



Project reaches 26,752 males in Shinyanga



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Primary school in Z'bar gets WASH facilities



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NIMR to conduct research on NCDs



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'EACOP firms' must pay, MPs demand

Members of the committee questioned how the Nzega District Council was benefiting from service levies and CSR on account of EACOP firms working there

By Guardian Correspondent, Nzega

THE Public Investment Committee (PIC) of the National Assembly has issued a seven-day ultimatum to the Tanzania Petroleum Development Corporation (TPDC) to list the number of companies working in the East African Crude Oil Pipeline Project (EACOP) not paying service levies and corporate social responsibility (CSR) dues to local governments.

Deus Sangu (Kwela), the committee chairman, issued the ultimatum when visiting the yard for storing pipes to be installed for transporting crude oil at Sojo village, Isugule ward in Nzega District, Tabora Region.

Members of the committee questioned how Nzega District Council was benefiting from service levies and CSR on account of EACOP firms working there.

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Finance minister Dr Mwigulu Nchemba (R) and World Bank Country Director Nathan Belete pictured in Dar es Salaam yesterday exchanging just-signed documents on a loan agreement for 361.1 million Euros (equivalent to about 988.093 billion/-) for the implementation of the Second Phase of the Dar es Salaam Infrastructure Development Project (Dar es Salaam Metropolitan Development Project Phase II) in Dar es Salaam yesterday. Photo courtesy of Finance ministry

World Bank's 988bn/- loan for Dar metropolitan drive

By Henry Mwangonde

THE government yesterday signed a euro361.1m (988bn/-) credit agreement with the World Bank to finance the second phase of the Dar es Salaam Metropolitan Development Project (DMDP II).

Finance minister Dr Mwigulu Nchemba said at the signing ceremony in Dar es Salaam yesterday that the agreement shows the government's commitment

to enhance infrastructure, fostering prosperity for Dar es Salaam residents.

He said the project is a milestone in the growth path of the city, from the old Mzizima town (way back in 1857) to Dar es Salaam City Council at independence, and modernisation of its metropolitan districts of Kinondoni, Temeke, Ubungo and Kigamboni.

The project is a continuation of third five-year plan goals of revitalising key transportation networks by improving

the urban infrastructure to alleviate congestion and enhance connectivity.

This would improve the overall livelihood and economic activities of the city residents, affirming that the project seeks greater improvement of will continue to improve key public infrastructure in the existing Phase I districts of Ilala, Temeke and Kinondoni.

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Home advantage: Coach Chevalier's strategy as Asec Mimosas gear up to face reshaped Simba

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TotalEnergies upbeat about Kilimanjaro International Marathon

Egyptian delegation arrives for discussions on Great North Road

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Freeman Mbowe (C, in red cap), national Chairman of the opposition Chadema, leads a peaceful "pro-democracy" demonstration staged by the party's members and supporters at Mbalizi in Mbeya Urban District yesterday. Photo: Correspondent Nebart Msokwa

Education sector leads in clean energy uptake

By Guardian Reporter

THE government directive to public institutions feeding not less than 100 people per day to replace firewood and charcoal with clean cooking energy has best been taken up by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology.

Dr Selemani Jafo, the Union and Environment state minister in the Vice President's Office (VPO) made this affirmation at a press briefing in the capital yesterday, making comparisons across six ministries.

Institutions under the ministry have dropped fuel wood by up to 85 percent in the VPO update on the picture up to the end of January.

It said 30 out of 35 teacher training colleges had made the shift, 51 out of 54 folk development colleges, and eight centres run by the Vocational Education and Training Authority (VETA) out of 36 equal such institutions.

The shift to cleaner energy was taken up with a softer version of firewood where tree felling for charcoal is eliminated, and there is 'alternative wood' chiefly in the form of briquettes.

An online entry describes briquettes as flammable blocks of matter used as fuel. They are made from extruded or compressed shredded combustible materials like charcoal fines, mineral char, sawdust, chaff from rice, peanut and other crops along with peat (decomposed plants), in particular.

The minister described the clean energy shift in terms of alternative wood, considered to be a gentler version vis a vis the environment, but online explanation focuses more on the cook stove for the material than the material itself.

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Afya Plus programme Joel Andwilege gives explanation on what normally takes place inside voluntary medical male circumcision mobile vans. He was briefing journalists attending a two-day media tour in Kahama, Shinyanga Region, at the weekend. The activities are carried out under five-year Afya Hatua project jointly implemented by Afya Plus and a second NGO, Tanzania Health Promotion Support. Photo: Correspondent Mary Kadoke

PM wants Kiswahili use in digital economy to reach out to majority

By Guardian Reporter

VICE President Dr Phillip Mpango has called upon Kiswahili stakeholders to come up with strategies to ensure the language is used in the digital economy for inclusion of majority of Tanzanians.

Dr Mpango made the in Dar es Salaam yesterday during a symposium aimed at making Kiswahili a tool for attracting investors and a platform for doing business digitally.

He said the stakeholders should ensure that Kiswahili and other widely-spoken African languages are used to develop local innovation and promotion of economic diplomacy. He said the symposium ought to find ways to help show opportunities in the use of African languages and allow youth gain knowledge on how to prepare for the coming economic changes both within the continent and beyond.

The VP said that the adoption of Kiswahili as an official language in the African Union (AU) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) has expanded the scope of the use of the language and brought various economic and cultural opportunities.

He said that the conference has the responsibility of creating more opportunities and continuing the long history of Kiswahili in building relationships between people of various cultures, languages and economic and social bases.

He said that in the context of growth and development of Kiswahili, including preservation of other native languages, cultures and knowledge systems in East and Central Africa, small traders and hawkers have made a contribution that must be recognized and appreciated. The VP said there is a need to conduct a detailed study to see how African countries can develop systems that focus on participation of young people and groups such as self-employed businesspeople in economic diplomacy and business development.

Dr Mpango said that Tanzania has prioritized development of Kiswahili whereby it aims to make the language continue to bring unity, peace and tolerance throughout Africa. He commended the University of Dar es Salaam for continuing to collaborate with foreign universities and institutions in promoting Kiswahili and developing cultural diplomacy.

Men undergo medical circumcision in HIV control drive

By Correspondent Mary Kadoke, Shinyanga

A TOTAL of 26,752 men aged 15 years and above have undergone voluntary medical male circumcision (VMMC) in Shinyanga Region in the first quarter of this financial year through Afya Hatua project.

The three-year project is implemented by Tanzania Health Promotion Support (THPS) in collaboration with Afya Plus, with support from US Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) through US President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR).

It is part of reducing HIV transmission in the Lake Zone region. Speaking during a two-day media tour organised in the region by the two NGOs on Monday, Shinyanga Regional Medical officer Dr Yudas Ntungile

said the project has recorded a number of successes in scaling up and sustaining a comprehensive package of quality, safe VMMC services so as to reach the 90 percent male circumcision in all supported councils.

"In the first quarter of the third year of the project (2023/2024), October to December last year, the project reached 26, 752 males aged 15 years and above, this represents 29 percent of the annual target of 91,022 general target," he said.

Dr Ntungile, said the minimum comprehensive package for VMMC services offered to clients include health education to better understand the link between VMMC and HIV prevention, HIV testing services, clinical assessment for eligibility of VMMC and referrals for appropriate services such as HIV care and treatment for clients

who test HIV positive, pre-exposure prophylaxis or reproductive tract infections and referral for treatment.

Dr Challo Charido, Afya Plus VMMC programme coordinator said since 2007, the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV and AIDS (UNAIDS) recommended the implementation of VMMC programmes in 15 priority countries in east and southern Africa with low male circumcision rates and high HIV prevalence, including Tanzania.

"Tanzania started implementing VMMC as one of the HIV prevention strategies in regards to WHO recommendation in three regions in 2009 as a pilot and then expanded to a total of 17 priority regions, including Shinyanga," he said. "Journalists, healthcare workers, community leaders, political leaders, religious leaders, home based care per-

sonnel, popular opinion leaders, educational institutions workers, traditional healers and traditional leaders carry a responsibility in creating demands upon VMMC," he said.

Dr Innocent Mbughi, THPS VMMC services programme manager said between January 2022 and December 2023, Afya Hatua project reached 73,927 males aged 15 years and above with VMMC services through 35 supported VMMC clinics and mobile services conducted at 145 health facilities in Shinyanga Region.

VMMC is a safe and quality procedure that offers primary prevention that reduces the risk of heterosexual transmission of HIV from women to men. It is performed by trained healthcare providers in a convenient minor surgical setting. It can be performed through conventional surgical procedures or the use of devices.



Selemani Jafo (L), Minister of State in the Vice President's Office (Union and the Environment), briefs journalists in Dodoma city yesterday on the 'ban' of the use of firewood and charcoal. Right is Deputy Permanent Secretary Abdallah Hassan Mitawi. Photo: Correspondent Ibrahim Joseph

Rural electrification board members meet for familiarisation

By Guardian Reporter, Dodoma

THE Rural Electrification Board (REB) has emphasised the need for collaboration from stakeholders to enable Rural Electrification Agency (REA) to achieve its goals

REB Chairperson Ambassador Maj Gen (rtd) Jacob Kingu made the remarks here yesterday after holding the first meeting of the board which was aimed at familiarisation.

"Our meeting went well; we have chosen a committee and assigned each other tasks. We believe that if we carry out our duties, we will achieve the goals which established REA," he said.

Kingu thanked President Samia Suluhu Hassan for appointing him and the Deputy Prime Minister Dotto Biteko for finalizing the appointment of members.

Explaining more about the responsibilities they have planned, Kingu said in early March, the board will meet in an emergency session to review and discuss various issues of the REA that await approval of the board.

Hassan Saïdy, secretary of the board who is also the director general of REA, commended the appointing authorities for selecting strong and hardworking people who he said is important

in effectively managing the agency which has major responsibilities that directly affect Tanzanians. "REA has a big responsibility that touches people's lives but also involves large amounts of government funds. Therefore, having a good board made up of competent people, for us, is a matter of comfort," he said.

"We wish to see our fellow Tanzanians who live in rural areas get the same quality energy as their counterparts who live in urban areas," he said.

The board members commended the previous boards and the management as well as all the employees for the good work they have done since the establishment of the agency and promised to continue all the good things that have been done. The session also involved management whereby the heads of departments and units presented to the board the implementation of responsibilities in the areas they manage with the aim of building the board's understanding about the Institution.

On January 26 this year, Deputy Prime Minister Dr Doto Biteko appointed Florian Otman Haule, Lucas Charles Malunde, Mwantumu Issa Sultan, Stephen Mwakifamba, James Mabila, Ahmed Chinemba, Sophia Mgonja

and Ambassador Radhiya Msuya as members of the REB, joining Kingu who was appointed by President Samia in September 2023 as Chairperson.

NACHAGO GENERAL ENTERPRISES LIMITED
Incorporation Number 123999
(The "Company")

NOTICE OF THE FINAL MEETING OF MEMBER'S VOLUNTARY WINDING UP OF THE COMPANY TO TAKE PLACE AT 08:00HOURS EASTERN AFRICA TIME (EAT) ON 15th DAY OF FEBRUARY 2024


Notice of the final meeting under section 345(1) and (2) of the companies Act 212 R.E 2022

TO THE MEMBERS AND GENERAL PUBLIC

Notice is hereby given that the liquidator intends to convene the final general meeting in respect of NACHAGO GENERAL ENTERPRISES LIMITED which will be held at Johnsons Villas Hotel, Kilimanjaro on 25th February 2024 08:00hours

The purpose of the meeting is for Liquidator to lay accounts of winding up showing the manner in which the winding up of the company has been conducted and its properties disposed of giving other explanations hereto

Signed at Dar es salaam this 9th January 2024


Aman Jordan Ntangu
The Liquidator

PUBLIC NOTICE



Kamal Steels Ltd wishes to inform the general public that **Mr. Sachin Pralhad Pawar** is no longer associated/ employed with the Company or any of the Group Companies from **31 January 2024**.

Please be advised that any business transaction, communication or arrangement with **Mr. Sachin Pawar** whose picture is attached above shall not be binding to the Company.

Egyptian delegation holds talks on Great North Road

FROM PAGE 1

By Getrude Mbago

EXPERTS from the Ministry of Works and Egypt's Ministry of Transport have started on major rehabilitation of the Cape Town to Cairo highway, with a portion of the provincial road passes through Tanzania.

Works minister Innocent Bashungwa officiated at the meeting in Dar es Salaam yesterday bringing together sector ministers, top officials and a selection of consultants, setting the framework to rehabilitate in a fast-track manner the project, which some believe can solve trade bottlenecks on the eastern side of the continent.

The minister expressed appreciation for the Egyptian authorities for its efforts to

bring countries traversed by the officially used version of where the road passes, to rehabilitate it to a usable highway facilitating trade expansion.

Tanzania forms part of the Great North Road when it takes an easterly trajectory, reaching 1600km when arriving at the Namanga border post in Arusha Region, having passed through Mbeya, Iringa, Dodoma, Manyara and then Arusha Region, as usually the road is tracked from Cape to Cairo rather than vice versa.

There are maps which show the road on a more straightforward path in the central Africa side, where it would briefly pass through Tanzania near the Lake Tanganyika Rift Valley zone upwards to Burundi, Rwanda, Uganda and South Sudan, before reaching Sudan and eventually Egypt.

For decades official references to the Great North Road is the easterly version taking a long stretch of middle Tanzania, where the total length is billed at 10,228km from the far south to the northern end of the continent.

The meeting focused on the road in an Egyptian version of the Great North Road as proceeding from Cairo, despite that traditionally it was a dream of British trading firms to connect South Africa with the northern outreaches.

While the talks in Dar es Salaam do not mention Botswana in the trajectory, on-line tourism entries talk of exploring Botswana's best game reserves on land and on water on an exciting 11-day mobile camping safari aligned with the Great North Road. North of Botswana is Zimba-

bwe and then Zambia where the great Victoria waterfalls are found, before moving up to the Tanzanian border at Tunduma.

The minister said that the partnership between Tanzania and Egypt in infrastructure development would address key infrastructure challenges and unlock new opportunities for economic advancement.

He expressed the government's keenness on joint cooperation with Egypt in the various fields of transport and the increase of trade between the two countries through a comprehensive vision in all fields, including the transport sector.

As Egypt is far ahead in the area of technology and innovation, the collaboration will greatly help Tanzania to implement its projects by taking up updated adher-

ing to high standards and technology, he stated.

Capacity building in the cooperation drive shall equip Tanzania's experts in the construction sector, he said, pointing at youth engineers needing essential exposure to take up construction work more effectively.

Kamel El Wazir, the Egyptian Minister of Transport praised efforts by President Samia Suluhu Hassan for opening up the country and placing a conducive environment facilitating greater cooperation.

El Wazir said construction of the Cairo-Cape Town highway will aid in shortening travel time between the north and southern parts of Africa to an average of only five days on land, realising the dream of a real Great North Road.

Sudan war sends malnutrition rates up across the region - WFP

KHARTOUM

THE UN World Food Programme (WFP) has warned that the 10-month long war in Sudan has meant malnutrition is soaring across the region and is creating the world's largest displacement crisis.

At least 25 million people are struggling with soaring rates of hunger and malnutrition as the crisis in Sudan sends shockwaves around the region, the body alerted.

The WFP also deplored a lack of resources to try to address the humanitarian crisis.

"At the moment unfortunately we don't have the funds and we don't have the access to be reaching people at the need at the scale that is required right now."

Thousands of families are being displaced and forced across borders into Chad and South Sudan each week, said Annabel Symington, a spokesperson for the WFP.

Some 1.8 million people fleeing the war mainly have found refuge in neighbouring Chad and South Sudan but these grapple with their own fragilities.

"In both these countries the rainy season is coming soon and with that it's going get even harder to reach people. We need to be prepositioning assistance right now to make sure that we can sustain a response. We are unable to do that, and on top of that Chad, South Sudan, they are dealing with their own hunger crises. So this is really crisis building on crisis."

In South Sudan, families fleeing Sudan now make up 35 percent of those facing catastrophic levels of hunger, despite only accounting for 3 percent of the population.

Malnutrition rates are increasing rapidly among children who are languishing in temporary transit camps, like the camp in Renk.

According to the WFP, approximately 4 per cent of children under 5 years of age crossing the border into South Sudan are malnourished upon entering the country.



Takashi Araki (R), Tanzania Cigarette Public Limited Company's CEO and general manager, pictured in Kigoma/Ujiji municipality on Monday gifting Kigoma regional commissioner Thobias Andengenyne a souvenir. It was at a workshop at which stakeholders from the Government and the private sector discussed challenges resulting from illegal trade in cigarettes in border regions. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

Education sector leads in clean energy uptake

FROM PAGE 1

The stoves and the relevant materials are less smoky and burn far less quantities of wood or wood-en materials, and can be used in schools, camps or restaurants.

It is so far not clear how much of briquettes is being conducted and its commercial parameters, for instance in the use of a binding agent like starch to hold the materials together, though pressure may at times be enough.

Less than a quarter of VETA centres had taken up alternative wood, or 22.22 percent, with the figure being even less for schools, where out of 571 boarding secondary schools just 67 schools or 11.73 percent had decamped to alternative wood.

There was also a scatter of other institutions shifting to alternative wood, where the minister cited Kidatu Police College and Tanzania Police School as using gas stoves, while the Zanzibar Police College uses gas and wood.

Out of 129 prisons, 76 had shifted to natural gas mainly, along with three out of four prison colleges and a secondary school at Bwawani (Coast Region) had changed energy use.

Tengeru and Uyole community development colleges have started using renewable energy, making it 25 percent of institutions under that category.

The Mwananyamala regional referral hospital in Dar es Salaam and similar facility in Dodoma, plus Sinza Health Center in the city had shifted to natural gas.

In 2022, the government ordered all institutions that serve not less than 100 people to stop using firewood and charcoal by January 31, 2024, while institutions serving 200 people have until January 31, 2025 to make the shift.

The National Environmental Policy of 2021 encourages the use of alternative energy to wood and charcoal to reduce deforestation.



It is so far not clear how much of briquettes is being conducted and its commercial parameters

'EACOP firms' must pay, MPs demand

FROM PAGE 1

"We want to get the information so that we know what companies pay and those that do not pay," he said, hinting that the committee will instigate the pursuit of legal action on the non-paying firms.

Fakhi Mohamed, the commissioner for petroleum in the ministry, promised to implement the order within the given time, saying the demand will extend to companies that ended their contracts, to pay up if they didn't do so earlier.

ECOP project coordinator Kisamarwa Joseph said the project started in February 2021 and is expected to be completed in December 2025, with a total of 9,822 claimants to compensation out of 9,898 have been verified and paid upwards of 34.9bn/-.

He said that 76 families still await payments as family disputes and inheritance contentions are in court so compensation funds were placed in a special account.

Similarly, 339 alternative houses were built for 344 households vacating their dwellings for the project, with 12 houses built in Sojo village.

World Bank's 988bn/- loan for Dar metropolitan drive

FROM PAGE 1

while extending coverage of improvement to focus Ubungo and Kigamboni, the new incoming districts into the project.

DMDP Phase II is tuned to climate resilient outcomes, like integrating green spaces, promoting eco-friendly practices and mitigating the impact of climate change, he stated.

He reaffirmed government collaboration with the World Bank for close supervision and monitoring of the project as part of wider development en-

gagements.

World Bank country director Nathan Belete said in his remarks that the project will respond to short and long term needs of the city, noting that cities account for most of the country's physical, financial and technological capital.

Dar es Salaam is the largest urban area with a population of 5.4m, partly centred on the port as a commercial gateway to Tanzania and six landlocked countries, he said.

The port-tied trade economy along with a vibrant service sector makes Dar es Salaam contribute 17 percent of GDP,

in which case the World Bank Group is keen about supporting the growth of the city, placing \$1.5bn in loans across the past 15 years, he said.

He said the first phase of the DMDP project was constructed: 207 km of roads and 4 bus stands, improving mobility for over 3.5 million people.

Upwards of 75km of drainage and three detention ponds have been built under the project, reducing flood threats over 400 hectares of flood prone land, he said, also highlighting construction of 10 markets and six public parks. This enhances economic ac-

tivity and access to goods, making the city more livable, he said.

It also enlisted local governments to improve capacity for revenue collection, enforce regulations, plan and maintain infrastructure.

"Dar es Salaam is growing rapidly, and the services and infrastructure need to keep up with this growth, a fact that has been clear for decades. DMDP Phase 2 will continue this work, including constructing over 200 km of roads and 300 km of drainage infrastructure," he added.



Ally Mahmoud (2nd-R foreground, gesturing), headteacher of Zanzibar's Kisiwandui Primary School, briefs Puma Tanzania general manager Fatma Mohamed Abdallah (2nd-L), Zanzibar Pre & Primary Education director Fatuma Mode (L) and Zanzibar Education and Vocational Training minister Lela Muhamed Mussa shortly after yesterday's launch of latrines and other buildings at the school rehabilitated by the oil marketing firm. Photo: Guardian Correspondent



Nazeer Tajudeen (2nd-R), President of the Dar es Salaam Peninsula Rotary Club presents recognition certificates to one of its project partners at an event held in Dar es Salaam on Saturday for persons with albinism. Photo courtesy of Rotary Club

'DCEA seizes 1,900 tonnes of narcotic drugs in 2023'

By Correspondent Valentine Oforo, Dodoma

THE Drug Control and Enforcement Authority (DCEA) has seized a total of 1,965,340.52 kg of various types of narcotic drugs in the country during the period between January to December 2023.

The Minister of State in the Prime Minister's Office (Policy, Parliament and Coordination), Jenista Mhagama yesterday told a press conference in Dodoma yesterday Capital City that at least 10,522 suspects have been arrested in connection to the illegal business.

She said the development signs a great milestone in the country's concerted efforts and war against importation, peddling and use of the unwanted drugs across the country.

"A total of 10,522 suspects were arrested out of various intelligent crackdowns, out of which 9,701 were men and 821 women," the minister unveiled, added, a total of 2,924 hectares of hemp and quince plantations were also burnt.

She stated that the amount of drugs seized in one year alone is the largest ever seized in the country as it exceeds the amount of 660,465 kg seized in 11 years. Moreover, unveiling more stride so far attained in the sensitive sector, ministry Mhagama said the government has also succeeded in preventing the importation of around 157,738.55 kg of toxic chemicals that could be used to make illegal drugs.

To further efforts to help stamping out the evil trade, the minister expressed the government was running a series of strategies, focusing to expand

the scope of public awareness creation from grassroots, including towards the primary, secondary and college students. And she informed, the Drug Control and Enforcement Authority (DCEA) has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the Prevention and Combating of Corruption Bureau (PCCB) to roll out education on drugs and corruption through anti-corruption clubs, to be christened 'Anti-Corruption And Drugs Clubs'.

"Studies show that the use of drugs starts at a young age between 10 and 12 years old, and thus the government finds it imperative to start shaping the youth while at young ages to stand firmly against the dangerous drugs," she said. However, she expressed that the government will continue implementing its constructive role to disseminate vital education against the drugs towards key social groups including religious leaders, traditional leaders, journalists, defense and security agencies, customs officials and farmers especially in areas where the cultivation of marijuana and quince is rampant.

Also, the minister noted that the government will continue make a sober use of media outlets, various conferences, as well as international exhibitions to channel education against the killer drugs.

Speaking in pertaining to treatment for the drugs affected individuals, the minister said the government has continued to strengthen services by adding treatment centers for addicts using drugs and counseling services (MAT) and for the year 2023 one center has been opened in Morogoro region, at Kihonda prison.

Brela offers training after changes in company ownership law

By Guardian Correspondent, Mbeya

THE Business Registrations and Licensing Agency (Brela) has started offering training on company ownership laws to equip relevant authorities with new changes so that innocent people are not punished.

The training started in Mbeya Region yesterday, bringing together legal officers, magistrates, police and immigration officers

as well as officials from the Prevention and Combating of Corruption Bureau (PCCB).

Isdor Nkindi, acting director for company name registration at Brela said they launched the training after changes in company ownership law which now recognizes stakeholders who were not recognized by previous law.

He said in the previous law, beneficiaries were not recog-

nized in registration documents hence they used to find themselves in trouble without knowing.

He said the current law requires that company beneficiaries who were not recognized in the previous laws must be registered in a special registry.

"We give such trainings because beneficiary company ownership is new and we want to avoid activities being funded

by people who are not known," he said.

He said that the training is being held for five consecutive days in regions and that after training of the stakeholders, Brela will start training company owners.

He also said that they also listen to grievances from stakeholders on the problems they encounter in their work and discuss how to deal with them.

Some of the stakeholders who

participated in the training said that there are things that happen in their companies without their knowledge which was risky.

Emelda Aluko, representative of the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) said that they have been prosecuting various cases related to financial crimes, including money laundering, but they were not aware of some of the circumstances in which those incidences occurred.

She said in the training they were taught how a crime can be committed in a company and cause legal problems to innocent individuals.

She said they were made aware that there are some people whose companies can be used to commit a crime without their knowledge.

Adriano Mtafya, Resident Magistrate at Mbeya Resident Magistrate's Court said that the training should continue to be given to stakeholders.

TFS procures patrol vehicles worth 6bn/-

By Getrude Mbagu

THE Tanzania Forest Services Agency (TFS) has procured modern vehicles including powerful motorcycles and four-wheel-drive vehicles worth 6bn/- to boost patrols in various reserve forests and farms.

The vehicles include 39 motorcycles, two land cruisers and two military trucks with high capacity to conduct operations in difficult environments.

Handing over the vehicles in Dar es Salaam yesterday, Minister for Natural Resources and Tourism Angellah Kairuki appealed to leaders to ensure that the vehicles immediately go to the designated places and properly used to achieve intended goals.

She said that the new vehicles will heighten daily patrols in the forests to control illegal human activities such as farming, logging and charcoal making in the reserve forests.

The minister said that as the vehicles have capacities to conduct patrols in difficult environment,

it will make it easy for conservators to conduct their operations smoothly.

"It is not that the vehicles are enough to cover the country's 48.1 million hectares of forests which need to be protected, let us use what we have to ensure that our reserves and protected areas are safe for the country's development," she said.

She also wanted leaders to supervise protection of parks and reserve areas which include arresting people who invade the areas and engage in mining and charcoal production.

"We don't want to see extraction in our protected areas, there should be no charcoal production and other illegal activities. I will be very serious about this," she said.

According to Kairuki, no leaders will be spared if their areas of work are affected by illegal activities such as mining and charcoal production.

The minister also encouraged Tanzanians to positively utilize the available land and forests for beekeeping in order to improve

income and people's livelihoods.

Festo Sanga, member of the Parliamentary Committee on Land, Natural Resources and Tourism commended the government for the big investment in the protection of resources and promotion of tourism.

"The procured vehicles will strengthen patrols for protection of our natural resources; they will immensely improve conservation initiatives in the country," he said.

Prof Dos Santos Silayo, TFS conservation commissioner, said that the vehicles will help strengthen operations to control forest destruction as they will enable officials to penetrate all parts of the forests.

"We will strengthen efforts to protect our forests and with these new vehicles, we will be able to penetrate all difficult areas to ensure that our forests are safe," he said.

He said that there are a number of nature reserve forests in the country endowed with attractive species of plants, animals and insects that have to be protected.



Shinyanga district council director Kisena Mabuba (in cap) presents a wheelchair to Iselamagazi Primary School pupil Emmanuel Dotto to ease the boy's transport from home to school. The support is a Tanzania Cheshire Foundation gesture of compassion. Photo: Correspondent Marco Maduhu

By Guardian Reporter, Zanzibar

Energy firm provides WASH facilities to school

THE government of Zanzibar has commended Puma Energy Tanzania for its initiatives to support efforts towards improving learning environment in the Isles.

The company through its 'Energising School Communities' programme supports education and promotes a healthy learning environment towards improving education outcomes for Tanzanian children.

Speaking at the launch of the programme here yester-

day, Zanzibar Minister for Education and Vocational Training, Lela Mohamed Mussa said: "I am pleased to hear that Puma Energy Tanzania is committed to improving learning environment in schools. And, it is not ending here at Kisiwandui Primary School, as the programme will be implemented in various schools here in Zanzibar."

Mussa added: "I would like to assure you that the government will continue to

work closely with the company. Our doors are open to listen and provide support whenever you wish to implement similar projects."

Under the programme, Kisiwandui Primary School will benefit with the construction of additional toilets and refurbishment of other facilities. It is the first beneficiary of Puma Energy Tanzania's programme that aims to support the government's efforts to reduce the pupil-toilet ratio which is

key for improving school attendance, education outcomes and learner retention rates.

Fatma Abdullah, general manager of Puma Energy Tanzania, reaffirmed the company's commitment to making a positive impact on communities it serves.

She said to improve access to water and safe, hygienic sanitation facilities at Kisiwandui Primary School, Puma contributed \$50,000 (130m/-) towards the pro-

gramme.

"Learners at the school where Puma has constructed more toilets are the first to benefit from our programme," she said.

Abdullah added that at Kisiwandui, with a ratio of 200 pupils per toilet, there was an urgent need to improve the school's sanitation facilities.

Kisiwandui Primary School, a co-educational government school in Unjaja, has 2050 pupils from

kindergarten to Standard Six, including children with special needs.

Despite its large learner population, the school had only ten toilets, which fell significantly short of the government's recommended standard of 40 pupils per toilet.

The 2028 Tanzania National School WASH (Water, Sanitation and Hygiene) Report shows that only 25 percent of schools in Tanzania met the minimum

government standard for learners per toilet (20 girls and 25 boys per toilet) while 16.7 percent of schools had changing rooms with basic amenities such as water, waste bin, soap and emergency supplies.

Inadequate WASH conditions in schools may hinder girls' full participation in school and lead to their poor performance and increased dropout rates, said the report.

Puma Energy Tanzania is one of the largest oil marketing companies in Tanzania, supplying ground fuels and

Farmers credit warehouse receipt system with enhancing of income

By Guardian Correspondent, Namtumbo

FARMERS and agriculture stakeholders in Namtumbo District, Ruvuma Region have hailed the implementation of warehouse receipt system, saying it has increased productivity.

Speaking at a stakeholders' meeting, the farmers thanked the government for coming up with the system which has eradicated exploitation of their harvests.

The meeting was convened by Namtumbo District Commissioner Ngollo Malenya and attended by various leaders, including cooperatives directors, extension officer, livestock officers and financial institutions as

well as councillors.

Ally Lyuma, one of the residents, said that since the warehouse receipt system came into the district, farmers have been selling their produce on time at better prices compared those offered by crop dealers.

Lukas Sesilius, manager of Naisi cooperative association said the farmers were grateful to the government for establishing the system since they are assured of a market for their produce at a fair price.

Kassimu Gunda, Likuyu Ward Councillor said that individuals who complain about the warehouse receipt system are not farmers but businesspeople who buy produce from farmers low prices and then sell the same later at high prices.

Juma Pandu, Namtumbo District Council Chairman encouraged experts to improve the warehouse receipt system since it benefits farmers.

He wanted serious plans to be developed to address the deficiencies in income collection from the council.

Philemon Magesa, Namtumbo District Executive Director told the meeting that the council will work on all of the ideas and proposals raised during the meeting.

The district commissioner thanked the council for installing government health operation management information system at the district hospital which has enhanced operations and the hospital's re-



An official with Elsewedy Electric Tanzania (gesturing) shows visiting members of the Parliamentary Administration, Constitution and Law Committee around the Dar es Salaam-based company yesterday. The firm deals in the production of electrical goods, engineering, construction, smart infrastructure and infrastructure investments. Third left (in glasses) is Prof Kitila Mkumbo, Minister of State in the President's Office (Planning and Investment). Photo Correspondent Joseph Mwendapole

Journos challenged: Deal with issues of utility to the people

By Correspondent Wilhelm Mulinda, Mwanza

MINISTER for Information, Communication and Information Technology Nape Nnauye has called on journalists raise issues affecting Tanzanians so that the government can solve them.

The minister made the call here yesterday when speaking at a training that involved TV and radio producers on public education programmes through Tanzania Broadcasting Corporation (TBC).

He said that journalists should act as a bridge between the people and the government to increase accountability in the government, noting that the aim of the government is to have a strong media that observes professionalism to help propel development of the people. When giving people news, there should also be a procedure of receive information from them as feedback which helps to solve their challenges, he said.

He noted that President Samia Suluhu Hassan has embarked on a philosophy of Reconciliation, Resilience, Reform and Rebuild (4Rs) but it is the responsibility of journalists to make sure that it works out.

Citing as an example, he said that reconciliation and resilience are important for development, urging journalists to push the agenda 4Rs to the grassroots level for development of the nation.

He said that there will be elections of local government later this year and general election next year, therefore, the media should encourage people to go and vote for the leaders they want during the elections. According to him, journalists have a big role to play and can make the nation peaceful throughout the electioneering period if they work professionally.

He thanked the sponsors of the meeting, saying it will enable journalists to exchange ideas and add knowledge on how to relay information to the people regarding what the government is doing and vice versa.

Police embark on tree planting operation to save environment

By Guardian Correspondent, Mbeya

MBEYA Regional Police Commander Benjamin Kuzaga has directed police officers to take care of trees planted in their districts to protect the environment.

He spoke at the weekend when he led police officers to plant trees throughout the Field Force Unit facilities in Mbeya Region.

ACP Kuzaga said the planting of trees in police camps, barracks and stations is part of the Inspector General of Police Camillus Wambura's directive to care for the environment.

He also said the tree planting will take place in all six police districts Mbeya Region, with each police officer receiving a tree seedling to plant and care for.

"We have started with a total of 1,000 fruit and shade tree seedlings of Kassuarina, Pinuspatula, and plum trees have been planted in various areas in Mbeya Region," ACP Kuzaga said.

He said IGP Wambura requested all regional commanders to supervise the planting of trees in their regions near police stations and barracks in order to preserve nature.

Last week, Juma Homera, Mbeya Region Commissioner directed all district commissioners in the region to work with the peace and reconciliation committee leaders to plant trees in various areas to protect the environment.

He issued the instructions as part of the Peace and Reconciliation Week celebration whose climax set for March 6 this year and will be marked at national level in Mbeya city.



We have started with a total of 1,000 fruit and shade tree seedlings of Kassuarina, Pinuspatula, and plum trees have been planted in various areas in Mbeya Region



GLOBAL HEALTH SUPPLY CHAIN PROGRAM TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE - TANZANIA

Statement of Work

Purpose: The primary objective of this evaluation is to assess the effectiveness of implementation of IMPACT Approach at the Regional and Council levels and their contribution to improving the supply chain performance in Tanzania.

Period of Performance: March 20th to May 20th, 2024

Place of Performance: Various Regions, Councils, and Health Facilities.

Background

The efficient delivery of health services is crucial for achieving the Tanzania's health goals. The Ministry of Health (MoH) and President's Office Regional Government and Local Administration (PO-RALG), in collaboration with the USAID Global Health Supply Chain Program Technical Assistance-Tanzania (GHSC-TA-TZ), introduced the Information Mobilized for Performance Analysis and Continuous Transformation (IMPACT) approach in 2018 to improve data quality and use across health levels. The approach is people-centered and data-driven, and encourages IMPACT Teams to use data and analyses for evidence-based performance monitoring to ensure continuous improvement of health supply chain. The IMPACT approach aims at instilling a data-use culture, strengthening teamwork, and building capacity among healthcare workers in the health commodities management as well as institutionalizing data use across different levels of the supply chain. Over the past six years, GHSC-TA-TZ, in collaboration with various Implementing Partners, has provided technical assistance to MOH and PO-RALG in rolling out the IMPACT approach to regional and council teams. By December 2023, the IMPACT initiative extended to 26 regions, 184 councils, 23 regional referral hospitals, and 684 primary health facilities.

PURPOSE

GHSC-TA-TZ is collaborating with MoH and PO-RALG to evaluate the IMPACT Approach Implementation in Tanzania mainland to determine:

- Overall adoption
- Relationship between the IMPACT approach utilization and improvements in data quality and use
- Implementation best practices, lessons learned, and challenges

OBJECTIVES

1. Determine the extent to which the IMPACT approach has promoted the use of existing health Management Information Systems (MIS) such as eLMIS at the regional and council health management teams as well as health facilities.
2. Determine the effectiveness of the IMPACT Approach in enhancing data-driven decision-making processes within the National, regional, council, and health facilities health management teams.
3. Assess the influence of the IMPACT Teams approach on changes in various supply chain functions between and within levels National, Regional, District and Health Facilities
4. Identify the best practices, lessons learned, and challenges faced in implementing the IMPACT Teams approach to inform recommendations for improvement, scale-up, or replication.
5. Assess the extent of sustaining institutionalization of data use culture through the IMPACT approach across the levels.
6. Assess the effectiveness of capacity building to health care workers and their ability in data analysis and use.
7. Assess the overall effectiveness of oversight of the IMPACT approach initiative including reporting.

ACTIVITIES AND DELIVERABLES

To conduct an evaluation of the IMPACT Approach initiative and provide evidence-based recommendations for improving the initiative, the consultant is expected to do the following activities within 60 calendar days.

#	Activity	Deliverables
1	Prepare and submit an inception report detailing the methodology and techniques to be used in the evaluation of IMPACT Approach including how the deliverables will fit into the overall timeline provided.	Inception report
2	Conduct a desk review of reports and previous work done on IMPACT approach.	Desk review report
3	Develop data collection tools to capture the required information in line with objectives of this evaluation.	Final data collection tools
4	Conduct planning / engagement meetings with MoH, PORALG, Implementing Partners and other stakeholders.	Meeting minutes
5	Develop and implement a sampling frame based on a list of Regions, Councils and Health facilities implementing IMPACT approach	Selected list of facilities
6	Identify and train a data collection team.	Number of trained data collectors
7	Develop a list of key informants to be included in the evaluation and provide justification for selection.	List of selected informants
8	Conduct data collection through virtual platform and through sites visits.	List of facilities (regions, councils, Regional Referral Hospitals, Health Facilities) visited/individuals interviewed/Participants Consents
9	Analyse and synthesize the data/information collected to address the main objective and specific objectives provided above.	Presentation that summarizes the findings
10	Identify best practices and lessons learned and provide recommendations for improvement of the current IMPACT approach.	Best practices and lessons learned report
11	Draft and submit the evaluation report to stakeholders for validation.	Draft an evaluation report
12	Produce a final evaluation report with recommendations incorporating stakeholder's inputs.	Final evaluation report

QUALIFICATIONS AND ATTRIBUTES REQUIRED

Applicants for this consultancy should be Tanzanian nationals or lawful residents/ registered institutions that possess the following minimum qualifications and can provide documentation showcasing capabilities and past experience:

DEMONSTRATED TECHNICAL CAPABILITIES

- Be a qualified professional with at least Master's degree or firm with a team comprised of qualified experts with a demonstrated track record in Tanzania health supply chain systems, Health Management Information Systems and data management.
- Extensive experience with Tanzania health structures and systems including the MOH, PORALG and Health Management Teams

DEMONSTRATED PROJECT MANAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATIONS CAPABILITIES

- Demonstrated experience leading conducting and supporting similar projects
- Strong experience in managing projects of this scope and size, including meeting deadlines and managing risks
- Experience in planning and executing communications efforts in support of projects of this scope and size
- Be able to participate and lead in-person workshop(s)/meetings and conduct presentations
- Excellent verbal and written English and Swahili

PROPOSAL SUBMISSION AND TIMELINES

- All submissions should be sent to Ondo Baraka ondo.baraka@tz-ghsc.com copy to Peace Nyankojo at peace.nyankojo@tz-ghsc.com and James Bagoka at james.bagoka@tz-ghsc.com by 3 March, 2024 at 17:00 EAT.
- All quotes must be valid for a period of 60 calendar days.
- All proposals should be priced/quoted according to days and deliverables in Tanzania Shillings.
- The duration of the contract is 60 work days, and work is expected to start once the contract is signed by the contractor.
- All proposals should include a maximum of three past performance examples, with client contacts information (name, email, and phone number)

EVALUATION CRITERIA

Offerors will be evaluated based on experience working with Tanzania health systems, particularly health supply chains, the quality of the technical approach, and pricing.



National Institute for Medical Research director general Prof Said Aboud (L) and PharmAccess Country Director Dr Heri Marwa pictured in Dar es Salaam at the weekend exchanging documents shortly after signing of an MoU on collaboration in health research. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

Minister calls for protection of all Indian Ocean beaches

By Guardian Reporter

MINISTER of State in the Vice President's Office (Union and Environment) Dr Selemani Jafo has called for efforts to protect Tanzania's beaches along the Indian Ocean.

Dr Jafo made the call on Monday in Dar es Salaam when speaking on the importance of protecting Indian Ocean beaches by making them free from pollution.

"The beaches are often littered with garbage including used plastics which not only pollute the beaches but also present an eyesore for visitors," he said, assigning local government authorities the responsibility to ensure robust pollution control measures along the beaches.

He suggested that local government authorities explore ways to incentivize youth groups to collect plastic and other litter from beaches.

Last year, a group of young Tanzanian women collected one tonne of plastic waste along the Indian Ocean beach in Dar es Salaam to save the ocean from pollution.

Hellen Silas, chairperson of

Women in Recycling Foundation, led her fellows in collecting plastic waste at Kawe Beach along the Indian Ocean coastline.

"We are here today to do beach clean-up activities that we have organized together with other environmental organizations and volunteers across the country," she said.

Silas said the collection of plastic waste along the beaches will be carried out at least once every three months.

"The issue of dumping plastic wastes in the ocean will end if we continue raising awareness and changing people's mindset," she said.

Madina Kimaro, UNICEF youth advocate in climate action, said the aim of the event was to raise awareness on the importance of protecting the water ecosystems.

"Because the more we pollute the water ecosystems, the more lives of marine animals are in danger," she said.

According to Tanzania National Guidance for Plastic Pollution Hotspotting Report, 29,000 tonnes of plastics were released into the Indian Ocean, rivers and lakes in 2018.

NIMR to conduct research on NCDs, AI

By Carlos Banda

THE National Institute for Medical Research (NIMR) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with a non-governmental organisation to conduct research on Non-Communicable Disease (NCDs) and Artificial Intelligence (AI).

The parastatal organization under the Ministry of Health signed the MoU with PharmAccess Tanzania in Dar es Salaam on Monday.

Speaking after the signing ceremony, NIMR director general Prof Said Aboud said the partnership was a testimony of the institution's efforts to collaborate closely with other partners in the country.

"The expectation is to collaborate in areas of health research, capacity building, joint proposal writing so that we come up with research projects conducted together to influence policy change and decision-making," he said.

"We will work together to conduct research and disseminate findings through joint symposiums and conferences. By working together, we can fulfil the mandate of informing the government through the Ministry of Health on various diseases that affect communities in the country."

Prof Aboud said oftentimes MoU are signed but end up being stored in shelves instead of being implemented as was intended.

"Therefore, with this I have emphasized that it should not only be the signing of MoU but we will do justice by implementing what we have agreed on," he said.

He said that the agreement involves collaboration in researching NCDs and AI, noting that findings from any AI project will help contribute to policy change and improve quality of health services, adding that as other countries venture into the use of AI, Tanzania cannot

avoid the technology.

Dr Heri Marwa, PharmAccess Tanzania country director said the MoU will serve as a pivot for advancing research data and innovations that are crucial for the development of health sector in Tanzania.

"As an NGO we come up with different ideas and concepts. However, it's the government that should adopt and roll out changes throughout the country," he said.

To do that, it needs scientific evi-

dence that whatever it does can improve services provided to the people. "One of the challenges that we face as a country is that the studies done are not fully utilized by responsible authorities. With this partnership, we look forward to seeing that whatever is done is taken and used on the ground to ensure improvement of quality of services provided and work together in seeking solutions apart from conducting research."

Minister impressed by EA logistics centre pace

By Correspondent Joseph Mwendapole

THE Minister of State in the President's Office (Planning and Investment), Prof Kitila Mkumbo has said he is satisfied with the speed of construction of the East Africa Commercial and Logistics Centre (EACLC) which is expected to provide 15,000 direct and 65,000 temporary jobs upon completion.

Prof Mkumbo said this in Dar es Salaam yesterday when the Parliamentary Committee on Governance, Constitution and Legal Affairs visited the project site.

He said the committee witnessed and was satisfied with the speed of investment being made in the two major investment areas in Kigamboni and Ubungu in Dar es Salaam.

He said EACLC is a major investment project in East Africa whose investment amounts to approximately \$110 million (280bn/-).

The minister said when it is completed, the project will help stimulate the economy as many traders from East African countries will be coming to buy products in Tanzania.

Prof Mkumbo said the centre will expand opportunities for many Tanzanians whereby small traders known as Machinga will also have the opportunity to do business outside the building.

He said that in Kigamboni, witnessed the development of the Elsewedy Electric Industrial Complex electric cable production plant which expects to create 400 jobs, adding that 278 of people have already been employed.

Committee Chairman Dr Joseph Mhagama commended the government for creating a friendly environment for investments in the country that causes local and foreign investors to invest in various areas without restrictions.

He said the work of the committee is to advise the government and to check the state of investment in the country, adding that through the projects they witnessed, they believe that it will reduce the big problem of importing goods.

He said that currently the country has been buying more products from abroad than selling, a situation that causes the loss of a lot of foreign currency.

EACLC director Cathy Wang said that their company is building a strategic centre that will lead East Africa in trade of products from China as well as transportation of the same.

She said the centre will enable development of small businesses in the country and expand businesses within the larger African market.

Located at Ubungu area in Dar es Salaam, the centre is expected to be completed in July this year and will have a total of 220 shops.



Tanga Regional Medical Officer Dr Japhet Simeo (3rd-L) has a word at the Tanga Regional Referral Hospital (popularly known as Bombo) yesterday with members of Sema na Tanga group on a tour of Tanga city. Photo: Correspondent Oscar Assenga

Give graduates internship opportunity, employers urged

By Guardian Correspondent, Geita

THE Tanzania Private Sector Foundation (TPSF) has urged private sector companies to emulate the approach of Geita Gold Mining Limited (GGML) in providing internships and investing in youth.

Raphael Maganga, TPSF chief executive officer, made the remarks here at the weekend during a function to welcome 40 unemployed graduates from various colleges given the opportunity to receive on-the-job training at

GGML for a period of one year.

The function also involved 10 graduates from last year's training who were taking the next step in their careers at GGML, having been promoted to the Africa Business Unit (ABU) Graduate Programme—one of AGAs initiatives to accelerate graduates' career growth within the company.

Maganga also advised stakeholders of TPSF to continue to foster collaboration between employers and educational institutions as key to bridging Africa's mining skills gap.

He said the initiative wasn't just about providing opportunities but also about closing the skills gap in Tanzania and empowering youth for a better future. "By providing internships and other opportunities, we can bridge the gap between education and employment and ensure that our youth are equipped with the skills they need to succeed," he said.

Maganga said the rise of mining in Africa has led to a greater need for skills that are scarce on the continent, and this is not a Tanzanian issue, but a continental one.

He also said the industry's rapid growth over the past two decades has depleted the talent pool, exacerbated by an ageing workforce and the unpopularity of mining career due to challenging conditions.

"This talent shortage is particularly acute in countries such as Angola, Nigeria, Tanzania and Ghana. To address this, there's a need for improved training facilities and programmes with the private sector playing a crucial role in funding and shaping curricula to meet industry needs. Collaboration between industry

and educational institutions is key to closing Africa's mining skills gap," he said.

Terry Strong, GGML Senior Vice President - Africa (Business Unit) said the training programme will give unemployed graduates the opportunity to gain work experience that complement their studies and help them compete in the job market.

"With several successes achieved so far, GGML is committed to continuing the on-the-job training programme as an important recruitment tool," he said.

Central banks in southern Africa cautioned against cybercrimes

LUSAKA

CENTRAL banks in southern African countries have been urged to put in place measures to enhance cybersecurity and mitigate disruptions posed by the rise in cybersecurity crimes.

"A number of our member central banks have been affected by cyber incidents, and we equally have not been spared. We, therefore, need to closely collaborate in enhancing cybersecurity and developing resilience of all critical Information and Technology Communication systems to mitigate disruptions," Rekha Chifuwe Mhango, Bank of Zambia deputy governor in charge of administration said here on Monday.

The development and establishment of a well-researched and consultative cybersecurity supervision framework were vital for central banks' operations, she said at the opening of the 29th annual meeting of the Southern African Development Community Central Bank Governors Information Technology Communication meeting in Zambia's southern city of Livingstone on Monday.

The need for enhanced cy-

bersecurity was vital now that a number of central banks in the region were considering the introduction of central bank digital currencies, she said, adding that other entities regulated by central banks were fast innovating products that use various forms of crypto assets, hence the need for central banks to develop the capacity to effectively carry out their regulatory functions.



A number of our member central banks have been affected by cyber incidents, and we equally have not been spared. We, therefore, need to closely collaborate in enhancing cybersecurity and developing resilience



Dar es Salaam Special Zone Police Commander Jumanne Murilo briefs journalists yesterday on security-related incidents reported in the region at the weekend. Photo: Correspondent Imani Nathaniel

Gender bonds toolkit launched to advance equality

NAIROBI

FSD Africa, the FSD Network's gender collaborative programme, British International Investment (BII) and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) yesterday launched a gender bonds toolkit, a guide for advancing gender equality and climate action in African capital markets.

Launched in Nairobi, the toolkit aims to deepen the understanding of gender bonds and their potential to mobilize capital for women's

empowerment initiatives within the African capital markets context.

Parallele Finance, an investment research and consulting firm, served as author of the toolkit.

According to a report by UN Women and UNDP in 2022, sustainable bonds aligned with SDG 5, Achieving Gender Equality and empowering all women and girls, were still 1 percent of the US\$900 billion issued through green, social, sustainability, and sustainability-linked bonds.

The financing gap was even

more evident when gender finance was considered as a proportion of total global Assets Under Management (AUM) - making up not even 0.01 percent.

However, as of June 2023, global Assets Under Management for Use of Proceeds bonds dedicated to gender equality and women's empowerment reached USD 13.5 billion, underscoring the increasing significance of gender-focused investments.

Noting the potential, the gender bonds toolkit will play a crucial role in building a pipeline of

Gender Lens Investing (GLI) opportunities within African capital markets, promoting sustainable growth while providing clear guidance on how to incorporate gender metrics into businesses that address the slow progress of gender lens investing.

The toolkit will equip stakeholders with the necessary insights and strategies to foster inclusive and impactful investments, marking a significant step toward bridging gender gaps in the investment landscape.

Generally, gender-focused bond

issuances have been viewed as complex due to the lack of a 'go to' reference on the process and procedure.

This toolkit will champion the centralisation of efforts in mobilising gender smart capital, strategically addressing technical capacity gaps on both the demand and supply sides, with the aim of enhancing the effectiveness and inclusivity of financial initiatives aligning with the broader goals of the UN SDG 5: Achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls.

Speaking during the launch event, Mark Napier, Chief Executive Officer of FSD Africa said: "With the launch of the gender bonds toolkit, FSD Africa together with our partners are catalysing a seismic shift in African capital markets.

This initiative not only signifies our commitment to gender equality but serves as a powerful tool to mobilize capital, foster sustainable growth, and empower women across the continent."



Prime Minister Kassim Majaliwa, who is on a tour of Ruangwa District, pictured yesterday addressing a meeting in Chienjele ward shortly after inspecting a dispensary at Namakuku. Photo: PMO

China's envoy at UN calls for continued support for Somalia

NEW YORK

CHINA'S permanent representative to the UN, Zhang Jun, has called for continued international support for Somalia's efforts to achieve political stability, security transition, and economic and social reconstruction.

The attention and support of the UN and the international community for Somalia must not waver, as 2024 is critical for the country's political process, security transition and national reconstruction, Zhang said at a Security Council meeting on Somalia.

China supports all parties in Somalia in resolving their differences through dialogue and consultation and advancing the political transition, Zhang said on Monday.

"It should be noted that the choice of political system and development path is an internal affair of Somalia. The international community should adhere to the Somali-led and Somali-owned principle and avoid the imposition of an externally imposed governance model," he said.

In terms of Somalia's security transition, Zhang said the international community should support the Somali federal government in consolidating the achievements in counter-terrorism and stability maintenance in the previous phase.

It is necessary to support the Somali security sector in building its capacity to assume greater responsibility for security, he added.

There is also a need to support Somalia's economic and social reconstruction, Zhang said.

China welcomes the recent launch of the Centennial Vision 2060 by the Somali federal government to formulate key tasks for national development, said the envoy.

Shock as lion kills zookeeper at Nigeria's university

By Basilioh Rukanga

A ZOOKEEPER at a Nigerian university has been killed by one of the lions he had been looking after for close to a decade.

Olabode Olawuyi, who was in charge of the zoo at Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU), was attacked as he was feeding the lions, the

university said in a statement.

His colleagues were unable to save him as one of the lions had already fatally wounded him, the university added.

The lion has since been put down.

Olawuyi, a veterinary technologist, had been "taking care of the lions since

they were born on campus about nine years ago".

"But, tragically, the male lion killed the man who had been feeding them," the university's spokesman, Abiodun Olarewaju, said.

"We never knew what came over the male lion that it had to attack him," he added.

Nigerians on social media

have been sharing graphic images of the mauling at the university in Osun state in the south-west.

The university community was in mourning, and a delegation had gone to the family of Olawuyi to offer their condolences.

The university's vice-chancellor, Prof Adebayo Simeon Bamire, said he was

"saddened" by the incident and ordered a thorough investigation.

The students' union leader, Abbas Akinremi said that the attack was caused by "human error" after the zookeeper had forgotten to lock the door after feeding the lions.

He described the incident as unfortunate, while pay-

ing tribute to Olawuyi as a "good and humble man, who attended to us nicely whenever we went to the zoo".

Abba Gandu, who has been feeding lions for more than 50 years at a zoo in Kano in northern Nigeria, described Monday's incident as unfortunate and said more safety measures

were needed.

"This incident wouldn't in any way affect me personally as feeding lions is what I want to do until I die," said Gandu, who started feeding lions in 1971.

He added that his worst experience was when a baboon he was trying to feed bit his finger.

AfDB should not be all smiles in assessing these growth rates

ECONOMIC experts and African Development Bank Group (AfDB) officials appeared satisfied when the bank recently laid out a fairly rosy picture of Africa's macroeconomic performance and outlook (MEO) for this year.

According to the analysis, the continent will boast 11 of the world's 20 fastest-growing economies this year.

AfDB group president Dr Akinwumi Adesina led the presentation of the bank's latest MEO, which is published twice a year.

On the whole, Africa is seen as having better than average growth - which cultivates the feeling that things are already well or are getting better. It needs some scrutiny to notice hidden antinomies, though.

For one thing, when a non-initiated listener or reader hears that real gross domestic product (GDP) growth for the continent is overall expected to average 3.8 per cent and 4.2 per cent in 2024 and 2025, respectively, and that this is higher than the projected global averages of 2.9 per cent and 3.2 per cent, it's pretty easy to believe that all is well.

However, this indicator is helpful only in relation to where a country stands at the particular moment and what is implied in the percentage growth it is likely to achieve.

The data show how a country may change relative to where it is and not relative to other countries as the global comparison suggests.

Thus, even within the continent's growth panorama, the data or rather the growth percentages given are scarcely indicative of who is doing better but rather what country will change faster.

That leads to a paradox of sorts in the interpretation of the data, where the most chaotic states once they start restoring order and descend to more routine averages when things are cooler. The percentage cited is vital only in relation to how

performing an economy is at a particular moment, so Niger leads at a likely 11.2 per cent growth pace. It is unclear if the data include the ECOWAS (Economic Community of West African States) withdrawal spectre and its consequences.

The difficulty comes up when the report focuses on what is taking place in the continent and how that relates to growth. It was angled on the challenging global and regional economic environment, even as 15 African countries posted output expansions of more than 5 per cent. To this, larger pools of finances will be crucial.

This is the basic view, not to say paradigm, on Africa's growth. Some auxiliary policy interventions amount to little more than a freeing up of trading space, expediting investment permits - which most countries are doing already.

Given the challenges posed by global and regional risks, rising geopolitical tensions, increased regional conflicts and political instability, one sees cautious optimism which in fact is a combination of the trees that hide the forest. Africa's vast land is largely owned tribally, attracting small bank loans and singularly forbidding for those who would settle here from Europe and elsewhere, place large deposits, buy property and push growth.

AfDB is still stuck in the public resource transfers or aid mentality as well as really heavy investments. But without 10 per cent growth levels for ten years, poverty will remain in place and the growth we see just softens the burden of population growth, not much else.

Those moving up would help more people as too many people have no formal earning prospects, unlike in previous decades.

The story of East Asia was two-digit growth that took more than a decade to get people out of poverty.

LHRC's ideas on power woes good, greater clarity and punch needed

AFTER pondering the issue for decades, and in view of the governance alleys where public sector management of emergency power supply took the country, the Legal and Human Rights Centre (LHRC) has come up not with a formula but an appeal.

It says the government has to devise an immediate and permanent solution to end the on-going electricity shortage as the situation has a big impact on human rights and economic development.

Some of the agency's observations were by and large technical and have been raised earlier, especially in the past when the then-president questioned simultaneous maintenance of Kidatu and Mtera hydropower stations instead of sequencing that exercise. The LHRC is rediscovering this, if you will. Were it that the NGO puts its other skills to the matter as lawyers, they could mentally interrogate the state-owned power monopoly, the Tanzania Electric Supply Co. Ltd, over its irregular maintenance of power plants and possibly arrive at an answer based on reality.

There are efforts at the moment for the power firm, like many other entities, to balance books of account, pay taxes and hefty dividends to the government, etc.

Meanwhile, it is no secret that anyone in the corporate entity wishes it skipped both demands and was lined up for regular subsidies as development funds.

The advocates in the human rights entity, much like their colleagues in the diplomatic activist fraternity, definitely want solutions within the public sector and 'involving' the private sector.

They also ought to view the

power outages as induced in part by lack of competition as well as defective use of the public trust. It would also do well not leaving it to the firm to let the government explain what the problem is.

Before the LHRC leadership pursues an academic topic like the shortage of electricity and its relationship to human rights, it could have possibly moved better by focusing on a more engaging topic for lawyers. That would have possibly included seeking to know whether there are vested interests in power outages, if it is vendors of diesel generators or the power firm itself that are the "villains", etc.

It then could have examined government regulatory capacities as well as the dimension of representation - such as how far parliamentary committees can forestall or mitigate corporate misdeeds in the power of monopoly.

But one can be excused for bringing up old-fashioned radical analyses in common use before the human rights industry started to blossom.

Suggesting that power holders in corporate entities only work properly in a climate of fear or that when democracy prevails they take the government for granted may be true. The bottom line is the need to respect consumer expectations, needs and rights, the importance of which monopoly gone mad often stands to ignore or belittle.

There is definitely need to guard the peace in the energy sector, and making more private investors complement state-run firms in serving the people for better returns would be worth considering. Surely, healthy competition often works wonders.

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Postpartum haemorrhage: A plastic sheet can save 70,000 lives a year, here's how...

By Isabella Ochieng

IN the labour ward at the Malindi Sub-County Hospital, situated in the Kilifi county along the east coast of Kenya, necessity is the mother of invention.

For three years, my colleagues and I participated in an international study that evaluated a treatment approach called E-MOTIVE to help women who've just given birth from losing too much blood.

Bhekisisa previously reported that the package of care starts with measuring how much blood a new mother loses after giving birth using a "drape" - a plastic, funnel-like sheet that collects the blood into a volume-marked pouch. If this gets to 500ml, or if it gets up to 300ml and the woman's blood pressure is dropping or her heart rate is picking up, the nurse or midwife should start a bundle of five things to stop the bleeding.

This is where the acronym E-MOTIVE comes from: E is for early detection of blood loss, and then the other letters follow to remind health workers of five things that need to be done, in order.

Losing more than half a litre of blood or more in 24 hours after giving birth is called postpartum haemorrhage (PPH). It happens to 14 million women every year, with one dying every six minutes because of it, the World Health Organization (WHO) says - because of a range of contributing factors, one of which is that visual estimation of blood loss is known to be inaccurate.

Soon after learning how to implement the approach, we realised it's a lifesaver at our hospital. Being able to accurately measure blood loss helps with diagnosing PPH in time. The study showed that acting on the diagnosis reduced PPH, deaths or the need for surgery by 60%.

But when the trial ended, we stopped receiving the commodities that were needed to conduct the study. Not least were the imported blood-collecting drapes.

Keeping moms safe

So, my colleagues invented their own drape-like apron made from waterproof hospital mattress pads that we had on hand in our hospital and stitched by a local tailor, which funnels blood into a pan with calibrated markings.

Their makeshift solution shows how much they believe in this management approach. In fact, they had wholeheartedly embraced it even before the results of the trial of the WHO's first-response bundle for PPH were published.

The WHO has since also published new recommendations that set out standardised guidelines about what signs health workers should look for to identify PPH and how it should be treated, so that women everywhere get the same treatment - and can get more specialised care if needed. Further, the



A plastic sheet can prevent tens of thousands of women from dying after giving birth. (Photo: Pexels / Jonathan Borba)

WHO says a clear plan for making the approach work must be available, such as training health staff where they work and having all the needed supplies on hand.

While each individual component of the E-MOTIVE treatment previously had been studied and recommended for all women with PPH, the bundle approach - doing the five things as a set - had not been studied or recommended.

My role in the E-MOTIVE research project was to train colleagues in providing the care as a series and supervising them as they worked. Scepticism on the part of some, or resistance to doing things differently from before (for example, doing only one of the five things or choosing to refer the case to a doctor from the start), evaporated when we saw just how effective the bundle approach is when combined with early detection using the drapes.

Putting the approach into practice resulted in two or three new mothers every week experiencing excessive blood loss in our labour ward, instead of five or six as before.

The death of a mother has devastating consequences for her family and community.

Research shows that a newborn whose mother died before they were six months old, for example during childbirth, is five times more likely to die before they can become adults than those whose moms survive.

The loss of a mother has knock-on effects for children's nutrition

and education, and also affects things like gender equality - which all slows the world's progress in getting to a sustainable, healthy and prosperous future, as set out by the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

No more guesswork

But nurses, midwives and other health workers, as new mothers' caregivers, also suffer when a patient dies.

It's demoralising and draining to work tirelessly to keep women safe during childbirth yet still lose so many to a preventable condition such as PPH. Unlike patients who are clearly very ill, these young women often look well - they're breastfeeding, smiling and joking with staff and their families.

Then suddenly, in the next moment, they're in the throes of the life-threatening crisis of severe bleeding after birth. It's chilling and shocking.

Midwives like us, who have first-hand experience in implementing the bundle, also feel newly empowered. We no longer need to summon doctors in a panic when a woman is bleeding excessively. With the bundle, we can confidently and competently manage most cases of PPH, leaving doctors with more time to tend to other cases needing their expertise.

And because we learnt how to apply the approach along with nurses and doctors, a respectful sense of teamwork emerged. Doctors now

seem less likely to demand that we defend our clinical judgement and are less inclined to ask: "Why did you give tranexamic acid?"

In the past this may have been a valid question by a doctor. We know now that giving women this drug in time to stop heavy bleeding is a crucial step in the treatment bundle. While health facilities in Kenya may have this medicine on hand, it's usually bought and reserved for other purposes, like trauma cases, and not routinely used for management of PPH.

We know the bundle works - but only when it's started on time and all the supplies needed for it are available, including drapes and drugs like tranexamic acid. Hospital administrators and procurement officers need to be made aware of what the E-MOTIVE bundle can mean for keeping women safe during childbirth, as should health ministries, which have the power to update policy recommendations.

If all my colleagues are trained to implement the bundle and have all the necessary commodities, I think that my country could reduce severe PPH by even more than 60% - maybe as much as 80%. So too could your country - and that will be a big achievement to ensure a thriving future generation.

Isabella Ochieng, a nurse midwife and maternal and newborn health technical adviser for Jhpiego, worked on the E-MOTIVE trial.

Landmark acquittal in wildlife case: Ngoda freed after court overturns 22-year sentence

By Adonis Byemelwa

IN a groundbreaking development, the High Court of Tanzania Iringa Registry acquitted Maria Ngoda, who had been serving a 22-year prison sentence for the alleged possession of 12 pieces of antelope meat on November 3, 2023.

The Tanzania Women's Union (WU) played a crucial role in facilitating her appeal, leading to her release.

The ruling party's Women's Union, CCM Tanzania, led by Chairwoman Mary Chatanda and Secretary-General Jokate Mwegelo, successfully championed Ngoda's cause, bringing joy and relief to the women from Iringa.

The judgment day on February 16 marked the culmination of efforts by the CCM union, which filed an appeal on behalf of Maria Ngoda, emphasizing their commitment to advocating for the underprivileged.

The Tanganyika Law Society (TLS) in the Iringa Region actively supported the case, naming 10 lawyers involved in the appeal process.

TLS Chairman Moses Ambindwile provided a statement, acknowledging the lawyers' dedication and the importance of offering legal assistance to vulnerable individuals.

Ngoda's initial sentencing on November 3, 2023, by Resident Magistrate Said Mkasiwa, sparked widespread debate on the legality and appropriateness of the decision.

TLS Chairman Ambindwile highlighted the economic sabotage case number 28 of 2022, expressing concern over the severe sentence imposed on a widow with four children for possessing antelope meat val-

ued at 900,000/-.

The legal community, led by lawyers like Dr. Rwezaura Kaijage, Frank Ngafumika, Barnabas Nyalusi, Jane Massey, Samson Rutebuka, Joshua Chusi, Innocent Kibadu, and Cosmas Kishamawe, rallied behind Ngoda.

TLS, UWT, and human rights advocates collectively supported the appeal, questioning the adequacy of wildlife conservation laws and urging a fair and just legal system that considers the circumstances and human rights of the accused.

Prominent Tanzanian lawyer Method Kimomogoro raised systemic concerns, pointing out a longstanding issue of wildlife conservation laws being enacted without due consideration for the human rights of citizens in proximity to protected areas.

The debate over wildlife-related legalities extended to social media, drawing parallels between Ngoda's sentence for antelope meat and an American couple, Josh and Sarah Bowmar, who faced public outrage for hunting a Tanzanian crocodile.

While Ngoda's case raised questions about the legality of imprisoning a woman over antelope meat, the Bowmars were cleared by the Tanzania Wildlife Management Authority (TAWA) after an extensive investigation.

The controversy surrounding the Bowmars erupted when they shared images and videos of their trophy—a massive crocodile—leading to debates on the ethics of trophy hunting and its impact on wildlife conservation.

In response to public concerns, TAWA's statement clarified that the crocodile hunting incident involving the



Maria Emirio Ngoda, a widow, was sentenced to a 22-year prison term for possessing 12 pieces of antelope meat.

Bowmars adhered to both local and international laws governing trophy hunting. According to TAWA, hunting activities, including crocodile hunting, are regulated by the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES).

The statement assured the public that the hunt was conducted within the legal framework, with the crocodile exceeding the minimum length requirement and all necessary fees paid.

The Ngoda case and the Bowmars' acquittal underscore the complexities and debates surrounding

wildlife-related legal issues, prompting discussions on the perceived discrepancies in legal consequences for different wildlife-related activities.

As social media discussions intensified, comparisons between Ngoda's antelope meat case and the Bowmars' crocodile hunting incident sparked debates on the fairness and consistency of legal consequences.

Ngoda's imprisonment led many to question the legal system's priorities, especially in contrast to the Bowmars, who were deemed to have acted within the bounds of the law, shedding light on

the intricate intersection of legalities, public perception, and wildlife conservation.

Lawyer Frank Robert emphasized the legal aspect, noting that the applicable Section 86(2)(c)(ii), prescribes a fine three times the value of the contraband or imprisonment not exceeding 20 years when the value does not exceed Sh1 million.

The discrepancy between the punishment for wildlife-related offenses and other economic crimes sparked discussions about the proportionality of sentences.

The court proceedings involved various witnesses, including wildlife officers,

police officers, and village officials, who presented evidence related to the alleged offense.

Ngoda, in her defense, explained that she was apprehended with a plastic bucket in the mentioned location, claiming she encountered another woman initially.

However, after people expressed suspicion about the bucket's contents, Ngoda found herself accused of possessing the game meat.

The court heavily relied on a confession allegedly voluntarily made by Ngoda, where she admitted to being found with 12 pieces of antelope meat.

Judge Mkasiwa, in his judgment, stated that the defendant failed to cast doubt on the evidence presented by the prosecution, and the confession played a pivotal role in the decision.

The case has sparked a broader conversation about the balance between wildlife conservation efforts and respecting individual rights.

Lawyers, advocacy groups, and human rights activists have underscored the need for a legal system that considers the circumstances surrounding the accused and emphasizes the importance of fair and just legal proceedings.

As Tanzania reflects on this case, it serves as a reminder of the challenges in finding the right balance between conservation laws and individual rights, prompting a reevaluation of the adequacy and proportionality of wildlife-related sentences.

Maria Ngoda's acquittal stands as a testament to the power of advocacy and the ongoing dialogue surrounding the intersection of legal justice, conservation efforts, and human rights.

By Correspondent
Gaudensia Mngumi

TANZANIA has since 2013 adopted a number of reforms signifying the country's readiness to write a new constitution.

Former President Jakaya Kikwete spearheaded the reforms process, of which according to him aimed to produce a new country document to improve and make Tanzania even stronger and greater politically and democratically.

However, the constitution writing process has remained a nonstarter, although in a recent development, President Samia Suluhu Hassan, formed a task force to look into political reforms.

The task force proposed establishment of an independent electoral commission, whose amendment bill sailed through the National Assembly this January and awaits presidential assent to become a law.

As the election bills lie on the President's desk, some stakeholders have raised concerns that the bills look unconstitutional. The three bills passed in Parliament were President, Members of Parliament, and Councilors' elections Bill, 2023; the Bill for the Amendment of the Law on Political Parties, 2023; and the Bill for the National Election Commission, 2023.

The Constitution of Tanzania under Article 74 establishes the National Electoral Commission (NEC), in which its top brass—the chairperson, vice chair, director of elections and the commissioners are presidential appointments.

An advocate, James



Electoral reforms bill: Concerns as the document lies on the President's Desk

Marenga feels that the Bill for the National Election Commission, 2023 contravenes with the president's constitutional roles to appoint NEC officials. The bill states that there should be a recruitment committee responsible for nominating NEC commissioners, something which is not in the constitution.

In her oath of allegiance the president vows to support, honour, and be loyal to the constitution and its laws.

The independent advocate sees it as a test to the head of state, whose oath is about supporting and defending the constitution of the United Republic of Tanzania.

"Let us wait and see if the amended bills will be assented into laws because the constitution is the supreme law," says Marenga.

Former Igunga law marker, Dr Peter Kafumu (CCM) observes a number of vital democratic and electoral

issues that were brought before the National Assembly through the bills are fully embedded into the 1977 constitution; hence it is hard to work on them without touching the constitution.

The ex-Minerals Commissioner says that without addressing constitutional issues, it will be difficult to bring the desired democratic regime that politicians are pushing for.

Suzan Lyimo, a prominent politician and former

CHADEMA Member of Parliament (Special Seats), says stakeholders especially politicians from the opposition have great expectations on the Bill for the National Election Commission, 2023. However, she is worried that their expectations may not be met.

There are many things in the country's constitution that need to be revisited to ensure free, fair and credible elections such as Article 74 of the constitution 74

which says there will be an electoral commission and not an independent electoral commission, as stipulated in the particular bill.

"There is confusion on what is stated in the constitution and what is in the bill. Tanzanians want an independent electoral commission to supervise and manage elections. Returning officers shouldn't be local government offices or District Executive Directors (DED) where the president

is their paymaster," Lyimo told The Guardian.

Lyimo noted that the recruitment committee named in the bill involves Chief Justices of Mainland and Zanzibar who are presidential appointees.

The independent electoral commission that Tanzanians want should be formed by independent people such as religious leaders, politicians, members of civil organisations and the academicians, added Lyimo.

"The government should revive the constitution writing process since it is vital in upholding democracy and the rule of law. With the best constitution our elections will be free and fair with no riots that may result in deaths," she remarked, advising the President not to assent the bill into law.

Archbishop Victor Chisanga, of the World United Alliance Church in Tanzania (WUACTz) said amendment of the Bill for the Amendment of the Law on Political Parties, 2023; and the Bill for the National Election Commission, 2023 are likely ensure a free and fair election.

Prof Chisanga, a seasoned architect and former lecturer at Ardhi University in Dar es Salaam said that to ensure free and fair elections, the government should revive the constitution writing process as well as ensuring all citizens are given chances to provide opinions.

Commenting on the bill, former Director of the Legal and Human Rights Centre (LHRC) Dr Hellen Kijjo-Bisimba, said the passed bill does reflect what is in the constitution. The document has not created an environment that assures people of a free and fair election.

By Tommy Greene

FOR Gerard McCourt, there is a lot riding on this year's eel catch. He should be looking forward to casting his first lines of 2024.

However, the 42-year-old McCourt cuts a troubled figure as golden sunshine intermittently punctures the brooding, overcast skyline behind him.

"This year will tell a tale," he says, with a mix of desperation and agitation in his voice. He talks like a man running on fumes. Dressed in a diesel-flecked grey hoodie, and standing at a jetty along the northern shore of a vast lough ("lake" in Gaelic or Gaelige, the Irish language), he says that this season will be "make or break" for him and dozens of other fishermen.

Six generations of McCourt's family have fished for eels here in Lough Neagh, one of the largest freshwater lakes in north-western Europe. The 400sq km (154sq-mile) lough has been both a muse for Irish artists, poets, and storytellers and a source of deep pride for fishermen who have worked these waters for centuries.

McCourt's licence was handed down to him by his father - just like the 90 or so other fishermen at Lough Neagh. His boat, which he uses to work the waters at the lough's south-western end, is also passed down: "Wee Henry" was built by and named after his father. Although not particularly "wee" at around 8 metres (27 feet) long, the burnished black fibreglass vessel is a far cry from the timber rowing boats that lough fishermen used in decades gone by - when eels and other catch were more plentiful.

This is no longer the case. Dwindling numbers of eels compounded by an algal bloom that swept the water body last summer and autumn meant fishermen like McCourt "effectively had to write off" an entire season, he says.

But this drop in eel numbers and dramatic water quality deterioration did not come out of nowhere. In 1983, Lough Neagh's annual recruitment of juvenile eels (elvers) suddenly plummeted from 8 million to 726,000 - less than 10 percent of what it had been a year beforehand.

And the condition of Northern Ireland's waterways - many of which feed into the lough system - has been declining for years. In 2021, none of the region's rivers, lakes, transitional or coastal bodies could be classified as being in "good" health under European water quality legislation.

Even before last year's algal growths, an annual fishing industry report published in April 2023 revealed that the number of elvers "naturally recruited" - and not flown in from the Severn Estuary in England, which has increasingly been the case in recent years - to the lough system was down by approximately half of the previous year's figure.

This sharp decline in the eel population has also been happening across the rest of Europe. Although the main drivers remain a mystery, many point to climate change.

Adam Mellor, principal scientific officer for the Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute in Northern Ireland (AFBNI), said that many complex factors and variables have made it very difficult to pinpoint what is driving the species loss.

He says that despite a "really big body of knowledge" from the fishery itself and the scientists who are studying it, massive gaps in external knowledge are extremely hard to fill. "There's still a lot of assumption in there," he adds.

Also, the eels' breeding cycles, which involve lunar phases and migration to the Sargasso Sea in the Atlantic Ocean, are still not fully understood by scientists, despite recent discoveries.

McCourt speaks of "ecological grief" afflicting fishermen who have for years sensed the major decline in fish and wildlife numbers, which has been validated by recent studies. Growing



Gary McErlain, whose grandfather was prosecuted for trespassing when fishing the lough, is upset by the Earl of Shaftesbury's decision not to hand the water body back to the community without compensation

Disappearing eels and fight for centuries-old livelihood

concerns over continued loss of income and the future viability of commercial fishing at Lough Neagh are only making matters worse, he says.

In 2023, McCourt says, he managed just three weeks in the water during a season that runs from early May to "around Halloween" or the end of October. "I'd definitely have to give up if there isn't a good catch this May," he says. "Financially, we couldn't take another battering like the one we took last year."

A further collapse in the eel numbers at Lough Neagh could effectively signal the end of commercial fishing at the water body, McCourt adds, given the premium they are sold at when compared with other available fish.

The eels caught in Lough Neagh are almost entirely exported for consumers in London and the Netherlands. Other kinds of fish, which have fared better amid worsening water quality levels at the lough and its tributaries, are not sufficiently valuable to sustain industrial activity. And some species of these "scale fish", like the pollan (freshwater herring), are considered vulnerable and are heavily protected.

"The scale fish are harder," McCourt explains. "They seem to manage better in dirty water. But it's only a matter of time with the scale fishing, too."

This is partly because it's nowhere as lucrative as eel fishing. "If you went out today and came back with eight stone (51kg) of eels, that's a good catch and you'd be well paid," McCourt says. Still "you'd need four days a week minimum to make it work financially" - that's around 800 British pounds \$1,000 per crewperson for the week, including bonuses paid later in the year. At least two people are needed for each fishing boat.

"But with pollan, roach, perch, anything like that, you would need 100 stone (635kg)," McCourt explains, adding that "you would need massive volumes to make it pay".

The year 2012 was the last one when McCourt recalls making a profit.

History of struggle

The economic landscape has been increasingly difficult for fisheries in the United Kingdom and the nearby Republic of Ireland in recent decades - whether at freshwater inland bodies or at sea. But those working at Lough

Neagh in Northern Ireland in the UK face another, more pressing, challenge.

For centuries, a bitter dispute played out over public access, denying locals the ability to work the water body. The core issue is ownership: The lough waters are publicly owned, much of the surrounding land is privately held, and the non-water elements of the lough belong to an aristocratic estate. The estate has also claimed ownership of the waters in previous decades and this legacy of disputes has coloured many continuing disagreements.

After a lengthy civil case that contested a Dutch-British consortium's claim to exclusive fishing rights on the water body, the Lough Neagh Fishermen's Co-operative - now Europe's largest remaining wild eel fishery - was formed in 1965 to represent the interests of local fishermen and oversee the lough's fishing rights, which it acquired from the company in the early 1970s. But to this day, rent is still paid to the Earl of Shaftesbury's estate for the right to fish.

The grip of private interests on the lough's fishing communities continues to be felt keenly by Gary McErlain, who speaks to me by the shores of Traad, a small peninsula along the lough's northwest corner. Unfurling a traditional long and bag-shaped fishing net, he says he feels wounded by the recently declared stance of Earl Nicolas Ashley-Cooper that he would not consider gifting the lough to the community.

The Shaftesbury Estate also receives royalty fees for industrial sand extraction, which is scarring the lough bed and creating "dead zones" for fish, according to the fishermen.

McErlain, 49, is one of a number of practising fishermen whose families were disenfranchised by the absentee landlord's territorial claim, which dates back to the Plantation of Ulster in the early 1600s. His grandfather was "criminalised", McErlain says, for trying to "make a living on Lough Neagh doing what their family had done before them".

For decades, fishermen had their lines confiscated and their boats rammed by bailiffs acting for the consortium. McErlain's grandfather was one of many prosecuted for trespassing. Court-houses in many of the market towns right around Lough Neagh were termed "fishermen's courts" because there were so many fish-

ermen that went through them", McErlain explains, stressing "that was the scale of it."

Even with the transfer of fishing rights, those convictions - likely hundreds of them - have never been overturned.

Dying way of life?

Today, fishing families around the lough still say that eel fishing and the water body itself is "in the blood".

But they feel their concerns have been largely unheard or ignored by politicians and authorities. Alongside their current economic woes, fishermen feel longer-term planning for the industry's survival has not been adequate.

With the return of Northern Ireland's devolved government earlier this month, following a two-year hiatus of its power-sharing arrangements, there is considerable pressure on political leaders to address Lough Neagh's devastated condition. A departmental report with 113 recommendations on how to "save" the water body is expected in the coming weeks.

Lough Neagh fishermen are not optimistic, however, after what McErlain describes as a "non-existent" government response to 2023's algae crisis. McCourt agrees, adding that "nothing is really being done on the ground".

John Spence, a retired researcher specialising in aquatic systems management, says there have been some "welcome" noises and recent moves from politicians starting to grapple with Lough Neagh's many problems. One proposal: Establish a cross-departmental body and a new management structure to protect the lough.

But he believes that "no substantive progress" has been made to date and that the inefficacy of Northern Ireland's devolved administration means expert oversight will be required from other jurisdictions.

"It's going to take a long time before they get to grips with what the real structural issues are," he says. "The situation needs outside observation. Unfortunately, the current Westminster government doesn't seem prepared to play that role."

"One logical way of addressing all of this would be to involve the Irish government in water management since Lough Neagh and other major water bodies in the North are transboundary. This was contemplated in the 1998

Good Friday Agreement signed by the UK and the Republic of Ireland, but hasn't yet been implemented."

Meanwhile, many fishermen at the lough have been forced to double-job or give up altogether.

McCourt and McErlain now supplement their incomes to remain afloat. But some of the lough's outspoken former eel fishermen, like 53-year-old Declan Coney, say worsening conditions - which led his father and fishing partner to "walk away from the lough" - are forcing them to quit, as Coney did in 2000.

At times appearing wary and diffident, Coney clearly expresses his love of the lough's wildlife when he speaks, often trailing off into detailed descriptions of wildfowl such as bittern, which are now extinct at Lough Neagh. Even when he talks about the job's low-paying off-season work, straining to meet catch quotas in the cold darkness, and hunting for worms in nearby fields, a fondness for his former livelihood creases his worn face.

But Coney's nostalgia is tempered with a deep disappointment at a perceived lack of support from the co-op and government. "Growing up," he says, "it was like, 'I want to be a fisherman.' And then when you got that opportunity, it was like, 'Great. I've made it - I've reached my goal.' And then it was so frustrating feeling like there was no one there to help you."

Coney says the progressive decline of the lough's fishing industry since the 1980s has unravelled the ties that bind the shoreline's tight-knit communities together. Soon, he says, the only evidence of Lough Neagh's fishing industry will be "nothing more than an artefact" in a museum.

Recruitment is increasingly a problem, he added, with the vast majority of Lough Neagh fishermen above the age of 40. "There are no jobs to keep young people by the lough shore. And so all that local knowledge is being lost - there's no one for fishermen to pass it onto now."

Future survival

Researchers say it is too early to know the full ecological impacts of last year's algal bloom. But, facing the prospect of sectoral collapse, fishermen at the lough say they do not have time on their side.

There has been no coordinated campaign group advocating for

the compensation of lost earnings among Lough Neagh fishermen. And no estimate has been put on what that potential bill could amount to.

But fishermen are exploring avenues of legal redress, according to Enda McGarrity, a solicitor from PA Duffy & Co. The local outfit's founder Paddy Duffy "was instrumental in setting up the Lough Neagh Fishermen's Co-operative in the 1960s with the intention of protecting the livelihoods of fishermen in the area," he explained.

McCarrity said the firm has been "instructed to explore legal remedies in relation to the current pollution issues in Lough Neagh" in tandem with the fishermen. A number of cases are expected to be filed over the coming months.

Meanwhile, some believe a year or two of fishing inactivity, alongside a moratorium across other forms of commercial activity, may hold the key to restoring fish stocks.

However, AFBNI researchers tell Al Jazeera that ecosystem modelling work - field-based data maps that provide an evidence base for future policy - would be needed before taking such drastic action. These models can take many months and sometimes years to produce.

"What we're discovering is that, if somebody were to, say, stop fishing for three years, we don't necessarily have a good enough understanding of what the response would be," Mellor says.

His colleague, Kevin Gallagher, points out that a complete cessation of fishing activity could have unintended negative consequences on the lough system. For example, it could allow invasive fish species numbers to multiply and become unmanageable.

"If you don't control the invasive, you don't know what kinds of impacts there could be on the conservation species - the pollen and trout. So it could have adverse knock-on effects."

"Stopping a fishery is obviously going to help whatever fish are being targeted," Mellor says, adding that there's no clear picture of how that balances out. "The social and economic impacts of closing a fishery, even temporarily, would also need to be weighed against any scientific evidence base to suggest such a decision is worth considering."

AFBNI scientists say that a fundamental shift in land management practices alongside targeted actions on the lough's waters are key to safeguarding the fishery's future.

"Fishing isn't causing the problem," Gallagher says. "Sand extraction is to a degree." He also cites some farmers' excess use of fertiliser.

Mellor also points to non-agricultural challenges. "There are more than twice the UK average of septic tanks in that catchment", he says, with many unlikely to be serviced every year or have their outputs checked regularly.

He warns that locals may also have to adjust their expectations about what kind of recovery can be achieved at Lough Neagh. "Fundamentally, we have to recognise that we won't be going back to a baseline that we had five, 20 or 30 years ago," he says. "We can't change locally the effects of a changing climate."

However, he adds, "we can manage some aspects" like fisheries, nutrient inputs, and extraction activity.

Timelines on the lough's recovery are being set at decades - ranging from 20 to 40 years, depending on different kinds of estimations and metrics.

But, for McErlain and others like him who still work the lough's mythical waters, these questions are not academic. Their livelihoods, he says, depend on stronger data, robust environmental governance and a just financial settlement for fishermen.

Phasing out of fossil fuels: An imperative for climate justice

YAOUNDE

CLIMATE change made 2023 the warmest year on record. As urgency mounts to address this worldwide crisis, phasing out the use of fossil fuels is a necessary step that all nations must take. This is because fossil fuels—coal, oil and gas—are the primary drivers of the climate crisis accounting for over 75% of global greenhouse gas emissions and nearly 90% of all carbon dioxide emissions.

Fossil fuels can be linked to severe human rights harm. According to the International Energy Agency, there cannot be any new fossil fuel projects if countries are to meet existing climate targets and avoid the worst consequences for frontline communities. Not addressing these issues can create a human rights crisis of unprecedented scale.

Another ethical imperative for phasing out from fossil fuels is our responsibility to communities facing loss and damage. Fossil fuel projects and infrastructure often expose fence line and frontline communities to toxic substances, environmental degradation, and increased vulnerability to climate disasters.

Africa has contributed the least to climate change but still suffers the most from its consequences. Since rich countries have historically emitted the most greenhouse gases, the goal of transitioning to renewable energy sources is an act of responsibility and justice, providing support to those most in need.

Fossil fuel extraction and production often violate the rights of indigenous peoples, local communities, and environmental defenders, who face land grabbing, displacement, violence, intimidation, and criminalization. This must change.

When we look at the African continent, the current increase in investment in fossil fuels will increase Africa's carbon emissions and raise Africa's share of global climate change.

In 2021, Africa contributed 3.9% (1.45 billion tonnes of CO₂ eq.) of global carbon dioxide emissions from fossil fuels and industry. Continuing with this energy policy would be very suicidal for their future in the face of the consequences of climate change.

There is also an economic impact of fossil fuel production too, especially in Africa. Fossil fuel subsidies and investments divert resources from addressing the needs and rights of people living in poverty.

It is well known that Africa has contributed the least to climate change but still suffers the most from its consequences. Since rich countries have historically emitted the most greenhouse gases, the goal of transitioning to renewable energy sources is an act of responsibility and justice, providing support to those most in need.

Fossil fuel extraction leads to deforestation, habitat destruction, and water pollution, which have contributed to 1.2 million deaths in 2020, leading to biodiversity loss and ecosystem degradation.

In the DRC for instance, if the peatland is destroyed by the construction of roads, pipelines and other infrastructure needed to extract the oil, up to 6 billion tonnes of CO₂ could be released, which is the equivalent of 14 years' worth of current UK greenhouse gas emissions.

Through a transition to renewable energies such as wind power and solar energy, we can take control of the effects of climate change and support future generation's sustainability moving forward.

Africa has huge renewable energy potential - it has 60% of the world's best solar resources, but the continent receives less than 3% of global energy investment.

As a region that has had the smallest impact on the climate crisis but suffers significant impacts now and in the future, the international community must work with Africa to invest in its clean energy future.

For instance, Kenya is home to the Lake Turkana Wind Project, currently the largest wind farm in Africa. Output exceeds 310 MW—enough to power 1 million homes.

The project also attracted the largest private investment in Kenya's history, amounting to US\$650 million. For Africa to achieve its energy and climate goals, Africa needs \$190 billion of investment a year between 2026 to 2030, with two-thirds of this going to clean energy.

Fortunately, some progress has been made toward ending use of fossil fuels on a global scale. During the recent COP28 in Dubai, nearly 130 nations approved a roadmap for "transitioning away from fossil fuels"—a first for a UN climate conference—but the deal still stopped short of a long-demanded call for a "phaseout" of oil, coal, and gas.



Africa has huge renewable energy potential - it has 60% of the world's best solar resources, but the continent receives less than 3% of global energy investment.

AI expert warns of 'digital colonisation' facing Africa



UN Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed (R) interacts with Sophia the robot at the "The Future of Everything - Sustainable Development in the Age of Rapid Technological Change" meeting.

United Nations

ARTIFICIAL intelligence (AI) is ripe to help resolve certain major problems in Africa, from farming to the health sector, but Senegalese expert Seydina Moussa Ndiaye is warning of a new "colonization" of the continent by this new technology if foreign companies continue to feed on African data without involving local actors.

One of 38 members of the new UN advisory body on machine learning, Mr. Ndiaye spoke with UN News

By Danai Kupemba, Cape Town

A "nauseating" stench engulfing the South African city of Cape Town comes from a ship docked in the port carrying 19,000 cows, local officials say.

"It was the worst stench I have ever come across in my life," Lerato Bashing, a 29-year-old Cape Town resident said.

The smell has been traced to the Al Kuwait ship which has been anchored in Cape Town since Sunday evening.

The City of Cape Town said on X the issue of the smell was being handled.

The city's official in charge of water and sanitation, Zahid Badroodien, said the ship was due to leave on Monday night.

The Al Kuwait is heading to Iraq from Brazil. It stopped in Cape Town to get feed for the cattle, according to anti-animal cruelty organisation, NSPCA.

Its agents boarded the ship to assess the condition of the ship and said in a statement: "This smell is indicative of the awful conditions the animals endure, having already spent 2½ weeks on board, with a build-up of faeces and ammonia."

"It ruined my day because

about the landscape ahead, building on his experience in helping to drive Senegal's digital transformation in higher education, serving as an expert to the African Union in drafting the Pan-African Strategy on AI and in contributing to the Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence (GPAI).

How could AI help Africa?

There are several African countries that are beginning to have a dedicated strategy for artificial intelligence. However, there is a pan-African strategy that will soon be published, with a continental vision of

AI development.

More and more, young people launching startups are interested in this, and they have a real thirst for knowledge in the field of AI. This growing interest can be accelerated with international help.

However, there is a wall in some areas, and AI can in fact be used to solve certain problems, including in agriculture. In the health sector, AI could solve a lot of problems, especially the problem of a lack of personnel.

The other element that is also very important is the development of cultural

identity. Africa has been seen as a continent with a cultural identity that has not been able to impose itself across the world. With the development of AI, we could use this channel so that African cultural identities are better known and better valued.

Are there bad sides of AI threatening Africa?

The biggest threat is colonization. We may end up with large multinationals in AI that will impose their solutions throughout the continent, leaving no room for creating local solutions.

Most of the data currently generated in Africa

is owned by multinationals whose infrastructure is developed outside the continent, where most African AI experts also operate. It's a loss of African talent.

The other important element to consider is in the context of the fourth industrial revolution. The power of AI combined with advances in biotechnology or technology could be used, and Africa could be the place where all these new solutions are actually being tested.

If it's not supervised, we could end up with tests that would take place on humans with chips or even integrated biotechnology elements that we improve. These are technologies that we don't really master well.

In regulatory terms, there are certain aspects that have not been considered. The very framework for the application of ideas and existing regulations is not effective.

In concrete terms, and when you don't control these things, it could happen without anyone knowing. We could have Africa being used as a guinea pig to test new solutions, and this could be a great, great threat for the continent.

Do you think that the UN's new AI advisory group is going to be a platform that will allow you to put these problems on the table?

Yes, absolutely. We've started our work, and it's really very open. These are high-level people who understand international issues well, and there are no taboo subjects.

It's important that the voice of Africa is represented in the group. International scientific cooperation will be strengthened and not limited to the major powers. At the international level, it includes everyone and also helps the least developed countries.

Currently, there is a real gap, and if this is not resolved, we risk increasing inequalities.



Cape Town smell blamed on cattle ship docked in South African city

even when I was indoors, every time the lift opened, the smell spilled over into the office and it stuck in the back of my throat like a bad aftertaste," Bashing said.

Another resident, who works near the harbour, said that the smell was "overwhelming" and they were forced to close their

car windows, despite it being a hot day.

"It smelled as bad as one you'd imagine and I was put off of breathing," they said.

However, residents say the stink has not reached the other side of Table Mountain or the southern suburbs.

While residents in the port city were greatly affected, many wondered how the crew were faring as they had spent about two weeks with the cattle.

"I feel sorry for the workers on that carrier who have to be around that every day and for the animals," Bashing said.

The NSPCA took the moment to reiterate "its firm stance against the live export of animals by sea".

The group launched a campaign in 2019 to stop the practice.

The NSPCA says this method of trade causes "pain, suffering and distress to many animals".

Importance of integrating intercultural education into learning, teaching practice



By Telesphor Magobe

INTERCULTURAL (multicultural) education is an approach to learning-teaching that promotes the coexistence of cultural pluralism, interdependence, cross-cultural dialogue and responsible global citizenship.

It focuses on two points. 1) It is an approach to teaching/learning that respects and recognises human diversity. 2) It promotes equality and human rights and challenges discrimination against other people on the basis of gender, race, age, religion, language, political opinion, disability, health status, custom, ethnic origin, rural or urban

background, birth, socioeconomic status, being a refugee or any other status.

Alvino Fantini from the USA's School for International Training, commenting on a book entitled "From Principles to Practice in Education for Intercultural Citizenship" says intercultural education offers educators an approach to developing 'intercultural citizenship'.

He further says intercultural education shows ways in which teachers and learners can cooperate to develop openness and willingness to learn about others and to resolve conflicts peacefully. "The world today desperately needs more citizens competent to do just this," he says.

We live in a world which challenges us to respect others and be open to them because of who they are and not because of our stereotypes. We are all equal in human dignity and each one of us counts.

Pope Francis in his Encyclical Letter 'Fratelli Tutti' (2020) speaks of human fraternity and social friendship. He says by acknowledging the dignity of each person, we can contribute to the rebirth of a universal aspiration to fraternity between all men and women.

"We need a community that supports and helps us, in which we can help one another to keep looking ahead. How important it is to dream together... Let us dream, then, as a

single human family, as fellow travellers sharing the same flesh, as children of the same earth which is our common home, each of us bringing the richness of his or her beliefs and convictions, each of us with his or her own voice, brothers and sisters all."

We are aware of xenophobic attitudes and their consequences. Some authors who have written on xenophobia like Mogeke (2005) suggest that xenophobes presumably do not have adequate information about the people they hate and, since they do not know how to deal with them, they see them as a threat.

Xenophobes resort to acts of violence against the people they perceive

as foreigners or strangers, some of who may be even their relatives, friends and colleagues. Each person is somehow 'xenophobic' in nature, but we only differ in the way we react when we feel threatened by the people we perceive as threats to us.

Hussein Solomon and Hitomi Kosaka in their article entitled "Xenophobia in South Africa: Reflections, Narratives and Recommendations" published in a journal "Southern African Peace and Security Studies (Volume 2)" suggest that xenophobia is embodied in discriminatory attitudes and behaviour, and often culminates in violence, abuse and hatred. They say its manifestation under-

mines social cohesion, peaceful co-existence, and good governance, and constitutes a violation of human rights.

Xenophobia may emerge where people scramble for scarce resources and job opportunities since it is often in situations like this that people easily turn against each other as a survival mechanism.

Ballyn in an article entitled "Lives in migration: Rupture and continuity" published in 2011 argues that people may flee their home countries to foreign countries in search of greener pastures or because of other reasons, including running away from social unrest, political violence, persecution and so on.

Yet, while in foreign countries there too they are subjected to heinous acts as migrants. The author further argues that natives often find it difficult to cope with foreigners, who migrate in search of greener pastures, and willing to accept lower remuneration for their labour and services, thereby leading to job losses for the natives.

"This often sparks a frosty relationship between the natives and the immigrants, leading to xenophobic attacks as a medium of communicating their discomfort and disapproval against foreigners."

The author says although borders between countries are increasingly becoming loosened and multiculturalism is taking the centre stage of global human interactions, ethnic and identity consciousness exacerbated by xenophobia still define the basis of such cross-border and global human interactions.

This shouldn't be the case. A feasible solution has to be sought to counter this social

phenomenon for it tends to be self-defeating. But through intercultural education learners are exposed to cultural pluralism, engage in cross-cultural dialogue and are encouraged to become responsible global citizens.

A discussion paper called "International Migration, Racism, Discrimination and Xenophobia" published in 2011 suggests that addressing the reality of increased diversity means finding political, legal, social and economic mechanisms to ensure mutual respect and mediate relations across differences.

Where intercultural education is practised children grow up seeing each other as different, but equal in dignity and interdependent and so they cannot easily turn against each other. Where it is not practised we are likely to expect acts of violence against foreigners as natives often regard them as a threat to them as they are thought of taking jobs for natives, businesses and land.

In trading markets which promote free movement of people, goods and services it doesn't make sense to see others as a threat. Tanzania is a party to the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), whose one of its general objectives is to create a single market for goods, services, facilitated by movement of persons in order to deepen the economic integration of the African continent and in accordance with the Pan African Vision of "an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa" enshrined in Agenda 2063. So, the coexistence of cultural diversity is a practice that is becoming more and more relevant in the 21st century.

By Azubuike Ishiekwene

I was going through some old files in my closet the other day when I saw some documents and receipts that absolutely cracked me up. Among the browning, time-worn papers was the receipt from a private primary school for the payment of my first daughter's fees.

It was a middle-class school that charged N5,000 (\$228 at 1995 exchange rates, \$3.28 today) per term. Attached to the fading receipt was a thank you note by the bursar. I rocked with laughter. This was in 1995 when, after nearly seven years of working, my monthly salary was around N60,000 or so. I will not forget how my mother reacted when she found out how much I was paying for her granddaughter's termly fees. "Did your university tuition cost that much?" she asked despairingly.

Of course, it did, but not by a lot. As I held that rusty receipt in my hand on that day, the shock and despair in my mother's face about how prices had gone up and how things had changed, for the worse, flooded my mind.

Yet, within three decades of my mother showing concern, the joke was on me. But this time, it was no longer a laughing matter.

I had somehow managed to find out how much my daughter was paying for my granddaughter's school fees in a school certainly more upscale than the one she attended, but by my reckoning, unlikely to be among the A-List schools in her part of town.

What she was paying for my granddaughter's kindergarten per term was roughly 10 times my 1995 salary after seven years of working. I couldn't help wondering what my mother would have said or done if she had lived to see the school fees of her great-granddaughter, a kid enrolled barely out of her diapers. And this was only three years



Nigeria is facing an inflation crisis, cashew nuts are now unaffordable

ago.

Many things in the old files in my closet reminded me of how the times are changing. When I think of Victor Olaiya's famous highlife song, *Ilu le o!* (literally meaning, Country hard!), released over 40 years ago and which was supposed to have captured the misery of men and women complaining about the hard times, I wonder exactly what the moaning was about.

Nut for the rich

A few days ago, I had a conversation with my local cashew seller. I had been buying cashew nuts from her since when a bottle cost N800, which was not up to four years ago. Slowly, but steadily, the price climbed to N1,000, then N1,200, then N1,500, and before you could say "cashew", it became N4,000 per bottle - roughly the cost of the fee for one term at my daughter's school

in the late 1990s.

How do you buy a bottle of nuts for N4,000? Perhaps because I drive a big car - which is a tokumbo, by the way - the nut seller thought she had me hooked; that I should be able to afford the nut, whatever the price. Well, she was mistaken, and I told her so. Of course, she pleaded that it was not her fault, which it was - you guessed right - the exchange rate. Dollar or

not, I won't buy cashew nuts now priced as luxury items.

Of course, I know about the fibre, protein and healthy fats that come from cashew nuts, not to mention blood sugar control, heart health and weight loss. But at 72.5kg and with the gift of a stature that can eat both pounded yam and mortar without their showing, why should I lose sleep over weight? Whatever cashew nuts offer, especially in fibre, I

will get from sweet potatoes.

But cashew nuts are not the whole story of this cost-of-living crisis. Even potatoes have doubled in price. According to a BBC report, prices in Nigeria are rising at their fastest rates ever in 30 years.

This was how the BBC report described it: "A standard 50kg bag of rice, which could help feed a household of between eight and 10 for about a month, now costs N77,000," - about double the price last December. The prices of other staples such as beans, garri, maize and millet have also gone up, costing the average worker two months' minimum wage for a bag.

Portion control

Portion control was a frequent point of argument in my house. It's a problem with men, of course; but it's worse with African women brought up to believe that the proof of spousal care is in the husband's weight, measured by the amount of food on his plate. It's considered a taboo in many places, especially in the south of Nigeria, for example, for a man's plate of soup to have only one piece of meat or fish.

This well-intended culture of culinary excess is captured in Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, where the story is told of a wealthy man who gave a feast at which guests on one side of the table did not see those on the other side from morning until night, when they managed to level the mountain of food set before them during the new yam festival.

If, however, Okonkwo's guests were living in today's Nigeria, where a sachet of water in a 50cl plastic bag costs N20, more than twice the price last year, they would be lucky to find enough water to drink after a meal of *afafata*, chaff of rice grain, which is now a staple in parts of northern Nigeria.

BUSINESS

DSE indices gain at week's start with 1.5bn/- turnover

By Guardian Reporter

THE Dar es Salaam Stock Exchange (DSE) share indices opened the week in green, with local investors exchanging hands shares valued 1.5mn/- following the transactions of 1.08 million shares traded in 74 deals.

The market report shows the Tanzania Share Index (TSI), which measures the performance of locally listed companies closed at 4,403.07 points on Monday, an increase of 13.14 points, when compared with Friday's close.

The DSE All Share Index (DSEI) also gained by 4.25 points, after closing at 1,771.43 points on Monday.

According to the daily market report, the gaining of the share indices was mainly caused by the appreciation of Tanzania Portland Cement Company Limited (TPCC) share price, after closing at 4,540/- on Monday, an increase of 4.61 percent, compared to 4,340/- recorded on Friday's close.

The appreciation of the TPCC share price also resulted into the gaining of the Industrial & Allied Index (IA), after closing at 5,231.17 points on Monday, an increase of 31.66 points.

The report shows there were two block pre-arranged market board deals, involving the Tanzania Breweries Limited (TBL) and TOL Gasses Limited (TOL) counters.

TBL, the largest listed company traded a block of 156,566 shares valued 939.39mn/- in one deal while TOL counter traded a block of 902,170 shares valued 595.4mn/- in one deal.

TPCC counter recorded a trading of 11,310 shares valued 51.3mn/- traded at a price ranging from 4,360/- to 4,680/- shares in four deals.

Other active counter was CRDB Bank, which traded 3,225 shares valued 1.6mn/- traded at a price ranging from 500/- and 510/- per share in 20 deals as well as NMB Bank, which recorded the transaction of 1,420 shares valued 6.6mn/- traded at a price ranging from 4,660/- to 4,700/- per share in 14 deals.

NICO counter also opened the week active; following the transaction of 4,400 shares valued 2.5mn/- traded at a weighted average price of 575/- per share in 12 deals, as well as self-listed DSE, which recorded the transaction of 865 shares valued 1.57mn/- traded at a price ranging from 1,820/- to 1,840/- per share in five deals.

Other active counters were Vodacom, which transacted 1,232 shares valued 0.9mn/- traded at a discounted price of 740/- per share in three deals, TICL counter, which transacted 1,480 shares valued 0.3mn/- traded in seven deals.

The report shows local investors dominated the market activity after accounting for 100 percent of both buying and selling activity.

On weekly basis, the reports show, trading declined by 54.48 percent to a total transaction value of 3.35bn/- compared to 7.3bn/- recorded during the previous week.

TBL emerged as the major player, leading with 39.99 percent of all activities, primarily fueled by block trades executed on Monday, Tuesday, and Friday.



Kumar replaces Alexander as Air France-KLM TZ country manager

By Guardian Reporter

AIR France-KLM has yesterday announced the appointment of Rajat Kumar as the new Country Manager for Tanzania effective February 2024.

A statement issued yesterday by the carrier, indicated that Kumar replaces Alexander van de Wint, who has been in the role since 2018.

With an extensive background in aviation management, Rajat brings a wealth of experience and expertise to his new role, having previously served in various leadership positions within the Air France-KLM group.

Prior to his appointment in Tanzania, he served as the Country Manager for Kuwait, Qatar, and Iran and that Kumar led the successful operations of Air France-KLM to Doha, Qatar during the FIFA World Cup of 2022.

"Rajat's association with the Air France-KLM group since May 1996, when he joined KLM as a Sales Executive in New Delhi," Said Marius van der Ham, Air France KLM Regional General manager for East and Southern Africa.

Adding that: "During his close to 27-year tenure with the group, he has demonstrated exceptional leadership and strategic vision, contributing

significantly to the airline's growth and market leadership in the region."

He said, in his new role as Country Manager of Air France Tanzania, Rajat will be responsible for driving the group's business objectives, enhancing customer engagement, and strengthening the airline's position in the Tanzanian market.

"We are delighted to welcome Rajat as the new Country Manager of Air France Tanzania. His extensive experience and strategic leadership will be instrumental in driving our business forward and delivering exceptional value to our customers in Tanzania," he maintained.

For his part, Rajat expressed his enthusiasm for his new role saying he is excited to lead company's operations in Tanzania, and he look forward to working closely with all the key stakeholders to further strengthen their presence in the market and deliver the unparalleled travel experience of their brands to their customers.

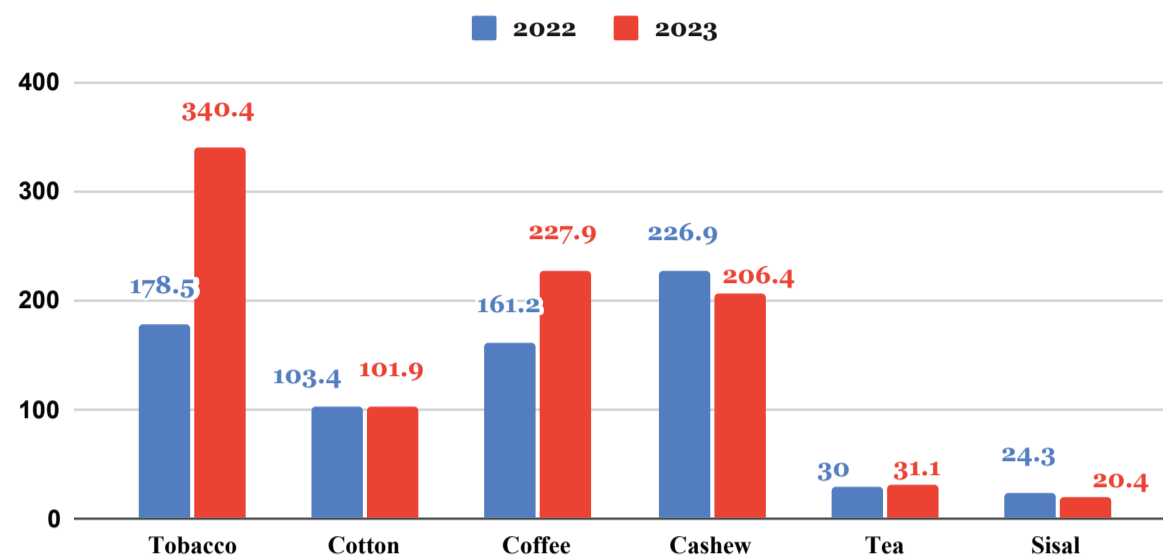
Rajat's appointment comes slightly over half a year since Air France began direct flights from Paris-Charles de Gaulle to Dar es Salaam, expanding its reach in the region following the popularity of the Zanzibar and Nairobi routes.



Raja Kumar

Tobacco, coffee spur traditional crops' exports earnings in 2023

Traditional Exports Earnings in US\$ Million



SOURCE: BOT/TRA

By Mnaku Mbani

TOBACCO and coffee farmers as well as marketers pocketed more cash than their fellows in other traditional cash crops, after they recorded increased exports earnings in 2023, when compared to 2022.

Provisional data by the Tanzania Revenue Authority (TRA) and Bank of Tanzania (BoT) computations show earnings from traditional exports reached US\$953.3 million during the year ending December 2023, compared to US\$766.5 million recorded in 2022.

The increase was mainly driven by the substantial growths of exports earnings from tobacco and coffee,

as well as slight increase on tea, despite the decreased earnings from other traditional exports include cashewnuts, cloves, cotton and sisal.

Exports earnings from tobacco nearly doubled to US\$340 million during the year ending December, 2023, which was nearly a third of total traditional exports incomes, higher than US\$178.5 million recorded during the year 2022.

Tanzania Tobacco Board (TTB) chairman Victor Mwambalasa told The Guardian yesterday that the increase of earnings was due to an increased production, which doubled to 120 million kilos last year, compared to 60 million kilos produced in 2022.

The government is

also targeting to increase the crop production to 200 million kilos by 2025, which will also boost tax collections as well as farmers and marketers incomes.

Mwambalasa said the success was also attributed by the government efforts to securing more markets for exporting tobacco leaves, which resulted into an increased number of buyers.

According to statista, a global data and business intelligence platform, the tobacco products market in Tanzania is projected to generate revenue amounting to US\$644.9 million in 2024.

This market is expected to exhibit an annual growth rate of 3.51 percent (CAGR 2024-2028).

Among the various

segments within the market, cigarettes account for the largest share, with a market volume of US\$581.9m in 2024, according to data from statista.

The global tobacco market is on a trajectory to achieve remarkable growth, with an anticipated size of US\$ 1,049.9 billion by the year 2030, reflecting a steady Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 2.1 percent.

The BoT/TRA provisional data also show export earnings from coffee also recorded a substantial growth of nearly 40 percent, after hitting US\$227 million during last year, compared to US\$161.2 million recorded in 2022.

Exports earnings from tea also recorded the gaining trend after

slightly increasing to US\$31.1 million last year, compared to US\$30 million in 2022. However, the earnings were lower than US\$32.9 million recorded in 2021 and US\$45.7 million in 2019.

Provisional data also show exports earnings from cloves declined to US\$25.1 million last year, compared to US\$42.2 million recorded in 2022, while those of cotton slightly went down to US\$101.9 million last year, compared to US\$103.4 million in 2022.

Commenting on the released exports data, Marco Mtunga, the Tanzania Cotton Board (TCB) director general explained yesterday that there has been a decrease of cotton prices, although the sale of the crop is currently ongoing.

This indicates that the earnings from cotton will increase further when the crop sale will be finalized, considering the published data are provisional.

Other traditional export crop which recorded the decline of earnings, according to BoT/TRA provisional data was cashewnuts, which earned US\$206.4 million last year, compared to US\$226.9 million in 2022 and US\$359.6 million in 2020.

Sisal also experienced similar trend, after its exports earnings slowed to US\$20.4 million in 2023 compared to US\$24.3 million in 2022.



Home Depot's strong Q4 dwarfed by declining sales, 2024 outlooks

NEW YORK

HOME Depot's sales continued to fade during the fourth quarter as the country's largest home improvement retailer feels the impact of high mortgage rates and inflation on its customers.

While quarterly results topped Wall Street expectations, the company's sales expectations for this year weighed on shares early.

Shares slipped 2 percent before the opening

bell Tuesday.

Home Depot reported fourth-quarter sales of \$34.79 billion, down from \$35.83 in the prior-year period. That still beat the \$34.55 billion that analysts surveyed by Zacks Investment Research expected.

Sales at stores open at least a year, a key indicator of a retailer's health, fell 3.5 percent. In the U.S., same store sales declined 4 percent.

Last week, the average long-term U.S. mortgage rate rose to its highest level in 10 weeks. The

average rate on a 30-year mortgage rose to 6.77 percent from 6.64 percent a week earlier, according to mortgage buyer Freddie Mac. A year ago, the rate averaged 6.32 percent.

The increase echoes move in the 10-year Treasury yield, which lenders use as a guide to pricing loans. Stronger-than-expected reports on inflation, a strong job market and the overall strength of the economy have stoked fears that the Federal Reserve will wait longer

before it begins cutting interest rates.

When mortgage rates rise, they can add hundreds of dollars a month in costs for homeowners, limiting how much they can afford in a market already out of reach for many Americans. They also discourage homeowners who locked in rock-bottom rates two or three years ago from selling.

The average rate on a 30-year mortgage remains sharply higher than just two years ago, when it was 3.92 per-

cent. For the three months ended Jan. 28, Home Depot Inc. earned \$2.8 billion, or \$2.82 per share. The Atlanta company earned \$3.36 billion, or \$3.30 per share, a year ago.

That topped the \$2.77 per share that Wall Street was calling for.

Home Depot predicts fiscal 2024 sales growth of about 1 percent, including the 53rd week. It anticipates same-store sales will be down about 1 percent for the 52-week period.

The company also announced Tuesday that it was boosting its quarterly dividend 7.7 percent to \$2.25 per share.

Government urged to establish plastic waste collection points



By Correspondent **Beatrice Philemon**

THE government should establish designated zones to facilitate easier access to raw materials for businesses involved in plastic recycling.

Henry Kazula, a trainer, sustainability consultant, and expert in climate action strategy, made this statement last Friday while addressing various stakeholders at a collaborative workshop on plastic waste management organized by Women Action towards Economic Development (WATED).

The workshop convened stakeholders to collectively address the pressing issue of plastic waste management in Tanzania, aiming to provide insights for ongoing UN discussions on a binding treaty on plastics.

Urgent calls were made for the government to implement significant measures to combat plastic pollution in the Indian Ocean, lakes, and rivers to prevent water contamination.

Analysis conducted by Kinyonga Nyendo, Msololo Onditi, and Henry Kazula highlights plastic as a significant environmental challenge in Tanzania, with plastic remnants posing a widespread problem in water pollution, including rivers, lakes, and

coastal areas.

Expounding on the global perspective of plastic in Tanzania, he referenced the IUCN-EA-QUANTIS 2020 report, stating that national guidance on plastic pollution hot spotting and action shaping indicates that 96 percent of plastic waste generated in Tanzania is mismanaged.

The analysis shows 40 percent of the plastic waste is collected and 29,000 tonnes of plastic waste that is equivalent to nine per cent of the total plastic waste generated has leaked into oceans, rivers and lakes in 2018.

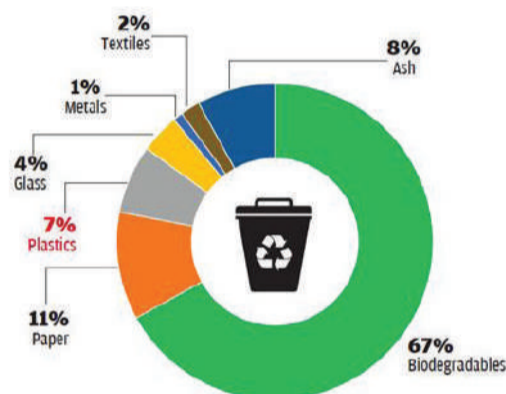
Among those, Dar es Salaam Region is responsible for 71 percent of the plastic leakage.

Expanding on why plastics pose a challenge to the environment in Tanzania, he referenced the Vice President's Office Report 2020, which outlines the percentage of various types of waste produced annually: two percent textile waste, seven percent plastic, 11 percent paper waste, eight percent ash, four percent glass, and 67 percent biodegradables.

Further elaborating on the global perspective of plastic in Tanzania, he cited a 2021 WWF report titled "Plastic Pollution in Africa: Identifying Policy Gaps and Opportunities," revealing that globally, 8.3 billion tonnes of plastic have been produced.

Out of this, approxi-

Graph 1: Waste composition in Tanzania



mately 6.3 billion tonnes of plastic waste have been generated, with only 9 percent recycled, 12 percent incinerated, and a staggering 79 percent ending up in landfills.

Also around 4.9 billion tonnes of plastics amounting to 60 per cent of all plastics ever produced were discarded and are now accumulating in landfills or in the natural environment.

Also a report from the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and Quantis estimates that 319,000 tonnes of plastic waste was generated in Tanzania in 2018.

Close to 96 per cent of the plastic waste in Tanzania is mismanaged and 29,000 tonnes of plastic waste that is equivalent to nine per cent of the total plastic waste generated) has leaked into oceans, rivers and lakes in 2018.

To effectively reduce plastic waste nationwide,

landfills, preserve essential resources, safeguard the environment from plastic pollution, and mitigate greenhouse gas emissions," he emphasized.

Moreover, legal provisions outlined in the Environmental Management Act (EMA) of 2004 can serve as a gateway to integrate the plastic waste unit into the broader solid waste management framework for comprehensive implementation.

Regarding regulatory measures, he stressed that manufacturers must be held accountable for the entire lifecycle of their products, from production to disposal.

For her part, Maria Matui, WATED's coordinator added that in a bid to address the critical issue of plastic waste management in Tanzania and seeks to inform ongoing UN processes regarding a binding treaty on plastic pollution so far Tanzanian CSOs and NGOs have been met and have a face-to-face discussions to provide recommendations that will be included in the UN Binding Treaty on Plastic.

"We have been able to conduct analysis of plastic waste management and have a meeting with CSOs, NGOs members and government representatives to learn together on the pressing issue of plastic waste management in Tanzania," she said.

Eurozone bond yields dip, Q4 wage growth slackens

LONDON

EURO zone government bond yields eased from near multi-month highs on Tuesday as data showing cooling wage growth encouraged traders to nudge up bets on the number of European Central Bank rate cuts this year. Longer-dated yields had already slipped and inched lower after data showed that euro zone negotiated wage growth slowed to 4.5 percent in the fourth quarter, from a record 4.7 percent in the third.

Germany's 10-year bond yield, the benchmark for the bloc, was last down 4 basis points (bps) at 2.374 percent. Yields move inversely to prices.

Bond market strategists said Tuesday's fall in yields came as investors paused for thought after sharply scaling back their expectations that central banks will slash interest rates this year.

"They (central banks) may not cut by May or April but I think there are cuts coming," said Pooja Kumra, senior European rates strategist at TD Securities. "We do have this bias for rate cuts coming back again."

The benchmark German 10-year yield hit an almost three-month high of 2.422 percent on Friday.

"The markets have been erasing quite a lot of rate cut

expectations this year - maybe it's enough for now," said Jussi Hiljanen, head of rates strategy at lender SEB.

"I wouldn't be surprised if we make an attempt in the coming weeks at somewhat lower yields, unless the data points otherwise."

Germany's 2-year bond yield, which is sensitive to interest rate expectations, was last down 3 bps at 2.803 percent.

Investors were expecting around 105 bps of cuts from the ECB this year on Tuesday, according to money market pricing, up slightly from around 102 bps on Monday.

Hiljanen said Tuesday's wage data didn't change the outlook significantly and that first-quarter 2024 readings would be more important.

Some ECB policymakers, including President Christine Lagarde, have said they would like to see the outcome of wage deals struck in the first quarter before making a decision. That data is due in late May.

Italy's 10-year bond yield was last down 4 bps at 3.863 percent. It hit 3.986 percent last week, the highest mid-December.

The closely watched gap between Italian and German 10-year yields narrowed slightly to 147 bps, after falling to 145.5 bps on Monday, its lowest since March 2022.

Agencies

CTI, TanTrade in push for Dar business expo

By Francis Kajubi

THE Confederation of Tanzania Industries (CTI) and Tanzania Trade Development Authority (TanTrade) are preparing for TIMEXPO 2024, happening this September, whilst the business community is encouraged to register for participation.

Themed 'Building Bridges: Connecting Local and International Manufacturers', TIMEXPO 2024 will showcase cutting-edge technologies in diverse sectors as it brings together over 500 exhibitors from domestic and international industrial players.

Speaking to journalists in Dar es Salaam yesterday, CTI Executive Director, Leodegar Tenga shared insights on last year's TIMEXPO success stories and this year's preparations, saying the four-day international expo is scheduled for September 26th to 29th, 2024, at the famous Dar es Salaam's Saba Saba grounds.

Tenga said that the authority is excited to collaborate with CTI to organize the expo and is confident that it will be

a great success and can't wait to welcome delegates from all around the world to Dar es Salaam.

"This year's TIMEXPO 2024 will feature exhibitors from all over the world to showcase their equipment and products in various sectors including but not limited to building and construction materials.

Other stakeholders invited to register for the expo encompass business leaders from various sectors including the paints, textile, leather, cosmetics, consumer goods, petrochemicals, pharmaceuticals, renewable energy technologies, and electronics industries.

For Fortunatus Mhambe, TanTrade Director of Trade Promotion, said the event will highlight key sectors to promote and introduce new equipment, products and services to the Tanzanian market.

He said last year's TIMEXPO featured unique and notable innovations such as locally assembled airplane, electric car, and many more", as expressed by

Bolt introduces option for riders to cancel offline trips, prioritising safety



By Guardian Reporter

BOLT has introduced a new cancellation option in its app, aimed at deterring users on its platform from taking offline trips and paying off the app, so as to further enhance the safety and well-being of riders.

Riders will now be able to cancel a trip by selecting the option 'driver asked to pay off-the-app' under specific circumstances.

The new feature empowers riders to take immediate action should they encounter situations where the driver asks for payment for a trip outside the

app, requests payment exceeding the agreed-upon trip fare, or encourages cancellation of the trip to go offline.

Munira Ruhwanya, Operations Manager said: "We're thrilled to unveil our newest cancellation feature, crafted to minimise offline trips and address situations where drivers attempt to charge rates higher than those listed in the app. At Bolt, we strongly discourage both drivers and passengers from exchanging contact information or arranging offline rides through our platform. This practice contradicts the safety and reliability standards we strive

to maintain for our community." She said when drivers and passengers go offline, vital safety features such as GPS tracking and in-app SOS assistance become inactive, leaving users without access to crucial safety tools. "Staying online ensures the functionality of these features and prioritises the safety of all users. Additionally, we have implemented measures to address drivers repeatedly reported for soliciting offline rides. These measures may include temporary bans or account suspensions, reaffirming our commitment to providing a

secure platform for all users," she said.

To ensure safety for both drivers and passengers, Bolt encourages both passengers and drivers to take advantage of the safety features provided in the app's Safety Toolkit. These features are specifically designed to operate during active (in-app) trips.

She noted that Bolt is committed to providing a secure and reliable ride-hailing experience for all users. The introduction of the new cancellation reason option reinforces this commitment, offering riders a powerful tool to prioritise their safety and well-being.

Pentagon turns to Tiny Ursa Major as rocket motor requirement rises

WASHINGTON

DESPERATE to address surging demand for solid fuel rocket engines, the Pentagon is close to giving a contract for new motors to the untested, privately held startup Ursa Major, according to two sources familiar with the situation.

While rocket motors themselves are relatively inexpensive, they play a vital role in propelling billions of dollars of missiles and rockets on order to supply the war efforts in Ukraine and Israel, and to re-stock dwindling U.S. inventories.

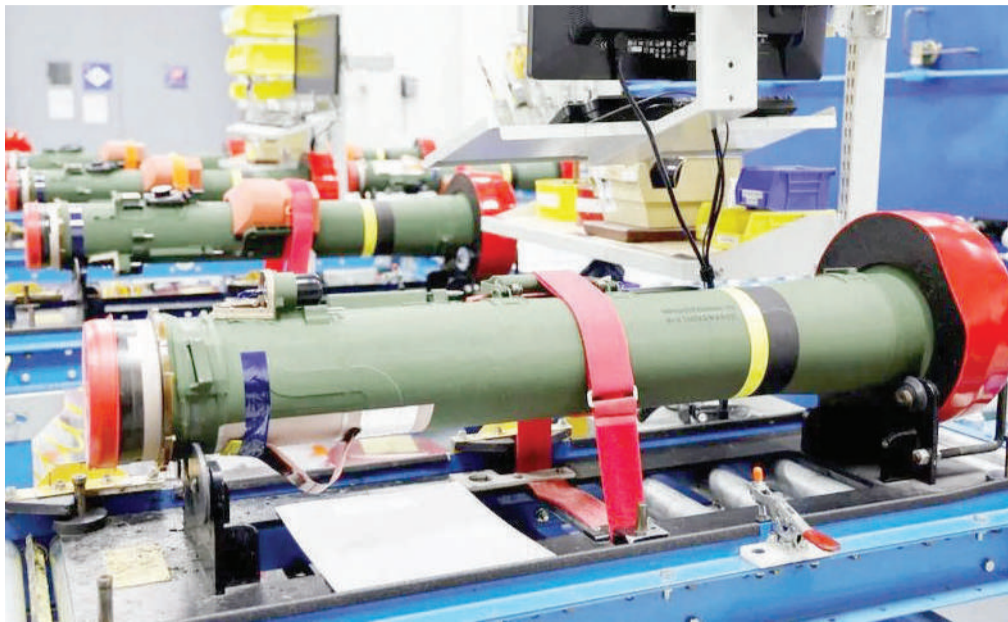
The contract - expected to be small and to fall under the Pentagon's development programs - would be a big vote of confidence in the upstart defense contractor as officials seek more sup-

pliers beyond the two dominant rocket engine makers - Northrop Grumman and L3 Harris Technologies. There are other recent entrants including X-Bow Systems.

It also shows the Defense Department's growing appetite for risk to resolve what officials called a "major crisis."

"As soon as I get the FY (fiscal year) '24 budget I am going to drop it on a small company that is going to do additive manufacturing of a solid rocket motor," Heidi Shyu, under secretary of defense for research and engineering, told Congress last week.

She did not name the company or give a size of the contract during her testimony, but did say the company had been working closely with the Navy, adding, "we can't wait to get them on contract."



Javelin anti-tank missiles are displayed at a Lockheed Martin factory in Alabama

A congressional aide and an industry executive who spoke on condition of anonymity said Shyu was referring to Ursa Major, a private-

ly held company that uses 3-D printing to make rocket motors.

A representative of Ursa Major declined to comment.

The Pentagon declined further comment on the possible award.

Ursa Major is headquartered in Berthoud, Colora-

do, and backed by investors including RTX Ventures, BlackRock and Eclipse.

Ursa Major's website features the launch of a Javelin anti-tank missile, a weapon heavily used in Ukraine's efforts to combat the Russian invasion for the last two years. Ursa Major says it can make rocket motors between 2 and 22 inches in diameter.

The industry executive from a large defense prime contractor said Ursa Major's motors can be used in any small diameter weapon like the new Boeing and SAAB product the Ground Launched Small Diameter Bomb (GLSDB), RTX's SM-6 rockets and Lockheed Martin's Guided Multiple Launch Rocket System (GMLRS) which are used heavily in Ukraine.

Lockheed Martin was making about 4,600 GMLRS

per year but has ramped production since 2022. More than 5,000 have been sent to Ukraine so far, according to a Reuters analysis. GMLRS production is scheduled to ramp from 10,000 deliveries in 2024 to 14,000 deliveries in 2025 as demand surges.

President Joe Biden's 2024 budget request was the first to procure missiles and other munitions with multi-year contracts, something that is routine for planes and ships, as the Pentagon signals enduring demand to top munitions makers.

That 2024 budget, which is still not through Congress, earmarked \$11 billion to "deliver a mix of highly lethal precision weapons" which included hypersonic prototyping and the multi-year procurements of Joint Air-to-Surface Standoff Missile (JASSM), and Long-Range Anti-Ship Missile (LRASM), and Standard Missile 6 (SM-6).

Ursa Major has raised \$274 million from investors and has a valuation of \$750 million according to PitchBook data.

Agencies

Markets start to speculate if the next Fed move is up, not down

NEW YORK

INVESTORS are beginning to war-game how the Federal Reserve can manage a US economy that just won't land, with some even debating whether interest-rate hikes will be needed only weeks after a steady run of reductions appeared all but certain.

Bets on lower rates coming soon were so prevalent a few weeks ago that Fed Chair Jerome Powell publicly cautioned that policymakers were unlikely to be in position to cut as of March. Less than three weeks later, traders have not only removed March as a possibility but May also looks improbable, and even conviction about the June Fed meeting is wavering, swaps trading shows.

The latest hot debate: perhaps the next shift isn't a cut at all. Former US Treasury Secretary Lawrence Summers on Friday voiced what a number of market participants had already been thinking: "there's a meaningful chance" the next move is up.

Even if another hike is too hard to countenance, some Fed watchers are floating a repeat of the late-1990s: only a brief course of rate reductions that sets the stage for increases later.

"There are so many possible, plausible outcomes," said Earl Davis, head of fixed income and money markets at BMO Global Asset Management. While he's sticking with 75 basis points of cuts for 2024, he said "it's very hard for me to say that with a high degree of confidence."

For their part, no Fed policymaker in recent weeks has publicly suggested that further rate increases are on the table. Powell on Jan. 31 said "we believe that our policy rate is likely at its peak for this tightening cycle." On Friday, San Francisco Fed President Mary Daly, viewed as a centrist, said 75 basis points of cuts in 2024 was a "reasonable baseline expectation."

At the same time, the central

bank hasn't offered the kind of "forward guidance" with regard to a medium-term policy framework that it's sometimes presented in the past - leaving investors with less of steer. Volatile economic data this month has driven swings in Treasuries, futures and swaps contracts.

Yields jumped last week after hotter-than-expected consumer and producer price index data. A key subset of CPI services prices advanced by the most in nearly two years. Job gains for January also exceeded forecasts, though a slump in retail sales for the month offered a counterpoint to evidence that the economy continues to expand faster than its longer-term potential.

Two-, three- and five-year yields all reached their highest levels since early December last week.

"The last yards of this inflation fight is going to be bumpy," said Lindsay Rosner, head of multi-sector fixed income investing at Goldman Sachs Asset Management. "It does feel a little bit like a ping-pong match with every single data point."

Rosner said she agreed with Summers's assessment of some risk of a rate hike, though concluded "it would make more sense to hold at these levels of interest rates for longer" for the Fed to be assured of quelling inflation.

Summers, a Harvard University professor and paid contributor to Bloomberg Television, suggested a perhaps 15% chance that the next Fed move is an increase. Mark Nash, who manages absolute return macro funds at Jupiter Asset Management, puts the odds at 20 percent.

Even some who do expect rate cuts have advocated taking out insurance on that bet. BMO's Davis has been shorting two-year Treasuries since December, though covered half of that position amid the climb in rates since the start of the year.

Bloomberg

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<p>16:30 Culinary delight rpt</p> <p>17:00 Innovation rpt</p> <p>17:30 Meza huru</p> <p>19:00 Sports Gazette</p> <p>19:30 Special Pgm:Sauti za Busara</p> <p>20:00 Monday Agenda Rpt</p> <p>20:45 Telenovela: I Plead Guilty 21:30 Capital Prime News</p> <p>22:00 Dakika 45:</p> <p>22:45 The Décor</p> <p>23:15 Al Jazeera</p> <p>THURS 22 FEB</p> <p>06:00 Al Jazeera</p> <p>09:00 Kumekucha Michezo rpt</p> <p>10:00 Meza Huru Rpt</p> <p>11:30 Spots gazette</p> <p>12:00 Innovation</p> <p>12:30 Culinary</p> <p>13:00 Telenovela rpt: I Plead Guilty rpt</p> <p>14:00 Our Earth rpt</p> <p>14:30 DW news Africa rpt</p> <p>15:00 Jagina rpt</p> <p>15:30 Mizengwe rpt</p> <p>16:00 Tomorrow Today</p> <p>16:30 Business edition rpt</p> <p>17:00 In good shape</p> <p>17:30 Meza huru</p> <p>19:00 Out & About Rpt</p> <p>19:30 Special Pgm:Sauti za Busara</p> <p>20:00 Our Earth Rpt</p> <p>20:45 Telenovela: I Plead Guilty 21:30 Capital Prime News</p> <p>22:00 Malumbano ya hoja rpt</p> <p>00:00 Al Jazeera</p> <p>SAT 24 FEB</p> <p>08:00 Al Jazeera</p> <p>09:00 Rev rpt</p> <p>09:30 Jagina rpt</p> <p>10:00 Culinary delight rpt</p> <p>10:30 Innovation rpt</p> <p>11:00 Out n'about rpt</p> <p>11:30 Sports Gazette rpt</p> <p>12:00 Shamba Lulu rpt</p> <p>12:30 Our Earth rpt</p> <p>13:00 Business edition rpt</p> <p>13:30 Aljazeera</p> <p>14:30 Telenovela I Plead Guilty rpt</p> <p>17:15 Special Pgm:Sauti za Busara Rpt</p> <p>17:45 Bundesliga kick off</p> <p>18:15 Capchat rpt</p> <p>19:15 Mizengwe</p> <p>19:30 The Décor</p> <p>20:00 Ripoti Maalum</p> <p>20:30 Tomorrow Today</p> <p>21:00 Out n'about</p> <p>21:30 Capchat Rpt</p> <p>23:00 Al Jazeera</p> <p>01:00 Al Jazeera</p>



Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell. (iu Jie/Xinhua via Getty Images) (Xinhua News Agency via Getty Images)



Protesters stand outside the Supreme Court in London, Nov 15, 2023. Britain's highest court is set to rule on whether the government's plan to send asylum-seekers to Rwanda is legal, delivering a boost or a blow to a contentious central policy of Prime Minister Rishi Sunak's administration. AP

UN rights chief slams UK's Rwanda bill for asylum seekers

GENEVA

THE United Kingdom's recent legislative moves to facilitate the removal of asylum-seekers to Rwanda run contrary to the basic principles of the rule of law and risk delivering a serious blow to human rights, the United Nations human rights chief said on Monday.

The bill would also drastically strip back the courts' ability to scrutinize removal decisions, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Turk said in a statement.

The UK's proposed legislation, known as the Safety of Rwanda (Asylum and Immigration) Bill, requires every decision maker - be it a government minister, immigration office, or court or tribunal reviewing asylum decisions - to treat Rwanda as a "safe country" in terms of protecting refugees and asylum seekers against refoulement, irrespective of evidence that exists now or may exist in the future, he said.

"Settling questions of disputed

fact - questions with enormous human rights consequences - is what the courts do ... It should be for the courts to decide whether the measures taken by the government since the Supreme Court's ruling on risks in Rwanda are enough," Turk said. "You cannot legislate facts out of existence."

"It is deeply concerning to carve out one group of people, or people in one particular situation, from the equal protection of the law. This is antithetical to even-handed justice, available and accessible to all, without discrimination," he added.

The UN human rights office has reiterated the concerns expressed by the UN refugee agency (UNHCR) that the scheme is not compatible with international refugee law, the statement said.

"The combined effects of this Bill, attempting to shield government action from standard legal scrutiny, directly undercut basic human rights principles," Turk said.

Turk urged the UK government to "take all necessary steps" to ensure full compliance with the UK's international legal obligations and to uphold the country's history of "effective, independent judicial scrutiny." "Such a stance is today more vital than ever." **Xinhua**

WHO calls to accelerate tobacco and e-cigarette control measures

NEW DELHI

THE World Health Organization on Tuesday called on countries in the South-east Asia Region to intensify efforts to control the use of tobacco and e-cigarettes, according to an official statement.

It noted that despite the steep decline over the years, tobacco consumption in the region continues to be the highest globally, and vaping is on the rise.

"The region still has the highest number of people using tobacco, which puts them at risk of life-threatening diseases such as cancer, respiratory and heart disease. Urgent measures are also needed to control e-cigarettes, which have not been proven to be effective for smoking cessation. We must do all we can to control tobacco and e-cigarette use to protect health and save lives," said Saima Wazed, Regional Director, WHO South-East Asia.

According to the statement, tobacco use in the WHO South-East Asia Region decreased from 68.9 per cent in 2000 to around 43.7 per cent in 2022, an estimat-

ed 411 million people in the region still consume tobacco, as per the latest trends released this year.

The region has 280 million smokeless tobacco users, nearly 77 per cent of the global smokeless tobacco users, and around 11 million adolescent tobacco users in the age group of 13-15 years, accounting for nearly 30 per cent of the global total.

The use of e-cigarettes, particularly among young people, is increasing in many countries, with co-use of e-cigarettes and conventional cigarettes being common. Thailand, which has been tracking e-cigarette use, reported a steep rise in e-cigarette use among school-aged children of 13 to 15 years, from 3.3 per cent in 2015 to 17.6 per cent in 2022.

WHO is committed to support policies aimed at countering the tobacco and e-cigarette industries' interference for safeguarding the health of the over 2 billion people in the Region, the Regional Director said.

ANI

Qatari authorities thank Russian official for helping Ukrainian kids reunite with families

DUBAI

QATAR'S Minister of State for International Cooperation Lolwah Al-Khater has thanked Russian Children's Rights Commissioner Maria Lvova-Belova and Ukrainian Human Rights Ombudsman Dmitry Lubinets for facilitating the return of Ukrainian children to their home country.

"Heartfelt and deep appreciation for Maria Lvova-Belova, Commissioner for Children's Rights under the President of



the Russian Federation, and Dmitry Lubinets, the Ukrainian Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights, for their cooperation and goodwill through-

out the mediation and family reunification missions.

Their dedication to the process has been instrumental in uniting Ukrainian children with their families during these challenging times," the Qatari official wrote on X.

On Monday, Russia handed 11 children over to Ukraine. The kids reunited with their families at the Qatari embassy in Moscow in the presence of Ambassador Ahmed bin Nasser Al Thani and Lvova-Belova.

Agencies

26 EU nations urge 'immediate humanitarian pause' in Gaza

BRUSSELS / GAZA / TEHRAN

TWENTY-SIX member states of the European Union (EU) called for an "immediate humanitarian pause that would lead to a sustainable ceasefire" in the besieged Gaza Strip, the bloc's foreign policy chief Josep Borrell said here on Monday as the Palestinian death toll exceeded 29,000.

At a meeting of EU foreign ministers, all EU countries except Hungary warned Israel against launching an assault on the southern Gaza city of Rafah, which they said would deepen the catastrophe of some 1.5 million refugees crammed into the city.

"An attack on Rafah would be absolutely catastrophic ... it would be unconscionable," Ireland's Foreign Minister Micheal Martin said before the meeting.

Israel's reported plans for an assault on the city have sounded international alarm bells, with many countries urging restraint or cancellation of the operation.

The Gaza-based Health Ministry announced on Monday that the Palestinian death toll resulting from the ongoing Israeli attacks has surpassed 29,000.

According to a press statement from the ministry, the Israeli army killed 107 Palestinians and wounded 145 more within the past 24 hours.

This latest update brings the total number of casualties to 29,092 deaths and 69,028 injuries since the Israel-Hamas conflict broke out on Oct 7, 2023, according to the statement.

It noted that some victims remain under the rubble amid heavy bombardment and a lack of civil defense and ambulance crews.

Israel has been launching a large-scale offensive against Hamas in the Gaza Strip to retaliate against a Hamas rampage through the southern Israeli border on Oct 7, 2023, during which about 1,400 people were killed and more than 200 were taken hostage.

Oxygen supply shortage

Eight patients have died in a major hospital in south-



Displaced Palestinian children gather to receive food at a government school in Rafah in the southern Gaza Strip on Monday, amid the ongoing battles between Israel and the militant group Hamas. AFP

ern Gaza's Khan Younis city after days of power outage and oxygen supply shortage due to continuous Israeli strikes on the facility, said Palestinian Health Minister Mai al-Kaila on Monday.

Conditions of some other serious patients became life-threatening due to the cessation of required treatment under the Israeli attack on the Nasser Hospital, she said in a statement, while calling for international efforts to pressure the release of bedridden patients and medical staff, who she claimed were taken away by Israeli military trucks from the hospital to an unknown location.

Israeli forces on Thursday stormed the Nasser Hospital in the southern Gaza Strip city of Khan Younis after demolishing its southern wall, the Hamas-run health ministry in Gaza earlier said.

The IDF said in a statement posted Sunday on social media platform X that it apprehended, in a joint operation with Israel Security Agency forces, hundreds of "terrorists" and other suspects who were hiding in the hospital, some posing as medical staff.

It said that large quantities of weapons and a vehicle belonging to an Israeli border kibbutz were found in the health facility, as well as medicines about to be handed over to Israeli hostages. It accused Hamas of using civilians in the hospital as human shields.

On Monday, the Gaza Health Ministry said that the Israeli army has turned the Nasser Medical Complex into a "military barracks," endangering the lives of patients and medical staff inside.

The ministry said in a statement that 25 medical staff and 136 patients were still in the hospital "without electricity, water, food, oxygen, or adequate medical capabilities for critical cases."

The World Health Organization was making efforts to evacuate the remaining patients to other hospitals, but the Israeli army was still

"obstructing" the entry of medical and humanitarian aid into the complex, it noted.

Meanwhile, the IDF retweeted a statement by the Israeli defense ministry's liaison unit COGAT that humanitarian aid and supplies had been delivered to the Nasser Hospital, including generator, fuel, and WHO-donated medicine to ensure its continued service while carrying out the "precise activity against the Hamas" inside the facility.

'Stop Rafah offensive'

In Tehran, Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian on Monday called on the United Nations to prevent a possible major Israeli offensive on the city of Rafah in southern Gaza.

Amir-Abdollahian made the remarks in a letter addressed to UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, according to a statement published on the Iranian Foreign Ministry's website.

"As you rightly said recently, an all-out offensive on the city would be devastating for the 1.5 million Palestinian civilians there who are already on the edge of survival," said the Iranian foreign minister.

He called on the international community not to let such "carnage" happen, stressing that "any military offensive on Rafah would undoubtedly qualify as another phase in the Israeli genocide of the Palestinian nation."

The Iranian foreign minister also said it was imperative that the UN fulfilled its responsibilities and averted further "mass atrocities" against the Palestinians, who had taken refuge in Rafah.

Over the past few weeks, Israel has signaled an intention to conduct a ground operation in Rafah to "eliminate" Hamas and rescue Israeli captives.

Agencies

'Western countries have long preferred to supply Pakistan, not India'

MUNICH

THE External Affairs Minister yesterday reaffirmed defence and trade cooperation with Russia and said that many Western countries used to supply arms to Pakistan and not India, adding that the trend has changed in the past decade.

"In terms of inventory, yes, because many Western countries have long preferred to supply Pakistan and not India. But that has changed in the past ten or fifteen years with the USA, for example, and our new purchases have diversified with the USA, Russia, France and Israel as the main suppliers," he said.

In an interview with a leading German economic daily, Handelsblatt during his visit to the Munich Security Conference in Germany, EAM Jaishankar highlighted the infrastructural imbalance of supply chains in the world and said that the world's economic model is unstable and unfair.

"The world has created an economic model that is unstable and unfair. In the name of globalization, we have seen over-concentration in the world. Production has been shifted to a limited number of countries. The economies of many countries have been hollowed out," EAM Jaishankar said.

"Many countries depend on others for very basic things - and we notice this immediately when we have disruptions like COVID, like the climate or the problems in the Red Sea at the moment. The problem is so profound that it's not so easy to say: 'Let's do these three or four things - and things will be fine again,' he added.

He said further, "The global order is currently facing multiple kinds of stress. Due to shocks like Covid, the war in Ukraine, the war in Gaza, the NATO withdrawal from Afghanistan and disruptive climate events that are happening more and more frequently. That is our challenge. However, it is not just about strengthening the international order, but also about changing this order. Who shapes it and on what basis? The international order must evolve further."

India and Russia have maintained a robust strategic partnership, rooted in historical ties and shared interests, over decades. Central to this relationship is extensive defence cooperation, with Russia serving as a major supplier of military equipment to India and both nations engaging in joint military exercises, co-development of advanced military platforms, and technology transfers, according to the Russian news agency.

More recently, energy collaboration has become another strong pillar of bilateral ties. The Kudankulam nuclear power plant (KNPP), India's largest, is being built in Tamil Nadu with technical assistance provided by Moscow.

Russia's expertise in nuclear technology has been instrumental in advancing India's capabilities, fostering a mutually beneficial partnership, according to RT. The two countries have pledged to deepen their nuclear cooperation, recognizing its strategic importance for energy security and technological advancement.

Over the past 18 months, India has emerged as one of the largest importers of Russian oil - a stand New Delhi has had to defend on many occasions from accusations by Western media, and even some political leaders, of funding 'Russia's war' with Ukraine.

ANI

China, Europe enjoy huge potential in green cooperation

RECENTLY, China-Europe green cooperation has been making significant progress in new energy investment and green trade.

German automaker Audi is making rapid progress in the construction of its first purely electric vehicle production base in Changchun, northeast China's Jilin province. Meanwhile, the Dabar Hydro-power Plant in Bosnia and Herzegovina is currently being built by China Gezhouba Group. The Manduria 7MW photovoltaic power plant in Italy undertaken by China

National Machinery Import & Export Corporation Europe has been officially delivered.

A recent report by the Delegation of the European Union (EU) to China highlighted that green cooperation has become a key area of collaboration between China and the EU. Strengthening policy coordination and dialogue and promoting information exchange and cooperation are beneficial for the two sides to jointly address global climate, energy, and environmental

challenges, and promote sustainable development.

Europe Renewable Energy Company (EREC) under China Energy Investment Corporation has built a wind power project in Thrace, Greece, which comprises four wind farms. The project generates approximately 160 million kilowatt-hours of green electricity annually, contributing to the rapid development of renewable energy in Greece and surrounding regions.

It is reported, since the

completion of the Thrace wind power project in 2020, the EREC has cumulatively produced approximately 632 million kilowatt-hours of green electricity, which was supplied to 30,000 households in Greece. This is equivalent to reducing carbon dioxide emissions by approximately 630,100 tons and saving 255,300 tons of standard coal.

The Thrace wind power project is a vivid example of green cooperation between

China and Europe. In recent years, China and Europe have collaborated in various fields such as green energy, green manufacturing, and green services through the establishment of energy cooperation platforms and the sharing of clean energy technologies and experiences.

According to the United Nations Comtrade database, trade volume of green goods between China and Europe exceeded \$56 billion in 2019, a 14-fold increase from 2000.

Statistics from the International Energy Agency showed that in 2022, approximately 46 percent of Europe's wind power generation was contributed by Chinese products.

Wang Yiwei, director of the Centre for EU Studies at Renmin University of China, noted that Europe is at the forefront of addressing climate change and promoting green development, with abundant practical experience as well as industrial and technological resources. China and the

EU share common goals and a solid foundation for cooperation in relevant fields, he added.

"China and the EU are strengthening coordination at three levels: domestic policies, bilateral cooperation, and multilateral collaboration, with an aim of jointly addressing global challenges such as climate change, pollution, and biodiversity loss," said Yao Ling, director of the European Institute, Chinese Academy of International Trade and Economic Cooperation. **People's Daily**

WikiLeaks' Assange in last-ditch battle to stop US extradition

LONDON

WIKILEAKS founder Julian Assange begins what could be his last chance to stop his extradition from Britain to the United States on Tuesday after more than 13 years battling the authorities in the English courts.

US prosecutors are seeking to put Assange, 52, on trial on 18 counts relating to WikiLeaks' high-profile release of vast troves of confidential US military records and diplomatic cables.

They argue the leaks imperilled the lives of their agents and there is no excuse for his criminality. Assange's supporters hail him as an anti-establishment hero and a journalist, who is being persecuted for exposing US wrongdoing.

Outside the High Court in London, a large, noisy crowd gathered, chanting "Only one decision, no extradition".

"We have two big days ahead. We don't know what to expect, but you are here because the world is watching," Assange's wife Stella told the crowd. "They have to know they can't get away with this. Julian needs his freedom and we all need the truth."

Assange's legal battles began in 2010, and he subsequently spent seven years holed up in Ecuador's embassy in Lon-



A giant billboard in Melbourne on Sept 5, 2023 calls for the release of WikiLeaks founder, Australian Julian Assange. (PHOTO / AFP)

don before he was dragged out and jailed in 2019 for breaching bail conditions. He has been held in a maximum-security jail in southeast London ever since, even getting married there.

Britain finally approved his extradition to the US in 2022 after a judge initially blocked it because concerns about his mental health meant he would be at risk of suicide if deported.

His lawyers will try to overturn that approval at a two-day hearing in front of two

judges in what could be his last chance to stop his extradition in the English courts.

They will argue that Assange's prosecution is politically motivated and marks an attack on free speech, as the first time a publisher has been charged under the US Espionage Act.

Assange's supporters include Amnesty International, media groups that worked with WikiLeaks and politicians in his country of birth Australia, including Prime Minister Anthony Albanese, who last week voted in

favour of a motion calling for his return to Australia.

'He will die'

If Assange wins this case, a full appeal hearing will be held to again consider his challenge. If he loses, his only remaining option would be at the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) where he has an appeal lodged pending the London ruling.

Speaking last week, Stella Assange said the decision was a matter of life and death and his lawyers would apply to the ECHR for an emergency injunction if necessary.

"His health is in decline, physically and mentally," she said. "His life is at risk every single day he stays in prison - and if he is extradited he will die."

Assange's brother Gabriel Shipton compared the WikiLeaks founder with Alexei Navalny, the Russian opposition activist who died in prison on Friday while serving a three-decade sentence.

WikiLeaks first came to prominence in 2010 when it published a US military video showing a 2007 attack by Apache helicopters in Baghdad that killed a dozen people, including two Reuters news staff.

It then released thousands of secret classified files and diplomatic cables that laid bare often highly critical US appraisals of world leaders from Russian President Vladimir Putin to members of the Saudi royal family.

'We stay engaged with Indian govt'

NEW DELHI

US Deputy Secretary of State for Management and Resources Richard Verma here yesterday said that America will stay engaged with the Indian government on the issue of the alleged bid to assassinate Khalistani terrorist Gurbhagat Singh Pannun in the United States.

"I know we raised our concerns with the Government of India. There is a committee of inquiry looking into the matter, and we will stay engaged with the government and look forward to their findings. And they've taken it very seriously, and we're grateful for that," Verma said.

He made the remarks at the event titled 'The Long View from DC: The India-US Partnership' hosted by the Observer Research Foundation (ORF) in Delhi. His statement comes after the US Justice Department unsealed an indictment against an Indian national for his alleged involvement in the foiled plot to assassinate Pannun.

Earlier in November, the US Justice Department claimed that an Indian government employee (named CC-1), who was not identified in the indictment filed in a federal court in Manhattan, recruited an Indian national named Nikhil Gupta to hire a hitman to carry out the assassination, which was foiled by US authorities, according to prosecutors. Gupta is currently in custody in the Czech Republic and has been charged with murder-for-hire, which carries a maximum sentence of 10 years in prison.

In his remarks at the event, Richard Verma also emphasised on the ties between India and the US. He recalled that Mahatma Gandhi used to write to then-US President Franklin Delano Roosevelt about his writings.

He further said that Martin Luther King found inspiration in the writings of Gandhi, and stressed that this connection and ideas travel along three different vectors, which include overcoming the bondage and legacies of colonialism, fighting for social justice and equality and attempting to build a stable, inclusive democratic system governed by the people and called these ideas the foundation of the bilateral relationship between two nations.

Highlighting the growth of ties between India and the US, he said that the two nations, which earlier had no defence sales, were now major defence partners and were conducting complex exercises in every facet. He said that the bilateral trade between India and the US has witnessed a 100 per cent rise in the last 10 years.

Speaking about the Indian diaspora in the US, he said, "People-to-people ties, America boasts well over 4 million Americans of Indian descent, including a vice president and a leading presidential candidate."

Last year, the US in this embassy issued over 1 million visas and now there are nearly 270,000 Indian students in the United States. I could go on and on through all the categories of our work together. But it's safe to say we have done well. It has not been perfect. But I say this with all humility. It has been transformative and impactful and it has brought greater peace and stability to the Indo-Pacific region."

He noted that the world is better off when the US and India are cooperating fully and strongly together on the world stage. Calling India and the US "post-colonial democratic powers governed by a constitutional framework," Verma said that the two nations aspire for equality, social inclusion, and racial and minority rights and other areas.

In his remarks, he said, "Our security cooperation will become even more important in the years ahead. The threats we face are real. But building our collective capabilities is increasing our sharing of information and improving maritime domain awareness and interoperability for example, we will ensure India continues to be a provider of net security across the Indo-Pacific region and beyond. ANI

Russian forces discover US-made ammunition, foreign mercenaries' MREs in Avdeyevka

AVDEYEVKA

RUSSIAN troops discovered foreign-made ammunition in the Ukrainian stronghold in Avdeyevka and a cache of US- and Czech-made 120-mm mortar shells in the nearby building, the Russian Defense Ministry said, adding that ready-to-eat meals (MREs) belonging to Canadian and Georgian mercenaries were discovered as well.

Previously, the Defense Ministry reported that the Ukrainian positions near the railway station were defended by the 3rd Assault Brigade, staffed with former "Azov" regiment (deemed terrorist and outlawed in Russia) militants.

"A Ukrainian armed forces stronghold, occupied by militants of the nationalist 3rd Assault Brigade was located in a building with thick walls, built in the early 20th century, next to the railway station.

Canadian-made MREs belonging to mercenaries from Canada and Georgia were discovered [...] at the stronghold, among other things. Unused foreign-made rounds were discovered at the stronghold, and a cache of US- and Czech-made 120-mm mortar shells was discovered in the next building," the ministry said. **Agencies**

Rwanda questions US credibility in mediating peace in DRC

KIGALI

RWANDA has said that it questions "the ability of the United States to serve as a credible mediator in the Great Lakes Region."

The Rwandan Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation said on Sunday that a statement issued by the US Department of State the previous day "fundamentally distorts" realities on the conflicts in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).

The US statement "stands in puzzling contradiction with the substance and tone of the confidence-building process initiated by the US Director of National Intelligence in November 2023, which created a productive framework for de-escalation," the Rwandan foreign ministry statement said.

"Rwanda will seek clarification from the US government to ascertain whether its statement represents an abrupt shift in policy, or simply a lack of internal coordination," the statement said.

The Rwandan foreign ministry was responding to a US State Department statement on Saturday that "strongly condemns the worsening violence in the east-

ern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) caused by the actions of the Rwanda-backed, US- and UN-sanctioned M23 armed group, including its recent incursions into the town of Sake."

"This escalation has increased the risk to millions of people already exposed to human rights abuses including displacement, deprivation, and attacks," the US statement said. "We call on M23 to immediately cease hostilities and withdraw from its current positions around Sake and Goma and in accordance with the Luanda and Nairobi processes."

Goma is the capital of the DRC's North Kivu Province.

"The United States condemns Rwanda's support for the M23 armed group and calls on Rwanda to immediately withdraw all Rwanda Defense Force personnel from the DRC and remove its surface-to-air missile systems, which threaten the lives of civilians, UN and other regional peacekeepers, humanitarian actors, and commercial flights in the eastern DRC," the State Department statement said.

"We call on the government of the DRC to continue to support confidence-building measures, including ceasing cooperation



Residents flee fighting between M23 rebels and Congolese forces near Kibumba, some 20 km from North of Goma, Democratic Republic of Congo, on Oct 29, 2022. AP

with the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR), an armed group named as a 'negative force' by regional bodies and the government of the DRC, and which exposes the civilian population to risk," the US statement added.

Rwanda, in its statement on Sunday, said it considers the FDLR as a terrorist group whose elements are linked to the 1994

genocide, when about 1 million people, mostly of the Tutsi community and moderate Hutus, were killed by Hutu extremists in a span of 100 days.

"It was the US Department of State which in December 2001 added FDLR -- then known as 'ALIR a.k.a. Interahamwe, ex-FAR' -- to the Terrorist Exclusion List under the provisions of the Patriot Act, after the group mur-

Lawyer with visual impairment in North China's Tianjin inspires many like him

AT an accessibility communication center named Xinzhiuguang, which means "the light of heart," in north China's Tianjin municipality, Wang Hui was sitting in front of a computer, preparing for a speech to be delivered at a conference in the afternoon.

Wang was invited by Tianjin's municipal health commission to provide an interpretation of relevant policies in internet information accessibility, so as to assist in the construction of accessible medical service information platforms.

Wang is the first person with visual impairment in Tianjin to obtain a legal professional qualification. In high school, Wang was diagnosed with optic atrophy, and doctors advised him to transfer to a school for visually impaired students, as they believed he would not be able to pass the college entrance exams.

However, Wang refused to give up and said, "How would I know if I don't even try?" In the end, with several times the effort of an average person, he was admitted to Lanzhou University, a renowned higher institution in northwest China's Gansu province.

In his sophomore year, Wang's eye disease worsened, forcing him to take a one-year leave from university. However, he decided to go back to campus, hoping to graduate successfully like his fel-

low classmates. Unable to see, he relied on recording and listening repeatedly. In 2008, he became the first graduate of his university with visual impairment.

Wang Hui is optimistic and loves to ponder. Whenever he encounters problems in mobility, daily life, or work, he takes note of them and seeks out others to discuss possible solutions. His go-to phrase is, "There's always a way, and I just need time to find it." If he doesn't know how to use a new product, he requests a user manual from customer service. And if he notices design details that overlook the practical needs of individuals with visual impairment, he isn't hesitant to provide direct feedback.

In the past, what persons with visual impairment read was only braille and their entertainment is nothing else but listening to the radio. To solve this problem, Wang has spent over a decade working with friends to develop screen reading software, tackle information barriers and teach persons with visual impairment to use cell phones and computers.

Zhao, 60, who lost her sight due to illness, came to Wang to learn how to use a cell phone. Staying from 9 am to 5 pm, she told Wang, "It's so great to have your help, and this makes me confident again in my future."

An elderly learner with full visual impairment sent a poem to a



Wang makes courseware with a laptop.

friend through his mobile phone after learning there. Upon receiving a reply, he expressed his gratitude to Wang, holding the latter's hand. "Wang, thank you! You are the eyes for us," the elderly learner said. In the past, Wang's focus was on technology. However, the gratitude and expectations for him from his learners made him realize he could do even more.

The power of an individual is limited, so Wang started thinking how to make the society pay more attention to the visually impaired group and build an accessible environment for persons with disabilities. He believes in addition to technology, legal protection is also needed.

Ten years after graduation from university, Wang decided to take the legal professional qualification examination. He got up at 4 am eve-

ry day in order to complete the over 1,500 hours of audio courses. He took electronic notes while listening to the courses, and after finishing work, he kept listening until late at night. This compressed his daily sleep time to only four to five hours.

Being afraid that examinees with visual impairment would be denied entry to examination rooms, Wang wrote a letter to the justice bureau of Tianjin municipality explaining his situation. To his surprise, three or four days later, he received a notification allowing him to participate in the exam.

The justice bureau of Tianjin municipality arranged a separate examination room for Wang, who independently completed all the subjects using screen reading software.

In 2019, Wang successfully

passed the exam and joined a local law firm in Tianjin, becoming the first lawyer with visual impairment in Tianjin. Wang's story has inspired more people with visual impairment to build confidence and make a change.

Wang, after careful consideration, established a Xinzhiuguang smart classroom as an online platform that aims to break geographical barriers and expand the coverage of public services for visually impaired individuals.

To cater to visually impaired individuals with no prior experience in using the internet, he also keeps the brick-and-mortar Xinzhiuguang accessibility communication center to provide legal education, and share knowledge about smart devices and practical life skills. The Yunyangli community in Nankai district, Tianjin, provides a venue for the Xinzhiuguang accessibility communication center.

In 2023, Wang was appointed as an observer for public interest litigation at the People's Procuratorate of Tianjin. During his tenure, Wang handled an administrative public interest litigation case, which aimed to ensure barrier-free access for visually impaired individuals in public transportation. This case was selected as a typical example of accessibility environment construction in public interest litigation by the Supreme People's Procuratorate in 2023. **People's Daily**

TotalEnergies upbeat about Kili International Marathon

By Guardian Correspondent

A LOT of excitement is undoubtedly engulfing the Kilimanjaro Premium Lager International Marathon is just around the corner.

Everybody is now gearing for the money-spinning event as local and international runners look forward to yet another thrilling event that is held under the slopes of Mount Kilimanjaro, the highest free-standing mountain in Africa.

The event, which is in the sporting calendar of the world's governing athletics body, is back this month and will attract more than 11,000 runners in the Kilimanjaro Premium Lager 42 Km, Tigo 21km Half Marathon and Gee Soseji 5km Fun Run.

Indeed no one wants to be left behind. Runners, supporters and sponsors are all eyeing for a place, hence one of the reasons for TotalEnergies has partnered with the event for two years in a row now as a water table sponsor.

"We are committed to being at the center of people's happiness. We are truly delighted to be part of this great event once again to show our support, love and kindness to runners. Since the event promotes the tourism sector, we feel proud of being part of this platform to support the growth of the country's economy,"



TotalEnergies' Legal and Corporate Affairs Director Gertrude Mpangile

says Gertrude Mpangile, the Legal and Corporate Affairs Director of TotalEnergies during a special interview.

She says TotalEnergies first sponsored the Marathon in 2022.

"From what we saw we were convinced to continue supporting this great initiative that supports both athletics and tourism," she says.

She further notes that the Kilimanjaro International Marathon is not only for Tanzanians but also attracts runners from over 56 countries worldwide, which gives them every reason to be part of this initiative.

"We acknowledge the fact that the marathon brings a lot of people in Moshi who in return use different products and

services during their stay, hence boosting the economy of not only this area but the country as a whole," she adds.

She further notes that since running is a good way of promoting healthy living,

TotalEnergies therefore feels obliged to sponsor part of the staff to take part in the marathon.

"We have a running club. Our staff train throughout the year and now it's time to make their presence felt at the Kilimanjaro Marathon. So we wish all the best to all those who intend to travel to Moshi for the prestigious event," says the director.

On TotalEnergies' services, she says they have enhanced their service stations to be one-stop centres, assuring all the travellers of better ser-

vices on their way to and from Moshi.

"Our service experience is of world-class, so participants can be able to fuel their vehicles by using cash, our TotalEnergies cards or mobile money transactions," she says.

She goes on to explain that their fuel has additives that help to clean car engines hence less consumption of fuel.

"We, therefore, encourage all the Kilimanjaro Marathon goers to pass through to our One Stop service stations and enjoy better services to experience quality products and services that we offer from our Bonjour shops," she says, adding that they have other services like lubricants, which are used according to the types of cars.

"We have a Lubricant called Rubia, which is used for diesel and petrol engines. We have Quartz, which ensures good performance of engines. For motorcycles and bajaj we have Hi-Perf 4T 500," she says.

She also points out on the availability of solar lamps at their Bonjour shops.

"We know some people will travel to Moshi at night so these lamps will come in handy as they are easy to carry even in the pockets and can be re-charged using solar," she adds.

The 22nd edition of the Kilimanjaro Premium Lager International Marathon was launched recently at the Salinero Hotel in Moshi, Kilimanjaro region, a clear indication that the marathon is now closer.

Other sponsors for this year's event include Kilimanjaro Premium Lager (main sponsor), Tigo-21km Half Marathon, and Gee Soseji 5 km Fun Run. Water table sponsors include Simba Cement, Kilimanjaro Water, CRDB Bank and TPC Sugar, as well as official partners including GardaWorld Tanzania, CMC Automobiles, Salinero Hotel and suppliers are Kibo Palace Hotel and Keys Hotel.

The race, which will be held on Sunday, February 25, 2024, at the Moshi Cooperative University (MoCU) grounds, has been organized by Kilimanjaro Marathon Company Limited and coordinated in this country by Executive Solutions Limited.

2024 DAM DAM Marathon winners rake in cash prizes

By Correspondent Sabato Kasika

EIGHTEEN winners of the race dubbed 2024 DAM DAM Marathon - bringing together more than 2,000 runners - have received cash prizes amounting to 7.8m/-.

The recent showdown - which included 5km, 10km, and 21-kilometer races - took place in Dar es Salaam - starting at the Leaders Club grounds, heading towards Aga Khan Hospital to Masaki Mwisho, and ending at the grounds.

Herman Sulle and Fabian Nelson - winners of the 21 kilometers race - walked away with 2m/- apiece, and second-place finishers Jonas John and Paul Festo were presented with 1.5m/- apiece.

Dickson Paul and Aloyce Sambu ended third in a 21km race, walking away with cash prizes of 1m/- apiece.

Clouds Media Group's Public Relations Officer, Dotto Bahemu, said the 10 kilometers winners - Jamal Said and Shomary Mohamed - were presented with 1m/- apiece.

"The 2024 DAM DAM Marathon involved a variety of participants... a man and his friend, girlfriend or wife who ran together," Bahemu disclosed.

He mentioned the 10 kilometers race second-placed athletes as John Joseph and Ribertino Robert who got 800,000/- apiece, while third-placed competitors Alfred Sulle and Modest Petro got 500,000/- apiece.

Bahemu pointed out: "The 5 kilometers showdown was won by Elibariki Buko and Emmanuel Josephat who received 500,000/- apiece."

"The showdown's second-placed competitors Gerald Salum and Samuel Nyangora got 300,000/- apiece, while third-placed runners Matthew Jeremiah and Paul Masenza walked away with 200,000/- apiece," he said.

Bahemu stated: "We thank the stakeholders including the Police force - for overseeing safety in the race course, we also thank DSTV, Faras, and Afya Maji for facilitating the hosting of the race."

Chama bolsters Simba SC quest for Premier League top honour

By Correspondent Cheji Bakari, Tanga

THE return of prolific Simba SC central attacking midfielder Clatous Chama in its past two fixtures of the 2023/24 NBC Premier League has seemingly made the Msimbazi Street outfit calm.

The Zambian midfielder has been one of the best footballers at the Msimbazi Street side for the past few years, impressing the side's fanatics with his eye-catching maneuvers, passing skills, and goal-scoring virtuosity.

There was a disturbing atmosphere at the club from November 5, 2023, when it came up against long-time rivals, Young Africans, in the top flight's first phase tie at Benjamin Mkapa Stadium in Dar es Salaam and succumbed to a humiliating 5-1 loss to the latter.

It was a loss that had Simba enduring difficult moments, which included the club facing endless taunts from Young Africans' fanatics.

The defeat not only frustrated the outfit's fans but also annoyed the leaders - prompting the leaders to fire the outfit's head coach - Roberto Oliveira 'Robentinho' - and his technical bench.

Chama and a few other teammates were moreover suspended to pave the way for the investigation of allegations facing them, which came about after the loss.

Simba, then, struggled to register good results given the side managed to notch a draw in clashes against Namungo FC and Kinondoni Municipal Council FC, which also took place in Dar es Salaam.

After a short break to pave the way for the 2024 Mapinduzi Cup and 2023 AFCON which took place in Ivory Coast, this season's NBC Premier League resumed-

with participating sides battling it out in fixtures aiming to conclude the first phase.

The top flight resumption witnessed Simba SC confronting Mashujaa FC at Lake Tanganyika Stadium in Kigoma and recorded a slim 1-0 win.

In the following fixture, which took place at Ali Hassan Mwinyi Stadium in Tabora, the Msimbazi Street outfit played against Tabora United and commanded a 4-0 victory.

It was the first convincing win for Simba SC after the NBC Premier League resumption and it brought about optimism among the otherwise frustrated fans - who slowly got over the past frustrating outcomes.

Simba SC fans' joy seemingly returned after they watched Chama show a stellar performance in the clash against Tabora United.

Chama's impressive footprint saw to it the outfit was well-coordinated in the tie, which was largely dominated by the club which had 60 percent of possession as opposed to Tabora United's 40 percent.

The Zambian player showed he was pivotal to the side's success, executing good passes and dribbles which made it easy for his teammates to torment the opponents.

In the third tie, which saw Simba SC confront Azam FC at CCM Kirumba Stadium in Mwanza, Chama continued showing he is a reliable footballer for the Msimbazi Street club.

The midfielder netted an equalizer for his team, beating the Azam FC shot-stopper with a direct free-kick during the added-on time after Azam FC had led for a long spell via a Pince Dube strike in the 14th minute of the match.

Simba brace for Champions League showdown without two key players

By Correspondent Seth Mapoli

SIMBA SC embarked on a crucial journey at dawn on Tuesday, departing Tanzania for Ivory Coast. Their destination is a pivotal CAF Champions League Group B clash against ASEC Mimosas on Friday.

However, the air is thick with a mix of anticipation and concern, as goalkeeper Ayoub Lakred is sidelined due to a three-match suspension accumulated through yellow cards.

Lakred's absence is undoubtedly a setback, but Simba isn't throwing in the towel. Seasoned goalkeeper Aishi Manula stands tall, ready to don the gloves and shield the net. Manula's experience and recent performances, where he seamlessly stepped in during teammate injuries, inspire confidence.

Currently perched in Group B with five points, Simba need victories to solidify their path towards the quarter-finals. Their opponents, ASEC Mimosas, already secured qualification with a comfortable 10-point lead.

A win for Simba would be a game-changer, setting the stage for their upcoming match against Jwaneng Galaxy on March 2.

Simba will also be without the services of attacking midfielder Willy Leandre Onana for their



Simba Sports Club goalie Ayoub Lakred in action during their NBC Premier League match against JKT Tanzania recently. Lakred will miss the CAF Champions League match against ASEC Mimosas. PHOTO: COURTESY OF SIMBA SC

upcoming match against the Ivory Coast side due to injuries.

Onana, who played a pivotal role by contributing to both goals scored by Simba in their last CAF Champions League encounter against Wydad Casablanca on December 19, 2023, at the Benjamin Mkapa Stadium, has currently showcased his talent and prowess on the field.

While Lakred and Onana's absence is significant, ASEC Mimosas also bear the weight of a major loss. Their star striker and current Champions League top scorer, San-kara Karamoko, recently signed with Wolfsberger AC, leaving a gaping hole in their attack.

Prior to his departure,

Karamoko dominated the league with four goals and an assist.

The two teams last locked horns on November 25, last year, in Dar es Salaam, where a 1-1 draw unfolded. While this might offer Simba a psychological edge, history whispers a cautionary tale. The last time they faced off in Ivory Coast during the 2022 Confederations Cup, ASEC Mimosas roared to a decisive 3-0 victory.

However, Simba are not fazed by these challenges. They enter this match with unwavering determination, ready to overcome the absence of their two stars and exploit ASEC Mimosas' own setbacks.

The team's fighting spirit and proven track record against formidable oppo-

nents fuel their belief in a positive outcome. Friday's encounter promises to be an electrifying battle, with both sides yearning for victory. Simba, despite missing key players, carry the hopes of a nation on their shoulders.

Can they silence the roar of the crowd in Ivory Coast and emerge victorious? Only time will tell, but one thing is certain: this match will be a spectacle not to be missed.

At the crack of dawn yesterday, Simba took flight from Dar es Salaam, setting their sights on Ivory Coast and the crucial rematch in the CAF Champions League.

The contingent, composed of 22 determined players and their dedicated technical staff, em-

barked on their journey early Tuesday morning, eager to conquer the challenge that awaits them.

The complete roster of players making the trip includes:

Goalkeepers: Aishi Manula, Ally Salim, and Hussein Abel.

Defenders: Shomari Kapombe, Israel Patrick, David Kame-ta Duchu, Mohamed Hussein, Henock Inonga, Che Fondoh Malone, Kennedy Juma, and Hussein Kazi.

Midfielders: Babacar Sarr, Sadio Kanoute, Fabrice Ngoma, Mzamiru Yassin, Abdallah Khamis, Saido Ntibazonkiza, Kibu Denis, Luis Miquissone, and Clatous Chama.

Strikers: Pa Omar Jobe and Freddy Michael Kouablan.



Free-scoring Arsenal want to win it all, says Odegaard

LONDON

MARTIN Odegaard has urged Arsenal to use the momentum from their recent goal spree to fuel the club's historic bid for Champions League and Premier League glory.

The Gunners head to Porto today for the first leg of their Champions League last 16 tie in buoyant mood after demolishing Burnley 5-0 last weekend.

Mikel Arteta's side have started a calendar year with five successive league wins for the first time in their history, scoring 21 goals in those games.

Arsenal are just two points behind Premier League leaders Liverpool and can turn their attention to Porto safe in the knowledge they are firmly in the hunt for a first title since 2004.

As well as reigning supreme in England for the first time in 20 years, the north Londoners are convinced they can also conquer Europe.

Arsenal have never won the Champions League - losing their only final appearance against Barcelona in 2006.

Buoyed by the recent string of high-scoring wins, Gunners captain Odegaard is confident his team can mount a thrilling bid for both trophies.

"That's what we want to do, we want to compete in every competition we play in," the Norway midfielder said. "Of course Champions League is a massive one, so we are excited for it."

"We just want to focus on ourselves each game, keep improving every game and we will see how it goes. We are in a good moment now. We have to use that momentum, keep building on it and we will see."

Arsenal lost their opening game of the year to Liverpool in the FA Cup.

Revitalised by a warm-weather training camp in Dubai, they crushed Crystal Palace 5-0 and beat Nottingham Forest. They put Liverpool to the sword in a 3-1 league victory that served notice of Arsenal's hunger to make amends for last season's late collapse in the title race.

They then thrashed West Ham 6-0 before crushing Burnley.

Porto, a disappointing third in the Portuguese league, could be next to suffer against Arsenal's suddenly ruthless attack.

For much of the season, critics suggested Arsenal's lack of a genuine penalty-box predator could ruin their title chances.

Gabriel Jesus's recurring injury problems have hardly helped but, even with the Brazilian playing just twice in 2024, Arsenal have been scoring with ease.

"I think that's what we were missing a little bit in the last few weeks before the break. We created so much but we didn't score the goals," Odegaard said.

"But within the last few games, we've been brilliant in front of goal. We get so many people in the box and so many situations around the box."

England winger Bukayo Saka has been one of the key figures in Arsenal's blistering run. Stopping him will be an essential part of Porto's game-plan at the Estadio do Dragao.

The 22-year-old scored twice against Burnley, giving him seven goals in his last seven games.

"The boss told us we're the first Arsenal team to win five in a row at the start of the year, so it's a nice achievement and we'll definitely build momentum going forward," he said.

"Not only that I'm playing well, the team's playing well and we're scoring a lot of goals because we've got some really important fixtures coming up, starting on Wednesday."

"I can't wait to go there. I'm really excited, looking forward to it and hopefully we can take this form into that game as well."

AFP



Arsenal have more than recent history to rewrite in UEFA Champions League

By Miguel Delaney

OVER the past few days, some of the Arsenal squad have been playing the Champions League theme to each other. There's a giddiness around the travelling group, that has been amplified by the team's raucous recent form. It is a welcome reminder of how the gravitas of the competition can still bring a simple thrill, even as it faces bigger questions.

The Arsenal players feel this is where they should be every season. Instead, Mikel Arteta has actually been preparing for the club's first Champions League knockout tie in seven years. There is more to rectify than that underwhelming stat, though.

For all that Arsenal became a fixture in the competition under Arsene Wenger, famously reaching the last 16 for 16 consecutive seasons, their name has remained missing from the only place that matters most. That is the pantheon of champions.

There's a fair argument that Arsenal are the biggest club to never win the competition, and maybe the most underperforming. That is about more than just a huge global profile, which has seen them dwarf two-time European champions in FC Porto. Arsenal have won 13 domestic titles, which is more than any other club from the five major leagues to never win the Champions League. The next closest are Paris Saint-Germain and Atletico Madrid, both on 11. Those two have also been in many more semi-finals and finals more recently, against Arsenal's two appear-



Arsenal's Martin Odegaard (L) and Bukayo Saka are dreaming of Champions League and Premier League glory. Agencies

ances in the last four in history. A great club should have a far better European heritage.

And yet there may now be a twist to that.

Although the ambition to emulate the 2003-04 title winners has come to drive Arsenal since last season, there is the possibility that the Champions League may offer a better chance of victory, as well as the opportunity to go one better than their celebrated predecessors. It is something at the back of the squad's mind, even as Arteta tries to ensure focus.

Through that, this last-16 tie against Porto actually touches on a lot of modern themes in European football. In previous years, it would have felt a properly exacting tie for Arsenal. Porto are after all one of the great continental names themselves, and have won more or

as many Champions Leagues than half of the Super League 12. Their two from 1987 and 2004 are the same as Chelsea and Juventus, and more than Tottenham Hotspur, Atletico Madrid, Arsenal and of course the reigning champions Manchester City.

The economics of European football have instead ensured that Porto just couldn't generate enough revenue to truly compete at that kind of level. Their television market in the Portuguese league has been too small, which is part of the reasons why there is now a renewed push for regional leagues at Uefa level. Within that, even a recruitment model that Porto had perfected - especially in bringing in the best young players from South America - was never going to keep going indefinitely. There

were always going to be drop-offs. They probably had a longer and better run than might have been fairly expected. It has played into a grand battle over the future of the club, as former manager Andre Villas Boas has pitched to become president. Benfica and Sporting have meanwhile overtaken them in bringing through Portugal's impressive succession of youthful talent.

It is indicative that, in rebuilding this new era at Arsenal, Porto were one of the clubs that Edu and the staff looked at. The main model around 2020 was what Borussia Dortmund had been, in bringing through promising young players into something that multiplied their abilities, but Porto had been the originators.

Now, even as Arsenal have admirably built an exciting new team again, it is their very place in

the biggest TV market of all that amplifies their chances this season. European football has got to the point where merely being a Premier League club and getting through the groups means they simply have to be among the favourites for the Champions League. Arsenal can represent a necessary counterweight to City along with Real Madrid and possibly Internazionale, especially amid Bayern Munich's struggles.

All of that is admittedly worsened by what feels a forgiving raft of last-16 clubs, but the wider trends are clear.

It's even hard not to feel that, if Manchester United had managed to weather their bad spell before Christmas to get through, they could be eyeing up a chance at glory.

Looming over all of this are of course the European champions themselves. Arsenal have first-hand experience of what City can do to a team when it really matters, as was witnessed in last season's relentless run to the treble. Arteta probably didn't feel much better about watching Real Madrid get blitzed in an even more forgiving fashion than his own team did.

And yet it is that very City quality that conversely gives Arsenal a better chance in the Champions League than the Premier League.

In domestic football, after all, the sheer force of numbers means City will dominate virtually all games. They can slip up in individual fixtures, as they did against Chelsea at the weekend, but the expectation is still that they will get at least 85+ points. It might be over 90 if they go on any

kind of run similar to last year.

Either way, the threshold is high. One bad result can't do that much damage.

That isn't the case in Europe, though. As Pep Guardiola well knows, one bad night can undo an entire campaign. Arteta saw this first-hand given he was the City manager's assistant for the eliminations of 2016-17 through to 2018-19.

Two of those, to Liverpool and Tottenham Hotspur, were to English rivals who finished below City in the league those seasons. It points to the peril and peculiar dynamics of one-country ties, that may even play into Arsenal's hands if they do meet the champions.

Arteta would of course caution his players and anyone else that it is wildly getting ahead of themselves to think like that.

Porto are a highly respectable team that have to be beaten first, before Arsenal can even consider anything else. He has made sure this is the attitude his players go into the game with. This isn't to be taken for granted, especially against a club with such a great record.

At the same time, this is nothing like the last Champions League knock-out that Arsenal faced. That was against a Bayern Munich team still close to a peak, and their 10-2 aggregate evisceration of Arsene Wenger's side hastened the French great's departure. It was always one of his laments that he didn't do more in Europe.

Arteta can rectify that. The reality is that it would be a profound upset if Porto knocked out Arsenal.

THE INDEPENDENT

All change again at crisis club Napoli as Barca come to town

NAPLES

NAPOLI are once again trying to start afresh as they face Barcelona in the Champions League after sacking their second manager of a disastrous season.

With the Italian champions ninth in Serie A and in a worse position than they were under the first casualty of this wretched campaign, Rudi Garcia, Walter Mazzarri was sacked on Monday night after just three months in charge.

To replace him Napoli's outspoken owner Aurelio De Laurentiis has plumped for Slovakia coach Francesco Calzona, who has the daunting task of Barca at home for his first match in charge of a top-tier club.

As well as being a glamorous fixture, today's last 16, first-leg clash is a key match for Napoli as the competition is their only chance to grab some glory from a season in which their defence of a historic third league title has long since end-



Francesco Calzona

ed. Napoli are a whopping 27 points behind league leaders Inter Milan and their chances of qualifying into next season's revamped Champions League are slim, even if Italy wins a fifth spot.

Calzona's new team are nine points behind both fourth-placed Atalanta and Bologna in fifth, and have shown little sign of being able to claw back that gap, failing to score in nine of Mazzarri's matches in all competitions.

But Victor Osimhen should be newly

available as he continues his post-Africa Cup of Nations comeback in training on Monday.

Before being sacked Mazzarri said that he "hoped" Osimhen would be able to start against Barca as Napoli have been struggling to score.

"It's always painful to sack a friend," said De Laurentiis in a short interview with Sky Sport on Monday, but Mazzarri won just four of 12 Serie A matches since taking over, collecting 15 points.

That is even less than the 21 that Garcia managed from his 12 league matches in charge, a total that had Napoli fourth when the French-

man was dismissed.

Calzona, who has guided Slovakia to Euro 2024, has been charged by De Laurentiis with giving Napoli army of fans "something extra" to get them back onside.

The 55-year-old faces a huge job at the club where he was an assistant under Maurizio Sarri and during Luciano Spalletti's trophy-less first season with the club.

The 55-year-old Calzona will reportedly keep his job with Slovakia while also trying to drag Napoli back up the table after the disappointing end to Mazzarri's brief second spell in charge of southern Italy's biggest club.

Mazzarri brought Napoli out from the doldrums between 2009 and 2013, winning the Italian Cup to claim the club's first trophy in over two decades.

He left in May 2013 after finishing second in Italy's top flight with a thrilling team which boasted Ezequiel Lavezzi, Marek Hamsik and Edinson Cavani in attack.

Now Napoli have entrusted a former assistant with salvaging something from this season, a choice which is unlikely to inspire fans who have watched their team crash and burn from the highest of heights.

AFP

Gwiji by David Chikoko



SPORT

Free-scoring Arsenal want to win it all, says Odegaard

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Simba's Benchikha confident of Champions League quarterfinal progress



Simba Sports Club players arrive at the Julius Nyerere International Airport in Dar es Salaam yesterday morning ready for their trip to Abidjan, Ivory Coast where they will face ASEC Mimosas in their CAF Champions League Group B match on Friday. PHOTO: COURTESY OF SIMBA SC

By Guardian Correspondent

THE Minister for Culture, Arts and Sports, Dr Damas Ndumbaro, is expected to grace this year's Kilimanjaro Premium Lager International Marathon slated for Sunday, February 25.

The organizers called on the participants to observe the announced times to avoid inconveniences and also called on those collecting numbers for their friends or relatives to ensure they have copies of their identity cards or consent letters allowing the representatives to collect on their behalf.

Simba's Benchikha confident of Champions League quarterfinal progress (PICHA: SIMBA)

By Correspondent Michael Webe

SIMBA head coach Abdelhak Benchikha has no doubt that they can pick a positive result in their upcoming Champions League clash with ASEC Mimosas.

The Tanzanian representatives are second in Group B, one point ahead of Botswana's Jwaneng Galaxy while Morocco's Wydad Athletic Club are rock bottom with three points.

Ahead of their crucial encounter with ASEC Mimosas on Friday, Benchikha is confident Simba can get the needed results to secure a place in the last eight of the CAF Champions League.

"It is a big match, very important for us. ASEC Mimosas is top of our group, we must have a good result to qualify for the quarter-finals. We must play, we have a chance and we are ready. All the players are ready for the big match.

"We will play without pressure. We will play our football. We must be strong for our fans, Simba has a lot of fans all over Tanzania. They trust us so we must give them

the pleasure of a good result.

"Qualification to the quarter-finals is our target. We must qualify for the quarters, it is our target. We will play a good game, and we must concentrate on our work," he said.

Benchikha also revealed they will continue missing the service of Willy Onana, who is out with an injury, while Moroccan goalkeeper Ayoub Lakhred is suspended for the game.

"We have Onana out with an injury, Dennis Kibu is also a doubt, but we have two or three days to work on his fitness. Ayoub is suspended but there is Aishi Manula. We trust him as a national team

goalkeeper," said the gaffer.

On Friday, Simba will take on hosts ASEC Mimosas at the Stade Félix Houphouët-Boigny in Abidjan.

A victory or draw against an already qualified ASEC Mimosas side will put them in pole position to grab the remaining group ticket ahead of Jwaneng Galaxy and Wydad.

Simba opened their CAF Champions League group campaign on a disappointing note following a 1-1 draw with ASEC Mimosas at Benjamin Mkapa Stadium in November.

They suffered another setback on matchday two when they failed to claim all three

points in the goalless away draw with Jwaneng Galaxy in Gaborone.

A harsh last-minute goal condemned them to a 1-0 loss in Casablanca against Wydad as they remained winless and bottom of Group B after three games.

They resurrected their qualification hopes with an impressive 2-0 win against Wydad at Benjamin Mkapa Stadium on match day four.

After the West African trip, Simba will quickly regroup for the final CAF Champions League Group Stage game against Jwaneng Galaxy at Benjamin Mkapa Stadium on Saturday, 2 March (19:00 EAT).

Kitambi blames fixture congestion for Geita loss against Ihefu

By Correspondent Michael Mwebe

GEITA Gold head coach Dennis Kitambi has pointed to fixture congestion as the reason his team has struggled against Simba in an NBC Premier League match at Nyankumbu Stadium on Monday afternoon.

Geita Gold, coming from a 2-1 loss over Azam and 1-0 defeat to Simba, were humbled 2-1 in front of their fans with Kitambi terming it as tired legs for his boys.

Speaking after the match, Kitambi noted that his side had played against Simba and Azam only a few days prior and the subsequent travel back to Geita to face Ihefu within 72 hours may have "taken a toll" on his players.

"We were not in the game for the first 15 minutes. It could be because of fatigue but the goals which we conceded quickly in the 6th and 12th minutes gave us a hard time considering that we didn't have much time to rest.

"You saw the performance of our players, they were fatigued. The fixture list has just come out so we have to handle it the way it is. We make changes to refresh the squad as the matches come after every two days. It's something we have to deal with," he said.

His sentiments were echoed by defender Anthony Mligo, who said they were tired after arriving from a long trip a day before the game.

"The game is over, we have lost. We are getting ready for the upcoming game. We have fought as much as we can since we just played the match after a trip from Dar.

"We started the journey after the Azam game and only arrived yesterday and today we played this match which is also a difficult one," said the defender.

As a result of three losses in a row since the resumption of the league, Geita Gold have dropped to position 14 with 16 points having played 16 games.

Kitambi and his charges find themselves back in the relegation zone but they are five points above Mashujaa, who occupy the last automatic relegation spot.

There is no time for rest as they have a Federation Cup home game against Championship side Mbeya City at Nyankumbu Stadium tomorrow.

On Sunday, Geita Gold are expected to face Mashujaa at home before hosting Kagera Sugar three days later as matches come quick and fast.

Home advantage: Coach Chevalier's strategy as Asec Mimosas gear up to face reshaped Simba

By Correspondent Seth Mapoli and Agencies

JULIEN Chevalier, the seasoned coach of ASEC Mimosas, is feeling the weight of expectation ahead of the pivotal CAF Champions League encounter against Simba SC.

The absence of their prolific striker, Sankara Karamoko, who boasts an impressive track record of four goals in four tournament matches and seven in the league, adds to the pressure.

"Over the past two weeks, I faced the challenge of rebuilding our attack line in the absence of Sankara Karamoko, who was sold during the January transfer window to Wolfsberger AC in the Austrian Pre-

mier League," explained coach Chevalier

Additionally, the tactician stated: "Our opponents have introduced new players and undergone significant team changes since our last encounter. However, we take comfort in the fact that we'll be playing on our home turf."

Despite this setback, ASEC Mimosas can still rely on Serge Pokou, who previously found the net against Simba SC and holds a commendable record of four league goals and one in the CAF Champions League.

With 10 points secured, ASEC Mimosas have already secured a berth in the quarter-finals, but their aim is to consolidate their position atop the group.

Simba, currently trail-



ASEC Mimosas coach Julien Chevalier. (Agencies)

ing with five points, present a new attacking force led by Freddy Koublan and Pa Omary Jobe.

However, their collective tally of three goals in five matches across all competitions pales in comparison to Karamoko's prowess.

Coach Chevalier acknowledges the formidable challenge Simba poses, emphasizing their intent to approach the match with the urgency of a final. With two more CAF Champions League matches remaining, ASEC Mimosas target securing two to three points to cement their group leadership.

The departure of Karamoko necessitated a rigorous rebuilding of the team's attacking line-up, intensifying the preparations for the up-

coming clash. Despite the changes, Chevalier remains steadfast in her commitment to home advantage, underscoring the team's readiness for the challenge ahead.

ASEC Mimosas' dominance in Group B, underscored by their 10-point haul, contrasts sharply with Simba's inconsistent away form.

Simba's recent history at ASEC Mimosas' turf reflects a pattern of struggle, having suffered defeats in their last two encounters.

The upcoming fixture on Friday in Ivory Coast carries significant weight for the Msimbazi Street side, who have redirected their focus following the postponement of a Tanzania Mainland Premier League match against Mtibwa.

Flexibles by David Chikoko



TO NIGHT @ 9:00

EATV THURSDAY

11:00 DADAZ
12:00 KIPENGA XTRA
13:00 Movie
13:55 Dondoo za Michezo
14:00 Movie
14:30 Ujenzi (r)
15:00 Funguka
15:30 Ubongo Kids
16:00 Zote Kuntu
16:55 Dondoo za Michezo
17:00 SSELEKT
17:55 Kurasa
18:00 Kall Za Wana
18:30 #HASHTAG
19:00 EATV SAA 1
20:00 DADAZ (r)
21:00 TOP 10
21:30 Zote Kuntu
23:00 Kurasa
23:05 EATV SAA 1

TOP 10
It is a list of the hottest Bongo Flava music videos that are loved by the viewers

eastafrica RADIO

05:00 Supa Breakfast
09:00 MAMAMIA
12:00 Kipenga Xtra
13:00 Planet Bongo
16:00 EA Drive
19:00 Kipenga
21:00 The Cruise

88.1FM
DAR ES SALAAM