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Jenista Mhagama, Minister of State in the Prime Minister's Office (Policy, Parliament and Coordination), wraps up debate in the National Assembly in Dodoma city yesterday on bills tabled in the legislative body for amendment. Photo: Correspondent Ibrahim Joseph

TIC registers higher flows of capital last quarter 2023

By Correspondent Joseph Mwendapole

THE Tanzania Investment Centre (TIC) has reported an improvement in the size of projects, capital value and expectations of job creation registered from October to December last year where a total of 161 projects billed at \$1.3bn were registered. A TIC statement released yesterday hinted that the projects are expected to generate 18,390 jobs whereas during the same period last year, TIC registered 58 projects valued at \$765m, expected to generate 10,216 jobs. This projection represents a 178 percent increase in the number of registered projects, an 81 per cent increase in capital value and 80 percent increase in likely jobs created.

Origination of projects registered during the period shows an increase in all categories, for foreign sources, joint ventures and local projects, it said, noting that foreign ownership of projects registered rose to 69 projects, compared to 23 projects in the same period the previous year. Joint venture projects increased to 32 projects from 19 such projects earlier in 2022, while locally sourced projects similarly increased to 60 from 16 projects registered in the corresponding quarter in 2022, it said.

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Azam FC sharpen claws for league return, aiming to maintain top spot

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Clatous Chama returns to Simba fold after pardon

Govt, EU seek to ease access to gas cylinders

By Guardian Reporter, Dodoma

EFFORTS are being pursued with the European Union (EU) and others for a joint programme to facilitate subsidised access to gas cylinders, the government has stated. Judith Kapinga (pictured) the Energy deputy minister, made this observation here yesterday when responding to Jacqueline Msongozi (Special Seats) who wanted to know government plans to place subsidies on gas prices so that the majority of the people are able to shift to using clean energy for cooking.

Focusing on the cost of

the cylinders, the deputy minister said that there are already various initiatives going on, like expected cooperation with the EU where gas cylinders sales agents are financially enabled to prune the price of gas cylinders for first time buyers. The government was bent on pursuing financing for projects ensuring that people obtain gas at more affordable prices, she said, affirming that the strategies being worked upon are tailored at encouraging the use of clean energy for cooking and for environmental protection.

The Rural Energy Agency (REA) has started a project for distributing clean en-



ergy for cooking to various public institutions including prisons, army camps, colleges, secondary and primary schools, she elaborated, noting that the gov-

ernment was seeking funds to reach more institutions. This effort is in line with the requirements of the National Energy Policy of 2015 that demands the government to take effective measures to achieve the use of clean energy and improved cooking equipment, she stated. In that direction, the government is in the final stages of preparing a national strategy for using clean energy for cooking, with expectations that 80 per cent of the public will have shifted to using clean energy for cooking by 2032. Measures are being taken to solve obstacles hindering the use of clean energy for cooking, intended to re-

duce the cost of accessing clean energy, equipment and standardised cooking stoves, she explained. Enabling clean energy for cooking was an agenda item championed by President Samia Suluhu Hassan at the COP28 global conference on climate change in the Gulf emirate of Dubai. She took the occasion to spearhead the launching of the Africa women clean cooking support programme intended to enable access to clean cooking technologies among women and girls in Africa. So, the energy ministry carries the issue of clean energy for cooking with the emphasis it deserves, she added.

UN raises sharp alarm over deepening hunger in Sudan

CAIRO

SUDAN's deepening hunger crisis requires immediate collective action, a senior official of the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) has declared. Abdul Hakim Elwaer, FAO assistant director-general and regional representative for the Near East and North Africa, said in an interview that the prolonged civil conflict in Sudan has plunged 17.7m people into acute hunger. This requires robust fundraising and other urgent actions to avert an impending humanitarian catastrophe, he said, citing the latest update by the integrated food security phase classification (IPC).

Upwards of 3.5m children are acutely malnourished in the hunger crisis, of whom 700,000 suffer from the most dangerous form of malnutrition - severe acute malnutrition, and are at risk of dying without treatment, he stated. He voiced deep concern about the security situation in Sudan and its implications for vulnerable populations nine months after military conflagration erupted between the Sudanese armed forces and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces. He said 25m people in the country were in dire need of humanitarian aid, with the FAO appealing

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Prime Minister Kassim Majaliwa pictured in Dodoma city yesterday following address by Angolan President João Manuel Gonçalves Lourenço, current Chairman of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), while representing President Samia Suluhu Hassan at the opening of the regional bloc's virtual extraordinary summit. Photo: PMO



Gender parity hits snag as MPs adopt three polls bills

By Francis Kajubi, Dodoma

EXPECTATIONS for legal provisions aiming at greater gender parity in constituency representation failed in parliamentary debate yesterday, as Speaker Dr Tulia Ackson ruled that how political parties get their candidates can't be laid out in the law.

It was part of the final stages of debate where the National Assembly approved three election law bills, of whose provisions empowers the president to appoint the chairman and vice-chairman of the National Electoral Commission (NEC), retained despite some stakeholder misgivings.

The Speaker emphasised that political parties need to mobilise youth, women and people with disabilities to collect forms to seek for party nomination as candidates, as each political party has procedures for the nomination, and the NEC can't lay out any procedure that would favour gender parity or other outcome.

The now adopted National Electoral Commission Bill, 2023 provides that the president shall appoint the two officials from names that will be proposed and submitted by the recruitment committee.

Jenista Mhagama, the Policy, Parliament and Coordination state minister in the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) tabled the three bills on Tuesday for the second reading, with the House also adopting the two other bills, namely the Presidential, Parliamentary and Local Government Elections Bill, 2023 and the Political Parties Affairs Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2023.

In winding up remarks, the minister said Article 5 (a) (2) of the National Electoral Commission Bill, 2023 gives the president powers to appoint the two officials.

The bill retains powers of the president in appointing the two officials as stipulated by Article 74(1) (a) and (b) of the 1977 Constitution, she stated, noting that the president has delegated

the powers of appointing other members of the electoral commission.

This prerogative is recognised in Article 74 (1) (c) of the Constitution, where the president had delegated the powers to the recruitment committee, she said.

Section 9 (1) of the Presidential, Parliamentary and Local Government Elections Bill, 2023 retains the powers of the president in those appointments, he elaborated.

The same section specifies how names of electoral commission members shall be proposed by the recruitment committee formed under Section 18 of the bill, and submitted to the president for formal appointment.

The recruitment committee is charged with formulating regulations that provide for qualification for nomination eligibility, guided by Section 27 of the bill, she said.

"I would like to assure the public that the National Electoral Committee will be free and fair as it has been demanded by political stakeholders for a long time," the minister intoned.

She said a free and fair electoral commission is defined in regard to its sources of funds for organizing elections, asserting that the bill allows the legislature to table budget estimates for running elections that shall be disbursed by the Treasury.

"The government will formulate a secretariat of civil servants within the independent electoral commission with the purpose of facilitating recruitment of permanent officers of the commission," she affirmed.

The Political Parties Affairs Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2023 places emphasis on eliminating gender discrimination during election runs, for nomination or campaigns.

It seeks to foster adherence to gender equality in political activity when nominating aspirants for parliamentary and ward councillor elections, she added.



President Samia Suluhu Hassan pictured at Chamwino State House in Dodoma Region yesterday swearing in Doris Ntuli Kalasa as Iringa regional administrative secretary. Photo: State House

UN raises sharp alarm over deepening hunger in Sudan

FROM PAGE 1

for an immediate stop in the violence by all parties in the conflict.

That would facilitate the opening of humanitarian corridors for aid agencies to reach the entire territory of Sudan and provide the most needed humanitarian assistance, he stated.

"This is extremely urgent for hard-to-reach places affected by high levels of violence, such as greater Darfur and Kordofan regions, in addition to the areas of Khartoum, Bahri and Omdurman cities in the Khartoum State

zone," the director elaborated. Trade disruptions caused by war and the surging food and production costs are expected to further exacerbate food consumption gaps, in the country, he said.

As a result, the food insecurity situation is expected to substantially deteriorate across Sudan as it heads into the typical lean season between June and September, he further noted.

Following the eruption of the conflict mid-April 2023, FAO up-scaled its emergency response, formulating a plan to reach one million farming households

(about 5m people altogether) with agricultural assistance, he said.

In the planting season of 2023, FAO distributed certified seeds to more than one million farmers from across 15 of the country's 18 states, as the organization launched a humanitarian response plan this year to fundraise a total of \$104m to benefit nine million people in a whole range of interventions.

If the funding is available, FAO can jumpstart a network of staff and local implementing partners, which is already well in place, to take effective steps

and help sustain this year's local food production, the director stressed.

These workers would provide farmers with certified seeds for sorghum, millet, sesame and other crops, farming equipment and assist in the management of livestock herds plus cash transfers, he stated.

"We need the involvement of all key development stakeholders, including government, farmers, herders, donors, the private sector, civil society organizations and others," he appealed.

FAO data shows that Sudan has 74m hectares of arable land

and 60 to 80 percent of its population relies on agriculture, fishery and animal husbandry for food and income, contributing 35 to 40 percent of the country's gross domestic product.

The country is also a major meat supplier for many African and Arab countries, as it has herds adding up to over 110m head of livestock, he said.

The international community, especially humanitarian and development partners need to accentuate support for Sudan as the country otherwise serves as a food basket for the Middle East region, he added.



Greysong Kisanga (L, seated), a senior investigation officer with the Prevention and Combating of Corruption Bureau in Masasi District, briefs Anna Abdallah Secondary School students on Thursday on the agency's activities. The event was held in marking national Law Day. Photo: Correspondent Hamis Nasri

TIC registers higher flows of capital last quarter 2023

FROM PAGE 1

Projects in this quarter were primarily concentrated in Dar es Salaam which attracted 67 projects, with Coast Region attracting 26 project and Arusha 15 projects, it said.

A total of \$1.3bn is expected from all registered projects, it said, highlighting that an initiative is underway for a national investment campaign that commenced this January. The primary objective of the campaign is to foster new investments, it explained. "This quarter has been a land-

mark period for TIC as we celebrate the completion of the state of the art healthcare facility set to open in the next few weeks in Dar es Salaam.

It is an impressive \$45m project featuring a modern hospital with a 250 bed capacity, seven operating theatres and 40

high tech ICU rooms, the statement indicated.

It is not just a significant upgrade to local healthcare infrastructure but also a major economic catalyst expected to create 2,800 direct and over 4,000 indirect jobs, it added.

UN experts: Terrorist threat is high in Africa conflict zones, Afghanistan, rose in Europe

UNITED NATIONS

THE terrorist threat from al-Qaida, the Islamic State group, and their affiliates remains high in conflict zones in Africa and in Afghanistan - and threat levels have risen in some regions including Europe, UN experts said in a new report.

The panel of experts said in the 23-page report that the relationship between Afghanistan's Taliban rulers and al-Qaida remains close, and unnamed member states report that "the high concentration of terrorist groups" in the country is undermining the security situation in the region.

The greatest threat within Afghanistan still comes from the Islamic State "with its ability to project into the region and beyond," the experts said in the report to the U.N. Security Council covering the period until Dec. 16, 2023, which was circulated Wednesday. Regionally, they pointed to a succession of attacks in neighboring Iran and Pakistan and threats in Central Asian nations.

The panel said, however, that while none of the al-Qaida affiliated groups have recovered the capability to launch

long-range operations, "they harbour global ambitions." And it said "covert and calibrated efforts to rebuild capability" have been reported.

The Islamic State group broke away from al-Qaida over a decade ago and attracted supporters from around the world. Despite its defeat in Iraq in 2017 and in Syria two years later. The panel said the combined IS strength in the two countries is still between 3,000 and 5,000 fighters. In Iraq, they are carrying out "a low-intensity insurgency with covert terrorist cells" while in Syria attacks have intensified since November, the experts said.

The panel said the three-month delay in naming the current IS leader, Abu Hafis al-Hashemi al-Qurayshi, following the death in the fighting of his little-known predecessor "is judged indicative of internal difficulties and security challenges"

Some unnamed U.N. member nations have assessed that serious pressure from counter-terrorism operations in Syria and Iraq raises the possibility that the Islamic State could move its leadership and "center of gravity" to Africa or Afghanistan, with Africa more likely, the experts said.



Residents of Nguruma in Arumeru District visibly shaken while viewing the carcasses of sheep allegedly killed by a leopard said to have strayed into the village. Photo: Correspondent Getrude Mpezya

Drug busters plant trees to commemorate Law Week

By Guardian Correspondent, Arusha

the case because it is located at the border.

THE Drug Control and Enforcement Authority (DCEA) in Northern Zone and Longido District Court have planted trees around the court premises as part of commemorating the 'Law Week'.

He added that they plan application of preventative education for drug control to serve as a platform for the leaders to sensitize citizens about drug prevention and help them abstain from drug use and trafficking.

This year's Law Week theme is 'Enhanced business undertaking: The role of the Judiciary and stakeholders to create conducive environment for Investment.'



Shabani Miraji, DCEA community education officer said they started working with the court on January 29 this year by organizing a demonstration to commemorate Law Week.

We planted trees in the area around Longido District Court to protect the environment and bring a beautiful scene to the facility

"We planted trees in the area around Longido District Court to protect the environment and bring a beautiful scene to the facility," he said.

Miraji said that on the second day of January 30 this year, they worked together to offer education on the consequences of drug usage, production and illegal trafficking of narcotics, particularly cannabis and marijuana.

Furthermore, he said sensitization targeted the general public as well as leaders, including ward councilors and all village leaders.

Shabani said Longido District is used for the transit of narcotics, particularly marijuana and khat, adding that this is

THE UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA
 SUMMONS BEFORE THE COMMISSION FOR MEDIATION AND ARBITRATION
 (HATI YA WITO MBELE YA TUME YA USULUSHI NA UAMUZI)
 (Hati under regulation 24(1) (Mwenzengwa Chini ya Kanuni ya 24 (1))
 Labour Dispute No. (Mgogoro wa kikazi No.) CMA/GSM/LA/177/2023
 Between/Baina ya
 BAKARI SEFU MASANGA ... Applicant (Mtamani/Mtamani)
 And/Na
 METRONIC AG ... Respondent (Mtamani/Mtoto Mtamani)
 NOTICE TO ATTEND MEDIATION/ARBITRATION HEARING
 (TAARIFA YA KUTWA KUHURUHA KWENYE SHIRU LA
 USULUSHI/UAMUZI)

Take notice that the above mentioned mediation/arbitration has been fixed hearing on ... day of ... month 2024 at ... Hours at DAR ES SALAAM ZONE, AKIBA-BITI TITI ROAD, Unaru/Una kuu shauri Hili/taifa hapo juu, imalokwa kwa hatua ya kusuluhisha/umuzi. Mmgogoro wa kikazi/kuwama tarehe 28 Februari 2024 Mweka 2024 saa 9:00 asubuhi.

You are required to appear before the Commission in person and or accompanied by an Advocate/Personal representative as instructed and produce on that day all relevant documents you intend to rely upon in support of your defence. You are further cautioned to remain in attendance until permitted by the Commission (Usitakua wakula binafsi) ama kwa kuambatanwa na wakili/Mwalishi wako mbele ya Tume kama uliyovigwa. Unapaswa kuja kila vilelezo/nyaraka muhimu unazo kusudia kuutumia katika ofisi wako. Usitaharibishwa usiwasue kufi wilo hoo na usitakua kubakia kwenye majengo ya Tume mpaka utakapo ruhusiwa kuondoka na Tume.

Given under my hand and Seal of the Commission this ... day of ... Year 2024 (Mtolewa na kuogoa mhuri wa Tume leo tarehe 01 Mwezi 02 Mweka 2024).

Gas blast in Kenyan capital kills three and injures nearly 300

NAIROBI
 A huge gas blast in the Kenyan capital, Nairobi, has killed at least three people and injured nearly 300.

Nairobi county Governor Sakaja Johnson said many of these people had been treated and sent home, but at least 39 have been sent to other facilities - some with critical injuries.

A lorry carrying gas cylinders exploded in Embakasi district at about 23:30 (20:30 GMT) on Thursday, "igniting a huge ball of fire", an official said.

A further 27 people were treated on site for non-life-threatening injuries.

Housing, businesses and cars were damaged, with video showing a huge blaze raging close to blocks of flats.

The government initially said the blast happened at a gas plant where workers were refilling gas cylinders, but the authorities later clarified that a truck had exploded in a parking yard.

The area has been cordoned off and an investigation is under way into the cause of the explosion.

According to government spokesperson Isaac Mwaura, a fireball from the blast "spread widely". A flying gas cylinder hit a clothing and textiles warehouse, burning it down.

A child was among those who died, according to Embakasi police chief Wesley Kimeto, who added that the death toll could rise.

"The inferno further damaged several vehicles and commercial properties, including many small and medium

Some 271 people were taken to hospital, according to the authorities, including at least 25 children.

sized businesses," he said in a statement.

"Sadly, residential houses in the neighbourhood also caught fire, with a good number of residents still inside, as it was late at night."

The fire has been contained and a search and rescue operation has been launched to find out if people are missing or have simply taken shelter elsewhere.

"There is still a search going on of whether there are bodies which have been burnt in various houses," said Embakasi East MP Babu Owino.

The Energy and Petroleum Regulatory Authority (Epra) said in a statement that the gas plant was illegal and that it had rejected three applications for construction permits to build a storage and filling facility at the site.

Agencies

Some prisons no longer use firewood, says minister

By Guardian Reporter, Dodoma

THE government says it has stopped using firewood for cooking in various prisons in implementation of clean energy uptake drive.

which further leads to drought and climate change related challenges," said Masauni, without giving figures.

Home Affairs Minister Hamad Masauni made the announcement yesterday when he led more than 100 staff in a tree planting exercise at the ministry's premises in Dodoma.

On tree planting, Masauni asked the staff to ensure that the planted trees are protected so that they can grow and fulfill the goal of environmental protection.

The exercise was also attended by his deputy Jumanne Sagini, Permanent Secretary Kaspar Mmuya and Deputy Permanent Secretary in the Vice-President's Office (Union and Environment) Abdallah Hassan Mitawi.

PS Mmuya said the exercise will continue in the agencies under the ministry, including police, prisons, Fire and Rescue, Immigration and National Identification Authority (NIDA).

"I commend the Prison Service for implementing the government's directive to cut the use of firewood because it leads to cutting down trees and environmental degradation

"As ministry and our agencies, we are going to plant trees in our respective areas. So far, the Prisons Service has planted 800 trees and I'm sure this February they will also plant more trees," he said.

Mitawi lauded the Home Affairs ministry for executing the government's order, urging staff to ensure

the planted trees thrive for the benefit of the current and future generations.

The government has set January 31, 2025 as the deadline for the use of charcoal and firewood by the country's institutions. The move is part of efforts to stop the use of energy sources that are hazardous to the health of individuals and the environment.

Data produced by the Ministry of Energy in Dar es Salaam last year showed that despite being largely considered to be cheaper options, charcoal, firewood, and crop residues were having profoundly detrimental impacts on people's health, causing up to 33,000 deaths annually.

The population of households using clean cooking energy in Tanzania stands at between 4.5 percent and eight percent.



Kinondoni district commissioner Saad Mtambule (3rd-R) oversees the removal of commercial placards and billboards reportedly placed illegally at Morocco Road intersection traffic rights in Dar es Salaam's Kinondoni municipality yesterday. Photo: Jenifer Gilla

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Ghana enforces controversial carbon emission levy

By Gloria Aradi

A FUEL emissions levy has taken effect in Ghana, sparking mixed reactions.

The government now requires Ghanaians to pay an annual levy for the carbon emissions produced by their petrol or diesel-powered vehicles.

Several citizens are opposing the charge, which they see as an added burden amid an ongoing economic crisis.

But some leaders and environmental groups are endorsing it, saying it will cut the country's emissions and help raise more revenue for the government.

Ghana is the third African country to introduce a form of carbon tax, after South Africa and Mauritius.

The tax agency, the Ghana Revenue Authority (GRA), has said that the levy aligns with the government's plans "to promote the use of eco-friendly technology and green energy".

The GRA began collecting the annual levy, approved by parliament in December, on Thursday. Fees range from 75 Ghanaian cedis (\$6; £4) for motorised tricycles and motorcycles to 300 cedis

(\$24) for vehicles with a capacity of 3,000cc or higher.

Benjamin Boakye, the head of the think-tank Africa Centre for Energy Policy, said the government was "not being sensitive" by imposing the levy on top of already-existing fuel and road-use taxes. He also argued that the new policy would not actually lower emissions.

"This is not going to prevent anybody from driving. They know you don't have a choice. You will have to pay for it. The carbon will still be generated because the Ghanaian will have to move from one point to the other," Mr Boakye was quoted as saying by the Modern Ghana news website.

The union of commercial and public transport providers has also criticised the levy and said it was not consulted by the government.

The union now plans to hike transport charges by as much as 60% to reflect the added costs of the levy.

Critics fear that it could have a ripple effect on the struggling economy, further intensifying the cost-of-living crisis that has already pushed up the prices of necessities like fuel.



National Assembly Speaker Dr Tulia Ackson, who is also current Inter-Parliamentary Union President, has an audience in Dodoma city yesterday with Turkey's Ambassador to Tanzania, Mehmet Güllüo lu. Photo courtesy of National Assembly

Procurement board in sensitisation drive after budget increase

By Correspondent Valentine Oforo, Dodoma

THE government has increased budget for the Procurement and Supplies Professionals and Technicians Board (PSPTB) by 8.5 percent.

With the increment, the board charged with the responsibilities of monitoring and controlling procurement and supplies professionals in the public and private sectors is now working on strategies to improve its performance.

PSPTB executive director, Goodfred Mbanayi said this in Dodoma yesterday during the board's council

meeting which convened to review its performance in the implementation of the past budget.

Among others, Mbanayi said that the focus is to improve use of Information Technology (IT) in the country's procurement and supply chain for enhanced professionalism in service delivery.

"We're very keen to ensure the area is managed and operated more digitally for us to overcome several challenges that used to thwart pace and quality of our work," he said.

According to him, the envisaged initiative will play key role in improv-

ing efficiency in procurement and supply chain by reducing manual processes which often used to result in some mistakes and delay of services.

He insisted that the government had instructed that all process pertaining to procurement and supply must be accomplished through the well-developed digital portal, the National e-Procurement System of Tanzania (NeST), adding that the planned strategy was part to comply with the directive.

He said the meeting was to receive performance report from the direc-

tors from each department as well as constructive criticism and options from members.

He urged members of the meeting to use the platform constructively by airing opinions for the betterment of the office's performance.

Shamim Mdee, PSPTB head of communications and public relations unit said that the board was set to embark on a special programme to sensitize professionals and other stakeholders in various regions about its work.

According to Mdee, the programme will commence in Mwanza Region

where it will provide awareness on its duties and responsibilities.

"In Mwanza Region, the programme which will commence next week to capacitate the upcoming procurement professionals at the St. Augustine University of Tanzania (SAUT) and the College of Business Education (CBE)," she said.

PSPTB is a government institution established by Act No. 23 of 22007. It is charged with the responsibilities of developing, monitoring and controlling procurement and supplies professionals in both the public and private sectors in the Tanzania.



We're very keen to ensure the area is managed and operated more digitally for us to overcome several challenges that used to thwart pace and quality of our work



A vendor in Mbulu town, Manyara Region, found earlier this week sun-drying fish in style before selling them. Photo: Correspondent Jumanne Juma

Inmates register to vote in SA's upcoming polls

JOHANNESBURG

THOUSANDS of convicted prisoners are expected to join more than 27 million South Africans at the voting booth when the country holds its much-anticipated elections later this year.

This follows a successful drive by the country's Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) last week to register eligible inmates on the voters roll, which has for the first time surpassed the 27 million registered voters mark.

While the number of prisoners who have registered to vote is yet to be confirmed, the IEC is hoping that at least 100,000 prisoners will vote this year, up from a total of 15,000 inmates who voted in the 2019 elections.

There are just over 157,000 inmates in South African correctional facilities. South African inmates were first allowed to vote after a 1999 landmark court case which afforded them the right to take part in the democratic process.

In many countries across the world prisoners are not afforded the right to cast a vote.

Despite the country commanding one of the highest crime rates in the world, its constitution allows all citizens the right to vote, including convicted criminals and South Africans living abroad.

Last weekend, thousands of South Africans living abroad were allowed to register at the country's foreign missions to cast their votes at a date still to be declared by President Cyril Ramaphosa.

Electoral staff and prison officials this last week visited the country's 240 correctional centres to register inmates as voters ahead of the upcoming registration weekend.

Wearing their orange prison uniforms, many lined up in a designated hall area at the all-male Zonderwater Correctional Centre in the capital Pretoria on Thursday to either register to vote for the first time or to update their details.

Some prisoners' voter details were registered while they were still free and had to be updated to reflect that they would be voting from inside prison.

Prison warders kept close watch as the inmates awaited their turn in the queue before they were assisted by electoral officials using digital tablets to register them.

Khathutshelo Mashau, an inmate, said prisoners also have an interest in who gets to govern the country.

"Whoever is going to be in charge afterwards, like your minister of correctional services and justice, he needs to change quite a few things.

"The way our courts are operating sometimes, it does frustrate us. If you are

South Africa scores record low in corruption index

JOHANNESBURG

SOUTH Africa's corruption perception index has dropped to its lowest in 12 years and was below the global average, global corruption watchdog Transparency International said on Tuesday.

"Since Corruption Watch (CW) started tracking its progress on

the index 12 years ago, South Africa has never scored as low as 41 - until now," the NGO, which is the local chapter of Transparency International, said.

With a general election due this year, the nation's image has been stained by a lacklustre economic record and allegations of corruption and cronyism.

Support for its ruling party, the African National Congress (ANC) - which has been in power since the start of democratic rule in 1994 - has dipped below 50 percent as the campaign heats up.

"It is one of 23 countries that reached their lowest ever scores this year, stumbling into the category of flawed democracies," the

CW statement said.

According to the report, 80 percent of the world's population lives in countries where the score is below the global average of 43.

The Corruption Perception Index scores 180 countries and territories around the globe on "perceived levels of public-sector corruption according to experts and business-

people." "It is frustrating that, in a country where the corrupt have been exposed for all to see in such public processes as the Zondo Commission and robust media investigations, so few of the implicated parties have been brought to justice," Karam Singh, executive director of CW said.

In June 2022, the final of a series

of damning reports from a four-year investigation into corruption under former leader Jacob Zuma's nine-year presidency was handed to President Cyril Ramaphosa.

Yet to date, no significant progress has been made in prosecuting those involved.

"In South Africa, the narrative is rather an appalling tale of rising in-

equality and injustice over 30 years" since apartheid, Singh said.

The country sits alongside Burkina Faso, Vietnam and Kosovo on the global index.

"The 2023 report raises the alarm of the apparent inability of governments around the world to stop the spread of corruption," CW said.

GCLA trains pupils on safe use of chemicals in lab experiments

By Correspondent James Kandoya

THE Government Chemist Laboratory Authority (GCLA) has conducted training on safe use of chemicals during science practical sessions and donated protective gear for the same to pupils and teachers at Kitomondo Secondary School in Mafia District, Coast Region.

Speaking yesterday at the school's premises, GCLA Eastern Zone Chemist Elice Omary said that the training aimed at increasing teachers and pupils' awareness about correct use of chemicals.

He said chemicals are generally used to facilitate activities such as making soap and tie-and-dye fabrics, adding that it is important to know right way of using them.

He named some of the items donated as gloves and masks that recipients were instructed how to rightly use so that they protect themselves against chemicals.

Omary said that GCLA will continue

conducting training to other secondary schools on how they can be safe from chemicals.

"It is our hope that the training and protective gear donated are important for pupils and teachers and will enhance their safety while learning," he said.

We want to ensure chemical users are empowered to avoid injuries or environmental pollution."

Omary said that so far, GCLA has conducted training to transporters of hazardous chemicals, police officers as well as officers from Fire and Rescue Force as well as other stakeholders.

Ramadhan Janabi Kitomondo Secondary School head teacher said that the sensitization and the donated protective gear are very important for safe practical sessions in the school laboratory.

"Our teachers and pupils will henceforth wear protective gear when doing science practical sessions in our laboratory," he said.



Immanuel Muro (R), a United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) senior finance specialist doubling as CookFund programme, manager shares insights views on Tanzania's clean cooking "revolution". It was during panel discussions held Arusha city earlier this week in tandem with the Fifth Tanzania Energy Cooperation Summit. He is Eenovators Ltd CEO Chris Mboni (L) and Tanzania Industrial Research and Development Organisation (TIRDO) researcher and senior engineer Atupele Kilindu. The event was jointly sponsored by the EU, UNCDF and UNDP. Photo: Guardian Correspondent



REQUEST FOR TENDER RISING MAIN PROJECT

North Mara Gold Mine, a fully owned subsidiary of Twiga Minerals Corporation, which is owned by Barrick Gold Corporation and the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania requests the submission of Tenders from reputable, experienced, certified, and qualified parties to provide the following goods:

Manufacture and Supply of Underground Minisub and Transformer for the Rising Main Project

Qualification Criteria

No	Reference no	Description of work	Qualification criteria
1	NM002/2024	<p>Manufacture and Supply of Transformers for the GOKONA Rising Main Project.</p> <p>Specifications:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. P&ID: CC0296-100-PRO-PID-0001-01 ii. Minisub Datasheet with reference: CC0296-100-ELE-DAT-0001. iii. Minisubs specification - CC0296-100-ELE-SPC-0001 iv. Lighting & Small Power Transformer Datasheet - CC0296-100-ELE-DAT-0002 v. Lighting & small Power Transformer Specification - CC0296-100-ELE-SPC-0002 vi. Paint Specification: CC0296-000-MEC-SPC-0001-0 Paint specification. vii. Barrick Prescribed Databook Index Requirements with Reference: CC0296-000-QUL-DAT-0001Rev D <p>Description: Supply, Manufacture, Paint, FAT Test, and provide quality documentation of the equipment as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Two Number 2000kVA, 6.6kV/415V, RM6 IDI, Minisubs ii. One Number 75kVA, 415/415V Lighting and small power transformer. <p>A BOQ with reference CC0296-000-ELE-BOQ-0001-A must be completed by the Bidder.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Procurement, manufacture, and supply of Minisub and Lighting & a couple of Small Power transformers for a similar sized project in Africa. Provide project profiles over the last three years for assessment. ii. Company Profile and capability statement. These should include photo of the fabrication workshop, confirmation of floor size and location. iii. Complete a sheet listing two-year spares and critical spare items, as well as location of these stock items kept in Africa or preferably Tanzania. iv. Confirm minimum lead time to supply North Mara site with spares and critical parts. v. List of Personnel and organogram. vi. Complete a side-by-side datasheet comparison of the Minisub and Lighting & Small Transformer to be supplied versus the datasheet requirements provided. Datasheet with reference CC0296-100-ELE-DAT-0001 and CC0296-100-ELE-DAT-0002. Supplier section to be completed for both datasheets for evaluation. vii. Completed Bill of Quantities (BOQ) with reference CC0296-000-ELE-BOQ-0001-A for the Minisub and a couple of Transformers. viii. Confirmation in writing on company letterhead that the Bidder will comply to the technical specifications or requirements detailed in documents with references: CC0296-100-PRO-PID-0001-01; CC0296-100-ELE-DAT-0001; CC0296-100-ELE-SPC-0001; CC0296-100-ELE-DAT-0002; CC0296-100-ELE-SPC-0002; CC0296-000-MEC-SPC-0001-0; CC0296-000-QUL-DAT-0001 Rev D or clearly highlight non compliances for review. ix. Class two, weekly schedule in Excel format confirming the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. All Material Procurement completed, number of weeks after PO received. ii. FAT testing completed, number of weeks after PO placement per equipment supplied item. iii. Completion of painting activities where required number of weeks after PO placement. x. Provide Quality Control Plans and procedures governing the quality during the manufacturing process. xi. Confirm the Warranty & Guarantee period for the equipment. xii. Provide a list of commissioning spares, two years operational spares and strategic spares as well as complete document with reference: CC0296-000-PRM-SPR-0001. xiii. Confirmation in writing to comply with Barrick Terms and Conditions. xiv. Local Content Regulations Compliance.

Submission of Proposals

If your company meets the qualification criteria and would like to be considered to receive the RFP package (BOQ, Technical Specs, etc.), send your request along with your company profile to nm.proposal@barrick.com

Applicants must quote the tender description(s) and the respective reference no.(s) in the subject line of the email.

NB: The Company reserves the right to invite any other supplier(s) who did not submit a request through this advertisement.

Qualification of any company submitting a "proposal" shall be at the sole discretion of **NMGM**.

If you do not hear from us in 21 days after the deadline date, please consider your submission unsuccessful.

Key Dates

- Last Date to Submit RFP Package request

09 February 2024

North Mara Gold Mine Limited



REQUEST FOR TENDER RISING MAIN PROJECT

North Mara Gold Mine, a fully owned subsidiary of Twiga Minerals Corporation, which is owned by Barrick Gold Corporation and the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania requests the submission of Tenders from reputable, experienced, certified, and qualified parties to provide the following goods:

Manufacture and Supply of Underground Motor Control Centre including VSD and PLC for the Rising Main Project

Qualification Criteria

No	Reference no	Description of work	Qualification Criteria
1	NM003/2024	<p>Manufacture and Supply of Motor Control Centre including VSD and PLC for the GOKONA Rising Main Project.</p> <p>Specifications:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. P&ID: CC0296-100-PRO-PID-0001-01 and CC0296-200-PRO-PID-0001-01. ii. Containerized Substation Specification - CC0296-100-ELE-SPC-0004 iii. Motor Control Centre Specification - CC0296-100-ELE-SPC-0003. iv. Paint Specification: CC0296-000-MEC-SPC-0001-0 Paint specification. v. Barrick Prescribed Databook Index Requirements with Reference: CC0296-000-QUL-DAT-0001Rev D. <p>Description: Supply, Manufacture, Paint, FAT Test, and provide quality documentation of the equipment as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. One No MCC. ii. One No Substation. <p>The MCC and substation must be containerised and of size and number to support transportation within the Underground environment. A BOQ with reference CC0296-000-ELE-BOQ-0002 must be completed by the Bidder.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Procurement, manufacture, and supply of Underground Containerised MCC and Substation for a similar sized project in Africa. Provide project profiles over the last three years for assessment. ii. Company Profile and capability statement. These should include photo of the fabrication workshop, confirmation of floor size and location. iii. Complete a sheet listing two-year spares and critical spare items, as well as location of these stock items kept in Africa or preferably Tanzania. iv. Confirm minimum lead time to supply North Mara site with the specified equipment, spares, and critical parts. v. List of Personnel and organogram. vi. Completed Bill of Quantities (BOQ) with reference CC0296-000-ELE-BOQ-0002. vii. Confirmation in writing on company letterhead that the Bidder will comply to the technical specifications or requirements detailed in documents with references: CC0296-100-ELE-SPC-0004; CC0296-100-ELE-SPC-0003; CC0296-000-MEC-SPC-0001-0; CC0296-000-QUL-DAT-0001 Rev D; CC0296-000-PRM-SPR-0001 or clearly highlight non compliances for review. viii. Class two, weekly schedule in Excel format confirming the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. All Material Procurement completed, number of weeks after PO received. ii. 30%; 60%; 90% and 100% manufacturing completed as a number of weeks after PO placement. iii. FAT testing to be completed, number of weeks after PO placement per equipment supplied item. iv. Completion of painting activities where required number of weeks after PO placement. v. Ready for Shipment Ex-works. Number of weeks after placement of PO. ix. Provide Quality Control Plans and procedures governing the quality during the manufacturing process for review and adjudication. x. Confirm the Warranty & Guarantee period for the equipment. xi. Provide a list of commissioning spares, two years operational spares and strategic spares as well as complete document with reference: CC0296-000-PRM-SPR-0001. xii. Confirmation in writing to comply with Barrick Terms and Conditions. xiii. Local Content Regulations Compliance.

Submission of Proposals

If your company meets the qualification criteria and would like to be considered to receive the RFP package (BOQ, Technical Specs, etc.), send your request along with your company profile to nm.proposal@barrick.com

Applicants must quote the tender description(s) and the respective reference no.(s) in the subject line of the email.

NB: The Company reserves the right to invite any other supplier(s) who did not submit a request through this advertisement.

Qualification of any company submitting a "proposal" shall be at the sole discretion of **NMGM**.

If you do not hear from us in 21 days after the deadline date, please consider your submission unsuccessful.

Key Dates

- Last Date to Submit RFP Package request

09 February 2024

North Mara Gold Mine Limited



Foundation for Civil Society executive director Francis Kiwanga addresses journalists shortly after 'Conversation on Aid Localisation' discussions held in Dar es Salaam on Thursday. Photo: Correspondent Mary Kadoke

CSOs for 'aid decolonisation' for donations to have impact

By Correspondent Mary Kadoke

SEVERAL civil society organizations (CSOs) have called for aid decolonisation to ensure donations reach marginalized communities in the country.

Representatives of the CSOs spoke in Dar es Salaam on Thursday at a discussion dubbed 'A Conversation on Aid Localisation' meant to see ways that can make aid transform lives as intended by donors.

Francis Kiwanga, the Foundation for Civil Society Organizations (FCS) executive director said the discussion meant to test some assumptions on development aid and examine if they were still needed in the industry.

"It was an essential conversation aimed at looking at ways on how to localize development initiatives. With the discussion we are trying to look on the aid grounds to ensure their significance and their reach to targeted people," he said.

"Aid comes with so many conditions that at the end of the day do not help. The industry is faced with misappropriation of the allocated funds. Therefore, this platform gives us a common voice of what is our aspiration on equitable development."

Kiwanga said that with the turbulent world with so many power imbalances that need to be changed, the better solution to problems

would be bringing people closer for them to solve them than those coming from outside hence stakeholders need to be bold enough to interrogate such issues and come up with deliberate ways of readjusting world economies and world equation.

Women Fund Tanzania (WFT) executive director Rose Marandu said there is need for aid decolonisation as the same is being managed and utilised by people sitting in offices without effectively addressing problems facing communities on the ground.

"Interrogating our own power is very important. What has pushed us to this level is poverty. We need to have our own strong governance where our tummies are full because when they are empty, we will not be able to negotiate," she said.

Dr Charles Sokile, Oxford Policy Management country director, said people in developing countries have to own all processes in development and they have to be at the centre of decision-making.

"The amount of aid that is coming to the developing world is extremely small. Big countries like the United Kingdom are only giving 0.7 percent of their GDP which cannot change the situation unless we are bold enough to question this and come up with more deliberate ways of readjusting world economies and the entire aid equation," he said.

OUT builds capacity programme target science, math teachers

By Guardian Correspondent, Iringa

COMMISSIONER for Education the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology Dr Lyabwene Mutahaba yesterday said that teachers play important role in development of country which is to prepare experts in various fields.

Dr Mutahaba said this on Wednesday in Iringa Region while launching the second phase of the

Connected Learning for Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (CLASTEM) project that is implemented by the Open University of Tanzania (OUT).

He said that over 80 sciences and mathematics teachers from nine schools in Iringa Rural District participated in the training.

"Teachers are the key to success because of the power vested upon them. Let us collaborate with parents

to identify the talents of pupils and develop the same," he said.

Dr Mutahaba said that when teachers care for their pupils, the latter are motivated to love the subjects and the vice versa is also true.

"I call on teachers to increase care for the pupils and encourage them to concentrate on their studies because doing so will motivate more pupils to love science subjects," he said.

He commended the varsity for

implementing the project aimed at improving science and mathematics with more skills such as Moodle, zoom and mobile apps. OUT Vice Chancellor Prof Elifas Bisanda said that the varsity is on the forefront to ensure the nation gets competent teachers who have skills and teaching techniques.

"The project implementation is part of OUT's efforts to develop capacity of teachers in the country. It

started after poor results recorded in science and mathematics," he said.

The don said OUT offers different programmes to develop teachers from certificates, bachelor degree, Master's and PHD. According to him, science and technology constitute the cornerstone for national development. He said through the varsity programme, teachers of sciences and mathematics and other subjects can pursue their studies while con-

tinuing with their teaching jobs in schools.

Dr Edephnce Nfuka, project coordinator at OUT said that the aim of the project is to ensure that teachers get teaching techniques from their environment, adding that it uses technology and systems to build capacity learners.

He said the project targets all teachers in urban, peripheries and rural areas.

Youth from 600 'deprived' households get work skills

By Correspondent Joseph Mwendapole, Zanzibar

A SKILLS training programme funded by Tanzania Education Authority (TEA) has benefited 600 households in Zanzibar.

In December last year, TEA officially launched a funding programme for skills development targeting youth from needy households and those living in difficult environment.

Speaking in Zanzibar during the event to congratulate and award certificates to the beneficiaries yesterday, Deputy Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training in Zanzibar Dr Mwanakhamis Ameir said it was time for the beneficiaries to look for employment opportunities because they already have the skills.

The training was short-term between two weeks to three months and aimed to benefit youth from poor households registered with the Tanzania Social Action Fund (TASAF) and designed to enable them employ themselves or be employed.

Dr Ameir said that the programme was implemented successfully with 600 youth acquiring skills in various fields such as cookery, automotive repair, electrical maintenance, vegetable farming, welding and plumbing.

She said that among the 600 beneficiaries, 300 are from the island of Unguja and 300 are from Pemba.

"It's time to go and search for opportunities anywhere since the condition was that you have to get out of where you are and do something even if it doesn't pay you much in the beginning so that the skills you have can be seen and later opportunities will follow you," she said.

She said that in addressing the challenge, the union government in collaboration with the government of Zanzibar through the Skills Development Fund (SDF) opted for an alternative way to help needy families through work skills to their youth.

Masozi Nyirenda, acting director of resource mobilization and education support management at TEA said the aim of the programme was to fund training for a total of 4,000 beneficiaries across the country, with a total of 4,063 youth having benefited so far, including 600 from Zanzibar who were handed their certificates.



Dr Mwanakhamis Ameir (3rd-L), Deputy Permanent Secretary in Zanzibar's Education and Practical Training ministry, presents a certificate to one of the beneficiaries of a programme targeting members of poor households who have completed practical training funded by the Tanzania Education Authority. It was at graduation ceremony held yesterday at Mkokotoni in Zanzibar. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

Farmers get 588m/- for coffee value addition

By Guardian Correspondent, Nyasa

COFFEE farmers at Kingerikiti Ward in Nyasa District, Ruvuma Region are set to benefit from the a three-year value addition project worth 588m/- funded by the US African Development Foundation (USADF).

To be executed by the Kirigiti Agricultural Marketing Cooperative Society (AMCOS), the project is to build a warehouse, purchase cof-

fee processing machines (roasting and grinding), and establish testing laboratory as well as coffee bar and a shop.

The project is meant to increase production of high quality coffee for the local and export markets. Handing over a dummy cheque to the AMCOS here on Wednesday, Gilliard Nkini, USADF country programme coordinator said that 10 percent of the 588m/- will go towards improvement of infrastructure at schools

within the ward.

He said are residents will be employed in the project to increase income in the ward, asking them to use the project as an opportunity to show their expertise and make the project sustainable.

Benedicto Damian, Nyasa District Administrative Secretary asked project managers to ensure that it benefits the people of Kingerikiti Ward, advising them to wisely use the 10 per-

cent money that goes directly to the community and make the unique project a success.

"Everyone who is directly engaged in the project should be diligent for the benefit of AMCOS members who are mostly farmers," he said.

John Mbunda, one of coffee farmers at Kirigiti Ward and a member of AMCOS lauded USADF for supporting them with such a unique project which he said will alleviate farmers

from poverty because they are set to have market for their coffee beans.

He said the arrival of this project will enable them afford production costs of coffee crop and have access to inputs.

Nyasa is one of the major 12 coffee producing districts in Tanzania. It produces some of the finest, mild Arabica coffee, accounting for approximately 25 percent of the total Arabica coffee production in Tanzania.

Literacy rate up by 6.3pc in 10 years

By Guardian Reporter, Dodoma

THE ministry of Education, Science and Technology has said that the rate of literacy among adults aged 15 years and above has increased by 6.3 percent in the past 10 years.

Omar Kipanga, Deputy Minister for Education, Science and Technology said this in the National Assembly yesterday when responding to a question asked by Special Seats MP Taska Mbogo (CCM) who wanted to know the government's strategy to ensure that all Tanzanians can read and write.

In his response, Kipanga said that according to the 2022 Population and Housing Census, Tanzania has reached literacy level of 83 percent from 78.1 percent recorded in the 2012 census.

He said that in order to ensure that all Tanzanians know how to read and write, the government has continued to implement various interventions, including the removal of obstacles to access education such as the provision of fee-free basic education.

He said the government also implement programmes aimed at reaching Tanzanians who missed educational opportunities adult education and continuing education. The goal is also pursued through implementation of national education strategy as well as providing opportunities for

those who left school for various reasons to return and continue their studies.

Along with these efforts, he said the government has continued to improve library services in the country at regional, district and school levels, including online libraries to enable more Tanzanians wherever they are to get access to self-study services.

In addition, he said the government will continue to improve the infrastructure of the Institute of Adult Education with the aim of increasing opportunities for more Tanzanians to join it.

In a supplementary question, Special Seats MP Fatuma Toufiq (CCM), questioned the government's strategy to identify Tanzanians aged 35 who are not on literacy interventions.

"What strategy does the government have to ensure that primary and secondary schools have libraries so that pupils can study themselves?" she asked.

Responding, the deputy minister said statistics show that there are people who do not know how to read and write, adding that they will be reached through various government programmes.

Regarding library service, he said that the current guideline is that all schools, including those currently being built, must have a library building.



Ally Juma (R), Arusha regional chairman of CCM's parents' wing, takes part in a tree planting drive in Elerai ward on Thursday alongside members of the wing and students of Burka Primary School. It was all part of the run-up to the February 5 commemoration of the party's 47th birth anniversary. The event saw a total of 117 trees planted. Photo: Correspondent Getrude Mpezya

TADB, TCB in 21bn/- loan guarantee agreement for farmers

By Guardian Reporter

TANZANIA Agricultural Development Bank (TADB) through its Smallholders Credit Guarantee Scheme (SCGS), has entered into an agreement with Tanzania Commercial Bank (TCB) to enable farmers' access loans in agriculture-livestock-fisheries value chain.

Through the five-year initiative, TADB will provide 70 percent guarantee for the loans that will target smallholder farmers.

Frank Nyabundege, TADB managing director told reporters in Dar es Salaam on Wednesday that the scheme was established in 2018 and that this was TADB's second contract with TCB.

He said during the period, TADB provided 7bn/- to TCB as a guarantee while TCB provided 34.1bn/- as loans to farmers. Nyabundege said TCB has reached 2,238 beneficiaries, including 416 youth and 448 women through 94 cooperative societies.

"The guarantee has been raised to

21bn/- by the new contract that we have signed today. The goal is to give farmers the guarantee since banks are reluctant to lend them because they fear losing money. Additionally, it is meant to boost the national income and combat poverty," he said.

He said TADB received 57bn/- from the government in 2018 and increased it up to 250.77bn/-.

Nyabundege said until December last year, more than 19,400 direct beneficiaries and 897,900 indirect beneficiaries received loans guaran-

teed by TADB through SCGS fund totaling 250.77bn/-.

He said the recipients come from 129 districts and 27 regions in Tanzania Mainland as well as Zanzibar. Farmers, breeders and small-scale fishers make up more than 95 percent of the recipients.

The director said this year the government has provided TADB with a capital of 52bn/- to enable the fund conduct its activities.

George Nyamrunnda, manager of SCGS, said that banks have long

found it difficult to lend farmers money due to their fear of losses.

He said the government launched the fund to support farmers as a result of the current circumstances.

"We protect financial institutions so they do not suffer losses by offering guarantees of up to 50 percent when they lend money to farmers. TADB pays in the event that the farmer defaults on the loan. This year, we raised the guarantee level to 70 percent," HE said.

Adam Mihayo, TCB chief execu-

tive officer said the agreement will expand the bank's loan portfolio and reach a larger number of farmers in the livestock, agriculture and fisheries sectors by giving them access to capital that allows them to transition from subsistence to commercial farming.

He said 16 financial institutions, including commercial banks, community banks and small lenders had benefited from the fund since the start of TCB and TADB's collaboration.

Invitation for Quotations/Bids

CONSULTANT FOR CONDUCTING BASELINE IMPACT ASSESSMENT HANANG DISTRICT - MANYARA REGION TANZANIA

Background
WaterAid is an International Non-Governmental Organization (INGO) with a vision of ensuring Safe Water Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) for Everyone, everywhere by 2030. WaterAid's mission is to transform the lives of the poorest and most marginalized people by expanding and improving access to WASH, working with partners and decision-makers to maximize its impact. WaterAid has had its operations in Tanzania since 1983 under the name "WaterAid Tanzania," which is registered as a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) in the United Republic of Tanzania and operates as a Country Programme and a functional office of WaterAid U.K. within the East African Region.

As of recent WaterAid has launched its five-year strategy, with two aims: 1. To attain sustainable, inclusive, and safe WASH services in targeted geographic areas for wider change and 2. To prioritize WASH across the health sector to improve public health. As it implements its 1st aim WAT's concentration will be on bringing impact and sustainable WASH services in Hanang DC. Focusing on this strategic and evidence-informed geographical location will support WAT in demonstrating models, and approaches and generate evidence that will support the government of Tanzania to deliver Universal access to adequate, safe, and clean water as per WSDP III, 2022-2026 targets. WAT will work in close collaboration with the government while ensuring alignment with the Government's objectives which focus on sustainable management and development of the nation's water resources; Improved universal access to adequate, clean, and safe water; Universal access to adequate sanitation and hygiene services improved; Enhanced planning, coordination, monitoring, and evaluation; Enhanced and Improved institutional strengthening and working environment.

WASH service level assessment in **Hanang DC** is intended to ensure local government has a solid understanding of the status of WASH services in Hanang DC. This will better enable the local government to plan, budget, and direct investments in WASH improvements in Hanang. It would also provide a benchmark against which local government will be able to track improvements in WASH service levels over time. This data can also be used by WAT to understand how WASH services are changing during its Aim 1 programme. The baseline will consist of service level assessment at the Household, Healthcare Facilities, Schools, and public places in each ward and village of Hanang district. This TOR gives the details of the impact baseline assessment to be conducted in Hanang district covering the essential aspects of the assessment. Whilst the TOR outlines a standard methodology, a consultant is expected to explore and propose the existing local monitoring methodologies and data sources that can be used. The assessment will be done in close collaboration with the MOW, MOH, RUWASA, local government authorities, community leadership, service providers, and other relevant actors as part of WAT efforts to strengthen engagements, collaboration, ownership, and their capacity in service level monitoring and enhancing data-driven decision-making.

WaterAid is looking for the Interested individual consultant, consulting, or research firm to conduct the Hanang Impact baseline assessment; All the Terms of reference documents can be found on the WaterAid Tanzania website: <https://www.wateraid.org/tz/work-with-us>

Bidder Instructions
Interested and qualified consultant (s) should send an electronic Expression of Interest (financial & technical proposals separated in different folders) by 16th February 2024 before 1700hrs to wateraidtz@wateraid.org with the subject line "CONSULTANCY - HANANG IMPACT BASELINE ASSESSMENT". The expression of interest should contain: (a) a technical offer and (b) a financial offer, comprising of:

Technical proposal:

- Technical proposal detailing understanding of the assignment, and proposed methodology/ approach. (max 8 pages)
- The consultant should describe their recent experience in similar assignments with at least three traceable references & references for similar assignments successfully delivered.
- Up-to-date and detailed CVs of the proposed team, highlighting the experience requested above. Included CVs should be for the consultant(s) & all team members who will be available for the assignment.

Financial proposal
The consultant should come up with a detailed financial proposal outlining the assignment's gross costs, including reimbursable expenditures and any necessary taxes in line with the proposed methodology strictly in Tanzanian shillings.

Invitation for Quotations/Bids

CONSULTANT FOR CONDUCTING BASELINE ASSESSMENT ON AIM 1 WASH SYSTEM BUILDING BLOCK HANANG DISTRICT - MANYARA REGION - TANZANIA

Background
WaterAid Tanzania (WAT) launched its five-year strategy in 2023 focusing on two aims: 1. To attain sustainable, inclusive, and safe WASH services in targeted geographic areas for wider change and 2. To prioritize WASH across the health sector to improve public health. As it implements its 1st aim over the next five years, WAT's will focus on modeling sustainable WASH services in Hanang DC. Further, WAT will work in collaboration with a range of actors to strengthen WASH systems at national and sub-national levels in the target district. This is because WAT's strategy is based on the understanding that by strengthening WASH systems at national and sub-national levels, there will be progressive and sustainable improvement in WASH service levels in the focus geographic areas.

WaterAid intends to engage an experienced and capable consultant to support in conducting baseline assessment of WASH System Building Blocks in Hanang' district Manyara region. The baseline assessment intends to measure the strength of the WASH system in Hanang district at the start of the Aim 1 programme. This is the level at which government has the mandate and responsibility for delivery and oversight of universal, safe and sustainable WASH at the local level. The assessment, while focused on WASH system in this district, will also incorporate critical barriers to sustainable, safe WASH that lies beyond the district e.g. at the national level. The assessment should put government in the lead to ensure government own and use the results to inform their decision-making and track improvements in sector performance. It is important to note that results of the WASH system building block baseline assessment will not be used to benchmark WaterAid's performance in Aim 1 but an indication of how WASH system as a whole (which is influenced by all the actors and factors that operate and exist within the WASH system at national and sub-national levels) is becoming stronger over time.

Interested individual consultant, consulting or research firm to conduct this baseline assessment in Hanang District - Manyara Region - Tanzania; the terms of Reference documents can be found on the WaterAid Tanzania website: <https://www.wateraid.org/tz/work-with-us>

Bidder Instructions
Interested and qualified consultant (s) should send an electronic Expression of Interest (financial & technical proposals in separate folders) by 16th February 2024 before 1700hrs to wateraidtz@wateraid.org with the subject line "HANANG - SYSTEMS BUILDING BLOCK ASSESSMENT" outlining the exact availability in line with the approximate timeline. The expression of interest should contain: (a) a technical proposal and (b) a financial proposal, comprising:

Technical proposal:

- Technical proposal detailing proposed methodology/approach. (max 8 pages) - please refer to the methodology proposed in WaterAid's Aim 1 Baseline - WASH system building block assessment guide and the WASH system building block tool (see ANNEX 1& 2)
- The consultant should describe their recent experience in similar assignments, with at least three traceable references & references for similar assignments successfully delivered.
- Up-to-date and detailed CVs of the proposed team, highlighting the experience requested above. Included CVs should be for the consultant(s) & all team members who will be available for the assignment.

Financial proposal
The consultant should come up with a detailed financial proposal outlining the assignment's gross costs, including reimbursable expenditures and any necessary taxes in line with the proposed methodology strictly in Tanzanian Shillings. Please note that all workshop-related costs will be borne by WaterAid and should not be included in the financial proposal.

SATURDAY 3 FEBRUARY 2024

Taking A New Look
At The News
ESTABLISHED IN 1995

Geothermal power sourcing a light in clean energy drive

UNTIL recently, the mental fixation for power generation in the country was the Julius Nyerere hydropower project (JNHPP) for which the dreams go back decades, altogether since independence.

As it is just during the past decade that electricity demand crossed 1,000MW, the idea of generating 2,100MW was sort of dreamy, even outlandish.

Yet there are lower middle income economies with large populations whose power needs go well beyond 6,000MW at present, even without being industrialised already.

Ethiopia is said to have 5,200 MW of installed generation capacity all the same reaching less than 60 per cent of the country's 126.5m people, during the past year.

That means our consumption is comparable by virtue of the population, largely twice that of Tanzania, while their hydropower generating potential is much higher.

This is even as it involves interminable legal battles with neighbouring counties as to how much of the Nile it can hold back for the purpose.

In developing JNHPP the problem here was vastly different, as to how much of the forest the government would clear for the purpose, squabbling that is now largely forgotten.

So the geothermal sourcing of electricity that was raised in this year's stakeholders' summit in the power sector was eye opening, that hydropower sourcing, cheapest renewable energy there is, now has a complementary, as natural gas does not compare at the pricing level.

While developing geothermal sources opens up wider gas exportation potential, it is also likely that many countries will have abundant geothermal sources as it natural occurrence is less uneven than oil, gas or hydropower sources.

Our northern neighbours are said to be quite advanced in that regard, in which case this is not a new resource that is being discovered, but monopoly generation of electricity restricted power options to those the state parastatals thought were best.

No one can say that geothermal generation technology was poor in 1992 in the first wide ranging blackouts, or by 2007

with more thermal power deals, to avoid cheaper competitive sources.

Now that it is the power monopoly that is developing the new sourcing target the pricing will not be at issue, only uplifting the partnership framework so that it is usable, as the earlier formats cushioned the power monopoly at the expense of consumers.

Yet there is plenty in heavy fuel generation costs that were absorbed by the power firm, thus operating at a loss, and that means at the cost of the Treasury as its debt guarantor.

Only when there is an element of structural reform by adopting project ownership models that permit efficient pricing can greater power generation also attract investments, as pricing of electricity is a key factor in investment decisions, clearly. Thus the discovery that Oldonyo Lengai as an active volcano near Lake Natron can be the focus of a flagship project is helpful as well as developing the Lake Ngozi geothermal power source in Mbeya Region.

The latter source is billed to add 70MW to the national grid, while the remark that geothermal energy is more sustainable and affordable is only a mild assurance, as unless the source is developed by an independent producer, the cost and efficiency gains will go to the monopoly producer and, indirectly, the Treasury.

Pricing for the consumer is unlikely to be affected as prices are reduced to attract customers or to keep them, which implies competition.

One way in which geothermal generation can make a difference is to hive out the new Tanzania Geothermal Development Co. (TGDC) from the Tanesco (Tanzania Electric Supply Company Ltd) fold and into a PPP entity overseeing private investments in the geothermal sphere.

A range of facilities could get cheaper electricity and also pave the way for eventual reform of the major generating firm by figuring out how to adopt the cost modality.

Again it would remove the belief that electricity has to be generated by a publicly owned form, as this belief makes PPP appeals an irritant to the ear rather than strategy.

Plant health needs broad outreach work at present

REPORTS that the Tanzanian government has partnered with the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and the European Union in constituting a new plant health and biosafety intelligence unit to strengthen plant health services are a welcome development.

There are numerous questions that existing institutions and their laboratory, inspection and regulatory outlays are trying to combat with little effect - for instance, the periodic outbreaks of fall armyworms.

There are environmentally toxic interactions between resilient weeds and farmland in many areas, and even more so in grazing lands, that we scarcely have the capacity to control.

Ensuring plant health and food safety as the project is designed to do is something that evidently needs to take place across the value chain, in which case safe agricultural trade domestically and internationally is tied to farm sector capacities.

Plenty is being done in that direction already, but the issue is how far it is possible to bring the broad peasantry (as different from farmers, as the latter tend to have viable commercial infrastructure) into a technically usable framework.

That is basically what the new collaboration will be seeking to sort out; it is vital the scale is made clear.

Those designing the work seem to have plenty on hand as to what it will take to perform the task, with a plant health administrator saying the project has placed building strong inspection capacity uppermost.

That would be hard to debate but the critical issue is at the preliminary stage, starting with preparing the soil, seeds, water sourcing and method of watering, weeding, fertiliser use and exposure to pests.

The big worry does not appear to be whether pests will be eradicated but rather that the marketing part is fully polished.

The administrator explained that inspections are carried out on traders who want to export agro-produce to ensure that they have proper documentation, where no harmful pests risk being introduced to destination countries.

If this is the purpose, it would presumably follow that the new unit proceeds to take up the model where the farms that can deliver exportable products are themselves inspected and certified.

Proceeding with a "universal plant health coverage" strategy is unlikely to work, as many farmers lack an awful lot of preliminaries in their production activity. That can't be rectified by inspection unless it is with a view to obtaining certification of eligibility, where the onus of proof is on the farmer.

This makes it imperative to elevate all export-oriented farming, or where such an option is even intended to be available, to a syndicate sort of industry.

Inclusion is vital in outreach activity but when it comes to exports there has to be controls so that the country has viable markets, not subjected to abrupt bans when 'smelly' agro-produce is taken over the borders and complaints emanate from there.

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Political bias in media doesn't threaten democracy - other, less visible biases do

By Marjorie Hershey

CHARGES of media bias are nothing new, though they have gotten louder - in the US - since 2016, led by former president Donald Trump. But a press free to take a variety of viewpoints was the founders' intention.

Charges of US media bias - that "the media" are trying to brainwash Americans by feeding the public only one side of every issue - have become as common as the hope that the forthcoming presidential race will end safely ... and soon.

As a political scientist who has examined media coverage of the Trump presidency and campaigns, I can say that this is what social science research tells us about media bias.

First, media bias is in the eye of the beholder. Communications scholars have found that if you ask people in any community, using scientific polling methods, whether their local media are biased, you will find that about half say yes.

However, of that half, typically a little more than a quarter say that their local media are biased against Republicans, and a little less than a quarter say that the same local media are biased against Democrats.

Research shows that Republicans and Democrats spot bias only in articles that clearly favour the other party. If an article tilts in favour of their own party, they tend to see it as unbiased.

Many people, then, define "bias" as

"anything that doesn't agree with me". It's not hard to see why.

American party politics has become increasingly polarised in recent decades. Republicans have become more consistently conservative, and Democrats have become more consistently liberal to moderate.

As the lines have been drawn more clearly, many people have developed hostile feelings toward the opposition party.

In a 2016 Pew Research Centre poll, 45 per cent of Republicans said the Democratic Party's policies are "so misguided that they threaten the nation's well-being", and 41 per cent of Democrats said the same about Republicans.

Not surprisingly, media outlets have arisen to appeal primarily to people who share a conservative view, or people who share a liberal view.

That doesn't mean that "the media" are biased. There are hundreds of thousands of media outlets in the US - newspapers, radio, network TV, cable TV, blogs, websites and social media. These news outlets don't all take the same perspective on any given issue. If you want a very conservative news site, it is not hard to find one, and the same with a very liberal news site.

"The media," then, present a variety of different perspectives. That's the way a free press works.

The Constitution's First Amendment says Congress shall make no law limiting the freedom of the press. It doesn't say that Congress shall require all media sources to be "unbiased". Rather, it implies that as long as Congress does not systematically suppress any particular point of view, then the free press can do its job as one of the primary checks on a powerful government.

When the Constitution was written and for most of US history, the major news sources - newspapers, for most of that time - were explicitly biased. Most were sponsored by a political party or a partisan individual.

The notion of objective journalism - that media must report both sides of every issue in every story - barely existed until the late 1800s. It reached full flower only in the few decades when broadcast television, limited to three major networks, was the primary source of political information.

Since that time, the media universe has expanded to include huge numbers of internet news sites, cable channels and social media posts. So if you feel that the media sources you're reading or watching are

biased, you can read a wider variety of media sources.

There is one form of actual media bias. Almost all media outlets need audiences in order to exist. Some can't survive financially without an audience; others want the prestige that comes from attracting a big audience.

Thus, the media define as "news" the kinds of stories that will attract an audience: those that feature drama, conflict, engaging pictures and immediacy. That's what most people find interesting - even bizarre, weird or rare.

The problem is that a focus on such stories crowds out what we need to know to protect our democracy, such as: How do the workings of American institutions benefit some groups and disadvantage others? In what ways do our major systems - education, health care, national defence and others - function effectively or less effectively?

These analyses are vital to us as citizens - if we fail to protect our democracy, our lives will be changed forever - but they aren't always fun to read. So they get covered much less than celebrity scandals or murder cases - which, while compelling, don't really affect our ability to sustain a democratic system.

* A dispatch by The Conversation. Marjorie Hershey is Professor Emerita of Political Science at Indiana University in the US.

Urine colours could be warning signs of diseases, here's how you could tell

By George Citroner

THAT morning pee could tell you what the most high-tech labs aim for: early detection of possibly serious conditions, from infections to organ trouble.

So the next time you flush, think twice. That quick glimpse into the porcelain toilet bowl can unveil important health clues - if you know the warning signs.

Changes in urine's colour, consistency or smell serve as potential red flags, signalling everything from dehydration to diabetes. Monitoring these diagnostic signals provides an easy, non-invasive assessment of well-being from head to toe.

While normal urine colour typically ranges from pale yellow to amber, shifts in colours can expose potential health concerns.

That's precisely what Dr Gauthami Churukanti, a urologist at NY-based Stony Brook Medicine, told The Epoch Times.

"When I see people in the office, the colour and consistency of their urine is of utmost concern," she said. She said there are five common variants of urine, one being clear or pale yellow. This typically signals proper hydration, suggesting a healthy functioning urinary system. Excess water intake can lead to clear urine, while pale yellow generally points to an adequately hydrated body.

"I would say that that's something that varies on a day-to-day basis, depending on how much water you're

drinking and other factors like that," Dr Churukanti said.

Two: Dark yellow to amber. Insufficient hydration often leads to concentrated urine, indicating a need for more fluids. However, dark amber urine may also indicate liver issues or high bilirubin levels, requiring medical evaluation. Dark-coloured urine may also suggest a serious and potentially life-threatening muscular condition. Abnormally high levels of bilirubin may indicate different types of liver or bile duct problems.

"Very dark, almost brown-coloured urine, like a Coca-Cola-coloured urine - that can suggest a condition called rhabdomyolysis," Dr Churukanti said. Also called rhabdo, this occurs when damaged muscle tissue releases its proteins and electrolytes into the blood. It is often caused by really intense exercise or severe dehydration, she said, adding that the condition can lead to "really significant" kidney failure, which could require dialysis.

Three: Red or pink. Blood in urine (haematuria) can be linked to urinary tract infections (UTIs), kidney stones, bladder or kidney infections, or something much more severe.

"Blood in the urine can sometimes be a sign of a more serious problem like cancer," Dr Churukanti said, adding: "The majority of cases are not associated with it, but when you do see blood in your urine, that should definitely prompt some medical attention and a urologic evaluation."

However, foods like beets can temporarily make urine appear bright red, which could be mistaken for

blood in the urine, she further noted.

Four: Orange or brown. Certain medications, liver disorders or haemolytic anemia can cause orange or brown discoloured urine.

For example, the anti-inflammatory medication sulfasalazine, the urinary pain reliever phenazopyridine, some chemotherapy drugs, or laxatives with senna can lead to orange urine. Iron supplements or kidney stones may also contribute to a rusty urine tinge.

Five: Blue or green. While rare, blue or green urine could be caused by specific medications like the antidepressant amitriptyline. Other culpable medications include the anticancer drug (Tagamet HB) and the diuretic triamterene (Dyrenium).

However, artificial food dyes, excessive consumption of certain foods, or bacterial infections may also cause temporary colour changes.

Dr Churukanti said certain supplements can make urine appear more brightly coloured like Gatorade-even fluorescent.

In addition to colour, the texture and consistency of urine can also provide important health clues. Although typically harmless, consistently cloudy or murky urine could signal issues like urinary tract infections, kidney stones, or excess minerals and crystals in the urine.

Occasional foaming or frothiness in urine is normal. However, persistently foamy urine indicates excess protein, which may result from kidney disease, infections or conditions like diabetes. * The Epoch Times

ABUJA

ONE day in October 2020, Serah Akpan, 70, was seated in her house at Boki Local Government in Cross River, southern Nigeria, when she heard the murmurings of irate youth outside. Before she could grasp what was really happening, they had broken into her house, bundled her outside, and threatened to kill her for allegedly being a witch.

"They started cutting me with a cutlass. I was bleeding and crying, but no one cared at that point. They cut my leg so deep that, even now, I cannot walk by myself," she said.

Moments later, she was among a group of nine individuals who were accused of witchcraft and cast into a ferocious inferno, meant to end their lives in a horrifying manner.

While she and two others survived after being rescued by good samaritans and hospitalised, the others were burned beyond recognition. Now, she finds life difficult, as she was badly injured, is no longer able to walk, and is dependent on her children.

Witch hunting thrives in Africa

Witch hunting is a serious problem across Africa. In Nigeria, severe acts of violence and abuse targeting elderly women due to accusations of witchcraft are prevalent, particularly in the southern region, where an intensified version of Christianity has been merged with native beliefs.

Elderly or disabled women who are labelled as witches are often subjected to banishment and isolation. In many instances, they are also at risk of facing lynching or enduring other horrifying forms of brutality.

This disturbing trend gained momentum in the 1990s across the region, partly influenced by popular films and opportunistic self-proclaimed prophets capitalising on people's fears and spiritual mindsets for financial gain.

This remains an obstacle to realising the objectives laid out in the United Nations' General Assembly's Decla-

In parts of Africa, witch branding destroying elderly women's lives

ration on the Eradication of Violence Against Women, which was signed in December 1993.

The problem stems from violence against women, which is rampant in Africa and Nigeria, such that the UN in 2020 described it as a "pandemic within a pandemic." From 2020 to 2022, 7,349 cases of gender-based violence were reported in the country.

The government turns a blind eye

Before leaving power in 2017, Yahya Jammeh the former president of Gambia, during his 22 years of ruling the country, branded several women as witches; they then experienced physical torture as a result of the accusation.

In September 2022, the Nigerian police stormed a seminar venue on "witch persecution" in Benue State, Nigeria, and chased away participants.

Experts argue that most governments on the continent are even part of the problem.

"The state is weak. When we take this issue to the police, they don't pick up our calls because they think we are disturbing them. It is not a priority for the state. Because of their quest for votes and popularity, the government won't want to go against popular beliefs," argues Dr. Leo Igwe, the founder of Advocacy for Alleged Witches.

Similarly, other governments in Africa have been unable to stop this gender-based violence in the form of witch branding in their countries. This is one of several reasons why achieving the Sustainable Development Goal on gender equality by 2030 appears uncertain in Africa.



This elderly woman was marginalized as a 'witch' in Southern Nigeria. Her face has been obscured to protect her identity.

According to Roslyn Mould, a humanist and human rights advocate in Ghana, "Witchcraft branding stems from the misuse of cultural beliefs and has become very detrimental to the most vulnerable, which includes elderly women in society." "Ghana is one of the countries in Africa that has witch camps created for people who have been banished

from their community. It is detrimental to us internationally, especially when it comes to how we treat our women and mothers. This practice denies women their rights.

She stressed that the key solution isn't closing the camps but ending the accusations. "Government officials sympathise but lack on-ground research or NGO collaboration. To

make a difference, teaming up with traditional leaders is crucial. Even when found not guilty, grapple with persistent societal stigma. Their basic rights, like freedom, healthcare, and proper nutrition, are frequently compromised. It's worth noting that nearly all accusations, approximately 99 percent, are targeted at women, making this a pressing women's rights issue, with a majority of the accusations coming from me," Roslyn added.

Hope Glitters in the Dark

In Malawi, witchcraft killings are still on the rise. The Centre for Human Rights and Rehabilitation reports that since 2019, mobs have unlawfully killed at least 75 individuals suspected of engaging in witchcraft in the country.

While Section 210 of Nigeria's Criminal Code Act prescribes a two-year prison sentence for accusing someone of witchcraft or participating in related activities like making, selling, or using charms and engaging in unlawful practices, the actual enforcement of this law has been inconsistent.

But Ghana is taking a step forward to counter the problem, despite the odds. In 2022, following the lynching of a 90-year-old woman in July 2020, the Ghanaian parliament passed a bill that criminalized the practice of witchcraft accusations. The bill prohibits the declaration, accusation, or labelling of another person as a witch.

IPS

South African Airways: Troubled airline returns to intercontinental travel

By Jewel Kiriungi

SOUTH African Airways - once a giant of African aviation - is back in the intercontinental market, but there are still doubts about its financial viability.

It had disappeared from our skies altogether in September 2020, having fallen victim not just to Covid but also another disease that has plagued some other state-run carriers - corruption and mismanagement.

It may be on the verge of a sale that would see a private consortium take a majority share in the business. However, its handling of finances has recently come in for severe criticism by the country's public spending watchdog.

In a scathing report, Auditor-General Tsakani Maluleke said that the financial statements SAA had drawn up dating from the 2018-19 financial year lacked credibility. The airline recorded losses in the four years from 2018 of a staggering \$1.2bn (£1bn).

But interim chief executive officer (CEO) John Lamola said this did not reflect the current position of the airline, which is under new management.

He said the situation had improved in the most recent financial year, with the airline now "running on financial resources generated from its own operations".

Towards the end of last year, in a sign that SAA wants to be a major player again, it reopened its routes from Cape Town and Johannesburg to São Paulo, Brazil. And now it is selling tickets for flights to Perth, Australia.

These are the airline's first long-haul destinations in three years. It did return in September 2021, making a surprise profit serving a limited number of African destinations after coming out of voluntary business rescue.

This was a process which saw the airline placed under the temporary supervision of experts who were asked to return the company to financial health. They pared back the fleet from 44 aircraft to six and focused on the African market.

Now it is aiming further afield.

"The choice of São Paulo was as a result of a very meticulous economic and market research analysis," Mr Lamola told the BBC.

He added that the intercontinental flights hoped to enhance trade and tourism ties between the two countries as members of Brics - an expanding group of emerging economies originally comprising Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa.

Prior to the Covid pandemic, SAA operated five other intercontinental routes from Johannesburg to destinations including New York and Hong Kong.

That route encapsulates the prestige that used to accompany the airline. Once the largest in Africa, SAA faced profound challenges in the last decade.

"South African Airways notoriously has gone through a process in South Africa called 'state capture', where there are well-recorded incidents of corruption that characterised the life of the airline," said Mr Lamola, adding that investigations were ongoing.

An official inquiry into state capture released at the beginning of 2022 showed that the airline had been wracked by corruption between 2012 and 2017.

As a result of the mismanagement, SAA was forced to rely entirely on government financial assistance over a 10-year period to stay afloat, a situation made worse by Covid.

"In that period... the government had to put in some 40bn rand (\$2.2bn) into SAA," said Public Enterprises Minister Pravin Gordhan. It had been run at a loss since 2011.

The national carrier was placed under voluntary business rescue in 2019 to protect it from bankruptcy.

SAA sell-off plan

It was then forced to suspend all operations in September 2020, as it struggled to raise a bailout of over \$540m.

As part of a programme to rescue the airline, the government announced plans, in June 2021, to sell a 51% stake in SAA to a group known as the Takatso Consor-



In 2011, the airline marked the arrival of new planes but its fleet has now been pared back

tium. Under the scheme, the government's department of public enterprises retains the remaining 49% stake, securing a long-term national strategic interest in the airline.

Last July, it was approved by the Competition Tribunal of South Africa provided that certain conditions were met.

One of the requirements was a moratorium on staff cuts that guarantees job security for SAA employees during the transitional phase.

But it has hit problems, with trade unions alleging that proper procedures were not followed. A parliamentary committee plans to subpoena Mr Gordhan to investigate this further.

Takatso, with its huge cash injection, had been seen as a lifeline for SAA, but the airline says it will carry on with its expansion plans in the meantime.

SAA's new management hopes to shift the business from its dependence on state support to a financially self-sustaining one, by only maintaining a low-cost market.

"This airline must be able to survive on operational efficiencies," said Mr Lamola.

These include choosing routes for commercial rather than political reasons, building a fleet with appropriate long-haul aircraft and matching expansion with the pace of the post-Covid recovery in the global aviation industry.

Aviation analyst and founder of online publication Airspace Africa, Derek Nseko, told the BBC that "this is a much more sensible South African Airways and there is a lot of confidence to be gained from some of the measures that they have taken since the business rescue process ended".

Despite the fanfare around the return of SAA to intercontinental travel, the airline is still looking to build up its business within Africa, taking on 15 extra regional routes, along with four domestic ones by March 2025.

"We are focused on generating many alliances. We have code shares with, for instance, Kenya Airways and other airlines on the continent, where we are working together to stimulate air travel in Africa," Mr Lamola said.

Referring to the clearance of historical debts, Mr Gordhan said that "all the muck has been cleared out, and the state has taken responsibility for that... to get operations that we see currently getting off the ground".

Many will be keen to see whether SAA will "rise from the ashes of state capture like a phoenix".

But it will be tough.

"African airlines are still being projected to make a loss this year," with airlines such as Air Zimbabwe also undergoing restructuring, analyst Mr Nseko told the BBC.

Nevertheless, Ethiopian Airlines and EgyptAir have both said they have had a profitable year.

Ethiopian Airlines, which is state-owned, offers a successful model that SAA could follow.

It has diversified its operations, including cargo, maintenance, repair and training services to create multiple revenue streams.

It has also focused on connecting regional destinations and capitalising on demand for intra-African travel.

This strategy has helped the airline become one of the largest and most profitable in Africa.

Turbulence ahead

But high operating costs made worse by rising inflation and currency devaluation threaten the ability of African carriers such as SAA to run profitably, as financiers and those prepared to

lease aircraft see the African market as a risk.

Additionally, inconsistent and complex regulatory frameworks in different African countries have been barriers of entry for airlines and investors on the continent.

The African Union's Single African Air Transport Market has tried to create a unified air transport market on the continent, but it remains a work in progress.

However, SAA boss Mr Lamola argues that businesses must also step up and create solutions.

"I think we have made a mistake of expecting the political authorities in our various countries to solve these problems. But really, they are business problems," he said.

"We need more aviation entrepreneurship in Africa, where innovative means have to be found. We need more concrete interventions of entrepreneurs who will be able to go out there and innovate on issues around financing."

While SAA's new business strategy offers a promising future, the skies ahead will not be free of turbulence.

"The African aviation landscape is extremely difficult and the jury is still out on what the future looks like for South African Airways," said Mr Nseko. **BBC**

Spike in availability of 'cocaine for the poor' threatens lives in Morocco

By Abdelkader Abderrahmane

At 26, Hamza became addicted to pufa. He was soon spending all his money on the drug, stealing from his family to fund his habit. After losing his job and his fiancée, Hamza is now homeless and spends his days living for the next dose. In October 2023, a 25-year-old man died from an overdose during a pufa party in Rabat.

Pufa – also known as l'poufa, l'boufa, sisa or 'cocaine for the poor' – is a synthetic drug made from cocaine or crystal methamphetamine waste that is cut with additives such as battery acid, engine oil, shampoo, salt, baking soda and ammonia. It is cheap, easy to obtain and highly addictive. Like crack, pufa is smoked through a homemade water pipe.

Pufa leads to heavy dependence very quickly – one to three doses are enough to hook the user. The devastating effects include serious damage to users' psychological and physical health. The drug can cause aggression and violence, and is associated with schizophrenia, paranoia and depression. It can lead to skin infections, ulcers, cardiovascular disease and pulmonary distress, kidney problems, fever, severe headaches, insomnia and convulsions.

Homemade crystal meth first appeared in the United States in the 1980s. It spread to Europe in the 1990s, and has had many names, such as 'Krokodil' in Russia and '3-MMC' in France. It became popular in Greece when people turned to 'sisa' – or the 'austerity drug' – as a coping mechanism during the economic crisis that hit the country in the 2000s.

How pufa arrived in Morocco is unclear. Some say it first appeared in Tangier in the mid-2010s, under the name Lbasé, through people coming from the north of the country to seek treatment in drug rehabilitation centres in Casablanca. Others believe pufa was introduced by drug dealers in disadvantaged areas who mixed cocaine or crystal meth leftovers with other chemicals to bulk up their stocks. Many dealers were involved in cocaine trafficking before turning to pufa.

Enabled by poverty, deprivation

Nonetheless, there are parallels between Greece and Morocco. In Greece, the economic crisis of the 2000s fuelled pufa consumption, and in Morocco, use of the drug coincided with Covid-19. Pre-pandemic, cocaine was less widely available and consumed only by those who could afford it.

During the pandemic, dealers began mixing cocaine waste with other products, which lowered the price, making it more accessible to a wider population. Since Covid-19, many have been admitted to drug rehabilitation centres. More than 3,000 addicts are currently registered in these centres in the northern part of Morocco.

Unlike cocaine, which is imported from Latin America, pufa is manufactured locally. Some users buy the 'pebble' – made of different chemical components – directly from drug dealers, while others make it themselves.

Due to its low price, just \$0.50 (50Dhr) per gram, pufa is easy to obtain in Morocco. It is widely available among the youth, including school



A Moroccan addict holds a plastic wrap containing heroin powder in a squat behind a police station in the Moroccan city of M'diq near Tetouan on September 14, 2019. (Photo: Fadel Senna / AFP)

children, and is increasingly affecting poor communities. During the 2022-23 school year, security operations at different educational institutions led to the investigation of 3,870 cases and the arrest of 4,286 suspects for dealing in pufa.

Infecting the youth

Because it's highly addictive, a growing number of young girls are becoming involved in the sex trade to pay for their daily intake. Some users have sold their cars to fund their habit.

Between August and September last year, 112 pufa drug traffickers were arrested and nearly 1,413 kg of the drug

was seized in a coordinated operation spanning various Moroccan cities. This law enforcement intervention also dismantled six criminal drug rings operating across the country. In July 2023, 15 people were arrested in Casablanca after they were found in possession of the tools and ingredients to manufacture pufa.

In October, Moroccan security forces intercepted 1 371 kg of cocaine being trafficked into the country from Spain. While not all this stock may have been intended for the local market, it highlights Morocco's growing role as a regional cocaine hub. The more cocaine flows through the country, the easier it is for traffickers and dealers to manufacture and distribute pufa, compounding an already dire

situation.

Despite these seizures and the number of cases processed, the authorities still have a long way to go to eradicate the problem. Unless rapid and efficient measures are taken, Morocco could soon face a dramatic health crisis and an increase in violent and criminal incidents associated with this drug.

Currently, consumers and small- to medium-scale traffickers can be sentenced to between six months and a year behind bars, while major traffickers can be jailed for up to 30 years. However, they are usually sentenced to a maximum of 10 years.

The fight against pufa requires strengthening both legal and institutional frameworks. Harsher penalties for traffickers, especially those involved in cocaine smuggling or found to have been (indirectly) responsible for a consumer's death, is an important first step.

On the health side, strengthening prevention, awareness and support systems for drug-dependent people could help curb this growing threat. Policies that allow the use of naloxone and methadone are essential to prevent and respond to drug overdoses and treat drug use disorders. By prioritising such measures, non-governmental organisations in collaboration with the Health Ministry, have already reduced the number of deaths due to overdose.

Morocco could, like Greece, also train communities, families and friends to build trusting relationships with drug users in order to eventually help them accept treatment for their addiction. **DM**

Seen: Zambia's community health volunteers fight cholera outbreak

LUSAKA

AS cholera continues to be a health challenge in Zambia, community health volunteers in different parts of the country are working hard to educate the public about preventing the disease from spreading.

In Zambia, community health volunteers are ordinary members of the public who have undergone training in basic health care management and community mobilization. Most community health volunteers are found in low-income communities in rural and peri-urban areas of the country as well as in densely populated settlements.

These volunteers serve as a link between health facilities and the community and often offer their services free of charge. In some cases, they are given equipment such as bicycles to ease transport challenges.

"My job is to see to it that people in my area get the information they need to prevent getting sick from cholera. As they say, prevention is better than cure," said an enthusiastic Alice Sakala of Kapiri Mposhi, a town in central Zambia.

Sakala, 63, a resident of Kapiri Mposhi's Riverside Compound, a densely populated low-income area, is among the many community health volunteers in Zambia who are calling on members of the public to adhere to cholera prevention measures.

Through door-to-door sensitization programs and the use of public address systems to reach more people, Sakala and her colleagues have reached close to 1,000 people in their community with messages about preventing cholera.

"Our goal is to ensure that chances of people contracting cholera are minimized. This can be achieved if people drink boiled or chlorinated water and ensure that they eat properly prepared food. They should also wash their hands with soap and water after using the toilet and before eating any food," she pointed out.



A medical worker takes care of a patient at the National Heroes Stadium, which has been designated as a cholera treatment center, in Lusaka, Zambia, Jan. 18, 2024. (Xinhua/Peng Lijun)

Since the latest cholera outbreak, Sakala and her team of six community health volunteers comprising five women and a man have had little to no time to rest as they are ever moving from one end of Riverside Compound to another conducting sensitization programs. "We have to work throughout the week now.

Our phones are ever busy with requests for us to go and conduct talks about cholera prevention," said Sakala after a two-hour community sensitization program at a market in Riverside Compound.

Her sentiments were echoed by her colleague Doris Chanda, 59, who said that more people in Riverside Compound are adhering to cholera prevention measures as a result of the sensitization

program that the duo and their team of volunteers are undertaking in the community.

"Residents are eager to learn how to prevent cholera and how best to handle someone presenting symptoms of the disease. We tell them that anyone with diarrhea or vomiting should access medical attention immediately," Chanda explained. Interactions with residents of Riverside Compound indicated that sensitization programs are yielding results as evidenced by the increase in the number of people purchasing chlorine to put in water for drinking and various domestic uses."

People are also striving to keep their surroundings clean. To me, that is a sign that the sensitization programs are bearing desired results," noted 30-year-old Mary Mubanga, who sells chlorine, among other items, at Riverside Market. Mubanga also revealed that chlorine sales have improved drastically in the past few weeks, something she attributed to intensified cholera sensitization programs undertaken by community health volunteers.

Riverside Market Chairperson Emmanuel Chaota lauded volunteer community health volunteers for always being available and playing a key role in reducing the health burden in Riverside Compound, which is prone to hygiene-related diseases like cholera.

"These volunteers help bring healthcare services including information about disease prevention closer to the public. They should be given all the necessary support to help them reach more people in need of healthcare services," Chaota said. Zambia has now recorded 14,900 cases and 560 deaths since cholera cases emerged in October 2023, according to a report by Zambia's Ministry of Health dated Jan. 27, 2024. The outbreak initially emerged in peri-urban areas of Lusaka Province, which still has the highest number of cholera cases. The disease is now affecting people across multiple geographical areas of the country.

CAPITAL RADIO

RATIBA YA VIPINDI JUMATATU - JUMAPILI

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

Tembelea mitandao ya kijamii ya CAPITAL RADIO



CAPITAL RADIO

Beekeeping key in protecting pollinators, conserving forests, improving livelihoods

By Getrude Mbago

BEES and other pollinators make significant contribution to food security and development providing myriad benefits to humanity, including pollination services, honey production, food security and crop pollination, artistic inspiration and even career opportunities.

They play a vital role in ecosystems as pollinators of major crops. Science says more than 90 percent of plants rely on pollinators (bees) reproduce which means bees are responsible for one out of every three bites of food we eat.

However, reports show that these important insects are currently under great threat from the combined effects of climate change, intensive agriculture, pesticides, biodiversity loss and pollution.

In efforts to reverse the challenging situation for bees, the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) with support from the European Union (EU), is implementing a special initiative to promote modern and sustainable beekeeping.

Karim Solyambingu, a conservation officer at the Tanzania Forest Services (TFS) emphasized the importance of protecting bees by putting conducive environment for them to live and stay safe.

Speaking recently during the train-

ing session to farmers in Kigamboni District, Dar es Salaam region and Kilosa in Morogoro on modern beekeeping, Solyambingu said beekeeping is one of the very lucrative sectors but needs more efforts to attract people into it which provide both food, medicines and income.

According to him, protecting bees and promoting pollinator-friendly farming practices is a key part of the change needed to make the country's food system sustainable and ensure food security for all.

"Pollinator species particularly bees are under threat from improper use of pesticides which reduce their access to food and nesting sites, expose them to harmful chemicals and weaken their immune systems, so these training are important to inform farmers on best beekeeping practices to help protect the bees but also improve our livelihoods," he explained.

He noted that pesticides have a multitude of effects on honey bees, both at the individual and colony levels. First, there are lethal effects. Since many pesticides are acutely toxic to bees, exposure often results in death.

The use of dangerous chemicals is harmful to bees and it is the factor behind the decreasing the population of bees in the country, yet the insect is important in pollinating crops."

"If comes a day when all bees extinct, human beings will not take more



than four years, they will also die because bees contribute pollination of crops by over 90 percent," he noted. According to the expert, one bee can pollinate not less than 120 flowers per day assuring of crop growth and food security.

Project coordinator, Diomedes Kalisa warned that if happens all bees go away, the earth will a very difficult place to stay as there will be nothing to pollinate crops thus stimulating food insecurity.

"We urge farmers to use pesticides that don't harm bees because without these important insects, our crop will not be pollinated, then what shall we

eat," he said.

He said that all groups of people are stakeholders have a role to play when it comes to protecting biodiversity in the country and world at large, and have responsibility for its

"Farmers are the custodians of our environment. Their livelihood depends on the health of the land, biodiversity and air around them. Our agricultural industry is being asked to work in tandem with nature and under their stewardship, significant strides can be made in the protection and enhancement of our natural habitats," he said.

Kalisa said: "Pollinators such as wild

bees are a key part of an ecosystem, and an indicator of its overall wellbeing. Bee species are now threatened with extinction. This is part of a bigger global problem, and a number of factors are involved. But we must act now."

He said pollinators affect all people as the food they eat like fruits and vegetable rely on pollinators.

However, pollinators are facing many challenges, from intensive agriculture, pesticides, climate change, which are putting a lot of pressure on them.

He said that beekeeping as one of the important alternative livelihood

activities to protect pollinators, contribute to forest conservation, and improve the economic and nutrition status of the small-scale producers in the project sites.

Daudi Ntaki, a farmer in Kigamboni District, Dar es Salaam acknowledged that many people are yet to know deep what bees are important beyond honey production.

"We have been told here by the experts that bees can produce a lot of products if well taken care which include medicinal products, they also have great help in our farms and gardens," he said.

Joseph Kapele, Kilosa District education officer said as organisations take efforts to promote modern beekeeping, it was important for the beneficiaries to be serious and utilise well the skills received.

Kapele who represented district executive director at the training and handing over of the equipment said: "As leaders, we promise to take this education far to reach others in order to enable more people transform their lives, we will supervise to ensure that these donated tools are properly utilised to achieve intended goals."

According to Tanzania Forest Services Agency (TFS), by the end of 2020 Tanzania was the second producer of honey in Africa producing around 30,400 tonnes of honey per annum but more efforts are needed to increase investment in the sector.

With support from the government and other stakeholders the quantity of honey produced is expected to double by 2025.

Chinese-executed water supply project serves 400,000 Tanzanians

By Special Correspondent, Arusha

ANNA Emmanuel, a mother of four residing in Njiro in Tanzania's northern city of Arusha, no longer endures sleepless nights worrying about accessing water for her household needs.

The 32-year-old housewife now enjoys access to clean and safe water just a stone's throw from her residence, thanks to Power Construction Corporation of China (PowerChina), a prominent Chinese construction firm that has constructed the Arusha new water supply system project in Arusha at the foot of Mount Meru.

She is among the 400,000 beneficiaries of this initiative financed by the African Development Bank, with the project's completion date set on June 27, 2023, following its groundbreaking in December 2018.

"Before the water supply project was undertaken we

used to travel long distances looking for spring water which in most cases was not suitable for drinking, cooking food, and washing clothes," Emmanuel told Xinhua in a recent interview.

She noted that they instead had to buy water and most of the time people could not afford it because of the financial constraints they faced. Wearing a broad smile, Emmanuel said that, since the water project's completion, they now have access to water for household needs, and can save the little money they had as they no longer need to purchase water.

"Not only we are nowadays getting clean and safe water, but we are also free of waterborne diseases that we contracted from using contaminated spring water," she said.

The water supply project includes laying over 620 km of steel pipelines, constructing 11 pools and connecting the wa-



A resident washes vegetables with water provided by the Arusha new water supply system project undertaken by Power Construction Corporation of China, in Arusha, Tanzania, on Jan. 28, 2024. The water supply project includes laying over 620 km of steel pipelines, constructing 11 pools and connecting the water supply pipeline network to 48,000 households, according to PowerChina. (Xinhua/Hua Hongli)

ter supply pipeline network to 48,000 households, according to PowerChina.

Jin Denghui, the project manager, said the project involved sourcing water from deep groundwater at the foot of Mount Kilimanjaro, Africa's highest mountain about 100 km away from Arusha, and supplying it to the targeted households in Arusha every day. He said the project has improved the living conditions of residents and has helped expand the local economy.

During the construction of the project, they provided more than 4,000 jobs for the local people, organized professional training in welding, and trained a group of technical and management talents. In the implementation of the water supply project, the Chinese company actively assumed social responsibilities by donating a laboratory to a local school, conducting multiple accident rescue

demonstrations and maintaining municipal roads affected by erosion.

It received expressions of gratitude from various sectors of society. The Tanzanian Ministry of Water formally conveyed its appreciation to PowerChina for the company's significant contribution to completing the Arusha water project in a letter sent in January 2022.

Anthony Kusaya, a human resources assistant with PowerChina for five years, said he was comfortable with his job which has enabled him to provide for his family and resolve financial challenges he previously encountered.

"My experience with working for PowerChina has also helped me broaden my skills," said Kusaya, stressing that the long-standing cooperation between China and Tanzania has brought mutual benefits to the people of the two sides.

Morocco outmanoeuvres SA at UNHRC to snatch presidency – a potential warning for Pretoria

By Peter Fabricius

NO one in South Africa was more delighted than International Relations and Cooperation Minister Naledi Pandor when the national soccer team Bafana Bafana beat Morocco this week to reach the Africa Cup of Nations quarter-finals. "Bafana did us the job of returning the favour by 2-nil," Pandor beamed at a press conference on 31 January.

The ironic 'favour' returned was Moroccan Ambassador Omar Zniber's unexpected defeat of South African Ambassador Mxolisi Nkosi - by 30 votes to 17 - in the 10 January elections for the 2024 United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) presidency. Morocco clearly outmanoeuvred South Africa, bypassing the customary procedures.

It was Africa's turn to nominate a country for the presidency, which rotates among the world's five regions. The African Group of Ambassadors in Geneva typically selects the candidate, making the council vote a formality. The African ambassadors nominated South Africa.

But Morocco managed to insert itself as a second African candidate, undermining the consensus and forcing the 47-member council to vote, said diplomatic sources in Addis Ababa. Clayton Monyela, spokesperson for South Africa's Department of

International Relations and Cooperation, confirmed with ISS Today that this was what happened.

That Morocco gunned for South Africa was no surprise. The two are bitter enemies, mostly because Pretoria has championed the independence of the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR), while Rabat claims it as its province. South Africa regards this as Africa's last decolonisation struggle, and just before the vote, Nkosi said if Zniber were elected, it would "shatter whatever shred of legitimacy this Council ever had".

But why did South Africa lose the wider vote (and so badly)? Africa Confidential attributed it to several factors: Pretoria's strong pro-SADR stance; its 'non-aligned' (some would say pro-Moscow) position on Russia's war against Ukraine; its pro-LGBTQ policies; and most recently, its high-profile charge of genocide against Israel at the International Court of Justice (ICJ).

Making waves and rifts

Scanning the 47 council members, one could see how Pretoria's positions on Western Sahara and Ukraine, and its activism on Israel, could have cost it support among some African, and perhaps all Western, members. Its Russia-Ukraine posture probably would have also cost it the votes of Eastern European states like Bulgaria



Morocco's Ambassador Omar Zniber

and Romania.

In that sense, Morocco was shrewd to shift the vote from the African Group to the wider Council - a more favourable arena for Rabat. Of the possible contributing factors to South Africa's loss, the ICJ-Israel case is perhaps the most interesting.

The ICJ hearing in The Hague was to begin just a day after the Geneva vote, and South Africa's detailed application had been public since 29 December. No Western nations had expressed support for the move, and the US, a UNHRC member, called it "meritless, counterproductive and completely without any basis in fact".

Nevertheless, to head any UN body is prestigious, and Morocco probably intends to use it to deflect criticism of its Western Sahara occupation and allegations that it's committing human rights abuses against the territory's inhabitants. In that sense, beating South Africa was a double victory for Morocco - winning not only the position, but also denying it to perhaps its greatest African rival.

Morocco and Israel in cahoots?

Africa Confidential also suggested Morocco had worked with Israel to defeat South Africa in the presidency poll. It cited Morocco's "de facto alliance with Israel under the Abraham Accord. Rabat recognised Israel in 2021 in a three-cornered pact in which the United States recognised Morocco's sovereignty over Western Sahara".

Uniting against South Africa would make sense for Morocco and Israel, from a tactical perspective. South Africa has lumped Israel and Morocco in the same basket, as when Pandor last year described how she campaigned to prevent Israel from being recognised as an AU observer. She said Israel and Morocco were both "oppressors" and "colonial occupiers ... playing a very negative role in Africa" by using their "financial muscle" to win the support of African countries.

An AU expert who requested anonymity was sceptical that Israel and Morocco were in cahoots, suggesting that no Muslim state could afford to be seen backing Israel in light of the devastation it's wreaking in Gaza. But Morocco wouldn't of course, go

public with any deal it might have cut with Israel.

Morocco's controversial return to the AU in 2017, bitterly opposed by South Africa, continues to be disruptive across Africa, mainly because of its deep enmity with its neighbour Algeria, a strong South Africa ally, also largely over Western Sahara. "It is in fact paralysing the continent," one AU observer said.

For instance, less than three weeks before the AU's 2024 ordinary summit, North Africa hasn't nominated a candidate to chair the continental body this year. It is the region's turn to take the position, but officials in Addis Ababa say North Africa is still "consulting".

The AU expert said Egypt would like the chair, as that would enable it to exert influence in the Sudan crisis and other issues. But it last chaired in 2019 - it wouldn't look good to chair again so soon. The other option was Mauritania, "but it is a very weak state," the expert said.

The concerns of Algeria, and its supporters on this issue, like South Africa, are that if Morocco were elected AU chair, it would use the position to advance its claim to Western Sahara. That would include sidelining or expelling the Polisario-led SADR, which claims to represent the territory as an independent state.

For South Africa, even though it has won widespread international acclaim for its ICJ application, the question is whether its resounding UNHRC defeat was a warning that its foreign postures will cost it Western, and perhaps broader, support. **DM**

DSE records 13.2bn/- total turnover in January

By Guardian Reporter

The Dar es Salaam Stock Exchange (DSE) recorded shares transactions valued 13.23bn/- last month, which is more than half of total turnover recorded during the first quarter of last year and nearly 10 percent of total turnover recorded during the fourth quarter of last year.

The market report shows the market was dominated by local investors in both buying and selling activities, who accounted for 92.01 percent and 54.23 percent of total values respectively.

Foreign investors injected 1.05bn/- through buying shares during the month, of which was 7.99 percent of total value of shares sold during the month.

The largest selling transaction was held at the end of the month, after foreign investors changed hands Tanzania Cigarette Company (TCC) shares valued 899mn/- in a block trade transaction traded in one deal.

According to the market report, foreign investors sold shares valued 6.05bn/-, which translated into a net outflow of 5bn/-. The net outflows recorded by foreign investors in January this year, equivalent to half of total outflows recorded during the fourth quarter of last year ended in December, 2023.

DSE officials expect continued foreign investors sell-off as many were targeting fixed incomes in developed markets, due to in-



DSE brokers participate in online trading. File photo

creased interest rates and weak currencies in developing world's markets including Tanzania.

However, the foreign investors exit will not affect the stability of the DSE, due to strong absorption capacity by local investors, which will maintain high levels of share prices.

The report shows the total market capitalization closed at 14.38trn/- at the end of

January, which was lower than 14.61trn/- recorded during the end of December last year. The decreased total market capitalization resulted from slowdown of both locally and cross listed companies.

The domestic market capitalization also declined during the period of one month, after closing at 11.34trn/- January 31, 2024, which was lower than 11.40trn/- recorded during the

closing session of last year.

On Bond market, the DSE report shows that the value of government bonds traded during last month amounted to the face value of 259.78bn/- and transaction value of 253.86bn/-, which was equivalent to nearly half of total value recorded during the fourth quarter of last year.

During the period of one month, the outstanding values

of both government and corporate bonds, according to the report remained unchanged at 20.23trn/- and 459.05bn/- respectively.

The Corporate bonds trading included the face value of 381.5mn/- and transaction value of 333.57mn/-, which were equivalent to more than the face value and transaction value recorded during the first quarter of last year.

Foreigners extend flight with Sh178m NSE January exits



Stock brokers at NSE

NAIROBI

FOREIGNER investors pulled out Sh178.2million from the Nairobi Securities Exchange (NSE) last month, marking a fifth straight month of withdrawals and stretching a run of capital flight from the previous year.

The continued sell-offs are linked to a disparity in returns where investments in advanced economies yield greater gains than those in emerging and frontier economies after notable interest rate increases by their respective central banks. Last year, foreigners remained net sellers at the NSE, marking Sh21.2 billion in net portfolio

outflows, according to data from the Capital Markets Authority.

The bulk of the sell-offs took place in March at Sh10.6 billion while flows marked a positive surprise in June and August as the foreigners turned buyers, purchasing Sh113 million and Sh672 million shares respectively.

While major central banks have indicated imminent interest rate cuts which could cushion foreign flows back to markets such as Kenya, senior research analyst at AIB-AXYS Africa Ronny Chokaa says the interest rate differential remains in favour of developed markets even as competition among emerging and frontier economies further dictate the direction and destination of flows.

"From our point of view, we think that interest rate differentials currently remain in favour of developed markets, and as such, we see more runway for further tightening of the policy rate to spark a reversal. However, competition from active bourses across peer frontier and emerging markets has also fueled intense rivalry for capital, especially in the wake of disruptive technologies such as AI," he noted.

The continued exit of foreigners has served to extend a long run of low stock valuations at the NSE/ bear run as foreign investors determine the direction of the market based on their significant market turnover.

Last year, the NSE recorded a 27.5 percent fall in paper wealth amounting to Sh547 billion with the bourse's market cap closing 2023 at Sh1.439 trillion.

From our point of view, we think that interest rate differentials currently remain in favour of developed markets, and as such, we see more runway for further tightening of the policy rate to spark a reversal. However, competition from active bourses across peer frontier and emerging markets has also fueled intense rivalry for capital, especially in the wake of disruptive technologies such as AI



Exim Group gets 55.2bn/- in profit after tax in 2023

By Guardian Reporter

Exim Group net income increased by 25 percent to 55.2bn/- last year, compared to 44bn/- recorded during the previous year, thanks to increased interest and non-interest incomes, recovery of impairment losses and advances by the Tanzanian subsidiary.

Exim Group has subsidiaries in Tanzania, Djibouti, Uganda and Comoro, with 46 branches network and 4,279 employees as at the end of December 2023, an increase from 3,301 employees recorded in 2022.

Unaudited financial statements show

the net profit for the Exim Group's Tanzanian subsidiary (Exim Bank Tanzania) amounted to 40.8bn/- last year, compared to 27.9bn/- recorded during the previous year, of which 12.5bn/- recorded during the fourth quarter of last year.

The statements show Exim Bank Tanzania recorded a recovery of 2.4bn/- impairment losses on loans and advances last year.

According to the statement, the group's net interest income increased by 6.7 percent to 146bn/- during last year, compared to 137bn/- recorded during the previous

year, of which 80.5bn/- recorded during the fourth quarter of 2023.

The group's non-interest income also went up to 104bn/- during last year, of which 59.1bn/- being recorded during the fourth quarter, from cumulative 99bn/- recorded in 2022, as a result of increased fees and commission, and foreign currency dealings and transaction gains.

The group also managed to expand the level of its balance sheet, after total assets increased to 3.01trn/- during the fourth quarter of last year, compared to 2.85trn/- recorded in the third quarter of the same year.

Tanzanian subsidiary's total assets also gained to 1.97trn/- at the end of the third quarter, compared to 1.82trn/- recorded during the third quarter.

The improvement of the group and Tanzanian subsidiary's total assets resulted from increased cash,

investments in government debt instruments, loans, advances and overdraft and other assets.

Lending increased to 1.5trn/- during the fourth quarter of last year, of which 972bn/- being recorded by the Tanzanian subsidiary, from 1.3trn/- recorded in the third quarter.

According to the statement, the group's shareholders' funds amounted to 313bn/- during the fourth quarter of last year, an increase from 310bn/- during the third quarter, while those of Tanzania subsidiary jumped to 245.5bn/- compared to 234.8bn/- respectively.

The group's customer deposits amounted to 2.39trn/- at the end of the fourth quarter from 2.22trn/- at the end of the third quarter, where by the customer deposits for the Tanzanian subsidiary amounted to 1.34trn/- compared to 1.27trn/- respectively.

Nigeria's Naira finds path to stability after wild week

LAGOS

Even by the standards of Nigeria's byzantine foreign-exchange market, it's been a crazy week for the naira. But as the dust settles, new measures are in place that could prove decisive for the fortunes of the world's worst-performing currency.

The naira plunged 36 percent this week after the central bank allowed a change in the method for setting its rate in the official foreign exchange market, and cracked down on misleading price reporting by traders and speculation against the currency by banks.

It also eased rules on international money transfers to net billions of dollars sent home by Nigerians living abroad.

As a result, the naira's close-of-day rate as calculated by the exchange, FMDQ, is now closer to a market-related value for the currency - as evidenced by the fact that it traded at a weaker level through the official channels this week than on the street. The latest measures from the central bank are part of a push to step away from managing the currency, unify the official and unofficial markets and attract investor inflows.

"Conditions for naira stability are gradually coming together," Barclays Plc

analysts including Michael Kafe said in a note. The currency weakness witnessed since President Bola Tinubu came to power in May "could be approaching its end," they said.

The naira slumped almost 50 percent in 2023, including a one-off devaluation of about 30 percent in June as the central bank removed its peg against the greenback. But a scarcity of dollar supply through official channels meant the black-market rate weakened even more.

By offering a more competitive rate, the central bank hopes to attract flows from exporters and remittances - the

latter estimated to be as high as \$20 billion in 2022 - back to the official market.

If the reforms are sustained into the long term, Nigeria will be on track to restore confidence in its currency, said Mosope Arubayi, an economist at IC Group in Ghana. "This could bring back on board two of the country's key sources of foreign exchange: remittances and foreign portfolio investments," she said.

But maintaining the naira at a stable level hinges on clearing a backlog of foreign-currency demand that's estimated to be as high as \$10 billion. Even after the central bank

cleared about \$2.5 billion of overdue obligations, the jury remains out on whether it will be able to satisfy foreign-exchange needs.

"The longer they're unable to clear it, the more jittery the market gets and inflows won't come in as expected," said Imokha Ayebae, executive director and head of finance and accounts at Fidson Healthcare Plc, Nigeria's biggest drugmaker. "As I speak, we have letter of credit obligations that have not been closed. We are not able to source everything."

The naira's official rate closed below the street value for a second

day on Thursday, at 1,478.12 per dollar compared to 1,420 in the parallel market. The spot rate is also higher than its one- and two-month forward rates and only slightly below the six-month forward rate, an indication that the currency maybe now be undervalued. Barclays see the naira regaining some ground to average 1,100 this year and 1,150 in 2025.

"After the latest devaluation, Nigeria's real effective exchange rate stands 40 percent below its 10-year average and 35 percent below its 20-year average," said Patrick Curran, a senior economist at Tellimer Ltd.

I&M Bank jumps out of losses, records profit in 2023

By Guardian Reporter

I&M Bank Tanzania has managed to jump out of 9.8bn/- losses recorded in 2022, after attaining a net profit amounting to 3.8bn/- last year, thanks to assets recovery as well as an increase of both funded and non-funded incomes.

Unaudited financial statements for the period ended at the end of December 2023, show net interest income went up more than 50 percent to 47bn/- last year, compared to 31.8bn/- in 2022, of which 17bn/- recorded during the fourth quarter of last year.

This came after the bank is-

sued credits, advances and credits amounting to 450.5bn/- during the end of the fourth quarter of last year, as well as 14bn/- interbank loans receivables.

Non-interest income slightly increased to 12.9bn/- last year, compared to 11.7bn/- during the previous year, due to increased foreign currency dealing and transaction gains, amid slowed fees and commission.

Foreign currency dealing and transaction gains went up to 6.7bn/- last year, 4.3bn/- recorded in 2022.

Impairment losses on loans and advanced were positive at 18.5bn/- last year, which indicated successes in asset recovery

measures.

Basic earnings per share also improved to 0.16/- last year, compared to a loss of 0.43/- attained during the previous year.

The statements show the bank also managed to expand its balance sheet to 739bn/- at the end of the fourth quarter of last year, compared to 664.4bn/- recorded during the third quarter, following the increased lending, property, plant and equipment as well as balance with other banks and financial institutions.

The statements also show the bank also managed to increase the levels of deposits, after customer deposits went up to 582.7bn/- during the

fourth quarter, from 514bn/- during the third quarter while deposits from other banks and financial institutions increased by nearly 30 percent to 20bn/- from 15.5bn/- respectively.

The statements show the bank's capital also slightly gained to 103.3bn/- during the fourth quarter, compared to 103bn/- recorded in the third quarter, mainly due to increased profit account.

Non-Performing Loans (NPLs) and advances also decreased to 76bn/- during the fourth quarter, against 92.8bn/- recorded in Q3, 2023, with the rate of NPLs slowed down to 15.6 percent compared to 21.6 percent respectively.



Tanga needs synergy action to boost horticulture

By Correspondent Cheji Bakari, Lushoto

The call has been made to all commercial agriculture stakeholders to formulate collective strategies in order to address economic challenges facing horticulture sub-sector in Lushoto district.

Lushoto is one of Tanga region's districts located in the western part of range of Us-

ambar Mountain, popular for vegetable and fruits production, but currently facing many challenges, which ruin the lives of farmers.

The district is also among of top sources of Tanga region's revenue, specifically from agricultural economic activities.

The call was made by horticulture expert from Union of vegetables growers in Lushoto, Habilu Shembilu dur-

ing the stakeholders meeting held here, brought together vegetables growers.

He said as if all government leaders, horticulturists within Lushoto district will join together as a team, to achieve the targeted goals, the move will help to boost small scale farmers, which will result into elevating the revenues collection.

"It's unfortunate that despite of leading in agri-

cultural production, rural communities have been lagging behind economically, due to lack of technology in modern scientific farming methods, as well as reliable market which resulting into post-harvest losses as large quantity of fruits rot in farms," he said.

"Thus, the collective efforts are needed to ensure that these farmers are supported economically through edu-

cation, knowledge transfer and skills, which will create positive changes."

He further elaborated that agricultural sector, mostly horticulture in Lushoto district employs large number of people in rural areas, hence; their efforts go waste due to little supports.

"Also, I believe that our emphasis should focus on the need to utilize fertile valleys for irrigation purposes

because are necessary for increasing productivity," he explained.

For his part, Juma Shemdoe, the chairman of Kwalei village in Lushoto attributed that it's a time all vegetables growers to be trained on modern agriculture methods as well equip them with modern technologies, which will enable them to increase yields.

Egypt's exports market remains underutilised

By Correspondent Joseph Mwendapole

Despite of increasing exports to \$6.3 million in 2022 from \$4.9 million in 2018, the Egyptian market is still underutilized.

This was revealed by Mohamed Tajiri, the Business Development Manager, Tanzania Trade Development Authority (Tantrade), in Dar es Salaam during the Tanzania-Egypt Investment Forum that was organized by Tanzania Investment Center (TIC), attended by traders and industrialist.

He said Tanzania has for many years been exporting coffee, tobacco, fish, oil seeds, iron while the main import from Egypt include iron and steel, electrical machinery, pharmaceuticals, sugar, plastics, building materials and furniture.

"Despite of the trade we have, still there are huge export potentials to this market, specifically agricultural products such as sesame, pulse, cotton, coffee, cocoa, beans, black tea, kidney beans, cashew nut, fish and avocado," he said.

Tajiri said there is still potential for Tanzania to diversify exports of products like vegetables fats and oil, wood, leather, fish and textiles products, cotton, spices, raw cane sugar and cocoa beans.

Speaking during the event, the Head of Economic & Commercial Bureau, Egyptian Embassy, Mohamed Atteya said the meeting was crucial for business development among the two countries.

He said the forum saved as opportunity for interaction between Tanzania and Egyptian businesses to enhance mutual interest and benefit of both sides.

"We are always welcome and promote events such as today's forum, because it play an important role in creating and fostering link between business of private sector from both sides," he said.

He added that it is important to advance the mutual relations for both sides, particular in the area of investment and trade.

"In this regards, I am pleased to note that the volume of trade between Tanzania and Egypt is on the rise and it registered 45 percent increase in 2022 and the Egyptian Investment in Tanzania has so far reached \$1.3 billion, in accordance to TIC figures," he said.

"It is a great pride to note that, our two Egyptian companies are partnering with Tanzanian government in the implementation of Julius Nyerere Hydro Power Project (JNHPP), to provide electricity to millions of Tanzanian, contributing to development in Tanzania," he said.

TIC investment Officer Diana Mwamanga said the aim of the meeting was to introduce investment opportunities available in the country to investors from Egypt.

The available opportunities range from different sectors of the economy specifically mining, tourism and food processing.

"For today's meeting, they have shown more interest in investing on construction, health, human medicine and clothing production," she said.



Fruit farmer in Lushoto

China stocks swing wildly in chaotic end

BEIJING

A sense of panic gripped Chinese investors on Friday as shares swung sharply in the final hours of trading before closing at a five-year low.

Traders couldn't pinpoint any fresh news behind the moves but cited concerns about forced sales by leveraged shareholders as among reasons for the sudden acceleration of losses in onshore markets.

A subsequent rebound, which coincided with net flows from overseas investors turning positive for the day, couldn't stop the CSI 300 Index from ending the week with a 4.6 percent loss - its biggest since 2022. The Shanghai Composite Index lost 6.2 percent in its worst week since 2018.

Sentiment was already

brittle heading into this week, as investors digested draft US legislation that's hammered WuXi AppTec Co. and brought geopolitical concerns to the fore. This week's liquidation order for China Evergrande Group offered a reminder of how the property crisis is dragging down the world's second-largest economy.

"As a person who is bullish throughout the year, even I am feeling the panic and starting to turn gloomy," said Xu Dawei, fund manager at Jintong Private Fund Management in Beijing. "Judging by the trading trajectory, the freefall we saw this afternoon indicates forced selling, and I fear that this would trigger a downward spiral, causing more margin calls."

The CSI300 Index plunged more than 3 percent at one

point on Friday before closing down 1.2 percent. The Shanghai Composite gauge similarly pared its loss.

Chinese authorities have sought to put a floor under the rout, ramping up monetary stimulus and vowing to keep up spending this year despite a property market slump weighing on key government revenue sources.

Those pledges and measures, however, have proved insufficient to rescue what's spiraled into a crisis of confidence. Burned repeatedly over the past few years, investors now have little faith in the market's prospects.

The persistent slump has led to fresh concerns over a wave of margin calls as the value of shares put down as collateral shrinks. The fear is that failing to top up their margin trading accounts

may force liquidation of positions.

The outstanding amount of margin debt slid to 1.49 trillion yuan (\$208 billion) as of Thursday. That puts it on track for the biggest weekly decline since April 2022, when the onshore benchmark fell nearly 5% in a single day.

Concern that equity indexes have fallen to levels that trigger losses for popular snowball derivatives has also put investors on edge in recent weeks.

"The market is struggling with liquidity problem, with one pressure point after another from the snowball knock-ins to increasing number of margin calls and shares pledge," said Daisy Li, fund manager at EFG Asset Management HK Ltd.

Traders attributed the

quick paring Friday to likely intervention by state funds.

"State funds bought shares when the index fell sharply to be below 2,700 in the afternoon trading," said Shen Meng, director at investment bank Chanson & Co., referring to a key level for the Shanghai Composite. "The plunge forced the state funds to intervene to stabilize the market."

State funds have attempted to soothe sentiment before, with Central Huijin Investment Ltd. disclosing in October that it purchased exchange traded funds, and vowing to keep increasing its holdings.

Foreign investors, who were retreating earlier, turned net buyers of mainland equities as of the day's close to add 2.36 billion yuan. They had been relentlessly

selling into the new year, extending the outflow streak to a record sixth month in January.



Bank of England opens prospect for rate cuts in 2024

London

The Bank of England opened the door to interest-rate cuts for the first time since the pandemic struck – affirming predictions that inflation will fall to target this spring – while warning that price pressures could reemerge.

The UK central bank removed key guidance that borrowing costs may have to rise again, with Governor Andrew Bailey acknowledging that keeping rates unchanged would push inflation “significantly” below the target of 2 percent. The nine-member Monetary Policy Committee split three ways on how to act, with a majority of six opting to leave the key rate unchanged at 5.25 percent.

Still, MPC member Swati Dhingra pushed to cut rates, the first vote for a reduction in almost four years. Catherine Mann and Jonathan Haskel stuck with their previous position to raise rates to 5.5 percent.

Traders held bets that the BOE will deliver at least four quarter-point interest-rate cuts this year, with the first coming in June. The chance of an earlier move in May remains at around 50 percent.

“Cuts could happen from the summer onwards, by around 100 basis points in total this year, with interest rates potentially settling at around 3 percent by the second half of 2025,” said Yael Selfin, chief UK economist at KPMG.

The pound traded slightly weaker against the dollar and the euro, but above the levels reached earlier on the day as strategists took the BOE’s message as more hawkish than expected. Gilts rose, with the 10-year yield dropping two basis points to 3.78 percent.

The MPC decision marked the widest division on the direction of policy since 2008, a potential turning point in the BOE’s fight against inflation. The bank had come under pressure in recent weeks to adjust its relatively hawkish stance compared with the Federal Reserve and the European Central Bank and, on Thursday, Baily stepped back from recent remarks when he said there was a way to go before price pressures were contained.

“We’ve come a long way,” Bailey told reporters in London after the decision. “But we’re not there yet.”

For Bailey, one of the big unknowns that could shift the outlook is a potential



Bank of England complex

stimulus coming from Prime Minister Rishi Suank’s government in the next budget. Chancellor of the Exchequer Jeremy Hunt is preparing a statement in early March and wants to find room

for tax cuts that could help the ruling Conservative Party’s standing in polls against the Labour opposition.

“While the UK Chancellor has looked to play down speculation around pre-

election fiscal giveaways we still expect the government will implement some personal income tax cuts at the upcoming Budget,” said Henry Cook, senior economist at MUFG EMEA. The

BOE’s restrictive monetary policy setting could be pitted against more accommodative fiscal policy in the months ahead.”

The BOE dropped its guidance that “further tightening would be required,” if inflation proved persistent. Instead, it reiterated that rates would need “to remain restrictive for sufficiently long to return inflation to the 2 percent target.”

Forecasts in its February Monetary Policy Report also pointed to looser policy. On the constant rate path, which assumes the benchmark lending rate sticks at 5.25 percent, inflation falls well below the 2 percent target to 1.4 percent at the two-year horizon and 0.9 percent in three years. That suggests policy is much too tight.

Using the market path for rates to be cut to 4 percent this year and 3.5 percent in 2025, inflation is above target after two years, at 2.3 percent, but dips to 1.9 percent at the three-year horizon. That appears to imply rates should fall, but not as quite as steeply as the market thinks.

“Despite a vote for an immediate rate cut, it still looks hawkish compared to what was priced in,” said Kamal Sharma, a strategist at Bank

of America. “Looking at the inflation forecast – 2.3 percent by 2026, they want to signal that we are not there yet on inflation and rate pricing excessive.”

The UK has been lagging behind the US Federal Reserve and the European Central Bank, both of which have signaled that rate cuts are probable in the months ahead. Until now, the BOE has stuck to its warning that rates are more likely to rise than fall.

The UK economic backdrop has transformed since the BOE last met in December, with inflation dropping more sharply than anticipated. Officials now believe consumer-price inflation will be at the 2 percent target in the second quarter, thanks to tumbling energy prices.

However, inflation then is likely to bounce up to almost 3 percent as the impact of cheaper energy fades and underlying prices pressures in services and wages persist. The BOE cautioned that inflation risks remained “skewed to the upside,” and disruption in the Red Sea posed a potential price threat.

Meta earnings top estimates, announces dividend payable



Meta founder and CEO Mark Zuckerberg speaks during the Meta Connect event at Meta headquarters in Menlo Park, California.

CALIFORNIA

Social media giant Meta Platforms (META) reported fourth quarter earnings after the bell on Thursday, that beat analyst estimates on the top and bottom lines, with the company offering a strong outlook for the current quarter and announcing new shareholder return initiatives.

For the fourth quarter, Meta reported adjusted earnings per share (EPS) of \$5.33 on revenue of \$40.11 billion. Analysts were anticipating adjusted EPS of \$4.94 on revenue of \$39.01 billion, according to Bloomberg consensus data. The company reported revenue of \$32.2 billion in the same quarter last year.

The company also boosted its stock buyback authorization by \$50 billion and initiated a quarterly dividend of \$0.50 per share.

In the current quarter, Meta said it anticipates revenue of between \$34.6 billion-\$37 billion, surpassing analysts’ expectations for revenues to tally \$33.6 billion.

Shares of Meta soared after hours on Thursday, gaining more than 12 percent following the report.

Meta’s advertising revenue came in at \$38.7 billion in the fourth quarter, beating expectations for \$37.8 billion. The company also reported 2.11 billion Facebook daily active users. Wall Street was anticipating 2.07 billion.

The company reported ad impressions rose 21 percent over last year during the period while the average price per ad fell 2 percent.

Meta’s Reality Labs, however, continues to burden on the com-

pany. The division, which is tasked with turning Zuckerberg’s vision of the metaverse into a reality, lost another \$4.65 billion, up from the \$4.3 billion the company lost on the endeavor in the same period last year.

Still, the division beat expectations on revenue, topping \$1.07 billion versus an anticipated \$812 million.

The launch of Apple’s rival Vision Pro headset could create a jump in consumer interest in AR/VR headsets and generate a knock-on effect for Meta’s Quest line of headsets.

But Meta’s Reality Labs efforts have taken a backseat in the minds of investors amid increased investments in generative AI. In January, Zuckerberg announced in an Instagram Reels post that the company’s long-term strategy was to develop general artificial intelligence and make it open source.

There’s no single definition of generative AI, but broadly speaking, it’s a kind of AI that can think and learn like a human. In other words, it’s capable of understanding a multitude of concepts rather than specializing in a certain field.

Meta founder and CEO Mark Zuckerberg speaks during the Meta Connect event at Meta headquarters in Menlo Park, California, on September 27, 2023. (Photo by JOSH EDELSON / AFP) (Photo by JOSH EDELSON/AFP via Getty Images)

Meta founder and CEO Mark Zuckerberg speaks during the Meta Connect event at Meta headquarters in Menlo Park, California, on September 27, 2023. (Photo by JOSH EDELSON/AFP via Getty Images)

In 2024, Meta expects its expenses to total \$94 billion-\$99 billion, with the company noting, among other things, that payroll costs will rise this year as it adds more staff in higher-cost, technical roles amid its push into AI features.

Meta also disclosed that in 2023 restructuring charges including severance and facilities consolidation totaled \$3.45 billion. The company’s headcount as of Dec. 31, 2023, stood at 67,317 down 22 percent over the prior year.

Meta has been on a hot streak over the last 12 months, with shares rocketing 121 percent over that period and outperforming the likes of Apple (AAPL), Google (GOOG, GOOGL), Microsoft (MSFT), and Amazon (AMZN).



ITV PGM SCHEDULE

SUNDAY 28 Jan	TUESDAY 30 Jan	THURSDAY 1 Feb	FRIDAY 2 Feb	SATURDAY 3 Feb	SUNDAY 4 Feb	
5:30 Uwanga wa Mazoezi 6:00 HABARI 6:40 Kumekucha 7:00 Habari 8:00 AJ Jazera 09:00 Watoto Wetu 10:00 Soap rpt: Laws of love 11:45 Hawawmi lakini wamo rpt: 12:45 Mjuzi Zaidi 13:30 Usafiri wakio 14:00 Tamasha la Michozo 15:30 Mwanjuzi 16:30 ITV Top 10 rpt 17:20 Kipindi cha kikimoto 18:00 Hapa na Pale 18:15 Mageshi 18:30 Mahabao ya wili 19:30 Igizo: Stay Queen 20:00 Habari 21:05 Kipindi maalum: Biko 21:10 Igizo: Mzengwe 21:25 Kipindi maalum: Mchozo Supa Jackpot 00:30 AJ Jazera	5:00 Soap rpt: Uzalo 5:30 Uwanga wa Mazoezi 6:00 HABARI 6:40 Kumekucha 7:30 HABARI 8:00 Kumekucha Michozo 8:55 Habari za saa 9:00 Kumekucha kishindo 9:30 Soap: Laws of love 9:55 Habari za saa 10:00 Watoto wetu 10:25 Jajina 10:55 Habari za saa 11:00 Kipindi maalum: AFCON 2023 11:40 Igizo: Mzengwe 11:55 Habari za saa 12:00 AJ Jazera 12:30 Aya ya jami 12:55 Habari za saa 13:00 ITV Top ten 13:50 Shikamba 13:55 Habari za saa 14:25 Kipindi Maalum: Sema na Mahakama 14:55 Habari za saa 15:00 Meza huru 16:30 Watoto wetu 17:00 Music: The Base 18:00 Hapa na Pale 18:15 Mageshi 18:30 Kipindi Maalum: Sema na Mahakama 19:30 Soap: Laws of love 20:00 Habari 21:05 Kipindi Maalum: Malesha ni Nyumba 21:30 Kipindi Maalum: 21:45 Chetu ni chetu 22:30 Soap: Uzalo 23:00 Jiji letu 23:30 Music: The Base 00:30 AJ Jazera	5:00 Soap rpt: Uzalo 5:30 Uwanga wa Mazoezi 6:00 HABARI 6:40 Kumekucha 7:30 HABARI 8:00 Kumekucha Michozo 8:55 Habari za saa 9:00 Kumekucha kishindo 9:30 Soap: Laws of love 9:55 Habari za saa 10:00 Watoto wetu 10:30 Shamba lulu 10:55 Habari za saa 11:00 Kipindi maalum: AFCON 2023 11:55 Habari za saa 12:00 AJ Jazera 12:30 Hapa na Pale 12:55 Habari za saa 13:00 Soap: Laws of love 13:50 Kipindi Maalum: Sema na Mahakama 14:00 Ripoti maalum rpt: 14:25 Art and Lifestyle rpt 14:55 Habari za saa 15:00 Meza huru 16:30 Watoto wetu 17:00 The Base 18:00 Hapa na Pale 18:15 Mageshi 18:30 Shamba lulu 18:50 Shika Bamba 19:30 Soap: Laws of love 20:00 Habari 21:05 Malmalamo ya hoja 22:50 Kipindi Maalum: Malesha ni Nyumba 23:00 Jiji letu 23:30 Music: The Base 00:30 AJ Jazera	5:00 Soap rpt: Uzalo 5:30 Uwanga wa Mazoezi 6:00 HABARI 6:40 Kumekucha 7:30 HABARI 8:00 Kumekucha Michozo 8:55 Habari za saa 9:00 Kumekucha kishindo 9:30 Soap rpt: Laws of love 9:55 Habari za saa 10:00 Watoto wetu 10:30 Usafiri wakio 11:00 Kipindi maalum: AFCON 2023 11:55 Habari za saa 12:00 AJ Jazera 12:30 Hapa na Pale 12:55 Habari za saa 13:00 Soap: Laws of love 13:50 Kipindi Maalum: Malesha ni Nyumba 14:00 Ripoti maalum rpt: 14:25 Art and Lifestyle rpt 14:55 Habari za saa 15:00 Meza huru 16:30 Watoto wetu 17:00 The Base 18:00 Hapa na Pale 18:15 Mageshi 18:30 Shamba lulu 18:50 Shika Bamba 19:30 Soap: Laws of love 20:00 Habari 21:05 Malmalamo ya hoja 22:50 Kipindi Maalum: Malesha ni Nyumba 23:00 Jiji letu 23:30 Music: The Base 00:30 AJ Jazera	5:30 Uwanga wa Mazoezi 6:00 HABARI 6:40 Kumekucha 7:00 Habari 8:00 AJ Jazera 09:00 Watoto Wetu 10:00 Soap: Uzalo rpt 11:45 Hawawmi lakini wamo rpt: 12:45 Mjuzi Zaidi 13:30 Usafiri wakio 14:00 Tamasha la Michozo 15:30 Mwanjuzi 16:30 ITV Top 10 rpt 17:20 Kipindi cha kikimoto 18:00 Hapa na Pale 18:15 Mageshi 18:30 Mahabao ya wili 19:30 Igizo: Stay Queen 20:00 Habari 21:05 Kipindi maalum: Biko 21:10 Igizo: Mzengwe 21:25 Kipindi maalum: Mchozo Supa Jackpot 00:30 AJ Jazera	5:00 Soap rpt: Uzalo 5:30 Uwanga wa Mazoezi 6:00 HABARI 6:40 Kumekucha 7:00 Habari 8:00 AJ Jazera 09:00 Watoto Wetu 10:00 Soap: Uzalo rpt 11:45 Hawawmi lakini wamo rpt: 12:45 Mjuzi Zaidi 13:30 Usafiri wakio 14:00 Tamasha la Michozo 15:30 Mwanjuzi 16:30 ITV Top 10 rpt 17:20 Kipindi cha kikimoto 18:00 Hapa na Pale 18:15 Mageshi 18:30 Mahabao ya wili 19:30 Igizo: Stay Queen 20:00 Habari 21:05 Kipindi maalum: Biko 21:10 Igizo: Mzengwe 21:25 Kipindi maalum: Mchozo Supa Jackpot 00:30 AJ Jazera	5:00 Soap rpt: Uzalo 5:30 Uwanga wa Mazoezi 6:00 HABARI 6:40 Kumekucha 7:00 Habari 8:00 AJ Jazera 09:00 Watoto Wetu 10:00 Soap: Uzalo rpt 11:45 Hawawmi lakini wamo rpt: 12:45 Mjuzi Zaidi 13:30 Usafiri wakio 14:00 Tamasha la Michozo 15:30 Mwanjuzi 16:30 ITV Top 10 rpt 17:20 Kipindi cha kikimoto 18:00 Hapa na Pale 18:15 Mageshi 18:30 Mahabao ya wili 19:30 Igizo: Stay Queen 20:00 Habari 21:05 Kipindi maalum: Biko 21:10 Igizo: Mzengwe 21:25 Kipindi maalum: Mchozo Supa Jackpot 00:30 AJ Jazera

WORLD



Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin speaks during a press briefing in Beijing, China, on Jan 29, 2024. (PHOTO / MFA.GOV.CN)

China slams US over 'slandering' cybersecurity accusations

BEIJING

A spokesperson for China's foreign ministry on Thursday said that China urges the United States to stop its worldwide cyber espionage and cyberattacks, and stop smearing other countries under the excuse of cybersecurity.

Spokesperson Wang Wenbin made the remarks at a regular news briefing in response to a related query.

Wang noted that China firmly opposes all forms of cyberattacks and cracks down on such practices in accordance with the law.

He said that the United States jumped to an unwarranted conclusion in the absence of valid evidence, and it has slandered and made groundless accusations against China.

"It is extremely irresponsible and is a complete distortion of facts," Wang said.

"China firmly opposes this," Wang said. The United States itself is the origin and the biggest perpetrator of cyberattacks, Wang said, noting that the US Cyber Force Command openly declared that the critical infrastructure of other countries is a legitimate target for US cyberattacks.

Wang said that since last year, China's cybersecurity agencies have released reports revealing the US government's long-running cyberattacks against China's critical infrastructure. Such irresponsible policies and practices have exposed global critical infrastructure to huge risks, said the spokesperson.

Developments happening in Red Sea a matter of concern: MEA

NEW DELHI

AMID the ongoing escalations in the Red Sea, the Ministry of External Affairs said on Thursday that it is a matter of concern for India.

On being asked if India has discussed the situation in Red Sea with other major powers, and what is New Delhi's policy on the issue, the official spokesperson of the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), Randhir Jaiswal in a weekly presser on Thursday said, "It is a matter of concern, not just for us, but for several international players. We have been discussing this with our interlocutors...the French President was here, with Iran when our External Affairs Minister travelled there, and also with the UAE President when he was here."

"So, it is a matter of concern. We want to address maritime security, we want to address freedom of navigation, as to how we can secure these lanes," the MEA spokesperson said.

The MEA spokesperson also highlighted that the Indian Navy is also active, and providing support to several vessels, not only in India but in other

nations as well.

The Indian Navy has been widely appreciated for its rescue efforts too.

"You are also aware that the Indian Navy is active in this area, in the Gulf of Aden, in the Arabian Sea, and they have been providing support... to several vessels, not just Indian, but of other nations as well, and of course, supporting Indian sailors on them, which has been widely reported and widely appreciated," Jaiswal added.

Amid maritime security challenges including in the Red Sea, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar had earlier spoken about the "perceptible increase in threats" to the safety of maritime commercial traffic in an important part of Indian Ocean and said there have been some attacks in the "vicinity of India".

He said threats to maritime commercial traffic also have a bearing on India's energy and economic interests.

The EAM also said that this situation would not benefit any party.

"This fraught situation is not to the benefit of any party and this must be clearly recognised," he also said.

ANI

Russia makes top three countries boasting digital competences – PM

ALMATY

RUSSIA is among the world's top three countries with serious digital technology competences, Russian Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin said.

"Russia prioritizes all those issues (of digital development - TASS). We are among the world's top three countries having serious competences in digital technologies.

In particular, their employment enables us to respond to local and external challenges," he told a plenary



session of the Digital Almaty forum, adding that the country's GDP dy-

namics highlights it as well.

The average level of exploiting AI (Artificial Intelligence) technologies in the area of economy and public management in Russia increased 1.5-fold over the past two years, the prime minister said.

The economic effect from the introduction of AI technologies in the country stands at around 1 trillion rubles (\$11 bln), and it is expected to surpass 10 trillion rubles (\$110 bln) by the end of the decade, he noted, adding that it will add almost 6% to GDP.

Agencies

Progress in Israel-Hamas indirect talks offers hope to Palestinians

GAZA

PALESTINIANS in the besieged coastal enclave of the Gaza Strip have expressed hope of witnessing a real ceasefire between Hamas and Israel as their indirect negotiations have progressed after 118 days of bloody conflict in the territory.

According to media reports, a Hamas delegation is due to be currently visiting Egypt for truce talks. The delegation is expected to meet with Abbas Kamel, head of Egypt's General Intelligence Service, to discuss the framework agreement on a truce in Gaza issued by the recent Paris meeting, which outlined several stages to achieve a Gaza ceasefire, according to unnamed Palestinian sources.

The sources said that "so far, the negotiations have made significant progress, and we may witness a ceasefire in Gaza at the beginning of the next week if it is guaranteed that Israel will adhere to the Paris proposal."

Mamdouh Abu Kumail, a Gaza resident, is excited about such news, saying, "All of us (Palestinians and Israelis) need to end this war in Gaza."

The 62-year-old man hopes a new agreement will be reached to "allow us to return to our houses to check our losses and even to manage our new lives based on the new circumstances resulting from the devastating war".

Sami Abu Salem, a Jabalia-based Palestinian man, holds the same hope, saying, "Neither Hamas nor Israel has achieved their goals in this war. So, we need it to end as soon as possible."

The 50-year-old father of four



Smoke from bombardment billows in the background as displaced Palestinians flee from Khan Yunis in the southern Gaza Strip on Jan 30, 2024. AFP

added that "it is better to solve the conflict through diplomatic ways instead of military methods, which only affected the civilians."

Khadija al-Ojaili from Khan Yunis told Xinhua that "the possible ceasefire will be the only way for her to meet her four children, who are now trapped in Jabalia refugee camp in northern Gaza" while she has been displaced to Rafah city.

"I have not seen my children for more than three months since I moved to Abu Yousef Al-Najjar Hospital in Rafah to receive treatment for my injuries from an Israeli attack on our house," lamented the 39-year-old woman.

"I cannot stand to stay far away from them for a longer time. They need me," she said, in the hope of witnessing a ceasefire and returning home the soonest possible.

The about 2.3 million Palestinians in Gaza have been living in difficult conditions since Oct 7, 2023, after Israel declared a large-scale offensive against the enclave in response to an

unexpected Hamas attack on southern Israel, which killed about 1,200 Israelis.

The Palestinian death toll from the ongoing Israeli attacks in Gaza has reached 27,019, with 66,139 others wounded, the Gaza-based Health Ministry said Thursday in a statement.

On Sunday, a meeting was held in the French capital of Paris, attended by senior intelligence and government officials from the United States, Israel, Qatar, and Egypt, to discuss a deal to end the Hamas-Israeli conflict in Gaza.

The Israeli delegation was led by David Barnea, chief of the Mossad, the Israeli intelligence agency, and Ronen Bar, head of the Shin Bet, the Israeli internal security agency.

But Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu vowed Tuesday that his government will not release Palestinian prisoners or withdraw forces from Gaza, despite the international efforts to achieve a ceasefire deal.

Xinhua

UK-India Business Council welcomes Interim Budget 2024-25

NEW DELHI

THE UK-India Business Council has welcomed India's interim budget 2024-25 and its focus on stability for the coming months.

Following the budget session today, Richard McCallum, Group CEO, UKIBC said, "UK industry keen to be reliable partner for India now and into the future," according to an official press release.

"The UK India Business Council welcomes Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman's presentation of India's Interim Budget 2024-25 and its focus on stability for the coming months," the release read.

India has shown transformational change over the last decade - as the Minister's speech highlighted - whether it is poverty alleviation, gender equity, leveraging digital technology for inclusivity, building world-class infrastructure, and

many other areas.

India's story on women's participation in the STEM industry is a success at a global level.

"The UPI and digital infrastructure case study will benefit hundreds of millions across other countries as well. The continued emphasis on a people-centric, trust-based governance model will continue to be an essential driver for economic growth," the UKIBC release noted.

The Minister spoke about multiple priority sectors. We're particularly excited about the possibilities of partnerships between the UK and India.

The release also underlined that the UK companies are playing a leading role for instance, in GIFT City on financial services. There's substantial collaboration on electric vehicles, where there is a strong cross-border R&D for

design, manufacturing and battery capabilities.

"Technological innovations have been the cornerstone of India's transformation in recent years and the landmark UK-India R&D agreement provides an excellent platform for collaboration across business, academia, research and government," the release read.

British Industry understands and supports Atmanirbhar Bharat. It also appreciates India's need for greater self-reliance, supply chain stability, and access to critical technology. And British industry is eager to invest even more in India.

"We collectively recognise that the future lies in partnership: co-creation, co-development, and making in India, for the world. UK industry wants to continue to be a reliable partner to India and Indian industry now and into the future," the release added.

ANI

Ahead of election, Pakistan seals plan to sell national airline

BRUSSELS

ISLAMABAD - Ahead of elections next week, Pakistan's caretaker administration is making binding plans for a new government to sell loss-making Pakistan International Airlines, according to the minister in charge of the process and other officials.

In the past, elected governments have shied away from undertaking unpopular reforms, including the sale of the flag carrier. But Pakistan, in deep economic crisis, agreed in June to overhaul loss-making state-owned enterprises under a deal with the International Monetary Fund for a \$3 billion bailout.

The government decided to privatize PIA just weeks after signing the IMF agreement.

The caretaker administration, which took office in August to oversee the Feb 8 election, was empowered by the outgoing parliament to take any steps needed to meet the budgetary targets agreed with the IMF.

"Our job is 98 percent done," Privatization Minister Fawad Hasan Fawad told Reuters when asked about the plan to sell the airline. "The remaining 2 percent is just to bring it on an excel sheet after the cabinet approves it."

Fawad said the plan, drawn up by transaction adviser Ernst & Young, will be presented to the cabinet for approval before the tenure of the administration ends following the election. The cabinet will also decide whether to sell the stake by tender or through a government-to-government deal, Fawad said.

"What we have done in just four months is what past governments have been trying to do for over a decade," Fawad said. "There is no looking back."

Details of the privatization process have not been previously reported.

PIA had liabilities of 785 billion Pakistani rupees (\$2.81 billion) and accumulated losses of 713 billion rupees as of June last year. Its CEO has said losses in 2023 were likely to be 112 billion rupees.

Progress on the privatization will be a key issue if the incoming government goes back to the IMF once the current bailout program expires in March. Caretaker Finance Minister Shamsah Akhtar told reporters last year that Pakistan would have to remain in IMF programs after the expiry.

Two sources close to the process told Reuters that a 51 percent stake with full management control would be offered to buyers after parking the airline's debts in a separate entity, under the 1,100 page report from Ernst & Young.

Reuters could not independently confirm the contents of the report. Fawad did not give specific details of the size of the stake to be sold, but confirmed the plan involved the carrier's debts being spun off into a separate entity.

Ernst & Young did not respond to requests for comment.

PIA spokesman Abdullah Hafeez Khan said the airline was assisting the privatization process, extending "full cooperation" to the transaction adviser.

Besides operational and technical measures for PIA's divestment, the caretaker government has also amended a 2016 law that had blocked selling off its majority shares, according to a draft posted on the Pakistan parliament's website.

Agencies

Abuse of force only makes bigger crises

RECENTLY, the coalition forces of the United States and Britain launched new strikes on Houthi targets in Yemen. The escalation of the crisis in the Red Sea has triggered widespread concerns in the international community about the further rise in the overall security risks in the region.

The use of force will not help resolve the issue, but only exacerbate tensions.

The waters of the Red Sea are an important international transportation route for goods and energy. It is in the common interest of the international community to ensure unimpeded access to

the waterway and the safety of passing vessels. All parties should work together to safeguard the security of the waters.

Major countries should play a constructive and responsible role in keeping the shipping lanes safe in the Red Sea waters. Any action must abide by the norms governing international relations, and respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Yemen and other countries bordering the Red Sea.

The military actions taken by the U.S. and Britain have damaged infrastructure and caused casualties of civilians. They

couldn't help to protect the safety of merchant shipping, and even increased the overall security risks in the region. This is something that the international community does not want to see.

The international community has voiced concerns and opposition after the U.S. and Britain launched military strikes.

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres called upon all parties involved not to escalate even more the situation in the interest of peace and stability in the Red Sea and the wider region. He

called for every effort to be made to ensure that Yemen pursues a path towards peace and that the work undertaken thus far to end the conflict in Yemen should not be lost.

Saudi Arabia stressed in a statement the importance of maintaining the security and stability of the region. It demanded freedom of navigation in the Red Sea and called on all parties involved to exercise restraint and avoid escalation. Egypt called for unifying international and regional efforts to ease tensions in the region and

ensure the safety of navigation in the Red Sea.

Iran believed that arbitrary attacks would only make the Middle East more insecure and unstable. Iraq said in a statement that expanding the scope of targets does not represent a solution to the problem, rather, it will lead to continued spillover and proliferation of risks.

The international community has a clear understanding of the negative effects brought about by military strikes on the regional situation. It hopes to resolve the

crisis with political means that address both the symptoms and root causes.

The escalating tensions in the Red Sea indicate that the abuse of force will only make bigger crises. The world is seeing the spillover effects of the new round of conflict between Palestine and Israel, and as the factors of instability in the region are clearly upswing, the risk of more forces being dragged into the conflict is on the rise.

It's obviously contradictory that some countries are actually abus-

ing military force while stressing the importance of preventing the spillover of the conflict. The UN Security Council has never authorized any country to use force against Yemen. The military actions taken against Yemen not only have increased security risks in the Red Sea, but also could possibly impact the political process of Yemen.

Since the 21st century, the abuse of force has only brought turmoil and humanitarian disasters to the Middle East, as evidenced by what has happened in Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya and Syria. **People's Daily**

Protesters block roads around EU summit in Brussels

BRUSSELS

PROTESTING farmers have blocked the roads with about 1,300 tractors around the European Union (EU) summit venue where the bloc's 27 leaders are gathered on Thursday, said the police.

In response to a call from Europe's farming union, the European Coordination Via Campesina (ECVC), the farmers gathered at 11 a.m. local time (1000 GMT) on Place du Luxembourg in Brussels, where the European Parliament is located.

The site is a kilometer away from the Schuman roundabout, where a special EU summit is taking place. The protesters were understood to show their complaints about taxes, administrative overload, rising costs and cheap imports, and asked EU leaders for more help.

"Europe's neo-liberal policies are overwhelmingly responsible for farmers' distress: free trade agreements (FTAs), market deregulation, Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) subsidies which are distributed totally unfairly, administrative overload, fake solutions such as senseless support for digitization, GMOs and carbon markets, and a lack of overall vision for a transition to more sustainable models of agriculture, to name only some," ECVC said in a press release.

ECVC demands an end to FTAs linked to agriculture as well as giving up negotiations between the EU and the South American trade bloc Mercosur, fair prices for farm produce amid rising production costs, a redistribution of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) money per ac-



Tractors block a road during a protest in Brussels, Belgium, Feb. 1, 2024.

tive worker instead of by hectare to better support small and medium-sized farms during their transition towards agroecology and sustainability, and a simplification of red tape.

Red tape imposed by the EU takes up to two full days to complete, which keeps farmers away from working on the fields, according to Belgian farmer unions FWA (Walloon Federation for Agriculture) and UFW (Union of female farmers in Wallonia).

The CAP also imposes a strict calendar, regardless of the weather and other circumstances. This leads to soil degradation and poorer harvest and proves unsustainable, the Belgian farmers' unions argue.

They also ask for an indexation of the CAP budget, as it has been regularly cut off despite rising costs of living.

Representatives of the ECVC are expected to meet in the afternoon with European Commissioner in charge of European Agriculture Janusz Wojciechowski and with the cabinet of Charles Michel, president of the European Council, to discuss their demands.

The farmers were joined by more than 30 civil society organizations, and have received the support of Green member of the European Parliament Saskia Brimont. "A fair income, a nourishing local agriculture, the end of unfair

competition.

For the return to working the land in a way that protects people and the planet. Environmentalists and farmers together to tackle social and climate challenges," Brimont published on social media platform X, with photos of tractors in the streets of Brussels.

Farmers in several other EU countries have taken to the streets as well. In France, protesting farmers blocked major roads around Paris earlier this week.

Xinhua

Seven years on, Africa CDC wins acclaim for safeguarding people's health

ADDIS ABABA

THE Africa Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC) has gained acclaim for its contribution to bettering public healthcare in Africa as it marked its seventh anniversary.

A special ceremony was held at the headquarters of the Africa CDC in the southern suburb of Addis Ababa, the Ethiopian capital on Wednesday to mark the African Union (AU) autonomous specialized healthcare agency's seventh anniversary.

The celebration, under the theme "A journey of action and commitment to safeguarding Africa's health security," highlighted the Africa CDC's successes in supporting public health initiatives on the continent and strengthening the capacity of public health institutions in Africa to detect, prevent, control and respond quickly and effectively to disease threats.

Since it was established in January 2016 by African leaders and officially launched one year later, the agency has withstood various public health threats, ranging from the Ebola virus outbreak to the most recent COVID-19 pandemic, said Director-General of the Africa CDC Jean Kaseya.

"It's a great pride to see our Africa CDC growing, thriving, and achieving more than what one has ever thought of in just seven years of its existence. As we reflect on our collective achievements, we are inspired

by the impact created, the lives saved, and the resilience of our continent," he said.

"As Africa CDC, we have relentlessly advocated for a New Public Health Order for Africa, emphasizing the necessity for a fundamental shift in our approach to public health on the continent," he said.

"Our journey forward will be rooted in the foundational principles of the 5Cs -- community, connectivity, capacity, collaboration, and climate. These pillars have not only anchored our progress but will remain the guiding light as we aspire to shape a New Public Health Order for Africa," he added.

According to the AU, the occasion marked a significant milestone in the existence of the young organization since its establishment, witnessing transformative growth at the institutional, strategic, and operational levels.

Africa CDC, as a platform for strategic guidance and knowledge exchange among member states, is steadfast in its commitment to continental health security, the AU noted. Deputy Chairperson of the AU Commission Monique Nsanzabaganwa said the Africa CDC has been playing a critical role in the promotion of timely response to health emergencies on the continent.

"The results we can see today are significant, and proof beyond doubt that Africa CDC



This photo taken on Jan. 31, 2024 shows the headquarters of the Africa Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC) in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The Africa CDC has gained acclaim for its contribution to bettering public healthcare in Africa as it marked its seventh anniversary. Xinhua

is well placed to carry out the mandates entrusted to it," she said.

To mark the occasion, Africa CDC honored Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, the former chair of the AU Commission, and John Nkengasong, the inaugural director of Africa CDC, by naming the twin towers of its headquarters after them in recognition of their con-

tributions to the establishment and development of the agency, respectively.

The Chinese-built Africa CDC headquarters, which is regarded as a flagship project in China-Africa public health cooperation, was officially inaugurated in January last year.

In November last year, the Africa CDC also unveiled a China-

aided reference laboratory at its headquarters.

It said the completion of the laboratory marks a milestone in its pursuit of a strong continental public health institution that will support AU members in improving disease diagnosis, surveillance and outbreak response.

Xinhua

China sets example for international human rights development

regards the rights to subsistence and development as its primary and basic human rights, ensures and improves people's livelihoods through development, ensures the fruits of development are shared by the people, and strives for the comprehensive and coordinated development of economic, social and cultural rights as well as civil and political rights. It has significantly improved its capability in ensuring human rights.

Since joining the third round of the UPR in 2018, the country has made tangible achievements in the promotion and protection of human rights.

China has secured a complete victory in the battle against ex-

treme poverty, and explored whole-process people's democracy that covers all aspects of the democratic process and all sectors of society. It has formulated new laws to safeguard various rights of the people, including the Civil Code, the law on personal information protection, and the law on barrier-free living environment.

During this round of the UPR, many representatives from developing countries said that China's path to human rights is in line with China's national conditions and meets the aspirations of its people.

China has found a human rights development path that echoes the trend of the times and suits its national conditions, setting an example for the development of

countries.

There is no one-size-fits-all path or model of human rights development in the world. People of all countries have the right to and should independently explore their own human rights development that is in line with their own realities.

China has advocated respect for the diversity of world civilizations, implemented the Global Civilization Initiative, strengthened exchanges and mutual learning, and encouraged and respected countries in choosing their own path to human rights development, so that people of all countries are ensured of human rights fairly through their own modernization drives.

China has been actively promoting the high-quality development of its own human rights cause while engaging in extensive exchanges and cooperation in the field of human rights, making contributions to global human rights governance.

Since the third round of the UPR, China has joined human rights treaties such as the Marrakesh Treaty and actively participated in the UPR.

As Chinese President Xi Jinping noted, China stands for safeguarding human rights with security, promoting human rights with development, and advancing human rights with cooperation, which has exerted profound influence.

The 53rd session of the UN Human Rights Council adopted again the resolution on "the contribution of development to the enjoyment of all human rights" submitted by China.

People's Daily

BRICS countries back Russia's plans as chair of organisation at Sherpa meeting, says diplomat

MOSCOW

REPRESENTATIVES of BRICS member countries have pledged support for Russia's plans as chair of the association, Russian Deputy Foreign Minister and Russia's BRICS Sherpa Sergey Ryabkov said at a press conference following the first meeting of the BRICS sherpas and sous-sherpas under Russia's chairmanship.



According to the minister, ten working sessions were held over the past three days, during which representatives of Russian ministries and agencies, businesses and academic circles presented detailed briefings on the key areas of cooperation in BRICS and initiatives of Russia's BRICS chairmanship. "We highly appreciate that our partners have assured their support for our chairmanship plans and their readiness for vigorous joint work this year," the deputy minister said.

Ryabkov (pictured) added that fruitful and constructive discussions were held on a range of topics within the "three baskets" of cooperation in BRICS: politics and security, economy and finance, and humanitarian ties.

"We discussed pressing issues in the areas of trade and investment, transportation and logistics, energy, technology, innovation and sustainable development. We exchanged views on strengthening cooperation in education, healthcare and sports, and reaffirmed the focus on maintaining and deepening business and expert ties," he added.

Agencies

US President Biden issues executive order targeting violent Israeli settlers in West Bank

WASHINGTON

PRESIDENT Joe Biden has signed an executive order addressing the issue of violent Israeli settlers in the West Bank, a move aimed at restoring stability in the region, CNN reported.

The new order, first reported by Politico and expected to be announced on Thursday, will impose sanctions on several individuals who are accused of participating in the violent acts.

The executive order targets individuals accused of participating in violent acts that have undermined stability in the West Bank. The order will impose sanctions on four individuals directly involved in violent acts, including initiating riots, arson, assaults on civilians, and property damage.

David Chai Chasday, Einan Tanjil, Shalom Zicherman, and Yinon Levi are the individuals named in the State Department's announcement. The executive order blocks their financial assets and restricts their entry into the United States.

The White House notified the Israeli government in advance of these plans, CNN reported, citing an official.

Officials also stated that evidence had been compiled to prove the individuals' roles in West Bank violence, with information gathered from public reporting. The acts attributed to them include leading riots resulting in the death of a Palestinian civilian, assaulting farmers and activists, and engaging in actions creating fear in the West Bank.

According to the State Department, Chasday "initiated and led a riot, which involved setting vehicles and buildings on fire, assaulting Palestinian civilians, and causing damage to property in Huwara, which resulted in the death of a Palestinian civilian."

Tanjil "was involved in assaulting Palestinian farmers and Israeli activists by attacking them with stones and clubs, resulting in injuries that required medical treatment," according to a State Department fact sheet.

Zicherman, "according to video evidence, assaulted Israeli activists and their vehicles in the West Bank, blocking them on the street, and attempted to break the windows of passing vehicles with activists inside." He cornered two activists, injuring both of them, according to the State Department.

Levi "led a group of settlers who engaged in actions creating an atmosphere of fear in the West Bank," according to the fact sheet.

"He regularly led groups of settlers from the Meitarim Farm outpost that assaulted Palestinian and Bedouin civilians, threatened them with additional violence if they did not leave their homes, burned their fields, and destroyed their property," it said. Levi "and other settlers at Meitarim Farm have repeatedly attacked multiple communities within the West Bank."

President Biden, who has condemned such violence in the past, discussed the issue with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in recent months.

The executive order is expected to address settler violence specifically, a sensitive topic given Biden's backing of Israel in its conflict with Hamas in Gaza.

ANI

Wheelchair tennis team off to Nigeria today

By Correspondent Joseph Mchekadona

THE national wheelchair tennis team is expected to leave today for Nigeria where it will compete at this year's edition of BNP Paribas World Team Africa qualifiers.

The tournament, which gets underway next week, will be held at the National Tennis Centre, Moshood Abiola Stadium, Package B, in Abuja.

Coach of the team who is also the secretary general of the Wheelchair Tennis Association, Riziki Seleman, said the qualifiers are slated for February 8 to 11 and the country will be represented by six players.

He named the players as Rehema Seleman, Pendo James, Lucky Shirima, Jumanne Nasoro, Voster Isaya and Albert John.

However, Seleman said that the team has yet to secure funds for air tickets for the trip and asked sports stakeholders, companies, organizations and people of goodwill to help the team.

"We are indeed going to Nigeria

tomorrow (today) for the Africa BNP Paribas qualifications. The country will be represented by six players and one coach, however up to now (yesterday) we have not secured air tickets for the team. Our hope is the government. As I am speaking to you am heading to the National Sports Council to seek their help," he said.

Part of an invitation letter from the host nation said: "The Nigerian Tennis Federation invites by this letter the national wheelchair tennis team of Tanzania to participate in the BNP Paribas World Team Cup Africa Qualification Event, owned by the International Tennis Federation and the VEMP Wheelchair Tennis International Open Tournament scheduled to be held from February 8 to 14, 2024 in Abuja, Nigeria."

Despite having no reliable support, the national wheelchair tennis team has been doing well in international tournaments.

A few years ago the team participated in the BNP World Finals which was held in Turkey and emerged top in the African Zone.

Baseball national team left for African qualifiers in Cape Verde

By Correspondent Joseph Mchekadona

THE national baseball team left the country yesterday for Cape Verde where it will compete at the African qualifiers of the World Baseball Softball Confederation (WBSC) Baseball5 World Cup.

The Baseball World Cup finals are slated for mid-October this year in Hong Kong.

Speaking yesterday in Dar es Salaam, the manager of the team, Alpherio Nchimbi, said the team is made of himself, eight players and a coach.

He said the games will start next Monday and will end on Thursday.

Tanzania is in Group A alongside Tunisia, South Africa and the host Cape Verde.

The team is made up of Sindani Katanga, Ali Mohammed Ali, Abdulmouminim Ally, Brown Manyama, Enerster Petro, Frida Msaki, Mwajuma Uledi and Neema Elias while the coach of the team is Annur Saidi.

"We are departing for Cape Verde today (yesterday) to compete in the qualifiers of this year's Baseball 5 World Cup which will be held in Hong Kong in October.

"We are well prepared for the qualifiers and we will know which team we will start with on Sunday, but we are in Group A," he said.

The Baseball5 World Cup qualifiers will take place in Praia, Cape Verde.

There are two groups and the top two finishers in each group will qualify for the World Cup finals.

Clatous Chama returns to Simba fold after pardon

By Correspondent Michael Mwebe

SIMBA Sports Club have lifted the indefinite suspension on Clatous Chama following his apology for "gross misconduct".

The Zambian attacking midfielder alongside Nassor Kapama was accused of indiscipline by the management and was subsequently handed an indefinite suspension, which he has now apologised for in a letter to the club.

In a statement posted on Simba's social media platforms on December 21, the club confirmed the disciplinary action without disclosing the

specific nature of the duo's transgressions.

"The Management of the Simba Sports Club has suspended Nassor Kapama and Clatous Chama due to acts of misconduct," the statement read.

"Following these actions, the two players will be referred to the Disciplinary Committee for further disciplinary measures. Simba have internal procedures which refer the players to the Disciplinary Committee so that they too will be given a chance to be heard before further action is taken against them.

"The management would like to remind its employees to adhere to

the principles of ethics and discipline as the club will not hesitate to take action against anyone who is proven to go against laid down regulations."

Yesterday, the club once again took to social media to explain their decision to make a U-turn on Chama's suspension.

"The management of Simba Sports Club would like to inform its members and fans that they have pardoned Clatous Chama.

"This action has followed the decisions of the Technical Committee which reviewed Chama's letter of explanation and also the decision of Coach Ab-

Pundits finished with AFCON reviews with no idea of what Diaspora can offer

By Correspondent John Kimbuta

LOCAL soccer analysts, who are otherwise increasingly immersed in the techniques of the game, are showing an inability to properly ascertain aspects of our soccer backwardness for decades, and are seemingly likely to repeat the same cycles of opinion formation after each moment of failure.

While the inability to reach the round of 16 (or some call it 'the last 16') could scarcely be considered a failure in the circumstances, it is the wider environment where the drawbacks of what pundits assert are somewhat disturbing.

The map of Tanzanian soccer potential is strictly constrained by a preliminary affirmation of the legal tenets prevailing, instead of seeing it as a problem that needs to be sorted out, a mental limitation to be overcome for soccer to go forward.

In the wake of the 3-0 rout against Morocco and the better show in the face of Zambia despite its second-half shenanigans, the show against DRC has cleaned the conscience of soccer analysts in the city of Dar es Salaam.

We now see ourselves as one among equals, not the tournament 'has-beens' in the sense that we also participated, as in the 0-0 result with DRC it is as if we had indeed equaled them in a strict sense of the term. That hides the singular fact that our soccer level is much lower than the countries we contested with, and satisfaction with it is to assign the country to the same situation or rather similar expectations, for the premises need to be rectified.

For one thing, the focus of analyses as to the future image of Taifa Stars was the coming replacement of veterans like Mbwana Samatta and Simon Msuva, not to speak of Mohamed Hussein 'Tshabalala,' whose nickname seems to have sunk in continental soccer television commentary corners already.

There are some like Shomari Kapombe who might have been there with a different view of things, alongside youths like Ally Salum and even Clement Mzize who will probably be replacing overused veterans in due course, but that is a different matter. What was surprising in the reflections was that there was little idea of our youths' potential, outside.

To take but a singular example, during the past decade a young player with Tanzanian origins, and some of his clan namesakes have worked with the national side for more than a decade, wanted to be allowed to play for Taifa Stars, and was rejected.



Yussuf Poulsen

While the local argument is that he has foreign citizenship, the proper issue would be whether FIFA would reject his being accepted, or it is ourselves who exercise the right of refusal for a player who doesn't hold Tanzanian citizenship though he acknowledged his roots and is presumably devoted to appear for the national side. It would have been useful to hear some presentations in that direction, at least.

Had the youth been accepted, namely Yussuf Poulsen, who appears for the Bundesliga side RB Leipzig, which has a regular appearance in the UEFA Champions League, and even without thinking of other players there might be in any part of the world who acknowledge their local roots, the story would be different.

Instead of seeking out Samatta as the likely goal-getter and Msuva as a sort of stand-in, there would be a different situation where Poulsen is at the centre and obtains feeds from the two veterans.

In the sides Taifa Stars played with, only Moroccan defender Achraf Hakimi at Paris Saint-Germain can be rated to be playing for a slightly bigger club than the Bundesliga side. That was an op-

portunity we not only missed but totally ignored.

After being refused to play for Taifa Stars, the young man then shifted to accepting a call-up to the Danish national side, remarkable because those we try to imitate their level of success are open-minded and fair with regard to accepting young people with a discernible level of loyalty for the specific country. We are on the contrary fastidious with nationality, thinking that the passport is a golden opportunity to reap from the country's resources instead of figuring out that there are chances of making a contribution.

Four or five of the players appearing on the DRC list were born outside, specifically in Belgium and France, and opted to play for DRC, while others like Romelu Lukaku preferred to play for their proper country of birth. It is an opportunity we can use not just with Poulsen but definitely a number of others, not just those we send outside.

Listening to the commentary from pundits, forming youths here and sending them outside is the panacea to obtain a side that compares with those with many players bred outside, as we tend not to think about being bred outside and

instead opt for mere access to soccer training facilities.

What happens at the level of childhood in a variety of ways, from nutrition to facilities as well as mentoring, all play a role in how far skills can be formed and fortified in an up-and-coming player.

None of the players who leave Tanzania as adults have properly succeeded outside; even Samatta appears in leagues whose best players play outside their native countries, for instance, Belgium, where the national side has few if any players appearing for the country's league sides.

There are countries or small states in the Gulf where entire communities and numerous households speak Kiswahili as their native language. Those who have studied outside often meet such youths, whose parents went out Zanzibar or Dar es Salaam and elsewhere in various circumstances in the past and they have retained their cultural roots.

Failing to have any scouts for such talent, and even when they come around we reject them, isn't the spirit of a winning nation. Those who are inward-looking, detest anyone who looks foreign, and don't go far in soccer.



Clatous Chama

Liverpool threaten knockout blow to Arsenal's Premier League title challenge

LONDON

ARSENAL must stop a Liverpool juggernaut, inspired by the impending departure of Jurgen Klopp, if the Gunners are to maintain Premier League title aspirations at the Emirates on Sunday.

Liverpool restored a five-point lead over Arsenal and Manchester City, who have a game in hand, with a dominant 4-1 destruction of Chelsea on Wednesday despite missing Mohamed Salah due to injury.

The Egyptian will again be absent, but Klopp's men have shown no sign of missing their top goalscorer since he departed to represent his country at the Africa Cup of Nations.

Diogo Jota opened the scoring against Chelsea to take his tally to four in the last four games.

Darwin Nunez did everything but score in midweek as the Uruguayan set a record as the first Premier League player to hit the woodwork four times in one match but he teed up Luis Diaz to round off a night to savour for the home fans at Anfield.

Klopp is determined that the news of his exit at the end of the season does not become a distraction as Liverpool remain in the hunt for trophies in four competitions.

So far it appears the Reds are inspired to send their boss out on a high and Klopp is blessed with a wealth of options thanks to a combination of rising stars and returning veterans.

Trent Alexander-Arnold and Andy Robertson made their comebacks off the bench against Chelsea, but the former has a huge challenge to get back into the team after Conor Bradley's man-of-the-match performance.

The Northern Irishman scored his first Liverpool goal and provided two assists from right-back against Chelsea.

"It is a joy to watch him," said Klopp of the 20-year-old. "The academy is doing an incredible job."

Arsenal's cup exit rounded off a run of three consecutive defeats around the turn of the year that has severely damaged their quest for a first league title in 20 years.

Mikel Arteta's men have steadied the ship with back-to-back victories over Crystal Palace and Nottingham Forest.

But defeat could realistically end Arsenal's title challenge should they fall eight points behind a relentless Liverpool.

*Richarlison's return threatens Everton

Across Merseyside, the outlook is not so bright, as Everton dropped into the bottom three in midweek.

The Toffees are feeling the effect of a 10-point deduction for breaches of the Premier League's financial rules and could yet face further sanctions for overstepping spending restrictions again last season.

Everton's appeal against the points penalty was heard this week with a verdict expected by the middle of February.

But they desperately need to get back to winning on the pitch after a five-game run without victory in the Premier League.

Tottenham travel to Goodison on Saturday fresh from moving into the top four thanks to a 3-2 victory over Brentford.

In the absence of Son Heung-min, who is leading South Korea's bid for Asian Cup glory, a familiar face poses the biggest threat to Everton.

After a difficult start to his Spurs career, Richarlison has scored seven times in his last seven Premier League games.

*Man Utd eye Champions League charge

Manchester United's dramatic 4-3 win at Wolves on Thursday cut the gap to the top five to eight points.

There could be a fifth place in next season's Champions League depending on how English sides perform for the rest of this season in European competition.

United remain in the race with Aston Villa faltering and with a trip to come to Villa Park next weekend.

First up, there is the chance for Erik ten Hag's men to move into the top six when West Ham visit Old Trafford tomorrow.

United produced perhaps their best 45 minutes of the season in the first half at Molineux in midweek and will hope the return of Luke Shaw, Lisandro Martinez and Casemiro from injury will result in a strong end to the season.

Today

Everton v Tottenham (1230), Brighton v Crystal Palace, Burnley v Fulham, Newcastle v Luton (all 1500), Sheffield United v Aston Villa (1730)

Tomorrow

Chelsea v Wolves, Manchester United v West Ham, Bournemouth v Nottingham Forest (all 1400), Arsenal v Liverpool (1630)

Monday

Brentford v Manchester City (2000)

AFP

Sundowns stars help home-grown South Africa rise at Cup of Nations

ABIDJAN

WHILE most teams at the Africa Cup of Nations rely heavily on players based in Europe, South Africa stand out in having an almost entirely home-based squad with coach Hugo Broos leaning heavily on the Mamelodi Sundowns side that dominates domestically.

Ten members of the Bafana Bafana squad preparing to take on Cape Verde in the quarter-finals in Ivorian capital Yamoussoukro today have come from Sundowns, the Pretoria club nicknamed the Brazilians.

Eight started in the 2-0 win over Morocco in the last 16, including captain and goalkeeper Ronwen Williams, and the outstanding midfielder Teboho Mokoena, who scored their second goal.

The only other competing nation that really came close was Egypt, but they still had a significant sprinkling of foreign-based stars beyond talisman Mohamed Salah.

It is something that gives South Africa coach Broos an obvious advantage over many of his counterparts,



Sundowns midfielder star Teboho Mokoena celebrates after scoring South Africa's second goal against Morocco. Agencies

who saw most of their players leave their clubs in the middle of the European season and have just a few days to train together before the AFCON began.

"When you watch these guys play you can tell they have been playing together for a while," former Cameroon defender Aurelien Chedjou, who played under Broos for the Indomitable Lions, told broadcaster Canal Plus Afrique.

"They can find each other almost with their eyes closed and that makes a difference."

The veteran Belgian Broos, who turns 72 in April, is now hoping to lead South Africa into the AFCON semi-finals for the first time since they finished third in 2000.

It is quite a turnaround from their inability to even qualify for the last Cup of Nations, a failure which led to Broos being appointed.

- Friction -

Broos really has no choice but to rely on a core of Sundowns players, given how few leading South Africans play abroad.

Percy Tau of Egyptian giants Al Ahly has the highest profile, and the little forward is a former Sundowns player, featuring in the team that won the CAF Champions League in 2016.

Beyond him there is Lyle Foster of English Premier League side Burnley, but the striker was left out of the squad due to mental

health issues.

Sundowns, who were bought two decades ago by current Confederation of African Football president Patrice Motsepe, have won six consecutive South African titles.

They are currently well on course to make that seven, as they sit nine points clear at the top of the table. In addition to that, they won the inaugural African Football League in November, defeating Wydad Casablanca in the final.

They are coached by the very highly-rated Rulani Mokwena, who having only just turned 37 is from a different generation to Broos.

Friction has appeared between

them, with Mokwena not happy when one of his many international stars returns injured from Bafana Bafana duty.

"The coach of Sundowns, he is the local Mourinho. He has won a lot of trophies, he pretends to be God and everyone listens to what he says," Broos told South African media at the start of the AFCON.

Against Morocco, South Africa's entire back four in front of Williams were all Sundowns players. Mokoena patrolled the midfield, with Thapelo Morena and the veteran Themba Zwane completing the Sundowns contingent.

South Africans used to watching the Sundowns stars playing their sophisticated brand of football -- Mokwena has cited Brighton and Hove Albion manager Roberto de Zerbi as an influence -- may feel entitled to have big expectations of their team at this Cup of Nations.

Broos does not have the same methods as Mokwena, but the man who led Cameroon to unexpected AFCON glory in 2017 is now hoping to do the same with South Africa.

"I got a lot of critics in South Africa at certain moments because of the choices I made, but I knew what I was doing," Broos insisted after the Morocco victory.

"I know the results have to follow. And even with local players, now you see they play on that high level. When they have the confidence, they can do it."

AFP

Arsenal made it a three-way title fight - but they still end up chasing Liverpool

Miguel Delaney

IT'S a game that's already building up quite enticingly, but Sunday at Arsenal could end up being looked back on as something of a landmark.

It could well be the first direct title-race encounter that doesn't involve Manchester City in seven years. That isn't to say Pep Guardiola's side won't be involved but more how a potential multiple-front title race is developing. That touches on what this whole match is enlivened by. It is about potential. Both Arsenal and Liverpool look two of the most exciting young teams in Europe, and at least best-placed to step into any opening left by City.

That is if an opening is left by City, of course. The entire season still feels dependent on whether the champions just put up a run that renders everything else irrelevant.

For the moment, however, Arsenal-Liverpool is more than just another big game between two of the old big six. It is a match that could yet have huge significance for the title race, that is enriched by their histories as much as their futures.

These are two of the three most successful clubs in England, with 32 titles between them. As with Manchester United and Liverpool, however, it is almost one of those historic quirks that their challenges or good periods have so rarely overlapped.

Although one of Arsenal or Liverpool have finished in the top two for 45.9% of all English seasons, there have only been four campaigns where they have



Jurgen Klopp

Mikel Arteta

directly gone against each other. Another quirk is that Arsenal have won all of them.

One was of course the most famous title showdown of all, when Michael Thomas won the league for Arsenal in the last minute of the season at Anfield. The 1973 campaign was close but not that close, with 1991 and 2002 really the London side out ahead on their own. Those two maybe more reflect how there has generally always been a distance between the clubs.

Not now.

There's even an argument that this race has been augmented by how they have influenced each other. In building this team, and knowing exactly how difficult it is to keep pace with this City, Mikel Arteta naturally analysed a lot of what Jurgen Klopp did at Liverpool. It was an obvious example. One influence seems clear. Arsenal's front three often looks modelled on Klopp's famous front three, with the notional number nine offering the link for both wide players to run in and score.

22. They still have a lot of developing to do, which is perhaps part of the reason they have endured a bit of a drop-off so far this season.

A crucial difference from recent weeks, however, is that there's a freshness again. Those at the club believe that December's staler performances were really down to a mental fatigue as much as anything, and that the recent January break has been revitalising.

All of this had fostered excitement that Arsenal will now be the team to put it up to City, except Liverpool have been revitalised in a grander sense.

As Klopp said in a recent interview on Sky, even he has been pleasantly surprised by how quickly this new team has come together. You could understand an element of aggravation about that for Arsenal. They've been striving to get to that level, with Arteta carefully considering every move and every piece... and then Liverpool just overtake them again.

Perhaps it points to

Klopp's greater experience in team-building, if also the multiplying effect that seems to happen when he gets a team right. It's not just that there's a force to Liverpool again. There's a new depth, illustrated by how some of the young players just slot in. Above all, there's Conor Bradley.

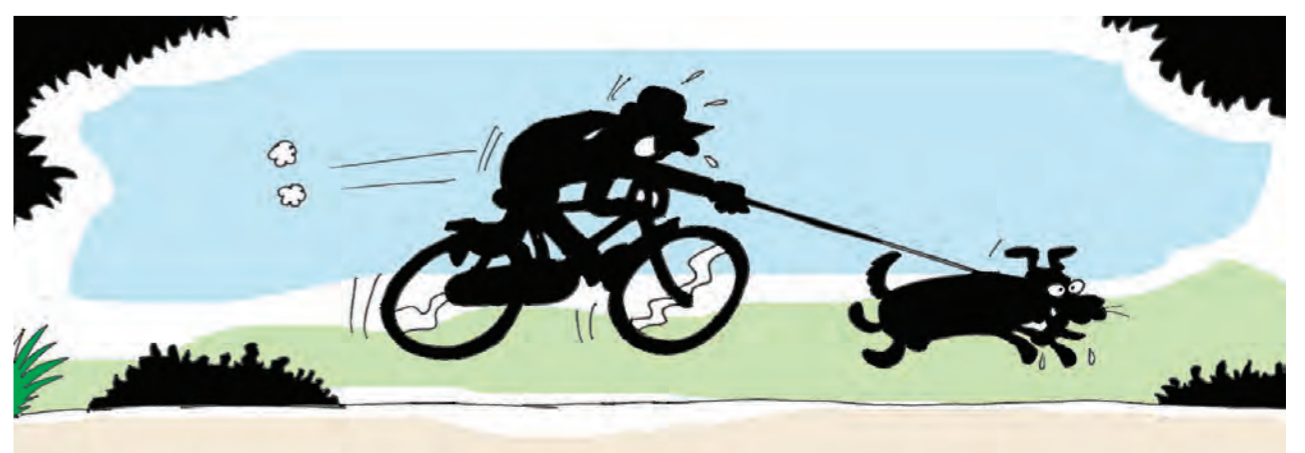
It adds edge to Sunday's game. It also adds a further poignancy, if motivation, to this huge decision Klopp took back in November. This team feels like the start of something, but it will also be the end of something.

Those players now want to do this for Klopp, to give him the second title they feel he deserves. Manchester City have barred the way for all of that time. Arsenal are now in view.

It may mean, in Klopp's last days at the club, having won everything and seen almost everything, there could be something new. There could be a title race involving someone other than City. Sunday will maybe tell if that's the case.

THE INDEPENDENT

Gwiji by David Chikoko



Sundowns stars help home-grown South Africa rise at Cup of Nations

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TONIGHT @ 9:00

EATV MONDAY

11:00 DADAZ
12:00 KIPENGA XTRA
13:00 Zote Kuntu
13:30 Kall Za Wana
13:55 Dondoo Za Michzo
14:00 SKONGA (r)
14:30 Planet Bongo (r)
15:00 Funguka
15:30 Akili & Me
15:55 Dondoo Za Michzo
16:00 Zote Kuntu
16:55 Dondoo Za Michzo
17:00 SSELECT
17:55 Kurasa
18:00 Kall Za Wana
18:30 #HASHTAG
19:00 EATV SAA 1
20:00 DADAZ (r)
21:00 SSPORTS
22:00 Zote Kuntu
23:00 Kurasa
23:05 EATV SAA1 (r)

SSports
The week's local and international sporting events as well as in-depth analysis of the biggest sporting highlights of the week are covered on SSports.

eastafrica RADIO

05:00 Supa Breakfast
09:00 MAMAMIA
12:00 Kipenga Xtra
13:00 Planet Bongo
16:00 EA Drive
19:00 Kipenga
21:00 The Cruise

88.1FM DAR ES SALAAM

Simba out to make up ground on Azam, Yanga against Mashujaa



Simba SC midfielder Saido Ntibanzokiba (C) scores their second goal against Tembo FC during their Federation Cup Round of 64 match at Azam Complex on Wednesday, Simba won 4-0. PHOTO: COURTESY OF SIMBA

By Correspondent Michael Mwebe

THE NBC Premier League title is starting to look clearer as we approach the halfway mark with Azam and Young Africans neck to neck at the top of the standings.

However, third-placed Simba will feel they are not out of the picture just yet as they take on Mashujaa at Lake Tanganyika Stadium this afternoon.

Should Simba win this encounter, they will move to within five points of the leaders Azam and a result feels imperative when a trip to Tabora and a home clash

versus Azam are next on their league calendar.

Before the league one-month break, Simba slipped up by winning just two of their five games, suffering a 5-1 defeat to arch-rivals Young Africans and then a disappointing 1-1 draw with Namungo before a frustrating draw against KMC last time out.

A lack of a clean sheet has been a theme running through Simba's recent games, as they failed to keep a clean sheet

in five of their previous six matches in the NBC Premier League.

Coach Abdelhak Benchikha is boosted by the availability of Mohamed Hussein, Aishi Manula, Dennis Kibu and Yassin Mzamiru, who returned to the team after taking part in the African Cup of Nations.

Clatous Chama, who was suspended for misconduct in December, is also available for selection after he was pardoned yesterday.

With DR Congo in Africa Cup of Nations quarter-final action against Guinea later yesterday, Henock Inonga will miss the trip to Kigoma.

Inonga's unavailability could benefit Hussein Kazi to partner up with Che Malone in the heart of defence.

As for Mashujaa, they are firmly in a relegation battle in their topflight debut season, only picking up nine points from their opening 12 matches of the campaign, which has left

them down in the 15th position in the table.

The Kigoma outfit are six points from the safety of the 12th position, which is far from disastrous at this stage, but they are currently struggling for form.

A 2-1 defeat at Manungo Complex last time out in the league means that they are winless in their previous nine outings.

The last win for Mashujaa came all the way back in mid-September as they defeated Ifehu 2-0 in what was only the third game of the season.

Mohamed Abdallah's side have only picked up seven points from their seven home league games this season, while they have struggled defensively, conceding 17 times in their 12 games, which is the fourth-worst defensive record in the division.

The army-backed side was busy during the December-January market, making ten signings in total, including securing Reliants Lusajo from Namungo and David Uromi from Moroka Swallows of South Africa.

They only have one confirmed absentee for this match, with new arrival Uromi remaining unavailable for selection due to a muscular problem.

Azam FC sharpen claws for league return, aiming to maintain top spot

By Correspondent Seth Mapoli

AZAM Football Club is intensifying its training regimen, geared towards maintaining an impressive winning streak in the top-flight league.

As they gear up for their next Premier League encounter against Simba SC on February 9, the Chamazi-based club is leaving no stone unturned in their preparations.

The venue for the upcoming match is yet to be confirmed.

Thabit Zakaria, the head of Azam's Communication Department, affirmed the team is currently in camp, preparing for the resumption of the league.

"In the meantime, we are expected to play friendly matches to strengthen the team. Our focus extends beyond the fixture against Simba. In the league, there are numerous matches we need to be prepared for," he said.

Expressing optimism about the team's recent acquisitions during the mini-transfer window, Zakaria highlighted the potential and value the three new players bring to Azam.

He acknowledged the subjective nature of football, stating: "People will judge these players based on their performance on the field, as our perception and appreciation of things may differ."

The ice-makers made notable



Thabit Zakaria, the head of Azam's Communication Department. Agencies

additions to their squad, securing the services of Sudan's goalkeeper Mohamed Mustafa on a six-month loan deal from El

Merreich.

Additionally, they welcomed two Colombian players, Yeison Fuentes and Franklin Navarro,

with Zakaria praising their potential impact on the team.

Navarro has already made appearances in some of Azam's

matches during the Mapinduzi Cup at the New Amaan Sports Complex in Zanzibar, showcasing his early integration into the squad.

Azam FC has displayed commendable performance in its recent matches, securing a strong position in the current standings.

Simba occupies the third position with 23 points from 10 matches.

The Msimbazi-based side is entering the field this evening in the NBC Premier League game against Mashujaa FC at Lake Tanganyika stadium in Kigoma as they need three points to put themselves in a good position in the league standings.

Followed by KMC in fourth place with 21 points from 14 games, Singida Fountain Gate rounds out the top five with 20 points, having played 14 matches.

The upcoming clash with Simba promises to be a crucial test for Azam as they strive to maintain their position at the summit of the league.

With their robust preparations and bolstered squad, Azam remains determined to navigate through the challenges of the league and continue their pursuit of success.

Federation Cup: Easy draw for big guns in Round of 32

By Correspondent Michael Mwebe

NBC Premier League's Big Three, Azam, Simba and Young Africans, discovered their Federation Cup last 32 opponents yesterday afternoon.

The draw for the Round of 32 of the 2023/24 Federation Cup season was held in the studios of Broadcast partner Azam TV.

This year's competition sees 16 NBC Premier League clubs, 10 Championship teams and six clubs from the first and regional leagues taking part in the Round of 32.

Holders Young Africans have been drawn against the second-tier side Polisi Tanzania, who are currently occupying eighth place in the Championship.

Young Africans cruised through to the last 32 with a comfortable 5-1 victory over Hausung FC.

Wananchi clinched the title last season with a hard-fought 1-0 win against Azam, thanks to Kennedy Musonda's sole first-half strike at Mkwakwani Stadium, Tanga.

Musonda scored 12 minutes into the final to set Miguel Gamondi's side on the path to another trophy.

On the way to the final, Young Africans defeated Rhino Rangers, Geita Gold, Singida Fountain Gate and Tanzania Prisons.

Victory over Polisi Tanzania will set up a Round of 16 tie against Dodoma Jiji or Biashara United.

Just like their city rivals, Azam will host the second-tier side Green Warriors.

Azam will view this competition as an opportunity to end their five-year trophy drought which began shortly after they clinched the 2018/19 Federation Cup trophy in Lindi.

If Azam overcomes Green Warriors they will face the winner between Mtibwa Sugar and Stand United in the last 16 round.

Meanwhile, Simba will host third-tier side TRA Kilimanjaro. Simba cruised to the Round of 32 with a 4-0 victory over Tabora Regional Champions, Tembo FC, on Wednesday.

Simba will be looking to clinch their second trophy of the current season having already lifted the Community Shield in August.

A potential last 16 tie against Mashujaa or Mkwajuni awaits Simba if they go past TRA Kilimanjaro.

The 32-round proper ties will take place between February 19 and 21.

Federation Cup last-32 full draw:
Singida Fountain Gate vs Fountain Gate Talents
Tabora United V Nyamongo FC
Azam FC V Green Warriors
Mtibwa Sugar V Stand United
Mashujaa FC V Mkwajuni FC
Simba V TRA Kilimanjaro
KMC V Gunners
Ifehu V Mbuni
Coastal Union V Mbeya Kwanza
JKT Tanzania V TMA Fc
Dodoma Jiji V Biashara United
Young Africans V Polisi Tanzania
Namungo FC V Transit Camp
Kagera Sugar V Pamba
Geita Gold V Mbeya City
Rhino Rangers V Mabao FC

Flexibles by David Chikoko

