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African court pleads for citizen access withdrawal reversal

By Polycarp Machira, Dodoma

THE African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights (AfCHPR) has renewed its call for the Tanzanian government to reconsider its withdrawal from a crucial provision of the court, effected in 2019.

Lady Justice Imani Daud Aboud, the AfCHPR president issued this appeal on discussions with top officials of the Commission for Human Rights and Good Governance (CHRAGG) here yesterday, seeking support to encourage the government to reconsider the country's position on the matter.

She sought to engage with the commission "on an issue critical to the future of human rights protection in Tanzania and Africa", namely the re-deposit of Tanzania's declaration of accepting cases to the court brought under Article 34(6) of the protocol setting up the AfCHPR.

"Tanzanians have a special right to be heard by the continental institution," she stated, underlining that the declaration the government deposits allows individuals and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to bring cases directly before the African Court.

This facility is meant to complement the important work the state commission is already doing to protect and promote human rights domestically, she explained.

The court's president acknowledged the



And we hope the government will change its position, allowing Tanzanians to access the court

commission's role in bridging the gap between citizens and the state, affirming that the commission's voice "carries significant weight in advocating for policies that strengthen human rights protection," thus the need for it to champion the re-deposit of the declaration.

That would be a vital step in reaffirming Tanzania's leadership in human rights and ensuring that justice remains accessible to all, she stated, referring to the commission as the backbone of Tanzania's efforts to protect rights enshrined in the constitution and international commitments.

These commitments are key to ensuring that citizens can live with dignity, free from oppression, discrimination and injustice. "The African Court shares this mission, providing a platform for justice when national remedies are exhausted or unavailable," she explained.

She was optimistic that under the current leadership, which has demonstrated strong commitment to human rights, the government was likely to re-deposit the declaration.

Judge (rt'd) Mathew Mwaimu, the commission chairman, said that the commission has been engaging the government on this issue through various forums, underlying its belief that this issue can be discussed.

"And we hope the government will

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NHIF moving to resume Under-21 health scheme



Deputy Prime Minister and Energy minister Dr Doto Biteko represents President Samia Suluhu Hassan in Arusha city yesterday at the closing of the 2nd African Association of Accountants General (AAAG) Annual Conference. Photo: DPMO

Retirees a substantial loss source group, while alcohol shops irritate CEO

By Guardian Reporter

PATIENTS aged 21 or less are likely to benefit from a National Health Insurance Fund (NHIF) scheme where starting early next year an insurance package to that effect will be reinstated.

Dr Irene Isaka, the NHIF director general, made this affirmation yesterday at a meeting with editors from various media outlets, stating that the fund has now instituted robust systems to prevent fraud.

This was perpetrated by fund members, service providers and medical staff at various levels, she said, highlighting that the fund is currently burdened by the elderly, people with non-communicable diseases and children beneficiaries.

Over the seven years from 2016/17 to 2023/24 it operated, the scheme incurred a loss of 366 percent compared to the contributions made by the beneficiaries, she said, citing an example where in 2023, 185,021 beneficiaries contributed a total of 10.1bn/- while costs of treatment amounted to 31.7bn/-, a 313 percent loss.

NHIF suspended the scheme last year af-

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'Social protection relies too much on foreign aid'

By Henry Mwangonde

THE World Bank has advised Tanzania to develop a sustainable financing strategy for its social protection programmes, asserting that the lack of such a strategy hampers progress in achieving poverty reduction targets.

Nathan Belete, the World Bank zonal director for Malawi, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe, issued this advice in Dar es Salaam yesterday at a high-level dialogue on "the future of social protection in Tanzania."

He said that social protection pro-



...the need for comprehensive social safety nets to address poverty and vulnerabilities is more urgent than ever

grammes have not been fully supported by local resources and are overly reliant on foreign aid, despite that it is sometimes uncertain.

Despite demonstrating positive outcomes in poverty reduction, the programmes struggle to meet their targets due to the lack of domestic funding, he said, arguing that it is therefore essential for the government to establish a sustainable financing strategy for social protection.

"Social safety nets are game-changers in poverty reduction, as they improve

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UN agency takes up child labour public dialogues

"The children face hazardous conditions, such as exposure to toxic fumes and heavy lifting, placing their health and safety at significant risk"

By Guardian Reporter

SIGNIFICANT progress is being reported on reducing child work and child labour in Tanzania, on the basis of a statement issued yesterday by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

The statement sums up findings of a new report on child work and child labour, citing evidence from the Integrated Labour Force Survey (2014-2021), noting that persistent challenges still jeopardize efforts to eradicate child labour in the country.

An alternative report published in 2021 by the United States government, its Labour Department, said the government did not publicly release information on its labour and criminal law enforcement efforts.

"Other gaps remain in the legal framework and enforcement of laws related to child labour, including protections for the use of children in illicit activities and domestic work and the likely insufficient number of labour inspectors for the size of Tanzania's labour force," the US report intoned.

Published in tandem with efforts by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) to end the worst forms of child labour in the

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Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) chairman Judge Jacobs Mwambegele (L) pictured at Ilboru Secondary School in Arusha District yesterday while on an assessment tour of two-day constituency level training for electoral officers. The training is conducted in preparation for the updating of the Permanent Voters' Register, scheduled to take place in the district from December 11 to 17. Photo: INEC



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'Social protection relies too much on foreign aid'

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the livelihoods of the poor and enhance their productivity," he declared, pointing at the Productive Social Safety Net (PSSN) that has for 12 years remained entirely donor financed.

Most of its resources are delivered by the International Development Association (IDA), a soft loans and grants window of the World Bank, in which case the programme's expansion was not matched with proportional budgetary allocations from domestic resources.

"Reliance on external financing has become harder to predict in recent years and seems to be on an overall downward trend," he told the gathering, underlining that

IDA resource constraints are already apparent in the upcoming cycle.

"This raises questions about the sustainability of the programme, and more so its ability to continue to expand its coverage as hoped," he stated, reaffirming the World Bank's commitment to supporting Tanzania's social protection programmes.

It would leverage resources and capacity building to ensure the intended goals are achieved, he said, with Finance minister Dr Mwigulu Nchemba pointing at the results of efforts to reduce extreme poverty.

They include increased resilience and promoting economic inclusion for vulnerable and at-risk households, where the country has been investing in various initiatives aimed at eradicating extreme poverty, improving social protection and enhancing popular welfare.

UN agencies lead child labour public dialogues

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past decade, it said that children in Tanzania are subjected to the worst forms of child labour, including what is called forced labour in mining, quarrying and domestic work.

Children also perform dangerous tasks in agriculture, providing illustrations on key indicators on children's work and education in Mainland regions, while affirming that in 2021, the country made moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child

It highlighted a circular directing that girls be able to return to school following the completion of their pregnancy, reversing its previous support of permanently expelling girls who had become pregnant."

The government also committed additional resources to address other barriers to educational access, including provision of additional classrooms and latrines, as well as desks.

In addition, the government facilitated awareness campaigns related to human trafficking and trained 17 local committees focusing on child labour and other issues related to violence against women and children.

The UNICEF report, released jointly with the National Bureau of Statistics and the Office of the Chief Government Statistician for Zanzibar, "offers a comprehensive analysis of child labour trends across Mainland and Zanzibar regions," the statement noted.

Using the latest data from the 2020/21 sectoral survey and tracking changes since 2014, the study measures Tanzania's progress toward Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 8.7 and 16.2, which focus on eliminating child labour, abuse, and exploitation, it said.

Elke Wisch, the UNICEF country representative, said in her remarks on the report that every child deserves a childhood free from exploitation, the right to protection, education and the opportunity to thrive.

UNICEF and its partners remain committed to supporting the government in strengthening social protection programmes that empower families, remove children from hazardous labour and bring them back to school, she stated.

"While we celebrate the progress made in reducing child labour in Tanzania, the fight is far from over," the representative declared.

"This has contributed to the country's attainment of lower-middle-income status in 2020, five years ahead of the target set in the Tanzania Development Vision 2025," he stated.

Despite these efforts, extreme poverty has in absolute terms risen further. "For example, the number of individuals living in poverty increased from 12.3m to about 14m, even though poverty levels declined between 2011 and 2018," he explained.

The future of social protection in Tanzania presents both challenges and opportunities, he said, highlighting that with a growing population, urbanisation and the increasing impacts of climate change, "the need for comprehensive social safety nets to address poverty and vulnerabilities is more urgent than ever."

The government is committed to establishing a comprehensive social safety net programme designed around a vision of balanced, sustainable and inclusive growth, he added.



Reliance on external financing has become harder to predict in recent years and seems to be on an overall downward trend



This is decades-old Segerea commuter bus stand, as captured yesterday. It has grown so pot-holed as to make navigation there a daunting challenge for all manner of users and passers-by. Photo: Correspondent Sabato Kasika

NHIF moving to resume Under-21 health scheme

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it was found to be causing significant losses, as this group was using more services than what they contributed, leading to saving 5.4bn/- in the 2023/2024 financial year, "after closing loopholes that allowed fraud by some members and health service providers," she stated.

Hipoliti Lello, the NHIF member services director, affirmed that the 'health insurance for all' scheme has removed the requirement for schools to have a minimum of 100 students before being registered for coverage.

"Now, any school or institution can register students who lack insurance and provide them with coverage, regardless of the number," he said, noting that the new registration procedure is taking off in various institutions for students aged 18 and above, who can now register directly.

Earlier, there were cases where a student's card was used by a multiple of individuals to receive treat-

ment, or patients being given unrelated treatments under the guise of malaria care.

Other cases included unnecessary hospital stays, such as a child being admitted for three days for circumcision, which should have been an outpatient procedure.

As a result of these fraudulent activities, 12,685 cards were deactivated, and 11 service provider contracts were terminated, bringing the total number of terminated contracts to 55 since 2018.

Three NHIF staff members have faced disciplinary action, with procedures for eight others ongoing, the CEO had specified, underlining that the fund's sustainability was on the rise again.

Its resilience stood at seven years and nine months in 2001/02, dropping to just six months by June 2023 and is now projected to have risen to one year mid-2024, as it had collected 756.4bn/-, exceeding its target of 746.7bn/- for the period to guarantee resilience, she said.

Even with 26.4 percent of Tan-

zanians living below the poverty line, and 70 percent of them living in rural areas, all of them are eligible for insurance coverage without contributing, she stated.

There was also a rise in the elderly population, especially those over 60, who face significant health challenges particularly non-communicable diseases, she said.

NHIF contracts are 73 percent government health facilities, 18 percent private sector facilities and nine percent religious institutions, she said, indicating that by June 2024 the fund had paid 650.4bn/- in claims relating to the past fiscal year.

About 37 percent of the claims stemmed from government facilities, 35 percent from private care facilities and 28 percent from religious institutions, she further noted, pointing at retirees as significant contributors to the fund's losses.

The number of retirees covered by the scheme increased from 151,500 in 2021/22 to 152,000 in

2024 while the number of retirees requiring medical treatment rose from 36,936 in 2016/17 to 125,582 in 2021/22 before slightly declining to 120,551 in 2023/24, she said.

The average number of hospital visits per retiree also increased from three in 2016/17 to seven in 2020/21, reflecting a sharp rise in healthcare costs for this group.

"The increase in healthcare costs for retirees was 58 percent in 2017/18, 43 percent in 2018/19, 22 percent in 2022/23, and five percent in 2023/24, reaching a high of 91.9bn/- in treatment payments," she specified.

Non-communicable diseases are a significant financial burden on the fund, with a growing number of beneficiaries suffering from these diseases, "not just the elderly, but people of all ages."

"I get anxious when I see alcohol shops. Non-communicable diseases cost the fund a lot. We must educate the public on how to consume such drinks without compromising their health."



Finance minister Dr Mwigulu Nchemba (C, facing camera) chairs high-level talks involving the government and Tanzania's development partners, the thrust being on progress made in efforts by the Tanzania Social Action Fund (TASAF) to help out needy households. Held in Dar es Salaam yesterday, the event brought together sectoral ministers from both mainland Tanzania and Zanzibar, members of the diplomatic corps and representatives of various development partners. Photo courtesy of Finance ministry

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change its position, allowing Tanzanians to access the court," he said, noting that the commission is a key stakeholder of the court. The visit to CHRAGG offices was part of AfCHPR's broader plan to meet with various government agencies on the matter, he said.

In 2019, Tanzania became the second country in the East African Community (EAC), following Rwanda, to withdraw the right of individuals and NGOs to directly access the continental judicial facility. Rwanda led the way in 2016.

The government withdrew from Article 34(6) of the AfCHPR protocol, which allowed citizens and NGOs to bring cases directly before

African court wants citizen access withdrawal reversed

the court.

AfCHPR is now in dialogue with the government, urging it to reconsider its position, pointing out that as the host country, Tanzania should lead by example and demonstrate its commitment to human rights.

Re-depositing the declaration is not only a legal step but also a moral one, the Lady Justice reaffirming Tanzania's support for principles of fairness, accountability and trans-

parency.

Direct access to the African Court provides disaffected citizens with the final opportunity to have their grievances heard and addressed, she said, insisting that the importance of allowing individuals direct access to the court cannot be overstated.

Such access not only empowers citizens but also enhances the country's image as one that respects, promotes and protects human rights,

she further noted, elaborating that it would ensure that Tanzanian citizens can benefit equally from institutions of the African Union, just like those in countries that have maintained the declaration such as Mali and The Gambia.

"This is an opportunity for Tanzania to set an example for other nations and to show that the country remains committed to regional mechanisms that complement domestic efforts," she added.



Prof Raghunathan Rengaswamy, Dean (Global Engagement) at India's IIT Madras, lectures on the application of artificial intelligence in diplomacy at the Indian High Commission in Dar es Salaam earlier this week. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

By Guardian Reporter

India highlights technology's role in bridging Africa's digital divide

THE High Commission of India in the country has underscored the critical role of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in bridging Africa's digital divide and empowering diplomats with advanced tools to navigate the complexities of global diplomacy.

Bishwadip Dey, the High Commissioner of India to Tanzania, made these remarks in Dar es Salaam on Wednesday at a special reception and talk on the use of Artificial Intelligence in Diplomacy.

The envoy emphasised AI's growing influence in international relations, praising the technology for its ability to enhance decision-making processes and deepen understanding of global dynamics. He acknowledged the event's importance in equipping diplomats with the knowledge to leverage AI's capabilities for more effective diplomacy.

The event featured distinguished

professors from the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Madras, who shared insights into AI's potential to transform diplomacy.

Prof. Raghunathan Rengaswamy, Dean of Global Engagement at IIT Madras, highlighted the emerging role of AI in international relations, pointing to its potential in analytical decision-making and offering diplomats advanced tools for better-informed global negotiations.

Additionally, Prof. Preeti Aghalayam, Director of IIT Madras Zanzibar, briefed attendees on the opportunities available for African students at the newly established IIT Madras Zanzibar campus. She highlighted programmes in cutting-edge fields like Artificial Intelligence, Data Science, and Ocean Structures,

inviting diplomats to encourage students from their respective countries to enrol and benefit from high-quality education in these emerging fields.

Mwanakhamis Adam Ameir, Deputy Principal Secretary of Zanzibar's Ministry of Education, shared the government's strategic vision for IIT Madras Zanzibar, positioning it as a pan-African educational hub. She invited ambassadors to visit the campus and promote student enrolment, further cementing the institution's role in shaping Africa's technological future.

The event also saw the introduction of the 'Airtel Africa Fellowship', announced by Charles Kamoto, Managing Director of Airtel

Tanzania. The fellowship aims to advance educational excellence and digital innovation across Africa, offering support to students at IIT Madras Zanzibar.

The event received positive feedback from participants, many of whom expressed enthusiasm about the potential for collaboration with IIT Madras Zanzibar. The ambassadors and diplomats recognised the importance of AI in addressing global challenges and enhancing Africa's role in the future of diplomacy.

This reception marked a significant step towards fostering stronger educational and diplomatic ties between India and Africa, with AI at the forefront of this evolving partnership.

Experts: Local communities key to securing wildlife connectivity

By Correspondent Marc Nkwame,

Arusha

CONSERVATION experts gathered in Arusha have emphasised the crucial role of local communities in reviving and securing wildlife connectivity routes.

Here is your revised text, with improved clarity, flow, and grammatical accuracy in British English:

During the ongoing Second Annual National Wildlife Corridor Forum, Dr Stephen Nindi, Chief Research Officer at the Tanzania Wildlife Research Institute, presented guidelines for securing wildlife corridors. He stressed that a people-centred, multi-disciplinary approach is essential for maintaining these connectivity routes for both wildlife and local communities.

"We cannot ignore the communities in conservation efforts; success in this mission depends on a participatory approach," Dr Nindi said.

He highlighted the importance of addressing issues such as population dynamics and climate change, which also affect wildlife movement.

To gain the support of local communities, Dr Nindi suggested that conservation strategies should align with livelihood activities in the area. "The restoration of wildlife connectivity passages should go hand in hand with supporting environmentally friendly, community-based enterprises. This way, villagers can benefit from conservation activities, such as Wildlife Management Areas," he said.

The forum also discussed the challenge that some wildlife corridors stretch across multiple villages and even cross district and regional boundaries, raising the need for a collaborative approach among different stakeholders.

Key players in Tanzania's

conservation sector were present at the forum, including the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism, Tanzania National Parks, Tanzania Wildlife Research Institute, Tanzania Forest Services, and the Tanzania Wildlife Authority. International partners such as the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Tanzania, through the USAID Tuhifadhi Maliasili Project, The Nature Conservancy (TNC), the German International Cooperation Society (GIZ), RTI, the Africa Wildlife Foundation (AWF), the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), Frankfurt Zoological Society (FZS), the Tanzania Nature Resource Forum (TNRF), and the Chem-Chem Association were also involved.

Johannes Solar, Manager of the USAID Tuhifadhi Maliasili Project at the Tanzania Nature Resource Forum, explained that stakeholders are reviewing the 2018 government action plan to reclaim and restore wildlife corridors, making amendments to address shortcomings identified during its implementation.

At the forum, experts encouraged the creation of Joint Village Land Use Agreements in areas impacted by wildlife corridors. They also recommended the establishment of standing committees at the village, ward, district, and regional levels to coordinate conservation efforts.

One significant challenge discussed was the presence of immovable facilities, such as factories, schools, and infrastructure like roads and railways, which obstruct wildlife corridors. The experts proposed alternative solutions, such as the introduction of underpasses and overpasses for highways and railways.

Examples of successful projects were highlighted, including the Kilombero road elephant underpass, which is functioning effectively, and the ongoing efforts to clear wildlife passages beneath the Standard Gauge Railway (SGR) currently under construction.

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TENDER NOTICE

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL FOR THE PROVISION OF VARIOUS SERVICES

- National Bank of Commerce Limited has set aside funds for the procurement of various services during financial year 2025/2026, it is intended that, part of the proceeds of the fund will be used to cover eligible payment under the various contracts.
- Request for proposal is open to all eligible service providers with proven experience and capacity to offer the required services. Interested eligible bidders are invited to apply for the provision of below list of services;
 - Securities Services Solution (Custody)
 - ATM Monitoring Tool
- Request for Proposal documents can be downloaded from the website www.nbc.co.tz and then click 'Procurement' to access the document.
- All Proposals should be submitted in one original document along with a copy, enclosed in a sealed envelope clearly marked with the service name as indicated in the RFP document, addressed to the; **CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER, NATIONAL BANK OF COMMERCE LIMITED, HEAD OFFICE BUILDING, 6th FLOOR, and P. O BOX 1863 DAR ES SALAAM.**
- Sealed applications and Bids must be submitted not later than **Friday, 10th January 2025 at 1600 hrs.** Proposal shall be delivered by hand to the Tender Box located at reception of Head Office building, ground Floor along Sokoine Drive/Azikiwe Street.

**CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER
NATIONAL BANK OF COMMERCE LIMITED**



RE-ADVERTISEMENT

INVITATION TO EXPRESS INTEREST FOR BUILDING CONTRACTORS REGISTERED WITH TANZANIA CONTRACTORS REGISTRATION BOARD IN CLASSES I AND II

PROJECT NAME:	MATERNITY AFRICA MATERNAL HEALTH CENTRE
LOCATION:	CHIBWE-MANCHALI 'A', CHAMWINO DISTRICT DODOMA REGION, UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA
DESCRIPTION:	CONSTRUCTION OF A NEW 40-BED HEALTH CENTRE WITH OUTPATIENT CLINIC, INCLUDING M.E.P. AND EXTERNAL WORKS

Maternity Africa is a Christian based not for profit organization that endeavours to provide fistula treatment and quality maternity care for all marginalized women through out Tanzania, through professional excellence and in the example of displaying love, kindness and compassion regardless of race, religion and ethnicity.

Maternity Africa is proposing to undertake construction of a new 40-bed maternal health center on its property in Chamwino District, Dodoma Region, Tanzania. Works shall include construction of patient wards, surgical and delivery theatres, outpatient clinic, administrative and support facilities, plus related external works. Total built-up area will be no less than 2,100 square meters, AORB Medical Type Building Class 4.

The client is now soliciting information from Building Contractors registered with Tanzania Contractors Registration Board (CRB) in Classes I and II. Tenders shall be solicited by invitation upon completion of this exercise, and a construction contract shall be awarded upon receipt of tenders. Companies in Classes I and II wishing to be considered for invitation to tender are requested to submit the following:

- Company Description, including copies of Business License; CRB Classification Certificate and current receipt of annual registration fee; VAT Registration Certificate; and Condensed List of Physical Assets.
- Separate Curricula Vitae for a proposed Company Project Manager (one only) and Site Foreman (one only), showing education and professional experience.
- Specific List of Proposed Sub-Contractors legally registered in Tanzania to undertake such works.
- Specific List of All Current Projects, including photographs, contract value, completion date, sub-contractors, project consultants and client representatives, with current contact information for all.
- Specific List of Recent Projects of Similar Size (minimum 2,000 square meters) and/or Type (medical) completed within the past five years (none earlier than 2019), including photographs,

contract value, sub-contractors, project consultants and client representatives, with current contact information for all.

- Specific List of Recent Projects Undertaken in Dodoma Region completed within the past five years (none earlier than 2019), including photographs, contract value, sub-contractors, project consultants and client representatives, with current contact information for all.

- Reference from the Company Banker confirming the Company's financial capacity to finance a project of this size. Indication that the Company could obtain Letter of Credit facilities stating maximum value available for this facility should a contract for this project be awarded to them, is also required.

- Statement of Intent to Tender, including admission to undertake work within two weeks of contract award, and capacity to complete all work within twelve calendar months.

Interested firms should submit this documentation in bound two hard copies format, signed by a Company Director, to the following physical address no later than 10:00 hours (10:00 Am) on Friday, 13th December, 2024. Proposals will be opened at 11:00 Am, on the same day at Maternity Africa, in the training room venue in the present of bidders or their authorized representatives.

Country Director, Maternity Africa
Kivulini Maternity Centre, Plot 181, Kivulini Estate
Ngaramtoni Chini, Arusha, Tanzania

Interested firms should also submit the exact same documentation in PDF soft copy format to the following e-mail address immediately after (but not before) hard copies submission, and within twenty-four hours:
info@maternityafrica.org

Building Contractors registered with Tanzania Contractors Registration Board in Classes I and II shall be considered. Failure to provide any of the above-prescribed information may result in disqualification. The Client reserves the right to select qualified companies at its discretion, and will notify parties of results in writing. No contact may be made with the Client or its Project Team prior to written notification of results.

www.maternityafrica.org

Tanzanian female scientist wins top innovation award

By Guardian Reporter

A FEMALE scholar Dr Never Mwambela has flown the Tanzanian flag higher in Europe after clinching a Coimbra Award for Young African researchers, trouncing her peers across sub-Saharan African higher education institutions.

Dr Mwambela, a lecturer at the College of African Wildlife Management (CAWM)-Mweka, has emerged as the sole young researcher from sub-Saharan Africa with a groundbreaking project.

Dr Mwambela is conducting her research, titled The Impact of Climate Change on Biodiversity and Food Security: The Role of Nature-Based Solutions for Improving Conservation and Wellbeing, at the University of Barcelona, Spain.

The scholarship programme supporting her work aims to equip young scholars with high-impact projects by fostering academic and

research connections in Europe, enabling them to apply their findings back home.

To qualify, scholars must propose innovative, integrative natural solutions that serve multiple purposes in minimising the impacts of climate change while promoting resilient food production and biodiversity conservation.

Dr Mwambela's award-winning research is based in Tanzania's protected areas, including the Ngorongoro Conservation Area, Makuyuni Wildlife Park, and the Tarangire-Manyara ecosystem. Additionally, she conducted studies in agricultural landscapes, such as KPL Coffee Plantations in Kilimanjaro, cotton plantations in Meatu District, Simiyu Region, and maize farms in Arusha Region.

Recognising climate change as a significant threat to biodiversity conservation and food security in sub-Saharan Africa, including

Tanzania, Dr Mwambela sought to address these challenges through her research. Agriculture in the region faces mounting pressure to meet growing food demands while reducing its environmental footprint and achieving sustainable production.

Pests, particularly invasive species, are responsible for up to 40% of crop losses. Climate change exacerbates this problem by altering weather patterns, facilitating the spread and population growth of both indigenous and exotic pest species into new areas.

Human activities, including deforestation for intensive agriculture, the burning of fossil fuels, and the widespread use of synthetic pesticides, further compound the issue by driving up production costs and contributing to environmental degradation.

Dr Mwambela attributes intense droughts, water scarcity, severe

fires, rising sea levels, flooding, catastrophic storms, and declining biodiversity in some parts of Tanzania to anthropogenic climate change. These challenges are largely the result of shifts in temperature, humidity, and rainfall patterns over time, exacerbated by human activities.

"The effects of extreme temperatures on other arthropod groups, such as spiders, have received much less attention, despite their potential roles in biocontrol and conservation within ecosystems," Dr Mwambela noted.

In her innovative research, Dr Mwambela uses spiders as a focal point to assess species diversity and their role in conservation.

By analysing the gut contents of spiders, she evaluates their diet to identify their potential as natural pest controllers in Tanzania's agricultural landscapes.

Her findings reveal the highest diversity of spider species in the protected areas of the northern tourism circuit, including Ngorongoro Conservation Area, Makuyuni Wildlife Park, and the Tarangire-Manyara ecosystem.

The research also highlights the significant biocontrol role spiders play in both agricultural and natural landscapes, particularly in cotton, maize, and coffee fields.

"We discovered over 100 spider species, including members of the Araneidae, Salticidae, and

Lycosidae families, which play critical roles in controlling major agricultural pests such as the fall armyworm, bollworm, jassids, aphids, whiteflies, red spider mites, and thrips," Dr Mwambela explained.

She added that some of these pests are vectors for viral pathogens, complicating intervention efforts.

The findings also indicate that spider diversity is lowest in areas with intensified farming systems reliant on synthetic pesticides and in inhabited areas. This underscores the need for ecological agriculture and organic farming practices to restore soil health, enhance ecosystems, and mitigate the impacts of climate change.



Salome Kitomari (L), until mid-week chairperson of the Tanzania Chapter of the Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA-TAN), congratulates her successor, Edwin Soko, shortly after an election held in Dodoma city. Photo: Correspondent Marco Maduhu

Malecela urges CCM members to uphold patriotism, national service dedication

By Guardian Reporter

FORMER Prime Minister John Malecela has urged members of Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM) to continue fostering patriotism and working tirelessly for the nation's interests.

Speaking in Dar es Salaam yesterday, following a visit to his home in Upanga by CCM Secretary-General Dr Emmanuel Nchimbi, John Malecela commended the party for its unwavering leadership under the Chairperson, President Samia Suluhu Hassan.

Malecela, a former Deputy Chairperson of CCM (Mainland), lauded the rapid progress in implementing the CCM Election Manifesto, describing it as a testament to the party's genuine commitment to serving Tanzanians.

He highlighted President Samia's

achievements in infrastructure development, healthcare, and education, urging members to draw inspiration from these successes to foster unity and strengthen the party's leadership, which is rooted in principles of public service.

"CCM members should lead by example in demonstrating patriotism. This is our historic duty, one that we must honour through our actions," Malecela said.

He also called on CCM members to uphold the party's unity and values, which he described as fundamental to its over 60 years of success since its establishment. Malecela encouraged the current leadership to continue their commendable work while adhering to the principles of justice, transparency, and accountability.

He noted that good leadership has been pivotal in earning the

public's trust in CCM, urging leaders to maintain these standards.

In response, Ambassador Dr Emmanuel Nchimbi expressed gratitude for Malecela's invaluable insights and experience, which he described as a significant asset to both the party and the government.

"Your experience serves as a guiding light for us. We deeply appreciate your ideas, which remain a cornerstone for the party and the nation as a whole," Dr Nchimbi said.

He further emphasised the importance of hard work in ensuring continued national development while staying true to the party's core mission of serving the people.

"Now is the time to intensify our efforts to strengthen the country's progress while upholding CCM's foundational commitment to public service," he added.

By Correspondent Joseph

Mwendapole

A TOTAL of 1,922 students and 64 teachers from three secondary schools in Temeke District, Dar es Salaam, have been equipped with essential information and communication technology (ICT) skills to enhance digital literacy.

The programme, dubbed "Skills for Their Future", is funded by the non-governmental organisation BRAC Maendeleo Tanzania in collaboration with the National Education Fund, managed by the Tanzania Education Authority (TEA).

Launched in 2022, the initiative, which will run until December this year, has been implemented at Karibuni, Miburani, and Wailes secondary schools.

During the closing ceremony in Dar es Salaam yesterday, TEA's Acting Education Project Manager, Mwafatma Mohamed, highlighted the uniqueness of the programme in enhancing the learning and teaching environment. She expressed TEA's pride in collaborating with BRAC Maendeleo Tanzania to improve education and contribute to national development.

"We signed a special partnership agreement with BRAC Maendeleo Tanzania in 2022, a key player in

Dar students and teachers equipped with ICT skills

the education sector," Mohamed said. "Through this partnership, we've been able to provide 60 computers and 60 laptops, worth 132.6 million Tanzanian shillings, to these schools."

She also praised BRAC Maendeleo Tanzania for sponsoring and funding the "Skills for Their Future" programme, which has significantly boosted both students' and teachers' ability to incorporate IT into their teaching and learning activities.

On behalf of the beneficiary schools, Daudi Kassenga, Headmaster of Wailes Secondary School, shared how the IT project had greatly benefited both teachers and students.

"Before this project, our schools had no computers or laptops. Now, each school has 20 computers and 20 laptops, and one room has been renovated to house the IT equipment," he said.

Anuary Josephati, a Form Three student at Miburani Secondary School, shared his personal growth through the programme.

"When the training started, I was in Form One, and it was my first time using a computer. I made a

commitment to learn, and now I have the skills to design systems that can improve work in the community. I've also learned about entrepreneurship through IT," he said.

Kalunde Simba, representing the Director of BRAC Maendeleo Tanzania, pointed out the challenges that women and girls face in accessing IT education, including insufficient infrastructure, a lack of trained teachers, and social and cultural barriers.

"Parents often prioritise boys over girls, particularly in education, which has resulted in fewer girls gaining digital skills or pursuing tech-related careers," Simba noted. "That's why we started this programme: to provide female students with the opportunity to gain essential IT skills."

Temeke District Secondary Education Officer, Niconia Amos, commended TEA and BRAC Maendeleo Tanzania for the success of the project. She emphasised that the programme has been a catalyst for development, particularly for adolescent girls and young women, empowering them with the skills needed for the future.



Maternity Africa
Making childbirth safe

JOB VACANCY

Position: Project Manager
Reporting Line: Barbara May Foundation and Maternity Africa Board.
Work Station: Chamwino, Dodoma.
Sector/Industry: Health

Who are we?

Maternity Africa is a Christian-based not-for-profit organization that endeavours to provide fistula treatment and quality maternity care for all marginalized women throughout Tanzania. We do this through clinical excellence and in the example of displaying love, kindness and compassion regardless of race, religion or ethnicity. Maternity Africa operates from its base at Kivulini Maternity Centre outside the city of Arusha in Northern Tanzania.

About the role.

Maternity Africa is looking to expand its operations in Dodoma therefore seeking a skilled and experienced construction Project Manager to oversee and manage the construction project of a maternity health Centre. This role is crucial in driving our growth and ensuring the successful execution of our expansion initiatives. The role will require reporting to two boards BMF and Maternity Africa board on the project progress, the contract assignment period will be for the specific time that the construction project is going to take to its completion.

The best suitable candidate for this role must be vastly technical and experienced in construction projects including reporting, project management, have high integrity, and can work, commute or relocate to Dodoma.

Role Responsibilities:

- Oversee the overall planning and delivery of the project including collating of all regulatory requirements needed to commence and then run the project; Including building codes, health and safety standards and environmental standards.
- Ensure any concerns raised by the regulatory authorities are duly addressed.
- In conjunction with the MA building committee make sure all drawings, engineering specs and BOQ are approved, completed and filed.
- To assist the architect and MA tender committee with the tender process and assignment and signing of the contract.
- Ensure a project outline including construction milestones and cashflow.
- In collaboration with the MA accounts dept, ensure invoices and payments are collated and reported
- Be stationed/present at the construction site for Five (5) work week days to ensure acceptable quality of construction and milestones are being reached.
- Meet regularly with the appointed architects and engineers to discuss progress and any concerns.
- Arrange regular meetings with the building committee and reporting to the owner (MA board and donor (BMF board).
- On behalf of the building committee report monthly to the MA board and BMF board, and alert the board at any time of any concerns and milestones.
- Taking and maintaining a gallery of photos and videos of the project phases/stages progress for visual updates, reporting and Maternity Africa website update.
- Ensuring regular monitoring of progress by regularly inspecting construction work to monitor progress, detect any deviations from plans, and ensure adherence to schedules.
- Acting as a liaison between contractors, subcontractors, architects, clients and engineers to facilitate smooth project execution.
- Addressing on-site problems promptly, proposing solutions, and working to prevent delays or cost overruns.
- Maintaining accurate records of all inspections, tests, and approvals throughout the construction process.
- Conducting final inspections to ensure that completed work meets contract requirements before handover to the client (Maternity Africa).
- If need arises, we will adjust the scope and specifications of the works to ensure that the project is completed within the agreed budget.

Qualifications and certifications, Experience and Skills required.

- A Masters degree in Construction Management or Civil Engineering.
 - Holders of any of the following additional qualifications and certifications will have enhanced credibility and added advantage:
 - A qualification in Project Management.
 - Project Management Professional (PMP) certification.
 - Certified Construction Manager (CCM)
 - Construction Experience: A minimum of 7 years significant experience in the construction industry. This includes hands-on experience in construction, ideally in various roles such as a construction manager, site engineer or similar.
 - Project Management Experience: More than 4 years experience specifically in project management. This involves overseeing projects from inception to completion, managing budgets, schedules, resources, and stakeholders.
- Soft Skills:**
 - Excellent communication skills – must have strong verbal and written skills to liaise with a diverse team of local and international, subcontractors, and other stakeholders.
 - Problem-solving and decision-making skills to address issues as they arise during the project.
 - Time management and organizational skills to manage multiple tasks and priorities.
 - Technical Expertise/Skills:**
 - Knowledge of building codes, construction methods, material, processes, regulations, and standards relevant to construction projects.
 - Ability to read and interpret blueprints, technical drawings, and construction plans.
 - Knowledge of Tanzanian Construction Regulations and guidelines** of the different regulatory bodies/or departments.
 - Quality Management:** Ensuring that the project meets the required standards and specifications.
 - Reporting and report writing skills:** Capable of producing and writing reports that are well analysed and can be clearly interpreted and comprehended by local and international users of the report.
 - Financial Acumen:** Must have an understanding of budgeting, cost management, and financial reporting related to construction projects.
 - Contract Management:** Familiarity with contract negotiation, administration, and management is beneficial, especially for handling subcontractors and suppliers.
 - Inspection/Monitoring and Evaluation Skills:** Conversant with the processes and guidelines of construction monitoring and evaluation.
 - Risk Management:** Anticipating potential risks and developing strategies to mitigate them to minimize disruptions and delays.

Application guidelines

All interested candidates should send their qualifications credential certificates, a cover letter, and a curriculum vitae to recruitment@maternityafrica.org by **22nd December, 2024**. If you are not contacted within 14 days of the closing date of this job advertisement, please consider your job application unsuccessful this time. Disclaimer! Maternity Africa do not charge any fees throughout its recruitment process.



Mtwara district commissioner Abdallah Mwalipaya (3rd-R, in jacket, facing camera) graces yesterday's presentation to Mnyawi Secondary School students of sanitary pads donated by various institutions through the 'Run for Binti Marathon' co-organised by Smile for Community and Legal Services Facility. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

Prof Mkenda reaffirms government's commitment to advancing innovation

By Beatrice Philemon

THE government has reaffirmed its commitment to prioritise investments in science, technology and innovation to address the country's challenges, advance knowledge, create new technologies and foster economic development.

Speaking at the closing ceremony of the 9th Science, Technology, and Innovation Conference and Exhibition (STICE) in Dar es Salaam on Wednesday, Prof Adolf Mkenda, Minister for Education, Science and Technology, stressed the critical importance of investing in human capital—particularly in science and technology education—to drive economic growth and close the technology adoption gap in Tanzania.

"For Tanzania to achieve economic growth, we must strengthen our capacity in science and technology, enabling our youth to lead innovation and address local challenges," Prof Mkenda said.

He pointed to examples like South Korea, which has demonstrated the transformative impact of investing in human capital, particularly in education and technology.

Prof Mkenda underscored the government's commitment to

enhancing Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) education in universities and colleges. He urged educational institutions to equip young Tanzanians with the knowledge and skills required to contribute actively to the nation's economic development.

To further support innovation, he highlighted the launch of the Samia Fund, with an allocation of 6 billion shillings. The fund aims to support Tanzanian innovators in bringing their products to market and fostering entrepreneurship.

"The Samia Fund is designed to help innovators turn their ideas into reality, providing the financial backing needed to drive local innovation," Prof Mkenda explained.

In addition to fostering innovation, the government has allocated resources to address the effects of climate change, particularly in regions experiencing reduced rainfall. Prof Mkenda expressed gratitude to the Norwegian government for its continued support in tackling these challenges. "We are thankful for international collaboration, which aids us in combating climate change and enhancing productivity in

drought-affected areas," he said.

Amos Nungu, Director General of the Tanzania Commission for Science and Technology (COSTECH), also addressed the conference. He highlighted participants' requests for support in acquiring affordable research equipment and stressed the need for investment in technologies that reduce carbon emissions and advance research in the biological economy.

"We need affordable technologies for research and innovation to address climate change and boost our economy," Nungu stated.

Prof Daniel Mushi, Deputy Permanent Secretary at the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology, commended the government's efforts to build a skilled workforce and strengthen the nation's science and technology capabilities.

He emphasised the importance of collaboration between researchers and government institutions in advancing Tanzania's development agenda.

"The government's initiatives to provide quality education and promote science and technology are pivotal for the country's economic transformation," Prof Mushi said.



Expression of Interest (EOI) for the Provision of Domestic Air Travel and Accommodation booking services to AUMS Geofields (T) Limited Staff.

AUMS Geofields (T) Limited invites eligible, qualified and experienced companies that possess the requisite expertise and capacity to provide Domestic Air Travel and Accommodation booking services to AUMS Geofields (T) Limited Staff.

1. Schedule and deadline for submission

The contract is to be awarded through a competitive tender process. If your company wishes to be considered for pre-qualification please submit an EOI by email to ContractsTanzania@aumsg.com by not later than 16:00HRS Local Time on **13th December 2024** quoting "Domestic Air Travel and Accommodation booking services" in the subject line of your email.

Please submit an EOI on your company letterhead with the following mandatory information:

- Company Profile, directors list, number of employees with a foreign to national ratio indicated
- Valid tax Compliance, VAT registration & TIN certificates
- Certificate of Incorporation and Business License.
- Compliant with all National labour Laws and Regulations
- Minimum of 5 years in Air Travel and Ticketing Industry transportation service.
- Provide a minimum of 5 clients and references to which the company has offered similar services in the last 3 years
- Submit copy of Ticketing and Refund Policy
- Compliant with all required Permits, Certifications and Licenses, e.g. IATA, TALA
- Contracts/agent agreements with domestic airlines e.g. Air Tanzania Limited, Precision Air, Auric Air etc.
- Insurance Cover
- Summary of court proceedings (pending and completed), court judgements and/or insolvency/bankruptcy proceedings if any against your company or shareholders, directors and or senior management over the last three years.
- Occupational Health, Safety and Environmental compliance
- Details of key employees and management team
- Provision of financial statements for the previous two financial years
- Compliance to Tanzania's Mining Local Content Requirements as per the Mining Local Content Regulations 2018.

Any response received beyond 16:00HRS Local Time on **13th December 2024** shall not be considered.

2. Assessment criteria

The mandatory information requested at paragraph 1 will be evaluated and scored to shortlist pre-qualified companies.

The pre-qualification of any company submitting an EOI shall be at the sole discretion of AUMS Geofields (T) Limited. The bidder shall bear all costs associated with the preparation and submission of the companies EOI. AUMS Geofields (T) Ltd shall not be responsible or liable for any costs incurred regardless of the conduct or outcome of the bidding process

For more information on African Underground Mining Services and its operations please refer to the following website www.aumsg.com.

AN AUMS & GEOFIELDS JV

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182867



Expression of Interest (EOI) for the Provision of AUMS Geofields (T) Limited Staff Transfer and Courier Services in Mwanza and Geita.

AUMS Geofields (T) Limited invites eligible, qualified and experienced companies that possess the requisite expertise and capacity to express their interest in the Provision of AUMS Geofields (T) Limited Staff Transfer and Courier Services in Mwanza and Geita.

1. Schedule and deadline for submission

The contract is to be awarded through a competitive tender process. If your company wishes to be considered for pre-qualification please submit an EOI by email to ContractsTanzania@aumsg.com by not later than **16:00HRS Local Time on 13th December 2024** quoting "Staff Transfer and Courier Services in Mwanza and Geita" in the subject line of your email.

Please submit an EOI on your company letterhead with the following mandatory information:

- Company Profile, directors list, number of employees with a foreign to national ratio indicated
- Valid tax Compliance, VAT registration & TIN certificates
- Certificate of Incorporation.
- Evidence of current proven background in operating large fleet of either shuttle or bus transportation services, their value and terms
- Compliant with all required Permits, Certifications and Licenses, e.g. valid vehicle passenger permits and Land Transport Regulatory Authority (LATRA)
- Insurance Cover
- Summary of court proceedings (pending and completed), court judgements and/or insolvency/bankruptcy proceedings if any against your company or shareholders, directors and or senior management over the last three years.
- Occupational Health, Safety and Environmental compliance
- Details of key employees (drivers) and management team
- Provision of financial statements for the previous two financial years
- Compliance to Tanzania's Mining Local Content Requirements as per the Mining Local Content Regulations 2018.

Any response received beyond **16:00HRS Local Time on 13th December 2024** shall not be considered.

2. Assessment criteria

The mandatory information requested at paragraph 1 will be evaluated and scored to shortlist pre-qualified companies.

The pre-qualification of any company submitting an EOI shall be at the sole discretion of AUMS Geofields (T) Limited. The bidder shall bear all costs associated with the preparation and submission of the companies EOI. AUMS Geofields (T) Ltd shall not be responsible or liable for any costs incurred regardless of the conduct or outcome of the bidding process

For more information on African Underground Mining Services and its operations please refer to the following website www.aumsg.com.

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Expression of Interest (EOI) for the provision of surface and underground civil works and fabrication for AUMS GEOFIELDS (T) Limited at Geita Gold Mine in Tanzania.

AUMS Geofields (T) Limited invites eligible, suitably qualified, and experienced Tanzanian companies to express their interest for the "provision of surface and underground civil works and fabrication" at its operations in Geita Gold Mine in Tanzania.

1. Schedule and deadline for submission

The contract is to be awarded through a competitive tender process. If your company wishes to be considered for pre-qualification please submit an EOI by email to ContractsTanzania@aumsg.com by not later than 16:00HRS Local Time on **13th December 2024** quoting "Surface and underground civil works and fabrication" in the subject line of your email. Email size should not exceed 20mbs.

Please submit an EOI on your company letterhead with the following mandatory information:

- Company Profile, Shareholding structure, List of directors, Number of employees with a foreign to national ratio indicated.
- Valid Tax Compliance, VAT Registration & TIN certificates, BRELA registration.
- Certificate of Incorporation, Valid Business Permit/Licenses
- ISO Certification, Industry Regulatory Compliance Licenses, Class I-IV Contractor Registration Board certificate and any other relevant Industry Documentation
- Summary of Court proceedings (pending and completed), Court Judgments and /or insolvency/bankruptcy proceedings if any, against your company and or any of your shareholders, directors and/or senior leadership/management team over the last 3 years.
- Occupational, Health, Safety and Environmental Management Plan.
- Three Trade references, Sample contracts and completion certificates.
- Key Employees CV & Certificates
- Contractor registration/approval to operate at Geita Gold Mine
- Compliance to Tanzania's Mining Local Content Requirements as per the Mining Local Content Regulations 2018.

Any response received beyond 16:00HRS Local Time on **13th December 2024** shall not be considered.

2. Assessment criteria

The mandatory information requested at paragraph 1 will be evaluated and scored to shortlist pre-qualified companies.

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NGOs partner to equip youth with tech skills for job chances

By Correspondent Grace Mwakalinga

TWO non-governmental organisations (NGOs) have teamed up to help young people in Tanzania leverage technology to enhance their skills and unlock job opportunities.

Reports reveal that a lack of essential skills and limited job opportunities are significant challenges facing many young people in the country.

To tackle these issues, Her Initiative, in partnership with Sheria Kiganjani, has launched a five-year project called 'Going Beyond', aimed at providing specialised training to youth on securing employment and engaging in entrepreneurship.

The growing problem of unemployment in Tanzania is exacerbated by many young people being unprepared for the job market. However, the training programme held in Dar es Salaam benefited 50 young participants by equipping them with the skills necessary for self-employment and preparing them for both local and international job opportunities.

Oswald Manyerere, Resource Mobilisation Coordinator, noted that many young people lack the right knowledge and are often not motivated by a desire for success. He observed that youth frequently use their phones for entertainment, such as social media, rather than accessing resources that could help them secure jobs or improve their economic prospects.

Gilian Mbaga from Kazi Connect encouraged young people to leverage technology by participating in conferences and

exploring economic opportunities through innovative methods.

Musa Kisenja, Technology Director at Sheria Kiganjani, stressed the importance of guiding young people on how to find and effectively approach job opportunities.

"Many young people struggle when applying for jobs because they don't know how to prepare or present themselves. This training is designed to help them overcome these challenges," Kisenja explained.

The 'Going Beyond' project, funded by the Digital Opportunity Trust (DOT) and the MasterCard Foundation, aims to support young people in Tanzania, Malawi, Ivory Coast, and Zambia until 2028.

Daniel Robert, Information Officer at Her Initiative, shared that the project aims to reach 1,500 young people within the first six months. In total, 300,000 traders across the four countries are expected to benefit from the training, which seeks to enhance their business skills and improve the quality of their products.

"Our goal is to empower young people to achieve economic independence through their skills and businesses by adopting innovative and effective approaches," Robert said.

One of the trainees, Isaya Richard, shared that he had learned how to write a professional curriculum vitae (CV) and job application letter using proper techniques.

Celine Julius highlighted the impact of the programme on women, noting that 70 per cent of the participants were female, compared to 30 per cent male.

Stakeholders unite to empower students for career decisions

By Correspondent Daniel Semberya

THE Economic Social Research Foundation (ESRF), in collaboration with the Norwegian School of Economics Hip Edutainment and Ruka Creatives, has launched an initiative aimed at supporting young people's transition from school to the workforce.

Speaking in Dar es Salaam yesterday at a dissemination workshop on the school-to-work transition, Dr Vivian Kazi, Senior Researcher and Head of ESRF's Strategic Research and Publications Department, stated that the initiative has been supported by the Research Council of Norway.

Dr Kazi highlighted that the Future Yangu project is a three-year pilot programme running from 2021 to 2024. The project has been implemented in the Dodoma and Tanga regions, involving 50 secondary schools—25 in each region. Its primary aim is to help young people identify job opportunities after completing their Form IV education.

She noted that the pilot programme has had a positive impact, with 8 per cent of students securing employment while others continue to work towards achieving their career aspirations.

"Future Yangu is a unique educational tool, offered as part of the extracurricular curriculum,"

Dr Kazi said.

"This programme addresses a critical challenge in Tanzania: the high youth unemployment rate and the lack of understanding about how to prepare for and succeed in various careers."

Minou Fuglesang, Executive Director of Hip Edutainment, underscored the scarcity of similar programmes across Sub-Saharan Africa, including Tanzania, that assist young people in navigating the labour market and acquiring the skills needed to secure employment.

"There has been a gap in equipping young people with the skills they need to transition into the workforce. Future Yangu bridges this gap by helping students develop relevant career skills," she said.

The Future Yangu podcast series is designed to prepare secondary school students in Tanzania for the working world. The programme aims to guide students in making informed decisions about their educational paths, ensuring they select routes that lead to fulfilling careers while equipping them with essential workplace skills.

The initiative is particularly beneficial for students pursuing vocational or technical training rather than university education. Regardless of their Form IV exam results, these students face the same challenge: finding their place in Tanzania's labour market.



Agness Kisaka (2nd-R), Deputy Permanent Secretary in the Water ministry, pictured yesterday leading the Tanzanian delegation during ongoing talks on the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands at the 16th Conference of the Parties (COP16) to the UNCCD in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. Photo: Guardian Photographer

'New partnership to transform healthcare access across Africa'

By Henry Mwangonde

SOUTH Africa-based medical tourism platform Najali Care has partnered with a local healthcare provider American Clinic, to enhance healthcare access and innovation across the African continent.

Addressing reporters in Dar es Salaam yesterday, Dr Nandipha Ndhlove, Chief Executive Officer of Najali Care, highlighted that the collaboration aims to establish a seamless healthcare ecosystem by integrating advanced medical expertise with a strong emphasis on accessibility, innovation, and cross-

border cooperation.

"This partnership represents a significant milestone in creating an integrated, patient-centred healthcare experience. By combining our logistical expertise with exceptional care standards, we ensure patients receive healthcare that meets global benchmarks," she said.

The partnership will provide a range of services, including pre-consultations, coordinated travel and accommodation, and access to specialised medical treatments in South Africa. Patients will also benefit from comprehensive post-treatment care upon their return,

seamlessly integrated with local healthcare providers.

Violet Luwanja, Director of Operations at American Clinic, underscored that the collaboration aligns with national healthcare priorities.

"This partnership supports Tanzania's commitment to improving healthcare delivery and expanding access to quality care. It also facilitates access to advanced medical services," she said.

She further explained that the collaboration promotes health innovation and capacity building, introducing a digital solution powered by the health-

tech company Afya Record. This platform allows patients to store and manage their medical records, access virtual consultations, and utilise tools for managing chronic diseases. "These advancements enhance cross-border healthcare accessibility while providing local healthcare professionals with opportunities for professional development and collaboration," Luwanja added.

The partnership will also focus on preventive healthcare through community wellness campaigns and the early detection of chronic diseases, including cancers and cardiovascular conditions.



Angela Mwirigi, KCB Group's Director for Digital Financial Services, speaks at a recent 25th East African Community anniversary side-event in Arusha city, mainly on the need to build and deploy robust technology to help the region to unlock digital potential and foster financial inclusion. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

By Correspondent Maulid Mmbaga

THE government has distributed 3,000 secondary religious education books to the Muslim Council of Tanzania (BAKWATA), with plans for these to be distributed to private schools.

The initiative aims to support the teaching of religious education, which is mandated by the national curriculum at both primary and secondary levels.

Speaking at the handover event in Dar es Salaam yesterday, Minister of Education, Science and Technology, Prof Adolf Mkenda, announced that the books are part of a larger consignment of 8,000 copies. Of these, 5,000 will be distributed to government schools nationwide.

The books were developed under the guidance of the Tanzania Islamic Studies Teaching Association (TISTA),

Govt begins distribution of religious education books

an organisation established to manage and coordinate Islamic Religious Education in Tanzania.

Prof Mkenda assured attendees that the government would continue printing additional copies to ensure all regions have access to them.

"The government does not dictate the content of religious education; this responsibility lies with religious leaders. We will not impose interpretations or decisions on religious matters," he said.

He added, "The government's role is to ensure that religious education is accessible to all. This has been

made mandatory from the first class to Standard Six, in accordance with Education Document Number Five."

Prof Mkenda also emphasised that religious education should be taught twice a week at both primary and secondary levels by teachers of the relevant faiths. He clarified that teachers who do not share the faith of their students will not be permitted to teach the subject.

"Parents will lose trust if we appoint teachers of a different faith to teach their children religion, even if they are competent educators," he explained. "Just as a Christian parent would not

want a Muslim teaching their child Christian studies, we must respect these religious boundaries."

He urged school principals to collaborate with local religious denominations to recruit qualified and passionate teachers for religious education. He also highlighted the role of religious education in shaping students' morals and character.

Sheikh Abubakar Zuberi, Mufti of Tanzania, underscored the importance of cooperation among all stakeholders to ensure the successful implementation of religious education in schools.



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Prospective foreign investor Harbinder Singh Reehal (R) and colleague Amarjit Singh Reehal at a media briefing in Zanzibar yesterday on efforts made by the government to make conditions friendlier to Tanzanian and other investors. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

Ngorongoro sees surge in local tourism as new drive unveiled

By Guardian Correspondent, Ngorongoro

The Ngorongoro Conservation Area (NCAA) has seen a significant increase in domestic tourism, with 200,000 Tanzanians visiting between July and November this year.

In unveiling the "Merry & Wild, Ngorongoro Awaits" campaign yesterday, NCAA's Tourism and Marketing Manager, Senior Assistant Commissioner Mariam Kobelo, explained that the initiative seeks to inspire more Tanzanians to explore the region's diverse attractions.

"The Ngorongoro Authority launched

this campaign to encourage more Tanzanians to experience the beauty of the Ngorongoro Conservation Area," Kobelo said. "Our statistics show a steady rise in the number of domestic tourists, with 200,000 visitors between July and November 2024."

She highlighted several key attractions, including the Olduvai cultural heritage site, the Empakai Crater, Olmoti Crater, and Mount Loromalasi, Tanzania's third-highest peak. The Ngorongoro Geological Museum, part of the Ngorongoro-Lengai UNESCO Geopark, is also a prominent feature.

Kobelo also introduced special tour packages tied to the campaign. The "Rhinos" package offers a two-day tour for 450,000 Tanzanian shillings, available from December 24 to 25. The "Elephant" package costs 130,000/- per person for a one-day tour, while the "Leopard" package is priced at 85,000/- per person.

To promote the campaign, NCAA has teamed up with several performing arts groups, including the Action Rollers Skates and Makachu Jumpers. The groups will be performing in Arusha, Dar es Salaam and Zanzibar from December 4 to 16, 2024.

Urgent relief sought for Sudan's isolated regions

KHARTOUM

OVER 700 trucks carrying vital food aid are expected to reach the most affected regions of Sudan, where millions are grappling with the devastating effects of hunger and displacement due to ongoing conflict.

The war, which erupted in April 2023, has led to widespread famine, forcing millions off their land and pushing the country to the brink of a humanitarian catastrophe.

Sudan's hunger crisis has become dire. With markets nearly empty, food prices have skyrocketed, and aid organizations struggle to reach the most vulnerable populations due to restricted access imposed by warring factions.

In the Zamzam displacement camp, located in Sudan's Darfur region, residents are enduring extreme conditions. Nour Abdallah, a woman living in the camp, described the dire situation: "There is a lot of suffering in this camp."

Global experts have confirmed the presence of famine in the camp since July, and there are growing fears that more areas will soon follow. The World Food Programme (WFP) warns that up

to 25 million people – more than half of Sudan's population – are expected to face acute hunger this year. In desperation, some residents are forced to eat ombaz, a mixture of leftover peanut shells used to extract oil, highlighting the severity of the crisis.

The WFP is working to deliver over 17,000 tons of food aid, which is expected to support 1.5 million people for a month. However, the organization stresses the urgent need for expanded and sustained access to ensure that food reaches those in the hardest-hit regions. The aid will be distributed to communities across Sudan, including 14 areas classified as "hotspots" due to severe food insecurity and the imminent risk of famine. "The need for expanded, sustained access is crucial," said a WFP spokesperson. "We must reach all those facing starvation across Sudan, especially in remote areas where aid is often blocked or delayed."

Since the conflict began, at least 24,000 people have lost their lives, and millions more have been displaced. The violence, sparked by tensions between Sudan's military and the paramilitary group Rapid

Support Forces (RSF), shows no signs of abating. The fighting has created a complex humanitarian emergency, making it difficult for aid agencies to provide sufficient support to those most in need.

In neighboring Chad, where many displaced Sudanese have sought refuge, the crisis continues to unfold. At a displacement site run by Doctors Without Borders (MSF), there have been seven child deaths related to malnutrition between May and September 2024. These deaths are often linked to weakened immune systems, leaving children vulnerable to diseases that thrive in hunger-stricken environments.

International pressure is mounting for both sides of the conflict to allow unfettered access to humanitarian aid. U.S. President Joe Biden has urged Sudanese leaders to halt attacks on civilians and ensure that aid reaches those who need it most.

As the fighting intensifies, aid groups warn that time is running out. Without sustained access to food, medicine, and critical supplies, the humanitarian crisis in Sudan will only worsen, threatening the lives of millions more in the coming months.

Ethnic groups at risk praise EACOP for respecting their cultures, traditional values

By Guardian Correspondent, Arusha

VULNERABLE ethnic groups, often referred to as indigenous peoples, have expressed their appreciation for the East African Crude Oil Pipeline (EACOP) project for respecting their customs, traditions, and practices throughout its implementation.

The communities affected by the EACOP project have commended its consistent engagement with them at every stage through quarterly meetings. These meetings provide updates on the project's progress and allow for discussions on challenges and opportunities arising from their roles as Project Affected Persons (PAPs).

Monica Kilandi, a cultural leader from the Maasai community, highlighted that their customs and traditions have been respected while the communities have benefited from capacity-building initiatives and improved social services.

"We have not experienced any negative impacts since the project began in our areas. On the contrary, our communities have benefited from improved social services, particularly water access, as we have faced significant water shortages due to droughts," Kilandi said.

She also commended the project's efforts to empower Maasai women, who are often culturally restricted from discussing issues in the presence of men. EACOP has organised exclusive meetings for Maasai women, enabling them to raise concerns and seek assistance from the project.

"We can now have our voices heard, and for that, we are grateful," she added.

Naseliani Lembulisi Remama, from the Wa-akie community in Kiteto, also praised the project for respecting their cultural practices, particularly their sacred worship sites. She explained that EACOP consulted cultural leaders prior to any actions to ensure their traditions were honoured.

"We are grateful to EACOP for consulting us before taking action. As Wa-akie people, we requested the project's help in securing

a traditional land ownership title for our worship site. The survey has been completed, and we are now awaiting the title," Remama explained.

She further noted that the project has brought significant benefits to their community, including employment opportunities for local youth.

Similarly, Elder Shingalila Kishaida Mniri from the Wataturu community in Igunga District expressed his gratitude for the project's respect for their traditions. He shared that the EACOP team agreed to reroute the pipeline to avoid disturbing burial sites, in line with their cultural norms, which forbid exhuming graves.

"When we raised the issue with EACOP, they understood and respected our traditions. They agreed to reroute the pipeline to ensure our graves remain undisturbed," Mniri said.

Dr Elifuraha Laltaika, an advisor to the EACOP project for communities on the outskirts of towns, explained that the project holds regular meetings with local communities to discuss progress and identify areas for further collaboration. These quarterly meetings have fostered mutual development and reinforced the project's commitment to respecting the rights and traditions of affected communities.

Laltaika emphasised that the EACOP project adheres to both national and international laws, ensuring compliance with human rights standards. The project integrates the cultural needs of indigenous communities, including the Maasai, Wa-akie, Wa-Bargaig, and Wataturu, into its planning and implementation.

The EACOP project spans eight regions in Tanzania, covering 1,443 kilometres from Hoima in Uganda to the Chongoleani Peninsula in Tanga, Tanzania.

The project's shareholders include TotalEnergies, which holds a 62 per cent stake, while the Tanzania Petroleum Development Corporation (TPDC) and Uganda Petroleum Development Company (UPDC) each hold 15 per cent, and China's CNOOC holds 8 per cent.



WWF for a living planet®

Consultancy to Develop the National Forestry Extension Strategy

Introduction

WWF is an international non-governmental organization founded in 1961, working to build a future where people live in harmony with nature. The mission of WWF is to stop the degradation of the planet's natural environment by conserving biological diversity, ensuring that the use of renewable natural resources is sustainable, and promoting the reduction of pollution and wasteful consumption through cooperation with local communities to secure sustainable and resilient rural livelihoods as a key conservation approach with energy and climate change adaptation and mitigation as a cross-cutting approach in all programmes.

WWF Tanzania Country Office (WWF - TCO) has supported the Government of Tanzania in implementing various projects on Marine, Forest, Fresh Water, Energy and Wildlife.

WWF - TCO through the Forest Programme is now looking to engage a consultant (s) to develop a National Forestry Extension Strategy. The strategy will provide guidelines on how to develop, design, plan and conduct effective forest extension services. Moreover, it will be an important tool for forest extension officers to disseminate/transfer forest technologies, create awareness on forest policy, legal and institutional framework, promotion of sustainable forest management and utilisation of forest resources. The Forest Programme Coordinator and Programme Officer will guide the data collection and ensure all deliverables are timely delivered to WWF TCO.

Application procedure & Submission of Applications

WWF TCO invites applications from competent, qualified and experienced consultant(s) through the following address:

Secretary, Procurement Committee

WWF Tanzania
White Star Street, Plot 252, Mikocheni
P. O. Box 63117, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania
Tel: +255 22 277 5346/277 2455/270 0077

Interested applicants may access the Full Detailed **Terms of Reference (ToR)** through the following websites: https://www.wwf.or.tz/jobs_and_opportunities/consultancies_and_tenders/

All applicants should direct their electronic copy to the procurement e-mail at procurement@wwftz.org. For any clarifications, please contact jwumbura@wwftz.org copy mfeisal@wwftz.org.

All applications should reach us by or before **Friday 20th December 2024**.

WWF TCO reserves the right to accept or reject any or all the applications without assigning any reason thereof. Late application shall not be accepted for evaluation irrespective of the circumstance.

WWF has a principle of zero-tolerance to fraud and corruption, if you encounter such incident, report by sending an email to fcci@wwftz.org



Members of the DTB staff pose for a souvenir photo with The LaunchPad co-founder Carol Ndosi (C) on the sidelines of an annual 'Women in Digital' workshop held in Dar es Salaam at the weekend. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

Ensuring that public servants deliver to satisfaction is a national obligation

AN analyst writing on human resource management once described leadership as one's ability to get others to willingly follow. He then outlined what he saw as the top ten leadership qualities.

Of course, it is highly unlikely that he was the first person to come up with such an analysis, but what he said all the same provided useful guidance.

In the analyst's view, among the attributes were having a vision, articulating it, and implementing it; having integrity, and thus the trust of one's followers; and having dedication, meaning spending the time or energy necessary to accomplish tasks at hand.

The others were having magnanimity, meaning being humble enough to give credit where credit was due and to take personal responsibility for failures; and being open, that is being able to listen to new ideas.

Yet others were creativity, or the ability to think differently, to get outside the box that constrains solutions; and humility, or the recognition that leaders are no better or worse than other members of the team.

Also mentioned were fairness, or dealing with other people consistently and justly; assertiveness, or the ability to clearly state what one expected; and a sense of humour, with which to relieve tension and boredom, defuse hostility, and energise followers.

By some coincidence, a conference jointly organised by the Commonwealth Association of Public Administrators and Managers, the government and the Tanzania Public Service College was by then in progress in Arusha city.

Delegates included HR experts and a range of executives from Commonwealth member-countries as diverse as Tanzania, Barbados, Botswana, Canada, Ghana, India, Jamaica, Kenya, Malaysia, Malta, Mauritius, Nigeria, South Africa, Uganda and the UK.

The theme of the conference tied in splendidly with the views of HR management and administration as well as various other experts or professionals who concurred that people were the most valuable asset to an organisation.

This was the gist of the message

then Australian Public Service Commissioner Lynelle Jann Briggs had for the conference.

Briggs told the conference, whose theme was 'Governance Excellence: Managing Human Potential', that attracting, retaining and developing the right people with the right skills was critical for success.

She said that, in the private sector, bottom line performance was the ultimate measure of whether that delicate equation was effectively balanced.

"In public administration... it is the quality and potential of our most valuable asset, our workforce, which will ensure that governments are served well, with integrity and honesty, and communities are supported with robust and reliable services and advice," she noted.

The conference ran as a series of mini-lectures on four major challenges that governments and corporate entities were said to commonly face as they sought to build their workforces.

These were said to revolve around strategic planning, attraction and recruitment, developing employees, and managing performance - the last one regarded as the most daunting.

The chief guest opened the conference by describing well-managed and motivated human resources as essential for promoting good governance as well as formulating and implementing sound economic policies.

Tanzania's Public Service has undergone intensive changes over the years, mainly meant to make it more effective and efficient.

It has not been easy devising and instituting the changes, not to mention ensuring effective and sustainable oversight at the implementation stage. Accordingly, the nation has every right to expect noticeable improvement in the quality of the services public servants worth the name ought to offer.

Understandably, that ought to be a major part of the rationale for holding of tailor-made conferences like the Arusha one - and we have witnessed numerous ones.

We justifiably need to see enough concrete evidence that this is indeed what we are witnessing - and ensure that no defaulting goes unpunished.

Expectations high on interpretation of laws and success in war on crime

A president-in-waiting once asked by a journalist seeking to know when it was that the national anti-corruption agency had last brought anybody of consequence to trial was candid enough to admit that he didn't remember.

As to the level of faith the citizenry could be having in the agency, the journalist was advised to ask the question "one year down the road".

That was shortly after the General Election, the countdown to which was characterised by promises to rid the country of all forms of petty and grand corruption.

Many people and members of the donor community at the time harboured the feeling that corruption was a stubborn cancer that was slowly but surely eating right into society.

As to whether the situation has since grown any better or any worse is anyone's guess. Whatever the estimation, though, corruption is confirmed as an impediment to good governance in general and the exercise of justice on particular.

It would clearly be of genuine concern were we to have diagnosed a problem and have the ability to solve it but still fall short of doing so conclusively.

We have often heard all manner of prominent and therefore influential members of society condemning corruption as an abomination - as a crime against humanity.

Even the government has frequently rightly slammed corruption as an

aggressive monster that has wreaked havoc on our country and nation.

Part of the proof of this lies in the 1995 presidential admission with regard to the existence of grand corruption at the political level, particularly in the use of public office for self-enrichment.

This is how the refrain ran, in part: "I get into a party as a simple person, I become a minister, I retire or I'm sacked at the end of four years. And suddenly I become the owner of large enterprises which could not possibly have been earned by the remuneration which was given to me by virtue of my ministerial office. And the only explanation then is that you used the ministerial authority to influence matters in return for the wealth that you have accumulated."

Rhetorical question: To what extent have well-funded and aggressively touted plans to rein in corruption by sprucing up the civil service, partly by ensuring more decent remuneration and other packages ended in real success?

There are surely cases where little can legally be done towards taming corruption and other vices, including when "evidence" about corrupt practices is too shaky, scanty or rickety for meaningful litigation to proceed.

However, this should stand as an exception and not turn into more of a lame excuse than a realistic interpretation of the country's laws. It is a line of action we ought to latch more on to.

The Guardian Limited Key Contacts

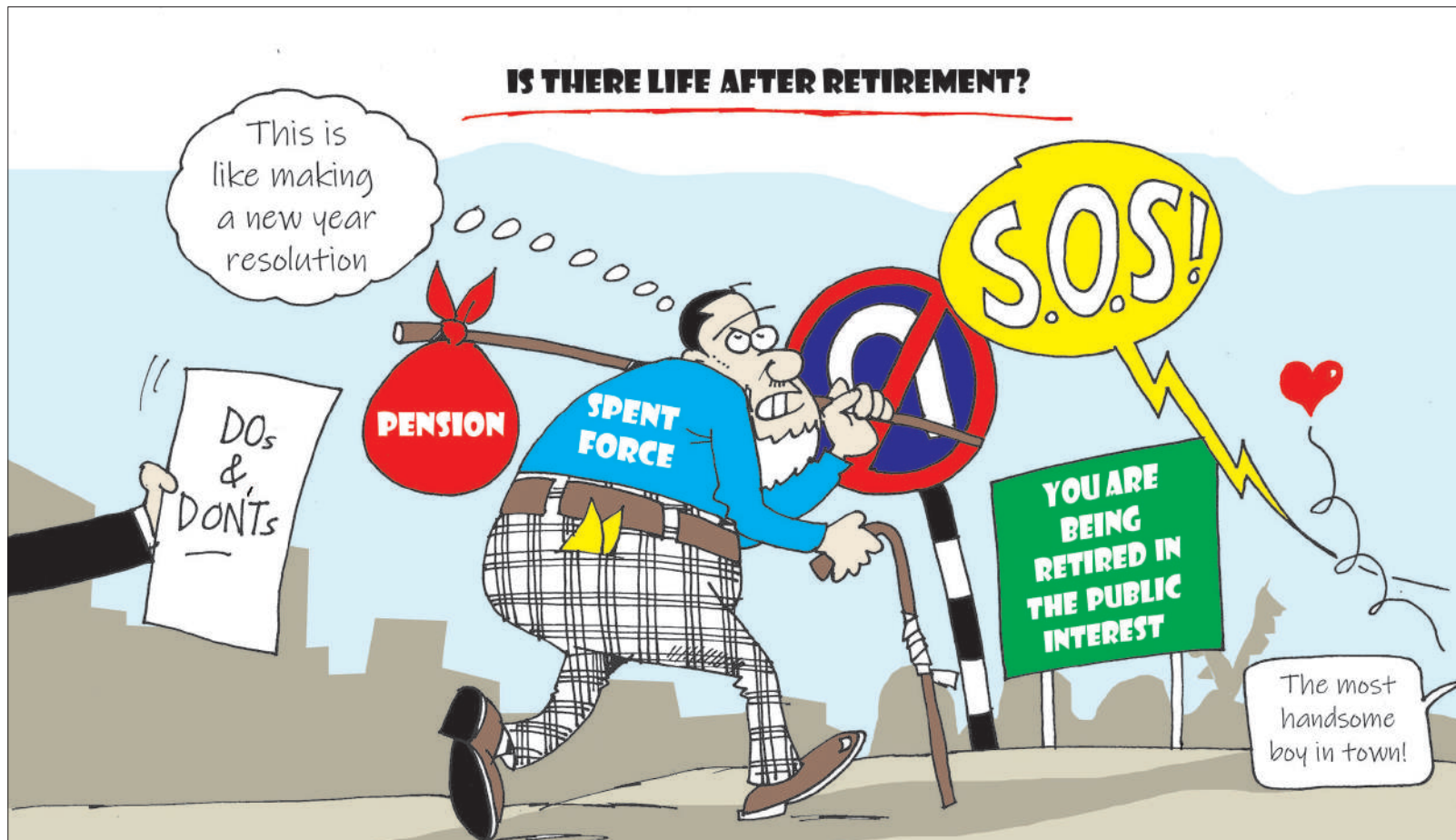
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By Msizi Khoza and Agencies

Money in vs money out? Rethinking Africa's climate financing solutions

efforts



IN reflecting on the recent COP29 summit, we just can't do without exploring why the global race for capital to fund positive climate action means that African countries must rethink how they finance their climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies.

Officially, the summit is known as the 29th Conference of Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). It was held in Baku, Azerbaijan, from November 11 to 22.

Dubbed the 'finance COP', COP29 touched off much-needed conversations about climate finance targets, carbon markets, global water resilience and more.

However, the conference spotlighted a wide chasm for Africa between the money coming into the continent to address climate change and the funds flowing out.

The continent faces a 'disproportionate burden' from climate change and the associated adaptation costs. We witness this at a time when the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) reports that, on average, African countries are losing 2.5 per cent of their GDP in responding to climate extremes, despite being responsible for fewer than 10 per cent of global greenhouse gas emissions.

These climate extremes, among them prolonged droughts, devastating floods, severe heatwaves, and cyclones, displace millions, compound poverty, threaten food security and destabilise economies.

The need to invest in climate adaptation and mitigation is urgent - bringing an alarming need for African countries to reassess their financing models to bridge this gap.

The financing chasm

The global capital flow disparity remains one of the most significant hurdles to tackling climate change. Wealthy nations continue to dominate climate financing, leaving developing countries struggling to secure the resources needed to fund their transition.

The issue of "money in versus money out" was a central theme of COP29, resulting in a US\$300 billion deal tripling climate finance to developing countries by 2035.

Yet the scale of investment required to drive Africa's climate transition feels almost boundless. Delivering a full-scale transformation will demand action from outside of the negotiation room at COP alone - it requires a fundamental rethinking of our existing financial systems.

Developing nations were right to call at COP29 for a big increase in the quantum of international climate finance. But the flow of

funds, as well as being bigger, will also need to be much more smartly and strategically deployed, with a far bigger focus on catalytic capital.

One potential solution is tapping into domestic pools of capital to help generate the additional funding needed to fuel this transition.

Mechanisms like climate-related levies can bridge this gap. Small levies on equity and bond transactions, for example, could generate revenue which can then be channelled towards renewable energy projects, climate resilience programmes or carbon offset schemes.

This approach mirrors mechanisms like the UK's Stamp Duty, which imposes a tax on share transactions to raise public revenue. Adopting this model for climate finance would create a steady stream of income dedicated to addressing Africa's climate priorities.

Further revenue could be generated through levies on shipping emissions, additional taxes on jet fuel, and "frequent flyer" charges targeting emissions from high-volume travel.

These measures would provide funding as well as incentivise lower-carbon alternatives in transportation. What's more, the energy-intensive nature of cryptocurrency mining presents another opportunity for targeted taxation.

Cryptocurrency mining and data centres consume vast amounts of electricity and account for nearly 1.0 per cent of all global emissions, with their environmental footprint becoming larger by the year.

Levying small taxes on crypto activities could discourage excessive energy use in this industry and

redirect these resources towards climate finance.

Crowding in private sector financing

These funding mechanisms could help raise vital resources but, on their own, they cannot carry the weight of the financing shortfall.

With sovereign debt levels already constraining many governments, public capital alone cannot meet Africa's climate financing needs.

Private capital is essential for scaling up investments. For example, South Africa's Renewable Energy Independent Power Producer Procurement Programme is a public-private partnership with the goal of increasing the country's electricity capacity via private sector financing.

Before the programme's establishment in 2011, South Africa had a very small private power sector. Today, though, the country has vastly expanded its installed energy capacity and is one of the largest financiers of renewable energy across the African continent.

South Africa has seen the highest growth in renewable energy capacity on the continent, including the highest installed wind capacity - accounting for 41 per cent of total installations.

This transformation was made possible by policies that encouraged private investment while aligning with public climate goals.

These models demonstrate how governments across Africa can attract private sector participation to drive the energy transition by creating supportive policy frameworks.

Crisis needs collaborative

The climate crisis is a defining challenge of our time, and many had hoped for a more ambitious outcome at COP29 - on both finance and mitigation - to tackle it. This agreement provides a base on which to build.

It's now essential that this framework is fully honoured - and without delay. Commitments must quickly become cash - and all countries must come together to ensure that the top-end of this new goal is met.

As the global race for climate capital continues to accelerate, African countries must embrace innovative and inclusive financing models that truly move the needle.

Leaning on public-private partnerships, exploring tax system reform and harnessing domestic resources are key to addressing the continent's complex, and urgent, climate financing challenges.

As we look forward to COP30, the hard work begins now. Translating ambition into action today will determine whether we meet the scale of tomorrow's challenge.

Meanwhile, here are some highlights from COP29:

Climate finance: Delegates agreed to a new global target to raise US\$300 billion annually for developing countries by 2035. They also agreed to work together to scale up finance to developing countries to US\$1.3 trillion per year by 2035.

National climate plans: Countries are developing new national climate plans (NDCs) that focus on transitioning away from fossil fuels and keeping the world on track to 1.5 degrees of warming.

Nature-based solutions: The summit emphasized integrating nature-based solutions.

Clean energy transitions: The summit emphasized accelerating clean energy transitions.

For the record: The 2025 UN Climate Change Conference (UNFCCC COP30) is scheduled to be held in Belém, Brazil, in November 2025.

It will include the 30th session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 30) and the 20th meeting of the COP serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol (CMP 20).

Also included will be the seventh meeting of the COP serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement (CMA 7) and the 63rd sessions of the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA 63) and the Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI 63).

• **Msizi Khoza is head of environmental, social and governance at Absa Corporate & Investment Banking.**

East African leaders revive political federation, regional unity dreams at EAC's 25th anniversary

By Adonis Byemelwa

EAST African Community (EAC) leaders, at a high-profile event marking the November 2024 organization's 25th anniversary in Arusha, Tanzania, have rekindled the dream of forming a political federation—an ambitious goal that dates back to the vision of East Africa's founding statesmen.

Against the backdrop of slow progress in regional integration, the leaders agreed on the urgent need to fully operationalize the Customs Union and Common Market protocols to bolster trade within the bloc, which remains strikingly low.

The vision of a united East Africa was first championed in 1963 by Presidents Jomo Kenyatta of Kenya, Julius Nyerere of Tanganyika (now Tanzania), and Milton Obote of Uganda. Despite their efforts, the dream faltered due to administrative inertia and political hurdles.

Tanzania forged ahead, uniting with Zanzibar to form the United Republic of Tanzania, a bold step that set an example for integration but left the broader East African vision unrealized.

Addressing the gathering, Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni reflected on East Africa's interconnected trade history, noting that long before colonial borders fractured the region, it had thrived as a cohesive economic zone stretching from the Great Lakes to Mesopotamia. He described how the 1884 colonial partition of Africa disrupted this network, transforming what was once a "Connected Trade Area" into a "Disconnected Trade Area."

Museveni lamented the missed opportunities for unity, arguing that a political federation would have averted many of the region's historical tragedies. He pointed to Uganda's dark period under Idi Amin, the unrest in Burundi and Rwanda, and the prolonged instability in Somalia and South Sudan as crises that could have been mitigated by a stronger, united East Africa. Museveni reaffirmed Uganda's commitment to free trade and criticized the protectionist practices that undermine market integration within the bloc.

Kenyan President William Ruto added his voice to the call for expedited integration, referencing a 2010 survey showing strong public support for a political federation across the region. He highlighted the strides made by Kenya, Uganda, and Burundi in national consul-



The push for greater integration comes amid skepticism from political scientists and observers who question the feasibility of a political federation.

tations on drafting a confederal constitution, with Rwanda, South Sudan, and Tanzania also beginning their processes.

Ruto touted the EAC as Africa's most dynamic regional economic community, with intra-regional trade reaching 28%—the highest on the continent. However, he stressed the need for peace and stability, which are crucial for attracting investment and fostering growth.

Ruto also underlined Kenya's role in regional diplomacy, including efforts to stabilize South Sudan and Somalia. The Kenyan leader endorsed the Democratic Republic of the Congo's (DRC) call to merge the Luanda and Nairobi peace initiatives, signaling his country's openness to mediation led by retired President Uhuru Kenyatta.

Meanwhile, Tanzania's President Samia Suluhu Hassan focused on environmental sustainability, revealing that her government dedicates 4-5% of GDP to combating climate change and has launched a massive afforestation drive. Tanzania's transition to clean energy, she noted, is not only an environmental imperative but also a cornerstone of rural development, with electrification enabling youth-driven economic activities and curbing urban migration.

Somalia's President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud celebrated his country's recent accession to the EAC, calling it a long-held dream. He highlighted

Somalia's untapped economic potential, including its strategic coastline and burgeoning investments in

agriculture, energy, and fisheries.

Nevertheless, the push for greater integration comes amid skepticism from political scientists and observers who question the feasibility of a political federation. Scholars from Uganda, Kenya, and South Sudan have pointed out that the EAC's ambitious goals risk outpacing its capacity to manage internal divisions and external pressures.

Professor Margaret Were of the Centre for Political Strategy in Nairobi notes, "While the rhetoric of unity is compelling, the EAC lacks the institutional robustness to handle the conflicts and mistrust that simmer beneath the surface." Dr. James Onen, a South Sudanese political analyst, warns that expansion without cohesion could deepen fault lines, particularly as newer members like the DRC grapple with their internal instability.

Kenya's assertive diplomatic outreach has also drawn mixed reactions. President Ruto's invitation to Comoros, a nation with a troubled history of over 20 coups since independence in 1975, has raised eyebrows.

While Comoros could enrich the bloc's agenda on climate and trade, its volatile politics pose a risk to the EAC's credibility. Similarly, Ethiopia, another nation courted by Kenya, brings immense economic potential with its large population and market reforms.

Yet Ethiopia's post-conflict fragility, particularly after the devastating Tigray war, underscores the challenges

of incorporating such nations into a bloc already burdened by unresolved tensions among current members.

Dr. Pierre Kambale, a Congolese academic, emphasizes that the EAC must prioritize resolving existing disputes over expanding its membership. "Adding more players to an already shaky table doesn't ensure stability. It increases the likelihood of further disarray," he cautions.

Despite the optimism expressed by EAC leaders, deep-seated skepticism persists about the feasibility of a political federation. Critics argue that the bloc's lofty aspirations remain disconnected from the political and institutional realities on the ground.

A recent study from the Centre for International and Strategic Studies (CISS) warns that expanding the bloc's membership while pushing for a political federation could create more burdens than benefits. The CISS highlights that while the notion of unity is appealing, the EAC risks overstretching its resources and capabilities, particularly as unresolved tensions among existing members continue to hinder cooperation.

Dr. Alice Mwendu, a political scientist affiliated with the CISS, asserts that "the EAC is already struggling with foundational issues such as implementing trade protocols, harmonizing policies, and managing internal disputes. Adding the complex and sensitive task of forming a political federation will only exacerbate these challenges." She emphasizes that member states have historically

prioritized national sovereignty over regional goals, creating an inherent conflict in the federation's framework.

From South Sudan to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, political instability poses a significant threat to the federation's viability. South Sudan, still grappling with post-conflict recovery, has been unable to fully integrate into the EAC's economic structures. Similarly, the DRC, with its vast size and ongoing security concerns, introduces another layer of complexity.

Dr. Pierre Kambale, a Congolese academic, questions whether the bloc is prepared to absorb the DRC's unique challenges without destabilizing itself further. He adds, "The EAC's enthusiasm for expansion risks ignoring the delicate political fabric required to support a federation. Without addressing existing tensions, this ambition could lead to fragmentation rather than unity."

The CISS study also points to the mistrust that often defines inter-state relations within the EAC. Historical grievances and economic disparities among member states have led to protectionist policies and trade disputes, undermining the spirit of cooperation. For instance, Uganda and Kenya have frequently clashed over trade restrictions, with each country accusing the other of unfair practices. "This lack of mutual trust erodes the foundation on which any federation must be built," says Dr. James Onen, a South Sudanese political analyst.

The study asserts that while the idea of a political federation holds great symbolic value, it remains a distant dream without a seismic shift in political will, trust-building, and institutional reform. For now, the vision of a united East Africa is more aspiration than reality, eclipsed by the harsh complexities of governance and geopolitics in the region.

In Arusha, the anniversary event closed with a sense of cautious optimism. Leaders reiterated their commitment to the shared ideals of the founding fathers while acknowledging the immense work ahead. Whether the EAC can overcome its internal divisions, address its structural weaknesses, and achieve the elusive dream of political federation remains to be seen. Yet the renewed momentum signals that the vision of a united East Africa, however distant, continues to inspire.

By Guardian Reporter

Tanzania appeals for UN support to address tax evasion, unfair treaties and illicit financial flows

TANZANIA, like many nations, faces significant revenue losses due to tax evasion and illicit financial flows, with unfair tax treaties limiting the fair taxation of multinational corporations.

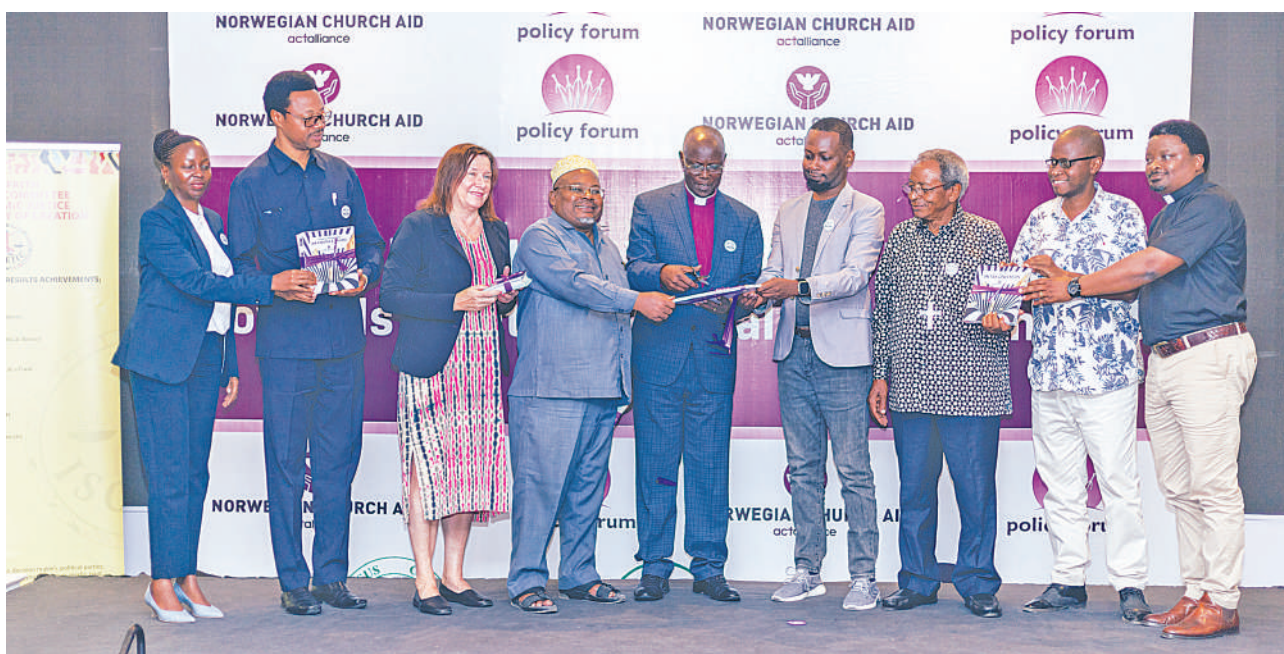
To address this, the country is urged to support global efforts for a United Nations (UN) Tax Convention aimed at fostering equitable and transparent tax policies.

The UN Tax Convention is envisioned as a step towards inclusive, democratic, and transparent decision-making, enabling all nations to have a say in crafting global tax rules that benefit both developed and developing countries.

Currently, the global tax system contains loopholes that allow multinational corporations to avoid taxes, disproportionately benefiting wealthier nations. This has raised critical concerns for Tanzania, which struggles to retain revenue from corporate profits transferred overseas.

Tax stakeholders convened in Dar es Salaam recently for an event titled 'UN Tax Convention: Why We Need Reforms in International Tax Making' which was organized by the Norwegian Church Aid (NCA) in collaboration with Policy Forum and the Interfaith Standing Committee on Economic Justice and Integrity of Creation (ISCJEIC)—a faith-based initiative that brings together representatives from various religious traditions to advocate for social, economic, and environmental justice.

The committee focuses on promoting ethical practices in economic governance, environmental stewardship, and equitable resource distribution, aligning its principles with both spiritual teachings and global development goals. It advocates for global initiatives like the



The UN Tax Convention to promote transparency and justice in international tax systems. During the forum, participants emphasized the urgent need for equitable global tax governance. The need for cooperation. Norah Kawiche, a tax law lecturer at Saint Augustine University of Tanzania (SAUT), highlighted the challenges Tanzania faces due to the current global tax framework. "When multinational companies transfer their profits out of Tanzania without being taxed, it becomes nearly impossible

for the country to claim taxes on those earnings because of existing legal constraints," Kawiche explained.

She emphasized that the UN Tax Convention could provide mechanisms for international cooperation, enabling Tanzania to access critical information on tax evasion and avoidance while building its capacity to collect taxes on funds transferred abroad.

"Domestic tax laws alone cannot address these challenges," Kawiche noted. "Without international collaboration, loopholes in the global system

will persist, undermining our ability to collect fair taxes and boost national revenue."

Faith leaders also voiced strong support for the initiative. Bishop Nelson Kisare, chair of the Interfaith Committee, stressed the moral obligation to pay taxes, citing biblical teachings such as Mark 12:17: "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's."

"Faith actors support the UN Tax Convention as it promotes equitable taxation, financial transparency, and justice," Kisare stated.

Global campaign for tax reform

Berte Marie Ulveseter, Country Director of NCA, launched an advocacy campaign to promote the UN Tax Convention, describing it as a transformative step towards fair global tax policies.

"For years, international tax rules have been shaped by a few wealthy nations, sidelining the voices of developing countries. This imbalance has left poorer nations struggling to generate the revenues needed to invest in essential services," Ulveseter said.

The campaign aims to amplify the voices of developing nations and push for a system that addresses challenges such as tax evasion, illicit financial flows, and the complexities of the digital economy.

A report by the Tax Justice Network revealed that \$500 billion is lost globally to tax evasion annually—double the amount of aid provided by wealthy countries.

Activist Magdalena Bisse, Executive Director of the Tanzania Young Feminist Movement (TYFM), highlighted the inequities of Tanzania's current tax system, which she said shifts the burden from the wealthy to the poor.

"We need the UN Tax Con-

vention to ensure tax fairness and a system that treats all citizens equitably," Bisse stated.

Interfaith Coordinator Edmund Matotay echoed these sentiments, emphasizing that taxation is both a local and international issue. "We need a global agreement that ensures all countries benefit and receive technical support when needed," he said.

On November 27, UN member states overwhelmingly voted to adopt the mandate for the new global tax framework. The Terms of Reference for the UN Tax Convention set the stage for negotiations beginning in February 2025.

The convention aims to address tax abuse, illicit financial flows, and the effective taxation of multinational corporations and ultra-wealthy individuals. It will establish an inclusive, fair, and transparent international tax system.

As countries prepare to negotiate the convention, stakeholders urge collective action to create a tax system that benefits all, particularly the most marginalized.

By Abigael Sum

Data crucial in ecosystem management and decision making in Eastern, Southern Africa



WORLD leaders gathered in Baku, Azerbaijan in November for the 29th United Nations Climate Change Conference, commonly known as COP29, the focus was on climate action commitments to protect biodiversity and promote environmental sustainability.

For Eastern and Southern Africa, COP29 offered a crucial moment to prioritize regional strategies for managing our unique ecosystems, which include forests, marine, and wildlife habitats that support millions and sustain diverse biodiversity.

Among the most critical actions we can take is to embrace data-driven ecosystem management and address the governance challenges that often stand in the way of effective conservation. In recent years, data has come to be seen as “the new oil” in conservation—a resource with immense potential to improve ecosystem management.

Data-driven decision-making involves using data to make informed decisions, rather than relying on intuition or experience.

With accurate, timely data, policy-makers and conservationists can track biodiversity trends, detect environmental changes, and target conservation efforts where they are needed most. The Regional Centre of Excellence for Biodiversity, Forests, and Seascape Ecosystems Management in Eastern and Southern Africa (RCoE-ESA) is leading this data revolution with the development of a Data Geoport—a centralized platform that aggregates environmental data from 24 countries in Eastern and Southern Africa.

This Data Geoport has the potential to transform conservation across the region by abridging the data gap to enhance collaborative efforts in conservation initiatives. It fosters collaborative data contribution and sharing by different stakeholders.

At the heart of Regional Centre of Mapping of Resources for Development's (RCMRD) strategy is the Data Sharing Agreement, a collaborative framework being signed with the 24 countries we

serve. This agreement ensures that the environmental data we receive is authenticated and verified by governments, providing a solid foundation for transparency and trust among all stakeholders. By standardizing data-sharing practices, the agreement supports informed decision-making, enabling better strategies for ecosystem protection and restoration. It also strengthens the functionality of the Data Geoport.

RCMRD plays a pivotal role in helping countries update information on protected and conserved areas, which are key to biodiversity conservation.

This effort was amplified

with RCMRD's contribution to the recently published Protected Plant Report 2024. The report, produced by UNEP-WCMC and IUCN is the first global assessment of protected and conserved areas since the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework was agreed. It highlights countries' progress on commitments to protect 30% of Earth by 2030.

Yet, as COP29 discussions aim to strengthen global commitments to biodiversity protection, we must also confront a significant barrier: the governance issues around data sharing. Each country in Eastern and Southern Africa has unique policies on data

privacy, ownership, and access, leading to significant discrepancies that impede cross-border conservation efforts.

While some countries restrict access to data due to security concerns or prioritize national control over ecological information, others face institutional gaps that limit their ability to contribute to regional data-sharing initiatives. This fragmented approach makes it difficult to create a unified conservation strategy, particularly for ecosystems that transcend borders, such as migratory corridors and forest reserves.

Moreover, issues of data sovereignty are increasingly prominent, with countries

viewing environmental data as a national asset. While protecting national interests is valid, restricting data access or failing to engage in collaborative data platforms like the RCoE-ESA Geoport weakens conservation outcomes across the region. This lack of coordination not only impacts biodiversity but also threatens regional stability, as ecological disruptions can trigger resource conflicts, displacement, and economic losses.

To leverage data effectively in conservation, Eastern and Southern African countries must commit to harmonizing policies on data governance. Regional leaders should

prioritize the development of shared standards for data privacy, ownership, and cross-border access. A unified framework will allow countries to contribute to data-driven initiatives without compromising national interests, ensuring that all stakeholders—governments, conservation organizations, and local communities—benefit from a collaborative approach.

Countries can share data in a way that respects national privacy concerns and boundaries while maintaining the integrity of national boundaries and safeguarding sensitive information.

The time is ripe for Eastern and Southern Africa to champion data-driven ecosystem management and to establish a unified governance framework that supports transparent data sharing. By aligning on these critical issues, the region can lead the way in demonstrating how data can drive effective, sustainable conservation.

Data must be the foundation of conservation efforts, backed by robust governance, regional cooperation, and the full support of our communities.

Abigael Sum is a Communications Specialist at the RCoE-ESA, a project funded by the European Union and Implemented by CIFOR-ICRAF and The Regional Centre for Mapping of Resources for Development (RCMRD).

Conservation agriculture transforming farming in southern Africa

BULAWAYO

On the dusty plains of Shamva District in Zimbabwe, Wilfred Mudavanhu's maize field defies drought.

With the El Niño-induced drought gripping several countries in Southern Africa, Mudavanhu's maize crop is flourishing, thanks to an innovative farming method that helps keep moisture in the soil and promotes soil health.

Once harvesting just 1.5 tonnes of maize (30-50 kg bags) each season, Mudavanhu's harvest jumped to 2.5 tonnes of maize (50 bags) in the 2023/2024 cropping season.

Mudavanhu is one of many farmers in Zimbabwe embracing conservation agriculture, a method that prioritizes minimal soil disturbance, crop rotation, and soil moisture conservation. The practice is complemented by other methods such as timely control of weeds, mulching, and farming on a small plot to gain high yields.

Researchers say the conservation agriculture method is proving a lifeline for farmers grappling with climate change.

For more than 20 years, the International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center (CIMMYT) has promoted research on conservation agriculture in Southern Africa with the aim of getting farmers to increase their crop yields.

Under conventional farming, smallholder maize yields have often been below 1 tonne per hectare in Zimbabwe, according to researchers. Adopting CA practices has led to yield increases of up to 90 percent. While in Malawi farmers have experienced maize yields increased by up to 400 percent, crops are integrated with nitrogen-fixing trees such as *Faidherbia albida*. In Zambia, maize yields under conventional farming have been at 1.9 tonnes per hectare, and these have increased to 4.7 tonnes per hectare where farmers have used conservation agriculture practices.

But beyond high yields, conservation agriculture saves moisture and enhances soil health, offering farmers a long-term solution to the growing problem of soil degradation, a looming threat in the face of climate change, researchers said.

“As the climate crisis deepens, CA has become essential for Southern African



Christian Thierfelder, Principal Scientist at CIMMYT, poses in a field that is being tested for conservation agriculture at Henderson Research Station, Harare, Zimbabwe. Credit, Busani Bafana/IPS

farmers, offering a resilient, climate-smart approach to boost productivity and withstand climate change impacts, reinforcing sustainable food security,” Christian Thierfelder, a principal scientist at CIMMYT, told IPS, explaining that CA could be a game changer for the rainfed cropping system in the region.

About 3 million farmers in Southern Africa are practicing CA, Thierfelder said, adding: “The more climate change hits as seen in recent droughts, the more the farmers will adopt CA because the traditional way of doing agriculture will not always work anymore.”

The use of machines is attracting smallholder farmers to adopt conservation agriculture. CIMMYT has researched using machines suitable for smallholder CA systems.

The machines have been found to increase intercropping methods farmers use while addressing the challenges of high labour demands

associated with conservation agriculture.

Traditionally, farmers spend hours digging planting basins, a time-consuming and labor-intensive process. The basin digger has mechanized the land preparation stage, reducing the number of people needed to dig the basins.

Thierfelder said CIMMYT has partnered with registered service providers in Zimbabwe and Zambia, who offer mechanization services that improve farming efficiency and reduce labour demands. One such innovation, the basin digger—a cost-effective, low-energy machine—reduces labour by up to 90 percent.

Cosmas Chari, a farmer and service provider in Shamva, used to spend a day digging basins for planting, but now he takes an hour using the basin digger.

Mudavanhu became a mechanization service provider after integrating CA with mechanization. As a service

provider, Mudavanhu hires out a two-wheeled tractor, a sheller, and a ripper to other farmers practicing CA.

Similarly, another farmer, Advance Kandimiri, is also a service provider practicing CA.

“I started being a mechanization service provider in 2022 and adopted CA using mechanization,” said Kandimiri, who bought a tractor, a sheller, and a two-row planter.

“Conservation agriculture is more profitable than conventional farming that I was doing before I learned about CA,” said Kandimiri.

Data from CIMMYT's research indicates that farmers adopting CA practices can earn extra income of approximately USD 368 per hectare as a result of getting higher yields and reduced input costs.

Conservation Agriculture in the Region

Farmers across Southern Africa have found success af-

ter adopting CA practices with remarkable results.

In 2011, during a visit to Monze in Zambia's Southern Province, Gertrude Banda observed the significant benefits of CA firsthand. Farmers practicing CA for over seven years demonstrated how planting crops without tillage using an animal traction ripper led to reduced labour in land preparation and improved crop yields.

Banda says she was motivated by this experience to adopt CA on her own 9-hectare farm, where she grows cowpeas, groundnuts, and soybeans. She practices crop rotation, alternating maize with various legumes to enhance soil fertility and improve crop yields. Additionally, she uses groundnut and cowpea residues for livestock feed. She earned about USD 5,000 from selling her soya crop.

“Today, my entire farm follows CA principles,” Banda said. “All my crops are planted in rip lines, and I rotate maize with various legumes to maintain soil health.”

Over 65,000 farmers in Malawi and 50,000 in Zambia have adopted CA, according to CIMMYT, whose research shows that farmer education, training, and technical guidance are vital for farmers to make the shift.

However, widespread adoption of conservation agriculture has remained low despite its acknowledged advantages. Smallholder farmers face challenges in accessing inputs and equipment, said Hambulo Ngoma, an agricultural economist at CIMMYT.

Besides, farmers have limited knowledge of effective weed control and struggle with short-term yield uncertainties, which can discourage consistent practice, Ngoma said.

“While CA has proven its worth, adoption rates are still relatively low across Southern Africa,” Ngoma said, adding, “Many farmers lack the resources to invest in the tools and training required for effective implementation.”

Fruitful Partnerships to Promote Conservation Agriculture

Blessing Mhlanga, a cropping systems agronomist with CIMMYT's Sustainable Agri-food Systems program, said the success of CA goes beyond technology and techniques but is hinged on education and including CA principles in national policies. In Zambia, for instance, CIMMYT, in partnership with the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), helped design a mechanization strategy that has paved the way for mechanized CA to be incorporated into government-led agricultural programs.

“Technologies like intensification with *Glicicidia*, a fast-growing nitrogen fixing tree, strip cropping, and permanently raised beds are now part of Zambia's national agriculture agenda,” explained Mhlanga, who noted that the adoption of CA by smallholder farmers can be transformative, particularly in regions reliant on rainfed cropping.

Mhlanga said with more than 250 million hectares of land currently under CA globally and adoption rates of the CA practices increasing by 10 million hectares annually, the future of CA is promising. However, much work remains to be done in providing smallholder farmers like Mudavanhu with the right tools and knowledge to adopt conservation agriculture fully.

IPS UN Bureau Report

By Guardian Correspondent, Ruvuma

OVER the course of the year, from October 2023 to September 2024, the Tanzania Health Promotion Support (THPS) achieved substantial progress in HIV care and prevention through its PEPFAR/CDC Afya Hatua Project.

The initiative provided HIV counselling and testing services to more than 1.17 million people, identifying 17,989 new HIV-positive cases.

Dr Eva Matiko, THPS Project Director told to reporters on the sidelines of the World AIDS Day commemoration in Songea, Ruvuma recently, reflecting on the milestone achievements made over the past year.

"This success showcases our ongoing commitment to combating the HIV epidemic, particularly in regions with the highest burden of the disease," Dr Matiko said.

She said in addition to HIV testing, the Afya Hatua Project facilitated antiretroviral treatment (ART) for 190,311 individuals, spread across 350 healthcare sites nationwide. These ART services are critical for managing HIV, preventing its progression to AIDS and reducing transmission rates within communities.

"The provision of ART to over 190,000 people is a significant achievement in our journey toward HIV epidemic control," Dr Matiko continued. "These efforts are part of our broader goal to help Tanzania reach HIV epidemic control and eliminate HIV-related health disparities."

Alongside its HIV care efforts, THPS has also focused on tuberculosis (TB) prevention. The Afya Hatua Project administered TB preventive treatment to 1,731 individuals, underscoring the integrated approach to HIV and TB care.

TB remains a leading cause of illness and death among people living with HIV, making the combination of both treatments crucial for improving health outcomes.

THPS's efforts extend beyond HIV testing and treatment. The organization has made significant strides in addressing other critical health needs, including cervical cancer screening for women living with HIV.

In total, over 67,900 women have benefited from cervical cancer screening services across regions such as Kigoma, Coast, Shinyanga and Tanga.

"This holistic approach ensures that women living with HIV receive comprehensive care that goes beyond just treating the virus," Dr Matiko said.

She added: "We are tackling multiple health issues in tandem to improve overall health outcomes for people living with HIV."

Furthermore, the Afya Hatua Project also supported survivors of gender-based violence (GBV), offering care to 52,978 survivors of physical, emotional,



Minister for Health Jenista Mhagama charts with THPS Project Director Dr Eva Matiko during her visit to the organisation's booth at the World AIDS Day commemoration in Songea, Ruvuma Region

THPS highlights progress in HIV care and prevention efforts

and sexual abuse. Providing care and support to these survivors is an integral part of THPS's mission to improve the health and well-being of Tanzanians.

Empowering the Next Generation

Another key focus of THPS's work has been the DREAMS (Determined, Resilient, Empowered, AIDS-free, Mentored, and Safe) programme, which aims to empower young women and girls in high-risk areas.

In Shinyanga, over 33,300 adolescent girls and young women benefited from interventions designed to prevent HIV infections, improve sexual and reproductive health, and provide educational and economic opportunities.

"The DREAMS program is helping to change the trajectory of many young lives. By providing these young women with the tools and knowledge to make healthy choices, we are building a future generation of women who are resilient and empowered," Dr Ma-

tiko said.

Expanding Access to Care

THPS's focus on accessibility and comprehensive care is central to its mission. The organisation continues to work with a range of partners, including PEPFAR, CDC, and the Tanzanian government, to ensure that health services are available to underserved communities, especially in high-burden regions.

Looking forward, THPS plans to expand its services even further, aiming to reach even more individuals with HIV care and prevention programmes. "We are committed to reaching the most vulnerable groups, ensuring that no one is left behind in the fight against HIV," Dr Matiko said.

Global Goals and Local Impact

The successes achieved through the Afya Hatua Project and other THPS initiatives are contributing to Tanzania's broader efforts to control and eventually eliminate HIV as a public health threat. The work is also part of the global goal

to end the HIV/AIDS epidemic by 2030.

"Through the continued support of our donors and partners, THPS is making a lasting impact on the lives of Tanzanians," Dr. Matiko said. "We are committed to ensuring that people living with HIV can lead long, healthy lives, and that new infections are minimized."

In addition to its focus on HIV prevention and treatment, THPS is involved in several other key health projects aimed at improving overall health outcomes in Tanzania. These include the PEPFAR/CDC Afya Hatua Project (2021-2026), which provides HIV care and treatment in the regions of Kigoma, Pwani, Shinyanga, and Tanga and the USAID Uhuru wa Afya Project (2020-2025), which aims to improve access to TB and family planning services in several regions.

Enduring Collaboration

THPS's work is not done in isolation. It is part of a larger

network of organizations and stakeholders working together to address Tanzania's most pressing health challenges. "The collaboration between THPS, PEPFAR, CDC, the Tanzanian government, and other local partners has been key to the success of our initiatives," Dr Matiko said. "We are all working toward the same goal: improving the health of Tanzanians and ultimately ending the HIV epidemic."

Dr Geoffrey Tarimo is the Technical Manager for USAID Police and Prisons Healthcare Project and said the initiative has also made an impact on HIV prevention and care in police and prison settings.

"Over the course of the year, THPS provided HIV testing to 89,602 individuals in the settings, identifying 2,030 new HIV-positive cases," he said.

The project also provided TB care to 1,362 individuals and administered TB Preventive Therapy to 2,697 individuals, including children under five who were ex-

posed to TB.

"Reaching individuals in prisons and police settings is a key part of our strategy to ensure that no one is left behind," he explained.

"These high-risk environments can facilitate the spread of HIV and TB, making targeted interventions crucial for public health."

As Tanzania moves toward its goal of achieving an HIV-free generation, THPS remains steadfast in its mission to provide high-quality, accessible healthcare services for all. The organization's work continues to play a crucial role in the fight against HIV and tuberculosis, as well as in promoting the overall health and well-being of Tanzanians.

Jenista Mhagama, Minister for Health lauded THPS for its significant contributions to Tanzania's health sector during her visit to the THPS booth at the Maji Maji Stadium.

She expressed gratitude to the American Government for funding initiatives like THPS projects, which are instrumental in advancing the country's goal of eliminating AIDS as a public health threat by 2030.

"We are very grateful to the American Government, whose funding through organizations such as THPS is making a great difference in the lives of Tanzanians, and it is our hope that they will continue doing so", she said.

THPS, a Tanzanian NGO, collaborates closely with the Government of Tanzania through multiple ministries, including health, gender, and local government, to ensure equitable access to high-quality healthcare. Its work strengthens health and community systems and fosters impactful research.

Beyond the PEPFAR/CDC-supported Afya Hatua Project and the USAID Police and Prisons Healthcare Project, THPS also implements the USAID Uhuru wa Afya Project. This initiative focuses on improving access to quality tuberculosis and family planning services in the Katavi, Kigoma, Rukwa, and Songwe regions, aiming to enhance health outcomes across the country.

The achievements of THPS, through its various projects, represent significant milestones in Tanzania's ongoing efforts to combat HIV and improve health outcomes. With continued support from international partners and the Tanzanian government, THPS is poised to expand its reach, deliver life-saving interventions, and help ensure that future generations are free from the burden of HIV.

By Guardian Correspondent

IN Tanzania, teenage mothers for many years faced a challenging journey to re-enter formal education after pregnancy, but recent policy revisions have paved the way for their return.

The Education and Training Policy of 2023 offers hope to young mothers. With a growing commitment from the government to improve educational access for girls who have dropped out due to pregnancy, a policy gap persists due to challenges which can be addressed jointly by the government and stakeholders.

The revised Education and Training Policy, which officially allowed re-entry for pregnant students in 2021, marked a pivotal step.

Since its introduction, over 22,000 girls have returned to school. However, it is clear from both data and interviews that implementation remains uneven, with significant barriers hindering its full success.

Msichana Initiative, a non-governmental organisation that advocates for equal access to education for all and especially girls' education also commends the government for this huge step, but calls for further action to address gaps.

According to Msichana Initiative, one of the most pressing challenges lies in the infrastructure of schools, especially in rural areas like Kongwa and Nzega districts in Dodoma and Tabora Regions respectively.

Many schools lack basic amenities like lactating rooms, necessary for young mothers to balance their studies with childcare. In Kongwa, 73 percent of girls reported that schools lack lactating rooms, and in Nzega, 90 percent said that inadequate toilets and lactating rooms contribute to difficulties for re-admitted students. These issues highlight the gap between policy intent and on-the-ground realities.

In addition to physical infrastructure challenges, there are also socio-cultural

Re-entry policy for teen mothers: Overcoming barriers to education



One of the girls supported by Msichana Initiative to re-enter the formal education leading discussion during the psycho-social support meeting for girls who have returned to school.

barriers.

The stigma attached to teenage mothers remains prevalent in Tanzanian schools, hindering the re-entry process. Despite the policy's inclusive provisions, societal attitudes towards these young women remain unchanged in many communities, which results in a lack of support from teachers and peers.

The absence of mandatory teacher training on how to offer emotional and psychological support further exacerbates the

situation.

While the government has made commendable strides in promoting re-entry policies, funding for the construction of necessary facilities, such as lactating rooms and hostels, remains insufficient.

According to Msichana Initiative's "Arud Shule" programme, which supports 400 girls in Kongwa and Nzega, financial constraints remain a significant barrier to effective policy implementation.

"The re-entry policy exists on paper, but

without the necessary infrastructure and support mechanisms, it is not enough to make a real difference," says a program coordinator from the Msichana Initiative. "Psychosocial support and teacher training are equally important."

The organisation advises the country to learn from case of Zambia provides valuable lessons for Tanzania. Since 1997, Zambia has successfully implemented a re-entry policy for pregnant girls, complete with community sensitization programmes,

financial aid, and designated spaces for young mothers.

The support systems have proven vital to ensuring the success of the policy, demonstrating the importance of a comprehensive approach that extends beyond the classroom.

While the Tanzanian government's policy outlines the support young mothers need to thrive in school, such as lactating rooms and daycare services, implementation remains inconsistent. With over 60 percent of girls aged 15-19 out of school, and with pregnancy affecting nearly 30 percent of girls, Tanzania must prioritize infrastructure, teacher training, and societal change to make the re-entry program a sustainable success.

Msichana recommends that to ensure the policy meets its potential, the government has to allocate more resources to construct necessary facilities and establish psychosocial support networks within schools.

Local and national advocacy is also needed to change societal attitudes, ensuring that young mothers are fully embraced as students, not stigmatised.

The success of the re-entry policy will have a profound impact not only on the lives of young mothers but also on Tanzania's broader education and gender equality goals.

Supporting the girls in their educational journey will help reduce dropout rates, promote gender equity, and support Tanzania's achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly SDG 4 (Quality Education) and SDG 5 (Gender Equality).

With continued investment and commitment to overcoming these barriers, Tanzania can provide a clear path for young mothers to succeed in education, contributing to the nation's growth and development.

TASHICO HIGHLIGHTS MAJOR FEATS AHEAD INDEPENDENCE DAY

BY GUARDIAN CORRESPONDENT,
 MWANZA

THE state-owned entity, Tanzania Shipping Company Ltd (TASHICO), is set to mark this year's Independence Day on December 9 with impressive achievements. Since its inception, the company has made significant strides in the country's maritime sector, having reached major milestones that have transformed both the company and the shipping industry in Tanzania.

TASHICO's journey began in 1961 under the name TRC Marine Division, with a strong mandate to boost the country's shipping capabilities.

Over the years, the company has expanded its reach and operations, driving progress in the country's maritime infrastructure. Some of the key projects executed by TASHICO have focused on rehabilitating aging vessels, constructing new ships, and improving transportation across Tanzania's major water bodies – Lake Victoria, Lake Tanganyika, and Lake Nyasa.

According to TASHICO's Managing Director, Eric Hamissi, shortly after the country's independence, the company operated under the supervision of the East African Community. At this point, the government continued to manage the water transport services on the three major lakes, using a fleet of vessels, including the MV Victoria (Lake Victoria), MV Clarias (1961), and MV Liemba (1913) in Lake Tanganyika.

Additionally, the company managed other vessels, such as M.V. Butiama (1980), M.T. Ukerewe (1983), and M.V. Serengeti (1988) on Lake Victoria, while Lake Tanganyika was served by M.T. Sangara (1981) and M.V. Mwongozo (1982). At Lake Nyasa, the vessels M.V. Songea and M.V. Iringa were deployed for transport. These vessels played a key role in maintaining vital connections between the mainland and the lake-

side communities.

In 1997, a major shift occurred when the TRC Marine Division transformed into the Marine Services Company Ltd (MSCL), operating under the Companies Act of 1997. This transformation aimed to strengthen the company's operational capacity and make it a fully independent commercial entity. It officially started operating as MSCL in 1999, with a fleet of 14 ships and one boat.

This transformation marked the beginning of a period of growth, with MSCL quickly expanding its fleet to meet the increasing demand for water transport services. By 2015, the company had 14 vessels, of which 9 served Lake Victoria, 3 served Lake Tanganyika, and 2 were based at Lake Nyasa.

However, by 2017, the company faced challenges as many of its vessels became outdated and prone to wear and tear. This situation forced the company to reduce its active fleet to just five vessels, which continued to operate on the lakes, including the MV Umoja and MV Clarias (Lake Victoria), MV Liemba and M.T. Sangara (Lake Tanganyika), and MV Songea (Lake Nyasa).

To address these challenges, the Tanzanian government started to allocate more funds to support the rehabilitation and modernization of the fleet. In 2017, the government earmarked significant resources to implement four major projects at Lake Victoria to enhance both passenger and cargo transport. In 2022, the government also directed the Tanzania Ports Authority (TPA) to focus on enhancing water transport services, leading to the transfer of several vessels to MSCL, including the MV Mbeya II, MV Njombe, and MV Ruvuma, which now serve Lake Nyasa.

Under the first phase of its development program (2018-2023), the company completed several key projects, including the construction of a new ship, the MV Mwanza



side communities. The new vessel, capable of carrying 1,200 passengers and 400 tons of cargo, became a vital asset on Lake Victoria. The phase also saw the construction of a shipbuilding facility to support ongoing maintenance and the rehabilitation of MV Victoria, which operates between Mwanza and Kwemba in the Bukoba region.

Moreover, the MV Butiama was rehabilitated and repurposed as the "New Butiama Hapa Kazi Tu" and began regular trips from Mwanza to Nansio. This marked a significant achievement for the company, as it extended the lifespan of critical vessels serving key transport routes on Lake Victoria.

The second phase of development (2023-2028) continues the momentum with four major projects aimed at further enhancing the company's capacity. Among the ongoing projects are the construction of a new 3,000-ton ship for Lake Victoria, and the major repair of the MV Union, a ship used for transporting cargo, particularly carrying wagons across the lake. This project, signed in June 2021, was completed in September 2023, and the vessel has been back in service since October 2023.

In addition to these projects, there are plans to repair the MV Ukerewe,

a rescue ship stationed on Lake Victoria, and the MV Nyangumi, an oil cargo ship. Contracts for the repairs were signed in November 2023.

At Lake Tanganyika, MSCL is focusing on repairing the oil cargo ship M.T. Sangara and constructing a new 3,500-ton cargo ship. Further, a shipbuilding factory is being established to boost the company's ability to produce and maintain its fleet, including the major repair of MV Liemba, a historic vessel operating on Lake Tanganyika.

The total investment for the second phase of projects is estimated at 326,027,480.02 US Dollars, or 893,315,295,254.8 Tanzanian Shillings.

The Transformation of MSCL into TASHICO

On November 18, 2024, a new chapter in the company's history began with the rebranding of MSCL to Tanzania Shipping Company Ltd (TASHICO). This decision aims to further enhance the company's growth and performance within the sector.

Managing Director Eric Hamissi attributes the transformation to the extensive reforms in the water transport sector led by President Samia Suluhu Hassan's administration. He also highlighted TASHICO's vision to expand operations beyond

the Great Lakes and into the Indian Ocean. A feasibility study for deploying ships to the Middle East and Far East regions, including China, has already begun. The company also plans to operate cargo ships in the Comoros Islands, with construction slated for the 2025/2026 financial year. By 2030, TASHICO aims to employ 5,000 people to meet the demands of the expanding fleet and growing operations. The goal is to increase Tanzania's contribution to national income through the strategic expansion of water transport services.

The rebranding of MSCL to TASHICO is not just about a name change; it symbolizes a new identity and strategy for the company. Hamissi explains that the new name reflects the company's Tanzanian roots and commitment to the nation's economic development. TASHICO, as a national entity, aims to connect the various regions of the country while expanding its footprint in international markets.

The name change also aligns with TASHICO's strategic plan to move beyond the Great Lakes region into deep-sea operations, allowing it to compete in the international commercial market. This shift will help the company attract new customers, international partners, and

investors, as it looks to diversify its services, including transporting general cargo, fuel, and other goods.

The government's significant investment in TASHICO will also foster stronger trade ties with neighboring countries such as Uganda, Kenya, Zambia, Burundi, DRC, and Malawi. This expansion will not only facilitate the movement of local products but also bring in foreign currency to Tanzania.

TASHICO's expansion plans promise a host of benefits to the country, particularly in transport. For instance, cargo transport by road from Dar es Salaam to Kampala, Uganda, takes 1,717 kilometers, while traveling via Lake Victoria reduces the distance to 1,470 kilometers. Similarly, shipping goods from Dar es Salaam to Kalemie, DRC, via Kigoma Port, is more efficient, cutting the distance by nearly 500 kilometers compared to land routes.

The tourism sector is also poised to benefit, with the government planning to promote the MV Liemba as a tourist attraction. This historic vessel, which is currently undergoing extensive repairs in Kigoma, will help boost local tourism and generate additional revenue for surrounding communities.

Hamissi expressed his deep gratitude to President Samia Suluhu Hassan for prioritizing TASHICO and the country's water transport sector. He also thanked the various stakeholders who have supported the company's progress, noting that the large-scale investments in the sector have been crucial in enabling TASHICO to transform into a modern and competitive entity.

"Without these substantial investments, the process of rebranding the company and expanding our operations would have been meaningless," Hamissi said.

"This transformation has laid a solid foundation for the company's future, and we are excited about the opportunities ahead."

Savannah clinker withdraws Bamburi Cement takeover bid

NAIROBI

Savannah Clinker Limited has withdrawn its competing offer to acquire listed cement manufacturer Bamburi Cement Plc, the Capital Markets Authority (CMA) announced on December 4, 2024.

To facilitate reconciliation, the trading of Bamburi Cement Plc shares on the Nairobi Securities Exchange (NSE) will be suspended starting 9:00 am on December 6, 2024.

In its statement, Savannah said that the arrest of its chairman and main shareholder Benson Ndeti "led to the financier of the Competing Offer seeking additional due diligence," and lay the blame on the CMA for refusing to extend the offer period by 60 days to enable it "respond to any queries."

Ndeti was arrested and charged with eight counts, including involvement in a 4.5bn fraud related to his previous company, the now defunct Savannah Cement.

In October, Savannah Clinker hiked its offer for the cement manufacturer from KSh 70 per share to KSh 76.55 per share, while



Amsons' July bid remain unchanged at KSh 65.

Bamburi's principal shareholders are Fincem Holding Limited and Kencem Holding Limited, each owning 29.30% of the cement maker. Other major shareholders include Standard Chartered Nominees with 15.68%, and Ak-saya Investment Holdings Limited with 11.12%.

The tussle between the Amsons Group and Savannah Clinker for Bamburi saw the company's share price surge to KSh 77.52 at the start of September. The stock price then dipped by 29% later that month after investors locked in the special dividend payout from the sale of a subsidiary in Uganda.

Bamburi Cement, which is considering two acquisition offers, is set to pay a special dividend of KSh 18.25 per share despite

posting a loss for HI 2024.

On the upside, profit after tax from continuing operations grew by 131 percent to KSh 525 million from KSh 227 million in HI 2023. In the first 6 months of 2024, the profit before tax from continuing operations increased by 114 percent to KSh 695 million compared to prior year attributed to the several cost optimization measures and improved operational efficiency.

Turnover from continuing operations increased by 4 percent to KSh 10.9 billion compared to HI 2023 on the back of high quality premium products strategy. The unusually heavy rains in the first half of 2024 coupled with social disturbances linked to the rejection of the finance bill 2024 adversely impacted operations for the company.

Cash generated from operations increased by 51 percent to KSh 1.9 billion in HI 2024 compared to KSh 1.2 billion in the previous year resulting from improved operating profit and efficient working capital management.

"Despite the challenging operating environment and slowdown in the market, we remain committed to our strategy and confident in our ability to deliver strong performance in 2024," Bamburi noted in the earnings release.

Following an exit plan by the majority shareholder - Holcim - Bamburi has received two acquisition offers in a span of two months from Amsons Group and Savannah Clinker at KSh 65 and KSh 70 respectively.

Amsons, a Tanzanian conglomerate, has received irrevocable commitment from Holcim, which owns a combined 58.6% through subsidiaries Fincem Holding Ltd and Kencem Holding Ltd. Holcim's decision to exit African markets is in line with their portfolio optimization strategy rolled out in 2015 after merging

Call for increased investment to tackle coastal flooding in Lagos

LAGOS

Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu of Lagos State has urged for more investment to address the persistent flooding in the state's coastal regions. He made this appeal during the Real Estate Discussions and Awards (REDA) 2024, organized by Thinkmint Nigeria. Themed "Navigating Change in Real Estate for a New Era," the event focused on how technological advancements, market shifts, and rapid urbanization are transforming the real estate industry.

Sanwo-Olu highlighted that Lagos is undergoing significant changes driven by technology, market dynamics, and a growing focus on sustainability. He emphasized that these shifts present both challenges and opportunities for the built environment. "The REDA forum provides valuable insights on how we can collectively move forward," he said.

The governor also underscored the importance of environmental sustainability in real estate development. He pointed to green building practices and flood defence investments, particularly in coastal areas like Eko Atlantic City, as critical to Lagos' long-term strategy for addressing climate risks and environmental challenges.

Joseph Ayodeji, Managing

Director of the Lagos State Development and Property Corporation, stressed the need for collaboration and innovative thinking among stakeholders to navigate changes in the global real estate market. He called for the adoption of cutting-edge solutions in construction and real estate technology.

Keynote speaker Akin Opatola, President of FIABCI-Nigeria, discussed the necessity of embracing emerging trends such as technological advancements, sustainable development, and the rising demand for mixed-use developments. "Anticipating, adapting to, and enjoying change is crucial in seizing the opportunities it presents," Opatola remarked.

Imelda Olaoye, Managing Partner of Thinkmint Nigeria, emphasized the role of technology in property management, marketing, and customer engagement. She noted that digital tools could enhance efficiency and the overall customer

experience in the real estate sector.

Highlighting the relationship between aviation and real estate, Imo-Abasi Jacob, Chairman of Ibom Air and Managing Director of Akwa Ibom Investment Corporation, noted that improved air connectivity could drive economic growth, attract investment, and boost property values.

He stressed the importance of government policies, land reforms, and infrastructure development in creating a conducive environment for real estate investment.

Dele Oshinowo, Chairman of Agboyi-Ketu LCDA, Lagos, underscored the benefits of partnerships between the government and the private sector in addressing housing challenges. He emphasized that such collaborations, when aligned with effective policies and shared goals, could reshape housing markets and improve living conditions for millions of people.



KENYA PLANS UNDERWATER MUSEUM FOR SHIPWRECKS

NAIROBI

A Portuguese ship that sank in the 16th century has been at the bottom of the Indian Ocean for centuries, but soon tourists might be able to explore the ruins under the water.

This follows plans by the National Museums of Kenya to build an underwater museum at Ras Ngomeni in Kilifi, where the vessel sank in 1516, making it the oldest shipwreck in Kenya.

The museum was initially envisioned twelve years ago after the discovery of the relics by underwater archaeologist Caesar Bitia, the head of coastal archaeology at the NMK, but the plan was delayed to allow the search for more shipwrecks along the Kenyan coastline.

In March 2012, the NMK disclosed that designs of the proposed museum were being prepared with the help of US architects and that a budget was being discussed.

The underwater museum - the first of its kind in sub-Saharan Af-

rica - will be dedicated to studying shipwrecks and marine life, including several species of fish, turtles, and dolphins that inhabit the shipwrecks.

Human remains from the shipwrecks will also be archived in the museum records.

"Apart from studying shipwrecks that happened in the Indian Ocean Coast, we will also be studying the marine life that exists [there]," Dr Bitia said in an interview.

Initially, the Kenyan underwater museum would have been the first of its kind in Africa, but this accolade went to Egypt - which built an underwater gallery to ease pressure on coral and marine life in the popular diving site in Dahab, a tourist town north of Sharm el-Sheikh.

Although the designs of the gallery are yet to be divulged, most underwater museums feature an above-water section to display recovered relics, with underwater tunnels, running several feet below the surface to give visitors access to the antiquities buried in

the water.

"We want to make Ngomeni a very unique tourist attraction site in our country, which will be added to what we call the Big Five. When tourists explore our national parks, beaches and monuments, they can also appreciate and enjoy the underwater heritage," he said.

Presently, Kenya has displays at the Ngomeni, where tourists see the wrecks on land, but NMK wants to allow sightseers to explore the relics underwater.

"Once the museum is complete, we will have tour guides who will be guiding people under the water. Each wreck will have a placard that tells its history," Dr Bitia said.

Kenya has 33 documented ancient shipwrecks, 22 in Mombasa, eight in Malindi, and three in Lamu, although archaeologists believe there could be more.

"Some of the ships were carrying ivory, cinnabar and copper. Because of the conducive underwater environment, these objects are still intact," Dr Bitia said.

If the project becomes a reality, Kenya will join the league of the United States, the United Kingdom, as well as China, which have some of the world's largest underwater museums.

Kenyan paleoanthropologist Richard Leakey has hired Daniel Libeskind to design a \$1.1 billion museum in Turkana, setting in motion a project that he has promoted since 2015.

According to The Independent, Dr Leakey engaged the Polish-American designer shortly after securing \$300 million from Tullow and other oil prospectors in Turkana.

"I took Libeskind up to Turkana and had him see the place and listen to me chat, after which I asked, 'can we do something here that will stand alone and wow?'" Dr Leakey said.

"He immediately said yes. He said it could be one of the most important things he's done, and he's excited about it."

Mr Libeskind, a man who has designed over 30 iconic structures among them One World



The Ngomeni shipwreck

Trade Centre in New York City, is expected to design a cluster of irregularly shaped buildings stimulated by Stone Age hand axes and other tools unearthed in the area.

The museum, which Dr Leakey calls 'the cathedral', will have a central hall soaring 15-storeys "above the desert" and the shape of the site's footprint is the outline of the African map.

Although Mr Libeskind has undertaken several museums such as the Imperial War Museum North in Manchester and the Jewish Museum in Berlin, creating plans for the Turkana museum will be quite challenging

considering that the development is located in a desert.

Besides, there are no tarmac roads to the proposed site and there is no grid power in the area. But Dr Leakey has confidence that all the difficulties will be overcome.

"Libeskind is planning a building run entirely from renewable energy with a zero-carbon footprint... We're as keen to make the technicalities of the building as ground-breaking as its overall design," he said while conceding that the project will cost a great deal of money.

Land Use Act difficult to amend - operators

LAGOS

The Chairman of the Ministerial Land Reform Task Team, Dr Ugochukwu Chime, has said the Land Use Act is difficult to amend.

He disclosed this at the 2nd edition of the International Conference and Fair on Land and Development, themed, "Sustainable Land Management for Inclusive Development in African Cities," in Lagos recently.

He said, "Various efforts to amend the LUA 1978 have failed due to fears and concerns about its impact on various interests. Amendment of the Land Use Act will be a very tall order because of the socio-political perceptions of it as a tool for land grabbing. Thus, improvement of operational issues at the 38 land administration entities and improvement of the legal infrastructure for speedy adjudication of land-related matters must be put in place.

"The needed alignment of our land administration, financial sector services, and the legal underpinning requires the massive involvement of the private sector which is the engine room for the development of any economy.

"All the reforms, hopes, and agenda of the government to use land reform as a means of taxation and increased IGR without linking it back to the efficiency in the private sector businesses which control over 85 per cent of the productive activities in the country are hyper-myopic and must be stopped."

In a similar vein, the Executive Secretary of the Association of Housing Corporation of Nigeria, Toye Eniola, said it would be difficult to amend the Land Use Act because of the provision vesting all land powers in the governor.

He said, "It is difficult to amend because according to the Land Use Decree, all the land that we have to speak about is referred under the authority of the Governor. Hence, for you to amend that you have to go to the National Assembly and all the states' House of Assemblies must also support it. And getting the approval of all of these people to come together to agree to do that is a problem.

"The sole reason is that the Governor controls the National Assembly, and if they want to do something, that thing will benefit the sitting government. So no government wants to let go of land powers because land these days has become a source of income for most of the government."

Meanwhile, the Director of the Centre for Housing and Sustainable Development, Prof Timothy Nubi, said populous regions like Africa and Asia despite their rapid urbanisation and growing economies hold significantly lower real estate value.

He said, "This disparity points to the immense untapped potential for growth in Africa's property markets, a potential that is currently hindered by systemic challenges. Unfortunately, due to inadequate data, the distribution of real estate value within Africa, and specifically Nigeria, remains poorly documented.

"A significant portion of Africa's real estate wealth is trapped in 'dead capital,' a term popularised by economist Hernando De Soto to describe untitled and unproductive assets. In Nigeria, unresolved issues of land ownership and inefficient administration of the Land Use Act of 1978 have perpetuated this problem. Weak land tenure systems have stalled capital formation and economic growth, leading to massive/colossal wastage."



Uganda's President Yoweri Museveni inspects an SGR project

Turkish firm begins \$3bn Uganda railway project

KAMPALA

Work is finally underway for the 272km Malaba-Kampala Standard Gauge Railway (SGR) after Uganda broke ground for the project in Tororo District on November 21.

This follows the signing of a \$3 billion deal with Yapı Merkezi to build an elec-

trical railway from Kampala to Malaba, on the Kenya border, clearing the way for the project.

The deal came after the country selected the Turkish firm in July, following the cancellation of its agreement with a Chinese firm last year after an eight-year delay.

The Kampala-Malaba standard gauge

railway, which entails Uganda's first segment of a planned 1,700 km regional railway, will be one of Yapı Merkezi's largest overseas projects.

The project, expected to take 48 months, will be funded by Uganda's own resources and loans from Standard Chartered in the United Kingdom, backed by export credit guarantees.

Yapı Merkezi recently completed a 541 km standard gauge railway from Dodoma to Tabora in Tanzania at a cost of \$3.1 billion, a track record that influenced Kampala's decision.

"We have done due diligence on this company, and we have seen what they have done in Tanzania," Mr Wamburu said in August when announcing the contractor's engagement.

The Malaba-Kampala SGR project is a key part of a regional initiative launched nine years ago by East African states, including Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda, and South Sudan.

The railway aims to lower transport costs, accelerate transit, and boost economic growth through better connectivity within Uganda and its neighbouring countries.

Uganda has lagged behind on the project, with only Kenya and Tanzania having made significant progress in constructing their respective sections to date.

In 2015, Uganda struck a deal with China Harbour and Engineering Company Ltd to build the Kampala-Malaba SGR line, subject to the firm securing project funds from China Exim Bank.

However, the terms of the \$2.2 billion loan were deemed unfavourable, prompting the country to partner with the Turkish contractor, which offered more favourable conditions.

Yapı Merkezi signed an MoU with the Ugandan Ministry of Transport in July 2023 to undertake the work, and the contract negotiations were finalised in July this year.

Unified stance against latest US crackdown

QUANZHOU

The United States' third crackdown on China's semiconductor industry in three years will have "limited" impact on Chinese companies and only accelerate the self-reliance of the world's most crucial chip application market, the largest consumer of automobiles and the single largest smartphone market, industry insiders said on Tuesday.

They made the comments as four of the country's top industry associations on the semiconductor, automotive, internet and telecommunications industries hit back at the latest US move to expand export restrictions to 140 Chinese companies from accessing US semiconductor-making equipment and advanced chip technology.

"The unified stance expressed by industry associa-



Technicians work in the workshop of optical chips at a chip company in Quanzhou, Fujian province

tions, particularly the call for prudence in purchasing US chips, is unprecedented," said Xiang Ligang, director-general of the Zhongguancun Modern Information Consumer Application Industry Technology Alliance, a telecom industry

association.

Xiang said that it sent a very clear message that China's technological prowess has reached a point where the country no longer needs to tolerate this.

"If the US continues to im-

pose sanctions round after round, it will end up losing the entire chip market, and US chips will only be left at home and be 'eaten like cookies,'" he said.

Such statements are a "trendsetter", suggesting that other Chinese industries may follow to accelerate the adoption of domestic chips, driving local chip breakthroughs, a CITIC Securities report said.

On the other hand, some multinational enterprises are likely to implement "China for China" strategies, producing chips within the Chinese mainland to meet local demand, which is expected to boost the development of China's chip manufacturing sector as a whole.

The report emphasized: "As the market has already anticipated this, many Chinese firms have made prior preparations, thus the short-term impact is

limited."

Naura Technology Group, a major chip firm added to the new control list, responded that its operations remain normal and that being listed "would not substantially affect its business".

In a statement on Tuesday, the China Semiconductor Industry Association said that recent moves have made US chip products "no longer secure and reliable", forcing Chinese companies to be more cautious in purchasing US chips.

The Internet Society of China urged domestic companies to think carefully before procuring US chips and seek to expand cooperation with chip firms from countries and regions other than the US. It also encouraged domestic firms to proactively use chips produced by both domestic and foreign-owned enterprises in China.

CONSTRUCTION

SELLING SEX FOR GOLD IN THE AMAZON'S ILLEGAL MINES

BRASIA

Dayane Leite never wanted to become a sex worker but at the age of 17 her husband died of a heart attack and she couldn't pay for the funeral.

Her home town, Itaituba in Brazil's northern Para state, is at the heart of the country's illegal gold-mining trade, so a friend suggested raising the money by having sex with miners, deep in the Amazon.

"Going to the mines is a roll of the dice," she says.

"The women are seriously humiliated there. They may be slapped in the face and yelled at.

"I was sleeping in my bedroom and a guy jumped through the window and put a gun to my head. And if they pay, they want to own the women."

Dayane successfully gathered the money for the funeral, and at the age of 18 she had her first child. For the last 16 years, like many women in Itaituba, she has been returning periodically to the mines to work as a cook, a washerwoman, a barmaid and a sex worker. She now has a family of seven to support.

"I'm not going to say that all the women in the city do it, but a fair share of them do sex work. So it's kind of normal. We don't really care," says Natalia Cavalcante, who became a sex worker in a remote mining settlement at 24. Four years later, after marrying the owner of a bar, she became the madam of a brothel - a job she only gave up recently, to look after her nieces in the city.

Life in mining villages in the rainfor-



The Brazilian government says anywhere between 80,000 and 800,000 men work in illegal mines

est is harsh - most consist of just a dirt track, saloon bars and a church. But the miners themselves live even further out, in shacks made of wood and canvas, surrounded by snakes and jaguars, and in total darkness once the generator is switched off. Women working as cooks have to live in these camps, alongside the men.

The miners appear in the village whenever they have found gold and have money to spend, Natalia adds. Sometimes they have to be persuaded to have a shower before sex, women say.

Running a brothel is illegal under Brazilian law, but Natalia says she took no commission, she just employed bar staff

and rented out rooms.

Young women would contact her asking for work, and she sometimes lent them money for the journey, a seven-hour drive from Itaituba.

Asked whether she had misgivings about involving other women in the work, she replied: "Sometimes I think: 'I've been through that, and I know it's not that nice.' But then I think: 'The girl has a family, sometimes a child to raise. Many of the girls who go have one or two children.' So we accept it."

Even before marrying, Natalia had made a lot of money.

She now has her own house in Itaituba, a motorbike, and considerable quan-

ties of gold that she sometimes received as payment for sex, two or three grams at a time. Her goal is to study, to become a lawyer or an architect.

Some women in Itaituba, nicknamed Gold Nugget City, have set themselves up in business with the money they made, she says.

But it's a big risk to venture as a woman into the violent and lawless mining settlements.

While the environmental harm of the mines is well known, the human cost - which the UN says includes violence, sexual exploitation and trafficking - goes largely unreported.

A dealer in precious metals told the BBC that the illegal gold from these mines would typically be relabelled as gold from a licensed mining co-operative, before being exported and turned into jewellery and components for mobile phones, or other electronic goods.

The three largest customers of Brazilian gold are Canada, Switzerland and the UK. More than 90 percent of all exports to Europe are from areas where illegal mining occurs, according to the Instituto Escolhas think tank.

It's not unknown for women to be murdered in mining villages. The dead body of 26-year-old Raiele Santos was found last year in the room where she had been living near the Cuiú-Cuiú gold mine, 11 hours' drive from Itaituba.

Her elder sister, Railane, says a man had offered her money for sex and she had refused, so he found her later and beat her to death.

"A lot of women die on a daily basis, a

lot of women," Railane says.

"I was born in the mines, I grew up in the mines, and now I'm afraid to live in the mines."

A man has been arrested in connection with Raiele's murder, but has not yet been tried. He denies all the charges against him.

The land covered by Brazil's illegal gold mines more than doubled in the 10 years to 2023, to 220,000 hectares - an area larger than Greater London. No-one knows how many women work in this area, or even how many illegal miners there are. The Brazilian government says the latter figure could be anywhere from 80,000 to 800,000.

Under President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, the government has taken steps to close illegal mines and to stop dealers buying the gold they produce, but high gold prices continue to drive many men to try their luck.

Dayane wants to stop working in the mining areas because of the risks and the toll the hardship takes on her body, but she is planning what she hopes will be one last trip. Her goal is to earn enough in two or three months to open a snack bar on her return, though she realises she may not succeed.

Whenever she is alone, walking in the forest, she will worry about her children, she says.

"I will keep trying, until I can't any more," she says. "Because I think that one day, my children will say: 'My mum worked so hard. She went through what she went through for us, and she never gave up.'"

MACAO

Products such as Portuguese wines, Brazilian coffee and rice from Mozambique in Southeast Africa can all be found in Macao, as the special administrative region, a vibrant melting pot of Chinese and Portuguese influences, is positioning itself as a key trade hub between China and Portuguese-speaking nations.

At an exhibition center in Macao specializing in products from Portuguese-speaking countries, around 3,000 items, primarily food products with vibrant and exotic packaging from nine such countries, are elegantly displayed, awaiting Chinese buyers.

Each displayed item is accompanied by a QR code, streamlining communication with suppliers. Green QR codes denote products readily available in Macao, while blue codes signal opportunities for foreign suppliers seeking agents and distributors in China. Chinese-Portuguese translation services are provided for negotiations.

Ao Jeong Ka-lok, from the Macao Commerce and Investment Promotion Institute, said, "Businesspeople need not travel vast distances to Brazil, Angola or Portugal. By visiting Macao, they can learn about the diverse array of products originating from Portuguese-speaking countries."

He said that, Porthos, the oldest brand of Portuguese sardines, famous for eye-catching bright colors and iconic artwork of the tins and the sardines' exquisite taste, is the most popular and representative Portuguese import. Nowadays, it adorns the shelves of specialty stores lining the streets of Macao.

"This distinctive canned fish from Portugal has been an integral part of Macao residents' lives for generations," said the 30-year-old. "During my childhood, whenever typhoons struck Macao, stocking up on these canned goods was a common practice in our homes."

Macao, where Chinese and Portuguese are official languages, maintains close ties with Portuguese-speaking countries. About 68 percent of young people are fluent in two out of the three languages - Chinese, Portuguese and English - and 28 percent are proficient in all three, according to data from the SAR government.

Fu Tang-long, vice-president of the Macau Live Streaming Association, said it is exploring the use of e-commerce talent in Macao to assist Chinese brands in expanding into Portuguese-speaking countries and



Tourists visit the Ruins of St. Paul's in South China's Macao

Macao bolsters role as bridge, trade hub

to facilitate the introduction of overseas brands into China.

Jose Chan Rodrigues, a host and livestreaming blogger from Macao, whose grandfather is from Portugal, said that Macao people of Portuguese descent can play a significant role in interactions between China and Portuguese-speaking countries.

"They have a deep understanding of Portuguese culture and overseas connections with relatives living abroad, and they are proficient in Portuguese, Mandarin, Cantonese and English," he said.

Last year, the trade volume between China and Portuguese-speaking countries reached \$220.9 billion. In the first three

quarters of this year, the value of goods traded between China and those countries amounted to \$174.18 billion, up 7.84 percent year-on-year, data showed.

"The trade meets the development needs of both sides and demonstrates remarkable resilience," said Ji Xianzheng, secretary-general of the Permanent Secretariat of the Forum for Economic and Trade Cooperation between China and Portuguese-speaking Countries. Established in 2003, the forums held in Macao have been instrumental in facilitating close economic, trade and cultural exchanges.

Portuguese-speaking countries have urgent development needs in areas

such as automobiles, high technology and agricultural machinery, and have a strong demand for infrastructure development, Ji said, adding that Macao should continue to serve as a bridge connecting China and those countries.

President Xi Jinping's attendance at the 19th G20 Summit and his state visit to Portuguese-speaking Brazil last month injected more confidence into future cooperation between the two countries.

Ma Chi Ngai Frederico, president of the Macao Chamber of Commerce, said Brazil is an important trade partner for China, with traded goods primarily consisting of food items such as meat, pepper and soybeans.

Macao's contribution in trade between them lies in providing services such as forums to help support the country's high-level opening-up and maintain international friendships, he said.

Gabriela Rorato, a Brazilian student at University of Macao, said it is convenient living and studying in Macao, as the city has road signs in Portuguese, and she also enjoys buying items that are of good quality and reasonably priced from Chinese e-commerce platforms.

China and Brazil are very open to each other, which allowed Rorato to enjoy preferential visa policies and work in companies that mix Chinese and Brazilian culture, she said.

Behind the scenes in the Baltimore bridge collapse

BALTIMORE

In the dark, early morning hours of 26 March, US transportation secretary Pete Buttigieg's phone rang - and he immediately knew he had a problem.

"If my phone rings in the middle of the night, it's not a good thing," he recalled.

The Dali, a massive 948ft (289m) cargo ship had slammed into Baltimore's iconic Francis Scott Key Bridge, sending the 1.5-mile (2.4km) bridge into the cold waters of the state's Patapsco River.

"It wasn't immediately clear what we were dealing with," Buttigieg told the BBC in an interview. "How many people had been impacted, and how much of the bridge had been destroyed."

Six men, all members of a road crew working on the bridge, were killed in the incident, which left the Dali - still afloat - stuck under huge chunks of shredded metal and concrete. Another man was pulled from the icy water, seriously injured.

A new documentary from BBC One - available on iPlayer on 5 December - reveals new details of the investigation into the crash, including a possible cause: a cable that shook loose, disrupting the ship's power supply and causing an initial blackout minutes before it struck the bridge.

After that, investigators believe they discovered a lack of fuel pressure to the generators may have created power fluctuations that tripped breakers and caused the ship to go dark again, with no time to change course before slamming into the bridge.

Previously unseen bodycam footage taken after the collapse shows first responders and officials struggling to come to grips with the enormity of what they faced in the confusing hours after the crash.

"Key Bridge is down. It was last reported that there are at least several vehicles in the water," an officer can be heard saying. "And several people still unaccounted for."

In the aftermath of the collapse, an estimated 3,000 to

4,000 tonnes of debris blocked the Patapsco, a 700ft (213m) wide and 50ft (15m) deep and economically vital shipping channel.

Recovering the bodies and removing the twisted, broken steel and concrete from the channel - plus moving the Dali - fell to a massive team including US Army, Navy and Coast Guard members, as well as Maryland authorities and specialist private firms. The woman who led the effort, Colonel Estee Pinchasin, the Army Corps of Engineers Baltimore district commander, said that she had "never seen anything of that magnitude before".

"Everything [was] mangled up on top and around," she said. "You had these big, large spans that were just laying in the water. You see four-inch steel that's been bent... how can you even start to think about the force?"

The dangerous work of searching the debris field and determining which pieces could be safely removed - and when - fell, in part, to teams of divers who inspected both the ship and the destruction beneath the surface.

Never-before-seen footage obtained by the BBC shows the difficult conditions they faced: jagged and potentially dangerous pieces of rubble and muddy, brown water, which often meant they could not see more than a foot or two ahead of them.

"There was no visibility. I kind of compared it to a metal jungle gym underwater," recalled Robyn Bianchi, the assistant salvage master for one of the firms involved, Donjon Marine.

"You turn off all the lights in the room and try to tell me all the pieces of where they connect to that metal jungle gym. Oh, and by the way, the jungle gym is completely twisted and looks nothing like it did when it was built to perfection."

A preliminary report from the National Transportation Safety Board, or NTSB, found that two electrical blackouts disabled equipment ahead of the incident, and noted that the ship lost power twice in the 10 hours leading up to the crash.

WORLD

Amnesty report says Israel has committed genocide against Palestinians in Gaza

THE HAGUE

AMNESTY International accused the state of Israel of committing genocide against Palestinians in the Gaza war in a report published on Thursday, an allegation Israeli leaders have repeatedly denied.

The London-based human rights group said it reached the conclusion after months of analysing incidents and statements of Israeli officials. Amnesty said the legal threshold for the crime had been met, in its first such determination during an active armed conflict.

The 1948 Genocide Convention, enacted in the wake of the mass murder of Jews in the Nazi Holocaust, defines genocide as "acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group".

Israel has consistently rejected any accusation of genocide, saying it has respected international law and has a right to defend itself after the cross-border Hamas attack from Gaza on Oct

7, 2023 that precipitated the war.

Israeli officials could not immediately be reached for comment on Amnesty's report.

Israel launched its air and ground war in Gaza after Hamas-led fighters attacked Israeli communities across the border 14 months ago, killing 1,200 people and taking over 250 hostages back to Gaza, according to Israeli tallies.

Gaza's Health Ministry says that Israel's military campaign since then has killed more than 44,400 Palestinians and injured many others.

Palestinian and UN officials say there are no safe areas left in Gaza, a tiny, densely populated and heavily built-up coastal territory. Most of Gaza's 2.3 million people have been internally displaced, some as many as 10 times.

At hearings earlier this year before the UN's International Court of Justice (ICJ) in The Hague, where Israel faces accusations of genocide brought by South Africa, lawyers for the country denied the charge. They argued that there was



Palestinians check the rubble of a destroyed building following an overnight Israeli strike in Deir al-Balah, Gaza Strip on Wednesday. AP

no genocidal intent and no genocide in Israel's conduct of the war, whose stated objective is the eradication of Hamas.

Presenting the report to journalists in The Hague, Amnesty International Secretary General Agnes Callamard said the conclusion had not been taken "lightly, politically, or preferentially".

She told journalists after the presentation: "There is a genocide being committed. There is no doubt, not one doubt in our mind after six months of in-depth, focused research."

Amnesty said it concluded that Israel and the Israeli military committed at least three of the five acts banned by the 1948 Genocide Convention, namely killings, causing serious bodily or mental harm, and deliberately inflicting conditions of life calculated to bring about a protected group's physical destruction.

These acts were done with the intent required by the convention, according to Amnesty, which said it reviewed over 100 statements from Israeli officials.

Israel's military accuses Hamas of planting militants within populated

neighbourhoods for operational cover, which Hamas denies, while accusing Israel of indiscriminate strikes.

Callamard said Amnesty had not set out to prove genocide but after reviewing the evidence and statements collectively, she said the only conclusion was that "Israel is intending and has intended to commit genocide".

She added: "The assertion that Israel's war in Gaza aims solely to dismantle Hamas and not to physically destroy Palestinians as a national and ethnic group, that assertion simply does not stand up to scrutiny."

Amnesty urged the prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC), which has issued arrest warrants for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his ex-defense minister for war crimes and crimes against humanity against Palestinians in Gaza - charges they deny, to investigate alleged genocide. The office of the prosecutor said in a statement that it is continuing investigations into alleged crimes committed in the Palestinian territories and is unable to provide further comment.

US seeks to preserve its occupation of northeast Syria – Russia's UN envoy

UNITED NATIONS

WASHINGTON has been trying to preserve its de facto occupation of Syria's northeastern regions by all means, Russian Permanent Representative to the United Nations Vasily Nebenzya said.

"The equally destructive factor is Washington's aspiration to preserve its de facto occupation of the oil, gas and agricultural resource-rich areas in north-eastern Syria. The United States and its allies are using every opportunity to sow chaos in the country, applying sanctions to asphyxiate the country's economy and supporting Idlib-based terrorists and the extremist underground in the SAR [Syrian Arab Republic]," he told a UN Security Council meeting on Syria.

In his words, the United States is openly attempting to "whitewash" Hay'at Tahrir Al-Sham (HTS, terrorist group, outlawed in Russia) by presenting it as a kind of allegedly moderate Syrian opposition.

"Such 'double standards' are unacceptable and the fight against international terrorist groups, which have been designated as such by the UN Security Council, must certainly continue. We expect Washington and its satellites today to unconditionally condemn the action of the former Al-Nusra affiliates and to express support for the legitimate Syrian government, which has been attacked by terrorists, as Syria's neighbors and the members of the Arab League have done," Nebenzya said.

"As practice has shown, the use of terrorists for the advancement of parochial geopolitical interests always turns against their own patrons," the Russian diplomat added.

Units of the Jabhat al-Nusra extremist group (outlawed in Russia) staged a large-scale attack on Syria's northern governorates early on November 27. According to the Syrian government army command, the terrorists attempted to seize a number of neighborhoods and military facilities, attacking the positions of government forces. The Syrian army launched an operation to repel the attack.

On November 30, the Syrian army command said that government forces were delivering strikes on terrorists' positions in Aleppo. According to the Syrian defense ministry, the army had to regroup to save the lives of civilians and its troops and prepare for a counterattack.

Agencies

Russian MFA says Malta canceled visa for its spokeswoman ahead of trip to OSCE meeting

MOSCOW

THE Russian Foreign Ministry said the visa of its spokeswoman Maria Zakharova was canceled by Malta ahead of a meeting of the OSCE Ministerial Council.

It happened just as the Russian delegation was about to board a flight from Moscow, the ministry said in a statement.

"In an unprecedented case, the visa that had been issued to Russian Foreign Ministry Spokeswoman Maria Zakharova by the Maltese presidency was revoked ahead of the event, with the reason being phrased like this: 'Due to circumstances beyond our control,'" the statement said.

According to the ministry, the Russian delegation led by Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov will pay special attention at the upcoming meeting to the subject of failure to issue visas for various events under the auspices of the OSCE.

The OSCE Ministerial Council, the organization's principal decision-making body, will hold its 31st meeting in Malta from December 5-6.

Zakharova earlier told TASS that Malta should ensure equal participation of all delegations.



In an unprecedented case, the visa that had been issued to Russian Foreign Ministry Spokeswoman Maria Zakharova by the Maltese presidency was revoked ahead of the event, with the reason being phrased like this: "Due to circumstances beyond our control"



UNESCO inscribes Spring Festival on intangible cultural heritage list

ASUNCION

THE United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) on Wednesday inscribed Spring Festival, social practices of the Chinese people in celebration of the traditional new year, on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

The decision was made during the 19th session of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, taking place in Paraguay from Dec. 2 to 7. The committee recognized the festival for its wide array of rituals and unique cultural elements that engage all of Chinese society.

UNESCO highlighted that the Spring Festival, marking the start of the traditional Chinese Lunar New Year, involves various social practices, including prayers for good fortune and family reunions. It also features activities planned by elders and festive public events organized by communities.

According to UNESCO's documentation, the traditional knowledge and customs associated with the Spring Festival are passed down informally within families and communities, as well as formally through the education system. Craftsmanship and artistic skills related to the festival are transmitted through apprenticeships, promoting family values, social cohesion, and peace, while providing a sense of cultural identity.



Chinese delegates celebrate the inscription of Spring Festival, social practices of the Chinese people in celebration of traditional new year, on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity during the 19th session of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Asuncion, Paraguay on Wednesday. Xinhua

The committee also emphasized that the festival embodies the harmony between humans and nature and contributes to sustainable development in areas such as food security and education. It also plays a key role in raising environmental awareness.

China's vice minister of Culture and Tourism, Rao Quan, who led the Chinese delegation at the UNESCO session, expressed gratitude for the recognition. He stressed that the Spring

Festival is China's most important traditional holiday, symbolizing the Chinese people's hopes for a better life, strong ties to family and country, and the values of harmony between humans and nature.

Rao further explained that the festival, passed down through generations, has provided lasting spiritual strength to the Chinese people. It has played a significant role in promoting family and social harmony, driving economic

development, protecting the environment, and fostering global cultural exchange. He added that the inclusion of the Spring Festival on the UNESCO list will help promote universal values of peace and harmony and highlight the important role of intangible cultural heritage in sustainable development.

With this addition, China now has 44 cultural elements or practices recognized by UNESCO as Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. Xinhua

China to advance international industrial, supply chain cooperation

THE world today is undergoing profound changes unseen in a century. The international political and economic landscape is in the midst of profound and complex changes, with frequent outbreaks of regional conflicts and disturbances, intensified major-country competition, and backlash against globalization. Against this backdrop, the restructuring of global industrial and supply chains is occurring at an accelerated pace.

On one hand, the rapid development of a new round of technological revolution and industrial transforma-

tion represented by information technology, artificial intelligence, and new energy has made digitization and green development the major directions for the transformation and upgrading of industrial chains and supply chains.

On the other hand, influenced by factors such as the rise of protectionism, public health crises, and geopolitical turmoil in recent years, industrial chain and supply chain cooperation is more and more politicized and the concept of security is often overstretched.

Countries have different

resource advantages and levels of development, and only through economic and trade cooperation can they achieve complementary advantages and win-win results.

While developing itself, China, the world's largest developing country, has actively participated in global industrial and supply chains cooperation, continuously making new contributions to the stable operation of the global industrial and supply chains.

China promotes the building of a safe and stable industrial and supply chain system.

China has the most complete industrial categories

and the most comprehensive supporting systems according to United Nations standards. The country's manufacturing value added accounted for approximately 30 percent of the global total in 2023. Official statistics showed that China tops the world in terms of output of more than 40 percent of 500 major industrial products.

In recent years, China has improved its position in the global division of labor in mid- and high-end industries such as electronics and electrical equipment, and machinery equipment, providing important support for

the stable operation of the global industrial and supply chains, and becoming a solid and reliable part of the global division of labor.

China promotes the building of a smooth and efficient industrial and supply chain system.

In recent years, guided by high-quality Belt and Road cooperation, China has promoted "hard connectivity" of infrastructure and "soft connectivity" of rules and standards with Belt and Road partner countries.

China has signed over 200 Belt and Road cooperation documents with more than

150 countries and over 30 international organizations, to strengthen alignment and coordination in development strategy planning and management standards and rules.

Iconic projects such as the China-Europe freight train service, the Hungary-Serbia Railway, and the Jakarta-Bandung High-Speed Railway have effectively reduced the cost of cross-border commodity transportation and transactions, promoting the quality and efficiency of the global industrial and supply chains.

China promotes the build-

ing of a mutually-beneficial industrial and supply chain system.

China pursues a more proactive strategy of opening up. It shares with the rest of the world the vast market of over 1.4 billion people. It has become a major trading partner with more than 150 countries and regions, maintaining its position as the world's second-largest consumer market and the largest trading nation in goods. Over 90 percent of foreign-funded enterprises in China primarily target the Chinese market.

People's Daily

Discovering 'the center of the Earth'

SAO TOME

SAO TOME and Principe, where the prime meridian meets the equator, holds a unique position as "the center of the Earth."

This small island nation, located in the Gulf of Guinea off the west coast of Africa, is known for its lush landscapes, rich biodiversity and a history tied to cocoa cultivation.

Once dubbed the "Chocolate Island" for being the world's largest cocoa producer, Sao Tome and Principe's economy has faltered in the past decades. However, its fertile volcanic soil, tropical climate and high-quality cocoa have been guiding the country toward recovery, with a focus on global partnerships and South-South cooperation for new opportunities.

Today, Sao Tome and Principe is focused on expanding organic cocoa production while nurturing emerging industries like tourism, which shows great potential as a key driver of economic growth.

REVIVAL OF "CHOCOLATE ISLAND"

With a land area of about 1,000 square km and located 200 km off Africa's coast, Sao Tome and Principe consists of two main islands - Sao Tome and Principe - along with several islets.

Back in the 15th century, Portuguese colonizers arrived and discovered the islands' fertile volcanic soil and tropical climate, perfect for cocoa cultivation, which they introduced to the region.

Large numbers of enslaved Africans were brought to work on the cocoa plantations in Sao Tome and Principe over the following centuries. By the 19th century, cocoa production expanded rapidly, and by the early 20th century, the country had become the world's leading cocoa producer, earning it the nickname "Chocolate Island."

In the 20th century, chocolate's global popularity soared, with major sales during holidays such as Valentine's Day and Christmas.

However, when Sao Tome and Principe gained independence in 1975, much of the wealth from cocoa had been taken by colonizers. Combined with the dismantling of the industry's management system, this led to the collapse of its cocoa industry.

Meanwhile, as cocoa cultivation thrived in West Africa, Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire, with their larger cultivation areas and greater labor forces, surpassed Sao Tome and Principe to become the world's leading cocoa producers. Today, these two countries account for two-thirds of global cocoa production.

As a result, Sao Tome and Principe's economy faltered, and it is now designated as one of the world's least developed nations by the United Nations (UN).

In response to these challenges, Sao Tome and Principe sought solutions to revive the country's pillar industry. Capitalizing on the island's ideal growing conditions and its long-standing reputation for high-quality cocoa, they turned to organic cocoa production and partnered with global chocolate manufacturers, trying to secure a place for the island in the competitive global market.

Amid increasing foreign investment in cocoa production, local chocolate brands have emerged and gained popularity both at home and abroad, helping steer the nation toward a higher-value chocolate manufacturing industry.

Today, the tropical rainforests of Sao Tome and Principe remain lush and vibrant. Banana trees provide shade for young cocoa plants, while coconut trees shield the mature cocoa trees from the sun. Various fruits that fall from the rainforest provide natural nutrients to the soil for cocoa cultivation. This natural environment continues to nurture the cocoa industry, offering hope for the economic revival of the once-famous "Chocolate Island."

PROMISING FUTURE OF TOURISM

Beyond the revival of cocoa, tourism holds great potential



as a key driver of Sao Tome and Principe's economic growth. The country boasts stunning volcanic landscapes, pristine coastlines, vibrant tropical rainforests and rich marine life, as well as a monument marking the center of the Earth, where the prime meridian and the equator meet, on Ilheu das Rolas island, making the country a popular tourist destination in Africa.

Millions of years ago, tectonic shifts caused islands like Sao Tome and Principe to rise from the sea, forming dramatic volcanic landscapes. Steep mountains, winding streams and deep valleys create breathtaking natural scenery. Due to its long isolation from the African mainland, the islands are home to many endemic species. In 2012, the Principe Island was declared a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve.

Due to the absence of large-scale modernization construction, Sao Tome and Principe's beaches, rainforests and other landscapes have preserved their untouched natural beauty. From November to February, sea turtles come ashore to nest, and conservationists, working alongside local communities, develop ecotourism initiatives that protect endangered species while offering visitors a unique opportunity to experience nature in harmony.

Ilheu das Rolas island, located south of Sao Tome, attracts tourists due to its proximity to the center of the Earth monument, allowing visitors to experience the rare sensation of standing in two hemispheres simultaneously. Despite its rich tourism potential, the industry faces challenges, including underdeveloped infrastructure, limited facilities and health issues such as malaria. In the first half of this year, Sao Tome and Principe received only about 17,000 visitors, primarily from Portugal, France and Angola, according to local media. By comparison, the Seychelles, a much smaller island nation, attracted 358,000 tourists in 2023.

Lucio Magalhaes, Sao Tome and Principe's minister of the Presidency and Council of Ministers, Parliamentary Affairs and Sustainable Coordination, said the country needs improved infrastructure, including higher-quality roads and healthcare facilities, to enhance the tourism experience and provide a sense of security for foreign visitors and local residents alike.

"To achieve our development goals, we need to work with partners, including China, to plan a path for future growth and ensure a more prosperous life for the people of Sao Tome and Principe," he said.

Xinhua

SUPPORT FROM SOUTH-SOUTH COOPERATION

In late September, a tourist group from Beijing arrived in Sao Tome and Principe for its beautiful island scenery. Lai Xiaojuan, a tourism professional with over 10 years of experience in Sao Tome, said that she had already hosted 19 Chinese tour groups this year, bringing in a total of 60 visitors.

Sao Tome and Principe is becoming an increasingly popular destination for Chinese tourists, with more groups and backpackers adding it to their African itineraries. Meanwhile, over 200 students from the country went to China for study, ready to return home and contribute to the country's development. A shared vision for a brighter future has deepened the mutual desire for closer ties between the two nations.

Since resuming diplomatic relations in 2016, Sao Tome and Principe and China have strengthened cooperation across a range of sectors. The Confucius Institute has established a presence at the University of Sao Tome and Principe, while Chinese medical teams and malaria experts have been providing high-quality healthcare to the local population. Chinese agricultural experts have also supported the island's efforts to improve farming techniques, establish demonstration villages for agricultural poverty reduction, and address food security challenges.

In September, Sao Tome and Principe's Prime Minister Patrice Trovoada attended the Beijing Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, where both countries announced the elevation of their relationship to a strategic partnership. The leaders of the two countries discussed advancing cooperation in tourism, agriculture, fisheries and infrastructure, encouraging Chinese enterprises to invest in Sao Tome and Principe to support the country's economic diversification.

Xinhua

'Modi govt has been very cautious on FTA'

NEW DELHI

EXTERNAL Affairs Minister S Jaishankar yesterday said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been cautious about FTAs. He was speaking at the Bharat @100 event by the Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India (ASSOCHAM)



Jaishankar (pictured) said that the government tries to keep farmers' and MSMEs' (Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises) interests while negotiating the terms of FTAs.

"Modi government has been very cautious on FTA for two reasons. Number one, weighing the experiences and the results of previous FTAs and number two, our concern for the impact of FTAs on MSMEs.

We will always keep MSME interest and the interest of our farmers in mind when we negotiate FTAs. We have been pressing very strongly. For a review of the ASEAN India trading goods, agreement, because we have concerns about the impact of that FTA on the development of manufacturing in it, and we feel that that FTA should not become, in a way, damaging to the Indian economy.

When it comes to EU and UK, I think it's complex, because there are many non-trade issues also, so those also have to be negotiated so and in the case of EU, because there are multiple members, everybody has their interest. Overall we benefit we believe that these will benefit us. It is also a fact that if you become excessively dependent on single supply chains, or you in the name of supply chains, you open up your market so that it is not no longer a supply chain, but your sectors are getting hollowed out. We don't want to end up as a market of other countries. We have to find a right balance here," he said.

ANI

UBA Group to commence full banking operations in France

PARIS

AS part of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's state visit to France, the Chairman of UBA Group, Tony Elumelu in the presence of President Tinubu and the President of France, Emmanuel Macron, signed a landmark business cooperation agreement with the French Finance Minister, Antoine Armand.

The agreement is a significant indication of support by the French Government for the development of UBA's full banking operations in France.

Speaking at the signing ceremony, Tony Elumelu, the Chairman of UBA Group commented: "This partnership reinforces our commitment to seamless international banking services for our customers, not just across the 11 Francophone African countries we serve, but Africa as a whole; and French and European customers transacting with Africa."

Expanding into France is a natural progression, with Paris serving as our European Union hub, as we continue to bring Africa and the world together, through innovative financial solutions. Paris will join London, New York and Dubai, as a critical component of our unique global network."

United Bank for Africa is one of the largest employers in the financial sector on the African continent, with 25,000 employees group wide and serving over 45 million customers globally. Operating in twenty African countries and the United Kingdom, the United States of America, France and the United Arab Emirates, UBA provides retail, commercial and institutional banking services, leading financial inclusion and implementing cutting edge technology. **Agencies**

US continues to exploit other economies of the world for their benefit - Putin

MOSCOW

RUSSIAN President Vladimir Putin accused the US of exploiting other economies for their benefit, thanks to the dollar.

Addressing the VTB Investment Forum in Moscow on Wednesday, Putin said that the opponents of the US did a lot to undermine the fundamental basis of dollar as their international reserve currency.

"The use of the dollar as a world currency gives the US a

lot of money... Thanks to the dollar, US continues to exploit other economies of the world for their benefit... One thing is to prohibit the use of dollars and the other thing is not to use it... The President-elect hasn't been in the White House for four years. There have been certain changes in the world economy as well as the American economy during this time... Their opponents did a lot to undermine the fundamental basis of dollar as their interna-

tional reserve currency. They did it themselves in their own hands using dollar as an instrument of political or even military fight to inflict damage on other countries," he said.

Giving an example of Bitcoin, Putin said that no one can prohibit the use of new technology. The US cannot prohibit its use for anyone.

"The share of the US in the world economy is reducing, and the influence of the dollar on the

world economy processes is also reducing... That is why we see (economic) processes with the use of other instruments. For instance, Bitcoin, who can prohibit the use of it?... Or the use of other electronic ways of settlement. No one can ban the use of them because these are new technologies and anything can happen with dollar. The use of these instruments will increase... Dollar has nothing to do with it. If we see that the use of dollar has re-

duced, they (US) will undermine their economic dominance... We never refused to use dollars. We were denied the use of it... And now we have to think of what to do next... They are too confident of themselves and this is unacceptable... Based on understanding the processes that are happening in the world, we should establish our policy on the international level," he said.

Putin added that the US cannot undo the policies that its own

China contributes to global rural road development and poverty reduction

CHINA'S State Council Information Office on Nov. 29 released a white paper titled "China's Rural Roads in the New Era" to introduce the achievements and vision of rural road development in the new era and to share China's experience.

China has explored an approach to developing rural roads in light of its realities. Over the years, it has shared its experience in rural road development and helped construct rural road infrastructure in other developing countries, contributing Chinese wisdom and solutions to global poverty reduction, people's wellbeing and sustainable global development.

Easy access to convenient roads brings happiness to the doorstep. Following a people-centered development approach, China has worked vigorously to meet people's needs for quality transport.

Upgraded and newly-built rural roads have added up to over 2.5 million kilometers over the past decade. By the end of 2023, the length of rural roads had reached 4.6 million kilometers, accounting for 84.6 percent of the total road length in China.

This safe and convenient transport network has brought about a remarkable transformation in Chinese rural areas, connecting villages and towns to the outside world and expanding bus services to villages. The ongoing development of rural roads will continue to bring benefits to China's agriculture, rural areas and rural population. Siddharth Chatterjee, the UN Development System Resident Coordinator in China, said that in China, he saw many outstanding examples of high-quality rural roads that were properly built, managed, maintained, and operated, as well as the resilience of the Chinese transport system.

At present, rural transport is still a bottleneck constraining the economic and social development of many developing countries. China is making concrete efforts to strengthen mutually beneficial transport cooperation



Photo taken on July 19, 2024 shows a rural road in Wanquan township, Qionghai, south China's Hainan province. (Photo by Meng Zhongde /People's Daily Online)

with the international community, enabling impoverished areas in more countries to embrace greater prosperity.

The Belt and Road Initiative and the Global Development Initiative proposed by China have given full play to the foundational role of transport in bolstering economic and social development, injecting strong momentum into common progress.

In 2018, a resolution initiated and promoted by China - Eradicating rural poverty to

implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development - was adopted by the UN General Assembly, emphasizing further poverty reduction efforts through infrastructure construction.

By sharing its development experiences through international cooperation mechanisms and helping with the construction of rural road infrastructure in other developing countries, China has made active contributions to global rural road development and

poverty reduction.

To improve the wellbeing of humanity, China has played an active role in building new platforms and mechanisms for global transport cooperation and in promoting knowledge and experience sharing. It has met its responsibilities as a major country with practical actions.

China is promoting "soft connectivity" by sharing Chinese standards. Since 2012, the country has released 73 industry standards for high-

way engineering in foreign languages. They represent a systematic effort in building industry standards in foreign languages and have been applied in hundreds of projects in dozens of countries around the world.

China hosted the Second United Nations Global Sustainable Transport Conference and the Global Sustainable Transport Forum, and has established the Global Sustainable Transport Innovation and Knowledge Center, proactively building new platforms and mechanisms for global transport cooperation.

When it comes to international transport training, China has held 28 training sessions for more than 800 people, including a training program on road design and management in Botswana, an advanced training program on highway engineering for Belt and Road partner countries, a training program for technical personnel in highway engineering in other developing countries, and a training program on road network planning.

China has supported and participated in rural road construction projects in other developing countries, improving people's wellbeing and promoting sustainable development.

For instance, a post-disaster reconstruction project implemented by the Ministry of Transport and Public Works of Ecuador with China's sup-

port has significantly improved access to transport for around 1.5 million people along the route; and the road construction project on the fringes of the capital of Madagascar, supported by free aid from China, has made it easier to transport eggs from the town of Mahazaza and facilitated the development of local poultry farming. It is known by the locals as the "egg road."

Since 2018, China has supported 24 developing countries including Cambodia, Serbia, Rwanda, Namibia, Vanuatu and Niger in highway and bridge construction and maintenance.

By participating in construction projects and providing technical support and human resource support, China has helped improve rural road infrastructure of these countries, make travel much easier for local people, and reduce logistic costs by a large margin.

Rural roads help to connect beautiful scenery, drive the development of local industries, grow the local economy, and benefit the local people. In a spirit of openness and mutually-beneficial cooperation, China will strengthen international exchanges and collaboration in exploring new models and paths of rural road development, further contributing to global rural road development and poverty reduction, and building a global community of shared future.

People's Daily



Frida Shirima (L), Head of Legal at KCB Bank Tanzania, is pictured on Wednesday bidding farewell to Lugalo Golf Club's Tanzania team at the Julius Nyerere International Airport in Dar es Salaam ahead of the KCB East Africa Golf Tour final in Nairobi today. The team is led by Major General Ibrahim Mhona (R), and involves Khadija Suleiman (2nd R), Peter Mlewi (C) and Hawa Wanyache.

'Team Tanzanite' set to dazzle at KCB East Africa Golf Finals in Kenya

By Guardian Correspondent

A TEAM of four Tanzanians from Lugalo Golf Club, Dar es Salaam, is poised to represent the country in the grand finals of the KCB East Africa Golf Tour, set to take place today in Kenya.

Leading the contingent is Major General Ibrahim Mhona, supported by seasoned golfers Hawa Wanyache, Hadija Suleiman, and Peter Mlewi.

The team, aptly named "The Tanzanite," symbolizes the uniqueness of Tanzania's rare gemstone, reflecting their pride and aspiration to shine on the regional stage.

Speaking ahead of the competition, Frida Shirima, Head of Legal at KCB Bank Tanzania, expressed confidence in the team's potential.

Representing the Group Regional Businesses Director and Managing Director of KCB Bank Tanzania, she remarked: "We named this team 'The Tanzanite' specifically to showcase our country, Tanzania."

"As you know, Tanzanite is a rare gemstone found only in Tanzania, and its uniqueness reflects this special team representing our country in these prestigious competitions in Kenya. We believe they will bring home the victory."

The Tanzanian golfers will compete against formidable counterparts from

Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, and Burundi.

Significant rewards await the victors, with the overall winner set to receive KShs. 1 million (approximately TZS 20 million).

Additionally, any player who achieves a hole-in-one will be awarded a house valued at KShs. 2.1 million (around TZS 42 million).

Major General Mhona, the team's leader, expressed optimism about their preparations and prospects: "We are optimistic about performing well due to our team's experience."

"We have prepared thoroughly, and the players have assured me they will play their best. We ask all Tanzanians to keep us in their prayers."

This tournament underscores KCB Bank's dedication to sports development across East Africa.

Beyond golf, KCB Bank has sponsored numerous sports initiatives in Tanzania, including football, boxing, marathons, car rallies, and motorcycle competitions.

Notably, the bank sponsored the Tanzania Premier League for four consecutive seasons (2017-2021) and supported tournaments like the Nondo Cup, reaffirming its commitment to nurturing talent and promoting social cohesion through sports.

Delaware Upanga SC A trounces Strikers in TCA Delaware Champions League

By Correspondent Japheth Kazenga

DELAWARE Upanga SC A outfit has brought its spell in the 2024 Tanzania Cricket Association (TCA) Delaware Champions League to an end grandly, defeating Strikers by five wickets recently.

Rishen Patel showcased a man of the match showing with the ball to propel Delaware Upanga SC A to the win over Strikers at the Leaders Club venue in Dar es Salaam.

Strikers were bowled out for 110 runs in 18.1 overs once they had taken the crease first, with opener Abdulrazak Mohammed's solid batting showing proving to be extremely significant to the club.

The opening batsman was, in the end, the cricketer with a significant contribution when his outfit's turn with the bat ended, ending with 44 runs.

He had to prove his worth at the crease following the early exit of fellow opener Athuman Siwa, as the experienced cricketer got out with eight runs.

Mohamed's efforts witnessed Strikers moving to 77-5 half-way through the innings once the cricketer returned, having been caught by Delaware Upanga SC A's Ashish Kamania from the Asuri Rajendra ball.

The brief stay by experienced all-rounder Issa Kiasi turned out to be a huge drawback that the Strikers faced in the side's efforts to set up a huge target for Delaware Upanga SC.



A section of Delaware Upanga SC cricketers jubilate once they took a wicket in a recent tournament which took place in Dar es Salaam. PHOTO: COURTESY OF CARAVANS CRICKET CLUB

Kikasi's quick exit had Strikers reeling at 51-2 after 5.1 overs, leaving fellow cricketers with a tough assignment.

Arun Dagar vainly battled to get hold of Strikers' batting woes with his 12 runs.

Dagar was, in the end, the batting side's other cricketer with the two-digit figure, as Strikers battled to complete their innings with a respectable total.

Gurvinder Singh returned with bat in hand, notching nine runs and had time to crack a boundary in his short stay at the crease.

Strikers' total was, to a great extent, boosted by 13 extras given away by Delaware Upanga SC A bowlers.

The extras were made up of one no-ball, two byes, and 10 wides.

Rajendra (3-15) and Patel (3-

20) successfully led Delaware Upanga SC A's bowling attack and silenced the Strikers' batting unit.

Delaware Upanga SC A's Maker Mukesh's 2-12 and Sanjay Bom's 2-15 moreover piled misery for the Jatin Darji-led Strikers.

The Rajendra-led Delaware Upanga SC A comfortably cantered to the 11-run target, dropping five wickets in 17.5 overs.

Opener Vikram Rathore showcased his batting virtuosity for the batting team with his 46 runs.

The opening batsman's exploits pushed Delaware Upanga SC A to 62-1 when the cricketer exited after 8.3 overs.

The other opener, Patel, chipped in with 12 runs in a relatively short stay, as his efforts to exhibit his resoluteness were frustrated by Strikers' spinner

Siwa.

Omary Ramadhani and Prem Thakkar's early exits could not prevent Delaware Upanga SC A from reaching the target, given the other cricketers proved their worth.

Ramesh Alluri's unbeaten 12 runs and Baraka Freddy, who ended with bat in hand and 10 runs, propelled Delaware Upanga SC A to victory.

Delaware Upanga SC A's quest for the victory was significantly buoyed by 10 extra runs given away by Strikers' bowlers.

The extras were made up of seven wides, one bye, one leg bye, and a no-ball.

Strikers' spinner Siwa finished with 3-15 and a 3.75 economy rate and pacer Dagar notched 2-12.

The experienced bowlers' impressive figures were, however, not enough to bail Strikers out.



Kitunda football youth team players pictured recently during a training session at Kitunda Primary School grounds in Dar es Salaam. PHOTO: CORRESPONDENT JUMANNE JUMA

Tabora United's Offen Chikola, Azam FC's Rachid Taoussi win NBC Premier League Monthly honors

By Correspondent Nassir Nchimbi

TABORA United winger Offen Chikola has been named the NBC Premier League's Best Player for November in the 2024/25 season, while Azam FC head coach Rachid Taoussi earned the title of Best Coach for the same month.

Chikola triumphed over fellow nominees Yacouba Songne (Tabora United) and

Moussa Camara (Simba SC) in the final voting conducted by the Tanzania Football Federation's (TFF) Awards Committee.

His stellar performance in November saw him score three goals in 351 minutes, leading Tabora United to an unbeaten run during the month. Notable victories included a 3-1 win over Young Africans, a 1-0 triumph against Mashujaa FC, and

a 2-0 victory against KMC, along with a 2-2 draw against Singida Black Stars.

Tabora United are now unbeaten in their last five matches, with four wins and one draw.

Taoussi, named Coach of the Month, outshone competitors Fadlu Davids (Simba SC) and Hamad Ali (JKT Tanzania).

Under Taoussi's guidance, Azam FC secured three cru-

cial victories in November, defeating Singida Black Stars (2-1), Young Africans (1-0), and Kagera Sugar (1-0).

These results propelled Azam to the top of the league standings and extended their unbeaten run to seven matches, solidifying their position with 30 points.

The TFF Awards Committee also honoured Shaaban Rajabu, manager of the Lake Tanganyika Stadium in

Kigoma, as the Best Stadium Manager for November.

Rajabu's exemplary management of the stadium's infrastructure and events has been pivotal for Mashujaa FC, who use the venue for their home matches.

In the First Division League, Mtibwa Sugar's Anurary Jabir was recognized as the November Best Player, while Mtibwa coach Awadh Juma was named Best Coach.

Jabir outperformed Naku Kazimoto (Mbuni) and Abdul-Aziz Shahame (TMA), scoring four goals in 136 minutes over five matches.

His contributions were key to Mtibwa's strong performances.

Juma led Mtibwa Sugar to an exceptional month, securing four wins out of five matches and climbing from second to first place in the league standings.

Mtibwa registered victories against African Sports (3-0), Stand United (2-0), TMA (2-1), and Mbuni (2-0), with a single 2-2 draw against Biashara United.

These accolades reflect the exceptional talent and tactical expertise displayed across Tanzania's top football leagues, highlighting standout performances that are shaping the 2024/25 season.

Mbappe misses another penalty as Real Madrid slump at Bilbao

By Fernando Kallas

KYLIAN Mbappe missed his second penalty in a week as LaLiga champions Real Madrid slumped to a 2-1 defeat at Athletic Bilbao on Wednesday, their fourth loss in the last seven games in all competitions.

Athletic were the aggressors throughout the first half against a harried Real Madrid who were short of ideas when in possession and toothless up front, going to the break with no shots on target.

Unbeaten for almost two months, Athletic finally managed to break the deadlock to take the lead thanks to a close-range effort by Alex Berenguer in the 53rd minute but Mbappe had a great chance to level from the spot after defender Antonio Ruediger was fouled 15 minutes later.

However, the French forward, who missed a spot-kick in the Champions League loss at Liverpool last week, stroked another weak shot that made it easy for Julen Agirrezabala to palm the effort away.

Still missing talisman Vinicius Jr and other key players like Dani Carvajal, Eder Militao and Eduardo Camavinga to injuries, Real equalised in the 78th minute when Jude Bellingham fired home a rebound but a bad mistake by Federico Valverde gifted the ball to Gorka Guruzeta who struck the winner past a helpless Thibaut Courtois one minute later.

Real missed the chance to close the gap on leaders Barcelona who top the standings on 37 points, four ahead of second-placed Real who have a game in hand. Athletic Bilbao are fourth on 29 points.

It was another uninspired performance by Mbappe who has missed two of his five penalties for Real Madrid in all competitions, making him the LaLiga player who has failed to convert most penalties this season.

Mbappe arrived with sky-high expectations to boost a stellar Real Madrid squad who won last season's LaLiga and Champions League titles, but so he has been a shadow of his old self, looking tentative and out of sync from the rest of the team.

He has scored 10 goals in Real's 21 games in all competitions, only seven from open play.

At Bilbao, he was a non factor until he fired an angled strike from the edge of the box late in the second half that Athletic goalkeeper Agirrezabala palmed straight to Bellingham who stroke home the rebound to equalise.

Rodrygo wasted a golden opportunity to get Real the lead in the next play but Valverde's error which handed substitute Guruzeta the winner raised more questions about Real's form with Mbappe firmly under the spotlight.

Meanwhile, Kylian Mbappe has struggled to reach the performance levels that were expected when he signed for Real Madrid, but he has been working hard to return to his old-self, coach Carlo Ancelotti acknowledged on Wednesday.

After missing a penalty in Real's Champions League loss at Liverpool last week, Mbappe failed to convert another spot-kick on Wednesday as the LaLiga champions slumped to a 2-1 defeat at Athletic Bilbao.

It was another lacklustre performance by Mbappe and Real Madrid, which led to their fourth loss in the last seven games in all competitions, raising more questions about their form with the France captain firmly under the spotlight.

"He is at a lot more than just 1% (of his potential), but he's not at his best," Ancelotti told a press conference.

"However, we have to give him time to adapt (to Real Madrid). He has scored 10 goals and is working hard to improve and to do better.

"I haven't spoken to him yet. It was a complicated, even, hard-fought, competitive game. We missed a penalty... I don't evaluate a player's game because of a missed penalty... sometimes you score and sometimes you miss. Obviously he's sad, disappointed, but we have to keep going."

Real missed the chance to close the gap on leaders Barcelona who top the standings on 37 points, four ahead of Ancelotti's side in second place and five above Athletic Madrid in third, with both the chasing clubs having a game in hand.

"The match was evenly matched. Athletic are a very dangerous team, we competed and fought. I think the match was worth a draw," Ancelotti said.

"But it is what it is... We're still in contention and have to keep fighting. We could have got a better result, but we're here and we have to think about Saturday's game at Girona."

REUTERS

Arsenal boss Arteta hails 'will to win' after downing Manchester United

By Sam Tobin

ARSENAL'S set piece-inspired victory over Manchester United on Wednesday showed the Gunners' ability to score goals in different ways and their sheer will to win after a difficult spell, boss Mikel Arteta said.

Jurrien Timber and William Saliba both scored from corners in a 2-0 win, which was Arsenal's fourth on the bounce in all competitions, following a draw and back-to-back defeats before the international break.

Even with first-choice centre back Gabriel out injured, Arsenal still posed a constant threat from corners and could have scored more than the two goals they managed from a succession of dangerous set pieces.

Arteta, who briefly chuckled after being asked yet another question about their proficiency from dead balls, said this element of Arsenal's game was about being a more complete team.

"We want to be very dangerous and very effective from every angle and every phase of play and we work on all of that," he told reporters.

"Today we could have



Arsenal's Jurrien Timber scores their first goal during their Premier League match against Manchester United at Emirates Stadium, in London, Britain on December 4, 2024. Reuters

scored from open play like we did against West Ham, against Sporting, so the team really has that belief that from every angle we have the mentality to (cause) threat to the opponent and to try to score."

Arsenal's victory also came as leaders Liverpool dropped two points in a draw at Newcastle United, meaning Arsenal cut the gap to seven points to the top.

Arteta insisted he did not allow the changing score in Liverpool's match to affect his approach to Arsenal's

game, but said his team's response to setbacks earlier in the season showed a positive mentality.

"The will to win is there," he said. "We tried our best to do that. It's true that we went through a lot in that period, (with) the schedule and the position that we played. A lot of things and you have to react."

"It's about trying to do it next. Today, now we've won four in a row -- it doesn't matter, we have to go to Fulham and be better than them."

Amorim's first loss as

United manager -- and his first league defeat since his former club Sporting were beaten by Vitoria de Guimaraes in December, 2023 -- left them 11th on 19 points.

Amorim saw positives from United, especially in the first half.

"I make the evaluation of a game regardless of the result, he told reporters. "The 4-0 (win against Everton), you can take positive things but you have to improve and you already knew that."

"You can feel it in the

first half, especially at the end of the first half, you can feel that they were not comfortable, you can feel it in the stadium, so you can take that."

Meanwhile, Arsenal defensive midfielder Declan Rice said he would have done anything to win, as his corner kick set up Jurrien Timber's second-half strike which put the hosts ahead in a 2-0 win over Manchester United in the Premier League on Wednesday.

The England international, who has pro-

vided 10 assists in the league since joining Arsenal last year, said he was confident about his corner kicks as his team reduced their gap with league leaders Liverpool to seven points.

"Tonight, I just had a different energy. I just wanted to do anything for the team to win and in the second half, I would have done anything tonight to get the three points. I'm buzzing," Rice told Arsenal's official website.

"I think that every time I was going to take the corner, I knew it was going to be a good ball. In my head, I was just thinking about putting it in the same spot and in the end with repetition, you end up scoring goals."

"This year has been my biggest output in terms of goals and assists throughout the year, so I'm really happy with that," said Rice, who has continued playing despite suffering a broken toe last month.

Bukayo Saka's corner kick set up Arsenal's second goal of the match, with United coach Ruben Amorim saying the hosts' set pieces killed the game.

Third-placed Arsenal visit Fulham on Sunday.

REUTERS

We need to help De Bruyne through tough schedule, says Guardiola

By Lori Ewing

ALTHOUGH Kevin De Bruyne's return to Manchester City's starting lineup was key to a 3-0 Premier League victory over Nottingham Forest on Wednesday that ended their winless run, manager Pep Guardiola warned that he needs to look after his midfielder.

The oft-injured Belgian was brilliant in scoring one goal, helping set up another, and taking or creating most of City's shots in his first start in more than two months, guiding City to their first victory since late October.

"We'll see how he recovers after a long time injured," Guardiola told reporters. "The reality is he played few games last season and this season."

The gruelling December schedule compounds the concern, with City heading to Crystal Palace on Saturday.

"Three days, three days - we'll see how does (De Bruyne) feel through this," Guardiola said.

City's win lifted the champions to fourth in the league table, still nine points adrift of leaders Liverpool.

It also ended the worst string of results in Guardiola's glittering managerial career -- seven consecutive games without a win, including six defeats.

"We needed it," said Guardiola. "The club and the players, everyone needed to win. After what happened in the past we were not relaxed until the referee's whistle at the end."

The victory might have



Manchester City's Kevin De Bruyne with Manchester City manager Pep Guardiola after being substituted during their Premier League match against Nottingham Forest at Etihad Stadium, in Manchester, Britain on December 4, 2024. Reuters

come at a cost, however, as defender Nathan Ake was forced off late in the game holding his hamstring, an injury that saw him sidelined for five weeks earlier this season.

the way you asked it, it's just an incredible year. I'm so grateful for everything, and what can I say more?"

"Nathan doesn't look good. We will see tomorrow," Guardiola said. "He could not continue and we will see in three days what will happen. I am sad for Nathan."

An injury also kept Manuel Akanji out for the second half, although the manager said his is not as serious.

"We'd love to have

Manu and Nathan and two defensive midfielders. They are fantastic human beings and fantastic players," Guardiol

la said.

Forest manager Nuno Espirito Santo said City were definitely more dangerous with De

Bruyne on the pitch.

"It's very difficult (to stop De Bruyne), very difficult because of the quality," he said. "And it's not only Kevin de Bruyne, their quality all over the pitch, in the wide areas, it's very difficult to individually control these kind of players."

"No one ever doubts the quality of City players and their manager, so we know that we had a hard task ahead of us. But honestly, we went for it. We lose, okay, that can happen in football, but we challenged ourselves and that can reflect on the next games I hope."

Meanwhile, Kevin De Bruyne made the most of his first start since September with a goal and an assist in Wednesday's 3-0 win over Nottingham Forest, saying he was happy Manchester City earned three points after four straight losses in the Premier League.

"I think it's just important that we won a game," the 33-year-

old midfielder told his club's official website. "We started the game well, created some opportunities, maybe a few mistakes, I think myself as well. But, you know, happy with the way that we performed."

The Belgian, who has come on as a substitute in recent matches after missing a month with a groin strain, said injuries have plagued City's bid to secure a fifth league title in a row.

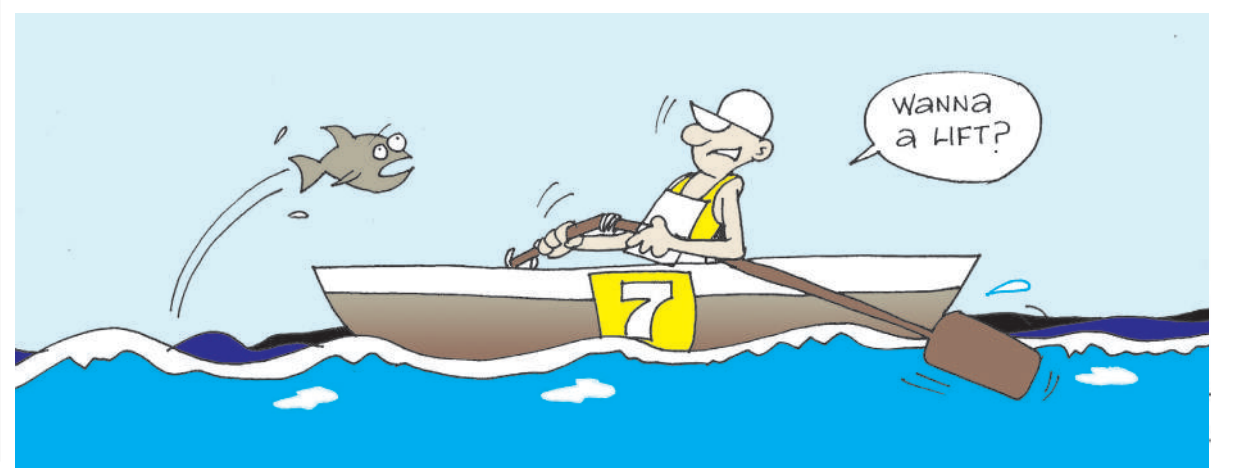
"It's been a tough time but we tried to change it. Unfortunately we've got a few guys who are maybe injured so, it's what is happening this year. But we'll try and recover as quickly as possible."

De Bruyne was also pleased that City, who have lost key defensive midfielder Rodri for the season due to a cruciate ligament tear, kept their first clean sheet in eight matches in all competitions.

"We gave a couple of chances away but I think second half is pretty good," he added.

REUTERS

Gwiji by David Chikoko



SPORT

Arsenal boss Arteta hails 'will to win' after downing Manchester United

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Premier League witnesses heightened competition and unpredictability

By Correspondent Nassir Nchimbi

TANZANIA Premier League Board (TPLB) CEO Almas Kasongo has expressed satisfaction with the growing competitiveness of the NBC Premier League this season.

He highlighted that after 13 weeks of play, all teams have suffered at least one defeat, signalling an unprecedented level of parity in the league.

Kasongo pointed out improvements in pitch conditions and match preparations, which have contributed to a more engaging and balanced competition compared to previous seasons.

"In contrast to last season, where a clear gap among teams emerged after 13 matchdays, this year's league has been more unpredictable and competitive. It's exciting to see how every team has stepped up their performance," Kasongo remarked.

In terms of goal difference, only Simba SC, JKT Tanzania, Azam FC, Singida Black Stars, and Young Africans have positive goal differentials. The remaining 12 teams are in the negative.

Namungo, KMC, and Fountain Gate FC have the worst goal differences, with Coastal Union and JKT Tanzania having the lowest overall goal differentials of 0 and one, respectively.

Despite playing only 11 games, Simba SC leads the league in goals scored with 22, averaging 2.0 goals per match. Fountain Gate follows closely with 20 goals, and Azam FC is third with 19 goals.

Simba SC have been the league's defensive powerhouse, conceding only three goals. Young Africans and Azam FC follow closely with four and five goals conceded, respectively.

Kasongo praised the league's increased competitiveness and unpredictability, which has made matches more exciting to watch.

"After 13 rounds of matches, the league has become increasingly challenging for many teams due to the heightened competition. It's typical for our league to start slowly and then gradually intensify, leading to tougher matches.

"Teams now have a clearer understanding of their form, their position in the league, and their goals for the season, whether it's avoiding relegation, securing a top-four finish, or winning the title. This clarity intensifies the competition.

"Teams have become unpredictable, and we've seen surprising results as they strive to achieve their objectives. This level of competition is positive, and we need to maintain it to ensure a strong and competitive top tier," said Kasongo.

The Premier League continues despite the absence of Simba SC and Young Africans, who are currently in Algeria for their CAF interclub matches.

Simba are set to face CS Constantine in the Confederations Cup while Young Africans will take on MC Alger in the CAF Champions League.

KenGold FC are currently at the bottom of the league table with one win, three draws, and nine losses, totaling six points. Namungo, in 15th place, has nine points from 13 games, with three wins, 0 draws, and nine losses.

Azam FC have been a dominant force in the league, amassing 30 points from 13 games. Simba SC, with 28 points from 11 games, and Young Africans, with 27 points, round out the top three positions.

Simba's Davids opts for discretion: No tactical training in Algeria



By Correspondent Seth Mapoli

SIMBA SC head coach Fadlu Davids has confirmed that the team will focus on maintaining physical fitness during their training sessions in Algeria ahead of their CAF Confederation Cup Group A clash against CS Constantine on Sunday.

Davids (pictured) emphasized that he will avoid tactical drills to prevent their opponents from gaining insights into their strategies.

Simba, who secured a narrow 1-0 victory in their opening Group A match, will face a tough challenge against CS Constantine, who also won their first game by the same

margin. Both teams are eyeing the top spot in the group, making this encounter crucial.

Davids explained that all tactical preparations were completed before leaving the country. In Algeria, the focus will be on light training sessions aimed at alleviating the fatigue of travel and ensuring the players' physical readiness for the

high-stakes match.

"We've completed our tactical exercises in Tanzania, where we addressed both our own weaknesses and the strengths of our opponents," Davids stated. "In Algeria, we will only conduct light training to keep the players physically fit. It's risky to engage in tactical drills at this stage, especially with so many

eyes watching us. We can't afford to give CS Constantine any clues about our approach."

Davids acknowledged the difficulty of playing away from home, emphasizing the importance of a solid defensive strategy. He highlighted the need for his players to maintain composure, avoid unnecessary errors, and capitalize on quick counterattacks.

"We need to excel in our defensive organization and limit mistakes. Strengthening our defensive line and midfield positioning has been a priority, as we need to neutralize their threats effectively," he explained. "At the same time, we have prepared to launch quick counterattacks and recover defensively with urgency."

The coach is aware of the challenge posed by CS Constantine, who will have the advantage of home support. Despite this, Davids expressed confidence in his team's preparation and readiness to compete.

Simba's preparations were dealt a blow with the last-minute withdrawal of goalkeeper Aishi Manula due to illness. In his place,

Hussein Abel has travelled to Algeria to join the squad.

The team now has Mousa Camara, Ali Salim, and Abel as their goalkeeping options for the match.

With both Simba and CS Constantine tied on points after their respective first-round victories, Sunday's match could determine the group leader.

A win would be an ideal result for Simba, but even a draw would keep the Tanzanian giants in a strong position to achieve their goal of advancing to the quarterfinals.

Simba's away form will be under scrutiny as they aim to secure a positive result against a formidable opponent. The team's ability to execute their defensive plan and capitalize on attacking opportunities will be key to their success.

Simba's performance in Algeria will set the tone for their remaining group-stage matches.

As the team continues their quest for continental glory, Davids' focus on physical readiness and strategic discipline underscores the importance of this fixture.

TOC general election now postponed indefinitely over constitutional issues

By Correspondent Joseph Mchekadona

THE Tanzania Olympic Committee (TOC) general election, initially slated for December 14, 2024, in Dodoma, has been postponed indefinitely following a directive from the Registrar of Sports Associations and Clubs.

TOC president Gulam Rashid revealed that the postponement arose from a letter by the acting registrar, citing concerns over the TOC constitution used to announce the elections, which the registrar claims is not properly registered.

"The letter, dated December 2, referenced number AC.50/246/01 'B'/13, directed that elections be postponed until the constitution is properly registered. This development has sparked complaints from several local associations," Rashid said.

Rashid also announced that the committee will refund registration fees paid by candidates who intended to contest in the elections.

Presidential candidates, who each paid TZS 500,000, and vice-presidential contenders, who paid TZS 200,000, will receive their fees back.

Despite the indefinite postponement of the general elections, Rashid confirmed that the TOC annual meeting will proceed as planned on December 28 in Dodoma.

Earlier, TOC elections committee chairperson Ibrahim Mkwawa had announced a rescheduling of the election from December 14 to December 28, citing "circumstances beyond our control."

TOC secretary general Filbert Bayi attributed the delay to financial constraints, explaining that the funds al-

located for the election had been depleted due to the numerous activities planned for December.

Bayi added that the International Olympic Committee (IOC), through Olympic Solidarity, had released 75% of the required funds, but the amount may still fall short.

The election was to fill 12 committee

positions, as per recent amendments to the TOC constitution. Notably, the Secretary General and Treasurer positions have been changed from elected roles to appointed ones.

Presidential race was a four-way contest between Michael Washa, Anthony Mtaka, Henry Tandau, and Nasra Mohammed.

Vice presidential race involved Suleiman Jabir and Jamal Iddi are the only contenders.

The TOC election commission was led by chairperson Ibrahim Mkwawa and supported by vice chairperson Malangwe Ali Mchungahela and secretary Halfani Omari.



A youngster tennis player pictured on Wednesday during a training session at the Gymkhana grounds in Dar es Salaam. PHOTO: CORRESPONDENT JUMANNE JUMA

Flexibles by David Chikoko

