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Samia stresses 4Rs in marking 60 years

By Guardian Reporter

PRESIDENT Samia Suluhu Hassan yesterday led Tanzanians in commemorating 60 years of the Union between Tanganyika and Zanzibar underscoring the importance of embracing the 4Rs philosophy in maintaining peace and uplifting economic prospects.

In brief remarks at a colourful rain drenched ceremony at Uhuru Stadium in Dar es Salaam, the president said that through the Union, both sides of the Union were more assured of peace and national unity.

"We have protected our country and achieved various development successes," she said, pointing at the country's shift to lower middle income status.

Tanzania needs to stick to the 4Rs which represent reconciliation, resilience, reform and rebuilding, she stated, describing this vision as essential for current social, political and economic demands.

She said that the 4Rs had enabled a push to overhaul the criminal justice system, guaranteeing freedom of expression and allowing political parties to operate freely.

"Through dialogue and engagement, we have made changes to our electoral laws, political party laws and the Electoral Commission Act," she reminded the public, of milestones of her three year leadership so far.

In a televised address late on Thursday, the president detailed achievements in all spheres in the period that Tanzania has existed, during the past 60 years.

She said that wisdom, prudence and courage guided founder presidents Mwalimu Julius Nyerere and Sheikh Abeid Karume, together with their close associates, in moving to bring the two sides of the union together.

Those who succeeded them maintained the vision, with the leaders of Union and Zanzibar governments attaching great importance to the Union since it came into effect.

Onlookers marvelled at mass displays and commando exercises at the ceremony, where President Samia was accompanied by several Heads of State and government

We have protected our country and achieved various development successes

in the eastern Africa region.

Gracing the occasion were presidents Evarist Ndayishimiye of Burundi, Hakainde Hichilema of Zambia, Felix Tshisekedi of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Azali Assoumani of the Comoros, Dr William Ruto of Kenya and President Hassan Sheikh Mahmoud of Somalia.

Prime Minister Nangolo Mbumba of Namibia and Malawi VP Dr Saulos Chilima attended, along with top officials from Mozambique, Rwanda and Uganda.

Past and current leaders at the podium included Zanzibar President Dr Hussein Ali Mwinyi, Vice President Dr Phillip Mpango, Prime Minister Kassim Majaliwa and Zanzibar First Vice President Othman Masoud Othman.

Former president Jakaya Kikwete was an attraction at the podium for his personal familiarity with most of the visiting statesmen, with Burundian President Ndayishimiye speaking on behalf of the other leaders from East African Community partner states.

"What I know is that the unity of Tanzania is East African unity and we all know that even with our ancestors before colonialism, Tanzanians and Burundians were close relatives, crossing border lines for trade, marriage and other ties as a normal situation, which has remained that way," he said.

He said Burundians share Tanzania's joy in the union and its leaders cherish moving relations to a higher level for shared development.

In his remarks, Zanzibar President Mwinyi said the citizenry was pivotal in strengthening the union, while premier Majaliwa said the milestone anniversary marks a new dawn in the development journey as the nation looks up to the future with hope.



President and Commander-in-Chief Samia Suluhu Hassan arrives at Uhuru Stadium in Dar es Salaam yesterday, waving to the thousands of people who braved daylong rain to attend celebrations to mark the 60th anniversary of the Union of Tanganyika and Zanzibar. Photo: State House

EAC transporters decry corridor inefficiencies

By Guardian Reporter

PUBLIC-private dialogue is needed to improve competitiveness and efficiency in East African Community (EAC) transport corridors performance, key stakeholder affirm.

John Bosco Kalisa, the East African Business Council (EABC) executive director, issued this appeal at a regional stakeholders' webinar on corridor performance and its impact to businesses.

He said that transport corridors are the lifelines that connect landlocked countries to major seaports, boosting intra-regional trade and fostering economic de-

velopment."

Highlighting inadequate transport connectivity and non-tariff barriers impacting transit time and corridor performance, he cited data that average freight costs to transport a 20foot container from China to the port of Mombasa or Dar es Salaam stands at \$2,188 and \$1,975 respectively.

These charges are still too high for regional businesses to operate competitively, thus the importance of public-private dialogue involving trade facilitation agencies in ensuring regional efficiency in transport corridor performance.

Annette Mutawe, the EAC acting secretary general, graced

the occasion with an observation that operationalisation of the EAC single customs territory and 15 one-stop border posts has proved beneficial.

It has reduced border delays and trade costs for businesses, she said, praising the EAC Heads of State for intense commitment to infrastructure development as it enhances competitiveness, trade improvement and economic development in the zone.

An EAC Summit retreat on infrastructure is expected later this year, she said, whereas Pauline Ukwalu, a Shippers Council

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TMA expects wet weekend as businesses are forced to close

By Guardian Reporter

WHILE the Tanzania Meteorological Authority (TMA) was predicting that heavy rains will persist until Monday in the city of Dar es Salaam, outpouring for the past three days had paralysed business in certain areas by cutting off road links.

With bridges, houses and roads waterlogged in various areas, shops were closed to wait for the water to drain away, with taking goods from the city centre hampered by blocked major roads and collapsed bridges. Morogoro Road at Jangwani area was im-

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Africa: Vaccines save 51.2m lives in 50 years

By Guardian Correspondent

AN estimated 51.2 million lives have been saved through vaccines in the African region over the past 50 years. For every infant life saved over that period, close to 60 years of life are lived, a new report by World Health Organization (WHO) finds.

These achievements have been possible under the Expanded Programme on Immunization (EPI), a WHO initiative launched in 1974 as a global endeavour to

ensure equitable access to life-saving vaccines for every child, regardless of their geographic location or socioeconomic status.

The report, which assesses the life-saving impact of vaccines, was released today at the start of this year's African Vaccination Week and World Immunization Week being marked from 24-30 April under the theme "Safeguarding Our Future: Humanly Possible."

With the continuous support from WHO, UNICEF and Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance and many oth-

ers, today most countries in the region provide antigens for 13 vaccine-preventable diseases, up from the initial six when the EPI was introduced.

Notable achievements have been made, including reduction in measles deaths, with an estimated 19.5 million deaths averted over the last 22 years. The region has also witnessed a sharp decline in meningitis deaths by up to 39 percent in 2019 compared with 2000. Maternal and neonatal tetanus has nearly been elimi-

nated in the region, and in a historic public health achievement, the African region was declared free of indigenous wild poliovirus in 2022 following years of relentless work to protect every child from the virus.

"From disease prevention to eradication the success story of vaccines is a compelling one. Millions of people are alive and healthy today thanks to the protection vaccines offer," said Dr Matshidiso Moeti, WHO Regional Director for Africa.

He said: "We have half a century of momentum and have accomplished so much. Now we must sustain and expand vaccine equity to end the threat of vaccine-preventable diseases."

The rollout of new vaccines such as the first ever malaria vaccine, and expansion of existing vaccines, such as for HPV, which protects against the leading cause

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EAC transporters decry corridor inefficiencies

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of East Africa (SCEA) senior executive, said that high road transport rates against the global benchmark of \$1 per kilometre impact on the doing business costs in the region, hampering investments.

In a presentation on the East Africa logistic performance index, she said that last year road transport rates on container transport from Mombasa to Nairobi, Kampala, Kigali, Goma and Juba stood tended to rise with distance covered, at \$1.88 per km for Nairobi, \$1.97 to Kampala, \$2.50 to Kigali, \$3.0 per kilometre to Goma, and slightly lower at \$2.60 to transport a container to Juba.

Average ship turnaround time at the port of Mombasa is still too high at 79 hours, far in excess of the global benchmark of 24 hours, she stated.

In 2022, the transit time to Busia in western Kenya and Malaba border post was 77 hours and 80 hours respectively, despite that the Mombasa port and northern corridor charter indicate a target of 40 hours and 45 hours respectively for the two transits.

Emmanuel Rutagengwa, a Central Corridor Transit Transport Facilitation Agency (CCTTFA) executive, stated that Dar es Salaam port efficiency enhancements have resulted in ship turn-around time reduced from seven to 2.5 days.

Cargo dwell time decreased from 22 days to less than seven days, with truck turn-around time shortened from 4.3 to 2.3 hours, and cargo throughput, the volume of cargo handled at the terminal in one year, was raised from 13.6m tonnes in 2016 to 24.0m tonnes in 2023, he said.

The central corridor standard gauge railway programme is designed to actualize the Tanzania-Burundi-DRC extension as well as the Isaka-Kigali SGR extension, he affirmed.

Denis Muganga of Kenya's Northern Corridor Transit and Transport Authority (NCTTA) stated that Mombasa port throughput stood at 35m tons in 2023, with 13 percent of corridor business being exports and 79 percent or thereabouts being imports percent, he said, pointing at the need for more investments to boost export activity.

Dr Merian Sebunya, the National Logistics Platform chairperson in Uganda, stated that the high cost of transport and inadequate infrastructure dampens business activity.

Trade facilitation agencies need to jointly work to bring about enhanced performance of EAC trade corridors, she stated.

The webinar highlighted the lack of multimodal transport, disparity in levying road user charges (RUC) across the partner states as major impediments to trade efficiency.

Other challenges are numerous road stops along the corridors, non-harmonized implementation of the Vehicle Load Act 2016 and lack of inter-connectivity of customs systems under Single Custom Territory (SCT), she said.

Yet other complications arise from non-harmonized standards across East Africa in packaging and labelling in the context of the lack of full implementation of trade facilitation initiatives, she elaborated.

The webinar convened upwards of 100 stakeholders including trade facilitation agencies, manufacturers, transporters, importers, exporters, freight forwarders, and shippers across EAC and beyond.



Some heads of Tanzania's defence and security forces pictured at Uhuru Stadium in Dar es Salaam yesterday attending celebrations to mark the 60th anniversary of the April 26 Union of Tanganyika and Zanzibar. Photo: VPO

TMA expects wet weekend as businesses are forced to close

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passable for most of the morning and midday yesterday as well as Kawawa Road at its Magomeni to Mkwajuni section, hindering commuter transport, including the rapid transit bus (BRT).

A section of city residents were all the same relieved that extensive construction of key road arteries in various parts of the city had reduced the impact of flooding, limiting it to a few major roads, secondary bridges and road sections, as well as flooded housing areas which earlier were believed to be safe from floods.

Julius Terry, a trader at Mwenge area

in Kinondoni District said that many shops in the area remained closed for two days or more due to the heavy rains.

Water was coming up to the shop frames so traders had little to do but to wait for the rains to decrease and the pooled water to drain out, he said, even as another trader, Mariam Juma, was disturbed by the sharp decline in customers since the non-stop rains started.

"We are not selling anymore, there is no business, because even if you try to push to open the shop, no customer comes. You can stay the whole day and get nothing," she said.

The rains haven't only affected people in the flood-prone areas but busi-

nesses as well because traders depend on customers from all sorts of areas to buy their products, she stated.

Yasinta Rashid, a resident of Manzeze area in Ubungo District, said that the lack of usable drainage systems in inner city roads floods houses as water swells up randomly from each rooftop or raised part to descend to lower levels, create road pools and seep into houses.

On Wednesday, TMA issued a five-day severe impact-based weather forecast, projecting another round of heavy rains in Dar es Salaam and some regions, affirming that most parts of Dar es Salaam, Coast and Tanga regions as well as Mafia, Unguja and Pemba islands will experience heavy rains over the week-

end and up to Monday.

Strong winds and large waves along the entire coastline, the agency noted, indicating above normal rainfall throughout the season, chiefly from late February to first weeks of May.

Zones receiving substantial rainfall twice yearly or bimodal regions are more affected, despite that TMA cited Dar es Salaam, Coast, Tanga, Morogoro, Unguja, Pemba, as well as the Lake Zone regions of Mwanza, Geita, Mara, Kagera, Shinyanga, Simiyu and Kigoma.

Experience shows that non-projected areas also having two seasons of rainfall like Kilimanjaro Regions were intensely impacted, observers noted.



Mwailimu Nyerere Foundation executive director Joseph Butiku pictured in Dar es Salaam on Thursday addressing a conference the Institute of Social Work organised in marking the 60th anniversary of the April 26 Union of Tanganyika and Zanzibar. Photo: Correspondent Sabato Kasika



Leaders explore Africa's agriculture potential

By Special Correspondent

THE African Agriculture Council recently hosted its inaugural Food Security Strategy Meeting, where industry leaders delved into the latest developments, prospects, and essential requirements in food and agriculture.

This podcast episode offered a glimpse into that discussion, featuring in-

sights from Gilles Mettetal, chairman of the advisory board of the African Agri Council; Nhlanhla Nene, board member of the African Agri Council and former finance minister; and Frank Braeken, African Agri Council board member and advisor for major agro and food firms in Africa.

According to Mettetal, Africa has immense potential to produce food for the

world. However, there is a critical role the private sector has to play in driving agricultural growth, and he stressed the importance of supportive policies for investment and predictability.

Drawing from his experience in Eastern Europe, Mettetal underscored the need for governments to collaborate with the private sector to create a conducive environment for agriculture

to thrive. "Food security in Africa is not just a challenge for the continent but for the world globally."

Nene echoed Mettetal's sentiments, emphasising the need for African countries to maximise their agricultural potential and access global markets.

He highlighted challenges faced by small-scale farmers in accessing markets and navigating trade agreements,

stressing the importance of market intelligence and supportive policies.

"We need policies that incentivise farmers to participate in feeding our nation and accessing outside markets," Nene said.

Meanwhile, Braeken stressed the importance of showcasing success stories of collaboration between governments and the private sector.

Africa: Vaccines save 51.2m lives in 50 years

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of cervical cancer, has also set up future generations in Africa with an opportunity to thrive.

"Today we celebrate the monumental advances governments and partners have taken across Africa in the last

50 years to ensure so many more children on the continent are living past their fifth birthday thanks to vaccination," said UNICEF Regional Director for Eastern and Southern Africa, Etleva Khadilli.

"Leaders, partners and donors must strive to protect immunization gains in the region especially in the face of backsliding rates in recent years."

"Children that are not, or not enough, vaccinated often come from communities missed across the spectrum of social services. We must focus our efforts on finding them and ensuring they receive the life-saving vaccines and other services they need. Together, with leaders and communities, we can make this a reality," said Gilles Fagninou, the UNICEF Regional Director for West and Central Africa.

Through Gavi, an alliance of immunization partners including WHO and UNICEF established in 2000 to expand

the impact of the EPI, countries are supported to deliver vaccines against vaccine-preventable diseases including others such as cervical cancer and malaria, and to respond to outbreaks of diseases such as Ebola and cholera.

"The evidence is clear: vaccines are one of the most impactful and cost-effective investments in health and development in history. Over the past two decades, Gavi has worked with 40 African countries to expand immunisation coverage while delivering new innovations like the HPV and malaria vaccines and responding to deadly outbreaks - saving millions of lives and generating billions in economic benefits," said Thabani Maphosa, Managing Director of Country Programmes Delivery at Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance.

While progress in vaccine coverage has been made, the region still faces challenges in achieving and sustaining high immunization coverage rates for most of the vaccine-preventable diseases. There are also challenges in ensuring equitable vaccine access across the continent with a significant number of children yet to receive a single dose of life-saving vaccines while others not receiving enough doses.



A commuter bus plying the Mbagala-Mbezi route in Dar es Salaam lies in a flooded ditch yesterday after skidding off the road at Temeke kwa Sokota, with sources saying several people were injured. Photo: Correspondent Jumanne Juma

Over 40 people die in Kenya due to flooding

NAIROBI

KENYA is experiencing heavy rain that has disrupted normal business across the country, resulting in the destruction of property and loss of 44 lives as of yesterday, according to Kenya Red Cross Society (KRCS).

KRCS said the downpours have affected the life of about 60,000 people.

In the Mathare slums of Nairobi, the country's capital, residents - mostly low-income earners - found themselves stranded in their homes due to severe flooding on Wednesday following an overnight rainstorm.

As a result of the deluge, Kenya's domestic railroad operations have been suspended and highways in some areas have been temporarily closed.

The Kenya Meteorological Department predicted that rainfall will persist across various regions of the country, with heavy downpours on their way.

Kenya said on Thursday that it had stepped up emergency measures to respond to flooding in various parts of the country caused by the ongoing heavy rain.

"The situation continues to be very worrying. As of last night we were reporting over 60 people died across the country," Senator Edwin Sifuna, who represents the particularly hard-hit Nairobi County said.

The flooding has been caused by torrential rains linked to the El Niño weather phenomenon.

"Even just looking outside my window the clouds are already gathering. The weatherman tells us to expect even heavier rains over the next 72 hours," Sifuna said, adding that rescue teams on the ground estimate that roughly 100,000 have been forced to flee their homes.

Michael Aiyabei, head of disaster risk management, was also concerned.

"We are bracing for an even harder moment," he said.

The severe flooding has displaced hundreds of thousands of people across East Africa - and in Kenya rescue workers and authorities are "bracing" themselves for even more devastation.

SUA, NEC earn praise for environment research work

By Guardian Correspondent, Mbeya

MBEYA Regional Commissioner Juma Homera has hailed Sokoine University of Agriculture (SUA) and the National Environment Management Council (NEMC) for engaging in a research which has helped heighten efforts in restoring natural vegetation in water sources.

According to him, researchers from two entities have done a tremendous job as their work was going hand in hand with tree planting exercises in various water sources,

something which has helped produce useful findings which will be used to further implement strategies to promote good flow of water from rivers to the ocean.

He made the remarks early last week here during the opening of six-day training for senior leaders supervising water and environment issues from four African countries as part of implementation of the Sustainable Catchment Management through Enhanced Environmental Flow Assessment (EFLows) project.

The participants involved came from Tanzania, Mozambique, Madagascar and Kenya.

He commended the principal researcher at EFLows project Prof Japhet Kashaigili for supervising and coordinating the research work until its completion.

He said the research findings will help the government to work on various recommendations which have been highlighted and thus make decisions that provide positive impacts to the environment and the society.

He said that education officials got from the experts from Tanzania and Australia will help increase understanding on environment and water sources management thus enabling them to plan and supervise well water sources for sustainable development.

In his remarks, Prof Kashaigili said the project aimed at determining the quantity and quality of water and sediment flows necessary to sustain freshwater and estuarine ecosystems and the human livelihoods and wellbeing that de-

pend on them.

He said the training was meant to equip senior leaders supervising water and environment issues on assessment of water issues from the source to the ocean, especially this time when countries face multiple challenges caused by destruction of environment and water sources.

Wankyo Mnono, an advocate from the Vice President's Office emphasized the importance of cooperation for all the countries in the Western Indian Ocean because its protection requires cooperation to

achieve the goals of safe water flow to the ocean as well as its security and other water creatures.

He said successful implementation of recommendations from the assessment can have profound changes on communities living near rivers and the ocean.

Implemented by SUA and NEMC in collaboration with other stakeholders, the project is funded by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) through contributions from 10 contracting parties of the Nairobi Convention.



Health minister Umyy Mwalimu (C, in head-cloth) cuts the ribbon in Mwanza city earlier this week to launch a human papillomavirus infection (HPV) vaccination campaign. Photo: Correspondent Neema Emmanuel

Sugarcane farmers taste sweetness of their hard labour

By Special Correspondent

IN a historic move, South African sugar industry has witnessed a transformative shift towards inclusivity, granting small-scale sugarcane farmers a permanent voice and place within the sector.

Trade, industry and competition minister Ebrahim Patel handed over a signed government gazette that legally gives small-scale sugarcane farmers recognition at the offices of the South African Sugar Association in Mount Edgecomb, Durban.

According to minister of agriculture, land reform and rural development Thoko Didiza, stakeholders noticed a missing link aimed at growing the sugar industry when they crafted the Sugar Master Plan.

"Today we looked at how far we have travelled and different successes and challenges. We also noticed that having gone this far with phase one, what should phase two look like, and how can we collectively move ahead as an industry," she explained.

"We are now appreciating the important role that has been made legally in making sure that we have

a unified industry that recognises that we have the smaller player in production. We wanted to recognise that the department of trade industry and competition, in terms of its powers of legislation, has sealed this partnership that has happened over the years," said Didiza.

According to Patel, the sugar industry was in a state of urgency and stakeholders wanted to involve small-scale farmers, and the South African Farmers Development Association (Safda) was an important part of developing the master plan.

"With commercial farmers and millers, we have developed a plan to help save the sugarcane industry. The plan requires that everyone contributes, we needed everyone to be involved in the development of the plan.

"Small-scale sugar farmers are benefitting at a greater scale than before and a sum of money is made available to support small-scale farmers. The money amounts to about R 2 million," he said.

Meanwhile, Siyabonga Madlala, chief executive officer of Safda, hailed the two ministers for getting small-scale sugarcane farmers to this point.

Zanzibar steps up measures to end malaria by 2029

By Guardian Reporter

ZANZIBAR government has called upon relevant authorities to take appropriate measures so as to end malaria by 2029.

Zanzibar Minister for Health Nassor Ahmed Mazrui made the call on Thursday during commemoration of the World Malaria Day in the isles.

According to the 2022 Tanzania Malaria Indicator

Survey, Zanzibar maintained a malaria rate of less than 1 percent for more than a decade. This is due to substantial contributions from the U.S. government through the President's Malaria Initiative.

Mazrui, who represented Zanzibar President Dr Hussein Ali Mwinyi, said despite the fact that malaria is currently decreasing; there are still some areas, especially in Unguja's Urban, West A and West B districts where the

disease continues to persist.

"The situation is alarming; we need to take effective measures to control malaria infection by involving all sectors in the country," he said.

The target is stipulated in the six-year Strategic Plan to End Malaria (2024-2029).

"Despite the decrease in the number of malaria cases in Zanzibar, I have learned that recently, there are some districts which have experienced an increase in malaria

cases. This is not acceptable in Zanzibar. I ask that all measures be taken to control malaria by involving all responsible sectors," he said.

The minister added that the government will continue to ensure access to all the necessary health services needed to control malaria that continue to be provided to the general public.

He called on all regions that still have malaria infection to ensure that they properly

manage implementation of the correct strategies to end the disease in their areas so that eventually Zanzibar is malaria-free.

"This is possible by ensuring that all anti-malaria interventions are implemented fully and efficiently," he said.

"I urge the departments and institutions that implement the law of public health and its regulations to ensure that they properly manage implementation of those laws

and regulations."

During the event a special campaign to distribute nets was launched where a total of 314 shehias in Unguja and Pemba will benefit.

The initiative is implemented by the Zanzibar government in collaboration with the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and the U. S. Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

A total of 782,000 nets

were purchased through the U.S. President's Anti-Malaria Fund (PMI) and were distributed to communities.

Craig Hart, USAID mission director for Tanzania, said the U.S. President's Fund to Fight Malaria (PMI), will continue to cooperate with Tanzania to fight and end malaria.

He said the funding has delivered mosquito nets, life-saving drugs as well as advanced testing and training for health workers.



Manyara regional commissioner Queen Sendiga (squatting) has a word with elders at Endagaw village in Hanang District earlier this week shortly after visiting an irrigation scheme project being implemented in the area. Photo: Correspondent Gift Thadey

Initiative seeks to meet nation's barley demand

By Guardian Correspondent, Dodoma

THE government has launched a strategic plan to provide close support to barley farmers to enable them to increase production and meet demand of local industries.

The initiative is implemented in collaboration with Tanzania Breweries Limited (TBL), the International Finance Corporation (IFC) and the Cereals and Other Produce Regulatory Authority (COPRA).

Speaking soon after the launch of the strategic plan on Thursday here, assistant director of crops development at the Ministry of Agriculture Beatrice Banzi said the new initiative will prioritise five areas.

She highlighted the areas as support availability of quality seeds, encourage farmers through cooperative unions and other systems to venture into barley farming as well improve infrastructure and the market.

She said the strategic plan also focuses on enhancing farmer contracts to facilitate financing and investments. This will address capacity challenges and boost production of barley, wheat, sunflower and soybean.

Statistics show that barley production has been growing at an average annual rate of 13.11 percent from 1972 to 2021 but as a result of unstable market, farmers' morale has been declining.

Banzi said the plan will also engage barley out growers' contract farming to cultivate barley as raw material to feed the brewer for further processing.

Irene Mlola, director general of COPRA said the new strategic plan focuses on ensuring that TBL purchases the produce from Tanzanian farmers while ensuring that barley produced in the country meets required standards.

Sam Nganga, a representative from IFC said that the organisation will continue to support the initiative in order to improve productivity of Tanzanian farmers who for year have been grappling with unreliable market.

Afreximbank, FCI for SME financing in Africa

By Special Correspondent

IN their commitment to establish factoring as a viable financing solution for Africa's small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), thus bolstering their participation in intra-regional trade and industrialisation, the African Export-Import Bank (Afreximbank) and the Global Body for Factoring (FCI) recently held a two-day factoring conference in Harare, Zimbabwe.

Centred on the overarching theme of 'Empowering Economic Growth Through Innovative Factoring and Receivables Finance Solutions' and the sub-theme of 'How

factoring can serve as a catalyst for the financial inclusion of SMEs,' the workshop that was held on April 22 and 23, focused on the pivotal role SMEs are poised to play in intra-African trade under the African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA).

Co-organised in collaboration with FCI, the global body for factoring, the conference provided a platform for in-depth discussions and strategic initiatives to promote and enhance factoring within the Southern Africa region.

Speaking at the opening ceremony, Kanayo Awani, Executive Vice President, Intra-African Trade and

Export Development Bank, Afreximbank, and FCI Board member, said: "Factoring provides an important alternative to other traditional financing sources available for SMEs such as bank loans, leasing and venture capital.

And while factoring is globally acknowledged as an alternative form of financing to SMEs as evidenced by the euros 3.7 trillion global factoring volumes, a recent study by Afreximbank on the financing schemes employed by SMEs in Africa showed that only 90 of the 2,895 sampled (representing 9.2 percent), used factoring as a financing option.

She highlighted the contribution of Afreximbank in developing a model law that has since been adopted by seven countries, the provision of over US\$100 million in financing, technical training to over 30 emerging factors in 2022/23 and over 3,000 delegates being exposed to awareness of factoring, with the sum effect of double growth in factoring volumes in Africa from euros 21.6 billion in 2017 to euros 41.8 billion in 2023.

She added however that, despite the steady progress we have made in growing factoring, there remains substantial work to cover given the over \$330 billion SME finance gap

per annum and overall factoring volumes of 1 percent in Africa.

"It is in this context that the theme for the workshop is not only relevant, but also timely, reflecting both the urgent need to grow factoring, and at the same time, highlighting the potential of factoring in promoting economic growth in Africa - as seen in Europe and America," Kanayo added.

Neal Harm, Secretary General, FCI, said: "Open account trade finance (Factoring, Supply Chain Finance) is one of the most crucial financial services that can assist the growth of SMEs and their local economy. It provides the neces-

sary liquidity to SMEs by converting their accounts receivables or invoices into cash.

There is so much opportunity to fill the trade finance gap that exists across the globe through Factoring and Open Account Trade Finance. The World Trade Organization recently reported a \$2.5 trillion trade finance gap - much of which is with SMEs and emerging markets. But receivables are a very strong and a reliable asset that is self-liquidating. Factoring, Open Account, and Reverse Factoring are tools that can generate working capital to allow SMEs to grow."

US to 'temporarily' pull some troops out of Chad

By Special Correspondent

THE United States will temporarily withdraw some of its troops from Chad, days after agreeing to remove all its soldiers from the neighbouring Niger.

Pentagon Press Secretary Maj Gen Pat Ryder said on Thursday that the US plans to "reposition" some of its military forces from Chad, but did not say how many would be affected or where they would be moved to.

"This is a temporary step as part of an on-going review of our security cooperation, which will resume after Chad's 6 May presidential election," he said.

The announcement follows Chad's air force chief ordering the US to halt activities at an air-base near the capital, N'Djamena, earlier this month, Reuters news agency reported.

Gen Ryder also said that talks with Niger's ruling military junta, the National Council for the Safeguard of the Homeland (CNSP), began on Wednesday and are aimed at ensuring "an orderly and responsible withdrawal of US forces" from the country.

The US has relied on Niger as its primary base for monitoring regional jihadist activity.

But the ruling junta, in power since last July, ended a military agreement that allowed US personnel to be deployed in the country and kicked out French troops.

The moves are the latest in Niger's efforts to cut links with the West.



Ihala District Hospital youth services coordinator Hefrid Paul (L) has an audience with students at earlier this week's launch at Kivule in suburban Dar es Salaam of a drive under which young people will attend a development and self-awareness programme. Photo: Correspondent Jumanne Juma

Farmers get fertiliser boost with \$2 million credit guarantee

NAIROBI

IN a significant step to advance food security in Kenya, the Africa Fertilizer Financing Mechanism has launched a project that will help deliver nearly 8,000 tonnes of fertilizers to 100,000 smallholder farmers, boosting harvests and incomes.

Through its Fertilizer Fi-

nancing for Sustainable Agriculture Management Project, the mechanism will provide a \$2 million partial trade credit guarantee and a grant of \$219,000 to Apollo Agriculture Limited, a Kenyan corporation, to facilitate the company's fertilizer sales.

The Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation, through a contribution of

\$10.15 million to the Africa Fertilizer Financing Mechanism, also supports the project, which was launched on 8 April in the capital, Nairobi. Representatives of the African Development Bank, which manages the Mechanism, Apollo Agriculture and the Kenyan and Norwegian governments attended the launch event.

Kenyan smallholder farm-

ers often lack the collateral to secure financing to buy the fertilizers they need. The Mechanism, by sharing credit risk with suppliers like Apollo Agriculture, bolsters their confidence to offer fertilizer on credit.

Marie Claire Kalihangabo, Coordinator of the Africa Fertilizer Financing Mechanism, said, "The credit risk guarantee

also provides finance directly to smallholder farmers at the last mile of delivery. It offers fertilizer, certified seed crop protection, and insurance against crop failure."

The two-year-long project will use Apollo's digital platform to connect farmers seeking fertilizer and other inputs on credit with a network of 150 retail agro-dealers and 800

village-based agents. Kenya's fertilizer market involves importers, blenders, and a government subsidy program.

Nnenna Nwabufor, Director General of the African Development Bank's East Africa regional office, said, "This support is in line with the Bank's Feed Africa Strategy. It will ensure long-term private sector engagement in financing

fertilizer, ultimately increasing food production and security in Kenya."

Benjamin Njenga, co-founder of Apollo Agriculture, explained that farmers can obtain high-quality farming supplies by paying a small deposit upfront, with the full loan being due when the farmer has harvested and sold the produce.



Public Procurement Regulatory Authority CEO Eliakim Maswi (R) and Zanzibar Public Procurement and Disposal of Public Assets Authority executive director Othman Juma Othman pictured in Dodoma city yesterday signing an MoU on cooperation involving the two entities. Photo: Correspondent Joseph Mwendapole

Chato airport targets fish export business to turn around fortunes

By Correspondent Marc Nkwame, Geita

AUTHORITIES in Chato District, Geita Region, are set to turn the status of a local airport from an idle terminal to a busy hub for shipments of fresh water fish from Lake Victoria.

Chato District Commissioner Said Nkumba disclosed this on Wednesday here, saying that the government has already disbursed over 1.7bn/- for the establishment of an International Fish Processing and export zone on the shores of Africa's largest Lake.

"Most of the district residents are fishermen and we intend to boost their activities through the provision of a modern fish market, cold storage facilities and proper packaging skills as well as outlets for their products," he said.

Chato is home to 470,000 residents, most of them fishermen and farmers. The government thus wants to create a special industry for that.

Chato Airport, according to the district commissioner, will serve as the portal for taking fish products from Chato to other regions as well as connecting with other terminals such as the Julius Nyerere International Airport in Dar es Salaam to fly fish shipment outside the country.

Apart from the airport, the district transport sector is being complemented with a modern bus terminal constructed at the cost of 14bn/- which is soon set to open gates for the upcountry passenger vehicles.

The large bus terminal comes at a time when the construction of the Magufuli Bridge, also known as the Kigongo - Busisi Bridge, is nearly complete and set to open anytime this year.

Previously referred to as the Mwanza Gulf Bridge, it spans 3.2 kilometres across Lake Victoria, linking the Kigongo area of Mwanza and Busisi in Geita Region. The bridge is expected to reduce the crossing time from the current 40 minutes by ferry to just four minutes by vehicles.

The Kigongo-Busisi is reported to be the longest bridge in East Africa and the sixth-longest on the African continent and once in operation, it is expected to handle an average of 1,600 vehicles every 24 hours.

Outside business, Chato is also beefing up the district's academic prowess with the ongoing construction of the Institute of Financial Management (IFM) at the cost of 8.5bn/- and the National Library facility at the cost of 3.4bn/-.

PPRA, Zanzibar counterpart ink cooperation agreement

By Correspondent Joseph Mwendapole

THE Public Procurement Regulatory Authority (PPRA) and Zanzibar Public Procurement and Disposal Authority (ZPPDA) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding to work together to strengthen efficiency.

The agreement was signed in Dodoma yesterday in front of the chairpersons of boards of directors of both entities, members of the boards of directors and representatives of employees.

Others who were present during the signing ceremony were the director general of PPRA Eliakim

Maswi, executive director of ZPPDA Othman Juma Othman and the management of PPRA.

Speaking after signing the MoU, Maswi said they agreed to cooperate in building experience for executives and developing practical knowledge by exchanging expertise in implementing strategic plans and in the procurement profession.

He said that they will cooperate in identifying laws and guidelines to bring productivity and accountability within the institutions, educate each other with important information and skills related to public procurement and the op-

eration of public assets, exchange experiences and engage in opportunities to participate in forums and meetings related to public procurement.

"We have decided to cooperate because we are both in the United Republic of Tanzania and the work we do is similar; we have decided to cooperate and share experience in our work from 2022 and last year, PPRA board went to Zanzibar and held a meeting there," he said.

"After that meeting, our leaders from both sides gave instructions that we meet and prepare an agreement to cooperate and enable both sides to work together."

He said lawyers from both sides have worked in collaboration and have submitted proposals that they have deemed appropriate.

He added that they have agreed to give each other the necessary support through resources they have to build the capacity of both parties and keep them together.

"We will also consult about modern materials for the performance of duties, including electronic and other equipment for investigation and monitoring work. We will have joint activities that we do, including a joint meeting of the board of directors; each side will have the responsibility to consider, follow

and implement this schedule," he said.

He said it is a joint responsibility to prepare a vision and a report should be issued to develop strategies to bring productivity in our country.

"We have agreed to conduct regular short-term training for our authorities to go to each authority to learn on public property management activities and asset disposal," he said.

Othman said: "We are working together in the interest of Tanzanians; we have signed the MoU and we are grateful that the Zanzibar Attorney General's chambers has

given its favourable opinion."

Ahmed Makame Haji, Vice Chairman of ZPPDA board said the agreement was signed but it will not be complete if there is no implementation.

"As we have agreed, it is very important to ensure that the agreement is implemented and to set up a procedure to check if the agreement is implemented," he said.

Dr Leonada Mwagike, Chairperson of PPRA board of directors, said after signing the agreement, what remains is implementation on time to ensure the real value for money is attained in public procurement.

NCDs burden: Partners pointing fingers at agriculture chemicals

By Guardian Correspondent

HUMAN Rights advocates have warned against unregulated use of chemicals in agriculture which they say contribute to high prevalence of non-communicable diseases such as diabetes, heart and kidney diseases.

Edwin Mugambila, chief executive officer of Tanzania Relief Initiative, told journalists in Dar es Salaam recently that statistics show that 70 percent of deaths in the country are caused by NCDs.

"One among the causes of NCDs is an unhealthy diet, but the World Health Organization says chemicals are responsible for 25 million deaths around the world annually," he said.

He advised the general public to consume more vegetables and fruits to have a balanced diet, saying most of the foods are grown using carbofuran which is also used to neutralize pests on rice, potatoes, maize and in some fruits.

Mugambila said diazinon is also commonly used to kill cockroaches, ants and house flies in buildings, adding that other chemicals like DDT have been banned in most countries after it was discovered that it was linked to cancer although the chemical is still being used to destroy mosquito breeding areas in some countries.

Mugambila said Tanzania uses more than 99bn/- annually to treat NCDs and that 13.2 percent of deaths are caused by NCDs.

He said recent research conducted in Somalia showed that in a few years 72 percent of farmers who used pesticides became diagnosed with cancer and heart diseases, adding that continuous usage of the chemicals in farming will have devastating health effects in the future.

"As stakeholders, we will prepare evidence so that the government takes measures, including policy formulation, laws and guidelines to protect Tanzanians," he said.

Dr Fredrick Mashili, a lecturer at Muhimbili University of Health and Allied Sciences said there are many causes of NCDs including food security.

"When we talk about pesticides, we look at chemicals used in agriculture such as fertilizers and chemicals sprayed on crops like fruits and vegetables to prohibit pests. We understand that too much chemical can affect the human body," he said.

Dr Mashili said the purpose of the press conference was to discuss how important it is to regulate and ensure the right chemical volume is used on crops so as to protect the end-consumers.



A motorcyclist is seated helplessly after sliding along a muddy section of a road at Kiyombo Hill - Nyantira in suburban Dar es Salaam on Thursday. Photo: Correspondent Jumanne Juma

Fence district hospital to protect it from wildlife, orders DC

By Guardian Reporter, Longido

AUTHORITIES in Longido District, Arusha Region have been directed to construct a fence around Longido District Hospital to protect trees and properties from being destroyed by human activities, wildlife and livestock.

Longido District Commissioner Marco Ngumbi issued the directive recently, saying that since the hospital has been built along the wildlife corridors of Kilimanjaro National Park and the

Ngorongoro Conservation Area, it is important to fence it for its security.

Ngumbi made the instructions shortly after launching a tree planting campaign facilitated by the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) through its project known as Land for Life, as part of celebrations to mark 60th Anniversary of the union between Tanganyika and Zanzibar.

He directed Longido District medical officer aid the district's executive director to initiate a special campaign to

prevent wildlife and livestock from invading the hospital surroundings.

"The government's directive is that the district medical officer and DED should cooperate to make sure a fence is built around the hospital to ensure that the trees grow and create a good environment around the hospital," he said.

"As we all know, Longido District is situated along a wildlife corridor and home to residents who are 98 percent pastoralists; this means if we

don't protect the trees we planted here through fencing, the risk of the same being destroyed by wildlife and livestock is very high. The destruction can discourage WWF and Tanzania Forest Services Agency who supported this tree planting initiative."

According to the DC, a big part of Longido district is dry, a reality that affects livestock and wildlife pastures whereby he said to address that challenge and WWF has come out with a programme

to improve pastures for livestock and wildlife.

"This programme started to be implemented in the wards which experience low rains which are Lang'ata Dabashi with Sokoni, Olochoonyokie and Lang'ata villages and Ilorienito where WWF facilitated the planting of trees last year," he said.

"Next month we will plant more trees at Lang'ata Dabashi Ward as continuation of the tree planting campaign to restore vegetation which was destroyed by people who

entered the area and created residential houses."

Aziz Musa, WWF policy advisor, said the organization's roles include conserving and improving the environment and that it was currently implementing an environment programme dubbed: 'Land for Life' by planting trees to protect water sources and restore vegetation in areas which were destroyed by wildlife, livestock and human activities.

"We commenced this tree planting exercise last year at

Ilorienito Village along the Kitumbeine forest which was destroyed by livestock, wildlife, and human activities," he said. "We aim to make sure we plant trees to restore vegetation which was destroyed and therefore preserve Kitumbeine forest and water sources found in the area just as it was in the past."

He said that the campaign targets to plant 1,000 trees, a move which he said would restore the vegetation that was destroyed by wildlife, livestock and human activities.



Joseph Mwambeleko (R), an official with CCM in Kilombero District, briefs the chairperson of the party's parents' wing for Morogoro Region, Dr Rose Rwakatare (next to him), on Thursday on progress in the ongoing construction of a building meant for the party's district office. Third right is the district's CCM chairman, Mohamed Msuya. Photo: Correspondent Joseph Mwendapole

ADF approves partial credit for Rwanda's green initiatives

ABIDJAN

THE Board of Directors of the African Development Fund, the concessional lending arm of the African Development Bank Group, has approved a partial credit guarantee to support Rwanda's mobilisation of financing to implement green and social initiatives.

The Partial credit guarantee for mobilisation of sustainable financing for Rwanda project will enable the country to raise up to €200 million competitively from international commercial banks, diversifying its funding sources.

It will allocate the proceeds to eligible renewable energy, climate adaptation and mitigation, disaster risk reduction and management, biodiversity conservation, energy efficiency, forestry, food security, health and wellbeing, affordable housing, and access to social services projects among others.

This is in line with Rwanda's National Strategy for Transformation (NST-I) for 2017-2024 and Vision 2050, while establishing the country as a credible sustainable borrower by building a track-record in the international financial markets. The financing is also aligned with Rwanda's Sustainable Finance Framework which sets out how funds can be deployed, processes for selecting and evaluating green and sustainable projects, and project reporting, in line with global best practice.

"This operation demonstrates how countries can leverage their African Development Fund resources innovatively to secure long-term financing for development. This guarantee will unlock sustainable financing for Rwanda while crowding in new capital providers to the country thereby contributing to the diversification of its funding sources," said Ahmed Atout, Bank Group Acting Director for Financial Sector Development.

AfDB appoints special envoy for Middle East and North Africa

By Guardian Correspondent

PRESIDENT of the African Development Bank Group Dr Akinwumi Adesina has appointed career diplomat Ambassador Jalel Trabelsi as his Special Envoy for the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) and Gulf Region.

Ambassador Trabelsi brings to the role over 30 years of experience as a highly accomplished and distinguished diplomat.

A statement availed to the media yesterday stated that as Special En-

voy for MENA and the Gulf Region, Ambassador Trabelsi will help to foster diplomatic and strategic engagements within the MENA and Gulf Region, focusing on the Bank's strategic priorities, strengthening partnerships and mobilizing public and private sector resources at scale to deliver transformational projects in Africa.

A Tunisian citizen, Ambassador Trabelsi's diplomatic career is marked by significant roles and contributions.

He served as Minister Plenip-

otentiary for African Affairs, and was the Ambassador of Tunisia to Nigeria, Ghana, Benin, Sierra Leone, and the Economic Community of West Africa (Ecowas).

He also served as the Dean of the Council of Arab Ambassadors and in other roles as an Adviser to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Head of the National Commission for Tunisia's candidacy to the Presidency of the African Development Bank.

He is also a specialist in international law and taught Diplomatic International Law at university

level.

Ambassador Trabelsi holds an Advanced Master in Maritime and Aviation Law from Belgium's Université Libre de Bruxelles, where he undertook his undergraduate degree in political science and international relations and graduated with the highest honour. He also holds a Master's degree in political science from the University of Tunis. He is multilingual with fluency in English, French and Arabic.

Commenting on his appointment, Ambassador Trabelsi said:

"I am extremely honoured to be appointed by Dr Adesina to this role. As an African, I am motivated to continue to serve our continent and to contribute to the African Development Bank's transformational work under the visionary leadership of Dr Adesina. I will work to ensure the Bank maintains and further strengthens its excellent and fruitful cooperation and partnership with the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) and the Gulf Region."

Dr Adesina said: "I am delight-

ed to have Ambassador Trabelsi as my Special Envoy for a region that holds a lot of promise for the Bank's and Africa's economic transformation.

He has a strong track record and expertise in international relations and cooperation as well as international negotiation. He brings extensive knowledge in African, Arab, and European affairs and a deep understanding of the activities of the Bank, as well as other regional and international financial banking institutions."

Kenyan court allows cult leader to meet wife in prison

MOMBASA

A COURT in Kenya's coastal city of Mombasa has allowed cult leader Paul Mackenzie to meet his wife, Rhodah Mumbua, in prison under strict supervision from the authorities.

Mackenzie pleaded with the court to order the authorities at Shimo La Tewa Prisons to arrange a meeting between him, his wife and their children to discuss family matters.

Mackenzie had also requested to be transferred to a different cell.

But a magistrate summoned the officer in charge of the prison to guide the court on Mackenzie's plea to be relocated to a different cell.

Mackenzie has been charged with murder after more than 400 bodies were found buried in shallow graves in a remote forest in the coastal Kilifi County.

Survivors and victims' families have said Mackenzie urged followers to fast in order to "go see Jesus".

He and 29 others pleaded not guilty and have been behind bars for more than a year. Mackenzie has already been charged with committing acts of terror, child cruelty and torture, all of which he has denied.



HakiElimu executive director Dr John Kalage briefs journalists in Dar es Salaam earlier this week on what the education NGO would like to see tabled in the National Assembly as the Education, Science and Technology ministry's Budget estimates for financial year 2024-2025. Photo: Correspondent Mary Kadoke

Three African countries roll out malaria vaccines

By Correspondent James Kandoya

By Special Correspondent
BENIN, Liberia and Sierra Leone have begun a mass vaccination campaign against malaria, becoming the latest African countries to join the recently introduced routine vaccination programme.

The World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the Global Vaccine Alliance (Gavi) which coordinate the programme, said in a joint statement that the rollout was

"a significant step forward for malaria prevention in Africa," which is the continent most affected by malaria.

Under the schedule, the RTS,S vaccine will be administered to children aged five months and older in four scheduled doses. Benin has received 215,900 doses of vaccine, Liberia 112 and Sierra Leone 550 thousand.

The noted that over 30 countries have indicated interest in adopting the vaccine with support from organisations like Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance as efforts to fight the disease with existing strategies like insecti-

cidal nets and seasonal malaria chemoprevention continues.

It said that Benin, having received 215,900 doses, has seamlessly integrated the malaria vaccine into its Expanded Programme on Immunisation, targeting children from around five months of age.

Health Minister Benjamin Houkpatin stressed the vaccine's pivotal role in protecting children from the illness, reassuring the public of its safety and effectiveness.

Meanwhile, in Liberia, the vaccine rollout began in Rivercess County, an area with high malaria prevalence, with plans to extend coverage to five additional counties.

Liberia's Health Minister, Louise Kpoto, hailed the vaccine's introduction as a transformative milestone in the fight against malaria, rallying communities, healthcare workers, and international partners to combat the disease and secure a brighter future for the country's youths.

The deployment of two WHO-recommended vaccines, RTS,S and R21, has shown promising results in pilot programmes across Ghana, Kenya, and Malawi, significantly reducing malaria cases and child mortality rates.

Sierra Leone's Health Minister, Austin Demby, emphasised the collective endeavour to eradicate malaria, leveraging a comprehensive approach to disease prevention and treatment.

Matshidiso Moeti, WHO Regional Director for Africa, stressed the importance of sustained efforts to reduce malaria-related fatalities and strengthen healthcare infrastructure across the region.

Aurelia Nguyen, chief programme officer at Gavi, praised the expansion of malaria vaccine coverage, highlighting its crucial role in saving lives and easing pressure on

Over 100 inmates escape from Nigerian prison after heavy rains

ABUJA

OVER 100 prisoners have fled from a correctional facility near Nigeria's capital following heavy rain that caused damage to parts of the prison infrastructure.

Authorities reported yesterday that initially, 118 inmates escaped from the Suleja Prison, with 10 individuals subsequently recaptured. A large-scale manhunt was underway to locate the remaining escapees.

Details regarding the identities of the escaped prisoners remained unclear, raising concerns about potential risks to public safety. However, a statement from the prison authorities assured collaboration with other security agencies to address the situation and urges citizens to continue their daily routines without undue alarm.

"In conjunction with sister security agencies [we] have so far recaptured 10 fleeing inmates and taken them into custody, while we are in hot chase to recapture the rest," stated Abuja's prison authority.

The incident underscores broader challenges faced by Nigeria's prison system, particularly

the deteriorating conditions of many facilities. Built during the colonial era, prisons like Suleja have aged and become vulnerable to damage, exacerbating security risks.

This recent escape echoes a similar incident two years prior, where over 400 prisoners broke free following an attack on another Abuja-based prison. Tragically, casualties ensued, including four inmates, a security guard, and multiple assailants.

The 2022 attack, claimed by Islamist fighters, aimed to release incarcerated members, highlighting the complex security landscape in Nigeria. Since 2020, more than 5,000 inmates have escaped during various prison breaks across the country, illustrating persistent challenges in maintaining secure correctional facilities.



In conjunction with sister security agencies [we] have so far recaptured 10 fleeing inmates and taken them into custody



Manyara Region's Special Seats legislator, Regina Ndege (3rd-L), joined by members of the CCM women's wing in Kiteto District shortly after presenting 20 bed sheets to Engusero health centre earlier this week. Photo: Correspondent Gift Thadey

Partnership to plug climate mitigation financing gap

JOHANNESBURG

FSD Africa Investments (FSDAI) and Allied Climate Partners have entered into a Memorandum of Understanding to address a critical financing gap for climate infrastructure, mitigation and adaptation in Africa.

The move aligns with the core missions of both organizations to increase the number of bankable opportunities for climate-related investment, increase private sector participation, improve livelihoods and mitigate the effects of

climate change across Africa.

FSDAI invests to make finance work for Africa by allocating catalytic capital to market shaping instruments, intermediaries and infrastructure and has cumulatively invested US\$ 105 million with a portfolio of 19 projects.

Allied Climate Partners (ACP) seeks to aggregate approximately US\$ 825 million backed by \$ 235 million in philanthropic capital to support the establishment of third-party funds, platforms, and other investments in early and development stages of climate-re-

lated projects in Africa, Southeast Asia, India, and the Caribbean and Central America.

Allied Climate Partners invests junior, first-loss equity in regionally focused third-party funds. ACP announced its inaugural investment into the Southeast Asia Clean Energy Fund II, managed by Clime Capital, in January, and is seeking to replicate similar investments in other regions.

Speaking during the MoU signing ceremony on the sidelines of the ongoing AVCA annual summit in Johannesburg, South Africa,

FSDAI Chief Investment Officer Anne-Marie Chidzero hailed the collaboration as one that will support Africa to meet her ambitious climate finance goals.

"For the African continent to meet her NDCs, we must raise tenfold current annual climate finance levels to US\$ 277 billion, and the share of private capital to at least US\$ 100 billion. Working with ACP, we will be able to catalyse and crowd in more innovative and green finance for greater action", she said.

ACP chief executive officer

Ahmed Saeed noted that this collaboration will drive innovation across the African continent, specifically mobilising more climate finance for Africa.

"There is a critical gap in climate finance, and specifically risk-oriented equity, available for emerging and developing economies to meet climate and energy transition goals. We are thrilled to partner with FSDAI, a pioneering organisation at the forefront of strengthening private sector participation and financial markets in Africa. Together, we hope to

attract more risk-oriented capital for early-stage investments in Africa, by establishing new, catalytic, blended finance solutions that will leverage public and private capital to tackle the climate crisis", he said.

Working in concert, FSD Africa Investments and Allied Climate Partners will identify, evaluate, and seek to invest in highly catalytic financing solutions in Africa that increase investment for early-stage project development and companies deploying climate-related infrastructure in Africa.



There is no let-up in the heavy rains that have been pounding various parts of Tanzania with a vengeance for weeks now. This scene, captured yesterday along Kilimani Street in Kinondoni municipality, Dar es Salaam, is part of the evidence of the impact of the weather phenomenon. Photo: Correspondent Miraji Msala

Two Africans charged in English Channel deaths probe

LONDON

TWO African men have been charged with immigration offences after an investigation into the deaths of five migrants, including a child, in the English Channel.

Three men, a woman and a seven-year-old girl died in a crash on board a boat carrying 112 people last Tuesday.

Tajdeen Abdulaziz Juma, from Sudan, and Yien Both, from South Sudan, were remanded in custody in the weekend.

They were due to appear at Folkestone Magistrates' Court later.

The charged men are both aged 22 and accused of attempting to arrive in the UK without valid entry clearance.

Both has also been charged with assisting unlawful immigration.

A third man, 18, from Sudan, was arrested earlier this week and has been bailed pending further inquiries.

The vessel got into trouble early on Tuesday morning after leaving Wimereux in northern France, and police witnessed people entering the water from the overcrowded boat.

It was one of several small boats which left France at about 03:00 local time.

Some 49 people were rescued but 58 others opted to remain in the boat and continued towards the UK, the coast-guard said in a statement.

African leaders call for value addition to continent's mineral resources

LILONGWE

MEMBER countries of the Africa Minerals Strategy Group (AMSG) have launched the inaugural Mining Investment Forum in Malawi's capital, Lilong-

we, during which they urged African countries to add value to their mineral resources before exporting them.

Moses Engadu, AMSG secretary general, made the call during the launch of the

two-day forum, opened by Malawian President Lazarus Chakwera, highlighting the key challenge for Africa: the exportation of minerals in raw form instead of exporting processed minerals to maxi-

mize gains. Malawi and other African countries should insist on adding value to minerals before export, Engadu said. "No mineral must leave our borders without adding value- at least primary value

addition must be done here."

The AMSG is an initiative of 16 African countries to facilitate international cooperation in the sustainable development of critical minerals.

South Sudanese Minister of

Mining Martin Gama Abucha supported Engadu's stance in his keynote address, noting that Africa has been lagging in developing and marketing its minerals.

Chakwera urged banks and

other financial institutions operating in the country to support the mining sector to establish local labs for testing samples and adding value to raw minerals before export.

SATURDAY 27 APRIL 2024

**Taking A New Look
At The News
ESTABLISHED IN 1995**

Handling severe cases of NCDs even at dispensary level promises a lot of good

MANY patients or families may have been somewhat perplexed at the idea that severe non-communicable diseases could be expertly handled at dispensary level in the near future.

This intention was expressed by the Health minister, optimistic about landing enhanced collaboration with our country's development partners in scaling up what is known as the PEN-Plus strategy. It is useful for both diagnosis and treatment.

PEN-Plus is described as an integrated care delivery strategy focused on stepping up accessibility and quality of chronic care services for severe NCDs such as type 1 diabetes, rheumatic heart disease and sickle cell anaemia.

These are health conditions that usually need specialists close at hand, as any complications can be disastrous. With technological improvements, though, the basics of NCDs are starting to become somewhat commonplace.

Medics at lower levels can diagnose or even treat such patients depending on the severity of cases, the tests needed, etc.

Dar es Salaam city has recently hosted a significant intergovernmental conference on a vital aspect of policy and strategic collaboration. This is none other than the first International Conference on Pen-Plus in Africa (ICPPA) 2024.

There were altogether 300 delegates from various countries taking up the theme 'prioritising people-centred approach to chronic and severe NCDs', citing type 1 diabetes, sickle cell anaemia and childhood heart diseases. The non-infectious diseases notably put health in abeyance for a rising portion of the population.

The core to this drive is the rising effect of digitalisation of medical services, where a past international conference examined the possibil-

ity of converting hospital records into digital format.

It is, however, not necessarily that there is much difference between storage of medical information in digital format and conducting digital diagnosis on a patient with any of the chronic NCDs habitually directed at higher hospitals.

That is where the collaborative effort comes up, in the sense that 'spreading' the availability of such equipment to dispensary level apart from health centres looks a bit complicated.

When it comes to treatment, it appears that apart from diagnosis and occasional dispensing of prescribed medicine, plenty in consultation has to do with getting patients to understand the need to cut out bad health choices and sedentary lifestyles.

These contribute a lot to generating NCDs, in which case it doesn't need closed circuit consultations by elaborate appointment and steep fees.

That doesn't mean that these featured will not be there but when diagnostic tools can be delivered at the lower level, all that is needed is a secluded chamber.

It is an effort at costing cutting, a reduction of the presumed difficulty of NCDs, with a view to treating such ailments as commonplace diseases, not big issues.

A resident executive for the World Health Organisation (WHO) said that the first ICPPA provided a pivotal moment to advance lifesaving care for people living with severe NCDs in rural sub-Saharan Africa.

He saw the moment as a critical inflection point in global health equity with a real opportunity to fundamentally improve access to lifesaving care for people living with severe NCDs. That is undeniable but its proper impact is likely to be urban, when such cases are routinely administered at dispensaries and health centres.

Yes, villages merit 4G tech links, still saddled with customary titles

VICE President Dr Philip Mpango has called on the Universal Communication Service Access Fund (UCSAF) to focus on projects enhancing the capacity of communication towers from 2G to 3G and 4G technology.

This wish was noted with explicit reference to the quality of communication in villages, to suggest that smart phones ought to be used in rural areas just like elsewhere. It is an issue that had already started to surface over the quality of communications in the country.

Chroniclers of social conditions across long periods of time observe that the state of technology by and large conditions social relations or formal rules and techniques of their being enforced or perceived by members of society.

An ancient thinker is on record as having said that slavery would come to an end when oxen could pull the carts by themselves, implying that they need a slave to guide them.

Slavery ended when capitalists started competing for labour, while under primitive conditions the issue was who owns this or that one and was therefore a lifelong labourer.

Officiating at the inauguration of USCAF headquarters in Dodoma city, the VP emphasized the need to monitor the construction of communication towers that boost capacity to ensure that all villages are linked with reliable communication services. That brings us back to technology and social structures or regulatory systems as, in the age of the post office, all coffee would be bought by the village cooperative for sale to a national agency for onward exportation.

With 3G communications or

higher, a single farmer with sufficient acreage can post a product with specific standards, agree with a buyer, and proceed to sell.

Yet this communications upgrade is being pursued in the background of the compulsory holding of land by customary titles.

In that case, investment of that sort is limited by the scale of production, leaving a few planters with some acreage in a position to market produce and produce the yield sizes needed for foreign buyers to place orders.

When people across the country, regardless of their particular locations, can access communication services smoothly, the manner in which they can properly participate in social and economic activities would definitely change.

They would demand or otherwise start using the greater freedom that modern communication avails, including property deals.

To a certain extent, that will not be the case even if communications were to be improved under the aegis of USCAF, as a vital component of the Digital Tanzania project financed by the World Bank.

So far, imagination about communication in a village setting is tied with cash transfers, but will likely change soon.

Major projects are being mooted by foreign investors in special economic zones and more discreetly as brand introduction or boosting in glitzy shopping neighbourhoods.

Tanzanian stakeholders making millions or even billions each year from all sorts of projects, from natural gas to upcoming mass assembling, will seek to broaden urban areas more rapidly.

The Guardian Limited Key Contacts

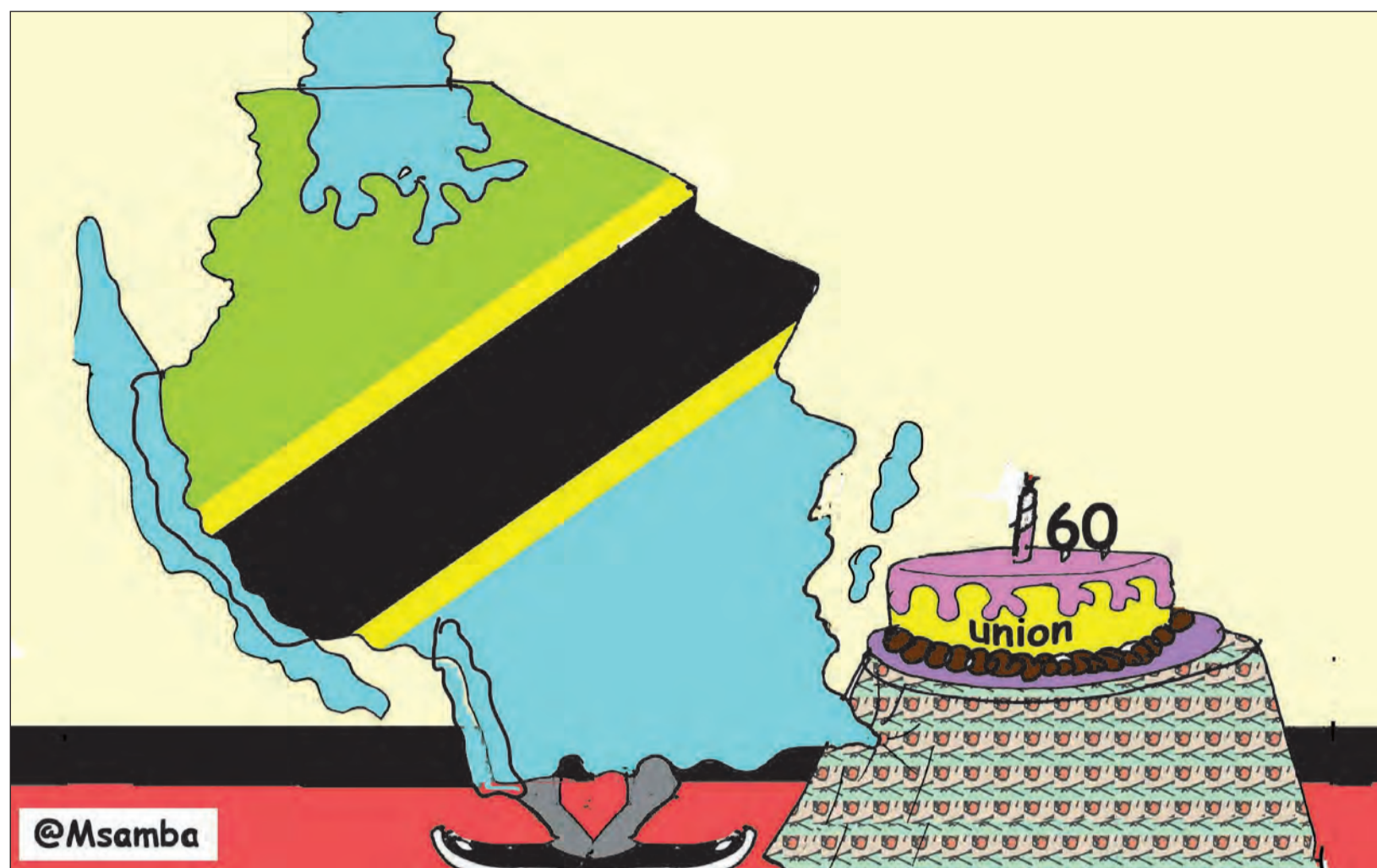
MANAGING EDITOR: WALLACE MAUGGO
CIRCULATION MANAGER: DENNIS NTAITA
feedback@guardian.co.tz

Newsdesk

General Line: 0745 700710
News Editor: LUSEKELO PHILEMON
0757 154767
E-mail: guardian@guardian.co.tz

Advertising

Cel: + 0677 020701 E-mails: Advertise@guardian.co.tz
Website: lppmedia.com, epaper.ippmedia.com



Trying to be better could only make you feel worse

By Smool

IT is 2:19 am and you just checked the time. "Dammit, not again" you whisper...

You ate your dinner on time and read ten pages with eyes full of drowsiness just to tick off things from your daily to-do list.

You pick up your phone to scroll a little bit because you think you have earned the leisure by working for 30 minutes straight. You look at the time and it is already past 2 am. You've repeated the circle yet again.

Now this is not to tell you that to-do lists are a waste of time and you shouldn't create patterns. This is just a wake-up call for you - to let you know that these methods, tactics and "five ways to be more productive" articles won't help you unless you're serious.

Everyone wants to be better but only some have the heart to follow that path. People like routine but they love comfort even more.

If you're a student, you would like to get good grades but also maintain a social life. You will want to go out, have coffee with friends, go to concerts and make the best of your teens.

If you're a working professional, the set pay cheques make you lazy. You wake up, go to work, start with the tasks and by the end of the day you don't have any more energy to pick up your laptop for doing anything else.

You see - here is a pattern. You find comfort in the life you build. Now why would you want to break it and make your life miserable? Why eat healthier, why go to the gym, why start a blog, why establish your long-wanted business?

Where there is comfort, there is no room for improvement. Now some people would rather live a life of comfort but then there are people like you - who want change.

You want a better health and a better income. You are different because you would rather give up comfort today to live a better life five years from now.

But where does your sadness emerge from? Let's break it down. You look up online and find the best self-improvement articles.

Ten ways to be better than other people... Live a resigned life and you'll rediscover yourself. Five ways to be more productive and get things done...

Even I write such articles and most of the time, these things work for me. But, what works for them shouldn't necessarily work for you.

You wouldn't teach a monkey how to fly or a bird how to bark. Most of the time this advice is a path for you to discover what works best for you.

Instead of finding a way of your own,

you follow the rules set by other people and when the results don't come you're feeling down.

We're inundated with tips and tricks on how to live our best lives. And yet, despite your best efforts to follow other people's sage advice, you often find yourself falling short. Why? The simple reason is that we're not putting in the real work.

Ask yourself, as you reading that book because you like it or because your list says so? Are you working because you like it or just because your list says so? Are you not meeting your friends because you don't want to or because your list says to stay passive?

To better yourself does not mean to change everything that makes you you! It's like trying to learn French by binge-watching Netflix instead of speaking the language.

As the Stoic philosopher Epictetus reminds us: "First say to yourself what you would be, and then do what you have to do."

Instead of fixating on endless to-do lists, focus on the essence of what you want to achieve. What kind of person do you want to become? What values do you want to embody?

By aligning your actions with your core values and priorities, you can cultivate a sense of purpose and fulfillment that transcends the superficiality of mere tasks.

"Get better," they say. But what does that even mean? And who gets to define what "better" looks like anyway? Is it working more? Is it eating healthier? Is it working like a robot with a schedule to even breathe?

The truth is that the pursuit of improvement is most fulfilling when it's driven by internal motivation, not external expectations. It's about following your own North Star, whether that leads you down the path of a nomad, a stoic or a hybrid of both.

The definition of 'better' varies from person to person. Then don't apply those strategies to your life - if the goals don't align.

"The obstacle is the path." Embrace the challenges, setbacks and detours on your journey of self-improvement. Each obstacle is an opportunity for growth, a chance to learn, adapt and evolve.

By embracing the messy, unpredictable nature of life, you can cultivate resilience, strength and wisdom that far surpass any superficial notion of "getting better".

don't forget to accept yourself. Most people fall behind this trap and set unrealistic expectations for themselves - when those are not met, they punish themselves.

Even scientifically - it takes the mind at least 18 days to create a habit and fit into a new routine. How can you expect your body to do that in two days?

Becoming a better version of yourself is less about the tactics you follow and more about the mindset you have. If you achieve something today, that would be great. Pat yourself on the back.

If the best thing you did was to get out of bed and do minimal work, it would also be great. Again, pat yourself on the back. Don't treat yourself like an algorithm that needs to 'earn' appreciation.

It's all about balance. Yes, strive to be better, but also learn to accept yourself exactly as you are in this moment.

Embrace your quirks, your imperfections and your beautifully messy humanity.

It's fine to have days when you feel like a productivity powerhouse and days when you just want to relax.

Life is a delicate dance between growth and acceptance, and finding that balance is the key to true fulfillment.

Set Intentions, Not Goals. Instead of fixating on specific outcomes, focus on setting intentions for how you want to show up in the world. Intentions are flexible, adaptable and rooted in your values, making them far more sustainable than rigid goals.

Setting intentions does not mean that you're weak-minded. It means that you're ready to give yourself the time to create new, long-term habits instead of rushing your body through a harsh cycle.

Practise self-compassion, not self-forgiveness. Be kind to yourself, especially when you fall short of your expectations.

This is tricky because if it's not done right, people might mistake it for cheat days. Compassion does not mean that you'll forgive yourself each time.

If someone treats you badly and says sorry each time - you'll get tired of the repeated cycle. Don't be that toxic person.

Being compassionate should not be co-related to being forgiving. Improvement requires a strong mentality so you cannot keep skipping important tasks and treating them

as 'just-another-day'.

Cultivate curiosity. You need to approach life with a sense of curiosity and wonder, embracing the unknown and exploring new possibilities.

Keep asking questions, seeking knowledge and staying open to growth. The smartest people I've met have never known that they were the smartest in the room.

One should always reach for more knowledge. The day you think or believe you know everything about that topic is the day you've lost.

Create a habit of reading, listening to podcasts or watching informational videos. You never know when you learn something life-changing.

Celebrate your quirks. Your quirks are what make you uniquely you, so celebrate them unabashedly.

Embrace your weirdness, your eccentricities and your idiosyncrasies - it's what sets you apart from the crowd. Give yourself appreciation and record the things you're proud of.

The days when you don't feel your best, go back to this record. It'll help you look back and appreciate how far in the journey you've come.

Connect with your WHY. When embarking on the journey of self-improvement, always connect with your why. What is driving you to grow and evolve? Keep that why front and centre as your guiding star.

This is the most important for me. I've written my 'why' on a post-it note and stuck it to my work desk. Whenever I sit there, that 'why' is the first thing I read and it fires me up. Never forget why you started and keep pushing for that goal.

*medium.com



It's all about balance. Yes, strive to be better, but also learn to accept yourself exactly as you are in this moment

Need for employers, workers to expedite occupational safety and healthy culture

By Telesphor Magobe

LAST week, we briefly looked at good child upbringing in light of the Law of the Child Act (R.E. 2019), which provides for parental duty and responsibility. We said the law requires parents or guardians to ensure children are brought up in a healthy and safe environment and that parental duty and responsibility include providing good guidance, care, assistance and maintenance and the assurance of children's survival and development.

However, we said in practice this is a challenge as many children are brought up in an unhealthy environment and are often subjected to harsh treatment, which is a disgrace to parents or guardians.

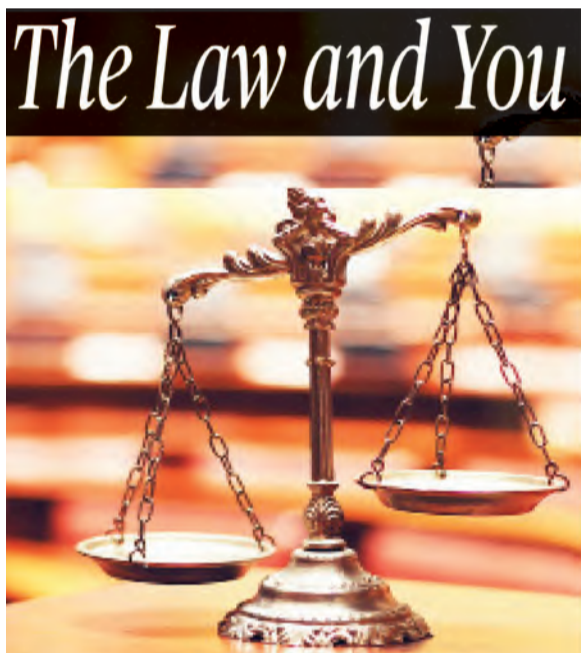
Today, I invite you to look at World Day for Safety and Health at Work 2024, which is marked each year on April 28. Article 22 of the Constitution of the United Republic of Tanzania, 1977 (as amended until 2005) provides for the right to work and that "work means any legitimate activity by which a person earns a living" [Article 9(e)].

Article 23 provides for just remuneration and Article 25 provides that work shouldn't be forced, cruel or humiliating labour. Forced, cruel or humiliating work is inconsistent with the meaning of work as "any legitimate activity."

Government leaders often encourage citizens to work, which includes formal employment, self-employment and job creation. They also encourage both local and foreign investment in various sectors of the economy. Where there is investment, jobs are created.

Yet, the problem lies in working conditions, the environment in which work is done and unfair treatment, all of which are detrimental to the welfare of employees. Besides this, where there has been massive laying-off of employees on operational reasons, the remaining ones could be subjected to a heavy workload that does not translate into fair remuneration.

In this way, some employees are subjected to unfair



The Law and You

remuneration which is contrary to the law. Employees treated in this way fall into the category of working poor - that's employees whose incomes fall below a given poverty line (\$2.15 a day) due to low-income jobs and low household income.

According to ILO World Employment and Social Outlook Trends 2024 (ILO Flagship Report), the numbers of workers living in extreme poverty - earning less than \$2.15 per day per person in purchasing power parity (PPP) terms - grew by about 1 million globally.

It says a stronger pattern emerges when one looks at moderate working poverty - that is, earning less than \$3.65 per day per person in PPP terms. "The number of workers living in moderate poverty increased by about 8.4 million in 2023; a decline in moderate poverty was observed only in upper-middle-income countries." In our context, although the Constitu-

tion of the United Republic of Tanzania provides that every person has the duty to participate responsibly and honestly in lawful and productive work, as well as observe work discipline and strive to attain individual and collective production targets desired or set by law, there are circumstances in which employees work in an undesirable environment.

With growing unemployment levels locally and globally, job seekers may end up working in an unfavourable environment just to make ends meet and some employers look for cheap labour and provide low wages even for demanding jobs. This does not only lower employees' morale, but also increases stress and burnout. Working in an unfavourable environment may subject an employee to work-related deaths and injuries.

According to the UN, World Day for

Safety and Health at Work promotes the prevention of occupational accidents and diseases globally. "It is an awareness-raising campaign intended to focus international attention on the magnitude of the problem and on how promoting and creating a safety and health culture can help reduce the number of work-related deaths and injuries." Where employees' safety and health culture is guaranteed productive work is ensured.

The UN further says while employers are responsible for ensuring a safe and healthy working environment, employees are responsible to work safely and to protect themselves and not to endanger others, to know their rights and to participate in the implementation of preventive measures.

ILO (2024) report suggests that 1.2 billion jobs rely directly on the effec-

tive management and sustainability of a healthy environment, in particular jobs in farming, fishing and forestry. It says as ecosystems are disrupted and essential resources become scarcer, many jobs in these and other sectors are now at risk.

As tomorrow we mark World Day for Safety and Health at Work, employers are reminded to fulfil their duty towards employees, which includes expediting occupational safety and a healthy culture. Employees too are reminded to fulfil their duty towards employers. This symbiotic relationship between employees and employers leads to greater productivity and fulfilment.

Today's proverb: "Saying is one thing, doing another."

The author is a Dar es Salaam-based lawyer. He can be reached at t22magobe@gmail.com

Perilous river crossings endanger lives of hundreds Missenyi District pupils

By Correspondent Mutayoba Arbogast

IN the remote hamlets nestled along the banks of Kagera River in Missenyi District, over 230 primary school pupils face a daunting obstacle on their way to and from school.

The on-going heavy rains have transformed the tranquil river causing floods that have swallowed up adjacent land, posing threat to the safety of those who need to cross it to reach their destinations.

In pursuit for education, children from Lushenye and Mtakuja hamlets are now using a canoe in crossing the river to and from school, something which poses safety risk to them as most of them do not know how to swim.

"The primary school is in Bugorora ward; one needs to cross the river to reach the area. Pupils are forced to embark on a perilous journey each day. Our children are in danger as they have sometimes come across dangerous wildlife," laments Fraides Edward, a concerned parent from Lushenye.

Farida Ibrahim, is one of the parents whose children are enrolled at the school, she blames district authorities over failure to look for alternative transport for the pupils.

"They promised us a better transport for our children; but to date, nothing has been done as pupils continue to use a canoe to and from school," stated Ibrahim.

She claims that Nkenge Member of Parliament, Florant Kyombo promised to use the Constituency Development Fund (CDF) to look for an alternative means of transport for the children, but he has only provided 5m/-.

Another concerned citizen, Adelitus Dickson said: "Leaders promised to work on matter but days are passing and there are no hopes."

At the heart of the matter lies the fundamental right to education, a principle enshrined in Tanzania's constitution and international conventions.

Yet, for these children, that right hangs in the balance despite authorities at Missenyi District vowing to prioritize the safety and well-being of the young citizens.

John Paul Wanga, Missenyi District Executive Director said they are aware of transport challenges that children are facing, adding the government is keenly working on the matter to ensure safety of children in Lushenye and other wards.

Hamza Sadick, the Chairperson of Lushenye hamlet, remains resolute in his commitment to securing a brighter future for the next generation.

"We are tired of empty promises; we want a perma-

nent solution. We are grateful for the support from Nkenge legislator who has already disbursed 5m/- from the CDF to support efforts towards getting a convenient mean of transport for the pupils," Sadick added.

The urgency of the situation is underscored by the voices of the children themselves, who bear the brunt of the daily peril. Speaking on condition of anonymity, three primary school students offer a poignant glimpse into their daily struggles.

"We are always late to school because of transport challenges; at times we miss morning lessons," said one of the pupils as she appeals for help.

In the face of such daunting challenges, solutions must be as bold and ambitious as the problem itself. Immediate steps must be taken to provide safe and reliable transportation for students, whether through procurement of modern canoes or establishment an alternative routes.

Besides, the construction of satellite schools in under-

served areas like Lushenye and Mtakuja is essential to ensure that every child has access to quality education closer to home. These initiatives require not only financial investment but also strong leadership and unwavering commitment from involved stakeholders.

Beyond infrastructure and logistics, community engagement and empowerment are paramount. Residents must be actively involved in the decision-making process, ensuring that their voices are heard and their concerns addressed.

Additionally, partnerships with NGOs, international agencies, and other stakeholders can provide invaluable support in tackling the multifaceted challenges facing these communities.

By harnessing the collective expertise and resources of various actors, sustainable solutions can be devised and implemented to uplift the lives of the most vulnerable. The challenges facing Tanzania's infrastructural development are deeply intertwined with the plight of children in rural

areas like Lushenye and Mtakuja.

While the country has made significant strides in recent years, including investments in roads, schools, and healthcare facilities, the benefits of these developments often fail to reach the most marginalized communities.

"One of our top priorities is to ensure that every child in Tanzania has access to quality education, regardless of their location," asserts Prof. Adolf Mkenda, Minister for Education, noting that infrastructural challenges, especially in remote areas, hinders government efforts to provide equal opportunities for all children.

President Samia Suluhu Hassan echoes these sentiments, emphasizing the need for concerted efforts to bridge the urban-rural divide.

"Our government is committed to inclusive development that leaves no one behind. We cannot ignore the plight of children in remote villages who lack access to basic infrastructure like schools and roads. One of the primary obstacles to infrastructural development is the vast geographical expanse of Tanzania, which encompasses diverse terrain, from dense forests to expansive plains, states the Head of State.

The country's geographic diversity poses logistical challenges for constructing and maintaining roads, bridges, and other critical infrastructures, particularly in remote and hard-to-reach areas like Lushenye.

Moreover, inadequate funding and bureaucratic inefficiencies have hampered efforts to upgrade and expand infrastructure networks, perpetuating disparities between urban and rural areas. "We recognize the need for increased investment in rural infrastructure to uplift marginalized communities," says Mohammed Mchengerwa, Minister in the President's Office, Regional Administration and Local Government.

"We cannot achieve our development goals without addressing the infrastructural needs of rural communities," asserts Innocent Bashungwa, Minister of Works in one of his recent speeches.

He added: "Our government is working tirelessly to improve road networks, expand access to electricity, and provide clean water to remote villages."



Bugorora primary school pupils boarding a canoe on their way back home. Photo: Mutayoba Arbogast

By Kunal Purohit

Farm suicides, anger haunt Indian villages that Modi promised hope

LIKE everyone else around him, Vithal Rathod was excited for what the future held for him and their village when Narendra Modi became India's prime minister on May 26, 2014.

Just two months earlier, on March 20 that year, Modi had picked the 45-year-old farmer's village of Dabhadi from the more than 15,500 villages in the Vidarbha region of the western Indian state of Maharashtra to launch his outreach to the country's farmers. The visit was important for Modi, eyeing the PM's chair at the time, to be able to reach out to the 65 percent of India's population that is engaged in agriculture.

During his visit to Dabhadi, Modi had sipped tea with farmers like Rathod, visited farms in the village and promised an end to the death and despair that had long haunted the predominantly rural, impoverished part of Maharashtra state. A lack of adequate irrigation, erratic weather patterns and fluctuating global prices for cotton - the principal crop grown there - meant that farmers suffered repeated losses and found themselves in debt. The resulting frustration drove more than 9,000 farmers to take their own lives between 2001 and 2014.

Modi came and said what the farmers wanted to hear. "Your pain, your struggle and your troubles will force me to do something good," he told Rathod and the thousands who had gathered to hear him. "I want to tie myself to this promise. I want to talk to experts and find such solutions that no poor farmer has to kill himself," he said.

Rathod went back home, reassured, to his family of five and tried to put his recurring farm losses behind him. He had a one-hectare (2.5-acre) farm, not far from where Modi spoke.

But by the following year, Rathod's losses grew and his optimism shrank. In 2015, Rathod became a statistic: he hanged himself to death from the ceiling of his home, just off the main road that leads to Dabhadi village, following another year of crop losses, making his 120,000 rupee debt (\$1,440) insurmountable.

Rathod was not alone in feeling let down. Ten years after Modi's visit, his promise seems to have crumbled - even as India's prime minister once again campaigns for reelection, this time for a third stint in office.

Data obtained by this correspondent shows the number of farmer suicides in the region has grown in the decade that Modi has been in power, compared with the preceding 10 years when the now-in-opposition Congress party ruled the country.

Between January 2004 and December 2014, 9,671 farmers died by suicide. That number rose to 10,122 for the period from January 2015 to December 2023, according to information collected from the Amravati Divisional Commissionerate in Vidarbha, which oversees the administration of five of the country's districts worst affected by suicides: Amravati, Yavatmal, Buldhana, Akola and Washim. The actual number of farm suicides in the region under Modi is even higher - since the PM came to power in May 2014.

On average, between 2004 and 2014, each year would see this region record an average of 879 suicide deaths by farmers. Since 2015, that number has risen to 1,125 suicides each year, on average - or three farmers taking their lives every day.

The paradox of Maharashtra, the country's richest state where Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has been in power locally for most of the past decade, also serving as the nerve centre of the country's agrarian crisis, has only deepened over the past decade.

Now, as India's national election rolls on, the anger over failed promises is visible in farm pockets across the region - parts of which vote on Friday, April 26.

Schemes that go nowhere

In the Rathod household, nine years after their principal breadwinner's suicide, the family's struggles have remained static - despite Modi government schemes that are meant to benefit farmer families like theirs.

Rameshwar, 25, Rathod's son, had to quit his studies after his father's death. Rameshwar has instead been doing what his father did - making the most of their one-hectare farm while falling deeper into debt.

Last year, he sowed cotton on his farm, but unexpectedly heavy rainfall washed his crops away. "I expected 40 quintals [4 tonnes] of cotton produce, but ended up getting only 5 quintals [500kg or 1,100 pounds]," Rameshwar says, standing outside the room where his father hung himself.

He turned to the Modi government's flagship scheme, the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY), a crop insurance scheme meant to compensate farmers for such losses. The scheme is meant to "provide a comprehensive insurance cover against failure of the crop thus helping in stabilising the income of the farmers", accord-



Family members of Vithal Rathod, the farmer in Dabhadi village who took his own life, stand outside their home in Yavatmal. It was in Dabhadi that Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched his farm outreach in 2014. A decade later, crosses losses, debts and deaths are mounting.



Farmer Prithviraj Pawar holds up the wheat crop that was damaged in a March hailstorm, and for which he is yet to be compensated.

ing to the initiative's website.

A back-of-the-envelope showed him his losses were close to 235,000 rupees (\$2,815). He applied for the insurance money but got only 10,000 rupees (\$120), an amount determined based on local officials' estimate of the damage his farm suffered.

Putting on a brave face, he hoped the next crop he sowed, wheat, could help him recoup his losses. But in March this year, a hailstorm in the region destroyed nearly half his standing crop. He has, yet again, applied for compensation under the PMFBY. A month later, Rameshwar is still waiting.

Like his father, Rameshwar is now running high debts. His father was impressed by Modi, but he is not. Rameshwar is going to back the opposition parties in these polls.

Many others in his village have had a similar reversal of feelings.

A change of heart
Narendra Dabhane, the former village chief of Dabhadi, used to be "so spellbound by Modi that I would scold those who would criticise him", he says, sitting in the courtyard of his home in the village. "I used to tell people, he is a man sent by God to help us," Dabhane says, with an embarrassed smile. "I kept thinking that our village was going to become a paradise, now that the PM had made such emphatic promises."

Within months of Modi coming to power, though, Dabhane started feeling betrayed.

Modi, in his speech, had proposed what seemed to be a revolutionary idea, what he called the "5F formula from farm to fibre to

fabric to fashion to foreign" - the idea that their cotton produce could be converted to readymade garments right here, in Vidarbha. The result would be that factories would be set up, so the children of farmers could be employed. The garments would then be exported around the world. That was the dream that Dabhadi was sold.

None of that happened. Dabhane does not know of any such supply chains being developed - both of his sons had to migrate to neighbouring districts to get jobs.

Last year, Dabhane sowed cotton on his 1.2-hectare (three-acre) farm just outside the village. Much of his crop was damaged in the rains, and the remaining fetched a price of 6,800 rupees per quintal (\$81 per 100 kilos) of cotton. His earnings are "less than what I used to get for my cotton 10 years ago", he said.

Government data shows that there had been a 74 percent increase in state-mandated support price for medium-staple cotton, from 3,800 rupees (\$46) in 2015-16 to 6,620 rupees (\$79) in 2024-25. But many farmers insist that traders seldom heed these prices. And Dabhane points to what this data does not reveal.

"All the inputs that go into the farm have become exorbitantly expensive," he said. "A bag of fertiliser that cost us 500 rupees [\$6] 10 years ago, is now nearly 1,700 rupees [\$20]," he said. "We are also paying the [Modi government-introduced] Goods and Services Tax on everything from pesticides to tractors," he said.

Like Rathod, Dabhane, too, suffered heavy losses twice in the last few months with his cotton and wheat crops failing due to

poor weather. But unlike Rathod, who at least got a measly 10,000 rupees, Dabhane got nothing, he said.

All this has meant that while Modi, in February 2016, had said he "dreamed" that farmers' incomes would "double" by 2022, farmers like Dabhane have seen their real incomes shrinking.

From a Modi supporter, Dabhane has now turned into a fierce critic. In February this year, when Modi visited Yavatmal district, under which Dabhadi falls, Dabhane and a few others put up banners listing out 16 promises they said Modi made to them in his 2014 speech in the village.

"We even made black chai on that day," he says, laughing, as a riposte to Modi's famed Chai Pe Charcha (Chats over Chai) campaign. During his 2014 election outreach, Modi - who says he used to sell tea or chai at a railway station as a young man - helped campaign events over cups of tea to underscore those humble beginnings. The local police, he said, arrested him for the protest and released him after Modi left.

The crisis has affected not just smaller farmers like Dabhane, but also many others who are ambitious and are trying to make farming a more sustainable source of livelihood.

Prithviraj Pawar, 43, owns two hectares (five acres) and has leased another six hectares (15 acres), to be able to cultivate crops like soybean and wheat. Last year, Pawar's two-hectare cultivate of soybeans suffered severe losses, his yield falling from the expected 25 quintals to merely 12 quintals, his losses over 60,000 rupees (\$720). "The insurance scheme only gave me 11,000 rupees [\$132], which did not even remotely cover my expenses, leave alone my losses."

Pawar has a unique connection to Modi - he is now cultivating, on a lease, the farm on which Modi held his 2014 event. This year, though, the farm is mostly dry and the wheat crop stunted due to the hailstorm in March that also destroyed Rameshwar's crop.

Such lived experiences, along with the Modi government's chequered record in dealing with farmers - from bringing in three controversial new laws to regulate Indian agriculture in 2020, to repeated instances of police violence against protesting farmers - have made many in Vidarbha wary of the government's intent.

On his part, Modi has repeatedly tried to reach out to the farming community in the region. He has already held three public meetings in the region, including one in the neighbouring Wardha district on April 19 where he reportedly blamed the opposition Congress responsible for the "longstanding challenges farmers faced in the country".

But many like Dabhane and Rathod, and others across the region, remain unconvinced and bitter. To them, new speeches are not going to wash away old betrayals.

CAPITAL RADIO

RATIBA YA VIPINDI JUMATATU - JUMAPILI

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



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Placing farmers at the core of development efforts is crucial in attainment of food security

By Special Correspondent

THE urgency to re-evaluate financing mechanisms is increasingly recognized, with a growing emphasis on mobilizing domestic resources and exploring innovative financing solutions to bolster agricultural development.

In an event at the 10th African Regional Forum on Sustainable Development (ARFSD) held in Addis Ababa, a clarion call has been issued to policymakers to centre their policies on the needs of farmers and enhance access to funding in the agricultural sector.

The imperative to empower farmers and provide them with adequate financial resources is underscored as essential steps towards eradicating hunger, achieving food security, sustainable development, and realizing the broader objectives of the African Union Agenda 2063.

During a session themed "Harnessing the potential of innovative financing for reinforcing CAADP implementation towards Africa free of hunger and sustainable, resilient agri-food systems," Godfrey Bahigwag, Director of the Sustainable Environment and Blue Economy Directorate at the African Union Commission, emphasized the critical role of farmers in driving progress and development in Africa.

The Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP), a cornerstone initiative of Agenda 2063, outlines ambitious targets for transforming African agriculture by 2025, including the commitment of African governments to allocate at least 10 percent of national budgets to agriculture and rural development. However, the participants at ARFSD stressed that there is a pressing need for concrete action



to translate these commitments into tangible outcomes on the ground.

Private sector engagement is identified as critical in driving investments and innovation in Africa's agri-food and nutrition sector, offering critical resources and expertise to address the complex challenges facing the agri-

cultural landscape.

"By fostering collaborative efforts and forging strategic partnerships, stakeholders can amplify the impact of CAADP, fortifying Africa's agricultural systems and advancing the goal of food security across the continent", said Menghestab Haile, Regional Director for

Southern Africa, WFP.

Participants at the meeting echoed the sentiment that Africa stands at a transformative moment in its development trajectory, where innovative financing mechanisms hold the key to unlocking the vast agricultural potential of the continent.

International celebs, pan-African activists for special 7-day Mount Kilimanjaro expedition next month

By Correspondent James Lanka, Moshi

A Celebrity Sharada John alias 'Super Sharada' from Suriname in South America is among celebrities across the globe who will in May 25, this year join a group of more than 50 Mount Kilimanjaro Pan-Africanism activists who will climb the highest mountain with the African Union (AU) flag to commemorate 61 years of the continental body.

Another celebrity who will participate in the third special expedition dubbed 'Africa Day Celebration, Live Your Dream Mount Kilimanjaro Challenge 2024' is Miss Norena Ahamada Ali who represents Comoro in the special event.

In an interview with this paper about the event, Emmanuel Motta, Managing Director of the Moshi-based tourism firm- ORIGIN Trails explained that, the special 7-day Mount Kilimanjaro climb will take place from May 20 to 26 this through Machame route to commemorate 61 years of AU, representing the Africa Diasporas.

"Sharada, an international super model who had graced the stages of London, Milan, Paris, and was involved in lots of brand work in New York, Germany, Amsterdam, more, also an activist and motivational speaker will participate in the annual 'Kilimanjaro Climb' Challenge representing the Africa Diaspora," Motta explained.

He added that, apart from commemorating 61 years of AU, the event which will attract climbers from various countries in Africa including Zimbabwe, Tanzania, Kenya, Comoro, Zambia, Uganda, Rwanda, Malawi, Ethiopia, and South Africa, among many others, aims at promoting Tanzania's tourism destinations across the globe.

Motta applauded the role played by the President Samia Suluhu Hassan in her efforts to promote Tanzania's tourism destinations across the globe through the 'Royal Tour' Documentary.

One of the participants of the special event 'Africa Day Mount Kilimanjaro Challenge the Africa We Want 2024', Munyaradzi Muzenda from Zimbabwe appealed to Tanzania government to lower park fees for African nationals.

He further advised the government of Tanzania to lower the fees



for African citizens in order to attract more tourists from the AU member states.

According to previous programme by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism, Tanzania is targeting visitors from the East African Community (EAC) member states to visit wildlife parks, historical sites, and adult EAC citizens will now pay 10,000/- (\$ 4.2), the same fee adult Tanzanians will also be charged.

The Tanzanian government will also focus on meetings and conference visitors through exhibitions, conferences and other tours.

"I know that the government of Tanzania has lowered park fees for East African citizens to attract more tourists from neighbouring countries, but myself I have always been charged as a Europeans or Americans though I mostly climbs Mount Kilimanjaro for the cause," Munyaradzi Muzenda who is also the Director for the African Great Art Banner (GAAB) lamented.

He further explained that, they have planned to attract more and

more Africans from all AU member states countries to come in Tanzania and climb Mount Kilimanjaro-The Roof of Africa to promote the 2063 African Agenda of the 'Africa We Want'.

From 20 to 26 May, 2023, a group of 8-people from some East African Community member states with African Union (AU) flag as well as different of flags of some African countries had a special 7-day Mount Kilimanjaro Expedition through Machame route as a part of their activities to mark 60 Years of AU which is observed on May 25, every year.

The group was leading by a professional Mountain guide, Emmanuel Motta who is also the Director of the tourism company called ORIGIN Trails who explained that the expedition is one of the series of activities to mark 60 years of AU.

"We used Mount Kilimanjaro, the highest mountain in Africa and one of the most tourist attractions in the country as a special platform to unite young Africans with different dreams and visions through the

art of painting in spreading the special message of Africa that says 'The Africa we Want' by 2063 as part of the series of activities of the African Union (AU) Day Celebration which is celebrated on May 25, every year, and we will bring the AU flag on top of the mountain," Motta explained.

He added that, on the day of the African Union (AU), they will climb Mount Kilimanjaro for seven days with some paintings and other artistic works with good messages on the 'Africa We Want' project to promote sustainable local and international tourism.

"During our descend from the top of Mount Kilimanjaro (May 25, this year to mark AU Day, we will use the art of painting through pictures because art expresses more than the words a person can say but in a language that everyone can interpret in their own way," he further enlightened.

He added: "This programme that we will use, will help promote Mount Kilimanjaro as a mass tourist destination because I think there

are not many Africans who climb Mount Kilimanjaro, they are few, and those who climb are from other continents."

"We will market this mountain to all African countries to young people and all those who have a vision about Africa. We want a platform that includes everyone. A person can contribute to explain the Africa he wants. If he is a painter, he will draw a picture about the Africa he wants. A singer will sing a song about the Africa he wants. A writer can write the Africa you want, but all these will be sent to painters to paint our ideas that we cannot paint like them," he explained.

He said that after the pictures are drawn and placed on cloths, they will take them directly to the top of Mount Kilimanjaro, the goal being to promote Mount Kilimanjaro in Africa.

"In each station the painters will continue to draw the ideas of Africa they want, these ideas and these pictures will be sent directly to the top of Mount Kilimanjaro, we will use

art and this art that will be placed on fabrics will be connected and each country will make a picture the size of one kilometre," he said.

A Ugandan national, Faith Agumya who launched her book on the highest peak of Mount Kilimanjaro-UHURU Peak (5,895m ASL) explained that, she thought that climbing Mount Kilimanjaro was easy challenge, but later on she experienced that it was tough challenge, asked young Africans to use such opportunity to show the various talents they have as part of employment.

"This event is a good opportunity for painters because they can create many permanent jobs when we are heading towards this important day for Africans, this is a great job opportunity but people don't see that, most people have been just waiting to be told," she said.

Fred Barungi from Uganda who once didn't reach the highest top of the mountain explained that he always like to challenge himself, so next time he will come back to Tanzania to climb Mount Kilimanjaro to make sure that he is reaching its highest peak.

"I experienced Mount Kilimanjaro as a good teacher as I really learnt many things including weather changing, rain forests, deserts and various friendly wild animals and birds, among many others, but it really needs determination to reach the top," he explained adding that, "I will very old to forget the mountain challenges."

A senior television journalist and Film maker from Kenya Yassin Juma explained that, they are going to produce a special documentary during 7-days Mount Kilimanjaro which will be used to unite all African particularly on some 'burning' issues like free visas, and borderless Africa.

"I believe in Pan-Africanism, and as TV journalist I planned to participate in this special Mount Kilimanjaro many years ago, and I am to document everything in this expedition and use them to promote the 'Africa We Want' campaigns," explained Yassin.

He added, "We will make sure that this program goes well from the beginning because it is an agenda that will exist for 40 years now and it will help Africans and the whole world to know Mount Kilimanjaro and others to be attracted to come and climb our mountain."

Universal social protection needs more financing - ILO

By Special Correspondent

AN additional \$1.4 trillion is needed to achieve universal social protection across low- and middle-income countries, the International Labour Organization (ILO) said

on Wednesday.

Speaking to reporters in New York, the ILO's Public Finance Economist Umberto Cattaneo said that the financing gap to achieve universal protection remains high, especially for low-income coun-

tries.

"When we look at all low- and middle-income countries, we have a financing gap of 3.3 percent of GDP. But when we go to low-income countries, this goes up to 52.3 percent of their GDP," he said.

"Bridging this gap across all low- and middle-income countries requires an additional US\$1.4 trillion."

Regionally, Africa is facing the

biggest challenge in achieving universal coverage, with a financing gap of 17.6 percent of regional GDP per year.

This is followed by low- and middle-income countries in the Arab states with a financing gap of 11.4 percent of regional GDP and Latin American and the Caribbean with a gap of 2.7 percent.

Cattaneo told reporters that closing this gap will require "domestic

resource mobilisation, including progressive taxation and social security contributions."

He added that development assistance for low-income countries should be tripled, with all additional funding allocated to social protection.

Universal social protection is considered a key target in achieving the first of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals focused on poverty.

According to ILO statistics, today, 4.1 billion people worldwide still lack social protection.

Only 29 percent of the world's population has adequate social security coverage and 55 percent lacks any coverage at all.

Chambers of commerce join forces to boost economic growth in East Africa

By Beatrice Philemon

THE call to action has been made for the Chambers of Commerce in Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania to develop a comprehensive strategy aimed at enhancing intra-regional trade, creating jobs for women and youth, and driving positive change within staple food value chains throughout East Africa.

Mathews Wanjala, the regional programme manager at TradeMark Africa (TMA), delivered this proclamation during a recent address to farmers, processors, exporters, aggregators, brokers, traders, banks, and input suppliers from various regions.

They had convened in Dar es Salaam yesterday, to commemorate the commencement of a three-year initiative entitled 'Enhancing Competitiveness in Export-Oriented Staple Food Value Chains in East Africa'.

Wanjala urged small and medium entrepreneurs in Tanzania, Kenya, and Uganda to bolster cross-border trade in crucial food sectors. This collaborative effort is essential to boost the competitiveness of staple food value chains throughout East Africa.

"At TMA, our primary objective in Tanzania is to form partnerships with farmers, producers, and cooperatives in order to enhance the availability of essential food items," he said.

Adding: "Our mission is to elevate the earnings of individuals involved in the grain value chain, raise the scale of trade, and broad-



Dried harvested grains awaiting processing. Photo: Raphy Favre/FAO

en market reach by establishing farmer-run Grain Business Hubs (G-Hubs). Ultimately, our endeavors will have a positive impact on a greater number of community members."

In order to fully harness the benefits of the 'Strengthening Competitiveness in Export-Oriented Staple Food Value Chains in East Africa' project, farmers must aim to consistently produce metric tons of food that adhere to international standards.

"We, at TMA, are committed to collaborating with farmers, producer associations, women exporters, and importers to promote economic diversity and enhance the business environment," he explained.

He expressed excitement to partner with the Eastern Africa Grain Council (EAGC) to implement the 'Strengthening Competitiveness in Export-Oriented Staple Food Value Chains in East Africa' project.

Wanjala affirmed his dedication to working closely with EAGC and providing them with guid-

ance on how to effectively reach out to more women in both rural and urban areas. Michael Kitulizo, the country director of EAGC, emphasized the significance of agriculture in the economies of our region, stressing the critical role that stakeholders in staple food value chains play.

Agriculture was highlighted as a key pillar of our economic success by the speaker, who pointed out its significant contribution to our GDP and its crucial role in addressing pressing socio-economic issues such as food security, employment, and poverty eradication.

Despite its importance, the growth of food commodities trade in our region has been hampered by various challenges, including low aggregation, inadequate infrastructure, limited access to finance, and a lack of information on export market opportunities. These challenges have led to instability and a decline in food trade over the years.

To tackle these obstacles head-on, the EAGC and TMA have joined forces

in a three-year initiative under the USAID-funded ERRA program. The goal of this partnership is to enhance competitiveness in export-oriented staple food value chains in East Africa.

"We are dedicated to empowering smallholder farmers, women, and youth across Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania, creating new opportunities for job creation and income generation," the speaker explained.

This will be achieved through the establishment of farmer-operated grain business hubs (G-Hubs), which will offer access to technology and training to improve grain production, quality, and trade.

"We are dedicated to establishing and reinforcing an information hub that will support regional food balance sheets, influence national and regional food security and trade policies, and cultivate a conducive regulatory environment for trade," he emphasized.

He emphasized that their efforts cannot achieve success in isolation; it necessitates the active participation and cooperation of all stakeholders, spanning from farmer G-hubs representatives to value chain SMEs, service providers, public sector officials, and key collaborators.

"Each of you plays a critical role in shaping the success of this project, so as we embark on this journey together, I encourage you to actively participate in this project, share your expertise, express your concerns, and identify opportunities for collaboration," he urged.

It has been noted that Kenya is identified as the target market, with Tanzania and Uganda set to be key suppliers due to their surplus production. The project aims to address various challenges in the food commodities trade, including issues with aggregation, informal trading practices, and farmers' integration into formal trade channels. Inadequate storage facilities, poor quality management infrastructure, and a lack of post-harvest handling expertise further exacerbate the situation. Additionally, there is a lack of information on export market prospects, limited access to quality management services, and inadequate financing for trade and infrastructure development.

With the participation of over sixty stakeholders from the staple grains value chain, the project aims to achieve several objectives. This includes strengthening farmer-operated grain business hubs (G-Hubs) through the use of technology to improve grain production, quality, and trade. The initiative also seeks to enhance enterprise-level capacities and institutional mechanisms to improve Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) standards and quality compliance, leading to increased export-oriented grain trade. Furthermore, the project aims to establish and improve an information hub to inform regional food balance sheets, impact national and regional food security policies, and create a supportive regulatory environment for trade.



Ambassador Jalel Trabelsi

AfDB selects special envoy for MENA and Gulf region

By Guardian Reporter

THE President of the African Development Bank Group Dr. Akinwumi Adesina has appointed career diplomat Ambassador Jalel Trabelsi as his Special Envoy for the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) and Gulf Region.

A statement issued yesterday and shared to this journalist, indicated that Ambassador Trabelsi brings to the role over 30 years of experience as a highly accomplished and distinguished diplomat.

As Special Envoy for MENA and the Gulf Region, Ambassador Trabelsi will help to foster diplomatic and strategic engagements within the MENA and Gulf Region, focusing on the Bank's strategic priorities, strengthening partnerships and mobilizing public and private sector resources at scale to deliver transformational projects in Africa.

A Tunisian citizen, Ambassador Trabelsi's diplomatic career is marked by significant roles and contributions. He served as Minister Plenipotentiary for African Affairs, and was the Ambassador of Tunisia to Nigeria, Ghana, Benin, Sierra Leone, and the Economic Community of West Africa (Ecowas).

He also served as the Dean of the Council of Arab Ambassadors and in other roles as an Adviser to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Head of the National Commission for Tunisia's candidacy to the Presidency of the African Development Bank.

Commenting on his appointment,



I am delighted to have Ambassador Trabelsi as my Special Envoy for a region that holds a lot of promise for the Bank's and Africa's economic transformation

Ambassador Trabelsi said: "I am extremely honoured to be appointed to this role. As an African, I am motivated to continue to serve our continent and to contribute to the African Development Bank's transformational work under the visionary leadership of Dr. Adesina. I will work to ensure the Bank maintains and further strengthens its excellent and fruitful cooperation and partnership with Middle East and North Africa (MENA) and Gulf Region."

Dr. Adesina said: "I am delighted to have Ambassador Trabelsi as my Special Envoy for a region that holds a lot of promise for the Bank's and Africa's economic transformation. He has a strong track record and expertise in international relations and cooperation as well as international negotiation. He brings extensive knowledge in African, Arab, and European affairs and a deep understanding of the activities of the Bank, as well as other regional and international financial banking institutions."

Summit to delve into the role of Lobito corridor in mineral trade

By Guardian Reporter

The Critical Minerals Africa (CMA) Summit, scheduled for 6-7 November in Cape Town, will feature a panel discussion that will delve into the significant role of the Lobito Corridor in enabling the development of large-scale projects aimed at driving the monetization of resources.

The Lobito Corridor consists of a 1,300 km railway line traversing Angola from the Atlantic Ocean to the country's borders with the DRC and Zambia.

The key interest of the Lobito Corridor is to use it as a means of transporting minerals and materials from the DRC and Zambia all the way over to the EU and the US.

A statement issued yesterday by CMA and shared to this paper, indicated that with the DRC, Zambia and Angola intensifying the exploitation of critical minerals to bolster export revenue, the Lobito Corridor serves as a blueprint for attracting fresh investments to advance infrastructure and mining developments.

Underlining the project's significance, the US International De-



velopment Finance Corporation announced new financing and its long-term commitment towards the development and success of the Lobito Corridor project in February 2024.

The European Commission also signed an agreement with the DRC and Zambian governments to provide funding and technical support for the development of the initiative as part of the bloc's Global Gateway in October 2023.

The agreement followed seven signatories, including the United States, Africa Finance Corporation and the African Development Bank (AfDB), signing a deal to fund the project in October 2023.

The AfDB committed \$500 million towards the initiative as part of the deal. Prior to these commit-

ments, the Lobito Atlantic Railway announced substantial investments in infrastructure development on both the Angolan and DRC sides.

Entitled 'The Lobito Corridor: Driving Economic Transformation in DRC, Zambia, and Angola', the panel discussion at CMA 2024 will delve into best practices for Angola, the DRC and Zambia to maximize the flow of investments to advance their critical minerals value chains amid increasing global demand for raw materials.

In February 2024, the multinational commodity trader Trafigura and Kamo-Kakula entered a significant long-term agreement with the Lobito Atlantic Railway consortium to transport critical minerals via the Lobito corridor. This partnership marks a crucial step towards optimizing the trading process for essential minerals in the region.

Furthermore, Canadian mining firm Ivanhoe Mines recently achieved a milestone by making its inaugural copper shipment from the Kamo-Kakula Copper Complex in the DRC through the corridor.

This successful shipment has significantly reduced transit time from 25 days to just 8 days, showcasing the efficiency and potential of utilizing the Lobito corridor for mineral transportation.

These recent developments emphasize the vital role of regional critical minerals value chains, like the Lobito Corridor, in facilitating the efficient trading of essential minerals and promoting socioeconomic development in the region.

This partnership between key industry players and the utilization of strategic transport routes are pivotal in driving progress and growth in the minerals sector.

Organized by Energy Capital & Power, CMA is the largest dedicated gathering of critical minerals stakeholders in Africa. The event positions Africa as the primary investment destination for critical minerals. This year's edition takes place under the theme 'Innovate, Enact, Invest in African Critical Minerals to Sustain Global Growth', connecting African mining projects and regulators with global investors and stakeholders to unlock the full potential of the continent's raw materials.

Industry players hopeful about proposed mineral tax changes

Kigali

Industry players have said that proposed changes to taxes on minerals, including a major cut in gold rates, could spur interest in processing and contribute to higher revenues from precious metals and stones.

According to the government, the proposals in a new draft law establishing a tax on minerals are meant to promote value addition by setting lower rates for minerals supplied to local smelters and refineries, and at

the same time, discourage the exportation of unprocessed ones through higher rates.

Gasabo Gold Refinery (GGR) Managing Director Bosco Kayobotsi told The New Times that the facility was working at 30 per cent of its capacity, blaming the situation on a high tax rate – six per cent – on gold which was negatively affecting the profitability of traders.

GGR is a mineral processing company established in Rwanda, specialised in adding value to silver and gold, and serving local, regional, and

international clients, according to the firm.

With the tax rate going down to 0.5 per cent as proposed in the bill, he said, the mineral business could be boosted and more gold could be sourced from various places and supplied to the refinery.

"We have a capacity to refine eight tonnes of gold per month, but we work at 30 per cent of that on average because of low supply," he said, pointing out that the situation was due to the fact that the 6 per cent tax on gold that must be paid by export-

ers was high. Article 4 of the new bill (proposed) sets low rates of mining royalty tax applicable to minerals supplied to the local processing facilities to encourage value addition.

The tax rates are three per cent of the norm value for base metals; two per cent of the gross value for gemstones (minerals used in jewellery such as diamond); and two per cent of the norm value for platinum group metals.

Others are rare earth elements (high-tech metals such as uranium) that could attract a two per cent tax

rate of the norm value, energy minerals (such as lithium and cobalt) with three per cent of the norm value; and the category of gold with 0.5 per cent of the norm value – which is the lowest proposed rate of all.

The Chairperson of Rwanda Mining Association, Jean Malik Kalima, said the mining sector commends its engagement in mineral taxation negotiation and decision-making related to the development of the industry, making it one of the biggest earners of foreign currency.

Currently, he said, minerals ex-

ported from Rwanda are predominantly raw, pointing out that traders are affected by treatment (refining) charges when selling raw minerals at international markets, including the London Metal Exchange (LME), which is considered the largest base metal market such as cassiterite (tin).

"And we are in a context to make Rwanda a hub in mineral trading, especially in the gold sector where we want to encourage other countries to use the facilities [refineries and smelters] we have that are not available there," he said.

Kilwa's plea for support in revolutionising seaweed farming

By Beatrice Philemon

SEAWEED farmers in Kilwa district, Lindi region are seeking support to modernize their operations by acquiring state-of-the-art seaweed processing machines. They are reaching out to stakeholders locally and globally for assistance in obtaining the necessary equipment to expand their production of high-quality seaweed products for the commercial market.

By kickstarting this initiative, they hope to not only boost the industry but also create employment opportunities for women and youth in the region.

Pili Kuliwa, the secretary of New Hope for Women (TUJIWAKI) in Kilwa, passionately called for support in a recent interview with this reporter.

She highlighted the challenges faced by seaweed farmers in the region and emphasized the crucial need for modern processing equipment to maximize the potential of their harvest.

Kuliwa expressed the organization's desire to delve into the production of value-added seaweed prod-



Farmers in Kilwa carefully tend to their seaweed species post-harvest. Photo: Beatrice Philemon

ucts like soap, lotion, and oil, which could not only enhance the lives of farmers but also increase market value.

The community needs additional support from donors to acquire necessary resources such as tarpaulins, stalls, and a designated marketplace for their goods, in addition to machinery.

The lack of a proper selling plat-

form has hindered their business ventures, resulting in the selling of raw materials at low prices. With the right support, they believe they can establish a sustainable market for their products and create a thriving business environment.

Seaweed farming in Kilwa is a key income source that remains largely untapped, failing to reach its full potential in uplifting the community

out of poverty.

The introduction of seaweed processing equipment holds the promise of transforming the industry, catalyzing economic growth, and paving the way for a brighter future in Kilwa.

In order to maximize the potential of the seaweed industry in the Kilwa District, it is crucial for the government to actively promote and

facilitate foreign investments in the sector. By doing so, more jobs will be created, benefiting both youth and women in the region.

Effective management of seaweed farming in the Kilwa District has the potential to significantly boost economic growth and reduce poverty levels. The simple farming process, short time farming cycle, and low capital requirements make it an accessible and lucrative option for local farmers.

Additionally, the use of inexpensive technology and provision of stable cash flows can serve as a powerful tool for gender empowerment in the community.

In order to increase the quantity of seaweed sold, it is essential to improve techniques in harvesting, transportation, and storage facilities. By addressing these areas of inefficiency, farmers will be able to increase their production levels and maximize their profits in the market.

Ulimboka Ndile, the Fisheries Officer for Kilwa District, has identified several challenges facing seaweed farmers in the area including a lack of input supply, ropes, storage facilities, and drying facilities, as well as deficiencies in sea and inland trans-

port facilities. These challenges have resulted in low returns for farmers.

In an effort to help farmers increase their profits and produce higher quality products, over 300 seaweed farmers in Kilwa Kivinje, Masoko, Somanga, and Songosongo have received training on seaweed drying and processing to add value to their products.

Currently, seaweed is predominantly grown in 13 villages in the area including Songosongo, Somanga, Kilwa Kivinje, Milamba, Mayungiyungi, Ngomeni, Songomnara, Masoko, Songomnara, Malalani, Rus-hungi, and Pandepoti village. There are over 3,384 farmers involved in seaweed farming, with a total of 52 groups established to support their efforts.

Currently, there are two types of seaweed species grown in Kilwa: *Spinosum* and *Cottonii*. Farmers are engaged in both contract farming and non-contract farming.

It has been suggested that the availability of seaweed processing machines, tarpaulins, and stalls will improve the quality of their harvest, help them get better prices for their seaweed, and ultimately transform their lives for the better.

Water for the future: Tangiers takes steps to secure its blue gold

By Guardian Reporter

THE white city of Tangiers wakes gently at daybreak. Schoolchildren mill up and down the main streets of the old town, the medina, crossing paths with the crowd heading to offices and a few morning tourists.

Overlooking the Strait of Gibraltar at the northern tip of Morocco, Tangiers is a cosmopolitan place and gateway to the great continent of Africa. Every year, its timeless atmosphere attracts millions of tourists, who come to criss-cross its narrow-paved streets.

The guest house "Riad Saba", in the heart of the medina, welcomes holidaymakers with immense care. On the terrace, guests are treated to the view over the port while enjoying a tasty breakfast prepared by Ibrahim Jallouli.

Originally from Oujda, this young chef came to Tangiers to take advantage of the opportunities the city could offer him. "I came here because it's a city full of opportunities, which attracts tourists from all over the world with its cultural

and gastronomic heritage," he comments. For this young professional, the city guarantees access to essential services, particularly the availability of water. "Water is essential in my line of business. I use it every day, either for cooking, drinking or washing ingredients. I couldn't manage without it. But I'm conscious that having continuous, daily access to water is a real challenge in Morocco."

Like many of the Kingdom's citizens, Ibrahim is concerned about the effects of climate change on this vital resource. The region enjoys a warm Mediterranean climate, with the influence of the ocean keeping it damp and temperate.

However, its meteorological profile has been disrupted for several decades: temperatures are rising and rainfall decreasing, affecting the availability of water for millions of the city's residents.

The region's economy is expanding rapidly, attracting numerous industries, as well as experiencing a real population explosion. The need for water is increasing and placing heavy pressure on those



who manage this precious resource.

The Moroccan government realised the scale of the situation several years ago and responded by launching the National Drinking Water Supply and Irrigation Programme (PNAEPI) 2020-2027.

Through the National Office of Electricity and Drinking Water (ONEE), the government is investing in a range of infrastructure projects to secure, strengthen and optimize water resources, with support from the African Development Bank. The city of Tangiers has benefited from a project completed in 2023: a raw water supply from the Ibn Batouta dam.

Built in the late 1970s, the reservoir has seen its level drop for several years. With raw water supplies decreasing in volume, it was time to optimize the re-

source. Until now, raw water from the dam used to flow to the Mharhar treatment plant via the riverbed of the same name. This open-air journey resulted in losses, mainly due to evaporation. An 11-kilometre water pipe has now been built to optimize the resource and remedy the situation. The message is clear: water in Morocco needs to be conserved at any price in light of current and future climatic conditions. This philosophy is shared by the African Development Bank, which is helping Morocco to maintain its momentum. As a result, Africa's premier development finance institution has supported the ONEE by providing EUR 10 million in funding for the project. This is in addition to the overall amount of EUR 1.2 billion already invested in the water sector in Morocco.

Truck gridlock brings Jinja's Masese ward to a standstill

JINJA

BUSINESS came to a standstill in sections of Jinja city's industrial area after five trucks got stuck at different points along Factory Street, in Masese ward, in the southern division.

This follows heavy rains, which filled up giant existing potholes, that drivers accidentally drove into. The trucks, which reportedly got stuck early Thursday, were carrying processed goods from the factory premises to their markets in Jinja city and beyond.

Masese is home to over 100 large-scale and cottage industries, with Factory Road as their major gateway to the markets.

An employee of MMI still Mills who spoke to URN on condition of anonymity says that one of the trucks got stuck 10 meters away from a main gate, making it impossible for both suppliers and distributors to access the premises.

Another transport officer says that they received raw materials via Ripon Falls pier and their trucks were meant to collect them in eight hours, but due to the blockages, they have resolved to offload the same on one-tonnage capacity boats, which are ferrying the same to the factory premises



Some of the vehicles stuck in the middle of the road. Courtesy of URN

to enable production.

Sarah Nyakecho, a cotton supplier in one of the factories explained that the industrial area borders Lake Victoria on one side and slums on the left side, making it inaccessible during heavy rains and road blockages like these.

Nyakecho says that government should prioritize working on Factory Road, as it doubles as both a big employment hub for several youths in Jinja city and a revenue earner for the economy.

Nasser Ashiraf, the southern

division mayor says that they have lobbied all government offices ranging from the Ministry of Works, Uganda National Roads Authority-UNRA, and parliament, including President Museveni himself to work on the road in vain. Nasser noted that the business community struggles to transport goods and services due to the big ditches in the road, but nothing has been done to address their plight.

By 3:00 PM, police had not deployed their traffic personnel on

sight, forcing factory owners to deploy their security guards to supervise both traffic flow and the evacuation processes.

Meanwhile, the Kiira regional police spokesperson, James Mubi said their traffic department had not received any report about the same.

Mubi however, advised truckers to use an alternative route along the Jinja-Iganga highway, as a means of accessing parts in the industrial area, which have not been plunged by the trucks.

IEEFA: Tidal wave of new LNG supply to flood market amid demand uncertainty

By Guardian Reporter

SLUGGISH demand growth for liquefied natural gas (LNG), combined with a record increase in global export capacity through 2028, will likely thrust markets into an extended period of oversupply, according to the latest global LNG outlook.

A statement issued yesterday by the Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis (IEEFA), and shared to this journalist, indicates that major importing regions aim to reduce LNG demand through 2030.

This includes Japan, South Korea, and Europe, moreover, global LNG suppliers and traders will increasingly depend on growth in emerging markets to both compensate for falling imports elsewhere and absorb a flood of new supply.

However, such rapid LNG demand growth in emerging economies is not guaranteed, even in an oversupplied market.

Countries in South and Southeast Asia, for example, will face distinct barriers to rising demand, including fiscal and credit challenges, extensive infrastructure delays, and contracting issues, among other obstacles.

The global LNG crisis following Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022 brought these issues to the fore, spurring many markets to reduce the role of LNG in their development plans and accelerate the development of alternative energy sources.

IEEFA expects Europe's gas and LNG demand to fall through 2030. Europe's natural gas demand has declined 20 percent since 2021, due to fuel switching, increased nuclear and renewables generation, and energy efficiency measures.

LNG imports to Japan and South Korea fell 8 percent and 5 percent, respectively, in 2023. National energy and climate plans envision steep reductions in the role for LNG in both countries, turning instead to nuclear and renewable energy. Taiwan, on the other hand, aims to cut nuclear power, which may boost LNG demand.

China reclaimed its position as the

world's largest LNG importer in 2023. However, domestic natural gas production and additional pipeline imports may limit LNG demand growth. Unprecedented increases in renewables capacity are constraining the need for LNG in the power sector.

In South Asia, fiscal challenges along with the inherent volatility of LNG prices may constrain rapid near-term demand growth, and the role of LNG in power generation is likely to remain low.

In Southeast Asia, extensive development timelines, contract negotiations, and repeated project delays for LNG-related infrastructure may continue to inhibit demand while strengthening political incentives to pursue alternative energy sources.

As the recent LNG crisis compromised demand growth, high prices also spurred a flood of new supply. Overall, IEEFA expects LNG liquefaction projects already under construction to add 193 million metric tons per annum (MTPA) through 2028—a 40 percent increase in just five years—bringing the world's total nameplate liquefaction capacity to 666.5 MTPA.

The largest share of supply additions will come from the U.S. and Qatar, likely pushing Australia to third place among global LNG suppliers. Meanwhile, substantial LNG capacity is under construction in Russia, Canada, and African nations.

In recent years, global LNG traders—including, for example, Shell, TotalEnergies, and many others—have contracted to buy the largest share of LNG volumes from new export facilities, with the aim of reselling cargoes to buyers around the world. But if rapid and sustained demand growth does not materialize, LNG suppliers and traders will likely face an extended period of low prices and slim profits.

"If rapid and sustained demand growth does not materialize, LNG suppliers and traders—particularly those with higher costs and significant uncontracted supplies—will likely face an extended period of low prices and slim profits," says Clark Williams-Derry, energy finance analyst.



A liquefied natural gas storage. File Photo

How struggling African countries face climate crisis payment woes

By Michael Olabisi

The world's poorest countries, especially those in Africa, are struggling to pay for a climate crisis they cannot afford.

More public debt is not the answer: climate investment needs exceed the lending capacity of multilateral finance institutions, and many African countries are already in a funding squeeze. What's needed are novel solutions—chiefly stepped-up private sector investment for climate action in poor countries. And these efforts cannot be simply country-based. They must be geared to achieve global goals for net zero greenhouse gas emissions.

The stakes in Africa are heightened because the continent will contribute the most to human population growth in coming decades. This will increase the need for funds to mitigate climate-warming emissions. At the same time, a greater share of the region's agriculture will be exposed to climate-linked productivity losses. Millions of families in Mali, Niger, and Senegal under-

stand from experience the horror of desertification, which is set to worsen without climate action. On the other hand, Africa's large coastal cities—including Lagos, its most populous metropolis—have no meaningful defense against rising oceans.

Based on the size of their economies, African countries face a disproportionate burden to avoid the worst of climate change. For example, while China needs to raise its annual climate mitigation spending by 2 percent of GDP through 2030, Cameroon needs to increase spending by 9 percent of GDP, according to the World Bank's 2023 Country Climate and Development Reports. The five countries of the West African Sahel—Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger—some of the poorest in the world, need to increase spending by about 8 percent of GDP on average.

The continent's required climate funding comes on top of the existing need for development financing, in addition to resources for COVID crisis recovery. Inadequate and missing public services in health, transportation, and education in many African countries hold back economic growth—and some have resorted to debt to address development financing gaps.

Additional borrowing to pay for climate mitigation is not a



good option, for at least three reasons.

First, poor countries have limited ability to borrow. They

must either pay above-market rates to borrow in international debt markets (Olabisi and Stein 2015) or must accept burden-

some conditions from multilateral and development lending institutions. With rising debt, the ratios of service payments to revenues are troubling for many governments. Among the continent's largest economies, South Africa's had debt of nearly 70 percent of GDP in 2021; Nigeria's was about 40 percent. The pressure to spend and governments' inability to do so have the makings of a crisis that is not entirely of the countries' making.

Second, investment needs are beyond the capacity of the world's multilateral lending and development institutions. The global need for investment to address the worst of climate change exceeds \$1.3 trillion a year for the next decade. This amount will not address all climate issues; it will only avoid the worst effects. The African Development Bank estimates that Africa needs to spend \$3 trillion by 2030. For context, all sub-Saharan Africa combined had a GDP of \$2 trillion in 2022. Even if you added the entire \$1 trillion lending capacity of the IMF to the \$400 billion lending portfolio of the World Bank, it is clear that the global financial institutions do not have the lending capacity to address climate change at the speed and scale needed. If the lending capacity of the regional development banks is added to the mix, we would come close to the scale of financing needed.

But in that case banks would do little else over the next decades but finance the green transition and urgently needed climate adaptation.

Third, public debt may not be the most effective financing mechanism for some of the most promising climate interventions. Debt may not always work as a means to deploy relatively recent technologies at scale, often in settings where such technologies are untested. Some of the principal technologies for climate mitigation or adaptation—such as solar- or wind-powered irrigation for farmland or retrofitting residences and industrial sites—do not fit the mold of typical debt-funded public projects. Much of the necessary climate funding is to prevent severe human and economic losses. The auxiliary goal of climate financing is to boost the adaptive capacity of local economies. Neither boosting adaptive capacity nor avoiding asset losses looks, in principle, like a bankable venture that can produce a steady cashflow stream.

Climate-friendly finance In exploring new ideas, one possibility is the supplementation of debt with other financing arrangements that meet the challenge of climate change.

Africa is a prime location to create opportunity from this crisis. The need for energy fits with the abundant renewable

energy potential of the continent. Africa's solar potential greatly exceeds its fossil fuel resources. If high-income countries are looking for markets, Africa is poised to have 2 billion consumers of food, energy, and water by 2050. If the need is for labor and new ideas, the youthful population of the region is seeking opportunities for work. The world can choose to leapfrog the impending multiple crises of climate and development financing by setting the conditions for a rapid transition to sustainable energy and responsible natural resource consumption for the region, while it is still a continent of 1.2 billion.

This challenge calls for novel approaches to financing. Spending to address climate change is not optional, given the severe human and economic losses that accompany unmitigated greenhouse gas emissions. For many African countries, there is no fiscal policy wiggle room for structural adjustment.

Michael Olabisi (pictured), is an assistant professor at Michigan State University in the US.

Airbus surpasses last year's commercial aircraft deliveries in strong start to 2024

By Guardian Reporter

Airbus has posted a strong start to the first quarter of 2024, surpassing last year's commercial aircraft deliveries, noting the increase in production of the A350 wide-body aircraft driven by high demand, contributes to the firm's positive outlook

The firm's statement issued yesterday and shared to this journalist, stated that with a solid backlog and adherence to 2024 forecasts, Airbus and the aerospace industry are poised for continued success.

"We delivered first quarter 2024 results against the backdrop of an operating environment that shows no sign of improvement. Geopolitical and supply chain tensions continue. In that context, we delivered 142 commercial aircraft," said Airbus CEO Guillaume Faury.

Adding: "We started 2024 with a solid order intake across our businesses. The strong momentum on wide-body aircraft underpins our decision to increase the production rate for the A350 to 12 aircraft a month in 2028."

The CEO further said: "Our ramp up plans are continuing, supported by the investments in our production system while relying on our core pillars of safety, quality, integrity, compliance and security."

The statement reveals that in the first quarter of 2024, Airbus experienced a rise in total gross commercial aircraft orders to 170, up from 156 in Q1 2023. Despite no cancellations, net orders remained at 142, matching the previous year's figure. As of March 2024, the order backlog stood at 8,626 commercial aircraft.

During the same period, Airbus Helicopters also observed a growth in net orders, reaching 63 units compared to 39 in Q1 2023, particularly in the light and medium segments. Meanwhile, Airbus Defence and Space's order intake by value was slightly lower at €2.0 billion, down from the previous year's €2.5 billion.

In terms of financial performance, Airbus reported a 9 percent increase in consolidated revenues in the first quarter of 2023, totaling €12.8 billion compared to €11.8 billion in the same period last year. This growth was primarily attributed to the delivery of 142 commercial aircraft, consisting of 12 A220s, 116 A320 Family, 7 A330s, and 7 A350s. Revenues from commercial aircraft activities increased by 13 percent, largely due to the higher number of deliveries.

Despite a decline in Airbus Helicopters' deliveries to 50 units during the quarter, resulting in a 9 percent decrease in revenues, this was partly offset by a rise in services revenue.

Airbus Defence and Space experienced a 4 percent increase in revenues in the first quarter of 2023, primarily due to strong performance in the Air Power business. This growth was slightly tempered by less favorable phasing in Space Systems. During the quarter, one A400M military airlifter was successfully delivered, showcasing the company's continued operational success.

The overall strong performance of Airbus in the first quarter of 2023 demonstrates the company's ongoing success in the commercial aircraft market and its diverse business portfolio across various segments.



ITV PGM SCHEDULE

SATURDAY 27 April

5:30 Uwariya wa Mazoezi
6:00 HABARI
6:40 Kumeleka
7:00 Habari
8:00 Ai Jazeera
9:00 Watoto wetu
10:05 Shika Bamba 5
10:35 Mjuzi Zaidi rpt
11:15 Chetu ni chetu rpt
11:50 Hawavumi lakini wamo
12:50 Art and Lifestyle
13:20 Shamba lulu
13:50 Soap rpt: Laws of love
14:45 Igizo: Mizenge
16:10 Igizo: Slay Queen
17:00 Shamsam za Pwani
18:00 Hapa na Pale
18:15 Mjuzi Zaidi
19:00 Jungu kuu
19:30 Shika Bamba
20:00 Habari
21:05 Igizo: Slay Queen
21:40 Art and Lifestyle
22:10 ITV Top 10
22:50 Hawavumi lakini wamo
23:40 Soap: Uzalo rpt
00:30 Ai Jazeera

SUNDAY 28 April

5:30 Uwariya wa Mazoezi
6:00 HABARI
6:40 Kumeleka
7:00 Habari
8:00 Ai Jazeera
9:00 Watoto wetu
10:05 Shika Bamba
10:35 Mjuzi Zaidi
11:15 Chetu ni chetu rpt
11:50 Hawavumi lakini wamo
12:50 Art and Lifestyle
13:20 Shamba lulu
13:50 Soap rpt: Laws of love
14:45 Igizo: Mizenge
16:10 Igizo: Slay Queen
17:00 Shamsam za Pwani
18:00 Hapa na Pale
18:15 Mjuzi Zaidi
19:00 Jungu kuu
19:30 Shika Bamba
20:00 Habari
21:05 Igizo: Slay Queen

MONDAY 29 April

5:30 Soap rpt: Uzalo
6:00 Uwariya wa Mazoezi
6:40 HABARI
7:00 Habari
8:00 Kumeleka
8:55 Habari za saa

TUESDAY 30 April

5:00 Soap rpt: Uzalo
5:30 Uwariya wa Mazoezi
6:00 HABARI
6:40 Kumeleka
7:00 Habari
8:00 Ai Jazeera
9:00 Watoto wetu
10:05 Shika Bamba
10:35 Mjuzi Zaidi
11:15 Chetu ni chetu rpt
11:50 Hawavumi lakini wamo
12:50 Art and Lifestyle
13:20 Shamba lulu
13:50 Soap rpt: Laws of love
14:45 Igizo: Mizenge
16:10 Igizo: Slay Queen
17:00 Shamsam za Pwani
18:00 Hapa na Pale
18:15 Mjuzi Zaidi
19:00 Jungu kuu
19:30 Shika Bamba
20:00 Habari
21:05 Igizo: Slay Queen

WEDNESDAY 1 May

5:00 Soap rpt: Uzalo
5:30 Uwariya wa Mazoezi
6:00 HABARI
6:40 Kumeleka
7:30 HABARI
8:00 Ai Jazeera
9:00 Our Earth
9:30 Soap rpt: Uzalo
10:00 Uwariya wa Mazoezi
10:30 Kumeleka
11:00 Mjuzi Zaidi
11:30 Kipindi maalum: Mto wa Jamhuri rpt
12:00 Ai Jazeera
12:30 Bundesliga na DW rpt
13:00 Dakika 45 rpt
13:55 Habari za saa
14:40 Chetu ni chetu rpt
15:30 Jungu kuu rpt
16:00 Hapa na Pale
16:15 Kipindi maalum: Vuna Dele
18:00 DW: Afimax
18:30 Aya ya Jamii
19:30 Soap: Laws of love
20:00 Habari
21:05 Dakika 45
22:20 Kipindi maalum: NHF
22:15 Bundesliga na DW
23:00 Soap: Uzalo
23:10 Jiji Ietu
23:30 Music: The Base
23:40 Soap: Uzalo rpt
00:30 Ai Jazeera

THURSDAY 2 May

5:00 Soap rpt: Uzalo
5:30 Uwariya wa Mazoezi
6:00 HABARI
6:40 Kumeleka
7:30 HABARI
8:00 Ai Jazeera
9:00 Watoto wetu
10:05 Shika Bamba
10:35 Mjuzi Zaidi
11:15 Chetu ni chetu rpt
11:50 Hawavumi lakini wamo
12:50 Art and Lifestyle
13:20 Shamba lulu
13:50 Soap rpt: Laws of love
14:45 Igizo: Mizenge
16:10 Igizo: Slay Queen
17:00 Shamsam za Pwani
18:00 Hapa na Pale
18:15 Mjuzi Zaidi
19:00 Jungu kuu

FRIDAY 3 May

5:00 Soap rpt: Uzalo
5:30 Uwariya wa Mazoezi
6:00 HABARI
6:40 Kumeleka
7:30 HABARI
8:00 Ai Jazeera
9:00 Our Earth
9:30 Soap rpt: Uzalo
10:00 Uwariya wa Mazoezi
10:30 Kumeleka
11:00 Mjuzi Zaidi
11:30 Kipindi maalum: Mto wa Jamhuri rpt
12:00 Ai Jazeera
12:30 Bundesliga na DW rpt
13:00 Dakika 45 rpt
13:55 Habari za saa
14:40 Chetu ni chetu rpt
15:30 Jungu kuu rpt
16:00 Hapa na Pale
16:15 Kipindi maalum: Vuna Dele
18:00 DW: Afimax
18:30 Aya ya Jamii
19:30 Soap: Laws of love
20:00 Habari
21:05 Dakika 45
22:20 Kipindi maalum: NHF
22:15 Bundesliga na DW
23:00 Soap: Uzalo
23:10 Jiji Ietu
23:30 Music: The Base
23:40 Soap: Uzalo rpt
00:30 Ai Jazeera

SATURDAY 4 May

5:30 Uwariya wa Mazoezi
6:00 HABARI
6:40 Kumeleka
7:30 HABARI
8:00 Ai Jazeera
9:00 Watoto wetu
10:05 Shika Bamba
10:35 Mjuzi Zaidi
11:15 Chetu ni chetu rpt
11:50 Hawavumi lakini wamo
12:50 Art and Lifestyle
13:20 Shamba lulu
13:50 Soap rpt: Laws of love
14:45 Igizo: Mizenge
16:10 Igizo: Slay Queen
17:00 Shamsam za Pwani
18:00 Hapa na Pale
18:15 Mjuzi Zaidi
19:00 Jungu kuu

SUNDAY 5 May

5:30 Uwariya wa Mazoezi
6:00 HABARI
6:40 Kumeleka
7:00 Habari
8:00 Ai Jazeera
9:00 Watoto wetu
10:05 Shika Bamba
10:35 Mjuzi Zaidi
11:15 Chetu ni chetu rpt
11:50 Hawavumi lakini wamo
12:50 Art and Lifestyle
13:20 Shamba lulu
13:50 Soap rpt: Laws of love
14:45 Igizo: Mizenge
16:10 Igizo: Slay Queen
17:00 Shamsam za Pwani
18:00 Hapa na Pale
18:15 Mjuzi Zaidi
19:00 Jungu kuu

MONDAY 6 May

5:30 Uwariya wa Mazoezi
6:00 HABARI
6:40 Kumeleka
7:30 HABARI
8:00 Ai Jazeera
9:00 Our Earth
9:30 Soap rpt: Uzalo
10:00 Uwariya wa Mazoezi
10:30 Kumeleka
11:00 Mjuzi Zaidi
11:30 Kipindi maalum: Mto wa Jamhuri rpt
12:00 Ai Jazeera
12:30 Bundesliga na DW rpt
13:00 Dakika 45 rpt
13:55 Habari za saa
14:40 Chetu ni chetu rpt
15:30 Jungu kuu rpt
16:00 Hapa na Pale
16:15 Kipindi maalum: Vuna Dele
18:00 DW: Afimax
18:30 Aya ya Jamii
19:30 Soap: Laws of love
20:00 Habari
21:05 Dakika 45
22:20 Kipindi maalum: NHF
22:15 Bundesliga na DW
23:00 Soap: Uzalo
23:10 Jiji Ietu
23:30 Music: The Base
23:40 Soap: Uzalo rpt
00:30 Ai Jazeera

TUESDAY 7 May

5:00 Soap rpt: Uzalo
5:30 Uwariya wa Mazoezi
6:00 HABARI
6:40 Kumeleka
7:30 HABARI
8:00 Ai Jazeera
9:00 Watoto wetu
10:05 Shika Bamba
10:35 Mjuzi Zaidi
11:15 Chetu ni chetu rpt
11:50 Hawavumi lakini wamo
12:50 Art and Lifestyle
13:20 Shamba lulu
13:50 Soap rpt: Laws of love
14:45 Igizo: Mizenge
16:10 Igizo: Slay Queen
17:00 Shamsam za Pwani
18:00 Hapa na Pale
18:15 Mjuzi Zaidi
19:00 Jungu kuu

WEDNESDAY 8 May

5:00 Soap rpt: Uzalo
5:30 Uwariya wa Mazoezi
6:00 HABARI
6:40 Kumeleka
7:30 HABARI
8:00 Ai Jazeera
9:00 Watoto wetu
10:05 Shika Bamba
10:35 Mjuzi Zaidi
11:15 Chetu ni chetu rpt
11:50 Hawavumi lakini wamo
12:50 Art and Lifestyle
13:20 Shamba lulu
13:50 Soap rpt: Laws of love
14:45 Igizo: Mizenge
16:10 Igizo: Slay Queen
17:00 Shamsam za Pwani
18:00 Hapa na Pale
18:15 Mjuzi Zaidi
19:00 Jungu kuu

THURSDAY 9 May

5:00 Soap rpt: Uzalo
5:30 Uwariya wa Mazoezi
6:00 HABARI
6:40 Kumeleka
7:30 HABARI
8:00 Ai Jazeera
9:00 Our Earth
9:30 Soap rpt: Uzalo
10:00 Uwariya wa Mazoezi
10:30 Kumeleka
11:00 Mjuzi Zaidi
11:30 Kipindi maalum: Mto wa Jamhuri rpt
12:00 Ai Jazeera
12:30 Bundesliga na DW rpt
13:00 Dakika 45 rpt
13:55 Habari za saa
14:40 Chetu ni chetu rpt
15:30 Jungu kuu rpt
16:00 Hapa na Pale
16:15 Kipindi maalum: Vuna Dele
18:00 DW: Afimax
18:30 Aya ya Jamii
19:30 Soap: Laws of love
20:00 Habari
21:05 Dakika 45
22:20 Kipindi maalum: NHF
22:15 Bundesliga na DW
23:00 Soap: Uzalo
23:10 Jiji Ietu
23:30 Music: The Base
23:40 Soap: Uzalo rpt
00:30 Ai Jazeera

FRIDAY 10 May

5:00 Soap rpt: Uzalo
5:30 Uwariya wa Mazoezi
6:00 HABARI
6:40 Kumeleka
7:30 HABARI
8:00 Ai Jazeera
9:00 Our Earth
9:30 Soap rpt: Uzalo
10:00 Uwariya wa Mazoezi
10:30 Kumeleka
11:00 Mjuzi Zaidi
11:30 Kipindi maalum: Mto wa Jamhuri rpt
12:00 Ai Jazeera
12:30 Bundesliga na DW rpt
13:00 Dakika 45 rpt
13:55 Habari za saa
14:40 Chetu ni chetu rpt
15:30 Jungu kuu rpt
16:00 Hapa na Pale
16:15 Kipindi maalum: Vuna Dele
18:00 DW: Afimax
18:30 Aya ya Jamii
19:30 Soap: Laws of love
20:00 Habari
21:05 Dakika 45
22:20 Kipindi maalum: NHF
22:15 Bundesliga na DW
23:00 Soap: Uzalo
23:10 Jiji Ietu
23:30 Music: The Base
23:40 Soap: Uzalo rpt
00:30 Ai Jazeera

SATURDAY 11 May

5:00 Soap rpt: Uzalo
5:30 Uwariya wa Mazoezi
6:00 HABARI
6:40 Kumeleka
7:30 HABARI
8:00 Ai Jazeera
9:00 Our Earth
9:30 Soap rpt: Uzalo
10:00 Uwariya wa Mazoezi
10:30 Kumeleka
11:00 Mjuzi Zaidi
11:30 Kipindi maalum: Mto wa Jamhuri rpt
12:00 Ai Jazeera
12:30 Bundesliga na DW rpt
13:00 Dakika 45 rpt
13:55 Habari za saa
14:40 Chetu ni chetu rpt
15:30 Jungu kuu rpt
16:00 Hapa na Pale
16:15 Kipindi maalum: Vuna Dele
18:00 DW: Afimax
18:30 Aya ya Jamii
19:30 Soap: Laws of love
20:00 Habari
21:05 Dakika 45
22:20 Kipindi maalum: NHF
22:15 Bundesliga na DW
23:00 Soap: Uzalo
23:10 Jiji Ietu
23:30 Music: The Base
23:40 Soap: Uzalo rpt
00:30 Ai Jazeera

SUNDAY 12 May

5:00 Soap rpt: Uzalo
5:30 Uwariya wa Mazoezi
6:00 HABARI
6:40 Kumeleka
7:30 HABARI
8:00 Ai Jazeera
9:00 Our Earth
9:30 Soap rpt: Uzalo
10:00 Uwariya wa Mazoezi
10:30 Kumeleka
11:00 Mjuzi Zaidi
11:30 Kipindi maalum: Mto wa Jamhuri rpt
12:00 Ai Jazeera
12:30 Bundesliga na DW rpt
13:00 Dakika 45 rpt
13:55 Habari za saa
14:40 Chetu ni chetu rpt
15:30 Jungu kuu rpt
16:00 Hapa na Pale
16:15 Kipindi maalum: Vuna Dele
18:00 DW: Afimax
18:30 Aya ya Jamii
19:30 Soap: Laws of love
20:00 Habari
21:05 Dakika 45
22:20 Kipindi maalum: NHF
22:15 Bundesliga na DW
23:00 Soap: Uzalo
23:10 Jiji Ietu
23:30 Music: The Base
23:40 Soap: Uzalo rpt
00:30 Ai Jazeera

MONDAY 13 May

5:00 Soap rpt: Uzalo
5:30 Uwariya wa Mazoezi
6:00 HABARI
6:40 Kumeleka
7:30 HABARI
8:00 Ai Jazeera
9:00 Our Earth
9:30 Soap rpt: Uzalo
10:00 Uwariya wa Mazoezi
10:30 Kumeleka
11:00 Mjuzi Zaidi
11:30 Kipindi maalum: Mto wa Jamhuri rpt
12:00 Ai Jazeera
12:30 Bundesliga na DW rpt
13:00 Dakika 45 rpt
13:55 Habari za saa
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16:00 Hapa na Pale
16:15 Kipindi maalum: Vuna Dele
18:00 DW: Afimax
18:30 Aya ya Jamii
19:30 Soap: Laws of love
20:00 Habari
21:05 Dakika 45
22:20 Kipindi maalum: NHF
22:15 Bundesliga na DW
23:00 Soap: Uzalo
23:10 Jiji Ietu
23:30 Music: The Base
23:40 Soap: Uzalo rpt
00:30 Ai Jazeera

TUESDAY 14 May

5:00 Soap rpt: Uzalo
5:30 Uwariya wa Mazoezi
6:00 HABARI
6:40 Kumeleka
7:30 HABARI
8:00 Ai Jazeera
9:00 Our Earth
9:30 Soap rpt: Uzalo
10:00 Uwariya wa Mazoezi
10:30 Kumeleka
11:00 Mjuzi Zaidi
11:30 Kipindi maalum: Mto wa Jamhuri rpt
12:00 Ai Jazeera
12:30 Bundesliga na DW rpt
13:00 Dakika 45 rpt
13:55 Habari za saa
14:40 Chetu ni chetu rpt
15:30 Jungu kuu rpt
16:00 Hapa na Pale
16:15 Kipindi maalum: Vuna Dele
18:00 DW: Afimax
18:30 Aya ya Jamii
19:30 Soap: Laws of love
20:00 Habari
21:05 Dakika 45
22:20 Kipindi maalum: NHF
22:15 Bundesliga na DW
23:00 Soap: Uzalo
23:10 Jiji Ietu
23:30 Music: The Base
23:40 Soap: Uzalo rpt
00:30 Ai Jazeera

WEDNESDAY 15 May

5:00 Soap rpt: Uzalo
5:30 Uwariya wa Mazoezi
6:00 HABARI
6:40 Kumeleka
7:30 HABARI
8:00 Ai Jazeera
9:00 Our Earth
9:30 Soap rpt: Uzalo
10:00 Uwariya wa Mazoezi
10:30 Kumeleka
11:00 Mjuzi Zaidi
11:30 Kipindi maalum: Mto wa Jamhuri rpt
12:00 Ai Jazeera
12:30 Bundesliga na DW rpt
13:00 Dakika 45 rpt
13:55 Habari za saa
14:40 Chetu ni chetu rpt
15:30 Jungu kuu rpt
16:00 Hapa na Pale
16:15 Kipindi maalum: Vuna Dele
18:00 DW: Afimax
18:30 Aya ya Jamii
19:30 Soap: Laws of love
20:00 Habari
21:05 Dakika 45
22:20 Kipindi maalum: NHF
22:15 Bundesliga na DW
23:00 Soap: Uzalo
23:10 Jiji Ietu
23:30 Music: The Base
23:40 Soap: Uzalo rpt
00:30 Ai Jazeera

THURSDAY 16 May

5:00 Soap rpt: Uzalo
5:30 Uwariya wa Mazoezi
6:00 HABARI
6:40 Kumeleka
7:30 HABARI
8:00 Ai Jazeera
9:00 Our Earth
9:30 Soap rpt: Uzalo
10:00 Uwariya wa Mazoezi
10:30 Kumeleka
11:00 Mjuzi Zaidi
11:30 Kipindi maalum: Mto wa Jamhuri rpt
12:00 Ai Jazeera
12:30 Bundesliga na DW rpt
13:00 Dakika 45 rpt
13:55 Habari za saa
14:40 Chetu ni chetu rpt
15:30 Jungu kuu rpt
16:00 Hapa na Pale
16:15 Kipindi maalum: Vuna Dele
18:00 DW: Afimax
18:30 Aya ya Jamii
19:30 Soap: Laws of love
20:00 Habari
21:05 Dakika 45
22:20 Kipindi maalum: NHF
22:15 Bundesliga na DW
23:00 Soap: Uzalo
23:10 Jiji Ietu
23:30 Music: The Base
23:40 Soap: Uzalo rpt
00:30 Ai Jazeera

FRIDAY 17 May

5:00 Soap rpt: Uzalo
5:30 Uwariya wa Mazoezi
6:00 HABARI
6:40 Kumeleka
7:30 HABARI
8:00 Ai Jazeera
9:00 Our Earth
9:30 Soap rpt: Uzalo
10:00 Uwariya wa Mazoezi
10:30 Kumeleka
11:00 Mjuzi Zaidi
11:30 Kipindi maalum: Mto wa Jamhuri rpt
12:00 Ai Jazeera
12:30 Bundesliga na DW rpt
13:00 Dakika 45 rpt
13:55 Habari za saa
14:40 Chetu ni chetu rpt
15:30 Jungu kuu rpt
16:00 Hapa na Pale
16:15 Kipindi maalum: Vuna Dele
18:00 DW: Afimax
18:30 Aya ya Jamii
19:30 Soap: Laws of love
20:00 Habari
21:05 Dakika 45
22:20 Kipindi maalum: NHF
22:15 Bundesliga na DW
23:00 Soap: Uzalo
23:10 Jiji Ietu
23:30 Music: The Base
23:40 Soap: Uzalo rpt
00:30 Ai Jazeera

SATURDAY 18 May

5:00 Soap rpt: Uzalo
5:30 Uwariya wa Mazoezi
6:00 HABARI
6:40 Kumeleka
7:30 HABARI
8:00 Ai Jazeera
9:00 Our Earth
9:30 Soap rpt: Uzalo
10:00 Uwariya wa Mazoezi
10:30 Kumeleka
11:00 Mjuzi Zaidi
11:30 Kipindi maalum: Mto wa Jamhuri rpt
12:00 Ai Jazeera
12:30 Bundesliga na DW rpt
13:00 Dakika 45 rpt
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22:15 Bundesliga na DW
23:00 Soap: Uzalo
23:10 Jiji Ietu
23:30 Music: The Base
23:40 Soap: Uzalo rpt
00:30 Ai Jazeera

SUNDAY 19 May

5:00 Soap rpt: Uzalo
5:30 Uwariya wa Mazoezi
6:00 HABARI
6:40 Kumeleka
7:30 HABARI
8:00 Ai Jazeera
9:00 Our Earth
9:30 Soap rpt: Uzalo
10:00 Uwariya wa Mazoezi
10:30 Kumeleka
11:00 Mjuzi Zaidi
11:30 Kipindi maalum: Mto wa Jamhuri rpt
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23:00 Soap: Uzalo
23:10 Jiji Ietu
23

WORLD

'Europe could die': Macron urges stronger defenses, economic reforms

PARIS

FRENCH President Emmanuel Macron called on Thursday for stronger, more integrated European defenses as he outlined his vision for a more assertive European Union on the global stage. In a speech at the Sorbonne University in Paris, he also said the continent must not become a vassal of the United States.

"There is a risk our Europe could die. We are not equipped to face the risks," Macron said.

With just three years left of his second and final term in office, Macron, 46, wants to show his critics he retains the energy and fresh thinking that helped propel him into the presidency in 2017 and that he has not become a lame duck leader.

In the speech lasting nearly two hours, he warned that military, economic and other pressures could weaken and frag-

ment the 27-nation EU.

He called for a boost in Europe's cybersecurity capacity, closer defense ties with post-Brexit Britain, and the creation of a European academy to train high-ranking military personnel.

Europeans should give preference to buying European military equipment, he said.

"We must produce more, we must produce faster, and we must produce as Europeans," Macron said.

The speech won a positive response from Macron's main EU partner, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz, with whom he has often clashed on defense and trade issues.

"France and Germany want Europe to be strong," Scholz said in a post. "Your speech contains good ideas on how we can achieve this."

Macron has long called for European "strategic autonomy" involving less reliance on the United States, a stance that



French President Emmanuel Macron delivers a speech on Europe in the amphitheater of the Sorbonne University in Paris on Thursday. AP

has gained greater resonance in the face of Donald Trump's bid to return to the White House. Trump has often accused Europe of free loading on defense at the United States' expense.

Europe "must show that it is never a vassal of the United States and that it also knows how to talk to all the other regions of the world", Macron said.

Many EU officials believe there is currently no credible alternative to the US military umbrella.

Economic challenges

Macron said Europe also risks falling behind economically as global free-trade rules are being challenged by major competitors. The European Central Bank should no longer just target inflation, but also growth and climate, he said.

The EU should agree exemptions to its own competition rules so it can support firms in sectors such as AI and green energy in the face of "over-

subsidies" by the US, Macron said.

Europe needs less fragmented markets for energy, telecoms and financial services, and must also cut red tape, he added.

The French leader hopes his speech will have the same impact as a similar address at the Sorbonne he made seven years ago that prefigured some significant EU policy shifts.

Since then, much has changed, with geopolitical challenges including the conflicts in Gaza and Ukraine.

Thursday's speech was billed by Macron's advisers as France's contribution to the EU's strategic agenda for the next five years. The agenda is due to be decided after the European elections.

"Macron thinks that Europe's strategic fault lines are not just with illiberal assertive powers but also with the US," said Rym Momtaz of the International Institute for Strategic Studies in Paris.

US witnesses bird flu outbreaks in poultry, dairy cows

LOS ANGELES

THE highly pathogenic H5N1 bird flu is widespread in wild birds worldwide and is causing outbreaks in poultry and dairy cows, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

There have been two reported human cases in the United States since 2022, one in the state of Colorado following exposure to poultry, and the other recent case in the state of Texas following exposure to dairy cows, according to CDC.

While the current public health risk is low, CDC is watching the situation carefully and working with states to monitor people with animal exposures. CDC is using its flu surveillance systems to monitor for H5N1 activity in people.

As of Tuesday, nearly 9,300 wild birds in 50 jurisdictions detected H5N1, over 90 million poultry in 48 states affected, and 8 states with outbreaks in dairy cattle, CDC data showed.

To further protect the U.S. livestock industry from the threat posed by highly pathogenic H5N1 avian influenza, the U.S. Department of Agriculture has announced a number of actions to help limit its spread.

The actions, taking effect from April 29, include mandatory testing for interstate movement of dairy cattle, and mandatory reporting.

The panzootic of H5N1 viruses in wild birds has resulted in outbreaks among commercial poultry, backyard bird flocks, and spread to infect wild terrestrial and marine mammals, as well as domesticated animals.

Although human infections with H5N1 virus are rare, having unprotected exposure to any infected animal or to an environment in which infected birds or other animals are or have been present can pose a risk of infection, according to CDC.

Most human infections with H5N1 virus have occurred after unprotected exposures to sick or dead infected poultry. There is no evidence of sustained human-to-human H5N1 virus transmission, and limited, non-sustained human-to-human H5N1 virus transmission has not been reported worldwide since 2007, according to CDC.

At this time, CDC considers the human health risk to the U.S. public from H5N1 viruses to be low. However, people with close or prolonged, unprotected exposures to infected birds or other animals, or to environments contaminated by infected birds or other animals, are at greater risk of infection.

CDC recommends people to avoid unprotected exposures to sick or dead animals including wild birds, poultry, other domesticated birds, and other wild or domesticated animals, as well as with animal feces, litter, or materials contaminated by birds or other animals with suspected or confirmed H5N1 virus infection.

CDC said people should not prepare or eat uncooked or undercooked food or related uncooked food products, such as unpasteurized milk, or raw cheeses, from animals with suspected or confirmed H5N1 virus infection.

Xinhua

Pro-Palestinian protesters rally at University of California, Los Angeles

LOS ANGELES

HUNDREDS of protesters gathered and built a protest encampment in support of Palestinians on Thursday at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), one of the top public universities in the United States.

Organizers of the "UCLA Palestine Solidarity Encampment" said in a statement that "We will not be silent while Gaza is being annihilated."

The group, made of UCLA students, community members, faculty, and staff, issued a list of demands that include the boycotts of Israeli universities.

"With the passing of a new funding package, the Biden administration has approved and signed off on 26.4 billion U.S. dollars in aid for the 'Israelis,' greenlighting the invasion of Rafah, where they have trapped 1.5 million fleeing Palestinians," the statement noted. Protesters displayed signs on campus with slogans such as "Let Gaza live."

This is not war, this is genocide," "Stop the massacres," and "UCLA says free Palestine." "Our top priority is always the safety and well-being of our entire Bruin community," said Mary Osako, vice chancellor for UCLA Strategic Communications, in a statement, adding that "We're actively monitoring this situation to support a peaceful campus environment that respects our community's right to free expression while minimizing disruption to our teaching and learning mission."

China's high-quality development to present opportunities for enterprises

BEIJING

CHINA'S ongoing drive to advance high-quality development will create new opportunities for enterprises, according to industry insiders who joined the fourth episode of the China Economic Roundtable, an all-media talk platform hosted by Xinhua News Agency.

"We started from scratch like many other small Chinese companies, but after reaching a certain size, we had to undergo a major transformation to extend the growth momentum," said You Hongtao, chairman of Chongqing Pharscin Pharmaceutical Co., Ltd.

Today the company is listed on the A-share and has a market value of over 5 billion yuan (about 703.75 million U.S. dollars). "We benefited from China's supportive policies to spur innovation," You said.

China ranked 12th in the 2023 Global Innovation Index, and became the country with the largest number of top 100 sci-tech innovation clusters in the world for the first time, according to the World Intellectual Property Organization.

This year, the country has put developing new quality productive forces, featuring high-tech, high efficiency and high quality, on top of its agenda to further facilitate its high-quality development.

To leverage China's innovation momentum, both traditional and high-tech industries have been making strides.

"Traditional industries don't represent low-end industries and backward productive forces," said Dai Guanwen, head of the development department at the technical center of the HBIS Group Shisteel, a steel bar production enterprise, via a video shown during the roundtable episode.

"The key to new quality productive forces lies in the profound transformation and upgrade of industries," Dai stressed.

Referring to the HBIS Group Shisteel as an example, Dai said that the company has implemented a tech-



This aerial photo taken on June 24, 2023 shows the downtown area of north China's Tianjin. (Xinhua/Sun Fanyue)

nique to eliminate high-emission processes in steel production, such as sintering and coking. It also uses clean energy sources to minimize carbon emissions.

Another video showcasing a production workshop of TCL China Star Optoelectronics Technology (TCL CSOT) reveals an automated and smart production line housed in a space equivalent to 12 football fields.

"The production line is able to carry out fully automated production 24/7. We could even turn off all the lights, and it will still carry out production in the dark," said Zhang Feng, senior

vice president of the TCL CSOT, via the video.

In the next step, Zhang said the company is planning to fully harness the advantages of green and digitalized manufacturing and continue strengthening the weak links of the industrial chain.

China has acknowledged the urgent need for enterprises to achieve breakthroughs in sci-tech innovations and has made arrangements to expedite the process.

Solid steps will be taken to accelerate the development of new quality productive forces, boost indus-

trial innovation through technological innovation, speed up upgrading of traditional industries, and foster emerging industries, Zheng Shanjie, head of the National Development and Reform Commission, said at the China Development Forum 2024 in March.

"As long as we proceed on the innovation trajectory, I believe the made-in-China products will have a greater presence in overseas markets," You said. Xinhua

Pro-Palestinian protests spread in US universities, urging cessation of military aid to

BEIJING

PRO-PALESTINIAN demonstrations have recently erupted on campuses across the United States, calling for a permanent ceasefire in the Gaza Strip and cessation of U.S. military aid to Israel.

Despite certain U.S. politicians branding the demonstrators as "anti-Semitic" and the subsequent arrest of hundreds of students, the anti-war protests continue to gain momentum.

The University of Southern California (USC), a renowned private research university located in Los Angeles, has closed its gates amid rising

tensions after pro-Palestinian protesters clashed with police on Wednesday.

A growing number of protesters, including students and non-students, started a "Gaza Solidarity Occupation" at the university's Alumni Park on Wednesday morning. Organizers of the protest, the USC Divest from Death Coalition, said in a statement that they "have set up this occupation in solidarity with the people of Gaza, empowered by the actions of our peers at different campuses across the country."

"We stand here to join the nation-wide call by students for their universities to dis-

close their finances and endowment, to divest from Israeli violence, and to defend Palestinians and those who speak up against Zionism," added the statement.

The USC Divest from Death Coalition said it was made of USC students, staff, faculty, alumni and Los Angeles community members.

USC has come under fire after the university announced last week that it cancelled valedictorian Asna Tabassum's planned speech after pro-Palestinian posts, citing potential campus safety risks. Meanwhile, all classes at Columbia Uni-

versity went virtual start-

ing on Monday as divisive demonstrations and debates around the Palestinian-Israeli conflict heated up on campus recently.

The university's president Minouche Shafik urged relevant parties to "sit down and talk and argue and find ways to compromise on solutions" and announced that all classes would go virtual.

The students with "Gaza Solidarity Encampment" opposed Israeli military action in Gaza and demanded the university divest from companies that "profit from Israeli apartheid."

According to media reports, students from Yale Uni-

versity, New York University, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, the University of Michigan, and the University of North Carolina also staged encampments in solidarity with their peers at Columbia University.

The universities and local authorities have taken tough measures against the pro-Palestinian protesters, with hundreds of students arrested.

Video from local TV channels showed protesters in USC holding their ground and confronting police officers who tried to clear the encampment of tents. USC urged students, staff and faculty members in an alert to

"continue to avoid the center of campus unless you have a class."

"The university warned that there is still significant activity at the center of its main campus due to a demonstration." "The gates are closed, so anyone coming to campus should be prepared to show an ID at the gates for class or for business," noted the university.

In Texas, police bulldozed into student protesters at the University of Texas at Austin on Wednesday. More than 50 people were arrested, said a report from local media outlet Austin American-Statesman.

On Monday, more than 40 students from Yale University, who occupied Beinecke Plaza at the center of campus starting Friday night, were arrested, according to the local police department.

Last week, Shafik, Columbia University's president, sent a letter to the New York Police Department (NYPD), requesting that the police help remove individuals who had occupied the South Lawn of the university's Morning-side Heights campus.

The NYPD arrested more than 100 protesters from the campus of the university on the afternoon of April 18.

Haiti transitional government takes power as gangs hold capital 'hostage'

PORT-AU-PRINCE

HAITI'S transition council took power in a ceremony on Thursday, formalizing the resignation of former Prime Minister Ariel Henry as the Caribbean country seeks to establish security after years of gang violence wreaking chaos and misery.

Henry's finance minister, Michel Patrick Boisvert, will be interim prime minister until the transition council appoints a new head of government, a cabinet and a provisional electoral council set to pave the way for an eventual vote.

"Today is an important day in the life of our dear republic, this day in effect opens a view to a solution," Boisvert said after the nine-person transition council were sworn in on Thursday morning.

Regine Abraham, a non-voting council member, thanked Haiti's security forces and international mediators, and said the council would focus on security, a national consultation on constitutional reform, preparing for elections, rebuilding the judiciary system and the economy.

"We are seeing the total collapse of our institutions and failure of a government," she said.

Port-au-Prince residents have "literally been taken hostage," she added. "Facing this unprecedented crisis, the entire population has recognized the urgent need of a firm hand to take us out of this spiral of despair and destruction."

Even as the council was sworn in, local media reported houses being set on fire and shooting in the capital's downtown and Delmas areas, posting photos of columns of gray smoke rising above the skyline and videos of families leaving the area with their belongings.

Armed gangs, equipped with weapons trafficked largely from the United States, have for years tightened their grip on the capital and sought to topple Henry. Since he pledged to resign last month, they have called for a broader "revolution".

Earlier this week, gang leader Jimmy "Barbeque" Cherizier warned members of the transition council to "brace" themselves.

Unverified voice recordings circulated on social media over the weekend in which Cherizier appeared to order his soldiers to indiscriminately burn houses in Lower Delmas, an impoverished part of the capital



Officials pose for a group photo during an installation ceremony, in Port-au-Prince, Haiti on Thursday. AP

where he grew up.

At the ceremony, hosted amid tight security at the prime minister's Villa d'Accueil office, Boisvert and members of the transition council were flanked by top police and military officials.

Henry announced last month he would resign once the council was in place, initially expected to happen within a couple of days but delayed amid disagreements as to who should sit on it.

Henry had left Haiti in late February seeking support for the country's outgunned police, but was left stranded in Puerto Rico as the gangs threatened to completely take over the capital. Boisvert has served as acting prime minister in Henry's absence.

The transitional government's mandate runs until February 2026, by when there are slated to be elections, and cannot be renewed. No date has been set for its naming of a new prime minister or council president.

'Complex interregnum'

"We just hope the council will quickly choose a president or coordinator in order to move onto the second

phase, which is the appointment of a prime minister and the members of government," said James Boyard, a security expert at the State University of Haiti.

"The new transitional government has a lot of work ahead of it, and alongside security all the issues are urgent."

Diego Da Rin, an analyst with the International Crisis Group, warned of tensions within the council as different factions jostled for power, and a "long and rocky road ahead."

Local organization Together Against Corruption (ECC) published a letter calling on the new authorities to be financially transparent to "prove their will to help build a government that breaks with the past."

The council's installation is seen as a key step towards the deployment of a multinational security mission Henry requested back in 2022 and the United Nations approved more than six months ago. Though Kenya offered to lead this mission, plans were put on hold last month pending the establishment of a new Haitian government.

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres called for the new authorities to implement new governance ar-

rangements swiftly to allow for the mission's deployment. The mission has received less cash and fewer troops than the UN has said it needs.

The council members must, as per the decree installing them, support the mission's "accelerated deployment." But some Haitians are wary after previous international interventions left behind a deadly cholera outbreak and sexual abuse scandal.

Others hope the mission could help restore much-needed security and pave the way for eventual elections.

According to UN estimates, more than 2,500 people were killed or injured in gang violence from January through March, while hundreds of thousands have been internally displaced and millions are facing catastrophic hunger.

Key ports have been closed for more than a month, but on Thursday Florida-based non-profit Hope for Haiti said a first humanitarian flight since the capital's airport shut down had landed in Port-au-Prince: a US military plane bringing 20 pallets of rehydration solution for cholera patients.

Separately, Haiti's national police said it received a shipment of equipment paid for by Haiti's government and flown in by US authorities.

Foreign diplomats hailed the ceremony as an important step to restore security, and Kenyan President William Ruto said the nation stands "ready and willing" with its counterparts to "rapidly execute the security support infrastructure."

"Kenya assures the Transitional Presidential Council of Haiti of its full support as it shepherds the country through this complex interregnum," Ruto said on X.

The council members installed were the same as announced last week: seven voting members, all men, including representatives from various political parties as well as former diplomats, a barrister, and a businessman, and two non-voting observers: a pastor and former government adviser.

"We continue the fight for the transformation of our country," former central bank governor Fritz Alphonse Jean, one of the council members, said on X. "The country needs the talents of all its sons and daughters here and in the diaspora for the construction of the new Haiti."

Agencies

CAIRO

ISRAEL stepped up airstrikes on Rafah overnight after saying it would evacuate civilians from the southern Gaza city and launch an all-out assault despite allies' warnings this could cause mass casualties.

Medics in the besieged Palestinian enclave reported five Israeli airstrikes on Rafah early on Thursday that hit at least three houses, killing at least six people including a local journalist.

"We are afraid of what will happen in Rafah. The level of alert is very high," Ibrahim Khraishi, the Palestinian ambassador to the United Nations, told Reuters on Thursday.

"Some are leaving, they are afraid for their families but where can they go? They are not being allowed to go to the north and so are confined to a very small area."

The Gaza Strip is about 40 km long and between about 5 km and 12 km wide and is one of the most densely populated areas in the world.

In the seventh month

Israel intensifies strikes on Rafah ahead of threatened further operation



This image provided by Maxar Technologies, shows a rows of tents built near Rafah in Gaza on April 23, 2024. AP

of a devastating air and ground war, Israeli forces also resumed bombarding northern and central areas of the enclave, as well as east of Khan Younis in the south. Israel's stated goal is to destroy Hamas, though it is unclear how they would do so.

A United Nations team visiting a site for a staging area and pier for maritime aid operations was forced to take cover in a bunker on Wednesday after the area came under attack, a spokesperson said on Thursday.

"They were there for "some time," but there were no injuries.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's war cabinet was meeting "to discuss how

to destroy the last vestiges, the last quarter of Hamas' battalions, in Rafah and elsewhere," government spokesperson David Mencer said.

He declined to say when or whether the classified forum might give a green light for a ground operation in Rafah.

Israel has killed at least 34,305 Palestinians, Gaza health authorities said on Thursday. The offensive has laid to waste much of the widely urbanised enclave, displacing most of its 2.3 million people and leaving many with little food, water or medical care.

A UN expert speaking after visits to Jordan and Egypt said aid agencies were seeing an in-

creasing number of patients suffering from the acute lack of food in the enclave.

"What I've seen here was traumatizing. Patients that previously arrived in Egypt primarily with explosive and other war injury related symptoms are now joined by increasing numbers of patients, often children, with chronic diseases and severe malnutrition," Francesca Albanese, the UN Special Rapporteur on human rights in the Occupied Territories, told reporters in Cairo.

Israel is retaliating against an Oct 7 Hamas attack that killed 1,200 people and led to 253 taken hostage, according to Israeli tallies. Iranian-backed Hamas is sworn to Israel's destruction due to its occupation of Palestinian territories.

Escalating Israeli warnings about invading Rafah, the last refuge for around a million civilians who fled Israeli forces further north earlier in the war, have nudged some families to leave for the nearby al-Mawasi coastal area or try to make their way to points further north, residents and witnesses said.

Agencies

Highlights of China's new quality productive forces reveal growth momentum

CHINA has sped up industrial upgrading by cultivating new quality productive forces, laying a solid foundation for strengthened recovery momentum this year and beyond.

The following are some figures highlighting the country's progress in certain areas within the first quarter (Q1) of this year.

EMERGING INDUSTRIES

The high-tech manufacturing sector registered a growth of 7.5 percent in Q1, accelerating by 2.6 percentage points from the fourth quarter of 2023.

Investment in high-tech industries has experienced robust growth, increasing by 11.4 percent from the previous year. In particular, investment in high-tech manufacturing expanded by 10.8 percent.

In the first quarter, the new energy vehicles (NEVs) output saw a substantial year-on-year increase of 28.2 percent, reaching nearly 2.12 million units, while NEVs sales climbed 31.8 percent to 2.09 million units.

NEW INFRASTRUCTURE

The number of 5G base stations in China had risen to nearly 3.65

million by the end of March this year.

The value added output of the digital economy's core industries is estimated to exceed 12 trillion yuan (about 1.69 trillion U.S. dollars) in 2023, accounting for 10 percent of China's gross domestic product.

NEW SERVICES

The high-tech services maintained rapid growth momentum. Specifically, the combined value added output of information transmission, software and information technology services grew by 13.7 percent in the first quarter.

Online retail sales jumped 12.4 percent year on year in Q1, with online retail sales of physical goods expanding 11.6 percent and accounting for 23.3 percent of the total retail sales of consumer goods.

NEW ENERGY

New energy consumption grew rapidly in Q1, with the proportion of coal consumption decreased by 1.1 percentage points from the same period last year, and that of non-fossil energy consumption increased by 0.8 percentage points.

Farm without farmers: A peek into unmanned farm in E. China's Jiangsu province

THE spring sowing season has arrived, but in the sprawling wheat fields in Lujia township, Kunshan, east China's Jiangsu province, there wasn't a farmer in sight across the vast expanse. What could be seen was only a drone hovering above the fields.

"This is an unmanned farm. It spans 3,840 mu (256 hectares) and primarily grows rice and wheat," said engineer Geng Bojian, who's engaged in the R&D and regular maintenance of the farm.

This intelligent farm, which features minimal management and unmanned operations, was established last year through the utilization of big data, artificial intelligence, self-organizing communication networks, and a suite of intelligent equipment such as multi-rotor drones, driverless tractors, unmanned harvesters, and smart irrigation gates, according to Geng, who's also a member of the Yangtze River Delta Academy of Smart Agriculture under the Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences (CAAS).

In recent years, Kunshan has been working to promote the digitalization of agriculture, focusing on smart agricultural machinery and intelligent farming, and striving to build relevant intelligent scenarios.

In 2021, Suzhou and the CAAS signed an agreement to jointly establish the East China Agri-Tech Center, and the unmanned farm was exactly one of the projects launched by the center.

In the unmanned farm, there is a white building - the intelligent command center, also known as the "smart brain" of the farm.

At the center, a young staff member was staring at a big screen displaying live video footage of the wheat fields, with relevant data constantly updating on either side.

The young staff member was performing routine field patrol with a drone.

This "smart brain" comprises modules for crop monitoring, agricultural machinery management, resource management, drone control, agricultural operations, intelligent irrigation, equipment alerts, and analysis and decision-making.

"In the past, a field patrol needed several people riding electric bikes to each plot, with each person inspecting hundreds of mu of land. It would take at least an hour and a half to complete the patrol," Geng said.

"Now, a drone can cover the entire area in half an hour while simultaneously collecting crop growth data," he added.

Geng said that in every plot there is a soil condition monitor, which is used to record soil temperature, moisture, and real-time water level.

"The unmanned farm employs an intelligent irrigation system. Once the monitors detect low soil moisture, the system will be activated," Geng told People's Daily.

Besides, a small weather monitoring station is set up in the fields, capable of real-time collection of meteorological data such as temperature, humidity, wind speed, and rainfall. In addition, there are also devices like insect monitoring traps and spore catchers.

Shen Junjie is an employee of Jiangsu Provincial Agricultural Reclamation and Development Corporation. He works with three colleagues to manage the agricultural operations of this unmanned farm. Their daily work involves collecting field data with monitoring devices and drones. Based on the data they collect, the intelligent command center would analyze crop growth and provide scientific guidance on farming practices.

"Through a mobile app, we receive notifications from the command center and can remotely assign tasks to unmanned agricultural machines," Shen told People's Daily.

The unmanned agricultural machines Shen mentioned were parked in a storage facility, all large in size, including cultivators, transplanters, crop sprayers, and harvesters - each equipped with the BeiDou Navigation Satellite System. All the operators needed to do was to set the routes and tasks, and remotely start the machines.

"These machines weren't unmanned when they were manufactured. It was our technical team that modified them, and now each one possesses unique skills," Geng said.

Today, unmanned equipment is employed in the entire rice and wheat production cycle, including plowing, sowing, managing, and harvesting. The cultivators can complete fertilizing, tilling, and sowing operations all at once. The harvesters can monitor harvest quality in real time while reaping, and upload data to relevant platforms. They can even chop and spread the rice

straw back into the field or pass it to a baler for organic processing. The harvested rice and wheat is transported by unmanned vehicles to the farm's drying center for automatic drying and storage.

"In another couple of months, it will be the time to harvest the winter wheat. All the agricultural machines will be in full swing," Geng said.

People's Daily



In the past, a field patrol needed several people riding electric bikes to each plot, with each person inspecting hundreds of mu of land. It would take at least an hour and a half to complete the patrol

Simba SC fans restless, demands not helpful to rebuilding the team

By Correspondent John Kimbute

PLENTY is being heard over the airwaves on what Simba SC's members and supporters, especially leaders in city corner talk shops scattered in virtually all suburbs, either think or say about the current performance of the team.

To that discussion is attached a series of demands, but they are not focused on a particular aspect of the organization, seemingly scattered depending on either who or what group is making those assessments - with just one catching headlines.

A well-known fan was removed from 'el clasico' (last week's 2023/24 NBC Premier League tie between Simba SC and Yanga) and placed in provisional arrest for some hours until the controversial derby, which took place in Dar es Salaam, ended.

The fan had issued a blanket appeal that the Simba SC leaders should be restrained from leaving the Benjamin Mkapa Stadium, alias 'Lupaso Arena', were the side to have lost to next-street rivals Yanga, an appeal which was aired live and sparked attention at Ilala District criminal investigation desk.

The fellow was called over the phone, duly reported at Msimbazi police station, and then whisked to explain himself to the zonal chief of investigations, where his case was seen to be mild. But for his security - as well as peace in the Benjamin Mkapa Stadium - he had to be out of that vicinity for the event's duration.

This was the more visible incident that had leaders being put on the firing line but, since the match ended, the fire has been directed mostly at players, or rather a select number of them and, to an extent, head coach Abdelhak Benchika.

An especially troubling datum was a comparison between the removal of the former head coach Roberto Oliveira or just 'Robertinho', as the lat-



Simba SC players are pictured participating in training in Dar es Salaam recently in preparation for the 2023/24 NBC Premier League fixtures. PHOTO: COURTESY OF SIMBASAC

ter lost only the derby and was removed, while the current coach has lost a series of matches and is unruffled.

Those reciting events tended to be forgetful, saying the side did not lose a match during that season unless Raja Casablanca's 3-0 and 3-1 hits (in the 2022-23 CAF Champions League Group Stage) were of another epoch.

Surprisingly, whereas the club's honorary president Mo Dewji tended to be on the firing line in the wake of the Al Ahly debacle in the quarterfinals of this season's CAF Champions League, this was not the case after the derby.

What this implies is that the CAF Champions League quarterfinals had to do with the overall quality of the players the club disposes and, if they suffice to compete at that level, not just making furtive appearances.

With the derby, the overall quality of players was not at issue but their performance, especially from the fact that the side has either lost or drawn earlier with fairly minor teams in the premier league and being bundled out of the CRDB Bank Federation Cup Round of 16 by premier league starters, Mashujaa FC of Kigoma, the terminus of central corridor.

This, hence, leads to the pat-

tern of blame throwing, where the side was beaten home and away by Al Ahly, failing to show a glimpse of being able to turn the tables in like manner as Yanga's Stephane Aziz Ki's disallowed goal in their epic encounter versus Mamelodi Sundowns 'Masandawana', downtown Pretoria.

Simba SC's archrivals, Yanga, had something to show in their exit pattern at the CAF Champions League quarterfinal level, with an impression they could do better next time, whereas the fans and pundits for that matter had no reason to project the same for the Msimbazi Street side.

In that case, the criticism went to the club sponsor cum investor, while it was clear they do not realize that this disputed team loyalty has problems in how those they snide as 'investors' feel uncomfortable in that clothing.

The problem in the aftermath of the derby was the 'strategic shift' from being concerned with the organization as such, to the technical bench, to which the leadership is also attached.

Even without pondering over the issue, it is now clearer that the fortunes of leaders, either the level of loyalty among the fans or the intensity of bitter feeling on the team relates to

technical bench performance.

The reason is that the technical bench handles players whose welfare or future is less with the coaching than the leadership - in that sense, the quality of the coaching itself is tied to leaders.

Thus, it was appropriate that the questioning be directed to the coaching, while it is unclear where the leaders come in, except that they are not with the team, tending to leave the squad to vibrant Ahmed Ally, an overtaxed club major-domo.

The board and leadership have two sides and they tend to throw the blame on one another, in which the Salim Abdallah 'Try Again' camp is blamed by the Murtaza Mangungu camp.

On the other hand, the leaders arising from the fans are seen to foment unrest and diminish club loyalty to the sponsor, making the board fail to work harmoniously on account of needless interference.

The Mangungu camp wants to lead while, technically, it is the fund dispenser Mo Dewji who calls the shots, so, leadership finally reports to him, simply.

This confusion is still being played out, as the fans' major-domo who was arrested, or rather reported to the police upon being called, appeared to see the leadership as a united, and failed category.

The fans speak indifferently of Mangungu and 'Try Again' as either failed or failing leaders, whereas it is evident that pushing the club sponsor to dish out the cash and let elected officials prevail cannot work.

When it comes to the board, it is 'Try Again' who is in charge, but he needs advisory roles of former leaders carted in last year by the sponsor.

Let Simba SC members pick Barbara Gonzalez as a nominee of the Mo Foundation in like manner as Yanga's president Hersi Said, for total harmony.



Simba Queens head coach Juma Mgunda.

Simba Queens' head coach focuses on JKT Queens after thrashing Yanga Princess

By Correspondent Nassir Nchimbi

SIMBA Queens' head coach Juma Mgunda is now focusing on the club's upcoming Mainland Tanzania Women's Premier League match after guiding the squad to thrashing rivals Yanga Princess 3-1 at Azam Complex Stadium in Dar es Salaam on Thursday.

Mgunda revealed that celebration time is over, as his club's next match will see it come up against league-defending champions JKT Queens at the same venue on April 29.

Simba Queens goals were scored by Aisha Mnunka - who scored a brace to extend her goal tally to 15, two behind Stumai Abdallah of JKT Queens who has scored 17 goals - while fellow forward Jentrix Shikangwa scored one goal.

Yanga Princess' consolation goal was scored by American midfielder Kaeda Wilson. This season, Simba Queens has defeated Yanga Princess in three games, the first of which is the Women's Premier League Community Shield which saw the former secure a 5-4 victory in penalty shoot-out after drawing 1-1 in 90 minutes.

In the other clash, a Serengeti Lite Women's Premier League fixture, Yanga Princess conceded a 3-1 loss to Simba Queens.

Mgunda said that he has been pleased with his charges' win but the main focus is kept on the upcoming match against JKT Queens who are tough opponents, according to the gaffer.

"Winning a derby and extending to the top of the league is massive, I am pleased with what I saw from my players and the main focus now is how we approach the next game against defending champions JKT Queens," Mgunda revealed.

"Against Yanga, we knew it was going to be tough, we had played them twice before and defeated them in both games, we understood that they would want to cause problems and grab a win, we had to make a few adjustments in the second half and grab a win," the tactician remarked.

Yanga Princess has, consequently, failed to beat Simba Queens in all competitions in the past five years.

The Jangwani Street's women's squad's last win against the Msimbazi Street counterpart was a 1-0 triumph that was garnered in 2018 via a goal by forward Clara Luvanga, of late plying her trade in Saudi Arabia with Al Nasr Women's FC.

"We are not carried away by this result, our main focus remains winning the remaining games and clinching the SWPL title at the end of the season," Mgunda pointed out.

"We did not face JKT Queens in the first round due to venue misinformation and we were awarded three points, I understand that it won't be as easy a game on April 29," the tactician disclosed.

Simba Queens lead the Mainland Women's Premier League with 34 points after honouring 12 games, having notched 39 goals and so far conceded seven.

The club's city rival, Yanga Princess, is sitting third in the league log with 21 points, having scored 18 goals and let in 10 goals.

Simba Queens' close league title rivals JKT Queens - who represented Tanzania and CECAFA Zone in the 2022/23 CAF Women's Champions League - are currently holding the second spot with 25 points from 11 games.

The army-owned outfit's placement has come after facing a five-point deduction due to failure to report to the accurate venue for the league clash versus Simba Queens.

During the first round, JKT Queens were slated to face Simba Queens at Azam Complex Stadium in Dar es Salaam but the former arrived at their home venue - Major General Isamuhyo Stadium - on the match day, having claimed they were, as per league fixture, supposed to host the match at the venue.

As the match did not take place due to misinformation, the Tanzania Premier League Board resorted to deducting five points from JKT Queens.

but we secured the win with two goals."

Matola praised his team's dominance, adding: "We controlled possession for most of the first half, creating several scoring opportunities. We capitalized with a goal in the first half and added another in the second half. Overall, we're grateful to God for reaching the final."

Injuries did cause some concern for Simba SC, as Matola admitted: "Clatous Chama, Luis Miquissone, and Ladaki Chasambi came off injured, we'll wait for the doctors' reports to determine

their availability for the final." Looking forward to the final, Matola acknowledged the challenge, noting: "The final match will be a tough encounter. Every final is crucial, but we'll prepare strategically to win and bring joy to our fans. We're determined to restore the winning feeling." Azam FC secured progression to the revived Muungano Cup's final after hammering Zanzibar's KMKM SC 5-2 in the other semi-final that took place at the venue Thursday.

Simba SC wasted no time setting the

tone for the Wednesday last-four clash, launching a relentless attack on the KVZ FC goal from the opening whistle.

Their early dominance paid off in the 26th minute when forward Freddy Koublan displayed his cunning move and outsmarted the KVZ FC defense to fire home the game's first goal. Koublan's goal in this match raised questions about the starting striker's role.

Matola explained the coaching strategy, saying: "It's positive that Freddy scored today. Starting him depends on the spe-

cific needs of each game. Sometimes, a number nine is needed, while other situations call for a different approach."

"This is the second game Freddy has netted out for the team, which is good. He should keep striving for that role, the position is open for him," the former Simba SC midfielder remarked. The second half saw Simba SC increase their offensive pressure, searching for more goals. However, KVZ FC's defense remained resolute, making crucial blocks and interceptions to keep the scoreline close.

Singida Fountain Gate FC set to issue ultimatum on Kakolanya

By Correspondent Nassir Nchimbi

SINGIDA Fountain Gate FC is expected to reach a decision on the club's keeper Beno Kakolanya who left the camp without permission hours before facing Yanga in the 2023/24 NBC Premier League on April 14.

Kakolanya left his club's camp a few hours before the league's match against Yanga which took place at CCM Kirumba Stadium in Mwanza and culminated in a 3-0 defeat for his outfit.

Before the match, Singida Fountain Gate FC released a statement that offered information about the situation.

Singida Fountain Gate FC expressed the situation as an act of sabotage by Kakolanya, who is also the outfit's captain.

The shot-stopper moreover boycotted a summons issued by the executive committee meeting - claiming that he would not

be treated fairly.

The former Yanga and Simba SC goalie is set to lose his captain's role and be dropped from the team for the rest of the season - with the possibility of leaving the club at the end of the season being on the cards.

Singida Fountain Gate FC is set to release a statement on the final judgment made by the club following the player's act, according to the club's Information and Communication Officer Hussein Massanza.

He said the goalkeeper received a letter of summons on April 15 from the club, asking him to attend the Disciplinary Committee meeting on April 19, this year, but he failed to comply with the summons.

"Beno (Kakolanya) was indeed given a summons by the Disciplinary Committee asking him to attend the meeting that was scheduled for April 19," the

official revealed.

"The keeper however went on strike - claiming that the committee will not treat him justly due to the sabotage allegations," Masanza added.

He said the shot-stopper was supposed to attend and issue the reasons why he escaped from the camp, a move which was perceived as sabotage, a few days before facing Yanga in a game that was played on April 14 in Mwanza - resulting in the 3-0 loss.

"This week we will release a statement on the final decision reached by the executive committee made of our team lawyers and other executives will release the final judgment and decisions made on Kakolanya, it is to be noted that this issue will come to an end or move to the next step," the official pointed out.

"Our fans should be calm and



Singida Fountain Gate FC goalkeeper, Beno Kakolanya.

humble, everything (about) the ongoing saga between the club and our player will be transparent," Massanza noted.

He added that the outfit's leadership will take stern action against him so that it will be a lesson to all players at the club that will commit misconduct.

The now Mwanza-based club is sitting ninth in the league log with 26 points after 24 games and six games left.

Matola reflects on Koublan's impact as Simba SC makes it to Muungano Cup final

By Correspondent Seth Mapoli

SIMBA SC roared into the 2024 Muungano Cup semi-final after posting a hard-fought 2-0 victory against KVZ FC at the New Amaan Complex in Zanzibar last Wednesday.

The win has set the stage for a thrilling final clash versus Azam FC, with Simba SC being hungry to claim the coveted trophy.

The Msimbazi Street club's assistant coach Selemani Matola expressed his gratitude, saying: "We thank God for reaching the final. The game was tough,

but we secured the win with two goals."

Matola praised his team's dominance, adding: "We controlled possession for most of the first half, creating several scoring opportunities. We capitalized with a goal in the first half and added another in the second half. Overall, we're grateful to God for reaching the final."

Injuries did cause some concern for Simba SC, as Matola admitted: "Clatous Chama, Luis Miquissone, and Ladaki Chasambi came off injured, we'll wait for the doctors' reports to determine

their availability for the final." Looking forward to the final, Matola acknowledged the challenge, noting: "The final match will be a tough encounter. Every final is crucial, but we'll prepare strategically to win and bring joy to our fans. We're determined to restore the winning feeling." Azam FC secured progression to the revived Muungano Cup's final after hammering Zanzibar's KMKM SC 5-2 in the other semi-final that took place at the venue Thursday.

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Slot 'confident' of Liverpool job as negotiations take place

AMSTERDAM

FEYENOORD boss Arne Slot said Thursday that his club and Liverpool are in negotiations for him to succeed Jurgen Klopp as manager of the Premier League giants and he was "confident" the outcome "will become clear in the coming days".

"The only thing I can say about it is that the clubs are in negotiations," Slot told ESPN.

"It seems clear to me that I would like to go to Liverpool. Now I'm waiting to see whether the clubs reach an agreement. I'm very confident in that."

ESPN said that one of the matters being discussed for the release of the 45-year-old is compensation with the Dutch club demanding around 10.5 million euros (\$11.3 million)

"The clubs have to do their job," said Slot. "And then I'm waiting. I have to respect that. It will undoubtedly become clear in the coming days."

Bayer Leverkusen boss and former Liverpool midfielder Xabi Alonso had been the favourite to succeed Klopp who has been in charge at Anfield for nine years.

However, Alonso has committed to staying at Leverkusen after leading them to a first-ever Bundesliga title.

Sporting Lisbon coach Ruben Amorim was also linked with the Liverpool vacancy but has reportedly held talks with West Ham about replacing David Moyes next season.

Slot moved to Feyenoord in 2021 after impressing in his first managerial role at AZ Alkmaar.

He led the Dutch giants to the inaugural Europa Conference League final at the end of his first season, in which they narrowly lost 1-0 to Jose Mourinho's Roma.

Slot then delivered just a second league title in 24 years to De Kuip last season before penning a new three-year deal.

Liverpool captain Virgil van Dijk said Slot's attacking tactics could be the ideal match for the Premier League club.

"I find it hard to answer of course, but I think Arne Slot is perhaps one of the better Dutch coaches at this moment," Van Dijk told Viaplay following Liverpool's 2-0 defeat at Everton on Wednesday.

"I think the way of playing and the philosophy he has, that he could be a Liverpool coach.

"Only I think from what I read and hear is that it's still far from being completed. We shall see."

If Slot is picked to take over from Klopp, who led Liverpool to the Premier League title in 2020 and won the Champions League in 2019, he will likely have to lift a team that is set to finish this season on a low note.

Liverpool's loss at Merseyside rivals Everton left them three points behind leaders Arsenal with four games left.

Third-placed Manchester City will retain the title if they win their last six matches.

After quarter-final defeats in the FA Cup and Europa League, Klopp's farewell season is becoming a damp squib.

AFP

European battle adds spice to fiery Leipzig-Dortmund clash

BERLIN

RB Leipzig host Borussia Dortmund on Saturday with possible Champions League qualification at stake in what has become one of the Bundesliga's bitterest rivalries in recent years.

Fourth-placed Leipzig sit two points clear of Dortmund in fifth, with only the top four clubs guaranteed Champions League football next season -- although Germany may snare a fifth spot in the new UEFA qualification system thanks to strong European performances.

The rivalry between the sides has been fierce ever since Leipzig were first promoted in 2016.

At Leipzig's first match in Dortmund, the famous Yellow Wall unveiled a banner calling the Red Bull-owned newcomers "the shame of the league", while around 2,000 fans marched through the city before the game in protest.

Both sides' claims to being the next best after Bayern Munich were dealt a blow by Bayer Leverkusen's stunning title run this season, but Leipzig and Dortmund can still be regarded as next in line for the throne.

Since Leipzig were promoted to the first division ahead of the 2016-17 season, only once has neither finished second behind Bayern.

Schalke, now in the second tier, finished runners-up in 2017-18, with Dortmund coming second four times and Leipzig twice in that time.

Other than Bayern, Leipzig and Dortmund -- both Champions League regulars -- have performed best in Europe's premier competition.

Leipzig made the Champions League semi-finals in 2019-20 and Dortmund are through to the last four this season.

Speaking with AFP and other media on Thursday, Leipzig striker Benjamin Sesko said his side were raring to go.

"I always look at each game like it's my last. "But in this situation, you know what you're playing for. For me, it's not even pressure, it's more motivation.

"In the week before that game, it's really hard to wait."

AFP

Man City in title groove as Arsenal face Spurs tes

LONDON

MANCHESTER City are in ominous form as the champions chase a fourth successive Premier League crown.

Leaders Arsenal face a stern test of their title credentials in the north London derby at top four hopefuls Tottenham, while Sheffield United are on the brink of relegation.

AFP Sport looks at three talking points ahead of this weekend's action:

"Frightening" Man City make statement

Phil Foden issued a warning to Manchester City's title rivals after the champions' "frightening" attack inspired a vital 4-0 demolition of Brighton. Pep Guardiola's side could not afford to slip up at the Amex Stadium on Thursday as they try to overhaul Arsenal in the title race.

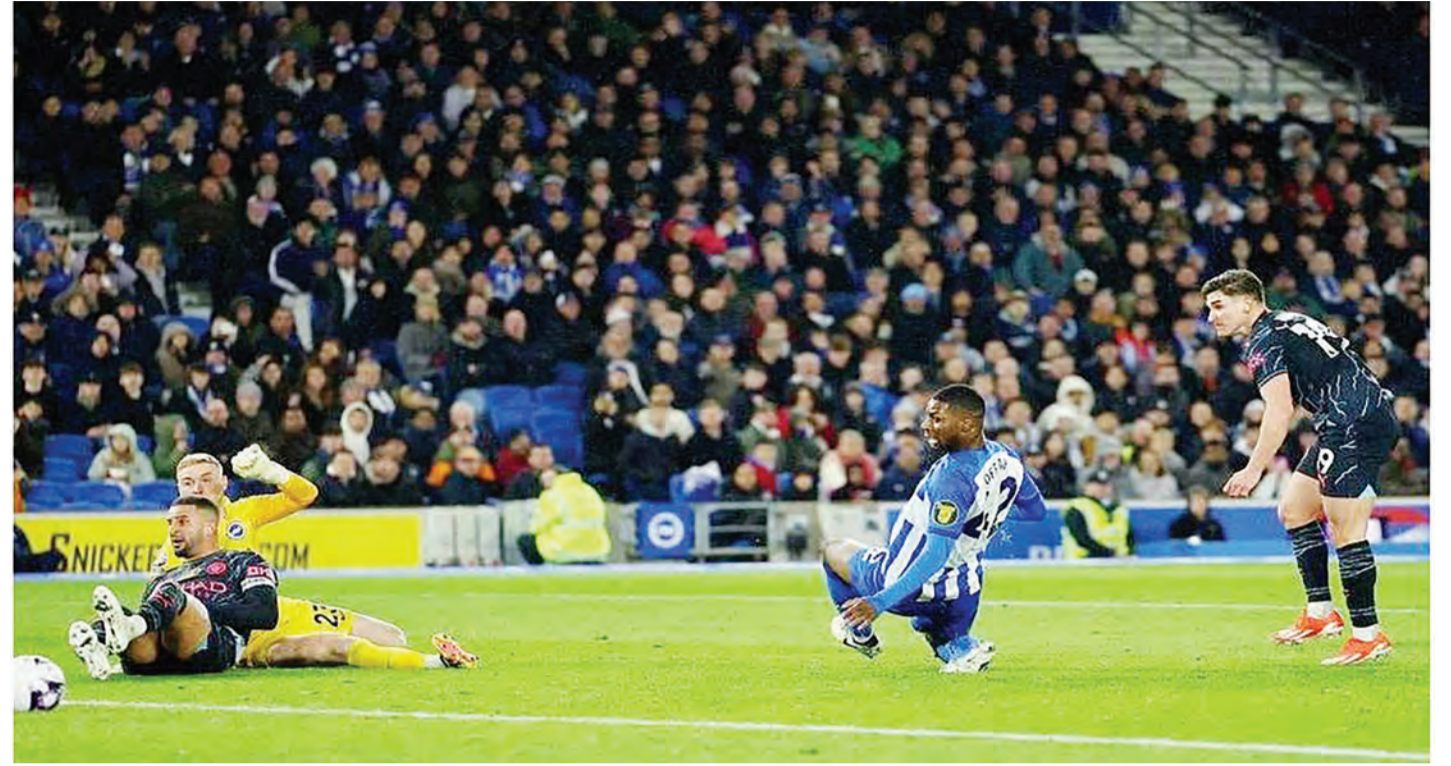
And City rose to the challenge as Kevin De Bruyne's header put them in front before Foden netted twice in the first half.

Julian Alvarez added the fourth after the break to end his goal drought as second placed City climbed within one point of Arsenal.

City have a game in hand over both Arsenal and third placed Liverpool, who are two points adrift of Guardiola's men after their damaging loss at Everton on Wednesday.

The Etihad Stadium club will be champions yet again if they win their last five games, starting at Nottingham Forest tomorrow.

"In the first half it was frightening the way we attacked," said Foden, while De Bruyne



Julian Alvarez scores goal number four for Manchester City. PHOTO: REUTERS

added: "I trust my team obviously, all respect to Arsenal and Liverpool because they are amazing."

Arsenal must win at bitter rivals Tottenham for a second consecutive season to keep City at bay, while Liverpool take their spluttering challenge to West Ham.

"Villa aim to cement top four place

With Tottenham facing a tricky task against Arsenal, Aston Villa have a golden opportunity to cement their grip on fourth place when they host troubled Chelsea.

Villa are six points clear of fifth placed Tottenham, who have two games in hand in the battle to qualify for next season's Champions League.

A win for Unai Emery's men today evening and a loss for

Tottenham would take Villa within touching distance of a first European Cup campaign since 1982-83.

The prospect of plundering a Chelsea defence breached five times by Arsenal on Tuesday will be all the incentive Villa striker Ollie Watkins needs to extend his hot streak.

Watkins has 19 league goals this term -- behind only joint top-scorers Erling Haaland and Cole Palmer -- and is also the top-flight's leading assist provider with 12.

"I appreciate him and his progress. His commitment to do the work we always need has been fantastic, more than scoring goals, more than assists," Emery said.

"Blades face the chop

Sheffield United travel to Newcastle with the grim pros-

pect of relegation hanging over them after a disastrous season.

With just three league victories, Chris Wilder's bottom of the table team are 10 points from safety with four games left.

They are almost certain to return to the Championship just 12 months after winning promotion, with their crumbling defence at the root of their impending demise.

Beaten 4-2 at Manchester United on Wednesday, the Blades have conceded 92 goals in 34 league games, surpassing Derby's previous record of 89 in a 38-game top-flight season.

Their fate will be sealed if they lose at Newcastle today or if fourth bottom Nottingham Forest match their result against Manchester City to-

morrow.

Asked if he believes his club can bounce back next season, Wilder said: "It's going to be hard. We have to make big decisions. We have to get it right."

Fixtures

Today (1400 GMT unless stated)

Aston Villa v Chelsea (1900), Everton v Brentford (1630), Fulham v Crystal Palace, Manchester United v Burnley, Newcastle v Sheffield United, West Ham v Liverpool (1130), Wolves v Luton

Tomorrow (1300 GMT unless stated)

Bournemouth v Brighton, Nottingham Forest v Manchester City (1530), Tottenham v Arsenal

AFP

Kevin De Bruyne is still the Premier League's true Grandmaster

By Sam Dean

IN hindsight, it all feels rather obvious. Of course Manchester City are stampeding towards another Premier League title. Of course they are coming into this defining period of the season on a run of 18 league matches without defeat. Of course they swept past Brighton here, winning 4-0 and barely breaking into a sprint.

We should have known this was coming from the moment Kevin De Bruyne trotted onto the field in the 69th minute of City's trip to Newcastle in mid-January. At the point of the season, Pep Guardiola's side were not top of the league. They were within reach of the leaders, though, and they had stayed within reach despite being without De Bruyne since August.

It will be no surprise if history shows that De Bruyne's return was the key moment in this season's title race. The Belgian is not the player he once was and, at the age of 32, he never will be. But he can still be the most decisive player in this division and he can still produce nights like this, when his intelligence and quality pierces an opponent over and over again.

Despite his age, De Bruyne continues to evolve as a player. He is still providing surprises, too: his astonishing header here, converted as he soared across the turf with his long hair flowing artfully behind



De Bruyne scored a remarkable first-half header at the Amex - AFP

him, was his first ever headed goal in the Premier League.

For most of his City career, De Bruyne has operated in a defined position within Guardiola's midfield three. In the 2019/20 season, for example, 48 per cent of his touches were on the right side of the pitch, compared to just 30 per cent on the left.

This season, by contrast, he has far more freedom. Of his touches, 40 per cent have been taken on the left, and 44 on the right. He can float in any direction he likes, and the result is that he has been more creative than ever. Per 90 minutes, De Bruyne is creating 4.6 chances per match -- up from an average of 3.6 per match

in each of the last three years.

It is a strange reality of City's season that Phil Foden and Rodri are now City's most consistently effective mid-

fielders, rather than De Bruyne. But De Bruyne remains the ultimate match-winner, the one player who can turn nothing into something and transform the entire

feel of the game in an instant.

Against Brighton, there was a threat every time he got the ball. You could feel the fear in the crowd, and see it on the faces of Brighton's young players. They tried to go man-to-man, tracking De Bruyne all over the pitch, but could never get a proper grip on him.

Even when he was not directly involved, De Bruyne still played his part. In the build-up to City's fourth goal, converted by Julian Alvarez, it was De Bruyne who pointed to the right wing, signalling for the ball to be played long towards Kyle Walker. The Belgian, as is so often the case, saw the move before anyone else.

In this floating position, De Bruyne's neck does as much work as his legs. He is constantly checking over his shoulders, swivelling his eyes and looking for space to drift towards. Rather than going where Guardiola has instructed him

to go, as is seemingly the case for almost every other City player, this version of De Bruyne goes where the match takes him.

Within the space of a few first-half minutes, De Bruyne took up the positions of a left-winger, central midfielder, centre-back and then centre-forward. No wonder Brighton struggled to contain him, with Jakob Moder enduring an especially unenjoyable evening as De Bruyne's marker-in-chief.

For much of the season, it has felt like the responsibility of leading this City team is being passed from De Bruyne to Foden. There are still occasions, though, when De Bruyne reaffirms his status as the grand master, and the rest of Guardiola's players can only sit back and learn. This is how it is done. This is how you become one of the best midfielders this league has ever seen.

THE TELEGRAPH

Gwiji by David Chikoko



SPORT

Man City in title groove as Arsenal face Spurs tes

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Yanga set to rope in midfielder Kagoma

By Correspondent Nassir Nchimbi

YANGA have expressed their interest in acquiring Singida Fountain Gate FC holding midfielder Yusuph Kagoma to add defensive depth into the former's squad after recent struggles brought about by the absence of Khalid Aucho.

Head coach Miguel Gamondi has already identified various positions for adding depth and competition ahead of next season's CAF Champions League, NBC Premier League, and CRDB Federation Cup campaigns.

Kagoma (pictured) is one of the native midfielders who are doing well in the NBC Premier League.

He has, this season, flourished in the domestic topflight whilst turning out for Singida Fountain Gate FC, an outfit he joined on a two-year contract during the mini transfer window in the 2022/23 season from Geita Gold FC.

Kagoma, who has six months left on his current contract, has not featured for Singida Fountain Gate FC since March 16 this year in a duel against Namungo FC which ended with his team cruising to a 1-0 victory.

He is currently out of the team's camp after the failure of the outfit to fulfil contract terms.

Singida Fountain Gate FC has yet to win since March 16, after losing 3-0 to Yanga, settling for a 0-0 draw with Mashujaa FC and thereafter posting a 1-1 draw with Ihefu SC.

Kagoma is open to leaving the club and beginning a new life out of the now Mwanza-based team. He is set to leave as a free agent once his contract runs out with Singida Fountain Gate FC.

The Singida Fountain Gate FC defensive midfielder has already represented Tanzania's national team, Taifa Stars.

His prowess is what Gamondi admires, as the Argentine is aiming to bring competition to his outfit's local midfielders including Jonas Mkude - who is set to extend his contract with the club as his one-year contract is set to expire at the end of the season.

Kagoma's arrival will push Ivorian midfielder Pacome Zouzoua further in more advanced areas after playing in the defensive midfield in some games.

The area needs high-caliber midfielders like Kagoma who can control the game.

The midfielder will face competition from other defensive midfielders Mkude, Khalid Aucho, Zawadi Mauya, Mudathir Yahya, and Salum Abubakar.

Gamondi's calculations have further shown interest in adding one goalkeeper, who will replace one of the two goalkeepers, Metacha Mnata and Aboutwalib Mshery.

One of the duo is slated to leave Yanga, as the club aims to provide competition to first-choice goalie Djigui Diarra.

In the defensive area, Gamondi's report has shown that one left fullback is needed, to give Congolese defender Joyce Lomalisa competition.

Yanga will not sign another left-back if Tanzanian left-back Nickson Kibabage, currently on loan from Singida Fountain Gate FC, opts for a permanent move.

Yanga looks to strengthen grip on NBC Premier League title pursuit



Yanga's Congolese midfielder Maxi Nzengeli (L) outfoxes Coastal Union's defender Jackson Shiga when the clubs met in a 2023/24 NBC Premier League clash in Tanga last year, which ended with Yanga commanding a 1-0 win.

By Correspondent Michael Mwebe

YOUNG Africans SC will be aiming to move eight points clear at the top of the NBC Premier League table when they continue their domestic campaign with a home tie against Coastal Union in Dar es Salaam this evening.

Head coach Miguel Gamondi's side is currently in a commanding position at the summit, sitting five points clear of second-placed Azam FC with seven games left.

The reigning NBC Premier League champions, alias Yanga, have been comfortably the best team this season, boasting a record of 19 wins, two draws, and two defeats from 23 matches, which has left them at the top of the division having collected 59 points.

Unless something extraordinary happens, Yanga will win the title for a third successive

season, and it will be fully deserved, having scored the most goals (54) and conceded the fewest (12) during an excellent campaign.

The Dar es Salaam side is bidding to secure one more trophy this term, as they are also in the quarterfinals of the CRDB Federation Cup, having knocked out Dodoma Jiji FC in the Round of 16

earlier this month.

They boast a three-match unbeaten run though they were held to a goalless draw by relegation strugglers, JKT Tanzania, in Dar es Salaam last time out.

Not only does Gamondi's side boast the best offensive record in the division (54 goals scored), but also the team possesses the

strongest defensive record (letting in 12 goals).

As for Coastal Union, nobody expected them to be challenging for a CAF Champions League spot during the business end of the season but that is exactly what they are doing.

Coastal Union, nicknamed 'Wagosi wa Kaya', is sitting fourth in the top-

flight, one point ahead of fifth-placed Kinondoni Municipal Council FC in the battle to secure CAF Champions League football for the 2024-25 campaign.

With six games to play, they need to grind out good results to secure their highest finish since the 2014/15 campaign when they ended fifth.

Head coach David Ouma's side has struggled for consistency in the league recently, recording two wins, two losses, and one draw in their last five matches.

They head into today's clash on the back of a 1-0 away defeat to Namungo FC in Lindi last week. They need to avoid defeat here to remain in control of their top-four bid.

Coastal Union suffered a 1-0 defeat to Yanga in the reverse match at Mkwakwani Stadium in Tanga this season, but the recent draw with Azam FC and victory over JKT Tanzania at the Azam Complex Stadium should give them confidence ahead of this contest.

Despite the daunting 26-point gap separating Coastal Union from the league-leading Yanga, Ouma's squad is buoyed by a string of commendable defensive performances against formidable opponents.

Simba SC eyes Muungano Cup tourney title, faces Azam FC in final

By correspondents Michael Mwebe & Seth Mapoli

THE beautiful New Amaan Complex in Zanzibar prepares to witness a historic clash today as Simba SC and Azam FC lock horns in the final of the revived Muungano Cup tournament.

The pulsating match's kick-off is set for 2.15 pm, promising a captivating display of footballing talent and fierce competition.

This highly anticipated encounter is the culmination of a tournament reborn after a two-decade hiatus.

The Muungano Cup tournament, held to celebrate the union of Tanganyika and Zanzibar (formed on April 26, 1964), has returned with a revamped format so far featuring four teams.

Representing the Tanzanian mainland are footballing giants Simba SC and Azam FC, while Zanzibar fielding the Isles champions, KMKM SC, and KVZ FC.

The semi-final matches were a thrilling prelude to the final. Simba secured a convincing 2-0 victory against KVZ FC, with striker Freddy Koublan opening the scoring and right-back Israel Mwenda converting a penalty to seal the deal.

Meanwhile, Azam FC displayed their attacking prowess, demolishing KMKM FC 5-2 in a high-octane semi-final encounter.

Today's final promises to be a battle between titans. Simba SC,



Simba SC's central defender Henock Inanga (L) challenges Azam FC's winger Kipre Junior as the clubs took on each other in a past NBC Premier League tie in Dar es Salaam.

boasting five Muungano Cup tournament titles between 1993 and 2002, has its sights set on a record-breaking sixth championship.

Standing in their way is a determined Azam FC, hungry for their first-ever Muungano Cup tournament triumph.

Both teams possess talented squads, skilled coaches, and a burning desire to etch their names in history.

Adding another layer of intrigue is the historical dominance of Young Africans SC (Yanga) in the Muungano Cup tournament.

Yanga holds the record for most triumphs (six), with their last success coming in 2003.

A win for Simba SC today would not only grant them the coveted trophy but also surpass Yanga's record, a significant feat for the passionate Simba SC faithful.

It has been a disappointing campaign for Simba SC. Despite the club spending a huge amount of money, save for Community Shield they are bound to finish the season empty-handed for a third consecutive season.

With eight games remaining

Simba SC is trailing NBC Premier League leaders, Yanga, by 13 points. They were dumped out of the CAF Champions League and CRDB Federation Cup.

The Muungano Cup might not have the glamour of either the NBC Premier League or CRDB Federation Cup, still triumph over Azam FC earns Simba SC a bit of redemption for a campaign that did not quite go as planned. It will be a step forward in the right direction to redemption from one of the darkest club's chapters in the last decade.

Azam FC should approach the Union Cup final in good spirits after their upturn continued with last week's 1-0 win against Ihefu SC, a result that kept them in the title race. There was a convincing semi-final victory over KMKM SC (5-2) to book a date with Simba SC.

Beyond the records and rivalries, the Muungano Cup tournament final promises an exhilarating display of football.

Soccer followers should expect tactical battles between the coaches, moments of individual brilliance from star players,

and a relentless fight for supremacy on the pitch.

The passionate supporters of both Simba SC and Azam FC are sure to create an electric atmosphere in the stadium, further adding to the drama of the occasion.

The stakes are high, as the showdown's champions will be handsomely rewarded with a staggering 50m/-, while the runners-up will walk away with 30m/-.

More than the financial rewards, though, it is the prestige and glory associated with the trophy that truly motivates these teams.

The return of the Muungano Cup tournament has injected a dose of excitement into Tanzanian football.

Today's final between Simba SC and Azam FC promises to be a fitting climax to the tournament, showcasing the best of Tanzanian football talent on a historic stage.

The beautiful Isles of Zanzibar will witness a clash of titans, a battle for bragging rights, and a celebration of Tanzanian unity. Buckle up, football fans, for a truly unforgettable encounter.

Flexibles by David Chikoko

