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Hanang to get 101 houses in three months

The government has searched and found a 100-acre piece of land located at the Warret Farm operated by the Prisons Service in Mogitu ward in the district

STORY ON PAGE 2

Minister reaffirms extensive aerial map minerals research strategy

By Guardian Correspondent, Mwanza

THE government has reiterated plans for a countrywide high resolution minerals availability research to identify new mineral reserves.

Anthony Mavunde, the Minerals minister, said the move was expected to boost the sector's contribution to the economy, affirming that under the plan, investments will be made on exploratory drilling after high resolution techniques have been used to map the area

Opening a conference between the ministry and licensed service providers in the mining sector here yesterday, he said the mining sector contribution to the national economy was unsatisfactory despite the sector's good performance in revenue collection and foreign currency earnings.

The meeting was aimed at discussing ways to improve the sector and boost its contribution to the country's economy, he said, affirming that this requirement underlines the need to invest in research and equipment.

Citing the presence of ten mines and 750 licensed service providers countrywide, he said that the planned research is likely to attract more investors and service providers from within and outside the country.

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Residents of Dar es Salaam's Mbagala suburb literally wade in floodwaters mainly induced by rains experienced in the city and its environs most of yesterday. Photo: Guardian Photographer

Vehicle inspections: Police, TBS in pact

Commissioner vows arrests for tinted windscreens

By Correspondent Joseph Mwenda-pole

POLICE have said they are seeking assistance from the Tanzania Bureau of Standards (TBS) in carrying out vehicle inspections across the country.

Awadh Juma Haji, the training

and operations commissioner at the police headquarters, yesterday signed an agreement with Dr Athumani Ngenya, the TBS director general, where the verifier will assist the police to identify and remove from the road vehicles that appear to be unsuitable for use.

The agreement, signed at the Police Officers Mess at Oysterbay

in Dar es Salaam, enables the use of modern TBS equipment in carrying out inspections, as a measure to reduce road accidents often caused by malfunctioning vehicles.

The commissioner said after the signing that the agreement aims to ensure that all motor vehicles are inspected and have required qual-

ity standards, pivotal in reducing accidents.

For motor vehicles to be usable they need to be inspected with modern equipment, he said, noting that the police will start using such equipment following the pact just signed.

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Minerals minister Anthony Mavunde pictured in Mwanza city yesterday opening a meeting meant for licensed mining service providers from across Tanzania, the focus being on ways to boost efficiency and productivity in the country's mining sector. Photo: Vitus Audax

Five die in year-end outbreak of cholera

You should avoid gatherings and wash hands regularly,

By Guardian Correspondent, Kahama

FIVE people are reported dead following an outbreak of cholera in Kagongwa ward in Kahama municipality, Shinyanga Region, with five others reported to have contracted the disease.

Mboni Mhita, the Kahama district commissioner, confirmed the incidents at a press briefing yesterday, tracing the outbreak to eating at the funeral of a resident at the end of the year.

The government has placed upwards of 452 residents in the area under quarantine, confined to health centres set aside to treat patients from Mwendakulima and Kagongwa areas, she said.

Michael Shija, the Kagongwa ward chairman, informed the DC of being informed of the death of five people who showed symptoms of cholera like vomiting and profuse watery diarrhoea.

A medical team was sent to the area, took samples from patients to conduct a laboratory analysis, thereby confirming that it was cholera, she said, affirming that the 452 who are under quarantine are stationed at the health centres for treatment.

Various steps have been taken to address the matter, like closing bars, controlling unnecessary gatherings and raising awareness on the disease, with awareness messages focused on prevention, controlling its spread.

People must avoid eating fresh foods sold in open places and ensure thorough cleaning before eating fruits, she emphasized, with the ward chairman saying that a child died in the area after vomiting uncontrollably on December 25.

Two people who participated in caring for the deceased child also developed the symptoms and died a few days later, she said, noting that so far four people have been buried by health officers, with five others who are sick receiving treatment. The 452 others are under quarantine as a standby measure, she stated.

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Forest carbon credits and the voluntary market: Are they solution or distraction?



interpreted as ‘projects,’ Seymour said. “There was this huge flowering of conservation initiatives that were relabelled as REDD+ projects.”

Under this interpretation, newly tagged REDD+ projects proliferated in places with an imminent threat to forests – in a country or province losing forest to clearance for agriculture as the population grew, for example. Developers could argue that the “avoided deforestation” as a result of their work kept carbon from being released into the atmosphere – the “reducing emissions” part of REDD+. The voluntary market would then reward these results with credits that could be traded or sold, not payments as originally intended.

Then came the landmark 2015 Paris climate summit (COP21), at which countries submitted their individual emissions reduction goals, known as their nationally determined contributions.

These NDCs would establish the basis for a U.N.-backed global carbon market as a tool for countries to use in meeting their self-determined goals. The Paris Agreement also acknowledged the importance of maintaining forests and other natural carbon sinks. A 2017 study concluded that “natural climate solutions” had the potential to contribute more than a third of the carbon emissions reductions required to keep the global temperature rise below 2°C.

The vision was that the trade in carbon credits, by “offsetting” or canceling out emissions elsewhere, could be a tool on the path toward net zero, in line with the effort to decrease overall greenhouse gas emissions.

In late November 2023, Suriname became the first country to offer nearly 5 million carbon credits under Article 6 of the Paris Agreement through what are known as internationally transferable mitigation outcomes (ITMOs). Article 6 of the Paris Agreement allows the trading of emissions reductions and removals between countries, and it also envisions a global carbon market.

But to many supporters of the voluntary market, that’s not reflective of what’s happening. Offsets are just part of the climate strategy of the companies that buy credits, said Josh Tosteson, president of Everland, a company that does marketing for REDD+ projects.

“Those organizations that are most involved in offsetting are the ones that are doing the most and investing the most in decarbonizing their own operations,” Tosteson said.

A recent survey of more than 100 companies by Sylvera, a U.K.-based carbon credit ratings and analytics firm, found that companies that invest in carbon credits are reducing their own emissions almost twice as fast as companies that don’t.

Despite the carbon market’s increasing value, the credits sold in 2022 represented 116 million metric tons of CO2, just 0.3% of the year’s total global emissions from energy production.

By John Cannon

AT the outset of 2023, the voluntary carbon trade seemed poised to expand its reach, boosting the amount of carbon it sought to offset along with the trade’s value.

Figures from 2022 suggested the market’s value had reached \$2 billion, and current projections suggest it could grow to \$10 billion or even \$100 billion by 2030 – and into the trillions by 2050.

Proponents say this voluntary mechanism had begun to mature, providing climate action as well as desperately needed funding for forest conservation in places where government protections had fallen short. It also offered, they add, an avenue for individuals, companies and states to provide restitution for their carbon emissions and contribute to holding back climate change. What’s more, that \$2 billion figure was proof that it was actually happening.

A 2022 investigation by Bloomberg Green suggested many credits, mostly from renewable energy projects and sold to companies to offset their carbon emissions, were “junk.” Investigation by The New Humanitarian in September 2023 raised serious questions about the United Nations’ own claims to be almost entirely carbon neutral based on its carbon credit purchases.

Many corporations, already wary of carbon offsets due to fears they might be accused of “greenwashing” their operations, began to shy away.

In June, Nestlé withdrew its pledges to make some of its brands carbon neutral amid fears of more lawsuits over alleged misrepresentation regarding its climate neutrality.

Royal Dutch Shell decided to scrap planned investments of up to \$100 billion in offsets. And lawsuits over claims of carbon neutrality against companies like U.S.-based Delta Airlines gained traction.

Many observers predicted 2023 would be a pivotal year for the voluntary carbon market.

One of Liberia’s opposition parties, the Liberian People’s Party, has called for negotiations between the government and Blue Carbon to be suspended until communities who will be impacted by the deal are consulted.

“Where we are in 2023 is at an inflection point for the future of the role of carbon markets in overall climate mitigation,” said Frances Seymour, who was a distinguished senior fellow with the World Resources Institute.

Others have seen the dissection of the market’s methods as further proof that it’s a distraction holding the world back from meaningful climate action.

Flawed as markets may be, “We need all the tools we can have in order to adapt, mitigate, reduce,” Robert Nasi, chief operating officer of the research organization CIFOR-ICRAF said, echoing a common sentiment among those worried about climate change, deforestation and biodiversity loss.

There’s near-universal agreement that ending the use of fossil fuels and the resulting release of greenhouse gases is imperative to avoid catastrophic climate change. But so much carbon has been released since the beginning of the Industrial Revolution in the 18th century that even a drastic overhaul of the world’s transportation, agriculture and power generation infrastructure won’t be enough to stay below a 1.5° Celsius (2.7° Fahrenheit) or 2°C (3.6°F) rise in the global temperature since then.

The figures are the key goals of the 2015 Paris climate agreement and the thresholds below which scientists say the world will avoid the worst effects of global heating.

Many say that’s where nature-based solutions such as forest conservation, with support from the voluntary carbon trade, can play their part. Voluntary carbon markets also retain the support of key players who see it as the most active approach to addressing climate change.

“It’s great to have it because we have nothing else right now,” said Tim Christophersen, vice president of climate action with Salesforce, during a panel at COP28, the 2023 U.N. climate summit, held in Dubai. The U.S.-based company developed its own carbon credit marketplace in 2022.

But as the pressure on voluntary markets and the projects that feed into them increase, so have concerns about their viability.

“In order for that market to function ... as a way of accelerating over-

all societal climate action towards net zero,” Seymour said, “we need to have demand and we need to have supply.”

In 1997, leaders from 160 nations brokered the Kyoto Protocol, named after the Japanese city in which it was signed during that year’s U.N. climate conference (COP3). The Kyoto Protocol required the world’s industrialized countries to limit the amount of carbon they were releasing. Even though the U.S., the world’s largest emitter at the time, never ratified the accord, it was seen by many as the first global reckoning with how human actions were affecting the climate.

Widespread deforestation decimated tropical forests throughout the 1990s, fueled largely by demand from wealthy nations for timber, cash crops, meat and other products.

The logging boom not only wiped out habitat for untold numbers of species and destroyed a vital resource for the 20% of the world’s people who depend on forests. It also razed a significant repository of carbon, releasing it into the atmosphere. Had the trees been allowed to continue growing, they would still be siphoning carbon from the atmosphere.

With the advent of the Kyoto Protocol and the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM), the idea arose that polluting countries could invest in emissions reductions in other countries.

It would help industrialized coun-

tries meet their emissions targets, so the thinking went, while providing funds for sustainable development in other parts of the world. It also revolved around the idea of “saleable” credits tied to those emissions-reductions projects.

By the 2007 U.N. climate conference (COP13) in Bali, Indonesia, the concept of REDD had gained support. It was based on an idea introduced in 2005 by the Coalition for Rainforest Nations, a group that today includes about 90% of the world’s remaining rainforest. Short for “reducing emissions from forest degradation and deforestation in developing countries,” REDD involves integrating forest conservation into climate change mitigation. Later, the term REDD+ appeared, which added a focus on sustainable forest management to increase carbon stocks.

The original idea behind REDD was to reward countries for protecting their forests. As their forests and the carbon they contained expanded over time – provided they kept a lid on deforestation – they would receive payments based on the results, said Kevin Conrad, founder and executive director of the Coalition for Rainforest Nations, who was also an architect of an early version of REDD.

But others saw carbon markets as a nimbler solution, one in which REDD+ projects could contribute to emissions reductions immediately. The Bali Roadmap that arose out of COP13 called for “demonstration activities” to stimulate work on REDD.

“Demonstration activities’ was

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Tembelea mitandao ya kijamii ya Radio One



UN says nearly 25 million people do need humanitarian assistance in Sudan

WASHINGTON

THE United Nations relief chief has warned against the deepening of human suffering in Sudan due to an on-going war in the country.

"Across Sudan, nearly 25 million people will need humanitarian assistance in 2024. But the bleak reality is that intensifying hostilities are putting most of them beyond our reach," Martin Griffiths said in a statement.

Nearly nine months of war have tipped Sudan "into a downward spiral that only grows more ruinous by the day," he said. "As the conflict spreads, human suffering is deepening, humanitarian access is shrinking, and hope is dwindling. This cannot continue."

Stressing that escalating violence is also imperiling regional stability, Griffiths urged the international community, particularly those with influence on parties to the conflict in Sudan, to take "decisive and immediate" action to stop the fighting and safeguard humanitarian operations.

"The war has unleashed the world's largest displacement crisis, uprooting the lives of more than 7 million people, some 1.4 million of whom have crossed into neighbouring countries already hosting large refugee populations.

"For Sudan's people, 2023 was a year of suffering. In 2024, the parties to the conflict must do three things to end it: Protect civilians, facilitate humanitarian access, and stop the fighting - immediately," he added.

Sudan has been mired by fighting between the army, led by Gen. Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, who is the head of the ruling Sovereign Council, and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF).

At least 12,260 victims have been killed and more than 33,000 injured in the conflict, according to UN figures.

A humanitarian crisis continues to worsen as nearly 6.8 million people have fled their homes seeking safety in Sudan or neighbouring countries.

Several cease-fire agreements brokered by Saudi Arabia and US mediators have failed to end the violence.



Cholera-plagued Zambia deferring the reopening of schools by 3 weeks

LUSAKA

A cholera outbreak in Zambia forced authorities to defer the reopening of schools by another three weeks, the education minister said Thursday.

"All public and private early childhood, primary and secondary schools remain closed for a further three weeks after the official opening date of January 8, 2024. This means that schools will only reopen on Monday, January 29," Douglas Syakalima told reporters in the capital, Lusaka.

On Thursday, the country reported a daily record of 23 deaths and 342 cholera cases, which brought the cumulative toll since last October to 150 deaths and 4,097 cases.

Health Minister Sylvia Masebo said that the 60,000-seater National Heroes Stadium in Lusaka has now been designated as a treatment center for cholera to ease the pressure on health facilities.

"We continue sensitizing our citizens not to buy food from unsafe locations and to observe the highest level of hygiene so that together we can curb the spread of cholera," Masebo said after conducting a mass sensitization roadshow in Lusaka on Thursday.

Last week, the country has also banned vending on the streets.

Dr Mwinyi gets Z'bar urban public transport master plan into action

By Guardian Reporter and Agencies

ZANZIBAR President Dr Hussein Ali Mwinyi has commanded the swift execution of the stagnant 'Zanzibar Urban Public Transport Master Plan,' with a vision to restructure the island's public transport framework for enhanced efficiency, sustainabil-

ity, and economic growth.

Recognizing the fundamental role of a robust transportation system in fuelling Zanzibar's economic progress, Mwinyi visualized modern bus terminals bustling with environmentally friendly buses.

Under the transformative plan, the Zanzibar Social Security Fund (ZSSF) will collaborate with transport authorities to

identify a suitable company that can infuse modernity into the city's bus fleet.

Mwinyi's vision extends beyond the immediate horizons of road transport and encompasses an integrated, modern, and efficient transportation network, potentially reinstating the historical railway system.

The ground-breaking event, graced by the First Lady of Zan-

zibar, Maryam Mwinyi, and other dignitaries, also recognized the contributions of a group of retired soldiers to the bus terminal project.

The President commended the ZSSF for its strategic investments and assured the government's support in their future endeavours.

With the Zanzibar Urban Public Transport Master Plan now

in action, new initiatives and investments are being introduced to refine the public transportation system in Zanzibar.

The plan covers measures to alleviate traffic congestion, upgrade road safety, and elevate the overall efficiency of the public transport network, leading Zanzibar towards a future of sustainable and efficient mobility.



AU will battle for relevance in 2024 in face of waning resources and weakened cooperation

By Martin Ewi

THE African Union (AU) isn't living up to expectations – and member states are partly to blame, according to AU Commission (AUC) Chairperson Moussa Faki Mahamat.

He says they're using their sovereignty to avoid relegating powers to the commission. As the sum of all individual African countries, the AU's strength depends on the power member states give it to implement their decisions.

The AU's weaknesses are evident in its failure to deal with recent crises, including conflicts in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Sudan, northern Mozambique's insurgency and coups in Guinea, Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger.

How can the continental body become more relevant as Africa enters a new year? Can it help citizens experience more stability, or will 2024 be another year of conflict? And how can member states help bring peace to the continent?

This isn't the first time Faki has chided member states for the AUC's failure. At the 2022 Conference on Terrorism and Unconstitutional Changes of Government in Malabo, he blamed the continent's deteriorating security on insufficient African solidarity and member states' failure to honour their AU commitments.

For African countries, pan-Africanism or regional integration has often meant choosing

between creating a powerful continental body or safeguarding sovereignty – with the latter usually winning.

Ominous OAU echoes As instability and underdevelopment persist, questions have arisen about whether the AU displays the systemic weaknesses of its predecessor, the Organisation of African Unity (OAU).

One of the OAU's biggest problems was that the general secretariat, tasked with day-to-day activities, was reduced to clerical functions. It should have implemented the organization's decisions, but lacked the required institutional powers and human, financial and material resources – essentially because member states refused to grant it autonomy to function.

A current example is countries' procrastination in adopting recommendations dealing with autonomous funding sources, which would reduce the AUC's reliance on states' contributions and donations from development partners.

The OAU general secretariat relied entirely on states (and external powers) for funding, recruitment and other basic functions. Many states didn't pay their annual contributions, rendering the organisation increasingly impotent. The secretariat could organise meetings and produce reports but struggled to implement major decisions on advancing continental integration.

The AU, launched in 2002, was meant to correct OAU weaknesses and achieve a more robust, proactive and efficient organisation with its secretariat, the AUC, as the fulcrum of continental integration. But problems that plagued the OAU secretariat seem to be resurfacing with the AU.

African heads of state have apparently abandoned the idea of a powerful AUC, and adopted attitudes that precipitated the OAU's fall. Member states appoint the chairperson, deputy and commissioners, and influence directors' appointments, leaving the AUC chairperson powerless and unable to hold incompetent senior managers accountable.

Recent reforms have tightened the AUC budget and collapsed or merged some departments – similar to the OAU's structure. For instance, the peace and security, and political affairs departments have merged, reverting to the OAU era. They were separated under the AU to intensify action on armed conflicts and emerging security challenges – regarded as the greatest threats to Africa's development.

Dwindling resources

Merging the two may lead to some issues being overlooked. The current commissioner of the department has made election monitoring a prime focus. But as separate entities, political affairs could prioritise election monitoring while the peace and security department

focused on conflict prevention, management, and resolution.

Keeping staff to a bare minimum has also weakened the AUC. The commission has 1,720 staff to service 55 countries. In comparison, the European Union Commission serves 27 countries with 32,000 permanent employees, excluding consultants and short-term staff. Some analysts argue that the quality of staff matters more than the quantity – but the AUC lacks both.

Sixty-one per cent of the AUC's staff are on short-term contracts because recruiting permanent staff hasn't been possible. The commission has just 1,000 permanent staff. This has led to low morale and a drastic decline in productivity. Member states complain that they cannot finance a 'huge' AUC – even though they contribute less than 40% of the AU budget, leaving development partners to cover the bulk of the costs.

Endless transformation and reform projects since 2003 have left the AUC more confused, less productive and fragile. The result is a commission reduced to a mere secretariat, similar to the OAU. Yet the AUC is expected to drive Africa's ambitious Agenda 2063 goals and service 55 countries of about 1.4 billion people.

With no overarching continental mechanism to check and complement countries' activities, states can act as they please, even when such actions

threaten their sovereignty, other member states, or even the AU itself. This has weakened governments and fomented fragmentation. It has undercut state accountability and enabled coups and chronic and institutionalised corruption.

The phrase 'Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose' has characterised Africa's efforts to forge continental integration over the past 60 years. Regionalism has been a delicate balance between states that put their sovereignty first versus those seeing integration as a way to safeguard and protect independence. As a result, continental decision-making has lacked consistency, vision and patronage – to the detriment of creating functional institutions. Regional economic communities and mechanisms exhibit similar weaknesses to the AUC.

No norms guide how African states should conduct their foreign policies or relations. For example, what principles are followed for hosting foreign military bases, especially where they threaten the sovereignty of other states?

A good first step would be to resolve AU funding issues and empower the AUC chairperson to be solely accountable for the commission's work. The AUC should also have autonomy to recruit operational staff and senior managers, except the chairperson and deputy.

In its current state, neither the AU nor its member states can achieve Agenda 2063. Unless these issues are urgently addressed, the AU – like the OAU – risks becoming irrelevant.

Gender equality key in transforming the lives of women and girls in Eastern and Southern Africa

By Guardian Correspondent

GENDER equality is central to the World Bank's mission of ending extreme poverty and promoting shared prosperity.

In Eastern and Southern Africa (AFE), where women and girls face unique disadvantages in education and economic empowerment, and where gender-based violence remains prevalent, operations that prioritize gender considerations have achieved some impressive successes over the past decade.

The region upholds increased ambition and commitment to close gender gaps and boost women's empowerment, guided by the World Bank's new Gender Strategy, which highlights three key strategic objectives—eliminate all forms of gender-based violence (GBV) and elevate human capital, enhance and expand economic opportunities and engage women as leaders.

An uneven playing field

Across multiple dimensions related to human development and socioeconomic empowerment, women and girls in Eastern and Southern Africa lag their male counterparts. For instance, just 43.5 percent of girls in AFE completed lower secondary school according to 2020 data, slightly lower than boys at 45.6 percent.

In terms of labour force participation, the gap is even larger, with 65 percent of women employed, compared with 75 percent of men as of 2022.

For women who are active in the labour force, their productivity and earnings tend to be lower than those of men in key economic sectors, including agriculture and self-employment. These gaps in outcomes are not due to inherent differences in women and men's capabilities, but rather stem from women's lower access to productive resources and to systemic challenges posed by gender norms, policies, and institutions.

Women in the region face high rates of maternal morbidity and mortality, related strongly with differences among countries in skills, resources, and infrastructure.

In South Sudan, almost 1,500 out of every 100,000 women die each year in childbirth, compared to 119 in South Africa. The average maternal mortality rate of the region is 391 women per 100,000 live births.

According to United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) estimates, only half of the primary health facilities in the region are fully ready to provide essential primary care. Lack of readiness and functionality of primary health delivery systems contribute to this poor effective coverage and poor quality-of-care of maternal health services.

The burden of HIV/Aids on maternal health also remains high in many countries in the region. In at least five countries, more than 10 percent of all maternal deaths are estimated to be AIDS-related. Cervical cancer, which is caused by certain strains of the human papillomavirus (HPV), also presents a significant public health threat to women in Africa.

All but one of the top 20 countries worldwide with the highest burden of



The World Bank, along with its client countries and partners in AFE—in particular the African Union and the African Development Bank—are working to accelerate gender equality in the region.

cervical cancer in 2018 were in Africa. In 2020, the top 10 countries with the highest incidence of cervical cancer were in Africa, and nine of those countries were in AFE.

Cervical cancer progresses slowly from the precancer stage to invasive cancer, and it is entirely curable if diagnosed and treated early. While this type of cancer is one of the most preventable, poor access to prevention (HPV vaccination), screening, and treatment contributes to 90 percent of deaths. A recent study estimated that more than a million children become orphans each year due to deaths of women from cancer with half of them being breast and cervical cancers.

Women spend far more time than men on unpaid domestic and care work, participate far less in household decision-making, and are overwhelmingly the victims of GBV; in 14 out of the 23 AFE countries, one in four women on average has been subjected to physical or sexual violence in the previous year.

Women are also disadvantaged in the ownership of assets: only 37 percent of women in the region have a bank account, compared with 48 percent of men. Similar gaps are seen across other key indicators, from mobile phone ownership to adult literacy.

Strategic building blocks for gender equality

The World Bank, along with its client countries and partners in AFE—in particular the African Union and the African Development Bank—are working to accelerate gender equality in the region.

The World Bank's Gender Strategy 2016-2023 has informed operations in the region since its adoption. The strategy recognizes the importance of addressing gender equality in access to jobs and the ownership of productive assets.

It also emphasizes the importance of addressing gender gaps in health and education, and enlisting men and boys

in ending GBV. The Africa Region Gender Action Plan 2018-2022 has provided additional guidance on key themes, frontier issues, and the broad approach of the World Bank's Africa Region.

Seventeen out of 23 AFE Countries are members of the International Development Association (IDA). Gender has long been a priority for IDA, with the World Bank's Gender Mainstreaming Strategy informing operations in IDA's twelfth replenishment (IDA12), gender becoming a Special Theme in IDA16, and successive IDA cycles advancing an increasingly ambitious set of policy commitments.

Ninety-two percent of World Bank projects in AFE were gender tagged in 2022, indicating that they seek to close gender gaps.

Improving lives and livelihoods for east African women

In East Africa, health, nutrition, education, and social protection are central to enhancing social and economic outcomes for women and girls.

Since 2013, 22.4 million women have benefited from improved essential health and nutrition services and water and sanitation supply projects across AFE countries. The region has achieved gender parity in primary education enrolment with 25 million more girls enrolled in primary school in AFE in 2020 than in the early 2000s.

Moreover, a total of 5.4 million women benefited from social safety net programs in Ethiopia, Lesotho, Kenya, Madagascar, Rwanda, and Uganda. For example, Ethiopia's Urban Productive Safety Net Project is on track to reach 604,000 of the poorest and most vulnerable, of whom 71 percent are women.

The project combines public works and livelihood grants for some of the poorest urban households, supports direct cash transfers for pregnant mothers, disabled, and the elderly, and provides social services for the destitute.

In Rwanda, the World Bank is supporting the government's ambitious

aim to halve the rate of childhood stunting to 19 percent by 2024 with the Stunting Prevention and Reduction Project, through behavior-change interventions in health and nutrition.

By the end of 2022, over 350,000 women and 600,000 children under five had benefited from the program. Moreover, large-scale educational programs, like the General Education Quality Improvement Project, have reached an estimated 10.5 million female beneficiaries in Ethiopia.

Ownership and control of assets is another outcome mapped in the World Bank's Gender Strategy, and IDA's Gender Commitment 6 specifies that at least 70 percent of IDA20 operations involving land activities will include specific actions to strengthen women's land rights.

Good governance is key to tenure for women, projects that improve the performance of local municipalities have benefited 3.3 million women in Ethiopia and Burundi. In Kenya, a program to support the construction of affordable housing units increased the proportion of houses individually owned by women to 46 percent.

In the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), a project aimed at preventing and mitigating gender-based violence in North and South Kivu provided prevention activities through the economic empowerment of women in the community and awareness-raising activities.

Under the project, the Engaging Men through Accountable Practice Program (EMAP) facilitated group discussions for men with the aim of reducing intimate-partner violence (IPV) and transforming gender norms. It also led to a statistically significant decrease both in the probability and severity of physical IPV among women who experienced high physical and moderate sexual violence before the program.

In Tanzania, a comprehensive safe school program helped to create safe learning environments for 1 million students, through counselling, train-

ing, and school-level and community interventions.

It was buttressed by the implementation of the fee-free secondary education policy, and construction of secondary schools nearer to communities to reduce commute distance.

The World Bank is also tackling harassment and GBV outside of school settings. In the Great Lakes region (DRC, Rwanda, Uganda), a project targeting 1 million female small-scale traders led to a decrease in harassment of these women from 96 percent to 12.3 percent over the 2015-2022 period.

A network of empowerment

The World Bank's Africa Region Gender Innovation Lab (GIL) conducts impact evaluations assessing the outcomes of development interventions in Sub-Saharan Africa, aiming to generate evidence on how to close the gender gap in earnings, productivity, assets, and agency.

The GIL works in partnership with units across the World Bank, aid agencies and donors, governments, non-governmental organizations, private sector firms, and researchers.

It is funded in part by the Umbrella Facility for Gender Equality, a multi-donor trust fund administered by the World Bank to advance gender equality and women's empowerment through experimentation and knowledge creation.

The World Bank also supports the African Union in the execution of its gender strategy, which focuses on women's economic empowerment, social justice, and leadership and governance.

A step change into a more equal future

The World Bank's Gender Strategy 2024-30: Accelerating Gender Equality for a Sustainable, Resilient and Inclusive Future is under preparation and will shape the directions of World Bank engagement and support through 2030.

It will place gender equality at the centre of climate action and boost the participation of women in the labour force. In parallel with the design of the new gender strategy, a new Regional Gender Action Plan for Eastern and Southern Africa is under preparation for the 2023-2028 period.

The new action plan identifies priority themes, including the need for a common goal for an integrated and efficient provision of services, including maternal and childcare and non-communicable disease at all levels of care.

The East Africa Girls' Empowerment and Resilience (EAGER) Multi-Phase Programmatic Approach, now under preparation, aims to empower girls and young women in the region. The \$1.08 billion multisectoral operation will encompass education, health, employment, private sector development, and social inclusion—recognizing that these dimensions are strongly interrelated in women's empowerment.

The project is expected to help more than 2 million girls stay in or return to school, and support 170,000 women in increasing their productivity in the labour market.

CAPITAL RADIO

RATIBA YA VIPINDI JUMATATU - JUMAPILI

MONDAY TIME PROGRAMME	TUESDAY TIME PROGRAMME	WEDNESDAY TIME PROGRAMME	THURSDAY TIME PROGRAMME	FRIDAY TIME PROGRAMME	SATURDAY TIME PROGRAMME	SUNDAY TIME PROGRAMME
05:00-09:00HRS MORNING JAM 09:00-13:00HRS LETE RAHA 13:00-14:00HRS DW-RADIO 14:00-16:00HRS CLUB 101 16:00-18:00HRS DALA DALA 18:00-18:10HRS HABARI 18:10-20:00HRS BOZOUK TIME 20:00-21:00HRS HALI HALISI 21:00-22:00HRS SPORTS 22:00-05:00HRS MUZIKI (MCHAGANGANYIKO)	05:00-09:00HRS MORNING JAM 09:00-13:00HRS LETE RAHA 13:00-14:00HRS DW-RADIO 14:00-16:00HRS CLUB 101 16:00-18:00HRS DALA DALA 18:00-18:10HRS HABARI 18:10-21:00HRS BOZOUK TIME 21:00-22:00HRS SPORTS 22:00-05:00HRS MUZIKI (MCHAGANGANYIKO)	05:00-09:00HRS MORNING JAM 09:00-13:00HRS LETE RAHA 13:00-14:00HRS DW-RADIO 14:00-16:00HRS CLUB 101 16:00-18:00HRS DALA DALA 18:00-18:10HRS HABARI 18:10-21:00HRS BOZOUK TIME 21:00-22:00HRS SPORTS 22:00-05:00HRS MUZIKI (MCHAGANGANYIKO)	05:00-09:00HRS MORNING JAM 09:00-13:00HRS LETE RAHA 13:00-14:00HRS DW-RADIO 14:00-16:00HRS CLUB 101 16:00-18:00HRS DALA DALA 18:00-18:10HRS HABARI 18:10-20:00HRS BOZOUK TIME 20:00-21:00HRS SPORTS 21:00-23:00HRS MALUMBANO YA HOJA 22:00-05:00HRS MUZIKI (MCHAGANGANYIKO)	05:00-09:00HRS MORNING JAM 09:00-13:00HRS LETE RAHA 13:00-14:00HRS DW-RADIO 14:00-16:00HRS CLUB 101 16:00-18:00HRS DALA DALA 18:00-18:10HRS HABARI 18:10-20:00HRS BOZOUK TIME 20:00-21:00HRS SPORTS 21:00-23:00HRS KIPIMA JOTO 22:00-05:00HRS MUZIKI (MCHAGANGANYIKO)	07:30-10:00HRS DK 90 DUNIANI 10:00-11:00HRS KADOGOO 11:00-13:00HRS BONGO HITS 13:00-14:00HRS DW RADIO 14:00-16:00HRS ZAIDI YA UMJUAYVO 16:00-18:00HRS ALIYEVUMA 18:00-21:00HRS BUZUKI TIME 21:00-22:00HRS SPOTI 22:00-05:00HRS MUZIKI (MCHAGANGANYIKO)	07:00-09:00HRS HABARI NA MATUKIO YA WIKI 09:00-11:00HRS THE SUNDAY 11:00-13:00HRS TOP 20 13:00-14:00HRS DW RADIO 14:00-16:00HRS CAPITAL MICHEZONI 16:00-18:00HRS UKURASA WA MBELE 18:00-21:00HRS JIACHIE 21:00-22:00HRS SPOTI 22:00-01:00HRS LADHA LAINI 01:00-05:00HRS MUZIKI (MCHAGANGANYIKO)

Tembelea mitandao ya kijamii ya CAPITAL RADIO



CAPITAL RADIO

BUSINESS

Energy takes lion's share despite 39pc dip in Africa's emerging startup funding

KIE head's turnaround plans see state firm register record profits

NAIROBI

PARMAIN ole Narikae, the managing director of Kenya Industrial Estates (KIE), has led the State entity as it ended a streak of losses to assert its role in growing small businesses.

KIE in the financial year ended June 2020 posted a Sh3.9 million profit—the first in the history of the entity since its inception in 1967 – and has built on this to post profit growth for three years running, including Sh52.3 million in 2022.

Dr Narikae, a former corporate banker, spoke with a local outlet on his journey from the private sector to public service, rallying the KIE team into turnaround and other milestones, including the entity's annual funding to MSME crossing the Sh1 billion mark.

He also shares on the future of the entity in providing industrial parks, offering medium to long-term financing and giving business advisory and training services to small businesses in the manufacturing space.

How was the experience moving from the private sector to the public service?

The experience has been really exciting, different and at the same time enriching because in the public sector, you directly participate in interventions that directly impact the lives of people. And to do that with interventions that are developmental in nature is really enriching and rewarding.

KIE has turned from a loss-making entity to profitability, with the first profit in 53 years coming in 2020. What did it take to turn the corner?

We posted the profit in really difficult times when the country and the entire world was battling Covid-19 disruptions. And we have gone ahead to build on this.

It took tremendous support from the parent ministry [Ministry of Co-operatives and MSMEs Development], the board and all the staff. It required a pragmatic turnaround strategy and the commitment of all stakeholders, particularly the staff, to be able to bring out the organisation's impact of transforming lives through small businesses.

How did your background in the financial sector shape your approach to your role at KIE?

Transforming KIE has not been a one-person affair but rather a team work. I am just part of a bigger team that is committed to deliver on the mandate of KIE and impact on SMEs and the lives of Kenyans.

But definitely the experience from the private financial sector helped because KIE has some aspects of a development financial institution, managing a business and working with and through people. This came in handy.

Many public sector entities are grappling with ambition, transparency and efficiency. What did it take for KIE to be ranked among the best

performing entities [seven out of 394 in the latest government performance contracting] in State corporations, Ministries, Departments and Agencies?

It has been an interesting and transformative journey along the way because our focus is to support micro-small and medium sized enterprises in manufacturing and we do it through incubation and acceleration, access to finance and entrepreneurial capacity development.

We have to emphasise on a clear vision that for us to succeed, it is about impact on MSMEs not just urban or peri-urban areas but also rural areas. It has been a team effort.

We have been able to focus exclusively on our mandate and rallied our vibrant, committed and passionate team behind the vision. This has taken focus on our mandate through clear strategy by the board and implementation by management, through crucial support by the parent ministry and government.

Budget constraints are cited as a drawback for many State entities in achieving their mandate. What has been the experience of KIE and how has it succeeded in delivering on its goals in such an environment?

Budget constraints are a challenge not just for KIE but across entities because the government has to balance the competing requests for resources.

We always strive to work within the available resources and this has meant being innovative and to be able to do more with less through a razor-sharp focus on specific areas of our mandate that carry the highest impact.

There is demand for resources, particularly for lending but empowering manufacturing businesses to grow from micro to medium and eventually to corporates takes more than just money. It is about using all our experiences to make progress.

What has stood out for you in your role at KIE?

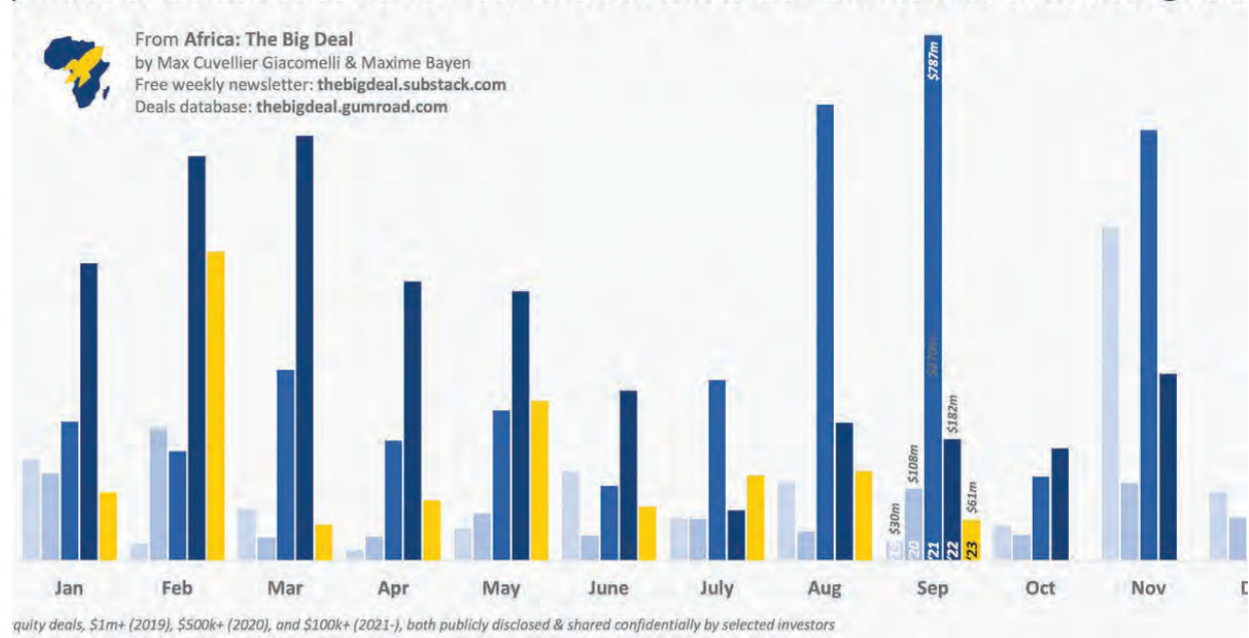
What has stood out for me is the immense potential and the role of KIE in powering the dreams of MSMEs in the manufacturing sector. Seeing those SMEs succeed in industrialisation and create wealth and jobs has been very rewarding.

Nurturing businesses to graduate from micro entities to small, medium and eventually large enterprises or corporates is quite a journey.

It requires a lot of deliberate focus to believe in the entrepreneurs behind such entities and to support their dreams.

Money is just a part of the story but the person to be celebrated is that entrepreneur who does not quit, believes in his dream, fails and wakes up again and is willing to be supported. These are people whose resilience has really built my belief that it is possible to incubate and accelerate small businesses to big enterprises.

Equity funding raised by start-ups in Africa, monthly | January '19 – September '23
September 2023: second-lowest month since 2021 in terms of funding raised



A decline in venture funding is not unique to Africa but rather aligns with a global trend.

KIGALI

ENERGY-LED startups brought power to the industry, becoming the second-most funded sector in the startup ecosystem, only after fintech.

with \$1.2 billion raised in the first quarter, followed by \$877.8 million in the second quarter and a further drop to \$492.7 million in the third quarter.

Beyond the total number, the report noted that many startups in Africa have turned to debt to finance their growth.

The outlook is contained in the latest findings from funding tracker, Africa: The Big Deal, which, among others, shows that energy emerged as the leader for the African tech ecosystem for more than seven months in 2023.

According to the findings, African startups secured a total funding of \$2.9 billion, marking the lowest amount since 2020's \$2.1 billion.

This, authors of the report said, represents a 39 percent decrease from the around \$4.6 billion total recorded in 2022.

The funding landscape for African startups also witnessed a quarter-on-quarter decline throughout 2023.

Figures indicate that it started

However, there was a slight increase in the fourth quarter, where startups raised \$551.2 million.

According to the report, the decline in venture funding is not unique to Africa but rather aligns with a global trend.

The flow of venture capital funding has been consistently decreasing since January 2022, which was the last time global tech funding exceeded \$60 billion per month.

According to the breakdown of the report, several fresh startups made big flashes including Kigali-based Norrsken, which stormed into the year with a \$250 million debut fund.

Other players to join the continent's party with their maiden Africa-focused funds include Black Ostrich Ventures and Seedstars Capital.

It observed that the amount of debt raised reached \$1.1 billion, a 47percent growth year-on-year, while equity funding fell by 57 percent during the same period.

"In 2022, start-ups in Africa had raised 19 cents of debt for every \$1 of equity they had secured. In 2023, this number went up to 65 cents, and debt made up 38 percent of all funding raised (against 16 percent in 2022)," the report stated.

But the African startups' shift to debt did not just start in 2023. According to a recent report by Briter Bridges, a research and market intelligence firm focusing on emerging economies, African startups in general borrowed a total of \$2.1 billion between 2014 and 2023.

The report also noted that debt financing in the African startup

ecosystem had grown over the last five years due to a decline in equity funding.

"While debt is certainly playing a role in Africa's startup ecosystem and innovations on the financing side making it more accessible, one of the biggest drivers of debt's rise in Africa's startup ecosystems may be the dramatic fall in equity funding, which fell from \$2.6 billion in 2022 to \$1.4bn in 2023."

"Over the past ten years, more than \$2 billion in disclosed debt funding has been raised by digital, technology-enabled, and green companies in Africa from more than 140 funders for a total of more than 200 deals," Briter Bridges stated in an earlier report.

The outlook for 2024 in the startup and tech investment landscape suggests a more cautious and frugal approach from investors, according to the report.

Forecasts indicate that investors are likely to be more discerning in choosing where to allocate their funds.

According to insights from TechCabal, a pan-African publication chronicling innovation and technology developments across the continent, at least 10 out of 23 tech leaders shared the expectation of encountering more cautious investors, leaner startups, and challenging economic conditions, particularly in the first half of the year.

The sentiment, according to reports, is not limited to the African tech ecosystem; global funds such as Thomvest Ventures and QED have also expressed similar predictions.

The overall trend suggests a more prudent and selective approach from investors, possibly leading to increased scrutiny of startup business models and a focus on sustainable growth.

The anticipated caution and frugality may pose challenges for startups seeking funding in 2024.

Economic upswing expected in 2024

KIGALI

BANK of Kigali (BK) and Business Development Fund (BDF), a government-backed initiative that provides financial support to small businesses, on Wednesday, December 27, signed a partial credit fund agreement to lend to more clients.

According to Diane Karusisi, the BK chief executive, BDF will provide a partial guarantee of up to 50 per cent or more, to especially micro and small enterprises (MSEs) to enable them to have access to credit at an affordable rate.

Karusisi stressed that the partial credit fund is aimed at solving issues that most of BK's clients in the MSEs segment face, one of which is inadequate access to finance due to lack of collateral.

"We believe that this agreement will support our ambitions to grow our businesses into MSEs," Karusisi said.

Vincent Munyeshyaka, the BDF chief executive, said the partial credit fund will cover 50 to 75 per cent of the loan received from the bank as a coverage rate by BDF to support SMEs' development.

"We have a budget of around Rwf30 billion and are exercising individual guarantee. It is a quick-win action plan that we would love to continue in this spirit."

In the long term, starting January 2024, BDF will have a technical adviser from the World Bank to help design a portfolio guarantee intended to reach agreement with banks, rather than individual customers.

"We will decide the money we want to be covered and set performance criteria like the level of non-performing loan book. The purpose of the portfolio guaran-



Rwanda's president, Paul Kagame

youth and women and as well as eradicate poverty.

According to the national SMEs development policy, SMEs are defined as enterprises not exceeding Rwf75 million of net capital investments; Rwf50 million of annual turnover and employee 100 people.

Hence BDF is mandated to support such SMEs without sufficient collaterals in form of guarantees.

An audit into the operations of BDF revealed that BDF had deviated from its mandate and was supporting large enterprises.

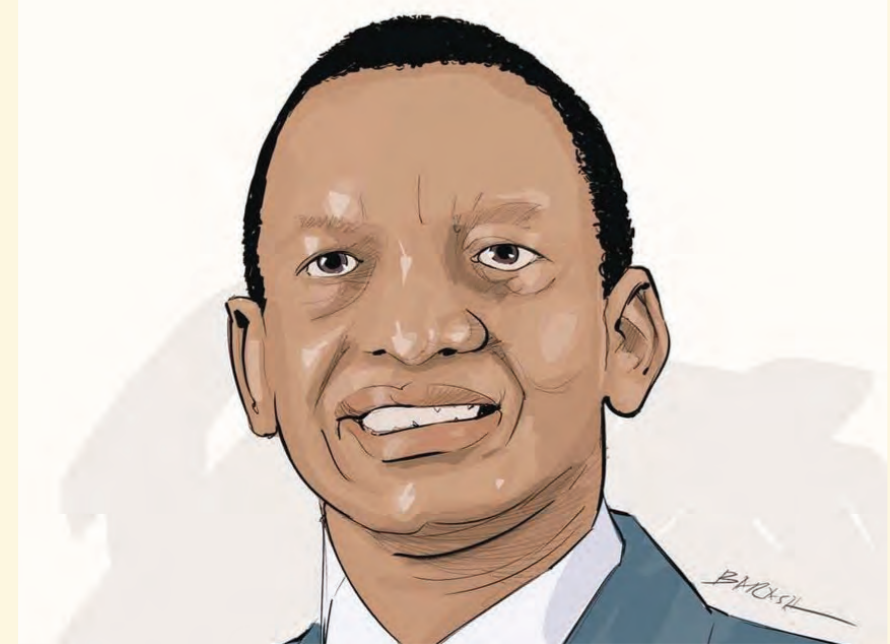
The audit also exposed wide-ranging inefficiencies and management of financing products.

It was disclosed during the public hearings that BDF's SME policy put the ceiling of net capital investments at Rwf500 million, which is higher than what is contained in the national SMEs development policy.

The AG's report revealed that BDF gave credit guarantees worth more than Rwf25.1 billion to finance 217 projects of large enterprises contrary to the original policy of SMEs. That security represents 51 per cent of total credit guarantees of more than Rwf49.2 billion provided from 2011 to August 2019.

This, the report said, implies that a high portion of credit guarantee was provided to secure financing for the 217 large enterprise projects, representing only 2 per cent of all 10,191 projects secured in this period.

"This does not facilitate as many deserving beneficiaries to access finance as should have been," the report warned, adding that providing credit guarantees to large enterprises violates BDF mandate.



Parmain ole Narikae, the managing director of Kenya Industrial Estates (KIE).

iPads, mangroves, and aspirations: How Apple is touching lives in India

NEW DELHI

RIGHT in the heart of Mumbai, nestled between towering structures, is the 'Red Building' where a quiet revolution is being powered by a little bit of tech and a lot of perseverance. At the Sitaram Mill Compound Mumbai Public School, a 30-minute drive from the Bandra Kurla Complex, a bunch of underprivileged children are rewriting their futures, armed with iPads.

The bright, sunny day makes the red-painted school stand out even more, and what adds to its ambience is students having fun recording each other on iPads, creating content as part of their curriculum. "How can we combat pollution, when our surroundings are not clean?" asked Antara, a Grade 8 student, who was part of the classroom project where each group, called a station, was allowed a topic on pollution. They were required to create videos, posters, and brief presentations on the topic. But for the students it is beyond a classroom project, as this gives them an opportunity to share their perspectives on an issue that is pervasive in their everyday lives.

"It took me less than 15 minutes to source images from the Internet, make a collage, and create a poster as part of my project. My team partner and I made it using the Keynote app," explained an eager Rani, another eighth grader who believes technology has the ability to fulfil the dreams and aspirations of millions of students like her.

Drishti of Grade I is just mirroring her project on verbs from the iPad to the bigger display in the classroom. But her glee at getting to do something like this is apparent, also to show off their prowess with their favourite app, Book Creator, which helps them learn everything from English to Maths. "When it comes to training children in Grade I, we start with the camera, how to record a video and use the markup annotation after they click a picture. Then we move to Book Creator for their projects, design, and videos," explained her teacher Ruchika Patel.

Today, most schools in India, especially the IB Boards, have included technologies such as iPads and notebooks in their teaching methodology. While this has given students from recognised schools an edge over their peers from schools in socially backward quarters, it has also widened the gap between the educational and learning



abilities among them. Akanksha Foundation, a non-profit organisation, that was set up in 1991 as an after-school centre has been working towards bridging this gap. In 2014, the organisation partnered with Apple to integrate technological support in their schools across Mumbai and Pune.

At Sitaram Mill Compound School, iPads are introduced to students right from kindergarten. While they start with relatively simple applications such as the Book Creator, they move on to more applications as they progress through grades. "Each day, these students look forward to classes, especially to learn more about the apps that are making learning a fun experience," added Patel, who highlighted the fact that they usually don't have access to any gadgets at their homes.

Principal Mandira Purohit recounted how after the partnership with Apple, a core team of teachers underwent extensive training that laid the groundwork for integrating iPads into the curriculum. The initiative was not just about providing access to technology, she asserted, but also about empowering teachers and students to use it effectively. "There were inhibitions on our part, which we had to overcome and we created structures for that. We had PD spaces and best practice sharing, where teachers were compelled to bring in best practices in technology. We also didn't let go of the non-tech aspect of education, we balanced both

conventional and new methods of teaching. Even today, along with typing, our students are also writing their notes," explained Purohit, who admitted to having never used an iPad till they were introduced in her school.

"We have a long history of working in education and we believe very strongly in how transformative our projects can be. So if we are going to be engaged in an education project, it is going to involve not only our hardware but also the tools, we develop the curricula and approach to what we call challenge-based learning," Lisa Jackson, Apple's vice president of Environment, Policy and Social Initiatives, told indianexpress.com in an interview. Students can learn from working on a problem as much as they can sometimes learn by being lectured to, she said, adding this is why Apple's "educational projects are going to be centered around the way we approach education, and that's hardware and software and also teacher education."

While for students it was experiential learning, for teachers the gadgets were initially a challenge, especially because of the accountability aspect. "For us, exploring the tech and the training boosted our confidence and helped us translate the same to the students. We realised that the kids were like sponges and could absorb anything that you gave them," said Kanisha Doshi, the vice-principal.

The transformation was sig-

nificant. The students learned to research, create presentations, and express creativity which also enhanced personalised learning. In school, they often work in pairs or groups, which leads to developing their skills in collaboration and communication.

Former students like Sneha Chandolkar and Rutuja Nandgaonkar are convinced their early exposure to iPads gave them a significant advantage in higher education. Their proficiency in creating presentations and their comfort with technology have set them apart from their peers in college. "Recently, in college, we did a presentation, and none of our teammates were able to create one. They did not know how to compose it, what to include, or how to use their creativity to put forward their ideas," said Chandolkar, an alumna, adding that the exposure also taught them how to present confidently.

Meanwhile, to ensure safety, the school authorities follow a booking system, like in libraries, to see which student has a device and to keep track of their activities. "In terms of safety, these devices have adequate measures, and certain apps such as YouTube are locked. From our central office, we have taken care of the cyber safety aspect. Children can go and search on Google but only have access to limited websites. Besides, we have installed the Web Nanny cams in classrooms too," said Purohit.

For Purohit, seeing students

develop qualities such as accountability in handling the devices and collaborating as a team far outweighs the risks. "Tech is something that we have been using right from kindergarten," lead teacher Mamta Sangani reminded us, adding that the children have nurtured qualities like sharing and belonging now.

The Akanksha schools have metrics in place to monitor the progress of each student and their curriculum focuses on social, emotional and ethical learning. "Our main metric is the state board exam results. We also conduct internal assessments and reviews. Our schools have shown remarkable success, with many students achieving first-class or distinction over the years. The success has also enabled us to add more schools," said Chitra Jain, from Akanksha Foundation.

Nearly 1,000 km away, in the dusty landscape of Rajasthan, a similar story is unfolding, this time with children of migrant labourers who toil in the marble quarries of Kishangarh. Under the blazing hot sun, past marble factories and small huts, is a dilapidated old house that serves as a makeshift school for nearly 100 children. There are no walls, just a blackboard in the open. But a little further away is an extension, partially enclosed with cloth on two sides. This is where the students watch educational videos at the digital community school organised by Bindi International, a non-profit organisation.

"Digital community schools are bridge schools for students whose access to education has been limited. This region, primarily inhabited by migrant communities, has been overlooked by society. The children, often left to fend for themselves, miss out on education due to household responsibilities," explained Monalisa Padhee, the Programme Head at Bindi International. "Our goal is to build aspirations. We have established these schools right in the community to demonstrate the impact of education. In just a year, we are seeing parents inquiring about open exams for their children."

The curriculum at these centres focuses on functional literacy, numeracy, and Hindi, but they also address issues such as gender equity, health, nutrition, and climate change. When it comes to technology, they use digital tools like solar projectors for experiential learning, encouraging students to express their traditional knowledge and engage with pressing issues.

Egyptian economy to return to normal this year, subsidies having seen surge

EGYPTIAN Prime Minister Mostafa Madbouly has emphasized that Egypt's economy aims to return to normalcy by 2024, with a transitional period extending into 2025.

Madbouly highlighted the government's commitment to easing citizens' burdens amidst the Russian-Ukrainian crisis, stressing on the state's decision to refrain from raising service prices, particularly for essentials like electricity and water.

The PM also emphasized Egypt's economic reform program as a comprehensive plan to rationalize support across all sectors, noting the government's intention to conclude electricity subsidies by 2023/2024, which is dependent on a more stable exchange rate.

The total value of subsidies surged to EGP 342 billion, with the prime minister acknowledging fiscal challenges and emphasizing the difficulty for the state to sustain the cost of support through increased debt, signaling a need for strategic financial planning and economic resilience in the coming years.

Despite the rise in electricity prices, Madbouly explained that the government anticipates sector losses to reach EGP 75 billion compared to the previous EGP 90 billion.

He added that the decision to extend the phase-out of electricity subsidies to five years aims to manage the impact on citizens, revealing that the actual cost of each kilowatt-hour of electricity stands at EGP 1.77.

Madbouly highlighted the evolving landscape, stating that after ending subsidies for petroleum products in 2021, current support levels stand at EGP 91 billion for a loaf of bread from EGP 50 billion, EGP 90 billion for diesel, EGP 30 billion for stoves.

Egypt's non-oil private sector activity shrank in December 2023, as import constraints, slowed demand, and the weakened EGP continued to impact businesses.

The S&P Global Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) for Egypt was up to 48.5 from November's 48.4, noting a modest deterioration that was softer than the average seen over the past year (47.9). It is important to note that Egypt received its highest index rating of 49.2 in July, breaking its previous record from August 2021.

"...As highlighted by surveyed firms, inflationary pressures are still widely driven by the economic challenges originating from the Russia-Ukraine war, including a marked depreciation of the pound against the US dollar leading to an uplift in buying costs," explained David Owen, Senior Economist at S&P Global Market Intelligence.

Confidence in activity growth was up from a record-low in November despite activity shrinking for the 37th month - an index of below 50 is considered a contraction - to hit 55.1 from November's 50.9.



Many South Africans not paid a living wage

CAPE TOWN

MANY South Africans are not paid a wage that is in line with the cost of living according to research.

This shows that even employed South Africans can live in poverty because they are underpaid. Workers say they need between R12 000 and R15 000 to afford the cost of living.

In a world of growing calls for global social reform, companies that want to preserve their market share will have to pay their employees at least a living wage, professor Ines Meyer of the Living Wage South Africa Network says.

Her groundbreaking research paves the way for remuneration policies favouring human needs over market rates.

"Unfortunately, many companies still resist due to legacy thinking that goes against what modern consumers expect from their employers."

Meyer defines a living wage as sufficient income for individuals and their families to afford the basic necessities of life, have something over for savings, and be prepared for emergencies.



However, this is not the same as the minimum wage legislated in the National Minimum Wage Act which compels companies to pay workers a rate not lower than the prescribed amount.

"The act focuses on a minimum amount which is a compromise between labour, business and government representatives, but the concept of a living wage looks at what a human being needs to subsist with a measure of dignity, according to Section 10 of the Constitution,"

Meyer says.

Why do most companies not pay their employees a living wage although not doing so could cost them dearly? Meyer says in her experience, South African companies have three main arguments against paying a living wage.

"The first argument is that they simply cannot afford it. Secondly, the prohibitive cost would mean letting go of employees or hiring fewer workers, thereby impeding job creation and increasing un-

employment.

Thirdly, the difference between the income of the lowest and next highest paid worker would be unfair on higher skilled employees."

However, Meyer says her research and that of bodies like the World Economic Forum (WEF) suggests this knee-jerk reaction is the result of flawed thinking that is not backed by data.

For example, the enforcement of a minimum wage in South Africa did not lead to corporate financial

distress, higher unemployment or employee dissatisfaction.

"A better approach than to ask can we afford it would be how to make it happen as paying less means we ensure we keep employees living in poverty," she said.

Meyer points out that determining an appropriate living wage is problematic locally and globally due to a lack of data and inconsistency in available data.

How should employers calculate

to determine if they offer a reasonable living wage or not?

"Even if they could, who are we as middle-class earners in our ivory towers to decide what the lowest-paid workers need to live a decent life?" Meyer says with this mindset, she puts the question of what is enough not to employers but workers themselves.

The result is a growing body of research that pinpoints the optimal living wage organisations should adopt, which Meyers says is between R12 000 and R15 000.

"While companies may see such figures as an unwanted loss to their business, the WEF [World Economic Forum] has identified many overriding benefits, such as retaining customers who favour ethical companies that share their value of an equitable world.

"In addition to goodwill, lifting workers out of poverty has been shown to grow consumer markets. Companies also experience less absenteeism, greater employee engagement and increased productivity."

Meyer warns that worker poverty can adversely affect the entire organisation, including profits and therefore early adopters of a living wage initiative stand to benefit sooner and win a greater share of the market.

UK councils brace for spending cuts with financial crisis lurking



Grand Central centre in Birmingham.

LONDON

The glitzy Victoria Square development, boasting two skyscrapers and a new Hilton Hotel, was to be a new landmark for the London commuter town of Woking. Instead, it stands as a monument to how financial bets by local councils can go badly wrong.

The hotel is yet to open its doors. Work to replace unsafe cladding on the outside of the building, which dominates the skyline of the town of 100,000 people, will only be completed this summer, almost four years after the complex's scheduled opening was blown off track by the Covid-19 pandemic. The original budget for the development has more than quadrupled to more than £700 million (around R16.5 billion).

A combination of cuts in funding from central government, higher interest rates, Covid, and above all, soured bets on commercial real estate are set to leave Woking Borough Council with borrowings of £2.4 billion, compared with its net budget of £24 million.

It became the first of three councils last year to issue a so-called Section 114 Notice (in effect, a declaration of bankruptcy) after winning the unwanted title of England's most indebted council relative to its population. Now it is being forced to slash spending on key services.

"The council lived beyond its means," said Ann-Marie Barker, the Liberal Democrat leader of the council who replaced her Conservative predecessor in 2022. "We're moving to be a smaller council."

It isn't alone. Birmingham, Britain's second-biggest city, and Nottingham in the East Midlands are set to reveal their cost-cutting plans after issuing their own Section 114 Notices in recent months.

According to the Local Government Association, which lobbies for almost all UK councils, one in five of its members say they are very or fairly likely to follow by the end of next year, something that would force them to cut many of the services they provide to millions of Britons.

Many blame the policy of austerity that began under the Conservative-led coalition in 2010 for the hollowing out of local government finances: as grants from central government were cut, local councils were given greater powers to borrow money.

Since then, Woking council's funding from Westminster has fallen by about 69% in real terms, according to the National Audit Office.

"Ultimately, the funding and resilience has been sucked out of our public services and pre-election what we're hearing is 'there is no money'," said Jack Shaw, an affiliate researcher at the Bennett Institute

for Public Policy at the University of Cambridge.

Next month, the council in Woking will vote on a package of cuts aimed at saving about £12 million annually.

The town's residents face the closure of their public swimming pool and council-owned public toilets while funding for sports pitches and the town's main art gallery is being removed.

For people like Brian Truman, the cuts could be devastating. The 90-year-old widow is a familiar face at St Mary's community centre on the outskirts of Woking where, five days a week, he turns up for lunch and company.

In coming months, the council's funding for the centre will go, meaning its services, which range from bingo to hot baths, will move to premises several miles away and a £20 (around R473) per day charge will be introduced. It's a move Truman and other locals dread.

As spending cuts begin to impinge on services that were previously untouchable, who gets the political blame could play a crucial role in an election year.

Prime Minister Rishi Sunak's Conservative Party held the parliamentary seat of Woking with a near-10,000 majority at the last election. The party led the council there until 2022, when the Liberal Democrats took over.

James Johnson, co-founder of pollster J.L. Partners, points to the role local politics played in the last general election in 2019.

According to him, many voters in Labour's traditional heartlands turned to the Conservatives for the first time in part because they were angry with what they saw as years of the party's mismanagement of their local councils.

He added that it is however "not inconceivable we could see the same effect now happen in reverse where Tory councils have let their voters down".

For Labour, the financial troubles of local government could turn into a headache if the party gains power as current polls suggest. Leader Keir Starmer has blamed "short-term inadequate funding" by the government for the crisis and has pledged to overhaul council budgets - but the party is yet to outline any detailed plans and has promised to take a prudent approach to spending overall.

The crisis has prompted calls for an overhaul of how councils are funded, with some urging the government to grant local leaders more fiscal autonomy.

"We as a country have the least money allocated at a regional or a local level of any in Europe," said Barker. "We need to move away from that."

English local authorities have less

fiscal autonomy than other countries with federal systems, such as the US. There, states have a much wider range of revenue raising options and get a bigger share of the tax take.

In Britain, councils rely on central government grants for about half of their funding. The rest comes from a form of residential property tax and a levy on business premises - but local councils have only limited control over these. They must share business rates with central government, and increases in council tax are capped each year.

Successive governments have shied away from any radical overhaul of local government finance since the introduction of the poll tax in 1990 triggered riots and helped to bring down then-prime minister Margaret Thatcher.

As a result, the rate of property tax residents pay still depends largely on the value of their house more than 30 years ago.

The costs of the Victoria Square project ballooned from an initial £150 million to £460 million when the project was approved in 2016, only to soar to as much as £700 million, according to a government-commissioned review of Woking's finances in May.

As well as Victoria Square, the council also embarked on a £500 million plan to redevelop a whole residential district in 2017.

Together, the two real estate projects account for the majority of Woking's borrowings - and the cost of servicing that debt has ballooned to £62 million (close to R1.5 billion) annually.

"The scale of borrowing was disproportionate to the council's assets and ability to manage complex commercial activity," the government inspectors said in their report. "There was insufficient regard to the level of risk the council was being exposed to."

For Woking's residents, the ramifications of the debt crisis are becoming clear. Jonny Moles, who runs the centre, said in an interview the council's plans are "devastating" and will "kill what we do" by removing the services for the elderly and hampering the running of its cafe.

"It's purely financial, this decision," he says. "What we're trying to say is there's more to it than that."



MONDAY - WEDNESDAY FROM 10:30 PM



<p>ITV</p> <p>SATURDAY 6 Jan</p> <p>5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi</p> <p>6:00 HABARI</p> <p>6:40 Kumekucha</p> <p>7:00 Habari</p> <p>8:00 Al Jazeera</p> <p>9:00 Watoto wetu</p> <p>10:05 Shika Bamba 5</p> <p>10:35 Mjue Zaidi rpt</p> <p>11:15 Chetu ni chetu rpt</p> <p>11:50 Hawavumi lakini wamo</p> <p>12:50 Art and lifestyle</p> <p>13:20 Shamba lulu</p> <p>13:50 Soap: In Love with Ramon rpt</p> <p>15:45 Igizo: Mizengwe</p> <p>16:10 Igizo: Slay Queen</p> <p>17:00 Shamsam za Pwani</p> <p>18:00 Jiji Letu</p> <p>18:15 ITV Top 10 rpt</p> <p>19:00 Jungu kuu</p> <p>19:30 Shika Bamba</p> <p>20:00 Habari</p> <p>21:05 Igizo: Slay Queen</p> <p>21:40 Art and Lifestyle</p> <p>22:10 ITV Top 10</p> <p>22:50 Hawavumi lakini wamo</p> <p>23:40 Soap: Uzalo rpt</p> <p>00:30 Al Jazeera</p>	<p>MONDAY 8 Jan</p> <p>5:00 Soap rpt: Uzalo</p> <p>5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi</p> <p>6:00 HABARI</p> <p>6:40 Kumekucha</p> <p>7:30 HABARI</p> <p>8:00 Kumekucha Michezo</p> <p>8:55 Habari za saa</p> <p>9:00 Kumekucha kishindo</p> <p>9:30 Soap: In Love with Ramon rpt</p> <p>9:55 Habari za saa</p> <p>10:00 Watoto wetu</p> <p>11:00 ITV Top Ten</p> <p>11:55 Habari za saa</p> <p>12:00 Al Jazeera</p> <p>12:30 Igizo: Filimbi</p> <p>12:55 Habari za saa</p> <p>13:00 Mjue Zaidi</p> <p>13:40 Art and Lifestyle</p> <p>13:55 Habari za saa</p> <p>14:00 Art and Lifestyle</p> <p>14:15 Soap rpt: Slay Queen</p> <p>14:55 Habari za saa</p> <p>15:00 Meza huru:</p> <p>16:30 Watoto Wetu</p> <p>17:00 Music: The Base</p> <p>18:00 Jiji Letu</p> <p>18:15 Igizo: Mizengwe</p> <p>18:30 DW: Afrimaxx</p> <p>19:00 Afya ya Jamii</p> <p>19:30 Soap: In Love with Ramon</p> <p>20:00 Habari</p> <p>21:05 Dakika 45</p> <p>22:00 Bundesliga na DW</p> <p>22:15 Mapishi</p> <p>22:30 Soap: Uzalo</p> <p>23:00 Habari</p> <p>23:30 Music: The Base</p> <p>00:30 Al Jazeera</p> <p>02:00 DWTV</p>	<p>13:00 Jungu Kuu</p> <p>13:30 Shikabamba</p> <p>13:55 Habari za saa</p> <p>14:00 Shikabamba</p> <p>14:10 Igizo rpt: Slay Queen</p> <p>14:55 Habari za saa</p> <p>15:00 Meza Huru</p> <p>16:30 Watoto wetu</p> <p>17:00 Music: The Base</p> <p>18:00 Jiji Letu</p> <p>18:15 Mapishi</p> <p>18:30 Kipindi Maalum: Sema na Mahakama</p> <p>19:30 Soap: In Love with Ramon</p> <p>20:00 Habari</p> <p>21:05 Kipindi Maalum: Maisha ni Nyumba</p> <p>21:30 Kipindi Maalum: Chetu ni chetu</p> <p>21:45 Chetu ni chetu</p> <p>22:30 Soap: Uzalo</p> <p>23:00 Habari</p> <p>23:30 Music: The Base</p> <p>00:30 Al Jazeera</p>	<p>TanESCO</p> <p>21:25 Kipindi maalum:</p> <p>22:00 Ripoti maalum:</p> <p>22:30 Soap: Uzalo</p> <p>23:00 Habari</p> <p>23:30 Music: The Base</p> <p>00:30 Al Jazeera</p>	<p>THURSDAY 11 Jan</p> <p>5:00 Soap rpt: Uzalo</p> <p>5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi</p> <p>6:00 HABARI</p> <p>6:40 Kumekucha</p> <p>7:30 HABARI</p> <p>8:00 Kumekucha Michezo</p> <p>8:55 Habari za saa</p> <p>9:00 Kumekucha Kishindo</p> <p>9:30 Soap rpt: In Love with Ramon</p> <p>9:55 Habari za saa</p> <p>10:00 Watoto wetu</p> <p>10:30 Shamba lulu</p> <p>10:55 Habari za saa</p> <p>11:00 Ripoti maalum rpt</p> <p>11:55 Habari za saa</p> <p>12:00 Al Jazeera</p> <p>12:30 Jarida la wanawake rpt</p> <p>12:55 Habari za saa</p> <p>13:00 Kipindi maalum rpt: BOT</p> <p>13:30 Jungu kuu rpt</p> <p>13:55 Habari za saa</p> <p>14:00 Shamsam za pwani rpt</p> <p>14:55 Habari za saa</p> <p>15:00 Meza huru</p> <p>16:30 Watoto wetu</p> <p>17:00 The Base</p> <p>18:00 Jiji Letu</p> <p>18:15 Mapishi</p> <p>18:30 Jagina</p> <p>19:00 Usafiri wako</p> <p>19:30 Soap: In Love with Ramon</p> <p>20:00 Habari</p> <p>21:05 Malumbano ya hoja</p> <p>23:00 Habari</p> <p>23:30 Music: The Base</p> <p>00:30 Al Jazeera</p>	<p>10:30 Usafiri wako</p> <p>10:55 Habari za saa</p> <p>11:00 Kipindi maalum rpt: Watumishi housing</p> <p>11:20 Jagina</p> <p>11:55 Habari za saa</p> <p>12:00 Al Jazeera</p> <p>12:30 Kipindi maalum rpt: TanESCO</p> <p>12:55 Habari za saa</p> <p>13:00 Kipindi Maalum: Maisha ni Nyumba rpt</p> <p>13:30 Kipindi Maalum rpt: Sema na Mahakama</p> <p>13:55 Habari za saa</p> <p>14:00 Kipindi Maalum rpt: Sema na Mahakama</p> <p>14:30 DW: Afrimaxx rpt</p> <p>14:55 Habari za saa</p> <p>15:00 Meza huru:</p> <p>16:30 Watoto Wetu</p> <p>17:00 The Base (DJ Show)</p> <p>17:30 Kiislam</p> <p>18:00 Jiji Letu</p> <p>18:15 Top ten</p> <p>19:00 Shamba lulu</p> <p>19:30 Soap: In Love with Ramon</p> <p>20:00 Habari</p> <p>21:05 Kipima Joto</p> <p>23:00 Habari</p> <p>23:30 The Base</p> <p>00:30 Al Jazeera</p>
<p>SUNDAY 7 Jan</p> <p>5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi</p> <p>6:00 HABARI</p> <p>6:40 Kumekucha</p> <p>7:00 Habari</p> <p>8:00 Al Jazeera</p> <p>09:00 Watoto Wetu</p> <p>10:00 Soap: In Love with Ramon rpt</p> <p>11:45 Hawavumi lakini wamo rpt:</p> <p>12:45 Mjue zaidi</p> <p>13:30 Usafiri wako</p> <p>14:00 Tamasha la Michezo</p> <p>15:30 Mwangaza</p> <p>16:30 ITV Top 10 rpt</p> <p>17:20 Kipindi cha kikristo</p> <p>18:00 Jiji Letu</p> <p>18:15 Mapishi</p> <p>18:30 Matukio ya wiki</p> <p>19:30 Igizo: Slay Queen</p> <p>20:00 Habari</p> <p>21:05 Kipindi maalum: Biko</p> <p>21:10 Igizo: Mizengwe</p> <p>21:25 Kipindi maalum: Mch-ezo Supa Jackpot</p> <p>21:40 Mjue Zaidi</p> <p>22:20 Soap: Uzalo rpt</p> <p>00:30 Al Jazeera</p>	<p>TUESDAY 9 Jan</p> <p>5:00 Soap rpt: Uzalo</p> <p>5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi</p> <p>6:00 HABARI</p> <p>6:40 Kumekucha</p> <p>7:30 HABARI</p> <p>8:00 Kumekucha Michezo</p> <p>8:55 Habari za saa</p> <p>9:00 Kumekucha kishindo</p> <p>9:30 Soap: In Love with Ramon</p> <p>9:55 Habari za saa</p> <p>10:00 Watoto wetu</p> <p>10:25 Jagina</p> <p>10:55 Habari za saa</p> <p>11:00 Chetu ni chetu</p> <p>11:40 Igizo: Mizengwe</p> <p>11:55 Habari za saa</p> <p>12:00 Al Jazeera</p> <p>12:30 Afya ya jamii</p> <p>12:55 Habari za saa</p>	<p>11:55 Habari za saa</p> <p>12:00 Al Jazeera</p> <p>12:30 Bundesliga na DW rpt</p> <p>12:55 Habari za saa</p> <p>13:00 Dakika 45 rpt</p> <p>13:55 Habari za saa</p> <p>14:00 Kipindi maalum: NSSF rpt</p> <p>14:15 Chetu ni chetu rpt</p> <p>14:55 Habari za saa</p> <p>15:00 Meza huru</p> <p>16:30 Watoto Wetu</p> <p>17:00 Music: The Base</p> <p>18:00 Jiji Letu</p> <p>18:15 Igizo: Mizengwe</p> <p>18:30 Jarida la wanawake</p> <p>19:00 Kipindi maalum: BOT</p> <p>19:30 Soap: In Love with Ramon</p> <p>20:00 Habari</p> <p>21:05 Aibu Yako</p> <p>21:10 Kipindi maalum:</p>	<p>21:25 Kipindi maalum:</p> <p>22:00 Ripoti maalum:</p> <p>22:30 Soap: Uzalo</p> <p>23:00 Habari</p> <p>23:30 Music: The Base</p> <p>00:30 Al Jazeera</p>	<p>FRIDAY 12 Jan</p> <p>5:00 Soap rpt: Uzalo</p> <p>5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi</p> <p>6:00 HABARI</p> <p>6:40 Kumekucha</p> <p>7:30 HABARI</p> <p>8:00 Kumekucha Michezo</p> <p>8:55 Habari za saa</p> <p>9:00 Kumekucha kishindo</p> <p>9:30 Soap rpt: In Love with Ramon</p> <p>9:55 Habari za saa</p> <p>10:00 Watoto wetu</p>	<p>SATURDAY 13 Jan</p> <p>5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi</p> <p>6:00 HABARI</p> <p>6:40 Kumekucha</p> <p>7:00 Habari</p> <p>8:00 Al Jazeera</p> <p>9:00 Watoto wetu</p> <p>10:05 Shika Bamba 5</p> <p>10:35 Mjue Zaidi rpt</p> <p>11:15 Chetu ni chetu rpt</p> <p>11:50 Hawavumi lakini wamo</p> <p>12:50 Art and lifestyle</p> <p>13:20 Shamba lulu</p> <p>13:50 Soap: In Love with Ramon rpt</p> <p>14:55 Igizo: Mizengwe</p> <p>16:10 Igizo: Slay Queen</p> <p>17:00 Shamsam za Pwani</p> <p>18:00 Jiji Letu</p> <p>18:15 ITV Top 10 rpt</p> <p>19:00 Jungu kuu</p> <p>19:30 Shika Bamba</p> <p>20:00 Habari</p> <p>21:05 Igizo: Slay Queen</p> <p>21:40 Art and Lifestyle</p> <p>22:10 ITV Top 10</p> <p>22:50 Hawavumi lakini wamo</p> <p>23:40 Soap: Uzalo rpt</p> <p>00:30 Al Jazeera</p>

Italy to put Africa development, AI at heart of its G7 presidency

ROME

SUPPORTING African development and tackling the dangers posed by artificial intelligence will be two key themes for Italy during its one-year presidency of the Group of Seven, Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni said on Thursday.

Speaking at a wide-ranging news conference, Meloni added that Italy would maintain its support for Ukraine in the conflict against Russia and warned that a further escalation of the conflict in the Middle East could have "unimaginable consequences".

Italy took over the rotating presi-

dency of the G7, which includes the United States, Canada, Japan, Germany, France, Britain and Italy, at the start of January.

It will host numerous ministerial meetings throughout the year, including a leaders' summit in June. However, Meloni said she wanted to hold a special session before June focused on AI.

"I am hugely concerned about the impact (of AI) on the labor market," she told the news conference to mark the end of the year, held over from last month when she was unwell.

"Today we are faced with a revolution where (human) intellect is in dan-

India-Nepal relationship saw real transformation in recent years - Jaishankar

KATHMANDU

EXTERNAL Affairs Minister S Jaishankar yesterday said that bilateral ties between India and Nepal witnessed a real transformation in recent years with significant strides made in various sectors.

In his address after joint inauguration of Tribhuvan University Central Library and other post-earthquake reconstruction projects in Kathmandu, Jaishankar said,

"In recent years, we have witnessed the real transformation of the India-Nepal relationship. With significant strides made in a variety of areas, this partnership has expanded multifold and connectivity, be it physical, digital or energy-related, has become a cornerstone of this expanding collaboration, and this has further strengthened the people-to-people linkages between our two countries," Jaishankar said today.

The external affairs minister who arrived in Nepal a day ago today e jointly inaugurated with his Nepalese counterpart N P Saud the Tribhuvan University Central Library and other reconstruction projects undertaken in Kathmandu after the 2015 earthquake in Nepal.

Highlighting the India's efforts in Nepal after the devastating earthquake of 2015, Jaishankar said, "I stand before you today with a sense of satisfaction, even pride as we gather here to celebrate the inauguration of this newly constructed Central Library of the prestigious Tribhuvan University as well as 25 schools, 32 health

projects and a Cultural Heritage Sector project which were undertaken as part of a collaborative effort to support the people of Nepal in the aftermath of the devastating earthquake of 2015."

He said Nepal's government, after the initial rescue efforts prioritized housing, education, health and cultural heritage as part of its reconstruction drive. Jaishankar stated that India is pleased to be part of Nepal's reconstruction efforts and noted that the Indian government has funded the project for the construction of 50,000 houses that were completed in November 2021.

"We have been pleased to be part of these efforts as we contributed USD one billion in this regard consisting of USD 250 million in grant and the remaining as a line of credit. We are very satisfied that the Government of India has funded a project for the construction of 50,000 houses that were completed in November 2021.

"I'm happy to know that today's handing over of 25 schools and the inauguration of this very prestigious library, all the 71 projects being undertaken with reconstruction grant in the education sector have been completed and handed over to the Government of Nepal," Jaishankar said.

The external affairs minister appreciated the partnership of governments of Nepal and India and recognized the efforts of all the concerned agencies of Nepal government. He expressed hope that other projects will be completed soon and put to use as soon as possible.

Jaishankar stressed that India



Italy's Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni gestures as she answers journalists' questions, during her year-end press conference in Rome, on Thursday AFP

ger of being replaced."

She told reporters that supporting African development would also be a central theme of her G7, saying it was vital to boost local economies and living standards to dissuade would-be migrants from heading to Europe.

"What I think needs to be done in Africa is not charity. What needs to be done in Africa is to build cooperation and serious strategic relationships as equals not predators. What needs to be done in Africa is to defend the right not to have to emigrate ... and this is done with investments and a strategy."

Conflict on agenda

Among other issues likely to dominate Italy's presidency is the conflict in Ukraine and the crisis in Gaza between Israel and Palestinian militant group Hamas.

Meloni spoke to Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy late on Thursday in her first call to an international leader as G7 president, her office

said.

On the Gaza conflict, Meloni called on Israel to avoid civilian casualties and said that a more permanent solution needed to be found for the Palestinian issue.

"I believe...it's an error to say 'First let's destroy Hamas and then we'll talk about it,'" Meloni said.

"One of the best ways of calling the bluff of Hamas, which has no interest in the Palestinian cause, is to work for a structural solution of the Palestinian question," she added, saying the European Union should play a more prominent role in diplomatic initiatives.

Meloni, who took power in October 2022 as Italy's first woman prime minister, said she believed that the West should continue to supply arms and material support to Kyiv.

"The only way to reach any kind of diplomatic solution in Ukraine, any kind of negotiation, is to maintain the balance between forces on the ground."

Agencies

Putin inks decree on granting citizenship to foreigners under contract with Russian army

MOSCOW

FOREIGN nationals who concluded a contract with Russia's Armed Forces during the special military operation will be able to apply for Russian citizenship, according to a decree by Russian President Vladimir Putin published on the official portal of legal information.

According to the document, those foreigners who left service during the special military operation for health reasons, upon reaching the age limit or following the lifting of the martial law are also eligible.

According to the decree, their relatives will also obtain the right to apply for Russian citizenship.



US urged to stop bullying, restricting Chinese students in name of national security - spokesperson

BEIJING

CHINA on Thursday urged the United States to stop bullying and restricting Chinese students in the name of national security, adding the U.S. needs to ensure the security and lawful rights and interests of Chinese students and scholars in the country.

Spokesperson Wang Wenbin made the remarks at a daily press briefing in response to a related query. Wang said the U.S. has long been wantonly suppressing and ill-treating Chinese students traveling to the U.S. with lawful and valid identifications and visas.

Some of the students were interrogated, confined, forced into confession, induced and even deported without just cause. Every month for the past few months, the U.S. deported dozens of Chinese arriving in the U.S., including students.

"This is a clear case of selective, discriminatory and politically motivated law enforcement. We strongly deplore and firmly oppose this."

He said the U.S. likes to portray itself as open, inclusive and a place for academic freedom, but it wrongly adopted Proclamation 10043 and put it into force, overstretched the concept of national security, politicized and weaponized academic research and repeatedly interrogated, harassed and deported Chinese students.

"Such behavior has seriously undermined the students' lawful rights and interests and poisoned the atmosphere for China-U.S. people-to-people exchanges. It goes against the two Presidents' agreement to promote and facilitate people-to-people exchanges and the two peoples' shared desire for more friendly exchanges," said Wang.

China urges the U.S. to act on its commitment of welcoming Chinese students to study in the U.S., withdraw the unjust Proclamation 10043 and stop bullying and restricting Chinese students in the name of national security, the spokesperson said.

The U.S. needs to ensure the security and lawful rights and interests of Chinese students and scholars in the U.S. and take concrete steps to support and facilitate people-to-people exchanges and cross-border travel between the two countries as it has promised, said Wang.

"China will continue to take necessary measures to resolutely protect Chinese citizens' lawful rights and interests. We also remind Chinese students traveling to the U.S. to be mindful of such risks."

Indian envoy, Sri Lankan Foreign Minister discuss ways to further enhance bilateral cooperation

COLOMBO

INDIA'S High Commissioner to Sri Lanka Santosh Jha on Thursday held a meeting with Sri Lankan Minister of Foreign Affairs Ali Sabry and discussed ways and means to further enhance bilateral cooperation.

In a post shared on X, Santosh Jha stated, "Pleased to have received the newly appointed High Commissioner of #India to #SriLanka Santosh Jha this morning. Recalling deep-rooted civilizational links between #SriLanka & #India, we discussed ways & means to further enhance our bilateral cooperation during his tenure."

On December 29, Indian High Commissioner to Sri Lanka Santosh Jha called on Sri Lankan Prime Minister Dinesh Gunawardena. During the meeting, the two leaders discussed a wide range of topics related to the "multidimensional relationship" between the two nations.

In a post shared on X, Jha had stated, "High Commissioner called on H.E PM @DCRGunawardena today. They discussed a wide range of topics pertaining to the multidimensional relationship. ANI

China to keep scaling new heights with self-reliance in new year

IN his 2024 New Year message, Chinese President Xi Jinping reviewed the remarkable achievements China has made, encouraging the Chinese people to forge ahead with resolve and tenacity, steadfastly advance Chinese modernization, build a community with a shared future for mankind, and make the world a better place for all.

His message presented to the world a prosperous and thriving China, as well as the country's global vision and a strong sense of responsibility.

In recent days, the international community has paid high attention to China's tourism during the New Year holiday, witnessing a vibrant and bustling China in the booming tourism market.

In 2023, China's economy continued to rebound and improve, injecting new momentum into global economic recovery. Recently, several international

institutions have raised their expectations for China's economic growth. The international community generally believes that China still remains the largest engine of global growth, and it is expected to contribute around 1/3 of global economic growth in 2023.

It is reported that Chinese shipbuilding companies received 59 percent of global shipbuilding orders in 2023, ranking first for three consecutive years. Statistics from the China Association of Automobile Manufacturers show that China's automobile production and sales are expected to reach around 30 million units in 2023, with the production and sales of new energy vehicles exceeding 9 million units. The export of automobiles is expected to reach nearly 5 million units. The automotive industry has become a major driving force for industrial growth.

An article published on the website of Pakistani newspaper The Nation noted that the spotlight has undoubtedly shifted to the East on the global economic stage.

The year 2024 will bring more encouraging news from China on all fronts. On Jan. 1, China's first domestically built large cruise ship embarked on its maiden commercial voyage. This milestone reflected China's burgeoning innovative drive and vibrant development, as well as the C919 large passenger airliner entering commercial service, the Shenzhen spaceships continuing their missions in space, the deep-sea manned submersible Fendouzhe reaching the deepest ocean trench, Chinese trendy brands being highly popular with consumers, the latest models of Chinese-made mobile phones gaining market success, and the rise of Chinese new

energy vehicles, lithium batteries and photovoltaic products.

"Everywhere across our country, new heights are being scaled with dogged determination, and new creations and innovations are emerging every day," said Xi in his New Year message.

The Chinese nation is a nation that is brave and adept at innovation. China is committed to the strategy for invigorating China through science and education, the workforce development strategy, and the innovation-driven development strategy. It has the confidence and ability to achieve high-level technological self-reliance, explore new areas of development, and continuously create new driving forces and advantages for development.

"China has gone from being the world's factory to becoming the global

frontrunner in nearly every important industry of the future," said Russian political analyst Dmitry Kosyrev.

On the first day of 2024, the free trade agreement between China and Nicaragua officially came into effect. Besides, dairy products from New Zealand have been allowed to enter China duty-free, marking the removal of all remaining tariffs agreed upon in the free trade deal between the two countries.

In the new year, China will continue to expand high-level opening-up and constantly create new opportunities for the world with its own development.

The Chengdu FISU World University Games and the Hangzhou Asian Games hosted last year deeply impressed the world with the profound essence of Chinese civilization.

The 78th United Nations General Assembly unanimously passed a resolu-

tion designating the Lunar New Year (the Spring Festival) as a UN floating holiday, which showcases the influence of the Chinese culture.

In the coming year, China will continue to promote mutual learning, harmonious coexistence, and mutual achievements among different civilizations, and foster understanding and friendship among people from different countries.

In 2023, China established diplomatic relations with Honduras, established or upgraded partnerships with more than 10 countries, and continuously deepened and expanded a global network of partnerships based on equality, openness, and cooperation. In the new year, the country will continue working hand-in-hand with other countries to walk a path of great virtues and build a better future for humanity.

People's Daily

'Second half of the year': UK PM fires starting gun on election

LONDON

PRIME Minister Rishi Sunak fired the starting gun on Britain's next election on Thursday, saying his "working assumption" was it would take place in the second half of the year, all but ruling out an earlier vote opposition parties had called for.

With his governing Conservatives heavily trailing Labour in the polls, Sunak moved swiftly to end calls for an early election by saying he had work to do, including cutting taxes - a major demand from some in his party.

"My working assumption is we will have a general election in the second half of this year, because in the meantime I have lots I want to get on with," Sunak told reporters during a visit to central England.

"I want to keep going, managing the economy well and cutting people's taxes ... I've got lots to get on with."

Few had believed the British leader would call an early election with his

Conservatives so far behind in the polls, but opposition parties had hoped to bounce him into it by saying he was running scared of voters.

Pat McFadden, Labour's national campaign coordinator, accused Sunak of "bottling" holding the election.

"He needs to stop hiding, stop being so weak, stop squatting in Number 10 without a mandate and simply come clean with the public: when will the British people get their say on 14 years of Tory (Conservative) failure?," he asked in a statement.

"Even now Rishi Sunak is still leaving himself as much wiggle room as possible. But the reality is clear: the only thing worse than five more months of this Tory government would be five more years."

Pledges

Sunak has struggled to make progress on his main pledges, including stopping migrants arriving in small boats, growing the economy and cutting hospital



Britain's Prime Minister Rishi Sunak speaks during a visit to the MyPlace Youth Centre, in Mansfield, in central England on Thursday. AFP

waiting lists. He has hit one target of halving inflation by the end of 2023, but economists say that has little to do with government policy.

He faces threats from all sides.

Labour leader Keir Starmer has vowed to fight the Conservatives on the economy, traditionally seen as one of their strengths, while the right-wing

Reform UK party has refused to renew its pact with the governing party to help protect its parliamentary seats.

He also must try to quell a growing rebellion inside his own party, with some lawmakers threatening to try to oust him if he refuses to cut taxes, something they believe could help win back traditional Conservative supporters.

Sunak will be hoping a so-called spring budget on March 6 can deliver such party-pleasing announcements.

On his visit to a community center in the town of Mansfield, Sunak was asked by a supporter how he could better get his message across to voters, saying his sister, a once loyal Conservative voter, would not back the party this year.

"I'm going to be out and about myself talking about it," Sunak said. "And you will see that from me every single week between now and the next election, out and about talking to people up and down the country about what we are doing to make their lives better."

Agencies

Director of Uffizi Gallery hopes cultural ties with Russia restored soon

TEL AVIV

DIRECTOR of the Uffizi Gallery Eike Schmidt hopes that cooperation with Russia in the cultural sphere is restored soon in order to resume exchanges of exhibits and projects.

Among the main achievements of his eight-year tenure at the gallery, he considers opening new exhibition spaces, including the Museum of Russian Icons, which was presented exactly two years ago.

The museum includes the Russian icons from the Medici collection which is considered to be the largest and most valuable outside of Russia.

"I am very proud that we opened the Museum of Russian Icons. This happened at a very special moment in history, and our exhibition of self-portraits also includes works by Russian artists."

Uffizi preserves access and introduces the great Russian culture even if now many people cannot afford this, because they do not travel while direct cooperation with Russian museums and joint exhibits are impossible.

Let's hope that this is over soon. I hope that relations between our countries will soon flourish again as it has always been," Schmidt said in an interview with a TASS correspondent.

IS claims responsibility for Iran bombings that killed 84 - report

TEHRAN

THE Islamic State on Thursday claimed responsibility for the bombing attack that killed 84 people in Kerman, Iran, on Wednesday, according to a post on the terror outfit's official Telegram account. The New York Times reported.

The group on its Telegram channel, called it a "dual martyrdom operation", describing how two terrorists approached a commemoration ceremony at the tomb of Major General Qassem Soleimani and detonated ex-

plosive belts strapped to their bodies "near the grave of the hypocrite leader," referring to General Suleimani. The general, an Iranian military and security leader, was assassinated four years ago in an American drone attack.

The statement identified the two attackers as Omar al-Mowahid and Sayefulla al-Mujahid.

According to The New York Times, the Islamic State's announcement came together with American intelligence assessments, which indicated

that the attack was most likely the work of the Islamic State, according to four American officials, as well as with assessments by regional military officials.

Initially, some Iranian leaders had blamed Israel for the attack, causing fear that the war in Gaza -- in which Israel is battling Hamas, a Palestinian ally of Iran -- would widen into a regional conflict.

But Western officials had cast doubt on that theory, saying that although Israel is believed

to have regularly carried out covert operations in Iran, they have typically been targeted operations against specific individuals, Iranian scientists or officials, or strikes to destroy nuclear or weapons facilities.

The Islamic State's claims also contrasted with Iranian reports that the bombs had been placed in two bags and remotely detonated along the road to the cemetery in Kerman, in which thousands of people taking part in the commemoration were walking, as

per The New York Times.

American officials said that it was unlikely that the Islamic State's intention was to frame Israel for the bombings or set off a wider war. Instead, it was probably seizing an opportunity to hit an enemy: The Islamic State, a Sunni Islamist group, has long been opposed to Iran, which has a Shiite Islamic government and leads, funds and arms an alliance of Shiite groups across the Middle East.

Iran on Thursday held a national day of mourning to

honour victims of the twin explosions, which occurred not only at a tense moment in West Asia but also on a highly symbolic day for some Iranians -- the fourth anniversary of General Suleimani's death. General Suleimani is revered among many Iranians, especially those who support the government. The New York Times reported.

Iranian officials had put the death toll for the two blasts at 103 on Wednesday. But the interior minister, Ahmad Vahidi, said on Thursday that 84 had been killed, according to Tasnim, a semi-official news agency.

ANI

UN report predicts slower global economic growth for 2024

UNITED NATIONS

GLOBAL economic growth is projected to slow down from an estimated 2.7 percent in 2023 to 2.4 percent in 2024, according to the UN World Economic Situation and Prospects 2024 report, launched on Thursday.

Weakening global trade, high borrowing costs, elevated public debt, persistently low investment, and mounting geopolitical tensions put global growth at risk, says the report. Growth in many developed economies, especially the United States, is projected to decelerate in 2024 given high interest rates, slowing consumer spending and weaker labor markets.

The short-term growth prospects for many developing countries, particularly in East Asia, Western Asia, and Latin America and the Caribbean, are also deteriorating because of tighter financial conditions, shrinking fiscal space and sluggish external demand.

Low-income and vulnerable economies are facing increasing balance-of-payments pressures and debt sustainability risks. Economic prospects for small-island developing states, in particular, will be constrained by heavy debt burdens, high interest rates and increasing climate-related vulnerabilities, says the report.

"In a nutshell, the world is struggling to get back to the 3.0-percent annual average from 2000 to 2019, representing years



Shantanu Mukherjee (L), director of the Economic Analysis and Policy Division of the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, speaks at the launch of the UN World Economic Situation and Prospects 2024 report at the UN Headquarters in New York, on Thursday. Xinhua

of sub-par growth," said Shantanu Mukherjee, director of the Economic Analysis and Policy Division of the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, at the launch of the flagship report. "This latest forecast came on the heels of global economic performance exceeding expectations in 2023."

However, last year's stronger-than-expected growth masked short-term risks and structural vulnerabilities, according to the report.

Growth in the United States is projected to be 1.4 percent in 2024, following an estimated growth rate of 2.5 percent in 2023.

Robust consumer spending on the back of strong household balance sheets and resilient labor

and housing markets supported the better-than-expected performance in 2023.

Despite aggressive monetary tightening, the unemployment rate remained low. Robust house prices boosted and sustained the net worth of homeowners, exerting a strong wealth effect and supporting high levels of household spending. This may change quickly, especially if housing and asset prices drop and effectively reduce household net worth, says the report.

Amid falling household savings, high interest rates, and a gradually softening labor market, consumer spending is expected to weaken in 2024 and investment is projected to remain sluggish in the United States.

While the likelihood of a hard

landing has declined considerably, the U.S. economy will face significant downside risks from deteriorating labor, housing and financial markets, it says. Among major developed economies, the European Union will see a higher growth rate of 1.2 percent in 2024 from an estimated 0.5 percent in 2023.

The Japanese economy will continue to slow, from 1.7 percent in 2023 to 1.2 percent in 2024. For developing economies, growth will slightly drop from 4.1 percent in 2023 to 4.0 percent in 2024.

China's economy will slow down from the estimated 5.3 percent in 2023 to 4.7 percent in 2024. India's economy, which was estimated to have expanded 6.3 percent in 2023, will grow 6.2 percent in 2024, according to the report.

Global inflation is projected to decline further, from an estimated 5.7 percent in 2023 to 3.9 percent in 2024. Price pressures are, however, still elevated in many countries and any further escalation of geopolitical conflicts risks renewed increases in inflation, warns the report.

In about a quarter of all developing countries, annual inflation is projected to exceed 10 percent in 2024. Since January 2021, consumer prices in developing economies have increased by a cumulative 21.1 percent, significantly eroding the economic gains made following the COVID-19 recovery.

Xinhua

Sudan recalls envoy from Kenya over rebel forces leader reception

KHARTOUM/UNITED NATIONS

SUDAN on Thursday recalled its ambassador to Kenya in protest against the official reception for Commander of the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) Mohamed Hammad Dagalo, the official SUNA news agency reported.

"Sudan has recalled its ambassador to Nairobi for consultations, in protest against the official reception organized by the Kenyan government for the commander of the rebel militia when he visited Kenya yesterday (Wednesday)," Sudan's acting Foreign Minister Ali Al-Sadiq was quoted as saying in a statement.

"Nairobi has forgotten the terrible violations committed by the rebel forces, and the destruction they caused to the country's infrastructure, capabilities, and citizens' property," Al-Sadiq said.

The Sudanese top diplomat also accused Kenya of supporting and hosting the rebel leaders and supporters, "in addition to conspiring with hostile regional powers against Sudan."

On Wednesday, Kenyan President William Ruto received Dagalo in the Kenyan capital Nairobi, as part of Dagalo's external tour which included Uganda, Ethiopia, and Djibouti.

Sudan has been witnessing deadly clashes between the SAF and the RSF since April 15. More than 12,000 people have been killed in the fighting, according to a statement by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in early December. On Thursday, UN Undersecretary-



General for Humanitarian Affairs Martin Griffiths called for international actions to stop the fighting in Sudan.

Nearly nine months of war have tipped Sudan into a downward spiral that only grows more ruinous by the day. As the conflict spreads, human suffering is deepening, humanitarian access is shrinking, and hope is dwindling. This cannot continue, said Griffiths in a statement.

"2024 demands that the international community, particularly those with influence on the parties to the conflict in Sudan, take decisive and immediate action to stop the fighting and safeguard humanitarian operations meant to help millions of civilians," he said.

China continues to improve business environment for stronger economic vitality

U.S. biotechnology company Moderna recently set up a company in Minhang district, Shanghai. Moderna's agent lawyer obtained the business license just an hour after relevant authorities received the final document required for business registration.

"Minhang's efficiency has secured crucial development time for the company," the lawyer said.

From coastal to inland regions, continuously optimizing services and improving efficiency are building powerful momentum for China to further enhance its business environment.

Business environment is an important factor in stabilizing market confidence, stimulating economic development, and promoting high-quality development. Just like sunlight, water, and air are essential for human survival, a good business environment is indispensable for businesses.

Various regions and departments in China have been continuously optimizing the business environment based on the actual needs of enterprises, helping them overcome obstacles and thrive.

In the first three quarters of 2023, the number of newly established private enterprises in China exceeded 7.06 million, a year-on-year increase of 15.3 percent. In the first 11 months of 2023, the number of newly established foreign-invested enterprises in China reached 48,078, growing 36.2 percent from a year ago.

According to a report on China's business environment for foreign investors in the third quarter of 2023, more than 80 percent of surveyed foreign-invested enterprises expressed satisfaction with

China's business environment.

The continuously optimized business environment provides strong support for fostering and stimulating the vitality of business entities and promoting high-quality development.

Enterprises are in the best position to judge whether a business environment is good. East China's Anhui province has launched a platform that enables streamlined approvals for companies. As long as they provide accurate information, they can receive funds swiftly.

In Dongying, east China's Shandong province, a 2.5-billion-yuan (\$352.39 million) wind power project received personalized and proactive services from relevant departments, from planning to construction. Businesses are ex-

pected to experience a greater sense of fulfillment and confidence when they operate in a favorable business environment.

In a sense, the optimization of business environment is also a process of deepening reforms and overcoming entrenched interests. China has been focusing on removing market barriers, transforming government functions, improving service quality and efficiency, and promoting institutional innovation, with an aim to break bottlenecks, establish long-term mechanisms, and strengthen institutional foundations, so as to ensure continuous improvement of business environment and effectively stimulate market vitality and social creativity.

The rule of law is the best busi-

ness environment. From optimizing legislation to strengthening the removal of unfair provisions in administrative regulations, and to canceling and adjusting 33 penalty items in areas such as industry and informatization, housing and urban-rural development, China has taken solid steps in building a business-friendly environment through the rule of law.

China protects the legitimate rights and interests of various types of ownership enterprises, including state-owned, private, and foreign-funded enterprises, equally under the law. It promotes the improvement of institutional norms in areas such as property rights protection, market access, fair competition, and social credit.

China not only creates a stable,

transparent, standardized, and predictable legal environment for all types of business entities but also injects strong impetus into building a new highland for opening-up and promoting high-quality economic development.

It was stressed at the recently held Central Economic Work Conference that China will continue its efforts to foster a world-class business environment that is market-oriented, law-based, and internationalized.

Optimizing business environment is an essential component of consolidating and enhancing the positive momentum of economic recovery, and continuously promoting qualitative and quantitative economic growth.

By stimulating vitality through the optimization of business en-

vironment and accumulating momentum through institutional innovation, the Chinese economy is steadily moving toward high-quality development.

People's Daily



China protects the legitimate rights and interests of various types of ownership enterprises, including state-owned, private, and foreign-funded enterprises, equally under the law

Tanzanians urged to apply for 2023 AFCON visas online

By Guardian Correspondent

TANZANIA Football Federation (TFF) has asked Tanzanian soccer fans who want to travel to Ivory Coast to watch the 2023 TotalEnergies African Cup of Nations finals to apply for visas online.

According to a press release published on the TFF's X page, the national soccer governing body's Media and Communication Officer Clifford Ndimbo said the soccer fanatics ought to apply for visas through www.snedai.cl website.

Ndimbo noted the 34th AFCON finals will kick off on January 13 and Tanzania's senior national soccer team 'Taifa Stars' will play the AFCON Group Stage matches in San-Pedro and Korhogo cities.

The Media and Communication Officer urged soccer lovers who will take flights to Ivory Coast to make sure they have yellow fever vaccination.

He also said there is plane



Tanzania Football Federation (TFF) Media and Communication Officer, Clifford Ndimbo.

transport from the Ivory Coast capital city, Abidjan, to San-Pedro (60 minutes) and Korhogo (80 minutes) so reliable transport will be available for those wishing to travel.

'Taifa Stars' campaign in the 2023 AFCON will begin on January 17 at 6 p.m., as the squad is set to confront

the Atlas Lions of Morocco before challenging the Leopards of DR Congo on January 21 at 3 pm.

The Tanzanian team will conclude its Group Stage campaign with a tie against the Chipolopolo of Zambia on January 24 at 9 pm.

The Tanzanian squad's AFCON matches, slated

to take place in San Pedro City, will be played at the Laurent Pokou Stadium.

Meanwhile, the Confederation of African Football (CAF) on Thursday announced a 40% increase in the prize money for the winner of the 2023 TotalEnergies Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON) to be held in

Ivory Coast.

According to the CAF Media, the winner of the 2023 TotalEnergies AFCON will receive USD 7m while the runner-up will now get USD 4m.

Each of the two semi-finalists will receive USD 2.5m and each of the four quarterfinalists will pocket USD 1.3m.

Speaking about the increase, CAF president Patrice Motsepe was quoted by CAF Media saying: "CAF has made significant progress over the past two years in increasing the prize money of the AFCON and all its other major competitions."

Motsepe noted: "We have increased the prize money of the AFCON Winner to USD 7,000,000 which is a 40% increase from the previous AFCON prize money."

The CAF top leader added: "I am confident that a portion of the prize money will contribute to developing football and also benefit all the football stakeholders, as well as assist our Member Associations with their administrations."

Yanga's official praises youthful defender

By Guardian Correspondent

YANGA's vice-president Arafat Haji has heaped praises on the outfit's center-back, Hamis Nanguka, for showing impressive performance in a 2024 Mapinduzi Cup tournament tie against KVZ which took place in Zanzibar on Thursday.

Nanguka was one of the best performers in the Group C tie which ended in a 0-0 and witnessed his club booking a place in the last-eight stage of the annual showdown.

Haji moreover presented a cash prize to the towering, youthful central defender after the match in appreciation of the promising defender, now playing for Yanga's U-20 team.

The Yanga vice-president, speaking to the club's media outlet, disclosed: "I'm congratulating the young defender for a scintillating showing he has displayed in today's match, he has played for 90 minutes for the senior team for the first time."

"He has been great throughout, he has showcased very impressive displays which made him deserve the Man of Match prize," the official said.

The vice-president said even though Nanguka is youthful, he played well and made Yanga's defense solid, stressing the youthful center-back was a deserving winner of the Man of the Match prize.

According to Haji, Yanga officials watching the tie from the stands were closely following the duel and saw how composed Nanguka was when he was in possession, and when it came to fulfilling his duties.

Haji pointed out that Yanga officials are encouraging Nanguka to step up his performance and work hard so that he can turn into an excellent player for the national team and his outfit.

A delighted Nanguka said he was lost for words, adding he hardly expected his club's top official will

notice his displays and eventually reward him.

The central defender expressed his regard for the prize and noted he felt he was in his normal form but was surprised to have received the plaudits. He disclosed he feels the leader has noticed his potential.

Nanguka is one of several promising footballers from Yanga's U-20 team that have been included in the senior side which is taking part in the ongoing Mapinduzi Cup tournament.

The towering center-back had great coordination with Shaibu Mita, also a Yanga U-20 center-back, in the clash against KVZ.

In one of Nanguka's significant contributions, he went for a clean tackle to prevent a KVZ goal-getter from making his way into Yanga's box and finding the back of the net.

Nanguka has turned out for Yanga in two ties of the Mapinduzi Cup, the first of which witnessed him coming on as a second-half substitute in a clash against South Sudan club, Jamus FC.

The Thursday fixture was Yanga's last group stage tie and the club has joined KVZ to secure progression to the last eight stage of the showdown.

Yanga had also been pooled with Jamus FC, and the Isles' other team, Jamhuri SC, in Group C of the Mapinduzi Cup.

The NBC Premier League holder had started its campaign in the 2024 Mapinduzi Cup by commanding a comprehensive 5-0 win over Jamhuri SC on December 31 last year and later edged Jamus FC 2-1 in the following duel.

The 2024 Mapinduzi Cup quarterfinals are slated for Sunday and Monday, whereas the semi-finals are set to be played on January 10. The showdown's final will be played on January 13.

Singida Fountain Gate FC, Simba SC, and Azam FC are, as is the case for Yanga, outfits from Mainland Tanzania that are taking part in the Mapinduzi Cup.



Tigo Tanzania's Services and Products Division's Head, Ndevonaeli Eliakimu (L) is pictured handing over a dummy check of 5m/- to Kiungi Nombo, the winner of the telecoms company's competition, termed 'Magifti Dabo Dabo', in Dar es Salaam yesterday. PHOTO: CORRESPONDENT

Dar resident wins telecoms company's 2024 'Magifti Dabo Dabo' competition

By Guardian Correspondent

DAR ES SALAAM resident, Kiungi Nombo, has won prize money totaling 5m/- in the first draw for this year's competition, dubbed 'Magifti Dabo Dabo', organized by the innovative telecommunication company Tigo Tanzania.

Nombo was presented with the prize money at the company's offices in Dar es

Salaam yesterday.

Another Dar es Salaam resident, Christina Mrua, also emerged as the winner of home appliances including a refrigerator, television, and modern music system.

Speaking after receiving a sample check for the prize money from Tigo Tanzania's Head of Services and Products Division, Nombo said he did not believe it when he received a call that

he had won the prize.

The winner said he believed as soon as he arrived at the company's offices and his victory was confirmed.

"I am very grateful for this win, this money has come at an important time of the need for money, I thank Tigo Tanzania for what they are doing," Nombo stated.

The winner further called on the company's custom-

ers to make various transactions using Tigo Pesa to put themselves in a good position to win the way he did.

"I have won by making frequent transactions, I have not only been paying electricity bills and doing other payments through Tigo Pesa but also buying Tigo packages, every Tigo Tanzania customer has a chance to win," Nombo disclosed.

Tigo Tanzania's Head of Services and Products Division, Ndevonaeli Eliakimu, said the competition is still in progress and advised the firm's customers to make regular transactions to win.

He said that various prizes will continuously be presented to the winners and the grand prize of a new car will be handed over to the winner as well as the one he chooses to win with him/her.



Yanga's central defender, Hamis Nanguka. PHOTO: COURTESY OF YANGA

Magic to retire Shaquille O'Neal's No. 32 jersey in ceremony Feb. 13

BY TIM REYNOLDS

SHAQUILLE O'Neal's number will be retired Feb. 13 by the Orlando Magic, who will become the third NBA franchise to give that tribute to the four-time champion and Basketball Hall of Famer.

O'Neal will be the first player to get a jersey number – he wore No. 32 in Orlando – retired by the Magic. The Los Angeles Lakers retired his No. 34 jersey in April 2013, and the Miami Heat retired his No. 32 jersey in December 2016. O'Neal won three titles with the Lakers, and another with the Heat.

"When someone asks who was the first player to officially put the Orlando Magic on the map, the answer is simple – Shaquille O'Neal," Orlando Magic CEO Alex Martins said. "He took this franchise to new heights, both on and off the court, and his legacy is still felt within our organization today. On behalf of the DeVos family, we are excited to honor Shaquille by raising No. 32 into the rafters of the Kia Center, where it will remain forever."

O'Neal was the No. 1 pick in the 1992 NBA draft by the Magic, and he spent his first four pro seasons in Orlando before leaving for the Lakers in 1996. He was the NBA's rookie of the year for Orlando in 1993, was an All-Star in all four of his seasons with the Magic, led them to their first NBA Finals in 1995 and still ranks among the franchise's career leaders in several categories, including blocked shots (second, 824), rebounds (third, 3,691) and points scored (sixth, 8,019).

The decision was announced on TNT's "NBA Tip-Off" on Thursday, the show that O'Neal has been part of for several years. O'Neal said he was particularly thankful for Rich DeVos – the original owner of the Magic, who died in 2018 – for bringing him to Orlando.

"It was a great four years there," O'Neal said on the show. "I just wanted to come in and just make a name for myself. ... I'd like to thank the city of Orlando, like to thank the Orlando Magic organization. Appreciate you very much."

The Magic have seen three other players wear No. 32 since O'Neal left there in 1996. Jeremy Richardson donned it for 12 games in the 2008-09 season, Justin Harper wore it for 14 games in the 2011-12 season and C.J. Watson had it for 95 games over two seasons from 2015 through 2017.

The retirement ceremony will follow Orlando's game against Oklahoma City, one that will be televised on TNT. O'Neal went into the Magic Hall of Fame in 2015, the Basketball Hall of Fame in 2016 and was named to the NBA's 75th Anniversary Team in 2021.

AP

Brazil's ousted football chief restored to job by judge

RIO DE JANEIRO

A MESSY legal battle over the leadership of the Brazilian Football Confederation (CBF) took a new twist Thursday when a Supreme Court judge ordered its ousted president reinstated, after FIFA threatened sanctions over his removal.

The preliminary ruling suspended a lower-court decision and restored the job to Ednaldo Rodrigues, the first black president in the history of the CBF, which has faced a maelstrom of controversy over the legal squabble, the national team's poor performance and a failed bid to sign Real Madrid boss Carlo Ancelotti as coach.

"I hereby suspend the effects of the ruling by the Rio de Janeiro Court of Justice... and order the immediate reinstatement to their positions of the leadership elected by the CBF general assembly of March 23, 2022," judge Gilmar Mendes wrote.

The temporary ruling takes immediate effect, but must now go before the full 11-member Supreme Court. The lower court's December ruling had thrown out a 2022 deal between the CBF and Rio prosecutors that had paved the way for Rodrigues's election to lead the body until 2026.

It ruled prosecutors and the CBF had overstepped their authority in making the deal.

The case dates back to 2017, when the CBF changed its election rules without consulting representatives of Brazil's top-flight clubs, whose voting power was weakened.

The winner of the ensuing presidential election, Rogerio Caboclo, was sacked from the job in 2021 over sexual harassment accusations – later thrown out by a judge. Rodrigues was named his interim replacement.

A Rio court meanwhile annulled Caboclo's election because of the rule change, and Rodrigues won the substitute vote – the subject of the current dispute.

The lower-court ruling on December 7 removed Rodrigues and named the head of Brazil's Superior Court of Justice for Sport, Jose Perdig, as interim CBF chief pending new elections, which it ordered him to call within 30 days.

AFP

Erik ten Hag: Sir Jim Ratcliffe and I are on the same page



Erik ten Hag says he is looking forward to working with Sir Jim Ratcliffe at Man Utd - Reuters

By James Ducker

Erik ten Hag claims he is on "the same page" as Sir Jim Ratcliffe after the Ineos chairman and his team presented a number of their ideas to the Manchester United manager during lengthy

talks this week.

Ratcliffe has been meeting players and staff at United during a four-day scoping exercise and spent several hours with Ten Hag on Wednesday discussing plans as he prepares to take complete control of football operations at Old Trafford.

The British billionaire's arrival at United – subject to the Premier League ratifying his £1.03 billion deal for a 29 per cent stake in the club – has intensified the spotlight on Ten Hag after a miserable season in which United have lost 14 games and finished bottom of their Champions League

group.

Ineos are expected to bring in a new director of football and potentially a head of recruitment and Sir Dave Brailsford, the group's sporting director who has been on the ground with Ratcliffe at United this week, is likely to recommend other changes as part of his audit.

Ten Hag's long-term position is understood to be vulnerable if there is not a dramatic improvement in results and performances, but the Dutchman expressed optimism about the future after sitting down with Ratcliffe for the first time this week.

"[It was] very positive, I have to say," the United manager said. "We had a long meeting, so many hours we sit together. On many issues we were on the same page."

"So it was very positive from both sides. I can say that it was a very constructive meeting and we're looking forward to working with each other."

Asked whether Ineos explained any ideas they had for United, Ten Hag added: "They have given me a few so we have had our debates about our approaches, about our strategies and I think we will come together."

Nonetheless, Ten Hag insisted it was still early days and that he would have to see how the integration process unfolded once the

deal has the greenlight.

"I think it's very [soon] and also we have to let it settle down, they're just coming in, they're introducing themselves, they have good ideas. We have to see what we can integrate, in togetherness we will work but after one day you can't tell that."

United cannot make any big football decisions without consulting Ineos during the transition process so the news that the club have triggered options in the contracts of Aaron Wan-Bissaka, Victor Lindelof and Hannibal Mejbri to extend their deals by 12 months until the end of next season is thought to have been run by Ratcliffe and his team.

It remains to be seen if United look to sell any of that trio in the summer, when Anthony Martial is expected to leave as a free agent assuming the France striker does not exit this month.

United have opted against triggering the option in Martial's contract and that of Raphael Varane, who is now free to speak to foreign suitors this month as United discuss a new deal on reduced terms with the former Real Madrid defender. "We are talking with Rapha," Ten Hag said.

Goalkeeper Andre Onana will be available to face Wigan Athletic in the FA Cup third round on

Monday, when Ten Hag will still be without the likes of Casemiro, Lisandro Martinez and Mason Mount, none of whom are yet ready to return from injury. "I think we will have more or less the same squad as against Nottingham Forest," Ten Hag said.

The FA Cup is the last piece of silverware realistically available to United this season after last Saturday's dismal 2-1 defeat at Forest left Ten Hag's side 14 points behind leaders Liverpool and nine points adrift of the top four.

Ten Hag said he could not yet confirm that Onana would be available for the league game at home to Tottenham on Sunday week but it is understood the goalkeeper will be free to play after the Cameroonian Football Federation agreed to his delayed release for the Africa Cup of Nations.

Cameroon are due to play Guinea in their opening match at the tournament 24 hours after United play Spurs meaning Onana could end up playing two games in as many days.

"We're talking with the Cameroon Federation," Ten Hag said. "It was an issue during the talks with Andre when he came in here. It's constructive. We will see. I don't know yet [about Spurs] but he will be there for the game against Wigan."

THE TELEGRAPH

Premier League transfer window: What do big clubs need?

LONDON

THE Premier League transfer window is open, with clubs in the English top flight set to flex their financial muscles.

AFP Sport looks at where the major teams will look to strengthen in January.

***Liverpool (1st, 45 pts)**

Liverpool's rebuild is ahead of schedule after the club signed four new midfielders in the summer transfer window.

Yet it is that area of the pitch where they could look to invest again to try and land just a second league title since 1990.

Wataru Endo has proved a useful stopgap signing after Chelsea won the chase for Moises Caicedo, who joined the London club for a British transfer record.

But Jurgen Klopp's men could still do with a specialist defensive midfielder and Fulham's Joao Palhinha fits the bill.

Palhinha's proposed move to Bayern Munich collapsed at the end of the summer transfer window and the Portugal international has again been one of the Premier League's best in that position this season.

***Aston Villa (2nd, 42 pts)**

Many doubt whether Aston Villa will last the course and if they have the strength to win their first league title since 1981.

Unai Emery's men have balanced a stunning start in the Premier League with their first European campaign for 13 years.

But their squad could be stretched in the final months of the season should they go far in the Europa Conference League. Ollie Watkins has been



Manchester City's Calvin Phillips is a January target for Newcastle. Agencies

central to Villa's transformation under Emery, but another option up front to take some of the load off the England international is top of their priority list.

***Man City (3rd, 40 pts)**

The defending champions are not expected to splash out this month as they instead hope for a boost from returning stars.

Attacking midfielder Kevin De Bruyne is nearing a return after a five-month layoff due to a hamstring injury.

Star forward Erling Haaland has missed the past seven games in all competitions due to a foot injury and should be fit after the mid-season player break, during which there are fewer fixtures.

***Arsenal (4th, 40 pts)**

Arsenal's need for a goalscorer is arguably the greatest among the title contenders.

The Gunners' challenge has come off the rails in recent weeks, with shock defeats to West Ham and

Fulham.

Bukayo Saka is Arsenal's top scorer, with just six Premier League goals, while strikers Gabriel Jesus and Eddie Nketiah have combined for just eight between them.

Brentford's Ivan Toney has been linked with a move to the Emirates, but is only just approaching a return to action after an eight-month ban for breaching betting rules.

*Tottenham (5th, 39 pts)

Spurs are set to be the most active of the top five in the transfer market as they respond to an injury crisis and the loss of key players to both the Asian Cup and Africa Cup of Nations.

Cristian Romero is sidelined for a number of weeks while fellow centre-back Micky van de Ven, now back in training, has been out of action since early November. Genoa defender Radu Dragusin is top of Tottenham's wishlist, with reports

suggesting a potential £25 million (\$32 million) deal.

Midfield reinforcements are also needed in north London, with Pape Matar Sarr and Yves Bissouma headed to Ivory Coast for the AFCON.

Chelsea's Conor Gallagher is a rumoured target for a switch across the capital.

Spurs did not sign a replacement for the departed Harry Kane and will be without more firepower when captain Son Heung-min leaves to lead South Korea's Asian Cup challenge.

***Man Utd (7th, 31 pts)**

Only Burnley and Sheffield United have scored fewer goals than United's paltry total of 22 in the Premier League.

Competition for Rasmus Hojlund up front is a necessity if Erik ten Hag's men are to mount a challenge for the top four.

More scoring options from the wide areas are also badly needed, with Marcus Rashford stuck on three Premier League goals and Antony on a 30-game scoreless streak.

*Newcastle (9th, 29pts)
The Magpies' lengthy in-

jury list has contributed to a miserable run of seven defeats in eight games in all competitions.

Eddie Howe is beginning to get key players back, but the rest of his squad has been left exhausted by a gruelling December schedule. More strength in depth in midfield is a priority, with Manchester City's Calvin Phillips tipped for a move to Tyneside.

***Chelsea (10th, 28 pts)**

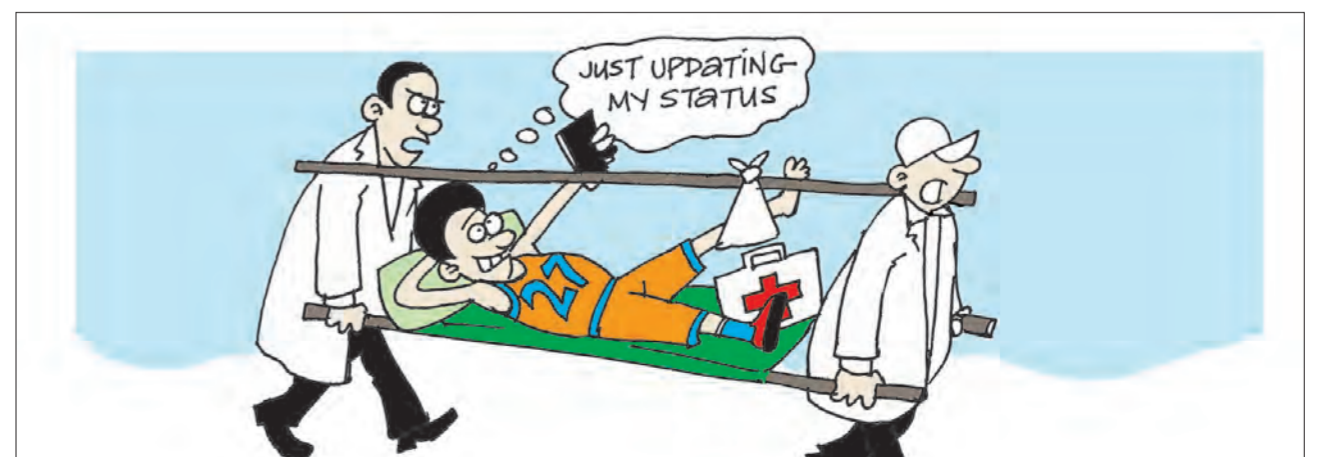
Despite spending more than £1 billion on new players in three transfer windows, Chelsea boss Mauricio Pochettino has hinted that he needs to dip into the market once more for a proven goalscorer.

The Blues have consistently failed to make the most of their chances this season with Nicolas Jackson's finishing erratic, while Mykhailo Mudryk, Raheem Sterling and Noni Madueke have only sparked sporadically.

However, Chelsea's desire to spend again could be hampered by a need to meet financial fair play rules, which could lead to major sales this month.

AFP

Gwiji by David Chikoko



Vehicle inspections: Police, TBS in pact

FROM PAGE 1

TBS officials will accompany the police in conducting roadworthiness tests, with inspections set to begin in phases in six zones countrywide in a preliminary drive described as pilot tests, he said.

Inspectors will go to all regions to conduct such operations to ensure that all vehicles are reached and their quality is checked, he affirmed, noting that the law provides for private vehicles being inspected once a year.

Commercial vehicles such as buses or minibuses transporting students are supposed to be inspected twice a year, he further asserted, hinting that when the car owner calls at an inspection center and the car is inspected, he is handed an inspection certificate.

After a period set by law, if it is six months or one year, the owner will be liable to return to the facility to undergo the mandatory inspection again and be provided with an updated certificate, he stated.

"I request all car owners to comply with this directive as it is a legal requirement," the commissioner intoned, insisting that there are accidents on the roads caused by human error, but other accidents are due to faulty vehicles.

That is why the police are determined to start inspecting the quality of vehicles using the best equipment available, he said, elaborating that the police force will

render the necessary facilitation for TBS officials asked to assist the police in that effort.

The intention is to ensure that all the set goals are achieved and thus all substandard vehicles are removed from the road, he emphasized, cautioning motorists with tinted glass on windscreens to rectify the vehicles as tinted glass causes poor vision and puts road safety in danger.

"If the windshield is tinted, it causes poor vision and when the lights are also tinted they become dim and endanger the safety of road users," he explained, warning those sporting tinted windscreens that they will be arrested.

"We will take strict action and they should not blame us when we start arresting them," he specified, meanwhile as the TBS CEO echoed that many road accidents are caused by the negligence of drivers.

Sometimes the vehicles are substandard and this is why TBS has decided to start helping in such inspections to ensure that all vehicles are of good quality.

"The police have been conducting regular inspections using commonplace equipment but TBS has both the expertise and equipment to inspect vehicles.

"So when we talked and it appeared that we have that ability then we saw that we should enter into an agreement like this that we entered today," he added.



Treasury Registrar Nehemiah Msechu pictured in Dodoma city yesterday making a presentation at training for members of the Parliamentary Public Investment Committee on the level of effectiveness in the management of public institutions. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

Minister reaffirms extensive aerial minerals research plan

FROM PAGE 1

"Investments in the mining sector will boost economic growth and create jobs," he said, underlining the wish by President Samia Suluhu Hassan to see Tanzanians participating directly in the sector for their own benefit and the nation as a whole.

Services providers in the sector need to work collaboratively and speak in one voice, to enable their being easily heard at the level of the government, he said, urging banks and financial institutions to empower the service providers with loans to enable them

take up available opportunities in the sector.

Yahaya Samamba, the Mining Commission executive secretary, said that employment opportunities in the mining sector rose from 7,000 in 2018 to 16,462 in 2023.

Upwards of 97 percent of jobs in the sector are occupied by locals, partly due to government directives tied to local content policies, he said, with regional commissioner Amos Makalla affirming that the mining sector contributes heavily to the region's revenue, via logistical services and air transport in particular.

Efforts are underway to make sure that

air transport services are further improved to facilitate airlifting of minerals and spare parts, he said, pointing at the strategic Kigongo-Busisi JPM Bridge that is nearing completion. It is expected to bring relief to minerals transporters in Geita and Mwanza regions, he stated.

The city of Mwanza will be a major centre for the standard gauge railway (SGR), as the building of an inland container depot (ICD) at Fela Station will enable freight forwarders and customs agents to provide services to importers and exporters, he said.

Fela dry port will be used for handling full

and empty containers moved to and from the depot to Dar es Salaam port on SGR, he said, challenging the national carrier, Air Tanzania Co. Ltd (ATCL) to further improve its cargo transportation services. This way it will be able to serve business people in Mwanza as soon as the wide ranging maintenance of the Mwanza International Airport is completed, he stated.

Service providers in the mining sector appealed to the government to allow locals to form joint venture projects in major mines, thus improving mining technology and creating more job opportunities.



Mara regional commissioner Said Mtanda addresses a rally at Nyatwali in Bunda District on Wednesday, chiefly asking residents of the area to exercise patience while the government works on the modalities of paying compensation to people relocated during the expansion of the Serengeti National Park. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

Hanang to get 101 houses in three months

By Carlos Banda

THE government has unveiled a three-month plan to execute the construction of 101 houses for survivors of the mudslide disaster that left 89 people dead 139 people injured and in Hanang District, Manyara Region.

Mobhare Matinyi, the chief government spokesman, told journalists in Dar es Salaam yesterday that the government had sought a 100-acre plot for building houses and various social amenities to accommodate those whose houses were destroyed in the dreadful incident.

The government has searched and found a 100-acre piece of land located at the Warret Farm operated by the Prisons Service in Mogitu ward in the district, he said, noting that the government cleared the land and surveyed

269 plots, where 226 plots are marked for residential purposes, 26 for mixed housing and commercial use, while 17 plots are set for community social services.

There are there plots for building worship centers, and single plots for dispensary, cemetery, sports activities, open space, township office, marketplace and a primary school, he stated.

Despite setting out 269 plots, the government will build 101 houses leaving the remaining plots for future purposes or usage in case another problem arises in the area, he declared.

The next step is handing over the plots to the survivors listed for the three room houses to be built, he said, underlining that completion of the map design for the houses, cost evaluation and strategy formulation for the housing project were being undertaken on an urgency basis, as an operation.

A total of 5.2bn/- has been collected as donations from the government, stakeholders, institutions and members of the public in support of efforts to redeem people affected by the mudslide.

The government received food donations, medicines, clothes and other accessories from stakeholders, institutions, individuals and other well-wishers, he said, affirming that donation stand at 3.2bn/- "and we are still continuing to receive more donations from various people and institutions."

The National Relief Fund had received 2.7bn/- in donations, with President Samia Suluhu Hassan boosting relief efforts by cutting short her participation at the COP28 summit in Dubai.

She obtained \$1m in donations (2.5bn/-) taking overall funds collected for relief efforts to 5.2bn/-, he said, stressing government efforts to ensure

that all students are supplied with uniforms and school materials relevant to their educational levels and requirements.

"On Monday 08 January, most schools will be reopening and the government has ensured that children impacted by the disaster have access to uniforms - skirts, shorts, shoes, backpacks and exercise books with consideration of their current education level," he explained.

The requirements were supplied to the children in an operation started on December 29 and supervised by regional commissioner Queen Sengida, he said, noting that the exercise is set for conclusion today.

He also ventured to explain health sector government objectives for this year as geared to improve health services and the quality in the supervision in health services delivery at regional and district levels.

Health care units rose from 8,549 in 2021 to 9,369 healthcare units by last year's end, comprising 436 hospitals, 1126 health centers and 7804 dispensaries.

Health centers with the capacity for caring for expectant mothers rose from 340 in 2021 to 523 last year; with the number of hospital beds rising to 104,687 last year from 84,164 in 2021.

Under-five mortality rates also declined from 560 births per 100,000 to 104 per 100,000 in 2022, he said, citing the government's intention to attain and even surpass the global target of 70 deaths per 100,000 births by 2030.

The relocation exercise for Ngorongoro conservation area residents was being pursued for those willing to leave, to ensure that the residents there remain stakeholders in the conservation quest.

Five die in year-end outbreak of cholera

FROM PAGE 1

Salome Mabula, one of the food vendors, said education was important in the matter, asserting that she has been following guidance issued by health officers on washing hands and ensuring hygiene at food selling points to control the spread of the disease.

Earlier in the month, the disease claimed four lives in Kagera Region, with Fatma Mwasa, the regional commissioner, saying the first cases were reported on November 29 at Buchurora village, Bugorora ward in Misenyi District.

Of the four people who died, three belong to one family, she said, noting that doctors in the region treated three patients, later discharged. Doctors took samples of 18 residents for further investigations as they are suspected to have contracted the disease at Goziba Island in Muleba District.

Doctors are camped at the place and medications are on-going while conducting investigations, she said, pointing out that the regional authorities seek assurance as to whether the disease had spread to the area.

"You should avoid gatherings and wash hands regularly," she said, urging the residents to make sure they drink boiled water. They also need to provide information whenever they see someone with cholera symptoms, as this would help to prevent the disease from spreading.

The regional authorities had received all the required equipment for medication, setting aside special areas for patients' treatment, she added.

SPORT

Erik ten Hag: Sir Jim Ratcliffe and I are on the same page

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Yanga's fringe players urged to make every opportunity count

By Correspondent Seth Mapoli

ZANZIBAR'S KVZ FC held Mainland Tanzania's Yanga to a 0-0 draw in the ongoing Mapinduzi Cup clash that took place at the New Amaan Complex in the Isles on Thursday night.

Despite playing with its third-string players, Yanga displayed significant potential but struggled to breach KVZ FC's defense. The draw secures both teams a spot in the tournament's quarterfinals.

In a notable mention, Yanga's defensive midfielder, Jonas Mkude, stood out as the Most Disciplined Player on the pitch and was duly rewarded with a monetary prize.

Yanga players, renowned for their strategic bench play in the Mainland Tanzania NBC Premier League and CAF Champions League, have received a caution from the outfit's technical bench to capitalize on the opportunities presented to them.

Mahlatsi Makudubela 'Skudu', Crispin Ngushi, Denis Nkane, Jesus Moloko, Mkude, Aboutwalib Mshery, and Kibwana Shomari found limited starting chances in both Premier League and CAF Champions League matches.

The mentioned players, now participating in the 2024 Mapinduzi Cup, showcased their skills in the game against Jamhuri SC on December 31, 2023, helping their outfit command a resounding 5-0 victory over the Isles club.

Ngushi netted two goals, while 'Skudu', Kibwana, and Clement Mzize each contributed to the comprehensive victory.

Mussa Ndaw, Yanga's assistant coach, emphasized the importance of current opportunities.

He urged players like Ngushi and Kibwana to use the chances diligently for strength in upcoming national and continental competitions like the CAF Champions League, NBC Premier League, and Azam Sports Federation Cup.

Ndaw noted the absence of several key first-team players, such as Stephane Aziz Ki (Burkina Faso) and Djigui Diarra (Mali) now in their respective countries' national team duties.

This creates an opportune time for Ngushi, Shomari, Mkude, Nkane, and others to step up and showcase their talents.

Reflecting on their initial performance, Ndaw acknowledged the significant potential displayed by the players in their first game.

Sustaining this level of play is crucial for continued success in the tournament.

Ndaw expressed confidence that these players will further solidify their prowess in the ongoing tournament, anticipating they will secure opportunities in future matches as well.

As Yanga continues its journey, the focus remains on nurturing emerging talents like Ngushi and Shomari to contribute consistently and make a lasting impact in both domestic and continental competitions.



Yanga's forward, Crispin Ngushi (R), dribbles past Zanzibar's KVZ FC defender when the clubs met in a 2024 Mapinduzi Cup duel which took place in the Isles two days ago and ended in a 0-0 draw. PHOTO: COURTESY OF YANGA

Samatta believes Taifa Stars can challenge AFCON Group Stage opponents



Taifa Stars' skipper, Mbwana Samatta. PHOTO: COURTESY OF TANZANIA FOOTBALL FEDERATION

By Correspondent Michael Mwebe

M BWANA Samatta, who joined his Taifa Stars teammates in Egypt in preparation for the 2023 African Cup of Nations, believes they can battle for a last 16-ticket in their group.

Under the guidance of Belgian-Algerian coach Adel Amrouche, Taifa Stars carried out training sessions in Egypt devoted to physical aspects where Samatta joined the rest of the squad.

The former Tanzania's Simba SC and Democratic Republic of the Congo's TP Mazembe striker went through drills and ball work with the senior national team in Cairo.

Samatta played for his Greek club, PAOK Thessaloniki in a 4-0 victory over OFI Crete on Wednesday before flying out to Egypt from Athens.

The Taifa Stars captain expressed optimism the team can



Taifa Stars coach, Adel Amrouche

do well with good preparations despite being the lowest-ranked team in the group.

The attacker noted: "Preparation is the most important thing. If we prepare well, anything can happen. Therefore, we should prepare well, and have a strategic plan to go and compete. We are going to San Pedro to compete."

He pointed out: "If we prepare well, I believe we can challenge our group opponents. Our group is not easy. I have talked about it in Saudi Arabia, and I said that we should respect pot seeding. We have to look at what pot we were in."

"The way to be successful is to prepare the team very well, but I believe the coaches have picked a team that they

believe has players who are ready to work," Samatta said.

He disclosed: "We leave the squad selection to the coach, our group is not easy, we need preparation to go out and battle."

Taifa Stars will test themselves against the Egyptian national team on Sunday, before flying to the Ivory Coast where they will begin the competition against the Atlas Lions of Morocco before crossing swords with Zambia and DR Congo in Group F.

In a related development, the Confederation of African Football (CAF) has increased the prize money of the 2023 Africa Cup of Nations by 40 percent.

The decision will see the winner of the competition receive a record \$7 million, a two million increase of what Senegal earned for winning the AFCON against Egypt in 2021.

Moreover, the runner-ups of the competition which will take place in Ivory Coast will now be awarded \$4 million, an increase from the \$2.75 million Egypt pocketed in the last edition.

Losing in the semi-finals will see each of the two teams receive \$2.5 million, while each of the four quarterfinalists will get paid \$1.3 million.

Taifa Stars players share insights on 2023 AFCON campaign

By Correspondent Seth Mapoli

TANZANIA'S senior national football team, Taifa Stars, is training intensively in Egypt for the 2023 Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON), slated to take place from January 13 to February 11, 2024, in Ivory Coast.

The Africa Cup of Nations is the biggest football competition in Africa and Taifa Stars players are excited and determined to do well in the tournament.

Charles M'mombwa, a Taifa Stars promising young player now playing for the Australian A-League club Macarthur FC, shared insights on the team's preparation for the 2023 AFCON.

He remarked: "Regarding the players, our training progress in the camp is positive, gearing up effectively for the tournament."

Discussing AFCON's significance and challenges, M'mombwa highlighted the efforts of the head coach and technical bench.

He stated: "AFCON is a major and demanding competition in Africa, but our coaching staff ensures thorough training to prepare us for the intense competition for the national team jersey."

Analyzing their group, M'mombwa acknowledged the presence of formidable teams but expressed the team's readiness to face all challenges.

He affirmed: "Our group includes tough opponents, yet we



Footballers making Tanzania's senior national football team are pictured participating in drills in Egypt recently to shape up for the 2023 Africa Cup of Nations slated for January 13-February 11, 2024, in Ivory Coast. PHOTO: COURTESY OF TANZANIA FOOTBALL FEDERATION

are prepared for every game, dedicated to fighting for our nation. Our ultimate goal is to clinch the championship, akin to other formidable teams."

Haji Mnoga, playing for English club Aldershot Town, expressed, "Training has proceeded smoothly, and all players are prepared to participate in AFCON, dedicated to defending our nation. The collective training and preparation contribute

positively to our unity."

"Personally, first of all, I am very happy to be a part of this history. I grew up watching football with my father and now I am playing for my national team, so my dream has come true and for that, I will make sure I fight for my national team jersey."

Mbwana Ally Samatta, the senior national team captain, recently joined the camp from his

club PAOK FC in Greece.

Expressing gratitude for a safe arrival, he emphasized the significance of thorough preparation for success.

Samatta stated: "Preparation is paramount; I believe comprehensive preparation will lead to success."

"Our group poses challenges as every team is well-organized, but I trust the coaching staff to devise a solid strategy for our

success, so let's entrust the team's preparation task to the technical bench but Tanzanians should not stop giving their support, it is very important for us players," he revealed.

Taifa Stars face a tough challenge in Group F of the 2023 AFCON, which includes Morocco, Zambia, and DR Congo.

However, the senior national team's recent performances have been encouraging, and they will be hoping to use the camp in Egypt to fine-tune their preparations and build momentum for the tournament.

Taifa Stars will also play an international build-up friendly match against Egypt in Cairo tomorrow before competing in the 2023 AFCON which will bring together 24 teams will take place from January 13 to February 11, 2024, in Côte d'Ivoire.

Tanzania is the only team from the CECFA Zone that qualified for the tournament and will open the campaign against Morocco on January 17, and later take on Zambia on January 21.

Amrouche's team will line up for a duel against DR Congo in the last Group Stage match on January 24.

Cruising to the knockout phase of the competition will be a big achievement for Tanzania's representatives and this is what millions of Tanzanians are waiting to see happen.

Flexibles by David Chikoko

THIS YEAR WE FOCUS ON STRENGTH...

... NEXT YEAR: HAPPINESS!



PM: We have a duty to protect children against violence

By Guardian Reporter

PRIME Minister Kassim Majaliwa has urged Tanzanians to continue supporting the government's efforts in fighting violence against children as the challenge is pushing many minors to leave their families.

The PM made the call yesterday when he joined children at the Songea Women and Children Care Organisation (SWACCO) in Songea municipality, Ruvuma Region, for a special lunch.

He wanted social welfare officers to implement their duties of identifying children who undergo the pains of violence in their areas and take immediate measures to support them.

"These children who face violence go through very tough times; so, they need very close support from people and social welfare officers have a role to provide such support which include psychological one," he said.

The Premier noted that violence against children and women remains one of the most serious human rights violations in the country which needs collective efforts to curb.

"We all need to join efforts and fight this war; our children should be protected from all types of harm as they are the nation's future workforce," he said.

He called for close cooperation among the youth, elders, parents, religious leaders, security officers and the judiciary in dealing with violence

against children and gender-based violence.

Majaliwa also wanted regional leadership to put robust strategies by engaging leaders in the streets, villages and wards to identify the challenges and come up with measures to address them.

He said the government has always stands for the safety and security of children through relevant ministry, institutions and law enforcement officers to ensure that children's rights are protected.

He urged parents and guardians to make sure children with disabilities have access to all social services, including education, warning that stern measures will be taken against parents who fail to take their children to school.

He directed local government authorities to make sure no school aged child remains at home when schools reopen on January 8th, 2024.

The Premier called upon stakeholders to volunteer in assisting the government to provide gadgets for people with disabilities especially those with vision impairment.

John Chinguku, manager at SWACCO children's home said the centre was established in 2000 for purposes of supporting government efforts in finding solutions to challenges facing vulnerable children, adding that it started with four orphan children but the number has now increased to 50.



Residents of Bulamba village in Mara Region's Mwirara constituency take part in the construction of a building at a girls' secondary school on self-help basis, as found on Wednesday. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

Five get 100-year jail term each for economic sabotage

By Guardian Correspondent, Sengerema

FIVE people have been sentenced to 100 years in jail each by Sengerema District Court after they were found guilty of five counts of economic sabotage, including illegal possession of elephant tusks.

The sentence on economic sabotage case number 5/2022 was issued on Wednesday by Senior Resident Magistrate Tumsifu Barnabas, with each of offense carrying a 20-year prison term.

Reading the sentence, Barnabas

named the offenders as Samson Emmanuel (48) Shalali Jisandu (40), Hamis Ngurumo (52) Mohammed Nasibu (32) and Mathayo Robert.

According to the court, the offences are contrary to article 86 (1) and 2 (c) (iii) of the Wildlife Conservation Act number 283 of 2002 and article 57 (1) and 60 (2) of the Economic and Organised Crime Control Act of 2022.

He said the five were found guilty of possessing seven elephant tusks and a G3 military weapon and were sentenced after the court was satisfied

without reasonable doubt that they committed the crime as proved in the evidence given by prosecution witnesses. "After listening to the evidence given by prosecution side, the court is satisfied beyond reasonable doubt that the accused are guilty and sentences them to 20 years in prison for each offense, thus making 100 years for the five offenses," Barnabas said.

Earlier, public prosecutor Inspector of Police Nyamhanga Mayagi said in different places on July 16, 2022, the accused were found with seven elephant

tusks belonging to the United Republic of Tanzania worth 138.9m/- equivalent to \$60,000.

He also told the court that they were found with a G3 type weapon with three bullets contrary to article 20(1)(a) (b) and 2 of the Firearms and Ammunitions Control Act number 2 of 2015, Chapter 31 and section 57(1) as well as 60(2) of the Economic and Organised Crime Control Act of 2022.

Soon after the sentence, the offenders were taken to prison to commence their jail terms.



Dr Salum Rashid (L), Director of Operations and Services in Zanzibar's Social Development, Gender, Elderly and Children ministry, engaged in talks on Tuesday with development stakeholders from the public and private sectors on plans to form a children's forum in the Isles. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

Exhibitions showcase govt services ahead of Zanzibar Revolution

By Guardian Correspondent

ZANZIBAR Second Vice President Seif Ali Iddi has urged government institutions to work in collaboration to improve service delivery and address people's challenges and build the economy.

Ambassador Iddi made the call at the Zanzibar Mapinduzi exhibition held at Kisonge Revolution Tower in Unguja on Thursday ahead of the 60th anniversary of the revolution next week.

"These exhibitions are aimed at marketing the government's work and should be sustainable because citizens get the opportunity to know various activities and services offered by the institutions. So, the Ministry of Labour, Economy and Investment needs to improve the exhibitions and make them last for more years," he said.

Mudrick Ramadhan Soraga, Minister of State in the President's Office (Labor, Economy, and Investment) said that the exhibitions are aimed at encouraging citizens to work and engage in legal activities that bring changes in their lives.

"In order to build a foundation of respect and human dignity, there is a need to work in

synergy and exchange experience with the institutions that participate in the exhibition as this will help bring the unity of Zanzibaris in freeing themselves from poverty," Soraga said.

He said the President's Office (Labor, Economy and Investment) has seen it better to engage more institutions in the exhibitions in order to ensure that citizens know them and the services that they offer.

Soraga said the exhibitions are also an opportunity for government and private institutions that provide services, as well as entrepreneurs, to find a market for their products.

Amina Said Ali, one of the participants, commended the ministry for organizing the exhibitions, saying the move has greatly helped improve unity and collaborations to help promote development.

The exhibitions of services and products brought more than 50 public and private institutions and started by a walk from Amani area through Mikunguni, Mkunazini, Malindi, Darajani, Michenzani and was received by the Second Vice President at the Kisonge Revolution Tower and later ended at Maisara grounds in Unguja.

South African businessman overtakes Dangote as Africa's richest person

PRETORIA

SOUTH African luxury goods tycoon, Johann Rupert and his family have taken the crown as Africa's top billionaire after Nigeria's Aliko Dangote lost the prime spot.

According to the latest Forbes bil-

lionaire ranking, Rupert and his family are currently the 201st wealthiest in the world, while Dangote is the 219th.

The valuation of the wealth of Mr Dangote, who held the first place on the African billionaire ranking for more than 12 years, came under pressure after a major devaluation of the

naira by roughly 40 per cent last June and the free fall that followed left his wealth much weaker in dollar terms.

Dangote earns the bulk of his fortune in naira, which finished 2023 as the third worst-performing currency in the world of the 151 currencies tracked by Bloomberg.

Born over 73 years ago in Stellenbosch, South Africa, Mr Rupert chairs the Swiss-based luxury goods company Compagnie Financiere Richemont and South Africa-based investment holding company Remgro.

Richemont's most iconic brands include Cartier and Montblanc. His net

worth, together with that of his family, is estimated to be \$10 billion. The billionaire also holds a 26 per cent stake in Reinet, an investment holding company headquartered in Luxembourg.

The wealth of Rupert & family has been on a steady rise since 2020 after slumping by 34.3 per cent over the

two previous years. It climbed to \$7.1 billion in 2021 from \$4.6 billion a year ago, jumping to \$8.9 billion in 2022 and reaching an all-time high of \$11.1 billion last year.

That feat lifted the billionaire to the 157th position on the Forbes World Billionaire Ranking in 2023.

MSD to distribute 16.9bn/- worth equipment to constituencies

By Guardian Reporter

THE government has launched a special initiative to supply medical equipment worth 14.9bn/- to 214 constituencies across Tanzania mainland.

Implemented by the Ministry of Health, the initiative involves distribution of medical equipment which have been purchased in line with the 2023/24 budget.

Health Minister Umyu Mwalimu said in Dar es Salaam yesterday that the government released additional funds in November, 2023 to procure the tools as part of the efforts to improve maternal and child health services.

Among the equipment that minister Umyu received are 3,080 patient beds, 1,000 maternity beds, 5,500 mattresses, 36,808 sheets and 306 bedside tables.

"We expect to receive other medical equipment soon which are delivery beds (4280), examination beds and tables (4280), delivery kits (4280), bed side lockers (6420) and 6420 drip stands," she said.

The minister said statistics show that 86 percent of pregnant women in Tanza-

nia give birth in dispensaries, health centres and hospitals and that the provision of the facilities will greatly help improve delivery of services in the facilities.

"Each constituency will get 30 beds, 30 mattresses, 60 sheets, 30 bed side lockers, 30 drip stands, 15 dining tables, 10 delivery beds, 10 delivery sets and 10 examination beds," she said.

"MPs will find these devices distributed in two centres in each constituency where Medical Stores Department (MSD) will deliver them."

The minister further thanked President Samia Suluhu Hassan for her efforts to transform health sector by facilitating implementation of various strategies which greatly reduce maternal deaths.

She said as per the new Tanzania Demographic and Health Survey and Malaria Indicator Survey (2022 TDHS-MIS), the country has cut maternal mortality rate by 80 percent.

"The report shows that maternal mortality rate in Tanzania has gone down from 530 deaths per 100,000 live births (2015/2016) to 104 deaths per 100,000 live births in 2022," she said.



Serengeti National Park community relations officer Abed Mwesigwa has a word with residents of Machochwe village in Serengeti District on Wednesday, the thrust of his remarks being on the need for them to take full part in environmental conservation drives. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

Minister outlines environment protection milestones

By Guardian Reporter, Zanzibar

MINISTER of State in the First Vice President's Office Harous Suleiman Said has said that in the past 60 years of Zanzibar Revolution there have been several achievements in the environmental conservation area.

He highlighted some of the achievements as the removal of 360 tonnes of dangerous expired chemicals from the market that were stored in various warehouses across Pemba and Unguja.

Speaking to journalists here yesterday, the minister said the chemicals were imported for

various uses, including health, agriculture, industries and school laboratories but have since been taken to the United Kingdom for safe and professional disposal.

The minister said his ministry has managed to control the use of plastic bags which were a threat to environmental conservation efforts and public health as a whole.

"The successes have been made possible through various inspection processes that we have been conducting; in fact, the plastic bag presence in the market has declined," he said.

The minister said the

government is determined to ensure that all development projects which were launched in Zanzibar are finalized on time with an evaluation on their viability.

The minister said from 2015/16 to December 2023, a total of 642 projects have been analyzed and 34 have been assessed on their effects on the environment, adding that in 2015/16, a total 136 projects were assessed and there is an increase to 102 projects.

He said the increase is due to the government's efforts through the Office of the First Vice President to ensure that economic and developmental

projects consider environmental issues during establishment and implementation. In addition, he said, environmental assessment certificates are issued for the projects to ensure that the projects are run without damaging and polluting the environment.

"The government has succeeded in building a sewage treatment plant in the base area of Chake Chake, Pemba, as well as a 100 meter long rainwater drainage system in that area," he said.

The minister said the presence of the plant helps to reduce the flow of sewage and eventually the pollution of the marine

environment of the Pemba Stream reservoir.

However, he said that in efforts to reduce the effects of climate change, the government succeeded in preparing and launching the Zanzibar strategy for climate change in 2014, which provides a vision of the steps taken by the government and stakeholders to withstand the effects of climate change.

"The plan succeeded in restoring some areas affected by climate change due to beach erosion and saltwater intrusion into agricultural and residential areas," he added.



Manyara regional commissioner Queen Sendiga pictured on Thursday addressing residents of Gendabi, one of the Hanang' District locations recently hit by devastating mudslides. Photo: Correspondent Gift Thadey

DRC churches now demand inquiry into election issues

KINSHASHA

CATHOLIC bishops conference and protestant churches in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) have demanded an independent inquiry be opened into irregularities and alleged legal violations observed during December general election.

The presidential election won by incumbent Felix Tshisekedi with more than 73 percent according to CENI, the central African nation's election commission, has been met with controversy.

In a joint statement on Thursday, the CENCO-ECC Catholic and Protestant churches said the results of the presidential and legislative vote would only be acceptable if an inquiry was set up.

The groups had monitored the polls with their thousands of independent observers on and after Election Day.

Hours-long delays, malfunction-

ing machines, and other issues led to an unscheduled extension of voting beyond Dec. 20 - something local observers and civil society organizations have called illegal - and parts of the country were still casting ballots five days after election day.

The logistical problems included many polling stations being late in opening or not opening at all. Some lacked materials, and many voter cards had smudged ink that made them illegible. A large group of opposition candidates say the election was fraudulent as a result and have rejected the provisional results.

Two formal appeals against the provisional presidential results have been filed before Congo's constitutional court which must assess them ahead of a Jan. 12 deadline to announce the final results.

The election had more than a 40percent turnout with some 18 million people voting, according to elections chief Denis Kadima.

'Climate change calls for new agricultural practices'

By Grtrude Mbago

OVER 75,000 farmers in various regions in the country have been reached with training to enable them adopt agroecological practices and embrace organic farming to restore nature.

Under support from the Sustainable Agriculture Tanzania (SAT), the farmers most of whom are from Morogoro, Dodoma, Iringa and Manyara regions, have in the past 10 years been empowered with essential skills on sustainable crop cultivation and marketing strategies to improve their yields.

Speaking during the 10th Agroeco-

logical Forum, Seed Fair and Organic Food Festival held recently in Morogoro Region, Janet Maro, executive director of SAT said the organisation invested heavily in agroecological technologies by promoting organic farming and smart livestock keeping which are cost-effective and protect nature.

"We trained them on organic farming to promote natural and conservation farming which eventually helped them to improve income," she said.

Maro added that the organization has been implementing several projects meant to assist farmers on how

to use local technologies to maintain soil fertility and moisture as well as how to make and use chemical-free organic pesticides.

She said that series of activities that enabled the project to reach its goals includes facilitation on agroecological methods that also covers training on organic farming methods and certification of organic farmers to enable them supply organic certified products to the markets.

"Such trainings are complemented with capacity building so that they gain skills in leadership, marketing and saving and lending. Special focus

was on supporting women especially from the pastoralist communities in generating income," she said.

Maro further said that through various formed cooperative unions, thousands of farmers in various villages have been working in synergy to produce various crops and selling the same to nearby and distant markets.

She said that the organisation has also been cooperating with the Sokoine University of Agriculture (SUA) to conduct participatory research by closely engaging farmers and pastoralists from the beginning to the end of the studies.

"Our approach builds links between women farmers, trainers, researchers and the government to secure and disseminate locally embedded knowledge," she added.

Johnson Nyingi, assistant director, government businesses coordinator at the President's Office (Regional Administrative and Local Government) commended SAT for investing heavily in promotion of organic farming and agroecological practices which have greatly helped farmers and pastoralists overcome the increasing impacts of climate change.

Nyingi said that agriculture sector

is currently facing various challenges due to climate change, something that needs more innovative and sustainable practices to overcome.

He however asked the organization to expand its operations and activities in many more regions in order to help more farmers recognize the potential in the agriculture sector, capacitating them with useful knowledge pertaining to agroecology.

"The government has set good policies that if well implemented, would help to improve performance of agriculture sector by engaging more farmers in agroecology," he said.

Unrestricted exchange boosts trade, security at Namanga township

By Guardian Correspondent,

Longido

AN agreement between Tanzania and Kenya that allows citizens to cross border by up to 20 kilometers without a travel document has seen increase in trade as well as improved security at both sides of the twin towns of Namanga.

Bulugu Mkanga, Immigration Officer at Namanga border said this yesterday, explaining that the arrangement has helped reduce crime due to frequent visits which enable people from both sides to know each other better.

The unhindered social interactions have built strong relations that boost businesses on both sides as well as friendship, he said.

"Through the communi-

qué, a Kenyan citizen is allowed to enter Tanzanian territory by up to a distance of 20 kilometers and a Tanzanian citizen is also allowed to enter Kenya within the same radius without having any permit other than a nationality ID, he said.

Mkanga was briefing Patrobasi Katambi, Deputy Minister in the Prime Minister's Office (Labour, Youth and People with Disabilities) who visited Namanga One Stop Border Post (OSBP) located in Longido District, Arusha Region.

The explanation came after Katambi expressed concern that some people were crossing into Tanzanian side without required papers.

"Despite the availability of the one stop centre, there are special services to allow passengers to cross the border, this should go hand in hand with ensuring that people who cross the border have all the necessary documents," he said.

"Also, strive to prevent the passage of illegal goods; I have seen better passenger service systems that control people passing without the necessary permits."

Longido District Commissioner Marco Ng'umbi said the security situation in the district is stable and the residents of the area continue with their daily activities in accordance with the law.



Also, strive to prevent the passage of illegal goods; I have seen better passenger service systems that control people passing without the necessary permits



Dodoma regional commissioner Rosemary Senyamule (3rd-L) makes an assessment visit to a building under construction at Michese Secondary School in Mkonze ward, Dodoma Urban District, yesterday. Photo: Correspondent Peter Mkwavila

EU reaffirms support for sovereignty, territorial integrity of Somalia

LONDON

THE European Union (EU) has reaffirmed its support for sovereignty, territorial integrity of Somalia and reminded the importance of respecting the unity of the country.

EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell reaffirmed the bloc's support for the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Somalia in a

phone call with Somali President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud.

"I reaffirmed the full support of the EU for the unity, the sovereignty and the territorial integrity of Somalia. The Horn of Africa doesn't need more tensions," Borrell wrote on X.

Earlier this week, the EU issued a statement stressing the importance of respecting Somalia's territorial integrity and sovereignty

after its breakaway region of Somaliland signed a controversial deal with Ethiopia.

On Monday, Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed and Somaliland President Muse Bihi Abdi signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in the Ethiopian capital Addis Ababa on granting Ethiopia access to the Red Sea through the port of Berbera in Somaliland.

Somalia rejected the deal, calling it a threat to good neighbourliness and a violation of its sovereignty.

Abiy's office hailed the pact as "historic," saying it is "intended to serve as a framework for the multisectoral partnership between the two sides."

Ethiopia lost its Red Sea ports in the early 1990s after the Eritrean War of Independence, which

lasted from 1961 to 1991.

In 1991, Eritrea gained independence from Ethiopia, leading to the establishment of two separate nations. The separation resulted in Ethiopia losing direct access to the Red Sea and key ports.

Ethiopia has since been landlocked, affecting its ability to conduct efficient maritime trade.



Assistant Inspector of Police Philipo Robert has a word with motorbike taxi riders in Mwakakati ward, Momba District, yesterday on the need for them to observe road traffic regulations. Photo: Correspondent Issa Mwadangala

Two cooling sub-stations to stabilise electricity in Geita

By Guardian Correspondent,

Geita

THE government is to construct two power cooling sub-stations at Nyakanazi and Kahama to provide reliable electricity supply to Bukombe and Mbogwe districts in Geita Region.

The districts currently use power from Kakola in Kahama District which is located far away, making it difficult for residents to access reliable electricity.

Energy Minister Doto Biteko made the statement here when addressing residents of Mbogwe District, saying that the power cooling sub-station at Nyakanazi will ensure the two districts get reliable electricity.

According to him, many districts in the country do not have power cooling stations and this has pushed the government to ensure that the stations are constructed with Bukombe and Mbogwe districts being among the first beneficiaries.

The minister said the government will also construct another power cooling sub-

station in Kahama District thus eradicating power outages in the areas such as Bogwe and Bukombe.

He said that the presence of the three power cooling sub-stations will significantly help improve the economy of the areas.

"For many years, the two districts of Mbogwe and Bukombe have lived without any power station because our electricity comes from Kakola ward in Kahama District, Shinyanga Region which is too far away and in case a fault occurs, it is not easy to understand and resolve the same urgently. This is why we have decided to build other two sub-stations at Nyakanazi and in Kahama," he said.

Nicodemus Maganga, Mbogwe MP appealed to area residents to continue being patient as the government is working to address power challenges in the area.

He said that regular power cuts in the areas have been affecting citizens with most of them failing to engage in economic activities, especially those that depend on electricity.

Leaders launch projects ahead of Z'bar Revolution Day

By Guardian Reporter, Zanzibar

AS residents here prepare for the commemoration of 60 years of the revolution next week, the isles are a beehive of activity, includ-

ing launch of various development projects.

Yesterday, Health Minister Nasser Ahmed Mazrui presided over the launch of the Kombeni-Nyamanzi-Dimani road which he termed as a great catalyst for develop-

ment. The launch function took place at Nyamazi area in West Unguha B District as part of commemorations to mark 60 years of the revolution.

He said residents of the area have been suffering

for a long time due lack of a proper transport infrastructure, saying the construction of the road will help improve the economy.

The minister added that the areas are now suitable for investment and con-

struction of modern houses and boost real estate sub-sector.

"There will be new development projects including a telecommunication network tower, trade fair ground as well as a modern

buildings. This will be satellite city and it will provide employment opportunities for many young people," he said.

Shomari Omar Shomari, Deputy Principal Secretary in the Ministry of Works,

Communication and Transport said that the 2.8 kilometers long road was built at the level of bitumen

The road is being built by IRIS ASER, a Company from Turkey and its construction started on July 17, 2022 and

was completed on October 5, 2023.

West Urban Regional Commissioner Idrissa Kitwana Mustafa said that the construction will end many challenges to citizens and investors in the area.

Samia puts smiles on orphans' faces with New Year gifts

By Guardian Correspondent, Shinyanga

PRESIDENT Samia Suluhu Hassan has donated food and non-food items to support children at Shinyanga Society For Orphans which is located at Bushushu area in the town.

The support includes rice, edible oil, sugar, boxes of juice and clothes meant to provide relief to children and their caregivers at the orphanage.

Handing over the gifts yesterday on behalf of the President, Shinyanga District Commissioner, Johari Samizi, said the gifts are part of true love that President Samia has to people of all groups without any discrimination and that the aid will enable the orphans to feel like other children.

"These gifts apart from being a sign of love, they also show how the president values the good job done by caregivers in the country and recognises the challenges that they are facing to support children with special needs," she added.

She said the government will always stand hand in hand with development stakeholders who have been extending a hand of support to the needy by providing them with care and education.

She commended the caregivers at the centre for the great job that they are doing to ensure that the children grow well and get all the essential needs.

Farhiya Said, the centre's manager thanked President Samia for the valuable gifts and her love for the children, explaining that the centre has 35 children where 26 are in primary schools and nine in secondary.

"We recognise the good job which the government is doing to improve people's lives and bring smiles to communities, many children's homes are now operating smoothly as the government has put in place conducive environment and policies," she said.

She added that the children were as happy as they celebrated the New Year with the gifts from the President, something that they did not expect.



Tanzania Bureau of Standards director general Dr. Athumani Ngenya (R) and Police Force Commissioner of Training and Operations pictured in Dar es Salaam yesterday showing copies of documents on an agreement they had just signed. It relates to countrywide investigations into the spread of defective motor vehicles. Photo Correspondent Joseph Mwendapole

'Africa needs to make climate needs known on global stage'

NAIROBI

EXPERTS have called for the African continent to focus on sustainable farming while it grapples with extreme weather events.

In the year following Africa's hosting of the 27th United Nations climate summit, more commonly referred to as COP27, held in Egypt in 2022, the continent has endured a run of lethal and unprecedented extreme weather events.

Last September, Libya hit global headlines when Storm Daniel

made landfall, causing severe weather conditions, including strong winds and sudden heavy rainfall that affected several areas in the country. Massive flooding killed more than 4,300 people, and more than 8,500 are still missing, according to the United Nations Children's Fund.

Even though Libya's floods were among the few African climate extremes that made global headlines last year, many other deadly and life-threatening events in Africa failed to gain international news coverage.

The Horn of Africa has seen al-

most three years of some of the worst drought conditions in history, said the Famine Early Warning Systems Network, a global provider of early warning and analysis on acute food insecurity. Ethiopia and Somalia have experienced five failed rainy seasons since late 2020, which have displaced 1.4 million Somalis and killed 3.8 million livestock.

This period of extreme drought was followed by the El Nino-induced heavy rains and flash flooding that killed hundreds in Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia last year, the United Na-

tions said.

The deluge swamped more than 1,000 hectares of cropland in Ethiopia and Somalia, challenging the agricultural economies in the two countries where more than 65 percent of the population relies on farming and much of the region's farmland relies on rainfall for irrigation.

Kilion Nyambuga, a research and planning expert involved in the resettlement of slum dwellers in Kenya, said Africa is responsible for only a fraction of global emissions but is suffering disproportionately from climate

change.

"The fact that Africa is continuously facing the extreme effects of climate change despite the continent's low emissions is harming food security, ecosystems and economies while fueling displacement, migration and worsening the threat of conflict over dwindling resources," he said.

Emissions of carbon dioxide per person in Africa in 2021 were 1.04 metric tons, standing in stark contrast to the global average, which is more than four times as high, said a report pub-

lished by the World Meteorological Organization in September.

The report, called 'State of the Climate in Africa 2022', said the rate of temperature increase across Africa has accelerated in recent decades, with weather and climate-related hazards becoming more severe. Yet, financing for climate adaptation is a drop in the ocean of what is needed.

Nyambuga said the global approach, which seems fixated on mitigation, neglects Africa's pressing need for adaptation

financing and loss and damage compensation. The decision by African countries to host the inaugural Africa Climate Summit in Kenya's capital Nairobi in September 2023, was timely and "a plus for the African Union", he said.

Alex Mugambi, chair of the Environmental Institute of Kenya, said the African Climate Summit was a success, highlighting the adoption of the Nairobi Declaration, a comprehensive document that outlines Africa's vision, priorities, and demands for climate action and finance.



This wobbly makeshift structure is all that residents of this section of Dar es Salaam's Mabibo Kisiwani suburb have for a bridge, as captured yesterday, the one previously there having swept away recently by floodwaters. Photo: Correspondent Miraji Msala

Ensure all selected children join Form One, parents urged

By Guardian Correspondent,

Wanging'ombe

PARENTS and guardians in Wanging'ombe District, Njombe Region, have been urged to ensure that pupils selected to join form one this year report to their respective schools on time and stop letting them work on farms.

A total of 4,823 pupils have been chosen to begin form one in 23 secondary schools located in the district whereby 2269 are boys and 2554 are girls.

Samson Machibya, Wanging'ombe District Education Officer, made the call here yesterday when speaking to this paper, saying that parents have the role to supervise education of their children while providing them with all the necessary tools.

"The government has done its role of constructing infrastructure; parents need to do their part too to ensure that their children begin their education journey," he said.

Machibya said there has been a tendency of pupils reporting late to schools which is caused by parents

not making preparations in advance.

Onesmo Lyandala, Vice Chairman of Wanging'ombe District Council, said in the past there were challenges of children who were selected not to join secondary schools not to report due to distance but that is no longer the case because of ward secondary schools.

Itulaumba Ward Councillor Tobias Mkane and his Wanging'ombe Ward counterpart Geoffrey Nyagawa asked parents to ensure that their children report to school and warned that legal action will be taken against those who will not do so.

"The government announced the removal of fees from primary schools to advanced level secondary education but parents have to pay for the basic necessities for their children such as uniforms and learning materials," Mkane said.

He added: "We will not allow a single child to miss the opportunity to excel in education for any reason; we will take action against all parents who force their daughters to get married at young age."

UN warns of humanitarian crisis in Sudan as ceasefire talks stall

KHARTOUM

THE United Nations Under-Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs, Martin Griffiths, issued a stark warning about the deteriorating situation in Sudan, emphasizing the urgent need for international intervention.

UN Spokesperson Stephanie Tremblay revealed that nearly 25 million people in Sudan require humanitarian assistance, but escalating hostilities are hindering aid efforts.

Tremblay urged the international community, especially those with influence

over the conflicting parties in Sudan, to take immediate and decisive action to halt the fighting and protect humanitarian operations intended to aid millions of civilians.

Despite these pleas, Sudanese paramilitary leader Gen. Mohammed Hamdan Dagalo stated his commitment to a ceasefire during a meeting with South African President Cyril Ramaphosa in Pretoria.

Dagalo highlighted the efforts taken to end the war and expressed an unwavering commitment to cease hostilities. However, he provided no specific timeline for meeting with Sudan military chief Gen. Abdel-Fattah

Burhan.

Tensions between Dagalo and Burhan, former allies turned adversaries, erupted into all-out war in April, resulting in over 12,000 reported deaths, though the actual toll may be higher, according to doctors and activists. Over 7 million people have been displaced.

Despite discussions of a ceasefire, the conflict has intensified, with 300,000 people forced to flee their homes in response to attacks by the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) in Wad Medani.

The RSF's actions in Wad Medani raised

concerns among residents, fearing potential atrocities similar to those committed in Khartoum and Darfur. The U.S. State Department has accused both the RSF and the Sudanese military of war crimes and crimes against humanity during the nine-month conflict.

While international pressure mounts, Dagalo continues his tour of African countries, meeting with leaders to discuss the on-going crisis. Ceasefire talks between the warring factions have yet to yield progress, exacerbating the humanitarian crisis in Sudan.

Sub-Saharan Africa urged to embrace crop diversity

By Special Correspondent

FARMERS in sub-Saharan Africa need to move away from growing maize and switch to crops that are resilient to climate change and supply enough key micronutrients for the population, according to a new study.

Led by Dr Stewart Jennings from the University of Leeds, the study argues that diversification towards fruits, vegetables and crops such as cassava, millet and sorghum will improve nutrition security on the continent, meaning sufficient micronutrients essential for good health.

The study also says the quantity of food produced must increase and unless yields are boosted to an unprecedented level, more land will have to be brought into agricultural production.

Sub-Saharan Africa is home to around 1.2 billion people, and according to figures from the World Bank, the population will grow by an additional 740 million people by 2050. Farmers will have to boost the amount of food grown at a time when climate change will result in increasingly extreme conditions, affecting what crops can be grown.

The researchers say the population is at risk of "food and nutrition insecurity" unless effective ways of adapting to climate change are identified. Integral to any decisions is a requirement that crops need to be nutritious and provide sufficient energy for the population.

The study has highlighted the need to place nutrition at the heart of agricultural policy to avoid the long-term unintended consequence of failing to produce food that can deliver the nutritional needs of the population.

If policy solutions focus only on increasing production of calories and adapting to be climate smart, it is likely there will be negative consequences for health through nutritionally poor diets.

Prof Jennie Macdiarmid from the Rowett Institute at the University of Aberdeen is one of the authors of the paper where more than 50 researchers contributed to the investigation which involved talking to policymakers and other stakeholders in the food and agriculture sectors in four countries in sub-Saharan Af-

rica: Malawi, South Africa, Tanzania and Zambia.

"Too often food, agriculture and nutrition policies sit in siloes across different government departments," said Dr Stewart Jennings, a Research Fellow in the School of Earth and Environment at the University of Leeds.

"This study provides holistic evidence that combines information on environmental impacts of food system changes and the changes needed for population level nutrition security. The research shows that action can be taken to adapt to climate change and improve nutrition security in sub-Saharan Africa."

The scientists say there needs to be a fundamental shift - or "transformative approach" - in agriculture to incorporate nutritional needs.

Diversifying into soybean production is one option. Soybean crops are more likely to withstand the impacts of climate change compared to maize.

Dr Ndashes Kapulu, from the Zambia Agriculture Research Institute and contributing author to the study has been involved in studies to assess how soybean could improve the income of commercial and small-scale farmers.

He said: "Many countries in sub-Saharan Africa will be better able to handle climate change and other stresses if they have more diverse food systems, such as the transition to soybean production in Zambia."

"As scientists, we need to generate enough evidence in our research to help make changes that support and guide actions to make the agrifood system more resilient."

Increasing the production and consumption of animal-based products in sub-Saharan Africa could also improve nutritional quality of diets but the scientists warn that it should not reach the unsustainable production levels seen in some higher-income countries.

More animal-based products would cause a rise in greenhouse gas emissions, although the researchers say that this could be tolerable given sub-Saharan Africa's need to reduce the risk of nutritionally inadequate diets - and that its greenhouse gas emissions are relatively low.



Neema Mapunda (2nd-R), headmistress of Mkurumuzi Secondary School in Muheza District, briefs Muheza district executive director Dr Jumaa Mhina (R) on Thursday on progress in the construction of a science laboratory building at the school. Photo: Correspondent Steven William

First feed of graphite ore found at mine in Lindi

By Guardian Reporter and Agencies

WALKABOUT Resources Ltd has announced the successful start of "wet" commissioning of the Crushing Circuit at the Lindi Jumbo Graphite Mine in southern Tanzania with the first feed of graphite ore through the entire crushing circuit.

The wet commissioning of the Crushing Circuit not only satisfies the necessary practical working of the entire circuit, it also further de-risks the Lindi Jumbo operational start up with the creation of a fine ore stockpile of high-grade graphite ore that will be used for the wet commissioning of the remainder of

the processing plant.

In a press statement issued by the firm, the approximately 19,000 tonnes from the existing ore stockpile will be used for the commissioning process and is sufficient for a full month's production at nameplate capacity.

Using the existing ore stockpile for commissioning and start-up has allowed push-back of the commencement of operational mining activities, resulting in a real cash saving as the cost of creation of the current high grade ore stockpile has already been incurred in the cost of mining competent rock for the building of the Tailings Storage Facility (TSF).

Once operational mining

commences there will be an orderly build-up of high-grade (20 percent TGC) and medium grade (10 percent TGC) stockpiles on the RoM pad for optimal grade feed to the plant and the ramp-up to nameplate ore throughput and recoveries.

The current mobile generating capacity on site is used for the wet commissioning of the crushing circuit while waiting for the delivery of the MV and LV switchgear and transformers at the Port of Dar es Salaam.

Once receipt of the transformers (being offloaded at the port) and switchgear (enroute to site) has taken place, it is expected the full 5MW of grid power will become avail-

able to advance wet commissioning.

The full planned electrical capacity (including backup generators) is necessary before the commissioning team will feed ore through the entire processing circuit.

Dry commissioning has also started on equipment within the grinding and flotation circuit and these commissioning activities will continue in preparation for continuous feed through the entire processing circuit.

On 28 December, the Minister for Minerals Anthony Mavunde and a delegation from the District Commissioner's office, Chief Inspector of Mines and a press delegation visited the Lindi Graphite

Mine to witness the progress of the project.

Feedback has been very positive, and the visit was broadcast widely within the Tanzanian media.

Andrew Cunningham, the managing director and CEO of Walkabout Resources commented:

"It is great to see the first feed of Lindi Jumbo Graphite ore and the first part of the plant operating as designed. Additionally, as the operations team starts to prepare for full production the fine ore stockpile will give them a flying start by de-risking the source of ore for the concentrator over the coming months."



Mary Marungi, manager of Dar es Salaam's Magomeni branch of NMB Bank, presses a button yesterday to launch the ninth-week draw of the 'NMB MastaBata Halipoi' cashless usage promotion campaign. She is with Gaming Board of Tanzania inspector Rasuli Masoud (L) the bank's Card Services manager, Ednamamu Mshubi. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

Miners are trapped as gold mine collapses in Zimbabwe

HARARE

ELEVEN subsistence mine workers have been trapped in an underground shaft following a ground collapse at Redwing Mine in Zimbabwe, located 270 km (167.77 miles) west of the capital, Harare, authorities yesterday.

According to a statement from Zimbabwe's mines ministry, the incident occurred on Thursday morning, with preliminary assessments suggesting that earth tremors may have triggered the collapse.

Redwing Mine's owner, Metallon Corporation, issued a separate confirmation of the incident and revealed that a dedicated rescue team had been mobilized to bring the trapped miners back to the surface.

Despite several rescue attempts, the unstable ground conditions have hindered the operation's progress, with Metallon emphasizing the importance of ensuring the safety of the rescue teams before proceeding further.

Metallon Corporation stated, "The team has made several rescue attempts. However, the ground remains unstable, rendering rescue operations unsafe. Our teams are diligently assessing ground conditions to make sure the rescue operations proceed safely as soon as possible."

Subsistence miners have carried out the mining operations at Redwing engaged in unauthorized work since the mine was placed under corporate rescue in 2020, according to the company.

As the rescue efforts continue, the Redwing Mine incident serves as a stark reminder of the hazards faced by subsistence miners and the imperative for enhanced safety measures in such operations.

EU avails €100,000 humanitarian aid for flood victims

By Guardian Reporter

THE European Union has announced a humanitarian aid package of €100,000 (274bn/-) to help people affected by the recent landslides and floods triggered by heavy rains in the Hanang District, Manyara Region and oth-

er parts of Tanzania.

A statement released yesterday by the EU Delegation to Tanzania and the East African Community said the funds will be used to support Tanzania Red Cross Society in delivering emergency relief and recovery assistance to 44,000 households in the most affected

regions of Manyara, Dar es Salaam, Kigoma, Kagera, Geita and Unguja in Zanzibar.

The aid includes provision of food, water, sanitation, hygiene, shelter, health and protection services, said the statement.

The statement noted that the EU stands in solidarity with the people of Tanzania in this

difficult time and remains committed to supporting them in overcoming the humanitarian crisis. The December 3 severe landslides and flooding in Hanang District left at least 89 people dead and more than 5,600 others homeless, according to the government's official data.

Credibility of eyewitness, weight of evidence in incest, rape cases

By Telesphor Magobe

LAST week, we briefly looked at the ingredients of the offence of rape and said sometimes a girl or woman is raped, but because she doesn't know the ingredients of rape is and how it is proved, court judgment may favour the rapist for lack of cogent evidence.

This can be very painful to the victim of rape and even to relatives, friends and neighbours who are sure the girl or woman was raped by the person who is complained of. It may also make people lose trust in the administration of justice, thinking justice has not been done.

So, it is good to be clear when one is called to testify in court to give evidence that can be relied on. Even if a complainant's claim may be genuine, the way a person testifies may raise doubts on his or her credibility and the weight of evidence.

Today, I invite you to go a step further on the offences of rape and incest. Just to refresh our mind, a few weeks ago we gave an example of a brother and sister who live together as husband and wife and have now two children, but we didn't offer any case law related to their situation. The brother pretends he takes care of her sister, but both of them sleep in the same bedroom and on the same bed and have two children.

The brother was called to a clan meeting to give his own story, but denied it to have impregnated her sister, saying the clan intended and had managed to tarnish his image. The clan now thinks to take another action if they both persist in living together as husband and wife - that is, to exclude

him from the clan and force him to leave his father's plot on which he has built a small house. The clan considers also reporting the case to the police should both of them disregard the clan's concern, but this could be the last resort as the clan wants the brother and sister to acknowledge their wrongdoing and rectify it.

Today, we have a case law on rape and incest and want to show how the weight of evidence counts. The case of Narzis Luambano (appellant) v Republic (respondent) is a case in point. It is an appeal from the decision of the High Court of Tanzania in Songea in a criminal case No 198 of 2015.

In this case, the appellant was charged before the Resident Magistrates' Court of Songea in Ruvuma Region with the offence of incest by male contrary to section 158(1)(a) of the Penal Code (R.E, 2002, now R.E 2022).

He was found guilty of the offence, convicted and sentenced to 30 years' imprisonment. Aggrieved by the trial court's decision, he unsuccessfully appealed to the High Court of Tanzania.

The appellant was accused of repeatedly raping his own daughter who was at the time aged 15 years and both his daughter and mother testified in court. At that time, the appellant's wife left home for some time, leaving behind her daughter and other children with the father, but the latter turned to his daughter by having forceful sexual intercourse with her which resulted in her pregnancy. The daughter informed her father that she was pregnant and he instructed a person to administer her herbal medicine so that she



True evidence of rape has to come from the victim, if an adult, that there was penetration and no consent, and in case of any other woman where consent is irrelevant, that there was penetration.

might abort.

The daughter drank it, but after three weeks her stomach started aching and had profuse bleeding. Seeing that the father recalled his wife and when she arrived she took her daughter to Songea Regional Hospital where they were advised to report the case to a police station, which they did. The daughter was given a PF3 and they returned to hospital for medical check-up and it was discovered that a two-month pregnancy abortion was incomplete. The father was then arrested for interrogation at Songea Police Station and arraigned in the Resident Magistrates' Court.

In the Court of Appeal of Tanzania it was confirmed that the daughter was the appellant's biological child and both lower courts regarded

the daughter as a truthful and credible eyewitness. Referring to the case of Mkumbo Hamisi v Republic (criminal appeal No 24 of 2007, unreported), which relied on the case of Selemani Makumba v Republic of 2006 in which it was commonly expressed that true evidence of rape has to come from the victim, which is what section 127(7) of the Evidence Act is all about, the prosecution urged the Court of Appeal to dismiss the appeal.

But the appellant reiterated that the evidence of the first eyewitness (his daughter) was contradictory and wrongly relied upon by the trial court in finding his conviction, and that the first appellate court erroneously upheld that decision. He submitted in general that the prosecution did not prove the case against

him beyond reasonable doubt. Therefore, he prayed to the Court of Appeal to allow his appeal.

The Court of Appeal reaffirmed a principle that "where there are concurrent findings of facts by the lower courts, an appellate court, in a second appeal, should not disturb them unless it is clearly shown that there has been a misapprehension of the evidence, a miscarriage of justice or violation of some principle of law, or there are obvious errors on the face of the record, or misdirection or non-direction on the evidence, or a misapprehension of the substance, nature and quality of the evidence, resulting in unfair conviction."

It said it agreed with the prosecution that the two lower courts correctly held, relying on section 127(7) of the Evidence Act and the case of Selemani Makumba v Republic, that: "True evidence of rape has to come from the victim, if an adult, that there was penetration and no consent, and in case of any other woman where consent is irrelevant, that there was penetration."

Furthermore, the Court of Appeal held that the prosecution proved the case beyond reasonable doubt that the appellant was the person who raped his daughter as was charged. Therefore, the two lower courts were justified to reject the defence evidence which they found to be nothing, but a conjecture.

On whether the appellant had committed the offence of incest, the Court of Appeal held that the prosecution had established that the victim of rape was the biological daughter of the appellant. The evidence came from both the daughter herself and her mother and the appellant himself who did not deny it. According to the Court of Appeal, "the offence of incest was perfectly proven against the appellant." Therefore, the Court of Appeal concluded that the appeal was devoid of merit and dismissed it in its entirety.

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Visa-free travel between African countries is vital for the continent

By Carlos Banda

REFORMS such as the famous women's rights movement of 1848 to 1917 which envisaged today's right to vote plus other entitlements that followed reminds us that women are not supposed to be viewed as a fragile group in the society that should wait for a rescue by a knight in shining armor.

Changes in lifestyle in today's world propelled by changes brought forth by technology and massive interaction amongst societies across the globe demand that women have a stake in making history as leaders, pioneers, philanthropists, innovators, policy and decision-makers, business owners, land owners and so much more alongside men in the running of societies and nations.

"Women need a seat at the table, they need an invitation to be seated there, and in some cases, where this is not available, they need to create their own table. We need a global understanding that we cannot implement change effectively without women's political participation," said Meghan Markle, Duchess of Sussex.

The words of Markle clearly point to the relevance of having women being enabled, empowered and given a voice to bring light and progress alongside men as both parties need each other's contribution in ensuring global economic stability.

It is so much so in the developing countries like Tanzania which need radical reforms to allow women on the same table with men as part of the decision-making to bring change and progress that impacts the lives of men, women and children.

According to the 17th Economic Update by the World Bank entitled 'Empowering Women: Expanding Access To Assets and Economic Opportunities', shows that Tanzania's female labour force participation rate rose from 67 per cent in 2000 to 80 per

cent in 2019, which is a record above 63 per cent in Sub-Saharan Africa and among the highest on the continent.

Despite the significance of such progress for women attributed to reforms aimed at empowering women, it is argued in some circles that female population still faces setbacks in accessing and controlling resources such as land, houses and financial services.

The bottlenecks are largely caused by a number of factors, one being cultural hegemony whereby the male is dominant over the female and secondly, the presence of unfriendly economic structures and bureaucracies in terms of procedures needed for women to have access and control of economic facilities.

Najma Hussein Abdallah Haji, the Executive Director of Zanzibar Women Chamber of Commerce and Member of the Generation Equality Forum Advisory Committee, argues that women contribute significantly to the national economy considering the fact that the 2022 Housing and Population Census showed that Tanzania has a total of 31,687,990 women which is 51.3 per cent of the total population compared to men who stand at 30,053,130 or 48.7 per cent.

She says that women and youth who make up a large portion of the micro-economic sector achieve little or no progress in entrepreneurial activities due to the fact that the present structure financial services and institutions do not provide a friendly environment for women to excel.

This includes access to loans and fiscal aid with restrictions which demand women to have collateral in terms of immovable assets like land, hence resulting in women's failure to access funds and services in order to expand their capital and businesses.

Haji also notes that in the cultural aspect, movements that are channelled in helping women economically have been viewed as a threat to



The fact that such laws and regulations that protect women's rights are not observed is a major hindrance to realizing gender equality and the reforms that intend to help more women have access to and control of resources.

male dominance. This, she argues, has led to misrepresentation and misinterpretation of what women's empowerment is all about, adding that even the use of the word 'gender' is associated with women alone while it is a reference to both sexes, male and female.

Thus, as a result, women in communities have been forced to remain home with no means to generate income but rather depend solely on their husbands as bread winners. In this formula, when a husband dies, the woman and her children become vulnerable and often lose inheritance to husbands' relatives and become financially crippled and in some cases homeless.

Hassan Hamisi Juma, Executive Director of the Association of Non-Government Organizations in Zanzibar (ANGOZA) says there are already initiatives including legal frameworks that are geared at helping women gain access to land ownership but notes that the problem is that most

individual males and communities fail to accept this economic right for women.

"The fact that such laws and regulations that protect women's rights are not observed is a major hindrance to realizing gender equality and the reforms that intend to help more women have access to and control of resources," he said.

The 17th Economic Update by the World Bank shows that Tanzanian women continue to face serious constraints with regard to access to land, labour and productive assets. It indicates that 25 per cent of men are sole owners of land versus just 8 per cent of women while 7 per cent of women are sole homeowners compared to 26 per cent of men. Tanzania's rates of both landownership and homeownership are below the average for Sub-Saharan Africa due, largely, to low rates among women.

According to Juma, the most convenient solution apart from leaders acknowledging and implementing

initiatives to address such challenges, educational reforms are also necessary to increase awareness on women's rights, empowerment and gender equality.

"Narrowing provision of such awareness on equality should begin in schools where a special topic on gender issues is taught and continued in terms of advancing understanding of the agenda along educational ladder from primary to university," he said.

"Having such awareness is paramount in having a future where disregard for gender rights is not a norm and a future where generational equality is a real life practice rather than an agenda spoken and understood by the minority."

In light of the ongoing debates and discussions on gender equality, it is important for us as a nation to understand that alleviating poverty is possible when all groups are involved in production, access and ownership of resources.