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Poland rolls safety net for SGR insurance

The two leaders agreed to revitalize diplomatic cooperation in strategic sectors like information and communication technology (ICT)

By Guardian Reporter

POLAND has agreed to provide insurance guarantees for the standard gauge railway slots three and four through its export credit agency KUKE, President Samia Suluhu Hassan has announced.

She said at a joint press conference yesterday that this decision is one among issues agreed in talks with the visiting Polish president Andrzej Duda, with the two countries agreeing to start presumably weekly direct flights between them, to strengthen bilateral ties and increase trade volumes.

The two leaders agreed to revitalize diplomatic cooperation in strategic sectors like information and communication technology (ICT), health, education, agriculture and tourism, she said, pointing at the need to intensify the use of technology in the manufacturing and mining sectors.

President Duda arrived in the country on Thursday, on the second stage of a tour of three African countries, where President Samia said at the briefing that the Polish leader's visit is testimony to the vibrant bilateral relationship obtaining between the two countries.



TURN TO Page 2 President Samia Suluhu Hassan shares a light moment with visiting Polish President Andrzej Duda shortly after the latter's arrival at State House in Dar es Salaam yesterday. Photo: State House

SPORTS Page 20



Gamondi salutes Yanga's fighting spirit after Mashujaa win

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Pundits suggesting phone link-up in

'120 districts have no fire, rescue stations'

By Francis Kajubi, Dodoma

OVER 80 percent of the country's districts have no rescue centres in case of fire outbreaks, thus hampering any rescue effort, the National Assembly heard yesterday.

Vita Kawawa (pictured), the chairman of the Foreign Affairs, Defence and Security standing committee of the legislature, said in a report that 120 districts have no fire rescue centres, with 80 fire rescue centres found in 64 districts.

This state of fire readiness countrywide was provided when tabling the committee's report for February 2023 to last month, with an auxiliary observation that the majority of people lack knowledge on safe approaches to fighting hazards such as fire.

He said that the Fire and Rescue Force has a shortage of 3,000 officers, impacting its preparations in tackling disasters like fires and floods.

It also needs upwards of 237 fire tenders, 28 turntable ladders and 28 Hazmat vehicles specialised for fire fighting, while lacking 168 rescue tenders.

It similarly has a shortage of 38 cranes and 38 fire rescue boats for use in the country's water bodies, the report indicated.

In the current financial year the force was allocated 9.93bn/- for development purposes but with four months remaining, no development project funds had been disbursed by



the Treasury, the committee underlined. The disbursement of development funds

by the Treasury to the Home Affairs ministry and its institutions is not satisfactory, noting that from July to December 2023 just over 23 percent of the ministry's allocated budget was disbursed.

Debating the report, MPs demanded that the government work to timely allocate approved budgets, relating to the Fire and Rescue Force.

Agnes Hokororo (Special Seats) described fire rescue services as being of critical importance for the community, as the outbreak of disasters affect daily economic activities and life prospects, like when markets are gutted down in a fire outbreak.

She said the Fire and Rescue Force is lacking equipment for it to properly undertake most of its daily activities.

"No funds have been disbursed by the Treasury so far. There is no helicopter for the force," she specified, demanding that the Finance ministry make sure that allocated funds are timely disbursed.

Regina Qwaray (Special Seats) urged the government to ensure that fire rescue centers are built in all districts and provided with the required facilities.

As hazards and disasters break out unexpectedly the government needs to be prepared all the time. "Huge economic losses have been recorded due to burning up of markets when fire rescue services are delayed," the MP added.

MPs approve Safer Cities CCTV cover

By Francis Kajubi, Dodoma

THE government expects to install surveillance cameras in major cities to heighten safety, along with heightening detecting and curbing threats of crime.

Vita Kawawa, the chairman of the Foreign Affairs, Defense and Security standing committee of the National Assembly made this affirmation here yesterday, asserting that the Safer Cities initiative will see installation of crime detection equipment on the streets. The plan is intended to be carried out within the current financial year, covering Dodoma, Mwanza and Arusha, which the public authorities believe will boost the level of detection of street crimes.

It will facilitate criminal investigation and keeping records to be used as evidence in court, he said, noting that targeted crimes include physical attack, road safety as well as incidents of theft or robbery.

TURN TO Page 2



MPs approve Safer Cities CCTV cover

FROM PAGE 1

Tabling the committee's report for the period covering February 2023 to January 2024, he pointed at fast growth of major urban areas as attracting criminals, whose operations need to be halted with the help of technology.

The Safer Cities project is going to be conducted by the Police Corporation Sole with a \$145m loan extended by the United Arab Emirates, he said, elaborating that the project includes the installation of surveillance equipment likely to signal criminal events when detected on CCTV cameras.

The project will improve criminal investigation by providing data that will be useful to the police as evidence, he said, insisting that as part of combating crime in cities, it is of great importance to ensure that this project is implemented as intended.

He asserted that reports

on the state of crime and security show an increase in crime incidents in cities that can be controlled by using surveillance technology, regretting a rise in crimes against persons, "which if not controlled will continue to cause serious effects and harm in the society."

The committee urged the government to collaborate with religious leaders and other stakeholders to sensitize the public on the effects of violence, the importance of upholding a moral society starting from the family level.

"Doing so will help build a society with morals, without vices and sheer lust for wealth," he declared.

The government should effectively engage local government authorities to coordinate various issues at the community level, including protection and security in families to appreciate one another in upbringing children, he added.



Zanzibar President Dr Hussein Ali Mwinyi hosts talks at Zanzibar State House yesterday with AARP chief executive officer Jo Ann C. Jenkins (2nd-L) and HelpAge International Country (Tanzania) director Smart Daniel. AARP, formerly the American Association of Retired Persons, is an interest group in the US focusing on issues affecting people aged over 50. It is nonprofit, nonpartisan organisation dedicated to empowering elderly Americans to choose how they live as they age. Photo: Zanzibar State House

Poland rolls safety net for SGR insurance

FROM PAGE 1

Poland is among the 10 top countries regarding the sources of tourist visitations to Tanzania, the host president noted, while the visiting leader said Tanzania and Poland have decades of friendship.

The flow of tourists from the European country to Tanzania was a sign that the relationship was growing, he said, extending a hand of welcome to Tanza-

nian youths to study in Poland in trending spheres like ICT, environment and climate change mitigation fields.

The visit is poised to bolster bilateral ties and pave the way for enhanced cooperation across various sectors, he said, meanwhile as he was expected to visit a treatment project at the Aga Khan Hospital in the commercial capital.

The facility has received \$1.137m for a site tour of the Improving Emergency Care in

Tanzania (IMECT), funded by Polish Aid with intent to providing assistance in treatment and educating healthcare service providers.

President Duda, accompanied by a business delegation, embarked on a tour of Kenya, Tanzania and Rwanda from the 5th to 9th February, aimed at boosting economic ties and strategic cooperation.

Online sources cited remarks by President Duda as he arrived in Nairobi that his Africa visit

aims at seeking more bilateral ties with African nations as well as "fighting against Russian misinformation."

An earlier entry noted that Poland's Armed Forces Day parade back in August 2023 marked the 103rd anniversary of victory over the Soviet Union in the Battle of Warsaw, the country's capital, to remove vestiges of Russian imperial rule over most of that country.

At the start of his African tour, Kenya signed two bilateral

agreements with Poland relating to agro-sector trade and removing double taxation in the conduct of business between the two countries, the sources added.

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Online sources cited remarks by President Duda as he arrived in Nairobi that his Africa visit

Malawi lifts visa restrictions for 79 countries

LILONGWE

MALAWI has removed visa restrictions for travellers from 79 countries in an effort to boost tourism and trade in the country.

Homeland Security Minister Ken Zikhale, in a gazette notice on Wednesday, amended the immigration regulations - effectively lifting visa barriers for citizens of the UK, China, Russia, Germany, Australia, Canada, Belgium, Ghana, The Gambia, Sierra Leone, France and others.

Nationals from the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) are also exempt from visa requirements.

This excludes countries that impose visa requirements on Malawian citizens.

The changes also include exemptions for certain groups

such as diplomats and government officials, and countries that have mutual exchange agreements for multiple-entry visas with Malawi.

The validity of multiple entry visas in Malawi is now up to 12 months, according to the new visa regulations.

"This monumental decision isn't just about visas; it's about unleashing the untapped potential of our beloved Malawi and inviting the world to experience its wonders first-hand," Tourism Minister Vera Kamtukule told local media.

The British High Commission in Malawi urged its nationals to take advantage of the relaxed visa restrictions to visit a range of popular tourist attractions in the southern African country.

Malawi joins Kenya and Rwanda in opening up their countries for African travellers.



This monumental decision isn't just about visas; it's about unleashing the untapped potential of our beloved Malawi and inviting the world to experience its wonders first-hand



Deputy Prime Minister and Energy minister Dr Doto Biteko (R) in tête-à-tête with Kigamboni legislator Dr Faustine Ndugulile in the National Assembly debating chamber in Dodoma city yesterday. Photo: Correspondent Ibrahim Joseph

Committee wants review of national water policy

By Francis Kajubi, Dodoma

THE government has been urged to fast-track review of the National Water Policy of 2002 to allow speedier implementation of projects in rural and urban areas.

Tabling Water and Environment Committee's report for the period of February 2023 to January 2024 in the National Assembly yesterday, its chairman Jackson Kiswaga said delay to review the policy has been hindering development of the sector.

"The committee has been repeatedly advising the government regarding the policy, and the delay to review it has been a setback to implementation of clean water projects, especially on participation of the private sector," he

said.

He said the august house resolved that the government should take strong and immediate actions to ensure the review of the policy is completed.

Kiswaga further said that water availability in many urban and rural areas for various uses including domestic, livestock, agriculture and industrial production, is still limited.

According to him, the situation could lead to various effects, including conflicts between water users, declining production and disease outbreaks.

He further said that the MPs have also resolved that the government should prepare national guidelines for rainwater harvesting in order to have sufficient reserves of the precious

liquid for various uses.

Kiswaga said there has been a huge loss of rainwater while the demand is rising on daily basis, thus the storage of the water is crucial to meet the demand.

The committee also resolved that the process of establishing the National Water Grid should continue to be worked on quickly to enable the nation have sufficient water distribution network that will help to improve availability in all parts of the country.

Kiswaga said citizens should be fully involved in planning, construction and handover of water projects to enable them participate effectively in the protection and sustainability of the schemes.

The committee also suggested that priority in

the implementation of various water projects should be given to local contractors in order to build their capacity.

He said other recommendations include strengthening and empowering the monitoring and evaluation unit under the Ministry of Water to identify areas with water challenges with the aim of addressing them.

Further, the committee directed the ministry to consider setting a budget for execution of various projects pledged by national leaders and continue to control water charges in all parts of the country to enable all citizens to have access to clean and safe water.

On destruction of water sources due to human activities, the chairman said that there has been a significant increase of human activities

in water sources, causing pollution, destruction of water infrastructure and high cost in execution of water projects.

He said that in order to address the situation, the National Assembly resolved that the government should continue to promote conservation of water sources.

According to the committee's report, water availability in the country has reached 88 percent in urban areas and 77 percent in rural areas.

The committee said that after the completion of water infrastructure in 9,670 villages out of the 12,318 villages, water availability is expected to reach 91 percent in urban areas and 80 percent in rural areas.

ENDS/sws/sm



Vice President Dr Philip Mpango pictured at the Karume Institute of Science and Technology in Zanzibar yesterday watering a tree he had just planted in the course of an environmental protection drive. Photo: VPO

'Govt will continue investing massively in health sector'

By Guardian Reporter, Zanzibar

VICE President Dr Philip Mpango has said the government will continue to invest heavily in the health sector, especially in the prevention and treatment of non-communicable diseases (NCDs).

Dr Mpango made the remarks yesterday here when opening an international heart conference dubbed 'Heart Team Africa - CARDIONTAN, supported by the Jakaya Kikwete Cardiac Institute (JKCI).

Themed: 'Advances in Cardiovascular Care in Africa', the conference brought together about 500 delegates from 40 countries to discuss and share experience on issues related to heart complications.

According to him, the government sets aside 63bn/- every year for the implementation of various interventions at JKCI with efforts being made to enable it provide quality services.

"Failure to provide priority in the fight against non-communicable diseases in many African countries has greatly contributed to the increase of cardiac challenges. So, it is better for the healthcare providers to continue to educate the public on how to avoid engaging in acts or behaviours that may lead to diseases," he said.

He commended JKCI for a job well done especially for its efforts to educate the public on diseases but also for the provision of quality services which have saved lives of many people. He wanted the summit's participants to utilise the opportunity well, especially the skills obtained from the training and go and make changes in provision of health services in their respective countries.

Dr Mpango directed Health Minister Ummy Mwalimu to start looking for partners and prepare a robust plan to get funds for the construction of cardiac treatment centres in the country. Earlier, the JKCI executive director Dr Peter Kisenge said that the institute's goal is to grow by opening a cardiac treatment facility for African nations.

Dr Kisenge said once the dream comes true, it would not only promote the notion of medical tourism, but it will also cut the cost of cardiac treatment for inhabitants of African countries. He added that to ensure cardiac services reach more Tanzanians JKCI has launched a competency programme in the regional hospitals of KCMC (Kilimanjaro), Bugando (Mwanza), Mbeya, Benjamin Mkapa (Dodoma), and Chato (Geita).

"Through this programme, we have managed to conduct special medical camps in more than 10 regions and also in Zambia, Rwanda and Malawi," he said.

He said these steps were made possible by the government's enormous investment in the institution, which reduced referrals for cardiac care overseas by 95 percent.

Hassan Khamis Hafidh, Zanzibar's deputy health minister, complimented the JKCI for its efforts to increase access to cardiac treatment services in the country.

He said the government of Zanzibar has built 10 district hospitals and one regional hospital over the course of three years, equipping them with cutting-edge technology in order to improve access and quality of health services in the isles.

Govt seeks partners in drafting Development Vision 2050

By Henry Mwangonde

THE government has called for coordinated efforts and partnership with development partners in exploring innovative approaches for drafting of the national development vision 2050 to build an inclusive and resilient economy which can withstand global uncertainties.

Speaking during the 2024 Technical Level Strategic Dialogue in Dar es Salaam yesterday, Permanent Secretary in the ministry of Finance Dr Natu Mwamba said there is need for coordinated efforts to mobilise concessional re-

sources to realize the envisaged national priorities.

"In the same vein, this dialogue will explore more on innovative approaches, climate financing to catalyse our transition towards a low-carbon climate-resilient economy, public-private partnerships and financial instruments tailored to Tanzania's perspective," she said.

She said Tanzania has the potential to become a breadbasket for the East Africa region, Africa and the world at large. However, this potential remains underexploited.

"This calls for the need to ex-

plore strategies and interventions that will accelerate transformation of Tanzania's food systems to ensure food sufficiency. We have many initiatives in place to transform our agriculture sector," she added.

Speaking on the achievements in the Development Vision 2025, Lawrence Mafuru, Executive Secretary of the National Planning Commission, said most of the priorities have been achieved, giving an example that the economy which was projected to grow at an average of 8 percent grew by 6.8 percent in the last two decades.

He said Tanzania maintained peace and stability both at local and international level through dialogue and peacekeeping efforts. He said life expectancy grew to 65 years from 52 years two decades ago, adding that transport within the country was also an issue which included going through other countries to reach a region in Tanzania.

"Enrollment in primary school has grown to 69 percent compared to 50 percent in 2000 due to massive investment in education," he said.

Zlatan Milisic, United Nations Resident Coordinator who is Chairman of the Development

Partner Group (DPG) said the dialogue was about collaboration for a shared future and DPG was part of the agenda.

He said the DPG is ready to work together with Tanzania to achieve robust macroeconomic development.

"Tanzania is a junction where investment in key sectors such as health and education can seize the opportunity for the growth of a country with half of its population being youth," he said.

He said investment in skills development for the youth is important in achieving the vision 2050 with active women involvement.



BARRICK
BULYANHULU

Advertisement REQUEST FOR QUOTATION

BUL-RFQ-24-01-02 – SUPPLY OF MACROBURN V500 INCINERATOR

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:

Specifications:

- 1x MacroBurn V500 incinerator – Fixed heart type, two (2) chambers, 14.05m³ combustion volume, two (2) retention/Residence time (seconds), 750 – 850°C Normal operating temperature, 1100°C Max operating temperature, 4.5 steel thickness, alumina silicate castable refractory, 1.54m²K/W insulation R – value, 900 x 900 (no feeder) Loading door opening size, 500 x 500 (feeder) Loading door opening size; 955mm stack ID, 14.9m height from ground, PLC type control panel, VSD control combustion fan, Remote monitoring and dashboard, 1 x thermocouple, Oxygen sensor, 2 x burners, burner temperature controlled; 1660kW Max power, 146Kg/H Max flow rate, 2m Fuel tank height – bottom of tank from ground, 1000L minimum recommended fuel tank volume, 45kPa Min fuel pressure, 200kPa Max fuel pressure, 44 – 131L normal fuel use, 6550L fuel required for bake-out, 1160 stack hole (roof), NFPA 13-2017 extra hazard group 1, 20A power standard unit, 400VAC standard unit, Power at incinerator control panel, Fuel at incinerator fuel train, including installation, site commissioning and training.

Key documents:

- Clear and detailed Quotation.
- Company registration documents i.e. Certificate of incorporation, business license, TIN, VRN, Tax Clearance Certificate etc.
- BRELA detailed search document indicating Tanzanian ownership percentage, Tanzanian management and below management employment percentage to determine classification as an Indigenous Tanzanian Company as per the Local Content Regulation, 2018.
- Applicable certification, accreditation, affiliated registrations, and letter of dealership as required.
- Approved Local Content Plan or acknowledgement of submission from the Mining Commissioner.

Submission of quotes:

- Please submit your quotes via email to bulytender@barrick.com.
- The reference "BUL- RFQ-24-01-02 – SUPPLY OF MACROBURN V500 INCINERATOR" must be quoted in the subject line of the email.

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

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

Key dates:

- Last date to submit quotes: **16th February 2024**

For and on behalf of BULYANHULU GOLD MINE LIMITED



BARRICK
NORTH MARA

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 goods:

Supply, Training, Installation of Hydraulic Hose, Lubricants and Fittings on Various Machines/Equipment

Pre-qualification Criteria

No	Reference no	Description of work	Pre-qualification Criteria
1	NM001/2024	Supply, Training, Installation of Hydraulic Hose, Lubricants and Fittings on Various Machines/Equipment	i. Supplier of hose and fitting should ensure that during installation of hydraulic hose working pressure and temperature of hose and fitting align with working pressure of the specific machine component. Provide project profiles over the last three years for assessment. ii. Company Profile and capability statement. These should include photos of the Installation of Hydraulic Hose, Lubricants and Fittings on various machines at workshop; confirm floor size and location. iii. Provide a list of minimum stock kept and location of the stock in Tanzania. iv. Confirm minimum lead time to supply North Mara site with spares and critical parts. v. List of Personnel and organogram of those who will be involved in the installation of Hydraulic Hose, Lubricants and Fittings on Various Machines vi. Local Content Regulations Compliance

Expression of interest

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 NMGM. 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 16 February 2024

North Mara Gold Mine Limited



Special Seats legislator Stella Ikupa (R), who is also Ikupa Trust Fund director, pictured in Dodoma city yesterday presenting to Foundation for Disabilities Hope director Maiko Salali various items for use by members the latter foundation in Dodoma Region. Photo: Correspondent Paul Mabeja

PCCB 'smells' corruption in 15 projects worth 4.34bn/-

By Guardian Correspondent, Dodoma

THE Prevention and Combating of Corruption Bureau (PCCB) in Dodoma Region has spotted irregularities and signs of corruption in 15 development projects worth 4.34bn/-.

These are among 35 development projects worth more than 21.16bn/- which were being monitored by the bureau during their implementation.

Asha Kwariko, acting head of PCCB in the region said this here yesterday when speaking to journalists on the implementation of various activities by the bureau.

Kwariko said the projects are in various sectors, including three in health, education (24), construction (four) and water (four).

"We were monitoring projects in education sector as our key area of focus because we were expecting a lot Form One pupils to be enrolled as compared to Standard One," she said.

Kwariko said PCCB has laid down targets that are aimed at stopping incidents of corruption from happening.

"The objective is to monitor classroom construction projects to speed up the implementation of projects to close the loopholes of corruption and embezzlement that may occur during the execution phase of the project," she said.

"This includes monitoring projects around classroom construction, health centres and other projects that are ongoing through

funds disbursed for improving nursery and primary education and follow-up on complaints about existing land disputes."

She said the government has been disbursing funds to execute various development projects but there are a few individuals who have been engaging in embezzlement of funds.

"We have added more focus on keeping watch over projects that are heavily funded by the government in order to close loopholes for corruption," she said.

The acting PCCB boss said more emphasis has also been placed on increasing awareness building efforts by using various means, especially youth groups.

"Alongside the establishment of debate competitions in secondary schools and universities to spread awareness on the effects of corruption in Dodoma, we will continue educating the public especially youth through the cooperation between PCCB, the public and the Drug Control and Enforcement Authority," she said. Kwariko stated that another key focus area is the systematic evaluation of areas with a lot of complaints in social service delivery and the projects that impact the community.

"We have also planned to investigate the claims listed in the report by the Controller and Auditor General (CAG) on the misuse of government office and abuse of power at land department in Dodoma urban and other allegations.

By Francis Kajubi, Dodoma

Govt mulls having Samia image on banknotes

A PERMANENT imprint of President Samia Suluhu Hassan in collective memory is being considered by stamping an official portrait of the president on banknotes and coins, the government has declared.

Prime Minister Kassim Majaliwa aired this intention in the National Assembly yesterday when responding to Ng'wasi Kamani (Special Seats) during the spot questions hour with the PM.

Stamping the president's official image would be conducted upon consultations with the Bank of Tanzania (BoT), he told the MP who wanted to know if the government sees the need

to keep a permanent record of President Samia, by putting her image on banknotes and coins.

The MP affirmed that she was aware that in 2006 the National Assembly passed the Bank of Tanzania Act, 2006 where section 27, sub-section 1 (b) provides for minor changes on banknotes and coins, like periodic induction of images.

She also intimated the importance of the fact that in 2021 a female president assumed the top national functions and took a commendable leadership role around the world.

Illustrating the point, she said that the US Congress is currently in the process of passing a bill where Harriet Tubman, an activist who played a critical role against slavery, to have her face inducted on the \$20 banknote.

Nigeria, Malawi and Tunisia have already considered induction of images of former presidents on their currencies, she stated, intoning that such moves were supported by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

Responding, the premier said that induction of face images relates to

unique contributions to the nation for founder presidents Mwalimu Julius Nyerere and Sheikh Abeid Amani Karume, for Tanganyika and Zanzibar respectively, and then for the union.

Images are used in keeping memories by their presence on the currency, the same applies to wildlife images in the promotion of tourism, she said.

"Decisions to induct presidents' images on banknotes and coins are often made by themselves in consultation with the central bank," he said.

Meanwhile, the premier has assured the general public that the shortage of sugar facing the country will end before the Ramadan fasting season starting late next month, with plans afoot to import 100,000 tonnes.

The pledge comes as the Quaresma partial fasting period starts next week, but it is the Ramadan fasting that stokes fears of rapid price hikes on sugar and a variety of staples, with the premier affirming that excessive rains disrupted work on sugarcane plantations flooded with water, impeding the harvest.

Stella Manyanya (Nyasa) had demanded to know government plans to end the sugar shortage before Ramadan starts. "The Ministry of Agriculture has already issued a sugar import license for over 100,000 tonnes to the business community that includes sugar producers as an emergency reaction," the premier said in assurance.

Importation of sugar has started and the government is confident that the shortage will be rapidly fixed, he said, in the wake of remarks by Agriculture minister Hussein Bashe last week that Kilombero Sugar Co. is currently producing 250 tonnes on a daily basis, while its installed capacity is 700 tonnes.

EAC, ECOWAS for peer learning to enhance regional integration

By Guardian Reporter

THE East African Community (EAC) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Commission have agreed to further foster bilateral engagement to strengthen peer learning between regional economic communities (RECs).

This was reached early mid-week when a special EAC delegation paid a visit to the ECOWAS Commission headquarters in Abuja, Nigeria on a benchmarking mission.

Led by Andrea Aguer Ariik Malueth, Deputy Secretary General in charge of infrastructure, productive, social and political sectors, the visit on 5th and 6th of this month meant to enhance integration in the region.

A statement availed to the media on Thursday noted that the delegation was received by Dr Omar Alieu Touray, President of ECOWAS Commission.

In his address, Dr Touray highlighted the importance of collaborations among the Regional Economic Communities (RECs), adding: "It is good we

learn from each other."

Malueth equally emphasised the importance of EAC learning from the experiences of ECOWAS in their journey to effectively promote trade and integration.

"We believe that EAC and ECOWAS can learn from each other and jointly promote regional integration in Africa," said the DSG who represented EAC Secretary General Dr Peter Mathuki.

The EAC delegation also held discussions with the Office of the Vice President on institutional reforms implemented at the ECOWAS Commission in the last decade.

Further, sectoral discussions were held with the Commissioner for Internal Services, the Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security, the Commissioner for Infrastructure, Energy and Digitalisation, as well as the Commissioner for Economic Affairs and Agriculture.

The mission was supported by GIZ as part of the cooperation between the German Government and the EAC on organisational development.



Community Development, Gender, Women and Special Groups minister Dr Dorothy Gwajima (C) speaks at yesterday's launch in Dar es Salaam of training for journalists on online violence against children. She is UNICEF (Tanzania Office) child protection and safety expert Joseph Matikbwi (R) and Mathias Haule, an assistant director in the Community Development ministry. Photo: Correspondent Sabato Kasika

Police hold four over missing hospital building materials

By Guardian Correspondent, Njombe

POLICE in Njombe Region have arrested four people, including two civil servants and one security guard, for allegedly stealing building materials at a hospital construction site.

Butusyo Mwambelo, acting Njombe regional police commander told reporters here

yesterday that the incidence occurred in the evening of January 31, this year at Mlowa Ward where Makambako Town Council Hospital is being built.

The acting RPC gave details of the suspects as a doctor at the hospital who kept the store keys and a storekeeper who was tasked with maintaining the building materials.

He further stated that the security guard was arrested after his house was searched and some of the missing construction materials for the hospital discovered.

"A theft incident has occurred and our investigation linked four people to the crime," the officer said while withholding details of the fourth suspect.

Residents of the area appeared shocked and appalled, requested the government to intensify investigation, arrest all suspects and punish those behind the act.

Ezekia Chongolo told this paper that while it is repugnant to see that some people sabotage development projects for their personal benefit

"There have been previous reports of construction materials being stolen here at Mlowa hospital and the worst thing is that fingers are not pointed at outsiders but insiders," he said.

Dr Alexander Mchome, Makambako Town Council Medical Officer said: "We are aware of the incidence. However, if you require informa-

tion, please write a letter to the council director and if he agrees, the person in charge of giving information will assist you," he said.

Odilo Fute, Mlowa Ward Councillor, acknowledged that construction materials were stolen and the matter was referred to law enforcement for investigation and further ac-

tion. "I got this information on Friday and according to my source, doors were not broken which suggests that those who did it just opened the door and took the materials," Fute said.

Hangaiika Nghonzela, chairman of Mlowa Street, requested an immediate investigation by government authorities so as to arrest all who were involved.

OSHA seamlessly collects health, safety info through ICT system

By Guardian Correspondent, Arusha

THE Occupational Safety and Health Authority (OSHA) has said that the use of information and communication technology (ICT) has significantly eased its work.

Raymond Machary, Head of ICT at OSHA, said this during the 4th summit of e-Government Authority (eGA) on management of safety and health issues at workplace which took place in Arusha Region recently.

Machary said that through the system, they have been able to prepare effective strategies for protecting human capital at workplaces against risks of diseases and accidents.

He said that OSHA has made significant steps in the use of ICT through its Workplace Information Management System (WIMS) which has been linked with other government systems, including the Government Electronic Payment Gateway (GePG).

“Through WIMS and other government systems, our institution has been able to collect and store vital information concerning economic activities taking place in the country which simplifies the management of health and safety issues in a workplace. The system enables our stakeholders to access our services, including registration of their workplaces without paying OSHA offices a visit,” he said.

“For instance, OSHA has the capacity to share information about ongoing construction projects in the country any time and currently the leading region with many ongoing projects is Dar es Salaam followed by Dodoma and Arusha. This was impossible before investing in ICT systems.”

Salum Rugambwa, director of customer services at eGA commended OSHA for being at the forefront in the use of the systems.

“OSHA has an internal system they created by adhering to government guidelines managed by eGA. As e-government regulator, we continue working with other public institutions to ensure the present systems work efficiently, including provision of assistance by our experts whenever challenges arise,” he said.



Through WIMS and other government systems, our institution has been able to collect and store vital information concerning economic activities taking place in the country



Mtwara Port manager Ferdinand Nyati (3rd-R) briefs editors from various media houses touring the gateway yesterday on infrastructural and other improvements recently made to the facility. Photo Correspondent Joseph Mwendapole

Major MV Liemba renovation now slated for later this month

By Guardian Correspondent, Kigoma

THE state-owned Marine Services Company Limited (MSCL) is later this month expected to commence major renovation of MV Liemba ship, an activity which is set to take 18 months.

Once completed, the renovations work which will cost 32bn/- is expected to help strengthen transport services in Lake Tanganyika.

MSCL acting manager Allen Butembero said here yesterday that the repair of the ship was supposed to start last month but it was delayed because the contractor did not complete some of the procedures, including having sufficient financial capital.

“The government through MSCL has allocated 600bn/- for the renovation of various ships, including those that work in Lake Victoria, Tanganyika and Nyasa. We have already sent request to the government and we hope that later this month, renovation of Mv Liemba will commence,” he said.

Butembero said along with the re-

pair of MV Liemba, the repair of MT Sangara tanker ship is in the final stages as well as improvement projects at Kigoma port which will cost 19bn/- in a project implemented by the government to improve transport and transportation services in Lake Tanganyika and support transportation through the central railway.

“Lake Tanganyika has a challenge of lack of reliable transport services which is also contributed by many of its ships being worn out while others including MV Mwingozo are being used for research activities. The repairs of MV Liemba and MT Sangara will solve a major transport challenge and stimulate regional trade,” he said.

Butembero further said that the government has also commenced construction of a new ship which will provide services in Lake Victoria between Tanzania, Kenya and Uganda, a project which will cost 113bn/-.

Speaking on the move, some traders said that the ships will greatly help stimulate trade and strengthen economic diplomacy between the coun-

tries surrounding the lake.

Baraka Ambrose, one of the traders, said there is a big challenge in transporting goods especially cement from Tanzania to the Democratic Republic of Congo, a situation which weakens trade due to delay in delivery of the goods. “Lake Tanganyika is an important link between Tanzania and the Great Lakes countries, especially Zambia, DRC, Burundi and Rwanda because of being part of human transport and transportation of cargo from the Port of Dar es Salaam. So, when the renovations of the ships and construction of new ones is completed, there will be reliable transportation services thus addressing many challenges,” he said.

Maisara Nkana, a trader at Buhanda-Businde underscored the need for the government to supervise the renovation for the works to be completed on time and bring relief to citizens.

“We want the government to help us on this as President Samia Suluhu Hassan promised to open up Kigoma Region economically,” he said.

South Africa to establish climate change response fund

JOHANNESBURG

SOUTH African government is expected to establish a Climate Change Response Fund to address the devastating effects of the phenomenon on vulnerable areas in the country.

Over the past few years, parts of South Africa have been ravaged by floods - particularly in KwaZulu-Natal - as well as fires in other parts of the country and drought.

“This will bring together all spheres of government and the private sector in a collaborative effort to build our resilience and respond to the impacts of climate change,” President Cyril Ramaphosa said on Thursday.

This came as the president delivered the last State of the Nation Address (SONA) of the sixth administration before a joint sitting of the National Assembly and National Council of Provinces at the Cape Town City Hall.

President Ramaphosa explained that furthermore, through reforms, government is positioning the economy for “future growth in a world shaped by climate change and a revolution in green technologies.”

“In the last three years, our country has seen an increase in extreme weather events, often with disastrous consequences. This is why we are implementing a just energy transition, not only to reduce carbon emissions and fight climate change, but to create growth and jobs for our own people.



“We will undertake this transition at a pace, scale and cost that our country can afford and in a manner that ensures energy security.

“With our abundance of solar, wind and mineral resources, we are going to create thousands of jobs in renewable energy, green hydrogen, green steel, electric vehicles and other green products.”



The president highlighted that green hydrogen and electric vehicle manufacturing are receiving particular attention.

“We are going to set up a Special Economic Zone in the Boegoebaai port to drive investment in green energy. There is a great deal of interest from the pri-

ivate sector to participate in the boom that will be generated from green hydrogen energy projects.

“We have decided to support electric vehicle manufacturing in South Africa to grow our automotive sector, which provides good jobs to thousands of workers. We have decided to give special focus to regions like Mpumalanga to enable the creation of new industries, new economic opportunities, and sustainable jobs.

“And in the past year, we have increased the financing pledges for our Just Energy Transition Investment Plan from around R170 billion to almost R240 billion,” he said,

REQUEST FOR TENDER RISING MAIN PROJECT

North Mara Gold Mine, a fully owned subsidiary of Twiga Minerals Corporation, which is 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 goods:

Manufacture and Supply of Electrical and Instrumentation Cabling for the Rising Main Project at North Mara Gold Mine
Tender Ref: NM005/2024

Qualification Criteria

No	Reference no	Description of work	Qualification criteria
1	NM005/2024	<p>Manufacture and Supply of electrical and instrumentation cabling for the Underground Rising Main Project.</p> <p>Specifications:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Power and Control Cables: Supply of the various sizes 4 core and three core cables and lengths of the following: 600/1000V Grade, Low Halogen (LH), Flame Retardant (FR), PVC(LHFR)PVC(LHFR) - ARMORED, "Blue Stripe" cables with stranded conductors, manufactured in accordance with SANS101057 (Refer to BOQ for quantities). Power Cables Supply of a 1000m 630sqmm single core - 600/1000V Grade, Low Halogen (LH), Flame Retardant (FR), PVC(LHFR)PVC(LHFR) - UNARMORED, "Blue Stripe" cables with stranded copper conductors, manufactured in accordance with SANS101057. MW Cables: three core 150sqmm 6.35/11kV Grade, XLPE, Low Halogen (LH), Flame Retardant (FR), PVC(LHFR)PVC(LHFR) - ARMORED, "Blue Stripe" cables with stranded copper conductors, manufactured in accordance with SANS1339 Type A. Earth Cables: Supply of 500m and 1500m of one core 70sqmm and 95sqmm cable 600/1000V Grade, Copper, Green PVC Sheetch with stranded copper conductors, manufactured in accordance with SANS101057. Various lengths and sizes of Instrumentation Cabling from 2-24 pairs, 1sqmm, Type; CU/XLPE/IOAM/APL/PE (To SABS 1507) Voltage Grade 300/500V XLPE Insulated, Individual & Overall screened, APL / FR armoured. 800m Multi Triad cables. Multicore cables: 800m 3c 1sqmm) and 300m (7c 1sqmm) of Type; CU/XLPE/OAS/APL/PE (To SABS 1507) Voltage Grade 300/500V XLPE Insulated, overall screened, APL / FR armoured. 1100m of network cables. <p>Description: A BOQ with reference CC0296-000-ELE-BOQ-0003 must be completed by the Bidder and submitted for adjudication.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Company Profile and capability statement These should include photo of the fabrication workshop, confirmation of floor size and location. Completed Bill of Quantities (BOQ) with reference CC0296-000-ELE-BOQ-0003. Confirmation in writing on company letterhead that the Bidder will comply to the technical specifications or requirements detailed in the BOQ as listed in point ii above. Class two, weekly schedule in Excel format confirming the following: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Ready for Shipment Ex-works. Number of weeks after placement of PO for the following BOQ Schedule Items for electrical cables: SCH01.1.1; SCH01.1.2; SCH01.1.3; SCH01.1.4 Ready for Shipment Ex-works. Number of weeks after placement of PO for the following BOQ Schedule Items for instrumentation cables: SCH01.1.1; SCH01.1.2; SCH01.1.3; SCH01.1.4 A letter providing assurance that the Bidder is an authorised supplier for specified cables. Confirmation in writing to comply with Barrick Terms and Conditions. Local Content Regulations Compliance

Submission of Proposals
If your company meets the qualification criteria and would like to be considered to receive the RFP package (BOQ, Technical Specs, etc.), send your request along with your company profile to nm.proposal@barrick.com

Applicants must quote the tender description(s) and the respective package 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 a proposal through this advertisement.

Qualification of any company submitting a "proposal" shall be at the sole discretion of NMGM.

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 RFP Package request: 16 February 2024

North Mara Gold Mine Limited



Members of Turkey's Red Crescent and those of the Women's Forum of the Queen of Arusha pictured at Gendabi village in Hanang District on Thursday presenting an assortment of items to Tanzania Red Cross officials for onward handing-over to victims of mudslides that hit parts of the district in early December last year. Turkey's Ambassador to Tanzania, Dr Mehmet Güllüoğlu, witnessed the handover. Photo: Correspondent Getrude Mpezya

Build capacity for our own local consulting engineers, ERB told

By Guardian Reporter

WORKS Minister Innocent Bashungwa has instructed the Engineers Registration Board (ERB) to expand capacity building programmes for consulting engineers in order to improve their knowledge and skills.

Bashungwa made the directive in Dodoma on Thursday at a meeting with the board's leaders and members where he emphasized the need to establish robust plans for advancement of professional consulting engineers.

"We want to see increased participation of local engineers and contractors in construction works and project management," he said.

The minister also wanted the board to ensure that graduate engineers participate in the structured internship programme for engineers on significant national projects in order to increase their capacity.

He also suggested that all challenging aspects of the Engineers Registration Act be examined and improved in order to encour-

age engineers to be creative and support the nation's industrial development as well as advancements in science and technology.

"Create an enabling environment for local consulting engineers to be able to participate in projects to save government money," he said.

The ministry's permanent secretary Aisha Amour advised the board and management to collaborate in order to improve productivity.

Menye Manga, chairman of ERB advisory board, pledged to work with the management to advance the engineering profession and increase the number of experts in the country.



We want to see increased participation of local engineers and contractors in construction works and project management

'Preventive approach effective in controlling drug abuse'

By Guardian Correspondent, Bagamoyo

PREVENTIVE approach involving families, schools, communities and media is the cheapest and most effective way of reducing drug abuse, it has been advised.

Dr Kandi Lussingu, Bagamoyo district medical officer, said this on Thursday during the launch of a project that seeks to enhance access to justice and other social services

through legal aid services.

The project is being coordinated by Life & Hope Rehabilitation Organisation (LHRO), a non-governmental organization which runs a sober house to care for drug addicts in Bagamoyo District, Coast Region.

"When education is provided to communities about drug addicts as patients who need support, there will be no stigma and the victims will know their rights, seek help and once

sober help other people from getting involved in drug use," he said.

He said that there are a lot of young Tanzanians who are drug addicts and that tomorrow's workforce is being wasted due to drug addiction, adding that if they recover, they can make contribution as productive members of the society.

Al-Karim Bhaji, executive director of LHRO said the one-year project covers five wards, namely Dunda, Ma-

gomeni, Nianjema, Kisutu and Kilimo, adding that he has taken two reformed addicts from each ward who will be involved in providing education to drug users. "In providing education the project involves village leaders, ward police officers, court officials, social welfare officers and community member," he said. Bhaji said that the organisation received more than 50m/- from the US Ambassador for HIV/AIDS Relief fund (AFHR-Grant) to run the project.

Delvin Maleko, Bagamoyo District Community Development Officer, said education about the effects of drug addiction can help families to be more careful and help prepare young people to be future leaders.

"Without taking various measures such as LHRO's to start a project to provide education, we will continue to have disadvantaged young people in our families and the community using drugs," Maleko said. Dr Joshua Mwarami from

Tanzania Health Promotion Support (THPS) said drug addiction challenge cannot be eliminated without adequate education for addicts, families and communities surrounding them.

Mwarami said addicts need to get proper education about the use of methadone, education about their legal rights, as well as education about the effects of drug use in order to save other young people who plan to indulge in the use of drugs.

UN chief calls conflicts around the world sad 'deadly daily hungry hell'

GAZA

UNITED Nations Secretary-General António Guterres has said that "for millions of people caught up in conflicts around the world life is a deadly daily hungry hell."

Addressing the UN General Assembly on Wednesday, Guterres (pictured) added: "Record numbers are fleeing their homes in search of safety. And they are crying out for peace. And we must hear them and act. In the immediate term, we must continue to push for peace across the globe."

He mentioned what could happen soon in the Israel-Hamas conflict: "I'm especially alarmed by reports that the Israeli military intends to focus next on Rafah, where hundreds of thousands of Palestinians have been squeezed in a desperate search for safety. Such an action would exponentially increase what is already a humanitarian nightmare with untold regional consequences."

Guterres also mentioned hotspots in Ukraine, Africa and Asia. "In Ukraine, I repeat my call for the justice and sustainable peace."

"The fighting must stop in Sudan before it destroys even more lives and spreads."

"In Myanmar, we need sustained international and regional attention to help urgently for the best towards the democratic transition and return to civilian rule," he added.

Guterres ended his speech with a call to all, "if countries fulfill their obligations under the charter, every person has a right to a life of peace and dignity would be guaranteed."



Manyoni district executive director Jimson Mhagama (C, gesturing) briefs Manyoni district commissioner Kemirembe Lwota (2nd-L) on Thursday as the latter made an assessment tour of the ongoing construction of a building to house a canteen at Solya Girls' Secondary School. Photo: Correspondent Thobias Mwanakatwe

PM orders rebuilding of destroyed roads, bridges

By Guardian Reporter, Dodoma

PRIME Minister Kassim Majaliwa has said the government is well prepared to restore infrastructure destroyed by heavy rains so that people can resume their activities in the affected areas.

Majaliwa made the statement on Thursday while responding to a question posed by Kishapu

MP Boniphace Butondo who wanted to know the government's budgetary readiness to restore infrastructure destroyed by rain during the question-and-answer session in the National Assembly.

He directed officials at the Tanzania National Roads Agency (TANROADS) and Tanzania Rural Roads Agency (TARURA) to ensure they inspect the affect-

ed areas and repair all roads and bridges that have been destroyed. While responding to a question by Nusrat Hanje (Special Seats) who asked about the government's preparedness to ensure children's safety online, Majaliwa said that the government will continue to call for proper use of online platforms.

He said the world is moving to-

wards the major changes taking place in the use of electronic devices, including digital economy but there are some people who have been misusing such systems such as bullying or abusing vulnerable groups such as women and children.

"We talked about this when we recently passed the bill on political parties where we agreed to punish those found guilty of mis-

using online platforms to bully or humiliate other people in the political landscape. The government has also placed a strategy to address child abuse, discrimination, and abuse against women and other groups," he said.

Majaliwa asserted that the government through the Ministry of Community Development, Gender, Women and Special Groups has placed a counter strategy to deal with individuals using on-

line media unlawfully to humiliate others. "The government will continue to regulate the use of social networks by taking stern measures against the perpetrators," he said.

The PM also called on people living in valleys to relocate to elevated areas to avoid the risk of being affected by floods caused by the ongoing heavy rains across the country.

Makete draws master plan to expand water services

By Guardian Correspondent, Makete

AUTHORITIES in Makete District, Njombe Region have promised to supervise the implementation of various development projects in order to stimulate social and economic growth.

Juma Sweda, Makete District Commissioner made the remarks on Thursday here when inspecting an ongoing water project that will benefit residents in the villages of Usaliwani, Mfumbi and Ruaha in Mfumbi Ward.

"You are aware how important this project is; let me assure you that we are committed and we will supervise it to ensure that it is completed on time. However, most of our wards now have enough water and with this project, the supply will expand by over 90 percent," he said. Sweda added that water projects in Makete District do not cost much to implement due to its geographical location where water naturally flows from the mountains.

He said the district has already developed a master plan to improve water and sanitation services.

"We have surveyed almost all the wards and established that we have more than 800 water sources," Sweda said.

Innocent Lyamuya, manager of the Rural Water and Sanitation

Agency (RUWASA), said the projects that are completed include the excavation of 17104.2m ditches for the main waterway, purchase of pipes and construction of 10 water extraction stations.

Lyamuya said the project is being implemented for a period of eight months at a cost of 736,762,450/-.

"There is a bit of a payment challenge as the contractor said the initial payment was late, but the work done is worth only 150m/- which means we have a shortage of funds," he said.

Eveline Mpande, a resident of Mfumbi Village expressed her gratitude to the government for initiating the project which she said will bring relief to the residents.



You are aware how important this project is; let me assure you that we are committed and we will supervise it to ensure that it is completed on time



Bashiru Omary, Dodoma District chairman of the National Muslim Council of Tanzania (Bakwata), has an audience with madrasa teachers and heads of department in Dodoma city on Thursday. He underlined the need for higher quality classrooms and hostels for students. Flanking him are Sheikh Ambar Mpanda (3rd-L) and Bakwata district secretary Ahmed Msuri. Photo: Correspondent Peter Mkwavila

Cooperative seeks audience with PM over farms retake talk

By Guardian Correspondent, Babati

RIFT Valley Cooperative Union (RIVACU) in Manyara Region has formed a special team it wants to meet Prime Minister Kassim Majaliwa in an attempt to save its farms from being retaken by the government.

According to the members, there are threats made by some government leaders who want ownership of the cooperative farms be revoked and the same allocated to other en-

tities or individuals for investment. The resolution was decided at the end of last week by the cooperative's members who attended a special general meeting which sat for more than four hours in Babati District to discuss the fate of their farms.

The six-member team consists of Patrick Sulley, Michael Tsaxara, Paul Silvester, Yuda Sulley, Ramadhanani Ismail and Gerald Gwaha.

The meeting also passed a resolution to protect the 2020 acres of

Dareda farm against intruders and to oppose the rumoured revocation of ownership.

Reading the resolutions, chairman of the meeting Patrick Sulley said that they made the decision in light of the fact that their farms are still being taken by citizens and that government officials are attempting to revoke their ownership without providing justification.

He said after their two visits to the Minister for Agriculture without seeing any action, they made

the decision to seek audience with the Prime Minister.

Taking advantage of the occasion, he asked his "comrades" to go to CCM headquarters to also ask for assistance from the Secretary General Dr Emmanuel Nchimbi.

Earlier, RIVACU Chairman Yuda Sulley announced that the group's goal is to meet with the Prime Minister during this week's Parliamentary session in Dodoma. They had previously discussed their plans with Hanang' Member of Parliament

Samuel Hhayuma, who pledged to assist them in meeting Majaliwa.

Sulley said RIVACU sent delegates to meet Minister of Agriculture twice but nothing happened and that is why they made the decision to approach Prime Minister.

He said upon meeting him, they will discuss Hanang' farm, Mbulu farm, Dareda farm, Mwada farm, and VIPIN farm in Karatu District where their members reside.

Michael Tsaxara said their association is neither a coincidence nor a

hoax, so they should hang onto the 2020 acres of Dareda farm to prevent it from being retaken.

Donald Deogratus, legal officer at the Tanzania Cooperative Development Commission (TCDC) informed them that if they approach the Prime Minister, he will likely inquire what they were told by Minister for Agriculture.

According to the lawyer, when the government chooses to take someone's land for other use, then compensation must be paid.

South Sudan appeals for funds to conduct elections

JUBA

SOUTH Sudan on Thursday appealed to the international community and the region to provide financial support to enable the country conduct general election later this year.

Minister of Cabinet Affairs Martin Elia Lomuro said the budget allocations declared by the government are insufficient and require generous contributions from international partners, especially considering the huge amounts demanded by the electoral and constitutional making process as well as the current economic crisis in a nascent country like South Sudan.

"We commit to transparently submit the detailed budget sheets to the region, continent as well as international countries and partners to study and decide areas each could consider assisting South Sudan in its endeavour for democratic transition in December 2024," Lomuro said in Juba, South Sudan's capital, during a plenary session of the peace monitors, the Reconstituted Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission (RJMEC).

He said the government requires \$40 million to write a new constitution, out of which the government tabled a supplementary budget that will cover only 63 percent of the total amount required.

Lomuro also said the estimated funds to facilitate the electoral process amount to \$228.1 million, while the government has only been able to allocate a supplementary budget that will cover only 15 percent of the total amount required, among other costs, including security required for the process.



The explanation here may relate to the "defence" of necessity knowing no law, but the consequences could be serious indeed. Correspondent Imani Nathaniel captured this scene at the Magomeni-Usalama section of Dar es Salaam's busy Morogoro Road on Thursday.

UNHCR chief visits displaced families in Sudan amid conflict

KHARTOUM

THE UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Filippo Grandi, embarked on a poignant journey through Sudan, where he met with families torn apart by the devastating conflict ravaging the nation.

Displaced from their homes and livelihoods by the ongoing turmoil, these families endure unimaginable hardships in displacement camps scattered across the coun-

try.

With conflict engulfing Sudan for 10 long months, the scale of displacement is staggering, with nearly 8 million people uprooted from their communities, both within Sudan's borders and beyond, seeking refuge in neighboring countries such as Chad, South Sudan, Egypt, Central African Republic and Ethiopia.

The relentless violence has not only shattered lives but also

brought Sudan's economy to its knees and crippled its once-thriving healthcare sector.

Recent escalations in the conflict, including the seizure of Wad Madani, Sudan's second-largest city, by the Rapid Support Forces, have exacerbated the suffering of already vulnerable populations. Wad Madani had served as a sanctuary for hundreds of thousands fleeing violence in Khartoum and elsewhere, only to be displaced once again.

During his visit to Ethiopia and Sudan, Grandi bore witness to the harrowing realities faced by internally displaced families. In Port Sudan and Kassala, eastern Sudan, he listened to their stories, amplifying their voices and calling for urgent support from the international community.

The majority of displaced families find themselves confined to overcrowded displacement camps, relying on humanitarian aid and the solidarity of fellow Sudanese grappling

with the same crisis. In states like Gedaref and Kassala, where displaced individuals continue to arrive from conflict-ridden areas, the need for assistance is dire.

UNHCR remains steadfast in its commitment to provide vital support to refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) across Sudan. Through counselling sessions, assistance with asylum procedures, resettlement options, legal and financial aid, and medical referrals, the agency

strives to alleviate the suffering of those affected by the crisis.

In a stark statement, UNHCR underscored the dire humanitarian situation in Sudan, expressing grave concerns about the potential spread of violence to other parts of the country. As the conflict rages on, the plight of displaced families grows increasingly desperate, underscoring the urgent need for sustained international intervention and support.

SATURDAY 10 FEBRUARY 2024

**Taking A New Look
At The News
ESTABLISHED IN 1995**

Indeed, land surveying widens user options, reduces conflicts

THERE is near-consensus in the National Assembly on the need for the government to take measures formally ending the chaotic situation in land occupancy and use across the country.

The way forward is a systematic effort at surveying all districts and wards and producing land use plans where land-based transactions can take place starting by involving individual residents and, by extension, involving investors.

There are institutional contentions revolving around the privileges of public agencies over ancestral land in that ending such conflicts is out of reach without proper surveying, mapping and deliverance of titles of occupancy where the boundaries are clear.

The head of government business in the legislature, who is none other than the Prime Minister, is on record as having announced in response to 'live' questions from legislators that the government is working on a review of current land use strategies with intent to end land-related wrangles and make it easier for investors to legally and therefore officially access land.

If done precisely that way, it would be a revolution of sorts in our country with respect to how land is viewed and how people are related to land.

Much as it would not remove clan land by legislation, chances that each piece of land would eventually be mapped and titled to its current holder, etc., would be higher.

That would diminish collective prerogatives with regard to residential areas, even as doubts would remain as to whether this effort would actually end migratory livestock herding.

It would depend much on whether auxiliary legislation would be put across to make land use mapping effective enough for economic activities to be carried out within well-defined land use contexts.

That would suggest having a specific act of actual empowerment on the part of this or that group to have claim on open land as individuals. Sharp debates can be awaited here.

It is similarly unclear whether the full breadth of what legislators were demanding from the government as to how it plans to tame a surge in land-related conflicts can be met - within the relevant timeframes.

One MP talked of the public steadily losing confidence in local government authorities blamed for sparking off - or, at the very least, tolerating - land occupancy disputes.

There is also inability, or simply inaction, on the part of conservation bodies viewing farmers near wildlife sanctuaries as trespassers, this courtesy to a value chain impression on the economy where tourism is foremost.

At times there are extended expectations on what is likely to happen, or how far reality would change, merely by generalised land surveying and use plans.

The idea that land policy via complete surveying and land use plans is expected to create friendly conditions under which people can transfer occupancy titles and benefit from such titles in the pursuit of economic activities seems valid.

However, it has some trappings. It is that when the land has one title holder or occupant rather than a village or a clan - and nobody said Village Land Act will be scrapped - it isn't enough.

The government is similarly understood to be working on reforming the modality of issuing land use permits among various categories of users, including commercial farmers, infrastructure development and private developers.

One might wish to hear if migratory livestock herding would need a permit to take up an area, and whether that would merit a land user permit or it needs some traditional attachment to a patch of land or transacting with the government if it is already mapped and labelled as grazing land.

But even in that best-case scenario, that would clearly still not be a collective permit. Leaving land titles vague and merely mapping land use has a trap deep inside that would be best addressed conclusively as soon as practicable.

If a good 'financial' year is seen early on, this one is surely bright

AS President Samia Suluhu Hassan was briefing members of the diplomatic corps earlier this week on the government's successes during 2023, there was a vibrant datum around the corner.

The National Bureau of Statistics was tidying up its early February 2024 briefing, which takes over from having climaxed briefings for 2023 in January with the latest December data.

The bureau was well-placed to tell the public how the year had begun, a datum that the president didn't definitely hold at the time of the briefing. It was an excellent observation that headline inflation for January stagnated at 3.0 per cent, with overall inflation earlier standing at 3.5 per cent.

This was good news which could have spiced up the president's remarks at the midweek sherry party. Still, she could admittedly safely do without that particular datum as there was enough uplifting data about policy successes during the past year.

What was however a bit troubling and perhaps calls for a revisiting of methods is the apparent discrepancy between visible and statistical price realities.

That has less to do with false data as that would presume the lack of intention to be transparent, as if adding a percentage point to inflation would invite disputes.

Usually inflation is calculated from a basket of products or commodities weighted as to their importance in household purchases, while wider public expenditure is only indirectly included.

The reason for this is that prices rise for individuals making purchases or for companies buying or selling, etc., rather than for public agencies.

For better or for worse, public agencies are key stakeholders with regard to inflation, often by enjoying it...

For instance, take the rises in sugar

prices, a factor scarcely reflected in the 3.0 per cent inflation for January and slightly above in earlier months.

It shows that local producers are among those allowed to import sugar, up to 100,000 tonnes as declared in the legislature.

The measure comes after well over one month of frenetic price rises when people will have 'lost' billions of shillings to sugar firms and especially local producers.

For the latter, their 'corporate social responsibility', not to mention periodic donations, would presume that they had made an effort to cushion the public from such price hikes.

That there would be massive rains capable of flooding sugar-cane farms was known by early October, but permits to import sugar are issued in January.

Even worse, the importation permits were not issued so that competing wholesalers could flood the market in a competitive manner but largely to the same state-based producers yearning to import, repackage as own sugar for sale at inflated prices.

Prices will eventually fall because the monopolists can't agree to keep sugar in warehouses for too long enough since they also compete. And, not surprisingly, the government has an interest in seeing the price of sugar drop before Ramadhan sets in.

It could be that the inflation basket where data are sourced and averaged provides too much weight to slow-moving commodities where the pace of inflation is hard to feel.

Whatever the correct explanation, though, having the 3.0 per cent level while the prices of nearly all farm produce and various industrial commodities are rising had some element of surprise. Statistics ought to reflect reality and not otherwise.

The Guardian Limited Key Contacts

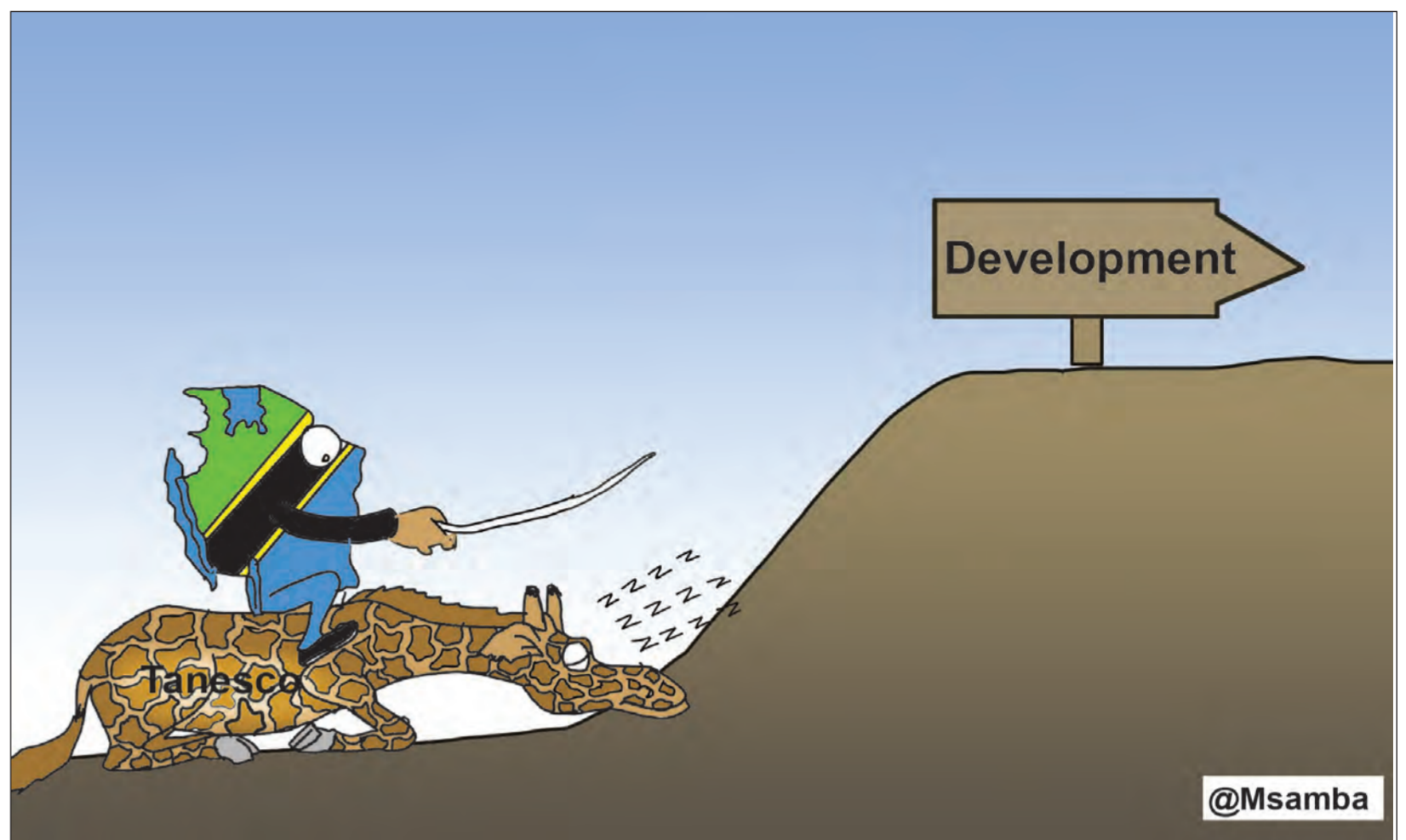
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Turning the corner on environmental crises in 2024

By Inger Andersen

LAST year was challenging on many levels, with conflicts across the globe and the impacts of the three environmental planetary crises intensifying.

I am sure that we all hope that this year will bring a brighter outlook. However, this will not happen by itself. We must all seek consensus through multilateralism and, above all, work hard for common solutions.

When it comes to climate, we do have something new to build on. Yes, the Dubai Consensus that emerged from COP28 was not everything everyone had hoped for. But it did signal a global decision to move away from fossil fuels, which is critical, as we all know.

And, of course, the Loss & Damage Fund was put into operation. This was an important show of solidarity with vulnerable nations, although there is a long way to go to capitalise the fund.

The positives did not stop there. We saw new commitments on sustainable cooling and reducing methane emissions. A tripling of renewable energy targets. Nature breakthroughs. Crucially, there was agreement on the framework for the Global Goal on Adaptation.

We at UNEP played a prominent role at COP28 and supported member states in many of these successes. UNEP's three Gap reports - most notably the Emissions Gap Report and the Adaptation Gap Report - informed and drove negotiations.

The UNEP-led Cool Coalition released a key report and teamed up with the United Arab Emirates presidency for the Cooling Pledge, to which over 60 countries signed up.

We at UNEP were deeply involved in new efforts on everything from tracking and cutting methane emissions to launching a powerful new alliance of export credit agencies for net-zero.

So, COP28 set the stage for the trajectory the world needs on climate change - and indeed on nature and biodiversity loss and pollution and waste, which are closely linked.

An important piece of work for UNEP will be securing the metals and minerals needed for the energy transition - as I told the Future Minerals Forum in Saudi Arabia and reinforced at the World Economic Forum in Davos earlier this month.

As you know, I highlighted responsible mining and sustainable minerals and metals use as one of six areas for multilateral action in my report to the sixth UN Environment Assembly.

Metals and minerals will be critical to scaling up renewable energy, electric vehicles and more, which are needed for the energy transition.

Some three billion tonnes of minerals and metals are needed to stay

below 2°C by 2050. This is a huge opportunity for developing countries to invest in sustainable development.

The challenge is to also ensure environmental integrity, environmental stewardship and environmental sustainability. Long-term strategies are essential to produce value-addition for producer countries and communities. To build circularity that keeps metals and minerals in the economy. And to avoid pollution and biodiversity loss.

While in Saudi Arabia, I also had the chance to witness the great work the country is doing on addressing desertification, drought and land degradation through proactive land restoration. This is the theme for World Environment Day, which the kingdom will host in June this year.

From Saudi Arabia, I journeyed to Davos, where I had the opportunity to engage on the importance of landing a strong instrument on plastic pollution this year.

Meanwhile, UNEP has received an official request from the State of Palestine to carry out an assessment of the environmental impacts of the conflict in Gaza. This is an exercise upon which we are embarking in coordination with other UN colleagues on the ground.

This type of assessment is a well-established aspect of UNEP's work. As you are aware, UNEP has already published an assessment on the environmental consequences of the war in Ukraine, in 2022 and many similar assessments in years prior to that.

The goal of such assessments is always to track the extent of damage and inform a science-based approach to recovery and reconstruction, when conditions allow.

An approach that minimises the long-term impact on the environment and mitigates the harm caused, to the greatest extent possible. But to assess and recover, conflicts must end, so I echo the UN Secretary General's call for an end to hostilities.

Remaining in update mode, let me also mention that we are progressing well on the new Climate Change Division. I am grateful to Dechen Tsering, Director and Representative from the Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, who has agreed to step in as acting director from this February 1.

The goal of the new division, and indeed of UNEP, is to find smarter ways to collaborate and deliver, as one, on climate action. I am pleased that we are moving closer to this goal.

I mention these elements because they show the complexity of the work ahead. We have an environmental must-do list that grows ever longer.

Different bodies and different agreements are working in many areas. This is why UNEA-6 is going to be so important.

UNEA-6 is the sixth session of the UN Environment Assembly. It is scheduled to take place from this February 26 to March 1 at the UNEP headquarters in Nairobi.

UNEA holds the power to weave agreements and promises into a tapestry of action. United, inclusive and multilateral action that addresses climate change, nature, desertification and biodiversity loss, and pollution and waste as one indivisible challenge.

I sincerely hope that the UNEA resolutions will focus on the urgent. The unexplored. The critical. All to move the environmental needle towards action and implementation, at home and at the global level.

If we proceed in this manner, we can ensure that the resolutions will help us build a roadmap to go further and faster on the environment.

So, we are in good shape for UNEA on the substantive front. But funding challenges remain. My thanks to all who have pledged and contributed a total of just over US\$1 million for the assembly. I encourage further contributions to help us close the remaining funding gap of just over US\$700,000.

And, as delegates may be aware, the UNEA-6 contribution from the United Nations Regular Budget, approximately US\$1 million, may now not materialise owing to unprecedented liquidity challenges to the United Nations Secretariat budget.

It is critical to note that the Regular Budget issue has a number of wider implications. When Member States fail to pay their assessment dues, impacts on governance arrangements and programmatic delivery are inevitable.

The UN has had to freeze recruitment for key regular budget posts, which means that many UNEP positions now remain vacant and cannot be filled for the foreseeable future. It is in the hands of Member States to resolve these issues and ensure that UNEP can pro-

vide nations with the support they need in this period of change.

But there is some good financial news. The Environment Fund received US\$88.9 million in 2023, an increase of almost ten per cent over the previous year and the best result since 2009.

My deep thanks to the 80 Member States that showed their trust in UNEP by heeding the call for increased core funding to enable us to effectively deliver.

I invite Member States that have not yet contributed to help us cross the US\$90 million mark, and move closer to the US\$100 million which is in the approved budgetary funds.

In this context, it is worth noting that the US\$100 million goal was indeed the goal that the initial founders of UNEP envisaged for UNEP on an annual basis back in 1972. So, if we were to adjust the US\$100 million to today's dollar value, the Environment Fund goal should be US\$733 million per year.

We have a busy year ahead of us. A year that will include the critical moments of landing a strong instrument on plastic pollution and finalising proposals for the new Science-Policy Panel for Chemicals, Waste and Pollution.

A year in which UNEP will drive action under the Multilateral Environmental Agreements and other processes by backing member states, working with the rest of the UN system, and engaging businesses and investors.

A year in which UNEP will focus on the resolutions adopted at UNEA-6 and pursue the 2024-2025 programme of work, with its focus on targeting the drivers of the three environmental planetary crises. All backed by digital transformation, finance and economic shifts and a stronger science-policy interface.

So, there are many existing goals to deliver on and new ones to set. A strong and well-funded UNEP will be essential. As will the multilateralism that this Committee of Permanent Representatives has exemplified over the years.

So, let us all unite under the banner of multilateralism, at UNEA-6 and beyond. And make 2024 the year in which the world turned the corner and strode off down the road to a healthy, peaceful and prosperous planet.

*** Inger Andersen is Executive Director of the Nairobi-based United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and delivered this speech at the 164th meeting of the agency's Committee of Permanent Representatives held in the Kenyan capital on January 25, 2024.**

Law Week climax message to Tanzanian judiciary

By Telesphor Magobe

RECENTLY, President Samia Suluhu Hassan and President Hussein Ali Mwinyi of Zanzibar presided at the climax of law week in Mainland Tanzania and Zanzibar respectively.

During law week free legal aid was provided to those in need to facilitate access to justice.

In many cases, ignorance of procedural law deprives needy people of access to justice because when they are unaware of what they are entitled to or what they must do or not to do they hardly exercise their rights, including access to legal aid and legal relief.

During law week, in both Mainland Tanzania and in Zanzibar, the Judiciary highlighted efforts made to improve the dispensation of justice, reduce a huge backlog of cases and increase efficiency and effectiveness in criminal and civil justice.

The efforts made include setting up modern court infrastructure and facilities, the appointment of new Judges and magistrates (taking into account gender equality) and the use of information technology (IT) to increase efficiency and speed up the

dispensation of justice, which to a considerable extent saves time and money.

Nevertheless, judges and magistrates were challenged to maintain judicial integrity and fair administration of justice for that is what they must always do to increase public trust in the Judiciary and avoid wilful miscarriages of justice. This means that the standard of conduct expected of a judge or magistrate must always be above suspicion.

Black's Law Dictionary refers to a miscarriage of justice as "prejudice to substantial rights of a party" and Law Dictionary (Second Edition, 2000) by P.H. Collin refers to a miscarriage of justice as a "decision wrongly or unjustly reached by a court, which goes against the rights of a party in a case, in such a way that the decision may be reversed on appeal".

In particular, President Samia Suluhu Hassan challenged judges and magistrates in Tanzania to be fair and just in their dispensation of justice for the credibility of the judicial system is dependent on them.

She said it was unfair and unjust for a judge or magistrate to deliver a judgment which in his or her conscience she knows is unfair



and unjust by all standards.

She was referring to cases in which accused persons facing criminal charges are convicted of the offences they are charged with and sentenced to imprisonment which they don't deserve at all.

"Think of the person him-

self or herself, think of his or her family and dependants and all the time wasted in jail as a result of a miscarriage of justice," said President Samia Suluhu Hassan in her speech.

Complaints about miscarriages of justice in the Judiciary are not new. Some judges

and magistrates are blamed for bending the law as a result of corruption or political interest to make the innocent look guilty and the guilty look innocent.

This includes the cooking of evidence and charging a person with offences he or

she never committed. I am inclined to believe that when the President mentioned this it was not in the abstract. She meant it and that there are people who have fallen victim to a miscarriage of justice which defeats fair and just criminal and civil justice.

Think, for instance, of cases of delayed justice in which a person is incarcerated for so many years for unsubstantiated grounds and all of a sudden or on appeal he or she is exonerated from liability for lack of cogent evidence. In this case, the victim must start life from scratch and may not be able to catch up well with society. How painful it is to that person

Talking about the Tanzanian Judiciary, Justice James Mwalusanya is quoted to have said: "Our courts must be courts of justice, not merely courts of law...Judges' conservatism and pro-state attitudes in post-independence Tanzania have been a subject of many criticisms by scholars who have viewed [conservatism] as 'uninspiring'. It has also been observed that judges in Tanzania, even the best of them, tend to argue, reason and judge in terms of what the rulers of the day would like to hear - rather than giving the law the kind

of integrity it deserves" (Kijo-Bisimba & Maina Peter, 2005).

Justice Barnabas Samatta too is quoted to have said this about the Tanzanian Judiciary: "Unyielding courage of judges is a priceless asset of any country. There is no substitute for it. Judges must not hesitate to make decisions they consider just however those decisions are likely to be to Parliament, the Executive or political parties, including the ruling party, and regardless of their impact on the relations between the Judiciary and the other pillars of the state. Their destination must be justice. That is their only highway" (Shivji & Majamba, 2011).

It suffices to say that the Tanzanian Judiciary must always maintain integrity and fair and just dispensation of justice beyond suspicion. For sure, judges and magistrates are fair to themselves and to Tanzanians when they conduct themselves in their professional practice with a becoming modesty as they meet public expectation.

Today's legal maxim: "The vigilant, and not the sleepy, are assisted by the laws."

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Government's commitment to teachers' welfare significant move towards strengthening the country's education system

By Adonis Byemetwa

IN a noteworthy move, the Tanzanian Teachers' Service Commission (TSC) on January 4th spotlighted challenges facing 136,000 teachers, highlighting the dire need for the government to address long-standing issues related to their entitlements.

The Minister of State in the President's Office for Regional Administration and Local Government (PO-RALG), Mohammed Mchengerwa, swiftly responded by issuing a directive for personnel management officers across the country to ensure that no teacher is left without resolution within the next 14 days.

This commitment was unveiled during a session on February 3, where Mchengerwa inaugurated efforts to address issues concerning promotions and job role changes for teachers.

The event witnessed the handover of 13 vehicles to support early childhood and primary education through the GPE- Literacy and Numeracy Education Support (LANES) project, a significant investment totaling 1.8bn/. Additionally, Information and Communications Technology (ICT) equipment were distributed to 200 primary schools as part of the BOOST project.

While these government initiatives are commendable, former President Benjamin Mkapa's statement urging the current administration to prioritize the welfare of teachers brings forth a pertinent concern.

Mkapa openly admitted to neglecting this crucial aspect during his presidency and urged against repeating such lapses. This candid acknowledgment underscores the need for sustained efforts to uplift the teaching profession.

The TSC's identification of challenges facing teachers is a step in the right direction, emphasizing the government's goal to address all grievances comprehensively.

The ongoing verification process, inclusive of information from the personnel and salary system, reflects a com-



During this convention, the heads of secondary school teachers reportedly contributed substantial sums of money, raising eyebrows and sparking controversy.

mitment to understanding the intricacies of the challenges faced by teachers.

However, concerns linger over the seemingly disparate treatment of private school teachers. The government's focus on community school teachers, while laudable, has raised questions about the equitable distribution of attention and resources.

The plight of teachers in private educational institutions remains a pressing issue that demands government intervention.

The challenges faced by private school teachers, especially concerning salary delays and violations of basic rights, are symptoms of a larger problem. Despite being an integral part of the education system, teachers in private institutions often find themselves grappling with issues that hinder their professional and personal well-being.

Richard Mshomba, a sea-

soned economist, has emphasized the importance of paying interest for delayed or intentionally delayed salaries. While such principles might be more commonplace abroad, the underlying argument resonates universally: not paying an employee their wages on time hampers their personal and community economy. This holds particularly true in the teaching profession, where a teacher's enthusiasm is pivotal for effective education.

In the private school sector, where there is a significant reliance on teachers, a harmonious and respectful employer-employee relationship is imperative. However, the prevalence of delayed payments, short-term contracts, and the lack of job security are contributing to a challenging environment for private school teachers.

Despite the commendable efforts of the Private

School Teachers' Union (TPSU) under President Cornel Matinde, the unique challenges faced by private school teachers make it difficult for them to advocate effectively for their interests.

The government's role in tightening regulations on private educational institutions extends beyond taxation; it should encompass safeguarding the rights and welfare of teachers.

While the government focuses on collecting taxes from private educational institutions, it must also address the working conditions and rights of teachers in these establishments. The current taxation landscape for private schools, featuring 18 different taxes, underscores the need for a balanced approach that considers the well-being of teachers.

The plea for equity in addressing teacher's grievances, irrespective of their in-

stitutional affiliations, gains resonance. The teaching profession serves as a cornerstone for national development, with teachers shaping the future through their dedication to education.

The government's recent commitment to addressing the challenges faced by teachers stands as a significant stride toward strengthening the education system.

However, the spotlight on community school teachers prompts a critical examination of whether the needs of private school educators are receiving adequate attention.

Achieving equity in addressing all teachers' grievances is not just a matter of policy but a fundamental step toward elevating the teaching profession and ensuring a brighter future for education in Tanzania.

As the nation approaches the 2024 civic elections and the 2025 general elections, the government's newfound focus on addressing teachers' concerns takes on added significance. Recent events have underscored the political dimensions surrounding the teaching profession.

Headlines emerged when the leaders of secondary school teachers were accused of engaging in political activities during a convention in Dodoma.

During this convention, the heads of secondary school teachers reportedly contributed substantial sums of money, raising eyebrows and sparking controversy.

The funds were intended to support the President's endorsement campaign, aiming to gather signatures across the country for her bid for a second term.

Critics expressed bewilderment at the intertwining of heads of schools in political activities, especially when teachers' concerns, fundamental to the education system, are yet to be adequately addressed by the government.

This intersection of politics and education raises

pertinent questions about the motivations behind such actions.

Censors argue that at a time when teachers' welfare remains a crucial issue, diverting attention and resources to political contributions can be perceived as misplaced priorities. The optics of educational leaders engaging in political activities while systemic challenges persist have led to public skepticism and concerns over the government's commitment to resolving long-standing issues within the teaching profession.

The government's recent pledge to address teachers' challenges gains significance amid looming civic and general elections. The timing, coinciding with political events, raises questions about its authenticity. Is the focus on teachers a genuine commitment to systemic issues or a strategic move for pre-election support?

In this critical juncture, the government's actions on teachers' welfare will shape public opinion. Teachers, a substantial constituency, can sway sentiments, making their concerns pivotal for politicians. The response will impact not only education but also shape perceptions of broader societal dedication.

As the nation navigates politics and education, the government must genuinely resolve challenges in all sectors, from community to private schools. Addressing teachers' concerns shouldn't be a political strategy but a sincere effort to uplift the profession and enhance overall education quality.

The government's renewed teachers' focus, amid election dynamics, holds promise and scrutiny. To secure teaching community support, actions must transcend political calculations. A genuine resolution of long-standing challenges will not only elevate the profession but also reinforce a commitment to a robust and equitable education system for Tanzania's future.

Female genital mutilation and cutting remain a neglected problem in Asia

By Nawmi Naz Chowdhury

SIGNIFICANT advances have been made in Africa towards ending female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C). Unfortunately, the same cannot be said for Asia, where FGM occurs in at least ten countries, but governments across the region are failing to take effective action.

Women's rights organizations are calling for states to introduce much-needed laws to criminalize FGM, provide national data on the extent and nature of the practice, and adequately fund efforts to tackle this regionally neglected problem.

Calls for governments in Asia to criminalize FGM

There remains a widely held misconception that FGM occurs primarily in Africa, and this low level of awareness about FGM in Asia is contributing to inaction.

In recent years, the UN, through its international human rights treaty bodies and other human rights mechanisms, has provided recommendations to Asian countries, such as India, Sri Lanka, Singapore, and the Maldives, to address FGM and pass specific laws for prohibition. Yet, nowhere in Asia has a law banning it.

At the 7th Asian and Pacific Population Conference (APPC), seven women's rights organizations made joint recommendations to regional governments about introducing a zero-tolerance approach to FGM.

The APPC is a regional review mechanism that convenes every ten years to discuss critical issues of population and development in Asia and the Pacific.

Held at the UN Conference Centre in Thailand on Novem-



ber 15-17, 2023, women's rights activists convened a side event, Rights-Based Approaches as the Foundation to Achieving Just and Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific - where participants discussed harmful practices affecting women and girls, including FGM/C.

Lawmakers were advised to put in place robust legal and policy measures, and proposals were featured in the Civil Society Call to Action and the Youth Call to Action.

FGM is a global problem

FGM is a harmful practice involving the partial or total removal of external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons.

Internationally recognized as a grave violation of women's and girls' human rights, FGM

is done with the aim of controlling and curtailing the sex drive of women and girls.

It can cause a range of lifelong physical and psychological problems, including infections and severe pain, emotional trauma, sexual dysfunction, reproductive health concerns, childbirth complications, and, in some cases, death.

An interactive data tool by the World Health Organization (WHO) revealed that, based on data from just 27 countries, the financial cost of health care for women with issues caused by FGM is \$1.4 billion annually. The WHO also estimates that if FGM were abandoned, the savings in health costs would be more than 60 percent by 2050.

Worldwide, the official number of women and girls undergoing FGM is estimated to be

over 200 million.

However, the true scale is far bigger. Academic and media reports, unofficial data collected by civil society organizations, and anecdotal studies based on interviews with survivors reveal that FGM is found in every continent except Antarctica.

Asian governments need to provide data on FGM

Indonesia and the Maldives are the only Asian states that share national-level FGM prevalence data; no official data is provided by any other Asian countries. However, academic research and survivor testimonies strongly indicate it occurs in Brunei, India, Malaysia, Pakistan, the Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka, and Thailand.

Accurate, comprehensive national FGM data collection is vital to understanding how

women and girls are directly impacted and at risk. It also provides crucial insights into what communities are involved in FGM, and what the implications are for health, human rights, and bodily autonomy.

Data on FGM can be used to plan appropriate interventions and measure their effectiveness. Furthermore, reliable statistics are key to attracting funding and holding governments and other duty-bearers accountable.

Lack of data gives governments an opportunity to claim a basis for inaction. For example, in India, in response to a question on FGM in Parliament in 2023, the Ministry of Women and Child Development noted that while there may be a few instances of FGM in the country, "there is no credible data to establish its prevalent

existence."

Investing in community action to end FGM

Unlike elsewhere, in most of Asia, there are little or no large-scale government programs for community education and awareness-raising about FGM. Few resources are directed toward prevention and supporting grassroots activities and it is difficult for local organizations to secure funding.

Collective actions, such as those led by the Asia Network to End FGM, are playing an invaluable role in shining a much-needed spotlight, supporting women and girls, and galvanizing collaboration within and across national borders.

FGM can only be eradicated with positive community engagement about its harmful effects, underpinned by laws and policies that punish perpetrators and meet the needs of survivors.

To achieve this, governments in Asia need to work in partnership with civil society organizations, affected communities, and survivors to better understand FGM, develop and implement effective policies, and invest in social, legal, educational, and health service provisions.

Global commitments to eliminating FGM

February 6 was designated by the United Nations as the International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation. How far we have come to ending FGM is gauged by the extent to which international commitments made by countries to end the practice are being met.

Various international human rights mechanisms have been put in place for countries to take robust measures. Sustainable Development Goal 5.3 and

international human rights treaties on the rights of women and girls, such as the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) expressly prohibit FGM and call on states to take action.

International documents, such as the Programme of Action under the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD PoA), urge countries to eradicate FGM and contain steps to eliminate it. Recommendations include "... strong community outreach programs involving village and religious leaders, education and counselling about its impact on girls' and women's health, and appropriate treatment and rehabilitation for girls and women who have suffered cutting" (para. 7.40, ICPD PoA).

Ending FGM in Asia must be prioritized

2024 will mark 30 years since the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) was first held in 1994. The anniversary marks a significant milestone in the area of advancing sexual and reproductive health and rights for women and girls globally. Ending FGM/C is a key component of this, and to effectively implement global commitments to achieve this, global efforts must focus on Asia as a priority.

Unless Asian countries step up to resolve current challenges, it will be hard to instigate action, design and implement policies, and hold governments and other duty-bearers to account in advocating for the introduction and effective implementation of legislative measures to finally end FGM in Asia.



In Romania, some fathers choose to take on the lion's share of childcare

By Lola Garcia-Ajofrin

IN an eastern Bucharest neighbourhood filled with apartment blocks, Oana wakes up and makes breakfast as her husband, Vlad, tends to their baby, a little girl named Mara.

After a nappy change and with full bellies, father and daughter head to the park.

Oana switches on her laptop and in a flash, the living room is transformed into an office as she hosts Zoom meetings for the public relations agency she operates.

In 2022, 36,507 fathers and 223,100 mothers took parental leave in Romania, according

to data provided by Romania's Ministry of Labor and Social Solidarity. The trend continued into 2023, with 33,689 men and 201,108 women taking parental leave between January and October.

Maternity leave is 126 days, with 85 percent of a salary paid. Paternity leave is a far shorter 15 days. But beyond these periods, either mothers or fathers can opt to take childcare leave until their infant blossoms into a two-year-old toddler.

Typically, mothers take childcare leave

"[But] I am 40 and I feel that I have accomplished enough

things, so I would not be frustrated for being home for a while with my daughter," said Vlad, explaining why Oana's career was prioritised.

At 33, she has just started her own communications company.

"I run a small business, and I could not put it on pause for two years," Oana said.

Most of her income comes from the company's earnings. Parental and childcare allowance only applies to salaries.

Romania's parental leave is among Europe's longest. By comparison, women in Austria receive 16 weeks of paid maternity leave, after which

either parent can take unpaid parental leave until the child is two. In Bulgaria, paid maternity leave is 58 weeks. When it comes to fathers, Spain is home to the longest paternity leave in Europe, which at 16 weeks is the same for maternity. Sergiu, a 24-year-old father in Brasov, is also on parental leave, looking after his one-year-old.

"The first six months we managed things together. Since then, I am in charge," Sergiu said proudly.

His partner is 20 and studying medicine.

"We agreed she could follow further more classes if

Oana has opted to stay at work while her partner Vlad takes on childcare duties. Photo: Lola Garcia-Ajofrin/Al Jazeera

stay home with the toddler," he said.

For Gabriela, 34, an actress who gave birth in October, and her partner, Silviu, 34, a pharmacist manager, there was only one option.

"I am a freelancer, and in Romania if you don't work under a permanent contract, you are nonexistent for fiscal administration," said Gabriela.

"The most challenging part will be not to go to work", said Silviu, who started his leave allowance in January. "And for the rest, we will wait and see what happens."

"We go with the flow but I don't think we found a rhythm yet," Gabriela said, adding that while grandparents visit, the bulk of the childcare is down to them.

Sweden's parental package is considered pioneering: paid leave for 480 days. Fathers who enjoy the time to look after their children, often with a coffee in hand, have been nicknamed "latte dads".

Romania's latte dads can usually be seen in parks.

While playing with Mara on a seesaw, Vlad said their decision will be useful in the long term, "for the relationship I am building with my daughter".

Near them, another two fathers play with their respective children.

"I did not have something like this with my father," he said.

Diana, meanwhile, opted to take the extended leave because in her family, she's the higher earner.

"This two-year parental leave is a blessing", said Diana. "I have a permanent job and a better salary."

But in a quip that could be heard among mothers the world over, she added: "Among

all my female friends there is a lot of frustration because we are doing everything ... It is so easy having children when playing is the only thing you do with them."

Raluca Popescu, a sociology professor at the University of Bucharest, said it is "remarkable" that men often choose to take parental leave, "especially in rural areas".

While she would like to think that this trend could represent a better work-life balance, "considering the whole picture of gender equality in Romania, this explanation becomes hard to believe".

Popescu, who was pregnant when she was researching parental leave, said men are more involved now rather as a "strategy of adaptation to the lack of resources".

In many cases, men are more likely to be the only employed partner in the household, meaning they can benefit from paid allowance. In other cases, they probably earn less than the mother and so a decision is made to sacrifice some of his salary instead, she said.

Romania's parental leave is the expression of reforms throughout history, from socialism until the country's entry into the European Union.

Professor Anca Dohotariu, who has studied maternity leave, said that during the socialist era, Nicolae Ceausescu, the former authoritarian president, aimed to boost the Romanian population by implementing a strict pro-natalist policy and limiting abortion, while also exerting pressure on women's participation in the workforce.

"We got this very long maternity leave, but they were more interested in children than in women's position in the labour

market," Dohotariu said. "They were obsessed with the needs of children."

She lauded the current parental leave as providing an incentive to fathers, but warned "it is not enough to make sure that fathers get more involved in parental obligations".

In 1965, maternity leave of 112 days was introduced, but it was exclusively for mothers. Romanian fathers have only had the right to paternity leave since 2000.

In 1992, the EU adopted a directive on maternity leave for the first time, entitling mothers with a minimum of 14 weeks' paid maternity leave.

The EU framework for paternity leave was adopted in 2019, with a minimum of 10 paid days.

"I don't think Romanian fathers fought for their rights or there was a social claim," Dohotariu said. "We just needed more gender-equality-oriented legislation in order to be part of the European Union."

According to Anna Riatti, the representative of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in Romania, paternity leave increases paternal involvement and reduces gender inequality, "while benefiting the infant and maternal health".

But parental leave alone will not solve inequality.

A recent UNICEF report found that Romania ranked second out of 41 countries in terms of leave entitlements, ahead of Japan. But on access to childcare, Romania ranked 39th.

Back in Bucharest, Oana is feeling privileged to be able to work remotely.

"If I had to go to the office on a daily basis, I would not feel comfortable," she said.

Organic fertilizers and the future of eco-conscious agriculture

By A Special Correspondent

THE movement towards organic farming is not merely a trend but a revival of the intrinsic relationship between nature and agriculture.

This paradigm shift, driven by an increasing consumer cognizance of the interconnections between diet, health, and the environment, positions organic farming at the vanguard of a global transition towards more transparent and sustainable food production methodologies.

Governments and regulatory bodies are also playing a significant role in promoting the use of organic fertilizers by offering subsidies, implementing organic farming policies, and encouraging farmers to adopt organic practices.

Furthermore, technological advancements in organic fertilizer production and distribution are streamlining operations and making these products more accessible to farmers worldwide.

The organic fertilizer market is witnessing robust growth as agricultural practices shift towards sustainable and eco-friendly solutions. Organic fertilizers, derived from natural sources such as animal manure, compost, and plant residues, are gaining popularity due to their numerous benefits over synthetic fertilizers.

These benefits include improved soil health, reduced environmental impact, and enhanced crop quality. As consumers become increasingly conscious of the origin and quality of their food, the demand for organic produce has surged, thereby driving the need for organic fertilizers.

Organic farming's appeal has surged in the early 21st century, as consumers began to favor clean labels and transparency in their dietary choices, marking organic products as a beacon of trust and quality. In this light, Persistence Market Research's latest report meticulously assesses the transformative role of eco-friendly fertilizers in redefining the agricultural canvas, spotlighting the burgeoning opportunities within the organic fertilizer market.

Growing Awareness of Environmental Sustainability: With rising concerns about soil degradation, water pollution, and greenhouse gas emissions associated with conventional farming practices, there is a growing awareness among farmers and consumers about the importance of adopting sustainable agricultural methods.

Organic fertilizers, being environmentally friendly and promoting soil health, are increasingly preferred over chemical fertilizers.

Shift towards Organic Farming Practices: The increasing demand for organic food products, driven by health consciousness and sustainability concerns, is incentivizing farmers to switch to organic farming practices. Organic fertilizers play a crucial role in organic farming systems as they help maintain soil fertility and support natural ecosystems without the use of synthetic chemicals.

Government Initiatives and Support: Governments around the globe are implementing various initiatives to promote organic agriculture and reduce reliance on chemical inputs.

Subsidies, grants, and incentives are being provided to farmers to encourage the adoption of organic fertilizers and sustainable farming practices. Additionally, stringent regulations on the use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides are further driving the demand for organic alternatives.

Technological Advancements in Production: Advancements in technology have led to improvements in the production, formulation, and distribution of organic fertilizers. Innovations such as biofertilizers, microbial inoculants, and precision application techniques are enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of organic fertilizers, thereby boosting their adoption among farmers.

Consumer Preference for Organic Products: The increasing consumer preference for organic food products, driven by concerns over food safety, health, and environmental sustainability, is a key driver for the organic fertilizer market. As consumers seek products that are free from synthetic chemicals and genetically modified organisms (GMOs), the demand for organic fertilizers continues to rise, supporting the growth of organic agriculture.

The evolutionary trajectory of organic fertilizers: from ancient manure to modern marvels

Historically, agriculture's reliance on natural resources for fertilization is well-documented, with early practitioners harnessing the nutritive power of manure to enrich their soils. However, the narrative took a pivotal turn with the advent of synthetic fertilizers in the mid-20th century, promising higher yields and stability against the capriciousness of nature. This transition, however, came at a significant environmental and health cost, leading to a reevaluation of organic fertilizers' value.

PMR's analysis traces this intricate journey, highlighting a rekindled interest in organic fertilizers as the agricultural community grapples with the ecological and health repercussions of synthetic alternatives.

The report underscores a steady uptick in the adoption of organic fertilizers, fueled by their environmental benefits and the growing demand for organic produce, estimating the market's value at approximately US\$ 6,179.6 million in 2018, with projections indicating a robust growth trajectory through 2029.

The allure of organic farming extends beyond its



Fairmiles research sheds light on benefits of airfreighted produce

By Michael Barkar

AT least five million people in Africa who benefit from the trade of airfreighted fresh produce to UK and European supermarkets are at risk from calls to reduce carbon emissions by limiting flown food and flowers.

That's according to research conducted by Fairmiles and the University of Exeter, which was presented during a stakeholder roundtable organised by the campaign group Fairmiles to discuss how to take a fair approach to net zero without

stopping vital market access for developing world producers.

Fairmiles is made up of organisations representing fresh produce businesses, academia and the international development sector. Its aim is to establish a just and equitable strategy, consistent with the principles of climate justice, to ensure the airfreight sector reaches net zero without stopping vital market access for developing world producers.

Founding partners in Fairmiles include ODI, the University of Northampton, the University of Exeter, COLEAD, Beanstalk, Global and Blue

Skies.

The research highlighted that airfreight helps communities to thrive in global supply chains, enabling inward investment and inclusive economic development.

It also revealed that very few emissions come from Africa, or airfreighting fresh produce. Africa comprises 18 per cent of the world's population but only 3 per cent of emissions. The transport of food is 1.56 per cent of total global emissions, and of this, just 0.16 per cent of food travels by air.

Fresh produce is transported in commercial belly holds. Air-

freighted fresh produce on UK and European retailers' shelves is enabled by UK and European travellers in commercial airlines. This provides capacity for airfreight. Africa's passenger traffic is expected to double by 2035. Increasing airfreight can therefore help Africa to reduce the trade deficit.

It stated that reducing airfreight won't reduce flights. If the industry stops importing fresh fruit and vegetables from Africa, it will have limited impact on flights that are driven by passenger numbers.

"African imports far exceed exports. Africa has been a net

importer of food for the last three decades. Nigeria imports 10 times more than it exports. UK and European exports dominate trade."

Simon Derrick, head of sustainability at fruit manufacturer Blue Skies and a founding member of the Fairmiles consortium, said: "It is clear that airfreighted fresh produce from developing countries provides a vital trade link that lifts millions of people out of poverty. Stopping this trade will do more harm than good, so it is in all our interests to achieve net zero in a way that protects and not penalises vulnerable communities".

Why West Africa's education system needs transforming

By a Correspondent

West Africa is staring at an incredible opportunity to provide the skilled workers needed to power the global economy over the coming decades.

But can the region fix its education system and ensure its youthful talent pool can capitalise on the opportunities of the 21st century digital economy?

According to Titilayo Adewumi, Managing Director at SAP West Africa, bold steps toward educational reform are needed to promote improved learning outcomes and ensure the region can capitalise on the opportunities presented by abundant population growth.

"Technology should play a central and guiding role in enhancing education systems in West Africa. In Nigeria, for example, Edo state has launched a new system approach that leverages digital technologies to improve teaching and learning."

Challenges with education persist

With much of the developed world facing ageing populations and slowing population growth, Africa is expected to play a central role in the global labour market.

The working age population in Sub-Saharan Africa will more than double in the next 30 years, accounting for more than two-thirds of total global population growth.

However, despite Africa's youthful population, only 9 percent of children in sub-Saharan Africa that enrol in primary school make it to tertiary education, and only 6 percent graduate.

Mobolaji Abubakre Ogunlende, Commissioner at Nigeria's Ministry of Youths and Social Development, says: "In West Africa, and by extension, Lagos, only a fraction of children who start in primary school make it to tertiary education and even fewer manage to graduate."

The root of this issue lies in the inefficiencies that plague our education systems, including the lack of digital transfor-



mation, which forces millions of students to compete for limited spaces in in-person educational institutions."

Adewumi adds, "A lack of digital transformation in West African education systems means millions of students have to travel long distances to physically collect transcripts instead of simply accessing digital copies online."

Climate change is adding a further dimension to the region's education challenges. The impact of droughts, floods, fires, heavy rain and heatwaves on education infrastructure can impact school attendance rates and dropout rates.

One study estimates climate change could keep more than 12 million girls in lower-income countries from completing their education every year from as soon as 2025.

Experts are calling for bold action to address the region's education challenges.

The World Bank's Western and Central Africa Education

Strategy 2022-2025, for example, brings top education leaders and experts together to advance the cause of education in the region. This strategy also sees investment of \$3-billion into the education portfolio, with an additional \$2-billion in the pipeline.

According to UNICEF's strategy for enhancing education in Central and West Africa, the region's education sector should focus on four key priority areas, namely:

Access to education for all children, including an expansion of early learning programmes, vocational training, and national data production; Quality learning through improved teaching skills, quality standards, life skills programmes and early learning assessments;

Girls' education through programmes that support girls' achievements in and through education; and

Education in emergencies, especially for children living

in conflict or disaster zones, where school safety, psychosocial support and information management are critical.

Adewumi says the private sector can play a critical role in enhancing education systems and outcomes in the region. "By investing in education and skills development initiatives, the private sector can also ensure it has access to the skills it needs to succeed and grow."

Research conducted by SAP revealed an acute tech skills shortage in the region, with only 3 percent of organisations saying they don't expect to have significant tech skills challenges in 2023. More than nine in ten organisations (93 percent) also said the need for tech skills has increased in the past 12 months, with two-thirds of Nigerian organisations saying he need for tech skills has increased significantly.

To help organisations in the region address the tech skills shortage, SAP introduced the SAP Dual Study Program, which

partners with top universities to take talented graduates into SAP-specific training and help them bridge the gap between university and the workplace.

Commissioner Ogunlende says: "Undeniably, government infrastructure and programs are needed to adequately provide efficiencies not only by increasing conventional capacity but also leveraging on the capacity of private-run programs like the SAP Dual Study Program and the SAP Young Professionals Program that have demonstrated the positive impact of private sector engagement in youth educational programs. By creating a multi-pronged assault on the issue, we can make significant in-roads in upskilling our population. These are some of the plans we would be unfolding in the next set of months in partnership with SAP."

The SAP Young Professionals Program provides a two- to three-month enablement plan that includes SAP software functional and technical knowledge. Graduates receive certification from SAP and exit the program as Associate Consultants, making them instantly employable within the broader SAP partner and customer ecosystem.

This model creates benefits across the board: youth develop industry-ready skills and secure suitable job opportunities; SAP partners and customers gain access to much-needed talent; countries benefit from the digital skills created; and SAP itself strengthens its own ecosystem.

"By making timely investments into strengthening the West African education system, the region can more readily benefit from its abundant youth skills," says Adewumi.

However, considering pervasive challenges with access to quality education outcomes, organisations in the public and private sectors must come together to design suitable programmes that can accelerate youth skills development. Done correctly, this investment will pay dividends for decades to come," he adds.

Ghana's medicinal plants, the 'first aid' for communities that are under threat

By Latoya Abulu

RURAL communities in southwestern Ghana lacking access to conventional medicine are using dozens of medicinal tree species to treat up to 83 ailments, according to a new study.

However, many of these tree species are also threatened by factors including overharvesting and agricultural expansion that drives deforestation in the area, the study authors say.

The study, published in the journal *Heliyon*, found that the communities on the fringes of the Asukese Forest Reserve and Amama Shelterbelt Forest Reserve use 70 species of medicinal trees from 33 taxonomic families.

The top five pharmacological effects they attribute to these trees are anti-inflammatory, anti-malarial, anti-microbial, anti-bacterial, and reproductive boosting properties.

"Herbal medicine is like the 'first aid' of rural communities and the only aid in some remote areas," study co-author Michael Asigbaase, a lecturer in the Department of Forest Sciences at Ghana's University of Energy and Natural Resources. "There are herbalists in all communities. In fact, in some cases, they have been able to help people who could not find help via clinics and hospitals."

The study authors interviewed 88 respondents from four communities, including the Indigenous Akan-Bono people and northern tribes like the Kusaasi and Waala to understand their use of medicinal trees in the region.

The findings were evaluated using five parameters, including an Indigenous knowledge index that assessed community knowledge of plant properties, healing effects, varieties and side effects. The rest of the parameters looked at how often medicinal properties were cited in scientific literature, the species and plants' part value, and their use within families.

For remote local communities in Ghana, medicinal trees are the primary source of treatment, given that they're easily accessible to communities living on the fringes of forests.

Despite recent advances in Western conventional medicine, the dependence on traditional medicine in many countries in Africa is due to the relatively high cost of the former, limited health service coverage and number of health professionals, and the cultural normalization of traditional medicine.

"Many communities in Ghana perceive herbal medicines to be more effective than orthodox (Western) medicine because they are available, affordable, and there is shared knowledge on how to prepare and administer them," Asigbaase said.



Azadirachta indica, commonly known as the 'neem tree', was the most frequently cited medicinal tree species.

Local communities play a critical role in initial firefighting and assist in early detection, boundary clearing to contain the fire, and the planting of trees.

Traditional healers in Ghana provide an estimated percent of health care using diverse medicinal species. Ghanaian tribes as a result collected traditional medicine knowledge of a combined 1,360 species of medicinal plants for their primary health care needs.

According to the study, participants who were widowed had more knowledge of medicinal plants compared to respondents who were married or single. This was because they have a large number of dependents or have experienced the loss of a spouse, the authors say, which is associated with limited income or access to resources for Western medicine.

Azadirachta indica, commonly known as the neem tree, was the most frequently cited medicinal tree species.

"Plant species of the Fabaceae, Apocynaceae, Araceae families and their closely related families have generally been reported to contain high levels of bioactive compounds with pharmacological value," Asigbaase said.

"Consistent with our findings, some studies have reported ethno botani-

cal knowledge on the use of various trees for the treatment of human, plant, and animal diseases."

A treatment at risk

Despite their widely acknowledged medicinal value, these trees are also used by community members for other purposes. These include making charcoal for fuel and as timber for construction and carpentry – uses that pose a threat to the conservation of the tree species. Wider threats like agricultural expansion, logging, mining, urbanization and climate change also contribute to the loss of medicinal tree species through deforestation, the study noted.

According to the United Nations Development Program, the current deforestation and forest degradation rate in Ghana is 135,000 hectares (333,600 acres) every year. Another study by Asigbaase and several colleagues involved in the *Heliyon* paper, and also conducted near the Asukese and Amama forest reserves, shows that seven of the cited medicinal plant species are vulnerable to extinction.

Overharvesting of these plants, which are primarily sourced from the

wild, is among the top drivers of the loss of medicinal plants in the study area. According to the perception of residents interviewed for that study, medicinal plants will become locally extinct in a decade.

The loss of these species means the erasure of their traditional knowledge, spirituality, and history, say researchers of another study on Ghana's ethnobotanical traditions. According to Bismark Ofori-Bamfo, a lecturer in ecology at the University of Energy and Natural Resources, there are strong ties between the trees and culture in most tribes across Ghana.

"Some names of towns like Odu-mase may literally [mean] 'under the Odum tree' (*Milicia excels*). A name like Onyina, which is a surname and also an appellation for a male born on Thursday (Yaw Onyina), is the same as the local name for *Ceiba pentandra*," he said.

Ofori-Bamfo said sustainable harvesting of herbal medicine is a key challenge as the demand for trees, like the bark of *Khaya* species, also known as African mahogany, is high, mainly from producers of herbal bitters. The demand for plants like *Khaya gran-*

difoliola, studied for the treatment of gastric ulcers, sometimes leads to felling and debarking of whole trees.

"Conservation commitment from users of herbal medicine at a local to industrial scale is needed," Ofori-Bamfo said. "Alternatives to trees may exist in closely related woody climbers [like lianas], some of which are in the same families as the trees used for the same medical conditions."

In 1975, the government established the Centre for Scientific Research into Plant Medicine (CSRPM), later renamed the Centre for Plant Medicine Research (CPMR). According to Asigbaase and colleagues, the government realizes the importance of traditional medicine in Ghanaian society.

"The activities of the CPMR and other scientific studies confirming the efficacy of such herbal remedies have further promoted and increased the usage of herbal medicines in Ghana," their study says.

One way in which communities in the study area are trying to conserve medicinal trees is through government-led forest restoration and protection programs that target frequent forest fires in the region. The impacts of these programs are yet to be evaluated.

"Local communities play a critical role in initial firefighting and assist in early detection, boundary clearing to contain the fire, and the planting of trees," Asigbaase said.

"The communities also participate in the Modified Taungya System (MTS), which is an innovative forest restoration tool. It is an agro-forestry system where participants are given portions of degraded forest lands to cultivate crops until the canopy of the trees closes."

Contrary to the findings of similar studies that show traditional plant knowledge diminishing across generations, the authors found similar levels of ethno botanical knowledge across different ages, genders, religions and educational levels. This suggests an effective transfer of knowledge among individuals in local communities, which can play a role in the conservation of species.

"This transfer of ethno botanical knowledge has been possible through parental training and community knowledge sharing via word-of-mouth recommendations," Asigbaase said.

"There is a saying among the local communities that can be translated as, 'If you are sick, you should not keep quiet,'" he added, noting community members explore solutions to their health problems by sharing their accumulated ethno botanical knowledge."



RALIBA YA VIPINDI JUMATATU - JUMAPILI

MONDAY TIME PROGRAMME	TUESDAY TIME PROGRAMME	WEDNESDAY TIME PROGRAMME	THURSDAY TIME PROGRAMME	FRIDAY TIME PROGRAMME	SATURDAY TIME PROGRAMME	SUNDAY TIME PROGRAMME
05.00 AM HALI YA HEWA / KUMEPAMBAZUKA I 06.00 AM AMKA NA BBC 06.30 AM NIPASHE 06.50 AM MATANGAZO 07.00 AM NEWS BULLETIN 07.10 AM MATANGAZO 07.15 AM TAARIFA ZA BARABARANI 07.25 AM UDONDOZI WA MAGAZETI 07.40 AM KUMEPAMBAZUKA II 08.00 AM HABARI NYEPESI 08.10 AM KUMEPAMBAZUKA III 09.00 AM HABARI ZA BIASHARA 09.10 AM MATANGAZO 09.20 AM BRAND TALK 09.30 AM KUMEPAMBAZUKA SHERIA 10.00 AM NEWS BRIEF 10.03 AM DEATH ANNOUNCEMENTS 10.10 AM YALIVOMO YAMO 13.00 HRS NEWS BULLETIN 13.10 HRS DEATH ANNOUNCEMENTS 13.30 HRS DJ SHOW 16.00 HRS NEWS BRIEF 16.03 HRS DEATH ANNOUNCEMENTS 16.30 HRS HOJA YA LEO 18.30 HRS DIRA YA DUNIA BBC 19.30 HRS SPOTI LEO 20.00 HRS NEWS BULLETIN 21.00 HRS RADIO ONE DOCTOR 21.05 HRS AFRO TIZI 21.05 HRS DAKIKA 45 22.00 HRS NEWS BULLETIN (24 HRS) 22.15 HRS AFRO TIZI 23.00 HRS NEWS BRIEF 23.03 HRS AFRO TIZI 01.00-05.00HRS MUZIKI (MCHANGANYIKO)	05.00 AM HALI YA HEWA / KUMEPAMBAZUKA I 06.00 AM AMKA NA BBC 06.30 AM NIPASHE 06.50 AM MATANGAZO 07.00 AM NEWS BULLETIN 07.10 AM MATANGAZO 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MICHEZO 16.00 HRS NEWS BRIEF 16.03 HRS DEATH ANNOUNCEMENTS 16.15 HRS MIDUNDO MOTOMOTO 18.00 HRS BONGO TEN 19.30 HRS SPOTI LEO 20.00 HRS NEWS BULLETIN 20.15 HRS CHEMSHA BONGO 21.00 HRS NEWS BRIEF 21.03 HRS WEEK END SHOW I 22.00 HRS NEWS BULLETIN (24 HRS) 22.15 HRS WEEK END SHOW II 23.00 HRS NEWS BRIEF 23.03 HRS WEEK END SHOW III 01.00-05.00HRS MUZIKI (MCHANGANYIKO)	05.00 AM HALI YA HEWA / KUMEPAMBAZUKA I 06.00 AM AMKA NA BBC 06.30 AM NIPASHE 06.50 AM COMMERCIALS 07.00 AM NEWS BULLETIN 07.15 AM NEWSPAPERS REVIEW 07.30 AM KUMEPAMBAZUKA KISWAHI 09.00 AM WATOTO SHOW 10.00 AM NEWS BRIEF 10.03 AM DEATH ANNOUNCEMENTS 10.15 AM SUNDAY SPECIAL 11:00 HRS TOP 20 13.00 HRS NEWS BULLETIN 13.10 HRS DEATH ANNOUNCEMENTS 13.30 HRS NANI ZAI?I 16.00 HRS NEWS BRIEF 16.03 HRS DEATH ANNOUNCEMENTS 16.30 HRS MIAMBO YA PWANI 18:00 HRS AFRICAN PANORAMA 19.30 HRS SPOTI LEO 20.00 HRS NEWS BULLETIN 20:10 HRS MBAYU ZANGU 21.00 HRS NEWS BRIEF 21.03 HRS MAMBO MSETO 22.00 HRS NEWS BULLETIN (24 HRS) 22.15 HRS RAFIKI I 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Tembelea mitandao ya kijamii ya Radio One



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BUSINESS

CRDB holds dominance at DSE, transacting 13.8 million shares in 4 days

Global share buybacks now return with a bang

NEW YORK

STRONGER than expected earnings are leading companies on both sides of the Atlantic to announce share buybacks at a blistering pace as 2024 gets going – a potentially crucial pillar of support for global stock markets already trading at all-time highs.

Facing the highest borrowing costs in decades, corporations turned stingy on share repurchases in 2023, but that's changing with buybacks projected to increase this year.

Profit growth is improving and investors expect the Federal Reserve and European Central Bank to start cutting interest rates this year. The reduced borrowing costs should give companies more cash and room to take on debt to boost their share prices.

US companies have announced \$105 billion in planned share repurchases in the first seven days of February, surpassing the full-month tally in January. It's the strongest start to a February ever for announced buybacks and the second-best start to a year after 2023, data by research firm Birinyi Associates Inc. show. Perhaps not surprisingly, the S&P 500 Index is has posted nine records so far this year.

"It does tell you that management is getting more confident about where the economy is headed," said Matt Maley, chief market strategist at Miller Tabak + Co. "It should be seen as somewhat constructive indicator. Stocks are not as cheap as last year, but companies announcing buybacks think the rally has more room to run."

S&P 500 firms are expected to repurchase \$885 billion in stock this year, up 10 percent from 2023 but down 4 percent from the record-setting pace in 2022, according to preliminary data from S&P Dow Jones Indices.

Meta Platforms Inc. last week announced plans to buy back an additional \$50 billion in stock, among the biggest authorizations in US history, Birinyi's data show. That was followed by Carlyle Group Inc. on Wednesday saying it plans to

buy back as much as \$1.4 billion in shares, and Alibaba Group Holding Ltd. saying it's boosting its repurchase program by \$25 billion.

"While the market is at record highs, many companies' stock prices have continued to languish and as a result buying back the stock is an indication from these companies that they see their stock as a good value," said Jeff Rubin, Birinyi's director of research.

While buybacks may help share performance, the impact can be somewhat diminished because high valuations mean companies are likely to scoop up fewer shares, said Howard Silverblatt, senior index analyst at S&P Dow Jones Indices. In addition, the expenditures aren't necessarily that big when measured against the companies' earnings and market values, he said.

Buyback announcements have increased in Europe as well, particularly in the financials and energy sectors, which that returned the most to shareholders last year. With banks continuing to reap the benefits of higher borrowing costs, share repurchase programs at Unicredit SpA, Intesa Sanpaolo SpA, Deutsche Bank AG and Banco Bilbao Vizcaya Argentaria SA are pushing stocks higher.

A Goldman Sachs Group Inc. basket of high buyback yield stocks has risen twice as much over the past 12 months as the Stoxx Europe 600 Index's 5.9 percent return, while the Solactive European Buyback Index also surged 10% during the period.

All of which is a good sign for the global economy and markets, as a strong pipeline of planned buybacks shows confidence among corporate executives, said Marshall Front, chief investment officer at Front Barnett Associates.

"The economy continues to improve, inflationary pressures continue to subside, interest rates will continue to decline – and all of the above is giving corporate executives the confidence they need to announce share buybacks," Front said by phone, referring to the US. "It means that companies don't expect a major economic downturn."



Total market capitalisation increased by nearly 300bn/- during the start of the month

By Guardian Reporter

CRDB Bank Plc continues to maintain its dominance in Dar es Salaam Stock Exchange (DSE) activity, after recording the trading of 13.8 million shares during the first four days of this week.

The DSE market reports indicate the majority of shares of the largest and most profitable bank were sold by foreign investors, of which all were absorbed by local investors, ahead of dividends an-

nouncement for 2023.

All of the company's shares were traded in 365 deals of which 12.9 million traded through pre-arranged block trade and the remaining were transacted through normal trade, the daily reports show.

The report further shows the bank's share traded between 460/- and 500/-, which resulted into gaining of the market price to 485/- on Thursday's close, compared to 465/- recorded during the

close of the first trading session of the week.

According to unaudited financial statements for 2023, CRDB Group, recorded the basic earnings per share (EPS) amounting to 162/-, compared to 134.5/- recorded during the previous year, with an increase in net profit by 21 percent to 424bn/- compared to 351bn/- respectively.

Market analysts are expecting continuing foreign investors' exits from the DSE and other Sub-Saha-

ran African markets due to global economic factors, although this will not affect the stability of the market due to strong local investors' absorption capacities.

The DSE report shows, foreign investors have so far sold shares valued 15.4bn/- during the current quarter, which is 250 percent of the value of shares they sold during the first quarter of last year.

However, the report shows foreign investors have so far bought shares valued 1.17bn/- during the current quarter, which is a third of the value of shares they bought during the first quarter of last year.

The market reports for four days show TCIA Investment Company (TICL) was second top mover, after recording the transactions of 0.3 million shares valued nearly 57mn/- traded at a price ranging from 190/- to 200/- per share in 59 deals.

The market report shows, NMB Bank counter was the third top mover after transacting 27,255 shares valued 127.4mn/- traded at a price ranging from 4,600/- to 4,700/- per share in 58 deals.

The DSE report also shows that the total market capitalisation increased by nearly 300bn/- during the start of the month, due to increase of share prices among locally and cross listed companies.

According to the market report, the domestic market capitalisation also gained by nearly 200bn/- since the start of this month, due to appreciation of local firms.

By Guardian Reporter

The total value of internet banking transactions reached 76.3trn/- in 2022, an increase of 35.5 percent, compared to 56.3trn/- recorded in 2021, the Bank of Tanzania (BoT) National Payment System (NPS) annual report for 2022 published recently has shown.

The increase resulted from the growth of transaction volume by 36.13 percent to 8.3 million transactions in 2022, compared to 6.1 million transactions recorded during the previous year.

Internet banking refers to the process of making transactions through the Internet. Internet banking allows customers to access their bank accounts and conduct transactions without visiting the nearest branch.

Usually, internet banking can be conducted through computers, smartphones and tablets using a web application.

The report shows the number of banks involved with internet banking services also increased to 27 in 2022, compared to 25 recorded in 2021, with number of registered customers being 245,438 compared to 185,617 respectively.

However, the number of active customers was half of the registered, but more than doubled to 110,692 compared to 52,666, respectively.

The value of local transactions



BoT: Value of internet banking transactions hit 76trn/- in 2022

of internet banking, according to the report, amounted to 66.5trn/- in the year 2022, an increase from 46.3trn/- recorded a year before, following the increase of transaction to nearly 8 million, compared to 5.8 million recorded during the previous year.

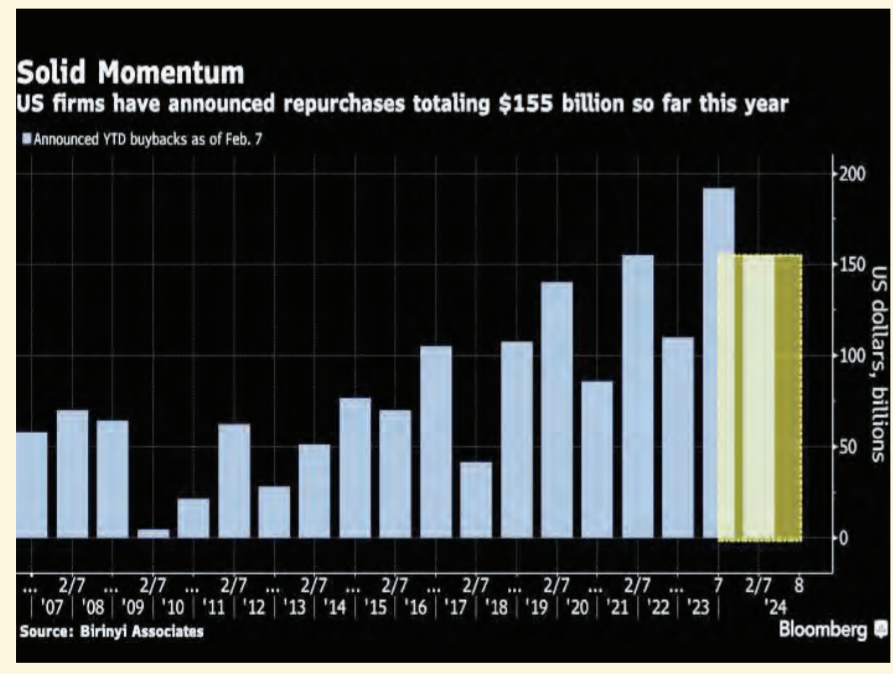
The report shows, the value of international internet banking

transaction amounted to 9.8trn/- in 2022 compared 10trn/- recorded in 2021, amid an increase of the volume of transactions to 308,602 compared to 275,682 respectively.

In cross-border payments the report shows, in 2022 the volume and value of inflows increased by 20.41 per cent and 60.52 per cent to reach 500,849 transactions

worth 1,344.12bn/-, from 415,960 transactions and 837.33bn/- recorded in 2021, respectively.

The volume of outflows 33 remittances recorded a slight growth rate of 2.28 per cent to 132,740 transactions in 2022, rising from 129,651 transactions. The corresponding value grew by 33.12 per cent to 640.14bn/-.



Banks start sharing customer data with tax body

NAIROBI

BANKS have started sharing information about foreign account holders with the Kenya Revenue Authority (KRA) as the taxman steps up its purge of tax dodgers and beneficiaries of illicit wealth.

Some banks on Thursday notified their customers that they had started implementing the common reporting standards (CRS) under which countries agree to seamlessly share information on taxpayers.

The KRA is also expected to receive similar details on a

resident taxpayer with an offshore account.

For individual account holders, banks will share with taxman details such as account balance, address, place of birth, date of birth, country or countries of tax residence, and ID numbers.

In the case of corporate entities, banks are also expected to collect and forward to the KRA information on the place of registration, the entity type, and the controlling person.

In January last year, the Treasury Cabinet Secretary signed the Tax Procedures

(Common Reporting Standards) Regulations, 2023, which require all Kenyan banks, trusts, and other financial institutions to report foreigners' details to the KRA.

The KRA will then share this information with 106 signatory countries—including popular tax havens such as Switzerland, Panama, the Cayman Islands, Bermuda, the British Virgin Islands, Mauritius, Jersey, and Monaco.

The tax authorities in the other signatory countries are in return required to share similar information with the KRA, enhancing the taxman's

chances of getting its hands on cash hidden in offshore accounts.

Just like the anti-money laundering rules that require financial institutions to report cash transactions of over Sh1 million to the Financial Reporting Centre, banks are expected to review all existing accounts with balances of above \$250,000 (Sh40 million) belonging to a foreigner.

However, tax experts caution that banks and the KRA walk a tightrope in safeguarding customer confidentiality in line with the Data Protec-

tion Act.

"Further, the CRS requires participating authorities to have data safeguards in place and I think this is what the Data Protection Act resolves," said Robert Waruiru, a partner at Ichiban Tax & Business Advisory LLP, adding that the EU tax residents will be subject to the much more stringent EU data regulations.

Being a signatory to the CRS, Kenya hopes to lift the veil on assets held by Kenyans abroad, especially companies and individuals that have set up shop in low-tax jurisdictions.

In 2017, the Treasury announced a tax amnesty offer to attract Kenyan investors who had stashed their wealth abroad to return it without being penalised.

Kenya the same year struck a deal with the Jersey government for repatriation of more than Sh380 million confiscated from a company associated with former Kenya Power managing director Samuel Gichuru.

CRS was developed by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), a club of mostly rich countries, in July 2014 to

reduce instances of tax evasion through the sharing of information among jurisdictions on an annual basis.

In the Finance Act, 2021, Kenya adopted the common reporting standards, which allows the KRA to seek information on a taxpayer from tax authorities in other jurisdictions.

Earlier on July 22, 2020, Kenya signed the CRS Multilateral Competent Authority Agreement on Automatic Exchange of Financial Account Information and adopted the OECD Regulations as drafted.

China proposes US\$1bn for revamping Tazara

LUSAKA

CHINA presented a plan to spend more than \$1 billion refurbishing a key railway connecting Zambia's copper heartland with the Indian Ocean port of Dar es Salaam in neighboring Tanzania.

Beijing's ambassador to Zambia, Du Xiaohui, on Wednesday handed the proposal to Frank Tayali, the nation's transport minister, saying in comments broadcast on state radio that the investment amount would be over the "coming years."

The Tanzanian and Zambian governments handed the concession to run the so-called Tazara railroad on a commercial basis to a Chinese state-owned company. A team from China Civil Engineering Construction Corp. visited the two African nations to study the line ahead of submitting the proposal.

China built and financed the 1,860-kilometer (1,156-mile) railway in the 1970s and it's since fallen into disrepair, operating at a fraction of its design capacity.



The line will compete directly with another railroad the US is backing to connect Zambia westward to the Lobito port on Angola's Atlantic coast,

both part of efforts to expand export routes for copper and cobalt mines in Zambia and Democratic Republic of Congo to the north.

The region is becoming central to efforts by the US and

the European Union to secure access to minerals that electric-vehicle manufacturers can't do without, and which are critical to the broader energy transition. Especially in Congo, China has been the dominant force

for years.

China, Tanzania and Zambia will undertake the revitalization of Tazara using a public-private partnership model, Du said.

The announcement came a

day before the US was due to host an investment forum for the Lobito corridor in Zambia, with Amos Hochstein, President Joe Biden's energy and investment adviser, and President Hakainde Hichilema

among the speakers.

Last month, the China Civil Engineering Construction Corporation (CCECC) dispatched a task force to conduct a comprehensive business and technical inspection of the railway from Dar es Salaam in Tanzania to Kapiri-Mposhi in Zambia.

The CCECC task force was led by Mr Peng Danyang, managing director of the Ethiopia-Djibouti Railway.

CCECC has been appointed as the negotiator for the prospective engagement of a Chinese operator to participate in the revitalisation of the Tazara.

It was reported last month that the CCECC's revitalisation proposal will be considered by the Tanzania-Zambia Joint Technical Committee, and then evaluated by the Tanzania-Zambia Steering Committee.

Tazara says that the multi-stage review process underscores the commitment to comprehensive assessment and collaboration at the various levels of governance before Tazara is transferred to a Chinese investor.

Australian firm acquires copper-gold projects in Tanzania

By Guardian Correspondent

RESOURCE Mining Corporation Limited has announced that it has acquired the Mpanda and Mbozi Cu-Au Projects by acquiring 75 percent the issued shares of Tanzanian company, Vancouver Mineral Resources Limited.

The projects are located within the Ubendian Orogenic Belt, a significant multi-element resource area in western Tanzania.

RMC currently holds six Ni-Cu project areas within the same belt, multiplying the opportunity for critical minerals discoveries.

The Mpanda and Mbozi Cu-Au Projects are located in some of the most prospective ground within the region. Mining of copper in the Mpanda Mineral Field has been active since the 1930s and continues today with the development of the very high grade Singililwa Mine, along strike to the Mpanda Cu-Au Project's tenements.

The Mbozi Cu-Au Project was initially explored by BHP, with the location of a high-grade copper project (Luez Hill) also up strike from the tenements. Preliminary soil surveys and field mapping in both projects has already located major copper anomalies within geological units that could support significant mineralisation.



Resource Mining Corporation's Executive Chairman, Asimwe Kabunga, said: "We are extremely excited to announce the acquisition of the Mpanda and Mbozi Cu-Au Projects, which we intend to explore in parallel with our current Ni-Cu projects.

The new projects are placed along strike from some of the most significant Cu-Au discoveries in Tanzania, and recent field work has already found major anomalies along strike and within the appropriate geology. The advantage held by our in-country knowledge and

experienced staff can now be fully utilised as we expand our exploration base and continue to explore for major critical mineral deposits."

Resource Mining Corporation Limited is an independent Australian minerals company advancing a portfolio of pro-

spective exploration projects focused on the definition of battery minerals in leading mining jurisdictions.

The company has six prospective nickel projects in Tanzania and is currently exploring the Liparamba nickel project.

access and efficiency.

Telesonic will offer products such as national and international leased line, dedicated internet access, IP and IP transit services and multiprotocol label switching (MPLS) services through its network of over 75,000 kilometres of terrestrial fibre across Airtel Africa's 14 markets.

Airtel Africa's Group CEO, Segun Ogunsanya said: "The establishment of Airtel Africa Telesonic Limited underscores Airtel Africa's commitment to addressing Africa's needs for the digital revolution by providing cutting-edge fibre-optic solutions that will empower businesses, education, healthcare, and communities at large. No doubt, Africa is experiencing a digital revolution, with surging demand for data across various sectors especially by the continent's growing youth population".

With robust and scalable infrastructure, he said, Airtel Africa aim to bridge the digital divide and unlock opportunities for innovation and economic growth.

He added: "Our investment signifies not just a technological advancement but also a catalyst for progress, connecting people and ideas across borders."



Airtel Africa's Group CEO, Segun Ogunsanya

Airtel Africa launches fibre, data connectivity for Africa

2Africa is the largest submarine cable interconnecting 33 countries in Africa, the Middle East and Europe.

The statement said the project aims to provide customers with a seamless connectivity between Africa and Europe to positively impact communities by enhancing connectivity in key sectors such as education and healthcare, fostering improved

access and efficiency.

Automobile firm donates vehicle for BBT project

By Francis Kajubi, Dodoma

GF Automobile Limited has donated a Mahindra car to the ministry of Agriculture to facilitate efficient operations of its officials in Dodoma capital.

The car which is part of the company's corporate social responsibility (CSR) is intended to complement the implementation of the Building the Better Tomorrow (BBT) project as a means of transport. Accepting the car on Thursday, Agriculture minister Hussein Bashe commended GF Automobile for being on the forefront in giving back to the community and for taking full part in development projects initiated by the government.

"GF has been one of the best development partners of the government. Today I am accepting this vehicle which is going to play a critical role in implementation of the BBT project in Dodoma," said Bashe.

According to the minister, the ministry is welcoming all development partners to take part in the implementation of the project especially through CSR donations.

GF Group Commercial director Salman Karmali said that the company would like to see the agriculture sector being empowered for the majority of youth to engage in self-employment.

According to him, GF Automobile and Mahindra entered into a partnership MoU last November for assembling Mahindra branded cars at its facility in Kibaha district next June.

"This means that the factory's production is expected to pile up from the current 1,000 annually assembled cars. Mahindra is out to support developments of the local mobility sector," said Karmali.

He said GF Group is a proud employer of over 500 locals directly in its factories and another 700 indirectly. Its collaboration with Mahindra is a great milestone that symbolizes shared commitment towards driving prosperity in the country's automotive industry.

He asserted that the launch of the Mahindra brand in Tanzania is another step ahead in its plans of having an existence in the East African region. In Africa Mahindra has a presence in about 30 countries.

"The business venture between Mahindra and GF Group is mostly likely to cut down used car importation into the country," he said.

This is the case when the Motor Vehicles (Tax on Registration and Transfer Act, 2019 has set conditions on imported used vehicles.

However, it is an advanced stage of already made reforms such as in July this year the National Assembly approved restriction of imported used cars age not to exceed eight years down from the previous ten years from the year of manufacture.

Setting a fairground, the parliament decided that if a car is older than eight years then it will face additional excise duty upon importation. The rate is 25 percent for regular cars and five percent for utility vehicles.



China's energy sector lures big number of foreign firms

BEIJING

UPBEAT about the business opportunities in China's new energy sector, global industrial gas supplier Air Products has been scaling up its stake in the country. Last year, the company established its Asia hydrogen application technology center in east China's Zhejiang Province, where it is also building China's first commercial-scale liquid hydrogen plant. In addition, it is also working to advance the local production of liquid hydrogen storage tanks in Shanghai and local liquid hydrogen industry standards.

"The growth potential of innovative green technologies will be tapped further as China promotes the development of new productive forces," said Saw Choon Seong, president of Air Products China.

As new productive forces underscore scientific and technological innovation and green growth, they are expected to generate new industries, models and growth drivers, analysts say. For foreign investors, these forces mean increased demand and a bigger market.

Air Products' ongoing commitment to China epitomizes how foreign enterprises are digging into opportunities brought by the country's pursuit of these new productive forces.

On the back of government policies, China's strategic emerging industries have seen rapid expansion in recent years, and high-tech industries have also become hot spots for foreign investors.

Last year, the country's high-tech industries drew in foreign direct investment totaling 423.34 billion yuan (about 59.6 billion US dollars), accounting for a record-high 37.3 percent of the national total, data from the Ministry of Commerce shows.

Cai Wei, chief strategy officer of KPMG Advisory (China), said that China will create multiple opportunities for foreign firms while developing new production centers in China.

"In emerging sectors such as new materials and advanced manufacturing, we have seen demand for high-quality industrial gases and advanced application technologies rise in recent years," Saw said.

To better leverage innovation trends, explore market opportunities and meet the demands of consumers, an increasing number of foreign enterprises have established research centers in China.

Take ResMed as an example. The medical device manufacturer has set up a local digital research and development team in China, along with an independent production base and product lines targeting



the Chinese market.

Scientific and technological innovation will play a key role in China's future development, said Tony Liu, general manager of ResMed China. He observed that enterprises in China have accelerated digital transformation and industrial chain upgrades, striving to move up the value chain.

With a supersized market, high-quality talent pool, stable social environment, solid infrastructure and improving government services, China boasts a comprehensive competitive edge and holds "strong appeal" to foreign enterprises, Liu said.

Cai noted that China's complete industrial chain and strong industrial supporting capabilities have provided a solid foundation for foreign companies to collaborate with their Chinese peers.

"Foreign enterprises can cooperate with local companies, share resources, and facilitate technological exchanges and industrial upgrades, enhancing their overall competitiveness," he said.

While fostering new productive forces, the country has rolled out a raft of policies and cultivated a more open and friendly environment for foreign investors, Cai noted. "Foreign companies should seize these opportunities, actively participate in the market, and grow together with the Chinese economy," he added.

On international cooperation, he said that China has taken the initiative to integrate into the global innovation network and enhance its technological and industrial innovation capabilities through opening-up and cooperation over the past 10-plus years.

With the development of new

productive forces, such cooperation will be strengthened further, especially in the research, devel-

opment, application and promotion of disruptive and cutting-edge technologies, he said.

Nigeria spikes rate on short-term bills

LAGOS

NIGERIA'S one-year bill auction was oversubscribed by more than two times after the central bank hiked the interest rate on the short-term debt obligation to attract investors, in a sign that tighter monetary policy is on its way.

The Abuja-based Central Bank of Nigeria sold 908.75 billion naira (\$632 million) of the bills to both local and foreign investors at rates that were nearly twice the level of previous offers. Yields on the offering rose to 19 percent, the highest in 12 years, from 11.5 percent at the previous auction on Jan. 24.

The 19 percent rate on the 364-day bills took it above the central bank's policy rate, which currently stands at 18.75 percent, for the first time. It is also close to Nigeria's rate of inflation, which stood at nearly a three-decade high of 28.9 percent in December.

By selling the one-year bills at a yield above the benchmark interest rate, the nation is "setting the tone for a tighter monetary policy

stance when the monetary policy committee" convenes later this month, analysts at BancTrust and Co. led by Ayodeji Dawodu, said in an emailed note.

The central bank's MPC, which hasn't met since July, will gather Feb. 26 and 27 and economists expect it to raise interest rates sharply.

Other short-term debt obligations were also sold at higher rates. Three-month bills were sold at 17.24 percent, which was three times higher than the January offer of 5 percent, while six-month notes fetched 18 percent.

The auction suggests the central bank is seeking to normalize interest rates in Africa's most populous nation and lure foreign investors in a bid to stabilize the naira.

Nigeria has relaxed currency controls and introduced a series of other measures since June to reform its foreign-exchange market and ease a dollar scarcity that has created a backlog of unmet demand estimated at \$2.2 billion by the central bank.

Cocoa price hits record high due to tight supply

NEW YORK

COCOA futures extended their surge to a record in New York as a shortfall gripped the market, threatening to make chocolate and other confectionery costlier.

Prices have doubled during the past year as growers in West Africa – who produce the bulk of global supply – are battered by extreme weather. Earlier rains promoted the spread of crop disease and delayed harvesting. That has been followed by a seasonal dry spell, which could further crimp production.

Consumers are already shelling out more for treats, and the cocoa rally is set to hurt results of chocolate makers like Hershey. High commodity prices will limit earnings growth this year, executives of the Hershey, Pennsylvania-based company said Thursday.

The worst may lie ahead as chocolate makers run out of supplies booked earlier and fully factor in the rally. While the gains have prompted some growers to

expand production, new trees can take a few years to bear beans.

"We are in a very tight balance," which will likely hold for another 18 months to three years, Paul Davis, the head of cocoa at major softs merchant Sucrex at Denrees SA, said in an interview at the Amsterdam Cocoa Week. "There is no cavalry that's coming to the rescue."

Davis, who is also president of European Cocoa Association, said he wouldn't rule out the potential for prices to scale \$6,000 a ton. Global cocoa supplies are on track to fall short of demand for a third season.

The most-active cocoa futures contract in New York touched a high of \$5,600 a metric ton on Thursday, surpassing a 1977 peak of \$5,379 a ton. That puts the contract at the highest in data compiled by Bloomberg spanning 65 years. The crop began trading in New York a century ago. A key spread between March and May New York futures also surged to a record.



MONDAY - WEDNESDAY FROM 10:30 PM



ITV SATURDAY 10 Feb
 5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi
 6:00 HABARI
 6:40 Kumekucha
 7:00 Habari
 8:00 Al Jazeera
 9:00 Watoto wetu
 10:05 Shika Bamba 5
 10:35 Mjue Zaidi rpt
 11:15 Chetu ni chetu rpt
 11:50 Hawavumi lakini wamo
 12:50 Art and lifestyle
 13:20 Shamba lulu
 13:50 Soap rpt: Laws of love
 15:45 Igizo: Mizengwe
 16:10 Igizo: Slay Queen
 17:00 Shamsam za Pwani
 18:00 Hapa na Pale
 18:15 ITV Top 10 rpt
 19:00 Jungu kuu
 19:30 Shika Bamba
 20:00 Habari
 21:05 Igizo: Slay Queen
 21:40 Art and Lifestyle
 22:10 ITV Top 10
 22:50 Hawavumi lakini wamo
 23:40 Soap: Uzalo rpt
 00:30 Al Jazeera

SUNDAY 11 Feb
 5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi
 6:00 HABARI
 6:40 Kumekucha
 7:00 Habari
 8:00 Al Jazeera
 9:00 Watoto Wetu
 10:00 Soap rpt: Laws of love
 11:45 Hawavumi lakini wamo rpt
 12:45 Mjue zaidi
 13:30 Usafiri wako
 14:00 Tamasha la Michezo
 15:30 Mwangaza
 16:30 ITV Top 10 rpt
 17:20 Kipindi cha kikristo
 18:00 Hapa na Pale
 18:15 Mapishi
 18:30 Matukio ya wiki
 19:30 Igizo: Slay Queen
 20:00 Habari
 21:05 Kipindi maalum: Biko
 21:10 Igizo: Mizengwe
 21:25 Kipindi maalum: Mch-
 ezo Supa Jackpot
 21:40 Mjue Zaidi
 22:20 Soap: Uzalo rpt
 00:30 Al Jazeera

MONDAY 12 Feb
 5:00 Soap rpt: Uzalo
 5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi
 6:00 HABARI
 6:40 Kumekucha
 7:30 HABARI
 8:00 Kumekucha Michezo

8:55 Habari za saa
 9:00 Kumekucha kishindo
 9:30 Soap: Laws of love rpt
 9:55 Habari za saa
 10:00 Watoto wetu
 11:00 Kipindi maalum: AF-
 CON 2023
 11:55 Habari za saa
 12:00 Al Jazeera
 12:30 Igizo: Filimbi
 12:55 Habari za saa
 13:00 Mjue Zaidi
 13:40 Art and Lifestyle
 13:55 Habari za saa
 14:00 Art and Lifestyle
 14:15 Soap rpt: Slay Queen
 14:55 Habari za saa
 15:00 Meza huru:
 16:30 Watoto Wetu
 17:00 Music: The Base
 18:00 Hapa na Pale
 18:15 Igizo: Mizengwe
 18:30 DW: Afrimaxx
 19:00 Afya ya Jamii
 19:30 Soap: Laws of love
 20:00 Habari
 21:05 Dakika 45
 22:00 Bundesliga na DW
 22:15 Mapishi
 22:30 Soap: Uzalo
 23:00 Jiji letu
 23:30 Music: The Base
 00:30 Al Jazeera
 02:00 DWTV

TUESDAY 13 Feb
 5:00 Soap rpt: Uzalo
 5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi
 6:00 HABARI
 6:40 Kumekucha
 7:30 HABARI
 8:00 Kumekucha Michezo
 8:55 Habari za saa
 9:00 Kumekucha kishindo
 9:30 Soap: Laws of love
 9:55 Habari za saa
 10:00 Watoto wetu
 10:25 Jagina
 10:55 Habari za saa
 11:00 Chetu ni Chetu rpt
 11:40 Igizo: Mizengwe
 11:55 Habari za saa
 12:00 Al Jazeera
 12:30 Afya ya jamii
 12:55 Habari za saa
 13:00 ITV Top ten
 13:50 Shikabamba
 13:55 Habari za saa
 14:00 Shikabamba
 14:25 Igizo rpt: Slay Queen
 14:55 Habari za saa
 15:00 Meza Huru
 16:30 Watoto wetu
 17:00 Music: The Base
 18:00 Hapa na Pale
 18:15 Mapishi

18:30 Kipindi Maalum: Sema
 na Mahakama
 19:30 Soap: Laws of love
 20:00 Habari
 21:05 Kipindi Maalum: Maisha
 ni Nyumba
 21:30 Kipindi Maalum:
 Chetu ni chetu
 22:30 Soap: Uzalo
 23:00 Jiji letu
 23:30 Music: The Base
 00:30 Al Jazeera

WEDNESDAY 14 Feb
 5:00 Soap rpt: Uzalo
 5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi
 6:00 HABARI
 6:40 Kumekucha
 7:30 HABARI
 8:00 Kumekucha Michezo
 8:55 Habari za saa
 9:00 Kumekucha Kishindo
 9:30 Soap: Laws of love
 9:55 Habari za saa
 10:00 Watoto wetu
 10:30 Igizo: Filimbi rpt
 10:55 Habari za saa
 11:00 Hawavumi lakini
 wamo
 11:55 Habari za saa
 12:00 Al Jazeera
 12:30 Bundesliga na DW rpt
 12:55 Habari za saa
 13:00 Dakika 45 rpt
 13:55 Habari za saa
 14:00 Chetu ni chetu rpt
 14:40 Mapishi rpt
 14:55 Habari za saa
 15:00 Meza huru
 16:30 Watoto Wetu
 17:00 Music: The Base
 18:00 Hapa na Pale
 18:15 Igizo: Mizengwe
 18:30 Jarida la wanawake
 19:00 Kipindi maalum: BOT
 9:55 Soap: Laws of love
 19:30 Soap: Laws of love
 20:00 Habari
 21:05 Abu Yako
 21:05 Kipindi maalum: Wa-
 tumishi housing
 21:20 Kipindi maalum:
 Tanesco
 21:50 Ripoti maalum:
 22:30 Soap: Uzalo
 23:00 Jiji letu
 23:30 Music: The Base
 00:30 Al Jazeera

THURSDAY 15 Feb
 5:00 Soap rpt: Uzalo
 5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi
 6:00 HABARI
 6:40 Kumekucha
 7:30 HABARI
 8:00 Kumekucha Michezo
 8:55 Habari za saa

9:00 Kumekucha Kishindo
 9:30 Soap rpt: Laws of love
 9:55 Habari za saa
 10:00 Watoto wetu
 10:30 Shamba lulu
 10:55 Habari za saa
 11:00 Ripoti maalum
 11:55 Habari za saa
 12:00 Al Jazeera
 12:30 Jarida la wanawake
 rpt
 12:55 Habari za saa
 13:00 Kipindi maalum rpt:
 BOT
 13:30 Art and Lifestyle
 13:55 Habari za saa
 14:00 Shamsam za pwani rpt
 14:55 Habari za saa
 15:00 Meza huru
 16:30 Watoto wetu
 17:00 The Base
 18:00 Hapa na Pale
 18:15 Mapishi
 18:30 Jagina
 19:00 Usafiri wako
 19:30 Soap: Laws of love
 20:00 Habari
 21:05 Malumbano ya hoja
 23:00 Jiji letu
 23:30 Music: The Base
 00:30 Al Jazeera

FRIDAY 16 Feb
 5:00 Soap rpt: Uzalo
 5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi
 6:00 HABARI
 6:40 Kumekucha
 7:30 HABARI
 8:00 Kumekucha Michezo
 8:55 Habari za saa
 9:00 Kumekucha kishindo
 9:30 Soap rpt: Laws of love
 9:55 Habari za saa
 10:00 Watoto wetu
 10:30 Usafiri wako
 10:55 Habari za saa
 11:00 Kipindi maalum: Wa-
 tumishi housing
 11:20 Jagina rpt
 11:55 Habari za saa
 12:00 Al Jazeera
 12:30 Kipindi maalum rpt: Tane-
 sco
 12:55 Habari za saa
 13:00 Kipindi Maalum: Mai-
 sha ni Nyumba rpt
 13:30 Kipindi Maalum rpt:
 Sema na Mahakama
 13:55 Habari za saa
 14:00 Kipindi Maalum rpt:
 Sema na Mahakama
 14:30 DW: Afrimaxx rpt
 14:55 Habari za saa
 15:00 Meza huru:
 16:30 Watoto Wetu
 17:00 The Base (DJ Show)

17:30 Kiislam
 18:00 Hapa na Pale
 18:15 Top ten
 19:00 Shamba lulu
 19:30 Soap: Laws of love
 20:00 Habari
 21:05 Kipima Joto
 23:00 Jiji letu
 23:30 The Base
 00:30 Al Jazeera

SATURDAY 17 Feb
 5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi
 6:00 HABARI
 6:40 Kumekucha
 7:00 Habari
 8:00 Al Jazeera
 9:00 Watoto wetu
 10:05 Shika Bamba 5
 10:35 Mjue Zaidi rpt
 11:15 Chetu ni chetu rpt
 11:50 Hawavumi lakini wamo
 12:50 Art and lifestyle
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 15:45 Igizo: Mizengwe
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 18:00 Hapa na Pale
 18:15 ITV Top 10 rpt
 19:00 Jungu kuu
 19:30 Shika Bamba
 20:00 Habari
 21:05 Igizo: Slay Queen
 21:40 Art and Lifestyle
 22:10 ITV Top 10
 22:50 Hawavumi lakini wamo
 23:40 Soap: Uzalo rpt
 00:30 Al Jazeera

SUNDAY 18 Feb
 5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi
 6:00 HABARI
 6:40 Kumekucha
 7:00 Habari
 8:00 Al Jazeera
 9:00 Watoto Wetu
 10:00 Soap rpt: Laws of love
 11:45 Hawavumi lakini wamo
 rpt:
 12:45 Mjue zaidi
 13:30 Usafiri wako
 14:00 Tamasha la Michezo
 15:30 Mwangaza
 16:30 ITV Top 10 rpt
 17:20 Kipindi cha kikristo
 18:00 Hapa na Pale
 18:15 Mapishi
 18:30 Matukio ya wiki
 19:30 Igizo: Slay Queen
 20:00 Habari
 21:05 Kipindi maalum: Biko
 21:10 Igizo: Mizengwe
 21:25 Kipindi maalum: Mch-
 ezo Supa Jackpot
 21:40 Mjue Zaidi

Putin: No intention to invade Poland, Latvia or other countries

'Global financial crisis in 2008 wasn't as serious as COVID-19'

NEW DELHI

STRESSING that the global financial crisis in 2008 wasn't as serious as the COVID-19 pandemic, Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman yesterday said that the then Congress-led UPA government should have handled it with sincerity and transparency.

The White Paper compares the alleged economic management during 10 years of the Congress-led UPA government with the what the government says are the positive outcomes of 10 years of the BJP-ruled dispensation.

NK Premachandran of Congress and Saugata Roy of TMC moved substitute motions under rule 342 of the rules of procedure and conduct of business, saying the House disapproves the contents of the White Paper.

During her speech, Sitharaman said, "(The) 10 years of one government with some crises and 10 years of a different government with a different crisis, the comparison shown in this paper clearly says how if the government handles it with true sincerity, transparency and putting the nation first, the results are there for everybody to see."

She said, "Equally when you don't put the nation first, when you put your first family first and when you have other considerations, then the results are there for you to see."

"Two examples should be taken. The global financial crisis after 2008 wasn't as serious as COVID-19. Still, I would want to say that it was a crisis and the government should have handled it with sincerity and transparency," Sitharaman said.

She said during the global financial crisis, whatever should have been done to protect India's interest, was not done.

"But even after that, scandals continued, leaving the country in such a critical state. God only knows, if the government had continued, what would have been the condition of this country today," the Finance Minister said.

While the sloganeering continued from the Opposition Benches, Sitharaman, in a response to it, said, "This is a serious document, I am reiterating that it has serious topics. It must be taken seriously."

The nearly 60-page White Paper was tabled in the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha by Sitharaman on Thursday.

The White Paper alleged that the UPA government abandoned reforms after coming to power in 2004 and that it failed to build on the strong foundation laid by the previous BJP-led NDA government.

The White Paper said that there were scandals in defence which compromised defence preparedness and the government delayed the acquisition of weapons.

"In the UPA government, decision-making came to a standstill due to corruption and scandals in defence, compromising defence preparedness. The government delayed the acquisition of artillery and anti-aircraft guns, fighters, submarines, night fighting gear and a host of equipment upgrades," the report said.

It also referred to the "coal scam", saying allocation of coal blocks was done on "arbitrary basis".

"The coal scam shook the conscience of the nation in 2014. Before 2014, the allocation of coal blocks was done on an arbitrary basis without following a transparent process to allocate the blocks". ANI



In this image provided by the UK Ministry of Defense, RAF Typhoon FRG4s are prepared to conduct further strikes against Houthi military targets in Yemen, from RAF Akrotiri, Cyprus, Feb 3, 2024. AP

US-British strikes hit Houthi site in Yemen's Red Sea port city

SANAA

THE US-British navy forces struck a Houthi site in Yemen's Red Sea port city of Hodeidah on Thursday, the group's al-Masirah TV reported.

Two strikes hit the al-Dhubrah area in the district of Ras Issa, northwest of the city, said the television without providing further information.

After the strikes, Houthi leader Abdulmalik al-Houthi delivered a televised speech, vowing again to continue missile attacks against the United States, British and Israeli vessels, unless Israel stops the conflict and blockade on the Palestinian enclave of the Gaza Strip.

"The American-British strikes on our country (group's camps) this week amounted to 86 strikes and have not affected or limited our armed capabilities," he said in a televised speech aired by the group's TV channel al-Masirah, adding "our missile attacks will continue in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden."

The group's attacks would stop only when "the US, Britain and Israel allow access of food and medicine to the Palestinian enclave of the Gaza Strip and stop conflict on the Palestinians," al-Houthi said, adding that his group's operations are part of a wide move of the regional resistance.

The US Navy has made no comment yet on today's strikes.

Hours earlier, the US Navy released a brief statement on social media platform X on its Wednesday's strikes on Houthi camps.

"On Feb 7, at approximately 9:00 pm Yemen time, US Central Command forces conducted self-defense strikes against two Houthi mobile anti-ship cruise missiles prepared to launch against ships in the Red Sea," the US Central Command said, referring to the strikes on a Houthi site in the Ras Issa district, where the Houthis used to launch missile attacks on the commercial vessels in the Red Sea.

"Later that day, at 11:30 pm Yemen time (2030 GMT), the CENTCOM forces conducted a second strike against a Houthi mobile land attack cruise missile prepared to launch," it said, referring to the Houthi stronghold of northern Saada province.

"The CENTCOM identified these missiles in Houthi-controlled areas of Yemen and determined they presented an imminent threat to US Navy ships and merchant vessels in the region," the CENTCOM added.

The armed Houthi group has launched dozens of missile attacks against commercial vessels transiting the Red Sea since mid-November last year, in what the group said in solidarity with Palestinians in Gaza.

The US-British maritime coalition hit back in response in an attempt to deter the group, but the group has instead increased escalation.

The Houthi group has been controlling the strategic Red Sea port city of Hodeidah since the 2018 UN-brokered Stockholm Agreement, which was backed by the United States and Britain, forcing the Yemeni internationally recognized government out.

Canada hosts national summit to combat car theft

OTTAWA

CANADIAN federal ministers met with law enforcement, border officials and industry players from across the country on Thursday to find solutions to the growing challenge of auto theft.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau told the summit that the rise in auto theft over the past few years "has been alarming."

"Organized crime is becoming more brazen, and the overseas market for the stolen cars is expanding," the prime minister said. "Cracking down on auto theft means bringing law enforcement, border services, port authorities, carmakers and insurance companies together."

Public Safety Canada said in a news release that the federal government

would increase the capacity of the Canada Border Services Agency by investing 28 million Canadian dollars (21 million U.S. dollars) to conduct more investigations and examinations of stolen vehicles, as well as enhance collaboration on investigations and intelligence sharing with partners across Canada and internationally.

This includes exploring detection technology solutions, and exploring the use of advanced analytical tools, such as artificial intelligence, the release said.

At the conclusion of the summit, participants endorsed a Statement of Intent, committing to work together to combat auto theft, and to finalize an action plan that will be released this winter, the release said.

Xinhua

RECENTLY, the U.S. Department of Defense once again used "national security" as an excuse to include some Chinese chip and artificial intelligence (AI) companies on its discriminatory lists, and threatened to take further measures against these entities.

The U.S. side consistently invokes "national security," overstretching the concept of national security, and abuses its state power to restrain the development of other countries' enterprises. Its moves have seriously infringed upon the legitimate rights of others to develop, undermined the international economic and trade order and

world trade rules, and threatened the stability of the global industrial and supply chains.

Every country has its national security concerns, but these concerns must be legitimate and reasonable. The concept must not be politicized and securitized, or be used to suppress and contain other countries' development.

In recent years, the U.S. has overstretching the concept of "national security" to encompass almost anything in order to contain and suppress China.

Last August, the White House signed an executive order on setting up a screening mechanism

US should stop taking 'national security' as catch-all excuse

on outbound investments and restricting U.S. entities' investments in the semiconductor and micro-electronics, quantum information technologies, and AI sectors in China.

Recently, The U.S. Department of Commerce announced it would investigate the supply chains of the U.S. semiconductor and national defense industries to assess their level of dependence on Chinese chips, again using the excuse of the so-called "national security" risks.

Some American politicians even hyped up Chinese-made port lift-

ing equipment and Chinese video applications, which are popular among Americans, as threats to their "national security." These practices are typical examples of pan-politicization and pan-securitization.

In the eyes of some U.S. politicians, "national security" has become a catch-all excuse for unreasonable and brutal suppression of foreign companies. In recent years, the U.S. has continuously politicized, instrumentalized, and weaponized economic, trade, and technological issues under the guise of

"national security," resorting to all means to suppress Chinese companies and restrict normal economic and trade cooperation between its domestic companies and China.

Such an approach essentially aims to promote de-globalization and "de-Sinicization," creating a chilling effect in economic and trade cooperation and serving its purpose of pushing for "decoupling and breaking the chain."

The U.S. has forcefully labeled other countries' companies as "national security risks," using it as an excuse for the so-called "de-

MOSCOW

MOSCOW has never refused to hold talks on Ukraine and is confident that the conflict will sooner or later end in peace and relations between the two countries' people will be restored, Russian President Vladimir Putin said in an interview with Tucker Carlson published on the US journalist's website. The Russian leader also did not rule out that US national Evan Gershkovich, charged with espionage in Russia, might be released, and shared his opinion of celebrity entrepreneur Elon Musk.

TASS has gathered the key takeaways from the president's interview.

On talks on Ukraine

Russia has never refused to engage in dialogue on Ukraine but after the Istanbul talks were suspended in March 2022, Moscow has no intention of taking the first step. "Why do we have to bother ourselves and correct somebody else's mistakes?"

The conditions for resolving the issue, including the option of keeping the situation where it is now, need to be discussed. "It is a subject matter for the negotiations no one is willing to conduct or, to put it more accurately, they're willing, but do not know how to do it. I know they want to. It is not just I see it, but I know they do want it, but they are struggling to understand how to do it."

On why London disrupted Istanbul talks

"Who knows. I don't understand it myself. There was a general starting point. For some reason, everyone had the illusion that Russia could be defeated on the battlefield. Because of arrogance, because of a pure heart, but not because of a great mind."

On future relations with Ukrainians

The West is wrong when it thinks that "the Russian people have been split by hostilities forever": "Sooner or later it will result in an agreement." "This probably sounds strange given the current situation but the relations between the two peoples will be rebuilt anyway. It will take a lot of time, but they will heal."

On Ukraine's borders

Ukraine is an artificial state in a sense, "shaped at Stalin's will" particularly of Hungarian, Polish and Romanian lands. Putin said he had never discussed a possible return of the Hungarian lands, which had been handed over to Ukraine under Stalin, with Hungary's Prime Minister Viktor Orban. As for the Black Sea region, it "had no historical connection with Ukraine whatsoever."

On responsibility for Ukrainian crisis

"I know one can say it is our mistake. It was us who intensified the situation and decided to put an end to the war that started in 2014, in Donbass. As I have already said, by means of weapons." However, NATO's expansion in breach of earlier promises is also something to remember. "Let us go back to



In this photo released by Sputnik news agency yesterday, Russian President Vladimir Putin (R) speaks during an interview with former Fox News host Tucker Carlson at the Kremlin in Moscow, Russia, Feb 6, 2024. AP

the coup d'etat in Ukraine in 2014. It is pointless, though, isn't it? We may go back and forth endlessly."

On 'Russian threat'

Allegations of the "Russian threat" are aimed at intimidating common people: "We have no interest in Poland, Latvia or anywhere else. It's just threat mongering."

On possible conversation with Biden

Putin has repeatedly warned US President Joe Biden that he is "making a huge mistake of historic proportions by pushing Russia away." Russia and the US currently maintain contact at the level of various government agencies with Moscow saying that Washington needs to stop supplying weapons to Kiev and "it will be over within a few weeks."

On Gershkovich case

Wall Street Journal reporter Evan Gershkovich was definitely engaged in espionage. Moscow is ready to release him if its "partners take reciprocal steps." "We have done so many gestures of goodwill out of decency that I think we have run out of them." Russian and US intelligence agencies are in talks. "I do not rule out that <...> Mr. Gershkovich may return to his motherland." There are some people jailed in the West who, according to Moscow, "are not connected with special services," including "a person (it may be alleged Russian national Vadim Krasikov convicted in Germany - TASS), who, "due to patriotic sentiments, eliminated a bandit in one of the European capitals."

On Nord Stream pipelines

Russia has not presented the evidence it has with regard to the Nord Stream pipeline explosions because "in the war of propaganda, it is very difficult to defeat the United States because the United States controls all the world's media and many European media." "So it is possible to get involved in this work, but it is cost prohibitive, so to speak. It is clear to the whole world what happened."



Russia has not presented the evidence it has with regard to the Nord Stream pipeline explosions because "in the war of propaganda, it is very difficult to defeat the United States because the United States controls all the world's media and many European media"

On cooperation with China

Allegations that cooperation with China is dangerous for Russia are nothing but boogeyman stories. Europe maintains even closer cooperation with China. "Ask Europeans, are they afraid?"

On Russia in NATO

Moscow inquired into the possibility of joining NATO and invited Washington to build a common missile defense system together. US presidents supported the initiatives but their administrations rejected them. "And then they just told us to get lost. <...> We created hypersonic systems with intercontinental range, and we continue to develop them."

Washington kept putting pressure on Moscow particularly because there were too many experts on confrontation with the Soviet Union in the US. "It is necessary to get rid of this. There should be new, fresh forces, people who look into the future and understand what is happening in the world."

On US policies

Washington's policy does not depend on who the country's president is. "It is not about the personality of the leader. It is about the elites' mindset." Today, the United States is trying unsuccessfully to adapt to the changing world by using force but "the tools that the US uses don't work." The world will "change regardless of how the developments in Ukraine end." The US position in the world will also change, and "the only question is how this will happen, painfully and quickly or gently and gradually."

On technologies and Elon Musk

Humanity needs to make agreements on regulating the field of artificial intelligence, genetic research and other research activities that are "impossible to stop."

"There are reports that Elon Musk has already had a chip implanted in the human brain. I think there's no stopping Elon Musk. He will do as he sees fit. Nevertheless, you'll need to find some common ground with him. Search for ways to persuade him."

petition that it has long claimed to champion.

When it comes to pursuing global hegemony, coercing other nations, and disregarding international norms in the early 21st century, the United States is the country that comes to mind, said a U.S. media outlet.

The principles of market competition and international trade rules, which the U.S. claimed to advocate, are only followed when they are beneficial to the U.S. American politicians may talk about fair competition, but deep down they believe in "America First" and wield the "sanctions stick." **People's Daily**

Biden will not face charges over classified papers

WASHINGTON

AN "elderly" President Joe Biden will not face charges for knowingly taking classified documents when he left the vice-presidency in 2017, a prosecutor said on Thursday, drawing a swift rebuke from the president as he seeks reelection.

Special Counsel Robert Hur said in a report that he opted against bringing criminal charges following a 15-month investigation because Biden cooperated and would be difficult to convict, describing him as a "well-meaning, elderly man with a poor memory."

Biden, in an angry rebuttal, said his "memory was fine." Brimming with emotion during remarks at the White House, he lashed out at the attorney's suggestion that he had forgotten when his son, Beau, had died and said the accusation that he had willfully kept the classified material was "just plain wrong."

Hur's conclusion ensures that Biden, unlike his expected 2024 presidential rival Donald Trump, will not risk prison time for mishandling sensitive government documents.

But it will cause further embarrassment for Biden, 81, as the oldest person ever to serve as US president tries to convince voters that he should serve another four-year term.

"Mr Biden would likely present himself to a jury, as he did during our interview of him, as a sympathetic, well-meaning, elderly man with a poor memory," wrote Hur, who served as the top federal prosecutor in Maryland during the Trump administration and was tapped to lead the Biden probe by Attorney General



US President Joe Biden answers questions about Israel after speaking about the Special Counsel report in the Diplomatic Reception Room of the White House in Washington, DC, on Thursday in a surprise last-minute addition to his schedule for the day. AFP

Merrick Garland in January 2023.

Biden noted that the special counsel drew a distinction between him and Trump, 77: Biden returned the documents while Trump allegedly declined to do so.

The president, who earlier this week referred to a conversation he had with Angela Merkel in 2021 as having taken place with the late German Chancellor Helmut Kohl, pushed back against descriptions of his recall.

US and British warplanes launched a new wave of airstrikes against Houthi camps in northern Yemen late Sunday, reported the Houthi-run al-Masirah TV.

"My memory is fine," he said, adding he was glad that a special prosecutor had looked into the case.

At one point during his remarks Biden appeared to confuse the presidents of Mexico and Egypt.

Trump has described the four criminal prosecutions he faces – including one for his handling of classified documents – as politically motivated. He has claimed, without evidence, that Biden was behind the state and federal cases.

"THIS HAS NOW PROVEN TO BE A TWO-TIERED SYSTEM OF JUSTICE AND UNCONSTITUTIONAL SELECTIVE PROSECUTION!" Trump wrote on social media.

Trump's allies seized on the report to underline concerns about Biden's age.

"If you're too senile to stand trial, then you're too senile

to be president," said Alex Pfeiffer, a spokesperson for Make America Great Again, a group allied with Trump.

Memory issues

Hur wrote that Biden's memory was "severely limited" when he was interviewed by members of his prosecution team. Biden forgot what year his term began as vice-president under President Barack Obama and when it ended, Hur wrote, and he forgot what year his son Beau died.

Biden grew emotional about the inclusion of his son in the special counsel report.

"How in the hell dare he raise that. Frankly, when I was asked the question I thought to myself, it wasn't any of their damn business," Biden said.

Biden's lawyers said his memory lapses were not unusual for someone trying to describe events that took place years ago. "Such comments have no place in a Department of Justice report," they wrote in comments included in Hur's report.

After the report's release, Biden's lawyers criticized Hur for overreach.

"It was plain from the outset that criminal charges were not warranted," his personal lawyer Bob Bauer said. "Yet the special counsel could not refrain from investigative excess."

'Inappropriate comments'

White House lawyer Richard Sauber said Hur's report contained "a number of inaccurate

and inappropriate comments."

Hur found that Biden took a handwritten memo to then-President Obama in 2009 opposing a planned troop surge in Afghanistan, and handwritten notes related to intelligence briefings and national security meetings.

Biden told his ghostwriter during a conversation in February 2017, a month after leaving the vice-presidency, that he had "just found all the classified stuff" downstairs in a home he was renting in Virginia, referring to documents on the US war in Afghanistan.

Hur's report found that Biden read aloud classified notebook passages to his ghostwriter on at least three occasions recounting meetings in the White House Situation Room.

The ghostwriter deleted audio recordings of his conversations with Biden after learning about the special counsel's investigation but kept transcripts, Hur said.

Biden said he did not share classified information but conceded he should have paid better attention to the transfer of material by his staff when he left the vice-presidency.

Hur wrote that Biden's actions "present serious risks to national security, given the vulnerability of extraordinarily sensitive information to loss or compromise to America's adversaries."

But he said the documents may have been taken to Biden's home while he was vice-president, when he had the authority to keep such documents.

Unacceptable to involve Lebanon in Palestinian-Israeli conflict, Lavrov says

MOSCOW

RUSSIAN Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov during a conversation with the leader of the Progressive Socialist Party of Lebanon Walid Jumblatt emphasized the inadmissibility of further escalation of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and involvement of other countries of the region, particularly Lebanon, the Russian Foreign Ministry said in a statement.

"The sides exchanged views on the crisis situation in the Middle East. Lavrov emphasized the inadmissibility of further escalation of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and the involvement of other states, in particular Lebanon. In addition, Russia's unwavering position in support of the sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of the Republic of Lebanon was reaffirmed," the ministry said.

Besides, the parties paid special attention to the internal political situation in Lebanon. "The sides emphasized the need for the Lebanese themselves to find solutions to pressing issues on the national agenda as soon as possible on the basis of mutual consent and without external interference."

The importance of further progressive development of traditionally friendly multidimensional ties between Russia and Lebanon was noted," the department emphasized.

On the same day, Russian presidential envoy for the Middle East and African countries and Deputy Foreign Minister Mikhail Bogdanov held extensive consultations with Jumblatt.



Brazil's Supreme Court orders Bolsonaro to hand over passport

BRASILIA

BRAZIL'S Supreme Federal Court on Thursday ordered former president Jair Bolsonaro to hand over his passport to judicial authorities, as they investigate his alleged role in an attempted coup.

Bolsonaro, who has 24 hours to comply with the order, is one of several high-profile officials being investigated in connection with a violent assault on Brazil's capital on Jan 8, 2023, soon after Bolsonaro lost reelection.

The court order is part of Operation Tempus Veritatis (Hour of Truth) launched Thursday by the Federal Police. It targets Bolsonaro's top aides, including military officers, with 33 arrest warrants and four preventive detention orders, according to local media.

The operation came after Bolsonaro's former personal secretary, Lieutenant Colonel Mauro Cid, signed a cooperation agreement with the Federal Police.

Thursday's operation included search warrants against four former ministers and the arrest of four former aides. Bolsonaro was at his beach house in Rio de Janeiro state when police arrived early on Thursday morning, demanding the document.

Brazil's federal police are now in possession of the passport, which was in the capital Brasilia, Bolsonaro family spokesman Fabio Wajngarten said on social media.

Bolsonaro's lawyer, Paulo Bueno, had no immediate comment.

"I left the government more than a year ago and I'm still suffering relentless persecution," Bolsonaro told the Folha de S.Paulo newspaper on Thursday. "Forget about me. Someone else is running the country now."

Bolsonaro has already been ruled politically ineligible until 2030 for spreading election falsehoods, and faces several other criminal probes that could land him in jail. He has denied wrongdoing and calls the investigations politically motivated.



DR Congo military activated against M23's offensives near strategic city

GOMA

THE armed forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (FARDC) on Wednesday repelled attacks launched by rebels of the M23 March Movement (M23) in the strategic city of Sake, considered the last barrier of the city of Goma, the capital of the province of North Kivu, in the east of the country, once fallen in 2012.

In a press release published on Wednesday, the FARDC affirms that they have been activated to thwart the simultaneous attacks launched that same day by the M23 on their positions located deep in Sake.

According to witnesses in the region interviewed by Xinhua, the M23 rebels launched attack on several army positions at the height of the mountain which overlooks Sake, as the fighting lasted for several hours in the city where detonations of heavy weapons have been heard. The

fightings created panic among the population in the area and forced thousands of people to leave for the city of Goma and its surroundings.

Hundreds of people in sites for displaced people in the area also headed towards Goma, saw a Xinhua correspondent on site on the road linking Sake and Goma.

The army sent several reinforcements, including the South African military as part of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Force, who deployed combat vehicles and helicopters to the area to fight the advance of the rebels.

In January 2024, the DRC military announced the start of joint military operations with the military elements of SADC in the east of the country, with an offensive mandate, mainly targeting the M23 rebels which occupy several areas in the territory of Masisi and that of Rut-



This photo taken on Feb. 7, 2024 shows people fleeing due to the fighting between the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) army and M23 March Movement (M23) rebels near the city of Sake, in the North Kivu province of Democratic Republic of the Congo. Xinhua

shuru, located in the North Kivu province. Until late Wednesday, the Congolese army plane continued to bomb the positions of the M23 rebels who retreated to their initial positions on the mountain near Sake.

In a brief press release published a few hours after this offensive, the M23 spokesperson

stressed that "the M23 does not intend to seize Goma contrary to the propaganda sponsored by the state of Kinshasa".

In the same statement, the rebellion reaffirms its commitment to a peaceful solution and its readiness to withdraw from its forward positions if a monitored ceasefire and a credible

verification mechanism were in place.

Kinshasa has already rejected any form of negotiations with the M23 rebellion despite the fact that M23 occupies several areas in the territory of Masisi and Rutshuru, located in the province of North Kivu.

On Wednesday, UN Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations Jean-Pierre Lacroix called on the M23 for an immediate cessation of hostilities.

About 42,000 people have been displaced from Masisi alone since Feb. 2, the UN's humanitarian office OCHA said on Tuesday.

The M23 is a group of former rebels of the National Congress for the Defense of the People (CNDP). The name came from the March 23, 2009 agreement between the CNDP and the Congolese government.

Xinhua

ISLAMABAD

PAKISTAN'S Interior Ministry has said that the media and public's concerns about the late processing of the election results have been reviewed. It said that the delay in election results is due to a "lack of connectivity," which it stressed was the result of preventive measures taken to ensure foolproof security.

In a post on X, the Pakistan Interior Ministry stated, "Concerns regarding delay in processing of results to the concerned Returning Officers of

'Delay in election results due to lack of connectivity'

the public and media have been addressed.

This has been attributed to a lack of connectivity, which was a result of the precautions taken to ensure foolproof security."

"Protocols to ensure the safety of both the crew and the belt are comprehensive and time-consuming. The situation is now satisfactory and the results are expected to continue," it added.

Amid the delay in the declaration of election results, the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Sikandar Sultan Raja has contacted the Chief Secretaries, DROs and Provincial Election Commissioners.

The News International reported. He has issued strict instructions to ensure immediate declaration of results, according to an ECP press release.

As results of the Pakistan Election face delays amid the slow counting of

votes, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) has alleged that the mandate of the people of Pakistan is being stolen. Imran Khan's party said that every independent result showed the PTI winning by a landslide despite pre-poll rigging and oppression.

PTI stated that the votes of each candidate are tabulated at each polling station on the Form 45. Imran Khan's party mentioned that copies of these forms have been collected by

PTI candidate's polling agents, which show them winning by large majority. However, returning officers are now manipulating the results using Form 47.

In a statement released on X, PTI stated, "Let the world know that the clear and overwhelming mandate of the people of Pakistan is being stolen. Despite unprecedented pre poll rigging & oppression, there was a record, massive turnout on polling day. Every

independent result showed PTI winning by a landslide. Form 45s are the primary source of election results at the lowest level."

"The votes for each candidate are tabulated at each polling station on the Form 45. Copies of these forms have been collected by PTI candidates' polling agents, which show them winning by a large majority. However, Returning Officers are now manipulating the results using Form 47, which is a summary of all the Forms 45 from each polling station," it added.

ANI

THE Spring Festival is the grandest traditional festival of the Chinese nation.

In the long agrarian civilization, the ancient Chinese people marked a year from the sowing of seeds to the harvest of grains, and this agricultural cycle has set the rhythm of people's lives - growing crops in spring, seeing them mature in summer, harvesting them in fall and storing them in winter.

As winter faded into spring at year's end, people celebrated the good harvest of the year and welcomed a new cycle.

They worshiped the heaven and ancestors, prayed for blessings, hosted feasts, bid farewell to the old year and ushered in the new, which helped form a series of solemn yet joyful folk customs.

These customs provided people with an opportunity to express their feelings, make wishes,

enjoy the joyful atmosphere, and voice their longing for a good life.

The Spring Festival is about folk customs, as well as art and aesthetics. The art of the Spring Festival is the collective creation and experience of beauty by the Chinese people and Chinese nation, a process that everyone enjoys.

During the Spring Festival, every household would paste images of Menshen, or door gods, traditional Chinese New Year paintings, Fu characters, paper cuttings, and Spring Festival couplets to the doors, creating a joyous and lively atmosphere.

The couplets on the doors and the paper cuttings on the windows reflect the spirit of a family.

Symbolizing the vigor and energy of the household, those decorations are mostly in fiery red color, with gorgeous and vibrant complementary colors. The patterns are highly familiar to com-

Spring Festival in Chinese folk arts



Israeli women demand the immediate release of the Israeli hostages held in the Gaza Strip by the Hamas militant group at a protest in Tel Aviv, Israel, Feb 1, 2024. AP

moners - vivid and distinctive.

The auspicious characters, calligraphy, images of gods, and depictions of ideal life with good weather, national peace and

prosperity, family happiness and longevity express people's hopes and aspirations for a better life.

These folk paintings and paper cuttings not only fully convey the

tastes and pursuits of the common people, but also can serve as decorations in traditionally furnished houses.

Apart from pasted decorations, there are other decorative items placed at home during the Spring Festival, including seasonal fruits, potted flowers, antiques, and more.

The Spring Festival decorations, ornate and elegant or simple and fresh, are always joyful, pleasing to the eye, and full of hope.

The food prepared for eating and ancestor worship during the Spring Festival, which is more sumptuous than usual, not only provides a rich culinary experience, but also contains auspicious meanings of prosperity.

For instance, families in the Jiaodong region of east China's

Shandong province would make various steamed buns and cakes, as well as auspicious dough sculptures, starting from the kitchen god day, also known as the Little New Year, several days around the Spring Festival.

They are a part of the festive cuisine and serve as gifts and offerings.

The beauty and symbolism of the Spring Festival food, when shared through social interactions, creates a spiritual bond among people.

During the Spring Festival, there are splendid recreational and celebratory activities. Folk arts like stilt walking, lion and dragon dancing, drumming, and Yangge dancing are presented at carnival-like events. Spontaneous performances, crowds of onlookers, cheerful and stir-

ring drum beats, as well as the costumes and masks worn by performers that carry elements of local culture and traditions jointly make up the lively festival celebrations.

In addition, from New Year's Eve to the 15th day of the first month of the Chinese lunar calendar, large red lanterns are often hung in shops and homes in both cities and rural areas.

Villagers in northern Shaanxi province would visit the Jiuqu Yellow River Lantern Array, a popular traditional folk event hosted on the 15th day of the first month of the Chinese lunar calendar.

On the Yunnan-Guizhou Plateau in southwest China, people of various ethnic groups would dance around bonfires to celebrate the festival. This showcases the purity and sincerity of the Chinese nation.

People's Daily

Pundits suggesting phone link-up in Dodoma City, Kagera Sugar

By Correspondent John Kimbute

AN old tradition in language is a parable and at times it is just an expression, like 'birds of a feather fly together', which easily means birds which fly together are of the same type, feathers looking alike.

But when people or animated beings that are unrelated to one another do the same thing, a wider frame of view is needed, for instance in a local expression, 'the day a baboon will die, all trees are slippery,' that it won't succeed to escape a predator or a group of them, in failing to climb a tree. That the trees are slippery isn't factually so but reading the baboon's mind.

Similar impressions come to mind when it is heard, in an expert discussion so to speak, that coaches of Premier League sides, Dodoma City and Kagera Sugar, who encountered either of the city rivals over the past week, had a telephone discussion on tactics.

The reason for that - yes, hypothesis - is that their tactics were almost identical, not to say indistinguishable, when either side met the highly drilled city side squads, while ordinarily, their tactics would vary one from the other. That the analysts imagined there was a phone link implied they couldn't see the real origin of the singularity of tactics, or say, technical fusion on the best tactics possible, etc.

This was evidence, if any was needed, that an event had taken place recently, not just that something happened like holding a group match in the Confederation of African Football's Nations Cup finals but an event in a different sense of the term.



Taifa Stars acting coach Hemed Suleiman Morocco. Agencies

It was something that altered what people know about playing a better side than yourself, how to handle such a side, a lesson surprisingly the pundits did not grasp - definitely most of them - in that, a change had indeed happened in that sphere. By contrast, there was a cadre of soccer professionals who grasped that event, coaches.

That 'hypothesis' is necessary because of the fact that they used nearly identical tactics at about the same time, and none is a particular friend of the other to have seen the need to compare notes, a rare event if it ever happens. In that case, the pundits' hypothesis of a phone link-up between the two Premier League side coaches was gratuitous and irrelevant.

It merely demonstrated the lack of having noticed

the preliminary event that created a common impression among the coaches and the result was their unrelated intentions to start applying that philosophy at the earliest opportunity, namely, in the next matches with city giants.

The list that interim coach Hemed Suleiman 'Morocco' issued for Taifa Stars against the DRC Leopards was Aishi Manula, Lusajo Mwaikenda, Bakari Nondo Mwamnyeto, Ibrahim Hamad 'Baka', Mohamed Hussein 'Tshabalala', Himid Mao, Novatus Dismas, Haji Mnooga, along with Feisal Salum, Simon Msvu and Mbwana Samatta.

Just by looking at that lineup in 'Google' was already something of an explanation of how Taifa Stars were playing the Leopards without needing the wholly defensive posture as with its first encounter with Mo-

rocco and managing.

The point was that it was no longer necessary that midfield players or some of the forwards rush back to defend, but rather with the exception of three players who were visibly attack-minded, the rest were defenders in the proper sense of the term.

What Prof Hemed Morocco did was to eliminate the midfield as an encumbrance, in the singularly appointed task of taking away balls from the Moroccan side, both the forwards and the midfielders.

So the players were playing across the entire pitch while being in every sense a defense lineup 'writ large.' That lesson was clearly grasped by some Premier League side coaches, thus adopting it against the city giants, as the usual three-phase lineup would cost

the side, easing the task for their opponents. When they meet a solid defense even way into the other half, it works.

That is the 'telephone conversation' that the coaches of the two Premier League sides noticed during the final Taifa Stars encounter in its marginally triumphant participation this year.

How far this was an innovation with the interim coach or it is a well-known philosophy is a different matter, but chances are that it is known at least among a section of coaches or when they go for professional training.

It is a workable philosophy of the game where the midfield becomes irrelevant, as the coach needs just a few players who can make a dash at goal, and all others be able to defend, properly.

It means that midfielders are auxiliary forwards rather than auxiliary defenders as the old school knew it, distinguishing between full-backs and half-backs, which was later converted to 'midfield,' chiefly attack-minded.

What this format also suggests is that the perennial preference at the highest levels of soccer leadership worldwide for attacking football where matches have many goals is a failure.

The reason is that coaches suffer less blame when the side fails to score than when it concedes or loses the lead it had by defensive laxity as was the case when Taifa Stars tackled Zambia at the AFCON finals group stage.

And with the total acclamation of the results, Prof Morocco's tactic will gradually be assimilated by more coaches, first when playing superior sides, and then in soccer.

Mashujaa goalie claims long-distance bus travel a setback to their PL survival

By Correspondent Nassir Nchimbi

MASHUJAA goalkeeper Erick Johora (pictured) has expressed that long-distance travel by bus has contributed to their lack of a win in eleven straight games as they lost 2-1 to Young Africans for the NBC Premier League at Azam Complex on Thursday.

Mashujaa equalized through Emmanuel Mtumbuka in the 64th minute to equalize Max Nzungeli's stunner on the stroke of halftime.

At 1-1, the game started afresh with Mashujaa looking sharp and dangerous when marching forward. After several hits and misses from either side, the big moment came in the 85th minute when Young Africans midfielder Mudathir Yahya rescued his side when he scored the winner.

Speaking on his team's performance and what is behind their lack of results in eleven straight games, Johora said long-distance travel by bus is among the factors leading to their setbacks in their debutant season but he is pleased by their performance.

"We had a good game. We showed

great morale and hunger for results, but we were unable to kill the game and get results. We are confident in ourselves and we will come out of the relegation zone in the upcoming fixtures

"We don't have much time to preview our previous games because we have to travel long distances to play games in a short period, something which disturbs our rhythm as players. However, we don't want to use that as an excuse for our lack of results, but that is one of the main factors," he said.

The Kigoma-based side plays Dodoma Jiji on Sunday before traveling to Kagera to face Kagera Sugar. The game will be followed by a match against Geita Gold and their final five away ties will end in Mbeya against Ihefu SC before returning home at Lake Tanganyika Stadium to face Namungo.

In their last eleven games in the NBC Premier League, Mashujaa have allowed 20 goals, scored seven, drew 2 games and lost nine games.

They are currently in the 15th place out of 16 teams after 14 games and with nine points.



Another Dar resident wins 30m/- in Magifti Dabodabo campaign

By Guardian Correspondent

LILIAN Clement, a resident of Dar es Salaam, yesterday was announced as the winner of 30 million shillings in the final draw of the Magifti Dabodabo campaign.

Speaking after being announced as the winner and receiving her prize, Lilian said she was grateful to Tigo for enabling her to get the money that will help her in her life.

Lilian said she did not believe it when she was told that she had won that amount of money until she was confirmed by Tigo staff and an event was organized to announce her.

"This money will help me to achieve my goals. I am really grateful. I will always remember this campaign and will continue to be a Tigo customer," said Lilian.

In addition, the spokesperson of the campaign, Haji Manara, said that the campaign has reached an end after awarding the last winners in the draw.

"But the end of this campaign gives an opportunity for another campaign from Tigo, Tanzanians should continue to use Tigo products and participate in future campaigns so that they can become like Lilian, and win money that will help them in their life," said Manara.

By Guardian Correspondent

THREE Tanzanians have won a chance to witness the Africa Cup of Nations (Afcon) final match between the hosts Ivory Coast 'The Elephants' and Nigeria 'Super Eagles' slated for tomorrow at Alassane Ouattara Stadium in Abidjan, the commercial and port city.

The lucky winners of the second draw, Bakari Miki-dai, a resident of Dodoma, and Veronica Mshometa and Dickson Kabaka, both residents of Dar es Salaam, were selected recently after the winners of the first draw failed to meet the requirements, including valid travel passports.

In a farewell ceremony to the winners held in Dar es Salaam, the CRDB Bank head of cards services, Farid Seif, said they were obtained through a campaign promo that was launched in November, last year, which required customers to use their TemboCards in various financial transactions, specifically payment for goods and services.

He said CRDB Bank will cover the costs of their round-trip travel, accommodation and stadium entrance fees.

"The main criterion to win prizes, including household furniture, electronic appliances and a trip to Ivory Coast for AFCON finals, was the use of a TemboCard. These three winners we are giving farewell today emerged on top dur-



Farid Seif, head of cards services, CRDB Bank (R) hands over electronic appliances to Charles Onesmo Lyimo after emerging the winner of the bank's campaign draw. The prizes handing over ceremony was held in Dar es Salaam yesterday. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

Three win CRDB Bank's draw to attend AFCON final

ing the month of January. We are happy to say goodbye as they are heading to Abidjan to join other soccer spectators from across the world," he said.

"Apart from the winners of the trip to Abidjan, Charles Onesmo Lyimo, a resident of Dar es Salaam, has also won household furniture and electronic equipment, and he has joined Fatima Mwatime Nundu, a resident of Tanga,

who has won sofa set and table valued 8m/- during the draw held in December, last year," he said.

Seif said another winner of the second draw of the campaign organized in collaboration with Visa International was Mario Albert Casari, who walked away with electronic appliances, including TV set, fridge and sound bar.

"As the world is migrating into cashless economy,

CRDB Bank has taken every step to ensure the use of alternative payment channels by introducing TemboCard, which is accepted all over the world," he said. "There is now no need to walk with cash because everything can be done through TemboCard," he added.

Earlier, CRDB Bank sponsored the travel of Hamis Shaban Taletat, the Member of Parliament, Morogoro South, as well as Ev-

elyne Gasper Rwebugisa, Josephine William Marealle and Dickson Christian Kabaka, residents of Dar es Salaam, to Ivory Coast to witness the AFCON opening matches.

"I am happy to win this chance to travel to Ivory Coast through Dubai and I believe, I will learn a lot through this trip," said Veronica Mshometa, the winner of the trip.

Liverpool must steady title challenge as chasing pack close in

LONDON

LIVERPOOL must come to terms with a rare domestic loss as the Premier League leaders fight to get back on track this weekend.

Beaten at Arsenal last Sunday, if Jurgen Klopp's side slip up again at home to Burnley, then either Manchester City or the Gunners could knock Liverpool out of pole position.

AFP Sport looks at three key talking points ahead of the latest round of matches:

"Title destiny in Liverpool's hands

Jurgen Klopp has told his Liverpool players to "create their own destiny" in the title race, starting with Saturday's visit to struggling Burnley.

After losing 3-1 against third-placed Arsenal last weekend, Klopp's men are just two points ahead of second-placed Manchester City, with Mikel Arteta's Gunners also trailing the leaders by the same margin.

It was only Liverpool's second league defeat this term and Klopp said: "We didn't lose recently an awful lot of football games, we know that."

"That means dealing with defeats is a challenge, for humankind actually. Nobody here expects that we just will fly over Burnley or whatever."

Klopp, in the midst of his final season in charge of Liverpool, knows his side can ill-afford to crash against second-bottom Burnley and he called on them to seize the moment rather than fear it.

"It's a home game and we can turn things around, meaning the first step, and then we will see," he said.

"Nobody celebrates the champion and nobody is relegated as far as I know, so we have all the chance to create our own destiny."

"Humble' Arsenal ready for photo finish

Martin Odegaard insists Arsenal will remain "humble" after being criticised by some pundits for 'over-celebrating' their vital victory against Liverpool.

Gunners boss Mikel Arteta embarked on a jubilant jig down the touchline after Leandro Trossard's stoppage-time goal killed off their title rivals at the raucous Emirates Stadium.

Arsenal captain Odegaard led the post-match celebrations on the pitch, taking a camera from the club's photographer to snap the joyous scenes following a result which reignited his team's bid for a first title since 2004.

"I think everyone who loves football, who understands football, they know how much it means to win this game. And if you're not allowed to celebrate when you win a game, when are you allowed to celebrate?" he said.

"We're happy with the win and we'll stay humble. It was a massive game. As you say it could have been eight points (if we'd lost) and it would look a lot more difficult then but we showed up."

Arsenal, who blew an eight-point lead in the title race last season, can keep the pressure on Liverpool with a victory in Sunday's London derby at West Ham.

Champions Manchester City host Everton on Saturday aiming to stay one step ahead of Arsenal.

"Blunt Blades face crunch clash

Sheffield United manager Chris Wilder has warned his players to block out the narrative that they are destined for relegation.

The Blades sit bottom of the Premier League, 10 points from safety, after last week's 5-0 hammering by Aston Villa.

Time is running out to avoid an immediate return to the Championship and Wilder's side are desperate to beat fellow strugglers Luton on Saturday.

United would cut the gap on fourth-bottom Luton to seven points with victory at Kenilworth Road, but a loss could be fatal to their survival bid.

"The narrative will be how well they're doing as a promoted side and how poor we are at the moment," Wilder said.

"We have to try and turn that into a positive. There's no hiding place in the Premier League."

Fixtures (all times GMT):

Today (1500 unless stated)

Fulham v Bournemouth, Liverpool v Burnley, Luton v Sheffield United, Manchester City v Everton (1230), Nottingham Forest v Newcastle (1730), Tottenham v Brighton, Wolves v Brentford

Tomorrow

Aston Villa v Manchester United (1630), West Ham v Arsenal (1400)

Monday

Crystal Palace v Chelsea (2000)

AFP



Back from the dead: Ivory Coast on verge of remarkable AFCON triumph



Ivory Coast players celebrate after beating DR Congo in Wednesday's Africa Cup of Nations semi-final. Agencies

ABIDJAN

IVORY Coast's victory over the Democratic Republic of Congo in the Africa Cup of Nations semi-finals on Wednesday leaves them just 90 minutes away from completing arguably the most remarkable turnaround in major international tournament history.

Sebastien Haller's goal was enough to give the host nation a 1-0 win over DR Congo at the Ebimpe Olympic Stadium and set up a final date at the same venue tomorrow against Nigeria.

Just like five years ago

in Egypt -- when Algeria beat Senegal 1-0 in the first round and did so again to win the title -- the AFCON final will be contested between two teams who met in the group stage.

Ivory Coast lost 1-0 to the Nigerians in Abidjan on January 18 and followed that by suffering a harrowing 4-0 loss to Equatorial Guinea four days later.

It was their heaviest ever home defeat and it made them the first Cup of Nations hosts to lose two group matches since the Ivorians themselves in 1984.

Coach Jean-Louis Gasset was sacked, and the team

waited to find out if they would somehow stay in the competition thanks to other results.

In the end they did, scraping through as the last of the four best third-placed teams, saved because Ghana conceded twice in injury time to draw with Mozambique in their last group match.

Emerse Fae, the former Elephants midfielder who had never managed a team before, took over on an interim basis, albeit only after an audacious attempt to hire Ivory Coast's 2015 AFCON-winning coach Herve Renard on a short-term deal failed.

He has overseen an astonishing revival.

"After the humiliation against Equatorial Guinea, we looked ourselves in the mirror and said what needed to be said," admitted midfielder Franck Kessie. "We saw we couldn't do any worse."

They ousted holders Senegal on penalties in the last 16 after being saved by a late penalty equaliser from Kessie in normal time.

Then they somehow beat Mali in the quarter-finals, coming back from a goal down to win 2-1 in extra time despite playing most of the match down to

10 men.

'-Can't die twice'

Their equaliser arrived in the 90th minute, before Oumar Diakite scored the winner in added time in extra time.

Wednesday's semi-final was all rather routine in comparison.

"We are not invincible but it is our mentality," Simon Adingra, the vibrant Brighton and Hove Albion winger, told broadcaster Canal Plus Afrique.

"We were out of the tournament and then brought back in, so now we can't commit any more errors."

"As we say here, we are al-

ready dead, so we can't die twice."

From finding themselves on the verge of being just the second AFCON hosts to go out in the group stage in 30 years, they now hope to become the first host country to win the trophy since Egypt in 2006.

Then it was Ivory Coast who lost the final on penalties to the Pharaohs, with Fae in the team alongside Didier Drogba and the Toure brothers.

Fae, who turned 40 on the day he took charge of the side here, deserves immense credit for the work he has done in so little time.

Born in France to Ivorian parents, he played there for most of his career as a midfielder with Nantes and Nice, although there was also a brief spell in the English Premier League at Reading.

But problems with phlebitis caused him to stop playing aged just 28.

Fae has already enjoyed success at international level -- he played alongside Florent Sinama Pongolle and Anthony Le Tallec in the France team that won the Under-17 World Cup in 2001, beating Nigeria in the final.

Now he is hoping to overcome the Nigerians again and deliver a third Cup of Nations crown for Ivory Coast.

"It is a beautiful final. It gives us the chance to avenge our defeat in the group stage," he told Canal Plus Afrique.

"As a player I won the Under-17 World Cup after losing the first game against Nigeria and then beating them in the final, so maybe that is a sign."

AFP

Nigeria captain Troost-Ekong dreams of lifting trophy

ABIDJAN

NIGERIA captain William Troost-Ekong says lifting the Africa Cup of Nations trophy would be an "amazing" moment for him and the country.

The Super Eagles beat South Africa on penalties to reach Sunday's final in Abidjan, where they will face tournament hosts Ivory Coast (20:00 GMT). Nigeria have reached their first final since 2013, when the West Africans won their third continental title.

"You dream about moments like that," centre-back Troost-Ekong told BBC Sport Africa.

"I've seen it so many times. And I've closed my eyes. To actually be there on Sunday and have the chance to do that will be amazing."

Nigeria were not among the leading contenders for the trophy before the finals, given their lacklustre showing in their opening two qualifiers for the 2026 World Cup and their position as the sixth-best team in Africa according to Fifa's world rankings.

However, the Super Eagles have been the top-ranked side at the tournament since the end of the last 16, where holders Senegal, Morocco and record seven-time champions Egypt all exited.

Nigeria manager Jose Peseiro says he has always had faith in his side, who were the top scorers in qualifying for the finals with 22 goals.

"When I signed the con-



Nigeria players, including William Troost-Ekong (centre), felt both relief and joy after beating South Africa on penalties after conceding a 90th-minute equalizer. Agencies

tract, I said I want to win the Afcon," the Portuguese told BBC Sport Africa.

"Either way, I don't know if everybody believed or not. I have believed since the first moment."

"We haven't won nothing until now - we want to win the Afcon."

Nigeria had looked like they would close out victory against South Africa inside 90 minutes on Wednesday, with Troost-Ekong's penalty putting them ahead in the 67th minute.

Victor Osimhen thought he had made it 2-0 with five minutes to go - but in a major twist Bafana Bafana were awarded a penalty for a foul in the build-up to that goal following a Video Assistant Referee review, allowing Teboho Mokoena to

equalise. "It's good VAR because it was a penalty against us," Peseiro conceded.

"But for us, for our minds, it was not good because we

were winning 2-0 and then we were drawing 1-1."

Khuliso Mudau almost won it for South Africa in second-half added time before a nervy 30 minutes

of extra time and Nigeria's eventual 4-2 triumph on penalties.

"This was a hard one. I think we showed real character," defender Calvin

Bassey told BBC Sport Africa.

"It just shows we could do the dirty work. We just had to keep believing in ourselves."

"[South Africa were] a well-organised team, a quality team. To outdo them on penalties, it's crazy."

"Kudos to all the boys that stood up and took [a penalty]. It's not easy to go out there with the pressure and they kept calm."

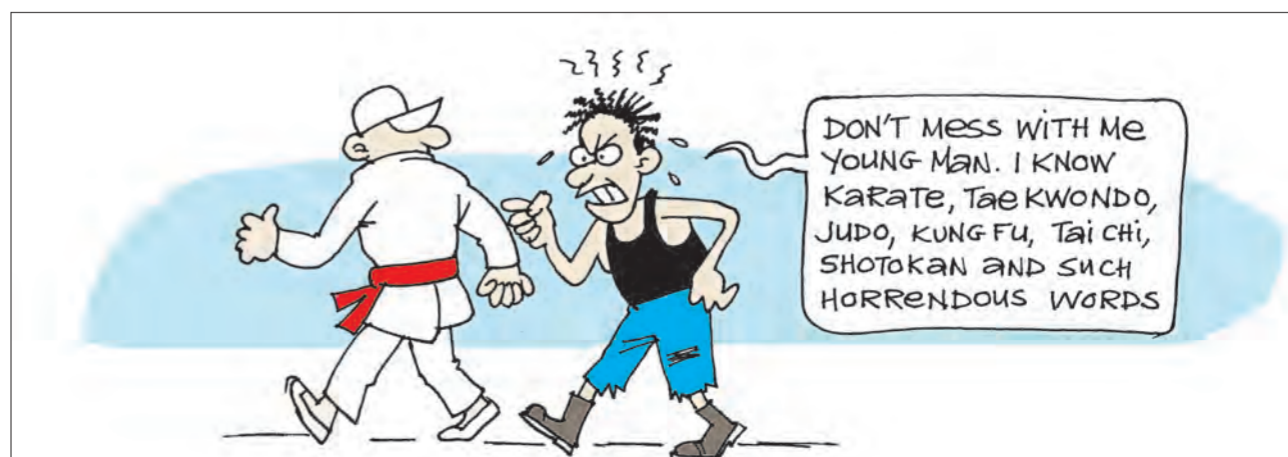
Goalkeeper Stanley Nwabali was the hero in the shootout for the Super Eagles, denying Mokoena and Evidence Makgopa before Kelechi Iheanacho netted to clinch victory.

"Seeing myself winning the man of the match (award) and also going to the final is a dream come true to me," Nwabali, who plays his club football in South Africa, said.

"Credit to my coaches, because when it's penalty time, they guide me a lot."

BBC

Gwiji by David Chikoko



SPORT

Nigeria captain Troost-Ekong dreams of lifting trophy



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Bakari Shime names Twiga squad to face South Africa in Olympic qualifiers

By Correspondent Michael Mwebe

A SQUAD of 24 Twiga Stars players has been summoned to commence preparations for the 2024 Paris Women's Olympic football tournament qualifiers assignment against South Africa.

Twiga Stars, Tanzania senior women's national football team, is preparing to take on South Africa over two legs in the third round of the qualifiers for the Paris Games.

Victory will see them move on to the final round of qualifying where they'll play either Nigeria or Cameroon for one of the two places that are guaranteed for African teams.

Tanzania is yet to make an appearance in the Women's Olympics.

Head coach Bakari Shime has retained most of the players that beat Botswana in the previous round with striker Aisha Masaka missing out due to an injury picked at her Swedish club, BK Häcken.

A squad of 20 local-based players will assemble for a preparation camp in Dar on Sunday.

Reigning Tanzania Women's Premier League champions, JKT Queens, provide the bulk of the local players with 12 from their book.

Four foreign-based stars led by captain Opa Clement, who play her trade in Turkey for Besiktas, are expected to join the team next week.

The Tanzania senior women's team ended 2023 on a high after qualifying for the 2024 Women's Africa Cup of Nations following a victory against Togo.

Coach Shime will be hoping to carry that same spirit as the team goes into the third round of the qualifiers against the highly rated South Africa.

The team is expected to begin with the first leg at home on Monday, February 19, 2024, followed by the second leg away in South Africa on Wednesday, February 28, 2024.

Twiga Stars squad for the 2024 third-round Olympic qualifiers and preparation camp:

Goalkeepers: Najat Abasi (JKT Queens), Asha Mrisho (Amani Queens), Husna Mtunda (Yanga Princess)

Defenders: Juletha Singano (Juarez, Mexico), Anastazia Katunzi (JKT Queens), Christer Bahera (JKT Queens), Fatuma Issa (Simba Queens), Violetta Nicholas (Simba Queens), and Happy Hezron (JKT Queens).

Midfielders: Ester Mabanza (JKT Queens), Aquila Gasper (Fountain Gate Princess), Stumai Abdallah (JKT Queens), Eneka Kasonga (Eastern Flames, Saudi Arabia), Joyce Lema (JKT Queens), Janet Christopher (JKT Queens), Amina Bilali (JKT Queens), Diana Lucas (Ame, Turkey), Hasnat Ubamba (Fountain Gate Princess), Irene Kisisa (Yanga Princess)

Forwards: Opa Clement (pictured) (Besiktas, Turkey), Aisha Juma (Simba Queens), Donisia Minja (JKT Queens), Winfrida Gerald (JKT Queens), Jamila Rajab (JKT Queens)



Gamondi salutes Yanga's fighting spirit after Mashujaa victory



Young Africans midfielder Max Nzegeli is followed closely by Mashujaa FC players during their NBC Premier League match at Chamazi Complex in Dar es Salaam on Thursday. Young Africans won 2-1. PHOTO: COURTESY OF YOUNG AFRICANS SC

By Correspondent Michael Mwebe

YOUNG Africans head coach Miguel Gamondi said his team's fighting spirit helped them to stay focused even after they surrendered a one-goal lead and snatched the dramatic 2-1 win over Mashujaa in their NBC Premier League game on Thursday.

Hosts Young Africans had looked comfortable after taking up a 1-0 lead through Max Nzegeli in a dominant first half, but then allowed Mashujaa to score with their first serious attack.

Second-half substitute Emmanuel Mtumbuka scored through a rocket shot which was his first taste of action barely a minute after coming on to replace Reliants Lusajo.

In the next twenty minutes, Young Africans looked to have dropped two points until Mudathir Yahya once again grabbed a dramatic winner with four minutes to normal stoppage time.

Consequently, Mudathir has now scored game-winning goals in two consecutive games at the same minute.

It was his fourth goal of the season in 12 league appearances so far.

Speaking after the game, Gamondi was delighted with the way his side shook off the

setback to grab the vital three-point win.

"Football is very nice, it is unbelievable because in one sense it was completely dominated by Yanga. In the first half, there were two clear penalties, and I was upset. At least give one penalty and we

can play much better.

"I told my players to be careful because one goal is not a big difference. And after only one action they scored a goal. It was very difficult to come back. But the fighting spirit, they put everything needed and believed. Hap-

pily, we scored the goal and we won three points. That's the most important thing," he said.

The result means Young Africans extended their lead at the top, six points above second-placed Azam who were due to play Simba at CCM Ki-

rumba in Mwanza later yesterday.

The defending champions' busy fixtures list continues with another assignment tomorrow when they make the trip to Mbeya to face Tanzania Prison.

Yanga players eye more points to retain Premier League title

By Correspondent Nassir Nchimbi



YOUNG Africans SC players have expressed their determination to collect more points in their race to retain the NBC Premier League title for the third time in a row following their 2-1 win against Mashujaa FC at Azam complex on Thursday.

Mudathir Yahya late winner ensured the defending champions moved six points clear before Simba SC and Azam FC squared off at CCM Kirumba in Mwanza later yesterday.

Speaking on the game and their season ambitions, the team captain and central defender, Dickson

Job, said they aim to collect three points without losing or dropping two points as the league second round phase brings tough opposition after the mini transfer signings for the majority of teams.

"The match against Mashujaa was tough because they are in the relegation zone, and after their equalizer, we had to push up front to get a winner because now we can't afford to drop points," said Job.

"We need to defend our league title that is why it is very important to get wins at home. Our next two fixtures we play away and that was important for us to pick up a win and build momentum," said the defender, who urged fans to

show up in huge numbers for their match against Tanzania Prisons on Sunday.

Returning to the squad and making his league debut for Young Africans, former Simba SC winger Augustine Okrah said he did not expect to return faster to the squad after nursing his foot injury he picked at the Mapinduzi Cup.

"I did not expect to come back early. My injury was severely disturbing me, but I thank the club doctors for taking care of me and trainers that guided me on my rehab to make my return," said Okrah, who was signed in the January mini-transfer window from Bechum United of Ghana.

"We got a win in 90 minutes and the team win is what matters the most as I push for game time. We need to be solid in every game. We have to avoid conceding many goals and ensure to score early goals so we can have a comfortable game," said the Ghanaian.

Midfielder Max Nzegeli registered the first goal for Young Africans on the stroke of halftime before a stunning shot by Emmanuel Mtumbuka in the 64th minute equalized for Mashujaa FC.

Yanga now have 37 points at the top of the league followed by Azam with 31 points and Simba are third with 29 points before their match later yesterday.

Flexibles by David Chikoko

EVEN CHEMISTRY SAYS, LOVE IS...



... a STRANGE SUBSTANCE!