



### National Pg 3

Dodoma city becoming attractive to investments



### National Pg 4

Govt, association find remedy to counterfeit seeds and fertilisers



### National Pg 6

Govt issues stern warning over plastic bag ban violations



## Desertification: Africa wants binding pledges

By Guardian Reporter, Riyadh

AFRICAN countries want United Nations-based legal, institutional and governance framework as well as financing mechanisms as the best way to address desertification and land degradation.

The demand was given in a statement by the African caucus at the 16th session of the conference of the parties (COP16) to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD).

They expressed this demand at opening session of the conference yesterday, expressing concern that despite the critical importance of land and the pivotal roles it plays, land degradation has been on an upward trend.

This has especially been the case in recent years, resulting in huge social and economic losses and serious environmental challenges, they said, noting that COP16 is an opportunity to adopt coherent and action-oriented decisions that will lead to tangible achievements on the ground.

"Africa attaches great importance to this conference and hopes that its concerns will be considered," the statement intoned, drawing attention to how acute is this phenomenon and how it needs to be addressed in an integrated manner that includes key pillars to effectively addressing the issues.

Drought affects a big number of African

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# 'Tanzania will compete for WHO regional post'



President Samia Suluhu Hassan pays her respects in Dar es Salaam yesterday to former Kigamboni legislator Dr Faustine Engelbert Ndugulile (55), who would have taken over as the World Health Organisation's Regional Director for Africa next month but died mid-last week in India while undergoing treatment. **Related photo on Page 2. Photo: State House**

*"He was also one of the first professionals to establish a programme for controlling the spread of HIV, making substantial contributions in this area"*

By Guardian Reporter

TANZANIA will once again compete for the position of Africa regional director of the World Health Organisation (WHO), following the passing away of Dr Faustine Ndugulile last week.

President Samia Suluhu Hassan made this affirmation at the national last respects ceremony for the late Kigamboni MP and incoming director for the WHO Regional Office for Africa.

"In his final journey, the late Ndugulile has brought great honour to our country by securing that position," she said, affirming that the country will again compete for that position.

The government would look for another individual with qualities capable of competing globally, she said, underlining that the country will enter the contest with the same strength to preserve the dignity of our country.

The president paid tribute to the de-

## SPORTS



**DAVIDS: TRANSFER WINDOW TO FOCUS ON QUALITY, NOT QUANTITY**

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**GUARDIOLA SMILES THROUGH TAUNTS AS MAN CITY FORGET HOW TO WIN**

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## Seaweed fertiliser: Coastal Biotech plans new factory

By Correspondent Marc Nkwame, Arusha

THE Tanzanian seashore is assuming a new role of becoming a major producer of organic fertilisers, as seaweed harvested from Zanzibar is a key raw material for environment friendly agricultural inputs.

Steven Sillah, the Coastal Biotech Ltd resident director heading the \$20m seaweeds fertiliser project, made this affirmation at the Tanganyika Farmers Association (TFA) stakeholders meeting here at the weekend.

A similar factory is expected to be built on the Mainland early next year, he said, underlining that the wish is to get rid of chemical fertilisers and replace them by organic ferti-



**In adopting organic fertilisers, we could reduce the costs for farmers by 236 dollars per acre. That is just on the inputs**

lisers.

Highlighting the importance of using seaweed to produce environment friendly farm inputs, he explained that a global shift is taking place from chemical inputs for organically grown crops. Organic farming is the only lifeline for local growers seeking to penetrate such markets, he stated.

The firm is a marine biotechnology entity whose research and innovation focuses on macro-algae and bio-based solutions as a core component to the food and feed industry, he said.

The company has just become a TFA member and the director set out plans

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## TCRA: Fraudulent SMS expose bank accounts

By Guardian Reporter

CYBER criminals swap victims' SIM cards after stealing their identities, personal information and account authentication as well as authorisation codes, using the data to access mobile money and

bank accounts, the regulator says.

Dr Jabir Bakari, the Tanzania Communications Regulatory Authority (TCRA) director general, made this observation when delivering a quarterly operational report relating to mobile network fraudulent acts.

He said fraud attempts had decreased by 28 percent in the June to September 2024 period, following concerted law enforcement and heightened consumer awareness campaigns.

The latest TCRA sector performance

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**Dr Faustine Ndugulile passed away on the night of November 27, 2024, in India, where he had been receiving treatment**

ceased for his contributions to the nation, while parliamentary speaker Dr Tulia Ackson said that the deceased conducted a spirited campaign for her to secure the position of president of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU).

"Even though we are saddened by his passing, securing the position has brought great respect to our country, showing the capabilities of Tanzanians in leadership," she remarked.

Prime Minister Kassim Majaliwa acknowledged the significant work the late MP, medical doctor and public administrator had done. He said his passing away "is no small event," as since the news of his death broke out, many leaders have been contemplating on the contributions he made during his years of service.

"I have witnessed how he tackled the issues faced by the people of Kigamboni, serving the government diligently," the premier asserted.

Dr Alex Msyoka, the president of the Tanzania Medical Association (MAT), recalled Dr Ndugulile's courage, particularly during the fight against COVID-19, where he was astute in carrying out his professional responsibilities.

"He was also one of the first professional to establish a programme for control-

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## 'Tanzania will compete for WHO regional post'

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ling the spread of HIV, making substantial contributions in this area," he said.

Kawe MP and cleric Bishop Josephat Gwajima, representing other legislators, said that everyone is given a purpose, "and it is important to fulfil that purpose as time is short."

Dr. Matshidiso Moeti, the outgoing WHO Africa Region director, described Dr Ndugulile as a visionary with innovative qualities that enabled him to persuade the meeting

and secure the nomination at WHO.

Dr Faustine Ndugulile passed away on the night of November 27, 2024, in India, where he had been receiving treatment.

In 2010 he was elected Kigamboni MP, serving as Health deputy minister, then appointed Communication and Information Technology minister after the 2020 - polls.

In August 2024, he was elected to the WHO regional position which he would start serving in February 2025. He leaves behind two children, Martha and Melvin.

## TCRA: Fraudulent SMS are exposing bank accounts

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statistical report shows that mobile phone fraudsters' acts slid to 16,069 by the end of the period from 22,267 attempts in the period ending June 2024.

The decrease in attempted theft is tied to enhanced public awareness educational programmes, as members of the public have been reporting fraudsters' phone numbers to 15040.

Collaboration among key sector stakeholders including mobile phone service providers contributed to the success, he said, even as observers felt that the 16,000 or so attempts reported show the situation is not good yet.

A high-level stakeholder consultative meeting to address network fraud and cyber security was recently convened, informing the regulatory minister as well as law en-

forcement met, also inviting mobile phone service providers and other online safety stakeholders.

SMS number 15040 was extolled by the sector minister Jerry Silaa in a recent press conference, saying the fraudsters include conmen who target unsuspecting customers and mobile money agents.

SMS-based fraud undermine governments efforts to promote financial inclusion and build a digital economy, he said, reminding people that communication between service providers and users is accessed via number 100 only.

Communication and Home Affairs would intensify action against mobile network fraud, particularly in regions with the highest number of incidents such as Rukwa, Morogoro and Mbeya regions accounted for 77 percent of the incidents, he added.

## Desertification: Africa wants binding pledges

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countries but it has not yet received the attention it deserves, despite being one of the main spheres of focus of the convention framework since its adoption, they exclaimed.

Expressing their commitment to the land degradation neutrality target setting programme (LDN TSP) since its adoption in 2015, they said a number of measures have been taken for its practical implementation.

These include the preparation of transformative projects that remain subject to the mobilization of necessary financial resources to activate them, they asserted.

There is need to accelerate implementation of anti-desertification programmes and land management mechanisms to reverse degradation and restore ecological balances, they said.

Africa is calling upon the international community to "respond to the great challenges of sustainable land management in an environment fraught with multiple constraints including climate change, scarcity of water resources, rapid population growth and urbanization," it emphasised.

Khamis Hamza Khamis, the Union and Environment deputy minister in the Vice President's Office (VPO) said in remarks to the plenary session that Tanzania's actions on drought resilience include developing a ten-year environmental master plan for strategic interventions (2022 - 2032).

Other measures include promoting integrated smart practices in water, agriculture and forest sector through measures like facilitating drought smart agriculture to ensure resilience of food systems, providing timely information to vulnerable communities, catchment conservation to improve water security and efficient use.

He praised gestures of support from the Global Environmental Facility (GEF) to increase funding to scale up implementation of projects, strengthen national systems, promote public private partnership and support mechanisms for involvement of the private sector.

"Tanzania is committed to ensuring pro-active and inclusive drought

resilience so that every community, particularly vulnerable groups—women and youth are not left behind."

Ibrahim Thiaw, the UNCCD executive secretary appealed in his opening speech for the UNCCD to address desertification, land degradation and drought. "This is no longer a whisper as it is recognized at the highest levels of global decision-making," he stated.

The cost of land degradation seeps in every corner of peoples' lives following surging price of groceries, unexpected energy surcharges and the growing strain within communities.

"I have spoken to farmers, mothers and young people who are living this reality every day. Their resilience is inspiring, but their struggles remind us that land degradation and drought do not recognize borders," he declared.

Themed, 'Our Land. Our Future' the conference brings together the 197 state parties to the framework convention, slated for 2nd to 13th December. It represents a critical moment to raise global ambition and accelerate action on land and drought resilience through a people-centred approach, the UN executive underlined.



**I have spoken to farmers, mothers and young people who are living this reality every day. Their resilience is inspiring, but their struggles remind us that land degradation and drought do not recognize borders**



President Samia Suluhu Hassan pictured in Dar es Salaam yesterday consoling members of Dr Faustine Ndugulile's family during the paying of respects to the former Kigamboni legislator. Dr Ndugulile, who was due to take over as the head of the Africa Region of the World Health Organisation next month, died mid-last week in India while undergoing treatment. Photo: State House

## Seaweed fertiliser: Coastal Biotech plans new factory

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for another factory, but even with another plant also relying on seaweeds from Zanzibar.

Experts are working on harvesting the marine raw materials from the Mainland shoreline, even as pundits say that the produce from Zanzibar is special, pointing out that the produce is pure, as the water around the two islands is

less polluted.

"In adopting organic fertilisers, we could reduce the costs for farmers by 236 dollars per acre. That is just on the inputs," he said, elaborating that with organic inputs the farm yields can rise by up to 35 percent.

Seaweeds, otherwise known as marine algae, are primitive non-flowering photosynthetic macrophytes occurring in tidal regions

of seas and oceans, and they are natural renewable resources.

Being a TFA member gives the firm access to more than 5000 local growers ranging from small landholders to large commercial farmers, while plans are at hand to develop large-scale integrated macro-algae and bio-based bio-refinery solutions.

This will facilitate the production of bio-stimulants, bio-pesti-

cides and feed additives, he said while TFA executive director Justin Shirima said of the current plans for a new factory, that it has the potential to revolutionize agriculture.

The organic fertiliser method originated in Germany, based on joint research programmes with a biotech higher education facility in Munich, a business hub south of Germany, he added.



Ruqayya Nassir, Deputy Secretary General the opposition ACT-Wazalendo's Youth Wing, addresses journalists in Dar es Salaam yesterday on reports about the "abduction and subsequent release" of the wing's leader, Abdul Nondo. Photo: Correspondent Imani Nathaniel

## TASAC gets awarded for best presented financial reports

By Guardian Reporter

THE Tanzania Shipping Agencies Corporation (TASAC) has been ranked first among nine regulatory authorities competing for the Best Presented Financial Statements Award for 2023.

The awards were organized by the National Board of Accountants

and Auditors (NBAA) of Tanzania.

The award was presented by the government's Internal Auditor General, CPA Benjamin Mashauri, during a ceremony held over the weekend in Dar es Salaam. TASAC's Director of Finance, Pascal Kalomba, accepted the award on behalf of the organization.

In his speech, Mashauri empha-

sized the importance of public institutions adhering to international standards when preparing financial statements, as it promotes good governance and transparency.

Kalomba credited the achievement to the collective efforts of TASAC's staff, stating, "This success reflects our commitment to managing public resources with

transparency, accountability, and efficiency."

This marks TASAC's third consecutive win of the prestigious award. The corporation first secured the top spot in 2021, repeated the achievement in 2022, and now in 2023. A total of 86 government and private sector institutions participated in the competition.





Dr Denis Mzaga, Director of Strategic Information with USAID-supported 'Afya Yangu' project, briefs Health minister Jenista Mhagama (R) in Songea on Sunday on the project as well as southern zone's 'Kizazi Hodari' project, also USAID-supported. The minister was going around pavilions during the climax of World Aids Day (Dec 1) celebrations in held in the municipality. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

## Minister commends USAID's supports against anti-HIV/Aids

By Guardian Correspondent, Ruvuma

HEALTH minister Jenista Mhagama has commended efforts by the US Agency for International Development's (USAID) projects for the dedicated work in the fight against HIV/Aids in the country.

The project includes the Afya Yangu (My Health) Southern and USAID Kizazi Hodari (Brave Generation) Southern Zone implemented by Deloitte Consulting Limited.

Mhagama particularly highlighted the innovative use of biometric fingerprint technology in service delivery, a modern approach that has improved the efficiency and accuracy of health services delivery.

She expressed her appreciation during a visit to the projects' pavilion at the World AIDS Day celebrations held in Songea Municipality, Ruvuma Region.

After receiving a detailed overview of the projects' operations from Dr Denis Mzaga, Director of Strategic Information for USAID Afya Yangu Southern, Minister Mhagama called for greater collaboration and partnership among all stakeholders, including the government, to further strengthen the efforts in the fight against HIV and work towards its eventual eradication in the country.

The eradication of HIV/Aids remains a global public health priority. While significant progress has been made in

reducing the prevalence and impact of HIV/Aids, achieving eradication is a complex and multifaceted challenge.

Both the USAID Afya Yangu and Kizazi Hodari Southern Zone projects have been instrumental in providing a wide range of essential services to communities.

During the World AIDS Day celebrations, the projects offered HIV testing, connected individuals who tested positive to care and treatment centres, and ensured continuous access to antiretroviral drugs.

The initiatives also included collaborative services for tuberculosis, cervical cancer screening, family planning, and referrals for survivors of Gender-Based Violence (GBV).

In addition to medical services, the projects have been proactive in providing educational outreach programmes to promote behavioural change within the community.

Their efforts aim to empower individuals seeking care at health centres and increased community awareness, encouraging people to identify those in need of services and motivate them to access necessary care.

Minister Mhagama praised the innovative approach by the USAID-led projects, emphasizing their role in building healthier communities through improved healthcare access, education, and the integration of technology to enhance service delivery.

## Dodoma city gets more attractive to investments

By Polycarp Machira, Dodoma

DODOMA is set to become a key business hub in the country, as it is increasingly becoming attractive to investors, due to the government's decision to relocate its administrative functions from Dar es Salaam to the central region.

The city, home to over three million people, is drawing attention from investors, with many recognising the opportunities created by on-going regional economic transformations.

This was highlighted by Amin Lakhani, Director of the automotive company At the Wheel (ATW), who is encouraging fellow investors to

consider expanding their business operations to the country's capital city.

Speaking at the grand opening of ATW's state-of-the-art fitment center in Dodoma, Lakhani said, "Dodoma is the next frontier for investment in the country, and we appreciate the government's efforts to improving the business environment in the region and beyond."

ATW, a trusted provider of quick-fit automotive services, has inaugurated its first fitment centre in the capital city of Dodoma, marking a significant step in expanding its reach in Tanzania.

This is the company's seventh service centre

spread across the country, with other five being located in Dar es Salaam, Arusha and Dodoma regions.

Lakhani emphasized, "This milestone reflects our commitment to delivering exceptional automotive services and high-quality products from renowned brands to drivers across Tanzania."

The new centre is equipped with cutting-edge machines operated by expert technicians, offering comprehensive fitment and general services to ensure vehicle safety and reliability.


He said customers can expect premium tires from top brands like Cooper, Goodride, Dunlop, MRF, and Jinyu, as well as long-lasting batteries

from Amaron and high-performance vehicle parts from Bosch.

"We are excited to expand our presence in Dodoma, where we aim to enhance the driving experience for our customers. Our focus remains on safety, reliability, and keeping drivers safe on the road for longer," Lakhani said.


He further stated that the new facility is dedicated to providing unmatched customer service, precision solutions, and access to top-tier automotive brands. "With this expansion, we will continue to set the benchmark for excellence in quick-fit solutions, offering services that are both efficient and affordable."

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MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS  
IMMIGRATION DEPARTMENT  
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MR. GEORGE EL TAYYAR  
P.O. Box 184, MASASI - MTWARA



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Anyone who knows any reasons why citizenship should not be granted to the applicant, should send us written and signed statement of facts to the Commissioner General of Immigration, P.O. Box 512, Dar es Salaam.

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FOR: COMMISSIONER GENERAL OF IMMIGRATION



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Dar es Salaam

### EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY POLITICAL OFFICER

Denmark's cooperation with Tanzania has been evolving since 1963, making Tanzania the first African country Denmark partnered with. Over the past 60 years, Denmark has contributed more than 50 trillion TZS to Tanzania's socio-economic development through Danida, and close relations have been built between people and institutions.

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- Build strong local networks and ensure regular outreach to relevant actors based on the Embassy's priorities, incl. regional security.
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- Manage smaller partnerships with think tanks.
- Drive a continued dialogue with Danish and Tanzanian researchers and think tanks.

To learn more about the qualifications and other requirements, please visit the Danish Embassy's website at [www.tanzania.um.dk](http://www.tanzania.um.dk)

The website will provide you with more information including the application process.  
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By Correspondent Marc Nkwame,

Arusha

## Govt, association find remedy to counterfeit seeds and fertilisers

THE government has introduced measures aimed at addressing the challenges farmers face in procuring agricultural inputs such as seeds and fertilizers in a market increasingly flooded with counterfeit products.

Gerald Mweli, Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Agriculture, announced new measures to combat counterfeit agricultural products during the Tanganyika Farmers Association Stakeholders' Annual General Meeting in Arusha.

Among the key remedies, Mweli revealed that all essential agricultural products will now feature QR codes to guarantee their quality and authenticity. He explained that the government, through the Ministry of Agriculture and its agencies—such as the Tanzania Plant Health and Pesticides Authority (TPHPA), the Tanzania Fertilizer

Regulatory Authority (TFRA), and the Tanzania Official Seed Certification Institute (TOSCI)—has established a reliable system to identify counterfeit, fake, and substandard farm inputs.

Justin Shirima, Executive Director of the Tanzania Farmers Association (TFA), praised the government's efforts to enroll local farmers and TFA members in the 'Agro-Dealer Tool' program, which provides farmers with subsidies for agricultural inputs. He also highlighted ongoing efforts to form partnerships with international producers to manufacture agricultural inputs locally in Tanzania.

Farmers in Tanzania have faced significant challenges in sourcing agricultural inputs such as seeds and fertilizers due to the growing presence of counterfeit products. Over the last six years, the TFA reported importing approximately

340.5 cubic tons of farm inputs, valued at \$1.9 million (4.43bn/-).

Mweli assured that the government is taking steps to address the issue of counterfeit products, including the implementation of QR codes on key products to ensure their quality.

Shirima also noted that the TFA is working towards establishing local manufacturing of agricultural inputs through partnerships with international producers.

Tanzania faces a significant gap in its agricultural input needs, requiring 100,000 tonnes of seeds annually, but only having 60,000 tonnes available, leading to an annual shortfall of 40,000 tonnes, which is met through imports.

The Tanganyika Farmers Association, the oldest agricultural institution in Tanzania, was founded in 1935 and will celebrate its 90th anniversary in 2025.



DTB team members come together at The Super Dome in Dar es Salaam recently in celebrating their bank's success, confirmed at the 2024 Top 100 Executive Awards, by showcasing their well-deserved accolades. Photo courtesy of DTB

## Accountants urged to adjust to emerging trends to foster growth

By Guardian Reporter

THE government has emphasized the importance of accountants staying ahead of emerging trends, particularly the adoption of digital technologies, to navigate the global economic shifts reshaping industries worldwide.

Speaking at the Accountants' Annual Conference in Dar es Salaam last week, Government Accountant General Leonard Mkude highlighted the essential role accountants play in managing technological advancements, such as artificial intelligence (AI), which are transforming the global economy. He stressed that accountants must adapt to these changes to ensure financial systems remain robust and capable of supporting Tanzania's sustainable growth.

"As the country embraces digital transformation, accountants must not only ensure financial integrity but also lead efforts to modernize financial systems that can sustain economic growth," Mkude said. He also emphasized the crucial role accountants play in resource management across both the private and public sectors, particularly in shaping policies related to climate change reporting, which is vital for long-term economic stability.

"Accountants are central to financial planning and strategies needed to help Tanzania achieve its goal of net-zero carbon emissions within the next 50 years. Their expertise is key to

### GENEVA

A new global report on infection prevention and control (IPC) by the World Health Organisation (WHO) reveals that nearly five years after the onset of COVID-19, significant gaps remain in preventing healthcare-associated infections (HAIs).

The report emphasizes the urgent need for continued investment in IPC programmes to reduce preventable infections and antimicrobial resistance (AMR) in healthcare settings.

According to the WHO, a large proportion of HAIs can be prevented through improved IPC practices, alongside better access to water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) services. These measures are not only crucial for preventing infections but also represent a highly cost-effective approach to tackling AMR.

The report, launched at a G7 side-event hosted by Italy, serves as a baseline for policymakers, IPC professionals, healthcare workers, and stakeholders to guide future action.

The findings show that although 71 percent of countries now have an active IPC programme, only 6 percent met all of the WHO's minimum IPC requirements in 2023-2024, far from the target of more than 90 percent by 2030, as outlined in the WHO Global Action Plan and Monitoring Framework on IPC.

integrating climate considerations into economic decisions and investments," Mkude added.

Mkude urged accountants to follow the guidelines set by the National Board of Accountants and Auditors of Tanzania (NBAA) for climate change reporting and to seize opportunities to boost economic productivity and contribute to the country's sustainable development.

NBAA Board Chairperson Prof. Sylvia Temu explained that the three-day conference focused on two key objectives: exchanging knowledge and experiences to identify opportunities and challenges in the accounting industry.

"This meeting is a crucial opportunity for us to share expertise, especially on how to address the evolving needs of the profession in a rapidly changing global landscape. Accountants have a pivotal role in economic development, and this conference ensures they are fully equipped to contribute to Tanzania's growth," Prof. Temu said.

The discussions also covered Tanzania's vision for the next 25 years, highlighting the importance of accountants in identifying economic opportunities and strategic investments to drive national growth. Prof. Temu noted that accountants must be skilled in financial management and integral in shaping national policies to promote sustainable development and address challenges like climate change, youth unemployment, and

industrialization.

She emphasized that the conference reinforced accountants' critical role in shaping Tanzania's economic future, ensuring the country remains on track to meet its development goals while addressing global challenges.

NBAA honorary member Saimon Sayore encouraged young people to pursue accounting with integrity and responsibility. He stressed the next generation's role in safeguarding the nation's financial resources.

"Accounting is not just about numbers; it's about managing the financial health of institutions and the nation. As future leaders, young accountants must uphold the highest standards of professionalism and ensure the prudent management of public and private sector funds," Sayore said.

The conference also featured discussions on offering practical solutions to the challenges accountants face, particularly concerning technological innovation and global economic shifts. One key topic was the role of accountants in helping businesses and government institutions navigate digital transformations and contribute to national development goals.

The event also provided a platform for discussing the integration of technology into accounting practices, with a focus on enhancing financial transparency, accountability, and reporting standards.

## Report calls for increased investment in infection prevention and control

The report also highlights a significant disparity between high- and low-income countries, with patients in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) being up to 20 times more likely to acquire infections during healthcare delivery.

"The Covid-19 pandemic, along with outbreaks of Ebola, Marburg, and mpox, has shown us how rapidly pathogens can spread and be amplified in healthcare settings," said Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, WHO Director-General.

"Healthcare-associated infections are a daily threat in hospitals and clinics, not just during epidemics and pandemics. Every country must do more to prevent infections and control them when they arise."

HAIs result in prolonged hospital stays, complications such as sepsis, and, in some cases, disability or death. The report underscores that addressing HAIs through improved IPC measures is vital in reducing the risk of AMR, with estimates suggesting that 136 million antibiotic-resistant HAIs occur globally each year.

The report also highlights financial and resource challenges in healthcare facilities, particularly in LMICs. A significant shortage of IPC professionals and limited budgets are cited as major obstacles, with


nearly a quarter of countries reporting shortages of personal protective equipment (PPE) in 2023.

New data from WHO and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) estimate that up to 3.5 million patients could die annually from HAIs without immediate action. By improving IPC measures at all levels, the report suggests that up to 821,000 deaths could be averted each year by 2050. These interventions would also result in healthcare savings of up to US\$ 112 billion annually and generate economic gains of up to US\$ 124 billion.

"WHO is committed to supporting countries in ensuring that by 2030, everyone accessing and providing healthcare is safe from healthcare-associated infections," said Dr Bruce Aylward, WHO Assistant Director-General for Universal Health Coverage. "Fulfilling IPC requirements at the national and healthcare facility levels should be a top priority to protect patients and healthcare workers and to prevent unnecessary suffering."

The report calls for sustained and increased investment in IPC programmes, especially in LMICs, to ensure that no one is left behind in the global effort to combat infections and AMR.

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#### Advisor for Artificial Intelligence in East Africa

GIZ is a federally owned enterprise operating worldwide, assisting the German Government in achieving its policy objectives in the field of international cooperation. It offers demand-driven, tailor-made and effective services for sustainable development worldwide. In Tanzania and across the region GIZ supports the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania and the EAC in attaining their development goals

The GIZ East Africa Alliance for Digital Skills, AI Research, and Innovation is a regional initiative aimed at fostering digital transformation across the eight partner states of the East African Community (EAC). The project focuses on strengthening public-private collaboration in AI research and education, upgrading education standards, and advising on regional AI policy. Key activities include launching a regional AI research network, hosting research challenges, establishing a regional fund for AI-driven startups, and developing AI education benchmarks aligned with industry needs. Additionally, the Alliance promotes cross-border mobility through internships, scales case-based online learning, and supports the development of an inclusive EAC regional AI policy framework.

The initiative is part of the cooperation between the German government and the East African Community (EAC) and is implemented by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH. It is carried out in close collaboration with the EAC Secretariat, the Inter-University Council for East Africa (IUCEA), and the East African Science and Technology Commission (EASTECCO). Together, these partners aim to improve education and employment opportunities for youth, enhance economic integration, and position East Africa as a leader in digital innovation

The GIZ Digital Skills for an Innovative East African Industry (dSkills@EA) programme is currently looking to fill the position of Advisor for Artificial Intelligence in East Africa

**Duty station: Arusha**  
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**Responsibilities and Tasks**

- Provide technical advice on Artificial Intelligence (AI) policy formulation and implementation across the eight partner states of the East African Community (EAC).
- Support the development of a regional AI policy framework in collaboration with EAC Secretariat, IUCEA, and EASTECCO.
- Engage with stakeholders to integrate AI governance principles, ethics, and best practices into national and regional policies.
- Develop and implement training programs on AI skills for higher education institutions and private sector partners.
- Facilitate capacity-building workshops on AI governance, ethics, and research for public and private stakeholders.
- Promote the harmonization of AI education benchmarks and the development of case-based, credentialed online learning programs.
- Lead the establishment of a regional AI research network in collaboration with academia, industry, and civil society.
- Organize and oversee research challenges to foster AI-driven practical solutions addressing regional challenges.
- Support the creation of a regional PPP-modalities to promote AI startups and student innovation projects.
- Strengthen public-private partnerships to promote collaboration in AI research, education, and innovation.
- Serve as a liaison between GIZ, EAC Secretariat, IUCEA, EASTECCO, and other stakeholders

**Required Entry Qualifications and Competencies**

- Master's degree in Artificial Intelligence, Computer Science, Data Science, or related fields; a PhD is an advantage.
- Minimum of 5 years of relevant work experience in AI research, policy development, or education, preferably in an international or regional context.
- Demonstrated experience in public-private partnerships, stakeholder engagement, and capacity-building initiatives.
- Strong expertise in AI technologies, their applications, and ethical implications.
- Knowledge of regional policy-making processes and experience advising on policy frameworks.
- Proficiency in project management, including planning, implementation, and monitoring.
- Excellent communication and interpersonal skills, with the ability to engage diverse stakeholders.
- Strong analytical and problem-solving abilities.
- Ability to work independently and as part of a multicultural team.
- Proficiency in English (written and spoken); knowledge of French or Kiswahili is an added advantage.

**Additional Requirements:**

- Familiarity with the East African Community (EAC) and its regional integration efforts.
- Experience working with international organizations or development cooperation projects.
- Willingness to travel across East Africa and internationally, as required.

**Applications:**  
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Closing date for submission: **31.01.2025**

**Only shortlisted candidates will be contacted.**

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A potholed stretch of Lumelezi Road, which in part serves the Kahama town bus terminal, undergoes rehabilitation yesterday with World Bank funding. Photo: Correspondent Shaban Njia

## CHAUMA gaining popularity in Mbeya with unique political style

By Guardian Correspondent, Mbeya

THE opposition CHAUMA has become a notable attraction in Mbeya City due to its unique political approach, which includes serving food (rice) at its various events, such as meetings.

Over the weekend, CHAUMMA party celebrated the victory of its candidate, Brayan Mwakalukwa, who won the Chairperson position for Soko Street in Mbeya City. The celebration, held at Mwanjelwa Central Market, marked the only victory for an opposition party among the 181 wards in the city.

Before the event, party leaders, along with leaders from other parties, toured various areas of Mwanjelwa, informing residents about the celebration and inviting them to join the rice meal.

Ipyana Samson, the CHAUMMA Chairperson for Mbeya Region, thanked the residents for their trust in the party's candidate during the November 27 local government elections. He noted that, although the party secured only one ward nationwide, the victory in Soko Street was significant. Samson pledged that the party would continue working with the people of Mwanjelwa, regardless of their political affiliations.

"We thank the people of this area; this victory is for all of us. In Mbeya, we've demonstrated a difference in politics. CHAUMMA has won one ward across Tanzania, and it is Soko ward," said Samson. He encouraged those interested

in joining the party to register and work together to strengthen it for future elections, with the aim of winning more wards and constituencies in Mbeya City.

Mwakalukwa, the newly elected Chairperson, expressed his commitment to collaborating with fellow elected leaders, regardless of their party affiliations, to fulfill the promises made to the community. As the only opposition party leader in the ward, he emphasized the need for unity to bring development to the area.

"Despite the challenges during the election, the people still showed trust in us. There was confusion when some wanted to declare a candidate who didn't win, but I thank God that we were declared the winners," Mwakalukwa said.

Some members of the ruling CCM party congratulated Mwakalukwa and promised to support him in serving the community. Atupokile Eliakimu, a CCM member, expressed respect for the people's decision and assured continued cooperation with the new Chairperson.

"The people have spoken, and we will work together without differences," Eliakimu said, urging those who opposed the new Chairperson to offer their cooperation.

During the campaign, the regional CHAUMMA chairperson banned public gatherings and instructed candidates to campaign by engaging people in their daily activities, using loudspeakers to reach them while they continued with their work.

## Govt reaffirms commitment to support IFM's expansion plans

By Correspondent James Kandoya

THE government has reaffirmed its commitment to further collaborate with the Institute of Finance Management (IFM) in its ambitious plan to establish a new campus in Dodoma.

Speaking at IFM's 50th graduation ceremony in Dar es Salaam over the weekend, Deputy Minister for Planning, Stanislaus Nyongo, addressed the attendees on behalf of Finance Minister Dr. Mwigulu Nchemba. He highlighted the government's plans to expand higher education to meet the

growing demand for educational services.

Despite challenges in the education sector, Nyongo reaffirmed the government's commitment to improving education quality. "Our commitment is part of a broader strategy to support national development by cultivating a well-educated and skilled population," he stated. He added that the government is actively upgrading educational institutions' infrastructure and expanding campuses to make higher education accessible to more

citizens.

Nyongo also emphasized the government's commitment to working with IFM to address challenges like increasing student enrollment and ensuring graduates are equipped with the skills for successful careers. He assured that the government is dedicated to developing state-of-the-art facilities to accommodate the growing number of applicants to IFM.

Since its establishment, Nyongo noted, IFM has demonstrated professionalism and a strong commitment to delivering high-quality education. "Graduates

from IFM are a testament to the institution's impact, significantly contributing to national development," he added.

Nyongo praised IFM's initiatives, including the incorporation of digital tactical training and promoting educational tourism through a private model. These efforts are transforming the institution, positioning IFM as a leader in innovative education.

Prof. Emmanuel Mjema, Chairperson of IFM's Governing Council, called for urgent revisions to Act No. 3 of 1972, which established the institution, to align

it with modern developments. He said proposals for amendments had already been submitted and urged the government to prioritize this legislative update to support continued growth.

IFM Rector, Prof. Josephat Lotto, discussed the challenges the institution faces despite its achievements. He pointed out shortages in educational infrastructure, including hostels and lecture halls, and a lack of personnel, particularly planning officers, due to recent expansions.

During the ceremony, Prof. Lotto announced that 597

students received basic technician certificates, 446 earned ordinary diplomas, four obtained technician certificates, 18 received higher diplomas, 2,646 earned bachelor's degrees, 65 received postgraduate diplomas, and 148 graduated with master's degrees.

To address these challenges, Prof. Lotto proposed repurposing unused government buildings to support IFM's growth and improve operational efficiency. "This approach would allow the institute to operate more effectively and achieve even greater success," he said.

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## Natural disasters hinder Africa's development, says WB official

By Correspondent Marc Nkwame, Arusha

NATURAL disasters cost the world over USD 363 billion annually, but for Africa, their impact is particularly severe, setting back development by up to five years, according to Dr Samuel Munzele Maimbo, Chief of Staff at the Office of the World Bank President.

Speaking during the ongoing Second Africa Associations of Accountants General (AAAG) Annual Conference yesterday Dr Maimbo pointed out that without natural disasters, Africa would already be far ahead in driving the global economy, with a combined Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of USD 2.6 trillion.

The AAAG annual gathering attracts more than 2,000 participants from different African countries.

"Africa is growing and improving economically. The situation today is quite different from what was being experienced in the past and quite contrary to what the Western media portrays about the continent," said Dr Maimbo.

Natural calamities have profound effects on Africa, impacting its economy, infrastructure, environment, and social systems. Droughts, floods, and locust invasions devastate agriculture, a sector employing most of the population and a critical GDP contributor.

Africa, despite contributing minimally to global greenhouse gas emissions, is disproportionately affected by climate change. Rising temperatures and unpredictable weather patterns exacerbate the frequency and intensity of natural disasters.

The AAAG Second Annual Conference theme is "Building Trust in Public Financial Management (PFM) Systems for Sustainable Growth."

Minister of Finance Dr Mwigulu Nchemba said that once citizens are confident public funds are used well in implementing development projects, it becomes easier for them to pay taxes.

"This happens to be the case in Tanzania, where the country is currently undertaking major strategic infrastructure projects such as the electrified Standard Gauge Railway (SGR), the Julius

Nyerere Hydroelectric Power Project, and the Magufuli Bridge across Lake Victoria," Dr Mwigulu maintained.

Minister for Works, Innocent Bashungwa, echoed Dr Maimbo's concern about how natural calamities are taking a toll on Africa's development strides.

"As participants, you should discuss and come up with solutions to address the challenges currently causing concern in the world," said Bashungwa, pointing out that the whole world is suffering from the effects of climate change.

"The loss of biodiversity, either due to human interference or climate change, is a matter of serious concern," said the minister, adding that there is a thin line between development and the environment, as the former depends on the latter.

Chief Commercial Officer for the CRDB Bank, Boma Raballa, said the financial institution also intends to hold private talks with conference participants from other African countries to encourage investment in Tanzania.

"You see, Chief Accountants are the right persons capable of convincing governments and leaders regarding investment opportunities beyond their borders. Here in Tanzania, the CRDB is ready to extend loans to boost their capital, and so far, we are working closely with the Tanzania Investments Center (TIC) to achieve this goal," said Raballa.

Chairperson of the Africa Associations of Accountants General, Malehlohonolo Mahase, who is also the Accountant General of the Kingdom of Lesotho, explained that during the First AAAG Annual General Meeting held in Maseru, Lesotho, a resolution was made that the follow-up conference would be jointly hosted by the Association and the United Republic of Tanzania.

The African Association of Accountants General is a Pan-African organization that has the full endorsement of the African Union, with its vision anchored on good public financial governance for an integrated and prosperous Africa.

*"As participants, you should discuss and come up with solutions to address the challenges currently causing concern in the world"*

## Women in Mwanza receive clean energy stoves in fight against GBV

By Guardian Correspondent, Mwanza

AS part of the ongoing 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence campaign, women food vendors in various wards of Nyamagana District, Mwanza Region have been provided with 100 clean energy stoves by Barrick and Taifa Gas.

The stoves aim to alleviate the challenges of using environmentally harmful energy sources like charcoal and firewood.

Throughout the campaign, Barrick and its partners are conducting a range of activities, including raising awareness about gender-based violence, providing training on the use of clean and safe cooking energy, and distributing gas stoves to local residents.

This year's campaign partners include the Tanzania Police Force through gender desks, district councils, NGOs such as Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO), Life Changing Foundation (LCF), Jadra, Hope for the Girls and Women (HGWT), law firm Bowman, and gas production and distribution company Taifa Gas.

During the stove handover ceremony at the St. Augustine University of Tanzania (SAUT) hall in Mwanza, Nyamagana District Commissioner (DC) Amina Makilagi, the guest of honour, urged women to engage in various crafts and income-generating activities. She stressed that financial independence can empower individuals and help reduce gender stereotypes and violence in society.

Makilagi expressed gratitude to the stakeholders collaborating

with Barrick for providing clean energy stoves, which not only protect the environment but also make it easier for food vendors like Mama Lishe to run their businesses. She also highlighted how this initiative aligns with the government's efforts, championed by President Dr Samia Suluhu Hassan, to combat climate change and environmental degradation.

Earlier, Deputy Vice-Chancellor of SAUT, Prof. Costa Ricky Mahalu, noted that gender-based violence remains a significant challenge, affecting the well-being of women and hindering their potential. "This violence not only impacts the victims but also the community, as it obstructs women from achieving their goals and becomes an obstacle to sustainable development," he said.

Happiness Kalebe, one of the beneficiaries, a food vendor at Mkolani Market, spoke on behalf of her colleagues.

She shared that the clean energy stove initiative would enhance her cooking efficiency and help her serve customers more effectively.

"Using this stove will help me avoid buying firewood, which will increase my income. During the rainy season, we sometimes buy wet firewood, which makes cooking difficult. I thank Barrick and Taifa Gas for valuing us women," Kalebe said.

In addition to distributing stoves and providing training on clean energy usage, the campaign continues in the Tarime District of Mara Region, focusing on educating people about gender-based violence and offering legal support.



Motorbike riders have a rough and tough time yesterday moving along Dar es Salaam's Bibi Titi Road, which a short-lived morning light rain had left flooded. Photo: Correspondent Imani Nathaniel

## Govt now issues stern warning over plastic bag ban violations

By Guardian Reporter

THE government has issued a stern warning to producers, importers, distributors, and users of plastic bags that were banned in 2019, due to their contribution to environmental pollution.

Speaking at the Climate Change Marathon in Pangani District, Tanga Region over the weekend, Minister of State in the Office of the Vice President (Union and Environment), Dr Ashatu Kijaji, emphasized that the government will not tolerate violations of the plastic bag regulations.

She explained that plastic bags

have a severe environmental impact, particularly on the soil, as they do not decompose. Additionally, animals, including cows, often consume them, leading to fatalities.

Dr Kijaji pointed out that the government is investing significant resources to protect and preserve the environment, but certain individuals are hindering these efforts.

To address the issue, she directed the National Environmental Management Council (NEMC) to conduct operations and take legal action against those involved in the production, sale, and use of plastic

bags.

In the same event, Minister Kijaji was honoured with an award recognizing the Vice President's Office (VPO) for its contributions to coordinating and managing environmental issues.

The marathon aimed to encourage the community to engage in environmental care activities as part of efforts to mitigate the impacts of climate change.

During the event, Dr Kijaji also awarded prizes to marathon winners and distributed gas cylinders to women and people with disabilities.

Minister Kijaji participated in a mangrove tree planting exercise along the coastline to help preserve the local environment and combat climate change effects.

Speaking about the distribution of gas cylinders, Dr Kijaji highlighted that this initiative is part of President Samia Suluhu Hassan's agenda to promote clean energy.

She urged the recipients of the gas cylinders to become ambassadors for clean cooking energy, inspiring others to adopt this sustainable practice and contribute to reducing deforestation for firewood and charcoal production.



Members of the Sikh community donate blood in Dar es Salaam yesterday in honouring Guru Tegh Bahadur. He was the ninth of ten gurus who founded the Sikh religion and was the leader of Sikhs from 1665 until his death in 1675. Photo: Correspondent Imani Nathaniel

By Guardian Reporter

THE Tanzania Revenue Authority (TRA) has emerged the overall winner for preparing financial statements in adherence to international accounting standards, both in the Public Sector (IPSAS) and Business Sector (IFRS).

The prestigious awards were presented by the National Board of Accountants and Auditors (NBAA) on November 29, 2024.

In addition to the overall award, the Tanzania Revenue Authority (TRA) was named the first-place

## TRA wins prestigious award for excellence in financial reporting

winner in the government agency category.

After receiving the awards, Deputy Commissioner General Mcha Hassan Mcha expressed pride in the achievement, emphasizing that the awards reflect TRA's commitment to transparency, accountability, and professionalism in financial reporting.

"This recognition is a testament to our dedication to upholding high international standards in preparing and presenting our financial reports," Mcha said. He also commended TRA's skilled staff, highlighting their ability to manage finances and produce reports that meet global standards.

"These awards affirm that TRA

has qualified personnel who ensure the preparation and presentation of financial reports in compliance with international standards," he added.

The NBAA organizes the annual awards to recognize financial report preparers who adhere to international accounting standards in both the public and business sectors.





Sun-dried and smoked fish on sale at Dar es Salaam's Magomeni mixed-goods market yesterday. The going retail price ranged between 3,000/- and 4,000/- apiece, largely depending on size. Photo: Correspondent Imani Nathaniel

# SK negotiations stall on plastic pollution treaty

BUSAN

NEGOTIATORS in Busan, South Korea, have failed to finalize a treaty aimed at addressing the global plastic pollution crisis, missing their target to secure an agreement before the end of 2024.

The negotiations saw a divide among delegates, with some, particularly from African nations, expressing frustration over what they considered a weakened version of the treaty. Meanwhile, countries such as Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and Iran resisted calls for stronger provisions, blocking key changes.

Luis Vayas Valdivieso, chair of the negotiating committee, described the talks as a step forward but acknowledged that significant work remains. "We have made significant progress in Busan in our collective effort to address plastic pollution, including its impact on the marine environment. However, our work is far from complete, and we must remain pragmatic as we continue collaborating toward our shared goal," he said.

Had the treaty been approved, it would have been the first legally binding global agreement on plastic pollution. Negotiators have agreed to resume talks next year to continue working toward a final agreement.

However, some experts, including Jyoti Mathur-Filipp, executive secretary of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC), warned that time is running out.

"We have tested the resilience of our planet to its limit. Now is the time for us to push our own limits and honour the trust placed in us. You have the INC Secretariat and my unwavering support to get this done," Mathur-Filipp emphasized.

In 2022, 175 nations agreed to develop a treaty in response to the escalating plastic pollution crisis. The global population produces more than 400 million tonnes of plastic each year, a significant portion of which ends up polluting oceans, waterways, and farmlands. According to Sam Adu-Kumi, Ghana's lead negotiator, these plastics are overwhelming communities and ecosystems worldwide.

As the global plastic waste problem continues to grow, negotiators are under increasing pressure to deliver a comprehensive and binding agreement to protect the environment.

**We have made significant progress in Busan in our collective effort to address plastic pollution, including its impact on the marine environment**

# Death toll in Uganda landslides rises to 22 as search continues

KAMPALA

MORE bodies buried under the mud were retrieved in eastern Uganda on Friday and an injured person died in a hospital, bringing the death toll from this week's landslides to 22, officials said as search efforts pressed on in the stricken area.

Heavy rains triggered landslides that engulfed six villages in the mountainous Bulambuli district, 280 kilometers (175 miles) east of Uganda's capital, Kampala, on Wednesday night. The landslides destroyed

around 125 houses.

Irene Kasiita, spokesperson for the Uganda Red Cross Society, reported that four more bodies were found on Friday, while a fifth person, injured in the landslides, died at Mbale Hospital. The Red Cross also stated that 750 people had been displaced, with 216 of them temporarily housed at a nearby school, while others were staying with relatives.

Faheera Mpalanyi, the Bulambuli Resident District Commissioner, confirmed the deployment of soldiers to assist with the recovery efforts. "More bodies remain buried

under the soil and stones, and we are doing everything we can to recover them," she said.

Local officials reported that an excavator would be brought in to help with the rescue, though the roads remained muddy, and rain was still falling. The affected area, approximately 50 acres, includes homesteads and farmlands that stretch downhill.

Irene Muloni, a lawmaker from Bulambuli, assured that the government would assist in relocating residents from the landslide-prone region. "Waterfalls are everywhere, and rainfall is excessive," she said, urging displaced residents to seek refuge with relatives and leave the dangerous area.

# Namibia opposition candidate furious over prolonged voting

WINDHOEK

NAMIBIA'S opposition presidential candidate, Panduleni Itula on Saturday expressed outrage after voting in the country's general election was extended for several days due to logistical and technical failures.

Itula, representing the Independent Patriots for Change (IPC), stated that his party would reject the election results, which were marred by delays and extended voting hours.

Partial results indicated that Itula was trailing Vice President Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah, the candidate for the ruling South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO). Voting, initially scheduled for Wednesday, was extended to Saturday after delays caused long queues and widespread logistical and technology problems.

Itula, who finished second in the 2019 election, argued that the extended voting period undermined the election's credibility. He confirmed that his party would seek to have the results nullified, with a court petition likely to follow the official announcement of the results.


Elsie Nghikembua, chairperson of the Electoral

Commission of Namibia, acknowledged the challenges, stating that many voters were unable to cast their ballots due to "logistical" issues.

Namibia's electoral troubles come as neighbouring Mozambique faces violent unrest following claims of vote-rigging after the Frelimo party was declared the winner of the October election, sparking protests and tensions in the region.



Muheza District Medical Officer Dr Fani Mussa (R) gives instructions to health department staff under him on the night of World AIDS Day (Dec 1) celebrations, marked at district level in Kigombe village. Photo: Correspondent Steven William



UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA  
MINISTRY OF ENERGY  
ENERGY AND WATER UTILITIES  
REGULATORY AUTHORITY  
(EWURA)

## PUBLIC NOTICE

(Issued under Section 19 of the EWURA Act, Cap. 414)

**NOTICE** is hereby issued to the public that the Energy and Water Utilities Regulatory Authority (EWURA) has received an application for Electricity Generation License from Gas Company (T) Limited. EWURA invites the public to provide comments and or objections on the application. Details of the Applicant, plant and the nature of the license application is given hereunder:


ITEM	DESCRIPTION
Name and Address of the Applicant	Gas Company (T) Limited, S.L.P 714, Dar es Salaam.
Location	Plot Number 1, Songosongo Island, Lindi
Details of Shareholders	Tanzania Petroleum Development Cooperation S.L.P 2774, Dar es Salaam, 100%.
Description of the Facility	Gas Engine Power Plant with installed capacity of Ten Point Seven (10.7) MW. The generated power will be used for running Gas Processing Plants.
Type and Duration of the Licence	Electricity Generation License for Own Use (Baseload) for a duration of Five (5) Years

Any person with comment or objection may submit in writing to EWURA within twenty-one (21) days from the date of this notice. The application documents can be viewed upon written request.

Issued by: -  
Director General  
1<sup>st</sup> December 2024

1827988

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UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA  
MINISTRY OF ENERGY  
ENERGY AND WATER UTILITIES  
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ITEM	DESCRIPTION
Name and Address of the Applicant	Gas Company (T) Limited, S.L.P 714, Dar es Salaam.
Location	Plot Number 7, Block A, Madimba Ward, Mtwara Region
Details of Shareholders	Tanzania Petroleum Development Cooperation S.L.P 2774, Dar es Salaam, 100%.
Description of the Facility	Gas Engine Power Plant with installed capacity of Three (3) MW. The generated power will be used to run a Gas Processing Plant.
Type and Duration of the Licence	Electricity Generation License for Own Use (Baseload) for a duration of Five (5) Years

Any person with comment or objection may in writing to EWURA within twenty-one (21) days from the date of this notice. The application documents can be viewed upon written request.

Issued by: -  
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1<sup>st</sup> December 2024

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## Readiness for EAC federation more urgent - this time around

A pivotal summit was held in Arusha city at the weekend to mark the Silver Jubilee of the protocols on the setting up of the East African Community (EAC).

The event saw a number of governments directed to complete national consultations on the long-envisioned political federation for the regional economic bloc by next June 30.

The resolution asked that the governments of Rwanda, South Sudan, Tanzania, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Somalia engage in those consultations.

Even as 18 years have elapsed from the time the 1999 protocols were signed, it was clear that most of local civil society and officialdom in the region had little stomach for federation.

The crucial parameter was that federation would enable implementation of EAC common market protocols on the right of its establishment, including purchase of fixed property like land and buildings.

Some partner states have in the past few decades been noticeably warm to the idea of an East African federation, and it must be said that the reasons for its usefulness are now becoming more apparent even for local observers.

That doesn't mean that there is already a critical shift to 'federophilia' from 'federophobia', so to speak, but it suggests that the matter can at least be discussed. Increasing economic integration has shown that Tanzania isn't a net loser in wider markets, far from it. Most local opinion makers will likely take a lot of convincing to subscribe to the idea that we need what the incoming EAC summit chairman, Kenyan President William Ruto, described as the United States of East Africa.

Burundi, Kenya and Uganda have already completed their national consultations on the matter, while the bloc's partner states still uncertain have considerably divergent motivations for that position, but it is

well and good if they re-examine those positions.

The cherished unity of political actors and civil society in any of the partner states for 'splendid isolation' is weakened in a number of areas.

While the talk has always been about federation since independence, it now appears more appropriate to talk about confederation - where certain vital instruments of sovereignty are deposited with the supra-national state.

One benefit under this arrangement would supposedly be the diminishing of the importance of local competition for positions of power, as there will be a higher regulatory cadre for all member states to observe. Diminishing some ambitions and obeying a higher state entity could dampen political tensions, etc.

While in 2007 local commentators looked around with some disdain at the way other countries were riven by factions and occasional instability, this 'holier than thou' feeling will be somewhat timid this time around if consultations were to start tomorrow.

Instead of seeking a new constitution, activists could seek some of those guarantees in the federal constitution, as its ability or resolve to respect rights of citizens would be higher than at nation state level. It is reality.

Noticeably, in their joint communiqué, the eight leaders entrusted the EAC council of ministers with working on and adopting "variable geometry" in the political integration process.

That can't be grasped in detail within a short phrase, but it means that there won't be identical demands on everyone with one clean sweep. It can allow for certain reforms to be conducted rapidly while others are tied to a slower mechanism.

Ironically, even the philosophy of the 4Rs (reconciliation, resilience, reforms and rebuilding) needs such a mechanism, as the adoption of what it envisages perhaps needs wider guarantees.

## Environmental degradation a big challenge we must address with enhanced seriousness

We have been treated to decades of talk on the "urgent need" to arrest environmental degradation in all manner of settings across the globe.

Sadly, it has not been of much consequence in terms of remedial action despite the massive amounts of financing and other resources spent on the efforts made.

The situation in our own backyards - as a country - is in part reflected in an increasing loss of forest cover despite efforts by the government and various focused groups to reverse the trend.

For instance, it is on record that our country lost an average of 403,350 hectares or 0.97 per cent of forest cover per year between 1990 and 2010. This came to

19.4 per cent or around 8,067,000 hectares of forest cover.

There were also authoritative statistics to the effect that the country's forests were by then home to 2,019 million tonnes of carbon in living forest biomass.

Additionally, going by the UK-based UN Environment Programme World Conservation Monitoring Centre, these forests accommodated a total of 1,898 known species of amphibians, birds, mammals and reptiles.

Nine per cent of these were endemic, in this case meaning that they were found only in Tanzania, and 6.1 per cent were threatened. Our country was further cited as home to at least 10,008 species of vascular plants, 11.2 per cent of them endemic.

By all accounts, these data should ordinarily have prompted the nation to set in motion actions more effectively addressing these challenges.

Indeed, we need to keep seriously asking ourselves why, despite the

pieces of legislation and the huge numbers of tailor-made education, sensitisation and other sessions we have had all these years, we are still witnessing such a high loss of forest cover.

It would be unfair to blame it all on the unavoidable consumption of wood as the most affordable source of energy for 97 per cent of the people in the country to cook and light their homesteads.

Yet this remains a significant cause, especially since we are yet to ensure that as many of our people as possible have reliable access to affordable alternative sources such as biogas, solar or electricity.

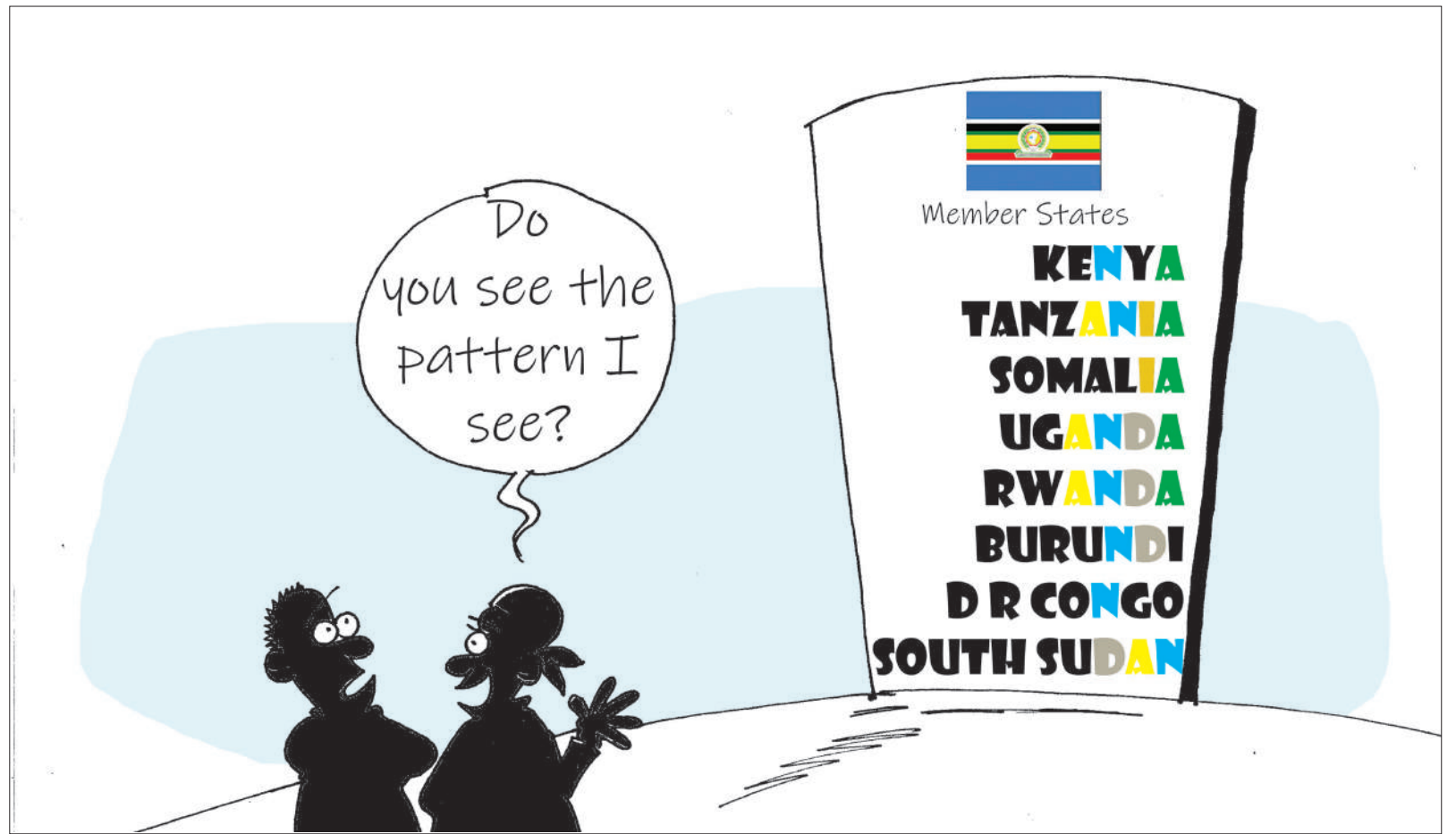
We know that deforestation is also a result of short-term monetary benefits, with illegal logging denying the nation much badly needed forest cover. It fuels poverty, as the rural poor heavily depend on forests for their livelihoods.

There is immense sense in appeals by environmental conservation stakeholders for concerted tree planting campaigns, but short-lived come-and-go "anniversary" demonstrations of concern don't have the needed impact.

An environmental crusader aptly underlines the need for allocating more time to tree planting, saying setting one day in a year for planting trees falls way short of expectations.

Involving communities in environmental conservation efforts is a step in the right direction in conserving the resource, particularly when that becomes a source of revenue for them.

Such undertaking may seem impossible, but they are achievable, can make much difference and deserve support.



By Kettie Chipeta

## Harnessing power of AI to reach targets of Tanzania's National Development Agenda

ARTIFICIAL intelligence (AI) is increasingly shaping economies, industries and societies worldwide.

For Africa, it offers an opportunity not just to innovate but also to leapfrog traditional stages of development and build more sustainable futures.

Tanzania, with its unique challenges and opportunities, is in a position to harness this transformative technology to drive progress across several sectors.

Far from replacing existing systems, AI can amplify current efforts, helping the country tackle long-standing issues and improve the quality of life for its citizens.

Tanzania's national development plans have ambitious goals, aiming to uplift the country by improving sectors such as agriculture, healthcare, education and infrastructure.

However, the challenges it faces, from a largely rural population to infrastructure gaps and a need for digitalisation, require more than just traditional methods. Applied strategically, AI has the potential to be a key enabler in this transformation.

At its core, AI involves systems that can process vast amounts of data, identify patterns and make informed decisions. It has the power to quickly analyse information and offer predictions or solutions.

While this technology might seem futuristic, Tanzania does not need to wait for a perfect system to emerge. By building on the existing infrastructure and initiatives, AI can address some of the country's most pressing needs in a way that is both practical and efficient.

In agriculture, which continues to stand as the backbone of Tanzania's economy, AI could be a game changer.

The sector employs more than 65 per cent of the country's population and contributes around 30 per cent of its GDP. However, it suffers from several challenges, among them low productivity, limited access to data and vulnerability to climate change.

Here, AI can provide real-time data to help farmers make informed decisions. For instance, AI tools can deliver hyper-local weather forecasts, allowing farmers in regions like those in the country's southern highlands to know exactly when to plant and harvest based on localised rainfall predictions.

This type of solution is already being implemented in Kenya, where AI models use satellite imagery to predict droughts and identify pest infestations. Tanzania can adopt similar technology, tailoring it to local needs.

Envision cassava farmers in Tanzania's Lake Victoria zone receiving a message on their mobile phones about an impending fungal threat, the idea being to enable them to take preventive action before the fungi spread.

This type of AI-driven intervention can empower farmers with timely, actionable insights that can help reduce crop loss and improve yield quality. Additionally, AI can play a key

role in reducing post-harvest losses, which account for up to 40 per cent of crops in some areas.

For instance, AI-enabled drones can monitor storage conditions, detect spoilage risks and optimise the supply chain, ensuring that produce reaches markets before it deteriorates.

This solution is already in use in Ghana, where AI-enabled drones assist cocoa farmers in managing pests and monitoring crop health. By adapting such technology to Tanzania's agricultural context, significant improvements can be made in efficiency and output.

However, for these AI solutions to reach every farmer, expanding digital infrastructure in rural areas is essential. In other words, access to affordable mobile networks and electricity in underserved regions is a priority.

Partnerships between the government, the private sector and organisations like mobile phone service providers - which already reach millions of Tanzanians through mobile money transactions - can enhance these digital tools.

Integrating AI features into these existing platforms could make agricultural insights available to farmers via simple text messages, ensuring accessibility for those who do not have smartphones. This approach would make AI more practical and inclusive, benefiting those needing it the most.

The healthcare sector is another area where AI could significantly improve outcomes. Despite progress in recent years, Tanzania still faces substantial challenges here, particularly in rural areas where medical resources and personnel are limited.

AI could alleviate some of the pressure on healthcare workers by offering faster and more accurate diagnoses. For example, AI-powered diagnostic tools could help nurses or clinicians in remote clinics identify early signs of diseases like malaria or pneumonia, improving treatment outcomes.

This type of technology has been successfully used in various parts of Africa, where it supports healthcare workers by providing quick, reliable results in areas where resources are scarce.

Additionally, AI can support Tanzania's efforts to address epidemics and disease outbreaks. During the Covid-19 pandemic, AI tools were used in countries like South Africa to predict outbreak hotspots and optimise the allocation of medical resources.

Tanzania could adopt similar systems, allowing the authorities concerned to prepare for - and respond to - health crises like cholera, dengue and Ebola more effectively.

By incorporating AI into the existing healthcare infrastructure and ensuring that medical staff are properly trained, Tanzania can significantly enhance its

health services.

Of course, with the integration of AI into the healthcare system, there are concerns about data privacy and ethical considerations. Patient data, which are essential for training AI systems, indeed ought to be handled with care to protect privacy and build public trust.

Tanzania can learn from other African nations. For instance, Ethiopia has developed a digital ID system that ensures that citizens' data are protected under strict legal frameworks.

Establishing similar regulations and data governance policies in Tanzania will be crucial to the successful and ethical use of AI in the country.

Education in Tanzania meanwhile faces its own set of challenges, including overcrowded classrooms, shortages of teachers and disparities in the quality of education across regions. Here, AI offers a solution - enhancing learning and teaching experiences.

AI-based learning platforms can personalise education, tailoring lessons to each student's strengths and weaknesses.

In rural areas like Nanguruka in Kigoma Region, AI-enabled apps could provide additional learning support, such as interactive lessons in Kiswahili for students with limited English proficiency. This could help bridge the gap and ensure that all students have equal opportunities to succeed, regardless of their location or background.

AI can also improve the efficiency of teachers' work by automating administrative tasks like grading assignments and preparing lesson plans. This would free up valuable time for teachers, enabling them to focus more on student engagement and personalised support.

To ensure the success of AI in education, however, the government must invest more in teacher training so that educators can more effectively integrate these tools into their classrooms.

A comprehensive nationwide strategy for incorporating AI into the education system would help bridge the gap in access and quality.

Tanzania is also undergoing rapid urbanisation, which brings both opportunities and challenges. Cities like Dar es Salaam are experiencing increased traffic congestion, a rise in the number of unplanned settlements and worrying levels of uneven access to public services.

AI can play a crucial role in urban planning and service delivery. AI-powered traffic management systems could analyse traffic data in real time, helping reduce congestion and improve flow, as seen in cities like Kigali, Rwanda.

Similarly, AI could be integrated into Tanzania's Smart Cities initiatives, vastly improving services like water and electricity distribution, waste

management and emergency response. For example, it could help detect water leaks or predict electricity demand, enabling service providers to respond more efficiently.

While these opportunities are promising, there are significant challenges that Tanzania must address to fully leverage AI. First, it must develop a clear, forward-looking national AI policy.

The policy should prioritise sectors like agriculture, healthcare, education and infrastructure, while setting workable ethical guidelines for data use.

Establishing a regulatory body, similar to Rwanda's Centre for Artificial Intelligence and Innovation, could help ensure that AI-supported projects align with the country's development goals and are implemented in a responsible and accountable way.

Another challenge is the shortage of professionals skilled in AI and related fields. Tanzania has a young and vibrant population, and there is a need for more education and training in AI, machine learning and data science.

Universities and technical colleges thus ought to introduce specialised programmes to build a local talent pool. Partnerships with international institutions like the African Institute for Mathematical Sciences and Google's AI lab could support the growth of AI expertise in Tanzania.

Tanzania should also encourage homegrown innovation. An array of local startups could incubate AI solutions tailored to the specific needs of Tanzanian farmers, healthcare workers, urban planners, etc. This would help reduce dependency on foreign AI systems and ensure that technological solutions are relevant and sustainable in the long term.

AI has doubtless the power to transform sectors like agriculture, healthcare, education and urban living in Tanzania. To harness this potential, the country needs a clear, inclusive strategy focusing on infrastructure investment, local expertise and tailored solutions.

By doing so, the country can address its unique challenges and leap ahead, empowering the people and securing a prosperous future for all - from farmers to urban residents.

In sum, AI offers Tanzania a unique opportunity to build a brighter tomorrow. There will be no regretting making it a priority.

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By Adonis Byemelwa

# Conjoined twins: Tanzania and Saudi Arabia unite to transform lives, celebrating progress in medical care

NOVEMBER 24 marked the International Day of Conjoined Twins, a global occasion to recognize the challenges and triumphs of those living as conjoined twins and to celebrate advancements in their medical care.

This year, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, hosted the inaugural International Conference on Conjoined Twins, a groundbreaking event that gathered medical experts, humanitarian organizations, and families from across the world.

Held under the patronage of King Salman bin Abdulaziz and Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, the two-day event aimed to foster collaboration, share knowledge, and explore innovative techniques to improve the lives of conjoined twins and their families.

Riyadh Governor Prince Faisal bin Bandar delivered a keynote address on behalf of King Salman, celebrating the Saudi Conjoined Twins Programme's remarkable achievements. Since its establishment in 1990, the programme has reviewed 143 cases from 26 countries and successfully separated 61 pairs of conjoined twins.

Prince Faisal highlighted that this initiative is the only one of its kind globally, making it a cornerstone of Saudi Arabia's humanitarian and medical contributions. He also noted the Kingdom's proposal to the UN General Assembly to designate November 24 as World Conjoined Twins Day, a move that underscores Saudi Arabia's commitment to raising awareness about the challenges faced by conjoined twins and their families.

Ahimidiwe Olutu, a reporter from UTV who attended the conference in Riyadh, described the atmosphere as "a unique convergence of science, compassion, and global cooperation." In his coverage, Olutu emphasized Prince Faisal's praise for the program's efforts to support low-income families and those from conflict zones. "This is not just a medical program; it's a humanitarian mission driven by the values of inclusivity and care," Prince Faisal said during his speech.

The conference also featured testimonials from families who benefited from the program, further highlighting its transformative impact. "When we came to Riyadh, we had only hope and prayers. Today, we have two healthy children who can live independent lives," said one parent, recounting their experience.

According to Olutu, Dr. Abdullah Al-Rabeeah, the programme's supervisor-general, echoed these sentiments, noting that the success of the Saudi programme is built on teamwork and innovation. "Every life we touch reinforces our belief in the power of collaboration and shared humanity," he stated. As Saudi Arabia continues to lead in this field; its dedication to advancing medical science and humanitarian aid remains unparalleled.

Dr Al-Rabeeah, who is also the advisor to the Saudi Royal Court, addressed attendees in a media roundtable. He shared the program's history and vision while discussing the goals of the conference.



Tanzanian twins Abriana and Adriana after life-changing surgery in Chennai, India.

Dr. Al-Rabeeah emphasized the importance of collaboration in addressing the complex challenges of conjoined twins' care. He also announced an imminent surgery to separate two Tanzanian twins, Hassan and Hussein, scheduled for November 25 at the King Abdullah Specialist Children's Hospital in Riyadh.

According to Olutu, Hassan and Hussein's surgery in Riyadh, scheduled for 16 hours with a team of 35 specialists, is a testament to Saudi Arabia's leadership in the field. Dr. Al-Rabeeah recounted the program's origin, which began during the Gulf War in 1990 when King Fahd directed his team to perform the first successful conjoined twin separation.

This landmark operation, which took 18.5 hours, laid the groundwork for a program that has now helped transform the lives of many conjoined twins worldwide. Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, WHO

Director-General, praised the Kingdom's commitment to advancing medical care for conjoined twins, underscoring its role in global humanitarian efforts.

Dr. Al-Rabeeah shared his reflections on the emotional highs and challenges of such surgeries. He described the profound joy of seeing two lives transformed, saying, "When I come out of the operating room with two beds instead of one, it is the best moment of my life."

Olutu says the conference tackled critical topics, including the candidacy process for separation surgeries, ethical considerations, antenatal and postnatal care, and the psychological impact on patients and their families.

Dr. Al-Rabeeah emphasized the importance of early diagnosis, revealing that advanced imaging technology now allows conjoined twins to be identified as early as 8 to 10 weeks into pregnancy. This ear-

ly detection facilitates better planning and improves surgical outcomes.

Attendees also explored recent advancements in medical technology that have revolutionized separation procedures. These include the use of argon lasers, ultrasonic knives, and advanced coatings to minimize bleeding, as well as the application of 3D imaging to enhance preoperative planning. Improved prosthetics and less invasive techniques have significantly reduced recovery times and improved post-surgical outcomes.

Dr. Al-Rabeeah underscored the importance of psychological care for both the twins and their families, especially in addressing "separation trauma." He noted that the emotional adjustment after living connected for years is a delicate process requiring specialized support. This holistic approach, combining cutting-edge medical expertise with compassionate care, has become a hallmark of the Saudi program.

In addition to its medical focus, the conference aimed to foster global collaboration. Dr. Al-Rabeeah discussed agreements with international organizations to address broader health challenges affecting children, including polio vaccination campaigns in Afghanistan, care for children with infectious diseases in Gaza, and the development of specialized regional medical centers. He stressed that knowledge and science are shared human assets, saying, "Science is not owned; it is for everybody."

The conference also served as a reminder of the ongoing challenges faced by conjoined twins worldwide. One poignant example is the story of Maria and Consolata Mwakikuti, Tanzanian twins who joined at the navel. The twins, who were against separation surgery, inspired many in their country with their determination to

pursue education.

Despite their health challenges, they graduated high school and dreamed of becoming teachers. They envisioned using projectors and computers to overcome physical limitations in the classroom. However, their journey was cut short in 2018 when they succumbed to respiratory complications at the age of 21. Their passing prompted an outpouring of grief in Tanzania, with then-President John Magufuli honoring their resilience and aspirations.

Tanzania's history with conjoined twins also includes a landmark case in 1994, when the country's first recorded pair of twins was successfully separated at Muhimbili Medical Centre in Dar es Salaam. Born in the Shinyanga region, the male twins were joined at the abdomen.

While one twin survived and was discharged in good health, the other succumbed to complications. The case underscored the importance of teamwork and multidisciplinary care in managing such complex conditions.

As the conference concluded, it was clear that the Saudi Conjoined Twins Program has not only advanced medical science but also embodied the values of compassion and global collaboration. Dr. Al-Rabeeah highlighted the program's commitment to serving families from low-income and conflict-affected regions, a vision reinforced by King Salman and Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman. "Humanity has no politics, no boundaries, no religion, and no color," Dr. Al-Rabeeah remarked, reflecting the ethos that drives the program's work.

Over the years, the programme has evolved into a symbol of hope, transforming lives and inspiring the medical community worldwide. By uniting experts and stakeholders at the International Conference on Conjoined Twins, Saudi Arabia has reaffirmed its leadership in this field while fostering a global dialogue aimed at improving care for these unique and complex cases.

# Mitigating climate impacts on human health

By Telesphor Magobe

ON the occasion of marking Earth Day in April last year, Pope Francis said very inspiring words in relation to taking care of nature. Citing a Spanish proverb, he said "God always forgives, human beings sometimes forgive, but nature never forgives." Pope Francis was making a direct link between destructive human activities and environmental degradation, which contributes to climate change.

His words carry with them a strong message to us today, not only as Tanzanians, but also as global citizens. The impacts of climate change are very diverse. Tanzania has not yet recovered from the devastating impacts of floods in different parts of the country. Besides floods, the tropical cyclone, Hidaya, hit with varying intensity some coastal areas from Mtwara to Dar es Salaam.

As a result, some Tanzanians had their houses, crops and property badly damaged, including in some cases losses of lives. The most affected victims have been directed to relocate to safer areas where they will start establishing new settlements and this implies starting again from scratch.

There are global, regional and national efforts to mitigate climate change impacts on human health. When prolonged droughts or floods strike they are often accompanied by disease outbreaks which cost governments billions of money to address.

The World Economic Forum (WEF) Insight Report of January 2024 titled "Quantifying the Impact of Climate Change on Human Health" suggests ways on how to mitigate climate change impacts on human health. The report highlights six major climate-driven event categories analysed as important drivers of negative health impacts. These are floods, droughts, heat waves, tropical storms, wildfires and rising sea levels. It suggests that by 2050, climate change will place immense strain on global healthcare systems, causing 14.5 million deaths and \$12.5 trillion in economic losses.



Furthermore, it says climate change impacts will account for further \$1.1 trillion in extra costs to healthcare systems, adding a significant burden on already strained infrastructure, medical and human resources and thus aggravating global health inequalities.

The most affected populations, according to the report, are women, the youth, the elderly, lower-income groups and hard-to-reach communities will be in Africa and southern Asia. Thus, according to the report, climate change is transforming the landscape of morbidity and mortality and is already having profound impacts on human health and health systems. In this regard, immediate impacts include deaths, physical injuries, malnutrition, respiratory and cardiovascular ailments and exposure to infectious

diseases, such as cholera, dysentery and typhoid, which result from drinking contaminated water or eating contaminated food.

"The stress, trauma and displacement caused by climate-related disasters can be expected to produce a surge in mental health illnesses, including anxiety, depression and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). In fact, a rise in mental health conditions is an outcome that all six climate events share," according to the WEF report.

The report suggests that in sub-Saharan Africa, southern Asia and Central America, about 80 million people will be at risk of hunger by 2050. "Not only do these populations already face higher risk of food insecurity, but they are also less likely to receive adequate relief to address the devastation to liveli-

hoods, property, and food and water supplies."

Therefore, understanding climate change-human health connections is crucial for designing effective public health policies and building healthcare systems resilient enough to withstand and mitigate the effects of climate change, the report says.

The following six weather-related events, suggests the report, will define the destructive impacts of climate change on human health worldwide. The incidence of floods is likely to cause about 8.5 million deaths, prolonged droughts 3.2 million deaths worldwide, heat waves are expected to claim about 1.6 million lives by 2050, with those aged 65 and older persons being the most susceptible to prolonged extreme temperature. There is also

the impact of tropical storms expected to result in an additional one-half million deaths by 2050, while the devastating spread of wildfires is predicted to claim another 300,000 lives and rising sea levels will result in 100,000 more lives lost.

Thus, the report suggests the following as mitigating measures. There is a need to develop or improve two crucial areas: resistance, the ability to prevent, reduce or delay climate change's impacts on humans, and recovery, by providing fast stabilisation of the affected populations and healthcare infrastructure and effective treatment of long-term consequences. Communities must focus on effectiveness and accessibility as top strategic objectives.

These can include adaptation planning, infrastructure resilience, disease surveillance and response, capacity building, innovative research and development, continuous evidence gathering and policy integration. It will also require global cooperation to develop solutions that fortify the global health infrastructure and the willingness to invest in mitigation interventions.

But for this to work effectively it must first start at the local level by involving communities in both short and long-term climate change mitigation interventions. Therefore, we can decide either to reduce the impacts of climate change on human health by taking responsible action or accelerate them if we think it is not our concern. The choice is ours!



ADDIS ABABA

# United approach urged for safer roads through African Road Safety Charter

ON a continent where road traffic accidents claim lives at an alarming rate, experts and policymakers are highlighting the potential of the African Road Safety Charter. Adopted by African Union (AU) members in January 2016, the Charter provides a common framework for enhancing road safety measures across Africa.

During the eighth Program for Infrastructure Development in Africa Week, held from Nov. 25 to 29 at the AU headquarters in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia's capital, ensuring safer road infrastructure was a focal topic guided by the principles of the African Road Safety Charter.

The 31-article Charter outlines critical provisions for developing and implementing road safety policies and strategies tailored to the continent's unique challenges.

These include building safer roads, classifying roads based on use, enforcing minimum vehicle safety standards, and implementing stringent road safety legislation on speed limits, drink driving, and safety gear use.

However, over eight years since its inception, only 12 countries have ratified the Charter, falling short of the minimum threshold of 15 ratifications for it to take effect.

Experts and policymakers argue that the slow progress poses significant risks, as road fatalities across Africa have surged by 17 percent since 2010, contrasting global trends where road traffic-related fatalities fell by 5 percent since 2010, according to a recent United Nations (UN) report.

**ALARMING REALITY OF ROAD SAFETY IN AFRICA**

Binta Sako, a violence and injury prevention technical officer at the World Health Organization (WHO) Africa, told Xinhua in a recent interview that Africa bears a disproportionate share of global road traffic fatalities, underscoring the severity of the issue, particularly given the continent's limited healthcare infrastructure that exacerbates the devastating toll of road crashes.

Despite accounting for 15 percent of the global population and owning merely 3 percent of the global vehicle fleet, the African continent recorded one-fifth of global road traffic deaths, according to the WHO's latest status report on road safety in Africa.

The report noted that Africa continues to have the most perilous roads globally, placing immense strain on the continent's economy and public health systems. In 2021 alone, nearly 250,000 lives were lost on African roads.

Sako emphasized that Africa's road safety crisis transcends statistics, describing it as "a pressing human tragedy" that demands targeted interventions.

She underscored the abrupt nature of road crashes resulting in devastating losses for families and communities grappling with long-term emotional and economic repercussions.

With no country in Africa currently having laws that meet the best practice standards for the five key behavioral risk factors in road safety -- speeding, drink-driving, non-use of motorcycle helmets, seatbelts, and child restraints -- experts and policymakers view the African Road Safety Charter as a vital framework to address these challenges and promote safer roads across the continent.

**UNIFIED APPROACH TO ROAD SAFETY**

The AU Assembly, comprised of African heads of state and government, adopted the 31-article charter as a framework for enhancing road safety across the continent.

Upon its adoption, African leaders expressed "deep concern" over the "inordinately high" rate of road crashes and their substantial socioeconomic impact, with costs nearing 2 percent of gross national product (GDP), according to the AU.

According to Amani Abou-Zeid, AU Commissioner for Infrastructure and Energy, the adoption of the Charter reflects a growing political will to save lives on Africa's roads.

Yet, over eight years later, it has not achieved the necessary threshold of ratification. With Namibia becoming the first country to ratify the charter in February 2019, the other 11 African countries to follow suit include Be-



Photo taken on Aug. 27, 2024, shows asphalt pavement works on Malawi's M5 Road in Nkhotakota district, Malawi. Group/Handout via Xinhua)

nin, Central African Republic, Ethiopia, Mali, Morocco, Nigeria, Niger, Senegal, Eswatini, Togo, and Uganda.

Experts argue that ratifying the charter, eventually leading to its effective implementation, is essential for implementing a cohesive continental road safety framework that can help reduce road crashes.

They mainly attributed the charter's slow ratification progress to an apparent lack of understanding of the magnitude of road safety-related challenges in Africa and limited political commitment.

Placide Badji, an economic affairs officer at the UN Economic Commission for Africa's connectivity and infrastructure development division, said with road safety challenges becoming a persistent public health concern across Africa, concerted efforts and enough resources are needed to be allocated for the road safety agenda at the national, regional, and continental levels.

"What we realized is that the bulk of the countries over the continent don't even have the fundamentals of road safety," Badji told Xinhua in a recent interview, emphasizing the charter's crucial importance as it offers a unified framework for road

safety protocols.

"Political commitment is the first challenge. It seems that there is a lack of understanding of the magnitude of the problem -- how this is hampering countries' GDP, as well as their social and economic development."

**LEARNING FROM EARLY ADOPTERS**

Despite these challenges, promising examples from early adopters of the African Road Safety Charter highlight its potential as a transformative framework. Ethiopia, among the first to ratify the charter, considers it instrumental in enhancing road safety management.

Although Ethiopia has a low per capita car ownership rate, fatal traffic accidents remain prevalent, often linked to reckless driving, weak road safety systems, and inadequate enforcement of safety regulations.

Experts believe that fully implementing the charter can complement national legislation and address systemic challenges at both national and continental levels.

Yohannis Lemma, chief executive officer of Road Safety Education and Capacity Building at Ethiopia's Road Safety and Insurance Fund Service,

stressed that understanding the economic, social, and psychological impacts of road crashes is key to fast-tracking the charter's swift entry into implementation.

"In order to address road traffic challenges in Africa in a practical and meaningful way, countries need to develop a common platform that can be used as a policy guideline. Hence, the adoption and implementation of the African Road Safety Charter is an important step to assess the progress and gaps related to road safety on a wider continental level," Lemma said. While Kenya has yet to sign or ratify the charter, efforts are underway to advance the process.

Duncan Kibogong, National Transport and Safety Authority (NTSA) deputy director in charge of road safety, told Xinhua that active efforts are ongoing to navigate the necessary steps for ratification.

Underscoring the need for collaboration with various agencies to expedite the adoption of the charter, Kibogong said concerted efforts are underway to facilitate the charter's ratification process, involving multiple reviews and approvals by relevant bodies.

He said such structured processes

are essential to ensure that the charter is thoroughly integrated into national policy.

**CALL FOR CONCERTED EFFORTS TO SAFER ROADS**

Bright Oywaya's story is a poignant reminder of the devastating human and socioeconomic toll of Africa's road safety crisis.

After a road crash some 27 years ago left her permanently wheelchair-bound, Oywaya became a passionate advocate, dedicating her life to raising awareness about road safety and its far-reaching impacts on victims and their families.

As a Kenyan road safety advocate and former NTSA vice chair, Oywaya called for a paradigm shift, urging governments and stakeholders to view road safety as a critical investment rather than an expense.

"Enhancing road safety is not just about regulations, it is about saving lives and fostering healthier communities. Every life lost and resources damaged to road crashes represent untapped potential and a tragedy that can be prevented," Oywaya said.

Patrick Kinyanjui from the Global Alliance of NGOs for Road Safety Africa acknowledged the critical role of civil society organizations in promoting the charter's ratification by AU members, citing Senegal's recent milestone as the most recent AU member to deposit its instrument of ratification with the AU Commission in September 2023.

Stressing that more efforts are needed to amplify the charter's significance and spotlight Africa's road safety crisis, Kinyanjui highlighted the importance of supporting the AU in raising awareness about the issue and working collaboratively to improve the socioeconomic conditions for Africa's 1.4 billion people.

## CAPITAL RADIO

# RATIBA YA VIPINDI JUMATATU - JUMAPILI

MONDAY TIME PROGRAMME	TUESDAY TIME PROGRAMME	WEDNESDAY TIME PROGRAMME	THURSDAY TIME PROGRAMME	FRIDAY TIME PROGRAMME	SATURDAY TIME PROGRAMME	SUNDAY TIME PROGRAMME
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Tembelea mitandao ya kijamii ya CAPITAL RADIO



CAPITAL RADIO



# PASADA transforms HIV treatment with first ARV therapy in Tanzania

By Correspondent Mary Kadoke

**H**IV/AIDS remains one of Tanzania's most pressing health challenges, affecting millions of lives and placing immense strain on the nation's healthcare system.

The disease continues to be a significant public health threat, with many individuals and communities grappling with its impact. Stigma surrounding HIV/AIDS, coupled with limited access to care and education in some areas, has made the fight against the epidemic even more difficult.

The stigma often prevents individuals from seeking testing, treatment, or openly discussing their condition, perpetuating cycles of infection and despair.

Amidst the challenges, Pastoral Activities and Services for People with AIDS (PASADA) has emerged as a powerful force, offering life-changing care, advocacy, and compassion to those affected by HIV/AIDS.

Since its inception in 1992, PASADA has been at the forefront of providing comprehensive care and support to individuals living with HIV/AIDS, transforming the landscape of HIV care in Tanzania.

The organisation's journey began in August 1992, when Father Georges Loire, M. AFR., a chaplain and Catholic priest at Muhimbili National Hospital, initiated efforts to integrate HIV/AIDS care into pastoral services. Appointed by His Eminence Polycarp Cardinal Pengo, then Archbishop of Dar es Salaam, Father Loire began serving the spiritual and physical needs of those affected by the epidemic, starting with a modest group of 150 patients. PASADA's initial services were provided at Attman House near St. Joseph Cathedral before moving to its current location at PASADA Chang'ombe (Upendano Dispensary).

PASADA's mission is to promote the physical and spiritual well-being of individuals suffering from HIV/AIDS and other diseases, improving their access to medical care, spiritual support, and liveli-

hood assistance. With a vision of "a society in which all people can live life to their full potential with dignity and respect," PASADA offers a holistic approach to care, addressing both the physical and emotional needs of patients.

In its early years, the organisation operated largely on a charitable and voluntary basis, relying heavily on donations and the efforts of volunteers—many of whom were clients themselves. The grassroots support was critical in sustaining PASADA's operations, enabling the organisation to deliver vital care and raise awareness in the community, despite limited resources.

Over the years, PASADA has expanded its reach and services. It now operates in three regions—Dar es Salaam, Mbeya, and Pwani—managing a total of 25 facilities across these areas. To date, PASADA has tested over 1.5 million people for HIV, treated 53,000 TB cases, and conducted over 1.1 million community outreach initiatives. Currently, PASADA provides a continuum of care to 27,401 clients, contributing significantly to public health in Tanzania.

A landmark achievement in its history came in 2003, when it became the first organisation in Tanzania to provide antiretroviral (ARV) therapy to patients. At the time, ARVs were prohibitively expensive and largely inaccessible to the general population. PASADA launched a pilot project to administer ARVs to 15 patients—10 adults and 5 children—using funds from charitable donations and volunteers. This pioneering initiative provided life-saving treatment to individuals who otherwise would have had no access to ARVs. Remarkably, 12 of the original 15 patients are still alive and in good health today, with many of them now serving as volunteers, supporting others living with HIV/AIDS.

The success of PASADA's ARV programme is reflected in the lives of its patients. For example, one mother of four, diagnosed with HIV in 1988, has remained healthy



thanks to ARV treatment. She has seen her children grow up and now has 12 grandchildren, with her eldest grandchild graduating from university this year. Her story is a testament to the effectiveness of early and consistent treatment. Another success story involves a young man who, after starting ART, was able to continue his education and eventually secure employment. He now serves as a mentor to others living with HIV, demonstrating the transformative power of treatment and support.

Despite its successes, the organisation faces several challenges. One of the primary hurdles is funding shortages. As a sub-donor-dependent organisation, PASADA has struggled to secure consistent funding, which has limited its ability to expand and maintain its services. This financial dependence means that fluctuations in funding can significantly impact operations. For example, critical services such as food provision, drugs for opportunistic infections, palliative and home-based care, and community caregiver support have been diminished due to lack of funds.

Another challenge is the shortage of essential laboratory tests, such as liver and kidney function tests, which are crucial for monitor-

ing patients on ARV therapy. Without these tests, it becomes difficult to provide safe and effective treatment, putting patients at risk. Additionally, the rising costs of medical supplies and equipment continue to strain PASADA's resources.

In response, PASADA is exploring several strategies to ensure its sustainability. One key approach is diversifying its funding sources. The organisation is working with multiple donors and exploring income-generating activities to reduce its reliance on a single funding source. This strategy will not only help secure financial stability but also foster a sense of ownership and responsibility among stakeholders.

Strengthening community engagement is also a priority. By involving local communities in decision-making, PASADA ensures that its services are culturally appropriate and tailored to the specific needs of the populations it serves. This approach fosters trust and collaboration, enhancing the effectiveness of PASADA's work.

Advocacy and policy engagement are also integral to PASADA's sustainability efforts. By working with government agencies and pol-

icymakers, PASADA aims to secure increased funding and support for HIV/AIDS programs. Its advocacy efforts highlight the importance of sustained investment in healthcare and the need for policies that prioritise the well-being of those affected by HIV/AIDS.

PASADA's journey from a small, volunteer-driven initiative to a leading organisation in HIV/AIDS care in Tanzania is a remarkable story of dedication, compassion, and innovation. Its pioneering efforts in providing ARV therapy have saved countless lives and set a precedent for other organisations in the region. PASADA's ability to adapt to challenges while continuing to deliver impactful services is a testament to its resilience and commitment.

The organisation's history serves as an inspiration and model for others striving to make a difference in the fight against HIV/AIDS. In a world where access to healthcare is often unequal, PASADA's work is a powerful reminder of what can be achieved when compassion, innovation, and determination come together. Its legacy of hope and transformation will undoubtedly continue to resonate for generations to come.

# UN urges instant action as farming, deforestation push earth to the brink

By Special Correspondent

**T**HE United Nations has issued a stark warning that unsustainable farming practices and deforestation are rapidly pushing the planet toward an environmental crisis, endangering the ability to sustain human societies and natural ecosystems.

A new report, released on Sunday in collaboration with the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), underscores the devastating impact of agriculture on the environment.

The sector is responsible for 23 percent of global greenhouse gas emissions, 80 percent of deforestation, and 70 percent of freshwater use. The UN stresses that industrialised farming, coupled with poor land management practices, is exacerbating climate change, accelerating biodiversity loss, and contributing to soil degradation, ultimately putting global security at risk.

As nearly 200 nations gather in Saudi Arabia for the UN Desertification Summit, experts are calling for transformative action to restore 1.5 billion hectares of degraded land by 2030. Urging

governments and stakeholders to rethink current practices, the report highlights key solutions such as reforming agricultural subsidies, improving water management, reducing the overuse of chemicals, and addressing corruption that hinders environmental protection efforts. The aim is to protect ecosystems, ensure food security, and mitigate the effects of desertification.

Saudi Arabia, already grappling with desertification and home to one of the world's largest deserts, has committed to restoring 40 million hectares of land. This pledge reflects the kingdom's recognition of the urgent need to address land degradation, as well as its role in leading global efforts to combat desertification and preserve the environment for future generations.

The UN's call to action emphasizes the necessity for a global shift toward sustainable land management and agricultural practices, urging nations to collaborate in tackling the environmental crises that threaten not only the natural world but also global food systems and livelihoods.



# Chamber urges Ivory Coast to sustain O&G investment leadership

JOHANNESBURG

**I**VORY Coast is emerging as a powerhouse in West Africa's oil and gas industry, driven by a solid regulatory framework, attractive fiscal terms and innovative partnerships.

Home to significant hydrocarbon reserves and progres-

sive policies, the country has drawn investments from leading energy companies, cementing its status as a regional hub for energy production and exploration.

The African Energy Chamber (AEC) applauds Ivory Coast's efforts in creating an environment where oil companies can

thrive. This week, the AEC is participating at the SIREXE 2024 conference in Abidjan. Led by Executive Chairman NJ Ayuk, the chamber engaged with global service companies such as Halliburton, Africa Global Logistics, Sahara Group and SLB, encouraging them to prioritize expansion and inno-

vation. The AEC is committed to supporting Ivory Coast's initiatives to reduce energy poverty, promote local content, and foster economic development. As the country continues to expand its role in the regional oil and gas sector, the AEC emphasizes the importance of ensuring that the energy transition

includes oil. It is essential that industry stakeholders advocate for a just transition that recognizes the ongoing importance of oil in Africa's energy future while transitioning to more sustainable energy sources.

Ivory Coast's strong policies have laid the foundation for oil companies to drive large-scale

projects. Notably, the Baleine field, spearheaded by Eni and the nation's national oil company Petroci, is a prime example of what is possible when innovation meets efficient governance. The field currently produces over 22,000 barrels per day (bpd) and is set to scale significantly.

As Africa's first net-zero (Scope 1 and 2) hydrocarbon project, the project is advancing with the arrival of critical infrastructure - the Petrojarl Kong FPSO and Yamoussoukro FSO - set to boost production to 60,000 bpd and add 70 million cubic feet of gas by the end of 2024.









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# Global billionaire population up by 4 pc - with 431 women

By Guardian Reporter

**T**HE global billionaire population expanded by 4 percent in 2023 to 3,323 individuals, more than reversed the previous year's decline to mark a new high in billionaire numbers, the new report entitled billionaire census 2024 published by Altrata has shown.

According to the census report, wealth holdings of the ultra-rich were bolstered by rising stock markets and firmer "risk-on" sentiment across most other asset classes.

Of the global population of 3,323 billionaires, 431 were women.

This gender split is similar to that of the Ultra High Net Worth (UHNW) class, which is also heavily male dominated.

Female billionaire representation has increased very gradually over the past decade (as it has in other high-wealth tiers), influenced by the shifting pattern of global wealth distribution, growth in female entrepreneurship, slowly changing cultural attitudes, and the rising frequency of substantial inter-generational wealth transfers.

Some 13 percent of female billionaires are below the age of 50, compared with 9 percent of their male counterparts.

In terms of the older demographic of billionaires above the age of 70, female representation is slightly lower than it is for men. Most billionaires - both men and women - are aged between 50 and 70.

Three-quarters of female billionaires have inherited at least a portion

of their wealth, compared with a third of male billionaires. The difference between the genders is especially stark for those with solely inherited fortunes.

Almost 38 percent of female billionaires and many of the world's very wealthiest women - such as Françoise Bettencourt Meyers, Alice Walton and Jacqueline Mars - gained their wealth exclusively from inheritance. In contrast, just 5 percent of their male counterparts have solely inherited fortunes.

Approximately a third of female billionaires gained their wealth through a blend of inheritance and self-created net worth.

This is a similar proportion to that of male billionaires, highlighting the considerable benefits of receiving a substantial transfer of wealth. Meanwhile, a quarter of billionaire women have made their own fortunes.

This is up from 16 percent five years ago but still lags well behind the 66 percent of male self-made billionaires.

Among the group of female billionaires with solely inherited wealth, about half are over the age of 70, with one in six aged under 50.

Most self-made billionaire women are in the 50-70 age bracket, with just one in 10 below the age of 50.

This is a similar proportion to that of the global billionaire population, underlining the fact that, bar the odd exception, it takes considerable time to accumulate such a large stock of wealth.

"The world economy remained sluggish, constrained by high inflation, tight monetary policy, cost-of-living pressures and geopolitical instability, but it was ultimately more resilient than expected," the census report says.

Gradually easing inflation and the rising prospect of central bank interest rate cuts spurred a late-year rally in global equities.



L to R: Elon Musk, Bill Gates, Jeff Bezos and Mark Zuckerberg. Total net worth of the billionaire class increased to a record \$12.1trn in 2023.

Amid growing optimism of a soft landing for the economy, total net worth of the billionaire class increased strongly by 9 percent to a record \$12.1trn compared with a previous high of \$11.7trn in 2021.

There were contrasting sector returns, with the pattern largely a reverse of 2022.

The strongest stock market gains were in technology (driven by surging investor enthusiasm for generative artificial intelligence), financial services and consumer goods, which outperformed more defensive sectors such as healthcare, utilities and energy.

Travel and tourism continued its post-pandemic revival, whereas higher interest rates weighed on real-estate activity and corporate transactions. High volatility crypto assets rallied strongly from their 2022 slump.

The global backdrop for wealth markets remained turbulent amid increasingly complex geopolitics shaped by Russia's invasion of Ukraine, deepening rivalry between China and the west, a new Israel-Hamas war, widening trade restrictions, and ongoing tech and climate disruption.

The report shows that uneven distribution of global wealth is evident at all levels of society and across all wealth tiers, but is also present when examining the world's super rich.

In 2023, the billionaire class of 3,323 individuals represented just 0.01 percent of the global high net worth (HNW) population - individuals each with a fortune in excess of \$1m - but held 8 percent of the total stock of HNW wealth.

Narrowing the focus to just the very wealthy ultra-high net worth (UHNW) segment - numbering more than 426,000 individuals, each with a fortune of more than \$30m - the billionaire population comprised only a 0.8 percent share, yet their collective net worth of \$12.1trn accounted for an outsized 25 percent of total UHNW wealth.

This proportion has risen from around 20 percent a decade ago, but has remained broadly stable over the past five years.

In terms of distribution by wealth tier within the billionaire class itself, just over half of the global population is in the "lowest" billionaire wealth bracket, each with a net worth of between \$1bn

and \$2bn.

A further third has a net worth of \$2bn-\$5bn. Viewed together, this group of 84 percent of all billionaires hold some 42 percent of total billionaire wealth.

This fits with the general trend of a large share of a cohort's population falling within the "lower" wealth tiers, as shown by the median wealth level (\$1.8bn) of the global billionaire class being well below the mean average of \$3.6bn.

Those with a net worth of between \$5bn and \$10bn comprise another 10 percent of the global billionaire class. Rising further, a highly privileged 194 billionaires (up from 171 in 2022) each hold a fortune of more than \$10bn.

Comprising just 6 percent of the billionaire class, they control a staggering 41 percent of global billionaire wealth, with a combined net worth of almost \$5trn.

An exclusive 18 individuals reside in the very top tier of billionaire wealth, each with a fortune in excess of \$50bn.

Over the past decade, the share of this group among the total billionaire population has risen just slightly, from a share of 0.2 percent in 2014 to the current 0.5 percent.

More remarkable by far has been the relative increase in their combined wealth. In 2014, those in the "super-billionaire" class with a net worth of \$50bn+ held 4 percent of global billionaire wealth.

As of 2023, this share had risen four-fold to 16 percent. The total net worth of these 18 individuals amounted to \$2trn, implying an average 12-figure fortune of just over \$100bn.

## Fund now empowers people with disabilities financially

By Francis Kajubi

AS the world commemorates the International Day of Persons with Disabilities today, Tanzania Social Action Fund (TASAF) is celebrating the day by introducing a policy to financially empower people living with disabilities for them to create income generating activities.

This empowerment is in form of disbursement of seed capital through monthly grants, sensitization on establishment of income generating activities and equipment to run economic activities that are given to disabled people who are part of families benefiting from the program targeting poor households.

Meleckzedek Nduya, TASAF Communications Officer said yesterday in Dar es Salaam at a special visit to one of the beneficiaries with disability that in celebrating the International Day of Persons with Disabilities, TASAF is proud to empower the disabled, especially those who come from households that benefit from the programme.

"Disabled people need to be empowered not only with the aim of enabling them to afford their daily lives but to make them part of the contribution to economic growth.

An inclusive economy requires the participation of all groups in society. TASAF enables disabled people in households to benefit from the poverty alleviation program," he said

He said that it is TASAF's responsibility to empower all disabled people from beneficiary households.

Nuru Ali (48), a resident of Kigogo Mbuyuni in Kinondo district Dar es Salaam, a visually-impaired on one eye and TASAF beneficiary who has graduated from receiving grants said that she has benefited from TASAF through monthly grants that have made her start an income generating activity.

Being a beneficiary of the Fund since



Nuru Ali (48), a resident of Kigogo Mbuyuni shows some of her small business products. Photo: Francis Kajubi

2014, Nuru, a mother of five children, has succeeded in starting an entrepreneurial business making liquid soaps, handbags and food ingredients. She also manufactures toilet cleaners.

"I have managed to grow my capital from 40,000/- in 2014 to more than 250,000/- while realizing other benefits that help me serve my family in collaboration with my husband," she said.

According to her, being one of the beneficiaries of TASAF has helped her to gain knowledge of running income generating activities.

She says that TASAF has contributed to changing her life and that of her family compared to before he became a beneficiary.

"The challenge is to find opportunities to market my products. I am asking if there is a possibility for me to be linked with the markets because right now I rely on walking my products here on the street;

Packaging is also a challenge where I would be empowered to sell my products even to supermarket owners," she said.

She asked to be linked with the Small Industries Development Organization (SIDO) to get more entrepreneurship training and add value to the products she produces.

"Although I have graduated this year, I would like to continue benefiting from this program because I feel like I have not yet been able to live my life outside of TASAF's facilitation," said Nuru.

She asserted that the lack of a reliable market makes her stay with the product for a long time which can reach up to three months.

She said that all his children have successfully completed primary school education and are looking for a life by engaging in industrial work.

She asserted that the disability of one eye makes the whole eye try to see where there are times when she sees darkness.

"There are times when I see darkness and have to stop as if I were wandering somewhere else. There are times when you can touch or hit someone for not seeing properly," said Nuru.

## China announces zero-tariff treatment for Africa

BEIJING

**S**TARTING Sunday, China will give all the least developed countries with which it has diplomatic relations zero-tariff treatment for 100 percent tariff lines, becoming the first major developing country and the first major economy to take such a significant measure.

As observers have noted, the move meets the development needs of countries from the global south, highlighting China's commitment to sharing development opportunities with nations worldwide through tangible actions.

It demonstrates China's willingness to further open its market and will promote China-Africa trade, Christopher Mutsvangwa, Zimbabwe's ruling Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU PF) party Politburo member and ZANU PF secretary for information and publicity, told Xinhua in an interview.

Chinese consumers are showing a growing interest in African agricultural products, with Zimbabwean oranges and other agricultural products making their way into the Chinese market, said Mutsvangwa.

In the future, it is hoped that sesame and other agricultural products can also find their place in the Chinese market, he said.

Benefiting from China's zero-tariff treatment are products from Madagascar, including agricultural products, textile and clothing products, seafood products and handicraft products, said Rabenja Claudio, a Malagasy international relations expert.

On top of tariff exemptions, China is exploring comprehensive measures to assist Africa in promoting trade, not least by facilitating trade agreements, supporting cross-border e-commerce, and assisting exhibitors from African countries to participate in various exhibitions in China, said Yang Baorong, a researcher at the China-Africa Institute.

During the 7th China International Import Expo last month, China provided over 120 free booths to exhibitors from 37 least developed countries while focusing on showcasing special agricultural products from Africa.

Tanzania Future Enterprises Company Limited, which produces, processes, packages, and sells beekeeping products, is one of the 34 Tanzanian exhibitors participating in the expo.

Jackson Mponela, the company's production manager for commerce and development, said the expo paves the way for Tanzanian honey products to enter the Chinese market, an important milestone for the Tanzanian honey brand to go global.

China's policies such as tariff exemptions, support for cross-border e-commerce, and platforms like the expo

provided immense growth opportunities for African businesses, he said.

This year also marked the debut of Madagascar's mutation products at the expo. Michel Anondraka, director general of agriculture and livestock at Madagascar's Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock, said that China's huge market will boost production for local livestock farmers and speed up the African country's agricultural modernization.

Experts have said that the zero-tariff treatment for 100 percent tariff lines aims to promote development through trade, serving as a powerful driver for economic cooperation in the global South.

"Africa is the continent with the largest number of least developed countries, and China's zero-tariff measure aims to drive industrial cooperation upgrading through large-scale trade, enhance China-Africa cooperation, and encourage more countries from the Global South to jointly pursue modernization," Yang said.

China is Africa's largest trading partner, with bilateral trade exceeding \$250 billion in recent years. Key African exports include raw materials such as oil, minerals, and agricultural products, while China exports manufactured goods, electronics, and machinery.

Chinese investment in Africa has focused on infrastructure, energy, and mining projects. Initiatives like roads, railways, ports, and power plants have been built under China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).

Many African countries have borrowed extensively from Chinese banks and institutions to fund infrastructure projects. While this has led to development, concerns about debt sustainability have emerged.

The relationship between China and Africa is dynamic and continues to evolve, with both opportunities and challenges shaping its future trajectory.

China often collaborates with African nations in global forums, advocating for developing countries' interests.



**Chinese consumers are showing a growing interest in African agricultural products, with Zimbabwean oranges and other agricultural products making their way into the Chinese market, said Mutsvangwa**



# Parents advised to allocate land to youth for agriculture

By Correspondent Beatrice Philemon

PARENTS and guardians in Kilwa District Council, Lindi Region, have been encouraged to allocate land to youth, enabling them to engage in sesame and cashew nut farming to uplift their economic status through agriculture.

Jacob Kateri, a facilitator from Education and Research on Democracy in Africa (ERED AFRICA), made this call recently during the launch of Kilwa Youth Development Initiatives' (KIYODI) three-year Strategic Plan. The event was attended by KIYODI members, ActionAid Tanzania staff, and Kilwa Community Development Officers.

"We are requesting land for the youth because the land is owned by the parents, and the youth want to farm," Kateri said.

Kilwa is recognized for sesame and cashew nut farming—two vital cash crops with the potential to significantly empower the youth economically.

KIYODI's strategic plan, developed with funding from ActionAid Tanzania, aims to guide its activities over three years. The plan focuses on economic, political, and social empowerment of youth, promoting gender equality, good governance, and accountability. It also supports agriculture, environmental protection, food security, and institutional growth.

"For the youth to benefit from sesame and cashew nut farming, education on climate change is important," Kateri emphasized. "Kilwa is vulnerable to flooding and drought, so it is crucial to teach the youth how to adapt to climate change."

He stressed that young farmers must take precautions against climate-related challenges and called for experts in agriculture, climate change, natural resources, and land management to provide education.

Kateri highlighted the critical role of donor support in addressing climate change, noting the need for financial resources to implement modern agricultural techniques, tools, and equipment suitable for climate adaptation. He also advised KIYODI members to use their platform to seek funding and tap into government programs to enhance their livelihoods.

"You should also increase creativity in your activities and identify areas where technology can be leveraged to access opportunities and improve productivity," he added.



Jacob Kateri, a facilitator from Education and Research on Democracy in Africa (L) speaks to KIYODI's members about three-years strategic plan at Tumaini Jipya kwa Wanawake Kilwa (TUJIWAKI) building. Photo: Beatrice Philemon

He applauded ActionAid Kilwa for helping the youth develop a comprehensive strategic plan. "It is my hope that the youth will become part of the decision-making process through this strategy," he said.

Kateri encouraged the youth to contest leadership positions in elections and cooperative societies to advocate for employment opportunities and access to capital. He also advised KIYODI members to use youth reflection forums to discuss challenges, join networks, and exchange experiences with other groups.

"Before implementing the strategy, conduct research to understand the economic situation of the youth across Kilwa's wards, assess their education levels, skills, opportunities, and specific needs," Kateri suggested. This research would help stakeholders initiate tailored projects to address these needs effectively.

Kassim Kambwily, the agriculture officer for Kilwa District Council, urged KIYODI to include education on men's rights in their platform, noting that many women in Kilwa are now aware of their rights, unlike in the past.

"As youth, prepare for your future. Cultivate sesame, but also focus on cashew nut and mango farming—these crops will support you financially when you are older," he advised.

He encouraged young people to plant cashew trees alongside their crops and to contest leadership positions in Agricultural and Marketing Co-

operatives Societies (AMCOS).

"Join these associations and run for positions like secretary. Many elders don't know how to use computers; this is an opportunity for you to modernize these institutions," he said.

Kambwily urged KIYODI members to use the M-Kilimo App, a digital platform introduced by the Kilwa District Council to connect farmers with buyers and provide agricultural business solutions.

"Youth and other farmers are required to register in the system. You can use your mobile phone or visit an agricultural officer for assistance," he explained. The app helps farmers secure local and international markets and digitize their farming activities.

"Some farmers in Kilwa have already started using the app to promote and sell their produce," Kambwily added.

Said Malenga, the secretary of KIYODI, expressed gratitude to ActionAid Kilwa for supporting the organization in formulating its new strategic plan.

KIYODI currently has 200 members, including 125 men and 75 women, and operates in 10 wards such as Kilwa Masoko, Mandawa, and Namayuni. It has established 10 youth reflection groups with 221 members, engaging in entrepreneurship ventures like horticulture and motorcycle taxi businesses.

Malenga noted that the training from ActionAid boosted his confidence to contest for leadership roles traditionally reserved for older individuals.

The International Capital Market Association has been crucial in helping accelerate the growth of the sustainable repo market, with ICMA's Repo and Sustainability Taskforce launching a survey on the market in February 2024 following a paper in 2022 and an initial consultation paper in 2021.

The results of ICMA's 2024 survey pointed to a clear call for further dedicated guidance to cover all types of sustainable repos. The survey also found that 75% of respondents said the development of the green repo market's best practices and industry guidelines would enhance the liquidity of transactions involving sustainable collateral.

More work is needed to grow the green and sustainable repo market but its emergence should be welcomed as a positive sign: not just of the maturity of the wider sustainable capital markets but as a step towards strengthening them too. OMFIF's Sovereign Debt Institute will be launching its inaugural workshop on the repo market in April 2025. This invitation-only forum will bring together issuers, investors and banks to share insights in the government repo market as a way of maximising liquidity and efficiency.

**Burhan Khadbai (pictured) is Head of Content, Sovereign Debt Institute at OMFIF.**

## Distressed LICs need debt relief, not more new debts

By Kevin Gallagher & Mark Sobel

THE International Monetary Fund and the World Bank have established a new approach to what they view as a pervasive liquidity crisis in many low-income countries and some emerging markets. According to this assessment, many countries are simply facing a short-term liquidity problem led by a concentration of debt service payments at a moment when creditors are not willing to extend additional lending.

The proposed approach has three pillars: first, an IMF reform programme; second, supplementing this with concessional financing from development banks and donors; and third, hoping that the private sector will return to the country - potentially with some incentives.

However, injecting more liquidity into LICs and EMs may pile on debt and lead to unsustainable debt overhangs. That is likely to result in a need for continued 'extend and pretend' refinancings, creating greater hardships for the poorest and sowing the seeds for massive debt relief in the future. The inconvenient truth is that the IMF should lead on new initiatives for debt relief for low- and lower-middle-income countries.

### IMF estimates are off the mark

According to the IMF's debt sustainability analyses, 35 out of the 68 LICs on the list are currently in debt distress or at high risk of debt distress, and another 25 countries are in moderate risk of distress.

The IMF no longer makes such predictions for market access countries but Suriname, Sri Lanka, Ecuador and Argentina have all fallen into debt distress and Pakistan, Nigeria and Egypt are on the lists watched by market participants and experts.

This is an alarming number of countries and is likely to be a significant underestimate as the DSAs are a subject of major controversy from governments, market participants and economists alike. A core concern is the large forecasting errors on debt to gross domestic product ratios.

IMF economists published an analysis of 174 countries from 1995 to 2020 and found that realised debt ratios are significantly larger than forecasted ratios and increase over time to upwards of 10 percent of GDP after a five-year time horizon.

In a more recent analysis of the post-Covid-19 period by Sheryl N Raga, research fellow at ODI Global, IMF forecasting errors were found to have significantly widened, with overly optimistic debt forecasts across the board and especially in hard hit countries like Chad, Ethiopia, Ghana, Sri Lanka and Zambia.

In addition, the baseline scenario for IMF DSAs often maintains a suboptimal level of spending and investment that in part leads to eventual distress in the first place, not the level of spending and investment needed to restore robust growth, exports and tax revenue.

Further, according to the G20 Independent Expert Group, LICs and LMICs need to mobilise upwards of \$2tn annually by 2030 from domestic and external sources in order to meet the United Nations sustainable development goals and Paris climate agreements and avoid the costs of inaction, which far outweigh the size of the initial investments.

### Poorest bear the biggest burden

Because of the lack of strong initiatives on debt relief, many LICs and LMICs are self-imposing fiscal consolidation and defaulting on their climate and development goals rather than their loans.

According to the UN, 3.3bn people are living in countries now spending more on interest payments than education and health - two core ingredients for long-run growth (and tax revenue).

The UN also sees that the number of countries spending more than 20 percent of government revenue on debt service is at the same level as during the debt crisis of the 1990s.

The World Bank finds that the share of developing countries with sovereign spreads greater than 10 percentage points - when new bond issuance is unattainable - is at the same level as the last debt crisis as well.

Filling financing gaps with more liquidity and new debt can increase debt service and amortisation costs, and ultimately the burden of economic adjustment, making the poor pay more of the costs and putting a drag on global growth. That isn't fair.

There is no doubt that domestic reforms are needed across the developing world, but the current distress has been magnified by the pandemic, war and geopolitical tension, climate change and interest rate hikes.

### Time for new initiatives

There are countries that simply face liquidity problems, and the Fund's approach may have promise there. But the IMF needs to call for a major debt relief initiative akin to the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries programme for those LICs and LMICs where debt payments are squeezing government revenues, making debt service unsustainable and choking the growth prospects of billions of people. The costs of the IMF misdiagnosing debt ratios by 10% of GDP under the IMF's new liquidity approach could backfire.

Nearly 20 years ago, the major official bilateral creditors built on the HIPC and eliminated their debts under the Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative. The freed up fiscal space was not managed well and was then gobbled up by bond markets and non-traditional official creditors.

It is better to be safe than sorry. Many countries simply need much deeper relief from private and official creditors in the net present value of their debt. The World Bank to its credit has been warning of a silent debt crisis but the Fund's new three-part approach pays too little attention to debt relief.

Next year the G20 is in Africa, where much of the debt distress resides. It should be the year for a new debt initiative.

## Emerging sustainable repo market shows maturity of the sovereign labelled bonds

By Burhan Khadbai

BOOSTED liquidity and price discovery among benefits of deep market for sustainable repurchase agreements

Repurchase agreements are an obscure but important part of the bond market and wider financial system, with trillions of dollars' worth of securities traded every day. The rapid growth of the green and sustainable bond market issued by sovereigns in recent years has led to the slow emergence of a repo market for these transactions.

Acting as a type of short-term borrowing for dealers in sovereign bonds which are sold onto investors, a dealer sells these securities and then agrees to repurchase them at a higher rate.

In the sustainable repo market, there are two types of transactions. The first involves repos that act as collateral for sustainable bonds. These repos do not directly fund sustainable projects but rather provide ancillary benefits for the broader sustainable finance ecosystem.

This includes increased liquidity and better price discovery of sovereign sustainable bonds, which are the standard benefits of conventional repos. The other type of sustainable repo is the cash leg, which allows issuers to immediately refinance sustainable assets between issuances.

Improving liquidity is particularly important for the growth and development of green and sustainable bonds, according to Robert White, head of the green and sustainable hub for the Americas at Natixis.

'Sovereigns often have been known to sometimes limit the size of their inaugural sustainable bonds due to liquidity concerns and are then concerned about how to build out the curve and what maturities to issue in,' said White. 'In an ideal world, a deep sustainable repo market can remove and mitigate those concerns.'

At present, however, the sustainable repo market



is still in its infancy. 'It's really early days with less than 20 sustainable repo transactions in the market to date,' said White. 'But the emergence of this market is a nice indicator that we have hopefully reached a tipping point for the sovereign sustainable bond market and that we can now unlock repos and those repos can lead to more issuance.'

In the last couple of years, a number of banks have executed inaugural green and sustainable repo transactions, including Natixis, which executed a 'triple' sustainable repo with Banco de Brasil earlier in 2024. It was the first deal of its kind to combine three sustainable elements in a single transaction to support Banco de Brasil's sustainability-linked bond framework.



# Business leaders seek to join effort against climate change

By Guardian Reporter

THE CEO Roundtable (CEOrt) has stated that it will continue to collaborate with the government, public sector, and private sector to address various challenges facing society, including combating climate change, in order to create an enabling environment for economic growth in the country.

Speaking during the 2024 CEOrt Dinner Gala, attended by Vice President Dr. Philip Mpango on behalf of President Samia Suluhu Hassan at Hyatt Kilimanjaro, Santina Benson, Executive Director of CEOrt, stated that CEOrt recently launched a report that outlines the role of climate action in ensuring a stable economic future for Tanzania.

She said CEOrt is taking on this responsibility because climate change affects various sectors that contribute to economic growth.

"Your Excellency, the Vice President, we recognize that the Private Sector is crucial in achieving our goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 30 percent," she said.

"And this is our commitment as the CEO Roundtable to contribute fully to this cause."

"In achieving this, we extend our gratitude to our main funding partner; the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) for their support in advancing this effort, as well as other important stakeholders including Axum, led by Devang Vussonji," she added.

She also mentioned several other initiatives they are undertaking to support the community, including helping the Tushikamane Pamoja Foundation, which assists elderly people facing poverty.

Speaking on behalf of President Samia during the gala, Vice President Dr. Philip Mpango praised the CEOrt and its partners for their efforts in advancing social and economic development



Santina Benson, Executive Director of CEOrt.

in the country.

"President Samia deeply values your tireless contributions and your dedication to building a sustainable economy by engaging various stakeholders from both the public and private sectors," he said.

He noted that this year's gala theme, "2050... Let's Go! Building a Thriving, Inclusive, and Resilient Economy," aligns with the Government's Vision 2050, which aims to transform Tanzania into an industrialized, upper-middle-income nation by 2050.

"We need to continue focusing on critical issues like climate change and assess its impact on the business environment," he added. Reflecting on his recent participation at COP 29, Dr. Mpango reaffirmed Tanzania's commitment to international climate goals and emphasized the importance of building a strong economy despite the challenges posed by climate change.

"In my speech at COP 29, I mentioned that climate change costs Tanzania up to 2-3 percent of GDP annually, resulting in billions of shillings in lost potential," said Dr. Mpango.

"It is encouraging to see that CEOrt is also working to engage businesses in the climate agenda."

Dr. Mpango urged CEOrt members to continue their efforts by creating innovative solutions and fostering partnerships that would help businesses align with Tanzania's climate goals, unlocking new

opportunities in the process.

The Vice President also highlighted the Government's ongoing investment in key infrastructure sectors such as roads, railways, water, air transport, and energy, all of which are essential for economic growth and development.

"We are ensuring that we improve the business and investment environment by implementing policies that foster a competitive private sector," he emphasized. "This includes streamlining business registration processes, removing regulatory barriers, and establishing one-stop service centers to reduce bureaucracy and combat corruption."

He made it clear that Tanzania is positioning itself as a key player in regional and global markets, attracting investments, and driving growth.

On the social development front, Dr. Mpango highlighted significant achievements in areas such as food security, education, healthcare, and gender equality.

He noted that student enrollment rates have reached 97% by 2022, healthcare access has improved, leading to a reduction in maternal and infant mortality, and the representation of women in education and leadership positions has increased.

"The private sector has played a crucial role in these successes, and it is important for each of us to continue our efforts, take responsibility, and show patriotism in fulfilling our duties," he said. "Together, we can achieve the goals of the National Development Vision 2050."

Dr. Mpango reaffirmed the Government's commitment to strengthening public-private partnerships, which are vital for fostering national and economic development.

# Latest US strike on China's chips hits semi-conductor toolmakers

By Karen Freifeld & David Shepardson

chip industry leaders like Nvidia in AI chips and chip equipment maker ASML in the Netherlands.

THE US will launch its third crack-down in three years on China's semi-conductor industry on Monday, restricting exports to 140 companies including chip equipment maker Naura Technology Group, among other moves, according to two people familiar with the matter.

The effort to hobble Beijing's chipmaking ambitions will also hit Chinese chip toolmakers Piotech and SiCarrier Technology with new export restrictions as part of the package, which also takes aim at shipments of advanced memory chips and more chipmaking tools to China.

The move marks one of the Biden Administration's last large scale effort to stymie China's ability to access and produce chips that can help advance artificial intelligence for military applications or otherwise threaten US national security.

It comes just weeks before the swearing in of Republican former president Donald Trump, who is expected to keep in place many of Biden's tough-on-China measures.

The package includes curbs on China-bound shipments of high bandwidth memory (HBM) chips, which are critical for high-end applications like AI training; new curbs on 24 additional chipmaking tools and three software tools; and new export restrictions on chipmaking equipment manufactured in countries including Singapore and Malaysia.

The tool controls will likely hurt Lam Research, KLA and Applied Materials, as well as non-U.S. companies like Dutch equipment maker ASM International.

Among Chinese companies facing new restrictions are nearly two dozen semiconductor companies, two investment companies and over 100 chipmaking tool makers, the sources said. U.S. lawmakers say some of the companies, including Swaysure Technology Co, Qingdao SiEn, and Shenzhen Pensun Technology Co, work with China's Huawei Technologies, the telecommunications equipment leader once hobbled by US sanctions and now at the center of China's advanced chip production and development.

They will be added to the entity list, which bars US suppliers from shipping to them without first receiving a special license.

China has stepped up its drive to become self-sufficient in the semiconductor sector in recent years, as the US and other countries have restricted exports of the advanced chips and the tools to make them. However, it remains years behind

The US also is poised to place additional restrictions on Semi-conductor Manufacturing International, China's largest contract chip manufacturer, which was placed on the Entity List in 2020 but with a policy that allowed billions of dollars' worth of licenses to ship goods to it to be granted.

For the first time, the US will add two companies that make investments in chips to the entity list. Chinese private equity firm Wise Road Capital and tech firm Wingtech Technology Co will be added.

Companies seeking licenses to ship to firms on the Entity List generally get denied.

An aspect of the new package that addresses the foreign direct product rule could hurt some U.S. allies by limiting what their companies can ship to China. The new rule will expand U.S. powers to curb exports of chipmaking equipment by US, Japanese, and Dutch manufacturers made in other parts of the world to certain chip plants in China.

Equipment made in Malaysia, Singapore, Israel, Taiwan and South Korea is subject to the rule while the Netherlands and Japan will be exempt. The expanded foreign direct product rule will apply to 16 companies on the entity list that are seen as the most important to China's most advanced chipmaking ambitions.

The rule will also lower to zero the amount of US content that determines when certain foreign items are subject to US control. That will allow the US to regulate any item shipped to China from overseas if it contains any US chips.

The new rules are being released after lengthy discussions with Japan and the Netherlands, which, along with the US, dominate the production of advanced chipmaking equipment. The US plans to exempt countries that put in place similar controls, the people said.

Another rule in the package restricts memory used in AI chips that correspond with what is known as "HBM 2" and higher, technology made by South Korea's Samsung and SK Hynix and US-based Micron. Industry sources only expect Samsung Electronics to be impacted. The latest rules are the third major package of chip-related export restrictions on China implemented under the Biden administration.

In October 2022, the US published a sweeping set of controls to curb the sale and manufacture of certain high-end chips which were considered to be the biggest shift in US tech policy toward China since the 1990s.

# Trump demands 'commitment' from BRICS on using US dollar

By Stephanie Lai

US President-elect Donald Trump warned the so-called BRICS nations that he would require commitments that they would not move to create a new currency as an alternative to using the US dollar and repeated threats to levy a 100percent tariff.

"The idea that the BRICS Countries are trying to move away from the dollar while we stand by and watch is OVER," Trump said in a post to his Truth Social network on Saturday.

"We require a commitment from these Countries that they will neither create a new BRICS Currency, nor back any other Currency to replace the mighty US Dollar or, they will face 100percent Tariffs, and should expect to say goodbye to selling into the wonderful US Economy," he added.

Trump on his campaign trail pledged that he would make it costly for countries to move away from the US dollar. And he's threatened to use tariffs to ensure they complied. Saturday's threat took on new relevance as the president-elect prepares to retake power in January.

Trump and his economic advisers have been discussing ways to punish allies and adversaries alike who seek to engage in bilateral trade in currencies other than the dollar.

The measures include considering options such as export controls, currency manipulation charges and levies on trade, Bloomberg News reported in April. Trump has long stressed that he wants the US dollar to remain the world's reserve currency, saying in a March interview with CNBC that he "would not allow countries to go off the dollar" because it would be "a hit to our country."

The president-elect's warning against the BRICS nations suggests "how confused the incoming administration is about the global trade and capital system," according to Michael Pettis, a senior fellow at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

"The US cannot both reduce its trade deficit and increase the global dominance of USD because these impose diametrically opposed conditions," Pettis said on his X account.



The BRICS group of emerging-market nations – the acronym stands for Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa – expanded this year to include Iran, the United Arab Emirates, Ethiopia and Egypt.

It discussed the issue of de-dollarization at a summit in 2023. Backlash against the dollar's dominance gained traction in 2022 when the US led efforts to impose economic sanctions on Russia.

While some potential dollar rivals such as the Chinese yuan have already made inroads, that has often happened at the expense of currencies other than the dollar.

Despite the group's rhetoric, the infrastructure that backs the dollar, such as the cross-border payment system, will likely give the US currency a decisive edge for decades to come.

Evidence of this emerged during the bloc's October meeting in Kazan hosted by Russian President Vladimir Putin, a champion of reducing the international role of the dollar.

Organizers for the meeting encouraged attendees to bring US dollars or euros with them as non-Russian Mastercard or Visa cards don't work in the country.

Economic advisers to Trump and his

campaign have spoken in particular about targeting the BRICS effort.

"There is no chance that the BRICS will replace the US Dollar in International Trade, and any Country that tries should wave goodbye to America," Trump said Saturday.

The president-elect has already rattled world markets ahead of his second term with threats to levy an additional 10percent tariffs on goods from China and 25percent tariffs on all products from Mexico and Canada if those countries do not do more to stem the flow of illegal drugs and undocumented migrants across US borders.

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau met with Trump on Friday to discuss trade and border issues in a bid to tamp down tensions between the two allied nations after the tariff threat.

But other nations may consider ways to mitigate the Trump tariffs on their economies. China could allow its yuan to depreciate by as much as 10-15percent in response to any trade war unleashed by Trump, according to JPMorgan Chase & Co.

The bank sees a 5percent average depreciation in emerging-market currencies over the first half of 2025.

VIEW FROM THE TOP





## WORLD

## GCC calls for end to Gaza conflict

HONG KONG

THE leaders of the Gulf Cooperation Council countries have again demanded that Israel end its collective punishment of the Palestinian people and occupation in Gaza.

Their calls came at the 45th session of the GCC Summit on Dec 1, which took place amid a fragile Lebanon-Israeli peace truce and raging atrocities in Gaza and the West Bank.

"The Supreme Council demanded a halt to the crimes of killing and collective punishment in Gaza, the displacement of residents, and the destruction of civilian facilities and infrastructure, including health facilities, schools, and places of worship, in clear violation of international law and international humanitarian law," the declaration published on the GCC website said.

The representatives of the GCC – Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Bahrain, Kuwait, and Oman – held a wide-ranging dialogue at the session in Kuwait City.

The GCC also called for intervention to protect civilians, to sponsor serious negotiations while reaffirming its firm

stances on the Palestinian cause, and to support the sovereignty of the Palestinian people over all of the occupied Palestinian territories dating back to June 1967.

They reiterated their desire for the establishment of an independent Palestinian state with East Jerusalem as its capital, and guaranteeing the rights of refugees, per the Arab Peace Initiative and international legitimacy resolutions.

The Gulf leaders also welcomed the resolutions of the extraordinary Arab-Islamic summit, hosted by Saudi Arabia on Nov 11, to enhance international action to halt the conflict in Gaza, achieve lasting and comprehensive peace, and implement the two-state solution.

On Nov 11, Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman led a summit in Riyadh denouncing Israel's genocide. In October, Saudi Arabia hosted the first meeting of a new international alliance pushing to establish a Palestinian state.

The GCC welcomed mobilizing support for the recognition of the State of Palestine and leading the international coalition to implement the two-state solution. It cited Qatar, which had been



A handout picture released by the press office of the Emir of Kuwait Diwan shows a general view of the 45th Gulf Cooperation Council meeting in Kuwait City of Dec 1, 2024. AFP

heavily involved in cease-fire talks.

They also discussed efforts to achieve economic diversification, the transition to a sustainable and innovative economic model, and enhanced cooperation with security and stability in mind.

The GCC leaders condemned Israeli aggression against Lebanon, warning against the dangers of its continuation and expansion of the conflict, threatening international peace and security.

Gokhan Erel, Gulf studies coordinator at the Center for Middle Eastern Studies in Türkiye, told China Daily that the GCC statement underscores its aspiration to emerge as "a pivotal regional leader, demonstrating a resolute commitment to managing crises and fostering stability through diplomacy and dialogue".

He said by addressing the humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza, advocating for adherence to international law, and calling for a cessation of hostilities in Lebanon, the GCC reaffirmed its proactive stance in "navigating complex geopolitical challenges". "Its support for the Palestinian cause and the revival of the Yemeni peace process further high-

lights its dedication to sustainable conflict resolution and regional cohesion," he said. "Their stance also reflects genuine historical and cultural commitments to Palestinian rights, rooted in domestic and regional pressures," said Erel.

Speaking to reporters a day before the summit in Kuwait, GCC Secretary-General Jassem Alabdaiwi strongly criticized Israel's allies for failing to convince Tel Aviv to end the "barbaric aggression" against the Palestinian people.

"Even Israel's closest allies failed to influence its government to stop the barbaric military operations in Gaza," Alabdaiwi was quoted as saying by Middle East Monitor.

In Israel, former defense minister Moshe Yaalon accused the Israeli government of committing war crimes and ethnic cleansing in Gaza, during an interview with Israeli public broadcaster Kan.

Meanwhile, Israeli President Isaac Herzog said on Dec 1 that as there was an agreement reached regarding the northern border with Lebanon, it was time to finalize a deal and bring the hostages home from Gaza and said that negotiations were taking place "behind

## Beijing boosts foreign investment via business environment optimisation

BEIJING

THE Chinese capital of Beijing has solidified its appeal as a hub for foreign investment through continuous efforts to improve its business environment.

Beijing hosts 252 regional headquarters of multinational companies and 149 foreign-funded research and development (R&D) centers. In the first eight months of 2024, 121 major foreign-funded R&D centers in the municipality invested 13.77 billion yuan (about 1.92 billion U.S. dollars) in R&D, up 29.9 percent year on year.

"Beijing has consistently prioritized improving its business environment as a crucial strategy to transform government functions, boost the vitality of enterprises, and strengthen the internal drivers of economic growth," Beijing's Deputy Mayor Sima Hong said.

For seven consecutive years, the Beijing municipal government has updated its business environment reform plan – introducing more than 1,500 reform measures in this process.

Tetsuro Homma, executive vice president of Panasonic Holdings Corporation and group chief executive for China & Northeast Asia, told Xinhua that since Panasonic established its joint venture in Beijing in 1987, the company has witnessed and benefited significantly from improvements in the city's business environment.

"China boasts a vast market, a comprehensive industrial and supply chain, strong adaptability to new technologies, and immense economic development potential, offering enterprises extensive opportunities for growth," said Homma.

"Major foreign firms are bullish on China's long-term growth prospects," said Li Yang, secretary-general of the Beijing Association of Enterprises with Foreign Investment, while adding that foreign firms continue to regard the country as a preferred investment destination.

To improve its business environment further, Beijing is also striving to transform and elevate its reform achievements into regulations.

On July 1 this year, Beijing's first special regulation on foreign investment took effect. Moreover, Beijing on Friday passed the newly revised regulation on optimizing its business environment, representing the capital's latest effort to promote further opening up and boost its appeal to global investors. This regulation took effect in 2020 and was first revised in 2022.

Zhang Jiachun, managing partner of Chinese law firm East & Concord Partners, noted that this effort will further foster a stable, fair, transparent and predictable business environment.

"The revision of the regulation demonstrates the municipal government's strong commitment to enhancing the business environment and supporting enterprise development in the city – which reinforces our confidence in growing in Beijing," said Yu Feng, president of Honeywell China, adding that the company will expand its investment in the capital.

Honeywell, a Fortune 500 company headquartered in the United States, has been present in the Chinese market for nearly 90 years. It has formed a full value chain in China, ranging from manufacturing and technology R&D to procurement and supply chain, and has actively joined hands with upstream and downstream enterprises in the supply chain to effectively integrate into local economic development.

Xinhua

## Lavrov dismisses West's ceasefire idea: 'not a path to peace'

MOSCOW

Russia rejects Western claims that a ceasefire will help the situation in Ukraine, as that will not lead to a lasting peace, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said.

"We are growing more and more concerned about what we are hearing from the West lately. The West – Brussels, London, Paris, Washington are starting to float the idea of a ceasefire as a means to give a respite to Ukraine and hence grant themselves a possibility to flood Ukraine with advanced long-range weapons again. Of course, this is not a path to peace," he said at a meeting with his visiting Hungarian counterpart, Peter Szijjarto, as follows from a video posted on the latter's Facebook page (Facebook is banned in Russia due to its ownership by Meta, which has been designated as extremist).

"It looks like Western leaders are doing [Vladimir] Zelensky's bidding, giving in to all of his whims," Lavrov said. "Their position has been: not a word about Ukraine without Ukraine. But that they have been discussing Russia under the 'Zelensky formula' without Russia for more than two years doesn't seem to bother anyone," he added.

According to the top Russian diplomat, Moscow is ready for an honest discussion. "We are ready for honest talks, as President [of Russia Vladimir] Putin said. Although he suggested that Zelensky's sponsors first talk him into revoking his decree banning any talks with the Putin government. As for us, we are ready for talks if they take into account the legitimate interests of all parties," he stressed.

## Israel strikes southern Lebanon, citing Hezbollah ceasefire violations

JERUSALEM/BEIRUT

ISRAEL'S military confirmed on Sunday that it had carried out several strikes in southern Lebanon over the past two days, describing the actions as efforts to "thwart" violations of the ceasefire agreement with Hezbollah.

In a statement, the military said it had targeted a church used by Hezbollah militants. According to the statement, the militants – identified by the Israeli side as members of Hezbollah's Khiam ground defense, anti-tank missile, and artillery units – had reportedly fired at Israeli troops from the church.

"Over the past day, the IDF (Israel Defense Forces) operated in several locations in southern Lebanon to remove threats to the State of Israel that were in violation of the ceasefire agreement," the statement read. "The IDF remains in southern Lebanon and acts against any threat to the State of Israel."

Earlier on Sunday, French diplomats warned that Israel had violated the ceasefire agreement with Lebanon in at least 52 separate incidents, according to a report by the Israeli news outlet Ynet. France cautioned that such breaches risk undermining the fragile agreement.

The ceasefire, signed last week, was intended to halt the deadly cross-border fighting between Israel and Hezbollah that erupted last October.

Separately, a five-member monitoring committee on the ceasefire agreement between Israel and Hezbollah in Lebanon will start its work within the next 48 hours, Lebanese security sources told Xinhua on Sunday.

The unnamed sources noted that the committee will be led by US General Jasper Jeffers, who recently arrived in Lebanon, with Brigadier General Edgar Lowndes from the Lebanese army representing Lebanon. Other members will include representatives from France, Israel, and the United Nations.



Residents walk on the rubble of destroyed buildings after they returned to Qana village, southern Lebanon, on Nov 28, 2024 following a ceasefire between Israel and Hezbollah that went into effect on Nov 27. AP

## French far right says government spurned budget talks

PARIS

FRANCE'S far right National Rally (RN) leaders said on Sunday that the government had rebuffed its calls for more budget concessions, raising the chances of a no confidence vote in the coming days that could topple Prime Minister Michel Barnier.

RN lawmaker Marine Le Pen had given Barnier until Monday to yield to the party's budget demands or face the threat that they would back a likely no confidence

motion against his government, which would trigger its collapse.

But Le Pen said the government had in effect "put an end to discussions", she told French news agency Agence France-Presse in a major escalation of the standoff.

Earlier on Sunday she had said that Barnier faced a choice of either negotiating new concessions or face the threat that his government falls in a vote of no confidence.

Barnier already dropped

a planned electricity tax increase last week, but the RN also wants him to raise pensions in line with inflation whereas he had aimed to raise some less than inflation to save money.

The RN also wants planned cuts to medication reimbursements to be scrapped and is unhappy the government may raise tax on gas. It also wants a cut in France's contribution to the European Union's budget among other demands.

The standoff between the

government could come to a head as early as Monday if Barnier has to use aggressive constitutional powers to force a social security financing bill through, which would inevitably trigger a no-confidence motion from the left.

To survive the vote in the fractured lower house, Barnier needs the RN to abstain, otherwise his government and the budget bill could fall, plunging France deep into a political crisis.

Budget Minister Laurent Saint-Martin said on Sunday

the government respected a compromise on the social security bill reached by lawmakers, which RN party head Jordan Bardella said he took to mean it would not make further changes.

"Through stubbornness and sectarianism, the minority government is putting an end to negotiations, running the risk of a vote of no confidence," Bardella said on X. As the standoff worsens, Saint-Martin and Finance Minister Antoine Armand warned that French taxpayers and pensioners

would suffer direct consequences in the event of a no confidence vote.

Armand said in le Journal du Dimanche weekend newspaper that would mean special emergency legislation would have to be passed to ensure that there would be a budget at the start of the year.

But it could only roll over spending limits and tax provisions from this year, which means pensions would get squeezed and tax thresholds would rise for 17 million people as neither could be

adjusted for inflation.

The growing uncertainty over France's budget and the future of its government has put French debt and stocks under pressure, pushing the risk premium on the government's bonds to a more than 12-year high last week.

Standard & Poor's offered some relief on Friday, leaving its AA- rating on French debt unchanged although it raised doubts about whether France could stick to the government's deficit-reduction targets.



# China boosts AIDS prevention with timely post-exposure care

**BEIJING**  
 “AMID a chaotic struggle, a police officer was accidentally scratched by a drug dealer known to be HIV-positive,” a university student retold the medical information he had memorized in just 30 seconds. He continued, “In a race against time, the officer immediately started post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP), following medical advice, and after completing a rigorous 28-day treatment, he tested negative for the virus.”

This was part of the ninth National College Student AIDS Prevention Knowledge Competition, held at Beijing Forestry University on Saturday, one day before the 37th World AIDS Day on Dec. 1. Established in 2016, the national knowledge competition aims to raise awareness among young people about HIV/AIDS.

Since its inception, it has engaged 6,320 universities and reached a total of 1742 million students, according to Sun Xinhua, president of the Chinese Foundation for Prevention of STDs (sexually transmitted diseases) and AIDS. This competition is just one of many efforts China has made in its long-standing fight against the “incurable devil” over the past four decades since the country reported its first case in 1985.

The theme of this year’s anti-AIDS campaign in China focuses on taking the right path to end AIDS and improve public health through a society-wide synergy. The campaign aims to address the public health threat and help

achieve the goal of HIV/AIDS elimination by 2030.

HIV, the virus that causes AIDS, can often be controlled with early detection and treatment, preventing the progression to AIDS. That’s why timely interventions, like PEP, are crucial in combating the disease and early treatments might be the silver lining before the situation worsens beyond control.

According to experts, PEP can be more than 80 percent effective when taken correctly. The sooner PEP is started after exposure, the higher the success rate. It is most effective if taken within 2 hours and should be started no later than 72 hours after exposure. Completing the full 28-day course is crucial, and individuals should avoid high-risk behaviors during treatment.

As of now, PEP outpatient clinics have been established in 31 provinces, autonomous regions, and municipalities across China, with a total of 924 clinics in operation, according to information released in mid-November by the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention (China CDC). “As an incurable disease that poses serious risks to both individuals and society, AIDS is not distant from anyone,” said Lyu Fan, deputy director at the National Center for AIDS/STD Control and Prevention of China CDC. “Raising awareness and teaching self-protection among key groups is crucial to reducing transmission risks and preventing new infections.”

China has largely halted the spread of HIV through blood



transfusions and blood products, while transmission from mother to child and among injection drug users has dropped to historical lows, said Chang Jile, deputy head of the National Disease Control and Prevention Administration.

However, new HIV infections in China are rising among both younger and older demographics with sexual transmission remaining the main route of spread, according to Li Taisheng, director of the Department of Infectious Diseases at Peking Union Medical College Hospital. This year, a new edition of China’s AIDS diagnosis and treatment guide has been released, outlining a series of preemptive measures to shield people from AIDS, among which the most important measure is the use of condoms to prevent sexual transmission of AIDS.

In the run-up to World AIDS Day, Chinese Vice Premier Liu Guozhong visited China’s CDC on Friday and connected via video

with a hospital in Kashgar, Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, to gain a detailed understanding of the current AIDS prevention and control efforts in the region. “Combating AIDS is a key task in building a healthy China,” Liu said.

“Through joint efforts across society, China has maintained overall control of the AIDS epidemic at a low prevalence level.” Liu acknowledged that the factors contributing to AIDS transmission are complex and diverse, making prevention and control challenging.

He stressed the need for continued efforts to strengthen monitoring and early warning systems, increase proactive screening and testing, and implement more comprehensive intervention strategies. In the meantime, humanitarian support for people with HIV should also be enhanced to help them build confidence and better integrate into society, Liu said.

# Xi stresses comprehensively advancing high-quality Belt and Road cooperation

**BEIJING**

CHINESE President Xi Jinping yesterday stressed comprehensively advancing high-quality cooperation under the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).

Xi (pictured), also general secretary of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and chairman of the Central Military Commission, made the remarks when addressing a symposium on BRI development.

It is imperative to strengthen strategic confidence, maintain strategic focus and act courageously with a sense of responsibility to create a brighter future for Belt and Road cooperation, Xi said.

Since the initiative was put forth in 2013, major achievements have been made in Belt and Road cooperation, which contributed to enhancing China’s friendship with participating countries and promoting their economic and social development, Xi said.

Noting that the world has entered a new period of turbulence and change in recent years, he urged efforts to appropriately manage all types of risks and challenges and effectively address the impact of geopolitical conflicts while advancing high-quality Belt and Road cooperation.

It is necessary to properly handle the relationship between strengthening participating countries’ sense of fulfillment and ensuring the benefits for China, Xi said, while calling for concrete measures to safeguard China’s overseas interests.



Xinhua

# Accords of undefined status cannot be subject of Ukraine talks – Russian senate speaker

**MOSCOW**

MOSCOW will make neither “one-day half-measures” nor “agreements of undefined status” the subject of talks on the Ukraine issue, given the volatile domestic situation in the US, Russian Federation Council (upper house of parliament) Chairperson Valentina Matviyenko said.

“Given such an unstable and unreliable domestic situation in the US, which is expected to remain unchanged in the near future, we cannot and will not focus talks on some one-day half-measures or agreements of undefined status, or discuss anything like a short-term ‘freezing’ of the conflict and the like. This is certainly not the solution to resolve issues of long-term security in the region,” the senate speaker said in an interview with the aif.ru media outlet.

She emphasized that the Russian president had outlined all the conditions, “and it’s only on this basis that genuine talks can be held.” Moreover, in Matviyenko’s words, Russia should not focus on Washington, waiting to see how things unfold

there. “We need to continue working independently to achieve our goals, which is what we are doing,” she stated.

The Russian upper house chairperson pointed out that Russia was consistently and effectively working to overcome thousands of unjust sanctions, while accelerating development efforts, particularly aimed at achieving technological leadership, advancing progress in the special military operation zone, and enhancing national security, as proven by the demonstration of its new capabilities such as the Oreshnik hypersonic ballistic missile.



# Biden says he has pardoned his son, Hunter

**WASHINGTON**

US President Joe Biden said on Sunday he had pardoned his son, Hunter Biden, who had been convicted of making false statements on a gun background check and illegally possessing a firearm and pled guilty to federal tax charges.

“Today, I signed a pardon for my son Hunter. From the day I took office, I said I would not interfere with the Justice Department’s decision-making, and I kept my word even as I have watched my son being selectively, and unfairly, prosecuted,” he said in a statement released by the White House.

The White House had said repeatedly that Biden would not pardon or commute the sentences of his son, a recovering drug addict who became a target of Republicans, including President-elect Donald Trump.

“No reasonable person who looks at the facts of Hunter’s cases can reach any other conclusion than Hunter was singled out only because he is my son,” Biden said.

Hunter Biden faced sentencing for the false statements and gun convictions on Wednesday. In September he pled guilty to federal charges of failing to pay \$1.4 million in taxes while spending lavishly on drugs, sex workers and luxury items. He faced



President Joe Biden and son Hunter Biden walk in downtown Nantucket Massachusetts, Nov 29, 2024. (PHOTO / AP)

sentencing in that case on Dec 16.

“I have admitted and taken responsibility for my mistakes during the darkest days of my addiction - mistakes that have been exploited to publicly humiliate and shame me and my family for political sport,” Hunter Biden said in a statement on Sunday, adding he had remained sober for more than five years.

“In the throes of addiction, I squandered many opportunities and advantages ... I will never take the clemency I have been

given today for granted and will devote the life I have rebuilt to helping those who are still sick and suffering.”

The president, whose son Beau died of brain cancer in 2015, said his opponents had sought to break Hunter with selective prosecution.

He said people were almost never brought to trial for felony charges over how they filled out a gun form, and said others who were late in paying taxes because of addiction but paid them back with interest and penalties

as his son had typically received “non-criminal resolutions” to their cases.

“It is clear that Hunter was treated differently. The charges in his cases came about only after several of my political opponents in Congress instigated them to attack me and oppose my election,” Biden said. “In trying to break Hunter, they’ve tried to break me - and there’s no reason to believe it will stop here. Enough is enough.”

Biden said he had made the decision over the weekend. The president, his wife, Jill Biden, and their family including Hunter, spent the Thanksgiving holiday in Nantucket, Massachusetts and returned to Washington on Saturday night.

During a walk around Nantucket shops on Friday afternoon, one supporter shouted at the president from across a street to pardon his son.

“Here’s the truth: I believe in the justice system, but as I have wrestled with this, I also believe raw politics has infected this process and it led to a miscarriage of justice - and once I made this decision this weekend, there was no sense in delaying it further,” Biden said.

“I hope Americans will understand why a father and a President would come to this decision.”

# Trump picks daughter’s father-in-law as Middle East adviser

**WASHINGTON**

U.S. President-elect Donald Trump on Sunday nominated Massad Boulos, his daughter’s father-in-law, as his senior adviser on Arab and Middle Eastern affairs.

“I am proud to announce that Massad Boulos will serve as Senior Advisor to the President on Arab and Middle Eastern affairs,” Trump announced on his social media platform Truth Social, adding another family relative to the foreign policy team of his incoming administration.

Father-in-law of Trump’s youngest daughter, Tiffany Trump, Boulos was described by the president-elect as “an accomplished lawyer and a highly respected leader in the business world,” “an asset” to his 2024 presidential campaign, and “instrumental in building tremendous new coalitions with the Arab American Community.”

Born in Lebanon into a family closely tied to Lebanese politics, Boulos moved to Texas as a teenager, where he attended the University of Houston and obtained a law degree.

After completing his education, Boulos returned to his family’s business and took over as CEO of SCOA Nigeria, a billion-dollar conglomerate specializing in the distribution of motor vehicles and equipment across West Africa.

Boulos is the second Trump family relative to be offered a key role in the second Trump administration, following the nomination of Charles Kushner, father of Trump’s son-in-law, Jared Kushner, as the next U.S. ambassador to France on Saturday.

# Ontario Court affirms Tanzanian Justice amid Barrick abuse claims

**ONTARIO**

THE Ontario Superior Court of Justice in Canada has affirmed its respect for the Tanzanian court system’s independence and capability to administer justice effectively.

This ruling came in response to a case initiated by Mining Watch Canada, representing 32 villagers from communities adjacent to the North Mara Gold Mine.

The plaintiffs’ counsel expressed concerns about the independence of Tanzanian courts, suggesting their clients might not receive fair justice if the case were filed there. In contrast, the defence maintained that the Tanzanian judiciary operates independently.

On November 23, 2022, Mining Watch Canada filed claims

alleging that Barrick Gold’s security measures at the North Mara mine effectively turned the local police into a heavily armed security force for the mine.

The plaintiffs further claimed that this strategy resulted in severe human rights abuses, including deaths, shootings, beatings, and torture of local residents.

Justice Edward Morgan of the Ontario Superior Court ultimately dismissed the lawsuit against Barrick, which was accused of human rights violations.

A contentious debate arose regarding the court’s jurisdiction under the forum non conveniens principle, requiring Barrick to prove that the alternative forum, Tanzania, was significantly more appropriate than Ontario for this case.

Both parties invested considerable resources examining the strengths and weaknesses of the respective legal systems. While Ontario’s court system was widely accepted, the Tanzanian legal framework faced intense scrutiny.

The plaintiffs presented expert reports to argue that the Tanzanian system was inadequate, while Barrick countered with evidence asserting that such critiques were unfounded and that the Tanzanian judiciary could handle the case.

Justice Morgan sided with Barrick, agreeing that Tanzanian courts were better equipped to address the matter. He dismissed the plaintiffs’ claims that the Tanzanian judicial system was deficient and criticized their application in Canada as an attempt to undermine the Tanza-

nian justice system.

He also noted that the plaintiffs’ assertion of financial incapacity to obtain counsel in Tanzania was unfounded, citing the existence of numerous legal aid centers across the country.

Barrick argued for the dismissal of claims based on a lack of jurisdiction or the inconvenient forum doctrine, which recognizes a more suitable venue for the case. To support their claims about Tanzania courts’ shortcomings, the plaintiffs called upon notable Tanzanian lawyers Fatma Karume and Boniface Mwambukusi as witnesses, while Barrick presented retired Tanzania Chief Justice Mohamed Chande Othman.

In his testimony, Chief Justice Othman emphasized that the Tanzanian judiciary is organized, transparent, and capable

of delivering fair justice. During cross-examination, Justice Morgan remarked that the characterization of the Tanzanian justice system was further validated by the insights revealed during questioning.

Testimonies from the plaintiffs’ witnesses highlighted their personal challenges with the Tanzanian legal system. Karume, who faced professional misconduct charges after a constitutional challenge, was noted by Justice Morgan to have been disciplined for incivility rather than her legal actions. Similarly, Mwambukusi’s claims of professional repercussions were undermined by evidence of his own misconduct during a pending case.

The plaintiffs contended that the Tanzanian judiciary lacked independence due to excessive

executive influence over judicial appointments and salaries. This argument relied on an affidavit from Kenyan lawyer Donald Deya, who found Tanzania lacking in judicial independence compared to its East African neighbours.

Chief Justice Othman clarified that while the president appoints judges, this process involves consultation with an independent judicial commission. Justice Morgan observed that the Tanzanian constitution imposes more checks on the executive in judicial appointments than the Canadian constitution does, noting that the appointment process in both countries shares significant similarities.

Justice Morgan concluded that the plaintiffs’ arguments regarding judicial independence were unfounded and empha-

sized that the Tanzanian system affords similar protections as Canada. He also addressed the plaintiffs’ claims of difficulty in finding legal representation in Tanzania, countering that legal aid resources are available to assist indigent individuals.

Despite the plaintiffs’ assertions, Justice Morgan pointed out that there was no evidence they had sought help from Tanzanian lawyers or legal aid clinics, leaving their claims of unavailability unsubstantiated. He remarked that a trial in Tanzania was necessary to ensure all pertinent evidence could be presented in court, given the geographical distance of Ontario from the case’s core issues and the likely absence of key witnesses in an Ontario trial.



# SPORT

## Women's sport rides popularity wave to growth in year 2025

By Amy Tennery

MAJOR gains in television viewing and attendance at women's sports in 2024 will give way to expansion in 2025 as start-ups and established leagues alike look to take advantage of the surging interest, industry leaders and experts say.

North America's top-flight National Women's Soccer League (NWSL) and Women's National Basketball Association (WNBA) both saw record viewing figures, while fans in the United Kingdom devoted more time than ever to watching the Women's Super League (WSL) and television ratings soared for Women's Premier League cricket in its second season.

Deep-pocketed investors took notice, and growth will be the theme for 2025 as the WNBA welcomes its first new franchise since 2008 when the Golden State Valkyries begin play next year.

The WNBA, which is also preparing for two more teams in 2026 in Portland and Toronto, had its most-watched regular season with 1.2 million average viewers on ESPN, according to the broadcaster, while an average of 1.6 million watched the Finals, the biggest audience in 25 years.

The league had enjoyed steady growth in recent years but the surge was helped along by a compelling rookie class led by Caitlin Clark, whose record-smashing collegiate career was a watershed moment for women's sport in the United States.

Clark will hope her extraordinary star power will help in her joint bid to bring an NWSL team to Cincinnati, as the women's soccer league considers three contenders, including Denver and Cleveland, for a fresh expansion franchise.

The league saw average viewership of 967,900 for this year's championship, up 18% from 2023, the NWSL said, and is preparing to expand to 15 members when a Boston team joins in 2026.

The value of NWSL and WNBA teams is expected to grow by at least \$1.6 billion over the next three years, according to research released late last month by The Collective, sports and entertainment agency

Wasserman's women's division.

"The women's sports industry is an incredibly valuable and rapidly growing sector," The Collective Managing Director Thayer Lavielle said in a statement.

"WNBA and NWSL teams are leading the charge but this growth is not limited to these leagues – it's about the growth of the entire women's sports ecosystem."

A PwC survey this year of more than 400 industry leaders showed 85% expected double-digit growth for women's sports revenues in the next three to five years, with soccer, basketball and rugby in particular getting a boost from major events.

The climate has been appealing for new outfits too, as Premier Lacrosse League last month announced a women's league that will debut next year, and the six-team Women's Professional Baseball League (WPBL) plans to kick off in 2026.

The WPBL was approached by dozens of potential owners in the week after they announced their launch in October, according to Keith Stein, co-founder of the league with pioneer Justine Siegal, the first woman to coach a professional men's baseball team.

"Over 40% of Major League Baseball fans are women and women's professional sports -- even women's collegiate sports -- have never been more recognized by the public than today," Siegal told Reuters.

"It's a perfect time to take a game that women have been loving for centuries and give them a chance not just to play but also be in leadership positions."

REUTERS



Minnesota Lynx forward Napheesa Collier (24) is blocked from behind by New York Liberty forward Breanna Stewart (30) in the third quarter during game five of the 2024 WNBA Finals at Barclays Center on Oct 20, 2024 in Brooklyn, New York, USA. Agencies

## SPORTS

## Simba ascend encouragingly as Yanga suffer an agonising loss in CAF group stages

By Lloyd Ellipoke

LAST week, those bitter rivals Simba SC and Young Africans SC kicked off their efforts to make deep runs in the CAF Confederation Cup and the CAF Champions League respectively.

Indeed, the long-awaited group stage of the CAF Confederation Cup and the CAF Champions League got up and running last week as both local football titans were tasked with starting this crucial phase of these two immensely respected continental competitions on the right footing.

Heading into their potentially daunting clash against their familiar Sudanese adversaries Al Hilal last Tuesday at the widely-known Benjamin Mkapa Stadium here in Dar es Salaam, Young Africans must have been incredibly eager to secure a triumph on their home patch.

Distressingly for the ginormous Young Africans fan-base, things miserably failed to unfold according to the script.

To the utter dismay of all Young Africans devotees in attendance, Al Hilal were not deterred by the heavily partisan home crowd as the Sudanese football outfit clinched a convincing 2-0 win.

As if that were not enough, all Young Africans supporters were rendered gloomier a day later on Wednesday as their age-old foes Simba hosted the Angolan side Bravos do Maquis at the admirably grand Benjamin Mkapa Stadium.

Seeking to begin their CAF Confederation Cup's group stage campaign on a positive note, Simba absolutely played a blinder in the first half and significantly, they assumed the lead in the 23rd minute via an expertly as well as coolly taken penalty kick by Jean Ahoua.

One minute into the second half, Simba's lead was put in jeopardy



Simba SC starting line-up against Bravos do Maquis during their CAF Confederation Cup group stage match at the Benjamin Mkapa Stadium last week. Photo: Courtesy of SSC

when Bravos were awarded a penalty following a foul by Kibu Dennis.

Thankfully though, the Bravos' player Emmanuel Edmond fluffed his spot-kick as Simba's goalkeeper Moussa Camara produced a remarkable save to thwart the Angolan side's efforts to restore parity.

In the wake of that costly penalty miss, Bravos ramped up their pressure on Simba but the Tanzanian club was able to withstand the seemingly relentless attacks to claim a morale-boosting victory.

Obviously, these are still early days in the group stage of the CAF Confederation Cup and the CAF Champions League.

In light of that, Young Africans would do well to adopt an indomitable spirit in their upcoming matches whereas for Simba, keeping their feet firmly on the ground ought to stand them in good stead.

Moving on, 2024 has proven to be an extraordinary year of drama-filled, non-stop sporting action which

thrilled all of us to the hilt.

It must be said that African football greats were at the center of the action-packed 2023-24 football season as was demonstrated by the lethal Nigerian forward Ademola Lookman in the Europa League final on May 22nd, this year.

Indeed, in what was an utterly engrossing Europa League final, Lookman stole the show by producing a completely terrific display, which inspired his Serie A team Atalanta to rout the German bigwigs Bayer Leverkusen 3-0 and lift the trophy for the first time in the Italian side's history.

Unquestionably, Lookman was central to Atalanta's Europa League triumph as the devastatingly effective Nigerian attacker netted a hat-trick to defeat Bayer Leverkusen 3-0.

Thus, as this present 2024-25 football season continues to unfold one hopes that Lookman will cement his reputation as one of the globe's deadliest forwards.

## Cup in one hand and control in the other, India boss 2024



India's Rohit Sharma and Arshdeep Singh during the ICC T20 World Cup 2024 final against South Africa at Kensington Oval, in Bridgetown, Barbados on June 29, 2024. REUTERS

NEW DELHI

CRICKET's financial engine India ended their title drought and also tightened their vice-like grip on the game's governance but their dogged stance of not touring Pakistan has jeopardised next year's Champions Trophy across the border.

India's 11-years of hurt finally came to an end in June when the country that boasts the world's richest T20 league won the men's World Cup in this format under Rohit Sharma's inspiring captaincy.

They were unbeaten in the group stage and unperturbed in the semi-finals, where they shattered England's title defence with a comprehensive victory.

In the final against South Africa, Virat Kohli's uncanny sense of occasion and the accuracy of their pacers secured India's second T20 World Cup title.

Rohit and Kohli immediately quit T20 Internationals and Suryakumar Yadav inherited India captaincy in this format.

While India thus ended their barren run in global events, their 12-year streak of not losing a test series on home soil, however, snapped.

India also slipped behind reigning champions Australia in the race for next year's World Test Championship (WTC) final after the shock 3-0 whitewash by New

Zealand.

Their fans did not have to wallow in grief for long though.

Stand-in captain Jasprit Bumrah led a depleted side to a memorable victory against Australia in the series opener in Perth leading by example with the ball.

Opener Yashasvi Jaiswal's 'daddy hundred' suggested he was ready to inherit the mantle of batting mainstay Kohli, who roared back into form with his 30th test century.

Away from the field, the powerful Indian cricket board (BCCI) cemented their control of the game.

Jay Shah, the game's most influential administrator as the secretary of the world's richest cricket board, took over as the chairman of the International Cricket Council (ICC).

In this new role, Shah's immediate task will be to find a solution to the stalemate created by India's refusal to tour Pakistan for the Champions Trophy next year.

The bitter Asian neighbours play each other only in global tournaments and the Pakistan Cricket Board grudgingly agreed to the BCCI demands to let India play their Asia Cup matches in Sri Lanka in 2023.

The PCB has dismissed the possibility of a similar 'hybrid model' for the Champions

Trophy leaving the ICC in a bind.

The year also saw England's demise as the game's white-ball behemoth.

Captain Jos Buttler oversaw the crumbling of their second World Cup title defence in eight months when they came up short in the T20 showpiece against eventual champions India.

While it raised questions about Buttler's captaincy, Matthew Mott stepped down as the white-ball coach and Brendon 'Baz' McCullum was put in charge of the England squads in all three formats.

England's 'Bazball' philosophy to test cricket too suffered a setback with a 2-1 series loss in Pakistan where their gung-ho batting did not work on spin-friendly tracks.

Bangladesh sprang a surprise by sweeping a test series in Pakistan and Afghanistan beat South Africa in an ODI series for the first time underlining their growth.

In the women's game, New Zealand won the T20 World Cup beating South Africa in the final.

England pace great Jimmy Anderson, Australia opener David Warner and Shakib Al Hasan, easily the greatest cricketer produced by Bangladesh, quit international cricket ending illustrious careers.

REUTERS



## Real Madrid boss Ancelotti happy with Mbappe's performance in win over Getafe

MADRID

REAL Madrid coach Carlo Ancelotti was delighted with Kylian Mbappe's performance in their 2-0 victory over Getafe in LaLiga at the Santiago Bernabeu on Sunday after the Frenchman found the net but spurned a few second-half chances.

The 25-year-old France captain, who moved to the Bernabeu from French champions Paris St Germain on a free transfer in June, became Real's joint-top scorer in the league this season alongside Vinicius Jr with eight goals after his first-half strike.

Having had a subdued performance in Real's 2-0 loss at Liverpool in the Champions League on Wednesday when he failed to trouble their defence and missed a second-half penalty, Mbappe put on a spirited display against Getafe to score his 10th goal of the season across all competitions.

"He was active, dangerous and scored a great goal which was important to control the rest of the game. He was active and that's what we want from him," Ancelotti told reporters.

"The fans understand better than anyone the moment of the team and the players. They supported Mbappe after Anfield because it was the right thing to do."

Jude Bellingham converted a penalty and Mbappe added another goal before halftime against 17th-placed Getafe as the reigning champions moved within touching distance of LaLiga leaders Bar-

celona.

Real climbed to second place in the table with 33 points from 14 matches, one point behind rivals Barcelona, who have played a game more.

"Yes, a relief for everyone because it was a spectacular goal with fantastic execution," Ancelotti said when asked if it was a relief for Mbappe to score against Getafe. "Apart from that, his game was very good," the Italian added.

Real have been hit by an injury-crisis with defenders David Alaba, Eder Militao and Dani Carvajal all out with anterior cruciate ligament injuries, while forward Vinicius Jr and midfielder Aurelien Tchouameni are sidelined due to a muscle and ankle problem, respectively.

Midfielder Eduardo Camavinga joined that list after sustaining a hamstring injury during their loss to Liverpool.

Against Getafe, Bellingham was replaced at halftime but Ancelotti believed the England midfielder would be ready in a couple of days.

"Despite the difficulties, which are many because of all the injuries we are having, we are fighting and struggling," Ancelotti said.

"We have returned to playing with concentration, spirit and attitude and that reassures me and gives me confidence. Little by little we will solve the problems, but in the meantime we are fighting."

Real next shift their focus to a trip to Athletic Bilbao on Wednesday.

REUTERS

## Conte happy with team response as Napoli put recent setbacks behind

TURIN, ITALY

NAPOLI coach Antonio Conte was pleased to see the team's response to his plea for improvement when Napoli beat Torino in Serie A on Sunday to remain on top of the standings despite dropping some points in recent matches.

Napoli got back to winning ways last weekend with a 1-0 home win over AS Roma, and maintained the momentum at Torino with the same scoreline after suffering a 3-0 home loss against Atalanta followed by a 1-1 draw at Inter Milan earlier in November.

"I have a group of guys who really understand when I ask them to improve. This is the aspect I like the most, beyond the result and the standings," Conte told a press conference.

"We are growing as individuals and as a team..."

"Torino are a great team, I was really afraid of this game. I lived in Turin for more than thirty years, I warned the guys, (and got) a mature response."

Torino keeper Vanja Milinkovic-Savic, brilliant throughout the day, dived to keep out a low back-heel shot by Romelu Lukaku that could have opened the scoring for Napoli in the 23rd minute.

The Serbia goalkeeper showed off his reflexes again when he stretched to deny Khvicha Kvaratskhelia's header one minute later, and continued to thwart Napoli's attack after the restart.

"Sometimes you take refuge in the result, today we created but there was a great goalkeeper who prevented us from being more relaxed at the end," added Conte.

Midfielder Scott McTominay eventually found a way past the Torino keeper in the 31st minute when he struck a shot powerfully inside the near post.

"He is a boy who was not a protagonist at (Manchester) United. I knew him well because I frequented the Premier League, he has quality," Conte added.

"We were lucky because he agreed to come in a situation in which we were not playing in Europe, having finished in 10th place. He could have seen Napoli as a demotion, instead he came to be a protagonist."

Despite his satisfaction with the result and his side's growing form, the Italian coach pointed out that Napoli will need reinforcements if they keep up their good form and return to Europe next season.

"Looking at the other teams, how they've equipped themselves also in view of the commitments in Europe, and if we were to be good at getting into Europe, you will have to strengthen this squad... The president must know that," Conte added.

"Today we have 21 outfield players and we have done what a team that only plays in the league and the Italian Cup does."

REUTERS

## Salah hints at exit after inspiring Liverpool to win over Man City

LIVERPOOL, ENGLAND

LIVERPOOL forward Mohamed Salah produced another inspirational display as his side beat Premier League champions Manchester City 2-0 to open a nine-point lead at the top but raised further doubt about his Anfield future on Sunday.

The Egyptian talisman skillfully created Liverpool's opener for Cody Gakpo and sealed City's fate by converting a penalty after the break meaning he has now scored and assisted in 36 Premier League games, equalling Wayne Rooney's record.

Salah, 32, is out of contract at the end of the season and recently stated the club had yet to offer him a new deal.

"Honestly, it's in my head. Until now this is the last Man City game I will play for Liverpool, so I was just going to enjoy it," he told Sky Sports when asked if the victory felt extra special because of his contract situation. "The atmosphere was incredible so I will enjoy every second here. Hopefully we just win the league and will see what will happen."

Salah has bagged 224 goals for Liverpool from 369 matches and despite the uncertainty around his future, he continues to deliver the goods for the club he joined in 2017.

"It's very special. I don't take it for granted. I'm enjoying every minute here. It feels like home," Salah said.

"It's always a special feeling scoring at Anfield and winning games."

REUTERS

# Guardiola smiles through taunts as Man City forget how to win

LIVERPOOL, England

TAUNTED by the Kop with chants of "getting sacked in the morning", Manchester City manager Pep Guardiola afforded himself a wry smile and held up six fingers to remind the ecstatic Liverpool fans of how many Premier League titles he has won.

It was an unforgettable moment on a Sunday evening on Merseyside which could spell the end of Manchester City's domination of the English top flight.

Liverpool cruised to a 2-0 victory with goals from Cody Gakpo and Mohamed Salah against a struggling City to move 11 points clear of the champions from the past four seasons and nine ahead of second-placed Arsenal.

City looked bereft of energy and ideas as they were comprehensively outplayed by Arne Slot's side, managing only two shots on target. It was their fourth successive Premier League defeat and sixth in seven in all competitions and they are now sitting fifth in the table.

Guardiola, the Spaniard who has ripped up the record books since arriving at City, is now reaching unwanted milestones.

He has never lost four league games in a row during a glittering coaching career and whereas he has always found solutions to every problem, his magic touch has temporarily deserted him.

There is zero chance City's owners would dispense with one of the greatest coaches in history, especially as he recently agreed a two-year extension to his contract.

But he does find himself in uncharted territory.

"I didn't expect them to chant that, maybe I deserve to be sacked," he told reporters. "I didn't expect that, but it's fine. When you win, you laugh. When you lose, they laugh, and you have to accept it."

"But I'm practical. I'm not depressed. When I think I cannot do it, we'll talk with the club, but I feel that I want to do it. Life is not always perfect. Now we are not as strong as we were, that is a reality."

While City are clearly missing in-



Manchester City's Erling Haaland in action with Liverpool's Virgil van Dijk during their Premier League match at Anfield, in Liverpool, Britain on December 1, 2024. REUTERS

fluent midfielder Rodri, amongst others, no one could have predicted quite how one player's serious injury could have completely de-railed Guardiola's winning machine.

It took them 39 minutes to even have a goal attempt on Sunday with striker Erling Haaland a virtual spectator.

City also looked ponderous at the back and the way they conceded the penalty for Liverpool's second goal, scored by Salah, was comical.

With games coming thick and fast there is little time for City to feel sorry for themselves. They face high-flying Nottingham Forest tomorrow, travel to Crystal Palace next weekend and then have a crucial Champions League clash with Juventus.

"I said before this game that we weren't in a position to think about targets but the season is long," Guardiola said.

"We have to think about making results and then some players will come back and then we'll be better and we'll believe maybe. There are many things to fight for and we're going to try."

"These players have given me the chance to live maybe the best years

of my life. All I can do is be here to try and find a solution."

City defender Ruben Dias, culpable for Liverpool's second goal, said it was not the easiest period for the club but said the character of the squad would see them emerge from a rut.

"Now it's just about Nottingham Forest and to break it (the run). Football is the perfect example of life, sometimes life seems easy but it slaps you in the face and football is the perfect example of that."

Meanwhile, Liverpool had to put in a near-flawless performance to defeat old rivals Manchester City who have so often thwarted their league title ambitions, manager Arne Slot said on Sunday.

The Reds thoroughly deserved to beat Pep Guardiola's side 2-0 to take a nine-point lead in the Premier League in what was Slot's 18th win of 20 games in charge of Liverpool.

"If you want to win against City you have to be perfect in every part of the game. We came close to perfection," he said, as jubilant fans chanted his name around Anfield as they did midweek after beating Real Madrid in the Champions League.

REUTERS

## What does Liverpool's win against Man City mean for title race?

BY EMLYN BEGLEY

LIVERPOOL'S dominant 2-0 win over Manchester City put them nine points clear at the top of the Premier League table - and 11 points above the perennial champions - as they continue to take charge of the title race.

Arsenal, runners-up for the past two seasons, and Chelsea - performing better this season than expected under Enzo Maresca - are joint-second after winning this weekend.

City's defeat has seen them drop to fifth - below Brighton & Hove Albion - while Liverpool are nine points in front after the Anfield success.

"It is a good position to be in," boss Arne Slot told BBC Sport. "You guys know better than me that Arsenal and City are able to win every game from now until the end [of the season]."

"Chelsea are able to win every game. It makes the Premier League so interesting - there's so many good teams."

"Last season there was a big difference in points between Arsenal and City and they were still able to come back."

Opta's 'supercomputer' gives Liverpool an 85.1% chance of going on to lift the title - making them overwhelming favourites - while City's chances have slumped to 4.4%.

But is it really that clear cut? "Liverpool's position now 'means nothing'."

Liverpool's start under Slot, who had the potentially tricky task of replacing the legendary Jurgen Klopp in the summer, has been phenomenal.

The Reds have won 11 of their 13 Premier League games - and all seven European and domestic cup matches.

Slot has equalled the record of 34 for most points by a manager in his first 13 Premier League matches, set by Guus Hiddink at Chelsea mid-season in 2008-09.



Liverpool's Mohamed Salah scores their second goal from the penalty spot during their Premier League match against Manchester City at Anfield, in Liverpool, Britain on December 1, 2024. REUTERS

"If you would've said at the start of the season Liverpool would be where they are now you wouldn't believe them, you'd think they need locking up," said Sky Sports pundit Roy Keane.

Only twice before has a team been nine or more clear at the top of the Premier League table after 13 games, Manchester United in 1993-94 and Chelsea in 2005-06, and both those sides won the title.

Still, Liverpool are understandably not getting carried away, with two-thirds of the season left to go.

Reds defender Joe Gomez told BBC

Radio 5 Live: "At the start of the season if you said we'd be in this position we would bite your hand off."

"It means nothing at this point, come the end of the season if we are not lifting the trophy it will feel like we have squandered a big opportunity."

"A 'mini-crisis' - do Man City face fight for top-four spot?"

Only three teams have ever won the title after trailing the leaders by 11 points or more - Arsenal in 1997-98 and Manchester United in both 1992-93 and 1995-96.

"I don't think there's any way back

"Playing against Real Madrid, against Manchester City, teams that are so good and have won so many trophies, coming out and winning against them... We're really happy with these two wins but we also understand we want to achieve more than this."

Emphasizing his injury worries in defence, with only five senior players available, Slot said there was still a long way to go before Liverpool had a trophy in their hands.

"If you want to win anything, it's all about consistency. These teams, like Real Madrid, like City, are all capable of getting the same winning streak that we have, so let's not get carried away by a few wins," he said.

Ahead of a busy December and New Year's fixture list, Slot said defenders Ibrahima Konate and Conor Bradley would remain out for a few weeks, while Kostas Tsimikas was unlikely to be available for another week.

Having taken over from the enormously popular Jurgen Klopp, Liverpool's new manager was feted by the crowd throughout Sunday's game and thanked them for giving energy to his team.

He lamented that Liverpool did not seal the game earlier, with chance-after-chance going begging, but said that at least made it a great game for neutrals.

"The amount of chances we miss made it tight at the end. But maybe that's nice for matches like this," he said, adding that he had enjoyed watching past Liverpool-City encounters for that same reason.

"I don't think anyone, including me would have predicted this," he said, referring to his amazing start at Anfield and praising the excellent state Klopp left the club in.

"It has been a good week, but let's not get carried away too much... I saw Arsenal yesterday (beating West Ham 5-2) and City, they will come back... Arsenal and City are able to win every game from now till the end. Chelsea are able to win every game. It makes the Premier League so interesting."

REUTERS

for Manchester City now," said ex-Liverpool defender and Sky Sports pundit Jamie Carragher after the Anfield encounter.

City boss Pep Guardiola did not concede the title, though.

"I said before this game that we weren't in a position to think about targets but the season is long," he said.

"We have to think about making results and then some players will come back and then we'll be better and we'll believe maybe. There are many things to fight for and we're going to try."

City are famously strong finishers - and have only lost a combined four Premier League games after Christmas across the past three seasons.

If they won their last 25 matches they would finish on 98 points, while Liverpool's form, stretched along the rest of the campaign, would see them finish on 99.

Carragher said: "Right now I could see Man City losing another four or five games between now and the end of the season."

"I think it's almost a mini-crisis at Manchester City. I think it's reminiscent of Liverpool two years ago and I think City might have a fight on their hands for top four."

"BBC

Gwiji by David Chikoko





# SPORT

Guardiola smiles through taunts as Man City forget how to win

COMPREHENSIVE REPORT, PAGE 19

## Guinea stadium crush kills 56 people after disputed refereeing decision

CONAKRY

A CONTROVERSIAL refereeing decision sparked violence and a crush at a soccer match in southeast Guinea, killing 56 people, according to a provisional toll, the government said yesterday, as a witness described scenes of chaos.

The fatalities occurred during the final of a tournament in honour of Guinea's military leader Mamady Doumbouya at a stadium in Nzerekore, one of the West African nation's largest cities.

Fans threw stones, triggering panic and a crush, the government statement said, promising an investigation.

A witness, who had attended the match, said a disputed red card in the 82nd minute of the match kicked off the violence.

"The stone throwing started and the police joined in, firing tear gas. In the rush and scramble that followed, I saw people fall to the ground, girls and children trampled underfoot. It was horrible," Amara Conde told Reuters by phone.

The crowd rushed to leave, leading to a dangerous scum at the exits, a police source said.

A video authenticated by Reuters showed dozens of people scrambling over high walls to escape.

Ousted President Alpha Conde said the event had been badly organised at an uneasy time for the country, which is waiting for Doumbouya to hold promised elections after he seized power in a 2021 coup.

"In a context where the country is already marked by tensions and restrictions, this tragedy highlights the dangers of irresponsible organisation," Conde said in a statement.

Speaking on condition of anonymity, an official from the city's administration said many victims were minors caught in the turmoil after police started firing tear gas. The official described scenes of confusion and chaos with parents retrieving bodies before they were officially counted.

Videos and pictures shared online showed victims lined up on the ground. In one video, over a dozen inert bodies could be seen, several of them children.

Reuters was not immediately able to verify that footage.

Opposition group National Alliance for Change and Democracy said authorities bore responsibility for organising tournaments to bolster political support for Doumbouya in contravention of a transition charter prior to the long awaited presidential election.

There was no immediate response from the military junta to that accusation.

Doumbouya's junta proposed a two-year transition to elections from 2022 after negotiating with West Africa's political and economic bloc, but it has shown little sign of moving to organise a vote, stoking public frustration and occasional deadly protests.

Yesterday, Human Rights Watch accused the military authorities of cracking down on the opposition, media, and peaceful dissent, and failing to keep their promises to restore civilian rule by December 2024.

It said in a report that security forces had used excessive force, including tear gas and gunfire, against protesters.

There was no immediate response from the junta to the HRW allegations.

Recent decades have seen a number of deadly disasters in soccer stadiums. The Confederation of African Football has been working with soccer's world governing body FIFA to tackle dangerous overcrowding and other safety issues in African stadiums.

REUTERS

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The stone throwing started and the police joined in, firing tear gas. In the rush and scramble that followed, I saw people fall to the ground, girls and children trampled underfoot. It was horrible

## Taoussi praises Azam's mentality after Dodoma Jiji hard-fought victory



Azam FC striker Nassoro Saadun who won the NBC Premier League Man of the Match award after their match against Dodoma Jiji on Sunday. Photo: Courtesy of Azam FC

## Dauids: Transfer window to focus on quality, not quantity

By Correspondent Michael Mwebe

SIMBA SC head coach Fadlu Dauids has disclosed the club's intention to adopt a cautious and strategic approach in the December-January transfer market, emphasizing quality over quantity.

The South African tactician (pictured) confirmed the arrival of Congolese attacking midfielder Elie Mpanzu as the club's only secured signing for the upcoming window.

Dauids stressed that Simba will remain patient in assessing the market for players who can bring immediate impact to the team.

"Mpanzu is already one change that is coming. It is not very easy to find players on the market who can immediately affect the squad," Dauids remarked.

Acknowledging the challenges new players often face in adapting to the environment and expectations of a big club like Simba, Dauids reiterated his belief in giving the current squad time to grow.

"Some players take longer than others to adapt. New coach, new players, different environment in a big club - they need a bit more time.

"We still have not seen the best of most of these players, and we want to give them time to grow and reach their best level," he explained.

Dauids emphasized that the club's recruitment strategy will focus on finding players who meet both immediate performance needs and financial feasibility.

"I don't think there is any area that needs a complete overhaul. It's about finding players like Mpanzu, who can come in and immediately challenge for a starting spot. That is the level we are looking for - not just players to add numbers," Dauids said.

He added: "At this moment, we need players who, if available, can improve the team right away. If nothing suitable comes up, we will stick with the same squad."

The Tanzanian Premier League's mid-season transfer window officially opens on Sunday, December 15, 2024, and will close on Wednesday, January 15, 2025, at 11:59 PM.

During this period, clubs can make player purchases, sales, and loan deals within Tanzania and internationally.

However, Simba's measured approach suggests they are committed to making only purposeful signings that align with their objectives for the second half of the season.



club remains cautious about unnecessary changes, focusing instead on building consistency and confidence within the existing squad.

The arrival of Mpanzu is expected to enhance Simba's attacking options, but the

By Correspondent Michael Mwebe

AZAM FC claimed the top spot in the Premier League with a gritty 2-1 victory over hosts Dodoma Jiji at Jamhuri Stadium on Sunday evening.

The hard-fought win propelled Azam to the league summit with 30 points from 13 games, two points clear of Simba SC, who have two games in hand.

Reacting to the result, Azam head coach Rachid Taoussi praised his players' resilience, describing the performance as a testament to their strong mentality in a challenging encounter.

"This victory is significant because it wasn't easy. Dodoma Jiji are a good team with quality players and they performed well in the first half. But our players demonstrated great determination and mentality," said the Moroccan tactician.

Taoussi highlighted the strategic adjustments made during the game: "We trailed 1-0, and it was a precarious moment because Dodoma could have scored a second goal.

"However, our players stayed disciplined and followed our instructions. We focused on using the wings, which proved effective as both goals came from wing play."

He further elaborated on the tactical approach: "In the second half, we asked the players to stay calm and adapt to the pitch conditions, which weren't ideal. We bypassed the midfield when necessary and capitalized on our strengths.

"Nassoro Saadun, who was outstanding and deserved the Man of the Match award, scored a crucial goal. Gibril Sillah also played exceptionally well, alongside the entire team."

Taoussi dedicated the victory to Azam's supporters and board while expressing optimism about maintaining the team's momentum: "We are thrilled to be at the top of the standings. Although Yanga and Simba have games in hand, we'll enjoy this moment.

"If we keep up this form, we can stay in first place. Our team has strong cohesion between the technical bench and players. To become champions, we must continue working hard."

Azam's next fixture is a Federation Cup 64th-round match against regional side Iringa Sports FC on Saturday evening.

They will then face a challenging Premier League clash away to Tabora United on Friday, December 13, at Ali Hassan Mwinyi Stadium in Tabora.

## Flexibles by David Chikoko

