but TotalEnergies "only paid for two years and stopped paying in 2006", Nyirenda alleged.

The government has since taken the company to court in Malawi, and Nyirenda said the government wants it to pay \$4bn to settle the matter.

As for the dispute with Star Agritech International, the government accuses it of buying three million tonnes of tobacco worth \$15m from Malawi through three subsidiaries - registered in Mauritius, Hong Kong, and South Africa - in 2013, but failing to pay for it.

Malawi Leaf Company, the state-owned enterprise that sold the tobacco, took legal action in Hong Kong and won the case, Nyirenda said.

"Over \$9.5m was proven in a Hong Kong court," he said, adding that Malawi wanted Star Agritech International to pay the amount.

He further alleged that the Hong Kong subsidiary of Star Agritech International was established "for the sole purpose of obtaining the tobacco from Malawi".

Financing helping women entrepreneurs in Tanzanian

By Special Correspondent

According to a 2019 African Development Bank report, African women entrepreneurs still face a \$42 billion finance gap. Traditional banks often view women-led businesses as high-risk, making loans complicated to obtain and expensive. Many women need more business and financial skills to qualify for these loans. Legal and regulatory hurdles further limit the potential of women-owned enterprises. The Women Creating Wealth (WCW) programme and the Trusts' investment fund Afrishela, recently held a workshop in Tanzania, focusing on alternative financing models that could help women entrepreneurs access capital to address this issue.

WCW's role in supporting women

WCW is more than a programme; it is a movement transforming economic opportunities for African women entrepreneurs. As Anabahati Mlay, WCW Country Lead - Tanzania, explained, the programme has already supported numerous entrepreneurs, helping them expand their businesses and create a network focused on wealth creation for women.

"Through WCW, we have built a community of successful women entrepreneurs," said Anabahati. "We want to invest in women-owned businesses and create a network focused on wealth creation for women."

In Tanzania, Kenya, Malawi, South Africa, Senegal, and Zambia, WCW helps businesses become more visible and fundable.

The programme addresses financial mindset, bookkeeping, negotiation skills, and efficient processes.

How the programme is helping women explore alternative financing

The workshop introduced several alternative financing options:

- Crowdfunding: Raising small amounts of money from many people, usually online.

- Private equity: Investment funds that provide capital to private companies in exchange for ownership shares.

- Venture capital: Funding for startups and early-stage companies with high growth potential.

- Angel investors: Wealthy individuals who invest in startups, often for convertible debt or equity.

These options offer more accessible funding than traditional bank loans, which often have high interest rates and require collateral.

During the workshop, Jane Muia from the Graça Machel Trust in Kenya took the stage to present the Afrishela Fund, highlighting an important alternative financing option for women entrepreneurs. Afrishela, meaning "Her Money," is an impact fund created by African women for African women. "We saw a critical gap in the capital," explained Jane. "We wanted to create a fund designed by African women, targeting African women with responsive capital."

She detailed how Afrishela supports women-led businesses across Africa, particularly those focused on climate-smart and sustainable initiatives. By offering flexible capital options-including loans with rebates or discounts, grace periods, and terms tailored to women-owned enterprises-the fund makes fi-

ancial support more accessible and adaptable to their unique needs. Operating in South Africa, Zambia, Tanzania, Uganda, and Rwanda, Afrishela has invested in numerous early-stage businesses across the region. Jane's presentation seamlessly connected with the workshop's goal of exploring diverse financing models, demonstrating how Afrishela complements WCW's efforts to bridge the \$42 billion finance gap faced by African women entrepreneurs.

Having invested in several companies, Afrishela plans to support six more in the next six months, continuing to assist women entrepreneurs' growth.

Success stories

The real impact of programmes like WCW and alternative financing is seen in the stories of women entrepreneurs.

Maida Waziri, chairperson of the Voice of Women Entrepreneurs (VOWET) and a WCW alumna shared her journey: "I have learned and grown from the WCW programme and sessions like this. I am now classified as a large contractor nationally, the largest woman-owned contractor in Tanzania. I have won national and regional awards. I credit part of my growth to WCW. Women should take this programme seriously-it pays off." Maida's story shows how access to resources and support can help women scale their businesses.

Patricia Kakorozya, CEO of WA Farmwise Tanzania and alumna of WCW shared: "Running and sustaining a business is hard work. Sometimes, you fail, but you must get back up. Sessions like these are critical, and women must use them. You must absorb at least 80% of the knowledge to grow your business."

WORLD

Xiplomacy: A glimpse of Xi's global insights through maxims quoted in 2024

BEIJING

THROUGHOUT the year of 2024, Chinese President Xi Jinping attended three major diplomatic events hosted in China and made four significant overseas visits, consistently calling for stronger win-win cooperation to build a better world.

Esteemed a masterly communicator, Xi incorporated into his talks, speeches and articles a string of well-known Chinese and foreign maxims, which offer a unique glimpse into his international insights and global vision.

STRATEGIC INDEPENDENCE

"A man of true moral integrity is one who is both friendly but independent, and who does not compromise his principles, and who is independent without any bias or taking sides. How unflinchingly firm he is in his strength!"

In a signed article published prior to his visit to France in May, Xi quoted the saying by ancient Chinese philosopher Confucius, which was recorded in "The Doctrine of the Mean," one of the hallowed Four Books of classical Chinese philosophy.

In a conversation with one of his most faithful disciples millenniums ago, Confucius uttered those words to emphasize the importance of independence besides affability, moderation, and other virtues.

Over 2,000 years later, Confucius' teaching was echoed by French writer Romain Rolland, whose observation was also cited in Xi's article: "It is so much easier to allow oneself to be guided than it is to think for oneself. This abdication is the kernel of the mischief."

Quoting both Confucius and Rolland, the

Chinese leader stressed that both China and France value independence as two major countries. French President Emmanuel Macron, for his part, has on many occasions also repeated his country's adherence to independence.

As Xi said in the article, now with the two countries standing at a new historical starting point, it is time for them to join hands to push for greater progress in bilateral relations and more benefits for the two nations and the broader world.

TRUE FRIENDS NEVER APART

The 2024 Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC), held in Beijing in September, marked a significant milestone in China-Africa relations.

In his toast at the welcoming banquet of the summit, Xi quoted a Chinese poem written by Tang Dynasty poet Zhang Jiuling: "True friends always feel close to each other, no matter the distance between them."

Reflecting on his heartwarming interactions with African leaders over the years, Xi commended the enduring China-Africa bond. "China-Africa friendship remains robust and is growing stronger through generations, no matter how the world changes," he said.

"The China-Africa community with a shared future is deeply rooted in our traditional friendship. Since the mid-20th century, we have been fighting shoulder to shoulder imperialism, colonialism, and hegemonism, and advancing hand in hand along the path of development, revitalization, and modernization," Xi noted.

The following day, in his keynote speech at the summit's opening ceremony, Xi



Chinese President Xi Jinping and his wife Peng Liyuan, together with international guests attending the 2024 Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC), enter the venue for a welcome banquet held at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, capital of China, Sept. 4, 2024. Xinhua

referred to an African proverb: "A friend is someone you share the path with," highlighting that no country should be left behind on the journey to modernization.

During the summit, China proposed 10 partnership actions to be implemented over the next three years, and forged or elevated strategic partnerships with 30 African countries, underscoring its commitment to further deepening cooperation and friendship with Africa.

TOWARD SHARED PROSPERITY TOGETHER

"A man of virtue, while establishing himself and pursuing success, also works to help others establish themselves and succeed," Xi said at the 31st APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting in Lima, citing Confucius. Then he continued to quote a similar Latin American adage: "The only way to be profitably national is to be generously universal."

With those maxims, Xi reaffirmed China's commitment that the country welcomes all parties to continue riding the "express train" of its development, grow together with the Chinese economy, and jointly contribute to peaceful development, mutually beneficial cooperation, and common prosperity.

As he pointed out, the third plenary session of the 20th Communist

Party of China Central Committee, held earlier this year, laid out systematic plans to advance Chinese modernization, which will not only boost China's development but provide new opportunities for the Asia-Pacific region and the world at large.

Over the past decades since it adopted the policy of reform and opening up, China has made remarkable progress. Now as the world's second-largest economy, it has been actively working with its global partners to boost shared development.

Addressing the conference marking the 70th anniversary of the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence in June, Xi referred to three maxims from different cultures to urge the international community, particularly the Global South, to work together in pursuit of shared prosperity.

Besides the Latin American one he mentioned months later at the APEC meeting, a Chinese saying goes, "The benevolent treat others with love, and the wise share with others benefits," and an Arab proverb teaches, "With unity, the fire grows; without unity, the fire extinguishes."

"In the era of economic globalization," Xi stressed at the event, "what is needed is not gaps of division but bridges of communication, not iron curtains of confrontation but highways of cooperation."

Xinhua

Palestine President writes to PM Modi, Congress President Kharge, offers condolences on Manmohan Singh's demise

RAMALLAH

PALESTINIAN President Mahmoud Abbas has written letters to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge to offer condolences on the passing away of former PM Manmohan Singh.

In his letter to PM Modi, Abbas stated, "It is with deep sorrow that we have received the news of the passing of His Excellency Dr Manmohan Singh, former Prime Minister of India, a distinguished leader who dedicated years of service to his country and its people."

"On behalf of the State of Palestine and its people, I extend to Your Excellency, the Government of India, the friendly Indian people, and the family of the late Dr. Singh, our most heartfelt condolences. We join you in mourning this great loss, and we pray for peace and mercy upon his soul," he added.

He expressed hope that India under PM Modi's leadership will continue to prosper and thrive. In the letter, he wrote, "May the Republic of India, under your esteemed leadership, continue to prosper and thrive. Please accept, Your Excellency, the assurances of my highest respect and sympathy and our sincere condolences."

In his letter to Mallikarjun Kharge, Mahmoud Abbas extended condolences to him, members of Congress and Manmohan Singh's family.

"On behalf of the State of Palestine and its people, I extend to you, the members of the Party, and the family of the late Dr. Singh, our most heartfelt condolences. We join you in mourning this great loss, and we pray for peace and mercy upon his soul," the letter read.

Manmohan Singh passed away at AIIMS on Thursday night at the age of 92 due to age-related medical conditions. He had a sudden loss of consciousness at home after which he was rushed to the hospital.

Earlier in the day, Charge d'affaires of the Palestine Embassy in New Delhi, Abed Elrazeg Abu Jazer, expressed deep sorrow over the passing of Singh, offering condolences to the Congress party, the people of India, and Singh's family.

He stated, "I am here in India posted since 2014 to represent my country - my people. We today present our deepest condolence to the Congress party and the people of India, to all the friends and family on the loss of a wise man, former Prime Minister."

He further described Singh as a "remarkable Indian politician and economist" and emphasised that Palestine stands with Singh's legacy. Abu Jazer also highlighted the long-standing relationship between Singh and Palestine over the years.

"Palestine is with the former PM of India, Manmohan Singh. We have a history of relationship with him when he was in the Ministry of Finance in 1991. When he became the PM in 2004, he had met the President of Palestine, Mahmoud Abbas many times," he said.

He noted that this partnership began in 2005, after Mahmoud Abbas was elected President of Palestine, and continued with meetings in Delhi in 2008, 2010, and 2012. Abu Jazer fondly recalled Singh's support in establishing the Palestinian Embassy in Delhi, stating, "He honoured Palestine's people by giving a piece of land for establishing the Palestine Embassy in Delhi, and he also gave support to build this embassy."

Manmohan Singh was cremated with full state honours at Nigambodh Ghat in Delhi's Kashmere Gate in the presence of his family, friends, colleagues and government dignitaries on Saturday.

President Droupadi Murmu, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union Home Minister Amit Shah, and Defence Minister Rajnath Singh paid their last respects to the former PM by placing a wreath near his mortal remains earlier today.

The last rites were carried out at the VIP Ghat as per the Sikh rituals. Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge along with Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi were also present for the cremation ceremony after they paid tribute to the former Prime Minister.

Singh's political career spanned several decades, with notable positions including Finance Minister from 1991 to 1996, during which he spearheaded economic reforms that transformed India's economy.

He served as the Prime Minister of India from 2004 to 2014, succeeding Atal Bihari Vajpayee. His tenure is particularly remembered for his steady leadership during economic crises and his contributions to modernizing India's economy.

He was succeeded by Narendra Modi in 2014 after the Congress-led UPA lost the general elections.

ANI

S. Korea secures black boxes from crashed passenger jet, death toll rises to 167

SEOUL

SOUTH Korea's transport ministry said on Sunday that its investigation unit secured both of the two black boxes from a crashed passenger jet that has killed at least 181 people onboard.

An official with the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport said in a televised press briefing that the retrieval of both flight data and voice recorders was completed to look into the exact cause of the accident.

The passenger plane with 175 passengers, including 173 South Koreans and two Thais, as well as six flight attendants on board crashed while attempting to land at the Muan International Airport, some 290 km southwest of the capital Seoul, at about 9:07 a.m. local time (0007 GMT) on Sunday.

The Jeju Air flight 7C2216 from Bangkok, Thailand skidded off runway and crashed into the outer wall of the runway, with its fuselage broken in half and catching fire.

Most of the 181 people aboard the plane was presumed to have been killed except two rescued crew members at the age of 33 and 25 each, according to the fire au-



This photo shows the site of an airplane crash at an airport in Muan, southwest South Korea, yesterday. All the 181 people aboard a South Korean airplane that crashed on Sunday at the country's southwestern airport were believed to have been killed except two rescued, multiple media outlets said citing the fire authorities. (NEWSIS via Xinhua)

thorities. Operations were underway to recover the missing bodies.

The fire authorities estimated that the accident may have been caused by bird strike that led to landing gear failure.

After making the first landing attempt, the aircraft went around into the air due

to the estimated malfunctioning of landing gear and made the second landing attempt with a belly-landing that resulted in the crash into the wall.

A TV footage showed a big plume of black smoke billowing out of the Boeing 737-800 engulfed by flames. Another

footage showed an engine on the plane's right wing emitting smoke with flames before attempting to land.

The transport ministry added that it may take at least months to years to figure out the exact cause of the accident.

Agencies

Macao breaks new ground in practice of 'one country, two systems'

OVER the past 25 years since Macao's return to China, the practice of "one country, two systems" with Macao characteristics has achieved remarkable success, thanks to the Chinese central government's strong support and the continuous efforts made by the Macao Special Administrative Region (SAR) government and all sectors of society.

Under the "one country, two systems" framework, Macao has made remarkable strides in politics, economy, improvement of people's livelihoods, and regional development, with increasing international influence.

"One country, two systems" is an unprecedented innovation. Since Macao's return to China, chief executives in each term and their respective governance teams have

been committed to fully and faithfully implementing this fundamental principle.

The institutional framework supporting the implementation of the Constitution and the Basic Law of the Macao SAR has been continuously refined to ensure the effective functioning of the SAR's constitutional order.

Macao's practice of "one country, two systems" is consistently based on an accurate understanding of the guiding principles of the Constitution and the Basic Law, the Chinese central government's overall jurisdiction, and compliance with the authority of these legal foundations.

Apart from a top-level design and institutional arrangement, "one country, two systems" is also a cor-

nerstone driving Macao's economic development, livelihood improvement, and social stability.

"We Macao people have deeply felt the benefits of 'one country, two systems.' We are both beneficiaries and practitioners of this principle," said Cheong Chok Man, director of the Policy Research and Regional Development Bureau under the Macao SAR government.

Over the past 25 years, Macao has undergone the fastest development of the highest quality in its history, marked by the strongest sense of fulfillment, happiness and security of the people.

In the early days of Macao returned to China, there was a big economic gap between the SAR and the "Four Asian Tigers," also known as the "small dragon" economies of

East Asia. Back then, the per capita GDP of Macao ranked only around 40th in the world.

Thanks to the comprehensive and targeted implementation of "one country, two systems," the tremendous opportunities brought by the rapid development of the Chinese mainland, and the concerted efforts of the Macao SAR government and all sectors of society, Macao has experienced an amazing transformation and achieved remarkable progress in economic and social development that has attracted worldwide attention.

By the end of September 2024, Macao's fiscal reserves had amounted to 617 billion patacas (\$77.04 billion), and foreign exchange reserves had reached 230.6 billion patacas.

With the support of the Chinese central government, Macao has seen a larger space for development.

In December 2015, the Chinese central government approved Macao's land reclamation plans and granted it administration over 85 square kilometers of surrounding waters, to align with its land area of 33.3 square kilometers. It also launched a general plan for developing the Macao SAR to improve the living environment, develop marine tourism, and promote regional cooperation.

In 2021, the Guangdong-Macao in-depth cooperation zone was established to deepen collaboration between Macao and south China's Guangdong province. The zone, on the island of Hengqin in Zhuhai, Guangdong, which covers an area

of 106.46 square meters, has further expanded the development space of Macao to 224.76 square meters.

The establishment of the cooperation zone also marked the beginning of a new management mechanism that features mutual discussion, joint construction, joint administration and shared benefits between Macao and Guangdong.

Since its return to China, Macao has experienced a continuous expansion of institutional and policy space.

In September 2021, China's central authorities issued a general plan for building the Guangdong-Macao in-depth cooperation zone in Hengqin, mapping out a blueprint for the cooperation zone.

People's Daily

An awakened Africa joins hands with Global South to advance modernisation

NAIROBI

IN 2024, Africa has taken center stage on the global development agenda, demonstrating the continent's resilience and its deepening ties with the Global South in the international arena.

From the 19th Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement and the 3rd South Summit held in Uganda to the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) Beijing Summit, Africa has showcased its determination and capability to unite the Global South in achieving shared development and pursuing modernization.

According to the International Monetary Fund, Africa is one of the fastest-growing regions in the global economic landscape in 2024. Amid rapid and profound changes in the world, the vast continent's potential and vitality have solidified its role as a key player in shaping the future.

GROWTH ENGINE OF FUTURE

Amid a complex and evolving global landscape, African nations are seeking self-reliant development through regional integration.

According to the African Development Bank, Africa's economic growth is projected to rebound to 3.7 percent in 2024, exceeding the global average, and climb to 4.3 percent in 2025, making it the world's second-fastest-growing region after Asia.

Many African countries held elections this year. From the Comoros in East Africa to Senegal in West Africa, most elections were conducted smoothly and orderly. The new governments have placed economic development at the forefront of their agendas, recognizing that self-reliance is essential for carving out a competitive position on the global stage.

To this end, African countries are accelerating the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). The agreement has been enacted in several nations, including South Africa, Ghana and Kenya. According to a report by Al-Mal News, an Egyptian daily, intra-regional trade is projected to grow from 192.2 billion U.S. dollars in 2023 to 520 billion dollars by 2030 following the launch of the AfCFTA.

The World Bank forecast that the AfCFTA could increase the continent's income by 7 percent by 2035 and lift 30 million people out of extreme poverty. Meanwhile, countries are ramping up investments in technological innovation and talent development, driving industrial upgrades through initiatives such as establishing research funds and developing technology parks.

According to a report by the International Telecommunication Union, the number of internet users in Africa has surged from 181 million in 2014 to nearly 646 million in 2024, and this figure could exceed 1.1 billion by 2029, which will enable Africa to integrate more effectively into the global economy.

Africa's development is fueled not only by its strong internal momentum but also by the rise of the Global South. At this year's G20 summit in Brazil in November, China outlined its eight actions for global development, including pursuing high-quality Belt and Road cooperation and supporting African development. These pragmatic measures have been widely recognized by developing countries.



An electric SGR train stops at Dar es Salaam Station in Tanzania, on Aug. 1, 2024. (Photo by Emmanuel Herman/Xinhua)

Moreover, China, Brazil, South Africa and the African Union (AU) jointly launched an Initiative on International Cooperation in Open Science to bring the benefits of global scientific and technological innovation to the Global South.

"We committed ourselves to have a vision that transcends national borders and individual interests while recognizing that the force of Africa resides in its unity," said Moussa Faki Mahamat, chairperson of the AU Commission, at the fourth Ordinary Session of the sixth parliament of the Pan-African Parliament in South Africa in November.

RISING POWER OF AFRICA

In 2024, Africa has reaffirmed its strong commitment to building a more just and equitable international order. This is evident in its advocacy for reforms in global governance, efforts to mediate geopolitical crises and advancements in energy transition.

On Jan. 1, Egypt and Ethiopia officially joined BRICS, marking another African addition to BRICS cooperation following South Africa's participation.

The expansion of the BRICS membership highlights the bloc's intention to enhance multilateral cooperation and uphold the voice and interests of developing countries at various international and regional forums, said Egyptian President Abdel-Fattah el-Sisi.

In November, the AU participated as a full member in the G20 summit for the first time, joining others to call for a fairer international financial system, advocating for debt relief, and safeguarding the interests of developing countries. On Dec. 1, South Africa assumed the G20 presidency, becoming the first African nation to hold this position. The theme of its presidency, "Solidarity, Equality, and Sustainability," reflects a distinct African vision for future global governance.

The AU's entry into the G20 "provides a platform for African nations to address critical global issues," said Balew Demissie, a communication and publication consultant at the Policy Studies Institute of Ethiopia.

"Through its participation, the AU can address challenges such as poverty, underdevelopment, and climate vulnerability while strengthening regional solidarity and increasing Africa's influence on global policy decisions," Demissie said.

Analysts observed that Africa is reassessing its developmental trajectory, seeking to break free from the constraints of Western development models and striving for political, economic and cultural independence. This shift is often described as Africa's "second awakening" since the national liberation movements in the mid-to-late 20th century.

Over the past year, countries such as Niger, Senegal and Chad have called for the withdrawal of the U.S. and French military forces from their territories.

Africa is no longer content to be the "silent majority" and is emerging as a key force in reshaping the international order, with African leaders actively pursuing political solutions to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict within multilateral frameworks and underlining their resolve to promote global peace, development and justice.

The AU's Agenda 2063 envisions Africa as "an integrated, prosperous and peaceful continent, driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in the global arena." To achieve this vision, African countries are playing an active role in Global South partnerships.

"Africa has a stake in a truly multilateral global order," said Mwangi Wachira, former World Bank economist and advisor to the Kenyan government. "Hopefully, it will have more than a token role in the ongoing drive for an equitable multilateral global order."

UNITED EFFORTS TOWARD MODERNIZATION

In September, the FOCAC Summit held in Beijing marked another historic milestone in China-Africa relations and for the broader Global South. China and Africa vowed to join hands to implement 10 partnership actions to advance modernization.

As a member of the Global South, China has consistently advocated for an open global economy, and helped developing countries, particularly African nations and the least-developed countries, to actively participate in international industrial cooperation and benefit from economic globalization.

In November, the 7th China International Import Expo (CIIE) in Shanghai showcased a range of African products, including South African avocados, Tanzanian honey and Mauritian sugar, which made their debut this year. The expo highlighted China's commitment to openness and its efforts to help African products gain access to the vast Chinese and global markets.

Devesh Dukhira, chief executive of the Mauritius Sugar Syndicate, said that the Chinese market's long-term contribution will be substantial, thanks to the CIIE and the China-Mauritius Free Trade Agreement.

By synergizing the Belt and Road Initiative and the Global Development Initiative with Agenda 2063 and African nations' development strategies, China and African countries are continuously exploring new areas of collaboration.

Starting Dec. 1, China has given all the least-developed countries with which it has diplomatic relations, including 33 African nations, zero-tariff treatment for 100 percent tariff lines, becoming the first major developing country and the first major economy to take such a measure. This policy will boost African industrial growth, create jobs and reduce poverty.

Xinhua

Sudan's certificate exams kick off amid protracted conflict

KHARTOUM

THE Sudan Certificate Examinations kicked off on Saturday against a backdrop of gunfire and smoke from ongoing battles. These critical exams, essential for university enrollment, are being conducted in schools situated on the front lines, as well as in refugee camps and shelters for displaced persons.

A total of 343,644 students are sitting for these pivotal exams at 2,300 centers across Sudan and abroad, while approximately 150,000 students are unable to participate due to the ongoing conflict.

The exams, traditionally held at the end of secondary school, were postponed for nearly two years owing to the war that erupted between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) on April 15, 2023.

Before the outbreak of the war, more than 570,000 students had been preparing to sit for the exams in 2023. However, the violence delayed them for nearly 20 months until the Ministry of Education rescheduled the exams to begin on Dec. 28, 2024.

While the Sudanese authorities defended the decision to hold the exams under the current circumstances, other parties criticized the move. "It was necessary to hold the exams for the batch postponed until 2023, to avoid accumulation of batches," Sudanese Minister of Education, Ahmed Khalifa, said in a statement. He noted that arrangements were in place for conducting the exams in safe regions and at 46 overseas centers across 15 countries hosting Sudanese refugees.

However, the RSF voiced rejection to the decision to hold the exams. "Holding the exams in certain areas and excluding other states of the country is part of policies tending to fragment Sudan and demonstrates a disregard for the future of thousands of students," the RSF said in a statement on Saturday.

The non-governmental Sudanese Teachers Committee said that students in eight of the country's 18 states will not be able to sit for the exams, while those in six states could only attend partially.

However, according to a report by the General Administration of Sudan Examinations on Thursday, exams are being conducted fully in only four states - Northern State, Red Sea, Gedaref, and Kassala - and partially in eight others, including Khartoum, River Nile, White Nile, Blue Nile, North Darfur, Gezira, Sinnar, and North Kordofan. Six states, including South Darfur, Central Darfur, West Darfur, East Darfur, South Kordofan, and West Kordofan, are completely excluded.

Social media in Sudan was abuzz with the story of student Shams Al-Hafiz Abdullah, who traveled 2,662 kilometers from a Sudanese refugee camp in the Chadian city of Abeche to Al-Damar city in River Nile State in northern Sudan to sit for the exams.

Khalifa, the education minister, received the student and her mother at the entrance to Al-Damar on Friday, saying her story was "inspirational" for students, according to the ministry's media office. Local media also published an inspiring story of 31 students from El Geteina, a city located some 100 km south of the Sudanese capital, Khartoum, who used traditional boats to cross the White Nile to sit for the exams in the Al-Duwaim city on the western bank of the White Nile, defying the ongoing war and the RSF, which controls the city.



Students sit for the Sudan Certificate Examinations at a test center in Dongola, Sudan, on Sunday. The Sudan Certificate Examinations kicked off on Saturday against a backdrop of gunfire and smoke from ongoing battles. These critical exams, essential for university enrollment, are being conducted in schools situated on the front lines, as well as in refugee camps and shelters for displaced persons. Xinhua

Macao actively integrates into China's overall development

THE Hengqin Line of the Light Rapid Transit (LRT), which connects China's Macao Special Administrative Region (SAR) and Hengqin Island in Zhuhai, south China's Guangdong province, officially opened on Dec. 2 this year.

The line has two stations, Lotus Station in Macao SAR and Hengqin Station, with a total traveling time of only two minutes.

"The extension of the LRT network to Hengqin has enabled the rapid transfer to the Guangzhou-Zhuhai Intercity Rail, which had also been extended to link Hengqin Port. The interconnected rail system has further enhanced Macao's integration into the 'one-hour living circle' of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (GBA)," said Raimundo Arrais do Rosario, secretary for transport and public works of Macao SAR.

Hengqin, located just across the river from Macao, enjoys a natural advantage for Guangdong-Macao cooperation. The Chinese central government decided to develop Hengqin Island in 2009. In 2021, the Guangdong-Macao In-Depth Cooperation Zone (hereafter referred to as "cooperation zone") was established in Hengqin to foster closer connection between Guangdong and Macao. After 15 years of development, Hengqin has become a vibrant hub for innovation and a frontier of opening up.

Calvin Sio, founder of Zence Object Technology, an innovative company dedicated to solving global waste problems, is a young entrepreneur from Macao. Starting in Macao, the company has expanded its presence to Guangdong province. It has set up an R&D headquarters in Hengqin, a sales center in Shenzhen, and a smart factory in Dongguan.

"The GBA offers young people from Macao a broader platform for entrepreneurship and more opportunities to collaborate with cities in the Chinese mainland. More and more Macao entrepreneurs are embracing new prospects in Hengqin and across the GBA," he said.

Today, in the cooperation zone, a new model of industrial synergy is taking shape, which integrates Macao's platforms, international resources, and Hengqin's development opportunities to yield shared results. The zone has entered a fast track of development, marked by accelerated aggregation of innovative elements for new quality productive forces. Enterprises are increasingly flocking to the zone, and the efforts to attract talent have delivered tangible results.

As of now, the cooperation zone has recognized the initial six innovation and entrepreneurship bases for Macao youth, and acknowledged 86 startups initiated by young entrepreneurs from



A technician helps a resident from Macao recharge his new energy vehicle in Zhuhai, south China's Guangdong province. (Photo: Zhou Zhiwang/ People's Daily Online)

Macao in two groups. To date, it has incubated 443 new projects based in Macao.

In recent years, Hengqin has experienced a remarkable enhancement in its overall strength and a deeper connection with Macao.

In 2023, the GDP of the cooperation zone reached 47.25 billion yuan (\$6.49 billion). By the end of that year, the zone had hosted 5,952 Macao-invested enterprises, with their annual added

value reaching 298 billion yuan, a year-on-year surge of 186.2 percent and 1.9 times of that in 2021.

In the first three quarters of 2024, the new industries that the cooperation zone specifically focuses on - scientific and technological R&D, high-end manufacturing, traditional Chinese medicine, culture and tourism, conventions and exhibitions, and modern finance - reported an added value of 18.31 billion yuan, accounting for 49 percent of the

zone's total GDP.

Deepened people-to-people exchanges with mainland

Every weekend, vehicles heading north from Macao would flow through the streets near the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge, making their way to border checkpoints.

According to Ms. Deng, a Macao resident, her holiday plans often include jogging, rowing, and photographing in Hengqin, dining in Zhongshan, shopping in Jiangmen, or visiting attractions like Chimelong. It has become a regular practice for people living in Macao to travel to the mainland.

In recent years, Guangdong and Macao have worked to facilitate infrastructure "hard connectivity" and rules and standards "soft connectivity," fostering a high-level, integrated system of opening up.

For instance, the "northbound travel for Macao vehicles" scheme has been jointly implemented by the two sides, which allows eligible Macao private cars to travel between Macao and Guangdong via the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge without the need to obtain regular quotas.

Besides, passenger and cargo vehicles crossing the border checkpoint between Macao and the Guangdong-Macao In-Depth Cooperation Zone in Hengqin, Zhuhai, can utilize the one-

stop customs clearance service as coordinated by the two sides instead of the previous respective checks.

Thanks to the mutual recognition and exchanges of driving licenses, the mainland and Macao allow individuals holding valid driving licenses issued by authorities from either side to drive directly through or obtain driving permits on the other side without any additional tests.

These efforts have enabled a more efficient flow of people, goods and services between the two sides. Macao residents now enjoy greater convenience in their daily lives along with a wider range of job opportunities available on the mainland.

For example, Macao professionals in architecture, traditional Chinese medicine, healthcare, pharmacy, education, and law have been provided with more preferential policies to work in Hengqin and the GBA. The vocational qualifications for chefs, beauticians, restaurant staff, and professionals in other service sectors are now mutually recognized by Macao and Guangdong.

Programs like the Cross-boundary Wealth Management Connect Scheme in the GBA, cross-boundary government services, and youth innovation and entrepreneurship initiatives continue to improve, making it easier for Macao residents to live and work on the mainland. **People's Daily**

Kings now fall to Lakers in first game since firing Mike Brown



Sacramento Kings forward Keegan Murray (13) shoots against Los Angeles Lakers forward Cam Reddish (5) during the second half at Crypto.com Arena in Los Angeles, California, USA, on December 28, 2024. Agencies

By Field Level Media

ANTHONY Davis scored 36 points with 15 rebounds and Austin Reaves added 26 points with a career-high 16 assists as the short-handed Los Angeles Lakers earned a 132-122 victory Saturday over the visiting Sacramento Kings, who were playing one day after head coach Mike Brown was fired.

Playing without star LeBron James (illness), while Gabe Vincent (oblique) did not see time in the second half, the Lakers got past the Kings as Rui Hachimura scored 21 points, while rookie Dalton Knecht had 18.

De'Aaron Fox scored 14 of his 29 points in the fourth quarter with 12 assists, while DeMar DeRozan scored 25 points for the Kings, who have lost six consecutive games

for the first time since an eight-game losing streak in January of 2022.

Sacramento was playing under the guidance of interim head coach Doug Christie.

Malik Monk scored 20 points and Domantas Sabonis had 14 points with 12 rebounds before fouling out as the Kings ended the season series 0-4 against the Lakers, including three defeats in a span of 10 days.

The game was tied 76-76 with 9:32 remaining in the third quarter before the Lakers took charge with a 12-2 run to take an 88-78 lead. Los Angeles closed the third period on a 9-0 run, with five points from Davis, to take a 107-90 lead into the fourth.

The Kings used a 12-0 run in the final quarter to get within 113-105 with 7:28 remaining after a 3-pointer from Fox. Sabonis fouled out with 5:20

remaining and Sacramento ran out of gas down the stretch.

Both teams were red hot from the floor in the first half, with the Lakers taking a 40-31 lead by shooting 73.9 percent in the first quarter and 6 of 8 (75.0 percent) from 3-point range.

The Kings went into halftime with a 66-65 lead after shooting 53.8 percent over the first two quarters, while the Lakers shot 58.5 percent in the half.

Meanwhile, Nikola Jokic scored 37 points, Jamal Murray added 34 and the host Denver Nuggets held off a furious rally in the fourth quarter to beat the Detroit Pistons 134-121 on Saturday night.

Michael Porter Jr. contributed 26 points and Christian Braun scored 10 for Denver, which is 6-0 this season in the second game of back-to-backs.

Cade Cunningham

and Jaden Ivey scored 17 points apiece, Malik Beasley added 14, Jalen Duren and Ronald Holland II each finished with 12 and Ausar Thompson notched 10 for Detroit, which went 3-1 on its four-game Western Conference road trip.

The Pistons' reserves played the entire fourth quarter and trimmed what was once a 25-point deficit to 128-121 on Holland's 3-pointer with 2:35 left before Jokic scored the final six points of the contest to seal the victory.

Denver led by six at halftime, 67-61, but couldn't really pull away until about five minutes had gone by in the third quarter. Porter was fouled on a 3-point attempt and made all three of his ensuing foul shots, then drained a triple before Braun hit two more free throws to make it 89-75 Nuggets.

Thompson cut Detroit's deficit to 11 with a layup

with 4:52 remaining in the third, but Denver controlled the rest of the period. Russell Westbrook drew an offensive foul on Cunningham immediately after he was called for one, sparking the Nuggets.

Over the final 3:10 of the third quarter, Denver put together a monster 20-6 outburst that had the Nuggets heading into the fourth up 114-89.

Jokic hit all four of his 3-point attempts during his 16-point first quarter and scored 19 total points in a back-and-forth first half. Detroit led 54-49 just past the midpoint of the second quarter before the Nuggets rallied.

After the teams ended up in a 58-58 tie, Denver rattled off nine unanswered points. Ivey's corner 3-pointer with 30.7 seconds left in the first half made it 67-61 at intermission.

REUTERS

Australia's tail wags to frustrate India in Melbourne test

By Ian Ransom

A MARNUS Labuschagne half-century and stubborn tail-end batting drove Australia to a 333-run lead at the end of day four in the fourth test in Melbourne yesterday, leaving India facing a record chase to steal victory.

Nathan Lyon and Scott Boland marched off to a big ovation from home fans at the Melbourne Cricket Ground, having combined for an unbeaten 55-run partnership for the final wicket as Australia went to stumps at 228 for nine.

Lyon was 41 not out, with number 11 Boland on 10 and India's hopes of winning badly diminished in the final hour.

With the five-test series level at 1-1, India's pace dynamo Jasprit Bumrah (pictured) threatened to turn the match with a three-wicket burst before tea in front of 43,867 fans.

But number three Labuschagne (70) and his captain Pat Cummins (41) steadied Australia with a 57-run partnership before Boland and Lyon frustrated India further.

The day ended sourly for the tourists when Bumrah had Lyon caught in the slips by a juggling KL Rahul in the final over -- with a no-ball.

Only one team has chased more than 300 for victory in an MCG test; England mowed down 332 to beat Australia in 1928.

While Boland and Lyon made the going look easy, Labuschagne said there was enough in the pitch for Australia's bowlers on day five.

"The movement (off the seam) has probably been the same but just the amount of bounce is significantly lower," Labuschagne told reporters of the changing wicket.

"So that makes for pretty tricky batting because more balls are hitting the stumps from a shorter length."

As impressive as Australia's rear-guard resistance was, it followed some shoddy middle order batting.

Having been in command at 80 for two, Australia crumbled in a Bumrah-led onslaught to slump to 91 for six.

REUTERS

Mohammed Siraj triggered the collapse when Steve Smith chased a wide, full delivery and nicked behind to wicketkeeper Rishabh Pant to be out for 13.

Bumrah had Travis Head caught at square leg for one to earn his 200th test wicket.

He struck again four balls later to remove number six Mitchell Marsh for a duck with a gloved catch to Pant before bowling Alex Carey through bat and pad for two.

Australia were wobbling but Cummins rode out the storm with typical defiance.

Having scored 49 in the first innings, he produced a vital 41 to stall India's momentum.

When Labuschagne was out lbw to Siraj, Cummins added another 25 runs with Mitchell Starc (five) and Lyon before falling to the spin of all-rounder Ravindra Jadeja.

Fielding mishaps also cost India. Yashasvi Jaiswal dropped two chances, with Labuschagne spared at 46 when he nicked Akash Deep to the gully and opener Usman Khawaja pre-ripped on two with a spill at leg gully.

Khawaja went on to make 21 before Siraj bowled him in the morning.

Nitish Kumar Reddy also missed a tough chance to remove Cummins for nine, misjudging the flight of the ball when chasing the Aussie skipper's slog over mid-off.

India may still count themselves blessed to be in the game at all. They were on the ropes on day three until Reddy rescued them with a maiden century.

The all-rounder finished with 114, his 189-ball vigil ended by spinner Lyon a few overs into the fourth morning.

"If you ask me, I think everyone is capable of playing on this pitch," the 21-year-old told reporters.

"We'll come back strong in the batting order."

The healthy day four crowd brought total match attendance to 299,329, a record for a Boxing Day test in Melbourne.



Soccer youth team players pictured recently during a training session at the Jakaya Kikwete Sports Park grounds in Dar es Salaam. PHOTO: CORRESPONDENT JUMANNE JUMA

Australia's tail wags to frustrate India in Melbourne test

PERTH

ALEXANDER Zverev eased past Thiago Monteiro 6-4 6-4 as Germany beat Brazil for a winning start to their United Cup defence yesterday while the Czech Republic got the better of Norway in a hard-fought match.

Zverev had a lengthy spell on the sidelines after damaging his ankle ligaments at the 2022 French Open but returned to his career-high ranking of number two following his Paris Masters triumph

last month.

The 27-year-old continued his good form in the mixed team tournament that kicks off the new season as he used his heavy shots from the baseline to grab a break in the first game and took the opening set on serve with a huge ace.

Zverev stepped up a gear at the start of the next set with a stunning backhand winner en route to another break and he closed out the match comfortably to give Germany an unas-

sailable 2-0 lead ahead of the mixed doubles match.

"I'm very happy to be back, very happy to be playing for team Germany," said Zverev. "Perth is one of my favourite cities in Australia, I really enjoy my time here."

"I didn't play that much tennis in the off season, I was actually in the gym... so the work has paid off I guess."

Laura Siegemund had earlier earned Germany their first point in the Group E encounter with a 6-3 1-6 6-4 victory over

Beatriz Haddad Maia at the RAC Arena.

Meanwhile, former French Open runner-up Karolina Muchova got her campaign up and running with a 6-2 6-2 win over Malene Helgo in Sydney but Norway levelled the Group B clash thanks to Casper Ruud's battling effort.

Ruud needed a couple of medical timeouts for a left thigh problem before seeing off Thomas Machac 7-6(6) 5-7 6-4 but the world number six was unable to return for the

mixed doubles decider that followed.

United Cup debutant Muchova and Machac then shrugged off the quick turnaround from their singles matches to ease past Ulrikke Eikeri and Viktor Durasovic 6-4 6-4 at the Ken Rosewall Arena.

United States, the inaugural champions of the tournament in 2023, play Canada in Perth later in the day while Italy were in action against Switzerland in Sydney.

REUTERS



Manchester City's poor run has made Guardiola realise how good they were

By Lori Ewing

MANCHESTER City boss Pep Guardiola said it had sunk in during his team's shocking run of results, the worst stretch in his mostly glittering managerial career, how good they were after winning an unprecedented four straight Premier League titles.

City's 1-1 home draw with Everton on Boxing Day left them down in seventh place, five points off the top four and 14 adrift of leaders Liverpool, who have a game in hand. They have won once in their last 13 games in all competitions.

"That makes me remember how good was the past," he said after Thursday's match. "That's the truth, that has made me realise now what we have done, because sometimes you have injuries, and how many years we were incredibly, incredibly consistent."

"But, yeah, you expect a little bit down. We didn't expect (this) much, and the main reason is having seven, eight important injured players."

"But I see the team, the spirit in training, how focused they are. And we saw (progress in Saturday's) game, we saw it, but unfortunately we could not get the result that we wanted."

Guardiola said last week that City were at risk of missing out on Champions League qualification this season in what would be a shocking turn of events for the reigning champions.

The 53-year-old, who signed a two-year contract extension last month, said frustration over poor results has not affected his desire to steer City back to their previous top form.

"I will not give up. I want to do it. And with the situations that we have, we have to do it," Guardiola said.

"Of course I want it. Everybody wants it. I don't want to disappoint my people, in terms of the club, in terms of the fans, or the people who love this club."

Guardiola shook his head when asked whether his team's slump had made him even more determined to please people.

"It has been since the arrival of my career as a football player, as a manager, I think every one of us in our job wants to please the people, we want to do good our jobs. That is undeniable. That is not a question mark, I would say."

If City are to right the ship, the next few weeks could be the best time to do it. Sunday's match at Leicester City is the first of four successive league games against teams in the bottom half of the table.

REUTERS

Inzaghi celebrates Cagliari victory as Martinez's goal drought ends

CAGLIARI, Italy

INTER coach Simone Inzaghi reaffirmed his faith in striker Lautaro Martinez after he ended his goal drought in Saturday's 3-0 win over Cagliari that kept the Nerazzurri at the top of Serie A.

Inter's skipper had not scored for his club since Nov. 3 in a 1-0 win over Venezia.

But the Argentine got back on the scoresheet in the 71st minute on Saturday with a volley to put his team two up.

Inzaghi praised Martinez's resilience despite his recent struggles.

"Naturally, this situation was weighing on him, though we told him to relax and that he continued to give the team so much with his work. Lautaro (Martinez) will never be a problem for Inter, only a resource," Inzaghi told DAZN streaming service.

Alessandro Bastoni's header and Hakan Calhanoglu's penalty sealed Inter's fifth consecutive away win. Inzaghi praised his side's hard work from set-pieces and the contributions of players such as Federico Dimarco, Calhanoglu and Kristjan Asllani.

"At the end of the first half, we congratulated the team on their performance and knew we just had to keep going against a tenacious Cagliari side," Inzaghi added.

The manager was upbeat as he set his sights on Inter's fourth consecutive Supercoppa title and a 21st Scudetto after lifting the title last season.

"This exciting 2024 ends with the 20th Scudetto that will forever unite us with the fans and directors, but now we go to Saudi Arabia for the Supercoppa hoping to win it for the fourth year in a row." Inter are level in the league on 40 points with Atalanta, who play at Lazio later on Saturday.

The two sides will also meet in the semi-finals of the Supercoppa Italiana in Saudi Arabia on Jan. 2, with the winner advancing to face either Juventus or Milan.

"We know that we are Inter, we have objectives and it is only right to declare them. It takes a lot of sacrifice, January and February will have us playing constantly, but I am fortunate to have players ready to give their all, whether for 95 minutes or five, and that is important," Inzaghi added.

REUTERS

Manchester City's hearing looms over football in 2025 - and the ramifications will be seismic



By Miguel Delaney

AS football enters the year of Uefa's 70th anniversary, amid so many concerns, it is probably worth celebrating one great virtue. The game has been a unified pyramid for the majority of its history, and certainly since the European body's founding.

This is a virtue that speaks to football's joyous universality. It has never endured the splits of boxing or cricket, or even had to withstand sustained threats of similar. Until now.

The great fear is whether 2025 will be the year when the game starts to come apart. There are already many forces assailing it, which is why it's even more of a problem the sport is bursting at the seams from a packed calendar.

It's the worst possible time for stress on the system... such as a legal case widely seen as an existential threat to the sport as we know it. The outcome of the Manchester City hearing is going to change the face of the planet's most powerful football competition, and consequently global football.

An initial judgment is expected as early as February, although it is anticipated it will lead to an appeal from either side which could even drag into 2026.

The silence around the hearing makes it even more futile to try to "predict" any judgment, but there are three issues that informed individuals feel the potential outcome might hinge on. The Independent has learnt.

One is the alleged breaches for non-compliance, given that a mem-

bers' club like the Premier League requires aid with any investigation. That in itself could lead to a big punishment, given what lawyers could argue it represents.

Others point to the leaks about a second contract to Roberto Mancini, as well as details around a figure described as a broker, named "Jaber Mohamed".

On the club's own admission in the initial Uefa hearing, Abu Dhabi United Group "caused" £30m to be paid by Mohamed on behalf of main sponsor Etisalat over 2012 and 2013. The telecom company didn't actually pay for anything until 2015.

These are issues that will warrant explanation, especially given the case is ultimately about whether financial information was accurately disclosed. City insist on their innocence.

Either they will have proved that and the Premier League will have spent millions on a case that could create other huge issues, or the competition's recent history will be altered, with its champions severely punished.

The City hearing isn't the only legal case weighing over football. The 2023-24 period saw a number of other judgments, almost all of which criticised the governance of Fifa and Uefa, that have laid a legal bedrock for future challenges.

The wonder is whether any party with sufficient means decides to properly test that and open real fissures in the game. The City hearing may also prove a catalyst in that sense. It could be open season.

The European Union case filed by the leagues and players against Fifa could involve thousands

of documents and correspondences coming into the open. There may even be upheaval in the transfer market from the Lassana Diarra judgment, as Fifa assesses the suggestions from its "global dialogue".

The cracks in the calendar are all the more important in that context, with everyone feeling the weight of the expanded European competition and the new Club World Cup. The latter has already forced the African Cup of Nations to be moved to the end of the year and its final into 2026, while the US-based tournament also goes up against the Women's Euros in Switzerland.

Stakeholders will be less invested in preserving the sanctity of the pyramid if they don't feel the pyramid is working for them, on even the most basic terms.

Could this even be the year where someone follows through and takes legal action over a refereeing decision, destroying the sanctity of match results?

Such threats have been coming for a long time, given the financial disparity in the sport.

And yet, the irony is that disparity may temporarily bring some badly needed surprises. That could be a

theme of 2025.

Even the wealthiest clubs are starting to struggle physically with how much football there is, bringing less consistency. Might that create sufficient opening for shock results by the season's end?

It's why so much depends on these competition expansions proving a success. We may have a first answer by the end of January, with Uefa needing the final night of the new Champions League opening stage to offer the chaotic excitement it has been engineered towards.

The Club World Cup is much more of an unknown, especially with how it comes at the end of the most intense season football has ever seen.

Will the big clubs be able to take it as seriously as Fifa requires, even if they want to? Real Madrid will be desperate to echo their history in the European Cup and win the first.

Florentino Perez certainly wants victory in a competition others disparagingly describe as "the Gianni Infantino trophy".

His personal investment in it creates extra pressure surrounding a highly debated legacy as Fifa president.

It is the sort of idea that

pushes the game to saturation point, where nothing feels like it matters as much and people start to switch off.

There are virtues to the tournament despite the criticisms about how Fifa has just unilaterally imposed it on the game and how its prize money might worsen financial disparity. It lifts clubs outside western Europe to the top level, at least spreading some money, amid potentially fascinating cultural clashes.

The game as it's played on the pitch may even be entering a newly fascinating period, too. If the global dominance of Pep Guardiola's football illustrates how resoundingly he won the last tactical "split", against his old rival Jose Mourinho, it is now possible we are seeing the first great split in that hegemony.

It may even run down similarly narratively rich lines. While any future coach will play with at least some of Guardiola's principles, the difference will be how many.

Coaches like Liverpool's Arne Slot are Guardiola (pictured) disciples. The man who could have been in his job, Xabi Alonso, and Manchester United manager Ruben Amorim are meanwhile introducing new systems with

much more individualism.

This dynamic is likely to be at the centre of a third successive major summer tournament, through the dominance of a revitalised Spanish ideology.

After Euro 2024, and the 2023 Women's World Cup, Sarina Wiegman's England find themselves on the opposite side of the draw - as well as this tactical spectrum - to Spain.

The grand aim is to defend the Euros title. For Wiegman's new counterpart Thomas Tuchel, the challenge is both simpler and more opaque. He just needs to get England into the 2026 World Cup, but do so in a way that suggests they can win it.

That is likely to be influenced by many of the year's major issues, from the stresses on his stars to the sport's tactical evolution.

They will shape other themes, from Amorim's restoration quest to Mikel Arteta's trophy aims, Chelsea's challenge and the potential of Slot's Liverpool matching United's 20 titles. That would be a piece of pure football history.

The pity is that it's another year when the stakes feel higher than these feats that light up the pyramid.

THE INDEPENDENT

Gwiji by David Chikoko



SPORT

Man City's poor run has made Guardiola realise how good they were

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Rupia focused on team success despite leading Premier League scoring chart

By Correspondent Seth Mapoli

SINGIDA Black Stars striker Elvis Rupia has emerged as the leading scorer in the Premier League with eight goals, yet his primary focus remains on ensuring his team achieves its ambitions this season.

Rupia's latest contribution came in a 2-1 victory over KenGold last Tuesday where he netted a crucial goal to secure three points for his team.

The forward now leads the league's top scorer race, closely followed by Simba SC's attacking midfielder, Jean Charles Ahoua, who has scored seven goals.

"If I become the top scorer, I will be very happy because that is the goal of any striker," Rupia (pictured) remarked. "However, what I value most is the team's performance. My focus is on helping us finish in the top four, which is our primary target."

Rupia credited his teammates for their support and collaboration, emphasizing that their unity is key to the team's success.

"The cooperation I receive from my colleagues is something I am very proud of. It motivates everyone, from the players to the technical bench and management, to work towards achieving our goals," he added.

Singida Black Stars are currently in fourth place on the Premier League table after 16 matches. The team has secured 10 wins, three draws, and three losses, amassing 33 points.

They have scored 22 goals and conceded 11, making them a formidable competitor alongside league giants Simba, Young Africans, and Azam.

Simba lead the league with 40 points from 15 matches, having won 13, drawn one, and lost one. Young Africans are close behind in second place with 39 points from 15 matches, recording 13 wins and two losses.

Azam occupy third place with 36 points, having played 16 matches, winning 11, drawing three, and losing two.

Singida Black Stars' impressive run keeps them firmly in contention for a top-four finish. Singida Black Stars' acting head coach, Ramadhan Nswanzurimo, expressed his pride in Rupia's contributions but challenged the striker to maintain his focus and capitalize on every scoring opportunity.

"Elvis is an important player for us, but he must stay sharp and continue taking advantage of the chances he gets," Nswanzurimo stated.

Rupia's journey to Singida Black Stars has been remarkable. He joined the team in the 2023/24 season from Kenya's Police FC, where he made history by scoring 27 goals, breaking the 47-year-old record held by Gor Mahia's Moris Aloo Sonyi, who scored 26 goals in 1976.

In his debut Premier League season, Rupia played for two different teams, starting with Singida Big Stars then Ihefu FC. Now settled at Singida Black Stars, he has quickly established himself as a key player.

With Rupia in fine form, Singida Black Stars are determined to maintain their position among the league's elite teams. The striker's goal-scoring prowess, coupled with the team's defensive solidity, has positioned them as genuine contenders for a top-four finish in one of Tanzania's most competitive seasons.

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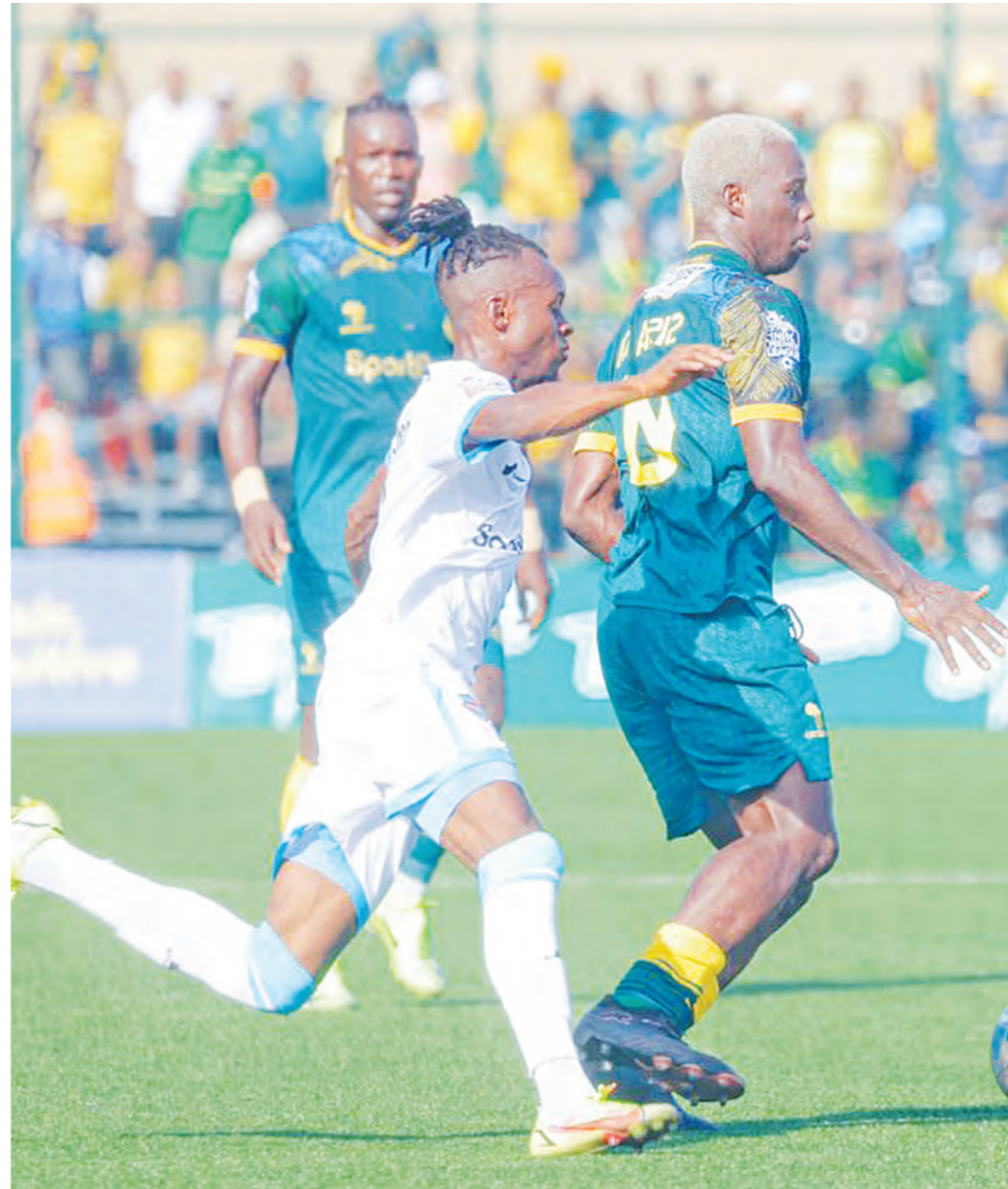
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Yanga thrash Fountain Gate to rekindle title ambitions



Young Africans attacking midfielder Stephane Aziz Ki pictured yesterday controlling the ball during their Premier League match against Fountain Gate at KMC Complex in Dar es Salaam. Photo: Courtesy of YASC

By Guardian Correspondent

YOUNG Africans secured a commanding 5-0 victory in their encounter against Fountain Gate to cement their second position in the Premier League.

The match, held at KMC Complex yesterday, was dominated by the Premier League defending champions.

Young Africans' first attempt came in the 14th minute when Pacome Zouzoua shot wide following a pass from Mudathir Yahya.

However, just one minute later, Pacome found the back of the net, superbly finishing a cross from overlapping full-back Chadrack Boka.

Fountain Gate goalkeeper Noble John was called into action in the 31st minute, punching away a powerful shot from Pacome following a corner kick from Stephane Aziz Ki.

Fountain Gate made their first attempt in the 34th minute when Edgar William's shot inside the six-yard box was blocked by Ibrahim Bacca.

Young Africans registered their second goal in the 42nd minute when Clement Mzize provided an assist inside the six-yard box.

Pacome completed his first-half

brace in the 45th minute, scoring the third goal for his side after another pass from Mzize.

The defending champions continued their dominance in the second half, registering their fourth goal in the

54th minute.

Fountain Gate defender Jackson Shiga failed to clear the ball after Pacome's shot hit the crossbar and rebounded off the defender's chest into the net.

Mzize sealed the victory in

the 86th minute, scoring past goalkeeper Noble following a long pass from substitute Duke Abuya.

The five consecutive victories in the Premier League have rekindled hopes of reclaiming the championship

title, with the team now firmly positioned as a contender.

Simba currently leads the league with 40 points from 15 matches, having won 13, drawn one, and lost one.

Young Africans are close behind in second place with 40 points from 15 matches, recording 13 wins and two losses.

Azam occupy third place with 36 points from 16 matches, with 11 wins, three draws, and two losses.

Singida Black Stars are in fourth place with 33 points from 16 matches, securing 10 wins, three draws, and three losses.

Since his appointment, Sead Ramovic has transformed Young Africans' playing style into a relentless attacking force.

The results speak for themselves: a 2-0 victory over Namungo, a hard-fought 3-2 win against Mashujaa, and commanding 4-0 triumphs against both Tanzania Prisons and Dodoma Jiji, culminating in the 5-0 rout of Fountain Gate.

This impressive run has injected fresh energy into the fanbase and squad alike.

Despite their domestic success, Young Africans face significant challenges in the CAF Champions League group stage.

Under Ramovic's guidance, the team has struggled to find its footing on the continental stage, suffering two losses to Al Hilal (2-0) and MC Alger (2-0), along with a 1-1 draw against TP Mazembe.

These setbacks underscore the hurdles Young Africans must overcome to secure a spot in the quarter-finals.

Dauids demands better from Simba in Premier League second round

By Correspondent Seth Mapoli

SIMBA SC head coach Fadlu Dauids expressed satisfaction after his team secured a narrow 1-0 victory over Singida Black Stars at Liti Stadium, Singida, a result that ensured Simba ended 2024 atop the Premier League standings.

However, he acknowledged the need for his team to improve as they head into the second round of the season.

"It's another three points in an away game against a difficult opponent," Dauids (pictured) said in his post-match remarks. "From the first minute to the last, it was clear they came to disrupt our rhythm, slowing the game and wasting time."

"I was surprised by their approach, as I expected them to face us head-on. Instead, they seemed content to sit back and aim for a draw."

Despite the challenges posed by Singida's tactics and the uneven pitch conditions, Simba managed to adapt and secure victory through midfielder Fabrice Ngoma's 41st-minute header, which came off a well-de-

livered corner by Jean Charles Ahoua.

"The pitch was difficult; the ball didn't roll well, making it hard to string passes together. But we don't complain. We adapt, and that's what we did. We executed our strategy to claim the three points," Dauids explained.

Dauids voiced his frustration over officiating decisions, pointing out that Simba were denied two clear penalties and a legitimate goal.

"Kibu Denis was fouled twice in the box, and his goal, which was perfectly valid, was disallowed. While I don't want to seem greedy, I feel those decisions could have given us a more comfortable scoreline. Nonetheless, I'm grateful for the effort the players put in," he said.

The win marked Simba's ninth consecutive league victory since their defeat to archrivals Young Africans in the Dar es Salaam Derby on October 19. It was also their 13th win in 15 first-round matches, giving them an unassailable 40 points at the halfway stage.

Ngoma's goal was his third of the season and his second consecutive away strike, following his contribution in Simba's 5-2 thrashing of Kagera Sugar two weeks ago.

Simba now boast 31 goals scored and only five conceded, the best defensive record in the league.

Singida Black Stars, currently fourth on the table with 33 points from 16 matches, put up a solid defensive display but struggled to capitalize on their chances.

Key players like Elvis Rupia, Marouf Tchakei, and Joseph Bada failed to break through Simba's resolute defense, marshaled by Abdulrazak Hamza and Fondoh Che Malone.

Singida's goalkeeper, Metacha Mnata, made a critical error that led to Ngoma's goal, his header slipping past Mnata after being redirected by Simba's Ellie Mpanzu. Despite their efforts, Singida could not recover.

The home side will rue missed opportunities, particularly two clear chances squandered by Rupia, who leads the league's scoring chart with eight goals.

Rupia's lack of composure in front of goal, including a one-on-one chance against Simba goalkeeper Moussa Camara, proved costly.

Camara, who now has 12 clean sheets in 15 matches, further solidified his reputation as the league's top goalkeeper.

Simba fans, who filled Liti Stadium despite the home side receiving vocal support from Young Africans fans, left celebrating a crucial win. However, Dauids emphasized the importance of sustaining their momentum in the second half of the season.

"It doesn't matter whether we're first, second, or third at this point. What matters is our progress and how we build on this project. We know we need a stronger second round if we're to challenge for the title," he said.

Simba now turn their focus to the CAF Confederation Cup, where they will face Tunisia's CS Sfaxien on January 5, followed by matches against Algeria's CS Constantine and Angola's Bravos do Maquis.

Dauids is confident the team



will use the break to fine-tune their strategies for both domestic and continental success.

Simba's consistency and depth continue to shine, but with the second-round looming, they must remain sharp to maintain their edge in the title race.

Flexibles by David Chikoko

