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'Special hire' joining LATRA tracking app

By Guardian Reporter

THE Land Transport Regulatory Authority (LATRA) has instructed owners of buses for hire, commonly known as 'special hire,' to integrate their vehicles with its vehicle tracking system (VTS).

Salum Pazy, the LATRA head of public relations and communications, said in a statement yesterday that it is a legal requirement for such buses to be linked up with the system.

LATRA has also ordered that drivers of such vehicles who have not yet registered for the driver identification button (i-button) to do so and connect to the system before January 12.

"Under Regulation 20(b) of the 2020 regulations for hire vehicles, special hire buses must be connected to the VTS," he said.

"The system enables the authority to identify the driver operating a specific vehicle, provided the driver is registered and using driver identification button."

Regulation 9(2) for driver certification and registration of commercial vehicle op-

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Police seize 'stolen' state infrastructure materials



Prime Minister Kassim Majaliwa represents President Samia Suluhu Hassan in making remarks at the paying of respects to former Attorney General Judge Frederick Mwita Werema (Oct 10, 1955 - Dec 30, 2024) in Dar es Salaam yesterday. Photo: PMO

The seized infrastructure includes transformer cables, parts used by DAWASA, materials from TRC, TTCL and copper from Tanesco

By Guardian Correspondent, Mkuranga

POLICE have uncovered substantial tonnage of construction materials presumably grabbed from various public firms stored at a building materials factory at Mkuranga, Coast Region.

ACP Protus Mutayoba, the Rufiji special police zone commander, said at a press conference also addressed by Regional Commissioner Abubakar Kunenge, that the materials include cables from the Tanzania Telecommunications Co. Ltd (TTCL), the Tanzania Electric Supply Co. Ltd (Tanesco), the Dar es Salaam Water Supply and Sanitation Authority (DAWASA), and the Tanzania Railways Corporation (TRC).

The stolen infrastructure was hidden at the LN Features factory in the area, with the seizure being the result of a task force initiative by the regional secretariat to monitor sabotage on infrastructure and building materials.

The RC said the task force was formed to curb the destruction of infrastructure impacting various government institutions, noting that some individuals betray the government by sabotaging infrastructure that supports essential services.

Despite the government's ongoing efforts



There is need for legislation to prevent traders from purchasing stolen government infrastructure

to improve infrastructure, certain individuals were bent on damaging the progress made, he said.

"We will not tolerate anyone seeking to reverse the country's progress; we will track down and identify those responsible for the thefts," he stated.

Coast Region was emerging a leader in industrial investment and will not allow investors who hinder the government's efforts, he said, noting that the stolen infrastructure was collected from various locations.

He urged that similar operations be conducted in other areas to curb the illegal trade, with the RPC noting that the operation began on November 21 and has been ongoing.

Several suspects have been arrested, with some already brought to court, he said, while Lenin Kiobya, the Tanesco security services manager, highlighted the rise in copper theft, causing significant damage to transformers.

From June to December 2023, 33 transformers were damaged, 21 of them in Mkuranga District, he said, elaborating that the price of copper has surged, rising from 10,000/- per kilogram to 30,000/-

In border areas the asking price goes as high as 100,000/- per kilo, thus fuelling the growth of the illicit trade, he stated, affirming

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SPORTS

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Yanga strengthen squad with key players back for Mazembe game

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Arsenal beat Brentford to close gap on Liverpool

Judiciary, well-wishers gather in Judge Werema last respects

By Guardian Reporter

PRESIDENT Samia Suluhu Hassan has described the late Judge Fredrick Werema as a steadfast leader who upheld ethics and principles throughout his career.

This assessment was given in remarks delivered by Prime Minister Kassim Majaliwa at a last respects ceremony for the late Werema at the Karimjee Grounds in Dar es Salaam yesterday.

The deceased (69) who passed away at the Mihimbili National Hospital on Monday will be laid to rest at his Butiama home village on Saturday.

The president expressed deep sorrow over the passing of Judge Werema, a past attorney general, from 2009 to 2014.

"Judge Werema was a distinguished



His strength in various areas of law and his dedication left a mark on the country's legal system

lawyer and a true patriot who always offered sound legal advice," the remarks asserted.

"The late Werema worked across all branches of government and gained vast experience in public service. He accomplished many great things," the president recalled.

In his other remarks, the premier urged lawyers and other professionals to build upon the positive work that the late Judge Werema did throughout his lifetime.

Former president Jakaya Kikwete paid tribute to Judge Werema, pointing at his distinguished career and public contributions.

"He achieved many great things for the

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TRA CEO visits Mufti, pact on tax education

To achieve this educational goal, a team of experts from TRA and the council will develop a strategic plan and start implementing it when finalised

By Henry Mwangonde

THE Tanzania Revenue Authority (TRA) has announced plans to reach out to religious leaders across the country for a special tax education engagement.

Yusuph Mwenda, the TRA commis-

sioner general, stated this intention at a meeting with Mufti Abubakar Zubeir, the chief sheikh, whom he paid a courtesy call at his offices in Dar es Salaam yesterday.

This engagement will help them educate their congregants about the impor-

tance of paying taxes, he said, with the two leaders agreeing on voluntary compliance with tax obligations.

Tax funds constitute the foundation for all development activities, he asserted, noting that they also agreed to collaborate in promoting voluntary compliance and education.

The revenue czar praised the chief sheikh for efforts in educating his followers on tax matters and ensuring their compliance, through various institutions.

He said that although the Muslim Council of Tanzania is a religious institution, it

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Police seize 'stolen' state infrastructure materials

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that since the operation began, no new transformer damage has been reported.

There is need for legislation to prevent traders from purchasing stolen government infrastructure, he said, expressing the view that

this would help end the trade and eliminate damage to public infrastructure.

The seized infrastructure includes transformer cables, parts used by DAWASA, materials from TRC, TTCL and copper from Tanesco, he added.

TRA CEO visits Mufti, pact on tax education

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carries out activities that require it to pay taxes.

"What we are doing for BAKWATA, we will extend to other institutions," he said, underlining that paying taxes is similar to an act of faith, thus religious institutions should encourage tax payment.

Denominational followers have a responsibility to pay taxes, he said, insisting that TRA will be fair to everyone—those who should pay taxes will do so, and those who should not will not be pressured, he declared.

TRA believes that using religious platforms to spread tax education to communities will have a positive impact, as religious leaders have large audiences who listen to them, he said.

"The benefits of taxes are numerous. Today, people receive medical treatment thanks to taxes, children

are educated through taxes and the country's development is driven by taxes," he emphasised.

To achieve this educational goal, a team of experts from TRA and the council will develop a strategic plan and start implementing it when finalised, he said.

TRA will collaborate with BAKWATA to ensure that tax payment education reaches a large number of Muslims by working closely with their leaders across the country, he said.

Mufti Zubeir expressed satisfaction with the TRA CEO for seeking out the council, to discuss strategies to expand the scope of tax payments.

It is vital for TRA to provide education to religious leaders as this would better equip them to inform their congregants about tax matters, he added.

'Special hire' joining LATRA tracking app

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erators specifies the responsibility of identifying vehicles.

Drivers must use driver identification button with special hire buses being among those listed, he further noted, pointing at Regulation 9(3) as requiring that a driver issued with an identification button "must ensure its safety and is prohibited from transferring it to another person."

He reminded drivers and owners of special hire buses to use the driver identification button correctly.

"Drivers without the device are required to visit LATRA offices in their respective areas to register and connect to the system," he specified.

To simplify the registration process, LATRA will facilitate the registration of driver identification buttons at selected roadside locations where buses typically stop, he said.

Equipping buses with VTS is meant to ensure that vehicles, particularly those travelling long distances, are closely monitored, especially concerning speed and driver behaviour, the statement added.

Senegalese president announces end of all foreign military presence by 2025

DAKAR

SENEGALESE President Bassirou Diomaye Faye has announced "the end of all foreign military presence" in the West African country by 2025 in a New Year's speech.

"I have instructed the minister of the armed forces to propose a new doctrine of cooperation in defense and security, involving, among other consequences, the

end of all military presence of foreign countries in Senegal from 2025," he said.

"All Senegal's friends will be treated like strategic partners within the framework of an open, diversified and uninhibited cooperation," the president assured.

On Nov. 28, Faye announced that the sovereignty advocated by his government "does not accommodate the presence of military bases in a sovereign country."

Metallic space object fall, crashes in Kenyan village

NAIROBI

A metallic object believed to be part of a rocket's separation stage has fallen from space into a village in eastern Kenya, according to the Kenya Space Agency and local media reports.

Speaking to journalists on Wednesday, Maj. Aloyce Were, an official from the Kenya Space Agency, confirmed the discovery of the partially burnt metallic debris, weighing approximately 500 kilograms. The object, described as a metallic ring, is suspected to be space debris from a rocket.

"So indeed we can confirm we have located the item. The area locals should not be scared. It is a part of a space object which is in the form of a ring, a metallic ring, possibly from a rocket separation stage," said Maj. Were.

The official urged residents not to fear the object while affirming that the Kenya Space Agency

would investigate its origin and assess any potential damage to the surrounding area. Were was seen consulting with police officers and inspecting the debris at the crash site.

In the coming days, the agency will work to determine the object's country of origin and its journey through space. "We are to assess the impact to the area and use the existing legal mechanisms under international law as far as the Outer Space Treaty is concerned," Maj. Were explained.

The discovery highlights the growing issue of space debris re-entering Earth's atmosphere, with fragments occasionally reaching the surface. The incident is a reminder of the challenges posed by increasing satellite and rocket activity in Earth's orbit.

No injuries or significant damage to property were reported in the village. The investigation into the incident is ongoing.



Zanzibar President Dr Hussein Ali Mwinyi unveils plaque yesterday to lay the foundation stone for Kizimbani-Kiboje road yesterday. Third left is Zanzibar's Infrastructure, Communications and Transport minister, Dr Khalid Salum Mohammed. The event constituted part of the countdown to January 12 commemoration of the 61st anniversary of the Zanzibar Revolution. Photo: State House

Judiciary, well-wishers gather in Judge Werema last respects

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country and left a lasting legacy. I appointed him as a judge based on his excellence in service," he told the mourners.

Attorney General Hamza Johari praised Judge Werema as a visionary and dedicated legal expert who played a pivotal role in ensuring jus-

justice and the rule of law were upheld, as essential to drive national development.

"Judge Werema engineered significant reforms in the legal system and greatly improved procedures for the rule of law. He mentored and uplifted young lawyers, demonstrating outstanding leadership in challenging times while advocating

for the nation's interests," he stated. Joseph Warioba, a former prime minister and continental human rights court judge remembered Judge Werema for unwavering commitment to serving the public.

"Judge Werema was someone who stood firm in his beliefs. He was honest, reliable and served the nation to the fullest of his abilities,"

he remarked.

Dr Ally Possi, the government chief counsel, praised Judge Werema as a pillar of the country's legal sector, still dedicated to law even after his administrative tenure ended.

"His strength in various areas of law and his dedication left a mark on the country's legal system," he added.



Foreign Affairs and East African Cooperation minister Mahmoud Thabit Kombo (R) and Dr Haroun Ali Suleiman, Minister of State in the Zanzibar President's Office (Constitution, Legal Affairs, Public Service and Good Governance), consult during Wednesday's laying of the foundation stone for a district court building at Kisakasaka in Zanzibar. Photo: Rahma Suleiman

Boy of eight survives five days in a lion-inhabited game park

HARARE

An eight-year-old boy has been found alive after surviving five days in a game park inhabited by lions and elephants in northern Zimbabwe, according to a member of parliament.

The ordeal began when Tinotenda Pudu wandered 23 km (14 miles) from home into the "perilous" Matusadona Game Park, said Mashonaland West MP Mutsa Murombedzi on X.

He spent five days "sleeping on

a rocky perch, amidst roaring lions, passing elephants, eating wild fruits", she said.

Matusadona game park has about 40 lions. At one point, it had one of the highest lion population densities in Africa, according to African Parks.

Murombedzi said the boy used his knowledge of the wild and survival skills to stay alive.

Tinotenda survived his ordeal by eating wild fruit. He also dug small wells into dry riverbeds with a stick to access drinking water - a skill

taught in the drought-prone area. Members of the local Nyaminyami community started a search party and beat drums each day to try and guide him back home.

But ultimately, it was park rangers who managed to find him.

On his fifth day in the wild, Tinotenda heard a ranger's car and ran toward it, narrowly missing it, the MP said.

Luckily, the rangers returned, spotted "fresh little human footprints," and searched the area until they found him.

"This was probably his last chance of being rescued after 5 days in the wilderness," said the MP.

The park is over 1,470 sq km (570 sq miles) and is home to zebras, elephants, hippos, lions and antelope.

Across social media, people have been praising the young boy for his resilience.

"This is beyond human comprehension," one person wrote on X.

Another user wrote: "He's going to have one hell of a story to tell when he gets back to school."



Faustina Ndunguru, a police officer stationed in Rufiji District, sensitises some 200 motorbike taxi riders in Mbwara ward on New Year's Eve on the need to observe road safety regulations. The riders were later issued with helmets. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

By Guardian Correspondent, Itigi

6,500 small traders in Itigi drilled on ways to access 10pc govt loans

A Total of 6,500 entrepreneurs across 13 wards in Itigi District Council, Singida Region, have started receiving training to help alleviate poverty and meet the criteria for accessing the 10% government loans designated for women, youth, and persons with disabilities.

Itigi Ward Executive Officer, Saimon Sirilo, who is voluntarily conducting the training, made these remarks recently while speaking to journalists about the program.

He explained that since January last year, he has been providing training to residents to equip them with skills to start small businesses, improve their economic standing, and form groups eligible for council-provided loans.

The training covers areas such as making liquid soap, batik fabrics, coated peanuts, financial literacy, budgeting, customer service, and marketing strategies.

Sirilo noted that by December 2024, he had conducted training sessions for entrepreneurs in 10 wards, including Majengo, Itigi Mjini, Tambukareli, Ipande,

Sanjaranda, Aghondi, Mgandu, Mitundu, Mwamagembe, and Kitaraka.

The remaining wards—Kalangali, Rungwa, and Idodyandole—are expected to complete the training this month (January). He highlighted the positive response from residents since the training began.

"I provide this training free of charge in all areas as part of my service to the community. I believe that when a society is empowered with knowledge and economic opportunities, the nation prospers, leading to significant development," he said.

Sirilo expressed gratitude to the ward leaders, especially councilors, who have consistently supported him in every ward he visits, enabling the training to be conducted effectively.

Towards the end of last year, the Itigi District Council urged women, youth, and persons with disabilities to take advantage of the loan opportunities, with 442,755m/-

allocated for these groups.

Itigi District Executive Director, Ayoub Nkambi, stated that these funds were allocated during the first quarter (July-September) of the 2024/2025 financial year.

"The Itigi District Council announces the availability of funds to provide loans to groups of women, youth, and persons with disabilities. A total of 442,755,221.17/- has been allocated, and eligible groups are encouraged to submit applications through their respective village government offices," he said.

Nkambi added that eligible groups must be registered and certified by the council, engage in small or medium-sized entrepreneurial activities, or plan to start such ventures.

He further explained that women and youth groups must consist of at least five members, while groups for persons with disabilities must have a minimum of two members.

TRA set to collect 30.04trn/- in FY 2024/2025 - Mwenda

By Guardian Reporter

THE Tanzania Revenue Authority (TRA) is set to collect 30.04trn/- in the 2024/2025 financial year, Commissioner General Yusuf Mwenda has unveiled.

Briefing journalists in Dar es Salaam on Wednesday on the authority's performance for the past six months, Mwenda cited factors behind realising the target as promotion of voluntary tax compliance, utilizing upgraded systems, enhancing taxpayer relations, and promoting the use of EFDs.

He also stated that other factors include creating a fair and equitable tax system, collaborating with the presidential task force on tax reviews, improving taxpayer services, and strengthening audit and investigation units to prevent tax evasion.

He also stated that TRA continues to implement President Samia's directive to integrate systems. Improvements have been made to the customs management system (TANCIS) and the domestic tax management system (IDRAS) to reduce manual inspections of exports and enhance service delivery.

Discussing the IDRAS system, Commissioner for Domestic Taxes Alfred Mregi noted that a feature has been added to track locally produced goods, making it easier to assess taxes for domestic industries.

"The goal is to reduce complaints about arbitrary tax assessments, as the data entered into the system will guide tax evaluation," he said.

Regarding TANCIS, Customs Commissioner Juma Hassan Bakari explained that it has been upgraded to include more institutions, such as the Tanzania National Roads Agency (TANROADS), airports, and border offices, to facilitate services for traders.

"For goods destined for export, instead of multiple checkpoints, inspections will now be handled through a system integrating TANROADS and other stakeholder institutions," he said.

He also said TRA surpassed its tax collection target by 103.52% last month, collecting 3.587trn/- and setting eight resolutions to enhance its performance for 2025.

Additionally, the mining, banking, manufacturing, and trade sectors were the

key contributors to these collections.

Mwenda stated that the authority collected 16.528trn/-, equivalent to 104.7% of the target, during the first half of the 2024/2025 financial year (July to December 2024).

He noted that this is the highest collection ever recorded by TRA, compared to the 13.9trn/- collected in the same period of the 2023/2024 financial year.

"These collections represent a 78.78% increase from the 9.242trn/- collected during the same period in the 2020/2021 financial year, before the Sixth Government under President Samia Suluhu Hassan took office," Mwenda said.

The commissioner highlighted that in December, TRA broke records with a 17.59% revenue growth, increasing from 3.050trn/- in December 2023 to 3.587trn/- last year.

"TRA has set a new milestone by consistently meeting and exceeding its collection targets for six consecutive months in the first half of the 2024/2025 financial year. The average monthly collection has grown by 18.80%, from 2.319trn/- in 2023/2024 to 2.755trn/- this year," he said.

In the second quarter of last year (October to December), TRA collected 8.741trn/-, equivalent to 104.63% of the target, representing a 19.05% growth compared to 7.342trn/- collected during the same period in 2023.

Mwenda credited this success to improved operational discipline, employee innovation, and the promotion of voluntary tax compliance.

He emphasized that TRA closely monitors the business environment, oversees industrial production, and encourages the use of electronic fiscal devices (EFDs).

On key contributing sectors, TRA's Commissioner for Large Taxpayers, Michael Muhoja, cited banking, mining, manufacturing, and trade as the leading contributors.

Of the 3.587trn/- collected in December 2024, 1.660trn/- came from banks, 1.1trn/- trillion from trade and customs duties, while the remainder was contributed by mining and manufacturing.

To further increase revenue, Mwenda revealed that TRA aims to expand its taxpayer base, including small, medium, and large taxpayers.

By Correspondent Christina Mwakangale

Govt realises 3.4bn/- from road traffic offences - RPC

THE government has collected over 3.4bn/- from road traffic offences in Mbeya Region between January and December 2024.

In a press briefing yesterday, Mbeya Regional Police Commander, (SACP) Benjamin Kuzaga, revealed that the amount represents an increase of 104.8bn/- compared to the 3.3bn/- collected in 2023.

Commander Kuzaga explained that the funds were raised from 115,216 traffic violations reported in 2024, a decrease of 604 violations compared to the 115,820 reported in 2023.

He also reported that 28 drivers had their licenses revoked for serious traffic violations, including speeding, overtaking in hazardous areas, and causing fatal accidents. Additionally, 29 drivers were taken to court for breaching traffic laws.

Commander Kuzaga highlighted other security successes, stating that 9,985 suspects were arrested for various criminal offenses and brought to court.

The total number of reported criminal offenses for 2024 was 22,049, a decrease of 1,705 compared to 23,754 offenses reported in 2023, reflecting a 7per cent reduction.

He further revealed that 9 kilograms and 622.76 grams of gold, valued at 1.5bn/-, were seized following the arrest of six suspects.

He said the police also seized government trophies worth 288.9m/-, with 31 suspects arrested, including 29 men and two women.

He also mentioned that 60 illegal immigrants were apprehended, including 43 from Ethiopia, 15 from

Malawi, one from Burundi, and one from Rwanda.

During the operation, 12 firearms, 63 bullets, and three small cans of gunpowder were recovered.

Commander Kuzaga urged the public to continue supporting security agencies by reporting criminals and preventing crime, ensuring that necessary actions, including arrests, can be taken.

He called on individuals involved in criminal activities to cease their actions, stressing that crime does not pay and its consequences are detrimental to society.

"For those continuing with criminal activities, it is better to stop immediately. Crime does not pay, its consequences are severe, and it is better to engage in productive activities," said Commander Kuzaga.



Permanent Voter Registration updating clerks in Njombe Region pictured in Njombe municipality yesterday taking confidentiality and non-partisanship oath. Photo: Correspondent Elizabeth John

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Beekeeping firm to partner with govt to combat HWCs in Singida

By Guardian Correspondent, Singida

A Singida-based beekeeping company, Kijiji Cha Nyuki Co. Ltd, has announced plans to collaborate with the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism to address the issue of destructive animals invading residential areas.

The company's managing director, Philemon Kiemi, revealed this initiative recently while speaking to journalists about the company's future plans to tackle human-wildlife conflicts (HWCs) in the region.

Kiemi highlighted the frequent challenges faced by residents of Singida Region due to elephants invading their homes. He said the company has developed modern strategies to effectively manage these incidents.

"Our plan involves identifying all elephant pathways in the affected districts of Singida Region and setting up beehive traps along these routes. The bees will act as a natural deterrent, driving the elephants away from residential areas," Kiemi explained.

He added, "We understand how difficult it is for residents to cope with these invasions. With the expertise from Nyuki Village, we aim to manage the elephants in partnership with the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism."

Kiemi also outlined the company's 2025 plans, which include establishing a ranch dedicated to rearing queen bees to address the ongoing shortage of bees—an issue that has troubled many beekeepers nationwide.

For 2024, the company plans to train 10,000 people across all villages in Singida Region on

modern beekeeping techniques. Each participant will receive a beehive to begin their journey in beekeeping.

Other initiatives include setting up factories for producing honey wine and building hotels and sports fields to attract major sports teams to Singida Region, boosting tourism and accommodation services.

Kiemi noted the growing demand for bee products, especially the company's Singida Dust, a product claimed to boost immunity and enhance male vitality. "When I introduced Singida Dust in parliament, 263 bottles were sold within just four days," he said.

Elephant invasions have been a recurring issue in Singida Region, with incidents of property destruction and threats to residents' safety. For instance, on November 10, 2024, over 56 elephants invaded Mkiwa village in Ikungi District, destroying eight homes and consuming stored food supplies.

The incident prompted villagers to block the main Dodoma-Singida highway, which led to a visit from the Minister of Natural Resources and Tourism, Dr. Pindi Chana. She directed the Tanzania Wildlife Management Authority (TAWA) to establish a camp in the village to control the elephants.

The districts most affected by elephant invasions in Singida Region include Ikungi, Manyoni, Singida, and Itigi Municipality.

"We understand how difficult it is for residents to cope with these invasions. With the expertise from Nyuki Village, we aim to manage the elephants in partnership with the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism."

900 train passengers stranded in Dodoma for 6 hours due to rains

By Correspondent Paul Mabeja,

Dodoma

A TOTAL of 901 passengers and 30 staff traveling by train from upcountry to Dar es Salaam have been stranded for over six hours at Dodoma main railway station due to communication breakdown on the central railway line.

The area where the communication was disrupted is Godegwe in Mpwapwa District and Kidete in Kilosa District, which were flooded due to the ongoing heavy rains in various parts of the country.

Most of the passengers were from Kigoma, Katavi, and Tabora regions.

The disruption also affected passengers traveling from Dar es Salaam to the Lake Zone regions, prompting the Tanzania Railways Corporation (TRC) to hire buses to help the travellers continue with their journey.

Mbwana Omary, one of the passengers, speaking to journalists at the Dodoma station, said they had left Kigoma two days ago and arrived in Dodoma last night at around 1pm.

"We started our journey from Kigoma on December 31, but along the way, we stopped at many stations. We arrived here in Dodoma at 1pm, and have been waiting for a long time. When we asked, we were told to wait and we would be informed about what is happening."

"We are surprised this morning when we are told that buses are being arranged to take us to the affected area, but some of us who were hoping to catch early buses are now unable to travel. For example, I am going to Tanga, and at this moment, I cannot find any transport," he said.

He further mentioned that the train delay had significantly impacted them due to the increased costs, and they appealed to the

government to address the issue, which has been recurring for passengers every year.

"We've already spent a lot, and since we got stranded here at 1pm last night, we haven't received any basic services," he added.

Zuwena Juma also mentioned that women and children had been greatly inconvenienced by the train delay due to the lack of basic services.

She suggested that the government should find a solution to address such issues in future and inconveniences of passengers every year.

"This problem is not new to the government, as it happens every year whenever the rains begin. The government should find alternative means to address it, even if it means building a bridge to relieve the frustration of Tanzanians who use this kind of transport," she said.

The Dodoma station manager, Festo Mgomapayo, explained that they halted the train's journey after receiving information from their officers that the track was flooded in that area due to the ongoing heavy rains.

"This train arrived in Dodoma from Kigoma yesterday (the day before yesterday) at 2pm, and by the time it reached here, we had already received reports that the track was flooded due to the rains, so we could not allow it to continue. The track had to be cleared before we could proceed."

"However, this morning the headquarters decided that the passengers would stay here, so buses were hired to transport them to continue their journey to their respective destinations."

"Also, another train is being held in Kilosa, so those passengers will use that train to travel to Dar es Salaam, while the rest will be brought here by the buses to continue their journey to the Lake Zone," Mgomapayo said.



Raymond Maseka, who is cared for at Misufini Elderly Camp at Umba village in Ngomeni ward, Muheza District, showcases a basket and a hat he made with his own hand. This was at event held when district officials toured the centre to present New Year presents, including foodstuffs. The event saw the elderly at the camp request for improvements in healthcare services. Photo: Correspondent Steven William

Police in drive to curb reckless driving

By Guardian Correspondent, Bukoba

POLICE in Kagera Region has pledged to take strict legal action against bus owners operating within and outside the region to curb reckless driving practices.

Kagera Regional Police Commander, Blasius Chatanda, told journalists here yesterday that specific measures aimed at reducing accidents in the region.

He emphasized that vehicle owners are responsible for ensuring their buses have drivers who follow traffic laws and regulations, and that long-distance buses must have at least two drivers to share the workload.

"We've stressed the need for two drivers for long journeys, such as buses traveling from Bukoba to Dar es Salaam. However, some operators still rely on old habits, reducing road safety," Chatanda said.

He revealed that some bus owners deceive authorities by presenting two drivers during vehicle inspections, but midway through the journey, only one driver continues, putting passengers at risk.

"It is unacceptable for one driver to handle an entire journey without relief. Fatigue leads to a lack of focus, which bus owners must address," he added.

Chatanda further noted that having two drivers ensures one can step in if the other is unfit or fatigued, reducing the likelihood of accidents caused by negligence.

"This December alone, we've recorded accidents in various parts of our region, including Karagwe, where a crash claimed seven lives and injured 13 people, and Biharamulo, where 11 people died, and 16 were injured," said Chatanda.

He highlighted incidents where drivers disembark mid-journey, leaving their counterparts to complete the trips. Additionally, some drivers were found to engage in behaviors such as drinking, reckless driving, and tampering

with speed control systems to avoid detection.

As part of December's road operations, nine drivers were arrested, and their licenses were revoked.

"Now, the focus will shift to vehicle owners. They are legally obliged to ensure proper conduct and compliance with traffic rules. If violations occur, we will hold them accountable," Chatanda warned.

According to a police report for January to December 2024, 97 per cent of accidents in the country were caused by human error. During this period, 1,735 accidents were recorded, resulting in 1,195 fatalities and 2,719 injuries.



Parents from Luchebele ward in Mwanza city feed their children shortly after receiving nutrition education, including on the preparation of quality traditional meals rich in essential nutrients. It was at a session jointly organised by Mwanza City Council and various other stakeholders and development partners. Photo: Vitus Audax

By Guardian Correspondent, Ngorongoro

A Recent nutritional assessment in Ngorongoro District, Arusha Region, conducted during the first quarter of the year (July to September 2024), found that 30,940 children, representing 92.81 per cent, have a good nutritional status.

The findings were shared during a meeting held in the district council's conference hall, chaired by Boniface Lugola, the acting District Commissioner and District Administrative Officer.

Lugola highlighted the improved nutritional status of children in the district, noting an increase in the percentage of children with good nutrition. He commended nutrition

Nutritional assessment reveals 92.8pc of children in good health, DC Lugola

officers and health stakeholders for their dedication to improving children's health and eradicating malnutrition.

"We appreciate the hard work of nutrition officers, ward officials, and other professionals. Let us maintain our efforts to eliminate malnutrition in our district completely," Lugola remarked.

He called on health committee members to prioritize community-based nutrition initiatives, starting from schools and homes, and emphasized planting fruit trees as part of a broader campaign to

promote healthy eating.

"While the progress is encouraging, we must take concrete actions. Let's ensure fruit trees are planted in schools and promote their growth to enhance nutrition for children and the community at large," he added.

District Nutrition Officer Angela Mbaga presented a report detailing the assessment of 33,337 children. Among them, 30,940 children (92.81%) had good nutrition, while 2,317 children (6.95%) were identified as malnourished.

During the quarter, the district

celebrated health and nutrition days in seven of its 28 wards: Maalon, Ololosokwan, Oloipiri, Kirangi, Orgosorock, Enguserosambu, and Olorien Magaiduru. These events featured mobile health clinics, nutritional assessments for adults, and counseling on proper dietary practices.

Additionally, 12,156 out of 12,511 pregnant women were provided with iron supplements to improve their health. They also received education on balanced diets, meal preparation, and complementary feeding for young children.



Shinyanga regional administrative secretary Salum Hamduni (C) presents to Kishapu acting District Medical Officer Dr Godfrey Kisusi in Shinyanga municipality yesterday one of two motorcycles meant to expedite the distribution of various vaccines and other medical supplies in the district. Looking on is acting Shinyanga Regional Medical Officer Faustine Mlyutu. Photo: Correspondent Marco Maduhu

188 PwD receive services at JKCI

By Correspondent Christina Mwakangale

A TOTAL of 188 people with disabilities underwent heart disease screenings and treatment for conditions like diabetes and hypertension, with 20 referred for further care.

The services were provided during a brief lunch and gift-giving event organised by the Mama Ongea na Mwanao Institute at the Karimjee Grounds in Dar es Salaam.

Dr. Mohamed Aloyce, a heart disease specialist at JKCI, shared that 20 people with disabilities were referred to the institute's Kawe branch for additional treatment after the screenings.

"We discovered that some individuals have high blood pressure, but due to their low incomes, they are unable to visit hospitals for treatment. Even when they do receive medication, they often fail to return for follow-up care," Dr. Aloyce said.

He highlighted that while the event provided essential health services to people with disabilities, there remains a crucial need for health insurance so that those facing health challenges can access treatment more easily.

Steven Mungele, the chairperson of the institute, explained that the organization brought together people with disabilities not only to provide screenings but also to offer companionship and support.

He pointed out that people with disabilities are often neglected, which is why the institute saw the importance of conducting heart disease screenings and ensuring the participants felt equal to others.

Dr Burian concluded by emphasising that the projects will continue to boost the region's economy and improve the quality of life for its residents in the coming years.

"Medical work is challenging,

and may God support you. We hope you won't abandon us in the future when we call upon your help again, so we can work together to reach more people from this group and provide them with these essential health services," Steven said.

Following the screenings, the participants expressed their appreciation for the government's efforts in providing these services, as many of them had never undergone such tests and did not expect to have heart screenings in their lifetime.

Joseph Jackson, a resident of Mbagala, revealed that he did not know he had diabetes until the test results were shared during the event.

"I am deeply grateful to my government for helping us access healthcare services. Today I was tested for heart diseases, diabetes, and hypertension, and I was found to have diabetes. I have been referred for further examination, and I promise to follow up," Joseph said.

Agnes Mwanuke, a resident of Temeke, thanked JKCI for offering heart disease screenings and treatment for people with disabilities. She had been experiencing severe pain on the left side of her chest but had not considered seeking treatment due to difficulties in finding work.

"As people with disabilities, finding work is very challenging, and we struggle to earn enough to take us to the hospital for treatment. But now that the services have been brought to us, we are extremely grateful because we've had the opportunity to check our health," Agnes said.

She also urged the institute to extend these services to other people with disabilities across the country, so they too can receive the necessary health checks, as health is the foundation of life.

By Correspondent Cheji Bakari, Tanga

AUTHORITIES in Tanga Region have unveiled plans to reclaim and revitalise all dormant factories in 2025.

The announcement was made by Tanga Regional Commissioner, Dr. Batilda Burian, during New Year prayers held at Tanga Urithi grounds.

The event was attended by religious, political, and government leaders as well as local residents.

Dr. Burian reflected on Tanga's industrial history, noting that many factories experienced decline in production following the collapse of the former East African Community (EAC) in 1977, which included Tanzania, Kenya, and Uganda.

She emphasised that the collapse

RC Tanga unveils plans to reclaim dormant factories

of EAC played a major role in the downfall of the industries.

"Tanga was once an industrial hub, but the collapse of the East African Community in 1977 significantly contributed to the decline of many factories in the region," said Dr. Burian.

She outlined the government's strategy to follow up on all privatised factories to ensure they are either developed or returned to the government for revitalisation.

Dr Burian also encouraged parents and guardians to pass down skills related to handwork and arts to their children, noting that such

knowledge would empower young people to create products using locally available materials, which are in high demand locally and internationally.


In her address, Dr. Burian also provided updates on key regional developments. She highlighted that Tanga port has seen significant improvements, with an investment of 429.1 billion shillings in its expansion.

The port now accommodates 35 mega-ships from Europe, the Far East, and the Middle East, compared to just 18 ships before the upgrades. Between May and

November 2024, the port served 172 ships, leading to a significant increase in employment, from 4,000 to 16,000 labourers.

Other ongoing government projects in the region include the East African Crude Oil Pipeline (EACOP), ICT centres, health facility constructions, and the building of primary and secondary schools, libraries, and laboratories.

Dr Burian concluded by emphasising that the projects will continue to boost the region's economy and improve the quality of life for its residents in the coming years.



BARRICK

BULYANHULU

Advertisement

REQUEST FOR QUOTATION

BUL-RFQ-24-12-03 - 40kA GIS 12kV ABB Switchgear

Bulyanhulu Gold Mine ("the Company"), a fully owned subsidiary of Twiga Minerals Corporation, which is ultimately owned by Barrick Gold Corporation and the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania requests the submission of Quotes from reputable, experienced, certified, and qualified parties to provide the following:

Material types and specifications:
Medium Voltage Metal-enclosed switchgear UniGear ZS1, equipped with VD4 - vacuum spring-operated circuit breaker.

- 29 x 1250A 40kA incomer/outgoer feeder breakers
- 4 x 2000A 40kA Incomer breakers
- 4 x 630A Metering panels
- 1 x Bus coupler breaker
- 1 x Bus Sectionalizer panel
- Feeder protection relay REX615_Protection and Control Relay for all circuit breakers
- 33 x PM8000 Power Quality Meters
- Switchboard accessories
- Overland wooden cage packaging for delivery to site
- 2000A Copper busbar 40kA rating
- Arc flash detection and suppression on all panels
- Accessories:
- UniGear Single End Cover
- Racking lever for truck
- Operating lever for earthing switch
- Lever for VD4 circuit breaker spring charging
- Plates, labels, manual and pocket with documentation
- Support bracket for handles and keys
- Correction pen for paint touch up
- Tin of 400g of grease
- Apparatus service trolley 17.5kV 650mm
- Apparatus service trolley 17.5kV 800mm
- Pendant Control Station-15m Lead with Controller Box
- Test Plug type ESSAILEC - TEST PLUG FI-

Key documents:

- Clear and detailed Quotation
- Company registration documents i.e. Certificate of incorporation, business license, TIN, VRN, Tax Clearance Certificate etc.
- Applicable certification, accreditation, affiliated registrations, and letter of dealership as required.
- BRELA detailed search document indicating Tanzanian ownership percentage to determine classification as an Indigenous Tanzanian Company as per the Local Content Regulation, 2018.
- Approved Local Content Plan or acknowledgement of submission from the Mining Commissioner.
- Full General Arrangement (GA) + Single Line (SLD) drawing to be submitted/supplied with every quotation for approval.

Submission of Quotes:
Please submit your quotes via email to bulytender@barrick.com.
The reference "BUL-RFQ-24-12-03 - ABB SWITCHGEAR" must be quoted in the subject line of the email.

If you do not hear from us in 21days after the deadline date, please consider your bid/quote unsuccessful.

Key Dates

- Last date to submit quotes: **10th January 2025**

Bulyanhulu Gold Mine Limited



BARRICK

BULYANHULU

Advertisement

REQUEST FOR QUOTATION

BUL-RFQ-24-12-01 - 40kA GIS 12kV WS-G 12 Schneider Switchgear

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Material types and specifications:
WS-G 40kA Schneider Switchgear

- 29 x 1250A 40kA incomer/outgoer feeder breakers
- 4 x 2000A 40kA Incomer breakers
- 1 x 2000A Bus coupler breaker
- 1 x Bus Sectionalizer panel
- Feeder protection relay P5F30_Protection and Control Relay for all circuit breakers
- Switchboard accessories
- Overland wooden cage packaging for delivery to site
- 2000A Copper busbar 40kA rating
- Arc flash detection and suppression on all panels
- Accessories:
- Racking lever
- Operating lever for earthing switch
- Lever for circuit breaker spring charging
- Plates, labels, manual and pocket with documentation
- Correction pen for paint touch up
- Tin of 400g of grease
- Apparatus service trolley
- Pendant Control Station-15m Lead with Controller Box
- Test Plug type ESSAILEC - TEST PLUG FI-

Key documents

- Clear and detailed Quotation
- Company registration documents i.e. Certificate of incorporation, business license, TIN, VRN, Tax Clearance Certificate etc.
- Applicable certification, accreditation, affiliated registrations, and letter of dealership as required.
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- Approved Local Content Plan or acknowledgement of submission from the Mining Commissioner.
- Full General Arrangement (GA) + Single Line (SLD) drawing to be submitted/supplied with every quotation for approval.

Submission of Quotes
Please submit your quotes via email to bulytender@barrick.com.
The reference "BUL-RFQ-24-12-01 - SCHNEIDER SWITCHGEAR" must be quoted in the subject line of the email.

If you do not hear from us in 21days after the deadline date, please consider your bid/quote unsuccessful.

Key Dates

- Last date to submit quotes: **10th January 2025**

Bulyanhulu Gold Mine Limited

Districts hosting border posts set for status uplift to boost growth

By Correspondent Cheji Bakari, Tanga

TANZANIA is set to transform all districts hosting One Stop Border Posts (OSBPs) into key economic hubs for the areas to offer more business opportunities for the benefit of Tanzania and its neighbours.

Dennis Londo, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs and East African Cooperation, unveiled this recently during his one-day official visit to the Lunga Lunga/Horohoro One Stop Border Posts in Mkinga District, Tanga Region.

The purpose of his visit was to assess implementation of the East African Community (EAC) Single Customs Territory and operating systems and infrastructure at the border post.

Londo emphasized the importance of integrity and professionalism among the staff working at the border post, stressing that the government's objective is to achieve its goals by fostering stronger links and enhancing the economic compatibility of border trade.

"We want to see all people living in those areas benefit more for being close to these OSBPs," he said, noting: "Our move is to strengthen trade connections at border posts to meet the targets outlined for economic growth."

The deputy minister also assured that Tanzanian government would continue to address the challenges faced by OSBPs, including operational difficulties that business people encounter when crossing borders.

"The East African Community

offers numerous opportunities that have yet to be fully utilized for the benefit of our business people. All district councils near border areas must develop strategies to empower traders and help them add value to their products for sale within the EAC region," he added.

The OSBP at Horohoro is just one of several such centres established along Tanzania's borders to ease trade flows by combining services such as customs, immigration and health inspection into a single operation.

With proper management and adequate support, they have the potential to transform border communities by creating jobs, reducing poverty and fostering economic integration.

Londo was accompanied by Tanga Regional Commissioner, Dr. Batilda Burian, Tanga Regional Administrative Secretary Pili Mnyema, representatives from Mkinga District Commissioner's office, the Union of Tanga Businesspeople, customs agents from Horohoro One Stop Border Post and local businesspeople.

Our move is to strengthen trade connections at border posts to meet the targets outlined for economic growth

Water crisis in Port Sudan surges after dam collapse, refugee influx

KHARTOUM

RESIDENTS in Port Sudan, the capital of the Red Sea State in eastern Sudan, are grappling with a severe drinking water crisis following the collapse of the Arbaat Dam in August and an influx of displaced people fleeing the ongoing civil war.

Animal-drawn carts have reappeared on the streets of this coastal city, transporting potable water from limited sources located 20 kilometres north of Port Sudan to households and businesses.

The collapse of the dam, previously the city's primary source of fresh water, has caused water prices to more than double. A 220-litre barrel now costs 25,000 Sudanese pounds (about \$10 on the parallel market), according to Mustafa Hamad, a local water carrier.

While the demand for water carriers has surged, those in the profession face challenges in sourcing water themselves. "Often, we return from the station empty-handed, and residents struggle to believe us. Sometimes, I even have to open the barrel to show that it's empty," Hamad told Xinhua.

Desalination plants have provided some relief, meeting a fraction of Port Sudan's daily potable water needs. However, plant operators are grappling with soaring production costs.

"Water treatment is expensive. With the continued power outages, we rely mainly on generators that consume a lot of fuel, leading to higher costs," said Moaz Yousif, owner of a desalination plant in Hadal neighbourhood, west of Port Sudan.

The crisis has forced some residents to resort to salty and polluted water as an alternative, leading to health problems.

"I did not have kidney disease before arriving here," Awatif Ismail from Al-Sika Hadeed refugee camp,

told Xinhua, noting that consuming water unfit for drinking has severely affected her health and that of her four children.

The swelling population in Port Sudan, which now includes nearly 321,000 displaced people, has exacerbated the city's water shortage. According to Omer Issa Tahir, director of the Red Sea State's Water Corporation, the city faces a daily shortfall of 50,000 cubic meters of water.

"No doubt that the impact of the dam collapse is huge, especially when we are facing a large increase in the number of displaced people, which puts great pressure on all sectors," Tahir told Xinhua.

Since May 2023, Port Sudan, some 800 km east of the Sudanese capital Khartoum, has become the de facto capital, hosting the government, headquarters of international organizations, and diplomatic missions in the country.

Sudan has been gripped by a devastating conflict between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces since mid-April 2023, which claimed at least 29,683 lives and displaced over 14 million people, either inside or outside Sudan, according to the latest estimates by international organizations.

Water treatment is expensive. With the continued power outages, we rely mainly on generators that consume a lot of fuel, leading to higher costs



Freshly harvested maize commonly munched roasted or boiled on sale at Dar es Salaam's Mwenge Bus stand yesterday. Photo: Correspondent Sabato Kasika

Nigeria issues travel alert on Australia amid upturn in discrimination reports

LAGOS

THE Nigerian Ministry of Foreign Affairs has cautioned citizens planning to visit Australia to exercise heightened vigilance due to an uptick in reports of harassment and discrimination against foreigners.

In a statement on Tuesday, ministry spokesperson Kimiebi Ebienna noted that recent incidents, including antisemitic and Islamophobic hate crimes, have raised safety concerns for Nigerians in Australia.

This advisory follows global tensions and conflicts that have fuelled a surge in hate-related incidents in certain areas of the country.

The warning comes on the heels of a similar advisory from the Australian government, which urged its citizens to reconsider travel to Nigeria due to terrorism, kidnapping, and violent crime risks. Areas highlighted as particularly unsafe included states like Adamawa, Borno, Bayelsa and Delta.

Citing specific examples, the

Nigerian ministry referred to a December 2024 incident in Sydney's suburb of Woollahra, where anti-Israel graffiti and the burning of a car sparked widespread condemnation.

While acknowledging Australia's reputation for multiculturalism and tolerance, the ministry emphasized the need for Nigerians to remain alert, respect local customs, and take necessary precautions.

"The Ministry of Foreign Affairs advises Nigerian citizens planning to travel to Australia to consider

the prevailing security situation in certain cities. Recent cases of discrimination, harassment, and verbal abuse targeting foreigners, including a disturbing rise in hate crimes, necessitate extra vigilance," the statement reads in part.

Nigerians encountering or witnessing acts of discrimination were urged to report such incidents to the Nigerian High Commission in Canberra for assistance.

Travellers are encouraged to stay informed about local conditions to ensure their safety and wellbeing.



Singida regional CCM youth wing secretary Sebastian Maganga addresses Tanzania Institute of Accountancy students in Singida municipality yesterday. Photo: Correspondent Thobias Mwanakatwe

ADDIS ABABA

ETHIOPIA has announced that efforts are underway to expand availability of electric vehicles (EV) in various big cities.

So far, Addis Ababa and Gondar city administrations have already implemented electric vehicles for public transportation. State Minister for Transport and Logistics, Ber'o Hasen, informed Fana Media Corporation about the installation of EV charger stations in Dire-Dawa, Harer and Jigjiga to further enhance presence of electric vehicles in the roads of the cities.

With currently 1.5 million fuel-

Ethiopia to promote EV use in big cities

powered vehicles in Ethiopia, the minister expressed desire and plans to transition fuel-powered public, government and taxi vehicles to electric ones.

Ber'o further revealed the plan to replace 432,000 gas-powered vehicles with electric vehicles in 10 years, adding that in the past two and a half years, up to 100,000 electric vehicles have been put into operation nationwide.

After the country's political reform in mid-2018, many EVs have been brought into the country as

a result of the government's tax incentives for electric vehicles. The government's tax breaks for importing EVs is anticipated to assist in boosting investor interest, enhance the country's supply of renewable energy, and reduce pollution.

The Ethiopian government has promoted the adoption of electric vehicles as part of a larger campaign to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and dependency on fossil fuels. The government is also developing different EV

infrastructures to accommodate the increasing demand for EVs in the country.

EVs have the ability to lower urban air pollution because the adoption of EVs may dramatically reduce air pollution in metropolitan areas, therefore benefiting public health and quality of life. They are also noted for having lesser greenhouse gas emissions. As Ethiopia increases its renewable energy production, the carbon footprint of EVs can be reduced, making them a cleaner option to regular automobiles.

Ethiopia generates \$2.6bn from exports in matter of months

ADDIS ABABA

ETHIOPIA has generated some \$2.63 billion in export revenue during the first five months of the current fiscal year amid strong performance in major agricultural export commodities, the country's Ministry of Trade and Regional Integration has disclosed.

The ministry said in statement issued on Wednesday the export revenue registered about 138.93 percent of the initial target set for the first five months of the current Ethiopian 2024/2025 fiscal year, which started on July 8.

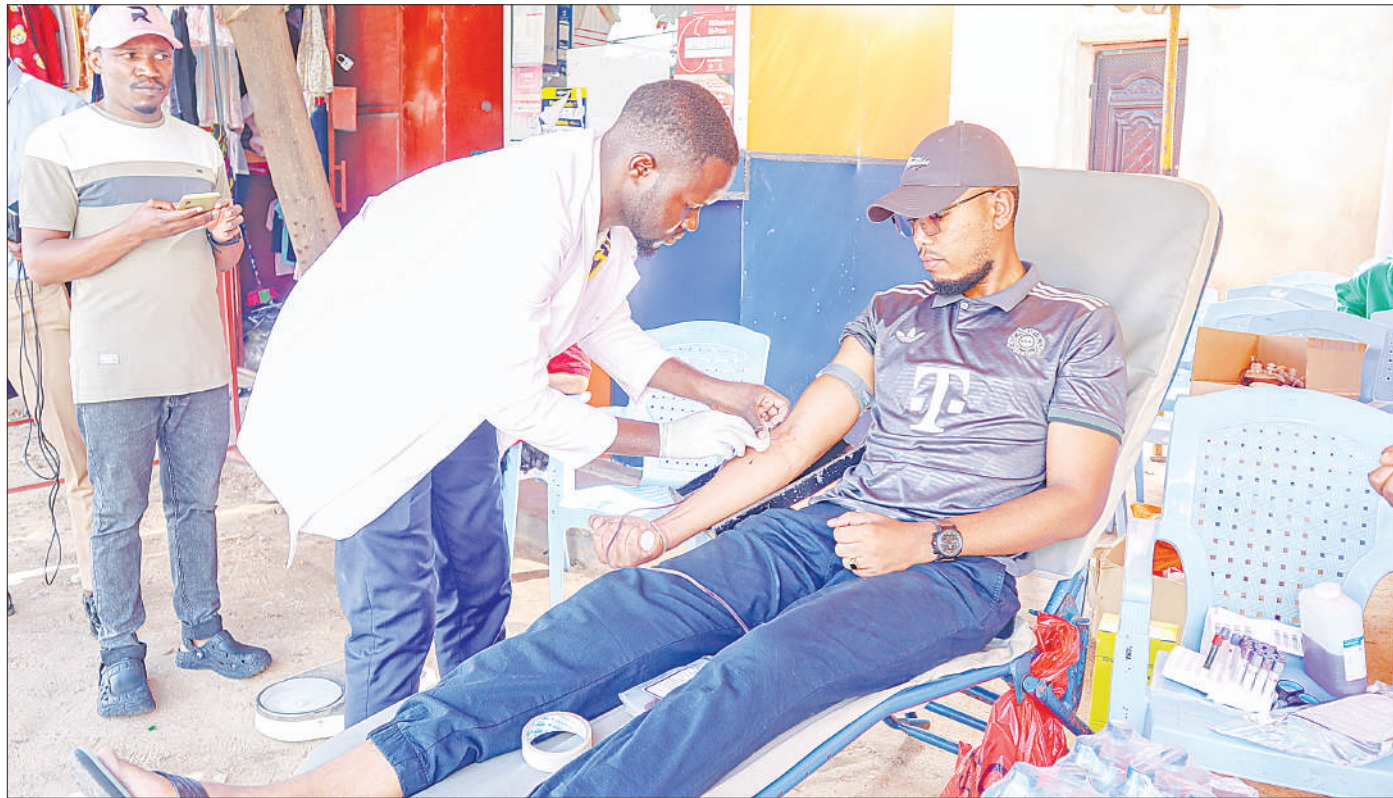
The East African country exported about 612,499 tonnes of commodities to the international market, eventually earning \$2.625 billion in the reported period, up by 102.09 percent compared to the same period last fiscal year, according to the ministry.

The ministry said agricultural commodities secured the largest share of the total export revenue, accounting for 50.42 percent during the reported period, followed by mining exports with 39.7 percent, manufacturing sector with 5.55 percent, and the export of electricity and other products accounting for 4.31 percent of the revenue.

Ethiopian government recently attributed the increase in the export of major agricultural commodities to the comprehensive economic reform and various enabling initiatives.

In 2024, Ethiopia's Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed announced an 8.4 percent economic growth target for the current fiscal year amid positive prospects in the agricultural, manufacturing, mining, and other major economic sectors.

According to the World Bank, Ethiopia, the second most populous nation in Africa after Nigeria with about 126.5 million people, is one of the fastest-growing economies in the region.



Singida Municipal Council official Amaniel Samweli donates blood on Wednesday under a drive a resident of the municipality initiated in marking his own birthday. Photo: Correspondent Tobias Mwanakatwe

Congo sentences 13 soldiers to death in bid to boost discipline

By Yassin Kombi, Lubero

Hazukay.

A CONGOLESE military tribunal has sentenced 13 soldiers to death on charges including murder, looting and cowardice in what military authorities said was a drive to improve army discipline after territorial losses due to soldiers fleeing.

The soldiers were sentenced on Tuesday in the town of Lubero in Democratic Republic of Congo's eastern North Kivu province, where Congolese forces have been fighting the Rwanda-backed M23 insurgency for nearly three years, as well as facing other militia violence.

Fighting has flared in Lubero territory and cases of soldiers abandoning their positions have helped the enemy advance, said local army spokesperson Mak

"Some of the soldiers who are supposed to be fighting the enemy at the front have shown a kind of indiscipline," he said. "We had to organise this educational trial to set things right."

Overall 24 soldiers stood trial. In addition to those handed death penalties, four received 2-10 year sentences, six were acquitted, and one's case was deferred for further investigation.

The hearings were intended "to help restore trust between the military and the population," military prosecutor Kabala Kabundi told Reuters.

All those convicted pleaded not guilty and have five days to appeal their sentence, Kabundi said. A lawyer for one of the defendants said they would appeal.

Egypt gets 15.7m tourists in 2024, targets 18m this year

CAIRO



EGYPTIAN Prime Minister Mostafa Madbouly has said that the country received a record high of 15.7 million tourists in 2024, according to a statement issued by the Egyptian cabinet.

Calling the figure "promising," Madbouly told a weekly news conference in Egypt's new administrative capital east of Cairo that "if it weren't for the events that took place in the region, the number of tourists would have reached 18 million."

Madbouly expressed his hope that Egypt will achieve the target number of 18 million tourists in 2025, "especially with the anticipated official opening of the Grand Egyptian Museum during this year."

The number of tourists in Egypt significantly dropped from over 13 million in 2019 to around 3.7 million in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, then it gradually recovered to about 8 million in 2021, 11.7 million in 2022, and 14.9 million in 2023, according to official data.

The tourism sector is one of Egypt's main sources of foreign currency, along with revenues from the Suez Canal, exports, and remittances from Egyptian expatriates.

REQUEST FOR TENDER

North Mara Gold Mine, a fully owned subsidiary of Twiga Minerals Corporation, which is ultimately owned by Barrick Gold Corporation and the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania requests the submission of Tenders from reputable, experienced, certified, and qualified parties to provide the following service:

OTR Tyres Supply
Tender Ref: NM033/2024

Pre-qualification Criteria			
No.	Reference no.	Description of work	Pre-qualification Criteria
1	NM033/2024	OTR Tyres Supply (Bridgestone brand only)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. The applicant should be able to finance stock until usage (Vendor managed/Consignment stock agreement) and hold a minimum of 3 months stock cover onsite. ii. Applicant to submit Company Profile with proven experience in OTR Tyres Supply in the mining industry for the past 3 years, preferably Barrick mine sites. iii. Applicant must be an appointed Bridgestone Dealer in Tanzania preferably for Barrick. iv. Must be able to supply and handle tyres as per standards with compliance to Tanzanian regulations. v. Must have the ability of cover tyre premature fails due to wrong compound used. vi. Ability to supply tyres in line with site's Tonne Kilometre Per Hour (TKPH) for tyre life improvements. vii. Offer tyre products and solutions that optimize efficiency in operations. viii. The applicant's ERP system should be capable to interface with SAP for stock monitoring and ordering purposes. ix. Be able to provide technical training to staff. x. Be able to provide a clear breakdown of cost contributors for each of the rates quoted, supported by a robust escalation mechanism. xi. Able to comply with Safety standards and management systems. xii. Provide technical advice and support regarding tyres selection, application, storage, handling, and safety procedures to ensure optimal performance and compliance with regulatory standards. xiii. Applicant to submit organizational structure, list of experienced personnel and resource schedule xiv. Applicant to submit proof of Local Content Regulations compliance and a recent Brela Search document. xv. Applicant should provide proof to its statements as necessary regarding its financial stability, engineering capabilities, documents complying with Tanzanian laws and Regulations. xvi. Applicant to submit active Health Safety Environmental policies and environmental management plan.

Expression of Interest (EOI)

If your company meets the pre-qualification criteria and would like to be considered to receive the invitation to tender (ITT), an expression of Interest (EOI) including your company profile and evidence of compliance with pre-qualification criteria may be submitted to nm.proposal@barrick.com

Applicants must quote the tender description(s) and the respective reference no.(s) in the subject line of the email.



NB: The Company reserves the right to invite any other supplier(s) who did not submit an EOI through this advertisement.

Pre-qualification of any company submitting an "Expression of Interest" shall be at the sole discretion of MMGM.

If you do not hear from us in 21 days after the deadline date, please consider your submission unsuccessful.

Key Dates

- Last date to submit EOI **09 January 2025**




Advertisement

REQUEST FOR QUOTATION

BUL-RFQ-24-12-02 - 40kA 12kV 8DA10 SBB GIS Siemens Switchgear

Bulyanhulu Gold Mine ("the Company"), a fully owned subsidiary of Twiga Minerals Corporation, which is ultimately owned by Barrick Gold Corporation and the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania requests the submission of Quotes from reputable, experienced, certified, and qualified parties to provide the following:

Material types and specifications:
Gas-insulated medium-voltage switchgear for primary distribution.

- 29 x 1250A 40kA incomer/outgoer circuit breakers
- 4 x 2000A 40kA Incomer breakers
- 4 x 630A Metering panels
- 1 x 2500 Bus coupler breaker
- 1 x Bus Sectionalizer panel
- Feeder protection relay Siprotec 7SX85_Protection and Control Relay for all circuit breakers
- 33 x PM8000 Power Quality Meters
- Switchboard accessories
- Overland wooden cage packaging for delivery to site
- 2000A Copper busbar 40kA rating
- Arc flash detection and suppression on all panels
- Accessories:
- Racking lever for truck
- Operating lever for earthing switch
- Lever for circuit breaker spring charging
- Plates, labels, manual and pocket with documentation
- Support bracket for handles and keys
- Correction pen for paint touch up
- Tin of 400g of grease
- Apparatus service trolley
- Pendant Control Station-15m Lead with Controller Box
- Test Plug type ESSAILEC - TEST PLUG FI-

Key documents

- Clear and detailed Quotation
- Company registration documents i.e. Certificate of incorporation, business license, TIN, VRN, Tax Clearance Certificate etc.
- Applicable certification, accreditation, affiliated registrations, and letter of dealership as required.
- BRELA detailed search document indicating Tanzanian ownership percentage to determine classification as an Indigenous Tanzanian Company as per the Local Content Regulation, 2018.
- Approved Local Content Plan or acknowledgement of submission from the Mining Commissioner.
- Full General Arrangement (GA) + Single Line (SLD) drawing to be submitted/supplied with every quotation for approval.

Submission of Quotes

Please submit your quotes via email to bulytender@barrick.com.
 The reference "BUL-RFQ-24-12-02 - SIEMENS SWITCHGEAR" must be quoted in the subject line of the email.

If you do not hear from us in 21days after the deadline date, please consider your bid/quote unsuccessful.

Key Dates

- Last date to submit quotes: **10th January 2025**

Bulyanhulu Gold Mine Limited

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Regulating mining should not mean stepping up joblessness

THERE is a tricky situation calling for intense consultations at upper government levels when one listens to residents of Ifumbo ward in Chunya District, Mbeya Region, where Minerals minister Anthony Mavunde was lately on a visit.

As irony would have it, the residents have been appealing to the government to remove gold miners 'invading' River Zira.

The surprising aspect is that mining seems to be conducted not just near rivers but seemingly within the key river and another one, which is obviously not environment-friendly.

While activists simply talk of mining as human activity destroying the environment there generally and the river in particular, there is more to this activity than meets the eye.

Gold mining isn't just any other 'human activity', and it will need plenty of effort by the relevant authorities to dissuade people from conducting mineral extraction there.

Earlier it appeared that there was some big investing firm and villagers objecting to its activities chiefly for environmental reasons, but it now appears locals are in it as well.

It is even more surprising hearing that mining activities in the specific area have not become controversial only lately but this dates back a long time.

Journalists visiting the area were told that the mining activities violate directives by President Samia Suluhu Hassan, when she was vice president, and it is precisely to those areas that the minister has recently visited.

Roundabout ten years ago, the

then VP banned mining activities in two rivers in the district - Zira and Lupa - in what was widely viewed as a measure underlining the need to protect the environment.

It is unfortunate if whatever bans are imposed are observed only briefly, and then the 'force of gravity' compel residents to resume mining again.

Whether or not there is siltation and sedimentation in the river, the bans don't appear to stand. But one thing is evident: gold is more highly rated than fears on environmental damage.

The mining activities aren't just being pursued with shovels and pick axes but with advanced machinery - and aren't being conducted by trespassers but actual investors with due recognition and licences. With this, one is tempted to believe that these activities are there to stay - not likely to end any time soon.

Still the way the reports are presented appears to be slanted in favour of seeking some fall guy, an investor - this while the reality on the ground is different in that it is a free for all plus some recognised boundaries.

It seems that the local authorities are realistic about the situation, that it is persuade people into putting a stop to mining and go back to their maize fields, sweet potatoes or rice.

Another way out would be to move people from the damaged area by developing it into a special economic zone.

The government habitually pays to relocate people from wildlife areas and it would as easily move similarly to facilitate mining and related activities but without this leading to enhanced levels of poverty, joblessness, etc. Just a thought.



Civil society trends for 2025: Nine global challenges

By Andrew Firmin and Inés Pousadela

IT'S been a tumultuous year, and a tough one for struggles for human rights. Civil society's work to seek social justice and hold the powerful to account has been tested at every turn. Civil society has kept holding the line, resisting power grabs and regressive legislation, calling out injustice and claiming some victories, often at great cost. And things aren't about to get any easier, as key challenges identified in 2024 are likely to intensify in 2025.

More people are likely to be exposed to conflict and its consequences, including humanitarian and human rights disasters, mass displacement and long-term trauma. The message of 2024 is largely one of impunity: perpetrators of conflict, including in Israel and Russia, will be confident they can resist international pressure and escape accountability. While there may be some kind of ceasefire in Gaza or halt to the Russia-Ukraine conflict, those responsible for large-scale atrocities are unlikely to face justice. Impunity is also likely to prevail in the conflicts taking place largely off the global radar, including in Myanmar and Sudan. There will also be growing concern about the use of AI and automated weapons in warfare, a troublingly under-regulated area.

As recent events in Lebanon and Syria have shown, changing dynamics, including shifting calculations made by countries such as Iran, Israel, Russia, Turkey and the USA, mean that frozen conflicts could reignite and new ones could erupt. As in Syria, these shifts could create sudden moments of opportunity; the international community and civil society must respond quickly when these come.

The second Trump administration will have a global impact on many current challenges. It's likely to reduce pressure on Israel, hamper the response to the climate crisis, put more strain on already flawed and struggling global governance institutions and embolden right-wing populists and nationalists the world over. These will bring negative consequences for civic space - the space for civil society, which depends on the freedoms of association, expression and peaceful assembly. Funding for civil society is also likely to be drastically reduced as a result of the new administration's shifting priorities.

2025 is the year that states are required to develop new plans to reduce greenhouse gas emissions

and adapt to climate change under the Paris Agreement. The process will culminate in the COP30 climate summit in Brazil, likely the world's last chance to limit the global temperature rise to 1.5 degrees above preindustrial levels. This will only happen if states stand up to fossil fuel companies and look beyond narrow short-term interests. Failing that, more of the debate may come to focus on adaptation. The unresolved question of who will pay for climate transition will remain central. Meanwhile, extreme weather events such as heatwaves and floods can be expected to continue to devastate communities, impose high economic costs, drive migration and exacerbate conflicts.

Globally, economic dysfunction is likely to increase, with more people struggling to afford basic necessities, increasingly including housing, as prices continue to rise, with climate change and conflict among the causes. The gap between the struggling many and the ultra-wealthy few will become more visible, and anger at rising prices or taxes will drive people - particularly young people deprived of opportunities - onto the streets. State repression will often follow. Frustration with the status quo means people will keep looking for political alternatives, a situation right-wing populists and nationalists will keep exploiting. But demands for labour rights, particularly among younger workers, will also likely increase, along with pressure for policies such as wealth taxes, a universal basic income and a shorter working week.

A year when the largest number of people ever went to the polls has ended - but there are still plenty of elections to come. Where elections are free and fair, voters are likely to keep rejecting incumbents, particularly due to economic hardship. Right-wing populists and nationalists are likely to benefit the most, but the tide will eventually turn: once they've been around long enough to be perceived as part of the political establishment, they too will see their positions threatened, and they can be expected to respond with authoritarianism, repression and the scapegoating of excluded groups. More politically manipulated misogyny, homophobia, transphobia and anti-migrant rhetoric can be expected as a result.

Even if developments in generative AI slow as the current model reaches the limits of the human-generated material it feeds on, international regulation and data protection will likely continue to lag behind. The use of

AI-enabled surveillance, such as facial recognition, against activists is likely to increase and become more normalised. The challenge of disinformation is likely to intensify, particularly around conflicts and elections.

Several tech leaders have actively taken the side of right-wing populists and authoritarians, putting their platforms and wealth at the service of their political ambitions. Emerging alternative social media platforms offer some promise but are likely to face similar problems as they grow.

Climate change, conflict, economic strife, repression of LGBTQ+ identities and civil and political repression will continue to drive displacement and migration. Most migrants will remain in difficult and underfunded conditions in global south countries. In the global north, right-wing shifts are expected to drive more restrictive and repressive policies, including the deportation of migrants to countries where they may be at risk. Attacks on civil society working to defend their rights, including by assisting at sea and land borders, are also likely to intensify.

The backlash against women's rights will continue. The US right wing will continue to fund anti-rights movements in the global south, notably in Commonwealth African countries, while European conservative groups will continue to export their anti-rights campaigns, as some Spanish organisations have long done throughout Latin America. Disinformation efforts from multiple sources, including Russian state media, will continue to influence public opinion. This will leave civil society largely on the defensive, focused on consolidating gains and preventing setbacks.

As a result of these trends, the ability of civil society organisations and activists to operate freely will remain under pressure in the majority of countries. Just when its work is most needed, civil society will face growing restrictions on fundamental civic freedoms, including in the form of anti-NGO laws and laws that label civil society as agents of foreign powers, the criminalisation of protests and increasing threats to the safety of activists and journalists. Civil society will have to devote more of its resources to protecting its space, at the expense of the resources available to promote and advance rights.

Despite these many challenges, civil society will continue to strive on all fronts. It will continue to combine advocacy, protests, online campaigns, strategic litigation

and international diplomacy. As awareness grows of the interconnected and transnational nature of the challenges, it will emphasise solidarity actions that transcend national boundaries and make connections between different struggles in different contexts.

Even in difficult circumstances, civil society achieved some notable victories in 2024. In the Czech Republic, civil society's efforts led to a landmark reform of rape laws, and in Poland they resulted in a law making emergency contraception available without prescription, overturning previous restrictive legislation. After extensive civil society advocacy, Thailand led the way in Southeast Asia by passing a marriage equality law, while Greece became the first predominantly Christian Orthodox country to legalise same-sex marriage.

People defended democracy. In South Korea, people took to the streets in large numbers to resist martial law, while in Bangladesh, protest action led to the ousting of a longstanding authoritarian government. In Guatemala, a president committed to fighting corruption was sworn in after civil society organised mass protests to demand that powerful elites respect the election results, and in Venezuela, hundreds of thousands organised to defend the integrity of the election, defeated the authoritarian government in the polls and took to the streets in the face of severe repression when the results weren't recognised. In Senegal, civil society mobilised to prevent an attempt to postpone an election that resulted in an opposition win.

Civil society won victories in climate and environmental litigation - including in Ecuador, India and Switzerland - to force governments to recognise the human rights impacts of climate change and do more to reduce emissions and curb pollution. Civil society also took to the courts to pressure governments to stop arms sales to Israel, with a successful verdict in the Netherlands and others pending.

In 2025, the struggle continues. Civil society will keep carrying the torch of hope that a more peaceful, just, equal and sustainable world is possible. This idea will remain as important as the tangible impact we'll continue to achieve despite the difficult circumstances.

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2025: Curtain raiser in sports field with East Africa hosting CHAN tournament

THINGS look good in the sporting arena as year 2025 starts, now that there is plenty on the sports calendar, and right away.

Discussion about Mapinduzi Cup becoming a regional event rather than grouping a selection of premier league sides and one or two visiting top club sides from the neighbourhood was rather mild.

Rather, greater attention is paid to the local premier league and the more engaging CAF tournaments. It is the three-way contest involving the two top clubs via continental opponents that thrills.

This month will thus be exciting if a number of countries turn up for the Zanzibar epic tourney as expected, in a way now being redesigned to take the place of Kagame Cup.

Looking at the local scene, neither the forthcoming CHAN tourney nor the Zanzibar bonanza is on the minds of most soccer fans.

A certain amount of excitement was to be seen in the final months as Taifa Stars battled for qualification to the Nations Cup finals 2025, where a 1-0 win over Guinea earned our team a ticket to the finals for the fourth time.

Analysts noted that this time the qualification was wholesome as in the final match the opponent needed to win to advance, unlike past qualification ties where they were through.

Yet the keen point of interest is whether city giants Young Africans SC will be in a position to reverse their fortunes when CAF Champions League engagement resumes, after CHAN is done with.

Their arch rivals across the street are breathing well in their group contests, and with the Jangwani

Street side at tail end in the group, that theirs is the club champions league unlike the second tier tournament is no solace to their fans.

But in that they have been picking up form in the local premier league, chances of coming up with a surprise in the next CAF Champions League tourney round aren't altogether negligible.

Pundits have also been taking note of the cascade of coaches who have left their teams since the current season began, and that means within four months or thereof.

It appears that just a handful of premier league sides did not replace the coach or indeed the technical bench that saw the club side through pre-season and laying plans for the league run.

The changes have been generally positive as in several areas, including the top-rated teams, their form picked up, play improved and goals came in numbers.

As the year slipped out, a big number of fans and pundits had their minds less on the local or regional scene but farther afield, where world soccer is stunned by the loss of form at the UK's Manchester United and Manchester City.

Just as applied locally, some fans have been wishing for the erstwhile coaches to leave and more suited ones to take over hopefully to bring the players together in the most effective play formation they can muster.

But, of course, soccer can prove extremely harsh and tricky, with even the most accomplished of coaches and training schemes falling way short of expectations.

Year of crises: Lessons from 2024's natural and man-made disasters

By Adonis Byemelwa

THE year 2024 has been one of the most difficult in Tanzania's recent history, marked by a series of devastating events that have left communities grappling with loss and destruction. From catastrophic floods and landslides to man-made disasters such as building collapses and fires, the country has faced an extraordinary range of challenges.

These incidents have exposed the vulnerabilities of both Tanzania's infrastructure and its growing urban centers, underscoring the urgent need for improvements in disaster preparedness, infrastructure development, and urban planning. This article examines the key tragedies of 2024, their impacts on the nation, and the crucial lessons that must be learned to build a more resilient future.

One of the most catastrophic events of 2024 was the flooding caused by the El Niño weather phenomenon, which brought an unprecedented amount of rainfall to Tanzania, especially between March and May.

The heavy rains caused widespread flooding in both urban and rural areas, with regions such as Dar es Salaam, Morogoro, Mwanza, and the Southern Highlands being hit the hardest. Entire communities were submerged, agricultural land was destroyed, and transportation routes were disrupted. Over 50 people lost their lives, and thousands were displaced, with the financial cost of the floods estimated at over 150bn/-.

The floods affected both rural areas and cities, with Dar es Salaam, the largest urban center, experiencing the most severe impact. The floods paralyzed daily life, disrupted transportation systems, and caused significant damage to infrastructure such as roads, bridges, and schools. Thousands of homes were flooded, leaving families without shelter, while vital farmlands were destroyed, pushing many households into financial distress.

The floods revealed just how vulnerable Tanzania's infrastructure is to extreme weather events and highlighted the need for better urban planning and flood-resistant infrastructure. With cli-



In Hanang, the combination of heavy rainfall and steep terrain triggered massive landslides, displacing hundreds of people.

mate change intensifying these extreme weather patterns, the country must invest in sustainable water management and climate-resilient infrastructure to better prepare for future events.

Along with the flooding, 2024 also saw devastating landslides in the mountainous regions of Hanang and Mbeya, leading to tragic loss of life and displacement. In Hanang, the combination of heavy rainfall and steep terrain triggered massive landslides, claiming at least 15 lives and displacing hundreds of people.

These landslides also caused widespread destruction, blocking roads and isolating remote villages. Agricultural activities, which are the backbone of the local economy, were severely impacted as farmlands were destroyed.

The landslide in Mbeya in October was even more catastrophic, claiming 25 lives and leaving thousands homeless. The disaster affected both urban and rural areas, with heavy rains causing the ground to give way in vulnerable loca-

tions. Thousands of people were displaced, and access to basic services like healthcare and education was severely disrupted.

The financial cost of the landslides in Mbeya alone was estimated at around TZS 100 million. These tragic events have emphasized the urgent need for better land-use planning, early warning systems, and infrastructure development in high-risk areas. Rural communities, in

November, a commercial building in Kariakoo, Dar es Salaam, collapsed, killing at least 20 people and injuring dozens more. The building, which housed various businesses, had long been considered structurally unsound. Investigations revealed that it had been built without adhering to safety standards, and its deteriorating condition had been ignored for years.

The collapse not only led to the loss of lives but also caused significant economic damage, especially for small-scale traders who relied on the market for their livelihoods. Kariakoo

is one of the busiest commercial districts in the country, and the tragedy underscored the risks posed by rapid urbanization and inadequate enforcement of building regulations. Many traders lost their businesses, deepening the economic hardships already faced by the community.

The incident highlighted the need for a comprehensive overhaul of urban safety regulations in Tanzania, particularly in rapidly growing cities. Enhanced building regulations and better fire safety measures must be prioritized to prevent such tragedies from happening again. The building collapse in Kariakoo wasn't the only disaster to strike Dar es Salaam in 2024. The city also faced a series of devastating fires in several markets, including Kariakoo, Buguruni, and Ilala. A major fire in August destroyed millions of shillings worth of goods, with faulty electrical wiring identified as the cause.

Similar fires occurred in other markets throughout the year, often due to overcrowding, poor infrastructure, and

the lack of adequate fire safety measures. Many of these markets lack fire exits, proper electrical installations, and firefighting equipment, making them highly vulnerable to fire hazards. The repeated occurrence of these fires highlights the urgent need for reforms in urban fire safety regulations.

In April, a fire at the Mwanza Central Market destroyed goods worth millions. The cause, again, was faulty electrical wiring—an issue that has plagued many markets across Tanzania. The total financial loss from these fires in 2024 was estimated in the tens of millions of Tanzanian shillings, further exacerbating the financial difficulties faced by traders and business owners. Tanzania must prioritize fire safety measures in urban markets and overhaul its infrastructure to prevent such disasters in the future.

In addition to natural disasters and man-made tragedies, road traffic accidents continued to be a major concern in Tanzania in 2024. With an increasing number of vehicles on poorly maintained roads, traffic accidents have become a significant public safety issue. Between January and October, more than 1,200 accidents were recorded, resulting in over 900 deaths and thousands of injuries.

In Dar es Salaam, traffic congestion and overcrowded roads are persistent problems. Many rural roads are also poorly constructed, lacking proper signage and maintenance. The high number of fatalities from traffic accidents demonstrates the urgent need for better road infrastructure, stricter enforcement of traffic laws, and comprehensive driver education programs. Without improvements in these areas, Tanzania will continue to face a high number of preventable traffic

deaths.

The year 2024 also saw a resurgence of cholera outbreaks in several regions of Tanzania, particularly in areas like Dodoma, Singida, and Tabora, where floods exacerbated existing sanitation issues. The inadequate sanitation infrastructure created ideal conditions for the spread of waterborne diseases, and more than 250 people died from cholera in the first half of the year.

The outbreaks underscored the urgent need for better public health infrastructure, especially in rural areas. Floods and other natural disasters often damage water supply systems and sanitation facilities, which increases the risk of disease outbreaks. To prevent future public health emergencies, Tanzania must improve access to clean water, sanitation, and healthcare services.

The tragic events of 2024 have exposed numerous vulnerabilities in Tanzania's disaster preparedness, infrastructure, and urban planning. While the country has faced immense challenges, these crises also provide an opportunity for meaningful change.

Moving forward, Tanzania must invest in building resilience against natural disasters, improving infrastructure, and ensuring the safety of its rapidly growing urban population. Key measures include enhancing early warning systems, strengthening building regulations, improving fire safety in markets, and boosting public health infrastructure. These steps are essential to reducing the impact of future disasters.

By working together—government, businesses, and citizens—Tanzania can build a safer, more resilient future, one that is better equipped to withstand both climate change and the challenges of rapid urbanization.

By Correspondent Constantine Akitanda

AS Tanzania strides into 2025, the dawn of a new chapter emerges, inviting both deep reflection and an enduring sense of optimism.

This pivotal moment calls not merely for the marking of time but for a thoughtful reckoning with the nation's journey thus far and the uncharted paths ahead.

In her end-of-year address, President Samia Suluhu Hassan eloquently outlined her administration's achievements in steering the nation through turbulent times, safeguarding economic stability, and championing inclusivity.

Central to her vision is the philosophy of 4Rs—Reconciliation, Resilience, Reform, and Renewal—which has become a unifying pillar for a nation committed to achieving its democratic aspirations.

President Samia assumed the presidency under extraordinary and challenging circumstances following the untimely passing of her predecessor, Dr. John Pombe Magufuli, shortly after his re-election in 2020.

Inheriting a nation grappling with political divisions and economic instability, further compounded by the global disruptions of Covid-19, she embraced the daunting task of fostering unity, rebuilding trust, and inspiring progress.

Her administration has taken deliberate steps to bridge the divide between the ruling party and opposition factions.

Through the formation of a task force dedicated to collecting public views and recommending reforms to critical political statutes—such as the Political Parties Act and electoral frameworks—President Samia has signaled her solid commitment to strengthening Tanzania's democratic foundation.

The timeless words of Chinua Achebe resonate deeply: "When we gather together in the moonlit village ground, it is not because of the moon. Everyone can see the moon from their own compound. We come together because it is good for kinsmen to do so." As Tanzania prepares for its 2025 general elections, this profound observation underscores the importance of unity, not merely in process but in purpose.

The 4R philosophy encapsulates this

2025 General Election: A test of resilience, reform and renewal in Tanzania's democracy



This year's General Election is more than a contest of political ideas; it is a critical test of the nation's democratic integrity.

ethos, serving as a rallying cry for national cohesion. Reconciliation seeks to heal divisions and nurture constructive dialogue.

Resilience reflects the enduring strength of a nation that has faced challenges yet continues to rise. Reform aims to address systemic shortcomings, laying the groundwork for justice and equity. Renewal embodies hope, heralding a new dawn where aspirations are matched by opportunities.

Together, these tenets offer a framework for transforming differences into strength and contention into collaboration.

Tanzania stands at a pivotal juncture as the electoral season approaches, the forthcoming elections are more than a contest of political ideas; they are a critical test of the nation's democratic integrity.

For democracy to thrive, the electoral process must be transparent, inclusive, and credible, as well as the political campaigns should move beyond divisive rhetoric, focusing instead on policies that genuinely address the people's needs and aspirations.

Leaders must rise above partisanship, demonstrating states-

manship that places the nation's welfare above personal ambition.

The integrity of these elections will reflect Tanzania's commitment to the principles of 4R.

Reconciliation must go beyond political rhetoric to create an environment where differing opinions are valued and respected. Resilience must shine in safeguarding the sanctity of the ballot, ensuring that every vote counts.

Reform should be visible in fair and just electoral practices, free from manipulation or coercion. Renewal must manifest in a collective commitment to building a

future that upholds justice, equality, and opportunity for all.

Achebe's wisdom reminds us that unity is rooted in shared purpose, as custodians of Tanzania's democratic heritage, the citizens bear the responsibility of not merely participating but actively shaping the nation's destiny.

The electorate must embrace the values of tolerance, mutual respect, and inclusivity, treating differences of opinion as opportunities for dialogue rather than sources of division.

Beyond casting votes, citizens must remain vigilant, resisting

narratives or actions that threaten the fabric of national unity.

Their commitment to dialogue, empathy, and respect will define the strength of Tanzania's democracy.

Through embodying these ideals, citizens contribute not just as voters but as agents of a shared vision for the nation's future.

President Samia's philosophy of 4R transcends policy; it is a moral imperative that calls every Tanzanian to action.

Reconciliation heals wounds, resilience sustains progress, reform enhances justice, and renewal inspires hope. These principles must move beyond rhetoric, finding expression in the lived experiences of all Tanzanians.

The 2025 elections provide a unique opportunity to demonstrate the maturity of Tanzania's democracy.

Embracing the spirit of 4R, the nation can set a benchmark for governance that is both aspirational and attainable.

Leaders and citizens alike must seize this moment, showing that democracy is not merely an event but an enduring journey toward growth and enlightenment.

Achebe's timeless words remind us that unity is not the absence of differences but the presence of a shared purpose.

As Tanzania advances, let the 2025 elections stand as a testament to its democratic strength, a celebration of its diversity, and a commitment to peace and progress.

Together, let us build a nation where every voice is heard, every right respected, and every action guided by the dignity and spirit that define Tanzania.

Eating good food vs nutritious food: What is the difference?

By Raisa Mehzaheen

WHAT comes to mind when we think of 'good food'? For many, it is about flavour, indulgence, and satisfaction. 'Good food' is commonly associated with taste, presentation, and enjoyment—a feast for our senses.

Whether it is a rich slice of cheesecake, a gourmet burger or a well-spiced bowl of pasta. However, what is often labelled as 'good food' may lack the nutrients we need for overall health.

Many of our favourite indulgences are high in sugars, unhealthy fats, or artificial additives, which contribute to weight gain, inflammation, and other health issues when consumed in excess. So, while good food has its place in life's enjoyments, it does not necessarily mean it is good for us nutritionally.

Nutritious food, on the other hand, prioritises health, longevity, and body function. It is defined by its nutrient density—the vitamins, minerals, fibre, and essential fats that our body needs to thrive.

When we think of nutritious food, we think of colourful vegetables, lean proteins, whole grains, nuts, seeds, and fruits. These foods not only support our body but also help reduce the risk of chronic diseases like diabetes, heart disease, and even some forms of cancer.



The benefits of nutritious foods go beyond just physical health. They also impact mental well-being. Studies consistently show that nutrient-rich diets improve mood, support cognitive function, and reduce the risk of mental health issues.

This is not to say nutritious food is not enjoyable. A

well-seasoned salad or a well-cooked lean protein can be incredibly delicious, proving that nutritious food can also be good food. The secret lies in preparation and mindful eating.

The balance between enjoyment and health: The real challenge lies in finding a balance. Rather than seeing 'good

food' and 'nutritious food' as mutually exclusive, we can seek to merge the two. There is a middle ground where food can be both nourishing and delightful. For instance, a homemade smoothie with fruits, greens, and a dollop of yoghurt can be delicious and nutritious. Grilled salmon with a side of roasted vegeta-

bles or a bowl of spiced lentil soup can be both satisfying and packed with nutrients.

It is essential to remember that food does not have to be bland to be nutritious. Seasonings like herbs and spices, different cooking techniques, and even occasional indulgences can make nutritious foods taste amazing without

compromising health.

Shifting the focus to a long-term vision: In a world where fast food and processed items are marketed as 'good food'—cheap, quick, and tasty—the importance of nutritious food is often overshadowed. But while good food may give us a moment of pleasure, nutritious food gives us a lifetime of wellness.

Choosing nutritious foods most of the time provides long-term health benefits, while indulging in 'good food' occasionally satisfies our cravings and emotional connections to food.

Ultimately, the difference between good food and nutritious food is not about choice; it is about priority. Prioritising nutritious food as a daily staple and reserving good food as a treat can be a powerful approach. This does not mean deprivation; it means making conscious choices that support our health and happiness.

In the end, we do not have to choose between eating good food and eating nutritious food. We can aim to incorporate both into our lives in a way that supports our body and nourishes our soul. Finding the harmony between flavour and function is the key to a well-rounded, joyful, and healthy life.

The struggle to reunite children with families in war-torn Gaza

By Yolande Knell

THEY are smiling now as they play together in the sand at al-Mawasi tent camp in southern Gaza, but the children of the Masri family have survived horrific events.

"Their lives were in danger, they were exposed to so much killing and destruction," says their grandmother, Kawther al-Masri.

An Israeli bombing six weeks ago struck their home in the northern town of Beit Lahia, killing the parents of one-year-old Jamal and the mother and two young sisters of his cousins Maria, Jana and Zeina, aged from two to nine. The girls' father was arrested by Israeli forces more than a year ago.

When the children were pulled from the rubble, they were injured and alone.

Since the start of the war in Gaza, more than 14,500 children have reportedly been killed, thousands more injured and an estimated 17,000 have been left unaccompanied or separated from the family members who would ordinarily care for them.

Some are too young to know their names and remain unidentified.

In a chaotic situation amid bombings and mass displacement, the UN's children's agency, UNICEF, has managed to reunite just 63 children with their parents or guardians. Last month, the BBC followed the story of the four Masri cousins.

"The happiness of their return is indescribable, but it's overshadowed with sadness - they came back without their parents," Kawther al-Masri told us.

Initially, the news that reached Kawther in mid-November was that all of her loved ones who had remained in the family's house in northern Gaza had been killed. But she says that after she prayed, word reached her that three of her grandchildren were still alive. She immediately knew



UNICEF has managed to reunite 63 children with their parents or guardians

that she had to bring them to her. "I longed for them," she explains. "Honestly, I wished I could go to the North and fetch them, but God's will is above everything."

For more than a year now, Israel has divided the northern third of the Gaza Strip from the southern two-thirds along the line of a valley, Wadi Gaza. Humanitarian workers have to carry out special co-ordination to cross the Israeli military zone bisecting the territory.

After Kawther collected the documents she needed, UNICEF carried out its own welfare checks and went through a laborious process to arrange to move the Masri children.

As the four bereaved cousins underwent medical treatment, distant relatives had looked after them. UNICEF filmed their emotional goodbye before it

took the children away in armoured vehicles.

The short distance from Gaza City to Deir al-Balah where the convoy was heading now involves crossing an Israeli checkpoint, it takes a long time to drive and can be very risky as the war rages on. Yet UNICEF says it is prioritising child reunifications.

"The challenges are multiple," says Rosalia Bollen, a UNICEF spokeswoman. "But we're talking here about highly vulnerable children."

"These are stories of loss - of deep mental trauma and physical trauma and for these children to recover. The fact that they've been reunified with one or both parents, or a family member, is extremely, extremely important."

Kawther describes an agonising wait on the day the children

were due to arrive until finally Unicef telephoned. She hadn't seen her grandchildren for 14 months.

"I didn't know who to hug first!" she exclaims. "The first one I hugged was Jana and then Zeina. I kissed her and hugged her."

"My son's children used to call me 'Kuko' and although Zeina couldn't speak the last time I saw her, she knew this was my nickname. She kept asking: 'Are you Kuko? Are you the one I came here for?' And I told her I was. She felt safe."

The story of the Masri family is not uncommon. They were split up in the early days of the war.

A week after the 7 October 2023 Hamas assault which killed some 1,200 people in southern Israel, the Israeli military ordered 1.1 million peo-

ple in northern Gaza to move south, signalling that it planned to start a ground invasion.

Kawther and most of her children quickly packed up and moved to Rafah, but transportation for her two sons, Ramadan and Hamza, fell through. They ended up staying behind with their wives - one of whom was pregnant - and small children.

In November 2023, Hamza was arrested by Israeli forces in Beit Lahia. His close relatives insist that he and they are farmers with no political affiliations.

Israel has detained thousands of Gazans during the war, saying they are suspected of terrorism.

"This has been our fate," Kawther tells us despairingly. "We lost our homes, our land and our loved ones, and we were divided between the North and the South."

With so many people unaccounted for, many turn to the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) for help. It takes detailed information and cross-checks this with sources it can access, such as hospital lists and names of returned detainees.

More than 8,300 cases have been reported to the organisation but only about 2,100 have been closed. Of these, only a small number have led to family reunifications.

"People are in limbo - they don't know whether their family member is alive, whether they are injured or in hospital, whether they are trapped under rubble or whether they will see them again," says Sarah Davies from the ICRC.

Doctors and staff at hospitals also play a part in trying to connect their patients with loved ones.

Nearly a year ago, a newborn baby who had been delivered by Caesarean section after her mother was killed in an Israeli air strike. Medics called the little girl "the daughter of Hanna Abu Amsha" and kept information about her in the hope her relatives could track her down.

Recently, the nursery at Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Hospital in Deir al-Balah told us that the baby was eventually handed over to her father and was doing well.

Days after the Masri family's reunion, a local journalist visited Kawther and her grandchildren in the al-Mawasi displaced people's camp where they now live in a tent. With aid in short supply, Unicef had given them help to get extra food and medication.

The girls also had warm jackets - some protection against the cold temperatures which have led to several babies dying of hypothermia, including at the camp on the coast, close to the city of Khan Younis.

While Kawther is relieved to have the children with her, she still does not feel they are safe. She worries about how to care for them and their mental health.

"They are in shock," she says. "No matter how much we try to distract the girls and avoid talking of the war, every now and then they wander off in thought."

"When night falls, they are afraid. They say: 'There's a plane, there's a strike.' They ask me: 'Is it dawn yet?' and only when morning comes, they start to feel reassured."

Kawther says she desperately hopes for a ceasefire and for her grandchildren to rebuild their lives. Not to become part of a lost generation.

Fishermen seek to form vigilantes in bid to tackle crime in Lake Victoria

By Special Correspondent

ON December 18, 2024, two dead bodies with deep cuts and suspected to be those of fishermen, were found floating on the Ugandan side of Lake Victoria, raising concerns about criminal activity in East Africa's largest freshwater fishery.

Police and community leaders say there have been three violent deaths on the lake in the past seven months, with an escalation in cases of boat hijacking and at least 130 thefts of outboard engines in 2024.

This has prompted the fishermen to petition the Ugandan army to come to their aid.

"We are perplexed by what is going on in Lake Victoria. It's a matter of life and death," the fishermen said in a petition, dated December 12, 2024, and delivered to the Bombo military headquarters a week before Christmas.

The petition was signed by James Karemera, chairman of the Nile perch conservation lobby, the Empuuta Conservation and Stakeholders Association.

The fishermen also sought permission to form vigilante groups to secure their businesses.

The fishermen blame the security lapses on the laxity of the police marine units, the army's Fisheries Protection Unit (FPU) and the district security committees charged with enforcing security on the lake.

Joshua Mukiibi of the Empuuta Conservation and Stakeholders Association cites the Lyabaana and Liibu landing sites in Buvuma District, Nkose and Jaana in Kalangala District, and Kimi in Mukono District as hotspots for robbery.

In Buvuma, which borders Kenya, area legislator Robert Migadde told Parliament in December that at least 40 outboard engines had been stolen, while community leaders in Kyotera District on the Uganda-Tanzania border also reported 90 engines stolen.

Lieutenant Leuben Ndifula, spokesperson of the FPU, says fishermen often fail to report incidents on the lake to the security teams.

"We had put a stop to criminality on the water," Lt Ndifula said. "Insecurity can be dealt with if fishermen share timely information with security agencies."

On December 26, the marine police unit arrested seven suspects and seized two Yamaha outboard engines valued at \$3,804.



Small hands, big dreams: Youths find harmony in orchestral music

WINDHOEK

WITH elegant strokes of her violin, 18-year-old Twani Fredericks fills the classroom of the Youth Orchestras of Namibia (YONA) with captivating melodies. Her journey with the instrument embodies not only a deep passion but also the resilience required to chase her dream in a country where opportunities to study orchestral music are limited.

"Learning orchestral music here has shifted my mindset. Playing the violin brings peace to my heart. I love it," said Fredericks, who began her musical journey at age 11.

Fredericks is one of the many beneficiaries of YONA, which was founded in 2016 to nurture artistic talents in Windhoek, Namibia's capital. Since its inception, the program has empowered more than 600 children, addressing Namibia's gap in training orchestra musicians.

"Our mission is to bridge gaps and inspire hope, empowering children to build a better future," said Gretel Coetzee, YONA's director and co-founder. She said that orchestras in Namibia previously relied on musicians from neighboring countries, a practice YONA is gradually changing by nurturing local talent.

Namibia's Minister of Education, Arts and Culture Ester Anna Nghipondoka said programs like YONA are important in fostering young talent despite limited resources, stressing that such initiatives play a pivotal role in unlocking potential and shaping the futures of young people.

What began with 25 children has blossomed into a thriving program, accommodating around 200 learners annually at its main location in Windhoek's central business district and two additional centers in Katutura township.

"When we first introduced violin lessons in 2017, the 25 children had to share just four instruments, taking turns to learn," Coetzee recalled.

YONA now offers lessons across three levels, from beginner string orchestras and choirs to advanced symphony ensembles. The range of instruments has also expanded to include the flute, piano, clarinet, and oboe, reflecting the increasing enthusiasm among the children.

Inclusivity is central to YONA's philosophy. While the academy charges standard fees, about 80 percent of the learners receive full bursaries sponsored by organizations such as the National Arts Council of Namibia. These bursaries cover tuition, transportation, and meals, ensuring that orchestral music education remains accessible to children from diverse backgrounds.

"This ensures that orchestral music education is accessible to as many children as possible, fostering inclusivity while harnessing music's power to positively shape young lives during their formative years," Coetzee said.

YONA's impact is tangible. Learners like Fredericks credit the program with boosting their confidence and teamwork skills. "It has positively influenced other areas of my life, especially teamwork and social skills," she said.

For 13-year-old violinist Edlin Hchobeb, YONA has been transformative, improving his focus and academic performance while also providing a sense of belonging. "It is good to be with peers who have similar interests, and it keeps me busy with good things like music," he said.

Beyond the classroom, YONA creates opportunities for its students to showcase their talents on both local and international stages. It organizes orchestra events featuring collaborations with renowned artists, offering young musicians invaluable exposure to professional music environments. This year, eight students participated in the Stellenbosch International Chamber Music Festival in South Africa, marking their first international performance.

"It felt like a dream come true," Fredericks said. "We learned advanced techniques I would not have encountered elsewhere."

YONA's reach extends beyond music. Amy Afrikaner, a music teacher at YONA, said "music provides the children with a safe, positive outlet and fosters trust within the community."

"I am amazed at how shy children have grown in confidence, both in their musical abilities and in life. They communicate more effectively, express themselves openly, and actively participate with others. This is the social transformation we aim to foster," Coetzee said.



AfDB to extend facilities worth \$200m to bolster trade in Africa, support SMEs

By Special Correspondent

THE Board of Directors of the African Development Bank Group has approved two financial facilities for South-Africa based Standard Bank Group to support economic development in Africa.

The first is a \$200 million trade finance risk participation agreement (RPA) for Standard Bank of South Africa Limited; the second is a ZAR 3.6 billion investment in a social bond issued by the Standard Bank Group (SBG).

The partnership will bolster Standard Bank Group's capital, increase support for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in South Africa

and expand trade across the African continent.

The social bond, to be listed on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange, represents an innovative approach to sustainable financing. Bond proceeds will go to support SME lending initiatives under the Standard Bank Group's Sustainable Finance Framework.

The Risk Participation Agreement will enable the scale up of trade finance support to local banks, thus enhancing trade finance capabilities across the continent including in low-income countries and transition states. This will alleviate trade financing constraints for businesses and reduce the trade finance gap on the continent while promoting

intra-African trade.

African Development Bank Vice President for Private Sector, Infrastructure and Industrialization Solomon Quaynor said: "This partnership between the African Development Bank and Standard Bank Group exemplifies our commitment to driving sustainable economic growth in Africa. By supporting SMEs and fostering inclusive financial solutions, we are taking significant steps towards achieving our vision of a prosperous continent where every individual has the opportunity to thrive."

Commending Standard Bank Group on its commitment to sustainability, African Development Bank Director for Finan-

cial Sector Development Ahmed Attout said: "This intervention innovatively builds on SBG's Sustainable Finance Framework, utilizing local debt capital markets to support financing to key segments including SMEs."

Standard Bank Group's Deputy CEO Kenny Fihla hailed the African Development Bank Group as a strategic partner.

"Structuring the funding as a social bond highlights the importance of the group's social impact and aligns with the continued support of our existing strategy within our Business and Commercial Banking division to drive financial inclusion through lending to SMEs in our biggest market, South Africa," he said.

Fihla, who is also CEO of Standard Bank of South Africa Limited, explained that the Risk Participation Agreement facility would enhance the organisation's trade finance capabilities and contribute towards the group's strategic objective of bridging the trade finance gap in Africa. "This will ultimately reduce trade financing constraints for local African banks and promote intra-African trade," he said.

This Board approval is aligned with the African Development Bank's new Ten-Year Strategy (2024 - 2033) to transform African economies. It will support industrialisation, and regional integration, and improve the quality of life for all Africans.

GERMAN AUTOMOBILE INDUSTRY FACING A MAKE-OR-BREAK YEAR

BERLIN

Going into the new year 2025, the German economy remains stuck in recession, with a crisis in the country's all-important automotive industry significantly contributing to the downturn.

Europe's biggest carmaker, Volkswagen (VW), for instance, is planning to cut thousands of jobs in Germany over the next few years. Mass layoffs are also on the horizon at other German automakers, affecting many of the industry's multiple suppliers.

The current state of affairs in the German car industry is plain to see for everyone, but opinions diverge when it comes to identifying the causes of the crisis.

Industry expert Stefan Bratzel from the Center of Automotive Management (CAM) describes the situation as a "combination of difficulties" and calls the problems a "German polycrisis."

He told DW that the industry is "still learning new skills in the transformation toward e-mobility, software-based vehicles, and autonomous driving." Additionally, Bratzel said a "new competitive environment" has emerged in the industry, with challenges "not limited to [US electric-vehicle pioneer] Tesla and new Chinese manufacturers."

A spokesperson for the German Association of the Automotive Industry (VDA) laid part of the blame for the difficulties on policymakers, telling DW that the sudden termination of electric-vehicle (EV) subsidies in December

2023 by the outgoing government of Chancellor Olaf Scholz and an insufficient charging infrastructure in Germany were "dampening sales figures and contributed to the overall situation."

Ferdinand Dudenhöffer from the Center for Automotive Research (CAR) think tank shares this view, criticizing politicians for sending conflicting signals: "One moment, they want electric cars, and the next, they're promoting combustion engines, which confuses people," he said.

For quite a few years now, it has been clear that the future of the automobile lies outside the traditional internal combustion engine, no matter whether fueled by fossil fuels or synthetic alternatives. The trend in the industry is moving decisively toward electrically driven cars.

Frank Schwöpe, a lecturer in automotive management at the University of Applied Sciences for Small and Medium Enterprises in Germany, sees "serious management errors at some manufacturers." He told DW that executives buried their heads in the sand, hoping "everything would work out fine."

But it hasn't, said Bratzel, and the German car industry has fallen behind in the global competition "due to high labor costs, in-



cluding health care expenses and extensive vacation days." These privileges for German workforces "worked as long as Germany was better and more innovative than others."

Bratzel has identified a critical shortfall: While German automakers excel in building conventional cars, they lag behind in making EVs, as these require automotive software and electronic components rather than mechanical parts. "The erosion of old paradigms and knowledge is truly tragic," he added.

Dirk Dohse from the Kiel Institute for the World Economy (IfW) believes that German developers and engineers are "still

among the global elite." Nevertheless, he told DW, there is a "lack of flexibility, particularly in management, to attract new customer groups, such as tech-savvy young people in Asia."

Dohse sees China clearly leading Germany not only in EV technology but also with regard to market power. "The Chinese EV market is the largest and most dynamic globally, which suggests China will continue to pull ahead."

China's huge technological advances and a dramatic shift in Chinese customer preferences have created massive problems for Germany's big three automakers VW, BMW and Mercedes, who had long dominated the Chinese

car market with their combustion engine vehicles.

But there are even new rivals competing against the Germans for market share, said Bratzel.

"It's not just China. In the medium term, stronger players will also emerge in India, modeled after Chinese manufacturers. Many companies from China and Korea are likely to enter India, possibly through joint ventures," he said.

For Frank Schwöpe, German automakers can still see some hope in the development of state-of-the-art batteries, a key component of EVs at the moment and in the future.

"Batteries for electric vehicles

are far from mature. Significant advances are possible, and by the end of the decade, we could see a shift toward solid-state batteries, which could change the game," he said.

Stefan Bratzel believes that 2025 will be a decisive year for the German auto industry's efforts to catch up with global developments – not only in terms of regulatory improvements but also in terms of creative and courageous action on the part of management. "Germany must be at least as innovative as it is expensive," he said.

What's at stake is vividly illustrated by a recent study conducted by the Swiss-based Prognos Institute on behalf of the VDA industry group. If the current EV trend continues, the study says, about 186,000 fewer carmaking jobs will exist in Germany by 2035 compared to 2019. Between 2019 and 2023, the industry already lost some 46,000 jobs, the VDA spokesperson quoted from the study, with "another 140,000 likely to disappear by 2035."

As a result, said the spokesperson, VDA is calling for swift political action that must include "less bureaucracy, more trade agreements, a competitive tax system, as well as simpler and faster approval processes."

Even if policymakers create more favorable conditions and German carmakers regain competitiveness, the industry's recovery will take time, cautions Bratzel. "The next two to three years will be a major challenge, requiring the simultaneous tackling of many structural problems," he said, adding on a brighter note: "At least politics has now recognized Germany's 'polycrisis.'"

IfW's Dohse, by contrast, predicts the situation may worsen before improving. "I think 2025 will be a very tough year for the German auto industry, and it will also be a year when setting the right course for the future will be essential."

NAIROBI

Inflation pressures across Africa exhibited divergence in 2024 with central banks adopting monetary policies tailored to country-specific factors such as fiscal concerns.

African countries with moderate inflation including Kenya, South Africa, Rwanda and Mozambique, have cut interest rates with prudent considerations of well anchored inflationary expectations within their target bands.

High inflation countries including Egypt, Nigeria and Angola have countered with rate hikes coupled with turnaround reforms to the monetary and exchange rate interventions to tame volatility.

In East Africa, Burundi has the highest rate at 12 percent, closely followed by Kenya at 11.25 percent, Uganda 9.75 percent, Ethiopia 7 percent, Rwanda 6.5 percent, and Tanzania 6 percent. Kenya's Central bank delivered 3 consecutive jumbo cuts in the benchmark rate, closing 2024 at 11.25 percent from a high of 13 percent in February.

Kenya's economy slowed down in

Africa's central banks adjust monetary policies amid currency, inflation woes



the hind quarters of 2024 hence the dovish move by the Central bank with anticipation of continued shilling stability and recovery of economic activity. Inflation eased from highs of 6.9 percent in January, now anchored within the central bank's targets.

The South African Reserve bank cut its key interest rate by 100 basis points in 2024 to 7.75 percent. The country saw inflation slow down to comfortable levels as the Rand held steady.

Egypt hiked its rates by 8 percent in 2024 to 27.25 percent in December from 19.25 percent in January. Inflation rate slowed down in November to 25.5 percent above the apex bank's target as fuel and cigarettes prices surged.

Zimbabwe's central bank maintained the benchmark rate at 35 percent in December from a high of 150 percent at the beginning of the year. Inflation in November eased significantly to 11.7 percent compared to 37.2 percent in October as

the ZiG regained strength.

The Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe replaced the Zimbabwean dollar with a new gold backed currency - ZiG in April in a 6th attempt to stabilize and strengthen the country's currency.

In the late days of September, the Reserve bank of Zimbabwe devalued the ZiG by 43 percent, from 13.56 to 24.4 against the dollar in a bid to stabilize the volatile economy.

Angola's central bank hiked its benchmark rate by 200 basis points

in 2024, closing the year at 19.50 percent - the highest level since 2022. Inflation rate in Angola remained elevated with the latest showing a slowdown to 28.41 percent amid the Kwacha's recovery.

The Central Bank of Ghana (BOG) lowered its rate slightly in September and maintained it at 27 percent in November, to tackle stubborn inflation and ease pressures on the exchange rate.

Ghana's inflation climbed to 23 percent in November owing to rising food prices. The Ghana Cedi has come under pressure in 2024 on the back of investor jitters on the prolonged debt restructuring and the subdued foreign exchange earnings from cocoa - world's 2nd largest producer.

Zambia's central bank hiked its benchmark rate to 14 percent in

November, the highest since 2017 in order to tame inflationary pressures and buoy the Kwacha. Inflation quickened to 16.5 percent in November driven by severe effects of prolonged drought as the Zambian Kwacha depreciated against the dollar.

Nigeria's Central Bank raised its benchmark rate for a 6th consecutive time in the year to 27.5 percent seeking to slow down the stubborn inflation and stabilize the Naira in anticipation of high dollar demand. Inflation in the West African country climbed to 34.6 percent in November as food prices edged higher.

The Naira depreciated against the dollar by about 46 percent in the year - listed among worst performing currencies - driven by dollar shortages even as the central bank sold dollars in the market to boost liquidity, with the free-floating system remaining insignificant. Meanwhile, the Nigerian government raised US\$ 2.2 billion in a Eurobond auction, attracting 400 percent demand to finance its growing budget deficit.

Key sectors for Nigeria's economy in 2025

LAGOS

Afrinvest's Nigeria Economic and Financial Market Review of 2024 and 2025 Outlook has projected that six major sectors are poised to boost the Nigerian economy this year.

The firm, which is involved in investment banking, securities trading, asset management, trust services, consultancy, and technology forecast a modest recovery in 2025, supported by stabilising inflation and improved global demand, amid persistent risks from geopolitical tensions and climate change.

According to the report "Beyond the Rhetoric: Transforming Reforms to Tangibles," the sectors that will aid Nigeria's economic growth are agriculture, oil & gas, consumer goods, industrial

goods, banking and telecommunication.

Afrinvest forecasts that Nigeria's economic prospects will be largely hinge on the proposed tax reforms and effective implementation of the tax reforms would help unlock about N7.5 billion annually, which are essential for fiscal sustainability in 2025.

"The reforms would be pivotal to revitalising the currently challenged fiscal capacity evidenced by the jump in national debt-to-GDP ratio to N138 trillion and 58.3 percent in 11 months of 2024 from N97.3 trillion and 40.1 percent in 2023 respectively," the report said.

It highlighted that the banking sector recapitalisation exercise remains vital to achieving Nigeria's \$1.0 trillion economy ambition by 2030.

"The positive spillovers from a successful banking sector recapitalisation in 2025 would include wealth and job creation across other sectors of the economy as well as the attraction of foreign capital to the economy," the report added.

At the end, Nigerians would be keen to see the transformation of the several reform rhetorics of the government to tangible outcomes beginning in 2025 as further delay could be devastating.

Here are six key sectors that will drive Nigeria's economic growth in 2025. The agriculture sector is positioned for a positive performance in 2025, anchored on the successful completion of strategic investments by major players in 2024, growing domestic and regional demand for output, and planned intervention by

the Federal Government including tariff waiver on equipment importation.

Oil & Gas sector should remain upbeat despite expected moderation in global energy prices. Afrinvest expects the FX balance sheet and stimulating corporate activities to keep the narrative compelling around the sector.

The consumer goods sector's near-term outlook remains cautiously optimistic with several domestic and global challenges likely to impact growth, inflationary pressures, FX volatility, and geographical factors are expected to continue influencing consumer spending patterns.

The industrial Goods sector outlook is positive, buoyed by an expectation that moderating inflationary and FX pressure should translate to firmer busi-

ness performance, even as FG's infrastructure investment remains supportive. The banking sector outlook is largely positive as highlighted in our 2024 Banking Sector Report supported by expected ESP growth and balance sheet optimization. In 2025, Afrinvest expects banks to make significant progress from the recapitalisation exercise which would lead to positive investor sentiment in the sector supported by a much more stable regulatory environment.

The telecom sector is expected to remain under pressure from FX dynamics which will strain operational costs and profitability. However, strategies such as renegotiations of existing tower lease agreements and upward review of tariffs in Q1 2025 would aid telecom giants in combating

the challenging environment.

Nigeria's economy experienced a 3.01 percent increase in foreign exchange inflows, rising to \$22.89 billion in Q3 2024 from \$22.22 billion in the previous quarter, according to the latest Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) Economic Report.

The report disclosed that inflows through the CBN surged by 39.63 percent, reaching \$11.86 billion, up from \$8.49 billion in Q2 2024 while autonomous sources witnessed a decline of 19.66 percent, dropping to \$11.03 billion from \$13.72 billion.

On the other hand, foreign exchange outflows also rose, rising by 15.18 percent to \$8.43 billion. Outflows through the CBN grew significantly by 27.91 percent while those from autonomous sources fell by 30.06 percent.

CANADIAN HOUSING MARKET TO SEE PRICE RISE IN 2025

TORONTO

The housing market in Canada which, like the Nigerian, has been embroiled in crisis, is projected to see stability and about 6 percent price rise in this new year.

Analysts see this as a piece of good news for Nigerians and other immigrants in the country who have been victims of the country's housing crisis that has pushed many of them to find homes in odd places including streets and cemeteries.

The analysts note that even as dire as the economic situation in Nigeria is at the moment, not even dollar-a-day Nigerians at home are living in the kind of places some Nigerians find as homes, all in the quest for 'better' living conditions and jobs abroad.

The streets of Canada and, in extreme cases, the cemetery, have become destinations for immigrants and refugees and it is reported that several immigrants, running into tens of thousands, are now pitching their tents in these places as their homes.

According to reports, in Quebec, one of the country's largest cities, one in two homeless people can be located in rural areas in odd places. This is explained by Julie Bourdon, the Mayor of Granby, who noted that, "visible homelessness did not exist three years ago in Granby," adding however that "rents are very high now compared to two years ago."

It is expected, therefore, that with this projection which is



based on a local market survey by Royal LePage the rent crisis will ease. The expected stability and price rise are to be driven by declining interest rates and new lending rules that will bring buyers back to the market.

Buyers coming back to the market means more houses will be available for rent by immigrants and natives alike while more developers would be encouraged to

move to the site and deliver more houses for the market.

The new mortgage rules which took effect December 15, 2024, aim to provide greater access to housing for first-time buyers and those purchasing new construction homes. These changes include eligibility for 30-year amortizations on insured mortgages and an increase in the mortgage insurance cap from \$1-million to

\$1.5-million.

"First-time buyers will be the primary beneficiaries of these initiatives, as their ability to borrow more for less with a smaller down payment will help bring them closer to their first home purchase," Phil Soper, president and CEO of Royal LePage, said. "We believe the return of buyers to the market will encourage builders and trigger a wave of

new supply, which is very much needed," Soper added.

The expected market stability will, however, come with a house price rise. Royal LePage predicts that the average price of a home in Canada will rise by 6 percent year-over-year to \$856,692 in the fourth quarter of 2025, falling in line with long-term trends.

"Single-family detached homes are expected to see a 7-percent

price increase, reaching a median value of \$900,833, while condo prices are forecast to grow by 3.5 percent, reaching \$605,993," the company said.

The editorial team of a real estate magazine (REM) in the country quotes Soper as saying, "the backlog of willing and able buyers continues to grow, and upcoming changes to mortgage lending rules will further enhance Canadians' borrowing power."

According to Soper, the Bank of Canada's recent monetary policy shift from "inflation fighter" to "economy booster" has been a key driver of this optimism. "We saw a marked increase in market activity at the start of the fourth quarter, following the Bank of Canada's 50-basis-point rate cut," he noted, adding that buyers, for the most part, believe home prices have bottomed out.

"The prediction sees price growth across all major Canadian markets, with Quebec City leading the way at an expected 11 percent increase in the price. Edmonton and Regina follow with projected gains of 9 percent each," the REM editorial team noted.

Soper explained that "over the past several months, supply has been building in the Toronto and Vancouver real estate markets as sellers responded to early interest rate cuts by listing their homes. However, with home prices in these cities remaining high, many sidelined buyers continued to wait for more favourable borrowing conditions."

How toxic masculinity became big business

BUCHAREST

Misogynist influencer Andrew Tate's brand of sexism has spawned an army of imitators. He and many of his followers offer online courses on how to become "real men."

A knife lies on the side table, next to it a single blue rose, probably made of plastic. So-called "media personality" and anti-feminist "man-fluencer" Andrew Tate sits with his legs spread wide on a leather chair, his eyes hidden behind dark, rectangular shades.

"I've analyzed the entire earth. All of it," he says grandly before waving a sword.

In his view, the cause of every problem in the world can be traced back to the fact that not enough men walk around their homes with a sword.

"There are not enough men like me, who do whatever they want," Tate explains. "I'm the guy who does whatever he wants. And now I want to smoke a cigar, it's just hard to find my cigars among all the money in my pocket," he jokes.

Now Tate comes to the core of his "analysis", namely to those who are actually to blame for everything: Women. Or as Tate like to say, "females." In his view, females manipulate men and control society.

"The female's entire life process from top to toe is that she never really thinks for herself. [Females] are just an empty vessel waiting for someone to install the program and then they become conservative, liberal, feminist, or whatever," Tate explains.

All this can be seen on a YouTube video titled "The Truth About Women" that dates back to 2022.

It was uploaded by a fan because YouTube

had banned Tate and it's been viewed over 41,000 times, although admittedly that is comparatively few viewers for the self-proclaimed misogynist, who is followed by over 10 million people on X (formerly Twitter) alone.

His two Telegram channels are read by over half a million users.

To many, the misogynistic, "anti-feminist" influencer is synonymous with what is known as toxic masculinity. But Tate is not the only current example of this in pop culture.

German author and philosopher Ole Liebl says there is no standard definition of toxic masculinity.

"Toxic means poisonous. The term describes men who behave like assholes," Liebl told DW. "In other words, harmful, destructive or hurtful behavior that is gender-coded."

Initially the term was coined by women's rights activists back in the 1980s to describe male behaviour characterized by dominance and insensitivity.

However, many people are bothered by the term.

"It contributes little to the scientific analysis of patriarchal structures," Liebl said. "Critics also warn that it places masculinity under general suspicion and damages the mental health of men."

A survey of 255 participants from Saudi Arabia's Qassim University and the Centre For Male Psychology in London came to the same conclusion.

Above all, the concept is about power, Liebl says.

"It's an emotional concept, and emotional concepts are important for liberation struggles, they activate us. But it's not helpful for science," he explains.



Russia gas facility

Russia-Ukraine gas deal ends, worries mount in the EU's east

MOSCOW

Russian gas exports via Ukraine came to a halt on New Year's Day, after Kyiv had refused to renew a transit deal hailing this as "Russia's biggest defeat." But some EU countries are scrambling to meet their energy needs.

The gas had kept flowing despite nearly three years of war between Russia and Ukraine, but Russia's main gas firm Gazprom said it had stopped at 0500 GMT on January 1 after Ukraine refused to renew a transit agreement.

Writing on the Telegram messaging app, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said the end of gas transit through his country to Europe was "one of Moscow's biggest defeats" and urged the United States to supply more gas to Europe.

"The more there is on the market from Europe's real partners, the faster we will overcome the last negative consequences of European energy dependence on Russia," he wrote, adding that Europe's "joint task" now was to support ex-Soviet Moldova "in this period of energy transformation."

Russia and the former Soviet Union spent half a century building up a major share of the European gas market, which at its peak stood at around 35%. In 2020, when the last five-year transit agreement started, Russia shipped about 65 billion cubic meters (bcm) of gas via Ukraine. Supplies have since fallen to 15 bcm, accounting for less

than 10 percent of the EU's pipeline gas imports in 2023.

Following the cancellation of the contract, Russian energy giant Gazprom will lose an estimated \$5 billion (€4.84 billion) in gas sales, while Ukraine will lose up to \$1 billion a year in transit fees from Russia.

The end of the agreement, however, raises questions about gas supply in landlocked eastern EU countries, which cannot import LNG by sea. Austria, Hungary, and Slovakia still rely on Russian gas which is why the governments there are eager to continue purchasing Russian gas.

Before the Ukraine war, Russia was the world's largest exporter of natural gas and Europe was Moscow's most important market. European governments prioritized access to cheap energy over concerns about doing business with Putin.

The mutually beneficial relationship began more than 50 years ago, when the former Soviet Union needed funds and equipment to develop its Siberian gas fields. At the time, the western part of then still divided Germany sought affordable energy for its growing economy, and signed the so-called pipes-for-gas deal with Moscow, under which West German manufacturers supplied thousands of kilometers of pipes to transport Russian gas to Western Europe.

This energy relationship persists, as European importers are often locked into long-term contracts that are difficult to exit.

According to the Brussels-based think tank Bruegel, EU fossil fuel imports from Russia amounted to about \$1 billion (€958 million) per month at the end of 2023, down from \$16 billion per month in early 2022. In 2023, Russia accounted for 15% of the EU's total gas imports, trailing Norway (30%) and the US (19%), but ahead of North African countries (14%). Much of this Russian gas flows through pipelines via Ukraine and Turkey.

Major consumers include Austria, Slovakia, and Hungary. Additionally, countries like Spain, France, Belgium, and the Netherlands still import Russian LNG by tanker, some of which mixes with other gas sources in Europe's pipeline network. As a result, it may even reach Germany, despite its efforts to forgo Russian gas.

Following Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022, gas prices surged dramatically – at times by more than 20 times – forcing some European factories to cut production and many small businesses to close. Prices have since dropped but remain above pre-crisis levels, making energy-intensive industries, particularly in Germany, less competitive.

European consumers are also suffering from high energy prices, prompting many to reduce consumption amid a severe cost of living crisis. The additional expenses are a significant burden: Nearly 11% of EU citizens struggled to adequately heat their homes in 2023, according to the EU Commission.



Andrew Tate had his luxury cars seized but they were later released as none of them was registered in his name.

CONSTRUCTION

TESLA'S SHANGHAI CITY ENERGY STORAGE MEGAFACILITY BEGINS TRIAL OPERATIONS

SHANGHAI

U.S. carmaker Tesla's Shanghai energy storage Megafactory has begun trial production, serving as a good example of cooperation between China and the United States to address climate challenges.

The new plant is dedicated to manufacturing Megapacks, Tesla's energy-storage batteries, with mass production expected to commence fully in the first quarter of 2025, Tesla China told Xinhua on Tuesday.

The facility was built with an initial annual production capacity of 10,000 units, equal to around 40 gigawatt-hours of energy storage, according to the company.

The project is Tesla's second plant in Shanghai, underscoring the US company's commitment to investing in the world's second-largest economy, its confidence in China's manufacturing capabilities, and the strengthened economic ties between the two countries in the new energy sector. Wu Qisheng, a researcher at the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences, told Xinhua.

Trial production was launched just seven months after construction began, setting a new record for "Tesla speed" in China, with the Shanghai Gigafactory -- Tesla's first plant in the country's eastern financial hub -- having been built



An aerial drone photo shows a view of Tesla's megafactory in east China's Shanghai.

and inaugurated within a year in 2019.

Covering an area of approximately 200,000 square meters, the new plant represents a total investment of about 1.45 billion yuan (about 201.7 million US dollars), according to the administration of the Lin-gang Special Area of China (Shanghai) Pilot Free Trade Zone.

The Megafactory is the first of its kind that Tesla has built outside the United States. At its launch ceremony in May, Tesla signed a deal with Shanghai Lin-gang Economic Development (Group) Co Ltd, securing the first

batch of orders for its Megapacks in China.

Lauding China's efforts to develop the new energy industry, including the energy storage sector, Tesla Vice President Tao Lin in May told Xinhua that the country offers a complete industrial chain, vast market potential, and a production and business environment crucial for enterprise growth.

As a global renewables powerhouse, China is a major market for energy storage. In 2023, its installed renewable energy capacity surpassed its thermal power capacity for the first time,

accounting for approximately 50 percent of all additions to the global renewable energy capacity.

Tesla's energy storage technology has already achieved a high level of commercialization and market success in the United States, said Liu Qing, vice president of the China Institute of International Studies. There remains room for market-driven cooperation between China and the United States in addressing climate challenges, particularly in advancing energy storage and energy-saving technologies.

Wu Xinbo, head of the Insti-

tute of International Studies at Fudan University, credited the rapid construction of Tesla's new factory to China's world-class infrastructure capabilities and the exceptional business environment offered by Shanghai and the broader Chinese market.

Tesla has not been alone in strengthening its commitment to the Chinese market this year. A record 52,379 foreign-invested companies were established in China in the first 11 months, an 8.9 percent increase from the previous year. In November, foreign direct investment in the Chinese mainland in actual use also saw a 6 percent year-on-year rise, data from the Ministry of Commerce shows.

In a bid to help foreign investors leverage its supply chain, market potential and innovation strengths, China has made significant strides in its opening-up.

Throughout 2024, the Chinese government has rolled out a range of key measures to foster a more welcoming environment for global investors. These measures included expanding access to key industries and launching pilot programs to facilitate foreign investment.

A key move was the rollout of the 2024 national negative list for foreign investment, effective Nov 1, which removed all market access restrictions for foreign in-

vestors in China's manufacturing industry. This unprecedented breakthrough overcame the final hurdles that global manufacturers face when entering a pillar industry in China.

In October 2024, the 3-millionth vehicle produced by Tesla's Gigafactory in Shanghai rolled off the assembly line. Of the total, one-third have been sold to markets outside the Chinese mainland, including Europe and the Asia-Pacific, the company said.

The first three quarters of this year saw the Shanghai factory deliver 675,000 vehicles, accounting for over half of the company's global deliveries during the period.

"China-US economic and trade relations are fundamentally mutually beneficial. Attempts at 'decoupling' or severing industrial and supply chains will harm US industries," Wu Xinbo said, emphasizing that half of Tesla's global vehicle production capacity is based in Shanghai, with China playing a dominant role in the new energy vehicle supply chain.

Tesla's two Shanghai factories showcase the mutual benefits of China-US cooperation, demonstrating that decoupling is impractical as US investors cannot afford to forgo the vast opportunities of the Chinese market, he noted.

Lagos, Kano, Ibadan top populated cities in 2024



LAGOS

Lagos, Kano, and Ibadan are the most populated cities in 2024, according to the latest United Nations data as estimated by Worldometer.

The data places the most populated cities to be Lagos with 15,388,000 people, Kano 4,910,000, Ibadan 3,649,000, Abuja 2,690,000 and Port Harcourt 2,120,000. 53.9 percent of the population is urban (125,447,884 people in 2024).

Nigeria has been forecasted to have a population of 237,527,782 by 2025, increasing from 235,072,214 recorded in December 2024.

The data shows that between 2023 and 2024, the country's population increased by 4,796,533.

"Nigeria's population is equivalent to 2.85 percent of the total world population and the country ranks number six in the list of countries (and dependencies) by population.

"The population density in Nigeria is 255 per Km² (662 people per mi²) and the total land area is 910,770 Km² (351,650 sq. miles), the report said.

"The median age in Nigeria is 17.9 years while the life expectancy at birth for both sexes is 54.6 years. Females have a life expectancy of 54.9 years at birth while that of males is 54.3 years," it stated.

According to U.S. Census Bureau estimates released Monday, the world population increased by more than 71 million people in 2024 which is a slight slowdown from the 75 million increase witnessed in 2023.

The data projected the world population to reach 8.09 billion people on Wednesday, January 1, 2025.

Guangxi better connected to high speed railway network

GUANGXI

The Nanning-Yulin section of the Nanning-Zhuhai High-speed Railway, located in South China's Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region, began operations on Monday, marking the completion of the region's HSR network and establishing it as the first ethnic minority autonomous region in China with high-speed rail connectivity across all its cities.

The operation has reduced travel time between Yulin and Nanning -- capital of Guangxi -- from one hour and 44 minutes to just 48 minutes, injecting new impetus into regional economic and social development.

This newly operational 193-kilometer section, running from Nanning to Yulin, is part of the larger 648-km Nanning-Zhuhai HSR line and boasts a design speed of 350 kilometers per hour. The new section includes five stations -- Nanning East, Luancheng, Hengzhou, Xingyu South and Yulin North.

While Nanning East is an existing station, the remaining four are newly built. This development is expected to significantly impact the region's economy and facilitate travel for both local people and far-off travelers. Huang Dixiang, a manager at Guangxi Xingyu Agriculture and Animal Husbandry Co Ltd in Xingye county, expressed his enthusiasm.

"The high-speed rail will greatly benefit our company in terms of talent recruitment. It will also enhance the visibility of our products, as Xingye is a major livestock breeding county. Additionally, it will greatly improve the convenience of travel for our employees and business trips," said Huang.

Li Longsen, stationmaster of Yulin North Station under China Railway Nanning Group Co Ltd, said 18 bullet trains will run daily.

The construction of the Nanning-Yulin section, which began in December 2019, was a challenging endeavor.

The line traverses complex geological terrain, including multiple rivers like the Yujiang and Yongjiang. With a bridge-tunnel ratio of 85 percent, the project involved constructing 125 bridges and 38 tunnels in total.

The project prioritized incorporating cutting-edge technologies, resulting in over 80 invention patents.

Yulin North Station, the largest newly constructed station on the line, features solar panels installed on its 7,470-square-meter metal roof.

As a crucial part of the rapid passenger transport channel connecting the Beibu Gulf Economic Zone and the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, the Nanning-Yulin section is poised to significantly enhance regional connectivity and bolster economic development.

China Railway Nanning said the operating mileage of high-speed railways in Guangxi has exceeded 2,400 kilometers.

Proven ways to help the planet in 2025

LOS ANGELES

Slowing down climate change is an immense task, but small individual actions can add up to help reduce emissions.

In 2024, the critical 1.5C threshold was breached for a full year for the first time, highlighting the urgent need to rapidly cut global emissions. Much of the work needed to curb climate change goes beyond the remit of individuals -- from scaling up renewable energy to stopping the production of oil, gas and coal. But research shows that individual actions can add up too.

But it can sometimes feel overwhelming to know where to start. Which steps can actually make a meaningful difference? We have rounded up some of the most impactful actions you can take to live a more sustainable life this year, from eating more plant-based food to reducing your number of flights to buying more second-hand clothes.

By 2033, it's thought that there will be almost two billion cattle, one billion pigs, 32 billion poultry, and nearly three billion sheep on our small blue-green planet -- that's some 38 billion individual animals. As they go about their lives, all will be releasing the potent greenhouse gases methane and nitrous oxide -- molecules which have effects 28 and 265



times stronger at warming the planet than carbon dioxide, respectively. That's not to mention the vast amounts of land and water required to keep them.

As a result, it's widely agreed among the scientific community that to rescue the global climate from ever-warming temperatures, one of the most impactful ways our species can change its behaviour is to eat less meat. According to one UK study, vegans have diets that emit just 25% of the carbon emissions of the most carnivorous meat-eaters, while both vegetarians and vegans have significantly lower water use and cause less harm to biodiversity than omnivorous ones.

In 2022, BBC Earth features editor Martha Henriques and senior journalist Zaria Gorvett decided to put this to

the test, and tracked the carbon emissions of their meals over the course of a week. They found that the vegan diet did indeed have lower emissions overall, though on some days of the week the vegetarian diet won. Surprisingly, the amount of food waste generated and the cooking methods used each day also had a sizeable impact.

Transport is the biggest source of emissions in the US, where it contributes almost a third of the total emissions, and makes up 16% of emissions globally. While infrastructure change is critical to helping people cut the emissions from transport, individual action can still go a long way toward reducing this.

If you fly regularly, it's probably making up a huge proportion of your carbon

footprint, so cutting out any flight is one of the best ways to live more sustainably. Using the train, bus or even a car with more than one person is nearly always lower carbon per km or mile. And reducing flying will also likely mean you travel closer to home, reducing carbon even further.

This year one of our writers, Matilda Welin, even tried replacing an airplane journey between London and Sweden with a long-distance bike ride. While it cost more and took far longer than the plane would have, she experienced an "unforgettable journey" and enjoyed seeing the world "at human speed". She now feels prepared to do shorter long-distance bikes rides more often, replacing car and train rides.

If you use a car, choosing a small one which uses less petrol and takes less energy and materials to manufacture will cut down on emissions, while electric vehicles are also an overall net win for the climate compared with their fossil-fuel-powered counterparts. Whatever car you have, simply driving less can have a big impact -- especially on shorter journeys which can be made by foot or bike instead, which is also beneficial for your health. Of course, where feasible, getting rid of your car altogether is a good way of cutting emissions.

WORLD

Driver in deadly New Orleans truck ramming may have had help, ISIS flag found on truck

NEW ORLEANS

A US Army veteran with an ISIS flag on his truck swerved around makeshift barriers and plowed into New Orleans' crowded French Quarter on New Year's Day, killing 15 people in an attack officials believe was carried out with the help of others.

The suspect, identified as Shamsud-Din Jabbar, 42, a US citizen from Texas who once served in Afghanistan, was killed in a shootout with police after ramming the crowd.

The attack injured about 30 other people, including two police officers wounded by gunfire from the suspect. It took place around 3:15 am (0915 GMT) near the intersection of Canal and Bourbon Streets, opens new tab, a historic tourist destination known for its music and bars where crowds were celebrating the new year.

Police and political leaders vowed to capture any accomplices.

With the perceived danger ongoing, officials postponed the Sugar Bowl, a classic college football game played in New Orleans each year on New Year's Day. The game between Notre Dame and Georgia was put off for 24 hours until Thursday night as police swept parts of the city looking for possible explosive devices and converged on neighborhoods in search of clues.

The city will also host the NFL Super Bowl on Feb 9.

The FBI said that police found weapons and a potential explosive device in the vehicle and that two potential explosive devices were found in the French Quarter and rendered safe.

An ISIS flag was attached to the trailer hitch of the rented vehicle, prompting an investigation into possible links to terrorist organizations, the Federal Bureau of Investigation said in a statement.

"We do not believe that Jabbar was solely responsible. We are aggressively running down every lead, including those of his known associates," FBI Assistant Special Agent in Charge Alethea Duncan told reporters, adding that investigators were looking into a "range of suspects."

Biden condemns attack

US President Joe Biden condemned what he called a "despicable" act and said investigators were looking into whether there might be a link to a Tesla truck fire outside a Trump hotel in Las Vegas. So far, there was no evidence linking the two events, Biden said.

"The FBI also reported to me that mere hours before the attack, he posted videos on social media indicating that he's inspired by ISIS, expressing the desire to kill," Biden said of the New Orleans suspect.



Georgia and Notre Dame fans react at the intersection of Bourbon Street and Canal Street during the investigation after a pickup truck rammed into a crowd of revelers early on New Year's Day, on Wednesday, in New Orleans. AP

CNN, citing officials briefed on the investigation, said the suspect recorded videos in which he mentioned dreams about joining ISIS.

Officials told CNN the suspect, obscured by darkness in the videos, spoke about his divorce and plans to gather his family for a "celebration" with the intent of killing them. He later changed his plans and said that he joined ISIS, CNN said.

ISIS - often called Islamic State or ISIL - is a Muslim militant group that once imposed a reign of terror over millions of people in Iraq and Syria until it collapsed following a sustained military campaign by a US-led coalition.

Public records showed Jabbar worked in real estate in Houston. In a promotional video posted four years ago, Jabbar described himself as born and reared in Beaumont, a city about 130 km east of Houston, and said he spent 10 years in the US military as a human resources and IT specialist.

Jabbar was in the regular Army from March 2007 until January 2015 and then in the Army Reserve from January 2015 until July 2020, an Army spokesperson said. He deployed to Afghanistan from February 2009 to January 2010 and held the rank of staff sergeant at the end of service.

'Screaming and debris'

Mike and Kimberly Strickland of Mobile, Alabama, said they were in New Orleans for a bluegrass concert and heading back to their hotel just 20 yards (meters) from where the truck hit some pedestrians.

"There were people every-

where," Kimberly Strickland said in an interview. "You just heard this squeal and the rev of the engine and this huge loud impact and then the people screaming and debris - just metal - the sound of crunching metal and bodies."

About 400 officers were on duty in the French Quarter at the time of the incident, including a number who had established a makeshift barrier to prevent anyone from driving into the pedestrian zone, police said.

"This is not just an act of terrorism, this is evil," Police Chief Anne Kirkpatrick told reporters.

In response to vehicle attacks on pedestrian malls around the world, New Orleans was in the process of removing and replacing the steel barriers known as bollards that restrict vehicle traffic in the Bourbon Street area.

Construction was due to be completed in time for the Super Bowl. As a temporary measure, police vehicles and officers attempted to provide a barrier, Kirkpatrick said.

"This particular terrorist drove around, onto the sidewalk and got around the hard target," Kirkpatrick said.

Jon Alterman, Middle East expert at Washington's Center for Strategic and International Studies, said ISIS, though diminished in the field, has long attempted to radicalize people online, with only occasional success.

"It doesn't take a huge operation to find individuals in personal distress and give them a sense that their life can have some greater meaning," he said in an email.

UK grooming gang scandal reignited, Elon Musk, JK Rowling, British MPs raise subject

LONDON

OVER the past 24 hours, social media platform X witnessed an intense debate on the alleged grooming gangs scandal in the UK, with British MPs and social celebs like Tesla CEO Elon Musk, British author JK Rowling sharing their views on the issue.

Musk criticised the UK's handling of such crimes, directly calling out former CPS head and current Prime Minister Keir Starmer.

In a post on X, Musk wrote, "In the UK, serious crimes such as rape require the Crown Prosecution Service's approval for the police to charge suspects. Who was the head of the CPS when rape gangs were allowed to exploit young girls without facing justice? Keir Starmer, 2008-2013."

In another post, he wrote, "Free Tommy Robinson!"

Robinson is a British journalist who had released a documentary on the alleged grooming gangs and alleged rapes of young women. Robinson who is in jail was represented by his team on X that once again raised the subject of alleged rapes in the UK.

"Nicole's story. Nicole was raped and pimped at the age of 11 by members of a grooming gang in Telford, one of many, many cases in that area. A man is languishing in solitary confinement in a high security prison because he dared to speak out and tell the truth about this scourge - the industrialised rape, pimping, and molestation of little girls by depraved adult men. That man is Tommy Robinson," a post on X from Robinson's handle said.

Meanwhile, author JK Rowling also condemned the crimes and questioned potential police corruption, describing the revelations as "almost beyond belief," citing an article of Telegraph by journalist Sam Ashworth-Hayes.

Rowling wrote on X, "The details emerging about what the rape gangs (why call them 'grooming' gangs? It's like calling those who stab people to death 'knife owners') did to girls in Rotherham are downright horrific. The allegations of possible police corruption in the case are almost beyond belief."

Former UK PM Liz Truss also wrote on X about the alleged grooming scandal. She said, "These appalling rape gang cases of girls as young as 11 shame our country. Not only do the perpetrators need to be punished. So do the authorities who turned a blind eye in the name of not inflaming racial tensions."

She added, "The horrific failings on rape gangs show the complete lack of accountability in British criminal justice. The proper role of Lord Chancellor needs to be restored (to its pre-2005 state), and the judiciary should be accountable to them. Ministers should be able to hire and fire senior Home Office Civil Servants. They should also be able to hire and fire senior police officers. Governments are accountable to the people and must be able to change the system. It's the only way to fix this country."

Great Yarmouth Reform MP Rupert Lowe wrote, "Reading these transcripts, these graphic descriptions - I am just so furious that our country allowed this to happen to those vulnerable young girls. It's not 'grooming' gangs, it's rape gangs - mass rape gangs. It makes me ashamed to be British, it really does."

Calling on for stripping of citizenship to foreign nationals involved in the the alleged scandal, Lowe added, "We must deport all foreign nationals involved in the rape gangs - stripping citizenship from dual nationals, and deporting them too. We must stop harbouring those wicked beasts who have raped and abused vulnerable young British girls."

The most haunting question of them all - how many vulnerable British girls are still being exploited, raped and abused? Ignored and silenced, all to prevent 'racial tensions' due to the race and religion of the rapists. How many young British girls continue to be sacrificed?"

Newark MP Robert Jenrick said, "As the father of girls the same age, it's hard to comprehend the evil of the grooming gang perpetrators laid bare in these sentencing remarks. I will continue to campaign for whole life sentences. And for the prosecution of all those who covered this up."

The alleged Rotherham scandal happened between 1997 and 2013. On September 13, 2024, the Crown Prosecution Service said that seven men were jailed for committing child sex abuse offences against two young girls in Rotherham during the 2000s.

The CPS prosecuted Mohammed Amar, 42, Mohammed Siyab, 44, Yasser Ajaibe, 39, Mohammed Zameer Sadiq, 49, Abid Sadiq, 43, Tahir Yassin, 38, and Ramin Bari, 37, following an investigation by the National Crime Agency as part of Operation Stovewood.

Operation Stovewood was a major investigation into child sexual abuse and exploitation which took place in Rotherham, South Yorkshire, between 1997 and 2013. The two victims in this case were aged just 11 and 15 when the offending began.

ANI

Brazil takes over BRICS presidency, focusing on Global South cooperation

SAO PAULO

BRAZIL assumed the rotating presidency of the BRICS group (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa) on Wednesday, with an agenda focusing on strengthening Global South cooperation, the Brazilian government said in a statement.

It will also focus on reforming international governance, and creating mechanisms to facilitate trade among its members.

"The group is one of the key political and diplomatic forums for Global South countries, focusing on cooperation across various sectors," said the statement.

Its key goals include developing payment systems to simplify trade and investment between members, promoting inclusive and responsible governance of artificial intelligence (AI), and improving financing mechanisms to address climate change.

The agenda also emphasizes col-



laborative projects among Global South countries, particularly in public health, and strengthening the institutional structure of BRICS.

As the host nation until the end of this year, Brazil will also organize and oversee working group meetings, bringing together representatives from member countries

to discuss and implement its priorities.

Xinhua

30 years of paired-up assistance: SW China's Xizang sees remarkable advances in healthcare

THIS year marks the 30th anniversary of China's implementation of paired-up assistance in Xizang autonomous region.

Over the past three decades, numerous medical professionals from different regions across the country have come to Xizang, providing targeted, systematic and long-term assistance for the region while also building local capacities for self-sustaining development. This paired-up assistance system has significantly boosted Xizang's medical and healthcare sector and steadily improved local people's wellbeing.

In 2016, Hou Xinlin, chief physician at the Children's Medical Center of Peking University First Hospital in Beijing, joined a paired-up assistance program and started working at the Xizang Autonomous

Region People's Hospital.

"At that time, the hospital's pediatrics department was already the largest in Xizang. However, it could mainly deal with common and prevalent diseases, lacking the ability to treat patients in severe conditions," she said.

"Given this situation, our primary focus was to increase the number of diseases that could be treated here so as to ensure that every child could receive proper medical treatment and healthcare," Hou added.

Upon her arrival in Xizang, Hou encountered a 3-year-old child who was suffering from continuous bleeding due to a lip injury. Local doctors were unable to determine the disease.

"The medical professionals of our team quickly identified it as

hemophilia, a rare blood disorder. It marked the first time that the disease was diagnosed in Xizang," Hou recalled.

According to Hou, thanks to years of medical assistance, the Xizang Autonomous Region People's Hospital has become a hemophilia treatment center of China Alliance for Rare Diseases. All hemophilia-affected children in the region can now receive standardized, effective, systematic, long-term, and high-quality medical services, Hou said.

Thirty years on, tens of thousands of Chinese medical workers like Hou have come to Xizang, providing services with superb medical skills, alleviating local patients' suffering, and safeguarding people's health.

Thanks to the coordination of China's National Health Commis-

sion (NHC), the paired-up assistance program has seen the participation of 17 Chinese provinces and municipalities.

China's NHC has also worked with dozens of Chinese ministries and state-owned enterprises to jointly roll out a variety of medical aid programs, including assistance by medical professionals in groups to Xizang, building partnerships between Xizang and other more developed regions in China, and sending doctors from major hospitals to grassroots institutions, especially those in the country's rural areas. All these efforts have significantly advanced medical assistance for Xizang.

Since 2012, more than 30 billion yuan (\$4.1 billion) from Chinese central funds or funds from regions

that have partnered with Xizang have been invested in boosting the region's healthcare development. At present, Xizang has established a relatively comprehensive and well-structured healthcare service system that covers both urban and rural areas.

Tibetan medicine plays an essential role in this process. Xizang has many specialized Tibetan medicine hospitals, and some general hospitals have also set up departments to provide Tibetan medicine services, said Liu Kui, head of the Department of Finance of China's NHC.

"We have fully leveraged the advantages of Chinese ethnic medicine in medical treatment, prevention, healthcare, rehabilitation, and nursing to further enhance people's wellbeing," Liu said.

Thanks to the assistance from Chinese central and local governments, public health services for various ethnic groups in Xizang have been elevated to a higher level. Key health indicators such as the mortality rates for pregnant women and infants and toddlers have dropped precipitously, and the average life expectancy has increased by nearly six years over the past decade.

Human resources are the key to enhancing medical services. In recent years, medical professionals from 182 hospitals across 12 Chinese provinces have provided medical assistance to 21 hospitals in Xizang, including the Xizang Autonomous Region People's Hospital, seven hospitals at the prefectural level, and 13 at the county level.

People's Daily

Germany's New Year marred by fireworks tragedy, violence, and calls for reform

BERLIN

GERMANY welcomed the New Year amid tragedy and controversy as five lives were lost in fireworks-related accidents and hundreds were arrested nationwide, German media reported on Wednesday.

The fatalities were attributed to explosions or mishandling of fireworks, with some incidents involving self-made, illegally obtained, or improperly used firecrackers, according to the German public broadcast ARD program Tagesschau.

Hospitals across Germany reported a surge in fireworks-related injuries, with burns, hand and facial injuries, and hearing damage being the most frequent cases. In Berlin, police arrested at least 390 individuals for various offenses during the New Year celebrations.

Additionally, 15 police officers and a firefighter were injured, according to the German news agency dpa, citing Interior Senator Iris Spranger. Violence broke out in several parts of Germany during the New Year celebrations.

In Leipzig, rioters set fire to rubbish bins, built barricades, and around 50 individuals hurled fireworks and bottles at police. In Cologne, authorities reported that two officers were injured by firecrackers,

while similar unrest was also reported in Hamburg.

In Bonn, a group of teenagers launched a New Year's Eve rocket at a homeless man as he slept, leaving him in shock. The suspects reportedly filmed the attack on their mobile phones.

These and other chaotic scenes have sparked widespread concerns over the safety risks posed by private fireworks use.

Representatives from the police, fire brigade, and the German Medical Association have voiced strong opposition to the unrestricted sale of fireworks for New Year's celebrations.

Jochen Kopelke, chairman of the police union, called for decisive actions in response to the New Year's Eve incidents. "Fireworks are meant for the sky, not for the streets," he said. "Too many dead, too many injured, too many police deployed."

German Medical Association President Klaus Reinhardt also advocated for reform, urging a nationwide ban on private fireworks.

"If politicians remain inactive, they contribute to the fact that thousands of people are injured by New Year's Eve fireworks year after year."

Several people arrested as new wave of protests erupts in Kenya

NAIROBI

SEVERAL people, including an opposition politician, were arrested on Monday as protests erupted across Kenya over the rising abduction of social media activists. Businesses were also disrupted in various towns as angry youths took to the streets, demanding action from the Kenyan government.

Carrying placards and chanting anti-government slogans, the protesters marched through towns, including Kenya's capital, Nairobi. Police fired teargas and engaged in running battles with the youths in an attempt to disperse them. "No more abductions, no more abductions," the youths chanted. On Kenyatta Avenue in Nairobi, protesters read aloud the names of social media activists who had been recently abducted or had disappeared without a trace. Some carried roses, offering them to police officers as a gesture of peace.

Okiya Omtatah, an opposition senator and protester, decried the abductions before being arrested alongside other demonstrators. "If they have committed a crime, let them be prosecuted and presented in court to defend themselves," he said. Police erected roadblocks on major routes into Nairobi, barring public transport minibuses, locally known as matatus, from entering the city center. Passengers were frisked as officers searched for potential protesters. In Kitengela, a Nairobi

suburb and previous protest hotspot, police carried out road checks and air surveillance to thwart gatherings. Protests also erupted in Embu and Nyeri, where demonstrators clashed with police while demanding the release of a young social media activist.

This new wave of unrest came six months after youth-led protests in June over proposed tax increases, which were eventually shelved after public outcry. Although those demonstrations subsided following the dismissal of President William Ruto's cabinet, online activism persisted. Youths have used social media platforms to critique the government, often employing creative tools such as cartoons, short videos, and artificial intelligence-generated images. However, a worrying pattern of abductions targeting vocal activists has emerged. The Kenya National Commission on Human Rights, a state-funded body, reported that 82 people remain unaccounted for since the June protests, with at least 50 killed and over 300 injured during demonstrations in recent months.

Addressing the nation on Dec. 27, Ruto pledged to investigate the abductions and take action against those responsible. "What has been said about abductions, we will stop them, so Kenyan youth can live in peace, but they should have discipline and be polite so that we can build Kenya together," he said.

Dozens killed in Gaza as New Year begins amid continued conflict, deepening humanitarian crisis

GAZA

CONTRARY to aspirations for peace, Palestinians in the Gaza Strip ushered in 2025 amidst renewed casualties resulting from Israeli attacks across the territory.

"At least 32 Palestinians were killed by the Israeli army in Gaza today," Mahmoud Basal, spokesperson for Gaza's civil defense, told Xinhua on Wednesday.

"Regrettably, while the world celebrates the New Year, Palestinians are met with further suffering and hardship amidst the ongoing Israeli conflict," Basal stated. Exacerbating the plight of displaced Palestinians in the coastal enclave, heavy rains inundated their tents, leaving children exposed to freezing conditions.

For several days, the Gaza Strip has experienced torrential rains and strong winds, causing widespread flooding and damage to makeshift shelters. Displaced residents who spoke to Xinhua expressed their distress at the lack of warmth and adequate shelter during the harsh winter weather.

Ibrahim Shukri, a displaced resident in Khan Younis, spent the night battling to remove rainwater that had flooded his tent.

"The rainwater has ruined everything inside, and no one is listening. No one understands the suffering of those living in these tents," the 39-year-old father of four lamented.

Jihan Ali, another displaced woman residing in a dilapidated tent near

Shukri's, described the pervasive leaks. "Neither my children nor I could sleep last night."

The rainwater flooded our tent, and we had nowhere else to go," the 45-year-old mother of three said. "These tents are unsuitable for both summer and winter."

We, the tent dwellers, are living in hell, and no one comprehends our suffering," she added. Basal reported that approximately 1,400 tents were flooded due to the heavy rainfall, with civil defense workers receiving tens of thousands of distress calls from displaced individuals.

"Our capacity to respond is severely limited due to a lack of resources to rescue those affected by the flooding," he explained.

The Gaza-based health authorities reported that seven Palestinians, including six infants, have died in the past week due to the severe cold.

This humanitarian crisis unfolds against the backdrop of stalled indirect negotiations between Hamas and Israel. The two sides have exchanged accusations, each blaming the other for the impasse in reaching a ceasefire agreement.

At least 32 Palestinians were killed by the Israeli army in Gaza today," Mahmoud Basal, spokesperson for Gaza's civil defense

Ukraine's halt of Russian gas transit raises supply, price concerns

VALLETTA

THE halt in Russian gas transit through Ukraine has sparked fears of supply shortages and soaring energy costs, particularly in landlocked European nations like Slovakia. Both Ukraine and Russia announced the stoppage on Wednesday, pushing some EU countries to resort to costlier energy alternatives.

"HARM EU, NOT RUSSIA"

Slovak Prime Minister Robert Fico on Wednesday said that stopping gas transit through Ukraine to Europe will have "severe consequences for all of us in the European Union (EU), but will not harm Russia."

The stoppage follows Ukraine's decision not to renew a 2019 gas transit agreement between its state-run Naftogaz and Russia's Gazprom, which expired on Dec. 31, 2024.

"At 07:00 a.m. (0500 GMT), in the interests of national security, the transportation of Russian natural gas through the territory of Ukraine was stopped," the Ukrainian Energy Ministry said in a statement on Wednesday.

Similarly, Gazprom confirmed that it has stopped gas supply due to expiration of key agreements and Ukraine's refusal to renew them.

In a letter to the European Commission (EC) on Sunday, Fico condemned Ukraine's gas transit halt as irrational and warned it would heighten tensions and harm the EU more than Russia.

He also indicated his government might consider measures such as cutting electricity supplies to Ukraine. Slovakia, heavily dependent on Russian gas, is among the worst-hit countries.

It imported approximately 3 billion cubic meters of natural gas from Russia through Ukraine annually, accounting for two-thirds of its demand.

However, the EC has downplayed the potential impact, with a spokesperson saying that the European gas infrastructure is "flexible enough" to provide gas of non-Russian origin to central and eastern Europe via alternative routes, and that it has been reinforced with significant new liquefied natural gas (LNG) import capacities since 2022.

Mark Cigoj, editor-in-chief of the Croatian weekly 7 Dnevno, has said that Slovakia, Austria, and Hungary are particularly vulnerable, given their reliance on Russian gas and lack of direct access to LNG imports.

SUPPLY, PRICE STAINS

Slovakia's Regulatory Authority for Network Industries, the country's energy regulator, has forecasted household gas price



increases of 15-34 percent in 2025 without state energy assistance.

To cushion the impact, the Slovak government has allocated around 235 million euros (244 million U.S. dollars) for energy aid, further straining the country's already tight budget. SPP, Slovakia's state-owned gas utility, on Wednesday assured continued supply but acknowledged the increased costs of alternatives.

Moldova, which imports approximately 2 billion cubic meters of gas annually from Russia via Ukraine, has enacted measures on Wednesday to cut electricity usage by at least 30 percent.

The measures include limiting street lighting, stopping escalators in some public and commercial buildings, and changing the working hours for high-energy-consuming areas. In 2023, roughly 15 billion cubic meters of Russian gas were transported via Ukraine to Europe, accounting for around 5 percent of Europe's needs.

Following the halt of Ukraine transit, the TurkStream pipeline under the Black Sea becomes the sole remaining route for transporting Russian gas to Europe.

According to the EC, the share of Russia's pipeline gas in EU imports has plummeted from over 40 percent in 2021 to about 8 percent in 2023. However, Cigoj noted that the EU must develop a clear plan for coordinating gas purchases among member states, warning that higher margins and transport costs will drive up gas prices, further fueling

inflation.

SHIFT DRIVES UP COSTS

While many European countries have significantly reduced their reliance on Russian gas since the outbreak of the Russia-Ukraine conflict, nations like Slovakia, Hungary, and Austria remain dependent on it. Slovak Vice Premier and Economy Minister Denisa Sakova said on Tuesday that Slovakia is technically well-prepared for the stoppage of gas supplies, as the country has sufficient gas reserves and alternative gas supplies for the year of 2025.

However, she warned of challenges if the issue persists into the winter heating season next year. Obviously, European countries will have to organize themselves to purchase significantly more expensive gas from other sources in the future, Cigoj said.

Markus Krug, deputy head of the gas department at Austria's energy regulator E-Control, has said that Russian gas would likely continue to flow through Turkey, supplying Hungary.

He estimated that Slovakia's gas supply could primarily come from Hungary, the remainder from Austria, the Czech Republic and Poland. The TurkStream gas pipeline, with an annual capacity of 31.5 billion cubic meters, offers limited capacity to absorb increased demand. To address the shortfall, the EU will have to rely more heavily on LNG imports, which come at a significantly higher cost.



It imported approximately 3 billion cubic meters of natural gas from Russia through Ukraine annually, accounting for two-thirds of its demand

China strives to safeguard beauty of biodiversity

AS the China National Botanical Garden approaches its third anniversary, it continues to attract a large number of visitors who are eager to explore its beauty.

The newly introduced wintersweet blossoms quietly. The thriving wetland ecosystem offers abundant food and ideal habitats for migratory birds to overwinter, rest, and breed. Meanwhile, a plant museum, themed "plants and life," showcases the extensive applications of plants in daily life from multiple perspectives.

Biodiversity concerns the well-being of humanity and is a crucial foundation for human survival and development.

The China National Botanical Garden and the South China National Botanical Garden are research bases and educational platforms for national biodiversity conservation. They signify a solid step forward in the construction of China's national botanical garden system.

This development holds significant importance in advancing natural ecological conservation, building a beautiful China, and promoting harmonious coexistence between man and nature.

The primary motivation for visiting a botanical garden is to experience the beauty of nature. However, the role of the national botanical garden system is not only to showcase nature, but also to protect species.

China is one of the countries with the richest diversity of wild plant species, with over 4,000 rare and endangered wild plant species, about 1,200 of which are listed in the List of National Key Protected Wild Plants.

Through facilities such as specialized gardens, herbariums, germplasm resource banks, and laboratories, systematic collection,



Tourists visit the China National Botanical Garden in Beijing. (Photo: Fan Jishan/ People's Daily Online)

complete protection, high-level research, and sustainable utilization of plant groups are carried out, which helps protect rare species, safeguard ecological security, and promote the realization of the value of ecological products.

The China National Botanical Garden alone is home to over 17,500 species of ex-situ plants - those transferred from their habitat.

Building germplasm resource banks is key to biodiversity conservation. Take the China National Botanical Garden's "national plant germplasm resource bank" project as an example. Scientific workers have conducted surveys on wild plant resources in 12 provinces and municipalities, collecting germplasm resources of wild plants including amur cork tree, wild soybean, amur linden, and lonicera oblonga, which are rare and endangered.

A single species can have a significant impact on the national economy, while a single seed has the potential to bring benefits to the people. Plant germplasm resource banks constitute the main component of species diversity

and genetic diversity. Preserving and passing down excellent plant genes not only benefits the present but also future generations.

Protecting the ecological environment and biodiversity is a cause that needs to be jointly participated, developed and shared by the entire population.

An action plan on biodiversity conservation for the period between 2023 and 2030 released by the Ministry of Ecology and Environment emphasized the importance of engaging all individuals in conservation efforts as a key priority.

Creating a long-term mechanism for biodiversity conservation, spearheaded by the government, with active involvement from businesses, and broad participation from the public, is essential for integrating biodiversity into mainstream practices and enhancing governance capabilities.

The principle that everyone is responsible for environmental protection is not just an empty phrase; it requires each individual to make a meaningful contribution.

As more and more botanical gardens are gaining fame on the inter-

net, they have become integrated natural education centers shared by urban and rural areas, inspiring people's love and sense of responsibility towards nature.

Since 2023, the China National Botanical Garden has hosted a total of 60 lectures on human-nature harmony, in which experts and scholars were invited to share scientific knowledge, classic theories, and major discoveries in an accessible manner.

By spreading the concept of biodiversity conservation to households across the nation, enhancing the biodiversity literacy of the entire population, and advancing conservation efforts by the public, significant progress has been made.

Globally, the loss of biodiversity and ecosystem degradation pose significant risks to human survival and development. Nature cannot wait, and neither can humanity. As one of the earliest signatories of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity, China has played a crucial leading role in global biodiversity conservation efforts.

The national botanical garden system is not isolated but works in conjunction with a national park-based system of protected areas. Through integrated planning for in-situ and ex-situ conservation, China's biodiversity conservation capabilities are significantly strengthened, contributing to a new level of global biodiversity governance.

A civilization may thrive if its natural surroundings thrive. A vivid scroll depicting the harmonious coexistence of man and nature unfolds gently across the vast land of China, contributing more efforts to building a clean and beautiful world and building a community of life for man and nature.

People's Daily



Chris Kirk 'blown away' by young talent on PGA Tour

KAPALUA, Hawaii

AT age 39, Chris Kirk has seen plenty in his PGA Tour career, and he is impressed with the current crop of rising players.

Kirk (pictured) is defending his title at The Sentry in Kapalua, Hawaii, this week as the season gets underway.

"It's different in so many ways it's hard to really sum it up, I guess," Kirk said the differences on tour since he was breaking in. "The level of play and the consistency of players is really high. I feel so fortunate that I've been able to kind of keep up and progress, and I feel like my game is a lot better now than it was 10 years ago when I was also.

"I was in the top 50 in the world at that time, too, and I feel like I'm so much a better player now than I was then, but everybody else is, too."

He praised improvements in terms of golf course agronomy before adding, "Obviously we're playing for a whole lot more money, and I've been amazed, I think that a lot of us were kind of worried about what would the Tour be like when Tiger was not out here every single week.

"I've been, you know, really pleasantly surprised, I guess, that the Tour has flourished, and we have a ton of

great young stars, and there's great stories each week.

"So I just am so happy with where -- I know there are a lot of things that people want to see changed still, and things that could be better, but professional golf is just in such a great place, I think. ...

"You can look at a guy that's hanging around 80th on the FedEx Cup list and nobody really knows a whole lot about him. But you go watch him hit balls or play golf with him, you would be blown away by how good they are."

Kirk is in a good place as well. He ended a seven-plus-year victory drought when he won the Honda Classic in February 2023, and then he opened the 2024 season with his victory at The Sentry.

Kirk finished in the top 35 in three of the four majors last year before tying for 27th at the Tour Championship.

Looking ahead to 2025, he said, "My goals are to really just sort of stick to my routines of what I like to do to prepare each week, and then I have a lot of things that I like to do at home. My time at home is more work on my physical fitness and strength and stuff in the gym, and then get the golf stuff in when I feel like I need to."

REUTERS

Tz Green defeats Tz Yellow in TCA 50 Overs Trials tourney

By Correspondent Japheth Kazenga

THE Tz Green cricketers have bounced back in the TCA 50 Overs Trials Tournament after defeating Tz Yellow by 60 runs at the Leaders Club venue in Dar es Salaam recently.

The Tanzania Cricket Association (TCA)-organized event has competent U-19 cricketers and their senior counterparts battling it out in it.

The national cricket governing body uses the tournament to gauge the selected cricketers' skills, as they form a provisional squad for the senior men's cricket squad.

It was the first victory for the Tz Green team, which narrowly went down to Tz Blue by four runs in the past encounter.

Tz Green raced to 212/10 in 49.2 overs, mostly thanks to solid batting by Alishihab Bukhari, skipper Kassim Nassor, and Acrey Pascal.

They were 44-1 within the first 10 overs following the dismissal of the youthful opener Darpan Jobanputra - the cricketer left the crease with 17 runs.

The fellow opener Bukhari was rather quite ruthless at the crease, notching runs with good knocks and making his way back with 35 runs.

Tz Green had registered 68-2 once the other opener made his way back after 91 balls, allowing the squad to amass many runs.

Athuman Siwa - assigned as a top-order batsman - garnered 22 runs for Tz Green as the squad was intent on piling more runs.

Pascal's 32 runs and Nassor's 34 runs had pushed Tz Green to 160-5 following Nassor's dismissal in the 33rd over.

The Tz Green captain was stumped by Tz Yellow's wicketkeeper Mohamed Omary off Umar Shaikh's bowling, and the former's outfit was nevertheless still in a good position to end with a better total.

Omary Ramadhan (16 runs not out), Issa Safari (16 runs), and Justin Thomas (17 runs) also made their way back with two digits, handing Tz Green a respectable total once the innings ended.

They were somehow buoyed by 11 extras conceded by the Tz Yellow bowlers.

The extras included one bye



Kassim Nassor propelled Tz Green's cricket squad to securing victory over the Tz Yellow team in the TCA 50 Overs Trials Tournament clash played in Dar es Salaam recently. PHOTO: COURTESY OF TANZANIA CRICKET ASSOCIATION

and 10 wides.

Shaikh ended up as the only Tz Yellow bowling unit member with the best bowling figures, posting 4-33.

Chasing 213 runs to garner victory happened to be a tall order for Tz Yellow who ended up garnering 152/10 in 35.3 overs.

A brief stay by the opener Baraka Robert was, early on, not quite a worry given his fellow top-order cricketers stepped up.

Robert exited the crease with seven runs to his name - leaving Tz Yellow with 15-1 in the third over.

The other opener, Jumanne Mohamed, fought to prove his

worth and chipped in with 18 runs.

Omary completed Tz Yellow's innings with the most noticeable contribution - scoring 28 runs.

There were also two digits posted by Maker Mukesh (26 runs), Seif Athuman (20 runs), and Shaikh (15 runs) for the Tz Yellow team.

Tz Yellow was, to some extent, boosted by 21 extras given away by the Tz Green bowling unit.

The extras consisted of 16 wides, two no-balls, two leg byes, and a bye.

Spinner Siwa's 3-36 was the most noticeable contribution to Tz Green's bowling time.

Youthful cricketer Yalinde Maurice made his presence count for Tz Green following his 3-37 and Nassor dashed Tz Yellow's hopes, finishing with 2-13.

The senior men's squad is shaping up for the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup Challenge League B scheduled for February in Hong Kong.

The ICC Men's Cricket World Cup Challenge League is a cricket competition contested in the List A format, and the bottom level of the three-league Cricket World Cup qualification system, which was introduced in 2019.

Twelve teams participate in two groups, with the top team of each group advancing to the World Cup Qualifier Play-off, which is a pathway to qualification for the next Cricket World Cup.

The Challenge League replaced Divisions Three, Four and Five from the World Cricket League in determining World Cup qualification. The first edition was in 2019-2022.

The 2024-2026 ICC Cricket World Cup Challenge League is the second edition of the ICC Cricket World Cup Challenge League and a cricket tournament which forms part of the 2027 Cricket World Cup qualification process.

The league features 12 teams - those finishing second-fourth in their respective league in the 2019-2022 ICC Cricket World Cup Challenge League, the top four finishers from the 2024 ICC Cricket World Cup Challenge League Play-off, and two teams from the 2023 Cricket World Cup Qualifier Play-off.

That tournament saw Canada, winner of League A in the previous Challenge League being promoted to League 2 status, while Papua New Guinea was relegated.

The other Challenge League winner, Jersey, was not successful in obtaining promotion.

The top two teams from both groups, A and B, will secure a spot at the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup Qualifier Playoff.

Each group in the ICC Cricket World Cup Challenge League is scheduled to play three times in a single round-robin tournament format, once each year from 2024 to 2026.

This amounts to 15 matches per team and a total of 90 matches.

By Field Level Media

CLUTCH plays by Malik Monk capped a furious finish that allowed the host Sacramento Kings to overtake the Joel Embiid-less Philadelphia 76ers for a 113-107 win on Wednesday.

Monk was credited with a basket on a goaltended layup to break a tie with 33.8 seconds remaining. He stole the ball from Paul George seven seconds later, then teamed with DeMar DeRozan for four clinching free throws.

Sacramento scored the final 15 points of the game to pull out its second consecutive victory.

Playing the front end of a back-to-back set that will see them in action again Thursday against the Golden State Warriors in San Francisco, the 76ers opted to sit Embiid after he averaged 26.3 points during a four-game winning streak that ended Wednesday.

With George taking charge by scoring 30 points and Tyrese Maxey adding 27 in Embiid's 20th absence this season, the 76ers were able to break from a 57-all halftime tie to lead for most of the second half. They were up by as many as 10 in the final period and led 107-98 with just 3:34 remaining before the Kings did the rest of the game's scoring.

A floater by DeAaron Fox, two free throws by Monk and a 3-pointer by Keon Ellis got the rally started. A DeRozan hoop knotted the game at

Kings' game-ending 15-0 run sinks 76ers



Sacramento Kings guard Keon Ellis (23) dribbles the ball against Philadelphia 76ers forward Caleb Martin (16) during the second quarter at Golden 1 Center in Sacramento, California, USA, on January 1, 2025. Agencies

107-all with one minute to play.

Maxey misfired on a short-range jumper at the other end that could have put the visitors back on top, setting the stage for Monk to get inside the Philadelphia de-

fense for his go-ahead points and give the Kings their first lead since the first minute of the third quarter.

Monk's steal on George came as part of a scoreless finish in which the 76ers had more turnovers (five) than

shots attempts (four).

Hitting 13 of his 16 shots, Fox led the way for the Kings with 35 points, while Domantas Sabonis snatched a game-high 21 rebounds to go with 17 points and a game-high seven assists.

Monk finished with 20 points, DeRozan 18 and Trey Lyles 12 for Sacramento, which improved to 2-1 under interim coach Doug Christie. Eric Gordon had 14 points, Caleb Martin 12 and Andre Drummond 10 to complement a team-high nine rebounds for the 76ers, who fell to 7-13 in Embiid absences.

Maxey found time for a team-high six assists and five steals.

Meanwhile, Scottie Barnes had 33 points and 13 rebounds and the Toronto Raptors ended an 11-game losing streak with a 130-113 victory over the visiting Brooklyn Nets on Wednesday night.

Toronto's Immanuel Quickley (elbow) returned after missing 22 games and added 21 points and 15 assists. Grady Dick had 22 points and three steals. Ochai Agbaji scored

14 points, Jakob Poeltl amassed 12 points and nine rebounds, and Ja'Kobe Walter added 11 points.

Brooklyn's D'Angelo Russell, playing his first game since his acquisition in a trade with the Los Angeles Lakers, scored 22 points off the bench.

Cameron Johnson scored 24 points and Keon Johnson finished with 17 for the Nets, who have lost three in a row and five of six. Nic Claxton had 16 points and 10 rebounds, Day'Ron Sharpe scored 11 points and Jalen Wilson added 10 points.

Brooklyn led 33-26 after one quarter.

Toronto took a 45-44 lead on Walter's 3-pointer with 6:45 remaining in the second quarter. The lead reached four on Dick's 3-pointer. Brooklyn answered with an 8-2 burst and led 65-64 at halftime.

Toronto shot 55.1 percent (27-for-49) from the field in the first half, and Brooklyn shot 50 percent (23-for-46).

Toronto opened the third quarter with a 9-3 run. The lead reached 10 points on Agbaji's 3-pointer with 6:25 left in third.

Brooklyn responded with seven straight points. Brooklyn's Noah Clowney fell on his back going for a rebound and went to the dressing room with 26 seconds left in the third quarter. He did not return.

Toronto led 94-91 after three quarters and started the fourth with a 10-4 surge to lead by nine with 8:22 to play.

Dick's 3-pointer later bumped the margin to 10, and Agbaji's trey increased the lead to 15 with 5:07 left. Quickley's 3-pointer gave Toronto a 119-99 lead with 4:17 remaining.

REUTERS

Adidas could end £900m kit deal if Manchester United relegated

LONDON

MANCHESTER United's £900 million kit deal with Adidas could be terminated by the German sportswear giant if the club were relegated from the Premier League.

Adidas has the power under the terms of its 10-year agreement with United to scrap the entire £90 million-a-year contract at one full-season's notice if the club were to drop out of England's top flight.

Alternatively, Adidas could reduce payments for a year by half to £45 million if United's worst fears were realised and the club was relegated.

Ruben Amorim said it was "really clear" United were in a relegation battle after they slumped to a fifth defeat in six league games following Monday's dire 2-0 loss at home to Newcastle.

United face league leaders Liverpool at Anfield on Sunday with the team currently in 14th position, seven points above the drop zone.

In United's accounts to June 30 last year, which were published in September, the club document the penalties they could face under the terms of their deal with Adidas in the event of relegation.

The details read: "Adidas may reduce the applicable payments for a year by 50 per cent if the men's first team is not participating in the English Premier League during that year."

"In addition, Adidas may terminate the agreement by giving one full-season's notice if the men's first team is relegated from the English Premier League or if it is otherwise determined that the men's first team shall not be participating in the Premier League or the top English league."

United signed a 10-year extension with Adidas in July 2023 that replaced their previous arrangement with the company, which was worth £750 million.

The new deal runs until June 2035 and includes a £10 million penalty in the event United fail to qualify for the Champions League this season.

The club said: "This clause has been amended to state that a £10 million deduction will be applied for each year of non-participation in the Uefa Champions League, commencing from the 2025-26 season."

United list an array of risk factors in their accounts that could affect the club's income, including the prospect of relegation from the Premier League.

"Our performance in the Premier League directly affects, and a weak performance in the Premier League could adversely affect, our business, results of operations, financial condition and cash flow," the club state.

"For example, our revenue from the sale of products, media rights, tickets and hospitality would fall considerably if our men's first team were relegated from, or otherwise ceased to play in, the Premier League, the Champions League, the Europa League or the Conference League."

"We cannot ensure that our men's first team will be successful in the Premier League or in the other leagues and tournaments in which it plays."

THE TELEGRAPH

Casemiro could leave Man Utd alongside Eriksen & Lindelof

Football Today

JOURNALIST Fabrizio Romano has revealed that Casemiro could leave Manchester United this month or in the summer.

United's season has not gone as planned. They are languishing in the bottom half of the Premier League standings and have been knocked out of the Carabao Cup.

The Red Devils need to sign quality players this month to turn their season around, but they face financial constraints.

The club are reportedly close to Profit and Sustainability Rules (PSR) spending limits, meaning they must offload valuable assets before adding new players to their squad.

Casemiro is reportedly one of the players the club are open to selling, alongside Christian Eriksen and Victor Lindelof.

Eriksen and Lindelof are not in manager Ruben Amorim's plans and have been considered disposable.

Casemiro is ready to leave Old Trafford this month. He is being courted by several Saudi Pro League (SPL) clubs, including Al-Nassr, Al-Ittihad, Al-Hilal, Al-Ahli, Al-Ettifaq and Al-Qadsiyah.

The Brazilian midfielder has seen his role diminish since the arrival of Amorim. He has often played second fiddle to Manuel Ugarte and has started just four games across all competitions.

The 'massive' star midfielder was given a chance to impress against Newcastle United on Monday but failed to make an impact. He was substituted in the 64th minute and replaced by Alejandro Garnacho.

*Stats from sofascore.com.

Arsenal beat Brentford to close gap on Liverpool

By Martyn Herman

ARSENAL showed they can cope without the injured Bukayo Saka as they began the year in style by recovering from an early sucker-punch to beat Brentford 3-1 away and move back into second place in the Premier League on Wednesday.

Forward Saka, arguably Arsenal's most influential player this season, has been ruled out for at least two months after hamstring surgery, dealing a blow to the club's title hopes.

A visit to a Brentford side who have been impressive at home this season felt like a must-win game for Arsenal but things began badly as Bryan Mbeumo gave his side a 13th minute lead with the home side's first attack. Arsenal did not panic, though, and Gabriel Jesus continued his recent resurgence to equalise before halftime.

Mikel Arteta's side came out firing in the second half and Mikel Merino put them ahead five minutes after the



Arsenal's Gabriel Jesus scores their first goal past Brentford's Mark Flekken during their Premier League match at GTech Community Stadium, in London, Britain on January 1, 2025. Agencies

restart after Brentford failed to deal with a corner.

Three minutes later Gabriel Martinelli produced a clinical volleyed finish to put Arsenal in complete control.

The victory lifted Arsenal above Chelsea and Nottingham Forest with 39 points from 19 games

with leaders Liverpool on 45 from 18. Injured hit Brentford's second home defeat of the sea-

son left them in 12th spot with 24 points from 19 games.

Defeat would have left Arsenal nine points behind Liverpool, who also have a game in hand, but the way they reacted to going behind suggests they can still be a factor in the title race.

Arteta will also have been impressed with 17-year-old Ethan Nwaneri after handing him a first Premier League

start.

"I think the team showed a lot of composure. To keep insisting, keep attacking them," Arteta, whose side are unbeaten in 11 games in all competitions, said.

"We can only win our next match and see what happens. It's not in our hands, but what is in our hands we need to make sure we do it."

Arsenal did not lose a London derby in 2024

and have started off in similar fashion.

They were caught cold, though, when Brentford burst forward in the 13th minute and Mbeumo was given too much space to cut in from the right and fire a shot past David Raya.

Raya was almost left red-faced soon after when he allowed a Mbeumo shot to burst through his gloves but he managed to race back

and claw the ball off the line.

It proved a pivotal moment as less than a minute later Brentford were guilty of failing to clear the ball and it eventually arrived for Thomas Partey to fire a shot that was parried by Mark Flekken and Jesus dived to head in the rebound.

It was the Brazilian's sixth goal in his last four games for Arsenal in all competitions, as many as in his previous 48 games for the club.

"I keep working and everyone at the club can tell how I work every day, not just me but everyone. I don't give up and it is not easy to play for a big club like Arsenal," Jesus said.

Arsenal's efficiency from set-pieces was evident again early in the second half when a corner caused chaos in the area and Merino was able to fire home a loose ball.

Martinelli gave the visitors breathing space with a superb finish when the ball came out to him on the edge of the box.

REUTERS

'No-one can replace Saka' - but Nwaneri, 17, gives Arsenal hope

By Emma Smith

"NO-ONE can replace him. He is one of the best players in the world."

Gabriel Martinelli's comments about Bukayo Saka are telling as to just how much Arsenal depend on the England winger, how much they will miss him during the months he is absent because of a hamstring issue and how all of Arsenal's front line must step up to replace him.

That was the case in their 3-1 win over Brentford, where Arsenal came from behind thanks to goals from Gabriel Jesus and Martinelli, either side of Mikel Merino's close-range strike.

But while Jesus and Martinelli scored, it was the third member of the front triumvirate, 17-year-old Ethan Nwaneri on his first Premier League start, who really impressed.

Nwaneri, who made his Premier League debut as a 15-year-old at Brentford two years ago and has appeared 10 times as a sub in the league in 2024-25 before his start here, played key roles in Arsenal's two goals in three second-half minutes.

His corner led to Merino's strike, before his un-cleared cross was swept home by Martinelli for number three.

Saka's injury is a major blow to Arsenal's title hopes - it is up to his team-mates now, not just one player, to limit the damage.

This win was doubly satisfying for Arsenal manager Mikel Arteta as he had to deal with illness in the squad, which ruled Kai Havertz out of the game. He said afterwards it had affected some of those who did play at Brentford and partially explained their slow start.

It meant Arteta had to revert to another new tactic, having flipped through plans when



Ethan Nwaneri was willing to express himself, to take players on and to make things happen in the final third - Getty Images

Saka has been absent this season.

When Saka missed the 2-0 defeat at Bournemouth in August, Raheem Sterling played right wing. He was largely ineffective before being hooked on 37 minutes following William Saliba's red card, and amid injury issues of his own has become a peripheral figure this season.

Martinelli started there and played 90 minutes during the 1-0 win over Ipswich, but is far more comfortable on the left - the position he reverted to at Brentford.

And against Shakhtar Donetsk in the Champions League, Arteta completely changed shape with two strikers and Jesus wide.

"Nwaneri is a joy to watch" Against Brentford, however, Arteta deployed Nwaneri in the role Saka has perfected, cutting in as a left-footed right winger. And Arsenal looked far more coherent for it.

In the first half, Nwaneri and Martinelli had the fewest touches of all outfield players, but the teenager impressed with what little ball he had. He was the only player to complete all of his passes in that opening period - 17 of 17.

It was a test to see if he

could step that up in the second half when Arsenal needed it. It was an exam that the college-aged student passed with flying colours.

"He just makes me smile," TNT Sports pundit Karen Carney said of Nwaneri. "He's bold - for someone who's so young as well."

"For a young man he was outstanding. He was positive and a joy to watch. I can't believe how young he is - he will be an absolute player for Arsenal."

"He's definitely going to get chances with Saka not available," added former Arsenal defender Martin Keown. "It's all there under the bonnet waiting to come out."

"It's really important you have those players

in the group demonstrating the quality coming out of the academy."

Arteta has handled Nwaneri with kid gloves since giving him his debut, but felt this was the time and place to give him the biggest spotlight of his career so far.

"We had a 17-year-old in the starting line-up who did great," Arteta told his post-match media conference. "I thought Ethan was the best player in that position to start the game. He also made his Premier League debut here, sometimes a feeling like that can help."

"It is patience, managing frustration and expectation. We are building him."

"How Arsenal's right-wing options differ

It would be foolish to say Nwaneri is yet a perfect replacement for Saka - but he is arguably the best Arsenal currently have in their squad.

The touch maps of Saka in his final full Premier League match before injury - the goalless draw with Everton - and Nwaneri's against Brentford are very similar, suggesting the youngster fits most naturally into Arsenal's usual system.

Meanwhile, Martinelli's against Ipswich - where he holds much closer to the byeline as would be expected from a right-footed right winger - shows just how differently Arsenal are forced to play with him in that role.

In that game, the Brazilian failed to have a shot or create a chance for a team-mate - and no other Gunners player who lasted the full 90 minutes had fewer touches of the ball.

Back in his more familiar role on the left against the Bees, Martinelli had four shots, created four chances and, for the second time in three games, scored.

"Jesus hits purple patch at right time

While Nwaneri impressed out wide against Brentford, Jesus continues to thrive down the middle.

Before Saka went off against Crystal Palace, Jesus had one goal in 20

appearances. Since then Jesus has six in four, as many as in his previous 48 games. A remarkable 23% of his goals for the club have come in the past two weeks.

Whether freed up by Saka's absence or stepping up to shoulder his share of responsibility, it has been an extraordinary, timely and welcome transformation.

"It is a quality of the team to share the goals," said Arteta. "They [Jesus and Martinelli] are so consistent in the way they train and behave."

Fans have been clamouring for Arsenal to sign an attacker in January and the calls have gained volume since Saka's injury.

Whether they enter the market remains to be seen. They cannot sign anyone on loan, as Sterling and back-up keeper Neto fill their two temporary slots from top-flight clubs.

And, without arguably their biggest star, it will be a tricky ask to stay in touch with leaders Liverpool until Saka returns, potentially as late as March.

But with impressive resolve from the players to fill the gap left by their injured comrade - and with a starry young talent growing his reputation still further - there are more than a few sparks of hope.

BBC

Gwiji by David Chikoko



SPORT

Arsenal beat Brentford to close gap on Liverpool

PAGE 19

Yanga strengthen squad with key players back for TP Mazembe showdown



By Correspondent Nassir Nchimbi

YOUNG Africans have received a significant boost ahead of their CAF Champions League clash against TP Mazembe tomorrow, with goalkeeper Djigui Diarra returning to training after being sidelined for approximately two weeks.

Diarra's return is a welcome development for Young Africans head coach Sead Ramovic, who now has more options as several players regain fitness.

Young Africans currently sit at the bottom of Group A in the CAF Champions League,

having earned only one point from a 1-1 away draw against Mazembe.

The team had been facing the potential absence of four key first-team players, including their first-choice goalkeeper. However, the situation has improved ahead of the crucial return leg against the Congolese side.

Kennedy Musonda, Maxi Nzengeli, and Chadrack

Boka have already returned from injury and resumed training.

Diarra's return further alleviates concerns for Ramovic, who had been under pressure due to his absence.

Diarra (pictured) himself has confirmed that he is feeling well, contrary to earlier fears that he would be out for four to six weeks.

Diarra and Nzengeli

were injured in the match in Lubumbashi, and it was initially reported that their recovery would take longer.

However, their return has boosted the morale of the fans, players, and technical bench of the team, which needs a win against Mazembe to keep their hopes of qualifying for the quarter-finals alive.

Ramovic expressed his happiness about the return of Diarra, Musonda, Nzengeli, and Boka. The coach, who has led Young Africans in eight matches since taking over from Miguel Gamondi, including three CAF matches and five Premier League matches, said that Diarra's absence had been the most concerning, but praised the medical team for their efforts in ensuring his recovery.

"As a team, we are happy about the return of the injured players as we are preparing for an important match this weekend. The first victory is having a full squad," said Ramovic.

"The biggest pressure was on Diarra, but he has returned to training, and I believe he will be part of Saturday's game."

Diarra, who has won sev-

eral trophies in three consecutive seasons, including two Premier League titles and one Federation Cup, said he is delighted that his condition has improved significantly.

"I am fit to play, my health has improved, and my fans should not worry. Yanga have a large and good squad. We will do well," said Diarra, who had been nursing a muscle injury in his right calf.

The goalkeeper, who played nine Premier League matches and kept seven clean sheets this season before getting injured in the CAF match, has been a key player for Young Africans since joining the club from Stade Malien of Mali in August 2021.

He helped them secure the Premier League title in all three previous seasons, along with three Federation Cups, and won the Best Goalkeeper award last season.

After playing Mazembe, Young Africans will face Al Hilal of Sudan away before hosting MC Alger of Algeria.

In their previous encounters, both Al Hilal and MC Alger secured 2-0 wins against Young Africans.



Mapinduzi Cup hit by Uganda and Burundi withdrawals

By Correspondent Michael Mwebe

UGANDA and Burundi, two East African sides due to take part in this year's Mapinduzi Cup, have pulled out of the tournament, the Zanzibar Football Federation (ZFF) president Suleiman Jabir said yesterday.

The Uganda Cranes and Intamba Mu Rugamba of Burundi were set to join four others in the tournament, which is hosted in Pemba's Gombani Stadium.

The remaining teams in the competition are Zanzibar Heroes, Kilimanjaro Stars (Tanzania Mainland), Kenya's Harambee Stars and Burkina Faso.

Jabir (pictured) confirmed the withdrawal of the two teams from the competition has led to a major format change of the tournament.

The tournament was originally planned to involve two groups of three teams each. The tournament will now follow a round-robin format with a single group of four teams, ensuring that each side plays against all the others.

The Mapinduzi Cup 2025 host team, Zanzibar Heroes, were set to get the tournament underway in the evening against Burundi instead, the opening match will now see Heroes take on Kilimanjaro Stars.

Match day two will see Harambee Stars face Burkina Faso tomorrow. Sunday is a rest day.

Zanzibar Heroes will return to action on Monday by battling Burkina Faso before Tanzania and Kenya take to the pitch the following day.

The top teams will contest the final match to decide the winner of the tournament.

The winner of the competition will walk away with a prize money of Tsh 100 million from the organizers.

The tournament, traditionally a club competition, will feature national teams for the first time in its history.

This edition of Mapinduzi tournament aims to serve as preparations for the 2024 African Nations Championship (CHAN), which kicks off on February 1, 2025.

Tanzania, alongside Kenya and Uganda, will host the tournament, and the Mapinduzi Cup provides a valuable opportunity to fine-tune their squads.

Dauids aims for strategic additions to maintain Simba's competitive edge

By Correspondent Seth Mapoli



SIMBA Sports Club head coach, Fadlu Dauids, has set his sights on bolstering his squad during the current transfer window, aiming for strategic additions to maintain the team's competitive edge.

Reflecting on the team's performance after completing 15 Premier League first-round matches and their upcoming CAF Confederation Cup fixtures, Dauids emphasized the need for quality over quantity in new signings.

The South African tactician said: "I want to sit down with the management to evaluate the market and identify the best player to strengthen our squad during this limited transfer window."

"We do not need to sign for the sake of it. The focus is on bringing in a player who can immediately take charge or create serious competition within the team."

Dauids outlined the critical areas that need improvement, noting that additions are necessary across all departments - defense, midfield, and attack.

He believes these changes are essential for the team to stay competitive in both domestic and continental competitions.

"The competition in the

Premier League is intense. Teams like Azam FC, Singida Black Stars, and Yanga all have the capacity to win the championship. To keep our edge, we must continue to strengthen our squad," he said.

Simba concluded the first round of the Premier League at the top of the table with 40 points from 15 matches. The team registered 13 wins, one draw, and one loss, scoring 31 goals and conceding only five.

Turning his focus to the CAF Confederation Cup, Dauids described Simba's group as the "group of death," underscoring the high level of competition among the teams.

"In our group, every team has the potential to qualify. Only two teams will advance, but realistically, all four teams have a chance. For us, it's crucial to secure strong results in the two remaining away matches and the final home game," he said.

Dauids acknowledged the team's missteps during their 2-1 loss to CS Constantine in Algeria. He expressed disappointment over missed opportunities to secure at least a point in that match but highlighted that the players have learned from their mistakes.

"We need to change our approach and avoid the er-

rors we made in Algeria. That was a match where we could have taken all three points, or at the very least, one. We cannot afford similar mistakes moving forward," he added.

Dauids also addressed the performance of new signing Elie Mpanzu, a winger who joined Simba during the January transfer window.

Despite fans eagerly awaiting goals and assists from the player, Dauids expressed satisfaction with Mpanzu's contributions on the field.

"I am very pleased with Mpanzu's level. I know the fans are eager to see him score or assist, but as a coach, I see the other great things he brings to the team."

"I urge Simba fans and football lovers to stay patient. He is a high-level player, and I am confident he will surprise everyone," said Dauids.

With Simba leading the Premier League standings and vying for progress in the CAF Confederation Cup, Dauids remains focused on achieving both domestic and continental success.

His emphasis on strategic squad reinforcement, learning from past mistakes, and maximizing the potential of new signings reflects his commitment to the club's ambitions.

Flexibles by David Chikoko

