



National Pg 3

1,000 dogs given anti-rabies shots

National Pg 5

'Lack of desks, toilets in schools to end'

National Pg 6

'Plant more trees to save environment'

Clerics warn youths over pushing for quick riches

"Many parents have now forgotten to take up their responsibilities of proper upbringing, leaving the task to domestic workers"

By Guardian Reporters

RELIGIOUS leaders have raised concern on the increase of cries on mental health challenges due to lust for fast achievements with many such aspirants lacking wisdom and refusing to rely on working hard.

In different addresses during Christmas gatherings and holy mass services yesterday, clerics warned the youth who seek rapid rise in life of risks of getting into trouble, where theft and misuse of public funds are clear examples.

Dr Fredrick Shoo, former presiding bishop and head of the North Central Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Tanzania (ELCT) said reports being heard from various districts show that officials are suspected to be misusing public funds.

Such thefts reach billions of shillings, money set aside by the government to implement various development projects in essential services like water, health, roads or education.

In remarks at the Christmas service

TURN TO PAGE 2



Vice President Dr Philip Mpango speaks to fellow worshippers after participating in the Christmas Day Service at the Dodoma Catholic Church parish yesterday. Left is his wife Mbonimpaye Mpango. Photo: VPO

SPORTS

GAMONDI EXPRESSES TACTICAL OPTIMISM FOLLOWING AWAY WIN

Page 20

SIR JIM RATCLIFFE HANDED FOOTBALL REINS AT MAN UTD AFTER £1.03BN DEAL

Page 3

Private hospitals reject NHIF payments review

Caution intent to deny service to insured patients

By Correspondent Joseph Mwendapole

LEADERS of the Association of Private Health Facilities in Tanzania (APHFTA) have appealed to President Samia Suluhu Hassan to chip in and sort out the conflict between the private health care providers and the National

Health Insurance Fund (NHIF) on the pricing of health services.

In a statement availed to the media yesterday, the association said that hospital operators are uncomfortable with prices approved by the government without their participation, affirming that when this price schedule comes

into effect, it will lead many hospitals to close.

Operational costs have greatly increased but the NHIF is reducing prices chargeable in hospitals, it said, affirming that hospital operators are seeking President Samia's intervention in the matter.

The reason is that the pricing sketched out is

likely to compel the closure of most if not all private hospitals, it said, noting that the president "has always been emphasizing the engagement and participation of the private sector through public private partnership but things are different on this side."

Private hospitals will be faced with the single option of not serving NHIF members if the

TURN TO PAGE 2



Johansen Kahatano, operations director for the Land Transport Regulatory Authority (LATRA) speaks to the media after conducting an inspection of bus fares at Arusha Bus stand, accompanied by police officers. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

LATRA, police use Xmas for electronic tickets, fare checks

By Getrude Mbogo

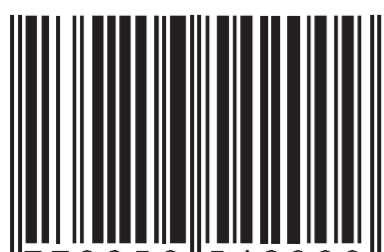
THE Land Transport Regulatory Authority (LATRA) in collaboration with the traffic police has over the past few days conducted intense inspections to monitor the safety of motor vehicles, to cut road accidents during this festive season.

Habibu Sullu, the LATRA director general, said inspections were conducted in major urban areas of Dar es Salaam, Arusha, Mwanza, Morogoro, Mbeya and Iringa.

In remarks to journalists while on an impromptu inspection visit at Iringa's Igumbilo bus terminal on Sunday, he said the government was keen to hear less of traffic challenges like accidents during this busy month, where many people travel back to their home villages or towns for year-end festivals.

He urged passengers to demand electronic tickets on their hands with correct information, including their names and fares paid, noting that LATRA and the police seek to enlighten drivers and passengers on road use

TURN TO PAGE 2



Clerics warn youths over pushing for quick riches

FROM PAGE 1

at the Moshi ELCT Cathedral, the prelate asked for divine mercy to help people change their behaviours and stop being too thirsty for a quick rise in life, pushing them into theft.

He cautioned of mental health challenges among a large number of people due to struggling to get too much in their lives, saying that they are not thankful for what they have been blessed with.

They struggle too hard even turning to wrong things to cater for their thirst, he stated, underlining that "this outlook is too bad and we need to change our behaviour."

He remarked that every year the Controller and Auditor General (CAG) has been relating painful reports of massive embezzlements conducted in public agencies, asking public officials to change and be patriotic, people who promote the rights and aspirations of others.

Archbishop Isaac Amani of the Arusha Catholic Archdiocese warned the youth on behaviour of seeking rapid rise in life in the short term, ignoring the need to work hard.

In a sermon during Christmas Eve mass at St. Therese of the Child Jesus church in the city centre, he said that many youths are becoming lazy, spending their days in the streets waiting for miracles of getting rich.

He also urged parents to take good care of their children for them to grow well and ethically, bringing up a dependable and reliable workforce in future.

"Many parents have now forgotten to take up their responsibilities of proper upbringing, leaving the task to domestic workers," he said, cautioning that this has a great impact on the nation's ethics. Children are left free to spend time on social media, "which is likely to create a massive disaster."

Bishop Stevie Mulenga of the Free

Pentecostal Church of Tanzania (FPCT), in a sermon in Tanga condemned excessive drinking and theft, saying they can cause serious harm in the society, including loss of life.

As Tanzanians prepare to celebrate New Year, they need to hold the peace as a great asset to the nation, he said, praising divine guidance in preserving the peace all these years.

"There are some of fellow Africans and elsewhere who are passing through difficult periods of wars and conflicts," he stated, urging believers to pray for them and protect the peace that we have.

Bishop Antony Lagwen of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Mbulu, said in a Christmas service sermon at Mbulu parish, Manyara Region, that the church recognizes marriage as it stands, and nothing has changed.

He also reminded people to increase efforts in protecting children against violence all kinds of abuse.

Bishop Liberatus Sangu of the Shinyanga Catholic diocese urged people to change their behaviour, turn to religion and be good family members, abandoning negative temptations.

In his Christmas Eve remarks at Ngokolo parish in Shinyanga municipality, the cleric said that people are gripped with lusts for wealth and power, thus leading to conflicts and wars.

Fr. Deo Bahati and Fr. Mapinduzi Africanus, in sermons during Christmas service at Maonano Mawela parish in Moshi Catholic Diocese asked parents to have their children close to them with prayers and care, cautioning that "the world has greatly changed."

"We need to make our homes a peaceful place. Parents need to do this and not anyone else," he cautioned. "Many of us have forgotten our responsibilities to lead families in the right direction, we have left the responsibility of children's upbringing to other people," they added.



Members of Roman Catholic Church at Majengo Shimoni Street in Muheza District, Tanga Region coming out from Christmas Sunday sermon yesterday. Photo: Correspondent Steven William

UNICEF needs \$1.89 billion for West and Central Africa

By Special Correspondent

THE UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) has appealed for nearly two billion dollars to provide lifesaving assistance to more than 24 million boys and girls across West and Central Africa in 2024.

The agency warned that 46.7 million children in the region are projected to face another year of humanitarian need mainly due to ongoing conflict and insecurity, including in the central Sahel and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and massive displacement into Chad sparked by the war in Sudan.

"West and Central Africa is home to a large number of critically underfunded emergencies, and some of the most neglected humanitarian crises in the world for children," said UNICEF Regional Director Felicité Tchibindat.

The \$1.89 billion appeal aims to reach roughly 24.1 million children next year, up from 23.5 million in 2023.

Aid will include lifesaving nutrition supplies, clean water, education and child protection services, as well as humanitarian cash transfers for households.

More than a third of the funding will be used to address malnutrition, as the prevalence of wasting in children under five remains high. The Sahel countries are most affected, with several areas of Burkina Faso, Mali and north-west Nigeria showing emergency levels of child wasting.

"West and Central Africa is home to a large number of critically underfunded emergencies, and some of the most neglected humanitarian crises in the world for children"

LATRA, police use Xmas for electronic tickets, fare checks

FROM PAGE 1

regulations and the need to observe the rules for everyone to remain safe during travel.

He demanded that bus operators regularly inspect their vehicles to ensure that they don't pose any visible challenges, while the traffic police commander, SACP Ramadhani Ng'anzi said the force will not stand aside while road crashes claim lives or induce disability from acts of reckless drivers on the roads.

Some of the passenger bus drivers and those with saloon cars were violating regulations by speeding and overtaking in prohibited areas, he said, emphasising that they need to stop such behaviour. When caught, the police will impose stiff penalties on the culprits, he stated.

During the wave of inspections, the police nabbed buses that are defective, removing them from the road until they are fit, he said, urging passengers to report to authorities whenever they spot things that are worrisome during travel.

Inspecting vehicles and their licences will be pursued to ensure that road transport is safe for all, he stated, echoed by the LATRA operations director

Johansen Kahatano led another team to conduct the exercise in Arusha.

He asked bus agents to ensure that they put the required and correct information in tickets and on their luggage, further asking drivers to dress smartly and work to avoid causing sorrow to people in end year displacements by reckless driving.

Drivers need to ensure that their buses are installed with the vehicle tracking system (VTS) and not tamper with it, he said, while Joseph Mwacha, chairman of the city drivers' association in Arusha, pledged that drivers will work diligently to avoid causing accidents.

He praised LATRA and the traffic police for close monitoring and inspections, noting that this has helped control incidents of crime and accidents, while allowing buses to travel on a 24 hour basis heightens the dangers.

Elesia Mtandi, a passenger, hailed the current leadership for prioritizing road safety with LATRA and the police, thus passengers feel it is peaceful to travel even during the festive season.

Earlier, festive season travel was difficult for fear of accidents, but this year things look better due to efforts conducted to heighten safety and monitoring, she added.

Senegalese navy seizes 690 kg of cocaine

DAKAR

THE Senegalese navy has seized 690kg of cocaine being transported to Europe in an ultra-fast go-fast boat and arrested the five Spaniards on board, the army announced in a statement on Sunday.

An ocean-going patrol boat intercepted the boat on Friday 220 km off the coast of Senegal.

The patrol boat had to issue verbal warnings and fire warning shots to stop the boat, which had released its cargo before the intervention; 690 kg of cocaine were recovered, the statement said.

On 28 November and 16 December, the Senegalese army announced seizures at sea of nearly three tonnes of cocaine on each occasion.

More than 800 kg of cocaine were also seized in January this year from a ship off Dakar by the Senegalese navy.

Long regarded as a simple transit area for drugs produced in Latin America on their way to Europe, West and Central Africa has also become a region of heavy drug consumption, according to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).

In June 2019, Senegalese customs seized 13 tonnes of cocaine from two Italian-flagged ships at the Autonomous Port of Dakar. This was the second-largest haul of cocaine in Senegal since 2007. According to research by ENACT, a further seizure of almost one tonnes from a vessel destined for Dakar occurred on the high seas in early November. Agencies

Private hospitals reject NHIF payments review

FROM PAGE 1

new NHIF price schedule comes into effect on January 1, with this affirmation likely to be carried by operators of private hospitals countrywide.

Costs that were set out seven years ago have not been improved, the statement affirmed, elaborating that hospital operators expected that NHIF will set out increases in respective service costs and not a tally of reductions.

"Considering this fact along with others such as payment delays for more than four months, inflation, the drop in the value of the shilling against the US Dollar by more than 20 percent within seven years, APHFTA has seen that we will fail to serve NHIF members at these prices if they come into effect officially."

There is for instance a decrease in the cost of seeing a doctor, along with surgery and dialysis, "which will make

private hospitals unable to afford the real operational costs of the hospitals."

Current final prices were set in 2016 and not reviewed since then despite the rising cost of living. Lowering the cost of services they provide is to "prepare a grave for private hospitals," the statement intoned.

"The payment itself to the service providers can remain unpaid for four up to six months and sometimes they reject some payment claims for no valid reason," the statement continued, pointing out while all this has not been resolved, NHIF is moving to lower the costs. "They want to kill us," they barked.

They said NHIF told private hospitals to install an online system in order to submit their claims for services provided and be paid within 14 days after submitting their claims. The situation has not changed since they installed the online system, it stated.

"We have installed the system which has cost us millions but those 14 days they were affirming aren't followed, so we have to wait for four or six months," they said, demanding that if NHIF sees that their operating costs are high, "they should reduce their unnecessary spending within the fund and treat people."

APHFTA submitted suggestions on how to improve NHIF, including proposing that NHIF examine commercial proposals for health care payment, citing availability of private insurance products like 'Wekeza,' 'Timiza,' 'Najali,' etc.

NHIF needs to adopt a more effective debt collection system, the statement underlined, citing remarks by the Controller and Auditor General (CAG) that large amounts of money are not collected by NHIF from many institutions.

A recent APHFTA meeting found that after inspecting claims for Sep-

tember, October and November 2023, all private health care providers from dispensary level to referral hospitals would suffer a loss of 25 percent on average with the new price schedules.

NHIF communications manager Angela Mziray said in response the payment procedure is a long process as it involves verifying the legitimacy of the claim "and if there are things that are not right then the claim is returned to the party to make adjustments."

Sometimes there is consultation with the claimant if there are queries, she said, specifying that the claims are paid within 60 days.

The manager denied that private sector stakeholders were not involved in setting the new price schedule, affirming that NHIF "has evidence of how it involved various stakeholders and got their opinions throughout the process of setting new prices, including private hospitals and religious institutions."



Mara Regional Commissioner Said Mtanda speaks at the Regional Consultation Committee in Musoma District over the weekend. Right is Home Affairs Deputy minister who is Butiama constituency MP Jumanne Sagini and Regional Administrative Secretary Msalika Makungu. Photo: Guardian Correspondent



Government and Health Workers Association (TUGHE) Deputy Secretary General, Rugemalira Rutatina, speaks with members in Singida Region during the seminar of branch leaders on Friday. Photo: Correspondent Thobias Mwanakatwe

Over 1,000 dogs given anti-rabies shots in Sengerema

By Guardian Correspondent, Mwanza

MORE than 1,000 dogs have been given anti-rabies vaccine doses in Sengerema District, Mwanza Region.

Dr Zacharia Elias, director and founder of Lake Zone Animal Welfare Organization (LAZAWO) said over the weekend that the organization teamed up with the government to carry out an anti-rabies campaign that ended up with vaccinating over 1,000 dogs.

"This came up after receiving information that a number of people have been bitten by the dogs in the district putting most of them at risk of getting rabies," he said.

Severe exposures make it more difficult to prevent rabies unless access to good medical care is immediately available.

It is estimated that in up to 99 per cent of cases, domestic dogs are responsible for rabies virus transmission to humans.

"We also heard that over 70 dogs were to be killed because of rabies' fear for the support from US-based Network for Animal (NFA). This is what made us immediately vaccinate over 1,000 dogs and apologize to those who have been affected with the problems."

He also blamed low-level of understanding on animal husbandry makes people reluctant when required to vaccinate their domestic animals.

"My advice to the government is to use animal rights laws and animal diseases so that citizens can understand that animals need to be given treatment, including vaccination, if they were properly considered, these disasters would not exist and will not happen," he explains.

Rabies is a vaccine-preventable, zoonotic, viral disease affecting the central nervous system. Once clinical symptoms appear, rabies is virtually 100 per cent fatal.

In up to 99 per cent of cases, domestic dogs are responsible for rabies virus transmission to humans. Yet, rabies can affect both domestic and wild animals.

VP urges Tanzanians to celebrate Christmas calmly and extend support to needy persons

By Guardian Reporter

VICE President Dr Phillip Mpango has urged Tanzanians to celebrate Christmas peacefully while extending a hand of support to the needy people including orphans.

In his address when he along with his wife Mbonimpaye Mpango attended a mass service at Mwenyeheri Maria Theresa Ledochowska parish Roman Catholic Church in Dodoma yesterday, the Vice President said it was important to celebrate this important day peacefully while reflecting on life.

He urged Tanzanians to take good care of their children which include leading them to know and love God, teaching them patriotism and hard work.

"We need to train and lead our children to become good citizens, this is a big obligation of every parent, we need to teach them the importance of loving their country and protecting it where later they will become good and ethical leaders," he said.

The Vice President also urged Tanzanians to continue condemning and fighting against all forms of violence where many women and children

have been passing through.

"It is better to use this day well by reflecting on our ways and stop bad habits of throwing away babies as well as abortion," he emphasized.

He also urged religious leaders and followers to continue spending time praying for the nation's peace, promoting it to last and seeking for God's assistance to help the nation to evade conflicts.

Dr Mpango also urged Tanzanians to get prepared to participate in the local governments' elections set for next year as well as praying for the nation to get good and patriotic leaders.



Manyoni District Commissioner in Singida Region Kemirembe Lwota (L) listens to irrigation scheme Eng Japhet Senyina when she visited Msemembo, Saranda, Chikuyu and Udima irrigation projects in the district to address the challenges facing them. Photo: Correspondent Thobias Mwanakatwe

Veggies firm in soilless farming to help farmers address diseases

By Correspondent Valentine Oforo

THE Arusha-based World Vegetable Center (Worldveg) is set to introduce soil-less farming technology that will help horticulture growers to do better in the farming venture.

The farming method is to assist farmers in the key agro sub-sector to treat diverse crop diseases, as well as the negative impacts of climate change.

Soilless farming is a farming practice through which plants can be grown without the use and presence of soil as a rooting medium, in which the nutrients absorbed by the roots are supplied through the irrigation water.

Nickson Mlowe, an agronomist at the Worldveg expressed that they have decided to hatch the environmental-friendly technology after realising that majority of farmers in the sector were incurring huge loss due to crop yield failure, propelled by diseases.

"Research proves that most plant (crop) diseases originating from soil and the majority of vegetable farmers in the country are not standing on a better financial and technical side to tackle the naught diseases," he expressed.

Mlowe said that the so far introduced soil-less farming practices are useful and are not very expensive for the farmers to adopt in their greenhouse plantations.

He named the soilless farming methods as use of coco peat, peat moss and hydroponics instead of using soil.

"These methods are very meaningful and helpful to assist the vegetable farmers to battle against several disease challenges in their fields, but also they're playing a vital role to assist the farmers to withstand severe effects of climate change," he insisted.

He observed that the facility would continue conducting more research to assure the farmers engaging into the vital economic sector in the country are benefiting accordingly from their farming investments and efforts.

Executing its top role through auspicious funds from International Fertilizer Development Centre (IFDC), the 'Vegetech Hub', mapped in Tengeru, a small market-town located below Mount Meru, is designated for the research and rolling out of helpful technologies for heightening performance of the horticulture sector in the country, as well as Africa in large.

The centre is expecting to serve more than 2 million farmers next year to acquire and put into practice different key technologies, including those based on soil health, water use efficiency, fertilizer use efficiency, seed trials, post harvest loss reduction, together with the other emerging value chains.

As part of the robust development, the center has successfully managed to introduce the vegetable farmers with the chameleon soil water sensor technology.

HAPPY
Holidays

FROM MANAGEMENT AND STAFF OF

IPPmedia | The Guardian | Nipashe

We Thank you and Value your continued Patronage.

CHRISTMAS EVE, XMAS SERVICES IN PHOTOS



Members of the Roman Catholic Church in Zanzibar line up towards the Grotto of Jesus Christ situated at the St. Joseph Church after the Christmas service yesterday. Photo: Correspondent Martin Kabemba



Dar es Salaam residents waiting to buy meat, one kilo selling at 11,000/- at Goba Tegeta A yesterday. Photo: Correspondent Miraji Msala



Nuns at the Christmas Eve service at St Peter's church, Oyster bay in Dar es Salaam on Sunday night. Photo: Correspondent Miraji Msala



Alistair Makubi, a priest at St Peter's church, Oysterbay parish, leads the Christmas Eve service in Dar es Salaam on Sunday. Photo: Correspondent Miraji Msala



The Rt. Rev. Dr Alex Malasusa, head of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Tanzania delivering blessings to believers after Christmas service at the Azania Front Cathedral in Dar es Salaam yesterday. Photo: Correspondent Jumanne Juma



The Canaan choir of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania, Dodoma diocese, at the Christmas service yesterday. Photo: Correspondent Peter Mkwavila



Roman Catholic Church priest Martine Kihyo of Muheza District, Tanga Region, leads members of the church yesterday in the Christmas service. Photo: Correspondent Steven William



Reverend John Ndimbo (R) of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania, Muheza parish North-Eastern Diocese in Tanga, preaches during the Charismas service yesterday. Photo: Correspondent Steven William

Health sector needs more doctors and nurses to meet demand - minister Ummy

By Guardian Correspondent, Tanga

HEALTH minister Ummy Mwalimu has said that the health sector is need of medical doctors and nurses to meet the country's demand

The minister said that shortage of workers threatens the future of the sector and the public in general.

Launching the Kisimatui dispensary yesterday here, Ummy said President Samia Suluhu Hassan had a good procedure to provide funds for the purchase of medicines throughout the country at 100 percent.

"In order to ensure that health care becomes reliable for the people, President Samia provides 100 percent of the money for medicine, and if there is no medicine, it is not her fault but the executives," she said.

According to Minister Ummy, the government hopes that the Kisimatui Dispensary will be a springboard for the people of the area and their neighbours, who used to walk long distances to seek health services in Tanga City.

Ummy, who is an MP for Tanga Urban said the government through its Ministry has tried to ensure that it moves the service closer to the people.

"Dispensaries are not buildings, what we want to see are better health services. We politicians have finished our duty, now the job is for you executives, not pregnant mothers who

come here and don't get services," she said.

Elaborating on the shortage of staff, Minister Ummy said that the sector is currently threatened by a 60 percent shortage of health workers, but through the jobs provided this year by the President, the Ministry will ensure that among the workers who got those jobs, they are sent to Tanga Region.

"Therefore due to the problem of shortage of staff, we will make sure we bring in more, we will bring nurses, doctors and laboratory people," the MP said.

"My instructions to you (Tanga City executive director), even in Kisimatui there are people and they are Tanzanians, lest the servants stay in the city and come to Kisimatui, we must make a division, so we want to see the number of servants brought here."

"Pongwe ward has 23,000 people and then it has only one health centre and that is why we started this clinic, but we will also look at another area with a lot of people so that people can get these services at the clinic."

Pongwe ward executive officer (WEO), Erica Njana, said the project has cost the government 155 million, for external service buildings and a mother and child building.

"The council has provided us with medicine and medical equipment, worth 15m/- and four toilets," he said.



Speaker of the National Assembly who is also IPU President Dr Tulia Ackson listens to one of Rungwe District residents who claimed that their land had been confiscated without compensation. Photo: Correspondent Nebart Msokwa

Lack of desks, toilets in MCC schools to end before January, Dr Tulia vows

By Guardian Correspondent, Mbeya

MBEYA Urban MP Dr Tulia Ackson has said that the problem of lack of desks and toilets in primary schools in Mbeya City will end before schools open on January 8 next year, so that students can study in a friendly environment.

Dr Tulia made the pledge over the weekend when speaking at a special meeting with the ambassadors of the ruling CCM and local government leaders in Mbeya City.

She said that they continue to fight

these problems by encouraging the technicians to increase the speed of the production of desks and the construction of modern toilet infrastructure in the remaining schools.

Dr Tulia who is also the Speaker of the National Assembly said the government has been providing a lot of money for the improvement of education infrastructure, especially the construction of classrooms, toilets and desks.

"This is the only city in the southern highlands, now we cannot be

discussing the problem of desks and toilets in our schools, this will end by January," said Dr Tulia.

The MP said that they will continue with the construction of classrooms in schools that lack infrastructure and repair dilapidated buildings so that all children can study in a similar environment.

The government, through various projects, has built new and modern buildings in some schools and that these buildings have been very different from the old ones, which causes the schools to not look good,

she said. According to her, the renovation of the infrastructure will be done in phases according to the availability of funds as well as the country's priorities and thus she asked the ambassadors and local government chairmen to be patient and cooperate.

She also stated that aid for school supplies and uniforms for more than 5000 students of the city who come from a difficult environment to create a friendly environment for them to continue their studies like their peers.

Dr Tulia said that he will distribute the equipment in January in all 83 schools and that he will collaborate with the teachers of those schools as well as the local government leaders to select the children who are qualified to be given the equipment.

COP28 focus on health draws \$777 million to fight tropical diseases

By Gloria Dickie

THE United Arab Emirates and several charities at the U.N. climate summit on Sunday offered \$777 million in financing for eradicating neglected tropical diseases that are expected to worsen as temperatures climb.

Climate-related factors "have become one of the greatest threats to human health in the 21st century", COP28 President Sultan Ahmed Al-Jaber said in a statement.

The pledges, made at the COP28 summit on Sunday focused on climate-related health risks, included \$100 million from the UAE and another \$100 million from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

Others to announce funds for climate-related health issues included Belgium, Germany and the US Agency for International Development.

The World Bank launched a program to explore possible support measures for public health in developing countries, where climate-related health risks are especially high.

The burden of tropical diseases will worsen as the world warms, along with other climate-driven health threats including malnutrition, malaria, diarrhoea and heat stress.

Many tropical diseases are already easy to treat. River blindness and sleeping sickness, for example, are both endemic to Africa and spread through parasitic worms and flies that are likely to proliferate in a warming world.

More than 120 countries have signed a COP28 declaration acknowledging their responsibility to keep people safe amid global warming.

The declaration made no mention of fossil fuels, the main source of climate-warming emissions, which the Global Climate and Health Alliance called a "glaring omission".

Activists including physicians in white coats held a small demonstration on Sunday within the COP28 compound to raise awareness of the issue.

"We are in a lot of trouble," said Joseph Vipond, an emergency physician from Alberta, Canada. He recalled the case of a child dying from an asthma attack made worse by smoke inhalation from Western Canada's record wildfires this year. "This is having real world impacts."

Climate change is also increasing the frequency of dangerous storms

and more erratic rainfall.

In September Storm Daniel killed more than 11,000 people in Libya, and last year's massive flooding in Pakistan fueled a 400 percent increase in malaria cases across the country, according to the World Health Organization.

Earlier on Sunday, Microsoft co-founder turned philanthropist Bill Gates said scientists were working on new treatments for and prevention of mosquito-spread malaria as the rise in temperatures creates more hospitable habitat for the insects to breed.

"We have new tools at the lab level that decimate mosquito populations," said Gates, whose foundation supports public health research and projects for the developing world.

"These new innovations give us a chance, at a reasonable cost, to make progress."

Former U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton also spoke on Sunday, urging reform to the world's insurance system as another key requirement to keep people safe.

"Right now insurance companies are pulling out of so many places, they're not insuring homes, they're not insuring businesses," Clinton said, addressing a panel on women and climate resiliency.

"It's people everywhere who are going to be left out with no backup, no insurance for their business or their home."

By Special Correspondent, Lusaka

DEVELOPING policies to support young tech experts is key to creating a digitally skilled healthcare workforce in Africa and achieving universal healthcare, public health leaders say.

COVID-19 highlighted the importance of digital innovation in enabling people to access health services from any location, the third International Conference on Public Health in Africa heard.

Tapping into the technological skills of the continent's young population could help shape future responses to public health emergencies, said Ebere Okereke, chief executive officer of the Africa Public Health Foundation.

"For the health workers, having digital skills is a very critical need, especially as we look at achieving universal health coverage and how we are looking at strengthening public health."

Hortance Manjo, global technical



Ruangwa primary school teachers in Lindi Region happy with the construction of Samia Suluhu Hassan primary school in Mbozi District, Songwe Region yesterday. Photo: Correspondent Yassin Ibrahim

Africa's health sector 'must tap young tech talent'

lead, Sightsavers

"We need to build a digital strategy for the health workforce that will bring in the youths," she told SciDev.Net.

"Africa is a young continent with a lot of young people who are technologically inclined. We need to harness their skill and look at the solution their talent will achieve for us."

Okereke said the COVID-19 pandemic, which left people confined to their homes during long periods of lockdown, had shown the value of digital health care.

"This is why we need a solid policy and regulatory framework in place to support young people and for the adoption of digital health in our health workforce," she added.

Abimbola Adebakin, chief executive officer of healthcare technology

company Advantage Health Africa, said the role of digital innovation should not be overlooked in Africa's public health workforce.

She believes digital innovation such as telemedicine can bridge the gap between patients and healthcare professionals, allowing people to access quality healthcare services, irrespective of geographical limitations.

Machine learning algorithms can give healthcare professionals deeper insights from patient data, leading to more accurate diagnoses and personalised treatment plans, Adebakin said.

Hortance Manjo, global technical lead at Sightsavers, a non-profit organisation working on sight protection and disability rights, said digital innovation and a robust digital health workforce could help overcome

barriers to health services such as high costs, inaccessible facilities, and social and cultural norms.

It can also improve diagnosis, including for those in remote communities, so that treatment is extended to more people who need it, she said, highlighting the need to reach women, children and marginalized groups.

"We have seen examples with the portable eye examination kit, which can help us screen, which means we can go further into the communities," said Manjo.

"For the health workers, having digital skills is a very critical need, especially as we look at achieving universal health coverage and how we are looking at strengthening public health."

However, digital innovation needs to be accompanied by effective policy,

cautioned Manjo.

"We have to make sure that it is not abused," she warned.

"We have to make sure that it is adapted to our context when we do look at treatment options, rehabilitative services such as assistive technology, as we look at digital health across the range of care."

Such technologies need to be designed to suit the patients who need them, and these patients need to be educated on how to use them, said Manjo.

"How do we make sure that it is acceptable to the user? These are the questions that need to be answered," she added.

Manjo also urged African and global leaders to recognise the importance of eye health and integrate eye health into the wider healthcare African health system.

Varsities urged to produce more competent graduates

By Guardian Reporter

HIGHER learning institutions, especially those involved in training for journalists and media practitioners, have been urged to produce competent graduates who will produce productive content instead of entertainment and games.

Dr Athuman Samzugi, senior lecturer at the Open University of Tanzania (OUT) made the call during the opening of two-day training on the criteria for evaluating news held at the weekend in Dar es Salaam.

Dr Samzugi said time has come for Africans to produce content that has good deeds, morals and culture to protect the society against the beloved culture that has negative effects.

"We are raising children who are Tanzanian by nature but have non-Tanzanian and African values", said Dr Samzugi.

According to him, some Tanzanians especially scholars and academicians have become consumers of news from outside and despise news from within something which shows lack of patriotism to the self, profession and public at large.

He said the community has been developing and raising a generation of people who do not know their culture but they know Chinese and Korean culture through drama, tele-novela and other imported programs.

He urged the media and journalism lecturers to use the opportunity of curriculum review to fix the cracks and have curricula that will graduate with the necessary skills and knowledge to overcome the existing problem of unproductive content in the media.

Abdallah Katunzi, media researcher

and journalism trainer at the School of Journalism and Mass Communication (SJMC) said there is still a challenge in the existing media content which is dominated with entertainment and sports while most of the time is spent on that genre.

Kahenga Dachi, OUT assistant lecturer said the training has helped them know the criteria for evaluating the quality of information and expand understanding and the best way to teach media and mass communication students.

Dr Malima Zacharia, SJMC lecturer said the recommendations and agreement of discussions in the training will be worked on and that his school is ready to cooperate with the lecturers of the OUT to ensure that content is included in the undergraduate and master's degrees curricula.

Bujo Ambosisye, OUT trainer said that the concept of quality journalism involves the theories of journalism and democracy.

He said there is a need to question the number of users and consumers of digital media as pinpointed by several research findings showing that it has a huge audience as compared to traditional media, something that has no reality and proof.

"There is still a lot of work to be done in identifying the root cause of the challenges that are being reported in the media", said Ambosisye.

The two-day training was organized by SJMC as facilitators and from the OUT as trainees with the aim of sharing experiences that can be included in the curricula that are reviewed for the undergraduate and postgraduate programmes in journalism and mass communication.



Kimara Baruti residents look at the scene of an accident which involved a commuter bus and Bajaj along Morogoro Road in Dar es Salaam yesterday. Photo: Correspondent Sabato Kasika

'It is everyone's responsibility to plant trees'

By Guardian Reporter

DR Selemani Jafo, Minister of State in the Vice-President's Office (Union and Environment) has insisted people to continue planting trees in their areas because the agenda is everyone's responsibility.

Jafo made the call at the weekend in Msalato auction area in Dodoma city when addressing citizens soon after leading a tree planting exercise organised by Habari Conservation Organisation with support from NMB bank.

He said that climate change has brought a big impact in the country that's why the government has now prioritised tree planting

and environmental conservation practices more than ever before.

He said that top national leaders have instructed that tree planting exercises be conducted countrywide and that there is a responsibility to plant 276 million trees every year in all district councils.

"As we are all aware that climate change is a big challenge and has brought uneasiness across nations in the world, recently we were at the COP28 and every country was complaining of the impacts of climate change which include severe drought and lack of enough rains," he said.

He also urged the public to ensure that they take good care of the

planted trees in order for them to grow, enabling the nation to achieve its goal of restoring nature.

The Minister also commended stakeholders including the Habari Conservation Organisation and NMB bank for their continued support to various government's initiatives.

"We also thank leaders and citizens for their efforts to transform Dodoma into a green outlook where the region has set its goal to plant 40 million trees in five years," he added.

Kondoa District Commissioner, Dr Khamis Mkanachi said that tree planting is a sustainable campaign in Dodoma and commended stakeholders for extending their support to the initiative.

Dr Mkanachi who represented Dodoma Regional Commissioner Rosemary Senyamule, directed city director and ward executive directors to supervise the exercise which includes making the Msalato auction area clean.

Chairman of Habari Conservation Organisation, Bernard James said a total of 1,100 trees have been planted at the area in effort to support the ongoing government campaign to plant trees in the country.

He said that for the past three years, the organisation has succeeded planting 1,003,000 trees where he asked the community to take care of the trees for them to grow well.

EU turns to the African hydrogen supplier to hit clean energy targets

By Special Correspondent Luanda

THE European Union is looking to ramp up its use of clean energy sources and reduce its reliance on fossil fuels. Starting next year, those efforts could get an unexpected boost from one of Africa's oil behemoths.

A new agreement between Sonangol, Angola's state-owned energy giant, and German engineering firms Conjuncta and Gauff Engineering could unleash an influx of clean hydrogen imports to the European market. Under the deal, Sonangol is building a green hydrogen plant along Angola's Atlantic coast that will produce some 280,000 tons of green ammonia per year. The liquid substance enables long-distance transport of green energy sources like hydrogen, including future intercontinental deliveries from Angola.

When the plant opens in 2024, Sonangol will become the first company in sub-Saharan Africa to export green hydrogen to Europe.

The collaboration comes as the European Union intensifies efforts to swap fossil fuel-based energy for sustainable alternatives that spew far lower volumes of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere. Dangerous greenhouse gases like carbon dioxide and methane are rapidly heating the planet and giving rise to severe weather events across the globe, including historic wildfires and flooding in Europe. The world as a whole experienced its hottest summer on record this year.

To blunt the effects of climate change, EU leaders are aiming to reach carbon neutrality by 2050, and they've identified hydrogen as an important step toward achieving the bloc's climate goals. Hydrogen is a clean fuel that produces only water when consumed in a fuel cell, per the U.S. Department of Energy, making it an attractive fuel alternative

for transportation and electricity generation.

Green hydrogen, derived from renewable energy sources, is a relatively new but increasingly popular option.

Brussels has set an initial target of producing 10 million tons of and importing a further 10 million tons by the end of the decade.

Angola holds enormous potential as a source of green hydrogen due to the country's vast renewable energy resources, namely solar and wind, and its favourable geographical location. Notably, the nation's promising place in the clean energy future follows a legacy of dominance in Africa's past and present energy market. Angola remains the largest sub-Saharan oil producer and is one of 13 members of the influential OPEC oil cartel.

Sonangol is perhaps the most visible face of Angola's changing economy. The long-time purveyor of Angola's oil wealth is increasingly focused on delivering environmental reforms and meeting the growing demand for more sustainable energy, as the company looks to attract private capital including from climate-focused investors in the West.

The state-run firm this month reached a separate agreement to use Paris-based TotalEnergies' drone technology to monitor and reduce methane emissions at Sonangol's inland and offshore facilities. That deal was signed at the U.N. Climate Conference in Dubai, where global leaders more broadly pledged to invest heavily in curbing methane emissions.

As for the hydrogen deal with its German partners, Sonangol is well underway building its new hydrogen facility in Barra do Dande, where Angola has invested in the construction of a deep-water port and hydroelectric facility some 30 kilometers north of Luanda, the capital city. The site is on track to open in 2024.



Miners' Association in Manyara Region (MAREMA) Mirerani branch secretary, Rachel Njau (L) presents the association's report at the annual general meeting held over the weekend. Photo: Correspondent Gift Thadey

KINSHASA

THE Archbishop of Kinshasa has called for restraint in his Christmas Mass Sunday evening, following what he described as the "gigantic organised disorder" of last week's general election.

"With enthusiasm, with determination, many of us came out to democratically express our preferences," Cardinal Fridolin Ambongo told the congregation.

DR Congo archbishop urges restraint after election chaos

"But alas, what should have been a great celebration of democratic values quickly turned into frustration for many," he added.

Massive delays and bureaucratic chaos marred Wednesday's elections to choose the president, lawmakers for national and provincial assemblies, and local councillors.

Election officials struggled to

transport voting materials to polling stations on time, some stations were unable to open at all and voting had to be extended into the following day.

The elections were "a gigantic organised disorder," said Ambongo. "You are all witnesses to it."

He also referred to video images showing a woman attacked for having voted for the opposition.

"How can we sink so low?" he said, asking what kind of message such images sent to the world.

Around 44 million people in the nation of 100 million were registered to vote, with more than 100,000 candidates running for various positions. President Felix Tshisekedi, 60, ran for re-election against 18 opposition candidates.

Many of them have denounced the way the election was run, some of them accusing the authorities of "massive" electoral fraud.

While one group of opposition leaders has called for a protest march in Kinshasa on Wednesday, others are pushing for the vote simply to be annulled.

The sheer scale of the DRC - roughly

the size of continental Western Europe - and its dire infrastructure make elections a stark logistical challenge.

Officially, voting ended on Thursday, but one election official in remote parts of the conflict-torn east of the country that some stations were only opened on Saturday. "For the moment, I urge you to exercise caution and restraint," said Cardinal Ambongo.

On Saturday, the ambassadors of more than a dozen Western nations called for restraint in a joint statement.

Gavi pledges \$1bn to boosting African vaccine manufacturing

By Special Correspondent

GAVI, the vaccine alliance has committed more than US\$1.8 billion to support vaccine production in Africa, a move that could bolster the continent's efforts to address historical dependence on imported vaccines and establish its own robust biotechnology sector.

Up to US\$1 billion of this will be made available to drugs manufacturers through the African Vaccine Manufacturing Accelerator (AVMA), which the Gavi board approved at a meeting in Ghana recently, the alliance said.

The new finance mechanism, scheduled to be launched in June 2024, is a response to the stark inequities exposed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

It aims to ensure a resilient vaccine supply for Africa, supporting at least four African manufacturers to deliver over 800 million doses over the next ten years.

Jean Kaseya, director-general of Africa Centres for Disease Control (Africa CDC), said the commitment was "a 'game-changer' for the continent's efforts towards vaccine self-reliance.

"The African Union has set a target for the continent to produce 60 per cent of the vaccines needed on the continent by 2040; AVMA is indeed an accelerator towards that ambition," he said in a statement.

The funding announcement also includes a US\$ 500 million First Response Fund, put in place to secure immediate vaccine funding for future pandemics and extraordinary support to help close routine immunisation gaps, a legacy of COVID-19.

Gavi's board approved a further US\$22 million to support pandemic prevention, preparedness and response activities.

Gavi has also added the new multivalent meningococcal vaccine into its investment strategy and set out a shortlist of other proposed new vaccines, taking the total investment to US\$1.8 billion.

However, vaccine manufacturers will not benefit from the accelerator funds immediately.

Oly Cann, Gavi's head of communications, told SciDev.Net: "Following board approval, Gavi will consult widely on AVMA's operational framework, including an inclusive steering committee and governance processes."

Cann said the AVMA would focus on supporting critical development stages and offsetting high start-up costs for vaccine manufacturers. This, he believes, "positions Africa as a key player in the global vaccine ecosystem".

"AVMA could help establish a robust biotechnology presence in Africa, manufacturing essential vaccines for cholera, malaria, measles, and the new

hexavalent vaccine while supporting pandemic and outbreak prevention," he said.

Vaccine equity gap

The COVID-19 pandemic exposed Africa's precarious dependence on imported vaccines, necessitating funding initiatives to build Africa's vaccine manufacturing capacity to tackle future health emergencies.

According to Africa CDC, just over half the population of Africa has now been vaccinated against COVID-19. However, the rate of vaccination was far slower than the world average.

Previous big funding initiatives for African vaccine manufacturing include the US\$2 billion raised through Partnership for African Vaccine Manufacturing (PAVM) since 2021 towards the 60 per cent goal for African vaccine production and over US\$12 billion allocated by the World Bank's Pandemic Emergency Financing Facility (PEF) to the same end.

The European Investment Bank (EIB) has committed €1 billion (US\$1.08 billion) towards vaccines, medicines and health technology in Africa, while The African Development Bank (AfDB) established a US\$3 billion facility to support healthcare infrastructure development in Africa, including vaccine production.

Earlier this year, Africa CDC produced a roadmap to help the continent achieve health security for sustainable development, known as the new public health order for Africa.

Its main pillars include expanded manufacturing of vaccines, diagnostics, and therapeutics to help achieve universal health coverage.

Anodi Kaihula, is a community health nurse from Tanzania and member of the African Union's Bingwa initiative, which aims to accelerate the uptake of COVID-19 vaccination among young people in Africa.

He says the Gavi pledge is the "right support for the region as the continent gears up for implementing the new public health order, particularly with regard to local vaccine manufacturing".

But he believes there is need for further support from African nations.

"With the current status of only 1 per cent of vaccines being produced in Africa, much funding is needed to put infrastructures in place, human resources and capacity building for member states," Kaihula told SciDev.Net.

"But the focus should be on raising domestic funding to make things happen sustainably."

Cann urged finance institutions to invest in sustainable business cases and encouraged the private sector to contribute to capacity building and technology transfer.

"Together, these efforts maximise sustainability and health security," added Cann.



All good businesses need planning. Potato fascines is not an exception. Plan well and you will make more money. A business plan keeps you focused on your aims and goals. It helps you see where you are coming from, where you are now and where you want your business to go. Potatoes small traders at Mabibo market. A sack is sold between 55,000/- to 70,000/- at the open market in Dar es Salaam yesterday. Photo: Correspondent Mirajji Msasia

Six endangered African wild dogs poisoned in 'senseless act'

JOHANNESBURG

SOUTH Africa's endangered painted dog population was dealt a heavy blow earlier this month when six dogs belonging to one of the country's last free-roaming packs were found poisoned on a private game farm south of Lephalale in the Waterberg District in Limpopo Province.

Investigators are yet to uncover the source of the poison, but initial reports reveal that the dogs succumbed to Temik, a widely used pesticide that has been adopted as a toxin to target wildlife.

The six poisoned dogs belonged to the TOOG Area Pack which roams freely across 125,000 hectares in the Waterberg. Image © Waterberg Wild Dog Initiative

"Poisoning is an indiscriminate, unethical, and illegal method used to eradicate predators, and the dogs would have suffered immense pain before dying," the Endangered Wildlife Trust (EWT) outlined in a press release about the incident.

Estimates suggest there are fewer than 650 African painted dogs in the

wild in South Africa and the Waterberg population is of particular significance. Numbering around 30 individuals comprised of two packs, the dogs here are genetically distinct from populations in larger wilderness areas like the Kruger National Park, which makes them a crucial component in the ongoing challenge of saving the species from extinction.

In addition to their genetic importance, the Waterberg dogs are also one of the last natural, free-roaming populations left in South Africa. Their conservation has come down to a community driven effort led by the Waterberg Wild Dog Initiative (WWDI) alongside various stakeholders and community members.

A sign erected as part of ongoing efforts to conserve the free-roaming wild dogs in the Waterberg. Image © Waterberg Wild Dog Initiative

The TOOG Area Pack, from which the six deceased dogs belonged, have not only become ambassadors for their species and advocates for the success of community conservation, but also symbols of freedom and

wildness.

"My team has been working to conserve the pack for three and a half years," WWDI Project Coordinator Reilly Mooney explained to Daily Maverick. "We knew each dog and had spent significant time getting to know them and working alongside the community to conserve them."

The TOOG Area Pack were fitted with GPS collars in 2020 in an effort to better track their movements and mitigate threats. Wild dogs remain vulnerable to persecution in the Waterberg as they may target animals owned by private game ranchers. The WWDI was formed to help provide an early warning system for those in the game-ranching industry and to help steer the dogs away from areas where they may not be wanted.

"Recent efforts by conservationists and the community gave hope to the future of wild dog conservation here. The pack ranges across 125,000 hectares and we engage daily with landowners to keep the community informed about its movements," Mooney explained.

The poisoning incident is a major

blow that is felt by all at the WWDI and the Waterberg community. "It is a devastating loss for conservation and for South Africa's free-roaming African wild dog population, for the Waterberg's biodiversity, for the team of conservationists dedicated to protecting the pack, for the community, and South Africa's heritage," the WWDI and the EWT expressed in a joint press release.

African wild dogs are protected in South Africa by the Biodiversity Act and Threatened or Protected Species Regulations (ToPS), and killing the animals without a permit is against the law. Investigations are ongoing to determine the source and motivation of the poisoning.

The Waterberg Wild Dog Initiative is offering a reward for information relating to this crime which results in a successful prosecution. Contact Detective Warrant Officer Cois van Deventer from the South African Police Service - Endangered Species Unit at +27 82 872 1741. The WWDI are also calling for donations to support the investigation and to safeguard the surviving dogs.

NGO treats 590 million cases of NTDs in northwest Nigeria

By Cornelius Essen, Abuja

SIGHTSAVER, an international development charity, has disclosed that it worked with the governments and other partners to screen 1.3 million children for visual impairment and treated 590 million people for neglected tropical diseases (NTDs) in northwest Nigeria, over a period of 70 years.

The group, which is working in countries across Africa and Asia to prevent blindness and strengthen local health systems, support equality for people with disabilities, and advocate for change, also supporting over 1,249 cataract surgeries for children in Zamfara, Sokoto and Kaduna States.

Its Communication Associate, Joy Tarbo, in a statement, in Abuja, to commemorate its 70th anniversary in Nigeria, noted as part of the achievements of the global charity in the last seven decades, specifically cited trachoma and the number of people who were at risk of going blind.

According to Tarbo, the group has reduced the incidents drastically from 38 million at its inception to just over 3.7 million, adding that millions of other people across three states of Kaduna, Sokoto and Zamfara have been weaned of the

use of Ivermectin for the elimination of river blindness.

Country Director, Dr Sunday Isiyaku, said: "We have also equipped around 100 service providers to support people with disabilities, in the process so many lives have been transformed through eye health programmes and eliminating diseases, and boost disability rights."

"So much has already been achieved in all areas. But today is also about looking forward and galvanising momentum for what still needs to be done. We are committed to a future where people are no longer at risk from neglected tropical diseases; everyone has access to quality eye care," he added.

Chief Executive Officer of Sightsavers, Dr Caroline Harper, observed that celebrating the progress made against trachoma was good, calling for extended healthcare initiatives, especially in northern communities and other parts of the country through disability advocacy and equal opportunities.

"Following these, there will be a celebration event, and Sightsavers will be joined by staff, partners, donors and government officials. Key successes from the past seven decades will be shared and awards given for key achievements, as well as commitments set for the future."



Secretary of Member of Parliament for Shinyanga Constituency Samuel Jacksoni (L) hands over a cow to Shinyanga District Prison Warden Theophil Mulokozi on behalf of the Member of Parliament Patrobas Katambi and Special Seat MP Shinyanga Region Santiel Kirumba donated the money and bought the cow for 700,000/- for the prisoners to celebrate Christmas Day. Photo: Correspondent Marco Maduhu

The Guardian Limited Key Contacts

Managing Editor: WALLACE MAUGGO
Circulation Manager: DENNIS NTAITA

Newsdesk

News Editor: LUSEKELO PHILEMON
0757154767
General line: 0745700710
E-mail: guardian@guardian.co.tz

Advertising

Mobile: 0677020701
E-mails: advertise@guardian.co.tz
Website: www.ippmedia.com
epaper.ippmedia.com

Entrepreneurs can't rely on ten percent council earnings' loans

AS the country approaches 57 years of the Arusha Declaration, periodic discussion and interventions on loans allocated from ten percent of district council earnings indicate how far the country still is from a viable small entrepreneurs' reliance on the formal credit system. And as if to underline the point, the government has consistently expanded the capital base of the Tanzania Agricultural Development Bank (TADP) despite upwards of 85 per cent of its loans being unserviceable from time to time. It is an all-out effort at inclusion.

Indeed the loan arrangements attached to ten per cent earnings of district councils are an aspect of inclusion, this time at the local level, or say at the district level. This theme is more or less dominant in economic policy dialogue among multilateral agencies in particular, while bilateral agencies are only concerned with keeping alive the dialogue, spirit of consensus on priorities, or feasible projects where a bilateral project can lead to opportunities. UN agencies are keen about inclusion as they bother about poverty than most governments.

Inclusion is a consensual modality of combating poverty in the wake of global inability to accept the structural adjustment format of the 1980s, where Tanzania for instance let go of entities that were chronically loss making, either district and regional economic units, or specific industries, factories. Service providers at the national level could not be brought to the market (of global investors) as critics considered it 'robbery,' that it changes hands from local ownership to domination by foreigners. We invite investors to the margins of these monopoly service providers, which lock inside the dynamics of fragmentation of service provision by a large number of companies. That is what would create jobs.

The mechanism that works in creation of credit and spawning

businesses is revolving funds, for instance channeling foreign aid to the central bank for nearly zero interest lending to commercial banks and similar institutions. Such sums would do a much better job in creating enterprises so long as they can hold land in like manner as city plots, where banks and exercise court attachment orders if loans are not paid. Ten percent of local council earnings are small amounts of money, creating narrow new income, unlike large amounts of foreign savings deposited in commercial banks to purchase land and real estate.

The government has agreed that they buy houses but that means they build more rental flats or shop frames and risk failure, when the consumption base is not expanding concomitantly. Proper freehold titles are now demanded at the level of land, so that people think of estate farming and industries where part of the funds are sourced from local banks, with investors using land as capital.

Administrators here want investors with bags of cash, not seeking local credit.

So it would be relevant that top policy makers see the district council loans in terms of what they are, as a formula for seeking inclusion of non-bankable sections of society, namely those in a special department of youths, women and persons with disabilities. That means it is inaccurate to say that the loans will enable entrepreneurs to take up opportunities for they ought to take up formal sector loans. In addition, it isn't by loaning cash to unemployed people that the economy will be lifted but when those with vast sums of money to spare are willing to place savings in our economy, for future gains. That means inviting big holders of cash, put at their disposal the breadth of immovable assets, etc. The policy incapacity is that we look at these assets with covetous village eyes; we pay salaries of developed countries and keep in place communal structures.

Preparing for another cycle of inability to solve land disputes

EACH time that there is a new government in office, one of those issues that the new holders of office wish to resolve rather hurriedly is the numerous land disputes disturbing social cohesion in many areas. At times it is conflicts between neighbouring villages, or in recent decades between migrant livestock herders and settled villagers when they claim 'empty' space for grazing. At other instances the conflicts involve public agencies and villagers, and despite that the government has a clearer ability to resolve such disputes, they take time.

During the fourth phase government President Jakaya Kikwete for instance first changed the Tarime DC and appointed another, with instructions to resolve land disputes that were causing inter-clan fighting. The new DC failed to halt the conflict, and the president appointed a new RC to steer those efforts, and after several months it was clear he had also hit a stump. Not having other avenues for changing administrators, he sent the prime minister to the area to bring together local elders and converse with them for days, to earn their confidence.

When this effort also failed, the president went there himself and upon coming back he recited these experiences to the media and in public remarks, for instance how elders had answered the premier that 'when a man is angered he has to fight.' Clashing on an issue as important as land until it is resolved in the clan interest is a matter

of self-respect for villagers there, about which no slight compromises can be brooked, and thus there was no way out. In the end, a wave of foot and mouth disease ravaged the area and the fighting finally stuttered out.

The sixth phase saw the creation of a high level cabinet committee grouping upwards of eight ministers touching on spheres like land and settlements, natural resources, agriculture, livestock rearing, local governments and allied responsibilities. Most of the work to solve land conflicts in the past few years relate to the committee, but as newly appointed Lands minister Jerry Silaa is demonstrating, there is still plenty to be done and it needs to involve top level ministerial officials. He wants land disputes 'clinics' where the minister, the deputy minister or the permanent secretary would be there to solve disputes.

What can be said in that direction is that this method will be a success if the party that is being complained about is a government agency or public facility, for they don't question orders of the cabinet. Even then it is possible some of the decisions arrived at in those clinics would still have to be approved at upper levels if the public agencies involved are too keen about their prerogatives on the issue. But when the disputes involve a collectivity like a village and a private user of land, or another collectivity, the minister should expect another fruitless series of meetings as it was the case earlier, and the disputes keep coming up.

On this Boxing Day...



Good morning Mr President: Merry Christmas, hints on new constitution

By Special Correspondent

MR President, we would like to wish you, your family, the government and the people of The Gambia Merry Christmas

We hope and pray that we all spend the festivities joyously with our family members and friends as we are all kith and kin in this beloved country of ours. Nevertheless we should keep on our guard, as during festivities of Christmas and New Year, criminals among us may try to up their game using various sorts of vice to deceive and exploit genuine and peace-loving people. Thus there should be proper security in place to ensure safety, peace and tranquility as usual during this festive season in order to prevent criminals from taking advantage of the Yuletide.

Mr President, talking about security

brings to mind the status of security in the sub-region of West Africa. There is no gainsaying that the region is volatile with the jihadists gaining strength in Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger and Chad. Thoughtfully, it is good ECOWAS extend ECOMIG mandate in The Gambia for another year, as peace is a precious resource which we cannot afford to lose.

Mr President, another matter of national interest is getting a new constitution.

The issue of a new constitution for The Gambia has become the talk of the town again, since it has been pronounced that a referendum on it will be done in December next year.

The referendum will give opportunity to Gambians to decide whether or not they want to be governed with the new constitution.

The draft constitution, which cost government 116 million Dalasis, was

rejected on 23 September 2020 with 31 MPs voted for and 23 MPs rejected it.

This time we hope such kind of resources would not be wasted again to get a new constitution. It is therefore good that a final decision is being sought to let the constitution come to effect or be dropped totally.

Gotten right and adopted, the new constitution should be seen to correct the bad laws in the country's 1997 constitution, which underwent numerous amendments under the Jammeh regime.

The new constitution should be geared towards earnestly promoting democracy, rule of law, human rights, freedom of expression and good governance. It should also capture the two-term limit of presidency and be adhered to. Indeed that has been the call by ECOWAS since 2015 at the sub-regional meeting in Ghana by all member countries to adopt the two

term-limit except Gambia and Togo that rejected the proposal.

Presidential term limit is good and essential for Africa in order to avoid instability, military coups, overstay in office, and increasing frustration by the masses of people in a nation that may want a change.

Mr President, in the event the voting system is changed or amended from token to ballot, proper sensitization campaign should be undertaken to educate the public.

Another issue of concern is the 72-hour detention, which should be firmly adhered to by either charging and prosecuting or releasing detainees.

It would be recalled that the 1997 constitution has a lot of laws that are considered by Gambians as inappropriate, which should be amended appropriately in the interest of the citizenry.

Good day!

On maternal mortality in Nigeria

By Special Correspondent

THAT five of every 1000 Nigerian women die while delivering their babies is alarming. Latest statistics from the World Health Organisation (WHO) reveal that Nigeria accounts for over 34 per cent of global maternal deaths while the lifetime risk of dying during pregnancy, childbirth, postpartum, or after an abortion for a Nigerian woman is one in 22, compared to one in 4,900 in developed countries. The scale of maternal mortality in Nigeria has become so worrying that we must call on the health authorities to fashion out a blueprint that will extenuate this pressing challenge.

The WHO report, 'improving maternal and newborn health and survival and reducing stillbirth: Progress Report 2023' ranked Nigeria as accounting for the second-highest number of maternal and child deaths globally, after India. In 2020, according to the report, 788 women and children died 'per thousand' in India and 540 women and children 'per thousand' died in Nigeria. In the same year, India accounted for 17 per cent of global maternal, and neonatal deaths and stillbirths, while Nigeria accounted for 12 per cent.

The challenge at hand goes beyond what the federal government can handle. Unfortunately, many of the rural communities in the 36 states of our country lack cottage hospitals and medical facilities that will address these challenges. Where they exist, there is shortage of manpower, and obsolete



medical equipment. Instances abound of pregnant women who have had to die in the process of commuting from their homes to a medical facility.

Yet when a pregnant woman avoids prenatal care, she puts herself under the risk of postpartum hemorrhage (PPH), a complication arising from childbirth, which can result in a fatal outcome. Besides, women who do not have access to healthcare are prone to unassisted delivery carried out by quack midwives with dire consequences for both the mother and foetus. To address this serious public health issue, we must begin to examine how to mitigate the acute poverty that has become the lot of our people,

especially in the rural areas.

However, we must put part of the blame on the state governments and the lack of attention by many of them to primary health care system at the grassroots. It is even worse that most of them have rendered prostrate the local government administration, leaving healthcare delivery at that level comatose. The solution therefore goes beyond mere formulation of some policies by the federal government. There should be a framework where states and local governments are held accountable for maternal child health care services in their domains.

The authorities, at both the federal and the states, should also find ways to

cushion the economic burden on most of the women who dwell in the rural areas, as that has been identified as the reason for their inability to afford quality prenatal and post-natal care. There should be a special focus on maternal, newborn and child health. Hospitals without the necessary drugs and other necessary facilities require urgent attention. We cannot continue to put the lives of our women at risk.

There is need to go beyond rhetoric and promises, to actionable plans to address the existing gaps in the primary health sector. We must end the agony and tears of mothers who carry pregnancy for nine months only to die at the point of delivery.

Africa, the imperative of climate action beyond emissions ranking



By Mohammed Dahiru Aminu

WHILE one may argue that Africa still maintains relatively low emissions, factoring in the concept of proxy emissions, it becomes reasonable to advocate for mitigation efforts in the more advanced countries producing industrialised goods imported into Africa, such as steel and refined petroleum products.

...while Africa may not be a top GHG emitter, the continent holds a pivotal role in shaping the future global climate landscape. By prioritising climate mitigation, African countries can simultaneously address pressing environmental challenges, unlock economic opportunities, and contribute meaningfully to the shared goal of a sustainable and resilient world.

In my role as a climate policy scientist who travels across Africa for research, policy development, advocacy, and collaboration to address the most pressing challenge of our time, I often find myself being asked by the people I meet to reconcile the fact of Africa's lower GHG emissions - in comparison to major industrialised countries - and the global call for an urgent climate action in Africa. I often come across people who believe that given the global emissions statistics, persuading African countries to actively engage in climate mitigation efforts ought not be made a paramount task for Africa and its people. It is true that Africa contributes the least to global warming in both absolute and per capita terms, such that it accounts for less than 4 per cent of global GHG emissions. But it is also true that Africa emits its GHG by proxy. The context of proxy emissions does not only suggest that African countries are not the top contributors to global GHG emissions in absolute terms, but also connotes that nations are not free of the products of industrialisation - often imported to improve the continent's economic development and technological progress.

For example, according to World Steel Association, all sub-Saharan African countries and majority of other African countries are net importers of steel products. According to data from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), between January 2015 and April 2022, South Africa imported about 10,773.4 metric tons of steel. The International Energy Agency (IEA) estimates that direct carbon dioxide emissions due to crude steel production is 1.4 metric tons of carbon dioxide per ton of steel produced. Other estimates even claim that the figures could be slightly higher, reaching 1.85 tons of carbon dioxide per ton of steel. These suggests that



Embracing climate action in Africa also presents the opportunity for the youth to engage in innovation and entrepreneurship - and African leaders can help empower the younger generation by fostering the culture of environmental responsibility and driving a positive change toward innovation.



South African steel imports within the period under OECD's review could reach somewhere between 15,082.67 to 19,392.12 tons of direct carbon dioxide emissions.

In volume terms, to make sense of the significance of 1 ton of carbon dioxide, we could take the average car's emission of around 2.3 kilograms of carbon dioxide per litre of gasoline burned. Thus, driving around 4,500 miles - about 7,242.05 kilometres - in an average car that utilises one gallon per 25 miles could result in one ton of carbon dioxide emissions. Also, while the carbon intensity of electricity varies by region and energy sources, consuming around 10,000 to 12,000 kilowatt-hours of electricity, depending on the energy mix, could result in one ton of carbon dioxide emissions. Air travel could also provide another example in demonstrating the significance of carbon footprints. If we can imagine that a roundtrip from New York to London can emit around one ton of carbon dioxide per passenger.

While one may argue that Africa still maintains relatively low emissions, factoring in the concept of proxy emissions, it becomes reasonable to advocate for mitigation efforts in the more advanced countries producing industrialised goods imported into Africa, such as steel and refined petroleum products.

Estimating the exact carbon dioxide emissions resulting from all African countries becoming fully industrialised or transitioning to a manufacturing economy is a complex task and involves numerous variables. The idea that industrialisation can play a crucial role in reducing poverty in Africa is not new and can be supported by various economic theories and historical examples that border on the potential for economic growth, jobs creation, and improvement of living standards. The European Union (EU), comprising 27 member states, has a population of slightly over 448 million people, yet in 2022 the region produced

2,641 terawatt-hours of electricity to meet its energy demand. Africa has a population of approximately 1.4 billion people, with only a total installed capacity of 244.64 million kilowatts of electricity as of 2021. If we take the EU as a standard for Africa's industrialisation, in the context of Africa's population, the continent will need to produce about 4,953 terawatt-hours of electricity per annum.

While one may argue that Africa still maintains relatively low emissions, factoring in the concept of proxy emissions, it becomes reasonable to advocate for mitigation efforts in the more advanced countries producing industrialised goods imported into Africa, such as steel and refined petroleum products. However, it is crucial to recognise that despite Africa's current lower emissions, the continent must strategically plan for full development and industrialisation, surpassing the energy needs of the EU. Africa can achieve this future by avoiding the climate mis-

takes made by industrialised nations. Like any region, the future of Africa is shaped by a complex interplay of economic, social, political, and environmental factors. Industrialisation has historically been associated with higher productivity, income growth and poverty reduction, thus the failure to industrialise Africa may lead to continued reliance on traditional and often subsistence-based economic activities, invariably contributing to persistent poverty. If Africa does not pursue industrialisation in a sustainable manner, several challenges and consequences would arise. To mitigate these challenges, it is essential for African countries to pursue industrialisation strategies that are sustainable, inclusive, and environmentally friendly - all of which require careful planning, investment in education and skills development, supportive policies, and collaboration with the international community.

Embracing climate action in Africa also presents the opportunity for the youth to engage in innovation and entrepreneurship - and African leaders can help empower the younger generation by fostering the culture of environmental responsibility and driving a positive change toward innovation. As Africa's population grows, the health and wellbeing of Africans is important for the continent's productivity.

But this is not the time to panic. African leaders should view the climate challenge as an opportunity for a promising future for the continent. Africa is vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change - from extreme weather events to agricultural pattern shifts. By supporting mitigation efforts in the continent and beyond, African leaders would build resilience against the impacts and safeguard their communities and ecosystems. By embracing climate-friendly policies and technologies, African leaders would help to catalyse sustainable economic development to foster long-term economic resilience. By actively participating in global climate initiatives, African leaders would enhance the continent's standing on the international stage to attract funding and strengthen diplomatic ties. By taking advantage of Africa's abundant renewable energy resources, including solar and wind, African leaders would be ensuring that their countries can leapfrog to cleaner energy alternatives and contribute to the global shift towards sustainable energy systems. As climate change continues to threaten Africa's unique biodiversity, its leaders can help to ensure that mitigation efforts are pitched towards protecting endangered species, the preservation of ecosystems, and maintaining the delicate balance of nature, upon which many communities depend for their livelihoods.

Embracing climate action in Africa also presents the opportunity for the youth to engage in innovation and entrepreneurship - and African leaders can help empower the younger generation by fostering the culture of environmental responsibility and driving a positive change toward innovation. As Africa's population grows, the health and wellbeing of Africans is important for the continent's productivity. Climate change contributes to the spread of diseases, it impacts water and food security, and exacerbates health challenges. The role played by African leaders in climate change mitigation would directly benefit public health and ensure a healthier and more prosperous future for Africa's populations. As climate-induced challenges lead to displacement and migration, the prevention of further creation of climate refugees and maintaining social stability within and between African nations will depend on the mitigation measures championed by African leaders. Finally, while Africa may not be a top GHG emitter, the continent holds a pivotal role in shaping the future global climate landscape. By prioritising climate mitigation, African countries can simultaneously address pressing environmental challenges, unlock economic opportunities, and contribute meaningfully to the shared goal of a sustainable and resilient world.



Education paying highest cost for ongoing the climate crisis

By Joyce Chimbi

It is a global catastrophe of astounding proportions that millions of children are on the run today, forcibly displaced from their homes. As conflict and climate change increasingly become the most pressing challenges facing the world now, the number of displaced children has doubled in the last decade alone, reaching a record high of 43.3 million children.

Yasmine Sherif, Executive Director of Education Cannot Wait (ECW), says that conflict- and climate-change-affected children are the least likely to enroll in or stay in school and are therefore the furthest left behind when it comes to fulfilling their basic human right to quality education. Many of these children are in the poorest and most vulnerable nations. ECW is the global fund for education in emergencies and protracted crises.

Stressing that the needs are enormous and responses must be immediate before the unfolding education crisis becomes irreversible, Sherif emphasized the need to build climate-



More than 62 million children—nearly one-third of the 224 million crisis-affected children worldwide in need of educational support—are also affected by grave climate-induced disasters.

resilient education systems as an adaptation measure, including climate change-proof education infrastructure that will ensure learning continuity.

“More than 62 million children—nearly one-third of the 224 million crisis-affected children worldwide in need of educational support—are also affected by grave climate-induced disasters. We have issued an urgent appeal for US\$150 million in new funding to respond to the climate crisis. We must act now with speed, for in the face of human suffering and the destruction of our planet, patience is not a virtue,” she said.

Awut Deng Acuil, South Sudan’s Minister of General Education and Instruction, brought the situation there more into focus during an ECW side event on the designated day for education. It was the first time in the history of the COP Summits to have an entire day dedicated to the education agenda, reflecting the strong interconnection between the climate crisis and the global education crisis.

An estimated 70 percent of school-aged South Sudanese children have

never set foot in a classroom, and only 10 percent of those who enroll complete primary education. This is one of the worst completion rates globally. As South Sudan faced multiple challenges over many years, a girl in South Sudan is more likely to die in childbirth than to complete primary education.

“There are parts of South Sudan that are completely flooded. I have never seen water that comes and never recedes. You hardly see any land. A week ago, I visited Unity State to assess the impact of climate shocks, and I saw many displaced families. At least 40 percent of schools are flooded and have remained closed since 2021. Before the pandemic, we had 2.3 million children in school; today, we have 2.1 million children out of school. For those still in school, the ratio is 120 students per teacher,” she said.

“To get to school in these areas, children and teachers walk along dikes—barriers built to hold back water—and despite the risks, they are running out of options. Some of the schools are inaccessible for rehabili-

tation. For those that can be rehabilitated, we use boats to transport rehabilitation material.”

But as the country was picking up its pieces through a peace agreement that has provided stability and normalcy, climate-induced disasters have exacerbated barriers between children and education, rolling back time by derailing access to education.

Sherif said ECW and South Sudan’s education ministry will not recoil from the imposing challenges and have a strong partnership to push the education agenda forward, appealing for additional donors to meet a funding gap of USD 25 million to fully implement the ECW-supported Multi-Year Resilience Programme in the country. She added that the needs are increasing as the conflict in Sudan pushes children out of their homes and into South Sudan.

“Since 2020, we have supported partners in improving access to quality, inclusive education for children and adolescents and increasing retention rates in South Sudan. ECW’s funding focuses on the most vulnerable ones, including girls, internally

displaced children, and children with disabilities. Interventions range from covering school fees, reaching students remotely, training education personnel, and implementing child protection pathways in schools. This holistic education must be urgently scaled up to reach all crisis-impacted children,” Sherif emphasized.

Ole Thonke, Undersecretary for Development Policy, Government of Denmark, reiterated Denmark’s commitment to resolve the climate, conflict, and education crises, as they are all different sides of the same coin. The country has announced a new additional USD 6 million pledge to ECW to support the delivery of quality education to vulnerable children and youth at the forefront of the interconnected crises of climate change and conflict, with a particular focus on girls and adolescent girls.

In pastoral communities such as Kenya and the larger Horn of Africa belt, girls are particularly at risk. As the climate crisis threatens to paralyze pastoral economies, families who have lost their livestock are increasingly marrying off their young girls. Current education systems are not equipped to handle the spiraling effects of the climate crisis. In fact, delegates heard that education systems as they are currently structured can only harness 35 percent of the value, talent, and potential nestled within each child—the gift of undiscovered human brilliance.

The side event was held within the context of the RewirEd Summit, which focuses on rewiring learning for green skills, green jobs, and the green economy and ensuring that acquired skills match the needs of current markets and the world’s most pressing needs.

“Since the first RewirEd Summit, we have worked very hard to follow through on the commitment we made to elevate the role of education as the most powerful and valuable opportunity for human development. We needed to bring education to the heart of all these challenges and leverage its potential to offer solutions. We are here because of one of the greatest challenges of our time: if we do nothing about climate change, it will affect the entire future of our planet,” said Dr Tariq Al Gurg, CEO and Vice Chairman of Dubai Cares.

Dubai Cares hosted the second RewirEd Summit to encourage dialogue and action to put education at the forefront of the climate agenda. The one-day summit brought together ministers, high-profile speakers, and panelists from UN agencies, climate actors, international NGOs, academia, marginalized communities, indigenous populations, teachers, and youth, as well as representatives from the public and private sectors from around the world.

“It cannot be business as usual; as long as we keep education confined within outdated, unambitious, and broken systems, we will continue to be in a vicious cycle where for every step forward we take, another pandemic, climate disaster, or conflict will set us back again, if not even further away from our goals to help people as well as the planet. The only way forward is to recognize that the pathway to meaningful progress towards 2030 and beyond must be through positioning education at the core of every single Sustainable Development Goal,” said Reem Al Hashemi, UAE’s Minister of State for International Cooperation.

CAPITAL RADIO

RATIBA YA VIPINDI JUMATATU - JUMAPILI

MONDAY TIME PROGRAMME	TUESDAY TIME PROGRAMME	WEDNESDAY TIME PROGRAMME	THURSDAY TIME PROGRAMME	FRIDAY TIME PROGRAMME	SATURDAY TIME PROGRAMME	SUNDAY TIME PROGRAMME
05:00-09:00HRS MORNING JAM 09:00-13:00HRS LETE RAHA 13:00-14:00HRS DW-RADIO 14:00-16:00HRS CLUB 101 16:00-18:00HRS DALA DALA 18:00-18:10HRS HABARI 18:10-20:00HRS BOZOUK TIME 20:00-21:00HRS HALI HALISI 21:00-22:00HRS SPORTS 22:00-05:00HRS MUZIKI MCHAGANGANYIKO)	05:00-09:00HRS MORNING JAM 09:00-13:00HRS LETE RAHA 13:00-14:00HRS DW-RADIO 14:00-16:00HRS CLUB 101 16:00-18:00HRS DALA DALA 18:00-18:10HRS HABARI 18:10-21:00HRS BOZOUK TIME 21:00-22:00HRS SPORTS 22:00-05:00HRS MUZIKI MCHAGANGANYIKO)	05:00-09:00HRS MORNING JAM 09:00-13:00HRS LETE RAHA 13:00-14:00HRS DW-RADIO 14:00-16:00HRS CLUB 101 16:00-18:00HRS DALA DALA 18:00-18:10HRS HABARI 18:10-21:00HRS BOZOUK TIME 21:00-22:00HRS SPORTS 22:00-05:00HRS MUZIKI MCHAGANGANYIKO)	05:00-09:00HRS MORNING JAM 09:00-13:00HRS LETE RAHA 13:00-14:00HRS DW-RADIO 14:00-16:00HRS CLUB 101 16:00-18:00HRS DALA DALA 18:00-18:10HRS HABARI 18:10-20:00HRS BOZOUK TIME 20:00-21:00HRS SPORTS 21:00-23:00HRS MALUMBANO YA HOJA 22:00-05:00HRS MUZIKI MCHAGANGANYIKO)	05:00-09:00HRS MORNING JAM 09:00-13:00HRS LETE RAHA 13:00-14:00HRS DW-RADIO 14:00-16:00HRS CLUB 101 16:00-18:00HRS DALA DALA 18:00-18:10HRS HABARI 18:10-20:00HRS BOZOUK TIME 20:00-21:00HRS SPORTS 21:00-23:00HRS KIPIMA JOTO 22:00-05:00HRS MUZIKI MCHAGANGANYIKO)	07:30-10:00HRS DK 90 DUNIANI 10:00-11:00HRS KADOGOO 11:00-13:00HRS BONGO HITS 13:00-14:00HRS DW RADIO 14:00-16:00HRS ZAIDI YA UMJUUVYO 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

Rwanda introduces electric buses to push for green transportation system

KIGALI

HERE is a new sight on the streets of Kigali, the capital city of Rwanda: new electric vehicles whizzing among old gasoline-powered ones.

The Kigali city authorities, in partnership with BasiGo, a Kenyan-based company, launched the pilot electric buses in public transport earlier this month, following a similar trial on minibuses in the city.

When fully charged, the bus can travel 300 kilometers, with charging points installed in Kigali's Kicukiro district.

The goal is to introduce 200 buses on the streets of Kigali within 18 months, each with a capacity to carry 70 passengers, according to officials.

Rwandan residents and experts said the introduction of the electric buses would boost the country's efforts to advance smart mobility systems to facilitate sustainability in the economy.

"I'm excited about the introduction of electric buses. In terms of environment protection, it was long overdue. I hope that a rollout of electric cars will reduce pollution," one passenger, who gave his name only as Hirwa, said, adding that the bus is comfortable and reduces travel time by about a half.

In July, the Rwandan government signed a deal with Vivo Energy company to introduce more than 200 electric buses to the country.

Innocent Umuhoza, who has been working as a professional driver for 18 years, was operating a brand-new electric bus from downtown Kigali to Remera Park along the airport road. "Old, combustion-engine buses can be a menace as they produce a lot



Students wait for bus to travel home for holiday in Kigali, Rwanda

of dangerous fumes which affect our environment."

For now, the majority of buses on Rwandan roads are still gasoline-powered.

The last time Umuhoza filled a diesel-powered bus with 100 liters of fuel, it cost him between 160,000 Rwandan francs (about 127 U.S. dollars) to 170,000 francs.

The electric bus he now drives,

by comparison, consumes electricity worth 40,000 Rwandan francs (about 31 dollars) from downtown Kigali to Remera, saving about 120,000 Rwandan francs of the money previously spent on fuel, according to Umuhoza.

He said that transport operators using gasoline-powered vehicles lose money during non-peak days when travellers are few.

"Fuel is sometimes prohibitively expensive. For example, driving from the town center to Remera Taxi Park, if I carry 40 passengers in a bus with capacity to take 76 passengers, their transport fare cannot cover the fuel consumed," he said. "For an electric bus with capacity to carry 70 passengers, even when I take 40, there is no loss on the part of my employer, because electricity

consumption is very low."

Overall, the operational cost of an electric vehicle is said to be 40 percent less than that of petrol vehicles.

Umuhoza said that since electricity is locally produced, part of the money previously used to import fuel will be saved and invested in the economy.

Jean d'Amour Nsemigimana, a passenger on board a bus from down-

town Kigali to the Remera suburbs, called for more electric vehicles on Rwandan roads to avoid pollution.

Rashid Rutayisire, another driver, said that after years of driving gasoline-powered vehicles he doesn't even want to smell gasoline any more.

He said electric buses are well-built in the interior, installed with charging systems and mobile internet, as well as comfortable seats for both the driver and passengers.

Abias Maniragaba, an environmentalist, said the introduction of electric vehicles is "a right step toward the global goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by adopting green technology, green transport in the country, and in terms of nature conservation."

"This initiative will help the movement to be greener, where people can move with zero emissions. When we reduce the greenhouse gas we are sending to the atmosphere," he told Xinhua.

Maniragaba urged the government to help subsidize transport fare for people using electric buses to encourage more people to abandon use of individual gas-powered vehicles. He also called for more awareness about the benefits of electric vehicles to increase their adoption. "We need to think globally, and act locally."

"Although Rwanda's emission is quite low compared to developed countries, it has a direct impact on our community," Maniragaba said.

Rwanda has abolished import taxes on electric vehicles and hybrids that utilize both electricity and petroleum products, including electric motorcycles, to encourage their adoption and contribute to a greener, cleaner future.

Ghana legalises cannabis farming for medical and industrial usage

ACCRA

GHANA'S Parliament has marked a historic milestone by legalizing cannabis cultivation for medical and industrial purposes, aligning with the global momentum embracing the multifaceted benefits of cannabis.

This ground-breaking decision, made on December 14, 2023, grants the Interior Minister the authority to issue licenses, ushering in a transformative era in Ghana's cannabis regulations.

Ghana's commitment to realizing cannabis's potential was underscored by the passage of the Narcotics Control Commission Act 2020 (Act 1019).

This move aligns with a global wave of countries harnessing the potential of the cannabis industry, which was estimated to be worth 30 billion dollars in global GDP in January 2022.

Licensing cover the entire spectrum of cannabis-related activities, including cultivation, processing, distribution, sale, import, and export.

Critically, these licenses adhere to stringent THC content standards, limiting levels to 0.3% on a dry weight basis.

Experts claim that if the cannabis industry is properly managed and regulated along the value chain, Ghana's economic issues may be remedied because cannabis has the capacity to flourish in every part of the country.

Key sector expected to benefit significantly is the employment sector.

As Ghana embarks on this transformative journey, the country stands at the forefront of cannabis industry development in Africa.



Nurses walking into an Ebola treatment unit in Liberia in 2015. African countries should be able to coordinate emergency measures within the next five years.

African govts to coordinate outbreak response

By Deborah Samuel, Lusaka

OVER 90 per cent of African countries should be able to coordinate healthcare worker surges and other emergency measures within the next five years when faced with a disease outbreak, under a plan launched by the continent's health agency.

The plan will enable countries to coordinate their national outbreak response and draw on resources from development partners, through the development of Public Health Emergency Operations Centres (PHEOCs).

Jean Kaseya, director general of the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC) told a launch event for the plan on 29 November that African countries were not yet prepared to respond to public health emergencies and the only way to prevent and respond to outbreaks was through strong PHEOCs.

"Without effective coordination by the government, we will end up hav-

ing a haphazard emergency plan."

Fiona Braka, programme area manager, emergency response at the WHO regional office for Africa

"This is why we are calling all of our colleagues, all of our partners, to consider what we will achieve under this five-year strategic plan," he said during the event at the 3rd Conference of Public Health in Africa, Lusaka, Zambia.

"We need US\$181 million to implement this plan," he added.

Under the proposals, at least 90 per cent of Member States in the Africa and Eastern Mediterranean regions will have developed a PHEOC and strengthened the capabilities of routine and surge public health teams by 2027.

Surge teams are made up of qualified health staff who are on standby to be deployed at short notice in case of a disease outbreak.

The plan was developed jointly between Africa CDC, the World Health Organization (WHO), the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the UK

Health Security Agency, and other development partners.

It comes amid a growing risk of outbreaks in the region as humans encroach further into natural habitats and as disease-carrying insects move into new areas as a result of climate change.

Fiona Braka, programme area manager, emergency response at the WHO regional office for Africa, said countries now understood that health emergencies are rising due to the increasing interface between animals, humans, and the environment. "Coordination is a component of health security," she said.

"Without effective coordination by the government, we will end up having a haphazard emergency plan."

"The Emergency Operation Centre ... brings all the plans and partners under one roof, working together around national priorities and that is very important with government in the driving seats."

Speaking at the launch of the plan, WHO regional director for Africa

Matshidiso Moeti said the plan will shape the future of public health in the Africa region and the Eastern Mediterranean region.

"Together, we are working on the next phase, ensuring a safer, healthier, and more resilient future where public health emergencies no longer hold us tightened with fear," she said.

Among a raft of technical requirements, PHEOCs should have the necessary information management and communication capabilities. Under the plan, eight PHEOCs will be designated as centres of excellence by the end of 2027.

Neil Squires, director of global operations at the UK Health Security Agency, said governments needed to ensure that the resources available are used to maximum effect to tackle problems immediately, and that requires a public health workforce.

"Countries in the region need political commitments to support the plan, they need strong national public health institutions to make sure that the plan is in force."

Justifying dictatorship in South Sudan: A case against the East African Community

By Duop Chak Wuol

THE East African Community (EAC) has recently installed South Sudan's President, Salva Kiir, as its chairperson, replacing Burundian President Evariste Ndayishimiye. Kiir is now the official Chair of the East African regional bloc, EAC. There is nothing wrong with a leader who wants to have a leadership role on a regional or international stage. However, vying for such a role with a documented ruthless leadership record is another thing. The decision by the bloc has effectively validated, bolstered, and legitimized the dictatorial political system which has been in existence in South Sudan for more than a decade. The move also raises moral questions about whether behind-the-scenes deals allowed Kiir to pay his way to the chair of the EAC.

For readers to get a brief understanding of what the EAC does, the following precis may be helpful. The bloc asserts that its vision, "...is to be a prosperous, competitive, secure, stable and politically united East Africa." The EAC also boldly claims that professionalism, accountability, transparency, teamwork, unity in diversity, and allegiance to EAC ideals are its core values. Unfortunately, for South Sudan, installing Salva Kiir as Chairperson of the EAC is an action that diametrically opposed these values.

The Republic of South Sudan under the new EAC chair, Salva Kiir, remains in a deep state of insecurity and political instability. How can this dire prediction be seen otherwise? Kiir is widely understood to be responsible for the countless appalling crimes committed in South Sudan. These crimes include the deaths of more than 400,000 people-citizens who lost their lives in South Sudan's civil war. The 10th memorial anniversary for these victims is coming up in less than two weeks (December 15, 2023).

Kiir's abuse of power by any credible standard will ultimately expose him to the scrutiny of the world. If the EAC is competent politically, economically, culturally, and socially, then it should have postponed or deferred Kiir's ambition to lead the bloc. It is now clear that the EAC failed to live up to its principles by elevating Kiir while ignoring the brutalities of his leadership. Keep in mind that this failure also exposes the leadership of the EAC to charges of gross indifference in the exercise of their moral obligations. Such a failure also raises serious concerns about the reliability of the EAC's requirements that a country must fulfill before its admission into the bloc is approved.

The action of the EAC member states (Tanzania, Rwanda, Uganda, Burundi, Kenya, Democratic Republic of Congo, South Sudan, and Somalia as its newest member) also raises the possibility of the fact that the EAC has buried its head in the sand when it elevated Kiir to the chair of the bloc.

Indeed, Article 3 (2) of the treaty establishing the East African Community requires, "adherence to universally acceptable principles of good governance, democracy, the rule of law, observance of human rights and social justice." The question then becomes, did South Sudan meet all the conditions specified under Article 3(2) of the treaty that established the EAC? The answer to this question is contestable at best. However, one thing is clear: there is no such thing as good governance, rule of law, human rights, or democracy in South Sudan before or after the bloc admitted South Sudan. The young nation remains politically fragile to this day.

The East African Community's decision to appoint Kiir as its chairperson does not surprise



Salva Kiir Mayardit assumed the EAC chairmanship on 24 November during the 23rd Ordinary Summit of the EAC Heads of State (Photo: EAC/X) By Duop Chak Wuol @ DuopChakWuol Addis Abeba - The East African Community (EAC) has recently installed South Sudan's President, Salva Kiir, as its chairperson, replacing Burundian President Evariste Ndayishimiye.

me. I had been expecting this moment to happen because Kiir started the process of making South Sudan part of the bloc just days after the young nation gained its independence from Sudan in July 2011. However, the resolution has raised questions about the credibility of the EAC and its moral principles. The action of the EAC member states (Tanzania, Rwanda, Uganda, Burundi, Kenya, Democratic Republic of Congo, South Sudan, and Somalia as its newest member) also raises the possibility of the fact that the EAC has buried its head in the sand when it elevated Kiir to the chair of the bloc.

Before Kiir took over the chair of the East African Community, South Sudan owed the EAC at least \$36 million. However, this did not prevent Salva Kiir from using his cunning and calculating leadership mindset to present himself as a good leader. On the 8th of November 2023, two weeks before the EAC Heads of State Summit began—the President directed his finance ministry officials to pay \$7 million to the EAC. After the payment was announced, those who were not well-informed about the situation celebrated and claimed that Salva Kiir would now take over the EAC chair with the young nation owing nothing to the East African Community. This was not the case; South Sudan still owed more than \$29 million at that time, making her the most deeply indebted member country, and also the nation with the greatest record of default. I should point out that under Kiir, South Sudan has never complied when it comes to paying its annual dues.

President Kiir is a man who often likes to project himself as a dependable leader. The problem is that he only acts responsibly when he is in desperate need of something, or he wants to be seen outside of South Sudan as someone who can be trusted. This was why he ordered his finance ministry on November 8 to make an initial payment of \$7 million so that other EAC leaders who may have questions about his leadership would change their perception of him. Kiir was also successful in behind-closed-door discussions in convincing his counterparts to forgive some of the outstanding \$29 million debt.

Kiir was able to persuade his counterparts by telling them that his regime was spending a lot of money on peace execution in South Sudan. This claim was misleading and self-serving. The truth is that Salva Kiir has been consistently impeding the implementation of peace by systematically denying necessary funding to the peace mechanism institutions created under the Septem-

ber 2018 revitalized agreement—even though the treaty requires him to do so. The bloc agreed and cleared \$13.5 million of the \$29 million, leaving South Sudan with a debt of \$15.5 million. President Kiir immediately ordered the payment of \$15.5 million, leaving Juba with a zero balance. Kiir then went further by declaring that South Sudan will now start remitting its annual arrears on a timely basis. It is worth noting that South Sudan has been the number one defaulter since it joined the bloc in April 2016.

Astonishingly, it only took Salva Kiir just over two weeks (November 8-24) to convince other EAC leaders to forgive \$13.5 million, leaving a remaining \$22.5 million that Kiir immediately paid in full. This resulted in clearing the entire \$36 million debt.

This surprising speed illustrates Kiir's desperation to secure regional support which, in fact, was at its breaking point. For him, it was do or die. He was determined to do anything to position himself as a leader whom other East African leaders should trust.

Salva Kiir is exceptionally clever when he wants something for himself. His strategy has always been a classic deceit dressed up in a diplomatic outfit. The notion that his regime was not paying its financial contributions to the EAC because he had been financing South Sudan's peace process, is an absurdity. It is incredulous that other EAC leaders would believe such an obvious falsehood. It does not make any logical sense to see Kiir satisfying the EAC financial obligation in less than three weeks when the country has been a member of the bloc for more than seven years.

Furthermore, since South Sudan joined the EAC, the country constantly failed to live up to its international obligations by failing to pay its financial shares. Kiir's rushed decision to make South Sudan part of the EAC has resulted in a negative perception of the nation. This perception is driven by the fact that South Sudan does not pay its dues. This is one of the reasons why members of the East African Legislative Assembly (EALA) savagely criticized the country for its continued failure to pay its debts to the bloc.

If the East African Community enforced its by-laws or rules, then in 2019 South Sudan should have been justly expelled from the bloc because of its policy of continuous non-payment.

A case in point involved the Honorable Fancy Haji Nkuhi, who, in 2019 was a Tanzania representative to the EALA. Honorable Fancy had had enough of South Sudan's persistent non-payment of its annual fees and wondered why South Sudanese

leaders always behaved unreasonably. In one of her speeches in the parliament, Honorable Fancy said, "Today we eat from the house of Mr. Tanzania, tomorrow Uganda, Kenya, Burundi, Rwanda. When we go to South Sudan, they close their doors and say we are not around." Fancy's statement exposed the bitter reality of Kiir's inability to protect the country's image. At that time, South Sudan owed more than \$276 million to the East African Community. Kiir was not interested in paying the arrears at that time simply because he was not vying for the EAC chair.

As the record indicates, Salva Kiir does not care about lasting peace in South Sudan. He only cares about maintaining his grip on power or securing any support he can get. This is why he made the recent deal with other EAC leaders to forgive \$13.5 million, paid the remaining \$15.5 million, and then publicly proclaimed his regime is now prepared to pay its annual contribution on time. This bold promise is feasible simply because Kiir wants to gain any support he can get from other EAC leaders. In his view, if he became popular or secured the necessary support, he would be in a better position to further obstruct peace implementation in South Sudan, and no one would dare to question his approach to peace.

South Sudan has a history of accruing huge debts and then renegeing on the debt. The country also has a history of asking other countries or foreign donors to fund some of its projects including the peace process. However, whenever a donor or another nation gives money to the regime in Juba, the original narrative used to secure such a financial grant would be deliberately put in a trash bin where only Kiir and his trusted allies know of its location. This shows that on many fronts, South Sudan was not ready when it joined the EAC.

The admission was approved merely because Kiir's devoted regional godfather and ally, Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni, lobbied other EAC leaders on Kiir's behalf. It was a decision that still haunts the country to this day. If the East African Community enforced its by-laws or rules, then in 2019 South Sudan should have been justly expelled from the bloc because of its policy of continuous non-payment. The main reason South Sudan was not barred was that Museveni often asked other EAC leaders to be easy on Kiir. Article 146 of the EAC states, "The Summit may suspend a partner state from taking part in the activities of the community if that state fails to observe and fulfill the fundamental principles and objectives of the treaty including failure to

meet financial commitments to the community within a period of 18 months." And yet, South Sudan failed to live up to its financial obligations and no remedy or chastisement was forthcoming. There is no doubt in my mind that Museveni was the reason behind Kiir's years-long avoidance of paying the accumulated debts.

I know those who do not understand how Kiir runs South Sudan's affairs may think that his actions as the East African Community chair have no connections to his leadership in the young nation. Nevertheless, there is one irrefutable connection between the two: political deceit. In 2018, Kiir declared at a peace talk venue that he had no money to fund the peace process and demanded that oilfields that were under the control of the armed opposition, the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army-In Opposition (SPLM/A-IO), be turned over to him so that he could finance the agreement.

The SPLM/A-IO agreed and returned the oilfields to him. After Kiir took over the oilfields, he quickly resumed oil production and his initial claim that he wanted oilfields to finance the peace process never materialized. He simply used the oil revenues to buy more weapons from a few greedy Eastern European countries through Uganda. Salva Kiir did not stop there.

In February 2019, he announced that he was set to collect taxes from all public servants after he realized international donors no longer trusted him when it came to money. In his mind, his regime was going to collect at least \$285 million and use the money for the execution of the accord. The announcement was never implemented because the people he wanted to tax were not even receiving their salaries on time, with most of them often going for months without pay. Kiir's leadership is all about deceiving first and striking soon after. In June 2019, he asked Afriexim Bank for a \$500 million loan, claiming he wanted the money to pay public servants' salaries and fund infrastructure projects. He also told the bank that he was prepared to repay the money in four years. It was another scam-laced strategy to keep his regime alive. After he received the funds, he did not pay the salaries of public servants and never funded the projects. About three months later (in September 2019), he borrowed \$600 million from China.

Kiir told the Chinese government that he wanted the funds to pay six months' salaries of all South Sudanese civil servants so that the peace process could go smoothly. Beijing gave him the money. After he received the fund, he used \$200 million to

pay two months' salaries of most civil servants and \$400 million (two-thirds) disappeared. The Republic of South Sudan has also become a nation where Kiir's family members and trusted insiders once looted a Qatari \$1 billion bank credit line which was designed to finance fuel, food, and medicines for South Sudanese communities. This list can go on and on, but these few examples are enough to give readers and the East African Community an idea of why they should be cautious when dealing with Salva Kiir.

I am aware that on numerous occasions some East African leaders (e.g., Yoweri Museveni, etc.) maintain that African problems need African solutions. This argument has also been echoed by other African leaders who tend to embrace or glorify tyrannical rule. These leaders always accuse European and American leaders of interfering in their internal affairs, nevertheless, their allegations about Western leaders are purely a scapegoating strategy designed to prevent other countries from scrutinizing their leadership.

This is why African leaders like Yoweri Museveni believe that the EAC's recent decision to allow Salva Kiir to chair the bloc without raising any concerns about his leadership in South Sudan serves as a strong statement to non-EAC leaders whom he perceives as hostile to African leaders. I believe the promotion of Kiir to the helm of the East African Community is one of the most egregious blunders the EAC has ever made. The people of South Sudan are stunned by EAC's unscrupulous decision to allow Salva Kiir to chair this important bloc.

What is disgraceful is the fact that all the leaders of the EAC's member states know that Kiir's regime is the most oppressive in the region and yet they failed to prevent him from assuming the EAC chair. The regime of his Ugandan ally Yoweri Museveni should not be far behind; indeed, these two leaders have instituted mafia-like techniques where dissenting views are treated as enemies of the state.

It is incredible how the EAC leaders who claim to be working for the goodness of the East Africans were convinced by a joint Juba-Kampala web of deceit to choose Kiir as the EAC chair. What I find ironic is that the EAC claims "One People" and "One Destiny" as its global motto, and yet the bloc failed to see this when they promoted Kiir to the chair of the group. It seems to me that "One People" represents EAC leaders, and "One Destiny" is all about validating and solidifying their actions at the expense of the people of East Africa. It also seems to me that the leaders of the EAC are more interested in the customs union, common market, monetary union, and political federation than in the establishment of a secure, stable, and politically united East Africa as is asserted in their vision statement.

I am baffled by the fact that EAC leaders overlooked and continue to overlook the prevailing political situation in South Sudan. It is imminently clear that the Republic of South Sudan, led by Salva Kiir, is still in a volatile situation and can return to war at any time. This is not a question of why the EAC has forgiven 37.5% (\$13.5 million) of the \$36 million South Sudan originally owed to the bloc. It is about whether leaders of the East African Community prefer the current oppressive political system over reforms in South Sudan. There is no doubt the East African Community has abandoned its core principles and transformed itself into a morally corrupt regional bloc where dictatorships are validated and empowered.



CURRENT NEWS
Akagera park looks to generate Rwf3 billion annually by 2025
Page 14



CURRENT NEWS
China eases curbs on tech exports
Page 14



OUTLOOK & ANALYSIS
Host of deals to rev up global use of battery swapping tech
Page 15

BancABC provides aid to the landslide victims in Hanang

By Guardian Correspondent, Hanang

BANCABC has donated water, rice, maize, and other humanitarian aid to the victims of the mudflow that occurred in the town of Kateshi, Hanang District, Manyara Region, causing deaths, destroying people's property and homes.

In an effort to give back to the community and assist those affected by severe flooding and landslides in Hanang,

The assistance was handed over to the District Commissioner of Hanang, Janeth Mayanja, by the BancABC Head of Sales, Emmanuel Nzutu, in the district yesterday.

Speaking after receiving the aid, the District Commissioner expressed gratitude to BancABC for their concern about the disasters that befell the residents of Hanang due to the floods, she also commended other institutions that have provided assistance, urging those that haven't done so to emulate BancABC. Mayanja expressed her gratitude, saying, "This aid is a result of the generosity shown by this financial institution, it will help bring relief to the victims of these mudslides, I thank BancABC for the timely assistance."

Handing over the aid to the district commissioner, BancABC's Nzutu, extended condolences to the residents of Hanang who experienced the mudslide disaster on the night of December 3 this year.

"BancABC continues to stand in solidarity with the residents of Hanang, offering condolences to those who lost their loved ones, we wish a speedy recovery to the injured, and to those affected in any way, we hope they find real solutions to the damages they have suffered.

"Our bank has genuine love and concern for the residents of Hanang, and to demonstrate this, we decided to bring our banking services closer by opening a branch in this district;

It is our hope that despite the challenges that have occurred, the residents of this district will continue to come to our branch and enjoy our excellent banking services," Nzutu said.



BancABC Head of Sales, Emmanuel Nzutu, hands over various food items and humanitarian aid to Hanang District Commissioner, Janeth Mayanja (3rd R), provided by BancABC to help the victims of the landslides in Kateshi town, Hanang District, Manyara Region, on December 3 this year. The event took place in the district yesterday. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

Central Bank wins praise for launching syllabus for certified financial educators



Central bank's governor, Emmanuel Tutuba.

By Carlos Banda

EXPERTS in the financial sector have expressed optimism on the launch of the certified financial educator's curriculum, citing the move as revolutionary in address-

ing financial knowledge and skills gap in the country.

In separate interviews, they aired their views on the move by the Bank of Tanzania (BOT) to launch the teaching curriculum for Certified Financial Educators.

They said the move will po-

tentially cater for the need to improve the use of financial resources beginning from institutional level rolling down to community level.

Gasto Mtweve, researcher and economist at the Tanzania Research Education Network (TERNET) said that the

move will help ensure the financial stability for institutions and individuals.

"The launch of the curriculum for certified financial educators by the central bank is a great move because it will have a strong effect towards the financial stability of financial institutions and individuals," he said.

Mtweve noted that due to poor financial literacy, people are prone to poor financial expenditure and management.

"Having this financial educator's certification will help people to acquire the required knowledge and have it disseminated at the lower levels where they are savings, loans and investment can be operated through informed decision making," he said.

He also stressed that it was imperative for basic financial education to be incorporated in the lower levels of education from primary levels to secondary level.

"Although we count this as a milestone, but I would say this has come a bit late because this knowledge should have been provided as a basic knowledge in primary and secondary education where people could at least have the basic understanding about finance in savings and investment. The lack of basic knowledge explains why people with lots of money stored in banks only know about expenditure on investment opportunities rather than expound on the potential opportunities that are readily available," said Mtweve.

Dr Mzuri Issa, director of Tanzania Media Women's Association in Zanzibar (TAMWA-Zanzibar) said the curriculum will help address women's limited financial knowledge hence paving a way for to reap profits in the market economy.

"With the curriculum rolled out, this means that women with limited financial knowledge will be able to gain more knowledge and therefore profitably engage in market economy as it will add support to organizations engaged in economic empowerment of women thus spearheading women empowerment endeavour," she said.

Alexander Njombe, Partner & Country Leader of Klynveld Peat Marwick Goerdeler (KPMG) said the curriculum comes at a great time where women empowerment is also a key focus citing that the knowledge given will help women better to understand better the keys to financial success and allow women to engage in opportunities which will pivot their rise to bigger numbers since, they will be equipped to keep proper financial books, properly use loans and run businesses.

Njombe also pointed out that financial illiteracy as one among the key reasons behind the failure of most businesses that kick off in the first year and those that survive but collapse in third year of operations, insisting that the knowledge provision will help effectively address this challenge.

Hard choices: High prices ruin Christmas for common people

LAGOS

THE boom that usually characterised yuletide related products and services was sharply absent in most markets as unprecedented low sales caused by decline in purchasing power of consumers dented the hopes of many traders.

Prices of goods and services have been rising sharply and steadily since June following the commencement of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu administration with thunderbolt reforms, namely removal of fuel subsidy and unification of the official exchange market, leading to sharp increases in pump price of petrol and depreciation of the naira.

Reflecting the upward trend in prices, the headline inflation rate rose to 28.2 per cent in November, the highest since 2005. In response to the sharp decline in purchasing power triggered by this trend, Vanguard investigations showed that consumers could not afford most of the food and gift items needed to celebrate the yuletide season, a development that translated to unprecedented low sales for traders dealing in

these items.

The items include rice, gift hampers, cooking oil, seasoning, fish and meat.

Financial Vanguard investigations also revealed that patronage was marked by shift to cheaper brands and reduction in volumes even as consumers avoided non-essential items like Christmas lighting and decorations.

Checks revealed that the average price of 50kg of local rice stood at N65,000 as at December 21, 2023.

This indicated over 50 per cent price increase compared to the previous year. The imported brands also recorded significant price increases.

For instance, American Delta, a foreign long grain rice that sold for N46,000 last year now sells for N80,000.

Another foreign brand, Vitali that sold for less than N50,000 in 2022, now sells for N75,000 and more depending on the dealer. The same thing goes for other foreign brands like Thailand Rice.

Though dealers said that there has been no noticeable change in the level of patronage, they told Vanguard that some of their customers, especially associations and



Nigerian Naira.

business owners, that usually buy in bulk for the end of year gift, have now reduced both the quantity and the sizes they buy.

They said that these categories of customers that hitherto bought 50kg now prefer to buy 25kg instead, while those that bought foreign brands in the past now buy local brands. They also said that other customers have settled for short grains, which are relatively cheaper compared to both imported and local long grains.

A distributor at the popular

Daleko Rice Market in Mushin, Lagos, Madam Memunat, said that some unions that usually buy the product in bulk from her during this season, have reduced the quantity they buy.

Her words, "When I asked the leaders of one of the associations that buy from me why they reduced their orders to just 35 bags this year, they complained of the high cost; they said that their budget cannot cover what they usually buy."

"They also said that they

disallowed people from booking more than one bag because of the money they have at the time."

Another dealer, Anastasia Anachusi, however, gave a slightly different account of the situation.

She stated: "People that have one event or the other and some that are travelling are buying. Nothing seems to have changed except that many people now buy local rice, and 25 kg rather than 50kg. Some others buy short grains because they are

cheaper.

"As for foreign rice, we do not buy them and stock again except if someone pre-orders it. They are quite expensive and that is why many people have shifted to local rice and short grains to cut costs."

A buyer that simply identified herself as Ndidi, who also spoke with Vanguard while our correspondent was on visit to one of the markets, lamented the increase especially within a very short notice.

"In fact, I don't know how we are going to cope in the country next year with the way things are now. Early this month, I priced rice because I wanted to buy it for our association.

"I was told that the Pretty Lady and the African Queen which we were considering buying were N46,000 and N47,000 respectively. But now as we speak today, (December 19th), just two weeks in between, the price of Pretty Lady has gone up to N59,000, while that of African Queen has now gone up to N60,000 and with much pleading.

"I am not even talking about foreign rice because we stopped buying foreign rice for our members two years ago due to the high cost even

though we would have preferred to buy foreign brands," she lamented.

Hampers gather dust Vanguard findings on patronage of gift hampers by shoppers show that more people focus more on purchasing staple foods rather than buying complimentary items like hampers.

Consequently, many hampers are seen gathering dust in major supermarket stands and open markets.

Vanguard also noticed that smaller sized hampers are predominant as one of the supermarket attendants said the big ones are too expensive considering the items they contain.

She also said that they have resorted to putting only basic and cheaper items unlike previous years when premium products go into the hampers.

The measure, according to her, is to make the hampers a little affordable. A visit to Twin Faja Supermarket, along LASU-Iba Road shows that a large size hamper without wine containing items like a carton of Indomie Noodles, a pack of cornflakes, one cabin biscuit, one 4kg custard, as well as other sundry item goes for N25,000.

Akagera park looks to generate Rwf3 billion annually by 2025

KIGALI

RWANDA'S Akagera National Park says it expects to break even in 2025, generating at least Rwf3 billion every year.

The projection, the park's management said, follows tangible signs of increased revenues that will enable the park management to balance its annual costs of operations and revenues.

Just recently the park, which is also the largest in the country, introduced new products and also registered an increase in the big five—namely—elephants, rhinos, lions, leopards, and buffaloes—and other vast varieties of wildlife.

In 2010, Rwanda and African Parks entered into a 20-year Public Private Partnership (PPP) forming the Akagera Management Company (AMC). The company is in charge of managing the park activities through biodiversity conservation, community development, and park revenue generation activities.

With only seven years to the end of the management contract, which could be extended, the park's net revenue from 2010 revenues has grown from \$203,000 to \$3.7 million in 2022.

According to the park management, despite COVID-19's toll on the safari industry during the pandemic, revenues started picking up in 2023 (with over \$4.5 million expected this year), and projected revenues are expected to stay on the increase.

As it stands, core operation costs (core opex) have increased from \$1.5 million to \$3 million in the same period, and they are expected to break even in 2025 according to the park's financials which show projections of a drop in the opex to \$3 million as the revenues shoot high.

"All revenue generated from tour-



ism goes into Akagera's running costs, reducing reliance on donor funding and simultaneously making the park more financially self-sustaining," the park management said.

According to Jean-Paul Karinganire, the AMC Deputy Tourism and Marketing Manager, there is hope that the expenses will be equal to the revenues by 2024.

"We shall start making profits by 2025 according to the plan," Karinganire said.

Karinganire attributed the development to the fact that offerings continue to increase at the wildlife haven.

He pointed out that the park continues to diversify its revenue streams from enterprises such as fisheries, and other revenue streams like coffee and gift shops, safari boat rides, air balloon flights, and high-

end eco-friendly campsites and lodges among others.

For context, he said, tourists visiting the park have more than doubled from over 15,000 (2010) to 41,000 (2022) with locals making up 45 percent and this year visitors are expected to reach over 50,000.

"If we keep these at the same momentum, there is a chance to break even," Karinganire stated.

This increase in park incomes and conservation tourism activities has overflowed to communities and attracted new hospitality businesses (four hotels) to open outside the park which covers Kayonza, Gatsibo, and Nyagatare districts.

Antonie Ahishakiye, the Manager of Akagera Transit Lodge which is two kilometers away from the park's main entrance says that the more tourists increase the more income

comes in to sustain the business.

"We opened two years ago and if there was no business here, we would have closed shop or moved out of the sector but the more visitors, the more income we earn," Ahishakiye said.

For Frank Muzungu, the Managing Director of Kigali Car Rentals and Tours, a local tour operating company, there has been an increased appetite for domestic tourism, which industry players are leveraging.

"With many players joining a well-streamlined sector and the investment that the government has put in, we have seen many tourists come into the country along with increased appetite for domestic tourism, the sector's future is bright," he said in an interview.

In 2022, Akagera National Park had several months as the best-per-

forming months in its history since African Parks took over management in 2010, and this has led to the best-performing year overall, with total revenue of \$3.75 million—far exceeding projections for the year by 132 percent.

Jean Paul Karinganire, Akagera National Park's Assistant Tourism and Marketing Manager, told the local outlet that the estimated revenue of 2022 was \$1.9 million.

The average spend per person was \$107, he said, which again exceeded targets.

The annual report of 2022 stated that Akagera National Park received 34,537 paying visitors of whom 43% are Rwanda nationals, showing that the park enjoys excellent support from the country.

Akagera National Park tourism revenue accrual after easing travel-

ling restrictions as the Covid-19 pandemic situation was calm from March 2022, Karinganire said.

"Overall the Covid-19 situation was calm from March which allowed travel at the normal rate as per before the pandemic and this increased the number of tourists. Diversity of income in the park including lodges, park leisure activities and fisheries along with concession fees," he said.

The number of visitors to the park continued to swell since African Parks, a non-profit conservation organization currently managing 22 national parks and protected areas in 12 African countries, took over its management in 2010. In Rwanda, African Parks also manages Nyungwe National Park.

In February 2021, a 68 per cent decrease in visitors in Akagera National Park had a negative impact.

Following lion and rhino re-introductions, Akagera officially became a "Big Five" park in 2017.

It now boasts a thriving population of lions, leopards, elephants, rhinos, and buffaloes, as well as zebras, giraffes and hundreds of bird species.

The wildlife population flourished with over 11,000 large mammals counted in a 2021 aerial survey, including 133 elephants (a 20 percent increase since the 2019), and nearly 4,000 buffaloes.

The lion population is more than 50 now.

Pre-Covid-19, Akagera was 80 percent self-financing, and despite a reduction in visitors due to Covid-19, tourism contributed 47 percent towards the park's operating costs in 2021. In 2022, tourism contributed 95 percent of the total park's operating cost.

In February 2022, the International Finance Corporation (IFC) signed a \$3.7 million (Rwf3.8bn) loan agreement with 3B Group of Hotels to support its construction of a 30-room mid-market safari camp in Akagera National Park.

Since 2010 African Parks and the government of Rwanda agreed to jointly manage the Park—for an initial term of 20 years, with an option for renewal.



An employee works at a smart production facility in Tianjin

China eases curbs on tech exports

TIANJIN

CHINA has released the most recent catalog of technologies that are restricted or barred from export on Thursday, removing 34 items from the list and adding four new items, as it pushes ahead with efforts to promote international economic and technological cooperation, said the Ministry of Commerce.

The latest catalog, which was jointly revised and issued by the MOC and the Ministry of Science and Technology, has brought down the number of technical items from 164 to 134, with 24 prohibited items and 110 restricted ones.

Noting the revision is a concrete measure in adapting to the changing landscape of technological development and improving technology trade management, the MOC said in a statement that the step will help maintain national economic security and devel-

opment interests while creating favorable conditions to deepen international economic and technological cooperation.

As many as six previously prohibited items involved in plant growth regulators have been removed from the catalog this time, along with 28 formerly limited items related to manufacturing technology for medical equipment used in diagnostics, and technology for feature extraction recognition, said an official with its department of trade in services.

Meanwhile, one newly added prohibited technology item pertains to human cell cloning and gene editing techniques. Additionally, the list updated three restricted technologies related to crop hybrid advantage utilization, bulk material handling technology and laser radar systems, the official said.

China has always upheld the belief that openness is the key to promoting re-

form and development. The country is facilitating the orderly cross-border flow of elements like technology and integrating into the global innovation network in a proactive manner, the official said.

China is committed to fostering open cooperation, improving the business environment and sharing its technological achievements with the world, so as to make positive contributions to global economic growth and human wellbeing, the official said.

Developed countries regularly revise their national lists in this category to align with the evolving landscape of technological innovation. China has progressively enhanced its grasp of the comprehensive national security framework, said Bai Ming, a researcher at the Chinese Academy of International Trade and Economic Cooperation.

With substantial progress in numerous technological

areas, Bai said the rationale for continuing to ban or limit certain technologies is diminishing. Prompted by the emergence of new technologies, there is a growing necessity to update the pertinent catalogs to meet the objective requirements of the changing scenario.

The measures aim to promote relevant systems that are more conducive to regulating and expanding the import and export of technology, moving toward the establishment of a more open, convenient and transparent technology trade management system, he said.

The catalog had undergone two major revisions in 2008 and 2020. The recent revision of the Export Control List has benefited from extensive feedback and input from the government departments concerned, industry associations, academic institutions and the general public, the MOC said.

CURRENT NEWS

Underwriters cut vehicle insurance losses by 23pc



NAIROBI

General insurers' underwriting losses from private and commercial vehicles dropped by 22.9 percent to Sh2.42 billion in the half year ended June, underlining the gains from the stringent approval and increased pricing measures adopted by the industry.

The latest industry data from the Insurance Regulatory Authority (IRA) shows the underwriting losses improved from the Sh3.14 billion loss that had been posted in the half year ended June 2022, largely helped by reduced losses in insuring private vehicles.

Insurers cut the underwriting losses in motor private insurance by 42 percent from Sh2.44 billion to Sh1.4 billion. The losses in motor commercial however increased by 44 percent from Sh700 million to Sh1 billion.

Motor vehicle insurance is the second largest class of general insurance and made up 27.5 percent of the gross written premiums during the review period after medical insurance (35.9 percent). The two classes therefore heavily influence the underwriting

results for insurers.

Claims paid to motor private customers rose by 3.2 percent to Sh8.96 billion in the period premiums collected rose by 12.6 percent to Sh14.68 billion. Payments to commercial vehicle claim shot up by 23 percent to Sh8.96 billion as premiums increased by 9.9 percent to Sh14.2 billion.

The improved motor vehicle underwriting results were despite many insurers having seen an increase in the value of claims paid, partly on the increased price of spare parts and imported medicine as the shilling continued to shed value against the dollar.

The shilling had shed 13.9 percent of its value in the first six months of the year and has extended the year-to-date devaluation to 25.1 percent against the dollar as at the start of Thursday, making imports such as car parts more expensive.

Many insurers have been aggressive in revising premiums upwards to reflect the level of risk in the market and also dropping comprehensive covers for some models of vehicles deemed too risky.

There have also been insurers adopting telemat-

ics-in-car monitoring devices—to adjust premium rates based on policyholders' mileage and driving habits.

APA Insurance Company in November last year announced that it had black-listed 28 models of Toyota, Honda, Maruti, Mazda, Nissan and Suzuki cars, barring their owners from accessing comprehensive covers over rampant misuse of the vehicles.

GA Insurance in the same period also stopped issuing comprehensive covers for Toyota Probox, Toyota Succeed, Toyota Sienta, Toyota Passo, Toyota Porte and all Suzuki models valued at less than Sh1 million.

APA had the highest market share (76.3 percent) in motor private followed by GA (7.3 percent).

In the motor commercial, APA and GA had the second and third largest market shares at 7.81 percent and 7.38 percent respectively.

Occidental Insurance in 2019 dropped 25 car models citing their "rare and obsolete" car parts, which were expensive or unavailable.

In April it was reported that general underwriters trimmed their losses 41.3 percent in 2022 to Sh3.7 billion from a wider loss of Sh6.3 billion the year before.

New data from the Insurance Regulatory Authority (IRA) shows the marine and transit class marked the largest improvement in operations, returning a profit of Sh545.1 million in the year from a loss of Sh99.3 million previously.

Host of deals to revup global use of battery swapping tech

By Guardian Reporter

THE development and operation of Epanko Graphite project located in Ulanga District in Morogoro Region, is on the cards following the completion of the site tour by the Special Presidential Negotiating Team (SPNT).

The statement issued by Australia Securities Exchange (ASX) listed EcoGraf's managing director Andrew Spinks recently said the tour was part of finalizing the Framework Agreement for the development and operation.

The site visit follows the government registration of Duma TanzGraphite Limited, as the new Tanzanian mining entity that will develop and operate Epanko project.

"Company representative were pleased to host the visit and present the Epanko development and planned expansion cases to the government of Tanzania," Spinks said a statement.

"The site visit assisted the Special Presidential Negotiating Team in completion the approval processes to enable signing of the Framework Agreement."

The EcoGraf interim financial report for the half year ended in December 2022 shows the loss after income tax incurred by the consolidated entity \$3,778,000 compared with a loss of \$2,721,000 during similar period in 2021.

No dividends were therefore declared or paid during the six months ended 31 December 2022.

"EcoGraf advanced the company's natural flake graphite business, that is focused on the long-life, high quality Epanko, with positive progress on the Framework Agreement in support of the debt financing program



Nio showcases battery-swapping models at the Guangzhou auto show last month.

for the initial Stage 1 - 60,000tpa development," the report says.

"Negotiations with the Tanzanian Special Presidential Government Negotiating Team in relation to the Framework Agreement for the development and operation of Epanko have concluded."

The government of Tanzania is currently completing its approval processes to enable signing of the Framework Agreement, it says.

"This is an important step that will support the financing and development of the Project," the report

noted.

"Under President Samia Suluhu Hassan, Tanzania is continuing to implement changes to encourage new foreign investment across its minerals sector and EcoGraf looks forward to partnering with the government on the development of the world-class Epanko project."

EcoGraf reports that has received interest from a range of financial institutions, encouraged by the extensive level of project studies and de-risking undertaken by the company, the Equator Principles envi-

ronmental and social planning, the significantly improved investment environment in Tanzania and the positive outlook for graphite demand and pricing.

The project team is being expanded with the recruitment of key personnel and multiple work streams are in progress to support development planning covering environmental and social management, site services and infrastructure, process plant engineering, project delivery and operational readiness.

Chrisjan Van Wyk has therefore

been appointed to lead the development of Epanko and has over 20 years of project execution experience, either leading the owner's team or as the EPCM project manager, most recently as the project director for the A\$700 million Khomacau Copper project in Botswana.

John Hearne has been recruited as manager - technical to lead geology, mining and metallurgical functions at EcoGraf.

Also, meetings have recently been held with Tanzania Electric Supply Company (TANESCO), Tan-

zania-Zambia Railway Authority (TAZARA) and Tanzania National Roads Agency (TANROADS) in relation to planned infrastructure developments.

This will include upgrades to an 80km section of road, replacement of multiple bridges and a 4-lane paved section of highway that is expected to be completed during 2023, supporting construction and operational logistics at Epanko.

It will also involve investment by TANESCO in power generation and transmission, including the Julius Nyerere Hydropower Station (2 GW to be completed by 2024) and the planned extension of the 220kV transmission network to Mahenge (7km from the Epanko site).

An addition investment in rail and road infrastructure into the port of Dar es Salaam to expand capacity and improve efficiency will also be implemented.

Access to grid power via TANESCO will provide Epanko with cost competitive, clean energy, as hydroelectric power comprises approximately 45 percent of Tanzania's energy supply and is forecast to increase in the future as part of broader government investment in hydro, solar, wind and biomass renewable energy generation, the report says.

Independent Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) studies conducted for EcoGraf confirm electricity accounts for 45-55 percent of CO2 emissions associated with its battery anode material products and Tanzanian grid power will deliver a significant competitive advantage as electric vehicle OEMs seek more sustainable supply chains.

An independent review has been undertaken of the Epanko Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) and Relocation Action Plan (RAP) to ensure Epanko continues to satisfy leading Equator Principles environmental and social development standards.

The Company has commenced implementation of the recommendations from the review through a number of work streams that will update the ESIA and RAP arrangements.

Tax fraud: RRA exposes plot to undervalue goods

KIGALI

Some traders are forging documents to record goods at a lower value compared to their actual prices as an attempt to pay less tax, the Rwanda Revenue Authority (RRA) Commissioner General, Pascal Bizimana Ruganintwari, has exposed.

He added that some of RRA's customs officers might be implicated in the process as they clear such goods that are obviously undervalued.

Ruganintwari disclosed this during the Taxpayers Appreciation Day held in Kigali on Friday.

"There are traders who are forging customs documents by reducing the number or types of goods, especially aiming not to pay taxes adequately at customs," he said.

"We want that judicial organs consider the issue so that such people be punished to stamp it out because it hinders taxation," he said.

Gregoire Shema Hakizimana, a businessman who sells mobile telephones, said that there is an issue where traders buy products from the same factory at the same price, but they sell them at different prices on the local market.

"The reason for that is that they do not pay the same tax," he said, pointing out that such a gap must be addressed to ensure fair treatment of all traders.

Reacting on the query, Ruganintwari said that it is due to some traders who undervalue goods they import through counterfeiting documents so that they pay less tax.

After learning about the issue, RRA took measures, including suspending employees linked to such fraudulent acts "because we do not understand how an employee can find goods whose

value is reduced in documents while it is obvious that the cargo is more than that, and let it be cleared."

Some traders are afraid because they maybe have forged documents, and they feared to take their goods out of customs warehouses.

"Others, at the advice of declarants, refused to get them (their goods) out (of warehouses) so that we first do them a favour for their goods to be let in without checking," he said.

Ruganintwari pointed out that it is possible that some customs officers are not assuming their responsibilities as it should, and RRA is probing the issue. So far, RRA has suspended four employees because it realised that their customs work was dubious, he exposed.

Elaborating on the issue that same goods are sold at different prices on the market, he said that undervaluation of goods before entering the country might be one of the factors for that.

He indicated that when traders have deflated the value of invoices for goods issued from the countries where they purchased them, it becomes difficult for them to sell them at expected prices as they do not give invoices [to buyers]. As a result, they might sell them at lower prices since they did not pay due tax.

On the other hand, forty outstanding taxpayers of the 2022/2023 fiscal year have been awarded by the government, through Rwanda Revenue Authority (RRA), during the 21st Taxpayers Appreciation Day ceremony held in Kigali.

It was in line with the 2023 Taxpayer Appreciation Month organised under the theme "Request for EBM Receipt to

Build Rwanda." During the celebration, RRA Commissioner General Pascal Bizimana Ruganintwari said that the use of Electronic Billing Machine (EBM) technology yielded good results.

"For instance, value-added tax (VAT) almost tripled compared to the last five years as it rose from Rwf259.1 billion to Rwf649.8 billion," he said adding that VAT taxpayers increased fourfold.

"This also contributed to Corporate Income Tax as it increased by more than five times from more than Rwf45.7 billion to Rwf259.2 billion," he said.

Though progress was achieved in line with taxation in the country, he said, there are still gaps in the use of EBM because some taxpayers do not use them, as well as undervaluation of goods in some cases, which hinder tax collection.

He indicated that such issues must be tackled, adding that RRA will continue to integrate technology in service delivery to further facilitate taxpayers, and make tax collection more efficient.

Speaking at the event, Prime Minister Edouard Ngirente appreciated taxpayers who performed well in meeting tax obligations and urged all Rwandan residents "to make EBM use a culture," and contribute to the development of the country through effective tax payment.

"In line with tax payment vision, we also want to provide greater rewards to those (consumers) who request EBM [invoice] and present it," he said, adding that both the trader and consumer must make EBM use a responsibility.

He said that if every person who must pay tax does it, and EBM compliance is ensured, it



Rwanda Revenue Authority (RRA) Commissioner General, Pascal Bizimana Ruganintwari

would be easy to achieve - and even surpass - the target for fiscal year 2023/2024 to generate tax revenues enough to fund 52 per cent of the more than Rwf5 trillion national budget.

At Provincial level, Overall Best Taxpayer 2022 Northern Province went to Gorilla Nest Lodge & Golf Resort (also known as One&Only), Nshili Kivu Tea Factory outperformed other taxpayers in Southern Province, Pfunda Tea Company did the same in Western Province, while Manebu Industries excelled in Eastern Province.

Jean Bosco Nkundunkundiye scooped Overall Best Taxpayer 2022 Local Government Taxes. Five entities were awarded in

this category. They are namely MTN Rwandacell, Mota-Engil, IHS Rwanda, CIMERWA, and I&M Bank (Rwanda).

Also referred to as growing taxpayers' category, its awardees are Prime Cement, Kasese Distillers & Distributors, Africa Lubricant Manufacturing Co., and Shema Power Lake Kivu.

Winners in this category are COFATOLE, a company that manufactures of steel construction materials, Thousand Hills Africa, Imizi Eco-tourism Development, and Construck.

Three people were appreciated for their outstanding performance in this category. They are Augustin Byukusenge, Anastase Nizeyimana, and Belinda

Karenzi.

Joram Mugwaneza, Ruth Mukantabana, and Jobanputra Ramnik Shakuntala were awarded as best taxpayers in local government taxes Equinox Mining, FG Investment (R), and Simbi Coffee Investment were the winners in export-related tax compliance.

In this category, Bakhresa Grain Milling (Rwanda) - also known as Azam - outclassed other taxpayers.

In special categories, DUHAMIL-ADRI was the best local non-governmental organisation (NGO) taxpayer, while the International NGO award went to Partners in Health.

The manufacturing sector best taxpayer award went to Master Steel, while University of Global Health Equity, performed well in voluntary disclosure.

According to the International Monetary Fund, voluntary disclosure allows taxpayers to comply with the tax laws and "come clean" about past tax-law infringements.

Skol Brewery, Inyange Industries, and Radiant Insurance Company, were recognised for their compliance with EBM use.

This recognition was given to Rwanda Wood Value Chain Association, ADARWA Association, and APARWA Association, whose work seeks to promote carpentry in Rwanda.

Jean Claude Mwizerwa was awarded as the best consumer for requesting EBM receipts for his purchases.

Mwizerwa said that he was encouraged to do that the main resource that the country has is its people, as well as accountability in the country's development.

"You can have a major impact in the development of your country through requesting EBM receipts," citing funding security, and infrastructure.

Meanwhile, Kepler College was announced the winner of RRA student debate on taxation, 2023.

WORLD

DR Congo awaits preliminary election results amid tensions

KINSHASA

VOTE counting continues in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) after episodes of irregularity reported in the general elections held on Dec 20.

As the country awaits the announcement of the first preliminary results later the day amid visible tensions, Moïse Katumbi, one of the main opposition candidates in the presidential race, has said on Saturday that the elections on Dec 20 should be "annulled" because of "massive fraud".

Episodes of irregularity

Some 44 million voters in the DRC go to the polls Wednesday to elect a new president, members of the National Assembly and Provincial Assemblies, as well as municipal councilors, with delays in deployment of voting materials and reports of sporadic violence at some polling stations.

The Independent National Electoral Commission (CENI), the electoral body, extended the polling till Dec 21, admitting that some polling stations failed to open due to logistics problems that led to the massive polling delay across the country.

According to local media, polling still continued on Sunday in some parts of country where polling stations suffered from major delay of voting materials.

"Faced with this unacceptable situation, we call for the immediate annul-

ment of these chaotic elections, marred by massive fraud as documented by all stakeholders," read a statement by Katumbi, a major challenger to the outgoing President Félix Tshisekedi, who is seeking reelection.

According to preliminary results announced late Friday by CENI, Tshisekedi leads in diaspora vote tallies in South Africa, Belgium, Canada, the United States and France, with Katumbi standing in the second place in general.

Other presidential candidates also contested the episodes of irregularity during the voting process, as the extension of polling goes against the electoral law and the Constitution.

The "irregularities sufficiently attest that on Dec. 20, 2023, it was a sham election, organized in violation of the fundamental right of the Congolese people", according to a statement of five presidential candidates on Saturday, including Martin Fayulu, Denis Mukwege, two main challengers in the race.

Full provisional election results are expected on Dec 31, as CENI would publish daily updates starting on Sunday.

Visible tensions

Visible tensions are running high since the beginning of the polling on Dec 20, like the previous ones. In 2018, Tshisekedi came to the power by winning the 2018 election, marking the country's "first peaceful transfer of power"



Voters queue outside a polling station during the presidential elections in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo, Dec 20, 2023. AP

since independence from Belgium, according to the United Nations.

The five presidential candidates announced on Saturday to launch a massive demonstration in Kinshasa, the capital of DRC, on Dec 27 to denounce the irregularities in the electoral process. The demonstration would start from the Triumphal boulevard, right to the headquarters of CENI, downtown of Kinshasa.

On Saturday, 13 embassies in Kinshasa released a joint statement calling for restraint.

"We call on all stakeholders, in particular political actors, candidates and their supporters, to continue to exercise restraint, allow time for the process to continue and to assert their challenges peacefully, in accordance with the laws and the Constitution", read the statement.

A Belgian IT expert, deployed by the European Union to support the elections, fell from the 12th floor of his hotel and died late Saturday. According to local media, investigation has been opened into the incident.

Unrest reignited

The eastern part of the country, long-plagued by conflicts and rebel attacks for decades, has seen unrest reignited as the country is currently going through major political transition.

On Dec 21, the day after the general elections, fighting resumed between the government military and rebels the March 23 Movement (M23) in the Masisi territory of the North Kivu province.

The rebel group, who resurfaced in late 2021, has triggered conflicts and major humanitarian

crisis and seized major strongholds on the Congolese soil.

On Dec 15, several days before the polling, Corneille Nangaa, a Congolese opposition figure in exile, formed a political-military alliance "Alliance Fleuve Congo" (AFC), with M23 rebels and other armed groups in order to "save the country".

On Saturday, RED-Tabara, a rebel group based in eastern DRC, has claimed responsibility for an attack that left 20 dead late Friday night in a Burundi's border town with DRC. RED-Tabara has been battling Burundi's government since 2015.

Several regions in the eastern part of the DRC, still occupied by the rebels, are excluded from holding the elections due to a lack of voter registration.

Tshisekedi and leading opposition candidates, including Martin Fayulu, Moïse Katumbi, and Dennis Mukwege, have all campaigned in the east, promising a respite from the violence.

The restive North Kivu province also witnessed a further deterioration in the security situation, with rising regional tensions between the DRC and Rwanda, which increases the risk of direct military confrontation that could involve Burundi.

The DRC has the largest number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) on the African continent. Years of violence and insecurity have driven 5.7 million people from their homes, and in Ituri and North Kivu provinces, violence has increased recently, including against civilians living in displacement sites, according to the United Nations.

Agencies

We recall noble teachings of Lord Christ: PM Modi extends greetings on Christmas

NEW DELHI



PRIME Minister Narendra Modi yesterday extended his greetings to the people of the country on the occasion of Christmas while wishing for peace and prosperity for all. He also recalled the noble teachings of Jesus Christ.

"Wishing everyone a Merry Christmas! May this festive season bring joy, peace and prosperity to all. Let's celebrate the spirit of harmony and compassion that Christmas symbolises and work towards a world where everyone is happy and healthy. We also recall the noble teachings of Lord Christ," PM Modi said in a message on his official social media account.

People across the country celebrated Christmas eve with mass midnight prayers taking place in different states. The churches were lit up and people even burst firecrackers in Madhya Pradesh to celebrate the winter festival.

Midnight mass prayers were held at Sacred Heart Cathedral Catholic Church in Delhi on the occasion of Christmas. Prayers were also held at St. Francis Xavier's Cathedral in Bengaluru.

Christmas is an annual festival celebrating the birth of Jesus Christ, observed by billions of people worldwide on December 25 as a religious and cultural event.

Carol singing, dazzling Christmas lights, and decked-out Christmas trees entice folks to join in the celebrations yesterday.

ANI

Russia notifies IAEA about sufficient staff at Zaporozhye nuclear plant

MOSCOW

THE Russian Permanent Mission to the International Organizations in Vienna informed the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) that there is sufficient personnel at the Zaporozhye Nuclear Power Plant (ZNPP) to ensure its safe operation.

"There's enough employees at the ZNPP to carry out its safe operation in the cold and hot shutdown modes, and for scheduled maintenance," the Russian mission said.

Recruitment of personnel continues, the mission noted. IAEA was also notified that the radiation background at the site and in the area of its location is not above the standard value.

Agencies

Japan forecasts elderly majority in 25 prefectures by 2050

TOKYO

THE elderly population, those aged 65 and above, is expected to make up over 40 percent of the residents by 2050 in 25 out of 47 prefectures across Japan, as per local institute's latest projections.

Akita prefecture is anticipated to have the highest concentration of senior citizens, with nearly half of its population, 49.9 percent, falling into this age bracket, according to data from Japan's National Institute of Population and Social Security Research.

The population outlook for 2050, which excludes Tokyo, indicates a downward trend for all other prefectures from 2020, highlighting the ongoing shift towards a more centralized population in the capital city.

These estimates, which are based on the 2020 census data, provide a detailed demographic trajectory for each prefecture, city, ward, town, and village over 30 years, with five-year intervals.

Japan's total population is predicted to stand at 104,686,000 in 2050, a 17-percent reduction from the 2020 figure. This decline is less severe than the previous forecast from 2018, attributed to an expected rise in the non-Japanese population.

Nevertheless, from 2020 to 2050, all prefectures except Tokyo are expected to see a population decline. Even within Tokyo, a decrease is predicted for the periods 2040-2045 and 2045-2050.

Eleven prefectures are forecast to experience a population drop of 30 percent or more from 2020 to 2050. Akita is expected to face the most drastic reduction at 41.6 percent, followed by Aomori prefecture with a 39 percent decrease, and Iwate prefecture with a 35.3 percent decline, as per the institute's analysis.

In 2050, 25 prefectures, including Akita, are expected to have a population where those aged 65 or older exceed 40 percent. Tokyo is set to have the lowest proportion at 29.6 percent.

Agencies

G20 stands out as India's diplomatic achievement of year

NEW DELHI

AS the year comes to an end, one can befittingly say that 2023 turned out to be a lucky star for Indian diplomacy with the G20 standing out as the country's diplomatic achievement of the year.

Through its G20 presidency, India was able to get the most influential, powerful, and consequential countries of the world to gather around the table and discuss, agree on some of the most pressing issues concerning the world today.

As External Affairs Minister (EAM) S Jaishankar rightfully said, the G20 is like the World Cup of diplomacy, where the biggest and strongest players come together.

"When we took the presidency, people did not have many expectations out of it. Through our G20, we bridged all the divides, found a common ground for countries which were otherwise arguing among themselves, who found it very difficult to reconcile. But, we were able to bridge it," the EAM said in his address at the Rotary Institute 2023 event in Bengaluru on December 17.

India assumed the G20 Presiden-

cy on December 1, 2022.

The 18th G20 Leaders' Summit was held in New Delhi on September 9 and 10. It saw the unanimous adoption of the G20 New Delhi Leaders' Declaration, which demonstrated the commitment of the G20 leaders to address global challenges in an inclusive, decisive and action-oriented manner.

The biggest takeaway of the declaration was that all 83 paras of the declaration were passed unanimously with a 100 per cent consensus along with China and Russia in agreement. For the first time, the declaration contained no footnote or Chair's Summary.

Also, the declaration being the most ambitious, contained 112 outcomes – both the outcomes and annexed documents – which is two-and-a-half times more than any other.

PM Modi congratulated the Sherpas and ministers who had worked towards forging the consensus.

"I have received good news. Due to the hard work of our team, consensus has been built on New Delhi G20 Leaders' Summit Declaration. My proposal is to adopt this leadership



declaration. I announce to adopt this declaration. On this occasion, I congratulate my Sherpa, ministers, who worked hard for it and made it possible," the PM had said.

Another big takeaway of the declaration was the launch of the Global Biofuels Alliance.

PM Modi said that it marks a watershed moment in India's quest towards sustainability and clean energy.

"The launch of the Global Biofuels Alliance marks a watershed moment

in our quest towards sustainability and clean energy. I thank the member nations who have joined this Alliance," PM Modi wrote on X.

PM Modi launched the Global Biofuels Alliance in the presence of US President Joe Biden, President of Brazil Luiz Inacio, President of Argentina, Alberto Fernandez and Prime Minister of Italy Giorgia Meloni.

The Global Biofuel Alliance was one of the priorities under India's G20 Presidency.

Leading biofuel producers and consumers, Brazil, India, and the United States, are now working towards the development of a Global Biofuels Alliance along with other interested countries.

The Alliance is aimed at facilitating cooperation and intensifying the use of sustainable biofuels, including in the transportation sector. It places emphasis on strengthening markets, facilitating global biofuels trade, developing concrete policy lesson-sharing and providing technical support for national biofuels programs worldwide.

It emphasizes the already implemented best practices and success cases.

Another major takeaway was the launch of a mega India-Middle East-Europe shipping and railway connectivity corridor by India, the US, Saudi Arabia and the European Union.

The India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEE EC) will encourage and provide impetus to economic development through enhanced connectivity and economic integration between Asia, West Asia/Middle East and Europe. ANI

Made-in-China stuffed bears spread joy of Christmas overseas

XI'AN

DURING the Christmas season, Care Bears dressed in Santa Claus hats and other decorations, an adorable plush toy favored by kids, can be easily found on the shelves of shopping malls in the United States.

Care Bears are multicolored bears that were used on greeting cards and later turned into plush bears.

Before these stuffed animals reached their destination, they had been produced in the hinterland of the Qinling Mountains in China and journeyed for almost a month across the ocean.

In the birthplace of toys, Ankang Heng'an Toy Ltd., in the city of Ankang in northwest China's Shaanxi Province, Huang Longhua threaded a needle deftly and sewed the back

of a stuffed bear in just one minute.

"I have been working here for four years. Every day I can sew more than 400 toys and earn 150 yuan (about 21 U.S. dollars)," said the 43-year-old worker, who used to be a stay-at-home mom.

Company manager Min Hua said the production of a Care Bear involves nearly 20 workers covering eight procedures. After applying textile printing on piece goods, workers would add embroidery. Then, they use machines to cut patterns, stitch them by following the given sketch, and stuff them.

"In particular, we stuff toys with polypropylene cotton, a kind of fluffy and springy material that is made from recycled materials," added Min. After that, workers sew every edge close before the inspec-



Staff members of Ankang Heng'an Toy Ltd., work at a workshop in Ankang, northwest China's Shaanxi Province, Dec. 21, 2023. Xinhua

tion and packaging processes.

Founded in 2018, the company continues to expand its export business of soft toys in North America

and Europe. It produces over 10 million Care Bears each year. Last year, its exports reached 180 million yuan.

"Orders once dropped during the pandemic, but market demand quickly recovered and we began to prepare for the Christmas season six months ago," said Min.

She also noted the toy factory is highly labor-hungry, and that was why the company chose to settle down in Ankang, where labor and land costs were relatively low.

To ensure quick delivery, in 2020, the local government and Shanghai International Port (Group) Co., Ltd. (SIPG) co-founded a logistics company named Ankang SIPG, ensuring multimodal transport at a lower cost.

"Some of the bears can take trains to central China's Wuhan, and then reach Shanghai by waterway before heading to the U.S. by sea. Those with tighter schedules can ride on

trucks to Shanghai and then to the U.S. by ship, a whole trip of less than a month. To reach the European market, China-Europe freight train services are a good choice," said Li Wanhua, deputy director of the office of Ankang's plush toy industry leading group.

The toy companies are the epitome of the flourishing plush toy industry in Ankang, which boasts 788 enterprises in this industry, creating more than 19,000 jobs, with an annual output totaling over 5.8 billion yuan by November 2023.

It is estimated that Ankang's exports of soft toys will reach 600 million yuan this year. "Plush toys are regarded as bearers of happiness. We want to bring more joy to kids across the globe," said Li.

Xinhua

Europe celebrates Christmas amid lingering security concerns

BRUSSELS

AMID the festive ambiance of European cities adorned with lights and decorations, this Christmas season is underscored by heightened security measures.

The recent university shooting in the Czech Republic, adding to the previous shooting and stabbing in Belgium and France, respectively, has exacerbated security concerns, casting a shadow over the holiday cheer in the continent.

Meanwhile, despite repeated warnings from security agencies, many tourists vowed these concerns will not impede their holiday plans. According to the travel analytics firm ForwardKeys, intra-European travel is exceeding 2022 levels, driven by sustained post-COVID demand.

"HUGE RISK"

A report from the United Kingdom (UK) National Counter Terrorism Security Office cited data from Western Europe, saying that terrorist attacks do not follow a discernible seasonal pattern. However, the Christmas period presents opportunities for attacks, not simply due to bustling celebrations but also because of its religious symbolism.

Authorities in Europe are on edge during this holiday season, given the recent rise in anti-Semitic and Islamophobic attacks since the conflicts in the Middle East escalated.

"With the war between Israel and Hamas and the polarization it causes in our society, with the upcoming holiday season, there is a huge risk of terrorist attacks in the European Union (EU)," European Commissioner for Home Affairs Ylva Johansson cautioned ahead of a meeting of EU home

affairs ministers earlier this month.

Spain's Home Affairs Minister Fernando Grande Marlaska, whose government holds the rotating Presidency of the Council of the EU from July to December, said, "In an especially delicate international context, the situation in the Middle East could sharpen tensions, heighten polarization and fuel terrorism."

Their warnings came following security incidents in the bloc, including a radical Islamist fatally stabbing a German-Filipino tourist near the Eiffel Tower in Paris, France, on Dec. 2, and the arrest of two teenagers -- one of whom called for a "holy war" against the West on social media -- in Cologne, Germany, suspected of planning an attack on a Christmas market or synagogue.

In light of Europe's history of terrorist attacks during the Christmas season, the security worries have a leg to stand on.

In 2016, a Tunisian male, reportedly pledging allegiance to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), drove a truck into a Berlin Christmas market, killing 12. In December 2018, a 29-year-old male armed with a firearm and a knife attacked the Christmas market in Strasbourg, France, killing five. The incident was later claimed by the ISIL. Austrian authorities thwarted an ISIL-inspired bomb attack on a Christmas market in Vienna in 2019.

ENHANCED SECURITY MEASURES

European security agencies have accentuated the growing risk posed by "lone wolves" - self-radicalized assailants with no formal ties to established extremist groups.

Thomas Haldenwang, president of Germany's Federal Office for the Pro-



Passengers get on a nostalgic tram decorated with Christmas lights in Budapest, Hungary on Dec. 20, 2023. Xinhua

tection of the Constitution, cautioned that much of the safety threat arises from the potential for radicalized individuals to attempt attacks on "soft targets."

In response to this heightened peril, the European countries have enacted various measures. EU Commissioner Johansson announced a financial boost, with the European Commission allocating an additional 30 million euros (33 million U.S. dollars) to enhance security in vulnerable areas, including places of worship. Governments are intensifying the surveillance of extremists, a challenging task given the substantial number of individuals in Europe on terrorism watch lists.

German authorities, at both federal and state levels, are collaborating closely to identify potential threats early on while increasing police presence. Likewise, the French Vigipirate security alert system was elevated to the highest level, deploying increased security measures in public areas nationwide since mid-October. Since the shooting in Brussels

on Oct. 16, where a perpetrator of Tunisian origin killed two Swedish soccer fans, Belgium has maintained a serious residual risk at threat level 3. Zeynep Balci, the spokesperson for Brussels Minister-President Rudi Vervoort, assured the public that the region is taking necessary measures to ensure safety as the New Year approaches.

This situation also prompted Swedish authorities to enhance intelligence gathering and adopt policies like a bag ban at major public events. The Swedish Police were bolstering their presence to improve readiness in case of an attack, Per Engstrom, commander of the National Operations Department of the Swedish Police, said last month.

OPINIONS VARY

Speaking to Dutch-language newspaper Het Laatste Nieuws recently, Belgian terrorism expert Pieter Van Ostaeyen from KU Leuven university said avoiding all mass gatherings is a decision that has statistical reasons because crowds are more likely to be the target of at-

tacks.

Van Ostaeyen urged people to "assess the situation realistically," as it is impossible to check everyone at gatherings like those on New Year's Eve.

Nevertheless, many take such cautions and alerts with a grain of salt.

Jared Ahmad, a journalism lecturer at the University of Sheffield, sees the Christmas security warnings as a familiar narrative that gains added significance this year due to concurrent events abroad, which are not worth making a fuss about.

"There's been a risk ... for a long time, even prior to the war on terror. If anything, the threat is the lowest it's been in a long time," he told Xinhua, adding "I think people should go about enjoying themselves."

Since this will be the first Christmas and New Year holiday since the end of the global health emergency caused by COVID-19, many Europeans are reluctant to alter their holiday arrangements.

Holiday travels in the EU and Britain surged 22 percent compared to last year. Moreover, arrivals in popular destinations, such as Italy, Austria and Sweden, have increased by over 25 percent year-on-year, data from ForwardKeys showed.

Emphasizing her sense of safety, Anja Bilic, a resident of Croatia's capital Zagreb, told Xinhua that her family will not make any adjustments to their holiday plans. "We are going skiing in Austria and I don't see any security concerns."

"Croatia is a safe country and I don't expect Christmastime to bring security threats," Dusan Ljustina, a theater director in Zagreb, told Xinhua. "I am sure that the police and everyone else will maintain public order and peace and that there will be no incidents of any kind." Xinhua

Yemen's Houthis again warn off US forces in Red Sea

SANAA

YEMEN'S Houthi rebels on Sunday renewed their warning to the US forces, urging them to leave the Red Sea quickly before it becomes "a burning arena."

"The Red Sea will be a burning arena if America and its allies continue their bullying," Houthi spokesman Mohammed Abdulsalam said in a statement aired by the group's al-Masirah TV.

The warning came as the US accused the Houthis of attacking MV Saibaba, an Indian-flagged crude oil tanker owned by Gabon, with a drone, which Abdulsalam denied by claiming that it was a US naval destroyer that was behind this near-miss missile attack in the southern end of the Red Sea.

"While a plane belonging to our navy was carrying out reconnaissance work across the Red Sea, an American warship hysterically opened fire with multiple weapons," explained Abdulsalam, adding that one of the missiles exploded near MV Saibaba, which came from Russian ports and headed southward.

The spokesman denounced the "militarization of the Red Sea" by America and its partners, saying they "posed a threat to international maritime navigation" and asking them to leave.

On Wednesday, the Houthi leader Abdulmalik al-Houthi clearly warned that his group would launch deadly attacks on US warships and interests across the Middle East if Washington waged war against the militia.

Last week, the US announced a 10-nation coalition to quell Houthi missile and drone attacks on ships transiting the Red Sea.

Shoigu says Russian army is most combat capable in world

MOSCOW

THE Russian army is the most combat capable in the world, while the Russian military hardware displayed supremacy over western weapons in Ukraine, Defense Minister Sergey Shoigu said at an enlarged board meeting of the Defense Ministry recently.

He summed up the results of the operation in Ukraine, disclosed Kiev's losses that exceeded 383,000 men killed and wounded, set up the priorities of the ministry for 2024, and stressed that the military operation would be continued "until the goals are completely achieved."

Russian military supremacy

"The Russian armed forces can adequately and timely react to the actions of any modern adversary. Over 650,000 servicemen acquired combat experience. As for today, the Russian army is the most trained and combat capable in the world with advanced armaments that were tested in combat conditions."

"Modern Russian hardware was rigidly tested in conditions of the special operation and displayed supremacy over similar weapons of NATO countries."

"Despite sanctions, we produce more high-tech arms than NATO countries," Shoigu said.

Military operation

Russian troops have liberated five times more territory than the Donetsk and Lugansk People's Republics occupied before the begin-



ning of the special military operation. Four regions with a territory of over 83 thousand square kilometers and a population of close to five million people have joined Russia.

The Sea of Azov has become an inland Russian sea. There is a land corridor to Crimea now and the railway traffic to Donbass has been restored.

Ukraine's losses

The Ukrainian armed forces failed to overcome the Russian tactical defense zone during the so-called counteroffensive and sustained colossal losses. They lost 159 thousand soldiers killed and wounded, 121 airplanes and 23 helicopters, 766 tanks, including 36 Leopards, and 2,348 armored vehicles, including 50 Bradleys. "It is likely the reason why we have not seen US Abrams tanks on the battlefield so far," Shoigu said.

Since the beginning of the special military operation in February 2022, Ukraine has lost over 383,000 men, 14 thousand tanks and armored vehicles, 8.5 thousand artillery guns and multiple launch rocket systems, over 800 airplanes and helicopters.

Most foreign mercenaries fighting for Kiev have been eliminated. "Over 5.8 thousand militants were destroyed. A hundred and three war criminals who displayed specific atrocity have been eliminated in Ukraine. Everyone will face retribution," the minister said.

Western support

Ukraine received 203 billion dollars from foreign sponsors, which is 30 billion more than its Gross Domestic Product. "It is actually a bankrupt country, as most of the finances are credits that have to be repaid," Shoigu said.

Fifty-four countries declared military aid to Ukraine, but only 15 supplied arms and hardware. Kiev received a total of 5.22 thousand tanks and armored vehicles, over three thousand artillery guns, 23 thousand drones and 115 airplanes and helicopters.

NATO military operates air defense systems, multiple rocket launchers, operational-tactical missile complexes in Ukraine. They prepare military operations and train Ukrainian soldiers. Besides, 410 NATO satellites operate in Kiev interests.

Russian rearmament

Unprecedented steps to rearm the army and the navy, as well as to provide social support to servicemen have been made. The Russian defense enterprises switched to round-the-clock operation and increased capacities four times.

Since February 2022, the output of tanks has increased 5.6 times,

armored vehicles - 3.5-3.6 times, drones - 16.8 times, and artillery shells - 17.5 times.

The defense industry has upgraded over a hundred arms and hardware units and is rapidly creating new ones. "The weapons that were designed and tested in ordinary conditions for 5-8 years, today reach serial production in 4-7 months. That has not happened since the Great Patriotic War," the minister said.

The Ground Forces have received 1.53 thousand new and upgraded tanks, over 2.5 thousand infantry fighting vehicles and armored personnel carriers. The Aerospace Forces received 237 airplanes and helicopters, while the Navy got eight warships, four multi-torpedo submarines, and a strategic nuclear submarine.

Fortifications

The Russian military has accomplished major fortification tasks. Seven thousand kilometers of minefields were laid along the combat contact line to a depth of 600 meters.

Lessons of the operation

The Russian military has changed the general combat tactic and created assault and drone units. Approaches to reserve formation have been revised. "As a result, each army has a reserve regiment." Besides, the Russian military began to engage air defense systems in a complex manner and successfully use precision weapons, Shoigu said.

Trump urges federal appeals court to grant him immunity in election subversion case

WASHINGTON

FORMER US President Donald Trump has urged a federal appeals court to throw out the federal election subversion criminal case in Washington, DC, arguing that he is protected under presidential immunity, CNN reported.

Trump wants the DC Circuit Court of Appeals to overturn a lower-court ruling rejecting his claims of immunity in special counsel Jack Smith's election subversion case. The appeals panel is weighing Trump's request, which the Supreme Court on Friday refused to take up on an expedited basis, as Smith requested.

As per CNN, the filing reiterates what the former president's lawyers have repeatedly asserted: that Trump was working in his official capacity as president to "ensure election integrity" when he allegedly undermined the 2020 election results and therefore has immunity and that his indictment is unconstitutional because presidents cannot be criminally prosecuted for "official acts" unless they are impeached and convicted by the Senate.

Trump's attorneys wrote on Saturday: "The Constitution establishes a powerful structural check to prevent political factions from abusing the formidable threat of criminal prosecution to disable the President and attack their political enemies."

"Before any single prosecutor can ask a court to sit in judgement of the President's conduct, Congress must have approved of it by impeaching



and convicting the President," they wrote. "That did not happen here, and so President Trump has absolute immunity."

The former president has been attempting to delay his March 4 trial in the case, with his fight over the immunity claim underscoring those efforts, as per CNN.

The appeals court has expedited its consideration of his appeal, and it's set to hear oral arguments in the matter on January 9. District Judge Tanya Chutkan, who is overseeing his criminal case, temporarily paused all procedural deadlines in the case while the appeal played out.

On Friday, the Supreme Court rejected a request from Smith for the justices to immediately hear the case before the DC Circuit had a chance to weigh in. Both sides will have the option of appealing the eventual ruling from the appeals court back up to the highest court.

ANI

In China, more and more teachers and content creators are sharing online.

They give virtual lessons to internet users on online platforms, explaining the profound in accessible ways, which effectively facilitates the dissemination of knowledge.

Song Hao, associate professor with the School of Mathematics and Quantitative Economics, Shandong University of Finance and Economics, has uploaded a 154-episode online course on advanced mathematics onto an online platform. The course, which lasts a total of over 76 hours, has garnered more than 110 million views and nearly 2.34 million bullet-screen comments.

Each episode of the course is often watched by hundreds of people simultaneously in real-time. Comments of encouragement continue to appear on the bullet-

Online knowledge sharing on the rise in China

screen.

Speaking of how he became a "knowledge sharer" on the internet, Song told People's Daily that he started all this just to help students who asked him for help to learn the course of linear algebra.

Over the past nine years, his teaching equipment has become more and more professional, from a voice recorder in the beginning, to a second-hand digital video recorder, and to an HD camera and a handwriting screen.

Besides, his teaching content also gradually expanded. Online learners could follow him as he taught university mathematics subjects including linear algebra, calculus, probability theory and mathematical statistics.

"Nowadays, many middle school teachers have opened ac-

counts on short video platforms, where they explain various subjects through videos. These lessons are visually appealing and interesting, attracting many followers," said a woman surnamed Yang, who lives in Haidian district, Beijing, adding that she and her child watch short videos about physics and chemistry every day.

A middle school physics teacher in Fushun, northeast China's Liaoning province, is a popular content creator on Douyin, the Chinese version of TikTok. He has a characteristic bald look, much like a famous Chinese cartoon character.

He films physics experiments conducted in the classroom, which not only explains physical principles in just dozens of seconds, but also relates them to

philosophy of life. His unique approach has gained him over 3 million followers.

In addition to school teachers, there are many professional institutions and science popularizers spreading knowledge and answering netizens' questions online. It has already become a routine for many short video users to watch the witty and lively science popularization videos by the Institute of Physics, Chinese Academy of Sciences. They also attend the diverse live open lectures of various universities, join virtual tours of the Palace Museum which boasts rich historical collections, and listen to doctors or book bloggers sharing their experiences.

According to statistics, the number of knowledge-sharing

content creators with over 10,000 followers on Douyin had exceeded 500,000 as of October 2022, increasing by 69.6 percent year-on-year. In particular, knowledge sharing of life, culture, popular science, and machinery, as well as technology product introduction, were sectors that saw a fast increase.

Zhang Chenliang, director of the media center of Chinese National Geography magazine, has garnered a total of over 35 million followers on various online platforms. His video series of creature identification has been played 1.77 billion times on Douyin.

In these videos, he not only shares knowledge of fantastic creatures that are popular online, but also answers questions from netizens. Many people have

learned about biological knowledge by watching his videos.

Among the many knowledge-sharing influencers, there is a special group of retired workers. Although they have left their previous careers, they continue to shine on internet platforms, passing on what they have learned throughout their lives.

Yang Weiyun, 74, is a retired Chinese language teacher at an elementary school in Huainan, east China's Anhui province. She has spent most of her life teaching children how to pronounce and recognize characters.

Since 2021, she started teaching Chinese pinyin, or the phonetic alphabet, on online platforms. Many people are learning pinyin, the Three Character Classic and ancient poems from her.

The livestream of Wang Guangjie, an 82-year-old retired electrician teacher, was often watched by many who are interested in electronic circuits. The highest number of viewers in a single stream exceeded 400,000.

When encountering questions from the viewers that he cannot answer, Wang would consult experienced electricians or graduate students watching the stream and invite them to share their ideas.

Experts believe that short videos and livestream can promote sharing and co-creation. Platform operators and knowledge-sharing influencers should collaborate to expand the channels for knowledge dissemination and improve the environment for knowledge sharing, so as to provide users with a wider range of choices through high-quality videos.

People's Daily

Caravans B cricketers lift 2023 DC Saifee Cup tourney trophy

By Guardian Correspondent

PROMISING cricketer, Issa Safari, starred with the bat as Caravans B lifted this season's Dar es Salaam Cricket (DC) Saifee Cup tournament's silverware after posting an eight-wicket win over Patel Brotherhood A in the final played in the city recently.

The final, which took place at Annadil Burhani Oval, had Caravans B winning the toss and electing to bowl, limiting Patel Brotherhood A to 80 runs for the loss of three wickets in the allotted 10 overs.

Opener, Acrey Pascal, had Patel Brotherhood A seeking to get off to a good start in the innings, notching 16 runs.

Pascal sought to have his presence felt following an early dismissal of the fellow opener, Keyur Patel, whose brief spell had the batsman making his way back with a mere two runs from seven knocks.

Kashif Anwar, deployed at number three, attempted to boost Patel Brotherhood A's score with his 36 runs not out, which included a boundary and three sixes.

There was also a two-digit contribution by experienced all-rounder, Athumani Kankonzi, who ended his spell at the crease with 13 runs.

Skipper Dhavalkumar Patel returned to the pavilion with the bat in hand, whilst staying four runs short of a two-digit figure.

Seven extra runs given away



Caravans B cricketers are pictured with a trophy after triumphing in this season's Dar es Salaam Cricket (DC) Saifee Cup tournament, which culminated recently. The outfit registered an eight-wicket victory over Patel Brotherhood A in the tournament's final. PHOTO: COURTESY OF DAR ES SALAAM CRICKET

by the bowling unit, which included two leg byes and five wides, somehow improved the batting squad's total.

Jayaraj Malayil was so far Caravans B's only bowler with a notable showing when the side fielded, in which he posted 2-22 in two overs.

Needing 81 runs to clinch

the top honour, Caravans B cricketers hardly wasted time given they went on to notch 83/2 in eight overs.

Safari, slotted in as one of the openers, led the successful chase with his 46 runs not out, which included four boundaries and two sixes.

His displays made up for a

less convincing performance put to show by the fellow opener, Praveen Puthanpurayil, as the latter posted one run from six knocks.

Johnson Nyambo (15 runs) and Sudu G (15 runs not out) had Caravans B smoothly reaching the target, having chipped in with two-digit fig-

ures. Halidi Amiri was the only Patel Brotherhood A's bowler who made his presence felt after taking one wicket, giving away four runs in one over.

The Player of the Tournament prize went to Kashif Anwar (Patel Brotherhood A), whereas Nageswara Rao Ila (Specialized K&P A) was presented with the show-down's Best Batsman award.

Harish Munungati (Specialized K&P A) laid his hands on the show-down's Best Bowler prize, whereas Mehul Luhar (Estim A) was voted as the tournament's Best Wicket-keeper.

Issa Safari (Caravans B) was presented with the show-down's final Player of the Match prize.

This season's DC Saifee Cup tournament- played in a 10-over format- began on September 30 and brought together 20 teams.

The participating sides were put into four groups, with Group A being made up of Caravans B, Aces B, Karibu Tanzanite DCC, Tamil Nadu Sports Club, and Annadil Seifee.

Lions B, Specialized K&P B, Unisoft Rising Stars, Gupta Upanga SC-B, and Estim A made Group B.

The Group C teams included Specialized K&P A, Shree Kutchi Leva Patel Sports Centre (SKLPSC) B, Union Sports Club, Annadil Burhani, and Caravans C.

Sandy's Super Strikers, Patel Brotherhood A, GP, Aga Khan SC B, and Estim B made Group D.

NBC Premier League takes break for Zanzibar Heroes vs Kilimanjaro Stars friendly match

By Correspondent Seth Mapoli

THE Tanzania Premier League Board (TPLB) has announced the postponement of seven league matches to make room for a special exhibition game and Taifa Stars' preparation for the 2023 Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON) finals.

This strategic rescheduling prioritizes both national pride and international preparation, offering Zanzibar football fans a spectacular exhibition and ensuring Taifa Stars' players have optimal training time before their continental challenge.

On December 27, the newly refurbished Amaan Stadium in Zanzibar will host a unique clash between Zanzibar Heroes and Kilimanjaro Stars, officially inaugurating the upgraded venue completed under the Isles' President, Hussein Ali Mwinyi.

This match serves as a momentous occasion, not just for football fans in Zanzibar but for the entire nation, showcasing the country's commitment to developing sporting infrastructure.

The postponement of league matches also provides crucial breathing room for Taifa Stars as they gear up for their AFCON finals campaign in Ivory Coast.

The rescheduled matches, originally scheduled for between December 26 and January 4, include several high-profile encounters like Tabora United

vs Simba SC, Young Africans SC vs Mashujaa FC, and a highly anticipated Simba SC vs Azam FC clash.

While Tanzania focuses on the current AFCON tournament, football fans across the continent are already looking ahead to the next edition.

The TPLB's decision to postpone league matches has met with mixed reactions. Some fans have expressed frustration at the disruption to the league schedule.

Others nevertheless understand the importance of supporting Taifa Stars in the team's quest for continental glory.

Ultimately, the TPLB's decision prioritizes the national team's success and the development of football infrastructure in Zanzibar.

With the 2023 AFCON finals and African qualifiers for the 2026 World Cup on the horizon, Tanzanian football is entering an exciting period.

The talent and dedication of Taifa Stars players, coupled with the ongoing investment in infrastructure, offer promising prospects for the future of the sport in the nation.

As Tanzania prepares to take on the continent's best, football fans across the country are united in their support for their senior national team, hoping to witness the squad garner even greater triumphs in the years to come.



Tanzania's Paralympic athletes are pictured engaging in training at Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete Youth Park's venue in Dar es Salaam recently. PHOTO: CORRESPONDENT JUMANNE JUMA

Simba face daunting task in Premier League title race

By Correspondent Seth Mapoli

SIMBA SC's quest for this season's Mainland Tanzania NBC Premier League title has suffered a setback as the club was held to a 2-2 draw by Kinondoni Municipal Council FC at the Azam Complex Stadium in Dar es Salaam on Saturday.

The draw keeps the Msimbazi Street side in the third position, trailing the top two outfits - Azam FC and Yanga - in the standings.

Kinondoni Municipal Council FC took the lead in the 31st minute with a goal scored by the squad's star player, Waziri Junior, who received a pass from midfielder Awesu Ally following a quickly taken free kick.

Simba SC equalized in the 57th minute with a penalty converted by midfielder Saidi Ntibazonkiza,

marking his third from the spot in the 2023/24 season.

Just a minute later, Simba SC secured the club's second goal in the 58th minute, courtesy of forward Jean Baleke, who took the pitch in the second half to replace John Bocco.

In the 89th minute, Kinondoni Municipal Council FC leveled the score again - with Junior capitalizing on a mistake by Simba SC's goalkeeper, Ayoub Lakred.

This marked Junior's seventh goal in this season's NBC Premier League, placing in the list of contenders for the top goal scorer's prize.

Simba SC has won seven out of 10 matches, drawn two, and holds the third position with 23 points. Yanga has 27 points in 10 games, while Azam FC has 31 points in 13 games.

Having faced each other 12 times, Simba SC has won nine games, and there have been three draws with Kinondoni Municipal Council FC.

Since Kinondoni Municipal Council FC entered the Premier League in the 2018/19 season, the club has never defeated Simba SC.

Simba SC's head coach Abdelhak Benchikha pointed out: "We are disappointed with the result. We had chances to win the game, but we made some mistakes in defense that cost us. We need to learn from our mistakes and come back stronger in the next game."

Following the result, Simba SC's Information and Communication Manager, Ahmed Ally, urged fans and the team not to give up, expressing confidence in a stronger comeback.

"We will come back stronger... we should not give up on the chance to do well, we are not even halfway through the season," Ally pointed out.

Junior, who scored two goals in the game, thanked God for the team's success and acknowledged his club's head coach's instructions to be sharp and exploit opportunities against a formidable team like Simba SC.

Kinondoni Municipal Council FC head coach Abdihamid Moalin acknowledged Simba SC's second-half resurgence and praised his players for maintaining discipline, defending in numbers, and staying sharp.

He emphasized that scoring against Simba SC is a commendable feat and they will continue to battle for Mainland Tanzania's NBC Premier League.

Amrouche unveils squad ahead of Kilimanjaro Stars friendly with Zanzibar Heroes

By Correspondent Nassir Nchimbi

TANZANIA's senior men's national team head coach Adel Amrouche has announced a 25-man squad ahead of the team's friendly game against Zanzibar Heroes slated for tomorrow.

The two teams are set for the friendly at Amaan Stadium in Zanzibar with famous players left out of the squad which will constitute the Mainland Tanzania squad.

The footballers- Mudathir Yahya, Feisal Salum, and Ibrahim Hamad- are expected to play for Zanzibar Heroes, while others that have earned a call-up for the Mainland Tanzania squad but are set to miss the friendly include Mbwana Samatta and Haji Mnoga.

Amrouche announced nine new entries who are slated to make their debut for the senior national team and are set to be included in the final AFCON squad should they impress.

Players making their debut for the senior national team include Roberto Nditi (Forfar Athletic, Scotland), Edwin Balua (Tanzania Prisons), Saidi Hamis (Jedinstvo, Serbia), Tarryn Allarakhia (Wealdstone, England), and Adolf Bitegeko (Volskundur IF, Iceland).

Zion Nditi (Aldershot Town, England), Mark John (Kingston FC, Australia), Maino Danilo (Villena CF, Spain), and Adam Kasa (IFK Hanninge, Sweden) complete the list.

Other players who made their return to the senior national team include Mohamed Hussein (Simba SC) who missed the majority of call-ups this year, Israel Mwenda (Simba SC), Nickson Kibabage (Yanga), and Simba SC keeper Aishi Manula who was nursing injury.

Goalkeeper Kwesi Kawawa, who plays for Karlslunden of Sweden, is set to make his second appearance for the senior national team while Singida Fountain Gate FC's goalie, Beno Kakolanya, has secured selection for the squad.

Yanga central defenders, Bakari Mwamnyeto and Dickson Job, along with Azam FC right fullback, Lusajo



Taifa Stars head coach, Adel Amrouche.

Mwaikenda, have joined the Kilimanjaro Stars.

Midfielders Yusuph Kagoma (Singida Fountain Gate FC), Mzamiru Yassin (Simba SC), and Sospeter Bajana (Azam FC) are the only locally based midfielders named to the squad.

Mtibwa Sugar's Ladack Chasambi, Azam FC winger Abdulhamis Suleiman, Simon Msuva (free agent), and Simba SC's Kibu Denis complete the Kilimanjaro Stars squad.

Samatta and Mnoga have not been selected for the Mainland Tanzania squad given the duo is already projected to make the senior national team's final squad for the 2023 AFCON.

Amrouche aims to use the friendly clash as his final preparatory encounter before unveiling players from both Mainland Tanzania's Kilimanjaro Stars and Zanzibar Heroes to make Taifa Stars' final squad for 2023 AFCON.

Norwegian Eliteserien leading goal scorer, Amahl William Pellegrino, is expected to make Tanzania's AFCON final squad.

Notable names that will not be heading to AFCON with Taifa Stars include Shomari Kapombe, Metacha Mnata, and Kibwana Shomari who had a stellar performance last season.

Jim Ratcliffe: Man Utd fan turned part-owner

LONDON

BRITISH billionaire Jim Ratcliffe already has interests in football, Formula One and cycling. He now owns a slice of his boyhood club, Manchester United.

It was announced on Sunday that the founder of chemicals giant INEOS had bought a 25 percent stake in the Premier League giants after a protracted saga.

INEOS joined the race to buy United early this year after the club's owners, the Glazer family, said they were willing to listen to offers.

United fan Ratcliffe, who made an unsuccessful bid to buy Chelsea last year, has long been linked with the Old Trafford club.

The 71-year-old already has an impressive sporting portfolio that includes French club Nice and Swiss team FC Lausanne-Sport.

In 2019, cycling powerhouse Team Sky became Team INEOS and the following year INEOS bought a one-third stake in the Mercedes Formula One team.

Ratcliffe and INEOS confirmed their bid for majority ownership of Manchester United in February and went head to head with Qatari banker Sheikh Jassim Bin Hamad Al Thani, who subsequently pulled out of the race.

The group vowed to make the Old Trafford side the "number one club in the world again" after a decade of underachievement.

They also pledged to be "the long-term custodians of Manchester United on behalf of the fans and the wider community".

Ratcliffe has not got quite what he wanted, with the Glazers still the majority shareholders at Old Trafford.

The Americans, who completed a leveraged takeover in 2005, saddling the club with huge debts, have proved deeply unpopular with supporters.

Ratcliffe, nevertheless, will feel he can play a part in re-

storing United to the pinnacle of English and European football after a chastening decline since Alex Ferguson won the last of the club's 20 Premier League titles in 2013.

He is one of Britain's wealthiest people - Forbes estimates his net worth at \$23 billion (£18.1 billion).

But the glitzy world of international sport is a long way from Ratcliffe's humble beginnings, growing up in social housing near Manchester in northwest England.

Ratcliffe founded INEOS in 1998 and the company went on to become an industrial juggernaut in Britain.

It operates 194 sites across 29 countries, generates \$65 billion annually and employs more than 26,000 people.

Ratcliffe has continued to diversify INEOS, entering the automotive sector to build the INEOS Grenadier, intended to be a successor to the Land Rover Defender.

Despite his business success, Ratcliffe has remained something of an enigma.

The Englishman, who has skied to the North Pole and South Pole and climbed the Matterhorn, is a risk-taker but says he does not take unnecessary chances.

"To give you an example, I won't and would never jump out of an aeroplane, because you either live or die depending upon how well someone's packed your parachute," he told The Times earlier this year.

"I'm quite careful, but you're only here once so you get more out of life if you challenge yourself a bit more."

How much of a risk Ratcliffe considers United to be is a matter for conjecture.

INEOS says it is in the business of "helping extraordinary athletes achieve extraordinary things".

Time will tell whether Ratcliffe can help turn around the fortunes of a club desperate to return to former glories.

AFP

Man Utd: Triumphs, tragedy and trophies

LONDON

BRITISH billionaire Jim Ratcliffe's deal to buy a 25 percent stake in Manchester United is the latest twist in the remarkable story of one of the world's most famous football clubs.

AFP Sport looks at the moments that helped make United a global phenomenon.

*A legend is born

Although the world now knows the Old Trafford giants as Manchester United and associates the team with their vivid red shirts, their story began in different colours.

Railway workers founded Newton Heath in 1878 and, wearing "white shirts with blue cord", they won their first recorded match 6-0 against Bolton's reserves.

Served with a winding-up order after financial issues in 1902, Newton Heath, who wore a green-and-gold kit by then, were taken over by a group including local businessman John Henry Davies.

Renamed Manchester United and playing in red shirts, the first of the club's English record of 20 top-flight titles was secured in 1908.

*Busby Babes and Munich disaster

Matt Busby would provide the impetus for United's first truly dominant era.

The Scot was appointed as manager in 1945 and reigned for the next 24 years, revitalis-

ing United with an infusion of homegrown talent.

His young "Busby Babes" won successive titles in 1956 and 1957 and United became the first English team to compete in the European Cup.

But disaster struck in 1958 when eight United players, including the great Duncan Edwards, died after a plane crash at Munich airport on the way home from a European Cup quarter-final against Red Star Belgrade.

Busby spent weeks in hospital before eventually returning to build another dashing young team from the ashes of the Munich tragedy.

*"Holy Trinity"

George Best, Bobby Charlton and Denis Law formed the attacking triumvirate that spearheaded Busby's second golden generation.

Best was the maverick genius whose pop star looks and dazzling skills made him famous beyond the world of football.

United won the English title twice before their defining moment in 1968, when they beat Benfica 4-1 to become the first English team to win the European Cup. It was a cathartic victory for Busby, who wept on the Wembley pitch a decade after the Munich disaster.

"The moment when Bobby took the cup it cleansed me. It eased the pain of the guilt of going into Europe. It was my justification," Busby said.

AFP

Sir Jim Ratcliffe handed football reins at Man U after £1.03bn deal

By James Ducker and Tom Morgan

SIR Jim Ratcliffe's Ineos group will assume total control of football operations at Manchester United after the English giants finally announced the British businessman's purchase of a 25 per cent stake in the club worth just over £1 billion.

Ratcliffe has agreed to pay £1.03bn for a quarter shareholding - the most expensive minority investment in a sports club in history - and will also provide an additional £237m to invest in Old Trafford after a 13-month takeover saga finally reached a conclusion on Christmas Eve.

The \$33 a share deal still requires approval from the Premier League, which is expected to take between four and six weeks, and values United at \$6.3bn (£4.97bn).

But the Glazers are now set to effectively hand over the running of football entirely to Ineos, who will have full responsibility for all matters related to the pitch, including transfers and the hiring and firing of managers and football staff in a move that will further intensify the spotlight on Erik ten Hag.

Ineos are expected to appoint a new director of football as part of an overhaul of the club's troubled recruitment operation.

On another dramatic day at United, who had slumped to their 13th defeat of a miserable season after a 2-0 loss at West Ham 24 hours earlier, it emerged that:

- Ineos chief financial officer John Reece and Ineos Sport chairman Rob Nevin are expected to join United's plc board, which is responsible for setting transfer budgets

- Sir Dave Brailsford, the Ineos director of sport, and its CEO Jean-Claude Blanc, who is in the running to succeed Richard Arnold as United chief executive, are due to be appointed to the football club board as they prepare to assume influential roles at Old Trafford

- Ratcliffe will have first refusal if the Glazers opt to sell more shares in the future amid the Ineos founder's long-term vision for full control of the club

- Former club captain Gary Neville slammed the timing of the announcement and claimed "Manchester United 2023 has been a disgrace to the end"

- The Glazers are set to pocket more than £500m from the Ratcliffe deal as fans renewed calls for the full removal of the Americans, who have owned the club since 2005

- Club executives faced questions from concerned staff about how football operations will work in the interim with the January transfer window looming.

In a statement released at 4pm on Sunday, which followed a board meeting that morning, United said Ineos had "accepted a request by the [United] board to be delegated responsibility for the management of the club's football operations". The club added that would include "all aspects of the men's and women's football operations and academies", as part of Ratcliffe's purchase of Glazer and A class shares.

It will be the first time since Sir Alex Ferguson retired and David Gill exited as chief executive in 2013 that the Glazers have taken a backseat on football decisions in what the Manchester United Supporters' Trust (MUST) said they tentatively hoped would represent "a step forward" for the club "after some very difficult years".

*Ratcliffe vows to return United 'back where we belong'

Ratcliffe - whose Ineos group also own the French club Nice and Lausanne-Sport in Switzerland - made no attempt to gloss over the on-pitch struggles that have seen United go 10 years without winning the Premier League and currently sit eight points adrift of the top four after a shambolic season to date.



Sir Jim Ratcliffe will take control of football operations at United. Agencies

"As a local boy and a lifelong supporter of the club, I am very pleased that we have been able to agree a deal with the Manchester United Board that delegates us management responsibility of the football operations of the club," said the Oldham-born entrepreneur, who was in Barcelona the night United won the Champions League in 1999.

"Whilst the commercial success of the club has ensured there have always been available funds to win trophies at the highest level, this potential has not been fully unlocked in recent times. We will bring the global knowledge, expertise and talent from the wider Ineos Sport group to help drive further improvement at the club, while also providing funds intended to enable future investment into Old Trafford."

Ratcliffe added: "We are here for the long term and recognise that a lot of challenges and hard work lie ahead, which we will approach with rigour, professionalism and passion. We are committed to working with everyone at the club - the board, staff, players and fans - to help drive the club forward. Our shared ambition is clear: we all want to see Manchester United back where we belong, at the very top of English, European and world football."

Telegraph Sport first disclosed on November 23 last year how Ratcliffe, one of Britain's richest men, would bid for United the day after the Glazers announced a "strategic review" and formally put the club on the market. Ratcliffe had originally sought to buy the club outright from the Glazers but his bid - and that of his main rival Qatari banker Sheikh Jassim bin Hamad Al Thani - fell short of the Glazers' \$8bn valuation leading to months of fraught negotiations. Sheikh Jassim eventually pulled out of the running in October with Ratcliffe's proposal to take a minority stake ultimately swinging a deal in his favour.

Confirmation of a deal had been expected to come weeks ago, with its eventual announcement on Christmas Eve drawing withering criticism from Neville, a vocal

critic of the Glazers, on X, formerly Twitter:

Ratcliffe is funding his minority purchase through an investment company called "Trawlers Ltd", which is incorporated on the Isle of Man, and involves no debt. The inspiration for the name derives from a famous quote by Eric Cantona, one of Ratcliffe's favourite ever United players. At a press conference following an appeal hearing at Croydon Magistrates' Court in 1995 in the wake of his infamous "kung fu" kick on Crystal Palace fan Matthew Simmons at Selhurst Park, Cantona uttered the memorable line: "When seagulls follow the trawler it is because they think sardines will be thrown into the sea".

As well as buying 25 per cent of the so-called B class shares which until now only the Glazers had owned and which carry ten times the voting rights of the Class A shares, Ratcliffe is also purchasing up to 25 per cent of A shares but has agreed to buy these at the same \$33 per share price to minimise the risk of any legal action from other minority shareholders.

After a board meeting was convened on Sunday morning to give the belated green light to an announcement, Patrick Stewart - who is serving as interim chief executive following Richard Arnold's departure last month - addressed club staff on a video call from Old Trafford shortly before the news was publicly confirmed.

Stewart told staff that United were looking to determine how football operations will run over the next six weeks or so, until the Ineos deal is sanctioned by the Premier League, and indicated that some of those questions had already been answered internally.

Some staff, including United's director of data science Dominic Jordan, pressed United on this issue. With the January transfer window due to open in a week, there is understood to be some concern internally about how and what decisions will be made inside and outside the game.

"Manchester United has talented people right across the club and our desire is to al-

board and Brailsford, who is in charge of an audit of United's football operations and the former Juventus CEO Blanc on the football club board are regarded as significant developments. Reece is one of the co-founders of the petrochemical giant. Brailsford was the former performance director of British cycling, although Ratcliffe will be very much the real power.

Although Ineos will not be in place in time to materially influence the January window, changes are expected ahead of the summer, not least around recruitment. Ineos are known to admire Newcastle's director of football Dan Ashworth and have been looking at a whole host of other figures for potential recruitment positions.

A well placed source told Telegraph Sport: "The Glazers have said to Sir Jim 'You take over the football side'. Obviously there have been conversations with the full board about budgets and money and Financial Fair Play etc. But in the end the decisions around all the football stuff will be made by Jim and his team."

"The business side and money side and the football side are inextricably linked so it's not to say that they [the Glazers] are complete bystanders. But Jim isn't going to do a deal like this and then have his hands tied."

Joel and Avram Glazer, the United co-chairmen, said: "We are delighted to have agreed this deal with Sir Jim Ratcliffe and Ineos. As part of the strategic review we announced in November 2022, we committed to look at a variety of alternatives to help enhance Manchester United, with a focus on delivering success for our men's, women's and academy teams."

"Sir Jim and Ineos bring a wealth of commercial experience as well as significant financial commitment into the Club. And, through Ineos Sport, Manchester United will have access to seasoned high-performance professionals, experienced in creating and leading elite teams from both inside and outside the game."

"Manchester United has talented people right across the club and our desire is to al-

ways improve at every level to help bring our great fans more success in the future."

*Redeveloping Old Trafford or a new stadium could cost between £800m and £2bn

Over the coming months, Ratcliffe has set aside another £237m to invest in Old Trafford, which has become a symbol of Glazer neglect at United.

The club confirmed Ineos will provide "a \$300 million fund intended to enable future investment into the Club's infrastructure at Old Trafford, comprising \$200 million paid upon the closing of the transaction and a further \$100 million by the end of 2024".

However, sources indicated that Ratcliffe recognises this is just the start of the financing of work required on Old Trafford and United's Carrington training base and that substantially more investment will be required in the future.

Estimates of the cost of redeveloping Old Trafford or the creation of a new stadium on surrounding land are put at between £800m and £2bn.

MUST greeted the news of Ratcliffe's impending arrival with caution amid concern about the continued presence of the Glazers at the club.

"During 18 years of debt, decay and mismanagement, Manchester United fans have loudly and consistently called for change at our club," the fans' group said in a statement. "When the so-called Strategic Review was announced nearly a year ago, it finally appeared that the sale of the club was on the horizon, potentially bringing the new investment and new direction MUFC so clearly needs."

"Against that backdrop, fans have very mixed feelings today. We welcome the investment from a boyhood red, Sir Jim Ratcliffe and his Ineos company, but many will wish his ownership stake was greater than the initially rumoured 25 per cent. We note the statements that he and his team will control sporting activities, yet puzzle how any organisation can put its very core business in the hands of a minority shareholder, and how that meaningfully works in practice."

"It is now incumbent on the club's owners and management to properly explain how this new structure will work, where the new investment will be directed and how it will benefit the team on the field. As the Supporters' Trust, we expect to have discussions with the club management and the INEOS team in the near future to understand their plans, and to put to them the very many questions fans have today."

"Today might - just might - be a step forward for Manchester United after some very difficult years. But with the Glazers still in charge, people should understand that United fans will remain sceptical and wait for the proof in the pudding."

THE TELEGRAPH

Gwiji by David Chikoko



SPORT

Sir Jim Ratcliffe handed football reins at Man U after £1.03bn deal

PAGE 19



Dar Motor36 Stars hammer Uluguru Stars in 2023 TCA Bilateral Series

By Guardian Correspondent

DAR Motor36 Stars have tightened their grip on the top place in this season's Tanzania Cricket Association (TCA) Moro-Dar Bilateral Series after commanding an 11-run defeat of Uluguru Stars recently.

The national cricket governing body has organized the showdown, which has brought together cricket outfits based in Morogoro and Dar es Salaam to give them a platform to gauge their skills.

Uluguru Stars won the toss and elected to bowl in the clash played at Sokoine University of Agriculture (SUA) ground in Morogoro, limiting Dar Motor36 Stars' batting unit to 167 runs for four wickets in 20 overs.

Skipper, John David, spearheaded the quest for a convincing total after ending five runs short of a half-century, with his figures consisting of five boundaries.

There were moreover meaningful contributions by other cricketers, with opener Mohamed Omary notching 29 runs, Abdallah Hassani ending with 24 runs not out, Rijali Fentu posting 20 runs, Alhaj Sadick chipping in with 16 runs, and Salum Jumbe grabbing 15 runs not out.

There were moreover 18 extra runs given away by Uluguru Stars - one bye, 15 wides, and two no balls - which to some extent boosted Dar Motor36 Stars' total.

Medium pacer Kibwana Salum, Hemedi Abbas, Omary Kizulege, and Ally Chombo took one wicket each for Uluguru Stars.

With the 168-run target in their sight, Uluguru Stars batted with plenty of zeal seeking to come out victorious, only to falter with 12 runs needed to register the victory.

Skipper Salmini Yusuph led Uluguru Stars' pursuit of the target with his 59 runs, his impressive showing however could not help the squad turn its fortunes around.

Yusuph, who had opened the innings, forged a promising partnership with the fellow opener Erick Sata, to get off to a good start as the other opener recorded 33 runs which consisted of a sixer.

Kizulege, coming at number three, had Uluguru Stars piling more runs after notching 30 runs, which propelled the outfit to 132 runs after 15.6 overs.

The top-order cricketers were, by far, the ones with performances worth writing home about, when it came to

Uluguru Stars' innings.

The remainder of the batsmen could not step up and the situation brought about the outfit's downfall in the clash.

Chombo was the only other performer with two digits, chipping in with 10 runs from eight knocks.

Even though Yusuph Ibrahim and Kibwana Salum made their way back with bats in hand, they could not chip in with meaningful figures, as Ibrahim ended six runs short of two digits and Salum was seven runs short of two digits.

Sadick led a successful attempt by Dar Motor36 Stars to frustrate Uluguru Stars' chase, having taken two wickets, and giving away nine runs in two overs.

Kelvin Anjelo (one wicket) and off-spinner, Athumani Siwa (one wicket), also made their presence felt when Dar Motor36 Stars fielded to ensure the side kept Uluguru Stars in check.

As a result, Dar Motor36 Stars is leading the three-team showdown with a 0.4399 net run rate from a victory in four ties and two losses.

Second-placed Uluguru Stars has collected a -0.3112 net run rate from a victory in one tie and a loss in two clashes.

The tournament's other participating team, Morogoro Stars, is sitting third having notched a -0.5833 net run rate - having recorded a victory in one clash and a loss in two ties.



Dar Motor36 Stars cricket outfit's player, Salum Jumbe. PHOTO: COURTESY OF TANZANIA CRICKET ASSOCIATION

Miguel Gamondi expresses tactical optimism following away win



Yanga's head coach, Miguel Ángel Gamondi. PHOTO: COURTESY OF YANGA

By Correspondent Nassir Nchimbi

YANGA'S head coach Miguel Gamondi has praised his players' prowess and collectivism in both transitions while adapting to difficult pitch conditions and picking a 1-0 win against Tabora United at Jamhuri Stadium in Dodoma on Saturday.

Midfielder Stephane Aziz Ki's 10th goal of the season was Yanga's only goal that made the difference as the visitors picked maximum points in the 2023/24 NBC Premier League's away clash against the Tabora-based club.

Yanga finished the calendar year of the domestic league on a winning note, as the squad shapes up for the 2024 Mapinduzi Cup tournament slated for Zanzibar next week.

The Argentine coach said: "My players played like champions, on a difficult pitch that is contrary to when we play at either Azam Complex Stadium or Benjamin Mkapa Stadium."

"They defended strongly, attacked in numbers, we forced them to make mistakes. Although we scored one goal, overall I am pleased with my players," the gaffer noted.

Gamondi disclosed: "The league is very difficult, there is no easy team, and every match has its approach, with that, it makes the NBC Premier League difficult, many mid-table teams play hard

against us, which is normal, in the world top teams face the same situation."

The tactician also said it is difficult to play competitive football in away venues which he described as

not suitable for high profile matches.

The Argentine stated: "Many away teams play in venues like this, which are not suitable for high profile games, I advise from the

pitch to infrastructures to improve the level of competition and also to bring entertainment to the fans, without that players cannot express themselves."

Gamondi also expressed optimism in the rotation of his players, given they showed a great level of desire and competition once given a chance to play.

The gaffer further talked about bringing in a new striker during the January transfer window.

"For me, it's not about rotation, for me it's about preserving the energy of my player after each three games, some face suspension some get injured it is about how my players respond to each game and how to get results for the team," the Argentine stated.

Gamondi asked: "I think fans are happy with my striking force, maybe you tell me this is your idea, and I accept because all teams in the world need a striker, Real Madrid needs a striker, Barcelona has Robert Lewandowski but also needs another striker, why not Yanga?"

"If Yanga gets a new striker during this time, where teams are reluctant to release their best players, I will come to the airport to pick him up too" a delighted Gamondi revealed.

Following the triumph, Yanga is now just one point away from catching up with league leader, Azam FC, having notched 30 points from 11 games while the latter has 31 points after participating in 13 outings.

Tabora United is still sitting 12th on the league log with 15 points in the bag and has just won three league encounters.

TPLB anticipates Simba SC versus Yanga encounter in CAF CL final

By Correspondent Nassir Nchimbi

TANZANIA Premier League Board (TPLB) Information Officer Karim Boimanda has expressed buoyancy in Simba SC and Young Africans SC's chances of making it to the quarterfinals of this season's CAF Champions League when Group Stage fixtures resume in February.

Both teams have collected five points after taking part in four games - posting two draws, losing one tie, and commanding one win in the premier continental club showdown.

He clarified that the board is optimistic about seeing the country's CAF Champions League envoys Simba SC and Young Africans SC, alias Yanga, facing each other in the showdown's final.

The official noted: "We hope that the two teams will qualify

for the quarterfinals and consequently reach the final for the fixture we have projected that the duo will meet each other in the final so that we can witness a tough final game."

"This is possible and can happen if they keep on working hard and embrace determination to achieve that feat, we hope to see Dar es Salaam derby in the season's CAF Champions League final," Boimanda said.

He added: "Both teams had a staggering start to the competition, but they have now recovered their balance as evidenced by the victories they recorded in their recent games."

"That is the behaviour of big teams, when they launch their campaign on the back foot, they never give up until they get back to winning ways and begin producing convincing results."

Boimanda elaborated that

this season's NBC Premier League fixtures will resume after 2023 AFCON games.

"In this regard, we will not have league matches in January and the game between Azam FC and Simba SC which was rescheduled for January 1, will be shifted to another date in February," Boimanda said.

He also revealed that both Simba SC and Yanga will not play their league games on December 29 and thereafter they will depart to join other teams for the Mapinduzi Cup tournament in Zanzibar.

He added that initially, the Mapinduzi Cup contest used to kick off in January but, this time, the tournament begins on December 28.

According to the TPLB official, the change has forced the body to communicate with the showdown's organizers to see the best way of creating a conducive fixture.

Flexibles by David Chikoko

