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National Pg 3
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National Pg 6
Zanzibar govt adores trade fair



Thumbs-up for opening French consular bureau

By Guardian Reporter

THE government has expressed satisfaction with the move by the French Embassy to open a consular office in Dodoma.

Dr Stergomena Tax (pictured), the Foreign Affairs and East African Cooperation minister expressed this appreciation to French Ambassador Nabil Hajlaoui on Monday when the envoy made a courtesy call at her office in Mtumba area in the capital.

Opening the consulate supports government efforts to strengthen capital city functions.

She said friendly relations exist between Tanzania and France since independence at the bilateral and multilateral level. "What you have done here in Dodoma cements our cooperation," she stated.

Ambassador Hajlaoui said his country has decided to open a consular office in Dodoma to strengthen relations, in support of the government's decision to move its headquarters to the centrally positioned city.

By June 2023 France expects to have started



UNHCR expects to cooperate with the government in the voluntary return of Burundian refugees

direct flights from Paris to Dar es Salaam via Zanzibar, he said, noting that Air France had in 2021 initiated trips to Zanzibar via Nairobi, the business capital of East Africa.

Setting up direct flights is likely ease travel by tourists from France to fly directly to the country as the trip is made shorter, he said, noting also that direct flights are likely to add interest among businessmen to look for investment opportunities while visiting tourist attractions.

The embassy was providing French language training for civil servants, starting with Foreign Affairs and East African Cooperation along with their Defence and National Service colleagues, conducted at the Tanzania Regional Immigration Training Academy (TRITA).

France wishes to support Tanzania in the renewable energy sector to seek self-sufficiency in that field, thus growing its economy, he said.

The minister had a meeting with Mahoua Parums, the resident representative of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), where the two sides

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The ball is in your court, Samia challenges youth

By Guardian Reporter



Zanzibar's Education and Vocational Training minister, Lela Mohamed Mussa, pictured at Chakechake in South Pemba Region yesterday fitting a cap on Vice President Dr Philip Mpango's head. This was at a ceremony where the VP launched Kwale Primary School as part of the countdown to the climax of celebrations to mark the 59th anniversary of the January 12 Zanzibar Revolution. Photo: VPO

PRESIDENT Samia Suluhu Hassan urged Tanzanian youth to make targeted efforts to grab opportunities in various areas, including the marine and agriculture sectors in the blue economy sphere, saying the government was setting up an enabling environment for such initiatives.

Receiving members of the CCM Youth Wing (UVCCM) who participated in the 'Mapinduzi Walk' at Paje village in Unguja South Region, she said such efforts would help the country reduce the rampant joblessness on the streets.

Most jobless youth spend time complaining about the government for shrinking availability of jobs while they are struggling to use existing opportunities, she said at the event to honor heroes of the Zanzibar Revolution led by the late Sheikh Abeid Amani Karume.

She pointed in particular at opportunities in marine resources where youth need to figure out how to grab them by first moving to think 'outside the box,' being innovative.

"We have seen women doing well in seaweed farming and production of various products from the plant, but things are still hard for youth," the president underlined, urging the youth to form groups, put up designs and present them for consideration.

She pointed at value addition for fish, like engaging in cage farming and selling fish, crabs, octopus and others in various markets, she said, laying stress on her dissatisfaction with seeing groups of youth in the streets who have lost hope and are not doing any work.

Narrating a discussion she had with secretary general Daniel Chongolo, she said the big



We need to be patient, our major focus now is not battling with critics but rather responding calmly to show true leadership

challenge to our youth is their huge eagerness in chasing for fast riches, instead of working hard, being patient and waiting for positive outcomes.

"Do not run for immediate results," the president cautioned, reiterating how it hurts to see youth are tired and out of focus "while we have a vast sea and coastline brimming with resources."

Too often the youth are not spotting resources as they are too lazy to put emphasis on utilizing them, she said, noting that hotels need fish, people also need fish and crabs, and youth can deliver by joining efforts, being innovative and coming up with new ideas to increase income.

The walk's theme of 'Blue Economy for Industrial Development' carries the need for understanding the blue economy, attracting more investments in industries and promoting the youth to take up such opportunities, she said.

She also dwelt on the upcoming competitive political environment, urging the youth to counter the challenges of opponents by arguing to respond to issues by explaining what the government is doing or expects to do.

"We need to be patient, our major focus now is not battling with critics but rather responding calmly to show true leadership," the party chairperson instructed.

Kenani Kihongosi, the youth wing secretary general, said that the walk attracted over 500 youth taking a 64km stretch. The walk is

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Police hold four in fertiliser theft trail

By Guardian Correspondent, Songwe

POLICE in Songwe Region have arrested four employees of Mbozi District Council over suspicions of misappropriating or redirecting 1,900 bags of subsidized fertiliser.

Rashid Ngonyani, the acting regional police commander, said in a statement yesterday that among those arrested include three are from the agriculture department and one teacher.

The civil servants' arrest comes a few days after Agriculture minister Hussein Bashe declared that Songwe Region leads countrywide in sabotaging proper

distribution of subsidized fertiliser.

The first suspect was named as Aloyce Madaraka, a senior officer in the department who declared to be having a 30-acre farm and went away with 71 bags of farm inputs, while in actual fact he had no farm.

He also reportedly gave false information about other people and took subsidized fertilizer, the police chief asserted.

The second suspect was named as Anton Buyongera, an agricultural officer at Iyula ward who was handed 855 bags of subsidized fertiliser, but after being questioned, he reportedly denied receiving the bags and has no farm.

The third is Rehema Mwanduluya, an agricultural officer at Iloilo Ward lo reportedly linked to the release of 600 bags of subsidized fertiliser in collaboration with another person who

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A bag of CAN fetching 108,156/- is now 60,000/- while a bag of NPK tagged at 122,695/- dropped in price to 70,000/-

MP, council consulting as pupils study under trees

By Guardian Correspondent, Kahama

FOUR out of the ten classrooms had their roofs blown away in stormy rain as schools opened after the end of year festival, pushing 484 pupils at the Butibu Primary School in Ushetu District, Shinyanga Region to sit under trees as schools reopened.

School authorities told Ushetu MP Emmanuel Cherehani (pictured) who



was inspecting development projects that strong winds blew away roofs on November 15 and the classrooms were yet to be repaired by the time schools opened.

This compelling a portion of the pupils to use tree shades around the school to do some study, they said, noting that the school has 1,209 pupils -582 boys and 627 girls.

Roofs of four classrooms and one staff office were blown away, they said in conveying their request to the legislator, to have the repairs done quickly to return learning activity to normal.

Colletha Katemi, a STD II pupil, said

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Prof Joyce Ndalichako, Minister of State in the Prime Minister's Office (Labour, Youth, Employment and People with Disabilities), addresses members of her ministerial wing's workers' council at a meeting held in Dodoma city yesterday. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

The ball is in your court, Samia challenges youth

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conducted annually and this year's

event was the tenth since it was restored, he said.

During the five days of the walk,

the young people engaged in various social activities as well as inspecting development projects

as part of events to mark the 59th anniversary of the Zanzibar Revolution of January 12, 1964.



CCM national Chairperson President Samia Suluhu Hassan receives the national flag from Mary Daniel, Mara Region's CCM youth wing chairperson, at Paje village in South Unguja yesterday. It was at the climax of a 59th Zanzibar Revolution anniversary walk staged by members of the wing. To the president's left is CCM Secretary General Daniel Chongolo. Photo: State House

New revenue collection system set to end fraud in public funds

By Guardian Correspondent, Dodoma

THE government has introduced a new revenue collection system to be linked to all district councils targeting at controlling public funds leakage and serving for effective revenue collection.

Administered by the President's Office (Regional Administration and Local Government-PO-RALG), the system that comes into effect this month is well known by a Swahili name-TAUSI will be a solution for revenue collection system from all district councils.

The introduction of the system

will serve as the remedy of the long standing argument by the Local Authorities Accounts Committee (LAAC) of establishing a single revenue collection system.

PO-RALG deputy permanent secretary Ramadhani Kailima revealed details about the system yesterday during the opening of the training of IT officers from different district councils.

Kailima said that the council's revenue collection system (TAUSI) has been set to be a solution after being tested in 54 district councils.

He said the new system will be able to read each council's revenue

collection thus avoid public funds embezzlement.

He added that the training will involve councilors and accountants as well as other government stakeholders.

They will come from the Controller and Auditor General office, the Prevention and Combating of Corruption Bureau (PCCB) and from the e-government department. Others will come from the Office of the Chief Public Prosecutor, the Public Service Commission and the Director of Criminal Investigation (DCI) office.

PO-RALG IT director Erick

Kitali said the old revenue collection system-LGRCIS has been operational for more than eight years and is now not effective for the purpose.

Kitali said that the older system will be restored for the sake of keeping safe financial records.

He said the system was tested for Dar es Salaam use last December. The testing involved insurance of business licenses as well as digital liquor licenses.

He said the training will start this month as expected by March 31, this year all 184 councils will start using the new system.

8,000 households in Rungwe District see 500m/- water project changing their lives

By Guardian Correspondent, Mbeya

OVER 8,000 households in Kiwira ward in Rungwe District, Mbeya Region have started benefiting from 500m/- water project.

The project which will generate 19 million litres per day has been constructed with funding from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) COVID-19 recovery funds and force account.

Speaking after launching a 135,000 litre water reserve tank, Uhuru torch leader Sahili Nyazabara said the projects which are being implemented by the Rural Water Supply Agency (RUWASA) are an opportunity to the people.

The tank which was launched by the Uhuru torch leader is expected to spread water to villages surrounding the area for the benefit of the people.

"It is better to educate the people about how to pay water bills so that the bills can help in taking care of

the infrastructure," he said.

Rungwe District Commissioner Dr Vincent Anney said the completion of the project will help in stimulating development especially the horticulture business.

Water Deputy Minister Maryprisca Mahundi urged the people of Kiwira to stop invading water bodies, especially carrying out farming activities which she said was dangerous.



It is better to educate the people about how to pay water bills so that the bills can help in taking care of the infrastructure

Police hold four in fertiliser theft trail

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the RPC said they are still looking for.

Another civil servant who is under arrest is James Ngunda, who the RPC said he uttered false information that has a 200-acre farm, thus obtained 400 bags of subsidized fertiliser, while he has no such farm.

After initial interrogation, the suspects admitted to being involved in the misappropriation and implicit sabotage of the government's fertiliser subsidy scheme.

"We are holding all of them for economic sabotage because they have been found to have cheated by entering false information into the system and getting subsidized fertiliser which they want to sell to other individuals," he stated.

Last August, the government

launched a fertiliser subsidy programme where President Samia Suluhu Hassan said farmers are set to obtain large amounts of subsidized fertiliser during the 2022/23 farming season.

Under the subsidy arrangement, the government delivers 52, 000/- in subsidy for a bag of fertilizer, such that a bag of DAP that was sold for 131, 675/- has a 70,000 A Urea bag selling at 124,714/- is obtained for 70,000/- with subsidy.

A bag of CAN fetching 108,156/- is now 60,000/- while a bag of NPK tagged at 122,695/- dropped in price to 70,000/-.

The program is part of President Samia's Agenda 10/30 that was launched in April, meant to turn around the fortunes of millions of Tanzanians earning a living in the agriculture value-chain, the minister affirmed.

Thumbs-up for opening French consular bureau

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emphasized the need to facilitate the voluntary return of refugees to their countries of origin.

The UNHCR was satisfied with Tanzania's efforts to host refugees despite the various challenges

it faces, she said, lauding the humanitarian contribution of Tanzania for the refugee population.

UNHCR expects to cooperate with the government in the voluntary return of Burundian refugees, she added.

MP, council consulting as pupils study under trees

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they have to wash their uniforms every day due to sitting on the dusty ground under trees. Pupils often fail to concentrate in their lessons especially when trying to write due to their sitting postures, she said.

Appealing to the government to rebuild the classrooms, the pupils said learning under trees shifts their minds to start looking at passers-by, with some pupils leaving school at will, as it is difficult for teachers to find out who was present and who is missing.

Shija Cosmas, a STD IV pupil said even though they were learning in the remaining classrooms, there is great congestion which results in some pupils learning under the trees, which hampers learning especially for science and math subjects.

Igimbi Tundu, the head teacher, said the school was short of 26 classrooms needed to cater for thousand plus pupils, where

parents have contributed to meet the cost of two roofed enclosures to alleviate the situation.

Semeni Nyambi, a parent, said the government is supposed to take urgent steps to solve the situation by completing the building of some classrooms, now that the rains have started.

Charles Mbulu, the primary school education officer and the acting district executive director, said the council has allocated 60m/- for rebuilding the four classrooms and one staff office shaken by the wind and rain.

Pupils will for the time being continue to study under tree shade, he said, with the MP saying that completing two classrooms and one staff office built from people's contribution needs 26m/-.

The council has to meet the cost, he stated, affirming that he was personally contributing 4m/- from the constituency fund to accelerate the return of pupils to learn in a friendly environment.



Zanzibar government security personnel pictured yesterday visiting the Public Service Social Security Fund (PSSSF) pavilion at Zanzibar's Maisara grounds, where a 59th Zanzibar Revolution anniversary business festival is in progress. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

Minister: Govt will not ban farmers from using foreign markets in selling products

By Guardian Correspondent, Mbarali

AGRICULTURE minister Hussein Bashe has said that the government will not ban farmers from selling their agro-products abroad as part of its initiatives of encouraging farmers to increase production.

Bashe issued the government's position yesterday in Mbeya Region during a visit to inspect various development projects including irrigation schemes being built by the ministry in Mbarali District.

He said that banning farmers from selling their produce abroad with the excuse of avoiding food shortage in the country has been discouraging farmers from cultivating in abundance due to being prevented from seeing the benefits of the foreign market.

He said the ban can lead to farmers' crops prices to fall and rise without order and thus affect farmers.

"We want farmers' produce to continue to be sold wherever there is a good market. The government also wants crop prices to adjust themselves through a free market. If farmers find out that their crops have a big market in the country and abroad, they will increase production," said Bashe.

He said the government will continue to improve the production environment for farmers, including improving agricultural infrastructure, especially irrigation schemes.

He asked farmers who produce rice using various irrigation schemes to ensure that they pay fees every year for the improvement of the infrastructure of those schemes.

He said paying fees is important because the government invests money for the infrastructure.

He instructed the Mbarali district council to collaborate with various stakeholders to properly organize

the displaced people in the villages that were inside the Ruaha National Park that have been relocated to strengthen conservation activities.

Mbeya region commissioner Juma Homera said that more than 2600 hectares have been set aside for the people who were relocated from the reserve and soon they will be provided with it to carry on their activities.

He said that the area has been set aside for agricultural activities and that the government will provide friendly infrastructure for people to continue their activities.

Homera said that the designated area meets the needs of the residents of all the villages that were inside the reserve.

"The land should be surveyed immediately so that people who were evicted from Madibila Two farms find a place to continue their activities because this is the farming season," said Homera.

He said the land is large enough for farmers including those relocated from the Mnazi area.

Some residents of Madibira complained that the land slated by the government does not meet their needs.

One of the citizens, Veronica Sofu said that they have been using the land in question for corn cultivation and it is not enough for them.



If farmers find out that their crops have a big market in the country and abroad, they will increase production

Samia wins praises for approving 60 billion/- to build Mbinga road

By Guardian Correspondent, Mbinga

PRESIDENT Samia Suluhu Hassan has been lauded for approving more than 60bn/- to build 35 kilometers of the road at tarmac level in Mbinga District, Ruvuma Region.

Eng. Ephatar Mlavi, Ruvuma regional Tanzania National Roads Agency (TanRoads) manager said here yesterday when presenting the report to Ruvuma regional commissioner on the implementation of the road construction project.

Eng Mlavi said that the project involved the construction of 82 kilometers Kitai-Litui road at the tarmac level.

He however said the amount of money given by the government involves the construction of the Amanimakoro-Ruanda road section (35 kilometers) at the tarmac level.

He mentioned that the project was started on June 15, 2022, and is expected to be implemented for 18 months and will be completed in December 2023.

Mlavi named the project's contractor as the China Railway Seventh Group company.

He said that the project involves the construction of four bridges, seven large culverts and 58 small culverts. "So far the construction has reached 24 percent. The government has already provided funds to build 40 kilometers out of 82," he said.

"This road is of great importance in the transportation of coal and other minerals, taking into account that this area has many mines," Eng Mlavi

stated. RC Col. Laban Thomas congratulated the contractor for working within the contract where he insisted that the work be completed early so that the people

could start benefiting from it. He mentioned the Kitai-Litui road as one of the biggest roads in Ruvuma region with a length of 82 kilometers which is relied

on by the region to promote the economy and that it connects Mbinga and Nyasa districts, it also connects Ruvuma and Njombe regions through Ludewa district.

RC Thomas lauded President Samia for taking a patriotic decision to implement the project that opens the Ruvuma Region through the Kitai-Litui road.

INTERNATIONAL COMMERCIAL BANK (TANZANIA) LIMITED

RECRUITMENT NOTIFICATION 2023/01

1. POSITION: APPLICATION & DATABASE SUPPORT SPECIALIST REF No. 2023/01/1

Key Responsibilities:

- Specify, implement, install and configure new business applications,
- Provide ongoing technical maintenance, understand security threats, devise and implement security measures, analyse, test and implement additional functionality in the business applications, analyse user reported application problems, identify its root cause, determine possible solutions, communicate with application vendors on support related issues,
- Deploy and test fixes and patch sets and implement solutions and document change requests.

Test business application patches and upgrades, perform backups of various business applications, perform restoration of data periodically of the business applications, ensure periodic maintenance of databases, perform periodic process (end of day, end of month, end of year) in core back-office applications and provide support on delivery channels.

Qualifications:

- Bachelor's degree in Computer Science or Business Information Technology or other related degree or its equivalent in education and work experience.
- Minimum 3+ years of work experience in supporting business critical applications in banking domain.
- Knowledge of Oracle Flexcube Universal Banking Solution (FCUBS), Oracle Digital Banking Experience (OBDX), Chequepoint, SWIFT applications.

4. POSITION: HUMAN RESOURCES EXECUTIVE- REF No. 2023/01/4

Key Responsibilities:

- Ensure adherence to Human Resources policies and procedures, monitor and review the system of performance appraisal, maintain staff records, prepare and maintain proper records of transfer, promotions; manage training, training costs against budget and propose training needs accordingly.
- Assist in disciplinary, including grievance matters and address labour related issues
- Monitor daily attendance, leave roster and medical leave, and provide monthly management reports.

Qualifications:

Bachelor's degree Human Resources Management/ with 2-3 years of experience in HR management.

2. POSITION: BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT OFFICER - REF No. 2023/01/2

Key Responsibilities:

- Co-ordinate with Branch Managers and Senior Management to develop business in both Liabilities and Assets and meet targets. Cross selling of Banks' Products and Services
- Develop and maintain effective relationships with small, medium, and large customers and Government organizations to initiate increase in Business.

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Bachelor's degree with 2-3 years of sales experience, preferably in the Banking sector.

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Key Responsibilities:

- Processing of business and retail loans including mortgage Loans,
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Qualifications:

Bachelor degree in Commerce (Accounting), or business administration, or

Equivalent qualification and 3-years working experience in the Credit Department of a Bank.

3. POSITION: BRANCH MANAGER - REF No. 2023/01/3

Key Responsibilities:

- Supervise operations of the branch and meet branch targets as set from time to time and to market/sell Banks' products.

Qualifications:

Bachelor's degree in Marketing /Business administration/ Finance and 2-3 years of experience in financial services/ branch manager /assistant branch manager in a Bank.

6. POSITION: CUSTOMER SERVICE ASSOCIATE /CLEARING ASSOCIATE - REF No. 2023/01/6

Key Responsibilities:

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APPLICATION PROCESS: Interested and eligible candidates may submit their applications with CV stating the position and reference number to the under mentioned addresses, to be received by or before **18th January, 2023.**

To: E-mail address - recruitment@icbank.co.tz or

To: HR Department,
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Request for Proposal

No. HPI/2022/01/10/01 - Commercial Program Partner

REDUCING LIVING INCOME GAP AMONG SUNFLOWER SMALLHOLDER FARMERS BY IMPROVING THEIR VISIBILITY THROUGH MASTERCARD POWERED COMMUNITY PASS

Heifer Project International (HPI) is an International Non-Governmental Organization working with smallholder farming communities to end hunger and poverty while caring for the Earth. Heifer believes that it significantly contributes to feeding the world and securing sustainable livelihoods by enhancing the capacity of vulnerable and smallholder farmers. This is accompanied by sound approaches [Value Based Holistic Community Development (VBHCD) and market systems] and innovative solutions that drive transformative processes towards sustainable reduction of the living income gap among smallholder farming households.

Sunflower is one of the key value chains that not only has potential to redeem smallholder farmers from poverty but contributing to reduce the gap of edible oil in Tanzania. To accelerate sunflower production and productivity in the country, smallholder farmers are proposed to be endowed with (but not limited to) improved access to last-mile extension services; technologies and innovative solutions; finance and access to reliable off-taker markets. To address this challenge, Heifer International and Mastercard Inc. are partnering to utilize an innovative digital solution that unlocks services for underserved smallholder farmers by establishing farmer visibility through a symbiotic business ecosystem (innovative and inclusive digital platform) called Community Pass.

Heifer International (Tanzania) is determined to support smallholder farmers through digital innovation (targeting Mastercard's Community Pass) to create sustainable agriculture ecosystem that benefits farmers. Heifer is seeking a fin-tech/ag-tech company as a Commercial Program Partner vested with experience in digital technologies and/or innovative financing for 6 months. Realization of the project goal is envisioned in the application of Community Pass to improve farmer access to last-mile extension services; technologies and innovative solutions; finance and access to the reliable off-taker markets. The project will cover the largest sunflower producing regions in the Central and Lake zones. The key outcome of the project will be as shown below: -

- 50,000 sunflower smallholder farmers (SHFs) are digitally visible using Community Pass and reduced living income gap through improved farm yield as result of improved farmer access to last-mile extension services; inputs, technology, and innovative solutions; finance and to reliable off-taker markets. Of all SHFs, 40% are women and 20% are youth (15 - 35 years old)]
- At least 75% of SHFs have better access to improved last-mile extension delivery to through Village Extension Agents, trainings, establishment of demo farms, etc.
- 250 digitized Farmer Producer Organization (FPOs) are established to ensure all farmers have better access of services, information, inputs, and finance through linkages to Agri-Buyers, Agro-Dealers, Financing Institutions, and key service providers connected using Community Pass ecosystem.
- At least 75% of the SHFs have and are using Farm Pass cards (powered by Mastercard) to access services, information and do transactions
- 250 Farm Field Schools (FFS) and 500 demo farms (each with at least 2 acres) are established and used as extension platforms to improve farm yields and as youth entry points in farming.
- At least 500 jobs as Village Extension Agents, Mobile Merchants, agro-dealers, distributors, Aggregators, etc created and sustained. 60% and 20% jobs are for youth (boys and girls aged between 15 and 35 years) and women (above than 35 years) respectively.
- All FPO and FFS platforms to have gender and youth integration policies.

Heifer International Tanzania invites qualified firms to apply by submitting a comprehensive proposal with both technical and financial sections. The submission should precisely explain how the applicant business model fits and anchors Community Pass powered by Mastercard. The submission should explicitly demonstrate how the model will be commercialized, and how SHFs will sustainably increase income margins, implementation approach (methodology) and strategy, detailed project plan and budget. The bidder should submit this proposal by **20th January 2023 at 05:00pm** through procurement-tz@heifer.org All inquiries in response to the RFP must be submitted in writing and electronic mail to: procurement-tz@heifer.org and must be received by **20th January 2023.**

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'Zanzibar all set to make education priority sector'

By Guardian Reporter

VICE President Dr Philip Mpango has said that the Phase VIII Zanzibar Government is committed to make the education a priority sector for solving various challenges it faces, including shortage of classrooms and teachers as well as the refurbishment of all old schools in both Unguja and Pemba.

Dr Mpango made the remarks here yesterday as he was officially opening Kwara Primary School in Chakechake District, Pemba South Region as part of development activities to mark the 59th anniversary of the Zanzibar Revolution.

Dr Mpango said the government intends to hire new teachers, especially for science and math subjects in order to alleviate or completely eradicate the shortage of teachers in Zanzibar.

He said the Zanzibar government also vows to construct other essential infrastructures including science laboratories, computer rooms, libraries and increase the number of dormitories to enable students learn in a friendly environment.

He said since the period after the revolution, the government has been increasing the number of schools in all regions in both Unguja and Pemba as well as face-lifting the infrastructures thereof.

Meanwhile, VP Mpango has appealed to parents, guardians and the people in general to make sure both girls and boys and boys joining primary and secondary schools finish their studies.

He also called for stern measures against acts of gender based violence (GBV) and child abuse and child pregnancies and stressed the community to work together in upbringing their children in acceptable culture and traditions.

He said family squabbles, acts of GBV and child abuse as well as social

decay to a great extent contribute for them not to realise their dreams in life.

Meanwhile, Zanzibar minister for Education and Vocational Training, Lela Muhammed Mussa said 45 new schools have been built in both Unguja and Pemba within one year in efforts to boost the Zanzibar education sector.

She said the aim of the Zanzibar government is to see the Isles improves in its education hence, she added, robust strategies to reduce congestion in classrooms have been put in place, including the removal of two-shift learning for students.

Earlier, submitting his report on the primary school's construction, the education ministry's Permanent Secretary Khamis Abdulla Said said 2.5bn/- has been spent for its construction involving 21 classrooms and has the capacity to hold 1,890 students learning in shifts, hence doing away with classrooms congestion.

At the event, the Zanzibar Education and Vocational Training ministry has proposed for the school to be named after Tanzania Vice President's name - Dr Philip Mpango.



...family squabbles, acts of GBV and child abuse as well as social decay to a great extent contribute for them not to realise their dreams in life

Review of policies and education curriculums all ready, says minister

By Guardian Reporter, Arusha

THE government has finalised the review of policies and education curriculums and was currently preparing for a national dialogue to allow people debate and air views on the drafted recommendations.

Minister for Education, Science and Technology, Prof Adolph Mkenda said this yesterday when speaking to heads of colleges, education officers, tutors and students at the Marangu Teachers College in Moshi, Kilimanjaro Region.

According to him, the process to draft the new policy and curriculums has closely engaged key stakeholders and what awaits is for the public to read them and give their opinions.

"The ministry has done a great job in the whole process of collecting views from several stakeholders and later came with the internal ministry process to go through and put it well before bringing it out for the public to debate on it through a national forum which will be organised specially for the job," he explained.

He said that during the review process, the government considered construction and improvement of all teachers colleges as this is an important area that stands as an eye for education in the country.

The minister said that there is a total of 35 public colleges and universities as well as private colleges and all of them are important in the provision of quality education in the country.

He said that the review of curriculums also touched higher learning institutions so as to facilitate improvements of courses and programmes to align with current development of science and technology and the market's needs.

"We will continue improving

the institutions by improving infrastructures while equipping them with required tools so as to facilitate production of quality graduates to work in various fields and bring transformation in the country," he added.

He said that the government will put a robust education strategy in place to support development of teachers especially by equipping them with up-to-date skills to increase competence and deliver well in classes.

In his tour in the region, minister Mkenda emphasized on the government's commitment to bring transformation in the country's education sector by investing heavily in the production of quality workforce.

On October 9, last year during the commemoration of Teachers' Day held in Bukombe District, Geita Region, Mkenda said that the government was ready to provide opportunities for teachers to develop their education levels and add more skills inside or in foreign colleges.



We will continue improving the institutions by improving infrastructures while equipping them with required tools so as to facilitate production of quality graduates to work in various fields and bring transformation in the country



Tanga district commissioner Hashim Mgandilwa (C. in blue) exchanges greetings in Tanga city yesterday with Brig Gen Steven Mnkande. The latter is leading a delegation of personnel attending training at the Dar es Salaam-based National Defence College and now on a five-day study tour in Tanga Region. Left is Tanga regional administrative secretary Pili Mnyema. Photo: Correspondent Hamida Kamchalla

RC Mtaka bans avocado 'middlemen' in Njombe

By Guardian Reporter, Njombe

ALL avocado middlemen who have been exploiting farmers by offering them peanut pay for their commodities have been banned by Njombe Regional Commissioner, Anthony Mtaka.

Mtaka said this in Njombe yesterday while opening a branch office of AvoAfrica Tanzania Limited, he underscored that middlemen who defy the ban risk having their consignments confiscated while also facing a possible jail term.

"If any avocado middleman wants to go bankrupt overnight, let them come and buy the commodity directly from farmers this season," Mtaka warned saying the cartel of middlemen is not only exploiting farmers but also denying government revenue.

"These people have no offices, they are not registered anywhere and encourage 'bodaboda' to steal from people's farms," he charged while urging the seven companies buying the fruit from farmers to stop dealing with illegitimate middlemen.

He commended AvoAfrica for investing in a factory which has employed over 300 youth directly but also recruited 3,000 smallholder farmers as out-growers.

"The government of President Samia Suluhu Hassan wants all services to be taken closer to the public including farmers and what you have done today as AvoAfrica helps achieve the mission because farmers will no longer be cheated by middlemen," the Njombe RC stated.

Earlier, Njombe Urban lawmaker, Deo Mwanyika said avocado is

one of the government's strategic commodities targeted to earn the country foreign currency. "I commend AvoAfrica for coming to Njombe where avocado fruits were once left to rot or fed to pigs," Mwanyika said.

He urged smallholder farmers to make use of AvoAfrica's investment in facilitating exports of avocado fruits to lucrative global markets. "Let's seize this opportunity as residents of Njombe by making use of this branch office," he advised.

Briefing the RC and his entourage, AvoAfrica Managing Director, Nagib Karmali said the company which officially started business last year, has so far invested U\$5m (over 11bn/-). Karmali said the company has encouraged farmers to continue cultivating Hass avocado species which was neglected because of

lack of market.

He explained that his company which shipped over 150 containers of the fruit to foreign markets last year, pays farmers better and the payment is done within 24 hours of receiving the commodity. "Currently we are paying 1,750/- per piece which meets market standards but middlemen pay very little because they buy from ignorant farmers directly," he said while promising that the new Njombe branch office will also have agro-experts to counsel farmers.

"Starting February we will be announcing prices that we offer to farmers on radio stations so that they know exactly what is at stake," he stated while stressing that his company which is part of Keitt Group of Kenya also buys the fruit from Mbeya, Songwe and Iringa regions.

Headquartered at Makambako in Iringa region, AvoAfrica Tanzania Limited exports the fruit to Europe, India, and United Arab Emirates is finalizing plans to start exporting to China later this year. The avocado season starts this month and runs through June.



Muheza Officer Commanding District Hadija Sokolo (3rd-L, gesturing) has a word with fellow police officers at Mang'anya police station yesterday. Photo: Correspondent Steven William

Women employed in beekeeping to be empowered with soft loans

By Guardian Reporter, Zanzibar

ZANZIBAR's government has declared its plans for empowering small scale entrepreneurs in the beekeeping subsector with training and soft loans so that they can produce honey that meets regional and international markets standards.

Speaking yesterday at the event to lay a foundation stone for the construction of a honey production center in Kizimbani suburb in the West Unguja Urban region, Minister of Lands and Human Settlement Development Rahma

Kassim Ali said the government has allocated funds to enable women entrepreneurs to find employment in the sector.

She said that for the first time the government has allocated money for entrepreneurs who produce honey after seeing their efforts that call for empowerment.

According to her, the honey market has been growing within the East African countries where small producers have the opportunity to grow if they are empowered.

"The construction of a honey production center aims to empower entrepreneurs,

especially women, to see that they are taking a big step in economic development and entering the competitive honey production market," she said.

She called upon entrepreneurs who will be given the opportunity to produce quality honey based on the training they will get through the program.

Speaking at the launch of the center, the Minister of State, President's Office, Labor and Investment Mudrik Ramadhan Soraga, said through the Covid-19 recovery funds, the government has allocated 36bn/- to enable

entrepreneurs in various sectors including beekeepers to carry out their economic activities.

Of this amount, 280m has been allocated for low interest loans for lending entrepreneurs engaged in honey production.

Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of State, President's Office, Labor and Investment Mariyam Abdalla Sadalla said that women honey production groups will be trained and provided with equipment that will enable them to produce honey that meets the global market standards.

Salma Haji Mwadini, a beekeeper in Bwejuu village in the southern district of Unguja, hopes that the center will enable women to achieve their goals of producing quality honey with global market standards.



Catherine Kagenzi, a teacher at Butibu Primary School in Shinyanga Region's Ushetu council, pictured yesterday running a session for her Standard Two pupils under a tree. This was after torrential rains destroyed four classrooms at the school recently. Photo: Correspondent Shaban Njia

Minister Ndaki calls on pastoralists in Tarime to ensure they use modern livestock keeping skills

By Guardian Correspondent, Tarime

THE Minister for Livestock and Fisheries, Mashinda Ndaki, has called upon pastoralists in Tarime district, Mara region to adopt modern livestock keeping techniques by developing special lands for grazing.

Minister Ndaki made the remarks when he addressed residents of Karetoga in the region after listening to their grievances on lack of grazing areas.

He said it was high time the pastoralists started keeping livestock using modern techniques including establishing special pastoral lands for use.

The minister said grazing areas are among the challenges facing pastoralists in the country and the end result is the death of livestock

saying pastoralists ought to find a solution to this challenge.

Minister Ndaki spoke against the tendency of shooting cattle which is being done by wildlife officers to residents surrounding the Serengeti National Park which was among the grievances by residents to the minister.

The minister said the tendency was against the law to protect animals saying his ministry will not hesitate to take serious actions against anyone who will be found doing the same.

Member of Parliament for Tarime Rural Mwitwa Waitara said the government in the area has done a lot in efforts to improve people's lives saying there is need for the government to demarcate boundaries between villages and the national park to address land

Dar students do wonders in ICT talent competition

By Correspondent James Kandoya

STUDENTS from various secondary schools have excelled in the Information Communication Technology Talent for self-employment programme 2022 conducted by Unique Academy, in Dar es Salaam.

The schools were Hindu Mandal School, Al Madrasa, Sunni Muslim Jamat, Feza secondary, Academic International, and Shabaan Robert School.

Speaking at the awarding function, in Dar es Salaam, the Unique Academy's students' mentor and job expert Govind Sreekumar said that there were more than 150 students from 29 schools who took part in the competition and the first phase of the result was released over the weekend.

Sreekumar said that in the first phase result, Mohamed Naushed Chaki, a student from Sunni Muslim Jamat topped the list.

He said Asma Abitalib Taherali from Al Madrasa and Zaid Ahmir Malik from Shree Hindu Mandal School were listed as second and third place respectively after stiff competition from other schools. "Unique Academy ICT search for self Employment 2022 programme was developed for school-completing students. It aims to improve the healthy development of ICT talent and support the integration of industry, education and self-employment for youths," he said.

Sreekumar said that motivated by their intention to grow the IVT sector in Tanzania, they have established that the best way to get people interested in the ICT sector is by giving them a taste of what the field has to offer through short-term programmes.

He said through scholarships

provided by corporate offices Unique Academy was able to create interest in students with placement assistance.

According to him, the programme is conducted by Unique Academy every year while students wait for their results adding that winners were awarded certificates.

The contest was evaluated based on two categories-practical, innovation & design, practical include the hands-on talent of students monitored throughout the programme, which examines student's theoretical knowledge and hand-on ICT skills along with their ability to work in a team.

The innovation & design track involved the use of knowledge and skills learned, to develop innovative designs and portray excellent output through media.

While talking to the parents and students from various schools, they commended the step taken by the Unique Academy to improve their student's/kids ICT skills and thanked Unique academy for giving them kind of exposure to their fellow Tanzanians.

During the function, Shree Hindu Mandal's school Principal Samwel Marjani received their overall best school performance award at unique house premises.

Unique Academy is a pioneer in IT education with a view to offer a broad portfolio of industry related computer training programmes for the career oriented youth of today.

Under the Digital & Information Technology domain, the institute provides a wide variety of career, professional, short term and certification courses, designed by our expert academicians after careful market study and research.

CCM in Tanga praises Samia for allowing political rallies

By Guardian Correspondent, Tanga

CCM in Tanga Region has showered praise on President Samia Suluhu Hassan for boosting democracy in the country while calling upon CCM members in the region to direct themselves in politics of conviction and provide answers to challenges facing Tanzanians of all ages, and that whoever does otherwise the party will deal with him/her.

The remarks were made yesterday by Tanga Regional CCM Chairman, Rajab Abdulrahman when addressing reporters while giving a statement to praise and support CCM national chairperson, President Samia Suluhu Hassan for strengthening the country's democracy.

He said following President Samia's endorsed political rallies, it is better for every political party to respect existing procedures and laws to conduct convincing and development oriented politics.

He said that after the go-ahead given on political rallies they will not tolerate to see any politician with evil intention within and outside CCM to

mar political rallies that have been sanctioned by President Samia.

Rajab said: "The process to allow political rallies began with dialogue that resulted in the formation of a task force that worked professionally and provide recommendations and advice on how all political parties can conduct gainful politics, the task that was not as simple as many think."

He added: "In that respect I have stood before you - Tanga Region CCM members and other people in general to express our pleasure in regard to this important issue that is beneficial for the development of all Tanzanians who love peace."

He also called upon government officials to oversee President Samia's directives without forgetting to beef up security for every Tanzanian.

Member of CCM National Executive Committee (NEC), Salim Mohamed Ratco said at this time, the government has removed the curtains on political rallies, it would be better for all political parties to abide by laws and regulations in line with their constitutional responsibilities.

Aweso appoints Lutonja as RUWASA manager for Morogoro

By Guardian Correspondent, Ulanga

WATER Minister Jumaa Aweso has appointed Sospeter Lutonja as new manager of Morogoro Region Rural and Urban Water and Sanitation Authority (RUWASA) after displaying his efforts in implementing water projects in the region.

Aweso announced the appointment yesterday in the presence of various CCM and government officials including Ulanga district councillors and Member of Parliament after directing RUWASA headquarters to transfer Ulanga District RUWASA Manager, Eng David Kajjage to

another district for failing to manage water projects including their completion in time.

The minister said Eng Lutonja takes Eng John Msengi's position who has also been transferred to RUWASA headquarters to be assigned with other responsibilities following his failure to supervise well the implementation of water projects in the region.

Aweso said elevating Eng Lutonja stems from his display of great efforts in overseeing water projects in Mvomero district valued at 9bn/- including the Tandali-Homboza water project costing 2.9bn/-.

The minister gave Eng Lutonja three months to start work by

overseeing water projects in Ulanga District by making sure they are completed in time and to acceptable quality standards.

In regard to Ulanga water projects, Aweso said it would be wrong for Eng Kajjage to remain in the district while he failed to closely supervise water contractors under his charge who displayed incompetence, as well for failure to supervise revenue from water supply services.

He said an engineer is capable to suspend a contractor if the latter lacks the capability to complete project work in time and the issue of mere reminding the contractor and extend the contract period serve no purpose for both the district and

the nation in general.

"Ulanga District must not become a home for incompetency, officials are supposed to oversee that laws and regulations governing work projects are adhered to," he said.

He said in his visit, he had expected water engineers requesting for more funds to complete the projects, but he was the one who was unearthing many negative issues than them.

Aweso was forced to cut short his 9-day visit in Morogoro region after he had already switched responsibilities of five RUWASA officials in order to bring about positive changes in the rural water sector.



Information, Communications and Information Technology minister Nape Nnauye (L) presents a gift to former CCM national Vice Chairman Philip Mangula at Imalinyi in Njombe Region at the weekend moments after the inauguration of a Vodacom tower built with support from the Universal Communications Service Access Fund (UCSAF). Looking on (from-R) are Vodacom's Njombe regional sales manager, Maula Mafuru, and the UCSAF executive director Justina Mashiba. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

Jafo urges RC, DCs to supervise tree planting initiatives

By Guardian Reporter, Dodoma

DR SELEMANI Jafo, Minister of State in the Vice President's Office (Union Affairs and Environment), has called upon regional and district commissioners countrywide to supervise the tree planting exercises in their areas in order to realise the government's goals.

He also called upon city and municipal officials to work together with TANROADS and TARURA to have enough number of trees along the roads in their areas to protect the

environment.

Dr Jafo made the remarks here yesterday when leading the tree planting exercise along the roads in the City of Dodoma as part of the events to mark the 59th anniversary of the Zanzibar Revolution.

He said following long periods of drought in some areas, it is better for the people to utilise current rains to plant trees in their areas including at water sources.

"Let all officials in our districts supervise the planting of 1.5 million trees in every district in order to

realise the target of planting 275 million trees, we shall attain this figure by utilizing the current rains, and here I would like to congratulate Dodoma city for setting the example and I believe within three years it will be a city to be proud of in regard to environmental conservation," he said.

He also called upon agricultural experts to identify the types of trees to plant in various areas to avoid some of them dying prematurely.

Dr Jafo also called upon school heads countrywide to make sure

each student enrolled in their schools plants at least one tree in accordance with the slogan "Learn with Trees", the campaign that targets to plant more than 14.5 million trees.

In addition, the minister stressed that every person applying for a building permit to make sure he had plans to plant at least three trees.

The tree planting exercise was attended by various government leaders including Dodoma District Commissioner Jabir Shekimweri, students, environment stakeholders and Dodoma residents in general.

President Samia to grace climax of Law Week in Dodoma

By Correspondent Zuwena Shame

PRESIDENT Samia Suluhu Hassan is expected to grace the climax of Law Week on February 1st this year at Chinangali in Dodoma Region.

Chief Justice Prof Ibrahim Juma revealed this yesterday when addressing journalists in Dar es Salaam. He said there will also be a walk from the Integrated Justice Centres (IJC) to the Chinangali grounds to be held from January 22nd to 29th 2023.

The CJ noted that Vice President Dr Philip Mpango will grace the events on January 29th.

He said the theme for this year's week is 'Importance of solving conflicts through arbitration in promoting economy: Its court's and stakeholders' responsibility'.

"This year's theme has carried a special message to the court and its stakeholders on the importance of using arbitration in solving conflicts to promote a sustainable economy," said Prof Juma.

Prof Juma said the Law Week is the time when court, stakeholders and citizens remind each other of the need to fast track cases for improved people's wellbeing and justice.

CJ Juma added that the Article 107A (2)(d) of the country's Constitution states about promoting and developing arbitration in solving conflicts, however there are alternative ways of solving conflicts including arbitration, mediation,

reconciliation and discussions.

Prof Juma added that solving conflicts through alternative ways is a constitution requirement, but it is also being emphasized in religions; therefore its God's plan to see people solving conflicts through arbitration.

"Our country has various laws which give opportunities for arbitration but they are not applied. Most of the people have been taking their cases to court," said Prof Juma citing an example of the Media Council of Tanzania (MCT) where journalists solve their conflicts through arbitration.

He said that contrary to other countries where arbitration processes account for 90 percent of the cases, in Tanzania arbitration has not been given priority although it is stated by Article 107A (2) (d) of the Constitution.

According to him, solving conflicts through arbitration has many benefits which include timely justice and with affordable costs. He said arbitration reduces cases congestion in courts, promotes peace and social welfare.

Arbitration uses short time in dealing with conflicts thus makes people have ample time to engage in other productive activities, he said.

"We are pushing courts to make use of arbitration in solving conflicts because it protects relationships between social and economic stakeholders," he added.



Engineer Yahya Said Abdalla (with microphone) briefs Zanzibar Works, Communication and Transport minister Dr Khalid Salum Mohamed (2nd-R) yesterday on the construction of office and residential buildings at Bambi in Unguja meant for use by National Service volunteers. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

Zanzibar Vice President praises ongoing trade fair preparations

By Guardian Reporter, Zanzibar

ZANZIBAR Second Vice President, Hemed Suleiman Abdulla has said that the ninth trade fair in the islands has enabled people to enjoy different services and purchase various commodities conveniently at low cost on one-stop-center.

Speaking when he visited the trade fair yesterday, the VP

congratulated the Ministry of Trade and Industrial Development for improving the ongoing trade fair at the Maisara grounds in Zanzibar.

He said the trade fair is one of a kind especially to see the participants from Zanzibar and other countries where the increase in their participation proves good preparations by the Ministry of

Trade and Industrial Development. He asked people to come out in large numbers to participate in the trade fair and get the services they want at a cheaper cost and more easily.

Hemed was pleased with the presence of the One Stop Center which includes various participating public institutions and explained that the presence

of the center strengthens cooperation between various public institutions.

Minister of Trade and Industrial Development Zanzibar Omar Said Shaban, said the ministry will continue to implement the instructions given to them by various leaders who come to visit with the aim of improving the experience.

Govt lauds IRDP's efforts to promote economic, social affairs at grassroots level

By Correspondent Valentine Oforo,

Dodoma

THE government has commended the Dodoma-based Institute of Rural Development Planning (IRDP) for its commitment towards promoting and steering social and economic affairs within local communities across the country.

IRDP's Rector, Prof Hozen Mayaya said in an interview that during the sixth Economic Promotion Conference (EPC) held in September last year, the varsity was ranked 3rd in the category of community empowerment.

"Our ranking follows the establishment of Mipango Entrepreneurship and Innovation Centre (MEI) that imparts key practical skills on entrepreneurship matters to students. Since its inception in 2019, MEI has played a serious role to steer entrepreneurship spirit to students," he said.

The Don added that the centre serves as an important podium to allow students to hatch and showcase different useful entrepreneurship that they have been endowed with under the tutelage of the experience and high-profile trainers.

He informed that the state-owned varsity also grabbed another award on good governance and rule of law, offered by the President's Office (Public Service Management and Good Governance).

"Together with that, we also managed to attain third position in the category of higher learning institutions across the country," Prof Mayaya stated.

Prof Mayaya said there has been an increased number of researches, projects and consultancy works at the institute which represents another crucial and vital milestone that the varsity has gone through.

He said: "For example, during last year, our research reports were published in our two peer review journals, the Rural Planning Journal (RPJ) and Planning and Development Initiative Journal (PDIJ) as well as other local and international journals.

Prof Mayaya asserted that further, through collaboration with the Eastern and Southern African Universities Research Programme, the varsity had so far published two groundbreaking books, entitled "The Game Changer: President Magufuli's First Term in Office" which was launched by the Prime Minister Kassim Majaliwa on January 14th 2021.

"The other book is "Continuity with Vision: The Roadmap to Success for President Samia Suluhu Hassan" which was launched on November 10th 2022 by Minister of Education, Science and Technology, Prof Adolf Mkenda," he informed.

He said development of the new programme resulted from a well-established and constructive move by the Dodoma-based college to review and improve its training curricula after each five years.

"We have developed the new curricula through use of an intensive labour market survey, the survey which was carried out in all the geographical zones of the country in order to obtain exhaustive information from a diverse range of stakeholders," he expressed.

According to him, the involved stakeholders include think tanks from the National Council for Technical and Vocational Education (NACTVET), the Tanzania Commission for University (TCU), the Prime Minister's Office (Regional Administration and Local Government), the President Office (Public Service Management and Good Governance) as well as others from key academic Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) to mention but a few.

He unveiled the envisaged six programmes as Basic Technician, Technician Certificate and Ordinary Diploma in Accountancy and Finance, (NTA-46), Information Technology (IT), Geomatics, Basic Technician, Technician Certificate and Ordinary Diploma and Bachelor Degree in Urban and Rural Planning (NTA 4-8), Master Degree in Environmental and Occupational Health (NTA 9) and Master Degree in Human Resource Management (NTA 9).



A delegation led by Ruvuma regional commissioner Col Laban Thomas (L) makes an inspection tour of the Amanimakoro-Ruanda section of a road construction project in Mbinga District yesterday. Right is Mbinga district commissioner Aziza Mangosongo. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

Don't engage in politics, police cautioned

By Guardian Correspondent, Arusha

POLICE in Arusha Region have been cautioned not to get involved into politics, instead they should concentrate on protecting citizens and their property.

The commander of the Tanzania Police Force-Stock Theft Preventive Unit STPU, ACP Simon Pasua warned members of the police not

to display their party preferences. Commander Pasua was speaking at a short ceremony to congratulate police personnel who had performed well last year.

He said the police are supposed to concentrate on other community issues, including sports, without forgetting their responsibilities in protecting people and their property, in order to reduce

complaints from among the citizens. Regarding the police who received awards, he said they still have room to increase their efforts for them to be awarded, including promotion.

He also called upon them to work in unity for more achievements.

During the event, Arusha Regional Police Commander, Julius Masejo congratulated STPU commander

by recognising the police who had performed better last year.

"Tanzanians depend on the Police Force, when you perform well others will emulate you so that they also receive awards," he said.

Police Cpl Silvester Mang'aha who received the award for performing well in 2022 thanked fellow officers for giving him cooperation.



Ilala district commissioner Ng'wilabuzu Ndatwa Ludigija has a word with journalists at a flood-prone section of downtown Dar es Salaam's Nkrumah Street yesterday. He directed the Dar es Salaam Water and Sanitation Authority (Dawasa) to move in with sustainable remedial action. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

Organic farming: Promotion efforts now bearing fruit

By Correspondent Valentine Oforo, Dodoma

THE various efforts made by the Ministry of Agriculture to promote organic farming in collaboration with various stakeholders from within and outside the country have started to bear the intended fruit.

During last year's World's Leading Trade Fair for Organic Food (BIOFACH) held in July in Germany, Tanzania was announced the third country across for the cultivation and production of cotton through use of biological practices.

Chief Executive Officer, Tanzania Organic Agriculture Movement (TOAM), Bakari Mongo said the development interprets the impressive strides that the country is achieving towards general impetus to improve performance of the environmental farming practices among the farmers.

"We remain optimistic that the parent ministry will continue to strategize and put in place further interventions to help scaling up executions of the agroecology sector across the country and impart farmers with needed biological farming practices to improve yields and to ensure environmental conservation," he expressed.

He hailed the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) for its commitment to support Tanzania cotton farmers to adopt an organic system, saying most of them are now turning to organic cotton farming.

He said cotton is one among the country's important economic cash crops for exports, saying however conventional farming methods are reportedly to have created problems among most farmers.

"For instance, the use of pesticides is contaminating soil and groundwater, smallholders

and their workers, who frequently use the most basic methods and resources, are putting their health at risk. Lack of crop diversity and harder pests are also reducing farmers' yields and economic output," he added.

He said TOAM, in cooperation with Helvetas Tanzania and GIZ Tanzania, are jointly implementing a special Organic Cotton Project (OCP), attracting at least 25,000 farmers and their respective communities in Singida and Simiyu regions.

According to him, the prime project being executed in cooperation with two ginny companies-Biosustain and Alliance-works to train the involved growers in various areas of organic farming.

Helvetas Programme Officer, Geraldina Kimaryo said the overall objective of the project is to work towards climate-smart, resilient cotton farming communities and establishment of organic zones or clusters.

Kimaryo said: "There's high competition from business companies, which heavily support the use of chemicals to improve production. The other challenge is the presence of conflict between farmers and pastoralists, the situation which to a greater extent is jeopardizing integration of livestock and crops for sustainable farming."

In Tanzania cotton contributes substantially to export revenues and provide employment and heighten livelihoods to farmers in the areas where it flourishes well, including Shinyanga, Simiyu, Mwanza, Mara, Geita, Tabora, Kigoma, Singida, Tanga, Dar es Salaam, Dodoma, Iringa, Ifakara, Lindi and Mtwara.

There's high competition from business companies, which heavily support the use of chemicals to improve production

By Correspondent Zuwena Shame

Court sentences Botswana national to three years in prison or 1m/- fine

THE Kisutu Resident Magistrate's Court has sentenced a Botswana national-Theo Leborang to three years in jail or pay a 1m/- penalty for allegedly staying in the country illegally and providing false information to immigration officers.

The judgement was read yesterday by Resident Magistrate Francis Mhina.

State Attorney Hadija Masoud told the court that on January 6th this year, Leborang was arrested

at the Posta bus stand whereas the officials proved that he was staying in the country without passport or Visa.

In the first charge, Leborang was accused of having an expired passport-BN0258427 issued in Botswana.

In the second charge, the state

attorney claimed that on the same date, Leborang gave false information about his nationality for the purpose of obtaining Tanzanian national identity by filling application forms with number 111011401202301050026, well knowing that it is illegal.

She claimed that Leborang was

arrested and interrogated before he admitted to committing the alleged offences. In his defence, Leborang urged the court to forgive him because he was misguided to fill the forms knowing it would be easy for him to get the national identification number, thus having legality to stay in Tanzania.



This is Shinyanga municipality resident Yusuph Hamis alias Mr Phone, who says he has been in self-employment as a mobile phone technician for more than 15 years now. He confided to The Guardian earlier this week that what he earns from his "sweat" from is enough to make lead a "reasonably good life". Photo: Correspondent Marco Maduhu

ZRB to start manhunt for unregistered tour guides

By Guardian Reporter, Zanzibar

THE Zanzibar Revenue Board (ZRB) has warned that it will launch a manhunt for unregistered tour guides who end up not paying taxes.

The board's Commissioner Yusuphu Juma Mwenda made the remarks yesterday when he opened a management meeting for workers of the board at Zanzibar beach resort.

He said there are people who are operating in the sector without licenses, a move which makes most of the people operate without registration hence making differences in doing business.

He said the board is targeting to collect 300bn/- from areas that do not match within the sector, saying in the tourism sector, it was the tour guiding department which does not match with other areas.

"There are people who are doing this business without registering or paying tax while there are people who are doing the same and paying tax," he said.

The Commissioner said the kind of revenue which they collect mostly are from the tourism sector saying it was a must for the people in the sector to pay taxes.

He said there are people who are benefiting from the tourism sector saying this should not affect all the operators in the sector.

He said in the last six month, the board planned to collect 290bn/- but collected only 286bn/- due to various reasons.

He said the board will continue to offer education on how to pay taxes so that everyone eligible pays tax according to the requirements of the law.

He said in the few coming days, the board will change its name to Zanzibar Revenue Authority (ZRA) saying there was no need for panic as the new changes will have no

impact on taxpayers.

Mohammed Walid Fikirini, an officer from the Zanzibar tourism commission said the commission was ready to deal with people who operate as tour guides without licenses.

"These have been divided in two groups: there are those who are natives of Zanzibar but are operating without being registered and there are hotel managers who are also guiding tourists without proper documentation," he said.

Shabani Yahya Ramashani who is the Director of tax from ZRB said tax collection for the board decreased because there are unscrupulous business people who do not give receipts when buying and selling.

Head of ZRB in Pemba Jamal Hassan Jamal said they are determined to control tax evasion saying the exercise was 99percent successful in the last six months.



These have been divided in two groups: there are those who are natives of Zanzibar but are operating without being registered and there are hotel managers who are also guiding tourists without proper documentation

Zimbabwe: Africa's new agricultural power house

HARARE

ZIMBABWE has registered its largest wheat harvest in 2022, 375,000 tonnes, making the austral African country a self-sufficient agricultural powerhouse.

With 375 thousand tons of wheat harvest registered for 2022, Zimbabwe is set to become a self-sufficient agricultural powerhouse. A unique performance in Africa.

The harvest in 2022 was 13% higher than the previous year, breaking a half-century old record.

The area sown to wheat has increased by 10% and, above all, the state has set up a policy of distributing fertilizer and buying crops via a public body, the Grain Marketing Board, which has won over farmers

The country no longer needs to import wheat to meet its needs,

saving up 300 million dollars in import costs.

In the current context where African countries are suffering from the absence or high cost of Russian and Ukrainian wheat, Zimbabwe stands out for its proactive policy.

However, although the country can pride itself on being a unique example in Africa for wheat, not everything is rosy. The Grain Marketing Board is having the worst

difficulties paying farmers. Less than a quarter of the crop has been purchased, despite government assurances and the release of emergency funds. The maize sector, the main cereal consumed in the country, is also progressing, but remains insufficient to meet national needs. In general, Zimbabwe's agricultural yields remain below the African average, according to some experts.

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Urban redevelopment needs indicative, not fixed, layouts

PLANS to ensure rapid redevelopment of most urban areas are taking firm root, with land occupancy formalisation agencies tasked to especially deal with those failing to develop their plots for years. While ordinarily the time that one develops a plot of land is a private matter, namely one's preparedness to meet the costs of such development by a prior design, it is wholly understandable that the public authorities can have a veto on the issue. The responsible minister is now pointing out that idle plots sully urban landscapes and slow down the collection of public revenues, as undeveloped land attracts few levies.

It is fair to say that it is true undeveloped plots mar the urban landscape, where a patch of land separates buildings, in ways that people don't often take notice of this empty space being somewhat abnormal, that all this area ought to be developed. As no one can own land by nature and all of just have a right to occupy and use it, or sell it if we want, it is clear that at some point the public authorities can make corrections about land use, or the failure to use land when it remains idle. There is nothing strange about such intervention.

In that case a measure of development of land plots can be said to be necessary, as if one can't do, it is better such an occupant or as many prefer, land owner, seek someone ready to develop the plot, as then he would get the best price for the plot. If such a person fails to do so until the land management agencies converge on the plot, what follows will be their decision as they come to acquire land rather than to buy land plots, so they will brook no discussions. Carrying out government orders brooks no discussion, to be sure.

There is all the same a lingering problem in how those who wish to

redevelop their plots - and at times it is housing structures or envisaged commercial buildings - just what they can do. It would appear to some observers that range of options is far too stringent, as some people, admittedly experts for that matter, already drew up a master plan on what the city ought to have, and that is way back in the 1990s, or five or so years later. Toeing those land use plans is what was being emphasized at a task force meeting working on the programme to formalise unplanned settlements Redeveloping the settlements is foremost.

The land management officials were instructed that if the plot was earmarked for constructing a ten storey building, then it should not be built to 20 storeys and if it was for a two storey building, only two storeys should be built. In other words the ministry believes that plans for grand urban development have already been issued so construction should abide by the plans. It is one thing to say what types of buildings are right for an area, and it is a different matter to say how many storeys a specific building ought to have, as here a certain level of discretion is exercised. Like everything else in life, this ability to decide the number of floors for a building can be traded for good earnings.

Instead of saying that this or that plot of land can only have two floors, not three, it is far better to say it ought to have at least two floors, and definitely not more than five. This sort of mixture is normal and it doesn't disrupt the street view; at most it will excite the market about what sort of investor can develop not a particular plot but take a plot within a certain area, given the limitation in ambition such indicative layouts impose. But on the whole it is investor friendly, not constraining investors like a two storey rule of thumb.

Business community has reason for elation over BoT, Treasury top cadre

RIPPLES are being felt near and far with the Treasury looking at itself a bit closely to see how everyone fits in with what is likely to be demanded of them from the new top cadre in the Bank of Tanzania (BoT) and the top civil servant there. The Treasury permanent secretary also has a role as the government's paymaster general, in like manner as the ministry has an internal auditor general. The Treasury internal auditor is involved with not just ministerial work but far beyond.

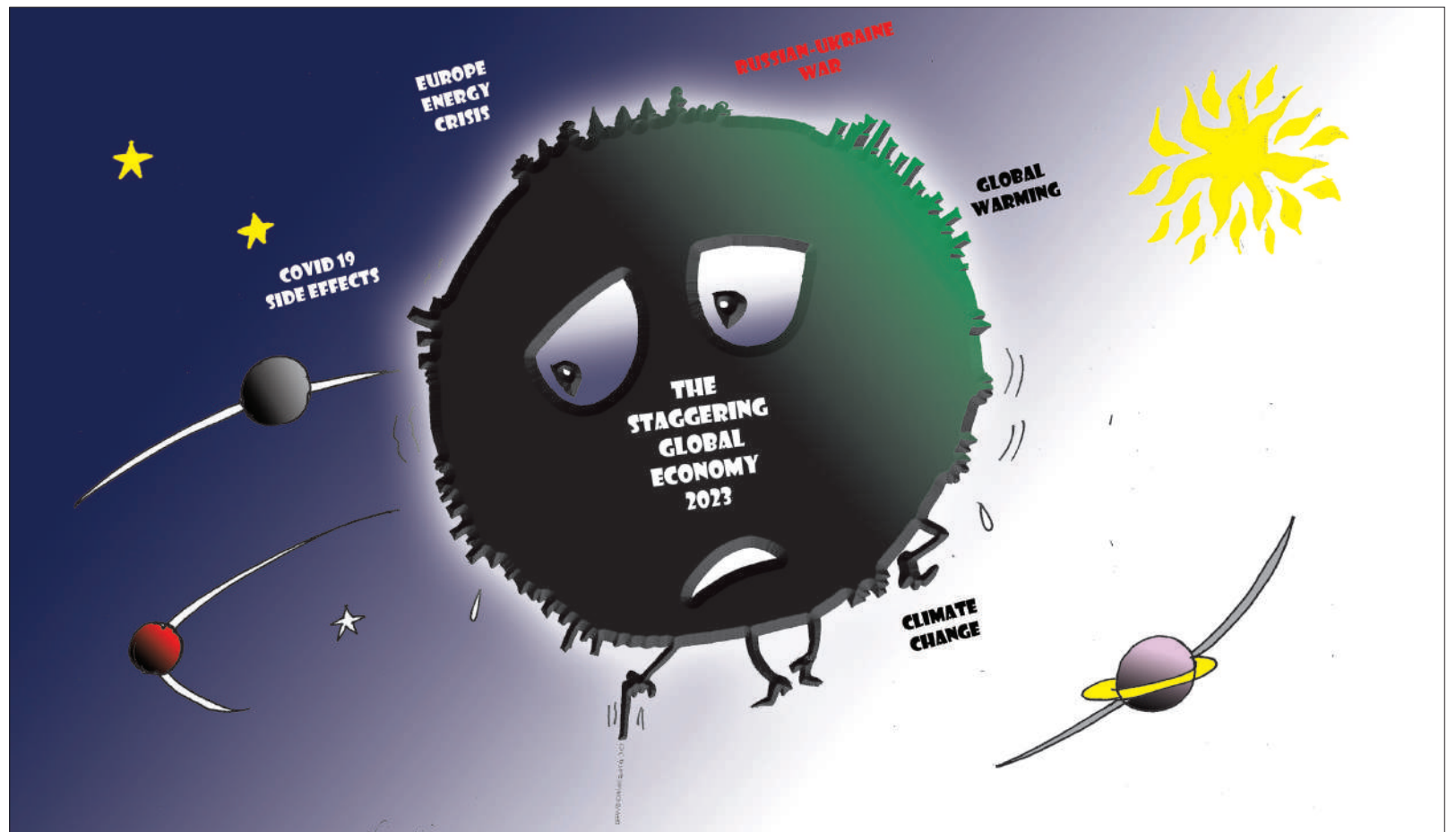
Some parts of the media have reported genuine enthusiasm especially for the change at the central bank, perhaps expecting a change of style, in consolidating changes that are being undertaken by the sixth phase government. Usually the policies aren't formed by top executives but the government itself, while those they entrust with implementation have legroom to give such orientation a specific tonality. Expectations in that direction can be general, not necessarily sharp ended.

Reports on the new appointments spoke less of what President Samia Suluhu Hassan expects of them after swearing them in, but rather expectations within the Ministry of Finance and Planning, as well as with portions of their major clients, the business community. It is evident that the business community has expectations of those taking positions in economic decision making after being nominated by the sixth phase authorities that

they will be more eager for instance about reform plans. There is a blueprint about the business and investment environment which is at odds with a breadth of traditional executives used to taking leave or distance from the private sector. Sixth phase appointees are likely to speed up reform work.

There is also an inward looking professionalism that was visible in the latest appointments, as the two earlier appointment for governor of the Bank of Tanzania essentially came from academia, first the late Prof. Benno Ndulu, followed by the now retiring Prof. Florens Luoga. This time a central bank insider has been picked, as Treasury outgoing permanent secretary Emmanuel Tutuba takes over as BoT governor. Dr Natu El-Maamry Mwamba, who has experience in the central bank apart from academics, comes in as Treasury permanent secretary. An insider, too.

In that case there will be more of continuity than change as the new appointments are relatively familiar faces in their new positions but appointing authorities often have agenda they wish to see taken up, not just 'business as usual.' Individual experience and background matters, for instance the former permanent secretary has worked on projects with diplomatic missions not just as an expert but as an administrator. That way he needs no introduction to what the development partners expect; he can use it at the BoT as well.



Only five days left for Zimbabweans to enjoy free education - so govt says

By Brian Sedze

FIVE days to go as Mahere say! MPs which I can now say without doubt are incompetent passed a budget just last week without questioning or making noise about this promise.

MPs sit in parliament to pass budgets without free education, cancer machines, medications, civil service remuneration and so forth. A few days after budget their party leaders complain about free education then start complaining.

A few months later they complain about they complain about inappropriate allocations yet in real they approved their allocations.

Them MPs lost their right to a voice after receiving those loans. I have no opinion about if they deserve them. Just receiving them before budget vote mean we are led

by greedy politicians across board.

I copy here what I wrote on the day of publication of this in July;

This is very absurd not because of previous hot air promises but because the government doesn't explain how, the 4th estate doesn't question the source of the money, citizens want free education without analysis of why paid education is failing teachers & facilities and our parliament doesn't robustly request the plan maybe by a gnatt chart of how to progress from presently ailing education system to a fully tax payer funded education in just 6 months. It won't just happen like miracle money!

To fund this need, government must explain or we must demand explanation on; how they intend to increase tax revenue by probably 30 per cent to fund this when NDSI only estimate below 10%, how are they to govern natural resources

to avoid leakages, what austerity are they to implement, which non core functions and activities do they intend to transfer resources from to education, how are they to shelve present and pressing debt retirement or needs to fund this mammoth need, what changes in budgeting model will be used to achieve this gigantic fund outlay, what will move us from a position we can't adequately pay teachers to fully funding education within just the next 6 months, how will this impact mega projects which still need funding, what is the outcome of that education if resources are transferred from job creation to basic education, does this also address a shortage of thousands of schools and what sort of system will be used to allocate resources to each and every school and at what cost etc.

My view is simple that in our

context we need to fund education in a manner in which for example low density parents go 100% , medium density 70 per cent, high density 50 per cent, rural 30 per cent and vulnerable people and areas per cent just like what they did with exam fees this year. At least for now! Not free for all.

A broke government can't promise this without a huge change in self inflicted and country specific ailments. Whats the plan with that.

With latest developments on parly loans, city of Harare land allocations, industrial land allocations to councillors and a city mayor being given 25 year least at a US\$1 per month for 25 years we are on our own.

In 2023 we are simply voting for nothing and at best who can represent our corrupt tendencies better.

By Jerry Chifamba

I have never felt this frustrated and helpless until these regular 19 hour power cuts that have been plaguing Harare and my neighborhood for the past few weeks.

The outages, which have been happening on a daily basis, have been causing major disruptions to my daily life and have even resulted in some businesses having to shut down temporarily.

According to officials from our electricity provider, ZESA, the power cuts have been worsened by limited production of electricity from the Kariba hydro-power plant as a result of plunging water levels. Kariba Dam is the largest man-made dam in the world, providing the bulk of electricity consumed in both Zambia and Zimbabwe. Its water level has been decreasing steadily because of droughts and low inflows from the Zambezi River and its tributaries.

Meanwhile, imports from South Africa have been problematic as Eskom battles its own power supply crunch mainly as a result of frequent breakdowns to its generating units. The company has said they'll address the shortages, but in the meantime, residents are being forced to deal with the consequences of the outages.

It's been really frustrating. I work from home, and every time the power goes out, my work is at risk of being lost. It's not just inconvenient, it's also costly and disruptive.

Zimbabwe's electricity crisis: The time for renewables is now

For most, without electricity, it's impossible to use computers, access the internet, or even make phone calls. This makes it difficult or impossible for people to do their jobs, leading to lost productivity and income. I've had to spend money on a backup solar system and other batteries just to keep work going.

Other residents have reported problems with food spoiling in their refrigerators and freezers, as well as difficulties with staying connected to the internet and other essential services.

"I'm really worried about the safety of my family," said a neighbour and friend who owns a car park. "Without power, our security system doesn't work, and we have to rely on flashlights for light. It's just not acceptable to have to live like this in the 21st century."

The power company has apologised for the inconvenience and has assured residents that they are working as quickly as possible to fix the problem. In the meantime, residents are being advised to prepare for future outages by keeping backup supplies of food, water, and other essentials on hand.

"We pay our bills on time and expect to have reliable power, but it seems like every day we're left in the dark," says Kudzanai Ruwisi, a local

resident and music promoter who uses a generator to keep the lights on.

In some cases, these power cuts can also be dangerous. For example, if people are using medical equipment that requires electricity, a power outage can put their health at risk. In addition, power cuts can lead to food spoilage and other issues if people are unable to use refrigerators or stoves.

To combat the effects of power cuts, a few people are turning to backup generators and other alternative sources of power. However, these solutions are expensive and aren't accessible to the majority.

It cost between U.S.\$2500 to U.S.\$3000 to install a solar system, and most people can't afford it.

In the end, the best solution to the problem of power cuts is to improve the reliability and stability of the power grid. This will require significant investment and effort, but it will ultimately benefit both individuals and society as a whole. Until that happens, however, people working from home will have to continue dealing with the inconvenience and disruption caused by power outages.

This could be used as a chance to increase energy supply with renewable energy feeding into the

national grid by 2025.

According to Deborah Ramalope head of climate policy analysis at Climate Analytics, solar has now become the cheapest source of energy generation with the costs of wind and solar energy having declined by over 72% and 90%, respectively, between 2009 and 2021. This is good news for the continent which has arguably the highest solar radiation levels in the world.

A transition to renewable energy is really good for Zimbabwe, Africa and the world, and ensuring universal access to affordable electricity by 2030 means investing in clean energy sources such as solar, wind and thermal. This would lower greenhouse gas emissions, slow down climate change, enhance air and water quality, protect human health and the environment, and in the end spur economic growth.

The United Nations and partners have already launched two new initiatives to accelerate action towards achieving clean, affordable energy for all, and the goal of net-zero carbon emissions.

Power cuts in Zimbabwe are due to last until, at least, early January 2023 whilst the Zambian government said they would last "until the water levels improve".

Olam explores listing agricultural arm in Singapore and Saudi Arabia

By Mercedes Ruehl, Singapore

OLAM Group, one of the world's biggest agricultural commodity traders, will list its \$3.5bn agricultural arm in Singapore and potentially Saudi Arabia as concerns around the war in Ukraine and climate change spur investment in food security.

The Singapore-based trader, which sold a 35 per cent stake in Olam Agri to a subsidiary of Saudi Arabia's Public Investment Fund last year for \$1.24bn, said on Tuesday that the dual listing of the company was designed to help expand its business outside of Asia.

Olam Agri is looking to raise between \$800mn and \$1bn for the listing in the first half of the year, according to two people familiar with the deal. The company, which supplies global brands from Nestlé to Unilever, also counts Japan's Mitsubishi and Singaporean state investment company Temasek as its backers.

The initial public offering comes as Saudi Arabia is looking to diversify its economy away from fossil fuels into sectors including agriculture.

Climate change and the war in Ukraine are set to keep food prices at higher levels than before the Covid-19 pandemic, even as wholesale food costs have stabilised in recent months.

Chief executive Sunny Verghese on Tuesday said investors were increasingly concerned about global food security. "What the Russia-Ukraine war has brought into sharp relief is that as the world balkanizes and polarises... global output including food and feed production, can get upended," he said.

Olam Agri is a supplier and processor that links farmers – particularly from frontier and emerging markets in Asia and Africa – with global brands.

The listing is part of a



Olam has been strengthening its ties with Saudi Arabia as the kingdom seeks to deepen investment in food security

reorganisation of the Singapore-listed Olam Group to split into three new entities. Verghese said there was no change to the plan to list its food ingredients business on the London Stock Exchange with a secondary listing in Singapore. The executive said it would happen after the Olam Agri listing was completed and when market conditions improved.

Nirgunan Tiruchelvam, head of consumer and internet research at Aletheia Capital, said: "Efforts to spin off [the Olam Agri] business ticks boxes in a world where people [are] valuing food security and high environmental, social and governance standards."

The company is "viewed as proxy for commodity or food prices going up," he said, though he added that a

number of global investors were not set up to trade in the Saudi stock market.

"The Saudis have been investing in the business for a while, and it fits into the government's plans to diversify and get exposure to businesses that are ESG-friendly but also serve its specific interests," he said.

In response to questions about

why it was pursuing a primary listing in Saudi Arabia as well as Singapore, Verghese said the Saudi exchange raised a lot of money in 2021 and 2022, making it an exception to other global equity markets last year.

"As the first foreign company to list there, we can tap into this additional incremental discrete pool of new capital," he said.

By Madhumita Paul

CLIMATE change and extreme weather events pose severe threats to Africa's food systems. Rising temperatures and changes in rainfall patterns are likely to increase the frequency of crop failures.

At the same time, the continent's access to international climate finance remains low and insufficient, with access to only 5 per cent of the total global finance, said a new report.

ADAPT: Policy innovations to unlock climate finance for resilient food systems in Africa, published December 5, 2022, called for action to plug the climate adaptation finance gap, estimated at \$41.3 billion annually.

The report was launched by a panel of experts from the Malabo Montpellier Forum in Dakar, Senegal. The panel convenes 18 leading agriculture, engineering, ecology, nutrition and food security experts.

It aims to facilitate policy choices of African governments to accelerate progress towards food security and improved nutrition.

The agri-food sector alone employs about two-third of the total workforce in Africa. It contributes to an average of 30-60 per cent to gross domestic product (GDP) and about 30 per cent to export earnings per country.

Given the situation, climate change may lead to an equivalent annual GDP loss of 10-20 per cent in Africa by 2100.

The report analysed four African countries – Benin, Mali, Rwanda and Zimbabwe.

It highlighted how dedicated action at the government level – through strategic policies, institutional innovations and other interventions – can unlock significant climate finance for resilient and sustainable transformation of

Africa needs diversified green funds to plug climate adaptation finance gap of \$41.3 billion, says report



The agri-food sector alone contributes to an average of 30-60 per cent to gross domestic product and about 30 per cent to export earnings per country

the food system.

The analysis lauded the efforts taken by Benin in mobilising climate finance towards transforming food systems.

The government of Benin ensured that its national resources were optimised to address the impacts of climate change. The country has also issued guide-

lines on mainstreaming climate change across sectors and sub-national levels.

Mali's government has mobilised significant climate funds over the last decade, driven mainly by close partnerships with international development partners.

These funds supported the es-

tablishment of a scientific basis and community-level capacity to address the impacts of climate change.

The government of Rwanda has invested heavily in establishing new, innovative and world-class institutions to mobilise climate finance, such as the National Fund for Environment.

Such investments supported a demand-led approach to bridge funding gaps.

The report also referred to the case of Zimbabwe, where the government has collaborated with the Green Climate Fund (GCF) to design the GCF Country Programme. It is a four-year-long plan to ensure the country's

readiness to mobilise climate finance from the GCF.

It comes after the 27th Conference of Parties (COP27) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, where the impacts of climate change on food security were highlighted.

The document put forward several recommendations to mobilise climate adaptation finance for resilient food systems.

For instance, it suggested the systematic alignment of the food and climate agendas. It also called for building technical knowledge and capacity that straddle climate, agriculture and finance across government.

Climate change adaptation and resilience-building should be mainstreamed into policies and investment decision-making.

Develop a pipeline of bankable projects focused on food systems and related infrastructures, supported by investible adaptation plans, the report said. Locally-led adaptation efforts should be supported to ensure that resilience-building interventions meet the needs of the most vulnerable and have a sustainable impact.

The assessment also called for scaling up efforts to attract private capital for adaptation across food systems; designing reliable tracking mechanisms and simple digital tools to record climate finance flow at the national level.

Streamline, coordinate and rationalise policies at donor institutions to unlock opportunities for recipient countries to access more and better finance, it added.

SMEs will need fast access to financing to survive in 2023

By Special Correspondent

THE 2022 saw the end of Covid-19-related restrictions but, at the same time, we also experienced some of the worst levels of load shedding ever. It has been a very difficult year for a sector that is widely considered to be the engine driving the SA economy. It is the resilience of SME owners that kept the doors open and the tills ringing.

Higher inflation and increasing interest rates also meant that it was becoming increasingly difficult to have any kind of disposable income with which to invest or grow a small business. This year, SMEs struggled to access the lifeblood that keeps them going - cash flow. This will be a determining factor to watch in 2023 too.

Perhaps the one thing that makes me optimistic about the year ahead, is how well SMEs have managed to recover and rebuild from the challenges of the past three years.

We saw how they demonstrated an innate ability to pivot, change, and adapt to the 'perfect storm' they had to weather. Over the past 12 months, we saw almost every foreseeable bit of bad news being thrown at them and somehow their resilience carried them through. This is a characteristic to encourage and nurture in 2023.

Access to funding will remain a pivotal element that determines one's successful operation in 2023. Small businesses need to have fast access to lines of funding. If they want to tap into a changing market trend, they need to be able to acquire the inventory they need quickly. Time is a luxury they don't have.

How do we turn things around in 2023? Some of the solutions



Access to funding will remain a pivotal element that determines one's successful operation in 2023. Small businesses need to have fast access to lines of funding.

and answers are perhaps more realistic and attainable than others.

Load shedding needs to come to an end

It would be remiss not to mention the dire need for a reliable source of power. The SME sector needs load shedding to come to an end. In a world that is moving away from handling cash, it is nearly impossible for SMEs to process payments and operate when there are constant power disruptions.

Cash flow will be crucial in 2023

Small businesses also need quicker access to funding and cash flow in the year ahead

and they need service providers that understand this. Banks are good for many things, but when it comes to a speedy turnaround time for a funding application then you are looking in the wrong place. SMEs need quick access to cash to get them over short-term hurdles, to get them the contracts they need to survive, as well as access to inventory.

In terms of growth cycles, I think we hit the bottom in 2022 and we will now start seeing bigger growth and expansion in the sector. When you've hit the bottom, there is only one way and that is up. But to tap into this growth you need funding, and you need fast decisions.

Inflation might have peaked and come down in 2023, something that is also potentially positive news for the sector. I expect we will see less aggressive interest rate increases or even a stabilisation of interest rates.

On a global level, there is reason to be pessimistic about next year. If the US goes into recession as speculated, this would have a knock-on effect here at home too. Unfolding events in Ukraine and Russia will equally be felt locally.

On the South African front, I am perhaps a bit more optimistic.

I don't think there is much more that can be thrown at lo-

cal SMEs that they haven't experienced yet. We saw doom and gloom this year, but next year we will see the start of a recovery. We can see the customers that are getting funding from us are all building and preparing for the growth that is anticipated in 2023. They appear to be more confident about the future and its prospects.

One should also acknowledge the important role that political stability and policy play in creating an environment that encourages economic growth. Whether it is events on a global stage or here at home, investors are watching; and nervous markets don't grow. We need to be attracting

foreign capital, not scaring it off. This is a real change factor to watch in 2023.

Resilient businesses prevail and pivot

We at Lulalend are funding businesses that are trying to be resilient. A lot of them are in the renewables sector, where they have completely pivoted to find new opportunities and tap into the gaps where Eskom is failing. This is great to see as it speaks to the dynamic capabilities of SMEs in South Africa. It also shows that people want to grow the economy. Jobs numbers have also recently improved, which is indicative of a growing economy.

I also see an increasing focus on "doing good" for the planet. While it varies in importance with economic pressure, consumers continue to make ethical purchasing decisions based on concerns over sustainability and the best interest of the planet.

This trend ties in with our fastest-growing market sector in terms of funding allocation. SMEs that are playing in the renewables space are ramping up to service consumer needs at pace.

Nimble and responsive suppliers of cash flow will see greater success in 2023. Small businesses don't have the luxury of time to wait for funding decisions to be made. Those that understand they can get access to funding when they need it most, will benefit from alternative lenders who can provide this with ease.

I think more SME owners will realise that banks are no longer their only source of funding in 2023. Banks will always have their space to fill but there are other players who will stand out and stand up to their needs with outstanding flexibility, tailor-made service, and an open door to available funds.

Garth Rossiter is the chief risk officer at fintech start-up Lulalend. The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views or positions of Ventureburn.x

Conflicts, climate change threatening sprouting of Africa's great green wall

By Busani Bafana, Bulawayo

ESCALATING conflict and climate change threaten the implementation of the Great Green Wall Initiative (GGWI), an ambitious land restoration project across Africa.

Promoters of the Great Green Wall have called for strong political will in engendering peace and increasing investment in environmental preservation, which the project launched 16 years ago seeks to enhance.

Competition over natural resources that are affected by climate change is fueling interstate conflicts, especially in West Africa, a region in the path of the Great Green Wall. The Wall is an Africa-led project to stop the march of desertification across Africa through the restoration of more than 100 million hectares of degraded land.

The project was initially aimed at planting trees in the Sahel region from Senegal in the west to Djibouti in the east, but its scope has been expanded to cover the restoration of degraded land in more than 20 countries with a view to sequestering 250 million tonnes of carbon and creating 10 million green jobs by 2030, the promoters of the project say.

To date, the project has covered more than 4 percent of the target 100 million hectares, but it is making good progress to make the deadline, says Paul Elvis Tangem, coordinator for the Great Green Wall Initiative at the African Union Commission.

According to a United Nations status report, the Great Green Wall needs to cover 8 million hectares of land a year at a cost of up to \$4.3 billion if it is to meet the implementation deadline.

Tangem says the project, which has received multiple funding from governments, donors, and multilateral development banks, would need more than 50 billion US Dollars to



Promotional image of the Great Green Wall by the United Nations' UN Water initiative



When the Great Green Wall Initiative started, there was skepticism that it was a 'white elephant', Tangem said, but now it was the project to support.

be realized by 2030. Currently, about 27 billion US dollars has been pledged, a seemingly huge amount which Tangem says is not much if the return on investment at 1:7 US dollars in nature-based solutions is considered.

Tangem notes that the escalating impacts of climate change across Africa justify the speedy implementation of the project, which is now more than just planting millions of trees across Africa but a holistic approach to unlocking economic and ecological benefits for many countries.

Launched in 2007, the Great Green Wall is envisaged that the land restoration initiative will boost economic prosperity in the participating countries, create employment, reduce hunger and reduce conflict, which has

been linked to a fight over access to and use of natural resources across the width of Africa.

"The various COPs from UNFCCC COP 15, the UNFCCC-COP27, and the CBD COP15 have recognized the Great Green wall as an important project giving more impetus to mainstream it in all development plans and giving more visibility to it," Tangem said, noting that the current climate change impacts and conflicts arising from natural resource use were challenges that the project was seeking to solve.

Conflicts and climate are the greatest threats to the full realization of the Great Green Wall currently, Tangem explained, adding that the impact of drought across Africa has justified the importance of the GGWI, which has gar-

nered global attention as a solution to land degradation, drought, and desertification.

"The main challenges we have now, especially for farmers, is the issue of grazelands which is the biggest push of conflict in the drylands of Africa," Tangem told IPS in an interview, highlighting that there was high competition for rangelands between countries and within countries, especially in West Africa where part of the Great Green Wall runs. He cited the conflict in the Tigray region as less political and more environmental.

"It is the competition for land, the politics of it is what we see, but the underlying causes are natural resources," said Tangem. "People do not want to speak the truth, but many conflicts in Africa are basically in the drylands, which are the areas most vulnerable to climate change and where the GGWI is focusing on. So we have a challenge."

Remarking that it was now impossible to work in Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger Republic, Chad, Nigeria, Ethiopia, and Eritrea as a result of conflict, Tangem underscored the need to restore peace by restoring the environment.

"The biggest challenge we are having today is security," Tangem observed. "Conflicts are a big, big challenge. Most of the challenges that are happening now are because of competition for natural resources, the use of benefit sharing of the scarce resources from water, fertile land, fishing, and pastoral lands."

When the Great Green Wall Initiative started, there was skepticism that it was a 'white elephant', Tangem said, but now it was the project to support.

In November 2022, global leaders launched the International Drought Resilience Alliance to give political impetus to making land's resilience to drought and climate change a reality by 2030. The Alliance is a boost to the Great Green Wall Initiative.

Droughts are hitting more often and harder than before, up nearly by a third since 2000. Climate change is expected to cause more severe droughts in the future. Recent droughts in Australia, Europe, the western United States, Chile, the Horn, and Southern Africa show that no country or region is immune to their impacts, which run into billions of dollars each year, not to mention human suffering, says Ibrahim Thiaw, Executive Secretary, United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD).

The United Nations has recognized the Great Green Wall Initiative as one of 10 pioneering efforts to revive the natural world, designating it as one of its inaugural World Restoration Flagships.

Tangem said this recognition of the Great Green Wall Initiative as a key programme for land restoration had elevated it beyond being an African project.

"When people were still talking about the reality of climate change, Africa saw the need to respond to this challenge through this programme. The project has taken desertification and drought to the global agenda," Tangem said.

Inger Andersen, Executive Director of the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP), warns that the world cannot turn a blind eye to the impacts and effects of degraded lands in places like the Sahel, where millions face multiple vulnerabilities, including climate shocks and conflict. Action to tackle the drought is of utmost urgency.

Noting that desertification was becoming a massive crisis, Ursula Gertrud von der Leyen, President of the European Commission, which is part of the International Drought Resilience Alliance, said the alliance is focusing on finding nature-based solutions and the right technology and societal approaches to prevent further land degradation.

Allow children room to perform domestic chores as it's not child labour, says expert

By Correspondent Rose Mwalongo, Morogoro

IT'S doom day as schools open coupled with fees, stationeries and whatever have you. Amidst all are various children who have put up some weight and most of them will need new uniforms for them to survive.

For the past one month, all so the world has seen people engage in a 'deja' vous with children at home enjoying delicious meals and what have you.

Most children in urban areas and especially the well to do, the routine was for them to sleep, eat and play with little engagement in manual work, let alone house chores. Unlike the current trend in our time we were engaged in farming, collecting firewood, pounding maize, cooking and what have you, and nobody, I repeat nobody would complain about it as we were taught to work and to respect our elders.

In actual fact, the world child labour either did not exist or else it was hidden somewhere. I recall then as is now the case in rural areas, a child of 10 years would carry a bag of maize, so heavy that one would think they would fall on the road. However, the latter would limp all the way home and nothing would happen to their neck or them. A girl child in rural



areas was charged with the role of the mother at a young age and played that role accordingly and most of them still do. By the way, I am aware that some of our children currently sleep until 11 or 12. In the old days, sleeping up to 6 am at my Mom's house whom we called Inspector Wingo was a capital offense whose punishment was a bucket of cold

water being poured on your body. At the time, I hated the whole idea of cold water especially in June where Njombe became a real Russia. Now that I look back, I am grateful that I grew up in such an environment where I can survive anywhere I live. Recently however, it hit me hard when during a discussion on labour rights in Tanzania I came around

some real life stories of some of the children using the child labour excuse to deviate from performing house chores.

Advocate Pasience Mlowe, who was one of the presenters at a stakeholders' workshop on labour rights situation in Tanzania by the Business and Human Rights in Tanzania (BHRT) warned parents to not fall into a trap saying the

law was very clear that children can engage into some form of activities so long as they are not to their detriment.

In recent years however, the world has seen an emerging trend where children are exploited where they work in various parts especially in the informal sector such as mining and agriculture. When we speak of mines we

also speak of chemicals such as Mercury which is already harmful to an adult let alone a minor who is too young to understand its effects. Tanzania has done its share to combat child labour and exploitation where it has laws and regulations prohibiting the same.

According to the report on labor rights situation in Tanzania by the BHRT, child labour continues to occur in various parts of Tanzania especially in informal sectors such as mining and agriculture. Children who should be at schools are at times found in homes taking care of the house and fellow children. Now talk of child labour, these are areas that stakeholders ought to focus on as well as of course making sure that our domestic workers are not minors.

As we begin this year, let us all vow to teach our children to engage them in house chores with no excuse because at the end of the day it is strange that as parents we can allow our very own children to rest while at the same time employing a maid of the same age to serve us all.

2023 should be a year where we curb real child labor while at the same time making sure our children are taught to be more meaningful.

Celebrating 'BAPS Africa Day' at Pramukh Swami Maharaj Nagar, Ahmedabad faithful

By Guardian Reporter

DEVOTEES of the socio-spiritual, volunteer-driven, not-for-profit Hindu organization—BAPS from various countries in Africa presented a creative programme titled, 'Africa's Timeless Tribute during the commemoration of the BAPS Africa Day' that gathered tens of thousands people in Pramukh Swami Maharaj Nagar.

Following the special programme, His Holiness Mahant Swami Maharaj and dignitaries from around the world paid tribute to Pramukh Swami Maharaj and his ability to inspire spirituality, temples, and humanitarian service in Africa and around the world.

The thought-provoking programme commenced with devotees from Africa singing devotional hymns. Maharaj's tireless efforts in traveling, constructing mandirs, and serving and transforming the lives of thousands of devotees and volunteers around Africa.

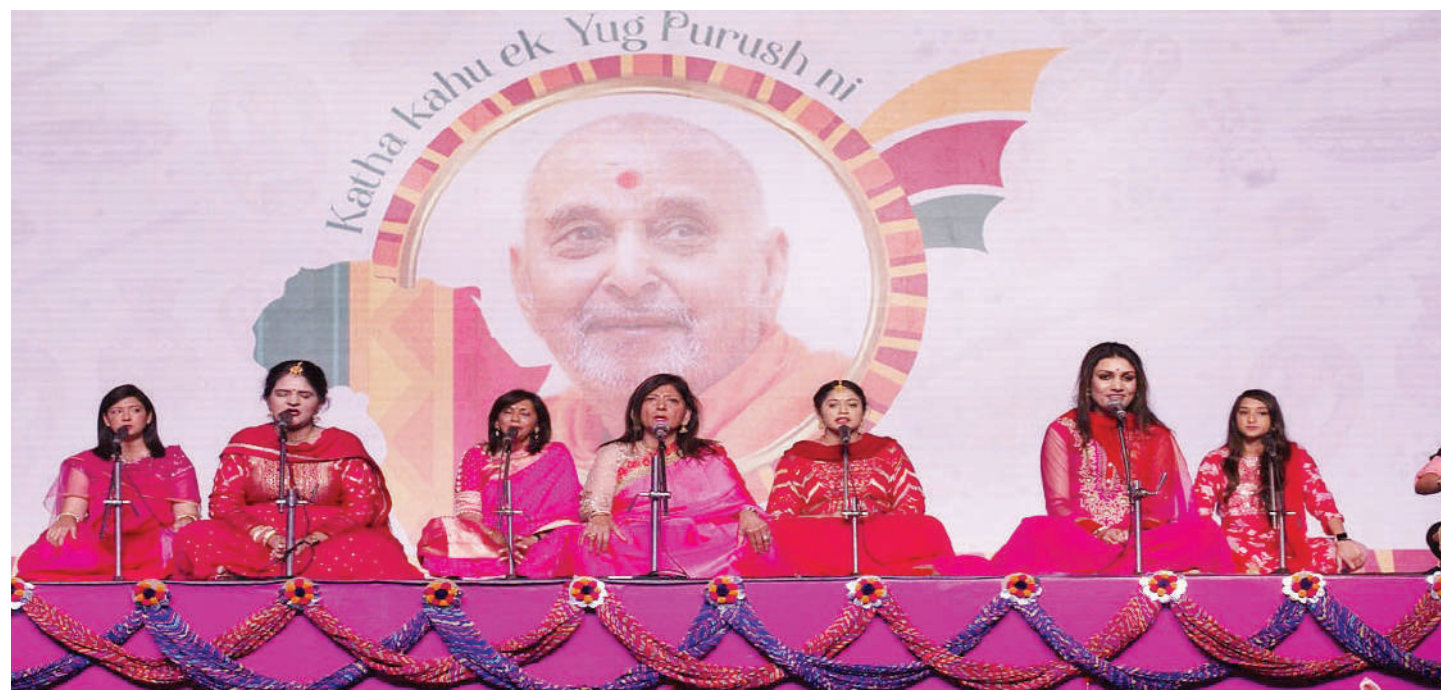
During the commemoration of BAPS Africa Day' on January 9, Senior BAPS swami Viveksagardas Swami narrated the history of the faith organization in the African continent.

BAPS swamis serving in Africa, Amrutswarupdas Swami and Paramkirtidas Swami narrated various incidents of African devotees who were inspired by Pramukh Swami Maharaj to renounce addictions and violence, forgive those who had harmed them, adopt a simple lifestyle, remain firm in their devotional observances and serve society.

Headswami of BAPS Africa Priyavratdas Swami offered a prayer to Mahant Swami Maharaj, "For BAPS Africa's Centenary five years hence, we want to offer our respects by further cultivating the virtues of humility, tolerance, and Pramukh Swami Maharaj's motto - In the joy of others. May all of Africa as well as the devotees become prosperous, may they become ideal devotees, and may BAPS Africa's Centenary be celebrated on a grand scale."

A special issue on the Pramukh Swami Maharaj Centennial Celebrations in the Journal of Contemporary Research Studies in Tanzania was blessed by Mahant Swami Maharaj. BAPS youth wrote several research articles for this journal. This is the first issue to come out of the BAPS Swaminarayan Research Institute, Tanzania.

During the day, Mahant Swami Maharaj inaugurated a new English publication, "My Personal Mala: My Daily Companion" written by Amrutvijaydas Swami which shows Pramukh Swami Maharaj's love



for worship, even during intense travels and service.

Maharaj inaugurated another new English publication, "In the joy of others" that provides a historical account of Pramukh Swami Maharaj's efforts for the success of the Narmada Dam Project.

Speaking during the occasion, Maharaj said: "The many satsang centers around Africa have come together and presented a beautiful programme on the occasion of BAPS Africa Day."

Nirgundas Swami strengthened the foundation through his letters to African devotees.

"We have also seen the devotees of Africa remain staunch in their faith and religious observances to please Pramukh Swami Maharaj. Young and old, male and female, this continues today allowing Satsang to continue growing. Without staunch religious observances, this would not happen. Everyone strives to serve through body, mind, and wealth, and they are fully devoted. I pray that everyone's devotion may be further augmented, that their social and financial circumstances improve and that everyone attains happiness in this world and in God's abode."

Gangapuram Kishan Reddy, Minister for Tourism, Culture and Development of the Northeastern Region -India said: "Pramukh Swami Maharaj combined spirituality, modernity, and values. His life was full of culture, spiritual endeavour, empathy, sacrifice and service. He thought of the happiness of others and felt his own happiness lay in it. His global personality can be seen from the celebrations in his honour at the United Nations in New York. Like

Vivekananda Swami who believed the service of humans is the service of God, I see this value in the BAPS Swaminarayan Sanstha. Great universities will have to study for this festival. It will be an inspiration for them.

"Pramukh Swami Maharaj worked for the development of individuals, families, communities, nations and the world. BAPS is one of the greatest social organizations in the world. In India and abroad they engage in service activities during times of crisis, whether it was the earthquake in Kutch, the floods in Assam, the cyclone in West Bengal, the war in Ukraine, the COVID pandemic, or the tragedy in Morbi. Wherever they are in the world, one sees the volunteers of BAPS offering service to the world.

The grand mandirs of BAPS attract hundreds of thousands of people to India fostering both our spiritual heritage and our economy.

Justice Sharad Arvind Bobde, Former Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of India, said: "BAPS has become a world-renowned institution. It is founded on the teachings of the Vedas and has done incredible work in the preservation of Sanatan Dharma in all its aspects. When you see the activities of BAPS, one feels a great sense of belonging to the great traditions of Sanatan Dharma.

The first sentiment of world unity was the Vedic statement 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbhakam'. This is also the motto of the Indian Parliament. As Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of India, the Supreme Court and the Parliament all work under the motto, 'Where there is Dharma there is victory.'

"Sanatan Dharma is timeless and pure.

There is nothing in it against any kind of people. Indeed, it originated when there was no other religious thought in this world. It stands on the great pillars of the concepts of the atman, the different celestial realms and the ultimate authority of Paramatma. The three great ancient civilizations of Greece, Rome and Egypt no longer survive, but Varanasi survives and is thriving. This is a sign of the greatness of our culture and our civilization.

Justice Alfonse Chigamoy Owin-Dollo - Chief Justice of Uganda said: "Today, I have seen with my own eyes what faith, love, devotion, commitment and utmost dedication can do. I have seen fulfillment in the faces of everyone I have met during these two days. It is amazing. This is the work of God. Nothing can move the world more than faith. This is what I have seen here. I have seen the inexplicable, the indescribable assemblage of infrastructure and people who are gathered here from the morning into the night. This is so inspiring.

"Pramukh Swami Maharaj was meticulous, thorough, and devoted to his chosen mission to change the world. His teachings and his endowment for paying attention to small details in every task that he chose to do remains one special attribute for us all to emulate. Being a part of these celebrations is one of the greatest opportunities in my life and I will always remember this.

"I speak for Uganda, I speak for East Africa, I speak for Africa. Our interface with India goes back a long way. I do not have sufficient time to give an account of all the contributions. In 1962, at the time of Ugandan independence, the

Ugandan economy was on par with South Korea, Singapore and a number of other countries. The main engine for Uganda's powerful economic base were Indian investors, the majority of whom were from Gujarat.

"We learn both from the good and the bad. Uganda is now open to everybody and there are thousands of Indian investors back in the country. A huge chunk of them are Ugandan citizens, including my friend Ramji, who introduced me to discover the beauty, strength, and purpose of your religion.

There are Indians already investing in this land, let me use this occasion to advise and encourage more of you to come to Uganda and invest.

"My personal encounter with Mahant Swami Maharaj and receiving his blessings has had a profound effect on me. The consequences were immediate. I asked the Lord God to bless all of us. We serve one God, we are all God's children, we are one people, in one small world and all of us are our brothers and sisters keepers."

Pujya Bodhinatha Veylanswami, Guru Mahasannidhanam of Kauai Aadheenam (Hawaii, USA) said: "In today's troubled world, many thoughtful individuals are concerned about bringing greater peace into the world. A temple such as the Swaminarayan mandir helps individuals find more peace within themselves, which in turn brings greater harmony into their homes, which in turn brings greater tolerance and unity within the community.

Certainly, the many mandirs established through the inspiration of Pramukh Swami Maharaj including those in the African countries of Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania and South Africa will continue generation after generation, helping Hindu values, traditions and customs flourish as well as contributing in an unseen way to making the world a more peaceful place.

BAPS Swaminarayan Sanstha's deep roots in Africa.

A century ago, Shastriji Maharaj, the founder of BAPS, encouraged devotees living in East Africa to gather and worship regularly. Yogiji Maharaj, the spiritual successor to Shastriji Maharaj, was the first guru to travel to Africa in 1955 and later in 1960. He consecrated temples in Mombasa, Kampala, Jinja, and Tororo. It was his wish that a grand stone Hindu mandir be built on the continent. Pramukh Swami Maharaj, whose birth centenary is being celebrated by millions in Ahmedabad, fulfilled his guru's wish by building a traditional stone Hindu mandir in Nairobi in 1999. Along with the world-famous Nairobi mandir, BAPS's 25 other temples in Africa, including in Dar-e-salaam and Mwanza in Tanzania, and Johannesburg and Lenasia in South Africa, represent and foster Hindu faith and traditions across Africa, and have become important spiritual homes for thousands of Hindus.



Parliament in Cape Town burns on 3 January 2022. The damage has not been repaired, although money has been made available, and much of MPs' work continues to be done in virtual settings. (Photo: ER Lombard / Gallo Images)

Rich biomes under threat despite zero-deforestation commitments, warns study

By **Maurício Brum and Silvia Lisboa**

CURRENT zero-deforestation commitments (ZDCs) may have the unintended consequence of pushing agriculture to other biodiversity-rich biomes, a new study led by the University of York shows.

Published in *Nature Ecology & Evolution* in late November, the research funded by Unilever demonstrates how habitats in tropical grassy and dry forests remain open for expanding agricultural production, threatening ecosystems often overlooked in Latin America and Africa.

"Zero-deforestation commitments have been designed to do exactly what they say: to protect tropical rainforest from being destroyed for agriculture or other intensive land-uses. This is a reasonable concern – tropical rainforests are generally extremely biodiverse and are crucial for mitigating climate change, by storing and sequestering carbon," says Susannah Fleiss, the lead author of the study.

"However, other habitats support unique biodiversity, and this shouldn't be destroyed in an effort to protect rainforest."

The research focuses on palm oil production, although the criteria for defining ZDCs are consistent across different crops. According to the study's estimations, globally there are 1.2 billion hectares (2.9 billion acres) of noncultivated land with a suitable climate for rainfed oil palm expansion, an area about the size of Brazil and Argentina combined.

Currently, only about 27 per cent of oil palm crops in Latin America, and just 9 per cent in Africa, are certified for meeting the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil's (RSPO) definition of "zero deforestation," according to the organisation's 2022 Impact Report.

Even if future expansion were



Both continents will face a number of specific challenges: using knowledge of local habitats to identify areas of high biodiversity, working with oil palm growers to avoid destroying biodiversity and ensuring that all habitats are protected by local and national governance.

to fully meet that definition, there would be around 167 million hectares (412.7 million acres) still suitable for production, an area nearly twice the size of Venezuela – around 57 per cent of which is made up by grasslands and dry forests in both Latin America and Africa. Despite a potentially lower crop yield in these areas, irrigation could be used to make them more economically attractive for eventual expansion.

Many palm oil companies have joined the RSPO commitments since 2018, after years of public pressure regarding the impact of the industry over rainforests and their biodiversity. It is now clear that this supposedly "sustainable" development is starting to affect other areas, the researchers argue.

"The first RSPO certified plantation in Africa was in [the] savanna in Gabon," reminds Fleiss, adding that there is more potential for "zero-deforestation" expansion in Latin American biomes than in African ones. Latin America has around 60 million hectares (148 million acres) of grasslands and dry forests at risk.

"We needed a more ambitious commitment to eliminate from the agricultural supply chains all forms of conversion of natural habitats. We had high expectations, but the roadmap still contains huge gaps and has a chance to become a new form of greenwashing for the industry," said Frederico Machado, public policies specialist, WWF-Brazil.

"Both continents will face a number of specific challenges: using knowledge of local habitats to identify areas of high biodiversity, working with oil palm growers to avoid destroying biodiversity and ensuring that all habitats are protected by local and national governance," said Fleiss.

Currently, it is not clear to the researchers where plantations are most likely to expand: The lack of protective legislation could make some countries more interesting to the industry than

others, even if some areas seem, at first, naturally more attractive for oil palm crops due to the landscape and water availability.

The eventual expansion in currently unprotected biomes could affect a third of the vertebrates on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. The savannas in Congo are home to the giant ground pangolin (*Smutsia gigantea*), while the Colombian Llanos host Hellmich's Rocket Frog (*Hyloxalus vergeli*), only a couple of the species on the list.

"These biomes are also important for carbon sequestration, as they can have high below-ground carbon stocks, in plant roots and soil, but this is also often overlooked," says Fleiss. Even though the implications for greenhouse gas emissions seem evident, the researchers point out that it remains difficult to quantify the real impact of clearing these areas, as the existing data suggest that below-ground carbon stocks are "highly variable" – but could, in some cases, "exceed those of moist forest," the paper highlights.

While the research focuses mainly on the commitments made by the palm oil industry and its shortcomings, the focus on preserving solely rainforests is widespread among food firms. One of the reasons is the common misconception that ancient grassy habitats are actually "degraded" areas of rainforest. "When tropical rainforest is cleared, the habitat that reforms is usually grassy, with some shrubs. This is very low in biodiversity, but superficially appears similar to ancient, biodiverse grassland and savanna habitats, such as the Cerrado in Brazil or Congolian savannas in West Africa," Fleiss says.

The Brazilian Cerrado has become the go-to example of a biodiversity hotspot that remains largely unprotected by current ZDCs and other agricultural commitments, with a strong lobby by the industry – in this case, mostly

connected to soy, corn and cattle production – to maintain the status quo. During the Climate Change Conference in Egypt (COP27), in November, the main argument to avoid further regulation was economic. Wei Peng, the global head of sustainability for grains and oilseeds at the Louis Dreyfuss Company (LDC), urged against the adoption of new directives to protect other biomes, pointing to "potential disruption of supply chains after the implementation of the law."

WWF criticises the "roadmap" agreed to by major agricultural companies at COP27, precisely for ignoring large biomes that do not fit the current definitions for preservation. "This roadmap so narrowly defines what types of places will be protected that 74 per cent of Brazil's Cerrado – the world's most biodiverse savanna that stores almost 14 billion metric tons of carbon – is excluded and therefore vulnerable to irreversible destruction," WWF says in a statement.

"If they don't include every ecosystem, these commitments will not work out. Not only does the legislation become more limited, but one can even see things going in the opposite direction than intended. It's almost like there is an incentive for destruction, an encouragement to take over those biomes," argues Frederico Machado, a public policies specialist at WWF-Brazil. "We needed a more ambitious commitment to eliminate from the agricultural supply chains all forms of conversion of natural habitats. We had high expectations, but the roadmap still contains huge gaps and has a chance to become a new form of greenwashing for the industry."

In Africa, the level of protection of different habitats varies largely from country to country. Oil palm plantations, for instance, have driven much less deforestation there than in Southeast Asia, Fleiss says. She argues, however, that with current ZDCs there

could be a "high risk" from new plantations. While not causing the same deforestation traditionally seen before the commitments, future expansion could do similar damage in grasslands and other biomes usually ignored by the industry in protection talks.

Ahead of the last Conference on Biological Diversity (COP15), which happened in Montreal in the first half of December, the African Wildlife Foundation (AWF) issued a statement asking for the adoption of strong requirements for "governments to develop regulatory frameworks and guidelines for businesses to report on their impact on biodiversity and minimise any adverse impacts of their activities."

According to the AWF, keeping business accountable should go hand in hand with protecting the right to sustainably use natural resources within the continent, since "many African communities rely directly on natural resources for food, medicine, economic activities, and other immediate needs."

In the specific case of grasslands, some specialists make the case that full conservation efforts need to get even more attention, for restoration is not as effective for recovering the original biodiversity.

"We advocate conserving intact grassland ecosystems as the key strategy for protecting grassland biodiversity, including small patches with disproportionately high biodiversity conservation value," says Clinton Carbutt, a plant scientist at the University of KwaZulu-Natal in South Africa, in a recent interview with the local agricultural news website Food For Mzansi. In South Africa, where pressures on the biome come mainly from livestock grazing, estimations say that only 2 per cent of grasslands are currently protected.

Recently, there was also hope that new European Union legislation aiming to ban the import of commodities connected to deforestation could also include other wooded lands, a Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) definition that includes most areas of savannas and dry forests. The text approved by the EU on Dec. 6, however, keeps the focus just on rainforests.

The proposal still needs to be ratified by all 27 countries of the bloc. If approved, food firms that export beef, wood, palm oil, soybeans, coffee and cocoa will have to prove, through remote tracking and geolocation, that the commodities do not come from deforested areas. The EU signals that the noninclusion of other biomes can be reviewed within a year of the law's adoption.

While unable to meet expectations, the EU proposal is already seen as a historic victory for the preservation of forests, says the NGO Observatório do Clima, the main Brazilian civil society network on the climate agenda, with 77 member organisations. The noninclusion of other wooded lands, however, could make the European bloc buy commodities produced in grassy areas that remain unprotected, notices Machado. "Europe will be buying soybeans from the biggest contributor of greenhouse emissions in Brazilian agriculture," warns the WWF-Brazil specialist.

Presently, to comply with zero-deforestation commitments in the palm oil industry and also for other commodities, one must usually go through the so-called High Conservation Value-High Carbon Stock Approach (HCV-HCSA), which helps to decide where plantations can be created and where forests should be conserved. "Currently, however, this framework has very little detail on grassy biomes, and doesn't include dry forests," says Fleiss.

To change that, the study urges, there need to be new comprehensive definitions of other habitats that remain unprotected, with a set of indicators decided by a panel of experts. "This would require expertise on different ecosystems across the tropics, so it would be a large effort to coordinate, but that expertise does exist in most cases, so it should be possible," says Fleiss.

BUSINESS

Food bill climbs steeply as Kenya is hit by drought

NAIROBI

Kenya's food imports bill in the first nine months of last year hit a record high since 2017 driven by a major drop in local production due to prolonged drought.

The latest data from the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS) shows that the food import bill rose 18 percent to Sh183.93 billion from Sh155.42 in a corresponding period in 2021.

This is the highest figure recorded in a year's first nine months since 2017 when the bill stood at Sh185.22 billion pointing to heightened food imports during the election periods.

In 2018, the bill dropped to Sh133.96 billion before marginally rising to Sh139.28 billion in 2019 and later falling to Sh128.06 billion in 2020.

Last year, wheat led the pack in import value at Sh54.94 billion followed by rice at Sh26.94 billion.

Maize, the country's staple food, had Sh20.71 billion worth of imports during the period while sugar accounted for Sh19.12 billion.

Kenya is battling the worst drought in 40 years that has hurt food production in a country where farming activities are largely dependent on rainfall.

KNBS data shows that the agricultural sector, which is the backbone of the economy, now contributes less than a fifth of Kenya's economic growth following four consecutive quarters of decline.

The sector registered a 0.2 percent annualised contraction to end a three-year growth expansion, which began after a 1.3

percent decline in 2017.

"The slowdown in the performance of the sector was mainly attributed to unfavourable weather conditions that prevailed in the first three quarters of 2022," stated KNBS in its third-quarter gross domestic product report.

Just like in 2017 when a biting drought hurt crop and fodder production, the national government was last year compelled to introduce subsidies for the smooth purchase of basic food items such as maize flour whose price had hit a sky-high of more than Sh200 for a two-kilogramme packet.

The subsidy bid was, however, a flop as consumers struggled to access the flour in retail stores despite a monthly cost of Sh8 billion for taxpayers.

President William Ruto recently lifted the ban on the cultivation of GMO products after 10 years of field trials by local scientists, citing Kenya's need to promptly address food security and lower food costs.

Dr Ruto, who had pledged to lower the cost of a two-kilo packet of maize meal to below Sh 100 during presidential campaigns, has ruled out costly consumption subsidies on flour, saying they are unsustainable.

His administration has however retained the waiver on import duty and levies on maize shipped from outside the country while at the same time introducing fertiliser subsidies as part of efforts aimed at fixing the general cost of food production.



Maize produce in a store in Uasin Gishu, Kenya. Photo by NMG

Domestic shares index up on NICOL share price gain



NICOL shareholders line up to register for the previous Annual General Meeting (File Photo)

By Guardian Reporter

TANZANIA Share Index (TSI) which measures the performance of locally listed company closed 0.12 points up at 3,912.13 points on Monday from 3,912.01 points on Friday last week's close.

The gain was due to 1.56 percent appreciation of NICO share price to 325/- on Monday close from 320/- recorded during the closing session of last week.

The company share price increase recorded after trading 11,713 shares valued 3.8 million traded at the maximum 325/- per share in seven deals.

The company share increase has also slightly pushed up its sectoral index; the Banks, Finance & Investments index (BI) to 3,484.24 points on Monday close from 3,483.85 points on Friday last week close.

During the Annual General Meeting (AGM) held in November last year, company shareholders endorsed a dividend of

20/- per share.

NICOL Chief Executive Officer, Mr Erasto Ngamilaga said during the AGM that the investments boosted the profit to 3.8bn/-.

According to the market report, the Dar es Salaam Stock Exchange All Share Index (DSEI) closed 4.06 points lower at 1,899.52 points on Monday close from 1,903.58 points on Friday close.

The decrease of DSEI was due to depreciation of Jubilee Holding Limited (JHL) and KCB Bank share prices, amid the increased share price of East African Breweries Limited (EABL), the second largest in terms of market capitalization.

The DSE market report shows KCB Bank share price decreased by to 720/- per share on Monday close from 730/- recorded on Friday last week while JHL share price fell by 1.37 percent 4.55 percent to 3,570/- from 3,740 respectively.

However, EABL share price slightly increased by 0.31 per-

cent to 3,260/- from 3,250/- respectively.

The daily market report shows a total turnover of 81.64mn/- recorded on Monday trading from transaction of 122,500 shares traded in 63 deals. Domestic investors dominated the market in both buying (82.10 percent) and selling (84.22 percent).

Foreign investors injected 14.62mn/- from share buying which was 17.91 percent of total buying value and 12.88mn/- through selling shares, which was 15.78 percent of total value of share selling.

Top mover was CRDB Plc, which recorded a turnover of 39.32mn/- after transacting 99,133 shares traded in 43 deals at a price ranging from 395/- and 400/- per share, followed by NMB which transacted 7,653 shares valued 23.78mn/- traded in seven deals at a price ranging from 3,100/- and 3,200/- per share.

The third top mover was Tanzania Portland Cement Company (TPCC) which recorded a

turnover of 14.7mn/- after transacting 3,981 shares traded in four deals at a price of 3,700/- per share while DCB Bank counter recorded a turnover of 3,000/- after transacting 20 shares traded at a price of 150/- per shares in two deals.

Meanwhile, On the government bonds board, a 15-year bond with a coupon rate of 13.50 percent and a face value of 12.05bn/- was traded in 5 deals at prices of 100.0000%, 116.4159%, 119.5663% and 129.2499%.

The 20-year bond with a coupon rate of 15.49% and a face value of 11.72bn/- was traded in four deals at prices of 119.4000%, 122.5296% and 125.0768%.

The market also traded a 25-year bond with a coupon rate of 12.56% and a face value of 0.09bn/- in two deals at prices of 100.0681% and 101.0000% and a 25-year bond with a coupon rate of 15.95% and a face value of 0.10bn/- was traded in one deal at 125.2502%.

Interest rate rise fears across the US see oil drop

SINGAPORE

Oil edged lower on Tuesday on expectations that further interest rate hikes in the United States, the world's biggest oil user, will slow economic growth and limit fuel demand.

Brent futures for March fell 33 cents to \$79.32 a barrel, a 0.4% drop, by 0719 GMT.

US West Texas Intermediate crude dipped 29 cents, or 0.4%, to \$74.34 per barrel.

Both benchmarks climbed 1% on Monday, after China, the world's biggest oil importer and second-largest consumer, opened its borders over the weekend for the first time in three years.

Two United States Federal Reserve officials this week expected the Fed policy rate - now at 4.25% to 4.5% - to need to rise to a 5% to 5.25% range to bring higher

inflation rates under control.

"(The expectation) is more hawkish than what markets are pricing at the moment (4.75-5% range)," said Yeap Jun Rong, Market Analyst at IG in a note, adding that the upcoming speech from Fed chair Jerome Powell later on Tuesday could mirror the hawkish tone with some pushback as well.

Fed policymakers said fresh inflation data out later this week will help them decide whether they can slow the pace of interest rate hikes at their upcoming meeting, to just a quarter point increase instead of the larger jumps they used for most of 2022.

China also issued a second batch of 2023 crude import quotas, according to sources and documents reviewed by Reuters on Monday, raising the total for this year by 20% from the same



A pump is seen at a gas station in Manhattan, New York City

time last year.

But analysts warned that China's demand revival may play limited role to drive up oil prices under the global economic downward pressure.

"The social vitality of major Chinese cities is rapidly recovering, and the restart of China's demand is worth looking forward to. However, considering that the recovery of consumption is still at the expected stage, the oil price will most likely remain low and range-bound," said analysts from Haitong Futures.

Separately, US crude oil stockpiles likely fell 2.4 million barrels, with distillate inventories also seen slightly down, a preliminary Reuters poll showed on Monday.

Industry group American Petroleum Institute is due to release data on US crude inventories at 4:30 p.m. EDT (2030 GMT) on Tuesday.

The Energy Information Administration, the statistical arm of the US Department of Energy, will release its own figures at 10:30 a.m. (1430 GMT) on Wednesday.

Training on savings, investing change the lives of women

By Correspondent Beatrice Philemon

The lives of dozens of poor women in Keko Mwanga B, Tembe Districts have improved following the savings and investment training delivered to them over the last three years by a Dar es Salaam-based Women in Social Entrepreneurship (WISE), a non-profit, in collaboration with South Korean Holt Children Service Inc.

Holt Children's Service Inc country director, Park Jieun said yesterday that through the knowledge gained from the project,

dozens of women have now established their own businesses and others have joined in credit and savings associations.

The project titled 'Improvement of Social Welfare of Underprivileged Families' aimed at training women on how to search market for what they produce, savings, entrepreneurship skills, how to find capital and customer care.

"As Holt, we are very glad of what has been achieved through this project, because women have managed to change their lives and are now performing well, which was not the case during the past,"

she said.

They were also trained on how to establish village community bank and how to keep records for business they have; so that can monitor the progress of their business, prepare their financial statements and identify sources of their income.

"As you know, good records can show whether your business is improving or not, which items are selling most, or what changes you need to make. Good records can increase the likelihood of business success," she said.

"The trainings have brought

positive changes to women and they are now training others."

So far, a total of 25 women in the project area have already set up individual business and corporate business, but most of the business is not registered by the Business Registration and Licensing Agency (BRELA).

Also WISE has assisted women to form a group dubbed: 'Mwanamke Malengo Group' where they cook different food and sell it at Keko Mwanga B Primary School to earn cash and alter on invest in different projects and buy shares.

Also beneficiaries of the project

have also established Village Community Banks (VICOPA) which enable members to access financial services and start small businesses.

Holt Children's Service Program Manager, Vailth Loy noted that during the COVID-19 pandemic, WISE and Holt donated food items worth 5mn/- to 109 poor households at Keko Mwanga ward that includes 109 bags of maize flour, 545 masks, and 327 bar soaps, each household has received 25kg of maize flour, five masks and three bar soaps.

"We donate it after discovering that women are suffering a lot to

get food to feed their families because they have no income," she said.

Also the project has been able to provide NHIF identity card worth 4.5mn/- to 90 children from poor families to help them access quality health services, improve their health, stay safe while at home, school, and access high quality health services and enjoy what they study in school.

Some children who have received NHIF card have heart disease, sickle cell disease (SCD), Asthma, stomach ulcers and other diseases.

Uganda MPs sue govt for delaying fisheries bill

KAMPALA

TWO Members of Parliament, Mr Charles Tebandeke (Baale County MP) and Ms Susan Mugabi (Buvuma District Woman MP) have sued the government over the President Museveni's delay to assent to the Fisheries and Aquaculture Bill, 2021.

The government, in a bid to consolidate and reform the fisheries industry, tabled before Parliament the Fisheries and Aquaculture Bill, 2021 which was read for the first time on September 29, 2021 and referred to the committee on Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries for scrutiny.

The Bill seeks to repeal the colonial Fish Act of 1951-amended in 2011 to bring regulation of the industry up to-date with current challenges.

The Bill was eventually debated and passed by Parliament on May 3, 2022 and later forwarded to the President to assent on May 25, 2022. The President, however, rejected the Bill and returned it to Parliament for reconsideration on September 7, 2022 after over 100 days, in contravention of Article 91(3) of the Constitution of Uganda which gives the assenting authority a 30 days limit to respond to the Bill.



Charles Tebandeke (Baale County MP) and Susan Mugabi (Buvuma District Woman MP) address journalists at Parliament on January 9, 2022. Photo by Daily Monitor

The Speaker of Parliament, Ms Anita Among, pursuant to the President's belated letter, referred the Bill to the Agriculture committee for reconsideration.

On September 28, 2022, the committee presented its report, which was again debated and passed by the House. The Clerk to

Parliament retransmitted the Bill to the assenting authority, which was received on October 18, 2022, but no action has since been taken.

The MPs have also faulted the Speaker for failing to cause a copy of the Bill to be laid before Parliament for it to become law without

the assent of the President, as guided by the Constitution.

Article 19 (7) of the Constitution of Uganda stipulates that where the President fails to respond to the Bill, by either assenting to it or returning it to Parliament for reconsideration within 30 days, the President shall be taken to have

assented to the Bill and at the expiration of that period, the Speaker shall cause a copy of the Bill to be laid before Parliament and the Bill shall become law without the assent of the President.

The MPs in their petition want the Constitutional Court to declare that the Bill was deemed

assented to upon failure by the President to do any of the acts specified under Article 91. They have also prayed that court declares that the acts, omissions and conduct of the Speaker of Parliament in not causing to be laid a copy of the Bill before Parliament to become law or an Act of Parliament upon failure by the assenting authority to either assent or return the bill for reconsideration within the stipulated 30 days.

"We did a lot while considering the bill by consulting the different stakeholders who include the government itself. We Bill was passed about five months ago, we make these laws for Ugandans, people are suffering at the lakes," Ms Mugabi told journalists at Parliament on Monday.

Mr Charles Tebandeke noted that the unclear laws, guidelines and restrictions "inflicted" on Ugandans as they work to earn a living, is part of cause for the current economic depression.

"The economy is down, it is lame, it's leaking, and we have reached a depression. The fisheries sector is one of those that earn Uganda foreign exchange after coffee. It has, however, entered the year 2023 with recurring challenges from the previous year," Mr Tebandeke asserted.

Gold prices steady after focus shifts to Powell's declaration

NEW YORK

Gold prices were steady on Tuesday, with cautious traders largely focusing on Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell's speech for insights into the US central bank's rate-hike trajectory.

Spot gold held its ground at \$1,872.79 per ounce, as of 0333 GMT. US gold futures were flat at \$1,877.70.

Investors' focus is on Powell's speech at a central bank conference later in the day.

Market participants will also scan the US consumer price index (CPI) data due on Thursday for further clues on Fed's policy stance.

"Gold prices are hitting a key resistance at the \$1,875 level ... A hawkish tone in Fed Chair Powell's speech later today could prompt some near-term profit-taking in gold," said IG Market strategist Yeap Jun Rong.

"However, market is on the watch for a downside surprise in the US CPI to support the less-hawkish rate-hike expectations, which could translate to upside for gold prices."

Elevated interest rates dull gold's appeal as an inflation hedge and raise the opportunity cost of holding the non-yielding asset.

San Francisco Federal Reserve President Mary Daly on Monday said that either a 50 basis point or a 25 bps rate hike was a possibility in the upcoming Fed meeting, while Atlanta Fed President Raphael Bostic commented that it was appropriate to be 'more cautious' in calibrating rates, with rates possibly staying higher into 2024.

The market consensus of a mild recession appears to be playing out, but with a nod to a more severe downturn could continue to be gold positive, the World Gold Council said.



More than 1.4 million people are facing acute food shortages in Burundi. File Photo

Burundi receives \$3.5mn to improve food security

Guardian Correspondent, Bujumbura

United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator Martin Griffiths released a \$3.5 million contribution from the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) to assist around 38,650 people affected by food insecurity in Burundi.

The Burundi analysis released in September 2022 projects that 1.4 million people (12 pct of the population) will experience acute food insecurity during the lean season (October to December 2022), an increase of 18pct compared to the period from June to September 2022.

However, climatic hazards that hit Burundi during the last quarter of 2022 (delay of the rainy season, hydric deficit, localized torrential rains mixed with wind and hail)

worsened the impact of pre-existing shocks (COVID-19 pandemic, Rift Valley fever, inflation) and further deteriorated the country's projected food insecurity level.

Farming households, which represent more than 90% of the population, have not set up the crops for the 2023A agricultural growing season and will face an extension of the lean season, marked by the depletion of food reserves, an increase in the price of essential foodstuffs on the market, and a reduction in the opportunities for agricultural labor.

Through this CERF Rapid Response allocation, people among the most severely affected will receive food assistance, seeds, and agricultural inputs through two projects implemented by the World Food Programme (WFP) and the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO).

Both projects intend to re-

duce the adoption of negative coping mechanisms by the most vulnerable households.

WFP will use a \$2.1 million allocation to provide emergency food assistance to 38,645 people (7,730 households) through a cash transfer modality, allowing the purchase of food on local markets to promote the local economy and support long-term solutions.

For its part, the FAO will allocate \$1.4 million to the provision of agricultural and livestock inputs to the same 7,730 households and the delivery of sensitization sessions on sustainable agricultural practices and land utilization.

FAO has welcomed the allocation stating that "climate change-related disasters have considerably impacted food production across the country, this CERF allocation will help us to assist farmers to recover, preserve their pro-

duction assets and strengthen their resilience to shocks".

WFP added, "the humanitarian response to the acute food security crisis affecting thousands of families in Burundi is critically underfunded, we hope that this CERF allocation will act as a catalytic instrument for the mobilization of additional resources, by the humanitarian and development partners present in Burundi."

The UN Resident Coordinator Damien Mama said he was "very grateful to CERF for their consideration of the severe impact of climate change-related disasters on agriculture and food security in Burundi." The food security cluster's requirements for 2022 remain underfunded at 33.4%, reducing its ability to respond as a food security crisis hits the country.

CERF pools contributions from donors around the world into a single fund allowing humanitarians to deliver life-saving assistance whenever and wherever crises hit.

In 20 years, CERF allocated more than \$75 million for 106 projects in Burundi.

Global shares ease after Fed officials dent optimism

LONDON

Global shares eased on Tuesday as investors took profit on the gains from the past two weeks after comments from two Federal Reserve officials injected a note of caution over the US rate outlook, knocking equities, commodities and other risk assets.

The MSCI All-World index eased 0.1%, but remained in sight of Monday's three-week high, while the dollar - a gauge of investor risk appetite - held steady against a basket of major currencies.

In the past six weeks, even as cases have surged around the country, China has dismantled its zero-COVID policy, which has given markets a bumpy ride as investors have weighed up the economic benefits of reopening against the impact to activity from the wave of infections.

Adding to that has been a sense of optimism that inflation has peaked, especially in the United States, and, as such, the Fed will not have to raise rates as much as many had feared.

However, with consumer price pressures still well above the central bank's target of 2%, two Fed officials on Monday issued a stark reminder that interest rates will have to keep rising, no matter what investors have priced in.

"The market is trying to get one step ahead of the Fed, but it's not actually listening to what it's saying. And the Fed is being quite clear with its message - that rates are going to push higher and they're going to stay higher for longer," CityIndex strategist Fiona Cincotta said.

"If we look at expectations of inflation later this week - the big focus - core inflation is still expected to remain high. It doesn't matter which way you look at it. It's still higher than the target the Fed is aiming for," she said.

Consumer price data, which is due on Thursday, is expected to show headline inflation slowed to 6.5% in December from 7.1% in November.

The data could be key to setting expectations for what happens with rates at the Fed's next policy meeting and beyond.

San Francisco Fed President Mary Daly told the Wall Street Journal she would pay close attention to Thursday's data and both 25- and 50-basis point hikes were options for her. Atlanta Fed President Raphael Bostic said his "base case" was for no rate cuts this year or next.

"The main theme overnight was cautiousness in the equity space as stocks pared gains after hawkish comments from two Fed officials. Raphael Bostic and Mary Daly said the Fed would likely hike (interest) rates to above 5% and hold them there for some time," Commerzbank said in a note.

Big global sci-tech events to watch for in 2023

BEIJING

A number of important sci-tech events deserve a place on the calendar of 2023. The exploration of the Moon will become a hot topic, with various deep space projects on the agenda. Many large scientific facilities will soon be put into operation to help basic research, while a CRISPR gene-editing therapy might be delivered to patients.

With so much going on, Xinhua outlined the emerging influential sci-tech events that should be followed this year.

In 2023, countries will continue to carry on the momentum of space exploration, with the Moon being a priority.

Russia plans to launch its Luna-25 moon probe in 2023, whose main tasks include testing soft landing technologies and conducting contact studies of the lunar South Pole.

Chandrayaan-3, India's third lunar exploration mission, is scheduled to be launched this year after several delays. The country aims to put a lander and rover in the highlands near the south pole of the Moon.

A Japanese company's HAKUTO-R Mission 1 lunar lander is planning a soft landing on the Earth's nearest celestial neighbor in April.

US space agency NASA's small satellite Lunar Flashlight will soon enter into orbit around the Moon. It will use near-infrared lasers and an onboard spectrometer to map ice in permanently shadowed regions near the Moon's south pole.

The European Space Agency (ESA)'s Jupiter Icy Moons Explorer, also called JUICE, is scheduled to be launched in April. The science goals will focus on Jupiter and its system, with particular emphasis on Ganymede as a planetary body and potential habitat.

NASA continues its Psyche asteroid mission, targeting a launch period opening in October. The agency selected Psyche to investigate a previously unexplored metal-rich asteroid of the same name. The spacecraft will arrive at the asteroid in 2029.

More space observatories are expected to be deployed this year. Euclid, an ESA medium class astronomy and astrophysics space mission, is expected to make a 3D-map of the universe by observing billions of galaxies out to 10 billion light-years, across more than a third of the sky.

The Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency has developed the X-ray Imaging and Spectroscopy Mission (XRISM), which is scheduled to launch into orbit around the Earth in 2023. XRISM will perform the high-resolution X-ray spectroscopic observations of the hot gas plasma wind that blows through the galaxies in the universe.

China will also maintain a high density of launches this year. China Aerospace Science and Technology Corp, the nation's leading space contractor, said it will arrange more than 50 launches in 2023. Other space enterprises plan to launch about 10 flights. In addition to the rocket launches,

the country will continue with the research and development of the Tianwen 2 asteroid probe and the Chang'e 7 lunar probe.

In recent years, advances in physics have become increasingly dependent on big scientific devices. This year, a number of big science installations will be put to use, promising to propel new discoveries in physics.

The US Linac Coherent Light Source (LCLS) is the world's first hard X-ray free-electron laser. The upgraded LCLS-II will provide a major jump in capability -- moving from 120 pulses per second to 1 million pulses per second, which will enable researchers to perform experiments in a wide range of fields that are now impossible.

The Matter-wave laser Interferometric Gravitation Antenna (MIGA) will be put into operation this year. The underground instrument in France will use cold-atom interferometry to perform precision measurements of gravity gradients and strains.

The European Spallation Source is under construction on the outskirts of Lund, a city in southern Sweden. It will start the scientific user program in 2023.

The installation of the underground neutrino observatory in Jiangmen, China, is scheduled to be completed at the end of 2023. One of its main goals is to determine the neutrino mass hierarchy.

This year, COVID-19 vaccine and drug research and development will remain the focus of the global medical community. More breakthroughs are expected in the research of multivalent vaccines, nasal-spray vaccines and small molecules in targeted therapies, which will further empower human to fight against COVID-19 and other infectious diseases.

In addition, more new drugs and therapies are expected. On Jan. 6, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved an Alzheimer's drug, called lecanemab, which can slow the progression of Alzheimer's disease by 27 percent in a larger trial conducted more recently.

Exa-cel, a gene-editing therapy for Thalassemia and sickle-cell disease, is expected to be submitted to the FDA this year. If approved, exa-cel would become the first marketed therapy based on the CRISPR gene editing technology.

The widespread use of mRNA vaccines during the COVID-19 pandemic has spurred the development of such vaccines for other diseases. German biotechnology company BioNTech is expected to initiate trials for mRNA vaccines against malaria, tuberculosis and genital herpes.

The company has announced a new research and development collaboration with Pfizer to trial an mRNA-based vaccine candidate to reduce the rate of shingles. U.S. biotechnology company Moderna also has mRNA vaccine candidates for the viruses that cause genital herpes and shingles.

The frequent occurrence of natural disasters and extreme weather in 2022 further highlights the necessity of harmonious coexistence between man and nature.



As inflation surges, rising prices keep the cost of living accelerating.

The 14th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties to the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, the 27th session of the Conference of the Parties (COP27) to

the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the 15th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP15) to the UN Convention on Biological Diversity

were held in the last two months of 2022.

The meetings expanded the consensus of all parties in the fields of protecting the ecological environ-

ment, coping with climate change and boosting green transformation, which is significant for promoting the development of global ecological civilization in the coming period.

On the basis of the phased results, the parties will continue to promote the follow-up negotiations and the implementation of the results this year.

As a highlight of COP27, the conference finally agreed to establish a "loss and damage" fund to provide financial assistance to the most vulnerable and hardest hit by climate change.

Participants in COP27 also agreed to establish a "transitional committee" to make recommendations on how to operationalize both the new funding arrangements and the fund at COP28. The first meeting of the "transitional committee" is expected to take place before the end of March 2023.

Under the leadership of China, a UN biodiversity deal, entitled Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and aimed at reversing biodiversity loss and setting the world on path of recovery, was adopted at COP15. The deal includes four goals and 23 targets for achievement by 2030.

ITV	Capital TV
<p>WEDNESDAY 11 Jan</p> <p>5:00 Soap rpt: Uzalo</p> <p>5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi</p> <p>6:00 HABARI</p> <p>6:40 Kumekucha</p> <p>7:30 HABARI</p> <p>8:00 Kumekucha Michezo</p> <p>8:55 Habari za saa</p> <p>9:00 Kumekucha Kishindo</p> <p>9:30 Soap: In Love with Ramon</p> <p>9:55 Habari za saa</p> <p>10:00 Watoto wetu</p> <p>10:25 Uchumi na biashara rpt</p> <p>10:55 Habari za saa</p> <p>11:00 Music: The Base rpt</p> <p>11:55 Habari za saa</p> <p>12:00 Al Jazeera</p> <p>12:30 Our Earth rpt</p> <p>12:55 Habari za saa</p> <p>13:00 Dakika 45 rpt</p> <p>13:55 Habari za saa</p> <p>14:00 Kipindi maalum: NSSF rpt</p> <p>14:15 Chetu ni chetu rpt</p> <p>14:55 Habari za saa</p> <p>15:00 Meza huru</p> <p>16:30 Watoto Wetu</p> <p>17:00 Music: The Base</p> <p>18:00 Jiji Letu</p> <p>18:15 Igizo: Mizengwe rpt</p> <p>18:30 Jungu Kuu rpt</p> <p>19:00 Jarida la wanawake</p> <p>19:30 Soap: In Love with Ramon</p> <p>20:00 Habari</p> <p>21:05 Aibu Yako</p> <p>21:10 Kipindi maalum: Tanesco</p> <p>21:40 Kipindi maalum: Pesa Fasta</p> <p>22:00 Ripoti maalum</p> <p>22:30 Soap: Uzalo</p> <p>23:00 Habari</p> <p>23:30 Music: The Base</p> <p>00:30 Al Jazeera</p> <p>02:00 DWTV</p> <p>THURSDAY 12 Jan</p> <p>5:00 Soap rpt: Uzalo</p> <p>5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi</p> <p>6:00 HABARI</p> <p>6:40 Kumekucha</p> <p>7:30 HABARI</p> <p>8:00 Al Jazeera</p> <p>9:00 DWTV Journal</p> <p>9:30 Soap rpt: In Love with Ramon</p> <p>10:00 Watoto wetu</p> <p>10:30 Shamba lulu</p> <p>11:00 Music: The Base rpt</p> <p>12:00 Al Jazeera</p> <p>12:30 Jarida la wanawake rpt</p> <p>13:00 Art and Lifestyle rpt</p> <p>13:30 Shamsham za pwani</p>	<p>14:30 Igizo rpt: Mizengwe</p> <p>15:00 Bongo Movie</p> <p>16:30 Watoto Wetu</p> <p>17:00 The Base</p> <p>18:00 Jiji Letu</p> <p>18:15 Mapishi</p> <p>18:30 Jagina</p> <p>19:00 Usafiri Wako</p> <p>19:30 Soap: In Love with Ramon</p> <p>20:00 Habari</p> <p>21:05 Malumbano ya hoja</p> <p>23:00 Music: The Base</p> <p>00:30 Al Jazeera</p> <p>02:00 DWTV</p> <p>FRIDAY 13 Jan</p> <p>5:00 Soap rpt: Uzalo</p> <p>5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi</p> <p>6:00 HABARI</p> <p>6:40 Kumekucha</p> <p>7:30 HABARI</p> <p>8:00 Kumekucha Michezo</p> <p>8:55 Habari za saa</p> <p>9:00 Kumekucha Kishindo</p> <p>9:30 Soap rpt: In Love with Ramon</p> <p>9:55 Habari za saa</p> <p>10:00 Watoto wetu</p> <p>10:30 Usafiri Wako</p> <p>10:55 Habari za saa</p> <p>11:00 Music: The Base rpt</p> <p>11:55 Habari za saa</p> <p>12:00 Al Jazeera</p> <p>12:30 Kipindi maalum: Tanesco rpt</p> <p>12:55 Habari za saa</p> <p>13:00 Kipindi Maalum: Masha ni Nyumba rpt</p> <p>13:30 Kipindi Maalum rpt: Sema na Mahakama ya TZ</p> <p>13:55 Habari za saa</p> <p>14:00 Kipindi Maalum rpt: Sema na Mahakama ya TZ</p> <p>14:30 DW: Afrimax rpt</p> <p>15:00 Meza Huru:</p> <p>16:30 Watoto Wetu</p> <p>17:00 The Base (DJ Show)</p> <p>17:30 Kiislam</p> <p>18:00 Jiji Letu</p> <p>18:15 Igizo: Mizengwe</p> <p>18:30 Uchumi na biashara</p> <p>19:00 Shamba lulu</p> <p>19:30 Soap: In Love with Ramon</p> <p>20:00 Habari</p> <p>21:05 Kipima Joto</p> <p>23:00 Habari</p> <p>23:30 The Base</p> <p>00:30 Al Jazeera</p> <p>02:00 DWTV</p> <p>SATURDAY 14 Jan</p> <p>5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi</p> <p>6:00 HABARI</p>



WORLD

Biden declares emergency in California as storms continue

LOS ANGELES

US President Joe Biden has declared an emergency in California as winter storms continue to pummel the most populous state in the country on Monday.

According to a statement released by the White House on Monday, Biden has ordered federal assistance to supplement State of California, tribal and local response efforts due to the emergency conditions resulting from successive and severe winter storms, flooding and mudslides.

The federal emergency declaration will authorize the US Department of Homeland Security and Federal Emergency Management Agency to coordinate all disaster relief efforts.

California Governor Gavin Newsom proclaimed last Wednesday a state of emergency throughout the western US state, home to around 40 million residents, due to the severe winter storms.

He submitted a request on Sunday to the White House for a presidential emergency declaration to support ongoing storm response and recovery efforts in the state.

Since late December, 12 Californians have died from storm-related impacts, including flooding, more than the number of civilians who lost their lives to wildfires in the past two years combined, according to a state-

ment released by the governor's office.

"We are in the middle of a deadly barrage of winter storms -- and California is using every resource at its disposal to protect lives and limit damage," said Newsom in the statement.

"We are taking the threat from these storms seriously, and want to make sure that Californians stay vigilant as more storms head our way," the governor added.

Winter storms continued to hit California with heavy rains, causing flooding, road closures and power outages in many regions across the state.

"California is expecting a stronger and more widespread atmospheric river that will bring strong winds, heavy rain, and thunderstorms," the governor's office tweeted, adding that "this is serious -- stay safe, make the necessary preparations, and limit non-essential travel."

Nearly 100,000 homes and businesses in California were still without power as of Monday afternoon, according to PowerOutage.us, a website which collects live power outage data from utilities all over the country.

Tens of thousands of people across Northern California are dealing with continued power outages on Monday, as heavy rain and strong winds caused issues on roadways but spared the region from widespread devastation, reported KCRA-TV, a television station



A tree collapsed and ripped up the sidewalk damaging a home in Sacramento, California on Sunday. AP

in Sacramento, the capital of the state.

Many school districts across the region and some individual schools facing power outages have canceled classes for Monday, the news outlet added.

No significant letup is expected in the recent very wet weather pattern that has been plaguing much of California and the ongoing heavy rains Monday afternoon across central California will be dropping into Southern California Monday night into early Tuesday, said the US National Weather Service in a weather forecast on Monday.

The US National Weather Service noted that nearly all of California has seen much above average rainfall totals over the past several weeks, with totals 400-600 percent above average values.

"This has resulted in nearly saturated soils and increasingly high river levels. Additional heavy rains on Tuesday will exacerbate ongoing flooding and

continue the risk of flash flooding and mudslides, especially across recent burn scar regions," said the agency.

"Dangerous life-threatening flash flooding across southern Santa Barbara county and central Ventura county through this evening as additional heavy rain moves into the area. Follow orders from emergency officials," the US National Weather Service tweeted Monday afternoon.

Thousands of people were ordered to immediately evacuate Southern California's Montecito on Monday.

All residents in the community in Santa Barbara County were urged to "leave now" by local officials as "the heaviest rain is yet to come this afternoon and evening."

A total of 23 people were killed in January 2018 when a massive mudslide caused by heavy rains swept through the coastal community and destroyed 130 homes.

Agencies

Security chief says world is tired of Western policies of threats and force

MOSCOW

WESTERN countries remain in the minority because the world is tired of their policy of threats and force, Russian Security Council Secretary Nikolay Patrushev said.

In an interview with aif.ru, he stressed that "humanity's potential is far from exhausted," although cross-border corporations imposed neoliberal values that contradicted human nature.

"There are structures that are designed to influence this situation in a positive way. These are the UN and the UN Security Council," Patrushev noted. In his view, "such associations as the SCO, BRICS, ASEAN and others are becoming increasingly popular."

"However, the West is not interested in the effectiveness of their work. Anglo-Saxons are obsessively trying to push the world community into believing that these institutions have had their day, and that they should live by their invented rules," the security chief said.

He stated that those who disagreed with the hegemony of the West "are labeled as 'rogue countries', 'terrorist countries' or states that pose a threat to national security."

"At the same time, Western countries do not notice that they gradually remain in the minority, because the world has already grown tired of the strategy of force and threats they use," Patrushev stressed.



China's new top diplomat pledges to keep strong relations with Russia's Lavrov, says ministry

BEIJING

CHINA'S newly appointed Foreign Minister Qin Gang pledged to maintain close relations with Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, the Chinese Foreign Ministry said in a statement on Monday, adding that the top diplomats of China and Russia held a telephone conversation earlier in the day.

"I am ready to maintain close relations with [Russian] Foreign Minister [Sergey Lavrov]," the statement quoted Qin Gang (pictured) as saying.

The Chinese top diplomat stated that Beijing was ready to keep promoting bilateral relations with Moscow.

"We are ready to work with Russia toward implementing the important consensus reached between the leaders of the two countries and keep pushing relations between China and Russia forward non-stop," he stated.

According to Qin, the strategic guidance of Chinese leader Xi Jinping and Russian President Vladimir Putin has helped propel the comprehensive strategic partnership between the two countries to a very high level.

"Chinese-Russian relations are based on the principles of non-allegiance [with any blocs], and non-confrontation, while not targeting any third party," the Chinese foreign minister emphasized.

Qin Gang, 56, served as the Chinese Ambassador to the United States between July 2021 and December 2022.

On December 30, 2022, a decision was made at a meeting of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress to appoint Gang China's new Foreign Minister. Qin Gang succeeds Wang Yi, who had headed the Chinese Foreign Ministry since 2013. Agencies



Xi emphasises zero tolerance for corruption

Xi Jinping, general secretary of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, stressed on Monday the need to further exercise full and rigorous governance over the Party and vowed zero tolerance for corruption.

Xi, who is also China's president and chairman of the Central Military Commission, made the remarks while addressing the second plenary session of the 20th CPC Central Commission for Discipline Inspection, which opened in Beijing on Monday.

Stressing that the situation in the battle against corruption remains serious and complex, Xi said that resolute efforts must be made to investigate and deal with corruption that involves both political and economic elements, and to resolutely prevent leading officials from acting on behalf of any interest groups or powerful groups.

He called for preventing collusion between officials and businesspeople and guarding against infiltration by capital into the political field in order to prevent such wrongdoings from undermining the political ecosystem or economic development. Laws and regulations to punish bribery should be further improved, he added.

Since the 18th CPC National Congress in 2012, the

CPC Central Committee has made continuous efforts to improve Party conduct, uphold integrity and combat corruption with unprecedented courage and resolve.

As a result of high-profile anti-corruption campaigns, some 81,000 people have voluntarily surrendered to disciplinary inspection and supervision agencies over the past five years, Xinhua News Agency reported.

Addressing the 20th CPC National Congress in October, Xi said, "As the largest Marxist governing party in the world, we must always stay alert and determined to tackle the special challenges that a large party like ours faces, so as to maintain the people's support and consolidate our position as the long-term governing party."

Within just over a month after the closing of the 20th CPC National Congress, more than 10 officials who were suspected of severe violations of discipline and laws had turned themselves in.

At Monday's meeting, Xi emphasized that exercising full and rigorous self-governance over the Party is a long-term, strategic issue that matters to the Party's long-term ruling of the country, the nation's long-lasting stability and the people's well-being.

He urged continuous efforts to achieve the strategic goal that officials do not



General secretary of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee Xi Jinping, also Chinese president and chairman of the Central Military Commission, addresses the second plenary session of the 20th CPC Central Commission for Discipline Inspection in Beijing on Monday. XINHUA

dare, are not able and have no desire to become corrupt.

Strong political supervision must be conducted to ensure that the decisions and policies unveiled at the 20th CPC National Congress are faithfully implemented,

he added.

Xi also called for continuous efforts to implement the "eight-point decision on improving conduct", which was first made public in December 2012 and targets formalism, bureaucratism,

hedonism and extravagance and seeks to rein in privilege-seeking attitudes and behavior.

In order to improve Party conduct, Xi said consistent and sustained efforts should be made to identify problems specific to certain areas, sectors and periods of time, and to go to great lengths to tackle prevalent and recurrent problems.

Tackling formalism and bureaucratism should be given greater prominence as a significant task in improving Party conduct, he added.

Xi underscored the importance of tightening Party discipline and urged Party officials to stick to the Party Constitution.

While stressing the Party's unified leadership over anti-corruption work, Xi also urged disciplinary inspection and supervision departments to assume their responsibilities and effectively fulfill their duties in the tough and protracted battle against corruption.

Members of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee Li Qiang, Zhao Leji, Wang Huning, Cai Qi and Ding Xuexiang attended the meeting.

Li Xi, also a member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee and head of the CCDI, presided over the meeting. Xinhua

Innovation drives constant prosperity of small commodity market in China's Yiwu

YIWU, a city in east China's Zhejiang province, is dubbed as the "world's capital of small commodities." It has trade relations with over 230 countries and regions around the world.

In the face of profound changes and a pandemic both unseen in a century, the city still delivered a great performance in trade. In the first 11 months of 2022, Yiwu reported total foreign trade of 442.22 billion yuan (\$64.48 billion), up 24.1 percent year on year. In particular, its exports grew 19.1 percent from a year ago to 399.06 billion yuan and imports grew 104.6 percent to 43.16 billion yuan.

The Yiwu China Commodities City, a

global center for the circulation, information and display of small commodities, celebrated its 40th anniversary last November.

At the entrance of the market, a series of bestsellers over the past four decades are displayed, including mainspring toy frogs that were extremely popular in the 1980s, enamel cups in vogue in the 1990s, as well as selfie sticks and fidget spinners that became trendy in the 2010s.

These bestsellers well explain how the market maintains its vitality - following trends, making innovations and selling them to the world.

Guo Zhenrong, chairman of Lanyu Digi-

tal Technology, a tech firm in Zhejiang province, told People's Daily that he came to Yiwu years ago with a new digital textile printer the firm had developed, which was able to directly color cross-stitch products.

Soon, digitally dyed cross-stitch products overwhelmed the market. Within half a year, the technology was employed by 46 enterprises, who saw their output value increase by 300 percent and their rate of profit hit 200 percent.

"I've come to Yiwu for five years. In the past, we competed with price advantage, but now we attach more importance to the design of our products," said Sun

Linguan, founder of a company that manufactures accessories.

"We launch around 1,500 new earrings, bracelets and necklaces each year, and we have clients in Europe and Africa," Sun noted.

The market launched its online platform "Chinagoods" at the end of 2020. The online marketplace offers one-stop services including shopping, shipping, tax return and payment of collection, and also provides international warehousing, logistics, payment and cargo space booking services for merchants. It is warmly welcomed by merchants, and its total transaction volume hit 16.8 billion in 2021.

"A total of 390 customers browsed my online store in half a day," said Fu Miaoling, general manager of a woodwork company in Yiwu, who was among the earliest to join Chinagoods.

"I always waited for clients to come to me, but with Chinagoods, now I have more channels to get in touch with them," she told People's Daily. According to her, almost all orders she received after last October were from the online marketplace.

So far, Chinagoods has been joined by 55,000 merchants that sell a total of more than 5 million commodities. Over 2.1 million purchasers have registered on it.

People's Daily

China spares no efforts in ensuring anti-COVID drug development, supply

BEIJING

CHINA is implementing swift and concrete measures to accelerate drug development, production and supply in order to guarantee better treatment of COVID-19 cases, as the country adjusts its epidemic response policy.

Weakened pathogenicity of the virus, a high vaccination rate and the accumulation of experience in prevention and control, have allowed China to optimize its COVID-19 response this winter.

The current focus of China's epidemic response has shifted from preventing infections to beefing up treatment of severe cases, which has greatly increased demand for relevant drugs, both from self-quarantined patients at home and from severe cases in hospital.

BROADEN OPTIONS

Chinese drug researchers and developers have been racing against the clock to find the right medicine to beat the virus in two ways: biological macromolecular drugs based on antibodies and small molecular compounds that can inhibit virus invasion and replication.

A China-developed oral antiviral agent called VV116, which is a potent anti-COVID-19 drug, has been proven as effective as Pfizer's Paxlovid in increasing the speed of clinical recovery, and it has shown improved performance during the early onset of Omicron infections, according to a study recently published in the *New England Journal of Medicine*.

China has kept broadening its



Staff members pack medicines at a pharmaceutical company in central China's Hunan Province, Dec. 19, 2022. Xinhua

range of options. Its drug regulator has granted conditional approval for the import of the Paxlovid COVID-19 pill.

It has also activated special approval procedures and granted conditional approval for the import registration of Merck's COVID-19 treatment Molnupiravir -- for adult patients with mild to moderate COVID-19 symptoms and a high risk of progressing to severe cases.

The small-molecule oral drug can be given to patients who, for instance, are elderly, overweight, or have chronic renal diseases, diabetes, severe cardiovascular diseases, and chronic lung diseases.

Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) has also been widely applied and has shown unique benefits in the treatment of COVID-19 infections.

For those with severe symptoms, integrated treatment with Chinese and Western medicine can effectively prevent the disease from becoming more severe or at least slow the development of more severe symptoms, thus reducing

the fatality rate, said Huang Luqi, deputy head of the National Administration of Traditional Chinese Medicine, at a recent national media conference.

ENSURE SUPPLY

Targeting classic symptoms of the infection, China has improved its production capacity for fever and pain relievers ibuprofen and paracetamol.

The country's daily production capacity of ibuprofen and paracetamol has exceeded 200 million tablets, while the daily output reached 190 million. In addition, the maximum daily output of children's antipyretic medicine has reached 1.12 million bottles.

There are 194 types of antipyretic, antitussive, antibacterial and antiviral drugs on the Chinese market.

Enterprises have increased drug development and distribution efforts. Jilin Natu Pharmaceutical Co., Ltd. has developed and manufactured

new products which assist in enhancing patients' resistance, clearing fever, detoxifying, and reducing inflammation.

A pharmaceutical company in Zibo city, east China's Shandong Province, has increased its production capacity by more than 60 percent. All its production lines and employees are required to give priority to the production of COVID-19 treatment drugs.

Medical enterprises in the northwestern Gansu Province's Minxian County, home to TCM herbs, are working hard to produce key medicines, such as cough medicines. At present, the daily output of key medicines for COVID-19 control in this region totals 150,000 boxes and TCM preparations reach 200,000 bags.

REACHING GRASSROOTS LEVEL

China is paying special attention to drug distribution and emergency reserves for elderly people and for people in rural and remote areas, as it optimizes its COVID-19 response.

Village doctors play an important role in this regard. Yang Pengcheng, a rural doctor in Baoding, north China's Hebei Province, has been on a tight schedule lately, delivering medicine to 50 or 60 households with COVID-19 patients daily.

Yang begins by decocting TCM according to the formula recommended by the county's health bureau and based on each patient's condition. After that, the veteran doctor embarks on a long trip, delivering boiled TCM remedies to the patients from house to house.

He also carries his usual medical bag with antipyretic medicine, and his sphygmomanometer, pulse oximeter, thermometer and stethoscope, to check the patients' health conditions.

"Not so long ago, my whole family contracted COVID-19. So I called our village doctors, and they brought us TCM decoctions and other Western medicine," said Yang Shaokun, a villager.

Real life forces Tokyo to compromise and cooperate with Russia, says senior diplomat

MOSCOW

Tokyo is immersed in sanctions work against Russia, but real life forces Japan to compromise its 'principles' and cooperate with Moscow, Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Andrey Rudenko told the *Izvestia* newspaper in an interview yesterday.

"It is quite obvious to us that official Tokyo is unquestioningly fulfilling Washington's political order by fully engaging in the sanctions work.

However, practice shows that real life makes the Japanese authorities compromise their detached from national interests 'principles' in the spheres where they cannot do without cooperation with Russia," he said.

Rudenko pointed out that the Japanese authorities recommended the local companies - the shareholders of Sakhalin-1 and Sakhalin-2 oil and gas projects - to continue participating in the projects under the pretext of ensuring the country's energy security.

"Fumio Kishida's administration begged his G7 partners to remove crude oil flowing to Japan from the Sakhalin-2 project from a restrictive scheme involving a price cap on Russian-origin energy carriers," the diplomat added.

It is quite obvious to us that official Tokyo is unquestioningly fulfilling

Classified documents from Biden's vice-presidency found at think tank

WASHINGTON

CLASSIFIED documents from Joe Biden's vice-presidential days were discovered in November by the US president's personal attorneys at a Washington think tank, a White House lawyer said on Monday.

Nearly 10 documents were found at Biden's office at the Penn Biden Center for Diplomacy and Global Engagement, CBS News reported earlier, adding that US Attorney General Merrick Garland had asked the US attorney in Chicago to review the classified documents which were handed over to the National Archives.

The classified material was identified by personal attorneys for Biden on Nov 2, days before the midterm elections, Richard Sauber, special counsel to the president, said in a statement on Monday.

The Penn Biden Center is named for Biden, who periodically used the office space from mid-2017 until the start of his 2020 presidential campaign. The White House Counsel's Office notified the National Archives on the day of the discovery of those documents, Sauber said, adding the National Archives took possession of the material on the following morning.

Sauber also said the documents were not the subject of any previous request or inquiry by the National Archives.

The documents were discovered when Biden's personal attorneys "were packing files housed in a locked closet to prepare to vacate office space at the Penn Biden Cen-



Nigerian Railway Corporation personnel are seen on a platform as a train speeds by at the Idu Railway Station during the resumption of Abuja-Kaduna train railway operations in Abuja, Nigeria's capital on Dec 5, 2022. AFP

ter in Washington, DC," Sauber said. He added the White House was cooperating with the Justice Department and the National Archives.

The Justice Department, the National Archives and the think tank did not respond to a request for comment. Biden was vice-president under former president Barack Obama from 2009 to 2017.

Sauber's statement did not mention the number of classified documents, what they contained or their level of classification. CBS News reported that they did not contain nuclear secrets.

Representative Jamie Raskin, the top Democrat on the House of Representatives Oversight Committee, said in a statement that Biden's attorneys "appear to have taken immediate and proper action" after finding the documents.

Raskin said he had confidence Garland will "make an impartial decision about any further action that may be needed."

The Justice Department is separately probing former president Donald Trump's handling of highly sensitive classified documents that he retained at his Florida resort after leaving the White House in January 2021. FBI agents carried out a court-approved search on Aug 8 of Trump's Mar-a-Lago estate. About 100 documents marked as classified were among thousands of records seized.

"When is the FBI going to raid the many homes of Joe Biden, perhaps even the White House? These documents were definitely not declassified," Trump said in a post on his Truth Social platform late on Monday.

Britain's groundbreaking satellite launch ends in failure

NEWQUAY

BRITAIN'S attempt to become the first European nation to launch satellites into space ended in bitter disappointment early on Tuesday when Virgin Orbit said its rocket had suffered an anomaly that prevented it from reaching orbit.

The "horizontal launch" mission had left from the coastal town of Newquay in southwest England, with Virgin's LauncherOne rocket carried under the wing of a modified Boeing 747 called "Cosmic Girl", and later released over the Atlantic Ocean.

"We appear to have an anomaly that has prevented us from reaching orbit," the company said. "We are evaluating the information."

The failure deals a further blow to European space ambitions after an Italian-built Vega-C rocket mission failed after lift-off from French Guiana in late December.

The rockets have since been grounded.

Europe has suffered a series of setbacks in the past year, with its key Ariane 6 launcher delayed, access to Russian Soyuz rockets blocked by the Ukraine conflict, Vega grounded and now a showcase launch for the burgeoning small launcher industry abandoned.

Virgin Orbit had initially said on Twitter that LauncherOne had reached earth orbit, a tweet it later deleted.

"Over the coming days there will be an investigation by the government and various bodies, including Virgin Orbit," Matt Archer, Commercial Space Director at the UK Space Agency said. Virgin Orbit, part-owned by British billionaire Richard Branson, had planned to deploy nine small satellites into lower Earth orbit in its first mission outside its United States base.

The mission had been heralded as a historic first for Cornwall, Britain and Europe, and thousands of enthusiasts watching from beside the runway cheered when "Cosmic

Girl" took off and when they were told the rocket had been deployed.

The crowd quickly and quietly dispersed following the announcement of failure.

Mission failure

A mission failure would be the second in Virgin Orbit's history since its first launch in 2020. The company has had four successful missions.

Archer, at the UK Space Agency, said a first stage burn had taken the rocket into space but the second stage had a "technical anomaly and didn't reach the required orbit".

A graphic display on an official video feed showed the mission at second-engine cut-off, three steps short of payload deployment about two hours after take-off.

The conflict in Ukraine has highlighted the importance for tactical military purposes of smaller satellites, like those being launched from Newquay, which can get into low orbit at much shorter notice than bigger ones.

It was not immediately clear how the failure, which will have to be investigated, would affect the timing or location of future missions. Virgin Orbit Chief Executive Dan Hart told reporters on Sunday that the company hoped to return to Newquay before the end of 2023. Britain says it is the leading non-US manufacturer of satellites, with 47,000 people employed in its space industry, and has called for the development of multiple potential microlaunch sites including two vertical launchpads in Scotland.

The UK Space Agency had described the Cornish mission as a moment of national pride for Britain's growing space industry while Britain's minister for science, George Freeman, told Reuters at the spaceport that it was a "historic moment".

"Lots and lots of things have been achieved and yet the milestone is obviously disappointing," Archer said. "But we will continue to press on and we will get there in the end."

Agencies

Fallacies of Western media won't reduce international community's confidence in Chinese economy

THE Baihetan hydropower station, the world's second-largest in terms of total installed capacity, was recently put into full operation, which marked the completion of the world's largest clean energy corridor on China's Yangtze River.

During the three-day New Year holiday, hustle-and-bustle returned to China's consumption market, and multiple provinces sent business delegations overseas to seek new opportunities.

These all indicate enhanced confidence of enterprises in the Chinese market and accelerated steps of work resumption in China, which comes from the optimization of country's COVID-19 response measures.

The international community is now more optimistic about China's economic prospects, believing that China's optimized COVID-19 response will inject more impetus into the country's economic recovery and growth.

Morgan Stanley, Goldman Sachs and JPMorgan Chase & Co. all lifted their forecast on China's economic growth in 2023.

According to a survey by the Bank of America, three quarters of its portfolio managers hold that China will see higher growth after it optimized its COVID-19 response.

WTO Director-General Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala said China's optimization of COVID-19 response "will help remove one set of uncertainties" in a world reeling from the impacts of the pandemic.

Secretary-General of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Mathias Cormann noted that the

optimization will inject more impetus into the recovery of China and the world.

However, some western media outlets have shut their eyes to the positive changes of the Chinese economy and the authoritative judgement by international economic organizations and commercial institutions, groundlessly talking down the Chinese economy.

When China was following a dynamic zero-COVID approach, these media outlets fanned up the negative impacts from China's COVID-19 response on the world economy. However, after China optimized its response measures, they still held similar views. Such self-contradiction

exposed their deep-rooted political prejudices against China, and their narrow-mindedness that they never want to see a prospering China.

The most important thing in the major test of the pandemic unseen in a century is to secure people's lives and safety while ensuring economy and livelihood.

Since the onset of the virus, China has taken a proactive approach and fully prepared itself with flexible measures. It has effectively responded to five global COVID waves and over 100 resurgences at home, which safeguarded the health of the Chinese people and its economic and social development.

The average annual economic growth of China over the past three years was higher than the world average.

China's active practice made important contributions to ensuring smooth global industrial and supply chains, and to promoting the development of the world economy.

Facts prove that China has blazed a trail that well coordinates COVID-19 response and economic development, which puts people's lives and health under the fullest protection and maximally reduces the impacts from the virus on economic and social development.

The recent Central Economic Work Conference stressed bet-

ter coordinating epidemic prevention and control with economic and social development. China optimized its COVID-19 response based on a comprehensive assessment of the mutation of the virus, the COVID situation, and ongoing response efforts. It will help make its response more science-based, targeted and effective. It will also restore normalcy to people's work and life, meet regular medical and health needs, and minimize the impact from COVID-19 on economic and social undertakings.

Besides, relevant departments formulated and released the provisional measures on cross-border travel, which took effect on January 8. This will better facilitate the safe and orderly cross-border travel of Chinese and foreign nationals and international exchange and cooperation, and prove to be a boon for the global economy.

People's Daily

'Papii Kocha' confirming lifelong, even tragic love fable in new song

By Correspondent Michael Eneza

TRYING to download a fairly recent song by the name 'Salima' reveals how popular the name is to local musicians, either at present or even earlier, which essentially suggests that the name is popular among women, in the first place.

Outside that sort of situation, it is not clear why musicians would be disposed to think of 'Salima' rather than any other, having two well-placed local musicians releasing what are said to be albums by that name. Some of them just marked the song.

The 'Salima' song that is more noticeable in online entries is attached with Diamond Platinumz, the fictitious name of Naseeb Abdul, who creates a virtual diamond out of everything he touches in music.

That must also have been true of the more recent number whose factual write-ups show it came out in early 2022, similar to the other 'Salima', coming a few months later.

It is this latter one which caught the interest of at least a few people, those who 'studied in Cuba,' noticing hidden intentions, or rather the song as a sort of unfolding of feelings about some issues.

Those listening to the lyrics will fail to get the connection of 'Salima' to Seya, the flagship composition of the singer and his father 'Babu Seya', where the name appears to be that of a daughter of the son, that is 'Papii Kocha.'

Everything in the way the group works is tailored around their identities and other stories arising out of life experiences, and they seem to have fairly vivid instances of experience. Some pundits boil this to one instance.

At the risk of simplification, some of us choose to belong to this number, that group which incessantly focuses on its inner



Congolese dance music artist, Johnson Nguza Mbangi, alias 'Papii Kocha'.

experiences are not telling several stories of such attachments but one such story.

It would thus have to be life-defining for it to be coming up time and again, across a span of close to 20 years, as the defining song, Seya, was a composition of the early 2000s.

It would thus need to be shown that Salima and Seya could be one person, for the trick to come unstuck, making the latest song a turn of reflection on the defining theme.

Not many listeners would be familiar enough with coastal usage to see how the two are linked.

Salima is a different pronunciation for Salma, and that can also be pronounced as Seyma in Zanzibar in which case it gives birth to Seya as a short form of Seyma, and thus the possibility the two are linked. It's Iliad, tied

to Seya.

Chances that the two composers, as what the son is doing and what the father is doing can scarcely be differentiated in this case, might have parallel experiences in that regard is one possibility, though a bit narrow.

It is a situation where one of them meets a woman that the group named Seya when the junior musician was a bit young and thus the main personage could have been the senior composer.

Twenty years later, chances of a reversal of roles are much higher, in which case the now matured 'Papii Kocha' would be narrating a story revolving around a personage with a similar name as that of the earlier woman. But why should it be a double?

It can be so fortuitously, as

they say, 'birds of a feather fly together,' so a Seya brings about a life experience perhaps for the senior composer, and then namesake, who for reasons of illustration would be 20 years younger, impacts the younger composer.

The tone of the two songs are different, the earlier song showing an existential fortitude in some tricky or even worrisome sentimental attachment, where those sounding warnings are dismissed as naysayers.

The lesson was a familiar one, one life and dies for the one he loves, come rain come shine. Whether or not there was 'rain' along the way, even a nightmarish flood, is one thing but what is evident is that the theme is yet to move out of the composers' minds, even if this time the senior composer is virtually out of sight in the song.

And it is also possible that outside recollections of what happened at that time, it is not the time for brazen sentimental heroics, and the younger composer, in turn, appears to be far wiser on the matter.

It is as if he is in no mood to be a hero, talks about having declined an approach or continuing it, and is seeing the results.

The note of regret will leave listeners perplexed about what is involved or rather is at stake, whether the singer reflects on a deserted sentimental environment where there is none as illustrious as Salima to give and receive sentimental appreciation.

Few shall wish to believe that it is a situation of dependency where Salima would be a provider, but in that case, the idea of leaving her - except for a similar provider - wouldn't arise.

As this aspect is wholly unexplored, it shall remain a dark secret.

Boxer Kidunda steps up preparations for international title bout

By Correspondent Ismail Tano

TANZANIA'S professional Super Middleweight pugilist, Selemani Kidunda, has said that preparations for his international title fight against DR Congo pugilist Patrick Mukala are going on well.

The Tanzanian pugilist has for that matter appealed to boxing enthusiasts to turn up in large numbers to support him in the fight that will be held on February 24.

The two pugilists will trade blows for the African Boxing Union (ABU) Super Middleweight title in the bout which will stretch for 10 rounds.

Boxing promoter Saada Kasonso from Kemmon Sports Agency has organized the bout.

Kidunda said he knows his fans are eager to see him come out victorious in the coming bout against Mukala.

It will be the first time the two boxers take on each other.

Kidunda noted: "My goal is to collect titles to increase my value, I moreover know that my fans want to

see what happened in the last fight."

The pugilist disclosed: "I promise you that this fight will showcase the continuation of my dominance on home soil."

Kidunda will trade blows with Mukala after notching a victory over the latter's compatriot Tshimanga Katomba by points in July last year.

The pugilists were eyeing the World Boxing Federation (WBF) Super Middleweight title, with Majimaji Stadium in Songea hosting the bout.

Promoter Saada revealed boxing fans should wait for a pulsating bout because the promoter's firm has planned to revolutionize boxing in the country.

"We will moreover have undercard bouts that will bring together 18 boxers in nine fights," the promoter noted.

"All of them will be intense due to the type of boxers who will take the ring on the day, we further invite sponsors to support our fight," the promoter said.

After hype, readers now get hands on Prince Harry's 'Spare'

LONDON

AFTER weeks of hype and days of leaks, readers got a chance to judge Prince Harry's book for themselves when it went on sale around the world on Tuesday.

In Britain, a few stores opened at midnight to sell copies of "Spare" to diehard royal devotees and the merely curious. Many said they wanted to form their own opinion of the book after days of snippets and debate on news sites and television.

"I'm excited just to hear about Prince Harry's life from Prince Harry," said Sarah Nakana, a surveyor who bought the book at London's Victoria station. "There's so much misinformation, disinformation about Harry and Meghan."

The book's myriad revelations and accusations have already been splashed across the media. In the ghostwritten memoir Harry, 38, recounts his grief at the death of his mother, Princess Diana, his disputes with brother Prince William and frustration at the role of royal "spare" in the shadow of his elder sibling, who is heir to the British throne.

He lacerates the U.K.'s tabloid press for coverage he considers prurient, intrusive and sometimes plain wrong, claims his relatives were unwelcoming to his wife Meghan and accuses members of the royal family, including his stepmother Camilla, of leaking stories to the media to burnish their own reputations.

Buckingham Palace has not com-

mented on any of the allegations, though royal allies have pushed back, largely anonymously.

Harry's exposure of bitter divides inside the House of Windsor - alongside details of his mental health struggles, experiences with sex and drugs and decade-long military career - has generated reams of media coverage.

The book is already the top-selling book on Amazon's U.K. site, which like many big retailers is offering it half price, and is expected to be one of the year's biggest sellers.

John Cotterill, nonfiction buyer at the Waterstones bookstore chain, told trade magazine The Bookseller that "Spare" was "one the biggest pre-order titles of the last decade for Waterstones."

Excitement is far from universal, however. Harry's interview with broadcaster ITV drew 4.1 million viewers on Sunday - fewer than the 5.3 million who watched BBC drama "Happy Valley" at the same time.

Retail worker Caroline Lennon arrived at 6 a.m. Tuesday at a branch of Waterstones in central London to await its opening.

"I did expect a queue. Unfortunately, there's no queue. I'm just by myself," she said.

"I want to read (it) because I like the royal family and I don't care what anybody says," she said. "People will criticize that. I don't care because I like the royal family, and I like Harry and Meghan."

AP

Junior basketball coach's initiative wins praise



Basketball coach Bahati Mgunda (standing 6th L) issues instructions to youths that attended basketball training held at Mkwakwani Stadium in Tanga early this week.

By Guardian Correspondent

TANGA Regional Basketball Association's secretary-general Jacob Senkondo is happy with a decision by the sport's coach Bahati Mgunda to conduct training for youths in the region.

Senkondo said his region had hardly conducted the game's training for youths for over eight years.

Mgunda's program has impressed many, including coaches and various stakeholders and all congratulated him.

Julius John, a basketball player from Dar es Salaam, asked domestic coaches to hold basketball training for juniors in various areas when the tacticians are on vacation, the same way

Mgunda did.

"I have to congratulate Mgunda and his Mambo Basketball Institute for conducting training in Tanga," John disclosed.

Ishaka Msechu, a junior hoops teams coach, said what Mgunda did has shown how much the coach wants all young people to love the game of basketball.

"Mgunda has been regularly conducting basketball training for young people and going to Tanga was a promise made by the coach," Msechu noted.

Mgunda said apart from holding training, the young people got information related to the FIBA program on advice for players about their life in general, termed 'Introduction to Players Life Style Mentorship'.

The basketball training for young people was held for two days and ended at the Mkwakwani Stadium in the region early this week.

In his effort to improve junior basketball training, Mgunda has moreover gone to conduct basketball training in Monduli, Kiwira, and Mwanza.

Meanwhile, Tanzanian basketballer Alphaes Kisusi will conduct a one-day basketball training for U-19 players at the JMK Youth Park in Dar es Salaam.

The training will start on Thursday and is organized by Shoes for Tanzania Youth Basketball camp, according to the Junior NBA League coordinator, Mgunda.

Mgunda said the camp has

targeted to, among others, spot basketball talents and seek ways to develop them to effectively promote the sport as per the call made by Tanzania Basketball Federation (TBF).

The camp also seeks to offer basketball coaches in Dar es Salaam a chance to exchange ideas and experiences with each other so that they could play a crucial part in maintaining the successful organization of the program in the future.

Vijana basketball side's player, Cornel Owiso who will conduct the training, thanked Kisusi for launching the youth program.

The baller pointed out the initiative will help to maintain its status as an important platform for developing sports talents.



A member of staff places the copies of the new book by Prince Harry called "Spare" at a book store in London, yesterday. Prince Harry's memoir "Spare" went on sale in bookstores on Tuesday, providing a varied portrait of the Duke of Sussex and the royal family. (AP Photo)

France captain Lloris retires from international football

PARIS

FRANCE captain Hugo Lloris has announced his retirement from international football at the age of 36, three weeks after his country lost the World Cup final on penalties to Argentina in Doha.

"I have decided to stop my international career, with the feeling that I have given everything," Tottenham Hotspur goalkeeper Lloris said in an interview with French sports daily L'Equipe published on Monday.

"I think it is important to announce this now, two and a half months before the start of Euro qualifying."

Lloris, who made his international debut as a 21-year-old in a friendly against Uruguay in November 2008, bows out after becoming France's most-capped player during the World Cup.

He overtook previous record-holder Lilian Thuram's mark of 142 appearances and finished with his 145th cap in the final, which France lost 4-2 on penalties after an epic 3-3 draw at the end of extra time.

"I have really been thinking about it since the end of the World Cup, but there has been something deep inside of me for maybe six months now and which grew during the competition, leading me to make this decision," Lloris said.

Former Nice and Lyon goalkeeper Lloris captained France to victory at the 2018 World Cup in Russia. He played at seven major tournaments in total, including Euro 2016, when France lost in the final to Portugal as hosts.

France's back-up goalkeepers at the World Cup were 37-year-old Rennes veteran Steve Mandanda and Alphonse Areola of West Ham United. However, the replacement for Lloris as France's starter is set to be the 27-year-old Mike Maignan of AC Milan, who missed the World Cup due to injury.

'Go out at the top'

"There comes a time when you need to step aside. I have always said the French national team does not belong to any one person," Lloris said.

"There is a goalkeeper who is ready (Maignan), and I need a bit more time for me, for my family and for my children.

"To have been the France goalkeeper for 14 and a half seasons is a big deal, but it is also mentally exhausting and I hope clearing some time for myself will allow me to keep playing at the highest level for a few more years."

He added: "I prefer to go out at the top, having helped France get to a World Cup final."

Lloris' decision comes after coach Didier Deschamps -- in charge since 2012 -- signed a new contract to remain in the position through to the 2026 World Cup in North America.

"I must, we must, respect his decision even if he still had his place in our team, as he demonstrated during the last World Cup," Deschamps said in a statement.

"A great servant of the France team is bowing out and I want to pay tribute to his exceptional career.

"Beyond all the records that his talent and professionalism enabled him to break, beyond the essential role that he played in our greatest victories ... Hugo is a remarkable person on a human level."

The next assignment for Deschamps and France is the qualifying campaign for Euro 2024 in Germany, which begins at the end of March with a double-header against the Netherlands and the Republic of Ireland.

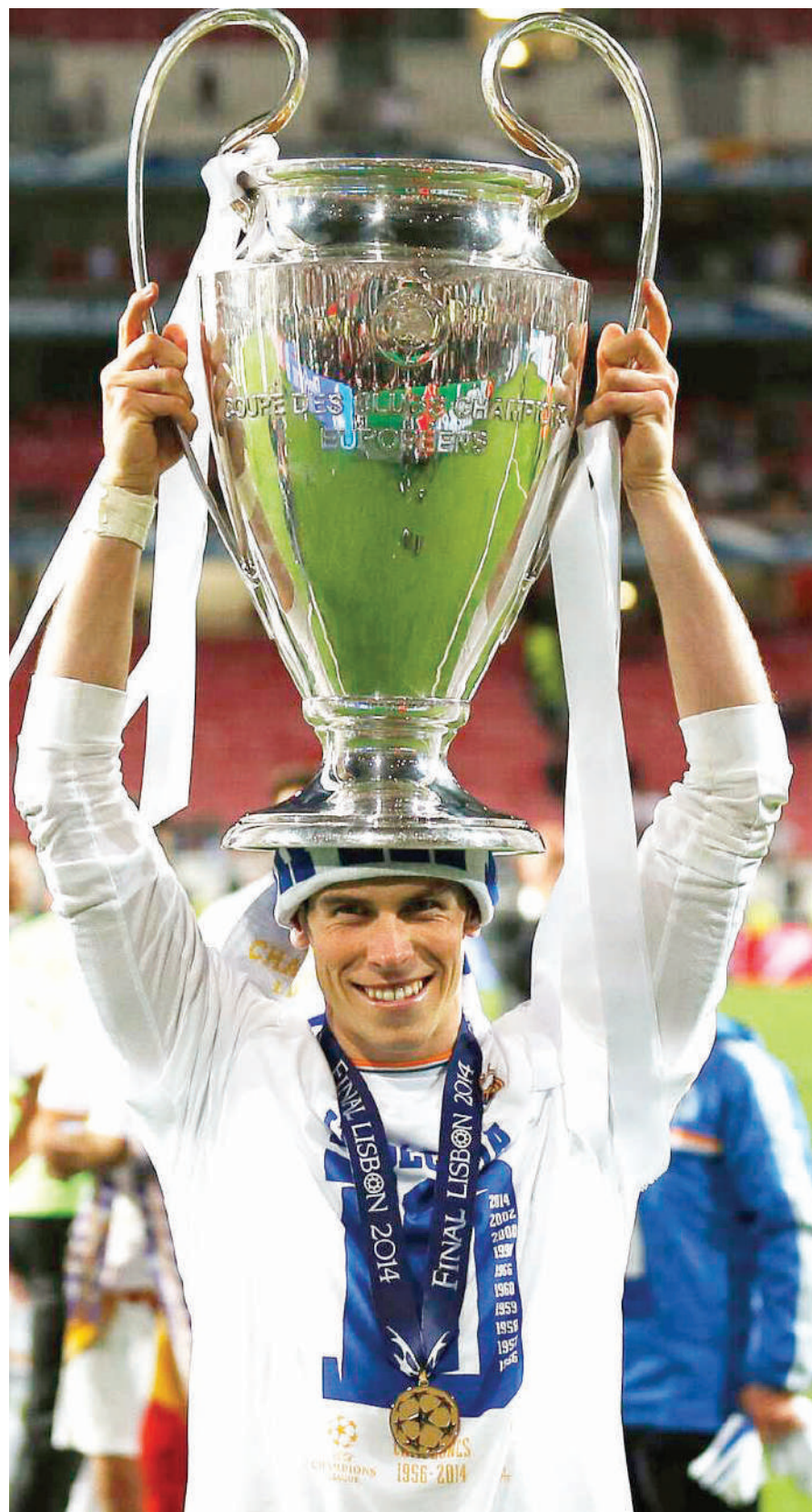
They will also play Greece and Gibraltar in Group B, with the top two teams advancing to the finals which will take place from June 14 to July 14 next year.

AFP



Hugo Lloris

Bale retires as one of Britain's greatest football exports



FILE - Real Madrid's Gareth Bale celebrates with the trophy after winning the Champions League Final soccer match between Real Madrid and Liverpool at the Olimpiyskiy Stadium in Kiev, Ukraine, Saturday, May 26, 2018. (AP Photo)

By Kieran CANNING

GARETH Bale retires from football with his place as one of Britain's greatest players secure after a spectacular career at home and abroad.

The Welshman was once the world's most-expensive player when he moved to Real Madrid from Tottenham in 2013 and went on to win the Champions League five times with the Spanish giants.

However, he will be most fondly remembered and loved in his homeland for his achievements in dragging Wales from the wilderness of international football to two European Championships and a first World Cup since 1958.

At the peak of his powers, Bale inspired Wales to the semi-finals of Euro 2016 in their first major international tournament for 58 years.

The 33-year-old leaves the stage with a record 111 caps for Wales and 41 goals -- another record.

"My journey on the international stage is one that has changed not only my life but who I am," Bale said in an emotional open letter to the Welsh supporters.

"The fortune of being Welsh and being selected to play for and captain Wales has given me something incomparable to anything else I've experienced."

- Global star -

Bale's career started at Southampton, where he made his debut aged

just 16 and caught the eye during just one full season in the second-tier Championship.

In 2007 he joined Tottenham for an initial fee of £5 million (\$6 million), but his path towards stardom at Spurs was not always a smooth one. Bale did not taste success in any of his first 24 Premier League appearances for the club over a period of more than two years.

However, he soon began to make his mark as a buccaneering left-back with two games against then reigning European champions Inter Milan in 2010 propelling him into the spotlight.

Bale scored a hat-trick despite being on the losing side in a 4-3 defeat at the San Siro before running the Italian giants ragged as Spurs gained revenge in a 3-1 win at White Hart Lane.

He ended that season as the Premier League's players' player of the year and won the award for a second time in 2012/13 once he had been moved into a more advanced attacking role.

- Memories and medals in Madrid -

His sensational performances attracted the interest of Madrid, who sought Bale to complement a forward line already boasting Cristiano Ronaldo and Karim Benzema in a £85 million deal.

Bale's time in Madrid was filled with moments of brilliance and plenty of medals. A barnstorming run and finish to win the Copa del Rey against Barcelona and the deci-

sive goal to secure Madrid's long-awaited 10th European Cup lit up his debut season.

An even more spectacular overhead kick turned another Champions League final Madrid's way against Liverpool in 2018.

But Bale started three of his five victorious Champions League finals on the bench -- testament to the fact that he failed to produce the consistent brilliance the Madrid fans, media and his managers demanded.

He lost friends in Spain when he responded to jibes over his priorities and love of playing golf by celebrating Wales' qualification for Euro 2020 with a flag that read: "Wales. Golf. Madrid. In that order."

Injuries also took their toll on a player whose devastating impact in his early years was based on blistering pace.

Bale's playing time at club level diminished during his latter years at Real Madrid, a loan spell back at Tottenham in 2020/21 and the final six months of his career at Los Angeles FC.

That only made his ability to rise to the occasion at international level all the more impressive. His goals in playoff wins against Austria and Ukraine completed his final quest -- to play at a World Cup.

He even scored a goal on football's biggest stage by firing home a penalty against the USA, but Qatar was the end of the road for Bale and the end of an era for Welsh football.

AFP

French FA boss Le Graet under fire for 'clumsy' Zidane comments

PARIS

FRENCH Football Federation president Noel Le Graet came under fire on Monday as he was forced to apologise for what he dubbed "clumsy remarks" about Zinedine Zidane's potential interest in coaching the France national team.

Le Graet had quipped dismissively in an interview to French radio station RMC on Sunday that he "wouldn't even have taken his call" when asked whether Les Bleus legend Zidane had rung him to express an interest in taking over as coach from Didier Deschamps.

That drew criticism from France and Paris Saint-Germain star Kylian Mbappe, who said Le Graet had shown "a lack of respect".

Real Madrid, where Zidane enjoyed decorated spells as a player and coach, also hit out at Le Graet, while French Sports Minister Amelie Oudea-Castera demanded an apology.

"I would like to apologise for these remarks, which absolutely do not reflect my views, nor my consideration for the player he was and the

coach he has become," said the 81-year-old head of the FFF on Monday.

"I gave an interview to RMC that I should not have given because they were looking for controversy by opposing Didier and Zinedine Zidane, two greats of French football.

"I admit that I made some clumsy remarks which created a misunderstanding."

Deschamps' contract expired after the World Cup in Qatar, where reigning champions France lost to Argentina in a penalty shoot-out after a thrilling final on December 18.

However, Deschamps -- who took over in 2012 -- on Saturday signed a new deal to stay until 2026.

Asked by RMC whether Zidane, who won the 1998 World Cup as a player alongside Deschamps, had called him in recent days, Le Graet dismissed him as having been a potential candidate.

"I wouldn't even have taken his call," Le Graet said. "To tell him what? 'Hello sir. Don't worry. Look for another club. I just agreed a contract with Didier'."

Le Graet also respond-

ed curtly to reports of Zidane's interest in coaching Brazil.

"I would be surprised if he left for there," he said.

"It's up to him what he does. It's not my business. I've never met with him and we've never considered parting with Didier Deschamps.

"He could go wherever he wants in Europe, to a big club. But a national side I find hard to believe."

- Government audit - Zidane left Real in 2021 having won two La Liga titles and three Champions League crowns over two spells in charge.

"These remarks show a



Zinedine Zidane

Noel Le Graet

lack of respect for one of the most admired figures by football fans around the world and our club is awaiting an immediate correction," Real said in a statement.

Le Graet was also criticised by former players including Laurent Blanc, a World Cup winner alongside Zidane who coached France before Deschamps was appointed.

"We all agree that what he said was very clumsy, to say the least," said Blanc, now in charge of Lyon.

"He apologised, but it is very easy to apologise. It takes two seconds, but what you said remains."

FIFA rules state that national federations must be free of government interference, but Oudea-Castera on Monday hinted that she wanted to see Le Graet removed from his post as she called on the executive committee of the FFF to "take responsibility".

"It is important that they get the measure of the situation," she told reporters.

"I don't want any more

of these situations where he loses it. We have become too used to these gaffes."

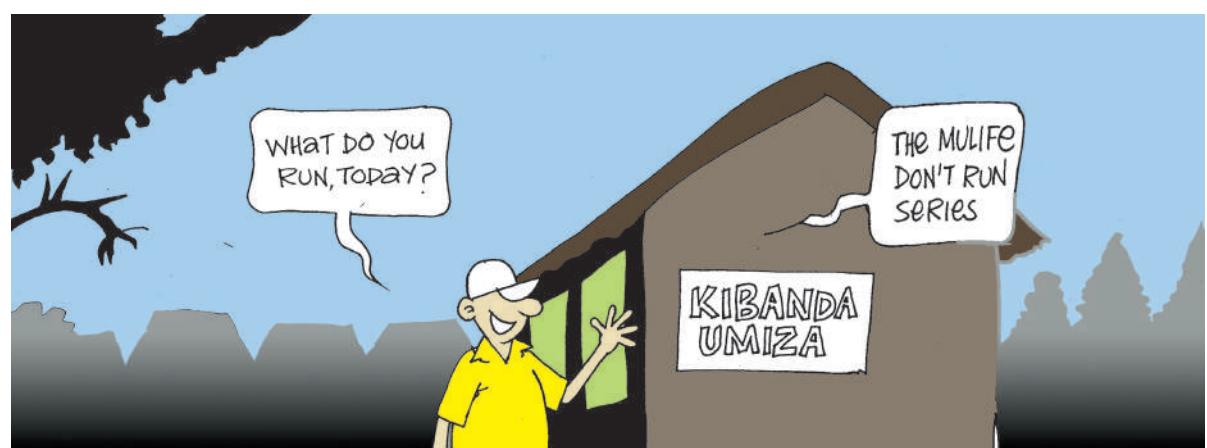
France's build-up to the World Cup was marred by accusations made against Le Graet that he had mistreated employees at the federation. Le Graet denied those accusations, with the FFF launching legal action against the magazine So Foot.

However, the government has launched an audit of the federation and Le Graet has been summoned to attend a hearing on Tuesday.

Le Graet is a former socialist mayor of the small Brittany town of Guingamp who later oversaw the rise of the local football team to a top-flight force during his time as club president.

He was elected president of the federation in 2011 and his current mandate is due to expire in 2024.

Gwiji by David Chikoko



SPORT

Gareth Bale retires as one of Britain's greatest football exports

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All set for 2023 Arusha cross-country race

By Correspondent Joseph Mchekadona

ARUSHA regional cross-country race will be held in the region at the end of this week, the region's athletics body officials have disclosed.

Arusha Regional Athletics Committee's secretary-general Rogath John said the cross-country race which will be used to select athletes for the National Cross-Country Championships has also attracted other six regions.

He mentioned the other regions as Dar es Salaam, Manyara, Kilimanjaro, Dodoma, Singida, and Tanga. John stated: "We have a cross-country race which will be held on Saturday, it will be used to select athletes for National Cross-Country Championships which will be held later this year."

"It will be a big event as other regions will also battle it out in it," he said.

Meanwhile, John said the region has lined up several athletics activities for this year ranging from juniors to seniors.

"This year, we have lined up several athletics activities which include events for juniors, coaching clinics, and senior events to ensure the region is active in athletics," he said.

Arusha is regarded as the hub of athletics in the country, given it has produced top athletes who have performed well both locally and internationally. Cross-country running is a sport in which teams and individuals run a race on open-air courses over natural terrain such as dirt or grass.

The course, typically 4-12 kilometers (2.5-7.5 mi) long, may include surfaces of grass and earth, pass through woodlands and open country, and include hills, flat ground, and sometimes gravel road, and minor obstacles. It is both an individual and a team sport, runners are judged on individual times and teams by a points-scoring method.

Both men and women of all ages compete in cross country, which usually takes place during autumn and winter, and can include weather conditions of rain, sleet, snow, or hail, and a wide range of temperatures.

Simba set to take on CSKA Moscow in friendly



A section of Simba SC footballers participate in the outfit's training in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates recently to prepare for the 2022/23 NBC Premier League and other assignments. PHOTO: COURTESY OF SIMBA SC

By Correspondent Nassir Nchimbi

TANZANIA'S Simba SC is expected to play two friendly games in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates in preparation for the second phase of the 2022/23 NBC Premier League and the 2022/23 CAF Champions League.

Simba SC will play the first game against Al Dhafra, which participates in the UAE Pro League on January 13, before facing Russian giants, CSKA Moscow.

CSKA Moscow has been UEFA Europa League champions in the 2004/05 season, beating Sporting Lisbon of Portugal. After training with the squad for two days in the camp set up in Dubai, Simba SC's head coach Roberto Oliveira has convinced himself that he needs another striker.

Oliveira noted that his team has good strikers while praising skipper John Bosco but he has made it clear that to achieve his goals, he needs another striker to support the existing ones.

According to the gaffer, he needs forwards that are strong, fast, and deadly in front of the goal. Oliveira also said that he needs friendly games to see how his footballers work on various techniques and formations.

The Brazilian gaffer said that the techniques he gave his players include attacking quickly and playing together once they are in pos-

session, especially in the midfield.

According to the tactician he was keen on watching his performers execute his instructions in the friendly clashes.

He said there are times when he needs to see the individual player's decisions used due to the circumstances, to dominate the match and win and change the tactics according to the opponents.

"Fortunately, I have come

to Simba SC, I have met good players with great talent... I believe they can play and meet my philosophies to achieve the goals of winning titles," Oliveira pointed out.

The Brazilian tactician revealed: "It is still too early to talk about many things but let's first see changes happening in the team within a short period, especially in matches and training and I have told all players that I want them to

show their talents."

Oliveira noted: "Another thing I have explained to my players is that they should have good relations with each other, I don't want to see them come into conflict in any way, that matter will be there for us on the technical bench and I believe I will live with them as one family."

The gaffer stated: "Another good luck since I arrived at Simba is I have had good cooperation with Juma

Mgunda who also has many techniques."

"I believe that if I combine his with mine, the team is going to do well in many games," the Simba SC head coach added.

After Simba SC returns to Dar es Salaam at the end of this week, the outfit will continue with the NBC Premier League games, hosting Mbeya's Mbeya City FC at the Benjamin Mkapa Stadium in Dar es Salaam on January 17.

Yanga denies links to landing Ulimwengu sign

By Correspondent Nassir Nchimbi

MAINLAND Tanzania champion, Yanga, has denied information about the outfit's plan to sign former TP Mazembe attacker Thomas Ulimwengu during this season's mini-transfer window.

Yanga is said to be in the process of signing two players who will reinforce their squad during this period which will end on January 15.

News about Ulimwengu's signing has been cir-

culating for more than two weeks now but Yanga's leadership through Information and Communication Department has denied it.

The Head of the Department, Ally Kamwe, noted that they have no plans to sign the striker hailing from Tanzania, and they have been surprised by the information linking them to the footballer.

Kamwe stated: "We have no plan to sign Ulimwengu, we are surprised to see on social media that we are asso-

ciated with the plan to sign the player, the truth is that we have different plans."

Ulimwengu is in Dar es Salaam after leaving DR Congo soccer giants, TP Mazembe, an outfit the player served in two periods. The goal-getter had first joined the Lubumbashi-based outfit in 2011 and left it in 2017, playing 122 games and scoring 33 goals.

He left the club in 2017 to serve Sweden's outfit AFC Eskilstuna and later played for Sloboda Tuzla in Bosnia and Herze-

govina.

In 2018, the muscular forward returned to Africa and joined Al Hilal SC of Sudan, he thereafter joined JS Saoura of Algeria in 2019 before returning to TP Mazembe in 2020.

He played for JS Saoura in the 2019/20 CAF Champions League's group stage, with the outfit taking on Egypt's Al Ahly, AS Vita Club of DR Congo, and Simba SC of Tanzania in the stage.

In the showdown's first round, JS Saoura went down 3-0 to Simba

on the latter's home turf, with Ulimwengu coming in as a second-half substitute for the Algerian side.

JS Saoura posted two draws against AS Vita Club and Al Ahly, then notched two victories against AS Vita Club and Simba in Algeria.

In the last round, JS Saoura suffered defeat in a duel against AS Vita Club, ending the group stage in third place with eight points.

Yanga is currently working on the signing of Zambian forward Kenne-

dy Musonda whose proposed move to Mainland Tanzania's NBC Premier League side can only be finalized in the July-August transfer window.

The Guardian understands that the attacker's outfit, Kitwe-based Power Dynamos FC, is hardly keen on letting go of their talisman this month.

The NBC Premier League leaders want Musonda, the Lusaka Youth product, to help them win the league's top honour which is their main target this season.



Thomas Ulimwengu

Flexibles by David Chikoko

