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AFDB launches a 5-year US\$2 billion bond

Hope as conservation agriculture improves livelihood and yields of small farmer in Morogoro Region

KCB Sukuk unleashes inclusive investment opportunities in Tanzania

Page 13

National Pg 3 TACAIDS directed to monitor committees



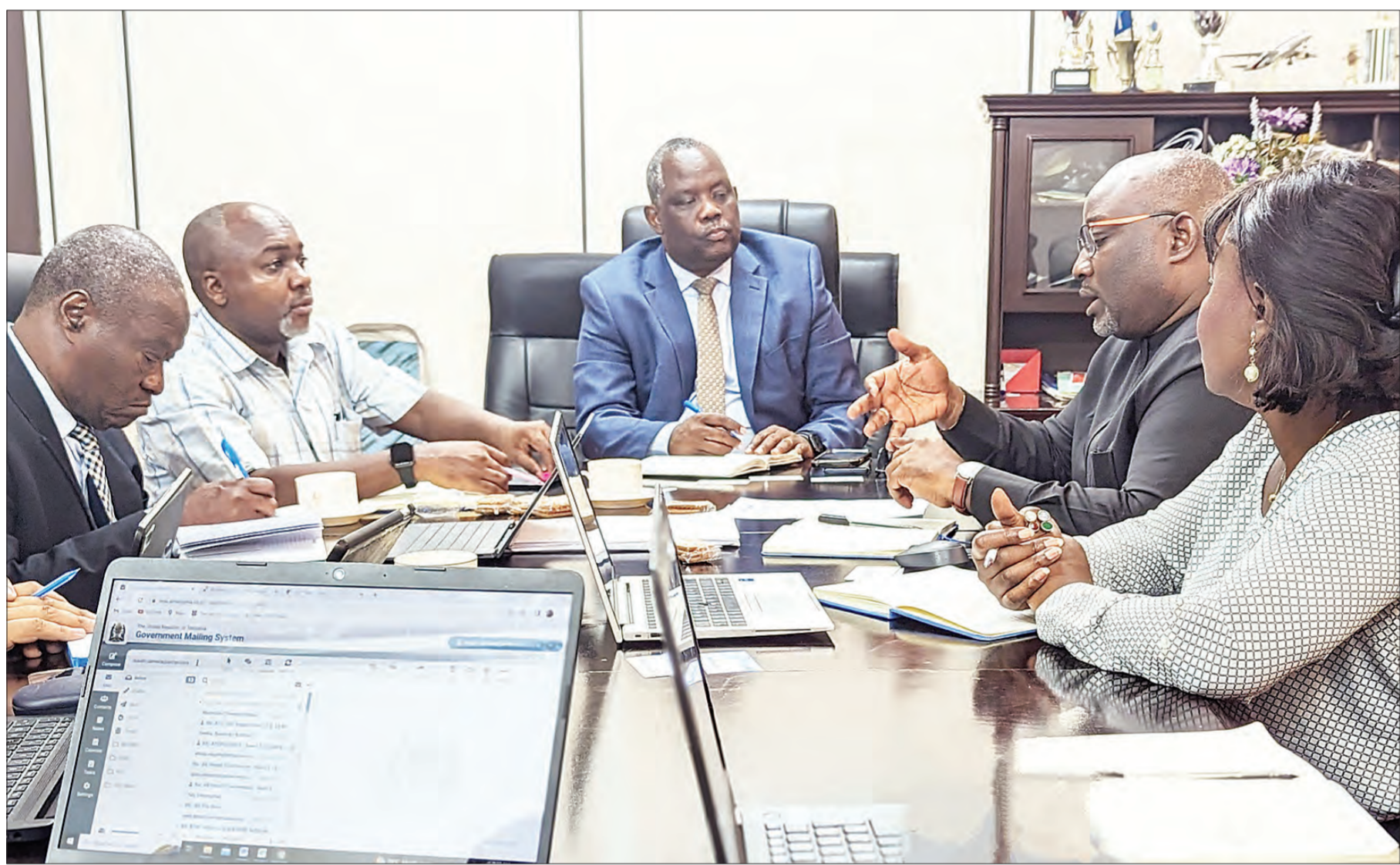
National Pg 4 Former MP hails Samia over political activities



National Pg 6 TAMWA pushes for technology use in Judiciary



African airlines consult on Airbus A220-300 woes



Air Tanzania Company Ltd CEO and managing director Ladislaus Matindi (C) chairs a meeting in Dar es Salaam at the weekend with top officials of Air Senegal who came over for "strategic" talks with their Tanzanian counterparts on the challenges facing the two national flag carriers in operating Airbus A220-300s. Photo courtesy of ATCL

By Guardian Reporter

CHALLENGES facing airlines using Airbus A220-300 planes are pushing African airlines to seek joint solutions.

Hanne Samba Sall, the director of administration and operations for Air Senegal has led a delegation to Air Tanzania Co. Ltd (ATCL) to look into finding solutions to the challenges.

ATCL and Air Senegal use Airbus A220-300 planes, while another airline cited is EgyptAir, he said.

Challenges regarding Airbus A220-300 planes had impacted world airlines with these planes, and hence the need to make regional contacts to exchange views on how to address the issue, he said.

"Pratt and Whitney (PW), the manufacturers of engines used by the planes has failed in its responsibilities in making available extra engines to alleviate engine needs when the engines in use undergo maintenance," he said.

Air Senegal is passing through a difficult operational period with A220-300 planes in its fleet, he said, while ATCL CEO Ladislaus Matindi confirmed

"grave shortfalls" regarding Airbus A220-300 planes experienced by all airlines operating the planes.

Problems emanating from the planes' design include engine defects and lack of alternative engines, which compels the airline to ground the planes for long periods waiting for repairs, disrupting flight schedules and steep losses, he said.

Other problems relate to developing rust in a short time, contrary to what the planes' operating manuals intimate, he said, noting that these design or manufacturing problems demand that operators of the planes conduct inspections earlier than the specified schedule, which increases operational costs. "PW1524G-3 engines made by Pratt and Whitney fitted to A220-300 planes are supposed to be removed for maintenance after 5,260 landings but due to engine design defects they are removed even before 1,000 landings," Matindi said.

Rust that was discovered within a short time after receiving the planes, he said, noting that plane registered as 5H-TCI got rust when they were 26 months of use.

TURN TO Page2

VP: Observe regulations in picking of personal aides

By Correspondent Valentine Oforo, Dodoma

DISTRICT commissioners needing services from private individuals as body guides or spokespersons must abide by government regulations and not take actions based on whims or personal wishes.

Vice President Dr Philip Mpango issued this instruction yesterday when opening a six-day orientation seminar for DCs across the country in the capital. He said that DCs were the prime

TURN TO Page2

Fiscal plan: Recurrent estimates up, verified debts cash doubled

By Guardian Reporter, Dodoma

RECURRENT expenditure is set to go up by 10.4 percent in the next financial year, development expenditure rising by one percent while funds allocated for paying verified debts more than doubled at 129.6 percent, the government has affirmed.

Finance and Planning minister Dr Mwigulu Nchemba told the Budget standing committee of the National Assembly here yesterday that the government is planning to spend 44.38trn/- in the 2023/2024 financial year with priorities directed on employing more civil servants in health and education. The budget funds will cover preparation for next year's

civic polls and preliminary arrangements for the 2025 general election, he said, noting that the budget is a nominal increase of seven percent from the 41.48trn/- projected for the 2022/2023 financial year.

It is focused on execution of strategic flagship projects, servicing the government debt, improvement of social services and strengthening the rule of law, he said.

He was presenting an outline of the 2023/2024 national development plan and budget estimates for the coming financial year to the committee, underlining that in the coming year the government expects to enhance productive sectors to boost exports,

tax revenues and reduce dependency on imports.

Efforts will also be directed at economic diplomacy to come up with strategies to obtain funds and investments to mitigate climate change impacts. The successful development of the blue economy policy is a pivotal aspect, he said.

Budget estimates have increased compared to preliminary expectations set out in preparing the national development plan and budget for fiscal 2023/2024 after concluding regular consultations with the World Bank and the African Development Bank (AfDB).

TURN TO Page2

PM launches new business access app, extols training

By Guardian Reporter

PRIME Minister Kassim Majaliwa has launched a new computer application founded by Jaffery International Business Association (JIBA) which links investors to scan opportunities available in the country, displaying vital information for investors.

The application facilitates communication, signals business opportunities among JIBA members spread out among small, medium and large scale businesses, its creators said. At the launching ceremony over the weekend in Dar es Salaam, the premier said the programme would

address business hurdles and facilitate communication and undertakings. "The programme will ease challenges, increase trust in the business application system and expand access to the world market, enabling

TURN TO Page2

SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT ON COMPLETION OF TWO YEARS UNDER THE ABLE LEADERSHIP OF



HER EXCELLENCY DR. SAMIA SULUHU HASSAN

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PM launches new business access app, extols training

FROM PAGE 1

more business to be conducted online," he said. The premier launched the JIBA sandbox which enables stakeholders to do business more professionally, taking greater account of global standards. Similarly, the JIBA investment desk providing information on various sectors including fishing and artificial intelligence was also launched, where the premier tasked the creators to ensure that the programmes are sustainable.

The JIBA innovators ought to support government efforts in creating opportunities and availing start-up capital related to their applications, he said.

The ICT innovators also need to nurture talents through training on new technologies as well as drawing out other local innovators in operations related to the use of those applications, he said.

He explained that the government has taken measures to improve the ease of doing business by redesigning the work of the Tanzania Investment Centre (TIC), now issuing a certificate of incentives.

Since last year the government has cut the fee for the certificate by 50-percent to \$50,000 (117.5m/-).

The government was conducting institutional, legal and policy changes to ensure the conditions for doing business in the country are improved, he further asserted.

Earlier, the Mufti Sheikh Abubakar bin Zubeir said doing business was a key component of people's lives in any country.

JIBA chairman Al Junaid Hasham said the UK-registered organisation has 32 branches globally. It aims at training on business opportunities to the Khoja community and associate members, he added.



National Assembly Speaker Dr Tulia Ackson, current chairperson of the Africa Geopolitical Group in the Inter-Parliamentary Union, addresses the agency's ongoing 146th meeting in the Kingdom of Bahrain yesterday. Photo: Parliament

Al Shabaab factions clash in Somali mountains

MOGADISHU

FACTIONS of Somali militant group Al Shabaab on Sunday clashed in Puntland state, reflecting the continual search for territorial supremacy.

Officials said the clashes in Bari region in eastern Somalia

between fighters allied to the Al Qaeda terror group and those affiliated to the against Islamic State (IS) began on Saturday night and continued till early Sunday.

The confrontations occurred at wadi (dry river beds) known as Dadamale and Qura'da in location known as Ja'ayl in Bari region

in the Puntland State of Somalia, over 1500 km northeast of Mogadishu.

Both Al Shabaab and ISIS operate in the wider sub-region known as Balli Dhidin with Qandala district in Bari region, particularly between Qandala and Bosaso, the main port town

and commercial capital of Puntland.

The areas where the bulk of the confrontation had taken place is characterised by dry river beds, torrents with water streams and mountainous territories where the militants of both extremist groups have coexisted.

VP: Observe regulations in picking personal aides

FROM PAGE 1

agents to help the government roll out vital services to the public as well as stimulating the pace of development from the grassroots.

"You must be creative in the execution of your daily roles by making sure you take proper initiatives to help the government in combating the effects of climate change and loss of biodiversity," he said, pointing at tree planting programmes in each district as a crucial requirement.

Those living in the various districts are being saddled with numerous challenges, where it is incumbent upon the DCs to stand at the forefront to listen to such problems and find solutions, instead of leaving them to lower level administrators.

The DCs are the government's representatives in the districts and must thus act smartly. They are the eyes of the government so they need to be good observers as well as communicators, he stated.

DCs need to make professional use of internet services to access data to help them stimulate socioeconomic development, "not use widespread cyber services to post government secrets," he cautioned.

"Confidentiality of government secrets should remain cardinal to your daily roles as well as in private life," he emphasized, pointing out that DCs need to be patriotic, working diligently to help the government to achieve keenly demanded development goals.

They must also expunge

immoral habits, ranging from excessive consumption of alcohol, promiscuity, soliciting bribes and using bad or provocative language, he told the gathering.

Measures will be taken against DCs who fail to deliver accordingly or leaking government secrets, he said, urging them to foster mutual understanding with others public officials and the public in general in their areas of responsibility.

He challenged them to work round the clock to improve collections of government revenues by familiarizing with people in various revenue sources. They must also make use of resources available in their districts, he stated.

"You must work hard to fight embezzlement and misuse of the funds channeled by the government for implementation of diverse development projects," he said, noting that DCs must make sure they explore fresh sources of income.

He said DCs need to be mindful of the ruling party election manifesto, as they have been trusted by President Samia Suluhu Hassan to administer the districts.

It is prudent for them to deliver in line with the president's high expectations and aspiration of the citizenry, he stated.

"The seminar should serve as a podium to evaluate yourselves and rectify past mistakes in order to start performing in your key roles with a fresh leg," he added.



Tanzania Women Chamber of Commerce vice chairperson Victoria Mwanukuzi (2nd-L) makes remarks at the Azania Bank Limited pavilion during a visit to a women-owned manufacturers' exhibition in Dar es Salaam last week in marking International Women's Week. With her: Azania Bank senior commercial manager Jackson Lohay (L), TWCC executive director Mwajuma Hamza (C), Azania Bank public relations manager Diana Balyagati and German International Development Agency (GIZ) official Dennis Mbangula (R). The bank was the event's main sponsor. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

Fiscal plan: Recurrent estimates up, verified debts cash doubled

FROM PAGE 1

The two multilateral financial institutions have pledged to provide 1,166.9bn/- and 247.4bn/- respectively for development projects, he stated, noting that budget preparations reflect agreement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

It is based on an Extended Credit Facility (ECF) programme, with a protocol on priorities like allocation of funds for social services such as education, health, rural roads, special groups, agriculture, water, rural electrification and creating more jobs in education and health sectors, he stated. In the 2023/2024 financial year, domestic revenue collections are projected to rise by 12 percent

while domestic and foreign commercial loans slide by 14.4 percent, he said.

Funds for implementing strategic projects like the Julius Nyerere Hydropower Plant (JNHPP) and the standard gauge railway (SGR) have increased by 15.8 percent and funding for other projects rose by 11.9 percent, he said.

The totality of increased budget funds for fiscal 2023/2024 will be directed to recurrent expenditure for public servant salaries, interest payments and operational costs, he said.

Grants and soft loans from development partners are projected to reach 5.46trn/- or 12.3 percent

of total estimates, with 5.44trn/- slated for borrowing from domestic sources, and 3.54trn/- used to service maturing government bonds and guarantees. Upwards of 1.89trn/- in the credits will be directed to development projects, he said.

Borrowing on commercial terms is projected at 2.1trn/- from foreign sources to increase the pace of realizing various infrastructure projects, he said.

Internal funds for development projects involves 1.5trn/- for implementation of the SGR project, 1.45trn/- for the JNHPP, 1.31trn/- for the Road Fund, 899.2bn/- for railway, water and REA Funds,

528bn/- for paying of contractors' arrears, he specified.

To achieve the goals and objectives set for 2023/24 fiscal year, the government will focus on measures to overcome risks relating to economic activities and take appropriate administrative measures "before, during and after" such risks occur, he said.

To strengthen the capacity of the government in combating tax evasion, improving information and communication technology (ICT) systems, controlling smuggling, strengthening taxpayer education and expanding the scope of revenue collection are envisaged, he stated.

Other productivity enhancing

measures are pursuing relief in accessing inputs like fertilizers, agricultural machinery, pesticides, better seeds and strengthening irrigation farming, he said.

"In order to stimulate production and availability of fertilizers in the country, the government will provide fertilizer subsidies with priority to local fertilizer in the use of lime to reduce production costs," he said.

Evaluating fiscal performance for 2022/23 he said the period from July 2022 to January 2023 saw the government collect a total of 22.23trn/- from all sources. It is put at 92.2 percent of the 24.1trn/- target, he added.

African airlines consult on Airbus220-300 woes

FROM PAGE 1

Another with registration 5H-TCH developed rust at 35 months of use whereas the company's plane maintenance planning document says rust ought to have developed after seven years of use.

Airbus A220-300 planes have the capacity to carry 130 passengers on medium

flights, with these technical shortfalls impacting many airlines around the world. Loss of revenue is the principal problem when the planes are grounded, he affirmed.

Efforts to get comments from Airbus company management in France were still being pursued.



Girls benefiting from a project run by Daughters of SOS Children's Villages, a CSO with activities in Iringa Region, display some of the products they have made. It was at an International Women's Day ceremony held in Kilolo District at the weekend. Photo: Correspondent Francis Godwin

TACAIDS counselled on monitoring of Aids

By Guardian Reporter, Dodoma

THE Tanzania Commission for AIDS (TACAIDS) has been directed to make follow ups on the implementation and responsibilities of AIDS committees at lower levels to ensure they do not operate habitually.

The chairman of the Parliamentary Health and AIDS Committee, Stanislaus Nyongo issued the directives after the Commission submitted its report on its structure and responsibilities to the Bunge panel here at the weekend.

Nyongo commended TACAIDS for the good on it was doing in the control of and reduction of HIV in the country and called on continued efforts to address challenges facing the committees. For his part, George Simbachawene, Minister of State in the PM Office (Parliament, Policy and Coordination) said the government, through his office will continue collaborating to Bunge panel according to guidelines, views and advice given.

Submitting his report on TACAIDS structure, the Commission's managing director Dr Leonard Maboko cited TACAIDS responsibilities include preparing policies and guidelines in regard to the country's HIV/Aids prevalence and oversee its effects, and chart out strategic plans of AIDS programme as well as crosscutting issues regarding the disease. "Others include building up national and international relations for all people with HIV/AIDS by sourcing financial resources, distributing and monitoring the resources and publishing of reports on the disease and its effects," he added.

He said that TACAIDS also enhances the provision of education at higher levels in regard to the prevention of HIV/AIDS, monitoring and assessing all activities being implemented in the country in regard to the disease.

Dr Maboko said another TACAIDS responsibility is to mobilise for the rights and responsibilities of people living with HIV, and to advise the government on all issues regarding control of and prevention of the disease, recognise challenges in the implementation of anti-Aids activities.

Japan provides grant to boost school projects in Tanzania

By Guardian Reporter

JAPAN government is expected to dish out a grant amounting to \$407,061 (943m/-) to support schools' projects both in the mainland and Zanzibar.

The funds are part of the Japan agenda of Grant Assistance for Grassroots Human Security Pro-

jects (GGHSP).

Misawa Yasushi, the Ambassador of Japan to Tanzania said this in Dar es Salaam yesterday during the signing ceremony with representatives from district councils that are expected to receive the funds tomorrow.

The representatives were from the districts of Kinondoni munic-

ipality, Unguja South, West A and Mbeya city council.

Ambassador Yasushi said the Japanese government has been extending its support to the Tanzanian community in various areas including health, education and water supply under GGHSP since 1991.

"The grants which will be

dished out on March 15 (tomorrow), will support improvements of infrastructures in various schools where the Kinondoni municipal council will get \$98,258 to ensure that the learning and teaching environment in school are improved," he explained.

The second project is the construction of an academic play

centre at the Kizimkazi primary school in South Unguja district and this will cost \$123,259 (equivalent to 286.2m/-).

The third project focuses on improving sanitation in schools located in West A district in Unguja which will cost \$108,717 (252.5m/-).

The sanitation project will also

be executed in Lomba secondary school in Mbeya Region which will cost a total of \$78,827 (equal to 178.4m/-).

The funds will also support construction of modern toilets as well as bring to the schools water services so as to facilitate smooth learning.



UNITED NATIONS INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATION

Training on Quality Management System According to ISO 9001:2015 to support producers and manufacturers of personal protective equipment (PPE), disinfectant and hygiene supplies

The United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) is currently implementing a project to promote public health and social resilience against Covid-19 and other communicable diseases by strengthening the domestic supply chain of personal protective equipment (PPE), disinfectants and hygiene supplies. To achieve the objective, the project builds the national capacity of production through upgrading relevant domestic producers, material suppliers and supportive public organizations. Importantly, its' successful implementation will provide not only short-term assistance to those who are in need of the PPE in the national health care system and individual households, but also contribute to medium and long-term humanitarian development of the country by anchoring stable public health and bringing stability to both economic activities and the livelihood of the people.

The project is funded by the government of Japan and jointly implemented by UNIDO together with the government counterparts, including the Ministry of Investment, Industry and Trade and the Ministry of Health, Medical Store Department (MSD), Tanzania

Medicine and Medical Devices Authority (TMDA) and Tanzania Bureau of Standards (TBS). As a specialized agency of the United Nations, UNIDO has a unique mandate to advance the achievement of Sustainable Development goals (SDGs) through the pursuit of its inclusive and sustainable industrial development (ISID).

Between December 2022 and March 2023, UNIDO conducted quality diagnosis according to ISO 9001:2015 to assess the level of conformity for companies in the PPE, disinfectant and hygiene supply chain in Tanzania. The diagnosis focused on assessing readiness for the selected companies towards ISO 9001 certification.

After the assessment, a series of training sessions were provided to the staff working professionals from both the private and public sectors in the national supply chains of healthcare products. The trainings were conducted at Giraffe Hotel in Dar es salaam. During the trainings, participants were introduced to the international standard of Quality Management System (QMS), the principles of Quality Management System, benefits of implementing a QMS, QMS requirements and



Group picture of people who attended the quality management system training. Seated on the right is the training expert and on the left is a representative from UNIDO

its documentation. Lastly, the participants were acquainted on how to develop and implement a quality control plan.

The training program was successfully completed with a good rating from participants who acknowledged that the training was very informative and

useful/vital, citing that they are confident the knowledge and skills gained will bring improvement to their organizations in terms of quality and consistency of their products and will have positive impact.

For more information, please visit: <https://www.unido.org>



Tabora District Council director Dr Peter Nyanja (R) presents a Tabora School Alumni database to Tanzania Education Authority project manager Masozo Nyirenda in Tabora municipality at the weekend. Second-right is Tabora Secondary School headmaster Deogratius Mwambu. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

Former MP praises Samia for allowing political rallies back

By Guardian Correspondent, Lindi

SELEMANI Said Bungara (Bwege), former Member of Parliament for Kilwa South Constituency, Lindi Region (CUF and ACT-Wazalendo), has praised President Samia Suluhu Hassan for her efforts to restore the state of peace and tranquility across the nation, by allowing parties conduct political activities.

Bungara (pictured) issued the praise when he was given chance to greet people at his party's rally held here at the weekend.

Bungara said efforts taken by the head of state, in restoring the state of peace and tranquility that was absent in the last seven years during his predecessor, the late John Pombe Magufuli governance is to be commended by every person with a sound mind. The former MP who led the constituency for ten years said the step by President Samia's predecessor to ban political activities had violated the country's laws and the constitution.

He said he will thank President Samia when she will agree for the country to have a new constitution and an independent electoral commission. "I will personally thank her when a new constitution and an inde-



pendent electoral commission are achieved," he said.

He called upon the people of Lindi Region in particular not to despair by the injustices committed against them in the last seven years especially in regard to the conduct of the 2019 Civic Elections and the 2020 General Elections.

He said any person who despairs in the fight against acts of injustice is equivalent to an octopus who puts burning charcoal on its body.

Meanwhile, ACT-Wazalendo chairman for Lindi Region, Rashid Machinjita said Lindi is among regions with many natural resources, including the ocean and its beaches, forests, various types of wildlife, minerals, cash crops including cashew nuts, pigeon peas, simsim and others, but still these have not benefitted the people and have remained poor day in, day out.

Employees urged to avoid 'business as usual' attitude

By Correspondent Joseph Mwendapole

THE government has urged workers of the Weight and Measurement Agency (WMA) to avoid the 'business as usual' attitude and instead they should be innovative and come up with new methods that will enable them to be efficient, productive and achieve the goals of providing quality services.

The call was made at the end of the week by the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Investment, Industry and Trade, Dr Hashil Abdallah, while inaugurating the 32 Workers Council of WMA held at NSSF Ilala Hall,

Dar es Salaam.

He asked them to ensure that they remove obstacles in production by enabling business to be done fairly instead of being spectators and waiting for mistakes to be made and taking action against the wrongdoers.

"We should enable business to grow, we should have laws, regulations and procedures that improve efficiency and improve the business environment. Let's not just sit in the office waiting for them to make a mistake and punish them," he said.

"It is good before you punish them that we educate the businessmen about the mistakes that

may occur by violating the Law and the procedures we have," he said.

He also congratulated the members of the council for being trusted and chosen to represent other employees as their selection to enter the council is based on their performance and responsibility within the institution.

Dr Hashil also commended the leadership of WMA for the way it leads the agency and for the smart leadership of the Acting Chief Executive as well as the Workers for participating in the opening of the new Workers' Council.

He said the development of the WMA is seen in carrying out its basic legal duties with the main responsibility of protecting the consumers through the correct measurement.

He said that this is an achievement that is clearly visible especially in recent days where the agency has started providing new services to check water meters and electricity meters in areas that were complained by the people for paying more than the amount of service they get.

Dr Hashil encouraged the members of the workers' council to join their forces by working hard, efforts and knowledge in

order to practically support the efforts of the sixth phase Government by providing better services and reducing the frustration and complaints of the people against their government.

He asked the new members of the council to use the opportunity well to make a detailed assessment of how they have carried out their budgetary and effective responsibilities in the past year and how they can organize themselves in the priorities of the agency for the next financial year in order to fulfill the government's goals.

He applauded President Dr. Samia Suluhu Hassan for his instruc-

tions and guidelines that help the Ministry and its institutions to implement plans and strategies to promote investment, business and industrial development.



Dr Hashil encouraged the members of the workers' council to join their forces by working hard, efforts and knowledge in order to practically support the efforts of the sixth phase



Water deputy minister Maryprisca Mahundi (2nd-L) cuts the ribbon in Songea municipality at the weekend to launch water projects lined up for implementation in Songea Urban District. Photo: Correspondent Gideon Mwakansoya

Stop bureaucracy in issuing loans to vulnerable groups, local councils told

By Guardian Correspondent, Singida

DEPUTY Minister in the Prime Minister's Office (Labour, Youth, Employment and people with Disabilities) Patrobas Katambi has cautioned local and urban councils in the country to stop bureaucracy in issuing loans to vulnerable groups from the 10 per cent of their internal revenues.

Katambi made the remarks here at the weekend during his visit to inspect projects implemented from the loans to the vulnerable groups as he spoke with officials of Ikungi District Council here.

Instructions of the deputy Minister followed complaints from the chairman of the Chapa Kazi women group, Mwanahamisi Omari regarding delays for the payment of 50 loadfuls of sand used to make bricks after the council had endorsed their 25m/- loan.

Following the complaints, Katambi called upon all local council officials to stop practicing bureaucracy in regard to loans to vulnerable groups, saying in doing so it retards their development.

Katambi also called on all government institutions implementing various de-

velopment projects including water and classrooms building to buy bricks, and other building materials from the groups in order to boost their capitals.

He also urged experts at projects sites to visit the vulnerable groups and educate them on the better ways to spend loan money to enable them produce high quality goods and avoid bad expenditure of the money.

The Deputy Minister further called on local councils to increase funds to vulnerable groups that perform well in loans repayment and cited the example of St Vidicon Manyoni Computer Workshop established in 2020.

He said students who have the opportunity to undergo three-month training for free by the PM Office should be given council loans after they finish such training to enable them establish small factories instead of remaining idle in the streets.

In the visit, Katambi inspected various projects run by the vulnerable groups in Manyoni and Ikungi districts, VETA colleges, and work on the construction of CCM Conference Hall in Manyoni.

Govt to start implementing 145.7bn/- water project in Songea municipality

By Guardian Correspondent, Songea

THE government plans to start implementing the construction of 28-urban water project programme in Songea Municipality, Ruvuma Region to cost 145.7bn/-

This was revealed at the weekend by Jumaa Aweso, the Water minister who was represented by the Deputy minister Maryprisca Mahundi at the event for signing the contract for the construction of the project between the government and the China Civil Engineering Construction Corporation (CHICCO).

"In the contract, the project will take 32 months to complete beginning March 10 this year and the 28-Urban water project will bring great benefits to the people, including Songea urban water and sanitation Authority (SOUWASA) from 11.58 litres per day to 42.581 litres," said Aweso.

He said the grand water project will solve water challenges facing Songea municipality because water availability will be assured as the project has the capacity to serve 440,794 residents.

For his part, the Ministry's Permanent Secretary, Nadhifa Kemikimba, speaking before the signing of the contract said that

when completed, the project will serve Songea residents until 2045 when the municipality population will be more than 400,000.

He mentioned works being done in the project as including the construction of a 4.8 million litre dam, the plant for treatment 16 million litre per day, construction of water tanks to hold 9 million litres, laying of 10.5 km pipeline from the dam to the tanks.

Kemikimba said the project will also involve more than 800,000 kms of pipelines for distribution to consumers.

"The government has decided to imple-

ment the 28-Urban Water project by looking in areas where water supply services have not reached the people and its feasibility studies will be done in nine months.

For his part, SOUWASA managing director, Patrick Kibasa said as for now the authority has a total of 13 water sources with a total capacity to produce 11.8 million litres per day or 57 per cent of the water needs, as the actual water needs for the municipality with 286,285 people stands at 20.336 million litres per day.

Ruvuma Regional Commissioner, Col. Laban Thomas thanked the government for making sure Ruvuma residents get safe and

clean water.

Col Thomas said Ruvuma Region has made great strides in the provision of safe and clean water saying so far the service has attained 80.95 per cent whereas for Songea Municipality it has attained 90 per cent at 22 hours a day.

Songea Urban Member of Parliament, Dr Damas Ndumbaro, who is the Minister for Constitutional and Legal Affairs commended the government for providing funds for the implementation of the project.

SOUWASA is among Water and Sanitation Authorities in Tanzania Mainland established in 1997.

Women farmers reap big from tobacco as auction season begins in Zimbabwe

HARARE

AFTER a long journey from a farming region, Shylet Muzveba was waiting impatiently in a truck here to offload her bales at the Tobacco Auction Floors.

She then breathed a great sigh of relief after finally arriving at the unloading bay. She said she will soon reap the harvest after months of toiling in the fields.

Muzveba is one of the thousands of small-scale farmers who have chosen to grow the high-reward golden leaf. But for now, her biggest worry is the selling price, as she is not under contract farming, Muzveba told Xinhua.

"This year we harvested a top-quality crop. We received enough rainfall, so we are expecting good pricing so that we will be able to buy inputs for the coming season," said Muzveba.

Tobacco is Zimbabwe's largest agricultural export earner and the second-largest commodity export earner after gold.

The first kilogram this year was sold for 4.35 U.S. dollars compared to 4.20 dollars last year.

Muzveba said she prizes the lucrative crop after

having farmed it for five years.

"I used to grow cotton and maize but stopped so that I can cultivate tobacco, which brings more returns," she said. "I realized that with tobacco farming I get my money at once, and I can plan for my life, build my house, take care of my family and send my children to school with the proceeds from tobacco."

Zimbabwe is projected to produce 230 million kg of tobacco this year, up from 212 million kg last year following good rains and increased hectareage.

The country aims to increase the level of value addition from the current 2 percent to 30 percent by 2025, said Zimbabwe's Vice President Constantino Chiwenga on March 8 when the 2023 tobacco marketing season began.

Another farmer, Sandra Takavata, also jumped ship after realizing how rewarding the farming of tobacco was.

"We used to cultivate corn and beans, but due to erratic rainfall patterns, we realized that those who grew tobacco were getting more returns," she told Xinhua, adding that she has been growing the crop since 2016.



Prime Minister Kassim Majaliwa has an audience in Dar es Salaam at the weekend with Tanzania Truck Owners Association (Tatoa) officials. Photo: PMO




REQUEST FOR TENDER NEW CRUSHING CIRCUIT PLANT

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

Supply of Prefabricated Steel Structures, Plateworks & Design and Supply of Overhead cranes for New Crushing Circuit Plant Construction

Pre-qualification Criteria

No	Reference no	Description of work	Pre-Qualification Criteria
1	NM011/2023_A	Supply of Prefabricated Steel Structures & Plateworks at North Mara Mine Site Package A: Prefabricated steel structure for New-Crushing Circuit (Quantity 390 Tons) Package B: Prefabricated plateworks structure (Quantity 373 Tons)	i. Applicants to submit company profile with experience Design, Manufacturing, and supply of SMPP (Structural, Mechanical, Platework and Piping) services, integrating 3D Modelling and Structural Designs into detailing and fabrication. ii. To submit purchase orders and certificate of completion evidence that applicant has been actively engaged in the supply of prefabricated mild steel structures of last 3 Years. iii. Applicant shall also provide evidence that it has achieved the minimum monthly KPIs of fabrication target of 50 Tons. iv. To be able to supply prefabricated steelwork Grade EN10025-1 S355JR (columns, beams, bracings all members required for sundry structures), welding shall conform to ANSI/AWS D1.1/D1.1M to be read in conjunction with SANS 2001-CS1, corrosion protection in accordance with ISO 12944 with term durability of 15 Years. v. To able to supply prefabricated Steel plate work from 3mm to 25mm thick. vi. To submit list and specifications of Equipment's available in workshop and workshop layout and capacity vii. To submit organizational structure, list of experienced personnel viii. To submit company's policy for Health, Safety and Environments. ix. To provide proof of statements as necessary regarding financial stability and documents complying with Tanzanian laws and Regulation
2	NM011/2023_B	Design & Supply of Overhead Crane as listed below: ▪ Capacity 13ton, Span 13.2m, Lifting height 19m ▪ Capacity 13ton, Span 6.15m, Lifting height 13.5m ▪ Capacity 13ton, Span 13.2m, Lifting height 14m ▪ Chain Hoist with Integrated Geared Trolley 5 Ton	i. Experience in design, engineered, manufactured, performance tested, supplied, and commissioned double girder overhead cranes minimum lifting capacity of 20 tons and span more than 20 metres ii. Should have supplied overhead travelling crane meeting above requirement within last 3 years from closing date of EOI and should be in successful operation for a period not less than one year as on the date of closing of EOI iii. Motor make - WEG efficiency IE3 (415V, 50 Hz) iv. Preferred Make - Demag / Kone / or equivalent v. Able to supply commissioning & maintenance spares vi. Warranty & Guarantee period to be specified vii. Installation and commissioning support and assistance viii. Lead time of delivery

Submission of Proposals
If your company meets the pre-qualification criteria, submit your proposal alongside all relevant documentation to nm.proposal@barrick.com

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

Queries should also be directed to nm.proposal@barrick.com

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

Key Dates
• Last Date to Submit Proposals **20 March 2023**

North Mara Gold Mine Limited

Kamala Harris to visit Africa in latest US outreach

WASHINGTON DC

VICE President Kamala Harris will spend a week in Africa at the end of March as the United States deepens its outreach to the continent amid global competition, notably with China.

"The trip will strengthen the United States' partnerships throughout Africa and advance our shared efforts on security and economic prosperity," said a statement from the vice president's spokesperson, Kirsten Allen.

Harris' plans follow visits by first lady Jill Biden and Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen. Secretary of State Antony Blinken, and President Joe Biden is expected to travel to Africa later this year.

However, Harris (pictured) will be closely watched as the first Black vice president in U.S. history and the first woman to hold the position.

She plans to be in Ghana from March 26 to 29, then in Tanzania from March 29 to 31. Her final stop is Zambia, on March 31 and April 1.

Harris has a personal connection to



the third country on her itinerary. Her maternal grandfather worked in Zambia years ago, and she visited him there as a young girl.

Allen said the vice president's agenda will include promoting democracy, climate adaptation, women's economic empowerment and food security.

Besides meeting the presidents of each of the three countries she's visiting, Harris plans to talk with "young leaders, business representatives, entrepreneurs, and members of the African


Diaspora," Allen said.

The White House's concerted outreach to the continent began with the U.S.-Africa Leaders Summit, which it hosted in December. China has invested heavily in Africa, but Washington is pitching itself as a better partner than Beijing.

"Our administration will be guided not by what we can do for Africa but what we can do with Africa," Harris said during the summit.

Although competition between the U.S. and China has been the backdrop of much American foreign policy, the Democratic administration is trying to calibrate its approach to Africa so leaders on the continent don't feel as though they're being caught in the middle of a geopolitical contest.

A senior administration official stressed that the White House wants to put forward an "affirmative agenda" that incorporates concerns about China and ripple effects from Russia's war in Ukraine but isn't dominated by them.



BOARD DIRECTORSHIP POSITIONS

Maendeleo Bank PLC commenced operations in September 2013 as a Regional Bank with its Headquarters at Luther House Sokoine Drive Dar es Salaam. It is the first bank in Tanzania to be listed on Dar es Salaam Stock Exchange (DSE) from its inception through the Enterprise Growth Market (EGM) window. Its Mission is to provide innovative, customer needs driven financial services with competitive returns to our Shareholders.

The bank invites applications from suitably qualified individuals of high personal integrity and clean track record to serve in the Board of Directors appointed as Non-Executive Directors of the Board to represent the Shareholders.

REQUIREMENT OF A BOARD DIRECTOR:
In line with Section 5(2) of the Banking and Financial Institutions Act (Corporate Governance) Regulations, 2021 candidates for the Board of Directors position should have the expertise and knowledge in the following academia: Banking; or Finance; or Accounting; or Auditing; or Law; or Economics.

Key Accountabilities:

- To determine the bank's Vision, Mission and Values
- To formulate, monitor and evaluate bank's Policies and Strategies
- To review on a regular basis the adequacy and integrity of the Bank's internal control, financial reporting, risk management, and management information systems including compliance with applicable laws, regulations, rules and guidelines.
- To appoint and regularly review the performance of the Managing Director and Senior Management of the bank.
- To carry out self-assessment as well as evaluate other Board of Directors.
- To regularly attend and effectively participate in Board, Committee and other important meetings.
- To meet the obligation of accountability to Shareholders.
- To perform any other duties stipulated under the law.

Minimum Qualifications and Experience Required:

- A holder of degree in Banking; or Finance; or Accounting; or Auditing; or Law; or Economics with extensive professional experience of not less than five years in Senior Managerial level in any reputable organization and must have knowledge of the sector especially issues affecting the banking sector.
- High moral and ethical character. Must exhibit independence, objectivity and capable of serving as a representative of the Shareholders.
- A Shareholder of Maendeleo Bank PLC, committed and possessing personal qualities to make effective contributions to Board deliberations
- Must not have any criminal record or history of bankruptcy.

Mode of Application:
Interested Candidates are requested to submit the following:

- An application letter detailing their suitability for the position,
- A comprehensive Curriculum Vitae (CV),
- Certified copies of Certificates and Awards,
- Certified copies of last two pages of a current Passport,
- Two recent passport size Photographs

**To be addressed to:
The Chairman, Nomination Committee,
Maendeleo Bank PLC
P.O. Box. 216, Dar es Salaam.
Email: secretary@maendeleobank.co.tz**

Deadline for submission of applications is 28th March 2023 at 4.00pm. Only shortlisted candidates will be contacted. Please note that candidates will meet their own travel and accommodation costs for the interviews.

Maendeleo Bank PLC strongly encourages women to apply.

100 tonnes of subsidised sunflower seeds yet to reach Singida's farmers

By Guardian Correspondent, Singida

AS the sunflower farming season is nearing its end, more than 100 tonnes of sunflower seeds provided as government subsidy in Singida Region has not reached farmers, it is still in the control of ward and village officials.

This was revealed here at the weekend by the Assistant Regional Administrative Secretary (Economy and Production) for Singida Region, Celestine Choaji at the Regional Consultative Council (RCC).

In the circumstances, Singida Regional Commissioner, Peter Serukamba cautioned agriculture officers and ward and village executives who have stayed with the seeds in their offices saying the government will take stern measures against them.

"I direct that by Monday March 20 this year the seeds should be distributed to farmers in need else the council should pay for the cost of the seeds," he said.

Serukamba said it is shocking to learn

that the seeds have not been distributed to farmers while the region had requested for subsidised sunflower seeds which were to be loaned to farmers and pay for them during harvest season.

He said the district that sees it cannot use the seeds it should send them to other districts in need else they should prepare themselves to pay.

The RC also called on public officials, especially agriculture officers not to stay in their offices, instead they should visit farmers to help them get the seeds.

Singida Region has put up a strategy to boost edible oil production to reach 159,110.5 tonnes, or 44.2 per cent of the imported edible oil.

The strategy aims to help the country solve its edible oil production shortfall that started with the 2021/22 season and in attaining its goals, the region plans to increase the acreage for sunflower cultivation to 631,391 acres that are expected to produce 492,485 tonnes on sunflower.



Youths benefiting from AGRI-CONNECT, a European Union-funded programme meant to improve value chains involving coffee, tea, fruits and vegetables, pictured in a farm in Mbeya at the weekend harvesting tea using modern machines for enhanced efficiency. Photo: Correspondent Nebart Msokwa

Number of Vodacom's 5G network towers reaches 227

By Guardian Reporter

VODACOM Tanzania Plc has built 227 5G network towers across the country to accomplish its mission to connect Tanzanians with communication technologies and impact lives through innovative digital services.

Philip Besimire, Vodacom Tanzania's managing director unveiled this over the weekend during the Twitter Spaces session dubbed 'VODA CHAT' discussing the company's network performance and a new 5G service introduced last year in September.

"Technology advances so are we, a few years back we rolled out 2G, moved onto 3G and 4G, and now

we are on 5G. In addition, there are some hearsays that some places have started to research and shift to 6G - technology will keep on changing. Now, what we are doing is keep on updating or layering up our network towers to accommodate new technological improvements," he said.

He also said the manufacturers of the radio equipment used in site towers build devices that could adapt to these changes.

"In short, all technologies will continue to exist as we still have a remarkable number of customers still using 2G, and many also are shifting to both 3G and 4G. Among the challenge that we need to address is the

high price of smartphones that supports 4G and 5G," explained Philip.

Philip said: "I have observed four things that I would like to share with you - most Tanzanians would like to be connected with better communication technologies, they want more understanding on how the 5G network operate, also the availability of affordable electronic gadgets, as well as inclusive innovative digital services across different sectors such as education, health, agriculture, finance, and banking to mention a few. Vodacom will keep on coming up with innovative digital solutions that impact the lives of people, support government initiatives, partner with

other stakeholders, and encourage a vibrant and competitive industry to benefit more customers."

"Vodacom will continue to accommodate 5G and 4G as well as 3G and 2G, our main goal, for now, is to continue convincing customers to move into new technology advancements to experience better performance and related benefits. Also, to make sure customers acquire smartphones at low prices and continuously expand our network services. Tanzania is a huge country with the youngest population in the region. As days go on this young population will grow and start using our services hence the need to keep on investing in the

expansion of better services. There are still a couple things to be dealt with first including improving our infrastructure to ensure the maximum network performance," added Philip.

Andrew Lupembe, Vodacom Tanzania director of network noted: "We have deployed the 5G network service in two spectrums - the first technology is using 3500 megahertz which is very popular and used in many countries globally and recently we have acquired a new spectrum from TCRA with a capability of 2300 megahertz."

Linda Riwa, telecos' consumer business director said: "Several customers with access to smartphones

are almost 30-40%, that is to say almost 60% of our customers do not use smartphones, out of 17 million that we have. The most challenge that customers are facing is the high prices of smartphones compared to 2G gadgets. Among the initiatives now is to introduce low-cost smartphones, for example, last year we introduced a smatikitochi that was retailed at 100,000/- and now is available for 55,000/- Also we offer free monthly internet connectivity to customers who purchase smartphones from our retail partners to unburden some costs. Next year, we will continue to invest more in lowering the prices of smartphones by introduc-



Weights and Measures Agency officials take the oath of integrity before the Industry, Trade and Investment ministry's Permanent Secretary, Dr Hashif Abdullah, in Dar es Salaam at the weekend during the launch of the agency's new workers' council. Photo: Correspondent Joseph Mwendapole

EALA women, Fungua Trust tour CCBRT in Dar in celebrating IWD

By Beatrice Philemon

THE East African Legislative Assembly (EALA) Women Caucus in collaboration with Fungua Trust have visited the Comprehensive Community Based Rehabilitation in Tanzania (CCBRT) in an eye opening and learning tour about health challenges to celebrate International Women's Day.

The team was led by CCBRT chief executive officer Brenda Msangi, who gave them the first-hand experience of the ongoing day to day activities at the hospital.

The Women Caucus Members also had a unique opportunity to visit the CCBRT hospital's brand-new, cutting-edge reproductive health facility, which was launched in July 2022 by President Dr Samia Suluhu Hassan.

Dr Shongo Sedoyeka, Trust's chief executive director said this yesterday that during the tour, they were informed of the hospital's operations and many others.

"President Samia's commitment to the health of women and children, this facility has been named Samia Suluhu Hassan reproductive health building," she said.

Brenda explained CCBRT social enterprise and sustainability model and its vision of providing accessible specialized health care services noting that its consistent growth has attracted patients from Tanzania and beyond.

Currently, the hospital frequently receives patients from countries such as Comoros, Mozambique, Malawi, and Yemen.

CCBRT also promotes medical tourism which is a growing niche of tourism in Tanzania.

EALA Women Caucus Members toured the eye department that provides medical and surgical specialized innovative services including manufacture of artificial eyes and other auxiliary/artificial organs that have contributed to improving the quality of lives and economic well-being of communities.

The MPs also visited maternity wing that provides care to high-risk and emergency cases including mothers with disabilities and history of fistula.

The team interacted with fistula and former fistula patients to learn about their situation and express their solidarity and empathy.

Apart from that, the visiting MPs were touched by CCBRT specialized health care services accorded to patients including children born with disabilities and its excellent advocacy and inclusion unit for people with disabilities.

They were delighted to learn about CCBRT Academy that develops human resource capacities for its staff and personnel from other institutions.

Ambassador Fatuma Ndingiza, EALA MP from Rwanda and Secretary General of the EALA Women Caucus on behalf of her colleagues congratulated the CEO and Staff for CCBRT noble mission and their remarkable and dedicated service that positively impacts on the health and welfare of communities especially the most vulnerable.

TAMWA organises symposium to boost use of technology in Judiciary, hasten justice

By Guardian Reporter

THE Tanzania Media Women Association (TAMWA-Zanzibar) has organised a symposium to appreciate the use of technology in judiciary to expedite justice as part of celebrations to mark the International Women Day (IWD).

TAMWA-Zanzibar executive director Dr Mzuri Issa revealed this over the weekend saying the event will be held at Zanzibar Association of People with Disability (UWZ) at Kikwajuni.

She said the symposium is expected to attract participants from governmental and

non-governmental institutions and others involved in legal issues, human rights, education and GBV Networks.

She said that the use of technology for the judiciary and law enforcement agencies will help facilitate access to justice as it will enable investigation and evidence collection in various ways, as stated in the evidence Act No. 9 of 2016.

According to her, TAMWA-Zanzibar calls for all institutions working on issues related to gender based violence (GBV) to ensure that the infrastructure is strengthened, be modernized to facilitate the use of technology that will

facilitate access to justice, and timely dispensation of justice. One of the main agenda of both governments is to ensure and guarantee rule of law as observed by ensuring that criminal justice system is taking place accordingly which is the basic principle of rule of law and access to justice.

She stated that the suitable use of modern technology will facilitate accountability and access to justice in order to build public confidence, and reduce the degree of sexual abuse particularly targeting women by using technology perhaps online communication.

"As the world celebrates International Women's Day, it should be understood the role that women play but also acknowledge the role of technology to fasten development to all and achieve gender equality," she said.

International Women's Day is celebrated every year on the 8th of March with the aim of providing an opportunity for women, governmental institutions and civil organisations and various stakeholders to have the opportunity to sit together to discuss the successes and challenges facing women in society and also reflect on how to achieve the goals of sustainable development by 2030.

The official stated that there are still existing challenges jostling women, including the incorrect use of technology that leads to the promotion of sexual harassment and violence, especially for women and children.

The symposium will be held under the theme: "Encourage the correct use of technology to bring gender relation," which goes in line with the national theme that says "Invest in Innovation and the correct use of Technology for Gender Equality" where all slogans emphasize the importance of the right user of technology in all fields to achieve gender equality and sustainable development for all.

COSTECH vows to support women-youth programme

By Correspondent Mary Kadoke

TANZANIA Commission for Science and Technology (Costech) has pledged to offer technical and financial support to CRDB Bank PLC 'ImbeJU' programme to help innovative youth and women start-ups in the country.

The programme is jointly run by CRDB Bank PLC, the Information and Communication Technologies Commission (ICTC) and Costech aiming at empowering women and youth economically by providing them with training and capital to support their businesses.

Dr Amos Nungu, Costech director general gave the remarks over the weekend during the official launch of one-day seminar on youth and women start-ups empowerment under the programme.

He said the commission's task as 'ImbeJU' partner is to provide subsidies and guide students qualified to attain the programme after they are screened by the board.

"Costech hosts National Fund for Advancement of Science and Technology (NFAST) with a task of offering subsidies from 1m/- to 40m/- to young innovators of which so far many innovators are already on board," he said.

"Having young innovators isn't enough as they still need support from other stakeholders to ensure that the gap to unemployment is reduced," he stressed.

Wilbroad Nyirenda, is one of the Costech's beneficiaries who has managed to create pre-paid water meter and he is currently working with Rural Water Supply and Sanitation agency (RUWASA) and Costech.

Abdulmajid Nsekela, CRDB Bank PLC CEO and managing director said CRDB 'ImbeJU' programme is a five years plan endorsed with 5bn/- aimed to boost women and youth innovations.

Nsekela said: "We have touched youth and women on many platforms but that has not been enough. We still need support to serve the vulnerable groups."

Benjamin Fernandez, NALA-an International financial technology company founder and CEO suggested: "It's time soft engineering is observed with a second eye as it's where the world employment market is."

"It is time the government looks at finance and technology policies that will facilitate youth start-ups, it's time we go away with trying to do something and decide to do it," he said.



Mbeya regional commissioner Juma Homera (5th-R, foreground) is briefed on the maintenance of motor vehicles at the Tanzania Electrical, Mechanical and Electronics Services Agency (Temesa) workshop in Mbeya city at the weekend. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

TDB ventures into campaign to spearhead school milk programme

By Correspondent Valentine Oforo,

Dodoma

THE Tanzania Dairy Board (TDB) is working in partnership with the ministry of livestock and fisheries to form a high-level committee which will oversee effective implementation of the School Milk Programme (SMP).

The envisaged committee is expected to bring together permanent secretaries (PSS) from several ministries, including the President's Office (Regional Administration and Local Government), Prime Minister's Office (Policy, Par-

liamentary and Coordination) who will co-chair the committee.

Others in the committee will be the Permanent Secretaries from the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Finance and Planning, Livestock ministry as well as from the Ministry of Education.

According to TDB's Registrar Dr George Msalya, the PS from the livestock ministry will serve as the secretary of the committee which will be meeting twice every year for the purpose of receiving reports and deliberate on the programme.

"As per the committee, the TDB

in collaboration with the president's office will be positioned to collect data, follow the programme in various places of the country, and inform the secretary about the programmes," he said.

He added that the data from the programme will be compiled by TDB and it is thought in the plans to come up with an online communication and data collection system.

The registrar noted that in the local government and at lower levels such as schools there will be local committees to oversee and report on implementation of the helpful programmes.

He said at the district level, milk inspectors to be appointed by the livestock ministry will be responsible to form district committee which will include numerous departments such as education and community development.

"What we're focusing to achieve through this programme, among others is to see the number of milk processors engaged on school milk programme increased by at least twenty percent by June 2028 whereby the number of beneficiary schools and students consuming milk increase from 125 to 625 schools and 96,733 to 500,000 students respectively," he detailed.

Apart from that Dr, Msalya added that the other intention was to heighten the number of milk collection centers to strategic areas from 242 to 292 as well as the number of milk consumption points from eight to 40.

The board needs around 15bn/- to enable it to implement the vital programme (SMP), which has been drafted from official implementation from mid this year by providing free milk to students within a total of 500 schools across the country.

As per the schedule, the plan is to start with at least 100 schools in the period of 2023/2024 while oth-

er 100 schools will be added every year for the five consecutive years of the implementation and schools covered is expected to increase from 125 to 625 schools by 2027, with the targeted beneficiaries students are those aged between 4 to 19 years.

In Tanzania school milk feeding programmes started way back in early 2000s, it has involved different models (ways of implementation), and has reached a peak of 125 schools and 99,000 children in the recent past. But despite the efforts, the vital programme had been limited in terms of coverage, access of dairy products to school children,



Ado Shaibu, Secretary General of the opposition ACT-Wazalendo, addresses a rally in Tunduru town at the weekend. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

Journos urged to fight patriarchy

By Correspondent Sabato Kasika

JOURNALISTS have been called upon to use their pens well to help women raise their voices on patriarchy that hampers them from realizing their development dreams.

The remarks were made by Deogratius Temba from Tanzania Gender Networking Programme (TGNP) at the launching of 'Boresha Habari' (Improve the News) project held in Dar es Salaam at the weekend at the Practical School of Journalism, at the apex of the event to mark International Women's Day.

"You, journalism students expecting to join various media organs should remember that using the pen well can free women who are being oppressed by the patriarchic system," Temba said.

He said apart from freeing women from the system, your pens can also lift up women with various skills so that their contribution to the community is recognised.

"In addition, you journalists, especially women journalists, are supposed to work like male journalists, do not be selective in your news stories as all of you have the same capabilities," he added.

He said TGNP as stakeholders have come up with this project in order to help journalists on how to educate the community to recognize gender equality, and that through the pen, acts of gender based violence (GBV) can be eradicated.

TGNP Project Manager, Mariam Oushoudada said "Boresha Habari" is a one-month project running with collaboration between Internews Tanzania at the Dar es Salaam school of journalism to provide training.

"After visiting various schools of journalism, our expectation is to see news that will be published are improved by adhering to gender and concentrating on news about women," said Mariam.

She called on scribes, including students still at journalism colleges to think about what they should do for the country through their pens, especially regarding the issue of boosting gender equality.

IAEA, TAEC install digital machines to improve cervical cancer treatment

By Correspondent Valentine Oforo, Dodoma

THE Tanzania Atomic Energy Commission (TAEC) and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) have installed high dose rate (HDR) brachytherapy machine at the Dar es Salaam based Ocean Road Cancer Institution (ORCI) to improve cervical cancer treatment in the country.

Prof. Lazaro Busagala, TAEC director general said over the weekend that since installation of the modern machines in October last year, the IAEA through TAEC has been facilitating a series of training and the development of a treatment planning

system to ensure its safe and effective use. Prof Busagala said that the ORCI, alongside the Bugando Medical Centre (BMC) in Mwanza, was one of only two operational public cancer care facilities so far available in the country.

"Tanzania is experiencing a rising cancer incidence in the past five years, but since the launch of a series of IAEA projects in Tanzania, the cancer care facilities in Dar es Salaam and in Bugando have seen a sharp rise in their capacities and in the number of cases managed each year," he noted.

He observed that cervical cancer was

a serious disease that affected more than 10,000 women per year in Tanzania, according to the Global Cancer Observatory.

"Brachytherapy is an essential component in the treatment of this type of tumor, and the IAEA is committed to providing technical support to the country in order to enhance the brachytherapy programme. IAEA is continuing collaborating with Tanzania authorities and health professionals for further improvement and expansion of the radiotherapy service in the country", he expressed.

He said: "Until recently, many cancer patients in Tanzania were traditionally re-

ferred to private clinics abroad for further management, amounting to an average of 80 patients referred per year at a cost of nearly \$2 million to the Tanzanian government.

"Through a series of TAEC and IAEA technical cooperation projects in the last eight years, support has been extended to the ORCI and BMC to equip the hospitals with the necessary equipment and to build human capacity through Master programmes to enhance access to cancer patients' diagnosis and treatment," he unveiled.

Together, Prof. Busagala said the BMC

and ORCI health facilities are now able to treat many cervix cancer patients per day using brachytherapy, saying the training provided by the IAEA has allowed TAEC to introduce 3D radiotherapy, intensity-modulated radiation therapy and other advanced modalities.

During the last year, more than 340 cervical cancer patients were recorded to have received brachytherapy services at BMC and ORCI.

"Tanzania has recently requested to join the IAEA's Rays of Hope initiative, which will reinforce enhanced cancer management in the country," he further informed.

The Guardian

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TUESDAY 14 MARCH 2023

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

We can end energy poverty to combat climate change

ONE of Africa's unique challenges with energy poverty is its rapid urbanisation and booming urban centres. However, access to modern energy services in cities is predicated by an increase in income, which is difficult to find in the economies of many African cities. This has led to only 25 per cent of the Africans living in urban centres to have electricity access. Furthermore, as Africa's population increases access to energy has not increased proportionally. Between 1970-1990, only 50 million people gained access to electricity against a population gain of 150 million. The largest barriers people in urban centers face in accessing energy is the huge cost compared to their relatively low incomes. Most Africans who lack access to affordable sources of power, burning charcoal and wood remains their sole source of energy.

However, as these fires burn across the continent, black carbon and smoke do more than accelerate climate change; they are also a source of serious health problems and a cause of ongoing forest destruction. Fortunately, recent progress suggests that it is possible to provide alternative sources of energy to those in need and, in so doing, address human health, climate change, and deforestation all at the same time.

Africa has the highest per capita wood fuel consumption in the world. It is estimated that across Africa, more than 80 per cent of people use some form of wood fuel as their primary source of domestic energy; more than 80 per cent of households in urban areas use charcoal, while firewood is used primarily in rural areas.

March 21 is the United Nations' (UN) International Day of Forests, which promotes the importance of forests and trees in our lives. The day addresses issues such as deforestation.

This global celebration of forests provides a platform to raise awareness of the importance of all types of forests and of trees outside forests. Forests cover one third of the earth's land mass, performing vital functions around the world. Around 1.6 billion people - including more than 2,000 indigenous cultures - depend on forests for their livelihood.

Forests are the most biologically-diverse ecosystems on land, home to more than 80 per cent of the terrestrial species of animals, plants and insects. They also provide shelter, jobs and security for forest-dependent communities.

Yet despite all of these priceless ecological, economic, social and health benefits, global deforestation continues at an alarming rate - 13 million hectares of forest are destroyed annually. Deforestation accounts for 12 to 20 per cent of the global greenhouse gas emissions that contribute to climate change.

Every year on the International Day of Forests we celebrate the ways in which forests and trees sustain and protect us. This year we are raising awareness of how forests are key to the planet's supply of freshwater, which is essential for life. In this first year of implementing the 2030 agenda for sustainable development, the International Day of Forests focuses on their role in supporting water systems, and investing in forests is an insurance policy for the planet.

The world is not on track to achieve gender equality

Gender equality is not only a fundamental human right, but a necessary foundation for a peaceful, prosperous and sustainable world. There has been progress over the last decades, but the world is not on track to achieve gender equality by 2030.

The social and economic fallout from the COVID-19 pandemic has made the situation even bleaker. Progress in many areas, including time spent on unpaid care and domestic work, decision-making regarding sexual and reproductive health, and gender-responsive budgeting, is falling behind.

Women's health services, already poorly funded, have faced major disruptions. Violence against women remains endemic. And despite women's leadership in responding to COVID-19, they still trail men in securing the decision-making positions they deserve.

Commitment and bold action are needed to accelerate progress, including through the promotion of laws, policies, budgets and institutions that advance gender equality. Greater investment in gender statistics is vital, since less than half of the data required to monitor Goal 5 are currently available.

Globally, 26 per cent of ever-partnered women aged 15 and older (641 million) have been subjected to physical and/or sexual violence by a husband or intimate partner at least once in their lifetime.

In a 2021 survey in 13 countries, 45 per cent of women reported that they or a woman they know has experienced some form of violence since COVID-19.

In 2021, nearly one in five young women were married be-

fore the age of 18.

35 per cent and 28 per cent of young women were married in childhood, respectively in sub-Saharan Africa and Southern Asia. The global prevalence of child marriage has declined by about 10 per cent in the past five years.

Up to 10 million more girls are likely to become child brides by 2030 due to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, in addition to the 100 million girls projected to be at risk before the pandemic.

At least 200 million girls and women today have been subjected to female genital mutilation, mainly in 31 countries.

As of 1 January 2022, the global share of women in lower and single houses of national parliaments reached 26.2 per cent, up from 22.4 per cent in 2015.

At this pace, it would take another 40 years for women and men to be represented equally in national parliaments.

Women's share is slightly over one third in local governments.

In 2019, before the pandemic, women accounted for 39.4 per cent of total employment. In 2020, women represented nearly 45 per cent of global employment losses.

The share of women in managerial positions worldwide increased from 27.2 to 28.3 per cent from 2015 to 2019, but remained unchanged from 2019 to 2020, the first year without an increase since 2013.

Between 2007 and 2021, 57 per cent of women aged 15 to 49 who are married or in a union made their own informed decisions regarding sexual relations, contraceptive use and reproductive health care.

The Guardian Limited Key Contacts

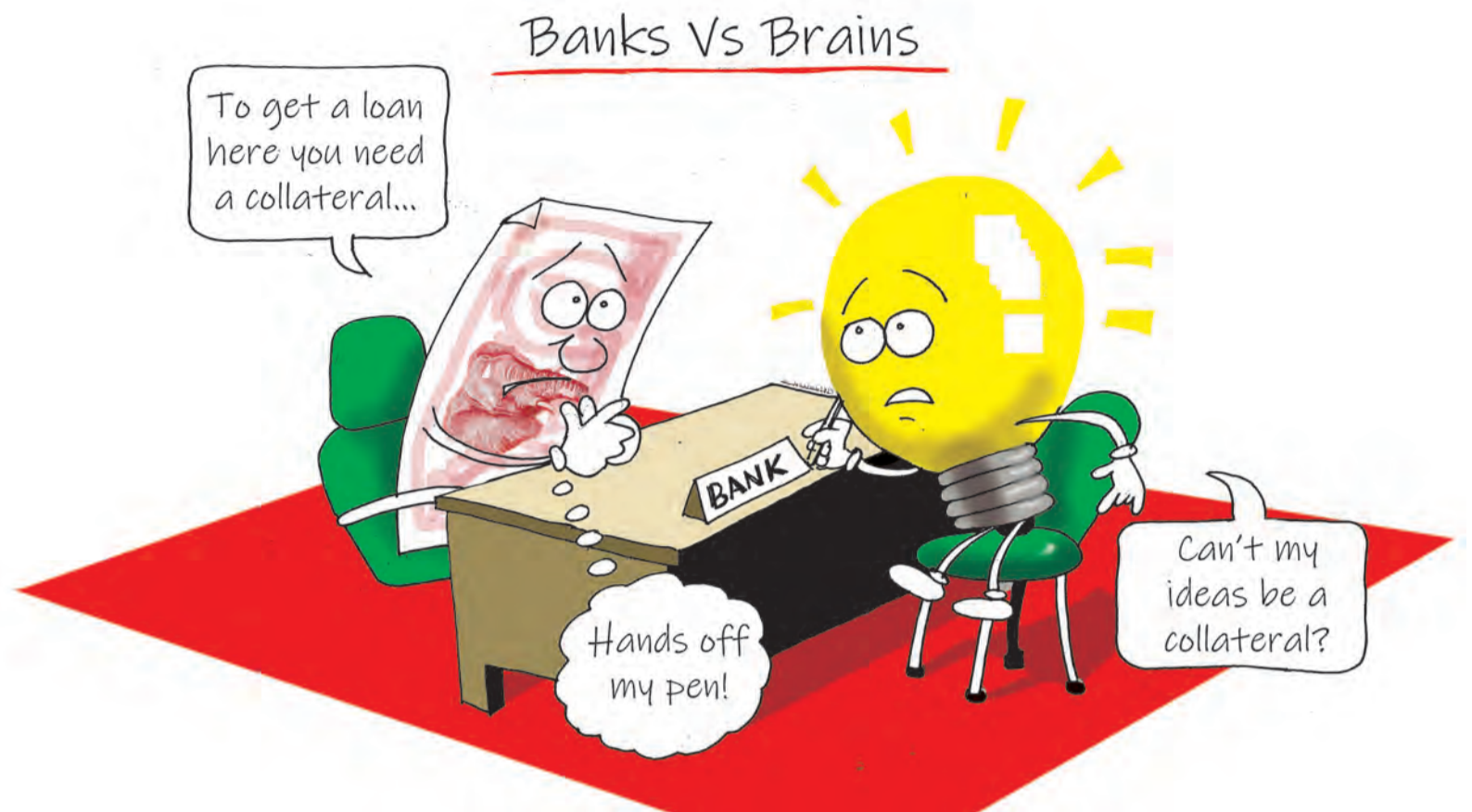
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What is productivity? - Part II

SIMPLY put, productivity measures the amount of value created for each hour that is worked in a society.

Focus up: you probably know that the amount of work you can get done in one day is your rate of productivity. Productivity in economics is pretty much the same as productivity at your desk.

However, for companies or even countries, measuring productivity is a little more complex than how well you were able to hold a video call over the construction noise from the street or your cat's incessant meowing.

On a country scale, productivity can mean the difference between good and not-so-good standards of living. For a company, productivity can determine whether it can afford to increase wages for its employees or even if it can continue operating. Stagnating or contracting productivity can spell serious trouble ahead for individuals, organisations, and nations alike.

Understanding what economic productivity is and how it works is critical to working towards maintaining and increasing it. Here, we'll take a deep dive into the theory and practice of productivity.

How has the Covid-19 pandemic affected productivity growth?

Productivity was stagnating prior to the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic. The pandemic, which ushered in the most significant economic disruption since World War II, only exacerbated the productivity slump.

However, that means that there's more room to grow. McKinsey Global Institute research finds that there is the potential to accelerate annual productivity growth by around one percentage point in the period to year 2024. That would be more than double the pre-pandemic rate of productivity growth. While this potential hasn't been realised, it does exist.

This projected rate of growth could spell exciting changes. Achieving one percentage point of additional productivity growth per year in every country by 2024 could mean an increase in per capita GDP ranging from about \$1,500 in Spain to about \$3,500 in the United States.

Widespread action - combined with robust demand - could realise this potential. However, without appropriate action, rising inequality and unemployment could undermine demand and imperil the possible productivity boost.

The pressures of the pandemic have already inspired some organisations to attack the problem creatively. Faced with the necessity of digitisation, one McKinsey survey found that companies digitised many activities 20 to 25 times faster



than they had previously thought possible.

What's more, the pandemic has inspired companies to become more efficient. Between 42 and 45 per cent of respondents to an executive survey reduced their operating expenditure as a share of revenue between December 2019 and December 2020. These indicators point to the potential of a post-pandemic productivity increase.

What can companies and policy makers do to boost post-pandemic productivity?

When the Covid-19 hit, businesses and policy makers were creative and bold in responding to unprecedented challenges. Moving forward, they need to be equally audacious in contributing to the recovery.

CEOs and individual firms need to be proactive rather than reactive. For example, cutting costs may respond to immediate challenges, but longer-term investments such as new products and services (and, perhaps, increased wages) can better serve the goal of driving sustainable, inclusive growth.

McKinsey research suggests three interlocking priorities for business leaders and governments. The first is to sustain and grow innovation and other advances that increase productivity.

Corporations can focus on catalysing change across their entire supply chains and ecosystems. Policy can support these efforts through public procurement focused on innovation, direct research and development (R&D) investment, and by revising platform and competition rules.

Second: Ensure that actions boosting productivity also support

employment, median wages, and demand. Businesses can help boost demand by emphasizing growing revenue rather than just seeking efficiency.

They can also reskill and upskill their employees so they can be deployed into more valuable tasks, while policy makers can support demand with fiscal stimulus and wage-setting norms.

Three: Increase investment to the right places. Long-running investment gaps related to sustainability, infrastructure and affordable housing need to be closed. Businesses can support this by making environmental, social and governance (ESG) issues central to their decision-making processes.

And governments can support such investments by setting rules for carbon emissions and housing markets, and by increasing direct investment to high-priority, high-impact areas such as infrastructure and skill building.

How can investments in intangibles affect productivity growth?

First, what are intangibles? Intangibles are assets that underpin the knowledge economy. These are things like intellectual property (IP), research, technology and software, and human capital.

As investments in intangibles rise, accelerated by the Covid-19 pandemic, the economy becomes increasingly dematerialised. This has ushered in a new stage in the history of capitalism - based on learning, knowledge, and intellectual capital.

Intangibles are at the very root of productivity growth and, as they gain prominence in the knowledge

and digital economies, they matter for productivity more and more.

This suggests that economies may trigger growth in productivity - and, indeed, long-term economic growth - by increasing investment in intangibles.

How can a focus on productivity growth help countries diversify their economies?

Countries dependent on one sector or resource are more susceptible to economic instability. In the case of Saudi Arabia, an oil boom from 2003 to 2013 propelled the national economy to become the world's 19th-largest.

However, a changing global energy market and national demographics means that Saudi Arabia must diversify its economy if it hopes to become more sustainable.

McKinsey research shows that a productivity-led economic transformation could enable Saudi Arabia to double its GDP and create six million new jobs by 2030.

A \$4 trillion investment in eight sectors - metals and mining, petrochemicals, manufacturing, retail and wholesale trade, tourism and hospitality, healthcare, finance, and construction - was, meanwhile, estimated to have the potential to generate more than 60 per cent of this growth opportunity.

** This is the second and last part of a McKinsey & Company dispatch, the first part having appeared in the March 10, 2023 issue of The Guardian. Meanwhile, sincere apologies for our having defaulted on our intention to run this second part on March 11, 2023. - Editor.*

Most African govts spend more on arms, less on farms - Oxfam

By Baher Kamal

THE data is shocking: three-quarters of African governments have already reduced their agricultural budgets while paying almost double that on arms.

Africa is home to a quarter of the world's entire agricultural land. Nevertheless, in the 12 months that African leaders vowed to improve food security in the continent, over 20 million more people have been pushed into "severe hunger."

Today "a fifth of the African population (or 278 million) is undernourished, and 55 million of its children under the age of five are stunted due to severe malnutrition," Oxfam International adds to the above data in its report: Over 20 million more people hungry in Africa's "year of nutrition".

"The hunger African people are facing today is a direct result of inadequate political choices..." said Fati N'Zi-Hasane, Oxfam in Africa Director.

Chronic underinvestment

The report further explains that chronic underinvestment in agriculture is a key cause of the widespread hunger experienced in 2022.

The majority of African governments (48 out of 54) reportedly spend an average of 3.8% of their budgets on agriculture - some spending as little as 1%. Nearly three quarters of these governments have reduced their agricultural spending since 2019, failing to honour their Malabo commitments to invest at least 10% of their budget on agriculture.

Specifically, it adds, the majority of African governments (48 out of 54) reportedly spend an average of 3.8 pc of their budgets on agriculture - some spending as little as 1pc.

"Nearly three quarters of these governments have reduced their agricultural spending since 2019, failing to honour their Malabo commitments to invest at least 10% of their budget on agriculture."

In 2014 African leaders signed the Malabo Declaration, which stipulated that African governments must spend at



least 10% of their budget on Agriculture and supporting farmers.

Politicians doubling military spending In contrast, "African governments spent nearly double that budget (6.4 pc) on arms last year. Ongoing conflict, especially in Sahel and Central Africa, has continued to destroy farmland, displace people and fuel hunger."

In addition, "worsening climate-fuelled droughts and floods, and a global rise in fuel and fertilisers prices, made food unobtainable for millions of people. In 2022 alone, food inflation rose by double digits in all but ten African countries."

No access to neighbouring markets

As the 36th African Union Summit was held in February 2023, focussing on intra-continental free trade, "millions of smallholder farmers, who are vital food producers in the continent, cannot reach markets in neighbouring countries due to poor infrastructure and high intra-African tariffs."

In other words, "many African nations

find it cheaper to import food from outside the continent than from their next-door neighbour."

According to Oxfam:

As of August 2022 (the last available figure), there were 139.95 million people in 35 African countries living in "Crisis or worse acute food insecurity." That is an increase of 17 per cent (20.26 million people) over the same number a year earlier (119.69 million people).

This increase can be attributed to both a worsening acute food insecurity situation and an expansion in the population analysed between 2021 and 2022. (Source: Global Report on Food Crises Mid-Year Update 2022).

The average spending on military as share of total budget is 6.43 per cent (2021) as reported at Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, while the average spending in agriculture (2021) was 3.8 per cent as reported on GovernmentSpendingWatch

South Sudan spends less than 1% of its budget on Agriculture. Calculations of all

agricultural spending in Africa is based on data from the government spending watch, national budgets and FAO.

According to the CAADP report and the FAO Crop Prospects report, Africa's cereal production in 2022 was 207.4 million tons, a decline of 3.4 million tons from the average of the previous five years.

Five-fold increase in extreme weather events

The increasing hunger in Africa - which is imposed by both externally and internally - is just part of a widespread drama.

In fact, climate change is fuelling hunger for millions of people around the world. "Extreme weather events have increased five-fold over the past 50 years, destroying homes, decimating livelihoods, fuelling conflict and displacement, and deepening inequality," Oxfam reports.

Hunger more than doubling

Climate change has resulted in more frequent and intense droughts, floods, and heat waves. "The number of disas-

ters has increased five-fold over the past 50 years."

This is hitting low-income countries hardest, Oxfam goes on, adding that the 10 countries with the highest UN appeals related to weather extremes since 2000, have seen a 123% rise in the number of people suffering extreme hunger - from 21.3 million to 47.5 million.

These countries are Afghanistan, Burkina Faso, Djibouti, Guatemala, Haiti, Kenya, Madagascar, Niger, Somalia and Zimbabwe. According to this data, 7 out of these 10 countries are Africans.

Fossil fuel staggering profits

The G20 countries are amongst the most polluting nations in the world, collectively responsible for nearly 77% of carbon emissions, reports Oxfam, a global movement of people, working together to end the injustice of poverty, by tackling the inequality that keeps people poor.

It is extraordinary that as humanity faces this existential crisis, there is still more incentive to destroy our planet than to save lives.

"The oil and gas industry has enjoyed staggering profits as they wreak havoc on the planet - amassing 2.8 billion US dollars a day (or more than 1 trillion US dollars per year) for the last 50 years."

Seismic hunger

For its part, the World Food Programme (WFP) reports that the current seismic hunger crisis has been caused by a deadly combination of factors: conflict, economic shocks, climate extremes are combining to create a food crisis of unprecedented proportions.

Much so that "as many as 828 million people are unsure of where their next meal is coming from."

In its report '2023: Another year of extreme jeopardy for those struggling to feed their families,' WFP warns that a record 349 million people across 79 countries are facing acute food insecurity - up from 287 million in 2021. This constitutes a staggering rise of 200 million people compared to pre-COVID-19 pandemic levels.

More than 900,000 people worldwide are fighting to survive in famine-like conditions, the world body reports, adding that this is "ten times more than five years ago, an alarmingly rapid increase."

In short, politicians also in the most needed and highest exposed to staggering hunger countries, continue to attach higher relevance to spending on arms fueling conflicts, and on fuel fuels spreading climate disasters, rather than investing in saving the lives of their own people.

Efficiency is law in Chile but concrete progress is slow in coming

By Orlando Milesil

The Energy Efficiency Law began to gradually be implemented in Chile after the approval of its regulations, but more efforts and institutions are still lacking before it can produce results.

In Chile, the energy sector accounts for 74 percent of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, producing 68 million tons of carbon dioxide (CO2) per year. For this reason, energy efficiency is decisive in tackling climate change and saving on its costs.

The law passed in February 2021 and its regulations were issued on Sept. 13 of this year, but full implementation will still take time. The law itself states that its full application will take place "gradually", without setting precise deadlines.

For example, the energy rating of homes and new buildings is voluntary for now and will only become mandatory in 2023. In addition, only practice will show whether the capacity will exist to oversee the sector and apply sanctions.

The aims of the law include reducing the intensity of energy use and cutting GHGs.

According to the public-private organization Fundación Chile, energy efficiency has the potential to reduce CO2 emissions by 44 percent - a decisive percentage to mitigate climate change in this long, narrow South American country of 19.5 million people.

"For the first time in Chile, we have an Energy Efficiency Law. This is a key step in joining efforts to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050, since energy efficiency has the potential to reduce greenhouse gases by 35 percent," the Foundation's assistant manager for sustainability, Karien Volker,



told IPS.

The law sets standards for transportation, industry, mining and the residential, public and commercial sectors. Land transportation accounts for an estimated 25 percent of the energy used in Chile and the 250 largest companies operating in the country consume 35 percent of the total.

Volker underscored that the law incorporates energy labeling, the implementation of an energy management system for large consumers and the development of a National Plan.

"Upon implementation of the law, a 10 percent reduction in energy intensity, a cumulative savings of 15.2 billion dollars and a reduction of 28.6 million tons of CO2 are expected by 2030," she said.

She also argued that the law will push large companies to meet minimum energy efficiency standards, which will change the way they operate.

"New homes with energy efficiency certifications will raise the standard of construction in Chile and push builders to innovate," said Volker.

She added that "the transporta-

tion sector will also be positively impacted by establishing efficiency and performance standards for vehicles entering Chile."

Buildings with the new standards will consume only one third of the energy compared to the current ones.

In Chile, 53.3 percent of electricity is generated with renewable energy: hydroelectric, solar, biomass and geothermal. The remaining 46.7 percent comes from thermoelectric plants using natural gas, coal or petroleum derivatives, almost all of which are imported.

Negative track record on energy efficiency

But in the recent history of this South American country the experience of energy savings has not been a positive one. There was total clarity in the assessment of the situation and concrete suggestions of measures to advance in energy efficiency, but nothing changed, said engineer and doctor in systems thinking Alfredo del Valle, a former advisor to the United Nations and the Chilean government in these matters.

Del Valle told IPS that between

2005 and 2007 he acted as a methodologist for the Chilean Ministry of Economy's Country Energy Efficiency Program to formulate a national policy in this field.

"With broad public, private, academic and citizen participation, we discovered almost one hundred concrete energy efficiency potentials in transportation, industry and mining, residential and commercial buildings, household appliances, and even culture," he explained.

However, he lamented, "Chilean politicians fail to understand what politicians in the (industrialized) North immediately understood 30 years earlier: that it is essential to invest money and political will in energy efficiency, just as we invest in energy supply."

Although a National Energy Efficiency Agency was created 12 years ago, "nothing significant is happening," said Del Valle, current president of the Foundation for Participatory Innovation.

To illustrate, he noted that "the public budget for energy efficiency in 2020 is equivalent to just 10 million dollars compared to an in-

vestment in energy supply in the country of 4.38 billion dollars in the same year."

According to the expert, "we need a new way of thinking and acting to be able to carry out social transformations and to be able to create our own future."

Boric's energy policy

The Energy Agenda 2022-2026 promoted by the leftist government of Gabriel Boric, in office since March, states that "energy efficiency is one of the most important actions for Chile to achieve the goal of carbon neutrality."

The document establishes actions and commitments to be implemented as part of the National Energy Efficiency Plan. Published at the beginning of this year, it proposes 33 measures in the productive sectors, transportation, buildings and ordinary citizens, according to the Ministry of Energy.

"With all these measures, we expect to reduce our total energy intensity by 4.5 percent by 2026 and by 30 percent by 2050, compared to 2019," the Agenda states.

The plan announces an acceleration of the implementation of energy management systems in large consumers to encourage a more efficient use in industry, "as mandated by the Energy Efficiency Law that will be progressively implemented."

According to the government, by 2026, 200 companies will have implemented energy management systems.

The authorities also announced support to micro, small and medium-sized companies for efficient energy use and management and will support 2000 in self-generation and energy efficiency.

"Although as a country we have

made progress in the deployment of renewable energies for electricity generation, we have yet to transfer the benefits of renewable energy sources to other areas, such as the use of heat and cold in industry," the document states.

Improvement in housing quality

In Chile there are more than five million homes and most of them do not have adequate thermal insulation conditions, requiring a high use of energy for heating in the southern hemisphere winter and cooling in the summer.

The hope is that by making the "energy qualification" a requirement to obtain the final approval, the municipal building permit, the quality of housing using efficient equipment or non-conventional renewable energies will improve. This will allow greater savings in heating, cooling, lighting and household hot water.

In four years, the government's Agenda aims to thermally insulate 20,000 social housing units, install 20,000 solar photovoltaic systems in low-income neighborhoods, recondition 400 schools to make them energy efficient, expand solar power systems in rural housing, improve supply in 50 schools in low-income rural areas and develop distributed generation systems up to 500 megawatts (MW).

In recent years, the Fundación Chile, together with the government and other entities, has promoted energy efficiency plans with the widespread installation of LED lightbulbs along streets and in other public spaces. It also promoted the replacement of refrigerators over 10 years old with units using more efficient and greener technologies.

AGRA gets make-up, not make-over

By Timothy A. Wise and Jomo

Kwame

DESPITE its dismal record, the Gates Foundation-sponsored Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA) announced a new five-year strategy in September after rebranding itself by dropping 'Green Revolution' from its name.

Rebranding, not reform

Instead of learning from experience and changing its approach accordingly, AGRA's new strategy promises more of the same. Ignoring evidence, criticisms and civil society pleas and demands, the Gates Foundation has committed another \$200 million to its new five-year plan, bringing its total contribution to around \$900 million.

More than two-thirds of AGRA's funding has come from Gates, with African governments providing much more - as much as a billion dollars yearly - in subsidies for Green Revolution seeds and fertilizers.

Stung by criticism of its poor results, AGRA delayed announcing its new strategy by a year, while its chief executive shepherded the controversial UN Food Systems Summit of 2021. Following this, AGRA has been using more UN Sustainable Development Goals rhetoric.

Hence, AGRA's new slogan - 'Sustainably Growing Africa's Food Systems'. Likewise, the new plan claims to "lay the foundation for a sustainable food systems-led inclusive agricultural transformation". But beyond such lip service, there is little evidence of any meaningful commitment to sustainable agriculture in the \$550 million plan for 2023-27.

Despite heavy government subsidies, AGRA promotion of commercial seeds and fertilizers for just a few cereal crops failed to significantly increase productivity, incomes or even food security. But instead of addressing past shortcomings, the new plan still relies heavily on more of the same despite its failure to "catalyze" a productivity revolution among African farmers.

The supposedly new strategy dashes any hopes that AGRA



or the Gates Foundation would acknowledge the harmful social and environmental effects of Green Revolutions in India, Africa and elsewhere. AGRA offered no explanation for why it dropped 'Green Revolution' from its name.

The name change suggests the 16-year-old AGRA wants to dissociate itself from past failures, but without acknowledging its own flawed approach. Recently, much higher fertilizer prices - following sanctions against Russia and Belarus after the Ukraine invasion - have worsened the lot of farmers relying on AGRA recommended inputs.

It is time to change course, with policies promoting ecological farming by reducing reliance on synthetic fertilizers as appropriate. But despite its new slogan, AGRA's new strategy intends otherwise.

Last month, the Alliance for Food Sovereignty in Africa rejected the strategy and name change as "cosmetic", "an admission of failure" of the Green

Revolution project, and "a cynical distraction" from the urgent need to change course.

Productivity gains and losses. Despite spending well over a billion dollars, AGRA's productivity gains have been modest, and only for a few more heavily subsidized crops such as maize and rice. And from 2015 to 2020, cereal yields have not risen at all.

Meanwhile, traditional food crop production has declined under AGRA, with millet falling over a fifth. Yields actually also fell for cassava, groundnuts and root crops such as sweet potato. Across a basket of staple crops, yields rose only 18% in 12 years.

Farmer incomes have not risen, especially after increased production costs are taken into account. As for halving hunger, which Gates and AGRA originally promised, the number of 'severely undernourished' people in AGRA's 13 focus countries increased by 31%!

A donor-commissioned evalu-

ation confirmed many adverse farmer outcomes. It found the minority of farmers who benefited were mainly better-off men, not smallholder women the programme was ostensibly meant for.

That did not deter the Gates Foundation from committing more to AGRA despite its dismal track record, failed strategy, and poor monitoring to track progress. Judging by the new five-year plan, we can expect even less accountability.

The new plan does not even set measurable goals for yields, incomes or food security. As the saying goes, what you don't measure you don't value. Apparently, AGRA does not value agricultural productivity, even though it is still at the core of the organization's strategy.

Last month, the Rockefeller Foundation, AGRA's other founding donor and a leader of the first Green Revolution from the 1950s, announced a reduction in its grant to AGRA and a decisive step back from the

Green Revolution approach.

Its grant to AGRA supports school feeding initiatives and "alternatives to fossil-fuel derived fertilisers and pesticides through the promotion of regenerative agricultural practices such as cultivation of nitrogen-fixing beans".

Business in charge

AGRA's new strategy is built on a series of "business lines", e.g., the "sustainable farming business line" will coordinate with the "Seed Systems business line" to sell inputs. Private Village Based Advisors are meant to provide training and planting advice in this privatized, commercial reincarnation of the government or quasi-government extension services of an earlier era.

The UN Food and Agriculture Organization successfully promoted peer-learning of agroecological practices via Farmer Field Schools after successfully field-testing them. This came about after research showed

'brown hoppers' thrived in Asian rice farms after Green Revolution pesticides eliminated the insect's natural predators.

China lost a fifth of its 2007-08 paddy harvest to the pest, triggering a price spike in the thinly traded world rice market. Seeking help from the International Rice Research Institute, located in the Philippines, a Chinese delegation found its Entomology Department had lost most of its former capacity due to under-funding.

Earlier international agricultural research collaboration associated with the first Green Revolution - especially in wheat, maize and rice - seems to have collapsed, surrendering to corporate and philanthropic interests. This bitter experience encouraged China to step up its agronomic research efforts with a greater agro-ecological emphasis.

Empty promises?

The new strategy promises "AGRA will promote increased crop diversification at the farm level". But its advisers cum salespeople have a vested interest in selling their wares, rather than good local seeds which do not require repeat purchases every planting season.

AGRA is not strengthening resilience by promoting agroecology or reducing farmer reliance on costly inputs such as fossil fuel fertilizers and other, often toxic, agrochemicals. Despite many proven African agroecological initiatives, support for them remains modest.

The new strategy stresses irrigation, key to most other Green Revolutions, but conspicuously absent from Africa's Green Revolution. But the plan is deafeningly silent on how fiscally strapped governments are to provide such crucial infrastructure, especially in the face of growing water, fiscal and debt stress, worsened by global warming.

It is often said stupidity is doing the same thing over and over again, expecting different results. Perhaps this is due to the technophile conceit that some favoured innovation is superior to everything else, including scientific knowledge, processes and agro-ecological solutions.

Gone wrong: Surprise engagement nearly ends in tragedy after woman swallows ring



NAIROBI

A wedding proposal nearly ended in tragedy after a woman swallowed an engagement ring that was placed in her food as a surprise.

Jessica Hawayu and her family had gathered on Sunday at her home in Gongoni, Tana River County, for a family party.

Unknown to her, the family and her boyfriend Johannah Charo had planned a surprise engagement party.

The day started well with family members preparing

food and Jessica was tasked with preparing a special dish that is her father's favourite.

"Pilau is our father's favourite and also her boyfriend's. So she knew she was doing it for dad and dedicated herself to it," said her sister, Melanie Hawayu.

Meanwhile, the boyfriend and his friends were hanging around town waiting for the signal from his girlfriend's family once things were ready.

At about 2pm, they received a text asking them to start advancing toward the venue as the tables were set.

The plan between the woman's mother and the boyfriend was to bury the engagement ring in a plate of pilau, where she would discover it.

"Dad had protested the idea but since there was no better idea, we decided to take a chance with the one we had and proceeded with it," narrated Melanie.

Jessica's mother was in charge of serving the food and kept sending her daughter on errands as she buried the ring in the plate.

Charo had already sneaked

into the compound and was to appear from behind where the girlfriend was seated.

It was all laughter and joy at the table as Charo tiptoed towards the table, a move that was cut short when his girlfriend started choking on the food.

All efforts went into rescuing her as she left the table and ran towards her father who hit her on the back three times, only for her to vomit the ring.

"We did not anticipate that would happen, but dad feared it would. That was so close, it left mum crying," said Oscar Habil, Jessica's younger brother.

Jessica collapsed and was rushed to a nearby hospital for a check-up.

Nevertheless, she woke up to say 'Yes' with the engagement ring already on her finger as Charo insisted that he would marry her dead or alive.

"I have learned a very hard lesson, that is how we would have killed my wife. The devil is a liar," said Charo in a phone interview.

Jessica, on the other hand, notes that though things did not work as planned, she does not feel bad about what the family planned because they all wanted to make her day memorable.

AGENCIES

EABC commends stakeholders for launching AfCFTA adjustment fund

By Guardian Reporter

DENNIS Karera, the East African Business Council (EABC) Vice Chairman applauded the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) secretariat, Afreximbank and Rwandan for launching the AfCFTA Adjustment Fund.

The launch was held in Kigali, Rwanda over the weekend in new drive towards supporting all initiatives geared towards the implementation of the AfCFTA.

The fund will also support AfCFTA State Parties to adjust to the new liberalised and integrated trading environment established under the AfCFTA Agreement.

Alongside the launch, Karera hosted Wamkele Mene and his team to discuss various continental integration initiatives and engagement related to partnership in the successful implementation of the AfCFTA and how the agreement is poised to benefit the private sector in the EAC region.

He appreciated the Secretary-General for his continued involvement of the private sector in the AfCFTA implementation pro-

cess and most importantly championing the roll-out of the AfCFTA Guided Trade Initiative that has practically enabled businesses to trade and called upon the private sector in the EAC region to take up the opportunity presented by the initiative.

Among continental priorities presented to the AfCFTA Secretary General include the AfCFTA Secretariat to support the regional Business Councils including EABC, SADC, COMESA, ECOWAS Business Councils and any other that would want to join, in establishing a formal engagement platform with the AfCFTA Secretariat and implementation of the agreement jointly.

The AfCFTA Secretariat and the EABC to work on a joint AfCFTA Awareness Strategy aimed at scaling up sensitization of the private sector on the AfCFTA protocols and its benefits to the private sector. The Strategy is to be launched at the forthcoming AfCFTA Business Forum slated to take place in Cape Town tentatively from 15th-19th April 2023.

On mobilizing resources to support regional Business Councils to raise awareness on matters

pertaining to the AfCFTA, the Secretary-General committed to supporting the EABC - AfCFTA promotion programmes through the private sector support programmes at AfCFTA Secretariat (Technical Assistance Facilitation) as well as the AFDB support programme.

Convening Regional Business Councils Summit to engage governments on the status of the AfCFTA implementation, establishment of One Stop Centre to create efficiency in doing business across the continent as well as establishing data centers to access market-related information across the continent. The Secretary-General committed to supporting the EABC in its efforts to establish regional a Regional Data Center with outlets in all Partner States to enable the private sector to access market information on product availability and access while trading through the AfCFTA.

The Fund headquartered in Kigali, Rwanda, will support AfCFTA State Parties to adjust to the new liberalised and integrated trading environment established under the AfCFTA Agreement. It was



Wamkele Keabetswe Mene (R) Secretary-General of African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) and Dennis Karera, the East African Business Council (EABC) vice chairman shake hands during the launch of the Fund held in Kigali, Rwanda recently.

established by the AfCFTA Secretariat and Afreximbank following a mandate from the African Union (AU) Summit of Heads of State and Government and the AfCFTA Council of Ministers responsible for Trade. Critical instrument in the realisation of the African Continental Free Trade Area, the Adjustment Fund addresses among other things, potential tariff revenue losses, infrastructure deficits to facilitate trade growth and possible supply chain dis-

ruptions that States Parties may face in the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Agreement. The AfCFTA Adjustment Fund consists of three sub-Funds namely, the Base Fund, the General Fund, and the Credit Fund. The Base Fund will utilise contributions from AfCFTA State Parties as well as grants and technical assistance to address tariff revenue losses that would result from the implementation of the AfCFTA Agreement. The General

Fund will finance the development of trade-enabling infrastructure while the Credit Fund will be used to mobilise commercial funding to support both the public and private sectors enabling them to adjust and take advantage of the opportunities created by the AfCFTA. The Fund for Export Development in Africa (FEDA), the impact investment arm of Afreximbank, has been selected as the Fund Manager of the AfCFTA Adjustment Fund.

Investments in sustainable water management key for practices and boosting services

By Guardian Reporter

PLASCO Limited, one of the leading providers of innovative water solutions in the country has emphasized on the importance of investing in sustainable water management practices so as to strengthen access to clean water and other sanitation services to people.

Ali Gulamhussein, Plasco's general manager, made the call in Dar es Salaam recently at the International Maji Scientific Conference organised by the Water Institute.

The conference brought together experts from around the world to explore potential options to empower water resources management in Tanzania, with a focus on groundwater, and to effect significant change in securing water supply and sanitation services in both rural and urban areas.

It was themed: "Water Above, On, and Below the Ground: The Concerns of it All."

Presenting on the company's Weholite technology, Gulamhussein said investing in sustainable water management practices, particularly in a country like Tanzania where access to clean water and sanitation services can be a challenge was a matter of paramount importance.

He said the technology offers a range of water storage, rainwater harvesting, and sanitation solutions.

He highlighted the benefits of Weholite technology, including its durability, flexibility, and ease of installation, as well as its ability to support a range of water-related applications in both rural and urban areas.

"The use of Weholite technology has the potential to significantly reduce the reliance on groundwater and improve access to clean water in Tanzania. In addition, the technology can help mitigate the effects of climate change, such as water scarcity and flooding, through rainwater harvesting and storage," Gulamhussein noted.

Plasco Limited's participation in the International Maji Scientific Conference demonstrates the company's commitment to working with stakeholders in Tanzania to promote sustainable water management practices and ensure access to clean water and sanitation services for all.

The Weholite technology showcased at the conference is just one example of the innovative solutions available to address the challenges facing Tanzania's water sector, and that Plasco Limited was proud to be at the forefront of this important work.

Arusha RC praises efforts by Exim Bank towards stimulating economic growth



Arusha regional commissioner John Mongella delivers a speech to Exim Bank's customers and stakeholders based in Arusha city during a dinner gala hosted by the bank at the weekend to update clients on a suite of technologically driven products and services meant to simplify banking and enhance the customer experience.

By Guardian Correspondent, Arusha

ARUSHA regional commissioner John Mongella has congratulated Exim Bank Tanzania for its contribution in stimulating the economic transformation of the region through its products and services to various customers including investors in the tourism sector, business and industry sectors.

Speaking over the weekend during the dinner event organised by the bank for its Arusha based customers, RC Mongella said the contribution of the bank with four branches in the re-

gion is more visible through its services that are in line with the real needs of its customers in the region.

"I give the compliments with confidence because I personally am also a customer of Exim bank and I have never blamed myself for that. In the 20 years that you have been here in Arusha, you have been closer to your customers and the regional administration as well, providing financial solutions according to their needs and nature of investments. The good number of your branches in Arusha region proves your ambition too...congratulations," he mentioned.

The bank met with its small and

large customers in the region to discuss business opportunities, introduce new services, along with educating the customers about the benefits of the services.

According to the RC, the region is currently experiencing a rapid economic change driven by the growth of the tourism, business, agriculture and industrial sectors, therefore the ongoing improvements in service offerings by financial institutions, including Exim Bank, will have a great contribution to many stakeholders in the sectors.

"My appeal to Exim Bank and other financial institutions is to keep on

meeting your customers regularly and listen to them because the feedback you get will help you to design services and products that suit their needs," said RC Mongella, who also admired the bank's new Supa Woman Account introduced specifically for women.

Exim Bank's Chief Executive Officer Jaffari Matundu said they are determined to make major improvements in the provision of services to its customers by focusing on important areas, which is the improvement of service delivery systems and procedures, so that they are in line with the needs of customers and market.

"Moreover, through the new strategy we have planned to increase the professionalism and competence of our employees, invest in modern technology as well as promoting our services and products to attract more customers," said Matundu.

He said that the longtime trust shown by the customers in the bank has been the reason for the lender to walk together with them giving an example of the strong relationship that existed between the bank and its customers during the economic challenges caused by the effects of COVID 19 pandemic.

"We fought together and we took deliberate steps to ensure that we offered a loan repayment holiday for a while until when the economic stability resumed its course... this is true friendship," he emphasized.

Andrew Lyimo, bank's head of retail banking said the introduction of the bank's new services including the Wajasiriamali account, Supa Woman account, borderless banking specifically for businesses in Tanzania and Comoros and other modern services for payment have come to join hands with other services provided by the bank specifically for customers in the region, including the bank's TANAPA card.

"The goal is to make services easier for our customers and that is why we are investing much energy in WAKALA (agency) services as well as electronic services. So far we have more than 120 agents across the country," he mentioned while insisting that the bank has kept on giving priority to credit services for various types of customers.

Experts seek appropriate circular solutions to pollution by plastics

By Aimable Twahirwa

EXPERTS agree that African economies need to develop innovative approaches to deal with plastic production, which is set to double in 20 years - adversely impacting rural communities.

They were speaking in Kigali, Rwanda, on the sidelines of the World Circular Economy Forum (WCEF).

As a result of current global efforts to spur Africa's transition to a Circular Economy at the country, regional and continental levels, official estimates show that the transition to a fully circular economy could generate \$4.5 trillion in economic benefits globally by 2030.

Government representatives, researchers, civil society activists, and strategic partners launched an initiative, the High Ambition Coalition to End Plastics Pollution, on the sidelines of WCEF to end plastic pollution by 2040.

"The issue of plastic pollution has reached crisis levels, and it is time polluters to be held to account," Zaynab Sadan, the Regional Plastics Policy Coordinator for Africa at World Wildlife Fund (WWF), told IPS.

According to experts, the key to a circular economy in Africa is to eliminate open dumping and burning of waste on the continent and promote the use of waste as a resource for value and job creation.

The latest estimates by the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) show that approximately 7 billion of the 9.2 billion tonnes of plastic produced from 1950-2017 globally



Female workers sort out plastic bottles for recycling in a factory in Dhaka, Bangladesh. New initiatives were launched at the World Circular Economy Forum to reduce plastic pollution.

has become plastic waste, ending in landfills or dumped.

Environmental experts argue that this pollution has altered habitats and natural processes and reduced ecosystems' ability to adapt to climate change, affecting millions of people's livelihoods, food production capabilities, and social well-being, mostly in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Experts unanimously agree that plastic consumption and production have reached unsustainable levels over the past 30 years, reaching 460 million tonnes between 2000 to 2019.

The 2022 Global Plastics Outlook report by the Organization

for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) indicates that much of this growth is mostly driven by massive increases in the production of single-use plastics for packaging and consumer goods, which accounts for half of the plastic waste generation.

To address this growing phenomenon, Sadan insists on the need for African countries to integrate the informal sector into recycling and waste management.

"There is a pressing need to improve in waste collection services and management at landfills," the fierce conservation activist told delegates at the launching of the new High Ambition Coalition

to end plastic pollution.

Official projections indicate that by 2060, the use of plastics could almost triple globally, driven by economic and population growth.

It said that plastic leakage to the environment is projected to double to 44 million tonnes (Mt) a year, while the build-up of plastics in aquatic environments will more than triple, where the largest costs are projected for Sub-Saharan Africa, whose GDP would be reduced by 2.8% below the baseline.

Kristin Hughes, the director of the resource circularity pillar and a member of the World Economic Forum's executive committee, told delegates that if current trends

continue, billion metric tons of plastic waste will be in landfills or the natural environment by 2050.

"Embedding science and evidence-based approach are key to end plastic pollution in Africa," Hughes said.

During various sessions on the forum's sidelines, Rwanda has been hailed as a role model in Africa toward managing waste from banning plastic bags in 2008, has made great steps forward, and has established the e-waste recycling facility in 2018.

Reacting to this achievement, Rwandan Minister of Environment Jeanne d'Arc Mujawamariya stressed the need for the country

to strengthen existing mechanisms to have a carbon-neutral economy by 2050.

"Despite these achievements, there are still shortcomings that are exposing the country to severe impacts of improper waste management, including hazardous wastes," Mujawamariya told delegates.

Terhi Lehtonen, Finnish Vice Minister of the Environment and Climate Change, is convinced that eradicating plastic pollution requires a systemic approach since plastic pollution is not simply a consumer issue.

"The plastic pollution is increasing at an alarming rate [...] African countries need to adopt a holistic control strategy at both production and consumer level," she told delegates.

The newly-established global mechanism, the High Ambition Coalition to End Plastics Pollution, is committed to developing ambitious international and legally binding instruments based on a comprehensive and circular approach that ensures urgent action and effective action interventions along the full lifecycle of plastics.

Erlend Haugen, Norway's coordinator of the Global Initiative, said the new treaty must establish provisions for plastic waste minimization and environmentally sound collection, sorting, and preparation for reuse and recycling of plastic waste to re-enter recycled plastics into the economy and avoid leakage to the environment.

But activists are convinced that communities also have vital knowledge and experience that can help combat the scourge of plastic pollution.

"Countries should also adopt a gender-sensitive approach to tackle plastic pollution," said Sadan.

According to her, the youth could also play a very influential role in plastic waste control by raising awareness about its negative impact.

Energy dilemmas of Roraima, unique part of Brazil's Amazon region

By Mario Osava

A riverside park in Boa Vista, which would probably disappear under the construction of the Bem Querer hydroelectric plant, 120 kilometers downstream on the Branco River. The projection is that the reservoir would flood part of the capital of the state of Roraima, in the extreme north of Brazil.

"Roraima did not have a Caribbean character; now it does, because of its growing relations with Venezuela and Guyana," said Haroldo Amoras, a professor of economics at the Federal University of this state in the extreme north of Brazil.

The oil that the US company ExxonMobil discovered off the coast of Guyana since 2015 generates wealth that will cross borders and extend to Roraima, already linked to Venezuela by energy and migration issues, predicted the economist, the former secretary of planning in the local government from 2004 to 2014.

Roraima, Brazil's northernmost state, which forms part of the Amazon rainforest, is unique for sharing a border with these two South American countries on the Caribbean Sea and because 19 percent of its 224,300 square kilometers of territory is covered by grasslands, in contrast to the image of the lush green Amazon jungle.

It is also the only one of Brazil's 26 states not connected to the national power grid, SIN, which provides electricity shared by almost the entire country. This energy isolation means the power supply has been unstable and has caused uncertainty in the search for solutions in the face of sometimes clashing interests.

From 2001 to 2019 it relied on imported electricity from Venezuela, from the Guri hydroelectric plant, whose decline led to frequent blackouts until the suspension of the contract two years before it was scheduled to end.

The closure of this source of electricity forced the state to accelerate the operation of old and new diesel, natural gas and biomass thermoelectric power plants. It also helped fuel the proliferation of so-



lar power plants and the debate on cleaner and less expensive alternatives.

In search of energy alternatives

Against this backdrop, the Roraima Renewable Energies Forum emerged, promoted by the non-governmental Socio-environmental Institute (ISA) and the Climate and Society Institute (ICS) and involving members of the business community, engineers from the Federal University of Roraima (UFRR) and individuals, indigenous leaders and other stakeholders.

The objectives range from influencing sectoral policies and stimulating renewable sources in the local market to monitoring government decisions for isolated systems, such as the one in Roraima, as well as proposing measures to reduce the costs and environmental damage of such systems.

"Not everyone (in the Forum) is opposed to the construction of the Bem Querer hydroelectric plant, but there is a consensus that there is a lack of information to evaluate its benefits for society and whether they justify the huge investment in the project," biologist Ciro Campos, an ISA analyst and

one of the Forum's coordinators, told IPS.

Bem Querer, a power plant with the capacity to generate 650 megawatts, three times the demand of Roraima, is the solution advocated by the central government to guarantee a local power supply while providing the surplus to the rest of the country.

For this reason, the project is presented as inseparable from the transmission line between Manaus, capital of the state of Amazonas with a population of 2.2 million, and Boa Vista, the capital of Roraima, population 437,000. The line involves 721 kilometers of cables that would connect Roraima to the national grid.

"In its design, Bem Querer looks towards Manaus, not Roraima," Campos complained, ruling out a necessary link between the power plant and the transmission line. "We could connect to the SIN, but with a safe and autonomous model, not dependent on the national system" and subject to negative effects for the environment and development, he argued.

Hydroelectric damage

The plant would dam the Branco River, the state's main water source,

to form a 519-square-kilometer reservoir, according to the governmental Energy Research Company (EPE). It would even flood part of Boa Vista, some 120 kilometers upstream.

The hydropower plant would both meet the goal of covering the state's entire demand for electricity and abolish the use of fossil fuels, diesel and natural gas, which account for 79 percent of the energy consumed in the state, according to the distribution company, Roraima Energia.

But it would have severe environmental and social impacts. "It would make the riparian forests disappear," which are almost unique in the extensive savannah area, locally called "lavrado," of grasses and sparse trees, said Reinaldo Imbrozio, a forestry engineer with the National Institute of Amazonian Research (Inpa).

A view of the Branco River, five kilometers above where its waters would be dammed if the controversial Bem Querer hydroelectric plant is built, which would generate enough electricity to meet the entire demand of the Brazilian state of Roraima as well as a surplus for export, but would have environmental and social impacts

magnified by the flatness of the basin that requires a very large reservoir. CREDIT: Mario Osava/IPS

In addition to the flooding of parts of Boa Vista, the flooding of the Branco and Cauamé rivers, which surround the city, will directly affect nine indigenous territories and will have an indirect impact on others, complained Edinho Macuxi, general coordinator of the Indigenous Council of Roraima (CIR), which represents 465 communities of 10 native peoples.

The CIR, together with ISA and the ICS, built two solar energy projects in the villages and carried out studies on the wind potential, already recognized in the indigenous territories of northern Roraima.

"The main objective of our initiatives is to prove to the central government that we don't need Bem Querer or other hydroelectric projects...that represent less land and more confusion, more energy and less food for us," he stressed to IPS at CIR headquarters.

"We will have to leave, said the engineers who were here for the studies of the river," said Alfredo Cruz, owner of a restaurant on the banks of the Branco River, about five kilometers upstream from the site chosen for the dam. At that spot visitors can swim in the dry season, when the water level in the river is low.

The rapids there show the slight slope of the rocky riverbed. It is a flat river, without waterfalls, which means a larger reservoir. The heavy flow would be used to generate electricity in a run-of-river power plant.

Cruz inherited his restaurant and house from his great-grandfather. The title to the land dates back to 1912, he said. But they will be left under water if the hydroelectric plant is built, even though they are now located several meters above the normal level of the river, he lamented.

Riverside dwellers, fishermen and indigenous people will suffer the effects, Imbrozio told IPS. The property of large landowners and people who own mansions will also be flooded, but they have been guaranteed good compensation, he added.

What the Forum's Campos proposes is the promotion of renewable sources, without giving up diesel and natural gas thermoelectric plants for the time being, but reducing their share in the mix in the long term, and ruling out the Bem Querer dam, which he said is too costly and harmful.

Energy issues will influence the future of Roraima, according to Professor Amoras. The most environmentally viable hydroelectric plants, such as one suggested on the Cotingo River, in the northeast of the state, with a high water fall, including a canyon, are banned because they are located in indigenous territory, he said.

The participation of civil society is important for the Brazilian state of Roraima to make progress towards sustainable energy alternatives that can reduce diesel consumption, offer energy security and avoid the impacts of hydroelectric dams.

Oil wealth, route to the Caribbean

In the neighboring countries, oil wealth opens a market for Brazilian exports and, through their ports, access to the Caribbean. The Guyanese economy will grow 48 percent this year, according to the World Bank.

Roraima's exports have grown significantly in recent years, although they reached just a few tens of millions of dollars last year.

Guyana's small population of 790,000, the unpaved road connecting it to Roraima and the fact that the language there is English make doing business with Guyana difficult, but relations are expanding thanks to oil money.

This will pave the way to the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), whose scale does not attract transnational corporations, but will interest Roraima companies, said Fabio Martinez, deputy secretary of planning in the Roraima state government.

Venezuela expanded its imports from Roraima, of local products or from other parts of Brazil, because U.S. embargoes restricted trade via ports and thus favored sales across the land border, he said.

Global Venture Funding, H1 2022

CURRENT NEWS
East Africa Venture Capital beats private equity in 2022
Page 14

CURRENT NEWS
Chinese stocks outperform other peers Asian market
Page 14

CURRENT NEWS
Chinese stocks outperform other peers Asian market
Page 14



OUTLOOK & ANALYSIS
TaCRI executes action plan to improve coffee competitiveness
Page 15

AfDB launches a 5-year US\$2 billion bond

ABIDJAN

THE African Development Bank has launched and priced a US\$2 billion 5-year Global Benchmark bond due March 14, 2028, its first of the year. The bond was issued on 7 March.

With this issue, the African Development Bank continues to carry out its funding strategy of issuing large liquid benchmark transactions and adds another on-the-run reference in the 5-year maturity while extending its outstanding USD curve.

With the final orderbook closing in excess of US\$ 3.5 billion and 95 investors participating, the African Development Bank set the size of the transaction at US\$2 billion.

The issue garnered interest from top quality investors with particularly good demand from Central Banks / Official Institutions.

The Bank's mandate for a 5-year US\$ Global Benchmark was announced on Monday 6, March at 09:07 London time with Initial Pricing Thoughts (IPTs) released at mid-swaps plus 35bp (basis points) area at 12:34 London time.

The deal enjoyed good investor demand during the first afternoon and overnight with Indications of Interest (IoI) reaching US\$2.1 billion by the time books officially opened on Tuesday 7, March 2023 at 07:57 London time.

The orderbook continued to grow throughout the European morning, with investor demand equaling US\$3.5 billion by 10:28 London time, which allowed the spread to be tightened by 2bps and set at SOFR mid-swaps + 33bps.

Shortly thereafter, at 12:54 London time, the high quality orderbook allowed the transaction to be launched with a size of US\$2 billion, with Americas books set to go subject at 13:30 London time.

The trade officially priced at 5.58 pm London time at SOFR mid-swaps plus 33bps, equivalent to a reoffer yield of 4.435% and a spread of 14.3bp vs the on-the-run 5-year US Treasury.

With the final orderbook closing in excess of US\$3.5 billion with more than 90 orders, the success of this 5-year transaction is a clear vote of confidence from investors in the Bank's AAA credit.



Hope as conservation agriculture improves livelihood and yields of small farmer in Morogoro Region

By Beatrice Philemon

IT'S Thursday evening, March 9, 2023, and 19-years old Aziz Suka (pictured), a small scale farmer in Lulongwe village in Mvuha, Morogoro Region, is standing on his seven acre land, looking on the shining crops.

Three years ago, Suka used to get 300 kilogramme of maize from each of seven acre farm located in the village.

"The harvest did not give me assurance of food security and income, as I depend on maize farming as my source of livelihood for many years," he told the Guardian in an interview at his village.

He said he used to sell three sacks of maize and gets small income for spending on households' basic needs including school necessities for his five kids, clothes for him and his wife and kids and other household's other spending, of which he remain with nothing at hands.

"I used to get just a small income after selling my maize, with a portion of harvests remaining for my household consumptions. The money I was getting was not even enough to improve the condition of my two bedroom house with mud floor," he said.

He said sometimes when the rain is not sufficient, he used to harvest maize which were only sufficient for his own consumption, with very little to sell.

This situation sometime, he said, forced some villagers to invade the natural village forests in search for wet fertile lands, which created massive deforestation.

But since, Tanzania Forest



Conservation Group (TFCG) and Tanzania Community Forest Conservation Network (MJUMITA) introduced conservation agriculture at his village, things have totally changed.

In few weeks to come, Suka will be harvesting maize, sorghum and sesame at the same piece of land, with the expectation of gaining more output and yields, compared with the previous harvesting seasons.

Before MJUMITA and TFCG intervention, I used to get at least four sacks of maize, but now I expects to get at least

nine sacks and above in one acres of land, which will be more than twice of what I was getting when using traditional farming method.

He explains that the new farming method is expected to be beneficial in terms of increase income generation, productivity, environmental conservation and land dispute.

He said, out of his seven acre piece of land, three have been allocated for maize, two for sesame and the remained two acres he is growing sorghum.

Through conservation agriculture technique, the farmer of five says, "This farming ensures our food security, income as well as reduces conflict with government, livestock keepers and other people.

He said under the new farming technology, maize can be intercropped with pulses or legumes in one-acre of land to improve soil fertility.

He said many villagers in Lulongwe Kati, Chagedere, Kipela and Bisanze suburbs are now engaged in this farm-

ing method.

"We are very glad to see what has been occurred in our village, because many villagers are increasing adopting conservation agriculture in our localities and they are now allocated special land for this farming," he said.

The project is being implemented through funding from Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC).

He said the project has come at the right time, as it addresses land conflicts with pastoralists whom sometimes graze cattle in their farms, food insecurity and incomes.

The village economic, planning and finance committee secretary, Shaban Luhaga said another main goal was to prevent shifting agriculture, as it caused massive clearance of natural forests at the village.

"MJUMITA and TFCG project has changed the mindsets of many villagers on farming, which has then transformed their lives," he said.

Under the project, a total of four demonstration farms were established to help peo-

ple learn.

"When we harvested for the first time, soon after adopting this new farming technique in our demonstration farm, we couldn't believe our eyes, as we harvested seven sacks of maize from half an acre of land that was not the case in the past," he said.

He said during old days, they used to get very little, such as one sack of maize in half of an acre, but now they are getting more than five to seven sacks.

"The improved yields assure food security and income for many villagers," he noted. "We are now advising at least each household to allocate at least three acres of land for conservation agriculture."

This will also prevent land degradation, protecting the environment and responding to growing challenges of climate change.

For her part, Bettie Luwuge, TFCG communication officer said they have decided to implement the project after discovering that 89 percent of deforestation in Tanzania is attributed to agriculture, in accordance with the research conducted by TFCG in 67 districts in Tanzania mainland.

She said the current forest ecosystem fragmentation in many areas across the country has been destroyed in the course of preparing farms, charcoal production, timber production and firewood collections.

According to the study, bush fires were the second major cause of forest destruction accounting for 77 percent, with many respondents saying fire was used to clear new farmland for cultivation.

KCB Sukuk unleashes inclusive investment opportunities in Tanzania

By Guardian Reporter

FINANCIAL inclusion remains the focal point towards achieving Tanzania's economic development vision.

The country is now implementing the third National Five-Year Development plan (2021/2022-2025/2026) aiming at realising competitiveness and industrialization for human development.

The Bank of Tanzania (BoT), together with stakeholders in financial sector, has been working to ensure broader access and usage of financial services to Tanzanian population.

This ambition seems to bear results as there is a considerable transition within the area of focus. Financial Inclusion in Tanzania grew to 65 percent from 58 percent by 2017.

The plan was to reach 75 percent by 2022 through implementation of the Second National Financial Inclusion Framework (NFIF 2018-2022).

Different stakeholders within the financial sector have taken further steps to ensure many Tanzanians have access to formal financial services.

This is done through offering customized financial services that are reliable and affordable, thanks to the technological ad-



Capital Market and Securities Authority CEO Nicodemus Mkama (C) rings the bell to officiate the Fursa Sukuk Listing on the Dar es Salaam Stock Exchange (DSE). With him are the Head of KCB Islamic Banking, Amour Muro (2nd L), Acting DSE CEO Mary Mniwasa (2nd R), KCB Bank's Head of Marketing and Corporate Affairs, Christine Manyenye (R) and Sheikh Mohamed Issa from Centre for Islamic Finance, Compliance and Advice. Photo by Guardian Correspondent

ancement. KCB Bank has been at the forefront to support this ambition over the years.

The bank has taken different deliberate measures to ensure it extends service delivery in the country by enhancing its branch network to 16 branches countrywide.

Also, the bank has invested heavily in accelerating digital operations and alternative delivery channels like Internet

Banking, Mobile Application, POS, Agency Banking (Mobi) which offers more convenience to customers. This has been instrumental in increasing service penetration to Tanzanians.

Last year, KCB Bank marked another milestone in the history of the financial sector in Tanzania. Through its Islamic Window, KCB Sahl Banking, it was able to roll out the first Public Offered Islamic bond called 'Fursa Sukuk'.

"Fursa Sukuk is the first Public Offered Islamic bond in this market and it is an advantageous investment opportunity that is open for everyone,"

"Buying this bond offers an expected return of 8.75 percent per year and the profit payment will be done four times in a year (every quarter). Anyone can buy Fursa Sukuk at a minimum rate of 500,000/-," said Cosmas Kimario, acting group Regional Business Director and

KCB Bank Tanzania Managing Director.

KCB Bank is one of the biggest banks in the East and Central Africa guaranteeing business continuity for its investors.

According to the KCB Head of Islamic Banking, Amour Muro, the funds raised will be directed to finance business and services that are Shariah compliant through the KCB Islamic Banking Window, and the profit generated will be distributed to

the investors.

"The profit income from financing activities that will be collected by KCB Sahl Banking will be distributed to the investors as coupon payments through Mudharaba contract.

Mudharaba is a profit-sharing contractual arrangement between an investor (Rab al Maal) and a managing trustee (Mudharib) whereby the bank is in charge of profit making within a certain period and thereafter the profit will be shared to investors at the agreed expected rate," he said.

This was another step in deepening financial inclusion in the country as it provided a rare opportunity for investors who could not invest in conventional bonds that are interest based.

To prove that, the bond was oversubscribed by 10 percent during its Initial Public Offering (IPO) attracting an investment value of 11bn/- against the initial target of Tsh.10 billion.

This shows that, Tanzanians are ready to invest but they need solutions that are in-line with their priorities.

Fursa Sukuk is now listed in the Dar es Salaam Stock Exchange (DSE) which means it has opened more doors for investors who did not buy during

the first offering. Besides, investors can now trade their shares under DSE something that gives them more flexibility and value to their investments.

The Chief Executive Officer for CMSA, CPA Nicodemus Mkama said the success of the bond is a result of sound investment environment by the Government of Tanzania including the removal of withholding tax in company bonds.

"We call upon institutions and companies to utilize capital markets to raise funds to implement different development projects. This will foster growth of the sector and the nation at large," he says.

The Dar es Salaam Stock Exchange (DSE) Acting Chief Executive Officer, Mary Mniwasa says the bond will extend product portfolio thus offering more flexibility to cover different groups in the country.

"This means products are increasing in the market. For a long time, we have had two products (stock and bond) but we never had bonds that are faith related," she says.

The Bank is looking forward to introducing more alternative financial products that will help many Tanzanians to tap into formal financial service and investments.

Digital Marketing; shift in data and purpose

THE world is dramatically changing driven by technology, a deluge of data and tectonic shift in cultures across the world. These necessitate us to rethink marketing to re-imagine marketing and to do it in a different way which is the fifth model of marketing and the way we do marketing is now defined as quantum marketing. Quantum Marketing is simply the application of quantum mechanics to marketing strategies.

What is getting on the front line principle? For me it means get very close to consumers. There are three principles to it as a marketer. First, get real - take a good combination of data and empathy, be close to the true reality of the world and try to solve the real problems and the real touch points of the consumers. Second, do good - how can you put "the purpose" at the heart of the brand and then really spur positive change for society and the environment, and the third one is, be admissible - how can your brand stand out in culture and be effortless to buy. In everything that we do we want to be first in mind, first to find not matter what country no matter how global a brand is.

That is a good framework to get back to if you cut out the clutter of

DIGITAL MARKETING
Alley Mtatya
Founder of Eyeland Advertising and Analytics



what to do, just; get real, get on the frontline and do good with your brand because that is one of the attractions of being a marketer just so you can impact the world as well as be noticed. You need to be admissible - first to mind and first to find.

Data in the form of sustainability is embedded across the entire value chain. It isn't just about marketing, sustainability is the way you do business, the how you do things and therefore the purpose which is more of a challenge in marketing. Purpose is one of the levers to grow brand power and this correlation to counter (table) research. It runs across more than one hundred and twenty two thousand brands and we know purpose drives brand power and brand power drives markets with sharing growth. There is a way to use purpose as a fly wheel for growth. What we have also learnt in

marketing is that you always need to start with a very good value proposition; a superior product against the right price. That is where it all starts; if you do not have that purpose it does not make it any better. Once you have a value proposition then values come into play. The second thing is that it isn't just any purpose, purpose needs to be really close to the authenticity of the brand it also needs to stand for the category benefit, it needs to be memorable for the people logically as well as connected, and then you need to invest in it.

After three months on you cannot say you have established a purpose it needs three years or longer and that is why it is hard to get it right. There is a lot of learning to be made in purpose as well as choices but do not get me wrong sometimes brands are built and as they evolve they find

their purpose later on.

A good example, is a Mayonnaise brand I know of (I won't mention the name) it started like all other brands in the market with a purpose to be used as a salad dressing or a general ingredient to already prepared food. As the brand evolved they found a purpose and niche. Data published on the food disposal market within their market showed that there was a huge volume of food wastage per year per household so they established their purpose, to turn their Mayonnaise brand into an ingredient/product that helped to prepare a decent meal from food that could be thrown away by households (recycled food) simply by educating/advertising via Television and social media. The videos and recipe notes explained how it is done in a few easy steps. Now the brand is iconic in that niche making incredible profits and with a new found purpose. Nonetheless, a need to be a brand with a purpose and have a correlation between purpose and growth in the long-run which ever route a brand may take.

When something is purpose driven it also provides measurable results in terms of Return on Investments (ROI) you get real time data. Take for example a bank that issues debit cards to its custom-

ers and the bank tests its ROI on real time hypothesis. The bank has branches in two cities but then runs a campaign in one city but does not advertise in the other city. The increased number of card swipes in that city (where the campaign is running) one can see in real time the impact which is translated to real time marketing. Another way to do this is or capture this more modernly is through digital marketing specifically lead generation, say for example, the same bank wants to increase or issue more debit cards to their clients (they may run a digital campaign) on social media using the lead generation approach as one client clicks on the link their details or information will be registered. One may go further to access the registration data vis-a-vis the number of debit cards issued which will also translate to real time data on the impact of the campaign.

The big question and the most difficult thing in marketing is; how much money should you invest in performance marketing to drive short-term sales and how much do you invest in building a real brand equity and how much is the overlap between the two. These days we build brands that convert to sales at the same time. Building a brand

takes much longer than performance marketing does.

There needs to be ethics and higher standards towards data as well as look beyond regulations and champion the ethical use of consumer data to achieve marketing goals. In the end we have a responsibility to inspire trust in our brands. In our industry or in our profession these days, we want to do the right thing and we can only do that if we rise to the highest standards only then can we inspire or drive positive change within the society.

There are predictions in business for the coming months or years that there could be a recession, inflation etc. of all that, more of a dark cloud in the horizon, so marketing investments are under pressure and CEO's and CFO's are a little bit conservative in terms of marketing budgets. Working with a very limited budget one needs to think about the message your brand wishes to portray and how to set yourself up to be a force for good. The world will always remain overly dynamic and we live in an information age, my old boss would always say to me in such a situation, "think and work like an entrepreneur."

Alley Mtatya is the founder of Eyeland Advertising and Analytics

Chinese stocks outperform other peers in Asia market



BEIJING

CHINESE stocks rallied on Monday, outperforming the broader Asian market as traders bet on policy continuity after news that China's economic leadership team would retain several familiar faces.

The moves to keep central bank Governor Yi Gang, Finance Minister Liu Kun and Commerce Minister Wang Wentao in place were pragmatic ones that may boost investor confidence at a time of uncertainty, analysts said.

The Hang Seng China Enterprises Index, a gauge of Chinese equities listed in Hong Kong, jumped 2.2% - the most in almost two weeks. A broader measure of Asian stocks was up 0.3%.

The upswing in Chinese stocks was a reversal from last week, when they sold off as the National People's Congress lacked in major policy incentives.

"The market likes the continuity and Yi Gang is seen as a reform-minded

technocrat and the market gives him credibility for his handling of the monetary policy during the pandemic," he said. "Thus, he is market friendly."

He noted, though, that the governor role "can also be a transition role, given his age. So he may or may not serve the full term."

Zhang Zhiwei, chief economist at Pinpoint Asset Management Ltd.

"It is a surprise to the market," Zhang said of Yi's reappointment. The 65-year-old had been expected to step down after reaching the retirement age for ministers and being left off a list of top ruling party officials last year.

"I think this is a pragmatic choice, as the new leaders need professional experts to handle the complicated economic and financial challenges," Zhang added. "The leaders understand the top priority is to boost confidence. This decision is one step in that direction."

Ming Ming, chief economist of Citic Securities Co

said: "The lineup suggests policy consistency will be emphasized as that's needed for the economic recovery and support of certain industries," Ming said. "No matter who becomes the PBOC governor, the policy direction won't change too much."

One rumored candidate for the governor job, central bank veteran Yin Yong, was recently made major of Beijing, and Hui said Xi may want to find a replacement so Yin can move to the PBOC.

"It also suggests that the leadership is not confident with the other rumored candidates at a time when stability is priority," said Hui, co-author of "The Rise of the People's Bank of China." He noted the "dire challenges" the bank faces in the short term, "namely the ballooning of public debt and great uncertainties in global economic and geopolitical arena."

Christopher Beddor, deputy China research director, Gavekal Dragonom-

ics said "It's a completely reasonable choice," Beddor said of Yi. "The leadership was clearly debating among several candidates in the run-up to this decision, and opted to go for continuity."

"That should somewhat reassure markets, given the major government and party restructuring that the PBOC will face over the coming months," Beddor added, describing Yi as "more of a heads-down monetary-policy technocrat than an influential policy entrepreneur."

Bruce Pang, chief economist for greater China at Jones Lang LaSalle Inc.

The reappointments "indicate continuity in fiscal and monetary policies, as the leadership is fully focused on improving the economy," Pang said.

The priority that authorities are placing on economic development has "significantly increased" since the Communist Party Congress took place last year, he added.

Absa Group sees ample growth in pre-provision profit in 2022

By Francis Kajubi

ABSA Group has said even though the operation environment in 2022 remained uncertain due to inflationary pressure, increased policy rates and high country risk premium in the 12 countries where it operates, the Group's pre-provision profit grew by four percent.

Arrie Rautenbach, Absa Group Chief Executive said yesterday during the release of the 2022 financial year results that the Group's pre-provision profit grew to 6.5Rbn from 6.3Rbn in 2021.

"As Absa we are committed to forging partnerships across social compact to drive sustainable solutions to the challenges raised from the Ukraine-Russia

war and the post pandemic. We continue to invest in growth with 3.3Rbn in the business space last year," he said.

He asserted that as 2023 business kicks off the bank will continue to accelerate digital transformation.

He said 60 percent of Absa regional operations (ARO) are digitally active up from 53 percent registered in 2021. Over 75 percent of core middle market and retail affluent customers are currently digitized.

In embracing the digital revolution 20 percent of home and personal loan sales in South Africa are issued on Absa App.

On the way forward the bank will focus on climate change financing, financial inclusion through its envi-

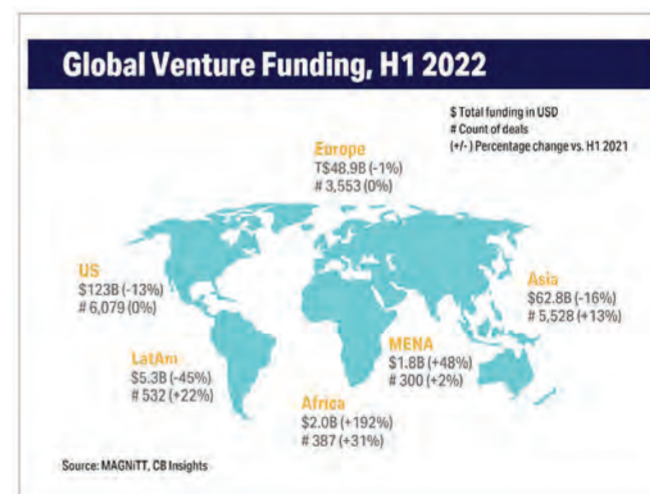
ronmental, social and governance (ESG) strategy.

"As we have already shifted our relationship banking to a customer centric segment model we also consider SMEs as our key priority," he said.

Jason Quinn, Absa Group Financial Director said deposits at the bank grew by seven percent to 201Rbn from 188Rbn in 2021. However, loans grew by seven percent to 134Rbn from 126Rbn in 2021. Headline earnings grew by eight percent to 4Rbn from 3.7Rbn.

According to him, in 2023 the bank's credit loss ratio (CLR) is likely to be at the top end of our through-the-circle target range of 75 to 100 basis points. It targets a growth of about 17 percent in return on equity.

East Africa Venture Capital beats private equity in 2022



for 2022.

"Traditional private equity investments declined for the third year in a row and accounted for 20 percent of all private capital transactions as well as 23 percent of the total disclosed deal value."

In addition to the rise in VC deals, the region has also recorded steady growth in inward investments by development finance institutions (DFIs), which have largely been targeting mature companies that are in need of capital injection for expansion or new product development.

The international financiers, who include some sovereign funds, were last year involved in some of the biggest deals seen locally, notably the transfer of a 40 percent stake in retail chain Naivas between two consortiums bringing together PE funds and DFIs.

"We note an increase in indirect asset investments by DFIs as well as an increase in the number of DFIs with a physical presence in Nairobi," the advisory firm added.

The region also saw a resurgence of mergers and acquisitions after a decline in the previous year, recording 22 transactions compared to 17 in 2021.

NAIROBI

Early-stage investors have taken a lead in the number of deals in the East Africa region over the past year, eclipsing traditional private equity deals that have been dominating inward investments previously.

Last year, deals data compiled by advisory firm I&M Burbidge Capital shows the region recorded 66 venture capital (VC) deals, up from 29 in 2021, while traditional PE deals declined from 38 to 26 in the period.

While both VC and PE fall under the same category of private capital, venture capitalists tend towards funding startups at lower amounts and equity stakes, while traditional PE firms

go for more mature companies that are further up on the profitability ladder.

Kenya, which accounted for 76 out of the 111 total deals disclosed in the region last year, has become an attractive destination for startup funding, targeting the fast-growing ICT, financial services, agribusiness, healthcare, energy and logistics sectors.

The country attracts a larger percentage of the deals due to Nairobi's status as the region's financial

"Venture Capital investment activity accounting for 51 percent of all private transactions and 40 percent of the disclosed deal value," said I&M Burbidge Capital in their annual deals review

Ubungo Mayor congratulates DCB Bank for its support for education sector

By Guardian Correspondent

UBUNGO Municipal Council mayor Jaffary Nyaigsha, has appealed to various institutions in the country to emulate the outstanding role that the DCB Commercial Bank is playing towards improvement of education sector.

The mayor rang out the call over the weekend in Dar es Salaam at a function at which he received a grant of 30 desks destined for Kiluvya Primary School located within the council, donated by the bank as part of its current campaign dubbed 'Elimu Mpango Mzima na Mama Samia'.

"By carrying out charity missions, the bank supports efforts of our President, Samia Suluhu Hassan of forging ahead development in the country through revamping the education sector," said His Lordship the Mayor.

Speaking at the hand-over event at the school's compound, DCB Commercial Bank managing director Isidori Msaki said the donation was part of 150 desks worth 37mn/- which are to be granted to the five municipal council that constitute Dar es Salaam City managerial hierarchy.

Msaki noted that the five municipal councils have been given priority by virtue of being the founding shareholders of DCB Commercial Bank during its establishment two decades ago.

"We are proud of the productive cooperation with the municipal councils since we launched operations 20 years ago in 2002 with core capital of 1.7bn/-, the bank has since sustained progressive growth, enabling it to issue cumulative dividend of 11.5bn/-, out of which 4.55bn/- went to the municipal councils," said Msaki.

The bank's chief executive said the success has been made possible due to outstanding management the bank's Board of Director under stewardship of its tireless chairlady Zawadia Nanyaro.

"It is my expectation that this grant will increasingly boost existing relationships for the benefit of both parties, DCB as banking services provider and development stakeholder on one hand, and your municipal council as our key stakeholder," said the DCB chief.



Mayor of Ubungo municipal Jaffary Nyaigsha (standing) delivers his speech at a function to mark the presentation of 30 desks for Kiluvya Primary School at the weekend. Photo by Guardian Correspondent



The President of the Women Group of the Absa Bank Tanzania christened Redskirts, Irene Sengati-Giattas (R), presents a certificate of appreciation to the CEO of the Institute of Directors Tanzania (IoDT), Said Kambi, who was the Guest of Honour during celebrations to mark the International Women day in Dar es Salaam over the weekend, organized by the bank for some of its female customers. Centre is the Managing Director of Absa Bank, Abdi Mohamed. Photo by Guardian Correspondent

VIEW FROM THE TOP



Development of Epanko graphite project possible

By Guardian Reporter

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

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

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

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

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

Agreement."

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

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

"Ecograf advanced the company's natural flake graphite business, that is focused on the long-life, high quality Epanko, with positive progress on the Framework Agreement in support of the debt financing program for the initial Stage 1 - 60,000tpa development," the report says.

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

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

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

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

Ecograf reports that has received interest from a range of financial institutions, encouraged by the extensive level of project studies and de-risking undertaken by the company, the Equator Principles environmental and social planning, the significantly improved investment environment in Tanzania and the positive outlook for graphite demand and pricing.

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

Chrisjan Van Wyk has therefore been appointed to lead the development of Epanko and has over 20 years of project execution experience, either leading the owners

team or as the EPCM project manager, most recently as the project director for the A\$700 million Khoe-macau Copper project in Botswana.

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

Also, meetings have recently been held with Tanzania Electric Supply Company (TANESCO), Tanzania-Zambia Railway Authority (TAZARA) and Tanzania National Roads Agency (TANROADS) in relation to planned infrastructure developments.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

TaCRI implements action plan for improving coffee competitiveness in market

By Correspondent Valentine Oforo, Dodoma

THE Tanzania Coffee Research Institute (TaCRI) is implementing fourth phase of a special Strategic Action Plan (SAP) meant to heighten Tanzania's coffee sector competitiveness in the world market.

The SAP focuses on increasing value addition for coffee products, reducing production cost for the coffee products, increasing income and livelihoods to the coffee farmers.

"We're implementing this strategic plan for an array of reasons, but chiefly to help improve the coffee sector's contribution towards the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) while making sure the farmers improves productivity as well as their livelihoods," according to TaCRI's Chief Executive Director, Dr Deuseddit Kilambo.

Dr. Kilambo said TaCRI had conducted several research to empower coffee farmers across the country to heighten their production and productivity, the development which have so far started to fetch fruitful results.

"Majority of the coffee farmers who have adopted research results disseminat-

ed by TaCRI are producing organic coffee as new coffee varieties do not require routine application of fungicides to control coffee diseases. Other recommendations to manage damage by coffee insect pests involve use of traps and botanicals, these help to reduce application of industrial insecticides," Dr. Kilambo said.

Tacri is also working to strengthen coffee extension services towards the farmers, saying the move will result in a positive impact on adoption of numerous agro-technologies being researched, introduced and disseminated by the Moshi-based Coffee Research Institute.

"This will also enhance effectiveness because of coherence with TaCRI's mandate ending up seeing positive performance of the Institute," he observed.

Together with that, Dr. Kilambo unveiled a positive trend in the country's coffee growing sector, saying the Institute has succeeded to extend cultivation of the cash crop in some new regions and districts, including Katavi and Geita regions, Serengeti District in Mara Region and Kakonko District in Kigoma region.

"Our research has proved that the new mentioned ar-

reas have useful potential for the production of healthier coffee beans, the revelation which currently allows the country to expand scope of its coffee production," he observed.

Apart from fetching numerous progress, Dr. Kilambo noted that the Institute was however still troubled with several constraints.

"Stakeholder's contribution is currently considered as a major funding source for the Institute but our major focus is now to continue working harder to reduce donor dependence and to open a fresh chapter in which contributions to TaCRI will largely be sourced from increased volume of coffee production and prices in local and international markets," he stated.

He said dramatic changes in coffee prices may affect financially sustainable support to TaCRI, noting that the state-owned Institute was taking other serious measures to ensure stability in financial resources such as discovering internal avenues of getting funds from internal activities.

Objective of TaCRI is to rejuvenate the Tanzania coffee industry by placing new emphasis on the role of stakeholder-led and client demand-driven research for development.



Dr. Deuseddit Kilambo, the CEO at the Tanzania Coffee Research Institute, admires coffee beans at one of coffee plantations located in Ngerengere JKT, Tarime District in Mara Region. Photo: Correspondent Valentine Oforo.

WORLD

Britain's Sunak boosts defence spending to try to silence critics

SAN DIEGO

PRIME Minister Rishi Sunak will spend an extra 5 billion pounds (\$6 billion) to replenish ammunition stocks and fund the next phase of a submarine pact with the United States and Australia in an update to Britain's foreign policy framework.

With his government unveiling the update to Britain's national security and international policy, Sunak, on a visit to the US, will also set out an "ambition" to increase defense spending to 2.5 percent of gross domestic product in the longer term.

Sunak hailed the move as a way "to ensure we are never again vulnerable to

the actions of a hostile power", but his offer of 5 billion pounds is less than half of what some in his governing Conservative Party say is needed to be able to support Ukraine, while not leaving Britain vulnerable.

He said his previous increases to defense spending showed he was a man of his word, and described the new commitments as a "strong and positive statement".

"As the world becomes more volatile and competition between the states becomes more intense, the UK must be ready to stand our ground," he said in a statement.

"We will fortify our national defenses, from economic security to technology



Britain's Prime Minister Rishi Sunak leaves 10 Downing Street to go to the House of Commons for his weekly Prime Minister's Questions in London, March 1, 2023. (PHOTO / AP)

supply chains and intelligence expertise, to ensure we are never again vulnerable to the actions of a hostile power."

The Ministry of Defence said minister Ben Wallace was "delighted" with the settlement, especially in the tough economic times, and said it would maintain the upward trajectory after the government invested heavily in recent years.

The unveiling of the updated Integrated Review has been choreographed to coincide with Sunak's visit to San Diego to agree the next steps in a landmark defense agreement,

AUKUS, with the United States and Australia.

Sunak is under pressure at home to offer more help to the defense ministry to combat the impact of inflation and spur production of ammunition and other military hardware to replace weapons sent to Ukraine.

Britain and other Western countries have scaled up their pledges of military aid for Ukraine this year, with promises of tanks and armored vehicles, as well as longer-range weapons. London has also offered to train Ukrainian soldiers on fighter jets.

Agencies

Xi cherishes people's trust in NPC closing meeting speech

BEIJING

CHINESE President Xi Jinping delivered a speech yesterday morning at the closing meeting of the first session of the 14th National People's Congress (NPC), the country's national legislature.

Xi said yesterday that the people's trust is the biggest motivation that drives him to march on and a great responsibility he shoulders.

"I will faithfully fulfill my responsibilities bestowed by the Constitution, with the nation's needs as my mission and the people's interests my yardstick," he said when addressing the legislature.

Xi pledged to perform his duty scrupulously, do his utmost, and prove worthy of the trust of all NPC deputies and the Chinese people of all ethnic groups.

"The relay baton of building a great modern socialist country and advancing national rejuvenation has been historically passed on to our generation," he said. Xi stressed accelerating Chinese modernization in accordance with the strategic decisions made at the 20th CPC National Congress.

Xi urged efforts to actively develop whole-process people's democracy, and to uphold the unity of the leadership of the Communist Party of China, the running of the country by the people, and law-based governance.

CPC leadership

Xi stressed upholding the leadership of the Communist Party of China (CPC) and the centralized, unified leadership of the CPC Central Committee.

It is important to stay alert and determined to tackle the special challenges that a large party like the CPC faces, Xi said while addressing the closing meeting of the first session of the 14th National People's Congress.

He underlined the importance of always having the courage to carry out self-reform, conducting full and rigorous Party self-governance unceasingly, and fighting corruption resolutely.

High-quality development & security

China will unswervingly advance high-quality development on the new journey of building a great modern socialist country and advancing the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation, Xi said Monday.

The country should fully and faithfully apply the new development philosophy on all fronts and accelerate efforts to create a new pattern of development, Xi said.

He called for fully implementing the strategy for invigorating China through science and education, the workforce development strategy and the innovation-driven development strategy.



China should work to achieve greater self-reliance and strength in science and technology, promote industrial transformation and upgrading, advance coordinated urban-rural and regional development, and foster green and low-carbon economic and social development, Xi said.

"Security is the bedrock of development, while stability is a prerequisite for prosperity," Xi said. He underscored the need to pursue a holistic approach to national security and also demanded efforts to advance the modernization of national defense and armed forces on all fronts, and build the people's armed forces into a "Great Wall of steel".

Shared future for humanity
China will make efforts to pro-

mote the building of a community with a shared future for humanity, Xi said Monday. China's development benefits the world and China cannot develop in isolation from the rest of the world, Xi said when addressing the closing meeting of the first session of the 14th NPC.

Stressing that China will make concrete efforts to advance high-standard opening up, Xi said the country will not only leverage global markets and resources for its own development, but also promote the development of the whole world.

"We will be dedicated to peace, development, cooperation, and mutual benefit, stand firmly on the right side of history, practice true multilateralism, and uphold the shared values of humanity," Xi said.

Xinhua

He added that China will play an active part in the reform and development of the global governance system.

'One country, two systems'

Xi stressed solid efforts in advancing the practice of "one country, two systems" and the cause of national reunification.

He stressed the need to fully, faithfully and resolutely implement the policy of "one country, two systems," under which the people of Hong Kong administer Hong Kong and the people of Macao administer Macao, both with a high degree of autonomy. Xi underscored the importance of remaining committed to law-based governance in Hong Kong and Macao, and supporting the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR) and the Macao SAR in growing their economies, improving their people's lives, and better integrating themselves into the country's overall development.

He stressed adhering to the one-China principle and the 1992 Consensus, actively promoting the peaceful development of cross-Straits relations, resolutely opposing external interference and "Taiwan independence" separatist activities, and firmly advancing the process of national reunification.

Xinhua

Ukrainian part of grain deal effective, Russian agricultural exports blocked, says diplomat

MOSCOW

THE Ukrainian part of the grain deal is working effectively, while Russian agricultural exports continue to be blocked as a result of unilateral Western sanctions, Russian Foreign Ministry Spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said on Sunday, commenting on the potential extension of the grain deal.



"Our position in general on the 'package' proposal of UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres, an integral part of which, in addition to the abovementioned Black Sea initiative, is the Russia-UN memorandum on the normalization of domestic agricultural exports, is known and remains unchanged.

We assume that the agreements signed in Istanbul on July 22, 2022 should be implemented in conjunction with each other to solve the humanitarian tasks of overcoming the food crisis and helping the needy countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America," the diplomat said. "We note that so far only the Ukrainian part has been effectively implemented, whereas the Russian agricultural export continues to be blocked as a result of Western unilateral sanctions."

According to Zakharova (pictured), the next round of consultations of an interdepartmental Russian delegation with Secretary-General of UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) Rebeca Grynspan and Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator (OCHA) head Martin Griffiths, who oversee the UN-Russia memorandum and the Black Sea Initiative respectively, will take place in Geneva on March 13.

The Foreign Ministry Spokeswoman pointed out that Russia was aware of the statements of various parties, including the Kiev regime, regarding the extension of the Black Sea Initiative, the second term of which was set to expire on March 18.

"There have been no negotiations on this matter, especially with the participation of Russian representatives," she pointed out.

Agencies

Storm Freddy triggers floods in Malawi, killing at least 11

BLANTYRE

AT least 11 people have died and 16 are missing around Malawi's second-largest city Blantyre after tropical storm Freddy brought torrential rains that triggered floods and landslides, police said yesterday.

Freddy, one of the strongest storms ever recorded in the southern hemisphere, is believed to also be the longest-lasting tropical cyclone, with the previous record held by a 31-day hurricane in 1994, according to the World Meteorological Organization.

It pummeled Mozambique for the second time in a month as a cyclone over the weekend before weakening as it moved inland towards Malawi.

The full extent of the damage and loss of life in Mozambique is not yet clear, as the power supply and phone signals were cut off in the affected area.

Malawi police spokesman Peter Kalaya told Reuters that the number of people killed and missing because of Freddy was likely to grow as it had affected 10 districts and so far numbers were only in Blantyre.

He said rescue teams were looking for people in Chilobwe and Ndirande, two of the worst affected townships in Blantyre, where it was still raining on Monday and most residents were without power.

"Some missing people are feared buried in rubble and our team is working with other cooperating national agencies," Kalaya said.

Mozambique's public broadcaster TVM reported that one person was killed near the port of Quelimane when their house collapsed, bringing the number killed to at least 28 in Mozambique and Madagascar since Freddy first made landfall last month.

Mozambique has received more than a year's worth of rainfall in the past four weeks, and there has been concern that Freddy could cause rivers to burst in its path.

Scientists say climate change is making tropical storms stronger, as oceans absorb much of the heat from greenhouse gas emissions and when warm seawater evaporates heat energy is transferred to the atmosphere.



The full extent of the damage and loss of life in Mozambique is not yet clear, as the power supply and phone signals were cut off in the affected

People's Daily

BBC seeks to end crisis by reinstating Gary Lineker

LONDON

BRITAIN'S BBC said sports presenter Gary Lineker would return on air after the corporation agreed to review its social media guidelines to settle an escalating row over its impartiality.

The BBC was forced to axe much of its sports coverage over the weekend after presenters, commentators and pundits refused to work in a show of solidarity with



Lineker (pictured), who was suspended for criticizing the government's immigration policy on Twitter.

The BBC said Lineker had breached its impartiality rules by comparing the rhetoric of Britain's interior minister Suella Braverman to the language used in 1930s Germany.

But its decision to take him off air led to charges that it had bowed to pressure from the government.

The corporation said on Monday it would now hold a review over how presenters can use social media, with a particular focus on how it applies to freelancers outside news and current affairs.

"Gary is a valued part of the BBC and I know how much the BBC means to Gary, and I look forward to him presenting our coverage this coming weekend," BBC Director General Tim Davie said in a statement yesterday.

Agencies

China to benefit world with more sci-tech innovation achievements

SCI-TECH innovation remained one of the important topics that received wide attention from the international society during this year's "two sessions," the annual gatherings of the National People's Congress and the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference.

As international sci-tech cooperation faces impacts and challenges from unilateralism and protectionism pursued by a few countries, China, while working to improve its capability in sci-tech innovation, is committed to launching sci-tech cooperation with other countries, for which it has won wide applause.

China is constantly making important

original sci-tech achievements today.

China's space station, Tiangong, features a basic three-module configuration consisting of the core module, Tianhe, and two lab modules, Wentian and Mengtian. It is designed to be a versatile space lab, capable of accommodating 25 experiment cabinets for scientific exploration.

China has achieved rapid quantum computer development, with the launches of "Jiuzhang," "Zuchongzhi," and "Zuchongzhi 2" in recent years. Similar to conventional computers, quantum computers also need software to manage hardware devices, run applications, and provide a user interface.

Claudia Vernotti, co-founder and director of Belgian non-profit organization ChinaEU, said that China's progress in sci-tech innovation is very impressive, from the top-level design to the translation of achievements and to the innovation in commercial models.

If there is a lush forest, giant trees naturally grow there, and China has long been nurturing forests, said a recent report by Russian media outlet RIA Novosti.

China has always placed sci-tech innovation in a central place in its development strategy. It follows a path of independent innovation with Chinese characteristics. The importance at-

tached by the country on sci-tech innovation, the frequency of policies it has issued to promote sci-tech innovation and the efforts it has made to advance sci-tech innovation are unprecedented.

China's gross domestic expenditure on R&D increased to 3.09 trillion yuan (\$449 billion) last year, from 1 trillion yuan in 2012. It accounted for 2.55 percent of the country's GDP, up from 1.91 percent during the same period. The number of R&D personnel rose from 3.25 million in 2012 to over 6 million in 2022. The Chinese mainland has climbed to 11th place on the Global Innovation Index 2022 released by the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), from 34th in

2012. The steady progress in the 10-year period is incomparable among all upper middle-income economies.

"China's growth (in GII ranking) from 34th ten years ago to 11th (in 2022) ... is really spectacular. The close attention paid by the government and the country to innovation as an engine of growth is paying off," WIPO Director General Daren Tang said at the press launch of GII 2022.

"The Chinese government takes IP (intellectual property) very seriously. They have five-year strategic plans in which they are able to harmonize IP policy making with all the related elements. China nurtures its innovation ecosystem in a holistic, comprehensive manner," he

said. To achieve greater self-reliance and strength in science and technology is a path that China must take to promote high-quality development.

Education, science and technology, and human resources are the foundational and strategic pillars for building a modern socialist country in all respects. China regards science and technology as its primary productive force, talent as its primary resource, and innovation as its primary driver of growth. It has fully implemented the strategy for invigorating China through science and education, the workforce development strategy, and the innovation-driven development strategy.

Suspected Islamist militants kill 19 in village raid in Congo

BENI

Suspected Islamist militants killed at least 19 people and burned a medical facility in a raid on a village in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo early on Sunday morning, two regional officials and a resident said.

The attack, which occurred around 1 am (2300 GMT) in the village of Kirindera in North Kivu province, took place just a few kilometers from another attack on a village that killed at least 35 people last week.

The army blamed last week's attack on the Allied Democratic Forces, a Ugandan armed group based in eastern Congo that has pledged allegiance to Islamic State. A resident of a nearby village and a member of local civil society blamed Sunday's attack on the ADF.

"The ADF arrived, they set fire to a hospital after looting it with medicines, and they set fire to a hotel," said Sadame Patanguli, the resident.

He said the militants kidnapped several others, who are now missing. The details of the burned buildings and the death toll were confirmed by two regional officials.

The ADF was created in Uganda before moving to eastern Congo in the 1990s, and has been blamed for thousands of deaths in the last decade.

The killings have continued despite efforts by the army, which is also fighting the rebel group M23, whose offensive in recent months has displaced 600,000 people. Congo says the group is backed by neighboring Rwanda, which Rwanda denies.

Meanwhile, public support for the United Nations' peacekeeping mission in eastern Congo, known as MONUSCO, has plummeted because of what local residents say is its inability to stem the violence.

A delegation from the UN Security Council toured North Kivu this weekend, including to a camp for displaced people.

"There are no magic solutions, it's not the United Nations that will solve the problem on its own," said Nicolas de Riviere, the French ambassador to the UN. "We need a political negotiation, we need a security solution."

Xinhua

Hundreds of migrants try to enter US at Mexico border

CIUDAD JUAREZ

US officials stopped hundreds of mostly Venezuelan migrants entering the country from Mexico on Sunday after a large group broke through Mexican lines to demand asylum in the US, only to be thwarted by barbed wire, barriers and shields.

Frustrated with problems securing appointments to seek asylum using a new US government app, the migrants gathered at the frontier in the Mexican border city of Ciudad Juarez, but could not breach the crossing connecting the two countries.

Many of the migrants had small children with them.

At one point, some migrants attempted to hurl an orange, plastic barrier at the US line, Reuters images show. Some people said pepper spray was deployed to repel them.

"Please, we just want to get in so we can help our families," said Camila Paz, an 18-year-old Venezuelan, sobbing heavily. "So I can have a future and help my family."

Neither US Customs and Border Protection nor the Mexican government's national migration authority immediately replied to requests for comment.

After some pushing and shoving with the officials, the crowd of migrants eventually withdrew, with some heading down to the banks of the Rio Grande where they were monitored by US immigration officials arrayed on the other side.

Many migrants have become fed up with the asylum process since the Biden administration made an app called CBP One available to them that was meant to streamline applications.

They say the app is beset by persistent glitches and high demand, leaving them in limbo in perilous border regions.

The US Department of Homeland Security has said recent app updates will simplify and speed up the process.

Agencies

Queensland residents warned about crocodiles amid flooding

SYDNEY

WITH major flooding still occurring in Burketown and the Gregory River, the police force in the Australian state of Queensland yesterday reminded residents to limit movement in floodwaters due to unseen hazards and recent crocodile sightings.

"Police rescued a baby kangaroo from floodwaters behind a residential community in Burketown yesterday. A helicopter pilot flew over at the time and spotted two very large crocs nearby, a timely reminder to stay out of floodwaters as you never know what is lurking beneath," Queensland Police Service warned on social media. In an update on the severe weather event affecting northwestern Queensland, the state police said sewage and water treatment plants in Burketown are now offline, with residents instructed to conserve water usage and continue to monitor advice from local councils.

As significant flooding is surging downstream of Urandangi to Roxborough Downs, police are closely monitoring the situation in Urandangi, with 16 people so far evacuated from the town in preparation for rising floodwaters. According to the police, air assets are stationed nearby and on standby for emergency rescues and transport of food, water and medical supplies.

Days of heavy rainfall led to major to record-breaking floodings through parts of northwestern Queensland.

"No observations are available for the Burketown Airstrip manual gauge. Based on anecdotal information from Burketown, the river level is expected to have peaked above the 2011 record flood level of 6.78 meters on Sunday," said the Australian Bureau of Meteorology (BOM).

Russia insists on objective investigation into Nord Streams sabotage – security chief

MOSCOW

MOSCOW insists that an objective international investigation with its participation should be carried out on the Nord Streams sabotage. The one-sided versions being heard now do little to explain anything, Russian Security Council Secretary Nikolay Patrushev said.

"I emphasize that any accusations that are not supported by the results of an impartial investigation cannot be trusted. Therefore, Moscow insists on an objective investigation with the participation of Russia and other interested countries. Without this, voicing one-sided subjective versions of the terrorist attack does not explain anything," he told the Argumenty i Fakty weekly on Monday.

According to Patrushev, Russia still did not know for certain who was behind the terrorist attacks at the Nord Stream gas pipelines, and the country has not been included in the investigation of this "unprecedented terrorist act".

He stressed that the situation was also complicated by the planting of a fake leak published without any reference to the real source.

"Resolving to cover up the true patrons of the crime, the pro-government Anglo-Saxon media, following orders from above, laid the blame on a certain group of Ukrainian terrorists.

In essence, they once again pointed to the terrorist nature of the current Kiev regime. At the same time, the authors of the information campaign thought that no one would object to this version," the Russian Security Council Secretary stressed.

In his opinion, the idea that the US and the UK were not involved in the terrorist attack "is obviously driven by the calculation that the audience lacks the ability to think logically, including the method of denial."

"Since newspapers are emotionally claiming that the act of sabotage was carried out by a group of Ukrainian terrorists, the question to ask is whether such a group exists at all and if it's capable of doing such things. It's no secret that activities like this require special ops units that are properly trained and equipped," Patrushev noted.

According to the security chief, the US and England certainly have such capabilities. Other NATO countries also use combat swimmers for sabotage tasks but only "with the consent and support of the country that determines the main agenda for NATO," the official explained.

Who benefits

Patrushev also suggested considering who benefited from the attack. "Were the blasts advantageous for Ukraine or Germany? Kiev neither lost nor gained anything from the gas pipeline destruction. Moreover, such an act is not advantageous for the Zelensky regime, which actually begs Berlin to give more military and other aid, and has no use for such an act," he said.

Germany, who for many years has been trying to build its economy based on a combination of cheap energy resources from Russia and advanced German technology, knows better than anyone else that the attack on the pipeline would definitely lead the economy of Germany to a further decline, added the Secretary of the Russian Federation.



Russian Security Council Secretary Nikolay Patrushev

At the same time, Berlin is well aware that close economic cooperation between Germany and Russia has never satisfied Washington and London," he recalled.

Along with that, Patrushev pointed out that it has long been clear that today's German state was not independent: Washington imposed its economic and environmental policy on Berlin and kept a 35,000-strong military contingent on its territory. "It is known that for many years the White House controlled [former German Chancellor] Angela Merkel, and today it is forcing the German leadership to go along with the US authorities' version of the pipeline sabotage.

Perhaps that is why [German Chancellor Olaf] Scholz was urgently summoned to Washington for a meeting with [US President Joe] Biden. By doing so, the US con-

tinues to humiliate Germany, showing it its place," he concluded.

In 2021, a number of media outlets in Germany, Denmark and Sweden reported that Danish intelligence agencies were helping the US National Security Agency spy on European politicians.

The scandal began back in 2013, when the Der Spiegel weekly published the revelations of former CIA employee Edward Snowden.

Since then, the story has only grown in scope. It turned out that US intelligence had been spying on thousands of targets in Europe for years, bugged citizens of Germany and even connected to Angela Merkel's phone several times when she was chancellor.

About Nord Streams explosions

Nord Stream AG reported that three threads of the Nord Stream 1 and 2 offshore gas pipelines had suffered unprecedented

damage on September 27. Swedish seismologists later revealed that two explosions had been recorded along the Nord Stream pipelines on September 26.

After that, investigators from Russia's Federal Security Service initiated a probe into this act of international terrorism in connection with the explosions.

On February 8, Seymour Hersh, an American journalist who specializes in investigative reporting, stated in an article, citing a source, that explosive devices had been planted under the Russian gas pipelines in June 2022 under the cover of the Baltops exercise by US Navy divers supported by Norwegian experts.

According to Hersh, the decision to conduct the operation was made by US President Joe Biden after nine months of discussions with administration officials involved in national security issues.

In response to a TASS request, White House National Security Council Spokesperson Adrienne Watson slammed the version presented by Hersh as "utterly false and complete fiction".

Last week, the New York Times, citing US officials, reported that the sabotage of the gas pipelines could have been carried out by some 'pro-Ukrainian group' that acted without the knowledge of US authorities.

According to the Die Zeit newspaper, German investigators identified the vessel used by the saboteurs. The company that rented it allegedly belonged to Ukrainian citizens and was registered in Poland. **Agencies**

China willing to continue playing constructive role in improving relations - top diplomat

CHINA, Iran and Saudi Arabia released a joint statement on Friday saying Iran and Saudi Arabia have agreed to re-establish ties and reopen embassies within two months after a negotiation meeting in Beijing.

The news came Friday night attracting worldwide attention, and is seen as a breakthrough in bilateral relations for longtime regional foes Iran and Saudi Arabia. Some analysts praised the efforts made by the two countries and China in seeking peaceful settlements of disputes amid global growing uncertainties.

On Friday, Wang Yi, director of the Office of the Foreign Affairs Commission of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee held the meeting between the Iran delegation headed by Ali Shamkhani, Secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council and the Saudi Arabia delegation headed by Musaad bin Mohammed Al-Aliban, Minister of State, Member of the Council of Ministers, and National Security Advisor of Saudi Arabia. The joint statement was released after the meeting.

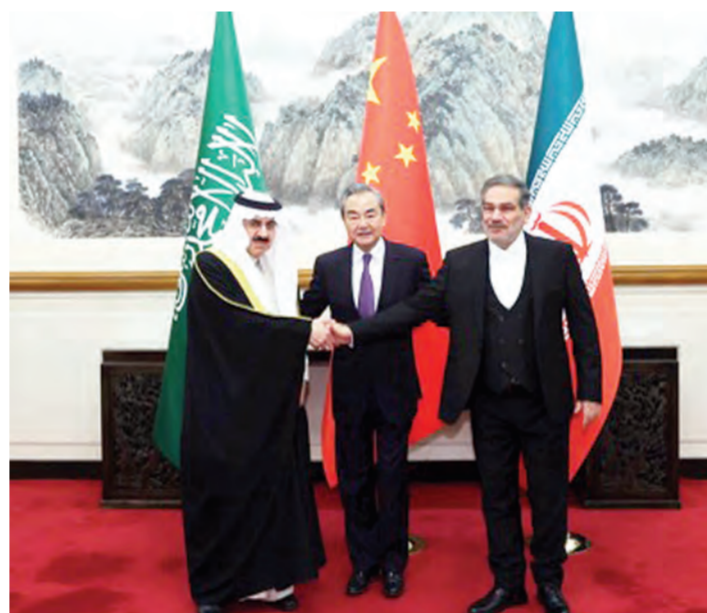
As per the joint statement reached by the three countries, Iran and Saudi Arabia have agreed to resume diplomatic relations within two months and reopen embassies and agencies in both countries. The foreign ministers of the two countries are to hold talks aimed at implementing the decision and make the necessary arrangements for the exchange of ambassadors.

Stressing respect for sovereignty and non-interference in each other's internal affairs, the two countries agreed to implement the agreement on security cooperation signed on April 17, 2001, and the general agreement reached on May 27, 1998, aimed at fostering ties in economic, commercial, investment, technical, scientific, cultural, sports, and youth arenas.

The three countries also expressed firm resolve to make every effort to strengthen regional and international peace and security. Wang congratulated the two countries on taking a "historic step" in improving bilateral relations. The two countries have also laid the foundation for follow-up work by outlining the timetable for dealing with each side's concerns.

Wang told reporters on Friday that the Iran-Saudi Arabia talks in Beijing have achieved a significant outcome and are a victory of dialogue and peace, bringing very good news to an unsettled world.

Wang also noted that the outcome sent a clear signal that the Ukraine crisis is not the only problem in the world and there are many issues concerning peace and people's livelihood that call for global attention and proper handling.



As announced by China on March 10, 2023, Saudi Arabia and Iran, the latter two have reached a deal which includes the agreement to resume diplomatic relations and reopen embassies and missions within two months. Photo: Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs

No matter how complicated or thorny some issues are, maintaining the spirit of mutual respect to seek equal dialogue can help each side reach a settlement. Wang also stressed that the Middle East belongs to local people and the region's destiny should be held fast in the hands of peoples in the region's countries. They can build a more stable, peaceful and prosperous Middle East by strengthening coordination.

The improvement in Iran-Saudi Arabia relations is of great importance not only to the region and the Islamic world, but also to the world - it injects some certainty to the Middle East as the world is still feeling the impact of the Russia-Ukraine conflict and boosts confidence in peace and development. Zhu Yongbiao, executive director of the Research Center for the Belt and Road at Lanzhou University, told the Global Times on Friday.

The breakthrough may bring an amplifying effect to the region, encouraging more regional countries to alter previous hostile foreign policies and seek possible cooperation with a more inclusive mentality to create more room for regional development, said Zhu.

By improving relations, Iran and Saudi Arabia have opened the door to peace in the Middle East, and set an example for settling disputes via dialogues. As a trustworthy friend of both Iran and Saudi Arabia, China is willing to continue playing a constructive role, Wang said.

The dialogue is also a successful application of the Global Security Initiative. As a kind and trustworthy mediator, China has fulfilled its responsibility as a host and will carry on being a constructive player in promoting the proper handling of global heated issues in accordance with each side's willingness, said Wang.

Ali Shamkhani and Musaad bin Mohammed Al-Aliban also spoke highly of China's major country diplomacy and expressed appreciation to China for hosting and promoting the meeting, and said they are willing to implement the consensus reached at the meeting to strengthen the neighborhood and jointly defend regional stability.

On top of the great efforts made by Iran and Saudi Arabia to make the breakthrough, China has also contributed to coordinating regional countries in settling thorny issues. This also highlights China's increasing influence in the region and globally, said Zhu.

Global Times

Mask mandate scrapped in Japan as govt eases COVID guidelines

TOKYO

THE smiles and screams at Tokyo Disneyland may be more obvious yesterday as the amusement park and much of Japan relaxed face mask norms that have defied the three-year COVID-19 pandemic.

Disney park operator Oriental Land Co, East Japan Railway Co and cinema operator Toho Co are among the major companies allowing patrons to go maskless starting Monday, based on revised government guidance announced last month.

But a rapid behavioral change is unlikely, given a long history of mask usage in Japan and a pollen onslaught that has given hay fever sufferers one of the worst spring seasons in years.

"Mask-wearing was part of our culture even before COVID-19," said Hitoshi Oshitani, a Tohoku University professor who was an architect of Japan's COVID response. "I think many people will be wearing masks even after the rules are relaxed."

Japan is one of the last major economies to relax official guidance on the coverings, whose usage has been nearly universal throughout the country even without firm regulations or penalties governing their use.

South Korea dialed back most requirements on indoor masking in January, while Singapore allowed bare faces on public transport last month. The United States and England halted most mask mandates early last year.

Japan has already eased norms on masks, allowing maskless

speeches in parliament and permitting schools to decide whether to require them at commencement ceremonies this month.

Chief government spokesman Hirokazu Matsuno said last week that masks would no longer be required at Cabinet meetings starting yesterday and that decisions on the coverings would be left up to individual workplaces.

"As of today, mask wearing is at the discretion of each individual," Tokyo Governor Yuriko Koike told reporters on Monday. "However, hay fever is also a pretty intense this season, so I think it boils down to the fact that you can wear them for different reasons."

Japan's COVID vaccination rate stands at more than 80 percent and cases have ebbed after an eighth wave of infections that peaked in early January.

Health experts in Japan have pointed to widespread mask use along with an embrace of hygiene and social distancing for the country's relatively lower death toll from COVID.

Kyoto University professor Hiroshi Nishiura, one of the more conservative voices among Japan's pandemic response experts, said that voluntary masking on public transport and in other spaces could have a continuing benefit in protecting against infection.

"That could have been incorporated as part of our daily habit," he said. "The governmental decision in this time spoiled that intent."

Agencies



Sports awards to spur athletes to ascend to stratospheric heights

By Correspondent Lloyd Elipokea

IN any walk of life, accolades unarguably serve as a strong motivation for professionals to perform to the very best of their abilities.

In a sporting context, a few of the most renowned gongs globally that are eagerly coveted on an annual basis include the Ballon d'Or prize in football and the Laureus World Sports Awards which bestow accolades on the most exceptional athletes across the sporting spectrum.

Strangely enough, Dear Reader, it is hard to think of a time in the 21st century when we have had such a huge prize-giving ceremony to reward the leading lights in various sports on our shores.

Nevertheless, come this Friday at the regularly visited Mlimani City complex, that dissatisfying status quo is set to change as the National Sports Council (NSC) is due to confer awards on the best sportsmen and sportswomen in the country.

Pleasingly, in a bid to ensure complete transparency, a special NSC committee will work hand in hand with local sports associations to draw up a shortlist of three nominees who will be vying for each accolade in both the male and female categories.

In addition, prizes will be given to the best teams that excelled in international competitions and to the athletes with disabilities who were a cut above the rest.

At this juncture, one would like to heartily commend the NSC for this laudable move, which will hopefully inspire our sportsmen to dramatically improve their displays in their chosen sports.

Speaking of inspiration, something magical must be in the air in Senegal as her national men's football teams are presently ruling the roost in continental football.

Indeed, the Senegalese nation-



Tanzania's Yanga forward, Kennedy Musonda, dribbles past Mali's AS Real Bamako defender when the clubs took each other in the 2022/23 CAF Confederation Cup Group D match played at Benjamin Mkapa Stadium in Dar es Salaam last Wednesday. Yanga garnered a 2-0 victory. PHOTO: COURTESY OF YANGA

al U-20 football team downed Gambia 2-0 in the U-20 AFCON final last Saturday in Cairo to hoist aloft the trophy for the first time.

Lest we forget, it should also be noted that the Teranga Lions (Senegal's nickname) clinched the senior men's football AFCON finals title last year, which also marked their first-ever triumph at the showpiece event.

This era of Senegalese dominance in African football is reminiscent of the country's sublime showings at the 2002 FIFA World Cup when they outstandingly advanced to the quarterfinals after sensationally beating reigning world champions France 1-0 in their opening match.

Thus, having now qualified

for the FIFA U-20 World Cup in Indonesia later this year, the million-dollar question confronting Senegal is, will they be able to put their best foot forward at the perpetually exciting youth football spectacle?

Unfortunately, the jury is still out on whether the Teranga Cubs (Senegal's U-20 football team) can brilliantly take the FIFA U-20 World Cup by storm.

That notwithstanding, though, one can quite confidently state that the Teranga Cubs will doubtlessly make every effort to leave their mark on the hugely anticipated championship.

Let us now switch our focus back to the local scene where the country's two football behemoths Simba SC and Yanga

were in continental football action mid-last week.

Indeed, Simba SC hosted the Ugandan side Vipers SC in a 2022/23 CAF Champions League Group Stage duel last Tuesday and, to the sheer ecstasy of their teeming fans, they edged out Vipers SC in a 1-0 victory.

Happily, for Yanga devotees, their club was also able to claim the scalp of Malian outfit, AS Real Bamako, in what was a pleasing 2-0 triumph.

It will be mightily interesting then to see whether Simba SC and Yanga can maintain their winning ways in their ensuing matches in the CAF Champions League and CAF Confederation Cup respectively.

Tanzania now ends third in 2023 EA Junior Athletics Championships

By Correspondent Joseph Mchekadona

TANZANIA has settled for third place in the just-ended East and Central African Region (EAAR) Junior Athletics Championships which took place at Benjamin Mkapa Stadium in Dar es Salaam.

This year's edition, bringing together U-18 and U-20 athletes, involved six nations, namely Kenya, Uganda, South Sudan, Somalia, Zanzibar, and the host Mainland Tanzania.

Kenya emerged as the overall winner with 13 gold medals, five silver medals, and one bronze medal, followed by second-placed Zanzibar which collected one gold medal, three silver medals, and two bronze medals.

Mainland Tanzania collected one gold medal, four silver medals, and eight bronze medals to settle for the third spot. The host's medal was won by Arusha-based Eliah Chani in the long jump category, as the athletes posted 6m 29cm.

Uganda ended fourth with one silver medal and two bronze medals, South Sudan came fifth after recording one silver and one bronze medal, followed by Somalia which ended without winning any medals.

Athletics Tanzania (AT) vice-president William Kallaghe, speaking during the showdown's closing ceremony, thanked all nations which battled it out in the showpiece and those who made it a success.

He said the EAAR Junior Championships are vital for the development of athletics in the region, hence the need to put much emphasis.

"We are very thankful to all Nations which took part in this Championships, this has been very successful mainly because of the commitment of the organizing committee and all stakeholders."

"We also particularly thank the government for making this stadium available for us and supporting us in other needed areas," he said.

He asked all EAAR member nations to start preparations for the African Junior Athletics Championships which will take place in Zambia later this year.

Jackson Tuwei, the EAAR Athletics Chairman, hailed tremendous athletics development initiatives set up by EAAR member states.

He said the region has a lot of world-class athletes due to its efforts in coordinating youth programs.

The official revealed: "We are doing a lot in athletics and we must

keep up, it is good and currently our region is on top in terms of athletics."

Tuwei pointed out: "This was evidenced at the recent World Cross Country Championships in Australia where in the top 10 there were EAAR member countries namely Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania."

"This is a clear indication that we are doing great, now we should focus on the coming African Junior Athletics Championships," he said.

Tuwei, who is also Athletics Kenya (AK) president, however, lamented the absence of some EAAR member countries in the championships and appealed to them to take part in next year's event.

National Sports Council (NSC) Secretary-General Neema Msitha disclosed during the opening ceremony the government is committed to the development of athletics in the country.

"This is the second time for Tanzania to host the EAAR Junior Athletics Championships in a row, this is a clear indication that the government is committed to developing athletics in the country," she revealed.

"To you junior athletes, please work hard, never give up as nowadays sports is a big business, people are making a lot of money in sports but they all start at this stage and grow to become prominent and earn a lot of money, what is needed is to have big dreams," she said.

The showdown's opening day had AT enjoying a shot in the arm, as the body received financial backing totaling 3m/- from the National Bank of Commerce (NBC).

Kallaghe thanked the bank for the money and said it will help his association prepare athletes for the coming African Junior Athletics Championships.

Tanzania was represented by 19 athletes in the showdown. They were selected in the Open Junior Championships which took place at Benjamin Mkapa Stadium involving more than 200 junior athletes.

The 19 athletes are Siwema Julius, Shija Donald, Salma Samwel, Christian George, Elizabeth Kirario, Bravo George, Kimena Kibesa, Damian Christian, Fedelis Amadi, and Baraka Tulili.

Others are Gaudensia Manono, Elia Clement, Nicodemus Joseph, Nelson Mangura, Jackson Sylvester, Dickson Mangura, Malcom Kazmir, Emmanuel Amos, and Elizabeth Ilanda. The athletes were under the tutelage of Mwingi Mwanjala and Robert Kalyahe.

Mayay appointment in Commonwealth Advisory Body

By Correspondent Nassir Nchimbi

ACTING Director of Sports Development in the Ministry of Culture, Arts, and Sports, Ally Mayay, has been appointed to represent Tanzania in the Commonwealth Advisory Body on Sport (CABOS).

The official will for that matter become a representative member of the African continent.

The appointment of Mayay has come after Tanzania was appointed as a Member of the CABOS Board for three years from 2023-2025.

According to the information issued by Minister for Culture, Arts, and Sports Pindi Chana, the move is based on strengthening Tanzania in diplomacy including sports under the leadership of the sixth phase government led by President Samia Suluhu Hassan.

The CABOS is a tool used to advise the Secretary General of the Commonwealth of Nations and member governments to ensure

that there is strong government involvement and representation in the development of policies.

It moreover vouches for the implementation of such policies based on the values and expectations set out in the Charter of the Commonwealth.

Minister Pindi congratulated Mayay and wished the official a successful performance of the duties.

Sports fraternity members have therefore been requested to provide the necessary support to Mayay during his new responsibilities.

Mayay is, among others, a well-known sports pundit in the country who usually analyses football matches on Azam Television.

He is also Chairman of the Tanzania Football Legends Association (TFLA) which comprises former local football players.

Apart from playing for the senior national team, he played for Yanga and garnered a reputable record at the Jangwani Street-based club.



Aces B outfit's cricketer, Hamza Ally (C), gets the Man of the Match prize from a domestic senior cricketer upon completion of a recent Dar es Salaam Cricket (DC) competition's match between the side and Malabar Cricket Club (MCC) played at Leaders Club venue in Kinondoni. PHOTO: COURTESY OF DAR ES SALAAM CRICKET

BFT urged to hire qualified coaches for female boxers

By Correspondent Joseph Mchekadona

TANZANIA'S female boxers jetted off to India yesterday to take part in this year's edition of the International Boxing Association (IBA) Women's World Boxing Championships.

The two-week championships will take place in New Delhi from Wednesday.

Speaking at the national flag handover occasion in Dar es Salaam yesterday, Minister for Culture, Arts, and Sports Pindi Chana asked the two boxers to fly the flag high in the championships.

She said the government is happy that, for the first time, the country is taking part in the IBA Women's World Boxing Championships.

"We are happy that, for the first time, our country is taking part in the Women's World Box-

ing Championships, the government is committed to developing sports in the country and we will continue doing that," she said.

The boxers are Lightweight pugilist, Beatrice Nyambega, and Light Flyweight boxer, Rehema Maganga.

They have traveled with coach Samuel Kapungu, matron Aisha George, and leader of the delegation, Boxing Federation of Tanzania (BFT) president Lukeo Wililo.

Meanwhile, Pindi has advised the office of the Director of Sports Development in the Ministry of Culture, Arts, and Sports, to start looking for qualified coaches in priority sports disciplines. The priority sports disciplines are football, netball, basketball, boxing, swimming, and athletics.

The minister pointed out "We have started with football, the

government is paying for the expatriate coach and now we want to have expatriate coaches in other priority sports disciplines like netball, basketball, swimming, athletics, and boxing."

"I'm asking the Acting Director of Sports Development in the ministry to start looking for qualified coaches both local and international," she said.

Tanzania's representatives in this year's IBA Women's World Boxing Championships have been sponsored by National Sports Council (NSC) and IBA.

The pugilists' camp was sponsored by Africa Human Rights Network (AHRN) and Mbezi-based Oasis Village and Club Gym.

The IBA Women's World Boxing Championships started in Scranton, USA in 2001 and this year will have Tanzania sending its boxers to the championships for the first time.

This year's edition will see 350 women from 74 countries battle it out in the championships which will be held in 12 weight classes.

According to IBA, the opening ceremony will take place at the K.D. Jadhav Indoor Hall on Wednesday, with preliminaries and quarterfinals scheduled for March 16-23, and semi-finals would take place on March 25.

For the first time, IBA has confirmed a lucrative prize fund of US\$2.4m for the Women's World Boxing Championships.

According to IBA, gold medal winners in each of the 12 weight categories will receive US\$ 100,000, ensuring a bumper reward for finishing top of the podium.

Each of the boxers finishing as runners-up in their categories will collect US\$ 50,000, while boxers who claim bronze medals will each receive US\$25,000.

Arsenal cuts through Fulham; Casemiro sent off again in EPL

LONDON

CHANTS of "We're gonna win the league" boomed out of Arsenal's gleeful away contingent of fans at one end of Craven Cottage as their team piled up the goals against Fulham.

It's getting increasingly hard to argue against it.

Indeed, judging by their latest stylish victory, Arsenal's players showed they might even be embracing the pressure of capturing a first Premier League title since 2004.

They cut through Fulham time and again in a 3-0 win on Sunday to re-establish a five-point lead over second-place Manchester City, the reigning champion which isn't giving up the trophy easily.

Eleven games remain for both clubs in what is surely now a two-team race for the title.

That's because third-place Manchester United dropped 16 points off the pace with a 0-0 draw at home to last-place Southampton, which failed to fully capitalize on a first-half red card to United midfielder Casemiro.

It was the Brazil midfielder's second sending-off in his last three league games and will earn him a four-match ban – three of them to be served in the league. Given his importance, United could be vulnerable to the teams just below them.

Newcastle is one of them. The northeast club ignited its ambitions for Champions League qualification by beating Wolverhampton 2-1, ending a five-match winless run in the league.

Newcastle moved six points behind Man United in fifth place and has a game in hand. The two teams meet at St. James' Park this month, too.

SLICK ARSENAL

Three goals in a 26-minute burst in the first half saw Arsenal overwhelm Fulham, a week after the leaders needed a dramatic strike in the seventh minute of stoppage time to beat lowly Bournemouth at home.

Gabriel Magalhães, Gabriel Martinelli and Martin Odegaard were the scorers in Arsenal's fifth straight win, which was made much more comfortable by the absence of Fulham's suspended midfielder Joao Palhinha.

Leandro Trossard – a January signing who has quickly fitted in – benefited most from the extra space that Palhinha's absence allowed, providing the assist for all three goals.

City had applied pressure on Mikel Arteta's team by winning 1-0 at Crystal Palace on Saturday, briefly reducing the gap to two points.

There was further good news for Arsenal, with Brazil striker Gabriel Jesus coming off the bench in the 77th for his first appearance since undergoing surgery on Dec. 6 on a medial collateral ligament injury sustained during the World Cup.

"A perfect win," was how Trossard described it.

ANGRY TEN HAG

Man United manager Erik ten Hag could find himself in trouble after his criticism of referee Anthony Taylor following the draw with Southampton.

"This game was influenced by the referee," Ten Hag said after seeing Casemiro get another red card, this time for a studs-up challenge on Carlos Alcaraz that initially earned him a yellow card.

Taylor changed it to a red after the VAR advised him to look at the incident again on the pitchside monitor.

"When you freeze it, it looks bad," Ten Hag said, "but everyone who knows something about football ... they know what is bad and what isn't bad, what is fair."

"I tell you Casemiro is a really fair player." Southampton hit the goal frame through James Ward-Prowse – off a trademark curling free kick – and Kyle Walker-Peters, while United midfielder Bruno Fernandes had a long-range shot tipped onto the post by Southampton goalkeeper Gavin Bazunu.

United moved two points clear of fourth-place Tottenham and has a game in hand.

Southampton stayed in last place. The bottom nine teams in the league are separated by just five points.

ALMIRON'S WINNER

Miguel Almiron scored Newcastle's winner against Wolves in the 79th minute as his team moved above Liverpool.

Wolves substitute Hwang Hee-chan had canceled out the opener by Alexander Isak.

In the day's other match, West Ham drew 1-1 with Aston Villa to climb out of the relegation zone. Said Benrahma's penalty canceled out the opener by Ollie Watkins.

AP



The cast and crew of "Everything Everywhere All at Once" accepts the award for best picture at the Oscars on Sunday, March 12, 2023, at the Dolby Theatre in Los Angeles. (AP Photo)

'Everything' wins best picture, is everywhere at Oscars 2023

LOS ANGELES

THE metaphysical comedy "Everything Everywhere All at Once" wrapped its hot dog fingers around Hollywood's top prize Sunday, winning best picture at the 95th Academy Awards, along with awards for Michelle Yeoh, Ke Huy Quan and Jamie Lee Curtis.

Though worlds away from Oscar bait, Daniel Kwan and Daniel Scheinert's anarchic ballet of everything bagels, googly-eyed rocks and one messy tax audit emerged as an improbable Academy Awards heavyweight. The indie hit, A24's second best picture winner following "Moonlight," won seven Oscars in all. Only two other films in Oscar history – "A Streetcar Named Desire" and "Network" – won three acting Academy Awards.

Fifty years after "The Godfather" won at the Oscars, "Everything Everywhere All at Once" triumphed with a much different immigrant experience. Its eccentric tale about a Chinese immigrant family – just the second feature by the Daniels, as the filmmaking duo is known – blended science fiction and alternate realities in the story of an ordinary woman and laundromat owner.

"The world is changing rapidly and I fear our stories are not keeping that pace," said Kwan, who shared best director and best original screenplay with Scheinert. "Sometimes it's a little scary knowing that movies move at the rate of years and the world on the internet is moving at the rate of milliseconds. But I have great faith in our stories."

Yeoh became the first Asian woman to best actress, taking the award for her lauded performance in "Everything Everywhere All at Once." The 60-year-old Malaysian-born Yeoh won her first Oscar for a performance that relied as much on her comic and dramatic chops as it did her kung fu skills. It's the first best actress win for a non-white actress in 20 years.

"Ladies, don't let anyone ever tell you you're past your prime," said

Yeoh, who received a raucous standing ovation.

"Everything Everywhere," released all the way back in March 2022, helped revive arthouse cinemas after two years of pandemic, racking up more than \$100 million in ticket sales with scant initial expectations of Oscar glory. In winning best director, the Daniels – both 35 years old – are just the third directing pair to win the award, following Robert Wise and Jerome Robbins ("West Side Story") and Joel and Ethan Coen ("No Country for Old Men"). Scheinert dedicated the award "to the moms of the world."

Best actor went to Brendan Fraser, culminating the former action star's return to center stage for his physical transformation as a 600-lb. reclusive professor in "The Whale." The best-actor race had been one of the closest contests of the night, but Fraser in the end edged out Austin Butler.

"So this is what the multiverse looks like," said a clearly moved Fraser, pointing to the "Everything Everywhere All at Once" crew.

"Everything Everywhere All at Once," a shock of freshness in a movie industry awash in sequels and reboots, helped Hollywood turn the page from one of the most infamous moments in Oscar history: The Slap. Jimmy Kimmel, hosting for the third time, pledged a ceremony with "no nonsense."

He said anyone who wanted to "get jiggy with it" this year would have to come through a fearsome battalion of bodyguards, including Yeoh, Steven Spielberg and his show's "security guard" Guillermo Rodriguez.

The former child star Quan capped his own extraordinary comeback with the Oscar for best supporting actor for his performance in the indie hit "Everything Everywhere All at Once." Quan, beloved for his roles as Short Round in "Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom" and Data in "Goonies," had all but given up acting before being cast in "Everything Everywhere All at Once."

His win, among the most expected of the



The cast and crew of "Everything Everywhere All at Once" accepts the award for best picture at the Oscars on Sunday, March 12, 2023, at the Dolby Theatre in Los Angeles. (AP Photo)

night, was nevertheless one of the ceremony's most moving moments. The audience – including his "Temple of Doom" director, Steven Spielberg – gave Quan a standing ovation as he fought back tears.

"Mom, I just won an Oscar!" said Quan, 51, whose family fled Vietnam in the war when he was a child.

"They say stories like this only happen in the movies. I can't believe it's happening," said Quan. "This is the American dream."

Minutes later, Quan's castmate Jamie Lee Curtis won for best supporting actress. Her win, in one of the most competitive categories this year, denied a victory for comic-book fans. Angela Bassett ("Black Panther: Wakanda Forever") would have been the first performer to win an Oscar for a Marvel movie.

Curtis is the rare Oscar winner whose parents were both Oscar nominees: Tony Curtis was nominated for "The Defiant Ones" in 1959 and Janet Leigh was nominated in 1961 for "Psycho."

The German-language WWI epic "All Quiet on the Western Front" – Netflix's top contender this year – took four awards as the academy heaped honors on the craft of the harrowing anti-war film. It won for cinematography, production design, score and best international film.

Though Bassett missed on supporting actress, Ruth E. Carter won for the costume design of "Wakanda Forever," four years after becoming the first Black designer to win an Oscar, for "Black Panther." This one makes Carter the first Black woman to win two Oscars.

"Thank you to the

Academy for recognizing the superhero that is a Black woman," said Carter. "She endures, she loves, she overcomes, she is every woman in this film."

ABC's telecast opened traditionally: with a montage of the year's films (with Kimmel edited into a cockpit in "Top Gun: Maverick") and a lengthy monologue. Kimmel struggled to find lessons from the year's prior scandal when Will Smith smacked presenter Chris Rock, and went on to win best actor. If anyone tried any violence this year, Kimmel said, "you will be awarded the Oscar for best actor and permitted to give a 19-minute-long speech."

After landmark wins for Chloé Zhao ("Nomadland") and Jane Campion ("The Power of the Dog"), no women were nominated for best director. Sarah Polley, though, won best adapted screenplay for the metaphor-rich Mennonite drama "Women Talking."

"Thank you to the academy for not being mortally offended by the words 'women' and 'talking,'" said Polley.

Daniel Roher's "Navalny," about the imprisoned Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny, took best documentary. The film's win came with clear overtones to Navalny's ongoing imprisonment and Vladimir Putin's continued war in Ukraine. Yulia Navalnaya joined the filmmakers on the stage.

"My husband is in prison just for telling the truth," said Navalnaya. "Stay strong, my love."

Some big names weren't in attendance for other reasons. Neither Tom Cruise, whose "Top Gun: Maverick" was up for best picture, nor James Cameron, director of best-picture nomi-

nee "Avatar: The Way of Water," were at the ceremony. Both have been forefront in Hollywood's efforts to get moviegoers back after years of pandemic.

"The two guys who asked us to go back to theater aren't in the theater," said Kimmel, who added that Cruise without his shirt on in "Top Gun: Maverick" was "L. Ron Hubba Hubba."

Blockbuster nominees typically help boost Oscar ratings. Neither "Maverick" or "Avatar" – with some \$3.7 billion in combined box office – took home much, though. "The Way of Water" won for visual effects; "Maverick" took best sound.

After last year's Oscars, which had stripped some categories from being handed out in the live telecast, the academy restored all awards to the show and leaned on traditional song and dance numbers. That meant some show-stopping numbers, including the elastic suspenders dance of "Naatu Naatu" from the Telugu action-film sensation "RRR," an intimate, impassioned performance by Lady Gaga of "Hold My Hand" from "Top Gun: Maverick," and an Super Bowl follow-up by Rihanna. Best song went to "Naatu Naatu" from "RRR."

It also meant a long show. "This kind of makes you miss the slapping a little bit, right?" Kimmel said midway.

After last year's slap, the academy created a crisis management team to better respond to surprises. Neither Rock, who recently made his most forceful statement about the incident in a live special, nor Smith, who was banned by the academy for 10 years, attended.

Last year, Apple TV's "CODA" became the first streaming movie to win best picture. But this year, nine of the 10 best picture nominees were theatrical releases. After the movie business cratered during the pandemic, moviegoing recovered to about 67% of pre-pandemic levels. But it was an up and down year, with smash hits and anxiety-inducing lulls.

This year, ticket sales have been strong thanks to releases like "Creed III" and "Cocaine Bear" – which made not one but two cameos at Sunday's show. Meanwhile, the Writers Guild and the major studios are set to begin contract negotiations March 20, a looming battle that has much of the industry girding for a possible work stoppage.

The Oscars, too, are seeking steadiness. Last year's telecast drew 16.6 million viewers, a 58% increase from the scaled-down 2021 edition, watched by a record-low 10.5 million.

AP

Gwiji by David Chikoko



SPORT

'Everything' wins best picture, is everywhere at Oscars

PAGE 19



Gymkhana Club hosts Junior World Tennis Series

By Correspondent Joseph Mchekadona

TANZANIA has become the first African country to host the Junior World Tennis Series (JWTS).

The six-day competition which has attracted 53 players from around the globe is taking place at the Dar es Salaam Gymkhana Club (DGC).

Thomas Schulze, JWTS president, on Sunday said through such tournaments kids play more matches as they battle it out in age categories of U-12, U-14, and U-16 doubles and mixed doubles.

The JWTS is an independent federation operating in cooperation with the International Tennis Federation (ITF), it has its own set of laws, rules, and regulations.

In JWTS matches, players have the opportunity to on-court coaching and there is round robin format, among others.

"Tanzania is the first country in Africa to host the JWTS tournament, we have 53 kids who will compete in the six-day event," Schulze pointed out.

"The players come from the United States of America (USA), Spain, Russia, India, Malawi, Kenya, Uganda, and the host Tanzania," he said.

He said winners in each category will be awarded a wild card to take part in the Masters' tournament in Bulgaria in June this year.

In Bulgaria, the winners will also be presented with other awards and prizes.

Schulze noted that other JWTS tournaments for this year will be held in Germany, Italy, Bulgaria, Austria, United Arab Emirates (UAE), Indonesia, Egypt, Morocco, and Uzbekistan.

Francis Thomas, Tanzania Tennis Association (TTA)'s newly elected president, described the tournament as a good opportunity for the country to promote tourism.

Thomas pointed out it will also develop awareness regarding the importance of sports activities in the country.

According to the TTA official, players will experience exposure by playing with new players, and this helps them learn more skills.

He said the focus of JWTS's endeavour is to promote the young talents in tennis by offering the possibility to play many international tournaments to ease the leap to the professional level.

Schulze noted: "This is the first time that a German company is sponsoring tennis in Tanzania where the best players are determined regionally to qualify for the world final in Bulgaria."

The JWTS boss stated: "This means that the winners from every region and category will get a chance to get the wildcard to play in the world final, Masters, in Bulgaria, stay in the hotel for a week, and receive tennis equipment."

"Well-known tennis ambassadors at respective events, exclusive prizes, and other additional services should motivate people to take part in the series," he said.



A Dar es Salaam Gymkhana Club (DGC) junior tennis player competes in a past competition that was played at the club's courts. PHOTO: CORRESPONDENT JUMANNE JUMA

Amrouche announces Taifa Stars squad for 2023 AFCON qualifiers against Uganda



Taifa Stars' new head coach Adel Amrouche. PHOTO: COURTESY OF TANZANIA FOOTBALL FEDERATION

By Correspondent Michael Mwebe

NEWLY appointed Tanzania's senior national football team 'Taifa Stars' head coach Adel Amrouche yesterday unveiled his first selection of 31 players for the first of the Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON) qualifiers' double-header against Uganda.

The squad is made up of well-experienced and celebrated players including captain Mbwana Samatta, Himid Mao, and Simon Msuva.

The trio was part of the Taifa Stars squad that partici-

pated in the 2019 AFCON finals in Egypt.

Yanga midfielder Feisal Salum 'Feitoto', who is caught up in a legal tussle with his club, has also been included in the squad.

But Simba SC fullbacks, Shomari Kapombe and Mo-

hamed Hussein have been overlooked despite a strong showing for their club in the ongoing CAF Champions League Group Stage.

Amrouche, who is assisted by Hemed Suleiman 'Morocco', has also included several youngsters in the squad which is largely composed of local players.

Taifa Stars will take on Uganda in Egypt on March 24 and return for another clash against the same opponents three days later at Benjamin Mkapa Stadium in Dar es Salaam.

Tanzania has just one point from the opening two games in Group F, picked off in an away draw with Niger in Benin. There was also a 2-0 home loss to group leader Algeria.

The 34th edition of the AFCON finals will take place in Ivory Coast next year. A total of 24 teams will qualify to play in the final tournament, including Ivory Coast, who qualify automatically as hosts.

Taifa Stars' full squad:

Goalkeepers: Aishi Manula (Simba SC), Beno Kokolanya (Simba SC), and Metacha Mnata (Yanga).

Defenders: Kibwana Shomari (Yanga), Datus Peter (Kagera Sugar), Yahya

Mbegu (Ihefu SC), David Luhende (Kagera Sugar), Dickson Job (Yanga), Bakari Mwamnyeto (Yanga), Abdallah Mfuko (Kagera Sugar), Ibrahim Baka (Yanga), Alphonse Mabula (FK Spartak Subotica- Serbia), and Haji Mnoga (Aldershot Town-England)

Midfielders: Mudathir Yahya (Yanga), Sospeter Bajana (Azam FC), Mzamiru Yassin (Simba SC), Yusuph Kagoma (Singida Big Stars), Ramadhani Makame (Bodrumspor-Turkey), Edmund John (Geita Gold FC), Feisal Salum (Yanga), Khalid Habibu (KMKM FC), Novatus Dismas (Zulte Waregem- Belgium), Ben Starkie (Basford United FC- England), Ally Msengi (Swallows- South Africa), and Himid Mao (Ghazl El Mahalla SC- Egypt)

Forwards: Anuary Jabir (Kagera Sugar), Abdulhamis Suleiman (Azam FC), Simon Msuva (Al-Qadiah FC- Saudi Arabia), Mbwana Samatta (KRC Genk- Belgium), Kelvin John (KRC Genk- Belgium), and Said Khamis (Al-Fujairah- UAE).

Company committed to tennis development in Tanzania



Tanzania Tennis Coaches Association's Secretary-General, Ismail Nguringa (L), presents a trophy to Morogoro's junior player, Amatullah Bhaijee, one of this year's Fumba Town by CPS Junior Open tournament winners after the showdown's conclusion at Dar es Salaam Gymkhana Club (DGC) last weekend. PHOTO: CORRESPONDENT JOSEPH MCHEKADONA

By Correspondent Joseph Mchekadona

FUMBA Town by CPS says it is happy with the progress of the Junior Open tournament which came to a close at the Dar es Salaam Gymkhana Club (DGC) last week.

The two-day tournament attracted a record number of 136 junior players from across the country.

Fumba Town by CPS's Executive Director, Sebastian Dietzold, said they are happy with the progress of the Junior Open tournament and are committed to sponsorship and promoting of growth of

tennis in the country.

He said the Fumba Town by CPS Junior Open tournament complements the efforts put in by President Samia Suluhu Hassan to develop sports from the grassroots. He noted that the country has many talented junior tennis players but they stay idle due to a lack of tournaments, adding his company is geared to end the vice.

Dietzold revealed: "This is the first time that my company, Fumba Town by CPS, is sponsoring the junior tennis tournament, but I'm happy with the performance shown by the juniors."

"Let me assure you all that

depending on the economic situation in the country, we are ready to make this tournament an annual event," the official disclosed.

"You will agree with me that through this tournament a lot of talent has been exposed because all kids were given the chance to compete," he said.

He also assured the Tanzania Tennis Association (TTA) of his company's commitment to see to it that the country sends players to this year's edition of Davis Cup.

Dietzold pointed out: "We are the sponsors of Tanzania tennis team's preparations for the Davis Cup, our aim of see-

ing the country make it to the Davis Cup is still there."

"What we want now is a strategy from TTA, we want to see how prepared are they," he said.

Through the company's sponsorship, five players took part in the Davis Cup Africa Qualifiers in Rwanda last year.

The players are Omary Sulle, Abubakar Risasi, Frank Menard, Dofuu Saleh, and Rashid Saleh, accompanied by coach Salum Mwamvita.

Mwamvita, also one of the Junior Open tournament organizers, hailed the company for facilitating the tournament.

The tactician said it has come at a good time, given the country is lacking junior tournaments.

He said TTA places much emphasis on junior events as they present a chance for spotting talent and developing it.

"For quite a long time, we have not had a junior tennis tournament, our juniors were not participating in tournaments, they were just training without having any platform to show what they have learned," the tactician pointed out.

"The presence of Fumba Town by CPS Junior Open tournament has excited them, no wonder there was tough competition in this tournament," he said.

Fumba Town by CPS last year sponsored two senior tournaments that were played at DGC and in Arusha.

More than 150 senior players participated in the competitions and winners got cash prizes. Winners in singles and doubles categories were presented with cash prizes, winners in men's singles took 500,000/-, runners-up got 300,000/-, and 150,000/- went to players that sailed through to the semi-finals.

Each of the players who made it to the quarterfinals took home 100,000/-.

In the women's singles category, the winner received 350,000/-, the runner-up walked away with 200,000/-, while in the men's doubles, the winners were presented with 300,000/-, runners-up got 200,000/-.

The showdowns' competitors who secured progression to the semi-finals were presented with 150,000/-.

Flexibles by David Chikoko

