



National Pg 3 TRA records 2.77trn/- in tax collections



National Pg 4 New projects to facelift Tanga city



National Pg 6 DAWASA boosts number of customers



Mountain guide Faustine Chombo (R) pictured with tourists from various countries at the highest point of Mount Kilimanjaro, Uhuru Peak (5,895 meters above sea level), at the weekend. Photo: Correspondent James Lanka

TANAPA acts on wild dogs' sharp decline, starts breeding

By Guardian Reporter

NEW strategies are being embarked upon by Tanzania National Parks (TANAPA) authorities to revitalise the constantly diminishing numbers of wild dogs, especially in the northern zone extending into neighbouring Kenya.

Albert Mangowi, an assistant park ecologist at the Mkomazi National Park said in a recent interview that there was an acute need to sort

out the threat of extinction facing the unique carnivorous species that conservationists repeatedly halt from irreversible decline.

The measures are being scaled for the Serengeti ecosystem which takes up the Serengeti National Park (SENAPA), the Ngorongoro Conservation Area (NCA) and the Maasai Mara national reserve on the other side of the border.

Numbers of wild dogs at different national

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Blue Economy experts train fishermen on fish finders use

By Guardian Reporter, Zanzibar

FISHERMEN in Zanzibar have attended training on modern fishing methods using the fish finder—a device used to locate fish in outlying areas of coastline waters.

Shabaan Hassan Ramadhan, the training coordinator with the Ministry of Blue Economy and Fisheries, said here yesterday that the training is intended to enable fishermen to catch more significant amounts of fish.

The government is determined to see fishermen shift to modern fishing tools that enhance productivity, he said, noting that the training was part of a fishing sector revamping programme.

The strategy seeks to educate fishermen and equip them with modern fishing

technologies, along with the provision of fishing boats equipped with fish finders.

Zanzibar recognises the role of the blue economy in promoting socio-economic development through better stewardship of the sea and related resources, he stated.

This involves the utilization of sea-based resources to support inclusive and sustainable economic growth, creating more occupational outlets, he said.

The training session was held at the Sheikh Idris Abdulwakil Hall in Kikwajuni suburb of Zanzibar, with one of the fishermen, Issa Salum Mussa expressing hope that the device would make their job easier and boost incomes.

Fish finders simplify the work and enable fishermen to be assured of substantial amounts of catch. Chances are that the new

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Mbeya DCs to survey cattle numbers, report in 20 days

By Guardian Correspondent, Mbeya

DISTRICT commissioners in Mbeya Region have 20 days to report on numbers of livestock in their areas and the carrying capacity of designated grazing areas.

Addressing journalists yesterday here, regional commissioner Juma Homera made public this directive at a press conference yesterday, explaining that the evaluation is meant to check increasing environmental degradation in water catchment areas in the region.

The cattle situation survey was based on a directive by President Samia Suluhu Hassan when launching the filling of water at the dam serving the Julius Nyerere hydropower

project (JNHPP).

Regional secretariats were directed to institute measures to protect water sources for streams and rivers feeding the Great Ruaha, the main tributary to the Rufiji River with its contributing rivers straddling Mbeya, Iringa and Njombe regions.

The RC demanded that DCs submit evaluation reports by January 20, enabling the region to map out measures to strengthen environmental conservation rapidly.

He cited remarks from Vice President Dr Phillip Mpango and Prime Minister Kassim Majaliwa emphasizing environmental protection, tasking RCs with supervising

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Schools remain closed as cholera ravages Malawi

LILONGWE

MALAWI yesterday postponed the opening of primary and secondary schools for at least two weeks due to a cholera outbreak.

The new term was set to begin on January 3, but the rising cases of cholera infections and deaths forced the government to cancel school reopening plans as it deals with the outbreak.

The measure covers Blantyre and Lilongwe, the main cities, while for all other learners in other districts, the respective authorities were tasked with enhancing compliance with recommended cholera control measures.

This includes cholera vaccination for those not yet been vaccinated, a health

ministry statement noted, citing evaluation from the country's presidential taskforce on coronavirus and cholera.

In a December 22 update, the ministry said that cholera had killed 410 people since February, with 13,837 tested for the disease, and 338 hospitalised.

Cholera is an acute diarrhoea infection caused by ingestion of food or water contaminated with the bacterium Vibrio cholera, experts say.

The incubation period is between 12 hours and five days after such ingesting, with the disease still a global threat to public health while it is entirely treatable, on the basis of the World Health Organisation (WHO).

In November, Malawi received 2.9m doses of cholera vaccines from the United Nations as the outbreak was spreading, officials said.

Malawi, which is one of the poorest countries in Africa, has a population of 18 million people and most relies on subsistence farming. However, the food security situation is precarious on account of drought and massive tropical storms from the Indian Ocean western rim.

Similar alarming reports gripped the Kenyan capital of Nairobi, also experiencing a cholera outbreak, but observers say cholera is

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National Assembly Speaker Dr Tulia Ackson (L), who is Mbeya Urban legislator, takes part in an environmental hygiene operation at Mbeya city's Soweto market yesterday. Photo: Correspondent Nebart Msokwa



Blue Economy experts train fishermen on fish finders use

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technology will attract more people to engage in fishing activities, he said.

Fishermen will have their welfare improved as they use the boats to reach farther into the sea and the finders to be sure of fish sources, thus better incomes, he elaborated.

Kheri Ramadhani Juma, another fisherman, said that previously they had to spend a lot of time in the sea, wandering to find a usable fish source.

They were staying in the sea for up to 15 days in search of fish and at times fail to find fish altogether, so with better boats and fish-finding devices, the time lag is likely to be reduced significantly.

He was happy about the training, underlying that fishermen need to undergo further training in case there are technologies available that they are not familiar with. This training should be provided to fishermen in both parts of the twin island state, he added.

Mbeya DCs to survey cattle numbers, report in 20 days

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more tree planting and conservation of water sources.

If the district surveys indicate that the number of livestock is higher than the usable capacity of allocated grazing areas, the regional authorities will consult on measures to lessen the challenge, he stated.

"We need to protect our environment with all our efforts," he declared, underlining that water sources are key to survival and must be maintained to ensure that power generation at Mtera, Kidatu and the JNHPP is optimised.

As soon as the district leaders submit their reports, the regional defence and security committee will meet to scan the extent of the problem and what is to be done in each district.

Last week, Chunya DC Simon

Mayeka issued restrictions on the movement of livestock into the district, pointing out that available livestock numbers suffice for the grazing fields available.

Excessive livestock numbers in the district pose considerable threats to conservation, instructing ward and village officials not to allow new herds of livestock into their areas. Those seen to be violating the directive will incur stern measures on their part, he cautioned.

Some pastoralists were driving their animals from Mbarali and Songwe districts through bush routes, coming into conflict with herders already based in the area as grazing space is insufficient.

The influx of livestock in the districts brews chaos between herders and farmers as migrating herders let livestock eat up crops with relish and abandon.

Schools remain closed as cholera ravages Malawi

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endemic in Malawi, where seasonal outbreaks are regular during the wet season.

Malawi has significant morbidity and mortality rates in affected populations, where since 1998 cholera cases have been reported, especially in the southern region, which is low-lying, flat, and prone to flooding during the rainy season.

The current outbreak has affected

27 out of 29 districts of Malawi, the largest outbreak reported in the country in the past 10 years, officials affirmed.

The outbreak is taking place in the context of tropical storm Ana (January 2022) and Cyclone Gombe (March 2022) which caused severe flooding, leading to the displacement of a large population who now lack access to safe water, sanitation, and hygiene, they added.

Dr Tulia Ackson joins market cleaning drive

By Guardian Correspondent, Mbeya

NATIONAL Assembly Speaker Dr Tulia Ackson, who is Mbeya Urban MP, yesterday led residents in Ruanda ward, Mbeya city in a cleanliness operation at the Soweto market which was extremely dirty, posing human health risks.

During the clean-up exercise, Dr Tulia witnessed piles of waste abandoned by the traders and emitting a bad smell.

She urged residents in the ward to prioritize hygiene by conducting intensive cleanliness so as to avoid the eruption of epidemic diseases including Cholera.

Dr Tulia said that the increase of abandoned waste in Mbeya city has ruined the image and quality of the city, wanting the residents to stop doing so and rather put more effort into ensuring that their surroundings are clean.

"Mbeya was in recent years labeled as one of the clean and smart cities but the ongoing trend is not pleasing and residents need to change as council leaders have taken steps to ensure that the city remains clean," she said.

Anna Ndimbwa, chairperson of Benki Street said that she has been conducting close follow-up on the collection of the abandoned wastes in the area without success.

"After seeing that the situation is becoming intense, I decided to report this to the ward councilor of Ruanda but things are still hard, there are a lot of abandoned piles of waste," she said.

"Mbeya was in recent years labeled as one of the clean and smart cities but the ongoing trend is not pleasing and residents need to change as council leaders have taken steps to ensure that the city remains clean"



Zanzibar First Lady Mariam Mwinyi (3rd-R, in hat) pictured yesterday presenting a fishing boat and related gear to Fatma Mshamara, secretary of Kisiwapaza's Mwanzo Mgumu group of South Pemba. It was at a seaweed cultivation ceremony held as part of 59th anniversary of the January 12 Zanzibar Revolution. Photo: Zanzibar State House

TANAPA acts on wild dogs' sharp decline, starts breeding

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parks countrywide were noticeably in decline, with poaching and acute conflict with herders being some of the reasons.

Conservation authorities say that by 2020 the country had upwards of 220 wild dogs, roughly 3.3 percent of the estimated 6,600 wild dogs roaming the world's wild zones.

"In the past, wild dogs could be found in all national parks but now just some expansive parks like the Serengeti, Maasai Mara, Ruaha and Katavi have them, -plus the Nyerere National Park and the vast Selous Game Reserve where the Nyerere park was carved out. Smaller park zones like Ugalla, Mkomazi and Tsavo across the border from Mkomazi park hold significant numbers of the dreaded canines, he said.

Tanzania has 22 national parks and a large number of game reserves and game-controlled areas, which are more open to other economic activities where the wild dogs can scarcely survive experts, say.

Pastoralists in particular poison the animals as they know few limits when moving out in hunting packs, and would destroy a cowshed if they arrive numerous in sizeable hunting packs as they mostly do.

Wild dogs chase all sorts of animals and overpower them by sheer numbers but often their size limits the species they can hunt, and are also prone to scavenging on the hunted carcasses of hyenas or tigers as they hunt in isolation.

Their numbers are also going down due to outbreaks of infectious diseases such as rabies, the

conservation official remarked.

Philbert Ngoti, the national rhino coordinator, said that rhinos like wild dogs are endangered species, asserting that the decrease in the number of wild dogs has to do with wild zones being reclaimed by herders and farmers.

Wild dogs can chase various prey chalking up 75 kilometers a day, either returning to base when they have a litter to feed or moving into a new habitat-cum-hunting zone he said.

"Strategies include capturing and keeping them in a yard to allow multiplication, after which we release them into national parks," he explained, urging villagers near various national parks not to kill the animals due to their small numbers - instead of the destruction they cause if they are nearby.

Constantine Kanyasu, Geita MP

and former Tourism and Natural Resources deputy minister, linked the drop in the number of wild dogs with the invasion into wildlife corridors.

He admitted that villagers lay poison traps on wild dogs as they move around in destructive numbers, not hunting in limited zones like lions, tigers or even hyenas.

Wildlife corridors in the Kilimanjaro National Park (KINAPA) are blocked by human activities and wildlife passages no longer exist, he said.

He emphasized the need to educate people on the importance of keeping wildlife corridors safe and protected, while some observers see the issue in terms of land use plans and compensation if such land is reclaimed for conservation.



Some 3.6 million people in Somalia depend on humanitarian assistance

Several hurt in Uganda mall stampede 'recovering'

KAMPALA

UGANDA'S police are investigating the stampede at a mall which left at least 9 people dead mostly juveniles on Saturday night.

The Freedom City shopping mall accident plunged into mourning the country which hosted its first New Year's celebrations in three years.

"In the outskirts of Kampala, in a shopping mall there was a concert

that was organised and we received information towards midnight, around midnight, that there was a stampede," Patrick Onyango, Kampala Metropolitan Police spokesperson recounted.

"Three children died on (the) spot and six others were pronounced dead on arrival in a hospital." He added that the youngest victim was a girl "aged 10 and the oldest among the dead was a 29-year-old woman."

It is alleged that the incident occurred at when the event's MC encouraged attendees to go outside and watch the fireworks display. Once the display ended, a stampede ensued. Emergency responders arrived on the scene and transported the injured.

"The injured are recovering. There were also about 10, but they are recovering. They are not so badly off. But mostly these were children."

The shopping mall is a popular venue for music concerts.

According to the Ugandan police force spokesperson, apart from Freedom City's tragic incident, the End of Year and New Year celebrations which included 1618 fireworks displays, were generally successful.

On Sunday, no arrests had been made yet. Police detectives are still trying to establish the number of people who were inside the mall.



Former Zanzibar president Dr Ali Mohamed Shein (L) exchanges greetings with Zanzibar Tourism Commission executive secretary Hafsa Mbamba at the launch of a five-star hotel in South Unguja at the weekend. Photo: Rahma Suleima

Operations from berths 8 to 11 at Dar port put under TPA

By Guardian Reporter

THE Tanzania Ports Authority (TPA) has said that operations at berths number eight up to 11 at the Dar es Salaam Port will be under its mandate after the departure of the Tanzania International Container Services (TICTS).

In a statement, the authority said it has started operating the berths beginning January this year after the expiry of a contract by TICTS.

"TPA informs the general public that from January, 1 all operations for berth eight up to 11 at the Dar es Salaam Port will be under TPA," he said.

According to the statement, any client with goods at the mentioned berths which were under TICTS should pay via bank accounts which

have been indicated in the public notice. "During this transition period official addresses which were being used when TICTS was in operations will continue to apply until a new criteria will be made.

TPA will now operate berths 8 to 11 that have been under the private sector for over twenty (20) years so as to get the revenues forecasted to be collected from cargo handled at those respective berths

TICTS Limited has been handling containers at berths number 8 to 11 of the Dar es Salaam Port. The company had a five-year lease agreement which expired on September 30, 2022 but it was extended for another three months to give more time for the two parties to discuss the possibility of renewing the contract.

Strike freezes majority of transport services across Tunisia's capital

TUNIS

STAFF from state-owned public transport firm Transtu walked out and hundreds demonstrated outside the prime minister's office, responding to a call by the transport section of the powerful UGTT trade union federation.

The strike froze "the majority" of transport services across the capital of almost three million people, Transtu said.

The strike is the latest in a string of similar actions as Tunisia grapples with a grinding economic crisis, with frequent shortages of basic goods from petrol to cooking oil.

The North African nation is struggling with debts of more than 100 percent of gross domestic product and is in negotiations

with the International Monetary Fund for a nearly two billion-dollar bailout.

Transtu, which runs around 250 bus routes and 15 tram lines, was also shut down by a strike during school holidays in November, a peak time for families using public transport.

The IMF has called for the implementation of a string of controversial measures, including gradually removing subsidies on basic goods and the restructuring of public firms, which include Transtu as well as monopolies in water, energy and cereals.

The birthplace of the Arab Spring has also been mired in political divisions since President Kais Saied staged a dramatic power grab in July 2021.

TRA records 2.77 trillion/- in tax collections in December

By Guardian Reporter

THE Tanzania Revenue Authority (TRA) recorded 2.77trn/- in tax collections in December 2022, the highest monthly collection recorded since the authority was formed in 1996.

The December collections concluded a good performance for the taxman in the first half of the fiscal year 2022/2023 according to the authority.

According to a statement released yesterday by the Commissioner of TRA Alphayo Kidata, the December collection was 106.5 percent above the target of 2.6 trn/-.

The December collection was 260bn/- more than what was collected in the corresponding period last year.

From July to December 2022, the taxman has collected a total of 12.48 trn/- which is 99-percent of its 12.48 trn/- target.

"No matter how successful we have been, it is still important to increase tax collections by improving the willingness of taxpayers to pay taxes," Kidata stated in part, adding that this will enable the government's capacity to provide services to its citizens, including security, infrastructure, and social services.

The impressive first-half performance, according to Kidata, was attributed to the rising

willingness among the public to pay taxes; improved relations between the authority and taxpayers; timely resolution of issues, and the current growth of business and economic activities in the country.

The success has also been partly attributed to President Samia Suluhu Hassan approach to revenue collection, which entails not to use force when collecting tax from businesses.

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REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP) CONSULTANT TO CONDUCT MIDTERM EVALUATION OF THE BENGO FLR PROJECT

A. Background of consultancy assignment/ project
The forest resources of the three implementing countries Tanzania, Kenya and Zambia are continuously declining overall, which threatens biodiversity as well as ecosystem services and sustainable development opportunities for the population. In all three countries, the project is implemented in areas specific to each country - the Aberdares Mountains of Kenya, the coastal regions and miombo forests of the Ruvuma Landscape in Tanzania, and the dry forests of the Silowana Complex in Zambia. The area directly addressed by the project covers a total of min. 37,500 ha and 13 communities. The project aims to establish a policy and strategy framework in three selected AFR100 countries. This will ensure the long-term success of FLR interventions, create sustainable landscapes for livelihoods, and mitigate climate change. Comprehensive forest landscape restoration activities are being implemented in all three countries, in addition to reforestation, sustainable forest management, FSC certification, and improved forest and fire management, these include numerous activities to improve the legal framework and forest policy, the development of community self-governance structures to manage their natural resources and the deployment of forest guards, and the development of income alternatives from forest products, effective stoves, etc.

B. Overall Objective of the consultancy
The purpose of this Mid Term Review (MTR) is to review the progress and the status of implementation of the project activities as outlined in the project document, share experiences and lessons learnt, identify strengths and challenges, and derive recommendation for enhanced implementation and effectiveness during the next two years of the project. Mid Term Review is part of the project design and reporting requirements. The main objective of the midterm review is to provide WWF and stakeholders with an independent assessment of the progress made towards the set targets as per project Results Framework in order to ensure its delivery. The results of the evaluation will inform implementation of the project activities in the last two years of the project implementation. The evaluation report should compare the planned outcomes of the project and the progress so far, and thus reveal any remaining gaps that can be addressed in the final years of implementation.

C. Required profile of the consultancy:
Minimum requirements of the evaluation team/the evaluator:
i. At least five (5) years of proven experience in evaluating integrated conservation, restoration and community-based projects in Sub Saharan Africa
ii. A sound knowledge of development interventions in the sector of forestry and forest landscape restoration, community-based approaches and the relevant policy/ strategic frameworks in Tanzania, Kenya and Zambia
iii. A proof of similar assignment undertaken within the past 3 years
iv. English: all members shall possess a level C1 expertise (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages)

Application procedure & Submission of Applications: All interested applicants may get the detailed ToR on WWF websites at https://www.wwf.or.tz/jobs_and_opportunities/consultancies_and_tenders/ and submit your full proposal (technical & financial) through procurement email at procurement@wwftz.org no later than **10:00 am Thursday, 22nd January 2022**. Only softcopy proposals are accepted and should be addressed to;

Secretary, Procurement Committee
WWF Tanzania
Kiko Street, Off Mwai Kibaki Road Plot 252, Mikocheni
P. O. Box 63117, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania
Tel: +255 22 277 5346/277 2455/270 0077 Fax: +255 22 277 5535;
website. wwf.or.tz

Evaluation of the consultancy applications will be done based on WWF procurement guidelines and that WWF Tanzania is not bound to accept any lowest or highest proposal/bid. Only Shortlisted candidates shall be contacted. WWF has a principle of zero tolerance on fraud and corruption, if you encounter such an incident, then report it by sending an email to fcii@wwftz.org.

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VP underscores need to make use of rain season planting food crops and trees in 'greening' drive

By Polycarp Machira, Dodoma

THE Vice President, Philip Mpango has called upon Tanzanians to use the ongoing rains in many parts of the country to plant crops for food production and trees for environmental conservation.

He said the abundance of food supply is critical for development as farmers can sell the surplus and earn income while maintaining the environment is key in alleviating the effects of climate change, among others.

The VP also called for Tanzanians to maintain peace and tranquility right from the family level, saying only peaceful nations prosper easily to high levels of development.

He noted that peace, love and unity at family levels and beyond can be realized when the public promotes and observe women's and children's rights for they are most vulnerable to domestic violence.

Dr Mpango made the statement here during a New Year service at the Yohane Bosco Muyui Catholic Church in Dodoma city. He argued that in spite of various efforts being taken to promote equality, there are injustices among some members of the community that affects the welfare of women.

"We still experience a lot of injustices to women in the communities as there is a number of challenges that are facing women from family level as a result of denying them owning properties including land," said Dr Mpango.

In his address, the VP appealed to Tanzanians of all walks of to continue praying for national peace and tranquility for the year 2023.

"By all means, Tanzanians should refrain from being involved in violence, but instead preach peace," he said, reiterating the importance of hard work and environmental conservation for national development.

He also asked religious leaders and their parishioners to continue praying for government leaders so that they keep on serving the national interest in all aspects.

Speaking last week during a Christmas service at the Christ the King Parish at Veyula in Dodoma, Dr Mpango urged Tanzanians to

strengthen protection of children from acts of violence, which affect them physically and psychologically.

He appealed to Tanzanians, who have abused children to ask for God's forgiveness, adding that they should stop injustice to children, because as believers they must meet the needs of children, including education.

A recent police report showed that there has been a 25.95 per cent increase in child sexual abuse cases from 2015 to 2020. In the year 2020, some 7,388 cases were reported while in 2015, 5,803 cases were registered.

Police records showed that from January to December 2021, there were 11,499 reported cases of abuse and violence against children in Tanzania.

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO) recent report, nearly 3 in 4 children, or 300 million children aged 2-4 years regularly suffer physical punishment and/or psychological violence at the hands of parents and caregivers.

One in 5 women and 1 in 13 men report having been sexually abused as a child aged 0-17 years, and 120 million girls and young women under 20 years of age have suffered some form of forced sexual contact.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) is the most widely-ratified international human rights treaty in history and the most complete statement of children's rights.

The Convention, which came into force in Tanzania in 1991, puts children at the heart of development.

Since it was adopted by the United Nations in November 1989, 196 countries have signed up for the UNCRC, with only one country yet to ratify.

"We still experience a lot of injustices to women in the communities as there is a number of challenges that are facing women from family level as a result of denying them owning properties including land"

New projects to transform Tanga into a competitive business city

By Francis Kajubi

TANGA region is set to be transformed into a competitive commercial city with an investment of over 2bn/- into infrastructure that facilitates the ease of doing business.

Speaking during the special visit by journalists in the city held last week, Tanga City Mayor Abdulrahman Shiloo said that the money which is part of the 2022/23 budget for the city development projects will be allocated to constructing modern markets, a city trade center and improving the quality of road infrastructure.

"The development projects slated for the 2022/23 fiscal year are intended to transform the outlook of Tanga city and make it competitive in attracting big investments and businesses to other cities such as Dar es Salaam and Arusha," said Shiloo.

According to him, the central government has allocated 540m/- for the construction of a small and medium entrepreneurs market in Kange suburb. The market is designed with a capacity of accommodating over 2,000 traders at a time.

He asserted that another 150m/- has been allocated for the construction of the fisheries, livestock, and poultry products at a place known as Mkingo wa Chuma.

"The government has allocated 1.2bn/- to the city for the construction of a business one-stop center. Another modern market worth 300m/- will be constructed

just on the immediate outskirts of the city.

The city council has been allocated 42m/- for installation of street lights across the city center to highways that lead into and out of the city," said Shiloo.

He said that the city has also allocated funds for empowering youth, women and the disabled to secure soft loans for establishing and expanding small businesses.

"The city council has during the current fiscal year been allocated 2.88bn/- for lending 115 individual women and groups, 72 individual youth and 24 people with disability," he added.

Tanga Regional Administrative Secretary (RAS) Pili Mnyema said that the region has been allocated enough funds for different socioeconomic activities that target fostering people-centered development.

She said that during the 2022/23 fiscal year the region received 23bn/- for the education sector, especially the construction of 249 classrooms for form one students joining the school this January. The funds will also serve for the construction of 228 new classrooms in temporary schools in rural Tanga.

The region had in 2021/22 allocated 9.9bn/- that was used in the construction of residential units for teachers and 465 secondary school classrooms.

"The central government has allocated 15bn/- during the current fiscal year for Tanga city and rural areas' clean water supply and sanitation projects.



Bishop Dr Evance Chande (2nd-L) of the Karmeli Assemblies of God church leads prayers in Dodoma Urban's Ipagala ward at the weekend to usher in the New Year. Photo: Correspondent Peter Mkwavila

DC issues ultimatum to farmers and herders to leave Kilombero northern safari hunting block

By Guardian Correspondent,

Kilombero

KILOMBERO district commissioner, Hanji Godigodi has given ten days starting December 2022 for pastoralists and farmers who invaded the Kilombero Northern Safari hunting block within the Kilombero valley to relocate to other places.

The Kilombero valley in Mlimba District Council is one of the sources that flows its waters to the Rufiji River in Coast Region that fills dams at the Julius Nyerere Hydroelectric Power Plant (JNHPP).

The on-going human activities at

the water source in Mlimba could ultimately affect the flow of water at the power project.

He gave the ultimatum yesterday during a tour at the Kilombero Northern Safari hunting block where he witnessed various human activities including farming and grazing being practiced within the valley.

He said farmers at the area have cut a good number of trees and cleared forests to establish maize farms. He said some of them have even constructed houses.

"We cannot leave people to sabotage our economy; environmental destructions going on at this water source have direct effects to the 6.5trn/- power project

in Rufiji," he said, adding the government is ready to relocate all the invaders at the Kilombero valley to restore it and ensure a good flow to the Rufiji River.

Godigodi said the government will not hesitate to take measures against invaders after the ten days grace period, insisting President Samia Suluhu Hassan had already directed for protection of water sources.

A patrol officer at the Kilombero Northern Safari hunting block, James Bebe said the forest destruction has fuelled poaching because animals have no places to stay.

"We are experiencing a serious invasion of pastoralists and farmers

in the valley; wild animals are running from their natural homes as farmers clear forests within the block," he said.

Bebe thanked the Tanzania Wildlife Management Authority (TAWA), Tanzania National Parks (TANAPA) and authorities in Mlimba District Council for their cooperation in ensuring successful patrols to control poachers within the hunting block.

Head at Mlimba police station, Donati Mhina urged villagers surrounding the hunting block to stop farming and grazing within the valley since it is illegal in accordance with the laws.

However, the villagers blamed local government leaders for taking bribes from pastoralists and farmers for purposes of allowing them to conduct farming activities within the valley.



Members of the Songe ward community committee in Kilindi District, Tanga Region, pictured at the weekend seeking to confirm a border at Kwengengo which is at the centre of a long-standing dispute between herders and farmers. Right is the ward's livestock officer, Ismael Niilo. Photo: Correspondent Dege Masoli

AMCOW elected into world water council board

By Silver Nwokoro

Members of the 9th General Assembly of the World Water Council (WWC) have elected African Ministers' Council on Water (AMCOW) into the Board of Governors (BOG) for 2023 - 2025.

The BoG will promote water as politics and a means to render services to release and sustain the global sustainable development agenda.

The WWC, an international multi-stakeholder platform organisation, is the founder and co-organiser of the World Water Forum. Its mission

is to mobilise action on critical water issues at all levels. WWC engages people in debates and challenges conventional thinking at the highest decision-making level.

AMCOW, on the other hand, works to provide political leadership, policy direction and advocacy in the provision, use and sustainable management of water resources in Africa.

As part of the AMCOW strategy to consolidate engagement at the global level, AMCOW successfully bid to serve on the BOG for the period 2023 - 2025. During the voting process, AMCOW emerged as

first with 184 votes, more than any other.

A statement issued said AMCOW's function would strengthen WWC's global efforts in mobilising collective action on water for all purposes. AMCOW brings on board several years of significant contribution to shaping the agenda and focus of the world water fora. It will facilitate access to the African Union Heads of State and Government, Ministers responsible for water affairs and the Member States.

Overall, the WWC will benefit again from AMCOW's experience

in successfully coordinating the Africa Regional processes for the 5th, 6th and 7th editions of the World Water Forum. AMCOW will contribute to the sub-themes and format of the 10th Forum - "Spare and Share Water". It will also drive the mobilisation of a solid and impactful African presence at the 10th World Water Forum in Bali, Indonesia.

AMCOW served on the World Water Council's Board of Governors from 2008 - 2016 when it played critical roles at the 8th and 9th World Water Forums in Brasilia and Dakar.



National Irrigation Commission director general Raymond Mndolwa issues instructions to the commission's experts in Kilimanjaro Region at the weekend on Mwanga District's Kirya Irrigation Scheme. This was soon after the termination of a contract with firms involved in the implementation of a 1.6bn/- irrigation canal project. Photo: Correspondent

Agency hands over documents for the third phase of the rural electrification project in Tanga

By Correspondent George Sembony,

Tanga

THE Rural Electrification Agency (REA) has handed over documents to Ok Electricals and Electronic Services, a contractor who has been tasked to implement the third phase of the rural electrification project in Tanga region signaling the project's countrywide launch.

Hassan Seif Saïdy, the REA Director General, said the Peri-Urban Electrification Project (PUEP), Phase three, which is being executed in eight Tanzania mainland regions at a cost of 76.9bn/- will benefit 4,346 residents in 82 peri-urban locations across the region.

He declared that the project in Tanga would cost 11.5bn/- and will take 18 months to complete.

"The current special project would exclude just Kilindi and Pangani districts in Tanga Region and it is being implemented in phases. The project includes all other district headquarters," Eng Saïdy stated.

Acting Tanga Regional Commissioner Hashim Mgandila launched the project, urging contractors to use locally manufactured products.

Mgandila remarked that using imported materials that are also

manufactured locally helps to develop the economies and jobs in the areas where the projects are used.

Mgandila also reiterated the REA DG's directive to the contractor to offload electricity materials such as poles in villages scheduled to get services in order to avoid unwarranted expectations from areas where the materials have already been delivered.

He encouraged REA and the contractor to expedite the survey and clearly define the route where the power lines would pass so that authorities could assist in convincing villages to allow the lines to pass without any squabbles because the project lacks compensation.

"It is being done on people's will, thus we need to rally them to allow the lines to pass through their property without compensation.

Levocatus Mwankemwa, the project's chief engineer, projected that the project will be completed by December this year.

He stated that industries close down businesses between January and February in China due to national events in the country's calendar. "It takes up to 60 days to obtain purchased goods from China, but we hope things will work out well and we will complete the project in time," he said.

By Guardian Correspondent, Mbeya

TARI Uyole launches research on nutritious yellow corn to support war against stunting

THE Tanzania Agriculture Research Institute (TARI), Uyole has launched research on the nutritious yellow corn grain to help the war against stunting in the Southern Highlands Zone.

A researcher at TARI Uyole Leonard Sabula revealed this during an interview with this paper on the various researches that the centre is

conducting. He said the research started in 2020 and is expected to end during the beginning of the agriculture exhibitions (Nanene).

He said the institute intends to finalise the research earlier this year and that distribution will start immediately especially in areas which will be seen suitable for production of the crop.

"We have noted that southern highland regions produce food but they are the one facing serious issues of malnutrition and stunting," he said.

He said the institute was also

conducting research on potatoes, beans and other nutritious crops which will help in addressing stunting in the regions.

He said the crops were important to children less than

five years noting however that they were also suitable for other ages.

He said apart from being suitable for consumption, the maize was also important as a cash crop as they are marketable in many countries namely Egypt.

Southern zone regions are known as national food baskets but they still grapple with stunting and malnutrition.

Complex violence defies military operations in restive east Congo

KINSHASA

There was hope last week that mounting violence in the Democratic Republic of Congo could ebb, after the feared M23 group agreed to surrender territories to the East African Community Regional Forces (EACRF).

And for most parts of the year, including recently, the security threat was largely seen as caused by the M23. But a new report by the UN Panel of Experts says communal violence also increased in 2022 especially between Yaka and Teke communities in western parts of the country.

This week, the UN Panel of Experts on the DRC said the violence in Kwamouth, in Mai-Ndombe province, 200 kilometres from Kinshasa was a collective security threat on the DR Congo.

In the Report to the Security Council, the Experts cited the Ugandan rebel groups, the ADF as having "continued to expand

their area of operations and attack civilians in of Beni and Lubero, in North Kivu, and in southern Ituri."

The ADF used improvised explosive devices in urban areas, opting for more visible attacks through well-established networks. "ADF continued to operate in small groups launching attacks simultaneously on multiple fronts."

The report says violence is increasing despite application of the state of siege, which had been in place since May 2021 in Ituri and North Kivu province. President Félix Tshisekedi had decreed this measure to combat armed groups in these provinces. Under this arrangement, civilian administrators and governors were replaced by military and police administrators.

According to the report, violence continued "despite the military operations carried out by the armies of the Democratic Republic of Congo (FARDC), the Uganda People's Defence Forces (UPDF) and

UN security forces (Monusco)."

"The fourth phase of Operation Shujaa, in September 2022, even led to MORE ADF attacks against civilians in retaliation, as had been observed in the past," the experts say. Since 30 November 2021, the Ugandan army has been in a joint operation with the Congolese army in Ituri and North Kivu to hunt down Ugandan ADF rebels who have a link to ISIS.

"ADF continued to be considered as an option for recruits willing to join Da'esh (ISIS)... because Da'esh publicity increased the notoriety of ADF. In its June 2022 Al-Naba newsletter, Da'esh encouraged recruits who had failed to join jihad battlefields elsewhere to travel to its African provinces.

"In November, Da'esh published a 20-minute propaganda video on ADF titled 'The life of jihad'. This video showcased ADF activities, plus a staged execution imitating Da'esh's," the report said.

Terrorists also adopted an ethnic profiling, abducting hundreds of civilians and killing some of them, in retaliation against those collaborating with the FARDC, the Congolese army, since 2021.



Small traders selling fried fish wait for customers outside Dodoma city's Majengo main market yesterday with the fish dangerously exposed to dust and posing a public health hazard. Photo: Correspondent Ibrahim Joseph



THE UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA
MINISTRY OF INFORMATION, COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY



TANZANIA COMMUNICATIONS REGULATORY AUTHORITY

PUBLIC NOTICE

IMPORTATION OF COMMUNICATION EQUIPMENT AND PROVISION OF SATELLITE TELEVISION SERVICES WITHOUT LICENCES

The Tanzania Communications Regulatory Authority (TCRA) is a Government body established under the Tanzania Communications Regulatory Authority Act, No.12 of 2003, to regulate the Electronic and Postal Communications in Tanzania.

TCRA has noted that there are companies and individuals carrying out the business of Satellite Television Services without having a valid licence and importing of communication equipment including Canal plus Decoders and other similar equipment, which are not type-approved by the Authority.

Pursuant to Section 23 (1) (b) and (c) of the Electronic and Postal Communications Act, Cap 306 (R.E 2022) and Regulation 40(a) of the Electronic and Postal Communications (Licensing) Regulations, 2018 requires importers and distributors of Electronic Communication Equipment to have licence from TCRA. Moreover, section 83(1) of the Electronic and Postal Communications Act, requires any equipment used for connection to any electronic communications network for the purpose of receiving and, or transmitting electronic communication signals to be approved by the Authority.

NOTICE is hereby given to the General Public and those operating satellite television services without having a valid Support Services (Satellite) licence from TCRA and those importing and distributing communication equipment including Canal plus Decoders and other similar equipment which are not type-approved by the Authority to immediately cease operating the said businesses, instead follow the procedures to obtain licences.

Failure to comply with this Notice, TCRA shall proceed to take further regulatory and legal action without further Notice.

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TANZANIA COMMUNICATIONS REGULATORY AUTHORITY
30th December 2022

2172/0001

More than 300 children in Simanjiro District to access quality medical services thanks to CHF

By Guardian Correspondent, Simanjiro

A total of 326 children from Losoito and Kambi ya Chokaa villages in Simanjiro District in Manyara Region can now access quality medical services without further co-payments after having on their hands the improved-Community Health Fund (CHF) cards.

They have been supported by the non-for-profit-AKO Tanzania Community Support, which paid a total of 1.956m/- to get the insurance cards for the children.

Hilda Kimath, the organisation's director, said the children are now assured of quality health services and that their parents will not spend time worrying about how they will cover medical bills for their children when they fall ill.

"When we heard on the challenges that our children are going through especially in accessing quality health services, we sat down and decided to bring our support so as to enable them get quality services whenever they fall sick."

Coordinator for iCHF in Simanjiro, Ibrahim Yeo commended AKO Tanzania Community Support for ensuring that the children have the insurance cards, something that assures them of getting health services on time.

"Sometimes children fail to get health services on time once they fall sick due to lack of funds, parents take a long to send children to hospital if their pockets are empty,

but with the cards, the children are assured of accessing quality health services," he said.

Elias Loshilaa, Kambi ya Chokaa resident expressed appreciation to the organisation for its generous support saying that this will enable a number of children from vulnerable families to enjoy free health services in various health centres.

He called for other stakeholders to extend their support to the villages and other societies as there are many people who need help.



When we heard on the challenges that our children are going through especially in accessing quality health services, we sat down and decided to bring our support so as to enable them get quality services whenever they fall sick

DAWASA in Ukonga increases number of customers following improved services

By Correspondent Joseph Mwendapole

THE Dar es Salaam Water and Sanitation Authority (DAWASA), Ukonga has raised the number of customers from 5,978 to 7,262 customers in 2022, thanks to improved services.

The increase of customers has been attributed to improvements made in various areas that had water challenges, including the streets of Kisumu, Mwakanga, and Kinyamwezi, all in Pugu ward.

Manager for DAWASA Ukonga, Sirila Josephat, during an interview on the implementation of water projects in the area mentioned other streets that had water challenges as Kichangani radar, Bwera and Bombambili streets in Majohe District, Guluka Kwalala and Gongo la Mboto streets.

He said the organisation carried out various works including changing old infrastructure and laying new pipes as well as implementing water projects in the respective challenging areas.

He added that the region has invested a lot of energy in implementing various water projects, including new connection projects, including the Majohe project, Mapensheni to provide water services for Kisiwani and Buyuni residents.

"We are working day and night to implement various water projects with the specific aim of enabling citizens to get clean water, especially for areas that had long-term water problems," he said.

of 1.5-inch pipes for a distance of 450 meters," he said.

Sirila said that through the improvements made, the water service has now improved and has helped to eliminate the water problem in the areas of Gongo la Mboto, Ulongoni A, Bridge, Jeshini Songas, Kajiungeni, Ulongoni B, Shamba pada, Pugu Station Kirumba and Kisumu.

He said that currently, the water service in many areas of the Ukonga area has improved and the people continue to enjoy the service.

"We are going to ensure that the remaining areas, including Mwakanga CCM, Mwakanga kwa Minja, Pugu Secondary School, Mwakanga Church, Mwakanga Hija and Kibiriko Juu all have full access to water," he said.



...the Kisiwani water supply project involved the laying of 1.5-inch and 2-inch pipes for a distance of 750 meters, while the mapensheni water project involved the laying of 1.5-inch pipes for a distance of 600 meters and the Buyuni project involved the laying



It's roaring roadside foodstuff and other business in a section of Muheza town, as captured yesterday. However, sources talked of concerns over safety going endlessly unheeded. Photo: Correspondent Steven William

Iringa municipal council loans 40 residential plots to journo

By Correspondent Friday Simbaya,

Iringa

IRINGA Municipal Council has loaned 40 residential plots to journalists in the region in a special agreement with the Iringa Press Club aimed at addressing housing challenges facing scribes.

The Mayor of Iringa Municipality, Ibrahim Ngwada gave the plots to the journalists out of more than 80 who requested to be given plots by the council on loan.

The list of names of 40 journalists who were given the plots have been handed over to the chairman of the Iringa Press Club (IPC), Frank Leonard.

The journalists are said to have requested that they be given plots provided by the council on loan during the celebration of World Press Freedom Day (WPFDD) in May 2022, when the mayor was an official guest.

"After taking the matter to the council of the Iringa Municipality, we decided to lend some journalists

plots to build houses by paying in installments," said Ngwada.

He added that the council is not capable of providing all journalists with free plots so they started with a few.

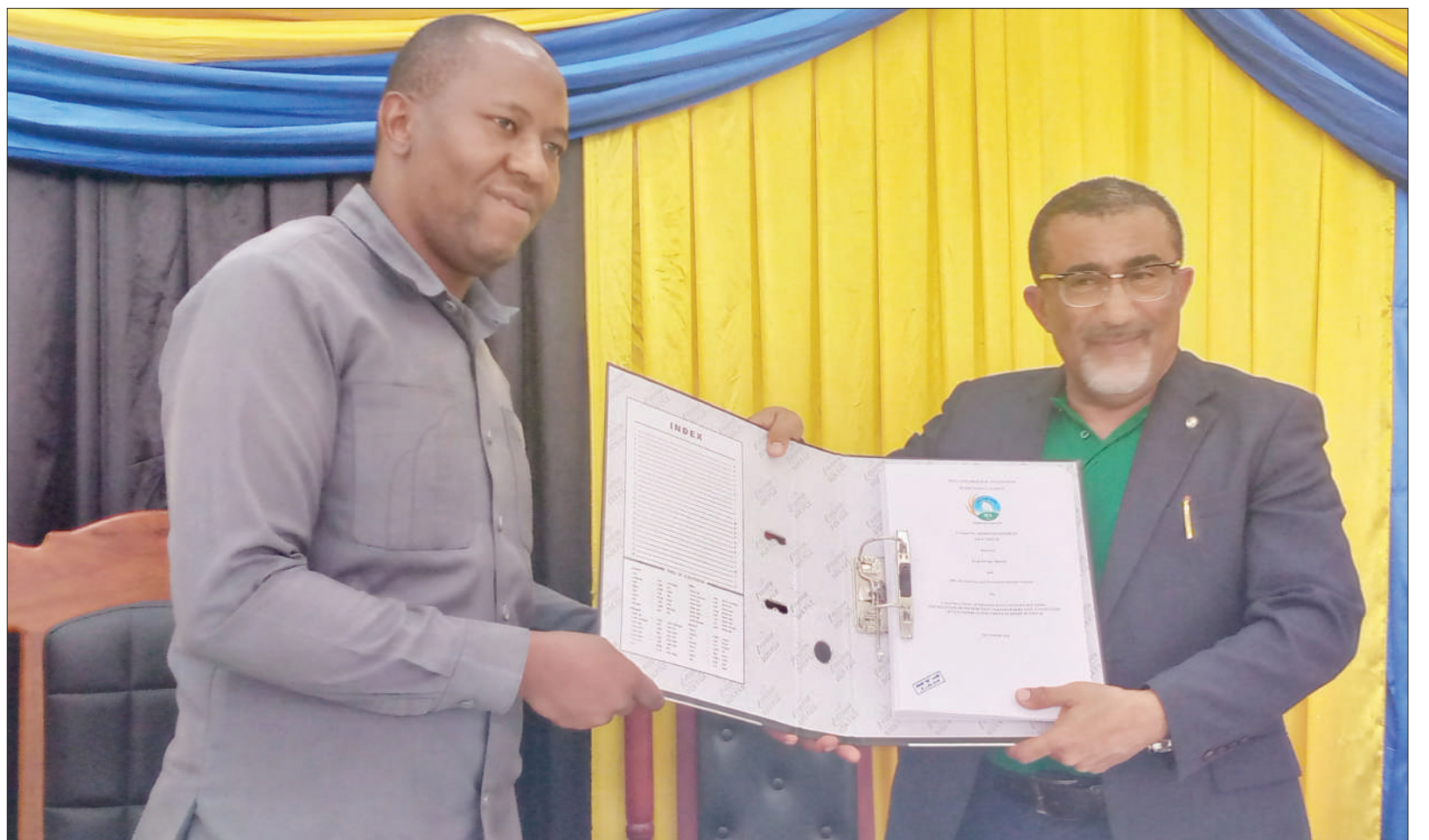
He urged journalists to adhere to journalistic ethics and professionalism while carrying out their daily duties in order to be effective.

"We ask you...journalists when you find anything, do not hesitate to share it with us so that we can see how to solve it, the doors are open

and we welcome you..." he said.

The chairman of the Iringa Press Club (IPC), Leonard hailed the mayor and the district municipal for the move.

Leonard also shared with the mayor the various plans implemented by IPC, including the strategic plan (strategic planning) for the next five years that they hope to implement, which focuses on three important areas, such as mother and child health, education democracy and good governance.



Rural Energy Agency director general Hassan Saïdy (R) pictured at the weekend presenting a signed document on a rural electricity supply contract to Tanga district commissioner Hashim Mgandilwa, who stood in for the Tanga regional commissioner. Photo: Correspondent Hamida Kamchalla

Strengthen protection of children by fighting all forms of violence, Kilaini calls upon public

By Correspondent Mutayoba Arbogast, Bukoba

AUXILIARY Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Bukoba, Rev Methodius Kilaini has called upon the public to strengthen the protection of children by fighting all forms of violence so as to enable them to grow up well and reach their full potential.

He made the call during the weekend during the mass celebration at Kanyigo Catholic Parish to mark the Holy Childhood

Day soon after launching the newly rebuilt church of Sacred Heart of Jesus Christ, Kanyigo parish which took nine years to complete, spending 785m/-.

Holy Childhood Day in some parts of the world is celebrated during the Christmas season instead of January 6 to mark the solemnity of the epiphany.

Kilaini noted that violence against children was on the rise, a situation that calls for immediate and joint efforts to rescue the generation.

"Many children are experiencing physical, sexual or emotional

violence, their rights are deprived and the society is not doing much to protect them, so we need to take this as a church's agenda so as to help end abuse and violence against children," he explained.

He wanted Catholic members to invest in their children's development by closely following up with steps so as to ensure that they are safe and growing well.

Bishop Kilaini said that parents should ensure that children are also raised to have fear of God in their life by investing in religious teachings as well as taking them to

church and holy childhood centres to learn about faith.

"This will help our children grow well physically and spiritually which is key for their development," he added.

Bishop Kilaini, who has been there for all nine years to lead the fundraisings until the new church building is completed, applauded the construction committee chaired by Richard Rweyemamu.

He commended the supervisor of the construction, Engineer Willibald Kombo and Magreth Mugyabuso, the treasurer, Parish priests and members of the church for their efforts to ensure that the building is completed and give room for worshippers to pray warmly without fear for their safety.

Chemba and Kondoa farmers set to benefit from climate-smart agricultural training

By Correspondent Valentine Oforo, **Kondoa**

FARMERS in districts of Chemba and Kondoa in Dodoma region are set to benefit from climate smart agricultural knowledge necessary for combating effects of climate change in their plantations offered by a Non-Governmental Organization, Inades Formation Tanzania.

The organisation is implementing a special project on climate change resilient towards farmers in the two districts christened 'Climate Change Adaptation for Improved Livelihoods in Semi Arid' under the financial support of Bread for the World.

The NGO is working to impart the farmers in the two districts with useful agro-ecological practices necessary for combating effects of climate change in their plantations.

The project coordinator for the project Abbawesiga Kamulali told this publication that the initiative was also addressing environmental issues across the two districts.

"Despite being endowed with arable land and conducive climate for supporting production of numerous crops, farmers in these districts have been failing to realise bumper harvest due to severe effects of climate change," Kamulali expressed.

Among others, the project being implemented in cooperation with the Agricultural Non State Actors Forum (ANSAF) has successfully managed to train the beneficiary farmers on proper land management, biological practices for the restoration of land fertility as well as soil moisture maintenance.

The effects, he added, include prolonged drought spells, soil erosion, and soil infertility together with washing away of soil humidity, the negative factors that have currently been contained to a great extent after the farmers have been trained on biological practices to

restore the losses.

Fabian Mwinuka, one of the project's beneficiary farmers who grow sunflowers, expressed joy that the initiative has played a paramount role to heighten his livelihood and general income.

"Before inception of the project in our village most farmers, including me, used to fetch poor sacks per an acre due to numerous effects of climate change and we were far from understanding neither adopting the use of improved seed varieties that suited our climatic locations," he noted.

The crops grown in the two districts of Dodoma region include sunflower, sorghum, bulrush, millet, maize, paddy and finger millet, groundnuts, sesame, simsim and finger millet, among others.

Bread for the World is a Christian advocacy organisation urging U.S. decision makers to do all they can to pursue a world without hunger, with the prime mission to educate and equip people to advocate for policies and programmes that can help end hunger in the U.S. and around the world.



Despite being endowed with arable land and conducive climate for supporting production of numerous crops, farmers in these districts have been failing to realise bumper harvest due to severe effects of climate change



Hanang' district commissioner Janeth Mayanja (C) resplendent in Kidatoga traditional attire alongside Kidatoga members of the tribe at a New Year's Day ceremony at the weekend. Photo: Correspondent Gift Thadey

By Guardian Correspondent, Arumeru

Meru district council hands over 18 motorcycles to three youth groups

MERU district council in Arusha region has handed over 18 motorcycles worth 45m/- to three youth groups aimed at promoting entrepreneurship and self employment.

The handover is part of a 237m/- loan issued by the council through internal revenue collection which is set aside for the youth, women and people with disability.

Speaking during a handover ceremony, Member of Parliament for Arumeru Dr John Pallangyo

called upon the youth to use the motorcycles profitably but also follow road safety rules.

The chairman for Meru district council Jeremia Kishili said the council will continue to take serious issues concerning the youth as it take interests of special groups with significance.

He used the opportunity

to call upon the youth to be disciplined by profitably using the motorcycles so that they can change their lives.

The Executive Director of Meru district council Zainabu Makwinya said collaboration between Ward and other officials has helped to facilitate issuance of loans.

He said the new equipment

handed over has been bought at a cost of 53m/- which is from internal revenues generated by the district council.

All councils are required to set aside 10 per cent of their revenues as revolving funds to be loaned to women (4 per cent), youth 4 per cent) and people with disabilities (2 per cent).

AU special envoy says humanitarian aid, basic services back in Tigray

ADDIS ABABA

AFRICAN Union (AU) High Representative for the Horn of Africa Olusegun Obasanjo said the delivery of emergency humanitarian aid and the resumption of basic services are underway in Ethiopia's conflict-affected Tigray region.

Emergency humanitarian aid is "being widely provided" in Tigray and basic services have started, the former Nigerian president said during his visit to the region with former Kenyan president Uhuru Kenyatta to observe the implementation of a peace accord reached between the Ethiopian federal government and the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), state-run Ethiopian News Agency (ENA) reported late Thursday.

Obasanjo commended leaders of both sides for "the good work they did" for the peace agreement, noting that the provision of unfettered humanitarian aid, the resumption of basic services, and the establishment of lasting peace in northern Ethiopia are part of the AU-led peace deal signed on Nov. 2 in South Africa.

It is commendable that electricity, banking, telecommunication, and other basic services have started within a short period of time, ENA quoted the special envoy as saying.

According to Obasanjo, the AU, the people of Ethiopia, and the civil and military leaders of the parties to the conflict in Northern Ethiopia have played "a significant role in bringing about this result."

Kenyatta underscored that air transport, roads, banks, electricity and other services, including

humanitarian aid, have resumed operations in the conflict-affected region.

"The leaders deserve praise for this result, and we will continue to strengthen our cooperation," Kenyatta said, adding that the implementation of the peace agreement is a clear demonstration that it is possible to provide an African solution for African problems.

The Nov. 2 peace accord, signed in Pretoria, the administrative capital of South Africa, and facilitated by Obasanjo, along with Kenyatta and former deputy president of South Africa Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, covers the restoration of law and order, the withdrawal of foreign and non-Ethiopian army forces, the restoration of services and unhindered access to humanitarian supplies.



...the implementation of the peace agreement is a clear demonstration that it is possible to provide an African solution for African problems



Doreen Raphael (2nd-L, foreground), a human resources officer with Mati Super Brands Limited, presents an assortment of items to Manyara regional referral hospital nursing officer Josephine Moshia at the weekend. Photo: Correspondent. Photo: Correspondent Jaliwason Jasson

Seaweed farming empowering women in Kenya

NAIROBI

SEAWEED farming is providing Kenyan women with the means to earn a living.

The activity is also seen as an alternative to fishing due to a decline in fish stocks and a less risky activity than farming.

"We are unable to engage in meaningful farming on dry land since wild animals such as the colobus monkey, wild pigs and baboons regularly invade our

farms. They can destroy crops on a one-acre piece of land within a day", said seaweed farmer, Fatuma Mohammed.

In this coastal town, seaweed farming mostly employs women who previously were not allowed to engage in fishing. Many also see it as being more lucrative than farming.

"Farming on dry land is expensive, as it requires different types of fertilizers that may be water-based and thus need to be sprayed onto plants or applied in soil. The use

of chemical fertilizers has led to soil degradation thus leading to reduced yields. Seaweed farming is the better option, as we are able to reap benefits", concluded the seaweed farmer.

The project is mostly supported by Kenya Marine Fisheries Research Institute (KMFRDI), a national research institute promoting the "sustainable development of the Blue Economy."

"The yields from farming on dry land are not great, since there are

many challenges, such as invasions from wild animals and thieves. The yields were also negatively affected by low amounts of rainfall this year", said Nasoro, a field officer from the Kenya Marine and Fisheries Research Institute (KMFRDI).

Most of the raw materials produced by the group are exported to markets in South Africa, the US and China. Extracts from dried seaweed can be used in the cosmetic and pharmaceutical industries as well as soil fertiliser.

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Taking A New Look
At The News
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Modifying LPG sale units can help uptake

SHIFTING from wood fuel to cleaner energy is costing the energies of a whole section of administrators in various departments, especially with the now six-month old directive from President Samia Suluhu Hassan to find ways of enabling most households to start using gas for cooking. The preliminary deliberations are making some headway but confront different winds, as a plethora of issues are tied up which connoisseurs will say they relate to the 'four p's of marketing,' namely product, packaging, place and price. They don't sing from the same texts, fully.

At the month drew to a close and some feedback is needed at higher levels on where the matter has reached, an LPG marketing firm organised a training session where a number of things were discussed. The training organisers explicitly mentioned efforts by Prime Minister Kassim Majaliwa at the start of the month to liaise with stakeholders in the sector as to how LPG use can rapidly be taken up. Discussions at the opening ceremony, or rather contributions, related to distinct spheres of concern, expertise and interest, between the ministry and gas vendors.

A top level executive in the ministry underlined the aspect that talks are being pursued between the Ministry of Energy and some major gas companies on initiating the repackaging and sale of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) in smaller quantities. That doesn't mean all of it is repackaged but that smaller quantities be available in the market, such that one can buy a 1,000/- gas unit or anything upwards, not as in purchasing electricity as the top executive said but rather as in buying charcoal. Most gas is purchased in shops rather than by electronic tokens.

This is the crucial idea at the

moment, as it appears that the small units can help households short of money to take gas amounts usable even for a day, waiting to buy more in the following days. It requires units like lamps with a fitting kit for placing pots, while today the standard units are those sold at average of 20,000/- or 50,000/- and bigger ones more visible at restaurant joints. The fact that the gas vending company at the gas cylinder holding training session for local leaders in Moshi did not refer to such packaging shows there is still a way to go, even now.

Strictly speaking, commercial distributors with an edge in the market at the moment are unlikely to be in any hurry whatsoever as to modifying the kits that are sold to the public. The reason is that it would make the current cylinders look like 'whole sale' units if there will be kits of 1000/- upwards, which multiplies the handling costs, labour units involved, etc. At the same time, this idea hasn't tackled the president's preliminary observation, namely how to bring gas costs down and make purchasing gas often affordable to the majority of households, urban or rural.

Those seeking innovation to ease access to gas cylinders or regular purchase of gas using smaller units have a point, but limiting their efforts to that sphere is to preempt the keen proposition, of a substantial reduction in gas prices. That calls not for technical innovation as the ministry is seeking out in its current liaisons but policy input, for instance directing carbon credits to subsidizing not trees in village or national conservation zones but gas use. Cylinders could be given for free and gas prices cut by half (by tax cuts compensated for by carbon credit, etc) which makes tree conservation an administrative task but its threat, charcoal, fully axed.

Take heed of clerics' worries on youth binge drinking trend

ONE theme that came up quite noticeably in sermons for Christmas observation lately is the tendency for binge drinking, especially by excessive consumption of cheap spirits available nearly at every corner shop. Listening to remarks by top clerics in major municipal centres the ringing tone was that this easy supply of hard liquor is impairing the workforce, not just for tomorrow but even at present. Their message was directed at the youth to seek ways of amending their outlooks before their lives are put on the road to ruin by seeking satisfaction in cheap spirits.

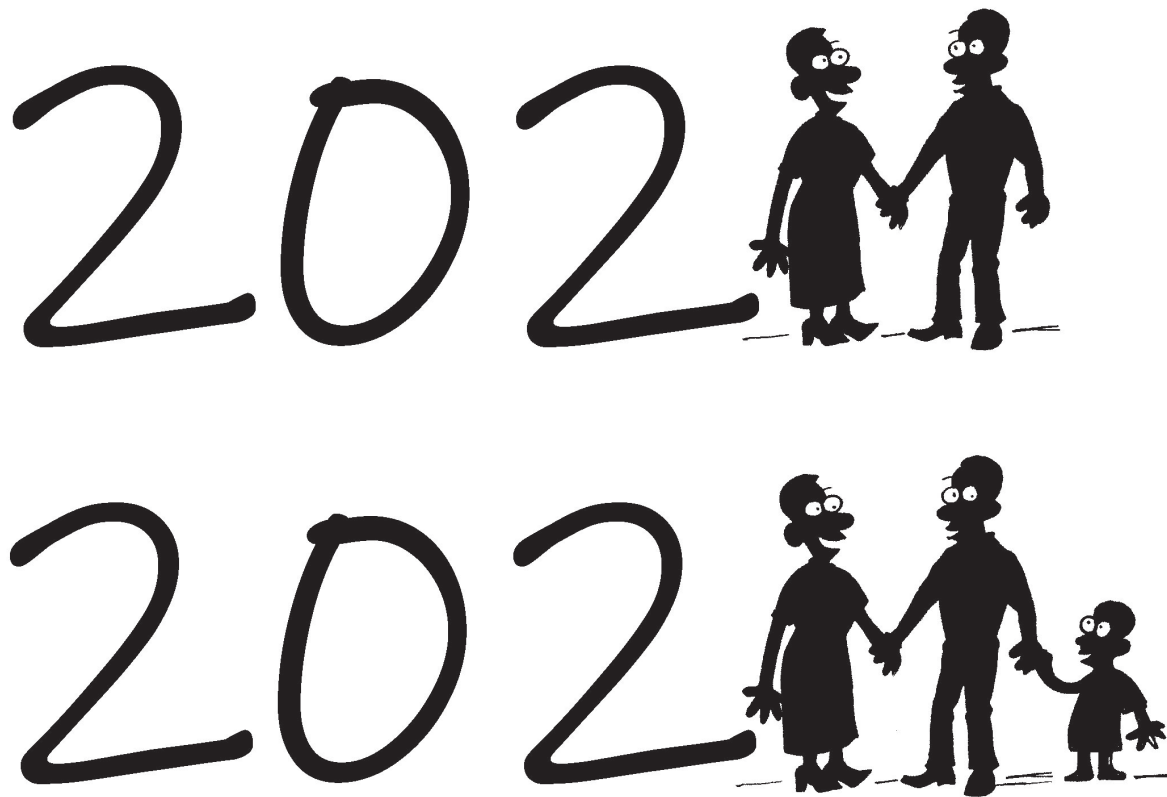
Yet it isn't just the youth who need be concerned about the matter as they don't live in isolation. Quite often the lamentable state of one youth lost in binge uptake of alcohol is the torment of a family which had hopes in him; quite often there are youths who started own families and then succumbed to binge drinking to families' torment. In church all they can do is to pray on the matter; it is unclear if the public authorities have any answers, as such a condition also expresses individual liberty.

As it is often the case, there are those with simple answers who come up with formulas, often of a punitive kind, to stop such alcohol being readily available. In the past the government made such an effort, raising the issue of plastic sachets holding such alcohol as a menace to the environment. It was during the carrying plastics banning days and the sachets were added to the banned plastics. The spirit was

now being sold in bottles with units similar to priming a unit of kerosene, etc. When it comes to pricing, it appears the price went up a bit but as with other things in life, users had to adapt to the new measures, with a doubling of the price, or so.

In that case some good was done on the drinking as changing the containers drove up the price somewhat, and since the consumption of everything is price sensitive, habitual drinkers may have adjusted to merely seeking satisfaction. We aren't sure if the worries being expressed by senior clerics indicate that we are back to square one in relation to extent of drinking, or that the progress we made is real but poor in relation to the problem. It is an area relevant authorities need to make a check.

No one can actually affirm what we achieved in the earlier campaign, though it is clear cheap spirits were not put out of the way. It is not clear if the answer is to highly tax spirits so that few take them excessively, but for one thing, we need greater institutional innovation so that more youths feel wanted in their homes and in society generally. Feelings of listlessness can scarcely be accommodated with sobriety, as being drunk is to escape the pains of facing up to reality, but striking a chord of nerve relaxation at a cost to other body organs and usefulness in society. There is great wisdom in appealing to the youths to reexamine their ways but public authorities have their part to do, making society have more opportunities for most youths, and hence more livable, not where one seeks escape routes by spirits.



Raising the alarm on the slow pace of family law reform



Adolescents in Gujara municipality of Rautahat district in Nepal perform a skit on child marriage as part of UNFPA-UNICEF global programme on ending child marriage.

By Hyshyama Hamin

IN September 2021, in the midst of a pandemic-related lockdown, a 15-year-old Muslim girl from Colombo, Sri Lanka was married off by her relatives to a much older man.

A local women's rights group reported this case to the national child protection authorities, however, because child marriage is still legal under the country's Muslim Marriage and Divorce Act (MMDA), little could be done.

Nine months later, the girl was divorced by her husband at the Quazi (Muslim-judge) led court under a provision in the MMDA that allows him to unilaterally divorce at will and without any reason.

Many countries, especially in Asia, the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), and Africa, continue to have civil, religious, or customary laws and practices on marriage and family matters that curtail the rights of women and girls.

An alarming finding in a new report, 'Progress on the Sustainable Development Goals: The gender snapshot 2022', released by UN Women and the UN Statistics Division, indicated that at the current rate of progress it may take up to 286 years to close gaps in legal protection between men and women and remove laws that discriminate against women and girls on the basis of their sex.

The report concluded that the world is not on track to achieve gender equality by 2030.

Discrimination in family laws, specifically when it relates to marriage and family, spans from the time of entry into marriage, during

the marriage, and at the time of dissolution of the marriage.

Organizations like Musawah have been mapping Muslim family laws in over 38 countries in three regions. Their research shows that the male guardianship system, where men are considered heads of the household and have legal authority over wives, daughters, and mothers, is very prevalent in MENA, South and Southeast Asia, and Sub-Saharan Africa.

Divorce rights continue to be unequal for women. In Algeria, Maldives, Malaysia, Pakistan, Indonesia, Sudan, Saudi Arabia, and Qatar, women have more conditions and procedures than men in seeking a divorce.

Equal right to child custody and custody arrangements that center on the needs of the child, remains a challenge for mothers in the MENA region, and in Latin American countries like Brazil, Mexico, and Argentina.

Inheritance rights are still unequal in many parts of the world. World Bank (2018) data showed that at least 39 countries prevent daughters from inheriting the same proportion of assets as sons.

Inequalities faced by women and girls under discriminatory family laws and practices affect all other areas of their lives.

According to the report by international women's rights organization Equality Now, Words and Deeds: Holding Governments Accountable in the Beijing +25 Review Process, "sex discriminatory personal status laws violate women's civil and political rights." It gives examples of legal discrimination in numerous countries and notes

that such laws, especially relating to property and inheritance, inhibit women's full social and economic participation and opportunities.

There is also a direct correlation between legal authority and power afforded to males in the family, and restrictions on women's autonomy and agency, along with an increased likelihood of experiencing sexual and domestic violence.

These inequalities have surged during the COVID-19 pandemic and ongoing economic, political, and climate crises. In April 2020, UNFPA predicted that the COVID-19 pandemic may result in 13 million extra child marriages in the years immediately following this global health emergency.

Women activists calling for reform face serious opposition

For decades, women's rights groups and activists in countries such as Malaysia, Morocco, India, Sri Lanka, Afghanistan, and Uganda, to name a few, have been advocating for the reform of unequal family laws. In Iran, women are currently leading the national struggle for free will to decide on matters of personal choice like dress code and other fundamental freedoms.

Activists calling for change face heavy opposition, including intimidation and threats from conservative religious and right-wing groups, who often claim that family laws and practices are a matter of freedom of religion and belief.

But rights groups are pushing back by repeatedly making the case that freedom of religion or belief can never be used to justify inequalities towards women and girls and that

human rights cannot stop at the front door of a family home.

Despite growing evidence of the impacts of discriminatory family laws, state action and political will towards reforming discriminatory laws, especially family laws, is almost non-existent. In fact, in countries like Iran and Afghanistan, women activists also face direct risk and harm to life and limb from state authorities themselves.

The need for global action

The Global Campaign for Equality in Family Law was launched in March 2020 by eight leading women's rights and faith-inspired organizations, as well as UN Women. The Campaign is calling for governments to prioritize equality in family law, policy, and practice, especially in light of multiple other crises that affect women and girls disproportionately.

In tandem, efforts of courageous community and national activists pushing for reform of discriminatory family laws need to be amplified and resourced. Regionally and globally, feminist movements must further promote family law reform as a crucial issue.

Achieving gender equality without equality in the family is impossible. We cannot wait 286 years before countries are free of laws, procedures, and practices that discriminate against women and girls.

The time to put family law reform on the agenda is now!

The writer is Campaign Manager - Global Campaign for Equality in Family Law

Generation and self-consumption are the path to clean energy in Argentina

By Daniel Gutman, Buenos Aires

WITH large projects held back by the economic crisis and lack of infrastructure, Argentina seems to be looking at an alternative path towards a more sustainable energy mix involving small renewable energy projects, promoted by environmentally aware industries, businesses and private users.

The initiatives are aimed at covering their own consumption, sometimes with the addition of so-called distributed generation, in which user-generators who have a surplus of electricity can inject it into the national power grid and thus generate a tariff credit.

Distributed generation initiatives have just surpassed 1,000 projects already in operation, according to the latest official data.

At the same time, this month saw the inauguration of the largest private solar energy park in the city of Buenos Aires, an initiative of the Argentine Rural Society (SRA), the traditional business chamber of agricultural producers.

The park was installed in the exhibition center the SRA owns in the capital of this South American country, to supply part of its consumption with an investment of almost one million dollars and more than 1,000 solar panels.

"Small private renewable energy projects and distributed generation will be the ones to increase installed capacity in the coming years, because the electricity transmission and distribution system sets strong limits on large projects," said Mariela Beljansky, a specialist in energy and climate change issues.

Beljansky, who was national director of Electricity Generation until early 2022, added: "Otherwise there will be no way to meet the growth targets for renewable sources set by Argentina, as part of its climate change mitigation commitments under the Paris Agreement."

Argentina presented its National Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation Plan, which includes 250 measures to be implemented by 2030, at the 27th Conference of the Parties (COP27) on climate change held by



Aerial view of the 5000 square meter roof full of solar panels, in one of the pavilions of La Rural, the busiest fair and exhibition center in Buenos Aires. It is the largest private solar park in the capital of Argentina and required an investment of almost one million dollars.

the United Nations in the Egyptian city of Sharm El Sheikh in November.

The National Secretariat for Climate Change estimated the total value of the plan's implementation at 185.5 billion dollars, four times more than the debt Argentina incurred in 2018 with the International Monetary Fund (IMF), which has generated a sharp deterioration of the economy since then.

According to the data included in the plan, the energy sector is the largest generator of greenhouse gases (GHG) in the country, generating 51 percent of emissions.

Although renewable sources (with wind projects in first place and solar in second place) reached a record in October, supplying 17.8 percent of total electricity demand, the energy mix continues to be sustained basically by oil, natural gas and large hydroelectric projects.

Furthermore, the country has not decided to slow down the development of fossil fuels. The main reason is that it has large reserves of shale natural gas in the Vaca Muerta field in the south of the country, which has been attracting the interest of international investors for years. The climate change plan sets the goal of using natural gas as a transition fuel to replace oil as much as possible.

The plan also includes the objectives of developing a variety of renewable energy sources

(wind, solar, small hydro, biogas and biomass) and also distributed generation, "directly at the points of consumption" and connected to the public power grid, at the residential and commercial levels.

Large renewable projects experienced strong growth between 2016 and 2019, on the back of an official plan that guaranteed the purchase of electricity at attractive prices for investors, but since then there have been virtually no new initiatives.

Consumption subsidies

"In Argentina's current situation, where there is practically no financing, and there are restrictions on importing equipment, high inflation and economic uncertainty, it is difficult to think about large renewable energy parks, and small projects become more attractive," said Marcelo Alvarez, a member of the board of the Argentine Renewable Energy Chamber (Cader).

Alvarez pointed out that what conspires against small private and distributed generation projects are the subsidies that the Argentine government has been providing for years to energy consumption, including those families with high purchasing power that do not need them.

"Artificially cheap electricity rates and the scarcity of credit discourage

the growth of renewables," Alvarez said.

"The proof of this is that more than half of the distributed generation projects in operation are in the province of Cordoba (in the center of the country), where electricity prices are three times more expensive than in Buenos Aires and there is a special line of credit from the local bank (Bancor, which grants 'eco-sustainable loans') for renewable equipment," he said.

Indeed, according to data from the Energy Secretariat, there are 1,051 user undertakings that generate their own electricity and inject their surplus into the grid and 573 of them are in the province of Cordoba.

Argentine state energy subsidies totaled 11 billion dollars in 2021 and this year, up to October, they already exceeded seven billion dollars, according to data from the Argentine Association of Budget and Public Financial Administration (Asap).

As for sources of financing, there is a line of credit endowed with 160 million dollars from the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and the Banco de Inversión y Comercio Exterior (Bice), financed in part by the Green Climate Fund, which is aimed at renewable sources and energy efficiency projects for small and medium-sized businesses. However, most companies are unaware of its existence.

View of photovoltaic panels in a private neighborhood in Pilar, some 50 kilometers from Buenos Aires. Solar panels have become part of the landscape in the suburbs of Argentina's capital city. CREDIT: Courtesy of Utorak

View of photovoltaic panels in a private neighborhood in Pilar, some 50 kilometers from Buenos Aires. Solar panels have become part of the landscape in the suburbs of Argentina's capital city. CREDIT: Courtesy of Utorak

Private ventures

On Dec. 15, the Rural Society inaugurated the largest private solar park in Buenos Aires, in the 42,000 square meter covered area where the country's most important fairs and exhibitions are held. The investment reportedly amounted to almost one million dollars.

"We have 42,000 square meters of roofs in our pavilions. It is a very important flat surface for the placement of solar panels, so we had been thinking about it for several years. We had done a pilot project in 2019, but then everything was delayed by the pandemic, which forced us to close the venue," Claudio Dowdall, general manager of La Rural, told IPS.

"At this stage we used 5,000 square meters of roofs, on which we placed 1,136 photovoltaic panels, with a total power of 619 kW. This is equivalent to the average consumption of 210 family homes and, for us, it is between 30 and 40 percent of the electricity we use," he added.

Andrés Badino, founder of Utorak, a company that has been dedicated to renewable energy for families and companies for more than five years, confirms that consultations and demand are growing in the sector.

"People's interest has been growing because of increased environmental awareness and, also, because of what can be saved on electricity bills for residential users and for educational institutions and healthcare centers as well," Badino said.

"Argentina has a national industry for the production of solar thermal tanks, but not for the manufacture of panels, inverters or batteries, despite the fact that the country has one of the largest reserves in the world, the main component. But we are confident that international prices will go down and drive demand," he said.

Digitising Africa: Key to strength of its institutions

By Kavazeua Katjomoise

I recently overheard a conversation among three young people at a café in an African city. It was a passionate discussion on the management of funds allocated to the COVID-19 response and the effectiveness of the mechanisms in place to manage the money to achieve the intended purposes.

The concerns of my young brothers and sister resonated with me, as I could not help but reflect on how COVID-19 exposed cracks in Africa's fragile revenue institutions and contributed to widening the financing gap for the region's development.

Weak institutions, especially revenue collection and customs authorities, are a challenge in Africa, which loses billions in potential tax revenue, including through tax avoidance and evasion, especially by multinational companies.

UNCTAD's Economic Development Report 2020 says Africa lost \$88.6 billion through illicit financial flows in 2019.

This undermines efforts to mobilize domestic resources to finance the continent's development as outlined in the

United Nation's 2030 Agenda and African Union Agenda 2063, which both recognize the primacy of strong and effective institutions in driving sustainable development.

African countries fare poorly on domestic resource mobilization compared to other developing countries. The share of revenue to gross domestic product (GDP) in 2020 averaged 16 per cent for Africa, compared to 35 per cent for Asia-Pacific, and 24 per cent for Latin American Countries. Africa's Least Developed Countries fared even lower at 13.3 per cent.

Governance influences tax revenue collection considerably in Africa. Good governance and strong institutions - measured through regulatory quality, the enforcement of the rule of law, strong institutional capacity and lower corruption - enhance a country's ability to mobilize domestic resources through revenue collection.

However, corruption erodes tax compliance. Citizens in countries with high corruption are reluctant to pay taxes because of the perception that resources will be misused.

Empirical evidence shows that countries with a low Corruption Perception Index (CPI) score



collected 4.3 per cent more in tax revenue to GDP than those with a high CPI score (2).

Addressing governance issues and improving transparency in the use of public resources is vital to building trust and generating increased domestic resources. Efforts should be geared at supporting African countries to strengthen governance and tackle corruption.

Digitization

Technological improvements and digitization could be leveraged to improve scale and efficiency and prevent corruption through increased transparency.

The pace toward digitization on the continent has quickened in recent years, particularly in the wake of COVID-19. Before the pandemic, Africa recorded

progress toward digitization, albeit driven by the private sector mainly through incubators, startups, technological hubs and data centres.

Digitization is already transforming African economies in several ways, such as revolutionizing retail payment systems, thus allowing consumers and businesses to save billions in transaction costs, facilitating financial inclusion, and enhancing the efficiency of fiscal and revenue administration.

For example, the launch of M-Shwari in Kenya increased access to financial services for millions who may otherwise have been excluded from the financial sector. Taking advantage of this trend, the Kenya Revenue Authority (KRA) introduced electronic banking in 2016 to expedite the payment of

taxes through secure electronic payment.

This, coupled with the launch of iTax, has enabled a single view of taxpayer information, allowing for real-time monitoring of revenue collection, thus improving the efficiency of payment to government suppliers and social protection grants.

Digitization has also enabled developed countries to build effective and robust Digital Rights Management (DRM) systems, critical to ensuring Africa's recovery from COVID-19.

However, despite the widespread adoption of digital technologies across the world, the digital divide excludes many African countries from the benefits of digital technology.

Digitizing tax administration in Africa has been relatively

slow. An International Monetary Fund's analysis (ISORA 2018: Understanding Revenue Administration) shows that, relative to other developing regions, African countries scored below the world average on almost all indices related to tax administration performance, especially on the degree of digitization.

The average score for the degree of digitization was 29 per cent for Africa compared to 49 per cent and 46 per cent for Latin America and the Caribbean as well as East Asia Pacific, respectively.

The COVID-19 pandemic contributed to an erosion of tax collection in Africa due to a lack of digitization, as countries could not fully work remotely. This underscores the urgency of investing in the digitalization of tax collection processes, paired with other digitization initiatives such as digital identification, digital finance, and electronic payment systems.

Evidence shows that enhanced tax collection has followed the introduction of ICTs, including the computerization of tax and customs administration to support tax payments.

Countries that have modernized and digitized tax revenue administration have benefited from increased revenue due to improved efficiency, reduced corruption through enhanced transparency, and increased tax compliance.

For example, the introduction of electronic cash registers by the Ethiopia Revenue and Customs Authority increased Value Added Tax (VAT) collections by 32 per cent.

Africa's processing industry truly holds promise for broader economic growth



Abou Fumarou Mahamadou poses amid millet stalks dried in the sun. She belongs to a co-op of 32 women farmers in the commune of Tibiri in southwest Niger.

By Chakib Jenane, Washington DC

As a central pillar of African diets for thousands of years, millet has a prized position as one of the continent's most important crops.

And with the onset of climate change, millet offers valuable security to the continent's smallholder farmers due to the crop's tolerance for dry soils.

Yet, the rise of an increasingly affluent urban middle class across Africa is threatening to shift diets away from traditional staples like millet in favor of higher-value and more convenient processed foods often sourced from outside the continent.

However, Africa's homegrown processing industry can increasingly deliver more sophisticated products, turning unprocessed millet into nutritious ready-to-eat meals such as rice-like products, porridges, and more. This is a win-win for farmers and consumers alike.

Africa's emerging agrifood processing industry clearly offers a major opportunity to capitalize on the growing demand for processed foods which, to date, has been met in large part by imported products.

Growing this sector can provide valuable opportunities for African livelihoods and economies across the region, all the while reducing the continent's food import bill, which stands at roughly USD 35 billion a year.

The recently released Regional Strategic Analysis and Knowledge Support System (ReSAKSS) Annual Trends and Outlook Report (ATOR) shows that Africa's agrifood processing sector is the essential link in connecting the continent's smallholder farmers to growing urban markets with changing preferences.

Still, the sector as it exists today is just the tip of the iceberg, and data from across the continent highlights its enormous untapped potential, particularly in terms of the long-cultivated staples.

For instance, the rise of the millet processing sector in Senegal has reversed declining consumption trends due to growing urban populations and their needs for quicker and more convenient staples.

The share of millet has risen to close to 30 percent of the cereal consumption of high-income earners in Senegal, roughly the same as imported rice.

The introduction of more sophisticated millet products has also opened up new market opportunities for smallholder producers, which, alongside rising

demand, is boosting the prices they can expect to receive in markets.

This means not only greater economic growth for national economies, but greater spending power and more resilient livelihoods for Africa's small-scale producers, too.

Another interesting case study is the tomato, the fourth most economically valuable food crop produced in low- and middle-income countries. Fresh tomato is often more accessible to small-scale processors than larger plants, leaving significant potential to develop greater value products.

As a result, the rise of Africa's processing sector is introducing new opportunities for tomato production by helping to add value and reduce post-harvest losses, stabilizing supplies for consumers throughout the year, while ensuring steady revenue streams for producers.

Meanwhile, some African countries are already seizing on the vast opportunities offered by their processing sectors to deliver a double win for economies and livelihoods.

Roughly 68 percent of Tanzania's manufacturing exports, for instance, are agri-processed and resource-intensive goods, such as bottled juices, cooking oils, and packaged flours. A large majority of these goods are also being shipped to other African countries, demonstrating how greater agri-food processing capacity on the continent can meet African demand with African processed products.

This not only replaces demand for intercontinental imports, but equally ensures the benefits of processing for producers and consumers remain in Africa to deliver economic growth for future generations.

The growth of Africa's agrifood processing sector clearly offers sustainable income-generating opportunities for the continent's smallholder farmers through higher-value products that appeal to changing urban markets.

It also offers many prospects for jobs creation for the continent's growing youth population - the fastest growing in the world.

With African food tastes and dietary preferences evolving, so too must its agrifood industry if it wishes to stay competitive, successful, and sustainable, delivering growth and improved livelihoods for millions.

Unlocking the potential of the continent's processing sector, in particular, offers a clear path forward to achieving this goal.

All girls must be allowed to return to education in Afghanistan

By Yasmine Sherif, New York

EDUCATION Cannot Wait stands in solidarity with every girl and woman in Afghanistan. Each one has an inherent human right to education. We also stand in solidarity with every Afghan father, brother, husband and son, suffering the pain of seeing their daughter, sister, wife and mother brutally denied their right to an education.

Yet, in recent days, the Taliban has taken drastic measures to ban girls from attending university, has for over a year banned girls from attending secondary school, and reports indicate possible further bans of girls from elementary school and of female teachers from the classroom.

Any ban on girls' education is a despicable attack on human rights and on Afghanistan, as a country. Afghanistan has suffered decades of brutal conflict, extreme poverty, starvation and climate-induced disasters. The people of Afghanistan have experienced excruciating hardship for far too long. How much more can the Afghan people take?

In preventing girls and women from going to school and higher education, 50% of the population is excluded from rebuilding Afghanistan, their communities and their families. There will be no female doctors, nurses or teachers to provide basic services to girls and women. There will be no Afghan children whose mothers or sisters can help them learn and



develop.

As the United Nations global fund for education in emergencies and protracted crises, Education Cannot Wait joins UN Secretary-General António Guterres in urging the de facto authorities to ensure equal access to education at all levels for women and girls. Afghanistan needs all of its people in order to rebuild from four decades of conflict.

All over the world, women and

girls have a basic human right to an education. By denying them the inherent right to an education, the de facto authorities are causing great harm to the people of Afghanistan - girls, women, men, and boys alike.

Education and knowledge are cornerstones of the teachings of Islam, cornerstones of an enlightened society, and cornerstones of peace, economic prosperity, and progress everywhere. Girls and

women who are guaranteed their human rights - especially their right to seek knowledge - are the backbone of a greater society arising out of war and poverty.

Education Cannot Wait will continue to advocate for the rights of all girls to quality education in Afghanistan and beyond. We stand with the global community and will continue to work tirelessly to fulfil the universal, moral obligation to protect girls and women

and ensure that their right to an education is fulfilled.

We urge people everywhere to join the world in calling on the de facto authorities to end this despicable and unconscionable ban. It is an open wound bleeding for our collective humanity. It is a painful blow to the inherent rights of millions of women and men already suffering in Afghanistan. It is time to alleviate their suffering - not inflict more of it.

The ban does not represent Afghanistan. It does not represent Islam. It does not represent culture. The ban on education for girls represents brutality and ignorance in its utter form. Most of all, it represents absolute inhumanity and irresponsibility towards the long-suffering people of Afghanistan. Ending the ban immediately will also contribute to ending the anguish and sorrow of the Afghan people.

‘President Samia tells the truth on environment conservation’

By Felician Kilahama

PRESIDENT Samia Suluhu Hassan has once said the current drought and dried up streams and rivers; is a phenomenon caused, to a large extent, by the destruction of water sources as a result of ‘our mistakes’.

In last November President Samia said this when speaking in Dodoma at an event celebrating the 50th Anniversary of the Mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

She said that many areas in the country have had “unpredictable rainy seasons and other seasons suffering from drought due to negative impacts of climate change”. In that event, the President also called upon the Religious Leaders to “pray to God to save us from the unprecedented weather calamities so that through God’s merciful love to humans, we get rainfall”.

She added: “Let’s continue to educate each other regarding our responsibilities to taking care of the environment and crucial water sources.”

President also stated: “The punishment we’re getting now is because, to a large extent, we have destroyed our natural heritage/environment such that we destroyed water sources.”

This kind of remark is absolutely true; as the only challenge I see is that we were wrong in making decisions about preserving and taking care of natural forests/woodlands.

Ecological services for the well-being of our country as a whole are highly dependent on the strength and health of natural forests.

During the past, rainfall seasons—Masika and Vuli were predictable and incidences of water scarcities were relatively rare. The environment was amusing for instance, the existence of spectacular environmental conditions in the Uluguru Mountains from the 1970s to 1980s. Water was flowing downhill vividly seen and some streams were visible throughout the year.

Also, clouds covered the Uluguru Mountains for almost the whole year. However, the situation started to deteriorate nearly 30 years ago when people invaded the mountains and other natural forests in different parts of the country doing whatever they wanted. Efforts to prevent human activities in natural forests (gazetted and non-gazetted) were not successful because the voices of forest professionals needed to be listened to by Policy and Decision Makers.

The destruction of natural forests began to flare up almost three decades ago. However, at the time of independence (December 9, 1961) and subsequently, little damage had occurred in Dodoma and Kondoa-Irangi areas. However, the government took action quickly by implementing a project to preserve and restore land that had developed into gullies. The project: “Hifadhi Ardhi Dodoma” (HADO) with efforts directed in Haubi area in Kondoa and parts of Mpwapwa District; was implemented and processes of gullies formation were contained henceforth stopped environmental degradation. In the 1980s similar consequences were cited in the Shinyanga Region and the Government took action through the Hifadhi Ardhi Shinyanga (HASHI) project and succeeded in preventing the environment from further deterioration due to uncontrolled human activities.

From independence time to the 1980s most areas throughout the country were greener than what is observed presently. Water in streams and rivers was abundant and available throughout the year. Forests/woodlands that were legally protected by law (Central Government and the Local Authorities Forest Reserves) were in safe hands protected and managed by Forest Guards/Rangers. However, when the decision was made more than 40 years ago and Forrest Rangers/Guards were removed from the government payroll; forest resources became ‘free-for-all’. Thus, farmers and livestock keepers developed habits, regardless of the limits that had been set, and engaged themselves in what they wanted to do without any restrictions. At the same time, others established settlements in some legally protected forests/woodlands. Although, the Forest Act (CAP323 RE: 2002) prohibits people from entering gazetted forests unless they have legitimate permits from the Authorized Forest Officer. However, while people knew that no one was there to deny entry; they couldn’t see the importance and/or the reason for seeking permits.

In December 2007 after my appointment to manage forests and bee resources in the country; I visited many forest/woodland areas in almost all the regions. When I examined the maps and saw gazetted forests, I wanted to locate such forests on the ground by comparing their existence on the map. Surprisingly, it was realized many forests were converted into people’s residences (villages and neighborhoods), and other villages registered by District Authorities legalizing

villages in gazetted forests/woodlands. Unfortunately, efforts to remove people in gazetted forests/woodlands turned out to be a big challenge, especially when I was asked if legally protected forest/woodland areas and people have established settlements, foresters where were you?



African armyworm destroys over 15 hectares of maize in Zimbabwe



By Precious Manomano

AFRICAN armyworm has re-emerged, being seen in Zimbabwe’s Mbire district in over 15ha of maize, 110ha of sorghum and 5ha of pasture, with authorities warning the public around the country to be on lookout for the pest; the required chemicals are available.

Recently, the migratory pests and biosecurity control department said chemicals to fight the African armyworm are available and ready for distribution.

The weekly update from the Ministry of Lands, Agriculture, Fisheries, Water and Rural Development said that the first African armyworm outbreak this season was received from Mbire district, Ward 6-Kasuo on Christmas Eve.

Samples of the pest collected by the migratory pests and biosecurity control department found that the pest was in its 1st to 4th instar stages at densities of 40 to 50 larvae per square metre attacking early crops of maize as well as grazing lands.

Moth catches continue to be recorded in Mashonaland West and there is high possibility of more African armyworm outbreaks occurring in other parts of the country.

“A total of 80 kg of Carbaryl have been delivered to the affected areas for control of the pest. There is 429 kg Carbaryl 85 percent WP in stock for the management of African armyworm this 2022-23 cropping season. African armyworm forecasting is in progress for other provinces for early warning with no outbreaks having been reported in these areas.

“Most farmers throughout the country are still planting their crops and the established crops are at early vegetative stages, making them susceptible to African armyworm damage,” said the report.

Migratory pests and biosecurity control department director Mr Shingirayi Nyamutukwa said he went with the chemicals to control the pest as soon as the reports came in.

There is still more work to be done in training stakeholders, extension workers and farmers so that they know the damage signs and the pests themselves.

“Farmers should be on the lookout for African armyworm caterpillars in their fields. Scouting should therefore be done every day for early detection and control.

Farmers should report any suspected caterpillars. We also

respond on time so we advise farmers to take pictures of these pests and send them to us so that we can identify them,” he said.

Recently, Tobacco Farmers’ Union Trust president Mr Victor Mariranyika said there is a need to create awareness campaigns so that every farmer is actively on the lookout.

“Farmers should be educated hence awareness programmes are effective when dealing with such issues.

“Agritex officers should also be working with farmers in identifying areas where African armyworms prefer.

“We applaud the efforts done by Government so far to secure enough chemicals in preparation for infestation” he said.

Problems of the armyworm have been reported for decades every cropping season.

Somali female taxi driver defies taboo to really prove her mettle

MOGADISHU

SHE throws plumes of dust in the rugged streets of Adado, a tiny town in the semi-autonomous Galmudug region, central Somalia, as she speeds off to work every morning leaving behind pedestrians holding into their cheeks with palms in utter awe.

The 29-year-old Haawo Mohamud Farah, alias Xaawo Jookar, is a tricycle (Tuktuk) taxi driver in a patriarchal society, and country where women are intimidated to venture out of their comfort zones by militant groups.

Mohamud, a mother of five, ventured into this male-dominated field after she was divorced and left with the responsibility of singlehandedly taking care of her young children.

Since she joined the male-dominated industry six months ago, her decision attracted hate and love in equal measures from the town residents, relatives and friends. “The local people could not believe a woman could do this business, and that is why they are amused when they see me driving,” she said in a recent interview.

Mohamud joined the highly competitive and male-dominated job after she was divorced by her husband. “I had no option other than looking for any job that will facilitate me to place my family’s needs on the table. It was difficult deciding on becoming a tricycle driver in a town whose community has assigned roles to people based on their gender,” said Mohamud.

She said at the beginning, people avoided her tricycle after noting that



This photo shows Haawo Mohamud Farah (R), a tricycle (Tuktuk) taxi driver, talking with a passenger at Cadado town, Somalia, December 23, 2022.

the driver is a woman. “People never believed that a woman can drive anything to her destination safely,” Mohamud said.

In Somalia, women are expected to bear children and be home keepers in their community. According to Mohamud, the taxi business is extremely competitive since it is the only one offering sustainable income to the majority of the youth in the town and many parts of the war-ravaged country.

“The taxi business is stiff. At every stage within the town, there are tens of tricycle operators waiting for

customers. Whenever a customer approaches, scores of the operators rush to them,” Mohamud said. “As a woman, I cannot jostle for customers with my male counterpart. I will avoid such jostling to save myself from being hurt in the scuffles.”

Mohamud, however, concedes her being a woman has given her some competitive advantages over her male counterparts, adding that women and young customers prefer her over a male operator. “Female clients avoid male operators in my favor to enjoy their privacy, while the young men take a ride on my tricycle for

adventure and out of curiosity,” said Mohamud, denoting that she managed to carve a niche in the business for herself by being a trustworthy person and maintaining good hygiene.

Mohamud said despite the challenges, especially during the night by some wayward customers, she enjoys her work since it is helping her cater to household bills.

“My children are getting the best care, the best education, and the best dressing. If I did not join this business I would be begging in the streets or misused by men for a peanut to feed my children,” Mohamud said.



Smoke and steam billows from Belchatow Power Station, Europe's largest coal-fired power plant operated by PGE Group, near Belchatow, Poland November 28, 2018. Picture taken November 28, 2018. REUTERS/Kacper Pempel

Fossil fuels, fairness, finance: Climate fights to watch in 2023

By Special Correspondent

FROM huge floods in Pakistan and Nigeria to heatwaves in India and drought-fuelled hunger in the Horn of Africa, vulnerable countries faced mounting climate disasters in 2022.

That has made it much harder for wealthy nations - whose emissions have driven the crisis - to ignore the need for more financial help for those suffering the most in a warming world.

In last November, at the COP27 summit in Egypt, they agreed to create a fund to help communities on the frontline deal with growing "loss and damage" from climate change impacts.

But efforts to reduce planet-heating emissions from oil, gas and coal - to avoid yet more climate damage - have seen little progress, and the relationship between top carbon polluters like China and the United States remains politically tense.

Russia's invasion of Ukraine sparked a global energy squeeze that made some governments question their heavy reliance on fossil fuels - but also pushed others to boost production, both to meet demand and profit from high prices.

COP27 ended with a stalemate on whether and how the world should commit to reducing its reliance on fossil fuels - a particular worry with next year's COP28 climate talks hosted by the United Arab Emirates, a major oil and gas producer.

What will 2023 bring? We asked top climate analysts and activists what they predict for the new year.

Li Shuo, senior global policy adviser, Greenpeace China stated: "Will geopolitics drag the climate agenda further down, or will a new type of big-power relationship emerge - one that still allows the climate agenda to progress?"

"The pessimistic side of me sees profound challenges... (but) the optimistic side of me still sees hope.

"Climate is at the top of the global



Mohamed Adow, founder and director, Power Shift Africa stated: "COP28 is already being talked down by some climate campaigners, writing it off due to the host nation being the United Arab Emirates."

agenda. The issue will only become more urgent as climate impacts deepen... and it is not like we have the luxury of time to wait for better political conditions."

Mitzi Jonelle Tan, Philippines climate justice activist said: "With the decision of a 'loss and damage' finance facility at the latest UN climate summit, we need to put pressure to ensure that this is operationalised immediately."

"It's a historic victory, but we still need to make sure that it becomes clear how the money will be transferred and who will pay."

Mohamed Adow, founder and director, Power Shift Africa stated: "COP28 is already being talked down by some climate campaigners, writing it off due to the host nation being the United Arab Emirates."

"However, that actually offers a big opportunity. Normally disruptive members of OPEC (Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries), like Saudi Arabia, are less likely to derail their neighbour's big moment in the global spotlight."

Harjeet Singh, head of global political strategy, Climate Action Network International said: "The financial institutions that were put in place in a bygone time are no longer fit-for-purpose and, in tragic irony, are often just seeding greater inequity and injustice by increasing the debt burden of countries as they try to solve for compounding and accelerating crises."

Vladislav Kaim, youth climate advisor to UN secretary-general said: "The inadequacy of the efforts and poor climate leadership of the international financial institutions in general, and the World Bank in particular, has become glaringly evident.

"A summit (French President Emmanuel Macron) convenes in

June will be a barometer of what his leadership - or that of (Barbados Prime Minister) Mia Mottley, with her Bridgetown Initiative - can achieve in the current environment."

With the climate conference COP28 in Dubai, we can expect petro-states and oil-producing states to exploit the moment to dictate the terms of the transition to their benefit and prop up false solutions. It will be a critical year to dismantle this powerful lobby.

Rachel Kyte, dean, The Fletcher School at Tufts University and co-chair of the Voluntary Carbon Markets Integrity Initiative said: "The financial capacity of the international financial architecture provides the 'easiest' trillion dollars to access (for climate action) - it's already authorised and in the case of the multilateral development banks is highly under-leveraged, despite 20 years of efforts to improve.

"So making that public money take more risk, work harder, move faster, is - while not easy - not as hard as finding another trillion."

Mitzi Jonelle Tan, Philippines climate justice activist said: "We need governments to sign onto the Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty to ensure that we stop all new, and expansion of, fossil infrastructure."

Mohamed Adow, founder and director, Power Shift Africa said: "For many years climate campaigners have said the world needs to get onto a 'war footing' to adequately deal with the climate crisis. A mobilisation akin to that which helped win World War Two is needed to accelerate the global energy transition."

"What has been missing is the political will... (but) that is now changing as fossil fuel costs soar and the folly of reliance on petrodictators like (Russian President

Vladimir) Putin becomes clear."

Harjeet Singh, head of global political strategy, Climate Action Network International said: "With the climate conference COP28 in Dubai, we can expect petro-states and oil-producing states to exploit the moment to dictate the terms of the transition to their benefit and prop up false solutions. It will be a critical year to dismantle this powerful lobby."

Vladislav Kaim, youth climate advisor to UN secretary-general said: "(Carbon offsets) already are discredited. There is no quick fix... to allow the polluters to buy their way out of the need to reduce emissions - and we should not give an inch in the fight on this."

"(Net-zero) pledges are the stuff of the day before yesterday - (high-emitters must) show us what they are actually doing, and be prepared to be held accountable."

Rachel Kyte, dean, The Fletcher School at Tufts University and co-chair of the Voluntary Carbon Markets Integrity Initiative noted: "2023 is an important year to pull together the different rules of the road for a (carbon) market."

"For voluntary carbon markets to work well, we need clarity on high integrity on both the supply and demand side - and that is coming into focus."

Harjeet Singh, head of global political strategy, Climate Action Network International said: "The climate crisis is a human rights crisis and viewing it through this lens widens the leverage points for action. It is time to hold states accountable to their obligations to their citizens."

"A key process early next year is the vote on the resolution tabled by the government of Vanuatu, seeking an advisory opinion

from the world's highest court, the International Court of Justice, on climate change.

"This would clarify states' obligations to their citizens through the framing of international law."

Fatima Denton, director, United Nations University Institute for Natural Resources in Africa said: "Youth groups in various parts of the world are challenging the dominant narratives on climate change and critiquing climate diplomacy for being too slow, too protracted, and for failing to challenge power relations."

"They are increasingly pointing to climate change as more than a scientific, economic, political issue, but inherently moral. As a result, they are speaking out against what they perceive to be climate injustice."

Mohamed Adow, founder and director, Power Shift Africa said: "We're already seeing deals being struck to help developing countries get out of polluting industries, like the recent \$15 billion agreement between the G7 and Vietnam. We need to see more of these to power a just transition.

"We also need to remove the barriers currently preventing the growth in good jobs in clean energy.

"The British government has had a de facto ban on onshore wind, the cheapest form of new electricity in the UK, for the last seven years. Not only was that a terrible policy from a climate perspective, it also prevented the growth of high-skill, high-value green jobs from emerging in the UK.

"Renewables offer a source of much-needed and well-paid employment if the industry is given support from governments around the world."

Fatima Denton, director, United Nations University Institute for Natural Resources in Africa also stated: "Climate finance obstacles will impede equitable transitions... Countries that are most vulnerable to climate extremes and have the least adaptive capacity are on the transition's periphery. (That) will negatively impact the quality, speed and depth of the transition."



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Amana Bank sees over subscription of the maiden Mudarabah Sukuk

By Smart Money Reporter

AMANA Bank has said that oversubscription of its last December Sukuk Mudarabah worth 5bn/- issued by Capital Markets and Securities Authority's (CMSA) under the central bank's mandate last November is a sole testimony of the bank's success during 2022.

The five-year Mudarabah Sukuk is a financial investment that provides institutional and individual investors with an opportunity to invest in Sharia compliant Capital Markets Instruments.

The bank's managing director Abubakar Athman said in a statement last week that the oversubscription is a direct reflection of trust and the potentiality of Amana Bank as a leading Islamic Banking service provider in the local market.

The offer was opened to a select group of investors mid-November 2022 and was closed on 08th December 2022. The result of the transaction follows an exceptionally positive response by the market on the type of Islamic Finance and Markets Instruments.

"We are pleased to inform our stakeholders the successful subscription of the Sukuk whereby 6.75bn/- has been raised, representing aoversubscription by 35 percent. The distribution of investors by category is 75 percent institutions and 60 percent from Individuals," said Athman.

Athman said the bank is delighted to bring Amana Bank's first Sukuk to a rapidly growing Islamic Finance market in Tanzania. He commended investors who saw the value and potential that it brings into the banking sector.

The bank's partners include FIMCO Limited, the Lead Arranger; and IRM Legal, Legal Advisor; who played a significant role in making Amana Bank's first ever Mudarabah Sukuk a success.

Amana Bank head of sharia and product development Jamal Juma this is Amana Bank's first ever issued Sukuk to the Tanzania Market.

"As guided by the Shariah Supervisory Board of Amana Bank, all proceeds from this transaction will support growth in various sectors of the economy. With its unique asset-oriented structure, the proceeds will be placed in investments which are Shariah compliant," he said.

Having commenced its journey on 24th November 2011, Amana Bank has witnessed strong progress, which was primarily fuelled by the growing support and confidence of its valued customers, which today counts over 120,000 enjoying a wide range of fully fledged Islamic financing products and services.

It grew its franchise to 10 branches, with over 80,000 registered customers on various digital platforms and access to more than 700 Amana Mtaani banking agents nationwide.

In the 11 years, Amana Bank has predominantly served the SME sector, which is the backbone of the Tanzania economy, where its people-friendly banking model forms a strong strategic fit.

Going beyond that, the bank's core business operations are well aligned to serve a wider range of customers with different levels of financing requirements.

Now: Phone accessories for Malawi's tech entrepreneur

BLANTYRE, Malawi

INSPIRED by Chinese technologies, a 30-year-old man in Malawi has embarked on making phone accessories with the aim of establishing a giant tech manufacturing company.

Sam Smith Silumbu manufactures mobile phone accessories, including low-cost power banks, convenient for use on various mobile gadgets to deal with power shortages in Malawi.

Despite having pursued a civil engineering major at Xinyu University in Jiangxi Province in China, Silumbu came across a lot of Chinese technologies, including techniques for making power banks.

"When I came back from China, I observed that we had a lot of problems with the power blackouts; that's how the whole idea started. So we make these power banks with the aim of making them affordable and efficient," Silumbu said in a recent interview.

Silumbu is selling low-cost power banks under Kayondo Science Technology, a mobile phone accessories manufacturing company. He said he will widen its scope of business in the future.

"We have received a lot of



Sam Smith Silumbu makes a power bank at his workshop in Blantyre, Malawi, Dec. 29, 2022

feedback and demand. We are even failing to meet the demand because of low supply. But we are finding ways to curb the challenge," said Silumbu.

"Our biggest challenge is electricity. In most cases, we need an eight-hour continuous supply of electricity for our equipment to operate efficiently. However, continuing load-shedding

schedules always hinder our productivity," he added.

Chinese Ambassador to Malawi Long Zhou expressed his country's commitment to helping Malawi achieve its 2063 agenda, among others, by upholding the various agreements between the two countries.

"We are committed to working with our Malawian friends to further build up

our relationship, to further strengthen our political trust, to further expand our cooperation under the framework of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation and in alignment with your own development strategy, the Malawi 2063 vision."

According to Silumbu, his workshop is in line with Malawi's 2063 agenda that promotes industrialization;

with a broader scope of business, his workshop will create more job opportunities.

Malawian Minister of Information and Digitization Gospel Kazako has emphasized the need for young people like Silumbu to achieve Malawi's Agenda 2063.

"These will be people to implement our develop-

ment program ahead of 2063. Young people are crucial. But it is not a question of having young people; we need young people that are well trained," Kazako said.

"We need to have young people that are well calibrated, young people that are ready and young people that are in line with the vision we have as a country," he said.

Dubai scraps 30% tax on alcohol sales despite economic rebound



DUBAI

Dubai has suspended a tax of 30 per cent on alcohol and dropped a licence fee previously needed to buy alcohol in the commercial and tourism hub, two major retailers said on social media.

The move is expected to further boost the appeal of Dubai to tourists and expatriate residents drawn by its more liberal lifestyle, compared to other Gulf cities.

The changes took effect on Sunday to run for a trial period of a year, domestic media have said.

"With the removal of 30

per cent municipality tax and a free alcohol licence, buying your favourite drinks is now easier and cheaper than ever," MMI, one of two major purveyors of alcohol in Dubai, said on its Instagram account.

Prices in its stores across the emirate reflect the removal of the tax, it added.

Another retailer, African+Eastern, confirmed the tax no longer applied, but prices would remain subject to a 5 per cent value added tax (VAT).

The Dubai Media Office did not immediately respond to a request for

comment. Dubai's economy has rebounded swiftly from the COVID-19 pandemic, with GDP growing 4.6 per cent on the year for the first nine months of 2022.

Tourism is a key pillar of the economy, and tourist numbers grew more than 180 per cent in the first half of 2022 over the corresponding 2021 period.

Several Gulf states have introduced VAT as they increasingly turn to taxation to boost non-oil revenue.

While the United Arab Emirates does not impose income tax, it will introduce a 9 per cent corporate tax from June on

profits exceeding 375,000 dirhams (\$102,100).

But Dubai, home to the world's tallest building and islands shaped like palm trees, faces growing regional competition.

Saudi Arabia, for example, is investing billions to burnish its tourism appeal with efforts such as the Red Sea Project, while playing host to major cultural and sporting events.

The first casino in the Gulf, where Islamic rules have long kept gambling off limits, is expected to open in the emirate of Ras Al Khaimah in 2026, at a resort being built and operated by Wynn Resorts.

Milk processing takes new turn with fresh dairy investment inflows

By Correspondent Valentine Oforo, Dodoma

TANZANIA Dairy Board (TDB) Registrar Dr. George Msalya has said that new investments in the dairy sector are likely to attract foreign currencies into the local economy only if new technologies are embraced in milk processing.

Speaking with The Guardian last week, Msalya said that the country can also save money by incurring huge sums of money in imports of milk processed products if local factories are ready to invest in new technologies. According to him, the country spends up to 640m/- a week and 15bn/-annually, on imported milk products such as powdery milk.

Dr. Msalya argued that poor investment in Ultra-high temperature processing (UHT) technology had for years denied the country an opportunity to benefit from the milk sub-sector.

According to him, only five factories have installed UHT technology facilities namely Azam Milk, Tanga Fresh Limited, Milkcom, ASAS Dairies and Galaxy Food. Ultra-high temperature processing (UHT) is a food processing technology that sterilizes liquid food, most commonly milk, by heating it above 135 °C, over a very short time.

The five factories have a capacity of processing 871,700 liters a day, but due to several challenges they process 207,050 which is equivalent to 25 percent of the requirement.

The milk sub-sector contributes 2.3 percent to the country's gross domestic product (GDP) while the sector grows at a small pace of 2 percent a year.

He said according to the ministry of livestock and fisheries milk consumption per individual is 54 liters a year while the East African Zone recommended amount is 74 liters a year.

He hopes that the Tanzania Inclusive Processor-Producer Partnership in Dairy (TI3P) project will see the sector developed to the needed tune and standards.

The is executed by Tanzania Agricultural Development Bank (TADB) in collaboration with the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation which among others, focuses to eliminate all bottlenecks upsetting the livestock and milk sectors across the country.



Digital transformation taking centre stage in the Middle East, Africa

By Kyriacos Nicolaou

SPENDING on digital transformation projects is expected to more than double over the next four years in Turkey, the Middle East and Africa, according to a report released this week by the International Data Corporation (IDC).

The firm explained that both public and private sector spending on digital transformation projects and other related initiatives in the region will expand by a compound annual growth rate of 16 per cent by 2026, by which time it is expected to exceed \$74 billion,

accounting for 43.2 per cent of all ICT investments made during that year.

"For many organisations, the digital and tech investments they made during the pandemic to build resilience could be put to test in 2023 across key business dimensions such as customer experience, operations, and financial management, among others," IDC's group vice president and regional managing director for the META region Jyoti Lalchandani said.

"The implementation of further digitalisation in critical areas and a more rapid shift to a 'digital

business' approach will be key to separating the thrivers from the survivors," he added.

In terms of the global market, regarding the digital transformation segment, IDC said that it expects spending on digital technology by companies and organisations to grow at eight times the rate of the economy as a whole in 2023.

In addition, the company explained that this will allow organisations to create a stable foundation, facilitating operational excellence, competitive differentiation, and growth in the long term.

"No matter what the

economy throws at us over the coming 12 months, organisations must not lose sight of their digital aspirations, so the focus should be on enabling clear and measurable outcomes, and digital spending needs to transition from building to scaling," Lalchandani said.

"Indeed, IDC predicts that by 2027, at least 30 per cent of the C-suite's focus will be on scaling innovation and operating a truly digital business. Automation will sit at the heart of this process, helping to reduce the cost of IT operations, address labour shortages, and increase the velocity of innovation," the director concluded.

Saudi Arabia's ICT market value hit \$40.9bn in 2022

RIYADH

SAUDI Arabia's first global spectrum auction, the launch of the latest generation of Wi-Fi, and the initial application of fifth-generation technology in the region all helped the Kingdom's information and communications technology market hit SR154 billion (\$40.9 billion) in 2022, according to new figures released by the Communications, Space, and Technology Commission.

The developments helped consolidate Saudi Arabia's position as the largest ICT market in the Middle East and North Africa, and the growth of the Kingdom's digital economy is set to double the impact in the field of user protection and institutional excellence, Saudi Press agency reported.

During 2022, Saudi Arabia witnessed several developments that boosted its ICT sector.

This included up to 600 firms registering in the first global spectrum auction aimed at covering the airspace with internet services, with the size of investment opportunities forecasted to stand at SR1 billion.

Additionally, as a result of the commission's regulatory capabilities, the number of ICT firms aiming to be listed in the financial market hit 11, reflecting a growth rate of 350 percent when compared to 2021. The commission also launched an experimental



regulatory environment specializing in emerging technologies in support of innovative digital business models, which was adopted by 10 international as well as local companies in the field.

Moreover, the authority registered over 87 local technical products - whose annual sales exceed SR500 million - to customers

and distributors across 28 countries globally.

As part of its organizational roles, the authority launched the Digital Regulations Academy aimed at developing human cadres in the field of digital regulations and to contribute to further propelling the Kingdom's digital transformation journey.

A total of 19 private and government agencies benefited from the seven training programs offered by the academy so far.

The CST Commission's ambition is to enable the digitization and adaption of emerging technology while elevating the services of the telecommunications and information technology sector to new heights.

Telecom services restart in key rebel-held city in northern Ethiopia - CEO

ADDIS ABABA

TELECOMMUNICATION services have restarted in Mekele, the rebel-held capital of northern Ethiopia's Tigray region, an official has said.

Frehiwot Tamiru, chief executive officer (CEO) of the state-owned telecoms operator, Ethio-Telecom, said a successful phone call was made Wednesday after more than a year of communication blackout caused by the northern Ethiopia conflict.

"The restart of telecommunication services in (Mekele) has enabled 61 bank branches to re-enter into service," the state-owned Ethiopian

Broadcasting Corporation (EBC) reported, quoting Tamiru as saying.

Tamiru also said the state firm has managed to rehabilitate 981 km of telecommunication fiber lines, resulting in 27 cities and towns across the region managing to receive telecommunication services once again.

Earlier on Wednesday, Ethiopia's flag carrier, Ethiopian Airlines, resumed flights to Mekele two days after a delegation of Ethiopian government officials visited the city, the first time since the conflict erupted in November 2020.

The latest developments came after a permanent cessation of hostilities

agreement signed on Nov. 2 between the Ethiopian government, and the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) which now controls parts of the northernmost region. The deal also includes restoration of law and order, withdrawal of foreign and non-Ethiopian army forces, restoration of services and unhindered access to humanitarian supplies.

Ethiopia, Africa's second most populous nation, has seen a devastating conflict between government-allied troops and forces loyal to the TPLF for the past two years, which left thousands dead and millions more in urgent need of humanitarian assistance.



Four-day workweek pilot launching in South Africa soon - with 20 local companies on board

JOHANNESBURG

FOUR Day Week Global published its findings from its most extensive four-day week pilot, which showed that participating companies experienced increased revenue alongside reduced absenteeism and resignations, while employees experienced a significant increase in health and wellbeing.

The four-day week is based on the 100-80-100 model, which prescribes 100% of the pay for 80% of the time in exchange for a commitment to delivering 100% of the output.

These findings come after more than 30 companies and almost 1,000 employees in countries including the US, Ireland and Australia recently concluded a six-month four-day week pilot programme - with the UK data, which began in June 2022, expected to be released early 2023.

According to the report, workers felt less stressed and burnt out and reported higher rates of life satisfaction. Findings also show significant declines in the duration and frequency of commuting - which meant employees got more time to be productive.

On average, revenue increased across all companies by 8.1% over the trial period and increased by 38% compared to the same period in 2021-employee fatigue decreased by 10%; employee stress and mental health issues decreased by 32% and 38%, respectively; on average, employees engaged in 27 minutes of

additional physical activity per week; Work and family life balance increased by 60%, while relationships with colleagues and family members improved by 44.9%; and the overall, life satisfaction increased by 57.5%.

The report also noted that participating companies rated the trial a nine out of ten, expressing extreme satisfaction with their overall productivity and performance - with none of the companies returning to a five-day week post-trial.

Additionally, 70% of the employees surveyed said they'd need a 10-50% pay increase to return to a five-day work week.

Four-day week trail in South Africa scheduled for early 2023

Speaking to Cape Talk, 4 Day Week South Africa director Karen Lowe said a four-day work week pilot will start in South Africa in February 2023. She added that 20 companies have signed up for the trial, and the pilot will run for six months.

"I'm positive that the 38% increase in revenue seen in the new data was partly due to the Covid-19 recovery, but we're seeing improvements in company performance, productivity, and phenomenal employee health and wellbeing data," said Lowe.

Lowe said there are hopes that the same results will be seen after the pilot in South Africa - especially when considering sub-Saharan Africa's current workplace sentiments.

According to Gallup's

State of Global Workplace 2022 report, only 21% of employees in sub-Saharan Africa feel engaged with their work and evaluate their life as thriving.

Lowe is optimistic that the four-day week trial will provide a way to change these statistics. "The first concluded pilot just reported happier, healthier, and engaged employees, and that's what we hope to see in the results when we start piloting next year," she said. However, there are questions about whether South Africa is ready for the model.

Kirk Kruger, master reward specialist with the South African Reward Association (SARA), said South African businesses are likely not ready to adopt a four-day workweek permanently.

"I don't think South Africa as a country or an economy is ready for this on a large scale, and interested employers will want to test the waters before committing," said Kruger.

Potential adopters are likelier to be niche organisations, such as smaller and medium-sized technology companies. Even then, he said that they should take time to investigate its impact on their operations, possibly running a pilot programme first.

Additionally, Abigail Butcher, the associate in the Employment Law practice at Cliffe Dekker Hofmeyr, noted that South Africa has standing laws and negotiated positions around working hours, which complicate any formal shift in scheduling.

Government's fiscal operations far less in four months - BoU

KAMPALA

THE state of the economy report for December 2022 by the Central Bank has revealed that in the four months of FY22/23, fiscal operations were less expansionary than programmed, reflecting in part tightening financial conditions and the need to support the disinflation objective of monetary policy.

During the first four months of this fiscal year which ends on June 30 2023, the Central Bank said in the state of the economy report which it released on December 30 2022 that total government expenditure in the period amounted to Sh11.065 trillion, which was Sh1.598 trillion lower than programmed mainly due to under-performance in development expenditure of Sh1.941 trillion.

"Although there was an 18.6 per cent growth in domestic revenue collections when compared to the previous year, government revenue (including grants) amounted to Sh7.658 trillion, which was below the budget target by Sh217.7 billion," said the Central Bank.

The central bank said during the period, grants amounted to Sh482.1 billion, registering a shortfall of Sh354.5 billion. The resultant fiscal deficit amounted to Sh3.406 trillion which was much higher than the programmed deficit of Sh1.380 trillion.

The Central Bank explained that in relation to the Uganda Revenue Authority (URA) targets, the cumulative outturns for net tax and Non-Tax (NTR) collections for the four months of FY22/23 amounted to Sh7.182 trillion which was Sh142.9 billion above the target underpinned by over performance in taxes on international trade.

"Net URA tax revenue amounted to Sh6.689 trillion and NTR amounted to Sh492.7 billion, corresponding to an overperformance of Sh100.6 and Sh42.3 billion, respectively," said the Central Bank.

However, the Central Bank report indicates that indirect taxes underperformed by Sh78.9 billion largely due to a Sh46.5 billion shortfall in VAT while international trade taxes were above target by Sh113.8 billion largely because of the overperformance of import duty and VAT on imports.

"Direct taxes also overperformed by Sh82.6 billion mainly due to higher than target collections in PAYE. On an annual basis, net tax revenue registered a growth of 16.9 per cent in the four months of FY22/23 compared to 9.2 in the same period last year while NTR increased by 51.3 per cent in the period compared to 13.7 in the previous year," the central bank explained.

In October global trade and manufacturing slowed down tremendously. A continued deterioration in the global manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) and business confidence suggests that industrial activity will remain subdued for the rest of 2019.

Uncertainty

Amid rising policy uncertainty, due to the renewed intensification of trade tensions in the world economy, global growth prospects have weakened, commodity prices have declined, and capital flows to EMDEs have slowed. These headwinds are expected to weigh on activity in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Globalisation has allowed many emerging countries to compete in world markets. Globalisation encompasses several phenomena and trends that have led to a growing interdependence of most economies throughout the world. It displays its effects through a strong increase in cross-border transactions in goods and services, capital, labour and natural resources.

In an interview with Prosper Magazine recently, the Deputy governor Bank of Uganda (BoU), Dr Louis Kasekende, said quarterly Gross Domestic Product (GDP) figures recently released by Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS) indicate average GDP growth of 5.5 per cent year-on year for second half of Financial Year 2018/19 relative to 6.6 per cent in the first half of that year, Financial Year 2018/19.

Why slowdown?

"The slowdown should be short-lived with a stronger rebound in economic activity expected in part due to the expected lagged impact of monetary policy easing, which should boost private sector credit coupled with an expected increase in private sector demand," he said.

Dr Kasekende said with respect to external developments, the heightened global tensions and uncertainty coupled with the deceleration of world growth, mean that the boost the Ugandan economy gets from abroad shall be lower.

"However, the stable international oil prices mean that the external push to domestic inflation is also benign," he said.



Kenyattas gain Sh3.1bn in a year as NCBA surges to top



NCBA branch in Nairobi

NAIROBI

THE Kenyatta family has gained Sh3.12 billion in one year from their ownership of NCBA Group after the top tier lender defied the stock market crash to emerge the best performer at the Nairobi Securities Exchange (NSE).

NCBA Group share jumped 57.94 percent in 2022, making it the top performer at the Nairobi bourse that shed Sh650.1 billion last year following rate hikes in the developed world and the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

The Kenyattas, who control 13.2 percent of the bank, saw the worth of their stake close the year at Sh8.66 billion from Sh5.5 billion on the first trading day of January.

The increase has been attributed to investors reacting positively to NCBA's market beating half-year financial performance, which lifted the bank's shares 66.74 percent over the past six months to close the year at Sh39.35 a piece – valuing the bank at Sh64.8 billion.

The bank's net profits for the nine months to September grew fastest at 96.2 percent, with the lender overtaking Absa Kenya as the country's fourth most profitable lender.

Equity, Kenya's most profitable lender, posted a 27.9 percent profit growth in the period while KCB Group was up 21.4 percent.

NCBA owners include tycoons

and formerly powerful political families in the era of Jomo Kenyatta and Daniel arap Moi including the ex-Central Bank Governor, Philip Ndegwa, and former head of Civil Service, Simeon Nyanchae.

All three are deceased, leaving their families to reap outsized capital gains at the NSE and steady dividend payouts.

The wealthy Kenyatta and Ndegwa families shepherded the merger of listed NIC Bank and the private CBA bank to form NCBA in 2019.

The Ndegwas' 13.13 percent stake is worth Sh8.5 billion –making them among Kenya's wealthiest families. The NCBA share rally has seen the Ndegwa's gain Sh2.96 billion, with their recent decision to increase their stake through an additional purchase of 10 million shares in the bank paying off.

Analysts say NCBA's surge at the NSE is the product of the profit growth that has seen its return on equity (ROE) rise to above 16.9 per cent, making the counter attractive to investors who prefer to put their money in risk-free Government when a company's ROE is below 10 per cent.

A higher return on equity (ROE) – a measure of financial performance which offers owners and investors insight into a business's profitability – is the main reason that has attracted investors to this counter.

ROE is the percentage of a com-

pany's net income to its shareholder value and shows how much they are likely to get for every shilling they have pumped into the business.

Rival top lenders like Equity, KCB and Cooperative Bank saw their market value dip 15.6 percent, 16.1 percent and 5.02 percent last year in line with share erosion at the NSE.

The market capitalisation stood at Sh1.98 trillion at the close of trading last week, down from Sh2.59 trillion on the first day of trading this year, translating to a loss of Sh597 billion.

The loss of Sh597 billion is the worst annual slide the market has recorded since its inception in 1954 and topples the Sh203 billion that was wiped out in 2020 due to Covid-19 economic hardships.

The market is being weighed down by a reduced appetite for emerging markets after a jump in interest rates in developed countries such as the US.

The developed markets are currently battling high inflation that has forced their central banks to adjust rates upwards, attracting foreign investors who have been fleeing emerging markets like the NSE.

The benchmark US 10-year bond rate – a closely watched gauge of market inflation expectations over the next decade – has climbed to 3.68 per cent, up from 1.63 per cent at the start of the year.

The Kenyatta family's vast busi-

ness empire is associated with well-known commercial brands and blue-chip companies.

Nigeria-based financial magazine, Ventures, in 2013 estimated the Kenyatta family fortune, including thousands of acres of land and commercial buildings to be worth \$1 billion (Sh100 billion).

But the full extent of the business dynasty, however, is still a closely guarded secret known only to the family, top lawyers and the elite investors with whom they do business.

Besides NCBA, Kenyatta's other investments are Brookside Dairy – where the President's younger brother, Muhoho Kenyatta, sits as executive chairman, and the upmarket and chic hotel chain, Heritage Hotels East Africa.

The family is also linked to Media Max Company, which owns K24 TV, Kameme Radio and The People Daily newspaper.

It also owns thousands of acres of prime land across Kenya that was acquired by the late President Kenyatta in the '60s and '70s under a settlement transfer fund scheme that allowed government officials to acquire land from the British.

Uhuru Kenyatta's assumption of the presidency has injected fresh energy into his family's commercial empire with expansion plans, buyouts and mergers taking centre stage.

How Rwandans will benefit from Starlink

KAMPALA

STARLINK is a satellite broadband service run by Elon Musk's private space company, SpaceX, based in Hawthorne, California, USA.

Its development began in 2015 with the prototype satellites launched into orbit in 2018. In the years since, SpaceX has deployed thousands of Starlink satellites into constellations across dozens of successful launches. As of December 2022, it consists of over 3,300 mass-produced small satellites in Low Earth Orbit (LEO), which communicates with designated ground transceivers.

The first two countries on the African continent confirmed to be getting Starlink are Mozambique and Nigeria. It will be launched in Rwanda in the first quarter of 2023, other countries where it is slated to be rolled out include Angola, Eswatini, Gabon, Kenya, Tanzania, and Malawi.

The launch of Starlink in the first quarter of 2023 will surely come with many benefits to internet users in Rwanda. It will provide high-speed broadband internet with low latency (Starlink's latency ranges between 20 ms to 40 ms and the latency of conventional satellites sometimes goes above 300 ms) worldwide unlike conventional satellite internet.



The higher the latency, the faster the internet and the lower the latency, the faster the internet.

"The launch of Starlink in Rwanda is exciting news to me as an internet user. I sometimes have issues every time I go to the village, my first worry is poor internet connection but from what I have heard and read, my worry will be no more and I cannot wait," Grace Umutesi, an internet user said.

Using advanced low-orbit satellites allows you to communicate in video chats, streaming and other high speed data activities, which was previously impossible via satellite internet.

"At times I get frustrated when I cannot have my zoom classes due to internet connection issues and I

end up missing lectures which obviously affects my grades in the end. As a student, the launch of Starlink in our country means I will not miss lectures and I am really hopeful," Kenneth Kamali, a university student said.

Users can expect download speeds from 100 Mbps to 200 Mbps and delays of 20 ms in most places. Therefore, Rwandans will easily use current generation broadband applications.

The Starlink kit or terminal comes with everything you need to connect to the internet including a Starlink device, Wi-Fi router and cables. It does not communicate directly to handsets but through a terminal mounted on a flat surface such as the ground or roof of a house.

This makes it very easy to set up since it is a matter of placing the terminal in an ideal location. Any Rwandan interested in using Starlink will install it with a lot of ease.

Starlink internet does not suffer any internet outage due to disasters. The fact that it has very many base stations around the world, internet can be restored when the sky clears up. This assures faster disaster recovery. This will serve as a guarantee to internet users in Rwanda who think that they will have connectivity issues in case a catastrophe happens.

Most studies have shown that Starlink has more pros than cons, therefore, it is worth embracing for more technological advancements.

VIEW FROM THE TOP

WORLD

Faithful pay respects to former Pope Benedict in St Peter's



Faithful pay respects to former Pope Benedict in St Peter's

in the secluded Vatican monastery where he had lived since his shock resignation in 2013.

His body, dressed in red and gold liturgical vestments, was placed on a simple dais, with two Swiss guards standing on either side as the faithful walked by.

He will lie in state until tomorrow. His funeral will be held on Thursday in St Peter's Square and be presided over by Pope Francis. The Vatican has said it will be a simple, solemn and sober ceremony in keeping with

his wishes.

There were no signs of the huge crowds who came to pay their respects to Benedict's predecessor, Pope John Paul II, following his death in 2005.

During his eight-year papacy, Benedict, a methodical, shy and very private German, had a hard time filling the shoes of the charismatic John Paul, inviting constant comparison in the media and among the faithful of the 1.3 billion member Church.

Agencies

JERUSALEM

VATICAN CITY - A steady stream of people filed into St. Peter's Basilica yesterday to pay

their respects to former Pope Benedict XVI, whose body will lie in state in front of the main altar until his funeral later this week. Benedict died on Saturday at the age of 95

Wang: Openness key to global relations

BEIJING

CHINA'S diplomatic missions will earnestly expand the country's global partnerships based on equality, openness and cooperation in the new year, senior Chinese diplomat Wang Yi said.

Wang, who is a member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, made the comment in a signed article in his capacity, for the first time, as director of the Office of the Foreign Affairs Commission of the CPC Central Committee.

The article was published on Sunday in the first issue this year of the committee's flagship magazine Qiushi.

The Xi Jinping Thought on Diplomacy "breaks new ground for China's diplomatic theories", and the country's diplomacy successfully advances the building of a community with a shared future for mankind and addresses

the yearning of people around the world for peace, development and collaboration, he wrote.

Currently, 150 countries and 32 international organizations are part of the big family of the Belt and Road Initiative, according to the article. In terms of advancing an open world economy in the new year, China will further advance the co-building of the Belt and Road, Wang said.

China will "provide more convenience for the exchange of visits with the outside world", and "secure a stable and well-functioned production chain and supply chain", he wrote. Su Xiaohui, an associate research fellow at the China Institute of International Studies, noted that China's great sense of duty as a major country is also a feature of its major country diplomacy.

"China has never ignored the challenges that developing countries in the world are



Chinese State Councilor and then Foreign Minister Wang Yi

facing, and seeks more efforts to guard their legitimate rights and interests, as well as wants more opportunities for developing nations to spur their growth," she said.

As part of the nation's new year resolution for diplomacy, Chinese diplomats will be dedicated to head-of-state diplomacy and shape external

conditions for realizing high-quality development, according to Wang.

China will deepen strategic mutual trust and mutually beneficial collaboration with Russia, and it will discuss with the United States about the guiding principles of their relations and make further fine-tuning to ensure the relations

go in the right path, he noted.

"Over the past year, we have relentlessly explored the right way for China and the US - two major countries - to get along with each other," he wrote. Beijing will work for closer high-level exchanges and strategic communication with Europe, and push for the steady development of China-Europe relations, he said.

"As two major forces champion world peace and two major markets promote common growth, the development of China-Europe relations matters to the stability of the global landscape and the prosperity of the Eurasian continent," he noted.

China will deepen its friendship, mutual trust and convergence of interests with neighboring countries while reinforcing unity and collaboration with other developing countries and defending their rights and interests, he added.

Xinhua

Lula takes over in Brazil, slams Bolsonaro's threats

BRASILIA

LUIZ Inacio Lula da Silva was sworn in as Brazil's president on Sunday, delivering a searing indictment of far-right former leader Jair Bolsonaro and vowing a drastic change of course to rescue a nation plagued by hunger, poverty and racism.

In a speech to Congress after officially taking the reins of Latin America's biggest country, the leftist said democracy was the true winner of the October presidential vote, when he ousted Bolsonaro in the most fraught election for a

generation.

Bolsonaro, who left Brazil for the United States on Friday after refusing to concede defeat, rattled the cages of Brazil's young democracy with baseless claims of electoral weaknesses that birthed a violent movement of election deniers.

"Democracy was the great victor in this election, overcoming ... the most violent threats to freedom to vote, and the most abject campaign of lies and hate plotted to manipulate and embarrass the electorate," Lula told lawmakers.



Lula, who was behind bars during Bolsonaro's 2019 inauguration on graft convictions that were later overturned, delivered a veiled threat to his predecessor.

"We do not carry any spirit of revenge against those who tried to subjugate the nation to their personal and ideological designs, but we will guarantee the rule of law," Lula

said, without mentioning Bolsonaro by name. "Those who erred will answer for their errors."

He also accused Bolsonaro's administration of committing "genocide" by failing to respond properly to the COVID-19 virus that killed more than 680,000 Brazilians.

"The responsibilities for this genocide must be investigated and must not go unpunished," he said.

Although Bolsonaro's Florida trip insulates him from any immediate legal jeopardy in Brazil, he now faces mounting judicial risks - related to his

anti-democratic rhetoric and his pandemic handling - after losing his presidential immunity, legal experts said.

Lula's plans for government provided a stark contrast to Bolsonaro's four years in office, which were characterized by backsliding on environmental protections in the Amazon rainforest, looser gun laws and weaker protections for indigenous peoples and minorities.

Lula said he wants to turn Brazil, one of the world's top food producers, into a green superpower.

Agencies

What makes Russia's preeminent New Year's tree preeminent?

MOSCOW

RUSSIA'S main New Year's tree was felled in the Moscow Region on December 12, 2022 and was delivered to the Kremlin two days later.

This year's pick was a fir tree in a village near Volokolamsk, to the northwest of Moscow, the press service of the presidential property department said. The spruce is 95 years old and is 27 meters tall, and the span of its lower branches is some ten meters. In addition, the diameter of its trunk is 56 centimeters.

The first Christmas trees in Russia appeared during a period that historians often refer to as the Time of Troubles (1598-1613), which followed the Polish invasion. This tradition failed to take root then. During the reign of Peter the Great (1672-1725), conifer trees began to be set up on New Year's Eve on Moscow's Cathedral Square and in Merchant Yard (the then equivalent of today's indoor shopping malls). The custom was borrowed from the Europeans that resided in Moscow's German Quarter.

On December 29 and 30, 1699 (December 19 and 20 according to the Julian Calendar effective in those days) Peter the Great issued two decrees - one on a new system of chronology and the other, on celebrating the New Year. Under the decrees, the years were to be counted from the day of Jesus Christ's birth and the beginning of the new year would be celebrated on January 1, in accordance with the custom adopted in European Christian countries. Before that, Russia had stuck to the Byzantine Calendar, which calculated historical time from the moment of the world's creation (believed to have been at 5509-5508 BC). According to the Byzantine Calendar, the first day of the new year was on September 1. That said, Peter the Great decided against adopting the Gregorian Calendar, which European countries had introduced in the 16th century. Russia retained the Julian calendar.

It was ordered to decorate Moscow's main streets and the homes of the nobility with conifer trees and branches. The New Year festivities lasted for seven days, topping the holiday off with a bonfire display lighting up Moscow's Red Square, the site of the main events.

Spruces were put up and decorated for Christmas, December 25, and remained in place until the New Year. Originally, the trees were adorned with sweets, fruit, ribbons, and candles. Later, they were decked out with special toys, most of them associated with biblical stories: jingle bells, stars, holiday lamps and tiny figures of angels and shepherds. Presents for all members of the family were placed under the tree - an unmistakable allusion to the Gifts of the Magi. Later, toys made from glass began to be brought from Germany. At the end of the 19th century, glass baubles and Russian-manufactured beads were already available. At about the same time, the country borrowed the European custom of making artificial Christmas trees. With that, the initial ones were made from pieces of fabric.

The first Christmas tree meant for public display was placed inside St. Petersburg's railway station in 1852. Later, trees began to be installed and decorated at other public sites.

The Christmas tree tradition was interrupted by World War I. In 1915, German prisoners of war, kept at a hospital in Saratov, arranged a Christmas party, consequently triggering enraged comments from Russian dailies. Thus, Emperor Nicholas II banned the custom of decorating trees for Christmas.

Spotlight on the spruce's Soviet-era saga

After the 1917 October Revolution, Nicholas II's prohibition was lifted. The Christmas and New Year holiday tradition festivities would continue for several years. For the children of Soviet government officials and Communist Party functionaries, New Year's parties around decorated trees were held in the Kremlin. With the launch of an anti-religious campaign in the mid-1920s, though, the celebrations were condemned as an alien "bourgeois and religious" legacy and outlawed in 1929.

On December 28, 1935 the Communist Party's daily Pravda carried an article calling for a revision of the "erroneous" prohibition on New Year's parties and urged that festivities and entertainment events for children across the nation be organized. A gala New Year's party was held in the Kremlin for children and the youth. Russia's traditional fairytale personality - Grandfather Frost (or Ded Moroz in Russian) - hosted the event. Another fictional character, the Snow Maiden (Snegurochka), joined a year later. On December 23, 1947 the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet (the then Soviet national legislature) declared January 1 as an official public holiday and a day-off.

Decorations over the decades

In the 1930s, nationwide factories began to churn out tree toys in abundance, but those delicate and fragile items, made from hot glass and painted by hand, were rather expensive. Many families demonstrated great resourcefulness in making improvised decorations from cardboard wood, color paper and painted spruce cones. Pressed cotton wool toys were extremely popular.

Their mass production had continued up until the mid-1950s. On Soviet New Year's trees, along with the traditional figures depicting animals and birds, fairytale characters, snowflakes and flowers, you could find baubles with portraits of Lenin and Stalin, toy figures of polar explorers, pioneers (the USSR's version of the boy scouts and girl scouts) with trumpets, blimps, tanks, tractors, bundles of wheat, ears of corn, space satellites, space rockets and so on. Plastics, which began to be used widely for making New Year's toys in the 1960s, considerably slashed production costs and, consequently, retail prices.

SUSAN, who works for Kakuzi PLC, an agricultural cultivation and manufacture company in Kenya, finished picking the last batch of avocados of 2022 with her colleagues in an orchard in Murang'a county, some 70 kilometers away from Nairobi. These fruits were soon shipped to China.

Kenya is the world's sixth largest exporter of avocados, and the largest in Africa. In January 2022, China and Kenya signed an export agreement for fresh avocado shipment. Five months later, China's General Administration of Customs (GAC) gave nod to allow qualified fresh avocados from Kenya to enter the Chinese market. In August, the first batch of fresh avocados grown in Kenya hit the Chinese market.

The fresh avocados picked by Susan arrived at a port in Shanghai, China after a 20-

Chinese consumers favour avocados imported from Kenya

day voyage. This batch of imports totaled 45 tons. "Before the avocados arrived at the port, we had contacted the importer for the information of the imported fruits, so we could open a green channel for them and ensure that inspection could be carried out at the earliest time possible," said Luo Kaiming, a customs official in Shanghai.

To ensure the freshness of imported agricultural products, the inspection of the avocados was completed in a closed cold-chain facility. After the fruits passed on-site inspection and random samples were qualified in lab tests, the avocados soon got a "green light." They were packed and then shipped to Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou and other Chinese cities. In the past, the avocados on the Chi-

nese market between March and September each year were imported from Peru, Mexico and other Latin American countries. Now with those from Kenya, the choices of Chinese consumers are very much diversified.

So far, the Kenyan government has appointed 15 orchards, nine factories and a fumigation treatment facility in the country as designated organizations for avocado export to China. The successful entry of Kenyan avocados into China will involve more Kenyan farmers in the avocado industry, said Joseph Ongeri, an agronomist from Kenya.

Chris Flowers, Managing Director of Kakuzi PLC, told People's Daily that the avocados from Kenya were quite popular among Chinese consumers and were soon sold out.

He said China's consumption market is expanding and the country has complete laws and regulations. "Chinese consumers and agents have a high requirement on quality. We are very optimistic about our prospects in China," Flowers noted. Strict quarantine and advanced cold-chain technologies make sure that fresh avocados from Kenya are of high quality.

According to an official with the GAC, the administration gives priority to the access applications of agricultural products filed by African countries and would quicken the inspection quarantine, so that avocados from Africa can get to Chinese consumers in a convenient and safe manner.

Agricultural products from the same coun-

try and similarly processed, or those of the same category but from different countries, can go through risk assessment procedures together, so as to accelerate the approval process, the official said.

"The facilitated customs clearance further reinforced our confidence in expanding agricultural imports from Africa," said Liu Mosu, general manager of a Shanghai-based importer. According to Liu, the company imported about 200 tons of avocados in 2022 and the figure is expected to exceed 9,000 tons in 2023. Wu Peng, head of the Department of African Affairs at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs noted that the high-quality Belt and Road cooperation between China and Africa has brought important opportunities to African industrial and supply chains over the recent years.

People's Daily

World leaders extend New Year greetings, hoping for peace, prosperity

BEIJING

AS people around the world are celebrating the New Year, world leaders delivered New Year messages to their citizens, reviewing the past year and hoping for peace and prosperity in 2023.

"It was a year of truly pivotal, even fateful events. They became the frontier where we lay the foundation for our common future, our true independence," Russian President Vladimir Putin said in his New Year address on Saturday.

"Defending our Motherland is the sacred duty we owe to our ancestors and descendants," Putin said. "The moral and historical truth is on our side."

In his New Year message, British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak described 2022 as "tough" and predicted the coming year will have its challenges. "Before we enter the new year, I want to take a moment to reflect: 2022 was tough," Sunak said.

Looking into the future, he promised that he is "not going to pretend that all our problems will go away in the new year," adding that "the government I lead is putting your priorities first."

While giving his New Year address on Saturday, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz said: "Tonight is the end of a difficult year." Germans are all feeling the effects of the Russia-Ukraine conflict in their everyday lives – when shopping in the supermarket, at the gas station, or paying electricity bills, Scholz said, noting that the country will implement measures including tax breaks, higher child benefits and capping the cost of energy.

"Our cohesion is our greatest asset," he said. Italians have good rea-



London fireworks

sons to be hopeful, but need to face the future with a "forward-looking look and a vision," Italian President Sergio Mattarella said in his New Year speech on Saturday.

"Unity of purpose, cohesion, and moral strength... Thanks to all this, Italy has achieved encouraging results, and our resilience to the crisis generated by the pandemic has been proven by our significant growth in 2021 and 2022," said the president.

While stressing the country had solid reasons to face the new year with confidence and to nurture hopes, Mattarella called on the nation to be aware of the challenges and opportunities of the current times.

In his New Year message posted on Twitter, Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte said that the year of 2022 was "a year of worries about rising supermarket prices and high energy bills." "What

I hope for 2023, what I would like to ask everyone (to do), is that we keep looking out for each other in the Netherlands," he said. "And especially to the people who are having a hard time, who are sick, or alone. May we also remain close to each other in the new year." Cuban President Miguel Diaz-Canel on

Saturday called on Cubans to work together in 2023. "I invite you to work with passion and willingness to overcome what appears impossible," he said. Noting that "we are making it to 2023 after together beating one of the most challenging years of Cuba's revolutionary history," Diaz-Canel urged Cubans to move forward, despite the U.S. embargo against the island.

On Saturday evening, Namibia's President Hage Geingob said the country looks into the future with renewed hope and optimism in 2023 under the theme "Year of Revival." "It is time for our collective revival, to shape our future, one step at a time as we march towards shared prosperity. As a nation, we now have a good reason, to cease looking backward, but rather to look ahead and pull forward into the direction of inclusive progress and prosperity," he said.

Noting the impact of the pandemic and a major conflict in 2022, Senegalese President Macky Sall pointed out that Senegal's economy remains resilient. Senegal has consistently advocated for peace and African integration, as well as the defense of the continent's interests in global political, economic and financial governance, said Sall, who is also the African

Union chief.

Delivering a message on the eve of the New Year, Zambian President Hakainde Hichilema called on citizens to prioritize community service and love for each other.

Expecting people to focus on hard work instead of bickering, the president said that the country is on track to unlock the economy and that all energies should be channeled towards economic transformation.

"We are looking at the New Year 2023 after having undergone the bleakest of times, immense hardships, as well as the uncertainties and hopelessness of the last year," said Sri Lankan President Ranil Wickremesinghe on Saturday.

Thanking the Sri Lankans for their "patience and courage," the president said that "we must boldly implement the proposed social, economic and political reforms to build a prosperous and productive Sri Lanka in the coming decade."

Giving his New Year address via audio and video recordings, Thai Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha on Saturday referred to the year of 2022 as a "victory year" for Thailand that was able to go through crises on top of crises in the past.

The prime minister called on the Thai people to be good hosts for foreigners, perform their duties to the fullest potential, and continue to be a "moving force" for national and social development.

The Pakistani nation has emerged from difficulties in the year 2022 due to its citizens' hard work, bravery, sacrifice, determination and consistency despite facing various challenges, Pakistani President Arif Alvi said on Sunday. Calling for national unity, discipline and continuous hard work with passion and dedication to make Pakistan a prosperous, developed, democratic and stable country, the president also wished for world peace, harmony, progress and prosperity in the new year. Also on Sunday, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi extended New Year greetings and wished that the New Year will be filled with hope, happiness and lots of success. "Have a great 2023! May it be filled with hope, happiness and lots of success. May everyone be blessed with wonderful health," he tweeted.

Cuba celebrates 64th anniversary of socialist revolution with ballet performance

HAVANA

CUBANS celebrated on Sunday the 64th anniversary of the country's socialist revolution with a ballet performance here at the National Theater of Cuba.

During the evening performance, leading dancers from the country's largest dance company the National Ballet of Cuba (BNC) staged famous classics like Giselle, Don Quixote, Coppelia, The Nutcracker, The Sleeping Beauty and Swan Lake.

"The success of the Cuban ballet should not be measured only by the talent of its dancers and choreographers but by its popular access," Cuba's Vice Minister of Culture Fernando Rojas told Xinhua.

On Jan. 1, 1959, the uprising army led by Fidel Castro captured the eastern city of Santiago de Cuba and the central city of Santa Clara, forcing military dictator Fulgencio Batista to flee to the Dominican Republic.

The events marked the triumph of the revolution and the beginning of social and economic reforms that led to the establishment of socialism on the Caribbean island. Founded in 1948, the BNC gained government support after the socialist revolution.

It returned to the stage in December 2021 after a 19 month-hiatus due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and will perform in Havana over the next two weekends.

Xinhua

Russia takes chairmanship over EAEU in 2023

MOSCOW

STARTING January 1, Russia will take the helm as chairman of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) – an organization that united Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and the Russian Federation back in 2015.

President Vladimir Putin announced the priorities of Russia's EAEU chairmanship for 2023 on December 9 at an expanded meeting of the Supreme Eurasian Economic Council in Bishkek. In assessing the EAEU's actions in 2022, he emphasized that this year showed the efficiency of cooperation within the organization. In the face of global market volatility and an adverse global political environment, the Union's member countries managed not only to stabilize the macroeconomic situation, but also to improve a number of key indicators.

Thus, trade in food and agricultural products expanded by more than a third in the first nine months of 2022. The labor market evolved, and the "Work Without Borders" system was introduced, with over 500,000 vacancies and 2 million resumes. More than 75% of bilateral settlements between the association's member countries were successfully transferred to national currencies.

Russia's priorities

According to Moscow, determining strategic guidelines and starting the preparation of a new basic document for economic integra-



tion is required for the EAEU's future development, as the existing one is only designed to last until 2025. The Russian President identified developing EAEU member states' technological independence and forming a common innovation base in key industries as essential vectors of integration interaction. He feels it is important to continue working on the coordinated introduction of information technologies, particularly electronic document management.

Russia also intends to focus its efforts on strengthening investment relations and creating favorable conditions for mutual investment. This will necessitate the streamlining of administrative procedures as well as the harmonization of taxation systems. Fur-

thermore, during its chairmanship, Russia aims to address issues with the expansion of scientific and educational connections, interuniversity cooperation, and the enhancement of student tourism programs.

Single energy market

According to Putin, the formation of a common EAEU gas market should be a top priority for the next two years. The Council of Heads of Authorized Energy Authorities of the EAEU States, set up in December 2022, will deal with issues related to the establishment of common energy markets and the provision of essential energy resources to national economies.

The development of north-south and west-east transport corridors is another possible area of collaboration among EAEU participants. At the same time, not only the association's members, but also many other countries willing to co-finance collaborative projects, are interested in developing transport infrastructure in the EAEU space, according to Putin.

Expanding cooperation

According to Putin, Russia supports the EAEU's strengthening its international ties and during its chairmanship will facilitate the further extension of agreements with foreign partners. Moldova, Cuba, and Uzbekistan have already been granted observer status in the EAEU, and the EAEU has agreements on a free trade zone (FTA) with Vietnam, Singapore, and Serbia, as well as an agreement on trade and economic cooperation with China.

The EAEU parliaments will have to adopt the FTA deal with Iran, which was negotiated in December 2022. Negotiations on an FTA agreement with the UAE will also begin, in accordance with the December ruling.

Agencies

RCEP adds vitality to global economy

BEIJING

THE very beginning of 2023 marks the first anniversary of the entry into force of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), as well as the launch of a free trade area with the largest population, the most diverse membership and the greatest development potential.

One year on, the RCEP agreement has shown great vitality, effectively boosting trade among member countries and prospering the regional economy.

The membership of the RCEP comprises 10 Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) countries, as well as China, Japan, the Republic of Korea (ROK), Australia and New Zealand.

The agreement further advances the development of the international multilateral trading system. Over the past year, in the face of surging anti-globalization sentiments and the sluggish world economy, the RCEP agreement, covering a wide range of rules to facilitate trade and investment liberalization, has injected strong impetus into regional industrial integration and economic recovery.

The RCEP agreement serves as a strong hedge against protectionism and unilateralism and a practical booster for free trade and multilateral cooperation.

Over the past year, the agreement has lowered the cost of trade, facilitated the integration of industrial chains, and benefited consumers in the region.

Its enforcement has helped the recovery of the Asia-Pacific economy, offsetting the headwinds from sluggish global demand and other factors.

The agreement also promotes coordinated regional economic development and helps build an open world economy. Over the past year, the growth of direct investment among member states indicates the surging indus-

trial integration process and the stronger resilience and stability of industrial chains, supply chains and value chains in the region. The open and stable market of the free trade area has attracted more and more foreign investment from around the world, helping the area withstand external economic turbulence.

China, via close cooperation with other member countries, has been committed to pushing for high-quality RCEP implementation through its opening-up and development to promote regional economic integration.

Data from the Ministry of Commerce shows that China's trade with the other RCEP signatories expanded 7.9 percent year on year to 11.8 trillion yuan (about 1.69 trillion U.S. dollars) in the first 11 months of 2022, accounting for 30.7 percent of China's total foreign-trade value.

In the new year, China will further unleash the development potential brought by RCEP agreements and share the dividends of its own economic growth with other countries in the region and beyond, providing stability and certainty for the regional and global economic recovery.



One year on, the RCEP agreement has shown great vitality, effectively boosting trade among member countries and prospering the regional economy

INTANGIBLE cultural heritage constitutes an important part of the fine traditional Chinese culture and plays a vital role in promoting the market economy, integrating culture and tourism, assisting poverty alleviation and boosting rural vitalization.

Since 2021, China's Ministry of Culture and Tourism, together with other departments, has worked to assist rural vitalization with intangible cultural heritage.

So far, the country has established over 2,500 intangible cultural heritage workshops that are engaged in more than 1,700 intangible cultural heritage items of different levels. In particular, 1,400 of these workshops are located in regions that have shaken off poverty, helping promote local employment and increase people's income.

Xiaoshiquan village in Yiping township, Yicheng district, Zaozhuang, east China's Shandong province has set up an intangible cultural heritage workshop of fenpi, a type of sheet jelly made of sweet potatoes. The typical Chinese food is a provincial-level intangible

Intangible cultural heritage contributes to China's rural vitalisation

cultural heritage of Shandong province.

So far, the workshop has launched over 300 training sessions on fenpi making. With this workshop, villagers are able to make money near their homes while taking care of their families, which not only helps integrate local culture and tourism, but also boosts rural vitalization.

Based on the workshop, the village has also mobilized over 100 local households engaged in fenpi making to produce the food together in accordance with standard procedures. Such a cooperative-like operation allows these households to standardize processing standards by purchasing raw materials and receiving orders together.

By selling the food via both online and offline channels, villagers can have a collective profit of over a million yuan (\$143,425) a year, said Sun Zhongkun, an inheritor of the intangible cultural heritage item of fenpi making.

Intangible cultural heritage workshops around the country are realizing villagers' dreams of securing a job near their homes and increasing their income.

For instance, Quyang county of north China's Hebei province has provided over 8,000 jobs for residents from 73 villages at intangible cultural heritage workshops engaged in items such as China's traditional Ding porcelain and stone carvings.

Relying on local intangible cultural heritage items, Wuzhishan

of south China's Hainan province and Yining of northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region established community- and village-based production centers. These production centers, cooperated with workshops and companies, offer skills training for residents and distribute orders to them, so as to help them secure a job at home.

Workshops of intangible cultural heritage items that feature comparative advantages, a large workforce and high market recognition are able to create a number of jobs for the people and inject impetus into rural vitalization, said an official with the Ministry of Culture and Tourism.

To expand the market for more inheritors of intangible

cultural heritage items, regions across China have mobilized enterprises, e-commerce platforms and industry associations to help with the production and sales of intangible cultural heritage workshops.

Over the recent years, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism has worked with other relevant departments to encourage e-commerce platforms to host an intangible cultural heritage-themed shopping festival.

According to statistics, some 150 prefectural-level cities held relevant activities about the festival in 2022, selling intangible cultural heritage products worth over 2 billion yuan. In particular, these activities were joined by over 1,000 intangible cultural

heritage workshops in 334 counties that have shaken off poverty, covering 65 key counties to receive assistance in pursuing rural vitalization.

Apart from that, promotional activities have been launched in scenic spots and historical and cultural districts across the country to make intangible cultural heritage workshops' products more popular. The integration of intangible cultural heritage and tourism could further boost rural vitalization.

Sichuan and Guizhou provinces have set up exhibition and sales areas for products of intangible cultural heritage workshops at Class A tourist attractions.

Hebei and Henan provinces have built intangible cultural heritage-themed B&B hotels and featured towns that display items such as traditional Jun porcelain and Ru porcelain, so as to enrich the cultural connotation of tourist attractions and improve local communities' income.

People's Daily

What next for Shaban Chilunda after Azam exit?

Yondani calls for discipline, dedication to young players

By Correspondent Nassir Nchimbi

TANZANIA veteran football defender Kelvin Yondani has urged young emerging soccer players to be disciplined and dedicated to the game while appreciating football as their job.

The 38-year-old has said that every era in soccer has its players, so it is the player's responsibility to ensure that he does something to leave a mark into the records books to be told to the youngsters who will come after them.

The former Simba SC defender, who currently serves Geita Gold FC, has said that the biggest thing he believes in the job is discipline, which is the basis of success for a player who is matured.

"First, the player must know that football leads to strong feelings of happiness and sadness, especially for the fans, that's why some reach the point of fainting and others lose their lives. This is because fans have great faith in the players who represent them on the field.

"That is a great lesson for a play-

er to work with discipline that will make him play at a level that will help his team and fans to enjoy his skills," he said.

Importantly, he advised the youngsters to use every minute they get on the pitch to open opportunities for another chance to show their talents and protect them so that they are not wasted after having a good start.

"There are former players who did great things that are being told to this day, that's a lesson to know that hard work is what gave them respect until today. Football is a valuable job for players who know their worth," said the defender who previously also played for Young Africans and national football team (Taifa Stars).

Yondani played for Simba for six seasons (2006-2012) before joining their arch-rivals Young Africans in 2012 where he helped them to win four Tanzania Mainland Premier League titles.

He left and joined Polisi Tanzania in 2020 where he played for one season before joining Geita Gold last season.



By Correspondent Michael Mwebe

AFTER an up-and-down 2016/17 campaign, several key players such as John Bocco, Shomari Kapombe and Aishi Manula left Azam to join Simba. It became apparent that Azam was in need of a squad refresh. Many new additions were brought in, hoping to be part of Azam's next project.

There were also several youngsters who were promoted from the junior ranks. One of those youngsters was Shaban Idd Chilunda.

Chilunda, a dynamic, skilful and fearless forward who dominated at youth level, transitioned seamlessly into senior football.

He had a good debut season

scoring eight league goals despite injury costing him a major part of the campaign. After leading Azam to their first CECAFA Kagame Cup triumph, emerging top scorer, he moved to Spanish side Tenerife.

However, he struggled to establish himself at Tenerife and was quickly re-signed by Azam. Almost immediately, his season was characterized by a number of injuries.

After it appeared his second spell was not working well, he moved to Morocco where MAT took his service but once again he failed to hit form. He scored a mere two goals the whole season before returning to Azam for a third spell.

When Chilunda left Morocco to rejoin Azam, it was seen as a final chance to resurrect his career.

However, much like his first and second spells, he was characterized by a number of injuries that sidelined him and even when he was fit, he found himself down the pecking order.

As we look toward the tail-end of his Azam career, the truth is that there are a variety of reasons why Chilunda was and could never again be the player he was in his first season. Finally Azam released him last week.

Ironically and perhaps as a cruel twist of fate, Chilunda was released by Azam on the same day Bocco scored a hat-trick for Simba against Tanzania Prisons. It should be noted Azam's decision to let go of Bocco was emboldened by the rise of Chilunda who was seen as a new and better version of Bocco.

It's tough to know where Chilunda can go from here. With no disrespect to Chilunda, it is almost impossible to see him joining either Simba or Young Africans, this means that he needs to drop down to a mid-table team for regular game time and a chance to rediscover his form.

Many teams with top four ambitions would consider a player of his quality, but would potential wage demands put them off? The future is unclear but, after almost four years of frustrations, the career of such a talented striker is very much at a crossroads.

The general consensus is that Chilunda's fall from grace is just as much due to the situations and environments he was placed in as anything he has done on the pitch.

He's clearly been susceptible to other things in football that some players fall victim to – poor runs of form, coaches' departures, injuries, off-field situations. Even so, Chilunda is partially responsible for his own downfall. There is, of course, a motivation and attitude angle to all of this, but it is not so simple to ascribe that as a sole explanation for Chilunda's descent away from being one of the best talents in Tanzania football.

There have been multiple reports suggesting that Chilunda's attitude in training was lacking, rarely putting in 100 percent effort during sessions. One Tanzanian football enthusiast did not shy away from expressing Chilunda's perceived motivation and attitude issues noting, "Shaban is washed...not for lack of talent or anything of that sort...just sheer lack of effort and hardwork!!!!...and...time flies."

So, is Chilunda's downfall due to the aforementioned reasons or could it be that the expectations placed on him guided us fans into thinking he was better than he was?

This was a player that truly had it all at such a young age. Perhaps some of it was influenced by immaturity, but there is no denying that there have been a variety of factors that have led him on his current path.

Still at just 25 years old, there is plenty of time for a career resurrection. And should it happen in Tanzania or abroad, I will be a fan. Not because I have a soft spot for him, but because he, like any other footballer, deserves any chance they get to prove others wrong.



I am still capable of playing at the highest level, says Niyonzima

By Correspondent Nassir Nchimbi and Agencies

FORMER Young Africans midfielder Haruna Niyonzima insists that he still has the energy to play his best football at a professional level after joining Al Ta'awon of Libya Premier League.

The Rwanda international left Rwanda Premier League side AS Kigali after he agreed to join Libyan topflight club Al Ta'awon Sports on a one-year deal.

Niyonzima played for AS Kigali since August 2021 where he rejoined the club from Dar es Salaam's Young Africans.

There have been persistent questions that Niyonzima's age has affected his performance over the past few years but the midfielder, who is set to make his debut at the club this Janu-

ary, remains confident that he can still play top level football and is ready to respond to doubters on the pitch.

"I am still the one you know. I can still play top level football as I did in my past clubs and I hope to score more goals and provide assists," the 33-year-old player said.

"You have to wait and see, and hopefully you will be able to see the real Niyonzima," he added.

Niyonzima has been in fine form so far this season as he helped AS Kigali finish the first round of Rwanda Premier League at the top of the table with 30 points.

He now shifts focus on getting to quickly adapt to his new team so he can help them push for a league title this season.

"I think I have the ability to adapt. It's up to me to prove

that I'm capable of playing at the highest level. If I hadn't felt capable of taking on this pressure, I'd be somewhere else," he noted.

Some may be suggesting that he is old and should retire from football, but Niyonzima insisted that, at 33, he is 'still strong' and hence has no plan to retire from international football yet.

"I am just enjoying my playing career and I am going outside to help my new club to win more games. I wish to achieve the best. I feel happy and I want to keep on playing and winning games, to score goals, to enjoy myself. This is my motivation behind my move outside again," He said.

Niyonzima started his football career with Etincelles before he was spotted and signed by Rayon Sports in 2006. He joined rivals APR the following

year where he played for three-and-a-half years prior to his 2011 move to Young Africans in 2011.

He won a number of titles with the military side including the 2010 CECAFA Kagame Cup.

Regarded as one of the most decorated players in the region, the veteran made history in June 2019 as he became the first player to win the Tanzania Premier League title in five consecutive seasons.

He won it three times in a row with Young Africans, between 2015 and 2017, before helping their rivals Simba to lift the title twice during the 2017/2018 and 2018/2019 seasons.

Niyonzima, who made his senior international debut for Rwanda in 2006, is so far Rwanda's most-capped player with 105 appearances, scoring six times in the process.



Conte says expectations for Spurs are 'unrealistic'

By George Sessions

ANTONIO Conte has cast doubt over Tottenham's Premier League top-four hopes and tried to address unrealistic expectations after his side were booed off following a damaging 2-0 home defeat to Aston Villa.

Second-half goals from Emiliano Buendia and Douglas Luiz gave the visitors all three points to make it a sorry start to the new year for Spurs.

Tottenham conceded first for the 10th fixture in a row and have dropped to fifth in the table following Manchester United's win at Wolves.

Even though Conte guided the club into the Champions League last season, he described that achievement as a "miracle" and insisted he will continue to be realistic with the club.

"I know what is the reality because I am the coach," he said. "The club knows very well what are my thoughts on the situation. The situation was very clear. I continue to work and to improve and to help you to improve the club, to create a solid foundation and then to develop.

"You have to know that there are clubs who can invest £200m or £300m and others with different policies and I repeat you have to respect the policy.

"The policy has to be very clear with all people otherwise we created a situation that's not positive for the environment to create expectations that are not realistic, honestly.

"I was expecting this moment. Now we have to start to fight strong, because the situation in this league you can slip quickly. "If you ask me if I'm scared, I'm not scared. I believe in my work, I believe in these players, but don't ask me for things I cannot promise you."

Conte arrived at Spurs last November and, despite an inconsistent opening few months, managed to help them overturn Arsenal in the race for the top four last season.

The signings of Clement Lenglet, Ivan Perisic, Yves Bissouma and Richarlison in the summer raised expectations and led to talk they could be involved in the title race.

(Agencies)

Pelé brought renown to Santos, Brazilian port city and team

SANTOS, Brazil

PELE. Santos, Brazil. Over decades, adoring fans around the world mailed thousands of letters, postcards and packages to the sports legend without his address or full name.

Almost without fail, they reached the office of Edson Arantes do Nascimento in the port city he made famous.

Santos was founded by the Portuguese in January 1546. It hosts Latin America's biggest port, which feeds the Sao Paulo area and exports the country's agricultural commodities to the planet.

Only after a 15-year-old sensation started scoring goals for the city's team did Santos, a city of about 430,000 residents today, become a household name. The Brazilian great, who died Thursday at 82 after fighting cancer, played there from 1956 to 1974.

"There's a Santos before Pelé and another after him," said Serginho Chulapa, Brazil's striker in the 1982 World Cup and a local hero with more than 100 goals for the club. "He put both the city and club on the map. Before him, people came to work at the port and go to the beach."

Chulapa had four spells at Santos FC as a player,



Giant banners that read in Portuguese: "Long live King Pelé, 82 years", are displayed in the stands of the Vila Belmiro stadium, home of the Santos soccer club, where Pelé's funeral will take place, in Santos, Brazil, Saturday, Dec. 31, 2022. Pelé, who played most of his career with Santos, died in Sao Paulo on Thursday at the age of 82. (AP Photo)

all during the 1980s. Since retirement he has worked at the club in different capacities, some of them alongside Pelé.

"Santos is not in a metropolis like Sao Paulo, we have to work with less money. And Pelé made this club gigantic since he started playing," Chulapa said. "Santos had its peak with him."

Pelé gave Santos two Copa Libertadores titles and two Intercontinental Cup titles against Benfica and AC Milan, as it beat

some of the best rivals around the world. The Brazilian great won 26 titles at the club.

Some of Brazil's top politicians, including President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, have lived in the coastal city. But one of Santos's main touristic attractions is the Pelé Museum. It lies in the renovated area of the Casaroes do Valongo, close to the city port. It opened in 2014 and hosts tens of thousands of tourists. Many are like

Gisela Claudia, 65, who arrived on a cruise ship to spend New Year's Eve in the city.

"It is my first time in Santos. And I only came in this cruise because my husband wanted to see the city of Pelé," Claudia said.

"He is lost somewhere in the museum," she said. "There are other beaches on this trip that are more beautiful than this. But none of them have this history of the greatest player."

The museum features some of Pelé's remaining memorabilia: boots, trophies, medals, shirts.

Santos has become a popular destination for New Year's Eve, specially among residents of Sao Paulo, who grew fond of its clubs, beaches and a few private islands where parties take place. But the local club's Vila Belmiro stadium, where Pelé's funeral will take place on Monday, remains one of the city's main tourist attractions.

The last time Santos consistently filled its arena's 16,000 seats was between 2009 and 2013, when striker Neymar played there.

Santos FC is also home to other renowned players, most of them coming from its academy long after Pelé had retired. The list includes Rodrygo, Elano, Zé Roberto, Giovanni, Robinho, Diego and Gabriel Barbosa.

Pelé's death is expected to change many names around Santos. The first is expected to be the port, which will be renamed King Pelé Port, the incoming federal administration has decided.

Architect Maria Tereza Myre Dores, one of Pelé's closest friends and his neighbor in the final years of his life in the neighboring city of Guarujá, says Santos the club and Santos the city will never be the same.

"He was Santos. He loved the city, loved the club. And he made both better and bigger," Myre Dores said.

"I still remember the afternoons he spent in his office signing letters and shirts for people everywhere. One by one and sending them back, even those that only came with those three words; Pelé, Santos, Brazil," the architect said. "Without him, Santos is less Santos."

AP

Tottenham upset by resurgent Villa; Chelsea held at Forest

LONDON

ANY New Year's resolution by Tottenham to stop conceding the first goal lasted less than one day as Aston Villa continued its revival under Unai Emery with a 2-0 away win in the Premier League on Sunday.

Antonio Conte's side has now conceded first in its last 10 matches, with Tottenham fifth in the standings following its latest disappointment.

Emiliano Buendia took advantage of an error by Hugo Lloris in the Spurs goal to open the scoring at Tottenham Hotspur Stadium. Douglas Luiz doubled the advantage to secure a second consecutive away league victory for midtable Villa, which has won three of its last four league games.

Tottenham has endured a poor string of results with just two victories in the club's last seven games undermining its push for a top-four finish.

Even though Conte guided the club into the Champions League last season, he described that achievement as a "miracle" and insisted he will continue to be realistic with the club.

"I know what is the (financial) reality because I am the coach," Conte said after the game. "If you ask me if I'm scared, I'm not scared. I believe in my work, I believe in these players, but don't ask me for things I cannot promise you."

Spurs struggled to create chances throughout

against Villa and players were booed off after a third home defeat from their last five games.

Liverpool can climb above Tottenham by winning at Brentford on Monday.

Chelsea was held 1-1 at Nottingham Forest in the other Premier League match on Sunday.

Forest's impressive performance was marred by alleged homophobic chanting from some home supporters toward traveling fans. Chelsea's official LG-BTQ+ supporters group took to Twitter toward the end of the first half to "totally condemn" the chant it said could be heard during a match which was shown live on Sky Sports.

Forest said in a statement shortly after full-time: "The club are aware of reports concerning chants aimed at Chelsea supporters from a minority of fans this evening and do not condone any type of discriminatory or offensive behaviour. The matter will be investigated."

TOTTENHAM LOSES

Tottenham was boosted by the return of World Cup finalists Cristian Romero and Lloris but Dejan Kulusevski became the latest player unavailable to Conte due to a minor muscle injury.

The two goalkeepers in the World Cup final — France's Lloris and Argentina hero Emiliano Martinez — were set to face each other again but while Lloris started,



Tottenham's Harry Kane (10) heads past Aston Villa's Ezri Konsa in an attempt to score during the English Premier League soccer match between Tottenham Hotspur and Aston Villa at Tottenham Hotspur Stadium in London, Sunday, Jan. 1, 2023. (AP Photo)

Martinez was on the bench. A lackluster opening half featured as many yellow cards as shots. Each of Tottenham's three center backs received bookings in a rash nine-minute period.

Ashley Young was well placed to clear Harry Kane's header off the line in the 40th minute after Ivan Perisic had rounded Robin Olsen in the Villa goal. The chance woke up Tottenham with Son Heung-min, who chucked away his protective mask midway through the half, curling a free-kick into the arms of the Swedish goalkeeper soon after.

Despite making it to the break without con-

ceding, Tottenham's habit of falling behind continued five minutes into the second period. Lloris was at fault in his first appearance since the World Cup final and Buendia profited.

Luiz's shot from range was spilled by Lloris and the alert Watkins reacted quickest to tee up Buendia, who slotted home from close range.

Kane fired wide on the half volley soon after before he made a costly error to allow the away side to double its advantage in the 73rd. Boubacar Kamara won possession from the Spurs forward and John McGinn exchanged passes with Luiz, who poked home.

BOOST FOR FOREST

Forest gave its Premier League survival hopes a boost with a point against Chelsea, whose troubles on the road con-

tinued. Forest has beaten Liverpool and Tottenham at the City Ground this season and looked strong despite falling behind to

Raheem Sterling's opener for Chelsea in the 16th minute.

Forest put in a fine second-half display which was rewarded with Serge

Aurier's equalizer just after the hour mark. Eighth-place Chelsea did at least avoid a fourth straight away defeat but will require huge improvement to close the seven-point gap on the top four.

"That's the Premier League for you," Chelsea manager Graham Potter said.

"Away from home teams are not going to make it easy for you. On one hand you have players asking if they can have the players' shirts and before the game they are thinking they are going to run through a brick wall to prove they can be good enough to beat Chelsea ... We have to be humble enough to know that is the challenge we face and we have to do better."

On Saturday, Arsenal stretched its league lead to seven points with a 4-2 win at Brighton while closest challengers Manchester City and Newcastle both dropped points.

AP

Gwiji by David Chikoko



SPORT

Pelé brought renown to Santos, Brazilian port city and team

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Simba, Azam to launch bid for Mapinduzi Cup glory



Simba Sports Club were crowned as champions of the 2022 Mapinduzi Cup tournament. (Agencies)



Ntibanzokiza opens up about his debut at Simba

By Correspondent Ismail Tano

AFTER starting with a bang in Simba SC by scoring a hat-trick and creating one goal, Saido Ntibanzokiza 'Saido' said this is just the beginning and more sweetness is yet to come.

Saido started in the Simba first team that beat Tanzania Prisons 7-1 in the Benjamin Mkapa Stadium last Friday, being lined up in the attack line with Clatous Chama, Pape Sakho, and captain John Bocco.

It was a good debut for the player who was signed in the ongoing mini transfer window from Geita Gold and leading Simba SC to that huge victory.

The attacking midfielder, who also plays for the Burundi national team, has made it clear that he is happy by hitting the ground running by scoring and assisting, while also making it clear that this is just the beginning of much that he has prepared for Simba fans.

"I am happy to start like this. It was a good debut that I have enjoyed an excellent start, and I believe that with this pace I will do better in the future," said Saido.

In addition, Saido talked about his relationship with his new teammates as one of the areas in which he sees him helping the team achieve more goals.

"The best thing is that we still have a lot to improve, together as a team we can still get much better in many areas of the game," he said.

"I thank the technical bench for believing in me and giving me a chance, and my teammates for their assistance on and off the pitch. That is what we will do to make sure we get better.

"I have enjoyed the game, and I believe that as the days go by, I will become more familiar with my teammates and we will create a strong team that will bring joy to our fans," said Saido.

The hat-trick he scored against Tanzania Prisons made him reach seven goals in the league, while the assist made him have seven assists along with Azam's Ayoub Lyanga, all behind Chama, who has 11.

By Correspondent Michael Mwebe

NBC Premier League heavyweights Simba and Azam launch their Mapinduzi Cup campaigns today as the tournament in Zanzibar shifts into a higher gear.

Simba begin their adventures with the clash against Mlandege in the evening at Amaan Stadium.

Juma Mgunda's men enter the tournament as one of the main title candidates once again despite missing some important players through injuries.

Leading club top scorer

Moses Phiri and first choice centre back Henock Inonga are out with injuries picked in league games.

Phiri was injured in an away game against Kagera Sugar while Inonga was forced out of the Tanzania Prisons match on Friday.

Simba, who won the tournament last year following a penalty shootout against Young Africans, have a star-studded attacking line with the likes of John Bocco, Clatous Chama, and new signing Said Ntibazonkiza, who had a brilliant debut against Tanzania Prisons and will be raring to go against Mlandege.

However, Mgunda is likely

to give more playing time to fringe players in order to give rest to some of his key players ahead of next month's CAF Champions League Group Stage campaign.

As for Mlandege this is a must win game for the Zanzibari side.

They registered a 1-1 draw in their opener against KVZ, and it was surely a nervy affair on Sunday.

They dominated the better part of the first half but found themselves trailing 0-1 after the restart - but managed to quickly slot in the equalizer.

Having the pressure to win against Simba is not a

matter to be relaxed about, especially when the Msimbazi Reds are in superb form in the NBC Premier League.

The earlier game of the day will see five-time winners Azam take on Malindi in a Group A clash.

The all-time Mapinduzi Cup winners will come with guns blazing knowing there is little room for error as only one team will make it out of the group.

Malindi will be also high on confidence after managing a 2-0 victory against Jamhuri in their opener.

And one more win would confirm them as the toppers of the group and first team

to qualify for the knockout stage. The 2023 Mapinduzi Cup tournament involves 12 teams.

The teams are divided into four groups of three. Mainland Tanzania is represented by five teams, Azam, Simba, Yanga, Singida Big Stars and Namungo.

The four group leaders will qualify for the semi-final. The first semi-final will be played on January 8. The second semi-final will be played on January 9.

The final will be played on January 13 at the Amaan Stadium in Zanzibar.

The champions will walk away with a prize money of Sh30 million.



Minziro wants Geita Gold to sign seven new players

By Correspondent Ismail Tano

GEITA Gold's head coach Fred Felix Minziro has said he will recruit seven new players in the ongoing mini-transfer window to strengthen his squad.

Minziro said the departure of a large number of players has weakened the team to the point of not getting good results in their recent Premier League matches.

According to the former Young Africans and national football team defender, the players who have parted ways

with his team are Saido Ntibazonkiza, who has joined Simba; Yusufu Kagoma, who has joined Singida Big Stars; Adeyem Salehe, who has moved to Dodoma Jiji; and George Mpole, who has joined FC Lupopo of the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Other outgoing players are Yahya Mbegu and Juma Mahadhi.

"I have spoken to the club's management to set aside an amount of money to be able to add seven new players whom I believe will bring the team back to the competition like last season,"

he said.

He further added that their main goal this season is to finish the league in the top four positions, as they did last season.

He said despite the existing difficulties, if they will succeed to sign the players he has proposed, there is a hope of returning to the CAF Confederation Cup next season.

On his side, Geita Gold defender Yahya Mbegu has confirmed parting ways with his former team.

He said he wrote a letter to the management seeking to terminate

his contract, and he is now waiting for their response.

In the Premier League standings, Geita Gold are placed seventh with 24 points after playing 19 games. The team has won five, drawn nine, and lost five matches. They have scored 21 goals and conceded 16.

Geita Gold will play their next match against Dodoma Jiji FC at Jamhuri Stadium in Dodoma on February 2.

After that, they will return to Nyankumbu Stadium in Geita to host Police Tanzania five days later.

Flexibles by David Chikoko

