



**National Pg 2**  
RC wants FGM performers arrested



**National Pg 3**  
Tourism sector under threat



**National Pg 4**  
Songea airport expansion



Page 13



## PM: Union, Z'bar authorities' economic vision sustainable

### Govt roots for private sector with tax-GDP rates still low

By Guardian Reporter

BUILDING a strong private sector is vital to expand the tax base and address unemployment as the tax collection rate in the Gross Domestic Product is still low, the government has declared.

Dr Mwigulu Nchemba (pictured), the Finance and Planning minister, made this observation yesterday at a tax symposium, pointing out that the private sector is the right tool in addressing unemployment as it would absorb rising numbers of graduates left to roam the streets every year.

The symposium had significant attendance of the Tanzania Revenue Authority (TRA), mingling with private sector executives under the theme 'policy change for people centered development'.

Over one million school leavers at various levels entering the labour market each year, with the public sector and the civil service taking up a small portion of that number, he said.



...the trend shows the country has an opportunity to expand its tax base to meet levels of other sub-Saharan countries

Public sector capacity for absorbing graduates has diminished over the years, with the rule of the private sector rising over time. There was a time that students were being asked to choose areas they prefer to be employed while still in school, he recalled.

Anyone starting a business should be respected and obtain enabling support as in doing so such a person is contributing to providing employment and widening the tax base, he told the gathering.

"We should think of taxes as inputs for national development and the platform as an avenue for giving out positive views to propel the country's development," he said.

He reiterated the revenue authorities' demand that they ought to claim receipts when buying and selling goods to ensure that the country is not denied of revenues, noting also that some sellers evade through issuance of inaccurate receipts not matching the value of goods sold.

"There are business people who are doing such things and the bad thing is that it is done in collaboration as most of these people think the tax belongs to TRA," he said.

The tendency is tantamount to economic sabotage because doing so makes the

TURN TO PAGE 2



Othman Hussein (R), a human resources officer with Kilindini Hotel of Pwani Mchangani in Unguja's North A District, pictured yesterday briefing Prime Minister Kassim Majaliwa on the facility. The PM had just launched the hotel as part of the countdown to the climax of celebrations to mark the 59th anniversary of the January 12 Zanzibar Revolution. Photo: PMO

By Guardian Reporter

PRIME Minister Kassim Majaliwa has declared that President Samia Suluhu Hassan and Zanzibar President Dr Hussein Ali Mwinyi have a sustainable strategy to promote the flow of investments, involving the private sector in more economic activities to build a stronger economy.

He made this assertion yesterday when launching Kilindini Hotel, a tourist facility at Pwani mchangani village in Unguja North A District as part of activities to mark 59 years of the Zanzibar Revolution.

He similarly acknowledged that the Zanzibar Investment Promotion Authority (ZIPA) has registered a total of 215 projects worth \$3.2bn in the past two years since President Mwinyi assumed office.

Projects inaugurated during the celebrations are expected to provide more than 13,000 jobs, he stated, noting that these achievements in the two year period



Out of them, 452 or 37 percent are hotel projects, with 38 hotels being classified as upmarket tourist facilities

of the eighth phase presidency result from measures to ease investment flows, in line with policies of the ruling party, he said.

The people have every reason to respect the revolution because it was a major instrument to free them from clutches of rulers discriminating against them in various fields in their own country, he said.

Marking the revolution is an important aspect of history as it is an occasion to remember how poor farmers and workers refused to be discriminated against in their own land, he stated.

The prevailing peace in the country has been a factor in attracting many foreign investors, making Unguja and Pemba prime destinations for tourism and related

TURN TO PAGE 2

## Samia stresses education, school environment uplift

By Guardian Reporter

THE Union and Zanzibar governments will make sure that the right to education is accessible to all school going children, as well as the ability to access secondary school wherever they obtain good pass marks, President Samia Suluhu Hassan has declared.

Opening Mwanakwerekwe Primary

School in Zanzibar as part of events to mark 59 years of the Zanzibar Revolution, he said that this will be done by boosting school facilities to match the rising number of enrolment in primary schools.

Zuhura Yunus, the director of presidential communications at the State House, detailed her remarks in a statement that both the Union and Zanzibar governments are working to

ensure that there is a friendly environment for teaching and learning.

The key aspect is reducing congestion in classrooms to not more than 45 pupils per class so that teachers can exercise personal attention on pupils to ensure that they are coping with lessons, she said.

The president said that allocating funds for community development

TURN TO PAGE 2



Students pictured in Dar es Salaam yesterday aboard one of the buses which the city's rapid transit agency has set aside, specifically with a view to easing their peak-hour morning and evening travel from home to school and back. Photo: Correspondent Joseph Mwendapole

## DART allocates four large buses for pupils, at 6:20am

By Correspondent Joseph Mwendapole

THE Dar es Salaam Rapid Transit Agency (DART) has allocated four large capacity buses early in the morning and early evening to take primary and secondary school learners along the Mbezi-Kimara-Gerezani and Kivukoni major routes.

Dr Philemon Mzee, the director of operations and infrastructure management, said in an interview yesterday that the move is meant to boost implementation of the free education policy as easing transportation improves the learning environment.

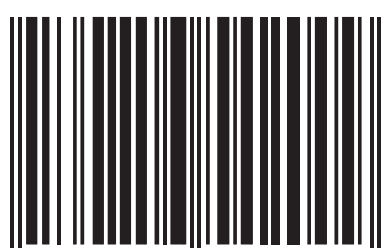
The learners will exclusively board the buses from 6:00am to 6:20am when the buses leave major stations. Two buses will take the learners on the Kimara to Kivukoni route and the other two to Gerezani.

The buses will make return trips with the learners in the evening, starting from Kivukoni to Kimara and Gerezani to Kimara at 4:30pm and 5pm respectively.

DART started with two buses in 2021 but the response shows increasing demand so it decided to add two more buses, he said, pointing out that the buses are the bigger type with a capacity for 150 adults.

So far learners from six schools in Kimara, seven schools in Kivukoni and 14 schools in the Gerezani zone use the special services, he elaborated, noting that the service followed a survey on learners' needs along the

TURN TO PAGE 2



9 770856 542009 >



## Govt roots for private sector with tax-GDP rates still low

FROM PAGE 1

government fail to deliver on key economic projections, he stated, insisting that it is time people realise that taxes do not belong to TRA but are the backbone of national expectations and that is essential.

Juma Msuya, a participant at the symposium, said it was important for TRA to conduct such meetings to allow business operators to air their grievances.

"Many people do not know the relevance of paying tax and thus the reluctance to pay arises from lack of knowledge that it is for development," he ventured to say.

He expressed surprise at the breadth of the country's informal sector to formal business entities,

despite that Tanzania is the second largest economy in the East African Community (EAC), discounting the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) as it is largely outside EAC databases at present.

Average revenue collection for sub-Saharan African countries stands at 15.1 percent of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) while developed countries collect 40 percent of their GDP, he said, noting that such revenue levels allow them to cater for their needs.

Tanzania's revenue collection is still well below the average for sub-Saharan Africa, but "the trend shows the country has an opportunity to expand its tax base to meet levels of other sub-Saharan countries," he added.

## DART allocates four large buses for pupils, at 6:20am

FROM PAGE 1

BRT corridor.

The schools whose data was collected include Muhimbili, Olympio, Gerezani and Mchikichini primary schools, he said, citing efforts to assist learners and other groups with special needs.

He asserted that DART prioritises the elderly, those living with disabilities and expectant mothers, who are supposed to be left to take available seats, and where possible, enabled to board the buses ahead of others.

Those boarding at middle stations are given seats as bus inspectors ask passengers to vacate seats for the special needs passengers, the director asserted.

Derrick Mwambe, a pupil at Mtendeni primary school said the service is a blessing to pupils as they can comfortably dash to school and

back home later.

Earlier the pupils were struggling to get transport as commuter buses take in limited numbers at a time, thus arriving late at school.

"I am happy that the trips are comfortable as it's only us who are carried in the buses during that time; we can now return home on time," he said.

Arodia John of Mnazi Mmoja primary school said the service has enabled them to find learning enjoyable.

Farida Kisenga, mother of a pupil at Uhuru Girls primary school, lauded the agency for the service, as it eases schooling and reduces parents' worries.

The number of pupils in some schools has doubled, making sufficient transportation to school and back home in the evening more challenging, the DART executive noted.

## Arrest all 'ngaribas', parents and leaders who engage in FGM acts, police in Tarime-Rorya instructed

By Guardian Correspondent, Musoma

MARA regional government has directed the Police Force in Tarime-Rorya to arrest all people including mutilators (ngaribas), parents and village leaders who have engaged in implementing female genital mutilation (FGM) acts to 70 girls during end of the year holiday.

Regional Commissioner (RC) Suleiman Mzee issued the directive here during his tour to inspect houses that had been keeping the girls before and after the action.

According to him, traditional leaders have been utilising the holiday season to implement the violence but some girls have been succeeding to run away and seek support from non-governmental organisations.

Some of the girls who run from the homes were rescued and helped by one of the NGOs at Masanga village in Ngorong'a ward, Tarime District educating them how to overcome the psychological torture and protect themselves from other harms.

"Unfortunately, only three days

after the girls came out of the centre so as to go to school, they were taken to FGM, this is intolerable and we will act upon those who have engaged in this violent act," he said.

He wanted parents of the 70 circumcised girls to be arrested and send them to court to face their charges.

The RC urged leaders in the region to assess their performance and see if they are doing enough to fight the violence actions against women, girls and children.

"During the end of year holiday season, we received a total of 750 girls who ran away from FGM and we promised to issue 5m/- so as to support children who are still staying at the centre," he added.

Yusufu Chacha, chairman of Msurura village advised citizens to shun away from the harmful customs and support their children to go to school so as to achieve their goals.

Yuritha Albert, a resident at the area condemned the incidents calling upon the government to strengthen efforts so as to deal with the culprits who ruin lives of the girls.

## Samia stresses education, school environment uplift

FROM PAGE 1

including education, water and health facilities was a pivotal aspect of what the two governments are doing at present, so that the people can benefit from these services.

She similarly praised the Zanzibar education authorities for their recent measure to form a task force to advise the government on essential changes in the education system.

This is intended to ensure that the delivery of education satisfies the need to adapt to a world of science and technology in the third decade of the 21st century, she stated.

She cautioned that the pace of

implementation of the Zanzibar 2050 Vision and the Zanzibar Development Plan will depend on the availability of experts from the education sector, thus the need to lay greater efforts in revamping education.

In the circumstances, the government was focused on developing the infrastructure for generating experts, when training institutions are providing field arrangements consonant with their needs.

This will enable Zanzibar people to benefit from the use of sea-based resources through boosting the blue economy strategy among other things, she added.



Ali Khamis Juma, Permanent Secretary in Zanzibar's Trade and Industrial Development ministry, presents to Zanzibar First Lady Mariam Mwinzi an award in appreciation of her contribution to the promotion of the well-being of young women and children. This is including in her capacity as Zanzibar Maisha Bora Foundation chairperson. The event was held at Unguja's Maisara grounds yesterday as part of the run-up to the climax of celebrations to mark the 59th anniversary of the January 12 Zanzibar Revolution. Photo: Zanzibar State House

## PM: Union, Z'bar authorities' economic vision sustainable

FROM PAGE 1

investments, he said.

He expressed appreciation to investors for choosing Zanzibar as a destination, saying the choice has something to do with the beauty of our islands and profound faith in

our future.

Shariff Ali Shariff, the ZIPA executive director, said the project was initiated by Elias and Rabih Michel, an Italian couple, together with Monica and Oscar Seavendra Perez, a Spanish couple, costing

\$13m (30bn/-). The hotel has recruited 62 employees, mostly locals.

Dr Habiba Omar, the Labour, Economic Affairs and Investment principal secretary at the President's Office, said that upwards of 1,225

projects have been registered through ZIPA, showing a total value of \$16.4bn.

Out of them, 452 or 37 percent are hotel projects, with 38 hotels being classified as upmarket tourist facilities, she added.



Angel Navuri Mvati, for a long 15 years a member of The Guardian Limited staff - including as Advertising and Projects manager, feeds a cake to The Guardian newspaper managing editor Wallace Mauggo at a brief farewell ceremony held in the TGL newsroom in Dar es Salaam yesterday. She was bidding her colleagues end-of-contract goodbye. To Mauggo's right is Nipashe newspaper managing editor Beatrice Bandawe. Photo: John Badi

## Nape assures reliable communication at SUA Mizengo Pinda Katavi campus

By Guardian Correspondent, Katavi

NAPE Nnauye, Minister for Information, Communications and Information Technology has assured the Sokoine University of Agriculture (SUA), Mizengo Pinda Campus and residents of Mpimbwe District in Katavi Region residents to get reliable communication for both mobile phones and radio before June this year.

Nnauye made the pledge Tuesday during his official visit at the Campus accompanied by senior officials from various institutions under his ministry, including Tanzania Telecommunications Company Limited (TTCL), Tanzania Communications Regulatory Authority (TCRA), Universal Communications Service Access

Fund (UCSAF) and Tanzania Broadcasting Corporation (TBC).

The visit aimed at Tanzania border regions to assess reception of communications services by the people in the said areas.

He said as for now communications is everything and in future it will become another big issue and will reach a stage whereby without communications is as better as one not being alive, hence the government will make sure to have in place reliable communications services as they are part of human activities.

He said he had met with retired Prime Minister Mizengo Pinda telling him that at Kibaoni Ward there is a SUA Campus named after him, but they face communications challenges due network problems

that impact on research activities at the campus.

Speaking on how to solve the problem, TTCL Director General, Eng Peter Ulanga said for starters they will boost network services at the campus after which to take the National BroadBand from their centre to the campus, the plan that will be finalised before June this year. "As TTCL we have held a meeting with SUA Vice Chancellor, Prof Raphael Chibunda at SUA main campus and has provided us with an area for constructing Community WiFi which students can utilise," the TTCL boss said, and added:

"Due to the importance of SUA Mizengo Pinda Campus we shall do the same and in case they provide us with an area we shall construct a communication tower for use

by TTCL lines - 2G, 3G and 4G we shall allow for the same tower to be used TIGO after making their co-location."

For his part, UCSAF Director General, Justine Mashiba said it is the responsibility to take communications services to rural areas as telecom firms have discovered that people in rural areas do not benefit from these services, hence the government will increase its subsidy for them to access communications services.

Earlier, reading a short report from the Campus, the Head of SUA Mizengo Pinda Campus, Prof Josia Katani said apart from great achievements attained since the establishment of the campus in 2019, they still face various challenges including communications.







## Kahama municipal council sets aside 100m/- to support youth farmers with subsidized inputs

By Guardian Correspondent, Kahama

KAHAMA Municipal council in Shinyanga Region has set aside 100m/- so as to support youth farmers with subsidized agriculture inputs and enable them to expand farms to produce more crops.

District executive director (DED), Anderson Msumba said the move will also help overcome the inflation in food products as the region will be filled with enough food once the harvesting season commences.

Msumba said that prices of food production have almost doubled in markets with maize flour price hiking from 1,500/- to 2,200/- per kilogramme.

He said that Kahama doesn't satisfy itself with the food produced in the region and it has been importing it from other regions.

"Every year, the council has been setting aside 70m/- to purchase inputs and distribute them to youth farmers who have capacity to cultivate five acres and above of both food and commercial crops and for this year the amount has increased to 100m/-," he said. He said that the council engages in the production of various crops such as maize at 97 per cent, rice-89 per cent and cotton having a total of 180,532.5 land which is suitable for farming.

"Despite having all these acres, production is still very low as the majority of the farmers are not adhering to modern farming practices, something which produces low harvest, but things are now changing as the government is working hard to transform the sector by educating farmers and supporting them with required tools," he explained.

Msumba said that the government has deployed extension officers in every ward to enable farmers to access services easily as the officers are able to reach them and advise on the better farming practices.

"The government hasn't only deployed the extension officers, but it is also supporting farmers with subsidized farming tools and inputs as well as machines to test soil's health so as to identify the type of soil and which crops can grow on it," he asserted.

According to him, issuance of farming inputs through the council's internal revenues is a big step and an opportunity for youth to increase investment in farming.

Agness Ezekiel, one of the farmers commended the council for coming up with the system to support farmers with tools and inputs, something which has lifted up the majority of youth who had lost direction of life due to lack of employment and capital.

"A number of college and university graduates were in the streets with nothing to do, as they haven't secured job and have no capital, it was even hard for them to engage in serious farming due to lack of inputs, but with the support from the council, they are currently spending time in farms and see light," she said.

She said that climate change has brought negative impacts in various sectors including agriculture, something which needs farmers to adopt innovative ways to conduct farming and see productivity.

"This includes planting drought resistant crops as well as adhering to the advice given by experts so as to get enough harvests," she added. Leonard Masawe said that inflation in major food products was threatening as in their area, maize flour is sold at 2500/- per kg from the previous 1500/-.

*"This includes planting drought resistant crops as well as adhering to the advice given by experts so as to get enough harvests"*



Simanjiro district commissioner Dr Suleiman Serera (3rd-L) pictured yesterday checking the list of newly enrolled students at Simanjiro Secondary School. He was leading members of the district's defence and security committee during an inspection tour of various schools. Photo: Correspondent Giff Thadey

## Police in Rukwa holding five 'in connection with poaching'

By Guardian Correspondent, Sumbawanga

POLICE in Rukwa Region are holding five people for allegedly being involved in poaching within the Lwafi Game Reserve in Nkasi District where they were found with two dead buffaloes worth 11m/-.

According to Rukwa Regional Police Commander Shadrack Masija, the incident took place on 9th January at around 1: PM midnight within the forest.

He said the police in collaboration with wildlife officers from the forest set up a trap to nab the suspects and were apprehended and were found in possession of the dead animals.

Masija said the law enforcers also managed

to seize two guns (Rifles) logged with 28 bullets which were used in the incident.

Asubuhi Kasunga conservator of Lwafi Game Reserve (GR) said the officers received information from well wishers over the availability of the suspects within the forest and managed to arrest them.

He said early investigations showed the suspects had killed two buffaloes which are worth 11m/-.

The regional police boss named the suspects as Selemani Hemed (27) Selemani Hillali (29) Humud Mohammed (28) and Galus Sambi (28) all residents of Sumbawanga.

All the suspects are expected to appear before the court to face poaching charges according to the police.

## 'Expansion work on Songea airport 97 per cent complete'

By Guardian Correspondent, Mbinga

WORK on Songea airport expansion in Ruvuma Region is now at 97 per cent and is expected to be handed to the government on January 30.

Submitting his report on the airport's expansion and refurbishment to the Ruvuma regional commissioner, TANROADS regional manager Ephatar Mlavi said the government extended more than 37bn/- to the project.

Mlavi said the project was implemented by CHICCO from China as its main contractor for a period of 20 months beginning September 2019.

He mentioned some of the works done to the airport as including the lengthening of the runway from 1,625 meters to 1,740 meters.

"Other works include the expansion of the airport's safety areas, expansion to the apron, construction of a new passengers waiting room, construction of a new planes emergency parking area and painting over signs on the runway," he said.

He said other works done on the airport include the digging of drainage ditches, erection of a perimeter fence around the airport area, construction of reserve roads for inspection of aircrafts' safety, fixing of aircraft navigation lights and the installation of communications equipment.

However, he said in general the implementation of the entire project has reached 97 per cent and that the remaining works include the installation of electrical water pump and other minor works.

Addressing reporters after inspecting the project, Ruvuma Regional Commissioner, Col Laban Thomas thanked President Samia Suluhu Hassan for sanctioning funds for the project as well as for other big strategic projects for the region.

The RC said Ruvuma Region residents now want to see all projects are completed by 100 per cent and are anxious for planes to start landing during the night at Songea Airport.

He said the need for air passenger services in Ruvuma Region is great whereas now the residents want both day and night flights using ATCL planes.

Meanwhile, Songea District Commissioner, Polelet Mgema said Songea Region now has a modern airport that will enable to fly to and from Songea day and night.

He said Ruvuma Region has many tourist attractions which can now be easily reached by air.

Songea Airport Manager Jordan Mchami said before the government introduced ATCL flights, people to and from Songea with financial ability used to fly at great expenses with the fare close to 1m/-.

He said the airport can now cater for Bombardier type of aircraft that carry 76 passengers.

*He said Ruvuma Region has many tourist attractions which can now be easily reached by air*



### THE REVOLUTIONARY GOVERNMENT OF ZANZIBAR MINISTRY OF LAND AND HOUSING DEVELOPMENT



## HAPPY 59<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF ZANZIBAR REVOLUTION

The Management and Staff of the **Ministry of Land and Housing Development Zanzibar** conveys sincere congratulations to **Hon. Dr. Hussein Ali Mwinyi**, President of Zanzibar and Chairman of the Revolutionary Council and to all Tanzanians on the 59<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Zanzibar Revolution.

**HAPPY REVOLUTION DAY**

Hon. Dr. Hussein Ali Mwinyi  
President of Zanzibar and Chairman of the Revolutionary

#### ADDRESS

25 Julius Nyerere Road  
P.o.box 238  
70473 URBAN WEST  
ZANZIBAR\_TANZANIA  
info@ardhismz.go.tz





THE REVOLUTIONARY GOVERNMENT OF ZANZIBAR  
ZANZIBAR AIRPORT AUTHORITY (ZAA)



## 59<sup>th</sup> YEAR'S OF REVOLUTION

# ZAA'S ACHIEVEMENT DURING THE 59 YEARS OF THE REVOLUTIONARY GOVERNMENT OF ZANZIBAR

Zanzibar Airport Authority (ZAA) is a Zanzibar government institution established by Act No 8 of 2011 whose responsibility is to operate, manage airports owned by the Zanzibar Revolutionary Government.

As the Zanzibar Government lead by President Dr Hussein Ali Mwinyi. There are many things to be proud of in regard ZAA'S accomplishment. ZAA continue to set record of unprecedented revenue collection by breaking the previous records and setting new ones every quarter from the start of the new financial year 2022/2023.

The Revolutionary government of Zanzibar under the leadership of of the president of Zanzibar and the chairman of the Revolutionary council Hon. Dr Hussein Ali Mwinyi continues his deliberate efforts to

strengthen the infrastructure in the aviation sector by signing an Agreement from the construction of Pemba international airport with PROPAV construction company from Brazil which will cover the construction of a passenger building with 9170 square meters as well as the construction of a new run way of 2510 meters of length and 45 meters of width.

Also The Zanzibar Government through the Ministry of construction, Communication and Transport undertaking the feasibility study for the construction of a new passenger building (Terminal iv) at Abeid Amani Karume International Airport (AAKIA) to cater for current and future demand.

In the second quarter of the financial year 2022/2023 (October to December) ZAA has managed to

collect a total of 8.1 Billion shillings which is equivalent to an increase of 221% from 2.5 billion in the second quarter of 2019 before the outbreak of the Covid-19 (CORONA).

Recently, the Authority has announced a new record of the largest revenue collection ever achieved. ZAA collected 6,778,716,329.97 billion shillings which is equivalent to 96% increase in revenue from 2021 in the first quarter of the financial year 2022/2023 (July - September).

Head of ZAA public Relations Department Mulhat Yusuph Said says the increase of income is a result of efforts made by Zanzibar President Dr Hussein Ali Mwinyi in boosting an income of the aviation sector.

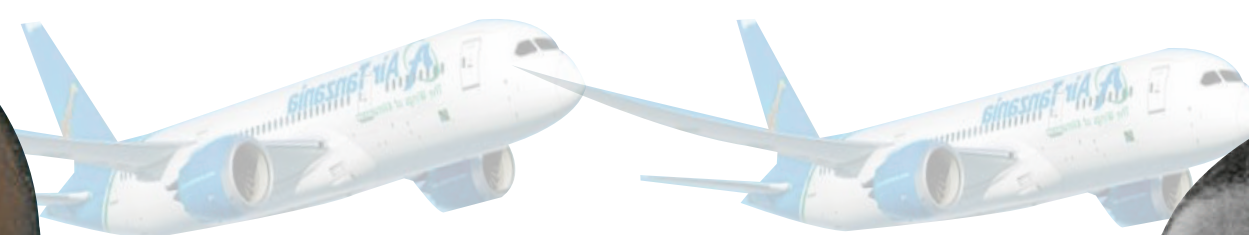
In addition, the collected income is a result of the great achievement of the Royal Tour film that starred Tanzanian President Samia Suluhu Hassan and Zanzibar President Dr Hussein Ali Mwinyi that they opened opportunities for Tourist to come in the country. Also introduces Abeid Amani Karume International Airport (AAKIA) global led to be the important source of revenue.

Hence these initiatives will boost economic sector including Tourism and trade while supporting other social areas leading to the economic development of the Island and Tanzania in General. therefore we congratulate the Zanzibar government led by our president Dr. Hussein Ali Mwinyi for continuing to take various effort to boost income from the aviation sector in the country.

## HAPPY 59<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF ZANZIBAR REVOLUTION

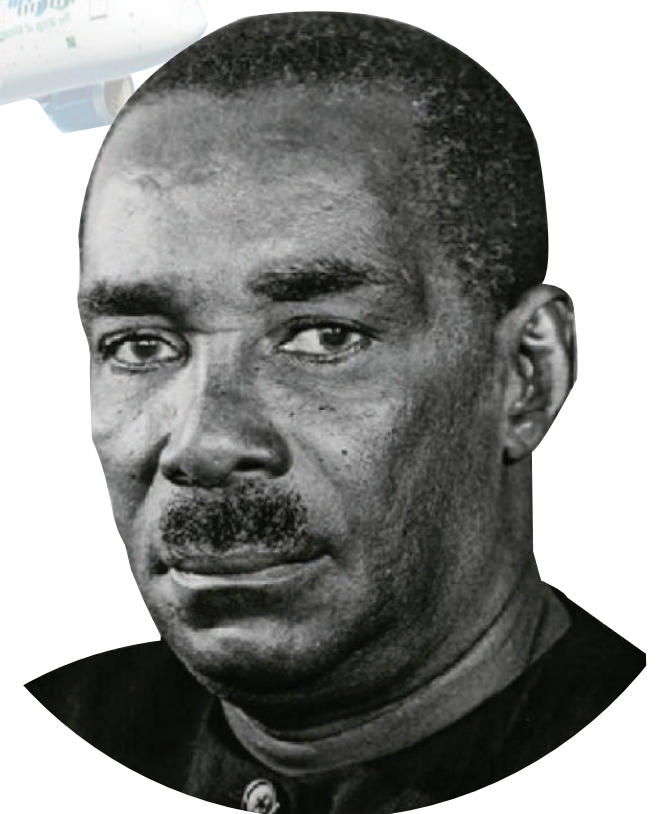


Hon. Dr. Ally Hussein Mwinyi



# 59

YEAR'S OF  
REVOLUTION



Amani Abeid Karume

The Council, Management and the Community of the **Zanzibar Airport Authority (ZAA)**, conveys sincere congratulations to **Hon. Dr. Hussein Ali Mwinyi**, President of Zanzibar and Chairman of the Revolutionary Council and to all Tanzanians on the 59<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Zanzibar Revolution.

In addition, **ZAA** joins all Tanzanians in celebrating this great day.

**HAPPY REVOLUTION DAY**

Zanzibar Airports Authority (ZAA), Kisauni Road Zanzibar,  
P.O. Box: 4742, Phone: +255 24 223 36 74, Email: [info@zaa.go.tz](mailto:info@zaa.go.tz)





Williamson Diamond Ltd Mine general manager Ayoub Mwenda has a word with residents of Ng'wanholo and Nyenze in Kishapu District, Shinyanga Region, on Tuesday. The banks of a dam at the mine burst in early November last year, with a flood of muddy waters destroying residential and other buildings as well as miscellaneous other property. He pleaded for "restraint and understanding from all those affected, as damage evaluation procedures continue to facilitate the payment of fair compensation". Photo: Correspondent Marco Maduhu

## Ng'wanholo, Nyenze villagers complain over compensation delay by mining firm

By Guardian Correspondent, Kishapu

VICTIMS of muddy water from Williamson Diamond Limited mines in Kishapu and Nyenze villages in Kishapu District, Shinyanga Region have complained about compensation delay for their plots, houses and properties affected by the waste.

According to them, their houses and properties were covered and affected by the mud after the mine's dam that was keeping dirty water broke and caused the mud to go out attacking their settlements.

Speaking here on Tuesday when the mine's general manager Ayoub Mwenda arrived at the village to listen to them, the residents complained that their lives have been greatly affected as they have no place to live and engage in economic activities.

Elias Mabele, one of the victims said that since the incident occurred on November 7, last year there is no humanitarian support done by the mine which includes compensating them. "Our farmers have also been affected and we have no area to conduct farming, this issue has brought us back, we have nothing

to do and the responsible company is not doing anything," he lamented.

Ester Nguli, also a victim, said that since last year when the incident occurred there are experts who have been passing in the areas conducting evaluation unfairly as they have been leaving a lot of properties out of the compensation list.

"The evaluation exercise is not fair, many of our properties are not considered, our destroyed farms are also not listed, we want the Mine to be fair on this and provide what is fair for everyone," she said.

Eng Mwenda urged the residents to remain calm and be patient as the Mine is finalising processes to ensure that all the victims receive their compensations.

"Those who see that some of their properties haven't been included in the list of compensation, can go to the office so as to explain on the matter and allow a new evaluation to be conducted; we conduct the exercise very fair," he said.

About 115 citizens of Ng'wanholo village, Mwadui Lohumbo ward in Kishapu District were severely affected by muddy waters from the dam when it breached in November last year.

## JET to train journalists on biodiversity conservation

By Felister Peter

THE Journalist's Environmental Association of Tanzania (JET) has organised a two-day master class training for journalists to furnish them with sufficient knowledge on corridor conservation issues particularly wildlife connectivity, marine and forest conservation, trafficking and poaching.

The training which includes 25 journalists from different media houses in Tanzania mainland and Zanzibar will be held in Bagamoyo District, Coast Region starting today.

JET Director, John Chikomo told The Guardian that the training is part of the biodiversity conservation project supported by the USAID Tuhifadhi Maliasili Activity, a five-year conservation project aimed to

address the dynamics that threaten wildlife movement and the long-term preservation of biodiversity in Tanzania. "Through training, journalists will be equipped with the right knowledge, skills, and attitude to be able to conduct investigative reporting on biodiversity conservation, combating wildlife crime, and climate change issues," he remarked.

He said journalists are expected to attain the capacity and knowledge of corridor conservation issues to effectively investigate, report and analyze wildlife connectivity towards promotion of wildlife conservation and tourism issues.

Chikomo said apart from creating networks by linking journalists with conservation stakeholders at the different levels, scribes will

improve the quality of stories on corridors, wildlife connectivity and biodiversity conservation matters.

"Journalists are often challenged with limited access to information when pursuing in-depth reporting due to lack of financial resources to facilitate visits to sources of information. Through the USAID Tuhifadhi Maliasili Activity, JET will create an enabling environment for journalists to investigate and report adequately on conservation issues," he added. He said journalists will use acquired investigative, reporting and analytical skills to generate reliable, regular and transparent flow of information from citizens to decision makers.

There are 52 corridors in the country, according to the Tanzania Wildlife Research Institute

(TAWIRI). More than 90 per cent of them are potentially found in village residents thus threatening wildlife extinction and limit migratory of animals.

Once wildlife corridors are lost they can never be fully restored. Some factors contributing to destruction of wildlife corridors include rapid agricultural expansion, unplanned land use, unmanaged natural resource extraction, increased bush meat trade and roads construction.

If left uncontrolled, the situation would likely have serious implications for the viability of animal populations and economic development, including the sustainability of the tourist industry as well as broader ecosystem survival.

## Court in Dar grants bail to two accused in elephant tusk case

By Correspondent Zuwena Shame

THE Kisutu Residents Magistrate Court in Dar es Salaam has granted bail to two accused Jayzan Kuchar (China national) and Aloyce Francis who were arraigned for allegedly being found with 19 pieces of ivory tusks valued at 272,640,000/-.

The bail was granted to the accused in the economic sabotage case after they fulfilled bail conditions.

Principal Resident Magistrate of the Kisutu Resident Magistrates Court, Mary Mrio said the accused have successfully submitted the required documents which

included presenting a title deed of a property worth 70m/-.

Mrio said each of the guarantors signed a 35m/- worth property. She adjourned the case until January 25th 2023.

Earlier, State Attorney Caroline Matemu told the court that the case was brought for judgment and therefore all the accused stated that they were ready for the judgment.

Other accused in the case are Said Rashid and Baraka Mohamed both accused with three counts among them, economic sabotage for allegedly being found in illegal possession of 19 ivory tusks and organising a criminal gang.

### THE UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA TANZANIA COMMUNICATIONS REGULATORY AUTHORITY ISO 9001:2015 CERTIFIED



#### PUBLIC NOTICE APPLICATION FOR LICENCE UNDER THE CONVERGED LICENSING FRAMEWORK

**NOTICE** is hereby given to the public that the Tanzania Communications Regulatory Authority has received applications for Licence under the Converged Licensing Framework from the following applicant: -

S/N	NAME OF APPLICANT	TYPE OF LICENCE	SHAREHOLDERS / NATIONALITY	SHARES %
1.	H & R Telecom (T) Limited	National Application Services	1.\$ Mary Blessing Munga- Tanzanian 2.\$ Honore Ndayiziga - Burundian 3.\$ Richard Nizigiyimana-Burundian	51 24.5 24.5
2.	Luziro Media Company Limited	District Content Services (Commercial Broadcasting-Free to Air Radio)	1. Godwin Lawrence Luziro-Tanzanian 2. Erasmus Lawrence Luziro-Tanzanian	50 40
3.	Dodoma Media Group Company Limited	District Content Services (Commercial Broadcasting-Free to Air Radio)	1. Leila Rayben Sanga-Tanzanian 2. John Baptist Mutesasira-Ugandan	51 49

Pursuant to Section 8 Of Electronic and Postal Communications Act, Cap 306 Of The Laws of Tanzania, written comments are hereby invited from any interested person in respect of the grant of licences to the applicants to reach the Authority, within 14 days of publication of this notice. Such comments will be taken into consideration when the Authority considers the applications.

Comments should be addressed to:

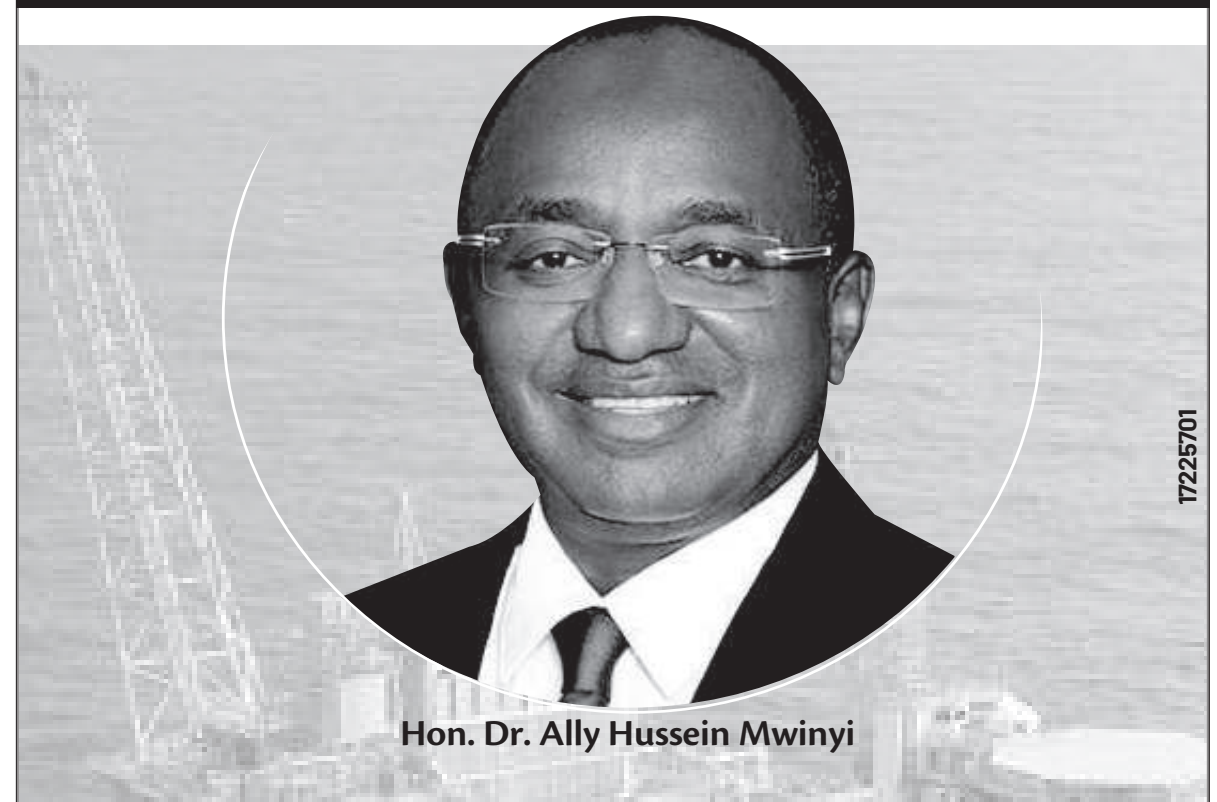
**Director General**  
Tanzania Communications Regulatory Authority  
P. O Bo 474  
14414 DAR ES SALAAM  
Tel: +255 22 241 2011-2  
Fax: +255 22 2412009  
E-mail: dg@tcra.go.tz

217224901



ZANZIBAR PETROLEUM REGULATORY AUTHORITY HTTPS (ZPRA)

## 59<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF ZANZIBAR REVOLUTION



Hon. Dr. Ally Hussein Mwinyi

The Board of Directors, Management and the Community of the **Zanzibar Petroleum Regulatory Authority (ZPRA)**, conveys sincere congratulations to **Hon. Dr. Hussein Ali Mwinyi**, President of Zanzibar and Chairman of the Revolutionary Council and to all Tanzanians on the 59<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Zanzibar Revolution. In addition, **ZPRA** joins all Tanzanians in celebrating this great day.

**HAPPY REVOLUTION DAY**

**WEBSITE: WWW.ZPRA.GO.TZ | EMAIL: INFO@ZPRA.GO.TZ CONTACTS.**  
ZPRA, P.O BOX 4746, MAISARA ZANZIBAR  
MOBILE +255 24 22 35689;  
INFO@ZPRA.GO.TZ; WWW.ZPRA.GO.TZ.

17225701



# Report incidents of violence to authorities, students instructed

By Guardian Correspondent, Kibaha

SECONDARY school students have been urged to report incidents of violence conducted in schools so as to enable authorities to take immediate measures.

Angellah Kairuki, Minister of State, President's Office (Regional Administration and Local Governments), made the remarks on Tuesday when she visited Sofu Secondary School in Kibaha District, Coast Region.

Kairuki pointed out that violence was still a major problem in the country with reports showing that a good number of children are abused within the school environment.

"In order to address this challenge, we need coordinated efforts, children should be taught the importance of speaking out whenever they face or witness incidents of violence be at home, streets or school so as to have a generation free from harm and abuse," she said.

In her meeting with teachers and pupils at the school, Kairuki wanted the children to focus on their studies to achieve their intended goals

while also reporting people whom they see as threats to them or their friends.

She said despite strides by the government and stakeholders to eradicate violence, there are still a number of children in Tanzania who report experiencing violence and abuse with many of them failing to receive immediate support.

"If there is a teacher or any of our staff here doing something bad to you, abusing you physically, mentally or psychologically, please report it to the head of school or any adult who you will be comfortable to speak to, she told students adding; we need to protect our children by any means, we should supervise to ensure that they study and achieve their intended goals," she asserted.

She also wanted those who will not find support at the school or for other people to go to the ward or district offices to report the case.

"It is not the time to show compassion again because these people are destroying our children, they are building a damaged nation, and in this way we are not ready to continue tolerating such perpetrators as I have never

tolerated any criminal," noted minister Kairuki. She further urged the public to cooperate with authorities in unearthing the perpetrators so as to eradicate and build a nation of moral people.

Coast Regional Commissioner, Aboubakar Kunenge urged parents to make close follow-up on their children's development at home and school which include inspecting their exercise books and homework.

"Teachers alone cannot supervise and keep an eye on the development of children, parents have a role in taking care of their children, which include conducting follow-up on their wellbeing and development," he said.

Kibaha town education officer, Rosemary Msasi commended the government for conducting major reforms in the sector as well as improving infrastructures of various schools in the areas, something which enables pupils to learn in a comfortable environment.

Halima Jumanne, the school's head mistress said registration of form one pupils has gone well and they are now receiving the new comers.



Officers and other members from the National Service's Makutupora camp plant trees around the Dodoma campus of the College of Business Education yesterday in implementation of a strategy to make Dodoma city and its environs greener. Photo: Correspondent Ibrahim Joseph

# 'Competent English Language teachers crucial in the mastery of other subjects'

By Guardian Correspondent, Bukoba

AUTHORITIES in Kagera Region have instructed all heads of secondary schools to select competent teachers so as to teach English language to form one pupils and make it easy for the children to understand and master other subjects.

Addressing journalists at his office, regional education officer (secondary), Khalifa Shemahonge said language has been a major challenge for new pupils in secondary schools considering that almost all subjects are taught in English.

"Most of the form one pupils in public secondary school, comes from government primary schools where the teaching language is Kiswahili, this makes it difficult

for them to adopt English after reaching secondary, this is why we have come with the new initiative to prepare competent teachers who will teach English subject to help the pupils understand well and be able to communicate in English," he explained.

He said that without doing so, many pupils will end up failing some subjects due to language barrier.

Shemahonge said that the selection of the competent teachers in the language is implementation of some directives issued at the education officers meeting on December 17, 2022 under regional administrative secretary.

He also highlighted another strategy as to ensure that ward education officers, head of schools, teachers and leaders to ensure

that they conduct door-to-door operations to identify children who are yet to join form one and supervise to ensure that they report to schools. "On this, we will work closely with leaders in street, hamlets, villages and wards so as to ensure that we identify all children who are yet to report form one and send them to school without delay, we want to have a nation of educated people so as to achieve development goals," he added.

He wanted parents to fulfill their obligations which include ensuring that their children are registered and attend school.

Over 59,000 pupils in Kagera Region were selected to join form one this year and leaders are working hard to ensure that all of them report and complete their studies.

# Cess on timber by insensitive district councils angers forestry stakeholders

By Guardian Correspondent, Arusha

DELEGATES of the ministerial public private sectors consultation meeting which ended here yesterday expressed, in a resolution, deep disappointment over continued five percent cess on timber imposed by district councils contrary to central government's declared cess of three percent.

In a strong worded resolution the meeting called on the government "to inform in writing all district council the changes made by central government to that effect; further councils should stop charging 200 shillings on each piece of timber irrespective of size while the owner of the same timber has paid 3 percent in royalty and 3 percent paid to the Tanzania Forest Fund."

The meeting, called and

coordinated by the Tanzania National Business Council (TNBC), also called for review of GN 59 in order to reduce costs (royalty) of buying trees and streamline costs currently enforced. The meeting said the TFS increased the cost of a tree based on Diameter at Breast Height.

The meeting also emphasised on upholding of business morals on the part of the private sector, saying the self-regulatory initiative in doing business should be respected and applied.

Another resolution called for the ministry of natural resources and tourism to look for and unearth

local and foreign markets in order to make forestry products business competitive.

Part of the money held by the Tanzania Forest Fund, a resolution reads, should be used to start a special bank to promote investment and business in forestry products.

The stakeholders also called for the establishment of industrial parks in each district councils in order to promote and increase engineered wood products.

The meeting supported the idea of establishing an annual week fair on forestry products. The first proposed 7-day fair will be held in Dodoma capital later this year.

**giz** Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH

## EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

### Advisor – Sexual Reproductive and Adolescent Health

As a federal enterprise, GIZ supports the German Government in achieving its objectives in the field of international cooperation for sustainable development.

The GIZ programme 'Improving Health Care Provision in Tanzania' (IHCP) is looking to fill the position of Advisor in the area of Sexual, Reproductive and adolescent Health (SRAH).

**Duty Station: Dodoma**  
**Fixed term contract**

#### Responsibilities

The advisor is responsible for

- managing the area of sexual, reproductive and adolescent health (SRAH) ("the area of technical expertise") under the programme objectives, team agreements and agreements with the superior
- assisting programme initiatives to provide professional advisory services to the political partners (Tanzania Ministry of Health and PORALG), the commissioning party and related bodies, and to cooperate with a broad range of target groups in and outside of the Tanzanian government
- participation and representation of the Programme in national forums in the area of expertise (e.g., Technical Working Groups (TWG))
- innovation and knowledge management
- supporting programme management on selected cross-cutting topics as assigned by the pro-programme manager

#### Tasks

##### 1. Advising the partner institution(s)

###### The advisor

- advises the partner at national level for strategic and operational documents (e.g., policies, strategies, plans, guidelines, SOPs) in the area of technical expertise
- contributes to preparing and implementing the coordination process, joint programme activities and work at the regional level in the area of technical expertise
- deals with the design, preparation and implementation of workshops, seminars and other events on issues connected with the programme's areas of activity
- develops and organises quality assurance measures and suggests necessary changes, improvements and initiatives

##### 2. Coordination tasks

###### The advisor

- Develops, implements and monitors the implementation of operational and financial plans in the area of technical expertise, and integrates them into programme-wide plans
- coordinates programme activities with programme management and advisors in other areas of expertise, and in cooperation with the partners
- supports the implementation of work packages in the area of expertise through preparing procurements of services and goods as well as grant making
- monitors progress, quality assures and supports contractors and grant recipients in implementation of their plans and activities
- compiles the relevant information for joint activities and assignments

#### Networking and cooperation

##### The advisor

- supports cooperation, regular contact and dialogue with partners at the national and regional level in the area of expertise, incl. both actors in sexual/reproductive health and rights, as well as sexual education and empowerment
- supports Public Relations (PR) work as relates to the field of expertise
- cooperates with local communities, relevant organisations, non-governmental agencies and individuals in the programme environment and with other projects to improve and maintain good working relationships in the area of technical expertise
- communicates local interests and efforts, forwards these and encourages sharing ideas and information for the benefit of the programme

##### 3. Knowledge management

###### The advisor

- ensures knowledge transfer to programme information
- develops ready-to-use strategies and technical concepts, including guidelines, manuals and procedures
- draws up reports and presentation documents
- prepares appropriate input for various programme reports including annual reports, and contributes to the other reports required by the programme manager and GIZ Head Office
- assists with research activities and studies on issues which benefit joint programmes.

#### Required qualifications, competences and experience

- At least a bachelor's degree in medicine or nursing/midwifery degree at master level with formal training in FP. A master's degree in public health or reproductive health or similar is an added advantage
- A minimum of 6 years of professional experience in FP / reproductive health (RH) service delivery in client centred settings or any organisations
- A minimum of 3 years' experience in conducting clinical training and mentoring in FP services
- A minimum of 3 years' experience in communication approaches related to adolescent health services or youth friendly services
- at least 3 years' professional experience in a comparable advisory position
- high level of professional and personal integrity
- proven ability for teamwork, co-creation and skill-transfer
- very good working knowledge of ICT (related software, phone, email, the internet) and computer applications (e.g., MS Office, Excel)
- fluent written and oral knowledge of the English, knowledge of German is an added advantage but not a requirement
- willingness to upskill as required by the tasks to be performed – corresponding measures are agreed with management

#### Application

Interested candidates should send their letter of application together with the CV and copies of academic certificates by email to [hr.giz-tanzania@giz.de](mailto:hr.giz-tanzania@giz.de).

Please use the subject line 'Advisor SRAH' Closing date for submission: **23.01.2023**.

Only shortlisted candidates will be contacted.

GIZ Tanzania is an equal opportunities employer and encourages applications from all qualified and eligible candidates regardless of their gender, origin, religion/belief, disability, or any other minority group.



THURSDAY 12 JANUARY, 2023

Taking A New Look  
At The News  
ESTABLISHED IN 1995

## Youth immersion in blue economy will be gradual

RECEIVING the 59th anniversary march in marking the Zanzibar Revolution, an event basically involving the CCM youth wing, provided an occasion for President Samia Suluhu Hassan to intensely reflect on the condition of the youth. Admittedly her remarks on that occasion were not just personal meditation but included what sort of impressions other top secretariat officials have of the issue, altogether in convergence. The key theme is that youth initiative is vital, not just state solutions.

To be sure, the president's remarks on that occasion did not differ from regularly aired wisdom from religious leaders, experts in personal uplifting (as in the notion of 'thinking big' that was in the vogue in past decades). It is possible that some academic institutions have conducted research on the efficacy of such efforts - assuming that this kind of authoritative advice is taken up by the youth and they start doing something about it. While it is hard to answer the question as to what research in that field would possibly bring up, it can be sorted out by another route.

It is a situation where, as anticipated, a number of startup organisations or small enterprises are formed for purposes of engaging in marine sector value addition work for Zanzibar, and on a broader range of initiatives on the Mainland. The point is that in market research and enterprise startups generally, the majority tend to fail rather than succeed, so a youth who puts up all the little cash he can muster on a startup and it fails will be most discouraged. In analytical terms he would be trying to move from an unemployed labourer or school leaver, then falls back into the lot.

There is a comparison that often

comes up, on how Zanzibar women have taken up marine agriculture in seaweed farming, while unemployed men, and especially the youth, are not doing as much. It is likely that seaweed farming compares with fishing, where men are likely to be more active, but with illegal fishing or suchlike the level of catches - thus productivity - will be abysmally low. Current efforts at a wide ranging distribution of fishing boats are definitely a solution, but other issues need to be sorted out in relation to productivity, fish drying, marketing, etc.

Strictly speaking, efforts to solve unemployment by appealing to youths to move into value addition presume that capital outlays will be there. That is why a more dynamic investment environment is the right solution for unemployment, as public resources can't put up enough capital, the rest of value addition layout, or solve market demand issues. Established enterprises sort that out easier than tiny units, in which case unemployed youths will largely remain labour in waiting, not pioneers.

That is why policy makers need to support sixth phase reforms more intensively as they will help to make the country more propitious for investment, and that isn't just by attracting foreign investments. There is plenty of capital lying idle in banks that permits sumptuous borrowing at times by public organisations for dreamy projects whose medium term benefits level is hard to project. Yet the banks and some financial institutions have no way but lending that way, given the paucity of usable productive projects. If land plots change hands, people get money for their own projects without loans; this additional money going into pockets widens demand.

## CAG will unravel the real extent of abusing the fertiliser subsidy

POLICE are in some regions at least picking up the trail of thefts of subsidized fertilizer as clever people lined up to ask for dozens or even hundreds of bags of subsidised fertilizer. Songwe Region is an example where four employees of the Mbozi District Council were arrested over suspicions of misappropriating or redirecting 1,900 bags of subsidized fertilizer from their intended use. It was a racket that at one point, this time in Njombe Region, had villagers blocking a road.

They were right in their suspicions that the three or four Lorries using a dirt road not often liked by other transporters might be taking contraband, and called the police. Several tons of fertilizer was found in the Lorries being ferried to nearby Malawi, even if some distance is crossed to arrive at a land border post. Just a few cases were reported of such suspicions. Now arrests are being made in Songwe Region after Agriculture Minister Hussein Bashe said the region leads others in sabotaging the fertiliser subsidy scheme, and we don't have the key to his data.

One reason could be widespread dissatisfaction with the availability of subsidies for farmers compared to complaints he would have received from other places. Whatever the case, arrests are in many cases just the tip of the iceberg, in which case that comes up from the police doesn't represent the reality, but it helps the feeling that the problem is being sorted out. That is why it will take efforts of the National Audit Department to follow up on how the project was implemented, to come nearer to the picture, as to the factual extent of false registration of farmers.

The police narration shows that

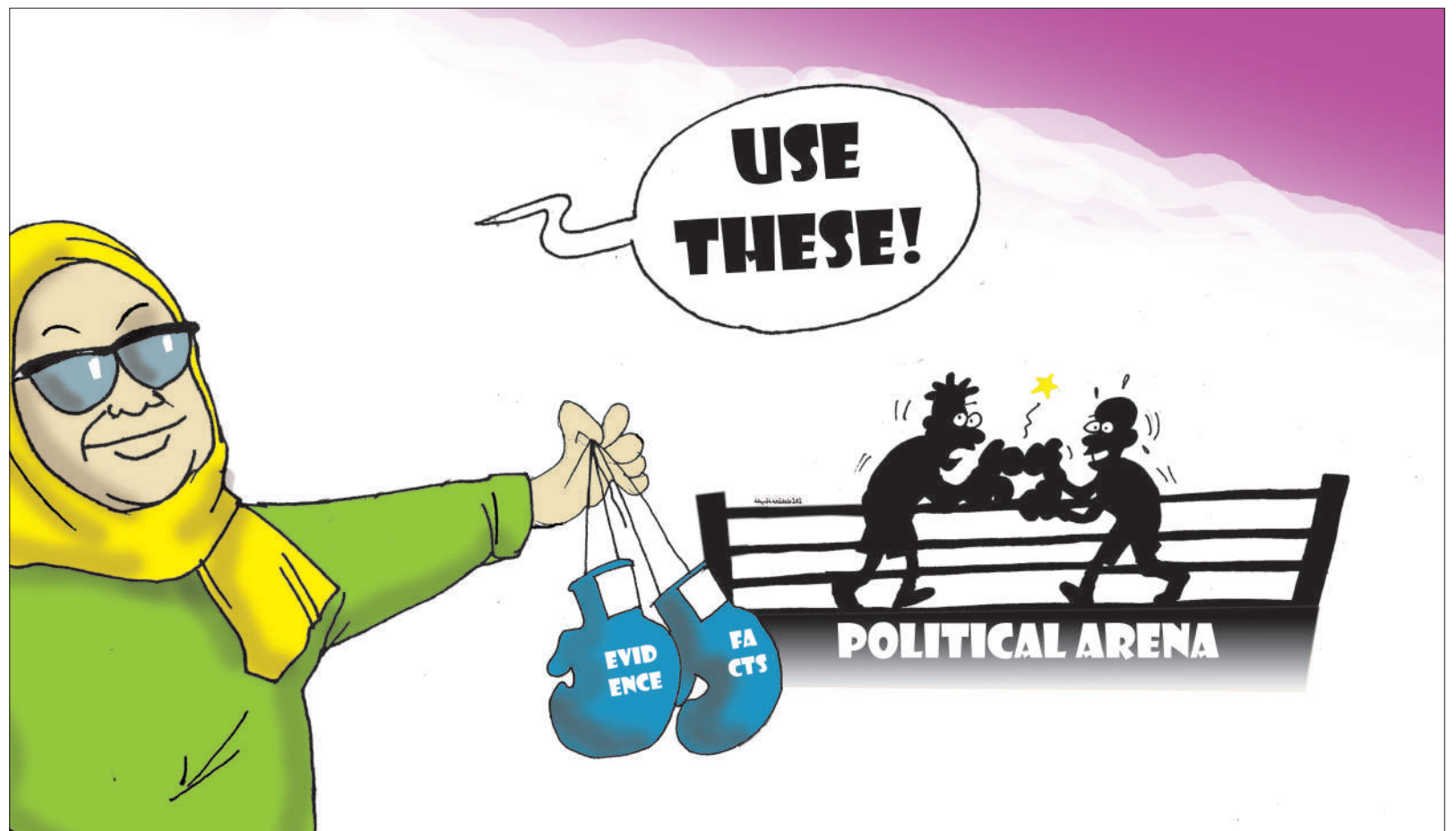
people were being registered by word of mouth as to what farm acreage they hold, outside any usable database in wards or villages, checked with some district surveys, etc. Registering farm size by word of mouth and getting fertiliser makes the manner the subsidy programme was implemented somewhat chaotic, as it wholly depended on the honesty of individuals as to the tonnage they needed. Serious economic plans aren't laid that way but clever plots.

The major lesson all the same is not the degree to which there was cheating in any particular region, or whether it was civil servants, council officials or any other who led in the cheating. That kind of administrative information isn't of much use but really a bit of examination of how the policy advisory system worked or rather failed to work, namely inability to see that this mode of registration was ill-fated to deliver systematic cheating. The preliminary answer is that there is excess faith in digital methods that codes will be issued, tied up with identity scans; so, foolproof.

There is an expression that every cloud has a silver lining, in which case the fertiliser subsidy near-fiasco ought to provide a lesson on how not to organise such a scheme. Indeed it tells a lot about subsidy schemes as a whole and can be contrasted with the 100bn/- oil import subsidy which definitely worked.

It means that the government ought to have subsidized importers and set indicative prices for wholesale and retail prices. Some people may have thought that this way the fertiliser could be sold to traders coming from across the border so they put up the onus of getting subsidised fertilizer by registering as a local farmer - which it works.

The Guardian Limited Key Contacts	Newsdesk	Advertising
Managing Editor: WALLACE MAUGGO Circulation Manager: EMMANUEL LYIMO	News Editor: LUSEKELO PHILEMON 0757154767 General line: 0745700710 E-mail: guardian@guardian.co.tz	Mobile: 0782253676 E-mails: advertise@guardian.co.tz Website: www.ippmedia.com epaper.ippmedia.com



## Things you might say that could sound worlds different to someone depressed

By Murtaza Ali

“DO you think it might be depression?” Late one night during my junior year of college, as I sat in a fast-food restaurant and picked at my food, one of my close friends directly asked me this question.

I had been telling her about the stress of the last few months - how, no matter what I tried, nothing felt good, fun or complete.

It seems foolish in hindsight, but I had never even considered depression a possibility. It just seemed so far away; something I read about in my psychology textbook, but not something I could actually experience.

It turns out she was right, though: I had depression, and I had depression bad. And from the experience, I learned quite a bit - including the worst possible things you can say to someone going through it.

Let's discuss them, shall we? It's all in your head. What you say: "You've just got to get out of your own head." What they may hear: "You're just imagining everything that you're experiencing."

Look, if you've never been depressed, I get why you say this. I know you mean well. It seems like a reasonable thing to say.

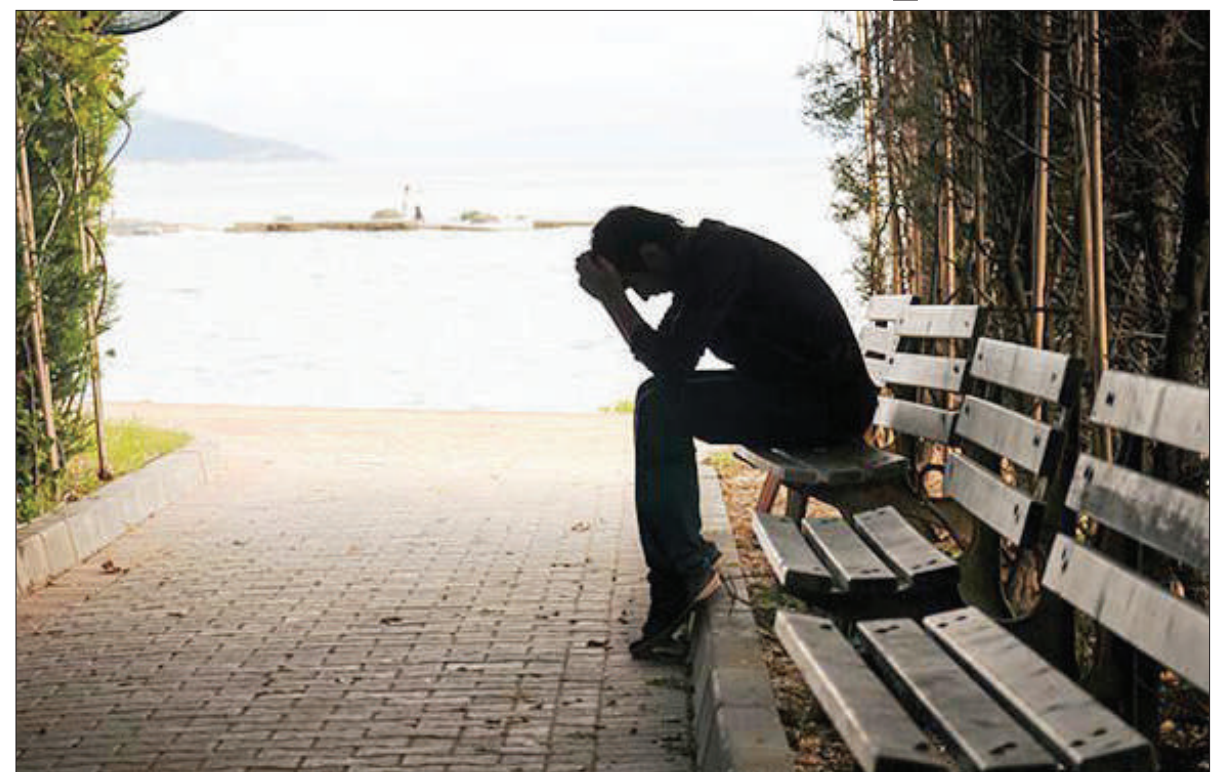
And in a way, you're not wrong. Depression is indeed in our heads - but so is, well, just about everything else. After all, the pain from a broken bone is nothing more than a bunch of chemicals being sent to a specific part of the brain.

But you wouldn't tell someone in a cast that his or her injury is all in their head, would you? Depression involves an abnormally long-lasting period of sadness. However, that doesn't mean that it's always written on a person's face. In fact, many depressed people appear perfectly normal and happy to the outside world. Internal sadness doesn't necessitate outward expression.

You can laugh at a joke and still be depressed. You can enjoy a day out with friends and still be depressed. You can appear fine for days or even weeks at a time and still be depressed. That's the very nature of the illness.

A depressive episode does not require some painful, heartrending experience. It can come out of nowhere. In fact, most of the time, it will.

This goes back to the point above about brain chemistry. You don't know what's going on inside a person. You have no idea what a seemingly meaningless sight, sound or smell might have awakened in him or her.



of worthlessness; and thoughts of suicide.

I have a question for you. Do you really think that anyone would choose to feel this way? That someone would actively decide to be perpetually miserable? How do you think it makes them - a person who is already despondent - feel when you suggest something like this?

Enough said. But you were okay just a minute ago, no? What you say: "You were just fine - why are you tired all of a sudden?" What they may hear: "You aren't allowed to feel bad unless there is a definitive, identifiable reason."

Depression involves an abnormally long-lasting period of sadness. However, that doesn't mean that it's always written on a person's face. In fact, many depressed people appear perfectly normal and happy to the outside world. Internal sadness doesn't necessitate outward expression.

You can laugh at a joke and still be depressed. You can enjoy a day out with friends and still be depressed. You can appear fine for days or even weeks at a time and still be depressed. That's the very nature of the illness.

A depressive episode does not require some painful, heartrending experience. It can come out of nowhere. In fact, most of the time, it will.

This goes back to the point above about brain chemistry. You don't know what's going on inside a person. You have no idea what a seemingly meaningless sight, sound or smell might have awakened in him or her.

Don't make a depressed person feel even worse. Understand that depressive episodes often strike unexpectedly, and be empathetic.

What you say: "But your life is so good. Friends, money, a house ... you've got it all. You should be happy." What they may hear: "You're not allowed to be depressed, and it's selfish for you to do so."

First of all, material pleasure doesn't equate to happiness. Happiness is a matter of internal contentment and perspective. There are rich and powerful celebrities with hundreds of people at their beck and call who are severely depressed, and there are working-class, invisible folks who possess profound tranquility.

And, secondly, simply because someone is depressed doesn't mean he or she is unaware of his or her blessings. Furthermore, it's highly unlikely that you know what his or her life is like behind the scenes. It's presumptuous to assume you do.

There is a difference between gently encouraging someone to practise gratitude and straight-up stating: "You should be grateful." The former is a well-established contributor to happiness, but the latter just comes off as mean and accusatory.

Be gentle and kind. Depression isn't a choice - don't make its victims feel bad for having it.

Finally, the worst thing you can say... This one isn't really a single phrase or sentence. It can be many things, but all of them convey the same vibe: Anger at someone for no other reason than because he or she is depressed.

You might think this is a ridiculous

thing to write. Who would do something like that? Most people, as it happens.

When a person is depressed, it affects the people around him or her. Sometimes, those people aren't familiar with depression to begin with. They may care deeply about you and not realize that they can't make it better, thus reacting with angry frustration. Other folks might just be jerks - unlikable.

The list goes on - there are any number of reasons you might lose your temper with a depressed person when that person has done nothing to deserve it other than being depressed.

But please, please, please don't do it. It's a horrid feeling. It takes all of the false and negative self-talk they're prone to and shoves it back in their face, giving them yet another reason to believe that they're unwanted, unneeded, unloved.

Where you could show anger, please show kindness instead. You don't have to be perfect.

In the words of renowned researcher Brené Brown: "Empathy has no script. There is no right or wrong way to do it. It's simply listening, holding space, withholding judgment, emotionally connecting, and communicating the incredibly important message, 'you are not alone.'" That's all it takes.

A Medium.com/Invisible Illness dispatch. Murtaza Ali is a PhD student at the University of Washington studying computer science education. He enjoys writing about education, programming, life, and the occasional random musing.



# First African-produced cancer tests to slash costs and waiting times

BY WERONIKA STRZYŻYŃSKA

**T**HE first African-produced tests to diagnose breast cancer and leukemia will become commercially available within months, cutting costs and waiting times for patients across the continent.

Most of the diagnostic kits for cancer and other diseases in Africa are expensive imports from outside the continent, usually from Europe and the US.

"The price of the kit can be double that of what it would cost to manufacture it locally. It is also a long process. It can take weeks or months for the kits to arrive," said Hassan Sefrioui, an executive board member of the Moroccan Foundation for Advanced Science, Innovation and Research (MASciR), which developed the new tests.

Development of the cancer kits has been under way since 2010, Sefrioui said, and the leukemia tests have already been used in Morocco on 400 people. Previously, all samples would have to be sent to France for analysis, prolonging and delaying treatment. "But with locally manufactured test kits, we can get results within hours," he said.

Breast cancer is the most prevalent cancer in Morocco and a leading cause of death among women. While global survival rates for those diagnosed early is high, a large percentage of breast cancer cases in low- and middle-income countries, including Morocco, are detected at a later stage.

Africa's reliance on imported tests,



Moroccan-manufactured tests for breast cancer and leukemia an important step in ending the continent's reliance on imported pharmaceuticals

treatments and vaccines has been a pressing concern for health authorities on the conti-

nent since the Covid-19 pandemic. An estimated 70% of pharmaceutical products and up to 99%

of vaccines used in African countries are imported.

"Africa is over reliant and

over dependent," said Christian Happi, director of the African Centre of Excellence for Genomics of Infectious Diseases, at a health conference in Rwanda last month. "The continent was entirely dependent on the outside at the start of the pandemic. We could not even produce simple diagnostics."

The conference discussed ways to increase Africa's manufacturing capacity. Last year saw the launch of the African Pharmaceutical Technology Foundation to expand production, and plans to improve regulatory oversight through the African Medicines Agency (AMA) were approved in 2019.

"We still need a comprehensive strategy to support local manufacturers," said Yewen Kebede Tebeje, head of laboratory systems and networks at the Africa Centres for Disease Control, which has been cooperating with MASciR to make the Moroccan diagnostic kits available in other African countries. "This includes access to hard currency and raw materials as well as creating a conducive regula-

tory environment for the evaluation of diagnostics."

This regulatory framework, said Tebeje, could be facilitated by the AMA once it is fully established. "We are working with the AMA to harmonise regulatory processes. So, for example, if a product is evaluated in Kenya there will be no reason for Ethiopia to do the same evaluation."

During the pandemic, MASciR developed Covid diagnostic kits, which were sold in Senegal, Tunisia, Ivory Coast and Rwanda. Sefrioui said the cancer tests could also be available to those countries.

The initial costs to procure the cancer tests from MASciR may be more expensive than from non-African competitors, said Tebeje, because small companies have to import raw materials. "But what I'm envisioning is the long-term impact. When these companies become strong and expand their manufacturing capacity, we will get to see the cost benefits." He said costs could be cut within three years.

## Remote, flexible work to boost travel spending by UAE, Saudi travellers in 2023

DUBAI, UAE

**R**ESIDENTS of the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia will increase their travel spending in 2023 as the sector continues to experience a strong recovery post-COVID-19 largely driven by flexible and remote working options, an expert said.

Hospitality behemoth Marriott International found that 93 percent of people surveyed in both markets said they were planning to go on vacation, with around 66 percent saying they will be planning more breaks than in 2022.

"Travel trends for 2023 are more interesting than ever due to the unique situation we are in, as we look ahead to the way consumers plan to travel this year. What comes across very clearly is a resurgence in the sector based in large part on increased confidence amongst travelers, with most planning to spend more than last year and the demand for luxury with travelers in the UAE and Saudi Arabia remaining strong," said Neal Jones, Chief Sales and Marketing Officer of Marriott International in Europe, the Middle East and Africa.

"This clearly shows great optimism, but also that people will be ring-fencing holiday spending."

Some key travel trends expected to dominate the market, according to the hospitality group's findings from research conducted by Marriott Bonvoy, include luxury accommodation, authentic travel, workations (also known as work away vacations) due to the rise of hybrid and remote work after the pandemic, and sustainability.

"We know that travel means so much more to people now. Beyond visiting destinations, travel can now be purposeful, educational, and regenerative. We've seen a continued trend in our guests' desire to travel better - being more proactive, progressive, and wanting to affect positive change, and all the while still indulging in global exploration," Jones said

"Travelers are taking a more considered and intentional approach to where and how they travel. They want a deeper connection to the places they visit, getting to know the people, history, food, and the culture of a place. They're shifting from a desire of being 'well-travelled' to 'travelling well'."

As more travelers seek out unique and meaningful experiences, the concept of authentic travel is gaining popularity. Authentic travel is all about immersing oneself in the culture and way of life of a destination, rather than simply viewing it as a tourist.

Authentic travel is becoming a more popular way for people to connect with their surroundings, past the preconceptions and stereotypes of tourism. It's not only about luxury or exclusivity, but above all about having a meaningful and human experience of the place you are visiting.

Research showed that authentic travel will be a key emerging trend this year, with many wanting to immerse themselves in a complete change of culture. Over half of respondents in both markets the UAE (55 percent) and Saudi Arabia (56 percent) said they were hoping to explore new destinations and cultures.

"The freedom and flexibility of being able to live and work while traveling the globe is more appealing and achievable now than it was prior to the pandemic. With that, we are increasingly seeing the hotel becoming the destination, particularly in the luxury segment," Jones explained.

"Guests used to see the hotel as the gateway for exploring and discovering a new locale, however guests now expect immersive experiences to take place at or arranged through the hotel, and our luxury brands are tapping into this trend, developing new and engaging programming to further embrace and highlight the destination through the offerings."

Jones also reported an increase in digital nomads seeking luxury "workation" experiences at Marriott hotels around



the world.

"Flexible and remote working patterns are set to continue, Jones said. "We need to ensure that we can cater to changes in travel patterns where people look to blend work and leisure travel more or travel for extended periods."

The world witnessed a seismic shift toward remote work in 2020, during the early days of the pandemic when the majority of the world was forced into lockdown. This shift has impacted the experience of the full-time employee, further boosting the global population of digital nomads - people who choose to embrace a location-independent lifestyle enabled by technology in order to travel the world and work remotely.

With the desire to roam the world now more than ever, digital nomads are still globe-trotting post-COVID-19, resulting in an uptick in demand for travel.

The 2023 Marriott Bonvoy Travel Trends research reflects this - with 48 percent of those from the UAE and 44 percent from Saudi Arabia going on extended holidays, highlighting that being able to work remotely allows them to take a longer holiday without having to take annual leave for the whole break.

In fact, hybrid and remote working has had a significant impact on travel plans in 2023. Nearly a third of those from the UAE (31 per-

cent) and 23 percent from Saudi Arabia plan to take a "work-away holiday" - where they will continue to log on and work whilst travelling, thus allowing them to experience a new place without taking annual leave.

The Middle Eastern region has a long history of wealth and opulence, which is heavily reflected in the culture and lifestyle of many people. Luxury travel is seen as a way to indulge in the finer things in life and to enjoy the best that the world has to offer.

Booking data from Marriott Bonvoy reveals how resilient luxury demand in the Middle East is, with bookings from April this year for luxury properties up 13 percent compared to pre-pandemic levels.

"The collective mindset has changed from viewing travel as a luxury commodity to an activity vital to overall well-being," said Jones.

"More than ever before, our luxury guests are prioritizing more meaningful travel and time spent with loved ones, looking for experiences that reflect their personal values and enhance their overall quality of life."

Sustainability

Sustainability is now a key factor in many peoples' travel plans, Marriott International found, with 85 percent in the UAE and 80 percent in Saudi Arabia saying that environmental considerations now have an impact on their arrangements.

"I'm delighted to see the priority that so

many travelers are putting on sustainability, with most taking it into consideration and many shaping their holidays around this."

Forty-three percent in the UAE go as far as to say environmental considerations define their travel plans and they will only spend money with companies that have a positive environmental impact, whilst the figure is 38 percent in Saudi Arabia.

Transportation, particularly air travel, is a major contributor to climate change. Greenhouse gas emissions from the aviation industry are a significant driver of global warming, and the industry is projected to account for an increasingly large share of total emissions in the coming years.

Air travel is a major source of pollution, particularly in terms of noise pollution, which can have a negative impact on the quality of life for people living near airports and it can also have a detrimental impact on wildlife and biodiversity, particularly in areas surrounding airports and flight paths.

Another reason why people may be considering the environmental impact of travel is the way in which tourism can contribute to the overconsumption of resources in destination areas. This can lead to the degradation of natural habitats, the displacement of local communities, and the depletion of water and other resources.



# Six fallacies and truths about China's epidemic control

BEIJING

Life is returning to normal and mobility is rebounding as China's COVID-19 prevention and control has entered a new stage – a boon for world economy.

However, some Western media ignore the facts, choosing instead to apply double standard and even spread misinformation, while making unwarranted accusations against China's epidemic fight, confusing the public and misleading the world as a consequence. However, in the face of facts and data, these lies are evident and untenable.

## FALLACY 1: "NEW COVID POLICY BRINGS CHAOS"

The real situation is: Grand Tang Dynasty Ever Bright City, a commercial pedestrian street in Xi'an of Shaanxi Province, was packed with people; residents in Shijiazhuang of Hebei Province and Wuhan of Hubei Province released balloons; locals in Xiangtan, Hunan Province, enjoyed a fireworks show during the New Year celebrations. "Seeing so many people celebrating the New Year together, I was nearly moved to tears," one netizen wrote.

More than 50 million people traveled in China during the New Year holiday. On Jan. 1, 10,640 cinemas opened for business nationwide, a new high in nearly 10 months. Many people are planning to return to their hometowns for family reunions or travel in the forthcoming Spring Festival. Bookings of domestic air tickets and hotels have increased significantly.

Traffic is getting heavier, more factories are running at full capacity, while the construction of new projects is underway.

China has put the people first and put life first all along, with prevention and control measures adjusted and optimized in light of evolving situations, and done its utmost to protect people's lives and health.

So far, the focus of China's epidemic prevention and control has shifted from preventing infections to beefing up treatment of severe cases. From coordinating drug production to strengthening the treatment of severe cases, and from promoting vaccination to speeding up the resumption of production, China has effectively coordinated epidemic prevention and control and economic and social development needs.

A community worker (L) explains a COVID-19 prevention and care package to a resident in Yangfangdian Subdistrict of Haidian District in Beijing, capital of China, Dec. 27, 2022. (Xinhua/Ren Chao)

Under the assistance of the government, pharmaceutical enterprises are running at full capacity. China has also optimized the circulation of drugs, testing reagents and protective goods for better epidemic control. Authorities in many regions provided the elderly with free "health kits," which usually include fever drugs and other anti-epidemic items.

By the middle of December 2022, more than 3.47 billion COVID-19 vaccine doses had been administered on the Chinese mainland, with over 90 percent of the population fully vaccinated. A total of 86.6 percent of people aged



This aerial photo taken on Jan. 1, 2023 shows a night view of the commercial area around Tianhe Road in Guangzhou, south China's Guangdong Province. (Xinhua/Liu Dawei)

60 or above had been fully vaccinated and the rate among people aged 80 or older was 66.4 percent. China also vowed to further ramp up vaccination efforts aimed at the elderly.

Wang Huaqing, an expert from the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention (China CDC), said the COVID-19 vaccines currently used in China are effective in preventing severe conditions and deaths. Data shows that during the epidemic outbreak period from March to June last year in Shanghai, compared with those who had not been vaccinated, the death risk of those over 60 who had received the booster doses of vaccines decreased by 98.08 percent.

The China CDC has also strengthened the monitoring of virus mutation nationwide. Each provincial-level region carries out genome sequencing and analysis every week and uploads the data in time in order to dynamically monitor virus subtypes.

## FALLACY 2: "CHINA'S COVID RESPONSE A FAILURE"

During the past three years, China launched a war against COVID-19, effectively handled more than 100 cluster outbreaks, and protected the lives and health of more than 1.4 billion people to the greatest extent.

Every country would and should adjust its anti-COVID-19 policies according to the changing situation of the epidemic and go through periods of adaptation following such adjustments.

A medical worker injects a booster shot of COVID-19 vaccine for a resident at Aoyuncun Subdistrict in Chaoyang District, Beijing, capital of China, July 13, 2022. (Xinhua/Ju Huanzong)

The pathogenicity and virulence of the Omicron strain have weakened significantly, while China's medical

treatment, pathogen detection and vaccination levels have all improved significantly – which means that it is indeed scientific, timely and necessary to proactively optimize anti-epidemic measures.

The elderly are the key population group being targeted by health services. During the battle in Wuhan in early 2020, medical workers cured more than 3,600 COVID-19 patients over the age of 80. In the past three years, a number of infected centenarians have recovered and been discharged from hospitals. Similar stories are still unfolding during this new wave of infections in China.

Tian, a 100-year-old woman from Hefei, Anhui Province, was diagnosed with novel coronavirus infection after she showed symptoms such as fever and coughing for three days, and was sent to the hospital by her family.

Her doctor said that fortunately, Tian had been vaccinated and showed no severe symptoms such as chest tightness and asthma, although she had some underlying health issues. After 11 days of treatment including anti-virus, anti-infection, improved immunity and nutritional support, she was discharged from the hospital.

China has managed to keep its severe cases and death rates of COVID-19 among the lowest in the world. Deliberately distorting the adjustment of China's anti-COVID-19 policies highlights the double standard and hypocrisy of some in the West. If China's COVID-19 response failed, what about some countries where the death toll far exceeds that of China? In fact, the label of failure should be attached to those countries whose incompetence, inaction and chaos in epidemic response had caused their people to suffer.

Striving to effectively coordinate the epidemic response with economic

and social development, China had won the tough battle against poverty on schedule and finished building a moderately prosperous society in all respects, getting off to a good start in the 14th Five-Year Plan period (2021-2025), and the average life expectancy of Chinese people increased from 77.3 years to 78.2 years.

Some Western media rarely reflect profoundly on the chaotic COVID-19 situations in their own countries. But when it comes to China, they always hold a stereotypical view and focus only on finding fault, which underlines their attempt to distort, exaggerate and fabricate.

"In fact, China has innovated control methods, improved them, and demonstrated their efficacy by saving millions of lives," said Josef Gregory Mahoney, a professor of politics and international relations at East China Normal University. The professor noted that some countries look at China through a perverse lens: they fail to acknowledge the country's successes because they politicize everything about China ideologically.

## FALLACY 3: "CHINA'S ECONOMIC OUTLOOK IS DIM"

China's optimized COVID-19 response has triggered a lot of ups and downs in terms of predicting the impact on the Chinese economy. A topsyturvy time and a drag on global growth were among the typical labels foreign pessimists put on the future of the Chinese economy.

Some foreign naysayers, bothered by the "unfortunate side-effects" of China's recovery, even warned that China's reopening may burden the rest of the world, not with higher growth, but with higher levels of inflation or interest rates.

Are the prospects of China's economic recovery bright or dim?

Over the past three years, China has effectively handled the impact of five rounds of global pandemic outbreaks.

Balancing its epidemic response and economic and social development, China not only emerged as the first major economy to return to growth, but also maintained an average annual growth rate of about 4.5 percent, significantly higher than the world average.

In 2022, China was expected to boost its GDP to over 120 trillion yuan (17.41 trillion U.S. dollars). Its grain output stayed above 650 million tonnes for the eighth consecutive year. In the first 11 months of last year, 1.16 trillion yuan of foreign investment went into the country, exceeding the level of 2021.

At the tone-setting Central Economic Work Conference in December, Chinese leaders aimed to promote overall recovery and improvements in the country's economic performance this year.

From a global perspective, China's strengths are also clear. Its economy accounts for 18.5 percent of the world's total and serves as an important growth driver. Its foreign exchange reserves top the world, helping ensure the stability of its currency the yuan and financial security.

An employee works at an automobile company in Yuyao, east China's Zhejiang Province, Jan. 5, 2023. (Xinhua/Huang Zongzhi)

Businesses remain optimistic about the Chinese market. Axel Weber, chairman of the Institute of International Finance, said the Chinese economy remains a massive opportunity for Western companies.

The capacity of Foxconn's plant in Zhengzhou, Henan Province has returned to its peak season levels with about 200,000 workers, shaking off the impact of the epidemic.

"Now, all the production lines of Foxconn's plant in Zhengzhou are running normally, and we have taken various measures to motivate our employees," said Wang Xue, deputy general manager of Foxconn Technology Group.

The optimized response China adopted to deal with COVID-19 is expected to have a "J-curve effect" on the economy, said Han Wenxiu, executive deputy director of the office of the Central Committee for Financial and Economic Affairs. "It may cause disruptions to the economy in the short-term, but from the perspective of a whole year outlook, it is a boon."

TO BE CONTINUED

# CAPITAL RADIO

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

Tembelea mitandao ya kijamii ya CAPITAL RADIO



CAPITAL RADIO



# Farmers need resilient value chains to combat climate impact

By Hari Krishna DV, Kavita Sharma, Mei Xu

**L**OCALLY-led ecosystem restoration is critical for adaptation and increasing people's climate resilience, which also emerged as a key focus area during the negotiations of the 27th Conference of Parties (COP27) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

Increasing climate impacts, diminishing crop yields, biodiversity loss, inadequate food and nutrition, rising poverty and unequal access to resources and a high vulnerability to pandemics are just a few of the challenges smallholder farmers face, along with poor market linkages.

Strong agricultural and food value chains play a pivotal role for them by ensuring regularised market linkages and fair farm incomes.

Creating agricultural value chains that support sustainable farm practices like agroforestry, food forests and regenerative farming provides better livelihood opportunities and incomes for smallholder farmers.

It also ensures efficient use of their natural resources while restoring soil health, sequestering carbon and building crop resilience against pests and diseases, making farming systems more climate resilient.

The resilience of such value chains to the environmental, economic, societal, geo-political, pandemic and climate-related shocks is crucial for food and nutrition security.

However, efficient and climate-friendly value chains are difficult to establish – especially for smallholder farmers, as they lack access to markets, essential information and resources. These constraints continue to make farming a deterring livelihood resulting in high rates of poverty and migration.

Resolving this problem demands a closer understanding of the fundamental challenges – vertical integration, knowledge sharing and increasing climate impacts.

Vertically integrating the phases, especially at the bottom of the chain, helps value-addition at the source and information exchange leading to better income output and resilient communities.

Fortunately, emerging social entrepreneurs are being mentored and fostered by unique accelerator programmes such as Land Accelerator South Asia. The programmes support these entrepreneurs in innovating restoration-based business models and working on such sustainable value chains.

We can help build the resilience of smallholder farmers, forest-dwelling communities and other marginalised groups by re-



**Creating agricultural value chains that support sustainable farm practices provides better livelihood opportunities and incomes for smallholder farmers**

storing forest and farmland ecosystems.

Emerging solutions with newer ways of business

Thapasu is a Manali-based supply-chain integrator of native agricultural products like sea buckthorn, led by two women entrepreneurs, Anshu CR and Meena HN.

This company partners with native tribal farmers and self-help groups to promote food sustainability and transparency for indigenous Himalayan crops and links them to potential markets.

The enterprise is improving access to native-grown nutritional produce, generating alternate livelihood opportunities and enabling them to restore their barren land by strengthening market access for smallholder farmers.

Konkuwan Herbs is another game-changer enterprise, founded in 2019 by Roopali D Mohaptra and Rajeshwar Dhavala, working to bridge the gap between smallholder

farmers and the market. It also addresses climate impacts on agriculture and improves the availability of quality raw materials in the herbal industry.

The enterprise organises farming communities, particularly women and smallholder farmers of tribal communities, into clusters based on their crops and geographies. It provides seed inputs and technical guidance for cultivating native medicinal crops with high industrial use and premium market prices.

The company also helps farmers manage their crop-lands and buys back fresh produce, providing sustainable livelihood options for farmers and also resolving issues of over-extraction of herbs and medicinal plants, malnutrition and distress migration.

It has worked with more than 2,200 farmers on 1,100 acres of land to date in Jharkhand, Odisha and West

Bengal.

Kimalaya Naturals, an Uttarakhand-based venture under its iAURA brand, is creating a unique category of organic health and wellness products.

Its founders, Kavita Negi, Bhupender Singh Adhikari and Kanchan Singh Kuwarbi, work towards offering sustainable livelihood options for local farmers by producing premium Himalayan tea blends.

The venture is also generating sustainable employment opportunities by manufacturing high-quality wellness products. It also provides better income and skills to local farmers for practising chemical-free agriculture.

As a result, it prevents migration in Almora, a district infamous for its abandoned villages. Cultivating crops on barren, sloppy lands also prevents soil erosion in these hilly regions.

Reviving the forgotten, in-

digenous, and highly nutritious 'millets', Nutraceutical Rich Organic India Private Limited, is working with tribal communities in the interiors of Chhattisgarh.

Its brand GrandMaa Millets is working to form Tribal Millet Cooperatives for producing, collecting and processing local millets at source, facilitating value addition and helping marginal farmers receive better remuneration for their produce.

This is encouraging the local smallholders to grow climate-resilient indigenous millet varieties, supporting both nutritional security and land restoration.

An increase in the frequency as well as the intensity of extreme climatic events was highlighted by the United Nations body Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's 2022 report.

Understanding the product and market-related risks arising from external shocks such

as climate change and information asymmetry is critical for improving the resilience of smallholders.

Operationalising all three strategies of building resilience, restoration-based enterprises like Konkuwan Herbs, Thapasu, iAURA, and GrandMaa Millets are reducing exposure by providing alternative, sustainable livelihood options and reducing sensitivity.

These companies offer stable and better income by formalising the work, connecting to risk transfer mechanisms and increasing adaptive capacity by promoting resilient farm practices, knowledge sharing and extension activities.

In building resilient value chains, the endeavours to reduce impacts from climate-induced risks and improve income and livelihood opportunities are enabling a transformation of businesses.

## UN reports child death every 4.4 seconds in 2021



By Nadia Colombe Gbano

**T**HE latest estimates by the United Nations Inter Agency Group for Child Mortality Estimation found that some 5 million children less than 5 years old have died in 2021 alongside, 2.1 million aged between 5 and 24.

According to the latest estimates and UN data report released Tuesday, in 2021, a child or youth died every 4.4 seconds in the world.

The United Nations Inter Agency Group for Child Mortality found that some 5 million children less than 5 years old have died in 2021 and 2.1 million aged between 5 and 24 have also passed.

A separate report estimates the death of stillborn babies during the same period to be at 1.9 million.

These deaths are attributed to uneven access to quality health-care.

Despite having 29% of global births, sub-Saharan Africa accounted for 56% of all under-five deaths in 2021 with children in the region subject to highest risk of childhood death in the world.

Children born in the region have a 15 times higher risk of death than the one born in Europe and Northern America.

Nearly half of all registered stillbirths happened in sub-Saharan Africa.

Nevertheless, all is not gloom and doom as the report also shows significant improvement with a lower risk of death across all ages globally since 2000 which can be attributed to more investments in strengthening primary health systems to benefit women, children and adolescents.

The global under-five mortality rate has decreased by 50% since the beginning of the century, while mortality rates in older children and youth dropped by 36% and the still-birth rate decreased by 35%.

Though these improvements are notable, seemingly, gains have reduced significantly 2010 and 54 countries will fall short of meeting the Sustainable development Goals target for under-five mortality.

The report states that if swift action is not taken to improve health services, almost 59 million children and youth will die before 2030 and nearly 16 million will be lost to stillbirth.

However, the reports also note gaps in data, which could critically undermine the impact of policies and programs designed to improve childhood survival and well-being globally.



# US and Russia clash at UN meeting over 'violent extremism' in Africa

UNITED NATIONS

**T**HE United States has accused Kremlin-backed Russian military contractors of interfering in the internal affairs of African countries and "increasing the likelihood that violent extremism will grow" in the Sahel region, which is facing increasing attacks, an allegation Russia denied.

US Deputy Ambassador Richard Mills lashed out at the Wagner Group at a UN Security Council meeting on West Africa and the Sahel on Tuesday.

He accused the paramilitary force of failing to address the threat of armed groups, robbing countries of their resources, committing human rights abuses and endangering the safety and security of UN peacekeepers and staff.

France's political counsellor, Isis Jarraud-Darnault, echoed Mills, saying the "model" used by Wagner mercenaries has proven "totally ineffective in combating terrorism".

She cited the "nefarious" and devastating impact of their work and human rights violations, including the alleged killing of more than 30 civilians in Mali, and its pillaging of natural resources.

Britain's Deputy Ambassador James Kariuki cited the deterioration of security in Mali, Burkina Faso, Nigeria and the Lake Chad Basin, and the fear of instability spreading to West African coastal countries. "You cannot ignore the destabilising role the Wagner Group plays in the region. They are part of the problem, not the solution," he told the council.

Russia's Deputy Ambassador Anna Evstigneeva rejected what she called attempts "to besmirch Russian assistance to Mali", where Moscow has a bilateral agreement to assist the transitional government, "and in other countries in Africa".

"Some countries once again today declared that Russia apparently is pillaging and looting the resources of Africa and is facilitating the growth of the terrorist threat," she said, accusing those unnamed nations of doing the same thing "throughout the world and in



Africa", especially in neighbouring Libya, which destabilised the entire area.

"Accusations against Russia are just astonishing, given common sense," and undermine African leaders trying to resolve their own problems and decide who they want to cooperate with, she said.

Evstigneeva never mentioned the Wagner Group by name. The group is run by Yevgeny Prigozhin, a close ally of Russian President Vladimir Putin, and its mercenaries are accused by Western countries and UN experts of numerous human rights abuses throughout

Africa, including in the Central African Republic, Libya and Mali.

US politics, Canada's multiculturalism, South America's geopolitical rise—we bring you the stories that matter.

Giovane Biha, the deputy head of the UN Office for West Africa and the Sahel, told the council that "insecurity has again deteriorated in large parts of the region", due to activities of armed groups, "violent extremists" and criminal networks.

As a result, she said, more than 10,000 schools across the Sahel have closed, leaving millions of

children without an education. Nearly 7,000 health centres have also shut down.

Armed groups are fighting for supremacy and control of resources, she said, and the central Sahel is facing "unprecedented levels of security and humanitarian challenges; socio-political instability, further compounded by the impact of climate change; and food insecurity which was exacerbated by the conflict in Ukraine".

She added that increasing attacks in countries along the Gulf of Guinea are threatening transport arteries to landlocked coun-

tries further north.

According to Secretary-General Antonio Guterres' latest report issued this week, more than 18.6 million people in the region are experiencing "severe food insecurity" - an increase of 5.6 million since the end of June 2022 - with Burkina Faso, Niger and Nigeria being the hardest-hit. About 6.3 million people are displaced across the Sahel, an increase of 300,000 since June.

Russia's Evstigneeva said Moscow shares concerns about the increasing number of threats in the region, ongoing inter-ethnic and inter-communal conflict, organised crime, drug trafficking and the killing of a large number of civilians by fighters in the second half of 2022.

She pointed to the withdrawal of French counterterrorism forces and the Takuba European military task force under their command on June 30, saying it wasn't agreed on with Mali's transitional government and is having "a negative impact" on the security situation in the short-term.

"Nonetheless," she said, "There is already some progress" and Russia is providing Mali with "appropriate assistance".

Mills, the US deputy ambassador, said the US is deeply concerned about the security, humanitarian and political crisis in the Sahel causing "a dramatic increase in the strength and influence of violent extremism".

The problem requires "a democratic governance solution", he said. "We are also gravely concerned about democratic backsliding across the region and urge the return of democratically elected, civilian-led governments."

West Africa's latest wave of coups kicked off in Mali in 2020, followed by another in Guinea in 2021, and then in Burkina Faso in January 2022.

Omar Aliou Touray, president of the West African regional group ECOWAS' commission, told the council he was pleased to report that transitions to critical elections in the three countries are "on course", with voting to take place in the next two years.

SM



## 59<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF ZANZIBAR REVOLUTION



**President of the Revolutionary Government of Zanzibar Excellency Dr Hussein Mwinyi**

The Management and staff of Zanzibar Ports Corporation (ZPC) join His Excellency President of Zanzibar and Chairman of the Revolutionary Council, Dr. Hussein Ali Mwinyi and all Zanzibaris in commemorating 59 years of Zanzibar Revolution.



**Our Ports for Our Economy**





## Five EA startups shortlisted for AfDB Agripitch

By Guardian Reporter

**F**ive startup firms from East Africa Community (EAC) region have been shortlisted for the African Development Bank Group's \$140,000 AgriPitch Competition top prize.

The statement issued by AfDB yesterday showed that there was no Tanzanian, Rwandese or Burundian startup shortlisted for the prize. However, DRC has three shortlisted startups, while one is from Kenya and one shortlisted startup is from Uganda.

Shortlisted firms from Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) including Bilanga Solutions, FullTech Congo, and Mvutu, while those from Ugandan and Kenyans are MiAgro Shoppers Limited and Farmers Life Technologies respectively.

Other countries with shortlisted startups according to the AfDB statement include Senegal (two), Ghana (two), Benin (two), Gabon (one), Malawi (two), Botswana (one), Zimbabwe (one), Cote d'Ivoire (One), Togo (One), Nigeria (Three).

Twenty-five youth-led agriculture sector companies from 14 African countries have advanced to the final round of the African Development Bank Group's 2022 AgriPitch



Winners of a previous AgriPitch competition pictured with African Development Bank and competition partner officials, receiving money for their businesses.

Competition.

The African Development Bank, in collaboration with the implementing lead Private Equity Support and partner organizations Eldohub and the Private Finance Advisory Network, announced the 25 finalists for the Competition that will award \$140,000 in grants and business skills training.

The 25 finalists include 17 women-owned or led small and medium enterprises. Thirteen

are from Francophone countries, while the other 12 are from Anglophone countries. The AgriPitch Competition targets African youth aged 18 to 35 years working in the agricultural value chain.

The 25 finalists will receive training to build business skill capacity with the requisite tools and knowledge to bolster their investor readiness, financial management, and help them pitch bankable business proposals, according to AfDB statement.

"These young agripreneurs show great potential and are a testament to the level of innovation that exists across Africa. The Bank's support, through the AgriPitch Competition, will boost

the bankability of these projects and provide a tangible step towards enhancing agribusiness and food security on the continent," said Edson Mpyisi, the Bank's Chief Financial Economist and ENABLE Youth Coordinator.

The Competition received over 1,000 applications from African "agripreneurs," including around 250 entries from women-owned or led small and medium enterprises.

"It's reassuring to see and evaluate hundreds of great potential investment opportunities from across the region," said Diana Gichaga, Managing Partner at Private Equity Support. "It reaffirms the crucial role that the agricultural sector plays in the African economy and the continued efforts to bring these initiatives to the fore through platforms such as the AgriPitch Competition," she added.

The AgriPitch Competition is a central and recurring activity of the African Development Bank's ENABLE Youth Program, sponsored by the Youth Entrepreneurship and Innovation Trust Fund of the Bank.

The 2022 edition will award three start-up categories: Early start-ups (0-3 years of operation), Mature start-ups (3 or more years in operation) and Women-empowered businesses (firms with at least 51% share of women ownership or founded by a woman).

The finalists will pitch their business plans to potential investors in the AgriPitch deal room and be eligible for one-on-one mentorship as well as access to post-competition digital expertise.

## World Bank warns over global economic recession in 2023

WASHINGTON

The World Bank slashed its 2023 growth forecasts on Tuesday to levels teetering on the brink of recession for many countries as the impact of central bank rate hikes intensifies, Russia's war in Ukraine continues, and the world's major economic engines sputter.

The development lender said it expected global GDP growth of 1.7% in 2023, the slowest pace outside the 2009 and 2020 recessions since 1993. In its previous Global Economic Prospects report in June 2022, the bank had forecast 2023 global growth at 3.0%.

It forecast global growth in 2024 to pick up to 2.7% - below the 2.9% estimate for 2022 - and said average growth for the 2020-2024 period would be under 2% - the slowest five-year pace since 1960.

The bank said major slowdowns in advanced economies, including sharp cuts to its forecast to 0.5% for both the United States and the euro zone, could foreshadow a new global recession less than three years after the last one.

"Given fragile economic conditions, any new adverse development - such as higher-than-expected inflation, abrupt rises in interest rates to contain it, a resurgence of



the COVID-19 pandemic or escalating geopolitical tensions - could push the global economy into recession," the bank said in a statement accompanying the report.

The bleak outlook will be especially hard on emerging market and developing economies, the World Bank said, as they struggle with heavy debt burdens, weak currencies and income growth, and slowing business investment that is now forecast at a 3.5% annual growth rate over the next two years - less than half the pace of the past two decades.

"Weakness in growth and business investment will compound the already dev-

astating reversals in education, health, poverty and infrastructure and the increasing demands from climate change," World Bank President David Malpass said in a statement.

China's growth in 2022 slumped to 2.7%, its second slowest pace since the mid-1970s after 2020, as zero-COVID restrictions, property market turmoil and drought hit consumption, production and investment, the World Bank report said. It predicted a rebound to 4.3% for 2023, but that is 0.9 percentage-point below the June forecast due to the severity of COVID disruptions and weakening external demand.

The World Bank noted that some inflationary pressures started to abate as 2022 drew to a close, with lower energy and commodity prices, but warned that risks of new supply disruptions were high, and elevated core inflation may persist. This could cause central banks to respond by raising policy rates by more than currently expected, worsening the global slowdown, it added.

The bank called for increased support from the international community to help low-income countries deal with food and energy shocks, people displaced by conflicts, and a growing risk of debt crises. It said new concessional financing and grants are needed along with the leveraging of private capital and domestic resources to help boost investment in climate adaptation, human capital and health, the report said.

The report comes as the World Bank's board this week is expected to consider a new "evolution road map" for the institution to vastly expand its lending capacity to address climate change and other global crises. The plan will guide negotiations with shareholders, led by the United States, for the biggest revamp in the bank's business model since its creation at the end of World War Two.

## China year-end new bank loans beat forecast

BEIJING

New bank lending in China unexpectedly rose in December from the previous month, central bank data showed on Tuesday, with 2022 setting a record high for lending as the central bank continued to support the COVID-ravaged economy.

Chinese banks extended 1.4 trillion yuan (\$206.7 billion) in new yuan loans in December, up from November and beating analysts' expectations, according to data released by the People's Bank of China.

Analysts polled by Reuters had predicted new yuan loans would drop to 1.1 trillion yuan in December from 1.21 trillion yuan the previous month. The new loans were also higher than 1.13 trillion yuan a year earlier.

"China's new loans beat expectations for December while aggregate financing missed," said Zhou Hao, chief economist at brokerage house Guotai Junan International. "The market had a low expectation as the virus resurgence should have dampened credit activities."

He said that investors' eyes have now turned to data for credit extensions in the first month of the year.

"As new loans came in higher than expected in December, there's a big hope of massive loan extension at the beginning of 2023, further boosting growth prospects," he said.

Household loans, including mortgages, fell to 175.3 billion yuan in December from 262.7 billion yuan in November, while corporate loans rose to 1.26 trillion yuan from 883.7 billion yuan, according to central bank data.

New bank lending hit a record 21.31 trillion yuan in 2022, up from 19.95 trillion yuan in 2021 - the previous record.

Chinese leaders have pledged to increase support for the world's second-largest economy, which was hit hard by COVID-19 lockdowns last year as well as slowing global demand. After tough virus curbs were abruptly lifted in December, the country is now battling a surge of infections.

The central bank has promised to make its policy "precise and forceful" this year to support the economy, keeping liquidity reasonably ample and lowering funding costs for businesses.

Broad M2 money supply grew by 11.8% in December from a year earlier, central bank data showed, below estimates of 12.2% forecast in the Reuters poll. M2 grew 12.4% in November from a year earlier.

Outstanding yuan loans grew by 11.1% in December from a year earlier compared with 11.0% growth in November. Analysts had expected 11.0% growth.

Growth of outstanding total social financing (TSF), a broad measure of credit and liquidity in the economy, slowed to 9.6% in December from a year earlier and from 10.0% in November.

TSF includes off-balance sheet forms of financing that exist outside the conventional bank lending system, such as initial public offerings, loans from trust companies and bond sales.

In December, TSF fell to 1.31 trillion yuan from 1.99 trillion yuan in November. Analysts polled by Reuters had expected December TSF of 1.60 trillion yuan.

## Government ready to launch state bank for S. Africa

JOHANNESBURG

South African Communications minister, Khumbudzo Ntshavheni (pictured) has said that the Postbank is ready to take up the role of a state bank in South Africa, with plans underway to roll out 100 new branches and to revamp the group's infrastructure to be a fully-fledged bank.

Speaking to the SABC, Ntshavheni said that the bank is currently assessing which Post Office branches in the country are doing the best operationally and in terms of profitability, and these will be brought on board for the bank.

"We are targeting a rollout of 100 branches...and (we will) start the infrastructure revamp that is required," she said.

"Currently, they (Postbank) operate at the Post Office, and there is no proper banking infrastructure. Banks operate at a different level, so they must put in the necessary infrastructure - when the (banking) licence comes in, then the bank will be readily available."

The department is currently waiting for the necessary legislation to make its way through the National Assembly to give the Postbank the necessary basis to take on the role of a state bank. It is also waiting for approval from the South African Reserve Bank for a banking licence.



Ntshavheni tabled the South African Postbank Amendment Bill to the National Assembly in May 2022, which inserts and changes definitions in the South African Postbank Limited Act to allow it to function as a separate entity from the South African Post Office.

It would allow for the shareholding of Postbank to be transferred from the South African Post Office (SAPO) to the government and allow for the setting up of a Bank Controlling Company (BCC) - a holding company for the bank.

The bill is currently making its way through the various portfolio committees, last being discussed by the Portfo-

lio Committee on Communications and Digital Technologies in late November 2022. Until the bill is approved by the NA - and the National Council of Provinces - and sent to the president for assent, the Postbank continues to operate as a subsidiary of the Post Office and can only offer transactional and savings accounts.

During discussions and deliberations on the bill, concerns were raised by the office of the Auditor General about the group's readiness to become a fully-fledged bank, highlighting worries over security and controls. Red flags were also raised about cybersecurity and its overreliance on the Post Office, which is

itself in dire financial straits.

Despite moves to make the Postbank a state-owned bank, Ntshavheni previously made it clear that it was a measure separate from the ANC's push for a new state bank in South Africa.

There has been a big push from the ruling party in recent years to establish a state bank, particularly in the wake of high-profile account closures by the country's major banks. Of particular interest is the fact that a state bank would be able to earn interest off customer deposits, which could bolster the country's coffers and fund various projects.

President Cyril Ramaphosa outlined the government's intention to form a state bank in 2020 - however, finance minister Enoch Godongwana has repeatedly shot down the idea, given the country's tight budget and the lack of resources needed to establish one.

In March 2022, the finance minister said there were no plans in the government to launch a state bank. Despite this, the ANC has kept the plan in its back pocket.

According to Ntshavheni, president Cyril Ramaphosa is expected to make an announcement regarding the Postbank or state bank during his State of the Nation Address, scheduled for 9 February 2023.



# WHY THE BANKING SECTOR WILL BE RESILIENT IN 2023

By Jan Bellens

Twelve months ago, I had hoped for a less volatile 2022.

Lingering effects of COVID-19 in some markets, wider geopolitical tensions, inflation and the prospect of recession in many major markets kept banking leaders busy. Banks had to implement sanctions, reassess credit and market risk exposures, think about their operations and people strategy, strengthen cyber resilience and, of course, adapt to the everchanging regulatory environment.

One of my major reflections on the upheaval of the past year is just how resilient the sector is. As the IMF's recent Global Financial Stability Report highlighted, "High levels of capital and ample liquidity buffers have bolstered the resilience of the global banking sector." But it isn't just capital and liquidity strength - it is the ability to manage radical change in response to unexpected external pressures.

The resilience of the formal banking sector is in some ways a contrast to the non-bank financial (especially crypto) sector, which is now starting to see greater



Jan Bellens

regulatory scrutiny. Meanwhile, the gap in valuations between fintechs and traditional banks has narrowed significantly. In an upward rate environment, posting great customer growth numbers will no longer be a substitute for actual profitability.

As I look to the coming 12 months, I suspect that we are perhaps entering a period of "stabilized volatility" from

a geopolitical and macroeconomic perspective. The key for me is determining which disruptions will be temporary and which will be permanent.

Here are my four bets for why the banking sector will remain resilient in 2023.

Banks will see the upside of the monetary tightening-recession paradox: Average returns on equity for major global banks could rise between 0.5 and 1 percentage point, with the beta effect of rates on net interest income the key driver.

The return of deposit margin will be particularly welcome for many banks. While monetary tightening into a recession raises concerns about loan losses, regulatory action following the global financial crisis has limited exposure to riskier segments.

Further, generally strong consumer balance sheets should limit asset-quality deterioration. Uncertainty is likely to have a negative impact on equity markets and mergers and acquisitions. As the macro environment stabilizes in the second half of the year, I expect to see a rebound in M&A and issuance.

Banks will focus on expanding their customer base and services: Rate rises will boost revenue for most lending businesses but beyond this, investors will be looking for banks to create alpha. I see two areas as a focus for income growth. The first is ancillary services they can offer clients, particularly small and mid-sized businesses. This includes legal, advisory and risk management capabilities, or helping clients understand and mitigate their carbon impact. The second area of opportunity will be serving the previously unbanked or underbanked. A decade ago, 40% of adults in the developing world had a bank account. Last year more than 70% did.

Technology investment will continue to grow: I remain skeptical of the argument that banks are really technology companies (those that genuinely are seem to be going through a tough time now), but they are certainly technology-powered. They will have to keep investing heavily in technology to keep pace with innovation.

Reports of the death of ESG are greatly exaggerated: More than 120 major banks are signed up to the

UN's Net-Zero Banking Alliance, representing around 40% of global assets. An EY review of 100 of the world's largest banks shows that nearly 90% have clearly defined their long-term net-zero emission targets, although there is still work to be done by a significant minority providing metrics on their progress.

I expect further strides forward in the coming year, but also greater evidence of sustainability targets being embedded in the KPIs of banking leaders and increased efforts to build confidence in sustainability reporting.

There was no time for a breather in the past 12 months, and I fear the same is also true for the next 12. But the benefit of the boost to banks interest income is that it may afford them some time to look beyond the immediate pressures of geopolitics and macroeconomics to the wider changes in the world and the opportunities ahead.

Transformation is always hard, but the lesson of the last few years is that the banking sector is exceptionally good at it, thanks to its resiliency.

Jan Bellens (pictured) is global banking and capital markets sector leader at EY

## World Bank mulls higher lending to poorest nations

WASHINGTON

Not since the early 1990s has the world faced such a period of low growth.

Discounting the havoc caused by the financial crash of 2008 and the initial impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, the World Bank says that by the end of 2024 it will have been 30 years since the global economy grew at an average of less than 2% a year.

Worse, the world stands on a "razor's edge" and risks falling into a recession this year if the situation in Ukraine deteriorates any further or another global crisis emerges.

The poorest will suffer the most. And for that reason the Washington-based development funder is hoping to persuade major donors, and especially the EU, US and China, to widen its lending capacity.

Ahead of its annual meeting in April, which is held in the US capital with its sister organisation, the International

Monetary Fund, the World Bank is seeking support for proposals that include a deeper pool of capital to draw on and new lending tools.

This "evolution roadmap" is designed to give the bank more flexibility to meet a series of overlapping crises that the New York university economist Nouriel Roubini, among others, has argued is the new normal.

Wars, famines and the climate emergency will continue to trigger food shortages and energy price spikes that fuel inflation. Interest rates, for so long at near zero, will remain above long-term trends, they say.

The Bank president, David Malpass, hopes to prevent countries that have made huge strides in the last 30 years towards food security and stable public debts from going backwards.

One of the biggest headwinds faced by developing world governments is the



World Bank president David Malpass

increase in debt costs. When most debts are denominated in dollars or euros, the aggressive rate rises by the US Federal Reserve and the European Central Bank matter.

Kenya might be one of the more durable, financially solvent nations in sub-Saharan Africa, but its debt payments are expected to average more than

30% of government revenues this year.

And after two decades of being encouraged to seek loans from international banks - and when that proved expensive, Chinese development banks - the country's president, William Ruto, who has only been in place since last September, is keen to switch back to borrow-

ing from the World Bank.

Ruto is unlikely to be alone. More than £63bn was spent last year by the 75 countries, many of them in sub-Saharan Africa, that make up the poorest nations, to cover loans taken out mostly over the previous decade.

Malpass wants to increase lending, but without sacrificing the institution's AAA credit rating. It will be a difficult tightrope to walk.

Private lenders have reduced the pool of developing countries they are prepared to consider for loans. Before the pandemic, one in five countries could borrow privately. Now it is just one in 15.

Malpass would struggle to meet the demand from countries shut out by private lenders without accepting the risk that many governments might default. Debt write-offs would force credit agencies to say the new policy warrants a downgrade.

## European retail banks attempt to experience restructuring

LONDON

Europe's retail banking sector is battling weak consumer sentiment and the threat of loan defaults. To curb losses and adapt to a difficult consumer credit environment, some European banks have opted to restructure.

Most recently, BNP Paribas is reported to be considering different options for a major overhaul of its consumer finance unit.

The news comes as European banks have been dialing back their lending to businesses and consumers for the first time in nine years following interest rate hikes and a possible eurozone recession.

Should the French bank go ahead with restructuring, it could potentially sell off parts of the business in an effort to cut costs and refocus on more profitable departments and geographies. BNP Paribas has already agreed to sell its Bulgarian personal finance business to Postbank, the Bulgarian division of Eurobank.

Going forward, further sales or cutting services could be on the cards.

In another ongoing bank restructuring being carried out by Societe Generale Group, keeping branches open and maintaining those all-important customer touchpoints has been one of the major priorities of the recently formalized merger of Societe Generale and Credit du Nord Group.

More than two years in the making, the newly formed retail bank, known as SG, was officially launched on Jan. 1 in a major consolidation of the group's retail banking operations.

As Societe Generale stated in a press release, the combination of the two banks' retail assets will give customers in France access to a larger branch network than they had when the businesses were operated separately.

"All customers will benefit from an increased number of points of sale, multiplied by more than two for customers from Credit du Nord Group and increased by 15% for Societe Generale customers," the release said.

That network of regional French banks includes the oldest existing bank in France, Banque Courtois, which was founded in 1760 and is part of Credit du Nord Group, which has deep roots in the country's retail banking sector. Prior to being acquired by Societe Generale in 2000, the financial institution (FI) was owned for several decades by Paribas.

While maintaining an important presence in the French banking landscape and relied on by many consumers and small businesses, such local and regional banks are at odds with today's global banking system, which is dominated by a small number of multinational giants.

## US banks readying for shrinking profits, recession

NEW YORK

US banking giants are forecast to report lower fourth quarter profits this week as lenders stockpile rainy-day funds to prepare for an economic slowdown that is battering investment banking.

Four American banking giants - JPMorgan Chase & Co (JPM.N), Bank of America Corp (BAC.N), Citigroup Inc (C.N) and Wells Fargo & Co (WFC.N) - will report earnings on Friday.

Along with Morgan Stanley (MS.N) and Goldman Sachs (GS.N), they are the six largest lenders expected to amass a combined \$5.7 billion in reserves to prepare for soured loans, according to average projections by Refinitiv. That is more than double the \$2.37 billion set aside a year earlier.

"With most US economists forecasting either a recession or significant slowdown this year, banks will likely incorporate a more severe economic outlook," said Morgan Stanley analysts led by Betsy Graseck in a note.

The Federal Reserve is raising interest rates aggressively in an effort



to tame inflation near its highest in decades. Rising prices and higher borrowing costs have prompted consumers and businesses to curb their spending, and since banks serve as economic middlemen, their profits decline when activity slows.

The six banks are also expected to report an average 17% drop in net profit in the fourth quarter from a year earlier, according to preliminary analysts' estimates from Refinitiv.

Still, lenders stand to gain from rising rates that allow them to earn more from the interest they charge borrowers.

Investors and analysts will focus on bank bosses' commentary as an important gauge of the economic outlook. A parade of executives has warned in recent weeks of the tougher business environment, which has prompted firms to slash compensation or eliminate jobs.

Goldman Sachs will start laying off thousands of employees on Wednesday, two sources familiar with the move said Sunday. Morgan Stanley and Citigroup, among others, have also cut jobs after a

plunge in investment-banking activity.

The moves come after Wall Street dealmakers handling mergers, acquisitions and initial public offerings faced a sharp drop in their businesses in 2022 as rising interest rates roiled markets.

Global investment banking revenue sank to \$15.3 billion in the fourth quarter, down more than 50% from a year-earlier quarter, according to data from Dealogic.

Consumer businesses will also be a key focus in banks' results. Household accounts have been propped up for much of the pandemic by a strong job market and government stimulus, and while

consumers are generally in good financial shape, more are starting to fall behind on payments.

"We're exiting a period of extraordinarily strong credit quality," said David Fanger, senior vice president, financial institutions group, at Moody's Investors Service.

At Wells Fargo, the fallout from a fake accounts scandal and regulatory penalties will continue to weigh on results. The lender expected to book an expense of about \$3.5 billion after it agreed to settle charges over widespread mismanagement of car loans, mortgages and bank accounts with the U.S. Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, the watchdog's largest-ever civil penalty.

Analysts will also watch if banks such as Morgan Stanley and Bank of America book any writedowns on the \$13-billion loan to fund Elon Musk's purchase of Twitter.

More broadly, the KBW index (BKX) of bank stocks is up about 4% this month after sinking almost 28% in the last year.

While market sentiment took a sharp turn from hopeful to fearful in 2022, some large banks could overcome the most dire predictions because they have shed risky activities, wrote Susan Roth Katzke, an analyst at Credit Suisse.

"We see more resilient earning power through the cycle after a decade of de-risking," she wrote in a note. "We cannot dismiss the fundamental strength."



# Trends shaping the future of Africa's fintech startups

DUBAI

According to the latest McKinsey report, revenue generated by fintech startups will grow by eight times to \$30bn by 2025. This forecasted success is fuelled by startups building innovative fintech products, the need to eradicate financial exclusion and large corporate investment interest.

Fintech is the fastest-growing startup industry in Africa, with over 5,200 companies spread across the continent in 2022. The rapid expansion has in part been driven by the increasingly young, tech-savvy and urban population. These consumers are looking for user-friendly and advanced digital finance solutions, rather than traditional and often slow-paced services.

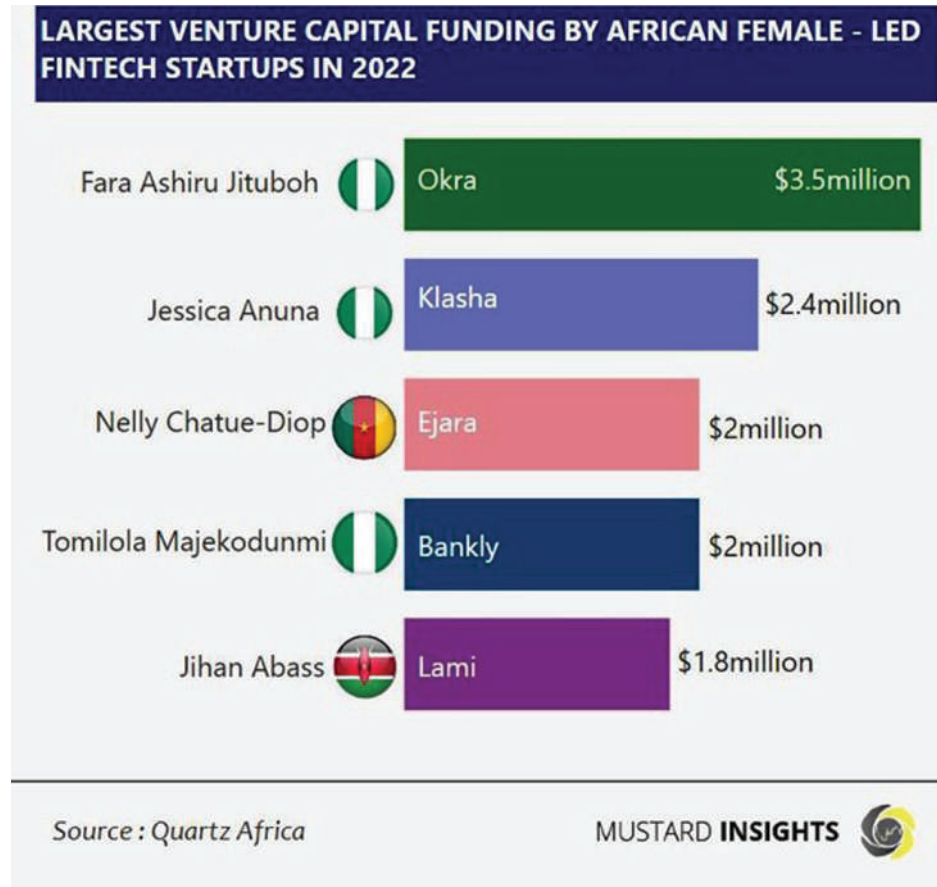
If fintech startups want to dominate their respective sectors, there are three trends that are expected to gain momentum in 2023 and beyond:

## 1. Financial inclusion driven by strategic partnerships

At the forefront of fintech's triumph in Africa is the need to serve the unbanked. Financial inclusion has long been a buzzword, but startups that truly use this goal as a catalyst will see far greater success.

According to Oxford's Business Group there are still 23.5% of South Africans that remain unbanked in 2022, however on the flip side, there has been a 20% increase in Africans who have access to formal financial services since 2011. The reality is that if financial inclusion is the end goal, we need to allow space for everyone at the table. Tech companies that operate in silos and steer clear of their competitors will not thrive at the rate of those who partner with their counterparts.

Strategic partnerships are essential for building better



products and improving digital literacy. Companies like PayFast, Finch Technologies and Loop have seen the value in partnering with innovative startups and solution providers. 2023 will see an even more focused effort from startups to collaborate and integrate with other tech solution providers. Essentially fintech startups need to focus on their core product to succeed, and if there is a gap in their current solutions, they should seek out partners who offer these solutions.

In the lending space, we've seen the rise of finance comparison platforms like Hippo and FundingHub. This has been prompted by consumers

wanting easier, simpler and more affordable access to finance. FundingHub has seen the value in building strong partnerships with lenders, and because of this, they were able to create a platform that benefits consumers and allows them to make better informed financial decisions.

## 2. Africa continues to be a hotbed for investments

The startup landscape has matured significantly with banks and government organisations creating enabling mechanisms that support the startup community.

With 200 and counting incubators in South Africa alone, there will not only be an increase in incubators

and accelerators but fintech startups who see the value of joining these networks. Powerhouses like Google Launchpad Accelerator Africa, Grindstone and Antler are continuing to catapult African fintech startups into international markets.

On the flip side, we are seeing a growing number of "The Big 5" banks, like Standard Bank and FNB investing in accelerator programmes. The banks are using incubators as an opportunity to seek out the best talent and products, with the fintech startups accessing the funding and guidance they need to propel their business.

African fintechs have secured nearly \$900m from

both local and foreign investors in 2022, with 25% of that being allocated to South Africa. The continent is emerging as a hotbed for foreign investment, this is mainly due to the rise of mobile penetration, better internet infrastructure and a growing fintech startup ecosystem.

Over a third of VC investment into Africa is from the US, in addition to that large international corporates like Visa and Fidelity are taking large stakes in South African fintechs. A payment model to watch out for in 2023, which has gained major investment interest in 2022, is buy-now-pay-later (BNPL). These fintech startups have become attractive to consumers, due to the payment models' ease of payment, simple approval process and lack of interest rates.

## 3. The growing need for low-code/no-code infrastructure

Startups that are able to build solutions that offer low-code/no-code infrastructure for entrepreneurs will be of growing significance in the new year. According to Gartner, 70% of new applications developed by enterprises by 2025 will use no-code or low-code technology.

Essentially low-code/no-code fintech infrastructures allow businesses to offer their consumers financial services without the need to spend heaps of capital on building out an engineering team. These products are designed for fast, easy implementation without the need for coding skills.

Microsoft estimates by 2026, there will be over 500 million new apps built. If businesses want to be able to meet the growing needs of their consumers, they need to put their legacy infrastructures aside and let low-code solutions lift the burden.

## Dfcu bank in Uganda gets acting CEO

KAMPALA

The Dfcu Group board has appointed William Sekabembe (pictured) as the dfcu Bank acting chief executive officer and managing director.

Sekabembe, who will hold the position in the interim until a substantive managing director is appointed, replaces Mr Mathias Katamba, who last week indicated he had resigned due to personal reasons.

In a notice sent to shareholders Tuesday, Jimmy Mugerwa, the dfcu Group chairman, indicated that the board had accepted Mr Katamba's resignation and was in the process of identifying a replacement.

"In the interim, the executive director, William Sekabembe will act in the position of chief executive officer and managing director," he wrote.

Sekabembe is the current dfcu executive director. He was appointed to the position in August 2016.

He has held various roles within dfcu including head of development and institutional banking.

He has more than 24 years of banking experience with extensive knowledge in retail and business banking, credit risk management and product development.

He has previously worked with Stanbic Bank as head of products and Barclays Bank, now Absa, as head of distribution.

Katamba, who has served dfcu for four years, is expected to leave by January 31. He was tapped from Housing Finance Bank and was appointed on October 31, 2018, but started official duties on January 2, 2019.

He replaced Juma Kisaame, whose contract had expired after serving dfcu for 11 years.

Katamba took over at dfcu after the takeover of some assets of Crane Bank, which elevated its position in terms of profitability and assets.

However, the bank has had mixed performance with profits dropping by 46 percent during the year ended December 2021, due to an increase in non-performing loans.

During its 57th virtual annual general meeting, Mr Katamba told dfcu shareholders that the bank would diversify its financial streams in the coming years to include retail personal, retail business and corporate banking to ensure effective recovery and profitability.

Efforts to get a comment from Winifred M T Kiryabwire, who was in April last year appointed the dfcu Bank chairperson, were futile by press time.



BANKING & FINANCE

## M-Pesa 'store number' to tame cash loss

NAIROBI

M-Pesa users will escape the pain of making cash withdrawals from incorrect agent shops after Safaricom introduced an additional verification step of inputting a 'store number' right after keying in the 'agent number'.

The additional feature aims at fixing the rampant problem of customers entering the wrong agent number, which results in funds withdrawal being reflected in a different outlet thus risking a loss of cash.

In the new process, the unique agent and the store numbers will have to match for a withdrawal transaction to go through, meaning there is no room for error.

Previously, customers had to contact the telco and initiate the reversal process of funds withdrawn erroneously from the wrong stores, which was time-consuming and not ideal in times of emergencies.

In October 2015, Safaricom introduced a service dubbed Hakikisha that gives M-Pesa users a 15-second window to confirm the name of the intended withdrawal agent through a pop-up on their mobile phones.

Through this service, subscribers can cancel transactions within the period at no cost. It also allows



customers sending money directly to other users to confirm the names of their intended recipients before the transaction is finalised.

M-Pesa has in recent years been the giant telco's leading cash cow following its steady growth

against voice and text messaging revenues.

In the half year ended September 2022, Safaricom booked Sh39.8 billion from the voice service while revenue from M-Pesa hit Sh56.8 billion, which translated to 41.2 percent

of the Sh138.1 billion total mobile service revenue.

The service employs thousands of agents and is used by a large number of merchants to process payments, making it a key player in the national payments system.

"There are over 160,000

agents countrywide ready to serve you wherever you are with many more added daily. Our agents are always ready to make your Safaricom experience satisfying," Safaricom says on its website.

Last October, Ethiopian authorities okayed Safaricom's introduction of M-Pesa in the market of more than 110 million people.

The entry into the new market marked the onset of a financial revolution in a country whose banking sector has no way of transferring funds across banks.

Safaricom is mulling splitting the mobile money service from its telco business in a reorganisation that will see the two run as separate subsidiaries of the same firm.

Safaricom chief executive Peter Ndegwa has affirmed that even though the board is yet to approve the transaction separating the two businesses, it has given support to the management to pursue the process.

## Seven banks compete in artificial intelligence adoption

LAGOS

In a bid to run with the tide of digital economy, fresh facts have emerged that seven Deposit Money Banks (DMBs) are already competing in not only adoption but performance efficiency and customer satisfaction in the use of artificial intelligence-powered chatbots.

The banks are Zenith Bank with chatbot called Ziva; Fidelity bank plc's Ivy; First City Monument Bank's Temi; UBA Group with its Leo, an AI-powered Facebook Messenger bot that allow users perform banking

transactions; Access Bank's Tamada; Heritage Bank's octopus chatbot and Keystone Bank's chatbot called oxygen.

A chatbot is a computer programme or an artificial intelligence which conducts a conversation through audio or text.

They are messaging apps which allow businesses and brands to remain online 24 hours, providing customer support by instant responses and complaint resolution.

AI, chatbots and automated, self-service technologies free up call centre employees

from routine tier-1 support requests so they can focus on more complex tasks.

Back in 2017, experts from IBM projected that by 2020, more than 85 percent of all customer interactions will be handled without the need for a human agent.

Today, only a few Nigerian banks have chatbots for now.

Access Bank's Tamara, with a female banker persona, can be accessed through WhatsApp or on the bank's website.

Some users describe Fidelity Bank's Ivy

as a 'cool babe' who has helped stop anxiety in online banking.

FCMB's artificial intelligence chatbot called Temi, has also being described as a nice loving name on messenger, for a fantastic banker persona.

Heritage Bank's octopus chatbot can be found on Telegram just as Keystone Bank's oxygen, found on Facebook messenger or Telegram has been described as a breath of fresh air outside the bank experience. It even helps customers to buy movie tickets.

Stanbic IBTC Bank's Sami is found on Messenger, while UBA's Leo is available on Whatsapp and on Messenger.

Some industry watchers opine that the channel through which each chatbot is accessed could help in its acceptability and wider use by customers.

Global AI in Financial Services Survey, supported by EY and Invesco, shows the impact AI would have on financial institutions, from business models to changes in the workforce.



## WORLD

# Prince Harry's memoir breaks UK sales record on first day of release

LONDON

PRINCE Harry's *Spare* became the UK's fastest selling non-fiction book ever, its publisher said on Tuesday, after days of TV interviews, leaks, and a mistaken early release of the memoir containing intimate revelations about the British royal family.

Harry's book has garnered attention around the world with its disclosures about his personal struggles and its accusations about other royals, including his father King Charles, stepmother Camilla and elder brother Prince William.

"We always knew this book would fly but it is exceeding even our most bullish expectations," Transworld Penguin Random House Managing Director Larry Finlay said in a statement.

"As far as we know, the only books to have sold more in their first day are those starring the other Harry (Potter)."

Citing British sales figures, the publisher said it had sold 400,000 copies so far across hardback, e-book and audio formats.

Earlier in the day, Caroline Lennon, a retail worker and one of the eager readers who had headed to bookshops to get their copy on the first day of its release, said she would

read the book immediately as she posed for photographers.

"I like him, I like the royal family," said Lennon, 59, the first and only person waiting to buy a copy from a Waterstone's bookshop in central London when it opened.

Despite the lack of queues, Waterstone's said there had been strong pre-orders for the memoir which currently ranks as the best-seller on Amazon's UK, US, Australian, German and Canadian websites.

"I know perhaps some of the things he says have rubbed different people the wrong way," Lai Jiang told Reuters after buying a copy in Singapore.

"And I know, definitely, there are a lot of people who say that he shouldn't come out and say the things he says, but I believe Harry should be given a chance to say what he wants to say."

*Spare* is the latest revelatory offering from Harry and his wife Meghan since they stepped down from royal duties in 2020 and moved to California to forge a new life, and follows their Netflix documentary last month.

The royal family has not commented on the book or the interviews and is unlikely to do so.



Copies of "Spare" by Britain's Prince Harry are displayed at a Barnes & Noble bookstore on Jan 10, 2023 in New York City. AFP

Extracts from the book were leaked last Thursday when its Spanish language edition also went on sale by mistake in some bookshops in Spain.

Harry speaks of his grief and growing up after the death of his mother Princess Diana when he was just 12, his use of cocaine and other drugs to cope, how he killed 25 Taliban fighters while serving as a soldier in Afghanistan, and even how he lost his virginity.

He also reveals a heated row with William, the heir to the throne, saying his brother knocked him over, and how they had both begged his father not to marry Camilla, who he wed in 2005 and is now the queen consort.

In TV interviews ahead of the book launch, Harry has doubled down on his accusations that some royals, including Camilla and William, leaked stories to tabloid papers which had damaged either him or his wife Meghan in order to protect themselves or enhance their reputations.

"I think she (his mother Diana) would be heartbroken about the fact that William, his office, were part of these stories," he told Good Morning America (GMA).

In another interview with CBS show 60 minutes, he said Camilla had been a tabloid "villain" and needed to rehabilitate her image, which made her "dangerous".

"I don't regard her as an evil stepmother. I see someone who married into this institution and has done everything that she can to, you know, improve her reputation and her own image," he told GMA.

While Harry's revelations have dominated the headlines in the British media over the last week, the interest in his disclosures is far from universal.

"I was not planning to (read the book) as it so happens, or certainly not as an early priority," business minister Grant Shapps told Times Radio on Tuesday. "I've got one or two other things to do."

Agencies

## Training of Ukrainians to use Patriots confirms US role in conflict – diplomat

WASHINGTON

THE Pentagon's decision to train Ukrainian servicemen to use and service Patriot missile defense systems at the US Army base in Fort Sill, Oklahoma, is yet another proof of Washington's involvement in the Ukrainian conflict, Russian Ambassador to the United States Anatoly Antonov (pictured) said, answering to a reporter's question.



"The decision by the US Department of Defense to organize training at Fort Sill in Oklahoma is another confirmation of Washington's de facto involvement in the Ukrainian conflict on the side of Nazi criminals from Kiev," the Russian diplomatic mission's press service quoted him as saying.

"It is noteworthy that our efforts to bring to the attention of the American audience the true danger of such a line by the White House are step by step recognized by the local expert community," the Russian diplomat continued. "For example, Washington Post observers openly admitted that the training of Ukrainian troops in the United States means that US involvement into the confrontation is growing. They noted that the administration is no longer limiting itself to strengthening the defense potential of Kiev, but is transferring new weapons to the republic in order to increase its offensive capabilities."

"The last argument, voiced by the local journalists, vividly shows that Washington deliberately misled our country and the world, speaking about the desire to strengthen Ukraine's self-defense ability. The real goal of the administration is to inflict on Russia as much damage on the battlefield as possible, using Ukrainians as proxies," Antonov added.

Pentagon Press Secretary Pat Ryder said on Tuesday the US would start to train Ukrainian servicemen in using the Patriot air defense system at the Army base of Fort Sill in Oklahoma next week.

He said at a news conference that 90 to 100 Ukrainians will undergo the training.

In December, the US authorities announced plans to provide \$1.85 billion to Ukraine in another package of military aid, which will, for the first time, include a battery of the Patriot air defense missile system.

Moscow has repeatedly warned Washington against providing such weapons to Kiev. Kremlin Spokesman Dmitry Peskov said that the Patriot systems would be regarded as legitimate targets by the Russian Armed Forces should Washington supply them to Kiev.

## COVID-19: WHO official urges non-discriminatory entry curbs

COPENHAGEN/LONDON

A senior official of the World Health Organization has urged countries to take science-based precautionary COVID-19 entry restrictions that are proportionate and non-discriminatory.

Hans Kluge, WHO's regional director for Europe, made the appeal at a press conference in Copenhagen on Tuesday.

"For those countries in our region introducing precautionary travel measures at this time, we are calling for such to be rooted in science, to be proportionate and non-discriminatory," Kluge said.

"Scientifically, there is no immediate threat for the European region at this point in time based on the information we have from China, because the (virus) variants that are circulating in China are also circulating in Europe," Kluge told Xinhua.

"We share the current view of the European Centre for Disease Control (ECDC) that the ongoing surge in China is not anticipated to significantly

impact the COVID-19 epidemiological situation in the WHO European Region at this time," he said.

Kluge reiterated the importance of scientific surveillance and criticized certain countries in the region for having significantly reduced their surveillance capacity for COVID-19 detection.

According to Kluge, it might be risky to ignore other significant aspects of the evolution of the virus, such as the Omicron XBB.1.5 recombinant variant, which has rapidly spread throughout the United States and is currently expanding in the European region.

Kluge called on countries to take on even more responsibility, including increasing vaccine uptake in general populations, providing additional vaccine doses to priority groups, promoting mask-wearing both indoors and on public transportation, ventilating crowded and public spaces, and providing early and appropriate treatment to patients at risk of severe diseases.



Quarantine support members walk on an international flight arrival floor at Tokyo's Haneda airport on Dec 1, 2021, as Japan suspended all new flight bookings into the country in response to the Omicron COVID variant. (KAZUHIRO NOGI / AFP)

### WHO urges travelers to wear masks

Meanwhile, countries should consider recommending that passengers wear masks on long-haul flights, given the rapid spread of the latest Omicron subvariant of COVID-19 in the US, WHO officials said on Tuesday.

In Europe, the XBB.1.5 subvariant was detected in small but growing numbers, WHO and Europe officials said at a press briefing.

Passengers should be advised to wear masks in high-risk settings such as long-haul flights, said the WHO's senior emergency officer for Europe, Catherine Smallwood, adding: "this should be a recommendation issued to passengers arriving from anywhere where there is widespread COVID-19 transmission".

XBB.1.5 - the most contagious and now globally dominant variant of the virus that causes COVID-19 - accounted for 27.6 percent of COVID cas-

es in the US for the week ended Jan 7, health officials have said. It is an offshoot of XBB, first detected in October, itself a recombinant of two other Omicron subvariants.

It was unclear if XBB.1.5 would cause its own wave of global infections. Current vaccines continue to protect against severe symptoms, hospitalization and death, experts say.

"Countries need to look at the evidence base for pre-departure testing" and if action is considered, "travel measures should be implemented in a non-discriminatory manner," Smallwood said.

That did not mean the agency recommended testing for passengers from the US at this stage, she added.

Measures that could be taken include genomic surveillance, and targeting passengers from other countries as long as it does not divert resources from domestic surveillance systems. Others include monitoring wastewater around points of entry such as airports. Xinhua

Agencies

## India purchases Russian oil due to economic interest, says expert

NEW DELHI

INDIAN refiners purchase Russian oil due to their own economic interest, India's foremost energy expert Narendra Taneja told TASS yesterday, adding that politics

should not be brought into those deals.

"Indian refiners buy crude oil from Russia because it is good economics. It is all about economics and nothing else. Do not bring politics into it," he said.

"If Russian oil is available at attractive prices, why should not an Indian or for that matter any refiner buy it?" he pointed out.

The expert also stressed that the price cap on Russian oil was imposed by G7 na-

tions, whereas India is not a member of G7. Consequently, the Western countries' initiative "is not relevant to Indian refiners," he said.

The world's third-biggest importer of crude oil after China and the US, India is ac-

tively buying Russian oil. In early 2022 Russia's share in the country's oil import basket equaled 0.2%, rising to over 20%, or almost 1 mln barrels per day, by the end of the year.

Agencies

## Looking forward to higher-level space cooperation with China - South African engineer

AS Chinese astronauts recently completed China's first in-orbit crew rotation, China's space station has entered an era of long-term manned residence.

China's space industry is developing at an admirable speed. 2022 marks the 30th anniversary of China's manned space program. Over the past three decades, China has independently developed its manned space program, completed the construction of its space station, and made leapfrog achievements in space technology.

The country has also launched lunar and planetary exploration missions, making continuous breakthroughs in space science. It is one of the most dynamic players in the space field.

The rapid development of China's space industry comes from the country's ever-growing capability in science and technology as well as innovation. China has constantly expanded the size of its aerospace personnel and stepped up its efforts to become a world center for talent and innovation in the aerospace field. Besides, its manufacturing sector also offers strong support for the development of its space industry.

China actively advances international cooperation and exchanges in space and promotes space technology to better benefit people around the world.

Space and satellite technology can significantly improve the modern development of African countries in climate monitoring,

seed breeding, disaster prevention and relief, communication and other fields.

China has not only assisted African countries in the manufacturing and launch of satellites on many occasions, but also fully supported them to foster the capability to independently develop the space sector. Offering high-quality training for African researchers in the designing, manufacturing, launching and controlling of satellites, China has nurtured a batch of space talents on the African continent.

South Africa has launched in-depth space cooperation with China.

A China-Brazil earth resource satellite has established a ground data receiving and processing system in South Africa, which

provides various services for countries in Southern Africa in the management of water and soil resources, disaster monitoring and urban planning.

In 2021, the South African National Space Agency and the Chinese side inked a Memorandum of Understanding between the Parties for Satellite Navigation Cooperation for Peaceful Purposes, which marked another important step taken by the two sides in advancing South Africa-China cooperation in the application of the BeiDou Navigation Satellite System.

Batches of Chinese taikonauts have entered space, becoming heroes for many African teenagers. The Talk with Taikonauts event held in September 2022, during

which three Chinese taikonauts talked from space with the youth from eight African countries via video link, has planted a seed of space dreams in the heart of many African adolescents.

I sincerely congratulate China on its outstanding achievements in space and am looking forward to higher-level space cooperation between South Africa and China.

The South African space industry hopes to launch closer personnel exchanges and more intensive scientific cooperation with China, and to further expand the two sides' cooperation on the application of space technology, so as to better benefit the two peoples.

People's Daily



# How to feed 8 bln people -- a look at global food security in 2023

BEIJING

AS the world's population hit a new milestone of 8 billion people in 2022, the task of ensuring global food security has become even more critical.

However, due to climate change, geopolitical crises and a global economic slowdown, the international food market is expected to remain uncertain in 2023, and some low-income countries may remain trapped in the food shortage dilemma.

If history is any guide, a global crisis necessitates global cooperation. Only by strengthening coordination, facilitating supply chains, and focusing on eliminating long-term and structurally persistent problems that undermine the resilience of the global food system will the international community be able to better meet global food security challenges.

## LINGERING FOOD SECURITY THREATS

2022 saw a rapid increase in food prices and shortages of food supplies around the world. "The world is facing a food crisis of unprecedented proportions, the largest in modern history," the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) said in a report last year.

In its joint research with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the WFP found that as many as 828 million people go to bed hungry every night.

The compounding food security crisis in various parts of the world was caused by a combination of geopolitical and economic crises,



People deal with harvested wheat at a farm in Chegutu, west of the capital Harare, Zimbabwe, Oct. 31, 2022. Xinhua

as well as global warming. Unfortunately, the factors that contributed to the crisis last year are still in place.

Both Russia and Ukraine are important grain exporters, and Russia is also a major fertilizer exporter. According to figures by the WFP, Russia and Ukraine together account for 30 percent of global wheat exports.

In February 2022, international food prices rose in response to the escalation of the Ukraine crisis, exacerbating the food crisis. In March 2022, the FAO Food Price Index reached its highest level on record since 1990, at 159.7 points.

Though grain exports from Russia are not officially subject to sanctions against Russia, the West has erected "invisible barriers" to Russian agricultural exports, Eduard Zernin, head of the Russian Union of Grain Exporters, told Interfax.

What's worse, the United States has coerced its allies into tightening sanctions against Russia, affecting international energy and fertilizer supplies and driving up agricultural input costs, which could affect global agricultural production in the coming growing season and further drive up food prices.

Multiple heat and drought events in the Northern Hemisphere in 2022 also hampered winter

wheat production in several major producing regions, and global corn production is also expected to be lower than the previous year's level. Due to limited international supply, wheat and corn prices will remain volatile in 2023 and highly sensitive to changes in weather conditions and related policies.

Meanwhile, some major economies are currently in recession or experiencing significant slowing, and the global economic downturn poses risks to food security.

## EQUAL DISTRIBUTION OF FOOD URGENTLY NEEDED

Last December, the FAO projected that global cereal production would be 2.756 billion tons in 2022, based on separate cereal supply and demand estimates. Observers believe that despite the fact that the global population has reached 8 billion, there should no longer be a food security crisis given the total global food production.

The unequal distribution of food between and within countries has caused hunger for many millions of people worldwide.

In the past decades, the core exporting countries have been stable and concentrated, while the core importing countries have been relative-

ly dispersed. Food self-sufficiency is particularly low in developing countries as a whole. In Africa, for example, more than 30 countries are net food importers.

Because of this supply and demand pattern, the international food market is highly vulnerable to epidemics, regional conflicts and other factors.

In recent years, many food exporting countries have implemented protectionist policies, citing concerns over food supply and rising food prices.

As of July 2022, 21 countries had implemented food export bans and six countries had implemented export restrictions, according to data from the International Food Policy Research Institute. If major food exporting countries tighten trade restrictions, international food prices will undoubtedly rise.

The continued aggressive interest rate hikes by the U.S. Federal Reserve and the appreciation of the U.S. dollar have also resulted in a significant increase in the financial burden on some low-income countries, which are highly dependent on food imports, further threatening the food security of vulnerable groups.

Meanwhile, Western companies at the heart of the global grain trade have enjoyed a record bonanza as global food prices soar, raising concerns of profiteering and speculation in global food markets.

In an interview with The Guardian, Olivier De Schutter, former UN special rapporteur on the right to food, said that the fact that global commodity giants, mainly the Archer Daniels Midland Company, Bunge, Cargill and Louis Dreyfus, are making record profits at a time when hunger is rising "is clearly unjust, and is a terrible indictment of our food systems."

"Global grain markets are even more concentrated than energy markets and even less transparent, so there is a huge risk of profiteering," said De Schutter, noting that the food price surge in 2022 happened despite what were thought to be abundant global grain reserves. Xinhua

## Tigray forces begin handing over heavy weapons to Ethiopian army

ADDIS ABABA

TIGRAY forces, who fought a two-year war against Ethiopia's federal government, began handing over heavy weaponry to the national army as part of an African Union-led peace process on Tuesday.

The demobilization of Tigray forces is seen as central to the Nov 2 ceasefire agreement, alongside the restoration of services, resumption of humanitarian aid and withdrawal of Eritrean troops, who fought alongside Ethiopia's army but were not party to the truce.

The conflict created famine-like conditions for hundreds of thousands of Tigray's population, killed thousands and displaced millions across northern Ethiopia.

The handover in the town of Agulae, around 30 km northeast of the regional capital Mekelle, was overseen by a monitoring team comprising members of the two sides and a regional body, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD).

At the ceremony, Tigray Defense Forces representative Mulugeta Gebrechristos said the start of the disarmament would play a major role in restoring peace.

"We are operating with the belief that if we are to have peace, all things that open the door for provocation must not be there. Peace is vital for us all," Mulugeta said in a speech broadcast on Tigray TV.

"We are all (part of) one Ethiopia. Both us and the TDF have moved from our respective defensive positions in peace, understanding and love," said Alemu Tadesse, a representative of the Ethiopian army.

## China's international travel expected to accelerate

CHINA'S civil aviation authority has examined applications for the resumption of international flights by Chinese and foreign airlines after China's recent optimization of its COVID-19 management, an official from the Civil Aviation Administration of China said on Tuesday.

International travel is expected to accelerate in the second half of this year, said Liang Nan, director of the Department of Transport for the Civil Aviation Administration of China.

"If the market recovers well, the number of international flights by the end of the year is expected to reach about 80 percent of the level before the epidemic, with about 7,300 flights per week," she said.

Liang made the remarks during a policy briefing in Beijing, which was organized by the International Department of the Communist Party of China Central Committee to brief international business executives on the optimization of the country's epidemic control policies.

"Chinese and foreign airlines are optimistic about the resumption of international flights, with nearly 40 domestic and overseas carriers having submitted applications to schedule about 700 passenger flights every week to and from 34 countries," she said.

Most flights are scheduled to resume operations in late January and early February. The administration is processing the applications in accordance with procedure, she added.

Meanwhile, the administration has resumed accepting applications



A C919 large passenger jetliner takes off at Shanghai Hongqiao International Airport in Shanghai, east China, Dec 26, 2022. (PHOTO / XINHUA)

for international passenger charter flights to meet the needs of business travelers, she said.

China has also taken other steps recently to promote international travel.

It ended special flight control measures – the "circuit breaker" and "five ones" policies – for inbound international flights on Monday. It also eliminated the categorization of high-risk flights as well as a restriction that limited flights to 75 percent passenger capacity.

Furthermore, closed-loop management, quarantines and nucleic acid testing are no longer required for inbound flight staff.

Liang also noted that the resumption of international flights will be slower than domestic ones.

"It (the international market) will take longer to recover, considering that the resump-

tion of international flights is affected by multiple factors such as market demand, transport capacity arrangements, time coordination and approval from domestic and foreign civil aviation authorities," she said.

Moreover, after the impact of the epidemic over the past three years, it will still take time for passengers to prepare to travel abroad again, Liang said.

This week, there were 563 international flights scheduled, she said. That number is expected to increase to 1,000 per week by the end of February, and by late March, to 1,300 to 2,300 every week.

The administration will maintain communication with Chinese and foreign airlines to ensure they understand the updated policy, Liang said.

## US official: Next Al Qaeda chief remains unclear

WASHINGTON

THE succession of Al Qaeda leader Ayman al-Zawahiri, who was believed to have been killed in a US raid last year, remains unclear, a US intelligence official said on Tuesday.

Zawahiri was killed in a US strike in Afghanistan, the biggest blow to the militant group since its founder Osama bin Laden was killed in 2011.

"The question for Al Qaeda, that it has not answered for itself, is who follows (Zawahiri)," Christine Abizaid, director of the US National Counterterrorism Center, said in an event organized by the Washington Institute when asked about Al Qaeda's "center of gravity" after Zawahiri's death.

Zawahiri had been in hiding for years. Al Qaeda has not named a successor.

Saif al-Adel, a mysterious, low-key former Egyptian special forces officer who is a high-ranking member of Al Qaeda, is seen by experts as the top contender. The United States

is offering a reward of up to \$10 million for information leading to his arrest.

Abizaid also addressed the threat landscape in the United States and said the country faced an "unpredictable" environment, adding that Americans must remain vigilant about overseas-based extremist organizations such as Al Qaeda and Islamic State.

"The online environment is where most of the radicalisation is occurring," she said.

Lone actors remained a key threat for the United States, Abizaid said, adding they could be inspired by overseas extremist groups or be driven by racially and ethnically motivated violent domestic extremism.

Her remarks echoed a recent assessment by the Department of Homeland Security, which said in November that the US threat environment will remain heightened in the coming months, with lone offenders and groups motivated by a range of ideologies posing a danger.

Agencies



This combination of two file images created on Aug 2, 2022 shows al-Qaeda leader Osama Bin Laden (left) in an undated file picture obtained on Aug 8, 1998, and his successor Ayman al-Zawahiri in a file image from video released on June 8, 2011 by Al-Qaeda's media arm as-Sahab. AFP

INSIDE a museum at Shijiazhuang Railway Station of the China Railway Beijing Bureau Group Co., Ltd., train tickets collected over the years are on display. The tickets, including hardboard tickets, soft paper tickets and magnetic tickets, are witnesses of the changes taking place in China's rail transport sector.

In recent years, train tickets are going paperless in China, and e-tickets have been rolled out for high-speed trains and intercity trains. From paper tickets to paperless tickets, China has constantly upgraded railway services and made travel more convenient.

The first generation train ticket in China was the hardboard train ticket which required the ticket seller to print all information manually. It would take several minutes for the ticket seller to create one such ticket.

In the 1990s, a soft red paper ticket printed with a computer system was rolled out. After typing the date and serial number of the train manually, the ticket seller could create one such ticket, cutting the ticket issuing time to seconds.

## Train tickets witness changing China

In 2008, the blue magnetic train ticket was introduced as the Beijing-Tianjin high-speed intercity railway went into operation. The ticket can go through the automatic ticket checks. Nowadays, as digital technologies, such as facial recognition, have been applied, electronic train tickets are provided.

What drives these changes are technological progress and people's aspiration for a better life.

The evolution of train tickets is a process during which passenger experience has been constantly improved.

In the past, people might have to queue up for a whole night before purchasing a ticket bound home; nowadays, they can buy

a ticket at one click. Passengers using e-tickets can even pass checks by scanning their ID. This reduces the time passengers spend checking in by more than one-third and eliminates risks of losing tickets, reporting the loss of tickets and repurchasing of tickets.

In 2022, the Kunming-Mohan section of the China-Laos Railway unveiled two new tickets: a multi-ride ticket and a periodic ticket. Ticket holders can travel several times along the route at a discounted price. This move has offered convenience for business travelers and commuters, showing that buying and using train tickets has become much simpler and travel has become more

convenient.

The continuous upgrading of train tickets and improvement of passenger experience are attributable to the burgeoning development of the railway sector. Over the past nearly 10 years, the size and quality of China's railway network have grown significantly, the quality of the country's rail transport service has moved to a new level and rail equipment and technology have become more advanced.

By the end of 2021, the operating length of China's railways surpassed 150,000 km and the length of high-speed railways in China accounted for more than two-thirds of the total length of such networks worldwide.

In the peak traveling season, passenger trains make more than 10,000 trips on average per day. Easier movement of people and smoother flow of goods has been basically ensured. The developed transport network with internal and external traffic connections has not only firmly supported the high-quality economic and social development of the country, but also continuously raised the quality of people's life.

The 2023 Spring Festival travel rush has kicked off in China and there has been a growing demand from passengers for visiting their family members and travel. Many localities and departments in the country have taken measures to ensure a

smoother and more heartwarming home-bound trip for passengers.

For instance, a code scanning service has been introduced on more than 3,200 bullet trains running in the country. By scanning the code on the train seats, passengers can easily get the travel information and services about their trips.

As China further boosts transport infrastructure and improves the capacity, quality and efficiency of transport service, people's demand for high-quality travel will be better satisfied.

People's Daily



**What drives these changes are technological progress and people's aspiration for a better life**



The Guardian

## SPORT

## At rehabbed Globes, 'The Fabelmans,' 'Banshees' triumph



This image released by NBC shows Eddie Murphy accepting the Cecil B. DeMille Award during the 80th Annual Golden Globe Awards at the Beverly Hilton Hotel on Tuesday, Jan. 10, 2023, in Beverly Hills, Calif. (AP)

By JAKE COYLE

THE Golden Globes returned to the air Tuesday with a red carpet flush with celebrities, comedian Jerrod Carmichael as a hesitant emcee and top awards for Steven Spielberg's "The Fabelmans" and Martin McDonagh's "The Banshees of Inisherin," as the beleaguered award show sought to rekindle its pre-pandemic and pre-scandal glamour.

Spielberg's autobiographical coming-of-age film "The Fabelmans" won best drama film and the dark friendship tale "The Banshees of Inisherin," captured best film, comedy or musical. "Abbott Elementary," "White Lotus" and "House of the Dragon" led the TV awards.

The Globes' would-be comeback ended like many Globes ceremonies before it: with a triumphant Spielberg. For the fifth time, one of Spielberg's films won a best picture Globe. Nominated 14 times by the Globes for best director, Spielberg also won the honor for the third time. He began by thanking his three sisters, his late father and his late mother, Leah Adler (played by Michelle Williams in the film). "She is up there kvelling about this right now," said Spielberg.

Carmichael kicked off the 80th Golden Globes from the Beverly Hilton in Beverly Hills, California, with little of the fanfare that usually opens such ceremonies. He plunged straight into the issues that drove the Globes off television and led much of the entertainment industry to boycott the Hollywood Foreign Press Association after the group was revealed to have no Black members. Carmichael opened by asking the crowd to "be a little quiet here."

"I am your host, Jerrod Carmichael," said the "Rothaniel" comedian. "And I'll tell you why I'm here. I'm here 'cause I'm Black."

"I won't say they were a racist organization," he continued before sitting on the stage. "But they didn't have a single Black member until George Floyd died. So do with that information what you will."

McDonagh's "The Banshees of Inisherin" left with three awards, including best screenplay for McDonagh and best actor in a comedy for Colin Farrell. Fourteen years earlier, Farrell won a Globe for McDonagh's "In Bruges," which likewise paired him with Brendan Gleeson. In his remarks, Farrell thanked the playwright, his castmates, his kids and the film's donkey, Jenny.

On a soggy night following punishing, prolonged rains that have lashed Southern California, the first award went to Ke Huy Quan, the former child star of "Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom," for best supporting actor in "Everything Everywhere All at Once." A clearly emotional Quan, who had left acting years before directors Daniel Kwan and Daniel Scheinert cast him in their multiverse tale, thanked them for his second act.

"More than 30 years later, two guys thought of me," said Quan. "They remembered that kid. And they gave me the opportunity to try again."

Michelle Yeoh, the star of "Everything Everywhere At Once," also won, for best actress in a comedy or

musical. The Malaysian-born Yeoh was just the second female actor of Asian descent to win in the category, after her "Crazy Rich Asian" costar Awkwafina, who won for "The Farewell" in 2020. "Forty years," the 60-year-old Yeoh said. "Not letting go of this."

Possibly Yeoh's stiffest competition at the Academy Awards, Cate Blanchett of "Tár," won best actress on the drama side. Blanchett, in production, wasn't in attendance to pick up her fourth Globe. (Also absent was Kevin Costner, best-actor winner in a drama series for "Yellowstone." Presenter Regina Hall said he was sheltering in place in Santa Barbara due to flooding.)

Angela Bassett, a likely Oscar front-runner, won best supporting actress for her performance in "Black Panther: Wakanda Forever." "Weeping may come in the evening, but joy comes in the morning," Bassett said, referencing the loss of "Black Panther" star Chadwick Boseman.

Best actor was an upset. Austin Butler won for his performance in Baz Luhrmann's "Elvis." The favorite in the category has arguably been Brendan Fraser for "The Whale." Ahead of the Globes, Fraser said he would not attend because "my mother didn't raise a hypocrite." In 2018, Fraser said he was groped in 2003 by longtime HFFPA member Philip Berk. Berk, who is no longer an HFFPA member, denied it.

Mike White's "The White Lotus" won for best limited or anthology series. Fresh off her dramatic finale, Jennifer Coolidge gave one of the night's lengthiest and warmest speeches while accepting the best supporting actress in a limited series award.

"Even if this is the end, you sort of changed my life in a million different ways," Coolidge told White. "My neighbors are speaking to me, things like that."

The public school sitcom "Abbott Elementary" came in the lead TV nominee and took home three awards, including best comedy series. Quinta Brunson, the show's creator and star, won best actress in a comedy series, and Tyler James Williams won for his supporting role.

"It has resonated with the world in a way that I couldn't even have imagined it would have," said Brunson as she thanked the studios that backed her vision. "But let's be real. I did imagine it. That's why I sold it to you."

Best drama series went to "Game of Thrones" prequel "House of the Dragon." "Naatu Naatu" from the Telugu sensation "RRR," won best song over the likes of Rihanna and Taylor Swift.

The Globes were plunged into chaos shortly before a largely remote pandemic 2021 awards show when a Los Angeles Times report revealed that the HFFPA, then numbering 87 members, had no Black members.

Stars and studios boycotted last year's ceremony, which NBC opted not to televise, saying the HFFPA needed time to make "meaningful reform."

Tom Cruise, whose "Top Gun: Maverick" was nominated for best picture, drama, famously returned his three Golden Globe awards after the HFFPA revelations. Mid-show Tuesday, Carmichael came out with three trophies he said he found backstage, and suggested they be traded for Shelly Miscavige, the wife of the leader of the Church of Scientology.

The HFFPA pledged to reform, diversified its membership and changed some of the ways it operates. It now has 96 members, including six Black members, along with 103 nonmember voters. Billionaire Todd Boehly purchased the Globes and has begun turning the nonprofit group into a for-profit company.

AP

## Pugilist Karim Said 'Mandongga' props up boxing promotion in Tanzania - I

By Correspondent Ernest Mwanjwa, Morogoro

THE origin of professional boxing in Tanzania, in the form that the game's enthusiasts know today, goes as far back as 1984.

Although this seems to be relatively long stretch of time, Tanzania's boxing has always kept itself as a lowkey sport.

However, serious efforts that aimed at unlocking speedier development potential of boxing began with regulatory as well as administrative reforms introduced to the sector in at least the last five years.

While such reforms are responsible for setting the environment for its sustained growth, it is the effort of individual sportsmen and women that made professional boxing to finally settle deep in the hearts of majority Tanzanians.

Although people are naturally accustomed to assess country's performance in boxing by the number of titles the country's pugilists have accumulated, the sheer size of public support to the sport is an equally important measure.

There is no denying that the year 2022 was of monumental achievement in professional boxing in Tanzania.

People witnessed tremendous improvement in the way boxing fights were organized and promoted, but the sheer number of fights that took place in a single year was also staggering.

For instance, there was on average one international boxing bout every month, and what is more pleasing is the fact that all these bouts involved professional boxers from countries with respectable record in the boxing world.

Argentina, Mexico, South Africa, DR Congo, Nigeria, and Ghana are some of the countries that made memorable appearances in Tanzania.

Among other things, this achievement is attributed to commitment and high-level professionalism exhibited by the boxing promotion companies.

It is this same year that boxing fans were entertained to explosive performances from local professional boxers when they faced formidable opponents from across the world.

Some of the memorable fights that will linger in people's minds for years to come include the knockout victories recorded by Tanzania's Ibrahim Mgendersa alias 'Class' against Gustavo Pina Melgar of Mexico back in September.

Another epic technical knockout win came in early November from Nassib Ramadhani who forced South Africa's Toto Helebe to retire prematurely in seventh round.

There were also boxing bouts that were promoted to a scale not seen in years.

The Boxing Day's fight known as 'Dar derby' that pitted Mfaume Ahmad Said alias 'Mfaume Mfaume' against Iddi Pialari was special in every sense, only that the main card ended prematurely.

It is easy to believe that achievements of such scale in the sport this complex must exclusively be brought about by more formalized structures.

While this is true to a large extent, the diverse requirements for development of professional boxing include such things that cannot be de-



Tanzania's professional Middleweight boxer Karim Said, alias 'Mandongga'.

back in the day, it even amplified class divisions.

While this was an undesirable side of the sport, it took efforts of dedicated individual boxing athletes to forever change such deep-seated anti-social perceptions.

Although there are many such individuals who can be credited for this role, the name Mohamed Ali quickly rise above the rest.

What is unique with Ali is that while he made people love the sport for his exceptional talent in ring, he also made boxing a medium that changed people's lives even when he was not fighting at all.

Boxing lovers probably remember how he used his fame to stir social change in America while serving his license suspension back in 1960s.

It is for such contributions to sport and humanity that we still remember him today, long after his passing.

Development of boxing in Tanzania can also be said to have taken a similar elitist character in its history.

Unlike football, for example, not many people used to expressly show their fanatical love for it.

It was rather the sport for those who played it, their close associates and those physically connected to the competing camps.

It was also for those attached to it by a professional interest, and a few dedicated enthusiasts.

But it is in the year 2022 when Karim Said, alias 'Mandongga Mtu Kazi', re-surfaced in professional boxing that all this changed.

Upon his introduction 'Mandongga' immediately become a public sensation. He was as popular with professionals as he was with the novice and the distinguished personalities in a society.

In short, he is a person who made the once widely scattered groups in lines of age, gender and status merge as unified supporters of boxing.

Thanks to 'Mandongga', 2022 was the year when boxing fights became an important fixture in people's timetables.

Boxing became a trendy topic for discussion and contention in traditional media, social media and wherever you see informal gatherings.

In a similar intensity to football, live broadcast of boxing bouts made people flood any spot they have an opportunity to follow the proceedings be it in hotels, bars, pubs or the locally improvised show rooms popularly known as 'vibanda umiza'.

But who is Karim Said in the first place? Contrary to perception of many, 'Mandongga' is hardly new to boxing.

He had his many successful years as an amateur at his home town Morogoro. However, long spells of inactivity forced him to juggle between the gym and doing other activities that made ends meet.

Despite this, one thing that never subsided in him is his undying commitment to keeping himself in shape.

Whether he had a premoni-

tion company in the country, Peaktime Media Promotion. The duo was indeed a 'match made in heaven'.

Mandongga's role in promotion of boxing in this year comes in many forms.

As a boxer, he did not only pull the attention of the crowds to the sport but owed to its explosion in popularity he also managed to turn boxing into a tool for business promotion.

Before his rise to fame it was the artists in entertainment industries, especially music and film, who took the lion's share in promotion endorsements.

Although these are still a dominant force in business advertisement, it is now certain that boxing is a powerful medium for business promotion.

Looking at a list of businesses that 'Mandongga' has somehow had his hands on, it is as if all business outlets from sports gear shops, fashion lines, suppliers of home appliances, agricultural implements, food and beverage products, beauty products, security services, medical services, sports training facilities, tourism attraction sites, hospitality establishments and many more struggled for his Midas touch.

He also played special guest appearance role in many sports and entertainment events around the country.

The grandiose opportunity of all was probably his appointment by Wasafi Media as an honorary ambassador for WasafiBet.

This appointment included, among other things, a fully paid travel incentive package to attend FIFA World Cup in Qatar, in December.

'Mandongga's role in advancing social cause was by no means limited to for-profit activities, the Government and public institutions also made best use of his promotional services.

He was, for example, one among a few celebrities and influencers to who sensitized the public for a national census exercise that was concluded in August 2022.

But out of his unique attributes as well as impact he had to the growth of boxing he also attracted attention of academia.

In his home town Morogoro 'Mandongga' is frequently consulted by a range of institutions with vested interested in sports and recreation development, one among these being the Department of Tourism and Recreation at the Sokoine University of Agriculture.

One thing that made 'Mandongga' such a special character in the growth of boxing is his oratorical skills.

When it comes to coining slogans that capture people's attention he was simply an artist of his own class.

He knew how to cultivate public anticipation for his upcoming fights and he is probably the only boxer known in the country's people's life time who could make his defeats sound as dramatic and likable as his victories.

When he took on Salum Abeid in Mtwara in September, people could hardly resist laughing at what he said, the eloquent pugi-

list told his opponent: "Ukinipiga ni kama nimekupiga na nikipupiga ndo nimekupiga kabisa."

The statement literally translates as: "In case you beat me, I would just have beat you, and, if I beat you, then I will have truly beaten you!"

'Mandongga' has his way of choreographing how he makes people believe he would beat up someone so badly in the ring, and he does this by creating a sensation of supersize animosity between him and his opponent.

In a build-up for his fight against Abeid he made a promise that he would go on to 'beat him as if he had an affair with his wife'.

In his following fight against Saidi Mbelwa held in Morogoro in November, Mbelwa was hardly spared either as 'Mandongga' claimed the latter was to be beaten as if he is the former's mother's murderer.

In 'Mandongga's Boxing Day's fight against Alibaba Ramadhani Tarimo that took place in Arusha, he told the latter that whatever he tries to do will be of no use.

He bragged he would beat Tarimo even if the latter comes fully prepared and, in case he panics, he will would hardly come out alive!

These kinds of intimidations made 'Mandongga's face-off meetings a true circus, listening to him addressing himself in social media was as dramatic and entertaining as watching him live in a fight.

He just made sure that everyone was fully entertained, and each boxing event is different and unique from any other.

While all boxers will try to promote themselves in a way that spell pure terror to their opponents, 'Mandongga' is such a boxer that took it to a whole new level.

He has a special punch for every fight and each punch comes with its own brand. The first punch which was specially invented for his bout against Abeid came under the brand 'Ngumi Mchomoko'.

Figuratively at least the punch is meant to look like a rocket-propelled missile. And when he was seen in promotional videos tearing down full-size trees as if they were paper punching bags, people knew right there that 'Mandongga' means business.

Although eventually the missile failed to launch as propagated, it left people with something to talk about for some time.

After 'Ngumi Mchomoko' he came up with what he called 'Ndoige' and, unlike its predecessor, this was rather an advanced missile system. It was in fact a lesser guided punch, so once 'Ndoige' is launched there is no escape.

It was capable of changing direction to pin an opponent down regardless what position he will take - when the opponent dodges left teh punch turns left, when the opponent dodges right, it is still on target. But true to his prediction, this time 'Ndoige' found its mark.

He used it to score his first Technical Knockout defeat, beating Mbelwa in Morogoro in November.

'Mandongga' branded his latest punch 'Pelesu Pelesu' and, this time, the punch was an import from Qatar.

Just like 'Ndoige', 'Pelesu Pelesu' went on score a decisive Technical Knockout victory against the more experienced and physically gifted boxer Tarimo. The two met in an epic fight that took place on a Boxing Day in Arusha.

In the past, it was a rare sight seeing people nicknamed after favourite sports figures other than football.

To be continued



## Poor form puts Chelsea's faith in Potter to the test

LONDON

FOUR months into his reign as Chelsea manager, Graham Potter is under pressure for a run of form that would have seen many of his predecessors at Stamford Bridge fired during the Roman Abramovich era.

A 4-0 thrashing at the hands of Manchester City on Sunday means the Blues are already out of both domestic cups. They sit 10th in the Premier League, 10 points adrift of even a place in the top four.

It is not the start the club's new American owners will have expected after spending over £300 million (365 million dollars) on new players to improve a squad that finished third in the Premier League last season.

Judging by the dissenting voices of the fans, it is the consortium led by chairman Todd Boehly that are responsible for the malaise on the field.

As Chelsea chased City shadows at the weekend, the travelling support at the Etihad rebelled by chanting the names of former manager Thomas Tuchel and former owner Abramovich.

Tuchel was ruthlessly sacked by the new regime just seven games into the season in what appeared a sure sign that the hire-and-fire culture was set to stay at Stamford Bridge despite Abramovich's departure.

The Russian had shown no mercy to even illustrious managers such as Jose Mourinho, Carlo Ancelotti and Antonio Conte, who won Premier League titles during their time at Chelsea.

Despite making his name as a Premier League manager in three impressive seasons with Brighton, Potter does not have the CV to match many of his predecessors.

But Potter believes times have changed at Chelsea. He says a more patient approach promised by the new owners was one of the things that attracted him to leave Brighton in September.

- 'Massive transitional period' -

"There's a completely different ownership," Potter said after also losing to City 1-0 in Chelsea's last league outing. "This is hard for people to get their head around as Chelsea for 20 years has been one thing and now all of a sudden it's different.

"The reason for me to take the job was because you've got a chance to shape a club that is in a massive transitional period."

One thing in Potter's favour is that Chelsea's £280 million transfer spend in the summer window took place before he arrived.

It also took place after the club's transfer guru Marina Granovskaia and goalkeeper turned technical and performance advisor Petr Cech departed with Abramovich.

AFP

## French soccer president accused of improper conduct by agent

PARIS

A SPORTS agent has accused the president of the French soccer federation of improper conduct over several years, saying he only was interested in her sexually.

Noël Le Graët has had a tumultuous week in France after saying he "couldn't care less" about Zinedine Zidane's future as a coach, and the latest accusation led to calls for his resignation Tuesday from the head of the French Football Federation's ethics council.

The troubled 81-year-old soccer executive has previously faced claims of sexual harassment and the French federation is the target of an investigation ordered by Sports Minister Amélie Oudéa-Castéra.

The agent, 37-year-old Sonia Souid, said in an interview with L'Equipe sports daily that Le Graët repeatedly tried to approach her from 2013-17.

She said that while she wanted to develop a business relationship with Le Graët to promote women's soccer, he was more interested in leaving messages on her voicemail late in the evening to invite her to drink champagne.

France's sports minister ordered an investigation into the federation in September after the body said it would file a defamation lawsuit against So Foot magazine, which reported that Le Graët allegedly harassed several female employees.

The French magazine published a six-page investigation quoting anonymous former and current employees, and inappropriate text messages that Le Graët allegedly sent to the women. So Foot also described an alleged toxic culture at the federation.

Souid, who said she first met Le Graët in 2013, also told L'Equipe that he texted her to ask her out or tell her he missed her. Souid said he never went too far verbally but made clear she should have sex with him to move her ideas forward.

"He never looked at me like an agent but like a piece of candy," Souid said.

Souid said she was hurt by Le Graët's attitude and that she thought about ending her career as an agent. Asked whether Le Graët helped her professionally at some point, Souid said he helped her find the phone number of coach Corinne Diacre and that he tried to help her with business class plane tickets for France player Amandine Henry.

Patrick Anton, head of the FFF's ethics council, issued a statement Tuesday urging Le Graët to leave his post.

AP

## Afghan women athletes barred from play, fear Taliban threats

KABUL, Afghanistan

NOURA'S determination to play sports was so great that she defied her family's opposition for years. Beatings from her mother and jeers from her neighbors never stopped her from the sports she loved.

But the 20-year-old Afghan woman could not defy her country's Taliban rulers. They have not just banned all sports for women and girls, they have actively intimidated and harassed those who once played, often scaring them from even practicing in private, Noura and other women say.

Noura has been left shattered. "I'm not the same person anymore," she said. "Since the Taliban came, I feel like I'm dead."

A number of girls and women who once played a variety of sports told The Associated Press they have been intimidated by the Taliban with visits and phone calls warning them not to engage in their sports. The women and girls spoke on condition of anonymity for fear they will face further threats.

They posed for an AP photographer for portraits with the equipment of the sports they loved. They hid their identities with burqas, the all-encompassing robes and hood that completely cover the face, leaving only a mesh to see through. They didn't normally wear the burqa, but they said they sometimes do now when they go outside and want to remain anonymous



Afghan women who practice Muay Tha, or Thai boxing, pose for a photo in Kabul, Afghanistan, Saturday, Oct. 29, 2022. The ruling Taliban have banned women from sports as well as barring them from most schooling and many realms of work. A number of women posed for an AP photographer for portraits with the equipment of the sports they loved. Though they do not necessarily wear the burqa in regular life, they chose to hide their identities with their burqas because they fear Taliban reprisals and because some of them continue to practice their sports in secret. (AP Photo)

and avoid harassment.

The ban on sports is part of the Taliban's escalating campaign of restrictions that have shut down life for girls and women.

Since their takeover of Afghanistan in August 2021, the Taliban have barred girls from attending middle and high school. Last month, they ordered all women thrown out of universities as well.

The Taliban require women to cover their hair and faces in public and prohibit them from going to parks or gyms. They have severely limited women's ability to work outside the home and most recently forbade non-governmental organizations from employing women, a step

that could cripple the vital flow of aid.

Even before the Taliban, women's sports were opposed by many in Afghanistan's deeply conservative society. Seen as a violation of women's modesty and of their role in society. Still, the previous, internationally-backed government had programs encouraging women's sports and school clubs, leagues and national teams for women in many sports.

A 20-year-old mixed martial artist recalled how in August 2021, she was competing in a local women's tournament at a Kabul sports hall. Word spread through the audience and participants that the advancing Taliban were on the city's

outskirts. All the women and girls fled the hall. It was the last competition Sarina ever played in.

Months later, she said she tried to give private lessons for girls. But Taliban fighters raided the gym where they were practicing and arrested them all. In detention, the girls were humiliated and mocked, Sarina said. After mediation by elders, they were released after promising not to practice sports anymore.

She still practices at home and sometimes teaches her close friends.

"Life has become very difficult for me, but I am a fighter, so I will continue to live and fight," she said.

Mushwanay, spokesman of the Taliban's

Sports Organization and National Olympic Committee, said authorities were looking for a way to restart sports for women by building separate sports venues. But he gave no time frame and said funds were needed to do so. Taliban authorities have repeatedly made similar promises to allow girls 7th grade and up to return to school, but still have not done so.

Noura faced resistance her whole life as she tried to play sports.

Raised in a poor Kabul district by parents who migrated from the provinces, Noura started out playing soccer alongside local boys in the street. When she was nine, a coach spotted her and, at his encouragement, she joined a girls' youth team.

She kept it a secret from everyone but her father, but her cover was blown by her own talent. At 13, she was named the best girl soccer player in her age group, and her photo and name were broadcast on television.

"All over the world, when a girl becomes famous and her picture is shown on TV, it's a good day for her and she's at the peak of happiness," she said. "For me, that day was very bitter and the beginning of worse days."

Furious, her mother beat her, shouting that she was not allowed to play soccer. She kept playing in secret but was exposed again when her team won a national championship, and her photo was in the news. Again, her mother beat her.

Still, she sneaked off to the award ceremony. She broke down in tears on stage as the audience cheered. "Only I knew I was crying because of loneliness and the hard life I had," she said.

When she found out, her mother set fire to her soccer uniform and shoes.

Noura gave up soccer, but then turned to boxing. Her mother eventually relented, realizing she couldn't stop her from sports, she said.

The day the Taliban entered Kabul, she said, her coach called her mother and said Noura should go to the airport to be taken out of the country. Noura said her mother didn't deliver the message because she didn't want her to leave. When she learned of the message—too late to escape—Noura said she cut her wrists and had to be taken to the hospital.

"The world had become dark for me," she said.

Three months later, someone who identified himself as a member of the Taliban called the family and threatened her. "They were saying, why did you play sports? Sports are forbidden," she recalled.

Terrified, she left Kabul, disguising herself in her burqa to travel to her family's hometown. Eventually, she returned but remains in fear.

"Even if my life was difficult, I used to have confidence in myself and knew that, with effort, I could do what I wanted," she said. "Now I don't have much hope anymore."

AP

## FIFA boss Infantino questioned by Swiss special prosecutors

GENEVA

FIFA President Gianni Infantino met with special prosecutors in Switzerland on Tuesday as part of their criminal investigation into his undisclosed meetings with the country's attorney general during a wider probe of soccer officials.

Criminal proceedings against Infantino were recommended in 2020 by a previous special prosecutor — who was later removed from the case by a Swiss federal court — for possible incitements to commit abuse of public office and breach of official secrecy.

The case potentially implicating Infantino is now moving forward in his home country, weeks after he oversaw the World Cup in Qatar and about two months before he is due to be re-elected unopposed by FIFA member federations.

Special prosecutor Hans Maurer confirmed in an email to The Associated Press that "a confrontation hearing was held in the proceedings," conducted by himself and a second prosecutor, Ulrich Weder.

"However, I do not comment on the time, scope and purpose of this hearing," Maurer wrote.

The two prosecutors were elected at the Swiss parliament in December 2021 to continue an



Gianni Infantino

investigation relating to three undocumented meetings held in 2016 and 2017 involving Infantino and then-attorney general Michael Lauber.

The meetings started soon after Infantino was elected FIFA president in the fallout from American and Swiss investigations of suspected corruption in international soccer that forced his predecessor Sepp Blatter out of office.

After the meetings were revealed by media reports starting in 2018, both Lauber and Infantino said the meetings were routine but claimed not to recall details or to have taken notes.

Lauber was ousted from his job after being found to have misled and obstructed a federal office overseeing prosecutors, which had

sought more information about the meetings.

FIFA declined to comment Tuesday on the questioning of its presi-

dent.

Soccer's world body has previously said "both FIFA and the FIFA president are fully available to cooperate with the authorities, whether that concerns meetings that the FIFA president had with the former Attorney General of Switzerland, or anything else."

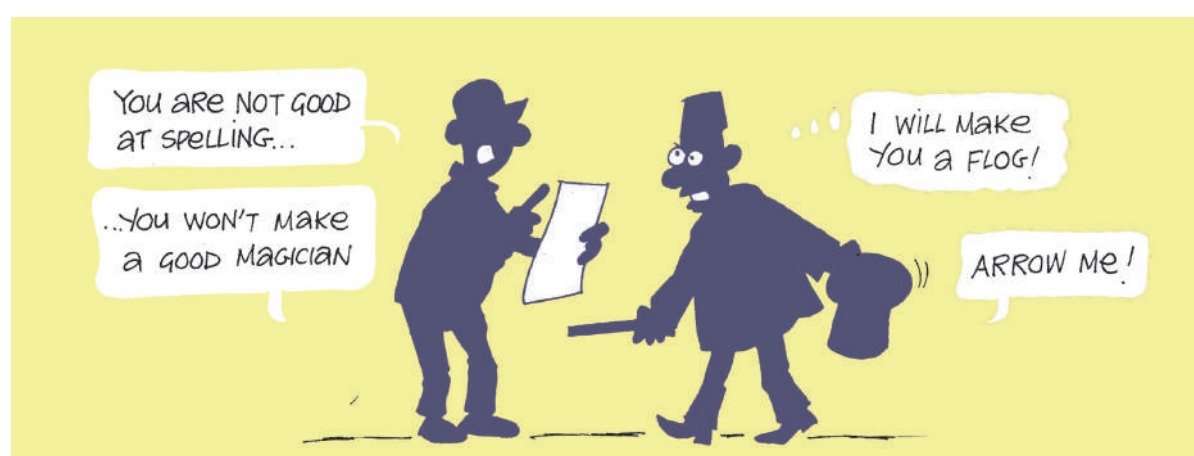
Infantino is due to be re-elected for a four-year presidential term at a March 16 election meeting in Rwanda. His unopposed candidacy must pass FIFA's eligibility and integrity check.

Blatter and Michel Platini, Infantino's former boss at European soccer body UEFA, were acquitted last year by a Swiss federal judge of financial wrongdoing with FIFA money.

That case came to trial nearly seven years after the allegations surfaced, which removed Platini from the contest to succeed Blatter. Infantino then became European soccer's candidate for the FIFA presidency.

AP

Gwiji by David Chikoko





# SPORT

## Afghan women athletes barred from play, fear Taliban threats

PAGE 19

**5 EATV THURSDAY**

**NIRVANA**

**TO NIGHT @ 9:00**

**NIRVANA**

**NIRVANA** is hip and edgy. It explores the latest trends in fashion, art, style and recreational activities. NIRVANA speaks to the trend makers, shapers and observers. It's a one stop shop for everything trendy.

11:00 DADAZ LIVE  
12:00 WEEKEND MOVIE (r)  
13:30 Kall za Wana  
14:00 Bongo Hits  
14:30 Ujenzi (r)  
15:00 Funguka  
15:30 Ubongo Kids (r)  
16:00 Zote Kuntu  
16:30 #HSHTAG  
17:00 SSELEKT  
17:55 Kurasa  
18:00 eNewz  
18:30 Bongo Hits  
19:00 EATV SAA 1  
20:00 DADAZ (r)  
21:00 NIRVANA  
21:30 TOP 10  
22:00 Zote Kuntu  
23:00 Kurasa (r)  
23:05 EATV SAA 1

**eastafrika RADIO**

06:00 Supa Breakfast  
10:00 MAMAMIA  
12:00 Kipenga Xtra  
13:00 Planet Bongo  
16:00 EA Drive  
20:00 Kipenga  
21:00 The Cruise

**88.1FM DAR ES SALAAM**



Juma Mgunda

## Mgunda happy with coaching spell at Simba SC

By Correspondent Ismail Tano

SIMBA SC assistant coach Juma Ramadhan Mgunda has said that he has hardly been offended by the arrival of head coach Roberto Oliveira Gonçalves do Carmo at the outfit.

The Msimbazi Street side announced the new coach, a Brazilian national, in Dar es Salaam last week, bringing Mgunda's role as a caretaker coach to an end.

Mgunda was entrusted with leading the club's technical bench after the departure of Serbian tactician Zoran Maki in September 2022.

Speaking in Dubai, United Arab Emirates where Simba SC has set up camp, Mgunda said he has been hearing that he was not interested in the arrival of Oliveira and was said to be eager to leave the club due to the decision taken by the management.

The coach pointed out he is still happy at the club and the arrival of Oliveira has helped him, as he has learned a lot from the boss who enabled Vipers SC to win the Uganda Premier League's silverware last season.

Mgunda stated: "I like to trust God in everything. Even though we are doing well, I have added another person, and this is good because the goal of Simba SC is to do well, so adding strength is not bad."

The gaffer revealed: "This shows that Simba SC's leadership was careful about this matter, so you can't hear me complaining."

"And I can't continue being heartbroken, I like what the leadership has done."

Mgunda pointed out: "In football, this is unavoidable, an important thing is that the person brought in has a lot of experience in coaching football, so any coach who wants to do well and who wants to continue excelling in the profession should learn from competent coaches."

"I am also in the classroom during this period, I respect him because he has recognized me as a fellow coach," Mgunda revealed.

## Pak Stars cricketers boost chase for Gymkhana Shield tournament's knockout stage



Cricketers making Pak Stars outfit pose for a picture during a Cello/Ruby's Magic Gymkhana Shield showdown's game that took place in Dar es Salaam last year. PHOTO: COURTESY OF GYMKHANA CLUB

By Guardian Reporter

**P**AK Stars cricketers have continued hunting for progression to the knockout stage of this season's Cello/Ruby's Magic Gymkhana Shield tournament, posting a comprehensive five-wicket win over Shree Kutchi Leva Patel Sports Center (SKLPSC) in Dar es Salaam last weekend.

The tie's winners have managed to hold on to the third spot in Group A thanks to the victory, having emerged victorious in two ties and conceded a loss in one.

The SKLPSC players batted first in the Group A duel which took place at Dar es Salaam Gymkhana Club's oval, notching 128/9 in 20 overs.

The batting side looked to have found it difficult to repel the opponents' bowling attack and had to mostly bank on veteran players to ultimately wind up with the total.

Vikeshkumar Kerai and Dinesh Rabadiya notched 24 runs apiece, Anil Pindoriya made his way back with unbeaten 19 runs, and Omary

Hilali and Khalil Rehemtullah chipped in with 16 runs apiece.

All-rounder Athumani Siwa was also one of the squad's members with a two-digit score, making his way back with 14 runs.

Pak Stars' experienced cricketers Basit Raza, Nisar Ahmed, and Zafar Khan orchestrated a bowling attack that weakened SKLPSC's batting unit and foiled the latter's plan to end with a bigger total.

Raza and Ahmed ended their bowling stints with three wickets apiece, and Khan made matters worse for SKLPSC having taken two wickets.

Raza bowled four overs, giving away 34 runs and

ending up with an economy rate of 8.50, Ahmed as well bowled four overs, leaking 21 runs, and posted an economy rate of 5.25.

Khan's four-over spell witnessed the veteran giving away 29 runs and recording an economy rate of 7.25.

In response, Pak Stars zealously got down to the chase, reaching the target in 16.3 overs for the loss of five wickets.

In-form Ivan Ismail almost single-handedly won the tie for the batting side, ending 20 runs short of a century.

The opener's impressive spell witnessed him nailing six boundaries and three sixes, ultimately walking

away with the Player of the Match prize. They were unperturbed by an early dismissal of fellow opener Ahmed that was bowled by SKLPSC's Hassan Rahim, as the other top-order batsman Mohamed Omary and captain Kashif Adnan came in handy later on.

Omary ended his batting stint with 20 runs, blasting two fours, and Adnan wound up the innings with 12 runs not out.

Much as SKLPSC lost the duel, the squad is positioned second in Group A, having posted a 1.1806 net run rate from victory in three fixtures and loss in two.

One of the showdown's favourites Caravans leads

Group A with a 4.2190 net run rate, emerging victorious in all three duels.

The outfits battling it out in this season's Cello/Ruby's Magic Gymkhana Shield showdown have been placed in groups A and B.

Group A consists of Caravans Cricket Club, GP, Shree Kutchi Leva Patel Sports Center (SKLPSC), Pak Stars, Union Sports Club, and Gymkhana Cricket Club.

Aruti Aces, Upanga Sports Club, Aga Khan SC, Annadil Burhani Club, Dar Cricket Club (DCC), and Lions Cricket Club have been put in Group B.

This season's edition is sponsored by Cello/Ruby's Magic and Co, as well as long-time sponsors, General Petroleum (GP). Other sponsors are Planet Fitness, Gem Point, ETG, and Pepsi.

Cello/Ruby's Magic and Co has moreover sponsored a special cash prize to be handed over to batsmen scoring centuries and wicket-takers posting hat-tricks in the showdown.

This season's edition of the tournament was officially launched at Dar es Salaam Gymkhana Club on November 6 last year.

The jerseys for clubs taking part in the showdown were handed out to the outfits' skippers in presence of various supporters and stakeholders.

The showpiece's organizers stated that exciting matchups made up of old and new rivalries are in store for cricket followers in the city that will watch the tournament's ties during weekends.

## Azam FC goalkeeper calls for patience after recent errors

By Correspondent Nassir Nchimbi



Ali Ahamada

AZAM FC goalkeeper Ali Ahamada has asked the squad's fans to be calm following several mistakes the goalie committed in recent league ties.

Ahamada, a citizen of the Comoro Islands, issued the comments after the side's followers had expressed displeasure with his performance during the 2022/23 NBC Premier League match against defending champions, Yanga.

The two teams met in the game which took place at Benjamin Mkapa Stadium in Dar es Salaam on December 25 last year, Azam FC conceded a 3-2 loss.

Ahamada noted he has to get used to the environment of Tanzanian football, which he has admitted is different from other countries where he has played football.

However, the goalkeeper who is said to be the highest-paid soccer player in Tanzania lately has insisted that he still realizes that he has the quality to turn out for his outfit and he will demonstrate his virtuosity.

"It is too early for me to be less trusted in the team because it is the first time to play football in Africa, I am happy to play football in Tanza-

nia," Ahamada stated.

The player revealed: "I have found out that it is a country whose fans love football but are not patient when the team gets poor results, so I ask that they should be patient during this difficult period in which we make mistakes between the posts."

"We got a victory against Simba SC, I did not receive any praise from the fans, but after losing to Yanga, it was the day I hated football because I heard many words and realized that this country has no tolerance for results which is very understandable," Ahamada pointed out.

However, Azam FC has already announced the signing of a new goalkeeper from Ghana, Abdulai Iddrisu, who is expected to challenge Ahamada in the club's first team.

Iddrisu has joined Azam FC on a two-year contract from Ghana Premier League outfit, Bechem United. Ahamada joined Azam FC at the beginning of this season from Santa Coloma Club of Andorra.

Before that, the 31-year-old goalkeeper played football for France's Toulouse Club (2011-2016), Kayserispor of Turkey (2016-2018), Norway's Kongsvinger (2019-2020), and Brann (2020).

## Flexibles by David Chikoko

SWEETS FOR YOU MY SWEET!

THESE NUTS ARE FOR YOU!

