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ISSN 0856 - 5434 ISSUE No. 9379• PRICE: Tsh 1,000, Kenya sh100 TANZANIA SATURDAY 18 JANUARY, 2025



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Govt allocates funds for local books purchase, internet access

By Correspondent Joseph Mwendapole

THE government has announced plans to improve cultural budgeting in the 2025/2026 financial year to facilitate purchase of locally produced books.

Prof. Rwekaza Mukandala, the Tanzania Library Services Board (TLSB) chairman, made this observation when opening a two-day meeting with publishers and book writers at the central library in Dar es Salaam.

The move is intended to encourage local writers and publishers, thus promoting the widening of functional literacy across the country, he said.

Discussion would focus on implementation of the legal deposit law in the national integrated internet library, and the importance of purchasing local books to devel

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CCM National Chairperson President, Dr. Samia Suluhu Hassan, chaired the party's National Executive Council (NEC) meeting in Dodoma yesterday. Left is the CCM Vice Chairman for Zanzibar and President of Zanzibar, Dr. Hussein Ali Mwinyi, and the CCM Secretary General, Ambassador Dr. Emmanuel Nchimbi (R). Photo: State House

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Munguwa vows to prepare Taifa Stars for success ahead of CHAN 2024

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Pak Stars A trounce Patel Brotherhood A in 2024 TCA DC Super League

Global nutritional NGO wants faster changes in food resilience systems

GENEVA

A ground-breaking study, published early this week in Nature Food, a nutritional branch of the science journal Nature, has presented experts with the first comprehensive analysis of change since 2000 in key food system indicators.

Lawrence Haddad, executive director of Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN) said in a circulated summary that this new report reveals a mix of encouraging advancements and concerning setbacks.

This underscores the urgency of accelerating food systems transformation since, as this report shows, trade-offs are inevitable between food system goals such as jobs, climate, nutrition, food security and resilience, he said.

GAIN is a non-profit foundation established in 2002 to address malnutrition by working with governments, businesses and civil society to improve food systems.

The report, titled 'Governance and resilience as entry points for transforming food systems in the countdown to 2030' identifies governance and resilience as pivotal leverage points for food system transformation.

Targeted improvements in these areas could catalyse positive changes across other indicators, amplifying global progress, he said in the remarks, insisting that stronger governance and better data

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MPs receive TUCTA proposals for labour law amendments

By Augusta Njaji, Dodoma

THE Trade Union Congress of Tanzania (TUCTA) has proposed nine amendments to the Labour Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2024, calling for significant adjustments to en-

sure better protection of workers' rights.

Tumaini Nyamhokya, the TUCTA president made this remark at a press conference here yesterday after the Social Welfare and Community Development standing committee of the Na-

tional Assembly had received the proposals.

TUCTA is advocating for extending proposed unpaid emergency leave from 30 days to five years, to better support employees in critical personal circumstances such as leadership roles

or educational pursuits.

It also proposes changes to maternity leave provisions, particularly for mothers of premature babies, urging that the leave

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Former Ambassador, Dr. Wilbroad Slaa (C), was under the custody of prison officers as he was escorted out of the Kisutu Resident Magistrate's Court in Dar es Salaam yesterday, heading to remand after being denied bail over charges of publishing false information online. Photo: Correspondent Imani Nathaniel

ZEC lists 78,922 new voters as per 2022 census

By Guardian Reporter, Pemba

THE Zanzibar Electoral Commission (ZEC) is set to register 78,922 new voters who have turned 18, based on the 2022 Population and Housing Census, in the second phase of the voter registration process for the 2025 general election.

Judge George Kazi, the ZEC chairman, made this observation at a stakeholders meeting at the Zanzibar House of Representatives hall in Wete, Pemba.

The registration exercise will commence in Micheweni district on February 1, and conclude in Urban District on March 17, he said,

noting that the registration is the last phase of voter registration ahead of the polls.

The meeting was convened to discuss the progress and gather feedback on the upcoming voter registration process, he said.

"ZEC has established a protocol for engaging stakeholders when-

ever important issues arise, seeking their input to enhance efficiency of the registration exercise, he said, he said, urging eligible citizens to take part in the process.

It is their constitutional right to participate in the election, he said, asking those eligible to turn up at ZEC offices across the districts dur-

ing working hours.

"I encourage eligible citizens to exercise their right to register and participate in the 2025 election. The registration offices are open for services during working hours,

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Govt allocates funds for local books purchase, internet access

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op the domestic market, he stated.

"The allocation of a large budget to purchase local books in this financial year highlights the government's commitment to supporting Tanzanian writers and publishers," he said.

"By purchasing books that reflect Tanzanian culture and content we aim to preserve and promote our heritage," the don affirmed, underlining that the government's efforts are expected to boost motivation for local authors and publishers.

This would encourage greater participation in the promotion of knowledge and education through books. "We expect that this initiative will inspire many Tanzanian authors and publishers to actively contribute to the dissemination of knowledge," he declared.

Meeting participants need to use the event as a platform to discuss opportunities arising from the implementation of the deposit law and the book purchasing process, he stated.

"Your ideas are vital in improving our work and expanding the local book market," he asserted, highlighting efforts to

preserve book publications for current and future generations.

The deposit law is critical for ensuring that all publications in Tanzania are stored in the nation's central library, helping to preserve the country's cultural and intellectual heritage, he further noted.

The TLSB has developed a digital platform that allows for the storage, access and distribution of publications to local and international users, he affirmed, stressing that this is an excellent opportunity for authors and publishers to showcase local works globally.

He cited ongoing cooperation efforts with various stakeholders to implement the deposit law and help develop the publishing sector, as an integrated national online library would play a key role in promoting the digital economy.

It would facilitate access to digital books, enabling online book registration and enhancing book distribution in the local market.

"The digital library system will enable the wider distribution of books and support the local market, fostering economic growth through technological advancements," he added.



A section of CCM National Executive Council (NEC) members attend meeting in Dodoma yesterday. From (L-R) are Vice President Dr Philip Mpango, Prime Minister Kassim Majaliwa, Zanzibar Second Vice President Hemed Suleiman Abdullah, National Assembly Speaker Dr Tulia Ackson, Zanzibar House of Representative Speaker Zubeir Ali Maulid and Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Energy, Dr Doto Biteko. Photo: State House

Global nutritional NGO wants faster changes in food systems

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"the negative trade-offs can be mitigated and even flipped into synergies."

"This report helps us to understand how to do this and accelerate progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)," he said.

Jessica Fanzo, professor of climate and director of the food for humanity initiative at the Columbia Climate School in New York, said that the world needs wholesale reform of its

food systems.

This way it could provide the world's population with the nutritious food needed to grow and develop, she said, underlining that "the world is facing a syndemics of challenges: increasing diet related disease, continued under nutrition, and a changing climate."

Combating these challenges requires significant and rapid change, she emphasized, noting that the

study is vital because it shows the speed of change so far, "to guide more action as we can only manage what we measure."

José Rosero Moncayo, chief statistician at the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) said that the report provides a clear roadmap for evidence-based policymaking.

"As we enter the final five years of the SDG process, we have to double down on areas of progress while addressing persistent gaps, keeping the

interconnectedness of food systems at the forefront," he said.

At the same time efforts are needed to improve the pool of indicators available to describe and analyse different elements of the system, he further noted.

The peer-reviewed research was conducted by the food systems countdown initiative (FSCI), a collaboration of leading experts and organizations, coordinated by Columbia University, Cornell University, FAO, and GAIN, the report indicates.



Deputy Director of Criminal Investigations (D/DCI), Zuberi Chembera, addresses regional police commanders and officers in Zanzibar yesterday regarding the security assessment for the period from January to December 2024. Photo: Correspondent.

ZEC lists 78,922 new voters as per 2022 census

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and I urge everyone to come forward," he said.

All stakeholders and the public need to maintain peace throughout the registration period, as has been achieved in Pemba, he said, assured that cooperation would ensure a smooth electoral process.

Thabit Idarous Faina, the ZEC director, said at the meeting that ZEC would be providing updates on the registra-

tion process and maintenance of the permanent voter register.

ZEC plans to release lists of voters who have lost eligibility or have updated their information, as outlined in Sections 19 and 31 of the Election Act No. 4 of 2018. The list will be made available during the second phase of voter registration, he said.

Mobile SMS services use will allow voters to check their registration status using any registered mobile network

free of charge, he said, asking stakeholders to help spread the word about the registration process.

"It is crucial that eligible voters bring their Zanzibar resident identification cards to the registration centers," he declared, while Maulid Ame Mohammed, the ZEC head of legal services, reiterated the importance of legal compliance in the voter registration process.

The Zanzibar Constitution of 1984 affirms that all citizens

who have reached the age of 18 have the right to register and vote in elections.

Awadh Ali Said, a ZEC commissioner, at the conclusion of the meeting urged stakeholders to understand their roles and responsibilities, upholding honesty in addressing challenges that may arise during the registration process.

The exercise must be carried out efficiently and peacefully, he appealed, while Juma Kombo Hijja, coordinator of the Zanzibar Association of

the Disabled, advised political parties to encourage voters to use respectful language that promotes peace.

Provocative statements could deter disabled individuals from participating in the registration process, he cautioned the meeting attended by election stakeholders including public and private institutions, political parties, special interest groups, security agencies and media representatives.

WHO unveils \$1.5 bn health emergency bid for global crises

GENEVA

THE World Health Organisation (WHO) has launched US\$ 1.5 billion Health Emergency Appeal (HEA) to tackle the unprecedented global health crises exacerbated by conflict, climate change, epidemics, and displacement.

With 305 million people in urgent need of humanitarian assistance in 2025, this appeal seeks to provide life-saving health interventions to those in the most vulnerable situations.

WHO Director-General, Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, announced the appeal

on Thursday, outlining the critical priorities and resources required to address 42 ongoing health emergencies, including 17 Grade 3 crises—the most severe emergencies demanding the highest level of response.

With strained health systems and dwindling

global financial resources, the US\$ 1.5 billion is crucial for responding to these pressing needs.

"Conflicts, outbreaks, climate-related disasters, and other health emergencies are no longer isolated or occasional - they are relentless, overlapping, and intensifying," said Dr

Tedros. "This appeal is about enabling WHO to save lives, protect the right to health, and provide hope where there is none."

WHO's emergency response will focus on providing essential health care in conflict zones like the Democratic Republic of the

Congo, Sudan, and the occupied Palestinian territories. Efforts will prioritize medical supplies, treating malnutrition, supporting maternal and child health, conducting vaccination campaigns, and offering mental health services to trauma-affected populations.

MPs receive TUCTA ideas for labour law amendments

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period be extended until the child reaches 40 weeks of age, instead of 36 weeks in the current draft, he said.

Additionally, TUCTA is seeking to ensure that maternity leave and child care leave are treated separately, with no overlap between the two, he specified.

The rationale behind these suggestions is to create a more supportive environment for workers balancing family, education and leadership roles, he explained.

Another point of contention in the bill is the proposed removal of the word 'Sunday' from the definition of 'basic salary,' as TUCTA objects to this change, from grounds of respect for tradition, he stated.

'Sunday' needs to be retained 'rest day' can be used without affecting the traditional comprehension, he stated.

In addition, TUCTA expressed concern on expanding the breadth of those included under 'senior management employee,' which, under the bill, refers to all those with authority to hire, discipline and terminate employees.

TUCTA fears this breath of inclusion may result in many low level managers being classified as senior managers, "thereby losing their entitlement to basic rights such as overtime pay and union representation," he stated.

Lawmakers need to maintain the current definition as it protects these rights, he said, highlighting a proposal to re-

duce the training period from the proposed 24 months to 12 months.

After that period employees should be hired as full-time staff, a change that would ensure that training periods do not unfairly delay actual employment, he stated.

When emergencies or crises arise, employers should consult with trade unions where applicable, to ensure workers' rights are protected in such situations, to safeguard job security and fair wages during unexpected events, the umbrella body emphasised.

Workers who are subjected to unfair dismissal need to receive compensation in accordance with existing law, rather than the bill's proposal to cap severance pay to a maximum of 12 months' salary, he stated.

TUCTA contends that such a cap would undermine workers' rights and encourage employers to dismiss employees without proper procedures, he further noted.

The legal cadre for negotiations for better working conditions in public institutions should provide for concluding such consultations and a decision set out by the permanent secretary for the relevant ministry within 60 days, not remain open-ended as the bill proposes, the body demands.

It further asserts that only trade unions formally recognised by employers be involved in negotiations on convening workers' councils, thus unions with registered members in a particular workplace are the ones given bargaining rights, he added.

DCEA destroys 185kg of drugs in Arumeru, urges public cooperation

By Guardian Correspondent, Arusha

THE Drug Control and Enforcement Authority (DCEA) in Northern Zone has destroyed 185.35 kg of illicit drugs including 154.35 kg of khat and 31 kg cannabis at Maji ya Chai dumpsite in Arumeru District, Arusha Region.

The destruction, which occurred yesterday, followed all legal procedures, and five suspects were arrested in connection with the drugs.

Innocent Masangula, the Operations Officer for the DCEA in the Northern Zone, confirmed the disposal and urged the public to continue efforts to combat drug abuse.

"The destruction of the substances adhered to legal requirements, with authorization from the Arumeru District Court. The potential harm to public health from retaining these drugs was significant," Masangula stated.

DCEA's Legal Officer, Benson Mwaitenda, emphasized the serious legal consequences for those

involved in the drug trade. He explained that offenders could face prison sentences of up to 30 years or life imprisonment.

Additionally, any vehicles or properties used in trafficking or storing drugs would be confiscated and declared government property.

Beyond law enforcement, the DCEA is committed to raising awareness about the dangers of drug abuse. The authority provides educational outreach to various groups, including students, women, children, and transport workers.

DCEA Northern Zone also collaborates with Civil Society Organizations to offer rehabilitation and support services for drug users.

Merry Komba, one of the residents who witnessed the destruction, commended the government's efforts and urged fellow citizens to abandon the illegal drug trade. She emphasized the devastating effects it has on both the nation and local communities.



Tricycles riders overloaded mattresses on their vessels along Bagamoyo Road, at Mwenge area in Dar es Salaam yesterday, an act that poses a road safety risk. Photo: Correspondent Sabato Kasika

Songwe Region embarks on data-driven strategies to boost health service quality

By Guardian Correspondent, Songwe

AUTHORITIES in Songwe Region have embarked on special strategies to ensure the sustainability of quality health service management and delivery.

The initiatives were outlined by Songwe Regional Medical Officer, Dr Boniface Kasululu, during a special session held on Thursday, at the Tunduma Town Council hospital. The session fo-

cused on reviewing and assessing the quality of health service data.

Dr Kasululu highlighted the critical role of data in the country's health care delivery system.

"Data forms one of the main pillars of health care delivery. However, the quality of data is fundamental for making accurate and effective decisions in providing services to citizens," he said.

He underscored the government's substantial improvements in the health sector, including the acquisition of medical equipment, construction of hospitals and health centres, and recruitment of health personnel.

"Five years ago, Songwe Region lacked a regional hospital, and only three councils had hospitals. Today, every council has a big hospital," Dr Kasululu said.

Despite the advancements, Dr Kasululu identified improving service quality as the region's most significant challenge.

"Our greatest responsibility is to ensure that the services we provide meet the highest standards. As service providers, it is our duty to guarantee citizens receive quality care," he said.

This year, Songwe Region plans to strengthen health service management through col-

laboration among leaders and health workers. Dr Kasululu urged district medical officers, council leaders, and hospital management teams to work together to achieve the goals.

As part of the ongoing efforts, a team of regional experts led by Dr Kasululu will assess health service statistics from October to December 2024.

Over the next two days, the team will visit eight health facili-

ties to evaluate their performance and develop an action plan to enhance the remaining facilities by the end of February 2025.

"This improvement initiative is cost-free, and fortunately, our facilities are easily accessible. Let's ensure we complete this exercise on time," Dr Kasululu said.

He also assured that similar improvements would be extended to all other councils in Songwe Region following this session.



Street food vendors at work along the roadside at Mikocheni Light Industrial area, Kinondoni Municipality in Dar es Salaam, yesterday. The conditions pose a health hazard due to the lack of basic services such as water and toilets. Photo: John Badi

Z'bar to enhance rural power access, address deforestation

By Guardian Reporter, Zanzibar

THE government of Zanzibar has unveiled plans to improve electricity access in rural areas, aiming to reduce reliance on firewood and charcoal, which are contributing to environmental degradation.

Shaibu Hassan Kaduwara, the Minister for Water, Energy, and Minerals, made the announcement this week during a visit to the Unguja North Region, where he met with residents to discuss solutions for electricity challenges and promote alternatives to firewood and charcoal use.

Kaduwara outlined the Ministry's plans for the 2024-2025 financial year, which include expanding electricity access to rural areas and constructing new power lines. The government is committed to adding 220 megawatts to the grid and installing new power lines from mainland Tanzania to Ras Kilomoni, as the current infrastructure can only support 132 KV.

He emphasized that the new power capacity would support a wide range of activities, including industrial development and the growing needs of the tourism sector. Kaduwara acknowledged complaints from hotel owners who have been grappling with frequent power outages due to insufficient electricity supply.

The minister also urged women to embrace the ongoing transition to natural gas as an energy source, moving away

from firewood and charcoal. He noted that deforestation, particularly the cutting of trees for fuel, has become a serious environmental concern in North Unguja and Pemba.

Kaduwara specifically highlighted the alarming scale of mangrove deforestation in Pemba, which threatens coastal ecosystems and exacerbates the impact of climate change. The loss of mangroves has led to rising water levels and increased flooding in coastal areas.

Harusi Said Suleiman, Minister in the First Vice President's Office (Environment), added that there has been growing awareness, particularly among women, about the benefits of using natural gas. He also highlighted government efforts to facilitate this transition, including reducing taxes on gas-related equipment.



Kaduwara specifically highlighted the alarming scale of mangrove deforestation in Pemba, which threatens coastal ecosystems and exacerbates the impact of climate change. The loss of mangroves has led to rising water levels

JICA reaffirms commitment to foster regional development in East Africa

By Guardian Reporter

KATSURA Miyazaki, Executive Senior Vice President of the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) has reaffirmed Japan's commitment to fostering regional development in East Africa.

During her visit to Tanzania, she met with Annette Ssemuwemba Mutaawe, the Deputy Secretary General of the East African Community (EAC), to discuss future collaborative projects aimed at advancing infrastructure, trade, and agriculture across the region.

The meeting, held in Dar es Salaam on Thursday, highlighted the longstanding relationship between JICA and the EAC, a partnership that has flourished for over 20 years. Both leaders emphasized the importance of further strengthening cooperation to accelerate development in key sectors crucial for regional integration.

Miyazaki highlighted JICA's ongoing support, including the dispatch of experts in areas such as customs, infrastructure, and capacity building. She announced that plans are underway to send additional

expertise in rice development, aligning with JICA's efforts to address food security and agricultural productivity in the region.

"We have collaborated closely with the EAC on infrastructure projects, such as One Stop Border Posts (OSBP) and roadside service stations," Miyazaki said. She added, "Looking ahead, we are committed to improving agricultural practices, particularly through rice development, to support the region's long-term food security and economic growth."

As part of the ongoing discussions, Miyazaki also invited

the EAC to participate in the upcoming Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD 9), to be held in Yokohama in August 2025. The conference will provide an important platform for continued dialogue on infrastructure, agriculture, and capacity building.

Deputy Secretary General Mutaawe expressed gratitude for JICA's support in vital sectors such as customs and infrastructure, particularly in the development of OSBPs and vehicle load control systems. She emphasized that food security remains the top priority for the

EAC and welcomed JICA's expertise in rice development.

"We truly value the support JICA has provided, especially in enhancing our customs systems and infrastructure," said Annette. "We are particularly excited about the forthcoming expert on rice development and look forward to expanding our cooperation with JICA in areas such as capacity building and the digitalization of our trade systems."

Mutaawe also proposed new avenues for cooperation, including the digitalization of One Stop Border Posts, drawing on

Japan's expertise in customs operations, and further institutional support, such as providing digital screens and projectors for EAC conferences.

Miyazaki responded positively, noting that the digitalization of OSBPs would be a priority focus for the next JICA expert mission. "Digitalization is a critical component in improving trade efficiency within the EAC, and we are committed to providing expertise in this area," she said.

The visit underscores Japan's continued commitment to strengthening its partnership with the East African Commu-

nity, building on past successes while exploring new opportunities for collaboration. Both leaders agreed to continue their discussions to ensure the successful implementation of joint projects aimed at enhancing regional development.

Ultimately, the meeting marked another important milestone in the longstanding relationship between JICA and the EAC, with both parties pledging to work together towards shared goals of prosperity, economic integration, and sustainable development.



A passenger seated at the front-right side of a Bajaj (three-wheeler) along Malamba Mawili Road at Mbezi area in Dar es Salaam yesterday, an act that is dangerous for road safety risk. Photo: Correspondent Sabato Kasika

Italy commits €400 million to support Tunisia's energy transition initiatives

ROME

ITALY and Tunisia formalised a two-year partnership on Thursday, with Italy pledging 400 million euros to support development initiatives focused on energy transition and the advancement of renewable energy sources.

The new commitment marks a significant increase, doubling Italy's previous financial engagement from the 2021-2023 agreement.

The agreement was signed in a ceremony in Rome by Italian Foreign Minister Antonio Tajani and Tunisian Foreign Minister Mohamed Ali Nafti.

Nafti said: "Energy was a very important point in our talks after signing the energy conversion agreement. This is a very important step that will strengthen the collaboration between us in this vital sector. We will also work on other projects to make our two countries far ahead in terms of energy and to have an energy corridor, if you can say that, to connect Northern Africa with Europe."

In response to inquiries regarding the treatment of migrants from sub-Saharan Africa by Tunisian authorities, Tajani stated, "One may not even agree with some analyses that are being done. We consider Tunisia a safe country, a friendly country. On the other hand, we contribute to the growth of that country and we do not see excessive dangers for Tunisian citizens. Tunisia has also made an important contribution in the fight against illegal immigration and human traffickers."

Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni has prioritised agreements with African nations as part of her development strategy known as the Mattei Plan, named after Enrico Mattei, the founder of the state-owned oil and gas company Eni.

Through the plan, Italy aims to generate jobs and opportunities in Africa, thereby reducing the incentive for individuals to embark on perilous migration journeys across the central Mediterranean.

In her first year in office, Meloni witnessed a substantial increase in migrant arrivals, with approximately 160,000 reaching Italy in 2023.

She attributes the subsequent decline in migrant numbers in 2024 to this policy. According to Frontex, the European border control agency, there has been a 59 percent decrease in crossings along the central Mediterranean route in 2024, largely due to fewer boats departing from Libya and Tunisia.

WB: Global economy stabilises, but rising economies face tougher slog

By Guardian Reporter

THE World Bank's latest Global Economic Prospects report has shown that developing economies, which fuel 60 percent of global growth, are likely to finish the first quarter of the 21st century with the weakest long-term growth outlook since 2000.

Indermit Gill, the World Bank Group's Chief Economist and Senior Vice President for Development Economics said even as the global economy stabilises in the next two years, developing economies are expected to make slower progress

in catching up with the income levels of advanced economies.

"The next 25 years will be a tougher slog for developing economies than the last 25," he said.

Gill added: "Most of the forces that once aided their rise have dissipated. In their place have come daunting headwinds: high debt burdens, weak investment and productivity growth, and the rising costs of climate change."

He said in the coming years, developing economies will need a new playbook that emphasizes domestic reforms to quicken private investment, deepen trade rela-

tions, and promote more efficient use of capital, talent and energy.

Ayhan Kose, World Bank's Deputy Chief Economist and Director of the Prospects Group said: "In a world shaped by policy uncertainty and trade tensions, developing economies will need bold and far-reaching policies to seize untapped opportunities for cross-border cooperation."

Kose noted that a good start for developing economies would be to pursue strategic trade and investment partnerships with the rapidly expanding markets of other developing nations.

"Modernizing transportation infrastructure and standardising customs processes are critical steps to cut unnecessary expenses and foster greater trade efficiency. Finally, sound macroeconomic policies at home will fortify their capacity to navigate the uncertainties of the global outlook," stated Kose.

According to the report, the global economy is projected to expand by 2.7 percent in both 2025 and 2026, the same pace as in 2024, as inflation and interest rates decline gradually.

Growth in developing economies is also expected to hold steady at

about 4 percent over the next two years. This, however, would be a weaker performance than before the pandemic—and insufficient to foster the progress necessary to alleviate poverty and achieve wider development goals.

The World Bank's assessment of the performance of developing economies in the first quarter of the 21st century. It finds that, during the first decade, developing economies grew at the fastest clip since the 1970s.

Yet progress ebbed after the Global Financial Crisis of 2008-09.

Global economic integration faltered: as a share of GDP, foreign direct investment (FDI) inflows into developing economies are at about half the level of the early 2000s.

New global trade restrictions in 2024 were five times the 2010-19 average. As a result, overall economic growth dropped—from 5.9 percent in the 2000s to 5.1 percent in the 2010s to 3.5 percent in the 2020s.

Since 2014, with the exception of China and India, the average per capita growth rates of income in developing economies have been half a percentage point lower than



Babati District Traffic Officer ASP Emmanuel Kandola (R), provides road safety education to school bus drivers during a vehicle inspection exercise in the district earlier this week. Photo: Correspondent

Scrap metal dealers jailed for stealing water meters in Babati

By Correspondent Jaliwason Jasson, Babati

TWO scrap metal dealers have been sentenced to two months in prison by the Babati Primary Court for stealing a water meter belonging to Babati Urban Water Supply and Sanitation Authority (BAWASA) along with other water-related equipment.

The ruling was delivered yesterday by Magistrate Kangida Kalembo, who identified the convicted individuals as Abubakari Sembuli (18) and Abdul Hamza (18). The court found the duo guilty of destroying property in violation of Section 326(1) of the Penal Code, Cap. 16, as amended in 2022.

The two were arrested on December 24 last year at around 1:45 am in Maisaka, at their place of work. They were found in possession of a water meter from BAWASA, which they had intended to sell as scrap metal.

Magistrate Kalembo noted that the defense presented three arguments but concluded that the defendants were deliberately guilty of stealing public property. During their defense, Sembuli stated that his mother is a widow and his younger siblings depend on him for support. Hamza, on the other hand, explained that he has two children to care for.

Following the ruling, Rashid Charahani, the customer service manager at BAWASA, commended the court for delivering justice. Charahani explained that water meters are frequently stolen and resold, and their inspection led to the discovery of stolen meters at scrap metal dealers.

"Water meters are public property, and they should be protected by the community. We urge citizens to report any damage to water infrastructure," Charahani said.

Singida RC orders seizure of assets from individuals implicated in embezzlement

By Guardian Correspondent, Singida

SINGIDA Regional Commissioner, Halima Dendego has ordered the seizure of assets from individuals implicated in the misappropriation of 36m/- in taxes collected by Iramba District Council.

The funds were allegedly collect-

ed by contractors but never deposited into the bank account.

The directive followed a report by Singida Regional Administrative Secretary (RAS), Dr Fatuma Mganga, during the Regional Consultative Committee (RCC) meeting held here yesterday.

Dr Mganga revealed that eight

individuals, including one government employee, are believed to owe over 37m/-. Seven contractors, who were hired to collect taxes, owe 32.5m/-. While an employee, named Dunstan Simpasa, owes 5.03m/-. Simpasa has reportedly agreed with NMB Bank to have 100,000/- deducted from his salary

every month to repay the debt.

The contractors were arrested by the police but later released on bail, and no specific timeline for repayment has been set. However, the Regional Commissioner has now given a deadline of March 30, 2025, for full repayment of the outstanding amounts.

If the debts are not settled by this date, Dendego has instructed that the debtors' assets be seized.

"These individuals have taken government funds, and it's unacceptable for them to return the money at their own pace. The employee who is paying 100,000/- per month will take five years to repay

the money, while we are delayed implementation of development projects for the people," Dendego said.

She expressed her frustration at the misappropriation of government funds and vowed to take a hard stance against such actions in the region.



Dodoma District Commissioner Alhaj Jabir Shekimweri tries his hand at construction during his visit to inspect the progress of the construction of Matumburu Ward Secondary School in Dodoma yesterday. Photo: Correspondent Peter Mkwavila

South Sudan authorities declare nationwide curfew

JUBA

SOUTH Sudan on Friday declared a countrywide curfew after protests targeting businesses owned by Sudanese traders broke out in the capital, Juba on Thursday night.

The dusk-down-curfew, according to South Sudan Police Service (SSPS) will begin from 6pm-6am.

South Sudan police chief, General Abraham Manyat told the state-owned television (SSBC) that members of the law enforcement institution would protect the lives and properties of all the people.

"I would like to assure the citizens that police officers are responsible for their lives and property, they are responsible for public order and public health and the public has the freedom to move and to work, they can do whatever they want," he stated.

According to the police chief, these additional measures being taken are to prevent any transgressions against public and private property.

He further stressed that the police are closely monitoring the situation and called on citizens to report any disturbances, warning that the police

will not tolerate any transgressions and will deal with lawbreakers in accordance with the law.

He said that the night protests were not related to incidents in Sudan, but orchestrated by criminals, while calling for cooperation between the public and the police to ensure security for the citizens.

Gen. Manyat urged citizens to report any criminal activities, adding that the police will not tolerate any violations that harm public security and would deal with perpetrators according to the law.

This development follows the brutal killing of South Sudanese nationals in Sudan's Gezira State following the takeover of the town by the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) from the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) last weekend.

Security forces in Sudan blame Juba for keeping silence on the alleged massive recruitment of South Sudanese by the paramilitary RSF.

The Sudanese armed forces on Tuesday condemned what it called "individual violations" in some parts of Gezira state, and promised that those responsible would be held accountable.

Zanzibar police report decline in human related crimes - DCI

By Guardian Reporter, Zanzibar

ZANZIBAR police have announced a decrease in human-related crimes in the Isles by 12.8 percent, from a total of 1,116 reported cases in 2024, to 1,280 cases reported in 2023.

Zuberi Chembera, the Deputy Director of Criminal Investigations (DCI) in Zanzibar, made the statement on Thursday during a security assessment meeting, which covered the period from January to December 2024.

Chembera mentioned that the crimes

addressed and reported at police stations included murder, rape, sodomy, and other offences. He reported that, for January 2024, there were 829 cases of rape, compared to 927 in 2023, marking a decrease of 98 cases, or 10.6 percent.

Additionally, from January to December 2024, a total of 217 sodomy cases were reported, compared to 309 cases during the same period in 2023, which represents a decrease of 92 cases, or 29.8 percent.

However, crimes related to murder saw an increase. From January to December 2024, 66 murder cases were reported,

compared to 44 in 2023, reflecting an increase of 22 cases, or 50 percent. Chembera stated that many of the murder cases were a result of citizens taking the law into their own hands.

Regarding property-related crimes, 1,855 cases were reported from January to December 2024, compared to 1,585 in the same period in 2023, showing an increase of 270 cases, or 17.0 percent. He also reported that 823 cases of property damage were recorded in 2024, compared to 833 in 2023, reflecting a decrease of 10 cases, or 1.2 percent.

"From January to December 2024, a total of 370 cases of livestock theft were reported, compared to 244 in the same period in 2023. This marks an increase of 126 cases, or 51.6 percent," Chembera said.

Concerning crimes related to social ethics, 174 incidents were reported from January to December 2024, compared to 176 in 2023, showing a slight decrease of 2 cases, or 1.1 percent. The majority of these cases involved drug abuse.

However, from January to December 2024, a total of 302 incidents involving

tourists were reported, compared to 181 in 2023, representing an increase of 121 incidents, or 66.8 percent.

DCI Chembera urged regional police commanders and officers to intensify efforts in preventing crimes such as murder, motorcycle theft, livestock theft, crimes against tourists, and road safety violations—all of which have risen in 2024 compared to 2023.

He also encouraged them to collaborate with the community, security forces, and criminal justice institutions in the execution of their duties.



Tanzania Library Services Board (TLSB) Chairman Prof Rwekaza Mukandala (C) exchanging ideas with the TLSB Director General Dr Mboni Ruzegwa (L) during a meeting with authors and book publishers in Dar es Salaam yesterday. Photo: Correspondent Joseph Mwendapole

UK minister visits SADC to discuss areas of mutual interest, cooperation

By Guardian Reporter and Agencies

SOUTHERN African Development Community (SADC), Dr George Ah-Thew met with the British Minister Lord Collins of Highbury on Wednesday to discuss mutual interests and enhancing cooperation between the United Kingdom and SADC in the realms of diplomacy, socio-economic development and in addressing sexual violence within the SADC regional integration agenda.

Lord Collins serves as the United Kingdom's Deputy Leader of the House of Lords, Government Whip, and Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State in the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office.

He also acts as the government spokesperson for equalities and the Prime Minister's special representative for preventing sexual violence in conflict.

During their meeting at SADC headquarters in Gaborone, Botswana, Lord Collins reiterated the UK's dedication to strengthening its engagement with SADC, emphasizing key areas such as energy, climate change, and infrastructure development.

He highlighted the importance of face-to-face interactions with the SADC Secretariat to continue fostering strong, respectful partnerships for the benefit of both SADC and UK citizens.

"The UK maintains bilateral agreements with several SADC Member States, including the SACUM-UK Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) with South Africa, Lesotho, Eswatini, Namibia, Botswana, and Mozambique. The collaboration at regional level with SADC includes areas such as climate change, water security, regional trade, and wildlife protection," he said. The UK government has committed £12 million to support SADC's Transfrontier Conservation Areas (TFCAs) over six years through the Kavango-Zambezi Transfrontier Conservation Area.

The UK has also endorsed Climate Investment Fund Market Mechanisms, aiming to raise \$7.5 billion over the next decade for adaptation and mitigation initiatives.

Dr Ah-Thew expressed appreciation for the UK's longstanding diplomatic ties and developmental cooperation within the SADC region.

He outlined SADC's readiness to explore new areas for development and cooperation, presenting an overview of the SADC Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP) 2020-2030.

This strategy aspires to transform the region into a peaceful, inclusive, competitive, and industrialized middle- to high-income region, aligned with the United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the African Union's Agenda 2063.

PCCB warns bribe claims in transfer of school pupils

By Guardian Correspondent, Dodoma

THE Prevention and Combating of Corruption Bureau (PCCB) in Dodoma Region has issued a stern warning to Education Officers at the ward and city level, as well as education quality control officers, against soliciting bribes from parents or guardians in exchange for facilitating pupils' transfers.

The Bureau has also condemned the practice of teachers swapping class periods with one another, allowing them to at-

tend to personal duties.

Faustine Malecha, Assistant Investigation Officer from the PCCB in Dodoma, made these remarks yesterday during an educational session with ward-level and city-level education officers, as well as education quality control officers. The session aimed to review the new education curriculum issued by the government.

Malecha stated that those found guilty of such actions will face severe legal consequences. He also addressed the widespread rumours regarding officials asking

parents for money to facilitate student transfers, stressing that this issue is currently under investigation to ensure such practices are eradicated completely.

"There is no reason to ask for bribes from parents to facilitate a pupil transfer. This is an offence, and your duty is to perform the tasks assigned to you when you take up your position," Malecha said.

He further warned that officials involved in such activities must cease immediately, as the PCCB will not hesitate to take strict action against anyone found

guilty of engaging in corruption.

Idda Siriwa, an official from the PCCB Education Desk in Dodoma, urged officers to remain vigilant against corrupt practices, noting that they contribute to national setbacks and hinder development. She emphasised the need for officials in the education sector, particularly at the ward and city levels, to lead the fight against corruption rather than enable it.

Siriwa added that the ongoing educational efforts by the PCCB are crucial, as

failing to address corruption could result in difficulties in understanding the severe consequences of accepting bribes.

Mashaka Manjalloh, the school quality control officer in Dodoma City, thanked the PCCB for reminding them of their responsibilities in executing their daily duties. He acknowledged the importance of the education provided and recognised that corruption remains a significant challenge, particularly when individuals seek assistance from the public to further their professional ambitions.

Nigerians recruited as prison officers in UK homeless, report

ABUJA

SOME Nigerians recruited to work as prison officers in the United Kingdom (UK) have resorted to sleeping in cars and setting up makeshift camps due to the absence of accommodation arrangements, according to a report by The Telegraph.

The UK prison service, grappling with staff shortages, reportedly started sponsoring skilled worker visas after an October 2023 change in visa regulations included prison officers to the list of eligible skilled workers.

However, the report noted that the recruits arrived and expected accommodation to be part of the job package, only to discover that no such provision existed.

The president of the Prison Officers Association (POA), Mark Fairhurst, described the situation as dire, recounting incidents where recruits arrived at prisons with their families and luggage, assuming housing would be provided.

In one case, Fairhurst stated a Nigerian officer who could not afford a 70-mile daily commute resorted to sleeping in his car outside the prison, adding that at another location, recruits set up a camp in a wooded area opposite the prison.

Sources from the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) told The Telegraph that approximately 250 foreign nationals had been sponsored to join the Prison Service after completing Zoom interviews and

vetting processes.

Prison governors noted that foreign applicants, including many Nigerians, constituted up to two-thirds of the 3,500 monthly applications during one period last year, with the president of the Prison Governors' Association, Tom Wheatley, stating that the demand appeared to have been fuelled online by the 'expat Nigerian community.'

He noted that concerns had been raised over language barriers, integration challenges in rural areas, and inadequate preparation for the demands of the role.

Fairhurst also called for a return to in-person interviews, arguing that the current Zoom-based hiring process is insufficient.

He stated that frontline prison officers were often hired without undergoing any face-to-face interviews, and recruits received just six weeks of training, which he argued was insufficient for learning how to manage prisoners effectively.



Fairhurst also called for a return to in-person interviews, arguing that the current Zoom-based hiring process is insufficient



Dar es Salaam Port Acting Director Abed Gallus (3rd L), provides details on the improvements made at the port to a delegation from the Tanzania Business Community during their visit on Thursday to observe the investments made. Others are the Community Chairman Hamis Livembe (3rd R) and the DP World Tanzania Public Relations Manager Elitunu Mallamia (2nd L). Photo: Correspondent Miraji Msala

Preparations underway for Z'bar 'Tourism and Investment Expo'

By Guardian Correspondent, Zanzibar

THE second edition of the Zanzibar Tourism and Investment Expo (ZTI Expo) is set to take place on May 30-31, this year after being rescheduled to avoid overlapping with the general elections.

Zanzibar's Minister for Tourism and Heritage, Mudrik Ramadhan Soraga, made the announcement during a press briefing early this week here, confirming that the

expo, originally planned for October 2024, will be held at Nyamanzi grounds in Unguja West B district.

"We have begun preparations for the Zanzibar Tourism and Investment Expo at Nyamanzi grounds. However, we've rescheduled the event timing due to the general election," Soraga said.

He said Zanzibar President Dr Hussein Ali Mwinyi will inaugurate the expo.

He explained that given the po-

litical climate this year, key figures such as ministers, legislators and other tourism stakeholders will focus on campaigns and constituency matters. Therefore, the decision was made to reschedule rather than delay the significant event.

The minister highlighted that the early announcement will allow stakeholders to confirm their participation and properly prepare for the expo, which is designed to elevate Zanzibar's and Tanzania's

tourism profile globally.

The international event aims to bring together tourism investors and industry professionals from around the world.

Reflecting on the success of the inaugural expo, which took place in October 2024, Soraga shared that the event attracted 500 investors and stakeholders from the tourism sector, both locally and internationally, showcasing a diverse range of products and services.

The minister expressed optimism that this year's expo will exceed expectations, attracting over 1,000 participants – double the attendance of the previous event.

Soraga emphasised the importance of hosting a dedicated national event to highlight Zanzibar's tourism potential. He noted that, historically, individual companies and institutions have represented Tanzania at regional and international tourism forums, often with-

out presenting Zanzibar as a unified brand.

The decision to create a dedicated platform for Zanzibar's tourism sector aims to position the island as a key player in global tourism.

"This expo is part of a broader strategy to put Zanzibar on the global tourism map," Soraga said.

Plans for the event include expanding activities to enhance the experience and attract more international attention.

Animal health service providers access to livestock services

By Guardian Correspondent, Tanga

ANIMAL Health Service Providers (AHSPs) in Tanzania have been equipped to implement herd health interventions aimed at promoting sustainable livestock productivity.

The three-day training held here this week brought together 24 AHSPs and District Livestock Officers from Kilimanjaro Region's Hai, Siha, Rombo, and Moshi Rural districts, as well as Muheza and Korogwe districts from Tanga Region.

Dr Sijali Zikankuba, Herd Health Field Coordinator at the International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI), stated that the training aimed to empower AHSPs with the skills and knowledge needed to implement the herd health approach, thereby improving livestock productivity in Tanzania by promoting technologies and best husbandry practices to smallholder dairy farmers.

"This training takes a holistic approach, addressing not only immediate health concerns but also focusing on long-term improvements in livestock management," Dr Zikankuba explained.

Additionally, the AHSPs were introduced to the Open Data Kit

(ODK), an open-source mobile data collection tool that allows users to fill out forms offline and later submit them to a server once a connection is available. This system ensures that the collected data can be accessed, downloaded, and utilized when needed.

The training also covered crucial aspects of dairy herd health, with the Herd Health Assessment Manual serving as a guide. Topics included disease prevention and management, with a strong focus on routine deworming to control internal parasites and vaccination schedules for diseases like Contagious Bovine Pleuropneumonia (CBPP).

Other key areas covered included East Coast Fever (ECF), Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD), Lumpy Skin Disease (LSD), and brucellosis, along with biosecurity measures such as quarantine, isolation, and proper waste disposal.

Walter Mangesho, a researcher from the Tanzania Livestock Research Institute (TALIRI), emphasized the importance of nutrition and feeding management, focusing on the formulation of balanced rations using locally available feeds to meet the energy and protein needs at various physiological stages.



A small-scale trader commonly known as "machinga" carries his merchandise while looking for potential customers at Posta area in Dar es Salaam yesterday. Photo: Correspondent Jumanne Juma

Ecowas, Sierra Leone team up to heightening cyber security

FREETOWN

A New milestone in Sierra Leone's cybersecurity journey was achieved on January 14, 2025, with the official launch of the National Cyber Security Incident Response Team (CSIRT) and the National Digital Forensics Lab (DFL) in Freetown.

The event, held at the National Cybersecurity Coordina-

tion Centre (NC3) Headquarters, marks a major step in strengthening the country's digital security infrastructure and addressing growing cyber threats.

During the ceremony, Salima Bah, Sierra Leone Minister of Communication Technology and Innovation, delivered a keynote address emphasizing the vital role of collaboration in tackling cybersecurity challenges.

She reaffirmed her ministry's commitment to working closely with the NC3 to ensure a safer digital environment for Sierra Leone.

The ECOWAS Commissioner for Infrastructure, Energy, and Digitalisation, Sediko Douka, represented by Ambassador Harouna Moussa, praised Sierra Leone's progress in enhancing its cybersecurity capabilities.

He highlighted cybercrime as one of the fastest-growing threats in Africa and stressed the crucial role of the National CSIRT and Digital Forensics Lab in combating these threats, investigating cybercrimes, and safeguarding critical infrastructure.

Sierra Leone's advancement in digital transformation, including the establishment of the

National CSIRT and DFL, demonstrates the country's commitment to aligning with ECOWAS's cybersecurity framework.

The effort has been supported by international partners, including the European Union, Germany, and the World Bank.

The ceremony was attended by key figures, including the Ministers of Communications Technology and Innovation, In-

formation and Civic Education, the Inspector General of the Sierra Leone Police, and the Chief Justice, along with representatives from the European Union, the British High Commission, and ECOWAS. Their presence underscored the significance of this achievement and the collaborative effort behind it.

The launch of the CSIRT and Digital Forensics Lab signals

Sierra Leone's dedication to creating a secure digital environment, enhancing cyber-security awareness, and contributing to the region's collective digital resilience.

ECOWAS reiterated its commitment to fostering a resilient digital landscape across the region, promoting innovation, trust, and safety in the digital realm.

Burundi denies reports of heavy losses in fighting with M23 rebels

BUJUMBURA

BURUNDI on Thursday denied reports of probable heavy losses of its soldiers in recent fighting against M23 rebels in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).

"The Burundi National Defense Force condemns with its last energy writers and propagators of hate and denigration messages against our valiant soldiers renowned for their discipline. We also condemn fallacious numbers of casualties of Burundian soldiers posted on social media," Gaspard Baratuza, spokesman for the defense ministry, told a press conference.

He said the "fabricated probable heavy human and material losses" are aimed at demoralizing Burundian soldiers, adding that the photos and videos were disseminated on social media for propaganda reasons.

The Burundian servicemen deployed in the DRC carry out their mandate with "seamless professionalism," Baratuza said.

He was responding to reports on social media and some international media outlets that quoted the M23 rebel group as saying that nearly 200 Burundian soldiers had died in recent fighting in DRC's North Kivu Province between M23 rebels and the Congolese military supported by the Burundian army and local militias.

Baratuza said Burundian soldiers have been deployed to the eastern DRC since 2023 as part of bilateral and regional agreements.

"In areas where Burundian soldiers are present, Congolese citizens carry out their activities freely," he said.



Manyara Region Miners Association (MAREMA) Chairman Elisha Mnyawi (C), leads an executive committee meeting to discuss various operational matters in held at Mire-rani Township earlier this week. Others are the association's Vice Chairperson, Money Yusuf (R) and Deputy Secretary, Dr. Cutis Msosa. Photo: Correspondent Gift Thadey

South Africa authorities face scrutiny over mine response

JOHANNESBURG

SOUTH African authorities face growing anger over their handling of a stand-off with illegal miners trapped in an abandoned gold mine, as the death toll from the incident reached at least 87.

Authorities may face an investigation over their initial refusal to help the miners and instead "smoke them out" by cutting off their food supplies.

The miners are suspected to have died

of starvation and dehydration, although no causes of death have been released.

Community groups launched their own rescue attempts when authorities said last year they would not help the hundreds of miners because they were "criminals."

That tactic to "smoke them out," as described by a prominent Cabinet minister, was condemned by one of South Africa's biggest trade unions.

Police and the mine owners were also accused of taking away ropes and dismantling a pulley system the miners used to enter the mine and send supplies down from the surface.

A court ordered authorities last year to allow food and water to be sent down to the miners, while another court ruling last week forced them to launch a rescue operation.

Mannas Fourie, CEO of the Mines and Rescue service, hailed the rescue and recovery operation as a "world first" with a "unique" machine that was "developed

and designed in South Africa by the mining industry."

"We didn't anticipate that we will be so quick with the operation," he added.

Many say the unfolding disaster underground was clear weeks ago, when community members sporadically pulled decomposing bodies out of the mine, some with notes attached pleading for food to be sent down.

"This government must make a plan and they must go to court. They must

account for these bodies," said Mandla Charles, a community volunteer helping with the rescue operation.

South Africa's second biggest political party, which is part of a government coalition, called for President Cyril Ramaphosa to establish an independent inquiry.

Authorities now believe that nearly 2,000 miners were working illegally in the mine near the town of Stilfontein, southwest of Johannesburg, since August last year.



Workers in progress of the culvert bridge construction on the road leading to the Kwamkabara Ward Executive Office in Muheza District, Tanga Region, recently. Photo: Correspondent Steven William

Kenya confirms 2 more mpox cases, bringing the total to 33

NAIROBI

KENYA has confirmed two more cases of mpox yesterday, bringing the total number of confirmed cases to 33.

Mary Muriuki, principal secretary at the Health Ministry, said in a press release that the cases were confirmed in the counties of Kericho and Taita Taveta, and that the outbreak has spread across 12 counties.

The statement said as many as 225 contacts were identified, and 216 underwent the suggested 21-day monitoring. Nine were confirmed positive for mpox among the contacts.

According to the official, the government has enhanced surveillance through active case searches, contact listing, tracing, investigation and symptomatic confirmation of confirmed cases. It has also initiated engagement efforts aimed at educating the public on mpox prevention and control measures.

Mpox, caused by a virus in the same family as smallpox, is characterized by high fever and skin lesions known as vesicles. In 2022, outbreaks were triggered in more than 70 countries across the world.

Last August the World Health Organisation declared the disease a public health emergency of international concern.

In Africa, the Democratic Republic of Congo remains the worst-hit country, with a vast majority of more than 49,000 suspected cases and 1,100 deaths confirmed in the continent since January 2024, according to the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention.

Guterres sets United Nations' 2025 goals

UNITED NATIONS

UNITED Nations (UN) Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said on Wednesday that the world continues to grapple with unprecedented challenges but there are reasons for cautious optimism in 2025 - on a Gaza ceasefire, climate action, tackling inequality and harnessing AI for the public good.

In his traditional New Year address to the General Assembly setting out his main priorities for the global organisation, the UN chief acknowledged the turmoil around the world and conceded

that it is understandable to get overwhelmed.

Nonetheless, Guterres urged delegates to never lose sight of progress and potential, underlining the ceasefire in Lebanon which is largely holding and the country recent election of a President, after a 2-year stalemate.

Away from the world battlefields, the UN chief highlighted positive developments on climate action that reflect the UN commitment to combating global warming, as the world now invests almost twice as much in clean energy as it does in fossil fuels almost everywhere.

He said that solar and wind are now the cheapest sources of new electricity.

On health matters, more children are surviving today than ever before, the Secretary General insisted, before adding that HIV infections continue to dramatically decline, along with malaria mortality rates.

He described the United Nations as a force of construction that is always strengthening how it works and delivers, proving the maxim that international problems need global solutions.

Throughout the whole Middle East, we must deny extremists a veto over a

peaceful future, he emphasized.

Guterres announced he would be visiting to Lebanon later in the day, emboldened by recent positive developments there that could see Israelis and Lebanese forge a new and lasting era of peace and security.

Inequalities can be beaten, he stated, starting with accelerating progress on the Sustainable Development Goals through multilateral reform on all fronts. He said the scourge of discrimination and hate speech was also fuelling inequality.

This is even more important as guard-

rails around social media platforms are being dismantled, allowing disinformation and hate speech to run rampant, he added.

Referencing the worst fires engulfing the canyons of Los Angeles, the UN chief said everyday people around the world are suffering the deadly effects of a warming planet and extreme weather.

But here too, there are immense opportunities to reverse the damage and build on climate action such as renewable energy growth, a commitment to net zero and national plans to cut emissions.

SATURDAY 18 JANUARY 2024

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Tenants withholding rent to pay to TRA designed to fail

A YEAR or so has happened since it was promulgated that tenants in residential or commercial buildings should withhold a portion of their rent payments before paying their landlords and remit the relevant amount to the tax authorities as withholding tax. The matter has lately been reemphasized by a city tax collection supervisor in the Kariakoo Tax Region in Dar es Salaam, obviously a good place to see how that regulation is implemented. The jury is still out, but feelings expressed by the supervisor shows the work is just starting.

Yes, it should at least begin as there is a no man's land that has been created for that category of tax compliance, where those supposed to submit the revenue funds are discharged from their duties. Instead those they rent out those spaces are tasked in the law or in regulation to submit the taxes, and it is unclear on whose behalf. Since the rule now says tenants should submit the tax funds, it means they pay it as TRA clients like any other, even as they are paying for the landlords.

One question that didn't appear to have been explained when the rule was first promulgated as part of budget initiatives as a salutary component of an annual Finance Act was precisely why TRA is not seeking the house owners to pay up. The sort of education we hear in that direction is the need to speed up remittance of taxes, but why it would be faster with a tenant than with the owner of the property is unclear. It is as if houses are rented by absentee landlords, but then there are all sorts of remittance mechanisms with the right addresses.

That was at the point of departure, while at the point of arrival there is an unclear question as to how far the tenant is then made factually compliant to the rule, as the mechanism by the revenue collection supervisor implicitly demands a contract between the two parties. If one submits an improper sum by citing the withholding tax aspect, and the landlord locks him or her out, TRA will take months to come to a ruling on the issue, and the courts may dismiss the case at filing.

There was one cultural addition to the comprehension of laws in 1992 when the presidential commission on the constitution delivered its report, which led to the transition to a multiparty state. The report famous as the Nyalali Report cited 40 'bad laws' which ought to be removed from the statute books or extensively amended to reflect the spirit of liberty and the freedom of speech or association, right to bail, right of fair trial, etc. It is unclear if they were indeed removed or sufficiently amended, but this tenant liability law as to submitting property taxes is easy to add to the list of bad laws as too confusing.

The only aspect about it that is clear is that the owners of a building will on no account be tailed or followed by tax officials as to having remitted the tax required. Instead, the tax body doesn't follow the tenants on whether they have paid their rents (in which case their landlord has no excuse not to have remitted the required amounts). They prefer to ask for co-operation from tenants, that they take the cue from TRA to deduce the funds and remit to TRA, unilaterally.

Appeals can't solve pending leave pay for public servants since 2018

REPORTS that the minister in charge of Labour is directing local government authorities to settle pending leave allowances for many employees, some of which have been unpaid since 2018. There is in the first place an issue of whether this is indeed a directive, as that portfolio isn't in control of local governments where most of the civil servants work. Nor is it remotely capable of making decisions binding on the Treasury, which would have to release those funds.

What was more likely was the need to consult the relevant ministers on various issues raised by the Tanzania Local Government Workers' Union (TALGWU). Another ministry is involved, as healthcare professionals are being required to pay annual licensing fees. In other words the union doesn't want to think of them as professionals, which means each one of them as an individual, thus registered by a professional organisation for their ranks, not just as state employees.

The minister said at a union general meeting of acknowledging those concerns, instructing city, municipal, district and town directors to "strengthen revenue collection within their area to enable payment of salary and leave arrears." Definitely that has been attempted time and again, and the directors sort of understand that those employees are allocated to those areas by the central government, not recruited by the relevant council. Their numbers and entitlements are decided at central government level, not surprisingly, lump sums are pending.

The minister had somewhat uneven remarks on the issue, underlining tightly that leave is a legal right for employees. Another remark was somewhat im-

precise, that the government is aware some councils have limited revenue sources, while frankly this can be said of all councils, apart from those whose funds are boosted by mining firms' corporate social responsibility funds. The government over the past half-decade cancelled numerous 'nuisance taxes' that were central to local government revenue projections, so it needs to be 'topping up.'

Not that the minister was not aware of this need, but places the state in the role of a 'development partner' or administrative associate of local governments, a sort of equal partner, whereas it is supposed to be a guarantor. The central government is expected or it indeed by implication countersigns all fiduciary engagements of municipal or other local councils, as their officials, and those below them, are state employees. They are merely supervised by local governments, not hired by them, nor belonging to service statutes of a local character.

On the whole the dialogue between the minister and the pivotal trade union did not yield much fruit, as the minister stuck to the position that the government makes efforts to provide grants that would be relevant where the other party has significant operational autonomy as with hospitals run by religious organisations, whereas municipal entities are wholly part of the government. In that case there was little of an institutional problem where the central government works towards a permanent solution, but simply the need to assume its full and entire responsibilities, by checking excessive expenditure in central government especially for 'other needs,' to pay civil servants.

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Trump returning to White House more powerful than he did before

By Geoffrey Kabaservice

WHEN Donald Trump (pictured) re-enters the White House on 20 January, he will be in a considerably more powerful position than he was when he first became president. In 2017, as in 2025, Trump's Republican Party enjoyed a 'trifecta' of power – control of the presidency and both houses of Congress. But in 2017, Trump – who lacked a certain degree of legitimacy on account of having lost the popular vote – faced considerable opposition from within his own party, as well as from outraged Democrats who organised the #Resistance movement against him. This meant that in Trump's first term, Republicans were unable to achieve much of their legislative agenda even before they lost majority control of the House of Representatives in the 2018 midterm elections.

But this time around, Trump unified the Republican Party around him and won a near-majority of the popular vote, while Democrats, reeling from the unanticipated magnitude of their defeat, are divided and demoralised. Does this mean that Republicans can now pass their most ambitious proposals into law? To what extent can (or should) the Democratic minority in Congress cooperate with them? And, finally, how long will Republican unity last?

Willingness to cooperate on some issues Early indications suggest that considerable numbers of Democrats are open to the possibility of voting with Republicans, at least on certain issues. For example, on 7 January, the House passed the Laken Riley Act – a bill that would require the detention of any undocumented immigrant charged with theft or burglary – with the support of all voting Republicans and 48 Democrats (while 159 voted against). In the Senate, a number of Democrats (including Pennsylvania's John Fetterman and Arizona's Ruben Gallego) have declared their support for the bill.

Many Democrats believe that their election defeats in November resulted from public backlash against their perceived failings and unpopular positions on issues including immigration, inflation, crime and public disorder, and race and gender radicalism. Voting with Republicans on bills dealing with these issues in a practical way can, they believe, help realign the Democratic brand with mainstream public opinion – and particularly with working-class voters of all races who have become increasingly alienated from left-wing cultural ideology. Representative Jared Moskowitz, a Democrat from Florida, told Punchbowl News that the increase in Democratic support for the Laken Riley Act was a response to the election results: 'I don't think the American people want extremism, but they do want changes at the border', he said. 'On some of these is-



issues, we were to the left of the American people.'

Democratic legislators have also told reporters that they're open to working with Republicans on bread-and-butter issues that include bringing down the cost of living, tax reform and perhaps the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE)'s effort to reduce wasteful government spending. Even some progressives have talked about cooperating with the administration on policies that would benefit working-class Americans, such as Trump's plan to cap credit card interest rates. Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez of New York, perhaps the best-known progressive legislator in the country, has stated that she believes Democrats sometimes lose elections 'because we're reflexively anti-Republican, and that we don't lean into an ambitious vision for working-class Americans strongly enough.'

But such quotes may overstate the willingness of both parties to work with each other on more than a handful of relatively uncontroversial measures. American politics has become increasingly tribal since Trump's first term, and large numbers of partisans in both parties regard compromise with the opposing side as akin to treason. This is why no one envies Mike Johnson, the Republican from Louisiana who was re-elected as Speaker of the House on 3 January. The Republicans hold only a 219-215 majority in the chamber, the narrowest seat

margin in nearly a century – and that majority will become even narrower in the coming weeks when two of their members will leave to take appointments in the new administration. It's worth pointing out that even though Johnson was re-elected on the first ballot, he had zero votes to spare, making him the first speaker candidate in 112 years to be elected without a single vote beyond the bare minimum.

Republican unity?

Johnson is widely considered to be destined for failure, not only because the close vote indicates the weakness of his support within his caucus, but also because Republicans will have to maintain near-perfect unity in the House if they are to pass bills without Democratic assistance. That would be an extremely difficult feat to achieve on a regular basis even if the Republicans were in perfect ideological alignment, when in fact they are more divided than they have been in decades.

Republican presidents, starting with Ronald Reagan, once benefited from a unified conservative movement that was able to subordinate its disagreements to the larger goal of winning the Cold War. Conservatism today is not a unified movement so much as a riot of competing factions. Populists, libertarians, nationalists, Evangelicals, Silicon Valley tech bros, Wall Street deficit hawks, Catholic

integralists, barstool conservatives, isolationists, neo-imperialists, QAnon conspiracists and more – they are united only by shared loyalty to Trump and hatred of the left. A preview of intra-conservative hostilities to come erupted in mid-January when Steve Bannon, Trump's former chief strategist, attacked Elon Musk, the co-leader of Trump's DOGE initiative, largely over disagreements about the role of high-skilled immigration via the H-1B visa program.

These hostilities within the conservative movement will reveal themselves in fights within the Republicans' congressional caucus on a multitude of issues, few of which have even reached public awareness yet. Just as an example, Republicans once were largely united in opposing Democratic plans to increase the number of electric vehicles (EVs) on American roads – but that was before EV magnate Musk went MAGA and before Biden-era legislation like the Inflation Reduction Act led to the creation of EV factories in strongly Republican states like Kentucky, South Carolina and Tennessee. How will Republican legislators from those states respond to plans to kill what by now have become some of their top job providers?

The problems of presiding over a deeply-divided, narrow-margin majority will bedevil Speaker Johnson at every turn. And what will happen when he doesn't have the votes on most-pass legislation like raising the debt ceiling, funding the government or extending the Trump tax cuts? Perhaps he could cut a deal with Democrats to gain enough votes for passage – but that likely would cost him even more Republican votes and spark a rebellion that could oust him from the speakership.

And even these dire scenarios don't take into account the possibility that Trump may entirely upend American politics as we know it. Some of Trump's proposed early actions – mass deportations, arresting journalists and political opponents, firing thousands of career civil servants, ending birthright citizenship – likely would produce such intense opposition from Democrats (and even some Republicans) as to snuff out any possibility of bipartisan cooperation. And what would happen if the administration then were to move toward genuine authoritarianism – defying court orders, using the Insurrection Act as a pretext to send the military into American cities to suppress protests? The comparative bipartisanship of the present moment may turn out to be very short-lived indeed.

By Telesphor Magobe

LAST week, we briefly looked at positive parenting and the protection of children's best interests and welfare as provided for in the Law of the Child Act and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child.

Section 4 of the Law of the Child Act provides for the protection of children's best interests. Subsection (1) provides that "The best interests of a child shall be a primary consideration in all actions concerning children whether undertaken by public or private social welfare institutions, courts or administrative bodies."

In the Law of the Child Act and in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child the best interests of the child are prioritised. It is through doing this that children can grow in a friendly and enabling environment and can meet their needs and be fulfilled.

Today, I invite you to look at climate change which continues tormenting the world and people in different ways. We may recall Pope Francis' Spanish expression which

Legal right to clean, safe and healthy environment



relates our relationship with nature. He said "God forgives, we forgive sometimes, but nature never forgives." He mentioned this in relation to the role we play in environmental degradation and pollution which results in disastrous consequences that affect all of us without leaving anyone behind. Think of the damage caused by floods, cyclones, rainstorms, scorching sun, bushfire, invasive species, and so on. All these do not select the country, people or place to affect.

Section 4 of the Environment Management Act, 2004 provides for a right to a clean, safe and healthy environment. Subsection (1) provides that "Every person living in Tanzania shall have a right to a clean, safe and healthy environment."

Section 6 provides for a duty to protect the environment. It stipulates that "Every person living in Tanzania shall have a stake and a duty to safeguard and enhance the environment and to inform the relevant authority of any activity and phenomenon that may affect the environment significantly." It is through this that we can take care of nature.

There are national, regional and global concerns for the protection and conservation of the environment, which

include minimising environmental, air and water pollution. Unless we do something about climate change it means we are going to face more catastrophes.

A report titled "State of the World's Migratory Species 2024" published by UN Environment Programme World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC), a global centre of excellence on biodiversity, decries biodiversity loss which has resulted in deterioration in conservation status.

It says "the impacts of climate change are already being felt by many migratory species, and these impacts are expected to increase considerably over the coming decades, not just as a direct threat to species, but also as an amplifier of other threats."

The report suggests that given the breadth and scale of the pressure facing migratory species, coordinated international action is urgently needed to reverse population declines and preserve the affected species and their habitats. This coordinated international action can be taken at local level when a country implements it according to its own context.

Another report titled "The State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture: Blue Transformation in Action 2024" pub-

lished by FAO says fishery stocks face major challenges from climate change and disasters, water scarcity, pollution, biodiversity loss and other anthropogenic impacts. It adds that effective fisheries management leads to stock recovery and increased catches, calling for urgent action to expand its enforcement to reverse the declining trend.

Therefore, this report suggests, poor governance causing environmental degradation and habitat destruction (leading to pressure on resources), overfishing, diseases and invasions by invasive species can be mitigated through responsive and effective governance promoting stringent fisheries management regimes, responsible aquaculture growth and improvements in technology, innovations and research.

A UNESCO report titled "State of the Ocean Report 2024" says ocean warming from the surface down to the abyss is happening at an unprecedented pace and the rate is accelerating. "The main and well-known consequences include rising sea levels, alterations in ocean currents and dramatic changes in marine ecosystems." These have long-term effects on biodiversity and ecosystems.

All these three reports point at one thing - the urgency of human responsibility to protect and preserve nature for it is through this that we can be sure of the future we want. Thus, the duty to safeguard and enhance the environment is ongoing and all of us are duty-bound to prevent environmental degradation and pollution so that we may live in a clean, safe and healthy environment.

People may be aware of the effects of climate change, but may lack the consciousness to take right steps to mitigate them. One way of mitigating climate change effects is through the planting of trees and keeping them as well as protecting water sources. Accelerating climate change can be like cutting a tree branch we are sitting on. Thus, all actions we do should mitigate rather than accelerate climate change.

Today's quote: "The only way forward, if we are going to improve the quality of the environment, is to get everybody involved." - Richard Rogers.

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The Law and You



Climate science must unlock solutions in new era

By Aditi Mukherji

BY the time the world's leading climate scientists publish their next report in 2028-29, the world will already have possibly breached 1.5 degrees Celsius warmer than the pre-industrial era for a few years and the deadline for the UN's Sustainable Development Goals will be on the horizon.

The threshold set by the 2015 Paris Agreement to reduce the impacts of climate change was passed for the first time in 2024, the EU's climate change service, Copernicus, confirmed last week (10 January).

So, as the next assessment of climate science from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) gets under way, it's vital that we answer the questions that will serve us in the future. Navigating the challenges of tomorrow requires forward-looking science today and in the months ahead.

Central to our mission to limit climate change are the communities and sectors most vulnerable to its impacts, especially agriculture and smallholder farmers, who play a critical role in feeding the world yet are particularly exposed to the effects of climate change.

The next cycle of climate science must therefore fill the gaps in evidence and solutions that reduce greenhouse gas emissions from agriculture while also ensuring farming remains viable in a warmer, less predictable world.

We know that food systems are a major contributor to climate change, accounting for about a third of global greenhouse gas emissions. The sector clearly needs to transition to more sustainable means of food production, consumption, and disposal to support global emissions reductions.

However, food systems are also vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. Agricultural losses from climate-related disasters totalled US\$3.8 trillion in the past 30 years, with the highest relative losses in the poorest countries. A 2 degrees Celsius increase in temperatures will worsen already serious long-term food insecurity in many countries, putting up to 80 million people at risk of hunger by 2050.

Burning questions

This coming cycle of IPCC assessments must answer at least three core questions related to the agri-food systems and climate change to help the world move from understanding the climate crisis to tackling it with utmost urgency.

The first question for climate scientists is how to make best use of existing technologies that help farmers combat and cope with climate change—and increase their adoption and use.

Innovations to help farmers adapt to new conditions, such as digital climate information services and climate-resilient crops, already exist along with developments like solar-powered irrigation pumps and low-emission forages, or feeds, that reduce farming's carbon footprint. But they are not reaching farmers at the scale needed to make a difference.

How to more effectively channel climate finance, resources and support from wealthier countries to roll out these innovations in low- and middle-income countries is a science question.

Similarly, we also need to assess which tools and technologies will enable farmers to adapt to warmer conditions in the future. Previous IPCC research cycles have shown that the ability to adapt to climate change becomes increasingly difficult as temperatures continue to rise. Scientists need to investigate which crop, livestock, or fishery adaptations will remain viable at 1.5 degrees Celsius or beyond.



Installing iButton weather sensors in farmers' fields in Tanzania

The second question for climate scientists is how to make low-emissions technologies cost-effective and accessible.

For farmers to have the best chance of adapting and avoiding future losses, it's crucial that global temperatures stabilise and this requires emissions to come down, including those from agriculture.

However, unlike the energy sector, which has benefited from research and innovation into renewable sources like solar energy, the agriculture sector has lagged on investments into research and development for low-emission technologies.

We urgently need to identify emerging and promising fields of research as well as the policies, infrastructure and governance needed to make clean technologies affordable and widely available.

Finally, scientists need to tackle the question of how to ac-

celerate carbon dioxide removal to complement emissions reductions.

As temperatures rise, the natural ability of land and oceans to sequester carbon weakens, intensifying the need for human-led carbon dioxide removal (CDR). However, interventions like afforestation could reduce agricultural land, particularly in lower-income countries, posing risks to food security. Climate scientists must map the impacts of both higher temperatures and large-scale CDR efforts on food systems and livelihoods to chart a course that does not jeopardise food security.

Future-facing science

The decisions shaped by the IPCC's reports will define how the world navigates the unprecedented challenges of a rapidly warming planet, especially as it approaches the conclusion of this pivotal decade.

As IPCC report authors, our role extends beyond delivering insights; we must provide actionable, evidence-based, future-facing science to empower governments to act decisively and effectively. This includes equipping innovators and policymakers to harness climate finance, tailor solutions to local contexts, and prepare for future temperature rises.

Most of all, we must not forget climate justice as the guiding principle of this green transition. Ensuring that the most vulnerable – often also the least responsible – remain front and centre of our plans can help to achieve an inclusive future where no one is left behind.

By Justin Stebbing

A daily glass of milk could reduce bowel cancer risk, new study finds

A glass of milk a day could help keep bowel cancer away - or so finds a study by Oxford University and Cancer Research UK. The research suggests that increasing daily milk intake by as little as one glass could have a significant impact on lowering the likelihood of developing bowel cancer.

There are nearly 45,000 cases of bowel cancer every year in the UK, making it the nation's fourth most common cancer - and third worldwide - but many of these are preventable. According to Cancer Research UK data, 54% of all bowel cancers could be prevented by having a healthier lifestyle. Smoking, lack of exercise, alcohol, eating processed meat, and poor diet are all significant factors in the development of bowel cancer.

As an oncologist, I advise my patients about how diet and lifestyle can influence health, including the risk of developing cancer. But this research - one of the largest studies into diet and disease so far - has shed new light on how easy, cheap diet changes can help everyone to reduce their cancer risk.

For example, as well as drinking an extra glass of milk per day, reducing consumption of alcohol and red and processed meat could also help protect against cancer. The study found that drinking an additional 20g of alcohol a day, equivalent to a large glass of wine, increased bowel cancer risk by 15%. Consuming more than 30g of red and processed meat daily was linked to an 8% increase in bowel cancer risk.

Researchers took a novel, two-pronged approach to examine the association between milk consumption and bowel cancer risk. First, they analysed genetic data from over 542,000 women and focused on variants - tiny changes in DNA - associated with lactase persistence, the ability to digest lactose in adulthood.

Second, the team collected detailed dietary information from participants, including their daily milk intake. By combining these two data sets, the researchers were able to better estimate the causal effect of milk consumption on bowel cancer risk.

Striking results

The analysis revealed that participants who consumed an additional 244g of milk per day - roughly equivalent to one large glass containing 300mg of calcium - had a 17 percent lower risk of developing bowel cancer. This reduction in risk applied to various types of milk, including whole, semi-skimmed and skimmed.

Researchers found that the protective effect of milk



consumption was independent of other dietary factors and lifestyle habits. This suggests that the benefits of milk in reducing bowel cancer risk are not because milk replaces unhealthy food choices or is consumed as part of an overall healthier lifestyle.

The reasons why milk consumption may reduce bowel cancer risk are not fully understood, but the researchers propose several potential explanations. First, milk is a rich source of calcium, which

has been linked previously to a reduced risk of bowel cancer. Calcium may help protect against cancer by binding to potentially harmful substances in the gut and promoting the death of abnormal cells. Next, many milk products are fortified with vitamin D, which has been shown to have anti-cancer properties and may help regulate cell growth and division. Also, the lactose in milk can promote the growth of beneficial gut bacteria that produce bu-

tyrate, a short-chain fatty acid with anti-inflammatory and anti-cancer effects. Finally, milk contains conjugated linoleic acid, a fatty acid found in meat and dairy products, which, according to a 2021 laboratory study, could also have anti-cancer properties.

Crucially, milk consumption may not be suitable or beneficial for everyone. Those with lactose intolerance, milk allergies, or other dietary restrictions should consult with healthcare professionals before making significant changes to their dairy intake.

Overall, this groundbreaking research provides compelling evidence for the potential role of milk consumption in reducing bowel cancer risk. The finding that a relatively modest increase in daily milk consumption could lead to a significant reduction in bowel cancer risk is particularly encouraging. It suggests that small, achievable changes in diet could have meaningful impacts on public health.

As we continue to unravel the complex relationships between diet and disease, studies like this one provide valuable insights that can inform both individual health choices and broader public health strategies. The potential for a simple dietary change to have such a significant impact on cancer risk underscores the importance of continued research in this field and highlights the power of nutrition in shaping our health.

'Staying alive was luck': Joy, despair in Gaza over Israel-Hamas ceasefire

By Maram Humaid and Mat Nashed

IN the Gaza Strip, many Palestinians are celebrating, hoping that the a devastating 15-month war is finally over.

Israel and Hamas have agreed to a ceasefire proposal, according to Qatar and the United States, which would involve a captive and prisoner swap, and the return of Palestinians to their homes across Gaza. Israel says a few issues remain, while Hamas has announced its acceptance.

In Gaza, the joy for Palestinians comes tempered with grief, having lived through the death of so many of their loved ones, in an Israeli war that rights groups and United Nations experts have described as a "genocide".

Several Palestinians said they plan to return to their towns and villages the moment they get the opportunity to, having been displaced by Israeli attacks and so-called "evacuation orders".

"As soon as there is a ceasefire, I will return and kiss my land in Beit Hanoun

in north Gaza," said Umm Mohamed, a 66-year-old woman who lost two of her 10 children when an Israeli bomb fell on her home in December 2023.

"What I realised in this war is that your home, your homeland and your children are all you have," she said.

Israel's war on Gaza has killed more than 46,500 Palestinians and wounded more than 100,000. It began after a Hamas-led attack on southern Israel on October 7, 2023, in which 1,139 people were killed and about 250 were taken captive.

During Israel's offensive on Gaza, it systematically bombed schools, hospitals and displacement camps, destroying nearly all basic services and structures that sustain life, according to UN experts and rights groups.

In September 2024, the United Nations Satellite Center found that 66 percent of all structures in the Gaza Strip were damaged or destroyed by Israeli attacks.

Israel also tightened its existing siege on Gaza at the start of the war, causing mass starvation and a breakdown in public order.



Palestinians inspect the site of an Israeli strike on a house in Deir el-Balah in the central Gaza Strip, January 15, 2025

Now that an end to the misery appears to be tantalisingly close, Palestinians are struggling to process everything - and everyone - they lost in the war.

"I have mixed feelings ... but I pray to God that we can return to our normal lives without feeling insecure," said Mohamed Abu Rai, a 47-year-old medic, from his office in Deir el-Balah.

Memory and grief
Palestinians reflected on loved ones they lost to Israeli attacks before the now-

expected ceasefire. Lubna Rayyes, who was the principal of the International American elementary school in Gaza City, said she lost one of her colleagues, Bilal Abu Saaman, who was rescuing people from the rubble when he was bombed.

Rayyes said she frequently calls Abu Saaman's widow and asks about his young children.

"He was a great and very kind teacher. When he died, it really affected me and it

still hurts until now," Rayyes said via phone from Cairo, Egypt, where she has been living with her husband and three children since last year.

"Bilal was really one of the best people in the world," she added.

Rayyes also spoke about her family home, which was burned to ashes by Israeli soldiers who lit it on fire.

"There is nothing left from the house," she said, sighing. "There are no more family photos, or any sort of

memories we retrieved. It's all gone."

Abu Rai also lost his house, but like Rayyes, he said the memory of deceased colleagues and friends brings him the most grief.

He believes the real number of casualties far surpasses the official toll and he still cannot quite understand how he survived during the last 15 months.

"Staying alive in Gaza was always just a matter of luck," he said.

Stay or go?

While many Palestinians are looking forward to returning and rebuilding their communities, others can't imagine staying in the besieged enclave any longer.

Mahmoud Saada, 52, said he doesn't believe there will be a lasting solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict despite the anticipated ceasefire.

He says he will take his young children and leave Gaza as soon as the crossing to Egypt opens.

"I swear to God I won't return to Gaza. I'm so tired and fed up," he said from Deir el-Balah, where he sleeps with his family inside a small crowded tent.

"I want to leave Gaza and just go anywhere else," he said.

Abu Rai also said that he can't imagine staying in Gaza now that everything is completely destroyed.

He believes most survivors are deeply traumatised and simply can't fathom rebuilding their communities and lives again, especially since Gaza has already struggled to recover from numerous previous wars with Israel.

At the moment, he suspects many people are trying to find a way out, at least for the time being.

"There has been so much destruction and we are starting from zero, again. Always rebuilding our communities steals so much time from our lives. Each day we lose, we don't get back," he said.

Abu Rai, Rayyes and Umm Mohamed all agree, however, that Palestinians will miss Gaza if they leave, making the move hard for many.

In the end, they believe most people will stay or return to Gaza, if they can.

"We need to go back eventually, you know?" Rayyes said.

"There really is no place like home."

RADIO JUMATATO - JUMAPILI

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

Tembelea mitandao ya kijamii ya CAPITAL RADIO



CAPITAL RADIO

US sanctions Sudan army chief Burhan over the civilian deaths

WASHINGTON

THE United States (US) government has imposed sanctions on the head of Sudan's army and de facto president, Gen Abdel Fattah al-Burhan.

He has been leading one of the two sides in the 21-month civil war that has killed tens of thousands, uprooted over 12 million and pushed the country to the brink of famine.

In a brief statement, the US treasury department accused Gen Burhan of "destabilizing Sudan and undermining the goal of a democratic transition."

The announcement follows reports of the killing of civilians in the central city of Wad Madani in recent days, however this was not mentioned in the statement.

Sudan's foreign ministry has dismissed the sanctions as "immoral."

Last week, Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo, the head of the paramilitary group fighting the army, was also sanctioned by the US.

The US accused Dagalo's Rapid Support Forces (RSF) of committing genocide during the conflict.

In announcing the sanctions on Burhan on Thursday, Washington said that the army under his command "has committed lethal attacks on civilians" including targeting "schools, markets and hospitals."

BBC reveals fighters accused of massacre in Sudan

A simple guide to what is happening in Sudan

Sudan shelling kills more than 100 civilians near capital

The US also alleges that the army is "responsible for the routine and intentional denial of humanitarian access, using food deprivation as a war tactic."

The sanctions freeze any assets the Sudanese leader has in the US and also block US transactions with him.

The Treasury Department issued exemptions for humanitarian goods, but aid groups fear the army could retaliate by further blocking assistance.

During the first year of the conflict, Secretary of State Antony Blinken said the army had committed war crimes.

The Sudanese military has achieved a major victory by recapturing Wad Madani.

Earlier, Gen Burhan ordered an investigation into allegations that his troops carried out widespread atrocities after recapturing the capital of Gezira state from their paramilitary rivals.

His move came after widespread concern that civilians - including foreign nationals - were killed after the seizure of Wad Madani.

Neighbouring South Sudan said on Wednesday that it had summoned Sudan's ambassador to protest against "the loss of lives among our innocent citizens."

Wad Madani, which is 87 miles (140km) south of the capital, Khartoum, fell to the RSF about a year ago. The military regained control of it on Saturday.

The city serves as a strategic crossroads, connecting several states through key supply highways. It is also the closest major town to Khartoum.

A Sudanese rights group accused the military of going on a rampage, killing at least 13 people in Camp Taiba, a village about 20km away.

The UN's humanitarian chief in Sudan, Clementine Nkweta-Salami, said she was deeply concerned about reports of retaliatory attacks against civilians in



Gen Abdel Fattah al-Burhan has been leading the army during Sudan's 21-month civil war: File Photo

Gezira "based on alleged affiliation or ethnicity."

The US special envoy for Sudan Tom Perriello called the reports "appalling" and urged the army and allied groups to investigate and hold those responsible accountable.

Gen Burhan said he had set up a committee to investigate the alleged killings in Camp Taiba, and has asked it to report back within a week.

He did not comment about the concerns raised by South Sudan, and whether the investigation would focus on alleged atrocities elsewhere in Gezira.

South Sudan's foreign ministry said that it had received a "comprehensive report" from its embassy in Sudan "detailing the unfortunate events that have resulted in the loss of lives among our innocent citizens, who maintain a non-combatant status."

The military has previously accused the RSF of hiring South Sudanese as "mercenaries" to fight on its side.

Both sides have been accused of atrocities in the conflict.

Social media videos of various incidents, including one showing a man in civilian clothing being thrown over a bridge and then shot at by a group of men, have been widely shared online.

We have matched key elements in the video including the railings and the painting on the railings as seen in the video to earlier videos filmed at the bridge.

One of the men involved in the incident, and who is carrying a Sudanese flag, is wearing clothing with a logo used by the al-Bara'a bin Malik Brigade which has been fighting alongside the Sudanese army in Khartoum and neighbouring states.

Two other videos filmed elsewhere show at least 30 bodies of men in civilian cloth-

ing laid out on a ground next to a wall.

It is not clear how the men died and whether they were killed before the bodies were gathered there.

It is also not possible to identify them nor whether they were affiliated to any of the fighting parties, as it is common for armed fighters not to wear uniforms.

Videos of the ambush, heavy exchange of fire, and the aftermath are also circulating.

The Sudanese armed forces on Tuesday condemned what it called "individual violations" in some parts of Gezira state, and promised that those responsible would be held accountable.

The RSF was itself accused of carrying out retaliatory attacks in Gezira following the defection of their commander Abu Aqla Kaikal in October last year.

Kaikal was heavily involved in the operation that led to the army wresting back control of Wad Madani.

African countries adopt strategy to unlock agricultural potential

KAMPALA

AFRICAN Union (AU) members have adopted a strategy and action plan aimed at unlocking the agricultural potential of Africa at the African Union's Extraordinary Summit on Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) in Kampala, Uganda.

The 10-year CAADP strategy has reportedly been developed over the past 10 months, following directives from African heads of state and government, and is set to run from 2026 to 2035.

It builds on the Malabo Declaration on Accelerated Agricultural Growth and Transformation for Shared Prosperity and Improved Livelihoods, adopted in 2014.

As part of the commitment to intensify sustainable food production, agro-industrialisation and trade, countries undertook to increase agrifood output by 45 percent, reduce post-harvest losses by 50 percent, triple intra-African trade in agrifood products and inputs, and raise the share of locally processed food to 35 percent of agrifood GDP by 2035.

In terms of investment and financing for accelerated agrifood systems transformation, commitments include the mobilisation of US\$100 billion in public and private sector investment in African agrifood systems, while ensuring that at least 10 percent of annual public expenditure is allocated to agrifood systems and at least 15 percent of agrifood GDP is reinvested into the sector.

In terms of food security, there is a commitment to achieve zero hunger in all African Union member states, ensuring that 60 percent of the population can afford a healthy meal and reducing stunting, wasting and overweightness by 25 percent by 2035.

Other commitments touch on inclusivity and equitable livelihoods, the building of resilient agrifood systems, and the strengthening of agrifood systems governance.

John Steenhuisen, South Africa's minister of agriculture who attended the event, told Farmer's Weekly that the strategy and plan was important for South Africa and the rest of Africa because it aligned agricultural priorities on the continent, fostering greater trade, standard setting and knowledge sharing.

"The plan and strategy encourage member states to foster policy coherence, enhance coordination across sectors, and strengthen national ownership of initiatives. This will result in improved policies that build infrastructure, improve agricultural practices and strengthen food systems."

Steenhuisen added that CAADP focused on partnerships with partner and donor countries, allowing access to financial opportunities for investment in infrastructure, research and development to strengthen domestic manufacturing and repair food processing machinery for the small-holder sector, for which access to finance was a critical enabler.

Steenhuisen said South Africa was the leading agricultural country on the continent and for this rea-



son played an important leadership in the continental agricultural agenda.

Wandile Sihlobo, chief economist at Agbiz, said CAADP set ambitious goals and urged member countries of the African Union to allocate 10 percent of their annual budgets to agriculture.

Far too many demands for resources in most of

these countries, however, resulted in agriculture spending remaining below these targets. "Even South Africa doesn't score well in the targets," he said.

He said big conferences such as these helped to stimulate discussion and evaluate the sector's profile, but real progress would require the private sector and dedicated government

support to boost each African country's agricultural output.

"We have seen first-hand the benefit of a robust private sector in South Africa. Looking at the data, it is clear that South Africa is an outlier in Africa."

The sector has more than doubled in value and volume terms since 1994 thanks to the adoption of

new production technologies, better farming skills, growing demand, and progressive trade policies," he said.

He said other African countries should see what they could learn from the South African success story of private sector-led growth if they were serious about agricultural development.

This would include the

extension of title deeds or tradable leases to farmers and agribusinesses for attracting investment, investments in infrastructure for improving value chains, an embrace of technological advancements in seeds, genetics and agrochemicals to boost productivity, limited trade and commodity price interventions, and support for commercial farming.

From crisis to case study: Cape Town's fight with sewage, urbanisation dynamics

By Anthony Turton

THOSE who follow my work will know that I have been acutely interested in state failure as a concept. Way back in 2008 I posed a question at an academic conference held at Unisa, about whether South Africa would become a failed state, citing global water scarcity data that placed us in the highest risk category.

That data is all about the number of people per unit of water, but it also deals with the capacity of the state to respond to changes that cross various thresholds of concern.

For this article, there are two specific issues that are colliding in the context of water, so an analysis of what is happening can help us answer the question about whether South Africa is a failing state. These two issues are population dynamics and sewage management. We will focus only on these two issues, to answer the question about the institutional capacity of the state to respond.

Population dynamics can be understood by the following key statistics. The current population is 64 million people, which translates to a population density of 53 people per km². Two-thirds are urbanised, placing a massive strain on infrastructure in towns and cities.

When we became a democracy in 1994, the population was just over 40 million, so a characteristic of our democratic transition is all about the arrival of 24 million new people in urban areas that were never designed for such a population density. To make matters more complex, influx control was abolished in 1994, so in addition to normal population growth, we have seen major changes to migration patterns.

We can consequently think of the population issue as a composite of natural growth plus migration from internal and external sources. Translating this to sewage management, this means that an additional 4,800 megalitres per day are needed when compared with 1994.

We arrive at this number by allocating 200 litres per person per day for domestic use, the majority of which ends up as either grey or black water, both of which typically go down the drain into a sewer. A megalitre is a million litres, so that's a big number.

We know from the Green Drop Report that over 90% of our wastewater treatment works are dysfunctional in one way or another. About 40% are totally dysfunctional, with the rest on a spectrum ranging from partial failure to impaired functionality.

Therefore, we can say that we have a sewage crisis that has the capacity to overwhelm the state's ability to respond. We also know that all water infrastructure in South Africa is designed on an indirect reuse model. This means that treated sewage effluent is discharged into aquatic ecosystems, from which our drinking water is also abstracted. For this reason, our sewage discharge standards must be exceptionally high, because in most cases, it will become drinking water soon.

The Blue Drop Report is all about drinking water quality, and it tells us that there is an alarming trend across the entire country, showing a steady deterioration in both chemical and microbiological terms. One reason for this is the deterioration of our sewage works.

Now let us look at Cape Town where we see several wastewater treatment works, many of which are extremely big. On the map, the size of the circle indicates the volume throughput of each plant. Each of these



wastewater treatment works are under severe pressure, and all discharge partially treated effluent into an aquatic ecosystem of which there are three distinct types - rivers, wetlands/lagoons and the ocean.

With respect to the rivers, it is apparent that other municipalities also discharge their effluent into the same river that eventually flows through the greater Cape Town area. This means that water quality in Cape Town is dependent on the capacity of other municipalities to cope.

Regarding wetlands and lagoons, we need look no further than the plight of the large natural wetland that exists between Somerset West and Stellenbosch, and the Milnerton Lagoon, which is severely contaminated by sewage.

Regarding the ocean, it gets very interesting, because there are three Marine Outfall Pipelines located at Green Point, Camps Bay and Hout Bay. These three pipelines discharge around 53 million litres of raw untreated sewage daily into the oceans adjacent to some of the best tourist beaches in the country.

The only "treatment" that this sewage undergoes is maceration, which converts the solid pieces into paste that is then injected directly into the ocean. Some of the solids such as condoms and feminine hygiene products are mechanically removed before maceration, but this process is not an exact science, so many of these make their way into the ocean.

The interesting aspect is that the flow through the Marine Outfall Pipelines is only 5% of the total volume of effluent produced daily by all wastewater treatment works in the area.

This is where it gets interesting, because sewage is made up of freshwater, but it is discharged into a saltwater environment. The chemistry and physics of water are relevant, because freshwater is less dense than saltwater, so the plume naturally rises to the surface where it is supposed to dilute itself.

Dilution is a complex process, because freshwater and saltwater are typically separated by what is known as a halocline. This separation persists for long distances, potentially measured in terms of tens or even hundreds of kilometres. It is this plume that is clearly visible to drones or aircraft flying over the discharge points.

The diagram, obtained from the City of Cape Town, illustrates how the Marine Outfall Pipelines are supposed to work. The expanding plume is exposed to UV sunlight that destroys bacteria, but the sun only shines half the day, turbidity of the water reduces the penetration of the UV spectrum, and the wind blows the surface plume in directions other than the prevailing ocean current, often directly on to the beaches adjacent to the point of discharge.

Maps used for environmental management purposes indicate the point of discharge of each Marine Outfall Pipeline and define the precise locations from which sampling must take place to ensure the health and safety of humans using the beaches. Each pipeline has its own map. The map shown here is for Hout Bay, which has 16 sampling points.

The other pipelines have a similar number of sampling points, the most being for Green Point. Note that the Hout Bay Marine Outfall Pipeline discharges into

a large bay, so if the wind changes direction to become a westerly, then the plume will be dispersed into the bay, and remain there for as long as the wind prevails. This holds true for all three Marine Outfall Pipelines, but the Camps Bay and Hout Bay pipelines are the most sensitive to this.

Regarding the flow from each pipeline, the most interesting is Camps Bay, because it has peaked at 60 megalitres per day, but it has a design capacity of 40 megalitres per day. All of the Marine Outfall Pipelines have a daily pulse to them, which is monitored by meters.

In all cases the pipelines are generally in a good condition, but all are hydraulically overloaded, so the discharge plumes are significantly larger than the design parameters used when they were originally engineered.

All are significant contributors to beach pollution, so they require increasingly robust monitoring and telemetry systems making them an ideal candidate for migration to a digital platform capable of artificial intelligence and machine learning type of interventions using real time data.

Cape Town is therefore an excellent example of the capacity of the state to cope with rapid changes to the system driven by population growth and migration. How it copes will determine the future prosperity of the citizens and the investment inflows from outside of the Western Cape.

These challenges are massive, but soluble, which is why Cape Town will become a major case study for governance in the face of growing competition between people for a dwindling natural resource.

DM

Lead poisoning: The persistent threat from mismanaged waste

By Special Correspondents

ACROSS Africa, the spectre of lead poisoning continues to pose a big threat to both the environment and public health.

Despite the stringent regulations under the Basel and Bamako Conventions aimed at controlling waste containing lead compounds, the reality on the ground paints a different picture.

Lead, a naturally occurring metal used to make a variety of products including paints, ammunition, spices, certain cosmetic products, jewellery, toys, waste lead acid batteries, gasoline, plumbing pipes, ceramics, and others.

Although it is present in the environment, lead can become a serious hazard when found in excessive amounts. Lead in soil can contaminate food sources and negatively impact biodiversity. It can also cause severe neurological impairments in humans—especially in children.

According to the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), land or soil sites with high lead concentrations are most prevalent of the trace elements.

In Sub-Saharan Africa, over 55 million children have blood lead levels that exceed 10 micrograms per decilitre (µg/dL), twice the threshold deemed dangerous by the World Health Organization (WHO).

Many children are exposed through direct contact, breast milk, and even as developing fetuses when pregnant mothers come into contact with lead.

One of the most alarming sources of lead poisoning comes from mismanaged e-waste and used lead-acid batteries (ULABs). Informal recycling



practices release lead particles into the environment, endangering countless communities.

The global demand for lead-acid batteries drives informal recycling operations, often without necessary safeguards. According to the International Lead Association, these batteries provide 70% of all rechargeable battery energy storage worldwide, making them a critical resource but also a major pollution source. When recycled under lead in unsafe conditions, pollution levels soar, impacting both the environmental

and human health.

During the WHO's International Lead Poisoning Prevention Week in October 2024, partners and stakeholders gathered to share successes and re-commit to urgent action on lead.

Across Africa, the numerous cases illustrate the scope of the problem: lead mining in Nigeria, ULAB processing in Senegal, and toxic waste in Zambia's Kabwe region.

In Kenya's coastal city of Mombasa, the residents

of Owino Uhuru area still bear the scars of pollution from a lead-acid battery smelting plant. For these communities, the right to a clean environment depends on effective policies for hazardous waste management.

At the legislative level, UNEA Resolution 3/9 aims to eliminate exposure to lead paint and improve waste battery management. UNEP's 2022 Guidance Manual supports policymakers with actionable frameworks. However, more investment in the necessary infrastructure, awareness campaigns, and enforcement are essential to making these initiatives effective.

The journey toward a safer tomorrow requires more than policy changes and investment. It demands a commitment to protect those most vulnerable.

As we look to the creation of a lead-free future, we are compelled to think of 'the future' not as distant and abstract, but one in the making with each passing moment.

This realization instils in us the responsibility to do better to safeguard the environment and public health for ourselves and for future generations.

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Tembelea mitandao ya kijamii ya Radio One

Radio One



Americans and Chinese share jokes on 'alternative TikTok' as USA ban looms

WASHINGTON DC

A looming TikTok ban has connected Chinese and American citizens like never before, as they swap jokes and memes in what one user described as a "historic moment".

It's all unfolding on a popular Chinese social media app called RedNote, or Xiaohongshu (literally translates as Little Red Book), which doesn't have the usual internet firewall that separates China from the rest of the world.

It has been drawing self-professed US "TikTok refugees" seeking a new home on the internet - despite the fact that their own government is seeking a TikTok ban because of national security concerns. Americans now find themselves in direct contact with 300 million Mandarin speakers in China and elsewhere - while in the real world, Beijing is bracing for a tumultuous Trump presidency that could strain its fragile ties with Washington.

At the heart of the US ban is the fear that China is using TikTok to spy on Americans.

The app has faced accusations that user data is ending up in the hands of the Chinese government - because of a Beijing law that requires local companies to "support, assist and cooperate with the state intelligence work". TikTok denies this has ever happened, or that it would happen.

But the possibility doesn't seem to worry some US users - 700,000 new users have signed on to RedNote in the last two days, making it the most downloaded free app in the US App store.

"The reason that our government is telling us that they are banning TikTok is because they're insisting that it's owned by you guys, the Chinese people, government, whatever," said one new RedNote user, Definitelynotchippy.

She goes on to explain why she is on RedNote: "A lot of us are smarter than that though so we decided to piss off our government and download an actual Chinese app. We call that trolling, so in short we're here to spite our government and to learn about China and hang out with you guys."

TikTok, although owned by Chinese company ByteDance, is headquartered in Singapore and says it is run independently. In fact, China's version of TikTok is another app called Douyin. RedNote, on the other hand, is a Chinese company based in Shanghai and among the few social media apps available both in

China and outside.

So Washington's fears over TikTok would extend to RedNote as well.

That's why American users on RedNote are referring to themselves as "Chinese spies" - continuing a TikTok trend where people have been bidding farewell to their "personal Chinese spy" who has allegedly been surveilling them over the years.

RedNote is now full of posts where ex-TikTok users are in search of a replacement. One post says: "I'm looking for my Chinese spy. I miss you. Please help me find him."

And Chinese users have answered: "I'm here!"

The honest, funny conversations on RedNote may not be what Chinese President Xi Jinping had in mind when he spoke about "strengthening people-to-people cultural exchanges" between China and the US.

But that is certainly what is happening as excited Chinese users welcome curious Americans to the app.

"You don't even need to travel abroad, you can just talk to foreigners here," said one Chinese RedNote user in a video that has received more than 6,000 likes.

"But it's honestly insane, no-one would have expected that we could meet like this one day, openly communicate like this."

Food, streaming shows and jobs have been the most popular topics: "Is life in America similar to how it looks on [the US TV show] Friends?"

Other Chinese users demanded a "tax" for using the platform - cat photos.

"Cat tax from California," reads one post in response. "Here's my offering - the shorthair is a boy named Bob and the calico is a girl named Marley."

Still others are using the platform to ask Americans for help with their English homework.

One post reads: "Dear TikTok refugees, could you please tell me the answer to question 53? Is the answer T (true) or F (false)?"

Help came quickly: some 500 people have since answered.

The flood of new American users appears to have caught RedNote off guard - reports say the company is hiring English moderators.

And others are trying to cash in on RedNote's new-found US stardom as well: language-learning app Duolingo put out a graph showing a 216% jump in its user base, compared to this time last year.

Keyamo secures Afreximbank deal to boost aircraft financing

LAGOS

The African Export-Import Bank (Afreximbank) has pledged to support aircraft financing for Nigerian airlines. The agreement was reached during a productive side meeting at the ongoing Aviation Economic Conference in Dublin, Ireland.

The leading development financing institution, announced plans to launch a leasing subsidiary that will soon deliver 25 aircraft for lease to African airlines.

This initiative is expected to provide Nigerian airlines with access to dry-leased aircraft, enabling them to enhance operations on Bilateral Air Service Agreement (BASA) routes and domestic networks.

This was contained in a statement signed by Tunde Moshood, special adviser on Media and Communications to the Minister of Aviation and Aerospace Development.

"At the meeting, Afreximbank, led by its Director and Global Head of Project and Asset-Based Finance, Helen Brume, agreed in principle to collaborate with Nigeria on aircraft financing. Afreximbank, a 30-year-old development financing institution, has a primary mandate to promote trade across Africa.

"Highlighting the bank's extensive experience in supporting airlines such as Arik Air, Kenya Airways, and TAG over the past two decades, Brume emphasized the need for robust aviation infrastructure to enhance the competitiveness of African airlines.

"To address this, Afreximbank announced plans to launch a leasing subsidiary, which will soon take delivery of 25 aircraft to be leased to African airlines. This initiative aims to provide Nigerian airlines with access to dry-leased aircraft, enabling them to better service Bilateral Air Service Agreement (BASA) routes and domestic operations," the statement read.

Led by Festus Keyamo, minister of Aviation and Aerospace De-



velopment, the meeting brought together stakeholders from the aviation industry, including Helen Brume, Afreximbank's director and global head of project and asset-based finance, and Lerece Rose, Boeing's senior director of finance.

Helen Brume highlighted Afreximbank's extensive experience supporting African airlines like Arik Air, Kenya Airways, and TAG, emphasizing the critical need for robust aviation infrastructure.

"Our goal is to strengthen the competitiveness of African airlines and improve connectivity across the continent," she stated.

During the meeting, Lerece Rose commended Nigeria for raising its Cape Town Convention score from 49.5 percent to 75.5 percent, signaling the government's commitment to creating an enabling environment for aircraft financing and leasing.

On his part, Keyamo underscored the importance of partnerships to address the challenges of accessing aircraft financing for Nigerian operators.

He emphasised the federal government's dedication to streamlining policies and improving airport concession agreements to attract global investors and enhance airport infrastructure.

In response, Afreximbank reaffirmed its readiness to collaborate with the Nigerian government and airlines, paving the way for a transformative future in Nigeria's aviation industry.

A follow-up committee has

been established to ensure that the partnership materialises into actionable solutions for Nigerian airlines.

According to the statement, this collaboration marks a turning point for Nigeria's aviation sector, promising increased capacity, improved passenger experience, and a stronger foothold in the global aviation landscape.

Afreximbank has agreed to support aircraft financing for Nigerian airlines during a side meeting held with airlines at the ongoing Aviation Economic Conference in Dublin, Republic of Ireland. The meeting, facilitated by Lerece Rose, Boeing's Senior Director of Finance, brought together key stakeholders to discuss aircraft financing opportunities for Nigerian airlines.

At the meeting, Afreximbank, led by Helen Brume, its Director and Global Head of Project and Asset-Based Finance, agreed in principle to collaborate with Nigeria on aircraft financing.

Afreximbank, a 30-year-old development financing institution, has a primary mandate to promote trade across Africa. Highlighting the bank's extensive experience in supporting airlines such as Arik Air, Kenya Airways, and TAG over the past two decades, Brume emphasized the need for robust aviation infrastructure to enhance the competitiveness of African airlines.

To address this, Afreximbank announced plans to launch a leasing subsidiary, which will soon

take delivery of 25 aircraft to be leased to African airlines. This initiative aims to provide Nigerian airlines with access to dry-leased aircraft, enabling them to better service Bilateral Air Service Agreement (BASA) routes and domestic operations.

The meeting was attended by Festus Keyamo, the Minister of Aviation and Aerospace Development, who led the Nigerian delegation.

The delegation included members such as Abdullafai Buhari, the Chairman, of the Senate Committee on Aviation; Abdullahi Idris Garba, Chairman, of the House Committee on Aviation; Abiru Adetokumbo, Chairman, of the Senate Committee on Banking, Insurance, and Other Financial Institutions; Chris Najomo, Director General of the NCAA, Nneka Onyeali-Ikpe, Managing Director of Fidelity Bank; Toyin Olajide, COO of Air Peace; Emmanuel Iza, CEO of XEjet; Kunle Soname, Chairman, ValueJet, and his Managing Director, Majekodunmi, and Oludare Akande, Chairman/CEO of Bellagio Air, among other aviation stakeholders.

Lerece Rose commended the Minister of Aviation for his efforts in improving Nigeria's aviation ecosystem, particularly in raising Nigeria's Cape Town Convention score from 49.5 per cent to 75.5 per cent. This progress, he said underscores the country's commitment to creating an enabling environment for aircraft financing and leasing.

The Minister highlighted the critical need for partnerships that would enhance access to aircraft financing for Nigerian operators, facilitating growth and improved service delivery.

In response, Afreximbank affirmed its readiness to work with the Nigerian government, signalling a promising future for the country's aviation industry.

A committee has been established to follow up on the discussions, ensuring that this partnership materializes into actionable solutions for Nigerian airlines.



The company's president for Europe, the Middle East and Africa, Thomas Mulliez (R), speaks to journalists in Dar es Salaam earlier this week, shortly after arriving in the country for an official visit. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

Global luxurious brand to strengthen local market business commitment

By Guardian Reporter

Thomas Mulliez, President of Moët Hennessy for Europe, the Middle East, and Africa, is in Tanzania to highlight the company's commitment to the region's economic and cultural growth.

The visit underscores the global luxury brand's confidence in Tanzania as a thriving hub for premium experiences and a dynamic market for its world-renowned portfolio of wines and spirits.

Tanzania has emerged as

one of East Africa's most attractive investment destinations, with a stable political environment, progressive business reforms, and an economy projected to grow at 5.7 percent in 2024, according to the World Bank.

The company has been a key player in shaping the country's premium lifestyle space, introducing brands to discerning consumers and contributing to the development of Dar es Salaam as a vibrant center for high-end entertainment and cultural

experiences.

In 2024, the company entered a new chapter in its Tanzania operations through a partnership with Mohan's Oysterbay Drinks Limited (MODL), a leading local distributor with over 40 years of experience.

This collaboration has expanded the company's market reach, enhanced logistics capabilities, and reinforced the company's role as a driver of local economic empowerment.

By creating jobs, supporting

local suppliers, and fostering knowledge transfer, the partnership is a testament to the brand's dedication to sustainable growth in Tanzania.

Beyond business, the company is deeply committed to community engagement and the celebration of Tanzanian talent.

Through the Hennessy Cypher 2024 initiative, the company has provided a platform for African hip-hop artists to demonstrate their creativity and reach global audiences.

Among them, one of hip

hop artists stood out, making a powerful impact and elevating his artistry internationally. Similarly, a Bongo Flava embodies the synergy between the company and African culture, representing Tanzanian excellence on the global stage.

The artists participated in remarkable experiences such as the NBA Games in Paris in 2023 and the Rwanda Basketball Africa League in 2024, further highlighting company's deep connection to sports and African culture.

The company also collabo-

rates with iconic local figures like designer Mtani Bespoke and entrepreneur Nancy Sumari, who reflect the ingenuity and creativity of Tanzanian culture.

These partnerships underscore the company's commitment to amplifying local talent and sharing Tanzania's rich heritage with the world.

Thomas Mulliez's visit further reinforces the company's strategic vision for the Tanzanian market. By leveraging its global expertise and partnering with local stake-

holders, the company aims to deliver exceptional experiences while contributing to the country's economic and cultural vibrancy.

As Tanzania prepares for continued economic growth and global recognition, the company is poised to deepen its connection with the market, introduce innovative collaborations, and reinforce its position as a key player in the country's premium lifestyle narrative.

Toyota to settle emissions scandal for \$1.6 billion

TOKYO

Toyota subsidiary Hino Motors has agreed to pay \$1.6bn (£1.3bn) and plead guilty to deceiving US regulators about the amount of emissions produced by its diesel engines.

The truck company will also be banned from exporting its diesel engines to the country for five years.

It comes after Hino was charged with fraud in a Detroit court for selling 105,000 illegal engines in the US between 2010 and 2022.

The settlement still requires approval by a US court.

According to the US Justice Department, Hino submitted "false and fraudulent" emission testing and fuel consumption data in a "criminal conspiracy" that allowed it to import and sell its engines in the United States.

"Hino Motors engaged in a years-long scheme to alter and fabricate emissions data in order to get a leg up over its competitors and boost their bottom-line," said FBI Director Christopher Wray.

"To further this fraudulent scheme, Hino violated laws and regulations intended to protect American's health and the environment."

On top of the five-year diesel engine import ban, Hino has also committed to a compliance and ethics plan during that period.

"We take this resolution seriously and will ensure that the field fix, the Environmental Mitigation Program, and further strengthening of our compliance system ... are implemented," said Satoshi Ogiso, Hino's chief executive and president in a statement.

"We deeply apologize for the inconvenience caused to our customers and stakeholders."

The US Environmental Protection Agency said Hino has also agreed to recall some infringing heavy-duty trucks and to replace marine and locomotive engines across the country to offset excess air emissions.

In order to cover costs resulting from its legal problems, Hino said that in its second quarter financial results announced in October, it reported an extraordinary loss of 230 billion yen (£1.2bn, \$1.48bn).

In the last decade, several car makers admitted to lying about the emissions produced by their diesel engines.

In what has become known as the dieselgate scandal, brands throughout the Volkswagen corporate em-



pire were implicated, including Audi, Porsche, Seat and Skoda as well as Volkswagen itself.

Volkswagen has spent more than 30 billion euros (£25bn, \$30.9bn) paying fines, issuing recalls and compensating its customers.

Toyota is pushing back the start date for electric vehicle (EV) manufacturing in the US, as global demand for battery-powered cars continues

to soften.

The Japanese motor industry giant was aiming to start production in late 2025 or early 2026.

Toyota now expects to launch its US EV operation at an unspecified time in 2026, a company spokesperson told BBC News.

Several other major car makers, including Volvo and Ford, have recently scaled back their EV plans.

"We're still focused on our global [battery electric vehicle] target of 1.5M vehicles by 2026," said Toyota spokesperson Scott Vazin, adding that in the next two years it plans to introduce "5 to 7 [battery electric vehicles] in the US market."

Earlier this year, the firm announced it was investing \$1.3bn (£980m) in its Kentucky factory as part of plans to build a three-row,

electric sport utility vehicle (SUV) there.

The company has also announced plans to build another electric model at a plant in Indiana.

To support these goals Toyota is ramping up its lithium-ion battery production with a factory in North Carolina, which it expects will come online next year.

Toyota's announcement came as the global car industry continues to struggle with weakening demand for electric vehicles in some major markets.

Last month, Volvo abandoned its target to produce only fully electric cars by 2030, saying it now expected to be selling some hybrid vehicles by that date.

The company blamed changing market conditions for its decision to give up a target it had announced only three years ago.

In August, Ford announced that it is shaking up its strategy for electric vehicles, scrapping plans for a large, three-row, all-electric SUV and postponing the launch of its next electric pickup truck.

Chief financial officer John Lawler said the firm was adjusting its plans in response to "pricing and margin compression".

Apple ignores error-strewn AI generated news alerts

LOS ANGELES

Apple has suspended a new artificial intelligence (AI) feature that drew criticism and complaints for making repeated mistakes in its summaries of news headlines.

The tech giant had been facing mounting pressure to withdraw the service, which sent notifications that appeared to come from within news organisations' apps.

"We are working on improvements and will make them available in a future software update," an Apple spokesperson said.

Journalism body Reporters Without Borders (RSF) said it showed the dangers of rushing out new features.

"Innovation must never come at the expense of the right of citizens to receive reliable information," it said in a statement.

"This feature should not be rolled out again until there is zero risk it will publish inaccurate headlines," RSF's Vincent Berthier added.

The BBC was among the groups to complain about the feature, after an alert generated by Apple's AI falsely told some readers that Luigi Mangione, the man accused of killing UnitedHealthcare CEO Brian Thompson, had shot himself.

The feature had also inaccurately summarised headlines from Sky News, the New York Times and the Washington Post, according to reports from journalists and others on social media.

"There is a huge imperative [for tech firms] to be the first one to release new features," said Jonathan Bright, head of AI for public services at the Alan Turing Institute. Hallucinations - where an AI model makes things up - are a "real concern," he added, "and as yet firms don't have a way of systematically guaranteeing that AI models will never hallucinate, apart from human oversight."

"As well as misinforming the public, such hallucinations have the potential to further damage trust in the news media," he said.

Media outlets and press groups had pushed the company to pull back, warning that the feature was not ready and that AI-generated errors were adding to issues of misinformation and falling trust in news.

The BBC complained to Apple in December but it did not respond until January when it promised a software update that would clarify the role of AI in creating the summaries, which were optional and only available to readers with the latest iPhones.



Three reasons Trump tariffs aren't China's only problem

WASHINGTON DC

China's economy rebounded in the last three months of last year, allowing the government to meet its growth target of 5% in 2024, Beijing announced on Friday.

But it is one of the slowest rates of growth in decades as the world's second largest economy struggles to shake off a protracted property crisis, high local government debt and youth unemployment.

The head of the country's statistics bureau said China's economic achievements in 2024 were "hard won," after the government launched a slew of stimulus measures late last year.

Beijing has rarely missed its growth targets in the past. Experts had broadly predicted this rate of growth. The World Bank said lower borrowing costs and rising exports would mean China could achieve annual growth of 4.9 percent.

Investors, however, are bracing themselves: the threat of President-elect Donald Trump's tariffs on \$500bn (£409bn) worth of Chinese goods looms large.

Yet that is not all that stands in the way of China achieving its growth targets next year.

Business and consumer confidence is low, and the Chinese yuan will continue to weaken as Beijing cuts interest rates in a bid to boost growth.

Here are three reasons why Xi has bigger challenges than Trump's tariffs. There is a growing chorus of warnings that China's economy will slow in 2025. One major driving factor of last year's growth is now at risk: exports. China has relied on manufacturing to help exit the slow-down - so, it has been exporting a record number of electric vehicles, 3D printers and industrial robots.

The US, Canada and the European Union have accused China of making too many goods and imposed tariffs on Chinese imports to protect domestic jobs and businesses.

Experts say Chinese exporters may now focus on other parts of the world. But those countries are likely to be in emerging markets, which don't have the same levels of demand as North America and Europe.

That could impact Chinese businesses that are hoping to expand, in turn hitting suppliers of energy and raw materials.

Xi wants to transform China from the world's factory for cheap goods into a high-tech powerhouse by 2035 but it's unclear how manufacturing can continue to be such a big growth driver in the face of rising tariffs.

In China, household wealth is largely invested in the property market. Before the real estate crisis, it accounted for almost a third of China's economy -

employing millions of people, from builders and developers to cement producers and interior designers.

Beijing has implemented a slew of policies to stabilise the property market and the financial markets watchdog, the China Securities Regulatory Commission (CSRC), has said it will vigorously support reforms.

But there are still too many empty homes and commercial properties, and that oversupply continues to force down prices.

The property market slump is expected to bottom out this year, but Wall Street banking giant Goldman Sachs says the downturn will be a "multi-year drag" on China's economic growth.

It's already hit spending hard - in the last three months of 2024, household consumption contributed just 29 percent to China's economic activity, down from 59 percent before the pandemic.

That is one of the reasons Beijing has stepped up exports. It wants to help offset sluggish domestic spending on new cars, luxury items and almost everything else.

The government has even introduced programmes like consumer goods trade-ins, where people can exchange their washing machines, microwaves and rice cookers.

But experts wonder whether these kinds of measures alone are sufficient without address-

ing deeper issues in the economy.

They say people will need more money in their pockets before pre-Covid levels of spending return.

"China needs to bring back the animal spirit of the population and we are still far from that," said Shuang Ding, Chief Economist for Greater China and North Asia at Standard Chartered Bank.

"If the private sector starts to invest and innovate that could increase income and the job outlook, and people will have more confidence to consume."

Steep public debt and unemployment have also affected savings and spending. Official figures suggest the youth jobless rate remains high compared to before the pandemic, and that wage rises have stalled.

President Xi has promised to invest in the cutting-edge industries that the government calls "new productive forces".

Until now, that has helped China become a leader in goods like renewable energy products such as solar panels and electric vehicle batteries.

Last year, China also overtook Japan as the world's biggest car exporter.

But the lacklustre economic picture, uncertainty over tariffs and other geopolitical uncertainties mean the appetite for investment in China is subdued.

SpaceX Starship test fails after Texas launch

TEXAS

The latest test of Space X's giant Starship rocket has failed, minutes after launch.

Officials at Elon Musk's company said the upper stage was lost after problems developed after lift-off from Texas on Thursday.

But the Super Heavy booster managed to return to its launchpad as planned, prompting an eruption of applause from ground control teams.

The mission came hours after the first flight of the Blue Origin New Glenn rocket system, backed by Amazon boss Jeff Bezos.

The two tech billionaires both want to dominate the space vehicle market.

"Starship experienced a rapid unscheduled disassembly during its ascent burn. Teams will continue to review data from today's flight test to better understand root cause," SpaceX posted on X.

"With a test like this, success comes from what we learn, and today's flight will help us improve Starship's reliability."

Unverified footage shared on social media shows what appears to be the rocket breaking up in flames. And footage showed orange balls of light flying across the sky over the Haitian capital of Port-Au-Prince, leaving a trail of smoke behind.

"Success is uncertain, but entertainment is guaranteed!" Mr Musk posted on X, sharing a video showing a fiery trail streaking through the sky.

He also said "improved versions" of the ship and booster were "already waiting for launch".

"Preliminary indication is that we had an oxygen/fuel leak in the cavity above the ship engine firewall that was large enough to build pressure in excess of the vent capacity," Musk said a short while later, adding that "nothing so far suggests pushing next launch past next month".

Footage of the launch clocked up 7.2m views, according to a SpaceX livestream.

The Starship system had lifted off from Boca Chica, Texas, at 17:38 EST (22:38 GMT) in the company's seventh test mission.

The Starship upper stage separated from its Super Heavy booster nearly four minutes into flight as planned.

But then SpaceX communications manager Dan Huot reported on a live stream that mission teams had lost contact with the ship.

The Super Heavy booster managed to return to its launchpad roughly seven minutes after lift-off as planned, prompting an eruption of applause from ground control teams.

The US Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) said it was aware "an anomaly occurred" during the SpaceX mission.

"The FAA briefly slowed and diverted aircraft around the area where space vehicle debris was falling. Normal operations have resumed," it said in a statement.

It comes a day after a SpaceX rocket blasted off from Florida carrying two privately constructed lunar landers and a micro rover to the Moon.

The uncrewed Falcon 9 launched from the Kennedy Space Center on Wednesday.

And Bezos' Blue Origin company successfully launched a rocket into orbit for the first time.

It was a huge step forward for Bezos and his company that has spent years getting to the point of sending a rocket into orbit.

China-Grenada ties bear fruit of shared growth

BEIJING

In Grenada, an island country in the eastern Caribbean Sea, the National Cricket Stadium is undergoing major repairs and an upgrade with aid from the Chinese government, bringing closer to reality the vision of the stadium becoming the premier sporting and entertainment venue in the English-speaking Caribbean region.

"The stadium is a good place and like a home," said 19-year-old Danny Joseph, a player on the Grenada national cricket team, who has been professionally trained at the stadium since childhood.

Joseph, who dreams of eventually playing for the West Indies cricket team, said he believes there will be more professional facilities, following the stadium's renovation, that can provide higher-quality training opportunities, which would take him closer to his dream. West Indies, nicknamed the Windies, is a men's cricket team representing a group of mainly English-speaking countries and territories in the Caribbean region.

The outdoor sport is not only an integral part of Grenadians' daily life, but also a source of national pride.

The stadium, renovated with aid from China in 2006, is one of numerous projects that have significantly improved the lives of local people while reflecting the friendship between China and Grenada in the 20 years since the two countries resumed diplomatic relations.

"The seed which was planted back in 2005 has blossomed into a tree that is bearing fruits for both the people of Grenada and China through agriculture, infrastructure, cultural exchanges and healthcare," Grenadian Prime Minister Maurice Mitchell said during his visit to China, which is to wrap up on Friday.

As the first foreign leader received by China in the new year, Mitchell brought with him a high-level delegation to learn about China's development in various sectors.

The first stop upon his arrival in Beijing was automaker BAIC Group, where he had a test drive of a Chinese new energy car. He even asked the Grenadian ambassador to place an order immediately.

On Monday, the two governments signed a total of 13 cooperation agreements covering a wide range of areas including agriculture, energy and the environment, renewable energy, arts, culture and tourism, and the blue, or ocean, economy.

"Through these agreements, we continue to build a stronger bridge of collaboration that will bring tangible benefits to our people, creating new opportunities for growth and development," Mitchell said.

"Although the road to development is full of challenges, we remain optimistic about the future. With the inspiration from China's progress, we can work together to address the challenges ahead," he told a bilateral trade and investment forum on Tuesday.

Chinese Ambassador to Grenada Wei Hongtian said in an article published on Jan 10 that China and

Grenada have forged a strong relationship that has brought substantial benefits to the two nations and their peoples.

"This relationship sets a brilliant example for mutual respect, equality and win-win cooperation between countries of different sizes," Wei said.

Before his visit to China, Grenada's prime minister had told reporters that "many times, as small islands, we don't always get the respect from large islands because they see us as small or insignificant".

However, in the Grenada-China relations, "we are treated with the same courtesies, the same level of respect, and we are listened to in the same manner as any larger country", Mitchell said.

China's achievements in areas like eradicating poverty, which were built on decades of experience, serve as valuable lessons for Latin American and Caribbean countries, he added.

Yue Yunxia, deputy head of the Institute of Latin American Studies at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, said that China's cooperation with Caribbean countries has witnessed fast progress in recent years, and such cooperation has no political strings attached and does not target any third party.

In addition to the cricket stadium, 1,000 units of low-income housing, a gift from the government and people of China, have provided comfortable homes for families in Grenada. Furthermore, in the agricultural sector, China has carried out eight consecutive phases of technical cooperation, introducing and promoting advanced agricultural technologies and equipment to Grenada.

The project to upgrade Maurice Bishop International Airport, financed through a soft loan from the Chinese government, has significantly enhanced Grenada's connectivity with the world, opening new opportunities for the further promotion of trade, tourism and cultural exchanges.

According to Yue, the launch of China-aided projects as well as "small and beautiful" livelihood cooperation projects, such as refurbishing community centers, building pedestrian bridges and extending roads in the Caribbean region, have won recognition from countries in the region for their contribution to local economies and the public interest.

Observers noted that as China continues to deepen reform comprehensively, expand opening-up and pursue high-quality development, it has not only promoted its own development, but also provided a broader market and unprecedented cooperation opportunities for the rest of the world, especially Global South countries.

Such endeavors will help inject strong impetus into the modernization process of the Global South and make sure that no country is left behind in the process of global modernization, they said.

Speaking at the third Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation in October 2023, President Xi Jinping told foreign leaders that "the modernization we are pursuing is not for China alone, but for



An aerial drone photo taken on Jan 6, 2025 shows a view of the China-aided renovation project of the Grenada National Cricket Stadium in St. George's, Grenada

all developing countries through our joint efforts".

Two months later, Xi reiterated China's commit-

ment when delivering a speech in San Francisco in the United States, saying, "We are ready to work with

all countries to advance global modernization featuring peaceful develop-

ment, mutually beneficial cooperation and common prosperity, and to build a community with a shared future for mankind."

Wang Bo, dean of the Beijing-based University of International Business and Economics' School of In-

ternational Development and Cooperation, said that as a significant gap still exists between developing countries and developed ones in terms of modernization, the modernization of the Global South therefore plays a key role in achieving global common development and prosperity.

"For a long time, the international order led by Western countries has posed many obstacles to the modernization of the Global South," Wang said.

"Hegemonism, unilateral economic sanctions and the practice of double standards on human rights issues are all factors that hinder this process," he said, noting that the modernization that China pursues has presented a new vision that is different from the path of Western countries.

The Belt and Road Initiative and the major global initiatives that China has put forward provide an important platform for Global South countries to board the express train of China's development in order to achieve their own development and facilitate the modernization drive of the Global South, he added.

UZALO
MONDAY - WEDNESDAY
FROM 10:30 PM
ITV

ITV PGM SCHEDULE

SUNDAY 12 Jan 5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi 6:00 HABARI 6:40 Kumekucha 7:00 Habari 8:00 Al Jazeera 09:00 Watoto Wetu 10:00 Soap rpt: Laws of love 11:45 Hawavumi lakini wamo rpt 12:45 Mjue zaidi 13:30 Usafiri wako 14:00 Tamasha la Michezo 15:30 Mwangaza 16:30 ITV Top 10 rpt 17:20 Kipindi cha kikristo 18:00 Hapa na Pale 18:15 Mapishi 18:30 Matukio ya wiki 19:30 Igizo: Haikufuma 20:00 Habari 21:05 Igizo: Bongo DSM 21:20 Kipindi maalum: Michezo Supa Jackpot 21:40 Mjue Zaidi 22:15 Soap: Uzalo rpt 00:30 Al Jazeera	TUESDAY 14 Jan 5:00 Soap rpt: Uzalo 5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi 6:00 HABARI 6:40 Kumekucha 7:30 HABARI 8:00 Kumekucha Michezo 8:55 Habari za saa 9:30 Soap: Laws of love 10:25 Watoto wetu 10:55 Habari za saa 11:00 Hawavumi lakini wamo rpt 11:45 Al Jazeera 12:00 Mjue zaidi 12:30 Mjue zaidi 12:55 Mjue zaidi 13:00 Igizo: Bongo DSM rpt 13:20 Shikabamba 13:50 Usafiri wako 13:55 Habari za saa 14:00 Usafiri wako 14:20 Soap rpt: Haikufuma 14:55 Habari za saa 15:00 Meza Huru 15:20 Watoto wetu 15:30 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WORLD

Israel: Hamas set to free first hostages on Sunday under Gaza ceasefire deal

JERUSALEM/CAIRO

HAMAS is expected to release the first hostages under a Gaza ceasefire deal tomorrow, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office said yesterday, after 15 months of war that demolished the enclave.

If successful, the ceasefire would halt fighting that has razed much of heavily urbanized Gaza, killed over 46,000 people, and displaced most of the tiny enclave's pre-war population of 2.3 million several times over, according to local authorities.

It could also ease hostilities in the Middle East, where the Gaza war spread to include Iran and its proxies; Lebanon's Hezbollah, Yemen's Houthis and armed groups in Iraq.

Under the six-week first phase of the three-stage deal, Hamas will release 33 Israeli hostages, including all women (soldiers and civilians), children, and men over 50.

Israel will release all Palestinian women and children under 19 detained in Israeli jails by the end of the first phase. The total number of Palestinians released will depend on hostages released, and could be between 990 and 1,650 Palestinians, including men, women and children.

Hamas said in a statement yesterday that obstacles that arose in relation to the terms of the Gaza ceasefire agree-

ment have been resolved.

In Gaza itself, Israeli warplanes kept up intense strikes, and the Civil Emergency Service said on Friday that at least 101 people, including 58 women and children, had been killed since the deal was announced on Wednesday.

Israel's acceptance of the deal will not be official until it is approved by the country's security cabinet and government.

In the early hours of Friday, Netanyahu's office said that Israel's security cabinet will meet to give final approval to the ceasefire accord, after the meeting was pushed back from Thursday raising concerns of delays.

A full cabinet meeting will be held later, but it was unclear exactly when.

Israel blamed Hamas for the last-minute hold-up, while Hamas on Thursday said it was committed to the deal, which is scheduled to take effect on Sunday.

Accord reached on hostages

"Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was informed by the negotiating team that agreements have been reached on a deal to release the hostages," his office said in a statement.

Underscoring the potential obstacles facing a final ceasefire, hardliners in Netanyahu's coalition have opposed the deal as a capitulation to Hamas, which runs Gaza, and National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir threatened to resign



Destroyed buildings by Israeli bombardments as seen inside the Gaza Strip from southern Israel on Thursday. AP

if it is approved. However, he said he would not bring down the government.

His fellow hardliner, Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich has also threatened to quit the government if it does not go back to war to defeat Hamas after the first six-week phase of the ceasefire was completed.

Nevertheless, a majority of ministers were expected to back the agreement. In Gaza yesterday, the air strikes continued. In the aftermath of one strike on tents housing displaced people, a boy picked through damaged items on the floor that was littered with canned food and coffee pots.

That attack killed two people and wounded seven others at an encampment close to Nasser Hospital in Khan Younis, according to medics.

Also in Khan Younis, mourners gathered around the body of a man killed in an Israeli strike as women hugged each other and cried.

"Life has become an unbearable hell," said resident Jomaa Abed al-Aal.

There was no immediate comment from the Israeli military on the latest strikes.

Hostage families want swift action

Israel says 98 hostages are still being held in Gaza. About half are believed to be alive. They include Israel-

is and non-Israelis. Of the total, 94 were seized in the Oct 7, 2023, Hamas-led attack on Israel and four have been held in Gaza since 2014.

For the first time, Israeli authorities have officially informed hostage families of the names of the first 33 to be released but it remains unclear how many of those on the list are still alive.

A group representing families of Israeli hostages in Gaza urged Netanyahu to move forward quickly.

"For the 98 hostages, each night is another night of terrible nightmare. Do not delay their return even for one more night," the group said in a statement late on Thursday carried by Israeli media.

The ceasefire accord emerged on Wednesday after mediation by Qatar, Egypt and the U.S. As well as the release of hostages and Palestinian prisoners, the deal includes a gradual withdrawal of Israeli troops from Gaza.

It also paves the way for a surge in humanitarian aid for the coastal strip, where the majority of the population has been displaced, facing hunger, sickness and cold.

Israel launched its campaign in Gaza after Hamas-led gunmen burst into Israeli border-area communities on Oct 7, 2023, killing 1,200 soldiers and civilians and abducting over 250 hostages, according to Israeli tallies.

China says US investigation 'blatant display' of unilateralism, protectionism

BEIJING

CHINA yesterday expressed strong opposition to the Biden administration's Section 301 investigation into China's maritime, logistics and shipbuilding sectors, calling the action a blatant display of unilateralism and protectionism.

The investigation, motivated by domestic political interests and aimed at hindering China's development, undermined the multilateral trading system and violated international trade rules, said a spokesperson for the Ministry of Commerce.

The spokesperson also criticized recent U.S. sanctions on multiple Chinese companies.

The World Trade Organization (WTO) has already ruled that additional tariffs the United States previously imposed on Chinese goods under Section 301 violated WTO regulations.

The spokesperson noted that the investigation report released Thursday is filled with unfounded accusations against China.

The decline of the U.S. shipbuilding industry has nothing to do with China, the spokesperson said, stressing that U.S. companies' global market share had already decreased significantly long before China emerged as a major player in the sector.

The growth of China's shipbuilding industry was not due to so-called non-market practices, but because of a robust industrial system, highly skilled engineers and workers, and an open business environment, the spokesperson said.

China's maritime market has always been open to foreign vessels and companies without discrimination and its industrial policies treat both domestic and foreign businesses equally, according to the spokesperson.

In contrast, the Biden administration has provided heavy subsidies to domestic industries through the Inflation Reduction Act and the CHIPS and Science Act, with many of these subsidies being discriminatory. Such measures undermine the effectiveness and authority of WTO rules and are a true example of non-market practices, the spokesperson said.

The spokesperson called on the Biden administration to address the legitimate concerns of Chinese and U.S. companies and to stop shifting blame onto China for challenges in domestic industrial development.

China will closely monitor the U.S. actions and take necessary steps to protect the legal rights and interests of Chinese companies, the spokesperson said.

Xinhua

Sanctions against Russia 'will be thrown out' after Ukraine conflict ends – Hungarian PM

BUDAPEST

HUNGARY is confident that after the Ukraine conflict ends, the West will lift sanctions against Russia and restore normal relations with the country, Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban stated in a morning program on the Kossuth radio station.

"Most importantly, these changes would mark the beginning of a new period, especially regarding war, peace, and sanctions, which will be thrown out the window. A sanctions-free system of relations with Russia will be established," the Hungarian prime minister said about the prospects for 2025.

At the same time, Orban emphasized that "this requires further effort," as EU leaders are hesitant to change their stance and still support the ongoing military conflict in Ukraine. "But this will pass," Orban added.

The Hungarian prime minister explained that the developments were mainly caused by the win of Republican Donald Trump in the latest US presidential election. Trump promised to address the conflict in Ukraine after taking office.

Hungary is relying on him, hoping to see an end to hostilities in the neighboring country in 2025, Orban emphasized. "Thus, we can say that a new era will begin starting from Monday," the prime minister said, referring to the inauguration of the US President-elect on January 20.

During last year's campaign, the Republican nominee declared his intention to achieve a cessation of hostilities in Ukraine in 24 hours, but after winning the November 2024 election, he began to suggest that this goal could take much longer.

He also noted the desire to hold talks with Russian President Vladimir Putin after returning to the White House. The US special envoy to Ukraine in Trump's second administration, Keith Kellogg, reported that the president-elect would like to see the Ukraine conflict end "as soon as possible."

Agencies



Kremlin ready to study signals from US that will come anyway – foreign policy aide

MOSCOW

THE Kremlin is certain that signals from the Donald Trump-led administration will come sooner or later and will be ready to perceive them, Russian Presidential Aide Yuri Ushakov has told VOTK journalist Pavel Zarubin. An extract from the interview was uploaded to his Telegram channel.

"Our president [Vladimir Putin] has repeatedly said that we are ready for a dialogue and are calmly waiting for signals," Ushakov said.

"Usually the president or leader who comes to power is the first to make the call," the Kremlin official said about the customary practice.

"We are not sitting and waiting. We calmly understand the whole situation and we know that sooner or later we will receive some signals from Washington. We are ready for them. We are ready to listen to the relevant proposals and respond to them constructively," he explained.

According to the presidential aide, if both sides make reciprocal moves, first there will be some communication behind closed doors between the relevant services and agencies, in particular, between the White House and the Russian presidential staff.



US President-elect Donald Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin

"Then questions about the further dialogue, including a possible conversation at the highest level, will be decided," he explained, noting that the leaders of the two countries might initiate such a conversation at any time.

Asked about technical obstruc-

tions that may arise in the context of numerous sanctions, including visa problems, Ushakov expressed the certainty that on the condition of the supreme political will these obstacles could be easily surmounted.

"For a start, after all, it is necessary to agree on the fundamental issues.

When some agreements have been reached, or are somewhere near in sight, then it will be the turn of practical issues, which in the case of a high-level agreement on some important step, it seems to me, will be easier to resolve," he said.

Agencies

China home to most automated terminals completed and under construction

At around 9 a.m., a ship laden with cargo arrived at a fully automated container terminal of Qingdao Port in east China's Shandong province. As the ship docked, intelligent operation promptly commenced.

Several gantry cranes descended from a height of tens of meters, their "arms" expertly grabbing and positioning the large containers onto automated guided vehicles (AGVs). Nearby, high-speed rail-mounted gantry cranes swiftly navigated the yard, accurately stacking and organizing the incoming containers.

The smooth loading and unloading operations were

made possible by automation.

"Construction of the fully automated terminal began in 2015, divided into three phases, with the third phase terminal becoming operational by the end of 2023," said an employee with Qingdao Port.

According to the employee, the terminal has lifted operational efficiency by six percent and throughput by 15 percent.

On Jan. 1, 2025, the automated container terminal at Qingdao Port achieved an average single-crane productivity of 60.9 units per hour during a loading task. This marks the 12th time that the terminal has set a world record for

the automated container terminal's loading and unloading efficiency.

Heading north along the coastline from the port, there is a bulk cargo terminal that has been revitalized.

At the ore terminal in the west port area of Yantai Port, the work site was totally unmanned, but as an orange ship unloader swung its mechanical arm, cargos were grabbed out of the hold. Conveyor belts, rotating fast, worked in close coordination with reclaimers and loaders, handling cargos with high efficiency.

Thanks to fully automated terminal control technology, the ore terminal at Yantai Port has achieved unmanned op-

erations throughout the entire work process. Compared to traditional operating modes, both the comprehensive unloading efficiency and bulk cargo loading efficiency have increased by over 20 percent.

The two ports in the north and south of the Shandong Peninsula are vivid examples of the accelerated construction of intelligent ports across China.

According to data from China's Ministry of Transport, the country has built 52 automated container and bulk cargo terminals so far, ranking first in the world in terms of both completed and under-construction scales. Chinese ports also rank at the forefront globally in the level and application of auto-

mation technology.

In recent years, China has successively formulated and released a series of industry technical standards such as the design specifications for automated container terminals and automated coal and ore terminals, which have driven and supported the development of smart port construction. Some technical solutions for automated container terminals have been introduced overseas and applied in ports in some countries.

"To achieve full-process unmanned operation for ship loading and unloading, container transfer, and yard handling at a container terminal, a complete set of automated

port machinery equipment loading/unloading systems are indispensable," said Li Yiming, director of a design and research institute of Shanghai Zhenhua Heavy Industries Co., Ltd. (ZPMC).

Li took the Yangshan phase IV automated terminal in Shanghai as an example. When a large vessel docks, the quay crane is the primary equipment for loading and unloading containers at the terminal. By introducing dual-trolley automated quay cranes, it is possible to achieve a relay operation with two trolleys, increasing the efficiency of loading and unloading operations by 50 percent.

After the containers are un-

loaded, AGVs will efficiently transport the containers to the yard. Following this, the world's first dual-container automated rail-mounted gantry cranes come into play, capable of lifting two containers at one go, doubling the efficiency of yard operations.

"Up to now, ZPMC has provided a total of 28 automated quay cranes, 121 automated rail-mounted gantry cranes, 145 AGVs, and a complete set of loading and unloading systems, helping the Yangshan phase IV automated terminal become the largest and most intelligent fully automated container terminal in the world," said Li.

People's Daily

Putin, Iranian president to sign strategic partnership treaty

MOSCOW

PRESIDENT Vladimir Putin of Russia and President Masoud Pezeshkian of Iran was expected to hold talks at the Kremlin yesterday and sign the Treaty on Comprehensive Strategic Partnership.

The meeting's agenda includes global and regional issues of mutual interest, including developments in the Middle East. The parties will also discuss the situation in the South Caucasus and the state of affairs around Iran's nuclear program. The bilateral agenda includes ways to expand trade, investment, transport, logistics and humanitarian cooperation.

Putin and Pezeshkian are supposed to make statements to the media after the talks.

New level of relations

The treaty is designed to bring Russia-Iran relations to a new level, cementing their status as strategic partners.

According to officials from both countries, the document will cover all

areas, including defense, the fight against terrorism, the energy sector, finances, transport, industries, agriculture, culture, science and technology.

Russia and Iran are currently guided by the 2001 Treaty on the Foundations of Relations and Principles of Cooperation. It was concluded for ten years and automatically renewed for subsequent five-year periods. The new document will be concluded for 20 years.

Professor Ruhollah Modabber, Iranian political scientist and the country's leading Russia expert, told TASS that the new treaty would not only boost cooperation between the two countries but would also allow them to better resist US sanctions. The document also contains provisions on respect for each other's territorial integrity.

According to the Kremlin, the treaty is in line with aspirations of both Moscow and Tehran and is not directed against the interests of other countries. Iranian



Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi noted that the treaty did not provide for the establishment of a defense alliance.

Cooperation across all areas

The Kremlin pointed out that Russia-Iran relations "are on the rise," progressing based on the principles of mutual respect and the consideration of each other's interests. The parties maintain active dialogue via all channels, including intergovernmental, interparliamentary, inter-agency and inter-regional ones. In November, Russia's prime minister made a visit to Iran, the first in recent years.

Both countries give high priority to the development of trade and economic

ties. A Russian-Iranian permanent commission on trade and economic cooperation operates effectively.

Bilateral trade rose by 15.5% to \$3.77 bln between January and October 2024. The share of national currencies in mutual payments has exceeded 96%.

The parties work on a number of major joint projects, primarily in the fields of transport and energy. In particular, the first power unit of the Bushehr Nuclear Power Plant in Iran is in operation, and work is underway to construct the second and third units.

The two countries also seek to boost humanitarian ties. The Days of Russian Culture are expected to take place in Iran this year. Efforts continue to establish a

Russian Cultural Center in Tehran. The number of Iranian students enrolled in Russian universities has passed 9,000.

"Close coordination between Russia and Iran on the international stage is based on common approaches, including commitment to building a just multipolar world order based on universally recognized principles of international law, equal and indivisible security, mutually beneficial and equitable cooperation between countries, the desire to pursue an independent foreign policy and determination to resist external pressure and the practice of illegitimate sanctions," the Russian presidential press service stated.

Previous communication

This will be the third meeting between Putin and Pezeshkian. The first two took place on the sidelines of an international forum in Turkmenistan and the BRICS summit in the Russian city of Kazan in October 2024.

Besides, Putin and Pezeshkian held two phone calls in 2024.

Malawi renews support for Morocco's sovereignty over Western Sahara

RABAT

MALAWI renewed its support for Morocco's territorial integrity and sovereignty over its southern provinces in Western Sahara today.

Nancy Tembo, the country's Foreign Affairs Minister conveyed her country's support during his visit to Rabat, where she held talks with her counterpart Nasser Bourita.

She also commended the international consensus in support of Morocco's Autonomy Plan, describing it as the only credible, serious, and realistic solution.

Malawi also expressed its support for the UN-led political process as the exclusive framework for reaching a realistic, practical, and sustainable solution to the regional dispute.

Tembo echoed the consensus among many officials across the continent and beyond.

In regards to other continental affairs, the diplomat said Lazarus McCarthy Chakwera, President of Malawi recognized Morocco's Sahel initiative - describing it as "enlightened and timely."

The initiative is aimed to facilitate Sahelian countries' access to the Atlantic Ocean, fostering intra-African cooperation.

Bourita also positively remarked on the bilateral ties the two countries have been witnessing, describing them as an "important development as part of the commitment by His Majesty King Mohammed VI" as well as the Malawian President as part of the South-South cooperation.

The Moroccan foreign minister recalled the efforts the two countries have been carrying out to deepen these ties, including a joint committee, the signing of several agreements, the reopening of the Malawi embassy in Rabat, and also the reception of the Malawian ambassador to the capital.

Both countries state they are committed to boosting cooperation at all levels, in security education, trade, and investment, among other sectors.

"Morocco has always expressed its contribution technically and financially to support Malawi in the face of natural disasters," Bourita said, describing Malawi as an important ally.

Ethiopia repatriates 33,000 nationals over 6 months, says spokesperson

ADDIS ABABA

THE Ethiopian government has repatriated about 33,000 nationals facing dire conditions in various foreign countries over the past six months, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs announced on Thursday.

Nebiat Getachew, spokesperson for the ministry, said that the ongoing large-scale repatriation effort is part of the Ethiopian government's "citizen-centered" diplomatic commitment to bringing home its nationals stranded in difficult situations abroad, according to state-affiliated Pana Broadcasting Corporate.

Getachew said the repatriated individuals had been "facing dire circumstances in various countries" during the first half of the current Ethiopian 2024/2025 fiscal year that started on July 8.

The spokesperson said a particularly concerning case involves Ethiopian nationals in Myanmar, where 380 citizens have been identified in dire circumstances.

These individuals were misled by illegal brokers promising employment opportunities in Southeast Asia. Upon arrival, they were taken to unauthorized camps in areas bordering Myanmar and Thailand, where conditions are reportedly severe.

He said as part of the government's efforts, some 34 nationals were freed from their "abductors" and transported to safety in Thailand before being repatriated to Ethiopia.

Great day for India-US relations: EAM Jaishankar

BANGALORE

EXTERNAL Affairs Minister S Jaishankar joined US Ambassador to India, Eric Garcetti for the opening of the US Consulate in Bangalore. Hailing the step as an important moment in the India-US ties, Jaishankar also announced that India will soon be opening its consulate in Los Angeles.

"Bangalore is such an important place, it was for me an imperative that there is a permanent resident presence of American diplomats this time...It has been something long in waiting...I told him (US Ambassador to India Eric Garcetti) you get Bangalore done and I'll get you Los Angeles done, which is

his hometown. So we will be opening our consulate in Los Angeles also. A consulate serves many purposes. A big part of it is to facilitate travel," the EAM said.

While addressing the gathering, Jaishankar highlighted several aspects of the India-US ties and said that the opening of the consulate was long due.

"Today it is within our grasp, within the realm of possibility, that we realise the potential of India-US relations. It is important that Bangalore too, realise its potential in the relationship. As a country, today we are encouraging the opening of more embassies in the capital. It's part of our deeper engagement with the world. But along with that,



we are also encouraging more embassies to open consulates. I hope that there will be more occasions where more countries will open more consulates in Bangalore. It would serve India's interests, Karnataka's interests and Bangalore's interests better", Jaishankar said.

Speaking about the expansion of the India-US ties, Jaishankar remarked, "Today, when we look at all the possibilities before us in an era of AI, EVs, space and drones, our relationships will be heavily based on technology, even more so than before. It will have a much bigger space

component because the space domain is just beginning to open up. Defence is a crucial area. Two decades ago, there were virtually no American weapons in our inventory, very little defence collaboration. Today we fly the C17s, the C130s, the Chinooks, the Apaches."

He also highlighted the importance of the education and research sector between the two countries. "I hope to see collaborative campuses, exchange of students and a stronger American education presence in this region. Today, the formal opening of this consulate is one more sign that we are overcoming the hesitations of history".

ANI

China steps up efforts to build digital twin systems in water conservancy sector

IN a farm in northwest China's Gansu province, sensors are inserted into the soil to monitor humidity, while a miniature weather station tracks wind and light conditions.

"Last year, the sunflower yield per mu (about 667 square meters) exceeded 280 kilograms, an increase of 15 percent," said Zou Changsheng, head of the project department of the farm.

With the use of smart irrigation, bountiful harvests were guaranteed, and the water usage per mu has decreased from 650 cubic meters to 300 cubic meters, Zou added.

The irrigation water comes from the Shule River, which flows through the desert, nurturing oasis along its path. The Shule River provides irrigation water for a total of 1.34 million mu of farmland spreading across 22 townships in Yumen city, and Guazhou county, as well as six farms.

The Shule River basin receives less than 70 millimeters of precipitation annually, while the evaporation is as high as 2,800 millimeters. How can this water-deficient river achieve intensive water conservation while ensuring proper irrigation?

"We have 'digitized' the

Shule River," said Zhang Faron, deputy director of the planning department of the Shule River basin water resources utilization center in Gansu province.

By leveraging geographic information systems and building information modeling, a virtual model has been constructed to simulate the river channel, canal system, reservoirs, and water gates in equal proportion, creating a "digital twin" of the river, Zhang explained.

Through large model simulation, water resource scheduling plans have been continuously optimized. Manual gate operations have been automated, enabling precise water release based on demand. The construction of high-standard farmland is advancing in sync, with integrated water and fertilizer technologies such as drip irrigation and precision fertilization, saving both labor and water. By combining data, algorithms, and computing power, the Shule River irrigation area is gradually becoming a leading example of water conservation.

These efforts to use digital technology to promote water-saving agriculture in the Shule River basin reflect China's rapid progress in developing



Photo shows a corn field that adopts intelligent irrigation methods in northwest China's Gansu province. (Photo from the New Gansu app)

a digital twin system for water resources management.

"In simple terms, digital twin water resources management refers to the use of technologies such as artificial intelligence, 5G, and large models to virtually replicate natural water systems and hydraulic engineering structures on the internet. This enables the simulation of interactions between physical and virtual objects, facilitating precise forecasting, early warnings, rapid scenario simulations, and the development of contingency plans," said Sun Chungpeng, director of the hydrological informa-

tion forecasting center at China's Ministry of Water Resources.

In recent years, China's water resources sector has completed 94 construction tasks of digital twin for water resource management.

The construction of a comprehensive water monitoring system covering the Yangtze River basin has commenced, accelerating the formation of a prototype digital twin of the Yangtze River.

A digital twin Yellow River project is advancing in an orderly manner, which aims at promoting the deep integration of the real-world Yellow

River, Yellow River models, and a digital twin of the Yellow River.

In the development of digital twin water networks, a framework for constructing a national backbone water network digital twin has been completed. Progress has been made in the preliminary establishment of a digital twin for the first phase of the South-to-North Water Diversion Project's central route, and 10 provincial-level pilot areas have achieved practical results in building their digital twin water networks. Efforts are also underway to advance the construction of digital

twin water networks at the municipal and county levels.

Regarding digital twin projects, continuous iterative optimization is being carried out for key sites such as the Three Gorges Dam, Xiaolangdi Dam, Danjiangkou Reservoir, and Yuecheng Reservoir. From 2023 to 2025, 49 digital twin irrigation areas are scheduled to be piloted. Besides, by 2025, large and key medium-sized water conservancy projects newly constructed will launch information infrastructure, digital twin platforms, and business application systems.

Digital twin in water conservancy enables more targeted management of rivers and lakes. China's Ministry of Water Resources has established a national key rivers and lakes ecological flow monitoring and early warning platform. This platform gathers monitoring data such as water levels and flow rates from 283 ecological flow sections of key rivers and lakes. It enables real-time monitoring and early warning for 235 ecological flow control sections across 165 key rivers and lakes, as well as 65 water allocation sections.

A national water use management platform has been set up, allowing for dynamic monitoring of violations such

as excessive water use, exceeding control limits, and lack of measurement for water users with permits. Up to now, 131,000 online monitoring points and 551,500 offline monitoring points nationwide have been connected to the platform.

Digital twin in water conservancy enables more science-based management of water conservancy projects.

In water conservancy engineering construction management system, information from over 40,000 enterprises, more than 1.07 million professionals, and over 420,000 project performance records and credit evaluations in the water resources industry have been consolidated.

In the water resources project operation management information system, electronic archives of over 90,000 reservoirs across nine industries, including water conservancy, energy, and transportation, have been shared.

In the rural water resources and hydropower information management system, basic and operational information for 520,000 centralized water supply projects, 42,000 small hydropower stations, and 7,326 large and medium-sized irrigation areas are updated annually, with a daily average



Kenyan star Lydia Akoth signs for Yanga Princess

By Correspondent Nassir Nchimbi & Agencies

FKF Women's Premier League Most Valuable Player (MVP) Lydia 'Ozil' Akoth has signed for Tanzanian outfit Yanga Princess ahead of the ongoing Tanzania Mainland Women's Premier League.

The midfielder (pictured), who derives her nickname from her awe-inspiring dribbling, guided Kenyan champions Police Bullets FC to their maiden league title last season in what was their debut season in the top flight.

With the mid-season transfer window opening on Friday, January 17, and set to close on Friday, February 14, the defending champions are expected to bolster the squad ahead of the second leg, looking to fill Akoth's massive shoes.

On her way to being named MVP, the former Wadadia and Zetech Sparks ace scored eight goals and provided ten assists in 18 matches, leading the Law Enforcers to victory in an unbeaten run.

Akoth, who joined Bullets from Women's National League side Gaspo Women, went on to propel the Bel-

dine Odemba-coached side to the final of the CECAFA Zonal qualifiers for the CAF Women's Champions League, where they narrowly lost 1-0 to Commercial Bank of Ethiopia (CBE).

The Law Enforcers had their sights set on becoming the second Kenyan team to qualify for the continental showpiece following Vihiga Queens' success in 2021, falling short against the experienced Ethiopians who had lost to Vihiga three years before.

'Ozil' made her Harambee Starlets debut in October last year as her then-club coach, Odemba, named a squad for the invitational Pink Ladies Cup held at the Emirhan Stadium in Antalya, Türkiye.

Before then, she had last donned the national team jersey in 2021 with the Under-20 team, Rising Starlets, during the 2022 FIFA U20 Women's World Cup first-round qualifying matches, where the team was eliminated early by Uganda in a 10-3 aggregate.

Yanga Queens, who are yet to win the women's title despite being behind Simba Queens and JKT Queens, are currently building their squad for the ongoing season.

Pak Stars A trounce Patel Brotherhood A in 2024 TCA DC Super League

By Correspondent Japheth Kazenga

MOHAMED Omary and Kashif Adnan exhibited stellar batting showing to propel Pak Stars A to a comprehensive 174-run defeat of Patel Brotherhood A in the 2024 Tanzania Cricket Association (TCA) DC Super League tie in Dar es Salaam recently.

Pak Stars A raced to an imposing 294/9 in the allotted 50 overs after garnering the opportunity to start batting at the Leaders Club venue.

It was chiefly thanks to youthful Omary and seasoned skipper Adnan's no-nonsense approach at the crease.

The batting squad moved to 35-2 after eight overs, with openers Nisar Ahmed and Ivan Ismail facing dismissal with 16 runs and 15 runs respectively.

Omary, coming in at number three, laid his hands on the bat and went on to garner 78 runs and ended up as the player boasting the most noticeable showing when his side took the crease.

The batting squad reached 201-5 when Omary made his way back after 38 overs, with the cricketer nailing 12 boundaries during his turn at the crease.

Adnan had Pak Stars A adding more runs, blasting 58 runs and pushing the team to 235-7 once he exited the crease in the 42nd over.

There were further two-digit contributions by Ayaz Mustafa, who notched 29 runs, and Mohamed Ali, who garnered 23 runs, as their squad punished Patel Brotherhood A.

Zamoyoni Ramadhan posted 18 runs and experienced cricketer Zafar Khan (15 runs) and



Pak Stars A's Mohamed Ali (R) receives the Player of the Match prize from a match umpire upon the conclusion of the 2024 Tanzania Cricket Association (TCA) DC Super League tie pitting the team against Patel Brotherhood A in Dar es Salaam recently. PHOTO: COURTESY OF TANZANIA CRICKET ASSOCIATION

Hassan Raza (19 runs) continued to offer the batting squad dominance.

Although budding pacer Khalid Amiri had a great bowling turn after hauling 5-56, Patel Brotherhood A hardly prevented Pak Stars A from ending the innings with a bigger figure.

Acrey Pascal garnered two wickets, leaking 48 runs, as Patel Brotherhood A's bowling unit vainly battled to get the better of Pak Stars A.

Patel Brotherhood A's bid to

successfully chase Pak Stars A's total could hardly be fulfilled after managing 120/10 in 42.2 overs.

Top-order batsmen Abubakar Juma and Pascal were the performers with the noticeable game in an otherwise below-par batting showing by Patel Brotherhood A.

Juma ended up with the most runs in the fruitless chase, having notched 30 runs, and opener Pascal garnered 23 runs.

The batting collapse, which

came about after experienced batsman Vishal Patel's dismissal, proved costly to Patel Brotherhood A.

Patel, Patel Brotherhood A's captain, could so far score 13 runs in his brief stint.

Twenty-seven extras leaked by Pak Stars A's bowlers somewhat helped Patel Brotherhood A end up with an encouraging total.

The extras were made up of one leg bye, one no ball, and 25 wides.

Ali, who ended up with 3-20, Khan, who took 2-20, and Muhammad Mudasser, who garnered 2-16, led Pak Stars A's successful bid to weaken Patel Brotherhood A's resolve.

The league, a TCA officer stated, features the top cricketer teams in Tanzania, put into two groups.

Group A teams are Aga Khan SC, Delaware Upanga SC-A, Patel Brotherhood A, Dar Indian Titans, and Pak Stars A.

Group B clubs are: Caravans, Strikers, Aces A, Gymkhana, and Lions A.

The showdown began on January 4, 2025, marking an exciting start to Tanzania's premier cricket competition.

The inauguration ceremony was graced by TCA Chairman, Balakrishna Sreekumar, who highlighted the league's significance in elevating the standard of cricket in Tanzania.

Sreekumar stated: "This league is not just about competition... it's about fostering talent, building camaraderie, and taking Tanzanian cricket to new heights."

The 2024 TCA DC Super League is off to a thrilling start, promising top-tier cricket action in the weeks to come.

CAF ban no obstacle for Simba, says former chair Rage

By Correspondent Joseph Mchekadona

RENOWNED football administrator Ismail Aden Rage has expressed confidence in Simba SC's ability to perform well in their CAF Confederation Cup Group A match despite

playing behind closed doors.

Simba SC will face CS Constantine tomorrow at the Benjamin Mkapa Stadium in Dar es Salaam.

In a recent interview, Rage, a former chairman of Simba SC, stated that the Msim-

bazi Street-based side comprises professional players capable of excelling under any circumstances.

"Simba have players who can play in any situation. They are professional players, and playing without fans cannot affect their per-

formance. Of course, supporters motivate players, but in this case, Simba players have to accept that they will play without supporters," he said.

The Confederation of African Football (CAF) banned Simba supporters from attending the

match due to crowd trouble during their previous Confederation Cup game against CS Sfaxien at the same venue.

In addition to the fan ban, Simba SC has been fined \$40,000 (approximately 100 million Tanzanian shillings).

Battling Sabalenka into Australian Open fourth round, Alcaraz sparkles

By Shrivathsa Sridhar

DEFENDING champion Aryna Sabalenka overcame a wobbly display to reach the Australian Open fourth round while Carlos Alcaraz was at his dazzling best despite a blip as warm and windy weather tested the composure of players yesterday.

Novak Djokovic will hope for better conditions as he resumes his bid for a record 25th Grand Slam title and 11th at Melbourne Park in the evening, with American third seed Coco Gauff also in action on a main showcourt.

The opening match on Rod Laver Arena on the sixth day of the championships was hardly vintage tennis, but Sabalenka came away unscathed after a 7-6(5) 6-4 victory over Clara Tauson amid blazing sunshine and intermittent gusts.

"That was a great battle, she played unbelievable

tennis," said three-times Grand Slam champion Sabalenka.

"I was playing this match thinking, 'girl, you're really tough'. So many times, I thought 'I'm done', but I was like, 'keep pushing'."

Sabalenka has been far from her devastating best in the first two rounds and against Tauson she dropped serve four times in a shaky opening set, but her opponent was equally profligate as both players struggled for rhythm.

"Conditions are really tough for serving, the balls are heavy and the surface slow," said Sabalenka, who conceded four breaks in the opening set of a match for the first time since San Diego in 2022.

"It was really important to get all of those breaks back. I'm super happy I was able to close this match."

The first hold in the eighth game was greeted with a big round of applause as world number 42 Tauson surged



Belarus' Aryna Sabalenka celebrates winning her Australian Open third round match against Denmark's Clara Tauson at Melbourne Park, in Melbourne, Australia, yesterday. REUTERS

ahead 5-3, but Sabalenka roared back like a tiger, the animal that has become her totem.

The top seed stabilised her own delivery and then drew level at 5-5 before Tauson recovered to save four set points and force a tie-break, where she matched the big-hitting Belarusian

punch for punch in the first 10 points.

Sabalenka shifted up a gear, however, and earned a set point with a stinging backhand winner before closing it out with a big forehand to leave Auckland champion Tauson a tad deflated after 63 minutes of toil.

The Dane gifted her opponent a break early in the next set but continued to carve out chances and made it to 4-4, only to fade away after a marathon game that had seven deuces as the momentum shifted one last time.

Sabalenka held her nerve on serve to seal a 17th

straight win at the Australian Open and keep alive her quest to become the first woman to lift three successive titles at the Grand Slam since Martina Hingis from 1997-99.

Up next for Sabalenka is a meeting with Mirra Andreeva after the 17-year-old Russian moved past Magdalena Frech 6-2 1-6 6-2.

Alcaraz dropped his first set of the tournament but the third seed comfortably beat Nuno Borges 6-2 6-4 6-7(3) 6-2 and awaits Jack Draper or local hopeful Aleksandar Vukic in the fourth round on Sunday.

Second seed Alexander Zverev continued to fly under the radar in search of his first major title, as the German eased past Briton Jacob Fearnley 6-3 6-4 6-4.

Earlier, 27th seed Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova sealed a 6-1 6-2 win over German Laura Siegemund, who at 36 was the oldest player remaining in the women's draw having made the third

round with a victory over Olympic champion Zheng Qinwen.

Paris Games runner-up Donna Vekic needed three sets to beat Russian 12th seed Diana Shnaider, the Croatian prevailing 7-6(4) 6-7(3) 7-5 after almost three hours on Margaret Court Arena and she immediately looked forward to an ice bath.

"It was tough, it was pretty warm and she was playing unbelievable tennis," Vekic said.

"In my next life I want to be a lefty (like Shnaider). I don't know the last time I beat a lefty. Now, the ice bath is waiting for me."

Paula Badosa was given a test at a blustery Kia Arena and at one point offered her racket to her coach in the stands, asking him to take over, before finding her focus to get past Marta Kostyuk 6-4 4-6 6-3.

REUTERS

Ancelotti sympathizes with Real fans who booed his team in cup win over Celta

By Fernando Kallas

REAL Madrid manager Carlo Ancelotti said that he understands the club fans booing him and his team in their 5-2 win over Celta Vigo in their Copa del Rey round of 16 clash on Thursday, which he sees as an act of frustration after a humiliating 5-2 loss to rivals Barcelona in the Spanish Super Cup on Sunday.

Ancelotti said he was glad that his side showed character to not be affected by their fans' anger and advance to the quarter-finals on Thursday, after they allowed Celta to recover from two goals down to level the game 2-2 in the final minutes and take it to extra-time, when Brazilian teenager Endrick struck twice to help Real advance.

"I see it as a wake-up call from the fans to the team and its coach. It's an acceptable wake-up call after what happened in the game against Barcelona. Afterwards the team reacted well," Ancelotti told a press conference.

"The fans booed to give us a wake-up call and then later because the team started to complicate a game that we were well on the way to winning with 2-0. But then the fans started to push and when the Santiago Bernabeu pushes it's something very special for us.

"Good thing we played well in extra-time and managed to win the match, so it was all good in the end."

Ancelotti lamented his side's missed opportunities to extend their lead in the second half and urged his players to maintain focus in the final minutes of games.

"The tension drops at the end. We made two mistakes and let our opponents back into the game, we left it open in a game that was practically over with two goals in front," Ancelotti said.

"We gifted our rivals two late goals when the game was almost over. First we made a bad mistake putting the ball in play and then in the second goal it was a result of bad positioning in defence. We had played really well for over 70 minutes.

"Obviously that's something that can't happen. We have to try to train more to avoid these types of mistakes and not to slow down at the end of games."

Real joined Atletico Madrid, Barcelona, Getafe, Leganes, Valencia, Osasuna and Real Sociedad in the quarter-finals which will be determined in a draw on Monday.

REUTERS

'You have to be careful with kids' - Amorim cautious with Diallo praise

By Peter Hall

MANCHESTER United manager Ruben Amorim insisted he must be careful not to lavish Amad Diallo with too much praise after the Ivorian forward's late hat-trick earned his struggling team a 3-1 victory over Southampton on Thursday.

United were largely second best against bottom of the table Southampton, falling behind in the first half to a Manuel Ugarte own goal as the hosts looked to be heading for a fourth successive home league loss.

Diallo, however, single-handedly dragged his side to a much-needed success, becoming the second youngest United player to score a Premier League hat-trick after Wayne Rooney, with three goals in the final 10 minutes to earn his side victory.

"The important thing is to win and he helped us and then he is doing a very good season," Amorim said of Diallo. "But you have to be careful with the young kids. Congratulations to him, enjoy tonight and he needs to appreciate these moments.

"I will tell him tomorrow he has to rest, eat good food because Sunday we need him again. He did a great job, a good moment for a young kid to score a hat-trick for a club like this."

Amorim did accept some of the blame for another poor display from his team who remain languishing in 12th in the standings, conceding recent battling performances at Liverpool and Arsenal took their toll.

"I have big expectations for all, trying to be really demanding and I also understand when they try it and cannot do it," he added.

"The pressure of playing at home is harder than playing away. The demands of controlling all the game against this opponent is harder.

"I need to improve the training and recovery of the players. We are tired, not just the body but the mind. It is a different game, we have to press more. If we don't manage the ball for so long, we suffer."

REUTERS

Liverpool still in control but title race warming up

By Martyn Herman LONDON

LIVERPOOL remain in the driving seat in the Premier League title race but there are signs that instead of Arne Slot's side vanishing over the horizon in the second half of the season they could face a real battle to be crowned champions.

The leaders head to Brentford today with a four-point cushion over second-placed Arsenal and a game in hand but suddenly they are not having it all their own way.

While unbeaten in the league since losing at home to Nottingham Forest in September, a run of 16 games, they have drawn four of their last seven, having dropped points in only two of their first 13 matches.

The failure of the teams below them to take full advantage, namely Chelsea and Arsenal, and Manchester City's meltdown towards the end of last year means Liverpool still look secure.

But Arsenal's 2-1 home win over Tottenham Hotspur on Wednesday, the night



Liverpool players huddle before their Premier League match against Nottingham Forest at The City Ground, in Nottingham, Britain on January 14, 2025. Agencies

after Liverpool were held 1-1 by surprise package Nottingham Forest, has left the door ajar.

Arsenal, who are unbeaten in 11 league games and host seventh-placed Aston Villa today, look the most likely side to chase Liverpool down but Forest, who are six points off the pace have become part of the conversation.

Nuno Espirito Santo's side reeled off six successive league victories

before the draw with Liverpool and should get back to winning ways this weekend as they host bottom club Southampton at the City Ground.

Newcastle United are the form team with six straight wins pushing them into fourth spot, although they are nine points adrift of Liverpool having played a game more. Eddie Howe's side host Bournemouth, who are eighth, today.

Chelsea's climb has

tailed off after a five-match winless streak in the league and Enzo Maresca's fifth-placed side will be desperate to get back on track at home to relegation-battling Wolverhampton Wanderers on Monday.

HOME GOALS

Liverpool will be mindful of a Brentford side who show scant regard for reputations and hit back with two late goals to draw 2-2 with Manchester City on Tuesday at the Gtech Community Stadium

where they have scored 29 goals, more than any other side has managed at home this season.

They have leaked 21 there too, so today's visit from Liverpool is unlikely to be a cagey encounter.

Arsenal's midweek victory over Tottenham revived their mood after a difficult start to the year which has included a draw at Brighton & Hove Albion, back to back home cup defeats and a season-ending knee injury for forward

Gabriel Jesus.

But opponents Villa are showing returning to form and the last time Arsenal lost at home in the league it was to their former manager Unai Emery's Midlands side -- a 2-0 defeat in April that dealt a huge blow to the Gunners' title ambitions.

The return of manager David Moyes to Everton fell flat on Wednesday as the Scot began his second spell in charge with a 1-0 home defeat by Villa.

Everton are one point above the relegation zone having scored one goal in six league games but Sunday's visit of a woefully out of form Spurs offers a chance to gain momentum.

Ange Postecoglou's Tottenham side have won once in their last nine league games and talk of a top-four challenge has now been replaced with that of a potential relegation battle if things do not improve rapidly.

"The reality is that our results and our form in the league has been nowhere near good enough. That needs to change," the Australian said on Wednesday.

REUTERS

Napoli's clash with Atalanta overshadows traditional Serie A heavyweight showdown

By Trevor Stynes

THE battle for the Serie A title brings two of the three main contenders face-to-face this weekend when leaders Napoli play Atalanta, topping the bill over AC Milan's trip to Juventus.

It is not often that a Juventus and Milan clash gets overshadowed, but with both sides already out of the Scudetto running, their meeting today will play second fiddle to events in Bergamo later the same evening.

Atalanta's 11-game winning streak may have come to an end, with three consecutive draws slowing their pace, but they are still very much in the title hunt, in third place and four points off top spot.

Defeat at home to Napoli would leave Atalanta with a lot of ground to make up, but they will have been boosted by coming from behind to claim a 1-1 draw with Juventus on Tuesday to stretch their unbeaten league run to 15 games.

Napoli lost top spot after defeat to Lazio in December, but five wins on the bounce has brought Antonio Conte's side back to the summit.

The imminent departure of Khvicha Kvaratskhelia (pictured), set to join Paris St Germain, will be seen by many as a huge body blow to their title chances, but Napoli have not suffered when without the Georgian winger.

Kvaratskhelia missed three of those last five games with injury, but Napoli have marched on regardless, while David Neres has begun to prove his worth to the manager.

The Brazilian winger,

who arrived in August, was reduced to mere cameo appearances for much of the season, with Conte unwilling to play both Neres and Kvaratskhelia in his front three.

Neres has now well and truly broken into the side, starting the last five games, and while Kvaratskhelia was a massive part of Napoli's Scudetto win two seasons ago, Conte will feel this team is now strong enough to survive his loss.

Napoli travel to Bergamo aiming to avenge their 3-0 defeat to Atalanta earlier this season, but another loss could see the scales tip in Inter Milan's favour.

Inter are still favourites to retain their crown, but after six straight wins, Simone Inzaghi's side drew 2-2 with Bologna on Wednesday and sit three points behind Napoli with a game less played, and they host Empoli on Sunday.

THE UNDERCARD Juventus remain the only unbeaten side in Serie A, but drawing 13 of 20 games is just not title contender form, and Thiago Motta's side are fifth, 13 points off Napoli.

The midweek draw at Atalanta was Juve's seventh stalemate in eight league games, and when they met Milan in November, they played out a dull scoreless draw, but their most recent meeting gives hope for a more entertaining tie in Turin.

Milan came from behind to win 2-1 in Riyadh in the Super Cup semi-final earlier this month in what was manager Sergio Conceicao's first game in



Talajic targets World Cup spot for Bahrain after Gulf Cup success

By Mohamed Yossry

BAHRAIN coach Dragan Talajic will be looking to use this month's Gulf Cup success as a spur to drive the country towards a first-ever World Cup appearance and bring an end to the island state's qualification hoodoo.

Bahrain lifted the regional title with a 2-1 victory over Oman in Kuwait on Jan. 4, claiming the trophy for the second time to give their World Cup hopes a major injection of confidence.

"After winning the Gulf Cup, we received a huge boost, and we look forward to using this positive momentum to perform well in the World Cup qualifiers," Talajic told Reuters.

"I believe this generation will make history for Bahraini football in the World Cup."

The island nation of around 1.5 million people, positioned in a narrow strip of the Gulf between Saudi Arabia and Qatar, has never previously qualified for the World Cup.

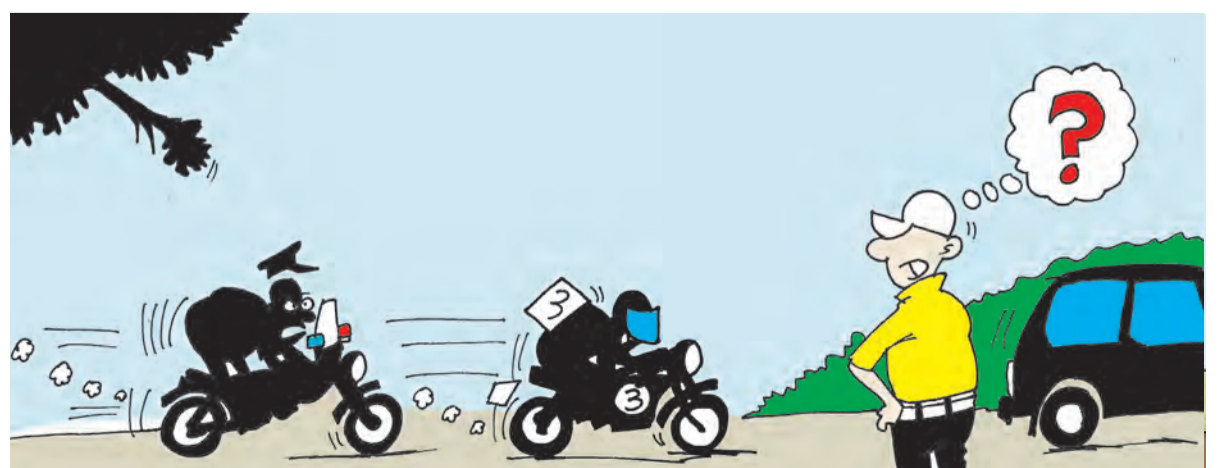
They have twice gone close, however, missing out on Germany in 2006 to Trinidad and Tobago in an intercontinental playoff before suffering the same fate against New Zealand four years later.

But with FIFA increasing the World Cup from 32 to 48 teams for the next edition, eight Asian nations will qualify directly for 2026 and that, plus the hiring of Talajic, has given the Bahrainis belief.

The 59-year-old has spent much of his coaching career in the Gulf, serving as Bahrain's technical director before replacing Juan Antonio Pizzi at the helm following the team's exit from the Asian Cup in February.

REUTERS

Gwiji by David Chikoko



**Liverpool still in control
but title race warming up**

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TPLB adjusts Premier League calendar after CHAN delay

By Correspondent Seth Mapoli

AS the Confederation of African Football (CAF) recently postponed the African Nations Championship (CHAN) to August 2025, the Premier League is set to resume earlier than expected.

According to an announcement by the Tanzania Premier League Board (TPLB) on Thursday, matches postponed during the 16th and 17th rounds will now take place in the first week of February 2025.

Simba SC, the league leaders, are set to face Tabora United in their first match back, which will be played at the Ali Hassan Mwinyi Stadium in Tabora.

The Msimbazi Street-based side will be eager to continue their dominant away form, having secured victories in all their away matches during the first round of the league.

The TPLB's statement confirmed changes to the league schedule, which was initially planned to resume on March 1, after the Mapinduzi Cup and CHAN tournament.

With CAF's decision to move CHAN from February to August, TPLB has taken the opportunity to reschedule postponed matches, ensuring a smoother flow of fixtures for the league.

The revised schedule will allow the league to address fixtures that were delayed during the first round. While exact dates and a detailed fixture list are yet to be released, TPLB assured stakeholders that these updates would be provided soon.

"TPLB announces changes to the return date for NBC Premier League matches, which were initially set to resume on March 1, 2025, following the conclusion of the Mapinduzi Cup and CHAN. The league will now return in the first week of February 2025 for rescheduled matches before proceeding with Round 17 fixtures," read the statement.

This adjustment provides teams with a significant opportunity to realign their preparations ahead of the league's resumption.

Clubs are expected to intensify technical preparations and ensure infrastructure readiness, as the TPLB plans to conduct stadium inspections before the league resumes.

In a bid to maintain high standards, the TPLB emphasized that stadiums failing to meet the required criteria would be removed from the approved list.

Home teams using such stadiums will be required to choose alternative venues from the list of certified stadiums for their home fixtures.

"Clubs are urged to strengthen their technical preparations and address stadium infrastructure issues. Stadiums that do not meet the required standards will be removed from the list, and clubs will need to select alternative approved venues for their home matches," the board emphasized.

Simba enter the second half of the season as the team to beat. They dominated the first round, particularly in away matches, where they maintained an unblemished record.

Their upcoming match against Tabora United is highly anticipated, with fans eager to see if Simba can extend their remarkable run of form.

As the league's resumption approaches, TPLB has urged all stakeholders, including clubs, technical teams, and other partners, to ramp up their preparations.

The board also expressed its commitment to ensuring a seamless return to action for the Premier League.

"We wish all clubs and stakeholders the best in their preparations as we gear up for the league's return," the TPLB statement concluded.

Yanga face MC Alger in a do-or-die CAF Champions League showdown



By Correspondent Michael Mwebi

YOUNG Africans (Yanga) will face MC Alger in a crucial CAF Champions League match, with both teams vying for a spot in the quarterfinals.

The stakes are incredibly high for Young Africans, who need a win to secure their place in the knockout stage of the competition.

The hosts delivered a solid performance against Al Hilal last weekend, securing a 1-0 victory thanks to Stephen Aziz Ki's seventh-minute strike.

Head coach Sead Ramovic (pictured) is confident his team can get the job done at

the Benjamin Mkapa Stadium this afternoon.

"We understand the importance of this game, not just for us, but for everyone who supports this great club. Reaching the quarterfinals again would be an incredible achievement," said Ramovic.

"As a coach, I'm extremely proud of the play-

ers' dedication. They've worked hard, quickly adapted to new demands, and embraced my style of play," he continued.

"We want to approach this game with energy and passion, to energize our fans and honour the proud legacy of this club. We aim to play with intensity and always strive for victory.

"Whether we need a draw or not, we go into every match with the goal of winning," Ramovic added.

"Sometimes we focus on controlling possession with dynamic play, while at other times, we prioritize a solid defensive structure and capitalize on transitions.

"Our main target is always the three points. This

is about making ourselves proud and, of course, making our supporters proud."

However, Young Africans face some fitness challenges, as Yao Koussi and Maxi Nzungeli Mpia are both sidelined, while Clatous Chama is working on regaining full fitness.

"I think Maxi is still not ready, but he's an exceptional player. Chama is on the right track after returning. We have a squad of 24-25 fantastic players, and everyone available will give their best tomorrow," said Ramovic.

Meanwhile, MC Alger come into the match after a 1-0 win over TP Mazembe in the previous round.

Akram Bouras scored the decisive penalty in the 36th minute at the Stade 5 Juillet 1962, helping them secure eight points and maintain second place in the group.

Unbeaten in their last four CAF Champions League games, MC Alger will be aiming for at least a draw to qualify for the knockout stage, making this encounter a potential turning point in the group.

Mgunda vows to prepare Taifa Stars for success ahead of CHAN 2024

By Correspondent Seth Mapoli

THE 2024 African Nations Championship (CHAN) draw took place on Wednesday, with Tanzania being placed in Group B alongside Mauritania, Madagascar, Burkina Faso, and the Central African Republic (CAR).

The tournament is set to be held in August this year across three host countries: Tanzania, Kenya, and Uganda.

Following the draw, Taifa Stars assistant coach Juma Mgunda (pictured) expressed his confidence in the team's preparations and readiness to compete at the prestigious tournament.

Mgunda emphasized that while the draw may appear favourable for Tanzania, the team must not underestimate their opponents.

"We have seen our opponents, and we will use this time to prepare a strong team. We know that these teams are not as easy as people might think. Every team will come prepared, and we must be equally prepared," said Mgunda in his post-draw statement.

Tanzania's involvement in CHAN 2024 holds special significance, as the tournament will be hosted on home soil.

"It's a pride for us that this time the tournament will be held in East Africa. Our players need to be very careful and not take this for granted," Mgunda added.



He stressed the importance of discipline and hard work to ensure the team makes the nation proud in front of its home supporters.

This year's CHAN tournament will be Tanzania's third appearance in the competition. The Taifa Stars first participated in 2009, when they were drawn in Group A and

finished third in their group with four points, behind Zambia and Senegal. They were eliminated at the group stage.

In their second appearance in 2020, Tanzania again found themselves in the group stage, finishing third in Group D with four points behind Guinea and Zambia.

Despite these early exits,

the Tanzanian side showed resilience and determination in both tournaments.

The current draw presents Tanzania with an opportunity to advance further. Group B, which they have been drawn into, consists of relatively unknown yet competitive teams. Mauritania, Madagascar, Burkina Faso, and CAR are all capable sides, but none of them are viewed as insurmountable threats.

This has given Tanzanian fans and pundits hope that their team can progress past the group stage and make a strong push towards the knockout rounds.

The host country's first match will be crucial in setting the tone for the tournament. With players such as captain Farouk Shikalo and key midfielders in good form, Tanzania will look to take advantage of home advantage while keeping their feet firmly on the ground.

Mgunda's message was clear: preparation, focus, and mental readiness will be key to success.

The draw also sets the stage for a highly competitive tournament. Group A features some of Africa's top footballing nations, including Morocco, Angola, DR Congo, and Zambia.

These teams have strong records in the competition, with Morocco and DR Congo both having won the tournament twice.

Kenya, the other host country in Group A, will face stiff competition, but the home crowd could offer them an edge.

In Group C, Uganda, also co-hosting the tournament, will face Niger, Guinea, and two other teams yet to qualify.

While Group C may appear less daunting than some, it promises to be competitive, with Guinea's record in the tournament giving them a potential edge.

Meanwhile, Group D is arguably the toughest, featuring two-time champions Senegal, alongside Congo, Sudan, and Nigeria.

Senegal, as defending champions, will undoubtedly be a team to watch in the competition. Their pedigree in African football, combined with their recent success, makes them one of the favourites for the tournament.

The 2024 CHAN will see a total of 19 teams spread across four groups. Groups A, B, and C will consist of five teams each, while Group D has four teams.

The top teams from each group will advance to the quarterfinals, ensuring that each match will be of utmost importance for the participating teams.

Tanzania's group, while not filled with powerhouses, offers a chance for the Taifa Stars to prove their worth on home soil.

Flexibles by David Chikoko

